CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE

TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

CYCLE BURMA (MYANMAR)
BURMA-MYANMAR

Fri 28 Sep - Sun 07 Oct 2018

In aid of your choice of charity

28 Sep - 07 Oct 2018

10 DAYS | BURMA-MYANMAR | CHALLENGING

Arguably South East Asia's best kept secret, Myanmar is a mystical blend of unique culture, regal history, jaw-dropping views and a magnificent temple-lined landscape. Our six day challenge sees us tackle approx 330kms of rural countryside, from the former royal capital Mandalay to Inle Lake. Pedalling through the itinerary, expect to soak up spectacular sunsets over the ancient city of Bagan and pass remote villages in untouched corners, before flying to Yangon to discover the Shwedagon Pagoda.

- Uncover the secrets of magical Myanmar
- Cycle over 330kms from Mandalay to Inle Lake
- Watch the sunset over the ancient city of Bagan
- Board a private boat for a scenic cruise to Bagan
- Have a go at haggling at Nyaung Oo Market

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 *Fri 28 Sep*

-

International departure from London

The day has arrived and it's finally time for the long-awaited departure to Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest city. Here we meet the rest of our team and the Charity Challenge representative, before saying goodbye to family and friends.

DAY 2 *Sat 29 Sep*

-

Arrive Mandalay

Touching down in Mandalay, the nerves turn to excitement as we disembark the flight and head for our bike fitting. Remember to bring any additional cycling gear you require (such as clip-in pedals and gel seats), as this is the best opportunity to adapt your bike for your comfort before setting off. We will spend the night in a hotel and enjoy our first team dinner together.

DAY 3 *Sun 30 Sep*

-

Mandalay to Monywa (approx 52km)

After breakfast you will transfer to the starting point for about 3 hours where your cycling challenge begins. The transfer will take you out of the city to avoid the busy traffic. You'll start your cycle on the paved road to Monywa for approx 28km as your first leg; en-route they will be time to stop and visit the Hindu-style Thanbodday Temple and Boditahtaung Pagoda.
After lunch at a local restaurant in Monywa, you'll cross the Chindwin River by boat and continue cycling to Pho Win Taung Cave famous for its carving and mural paintings dated between the 14th and 18th centuries for another 22 km; passing through several small farms and villages where you will have a glimpse of the Burmese way of life. After visiting the cave, return to Monywa by car or option to ride 32 km more to the jetty by riding on different dirt trail.

DAY 4 *Mon 01 Oct*

-

Monywa to Pakkoku to Bagan (approximately 62kms)

Now you have a feel of the roads and are a little more acclimatized to the heat, you will start from your hotel for an interesting 40K on off-road. Start your ride to head south along the Irrawaddy River bank in search of A Myint & A Neint villages where you can find a group of very ancient pagodas and local lifestyles of villagers. It's a lovely ride, rural and quiet by discovering the hidden temples decorated with mural painting and old monastery. After 40 km on dirt trail, continue cycling on paved road to a junction before Yezagyo where you will end your cycling.
Depending on time you may be able to rack up some more kms and cycle to Pakkoku, otherwise you'll be transferred to the boat and then to the elevated terrace to watch the sun set over temples Bagan.
(There is an option to cycle the further 47 km to Pakkoku today prior to boarding your private boat to Bagan. However, this will depend on the time remaining, and how well the group are doing. You certainly don't want to miss the sunset in Bagan, which is a truly spectacular)

DAY 5 *Tue 02 Oct*

-

Bagan to Mt Popa to Meiktila (approximately 55kms ride and two hour climb of Mt Popa)

This morning you will rise early for breakfast and then depart for your cycle from your hotel on a mix of back roads and tar roads to Mt Popa and Taung Kalat, a volcanic standing 1518 metres high. Today's cycle will involve a climb up to Mt Popa on the bike, but you will be rewarded by the incredible views.

Mt Popa has played an important role in Myanmar culture, religion and history since earliest times. Its shrine, located at the top of Taung Kalat, is dedicated to the worship of the 37 Nats, the Burmese ancient animist spirits. Learn about Nats and Nat-worship as you climb the 770 stairs to the top of the tower with your local guide. This will allow you to see impressive views over the Myingyan Plain from the top of the volcanic peak. After the hike, you will transfer on to Meiktila.

DAY 6 *Wed 03 Oct*

-

Meiktila to Kalaw (approximately 86kms)

Today your cycle takes you to the former British hill station of Kalaw, passing through pine forest and a much hillier route; gradients are getting tougher, and you will be thankful of your training! After an early start, you will enjoy your first 40 km on the flat before a hill for approximately 15 km, and another 46 km of undulating terrain thereafter. The slightly higher elevation up to 400 m today and a more testing hillier cycle than your previous days means that the air temperature will probably be cooler. Lunch will be at a local restaurant on the way. Then load your bike into the truck and shuttle to Kalaw. Kalaw is a charming little town with a mix of local and colonial-style houses. After checking in to your hotel you may wish to enjoy a stroll around town or simply relax at your hotel.

DAY 7 *Thu 04 Oct*

-

Kalaw to Nyaung Shwe (approximately 77kms)

Today you will make your way to Inle Lake starting with a great downhill ride to Aungban before you ride off road into the hills, the home of hill tribes once again. There is a stretch of rolling hills then climbs down to Indein when you see Inle Lake. On the way you will pass small villages, its huge monasteries and have opportunity to interact with local people. Reach Indein at the noon time. Lunch at local restaurant in Indein.
Indein is a Pa-Oh village which is known for its stupa-covered hill at Alaung Sitthu. Spend time exploring Indein on foot, making your way to the top of Alaung Sitthou where you can wander amid the weather-beaten stupas and enjoy magnificent views of the lake below. Proceed cycling to Nyaung Shwe along the western shore of Inle Lake with a stop at Kaung Dhine village and arriving to Nyaung Shwein the later afternoon. Nyaung Shwein is located north of Inle Lake, one of Asia's most beautiful inland waters.

DAY 8 *Fri 05 Oct*

-

Nyaung Shwe to Inle Lake (approximately 30kms)

Your final day's cycle will start along the lake and will be a short 30 km cycle to the finishing line in Nampan. You head first to the village of Mine Thauk, crossing over the town to the south. Take time to explore this village and its beautiful long wooden bridge. From there we head to Nampan Village where your cycling journey in Myanmar will end. Check out the local market (available according to time permitting) and you will board your private boat to visit Inle Lake and the beautiful sites along and in the lake.

Take an afternoon boat back before your well-deserved evening's celebratory meal.

DAY 9 *Sat 06 Oct*

-

Inle lake to Heho to Yangon sightseeing

Fly from Heho to Yangon for the final day of the trip. As the hard work is over we indulge in a sightseeing tour of the city, taking in the Shwedagon Pagoda, the country's most revered Buddhist temple. Built more than 2,500 years ago, this massive temple complex offers breath-taking views and the perfect finale before we transfer to the airport for the flight home.

DAY 10 *Sun 07 Oct*

-

Arrive UK

It's a poignant time as we arrive back in Britain, happy and proud of our achievements – though sad to say goodbye to new friends and cycling partners.

NB

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, 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 challenge 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	MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP	FLEXI
-	-	-
Pay a registration fee of £395.00 when you book *Then a balance of £1958.00 (8 weeks before your challenge)* *Raise as much as you can for your charity.*	*Registration fee of £395.00 when you book* *Raise a minimum of £3995.00 for your charity.*	*Registration fee of £395.00 when you book* *Then £395.00 towards challenge costs (8 weeks before your challenge)* *Raise a minimum of £3195.00 for your charity.*

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

-

- 12.5% off Cotswold Outdoor, Snow + Rock, and Runners Need
- Fundraising advice
- 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)

On your challenge

-

- 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
- All challenge management before, during and post event
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt
- A contribution towards funding the reduction of carbon emissions through Climate Care's portfolio of award winning projects
- A donation to a community project in one of the countries in which we operate

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

-

- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Visa
- 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

-

- 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 20/07/2018), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 04/11/2018). 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 16 - 20 participants
Small group supplement	The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 16 participants. We can run this trip with 10-15 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £95. 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	Trek/bike training weekends* Extensions at end of trip* Single room supplements* Travel insurance Business class upgrades* (*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 http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/charitychallenge.

Level of Difficulty

The Burma Cycle challenge is graded as “challenging”. This is the perfect challenge for participants who are of an adventurous spirit and an open mind, already have an interest in cycling and would like to train towards something that will test their endurance and stamina
You can tell your supporters that on your Burma Cycle Challenge you will be:

- Covering approximately 330km across 6 days of cycling
- Cycling for approximately 6-8 hours per day
- Tackling hills that reach approximately 20% gradient for short stretches
- Battling the heat and the dust. Your route is very exposed, and temperatures can reach the late 20s/early 30s
- Cycling on a mixture of tarmac and dirt roads

Money

Currency: The currency in Burma is the Kyat (pronounced Chat), but we recommend that you carry a mixture of Kyat and US Dollars, which are widely accepted in hotels and by currency exchange houses. However, please ensure that any bills are in good condition. For up to date currency exchange, go to www.xe.com.

Credit Cards: Credit cards will be used for emergencies, but are not widely accepted aside from in large hotels.

ATMs: ATMs are not widely available in Burma. You should carry small amounts of Kyat with you, and larger amounts of US Dollars which you can exchange.

How much to bring: All accommodation and meals are included within the price of the trip, as well as water during the days of your cycle. You will not need to carry a lot of money with you during the challenge, but you may have the opportunity to purchase drinks or snacks in the small local villages that you pass through on the way. The real shopping and spending opportunities come in Inle Lake, where there are lots of incredible artisanal products. We recommend carrying approximately £200 in a mixture of Kyat and US Dollars. Please get small denominations of dollars for exchanging.

Tipping: Tipping is at your sole discretion and all staff are paid a fair wage. However, tourism is a tipping culture, and Burmese guides will generally receive a tip at the end of a job well done. If you choose to tip, we would suggest an amount of approximately $75USD per person, which will be split across the team for your whole challenge. Your challenge leader may collect a small ‘kitty’ amount at the start of the trek, which will be distributed to all members of staff, hotels, boatmen and rest stops along the way.

Visa

UK citizens do require a visa to enter Burma, and we will provide you with information at 3 months prior to departure. There are two different methods of applying for a Burmese visa: either an e-visa, or the traditional paper form. This will be explained on our visa application advice. The visa costs approximately £14/£35 depending on the method of application. You will need at least 6 months validity on your passport after the end of the challenge.

Vaccinations

For up to date vaccination information please check the NHS 'Fit for Travel' website: http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx. Although the Charity Challenge team are travel professionals, they 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 in Burma, and as such it may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

Flights

You will be flying indirect from London Heathrow to Mandalay. The flying time is approx. 13-14 hours, with one stop. Your flight tickets will be issued to you upon departure at the airport. If you choose to book your own flights please confirm with the Charity Challenge office first, otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact flights@charitychallenge.com for further assistance). For more general flights questions, please refer to our main FAQs page.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have a suitable travel insurance policy whilst participating on the challenge. We have a special policy which covers among other things, medical (emergency, evacuation and repatriation) arrangements, cancellation and curtailment of the challenge, and more specifically for the adventurous activities undertaken on this challenge. If you have your own travel insurance policy, you must ensure that it provides at least the same level of cover as our recommended policy, including protecting the charity in the event of your cancellation 56 days or less prior to departure. If you choose not to purchase our recommended policy when you book we will send you a disclaimer which you should complete and return.

For more general travel insurance questions, please refer to our main FAQs page.

Group Size

Each group is intended to be 13 people minimum in order to run and maximum of approx. 20 people. We will be able to run this challenge for 8 to 12 people by charging a small group supplement of £75 which will be added to your final balance invoice (self funders) or charged to your charity (minimum sponsorship or flexi).

Leadership

There will be an English-speaking challenge leader who will be responsible for the logistics and co-ordination of your challenge. There will also be numerous support staff to assist them. The challenge leader will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

Climate

Burma has two distinct seasons – wet and dry. At all times, it's fairly hot. The wet season runs from May-September, with the dry season from October-April. We run our cycles mainly in September or January/February. September

may still be wet but it's hot and a refreshing time to cycle. Most of the rain is in a short sudden burst, with warm and sunny mornings. You can expect daily temperatures from 25 – 35 degrees. Like the UK, the weather is changeable, and these are rough guidelines.

Terrain

You will be cycling 330kms over 6 days, from 55kms to 90kms a day. You will be cycling between 6 -8 hours daily with 20% of your cycling being off road and 80% on tarmac roads (these roads are poorly maintained in many areas). Some areas are fairly mountainous with several ups and downs. As tourism is increasing in Burma you will encounter some traffic on the roads around you. If the group becomes too far stretched then we will regularly regroup you. Although the days cover long distances, there is plenty of time to stop for photos, to meet locals or to refresh with a cold drink. To avoid all your time on long stretches of tar road we will re-route you at some sections through off the beaten track terrain which will be trails used only by farmers to get to their farming land. These are incredible routes however please be aware that the terrain will be sandy and challenging compared to the roads.

Luggage allowance and valuables

The luggage allowance will depend on the airline we are using for your challenge, but in general it will be one piece of checked baggage at around 23kg. However, we suggest that for our Burma challenge you should only need around 15kg-17kg. If you don't need it, don't bring it, is a good rule. Carry your passport with you and make sure you have a photocopy of your documents (travel insurance etc.) in case they get lost or damaged.

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.

Typical day

This cycle has lots of early starts to beat the midday heat. You will rise between 5-6am, with breakfast between 6-7 and departure on the cycle around 7-8am. You will fill up your water bottles and get on the bikes, cycling for around 5 hours before lunch. You will have regular water breaks but you may wish to bring extra snacks and energy bars to keep your energy up. You will arrive at your accommodation in the mid-afternoon, and have the rest of the

day to relax, have dinner and rest. Specific hours of activity for each day are given in the itinerary.

Accommodation

You will be staying in hotels throughout the cycle. Most of these are good quality 3-star standard hotels, but in a couple of locations the quality and choice is much lower due to the non-touristy nature of the towns. The facilities in these hotels are much more basic and the quality is lower than elsewhere on the challenge. All rooms here are en-suite, so if you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with please ensure that you note this where appropriate when booking or email challenges@charitychallenge.com.

Food & Drink

Food in Burma is mainly South-East Asian fare, and delicious. For breakfasts you will have a mixture of Western and Asian fare, including eggs, pancakes, fruit, cake, fried rice, eggy bread etc. In the more basic hotels the breakfasts may be less plentiful and good quality than others. Lunch will be taken en route and could consist of a range of things including noodles, soup, avocados, sesame biscuits, fruit. Dinners will be a range of vegetarian and meat dishes, with noodles and rice. It is important that you eat as much as possible during the cycling phase in order to replace body salts lost due to increased perspiration, and you should bring snacks to keep yourself going while cycling, particularly when there is a big break between breakfast and lunch. The tap-water is not safe to drink. Bottled water will be provided during the cycling sections. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies.

Clothing and equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For your cycle challenge, padded cycling shorts and comfortable footwear are essential, and helmets are compulsory throughout. Training with your cycling shorts is definitely advised! You can bring equipment like clip-in pedals or a gel seat, if desired, in order to adapt your bike in country, and we would also recommend technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. A full kit list for this challenge can be found here. Once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire and Cotswold Outdoor.

Toilets

These range from very basic (the public toilets are squat toilets) to normal western standards in the hotels en route.

Phone and WiFi

In most of the hotels WiFi is advertised, although it is not often reliable or fast. Don't rely on having WiFi available every night, and when it is, some websites such as Facebook may be blocked. Phone signal during the challenge will be patchy, but sporadically available depending on your phone provider. In Burma, you can look forward to a

simpler way of living, technology-free!

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 Burma Cycle challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- The route is quite exposed, with almost no shade, and on sunny days the temperatures can soar. You should ideally be wearing sun cream, and hydrating constantly throughout the ride!
- The brakes on your bike will be the opposite way to normal. Be aware of this and ensure that you test them softly in order to become accustomed before starting the ride.
- You will be cycling on some dirt roads, but also tarmac roads that can have more car users. Remember that in Burma you will be cycling on the right, and always signal when turning.
- You will be flying internally from Heho to Yangon with a Burmese airline. We have had an external safety audit carried out on the available airlines, and we will only request those carriers that have fulfilled the audit checks.
- Smoke alarms are not a legal requirement in Burma, and as such some of the hotels we use do not have them in place. Your leader will explain the emergency fire procedures to you.

Emergencies

The event is not a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's cycling abilities. This is allowed for. We have a support vehicle following the group at all times, with staff members at the front and the back. In the event of an emergency, all guides and leaders are maintaining contact via radio, and their decision is final.

Training

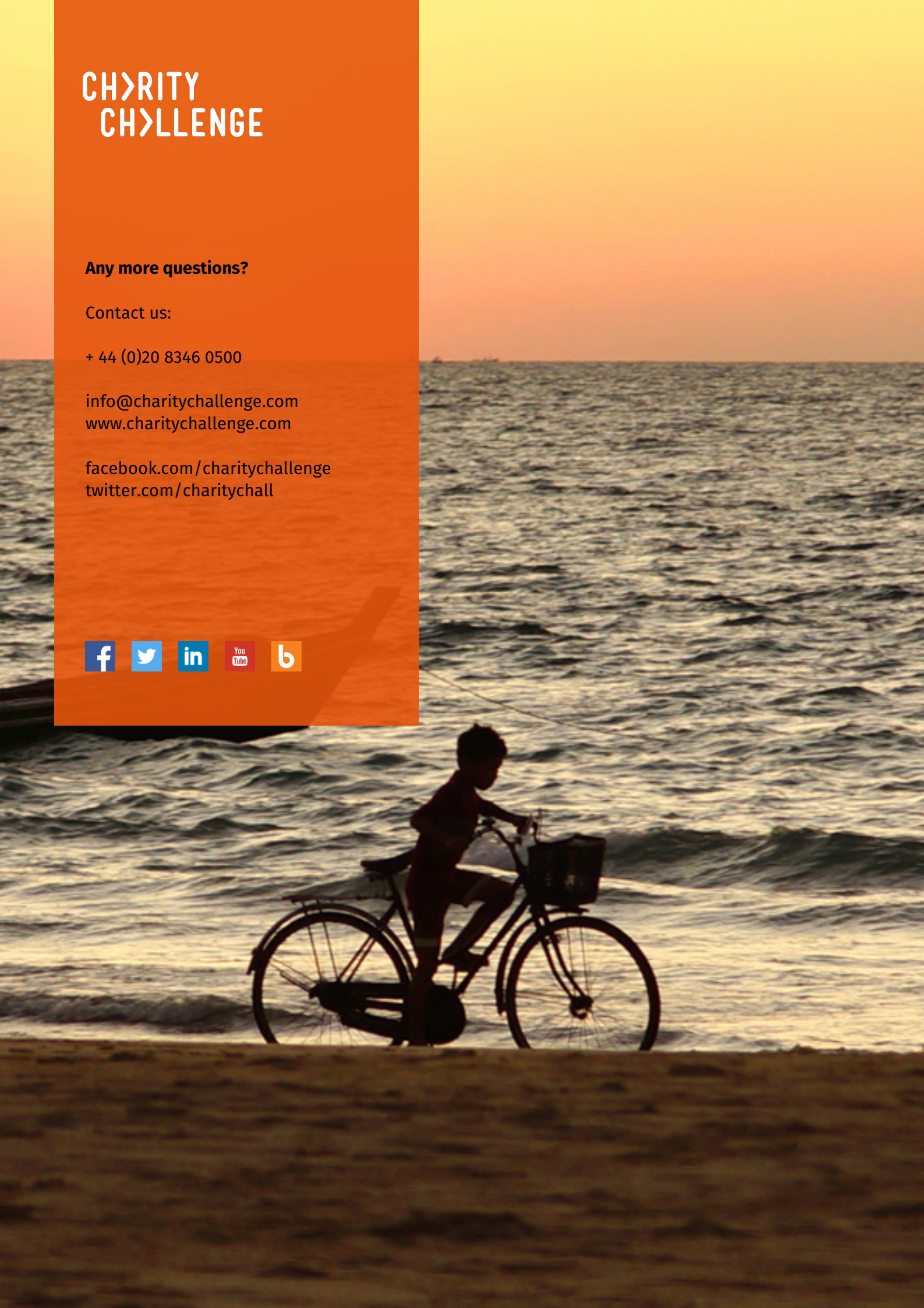
Training and fitness is definitely required. It is important that you work specifically on your stamina, leg and joint strength, and balance in order to get as much out of the challenge as possible. The cycle takes place in a hilly environment, so the best training advice is to get outdoors and do some long cycles in the hills around your area. Try and cycle for at least 2 consecutive days in the run-up to the challenge, and if you can do any more this will also really help. Although you will be able to put all of your equipment on the support vehicle during the challenge, it's a good idea to train while carrying a bag or panniers, in order to make it easier for yourself when you no longer need to carry the weight. For more information on training weekends click here

CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE

Any more questions?

Contact us:

+ 44 (0)20 8346 0500

info@charitychallenge.com
www.charitychallenge.com

facebook.com/charitychallenge
twitter.com/charitychall