

July 31, 2009

Delivery of a Bicycle

Today was kind of exciting for us. We went this morning and purchased a bicycle and the necessary trappings to turn it into a “boda boda” – a bicycle used to transport passengers for fares. We spent 200,000 shillings (\$90-100 US). We returned around 2 PM to pick up the bicycle to deliver it to the street kids in Nyakasanga.

We drove to the office of the LC1 (Local Chairman of the community) to speak with him first, to let him know that it was purchased and was for the group of kids. We didn't want the group accused of stealing the bicycle. His office was closed, so we went on to the area where the young people hang out. We immediately attracted huge attention, and many young people began to crowd around as we removed the bike from the car. (It seemed that half of the town came over!)



Enos, the young man wearing the spare tire and Peter are explaining the purpose of the bike, and the fact that they are going to have to work together to make this a money-making proposition. Then, it seemed like World War III started. The young men were concerned about being in charge of the bike, and felt that it should be given to a representative of the LC1's office, and that they would go there to get the vehicle and then return it at the end of the day. They seemed to feel that they would argue endlessly about who should have it, and would wind up killing one another. We explained that this was the beginning of *their responsibility* for not only the bike, but for the proceeds that came from its use. They are going to have a meeting tomorrow morning and work out the details. The bike was a gift from BUFO (Base Camp United Christian Foundation) and the young man who works with LC1 has Enos' phone number in case they need to get in touch with us for any reason.

We all agreed that the group was going to have to learn to deal with the LC 1 office, and with the community at large, and learn how to live *in* the community, and hopefully become a real part of the community. They have largely been ignored, except for being roused when the police are investigating burglaries. Probably, some of the boys are thieves – how else are they able to buy food. As can be seen in the photos, they are not very clean and have little in the way of clothing.

We asked the older boys to make sure that the younger children were given a chance to learn how to ride the bike, that it was a gift to all of them. We hope it brings some pleasure as well as some income to the group.



As can be seen, they were very excited to receive the bike.

The young man on the right was most vocal about someone being in charge of the bike for the real fear of arguments occurring within the group. The man in the foreground in the green shirt is the representative from the LC1 office, in whose charge the bike was placed. He will work



with the group to help them work out their concerns and make sure that they all are part of the decision-making process. He knows these young people well, and will do the best that he can to help them “own” the business and make wise decisions.

The fun part was next - Mimi told them that she wanted to be the first person to ride on the bike as a fare, and the young man who was most vocal was the one she chose to be her driver.



As can be seen, they did not have to go very far – from the back of the building to the front, where the car was parked. When she got off, she paid him his first 1,000 Uganda shillings, to which he grinned and promptly pocketed the money.

We then went to the LC1’s office and gave the young man enough money to purchase a license for the group to operate the bike as a `boda boda`.

Enos and Peter will be checking in with them from time to time. They plan to involve the pastor of the local church there with the young people as well. Please join us in prayer that this will provide the entire group a source of income, and that they will learn to make wise decisions regarding its use and the use of the proceeds from its use. These young people have never owned anything, nor have they any job skills, or experience with planning. This is going to be a real learning experience for all of them – and for those of us who want to help them.