

CONCLUSION

The concept of a cycling academy and its application within previously disadvantaged communities have demonstrated its ability to address social cohesion. Academy models may differ, but all conclusively address communities' needs for safe spaces, recreational outlets or business opportunities. Practicing a sports discipline such as cycling, brings people together on a relatively equal playing field, irrespective of their background. Cycling reinforces a sense of belonging, participation, self-worth and acceptance.

USEFUL CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Download Best Practice Guidelines For Cycling Academies at:
www.dffe.gov.za

Bicycle Empowerment Network www.benbikes.org.za
Bicycle South www.bicyclesouth.co.za
BYCS www.bycs.org
GO!Durban Cycling Academy www.durbangreencorridor.co.za
Langa Bicycle Hub www.langabicyclehub.co.za
Open Streets Cape Town www.openstreets.org.za
Pedal Power Association www.pedalpower.org.za
Timbuktu in the Valley www.timbuktuinthevalley.org
Velokhaya Life Cycling Academy www.velokhaya.org

WATCH CYCLING ACADEMIES IN ACTION

Good Hood Stories: Langa Bicycle Hub
<https://youtu.be/vlRYEOpdqal>

GO!Durban Cycle Academy - On the Right Track
<https://youtu.be/7mPhG-pSTag>

GO!Durban Cycle Academy KwaDabeka Bike Park
https://youtu.be/QvITD_6GSoo

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CYCLING ACADEMIES



Communities
of Best Practice

CYCLING ACADEMIES Communities of Best Practice

Cycling academies, recently introduced concepts, serve as safe spaces where children can learn to ride a bicycle. In addition, children also develop social/inter-personal skills and learn how to express themselves. Invariably, the subsequent benefits of a cycling academy can extend into positive outcomes across the social fabric of the community. In South Africa these academies are located within the Durban communities of KwaMashu, KwaDabeka, eNkandla, and Wentworth, Langa in Cape Town and Lorentzville in Johannesburg.

Key considerations when developing cycling academies is the requirement for access to financial and human resources. The **financial support** from donors or other self-generated income streams, allows for the growth of a cycling academy, improved facilities and the ability to reach more people. **Access to seed funding** coupled with establishing networks and partnerships are important and have proven to be significant enablers in advancing the cycling academies.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment in partnership with KfW Development Bank, and together with the eThekweni Municipality, provided the financial resources and technical expertise to support the construction of the cycling academies. This initiative is a legacy of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

During the **planning** of a cycling academy, one needs to identify the relevant **human resources** which are required to operate the site and provide necessary support to the children accessing the academy. Every cycling academy needs a champion, a visionary, passionate leader who makes things happen.

The role of the coach - developing youth of Wentworth into responsible adults. "This initiative aims to bring positivity and youth development to our community as we all know the kind of challenges these children face in the Wentworth community. We have been operating for six months now and in this short period, we have seen some drastic improvements in some of our kids with regards to their school work and overall attitudes." - Mario Gunkel, Wentworth Cycling



(Image: GO!Durban, eNkandla Cycling Academy)

WENTWORTH CYCLING ACADEMY: WORKING WITH A COMMUNITY TO ADDRESS SOCIAL CHALLENGES

In the South Durban basin, the community around the Wentworth Cycling Academy face an assortment of social challenges including gangsterism and substance abuse. The Wentworth Cycling Academy aims to promote a united community and guide the youth on a path of focus, self-discipline and self-improvement. Coaches play a key role here, acting as mentors who can guide children through a range of personal challenges.

The Wentworth Cycling Academy also hosts a "Thursday girls only" programme in which young girls receive mentoring in sport and general life skills. The female coaches, whose personal goals are to support the development of girls to become astute young adults in embracing a sense of independence.

Cycling academy coaches play an integral role as mentors in the children's lives and serve to inspire and guide the children to unlock their full potential.

The role of consultation

The announcement of the proposed site for Wentworth was received with great enthusiasm by the community and local ward councillor. The community realised the benefit of receiving such a recreational outlet and were accepting of the proposed site for the project. The buy-in and support of beneficiaries is integral for the success of the project.

CORNUBIA CYCLING ACADEMY: PROVIDING SOCIAL AMENITIES

One of the more recently constructed cycling academies is the Cornubia Cycling Academy, located on the northern outskirts of the eThekweni Municipality and adjacent to one of the city's key housing development nodes. The Cornubia Cycling Academy boasts a world-class asphalt pump track, allowing access to community members.

The Cornubia social housing development is aligned with the National Social Development Strategy. As such, the Cornubia Cycling Academy fits well within the broader context of the National Social Development Strategy by providing social amenities.

Selection of the right location is key;

In ensuring accessibility and visibility to the site, where communities may place their trust in the facility, and ultimately the coaches, ensuring a safe learning environment for the children. Community support, ongoing consultation, co-creation and building trust will help ensure buy-in from the community and contribute to a successful and functional academy.

Community engagement plan

* Ensure community members have an opportunity to **CO-CREATE** from the start of the process.

* Ensure **TRANSPARENCY** and a clear understanding of goals and objectives for all stakeholders.

* Build a sense of **OWNERSHIP** for the local community including leaders, employees of the programme, parents and the youth (beneficiaries).

* Build a **NETWORK** of like-minded partners and supporters to lean on in the future.

* Build local community **CONFIDENCE** in the project.

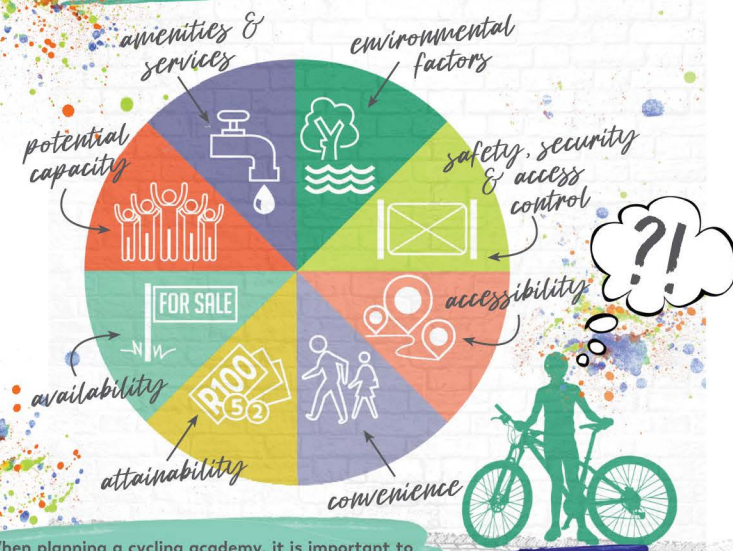


COMMUNITY NEEDS, EXPECTATIONS AND LOCAL CONTEXT



(Image: GO!Durban, KwaMashu Cycling Academy)

IMPORTANT FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING A LOCATION



When planning a cycling academy, it is important to ensure that the site is appropriately located, laid out and designed with potential environmental risks in mind.

KWAMASHU CYCLING ACADEMY: DEALING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE AND POLLUTION

The KwaMashu Cycling Academy is located on reclaimed, repurposed land that was previously an illegal waste dumping site. Due to the proximity of a nearby rivulet, proper drainage plans were incorporated into the design of the pump track. During April 2022, the KwaMashu community experienced severe flooding. However, good planning and design protected the Academy from permanent infrastructure damage, illustrating the need for cycling academies to be climate proof.

Summer rainfall also brings large volumes of plastic pollution down the river. The KwaMashu Cycling Academy has used these recurring events as a learning opportunity to entrench environmental awareness among the children.

With an expanding cycling community in areas such as KwaMashu, demand for bicycle repairs, spares and sales is expected to grow. To meet this need, a Bicycle Empowerment Centre was established at the KwaMashu Cycling Academy. These centres are operated by community entrepreneurs who receive training to become bike mechanics as well as in small business management.

CYCLING ACADEMIES:

REALISING SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS WITHIN BENEFICIARY COMMUNITIES

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS:

TAKING ACTION - PROMOTING POLLUTION FREE ENVIRONMENTS

Cycling academies aim to create environmental impacts through a wide range of interventions, which include encouraging non-motorised modes of transport and entrenching environmentally-friendly behaviour through structured environmental education programmes and by allowing children to experience freerplay outdoors.

Cycling academies can also be used to instill environmentally-friendly behaviour through structured environmental education programmes.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CREATE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



Engaging participants on community clean up days.



Providing recycling activities (and teaching the underlying principles of reuse and recycling) on site.



Beautifying cycling academies through on-site tree planting and agro-ecology.



Using cycling academy sites to entrench environmentally-friendly behaviour through structured environmental education programmes.



Ensuring cycling academy sites are well maintained, clean, free of litter and can provide an inspiring space for children.



Exploring the various sustainable development goals and considering where a cycling academy can make a further impact in a community.



Being the eyes and ears on the ground for environmental issues which may need to be raised with relevant authorities.



In appropriate locations, developing and maintaining a network of mountain bike trails encourages children to spend time out into nature.



Labelling indigenous trees, putting out bird feeders, and removing alien invasive plants can serve to create awareness and improve the sense of place at a cycling academy.



Where budget and opportunity allow, using solar power as a source of electricity can become a cost saver over time.



Capturing rainwater in storage tanks and where feasible reusing greywater (where safe and applicable).

ECONOMIC BENEFITS:

ACADEMIES MAKING MONEY SENSE

Cycling academies can also promote local economic development for communities through a range of entrepreneurial and job creation opportunities (such as Bicycle Empowerment Centre operators and coaches) during construction and operation phases of the academy. Other supplementary economic activities may include tourism (bicycle hire and cycling tours), and delivery services.

Cycling academies provide valuable entrepreneurial opportunities such as tourism, including bicycle tours and hire. However, the relevant safety and legal requirements for tourism related activities need to be taken into consideration.

A Bicycle Empowerment Centre is a business model which can be operated by an SMME for bicycle maintenance and servicing as well as spares retail.

SOCIAL BENEFITS:

DEVELOPING THE CHILD, DEVELOPING THE COMMUNITY AND DEVELOPING FUTURE SOCIETIES

Cycling academies encourage youth along a path of focus, self-discipline and self-improvement. Cycling academies provide a safe haven for children to grow, develop and expand their worldviews, which all contribute to the basic building blocks of social cohesion.

Recently fitted kitchens at the Durban cycling academies will allow for the provision of meals.

Partnerships with interested parties are encouraged.

Academic support programmes at cycling academies can be further supported by a range of educational initiatives such as career guidance and workplace readiness programmes.



(Image: GO!Durban Cycle Academy)

ENANDA CYCLING ACADEMY:

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOTOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

In a more rural context, the eNanda Cycling Academy is one of the most scenically located cycling academies, situated on the tranquil shores of the eNanda Dam on the outskirts of Durban. Children, at the eNanda Cycling Academy, have access to a network of mountain bike trails that follow a course through forests and open bushveld. The academic programme at eNanda Cycling Academy is supplemented by environmental education projects and outdoor learning on wetland health and biodiversity.

eNanda Cycling Academy was one of the first cycling academies in Durban. It started off with a simple gravel track, a few makeshift shelters and a handful of children and very basic resources. A track and basic resources such as bicycles for children to learn to ride on, helmets and maintenance equipment are all that is really needed to get started.



(Image: GO!Durban eNanda Cycling Academy)

"We have started environmental education weekends with a local scout group, our children are learning to value the environment and appreciate the natural beauty that we are lucky enough to ride in."

- Gabi Ngcobo, eNanda Cycling Academy Coach

Coaches at the eNanda Cycling Academy also supplement their income by working as mountain bike guides over the weekend, taking tourists on trails, showing them around the community and supporting local tourism entrepreneurs ranging from taverns to crafters and homestays.

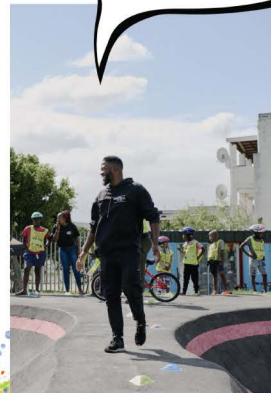
LANGA BICYCLE HUB:

THE VALUE OF A CHAMPION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Langa Bicycle Hub was established by social entrepreneur, Mzikhona Mgedle during the Covid-19 Pandemic lockdown in 2020. Mzikhona, a cycling enthusiast initially focused on providing deliveries by bicycle to bedridden and elderly people in the community. Today the hub is a local enterprise offering cycling classes, bicycle repairs, sales and rentals and township bicycle tours. Through a partnership with the city of Cape Town, the Langa Bicycle Hub now operates from more formal premises at a newly built pump track at the Langa Sports Complex. Langa Bicycle Hub also works closely with local businesses and taxi associations to create new opportunities for its cycling delivery business as well as to ensure cycling commuters are safe on the roads.

The Langa Bicycle Hub in the Langa Township of Cape Town demonstrates how a cycling academy can evolve from a small local business providing cycling-related services in a community, into a broader community-based project.

Individuals and businesses across the world have started using bicycle delivery services to ensure their packages arrive safely and quickly, especially within busy, urban centres. Also known as bicycle couriers, these companies deliver anything from legal correspondence to food. As with bicycle maintenance services, this is a business opportunity that has evolved quite naturally at several cycling academies in the Western Cape and is fast gaining traction.



(Image: Langa Bicycle Hub, Cape Town)

"Crime is an issue in townships and taxi drivers have become our guardian angels to protect children riding bicycles and to protect us when doing deliveries."

- Mzikhona Mgedle, founder, Langa Cycling Academy

KWADABEKA CYCLING ACADEMY:

BUILDING SOCIAL COHESION AND BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

The KwaDabeka Cycling Academy is located west of Durban in one of the more peri-urban areas of the city. The KwaDabeka site includes a pump track and offers a network of tarmac trails on the premises. The pump track is famously known for the hosting of the Red Bull Pump Track World Championship and the GO!Durban 100 Mountain Bike Race.



(Image: GO!Durban KwaDabeka Cycling Academy)

"The KwaDabeka Cycling Academy has given valuable exposure to our community. Hosting cycling events has demonstrated the tourism potential that is here."

- Chris Philli, Chairman, KwaDabeka Community Tourism Association

The coaching team at KwaDabeka have also initiated a food gardening project on the site. Here children are exposed to basic skills on how to grow vegetables, which is may provide a valuable learning experience.

TIMBUKTU IN THE VALLEY:

LOCAL SOLUTIONS FOR LOCAL CHALLENGES

Timbuktu in the Valley is located in Lorentzville, Gauteng. This is an inner-city area which is impacted by high rates of unemployment and crime. Unlike many other cycling academies in South Africa, the children in this community are no strangers to bicycles.

Children know how to ride bicycles, but are keen to learn how to maintain their improvised (often patched-together) bicycles. This inspired Victoria Schneider and Lungile Mfumo, founders of Timbuktu in the Valley, to establish a small workshop where children could come on a Saturday morning to get coaching on bicycle maintenance. Before long, these Saturday morning bike repair sessions grew into a more formal cycling academy and non-profit organisation which accommodates 75 children who regularly visit the academy. In addition, volunteers work with children to provide academic support, access to learning resources and other valuable skills.



(Image: Timbuktu in the Valley, Lorentzville)



Timbuktu in the Valley was realised through individuals who shared a vision and addressed a need within the community. By being responsive to local needs, Timbuktu in the Valley has been very effective in recruiting children to get involved. Understanding and responding to the needs of beneficiaries makes advocacy and promotion of a cycling academy a lot more effective.

"Bikes are a powerful tool to convey the concept of independence, you can travel, it's fun, you can transport things... bicycles provide endless opportunities for young people."

- Victoria Schneider, founder, Timbuktu in the Valley



(Image: Timbuktu in the Valley, Lorentzville)