



RESELLERS OF HOUSEHOLD TAP WATER

Abidjan - CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Abidjan: population 3,000,000 - 1,000 CFAF = US\$ 1.60

WATER SERVICE IN ABIDJAN

- Less than half of households in Abidjan have a private connection (43 percent in 1997).
- The rest get their water from private distributors: 142 standpipe operators, 300 licensed and 1,500 to 3,000 unlicensed household resellers.

FROM UNLICENSED TO LICENSED RESELLER

The Côte d'Ivoire Water Distribution Company (SODECI) serves only the planned urban subdivisions and its water connection procedures are especially restrictive.

Demand for water is so high that resale of water from households with a connection is growing:

- in planned subdivisions, where households with a low-income house connection resell water from a tap located in a common courtyard;
- in unplanned settlements, where households at the edges of neighboring planned areas install a meter linked to flexible tubing which carries water to unserved households, up to hundreds of meters away.

To regularize this practice, SODECI established a licensing procedure.

A PROFITABLE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The resellers use the same tap for their own use and to provide water to those in the immediate vicinity. Resale becomes profitable once a reseller can sell water from two taps connected to a meter and reserved exclusively for reselling water:

- initial investment: CFAF 464,000 (CFAF 169,000 for the connections, CFAF 200,000 for the security deposit, CFAF 95,000 for additional materials),
- purchase of water at normal rates: CFAF 464/m³, with monthly rather than quarterly billing,
- average resale price: CFAF 850/m³,
- average annual sales: CFAF 730,000 for an unlicensed reseller (one tap), CFAF 3,467,500 for a licensed reseller (three taps).

PROFILE OF A LICENSED WATER RESELLER

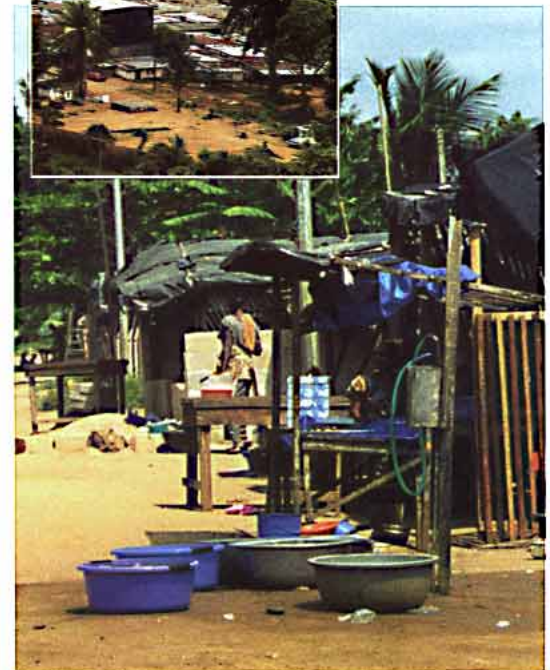
The president of the water resellers' association (AREQUAP-CI) is a former assistant bookkeeper who became a water reseller since his dismissal from his previous job.

- Using his savings, he purchased a defunct standpipe in 1993 and paid off over CFAF 350,000 in outstanding water bills and connection charges.
- with the earnings from this first standpipe, he purchased a second one in 1997,
- also in 1997, he purchased a meter with two taps, and then two more in 1999

He resells the water for CFAF 850/m³ on average. His average annual sales are CFAF 2,133,000 for water sold from the two standpipes and CFAF 2,920,000 for water sold from the three pairs of metered taps.



Unplanned settlements account for more than half of Abidjan's area. Underserved neighborhoods and dwellings clustered around a common courtyard are home to 70 percent of the city's households.



AN ASSOCIATION OF WATER RESELLERS

The Association of Water Resellers in Unplanned Urban Areas of Côte d'Ivoire (AREQUAP-CI), created in 1998, brings together about 40 licensed water resellers and enables them to negotiate with SODECI and the municipal authorities. Among the achievements they claim:

- reduction of the water rates paid by licensed resellers to CFAF 390/m³, the same as that for standpipes
- creation of a guarantee fund to finance initial installation equipment
- simplification of connection procedures
- information campaigns to publicize the association.