

2021 MALAWI IMPACT REPORT



WORLD BICYCLE RELIEF®

DEAR FRIENDS

Despite COVID-19’s continued effects on operations, especially as the more highly-transmissible Delta and Omicron variants emerged in Southern Africa, 2021 proved to be our most successful year in Malawi. Through the launch of our Mobilized Communities program approach and key sales to international organizations, 20,641 Buffalo Bicycles were distributed in the country this year.

Here are some of the highlights of 2021:

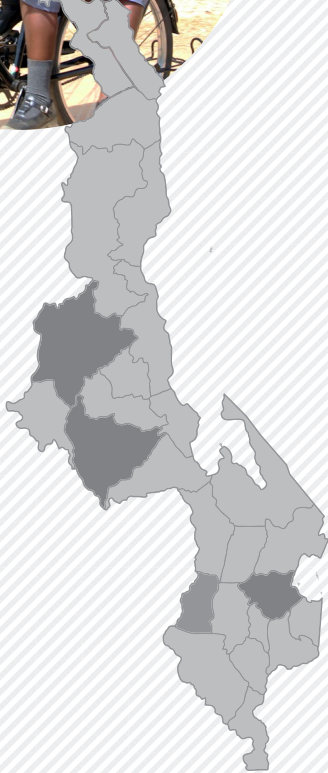
- Following a Mobility Needs Assessment, we launched our pilot program of our Mobilized Communities approach in the Kasungu district.
- Through Buffalo Bicycles Ltd., our social enterprise arm, we were awarded a tender for 9,305 bicycles by the United Nations’ Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) at the end of 2020. These Buffalo Bicycles were distributed in programs across the country, predominantly to agriculture extension workers helping to improve food security in the country.
- We completed our first export of 140 Buffalo Bicycles to the non-governmental organization mothers2mothers (m2m) in Mozambique.
- We embarked on an aggressive growth plan for our Buffalo Bicycles shops, opening six additional outlets. This brings our total number of outlets to 10, including our warehouse in Lilongwe. We now have a presence in all three regions of the country, supporting our programs and social enterprise with bicycles, spare parts, and mechanics and after-sales services.
- This year, World Bicycle Relief embarked on a series of research projects in Malawi (along with other countries) to better understand the bicycle market and the needs of our communities, and to build the body of knowledge around rural mobility. We joined forces with J.E. Austin Associates on a United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded research project, Bicycles for Growth, and Swiss University EPFL and Flying Labs Nepal on a Tech4Dev Participatory Geographic Information Systems (PGIS) project, a mapping exercise that will provide a geo-database with information on elements of the bicycle market system.
- The year ahead looks exciting for Malawi. We have identified the Zomba district as our second Mobilized Communities project site and will conduct a Mobility Needs Assessment there in June 2022. We look to double our shop footprint to ensure that all areas of Malawi have access to our bicycles and spare parts, and will continue our work on the Bicycles for Growth and Tech4Dev projects. In addition, we have partnered with the Volvo Research and Education Foundation (VREF) and the University of the Western Cape to research the transportation needs and practices of marginalized groups in peri-urban settings of Zomba district.






We would like to thank our donors and supporters for all that they do for our communities. We would also like to thank our partners, including FAO, UNICEF, Baylor College of Medicine Tingathe, CAMFED, CARE, Plan International, Feed The Future Agricultural Diversification Activity, and Bantwana, for their unwavering support during the past year.



Anthony Kinnaid
Country Director
World Bicycle Relief: Malawi

OUR IMPACT IN MALAWI
WHERE WE WORKED IN 2021



		2021	TOTAL TO DATE
	TOTAL BICYCLES DISTRIBUTED	20,641	50,649
	PROGRAM BICYCLES	5,640	11,880
	SOCIAL ENTERPRISE	15,001	38,769
	MECHANICS TRAINED	35	107
	SHOPS OPENED	5	9

OUR GLOBAL IMPACT TO DATE (2021)


635,478
TOTAL BICYCLES
DISTRIBUTED


260,262
WBR PROGRAM
BICYCLES


375,216
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
BICYCLES


2,680
MECHANICS
TRAINED

MOBILIZED COMMUNITIES

KASUNGU DISTRICT

In our baseline survey, although over half of the Mobilized Communities participants reported that they are in some form of employment, the majority of these are "working poor". Their employment is not necessarily sufficient to allow them to live above the country's national poverty threshold and would typically be precarious or poorly paid, with little or no job security. A bicycle is a tool that can help individuals access better opportunities, improve their productivity, and diversify their revenue streams.

KASUNGU BASELINE SUMMARY

32%

HAVE NO FORM OF EMPLOYMENT

86%

REPORT A LACK OF TRANSPORT AFFECTS THEIR DECISION TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THEIR VILLAGE

20%

REPORT DISTANCE AND LACK OF TRANSPORT AS A CHALLENGE TO ACCESSING WATER

76%

TRAVEL AT LEAST ONE HOUR (ONE WAY) TO THE NEAREST HEALTH FACILITY

91%

HOLD VOLUNTEER POSITIONS IN THEIR COMMUNITY

The baseline survey was conducted in August 2021 and included 168 participants

WHAT IS 'MOBILIZED COMMUNITIES'?

An evolution of World Bicycle Relief's work since 2005, the Mobilized Communities model drives sustainable bicycle use through community-led programming to improve rural access to health, education, conservation, and livelihoods. In partnership with communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments and the private sector, targeted regions benefit from an infusion of quality bicycles, programming and mechanic training.

With widespread access to reliable transportation, individuals within these communities can begin to lift themselves out of poverty by increasing productivity, income and access to education and healthcare. Women and girls, in particular, whose empowerment is essential for community wellbeing, are prioritized under the Mobilized Communities model.

WHY KASUNGU?

Kasungu is a district in the Central Region of Malawi. The first site of World Bicycle Relief's Mobilized Communities program is 120km from the country's capital city, Lilongwe, where our operations are based. We established a Buffalo Bicycles outlet in Kasungu to support our programs in the area, and the demand for Buffalo Bicycles and spare parts grew rapidly. The strong cycling culture in the area made us realize that the district could benefit from more robust programming. This district has some of the most fertile soil in the country and is an agricultural hub, with tobacco, tea, groundnuts and soya beans making up a large portion of the yield.

THE IMPACT OF THE BUFFALO ON LIVELIHOODS

Aisa Kankane is a member of the Mtunthama Mlato Milk Bulking group in the Kasunga district of Malawi. The group falls under the Kasungu-2 Tigwirane Manja AIDS Support Organization (K2 TASO). Through the K2 TASO ‘cow pass-on’ program, the group has more than sixty small-scale dairy farmers.

Aisa received a Buffalo Bicycle through World Bicycle Relief’s partnership with K2 TASO as part of the Mobilized Communities program in Kasungu. Before receiving the bicycle, Aisa used to travel on foot to sell milk at the nearest local market. Traveling a distance of 15km, Aisa would often get to the market with spoiled milk.

“Traveling to the market was a very big challenge for me. The walk would take me more than three hours (one way). The cool tanks that we transport milk in keep the milk cold for about two hours before it starts going bad. Often I would get to the market with spoiled milk. Sometimes I would take a minibus to sell milk in town but the MK2600.00 (US\$3.20) that I would use for my transport was an expense that was only increasing my losses,” says Aisa.

Aisa is now able to transport his milk cooling tank on the Buffalo Bicycle’s rear carrier, which can carry up to 100 kgs. His travel time to the local market and the nearest town has been reduced by two hours (one way) and he is able to get to his selling points with fresh milk. He is also able to move around the market with the milk, reaching more customers.

Due to distance and lack of transportation to the market, Aisa used to milk his cow once a day and would sell less than 20 liters of milk. With the bicycle, a fast and reliable means of transporting the milk, Aisa milks his cow twice a day and is able to sell at least forty liters of milk every day. The Buffalo Bicycle has also made it easy for him to care for his cow as he is able to use it to travel to cut grass as well as to get to the maize mill to prepare feed for his cow.

Beyond helping Aisa with his dairy farming, he uses the bicycle to travel the 25km (one way) to where he grows maize and soya beans. Being able to cover this distance effectively means he can further diversify his revenue streams, bringing in more money to support his family.



Aisa Kankane is a small-scale dairy farmer in Kasungu

EXPANDING OUR REACH THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

The United Nations’ Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) is working in Malawi to help communities improve their livelihoods, and to protect landscapes from deforestation. Malawi has traditionally relied on tobacco as their main export, and the country has many challenges with deforestation, which causes a range of environmental challenges and poses a risk to the future of farming. Through programs, FAO looks to improve food security and livelihoods by building the capacity of small scale farmers and helping them diversify their crops. Agricultural extension workers serve as a vital conduit in the communities, teaching transformative farming methods to small scale farmers. One of the main challenges affecting the reach of extension workers is mobility. With bicycles, extension workers are able to easily reach the farmers that fall within the catchment area and extend their reach. In 2021, through a tender, FAO ordered 9,305 Buffalo Bicycles. These bicycles went into their programs across the country.

DISTANCE NO LONGER A BARRIER TO EDUCATION



Rose (16) is a form two student at a secondary school in the Kasungu district of Malawi. She lives with her parents and three siblings in Chiliwile village, where her father is a small-scale farmer who grows and sells potatoes.

Rose’s school is located 5km from her village. In 2021, Rose received a Buffalo Bicycle through World Bicycle Relief’s Mobilized Community program that was implemented at her school. With the bicycle, Rose knew that she would no longer be wasting so much time traveling to school and that the bicycle will help her achieve her dream of becoming a nurse.

“Walking to school was a big challenge for me. It would take me three hours to get to school and I usually ended up sleeping during the lessons because of exhaustion. Most days I would not go to school because I was always tired from the previous day’s journey,” says Rose.

The distance Rose would walk every day also affected her punctuality and academic performance.

“I would wake up around 4am to do household chores and prepare for school. I would start off for school early. Despite waking up and leaving early, I would still get to school late, missing the morning study period and most of the morning lessons,” she adds. “My performance was not good at all.”

With the bicycle, Rose has reduced her travel time by over an hour each way. She now gets to school on time and is able to actively participate in her lessons. Her performance has greatly improved and she is confident that her performance in the upcoming Junior Certificate Examinations will be exceptional.

The bicycle has also gone beyond helping Rose access education: *“During weekends, my parents are able to use the bicycle to transport potatoes to the market to sell; this has helped my parents a lot. The money is not only helping the household but also with my school fees.”*

Rose is proud to have received the bicycle. She hopes that she can set an example and that other female students will be motivated to stay in school.

BUILDING A CASE FOR RURAL MOBILITY

Mobility is an often overlooked aspect of investing in rural development. Many people in rural communities lack transportation which often leads to a lack of access to basic goods and services, as well as opportunities to improve their livelihoods. World Bicycle Relief has prioritized building a case for rural mobility and partnering with other organizations to research the effects that bicycle mobility can have on rural communities.

In 2021, World Bicycle Relief launched a number of studies in Malawi (along with other countries). The following research studies aim to contribute evidence towards the rural mobility agenda:

USAID announced two awards totaling \$3.5 million for the Bicycles for Growth Initiative. Coordinated by J.E. Austin Associates and World Bicycle Relief with USAID support, the Bicycles for Growth initiative aims to increase mobility in rural areas by improving sustainable access to affordable bicycles for individuals in sub-Saharan Africa who cannot afford or do not have access to other transportation.

With funding support from Tech4Dev, World Bicycle Relief is partnering with Swiss university EPFL and Flying Labs Nepal to build a Participatory Geographic Information System (PGIS) toolkit to evaluate the accessibility, utilization, and sustainability of mobility options in rural communities. Once built and field-tested, we will share the data, learnings, and open-source tools with governments and the international development sector to help them assess and integrate mobility needs into development planning.

Through a grant from The Volvo Research and Educational Foundations (VREF), World Bicycle Relief, in collaboration with researchers from the University of the Western Cape, will research the knowledge gap around the transportation needs and experiences of marginalized populations in secondary cities across sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on the cases of Kenya and Malawi.



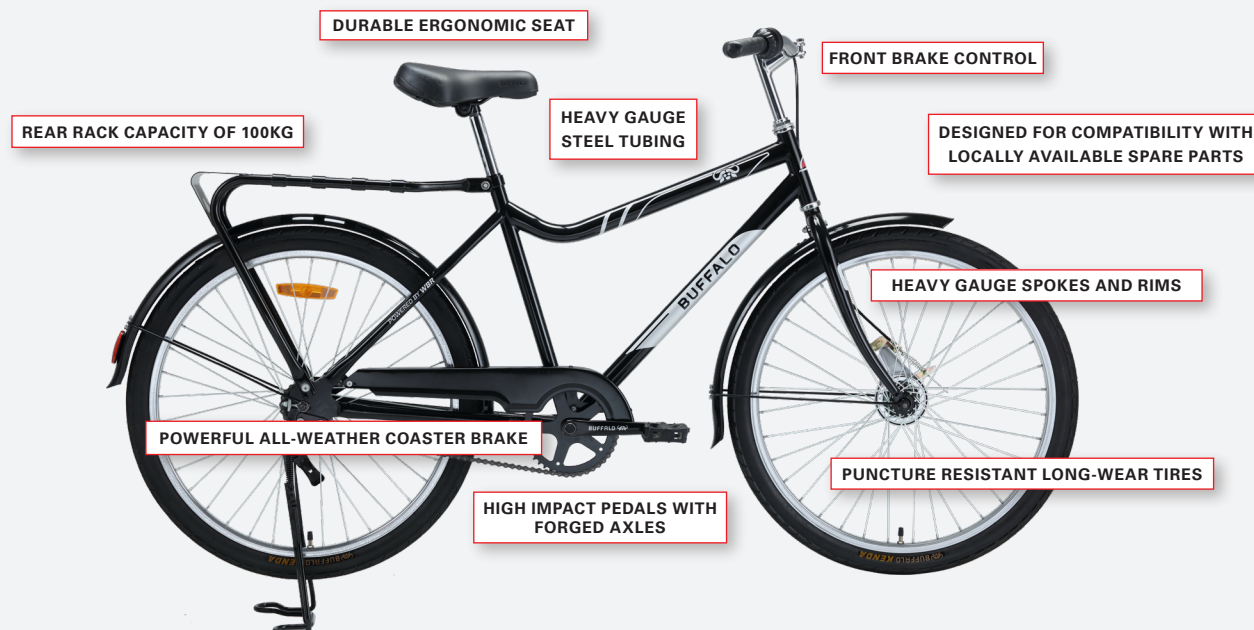
BUFFALO BICYCLES

Designed to be stronger, simpler, and more sustainable than other bikes



Buffalo Bicycles Ltd. is a for-profit subsidiary of World Bicycle Relief that sells bicycles to consumers and institutions across Africa and Colombia. Profits help fund our programs, providing bicycles for those who cannot afford to buy them, including rural students, farmers and volunteer health workers.

The Buffalo Bicycle, the result of over ten years of product development, is a new category of high-quality yet affordable bicycles created specifically to withstand rugged terrain and harsh climate conditions, based on the needs and preferences of the women, men, and children who ride it.



BUFFALO BICYCLES
MALAWI

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