Fundraising: Tales from Tanzania

Briefings

24 October 2022

Tina Riches tells the tale of the KiliTaxTeam's sponsored climb to the summit of Kilimanjaro.

This is going to be difficult – to sum up in such a short account how our incredible fundraising ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro went.

After two years of Covid delays, by early 2022 we really thought that our trip in aid of the tax charities was finally about to happen. Then most of us seemed to suffer some sort of blow – between us we had a broken arm, a broken elbow and damaged muscles, as well as some of us catching Covid two weeks before departure.

But such tribulations merely tested our resolve! Eventually, five of us joined our larger group of 16 trekkers at Heathrow Airport, along with our doctor Hannah (who kept a beady eye on us all through the trip) and team leader Will from Action Challenge. Just before our Qatar Airways flight safely arrived at Kilimanjaro International Airport, the mountain peak temptingly pierced the clouds.

The next day, the adventure began in earnest at the Lemosho Gate, where we entered the National Park and met the incredible support team of local guides, chefs and porters. Our route then took us through the rain forest – a great way to start the walk with black and white colobus monkeys serenading us.

As each day progressed and we climbed higher, most of us succumbed to altitude sickness. Meanwhile, the route became increasingly difficult, including climbing the Barranco Wall, which felt like a sheer cliff with no looking down and plenty of cliff hugging!

The last two days of ascent were the toughest, with little time to recuperate while walking through the night with headtorches to the summit, arriving at sunrise before the intense sun started to melt the frozen shale we'd walked over. Given that the temperature was close to minus 20 degrees centigrade, with a bitterly cold wind,

hallucinations of a warm café were par for the course! So we did not stay long to reflect on our achievement.

The descent from almost 6,000 metres took a day and a half – down to an incredible welcome with singing and dancing from our amazing support team, without whom most of us would never have made the top.

Early in the trip, our plucky tax team was renamed as the KillTaxTeam by another mirthful participant and from that moment the wider team gelled. We even picked up some sponsorship on the way – having a captive audience is a great way to explain the work of TaxAid and TaxHelp for Older People!

Thank you to everyone who has sponsored us already. At the time of writing, we have raised just short of an amazing £22,000, and donations are still coming in. You can sponsor the team or one of the trekkers at:
www.justgiving.com/team/KiliTax2020

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