

INGEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF PEDALS FOR PROGRESS



Greeting from your roving Moldoveneasc

Greetings from Your Roving Moldoveneasc Peace Corps Volunteer Reporter, Carol Stadden

It is the middle of winter in Grozesti but that does not stop people from riding their bikes. Many of the roads are impossible to navigate with a bike but the main road which has been under construction since I arrived, August of 2013, is almost complete! Many of the boys who helped to repair our shipment of bikes were part of the road construction crew. They would ride their new bikes to and from spreading stones and pouring tar this past summer. I know because I saw them on the days that I took a group of younger boys



Moldovan teens out for a ride.

and girls to participate in a different "Hill Challenge" each week. Now that the kids had bikes with gears, they could actually ride their bikes up all the hills that surround our village. You cannot go more than 2k before you hit a steep incline. We crowned a "King and Queen of the Hills". They were not awarded a polka-dot jersey but instead a bicycle gear pouch and inner tubes—compliments of the P4P shipment we received in June!

Fifteen of the bikes were sold to an enterprising Moldovan who will use them to improve tourism in the country. He helps pensioners rent out their vacant homes. He hopes the bikes will add more interest for potential tourists, if they are placed at some of these "Hai la Tara" rentals. With our shipment of 475 bicycles we also received about

70 sewing machines. All of them were distributed throughout the community except for 10. These were earmarked for a sewing class at the high school. I recently helped the French professor write a grant for equipment to create a modern sewing classroom. We won the grant and will soon have sewing tables, fabric and thread, storage bins, mannequin, excellent lighting, a laptop, printer/scanner, and projector and screen. The class has started and the children are very excited. We were pleased to find that 6 boys were eager to take the class stating that they would like to design clothes someday. We will not only teach sewing and design techniques but entrepreneurial training as well. We want to give the children who will not study at university after graduation choices. With the skills they learn in the sewing class they could possibly start their own business! Migration is a huge problem for this country; we want to see the youth stay in Moldova. With the completion of the road this summer, I expect to see even more bikes out and about than every before. So many people ride bikes in our village now that a sign was erected to warn incoming traffic. Isn't it great! Bun Ziua!



Grandfather taking his grand-daughter to kindergarten.

During the year 2014 EcoBici received two containers of bicycles for a total of 1062 bicycles, 971 of which were sold from January to December. During the first half of the year sales flow was very good but from July to November sales dropped greatly.

This year EcoBici will increase slightly outlays for wages which is due to the increase of wages mandated by the Ministry of Labor. It is mandatory to increase wages and social insurance and the top rate assumed by the employer is 16 %, just as the payment of social benefits is increasing (compensation for years of work, vacation, thirteenth month). The importation taxes have increased on the bicycles also.

It is for all these expenses the bikes price increases, but still sold at attainable prices for the population. Local shops are selling new bikes but poor quality and quite high prices. It is true there are shops that offer very good bikes but their costs are very high for poor people in Managua, so they always prefer to come to Ecobici because bikes are good quality and good prices adjusted according to your income.

We believe and are sure that it is always important to send bicycles. First people need access to a good bike for commuting to their workplaces and students to their schools. We hope P4P will have successful collections so that we may receive three containers of bicycles in 2015.

That's why we deeply thank everyone involved in P4P collections for their work and dedication of their time to this cause that has sent bicycles Rivas. Thanks, Thanks .



It has been a frenzy driven period for us. In-between the activities we are organizing many society projects and we are preparing for many more.

I am more than happy to tell you about 5 Kidical Mass which is a younger version of a Critical Mass and it has been a success for parents and children alike. The weather here is also very harsh on bikers but as soon as it gets a bit warmer and a bit less rainy we will return with this project as it was a wonderful occasion for parents to spend time with their children while doing something fun along the way. There was a significant participation on our last events in the year 2014 and we are constantly told how eagerly people await the return of these events in 2015. Participation was enabled by the many and many children bikes you sent us, and really hope to draw attention upon these bikes because not only they are (probably) the most entertaining gifts for a child but also the healthiest.



Kidical Mass ride in Tirane

I must thank you for the sewing machines, we are currently putting them in use in a small project for a small economic empowerment of families in the north of Albania where conditions are difficult to live and survive. As soon as we get some results and individual perspectives of the project, I'll let you know and maybe we include those in the newsletter.

Also I want to tell you of a very important project for us we are currently totally engaged to make work. With the sales of the last 2 months from the bikes (and of months ahead) we are working to plant 1000 trees near a landfill site called Sharra, with the hope of a better environment for the adjacent villages and the general area where the fumes from the landfill make living hard. "Plant Your Tree" and Ecovolis have the motivation to make this work. Phase One is three days away with first step of 1000 trees, and according to

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



Planting trees at a local landfill in Albania.

the participation we get we are going to plan and go all the way until we hit the target of 1500 trees (and who knows of how many more later). Soon enough I'll have some photographic material to send to you so you can also give impressions and include it in the newsletter.

There have been also smaller scaled projects but with a considerable success upon drawing attention of the public towards a greener living in general and biking in a more specific manner.

Best regards,
Ened



COSTA RICA UPDATE

Carlos Camacho

Carlos Camacho, lives at the bottom of the hamlet in Dulce Nombre de Coronado, Costa Rica. He works in the workshop of a flag factory located near Coronado. He put a basket on his bicycle so he could begin to deliver vegetables and fruit to some of the families that are along his route



Carlos making his daily drop off.

on his way to work. Some of the fruit and vegetables are from his own garden and others he buys the day before. He manages to generate a little income while he is commuting which he puts towards the cost of his five-year-old daughter's education. The bicycle allows him to manage to drop off the vegetable and fruit to certial households on his way to work.

Martha Bejarano

Martha Bejarano, raised her daughter alone doing needle-work. She lives in Aguas Zarcas of Ciudad Quesada, Costa Rica in a very humble village. At great cost she is sending her daughter to school to become a professional, so now she is caring for her granddaughter. The daughter gave her a better P4P sewing machine with more stitches, so she can be more productive while her granddaughter is at school. She now lives much happier because one needs to save. She learned to operate the new machine almost im-



Martha working in her house.

mediately and it is allowing her to be more productive and do more work. Now her dream is to improve the kitchen and the refrigerator of his humble cottage with the added income she is earning.

Javier Baldivia

Javier Baldivia and his family live in the district of Los Guidos in the heavily populated canton (much like a county) of Desamparados, Costa Rica. In this urban environment, Javier and his wife work hard to maintain a steady income in order to afford both the basics for the family and school for his older two children. Construction is his main occupation but, as in many places, the work varies as much as the demand. He waits for his boss to let him know where and when to be at a job and needs to be able to get to the assigned location as quickly as possible.



Javier and his daughter on their daily ride.

Not only does he compete with Costa Ricans for work, but he must also contend with the enormous influx of other Nicaraguans looking for a better life and steady wages. The ownership of a single bicycle has enabled Javier to remain reliable and, thus, competitive in a congested world of surplus able bodies. As a bonus, on weekend mornings, he can also make use of his bicycle to run errands for the family such as shopping with his daughter at a "Pulpería" to buy cheese and bread for their breakfast.

(Javier cont'd from page 4)

As our American cities embrace bicycle commuting and sharing as a new (much needed) trend, people like Javier have known for some time that two wheels mean much more than less traffic and good exercise. Bicycles are the most economical and efficient tool for many people of many incomes to keep their families secure and their environment healthy.



By Tim Weitzel

For the second time, Dave has asked me to write an update on the "Iowa operation". I would report that P4P in Iowa is very much a mixed bag as we begin the 2015 collection season. On one hand, we are enthusiastic, have established a recognizable "brand", have many supporters and the supply of used bikes and volunteers is deep. On the other hand, we do not have a "trucker" at this time!!!

Looking back 10 years, I now understand Dave's business-like approach to moving bikes. At the time, I was young, more naïve, and certainly blindly idealistic. Our biggest hurdle is to find transport for the 929 miles from Dubuque to High Bridge, NJ.. So we are not going to give up. Our volunteers, our sponsors and our supporters in Iowa are 100% committed to the work of P4P. Yes, we are an idealistic out here in the Heartland. Somehow, I believe we will have the big wheels rolling east again in 2015 with lots of bikes onboard.

Thanks, Dave, P4P staff, and all the P4P supporters for your trust and belief in the Iowa Connection.

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Bikes ready for the first spring shipment at the P4P warehouse.

Did you know that the #1 wine country in the world is still unknown? Imagine a friendly country, where everyone is eating fresh organic food, drinking clean domestic wine from grapes they have grown themselves and all the local traditions are about hospitality and making guests happy—this is Moldova!

Moldova is a small country in Eastern Europe, with a population of about 3 million people. In 2014, Lonely planet stated that it was the “least visited” country in Europe, and 2nd to last visited in the world. In 2014 Moldova was visited by less than 5 thousand real tourists; it is practically unknown by international tourists and is considered “off the beaten path”.

Moldovans usually have 2 houses in their garden. The first is old and small where the grandparents usually live and the second is new and much larger; about 5-7 times larger than first house. If you were to ask any tourist in which of these houses they thought people lived they would say, “of course, in the large one”. But the same question asked of locals will show the opposite response: “of course, in the small one”. The larger, new house is wasted!

We have decided to develop tourism in Moldova and at the same time help local people to rent their houses to tourist on a daily basis. We have 260 houses available for online booking in 60 different villages. All together there are about 2300 person/places to stay overnight. The project is called: www.hailatara.md, which in Romanian means: let’s go to the countryside. Most of the home owners are pensioners, receiving pensions of about \$40-\$50 a month.

Membership in our guest-house chain allowed them to earn additional money for their living. Competitive per person lodging and meal fees allowed them to make another 2-3 pensions each month without any effort. It was enough to bring just a few tourists to these homes and the whole village knew about the opportunity to make money! In a short time each village has seen about 5-10 additional houses registered in the system. Tourists now have an opportunity to choose a place to stay according to available conditions and clients reviews. Competition in the village makes a tectonic impact: local people start to make repairs inside of their houses by installing toilets and hot water showers. In the garden they put ethnic pieces from our local culture: cart wheel, jar of clay, handmade carpets, and so on.

Moldova is the largest per capita wine grape growing country in the world. At a time when local people in France

are prohibited to grow grapes and make wine, in our country it is the national culture! Every homeowner has their own cellar full with wine and a variety of conserved natural products. The food here is very delicious and hospitality is a part of our culture.

There is a need and desire to develop tourism in this country. But the number one problem that we face is this question – what is there to do in the countryside? There are only a limited number of developed tourist attractions in the countryside. This is the reason, why many of our customers do not stay longer than a few days. We need to have more tourist attractions in countryside. That’s why we are working on a new project called www.attractionsbylocals.com. It will allow local people to rent their boat, bicycle, or swimming pool; and even offer a culinary tour or wine making tour along with many other offers made by locals.

Moldova is an excellent country for cycling tourism. Using our chain of guest houses, we could offer tours or bicycle rental for international tourists. With this perspective the bicycles from Pedals for Progress could be the just the right seed to bring thousands of tourists to Moldova and help local people earn a better income. With more bicycles we could create more attractions in the countryside, and create the opportunity for those living in the countryside to have more tourists.

We have already had tourists from 19 countries including USA, Mexico, Chile, Canada, Australia, and even 2 groups from Japan! All of them enjoyed their vacations here! We invite all of you to spend a few weeks in Moldova – a most excellent country to be explored by bicycle!



Moldovan garden house

GUATEMALA UPDATE

SAN JOSE ARTESANAS

There is a small town in Cimaltenango, a department of Guatemala, where a group of 17 housewives and mothers have changed their fortunes. San José Poaquil is an isolated area and the residents of this municipality have little opportunity for economic and educational improvement. Still, one particular woman named Marta had the initiative to work for change. Under her guidance, the local women learned the craft of sewing and began to create and market blouses that are typical of their region.



San Jose Poaquil, Guatemala

They began with only one sewing machine to share among them. The success of the sales of these blouses enabled them to save enough so that they, through FIDESMA and P4P, could acquire more machines. Each blouse brings in about Q50.00 or Q100.00 (Guatemalan Quetzals), which is enough to improve their ability to get better food and other important resources for their families that consist of anywhere from 3 to 9 children. The immediate effects of access to these sewing machines will eventually lead to long-term opportunities as these women continue to establish themselves as artists and businesswomen.

ABNER OTTONIEL SIQUINAJAY POPOL

Abner has a small family since his father abandoned them when he was only eight months old and his older brother was two years old. The child's mother, whose name is Reyna Elizabeth Siquinajay, works in a tortilla company which earns her very little and not enough to pay for the education of her children. Therefore Abner has worked as shoeshine boy since he was 7 years old. He works during the evenings in the park and in the different houses of the village. Abner received the donation of a BMX bike part of



Abner on his bicycle

the FIDESMA Foundation to increase his mobility so that he could complete more work in his evenings. With support from Pedal for Progress FIDESMA has received 15 containers of bicycles, parts and sewing machines for sale since 1999. Most of the bicycles and sewing machines are sold at low-cost however occasionally for cases like Abner's the bicycle is donated. It is a special case of a child working in the evenings to pay for school in the morning at the National Urban Mixed School September 15. It is admirable that a human being at such a young age can take responsibility and desire to excel as this boy of just 12 years, whose dream is to someday graduate Master of Primary Education.

PEDALS FOR PROGRESS BOARD OF TRUSTEES & STAFF

John Strachan
NJ Highway Traffic Safety
95 Old York Road
Hopewell, PA 18938

Robert Zeh
5 Woods Edge Court
Clinton, NJ 08809

Andrew Williams
1217 Washington Street
Hoboken, NJ 07030

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4th International Convention of Environmental Laureates 12-15 March 2015 Freiburg, Germany

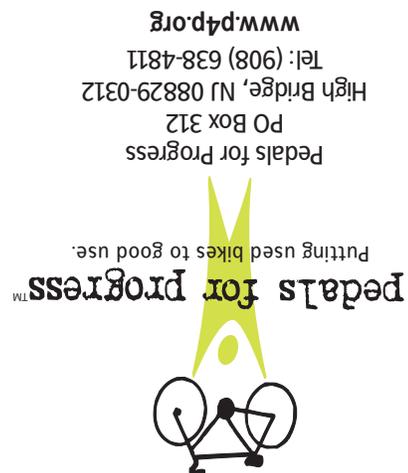
The Freiburg Convention is a platform for networking and dialogue among leading international winners of environmental prizes working in a number of different areas.

The theme running throughout this year's Convention is "Adaptation to Climate Change". The Convention will also highlight Africa, which is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.



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