

Change a Life Cycle

Combating crime the 'hard' way

They cycled more than 500 km in all kinds of weather in Namibia – business managers who temporarily gave up their comfortable offices for a unique challenge ...

Early last month **Kobie Hamman** was off line for about a week for a very good reason. The Johannesburg branch manager of Sanlam Private Investments (SPI) was in fact on a bicycle, pedalling through the Namib Desert.

Kobie was among 70-odd business executives who put their glutes on the line for the fourth Change a Life Cycle organised by Computershare to raise funds to combat crime.

AIM: R3,5 MILLION

The six-day event involved a challenging 500 km cycle tour from Windhoek through the desert to Swakopmund, and then around the Swakopmund-Walvis Bay area. The aim was to raise R3,5 million for anti-crime projects in South Africa.

"It was intense," says Kobie. "On the longest day we covered around 200 km in temperatures up to 50°C. There were blistering winds and then, when we approached the coast, cold desert fog. We even braved the salt roads on road bikes."

The Change a Life Cycle challenge was launched in 2008 to fund anti-crime initiatives following the

murder of Mike Thomson, senior Computershare manager, in September 2007. Including this year's funds, the Mike Thomson Change a Life Trust has raised over R12 million. Computershare matches rand for rand all funds raised from entry fees.

CHANNELLED DIRECTLY

This year all funds raised and matched will be channelled directly into recipient projects for the first time. Sponsorships cover all costs of the cycle tour. The projects are:

- ▶ the DNA project, which promotes the use of DNA evidence in bringing criminals to justice
- ▶ the Martin Dreyer Change a Life Academy, which trains disadvantaged youngsters in rural KwaZulu-Natal to become professional athletes
- ▶ iChoose to Change a Life, which provides leadership training to teenage offenders so they can launch anti-crime projects in their communities
- ▶ the iThemba Change a Life Rape and Trauma Support Centre, which provides treatment and counselling for victims of crime, mainly rape and abuse
- ▶ the Allan Thomson Kushido Karate-do, which inspires disadvantaged children to become productive members of society through the discipline and power of karate.


SPONSORING COMPANIES

The sponsoring companies are the JSE Ltd, the Kelly Group, UTi, Sun International and Vodacom. Each sponsor took charge for a day. In addition to the hard work, there was some fun too!

Day four, for instance, was turned into a kind of *amazing race* which involved sandboarding, go-carting and fishing as well as cycling. For this "race" tiny Kobie was paired up with the über-tall Derek Watts of *Carte Blanche*.

Among executives participating alongside Kobie were Russell Loubser, CEO of the JSE; his deputy, Nicky Newton-King, who will succeed him in January next year; David Coutts-Trotter, CEO of Sun International; Albie Geldenhuys, chairman of USN; Gavin Rimmer, president of UTi; Nic Kohler, CEO of Hollard; Katy Caldis, CEO of Fedhealth; Itumeleng Kgaboesele, CEO of Sphere Holdings; Diane Radley, chief executive of Old Mutual Investment Group; Enzo Scarcella, managing executive: Marketing at Vodacom; and David Cleasby, financial director: Bidvest.

Top South African cyclist Malcolm Lange and extreme sportsman Martin Dreyer were among the sportspeople who took part. Sports commentator Gerald de Kock joined Watts to represent the media.

"Change a Life has been changing lives for four years now and it has been a privilege to be involved in this initiative since inception," says Kobie. 



▶ Kobie pedalling against crime.