

Bicycles of Hope

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EDUCATION IN ARUSHA

28th August 2024

Our elders always said, "Charity begins at home." At ABC Impact, we often receive calls from headteachers of secondary schools in Arusha who share the challenges they face. One such instance came from a teacher at Kinana Secondary School, who explained that over 40% of their students regularly arrive late—around 9:00 AM instead of the scheduled 7:00 AM. Initially, the students were punished, but this didn't resolve the issue. After conducting research, the school discovered that these students lived so far away that they had to walk more than three hours just to reach school.

Madam Navo, a teacher at Kinana Secondary School, shared the heartbreaking reality that many of her female student's face. She revealed that some of the girls have become entangled in exploitative relationships with street people—particularly motorcycle drivers, known as "bodaboda." These drivers often offer the girls free rides home, taking advantage of their vulnerability because the students lack money for transportation. This has led to cases of early pregnancies, the spread of sexual diseases, and other harmful consequences, causing some girls to drop out of school entirely.

Given this dire situation, and in line with our mission to improve access to education through the power of bicycles, on August 15th and 16th, 2024, ABC Impact distributed 70 bicycles to students at Kinana, Olasiti, and Matevesi Secondary Schools. The goal was to alleviate the burden on students, and to provide a safer, more reliable means of transportation for these vulnerable students.



Before I continue, I'd like to share a brief story. When we arrived at Kinana Secondary School on Wednesday 1:00 pm with 50 bicycles, a local street vendor who sells maandazi (local doughnuts) to the students came to greet us. She faced one of our bicycle mechanics, Happiness, and asked what the bicycles were for.

When Happiness explained that they were for the students, the vendor became emotional. She explained that while her own children didn't attend the school, she was deeply concerned about the female students there. She gave an example of a girl she knew from Nado, a village about 10 kilometers away from the school, and expressed how some students lived even farther.

With tears in her eyes, she pleaded with us to provide more bicycles, noting that both boys and girls faced numerous dangers on their long journeys to and from school. She was clearly emotional, and while she didn't go into detail, the seriousness of her plea was undeniable.

In addition to distributing the new bicycles, we also serviced and repaired bicycles we had previously distributed in 2023. This included bicycles from the Pink Bike Project, a partnership with [Rotary Club](#). All 10 of the pink bicycles were out of commission when we arrived, but we were able to restore them, ensuring they were once again in riding condition.



At ABC Impact, we are immensely grateful to [Velafrica](#) for donating these bicycles to support vulnerable students. We invite more partners and donors to join us in this mission.

Even one bicycle can change the life of a student and their family, contributing to our greater goal of enhancing lives through the power of bicycles.