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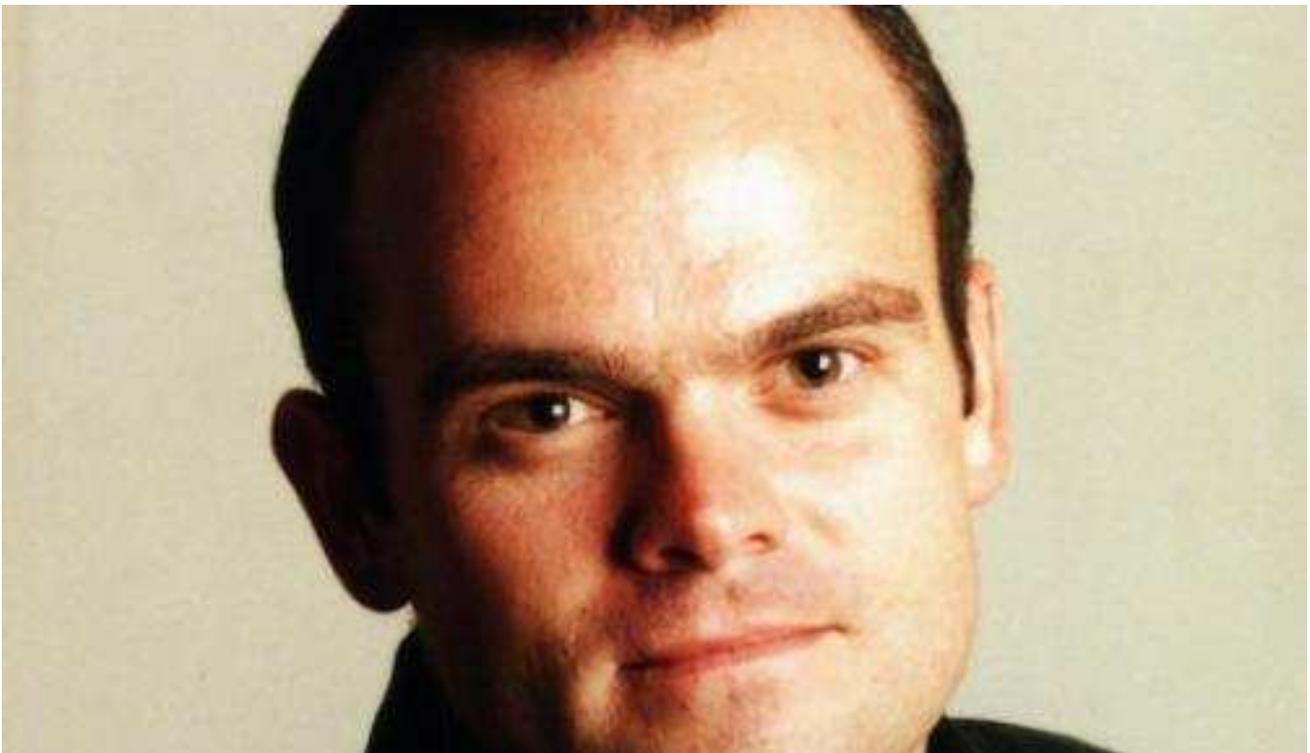
# Kevin McCallum: Island style cycling changing lives

**SPORT** / 23 September 2016, 08:16am

 **Kevin McCallum**

If it's Friday, then I must be in Mauritius.

Today, the Change a Life tour starts on the island of the dodo, a four-day 500km bicycle cruise that will raise loads of money for people who do good. A party with a cause. A bike ride with a reason. And I'm nervous.



**Chief Sports Writer Kevin McCallum is in Mauritius, participating in the Change a Life tour, a really noble event. Credit: INDEPENDENT MEDIA**

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I have ridden a bike two or maybe three times since the Cape Town Cycle Tour. My 2016 Cycle Tour lasted all of 30km before my rear tyre was destroyed, popping off the rim and tearing the sidewall. I spent the morning drinking at a bikers' bar, thoroughly disgusted at not finishing a Cycle Tour for the first time. And then I

was invited to ride the Computershare Change a Life initiative, which is “dedicated to a peaceful future for all South Africans and it supports highly effective grassroots projects that are geared towards achieving this ultimate goal”.

Businessmen and others pay to ride on the tour each year - the money raised, and it goes into in the many millions, is used for a variety of projects.

Like the DNA Project, which “seeks to strengthen crime detection through DNA sampling”; the Martin Dreyer Change a Life Academy, which “changes the lives of talented youths in KwaZulu Natal’s Valley of a Thousand Hill”; the iChoose to Change Life “transforms youths who have been in conflict with the law into confident value-driven leaders”; the Nemato Change a Life “empowers youth in Nelson Mandela Township” in Port Alfred; Change a Life Karate-Do “inspires disadvantaged children to become productive members of society through the discipline and power of karate.”; the Change a Life Rape Crisis Centre is “an organisation of volunteers recruited from communities and trained to support rape survivors in Cape Town”.

The Nemato programme is an exponential success, combining academics with sport. They have one of the strongest tumbling and trampolining clubs in the country.

Athenkosi Hlekani “was the first member of Nemato Change a Life to graduate with a degree in business science and is now employed as a teacher and rowing head coach at Jeppe Boys High School in Joburg as he completes a post-graduate course in education.”

Some 20 students from the programme are enrolled at universities and colleges outside of Port Alfred.

The project recently boasted of Noluthando Nakana, who “graduated with a qualification in nature conservation and has been offered an internship by PetroSA to work on a firebreak project in Mossel Bay.

For school-leavers not able to study, the club searches for skills development, job shadowing and employment opportunities.

For the next four days Rob Hunter, local professional Hanco Kachelhoffer and the rest of us will trundle around an island on bicycles. We will ride for Athenkosi and Noluthando. It seems like the finest way to spend a weekend.

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