



CHILDREN OF FIRE

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www.firechildren.org



Mt. Cameroon Expedition Proposal





Children of Fire

Children of Fire was started some 14 years ago, when Bronwen Jones, a British former engineer and journalist befriended a baby girl that had lost her face and hands in a shack fire. The girl, Dorah Mokoena, had been abandoned in a hospital in the East Rand near Johannesburg, South Africa, when Jones stepped in and started to push for reconstructive surgery for her. She set up a trust fund in the UK, which soon evolved to a charity registered in both the UK and South Africa, with the aim to help Dorah and children like her— this charity was named Children of Fire. Since then more than 250 children with severe burn injuries have been helped by the charity, whether for complex surgery, counselling, occupational speech and physiotherapy, solving family problems, providing education or talking to their schools so that they would not be teased for their appearance.

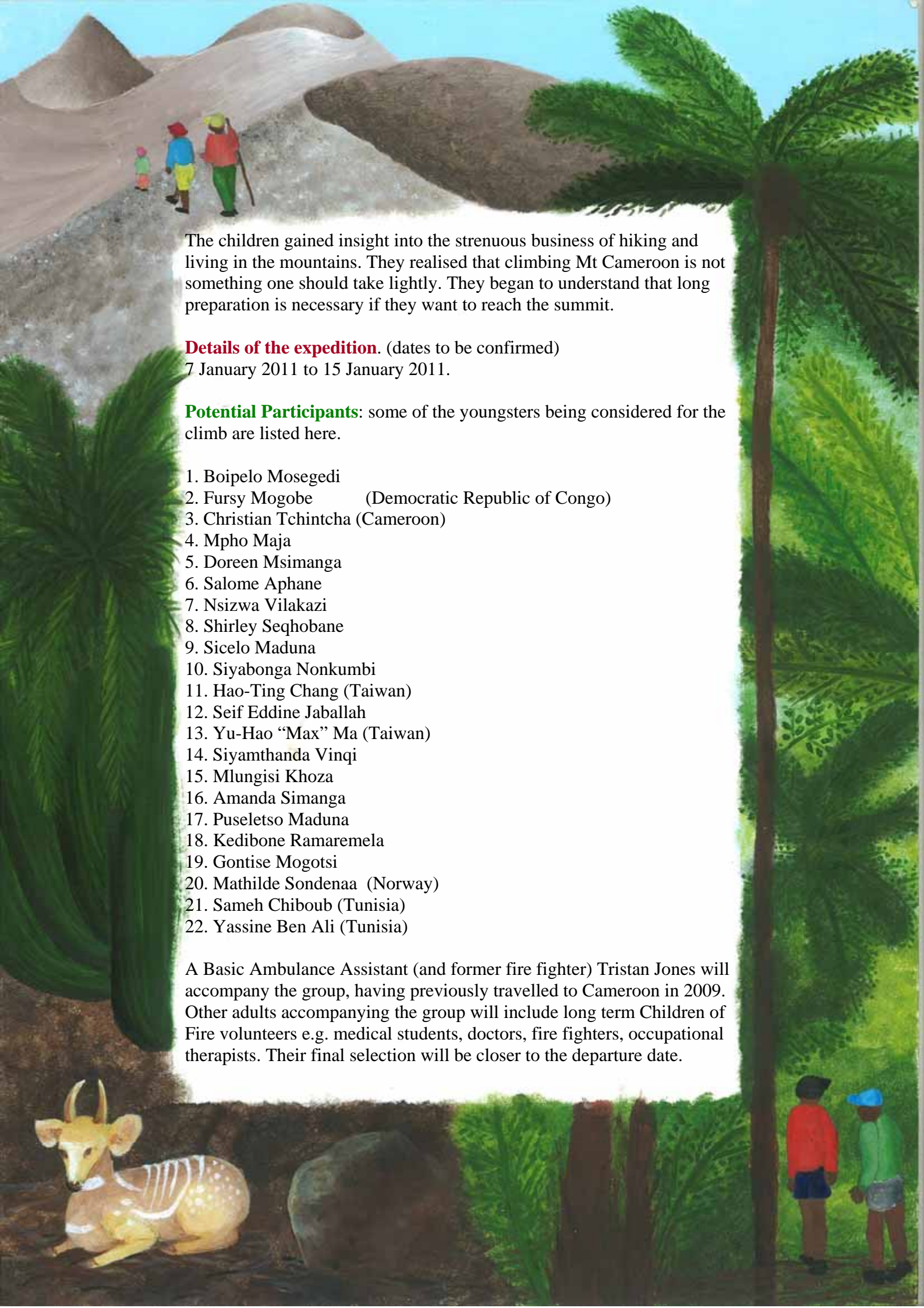
Children of Fire realised that prevention is better than cure. Fire fighting courses, First Aid courses, fire safety education campaigns at schools in different parts of South Africa were launched in order to make Africa a safer place. Water tanks were placed in small passages of squatter camps (shanty towns) where fire fighters cannot get through.

Children of Fire is Africa's first burns charity, and Africa's best informed organisation about fire and burns. It strives to use its knowledge to make the children's lives better and to decrease the huge number of burn injuries that occur every year.

Some children that have been “fixed” and are now in their teenage years, are invited to climb Mt. Cameroon with Children of Fire in January 2011. Also children from other countries such as Ethiopia, Cameroon, the DRC, Tunisia, Taiwan, the USA and Norway are being considered for this trip. This adventure will be a boost to the children's self-confidence, it will give hope to other burn survivors who can watch their summit. It will raise awareness of burns in people all over Africa and beyond and finally it will bring publicity to Children of Fire and encourage more people to support the charity in the wonderful work that it does.

The Drakensberg adventure (pre– Mt Cameroon adventure)

In July 2008 and October 2009, some of the possible candidates for Mt Cameroon went on a trip to the Central Drakensberg to test their hiking skills and fitness. They went on long walks through the mountains, did abseiling and other fun outdoor activities, learned about nature, history and culture in the Drakensberg and had lunch with the King of the ancient tribe of the Amangwane.

The background of the page is a colorful illustration. At the top, a mountain range is depicted with brown and grey peaks. Three hikers in colorful gear (red, blue, and green) are walking up a rocky path. To the right, a large, detailed green tree with a brown trunk stands prominently. In the bottom left corner, a spotted antelope is lying on the ground. In the bottom right corner, two more hikers are standing and talking. The central text is set against a white background that blends into the illustration.

The children gained insight into the strenuous business of hiking and living in the mountains. They realised that climbing Mt Cameroon is not something one should take lightly. They began to understand that long preparation is necessary if they want to reach the summit.

Details of the expedition. (dates to be confirmed)

7 January 2011 to 15 January 2011.

Potential Participants: some of the youngsters being considered for the climb are listed here.

1. Boipelo Mosegedi
2. Fursy Mogobe (Democratic Republic of Congo)
3. Christian Tchintcha (Cameroon)
4. Mpho Maja
5. Doreen Msimanga
6. Salome Aphone
7. Nsizwa Vilakazi
8. Shirley Seqhobane
9. Sicelo Maduna
10. Siyabonga Nonkumbi
11. Hao-Ting Chang (Taiwan)
12. Seif Eddine Jaballah
13. Yu-Hao "Max" Ma (Taiwan)
14. Siyamthanda Vinqi
15. Mlungisi Khoza
16. Amanda Simanga
17. Puseletso Maduna
18. Kedibone Ramaremela
19. Gontise Mogotsi
20. Mathilde Sondanaa (Norway)
21. Sameh Chiboub (Tunisia)
22. Yassine Ben Ali (Tunisia)

A Basic Ambulance Assistant (and former fire fighter) Tristan Jones will accompany the group, having previously travelled to Cameroon in 2009. Other adults accompanying the group will include long term Children of Fire volunteers e.g. medical students, doctors, fire fighters, occupational therapists. Their final selection will be closer to the departure date.



Cameroon

Cameroon is a developing country in central Africa. It is not widely known in world terms except for its national football team the Indomitable Lions, but it has West Africa's highest mountain at 4100metre, which is also its most active volcano. And we plan to climb it. It forms the hinge between West and Central Africa and is bordered by among others the Central African Republic, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad.

There are so many natural and cultural attractions in Cameroon, that it is often referred to as "Africa in one country," due to its diverse landscape which stretches from perfect beaches at the coast to rainforest, grasslands



and desert. It has one of Africa's most active volcanoes Mt Cameroon from which one can see the Atlantic on a clear day. Cameroon possesses 409 different species of mammals, 143 types of reptiles, 849 birds species and 19 types of amphibians.


There are many forest reserves namely Korup forest, Mount Cameroon forest reserve, the Bakyundu forest reserve, the Kilum forest reserve and the Dja biosphere reserve. The main cities are Douala, the principal seaport and commercial capital, with a population of more than 2.5 million; Yaounde, the capital with 1.2 million, and other major cities or provincial capitals at Garoua, Maroua, Ngounderie, Bamenda, Bafoussam, Fomban, and Kumba.

Almost half the population lives in the rural areas where they farm a variety of crops. Major crops are rubber, palm oil, cotton, cocoa, coffee, tea, bananas, pineapples, haricot beans, sugar, potatoes of various varieties, and a variety of fruit and vegetables. These are used locally and exported.

Official languages are French and English, though between the two French is the more widely spoken. These are accompanied by pidgin English and many indigenous languages. English is used in Cameroon's two Anglophone regions of Southwest and Northwest, as well as the larger cities.

There is always someone who is able to speak English or translate. Present day Cameroon was first "discovered" in the 15 Century by a Portuguese sailor, Fernando Poo, who named it " Rio dos Camaroes", meaning, River of Shrimps. The name, Cameroon, is derived from





this Portuguese word. Cameroon became a German colony from 1884-1916 with the signing of the Treaty of Berlin. After the 1st World War, Cameroon was divided partly into a French protectorate and partly placed under British trusteeship.

50 Years of Freedom

French Cameroon was granted independence from France in 1960. The Southern part of British Cameroon joined the Republic of Cameroon in 1961, to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon. In 1984 the name was officially changed to The Republic of Cameroon. In 1992, the first multi-party elections were held.

The system of government is the French model, with a powerful office of President (elected for seven year terms), a Prime Minister and Ministers appointed by the President, and the Chamber of Deputies elected by popular vote every four years. His Excellency, Paul Biya has been President since 1982.

Cameroon became a full member of the Commonwealth of Nations in 1996, and now actively participates in that organisation. Membership became possible due to part of the republic being the former British Cameroon, or South Nigeria.

The country is a *mélange* of many ethnic groups that can be sorted into three main sub-nationalities: the Bantus in the South, the semi-Bantus of the Western regions and the Sudanese in the North. This has led to a diverse number of art forms and cultural attributes, such as specific meals, traditions and clothing.


Each region has one or more festivals a year which, besides being tourist attractions, serve as an occasion for people to come together to celebrate their common culture. Sport is very important to most Cameroonians. The Indomitable Lions, Cameroon's national soccer squad, are known throughout the world for their prowess.

Many of Cameroon's soccer stars are professional players in Europe, the Americas and in Asia.

Beyond Soccer

The country has an extraordinary range of resources, both mineral, and forestry, most of which have yet to be exploited, although timber production is a major industry.



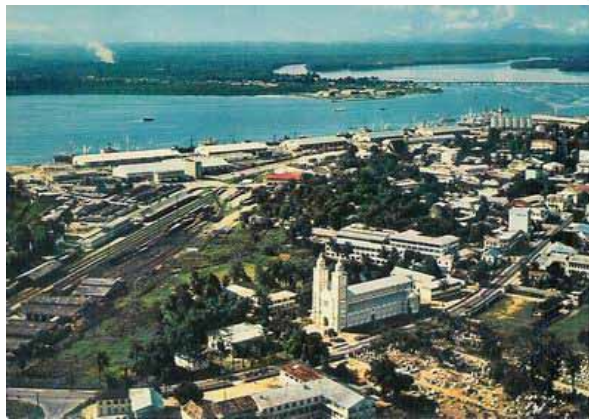


Apart from oil, the only two other mineral based enterprises in operation are: a large cement plant at Douala, and a 39 year old aluminum smelter at Edea, between Douala, and Yaounde. Despite known bauxite deposits in the billions of tonnes, most of the supplies for the smelter are shipped in from Equatorial Guinea.



Douala our start point

Douala is the largest city in Cameroon and the capital of Cameroon's Littoral Province. Douala has the largest port and major international airport, Douala Airport; it is the most important financial source of the country. It handles most of the country's major exports, such as oil, cocoa and coffee, timber, and fruits.

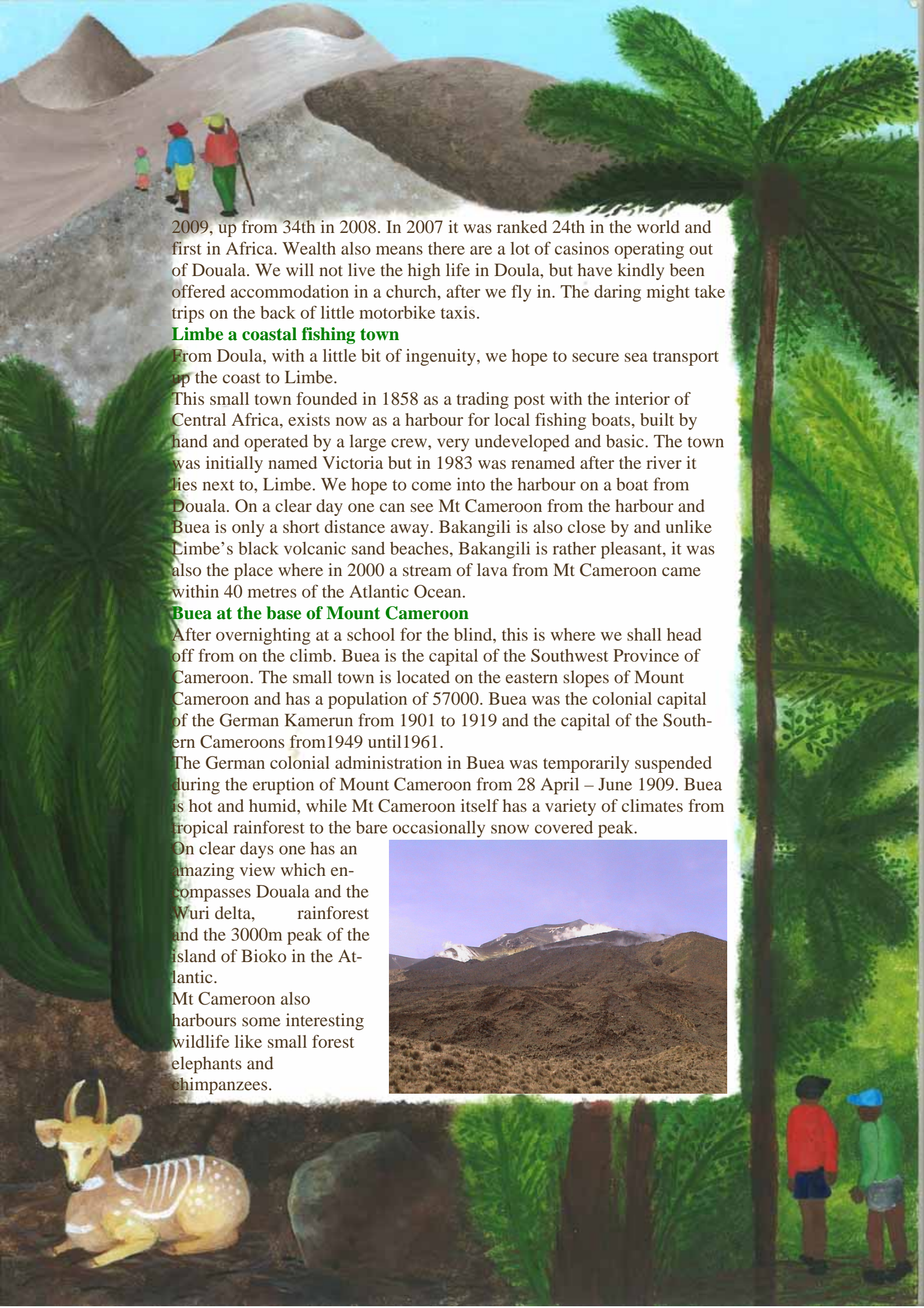


The city is located on the banks of the Wouri River, the two sides linked by Bonaberi Bridge. It has a population of 2.5 million.

The city is divided into quarters with Akwa and Bonanjo being the most important. Akwa is Douala's nightlife centre and Bonanjo its centre of commerce and administration. Along the city's main thoroughfare lie some of Cameroon's best restaurants, coffee houses and French-style patisseries; along the waterfront, many bars and bistros may be found, commanding views of the Gulf of Guinea and nearby mangrove swamps. These are popular with the city's large expatriate population, mainly French or Lebanese, most of whom work in the petroleum industry.

Douala is the 27th most expensive city in the world and the most expensive in Africa, overtaking Lagos, Nigeria at 32nd. It is ranked 27th for



An illustration of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, three people are walking on a path: a small child in a pink shirt, a person in a blue shirt and yellow shorts, and a person in a red shirt and green pants. The background shows rolling hills and a large, dark, conical mountain peak. The sky is a clear blue. On the right side, there are several tall, green trees with dense foliage. In the bottom left corner, there is a small illustration of a spotted antelope with horns. In the bottom right corner, there are two more people standing: one in a red shirt and blue shorts, and another in a green shirt and blue shorts.

2009, up from 34th in 2008. In 2007 it was ranked 24th in the world and first in Africa. Wealth also means there are a lot of casinos operating out of Douala. We will not live the high life in Doula, but have kindly been offered accommodation in a church, after we fly in. The daring might take trips on the back of little motorbike taxis.

Limbe a coastal fishing town

From Doula, with a little bit of ingenuity, we hope to secure sea transport up the coast to Limbe.

This small town founded in 1858 as a trading post with the interior of Central Africa, exists now as a harbour for local fishing boats, built by hand and operated by a large crew, very undeveloped and basic. The town was initially named Victoria but in 1983 was renamed after the river it lies next to, Limbe. We hope to come into the harbour on a boat from Douala. On a clear day one can see Mt Cameroon from the harbour and Buea is only a short distance away. Bakangili is also close by and unlike Limbe's black volcanic sand beaches, Bakangili is rather pleasant, it was also the place where in 2000 a stream of lava from Mt Cameroon came within 40 metres of the Atlantic Ocean.

Buea at the base of Mount Cameroon

After overnighting at a school for the blind, this is where we shall head off from on the climb. Buea is the capital of the Southwest Province of Cameroon. The small town is located on the eastern slopes of Mount Cameroon and has a population of 57000. Buea was the colonial capital of the German Kamerun from 1901 to 1919 and the capital of the Southern Cameroons from 1949 until 1961.

The German colonial administration in Buea was temporarily suspended during the eruption of Mount Cameroon from 28 April – June 1909. Buea is hot and humid, while Mt Cameroon itself has a variety of climates from tropical rainforest to the bare occasionally snow covered peak.

On clear days one has an amazing view which encompasses Douala and the Wuri delta, rainforest and the 3000m peak of the island of Bioko in the Atlantic.

Mt Cameroon also harbours some interesting wildlife like small forest elephants and chimpanzees.





Christian Tchintcha is a 22-year-old young man from Yaounde, Cameroon. When he was young he lived with his grandmother, but he now lives with his elder brother. We visited him in 2009.

The circumstances of how he got burned are not very clear. He was accidentally burned on his arm when he was ten-years-old. Initially he was treated by a traditional healer and only a few years later taken to a hospital. He has not received sufficient treatment for his arm, which has resulted in it not being very mobile. He wishes to have more surgery so that he may straighten his arm and Children of Fire was planning to help him get surgery. Unfortunately his family have been asked to get him a passport for four years and still have failed to do so; not even his former soccer player uncle who lives in South Africa.

Christian's hobbies are going to the cinema, and listening to music, and despite his disability he enjoys playing sports, especially soccer.

Christian is a patient young man who enjoys interacting with people. He would love to climb Mt Cameroon, and his knowledge of his country would be of great benefit to all the people on the trip. It would also boost his self-confidence and give him something to look forward to.





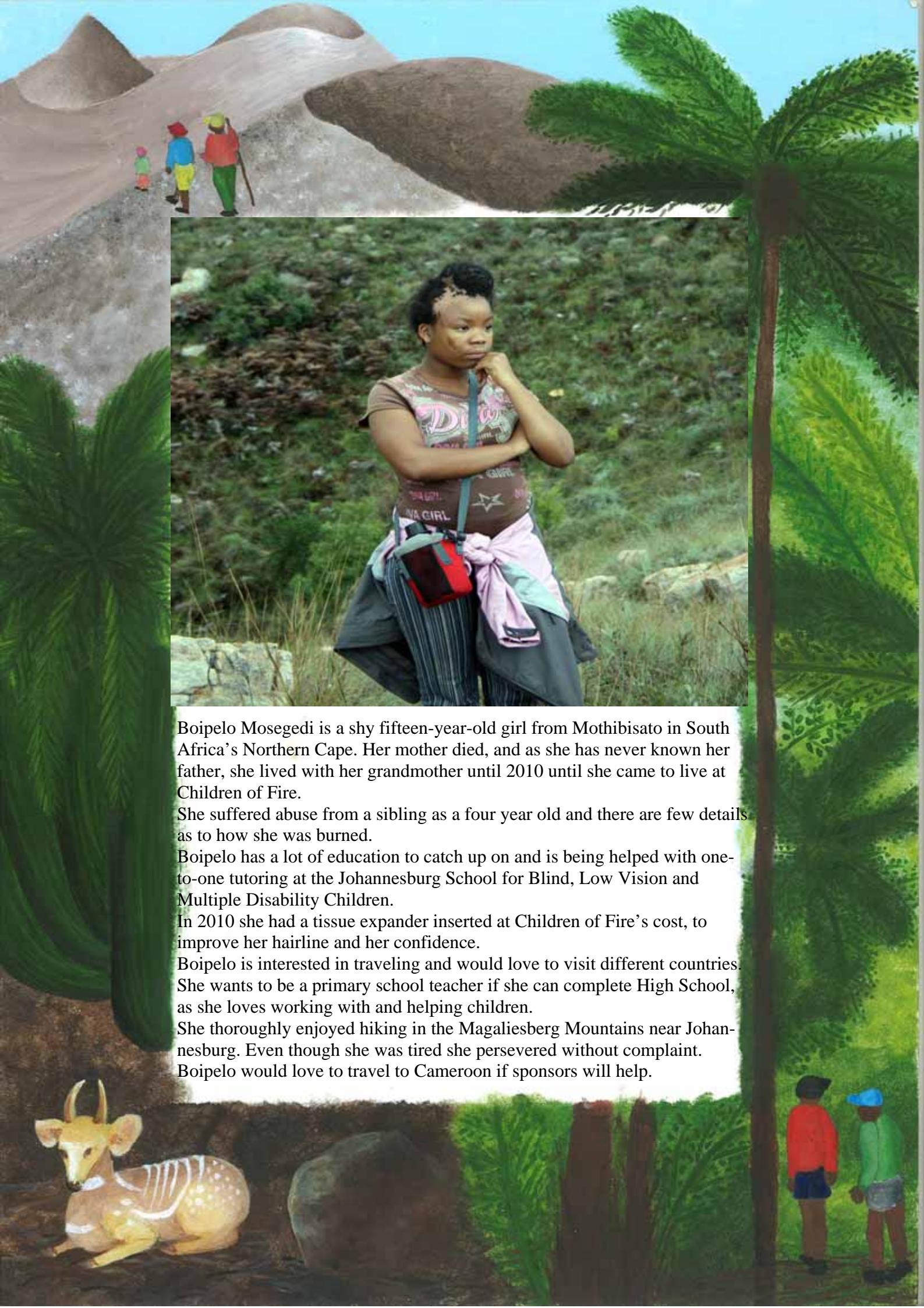
Fursy Mogobe is the youngest of four children in his family. Fursy lost both his parents at a young age and now lives with his brother and two sisters in Kinshasa.

In December 2007 Fursy was involved in a traffic accident. where he sustained burn injuries to his face, arms and legs, leaving him badly scarred. Medical facilities in the Democratic Republic of Congo are very limited, and as a result, Fursy's injuries have not been properly treated. He went to Morocco for some surgery and would like to continue medical care in South Africa.

In June 2009, he completed his secondary schooling. In October 2009 he went to the Drakensberg Mountains with Children of Fire. Now he spends most of his time repairing small electronic appliances.

Fursy would love to climb Mount Cameroon because he enjoys meeting people from different countries, and likes to learn about different cultures as well as sharing his own. He would like to exchange experiences about the emotions of being burned, to learn about the medical treatment the other participants have had and to get advice on moving forward in life. Like the other participants, he wants to make new friends and build relationships which last a lifetime.





Boipelo Mosegedi is a shy fifteen-year-old girl from Mothibisato in South Africa's Northern Cape. Her mother died, and as she has never known her father, she lived with her grandmother until 2010 until she came to live at Children of Fire.

She suffered abuse from a sibling as a four year old and there are few details as to how she was burned.

Boipelo has a lot of education to catch up on and is being helped with one-to-one tutoring at the Johannesburg School for Blind, Low Vision and Multiple Disability Children.

In 2010 she had a tissue expander inserted at Children of Fire's cost, to improve her hairline and her confidence.

Boipelo is interested in traveling and would love to visit different countries. She wants to be a primary school teacher if she can complete High School, as she loves working with and helping children.

She thoroughly enjoyed hiking in the Magaliesberg Mountains near Johannesburg. Even though she was tired she persevered without complaint. Boipelo would love to travel to Cameroon if sponsors will help.



Doreen Msimanga is an increasingly talkative thirteen-year-old girl. She sustained severe burns to her face and body when she was caught in a veldt (prairie) fire near Harrismith when she was almost three years old. Her mother died trying to save her from the blazing grassland. She lives with Children of Fire for most of the year and visits her grandparents in the deep rural Free State at Christmas time.

Her father has little contact with her.

As a result of her burns, both hands and feet are badly damaged. Her fingers are shortened and her poorly-angled left foot and ankle require complex seemingly-unachievable surgery.

Doreen has just remnant earlobes and is a candidate for prosthetic ears. She has lost part of her scalp but serial excision helped extend the hair-line. The charity funds trips to the hairdresser and false hair extensions to improve her self-confidence.

Doreen is a lovely girl who, despite the limitations with her feet, charged up the Magaliesberg mountains on a 10 kilometre hiking trip in April 2010. She is shy when you first meet her, but once you get to know her she opens up.

Doreen's ambition is to become a doctor one day.

She is praying for surgery on her feet sometime in 2010 to improve her gait, and to help her to climb Mt Cameroon, if she is given the chance. She has had many operations and much hardship in her young life



Mpho Maja, who turned 17 in March 2010, lives in Theresa Park, Gauteng Province, but he is a Pedi originally from Polokwane in Limpopo. He has a passion for sport, especially soccer and cricket. Mpho is an intelligent youth who is very inquisitive and interested in people and is never afraid to say what is on his mind. He lives with his parents and his younger sister and brother. Mpho is deeply religious.

On a cold winter's morning in 2003, Mpho, just nine-years-old at the time, was badly burned when his grandfather accidentally poured petrol instead of paraffin on to a fire. Mpho was burned on his face, his back, both arms, his knees and his feet. His grandmother who tried to shield him from the inferno, did not survive the fire.

As a result of this accident, Mpho spent a year in hospital undergoing treatment and receiving skin grafts. He finally returned to school and in 2010 was attending Hoërskool Akasia in Pretoria.

Mpho thoroughly enjoyed his time in the Drakensberg Mountains in 2009 with Children of Fire and also hiking in the Magaliesberg in 2010. He kept all the children entertained and encouraged them when they felt tired. Mpho is a confident young man despite his scars. Mpho needs a prosthetic ear and a reconstructed ear, as well as further hand surgery to lengthen his fingers. He is highly motivated to achieve great things in his life.



Nsizwazonke Vilakazi is an outspoken eighteen-year old youth from Piet Retief in Mpumalanga where he lives with his mother, his brother and two half-brothers. He attends high school in Pretoria and has had surgery with Children of Fire at Carstenhof Clinic and at Charlotte Maxeke Hospital. When he was just one month old, Nsizwa's sponge mattress caught fire when a candle was knocked over, and as a result, Nsizwa suffered massive burn injuries.

He is scarred mainly on his face, upper body and arms. He has also lost cartilage on his right ear and nose, and has suffered extensive tissue damage over his face and on the right side of his head. Nsizwa lost his right hand at wrist level. He had ear reconstruction with Dr Alastair Lamont and underwent tissue expansion in 2010.

As Nsizwa has only three functioning fingers, he does not like writing long stories at school but does well in subjects like technical drawing and science. He aspired to tertiary education and hopes to be an engineer. He craves his own laptop.

While his early adolescence was rocky, Nsizwa has now learnt to deal with his injuries, and is grateful to all the people who have interacted to help him. Climbing Mt Cameroon and having the opportunity to travel would give him the motivation he needs to succeed.



Salome Aphane is a 15-year-old girl from Hammanskraal, Gauteng. When she was just 11-years-old, the shack in which she was living burnt down when a candle fell over and the curtains and other furnishings caught alight. Two of her nieces, aged 18 months and 1 year, died in the fire. Salome was burned on her face and head and lost all her hair, the muscle for frowning and both of her ears. She also sustained burns to her arm and hand. Salome lacks confidence because of her appearance. She was given a wig but other children pulled it off and teased her.

She is learning that bald is beautiful. Salome is a candidate for prosthetic ears but still has to be convinced that the maxillo facial prosthodontics specialists can make them beautiful enough, as she saw another boy's "plastic ear" and was not impressed!

Behind her reserved veneer, Salome has a quietly happy and bright disposition. She gets good marks at school. She struggled with extra weight in the Drakensberg so we've linked her with a personal trainer.

On her first hike up the Magaliesberg mountains in April 2010 she was humming and singing, thoroughly enjoying herself.

A trip to Cameroon would be a life-changing experience for her.





Shirley Seqhobane is a outgoing 19-year-old who was accidentally burned on her head with hot oil when she was a toddler. She survived a lot of teasing at school because of the alopecia (baldness).

Shirley underwent tissue expansion which leaked and we tried again in 2009 / 2010 to help her improve the hair cover on her scalp. The surgery was at Charlotte Maxeke Hospital. Saline injections were a problem as she took too much time out of school to sit for hours in hospital queues.

Shirley lives with her father in Vanderbijlpark outside Johannesburg. He has been a brilliant single parent.

Shirley is an intelligent, positive and an well-organised person. She hopes to study gynaecology in 2012, when she has finished high school. She also wishes to be an intern at Children of Fire in the future.

She went to the Drakensberg with us. And on a hike up the Magaliesberg mountains, Shirley strode far ahead of everybody else. She is always willing to help the other children and shows good leadership skills by keeping the younger children under control.

Shirley would be an asset on the Cameroon trip as she would be able to support those who are having any difficulty. She is keen to travel.



Sicelokuhle Maduna is a courageous 12-old-boy from Duduza township, Volksrust in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. While he spends many months with Children of Fire, he also has a home with his grandmother, his mother, aunts and numerous cousins.

He would really like to meet his father.

Sicelo was burned when he was one month old, after a candle at the side of his bed fell over and the room caught fire. He has a calvarial defect (a hole in his skull) where the heat was so intense that the bone was reabsorbed.

Sicelo lost hair, most of his nose, and most of his right arm.

Sicelo is also HIV positive and is on ARVs. His CD4 count is good and his viral load is low. Even after all these difficult life challenges that Sicelo has had to face, he is kind and considerate and is a pleasure to be around. And he is always hungry!

Sicelo has had tissue expansion for his scalp and a attempt to rebuild his nose. He has polymethymethacrylate in his forehead, which, in retrospect was a mistake because the material can harbour infection. His lip was improved and he'd like surgery to improve the appearance of his eye.

Hiking in the Magaliesberg, Sicelo scrambled up tough rocky climbs with his one arm. He joked and laughed when he reached the top.

Sicelo has flown to Cape Town and even to Canada, as he fast-tracks his life. He wants to maximise however many minutes there may be.



Siyabonga Nonkumbi is a sixteen-year-old youth from Gauteng. He is capable and co-operative, fun and energetic, and always willing to help. Siyabonga was severely burned when he was just a two-months-old, when a paraffin stove caught fire, razing the shack in which he was sleeping.. He is scarred on his face, as well as his arms, chest, back and legs. Both hands were also badly burned and are very contracted.

After the death of his parents in 2003, Siyabonga says that he and his siblings were chased out of their home. He eventually moved in with his aunt and uncle and then went to live with his adult sister, also a burns survivor. Siyabonga was scheduled for surgery and twice had it cancelled—even after sleeping in hospital. This put him off the medical profession as he doesn't really believe doctors will keep their word. He still needs more surgery to improve his hands and other contracted areas.

Siyabonga is so excited about the chance to fly in an aeroplane. His voice rises and he beams excitedly: "I want to fly! I want to fly!"

Of all the youngsters, Siyabonga, whose name means "thank you", would soak in every new experience on a journey like this. And French? "I'll learn it in a week!" he boasts, grinning good-naturedly.





Hao-Ting Chang (15) is a teenager from Taiwan. He lives with his parents, two brothers and his grandparents on a farm in Taichung County in the middle of Taiwan. When he was two years old, his hands and feet were accidentally burned. He received skin grafting and rehabilitation. Although his fingers are still crooked, it does not limit the use of his hands.

Hao-Ting is a hardworking high school pupil. He particularly likes physical education, geography and English. In his free time he plays basketball and enjoys going bowling with his parents. Bowling is a very popular activity in Taiwan and Hao-Ting has won many bowling awards.

Hao-Ting visited Children of Fire in October 2009 and went hiking in the Dragon Peaks Mountain Resort area of the Drakensberg. He loved making friends among the burns survivors of so many nationalities. He said that the greatest pleasure was to be away from competitive academic pressures and just to be a boy having fun.

Hao-Ting and fellow survivor Max enjoyed cooking a Chinese meal for their South African friends and even teaching them how to speak a few Chinese phrases while also trying to learn greetings in Zulu.





Seif Eddine Jaballah is an enthusiastic 19 year old from Tunisia. He was burned in 2008 when a live electrical cable touched his chair on a balcony, giving him a 36,000 volt shock. He was in a coma for three months and so severe were the burns that both his legs had to be amputated, one above and one below the knee. He also burned on an arm and hand. The prosthetic legs often cause him problems and after Children of Fire arranged a consultation at Netcare Rehabilitation Hospital, he says he hopes to return to Johannesburg to get better legs. Seif was a very active and ambitious boy before his accident. He thoroughly enjoyed our trip to the Drakensberg mountains in 2009 where the National Parks Board arranged a horse for him, and felt that on that trip he could be his old self again. He took part in as many of the activities as possible, even abseiling! If Seif gets the opportunity to take part in the Mt Cameroon climb, it will require sourcing a good horse in Limbe. But he is a great young man who would benefit enormously from the experience.





Max (Yu-Hao) Ma is a 16 year old boy from I-Lan county in the north west of Taiwan. He lives with his parents and says they get on well because they give him a lot of freedom and trust him.

Max was five years old when he was accidentally burned. He was visiting a fair with his family when a sudden gust of wind blew over a pot of hot soup onto Max.

He was lucky enough not to burn his face, but sustained third degree burns to his upper right arm and second degree burns to his body, right hand, leg and foot. Max says his class mates were initially afraid of his scars, but after he explained what happened, they now accept him for who he is.

Max came to us via the Sunshine Foundation. He took part in Children of Fire's Drakensberg mountain hike in 2009 where he showed a keen interest in nature, particularly insects. He was like an older brother to fellow Taiwanese Hao Ting because his spoken English was more fluent.

Max liked playing pool and formed firm friendships with burns survivors from across Africa. He was impressed by the way in which people with far more severe or more visible injuries, coped in society. He said that children like Sizwe (9) would be shunned in Taiwan.



Siyamthanda Vinqi is a very tall teenager who will turn 16 in late January 2011. He was born in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. He is an only child of a traditional healer mother and a supervisor father. He lives with his mother in a five-roomed brick house with his grandmother and four cousins. Siyamthanda was 12 years old and sleeping next a paraffin heater which exploded over him. He was burned on the left side of his face and body. His mother threw a bucket of water onto him and doused the flames. He was in hospital for six months until he recovered enough from his injuries to return to school. A lot more surgery is needed though.

Siyamthanda loves fast cars and when he leaves school he wants to design sports cars. He likes listening to music and sometimes tries to teach his Dad to 'rap. He enjoys RnB and house music and the USA rapper Lil Wayne!

Siyamthanda's mother is central to his life. He loves to pull out a mobile phone and show pictures of her. "Look how beautiful she is," he says with pride.

Siyamthanda befriended Max and Mlungisi in the Drakensberg hike in 2009 and hopes that they will all get the chance to climb Mt Cameroon together.

"I have always dreamed of travelling to another county," he said.





Mlungisi Khoza is a 14 year old gregarious youngster from KwaZulu Natal Province in South Africa. He lives with his mother, two sisters and two brothers while his father lives in Eshowe where he works.

On 31st December 2008 his family was braaiing (barbequing) at home. The whole braai stand fell on top of Mlungisi. The hot coals set his trousers alight, and thinking quickly, Mlungisi jumped into the swimming pool. Nonetheless he sustained serious burns to his legs.

This did not deter him from enthusiastically climbing the Drakensberg mountains in 2009 and hopefully Mount Cameroon in 2011.

At Dragon Peaks he was one of the younger participants but seemed to be in the centre of everything, from cave sleeping to quad biking.

Mlungisi likes modelling "because I am good at it". He also enjoys swimming and playing soccer as well as going to the beach. At school his favourite subject is mathematics.

Mlungisi is prepared to brave all the Yellow Fever, Menomune and Hepatitis B vaccinations for a chance to fly to Doula, sail to Limbe and then to climb Mt Cameroon. He says he wants to tell lots of people about his injuries, to teach other children about the dangers of fire.



Amanda Simanga is 20 year old youngster whose schooling was delayed due to severe injury. She lives in East London in the Eastern Cape of South Africa with her mother and her two younger sisters. Her father works as a miner in Rustenburg.

Amanda was severely burned in an arson attack, when battery factory strikers set her relative's shack on fire. She was burned on fifty five percent of her body, and was bedbound for months. She had extensive physiotherapy and occupational therapy to help her to walk again and even to help her to feed herself.

Amanda's full story is on our website www.firechildren.org

Like many children who spent a long time in hospital, she dreams of a medical career, maybe helping cancer sufferers. But first she'd like to get a driving licence!

Amanda would still like the arsonists to be brought to justice. She would like them to apologise for scarring and injuring her forever.





Puseletso Maduna turned 18 in October 2010. She was born in Codesville, Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. Her father died a long time ago and she lives with her mother, who is a house cleaner. When Puseletso was 13 years old, she accidentally spilled hot paraffin on herself, causing severe burns to her neck, chest and right hand. She was in hospital for many months and underwent intensive treatment. Puseletso is studying at Codesville Secondary School and is a spirited member of her school's netball team. She also loves gospel singing and is an active member of her church group.

On Children of Fire's Drakensberg outreach at Dragon Peaks Mountain Resort, Puseletso said that she learned how to be patient, how to interact with other people and how to help others. She also loved learning about the animals on the expedition.

Puseletso is a little daunted about learning French as it is not normally a subject in South African schools, but she wants to know her continent better.

"I hope I get chosen to climb Mt Cameroon. I want to make my mother proud," she said.





Kedibone Ramaremela is a bubbly and bright 14-year-old girl from Pretoria, who moved to Polokwane, Limpopo Province in 2010. Early one winter's morning, when she was 11 years old, she was making a cup of tea before the long walk to school.

As she poured new ethanol gel into the stove, it exploded, severely burning her face. Kedibone does not understand why more is not done to protect low income families from dangerous fuels and appliances in the developing world.

She has undergone intensive medical treatment and despite her injuries, is an active and impulsive young woman.

Kedibone took part in our 2009 Drakensberg adventure, which she thoroughly enjoyed. She loved the adrenalin rush of zip lining at Four Rivers Rafting as well as abseiling and rock climbing.

"I never thought being burned could give me any advantage in life, but now I might even get to climb a Central African volcano. I hope so!" she said.





Gontise Mogotsi is a thoughtful 18-year-old boy who enjoys watching television and playing soccer. He was burned at age of 15 when he and his friend were foolishly playing with a can of petrol around the fire, to see the flames flare up.

Unfortunately, Gontise got too close to the flames and was severely burned on his face and left forearm.

Gontise was thrilled to be invited by Children of Fire to go hiking in the Drakensberg Mountains in 2008, so he could experience new and interesting activities.

He said the journey gave him the chance to make new friends and learn how to understand other people, in particular other burn survivors.

He also said that he learned to respect the mountains and the beauty and power of the birds of prey, and not to take things for granted.

Gontise lives in Soshanguve, near Pretoria in South Africa.

Gontise would love the opportunity to climb Mt Cameroon and experience the food and culture of central Africa. He would also like to experience a hike in warmer conditions because he said in the Drakensberg, you have to 'find your warmest clothes in an instant!'





Mathilde Sondena is an 18-year-old burns survivor from Trodenheim, Norway. She has a younger brother and sister and she lives with her parents.

Mathilde was burned in June 2005 on a school trip when she stood too close to a spirit stove and her jacket caught fire. Because she was wearing a wool sweater under her jacket, her severe injuries were limited to her face and hands. She spent the whole summer in hospital in Bergen, Norway. After two months and several operations, she had to wear a pressure garment mask for a year. She will have more operations in the future.

She was meant to join us in the Drakensberg in 2009 but was disappointed when another Norwegian girl belatedly couldn't travel with her.

Mathilde would love to join the Mt Cameroon climb, as she wants to get to know people with experiences that are similar to her own.

She would also like to enjoy the culture of a different country and a different continent. She is interested to know how people in other countries live with burn injuries.

She would also like to take part in an international co-operation to improve living conditions for people who are burned.

Mathilde had stunning surgery in Scandinavia. In Cameroon she will find that reconstructive surgeons are as rare as hens' teeth. But there is nothing to compare with the scenery, the wild life, the music and the food!





Costs

The cost of this expedition including flights, vaccinations, fees and equipment is estimated at about R30,000 per child. Some equipment from previous expeditions can be reused.

Broadcasting

A documentary to be aired internationally will be filmed.

Benefits

The benefits for lead sponsors can include:

- Media coverage on news channels across Africa and internationally
- Invitation to all media events arranged by Children of Fire
- Link to your website from the Children of Fire website
- Coverage in Children of Fire newsletters
- Being part awareness-raising initiative
- The gratitude of young burn survivors granted a once in a lifetime opportunity**
- The knowledge that awareness will prevent such injuries in the future**

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Donations details are on our website.

They may be made to the South African account 614 920 23919 at First National Bank, Melville, branch code 25-65-05 or the United Kingdom account 901 033 30 at Barclays Bank in Canterbury, Kent, branch code 20-17-92 or via Pay Pal on our website shortly.

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