



ActionAid Kenya Trip 2017

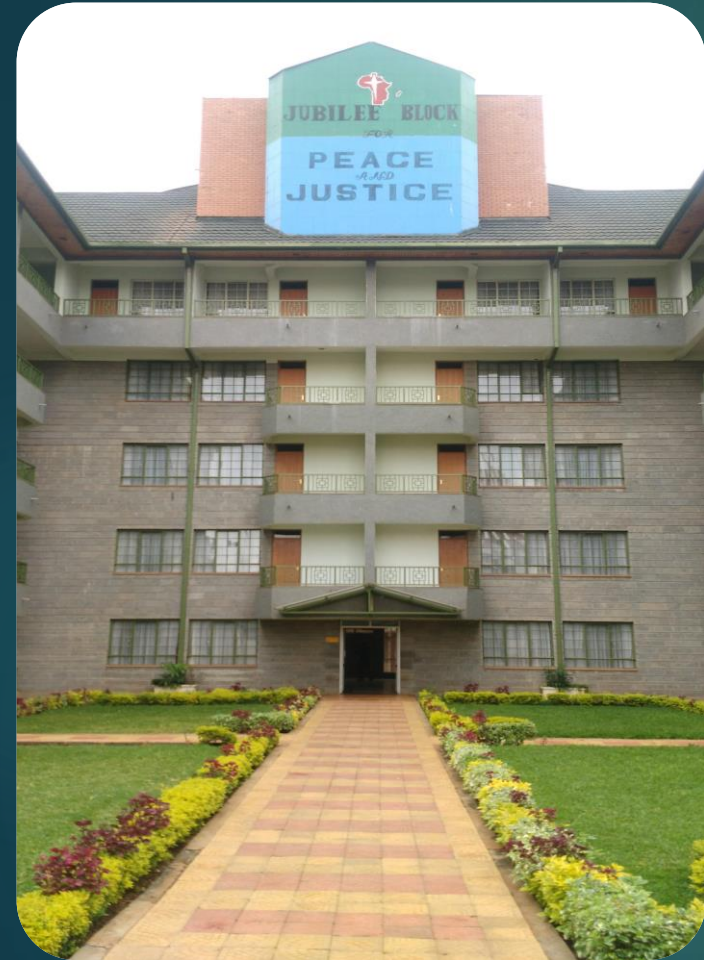
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Background information about ActionAid

- ❑ ActionAid is an international NGO working with over 15 million people in 45 countries for a world free from poverty and injustice.
- ❑ ActionAid was founded in 1972.
- ❑ As part of winning the ActionAid Ireland speech competition every year, the winners have the wonderful opportunity to travel and see the projects that ActionAid Ireland have funded in Africa and Asia.
- ❑ In my case I was lucky enough to travel to Kenya for a week with my teacher Ms. Cooke and the other winner Jessica and her teacher to witness these projects.



First day (Memorable Moments)



On our first day in Nairobi we were extremely exhausted after travelling for over 16 hours. We stayed in the AACCC Desmond Tutu Conference Centre which was located in close proximity to the ActionAid Kenya office. In the evening over dinner we discussed the different projects that were going on in the field with one of the ActionAid Kenya staff.



Second day (Memorable Moments)

Early in the morning after a delicious breakfast we went to visit the ActionAid office. We were introduced to Judy, Agnes and Makena who went on to talk to us about the programmatic approaches and principles of the organisation. We were also given a short security briefing as later on we were travelling to kajiado county. We also discussed the access to justice project which was set up to provide a safe space in which people can report incidents and receive help.



Third day (Memorable Moments)

On our first day in the field(kajiado) we met the courageous and inspiring women of the Iloodokilani women's network in Kajiado. These were a group of women who took it upon themselves to make sure that the young girls in their village were protected from early marriage, FGM etc and were given an education. We also got to learn about how they made beads and soap to earn money so they can fund the amazing work that they do.



Fourth Day (Memorable Moments)

On the fourth day of this unforgettable trip we had the chance to meet and talk with a group of girls aged from 5 to 12 from one of the local primary schools. This was such an eye opening experience and something I will never forget. Hearing about all the hardships and challenges that these young girls faced on a daily basis just broke my heart. However, the courage and bravery that these young girls possessed really inspired me to become the best version of myself that I can be and to never give up on myself or my dreams.



On the same day we also visited another primary school. We asked them some questions about their favourite subjects and the things they like about school. Jessica also volunteered to sing them a song on her ukulele as they have never seen one before. We brought along some presents from Ireland such as bubbles, copies and pencils. The joy that exploded in the room as the children saw bubbles floating gently in the air for the first time made me feel so incredibly grateful that I could witness this moment with them. Overall it was such an emotional and eventful day.



Day Five (Memorable Moments)

On the fifth day, we went to visit a pre-school. We decided to be very adventurous and travelled the entire way to the pre-school at the back of an open van. This was such an incredible experience. As Ms. Cooke said 'We now know how it feels like to be in a washing machine'.



When we finally arrived at the pre-school we were greeted by the principle and the cutest stares from all the little children as they wondered who we were.

Then we were taken to one of their classrooms where we interacted with the children a bit more. The most special moment came about when we started to hand out all the pencils, colours, copies, balloons and bubbles that we brought with us. All their faces started to light up and their happiness was uncontrollable. At that moment, I truly felt like my heart was melting from how cute they were.





Last two days (Memorable Moments)

On the Friday after we finished up with all our visits we went back to Nairobi. The Saturday before our trip was over we went to a Giraffe centre and an elephant sanctuary. In terms of the best days of my life this would be the second. Giraffes are incredible animals that are not just graceful but are also gigantic and immensely beautiful. It was always a dream of mine to see elephants and to be able to touch one. On this day my dream came true.



Thank you so much to ActionAid Kenya and ActionAid Ireland for giving me the opportunity to experience such a life changing adventure. At the beginning of this trip I didn't expect that it would impact me as much as it did. I have no words to describe my gratitude and respect for everyone that I met in Kenya. This experience has really changed my life for the better and made me realise the amount of opportunities that I receive on a daily basis and how to take advantage of them.

Thank you to Ms. Cooke, Jean and Jessica for also making this an unforgettable trip.

