

PEDALING FOR HOUSES

· I N C O L O M B I A ·

According to official statistics more than 380.000 families live in conditions of poverty in the city of Bogota in more than 400 identified neighborhoods. Most of these families struggle on a daily basis to buy their food and pay for the right to spend the night in improvised shelters made of metal sheet and pieces of wood. Single mothers have to work extremely hard to raise their children and keep them away from the threads of drugs, violence and abuse.

Under these conditions, having a safe shelter is of capital importance to help children make their way through school and eventually get out of the extreme poverty condition.

The situation in Colombia is worrying so much that, according to a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on Social Mobility, it takes the equivalent of 11 generations for an individual to overcome poverty.



Photo 1. Improvised housing is the only option for thousands of families living in extreme poverty. We build quality houses which transform the lives of these families.

In 2012, we, a group of amateur cyclists, decided to provide our pedaling with a special sense and founded **Pedaling for Houses:** we raise money to provide quality housing to families in need. Our efforts have resulted in 182 houses so far which we ourselves have built with the help of thousands of volunteers. A house has an area of 25 m2 to 36 m2 (270 sq. ft to 380 sq. ft) and can actually be assembled in one day of hard work. It is made of concrete slabs, metallic doors/windows and asbestos-free shingles. The family is required to prepare the foundation plate and commits to keep the children attending school, participate in education sessions about pacific handling of conflicts and also to plant a small garden to cultivate vegetables for their own consumption. The house and all the logistics involved is worth between US$2,400 to US3,400 depending on the size.



Photo 2. We conduct all kind of bike-based activities to raise funds and convert cycling into houses.

Photo 3. A house is built in one day with a small group of volunteers working hand to hand with the family members.



Numerous companies donate one or more houses and use the construction experience as a valuable team-building exercise. It is certainly an eye-opening activity that raises awareness about the importance of helping children to secure their education and a future.

We pledge a strong commitment for ethics and compliance. All our activities are supervised by the competent authorities and we provide detailed reports on the progress of our activities. With your help we will continue to provide safe housing for families in need and hopefully those children will stay away from drugs and violence. A house is not really the end of the process but the beginning of the fight against inequality. Thanks in advance. All amounts are important. We will make them count.



The final moment when the house is formally delivered is a very emotional one.