

World Bicycle Relief Launches Major Initiative to Alleviate Mobility Poverty in Tanzania, Empowering 45,000 Rural Residents by 2026

For Immediate Release

Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania – Oct 17, 2024 – World Bicycle Relief (WBR) today announced the expansion of its operations into Tanzania as part of an ambitious initiative to alleviate mobility poverty in rural communities. Over the next three years, WBR will mobilize and empower 45,000 Tanzanians by providing access to reliable, bicycle-based transportation solutions to improve access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

Mobility poverty remains a pressing issue in Tanzania, where 68% of the population lives in rural areas and struggles to access basic services. Building on its proven program model deployed in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, and Colombia, WBR's expansion into Tanzania directly addresses the challenge of distance by providing durable, purpose-built bicycles to healthcare workers, students, and entrepreneurs, empowering them to break free from the limitations imposed by mobility poverty.

A Comprehensive Solution for Tanzania's Mobility Challenges

World Bicycle Relief's expansion into Tanzania is part of its ambitious 2024-2026 global strategy, which seeks to distribute 300,000 bicycles and empower 1.5 million people worldwide by addressing transportation challenges in rural communities. The organization's unique approach combines the distribution of its rugged Buffalo Bicycles with the development of a sustainable bicycle ecosystem of local assembly, trained mechanics, and retail shops, ensuring long-term impact for program participants and their communities. This expansion has been made possible through the generous support of anchor funders, including Backroads, a leader in active and adventure travel, whose investment is helping to fuel the growth and sustainability of our operations in Tanzania.

"Mobility poverty is one of the biggest obstacles to progress in rural Tanzania. Without reliable transportation, access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunity remains out of reach for many. Our expansion into Tanzania represents a critical step in addressing this challenge and providing last-mile mobility solutions that will help individuals and communities thrive," said Dave Neiswander, CEO of World Bicycle Relief. "Through this initiative, we are not only delivering bicycles—we are creating a pathway for sustainable, long-term development."

Transforming Healthcare Access

WBR's initial focus in Tanzania will be in the healthcare sector, in partnership with the Ministry of Health to improve outcomes for malaria, TB, HIV/AIDS, and child health. With a distribution of 2,000 bicycles to Community Health Workers (CHWs) in the Pwani and Lindi regions, WBR will enable these frontline workers to reach more households, cover greater distances, and deliver essential healthcare services more efficiently. Tanzania faces a severe shortage of healthcare workers, particularly in rural areas, with

vacancy rates as high as 70%, according to the Ministry. WBR will help bridge this gap by increasing the reach and retention of CHWs, improving health outcomes for thousands of people.

Education: Keeping Girls in School

In Tanzania, students—especially girls—face significant barriers to education due to long, dangerous commutes to school. Many must walk between 3 to 10 kilometers each way, resulting in high dropout rates and reduced educational attainment. Through partnerships with the Ministry of Education and organizations like CAMFED, UNICEF, and USAID, WBR will provide bicycles to students, prioritizing girls, to ensure they can travel to school safely and efficiently. Similar WBR education programs in Zambia and Zimbabwe have demonstrated a 66% increase in punctuality and a 28% rise in attendance among students who received bicycles, dramatically improving educational outcomes.

"World Bicycle Relief has consistently proven to be a reliable partner with a deep understanding of the transportation challenges faced in rural communities," said Matthew Pickard, Associate Vice President of International Operations at CARE. "Their focus on distributing bicycles within a sustainable support ecosystem ensures their mobility solutions have a lasting impact. This comprehensive approach makes them an invaluable ally in the effort to keep girls in school and improve livelihoods across Tanzania."

Economic Development: Supporting Farmers and Entrepreneurs

WBR's programs will also target small-scale farmers and traders in rural Tanzania, providing bicycles that help reduce transportation costs, improve access to markets, and boost productivity. Bicycles will allow farmers to transport goods more efficiently, access inputs and services, and connect with larger markets, increasing their income potential. In Zambia, for example, bicycle recipients experienced a 48% decrease in travel time to markets and a 15% reduction in transport costs, significantly improving economic stability.

Bicycles as a Proven Last-Mile Solution in Development

Bicycles play a pivotal role in broader development programs, acting as a vital last-mile solution that enhances access to essential services, boosts economic productivity, and builds resilience in vulnerable communities. World Bicycle Relief's extensive research and 20 years of experience in the field have consistently demonstrated that bicycles are more than just a mode of transport—they are a transformative tool that improves welfare and social mobility, particularly for women and marginalized groups.

As global organizations increasingly seek scalable solutions to address mobility poverty, World Bicycle Relief's solutions offer an impactful and sustainable intervention that can be integrated into a wide range of development programs. World Bicycle Relief is uniquely positioned to lead these efforts, delivering critical last-mile mobility solutions that empower people and create lasting change.

About World Bicycle Relief:

Founded in 2005, World Bicycle Relief mobilizes people through the Power of Bicycles. As a pioneering non-profit social enterprise, World Bicycle Relief works tirelessly to provide durable, quality bicycles to those in need, ensuring greater access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Discover more about our impact and vision at WorldBicycleRelief.org.

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