



A LONG WAY FROM HOME: Mel Miller, of Cape Town, takes a break in Egypt. She is biking back to Cape Town on the Tour d'Afrique while three other South African riders and three Irish cyclists are doing a parallel trip on another route. *Picture: CHRIS BOEHNER*

Fund-raising cyclists take in the sights of ancient Egypt

COURTNEY BROOKS

THE Tour d'Afrique cyclists have met kindred spirits on a ferry to Sudan – six cyclists, three of them South Africans, who are also cycling from Cairo to Cape Town.

Grant McDermott, of Cape Town, Diana Francis, of Pietermaritzburg, and Gareth Brauteseth, of Durban, and three Irish cyclists are following a different route from the tour on their six-month trip, through which they are raising money for the Millennium Promise, an organisation devoted to ending extreme poverty in Africa by 2025.

They are travelling without support trucks or many of the amenities the tour offers, such as prepared meals.

They hope to raise \$300 000, enough money to support a village of 5 000 people in Tanzania for one year. They have raised \$130 000 so far.

On their website the group describe their first week, spent cycling through Egypt before taking the ferry to Sudan.

"From the hustle and bustle of frenetic Cairo to the rural villages along the Nile, the pyramids at Giza to the temples at Luxor, the spectacular mosques to the ancient monasteries, this

is a country rich in history, spirit and contrasts.

"It is also very much a country of children. Far removed from the PlayStation generation, they smile and wave, kick footballs and shout, 'Welcome to Egypt, what's your name?'"

Meanwhile, the tour group are cycling through Sudan for five days and are to arrive on Sunday night in bustling Dongola, where they are to stay in a former zoo converted into a campsite and rest on Monday.

Mark Hansel, a South African in the Tour d'Afrique group, said the hardest part for him had been riding in the

truck while others cycled.

"I've had a sore knee since day two. I don't want it to get worse ... so I am taking it easy.

"I thought it was about fitness, but the day-to-day grind takes a lot out of your body."

In an e-mail, Chris Bohner, a staff rider, said: "As riders float along Lake Nasser, they are relaxing their legs and mentally preparing for the sands of Sudan. With roads of varying quality, with some days cycling across nothing but knee-high sand, riders are putting on thick tyres and strapping an awful lot of water to their bikes."

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