

January 2010

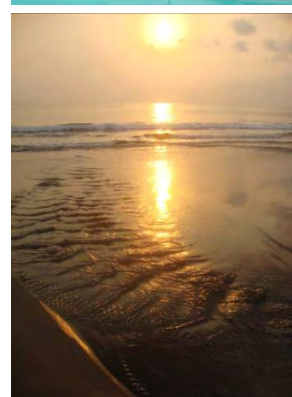
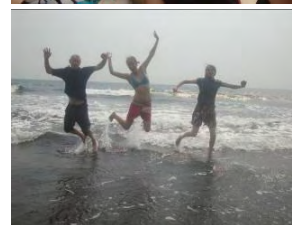
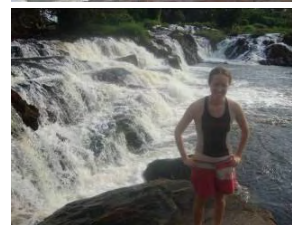
Dear All,

Our 'Christmas Party' was a success. 3476 children in six African networks benefited from a special treat of a day out, presents, talent shows, food, football and fun. With the street child focus, 1263 were connected with projects and churches that can support them for the very first time. Thank you for supporting Viva Africa!



My Christmas: I'll start with the rubbish bit. In theory travelling to Cameroon was going to be straight forward. Entebbe to Nairobi, Nairobi to Yaounde and then back again. In reality - 2 cancellations, 1 missed connection, 4 delays that culminated in 23.5 hours of waiting in airports, 9 take-off and landings, 2 hours in the Central African Republic and 1 hour in Equatorial Guinea! I'm not getting on a plane ever again.

My holiday in Cameroon was wonderful. We were quite worried about entry because I was unable to get the compulsory visa beforehand. These worries were unfounded as Ruth was brought to meet me straight off the plane. The friendly immigration officer took my passport and returned 30 minutes later with the all important stamp as we waited for luggage, no questions asked. Sometimes it does pay to be young, white, female and dare I say it beautiful! First stop was Kiribi for Christmas, a gorgeous coastline with waterfalls into the ocean and a guesthouse on the beach. We then had a few days in the city of Douala, with delicious pastries and ice-cream, and collected Mum and Dad. Another beach stop of Limbe, with its black sand and warm sea (like having a bath!), invited in the New Year. A 20 minute trek to an isolated lake was the warm-up to the three-day slog that was climbing Mt Cameroun. Still an active volcano, I never want to walk across Lava again. Miles of gravel, followed by miles of tennis ball sized rocks, followed by miles of dodgy small boulders...the scenery was pretty with the rainforest, volcanic tubular cave and savannah grassland mixing up the landscape. We finished up the trip by staying in the capital, Yaounde. This is where Ruth lives and we were able to see her school, football training, friends and life in general. The capital boasts a great swimming pool at the French Club, beautiful material markets and some interesting modern architecture. "Blame the French" was a repeated phrase throughout the two weeks. Their colonialism seems to be in part responsible for divided areas based on language, inappropriate female dress, men not really respecting ladies as much as one feels they should, croissants and nutella, frozen blackberries in one supermarket (£9 per 250g!!), better roads than Uganda, worse cars & drivers than Uganda, ridiculous humidity and heat (39°C most days)...well I suppose we can't blame them for *everything*.



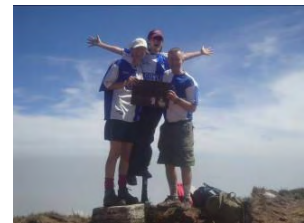
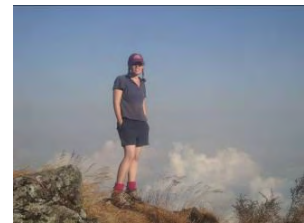
Find Out More About Viva:
Website: www.viva.org
Email: africa@viva.org
Work Email: ebelcher@viva.org

After feeling relaxed and refreshed (with the exception of Kenya airways only allowing me 6 hours between landing and the 8:30am office start) I walked into the office feeling ready to take on 2010. I hit the ground with a bump when the first item on the agenda was learning that a key donor has pulled out taking \$45,000 with them because of their financial situation. All my work outside fundraising has been relegated to bottom of the list so that we make new connections with organisations. We pray every day that our work will be able to be fulfilled with no resources or with lots of resources, somehow, some way. However, when I go back to the basics, I feel strengthened in what Viva is achieving and optimistic for the potential it will some day be able to unleash. In Africa, we have eight networks in five countries supporting 653,000 children at risk! We have the contacts for 3067 individual Christians, 2181 projects and 1447 churches who are all supporting children at risk. Cool.

I won't spend too much time telling you about the deceased mouse and lively maggots that ended up in my rice then on my kitchen floor, the policeman that fired a gun in the air next to me to control the crowd at a recent R-Kelly concert or the van that hit the motorcycle I was travelling on. My Mother's worry will only multiply!

Finally, for some exceptional thanks to my supporters this 'film award season': To the Belchers & Steins for all the presents, to Mum and Dad for carrying out the essentials and the essential treats, to Ruth for the fabulous holiday, to those of you who gave to Viva's Christmas party, Jo Wiggle gets the award for the only Christmas card to get through the worsening Uganda postal system and Verity gets the award for the latest/last birthday present to get through (are there any more floating around Mengo P.O?). To the group from Staple Hill who gave Viva Africa a financial gift, to Alex whose resolution was to email me (and for sticking to it!), and to Granny Belcher for sending a box of flakes that stayed entirely intact all the way here! My support is unbelievable and after receiving all these silly newsletters you lot are still going.

Lots of love, Elise (and the rest of them) x



From the top: Kiribi – beach, waterfalls and sisters, family swimming in sea and chlorine, sunsets and smiles. Steep climbing, views spoilt by clouds and a pair of sorry knees, summit jubilation and volcanic extravagance.

Please Keep In Touch!

Email: Belcher_327@hotmail.com **Post:** PO Box 14003, Kampala, Uganda

Text: +256775772204