

Report Workshop EC 3: Cycling and poverty alleviation

The Tunisian NGO “Woman for Sustainable Development” has set up a programme to promote cycling throughout Tunisia. The programme is focusing on information and events and showing cycling as a “normal” activity also for women. The use of bicycles in Tunisia is low, and per tradition women have not been using bicycles in Tunisia in spite of the fact that there are no specific hindrances, not either religious, against female cycling. Part of the programme is in urban areas all over the country to identify female politicians motivated in the issue and willing to show themselves on bicycles.

In Gauteng, South Africa, a business plan has been developed for the introduction of low-cost bicycles, comprising a ready to use bicycle sales and repair shop in a container as well as educational activities in cycling and bicycle maintenance. So far 3 such containers have been set up. A number of families have as result achieved an increase in income and quality of life through the use of bicycles.

While affordability of bicycles is probably a much more severe problem in Africa than in Tunisia the projects have in common the attempts to disseminate general knowledge and acceptance about the use of bicycles. Even though the bicycle is a fairly simple machine, its use and benefits are far from obvious in areas where there is no tradition for bicycle use, and the introduction of such knowledge is therefore imperative.

Thomas Krag, session chair