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SNAPSHOT

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives opens communication channels between city officials and transporters to create a problem-solving platform in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire.



USAID/Côte d'Ivoire

Working session between transporters and municipal authorities develops community-government collaboration in targeting scarce government resources.

"These workshops have greatly improved our relationships with local authorities; we all know our roles and responsibilities and where to meet to solve issues."

*-- Sako Oumar,
President, Bouake Communal
Taxi Owners' Association*

Telling Our Story
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Targeting Scarce Government Resources

September 2013 – In 2012, the Mayor's Office in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire imposed a yearly licensing fee of 25,000 francs on each transporter and taxi driver. Revenue from the licensing fee was intended for road repairs and other improvements to transportation infrastructure in Bouaké. However, as roads remained in a state of complete disrepair, the attempt to collect the fee triggered protests and refusals to pay among transporters and taxi drivers who viewed the fee as unreasonable as they could not see these funds put to good use.

Recognizing the lack of communication channels between the Mayor's Office and transporter as well as low levels of public confidence related to the application of the licensing fee to road repairs, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) helped organize a forum to bring together the public, local officials, and transporters to discuss the conflict between the Mayor's Office and Bouaké transporter and taxi drivers. This forum was supported under OTI's ongoing efforts to increase community-government interaction and build public confidence in local governments' ability to address constituency concerns.

Through this forum and a series of follow-up workshops, OTI facilitated the creation of a local government accountability committee that now deals with government to citizen relationships. Using this new mechanism, transporters and local authorities were able to communicate effectively to tackle road and licensing fee issues. Transporters provided the Mayor's Office with information on what repairs to prioritize, and local officials were able to provide information about their resource constraints and timelines for addressing repair issues.

As a result of these working sessions, repairs were made to three vital city roads and transporters resumed paying the 25,000 fee. By the end of the sessions, each participant understood his role in the process of resolving local service delivery issues. The President of the Bouake Communal Taxi Owners' Association, Mister Sako Oumar, asserted that "these workshops have greatly improved our relationships with local authorities; we all know our roles and responsibilities and where to meet to solve issues."

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