

CONTENTS

Page 1	Project Update
Page 2	COCO Golf Day Kilimanjaro Red Ribbon Ball
Page 3	Christmas Cards Coast to Coast Update
Page 4	TeamCOCO Update



Brighter Futures across the globe Winter Newsletter 2009

Project Update Tanzania



In July COCO's Operations Manager Lucy took time out from the office to visit some of COCO's projects in Tanzania. Her report follows...

"The July project visit was my first chance to visit the site of a project in the Majengo area of Northern Tanzania brought to COCO's attention by longtime volunteer Sarah Marriott in 2008. This project is aimed at providing

a nursery school feeding programme referred to locally as the "Central Kitchen Project". A visit to the area in which the central kitchen project would be based was taken to evaluate the significance of the project and the impact that it might have to the community as a whole.

Most nursery schools in Tanzania are private or community run as opposed to government. Primary school children start at age 7 unlike the UK, so children attend school much later. Due to the national policy of "free" primary school education the majority of schools are overcrowded and the quality of education is poor. It is because of this that parents are keen to give their children a chance to learn at an early age so that they will stand a better chance of completing their primary school examinations so that they can go on to secondary school and ultimately find themselves in a position to succeed and avoid living in poverty. Also, for many families in this area, HIV/AIDS has claimed the lives of one or more parents per household, which means that there is a huge demand for child care so that single parents can work to provide for their children. The overall objective of the project is to facilitate the construction of a kitchen to provide food for all children attending community nursery schools in the area. The 500 children who would benefit from this project are those attending one of the 5 nursery schools in the area, they are all either orphaned or from single parent or very poor families".

Case Study King John (Age 6)



I live at home with my mother, father, elder sister and brother. We have a number of rooms in a house we share with four other families. I share a bed with my brother. My father is a mechanic and earns the money for our family. My parents send me to Kilimani nursery school because they want me to be able to go onto primary school (and know

that this is impossible without nursery school education), but also because Mama Laya is well known as a good teacher and her

nursery is famous as an excellent one! Before I leave for nursery in the morning I usually have some milk and some bread. It takes me ten to fifteen minutes to walk to nursery and I enjoy my time there. My mum would be very happy if I were to receive a school meal each day. She knows it would improve my education and be good for my health too. My sister, who is now 9 years old and in Standard 4 at primary school, went to a different nursery school to me, as did my brother, Prince, who is now 7 years old and is in Standard 1 at primary school. Prince went to Tumaini nursery school because it is closer to our home, but I attend Mama Laya's school as her good teaching is well known. Following in my siblings' footsteps, I will go on to primary school. Thankfully our parents can afford the uniform and exercise books etc. When I return from nursery each day we usually eat ugali or rice and beans.

Project plans for 2010...

Raising funds for school in Ghana

COCO has been working in conjunction with students from Durham University to raise funds for the refurbishment of a school in Ghana, we have raised almost £5000 and it is hoped that this funding will be allocated early 2010 so that work can begin. Ghana is very new territory for COCO but the need for education projects is clear and we are very happy to be venturing into unknown territory to provide assistance for Ghanaian children.

COCO's Work in Uganda

Several project visits to Uganda have taken place over the past 3 years in conjunction with a HIV education programme which was rolled out in 2008. Through the programme, which saw thousands of books delivered across the country to encourage children to talk about HIV/AIDS, many contacts have been made and COCO intend to work closely with a community outside Jinja to ensure the availability of nutritional food for those with HIV. To accompany the provision of funds to enable sustainable farming of nutritious foods, pigs, chickens and goats will be bought and kept to provide both financial and nutritional support for members of the impoverished community who are at present struggling to survive in the dry climate and poverty stricken region.

New Computers for COCO

Thanks to the generosity of Cintra Payroll Services, Northumbrian Water, Duncan Bannatyne and The Maxfield Foundation the staff at COCO are now the very happy recipients of 4 brand new computers! Fred Howie from Howie White Resourcing, was also kind enough to donate a new server. The difference this makes cannot be under-estimated as the old hardware was slow, outdated and prone to crashing or giving up on regular occasions. After a few teething problems the new software has helped boost the productivity of the COCO staff and has brought COCO well into the modern age!

45% of people living in Tanzania don't have access to clean water.

COCO Celebrity Golf Day



Back in June COCO staged its 6th annual COCO Celebrity Golf Day which saw celebrities including COCO's Chairman Steve Cram, Sunderland FC Chairman Niall Quinn, Olympian's Denise Lewis, Kriss Akabusi and cricket legend Ian Botham tee off for COCO.

The day was held at the stunning course at Slaley Hall and businesses taking part from the North East included MGM, Howie White Resourcing, Clarks Catering, Tofco, CCS Mobile, Sunderland University, The Cooperative Bank, Adidas and sponsors of the event, Dunelm.

The highest scoring celebrity of the day was former Middlesbrough legend Craig Hignett whilst the second highest scoring celebrity, Finlay Mickel helped his team Browell Smith and Co to win the tournament. After a round of golf, players and guests gathered for a three course meal which was followed by a raffle, auction and a question and answer session with Niall Quinn and Ian Botham. Over £15,000 was raised for COCO through the sale of tickets, the raffle and auction in addition to fundraising initiatives during the day. Thanks to all of you who were able to attend and if you're interested in attending our 2010 Golf Day which will be held on Thursday 16th June please let Laura know!

Scaling the heights of Kilimanjaro for COCO



This July 6 students from Newcastle and Sunderland University travelled to Tanzania to climb Kilimanjaro for COCO. Together they raised £15,000 for COCO and all of them reached the summit. One of the boys from the trip, Mark Holmes shares his memories of the trip:

"On the 19th July at 6.45am, local time, after 6 long days I made it to the summit of Kilimanjaro, standing at 19,341ft (5985m).

Climbing Kilimanjaro really was one of the best experiences of my life, and certainly one I will never forget. Kilimanjaro is the largest free-standing mountain in the world and is a diverse and beautiful environment. Often referred to as the 'mountain of four seasons', you experience the warm tropical surroundings of the rainforest at the bottom, to the snow topped glacier at the top. We climbed the mountain by the Machame route, opting to spend seven days in total on the mountain, to give the best possible chance of acclimatisation and reaching the summit. I was part of a team of six lads, all of us climbing for COCO.

We were accompanied by our head guide, Jonas, a true professional, referring to the mountain as 'his office' and to him it was nothing more than a little stroll. Consequently he had reached the summit over 250 times! (He is currently preparing to climb Everest). There were also two deputy guides, and a team of about 30 porters consisting of cooks, and those who carried equipment. A massive thank you has to be given to all the porters who helped achieve our goal; they are true heroes, working tirelessly carrying massive loads. They were always willing to help, extremely friendly and taking great pleasure in teaching us their native Swahili phrases, such as "Kilimanjaro - Hakuna matata" (Kilimanjaro - No Worries). Most of all they wanted us to reach the summit, just as much as we did, a great help, especially on the final push to the top.

I spent five weeks in Tanzania in total: climbing the mountain, Kilimanjaro). I spent two weeks at the school, with another member of the team I climbed Kilimanjaro with. COCO helped the school become self sufficient, aiding it to develop crops to feed the students.

Whilst we were there we painted the school library, as well as teaching a few lessons.

It truly was a fantastic experience and most importantly one that I would happily do all over again!"

Steve Cram Climbs Kilimanjaro



After hearing stories from the many students who have climbed Kilimanjaro for COCO, COCO's Chairman Steve Cram decided it was about time he took on the challenge. On October 31st Steve joined 27 other individuals as they flew out to Tanzania to climb Africa's highest mountain. The group included Steve's partner Allison Curbishley, former Olympic Swimmer Karen Pickering and COCO's Fundraising and Marketing Coordinator Laura Elliott in addition to businessmen and women from the North East and London.

Whilst in Moshi (the main town at the foot of Kilimanjaro) the group visited the Central Kitchen Project in Majengo and were able to witness the results of COCO's work first-hand as they met children who attended the nursery and benefitted from the kitchen.

At 07.59 on Friday 6th November Steve and his group reached the summit of Kilimanjaro! They are pictured here and despite the snow, extreme cold and long hours of walking all their hard work paid off. 21 people out of the 28 reached the summit but unfortunately Laura Elliott was forced to come down the mountain on day 5 due to altitude sickness. Kilimanjaro is not to be underestimated - walking up to 8 hours a day, living in a tent and dealing with extreme temperatures is definitely challenging but the end results are worth all the effort.

Looking back on the climb Steve said: *"It was an amazing experience to reach the summit of Kilimanjaro and it is a challenge I've wanted to achieve for quite some time. It was a very difficult 7 days but we had a fantastic group taking part and a real highlight of the whole trip was the chance to visit COCO's projects and witness the results of funds raised and the difference we are making to children's lives."*

Congratulations to everyone who took part and made the trip such an enjoyable and amazing experience. It is hoped that over £70,000 will be raised from the challenge and the COCO team are already looking ahead to the next trip so watch this space!

Red Ribbon Ball



Who would have thought that Christmas would be upon us so quickly? As Christmas arrives, so does COCO's annual ball which takes place on Saturday 5th December at the magnificent Discovery Museum in Newcastle. After months of slightly more strenuous challenge events COCO staff are looking forward to letting their hair down and relaxing with friends and guests of COCO.

The Red Ribbon Ball ties in with World Aids Day on December 1st as COCO's projects aim to reduce the impacts of HIV/AIDS upon children's lives such as the iThemba Lethu project in South Africa which looks after HIV/AIDS orphans.

The night will include a champagne reception, three course meal, auction, raffle and live music from Rollin' Rock. The ball is a celebration of COCO and a chance for you to socialise with COCO's staff and other COCO supporters. Tickets are still on sale at £70 per head or £650 for a table of 10. We would love you to join us for what promises to be a very special evening. To book your ticket please email sally@coco.org.uk or call 0191 261 7427.

30,000 under 5's die every day from easily prevented causes such as diarrhoea, dehydration and malaria.

Christmas Cards

Did you know that Christmas is just around the corner?!

But don't panic as COCO can save you some of the stress of Christmas shopping! We are offering COCO Christmas cards, at only £4.00 for 8 so snap them up and allow yourself a bit more relaxation in the build up to Christmas.

The cards are professionally printed and each pack features 4 different designs; either pieces of art created by children at one of our projects, or pictures of the children at our projects themselves.

So don't hesitate in getting your order in! To order your pack of cards please complete the form below.

.....

Full Name & Initials _____

Address _____

_____ Post code _____

Contact number _____

Email Address _____

.....

I would like to order ____ art pack(s) of designs by children at COCO's projects

I would like to order ____ photo pack(s) of children at COCO's projects

Please find enclosed a cheque for £ _____
(Please make cheques payable to COCO)

Sign _____

Please send this slip and cheque made payable to COCO:
COCO, 3rd Floor, 14 Blandford Square,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4HZ

Registered Charity Number: SC030428

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Coasting Ahead at the C2C



'COCO's Coast to Coast cycle challenge took place at the beginning of October. 32 cyclists in total, including Steve Cram took part in a two day challenge which stretched 134 miles from Whitehaven to Sunderland.

Despite gale force winds and rain on day one, teams persevered and arrived unscathed in Alston 10 hours later. Teams taking part included representatives from Cintra Payroll Services, MOSO, Dunelm, Dickinson Dees, Berrymans Lace Mawer, Browell Smith and Co, Run for All and Simpson Millar LLP.

COCO staff had obviously been having a quiet word with the weather man on Saturday night as by Sunday morning the sun was shining, the wind had disappeared and cyclists were able to enjoy glorious views of the countryside. Day two was also shorter with more of the course heading downhill rather than up!

The first team greeted at the finish line in Sunderland with champagne was 'The Stragglers' from Berrymans Lace Mawer. Not content with dipping their bikes into the sea, some cyclists went for a swim! Steve Cram wasn't quite so brave!

The winning team, for the second year in a row, were Cintra Payroll Services who were represented by Carsten Staehr, Lorenzo Mugnai and Fred Pargeter who completed the course in a time of 15 hours and 13 minutes. A close second were Dickinson Dees in a time of 15 hours and 39 minutes, followed by the 'Psychlpaths' from Berrymans Lace Mawer who steamed home in a time of 16 hours and 26 minutes.

Congratulations to all of the cyclists who took part in this great event for COCO. You have raised close to £14,000, an amazing effort. Funds raised will benefit the iThemba Lethu project in South Africa.

Northern Rock Cyclone 2010



COCO are pleased to announce that we are now part of the Northern Rock Cyclone event which will take place in Newcastle on the weekend of the 12th June. This is one of the North East's premier cycling events and attracts cyclists of all abilities and ages to take part in one of three cycling challenges. On Friday 11th June youngsters aged 14 to 16 can race against each other in Leazes Park, followed by over 16's. Cyclists gather on Saturday for one of three races – 33 miles – for families and those who want to enjoy the countryside, 63 miles – for those who want a challenge and 104 miles – for the serious cyclists! It's the turn of elite cyclists on Sunday and last year Bradley Wiggins won the race.

If you would like to support COCO and take part in any of the Cyclone races you need to visit www.northernrockcyclone.co.uk and select 'COCO' from the list of charities. There is no minimum sponsorship amount, whatever you can raise will be appreciated.

EVENTS DIARY

December 5th	COCO's Red Ribbon Ball
April 25th	Virgin London Marathon
May 9th	Bristol 10K
May 30th	Comrades Marathon
May TBC	Coast 2 Coast Cycle Challenge
June 11-13th	Northern Rock Cyclone
June 16th	North East Golf Day
June 18th	Climb Kili for Kids (student trek)
August 1st	York 10K
September 5th	Bristol Half Marathon
September 19th	Bupa Great North Run
September TBC	London Golf Day
November TBC	Climb Kili for Kids (for grown ups!)
December TBC	COCO Ball

For more information about these events please contact Laura on 0191 261 7427 or laura@coco.org.uk. If you are interested in an event that is not listed here don't worry! We will be more than happy to support you in any challenge that you wish to take on for COCO.

In Africa, only 62% of children complete primary education, this is the lowest percentage in the world. In 19 African countries the ratio's are 50% or lower.



Clocking up the miles for COCO

COCO runners have been busy clocking up the miles in support of COCO. Since the last newsletter there have been a number of events that have taken place including the York 10K, Bristol Half Marathon, Middlesbrough 10K and the Bupa Great North Run. Congratulations to all of you who ran in support of COCO and thank you for your sponsorship, your miles have really made a difference to the lives of children in our projects.

Ed and Phil Complete the Augrabies Extreme Ultramarathon in the Kalahari Desert



Not content with taking on the Arctic Challenge earlier in the year, COCO's Director Edward Chapman and his friend and colleague Phillip Howells took on another extreme marathon in the Kalahari Desert.

The race was the second part of their 'minus to plus 40' challenge which has seen them pit their fitness against

temperatures from below minus 40 degrees centigrade to over plus 40 degrees centigrade in the Kalahari.

COCO are very pleased to announce the Ed and Phil reached the finish line in South Africa during the first two weeks in October. Phil, who came down with a virus on the day before the event, struggled from the start, but hung on to a final finish position of 62nd of 69 finishers in a total time of 52-21-00; an average speed of well under 3 miles an hour! Edward finished well ahead of him with 54th place in 46-22-00 despite getting a cold himself in the last couple of days.

Many may find the 'slow' average speed hard to believe, but the terrain is very rugged, with deep sand in dried up river-beds, steep boulder-strewn gorges (up and down) and rocky half-formed tracks comprising most of the route. This race was over a 237kms (148 mls) route to be covered in 7 days as a self-reliant race in which all food and other items needed to survive, other than water and tent, are carried in a rucksack on your back. Phillip's rucksack started out at just under 15kgs in weight, but was mercifully rather lighter by the end of the event.

Temperatures this time of year (being Spring south of the equator) can get up to 50 degrees C and higher, although the weather was relatively mild this year and temperatures ranged from 'only' mid-30s up to 45; still quite warm! Given the very rough terrain, the heat and the rucksack this is certainly quite a challenge of fitness at the best of times, never mind with a virus!!

Together they aim to raise £2500 for COCO. Congratulations to both of you! You are a real tribute to COCO and a great inspiration to other runners. We hope that you will now be enjoying a well earned rest!

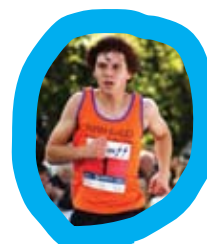
Do you think you're tough enough?

For those of you who feel that the likes of the London Marathon, Great North Run and the odd 10K are like a walk in the park then make 2010 the year you take on your biggest challenge yet – Ultra Running!

Follow in the footsteps of one of COCO's Directors, Edward Chapman who has taken part in many ultra marathons including the Comrades Marathon. Edward has offered to help train anyone who is interested in getting involved in ultra running and COCO will be offering you the chance to take part in one UK ultra event and one event abroad. If you think you're up for the challenge, and wish to raise funds for COCO's projects at the same time, please contact Laura.

TeamCOCO Gallery

We know that many of you have been pounding the streets in support of COCO this year and we thought you might like to see a selection of photos from the year's events and we hope that one of you may feature in an event for COCO next year.



1 billion children are living in poverty,
that's every second child worldwide.