

RESEARCH PAPER

ABIDJAN BUS RAPID TRANSIT AND METRO

LABOUR IMPACT ASSESSMENT
RESEARCH REPORT



UNIVERSITÉ
ALASSANE OUATTARA



This is the report of research commissioned by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) from the Global Labour Institute (GLI) in Manchester, UK and Université Alassane Ouattara (Côte d'Ivoire). It considers the potential impact of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Metro systems on the livelihoods and working conditions of those dependent on Abidjan's urban transport industry, particularly those employed in the informal economy.

In May 2022, a research team of trade union representatives undertook questionnaire surveys among 529 workers (450 men and 79 women) in the Abidjan transport industry.

The surveys were designed to capture data on the workforce in the context of the development of BRT and Metro in Abidjan. The interviews were designed to build a profile of workforce demographics, occupations, work experience and qualifications, employment terms and relationships, working hours and conditions, earnings and major issues experienced at work. It also aimed to determine the level of workers' awareness of BRT and Metro.

The street surveys were accompanied by a sequence of focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews, designed to provide further insight into the livelihoods and key issues faced by transport workers, issues facing the Abidjan passenger transport system, ideas for improvements and reform, and attitudes towards the introduction of BRT.

The fieldwork was accompanied by desk research to identify policies and analysis of BRT and Metro, its introduction to Abidjan, and the question of community and workforce engagement in consultation, planning and implementation.

This project is the third BRT Labour Impact Assessment undertaken on behalf of the ITF. The first, completed in January 2019, was carried out in Nairobi by GLI in partnership with the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Nairobi. The second, completed in January 2020 was in Dakar by GLI in partnership with the Cheikh Anta Diop University. The reports, and other relevant GLI publications are available at <https://www.gli-manchester.net/informal-transport>

The research is a contribution to the ITF's Our Public Transport (OPT) programme. The ITF works with transport unions in target cities to strengthen the voice of workers in the development of BRT systems and to negotiate the transition from informal to formal work. See <https://www.itfglobal.org/en/sector/urban-transport/bus-rapid-transit> for further information and resources.

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GLOSSARY

AFD: Agence Française de Développement

AGEROUTE: Agence de Gestion des Routes

AGETU: Agence des Transports Urbains (Urban Transport Agency) 2000-2014.

AMUGA: Autorité de la Mobilité Urbaine dans le Grand Abidjan

Apprenti: a conductor or that person who helps the driver

ARTI: Autorité de Régulation du Transport Intérieur

CFA Franc: currency used in eight West African countries, including Côte d'Ivoire and six Central African countries. At the time of writing, 1,000 CFA Franc is the approximate equivalent of USD 1.53.

CITEF: Comité Intersyndical pour la Transition vers l'Economie Formelle en Côte d'Ivoire

CNGR-CI: Coordination Nationale des Gares Routières de Côte d'Ivoire (National Coordination of Côte d'Ivoire Bus Stations)

CNPS: Caisse nationale de prévoyance sociale de Côte d'Ivoire (National Social Security Fund of Côte d'Ivoire)

COSYNCI: Collectif des Syndicats des Chauffeurs de Yopougon

Contractuel / L'américain: the third driver who can be called upon to drive when the official or relief drivers are attending to other issues.

Dêguê: Sweet dish made of wheat or millet mixed with milk

Embauché: relief / second driver

FENSC-CI: Fédération Nationale des Syndicats de Chauffeurs de Côte d'Ivoire. It is a communal and national structure

Gbâkâs: informal minibus services with 14-32 seats

Gnambros: people who collect fees from drivers in stations, often threatening or using violence.

Guichetier: money-changer

MUGCP-CEDEAO: Mutuelle Générale des Chauffeurs Professionnels de la CEDEAO

Patente: licence

Pinasses: traditional wooden ferries

PMUA: Abidjan Urban Mobility Project

Private metered taxi services: red or orange vehicles with meters

Recette: see Target

Salonis: informal three-wheeled taxis

SCTCI: Syndicat des Conducteurs de Taxi de Côte d'Ivoire (members include drivers of metered and non-metered taxis)

SICTA: Société Ivoirienne des Contrôles Techniques Automobiles et Industriels (road worthiness licensing)

SOTRA: Société des Transports Abidjanais

STAR: Société de Transports Abidjanais sur Rail

SYACPRO-CI: Syndicat Autonome des Conducteurs Professionnels et Routiers / Syndicat Autonome des Conducteurs Professionnels de Côte d'Ivoire.

SYNTRARAIL: Syndicat des Travailleurs du Rail

SYNTRAS: Syndicat des Travailleurs de la SOTRA (Société des transports d'Abidjan). SYNTRAS covers Greater Abidjan (Abidjan, Bassam, Dabou, Anyama, Bonoua, Assinie)

Target: daily fees paid by drivers to vehicle owners

Taxi clandestin: passenger unmarked vehicles operating on fixed lines between communes without meters (prohibited)

Tianboros: old Gbâkâ and taxi vehicles that failed inspection (technically prohibited)

Tontine: Merry-go-round saving scheme

UFATPCI: Union des Fondateurs et Acteurs du Transport Privé de Cocody.

UFESC-CO: Union des Fédérations et des Syndicats de Chauffeurs de Cocody.

USA SO: Union des Agents de la SOTRA

USCCO: Union des Syndicats Chauffeurs de Cocody

Vignette: motor vehicle tax

VTCs (Véhicule de Transport avec Chauffeur): vehicles using app-based ride-hailing platforms, such as Yango, Uber, Mon Woyo, and Treize Taxi

Wôro-wôros: 3-5-seater shared taxis, colour coded according to their authorised commune of operation

INTRODUCTION

In common with many other large cities, Abidjan faces major problems in passenger transport, most of which is in the informal economy. Services are frequently slow and unreliable. The roads are congested and poorly maintained. Most services are provided by numerous gbâkâs (minibuses) and wôro-wôros (taxis), mostly old environmentally harmful vehicles operating on a target ('la recette') system that encourages dangerously long working hours and on-street competition between drivers.

BRT and Metro systems offer the prospect of more efficient, cleaner, and faster passenger transport. At the same time, they potentially threaten the livelihoods of thousands of people who currently depend on the employment provided by the informal transport industry, whether directly as drivers or conductors ('mates'), or indirectly in the stations and numerous service occupations.

There is now considerable experience in cities across the whole of Africa in attempts to introduce BRT. Very few have come to fruition beyond feasibility studies and proposals. Those that achieve operation have mostly failed to meet full BRT standards or face financial difficulties. There are several underlying reasons for this, including poor government capacity, unsustainable business models (e.g., profit-making operations without state subsidy) and/or failure to take the political economy of urban transport into consideration. But one major factor has been the failure of transport planning authorities to consider the potential impact of major projects such as BRT and Metro on the informal workforce or to include their representatives in the planning process¹.

Nevertheless, if the authorities adopt an integrated approach which considers informal services to be part of a broader city-wide transport system alongside BRT, Metro, and other services, and recognise the need to mitigate against substantial loss of employment, there are opportunities for the

incremental transition and formalisation of public transport, based on the inclusion of the informal workforce through consultation and negotiation with democratically accountable representatives.

This reform of informal transport services requires a much deeper understanding of how the informal transport economy works in practice.

This labour impact assessment therefore attempts to build a comprehensive understanding of the composition and characteristics of the workforce, the issues that workers face in their day-to-day work, and detailed illustrations of the micro-economy, as well as an attempt to estimate the number of livelihoods in the transport industry at risk or to be created through the introduction of BRT and Metro.

The Labour Impact Assessment was undertaken on behalf of the ITF by the Global Labour Institute in partnership with researchers from the Université Alassane Ouattara and four trade unions in Côte d'Ivoire:

- Syndicat des Travailleurs du Rail (SYNTRARAIL)
- Syndicat des Travailleurs de la SOTRA (SYNTRAS)
- Syndicat des Conducteurs de Taxi de Côte d'Ivoire (SCTCI)
- Syndicat Autonome des Conducteurs Professionnels et Routiers (SYACPRO-CI)

The objective is to understand the potential impact of both BRT and Metro projects. Inevitably however, the emphasis is on BRT, due to the more direct impact of the proposed BRT system on current informal fleets of vehicles, and the very low awareness of BRT among informal workers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In common with previous Labour Impact Assessments (Nairobi, Dakar, Kampala, Accra), the methodology is based on the active participation of trade unions and other associations in the planning and delivery of the research, supported by locally based professional researchers.

Each union nominated representatives to form a Steering Committee which provided oversight of the research. The unions nominated a team of twelve volunteers, including four women, to undertake the questionnaire survey. This ensured that the survey was undertaken by people who knew the industry from the inside, were more likely to be trusted by the workers being interviewed, and thus more likely to provide accurate and honest answers. It ensured that the unions and their members had a sense of ownership of the results of the research. It also provided the unions with an opportunity for the development of their own capacity by gaining new research skills and experience.

PLANNING WORKSHOP

The research was preceded by a two-day workshop and meetings with stakeholders during 7th to 11th of March in Abidjan which introduced the unions to the proposed research programme.

The workshop was attended by representatives of the participating unions, along with the ITF and guests from:

- Transport Workers Union of Kenya (TAWU- K)
- Union des Routiers du Sénégal (URS)
- Comité Intersyndical pour la Transition vers l'Economie Formelle en Côte d'Ivoire (CITEF-CI)

- Fédération des Travailleuses et Travailleurs de l'Economie Informelle de Côte d'Ivoire (FETTEI-CI)

The workshop introduced the project, provided an overview of BRT and Metro systems and enabled the union representatives from Dakar and Nairobi to share their experiences of previous BRT Labour Impact Assessments.

Participants then undertook some introductory fieldwork in Cocody and Adjamé bus stations, to learn more about the trades, livelihoods, working conditions and problems faced by the workers.

The fieldwork was followed by a panel discussion with the Directeur de la Planification, des Etudes et Projets at the Autorité de la Mobilité Urbaine dans le Grand Abidjan (AMUGA), who provided an overview of BRT and Metro in Abidjan.

The workshop concluded with in-depth discussions about trade union policy on the opportunities and challenges presented by BRT and Metro, followed by consultation and discussion of the planned research and the establishment of the Steering Committee of trade union representatives to oversee the programme.

During and after the planning workshop, discussions were held with the Directeur Général and staff of AMUGA; the Chief of Staff at the Ministry of Transport, and the Resident Representative of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Consultations were also held with the national trade union centres: Union Générale des Travailleurs de Côte d'Ivoire (UGTCI), Fédération des Syndicats Autonomes de Côte d'Ivoire (FESACI) and Centrale Syndicale Humanisme (CSH).

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Statistical data was collected through a questionnaire survey among drivers and apprentices, station workers, and service workers at strategic points along the planned BRT Metro routes.

The questionnaire was adapted from previous questionnaires used in other Labour Impact Assessments, most notably in Dakar in 2019, amended to meet local circumstances and the outcomes of pilot surveys. It also had to reflect the inclusion of Metro as well as BRT projects.

The questionnaire was designed to gather data on workforce demographics, occupations, vehicle ownership, livelihoods and operating costs, employment relationships, issues faced at the workplace, and awareness and attitudes towards BRT and Metro projects (see Appendix).

Overall, it was hoped that the questionnaire would provide the foundations for a detailed understanding of Abidjan’s informal transport economy, to be supplemented by focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, technical data from other sources (vehicle licensing etc), interviews with stakeholders, and direct observations made on the BRT/Metro routes.

The survey was introduced with a **training workshop** for the team of interviewers and researchers on 6-8 May, led by Dr Armand Djah with Sibailly Douhoure and John Mark Mwanika. The workshop provided practical training in the use of the software used for the questionnaire, and a detailed introduction to the questionnaire itself and surveying methodology.

This was followed by pilot surveys at the Carrefour la Vie and the Riviera II stations and subsequent modification of the questionnaires and practical arrangements for a reliable and efficient field survey.

The full survey was undertaken between 9 to 15 May, by four teams, each with three trade union nominees supported by a professional researcher.

Over this period, surveys were conducted throughout Abidjan among drivers and apprentices, station workers and service workers.

The sample size was based on the “normal distribution law” which states that in the absence of a sampling frame on a given population, a sample of 30 individuals can be surveyed (Djeket, 2018, p.55).

The surveys began each day at 9 a.m. and ended at 3 p.m. with an average of 15 to 20 people surveyed for 15 to 30 minutes of discussion.

The data was subsequently organised and processed in the form of statistical, graphic, and cartographic analysis.

Software used for the project included *Sphinx* for the questionnaire, *KoboCollect* for surveys, *SPSS* for data processing, and *QGIS 2.18* for maps.

A total of 529 questionnaires were completed, of which nearly 15% were interviews with women and 43% with people under the age of 35.

Figure 1: Completed Questionnaire Interviews

COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE INTERVIEWS		
Men	450	85.07%
Women	79	14.93%
Total	529	100.00%
Interviewees over 35 years	301	56.90%
Interviewees under 35 years	228	43.10%
Total	529	100.00%
Men under 35 years	189	82.89%
Women under 35 years	39	17.11%
Total	228	100.00%
BRT Route	327	61.81%
Metro Route	202	38.19%
Total	529	100.00%

327 questionnaires were completed along four sampling points of the proposed BRT route, and 202 completed along seven sampling points of the Metro.

Figure 2: Distribution of sample by site and gender

SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY COMMUNE		
BRT Route		
Adjame	25	8%
Bingerville	42	13%
Cocody	147	45%
Yopougon	113	35%
Total	327	100%
Men	280	86%
Women	47	14%
Total	327	100%
Metro Route		
Abobo	42	21%
Adjame	58	29%
Anyama	29	14%
Marcory	10	5%
Plateau	21	10%
Port-Bouët	16	8%
Treichville	26	13%
Total	202	100%
Men	170	84%
Women	32	16%
Total	202	100%

A target had been agreed to complete questionnaires with between 500 and 600 workers, of whom 50% were to be on-board crews, 25% to be station workers and 25% service workers. Of the 529 completed questionnaires, 43% were with on-board crews, 20% station workers and 37% service workers.

Figure 3: Distribution of sample by workforce

	BRT Route	Metro Route	Total	%
On-board crews	142	86	228	43%
Station workers	71	36	107	20%
Service workers	114	80	194	37%
Total	327	202	529	100%

Figure 4: On-board crew vehicles

TYPE OF VEHICLE	BRT ROUTE		METRO ROUTE		TOTAL	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Gbaka / Hiace / massa	55	31%	49	53%	104	39%
Wôro-wôro (municipal taxi)	71	40%	15	16%	86	32%
Inter-municipal taxi (Toyota Picnic, unmarked taxi)	43	24%	24	26%	67	25%
Private metered taxis	6	3%	4	4%	10	4%
Personal bus	1	1%	0	0%	1	0%
Train	0	0%	1	1%	1	0%
Total	176	100%	93	100%	269	100%



OCCUPATIONS

Of the 529 workers interviewed, 227 were on-board crew members, 106 were station workers, and 196 were service workers.

Figure 5: Occupations

	Men		Women		Total	
On-board crews						
Driver	197	87%	0	0%	197	87%
Apprentice	30	13%	0	0%	30	13%
Total on-board crews	227	100%	0	0%	227	100%
Station workers						
Agent syndical	40	40%	3	50%	43	41%
Chargeur	19	19%	0	0%	19	18%
Chef de gare	18	18%	0	0%	18	17%
Délégué syndicat	13	13%	0	0%	13	12%
Clerk (Guichetier)	7	7%	2	33%	9	8%
Insurance agent	1	1%	1	17%	2	2%
Coxeur	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
Gnambro	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
Total station workers	100	100%	6	100%	106	100%
Service workers						
Vendor	44	36%	63	86%	107	55%
Mechanic	30	24%	2	3%	32	16%
Vulcanisateur (tyre mender)	14	11%	2	3%	16	8%
Auto electrician	7	6%	0	0%	7	4%
Ferrailleur (Spare parts dealer)	5	4%	2	3%	7	4%
Ferronnier (metalworker)	5	4%	0	0%	5	3%
Sheet metal worker	3	2%	0	0%	3	2%
Décorateur	2	2%	0	0%	2	1%
Administrative staff	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
Others*	12	10%	4	5%	16	8%
Total service workers	123	100%	73	100%	196	100%
Total survey respondents	450		79		529	

*Others include Calligrapher, Public Toilet Manager, Car Wash Manager, Wheel balancer, Radiator Repairer, Welder, Glazier

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Of the 529 workers interviewed, 227 were on-board crew members, 106 were station workers, and 196 were service workers.

Focus group discussions were held in four Abidjan communes: Yopougon, Adjamé, Abobo and Cocody.

The focus groups were jointly led by Sibailly Dohoure, John Mark Mwanika, Assita Ouedraogo, Dr Armand Djah, Konan Aya Suzanne and Flora Sandrine Akafou (interpreter).

These focus groups involved gbâkâ, wôro-wôro and Yango drivers in Adjamé Texaco Renault, Koumassi, Terminus 81 and Adjamé RAN.

In addition, women’s focus groups were organised in Riviera 2, Adjamé Texaco Renault and Adjamé RAN as well as mechanics, shippers, ticket agents from Adjamé RAN and a car park manager from Abobo Doumé participated in these discussion sessions. Focus groups addressed four main themes:

- Difficulties and issues faced at work
- Awareness and opinions on BRT
- Potential impacts of the BRT project on their work
- Practical proposals to solve the problems of Abidjan’s passenger transport system

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The data on livelihoods provided through the questionnaire interviews could only provide a very rough broad indication of livelihoods, given the time available and survey environment.

The survey data was therefore supplemented by the results of longer in-depth interviews with a smaller number of workers (and vehicle owners), each conducted over 60 to 90 minutes in a quiet and undisturbed setting. The interviews were led by John Mark Mwanika (GLI).

The objective was to provide some realistic illustrations of the typical livelihoods and profitability of drivers and owners. It was not attempting to be a fully representative scientific survey, but rather a snapshot of how the informal micro-economy functions day-to-day.

The in-depth interviews were based on a spreadsheet template, attempting to record typical operating costs and income of drivers and owners of gbâkâs and wôro-wôros: ‘target drivers’ - drivers working on the ‘target’ system where a daily fee (*recette*) has to be paid to the vehicle owner; ‘owner-drivers’ - drivers who own their own vehicle; and ‘owners’ – those who own more than one vehicle, and make a living from target payments.

In total, twenty-seven interviews were completed among twelve gbâkâ and fifteen wôro-wôro owners and drivers.

Figure 6. Completed in-depth interviews

COMPLETED IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS		
Gbakas	Target Drivers	5
	Owner-drivers	4
	Owners	3
Wôro-wôros	Target Drivers	5
	Owner-drivers	6
	Owners	4
Total		27

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Throughout the project, meetings were held with a range of organisations to introduce and discuss the project, learn about roles and perspectives in the development of Abidjan’s passenger transport operations and collect data and publications.

These meetings and interviews helped inform the design and delivery of the research, frame the policy questions, and provide insights into the issues involved in the introduction of BRT and Metro systems in Abidjan.

Figure 7. Stakeholder interviews

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS	
Autorité de la Mobilité Urbaine dans le Grand Abidjan (AMUGA)	09 March 2022
Autorité de Régulation du Transport Intérieur (ARTI)	16 May 2022
Centrale Syndicale Humanisme (CSH).	10 March 2022
Comité Intersyndical pour la Transition vers l'Economie Formelle (CITEF)	15 May 2022
Fédération des Syndicats Autonomes de Côte d'Ivoire (FESACI)	11 March 2022
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)	07 March 2022
International Labour Organisation (ILO)	01 July 2022
Ministry of Transport	11 March 2022
Union Générale des Travailleurs de Côte d'Ivoire (UGTCI)	10 March 2022
World Bank	04 April 2022



BUS RAPID TRANSIT AND METRO

All over the world, and in particular the Global South, major cities face a crisis in urban passenger transport.

According to the World Bank, transport is fundamental to supporting economic growth, creating jobs, and connecting people to essential services such as healthcare or education. But in many countries, the benefits are not being realised².

“One billion people still live more than 2km away from an all-weather road, where lack of access is inextricably linked to poverty. One in six women globally do not look for jobs out of fear of harassment in transit. Road crashes claim over 1.35 million lives every year, 93% of them in developing countries”.

World Bank Transport Overview

Most sub-Saharan Africa cities, including Abidjan, experience very congested and over-stretched road transport, following decades of neglect and under-investment, with most – if not all – public passenger transport operating within the informal economy. This has a severe impact on the economy and livelihoods of the population as a whole, although it provides essential employment for many thousands of people who work in the informal transport industry.

There is also an urgent need to reduce the climate impact of transport. The World Bank states that domestic and international transport already contribute 20% of global Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. As populations, economies, and the need for mobility grow, GHG emissions from transport could increase by as much as 60% by 2050 if left unchecked.

Governments and transport authorities, supported by the World Bank and other international financial institutions, are therefore investing in large-scale transport infrastructure projects designed to improve capacity and reliability in congested cities and reduce carbon emissions. These include projects to build and operate Bus Rapid Transit and Metro (light rail) systems.

BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)

BRT is based on dedicated road lanes that cannot be used by vehicles other than large buses operated by BRT companies. BRT involves building new roads, interchanges, terminals, and modern stations along the routes. It is, in essence, a light rail system, but one using buses rather than trains.

Major cities are encouraged by the World Bank and national governments to adopt BRT. They believe that BRT will ease congestion, increase efficiency, and reduce air pollution.

There are some complex factors involved in determining what constitutes a recognisable BRT system, including service planning, infrastructure, station design, communications and integration with pedestrians and other transport systems.

The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) developed a BRT standard, a worldwide evaluation tool to determine BRT best practice. According to ITDP³, the five essential elements in BRT include:

- physically separated bus lanes that allow buses to avoid congestion
- stations and bus lanes aligned to the centre of the street to avoid being delayed by turning vehicles and vehicles dropping off passengers or goods
- fares collected off the bus, to avoid delays caused by passengers paying on board
- boarding from a platform level with the bus floor to make boarding faster and more accessible

- turn restrictions and bus priority at intersections to reduce delay at intersections from red signals

THE LOGIC BEHIND BRT

Over the last few decades, governments have been unable to provide adequate public transport services and have found it difficult to regulate the informal transport industry, which has led to an over-supply of vehicles, with the consequence of congestion and on-street competition. The lack of investment into new more efficient vehicles leads to bad air pollution. Moreover, the transport workers have to compete with one another for passengers, suffering unsafe conditions, long working hours, and precarious and unpredictable incomes.

There is a need for the fundamental restructuring of public transport.

Transport planners are concerned with three main objectives:

01. Remove competition from the street. This requires regulation of bus and taxi services, and regular wages for the workforce rather than the 'target system' / 'recette' (see below).

02. Reduce pollution and congestion. This requires new and well-maintained fleets of large-capacity and energy-efficient vehicles. But most small owners cannot afford large, environmentally compliant vehicles
03. To integrate the system between different routes and modes of transport, where passengers can pay once for travel across the whole network. This requires a revenue-sharing mechanism between vehicle owners and transport companies.

Most governments only consider three options for the reorganisation of public transport:

- light rail or tram systems, but the infrastructure is expensive
- radical regulatory measures to curb the use of private cars, but this is often thought of as politically impossible
- BRT

BRT is the preferred option for many cities because the capital cost of building the BRT infrastructure (road construction, stations, buses etc) is thought to be a third or even a tenth of the cost of building a light rail system. BRT can also be implemented rapidly.

BRT AND METRO IN ABIDJAN

Abidjan is the largest city in Côte d'Ivoire, with a population of over 5.3 million inhabitants. The passenger transport system is key for inhabitants to get across the city for work, but currently passengers spend an average of three hours on transport each day⁴. Passenger transport makes up 80% of all daily motorised trips in Abidjan, three-quarters of which are operated by informal service providers^{5 6}.

Since the 1980s Abidjan's passenger transport has been characterised by the growth and dominance of the informal economy in transport. In 2000, the Ministry of Transport set up the Abidjan's Urban Transport Agency (AGETU - Agence des Transports Urbains) a state body to oversee Abidjan Public Transport Company (SOTRA - Société des Transports Abidjanais) and informal operators⁷. In 2014 AGETU, long criticised for inefficiency and marred with problems, was dissolved as part of government reforms to the transport system.

In 2020, the Ministry of Transport created the Autorité de la mobilité urbaine dans le Grand Abidjan (AMUGA) to oversee urban transport system in Abidjan and its suburbs. The authority oversees, the Abidjan Urban Mobility Project (PMUA), a project for the ongoing transformation of the Abidjan passenger transport system, including the construction of BRT and the Metro.

BRT

In 2016, the African Development Bank Group financed the Abidjan Urban Transport Project to develop urban transport infrastructure, facilities, and institutions, encourage economic activities and improve the quality of life for the population. The project resulted in a study on the feasibility of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in Abidjan⁸.

In 2016, the Swedish development finance institution Swedfund funded a feasibility study for the introduction of a new integrated public transport system in Abidjan⁹. In 2018, a resettlement plan was produced. In 2019, an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment was undertaken with support from the World Bank.

In June 2019, the World Bank, the main funder for the BRT, approved \$300 million for the **Abidjan Urban Mobility Project (PMUA)**¹⁰.

The project includes a public-private partnership to construct the East-West Bus Rapid Transit 20km corridor between Yopougon and Bingerville. The project also includes plans to strengthen the role of SOTRA, restructure the formal bus network and develop a North-South Metro line. In 2021 the World Bank stated the progression of the project was satisfactory despite major constraints including Covid-19 that affected original deadlines¹¹.

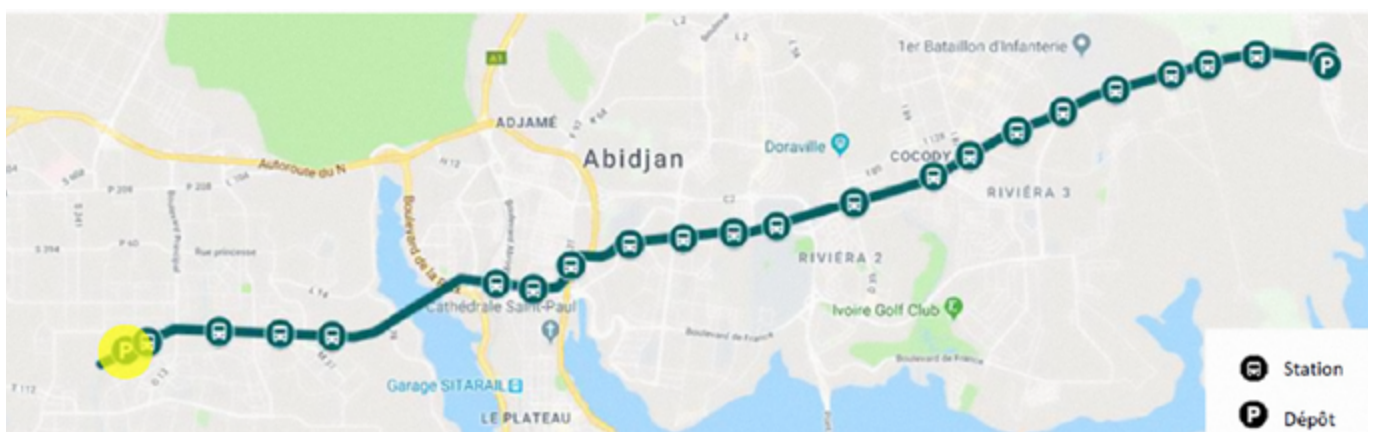


Figure 8. Map of proposed BRT routes and stations

Figure 9. Funding Breakdown for Abidjan Urban Mobility Project

PARTNER / SPONSOR	Contribution (million USD)	%
World Bank	300	56%
Other International Financial Institutions	100	19%
French Development Agency (AFD)	90	17%
Non-Government contributions	40	7%
Government of Ivory Coast	10	2%
Total	540	100%

Source: World Bank, June 2019¹²

At the end of 2019, Scania – the Swedish engine, bus, and truck manufacturer – signed an agreement with the Ministry of Transport and SOTRA to deliver 450 compressed gas (CNG) powered buses. The buses will partly be deployed on the BRT system¹³. In December 2021, 109 buses were sent to Abidjan via Scania’s bus producer Marcopolo, with the remaining buses delivered by July 2022¹⁴. Scania and SOTRA selected Trapeze Group to

implement an Intelligent Transport System (ITS) to help manage the new buses¹⁵.

In November 2021, the PMUA announced the finalisation of plans for the BRT with the tenders for the construction of the BRT advertised in early 2022, and construction work to begin by the end of 2022¹⁶. In May 2022, it was reported that a tender for the project had been awarded.

According to the Transport Ministry, by 2025, if successful, the BRT would consist of:

- 20 km long corridor between Yopougon (most populated municipality) and Bingerville.
- Segregated lanes in the median of the roadway.
- 22 stations approximately 700 meters apart.
- Off-board collection systems level with bus platforms.
- High-efficiency low-emissions buses with a capacity for 160 passengers.
- Tunnels (approx. 1km) and viaducts (approx. 3km).

It will be made up of two sections:

1. Yopougon-Adjamé, including a bridge,
- and 2. Adjamé-Bingerville passing through the François-Mitterrand Boulevard¹⁷.



Figure 10. Identified BRT feeder routes

Source: SETEC/TRANSITEC, Sept 2021. Etude de la Restructuration Globale du Réseau de Transport en Commun d'Abidjan

It is designed to improve urban mobility and provide safe, reliable, less polluting, and affordable transport, in particular, providing accessibility for women, the elderly and other vulnerable populations.

The authorities believe that the system will provide important new employment opportunities, linking the outlying and most populated areas with parts of the city offering employment, and claim that 600,000 additional jobs will become reachable within an hour's journey time¹⁸.

It was also hoped that it will lead to a more "professionalized" informal urban transport sector, and increased work opportunities for women, with a target of 30% of the BRT workforce to be women¹⁹.

METRO

The Abidjan Metro, first planned in 2017 for completion in 2022, is a rail transit of 37.4 km (23.3 miles) between North-South Abidjan and is expected to be operational by 2026²⁰. The budget for the construction of the metro is \$1,614 million funded exclusively by the French Development Agency (AFD: Agence Française de Développement). The metro will be run by the Society of Rail Transport in Abidjan (Société des Transports Abidjanais sur Rail, STAR). STAR is made up of four French companies:

Figure 11. STAR Member Companies²¹

PARTNER / SPONSOR	ROLES
Bouygues Travaux Public	Project leader
	Infrastructure
Alstom (replaced Hyundai)	Trains
	Signalling
	Systems
Colas Rail	Tracks
	Electrification
Keolis	Systems
	Operation maintenance

The metro will be a single mostly overground railway line between Anyama to Port-Bouët, with 18 stations linking seven municipalities. It will include the construction of 24 bridges, one viaduct over the Ebrié lagoon, eight underpasses, and 384 pedestrian footbridges.

The Metro's fleet will be 20 trains each with five carriages and will be supplied by Alstom²². It is expected to transport 540,000 passengers per day, and it is expected to generate 2,000 jobs²³. No information about the types of jobs or gender ratios has been released.

Construction work was scheduled to begin in 2020, however, resistance against land expropriation led to substantial delays, extensions, and an increase in budget²⁴. An estimated 10,000 people are being displaced by the construction of the metro line.

In January 2022, according to the Ministry of Transport, clearances and demolition were progressing, with 4km cleared of a total of 24km required in the North zone of Abidjan²⁵. In January 2023, it was reported that construction was underway on the metro line²⁶.

Figure 12. Abidjan Metro Route



THE PASSENGER ROAD TRANSPORT INDUSTRY IN ABIDJAN

FORMAL ECONOMY PASSENGER TRANSPORT IN ABIDJAN

Abidjan Public Transport Company (SOTRA)

The formal public transport operator in Abidjan is Société des Transports Abidjanais (SOTRA). The company is owned by the Ivorian government (60%), French-based company IRIS-BUS/IVECO (39%) and the District of Abidjan (1%)²⁷. An agreement between SOTRA and the Ivorian government grants SOTRA the exclusive market share of passenger transport

in Abidjan. It is supervised by the Ministry of Transport and the government provides some subsidies for certain categories of passengers (students, civil servants)²⁸. SOTRA's passenger transport share has decreased since the 2000s to 12% with 850,000 travellers per day²⁹. Since 2019 SOTRA has begun to expand its operations of buses and boat buses in Abidjan.

Buses: SOTRA operates 1500 buses across 128 urban lines in Abidjan. Bus rides cost between 200 and 500 CFA franc. Low speed (15km/h) and long waiting times of up to 30 minutes, longer than both Gbâkâs and Wôro-wôros, have resulted in low passenger numbers on the buses³⁰. There are two large bus stations (Plateau Sud and Adjamé Nord), nine smaller stations, and seven bus “departments” with garages and workshops. Since 2015 SOTRA replaced 1,200 buses, expanded its fleet by 300 buses, renewed garage equipment and retrained staff. SOTRA has around 6,000 employees of which around 4,500 are unionised across four different trade unions. In February 2022, SOTRA released a call for recruitment for new drivers³¹.





Boat Buses: SOTRA also runs Bateaux-bus / Monbato, boat ferries across the Ébrié lagoon. The boats are operated by SOTRA, as well as two private operators (Société de transport lagunaire and Citrans). SOTRA owns 20 boats in operation, each boat bus seats between 90-150 passengers³². The companies also operate ten lagoon water bus texacs (gares lagunaires).

The Société de Transport Langunaire (STL), a subsidiary of the SNEDAI group, operates 45 boats on the lagoon charging 500 CFA per a trip³³. The STL operates two lines: Riviera M'pouto-to-the Plateau and Abobo Doumé Plateau-Treichville with seven stations: Yopougou Azito, Abobo Doumé, Plateau, Treich-ville, Marcory INJS, M'pouto and Koumassi. STL estimates it transports 10,000 passengers daily across 100 trips³⁴. The other private operator is Aqualines, run by Citrans, operating seven boats with 240 places³⁵.

INFORMAL PASSENGER TRANSPORT IN ABIDJAN

In 2019, according to the Ministry of the Promotion of SMEs, Handicrafts and Transformation of the Informal Sector, informal employment represented 89.1% of total employment in Côte d'Ivoire. In 2022, the Ministry adopted the International Labour Organisation Recommendation (No. 204) on transition from an informal to a formal economy³⁶.

Informal passenger transport operations in Abidjan include:

Gbâkâs: informally operated minibus services with 14-32 seats. Vehicles are on average 15 years old and are usually Toyota, Isuzu or Mazda branded³⁷. It is estimated that there are between 5,600 - 10,000 Gbâkâ vehicles across Abidjan, carrying 1.16 million passengers, making up 33% of total daily trips across the city³⁸. In 1976 the Côte d'Ivoire government tried unsuccessfully to ban Gbâkâs due to



accidents and lack of regulation. Gbâkâs are authorised through a transport card system payable at a district level. This system, in theory, is enforced through inspections³⁹.

Gbâkâs cover authorised and unauthorised routes across communes citywide, including in areas where SOTRA is in theory the exclusive operator. For example, Gbâkâ routes overlap with SOTRA's routes in central Abidjan – although they are banned from Abidjan's central business district: the Plateau. They also serve the outlying municipalities. As SOTRA has proved unable to meet demands, Gbâkâs have continually expanded their routes⁴⁰. In November 2021 AMUGA announced plans to create specific operation zones for Gbâkâs in addition to greater regulation through police control as part of reforms linked to the *Projet Mobilité Urbaine d'Abidjan (PMUA)*⁴¹. The BRT system is likely to overlap with Gbâkâ routes, although it is expected to be more expensive than Gbâkâ rides.

Wôro-wôro s: 3-5-seater shared taxis, operating in eight of the ten Abidjan communes, are colour coded according to their authorised commune of operation. The vehicles are on average 20 years old⁴². Wôro-

wôro routes vary, certain routes operate within communes, others between, some with fixed routes, others according to passengers' requests. In total there are an estimated 12,000 Wôro-wôros in Abidjan⁴³ transporting approximately 1.1 million passengers each day⁴⁴. Similar to Gbâkâs, Wôro-wôros have expanded rapidly. This is largely due to imports of used cars in the 1990s and the demand to fill the gap in SOTRA's services⁴⁵. Wôro-wôros usually have two drivers: a primary driver (sometimes the owner) and a second driver. Wôro-wôros are authorised by transport cards at a communal level, inspections exist but are limited due to a lack of resources⁴⁶. The BRT system is not likely to be in direct competition with Wôro-wôros but potential SOTRA feeder lines could compete with wôro-wôro routes.

Pinasses: traditional wooden ferries operating informally on the Ébrié lagoon⁴⁷. It is estimated there are 100 pinasses in total, outperforming the formal water buses – with more quays (37 gares de pinasses), lines and passengers. Each boat carries 100 passengers. They provide transport for an estimated 100,000 passengers every day, offering a cheap alternative to the costly trip over the few bridges available⁴⁸. Pinasses operators are not unionised.



Private metered taxi services: red or orange vehicles with meters. These taxis carry 3-4 passengers and are authorised to operate across Abidjan through a permit and inspection system⁴⁹. They transport an estimated 675,000 passengers each day. The fleet is estimated between 11,300 and 14,000⁵⁰.

VTCs (Véhicule de Transport avec Chauffeur): vehicles using apps, such as Yango, Uber, Mon Woyo, and Treiize Taxi, without meters operating city-wide. It is estimated there are between 5,000 and 18,000 VTC cars operating in Abidjan⁵¹. Yango, a subsidiary to worldwide Yandex Taxis, started operations in Abidjan in October 2018. The cost of a trip starts from 1900 CFA franc⁵². Uber has been operating in Abidjan since December 2019⁵³.

Salonis: informal three-wheeled taxis. They transport between 3-6 passengers.

They are cheaper than Wôro-wôros and cost 100 CFA franc per ride. Operating in Yopougon, Attécoubé and Abodo communes, Salonis follow set routes as last-mile services in popular and low dense neighbourhoods often on unpaved roads. They transport an estimated 1,000 passengers a day⁵⁴. Salonis are not recognised by the authorities and there are no permits, although they are tacitly accepted by the authorities⁵⁵.

Tianboros: old Gbâkâ and taxi vehicles that failed inspection. They operate as a last-mile service in communes and are prohibited, although tacitly accepted by the authorities⁵⁶.

Taxi clandestin: passenger unmarked vehicles operating on fixed lines between communes without meters. They are prohibited and face police control⁵⁷.

REGULATION

The main bodies concerned with the regulation of informal passenger transport are the Communal Authorities (wôro-wôros), Autorité de la Mobilité Urbaine dans le Grand Abidjan - AMUGA (Gbâkâs) and the Autorité de Régulation du Transport Intérieur – ARTI (VTCs)

Communal authorities

Communal authorities regulate stations through municipal parking cards and accreditation of ‘unions’ running stations. Drivers pay a daily fee to the operating union to use the station.

There are roughly 64 wôro-wôro stations spread across nine communes and 27 gbâkâ stations across 27 communes.

Figure 13. Gbâkâ and Wôro-wôro Stations in Abidjan Communes

COMMUNE	GBÂKÂ GARES ROUTIÈRES	WÔRO-WÔRO GARES ROUTIÈRES
Adjamé	4	1
Abodo	7	11
Cocody	7	19
Youpougon	9	17
Koumassi		1
Marcory		1
Port-Bouët		12
Treichville		1
Plateau		1
Total	27	64

Source: AMUGA

Not all wôro-wôro stations are recognised by communal authorities.

Autorité de la Mobilité Urbaine dans le Grand Abidjan (AMUGA)

AMUGA was created in 2019 to facilitate mobility in Abidjan. It is an administrative authority with financial independence. It oversees the organisation and coordination of urban transport within Abidjan.

Autorité de Régulation du Transport Intérieur (ARTI)

The authority for the regulation of inland transport (‘ARTI’) was created in 2014. ARTI regulates Gbâkâs, Wôro-wôros and VTCs.

Police Spéciale de la Sécurité Routière (PSSR)

PSSR oversees traffic, speed, and correct documentation (licenses, permits, etc.) on the roads. Every month the police force publishes statistics on the number of warnings distributed.

Abidjan District Authority

The Abidjan District oversees the ten communes and collects fees from Gbâkâ owners.

STATION MANAGEMENT

Gbâkâ and wôro-wôro stations are supervised by trade unions. Many gbâkâ stops at the roadsides are controlled by Gnambros. Gbâkâ drivers, not owners, are expected to pay daily tolls in either the stations or stops in addition to any police charges throughout their workdays.

Stations are often registered at local municipalities by ‘chefs de terrain’ who are often former drivers or unionists who have inside knowledge of informal routes and profitable stops. ‘Chef de terrain’, through Gnambros (see below), collect levies from informal operators at stations, typically a daily rate of 100-300 CFA franc each day and a loading payment between 50-400 CFA franc depending on the cost to ride in the vehicle.

Tariffs

Gbâkâ and Wôro-wôro routes are chosen by unions, with little oversight by district or communal authorities. Officially, tariffs for Gbâkâs and Wôro-wôros are proposed by unions according to each route. Tariffs are then reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Transport with unions.

Figure 14. Tariffs for the different informal transport services (source: Transitec)

TYPE OF VEHICLE	MAXIMUM TARIFF FOR JOURNEY	MINIMUM TARIFF PER JOURNEY	ESTIMATED AVERAGE TARIFF
Gbâkâs	500	100	300
Wôro-wôros	350	150	200
Unlicensed taxis	700	300	500

According to calculations by Transitec, Gbakas are the cheapest services per kilometre due to the distances they cover. Their pricing is comparable, in terms of cost to users, to that of SOTRA (between 500 and 200 FCFA).

The wôrô-wôrôs are sufficiently affordable, as evidenced by their large number in the commune of Yopougon, one of the poorer communes in Abidjan. The routes of wôrô-wôrôs are relatively short, except in the largest communes (including Bingerville and Yopougon), and therefore their fare per kilometre is higher than that of Gbakas or SOTRA.

Unmarked taxis are comparatively more expensive, but they offer advantages over wôrô-wôrôs and Gbakas: they are faster than the latter because they have fewer stops; they have better frequencies because of their lower capacity; and they avoid the load breaks that constrain wôrô-wôrôs.

Per kilometre Gbâkâs are the cheapest service and have the longest routes, they are comparable to SOTRA services (200 CFA to 500 CFA). Wôro-wôros have shorter routes with higher fares. Unmarked taxis are the most expensive but stop less, avoid loading breaks, and are higher in frequency.

VÉHICULE DE TRANSPORT AVEC CHAUFFEUR (VTC) REGULATION

VTCs are vehicles using app-based ride-hailing platforms, such as Yango, Uber, Mon Woyo, and Treize Taxi.

In March 2022, ARTI released a press release highlighting decree No. 2021-860 from 15 December 2021 on the regulation of private

public transport of persons against unfair competition. The decree banned VTCs, carpooling, transport by non-communal taxis or tariff taxis.

“ARTI invites all operators who practice or wish to practice one of these activities to strictly respect the provisions of this Decree throughout the national territory. Any violation found will expose its author to the rigors of the law”.

VTCs are legal under Ivorian law. The platform companies are registered and pay taxes and they fall under the authority of ARTI.

In November 2021 there were strikes by metered taxis unions demanding a ban to VTCs. VTC operators do not pay registration like wôrô-wôros or metered taxi - they require only the basic registration like a private household vehicle.

At the end of 2021 the Ivorian government introduced new regulation for VTCs. Platforms are to pay 20,000,000 CFA to operate in Côte d'Ivoire, VTC drivers are required to pass the CACR certificate (dedicated to professional road drivers), and vehicle engines are required to be a minimum of 114 horsepower.

These regulations were criticised by the Association for VTC entrepreneurs on the grounds that 90% of current VTC vehicles would not meet the regulation's criteria and that vehicles with these engines would be unaffordable (14 million CFA) for VTC entrepreneurs.

THE WORKFORCE

There are many jobs and occupations among workers dependant on the informal passenger transport industry in Abidjan. Those workers who participated in the questionnaire survey included vehicle crews, station workers, and service workers.

VEHICLE CREWS

Drivers. Most drivers are informally employed by vehicle owners on the so-called target system or 'recette', where the driver has to pay the owner a daily fee, along with the other operational expenses, including fuel (see below). Other drivers own their own vehicles or may own one or two other vehicles in addition to the one they drive. There are also 'relief drivers' / 'l'embauché', who are paid by the main driver to operate the vehicle during rest periods or when the driver is attending to other business.

Apprentices. Every gbâkâ driver is accompanied by an apprentice, who is responsible for collecting fares, dealing with passengers, and assisting the driver in other tasks as needed. Apprentices may spend several years working with one driver, learning to operate the vehicle and hoping to become a driver.

STATION WORKERS

The main jobs in a Gbâkâ or Wôro-wôro station are:

“Coxeur”: The coxeur finds passengers for the driver outside the station (and brings them to the station). The coxeur is paid by the driver.

“Chargeur”: The organiser of the departure and arrival of vehicles at the station. In general, there are two – an owners' representative and a drivers' representative.

“Chef de Gare”: The station manager, representative of the transport union, responsible for the station's activities.



“Délégué”: A representative of the drivers’ union, responsible for the smooth running of the station’s activities.

The Chef de Gare and Délégué work closely together in the station.

“Agent Syndical”: Union representative.

“Guichetier”: A member of the drivers’ union who changes money, thus easing the problem of change, which is often a source of dispute between the driver and passengers.

Public toilet supervisor: In charge of the cleanliness of public toilets.

Insurance agent: Person who deals with the insurance of vehicles at the station, as a partnership with the insurance companies.

Administrative staff: Workers who are members of the local trade union office, for example the treasurer, the general secretary, the organising officer, etc.

Vendor: A trader, often itinerant, who provides services that are needed at the station.

“Car wash supervisor”: Person in charge of washing vehicles in the station

SERVICE WORKERS

Service workers may be based at stations, or in other locations close to stations or major routes.

Auto electrician: Repairs all electrical aspects of vehicles.

Mechanic: Repairs vehicles on site in the event of a breakdown or accident, concerning the mechanical part.

Car painter: Paints vehicles.

“Vulcanisateur”: Repairs tyres or wheels in the event of a puncture, tyre change)

“Ferrailleur”: A used spare parts dealer.

“Ferronnier”: Ironmonger that makes electrical welds, concrete iron manufacturer.

“Soudeur”: Assembles metal or plastic parts using small equipment (gas, welding paste)

Sheet metal worker: A person who rebuilds the bodywork of the vehicle in case of an accident or other problem with the bodywork.

Calligrapher: Vehicle sign-writer.

“Décorateur”: A graphic artist working on vehicles.

“Parallélisme”: Wheel balancing / tracking.

Radiator repairer: Restores vehicle radiators to a good condition.

Glazier: Works on vehicle windows, sells new windows, changes and repairs broken windows

WOMEN WORKERS

The representation of women in both the informal and formal passenger transport workforce is very low, although there is a lack of statistics. According to the World Bank in 2019 women made up 8% of 4000 SOTRA employees. Most were in clerical positions with only 10 women working as drivers or in bus maintenance. In informal transport it was estimated that there were less than 20 women drivers across all Wôro-wôros, Gbâkâs and taxis.



“LA RECETTE” – THE ‘TARGET’ SYSTEM

In common with most informal passenger transport operations throughout the world, and in Africa in particular, the Abidjan transport economy is based on “la recette” – the ‘target’.

Unless a driver owns their own vehicle (Gbâkâ or Wôro-wôro), they have to pay the vehicle owner a daily or weekly target to operate.

WORKING AS A DRIVER

GBÂKÂ DRIVERS

A gbâkâ driver’s day typically starts at 4:00am for most target (recette) drivers and around 5:30am for owner-drivers, taking the first passengers towards the central business districts of Koumassi, Marcory, Plateau and other destinations.

After unloading the passengers, those with gazetted stations report to the stations and pay for the day’s union ticket to join the queue. They are then faced with the decision as to

whether they park in the queue and wait for passengers at the station or try to attempt to attract passengers outside. This is the routine of the day until about 10:00-11:00pm, when most stop work.

In most cases, one gbâkâ may have two or more drivers. At some stage during the course of the day - especially between 11am and 2pm - the official driver hands the vehicle to ‘l’embauché’ (a second driver) to take a rest. In some cases, the second driver or third driver are given the opportunity to drive for the whole day and will pay the recette (target) and take home the remaining income. This is a common practice that workers have adopted to cope with the huge numbers of unemployed drivers compared with the number of vehicles. The ‘official’ driver has to fully trust the l’embauche (second driver).

They are not in position to save money and buy a piece of land to be their permanent station. Banks and micro finance institutions have refused to give them any form of loan.

GBÂKÂ OWNER-DRIVERS AND OWNERS

According to in-depth interviews, gbâkâ owners (including owner-drivers) were able to obtain vehicles in one of four ways: family members living abroad who send them vehicles, with savings, through interest-free loans from friends and relatives, or through bank loans.

Some owners have 10 cars, have a good understanding of the transport industry and are well organised, based on their many years of experience.

Leaders of owners' associations have learnt how to deal with the corrupt officials and police; they even give support to them during difficult times such as bereavement. They have also cultivated a very good relationship with the community –taking children to school for a small fee or for free, transporting relatives upcountry for funerals etc.

COVID was very difficult for gbâkâ drivers. First, they stopped working, then they were asked to operate at half-capacity, even though the cost of fuel remained the same, so they were working at a loss. They received no assistance, although some were able to negotiate reduced target payments with owners. One interviewee reported losing twenty members of their station due to the pandemic, and several others had to sell off their vehicles in order to survive. They did not receive any support from the government.

Their most challenging issue is the lack of voice or representation, unlike other workers who can be members of unions.

WÔRO-WÔRO DRIVERS

A typical working day for a wôro-wôro driver starts from around 4:30am for both owner-drivers and target drivers. After prayer, they retrieve their car from the parking lot, to be on the road by 5:00am. Most wôro-wôro drivers park their vehicles close to their homes and pay for night guard services. The early morning is a peak time to make several trips and maximise income. "The aim in the morning is to get people to their workplaces/offices, so any

serious wôro-wôro driver should ensure he maximises on this" noted one driver.

Wôro-wôro drivers are also mindful of getting to their official station early enough to book a position in the queue for the day, and dash to the station to pay the day's 'ticket' which are allocated on 'first-come, first-serve' basis. Most wôro-wôro stations are managed by the unions, which charge a ticket fee ranging from 300-700 CFA per vehicle per day. The union uses this money for cleaning the station, paying station workers and contributing to a welfare fund. However, many drivers interviewed were unhappy that they never receive support from the welfare fund when they experience hard times.

Most wôro-wôro drivers have a second (relief driver) who steps in when the official driver takes a break or goes to attend to other urgent issues. In some municipalities, there are actually two drivers per vehicle who take turns to drive in a week. The official driver ('le titulaire') may drive for four days and the second driver ('l'américain') can operate on the other two days. This kind of solidarity is to help everyone survive because they understand that there are few available vehicles against the very many drivers. Otherwise, in some locations the second drivers mostly operate during the off-peak hours and are paid from the amount that remains after the recette (target).

On a busy day a wôro-wôro can do 280km or 300km and earn perhaps CFA 45,000. On a bad day the car will only travel 180km or 200km and earn less than CFA 40,000.

ORGANISATION

Each wôro-wôro station has an elected union leader as the overall head; the official stations are mostly located on public land agreed upon between the union and town hall. The union leaders are not transparent about how much they pay the Town Hall for the use of the station, and it's one of the areas where the drivers feel cheated. Under the station leader are several loaders (staff who help in loading the vehicles), the number of which depends on how many routes the station serves. Ideally,

it is one loader per route and in some cases, they work in shifts of three per day (6:00am – 12:00pm, 12:00pm – 4:00pm and 4:00pm – close of business).

The individual station leader is a member of the municipality wôro-wôro committee, this committee among other things is responsible for:

- Representing the wôro-wôro drivers
- Ensuring that wôro-wôro drivers are offered professional training by the Ministry of Transport
- Offering food support to drivers during tough times and especially the fasting period
- Give drivers an end of year gift 'live chicken'
- Provide scholastic materials e.g., books, pens to the drivers' primary school going children at the beginning of the year
- Attend meeting with government, especially the Ministry of Transport to voice wôro-wôro sector issues

There are reported conflicts among some station, association, and rival groups. In 2019 for example, the Mutuelle Générale Des Chauffeurs Professionnels de la CEDEAO (MUGCP-CEDEAO) had bitter brawls with an unidentified group for the control of the Koumassi junction (le carrefour Koumassi). This resulted in the death of one person and the arrest and imprisonment of the MUGCP-CEDEAO leader who has now been recently released.

In response to this the Mayor of Koumassi has built a brand-new Gare Communale Yaya Fofana station. Although the ownership of the station is not clear, the following can be noted:

- The Carrefour de Koumassi has been developed into a leisure park where people can gather and sit around
- The new Gare Communale Yaya Fofana Park has seen a reduction of violence within the public transport industry in Koumassi

- Over fifty young people are now fully employed with a monthly salary in the security, sanitation, health care and administration departments of the station
- The station management plans to buy their own vehicles and with that they will ensure all drivers will be permanent employees with contracts
- Although the management is excited for the introduction of BRT, they do not know how it will benefit them since they have had no consultation so far.

The trade unions are very unpopular among the drivers because they claim that there are no tangible benefits being realised. In Bingerville for example the drivers have refused to pay the daily union ticket of CFA 300. They have also refused to pay the station tax, which they claim is too high for them at CFA 64,000.

This is the same story across most wôro-wôro and gbâkâs stations. In some wôro-wôro stations, there is actually double payment. First there is a union ticket of CFA 700 paid daily and is meant for meeting the costs of cleaning the stations and there is supposed to be a CFA 50 cash back to the drivers which doesn't happen. Secondly, the drivers claim to pay another CFA 300 to the union for which they do not know the purpose. This situation makes the unions very unpopular among the drivers.

FINANCING

There is a varied mode of acquiring vehicles with in the wôro-wôro industry. These include:

- Individual own savings
- Interest free loans from friends and relatives
- Some drivers have been gifted vehicles by owners for exemplary service
- Paying off the original owners after some years and especially when the return of investment starts to deteriorate with the age of the vehicle

- Tontine saving scheme which is a kind of merry go around used by not only the informal transport workers but most community groups including working people
- Association loans especially around Adjeme and Yopougon that give drivers loans to purchase vehicles and charge an interest rate ranging from 9-15 per cent. A potential borrower will need to be introduced by an association member as a security measure.
- Cash transfers from relatives living overseas, who might even send them vehicles. (Although since 2017 there has been a government ban on the importation of vehicles older than 5 years).

VTCS / RIDE-HAILING DRIVERS

The number of VTCs (Véhicule de Transport avec Chauffeur) - vehicles using app-based ride-hailing platforms - has been steadily rising over the last two years in Abidjan (and more recently across Côte d'Ivoire). The most-used app is Yango followed by Uber. Others include: TaxiJet, Africab, Moja Ride, Drive, Mon Woyo and Treiize Taxi.

It is estimated that there are between 5,000 - 18,000 VTCs operating in Abidjan. However, according to the president of the Association for VTCs entrepreneurs (La Mutuelle des entrepreneurs de VTC) there are currently at least 40,000 jobs connected to VTCs in Côte d'Ivoire. According to a recent media report in March 2022, women are increasingly drawn to working as VTC drivers.

According to in-depth interviews, Yango, which started operation in 2018, is the most popular among drivers, even though Uber started operations earlier. This is mainly due to less onerous requirements by Yango. For example, Yango does not insist on the quality of the vehicles whereas Uber insist on inspecting the cars to ensure that they meet its standards.

“To be a driver at Yango, a chip, a driving licence and a car registration card are required for registration. As soon as the registration is completed, the driver recharges his or her account with at least 10,000 CFA francs, depending on his or her economic means. The account is topped up by wave deposit and these units are passed on to Yango who give us units to work with. Working chips are left to the driver’s choice, but preferably we prefer to buy a new working chip, because on the ordinary chip, calls can interrupt the work”

Yango driver at terminus 81

“I was in Yango by a third person. The registration is done by taking a photo. Of the transport price, 10% belongs to Yango. The Yango structure gives a specific number to which the driver is entitled to make deposits. If more than 85 clients are transported per day, the Yango structure gives bonuses of around 30,000 CFA francs to its members. The Yango structure has several seats located before the faya crossroads, before the faya roundabout and another seat at Deux Plateaux”

Yango driver at terminus 81

In-depth interviews revealed some of the problems faced by Yango drivers:

- The Yango apps need good quality smart phones which are not available to many drivers.
- Passengers (and drivers) continue to prefer cash-based operation.
- Most passengers do not indicate their location after ordering a ride, hence the driver is forced to make voice calls which are expensive.
- The poor address system in Abidjan causes GPS problems for drivers and passengers.

There is no current evidence of trade unions organising among VTC workers, although further research is needed.

TRADE UNION ORGANISATION

There are currently four unions at SOTRA (Société des Transports Abidjanais), six unions at SITARAIL (Société Internationale des Transports Africains) and approximately 350 unions registered in the informal transport sector.

SOTRA

The four SOTRA unions are:

- Union des Agents de la SOTRA (USASSO), affiliated to DIGNITÉ
- Syndicat des Travailleurs de la SOTRA (SYNTRAS), affiliated to FESACI and ITF
- Syndicat pour la Reforme et le Maintien des Droits Acquis des Agents de la SOTRA (SYDERMA), affiliated to HUMANISME
- Syndicat des Agents Roulants et des Vendeurs de Titres de Transport de SOTRA (SYNARSO), affiliated to UGTCl

Elections organised by SOTRA in August 2022 resulted in representation of the unions to be:

- USASSO (86 delegates)
- SYNTRAS (34 delegates)
- SYDERMA (19 delegates)
- SYNARSO (14 delegates).

SYNTRAS, the ITF affiliate, has about 1,000 members out of a total of 6,000 employees at SOTRA.

SITARAIL

Société Internationale de Transport Africain (SITARAIL) is the subsidiary of BOLLORÉ Transport & Logistic operating the railways in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. Its headquarters are in Côte d'Ivoire. SITARAIL has 956 employees.

The unions of SITARAIL include:

- Confédération Générale des Travailleurs de Côte d'Ivoire Rail (CGT-RAIL) created in November 2021. Affiliated to CGT- CI.
- Syndicat des Travailleurs du Rail (SYNTRARAIL), created in 1995. It has approximately 200 members. Affiliated to UGT-CI and ITF.
- Free Trade Union of Railway Workers (SYLTRAIL). Affiliated to FESACI.
- Syndicat National des Cheminots de Côte d'Ivoire (SYNACI), created in 2000. Affiliated to DIGNITÉ.
- Railway workers' union of Côte d'Ivoire (SYC-CI) created in 2005. Affiliated to DIGNITÉ.
- Autonomous Union of Rail Workers (SATRAIL). Affiliated to CGT- CI.

Elections organised by SITARAIL in August 2022 resulted in representation of the unions to be:

- CGT-RAIL (15 delegates)
- SYNTRARAIL (11 delegates)
- SYNACI (2 delegates)

UNIONS IN INFORMAL TRANSPORT

It is difficult to locate documentation that lists unions operating in the informal transport economy, but it is estimated that there are approximately 350 unions and 30 federations formally declared in the informal transport sector, although few organisations are operational on the ground.

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The Haut Conseil des Entreprises de Transport is a national structure for drivers and owners. Other associations include the Fédération Nationale des Coopératives des Transporteurs de Côte d'Ivoire (FNCTCI) and the Coordination Nationale des Gares Routières de Côte d'Ivoire (CNGRCI).

Le Conseil National des Organisations de Conducteurs Professionnels de Côte d'Ivoire (CNOCP-CI) is the highest structure of drivers. Currently, the Council is made up of 122 drivers' unions from Abidjan and inland towns. Its Executive Committee meets once a month.

There are two national unions in the informal economy that are affiliated to the ITF. Both are mainly established in the communes of Abidjan, and in some towns in the interior:

- Syndicat Autonome des Conducteurs Professionnels et Routier (SYACPRO-CI), affiliated to HUMANISME.
- Syndicat des Conducteurs de Taxi de Côte d'Ivoire (SCT-CI). Affiliated to UGTCl.

In addition to the ITF affiliates, there are other national unions that are active, including:

- Syndicat National des Transporteurs de Marchandises et de Voyageurs de Côte d'Ivoire (SNTMV-CI)
- Fédération Nationale des Syndicats de Chauffeurs de Côte d'Ivoire (FENS-CI)

In almost all the communes of Abidjan, there are umbrella organisations that bring together the unions or federations of drivers and owners. Their main role is to solve common problems encountered on the ground (management of vehicles in circulation, setting up and management of mutual aid funds etc).

The unions depend on 'line fees' and loading fees for their income. The unions set up a weekly duty rota so that they take turns in the day-to-day running of the business. This formula, even if it avoids tensions or quarrels between the unions, takes them away from their democratic functioning (recruitment of members, training of members, holding of general assemblies, follow-up of demands with employers, etc.).

EXAMPLES OF UNIONS IN MUNICIPALITIES

Cocody: Union des Fédérations des Syndicats des Chauffeurs de Cocody (UFESC-CO), composed of six drivers' unions:

- Federation of Modern Taxi Drivers' Unions of Côte d'Ivoire, (FESCMT-CI)
- Syndicat des Conducteurs de Taxi de Côte d'Ivoire (SCT-CI)
- Federation of Autonomous Unions of Professional Drivers of Côte d'Ivoire, (FESACP-CI)
- Fédération nationale des syndicats de chauffeurs de Côte d'Ivoire (FENSC-CI)
- Fédération nationale des syndicats de conducteurs professionnels et assimilés de Côte d'Ivoire (FENASYNCPRACI)
- Fédération de chauffeurs nouvelle génération de Côte d'Ivoire (FECNOGE-CI)

There is also another umbrella organisation or structure in Cocody, the Confédération des Transporteurs et Chauffeurs de Cocody (CTC), in the Deux Plateaux which brings together six drivers' unions and the Union des Fondateurs et Acteurs des Transporteurs Privés de Cocody (UFATPC).

Adjamé Union des Fédérations des Chauffeurs d'Adjamé (UFCA) composed of 36 federations of drivers.

Port-Bouët. Collectif des Syndicats des Transporteurs et chauffeurs de Port-Bouët (CSTCP) composed of one drivers' union and 5 unions of drivers or owners.

Yopougon Collectif des Syndicats des Conducteurs de Yopougon (COSYNKY), composed of 18 drivers unions, and Collectif des Syndicats des Transporteurs (propriétaires) de Yopougon (CSTY), composed of 19 unions (drivers or owners).

UNION REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

Three ITF affiliated unions for road-based passenger transport - Syndicat des Travailleurs de la SOTRA (SYNTRAS), Syndicat des Conducteurs de Taxi de Côte d'Ivoire (SCTCI), and Syndicat Autonome des Conducteurs Professionnels et Routiers (SYACPRO-CI) - have Women Committees. In addition, SYNTRAS has a dedicated officer for women members.

WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS

AGE

Informal transport workers, both women and men, are of all ages, with the majority between twenty-five and fifty years old. This may be contrary to the popular perception of workers in and around the gbâkâ and wôro-wôro stations being mostly young men.

QUALIFICATIONS

Most workers in the informal transport industry have not had secondary or tertiary education. Illiteracy is a major problem, particularly for the women, of whom 28% have had no schooling whatsoever.

Figure 15. Sample by age

AGE OF WORKFORCE						
	Women		Men		Total	
16-24 years	13	16%	43	10%	56	11%
25-34 years	26	33%	146	32%	172	33%
35-49 years	37	47%	197	44%	234	44%
50-60 years	3	4%	53	12%	56	11%
Over 60 years	0	0%	11	2%	11	2%
Total	79	100%	450	100%	529	100%

Figure 16. Highest level of education

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION						
	Women		Men		Total	
None	22	28%	67	15%	89	17%
Basic literacy	2	3%	18	4%	20	4%
Koranic school	7	9%	98	22%	105	20%
Primary	22	28%	117	26%	139	26%
Secondary	21	27%	129	29%	150	28%
Tertiary	5	6%	21	5%	26	5%
Total	79	100%	450	100%	529	100%



DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT IN TRANSPORT

Many have made their livelihoods in transport for many years. Nearly a quarter of workers have more than twenty years' experience – both men and women.

59% (312) of those who responded had not worked in other industries or employment sectors. The other 41% (217) had come into the passenger transport industry after working in a very wide variety of occupations, nearly all of which were within the informal economy. These included 'traders' (24%) and agriculture (11%).

Once working within passenger transport, more than 90% of interviewees have remained in the same transport-related occupation. The remainder had changed jobs from a variety of

occupations. It can be assumed that most of these had progressed from being apprentices to drivers, drivers to owners, station or service workers with better pay and/or conditions.

OTHER JOBS OUTSIDE TRANSPORT?

Most transport workers are wholly dependent on the transport industry for their livelihoods. Only 12% (63 people) also worked in other sectors or occupations. 21 of these also had employment as traders. The remainder had a variety of other jobs, including two footballers and a film actor.

Figure 17. Women and men experience in transport industry

HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR?						
	Men		Women		Total	
Under 10 years	202	45%	52	66%	254	48%
10-19 years	120	27%	27	34%	147	28%
20-39 years	111	25%	0	0%	111	21%
40 years and over	17	4%	0	0%	17	3%
Total	450	100%	79	100%	529	100%

ORGANISATION

When asked whether they were a member of a trade union, an association or a self-help group, the majority (68%) stated that they were not.

Of those that did hold membership, the largest number of people were trade union members, followed by a variety of associations and self-help organisations.

Tontines

Women involved in transport-related activities are not organised in trade unions or cooperatives, but rather create self-help groups known as 'tontines'. These women include ticket sellers, water sellers, restaurant owners, cleaners at the station and others. In Adjamé Texaco Renault, for example, there are thirty women organised in this way on the site, including fifteen cleaners and fifteen vendors.

Figure 18. Organisation membership

ORGANISATION MEMBERSHIP						
	Women		Men		Total	
No	68	86%	293	65%	361	68%
Yes	11	14%	157	35%	168	32%
Total	79	100%	450	100%	529	100%

VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

Owners do not tend to be drivers and are organised in separate unions or in mixed unions with drivers.

Owners collect an agreed target (“recette”), for Gbâkâs - usually between 20,000 and 30,000 CFA a day - from drivers on either a daily or weekly basis. There are rarely contracts between vehicle owners and drivers, and owners have previously complained of delays and unpaid rent. In 2012, owners tried to work with authorities to introduce regulation.

In Abidjan the majority of wôro-wôro and gbâkâ owners have one vehicle, although it is more common for gbâkâ owners than wôro-wôro owners to have larger fleets. There is a lack of up-to-date data on ownership distribution, although previous studies on distribution of Gbâkâ ownership dating back to 2000 show 80% have one vehicle⁵⁸.

Figure 19. Vehicle ownership

VEHICLE OWNER?	
No	154
Yes	43
Total	100%

Figure 20. Cost of vehicle purchase

COST OF PURCHASING THE VEHICLE		
less than CFA 3 million	13	30%
CFA 3-6 million	10	23%
CFA 7-10 million	5	12%
more than CFA 10 million	1	2%
No response	14	33%
Total	43	100%

Figure 21. Source of finance

HOW THE VEHICLE WAS PURCHASED			
Own funds		27	63%
Loans			
	From individuals	8	
	Bank	2	
	Microfinance	2	
		12	28%
Donation		3	7%
Work pay		1	2%
Total		43	100%

Figure 22. Outstanding debt

OUTSTANDING DEBTS ON LOAN		
No	2	17%
Yes	10	83%
Total	12	100%

WORKING CONDITIONS

Figure 23. Contract or agreement with owner

EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT		
No	128	83%
Yes	26	17%
Total	154	100%

Figure 24. Social protection coverage

CONTRACT INCLUDES REGISTRATION WITH CNPS		
No	23	88%
Yes	3	12%
Total	26	100%

The National Social Security Fund of Côte d'Ivoire - La Caisse nationale de prévoyance sociale de Côte d'Ivoire (CNPS)

A majority of workers are at work six or seven days a week, including 19% who work every day.

Many workers experience very excessive working hours, with a large number starting work between 4:00 and 7:30 in the morning and leaving between 19:30 and 22:00 in the evening.

Figure 25. Working days per week

NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS PER WEEK		
1 day	2	0%
2 days	15	3%
3 days	61	12%
4 days	97	18%
5 days	45	9%
6 days	207	39%
7 days	102	19%
Total	529	100%

Figure 26. Working hours

TIME ARRIVING AT WORK					
Between	02:00	and	03:30	5	1%
	04:00		05:30	194	37%
	06:00		07:30	227	43%
	08:00		09:30	86	16%
	10:00		12:00	17	3%
Total				529	100%
TIME LEAVING WORK					
Between	06:00	and	09:00	5	1%
	11:00		12:30	6	1%
	13:00		15:30	4	1%
	14:00		16:00	10	2%
	16:00		18:30	133	25%
	19:30		20:30	186	35%
	21:00		22:30	182	34%
	23:00		00:00	12	2%
Total				529	102%

It is notable that a very large majority of workers regard their employment to be regular, rather than occasional, maybe suggesting that although work may be informal, it is not necessarily precarious.

Figure 27. Regular or occasional work

REGULARITY OF WORK		
Occasional work	12	2%
Regular work	517	98%
Total	529	100%

LIVELIHOODS

DAILY NET INCOME

Figure 28. Daily net income by occupation type

INCOME	ON-BOARD CREWS		STATION WORKERS		SERVICE WORKERS		TOTAL	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Less than 10,000	29	13%	64	60%	92	47%	185	35%
10,000-19,900	115	50%	17	16%	36	19%	168	32%
20,000-29,900	61	27%	5	5%	15	8%	81	15%
30,000-39,900	19	8%	8	7%	12	6%	39	7%
40,000-49,900	1	0%	0	0%	2	1%	3	1%
50,000-59,900	0	0%	0	0%	13	7%	13	2%
60,000-69,900	1	0%	3	3%	1	1%	5	1%
70,000-79,900	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	0%
80,000-89,900	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	0%
90,000-99,900	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	1	0%
More than 100,000	0	0%	3	3%	8	4%	11	2%
No response	2	1%	6	6%	13	7%	21	4%
TOTAL	228	100%	107	100%	194	100%	529	100%

Those who participated in the questionnaire survey were asked to estimate their typical net daily earnings. For most of these workers, earnings can obviously fluctuate to a high degree and, for many, can be difficult to calculate, so the results can only be very approximate.

Nevertheless, as may be expected, it is clear that on-board crew members earn more than other workers in the industry. The majority of station and service workers earn less than CFA 10,000 per day, whereas the majority of crew members earn between CFA 10,000 and 19,900.

At the lowest end of the scale are the unskilled station workers and service workers.

Figure 29. Daily net income for women and men

DAILY NET INCOME FOR WOMEN AND MEN						
	Men		Women		Total	
Less than 10,000	136	30%	49	62%	185	35%
10,000-19,900	159	35%	9	11%	168	32%
20,000-29,900	77	17%	4	5%	81	15%
30,000-39,900	34	8%	5	6%	39	7%
40,000-49,900	2	0%	1	1%	3	1%
50,000-59,900	10	2%	3	4%	13	2%
60,000-69,900	4	1%	1	1%	5	1%
70,000-79,900	1	0%	0	0%	1	0%
80,000-89,900	0	0%	1	1%	1	0%
90,000-99,900	1	0%	0	0%	1	0%
More than 100,000	8	2%	3	4%	11	2%
No response	18	4%	3	4%	21	4%
Total	450	100%	79	100%	529	100%

There is also a significant difference in the earnings between men and women. Women are more likely to be service workers, such as vendors.

62% of women workers earn less than 10,000 CFA per day, compared with only 30% of men.

“The water sellers who do not have freezers rent them for CFA 1,000 in order to carry out their activities. After the day’s sales, they earn profits that vary from CFA 3,000 to 4,000. Also, those involved in rubbish collection have a weekly income of CFA 8,000 while the sweepers have a monthly income of CFA 30,000”.

Adjamé Texaco vendor

DRIVERS, OWNER-DRIVERS AND FLEET OWNERS

At the centre of a complex web of transactions and employment relationships in the Gbâkâ and Wôro-wôro industries are the drivers working on the target system, the owner drivers, and the fleet owners.

Through the sequence of in-depth interviews, it became possible to provide detailed illustrative examples of their livelihoods.

The examples consider the type and age of vehicle, the route, the terminal where they are based, the number of trips taken each day, the average fare and number of passengers and the number of working days per year.

The interviews attempted to list and analyse the costs and expenses incurred on a regular basis, such as the target, fuel as well as the costs of employment of others, such as the apprentice, night guard etc.

Some of the variations in operating costs and income can be attributed to the age and condition of the vehicle. An older vehicle will need more breakdown repairs, the cost of which may fall on the driver if the owner does not accept the financial responsibility, or if the routine service is insufficient. The estimated cost of repairs fluctuated considerably – between 6,000 and 50,000 CFA per month. The age and condition of the vehicle can also affect the cost of fuel and the bribes demanded from the police. A gbâkâ in poor condition can also be less attractive and more uncomfortable for the passengers, affecting the fares that they are willing to pay.

All drivers were asked to estimate the age of their vehicle, yet it is extremely difficult to determine the age of a gbâkâ, especially for the target drivers who may not know the ownership history. All the vehicles are imported second-hand, many will have subsequently changed owners several times, and very few have any of the original documentation, so without inspecting the engine to determine a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and calculating the date of manufacture (if the VIN has not been removed), the estimates of age are little more than guesswork. In some examples, the drivers declined to make an estimate.

Gbâkâ Target Drivers

Of the four Gbâkâ drivers interviewed who are working on the target system, the net earnings of three of them were fairly consistent – between 20,000 and 29,000 per day. One driver earned considerably less (4,500 CFA), due to much fewer working days per year.

All were found to be paying the vehicle owners their targets of 20,000 CFA per day. These payments, alongside the cost of fuel (average 23,000 CFA), account for more than 50% of their operating costs. In each case, the highest cost after the target and fuel was the payments to gnambros (1,000 CFA per trip) totalling more than the payments to the apprentices (9,000 CFA per day).

Figure 30. Illustrative examples of Gbaka target driver livelihoods

GBAKA TARGET DRIVERS								
Name	Adame		Sofite		Ibra		Emmanuel	
Date of interview (dd/mm)	12 May		12 May		14 May		14 May	
Vehicle type/ model	Toyota Dina		Mercedes 307		Toyota Dina		Mazda	
Route	Adjamé - Yopougon		Adjamé-Bingerville		Adjamé-Abobo		Adjamé-Anono	
Length of route	15 Km		16 Km		7 Km		9 Km	
Terminal / Stage	Adjamé-Ran		Zoo Base		Texaco		Zoo Base	
No. of return trips per day	15 Trips		10 Trips		20 Trips		18 Trips	
Fare	300 XOF		500 XOF		300 XOF		300 XOF	
Number of Passengers	18 Seats		20 Seats		18 Seats		18 Seats	
Age of Vehicle	10 Years		Years		Years		Years	
Working days per year	260 Days		364 Days		364 Days		364 Days	
Km travelled per day	450 Km		320 Km		280 Km		324 Km	
Fuel cost per Km	51.11 per Km		78.13 per Km		85.71 per Km		70.99 per Km	
Costs (XOF)								
	per day/ week/month	per year	per day/ week/month	per year	per day/ week/month	per year	per day/ week/month	per year
Target (per day)	20,000	5,200,000	20,000	7,280,000	20,000	7,280,000	20,000	7,280,000
Fuel (per day)	23,000	5,980,000	25,000	9,100,000	24,000	8,736,000	23,000	8,372,000
L'apprenti (per day)	9,000	2,340,000	9,000	3,276,000	9,000	3,276,000	9,000	3,276,000
L'embauché (per week)	20,000	1,040,000	15,000	780,000	15,000	780,000	15,000	780,000
Breakdown repairs (per month)	7,000	84,000	10,000	120,000	6,000	72,000	50,000	600,000
Routine Service (per month)	25,000	300,000	30,000	360,000	30,000	360,000	20,000	240,000
Carwash (per day)	1,000	260,000	1,000	364,000	1,000	364,000	1,000	364,000
Police bribes (per month)	50,000	600,000	50,000	600,000	40,000	480,000	25,000	300,000
Night Guard (per day)	500	130,000	500	182,000	500	182,000	500	182,000
Union ticket (per day)	200	52,000	300	109,200	300	109,200	300	109,200
Gnambro (per trip)	1,000	3,900,000	1,000	3,640,000	1,000	7,280,000	1,000	6,552,000
Total Annual Costs								
		19,886,000		25,811,200		28,919,200		28,055,200
Annual Income								
	per day	per year	per day	per year	per day	per year	per day	per year
Passenger Fares (per day/year)	81,000	21,060,000	100,000	36,400,000	108,000	39,312,000	97,200	35,380,800
Annual Income less Expenditure								
		1,174,000		10,588,800		10,392,800		7,325,600
Daily net income								
		4,515		29,090		28,552		20,125

Gbâkâ Owner-Drivers

Three owner-drivers were interviewed. By coincidence, two of them had identical fare income, and very similar net earnings of 11-14,000 CFA per day. The owner of the more expensive Mercedes vehicle had net earnings estimated to be nearly 55,000 CFA per day, far more than the others. This owner-driver collected much higher fares – 100,000 CFA per day, perhaps because of the better condition, reliability and comfort of the vehicle, and higher fares reportedly demanded on routes from Bingerville.

The better condition of the Mercedes, as reflected in the purchase price, would also account for the comparative lower cost of fuel, lower cost of breakdown repairs and police bribes.

It is important to note that none of the three owner-drivers were setting aside savings towards the cost of recapitalisation, which means that they would be obliged to borrow for the purchase of a replacement vehicle when the current vehicles are no longer roadworthy.



Figure 31. Illustrative examples of Gbaka owner-driver livelihoods

GBAKA OWNER-DRIVERS						
Name	Leod		Dialo		Maxina	
Date of interview (dd/mm)	13 May		13 May		13 May	
Terminal / Stage	Attécoubé Garage		Adjamé Ran		Agiram-Adjamé	
Vehicle type / model	Toyota Dina		Mazda		Mercedes	
Route	Adjamé- Yopougon		Adjamé-Toit Fadi		Bingerville-Adjamé	
Length of route (round trip)	15 Km		15 Km		19 Km	
No. of return trips per day	12 Trips		12 Trips		10 Trips	
Number of Seats	18 Seats		18 Seats		20 Seats	
Fare	300 XOF		300 XOF		500 XOF	
Age of Vehicle at time of purchase	30 Years		30 Years		30 Years	
Operational life expectancy	Years		Years		Years	
Purchase price	4000000 XOF		3,000,000 XOF		6,800,000 XOF	
Loan	1,000,000 XOF					
Loan period (years)	0.3 Years					
Interest (%)						
Operating days per year	364 Days		364 Days		364 Days	
Km travelled per day	180 Km		180 Km		190 Km	
Fuel cost per Km	111.11 XOF		138.89 XOF		105.26 XOF	
Annual Costs (XOF)	per day/ week/month/ trip/time	per year	per day/ week/ month/trip	per year	per day/ week/ month/trip	per year
Interest	0	0	0	0	0	0
Loan repayments (per year)	1,000,000	1,000,000	0	0	0	0
Savings towards recapitalisation (per day)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fuel (per day)	20,000	7,280,000	25,000	9,100,000	20,000	7,280,000
L'apprenti (per day)	5,000	1,820,000	5,000	1,820,000	5,000	1,820,000
L'embouche (per week)	30,000	1,560,000	25,000	1,300,000	20,000	1,040,000
Breakdown repairs (per year)	700,000	700,000	400,000	400,000	350,000	350,000
Routine Service (per month)	58,000	696,000	50,000	600,000	45,000	540,000
Carwash (per day)	500	182,000	500	182,000	500	182,000
Police bribes (per month)	65,000	780,000	50,000	600,000	40,000	480,000
Gnambro (per trip)	1,000	4,368,000	1,000	4,368,000	1,000	3,640,000
Night Guard (per day)	500	182,000	500	182,000	500	182,000
Insurance (per month)	35,000	420,000	35,000	420,000	35,000	420,000
Patente (per year)	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Vignette (twice per year)	30,000	60,000	30,000	60,000	30,000	60,000
Station card (per year)	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000
Transportation Card (every 2 years)	40,000	20,000	40,000	20,000	40,000	20,000
Transport card (first time)	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
SICTA inspection fees (per 6 months)	100,000	200,000	100,000	200,000	100,000	200,000
Total Annual Costs		18,527,000		19,511,000		16,473,000
Annual Income	per day	per year	per day	per year	per day	per year
Passenger Fares (per day/year)	64,800	23,587,200	64,800	23,587,200	100,000	36,400,000
Annual Income less Expenditure		5,060,200		4,076,200		19,927,000
Daily net income		13,902		11,198		54,745

Gbâkâ Fleet Owners

Three interviews were conducted with owners of fleets of between two and four gbâkâs, with an average purchase price of between 3.8 and 7.3 million CFA . None of the owners reported outstanding loans.

Their daily net income was calculated to range from approximately 40,000 to 70,000 CFA.

Each owner reported a daily target income of 25,000 CFA per day (this differs from the reports of each of the target-based drivers who reported payments of 20,000 CFA per day – see above).

Two of the owners claimed that they paid no bribes, but one reported daily payment of 5,000 CFA to the police, costing more than 7 million per year – more than half of his annual costs. This is unexplained. Other than that, by far the highest operating costs were concerned with insurance and the refurbishment and major repairs of vehicles.

As reported by the owner-drivers, none of the fleet owners reported savings towards recapitalisation.



Figure 32. Illustrative examples of Gbaka owner livelihoods

GBAKA FLEET OWNERS						
Name	Nanje		Leo		Bruce	
Date of interview (dd/mm)	13 May		13 May		14 May	
Number of vehicles	4 Gbakas		2 Gbakas		3 Gbakas	
Average purchase price per vehicle	3,800,000 XOF		5,750,000 XOF		7,300,000 XOF	
Total purchase price	15,200,000 XOF		11,500,000 XOF		21,900,000 XOF	
Loan						
Loan period (years)	10 Years					
Interest (%)	15%		0%		0%	
Average daily target per vehicle	25,000 XOF		25,000 XOF		25,000 XOF	
Daily target (fleet total)	100,000 XOF		50,000 XOF		75,000 XOF	
Operational life expectancy	Years		Years		Years	
Average operating days per year	364 Days		364 Days		364 Days	
Annual Costs (XOF)	per day/ week/month	per year	per day/ week/month	per year	per day/ week/ month	per year
Interest						
Loan repayments						
Refurbishment and major repairs per vehicle (per year)	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	800,000	800,000
Savings towards recapitalisation (per year)	0		0		0	
Station card (per year)	24,000	96,000	24,000	48,000	24,000	72,000
Vignette (per year)	30,000	120,000	30,000	60,000	30,000	90,000
Transport card (per first time)	35,000	140,000	35,000	70,000	35,000	105,000
Transport card (per 2 years)	30,100	60,200	30,100	30,100	30,100	45,150
SICTA inspection fees (per 6 months)	90,000	720,000	90,000	360,000	30,150	180,900
Patente (per year)	200,000	800,000	200,000	400,000	200,000	600,000
Insurance (per month)	55,000	2,640,000	55,000	1,320,000	55,000	1,980,000
Owners Association (per day)	0	0	700	254,800	0	0
Police bribes (per day)	5,000	7,280,000	0	0	0	0
Total Annual Costs	13,056,200		2,468,100		1,893,050	
Annual Income						
Target income (per day/year)	100,000	36,400,000	50,000	18,200,000	75,000	27,300,000
Annual Income less Expenditure		23,343,800		15,731,900		25,406,950
Daily net income		64,131		43,220		69,799

Wôro-Wôro Target Drivers

If accurate, the reported operating income and expenses of wôro-wôro target drivers suggests that net income is highly precarious, with three of the four interviewees suffering a net loss. Nevertheless, the margins between operating loss and profit are extremely thin, and only a very small increase in daily income or reduction in costs would result in a small surplus. Costs and fare income fluctuate greatly, dependant on a wide range of factors, such as the weather, the time of year, holiday periods and public events etc.

The one driver making a very small net income operates a VTC on the Yango app-based ride-hailing platform, driving a relatively new Ford Mondeo. His operating costs are higher, including the daily target (17,000 CFA, rather than 13,000 CFA payments of 'traditional' wôro-wôro drivers), carwash, insurance and inspection fees, and the additional cost of airtime and data. But by working many more days per year, and with no wôro-wôro station taxes or costs of breakdown repairs, he reports a much higher fare income.



Figure 33. Illustrative examples of Woro-woro target driver livelihoods

WORO-WORO TARGET DRIVERS								
Name	Ko		Malgroubi		Toma		Elued	
Date of interview (dd/mm)	11 May		11 May		12 May		14 May	
Taxi stand	Riviera-Attoban		Attoban		Yango-target driver		Petro Ivoire-Angré	
Vehicle type/ model	Toyota		Toyota		Ford		Toyota	
Age of Vehicle	Years		Years		4 Years		Years	
Make of vehicle	Eto		Corolla		Mondeo		Eto	
Working days per year	260 Days		208 Days		312 Days		260 Days	
Km travelled per day	350 Km		600 Km		700 Km		300 Km	
Fuel cost per Km	42.86 per Km		45.00 per Km		32.86 per Km		66.67 per Km	
Annual Costs (XOF)	per day/ week/month	per year	per day/ week/ month	per year	per day/ week/month	per year	per day/ week/ month	per year
Target (per day)	13,000	3,380,000	13,000	2,704,000	17,000	5,304,000	13,000	3,380,000
Fuel (per day)	15,000	3,900,000	27,000	5,616,000	23,000	7,176,000	20,000	5,200,000
Airtime (per week)	0	0	0	0	1,000	52,000	0	0
Data (per day)	0	0	0	0	500	156,000	0	0
Breakdown repairs (per month)	60,000	720,000	20,000	240,000	0	0	30,000	360,000
Routine Service (per month)	30,000	360,000	24,000	288,000	24,000	288,000	20,000	240,000
Carwash (per day)	700	182,000	500	104,000	1,500	468,000	500	130,000
Police bribes (per month)	0	0		0		0	30,000	360,000
Insurance (per month)	20,000	240,000	20,500	246,000	75,000	900,000	20,000	240,000
Station tax (per month)	11,500	138,000	11,500	138,000	0	0	11,500	138,000
Station Card (per year)	0	0	0	0	0	0	95,000	95,000
Pre-Inspection (per 6 months)	3,500	7,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
SICTA inspection fees (per 6 months)	0	0	0		75,000	150,000	0	0
Driver's Permit (per 5 years)	13,000	2,600	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guard (per day)	200	52,000	500	104,000	200	62,400	200	52,000
Patente(per year)	0	0	135,000	135,000	0		135,000	135,000
Vignette tax(per year)	0	0	0	0	0	0	42,000	42,000
Union ticket (per day)	700	182,000	300	62,400	0	0	300	78,000
Total Annual Costs		9,163,600		9,637,400		14,556,400		10,450,000
Annual Income	per day	per year	per day	per year	per day	per year		
Passenger Fares (per day/year)	35,000	9,100,000	45,000	9,360,000	50,000	15,600,000	40,000	10,400,000
Annual Income less Expenditure		-63,600		-277,400		1,043,600		-50,000
Daily net income		-245		-1,334		3,345		-192

Wôro-Wôro Owner-Drivers

Five wôro-wôro owner-drivers were interviewed, four of whom make an estimated surplus daily income of 10-22,000 CFA. The one driver who was calculated to earn less from fares than their operating costs, reported to be working considerably fewer working days per year than the others. Fuel is by far the highest operating cost.

Unusually, compared to gbâkâ owner-drivers, all the wôro-wôro owner-drivers set aside some savings towards recapitalisation, which are

included in the operating costs, although the sums involved suggest that the amounts saved would perhaps only cover the cost of a deposit on a replacement vehicle.

One of the drivers operates on the Yango app-based ride-hailing platform. Despite lower fare income, an old vehicle (therefore high breakdown repair costs), and setting aside more towards recapitalisation, he has a modest net income. It is noticeable that he claims to pay nothing on licences, taxes etc.



Figure 34. Illustrative examples of Woro-woro owner-driver livelihoods

WÔRO-WÔRO OWNER-DRIVERS										
Name	Draman		Daboe		Germev		Yeminwe		Eduanima	
Date of interview (dd/mm)	10-May		10 May		10 May		12 May		12 May	
Taxi stand	Attoban		Angré		Riviera 2		Lavage-William Ponty		Yango Owner	
Vehicle type / Model	Toyota Cadena		Toyota Corrolla		Peugeot		Mercedes Vinto		Mazda 323	
Age of Vehicle at time of purchase	6 Years		5 Years		28 Years		5 Years		20 Years	
Operational life expectancy	Years		Years		Years		Years		Years	
Purchase price	2,600,000 XOF		XOF		1,800,000 XOF		2,500,000 XOF		2,600,000 XOF	
Loan	XOF		XOF		500,000 XOF		XOF		XOF	
Loan period (years)					6 months		Years		Years	
Interest (%)										
Operating days per year	312 Days		208 Days		312 Days		312 Days		260 Days	
Km travelled per day	300 Km		560 Km		195 Km		200 Km		300 Km	
Fuel cost per Km	56.67 XOF		53.57 XOF		61.54 XOF		100.00 XOF		50.00 XOF	
Annual Costs (XOF)										
	per day/ month/ 6 months	per year	per day/ month/ 6 months	per year	per day/ month/ 6 months	per year	per day/ month/ 6 months	per year	per day/ month/ 6 months	per year
Interest										
Loan repayments										
Savings towards recapitalisation (per year)	150,000	150,000	250,000	250,000	200,000	200,000	150,000	150,000	364,000	364,000
Fuel (per day)	17,000	5,304,000	30,000	6,240,000	12,000	3,744,000	20,000	6,240,000	15,000	3,900,000
Breakdown repairs (per year)	435,000	435,000	80,000	80,000	450,000	450,000	300,000	300,000	480,000	480,000
Routine Service (per month)	36,000	432,000	21,000	252,000	40,000	480,000	35,000	420,000	16,000	192,000
Carwash (per day)	1,000	312,000	1,000	208,000	500	156,000	1,000	312,000	1,000	260,000
Police bribes (per month)	3,000	36,000	2,000	24,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insurance (per month)	20,500	246,000	20,500	246,000	20,500	246,000	15,000	180,000	15,000	180,000
Station Card (per month)	11,500	138,000	11,500	138,000	11,500	138,000	11,500	138,000		0
Pre-Inspection (per 6 months)	3,000	6,000	3,000	6,000	3,000	6,000	3,000	6,000		0
SICTA inspection fees (per 6 months)	16,000	32,000	16,000	32,000	16,000	32,000	16,000	32,000		0
Annual Renewal (per year)	15,000	15,000	15,000	180,000	15,000	180,000	15,000	180,000		0
Vignette tax (per year)	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	360,000		0
Patente (per year)	135,500	135,500	135,500	135,500	135,700	135,700	135,000	135,000		0
Total Annual Costs		7,121,500		7,571,500		5,597,700		8,303,000		5,012,000
Annual Income										
	per day	per year	per day	per year	per day	per year	per day	per year	per day	per year
Passenger Fares (per day/year)	40,000	12,480,000	35,000	7,280,000	40,000	12,480,000	45,000	14,040,000	30,000	7,800,000
Annual Income less Expenditure		1,174,000		- 291,500		6,882,300		5,773,000		2,788,000
Daily net income		17,175		- 1,401		22,059		18,388		10,723

Wôro-Wôro Fleet Owners

If the reported figures are accurate, the operating costs for these small-scale wôro-wôro fleet owners are minimal and they appear to receive a considerable net income. The owner of seven vehicles is calculated to be earning more than 125,000 CFA (approximately USD 200) per day. All three owners interviewed were calculated to be earning a positive net income, generating between 10,000 CFA and 18,000 CFA per vehicle per day. This

includes the cost of some savings towards recapitalisation. The reported target income per vehicle is broadly in line with the targets reported by the wôro-wôro target drivers.

In each case, the vehicles appear to be owned outright, with no loan repayments or interest outstanding. The one owner who reported having had a loan (now presumed to have been fully repaid) was repaying 2.4m CFA over 18 months or 1.6m CFA per year during the repayment period.

Figure 35. Illustrative examples of Woro-woro owner livelihoods

WÔRO-WÔRO FLEET OWNERS						
Name	Karim		Nenge		Lukriem	
Date of interview (dd/mm)	10 May		10-May		12 May	
Number of vehicles	2 Woro-Woro		3 Woro-Woro		7 Woro-Woro	
Average purchase price per vehicle	2,900,000 XOF		2,100,000 XOF		2,500,000 XOF	
Total purchase price	5,800,000 XOF		6,300,000 XOF		17,500,000 XOF	
Loan			2,400,000 XOF			
Loan period (years)			18 months			
Interest (%)						
Average daily target per vehicle	13,000 XOF		15,000 XOF		20,000 XOF	
Daily target (fleet total)	26,000 XOF		45,000 XOF		140,000 XOF	
Average operating days per year	312 Days		312 Days		Days	
Annual Costs (XOF)	per day/week/ (6) month(s)	per year	per day/week/ (6) month(s)	per year	per day/week/ (6) month(s)	per year
Interest						
Loan repayments						
Refurbishment and major repairs (per year)	600,000	600,000	400,000	400,000	200,000	200,000
Savings towards recapitalisation (per year)	100,000	100,000	0	0	3,600,000	3,600,000
Pre-inspection (per 6 Months)	3,000	6,000	3,000	6,000	3,000	6,000
Patente tax (per year)	135,000	135,000	135,000	135,000	105,000	105,000
Station Card (per year)	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000
Station Card (per month)	11,500	138,000	11,500	138,000	65,000	65,000
Insurance (per month)	20,000	240,000	20,000	240,000	45,000	540,000
Total Annual Costs	1,284,000		984,000		4,581,000	
Annual Income	per day	per year	per day	per year	per day	per year
Passenger Fares (per day/year)	26,000	8,112,000	45,000	14,040,000	140,000	43,680,000
Annual Income less Expenditure	6,828,000		13,056,000		31,099,000	
Daily net income	21,885		41,846		125,317	

EMPLOYMENT OF LABOUR BY OTHER WORKERS

A substantial number of workers in the informal transport industry employ other workers, either family members or other paid workers.

Of the 529 total number of workers interviewed, 41% paid other workers as part of their work, and 11% employed members of their family.

A higher proportion of women workers employed family members. This is probably due to the large number of family members employed in the vending industry, which dominated the sample of women workers.

The majority of those who employ other workers only employ one or two other people, but a small number of (men) workers employ significant numbers of people – more than ten.

Figure 36. Employment of labour

EMPLOYMENT OF LABOUR							
		Men		Women		Total	
No		207	46%	47	59%	254	48%
Yes	Family	39	9%	21	27%	60	11%
	Paid work	204	45%	11	14%	215	41%
Total		450	100%	79	100%	529	100%

Figure 37. Daily payments to employees

EMPLOYMENT OF LABOUR							
		Men		Women		Total	
Less than 5,000		85	42%	8	73%	93	43%
5,000-9,900		67	33%	0	0%	67	31%
10,000-14,900		22	11%	1	9%	23	11%
15,000-19,900		9	4%	0	0%	9	4%
20,000 and more		13	6%	2	18%	15	7%
No response		8	4%	0	0%	8	4%
Total		204	100%	11	100%	215	100%

Figure 38. Number of family members employed

NUMBER OF FAMILY WORKERS EMPLOYED.							
Number employed		Men		Women		Total	
1		23	59%	11	52%	34	57%
2		9	23%	5	24%	14	23%
3		3	8%	3	14%	6	10%
4		2	5%	0	0%	2	3%
5		0	0%	2	10%	2	3%
7		1	3%	0	0%	1	2%
15		1	3%	0	0%	1	2%
Total		39	100%	21	100%	60	100%

Figure 39. Number of paid workers employed

NUMBER OF PAID WORKERS EMPLOYED						
Number employed	Men		Women		Total	
1	101	50%	5	45%	106	49%
2	43	21%	3	27%	46	21%
3	16	8%	1	9%	17	8%
4	7	3%	1	9%	8	4%
5	8	4%	0	0%	8	4%
6	7	3%	0	0%	7	3%
7	3	1%	1	9%	4	2%
8	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
9	1	0%	0	0%	1	0%
10	7	3%	0	0%	7	3%
More than 10	11	5%	0	0%	11	5%
Total	204	100%	11	100%	215	100%



ISSUES AT WORK

70% of questionnaire respondents reported that they faced problems at work.

Figure 40. Facing problems at work

ARE YOU EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS AT WORK?		
No	158	30%
Yes	371	70%
Total	529	100%

In-depth interviews and focus group discussions revealed the range of issues faced by the workforce, particularly the role of gnambros, police harassment and corruption, health and safety, traffic congestion, problems specifically faced by women workers, and trade union representation.

GNAMBROS

Those who participated in the questionnaire survey were asked to estimate their typical net daily earnings. For most of these workers, earnings can obviously fluctuate to a high degree and, for many, can be difficult to calculate, so the results can only be very approximate.

The notorious violent behaviour of gnambros is a major issue reported by vehicle crews, particularly gbâkâ drivers, in focus groups and in-depth interviews.

In 2017, the National Human Rights Commission of Côte d'Ivoire (CNDHCI) published a report on the problem of Gnambros in Abidjan, based on interviews with drivers, transporters' and drivers' unions, gnambros, police and gendarmerie officers, political, administrative and judicial authorities, sociologists and NGOs in the communes of Cocody, Adjamé, Abobo and Yopougon⁶⁰.

“The “Gnambros” are touts, businessmen, who can be found in the places that serve as stations in certain communes of the Abidjan district. In reality, they are agents for collecting “taxes” or line fees or daily loads for individuals or groups of individuals designated as transporters’ unions or associations. Gnambros are sometimes former trade unionists or retired drivers who resort to this phenomenon to collect money.

“These organisations, improperly called “unions”, reign supreme over the areas they control and collect a sort of fee from the drivers who use their areas. The collection of these taxes by the Gnambros gives rise to violence and public order disturbances”.

In April and May 2014 in particular, fights between these so-called “unions” led to exchanges of fire and machete attacks in Koumassi.

GNAMBROS IN ABIDJAN

The Gnambros (“big tough”) are those people whose job is in or around bus stations to load passers-by into transport vehicles, typically charging drivers a 25 CFA “loading fee” per trip.

They threaten or inflict violence to dissuade any uncooperative driver. Armed with sticks, brass knuckles, slingshots, or “caiman teeth”, a kind of stake to puncture the wheels of vehicles, they harass wôro-wôro or gbâkâ drivers:

“The Gnambros are a real mafia: they organize themselves to delimit a well-defined space in the stations of Abidjan, and if a taxi driver has the misfortune to park there to pick up passengers, he will have to pay the tax that they fixed themselves. If you try to avoid them by loading passengers at the edge of these areas and they see you, it’s a disaster. A few months ago, a gnambro demanded 2,700 CFA francs from me because he thought that I had tried to trick him.

“I refused, he said “think carefully” showing me his hand on which he had a very pointed ring used to strike. He then took my key out of the ignition and pushed me onto my back. I decided to pay to avoid making customers wait too long. I lodged a complaint with my boss, but there was no follow-up: no union recognized that this gnambro belonged to their service [some of the Gnambros are sent by transport unions, but from others act outside these structures] In the meantime, it is still rampant in the Cocody station”.

Wôro-wôro driver in Abidjan

Adama Touré, president of the National Coordination of Côte d’Ivoire bus stations, is fighting against this phenomenon which he describes as “gangrene”. According to Touré:

“The Gnambros were created in the 1990s by the former single transport union (SNTM-CI) to deal with the creation of new transport unions which they saw as a threat to its market. To keep control of the sector, the former union has hired big guys responsible for taxing drivers. Little by little, each union recruited its Gnambros, and the system became organised: each union managed to have its “collection day” and avoid clashes between Gnambros. It was not an acceptable system for the client, but at least there was little overflow.

The problem is that many Gnambros have decided to emancipate themselves from the tutelage of these unions to do their own business and have been using violent methods for several months. Our organization has estimated that the Gnambros extort transport companies about 20 million CFA francs a day (about 30,000 euros). In the worst case, it’s deducted from the driver’s pay. And with a salary of 30,000 CFA francs per month (about 45 euros), we understand that some take the risk of being beaten to avoid going to the cash register”.

From an article written in collaboration with Alexandre Capron, journalist at FRANCE 24.

During the 2011 war, the Gnambros were reportedly armed and were promised payment by the president-elect Alassane Ouattara, but when payments failed to materialise, they turned to the transport stations for income, enforcing the payment of fees from drivers with violence.

POLICE HARASSMENT AND CORRUPTION

In-depth interviews and focus groups revealed widespread police corruption, particularly affecting gbâkâ drivers. Interviewees all reported routine extortion payments to police totalling 40-50,000 CFA per month.

“Some police officers jokingly tell us that if they don’t take tips (bribes) from us they won’t be able to take home food for the day.”

Gbâkâ driver (in-depth interview)

POLICE EXTORTION IN YOPOUGON

In-depth interviews provided an example of the extent of police corruption and extortion, commonly faced by most gbâkâ owners and drivers.

The gbâkâ station in Yopougon was originally located on private land where the station leaders were paying rent, until one day, after fifteen years, the owner of the space instructed the gbâkâ workers and owners to leave. Not knowing what to do, one of the leaders suggested they start using the current space along a street as their station. They approached the mayor of Yopougon who verbally gave them permission.

But according to the interviewees, the station on the new site has become “an ATM machine” to some leaders and the police. Whenever the police need cash, they just walk over to the station and demand money, threatening to chase the workers away if they do not comply. This is an example of how vulnerable and precarious the gbâkâ industry in Abidjan is. Most transport workers believe that the local administration and government is determined to weaken and eliminate the informal transport industry.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and safety is a major concern for the workers, with more than three-quarters of those interviewed reporting that they are at risk of illness, and 39% having been the victim of accidents.

Figure 41. Risk of illness

ARE YOU AT RISK OF ILLNESS?		
No	122	23%
Yes	407	77%
Total	529	100%

Figure 42. Victims of accidents

ARE YOU A VICTIM OF ACCIDENTS?		
No	320	61%
Yes	207	39%
Total	527	100%

The majority of these are the result of collisions ('Accrochage') and other traffic accidents.

Figure 43. Causes of accidents

WHICH ACCIDENTS?		
Accrochage	74	35%
Traffic accident	71	33%
Injury	18	8%
Fighting	12	6%
Vehicle crash	12	6%
Improper handling of work tools	8	4%
Workplace accidents	6	3%
Burns	2	1%
Tyre blowout	3	1%
Other	8	4%
Total	214	100%

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

In focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, both gbâkâ and wôro-wôro drivers complain about the impact of congestion and traffic jams on their livelihoods.

“The traffic jam increases the journey time and slows down the number of laps. This prevents us from making fast rotations to amortize the revenue, the price of fuel and the income. Also, the rehabilitation of the road network in Abidjan has led to changes, including one-way and no-go traffic. For example, in Marcory, from a certain hour, passage is forbidden on the line while at 9pm, traffic is open on the same line. So, you have to take time to calculate and find the most suitable and quickest passage, which makes the work difficult”

Gbâkâ driver in Koumassi

“Before the crisis in 2002, there was administration everywhere in Côte d’Ivoire and there were 200 cars with three drivers per car, i.e., 600 drivers on our line. But since the advent of the 2002 crisis, the majority of drivers from other cities have taken refuge in Abidjan. This situation has led to a large number of drivers in Abidjan. Thus, the number of drivers increased from 600 to over 2,700. The decentralisation of the administration, especially the ministries, could reduce the number of vehicles in Abidjan and solve the problem of traffic jams”.

Wôro-wôro drivers

ISSUES FACED BY WOMEN

Data published in 2017 on sexual harassment on SOTRA bus services reported women between 14 and 39 years old frequently faced harassment, including rubbing, touching, and groping, throughout all hours of the day. There is no legislation currently in place to treat complaints about sexual harassment on transport. The high density on bus rides, due to bus shortages, has increased harassment. This research recommends that more bus services, legislation, CCTV, awareness raising would reduce sexual harassment and make transport safer for all passengers.

Women workers, as described in the focus group discussions, face major problems resulting from insecurity, often associated with Gambro violence.

Most are vendors in the stations, and find it difficult to access investment capital, leading to low profits.

In addition, the women emphasise the harassment of the municipal police officers in bus stations, and the loss of income when evicted or relocated from their stations.

“I have been selling dêguê for more than 10 years at the gbâkâ station in Adjamé. Before the relocation of the station from its original site, my business was doing very well. I was doing well economically, and I was able to support my family. However, since the station was moved to the new site, my activities have slowed down and my income has dropped considerably. This situation is linked to the fact that passengers make their purchases before going to the station”.

Bus station vendor, Adjamé RAN

When asked whether they had anything else to add at the conclusion of the questionnaire interview, the responses of women respondents included the request to build markets at each of the metro stops specifically

for women vendors, to fund projects for youth employment, for support in helping to resettle, and to find clean sites for women to operate from. It is important to note that there are little or no sanitation and washing facilities.

FUEL, TAXES, AND PERMIT COSTS

Drivers, particularly wôro-wôro drivers complain about the increases in fuel prices and the costs of taxes and permits.

“We wôro-wôro drivers are more confronted with the increase in taxes from the town hall and the rise in fuel prices. In the commune of Cocody, the communal taxes paid to the town hall are more expensive than the national tax. Thus, the licence, which was 9,500 CFA francs every three months, has risen to 11,500 CFA francs and 13,500 CFA francs in 2022, making a total of around 99,500 CFA francs”.

“The parking card is very expensive (13,500 CFA francs), and yet the town hall refuses to allow parking to take customers. When we do, if the town hall notices this, we pay 22,500 CFA francs”.

Wôro-wôro driver at terminus 81

FLEET RENEWAL

Gbâkâ and wôro-wôro drivers are concerned with the problem of the age of the vehicle fleet, which is an increasing constraint on profitable operations.

“Most of the time, the working equipment is inadequate, i.e., the vehicle is old. Indeed, when the driver goes out in the morning, there is no guarantee that he will be able to finish the day with the vehicle without going

to the garage. This has an impact on the driver’s performance. Also, the law prohibiting the entry of “France-au revoir” vehicles [the name given to second-hand imported vehicles] or vehicles older than 5 years is a problem for drivers, as they are allocated a vehicle for three people. However, although the renewal of the vehicle fleet is a reality, the main transport actors do not benefit, as the vehicles are granted to the relatives of the project managers who have no knowledge of the transport sector”.

Gbâkâ driver in Koumassi

New laws introduced in 2017 banned the import of vehicles over five years old. Very few drivers or owners can afford to buy newer vehicles, so the existing fleet of wôro-wôros and gbâkâs becomes progressively older, more difficult to maintain and less fuel-efficient.

As a result, particularly in the aftermath of COVID, owners are facing rising maintenance bills and are making less money, so they are keen to sell the old vehicles to drivers and invest their capital in land and property.

Many drivers aspire to become owners of their own vehicles but find it very difficult to raise loans from the banks.

The government restrictions on the import of used vehicles for public transport has also led to higher costs and worse quality of spare parts for their vehicles, and the cost of repairs and maintenance has increased.

“Spare parts that used to be cheaper are now very expensive and there is the increase in the price of fuel. Despite these numerous expenses, the State refuses to increase the transport tariff, which is not good for us.”

Wôro-wôro driver at terminus 81

LACK OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

In all the focus groups carried out in the various bus stations, Gbâkâ and wôro-wôro drivers mentioned the problem of the lack of social protection.

“Our social security is violated and there is no social security cover for us, because we have no salary. We are paid on our rest time. In fact, the vehicle owner who entrusts you with his car gives you the day off on Sunday to receive a salary. However, Sunday is a day of rest for all workers, which means that the driver no longer has a day of rest.”

Wôro-wôro driver in Koumassi

“Drivers work for several years and find themselves very poorly off when they retire, as their income is very low. So we would like to see the drivers taken care of through their declaration to the CNPS. Also, our salaries are very miserable and do not allow us to meet the needs of our families.”

Gbâkâ driver in Adjamé

LACK OF RESPECT / CUSTOMER PAYMENT

Wôro-wôro and gbâkâ drivers are confronted with difficulties caused by hostility and a lack of respect from passengers.

“The management of problems with passengers remains very complex for us. Last month, we were summoned for a dispute related to a theft. Also, there is a lack of respect and courtesy on the part of the passengers, especially in matters of change. Some passengers, without saying that they don't have change, get on and when they get

off, when you tell them that you don't have change, this sometimes leads to insults.”

“The price is a disagreement between us and the passengers. When the driver finds that the price of transport is low, the passenger throws money at him, which creates discontent on both sides. For example, with the increase in the price of fuel, when I take a client to Cocody and ask him to pay 500 CFA francs, he refuses and hands me the sum of 300 CFA francs that he thinks he is used to paying. This leads to discontent, brutality and sometimes a fight with the passengers. For this reason, I think that the price of transport should be standardised through an inclusive and negotiating approach between the union, consumers and the Cocody town hall”.

Gbâkâ drivers in Koumassi

Service workers also face major problems with the behaviour of customers. As one of the mechanics interviewed explained:

“Our main difficulties are related to customers. Indeed, when a customer gives you his machine, after the repair, he refuses to give us an estimate and prefers to pay us according to his means. He gives us begging tokens which deteriorate our means of subsistence. Also, we are confronted with accidents at work and lack of means to get proper medical care. Thus, we resort to self-medication.”

Mechanic in Adjamé

VTC ISSUES

Yango drivers describe the main problems specifically encountered by those operating VTCs, particularly the cancellation of orders by the customer and difficulties in using GPS to locate customers.

“The cancellation of orders by customers, despite the drivers having moved, is a major difficulty for us. Indeed, some young people make orders just for fun and interfere with the work of the Yango drivers. When you arrive at the exact location, the customer says that he or she has not placed an order. So, the cancellation of the order by the driver leads to points being deducted and to a delay of at least 1 hour for new orders.”

Yango driver at terminus 81

“GPS does not give an accurate indication of the position of customers. And some places are not recognised by the GPS. For example, a customer who goes to the SBK Cocody 82 station, the GPS recognises UTB. When you arrive at the UTB station, the customer tells you that he has not arrived at his destination. Sometimes, if the customer is nice, he decides to extend the amount paid and you drive him to the SBK station or if not, it is the driver who loses, because when you pass the place indicated by the GPS, you lose points on your bonus. Also, the GPS sometimes leads to big detours for the drivers.”

Yango driver at terminus 81

TRADE UNION REPRESENTATION

There are serious problems caused by the fragmentation and weaknesses of the transport unions, and the relationship between trade unions and Gnambros.

According to many Gbâkâ and Wôro-wôro drivers, the majority are not affiliated to trade unions, as these exist in name only, but do not engage in any activities on behalf of the drivers.

“If you take each driver individually, and you ask them if they are affiliated to a union, they will tell you no. The unions exist in name only and no work is done for the transporters in general and the drivers in particular.”

Gbâkâ driver in Koumassi

“All drivers are automatically members of the Union des Syndicats Chauffeurs de Cocody (USCCO). So to drive in Cocody, you have to be a member of the umbrella organisation which is the USCCO. The mission of this umbrella organisation is to defend the rights of drivers and to organise transport routes by zone. However, the defence of drivers' rights by the unions and the umbrella organisation is never respected and carried out, because they are left to their own devices.”

Wôro-wôro driver at terminus 81

During in-depth interviews, gbâkâ owners explained that they feel helpless because they are not listened too and voiceless: “at least the workers have the unions to speak for them, even if they actually don't, but for us owners there is no one...”

Wôro-wôro drivers complain that the unions make lots of financial demands of them but bring no tangible benefits.

The failure of the unions to organise effectively has created a power vacuum in the stations, filled by Gnambros, gangs and corrupt police units.



Some station workers are also frustrated by the lack of support from union leaders:

“Our main difficulties are linked to the irresponsibility of our (union) bosses. Indeed, we are obliged to deal with the problems of the drivers to whom we give tickets and who are members of our unions. However, when they have problems and come to see us, we are unable to deal with their difficulties, because when we pass on the information to our bosses, they turn a deaf ear. Being left to our own devices, we make contributions to help these drivers”.

Ticket agent in Adjamé

BRT AND METRO – IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WORKFORCE

PERCEPTION OF BRT

More than half of those surveyed on the proposed BRT route were not aware of BRT.

Figure 44. Awareness of BRT

HAVE YOU HEARD OF BRT?		
No	178	54%
Yes	149	46%
Total	327	100%

Most of those that were aware of BRT had heard about it from relatives or from television.

Figure 45. Source of BRT awareness

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT BRT?		
A relative	103	57%
Television	47	26%
Social networks	20	11%
Other*	7	4%
Radio	3	2%
Newspapers	2	1%
Total mentions	182	100%

*Other – meeting held at the town hall

There is a similar level of awareness of BRT among the women workers. Of the forty-seven women interviewed on the proposed BRT route, twenty had heard of BRT.

Figure 46. Awareness of BRT among women workers

HAVE YOU HEARD OF BRT? (WOMEN)		
No	27	57.45%
Yes	20	42.55%
Total	47	100%

Of the twenty women who had heard of BRT, most of them had heard about it from friends and relatives.

Figure 47. Source of women's awareness of BRT

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT BRT? (WOMEN)		
Friends and relatives	14	64%
Social networks	3	14%
Television	3	14%
Other	2	9%
Radio	0	0%
Newspapers	0	0%
Total	22	100%

The majority of those surveyed thought that BRT would have an impact on their work, although a sizeable minority (19%) did not know whether or not they would be affected.

Figure 48. Impact of BRT

DO YOU THINK BRT WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON YOUR BUSINESS?		
Yes	233	71%
No	32	10%
Don't know	62	19%
Total	327	100%
If so, how?		
Negative	215	92%
Positive	18	8%
Total	233	100%

Of those who thought that their work would be affected by BRT, the great majority (92%) expected it to have a negative impact.

Nevertheless, a more optimistic 8% thought that BRT would have a positive impact, and that BRT would improve Abidjan's transport system.

Figure 49. Expected positive impact of BRT

POSITIVE IMPACTS	NUMBER OF MENTIONS	
Restructuring of transport system	12	14%
Greater efficiency	11	13%
Revitalising activity	9	11%
Creation of ancillary activity	9	11%
Reduction of traffic jams	9	11%
Reduction of accidents	8	10%
Creation of feeder lines	8	10%
Reprofiling of unpaved roads	8	10%
Asphalting of roads	7	8%
Other*	2	2%
Total mentions	83	100%

* Others include "Workers will always be on time for work", and "Contacting stakeholders for a better future of transport"

Those who were pessimistic about the impact of BRT were mostly concerned with the effect it would have on their livelihoods – a reduction in the numbers of passengers and customers, the closure of informal transport stations, the costs of relocation etc.

Figure 50. Expected negative impact of BRT

NEGATIVE IMPACTS		
Reduction of the customer base	140	20%
Removal of activities	132	19%
Abolition of stations	112	16%
Relocation of my business	107	15%
Difficulty in obtaining daily income	106	15%
Employer-employee conflict	23	3%
Destruction of shops and facilities	23	3%
Removal of transport lines	20	3%
Cost of relocation to feeder routes	16	2%
Other*	12	2%
Total mentions	691	100%

Figure 51. Impact of BRT (women)

DO YOU THINK BRT WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON YOUR BUSINESS? (WOMEN)		
Yes	34	72%
No	3	6%
Don't know	10	21%
Total	47	100%

Of the thirty-four women who thought BRT was likely to have an impact on their business, thirty-one (91%) thought the impact would be negative.

Most participants in focus group discussions in the bus stations had never heard of BRT and said that this was the first time they had been made aware of the project in Abidjan.

“I am a wôro-wôro vehicle owner in Port-Bouët. I have never heard of the BRT but rather of the Abidjan metro, and this on several occasions. I am happy that you are coming to us to know our difficulties, to inform us and to sensitize us on this new transport system.”

Owner of wôro-wôro vehicle in Port-Bouët

The majority of focus group participants were opposed to the project. However, there are divergent opinions. Some are categorically opposed to BRT.

“This new BRT transport system is a system that suits the state and not the vehicle drivers. This is a bad thing, because this structure competes with the informal transporters as a whole. Also, the problem of the age of integration into the BRT and the impartiality of the State in the choice of actors to work in this new transport system reinforces our concern.”

Gbâkâ driver in Adjamé

“The state wants to send us a message. There has been the suppression of vehicles older than 5 years, the metro, and the BRT. We have the impression that the state is looking for ways to tell us to stop doing our job and to disbar us from the city of Abidjan. Côte d’Ivoire is not limited to the city of Abidjan, because the BRT project does not exist in the interior of the country.”

Wôro-wôro drivers

“The state’s transport projects are not successful and are carried out without regard for the welfare of transport workers. For example, in the case of the renewal of the vehicle fleet, the main workers were forgotten, and the choice of transporters was not made impartially, because the authorities

prefer to give the vehicles to their acquaintances or relatives who are not in the field of transport.”

Gbâkâ driver in Adjamé

“I have heard about the metro and not the BRT. The arrival of this new transport system will destroy our business. Where will we go? Who will pay for our children’s schooling? These are our worries, because we are single mothers who fight every day to ensure the survival of our children.”

Restaurant owner at Riviera 2

“BRT sounds a good thing, but I am scared if BRT comes will it be able to work for us, if I lose my job how can I take care of my family.”

Gbâkâ driver (in-depth interview)

“We know that the government and SOTRA have always wanted to delete us from the passenger transport in Abidjan, they send spies to see what we are doing, they come and take some of our friends to get employed in SOTRA but we are still here and growing strong...we know that they are now using the BRT to implement their idea of killing our work.”

Gbâkâ driver (in-depth interview)

“They have called us for about two or three meetings on BRT and told us a lot of things. Some we actually don’t understand, but one thing I remember is they told us to go and tell our members and drivers about the BRT, but they have never given us the money for going around to talk to the drivers, and these things need money.”

Gbâkâ driver (in-depth interview)

According to the gbâkâ owners who participated in the in-depth interviews, BRT is aimed at getting rid of them. They believe that government and SOTRA have long-term plans to throw them out of work and that BRT is going to be used to implement this. They fear that this will put the livelihoods of over 600 drivers at risk, because now they have about 200 gbâkâs with each gbâkâ catering for around three drivers, each of whom has a family to look after.

On the other hand, some FGD participants felt that BRT is good, and are willing to work and integrate into a new BRT transport system.

“In the explanation of the transport system, we agree, but we are waiting for the practice to give our opinion. This system would be welcome if all social strata, whatever their level of education, had their place. Also, the criteria for employability and the way workers join the BRT should be based on the impartiality of the authorities.”

Gbâkâ driver in Adjamé

“The BRT transport system is an innovative idea because it will reduce traffic jams and facilitate mobility in the city of Abidjan.”

Yango driver at terminus 81

“It’s a plus, because we can no longer transport the people of Abidjan properly because of the traffic jam. If the BRT has its own line, it will not have an impact on our activity. But if the BRT is relocated, the town hall will have to find places to relocate us to ensure the continuity of our activity.”

Wôro-wôro drivers at terminus 81

“The implementation of the BRT will increase unemployment among transporters in Côte d’Ivoire. This will lead to a reduction in wôro-wôro. For example, for 1000 wôro-wôro in Cocody, with the arrival of the BRT, only 200 wôro-wôro will be able to work properly. If there are three drivers per car, this creates a job crisis for 2,400 drivers. The BRT will only be able to integrate a maximum of 100 drivers.”

Wôro-wôro driver at terminus 81

“The implementation of the BRT transport system will lead to the suppression of the Gbâkâ lines, which will impact the economic situation of our drivers. Given that I am 62 years old, what work will I be able to do to look after my family? As they cannot officially ask us to leave the transport business, the authorities are finding alternatives to create new transport systems.”

Gbâkâ driver in Koumassi

“The BRT project will create economic pressure on us transport actors. This economic vulnerability could lead us to opt for illegal immigration. For me, if this new transport system is to be implemented, I would rather sell my car to go to the West, because I no longer trust my country. I prefer to die on the water than to die miserable in my own country.”

Gbâkâ driver in Adjamé

On the other hand, Yango drivers think that it will have positive impacts. One driver stated:

“The BRT transport system will not have a negative impact on our activities insofar as the BRT is a complement to the transport system. Each category of actor will have a role to play and a particular line to serve to facilitate urban mobility and regulate the problem of traffic jams”.

Yango driver at terminus 81

For women who are assimilated to transport-related activities, they claim to suffer indirectly from the negative effects of the implementation of the BRT project. According to them, this transport system will lead to the destruction of their sales sites, the lack of employment and the reduction of their income due to the low attractiveness of the new sales sites.

Options for alternative employment

Interviewees were asked what activity they would do if their current work was to disappear because of the arrival of BRT or Metro.

The greatest number of people thought that they would earn their livelihoods in unspecified trading (20%), attempt to remain in the same occupations (16%), work as drivers (15%) or return to their villages / work in agriculture (8%). Only 4% suggested working for BRT.

Other alternative work suggested included masonry, truck driving, selling vehicles, electricians, property management, the army, scrap metal industry, mobile money, car painting, tyre-mending, security guards, and entertainment.

Suggestions for BRT and Metro implementation

Questionnaire survey interviewees were asked to give suggestions regarding the arrival of the BRT and Metro.

Many responses were generally very positive concerning the arrival of BRT and metro systems in Abidjan, but there were also many which called for job creation by the government to offset the potential losses in the informal transport economy, particularly among the youth.

Figure 52. Alternative employment?

IF CURRENT ACTIVITY DISAPPEARED, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?		
Trader (unspecified)	67	20%
Remain the same (unspecified)	52	16%
Driver	50	15%
Don't know	29	9%
Return to village / agriculture	26	8%
Mechanic	19	6%
Retail	16	5%
BRT driver	14	4%
Garments	7	2%
Spare parts sales	6	2%
Restaurant	6	2%
Return to education	4	1%
Other	32	10%
Total	328	100%

A relatively large number of responses (45) called for the authorities to integrate the informal transport services into the new systems and feeder routes, “Think of us. Negotiate not impose!” and involve the unions.

More specifically, there were more than twenty proposals to ensure that BRT and Metro recruit drivers and mechanics on the basis of experience, not necessarily on formal qualifications, and to provide training.

Many interviewees asked that the BRT and Metro stations integrate modern gbâkâ and wôro-wôro stations and there were also calls, particularly among the women, for trading spaces and facilities in or near all the stations.

Other proposals for action by the authorities include the provision of access to affordable capital for fleet renewal and help for the relocation of businesses from sites being cleared for BRT and Metro development or provide compensation.

PERCEPTION OF METRO

All but three people out of 202 who were surveyed along the METRO route were aware of the project.

Figure 53. Awareness of METRO

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE METRO?		
No	3	1%
No	199	99%
Total	202	100%

Similar to those who were aware of BRT, most were made aware of the METRO project by relatives or television.

Figure 54. Source of METRO awareness

IF YES, HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE METRO		
A relative	123	40%
Television	112	36%
Social networks	43	14%
Radio	12	4%
Newspapers	10	3%
Other*	9	3%
Total mentions	309	100%

A large majority of those interviewed thought that the METRO project would negatively impact their work.

Figure 55. Impact of METRO

DO YOU THINK METRO WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON YOUR BUSINESS?		
Yes	150	74%
No	35	17%
I don't know	17	8%
Total	202	100%
If so, how?		
Negatively	119	79%
Positively	31	21%
Total	150	100%

Respondents were asked to identify any **positive** aspects of METRO's impact. The number of responses was relatively small, mostly concerned with potential reduction of congestion and accidents and improvements to road infrastructure.

Figure 56. Expected positive impact of METRO

POSITIVE IMPACTS		
Reduction of traffic jams	27	13%
Creation of feeder lines	27	13%
Accident reduction	25	12%
Creation of ancillary activity	24	11%
Transport fluidity	24	11%
Transport structuring	23	11%
Reprofiling of unpaved roads	22	10%
Revitalise the business	19	9%
Asphalting of roads	18	9%
Other	1	0%
Total	210	100%

When asked to identify **negative** impacts, there were a much larger number of responses, mostly concerned with the potential threat to livelihoods.

Figure 57. Expected negative impact of METRO

NEGATIVE IMPACTS		
Reduction of the customer base	89	20%
Difficulty in obtaining the daily recipe	66	15%
Removal of activities	65	15%
Relocation of my business	64	15%
Abolition of stations	52	12%
Removal of transport lines	36	8%
Destruction of spontaneous habitats and shops in the vicinity of the drawdown points	20	5%
Capital increase for the installation of ancillary activities in the feeder zones	19	4%
Employer-employee conflict	17	4%
Other	9	2%
Total mentions	437	100%

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT

Potential impacts of BRT on informal transport livelihoods

It is not possible to calculate accurate estimates of potential job losses. This would require reliable data on the number of affected vehicles along the BRT & Metro routes, the number of crew members per vehicle, the number of service workers required to maintain the fleets affected, the number of affected stations and the size of the direct and indirect workforce in each wôro-wôro and gbâkâ station.

Nevertheless, in the case of BRT, using data supplied by AMUGA, the results from the survey, field visits to stations and interviews with union representatives of workers and vehicle owners, it is possible to identify some of the stations most likely to be affected, a rough estimate of the number of vehicles using those stations, and the direct and indirect jobs in each station.

There are in total 170 gbâkâ and wôro-wôro lines in Abidjan identified by AMUGA, of which 72 are likely to be affected: 27 in Adjamé, 24 in Cocody, 11 in Yopougon, 6 in Bingerville, and 4 in Attécoubé.

A number of interviews were held with worker and owner representatives in a selection of affected gbâkâ and wôro-wôro stations to gather estimates of daily registrations of vehicles at the stations (minimum and maximum number or the average number of vehicles registered per day). With the assistance of station managers, headcounts were undertaken of workers directly or indirectly employed in each station. This identified an average of 1,380 gbâkâs and 1,117 wôro-wôros that use these stations each day.

Figure 58. Estimated jobs at risk at selected stations

ESTIMATED CAR FLEETS, AND DIRECT AND INDIRECT JOBS IN WORO-WORO AND GBAKA STATIONS ALONG THE BRT & METRO ROUTES					
	AVERAGE NUMBER OF VEHICLES PER DAY		JOBS IN STATION		
	Gbâkâs	Wôro-wôro	Direct	Indirect	Total
Yopougon Siporex Station	900		50	144	194
Yopougon Washing Station (16 ième)		275	52	50	102
Adjamé Dallas		55	23	104	127
Woro Life Station - Woro International (La vie)		200	53	50	103
Gare de Vie - Gbâkâ (La vie)	80		53	50	103
Life Station destination Blockhaus		15	2	2	4
Gare de Vie - 2 Plateaux / Angré		70	10	3	13
Riviera 2 Station / Attoban		250	26	120	146
Junction Kilometre 9 (9 kilos)		152	15	38	53
Feh Kessé Crossroads (Bingerville wôro-wôro)		100	11	35	46
Feh Kessé Crossroads (Bingerville Gbâkâ)	400		35	7	42
Total	1,380	1,117	330	603	933

It is possible to calculate the approximate total number of livelihoods at risk in these stations by adding together:

- the number of identified station workers
- an estimated number of crew members employed in the gbâkâs and wôro-wôros
- an estimated number of service workers (mechanics, technicians etc) needed to maintain the gbâkâs and wôro-wôros

The headcounts in the stations revealed an estimated total of **933 station workers**.

From field observations and in-depth interviews, it can be broadly assumed that each gbâkâ has a principal driver (target or owner-driver) and a relief driver ('l'embauché'), each with an apprentice – a total of **four crew members per gbâkâ**.

Very crudely, it can also be assumed that, on average, 40 service workers (mechanics, technicians, cleaners etc) are needed to maintain every 100 gbâkâs, generating **0.4 service livelihoods per gbâkâ**.

It can also be broadly assumed that each wôro-wôro has a principal driver (le titulaire'), a secondary driver ('l'américain') and a number of relief drivers equivalent to one person – a total of **three crew members per wôro-wôro**.

Similar to gbâkâs, it can also be assumed that, on average, 20 service workers are needed to maintain every 100 wôro-wôros, generating **0.2 service livelihoods per wôro-wôro**.

Figure 59. Assumptions for calculation of affected crew and service workers

ASSUMPTIONS FOR CALCULATION OF AFFECTED CREW AND SERVICE WORKERS	
Number of gbâkâs	1,380
Gbâkâ crews per vehicle	
Drivers	1
Relief drivers ('l'embauché')	1
Apprentices / conductors	2
Total gbâkâ crew livelihoods at risk	5,520
Gbâkâ service workers per vehicle	0.4
Total gbâkâ service livelihoods at risk	552
Number of woro-woros	1,117
Wôro-wôro crews per vehicle	
Driver ('le titulaire')	1
Second driver ('l'américain')	1
Relief drivers	1
Total wôro-wôro crew livelihoods at risk	3,351
Wôro-wôro service workers per vehicle	0.2
Total woro-woro service livelihoods at risk	223

Overall, from these calculations from very approximate estimates, it is possible to suggest that there may be more than 10,000 livelihoods at risk from these stations on BRT and METRO routes.

Figure 60. Total livelihoods at risk

TOTAL LIVELIHOODS AT RISK IN THE SELECTED STATIONS	
Station workers	933
Gbâkâ crews	5,520
Gbâkâ service workers	552
Wôro-wôro crews	3,351
Wôro-wôro service workers	223
Total	10,579

This of course does not take into account the potential for relocating some of these jobs to other locations, the new employment possibilities offered within BRT, METRO, or feeder routes to and from the BRT and METRO lines.

There are no available estimates of the number of jobs to be created directly by the introduction of Abidjan's BRT services. Nevertheless, based on figures from BRT introduced in other cities, it is possible to make a crude estimate. In Johannesburg, for example, Rea Vaya BRT reportedly generated 830 permanent new jobs: 256 within the bus operating company (drivers, mechanics etc), 280 in the stations, 240 in security and cleaning and 40 in administration⁶³. The Rea Vaya BRT line is 25.5km long, comparable to the proposed Abidjan line (20km).

According to the Ministry of Transport, the METRO system is expected to generate 2,000 new jobs⁶⁴.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS OF INFORMAL TRANSPORT IN ABIDJAN

Age and education

Informal transport workers, both women and men, are of all ages, with the majority between 25-50 years old. This may be contrary to the popular perception of workers in and around the gbâkâ and wôro-wôro stations being mostly young men. Most have not had secondary or tertiary education. Illiteracy is a major problem, particularly for women, of whom 28% have had no schooling whatsoever.

Experience

Nearly a quarter of workers have more than 20 years' experience – both men and women. 60% have never worked in any other industry or occupation. Most transport workers are wholly dependent on the transport industry for their livelihoods. In other words, it is a relatively stable workforce.

Organisation

Most of those surveyed (68%) claimed that they are not members of any form of organisation, whether a trade union, an association, or a self-help group, although it is possible that the definition of 'membership' may be unclear. Of those that did claim membership, the largest number of people were trade union members, followed by a variety of associations, cooperatives, and self-help organisations.

None of the women interviewed (vendors, ticket sellers, water sellers, restaurant owners, cleaners, and others) are in trade unions or cooperatives, but many are in 'tontines' (self-help groups).

Livelihoods

Those who participated in the questionnaire survey were asked to estimate their typical net daily earnings. For most of these workers, earnings can obviously fluctuate and, for many, can be difficult to calculate, so the results can only be very approximate. Nevertheless, as may be expected, on-board crew members earn more than other workers in the industry. Most of the station and service workers earn less than CFA 10,000 (USD 15) per day, whereas the majority of crew members earn between CFA 10,000 and 20,000 (US 15-30). At the lowest end of the scale are the unskilled station workers and service workers.

There is also a significant difference in the earnings between men and women. Women are more likely to be service workers, such as vendors. 62% of women workers earn less than 10,000 CFA per day, compared with 30% of men.

KEY ISSUES FACING THE WORKFORCE

Gnambros and workplace violence

Violence or the threat of violence and extortion by gnambros (gang members) is a constant threat in wôro-wôro and gbâkâ stations. Police, trade unions and the authorities seem powerless (or unwilling) to contain or solve the problem.

Police harassment

Police corruption and extortion is a major problem throughout the informal transport system but particularly for gbâkâ drivers and station vendors. In-depth interviews revealed that gbâkâ drivers are consistently forced to pay police CFA 40-60,000 (USD 60-90) per month in bribes.

The '**target system**' ("recette") and on-street competition. The informal transport economy is

characterised by the 'target system' where wôro-wôro and gbâkâ drivers are set a daily financial target by vehicle owners. Each driver has to pay the target, plus cover all other expenses including fuel, station fees, payments to other workers and police bribes from the fares collected, before earning any money to take home.

A typical daily target is CFA 13-17,000 (USD 20-25) for a wôro-wôro driver and CFA 20,000 (USD 30) for a gbâkâ, depending on the vehicle's age and maintenance and popularity of the route.

The target system generates very long working hours (a majority of workers are at work for six or seven days a week, including 19% who work every day) and competition between drivers for passengers, leading to speeding, dangerous driving, accidents, and friction between drivers.

Working conditions.

The working conditions are generally very bad, caused by traffic congestion, air pollution, the bad state of the roads and lack of facilities and amenities (shelter from sun and rain, lack of sanitation and clean water etc). 77% of survey respondents felt that they were at risk of illness. 39% had been the victim of accidents, mostly from hanging off vehicles ("accrochage") or involved in traffic accidents.

Trade union organisation.

There are very many competing unions and federations in the Abidjan transport industry, both in 'formal' (rail and SOTRA) and informal Gbâkâ and Wôro-wôro services. Many of those who took part in the questionnaire survey or participated in the focus group discussions or in-depth interviews complained about the role and behaviour of trade unions.

According to many Gbâkâ and Wôro-wôro drivers, the majority are not affiliated to trade unions, as these exist in name only, and do not engage in any activities on behalf of the drivers.

There is a conflict of interest. On the one hand, unions are responsible for the management and operations of the routes and stations and maintain discipline over the workforce. Unions depend on

the collection of fees paid per route ('line fees) and fees paid at the station per journey ('loading fees') for their income, rather than membership dues paid voluntarily.

On the other hand, unions are supposed to defend and promote the interests of their members through negotiation and collective bargaining with the authorities to improve livelihoods and working conditions.

Vehicle owners are also dissatisfied with their unions and associations. During in-depth interviews, gbâkâ owners explained that they feel helpless because they are not listened too and voiceless: "at least the workers have the unions to speak for them, even if they actually don't. But for us owners there is no-one"

Women workers are hugely under-represented in the trade unions. This is due to the concentration of membership among vehicle crews, rather than organisation among all the workers in the stations and service industries where women work, and the barriers faced by women in finding jobs in the industry, particularly as drivers.

Fleet renewal, spare parts, and access to capital.

Most of the vehicles are very old and in poor condition, and the fleets are getting older and less well-maintained as a result of a ban on the import of second-hand vehicles. This is accelerating the impact of diesel emissions on the environment and workers' health, as well as increasing the cost of maintenance and repairs. Imported genuine spare parts are largely unaffordable for most vehicle owners, leading to the use of cheap sub-standard substitutes or old parts cannibalised from scrapped vehicles.

With higher fuel and maintenance costs, profit margins from the gbâkâs and wôro-wôros are being squeezed, leaving owners with little or no capital and no access to affordable loans to replace vehicles when they reach the end of their operational life. Rather than rely on the daily target income, some owners are now passing their vehicles to the drivers who then have to pay for the vehicle by instalment. The owners, in effect, become moneylenders.

Lack of social protection

In all the focus groups in bus stations, gbâkâ and wôro-wôro drivers complained at the lack of social protection: "Our social security is violated and there is no social security cover for us, because we have no salary" (wôro-wôro driver in Koumassi).

"Drivers work for several years and find themselves very poorly off when they retire, as their income is very low. So, we would like to see the drivers taken care of through their declaration to the CNPS" (gbâkâ driver in Adjamé).

Difficulties with passengers and customers

Wôro-wôro and gbâkâ drivers are confronted with difficulties caused by hostility and a lack of respect from passengers. Arguments over fares are common, sometimes turning violent. Service workers, such as mechanics, also have problems with customers, refusing to pay more than a fraction of the real cost.

Women workers

The focus groups of women workers highlighted problems of police harassment, particularly harassment by municipal police officers in bus stations, lack of access to investment capital, lack of space and eviction from stations, and lack of facilities and clean sites.

On demand drivers / VTCs (Voiture de Transport avec Chauffeur)

The main problems encountered by VTC drivers, as expressed by Yango drivers in focus group discussions were the cancellation of orders by customers and difficulties in using GPS to locate customers.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS BRT

More than half of those surveyed on the proposed BRT route were not aware of BRT.

Most think that BRT will have an impact on their work, and the great majority (92%) expect it to be negative. Nevertheless, a more optimistic 8% think that BRT will have a positive impact, and that BRT will improve Abidjan's transport system.

Those survey respondents who were pessimistic about the impact of BRT are mostly concerned with the effect it will have on their livelihoods: a reduction in the numbers of passengers and customers, the closure of informal transport stations, the costs of relocation etc.

Most focus group participants in discussions in the bus stations had never heard of BRT, and that this was the first time they had been made aware of the project in Abidjan. Most participants are opposed to the project.

However, there are divergent opinions. Some are categorically opposed to BRT, and suspicious that the government is intentionally using BRT to remove the gbâkâ and wôro-wôro services. Some welcome BRT but are concerned for their livelihoods. The women vendors are particularly concerned at the loss of their workplaces and relocation. Others believe that BRT will be good and are willing to integrate into a new BRT transport system.

Workers' proposals

Many responses in the questionnaire survey called for job creation by the government to offset the potential losses in the informal transport economy, particularly among the youth.

Others called for the authorities to integrate the informal transport services into the new systems and feeder routes, "Think of us. Negotiate not impose!" and involve the unions.

More specifically, there were more than twenty proposals to ensure that BRT and Metro recruit drivers and mechanics on the basis of experience, not necessarily on formal qualifications, and provide training.

Many interviewees asked that the BRT and Metro stations integrate modern gbâkâ and wôro-wôro stations and there were also calls, particularly among the women, for trading spaces and facilities in or near all the stations.

Other proposals for action by the authorities include the provision of access to affordable loans for fleet renewal and help for the relocation of businesses from sites being cleared for BRT and Metro development or provide compensation.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

It is not possible to calculate accurate estimates of potential job losses. Nevertheless, through field observations and analysis of data on gbâkâ and wôro-wôro lines provided by AMUGA, it is possible to make some broad observations that give a sense of the scale of informal employment at risk.

Detailed field observations and interviews with station workers at 11 of the affected stations provide an estimate that there may be more than 10,000 jobs at risk:

933 station-based workers, plus 9,646 crew members and service workers who currently earn a living from 1,380 gbâkâs and 1,117 wôro-wôros.

This does not take into account the potential for relocating some of these jobs to other locations, the new employment possibilities offered within BRT, METRO, or feeder routes to and from the BRT and METRO lines, or other mitigation measures that the government may introduce to maintain employment opportunities for those at risk.

PROSPECTS FOR INCLUSIVE REFORM AND FORMALISATION

Transport authorities and industry experts in Abidjan are clearly sensitive to the potential impact of BRT on the gbâkâ and wôro-wôro industry, the importance of an integrated approach and the need for negotiation and consultation.

“International experience has indeed shown that the implementation of a BRT and the restructuring of a bus network could be largely hampered by opposition from small-scale transport operators. In order to avoid this blocking situation, it is essential to recognize the field experience of these actors and to propose a space for dialogue with the stakeholders in order to involve them in a shared diagnosis of the current traffic

and operation difficulties, the design of simple and operational solutions for the operation of feeder routes, but also of the exchange and terminus hubs, the construction of a provisional operating account and the associated financial analysis...”

SETEC/TRANSITEC, 2021. Study of the Global Restructuring of the Abidjan Public Transport Network, P.26.

This was reflected in positive and constructive discussions with AMUGA and other key stakeholders in meetings and interviews.

ILO Recommendation 204: Concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy

In 2015, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) agreed a set of recommendations to governments for the transition of the informal economy towards formalisation. The Recommendation is highly relevant for the informal transport industry and provides a good starting framework for reform and formalisation that is inclusive of workers and owners in public transport. Although ILO Recommendations have no legal power, this framework provides important policy guidance for negotiation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For trade unions

01. Build a stronger, more unified movement, nationally, city-wide and in the communes, capable of credible and effective negotiation with the authorities.
02. Strengthen democratic accountability to members, and act in their interests.
03. Explore organisational and financial options for the separation of management roles in gbâkâ and wôro-wôro routes and stations from the role of organisation and representation in the defence of workers' livelihoods and interests.

04. Meet workers on routes and in stations affected by the introduction of BRT and Metro systems regularly to share information, discuss issues and agree common policies for discussion and negotiation with AMUGA and other key stakeholders, based on democratic engagement and consultation with the workers concerned.
 05. Ensure that all workers dependent on employment in passenger transport are democratically represented and included in consultation, discussion, and negotiation, including vehicle crews (drivers and mates), station workers and service workers.
 06. Encourage women to join and actively participate in a union, include women workers in the union leadership, and develop and strengthen women's committees in the unions.
 07. Recognise the need for and encourage vehicle owners to have strong and democratic representative organisation, whether within the trade union movement or as independently constituted associations, while ensuring that competing interests of workers and owners do not create conflicts of interest within unions.
02. Establish a formally constituted forum for regular consultation, discussion and negotiation between unions, vehicle owners, service operators and the transport authorities concerning the integration and reform of informal transport services to ensure mitigation against loss of employment, improvement in working conditions and respect for workers' livelihoods and rights.
 03. Ensure that the agenda for reform and integration specifically includes action to address current major issues facing the workforce, including:
 - Extortion, corruption, and violence by gnambrors and police
 - Discrimination and harassment against women workers
 - Alternatives to the 'target system' ("recette") of daily fees paid to vehicle owners
 - Access to social protection
 - Access to affordable finance or subsidies for recapitalisation / replacement of vehicles
 - Access to decent sanitation and food preparation facilities and shelter for workers in wôro-wôro, gbâkâ and BRT stations and terminals.

For Abidjan transport authorities

01. Adopt ILO Recommendation 204 and "take urgent and appropriate measures to enable the transition of workers and economic units from the informal to the formal economy, while ensuring the preservation and improvement of existing livelihoods and respecting workers' fundamental rights, and ensuring opportunities for income security, livelihoods and entrepreneurship during the transition" .
04. Ensure that drivers and support staff to be employed by BRT and Metro operating companies are free to join trade unions of their choosing, that women and men currently in informal transport, irrespective of formal qualifications, have priority in training and recruitment, and that a proportion of all jobs are set aside for women.

ENDNOTES

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