

CONCEPT NOTE



Building a Cycling Culture in Kenya through Universities

The Initiative

Pedal to Class Initiative (PCI) seeks to transform Kenya into a cycling society by promoting and incentivizing student cycling at public and private universities.

Overall Goal: Encourage sustainable mobility, unlock economic potential and healthier lifestyles by making cycling the primary mode of commuting for university students.

Background & Rationale

Kenya faces rising urban congestion, air pollution, and high transport costs, particularly around growing university towns. Students often live within 1–5 km of campus, yet most walk or rely on costly and congested motorized transport. Cycling presents a faster (for the walking students), sustainable, affordable, and healthy alternative.

Despite its benefits, cycling uptake remains low due to limited infrastructure, safety concerns, and weak cycling culture. Universities, as hubs of innovation and trendsetting, offer an ideal starting point to cultivate a new generation of cyclists. If students embrace cycling, they can influence communities and cities at large.

Specific Objectives

- ⊕ To provide affordable access to bicycles for students.
- ⊕ To partner with local governments to create safe, student-friendly cycling infrastructure.
- ⊕ To foster cycling culture through clubs, peer-learning, and advocacy campaigns.
- ⊕ To reduce the carbon footprint and congestion in university towns.

Approach & Key Activities

1. Affordable Bicycle Access



- ⊕ Partnership with bike companies for subsidized sales or lease-to-own schemes.
- ⊕ University-based bike-share systems with docking stations.

2. Incentive & Reward Program



- ⊕ Students earn points or discounts when they cycle (linked to campus services, food outlets, or internet bundles).
- ⊕ Recognition awards for most active cycling clubs.

3. Enabling Infrastructure



- ⊕ Secure parking bays at lecture halls and hostels.
- ⊕ Collaboration with local governments for safe cycling lanes near campuses.

4. Awareness & Culture Building



- ⊕ Establish cycling clubs across universities.
- ⊕ Campaigns on health, economic benefits, and environmental benefits.
- ⊕ Annual inter-university "Cycle to Class Challenge."

Expected Outcomes

- Increased adoption of cycling as a primary transport mode by university students.
- Improved student affordability of transport (cost savings of up to 50%).
- Safer, greener, and less congested university towns.
- A growing national cycling culture, starting with the youth.

Partnerships

- ⊕ **Public and Private Universities:** Provide policy backing, campus space, and mobilization.
- ⊕ **Bike Companies:** Supply bikes, maintenance services, and technical expertise.
- ⊕ **Development and Funding Partners:** Provide resources and capital needed for implementation.
- ⊕ **Local and National Government:** Integrate cycling in urban planning and road safety.
- ⊕ **CityGrid Transport Consultants:** Technical advisor on sustainable mobility, monitoring & evaluation, and stakeholder coordination.

Next Steps



- ⊕ Secure partnerships with leading bicycle suppliers (NGO and private) and county governments.
- ⊕ Mobilize resources through development partners, and public–private partnerships.
- ⊕ Pilot launch at two universities (e.g., Maseno University & Kenyatta University).
- ⊕ Scale-up measures to all universities, day secondary schools and casual laborers in the informal market.



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