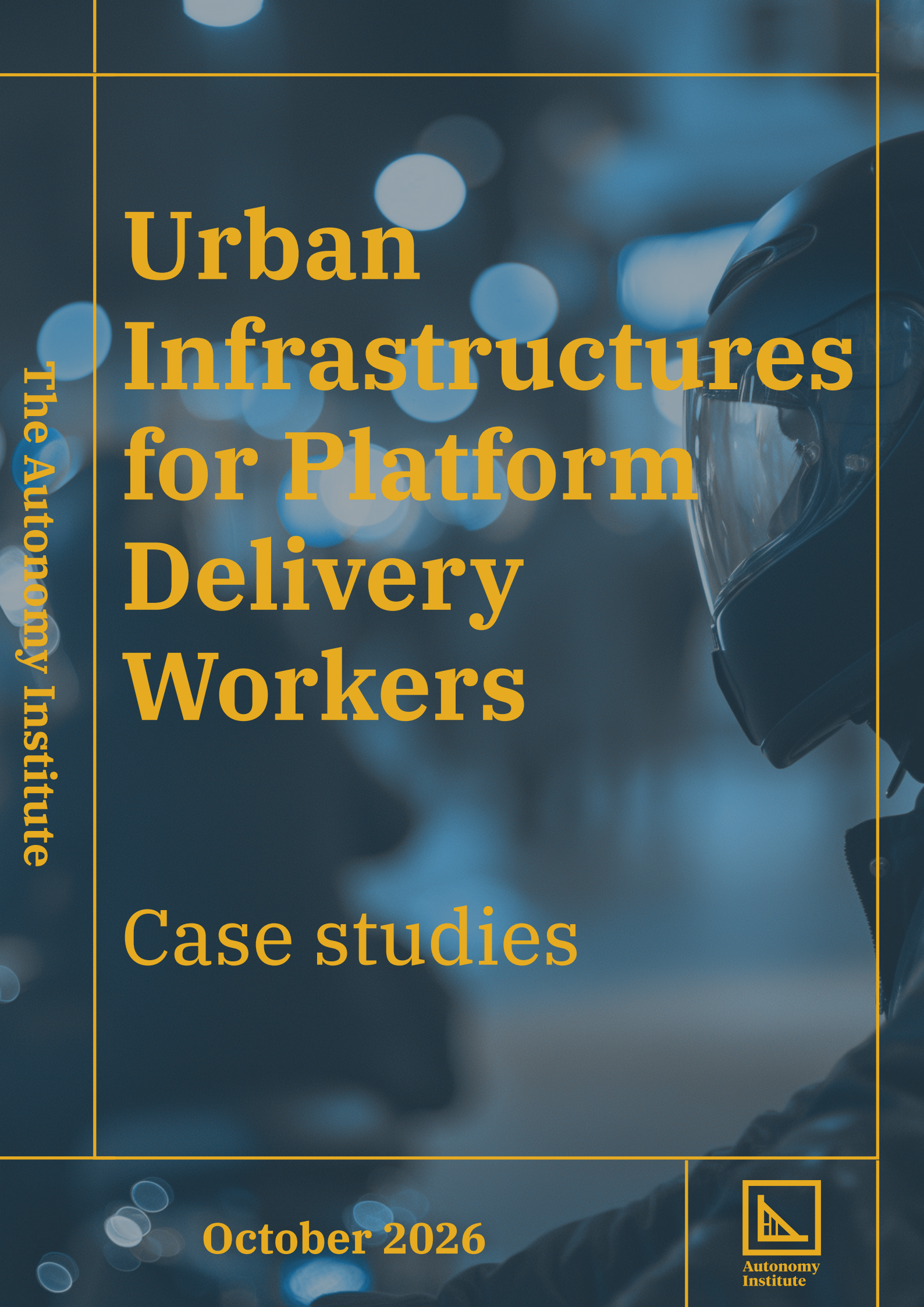


Urban Infrastructures for Platform Delivery Workers

Case studies

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Foreword

In Neither Vertical nor Horizontal, Rodrigo Nunes tells us something crucial about the logic of platforms: “ours is the age of mass movements without mass organisation, both because the large, influential organisations of the twentieth century have for some time been in decline, and simply because it is possible” (p. 202).

For capital leveraging new digital technologies, what has been achievable is the performance of the mass movement of goods, made possible by an increasingly atomised yet mobile labour force. With the rise of platforms, the workforce became a mass movement, literally. These are the decades defined by the platformed shape of capital and the on-demand production and circulation of goods. Think of the images of precarious, migrant workers on mopeds: they are both celebrated by their bosses and customers for their essential role and, at the same time, subjected to hostility from police and business owners who would prefer to see them disappear. At Autonomy, we’ve explored these issues in more detail in reports like ‘Working Nights’ and ‘Dark Kitchens 101’.

Without delving too deeply into Nunes’ book, the interesting question here, which we are simplifying, is classically twofold: how do workers organise in the era of platforms, and how do platforms shape the movement of people and goods in the city? Why does this matter? What this report does brilliantly is to show, once again, why space matters for any radical change.

The creation of rider hubs across the world, as workers’ responses to the violence of capital and poor working conditions, demonstrates the importance of building a shell to host the nodes of “organising cores.” Building a space — such as a rider hub — not only interrupts the flow of circulation but also creates opportunities to break through, grow ‘the local’ and build networked power.

What this excellent report by Andrew Copolov shows, as a first of its kind, is that these rider hubs are essential yet completely absent. A ‘market failure’ of platform capitalism is the lack of spaces for gig economy workers. It’s an orchestrated failure, obviously. The promise of platforms is that workers can be separated. Rider hubs, on the other hand, build a different way to rethink work, one in which solidarity is possible when it’s organised spatially.

The reality, in fact, is that no society would now design cities and streets to facilitate platforms making profits over the needs and aspirations of its residents. Yet our pavements are now a new terrain of urban struggle. Rider hubs show how we can scale the issue to a new ground and level, a way in which we can consciously design new urban spaces.

Ultimately, the rise of platforms and the accompanying spatial struggles illustrate a crucial turning point in how we understand work and shape urban life. Rider hubs show the potential to reclaim urban spaces from the commands of platform capitalism, challenging its atomising organisation by fostering solidarity and collective action. They remind us that the organisation of space is key to any power building. As such, the creation of these hubs is an assertion that cities can be reimagined to serve the aspirations of workers and residents alike. These efforts point to a future where urban spaces can become sites of empowerment, challenging the hegemony of platforms and opening up possibilities yet to be born in cities.

Alessio Kolioulis, London

Introduction

Within the last ten years, in cities across the globe, a new kind of social infrastructure has emerged to support platform-mediated delivery workers. Despite the homogenising pressures exerted by transnational platform companies, each rider hub reflects the social, political, and economic conditions of the contexts from which they arise. This report, based on fieldwork and interviews with hub staff in 2024, provides insights into the origins, purposes, services, and histories of six delivery rider infrastructures from across Australia, the US, and Europe. It offers a snapshot of this emerging international field, based on cases selected for their clarity of purpose and breadth of origin. This research was further informed by the author's role in establishing and operating the Australian hub, alongside efforts to strengthen dialogue between hubs. Together, these facilities make up a growing network of spaces that support the struggles of delivery workers. In each case, these infrastructures were preceded by informal modes of action and interaction among platform workers. The descriptions in this report reflect information available at the time of the research and may not represent the hubs' current operations.

These spaces, designed as rest areas and resource centres for food delivery workers, vary greatly in origin. Some hubs have been established by grassroots initiatives, while others are backed by unions, municipalities, or by delivery platforms themselves. In Paris, for example, the name and structure of Maison des Coursiers were shaped by local government officials, whereas in Bordeaux, the hub was set up by a grassroots organisation of migrant delivery workers. In Vienna and Brussels, large trade unions played a key role in establishing the hubs, with varying degrees of support from delivery workers themselves. This illustrates a tension between the desire for autonomy and the need for institutional support, a tension that runs through each of the cases presented in this report. In each instance, these infrastructures are also connected to broader struggles, including those for the recognition of delivery riders as employees.

These hubs operate within distinct political contexts shaped by local labour laws and migration policies. In Spain, progressive legislation like the 'Riders Law' has attempted to classify delivery riders as employees, but enforcement remains inconsistent. Migration law, too, shapes the composition of the delivery workforce in important ways. In France, undocumented migrants often rent or buy platform accounts from registered users in order to access work. In Australia, restrictive student visa conditions make international students a dominant presence in the delivery workforce, creating a labour pool that is both flexible and particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

Despite their differences, these hubs share a common goal: providing essential services to delivery workers while fostering a sense of community. From legal assistance to healthcare and bike repair, the support offered is more than ameliorative, it is invaluable. By sustaining social interaction and mutualism, these infrastructures facilitate the development of shared identities, which in turn support the capacities of delivery workers to articulate shared demands. Beyond physical spaces, these hubs represent crucial nodes of mutual care and solidarity in an otherwise isolating industry.

Andrew Copolov, Melbourne

Riders Collective Vienna



U-Bahn Bogen 36, 1080 Wien, Austria

Riders Collective (RC) in Vienna is a community centre for platform-based delivery riders. Supported by the ÖGB (Austrian Trade Union Federation), the trade union vida, and emerging in parallel with the DiDaNet (Digital Danube Network) project, Riders Collective employs two staff members. Since 2016, platform-based delivery work in Austria has increasingly become migrant work, and Riders Collective reflects this shift, with English being the most spoken language in the space. Riders Collective, housed within a railway arch at Roter Bogen, puts great emphasis on events where riders come together to share experiences and complaints. These include the monthly "Spill it!" hangout and the "Reflectors" film screenings. The collective also partners with the Graz-based company InterACT on the forum-theatre production RIDERS, built from community workshops with riders in both cities. In 2025, a second Riders Collective was established in Graz.

Staffing

1-2 current or former delivery riders staff the space part-time.

Unions and labour organisations

Governance

Connected to ÖGB and to Works Councils. RC helps to politicize riders.

Unions and labour organisations

Funding

Chamber of Labour (Arbeiterkammer Wien)

Unions and labour organisations

Services

An emphasis on events and legal advice where riders discuss shared concerns.

Legal advice

Administrative advice

Events

Amenities

Kitchenette

Bike toolkit

Charging points

Rest areas

Hot drinks

Toilets

Key Lessons

Events
Hosting social events helps RC maintain engagement with community.

Negotiating with institutions
RC leaders carefully negotiate between community leaders and union.

Maison des Livreurs

Bordeaux



14 Rue du Fort Louis, 33800 Bordeaux, France

Perhaps more than in any other riders hub, the Maison des Livreurs (MdL) in Bordeaux successfully operates as a social space for delivery riders. Each day the space opens, the bike racks out front are filled. So much so that the team are seeking a larger facility to better accommodate their growing community. Young migrants — many from Africa — sit on couches or play foosball in the space while waiting for orders. These riders also help staff to maintain the space, demonstrating a sense of ownership and shared responsibility that organiser Jonathan attributes to MdL's affiliation with AMAL (l'Association de Mobilisation et d'Aide aux Livreurs), a grassroots association of migrant riders. In a relatively small city like Bordeaux, a single central point of congregation can service the entire urban area. Centrality is therefore important, and proximity to Place de la Victoire — a popular gathering spot for local riders — is also critical to MdL's high level of use.

Staffing

1 full-time association staff member, 1 part-time health worker, 1 part-time bike repair person.

- Advocates

Governance

Half rider representatives, half associations: AMAL, Médecins du Monde, CoopCycle, Etu'Récup, Dédale.

- Advocacy orgs & cooperatives

Funding

Mostly La Fondation de France, Bordeaux municipality, Gironde department, Nouvelle-Aquitaine region.

- Advocacy orgs & cooperatives
- Municipal & regional government

Services

MdL Bordeaux is unique in providing delivery riders with free healthcare.

- Legal advice
- Administrative advice
- Free health check ups

Amenities

- Kitchenette
- Rest areas
- Charging points
- Hot drinks

Key Lessons

Responsibility & belonging
Riders use the space because they feel ownership and belonging.

Services for migrants
Healthcare is relevant because this is a migrant population.

Mutualism
The involvement of AMAL ensures this is for riders by riders.

Maison des Coursiers Paris



210 Rue St Denis, 75002 Paris, France

The Maison des Coursiers is an initiative established by the mayor of the Paris' 18th arrondissement, Barbara Gomes, in collaboration with rider advocacy network CoopCycle. The name Maison des Coursiers, instead of Maison des Livreurs, reflects the initiative's government-led, top-down roots. MdC began as a series of monthly meetups in response to mass account deactivations by UberEats. Since 2021, MdC has been offering administrative and legal support from a space shared with other community groups. Roughly 70% of users are undocumented migrants, most of whom live far away from where they work. In 2025, MdC moved into a dedicated space.

Staffing

3 part-time staff members employed through CoopCycle, including 1 nurse

- Advocates

Governance

A collaboration between Paris municipality and CoopCycle.

- Unions and labour organisations

Funding

The municipality of Paris

- Municipal & regional government

Services

MdC focuses on legal and administrative support, having recently introduced medical care.

- Legal advice
- Administrative advice
- Free health check ups
- Events

Amenities

- Kitchenette
- Rest areas
- Charging points
- Hot drinks

Key Lessons

Destigmatising shared concerns
Showing problems as commonly held by discussing them together.

Linking to shared concerns
Connecting the space to particular concerns, e.g., account deactivation.

Maison des Livreurs Brussels



Rue du Trône 95, 1050 Ixelles, Belgium

Currently open one day per week, MdL Brussels operates as an administrative support centre for delivery riders, many of whom are migrants. People sit together on couches waiting for their turn to meet with staff member Camille, who supports them to work through concerns around gig work and general life administration. MdL is a first port of call from where riders can be directed toward appropriate support groups. MdL Brussels is supported firstly by MOC (Christian Workers Movement), with affiliations to the United Freelancers and CSC Bruxelles unions. Supplementing the space, the group behind MdL Brussels do outreach work, engaging with riders in the street and encouraging them to organise.

Staffing

1 staff member employed through MOC

Advocates

Governance

Shared by MOC, United Freelancers and CSC Bruxelles, with MOC doing the internal work.

Unions and labour organisations

Funding

Funded by MOC, with space provided by the municipality.

Unions and labour organisations

Services

MdL Brussels is service oriented, offering legal and supporting workers with legal and administrative concerns.

Legal advice

Administrative advice

Free health check ups

Events

Amenities

Couches, foosball, a toilet and kitchenette, power points to charge phone and bike batteries.

Kitchenette

Rest areas

Charging points

Hot drinks

Key Lessons

A centre for casework
Delivery riders often fall through the gaps of traditional service provision.

In the streets & indoors
MdL Brussels is supplemented by continued outreach work performed around the city.

Casa Rider Florence



Via Matteo Palmieri, 11, 50122 Firenze FI, Italy

Casa Rider in Florence is a collaboration between the Florence municipality and a CGIL (Italian General Confederation of Labour), with support from four key NGOs. Casa Rider emphasises the fact delivery work in Italy has become migrant work, and that supporting delivery workers therefore requires addressing issues concerning migrants, such as citizenship. The space, opened in 2025, is provided free of charge by the city. Casa Rider Firenze joins a long list of Italian rider spaces, with CGIL having previously established Casas in Naples, Genoa, Livorno, La Spezia, and Bologna.

Staffing

2 part-time staff (CGIL officer and former delivery rider)

- Former Delivery Workers
- Unions and labour organisations

Governance

New work identities (NIdiL) subset of CGIL.

- Unions and labour organisations

Funding

A combination of CGIL, crowdfunding, and NGOs L'Altrodiritto, CAT Social Cooperative, Oxfam, and Nosotras.

- Unions and labour organisations

Services

Courses on Italian language and labour rights.

- Legal advice
- Administrative advice
- Bike maintenance
- Courses

Amenities

- Kitchenette
- Bike toolkit
- Charging points
- Hot drinks

Key Lessons

More than labour
Riders deserve social and migration support, not only work support.

Interests fade
Connecting a space to very specific demands can risk riders disengaging with a space once the relevant campaign is over, as seen in other Casas.

Gig Workers' Hub Melbourne



506 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC 3000, Australia

The Gig Workers' Hub in Melbourne is the only community centre-style initiative supporting delivery riders in Australia. As a small, non-profit organisation, GWH relies on a central figurehead to operate, despite being staffed primarily by migrant delivery riders. Unlike other rider hubs established for and by gig workers, GWH receives funding from both local government and from food delivery platforms (DoorDash and HungryPanda). Remaining independent is key to GWH's operational model, and allows the group to ally with government, private sector, and unions (Transport Workers Union) at the same time. GWH has grown incrementally, existing first as a series of pop-up events in 2022 and early 2023, before becoming an ongoing space in July 2023, and moving to the current location in April 2024.

Staffing

A shifting team of 5-6 part-time delivery rider staff. Recently GWH has begun employing volunteers as well.

- Advocates

Governance

Non-profit organisation 'Gig Workers' Hub Inc'. Run by local and international gig workers.

- Unions and labour organisations

Funding

Main funding is from two major delivery platforms. Additional funds from local government grants.

- Platforms
- Municipal government

Services

A focus on workshops, info sessions and shared meals. Less emphasis on formal admin. or legal support.

- Events
- Bike maintenance

Amenities

- Kitchenette
- Rest areas
- Charging points
- Hot drinks

Key Lessons

Incremental growth
Starting small avoids threatening existing institutions.

Independent
Being independent of any pre-existing organisation allows GWH to partner with, and act as a satellite site for different kinds of groups.

Across the globe

West and East Asia



Across West and East Asia, rider infrastructure takes markedly different forms. In China and Dubai, large-scale rest networks show how state or platform-backed provision can rapidly deliver basic amenities such as seating, charging, and shelter at scale. In Jakarta, by contrast, riders' base camps are more informal and community-run, built on existing local networks and strengthened through digital coordination. Taken together, these examples show that rider infrastructure in the region is often shaped less by formal labour representation than by a mix of platform governance, municipal capacity, and everyday mutual support.

Rider Rest Areas
Dubai

Built by Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA). The 40 air-conditioned rest areas serve a fleet of 46,600 delivery bikes.

Kitchenette · Rest areas · Charging points · Hot drinks

Gojek Base Camps
Jakarta

The ability of Jakarta's Gojek riders to congregate in place speaks to their existing networks (informal local precedent predated these new base camps). Supplemented by WhatsApp networks, often based on specific base camps. Community-run.

Kitchenette · Rest areas · Charging points · Hot drinks

Rest Station
Beijing

Shuangjing Subdistrict alone has 20 rest stations. Includes adult education as a service. Has 24hr code access. More than 26,000 stations throughout China. Most riders have recently migrated from other parts of the country. Most used between 3-5pm.

Kitchenette · Rest areas · Charging points · Hot drinks

Across the globe

Americas



Across the Americas, rider spaces reveal a sharper tension between worker organising and corporate control. In New York, Deliveristas hubs emerged through organising and public investment in worker-serving street infrastructure. In Bogotá, company-run pit stops offer riders temporary access to rest and charging, but remain firmly controlled by the platform. In Buenos Aires, intermediary models such as Nippy point to privately operated spaces that provide amenities while also incorporating riders into wider commercial and data ecosystems.

Nippy Centers
Buenos Aires

Nippy is an intermediary between delivery riders and delivery platforms, where riders can access space and amenity, but give over their data which gets sold on. Other locations include Mexico City and Santo Domingo.

Kitchenette · Rest areas · Charging points · Hot drinks

Street Deliveristas Hubs
New York City

Los Deliveristas Unidos, a part of Workers Justice Project. Predominantly Spanish-speaking migrants. Setting up a centre as well as street hubs. Have had to deal with much municipal bureaucracy to get these up. Federally funded.

Kitchenette · Rest areas · Charging points · Hot drinks

Rappi Pit Stops
Bogotá

Rest points run by Rappi itself, opened from 2019 after complaints about riders crowding pavements. Staffed from 6am to 10pm, with toilets, parking, phone charging and water. Sited in car parks and malls. 14 in Colombia by 2023.

Rest areas · Charging points