

# 8 years of wanderlust

Swiss couple Dario and Sabine Schworer and their three children have cycled over 18,000 km, sailed about 80,000 km and climbed 400,000 metres to spread the green message to 50,000 students. And they aren't done yet

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**D**ario Shworer and his family – wife Sabine and three children – will be at a complete loss when their 14-year journey across the world comes to an end. And they've only completed eight years so far.

Dario, a climatologist and mountain guide from Switzerland, and Sabine, a nurse, set out in 2002 on cycles, with a 15-metre-long yacht equipped with 11 solar panels and two wind turbines. Their aim is to spread awareness among the younger generation about global warming.

During their travels, the team expanded to include their three babies Salina (5), Andri (3) and Noe (1).

That, for you, is the ToptoTop Global Climate Expedition, powered by natural energy. The Schworers' children have seen no other life.

To date, they have cycled over 18,000 km, sailed about 80,000 km, climbed 400,000 vertical metres and spoken to about 50,000 students. They have climbed the highest peak in every continent though they are yet to make it to the top of Denali in North America and Vinson Massif in Antarctica.

## ORIGIN OF EXPEDITION

"We come from a remote place in Switzerland. In 1999, we were alarmed on hearing about global warming and its consequences. Our mission is to tell children that the earth is still worth saving. We have to enjoy nature, but have to give some-



During Dario and Sabine's travels, the team expanded to include their three babies – Salina, Andri and Noe. Together, they've also cleared about 1,000 tonnes of trash

thing back, which is only fair. After every place that we visited, we became more optimistic about saving our beautiful planet," says Dario.

Starting from Europe, the couple went to the Americas and Australia before reaching Asia. They entered India through Kolkata last December. Around that time, Noe was diagnosed with a kidney infection. The team had to return to Switzerland for an operation. In February, they were back in Kolkata to resume their journey. They headed to Nepal when they launched Operation Mount Everest Cleanup with the help of volunteers.

So far, the team has cleared about 1,000 tonnes of trash.

Considering their aim, sponsors were hard to come by. To bring them on board, the team offered to try out their products in extreme conditions.

So far, they have visited 47 nations. In every country, their agenda is simple. "We make sure that, through media coverage, local schools know about our arrival and mission. We visit schools to organise interactive sessions and clear trash in the neighbourhood. The children promise to clear garbage once they are shown how their small effort can affect the larger picture," says Dario.

In fact, so enthused are the young ones that, following the flash floods in Ladakh, children from around the world contacted the Schworers online with offers to contribute colour pencils for their counterparts in Leh.

## FAMILY LIFE ON THE ROAD

Sabine often works with local hospitals and the children attend local schools. In Bangalore, they are attending Gaia pre-school. This way, they make new friends, pick up new languages and learn about other cultures.

The couple also home-schools their children, often with the help of the volunteers accompanying them.

Talking of the couple's relationship during the course of the expedition, Dario says, "It has become stronger because differences and problems are resolved immediately. For example, if there were to be a storm in the next five minutes, we have to work together. If I fall overboard, then it is Sabine who has to throw me the rope."

But how do they deal with questions like 'Are we there yet'?

"We thought of wrapping up the expedition in about four years, but it has taken longer," Dario says. The Schworers expect their expedition to last another six years, which would give them an entry in the record books. It is common for them to fend off calls from family urging them to return once in a while.

And what about 'I am bored amusing the kids'? Dario says, "My children do not watch TV. They can never get bored and play with anything."

Utopia, surely.