

Conclusions and suggestions from the donor organisation after the visit 2012/2013
Clemens Rudolf, 1st chairman, Technik und Solidaritaet e.V. / Fahrraeder fuer Afrika
www.tus2005.net, afrikafahrrad@tus2005.net

The Pro-Link approach is to help the poorest and most suffering people in Ghana. These people are mostly found in rural areas. Helping the poorest with bicycles is difficult and comes with **three major challenges**:

1. **Costs**: Transport to several rural areas is more expensive than for example just to one place
2. The poorest tend to be people which have less **education and lack experience** in handling bicycles properly
3. Lack of appropriate **bicycles mechanics** in the villages, lack **of money for repairs, sustainability of the bicycle project**.

Pro-Link is **currently doing the following** to cope these challenges:

1. Introduction of a commitment fee on some beneficiaries, maybe 20 percent (?) of all beneficiaries paid around 30 Ghana Cedis
2. Pro-Link gives bicycle training to the beneficiaries. This helps the beneficiaries to detect simple and major faults on their bicycles. These trainings don't enable self repairs. Nevertheless all bicycles are repaired before handed out.
3. Pro-Link is giving out toolboxes to some villages. Some villages have been revisited for follow-up repairs.

What are **the effects of these steps**, what should be **changed, what can be done additionally**:

1. Introduction of a general commitment fee.

Giving out bicycles for free comes with a free rider problem. People who do not really need a bicycle or don't cherish it will of course subscribe to get a free bicycle. They tend to not care about there bicycle or ask for follow up visits to repair it. In their opinion the person who gave the bicycle is responsible for it, hence should repair it or give a new one when the old one is spoiled. Since they gave it for free, they must have a lot more. A fee separates some of these freeriders from real beneficiaries who want a bicycle, but cant afford it in the market. This is our target group. If you really want a bicycle you will be able to generate the 10 to 30 Ghana Cedis (the amount is discussable) which will make you value the bicycle more. The beneficiary will care more about the bicycle, e.g. taking it to a fitter when problems occur.

The problem of costs of clearing (approx. 3000 Ghana Cedis one container), transportation costs to the villages (approx.1500 Ghana Cedis one container) and transportation costs of visiting the villages and buying spare parts for the repair can be addressed with this money.

Problem of children bicycles (bicycles for small children before school level): The above described problem becomes even more severe with children bicycles. Parents do not care about the bicycles of their

children and are not willing to give any money for repair. A commitment fee should also be introduced. If no parents can be found who are willing to pay, I suggest to sell all the children bicycles to a wholesaler, who will find parents who care about their children bikes since they pay a market price. There is no sense in handing them out for free when they get spoiled after a few weeks and then lay around in villages, nobody caring about it. We want to see our bicycles running. The generated money can be used to cover the clearing, transportation and spare part costs. TuS wants a detailed financial report and will send Diana Akadi a template of how this should look like.

2. The training should be extended and given to all beneficiaries before receiving a bicycle. Training is an important part of the bicycle project. If bicycles are simply delivered and people don't know how to handle them, there is a huge probability of the bicycles to get spoiled and not repaired afterwards. Educated bike owners understand their machine, can detect faults and might even be able to repair simple faults. Last but not least riding a well maintained bicycle will provoke accidents, likely to happen with badly maintained bicycles. The training extends the lifetime of a bicycle and provokes health damages due to misuse of the bicycles, e.g. wrong saddle height.

A supplementary measurement could be a **simple printed bicycle manual** handed out with every bicycle covering major problems of bicycle use in Africa. A problem might be the illiterate rate in between the beneficiaries as well as a lack of will to read it. Therefore the manual should be simple, containing only a few pages and good explaining pictures. The development and design should be done by TuS e.V. in coordination with Diana Akadi, project manager Pro-Link.

3. Toolboxes given out by Pro-Link enable the beneficiary communities on a simple level to repair their bicycles themselves. **The follow up visits for repairing their bicycles are only of use and sustainable when they aim in training the owners.** By no means the beneficiaries should be given the impression of a full service from Pro-Link. Beneficiaries have to take care about their bicycles themselves. In general a decent mechanic training can not be given within a few hours.

In the **ideal case a money donor for a bicycle training center and storage can be found.** Within the storage the bicycles could be repaired by some selected beneficiaries for example street youth. This involves money for setting up the place and staff to monitor the storage as well as a full time instructor to train the street youth.

The **Pro-Link partner NORSAAC in Tamale is already running two training centres.** One since 2008 in Gumani, Tamale another one in the rural town Karaga 100 km north of Tamale. Norsaac established the training centre after they identified the problem of a lack of bicycle fitters within the beneficiary communities. The first training centre was given to them by Pro-Link. They managed to get a money donor EMPower USA and a tool donor Tools for Self Reliance UK for this training program. Reports can be found on their homepage. Unfortunately NORSAAC didn't receive any more bicycles from Pro-Link since 2009 for unknown reasons.

NORSAAC should receive one container of bicycles via Pro-Link every year. The statistical charts of economics and development show that the Northern Region is one of the poorest Regions within Ghana.