



**IMPACT REPORT  
2023**

# VELAFRICA'S VISION

is a world in which all people can enjoy the benefits of bicycle mobility to improve their lives.

Thanks to the «Bike to School» programme, 2,500 more students received a bicycle last year.

# THIRTY YEARS DEDICATED TO MOBILITY IN AFRICA

Dear readers and friends of Velafrica,

The past year was a significant one for Velafrica: not only did we **celebrate our 30th birthday**, but we also achieved important milestones in our various areas of impact.

In August, a major bicycle collection campaign took place in Germany for the first time in Velafrica's history: **nearly 1,500 bikes were collected in Aachen**. We were able to set a collection record in Switzerland as well as part of a pick-up campaign. In November, **residents of St. Gallen and Chur Rhine Valley donated an impressive total of 620 bikes**.

Three days after Christmas, the last container of the year, export container No. 53, left our warehouse in Liebefeld. On board were the last 455 of a **total of 25,087 exported bikes**. This means that we were able to export more bikes last year than ever before. However, a very special bike set off on its journey in spring already: **in June, the 300,000th bike since Velafrica's founding was shipped from Switzerland to Ghana**.

Our projects in the south were also bustling. **With over 6,000 bikes for students – including more than 2,500 last year alone – we successfully completed the 2020–2023 phase of the «Bike to School» project**. During the next three-year project phase, «Bike to School» has the goal of facilitating the access to education for additional 8,000 schoolchildren. Meanwhile, in Burkina Faso, the excitement is rising among the **30 bicycle mechanic trainees: in the spring of 2024, they take the vocational exam for bicycle mechanic trainers, the first in the country's history**. Our trainer Däni Grüter was on site to prepare them for this big moment.

As you can see, 2023 was a big year for Velafrica with many milestones achieved. **At the same time, our operations along the global value chain were not spared from economic and geopolitical events**. For example, due to security concerns in the Red Sea, our containers set for Tanzania and Madagascar now take a detour through South Africa, prolonging delivery times and increasing costs. The ongoing political

unrest in Burkina Faso considerably hampers the work of our local partners. Additionally, the dollar shortage in Tanzania raises the cost of bicycle deliveries. All these factors have a direct impact on our financial situation. **To ensure that we can continue to transform lives through bicycles from Switzerland, we rely on your support.**

On behalf of the entire team, I would like to thank our partners, the numerous volunteers, and the donors who support our cause year after year. Our work is only possible thanks to the people who pedal for Velafrica and thereby collect donations, those who organize bike collections and refurbish bikes for export, and not to forget those who provide us with the financial means through their monetary donations. **I promise you: We remain committed.**

Best regards,



**Michel Ducommun**  
Co-Director Velafrica



# SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

Velafrica combines **integration work in Switzerland with development cooperation in Africa**. Along this impact chain, Velafrica successfully contributes to sustainable development.

The recycling of bicycles, the education of young people, and mobility programs such as «Bike to School» have a direct impact on 10 of the **17 UN Sustainable Development Goals**, as shown by the following indicators.



Bicycles provide mobility, allowing people to transport more goods in less time. This enables access to markets and jobs, which positively affects income.

Every year, over **100,000 people** gain more mobility thanks to bicycles from Velafrica (3-5 people per bicycle).

Our partner companies in Africa provide **91 jobs**.

The lowest wage at our bicycle centres is **2.5 times higher** than the national minimum wage.



Cycling has numerous health benefits. Bikes also facilitate access to healthcare services and assist in supporting family members and friends.

**98%** of the surveyed students feel more rested thanks to the bike.

**11-14 minutes** are saved per kilometre by using a bike.

**60 children** regularly participate in the bike-training programme of our partner ABC Impact in Arusha.



Velafrica not only invests in its own bike centres but also in the bike sector. With bikes, we are laying the foundation for a sustainable bike value chain on the African continent.

In Africa, Velafrica works with **nine partner companies in seven countries**. (Page 11)

Since 2023, three of our partners are piloting **e-bike recycling**.

**A state-recognized vocational training programme** is being developed in Burkina Faso. (Page 12)



Distance can be an obstacle for many people. Thanks to cycling, they can get around faster, and distances are easier to overcome. This helps reduce social inequalities.

Up to **four times more goods** can be transported by bicycle than on foot.

Compared to walking, a bicycle can cover **three to four times more kilometres** in the same amount of time.



Bicycles are the affordable and, above all, ecological alternative to motorized local transport. Especially in cities, bicycles are the key to sustainable mobility.

**108 bicycle collections** were organized thanks to volunteers. (Page 7)

**25,078 bikes** were prepared for export. (Page 9)

Thanks to bikes, **4,000 trees** were planted in Moshi. (Page 16)



Students are better rested and more efficient thanks to the bicycles. Furthermore, our vocational training programs provide young people with more prospects for the future.

**2,502 more students** received a discounted bike. (Page 14)

**348 apprentices** completed our state-recognized vocational training programme in Burkina Faso.

**141 bike workshops** in Burkina Faso train apprentices. (Page 12)



Girls feel safer on their way to school on a bike. They are faster, which makes it easier to balance school and household chores. This allows girls to attend school more regularly.

**97%** of the surveyed students feel safer on their way to school thanks to their bike.

**60%** of the «Bike to School» bicycles go to girls.

In our bicycle centres, **a quarter of the employees** are women.



In Switzerland, bike repair work empowers unemployed people and provides meaningful activities in the correctional system. Our partners in Africa create jobs and apprenticeship opportunities.

**38 refurbishing partners** are part of Velafrica's network in Switzerland. (Page 9)

Our Swiss partners offer **250 labour intergration positions**.

In Africa, **30 aspiring vocational trainers** are currently undergoing training. (Page 12)



By refurbishing used bikes, we extend the lifespan of valuable resources. The training of mechanics in Africa ensures that the bikes remain in use for a long time.

**49,387 spare parts** were disassembled and exported.

In Switzerland, around **300 permanent collection points** are available for Velafrica bike donors.

**1,154 repairs** were carried out as part of the «Bike to School» programme.



Bicycles are environmentally friendly modes of transport. They produce no greenhouse gases or fine dust emissions. Promoting bike mobility makes a significant contribution to climate protection.

Around **600 tons of metal** is reused instead of being disposed of.

By repairing bikes instead of producing new ones, approximately **2,900 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>** are saved.\*

The ratio of collected bikes to the total number of new bike purchases in Switzerland is **1:10**.

\*Source: Trek Bicycle Product Life Cycle Assessment Study 2020



## COLLECTION & RECYCLING

The year 2023 was a good one for collections: **Velafrica was able to collect over 40,000 bikes and offer them a second life.** This prolongs the use of valuable materials and saves raw materials and energy that would be needed for the production of a new bike. This is not only sustainable but also protects the climate.

Nearly 2,000 of these 40,000 bicycles are sourced not from Switzerland, but from Germany. At the end of 2022, Velafrica officially ventured across national borders and founded the registered association Velafrica in Germany. **In 2023, Velafrica e.V. began its operational activities.** By expanding to Germany, Velafrica increases the number of collected bikes and expands its refurbishing network to meet the high demand from its partners in the south. For now, Velafrica e.V. is active regionally in Münster, Frankfurt a. M., and Aachen. **The first pick-up campaign in Germany took place in August**, in close cooperation with the employment and training project Spectrum.

The initial contact between Spectrum and Velafrica was made back in 2018. A year later, the first joint container set off for Madagascar.

The well-launched cooperation was initially interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic but resumed last August with the large pick-up campaign – and what a comeback: **nearly 1,500 bicycles were collected.** Monika von Bernuth from Spectrum was delighted: «Originally, we had expected a third of this amount. It was a pleasant surprise to see the great response to our collection.» As a result, the two pick-up days turned into two weeks. **Monika is particularly glad that many people showed genuine interest in what happens to their donated bicycles.** «There was a personal message intended for a child in Africa attached to a children's bike. It is heartwarming to see how donors not only want to pass on their bicycles but also their well wishes to the future users.»

### 2023 IN NUMBERS

**108** bike collections were organized thanks to volunteers.

**9,215** bikes were donated during these collections.

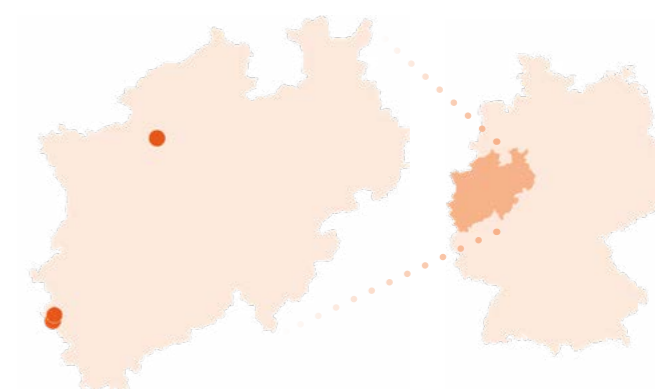
**4,258** bikes were delivered to Velafrica through SBB luggage counters.

Velafrica received a total of around **40,000** donated bikes.

Successful start for Velafrica in Aachen: Nearly 1,500 bicycles were collected during the pick-up campaign in August 2023.



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



Velafrica Germany is under development. Currently, two partners in the Aachen area and a business in Münsterland are part of the Velafrica network.

## INTEGRATION & ENGAGEMENT

In refurbishing around 40,000 donated bikes, Velafrica receives support from nearly 40 partner companies in Switzerland. **The 27 social enterprises for work integration and 11 correctional institutions prepared 25,078 bikes for export and secured 49,387 spare parts in 2023.** This creates 250 jobs in the bike workshops of our partner companies.

Working with bikes offers exciting learning content for young people, provides meaningful activities for those in correctional facilities, and empowers unemployed people in their daily lives. Jan Petersen confirms this: **«I often observe that participants learn something that helps them, for example, repair their children's bikes.»** The 22-year-old Jan is serving his civilian service with Verein für aktive Arbeitsmassnahmen (VAM) in Düringen. VAM has been part of the Velafrica partner network since 2012 and plays an important role: with ten jobs in Düringen and seven in Bulle, they serve as an important bridge to the French speaking part of Switzerland.

As part of his civilian service at VAM, Jan is responsible for the bike workshop when it comes to work integration: he ensures that enough bikes are ready for refurbishing, provides advice to participants,

and conducts quality control. As a hobby cyclist, Jan already had some bike repair skills. However, he says he learned a great deal at VAM: «I learned a lot here; the participants taught me a lot.»

«Working on bikes allows participants to acquire skills that can be useful for them in the future,» confirms Eduardo Da Silva Mattos, who is responsible for the various workshops at the Bellevue Correctional Facility in Gorgier. **The correctional facility has been part of the Velafrica partner network since October 2022 and is our third refurbishing partner in western Switzerland, along with VAM in Bulle and the Bellechasse correctional facility in Fribourg.**

An inmate at the Bellevue Correctional Facility appreciates the stimulating nature of working in the bike workshop: **«Every bike presents a new challenge. It makes me happy when I repair a bike and perform a meaningful job.»** He always keeps the safety of the future bike users in mind: «That's why it's important for me to work diligently.»

### 2023 IN NUMBERS

**38** refurbishing partners are part of Velafrica's network in Switzerland, with additional **2** in Germany.

**25,078** bikes were prepared for export.

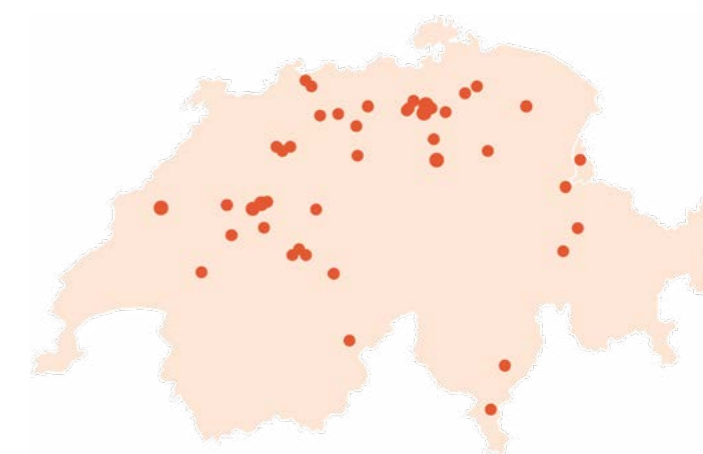
**49,387** spare parts were disassembled and exported.

**53** shipping containers filled with bikes and spare parts left Switzerland and Germany.

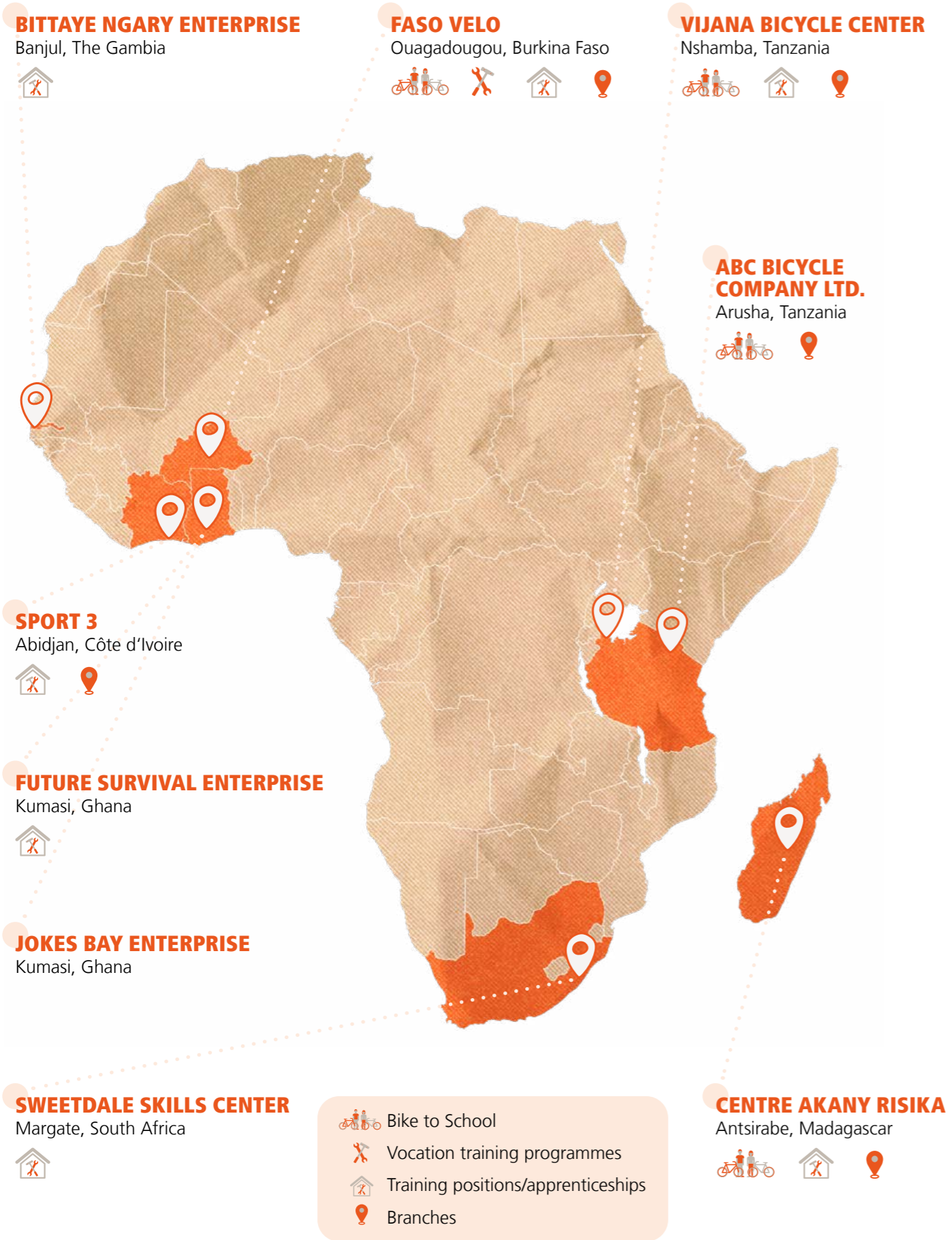
Jan Petersen, serving his civilian service, keeps an overview of the bike workshop at Velafrica's partner VAM Düringen.



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



In Switzerland, 38 companies are part of Velafrica's refurbishing network. Additionally, there are important collection partners that Velafrica can rely on.



# SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Imagine if all businesses were committed to fostering a more ecological, social, and inclusive society – our world would be a different place.

**Velafrica and its nine partner companies in sub-Saharan Africa are dedicated to achieving such positive societal impacts.** The five bike centers, which receive about three-quarters of all bikes, all follow a social entrepreneurial approach with three goals: enabling ecological and healthy mobility by improving access to bikes, promoting vocational training in bike mechanics, and creating jobs and income opportunities locally. The profits from bike sales are meaningfully reinvested into social bike projects, such as the «Bike to School» programme.

**Velafrica establishes long-term partnerships on equal footing, as demonstrated by the partnership with the Akany Risika Centre in Antsirabe, Madagascar.** The centre was founded in 1993 by the local Caritas and is currently led by Father Justin, a pioneering social entrepreneur. He has a clear vision: through his work at the centre, Father Justin strives for a more inclusive and social economy. He explains, «We buy the farmers' products at fair prices and enable them to purchase affordable bikes to transport their goods to the

market. Our vision is an economy that cares for others rather than exploiting them.»

However, the centre's impact extends even further: young people from challenging backgrounds can complete vocational training there. The course in bike mechanics is particularly popular. Father Justin proudly adds, «**Throughout Madagascar, we are the only state-recognized training centre in bike mechanics, and our graduates are spread across the capital. There, they have opened bike shops and continue to carry our vision forward.**» Thus, we are gradually moving closer to a world where entrepreneurial activity fosters positive societal change.

<b>1</b> NO POVERTY	<b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	<b>4</b> QUALITY EDUCATION
<b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY	<b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	<b>9</b> INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
<b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES	<b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	<b>12</b> RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
<b>13</b> CLIMATE ACTION	<b>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS</b>	



## VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Last year, 57 young people were training in bicycle mechanics at our partners' centres alone. After they finish their training, many doors open for them: some secure permanent positions in one of our bike centres, others work in local bike shops, or start their own businesses.

However, the impact of vocational training goes far beyond this. In the context of Burkina Faso, it can even change lives. «A solid vocational training is a great opportunity for the many young people in our country. Those who finish school and enter the workforce are less likely to join an armed group,» says Roland Tankoano, who leads an office for the development of vocational training programs in Burkina Faso.

Therefore, Velafrica has established a state-recognized training programme in bicycle mechanics together with local partners. Since there were previously no structures for standardized vocational training in the bike industry, Velafrica began by training instructors. These trainers now pass on their extensive theoretical and practical knowledge to apprentices in their bike workshops.

One of these trainers is Pauline Yameogo. She is a passionate trainer and shares her knowledge with great enthusiasm to her ten apprentices. With a smile on her face, she says, «True knowledge is achieved only when you can pass it on to others.»

Pauline's bike shop is doing well, and she proudly states, «My profession provides a livelihood for me and my family. For a long time, it was not common for women to work as bike mechanics, but now I see that the industry is changing. More and more young women are becoming interested in the profession and discovering their interest in mechanics.» The numbers from our vocational training programme also confirm this: **around ten percent of the over 400 apprentices are currently women.** At our partner company Faso Velo, the national centre of reference for vocational training in bike mechanics, all the apprentices are female.



### 2023 IN NUMBERS

**348** apprentices attend our state-recognized vocational training programme in Burkina Faso.

**141** bike workshops across the country offer apprenticeships.

**30** aspiring trainers attend the training courses.

**30** decentralized training centres are being established.

Pauline Yameogo during class in Burkina Faso. She takes great joy in being able to pass on her knowledge.

# MOBILITY

Velafrica's «Bike to School» programme improves the mobility of students in Africa: **thanks to the bikes, they get to school not only faster but also, more importantly, safer.** They are more punctual, efficient, and less tired at school. Bikes also offer the advantage of easily transporting heavy items such as school bags and textbooks, alleviating the physical burden from the students.

The bikes also provide relief to the families of the students. They save on bus fares and can allocate their funds to other important needs. In addition to studying, the time students save by biking can be used for household chores, further strengthening the family ties. **Since the beginning of the last project phase of «Bike to School» in 2020, over 6,000 students from various African communities received a bike – over 2,500 in the past year alone.**

Nyota Tumbo, a 15-year-old student from the Biharamulo district in northern Tanzania, also received a bike last year thanks to «Bike to School». Nyota lives several kilometres away from her school. Because of the long distance, she would often miss several lessons each day and return home late in the evening. «My black and red mountain bike makes me so happy. Now I get to school on time, complete all my tasks, and feel as comfortable as any other student,» Nyota says.

As the eldest of five children, Nyota takes on a lot of responsibility at home. However, her father is determined to invest in Nyota's future and provide her with a good education: **«Investing in her education is the best support I can give my daughter.** If she takes school seriously, she creates a better future for herself. I pray that she studies hard and succeeds.» Velafrica plans to pave the way for education for another 8,000 students with «Bike to School» over the next three years.



## 2023 IN NUMBERS

**2,502** more students received a discounted bike.

Students in Tanzania and Madagascar take an average of **110** minutes to walk to school.

On average, they save **31** minutes by biking.

**71** percent of students gain at least an hour per day thanks to a bike.

The «Bike to School» programme helps students and their families and supports them in their daily lives.



# INCOME

Did you know that women are particularly affected by the impacts of climate change? **Their daily work becomes more arduous, time-consuming, and at times more dangerous**, such as when they have to travel longer distances to source water or to fetch firewood. In these instances, a bike can change lives. The impact of the women's cooperative «Upendo Women's Group» in the dry northern region of Tanzania illustrates this impressively. The members of the group cultivate seedlings, which they then transport using their bikes, sometimes over long distances. **They have already planted 4,000 trees, and by 2025, they aim to plant another 10,000.**

Thanks to their bikes, the women can get around faster, transport the seedlings in a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral manner, and reach remote regions. **Additionally, the group raises awareness among the population**

**about sustainable environmental practices and supports them in nurturing the seedlings.** The planted trees protect valuable soil, retain water, provide sun-protective, cooling shade, and serve as barriers against the wind. In this context, bikes and trees make an unbeatable team for combating climate change.

**By selling the seedlings, the women of the cooperative generate their own income, which serves as start-up capital for their small businesses.** For example, Upamba from the Upendo group has converted her bike into a mobile ice cream shop, serving the nearby schools. Farmer Teresia was able to buy new seeds and bring more goods to the market thanks to her bike. Irene can now deliver her homemade pancakes to her customers more quickly by bike. In this way, a bike helps on numerous levels: long distances are easily overcome, the women have mobility and can reach markets or fields more quickly. This helps them become more independent, allows them to generate their own income, and sets sustainable change in motion.



## 2023 IN NUMBERS

**50** bikes were provided to the cooperative in Tanzania.

**1** repair workshop was conducted for the «Upendo Women's Group», including a supply of spare parts.

**4,000** seedlings were cultivated and planted.

**50** women generate a higher income and can invest it in their small businesses.

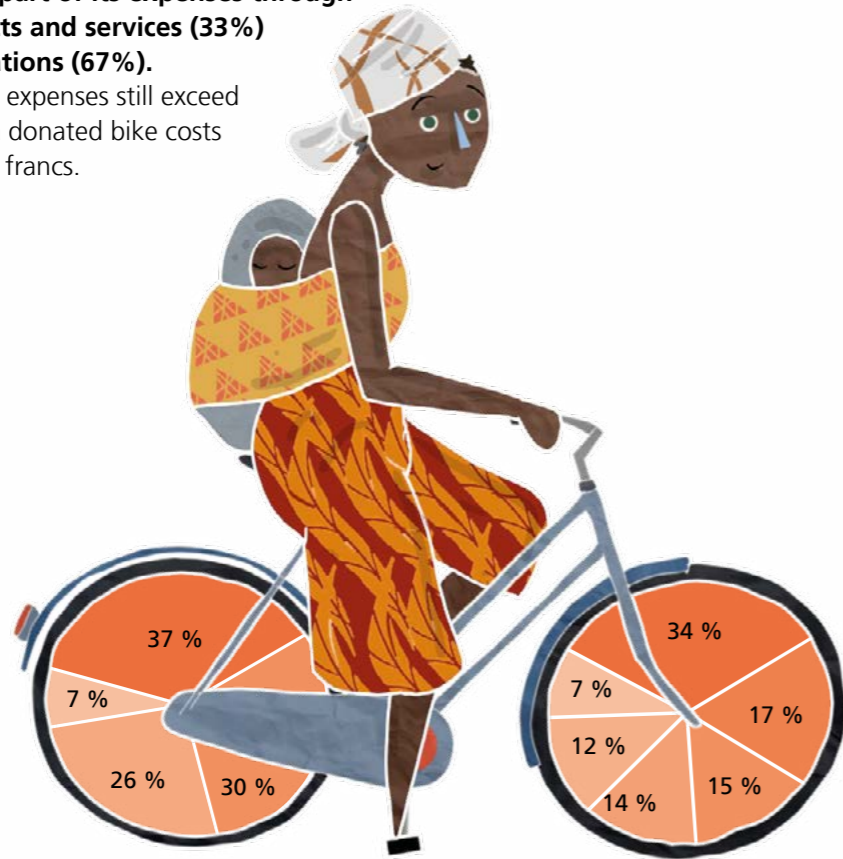
Thanks to the bikes, the «Upendo Women's Group» can now reach more remote areas and help even more people.

# THIS IS HOW WE ARE FUNDED

Velafrica combines integration work in Switzerland with development cooperation in Africa and operates with an annual budget of around two million Swiss francs. As a social non-profit project, Velafrica is a part of the foundation Sinnovativ and is supported by it. Under [www.sinnovativ.ch](http://www.sinnovativ.ch), you can find the foundation's annual financial statements.

Velafrica is a social entrepreneurial not-for-profit project and covers part of its expenses through the sale of products and services (33%) and through donations (67%).

Currently, however, expenses still exceed income: exporting a donated bike costs Velafrica around 75 francs.



## Income

- 37 % Donations for the bike value chain Switzerland-Africa
- 30 % Donations towards large projects (a.o. «Bike to School», vocational training in Burkina Faso)
- 26 % Bike deliveries to Africa (contributions from African partners for bike and logistics costs)
- 7 % Local service revenues (a.o. bike pickups, operating contributions, CSR events)

The foundation Sinnovativ still supports Velafrica with five francs per bike. This contribution has been and will be reduced. As for Velafrica, the overarching goal is to establish a healthy and sustainable financial position. Therefore, we rely on additional donations. **Thank you very much for your support!**

## Expenditures

- 34 % Operational costs and impact measurement in Africa
- 17 % Bike collection, awareness-raising, and local coordination
- 15 % Project fundraising
- 14 % Bike refurbishment, warehouse, and logistics in Switzerland
- 12 % Bike export to Africa
- 8 % Project overhead for Velafrica

# THANK YOU!

Velafrica's work is only possible thanks to support along the entire impact chain. In addition to the supporters mentioned, we would like to thank all the bicycle donors, volunteers and private donors.

**Thank you! Asante Sana!**

## FOUNDATIONS

ALTERNAID Stiftung, Bürgi-Willert-Stiftung, Choupette Stiftung, Clariant Foundation, COFRA Foundation, Däster-Schild Stiftung, Fagus lucida-Stiftung, Foundation Le Solstice Switzerland, Lighthouse Foundation, Niedersächsische Bingo-Umweltstiftung, Noemi Rusch Stiftung, Papalin Stiftung, Paul Schuster Stiftung, Stiftung Corymbo, Stiftung Symphasis, Stiftung Temperatio, The UK Online Giving Foundation, Werner und Helga Degen Stiftung

## PUBLIC SECTOR

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## CONGREGATIONS

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## ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHERS

Burgergemeinde Bern, claro Weltladen Paulus Bern, Kulturverein Steinen, Lions Club Muri-Bern, Pro Velo Lenzburg, Pro Velo Unterwalden, SP Egg, SP Mönchaltorf

## COMPANIES

A. Baggenstos & Co. AG, FLYER AG, Freitag lab. ag, Innovation Process Technology AG, Lizard Sport AG, Roche Diagnostics International AG, Velocity AG, Veloplus, Yelloh GmbH / MyBikePlan, Züger Frischkäse AG

## VELAFRICA NETWORK SWITZERLAND AND GERMANY

Anstalten von Bellechasse, Arbeitsintegration Pratteln AIP, Brühlgut Stiftung, Collectors, Drahtesel, EEP Bellevue, Fachhaus, Gefängnis Limmattal, Halle 44, JVA Aachen, JVA Pöschwies, JVA Realta, JVA Solothurn, JVA Thorberg, JVA Wauwilermoos, Oeko Service GmbH, ÖKO-JOB Liestal, OPRA, Quellenhof-Stiftung Dinhard, RG Altstätten, RG Thun, SAH Bern, SCC La Stampa, Schlossgarten Riggisberg, SEB NAVI, SOS Ticino, Spectrum Aachen, Stiftung arwole, Stiftung intact Langnau, Stiftung LebensArt, Stiftung Wendepunkt, VAM Düringen und Bulle, Velostation Thun, Werkbahnhof Rapperswil-Jona, Werkraum4, Werkstätten Buecherwäldli Uzwil, WTL, Zweckverband Soziales Netz Bezirk Horgen





**Successful ambassador**

Marlen Reusser is one of the present day's most successful cyclists. She is, among other things, an Olympic silver medallist and European time trial champion. As an ambassador, she voluntarily supports Velafrica's causes.

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*velafrica*

**Mobility with perspectives**



**Your donation  
in good hands.**

**Trustee is the foundation Sinnovativ**