



*Bike mechanic working in Kumasi market, Ghana*

Bike tools are thin on the ground in Africa, with a hammer and screwdriver being used for most jobs, as above. The problem is that this is time consuming compared to a specific bike tool, and often leads to damaged parts, especially when removing the freewheel (rear cogs) from a back wheel.

Many full time mechanics use a hammer and nail to instead of a “chain tool” (a threaded punch), again leading to damage and wasted time.

One of Re~Cycle’s partners, the Village Bicycle Project (VBP), is particularly active and effective in promoting bicycle tools, and has demonstrated that there is a demand, with tools now being sold at wholesale price. Mechanics who assist at the VBP’s basic training courses are given tools and those who assist at the advanced course can buy tools for half price.

Re~Cycle ships general tools (spanners, screwdrivers, files, etc.) donated by Tools With A Mission (TWAM) and Tools For Self Reliance (TFSR). These are UK charities doing similar work to Re~Cycle, putting unwanted tools to good use.

Women are trained as mechanics, for equality and to act as role models. In Haiti, the best mechanic was a woman who paid attention to bike tool techniques, rather than being macho and thinking she knew it all!