

## Giving Bikes –

### DACF experience with offering 103 bikes to (mostly) school girls

Many of you may know that simple things are difficult to do well. In the bikes program we have different components but all in all, it is not complex. There is the local partner, the recipient, the parents and the bike. But oh how easy it is to make a mess.... Here are some reflections on Not Making A Mess..

Lotus Pedals is a program of Lotus Outreach ([www.lotusoutreach.org](http://www.lotusoutreach.org)) which gives bikes to girls (mainly) who live far from school on the understanding and agreement that they sign a contract that says:

They alone will use the bike.  
It cannot be sold or pawned.  
The girl will stay in school for a minimum of 2 years.  
They will maintain their bike.



Each bike (secondhand Japanese bikes: sturdy and lasting) comes with a repair kit and the girls are taught how to maintain the bike.

This year we had 3 bike giveaways. At the first we gave 14 bikes, 5 to girls and (for the first time) 9 to boys.

Our timing was off as the road had been mended so we arrived early and, so, participated in the set-up. Our project coordinator, had had great difficulty finding transport for the bikes and there had been a misunderstanding with the shop who thought the bikes needed to be ready much later than originally planned.

Here's how they arrived....

The set-up includes screwing on baskets, adjusting bells, distributing repair kits, preparing the raffle (a piece of paper has a number on it which corresponds to a number on the bike), managing the people (recipients and parents).

This all went quite smoothly in the end.



The next event was 39 bikes for girls. The bikes had been inspected and delivered when we arrived. Then in the boiling sun we had to do the set-up from beginning to end, nothing had been done. Most of the people stood around and watched us as we melted in the sun.

Then the event began in a classroom with girls and parents all mixed, some arriving late. In actual fact some of the girls were represented by their parents and 7 bikes were never claimed at all – the people couldn't make it! The partner organisation had no idea how to make the lucky draw, there was no water offered for drinking and we all left exhausted and dissatisfied.



The next event was way off in the countryside. 50 bikes were being given away. We arrived, the bikes were beautifully aligned with all attachments (baskets etc.) and tape on the seats with numbers – before they wrote directly on the seat – for the lucky draw. All recipients were present (a requirement of the partner organisation) seated in a large hall in neat rows – there were

## Giving Bikes –

### DACF experience with offering 103 bikes to (mostly) school girls



seats for us with drinking water at each place. The governor's representative was present as well as someone from the Department of Education. The speech from the governor's representative was marvellous as she told how she had gone to school on a bike...

The girls stood by their bikes and road away together so that we could take good photos (see below). After that we were taken for lunch and, as there were almost no restaurants, the director of the partner organisation had organised a sumptuous

meal – everything was on the table ready. We returned to Phnom Penh very pleased and aware of the difference in ways of organising a simple event well.

Suggested future guidelines for the partner organisation:

1. Bikes should be ordered well in advance and someone should telephone frequently to see that the shop knows.
2. Delivery should be well in advance of the event with clear instructions for preparing the bikes.
3. The numbers on the bikes should be written on masking tape which can then be removed.
4. The lucky draw should be all set up with the numbers carefully written and folded.

(Click twice to see the finale of each event — not very professional but giving a good sense of the places — videos!!!!)



14 Bikes



39 Bikes



50 Bikes

May you all be well and happy — until next time! mujin for DACF