



BIKES NOT BOMBS

Using the bicycle as a vehicle for social change

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2023 Impact Report

“BNB has helped me see how I can fit into a leadership role and accept more public speaking opportunities. I have advocates who can talk about what I’ve achieved, and it’s what led me to have all the opportunities I have now” - BOCA Youth Associate Joseph P.

At Bikes Not Bombs, 2023 has been a year full of growth, community building, and exciting new partnerships! We launched a new Bike School program with the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, enabling us to engage more youth from our target communities of Mattapan, Dorchester, and Roxbury. We expanded our Bike School curriculum to include discussions on identity and current affairs, and integrated career development into our Youth Pathways program, while growing our capacity for alumni engagement. Our bike shop refurbished hundreds of bikes for local community members in need and for our international partners, increasing bike access locally and across the Global South. Each expansion has served to advance our Five-Year Strategic Plan — centering racial equity while building capacity to advance economic mobility among Black and other marginalized people in Boston and the Global South.

Youth Pathways Model

In 2023, we continued to grow our three-year Youth Pathways model, first formalized in 2021. Through this model, paid Youth Apprentices work alongside mentors across BNB to build competencies in technical and life-skill areas — from bicycle rotational systems to self-awareness, perseverance, curiosity, self-regulation, leadership, and community-mindedness.

This year, we employed **37** Youth Apprentices in our bicycle-based vocational training program. In addition to day-to-day mentorship, youth engaged in weekly meetings with other Apprentices and shop mentors in a dedicated space for youth to learn from each other and build professional development skills. In addition, each Youth Apprentice met monthly with our **Youth Development & Transitions Manager** to create individualized career action plans. They identified individual strengths and interests, created measurable goals, and explored professional development and career opportunities, including participating in internships beyond the walls of BNB. We also hired an **Alumni Engagement Coordinator** to develop strong relationships with our vast alumni network and support graduates in advancing their career aspirations.

Bike School

For many Youth Apprentices, their journey begins at one of our Bike School programs. In 2023 we engaged **83** participants across three different Bike School programs. At our Bike School in Jamaica Plain, **15** youth enrolled in **Earn-A-Bike**, where they developed safe riding skills and foundational bike maintenance knowledge. **Thirty-six** youth and adults participated in **Bike Institute**, where they learned how to build and maintain bikes to keep as their own, while exploring issues of social and environmental justice. Seven people — identifying as girls, womxn, trans, femme or non-binary individuals — participated in **Sisters in Action**, where they built hands-on skills and confidence while challenging the stereotypes of an historically male-dominated bike industry in an intentional, supportive environment.



This year, BNB continued to deepen our roots in Roxbury, offering four programs at our Roxbury location. Through our partnership with Children’s Services of Roxbury, **12** participants took part in **Bike Institute** and **11** joined **Earn-A-Bike** at our Hub in Roxbury. Participants engaged in both a mechanics curriculum as well as activities focused on social and emotional learning and mindfulness. Through a new partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS), we established a **new Bike School Hub** at the **Judge John J. Connelly Youth Center**. The partnership has enabled us to provide youth involved in the juvenile justice system with workforce training and employment opportunities, all rooted in the principles of positive youth development. This year, we offered two rounds of Bike School at the DHS facility. In total, **eight** DHS youth graduated from the program. We worked with DHS Career Navigators to create a pathway for DHS Bike School graduates to become Youth Apprentices at BNB, helping them grow their skills and create successful futures.

Youth Pathways Year One: Bike School Teacher

Year One Apprentices co-led instruction in all of our Bike School programs, with the support of BNB staff. Through teaching lessons, Apprentices gained facilitation, leadership, and bike mechanics skills, and were instrumental in growing equitable access to bicycles, bike maintenance, and city riding skills. Youth Apprentices also grew their own mechanical skills through **Advanced Mechanics training**, taught by BNB professional mechanics. In this 108-hour course, Apprentices honed their knowledge of bike and E-bike mechanics, bike refurbishing, bike recycling, and sales and customer service. Through the course, youth increased their confidence in lesson planning and teaching, and supported each other’s growth and knowledge. This year, **16** Youth Apprentices across all three years of Youth Pathways received Advanced Mechanics training.

We also launched a new partnership with the **Gallivan Community Center**, located in our target community of Mattapan. Year One Youth Apprentices and BNB mechanics provided 40 hours of bicycle training and technical support to a team of youth at the Community Center. Together, we built and began operating a youth-led bicycle repair pod at the center, further expanding bike accessibility across the neighborhood. This Summer, Youth Apprentices continued developing their leadership skills through a new partnership with the **Highland Street Foundation**. Three Youth Apprentices led balance bike classes for children ages four through nine, teaching them the basics of maneuvering a bicycle and learning to ride!

Youth Pathways Year Two: Bicyclists Organizing for Community Action (BOCA)

In their second year of Youth Pathways, Youth Apprentices engaged in the work of Bicyclists Organizing for Community Action (BOCA). Youth Apprentices and BNB staff collaborated with community partners to advance transportation justice, provide racial equity training, lead community rides, and provide free mobile bike repair in neighborhoods without bike shops.

This year, we employed **12** Youth Apprentices, and **one** Youth Associate (a graduate of the three-year pathway) in our BOCA work. We expanded our Chain Reaction Mobile Bike repair partnerships from **two to four**, extending our services to the neighborhoods of East Boston and Dorchester. BOCA Apprentices provided free bicycle services to families and individuals at **27** Chain Reaction events at the Mattapan, East Boston, and Egleston Square Farmers Markets, and **City of Boston Open Streets** Events in Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and Allston. BOCA youth also staffed our **Tool Time** program, where we opened up our spaces to the public to increase access to no-cost bike repair and empower attendees to learn bike mechanics. This year we operated a total of **24** Tool Time sessions between our spaces in Jamaica Plain and Roxbury.



BOCA Youth developed and led **Unity in Community Rides**, a new series of bike rides around the Boston area to further grow an inclusive and representative bike community. Themes included Thawing & Blooming, Exploring Boston's Queer History, Riding the Black Heritage Trail, and Ringing in the Fall. Over **five** rides, we **engaged over 100 riders**. We also rolled out a civic and social justice education component of our Bike School curriculum, created and facilitated by BOCA Youth

Apprentices to complement the existing mechanic education curriculum. Each week, BOCA youth engaged Bike School participants in conversations and activities surrounding identity, racism and oppression, domestic and international current affairs, and social-emotional learning.

Youth Pathways Year Three: Bike Shop and Training Center

This year, three Youth Apprentices graduated from the three-year Apprenticeship program and began working as Associates in our Bike Shop and Training Center. Working alongside professional staff and volunteers, they played a crucial role in selling new and refurbished bikes, processing bikes for shipment to our international partners, and donating bikes to people experiencing economic hardship through our Bike Match program. This summer, we purchased a **mobile bike repair vehicle!** We outfitted a 14-foot long Mercedes Sprinter Van with tools, stands, and parts. We are using the van for bike drives, container loadings, and Chain Reaction events across the city. A new Chain Reaction Coordinator has led the way in building a roadmap for expanding our mobile bike repair Chain Reaction services.

International Shipping and Bike Recycling

In 2023, we collected and processed over **2,000 bikes** for use across BNB programming. Community members across Greater Boston donated bikes at our shop, and at 14 bike drives, helping divert these bikes from the global wastestream. Youth Apprentices, staff, and volunteers completed four container loadings and shipped **1,930 bikes** to international partners in El Salvador, Kenya, and Rwanda — **up 350% from last year!** We hired two new Bike Donations Coordinators who continue to refine our inventory management system, allowing us to track the journey of each bike that comes through our doors. At our weekly volunteer night, volunteers and Youth Apprentices played a critical role in processing, recycling, and/or refurbishing each bike donated to BNB. This year, the shop sold over 320 refurbished bikes to community members.



Thank You

As we look back on the past year, we extend our gratitude to the entire BNB community. Our work is made possible thanks to the dedication of every board member, staff member, program participant, Youth Apprentice, volunteer, partner, donor, and institutional funder. We are so grateful for your support as we carry on our work at home and abroad, and continue to use the bicycle as a vehicle for social change to achieve economic mobility for Black and other marginalized people in Boston and the Global South. We are looking forward to working with you in 2024!

“Here I’ve had access to so many different opportunities. I’ve had access to REI, I’ve learned how to build bikes from scratch and work on different bike systems, and now I’ve done community outreach with BOCA and I’m even using my skills to improve my public speaking in school” - BOCA Youth Apprentice Derek M.