



Village Bicycle Project

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A project of Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute

Year end Report, 2005

Poverty
reduction, rural
development,
empowerment.
Sustainable,
affordable
transport for
Africa

Highlights

This was a big year for our workshops, serving nearly 1000 rural Ghanaians with discounted bicycles and basic repair skills. From the southwestern edge to the southeastern edge to the far north, we held 47 workshops in 19 communities scattered across the country, in places like Yapei, Brekumanso, Koloenu and Wassa Domama, (map on page 3).

--Health care workers around Yapei can now easily reach remote areas with medicine, treatment, and information,

--Tradesmen and women are sharing their services over a wider area,

--Teachers and students at Ankasa now get from home to school quicker, and

village residents working in towns save lots of money by bicycling.

A man who lives in Brekumanso, Eastern Region, estimated he will save \$150, 25% of his income in one year by biking instead of taking the bus to work. All these improvements point to rural development, improving the conditions of life for the productive rural people of Africa, their bicycles the tools that reduce poverty.

The Advanced class, started in October 2004 has become a hit. More than 170 graduates of our regular one-day repair workshop have taken the opportunity to learn more, and buy discounted tools, better equipping themselves to take care of their bikes, and other bikes in the community. The tools were sold at half price, subsidized by VBP to encourage and empower people to take care of their own bikes. We paid \$740 for the tools and received \$370 for them.

Nine Advanced workshops have introduced 700 tools to Ghanaian villages since the first Advanced class a little more than a year ago. Tools in the lower column were not available in Ghana until VBP began importing them in quantities in 2001.

Advanced Class tool sales

bought in Ghana	total
Foot pump	132
Spanner set, 8-22mm	70
Light oil	84
Patch kit	68
Screwdriver combo	58
Spokes key	41
Wire brush	43
12 inch adjustable wrench	26
Channel locks	32

Imported by VBP	
Allen keys 4,5,6mm	65
Cone wrench 13-16mm	36
Tire levers (2 pcs.)	39
Crank puller	29
Chain remover	33
Neck spanner 30,32,36,40 mm	10
Free remover, FR-1	25
8-9-10mm box spanner	6
Sealed bottom bracket wrench	12
Freewheel remover, others	12



George Aidoo, VBP's lead trainer, teaching the Advanced class at Songornya, June 2005. We require that 20% of the places in the One-day class be reserved for women, but not so with the Advanced class.

Earn-a-Bike Update

EAB successfully survived its first year of independence since American volunteer Emily Lin from Bikes Not Bombs (in Boston) finished her year in Ghana starting the program. Several rounds of EAB courses were held at each of the three schools, earning 72 young people bikes of their own, and in-depth skills to maintain them.

In 2006 we'll hold a week-long seminar to strengthen the skills of the trainers, building their ability to train their own replacement trainers. This is the next step towards initiation of a twelve-week course for Ghana's vocational schools.

Tools Update

Our second \$5000 tools order will reach Ghana in February. The tools program, I think is the single best thing VBP has done for bicycling in Ghana (and its neighbors). Repairs which were extremely difficult are now routine, which means that broken spokes can be replaced, and three-piece cranks can be serviced. Bikes that would've been run into the ground, beat to death, are now able to be regularly serviced. They run better, faster, longer, and cheaper, making bikes a more attractive transport option.

We sell the tools at about 80% of cost. In this way we use the market system for efficient distribution. Obviously they are affordable, (mechanics buy them) and by getting much of our cost back we are able to supply many more tools. We don't try to prevent anyone from re-selling tools. Indeed I'm happy that people mark them up, and make themselves a little money. With our prices in the reality ballpark, maybe a Ghanaian will find a cheaper source and undercut us. That would be sustainability!

2005's biggest donors

In July Working Bikes Co-operative of Chicago donated a container of bikes and shipping costs to VBP, a value of more than \$5000. They also ship bikes to many other countries. Seeing an opportunity, VBP decided to donate about \$1500 worth of tools back to Working Bikes, to put in their shipments to other places. Making such a huge difference for bike mechanics in Ghana, we believe tools will be just as meaningful in other countries. If other used bike suppliers will start including tools with their bikes, we can see a broad gain in bike sustainability worldwide.

Our second biggest donor in 2005 was Wheatley School in Old Westbury, New York, who donated most of the shipping costs for a container of bikes, worth about \$3000.

Meet the Project Managers



George left, and Samson in front of their shop in Accra. (Photo by EMP Productions)

Our Project Managers George Aidoo and Samson Ayine are key to the success of Village Bicycle Project. Without them, there simply would be no VBP in Ghana today.

I met them both when I first visited the Accra bike market, in Ghana's capital, in 1999, carrying a knapsack of tools.

George had been trained as a teacher but turned to bicycle repair to supplement his income when inflation eroded his salary down to \$5 a month in the mid 1980s. He was renting a small corner of a storefront in the Accra bicycle market when we first met, making repairs and selling about 20 bikes per year. George loves teaching, he is engaged and engaging, informative and entertaining. His students enjoy him. He is thrilled to be able to travel around the country teaching regularly at VBP's One-day workshops and Advanced classes.

Samson was a bike parts dealer when we met. He would buy leftover unwanted bike carcasses, and strip them for parts. One problem he faced was a high level of breakage because the best tools available for removing parts were hammer and chisel. He enthusiastically bought samples of all the tools I had that day to make his work more efficient.

I met both George and Samson on a business level, and I immediately noticed their integrity. In 2005 they processed 3800 VBP bikes through their own shop, coordinated 47 One-day workshops and distributed 3000 tools to mechanics from throughout Ghana and neighboring countries.

Village Bicycle Project totals starting with the first container of bikes we shipped in 2000.

	2000-2004	2005	plans for 2006
bikes shipped	8056	3822	4000
container loads	19	9	10
One-day workshops	51	47	50
bikes distributed in workshops	743	939	1000
Advanced class	1	8	10
Advanced class tools	44	777	1000
Earn-a-Bike classes	8	7	9
Earn-a-Bikes awarded	98	72	90
Total tools introduced	7078	3480	4000

On the map at right, "+" marks the villages where we held workshops in 2005, some of them named on page one. We've now reached seven of Ghana's ten regions, thanks in large part to working with Peace Corps volunteers, who live in villages scattered throughout the country.



Village Bicycle Project budget for 2006

		expense	income
Bikes shipments	10 containers @ \$5000	\$50,000	
	Bike sales reimbursements		52,500
	Collection logistics	800	
Workshops	50 One-day @\$350	17,500	
	Earn-a-Bike 3 sessions @ 3 schools, @\$325	2,925	
	Advanced class, 10 @ \$100	1,000	
	Training of Trainers	700	
Tools	3,800 pieces	5,000	
	shipping and customs	1,500	
	sales		4,300
Administration	communications	400	
	office	400	
	travel US-Ghana	1,400	
	memberships, visas	120	
	Director Salary	0	
totals		81,745	56,800
Balance to raise	\$ 24,945		

Budget notes--The big expense is the workshops, which provide crucial maintenance skills, subsidized bikes and free tools. It costs VBP about \$17 for each person that gets a workshop bike. This is targeted outreach that touches people's lives in the villages, which are the most economically depressed. If we can raise the money 1000 people will get bikes in our one-day workshops in 2006.

Your help is needed to continue this work for Africa. Special thanks to WorkingBikes Co-operative and Wheatley School in New York, and everyone who donated money, time, services, and bicycles. Also to Copy Court for layout and technical support.

Village Bicycle Project is a project of Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute. All donations are tax-deductible VBP Director and this writer, David Peckham PCEI Executive Director, Tom Lamar

Project Video

Another major donation was Marsha Que Sera Productions' 14 minute video "New Life for Old Bikes" story of the Village Bicycle Project. Copies available at the Moscow/Latah Public Library, (Moscow, Idaho) or by emailing vbp@pcei.org



People and their bikes

Interviewed in June, Joshua Numawose bought his white 3-speed in January 2005. He rides it almost every day to school where he teaches, about 6 km from his home, and also to the market. He figures his bike saves about \$9 a month in taxi fare. He paid \$17 for his bike. At the workshop and advanced class, he learned to do brake and hub repairs, and said his only problem now is straightening the rim. He said that the workshop taught him to notice problems he didn't know before.

"Now I'm not interested in the mountain bike. Parts are too costly. Once it becomes old everything breaks. My old mountain is in the house." Most of his travels are on paved roads.

Awudi Prosper- Brekumanso workshop, October 2005

Prosper is 15 years old, a big boy, but purchased the inexpensive child's bike, (for about \$9), and wants to upgrade. He has completed middle school but has no money for high school. He helps his parents farm.

Prosper uses the bicycle to run errands for his family, and to go to farm. He really likes being able to get places quickly. Sometimes his parents send him to a neighboring town about 2.5 km away to buy medicine. The farm is also about 2.5 km away.

The bike doesn't save money, because he walked before, but it saves a lot of time. He paid for the bicycle by making "small-small job," weeding for other farmers. Sometimes they pay \$1.50 for three hours of work.

At the workshop, he learned that he should be careful when riding at a place where there are pebbles, because of punctures. He learned to clean the chain to prevent rusting, and the proper way to shift gears so they don't spoil. Every morning, he must make sure his bicycle tires are well before riding. A problem which you can't repair should be sent to the bicycle repairer. He felt the workshop was very good, and didn't need more information.

Since receiving the bicycle, he has used the community tools to oil his chain. They are easy to access, and all he has to do is ask.



Web News pcei.org/vbp

Getting a lot of comments about the photo essay on repair in a remote village, where my friend used a machete to make a washer from a tin can in order to seat a spoke. Check this and other brilliant bush repairs at www.pcei.org/vbp/mbouyiessay.htm

In the last hours of 2005 we posted some interviews of people who got bikes from a workshop at Brekumanso in October. One of them is abbreviated above. www.pcei.org/vbp/people_and_bikes.htm

You'll also find our curricula, tools order lists, a blog, guide for collecting bikes, and soon bike terms in French, and easier links. vbp@pcei.org for help finding things.

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