

INGEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF PEDALS FOR PROGRESS



Moldova Shipment Arrives

by Carol Stadden

Walking down the street, strangers stop me and ask when the bikes will arrive. They thank me, sometimes with a hug or even a kiss on the hand. Everyone hopes to buy at least one bike and they are eager for them to come. The school basement has been cleared and new locks have been purchased for the doors as we await our "Christmas in June". Something like this doesn't happen every day in a small village like Grozesti!



Volunteers put pedals back onto the bikes in Moldova.

The Diamond Challenge team made headlines in America. Grozesti proudly sent the winning Moldovan team of young entrepreneurs to compete in the National Diamond Challenge competition at the University of Delaware the end of April. Their winning business concept was to open a bicycle repair/rental business using the bikes from P4P to start their venture. Tudor and Tamara got to spend their first day in the US with David, president of P4P! He took them on a scenic tour of High Bridge and to see where the bikes are loaded into crates. David taught them the easiest way to price the bikes once they arrive in Moldova, "Close your eyes and feel the weight of the bike; the lighter it feels, the more expensive it is". Tudor and Tamara spent the night at David's home and both said they would never forget his wife's pancakes! In the morning they were whisked off to Delaware for a tour of the college campus and the following

day the team took third place in the competition! Even though they did not win, they gained valuable knowledge about starting a business and they had a trip of a lifetime; it was a dream that came true for them.

In early May flyers were posted in our village and neighboring villages describing P4P and the shipment of bikes and sewing machines. Raffle tickets were sold to give away one free bike in order to generate funds and more excitement—if that was even possible!



Children trying out their new bikes.

We sold over 1,000 tickets. When the truck pulled up on June 12th, young and old gathered at the school to help unload the crate and to get a good look at its contents. Before the school's summer break I spoke to each of the senior classes to find my crew of mechanics and sales people. My inventory team arrived and we began the long process of numbering and cataloging each bike. Pricing came later. No one can believe how beautiful the bikes are or that they are "used".

My team of 12 mechanics worked like a well oiled machine. We had all the bikes repaired in two days! Tickets were sold in advance and the first five winners were waiting patiently with a stream of onlookers behind them. Each new bike owner was interviewed so in the future we will be able to monitor the usefulness of the P4P program and help P4P



On May 17th, the Norristown, PA, Rotary Club ran a collection as part of West Norriton Township Community Day. We were basically part of a community fair, which made the collection really unusual: besides our bicycles and sewing machines, also on hand were pony rides, a SWAT team, a helicopter landing, a magic show, Pinkie the Clown, a police exhibit with handcuffs that one of the Rotary members tried to use on her club president, and "Costumed Characters" -- Batman stopped by to give the thumbs up to our bikes. A Rotary Club member has a heating and air-conditioning business with a trailer where the club collects and stores bikes and sewing machines throughout the year. We got 39 bikes and 4 sewing machines, including a gorgeous old Singer treadle machine with ornate wooden carving on the drawer fronts. Great job, guys, and keep up the good work.



Batman protecting the P4P donations.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

150,000 bikes


In February 1991 I decided to try to collect 12 bikes to ship back to the town in Ecuador where I was a Peace Corps volunteer. On my first try to get 12, I ended up with 140 bikes and I had the feeling I was onto something.

I am now 61 1/2 years old and although I'm not ready for retirement yet, I am planning for and hope that at some point I will have a long happy retirement. I don't think it will be hard to know when it is time to go. There is a tremendous level of physicality in moving tons of bikes per week. My mind is willing, but even with six 1 1/4' screws, a metal plate and two nails holding my skeleton together, I will need to pass the torch to someone younger a couple years from now.

I've won lots of awards, gotten great accolades, but we only applied for those awards for the cash prize so we could ship more bicycles. Why am I still doing this extremely hard physical work? It is because of the people we help; they need our help. The knowledge of the change our program makes is great because it gives me the willpower to keep working on the rainy days, and sometimes even worse, the very hot sunny ones. And I have met the most fascinating people, from the incredibly educated and talented assembly of the International Convention of Environmental Laureates to which I am a delegate, to the campesinos laboring in the fields of Central America. These two disparate groups have a lot in common, a drive for change and betterment.

I always like having goals. By the time you are reading this President's Message we will have shipped just a little under 142,000 bikes. At our current collection rates, it will take 2 years to reach 150,000 bikes. We can do it! Honestly, no one bike is more important than any other bike because each represents someone gaining an opportunity to help themselves to a better life. It would be nice however to hit the goal of 150,000, and hopefully P4P will keep going on. But it would be nice when I finally do retire to step back and know that I had a hand in shipping the first 150,000, so once again I'm asking for your help to reach a lofty goal. Let's go collect and ship some bikes.

Sincerely


Dave

(cont'd from page 1)

determine if it is achieving its mission goals. The entire container of bikes which seemed enormous when it first arrived, completely disappeared over the weekend.

Everyone left happy. 50 bikes were purchased by an innovative entrepreneur who will rent the bikes to tourists who stay in his network of rental homes (Hai la tara). They are beautiful vacant homes dotted throughout Moldova belonging to grannies on a pension. This money supplements their meager incomes.

I am now working with a young woman who wants to help stem the tide of human trafficking in Moldova by teaching the young girls (and boys) in our village to sew. She will teach classes at the school and open a small shop. Her shop will provide needed jobs making it unnecessary to migrate in order to find work! So this is the summer when Grozesti became "the village where everyone rides a bike".

Mr. Mahmudu
by Fuseni Bense

Mr. Mahmudu is a native of Kidal from the Northern Mali who moved to Ghana due to the conflict in his hometown (Kilda) where he lived before. Because of the extent of the conflict and the threat involved, he tried to move his wife and six kids to southern Mali in order to escape the risk involved in the fighting.

As he moved to the Southern Mali, things were not easy for him as well. He later survived suicide attacks which lead to the death of one of his daughters with the others severely injured. Only one kid survived with no wound in the attack. Later, the incident left him with no choice but to move to Ghana alone in order to earn a living to cater for his wife and kids. When he came to Ghana, he had nothing in hand to start a trade to satisfy his basic needs as well as to take of his wife and kids back in Mali. He later joined a construction firm as a laborer. After a few months as a laborer, he was able to save an amount of GH\$50. He then started to sell used shoes, a business he had earlier thought of on his arrival in Ghana.

He then bought from a wholesaler 5 pairs of shoes with which he began his trade with Mr. Mahmudu will have to carry the shoes on his head and shoulders and comb around the city for about 30 – 40 Km/day trying to sell them to make a living. He later heard about the tremendous help WeBikes gave to the needy and came there to seek for assistance to own a bike which could help him cover more Kilometers so he can sell more to boost his income

MISSION STATEMENT

TO DELIVER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AID BY
RECYCLING BICYCLES AND SEWING
MACHINES IN THE U.S. AND SHIPPING THEM TO THE
PEOPLE OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD

WeBikes, as a Non Governmental Organization assisted Mr. Mahmudu with a bike at a cost of \$10 only. Mr. Mahmudu became more mobile with the help of the bike given to him by WeBikes and P4P and his trade grew. Gratitude to WeBikes and P4P, Mr. Mahmudu can now take care of his wife and kids. The kids now attend school in the capital of Mali (Bamako).



Mr. Mahmudu getting ready for work.

www.p4p.org

Update on Our Partner Ecovolis

by Patricia Hamill

Just recently, we received some positive updates from Ened Mato, CEO of Ecovolis in Albania. He announced that there have been 4 successful projects put in motion that were made possible through our partnership with them.

The first project he told us about was the development of an entrepreneurial endeavor called Trasta o Nona (The Sack is the Best). With the 20 sewing machines P4P was able to ship to them, 5 disadvantaged young people gained employment making cloth bags to replace the heavily depended on plastic bags from stores. In three months, 3,000 bags were sold. Even better is the fact that their overhead so far is 0 since the material comes from coffee companies and donated clothing.



Cloth bags on their way to the market to be sold.

The second success story is about a movement called Release Lanes or the Free Bike Lanes Movement that was started by thousands of bicycle enthusiasts in Tirana. They are actively protesting the lack of bike lanes and poor driver awareness that the cyclists must deal with daily. Funding from P4P's involvement was the catalyst for this activism and all participants readily acknowledge our part in their cause.

As most of you know, not all of the bicycles shipped elsewhere go solely to new owners to use. In some cases, as with Ecovolis, the cycles are sold to the public and then the funds collected are used for improving the lives of the local population. For instance, the first \$7,000 (USD) earned from a bicycle sale was directly transformed into something called Ecological Gardens. Five public gardens in Tirana that were languishing from neglect, now have solar panels installed, parking for bicycles, and recycling receptacles. All make these locations cleaner and more relaxing now. Ened also informed us that some funds collected in April from bike sales was put to use building small freestanding



Children learning about recycling in Albania.

“libraries” in some of the parks and playgrounds in Tirana. Children are able to take a book out of the little library and then return it for another. Lastly, some of the bikes at the time of the sale were reserved for the children’s daycare center Shtwpiza e Ngjyrave (House of Colors) so that the little ones would have more options for playtime.

As their web site states, Ecovolis was created to be “... a program that will forever change the way people perceive [Tirana], how they experience and perceive transportation, creating a more vibrant city, a place where people want to work and live with a quality and entertaining environment.” In these days of reinventing ourselves and putting concerted effort into recycling all that we can, it’s always gratifying to learn how the donated bicycles and sewing machines from the States become more than used cycles or machines elsewhere. They become clean energy sources, earth friendly bags made by newly employed people, books for children, and even garden plots. It might be time to take a trip to see Tirana’s improvements in person.



The freestanding library, making books more accessible to children in Tirana.

High Gear Cyclery and Pedals for Progress Team Up to Change Lives



Dave and Gary hard at work during the High Gear Cyclery Collection

High Gear Cyclery is pleased to have partnered with Pedals for Progress (P4P), with the first load of 193 kids bikes being readied for shipment to Guatemala in mid-June. There will be a container load of previously loved kids bikes from our NJ customers shipped to be distributed to families in Guatemala.

Bike shop quality kids bikes are built to last a long time. However, kids grow up fast, and their bikes get set aside when they've outgrown them. High Gear began to offset this trend years ago when they started a Trade-up Program. These bikes now can be put to good use and provide value to customers after a child has grown out of his/her bike and can help change the lives of families here in the US and in less developed countries. When customers bring back the bike purchased at High Gear they receive a Trade-up Credit to use toward the purchase of any new bike in the store. Over the years High Gear Cyclery has donated more than 2,000 used kids bikes to a variety of local charities. This is the first time that the used bikes will be shipped overseas to change lives.

It was great luck that High Gear has a number of kids bikes and P4P was planning a shipment to a charity named FI-DESMA in Guatemala for June. Given the average height of many of the Guatemalans, the 24 inch kids bike will become an adult bike to be used by a mother or father who now can get to work to do their job and get home in time to take care of the kids, and support themselves.

Each 16 and 20 inch bicycle will go to a child who will now be able to go to school on a regular basis. With a bicycle comes a life change, ease in getting to school and more time to study or play. There are 16 inch bikes for seven, eight and nine-year-old kids who are going to use them to commute to school. The 20 inch bikes will go to older kids

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who may use them for a combination of work and school commuting. Of course, as a bike shop, High Gear Cyclery believes that bikes can change anyone's life. Sometimes we just don't appreciate just how much impact a bike can have on a life. The stories and success of P4P shine a new light on just how important a bike can be in someone's life and on a village and an economy.



High Gear Cyclery collection crew.

Paso Pacifico Rangers

by Michael Sabrio

The Spring 2014 InGear newsletter introduced the turtle rangers of Paso Pacifico. The rangers patrol beaches in southwestern Nicaragua to try to protect the turtles that nest there. Through a happy collaboration of Paso Pacifico, the Turtle Conservancy, and Pedals for Progress, the rangers now use P4P bikes for commuting and patrolling. In February Gary Michel and I visited the Paso Pacifico rangers and got a first-hand look at what they do. The Paso Pacifico staff in California and Nicaragua were extremely helpful in arranging the logistics. (Thank you, Kate Dolkas!) Paso Pacifico driver Don Meyer Rodríguez picked Gary and me up in Rivas for the 35-mile ride to Ostional Beach, where we would meet the rangers. Claudia Perla, a Paso Pacifico forest ecologist, came along for part of the ride.



On the boat to Coco Beach

Besides their work with turtles, Paso Pacifico has project on monkeys, reforestation, and “felinos grandes” (big cats) among others. (In 2010, a Paso Pacifico camera trap got photos of a couple of jaguars in areas where jaguars were thought to have been extinct for many years.)

About half our ride was on excellent paved roadway. We passed through the beautiful Pacific Ocean resort town of San Juan del Sur, then headed south on rough unpaved roads. We were there in the dry season, so we had only the bumps, ruts, potholes, and dust to deal with. We wondered how much worse it is in the rainy season and how far the rangers had to travel to get to their patrols. Claudia rode with us to a site near Ostional where she planned to spend a few days with a local family setting up a monitoring program to help determine food resources for spider monkeys. We said goodbye to Claudia and continued down the road to Ostional.

Coco Beach

We stopped at Coco Beach, where Paso Pacifico has one of its turtle hatcheries. A hatchery is a rectangle in the sand near the beach with wire fencing and a covered top to provide shade. Inside, individual plots of a few square feet are marked with the date the eggs were found and estimated date of hatching. Here at Coco Beach, there were no turtle eggs. A sign said that there was lodging and a restaurant here; if you want a vacation truly off the beaten path, this is the place for you.



On Coco Beach with the Pacifico Rangers

Refugio del Flor

Our next stop was at Refugio del Flor, a national reserve famous for massive influx of Olive Ridley turtles. Nicaraguan soldiers were posted here when we visited. A board that shows counts of nesting turtles by month and by year has some big numbers – between 23,000 and 30,000 turtles from September through November of last year – but any relief you feel is tempered by very high mortality rates for newborn turtles – at least 90%.

Ostional

Our final destination was the beach at Ostional. Salvador Sánchez, the Paso Pacifico turtle coordinator (how's that for a job title), lives right here with his family in a spectacular isolated spot on the beach. We met the rangers on duty that day: Daniel, Eliezer, Erick, Felix, Jairo, Jorlin, Marcos, and Savador. They had their trusty P4P bikes. Gary and I mounted a couple more P4P bikes that Meyer had picked up from our long-time contacts in Rivas, the Santana family. We left these two extra bikes for the rangers at the end of our ride. Salvador, some of the other rangers, Gary, and I rode our bikes a few hundred yards south to another of the Paso Pacifico turtle hatcheries. Paydirt! A batch of a

few dozen turtles had just hatched that day. A Paso Pacifico employee was tending them, keeping them safe and healthy. They were to be released that night into the Ocean, which was a few dozen yards from the hatchery. Because of predation by gulls and other shoreline animals, the first few minutes of a turtle's life – from the time they emerge from the nest, crawl across the beach, and plunge into the ocean – are hugely dangerous. The Paso Pacifico program saves the turtles from at least this threat.

We rode our bikes back to the beach at Ostional and took a boat ride to a nearby beach that is a popular turtle nesting



Gary holding baby turtle to be set free.

site. One of the rangers dug up a nest where the turtles had recently hatched and counted several dozen eggshells plus 4 marble-sized eggs that had not developed. We hoped that the turtles hatched here had made it safely to the Ocean. Because the turtles come ashore at night, the rangers' schedule must accommodate them. A couple of the guys on our ride were getting ready to start their 6pm to 6am shift. They explained that their jobs are sometimes rou-

tine and sometimes dangerous. Sometimes there is nothing to report. Rangers have no official authority to confront or stop poachers, who may be armed. The rangers rely mostly on their ties to and respect from the community. It also helps that Paso Pacifico pays compensation to local people who help with its conservation programs. People who find a turtle nest get money when they bring the eggs to a Paso Pacifico hatchery. Families who lose livestock to predation by the big cats and even people who can show evidence of the cats (such as cell-phone photos) are also paid. Besides being incredibly interesting and beautiful, our trip gave us a better appreciation of how much a bicycle can



Pacifico Rangers on their way to work.

help people do their jobs where transportation is unreliable and expensive. We also have a better appreciation of how hard it is to balance the preservation of ecosystems and rare animals with the day-to-day survival of very poor people.

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Sewing Machines Arrive in Moldova

Aneta is a French teacher at the high school. She cares deeply for her students and the community. She spent many hours helping with the logistics of bringing the bicycles and sewing machines to Grozesti. When she was young all the girls learned how to sew, knit, and crochet. Her father was an artist and filled their home with tapestries. Aneta wanted to pass these skills on to the next generation. When she found out that our shipment of bikes would also contain sewing machines we quickly applied for a grant to pay for ten machines, tables, chairs, lights, and fabric. Her parent's home has been vacant for the past 7 years and her plan is to turn it into a sewing shop. She will teach a sewing class at the high school and those students who show promise will be offered a position in the shop. Moldova is ranked the highest in Eastern Europe for victims of human trafficking. She hopes to teach the most vulnerable young women in the village a valuable skill so they will not be so easily duped into believing there is a dream job waiting for them in Romania or Italy. Aneta has been taking

care of her granddaughter for the past two years while her daughter studies and works in Italy. Jobs are scarce in Moldova. Aneta is doing a great thing by sharing her knowledge and love of sewing while creating jobs and a future for her village.



For more information visit www.p4p.org.

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