

# E-Cycling now a reality in Namibia

August 7, 2015, 5:06pm



## E-Cycling now a reality in Namibia

The overall objective of the Transport Master Plan is to lay the foundation for the development of safe, secure, effective transport infrastructure services which are responsive to the socio-economic needs of Namibian. This can be achieved through innovators complying with the plan.

Marita Van Rooyen and Bernhard Walther are some of the motivators who have sought to support and achieve the goals of Vision 2030 and the National Development Plans through creating solar powered bicycles (e-bikes) with SunCycles project.

Van Rooyen says they are positive about this initiative as the City of Windhoek (CoW) has this sustainable transport master plan getting in place. "There are a lot of organisations already promoting cycling that try to push people to cycle in this town so these things are already in place. Now all we need is something to make it safer for people to actually do it."

E-bikes are not that different from normal bicycles the only difference is that with e-bikes one does not need to sweat.

They reduce carbon emission and offer a more efficient way of moving, it can reduce transport costs and energy and reduces maintenance costs. Furthermore, the battery can be used to charge cell phones and computers.

Walther says the good thing about e-bikes is that it does not have any carbon foot print with noise or exhaust fumes and completely sustainable powered by solar.

Van Rooyen says she came up with the idea of e-bikes when she lived in Europe last year and realised that in Europe everybody cycles and there are cycling lanes everywhere. "You can cycle from one country to the next because there are bicycle lanes across borders and it is very sustainable on transport alternatives and people think green," she says.

"Europeans are living a more advanced life than we are here in Namibia and it is cheaper, so this is why cycling is one of the easiest ways to get around. I found something is lacking in Namibia. We all have a car. Cars are really expensive like 87 percent of the population cannot even afford a car but still it is the main form of transport so it is something that is sort an imbalance. It does not make sense to me," she says.

Solar technology is not yet that advanced as it is in Europe so the duo thought of bringing this new innovation to Namibia and convince people to start thinking green.

She also says Namibians are excited about the idea and they have had hundreds of people trying out the bikes. "We still have people coming in everyday trying to understand and figure out what is that we are doing so the interest is really high, but the actual action part of the situation is a different story. In Namibia specifically it takes long for people to get used to a new idea."





Walther says the e-bikes are assembled at the Village complex. "We keep it as simple as possible. We put them at the container with all the necessary parts which are mainly the battery and the engine and then we put them together. "We also try to teach people to do it by themselves because it is not complicated and if I am capable of maintaining my bike the mechanical part and the electrical part then I can have electricity and mobility for free. We try to get the knowledge here that we can fix them and maintain them here in Namibia rather than sending to South Africa. We just import batteries which is a normal."

He also adds that, "The first station is at the container where people can recharge their batteries for free while the second one will be at Physically



Active Youth (PAY) in Katutura. When the battery gets used up one can just paddle normally to the station. “We have a lot of support, like now we have this space for free. People here said they fully support this initiative and allowed us to put our workshop here PAY also welcomed us with open arms, everybody is really supportive.”

Van Rooyen mentions that they are targeting everyone as they want to make the city safe by cycling rather than driving. “We are hoping to get commuters because we want people to see people on bikes to get rid of the cars. The city is also more safe in that regard, and also tourists as well. We are also renting out bikes to tourists that want to have an alternative way of exploring the city because e-bikes are very popular in Europe and that might be something that could catch their attention.”

Walthers adds that students are part of the target as they are in need of an affordable means of transportation. He further says if 20 percent of people in Windhoek start cycling instead of driving 700 jobs will be created.

Philani Nkomo



Methealth Namibia Administrators make it their business to ensure you are healthy, sometimes you are not and then you or your loved ones may need healthcare. We make sure as a member of Methealth you get what you deserve excellence, innovation and a formidable team of practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, dieticians and biokineticists.

Methealth Namibia administers 74% of all medical aid members in Namibia (public & private).

**METHEALTH NAMIBIA**  
ADMINISTRATORS



## Related Stories

- » RA and NRP accused of exploitation (content/29036/RA-and-NRP-accused-of-exploitation/)
- » Political parties promise better education (content/37944/Political-parties-promise-better-education/)
- » MOTHER LONGING TO MEET MISSING SON (content/4342/MOTHER-LONGING-TO-MEET-MISSING-SON/)
- » NamPower to import electricity worth N\$2,6 billion (content/50650/NamPower-to-import-electricity-worth-N-2-6-billion/)
- » Docket in rhino horn case back to NamPol (content/38415/Docket-in-rhino-horn-case-back-to-NamPol/)
- » UPDATE: Farmer arrested with guns, hand grenades and ammunition (content/60240/UPDATE-Farmer-arrested-with-guns-hand-grenades-and-ammunition/)
- » Repo rate left unchanged at 6,0 per cent (content/37783/Repo-rate-left-unchanged-at-6-0-per-cent/)
- » No arrest yet in teen's assault/rape: Shikwambi (content/59795/No-arrest-yet-in-teen-s-assault-rape-Shikwambi/)
- » KLIA2 COST WENT UP AMONG OTHERS TO MEET AIRASIA'S REQUESTS, DEWAN RAKYAT TOLD (content/3345/KLIA2-COST-WENT-UP-AMONG-OTHERS-TO-MEET-AIRASIA-S-REQUESTS-DEWAN-RAKYAT-TOLD/)
- » Elections training starts at Zambezi (content/53282/Elections-training-starts-at-Zambezi/)

## Media Galleries



(media-gallery/)



(media-gallery/)



(media-gallery/)



(media-gallery/)