



A hike with a purpose

18 Kearney MEA adventurers summit Mount Kilimanjaro

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In an inspiring act of determination and teamwork, a group of 18 Kearney adventurers from our offices in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Qatar, and South Africa embarked on a seven-day expedition to conquer the towering summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa at 5,895 meters. Organized under the auspices of our Mental Health & Well-Being (MH&WB) initiative, the journey was a test of both physical and mental fortitude, challenging every member in ways they never could have imagined.

The hike aimed to promote five elements:

- **Physical fitness** as the hikers had to go through several trainings in preparation for reaching the summit
- **Mental strength** that helped the hikers develop resilience and perseverance as they had to hike through challenging weather conditions, including strong winds, low temperatures, rains, extreme sun, and sand
- **Team-building** that helped the hikers build trust, strengthen relationships with other hikers, and create a strong sense of unity

- **Personal growth** that helped the hikers grow and develop in new ways and provide opportunities for self-reflection
- **Adventure and excitement** by providing a unique and memorable experience for the hikers and injecting some fun and excitement into the workplace

In preparation for the hike, the team underwent a variety of trainings, including Pilates, running, swimming, yoga, weightlifting, and of course—hiking! Hikes included the notable Büyükada in Istanbul’s Princes’ Islands, where they completed a 12-kilometer hike.

In total, the team rounded up more than 500 hours of training and 4,000 meters of elevation on Strava over two months, ready to take on the roof of Africa. On September 30, the team met up on Moshi Tanzania and then kickstarted the formidable hike on October 1.

The ascent to the summit was marked by grueling terrain and unpredictable weather, but the relentless spirit of the team ultimately led to their successful summit. Trekking more than 12 hours, the team felt an overwhelming sense of accomplishment when they reached Uhuru Peak.

But this wasn’t just any climb; it was a hike with a purpose.

The Kilimanjaro initiative was organized into three workstreams: training (focused on physical preparation), communications and PR (aimed at outreach and information dissemination), and corporate social responsibility (dedicated to social responsibility initiatives).

Beyond personal achievement, the MEA MH&WB team collaborated with the Social Impact & Sustainability (SI&S) team to combine personal resilience with a broader vision for societal impact.

The hikers participated in many corporate social responsibility activities prior to and after the hike, maximizing the impact of the trip by expanding Kearney’s community outreach, social impact, and sustainability efforts.

Our hikers worked with the UAE’s Heroes of Hope to deliver basketball sessions to people of determination. Heroes of Hope is a not-for-profit group that works to develop sporting, social, and interpersonal skills for people at all levels and ages. Our colleagues empowered participants by opening pathways for athletes to reach their full fitness potential and accomplish their dreams.

The team also partnered with Model COP to coach UAE high school students to become climate change champions.

After their ascent, our hikers went beyond this incredible achievement to further impact the communities and environment around them. The hikers teamed up with Greenmanjaro, a Dutch charity working in Tanzania to implement practical solutions for improving resilience and sustainability in the life and climate of the community in Kilimanjaro.

The Kearney team worked on three projects:

- Planting avocado trees in the Rau Forest Nursery to help overcome deforestation
- Exploring the tree planting near schools in Lower Moshi
- Discovering school vegetable gardens in Mawala and Kiyungi to provide children with nutritious meals

Now, the team is working with the SI&S team to define additional collaboration opportunities with Greenmanjaro and leave a lasting impact on the local Kilimanjaro community.

The MH&WB team is strategizing for an even larger-scale impact next year, aiming to organize an annual expedition akin to Kilimanjaro to ensure an ongoing engagement and wellness enhancement opportunities for the entire firm.

Congratulations to the team for their dedication and commitment to reaching the summit!

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