AUG 2022

# ENDLINE REPORT *on* UGANDAN MEDIA COVERAGE *of* ROAD SAFETY

dmToday | Feature

Through road safety campaigns, the number of road accidents could be reduced significantly. PHOTO/ FILE

Why funding is vital in promoting road safety

Without secure and stable funding, it is hard to sustain the policies required to achieve lasting reductions in casualty levels.

For the government to significantly reduce the number of road crashes, Katumba says, it requires between Shs10 billion to Shs30 billion per financial year. This would address issues of road safety management such as periodic and mandatory vehicle inspection, mass media campaigns such as caravans across all regions, public awareness among all categories of road users, post-crash responses and printing of road safety materials such as the Traffic and Road Safety Act, the Roads Act and the Highway Code in different local languages. This would help the ministry to reach out to the public and through such campaigns encourage a road safety mindset change, among other

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GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP
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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The report was written by the following ACME staff: Brian Ssenabulya (programme associate, media monitoring and research) and Gerald Walulya (programme officer, media monitoring and research). Mr Bernard Tabaire, the director of programmes, provided editorial oversight.

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We thank the reporters, editors, and civil society officials who participated in the key informant interviews.

# INTRODUCTION

This study looks at Ugandan news media coverage of road safety, focusing on the country's three main daily newspapers, three television stations, and two online platforms. The study explores the attention and the nature of coverage these media platforms paid road safety (including road traffic crashes and measures to mitigate them) from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022. The publications studied are *Bukedde* (a Luganda-language daily), *Daily Monitor*, and *New Vision* (Uganda's only English-language dailies). The television stations monitored are NBS, NTV, and UBC while the online platforms are ChimpReports and TND News.

Relying mainly on quantitative content analysis, the study explores the quantity of stories on road safety, the types of articles published (news, analysis, opinion, features, etc.), the reporting formats employed, the topics covered, and the sourcing. The analysis also covers the use of background and context in stories and the attention paid to key behavioural risk factors of drink-driving, speed, use of seatbelts, and use of motorcycle crash helmets. Operation of vehicles in "dangerous mechanical condition" also features.

The study also relies on responses from key informant interviews with journalists and civil society actors to provide context and insight into the quantitative findings.

This study builds on baseline research that ACME conducted from 1 January to 30 April 2021 to assess the nature of media coverage of road safety in Uganda. Consequently, ACME conducted training of 30 journalists, with the objective of addressing key weaknesses in media reporting of road safety that had been identified in the baseline report. This endline report, therefore, attempts to make comparisons with the baseline report. The aim being to establish whether the ACME training/intervention had any catalytic impact on how the wider media industry covered road safety. The impact of the actual stories the trained reporters did is measured separately. Overall, we have noted that the ACME intervention created some impact in terms of the attention the media accords road safety issues as gauged based on the volume of stories on the subject. We have also noted some improvement in the quality of reporting, especially in the newspapers. However, it will require more time and scaling up training of journalists, to include editors, and commitment of newsrooms to achieve greater results given the high number of journalists spread across the different media houses in the country.

# BACKGROUND

Uganda predominantly relies on the road to move goods and people. However, this dominant mode of transport is unsafe. According to the 2018 Road Safety Performance Review by the United Nations, the country loses about 10 people every day in road traffic crashes, the highest level in East Africa. The causes range from poor condition of vehicles to poor road use.[1]

The 2018 UN review notes: "At present, Uganda seems highly unlikely to achieve the goals of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety, of stabilizing and reducing the forecast level of road fatalities by 2020."[2] Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.6 requires the halving of the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2030. Uganda is falling behind this target. The report says that "unless effective interventions are implemented, road crashes [in Uganda] are likely to increase and even double within the next ten years."[3] According to the 2020 police report, the accident severity index stood at 30 people killed per 100 crashes, up from 24 in 2016[4]. The situation may be worse. Preliminary research findings released in 2019 by Makerere University School of Public Health suggest that about 9,000 people die in road traffic crashes a year[5], a number three times higher than what the police reports.

The media plays a pivotal role in increasing awareness and changing behaviour around public health issues. According to the University of California, Berkeley, effective communications about road safety, whether in the media, in safety campaign materials or in community outreach efforts play an important role in ensuring the safe mobility for all road users[6]. How the public thinks about the problem of traffic injury and fatalities and what can be done about it is significantly influenced by how the media reports on it[7].

Mogambi and Nyakeri (2015), who investigated how newspapers in Kenya report road safety issues, found that "studies about media coverage of road traffic crashes have found that most

1 UN Report. (2018). Road Safety Performance Review: Uganda
2 UN Report. (2018). Road Safety Performance Review: Uganda
3 UN Report. (2018). Road Safety Performance Review: Uganda
4 Police Report. (2020). Uganda Police Annual Crime Report
5 Monitor. 9,000 people die in road accidents every year – study. https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/9-000-people-die-in-road-accidents-every-year-study-1824666
6 https://catsip.berkeley.edu/resources/role-media-and-road-safety
7 https://catsip.berkeley.edu/resources/role-media-and-road-safety

news reports tend to be episodic rather than thematic, focusing on the traffic event and the parties involved in the crash".[8] Studies have also found that media coverage tends to ignore preventive measures for injuries and fatalities in road traffic crashes (Yankson et al, 2010).[9] Mogambi and Nyakeri (2015) observed that road crash issues were not placed prominently in the newspapers. They noted that most of the stories on road traffic crashes were buried in the inside pages of the newspapers. Even then, these stories were less prominent in those pages because they were placed as either third lead stories or as briefs.[10]

An unpublished 2021 ACME report titled "The Media in Uganda: a landscape analysis" notes: "Road traffic crashes, particularly those involving motor vehicles, dominate coverage of road safety in Uganda, although the biggest proportion of the thousands of accidents registered by police are in fact not reported by the media. Road safety is generally not covered as a public policy issue."

**8** Mogambi, H., & Nyakeri, F. (2015). Media priming of road traffic accidents in Kenya: Praxis, patterns, and issues. Sage Open, 5(4), 2158244015606491

**9** Yankson, I. K., Browne, E. N., Tagbor, H., Donkor, P., Quansah, R., Asare, G. E., ... & Ebel, B. E. (2010). Reporting on road traffic injury: content analysis of injuries and prevention opportunities in Ghanaian newspapers. Injury prevention, 16(3), 194-197.

**10** Mogambi, H., & Nyakeri, F. (2015). Media priming of road traffic accidents in Kenya: Praxis, patterns, and issues. Sage Open, 5(4), 2158244015606491

# PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

## Main purpose and objective of the research

The main objective of this research is to assess how the media report on road safety issues in order to provide evidence that can inform interventions intended to improve journalists' coverage of road traffic crashes.

## Specific objectives

1. To establish the volume of stories on road safety.
2. To investigate the prominence and frequency of road safety stories in newspapers.
3. To find out what type of articles are used to tell road safety stories.
4. To examine the formats that are employed to cover road safety issues.
5. To establish triggers and origins of road safety stories.
6. To find out the topics or themes of road safety stories.
7. To examine whether background and context are used in road safety news coverage.
8. To assess how human sources are used in the media coverage of road safety issues.
9. To establish the type and gender of voices that dominate the coverage of road safety stories.
10. To find out why the coverage of road safety issues is in its current form.

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Results of this report are based on the following research questions.

1. What was the volume or quantity of stories on road safety?
2. What was the prominence of road safety stories? What was the frequency of road safety stories on newspaper front pages? How were road safety stories placed on other pages?
3. What types of articles were used to tell the road safety story?
4. What reporting formats were employed to cover road safety?
5. What prompted the road safety stories? What was the origin of the articles?
6. What topics or themes did stories about road safety focus on?
7. How was the use of background and context in road safety coverage?
8. How was human sourcing used in road safety coverage?
9. Which voices (categories of human sources and their gender) dominated the coverage?
10. What explains the nature of coverage?

# METHODOLOGY

## Scope of the study

As stated in the introduction, the study focuses on Ugandan newspaper, television, and online coverage of road safety issues. The study was designed to cover all articles (news, commentary/opinion, features, letters, Q&A interviews, and profiles) related to road safety published in *Bukedde*, *Daily Monitor*, and *New Vision* from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022. Some 402 newspaper articles were analysed. A total of 230 stories from the three television stations — NBS, NTV, and UBC — were also analysed. And another 117 stories from the two online platforms — ChimpReports and TND News — were examined along the same dimensions.

*Bukedde, Daily Monitor,* and *New Vision* were selected because they are Uganda's major dailies and are considered to significantly influence the national conversation. NBS TV and NTV were included because they are the leading television stations in public affairs programming. UBC was selected because it is the national broadcaster that is expected to offer comprehensive news and a diversity of programming without paying as much attention to profit as the private stations do.

The online platform ChimpReports was selected because of its popularity. It is believed to have the largest audience among online news websites. TND News made the cut because it is the news website with the most frequent production of news that covers the greater Lango and Acholi sub-regions of Uganda in which this study had a special interest i.e. there is work on safety of school zones taking place in the region.

## Methods of data collection

The study relied mainly on quantitative content analysis of coverage of road safety issues by the selected publications, television stations, and online platforms. Key informant interviews with selected reporters provided context for the findings.

## Content analysis

We analysed *manifest* content. "Manifest content refers to what is explicitly stated and draws on the objective and replicable qualities of quantitative methods" (Hilton and Hunt (2010).[11] However, where appropriate and necessary, we also undertook qualitative analysis of *latent* content.[12]

Content analysis was used to get an all-round sense of the nature of coverage in terms of both quantity and quality. Stories were coded and analysed based on a detailed coding sheet that contained several variables that were necessary to answer the set research questions. The variables included the following[13]:

1. Publication [name, type, etc]
2. Volume of road safety articles or stories
3. Prominence/placement of road safety stories on the front page and other pages
4. Prominence/placement of road safety stories on other pages
5. Type of road safety articles published
6. Road safety story prompts or origins
7. Event-vs issue-based coverage
8. Reporting formats employed
9. Topics or themes in the coverage
10. Use of background and context in road safety stories
11. Number of sources
12. Occupation of sources
13. Gender of sources

The content analysis was conducted by six research assistants who coded the data after attending a training workshop. Samples of the preliminary data entered were analysed to test intercoder reliability (or the level of agreement between the different assistants doing the coding). The reliability test showed a high degree of agreement in the way different variables were coded.

11 Hilton, S. & Hunt, K. (2010). UK newspaper representations of the 2009-10 outbreak of swine flue: one health scare not over-hyped by the media?" Research Report, J Epidemiol, *Community Health*

12 See, Krippendorf, K. (2004). *Content analysis: an introduction to its methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

13 A full list of the variables and their definitions is detailed in the coding sheet in Annex 1.

## Key informant interviews

Fifteen key informant interviews with reporters, editors, and civil society actors were conducted to further analyse the findings and to provide context. The interviews helped to make sense of the nature of coverage and what informed it as well as the environment under which the reporting was done.

# FINDINGS ON MEDIA COVERAGE OF ROAD SAFETY

## Volume of stories

A total of 402 articles on road safety issues were identified from the three publications monitored from 1 August 1 2021 to 31 July 31 2022. *Bukedde* had the highest number of articles, followed by *Daily Monitor*. The television stations monitored aired 230 stories with NTV leading the pack followed by NBS. The two online platforms published a combined 117 stories. ChimpReports had the majority share of the total number of online stories.

**Table 1a:** Frequency of stories on road safety by publication

| Publication | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Bukedde | 163 | 40.5 |
| Daily Monitor | 144 | 35.8 |
| New Vision | 95 | 23.6 |
| **Total** | **402** | **100.0** |

**Table 1b:** Frequency of stories on road safety by TV station

| Station | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| NTV | 93 | 40.4 |
| NBS | 75 | 32.6 |
| UBC | 62 | 27.0 |
| **Total** | **230** | **100.0** |

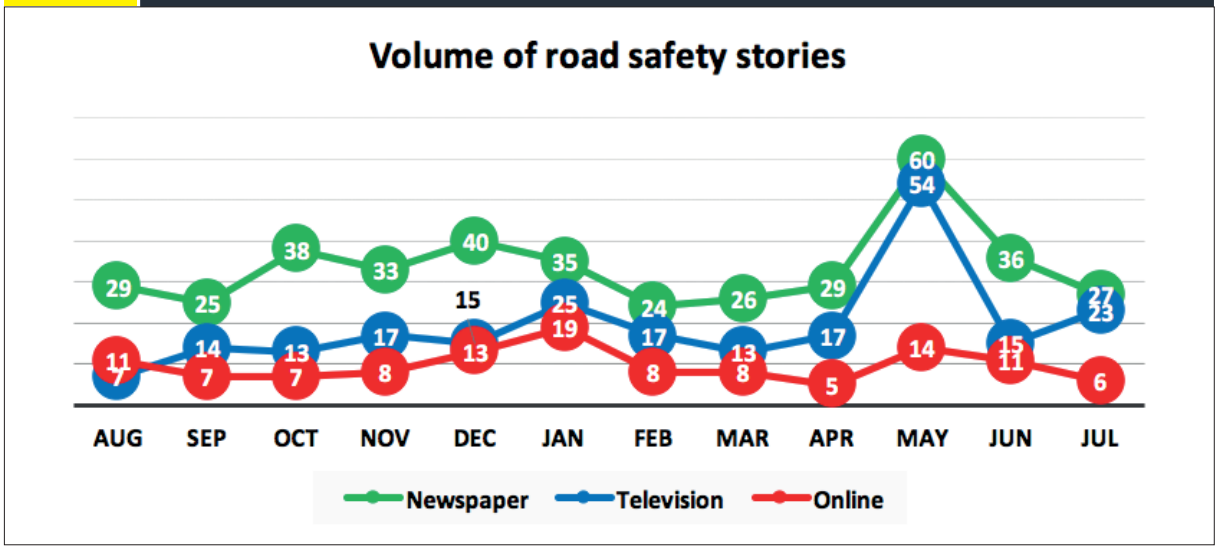
**Table 1c:** Frequency of stories on road safety by online platform

| Online platform | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| ChimpReports | 98 | 83.8 |
| TND News | 19 | 16.2 |
| **Total** | **117** | **100.0** |

A look at the volume of coverage by month shows a sharp increase in the volume of newspaper and television stories published on road safety in May. The increased publication of stories in that month is attributed to the fatal crash involving a bus owned by Link Bus Company that happened on 4 May 2022 along Fort Portal–Kyenjojo road[14] and the immediate government response to it[15]. By 19 May the death toll from this crash had risen to 23.[16]

Online media registered its highest volume of stories on road safety in January.

**Fig. 1:** Trend in coverage of road safety issues by month




14 https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/link-bus-crash-a-tale-of-tears-wails-and-blood-spill-3805172

15 https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/government-grounds-90-link-buses-3806288
https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/road-accidents-parliament-calls-for-speed-governors-3806188
https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/govt-to-compensate-bus-accident-victims-3806312

16 https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/link-bus-accident-death-toll-rises-to-23-3820340

## Prominence of stories

Only 18 stories (representing 4.5%) on road safety were on the front page in the 12 months monitored. Of these, 12 (representing 66.7%) were published in *Bukedde,* while *Daily Monitor* and *New Vision* contributed just three stories each to the total front-page volume.

Most road safety stories (78.1%) appeared beyond page 5 in the newspapers. This is similar to what was observed in ACME's baseline report on Ugandan media coverage of road safety, which stood at 84.3%. One editor attributed the limited prominence given to road safety stories to audience fatigue. He said: "The *New Vision* coverage of road safety was a priority in the '90s and early 2000s, with many stories appearing on page 1. However, the public wants something to give [them] hope. While it is important, people get fed up with news about death. This is why we look at aspects of the economy, farming, and jobs which give people hope."[17] Added a media trainer: "There's a preference to prioritise stories that give people hope on the prime pages rather than crashes, victims, and how people have died."[18] This finding is consistent with what Mogambi and Nyakeri (2015) observed in Kenya: road crash issues were not placed prominently in the newspapers.

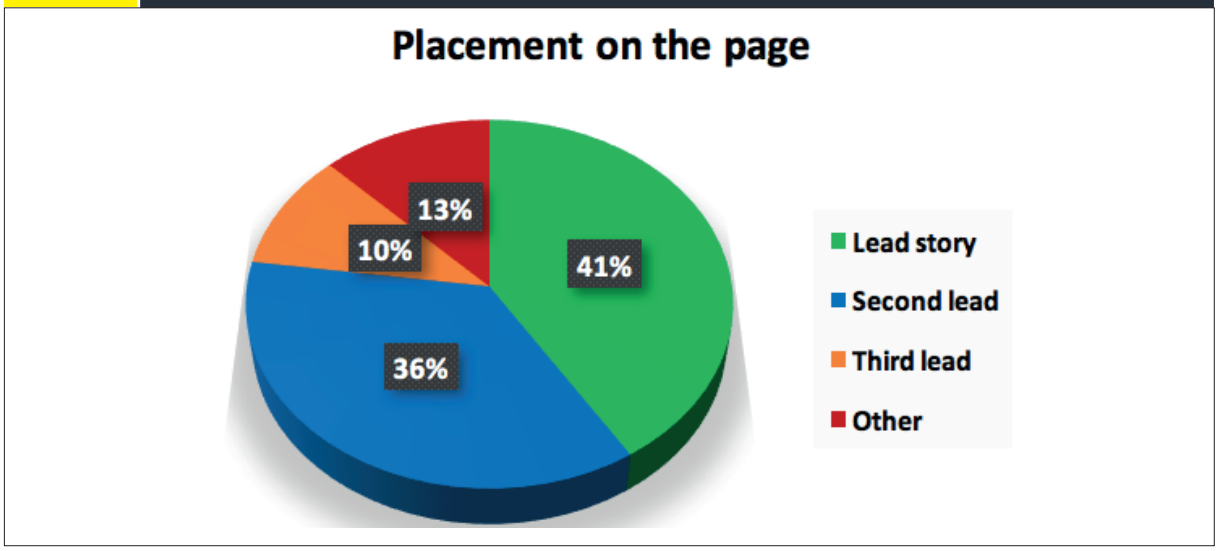
**Table 2:** Page location of road safety stories

| Page | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Front page | 18 | 4.5 |
| Page 2 | 8 | 2.0 |
| Page 3 | 30 | 7.5 |
| Page 4 | 22 | 5.5 |
| Page 5 | 10 | 2.5 |
| Beyond page 5 | 314 | 78.1 |
| **Total** | **402** | **100.0** |

However, most road safety stories were placed prominently as page leads (41%) or second leads (36.1%).

17 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala.
18 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala.

**Fig. 2:** Page placement of road safety stories




*New Vision* (58.9%) was more likely to carry road safety stories as page leads compared to *Daily Monitor* (36.8%) and *Bukedde* (34.4%).

**Table 3:** Page placement of road safety stories by publication

| Prominence | Bukedde (n=163) | Daily Monitor (n=144) | New Vision (n=95) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lead story | 34.4 | 36.8 | 58.9 |
| Second lead | 33.1 | 40.3 | 34.7 |
| Third lead | 11.0 | 13.9 | 4.2 |
| Other | 21.5 | 9.0 | 2.1 |

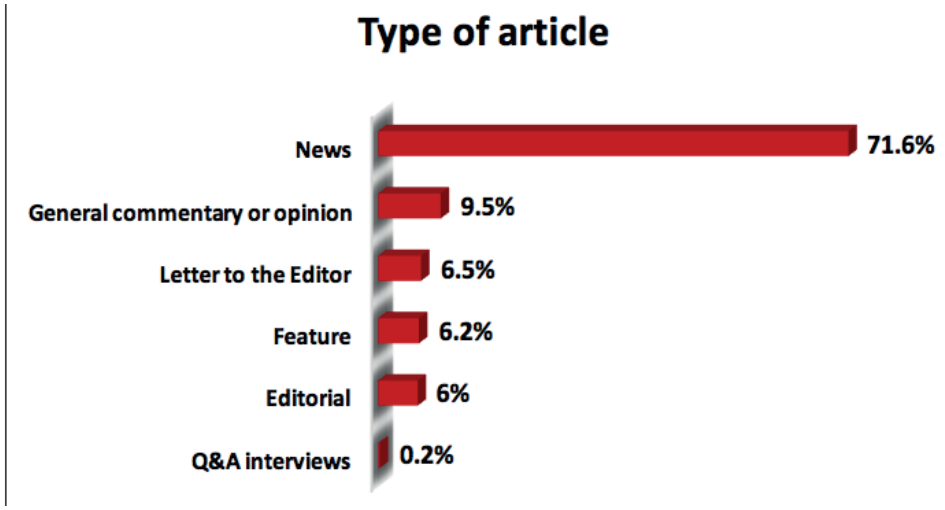
## Type of newspaper article

News remained the most frequent type of road safety newspaper article, a pattern similar to what was observed in our baseline study[19]. The next most frequent type of article was general commentary or opinions, which came a distant second at 9.5%. Letters to the editor and features came in third and fourth place respectively, followed by editorials and Q&A interviews.

The three areas that stood out were general commentary or opinions (growing from 5.7% in the baseline to 9.5% in the endline report), features (growing from 4.3% in the baseline to 6.2% in the endline report) and editorials (growing from 2.8% in the baseline to 6% in this endline report).

19 ACME unpublished study: Baseline Report on Ugandan Media Coverage of Road Safety

**Fig. 3:** Frequency of different types of road safety articles




*Bukedde* carried more news than any other type of article on road safety. *New Vision* carried a little more variety of articles than any other publication. It was also the only publication that carried Q&A interviews.

**Table 4:** Frequency of different types of road safety articles by publication

| Type of article | Bukedde (n=163) | Daily Monitor (n=144) | New Vision (n=95) |
|---|---|---|---|
| News | 93.9 | 55.6 | 57.9 |
| General commentary or opinion | 0.6 | 13.2 | 18.9 |
| Letter to the Editor | 0.0 | 15.3 | 5.3 |
| Feature | 5.5 | 5.6 | 9.5 |
| Editorial | 0.0 | 10.4 | 7.4 |
| Q&A interviews | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.1 |

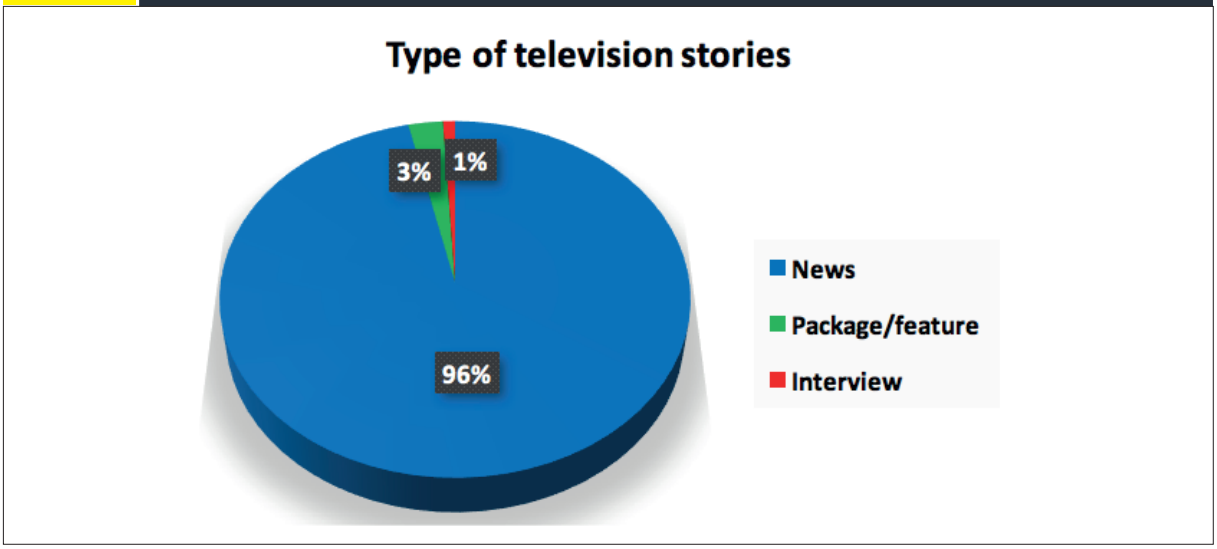
## Type of television stories

On TV, news made up nine out of every 10 stories on road safety. Only six features were identified in the 12 months monitored. This is consistent with ACME's research on media coverage of public affairs in Uganda, which showed that 89% of stories covered by TV were in the news format.[20] An editor at NTV attributed the high number of news stories compared to features to crashes that trigger the reporting. "The road safety stories tend to follow either

20 https://acme-ug.org/wp-content/uploads/2020-Annual-Report-on-Coverage-of-Covid-19-and-Other-Public-Affairs-1.pdf

an incident or a series of incidents. It is usually a crash that will spark the conversation. I don't think it's about audience interest, I think it's just the way the media covers the issues," he said.[21]

**Fig. 4:** Type of road safety television stories




*UBC* did not carry any other type of stories on road safety except news.

**Table 5:** Type of road safety television stories by station

| Type of news | NBS (n=75) | NTV (n=93) | UBC (n=62) |
|---|---|---|---|
| News | 93.3 | 96.8 | 100.0 |
| Package/feature | 5.3 | 2.2 | 0.0 |
| Interview | 1.3 | 1.1 | 0.0 |

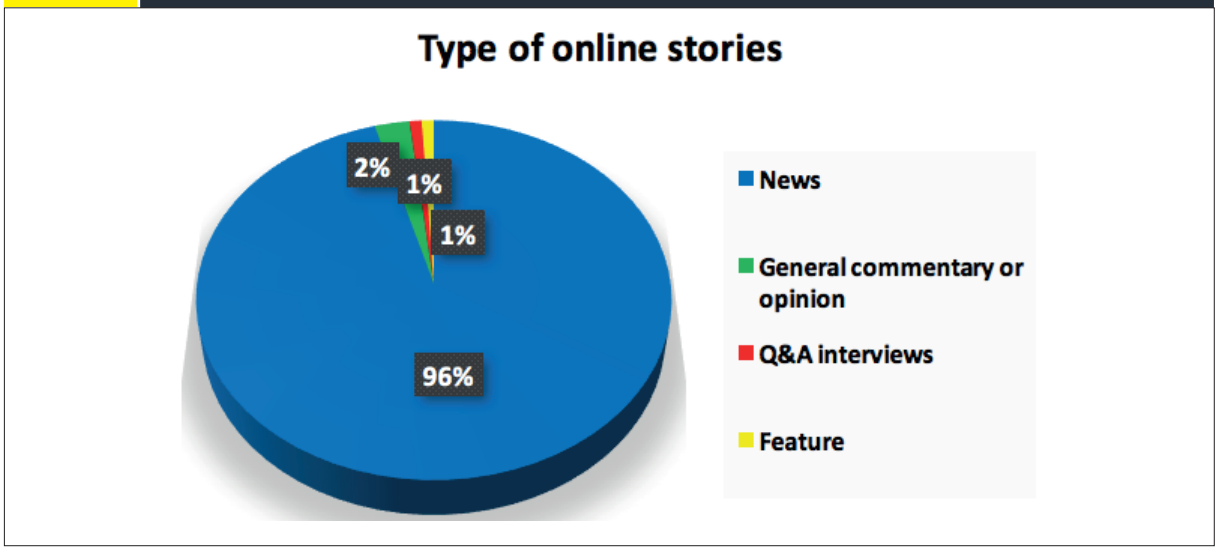
## Type of online stories

Like on television, news accounted for nine out of every 10 stories on road safety on online platforms. Only three commentaries/opinions were identified in the period monitored, while each online platform contributed one story to the total online volume in the category of Q&A interviews and features.

"Media houses don't usually provide adequate guidance and resources to enable journalists to take time to prepare long features on road safety. Road safety is not a 'selling' story," said an online editor when asked why news dominates coverage.

21 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala.

**Fig. 5:** Type of road safety online stories




ChimpReports published the only Q&A interview and feature on road safety.

**Table 6:** Type of road safety online stories by platform

| Type of stories | ChimpReports (n=98) | TND News (n=19) |
|---|---|---|
| News | 95.9 | 94.7 |
| General commentary or opinion | 2.0 | 5.3 |
| Q&A interviews | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| Feature | 1.0 | 0.0 |

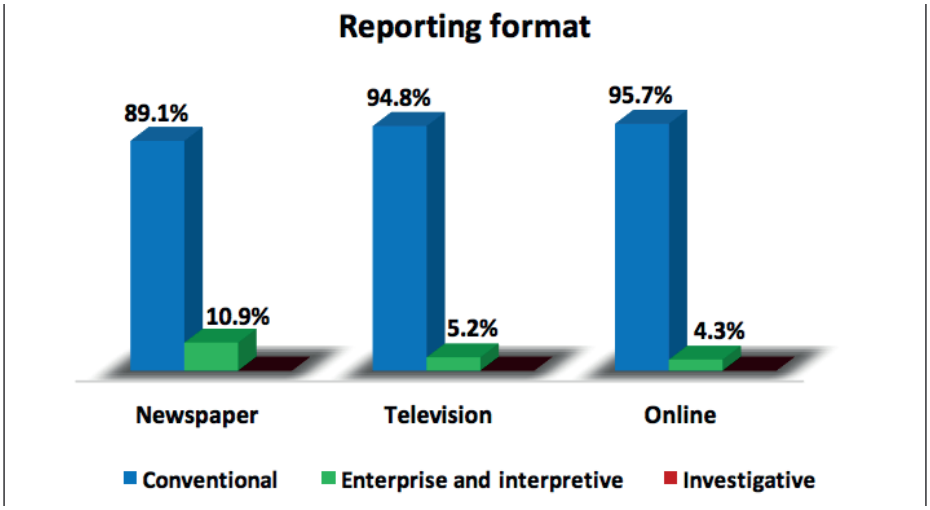
## Reporting formats of road safety stories

Conventional hard news reporting (he-said-she-said) dominated the coverage of road safety across the three media types. Conventional reporting accounted for eight of every 10 newspaper stories and nine of every 10 television and online stories. Newspapers carried more enterprise stories (10.9%) on road safety than television (5.2%) and online platforms (4.3%). This points to the high capacity in terms of personnel and resources of newspapers to conduct enterprise reporting compared to television and online platforms. There was no investigative story on road safety across the three media platforms in the 12 months under study.

The percentage of newspaper stories reported with the enterprise format increased from 8.6% in the baseline to 10.9% in this endline report. Television stories reported with the same format dropped from 14.3% to 5.2% in the same period, while online stories reported with the enterprise format increased by five stories in the same period.

Reporters and editors attributed the dearth of investigative and enterprise stories on road safety reporting to limited resources. Said an NTV reporter: "The manpower in the newsroom is very little. As a result, the amount of time you spend doing a story is dictated, yet such investigative and enterprise stories require more time to complete."[22]. An editor at ChimpReports said: "Most media houses are not able to invest in investigative reporting because it's expensive and requires experienced and investigative journalists who are not common in our newsrooms. And also, the topic doesn't seem to attract plenty of readership."[23] And a media trainer said: "There's a lack of resources. Sometimes journalists want to do such stories, but media houses apart from *New Vision* and *Daily Monitor* don't want to invest resources and attention. Some just don't have the money to do investigative reporting because some suffered during the Covid-19 period. However, where ACME has given grants, people have done very good stories."[24]

**Fig. 6:** Reporting formats across the three media platforms




Under the conventional reporting format, fact-finding is the dominant posture with common characteristics such as the following: spot or hard news that tends to focus on events; neutral and often uncritical transmission of facts; tendency to assign equal weight to all positions; faithful recording of the observed event or issue; suppression of the journalist's prior knowledge of the subject; depends largely or entirely on material provided by others; and tends to be event-centred.

Under the enterprise or interpretive reporting format, the story is usually of the journalist's initiative and effort. The coverage follows more leads than the usual straight news story

22 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala
23 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala
24 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala

and depends on material gathered or generated through the reporter's independent efforts. Enterprise stories tend to explore issues in greater depth, usually with narrative or literary techniques. These stories are traditionally presented as features. Instead of breaking news, enterprise stories focus on the forces that shape the events that may or may not be in the news.

Exposition is the dominant posture under the investigative reporting format, with common characteristics such as the following: the story is the journalist's original initiative; reporting depends on material gathered or generated through the reporter's effort; reporting uncovers information that an individual or entity may have tried to conceal from public scrutiny or information that an individual or entity may have had an interest in keeping out of the public domain; resources and evidence used by the journalist are discernible; there is evidence of strong documentation (the paper trail) and sourcing.

*Bukedde,* at 92.6%, had the highest percentage of road safety stories that employed the conventional hard news or straight reporting format. *New Vision* carried the highest proportion of enterprise stories (19%).

**Table 7a:** Reporting formats by publication

| Format | Bukedde (n=162) | Daily Monitor (n=88) | New Vision (n=63) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Conventional | 92.6 | 88.6 | 81.0 |
| Enterprise and interpretive | 7.4 | 11.4 | 19.0 |
| Investigative | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

NTV aired the most enterprise stories (8.6%), followed by NBS (5.3%). All the road safety stories aired on UBC employed the conventional format.

**Table 7b:** Reporting formats by television station

| Format | NTV (n=93) | NBS (n=75) | UBC (n=62) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Conventional | 91.4 | 94.7 | 100.0 |
| Enterprise and interpretive | 8.6 | 5.3 | 0.0 |
| Investigative | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

TND News carried the highest proportion of enterprise stories (11.8%) registered on online media in the 12 months monitored. This suggests that TDN News was deliberate in their choice of using the enterprise format in their news reporting, given that this media outlet generally produced fewer stories compared to other media houses monitored.

**Table 7c:** Reporting formats by online platform

| Format | ChimpReports (n=97) | TND News (n=17) |
|---|---|---|
| Conventional | 96.9 | 94.1 |
| Enterprise and interpretive | 3.1 | 11.8 |
| Investigative | 0.0 | 0.0 |

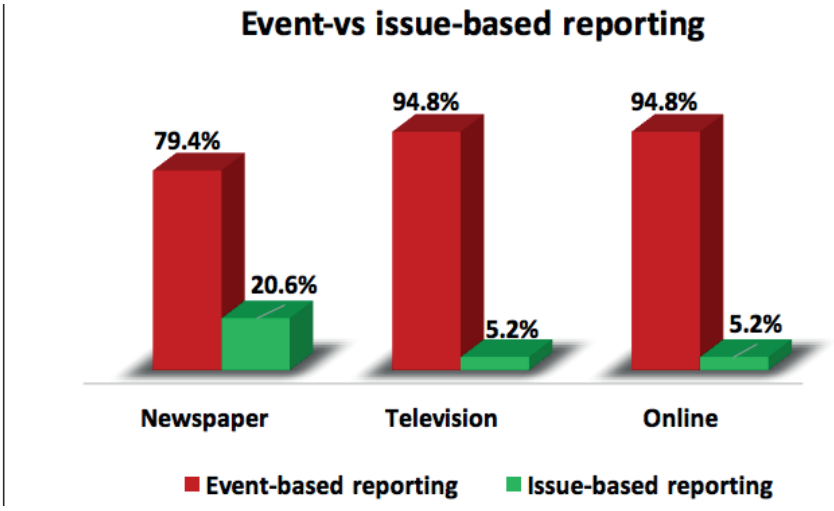
## Event-vs issue-based reporting

All three media platforms monitored continued to rely heavily on event-based reporting and much less on issue-based coverage, similar to what was observed in the baseline report. Event-based reports accounted for 79.4% of newspaper stories and nine in every 10 television and online stories on road safety. As was the case with enterprise and interpretive reporting, newspapers carried more issue-based stories (20.6%) than television (5.2%) and online platforms (5.2%).

Newspapers registered growth in issue-based stories from 8.6% in the baseline to 20.6% in the endline report. A reporter at the Northern Newswire blamed the heavy reliance on event-based reporting on story count and remuneration of journalists. Said the reporter: "As we practice journalism, we have not strived to take away the issue of story count because journalists are paid for each story produced. What is killing our journalism is not the journalist but the newsroom itself; they want quantity as opposed to quality. This is crippling our journalism. Journalists can be trained, but if media owners don't change their perspective from quantity to quality and pay journalists well so that they produce quality stories, this issue will persist."[25]. A reporter at *Daily Monitor* added: "Newsrooms haven't looked at road safety as something important. It can be difficult to convince an editor to give you a spread or space for a feature in the road safety perspective because it's an area that they don't prioritise."[26]. Joseph Beyanga, a road safety campaigner and the head of radio at Nation Media Group that owns *Daily Monitor* and NTV, attributed the dominance of event-based reporting to a lack of understanding of the road safety aspect by the media houses[27].

25 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala.
26 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala.
27 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala

**Fig. 7:** Event-vs issue-based reporting across the three media platforms




*New Vision* had the highest proportion of stories based on issue-based reporting followed by *Daily Monitor*. *Bukedde* carried the highest percentage of event-based stories on road safety.

**Table 8a:** Event-vs issue-based reporting by publication

| Reporting type | Bukedde (n=162) | Daily Monitor (n=112) | New Vision (n=86) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Event-based reporting | 92.0 | 74.1 | 62.8 |
| Issue-based reporting | 8.0 | 25.9 | 37.2 |

NTV had the highest proportion of stories based on issue-based reporting. All UBC stories on road safety were event-based.

**Table 8b:** Event-vs issue-based reporting by television station

| Reporting type | NTV (n=93) | NBS (n=75) | UBC (n=62) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Event-based reporting | 91.4 | 94.7 | 100.0 |
| Issue-based reporting | 8.6 | 5.3 | 0.0 |

TND News carried the highest percentage of issue-based stories registered on online media between August 2021 and July 2022.

**Table 8c:** Event-vs issue-based reporting by online platform

| Format | ChimpReports (n=98) | TND News (n=17) |
|---|---|---|
| Event-based reporting | 95.9 | 94.1 |
| Issue-based reporting | 4.1 | 11.8 |

## Topics/focus in road safety stories

Road traffic crashes continued to dominate much of the coverage on road safety across the three media platforms, accounting for 35.6% of newspaper, 39.6% of television, and 59.8% of online coverage. Online media carried a higher proportion of stories on road traffic crashes compared to newspapers and television. Some journalists attributed this form of reporting to laziness on the part of journalists. A reporter with *The Observer* weekly said: "Journalists like desk-based journalism and concentrate on the main event of the crash. They don't take the time to go back and investigate such underlying issues that cause the crashes. Some sources are not easily reachable; they keep on postponing. For example, there's a story I'm doing now about insurance compensation of road crash victims, but I've been delayed for over a month waiting for a comment from Insurance Regulatory Authority because it is a key source to my story. Therefore, some journalists find it easier to go with a few sources and run the story as soon as possible."[28]. A media trainer said that "editors tend to focus on only the facts of a road crash rather than other details. They only think of the headline; the more it bleeds, the more it leads."[29].

Enforcement of road safety measures and regulations came in second place across all three media platforms as the focus of stories, accounting for 23.1% of newspaper, 22.2% of television, and 14.5% of online coverage. Road infrastructure featured in third place across all three media types.

Road traffic crashes, enforcement of road safety measures and regulations, and road infrastructure were also registered as the top three topics on road safety in the baseline report.

**Table 9:** Topics/focus of road safety stories across the three media platforms

| | Newspaper | | Television | | Online | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Focus of the story** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** |
| Road traffic crash | 143 | 35.6 | 91 | 39.6 | 70 | 59.8 |
| Enforcement of road safety measures and regulations | 93 | 23.1 | 51 | 22.2 | 17 | 14.5 |
| Road infrastructure | 35 | 8.7 | 18 | 7.8 | 12 | 10.3 |
| Tips on safe road use | 28 | 7.0 | 9 | 3.9 | 1 | 0.9 |
| Vehicles | 17 | 4.2 | 5 | 2.2 | 1 | 0.9 |
| Systemic causes of road traffic crashes | 33 | 8.2 | 17 | 7.4 | 3 | 2.6 |
| Road safety policy | 15 | 3.7 | 8 | 3.5 | 5 | 4.3 |

28 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala.
29 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala.

| | Newspaper | | Television | | Online | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Focus of the story** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** |
| Effects of crashes (beyond the event)/cost of road crashes | 17 | 4.2 | 15 | 6.5 | 2 | 1.7 |
| Trends in road traffic crashes/road safety | 19 | 4.7 | 13 | 5.7 | 3 | 2.6 |
| Other | 2 | 0.5 | 3 | 1.3 | 3 | 2.6 |
| **Total** | **402** | **100.0** | **230** | **100.0** | **117** | **100.0** |

## The focus of road traffic crash stories

Most stories about road traffic crashes from all three media platforms focused on motor vehicles, taking up 71.4% of newspaper, 87.1% of television, and 80% of online coverage. Motorcycles came in second place across all three platforms, accounting for 19.6% of newspaper, 9.9% of television, and 11.8% of online coverage.

Pedestrians took a higher percentage of focus of road traffic crashes in newspapers (8.5%) than on television (2%) and online media (5.9%).

**Table 10:** Focus of road traffic crash stories across the three media platforms

| | Newspaper | | Television | | Online | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Focus of traffic crash story** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** |
| Motor vehicles | 135 | 71.4 | 88 | 87.1 | 68 | 80.0 |
| Motorcycle | 37 | 19.6 | 10 | 9.9 | 10 | 11.8 |
| Pedestrians | 16 | 8.5 | 2 | 2.0 | 5 | 5.9 |
| Bicycle | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | 1.0 | 1 | 1.2 |
| Other | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 1.2 |
| **Total** | **189** | **100.0** | **101** | **100.0** | **85** | **100.0** |

## Risk factors in road traffic crash stories

Speeding remained the most frequent road safety risk factor mentioned in the coverage, accounting for 73.7% of newspaper, 80% of television, and 69.7% of online crash stories. In newspapers, vehicles in dangerous mechanical condition accounted for 11.3% of crash stories, followed by distracted driving, with a share of 6%. The two risk factors also came in second and third place on television, accounting for 7.8% and 6.7%, respectively. On online platforms, distracted driving came in second place at 10.6%, followed by vehicles in dangerous mechanical condition at 9.1%.

**Table 11:** Risk factors mentioned in road traffic crash stories

| | Newspaper | | Television | | Online | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Risk factors** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** |
| Speeding | 98 | 73.7 | 72 | 80.0 | 46 | 69.7 |
| Vehicles in dangerous mechanical condition | 15 | 11.3 | 7 | 7.8 | 6 | 9.1 |
| Distracted driving (phone use) | 8 | 6.0 | 6 | 6.7 | 7 | 10.6 |
| Environmental (visibility, roaming animals, flooding) | 4 | 3.0 | 1 | 1.1 | 2 | 3.0 |
| Drink-driving | 2 | 1.5 | 2 | 2.2 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Over loading | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 1.5 |
| Other | 6 | 4.5 | 2 | 2.2 | 4 | 6.1 |
| **Total** | **133** | **100.0** | **90** | **100.0** | **66** | **100.0** |

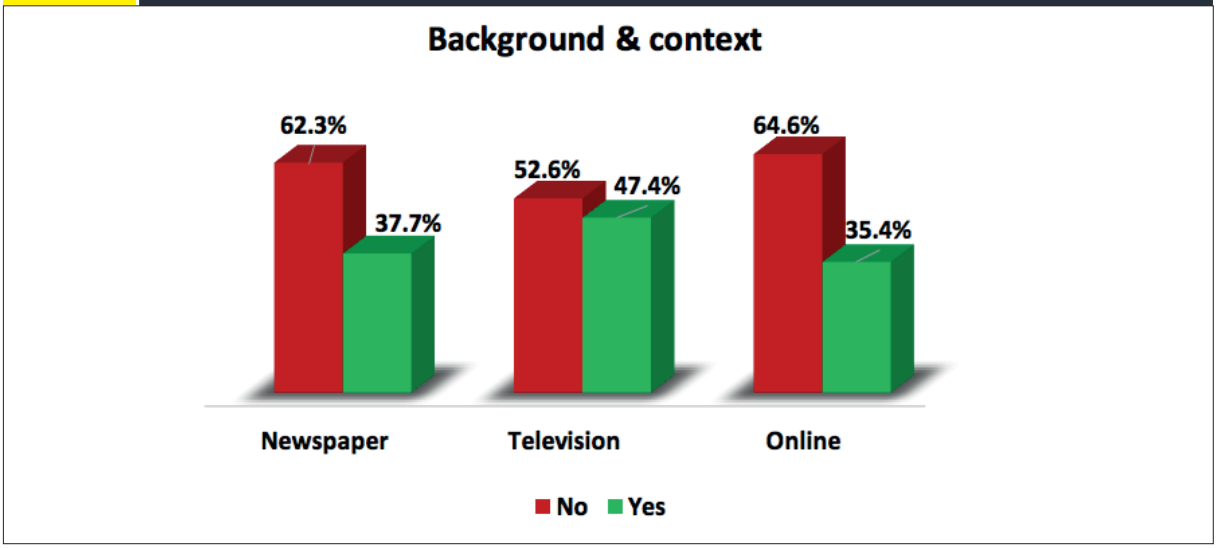
## Use of background and context

Only three out of every 10 newspaper and online news stories and four in every 10 television stories on road safety contained background and context that could help the reader put developments in perspective. The majority of stories from all the three media platforms did not contain background and context. As we have previously noted, background and context in road safety coverage would include information such as the annual incidence of road crashes, death and injury rates, systemic causes and the cost of road crashes, measures and regulations to promote road safety, policy, and so on. "Usually only the basic facts of a road crash are reported as opposed to what caused the accident where things like infrastructure, quality of drivers, driving school curricula, among others, would come in," said an editor at NMG[30]. "Our understanding of the subject is still pathetic." An editor at NTV added: "The media tends to concentrate on the main facts of the crash. There would be more context to a story if the media did more investigative or feature stories because such stories delve deeper into details."[31] An online editor blamed the lack of background and context on poor training of journalists and editors; poor reading culture among media practitioners; and lack of diligence.[32]

Newspapers and television registered an increase in road safety stories that contained background and context between the baseline and endline report from 27.6% to 37.7% and 28.6% to 47.4% respectively.

30 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala.
31 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala.
32 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala.

**Fig. 8:** Use of background and context across the three media platforms




*New Vision* had the highest proportion of stories with background and context followed by *Daily Monitor*.

**Table 12a:** Use of background and context by publication

| Background & context | Bukedde (n=162) | Daily Monitor (n=88) | New Vision (n=93) |
|---|---|---|---|
| No | 79.0 | 50.0 | 36.5 |
| Yes | 21.0 | 50.0 | 63.5 |

In television, NBS had the highest percentage of stories with background and context followed by NTV.

**Table 12b:** Use of background and context by television station

| Background | NTV (n=93) | NBS (n=75) | UBC (n=62) |
|---|---|---|---|
| No | 57.0 | 40.0 | 61.3 |
| Yes | 43.0 | 60.0 | 38.7 |

TND News carried a higher proportion of stories with background and context compared to ChimpReports.

**Table 12c:** Use of background and context by online platform

| Background & context | ChimpReports (n=95) | TND News (n=18) |
|---|---|---|
| No | 70.5 | 33.3 |
| Yes | 29.5 | 66.7 |

## Story origins/prompts

Most of the stories on road safety from all the three media platforms were prompted by a road traffic crash. Road crashes accounted for 46.3% of newspaper, 40% of television and 60.2% of online stories. News conferences came in second place across all the three platforms. This was a similar pattern observed in the baseline report where road traffic crashes and press conferences were the two leading sources of news on road safety.

Online media depended more on road crashes as a source of news compared to newspaper and television.

Newspapers (10.2%) registered a higher percentage of road safety stories originating from independent reporting, research or investigation by the journalist than television (5.7%) and online media (2.7%).

**Table 13:** Origin of the story

| | Newspaper | | Television | | Online | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Origin** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** |
| Road traffic crash | 145 | 46.3 | 92 | 40.0 | 68 | 60.2 |
| News conference | 64 | 20.4 | 51 | 22.2 | 21 | 18.6 |
| Independent reporting, research or investigation by the journalist/outlet | 32 | 10.2 | 13 | 5.7 | 3 | 2.7 |
| Government activity | 18 | 5.8 | 15 | 6.5 | 5 | 4.4 |
| Police activity | 17 | 5.4 | 16 | 7.0 | 2 | 1.8 |
| Other newsworthy occurrence | 16 | 5.1 | 18 | 7.8 | 3 | 2.7 |
| NGO/civil society activity | 6 | 1.9 | 13 | 5.7 | 4 | 3.5 |
| Document e.g. report, study/research | 5 | 1.6 | 2 | 0.9 | 3 | 2.7 |
| Parliament or legislative process | 4 | 1.3 | 9 | 3.9 | 1 | 0.9 |
| News release | 4 | 1.3 | 1 | 0.4 | 2 | 1.8 |
| Other | 2 | 0.6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Total** | **313** | **100.0** | **230** | **100.0** | **113** | **100.0** |

## Sources in the coverage

Police officers and ordinary people were the top two cited sources in newspaper and television coverage. They accounted for 24.6% and 17.7% of newspaper and 19.3% and 15.2% of television sources.

Police officers just like in newspapers and television were also the most frequently quoted sources on online platforms with a share of 49.3%.

Online platforms carried a significantly higher proportion of police officers as sources compared to newspapers and television.

Eyewitnesses also made up a significant proportion of television sources at 12.7%.

**Table 14:** Frequency of human sources in road safety stories

| | Newspaper | | Television | | Online | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sources** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** |
| Police officers | 175 | 24.6 | 116 | 19.3 | 68 | 49.3 |
| Ordinary person quoted in their individual capacity | 126 | 17.7 | 91 | 15.2 | 8 | 5.8 |
| Officials of Ministry of Works and Transport (includes ministers, commissioners, etc.) | 63 | 8.9 | 49 | 8.2 | 9 | 6.5 |
| Eyewitnesses | 48 | 6.8 | 76 | 12.7 | 3 | 2.2 |
| Persons involved in crash (driver/rider, victim) | 48 | 6.8 | 42 | 7.0 | 4 | 2.9 |
| Local government official | 44 | 6.2 | 24 | 4.0 | 4 | 2.9 |
| Business representative | 35 | 4.9 | 21 | 3.5 | 4 | 2.9 |
| Medical practitioners e.g doctor, paramedics, nurse | 27 | 3.8 | 26 | 4.3 | 5 | 3.6 |
| Professional driver | 25 | 3.5 | 16 | 2.7 | 3 | 2.2 |
| Civil society representatives (includes Red Cross and other local and international NGOs) | 24 | 3.4 | 20 | 3.3 | 9 | 6.5 |
| Experts e.g. independent researchers | 22 | 3.1 | 10 | 1.7 | 2 | 1.4 |
| Other central government officials | 20 | 2.8 | 20 | 3.3 | 4 | 2.9 |
| UNRA officials | 13 | 1.8 | 5 | 0.8 | 4 | 2.9 |
| Ministers | 12 | 1.7 | 19 | 3.2 | 3 | 2.2 |
| Members of Parliament | 10 | 1.4 | 48 | 8.0 | 6 | 4.3 |
| President | 5 | 0.7 | 1 | 0.2 | 1 | 0.7 |
| Politician or political operative | 4 | 0.6 | 4 | 0.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| KCCA officials | 2 | 0.3 | 6 | 1.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Religious representative | 2 | 0.3 | 4 | 0.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Speaker of Parliament | 1 | 0.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Military/security representative | 1 | 0.1 | 2 | 0.3 | 1 | 0.7 |
| Other | 3 | 0.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Total** | **710** | **100.0** | **600** | **100.0** | **138** | **100.0** |

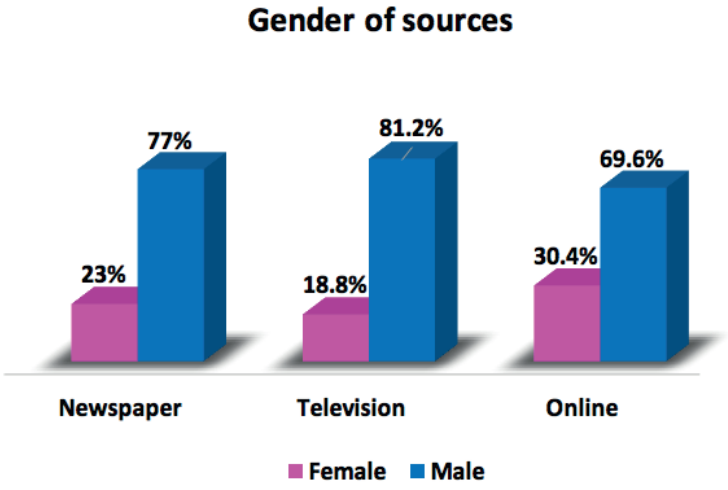
## Gender of sources

Men continued to dominate coverage of road safety, a pattern similar to what was observed in the baseline report. Online media quoted more female sources than newspapers and television.

One reporter attributed this disparity to the limited number of women at road crash scenes. "In the event of a road crash, fewer women rushed to the scene to see what has happened. Therefore, there are fewer female witnesses to interview," said a reporter at *The Observer*[33]. One journalist partly attributed this disparity to the dominance of men in positions of authority. "On average, most relevant offices such as the police are dominated by men. In the entire cycle, if you're looking for sources, most of the time, the people we interact with are mostly male. Statistics also show that there are more men on the road than women. Therefore, most victims who are sources will be male," a reporter at NBS TV said.[34] John Baptist Wasswa, a media trainer, blamed the limited use of female sources on laziness. "There must be policies in the newsroom that require us to balance gender in sourcing," he said. "Female sources must be looked for. I attribute this to laziness and stereotypes in newsrooms. If one woman declines to speak, it's the journalists' job to go and find another who is not encumbered."[35] It should also be noted that the dominance of male sources in the news is not unique to the road safety beat. ACME's report on the media coverage of the 2021 elections indicated that women constituted less than 20% of sources of news.[36] This means that ignoring female sources cuts across the coverage of public affairs issues in the Ugandan media.

**33** Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala
**34** Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala
**35** Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala
**36** ACME, Uganda Media Coverage of the 2021 elections. https://acme-ug.org/wp-content/uploads/Uganda-Media-Coverage-of-the-2021-Elections-DESIGNED-JANUARY-REPORT-_FINAL.pdf

**Fig. 9:** Gender of sources across the three media platforms




*New Vision* had a higher proportion of female sources than the other two publications.

**Table 15a:** Gender of sources by publication

| Gender of sources | Bukedde (n=301) | Daily Monitor (n=218) | New Vision (n=191) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 21.6 | 23.9 | 24.1 |
| Male | 78.4 | 76.1 | 75.9 |

UBC performed poorest in using women as sources in road safety coverage.

**Table 15b:** Gender of sources by television station

| Gender | NTV (n=251) | NBS (n=204) | UBC (n=145) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 19.9 | 19.1 | 16.6 |
| Male | 80.1 | 80.9 | 83.4 |

Three out of every 10 sources identified on TND News were women.

**Table 15c:** Gender of sources by online platform

| Gender of sources | ChimpReports (n=110) | TND News (n=28) |
|---|---|---|
| Female | 30.0 | 32.1 |
| Male | 70.0 | 67.9 |

## Multiplicity of sources

Reporting on road safety continued to use single sources a lot, especially among online stories, a trend similar to what was observed in the baseline report. Some 79.6% of online stores had either one or no source. One editor attributed this trend to reliance on police news releases about road crashes. "Media houses don't usually deploy at accident scenes; they prefer to rely on police statements hence the dominance of single-sourced stories," said an editor at ChimpReports.[37] More than 46% of newspaper stories on road safety used one or no source. Television stories were more likely to have three or more sources (48.7%) compared to newspapers (35.4%) and online platforms (6.2%).

**Table 16a:** Number of sources in road safety stories across three media platforms

| | Newspaper | | Television | | Online | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of sources** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** |
| No source | 22 | 7.0 | 5 | 2.2 | 13 | 11.5 |
| 1 source | 124 | 39.6 | 70 | 30.7 | 77 | 68.1 |
| 2 sources | 56 | 17.9 | 42 | 18.4 | 16 | 14.2 |
| 3 sources | 46 | 14.7 | 47 | 20.6 | 4 | 3.5 |
| 4 sources | 28 | 8.9 | 28 | 12.3 | 1 | 0.9 |
| 5 or more sources | 37 | 11.8 | 36 | 15.8 | 2 | 1.8 |
| **Total** | **313** | **100.0** | **228** | **100.0** | **113** | **100.0** |

*Bukedde* had the highest share of stories with one or no source (62.9%). *New Vision* had the highest proportion of stories with three or more sources (50.8%), followed by *Daily Monitor* (46.6%). All stories in *New Vision* had at least one source.

**Table 16b:** Number of sources in road safety stories by publication

| Number of sources | Bukedde (n=162) | Daily Monitor (n=88) | New Vision (n=63) |
|---|---|---|---|
| No source | 11.7 | 3.4 | 0.0 |
| 1 source | 51.2 | 30.7 | 22.2 |
| 2 sources | 13.6 | 19.3 | 27.0 |
| 3 sources | 7.4 | 26.1 | 17.5 |
| 4 sources | 5.6 | 8.0 | 19.0 |
| 5 or more sources | 10.5 | 12.5 | 14.3 |

NTV had the highest proportion of stories with three or more sources (56.5%) followed by NBS (44.6%). UBC had the highest percentage single-sourced stories (40.3%).

37 Key Informant Interview, April 2021, Kampala.

NTV and NBS did not carry any stories without sources.

**Table 16c:** Number of sources in road safety stories by television station

| Number of sources | NTV (n=92) | NBS (n=74) | UBC (n=62) |
|---|---|---|---|
| No source | 3.3 | 2.7 | 0.0 |
| 1 source | 20.7 | 35.1 | 40.3 |
| 2 sources | 19.6 | 17.6 | 17.7 |
| 3 sources | 31.5 | 8.1 | 19.4 |
| 4 sources | 10.9 | 12.2 | 14.5 |
| 5 or more sources | 14.1 | 24.3 | 8.1 |

Majority of the road safety stories published by the online platforms had single sources. Seven out of every 10 road safety stories on ChimpReports and one in every two stories on TND News used one source.

**Table 16d:** Number of sources in road safety stories by online platform

| Number of sources | ChimpReports (n=95) | TND News (n=18) |
|---|---|---|
| No source | 10.5 | 16.7 |
| 1 source | 71.6 | 50.0 |
| 2 sources | 13.7 | 16.7 |
| 3 sources | 3.2 | 5.6 |
| 4 sources | 0.0 | 5.6 |
| 5 or more sources | 1.1 | 5.6 |

# ACME TRAINING PROJECT AND ITS IMPACT

Over the last 18 months of this project, ACME has trained 30 journalists in effective ways of reporting road safety. The training was offered in two cohorts of 15 participants each. Trainees were recruited through a public call to journalists interested in reporting road safety issues. As part of the application process, applicants were required to pitch a story idea they would work on during the training. The training was facilitated by in-house ACME trainers and guest speakers who are subject matter experts from government entities such as Ministry of Works and Transport and Kampala Capital City Authority, and local and international NGOs such as Hope for Victims of Traffic Accidents and Bloomberg Initiative for Global Road Safety. As part of the training, participants went on field trips where they studied the different aspects of road usage and the nature and structure of roads. Participants also worked on reporting projects, producing several news reports on road safety.

In the very least, the number of stories on road safety produced by the trained reporters increased. In one of the evaluations, we noted that 88% of participants were producing less than six stories on road safety per year before undergoing training. After attending training at ACME, the number of journalists who were writing six or fewer stories reduced to 43%. And most of them said that the quantity and quality of stories they wrote after the training had significantly improved. The reporters testified that after the training, they wrote stories that elicited engagement and action from authorities and citizens. For example, one reporter said:

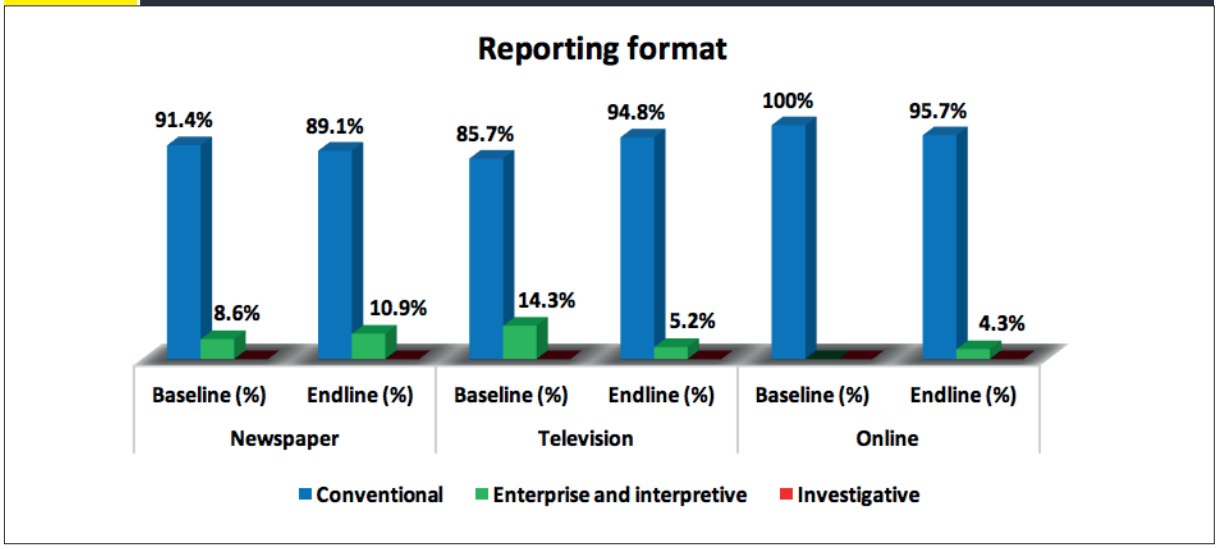
> "I did a story about the plight of persons with disabilities on the road. I started receiving phone calls from road safety activists applauding me for the piece and were willing to give me more story ideas. (I produced other stories from those) organizations that advocate the rights of persons with disabilities. I also shared the story, tagging responsible ministries and organizations [which elicited engagement about action] on social media. In addition, Makerere University School of Public Health (TRIAD) recognized the story, and I got a certificate."

Another journalist reported that due to the training, "the authorities in my area [of] Mbarara City came up with strict laws against those that vandalise road signage. Secondly, after the training, my supervisor created time for educating the masses on TV about road safety."

Despite these and many other positive testimonies obtained because of the ACME intervention through training of journalists, there is still a long way to go to improve the quality of media reporting on road safety across the media industry. The data shows that there is only a slight improvement between the baseline and endline reports. We need to point out that whereas our studies are based on nationwide media reports on road safety, our training on road safety has only covered a small number of journalists. This partly explains why there is only a small improvement after the training. Many other journalists remained untrained. Secondly, improvements in the quality and quantity of news reports sometimes take time. Some changes require structural adjustments within newsrooms to take effect. We believe that the impact of our training will continue to be felt as our trainees educate their peers and editors about road safety. Scaling up training, to include editors as well, will go a long way.

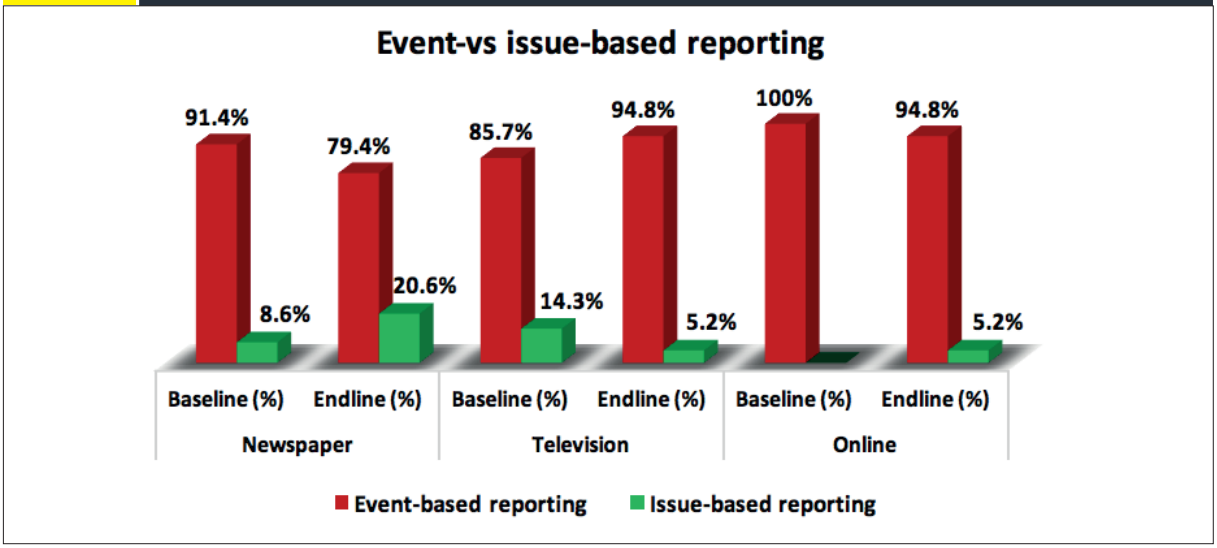
The percentage of newspaper stories reported with the enterprise format increased from 8.6% in the baseline to 10.9% in this endline report while online stories grew from zero to 4.3% in the same period.

**Fig. 10:** Baseline vs endline reporting format



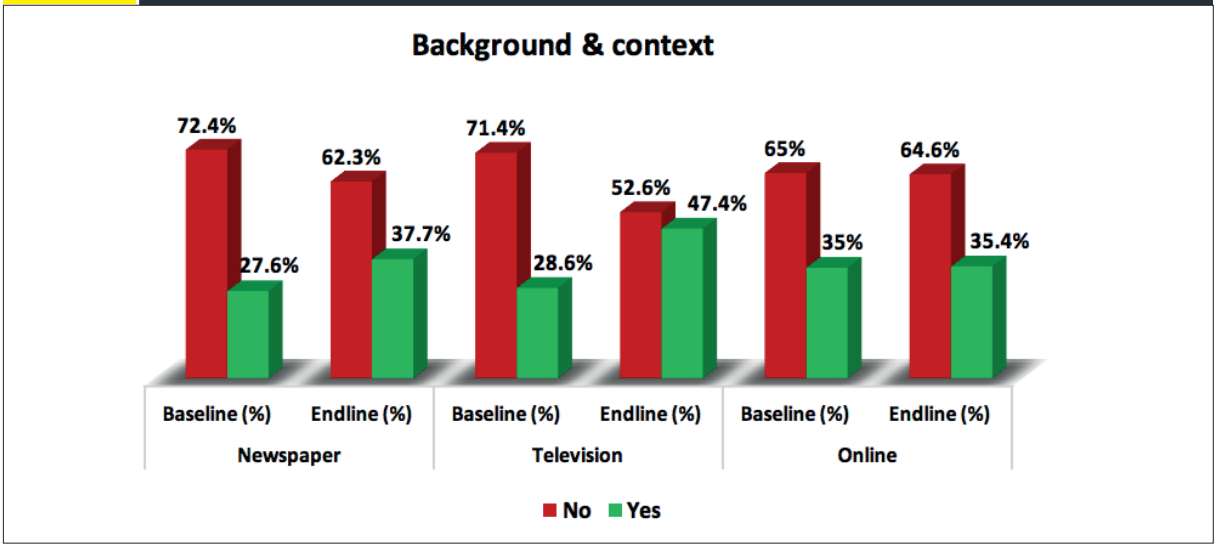

Newspapers registered growth in issue-based stories from 8.6% in the baseline to 20.6% in the endline report while online stories grew from zero to 5.2% in the same period.

**Fig. 11:** Baseline vs endline reporting type



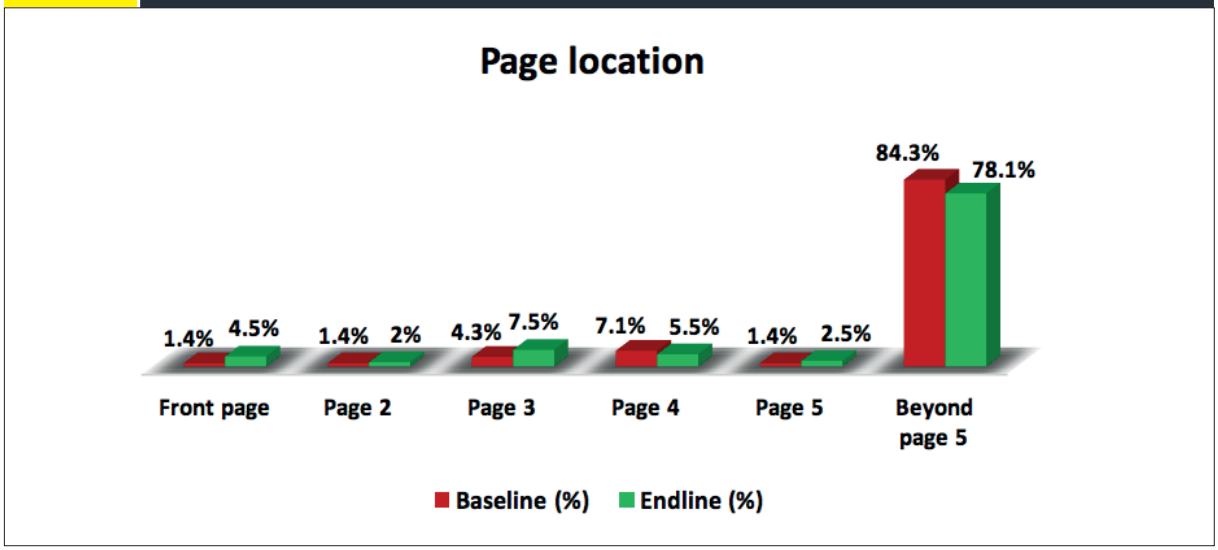

Newspapers and television registered an increase in road safety stories that contained background and context between the baseline and endline report from 27.6% to 37.7% and 28.6% to 47.4% respectively.

**Fig. 12:** Baseline vs endline background & context



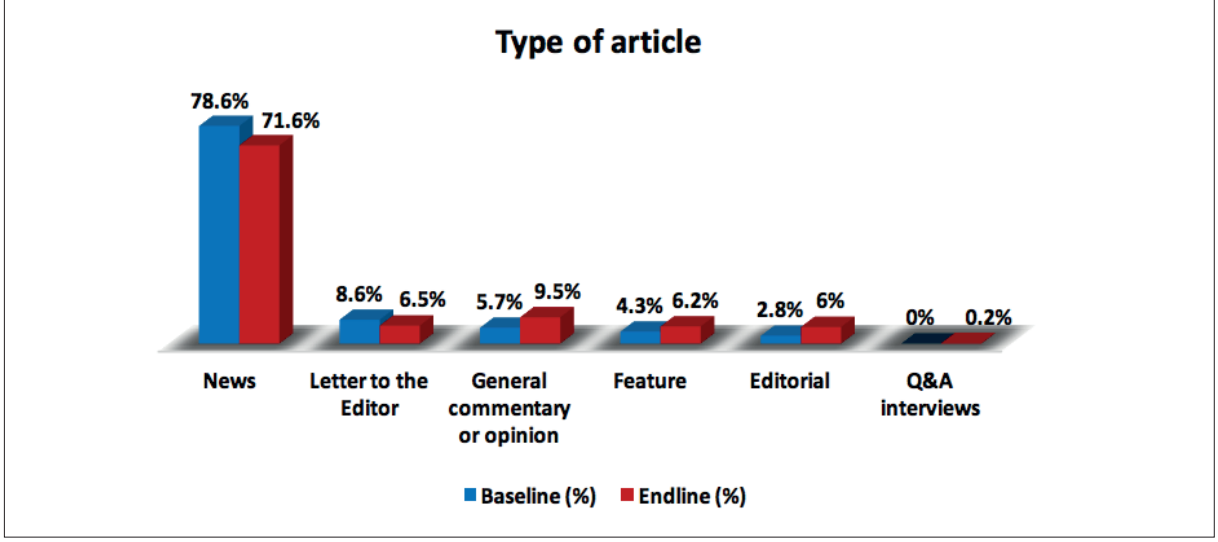

The number of stories appearing on page 5 or beyond reduced from 84% in the baseline to 78% in the endline report.

**Fig. 13:** Baseline vs endline page location




There was a marked growth in the number of commentary or opinions (from 5.7% in the baseline to 9.5% in the endline report), features (growing from 4.3% in the baseline to 6.2% in the endline report) and editorials (growing from 2.8% in the baseline to 6% in this endline report).

**Fig. 14:** Baseline vs endline type of article



# CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show a sharp increase in the volume of road safety coverage in May. The increased coverage is attributed to the fatal crash involving a bus owned by Link Bus Company that took place on 4 May 2022, along Fort Portal–Kyenjojo road and the immediate government response to it. This incident demonstrates a direct relationship between the number of stories broadcast/published and the number of road crashes occurring at any given time. This points to the reactive nature of media reporting, heavily reliant on events across all media platforms.

The findings of this study also show that the nature and quality of coverage of road safety issues did not significantly differ from what was observed in the baseline report. Previous findings, such as the predominance of 'hard news,' event-based reporting, and single and gender imbalanced sourcing, remained evident in the current study. Journalists, editors, and media trainers have attributed the current nature of road safety stories to a lack of experienced journalists, resources, training, and diligence on the part of journalists. There were observable differences in the quality of reporting done by the different media platforms, with newspapers and private television stations standing out. UBC and the two online platforms monitored performed poorly on key news reporting quality indicators, such as using multiple sources, background, and event-based reporting. The report has showed that the media in Uganda does not treat road traffic crashes and road safety as serious public policy issues. Many stories related to road safety are either relegated to pages beyond page five in newspapers or sometimes unreported. The lack of enterprise stories also means that road safety issues only become newsworthy when a fatal road traffic crash occurs. This form of reporting denies citizens the ability to put events and developments in this sector into proper perspective. A less informed citizenry is less likely to push authorities to enact and enforce policies and laws that can help make Uganda's road safer for all users.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, we recommend the following:

1. Given the negative consequences of road crashes, journalists and media organisations should deliberately make efforts to highlight road safety as an important public policy issue regardless of whether there is a road crash. This would go a long way in spotlighting some of the causative aspects of road traffic crashes. One way this can be achieved is to do more proactive educational reporting instead of waiting for crashes.
2. Whereas the number of practicing journalists with a degree in journalism has significantly risen over the last 10 years to [38], there seems to be a mismatch between the quality of journalism and the academic qualifications that journalists possess. This calls for continuous on-job professional training for journalists to appreciate issues about road safety. This is particularly important because of the high turnover of journalists across all media platforms in Uganda.
3. Media organisations need to commit more resources to boost the coverage of road safety. Some of these resources may include having reporters specialise in covering road safety (making it a beat just like environment or business) and allowing journalists more time to conduct thematic news coverage on the subject. As is evident in the findings of this study, newspapers, which traditionally commit more resources to support newsrooms tended to turn in slightly better-quality stories than TV and online.
4. Journalists should make deliberate efforts to include female sources in their stories so that the media coverage of road safety reflects both male and female perspectives. Although women may not constitute most of the primary victims of road crashes, they are also significantly affected by the short and long-term effects of such crashes.
5. Government officials from the Ministry of Works and Transport, local government, and related agencies should increase their interaction with journalists on road safety issues by making themselves available through interviews, regular press conferences, and other meetings to highlight the subject.

38 ACME, A portrait of Ugandan journalists in turbulent times. https://acme-ug.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Journalists-Survey-Report-for-Web-upload.pdf

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