bevrijdt kinderen van armoede

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Update

FINAL UPDATE | INT-0000030879

COUNTRY: Sri Lanka

GOAL: To provide bicycles to youth participants

INTERVENTION: INT-0000030879

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1. UPDATE

In response to the severe fuel crisis in Sri Lanka which disrupted transportation and adversely impacted daily life, an intervention to provide bicycles to youth participants was implemented. The primary objectives were to ensure continued access to education & project activities, reduce transportation costs for families, and promote sustainable modes of transport.

A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted to identify the most affected participants. Criteria for bicycle distribution included distance from project, family income, and availability of public transport. Next, the FCPs gathered quotations from various vendors and selected a suitable provider who met the requirements. Bicycles were procured as the next step. The selection of bicycles focused on durability, ease of maintenance, and suitability for the terrain.

The FCPs also educated families and participants about bicycle maintenance, and road safety and on safe riding practices and adherence to traffic rules. Due to the sudden reduction of prices in the local market, the FCPs were able to buy bicycles to extend the support to more participants.

The provision of bicycles had a significant positive impact on project attendance. Reports from projects indicated a marked increase in attendance rates, with students spending less time commuting and more time on project activities. This intervention also reduced the financial burden on families who previously spent a considerable portion of their income on transportation.

While the program was largely successful, several lessons were learnt. Once was that some participants faced difficulties with bicycle maintenance due to a lack of repair facilities in remote areas. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the program remains a learning in-progress, necessitating continuous community engagement and support.

2. IMPACT

The fuel crisis in Sri Lanka created a multitude of challenges, particularly in transportation, significantly affecting the daily lives of its citizens. Among the most affected were the youth, whose access to education and project activities was severely disrupted. In response, an intervention was implemented to provide bicycles to youth participants, aiming to mitigate the transportation challenges and ensure continued access to project activities. This intervention had profound and far-reaching impacts on the lives of the participants, extending beyond mere transportation solutions.

One of the most significant impacts of providing bicycles was the improvement in project attendance and punctuality. Prior to the intervention, many participants faced quite long and arduous commutes to projects, often resulting in irregular attendance and tardiness. The availability of bicycles dramatically reduced travel time, making it easier for participants to attend school regularly and on time. Project staff reported increased attendance rates and improved punctuality, which in turn had a positive effect on performance. Participants were less fatigued and more attentive in class, leading to better engagement and learning outcomes.

The economic benefits of the bicycle intervention were substantial. For many low-income families, the cost of transportation was a significant financial burden. By providing bicycles, the intervention eliminated or greatly reduced daily transportation expenses. This relief allowed families to reallocate their limited financial resources towards other essential needs such as food, healthcare, and educational materials. In some cases, the savings enabled families to invest in small-scale income-generating activities, further improving their economic stability.

The shift to cycling had notable health benefits for the youth. Regular physical activity, such as cycling, is known to improve cardiovascular health, build muscle strength, and enhance overall physical fitness. Additionally, the increased physical activity contributed to better mental health, reducing stress and anxiety levels among participants. The daily routine of cycling also instilled a sense of discipline and responsibility, promoting healthier lifestyle choices.

The environmental benefits of the bicycle program were noteworthy, contributing to the reduction of carbon emissions and promoting sustainable transportation practices. By reducing the reliance on motorized transport, the program helped decrease fuel consumption and air pollution. This not only had immediate environmental benefits but also raised awareness among the youth about the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable living practices.

Providing bicycles empowered the youth by enhancing their mobility and independence. With their own means of transport, students no longer had to rely on erratic public transportation or parental assistance for their daily commute. This newfound independence boosted their self-confidence and sense of responsibility. Additionally, the program included training sessions on bicycle maintenance and road safety, equipping the participants with valuable skills and knowledge.

3. INTERVIEW WITH THE PASTOR

Pastor Rodney F.

How have the lives of the affected participants been changed since the intervention's completion?
The participants were able to come to the project without having to walk all the way from home or waiting for hours to get a public transportation amidst the fuel crisis in Sri Lanka. This helped them to regularly go to school and attend other matters without a hassle. During the fuel crisis, many families had to be in long queues for hours to get fuel to their motor cycles, but through this intervention there was no need for the families to stay in long queues which saved them a lot of time.

How has this intervention benefitted the church / ICP / or community?
We were able to support the participants in a time of real need. This was recognized by the participant families and also by community members which helped the FCP to gain respect in the area. The participant families were saved of time where they spent on long fuel queues. The health of the families were positively impacted as they are now getting regular exercises when riding the bicycles.

How has this intervention affected your ability to minister to the participants?
We were able to expand our ministry through this intervention. We were able to identify the needs of the participants in the correct time and act on it. We learnt to identify needs, connect with local vendors and get quotations and identify the correct bicycle and process the order. This intervention equipped us with skills like financial management, needs identification, local resources, dealing with local vendors.

What would you like to say to those who provided the financial support for this intervention?
Thank you so much for your generosity in this very crucial time of need. Because of your giving we were able to face this fuel crisis with minimal impact. May God bless you more and more.

4. INTERVIEW WITH A PARTICIPANT

Chamod Sithum

What was your life like before the intervention was implemented?
We were really affected with the fuel crisis in Sri Lanka. We had to stay in long queues for hours and even days to get fuel to our motor bike. Sometimes I was unable to attend project activities as I had to walk a long distance to get there. Our lives were interrupted due to the fuel crisis and we were under a lot of stress

How has your life changed now that this intervention is complete?
Through this intervention I got a new push bicycle to use for my transportation. I was able to attend the project activities without being absent. This bicycle has saved me a lot of commute time. I am able to use that time for my studies and sports activities. I am more physically fit as I am daily riding the bicycle which is a good exercise to me.

What will this change mean for your future or the future of your family?
This intervention changed me and my family's future positively. Now we have a push bicycle that does not require any fuel. I can use this bicycle to go to my project every day. I use this also to go to school and other close-by grocery shops. The time spent on traveling is much less and it has saved me a lot of time to do extracurricular activities.

What lessons have you learned from this intervention?
I have learnt how to take care of my bicycle and use it responsibly. I also learnt road safety and keeping myself away from accidents. I also learnt the health benefits I am getting through riding this bicycle which is making me physically fit day by day.

What would you like to say to those who provided the financial support for this intervention?
Thank you so much for giving towards this cause. This was a very timely need. I am now able to travel to my project daily without any issues. I am physically fit and happy. May God bless you and your families more.

5. PHOTOS



The bicycles that were bought by LK0411 to distribute among their youth participants.



The bicycles that were bought by LK0426 to distribute among their youth participants.



LK0307 distributed the bicycles among their youth participants.



The pastor of LK0422 handing over a bicycle to one of their youth participants.