



AfCAP
Africa Community Access Partnership



Gender Mainstreaming in the Motorcycle Taxi Sector in Rural Sierra Leone and Liberia

Inception Report



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RAF2044G

February 2017

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Cover Photo: Aspirant female commercial motorcycle taxi riders undergoing training at an abandoned airfield near Kenema, eastern Sierra Leone. Paul Richards ©

<i>Quality assurance and review table</i>			
Version	Author(s)	Reviewer(s)	Date
1.0	Krijn Peters and Esther Mokuwa		27 February 2017
		Paul Starkey	23 March 2017
2.0	Krijn Peters		14 September 2017

AfCAP Database Details: Gender Mainstreaming in the Motorcycle taxi sector in rural Sierra Leone and Liberia			
Reference No:	RAF2044G	Location	Swansea, UK
Source of Proposal	PMU: Open call	Procurement Method	Open Procurement Method
Theme	Cross-cutting issues	Sub-Theme	Gender equality
Lead Implementation Organisation	Swansea University Singleton Park Swansea, SA2 8PP United Kingdom	Partner Organisation	- AKA Research - Lofa Integrated Development Association
Total Approved Budget	£45,502.80 plus UK VAT	Total Used Budget	£4550.28
Start Date	01-02-2017	End Date	30-01-2018
Report Due Date	27-02-2017	Date Received	14-09-2017

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Abstract

Even in the poorest regions of Africa, cheap Chinese or Indian made motorcycle taxis have now become part of the rural landscape, giving villagers easier access to local markets, health and educational facilities. The overwhelming majority of the riders are males, serving what is perhaps a majority female clientele. This research will establish the main barriers and challenges women experience in becoming motorcycle riders in rural settings in Sierra Leone and Liberia and how these can be overcome. It also logs rural women's needs for and use of rural transport provisions, with particular focus on motorcycle taxi transport. Furthermore, it assesses whether a pioneering community-driven rural track construction project in northern Liberia – designed to further facilitate rural motorcycle transportation and with explicit gender mainstreaming in design, planning, and implementation – empowers women and makes them more likely to take up the motorcycle taxi profession and/or opt for household/village roles or livelihood activities normally not associated with females.

Key words

Motorcycle taxis, unions, track construction, access to social amenities, training and maintenance, safety, empowerment

AFRICA COMMUNITY ACCESS PARTNERSHIP (AfCAP) *Safe and sustainable transport for rural communities*

AfCAP is a research programme, funded by UK Aid, with the aim of promoting safe and sustainable transport for rural communities in Africa. The AfCAP partnership supports knowledge sharing between participating countries in order to enhance the uptake of low cost, proven solutions for rural access that maximise the use of local resources. The programme follows on from the AFCAP1 programme that ran from 2008 to 2014. AfCAP is brought together with the Asia Community Access Partnership (AsCAP) under the Research for Community Access Partnership (ReCAP), managed by Cardno Emerging Markets (UK) Ltd.

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Acronyms, Units and Currencies

\$	United States Dollar
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFCAP	Africa Community Access Partnership
AKA Research	Sierra Leone research NGO
ASCAP	Asia Community Access Partnership
DfID	Department for International Development
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council (UK)
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GC	Global Communities (US NGO)
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GPS	Global Positioning System
LIDA	Lofa Integrated Development Association
MSF	Medecins Sans Frontieres
RECAP	Research for Community Access Partnership
UK	United Kingdom (of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
UKAid	United Kingdom Aid (Department for International Development, UK)
WHO	World Health Organization

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Executive Summary

Cheap Chinese or Indian made motorcycle taxis have now become part of the African landscape, giving villagers easier access to local markets, health and educational facilities. In Sierra Leone and Liberia – the countries for this research - this transformation in local transport provision started after the civil wars and spread from the towns to the rural areas. The impact of this on rural communities has been enormous, and has broken an age-long deadlock: without proper market access, rural producers – and many of these farmers are women – typically earn little from whatever they produce, inducing them to opt for subsistence production. Even though farmers may be willing to produce more for markets, better road infrastructure and transport services are a pre-condition for agricultural development, but are not forthcoming in light of the small volumes that are actually traded.

The overwhelming majority of the riders are males, serving what is perhaps a majority female clientele. But there are some female motorcycle-riders as well, sometimes favoured by passengers, given their reputation of being less reckless riders, and with no risk of sexual harassment of female passengers, particularly relevant for late night or longer journeys to more isolated areas. Nevertheless, despite the demand, female riders are still a tiny minority and if present, they are limited to the more (semi-)urban areas.

This research will establish the main barriers and challenges women experience in becoming motorcycle riders in rural settings and how these can be overcome (training, credit, awareness, policy change, etc.). This question will be answered via a detailed study of female motorcycle taxi riders and female passengers in the rural areas around the provincial Sierra Leonean towns of Bo, Kenema and Makeni and in Nimba County, Northern Liberia. All three towns in Sierra Leone serve as local hubs - connected via motorcycle taxis - for the surrounding rural areas, providing access to markets and health and educational facilities for rural dwellers. This helps us to better understand the rural, peri-rural and urban-rural nexus of motorcycle transportation and the opportunities and challenges for female riders within this.

The second research aim is to log rural women's needs for and use of rural transport provisions, particularly motorcycle transportation in both Sierra Leone and Liberia. It will also assess whether a pioneering community-driven rural track construction project – designed to further facilitate rural motorcycle transportation and with explicit gender mainstreaming in design, planning, and implementation – empowers women. Will this project make them more likely to take up the motorcycle taxi profession and/or opt for household/village roles or livelihood activities normally not associated with females? This track construction pilot project is funded by GIZ and implemented by Global Communities (GC) in Nimba County, northern Liberia.

A mixed-methods approach – with both qualitative in-depth interviews, surveys and focus -group discussions and more quantitative road-side census – is used to gather data. The research team is gender-balanced including researchers from a Sierra Leonean research NGO, AKA research and a Liberian NGO 'Lofa Integrated Development Association' (LIDA).

1 Background

This research initiative is in response to a ReCAP call on “gender mainstreaming in rural transport”, which followed on from the Gender Mainstreaming discussion facilitated on GATNET during November-December 2015.

The research initiative recognises that the motorcycle taxi sector provides a significant part of both urban and rural transport services in Sierra Leone and Liberia, and many other developing countries. Motorcycle taxis are partly replacing other forms of motorised public transport and partly offering motorised public transport in areas and on routes previously not served by public transport providers. The sector is male dominated, and there is little understanding of what the obstacles are for gender mainstreaming in the sector and the possible solutions and ways to achieve this.



Figure 1 - Motorcycle taxi rider with two female passengers on the Bafodia – Kabala road, Koinadugu District, Sierra Leone.

Previous research experiences by the team’s researchers and initial scoping activities for this research project suggest that both motorcycle taxi unions and female stakeholders in Sierra Leone and Liberia are interested in more women becoming motorcycle taxi riders. The motorcycle taxi sector is a relatively new phenomenon in many Sub-Saharan Countries and few transport policies have been formulated which recognise this new development. Those that have been formulated are dominated by road safety concerns, banning the activity in certain parts of the country, such as urban areas, or even universally across the country, which is, for example, the case in Ghana. Few if any policies recognise the sector’s significance for making motorised transport available to the majority of urban and rural populations.

In Sierra Leone and Liberia, the spread of commercial motorcycle taxis started from the early 2000s when the civil wars came to an end. During the war, many car taxis were either destroyed or driven to safety and sold in neighbouring countries. Furthermore, road maintenance, let alone road construction, came to a complete standstill. These factors, in addition to the lower purchasing costs of motorcycles as compared to cars and mini-buses, contributed to the introduction and rapid spread of motorcycle taxis in both countries, first in the urban areas and later to rural localities. So far, studies on this phenomenon in Sierra Leone and Liberia have mainly focused on the early years, where it was argued that many of the riders were ex-combatants who had failed to make a meaningful livelihood from their Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration training (Peters, 2007; Denov, 2011); on the role of motorcycle taxis in urban areas (Burge, 2011; Menzel, 2011); and on the role of motorcycle taxi unions (Richards et al., 2004; Baker, 2006; 2008).

However, the socio-economic impact on rural communities – and how this impacts differently on the two genders – by the introduction of rural motorcycle taxi services has hardly been researched, let alone quantified. Because of the rapid spread of, and increase in, motorcycle taxi services, some excellent studies, such as Porter’s 2008 study on the gendered dimensions of transport in Sub-Saharan Africa, have become partly outdated. The importance of rural motorcycle (taxi) transport for development can hardly be overstated. For instance, a study by the World Bank showed that nurses and certified midwives working in Liberia in rural settings valued having a motorcycle at their disposal more than having appropriate housing, working in an urban environment or not having a heavy workload (Vujici et al., 2010). This is important as not only do key government workers praise the merits of motorcycle transport in rural Liberia, but female nurses and midwives riding motorcycles can act as trail-blazers for a wider acceptance of female riders, as do female NGO workers riding motorcycles.

A rather novel initiative in response to rapid growth of motorcycle taxis in rural Liberia is a project by Global Communities in Northern Liberia. This project upgrades several footpaths connecting villages to motorcycle accessible trails. A three year study, funded by the ESRC/DfID is assessing its impact (Jenkins and Peters, 2016).



Figure 2 - Female NGO worker using her motorcycle to visit remote villages, around the Makeni area, Bombali District, Sierra Leone.

2 Research Objective and Questions

2.1 Research Objective

The proposed work will seek to understand barriers to women’s greater involvement in the motorcycle taxi sector, both as users and service providers, including addressing the challenges posed by poor track conditions. The approach is ethnographic, seeking to document how women talk about this issue in their own words and terms, and how they frame possible approaches to reduction of obstacles. Other stakeholders are also considered from the same analytical perspective. As with much ethnographic work, a major emphasis is placed on correct understanding of messages provided by informants. This will involve mainly qualitative analysis, but supported by quantitative contextualisation. Road-side traffic censuses will be conducted to assess, among other things, the gender balance of travellers across the various forms of (intermediate) transport. These censuses will follow the method stipulated in Starkey et al (2013).

2.2 Research Questions

- a. What are the barriers and challenges women face in becoming motorcycle taxi riders in peri-urban and rural settings?

- b. Will track building, with explicit gender mainstreaming, help women to become motorcycle professionals, or to take up roles and livelihoods not hitherto associated with females?

3 The Research Sites and Workplan

Research is conducted in rural areas in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The research sites are encircled on the below map. All four sites can be classified as post-war reconstruction areas, with some communities still receiving people who fled during the war. Moreover, the 2014 Ebola Virus Disease epidemic affected all four sites.



Figure 3 - Map of Sierra Leone and Liberia showing research sites

The Sierra Leone part of the study and its associated research question is answered via a detailed study of female motorcycle taxi riders and passengers in the rural areas around the provincial towns of Bo, Kenema and Makeni. Makeni and its rural surroundings have been added as a research site, based on comments made by the local ReCAP representative in Sierra Leone, who rightly observed a bias towards the South and East of the country. Our Sierra Leone research team has conducted extensive research in the Makeni area before so we believe this addition is very feasible, despite the limited time available. All three towns serve as local hubs for the surrounding rural areas, providing

access to markets, health and educational facilities for rural dwellers. This will help us to better understand the rural, peri-rural and urban-rural nexus of motorcycle transportation and the opportunities and challenges for female riders within this. Furthermore, the Makeni study offers the opportunity to assess the impact of a large scale agro-industry project (the 10,000 hectares Addax Bioenergy sugarcane plantation) with associated rural road construction, on rural transformation and gender roles in the motorcycle transport sector. The Chief Researcher and the SL Researcher will spend five days in each of the three research sites collecting data, bringing the total of data collection days in Sierra Leone to 15 days.

The Liberia part of the study and its associated research question is answered via a detailed study of a community driven track construction projects in Nimba county, northern Liberia, funded by GIZ and implemented by Global Communities. This project aims through extensive use of local resources (labour and materials) to facilitate rural transformation and allow for livelihood diversification. Moreover, via the active and deliberate involvement of women in all aspects of the track planning, design, implementation and maintenance, it aims to empower women to overcome traditional/patriarchal – but constraining – barriers. The researchers will also gather data in Nimba county locations which do not benefit from track construction, to compare and contrast the data from respondents involved in the track construction projects – and villagers living within the track construction areas. The fieldwork/data for the track site will be 12 days and for the other areas 8 days, bringing the total of data collection days in Liberia to 20 days.



Figure 4 - Newly constructed bridge at the Global Communities built motorcycle navigable track next to the old footbridge, near Gogein, Nimba County, Liberia.

Following the scoping visits to Sierra Leone and Liberia in November 2016 it became clear that for Sierra Leone the motorcycle unions in Bo and Kenema play an important role in accessing both female riders and rural motorcycle taxi providers. It is also likely that any intervention to encourage gender mainstreaming in motorcycle taxi provision in rural areas should include the unions. We are currently exploring opportunities to involve the riders in the data collection process.

For Liberia, it became clear from the scoping exercise that – in addition to the stated research objective – gathering detailed information on the (potential) impact of increased access for women and girls in the rural and peri-urban areas, would greatly add to the findings and recommendations regarding gender mainstreaming in rural transport. Due to extended contract negotiations between ReCAP and Swansea University, the various milestone due dates have been pushed back nearly 4 months. See the revised workplan in Annex B.

4 Researchers and Responsibilities

The Principal Investigator, Krijn Peters, will have overall responsibility for the research outputs and will be responsible for writing up of the findings of the studies. The Chief Researcher, Esther

Mokuwa of AKA Research, with the support of a Research Assistant, will conduct the research and data collection in the Bo, Kenema and Makeni area in Sierra Leone, and has responsibility for the Nimba field work in Liberia. She will oversee the LIDA researchers in Liberia. She is also responsible for the data transcription and will contribute to the writing up of findings. Krijn and Esther will have contact on a regular basis (at least once a month) concerning the study.

5 Community Access

The proposed research focuses on motorcycle taxi provision in deep rural areas in West Africa and how to further stimulate this. Motorcycle taxis often deliver an essential 'first mile' service by providing motorised access to rural communities affected by remoteness. Better and faster access is essential for rural livelihoods to move away from bare subsistence levels, and to have better access to essential services such as education and (maternal) health care.

5.1 Gender

The research is specifically focused on understanding the barriers and opportunities for women and girls in the rural motorcycle taxi sector, both as users and operators. The research team is also fully gender balanced.

5.2 Other Marginalised Groups – or Beneficiaries

Exploitation of young people (youths) in rural areas, and in particular of those from weak lineages or with a 'stranger' background (not residing within his or her chiefdom of birth) was a major cause for the high levels of under-age and youth conscription into the various armed groups during the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia (Peters, 2011). After the war, this category remains at risk of marginalisation, but many found a means to make themselves less vulnerable to the often arbitrary decisions and exploitative labour practices of rural elites, by working in the motorcycle taxi sector. Disabled people and people affected in their mobility due to old age are two other groups who are likely to benefit from the increased access opportunities offered by motorcycle taxis.

6 M&E Plan

The Chief Researcher is responsible for monitoring the progress of the planned research activities. In field presence and when not, regular updates via phone and email, will enable the timely and appropriate collection of field data. The Principal Investigator has overall responsibility for the delivery of the various milestones. He will be in regular contact (at least once a month) via email, telephone and face-to-face meetings with the contributing parties. A Terms of Reference for each component of the study has been developed which will be used by the Principal Investigator as a check list for work delivered and to be delivered.

7 Risks

The risk matrix (see Annex B) identifies a renewed outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease as the key risk. If this is to happen during the planned field data collection period in the area of the data collection site, an assessment of the risk will be made by the whole team based on information from local, national and international (WHO, MSF, FCO) sources. In the worst case, this can result in the postponement of a data collection exercise, but should not result in a delay of the overall project, given the in-built flexibility.

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Annex A: Updated Workplan

Activity Gantt Chart

Activity	Feb 2017	Feb	Mar	Mar	April	April	May	May	June	June	July	July	Aug	Aug	Sept	Sept	Oct	Oct	Nov	Nov	Dec	Dec	Jan 2018	Jan
Scoping visit to Sierra Leone and discussions with MC unions (November 2016)																								
Scoping Visit to Liberia (November 2016)																								
Literature Review																								
Milestone: Inception Report																								
Milestone: Developments of Data Collection Instruments																								
Data collection Sierra Leone																								
Data collection in Liberia																								
Milestone: progress report																								

Annex B: Risk Matrix

Programme Risk Assessment and Mitigation Matrix				Very High	High	Medium	Low
Potential Risk	Risk Grading ¹		Description of risk	Proposed Management and mitigation actions			
	Probability	Impact					
A. Programme Management Risks							
A1: Implementation delays due to hazards / risks at country level	M	L	In October 2017, presidential elections in Liberia take place. This can lead to localised violence	Field work will be conducted prior to the run up to the elections. LIDA will inform the Principal Investigator of any tensions in the Nimba area which may affect data collection.			
A2: Financial fraud	L	L	Financial fraud is a potential risk for complex financial operations	The budget is managed via Swansea University, which has very strict financial checks and balances in place.			
B. Risks associated with Research							
B1. Renewed outbreak of Ebola	M	M	A renewed outbreak of Ebola in either Sierra Leone or Liberia may have an impact on the field-based element of the research	See above under point 11			
B1. Political Violence	M	L	See above, under A.	See above, under A. Note that the research schedule will leave some flexibility regarding exact timing of field research.			

¹ **Probability** = the likelihood of this risk occurring despite the management and mitigation activities being in place. **Impact**: = the effect on the ability of the programme to achieve its objectives without major revision or review.

Annex C: Technical Inputs

Technical Adviser Input schedule

Position Title	Technical jnical Expert	Total Number of Inputs (in days)	Indicative Input schedule
Principal Investigator	Krijn Peters	26	Feb – Jan 2018
Chief Researcher	Esther Mokuwa	38	Feb – Jan 2018
Researcher – Sierra Leone inputs	Baigeh Johnson	18	Feb – Mar
Researcher – Liberia inputs	Baigeh Johnson	26	April-May
Researcher	Mercy Jacobs	26	April-May
Collaborator/advisor	Kristina Leipoldt	14	Feb, Sept – Dec
Advisor	Jim Clarke		Feb, April, Sept – Dec

Annex D: Revised Budget

Items					Totals (GBP)
Fee Component of Fixed Fee					
Position Title	Expert	No of Days Input	Fee Rate		
Principal Investigator	Krijn Peters	26	293.4		7,628.4
Chief Researcher	Esther Mokuwa	38	276.8		10,518.4
Researcher – Sierra Leone inputs	Baigeh Johnson	18	94.1		1,693.8
Researcher – Liberia inputs	Baigeh Johnson	26	138.4		3,598.4
Researcher	Mercy Jacobs	26	166.1		4,318.6
Collaborator/advisor	Kristina Leipoldt	14	276.8		3,875.2
Advisor	Jim Clarke				
Subtotal Fee Component					31,632.80
Expenses Component					
Item	Description / Comment	Unit	No of Units	Unit Price	Totals (GBP)
Car Hire	4x4 hire Sierra Leone and Liberia, including fuel/driver		41	150	6,150
Travel, subsistence & accommodation for Principal Investigator to SL and Lib for workshops	To SL and Lib for workshops		6	350	2,100
KP Visa & Vaccinations					140
Travel, subsistence & accommodation for Researchers & advisors for workshops			6	400	2,400
Stakeholder workshops, Venue hire			2	300	600
Stakeholder workshops, food and refreshments			2	200	400
Stakeholder workshops, local travel & accommodation for upcountry participants					1,600
Report printing for dissemination at workshops					120
Survey Software and tablets hire					360
Subtotal Expenses Component					13,870
TOTAL (Subtotal Fee Component + Subtotal Expenses Component)					45,502.8

Annex E: Key Dates

Inception report	27 February 2017
Development of Data Collection Instruments	30 March 2017
Progress Report	30 July 2017
Policy Brief for Stakeholders	30 October 2017
Final Project Research Report	30 December 2017
Submission of Journal Articles	30 January 2018