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Six lorryloads of bicycles for Bike-Aid

After recent Straits Times reports about two groups which transform used computers and bicycles into welcome gifts for the needy, donations of such equipment poured in from readers. **HO KA WEI** finds out what is happening to those gifts

THERE was no putting on the brakes for those who responded to an appeal last November for used bicycles.

They overwhelmed organiser Bike-Aid with donations of more than 170 bicycles. And volunteers have been kept busy collecting them from homes.

Because of the response, Bike-Aid had to call in as many as six lorries one Sunday last month, to pick up about 150 bicycles at one go.

The bikes are now waiting to be shipped to Thailand, said Bike-Aid president David Hoong. From there, the Thailand Cycling Club will distribute them to children in rural areas.

Most donors gave mountain bikes. Some gave bikes without wheels.

Mr Hoong, 46, an insurance broker, added: "We go to their houses, and they tell us 'This is the bike'. So we have no choice but to take it."

He said they might still send the damaged bikes to Thailand because the club could refurbish them, but the ones in good condition would be packed first. The damaged ones will have to wait for space.

Bike-Aid is a group of cycling enthusiasts who pedal for charity. Last year, on a cycling trip to Hatyai, they read in the Bangkok Post of the Thailand Cycling Club's project of recycling

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Thailand Cycling Club's project of recycling unwanted bicycles. Last October, Bike-Aid made the first shipment of 138 bicycles.

In rural Thailand, children often have to walk several kilometres to school and some simply do not attend.

Said Mr Hoong: "The Thai club was so happy and surprised that we took such a short time, when they would probably take months.

"I thank all the people who called and want to apologise to those whose bikes we're not able to collect because of time and transport constraints."

He added that in two months, they would know if more bikes were needed.

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