

SUMMER

newsletter 2007



Ghana — where WOMANKIND and its partners are working to ensure the new domestic-violence law is implemented consistently and thoroughly throughout the country.

Helping women use their rights and secure new ones

ACTIVISM

POLICY

EVENTS

REAL LIVES

NEW ISSUES



Sue Turrell
Executive Director

Welcome to WOMANKIND Worldwide

It's hard to keep going, the situation is very difficult.

That's why it's so important that WOMANKIND continues to stand by us through thick and thin. Ednah Bhala, the Director of the Musasa project, a WOMANKIND partner organisation from Zimbabwe.

I've recently returned from Zimbabwe, my first overseas trip with WOMANKIND. Harare appeared to be well cared for and people are busy, going about their daily business.

But when you look below the surface you can see how much has changed. On a visit to a supermarket to buy some lunch for ourselves and some colleagues from one of WOMANKIND'S partner organisations, we spent the equivalent of almost half a Zimbabwean teacher's month's salary on two loaves of bread, cheese, cucumber, tomatoes and some crisps.

Despite inflation of around 4000 per cent and a very uncertain situation, our partners in Zimbabwe continue the battle for women's rights — and are making huge progress. You can read on page 4 how, after many years of campaigning, the first-ever Domestic Violence Act was passed in 2007 and WOMANKIND'S partners are leading the way in pushing the government to ensure that it is fully enacted as well as educating women about their new rights. Seeing this work was fantastically inspiring: with modest funds and support from WOMANKIND, women like Ednah are helping to improve the lives of a whole generation of women. Thank you to everyone who has supported WOMANKIND over the past year and helped make this happen.

Looking to the future, WOMANKIND is already planning for 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence (25 November to 10 December) with the launch of a report on the impact of our UK Education Programme. In addition, a number of partners from around the world will be visiting the UK for a series of events. Subscribe to our e-bulletin and keep visiting the website to be kept up to date with our plans. Finally, I encourage you to join me and a group of intrepid WOMANKIND supporters who will be taking part in a sponsored six-day trek in Kenya to raise money for our work. The trek — full details on page 11 — will be an inspiring and unforgettable experience promising encounters (not too close!) with a multitude of wild animals including zebras, gazelles and giraffes, as well as extinct volcanoes, canyons and dramatic scenery.

Partnerships worldwide

Throughout this newsletter you'll read about WOMANKIND'S partners. We don't have a one-size-fits-all model of development, but fund and support organisations in their own communities. We support them to advocate for change at all levels — and our policy work is informed by the real challenges women face every day. The organisations vary in size, capacity and context — but we all share a commitment to ending discrimination and a belief that women, when given the opportunity, can be a powerful force for change.

Read all of WOMANKIND'S latest news, and find out more about our work and our overseas partners on our website www.womankind.org.uk. Make sure you receive our regular e-bulletin: e-mail ebulletin@womankind.org.uk or call Gavin on 0207 549 0380

news and views

Egypt bans FGM

WOMANKIND and its Egyptian partners are celebrating a victory in the battle to eradicate female genital mutilation.

The public outrage in Egypt following the tragic death of a girl undergoing FGM forced the government to finally close a legal loophole. The announcement on 29 June came hot on the heels of WOMANKIND partner ECWR's (Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights) demand for criminalisation following the death of 12-year-old Bodor Ahmed Shaker on the operating table of a private clinic. 'Female circumcision is banned by law and by all medical regulations,' the Health Minister Hatem al-Gabali said. 'Every doctor and member of the medical profession, in public or private establishments, is banned from performing the procedure.'

'Female circumcision is banned by law and by all medical regulations.'

● **Najia finds place in The Sun**

WOMANKIND and Najia Haneefi — the AWEC president who stayed to work for women under the Taliban — have just featured in a double-page spread in The Sun. The article, read by up to 3 million people, includes chilling statistics about life in Afghanistan today and, in an interview with Najia, describes her as 'dedicated to improving literacy, business training and counselling for women.' Read it in full — and the follow-up web discussions — by following the links at www.womankind.org.uk



No religious case for FGM

WOMANKIND has launched a powerful new 10-minute film and report in which Islamic and Christian leaders demolish the myth that female genital mutilation (FGM) is rooted in religious teachings. The film and report will help speed up change: as well as the high-profile leaders, the film features footage from Sudan, Somalia, Somaliland, Ethiopia and Kenya — depicting the impact of undergoing this life-threatening practice. To read the report — which includes WOMANKIND's practical strategies — go to www.womankind.org.uk

It's my party...

Four months after elections in Albania, WOMANKIND partners Albanian Centre for Population and Development (ACPD) and the Independent Forum for Albanian Women (IFAW) are still waiting for the official results.

Party leaders attempted to justify the lack of women candidates by stating that women cannot cope with tough electoral campaigns. On the other hand, a number of women did balk at standing because of the aggressiveness of male politicians. WOMANKIND partners have been training women and young girls on the structure and functioning of a party, the organisation of the electoral campaign, and debating policies.

'Women cannot cope with tough electoral campaigns'

Visit www.womankind.org.uk to read the latest blogs from Sue Turrell and Brita Fernandez-Schmidt. Sue describes how our partners in Zimbabwe are battling for women's rights in impossible circumstances, while Brita argues that aid-delivery mechanisms are failing those who need this help most.

'Whether one loves it or loathes it, everyone should be talking about it.' Women in Zimbabwe are hungry for change – and two new campaigns supported by WOMANKIND are already making waves.



campaigning

in Zimba

Zimbabwe year zero

It's only July but, for WOMANKIND's partner Musasa, 2007 has already been a phenomenal year.

In February the Domestic Violence and Prevention Act came into force – after years of lobbying at last they have the back-up of the law. Musasa is launching a major campaign to reach Zimbabwean women hungry for change, as rising rates of HIV and AIDS are fuelled by sexual violence. And on 28 June they launched the 'Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence' campaign. The deeply entrenched attitudes towards domestic violence, that mean it is tolerated, even expected, will be challenged nationwide.

Campaigners will emphasise the magnitude of the problem in Zimbabwe, make women aware of how the new Act works for them, challenge stereotypes and myths, and call on communities – particularly in rural areas – to put in place simple, workable strategies. For example, the village headman or Chief should respond appropriately to cases brought before him – ensuring that Community Courts treat them according to the law rather than referring them back to families to arbitrate themselves. Musasa is already reporting that men who abuse women now experience disapproval from the community. More and more women are coming forward to speak out about the violence they experience – the Act gives them the confidence that they do not need to suffer in silence. Zimbabwe's new act covers all forms of domestic violence – from refusing to stump up housekeeping money to beatings and murder. They are now defined as part of a continuum of abuse.

Impact of new DV law

All police stations have to have a section dealing with domestic violence – and officers take 'all reasonable steps' to bring a person suspected of committing (or threatening to commit) an act of domestic violence before a magistrate or, in villages, the traditional Chief within 48 hours. In addition, violent acts can be reported by others if those involved are too scared or vulnerable.

Accurate targeting

Campaigns can only work if targeted at the right people, using the right methods. Musasa is providing straightforward information to key institutions such as health institutions, churches, schools and government agencies. Then they will greatly increase their 'reach' by training women as peer educators, counsellors and campaigners within their communities – and Z-Tolerance taskforces will co-ordinate local activities. The second phase of the campaign covers law enforcement and the criminal justice system. Musasa will train the police in understanding the new law and what it means in terms of making practical improvements to the service they offer.



WiPSU (Women in Politics Support Unit) has launched a major '50:50' campaign, calling for 50 per cent women in politics. Supported by WOMANKIND, their interventions have already led to a significant increase in women's representation in local and parliamentary government, with the number of female MPs rising from 16 to 26 (out of a total of 150) in the March 2005 elections. WOMANKIND's three Zimbabwean partners are gearing up for the country's elections in early 2008.

bwe

'We thank Musasa for empowering our communities and us. We now do not tolerate any kind of violence towards women and children'

Alfred Shumba, Taskforce member, Mandava Ward

There'll also be road shows and an onslaught on the media with ads on websites and in newspapers. Radio shows will feature jingles and Musasa will take part in live discussions.

Standing together

A campaign this ambitious requires strong partnerships. Along with WOMANKIND, Musasa will be collaborating with another WOMANKIND partner, the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA), legal

centres, AIDS organisations, and the relevant government ministries. Musasa is confident of the campaign's success: 'It will give a clear message that this issue affects everyone – whether one loves the campaign or loathes it, everyone should be talking about it. We want to break the silence, have more women going to the police – and more abusers prosecuted.

'Zimbabweans can't continue to tolerate this unacceptable violence against women.'



Loveness Chiruka has spearheaded Musasa's counselling work, and is rolling out the Zero Tolerance campaign activities.

Backstory

'Our bus fares have gone up 300% since last week...some of the buses refused to operate and it took us two extra hours to get to work.'

WOMANKIND's partners are working in extreme circumstances. Life expectancy for a woman is 34 (37 for men) – while the economy has collapsed. Escalating costs have impacted hugely on women's groups' ability to maintain salaries in line with inflation (currently over 3500 per cent) – Musasa lost seven key Programme staff and counsellors in 2006. With your help, WOMANKIND is responding with long-term funding and support.

Teenchat is a big hit with young people in South Africa. But it's not some premium-rate phonenumber — as **Fairouz Nagia-Luddy** explains, it's an innovative way of engaging them in preventing violence.

touching hearts and minds

Every Tuesday afternoon, the voices of teenagers Jean-Pierre, Faith, Clinton, and their friends can be heard over the airwaves of Radio West Coast in an innovative scheme run by WOMANKIND and GAP. Eight months in, this programme for young people by young people is already gaining a reputation for lively debate — and providing sound advice — on the big issues affecting their age-group.

The GAP approach

Every six hours a South African woman is killed by her intimate partner. Two hours north-west of Cape Town, in the isolated area of Saldanah Bay, WOMANKIND and the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) are pioneering an innovative approach to the prevention of domestic violence. Working with all members of the community, they raise awareness of — and change attitudes towards — violence against women.

Getting the format right has been crucial. Each programme features a group of expert panellists who discuss violence, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, date rape and other pressing concerns. But there's always a lively balance of entertainment, music and awareness-raising. For Heritage Day — when the Rainbow Nation celebrates its rich and varied heritage — the team's show focused on history, identity and culture. During the 2006 '16 Days of Activism', in which campaigners around the world call for the end of violence against women, they joined up with another WOMANKIND partner, Rape Crisis Cape Town, to record part of their show on the Rape Crisis tour bus.

Breaking the silence

When GAP started work in Saldanha Bay, their '*Mabuphele*' ('That's Enough!') campaign posters were torn down overnight. Now, community and neighbourhood-watch groups — as well as the youth groups — run DV campaigns.

This initiative also goes way beyond broadcasting. The school-students explore the prevalence of, reasons for

Fairouz is GAP's Domestic Violence Project Co-ordinator. Her energy and excellent links with young people in the Saldanha Bay community ensured the immediate success of the Teenchat radio initiative

Making waves

Emily Brown, WOMANKIND's South Africa Programme Manager, is just back from seeing the Teenchat team in action. She met Ganton, Clinton, John-Pierre, Randall and Faith:

'They were so enthusiastic and were really enjoying themselves – and the attention they now get at school!

'Given that they'd only been getting training and doing the show for a few months they'd amassed an

impressive range of technical and communications skills. They were full of praise for the support they'd had from Radio West Coast and GAP.

'They told me about one of their recent shows, done as a direct response to a caller's comment that girls shouldn't be allowed to wear short skirts, as it meant she wanted sexual attention.

'I suggested that they invite Rape Crisis Cape Town on to the programme to talk about their recent "Shabeen-to-shabeen" walk. Young women in short skirts went from bar to bar with a clear message for the clients: we are free to wear what we want.

'Faith and her school-friends weren't just shown the studio equipment and told to get on with it. GAP gave them training in production and presenting – plus those all-important backroom skills in budgeting and marketing. Crucially, they've also learned how to report on a whole range of issues without falling back on gender stereotypes.'

Radio on

Across the UK police forces use local radio to encourage women to stop pretending about how they got those bruises – and to come forward and get help.

In developing countries radio is at the forefront of efforts to spread accurate information about HIV and AIDS (Southern Africa) or simple diarrhoea treatments (Afghanistan) – or, through soap operas and debates, to make women and girls aware that they don't have to put up with abuse.

and devastating impact of domestic violence. Then, like the young people WOMANKIND works with in Zimbabwe and the UK, many go on to become effective advocates for change. All GAP's findings indicate that the West Coast communities they've worked with now have a much clearer grasp of the severity and impact of VAW. In February 2006, GAP's DV team received an Award of Excellence from the Mayor of Saldanha Bay in recognition of breaking the silence around domestic violence.

Estelle, a hair-salon owner in Vredenburg, says, 'Many women are silent about the abuse because they think that it is their fault. GAP makes domestic violence visible and women are encouraged to speak out. I've referred many women to speak to the GAP staff or community members they've trained.'

After the Tuesday show, many of these young programme-makers will be returning to homes and communities that are struggling to cope with inequality, conflict and, very often, violence. Any opportunity to convince this generation that people's attitudes and destructive behaviour can be changed must be seized on. They require and deserve the support of their communities – and GAP and WOMANKIND – to stay motivated and keep providing consistent, up-to-date guidance.

'GAP makes domestic violence visible – women are encouraged to speak out'



Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. WOMANKIND and its partners are confronting endemic violence – experienced by over 60 per cent of women with partners – and supporting women to stand up for their rights.

“We lose the fear to speak”

Backstory

Indigenous women in Bolivia’s rural areas and shanty towns suffer serious hardship. The culture of machismo combines with deeply ingrained prejudices to create substantial discrimination and violence, severely restricting women’s progress towards full, active participation within their families, their communities and their country.

Juana lives in a poor area of La Paz where she looks after her daughters Luisa and Alma: ‘Now I know my rights and I fight for them. I’ve learned to value myself more, to stand up for myself – and to reduce the violence at home.’ Leonor, from the city’s outskirts says: ‘I am learning the value of a human being; nobody can humiliate us, not even our partners, or the people who surround us.’

Juana and Leonor are describing the changes wrought in their lives by a programme WOMANKIND started in 2006 with five local, partner organisations. With training and support women become active and decisive within family and community – and learn to address the pervasive violence against women.

A central space

Preconceptions about what goes on at a Mother’s Centre evaporate when you visit one supported by Fundacion La Paz (FLP) or CEPROSI. Women of all ages enthusiastically take part in training courses while others are finding out what their rights are in relation

to domestic violence, health, and political participation. They make things to sell, discuss local concerns and, through representatives, advocate for change.

WOMANKIND’s Susana Klien visited in March: ‘Women told me that the centres have become extremely valuable spaces. They share experiences and grow in confidence, learning new things – everything from knitting to human rights. Most importantly, they realise they are not alone, and are agents of change.’ Maria Teresa, who comes regularly to a CEPROSI centre, said: ‘They teach us to value ourselves; solidarity; how we must choose our representatives, how to be leaders.’ Elizabeth added: ‘Above all, CEPROSI supports women. The important thing is to come to the centre and to lose the fear to speak.’

Leading the way

One of the highlights of Susana’s visit was being invited to the graduation ceremony for the 196 women from 46 Mother’s Centres who’d completed a FLP Leadership course (pictured above). These fledgling leaders gained an understanding of political processes and are now equipped to advocate for change. And everyone who completes the Leadership course trains other women. Susana was moved: ‘The women felt an enormous sense of pride in their achievement. For many it was the first recognition they’d had in their lives.’

Roberta lives with her husband and son, Julio. Unlike many of the other women she got to finish high school – but she is just as enthusiastic about what she gained from the FLP training: ‘Most of all it helped me build my self-esteem – in getting a certificate I feel there’s proper recognition of what we’ve learned, like our rights...’

Change starts with one person taking a small brave step. Najia Haneefi, Director of WOMANKIND partner AWEC, describes the challenges facing the women of Afghanistan – and why she's forging a better future.



standing behind them

█ If the Taliban regained power in Afghanistan women would again be banned from participating in politics. The recent murders of women journalists and schoolgirls have affected us. Movements are restricted and families are worried to let their daughters go to school. Even my family wants me home before dark. But we've got used to living like this for 30 years. Reconstruction is a huge challenge. Organisations like AWEC (Afghan Women's Education Center) have to support women struggling with poverty and hunger – but also create sustainable structures for their future. WOMANKIND's support for peace education means women can play a part in conflict resolution and, therefore, the country's development. In the last two years, aid donors have paid less attention to projects helping Afghan women generate income, so although AWEC manages to work with them, if the money was better targeted, organisations could reach more women in remote areas. International aid pledges to Afghanistan have risen to more than \$10.5bn (£5.9bn), but a huge proportion has gone on the

Najia (middle) with colleague Aleena and Asifa Nazir, Director of another WOMANKIND partner organisation, Afghan Women's Network.

administration costs of international partners, companies and NGOs – and on experts' salaries. It's recognised as a big crisis, but no one is responding.

Shoulder to shoulder

Women and men in the UK can help Afghanistan women by supporting our push for democracy and equal rights – and pressing your government to do the same. Our most successful recent campaign was to block the re-establishment of the Department of Vice and Virtue (see box opposite) – and a new marriage contract will soon be passed by the Supreme Court.

The future

The biggest threats to Afghanistan are the growth of fundamentalism, and the lack of strong government and rule of law. The government must regain the confidence of the people. Severe human-rights violations continue, particularly for women – in the name of culture and religion. But I still have great hopes for Afghanistan! A big literacy campaign run by government and NGOs would mean that the majority of women who are now illiterate could fight for their rights and the rights of the next generation.

We must be able to differentiate between our traditional practices and Islamic values, and make sure that laws are reformed based on human-rights values – and proper implementation mechanisms set up. Cultural and ethnic values must be separated from religious values. This can be done, if we raise people's awareness and lobby hard.

The second step is to lobby for continued, affirmative action, specifically for a 50 per cent quota of women in parliament. We need institutions and protection mechanisms such as more female police officers and courts dealing with violence against women. █

Refusing to be cowed

Najia was a leading campaigner against last year's reintroduction of the Ministry of Vice and Virtue. Between 1996 and 2001 its religious police ruthlessly enforced restrictions through public beatings and imprisonment. Women were publicly beaten for wearing white shoes; using lipstick; or going outside unaccompanied by a close male relative. They were banned from educating their daughters in home-based schools as well as working or begging, leaving thousands of widows with no means of supporting their families.

making our voices heard

The CSW is the global body that makes policy decisions about women's rights. But what does that mean in practice?

At the beginning of March, top government officials gathered for the 51st annual meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). So did over a thousand representatives from women's organisations, including WOMANKIND and its partners from Ghana, Zimbabwe, Peru, Bolivia and South Africa — there to remind the governments of commitments on gender equality — and to push for further action.

Challenging the mainstream

Can women from small grassroots organisations really get heard? Yes, we're talking about real impact — over the years activists have secured significant commitments, set out in UN agreements and instruments; and they have challenged and broadened traditionally defined notions of human rights — for example, in the 1990s they highlighted how violence against women was often left out of 'mainstream' human-rights considerations.

But, increasingly, this vital work is threatened by a powerful group of right-wing organisations.

Linked with conservative governments, they oppose

What is the CSW?

The UN Commission on the Status of Women is the main global policymaking body on gender equality and women's rights. Established in 1946, it sets global standards, evaluates progress, identifies challenges — and sets out concrete measures and policies to advance women's rights and gender equality. It meets for 10 days each Spring. Forty-five Member States of the UN serve as members at any one time.

'I will hold the Ministry accountable'

Every year WOMANKIND ensures different partners participate at CSW.

Unlike the government bureaucrats, they really understand how laws and policies — or the lack of them — affect ordinary women.

Liana Ascama heads up Calandria's civil-participation network in San Martin, Peru. 'Sexist, "macho" attitudes are even worse in these rural areas,' she says, 'but many of the women we work with are now ready to take on political roles.'

For Liana, CSW was 'very intense, but a great opportunity. I have learned so much about how the UN works, and how we can bring about change by influencing policymakers. 'I plan to use the recommendations to hold our Ministry of Development accountable for its commitments to women. Now I can say that "I was there" — more powerful than reading the information on the internet!'



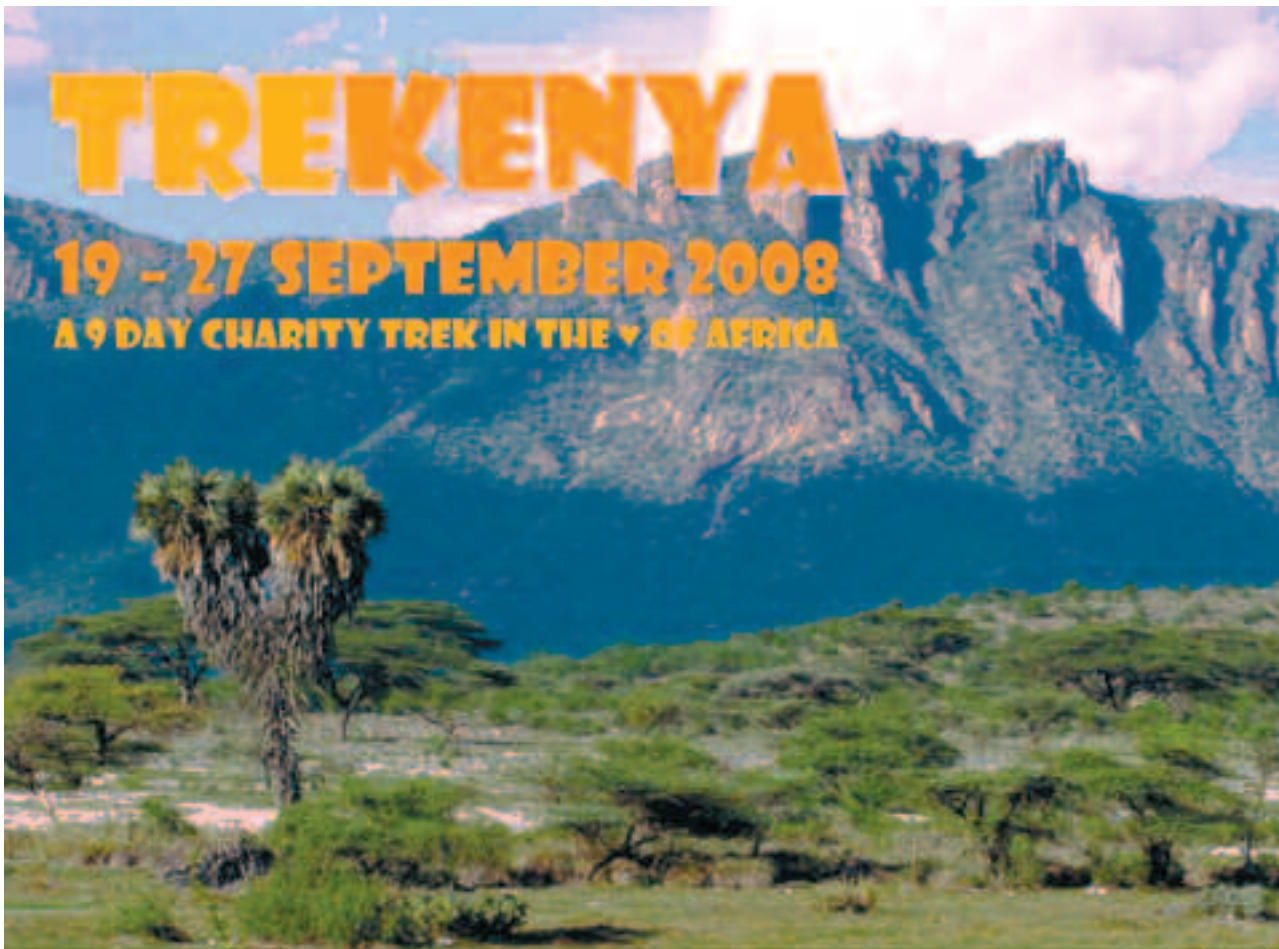
Cristina from Bolivian partner FLP and Liana at CSW 2007.

sexual and reproductive rights and freedoms for women and girls. While they were not successful at the 2007 CSW it is important that we do not cede this important and hard-won political space in future. Organisations like WOMANKIND have a key role to play in pushing governments to implement women and girls' human rights in all areas. We can also ensure that the voices of women from the South are heard.

TREKENYA

19 - 27 SEPTEMBER 2008

A 9 DAY CHARITY TREK IN THE ♥ OF AFRICA



WELCOME TO AFRICA...

Kenya is the heart of African safari country, boasting the most diverse collection of wild animals on the continent. As part of the challenge you will be circumnavigating Mount Longonot's crater rim, this is an extinct volcano at an altitude of 2,600m. Sign up for only £250 and commit to raise minimum sponsorship and you're one step closer to the experience of a lifetime...

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COMING TOGETHER TO CHANGE LIVES

This is a joint event organised by ChildHope (Charity No. 328434), WOMANKIND Worldwide (Charity No. 328200) and Interact Worldwide (Charity No. 1001688)