

# The Skeleton Coast

## Namibia



An original bicycle expedition of 1300km+ down the sandy desert coastline that “*God made in anger*”

Bringing light and education with solar energy to remote communities in north-western Namibia



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# The Importance of Exploring



Exploration is the driving force behind humankind. We have been exploring since the dawn of time, because it is at the centre of everything we do. From birth, we learn through experience and we can make better decisions tomorrow from the information we have unearthed today.

Everything we know today has been the result of explorers who have gone before us. Exploring is to travel through the unknown to learn or discover new information. Discoveries in geography, medicine, space, flora and fauna, that have changed the world for the better, are but a few of the riches of exploration.

Today, society seeks riches of other kinds. Equality of race and gender, alleviation of poverty, advances in health and education, tolerance and peace and preservation of the environment among them. Discoveries in the modern world will come; but only if we seek them and we are prepared to embark on uncovering the source of today's unknowns.

Real exploration cannot be done through a screen or second-hand; true perspective must be obtained first-hand as primary evidence. The great explorers and creators of history have known this and it remains the same today.

If the leaders of tomorrow are inspired to explore, understand how the world fits together and how they fit within it, our global community will be all the richer for the decisions they will make toward a better world.

*Kate Leeming*







## How the idea evolved



In 2010, Kate completed her *Breaking the Cycle in Africa* expedition, the first west to east bicycle crossing of the African continent in an unbroken line. The purpose of the ten month, 22,000km journey from Senegal to Somalia was to explore the causes and effects of extreme poverty, focusing on the positives; what is being done to give a 'leg up' rather than a 'hand out.'



Kate's ride – an Official Activity for the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Development (2005-2014) – was a life-changing voyage of discovery and learning to inspire and educate.

Fast forward to 2019 and Kate returns to Namibia, one of the 20 countries she cycled through eight years previously, to take on the notorious *Skeleton Coast*.



Deeply affected by many experiences from her previous African expedition, Kate is determined to make more of a tangible difference to the people whose land she will pass through. Kate has brought together a formidable team - her Indian partners, Global Himalayan Expeditions and local tour operator Karibu Safari - to partake in a second expedition to install a solar energy system to bring education and light to the remote village of Purros.



# The Skeleton Coast



Named after the bleached bones and the rusting remains of hundreds of shipwrecks washed up on its shore, the Skeleton Coast is where the Namib Desert meets the Atlantic Ocean in south-western Africa. Here, great walls of sand, many dunes between 200m and 300m high, drop sheer to the beach.

The KhoiSan people of the Namibian interior called the region *The Land God Made in Anger*, while Portuguese sailors once referred to it as *The Gates of Hell*. The cold Benguela ocean current circulates straight from Antarctica, every morning enshrouding the shoreline in fog, adding to its mystique, until the strong on-shore winds disperse the haze each afternoon.

The Namib Desert is the oldest, and one of the driest deserts in the world. The people and animals of the sparsely populated Kunene region in Namibia's far northwest, undergo constant struggles for water. A lack of clean, safe drinking water affects the lives and wellbeing of many local cultures; it compromises school students' ability to learn effectively and the ability of farmers to grow food and care for their livestock.

The Kunene Nature Reserve is home to the Kunene Desert Lions, an endangered species due to the conflict between the needs of local inhabitants, who see the lions devastate their livestock and threaten the region's communities, and the necessity for the species to survive. The lions have adapted to exist in such inhospitable conditions, able to draw moisture from the blood of its kill to rehydrate and has many special adaptations to minimise water loss.





# The Expedition

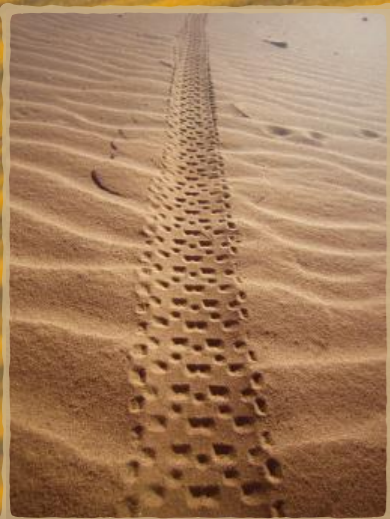


**When:** May/June 2019

**Route:** Beginning at the mouth of the Kunene River that forms the Namibian/Angolan border, Kate plans to cycle an average of 50km a day along the coastline, initially as far as Walvis Bay about 800km to the south. After speaking to schools at the historic towns of Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, the aim is to continue as far as Luderitz, a total distance of around 1300km (4 weeks).

**Permits:** In order to protect the fragile desert ecology, only a handful of permits are made available each year by the communities that own the land and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Jimmy Marais (Karibu Safari), who is providing the expedition support, is the only operator to hold the concessions for the northwest and is working to ensure we have the necessary permissions. Between 72 km north of Luderitz and Namibia's most southerly town of Oranjemund lies the Sperrgebiet region, where entry is forbidden due to diamond mining operations. The ultimate would be to cycle the extra 250km to Oranjemund, thus pedalling the whole 1600km coastline, but this is entirely dependent on gaining a permit from the authorities.

**Breaking the Cycle South Pole:** Kate is also using this expedition to help prepare herself physically and mentally for her planned bicycle crossing of the Antarctic continent via the South Pole. Negotiating soft, unstable surfaces requires immense core strength and concentration. Different techniques are used compared with cycling on regular paved and gravel surfaces. Kate will use one of her Christini all-wheel drive fatbikes that has been specifically developed for Antarctica.

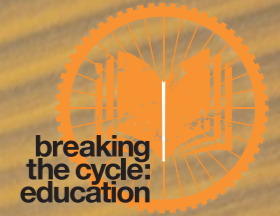


Kate's Christini AWD fat bike (No.2), first used in northeast Greenland, and here on the sands of the Finke River in Central Australia





# Creating access to clean energy



Kate is also working with her partners **Global Himalayan Expedition** and **Karibu Safari** (Namibia) to bring light, education and economic empowerment to the poor, sparsely populated region of northwestern Namibia. Firstly they will set up a pilot project in Purros village.

**Global Himalayan Expedition (GHE)** leverages tourism to provide clean energy access through solar power for remote unelectrified off-grid communities around the world. To make this possible GHE organises impact expeditions to isolated villages where tourists, as part of their trip, not only experience the beauty and culture of the region, they also help set up solar micro-grids to bring communities out from centuries of darkness.

In 2018 Kate joined one of GHE's projects in Ladakh in the Indian Himalaya as part of her *Breaking the Cycle in Ladakh* expedition. The passionate team led by Paras Loomba (founder) and Jaideep Bansal (COO) recently received a World Tourism Award for it's work in sustainable tourism in remote locations.

GHE, who has so far electrified 81 villages and built nine digital education centres, is starting to expand globally, Namibia being one of the first countries selected due to Kate's connection and vision.



Lighting 1100 year old Ralaking village, the most remote in the Zaskar region of Ladakh

Setting up a digital education centre in Phe village, Zaskar







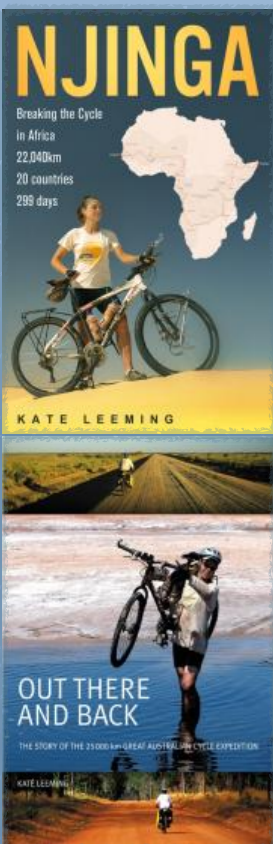
# Kate Leeming



**Cycled a distance greater than twice around the world at the Equator and is considered in the top Australian women explorers**

## Major expeditions containing world firsts

- *Trans-Siberian Cycle Expedition* – 13,400km, St Petersburg to Vladivostok in aid of the children of Chernobyl
- *Great Australian Cycle Expedition* – 25,000km through Australia, 7000km on remote desert tracks including the Canning Stock Route; an official activity for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
- *Breaking the Cycle in Africa* – 22,000km from Senegal to Somalia exploring the causes and effects of extreme poverty. Also an official activity for the UN DESD.

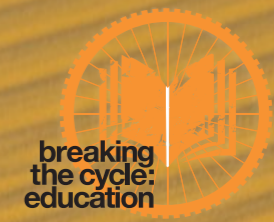


## Books and films

- *NJINGA* – book, multi-award winning feature documentary and TV series (Africa, 2014-19)
- *Out There and Back* (Australia, 2007)
- Honorary Doctor of Education (University of Western Australia)
- Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society, UK
- Member of The Explorers' Club, New York
- Bachelor of Physical Education, Graduate Dip. Ed (UWA)
- Honorary Advisory Board and Endorsed Supporter of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award
- Scout Ambassador (Victoria, Australia)
- Real tennis – Reached World No.2;  
Won 5 Australian Open singles titles



# The Team



## **Kasimir Zierl - Filmmaker**

Kasimir has worked as a director, cinematographer and video editor on a huge variety of films. His documentary work has taken him to Vancouver Island and the Yukon Territory in Canada, Helgoland in Germany, all over the South Island of New Zealand and Christmas Island in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Kas is a dedicated supporter of the Australian and New Zealand Chapter of The Explorers Club.



## **Jimmy Marais (Karibu Safari: Owner) - Expedition support**

Jimmy started working for Karibu in 1998 as a guide and avid adventurer. Since 1999 he has headed up Karibu operations, but doesn't shy away from a good safari, particularly in the renowned Skeleton Coast region.



## **Paras Loomba (GHE: Founder) - Humanitarian project**

Paras has led several leadership expeditions to Himalayas to provide clean energy access to remote Himalayan communities. An electrical engineer by profession, Paras merges technology and tourism with an approach to create local entrepreneurial models for remote areas advocating sustainable tourism solutions. Paras is a 2012 International Antarctic Expedition member and part of WTTC's jury for its Tomorrow for Tourism Awards.



## **Jaideep Bansal (GHE: COO) - Humanitarian project**

Jaideep is an IIT Bombay Graduate and has been involved in leading several impact tourism expeditions to remote areas in Himalayas with GHE. Jaideep plays a key role in developing new partnerships to further the work of Impact Tourism and has been instrumental in bringing the narrative of Impact Tourism to the wider arena through articles and as speaker at various forums. He was been featured by World Economic Forum as among the top young leaders inspiring change in the world.





Himba woman



Endangered: desert lion

## What Kate and the team may see:

- Endemic and specifically desert-adapted species
- Cultures - KhoiSan, Himba, Herrero
- Stunning desert landscapes
- Archeological and historical sites: Stoneage Sandloper (San 'beachcomers') site, ghost towns from the diamond rush, shipwrecks...



Endangered: black rhino



Desert-adapted elephants



Gemsbok antelopes  
Namibia's national animal



KhoiSan



# Outcome

## Outreach

Breaking the Cycle will serve to build on Kate's commitment to contribute towards ending extreme poverty and education.

(Sustainable Development Goals 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13)

By supporting local communities with the GHE village solar electrification expedition, the team aims to develop the pilot project to bring light, education and economic empowerment to more Namibian communities

**Breaking the Cycle: Education** aims to help prepare our future leaders to make informed decisions to create a better world. Partners include: the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, JUMP! Foundation, Ivanhoe Grammar School, Belouga, Victorian Department of Education and Training, Scouts Victoria/Australia/WOSM & more.

A **role model** inspiring girls and women to aim high and achieve their full potential

## Documentary

Kate is working with filmmaker Kasimir Zierl to create a documentary that not only tells the story of this unique expedition and groundbreaking humanitarian project, it will also examine Kate's mindset that enables her to push the boundaries of what is possible and successfully pull off such an expedition.

## Content

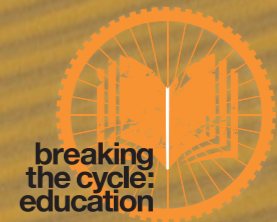
The team will produce quality content that can be used for PR, marketing, magazine articles, social media. Unique film and photo assets can be supplied en route

**Branding opportunities** on clothing and website





# Further details



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Partner Links:

Global Himalayan Expedition  
[www.ghe.co.in](http://www.ghe.co.in)



Karibu Safari  
[www.karibunamibia.com](http://www.karibunamibia.com)

Duke of Edinburgh's International Award -  
Australia

