



BIKES NOT BOMBS

Using the Bicycle as a Vehicle for Social Change

GEARING UP FOR GROWTH

2021 Impact Report



Our Mission

Bikes Not Bombs (BNB) uses the bicycle as a vehicle for social change to achieve economic mobility for Black and other marginalized people in Boston and the Global South.

Our Vision

Bikes Not Bombs envisions a more just, equitable, and sustainable world powered by bicycles and led by Black and other marginalized people.



Our Impact

Since 1984, BNB has since shipped 80,336 bikes to grassroots organizations across the Global South and has become a national leader in bicycle-based youth development programming.

Letter from Executive Director Elijah Evans

I vividly remember my first day at BNB at age 14. I was a shy kid, and my reluctance to try out the Earn-A-Bike program only magnified as I stepped out of the rain into a scrappy bike shop, cluttered with wheels and tools and tires. But then everything shifted. I entered the Bike School space and found, within the chaotic piles of metal parts and rubber tubes, a vibrant group of joyful young people who welcomed me. I knew I belonged.



When that first program ended, I was motivated to do whatever it took to remain connected to BNB's people, mission, and work ... so, I signed up to volunteer and, one year later, I landed my first job. I was so proud, that after countless hours of working with my hands, I had earned that job and, as a result, I got to work alongside people of all generations and backgrounds, and make a real difference in my own backyard and communities abroad.

I came to see myself as a leader, as someone who could inspire others, and I experienced what it meant to pay it forward. This changed my life.

Over the years, I have watched BNB adapt and grow, in size and scope, to meet the pressing needs of people in Boston and beyond. I have seen how a bike-in-hand for many people living in Boston can mean critical access to work, to school, to food, and to healthcare. For the young people who walk through our doors, as I did two decades ago, a bike can also mean a sense of pride, a feeling of belonging, an awareness of possibility, and an experience of joy.

As young people continue to contend with the profound social, emotional, and economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, impacts that have amplified deeply rooted inequities faced by Black and marginalized youth, this work is needed more than ever. BNB has been a people-powered organization since our infancy, ensuring that those most impacted by inequity have resources to mobilize around innovative solutions. In 2022, we are equipped with a clear vision and an extraordinary team of youth, staff, volunteers, and partners, and are poised to impact more people than ever before. Thank you for joining us in work that lifts voices, advances economic mobility, nurtures communities, and changes lives.

In solidarity,

Why "Bikes Not Bombs"?

In 1984, Bikes Not Bombs' founders shipped 18 reconditioned bicycles to healthcare workers and teachers in Nicaragua, increasing access to economic opportunities during the time of a violent civil war. Our mission was literally "Bikes Not Bombs."

Forging New Pathways for Youth

Drawing from decades of bicycle-based youth development experience, BNB formalized our three-year Youth Pathways model in 2021. Now young people hailing from Boston's most under-resourced neighborhoods have access to a multi-tiered vocational training program that provides a vast range of 21st century skills in a dynamic and caring environment.

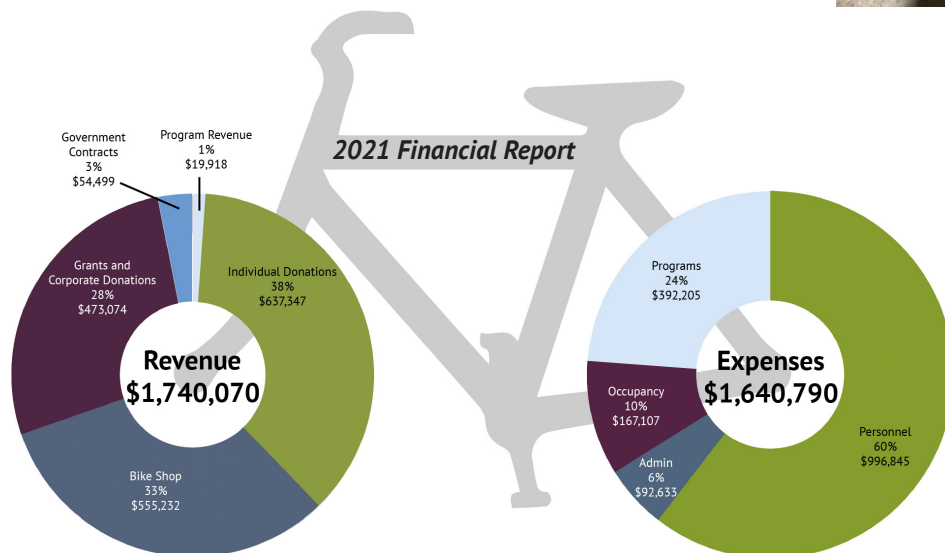


Bike School

Young people begin their Youth Pathways experience when they enroll in Bike School – a series of classes that bring young people together for approximately five weeks to learn basic bike mechanics, refurbish donated bikes, learn safe urban riding skills, and earn a bike of their own. In 2021, we engaged **over 100 young people** in Bike School programs at our Jamaica Plain Hub and in the **Boston Public Schools**. Thanks to a newly forged partnership with Children's Services of Roxbury, a new Bike School Hub in Roxbury will double the number of young people we serve in Bike School, while integrating therapeutic support into our curriculum.

Youth Apprenticeships

In 2021, BNB employed 28 youth as paid Apprentices in 48 part-time, seasonal positions. All Apprentices were welcomed by professional staff who served as mentors across our key operational areas. Apprentices served as peer instructors in our Bike School, repair bikes and attend to customers at our mission-driven Bike Shop and Vocational Training Center, prepped bikes and load containers to our International Partners, and organized for racial justice and transportation equity through our Bicyclists Organizing for Community Action (BOCA) initiative. With the help of one-on-one coaching and training, each young person was encouraged to stretch the boundaries of what they thought they could do—through reflection and hands-on work.



We have since evolved to understand “bombs” to also represent racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and the deeply rooted systemic inequities that prevent Black and other marginalized people from accessing the health, educational, and economic opportunities that everyone deserves.

Our work is as critical as it was in 1984. The Covid-19 pandemic has served to exacerbate feelings of isolation, dislocation, disengagement, and self-doubt among young people, particularly in marginalized communities. There is a greater need than ever for helping disempowered youth achieve a sense of competence, belonging, joy, and self-directed engagement in work.

Our Vision: A Roadmap for Change

In 2021, Bikes Not Bombs officially launched our Five-Year Strategic Plan, through which we have committed to advancing seven key organizational goals by 2025:

- Racial Equity
- Building Capacity
- Mission Effectiveness and Program Expansion
- Data and Performance Management
- Community Engagement
- Fundraising and Financial Sustainability
- Board Development

Bicyclists Organizing for Community Action (BOCA)



Our BOCA team partnered with local organizations to advocate for **improved bicycle infrastructure** in underserved Boston neighborhoods. Apprentices surveyed residents in Egleston Square, a connecting corridor between Roxbury and Jamaica Plain, and gathered 63 responses.

They also led eight **Chain Reaction** mobile repair events, where they provided free bicycle service to local families at the Mattapan Farmers' Market and other sites in Mattapan and Roxbury.

"BNB lights a fire in those whose lives may have been missing it... We instill confidence and hope to the hopeless and fearful. What we do can provide children with jobs, provide communities with leaders, developing countries with relief, and serve a society where such things are often overlooked."

- Youth Apprentice Joseph P., 18

BOCA youth coordinated bike safety workshops for over 50 school-aged children. Apprentices planned four **Ride for Black Lives** events, partnering with a coalition of organizers. Each ride began at Franklin Park and traversed the city, raising broader awareness of critical issues impacting Black and other marginalized communities.

Bike Shop and Vocational Training Center

Our diverse staff of professional mechanics provide a welcoming space for local families to find **affordable new and used bikes** and access bike service; offer professional **training opportunities for local youth** in bike sales, service, and business operations; and imagine and implement a multitude of creative initiatives to give new life to discarded bicycles in service of social change. In 2021, BNB collected 4,000 bicycles through volunteer-led bike drives and drop-offs.

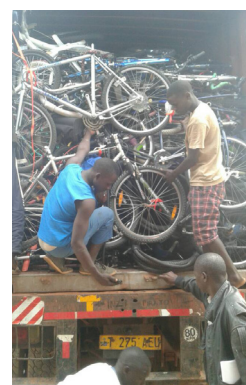


Together, we:

- Shipped over 1,300 bikes to our international, grassroots partners;
- Overhauled 1,000 bikes for sale at our mission-driven bike shop;
- Refurbished and matched 168 bikes to children and adults experiencing hardship;
- Allocated 500 bikes for our learn-and-earn Bike School programs;
- Recycled over 1,000 bikes, diverting them from the global wastestream.

International Reach

In 2021, Youth Apprentices and a dedicated crew of volunteers helped prepare bikes for shipment to CESTA in El Salvador and Learn, Work, Develop (LWD) in Rwanda. **CESTA** uses the bikes in their EcoBici program, which supports young people at risk of gang membership by helping them build skills in bicycle mechanics, gain a strong and positive community within CESTA, and access job opportunities refurbishing the bicycles for sale. **LWD** unleashes the creative and productive potential of youth by running educational and vocational training programs, in particular for young girls and women.



Build Momentum for Powerful Impact!

Donate to support our programs and services.

Ride at The Ride for Black Lives and in our 35th Annual Bike-A-Thon.

Volunteer to get your hands dirty while forwarding social change.

Questions about how to get involved?

Contact Director of Development Angela Phinney at angela@bikesnotbombs.org

bikesnotbombs.org

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