CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE

TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

TREK TRANSYLVANIA ROMANIA

Tue 18 Aug - Sun 23 Aug 2015

In aid of your choice of charity

18 Aug - 23 Aug 2015

6 DAYS | ROMANIA | CHALLENGING

Since ancient times, the territory of today's Romania has been a borderland of European civilization, strongly influencing its culture and its people who are an exotic mix of Oriental, Slavic and Occidental. Trekking through small mountain villages, we will get to know the locals and their culture, while tackling the rugged wilderness and the region's impressive mountain ranges. The itinerary also travels out to the King's Rock National Park, which was home to the Carpathian Large Carnivore Project, a conservation programme to protect and monitor the local populations of wolves, lynx and bears. And, of course, you cannot leave Transylvania without the obligatory visit to the castle of Romania's most famous son, Count Dracula.

- Traverse the Transylvanian Alps on this 60km trek through Romania
- Explore Count Dracula's eerie castle
- Climb over 2,200 metres above sea level
- Stay at a local guesthouse
- Visit the King's Rock National Park, home to wolves, lynx and bears

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 *Tue 18 Aug*

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International departure from London

A local Charity Challenge rep will meet you on arrival in Bucharest for the three-hour bus transfer to the medieval city of Brasov. Take in the impressive Romanian countryside as you head for the village of Bran where you will check into your pension (guesthouse), your base for the challenge, for a full briefing and have your first team dinner. (D)

Accommodation: Local pension

DAY 2 *Wed 19 Aug*

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Trek in Moieciu pastoral area (approx. 14km/5-7hrs)

Let's trek! You'll start the day with a short bus transfer to the Bran-Rucar Corridor, nestled in the hilly region between Bucegi and Piatra Craiului Massifs. The route takes in some of Romania's richest pastoral areas, dotted with shepherds' huts. The uninterrupted views of the most spectacular massifs in the Southern Carpathians will spur you on before returning by bus to your pension for dinner. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Local pension.

DAY 3 *Thu 20 Aug*

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Bucegi Massif (approx. 17km/8-9hrs)

Expect to be challenged as you head towards the western wall of the Bucegi massif. Today's route begins with a bus transfer to picturesque Gutanu, as you climb a steep ridge of more than 2,000m. It's onwards and upwards to the trek's highest peak – Varful Batrana (2,189m). After a picnic, the route descends from Strunga Saddle to the village of Moieciu de Sus before heading back by bus for the short transfer to your accommodation once more and a well-earned dinner! (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Local pension

DAY 4 *Fri 21 Aug*

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Dracula's Castle (approx. 14km/4-5hrs)

Originally built in the 14th century, Dracula's Bran Castle was renovated in the 19th Century by the Romanian royal family. From here you'll trek towards Magura, stopping for a picnic lunch on a ridge which overlooks the pretty village. The trek descends through meadows, grazing lands and pine forests. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Local pension

DAY 5 *Sat 22 Aug*

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Piatra Craiului National Park (approx. 18km/7-8hrs)

After another short bus transfer, this morning you will set off from the foot of King's Rock Mountain in Piatra Craiului National Park for the final day. The route is tough and there are some fixed cables to assist you in certain places. Climbing kit and technical training are not required, however you must be fit and mentally prepared. The highest peak is Piatra Mica (1,800m), where you will rest. A steep descent leads to Zanoaga Meadow and Zarnesti Gorges, and to your bus to transfer you back to Bran.
Once you've completed your incredible challenge, you will have time to freshen up ahead of your celebratory dinner where you can mark your amazing achievements! (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Local pension

DAY 6 *Sun 23 Aug*
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Depart for UK

Proud of having conquered the Transylvanian Alps, you'll be transferred back to Bucharest for lunch (time permitting) and then board your flight back to the UK. Saying goodbye to new found friends and trekking partners will be tough, so be sure to exchange contact details before parting ways. (B)

NB

B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to the location of your accommodation, unusual weather patterns, wildlife movements, the strength of the group, and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary; however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say.

HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.
The costs below are per person.

SELF FUNDER

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Pay a registration fee of £155.00 when you book
Then a balance of £978.00
(8 weeks before your challenge)
Raise as much as you can for your charity.

MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £155.00 when you book
Raise a minimum of £1995.00 for your charity.

FLEXI

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Registration fee of £155.00 when you book
Then £155.00 towards challenge costs
(8 weeks before your challenge)
Raise a minimum of £1675.00 for your charity.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Public liability insurance
- Discount on personal equipment from The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor and Nomad Travel Stores
- Access to "ask the expert" re your kit requirements
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- Warm up exercise routines
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule
- Fitness training notes
- Sponsorship forms (online and hard copy)
- Template press release
- A-Z of fundraising ideas
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, fact file, Q&As, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Fundraising advice

On your challenge

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- International flights to and from the UK (including all known UK air taxes, and fuel surcharges, at the time of costing)
- Internal road and air transfers as per the itinerary
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Drinking water on challenge days
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- All ground staff including English speaking guide, drivers, cooks, and porters
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- Activity equipment such as bikes, tents and rafts as per the challenge activity
- A £100 donation to your charity under the self funder option (unless stated otherwise)
- A donation to a community project in one of the countries in which we operate
- A contribution towards funding the reduction of carbon emissions through Climate Care's portfolio of award winning projects
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt
- All challenge management before, during and post event

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)
- Travel Insurance (you can buy at time of booking or in your Account Area, or provide your own policy details)
- Clothing and equipment listed on your Kit List

On your challenge

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- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)
- Personal spending money
- Any other specific items listed as not included in your Trip Notes

THE DETAILS

Fundraising deadlines	You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 10 weeks before departure (by 09/06/2015), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 20/09/2015). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.
Prices include all known air taxes	We include ALL known air taxes (including fuel) at the time of costing. Many companies do not include air taxes at all, and clients are therefore hit with a surcharge of three or four hundreds of pounds just before departure. Our aim is to provide you with transparent pricing and clear instructions as to what is included in our prices and if applicable what isn't.
Typical group size	The typical group size is 12 - 16 participants
Small group supplement	The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 12 participants. We can run this trip with 8-11 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £75. This is payable by your charity if you book under the Minimum Sponsorship or Flexi options, and by yourself if you choose the Self Funder option. We will notify you 12 weeks before departure if this is necessary.

Optional extras	Business class upgrades* Travel insurance Single room supplements* Extensions at end of trip* Trek/bike training weekends* (*subject to availability)
Travel insurance	Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenge is our main concern, which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy, which covers you for the adventurous nature of your challenge, the activities you are undertaking, and the altitudes. We have chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine, who offer cover for an extensive number of adventurous activities. Cover is available directly from Campbell Irvine for most European residents and includes cover for emergency medical and repatriation and for your cancellation or curtailment of the challenge. Full details including costs may be found at https://www.campbellirvine.com/charitychallenge.

Level of Difficulty

The Trek Transylvania is graded as "challenging" that will test you both mentally and physically. You should not undertake this challenge without significant training.

You can tell your supporters that on your Trek Transylvania you will be:

- Trekking for around 5-8 hours per day.
- Reaching peaks of 2,200m.
- Conquering the Transylvanian Alps.

Typical day

You will wake early in time for breakfast and then make a packed lunch for the day ahead. Hiking will start around 0830hrs. The number of hours spent hiking will depend on the weather conditions (which are extremely unpredictable) and the size and ability of the group. There will be plenty of refreshment stops, and visits to places of natural beauty and interest. In the evening you will arrive at pensions/chalet where you will have dinner.

Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of its participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. In a nutshell, Our Challenge Safe brand formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the activity itself. Your welfare is paramount!

In terms of your Trek Transylvania, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- The altitude in the Transylvanian Alps
- Varied terrain including steep and rocky ascents and descents

Responsible Tourism

At Charity Challenge we are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism, and work closely with bodies such as the International Porter Protection Group and Climate Care to ensure that our challenges benefit the local environments and communities in which they take place. We ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly, and following local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect, we aim to limit our impact on the natural environment. In addition to taking these practical steps to ensure that our challenges are sustainable, we also make a contribution each year to a number of local community projects, so as to give something back directly to the communities that we visit. Since 2000 we have donated almost £200,000 to such projects, supporting a range of initiatives, including schooling for children in Africa, shelter for street children in Brazil, and Orang-utan conservation in Indonesia. We recommend that any gifts brought over for children are given to the UK challenge leader and distributed where needed by them and our local Ground Agent. If you wish to do more, you should consider buying drinks, postcards and souvenirs from the local vendors. For many, it is their sole source of income. For more information, please visit our Responsible Tourism pages, where you will be able to view a list of the projects that we currently support.

Flights

You will be flying from London to Bucharest. The flight will take approx 3 hours. The airline and routing will be confirmed two months prior to departure. Your flight tickets will be e-mailed to you before departure.

If you choose to book your own flights you must confirm with the Charity Challenge office before paying otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact flights@charitychallenge.com for further assistance).

Visa

A full passport is required with six months to run from the end of the challenge, but no visa is necessary for British Citizens.

Insurance

Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenges is our main concern which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy that will cover you for the adventurous nature of your challenge. We have chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine, who offer cover for an extensive number of adventurous activities. Cover is available directly from Campbell Irvine for most European residents and includes cover for emergency medical and repatriation and for your cancellation or curtailment of the challenge. Full details including costs may be found by clicking here.

For more general travel insurance questions, please refer to our main FAQ's page.

Vaccinations & Medicines

Vaccinations
For up to date vaccination information please check the Travel Health Pro page: https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/185/romania#Vaccine_recommendations

Charity Challenge team are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your GP or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements. Your GP may ask questions about the specific locations that you are visiting, and as such it may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

Medication

- Carry medicines (including those bought over the counter) in their correctly labelled original packaging, as issued by the pharmacist. These should be carried in your hand luggage.
- Consider packing a spare supply of medication in the hold luggage in case of loss of hand luggage
- A letter from the prescriber detailing the medicines with the generic names for the medications can be helpful for border control checks, and in case medicines have to be replaced or medical help is required
- Carry a note from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery for controlled substances and injection medications

- Take out an appropriate level of travel health insurance including repatriation and specific cover for any pre-existing illnesses

N.B. Some medications are banned abroad so please check. You can find further information at https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/43/medicines-abroad

Climate & Terrain

Climate
Early mornings will feel chilly at first, but warm up considerably as soon as the sun rises. Whilst we have chosen the best seasons for trekking, rain and cloud, and even hail, cannot be ruled out. Night skies are usually clear and starry. As soon as the sun sets, the temperature drops radically and may drop below zero degrees. On the mountain, you will be trekking in very clear air and will need strong UV protection in particular for your skin & eyes.

Terrain
The terrain will be varied throughout the trek, from high pastures to mountain ascents where cables have been added to help trekkers whilst scrambling.

Training

A good level of fitness is definitely required! Anyone who leads a fairly active and moderately healthy lifestyle should be OK "as long as they train regularly over a period of a few months" leading up to the challenge. Although this is a short European trek, don't be mistaken into thinking it is not challenging as it is! The days are long, and the terrain difficult, including some areas where cables have been added to help trekkers whilst scrambling. No climbing kit is needed nor technical training, however good physical condition and faith in your own strength are essential.

In your Charity Challenge account you will find more comprehensive Fitness Training Notes. You can also look to join one of our training weekends.

Challenge Training

If you would like to get a feel for our challenges ahead of your departure, why not consider booking on a 1 or 2 day UK Challenge?

We have a variety of challenges, covering all levels of difficulty, taking place in stunning National Parks across the UK that are led by highly qualified and experienced expedition and mountain leaders. These challenges will give you the perfect opportunity to monitor fitness levels, test out your kit, meet people in the great outdoors, share fundraising stories and gain valuable advice and support for the challenge ahead. We encourage participants to make use of our highly knowledgeable leaders and ask them any questions you may have about clothing and equipment, expedition health and wellbeing, trekking skills, walking techniques and teamwork!

We are offering all participants **50% off** the registration fee when you book on one of the UK challenges listed via the link below. Just use the code **TRAINING** when booking. T&C's – you must have an active booking on a challenge

to avail of this offer. Discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Find out more here

Luggage allowance & valuables

Try to keep luggage to an absolute minimum – details of what to pack are provided in your kit list. Your rucksack/holdall (suitcases are not appropriate) must not exceed the maximum weight limit of the airline you are flying with (usually 20kg, however do check this with the airline or contact our flights team if in doubt). During the challenge your bags will be transported by vehicle. You will not have to carry your main pack.

Whilst we will do everything to provide adequate safety for the group and security for your possessions, the general rule is that if you don't need it, don't bring it. This includes jewellery, necklaces, rings and even watches. Your passport and money should be kept on you at all times.

Leadership

We employ a number of first aid qualified challenge leaders, all of whom speak English. They will ultimately be responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

Group Size

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 11 people in order to run and a maximum of 16 people due to the wilderness environment in which the challenge takes place. We can run this trip with groups of 8 - 10 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £75. This is payable by your charity if you book under the minimum sponsorship or flexi options, and by yourself if you are a self-funder.

Clothing & Equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, waterproof, well-worn in boots will be indispensable, particularly coupled with some really good quality walking socks. You don't need a clean pair every day, but enough to make sure you have dry socks each morning. The benefits of a comfortable day sack cannot be underestimated, so make sure that you train with this. Other essentials are high quality gore-tex waterproof and windproof jackets and trousers, and technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. Walking poles are also recommended, as a preventative as well as for anyone with any pre-existing leg injuries or niggles. A full kit list for this challenge can be found here, once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor and Cycle Surgery.

Accommodation & Toilets

Accommodation
During the challenge, your accommodation will be in a tourist pension in twin rooms. If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with, please let Charity Challenge know in advance.

Toilets
You will have clean toilets and good washing facilities in all pensions. Toilet paper is provided; you should also bring your own supply for during the day whilst in the mountains. Please note, however, that any tissue paper used on the trail must be brought off the mountain and disposed of responsibly.

Do we need to take our own sleeping bags/mats?

Unless specified as a camping based trip, there is no need to bring sleeping bags or a mat. Please see Kit List notes.

Food & Drink

The food will be very filling and nutritious. Breakfast will consist of eggs, ham, cheese, jam or honey and tea/coffee. Lunches are picnics with meat, cheese, fresh vegetables and fruit, chocolate or cookies. Dinner will be three courses: soup followed by a main course and desert. Plenty of drinking water will be available to keep you hydrated. You may want to bring some extra snacks, such as tracker bars, nutrigrains, dried fruits etc. You can buy extra food or alcohol at the pensions/chalet if you wish. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies.

Money

Currency: Romanian Leu. For up to date currency exchange, go to www.xe.com.

Cash: There are ATMs available at the airport and in the local town.

Credit cards: ATMs are generally OK. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are the most widely accepted and may be used at cash points. In smaller towns, banks do not necessarily have cash points.

For travel around the country it is a good idea to carry cash. Street handicraft vendors prefer Romanian currency.

Spending money: You will not need a large amount of money during this trip. You can't always change your pounds into Romanian Leu (ROL) in the UK, you may have to change it upon arrival. Debit and Credit cards are widely accepted and there are ATMs in Bucharest airport and Bran. Approximately £100 should be sufficient but please take more if you plan to extend your stay or shop a lot!

Tips: Tipping is personal and at your sole discretion. You should only tip if you feel that you have received good service. We recommend approx. GBP£5 per participant per trekking day and this should be given to the challenge leader at the end of the challenge who will distribute it amongst the local support team. In bars and restaurants tips are very common and are about 10% of the total bill.

Phone and WiFi

You will have a good phone reception. On trekking days, there will be phone signal at some points.
In the pension you will be able to recharge any electrical equipment.

What happens if I fall ill, can't keep up or there is an emergency?

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's walking ability. This is allowed for. There will be a staff member at the back of the group at all times to ensure that you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace. If we find somebody is unable to walk at all, then we can transport him or her from one location to the next with the help of our staff. Throughout the challenge, back-up support will be close by.

"

A fantastic but tough challenge. A rewarding experience with fantastic scenery and made all the better for meeting such great friends along the way.

Wendy Hawthorn

"

This was an exhausting yet amazing challenge. Scenery was stunning, insight into the life of locals was fascinating and as a group we felt so proud of what we had achieved at the end of each day.

Lynne Brown

"

I had a fantastic time in Romania - the scenery was stunning and the people lovely.

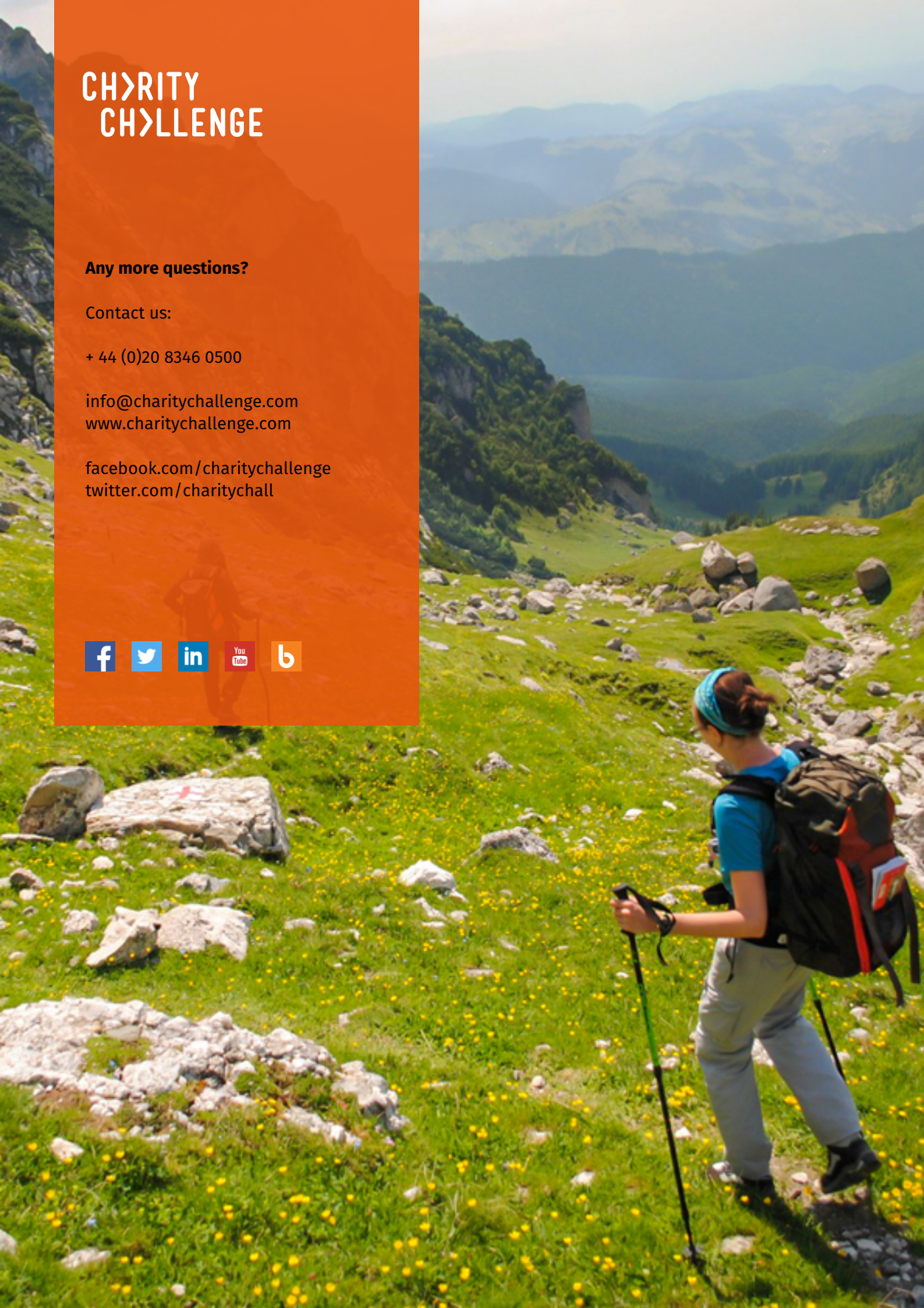
Rachael Gurney

CHARITY CHALLENGE

Any more questions?

Contact us:

+ 44 (0)20 8346 0500

info@charitychallenge.com
www.charitychallenge.com

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