

USED DANISH BIKES HELP AFRICAN POOR

 NONPROFIT & SOCIAL CAUSE

Thousands of bicycles are scrapped each year in Denmark because their owners can't be bothered to have them fixed, or would rather buy a new bike instead. A new initiative from Copenhagen-based [Baisikeli](#) aims to reclaim those discarded bikes to help the disadvantaged both in Africa and at home. Similar to [Bikes for Africa](#), which we wrote about several years ago, Baisikeli (named for the Swahili word for "bicycle") collects second-hand bikes from all around Denmark and sends them to Africa, where they create work, education and transportation. The group has set up projects in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Tanzania, and it ships bicycles to workshops it has established there to train local people in bicycle repair. Financing for the project comes from bike rentals back in Copenhagen, and unemployed people who have been out of a job for three years or more do the handling of the bikes on the Danish end. In Africa, local mechanics then work with apprentices to repair the bicycles and sell them to local distributors. Many are sold to the local population—offering a better-quality yet lower-priced alternative to the bicycles commonly available there—while others are converted into specially adapted bicycles that can serve as local ambulances and cargo bikes. Baisikeli also donates some bikes to rural Ghanaian children who depend on them to get to school. Profits from the fixed-up bikes that get sold are invested in local projects, while a portion is put back into developing the workshops. Ultimately, the group hopes to offer local mechanics micro-loans so they can start their own businesses, as well as to develop a Fair Trade Baisikeli bike that will be built in Africa and returned to Denmark for rental to tourists there starting next year, according to Copenhagenize. A [video on YouTube](#) illustrates the project's goals. So many projects intended to help Africa's poor are essentially just donations and produce only short-term effects. By developing a sustainable bicycle industry there, however, Baisikeli hopes to give Africans a better future. One to sponsor or partner with! (Related: [Microfinance meets mentoring](#).) Spotted by: [Copenhagenize](#) via RK
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