CHARITY CHALLENGE

TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

DOG SLEDDING CHALLENGE SWEDEN

Fri 26 Jan - Thu 01 Feb 2024

In aid of your choice of charity

26 Jan - 01 Feb 2024

7 DAYS | SWEDEN | CHALLENGING

Take on a challenge that is completely different to everything else you can think of. A team of loyal huskies will lead you through the snow-covered forests and mountains of Swedish Lapland. Experience the silence of nature as you glide through this winter wonderland, while taking the opportunity to spot elk and reindeer and even see the spectacular Northern Lights. The adventure begins in Kiruna, Sweden's northernmost city, situated 145kms north of the Arctic Circle. The region is home to the Sami people, who will guide you through their land with their four-legged friends – soon to become your trusted companions. This is a rare opportunity to travel with animals through on a great, mountainous expedition.

- Drive a team of huskies almost 200kms of beautiful, frozen landscape
- Learn to manage and care for the dogs
- A chance to witness the wonder of the Northern Lights
- Set up campsites and muck in with the cooking
- Stay near traditional Sami villages and learn about their culture

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 *Fri 26 Jan*

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International departure from London

The day is finally here to meet the other participants for the flight to Kiruna in Sweden. After touch down, you will transfer to a hotel in the centre of town, where you will be met by the challenge leader for a full briefing. Dinner will be taken at the hotel where you spend the night. (D)

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 2 *Sat 27 Jan*

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Dog sledding (approx. 25km)

Off to the kennels, where you will be allotted a team of huskies and given a demonstration and safety briefing. After lunch it's off into the wilderness! This initial stint mushing enables the group to get comfortable with the sleds. At the end of the ride you will head back to the kennels, where you will be shown how to care for the dogs. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Sami tepee

DAY 3 *Sun 28 Jan*

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Dog sledding (approx. 35km)

When it comes to breakfast, it's animals first – so you'll prepare their food, before sorting out your own. The route is roughly 10km longer than yesterday and lunch will be taken along the way. Arriving at a wilderness cabin later in the day, this will be home for the next three nights. The facilities are basic, but you will have the luxury of a sauna! (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Wilderness cabin

DAY 4 *Mon 29 Jan*

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Dog sledding (approx. 45km)

After breakfast, mushing takes place on homemade trails untouched by anyone other than the native moose and reindeer. It's really back to nature at lunch time, as you'll have to make a fire with wood that is collected from the surrounding forest. Back at the wilderness cabin, an evening of activities awaits: chopping wood, fetching water, making the fire, heating water and preparing dinner. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Wilderness cabin

DAY 5 *Tue 30 Jan*

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Dog sledding (approx. 40km)

By now, you will know the ropes, preparing breakfast and packing up for the activity ahead. Today you will mush for around 40kms and weather permitting, have lunch on top of a hill overlooking Kiruna. Later it's back to the wilderness cabin, to settle the dogs, yourselves and maybe even enjoy a sauna. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Wilderness cabin

DAY 6 *Wed 31 Jan*

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Dog sledding (approx. 35km)

Rise and shine early to get organized before heading off. From here it's a challenging ride back to the kennels. Upon arrival, it is down to you to unharness the dogs, feed and settle them, before bidding them a final farewell. After lunch, you visit the world famous Ice Hotel in Jukkasjärvi and have a celebratory dinner in the homestead restaurant before carrying onwards to Kiruna. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 7 *Thu 01 Feb*

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Kiruna Airport for return flight to the UK

Be sure to exchange contact details with new-found friends and sledding partners over breakfast, before transferring to the airport for your flight home. (B)

NB

B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, wildlife movements, the strength of the group & dogs, 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 may 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 £525.00 when you book *Then a balance of £2448.00 (10 weeks before your challenge)* *Raise as much as you can for your charity.*	*Registration fee of £525.00 when you book* *Raise a minimum of £4995.00 for your charity.*	*Registration fee of £525.00 when you book* *Then £525.00 towards challenge costs (10 weeks before your challenge)* *Raise a minimum of £3925.00 for your charity.*

You will be invoiced for the air tax and fuel element contribution for your international flights, capped at £150.00, which is due 10 weeks before departure.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, visa information, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Sponsorship forms
- 12.5% off Cotswold Outdoor, Snow + Rock, and Runners Need
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Warm up exercise routines
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Public liability insurance
- Fundraising advice
- Fitness training notes
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule

On your challenge

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- UK-based 24-hour emergency support line
- Internal transfers (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Equipment as per the challenge activity
- An English speaking first aid trained challenge leader and full local support team
- 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
- Drinking water on challenge days
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- International flights to and from the UK, in economy class (see air tax exclusion below)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Any covid tests required for entry to any countries or places of interest on your challenge itinerary
- Visa (if required)
- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)

On your challenge

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- Contribution towards air taxes and fuel element (please see the section below on "Air Tax and Fuel Element Contribution")
- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)

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 12 weeks before departure (by 03/11/2023), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 29/02/2024). 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.
Air tax and fuel element contribution	The air taxes, and fuel element, that make up part of the flight costs can fluctuate significantly before a challenge takes place. As such, we exclude part of these taxes from the initial cost of the challenge and we will invoice you for it 10 weeks before departure. This applies to all participants on all payment options. For the challenge you are booked on this payment will be capped at £150 and we will absorb any amount above that. Please be sure to factor this cost into your budgeting for the challenge.
Typical group size	The typical group size is 8 - 9 participants

Small group supplement	The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 8 participants. We can run this trip with 4-7 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	Business class upgrades* Single room supplements* Extensions at end of trip* Travel insurance (*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 Dog Sledding challenge is graded as "Challenging". This is the perfect challenge for participants who are of an adventurous spirit and an open mind, but perhaps haven't taken on a strenuous challenge event previously and are hoping to put themselves out of their comfort zone! It is imperative you have a good level of fitness, so you can manage the sled without falling off. Whilst this does happen occasionally you will need to get up quickly without assistance, sometimes in fairly deep snow, and try and regain control of the sled. A BMI of under 30 (preferably under 25), is appropriate for this trip due to the nature of the physical demands on yourself and the dogs.

You can tell your supporters that on your Dog Sledding Challenge you will be:

- Sledding for around 5-7 hours per day
- Covering almost 200km across 5 days of hiking
- Using your core strength to control the sled
- Sleeping in temperatures that can reach -40 celsius
- Over-nighting in very basic wilderness cabins, where the toilets are outside and you will room together in one room
- Taking charge of and looking after your own set of dogs. You will see to their needs before yours

Typical day

You will wake early in time to feed your dogs before having breakfast. You will then begin driving your dogs for 35-45kms per day, stopping for lunch en-route. There will be plenty of refreshment stops, and opportunities to take photos. In the evening you will arrive at your wilderness hut where you will have dinner and sleep.

Are the dogs friendly?

All the dogs are sociable, friendly and love attention. A cuddle and lots of love is greatly appreciated by our four legged friends!

How many dogs will I be driving?

As a rule of thumb you will be driving 3 or 4 dogs. Most people will drive 4 dogs, but some may use 3. This may seem like a small number, but you should not be fooled by their size – they are incredibly strong. All dog teams drive at the same speed, so you have to take into consideration the weight of the sled and equipment as well as your own weight and that of everyone else on the expedition. Do also keep in mind that you have to learn to be in control of your dog team, and not vice versa.

Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up Challenge Safe, one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry.

Challenge Safe 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 challenge activity itself. Your welfare is absolutely paramount!

In terms of your Dog Sledding challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- The temperatures could reach down to -40 degrees Celsius at night, so appropriate winter clothing and equipment is absolutely essential
- You will be working closely with the dogs, who are excitable and boisterous. This will be difficult for anyone with a fear of animals
- You could be up to 8 hours from evacuation, with evacuation procedures involving a snowmobile (!) to the main road. Participants with any medical condition that might require urgent medical attention may want to consider this before booking.

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 Kiruna via Stockholm. The flight will take approx. 5 hours. The airline and routing will be confirmed 1 month 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 expedition, 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 FAQs page.

Vaccinations & Medicines

For up to date vaccination information please check the Travel Health Pro page: https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/215/sweden#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

The temperatures range from -5C up to -45C! It is difficult to predict what temperature it is going to be but on average:

- December and January are the coldest months – it is the darkest time of the year with very little if any sunshine as the sun does not cross the horizon from December through to January.
- February is a great month as the temperatures are still very cold but the sun starts showing itself a little more each day.
- March is wonderful too as the temperatures are usually milder and the sun is shining brighter and longer! But don't be fooled, even in March it is possible to have an evening with -30C.
- April still has snow but things start to get warm. Sometimes it is so warm that you can mush in t-shirts!

- May only allows for mushing in the high mountains near the Norwegian border where the snow still persists.

The cold is a very dry cold. People are often surprised when the temperature is -15 C but it feels more like -5C in a humid climate. Nevertheless when you are driving a sled you will also experience wind chill, which adds to the cold!

Terrain
This dog sledding challenge has varied snow filled terrain surrounded by trees and a surprising number of hills. You will need a great deal of core strength and balance to cope with the ascents and descents.

Will I see the Northern Lights?

Your challenge is located about 200kms above the Arctic Circle. Due to the location you have a greater chance of catching a glimpse of this magnificent spectacle. This is not guaranteed, of course, as it is a natural phenomenon and dependent on nature's influences!

Training

A good level of fitness is required due to the challenging nature of the terrain and the need to often get off and push or run with the sled to help it navigate through trees and up hills. A BMI of under 30 (preferably under 25), is appropriate for this trip due to the nature of the physical demands on yourself and the dogs.

You do not need to have any previous experience in driving your own team of dogs but you DO need to be fit. Driving a pack of Huskies is very tiring at times and you will be standing on your feet all day. Anyone can drive a dog team as long as you are focused and willing to listen and learn. You will also be taught how to take care of your team of dogs, including the ins and outs of mushing!

Luggage allowance and valuables

As no formal clothes are needed, luggage should be kept to the absolute minimum - details on what to pack are provided in your Kit List. Your rucksack or holdall must not exceed 20kg in weight (suitcases are not appropriate as they won't fit in the sled).

Leadership

There will be an English-speaking challenge leader who will be responsible for the logistics and co-ordination of your challenge. The challenge leader will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

Group Size

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 8 people in order to run and a maximum of 10 people due to the wilderness environment in which the challenge takes place. We will be able to run this challenge for 4 to 7 people by charging a small group supplement of £95 which will be added to your final balance invoice (self-funders) or charged to your charity (minimum sponsorship or flexi).

Clothing and equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. In Sweden, you will be provided with the specialist winter snowsuits, mittens, hats and shoes that you will need while you are sledding. However, you will need to bring very warm clothes to wear underneath and when around the cabins in the evening. Woollen socks are a must, as cotton does not work well in extremely cold conditions, and you should bring some salopettes or skiing trousers with you to wear when not sledding.
You will need different types of gloves on this trip for both mushing and around the camp. The first pair should be thin, warm, and waterproof gloves for that can be used for feeding and harnessing the dogs. You will also need warm liners for the mushing mitts and our agent recommends woollen mittens.
A full kit list for this challenge can be found here, and once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire and Cotswold Outdoor.

Accommodation & Toilets

Accommodation
During the challenge your accommodation will be in shared facilities and living quarters. In the wilderness huts, you will not have access to electricity or running water. You will fetch water from the lake for the dogs and washing, chop your own wood and use it to keep warm and prepare food with, for yourself and for your dogs. To compensate for the otherwise Spartan conditions, you will happily be able to relax in the sauna for an evening (if it's warm enough)!

Toilets
The wilderness cabins have outside toilets. Toilet paper is provided, though it is worth bringing a supply of your own for during the day whilst on the sledges. You should also bring your own towel with you for washing & saunas.

Food & Drink

Expedition food will be very filling, nutritious and sourced locally – it includes reindeer, moose, and Swedish meatballs! Plenty of drinking water will be available to keep you hydrated. You might want to bring some extra snacks, such as energy bars, nutri-grains, dried fruits etc, however you generally have plenty of food available on this challenge. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies.

Money

Currency: The Krona, which is subdivided into 100 öre. For up to date currency exchange, go to www.xe.com.

Cash: There are ATMs available at the airport and in Kiruna at the end of the challenge. This is the best source of obtaining currency whilst you are in Sweden.

Credit cards: Credit cards and travellers cheques are reliable. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are the most widely accepted cards and may be used at cash points. In smaller towns, banks will not necessarily have cash points.
travellers cheque.Foreign denomination traveller's cheques, postal cheques and bank notes may be exchanged for Swedish currency at any bank.

Spending money: You will not need large amounts of money during this trip. Credit cards are accepted and there are ATMs in Kiruna. To help you budget, prices in Sweden are as follows: GBP5-8 per beer in a restaurant, GBP2-6 per beer in a shop, GBP1.50 per glass of soft drink, GBP25 per bottle of wine in a restaurant. Approximately £100 in Krona should be sufficient but please take more if you plan to extend your stay, drink a lot, or buy souvenirs.

Tipping: 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£10-15 per participant per day and this should be given to the expedition leader at the end of the expedition 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 phone signal in Kiruna, as well as access to WiFi. However, this is the last place that you will be able to make contact with the outside world. Once in the wilderness cabins, there is no WiFi access, and phone signal comes in-and-out of range. In addition, there is no electricity in the cabins and you won't be able to charge your camera or phones. However, if you want to bring a solar charger this will work very well in late February to March, as the days are longer and the skies are clearer than earlier in Winter.

Emergencies

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's ability, which is allowed for. The challenge is run at the pace of the slowest sledge so no one will ever be left behind! If we find somebody is unable to continue, then we can transport him or her from one location to the next with the help of our staff.

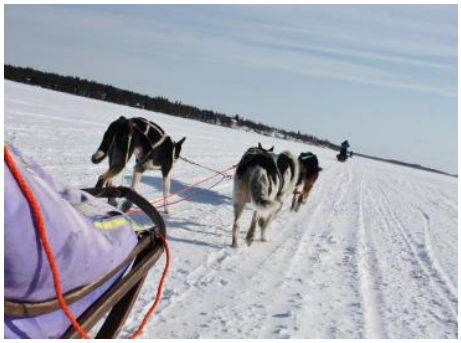
Pre-Existing Medical Conditions

We do not professionally vet your medical details. Please assess for yourself whether you are fit and able to take on the challenge. Please review the detailed Trip Notes and itinerary to get a better idea of what is involved. Please speak to your doctor or specialist if you have any concerns about taking part. If you suffer from a severe allergy, you are required to contact us to discuss any requirements. If you think that there are things we can do to make the challenge more accessible/comfortable for you, it is your responsibility to let us know, and we will then let you know if we can accommodate your request. Whilst we will do our best to put in place appropriate measures we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Medical Support

First Aid qualified staff will be provided with the medical details that you give on your booking form but please note that they are on the challenge to support with medical matters related to the challenge environment and terrain itself, i.e. heat/cold, high altitude and so on. They will deal with any incidents and accidents (cuts, sprains, breaks and so on). They are not intended to continue any ongoing specialist medical care that you receive in the UK for pre-exiting medical conditions, and should not be assumed to have any professional experience of your specific medical condition.

If you have any specific needs around pre-existing medical conditions, you should discuss with your family doctor or specialist in advance and can discuss any advice given by them with the challenge leader or doctor.



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A magical week full of fun, laughter, special memories, stunning scenery, amazing hosts and the best dogs in the world. If I could have brought them home it would have made the week perfect. I would encourage anyone to have a go at this. Simply brilliant.

Sally Wilson

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The dogs are lean running machines with open hearts and a willingness to please that brought a tear to the eyse when it was time to part.

Kirsty Strachan

"

It was an experience of a lifetime and one that will live with me for the rest of my life. I would recommend this challenge to anyone who wants to experience something totally different.

Martin Reynolds

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Any more questions?

Contact us:

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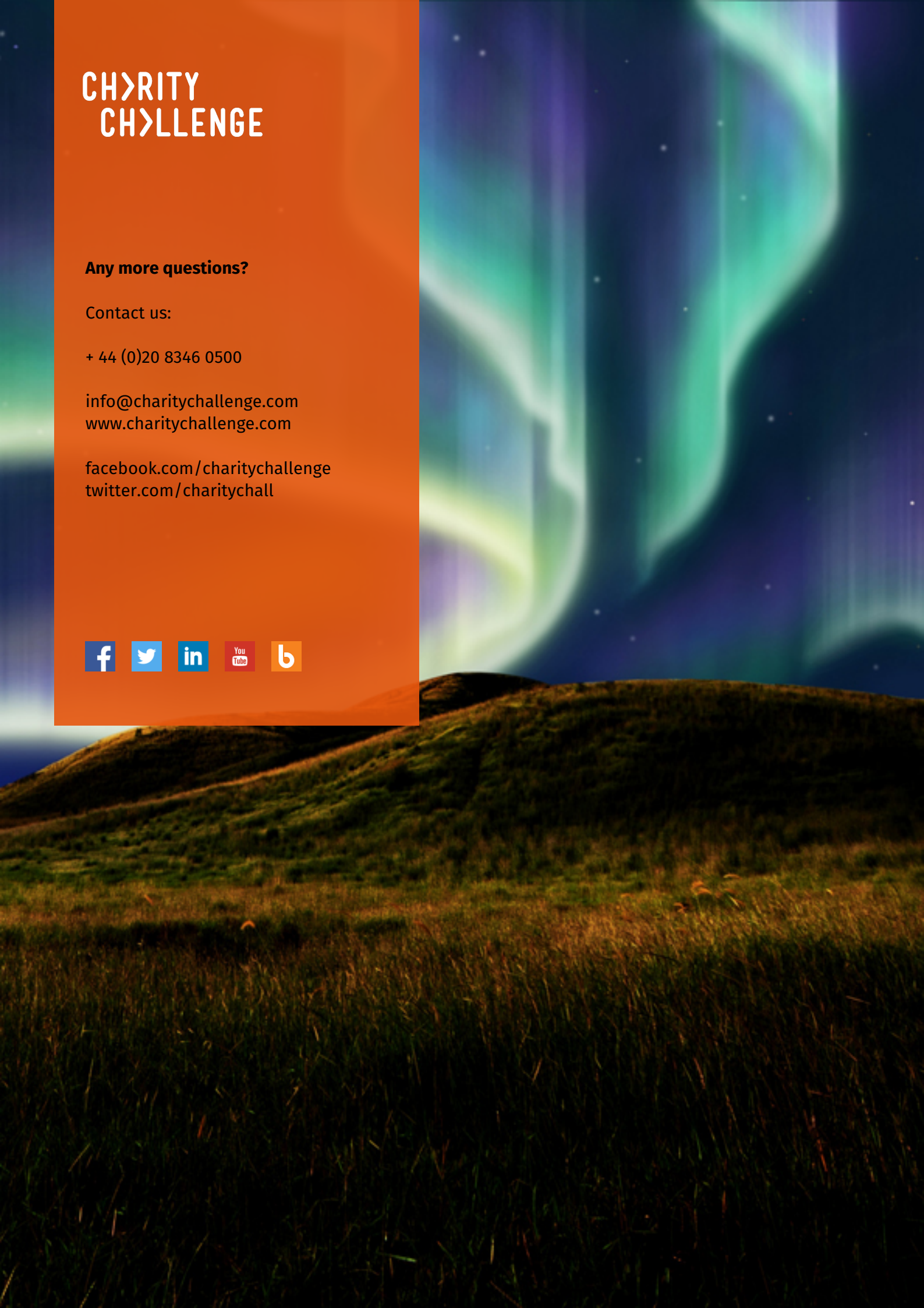
www.charitychallenge.com

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