

SPRING 2016

INGEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF PEDALS FOR PROGRESS



Bula Vinaka

My name is Percival Epeli Navolo and I reside on the beautiful tropical land known as the Fiji Islands.

Life here on the Island has not fully modernised in certain areas compared to larger countries and many of us live by the day. Here on the Island income levels are scarce and many do not have the privilege of completing high level education where they are incapable of obtaining standard level jobs thus also contributing to low level knowledge but have the capacity and capability of man and will power. I have involved myself in the sport of Cycling for 30 years and have seen the benefits the sport brings, Physically, Mentally and Environmentally. With the firm boosting support from NGO Organisation Pedals for Progress and Friends of Fiji, many Fijians now have a milestone opportunity to have their lives transformed.



I am formerly the president for a nationally recognised club known as the Nadi Cycling Club and we strategically aim to have 3 simple basic goals. With the 40foot container supported by Pedals for Progress, Friends of Fiji, Green Mountain Peace Corps Volunteer and Clif Bar Family Foundation containing 440 various species of Bicycles and a complementary offer of 68 perfectly operatable sewing machines, we would like to say a Big Vinaka Vakalevu to all the Supporters and donors who have helped make a difference. With these materials the club can now fulfil the task of



- Helping unemployed youths through the means of Dis-encouraging their flaws from violence and cruelty and instead train them in the field of Bike mechanism and excel in the trade and develop the Sport in the country.
- Lend a helping hand towards the underprivileged in such sense where low income earners who fail to meet transportation requirements in need of travelling from far off locations to working destinations are now eligible to own a cheap yet standard quality bike and not only have a mode of transportation but also maintain their physical fitness level.
- And most importantly, advocate on a more Environmentally Friendly mode of Transportation, to lessen the effect of harmful gases been released in to the atmosphere causing damage to the O-zone layer.

We believe that each individual effort can make a difference. We were also blessed to have the first hand privilege of helping unemployed widows who struggle to put food on their tables to fill their little young loved ones starvation. With now having a source of income, these talented ladies can now use these sewing machines and sell garments they sew. Though it may not be hundreds or millions in a day, but the lovely smiles of relief on their faces gave us a humble relief that it was more than enough.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

John Alexander & Jane Divinski

Sherman Carll

Clif Bar Family Foundation

Pamela Hanlon

Jack & Donna Haughn

Robert & Laura Hockett

Leo & Helen Hollein

Elliott & Kathleen Jones

Dorothy Magers

David Schweidenback & Geraldine Taiani

Thulé

Andrew Williams & Emily Winand

It's Not Just Any Bike That Will Do

By Patricia Hamill

When requests for donations are made, it's often assumed that any item, no matter how worn or outdated, is better than none at all. That is correct—for the most part—because old and unwanted cycles definitely can be resurrected, recycled, and repurposed. We have taken even the most well travelled bikes and turned them into viable and reliable transportation for many new owners. But here is the catch: What if the recipients have special requirements or requests? Is it enough to send what happens to be donated at a particular time and let those at the receiving end figure out how to manage from there?

The bikes we send are in good shape and ready to be purchased, so it's not like anyone has to repair anything before they get rolling. So maybe that is good enough. But who is to say what enough is? There is a story that Gloria Steinem tells about a turtle she found near a road. She was sure the turtle was in danger and in need of help. She made a point of returning it to the river it "belonged" in only to find out later that she had interfered with the turtle's arduous efforts to travel to her nesting spot. Steinem took that lesson of assumption to heart and began to apply it to all she does when she helps others. Basically she admonishes us all to "Always ask the turtle." So, we at P4P find ourselves in a similar situation except the turtle has come to us. In other words, we have found out that the concept of what is good enough is relative and our assistance is needed not just for access to jobs but to athletic ambitions that can offer opportunities for life improvement. There are recipients that know better than us what they need and we should pay attention to that.

In 2014, we introduced a young man named Juan Carlos Jimenez based in Rivas, Nicaragua. The article, "For the Love of Bicycles" shares Juan's ambitions to become a competitive bicycle racer. It was the donation of a carbon fiber Motobecane bicycle that made this possible. In fact, his daily employment was in a bicycle shop, so his financial and professional aspirations were both enhanced by his association with P4P. Today we reflect on Sergio Ramos Antonio Quintero, a 25-year-old living in the Nicaraguan municipality of Diriamba. A textile worker by trade, his great interest is in racing bikes and he hopes to do this full time; but he lacks access to the kinds of cycles that can propel his goals into reality.

So far, he has participated in a number of long-distance races in Nicaragua, winning many second places and bronze

medals. His ambition is to be able to have more time to hone his skills; but this means less time at the textile plant and less income. If he becomes good enough to participate



consistently and, of course, win, he could merit financial backing from local sponsors. If Sergio leaves the textile mill, his spot will go to another who is in need of work. It's a winning situation for more than one person.

So, returning to the example of the turtle, we all probably should work on shifting our perceptions about who is in need and what our contributions can really do. It's not just one bike, one person. It's about the person as well and what he or she really needs. Their locations, their terrain, their employment or lack of, and their personal ambitions and desires are all part of one large equation that we may not be able to know, but we can offer the widest range of options for them to make use of. If our recipients can thrive better with high-end competition bikes, then let's make it happen! The good old cruisers have their place and it's a given that children's bikes are valued, but if you aren't spinning past the finish line these days, there is someone out there who is working hard to earn that honor!

Let's ask our activist and philanthropist selves not just who we can donate to but what they best need. If you don't know the answer, ask this turtle: P4P.

Shifting Gears: Pedals for Progress and Sewing Peace Keep the Spirit of Economic Development Afloat

By Patricia Hamill

Adaptability, resilience and initiative. These are the key factors that define success in the world of the NGO and that are the very foundation of Pedals for Progress (P4P), a small, but internationally active nonprofit. Founded in 1991 by David this undertaking was not intended to be part of a charity effort, but a leg up for the economically disadvantaged. Over the last 25 years, P4P has searched out communities in the developing world and connected them with access to employment and self-sufficiency by providing them with sewing machines, bicycles and maintenance parts.

To date, more than 145,000 bicycles and 3,200 sewing machines have been shipped to P4P's nonprofit partners in more than 40 countries including Nicaragua, Guatemala, Ghana, Albania, and Fiji, and the numbers continue to grow as collections are scheduled year round. The partners in these countries arrange the pick up and delivery of the shipments, and they often serve as an ongoing center of support and education for those who purchase the bikes and machines. It is important to our philosophy of self-empowerment that people maintain a sense of self-reliance and initiative. Recipients of the bicycles and sewing machines that P4P collects and ships are required to purchase them. While the amount may be minimal, we feel that paying for affordable and low-maintenance access to employment offers a long-term solution to poverty. The recipients can earn their own way and take pride in their improved lifestyles. But what are the challenges of such an undertaking? When dealing with the bicycles, there are large containers to ship, customs to navigate, delivery to arrange at the recipients' location and reliable partners to connect with so that this endeavor remains untouched by mismanagement. These obstacles are among the reasons why P4P is now expanding its focus and putting sewing machines at the front of the list of shipping priorities. These collections are under the auspices of Sewing Peace. Still a part of P4P, but independent all the same. The shipping itself is less expensive and that enables Sewing Peace to allocate more funds towards outreach: "We can

stack the sewing machines on pallets and transport them in smaller vehicles once at their destination. Usually 20 or 30 machines are enough to fully supply a co-op or school without our needing to resupply." Sewing machines are practical because they are also technologically appropriate to the locations where they are distributed.



There are several success stories from long-term and new partnerships formed over the years. One such fortuitous relationship is with the Foundation for the Environment and Sustainable Development (FIDESMA). Located in Guatemala, this organization actively runs economic development programs that enable locals to learn a variety of skills such as computer use and more efficient methods of agriculture. FIDESMA is able to make use of the bicycles and sewing machines in two ways. First, those who purchase these enhance their earning power by accessing employment in more remote areas or by setting up their own sewing businesses right in their own homes. Then,

the income from the sales enables FIDESMA to continue to fund its programs and keep the classes running. This system of reciprocity is much more desirable than the cycle of poverty that exists so pervasively in this region. The Barrouallie Secondary School (BSS) on the island of St. Vincent is the fortunate institution that welcomed a dedicated PCV who was familiar with P4P's work. She arranged for 20 sewing machines to add to the school's vocational curriculum. These particular machines are strictly for educational purposes rather than commercial, but the skills these Vincentian students take away with them will help them avoid work in banana production and the insecurity that comes with crop diseases and other negative effects on prices. Tourism is a growing industry on the island, but there are only so many jobs to go around. The sewing machines do not rely on seasons or market values to function reliably.

As bicycle donations dwindle in the face of a reduction in consumer spending and an increase in their value as scrap metal, it has become immensely important that P4P maintain its momentum and continue its mission uninterrupted. What Sewing Peace hopes to accomplish, in the spirit of P4P, is to connect with many more people who can provide and store unwanted sewing machines domestically and may have ideas and suggestions as to where Sewing Peace can expand their footprint in the world.

Making changes after 25 successful years can be difficult for some, but P4P was founded on challenge and filling a need. Pedals for Progress and Sewing Peace embrace the evolution that must happen to keep the spirit of economic



stability alive. The needs of the poor stay the same but how they are met must evolve and this NGO is not losing any momentum shifting gears and running smoothly ahead. As the saying goes, "A rising tide lifts all boats."

Author blurb:

Patricia Hamill, M.A., is the founder of Heron Moon Press and an adjunct faculty member at Pace University and Southern New Hampshire University specializing in Composition Studies. She is a freelance writer and editor that regularly contributes to "InGear," the newsletter of Pedals for Progress. Her blog on writing and mindful living can be found at www.heronmoon.com

Update from Ghana, Fall 2015
by Kwaku Agyemang

In November of 2014, P4P sent an entire 40-foot container of just spare bicycle parts to WEBikes, our partner in Ghana, West Africa. These parts, valued at a little over \$300,000, were a generous donation to P4P from Bell Sports. Here is a report from Kwaku Agyemang, our partner at WEBike in Ghana.

When we got the shipment containing the bicycle spare parts, our idea was to use them to repair and service some old unusable bicycles that have been in WEBike's warehouse for some time now. These bicycles were unusable



because some parts were missing or not working when the shipment arrived. Bike parts from some unusable bikes were used to repair other bikes to make them ready for dispatching, but we still had many bikes in no condition to sell or donate.

Besides using the new parts to repair the bikes in our warehouse, WEBike decided to try an additional strategy. We wanted to visit some people who already had our bikes to check the condition of their bikes. Maintaining a bike can be very expensive, so it makes sense to help with maintenance as well as with the original acquisition of the bikes.



For instance, in Walewale we visited Mr. Usifu, a student teacher. Though Mr. Usifu's bicycle was in good shape, all his tires had worn out. We gave Mr. Usifu a set of tires and tubes to get his bike back on the road. This placed a big



smile on his face.

We also visited Paa Joe, an apprentice and inhabitant of Suhum in the Eastern region. We discovered that his bicycle had been unusable for some months. When asked why, Paa Joe lamented that he was the youngest apprentice in the shop where he learns his trade, and that his bicycle had been seriously abused by his master and his senior colleagues. Paa Joe further explained that because the bike was unlocked when he got to work, it was at the service of everyone at the shop and his junior position at the shop prevented him from saying a word. WEBike checked the bike carefully and gave Paa Joe a set of tires, a bell, pedals, a seat, lights and a little cash to help him fix his bike. He was also given a lock to ensure his bike was safe anytime he was at work. He was very grateful and speechless at our kindness.

We also visited Esi, a student of Nkwanta Senior High in the Volta Region. We found Esi's bike to be functioning very well. When asked how she keeps the bike in such good shape and how she maintained it, Esi replied that the bike was her only means of getting to school on time so she had to save some of her pocket money to maintain the bike. Esi also complained that some of her own friends call her names because she refuses to offer them a ride when they ask. But she was of the view that they lived close to school and could easily get there on foot. She on the other hand had to walk for hours to get to school before the intervention of WEBikes. She further explained how much her education meant to her and that she did not want to jeopardize it. We gave Esi a pair of tires, a seat, a bell, lights and other parts to be used whenever she needs them.

In the towns we visited, we also noticed that some people who had not gotten their bikes from us were having problems with their bikes. We want to help them, too. We met

Mr. Cobbla at a bicycle shop where he repairs his bike. After a chat with him we gave him a seat, a bell, and a set of tubes, which he needed to fix his bicycle. We also spotted Mr. Azuri pushing his bike to the workshop. Mr. Azuri told WEBike he had to walk for 30 minutes to the shop to fix his flat tire. We gave him set of tires and tubes to maintain his bike. He was very grateful and pleased with the organization.

Photos from Tanzania



Johnathan Mulokozi at his Garment shop in Karagwe Kagera Tanzania





“Bicycles for Roma Children” by Ened Mato
 December 2015 2 babies died from cold, they belonged to the Roma community. One of the most marginalized communities in Albania, which since 1990 have been in constant movement.

They raise their homes near rivers because they have their culture and simultaneously deal with one of the best works that the humans do for their planet which is recycling. But they suffer, they had always suffered in Albania. They have more than 25 years of wandering in the open air. A nomadic community who in Albania alone has 500 of their children at risk from the cold, the winter rains, and from poverty. They are full of life, you can find them everywhere, by separating the trashes, you can find them into street begging for some money, or through bars expecting for any customers to buy a cornet with almonds or walnuts.

They are everywhere and often fall prey victims of the violence and exploitation or frequent abuse. Well you can see these kids everywhere except at school. None of them go to school for a simple reason! They do not go to school because they are unwashed unkempt. Therefore they can't be prepared to go to school and feel equally with others without being rejecting by them. Their problem lies precisely in their living conditions. This is the point where all the

problems of this community begin. Lacking the living conditions they are deprived of the opportunities that may be given. This is the beginning of the problem of this community all start there. Lacking the living conditions they are deprived of the opportunities that may be given. Consequently of the impurity they say they do not go to school but they go out on the street. It is a vicious circle from which it is so difficult to disconnect the dots. This is the reason why we should start to change the situation in the beginning of the problem.

All the money of the first of 100 bicycles that will be sold from the recently arrived container will go to provide the first house trailers of the First Roma Park in Albania. The intervention will ensure a minimum living condition. The trailers are a solution. It's adapted too with their culture of being a nomadic. What will be done is supplying the house trailers to 40 families with 150 children. Pedal for Progress will be the catalyst of this change.

These children will leave the streets and will be returned to school. Will have the opportunity to be educated and go in life they are able to have a future, but what is important there will be no more babies dying from the cold. They will have a roof over their head, the only shelter after 25 years.



SEWING PEACE 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
 210 Pavonia Street
 Jersey City, NJ 07303

John Alexander
 (Treasurer)
 1594 Frontero Ave.
 Los Altos, CA 94022

David Schweidenback
 (Chairman & President)
 86 East Main Street
 High Bridge, NJ 08829

Gary Michel, Vice President
 gary@p4p.org

Lori Smith, Office Manager
 lori@p4p.org

Reykha Bonilla, Web Master
 reykha@p4p.org

MOLDOVA

The granddaughter of one of our key volunteers had a bike she had outgrown and she wanted her grandfather to donate it to Pedals for Progress. We wrapped it up with orange tape so we could follow it and put it in the front of a container going to Chisnau, Moldova.

We thought we had lost track of this bike as we had not heard back from our partner, but it turned out we just had an email problem which is now been rectified. This is the very happy little girl who received the bicycle from a very generous young American.



For more information visit www.p4p.org.

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
FLEMINGTON, NJ
PERMIT NO. 525



Pedals for Progress
PO Box 312
High Bridge, NJ 08829-0312
Tel: (908) 638-4811
www.p4p.org