

## **Trekkers conquer Toubkal!**

Oral health charity Dentaïd is celebrating the success of another overseas trek as supporters climbed the highest peak in Northern Africa, Mount Toubkal, at the end of September.

The week long trip in Morocco began with the group trekking through the stunning Atlas Mountains before ending in Marrakesh. This was the chance for the trekkers to experience both traditional and modern Morocco and gain an insight into the countries culture.

As the group began the trek and experiencing traditional Morocco they walked past berber villages, along mule trails and through valleys. They began to bond through tales of training, fundraising and dentistry. People had come from all over the UK, from the Isle of Man to Salisbury, to take part in the experience.

The five days of trekking that followed were extremely challenging. The trekkers faced steep inclines, difficult passes, heavy rain and snow. In spite of this the group showed excellent team spirit and everyone pulled together to enjoy themselves and complete the challenge, whilst sharing some laughs along the way.

On the final trekking day the group woke early and left for their final destination at 6am, the summit of Toubkal. The four hour ascent was over rocky terrain and was difficult to negotiate and soon everyone began to feel the effects of the altitude. Walking conditions were made harder by the strong gusts of wind on the mountain and the snow that lay on the ground capping the mountain top. However the group persevered to reach the summit and were ultimately successful. The sense of achievement, knowing the conditions each and every trekker had battled through, was a fantastic feeling. On the snow capped peak the group took photos, congratulated each other and even found time for a snowball fight before beginning the long ascent back to the village of Imlil and finally Marrakesh where a celebratory meal took place to toast the trekkers achievements.

Felicity Patterson, Dentaïd's fundraising assistant, who accompanied the trek said, "The trek was a fantastic experience and every day was eventful! Although this was an extremely hard challenge it is something that I certainly won't forget. I'd like to thank all the trekkers who took part and became such a close and supportive team. I would definitely recommend anybody thinking about taking part in a challenge like this to do so."

The trek has so far raised a significant amount of money for Dentaïd which will be vital for many of our new projects that are currently taking place. One of Dentaïd's most significant project at present is looking at the issue of Infant Oral Mutilation, known as IOM. This is a practise mainly prevalent in African communities whereby infants milk teeth are removed with bicycle spokes, finger nails or something similar, believed to be worms or maggots in the mouth. This can cause serious effects, from infection to long term damage to adult teeth. Dentaïd is currently research this issue with a view to combat it. Other ways that the funds the trekkers have raised will benefit Dentaïd include dental surgeries and our schools programme.

Dentaïd is planning to trek the Great Wall of China from 19-28 September 2009. If you are interested in taking part then please visit [www.dentaïd.org](http://www.dentaïd.org) for further details. Alternatively you can telephone 01794 324249 to speak to the fundraising team or email [info@dentaïd.org](mailto:info@dentaïd.org).