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Watashiato

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This is certainly true as this article indicates. For all the people we have met during these trips, we will never know how deeply our impact went or if there was any at all but such is the beauty of life.

It all started in November of 2018. It was a plan that hatched when we joined Form One and volunteered to teach Catechism classes in Faida. The intention was to help those who are deemed by society as “less fortunate”. The plan was to encourage one of us to take us to their upcountry "ushago" so as to carry out community service. Our chaperones were mainly Miss Kariuki and Miss Veronicah.

The first destination of choice was Bungoma. This is the county bountiful in maize and sugarcane.... The duration of stay was 5 days and

Rahab, one of our group members gladly hosted us for the entire time. We departed on a Monday to return on Saturday evening. Excitement was rife in the air. It was definitely a trip of many laughs and memories as we got the chance to bond with those members of the group who ordinarily would only get a passing hello in the hallways of the school. We carried out community service at a Catholic mission hospital called St Damiano. We cleaned up and down the hospital, talked to patients as well as interacted with the doctors and nurses there. To start the day off we would walk to a church to attend Holy Mass. We also managed to say the rosary as we made our way back to the house. We had ultimately managed to do our very best and we felt that we had made a small but significant change to those we interacted with. The trip then culminated with an excursion to Kakamega forest and a short trip of

seven minutes to Uganda. “Welcome to Uganda”, it pinged on one of the phones.

It was therefore expected of us that we would do the same kind of trip again but to a different location this time. Terry gladly agreed to host us. This time it was in 2019. The place of choice was Kirinyaga. As was routine, we travelled on a Monday to arrive on Saturday evening. We were to carry out the community service at a children’s home. We were warmly welcomed by Terry’s great-grandmother who despite her many her years, she looked as fit as a fiddle needing only assistance with a cane.

We were able to interact with the children in the home, they told their stories, some of woe, others of triumph which helped me to be humble and grateful for the life and privileges that I had. The trip helped to further cement the friendships

already made and to really accommodate each other's differences. I mean, from where else are you going to learn that your best friend snores? As it was the norm, we culminated the trip at the foot of Mt Kenya, taking picturesque photos by a waterfall. With each trip made, we donated necessary stuff as well as basking in the beauty of the stories each person and place had to say.

The next trip was to Nanyuki in November of that year. By now, our vision and goals for the trip were so inculcated in us like Scripture. The idea of sanctification of work was ever so present as we did the community service. Natalie offered her place up to us. We worked in Naromoru disabled children's home. We learnt much about rehabilitating the physically disabled. We spent a lot of time with the children and even if we went to help we felt we were the ones helped to appreciate

everything we have of which we have not done anything special to deserve.

And lastly the trip we did this year in late May 2022, may as well have left a lasting impression on my psyche. It was immediately after we completed Form Four studies. I'm sure it did too with the rest of the team which by this time was given an unofficial name "FRIENDS" by our mentor Miss Kariuki.

This final trip to Bungoma was dubbed Bungoma 2.0 as we were somewhat returning to Bungoma albeit staying in a different house. Sasha, one of the teammates decided to graciously host us at a place called Kanduyi. The place of choice was a children's home run by the Children's Welfare Society. We attended Holy Mass every morning at 7am so as to give the day and all its fruits to the Lord. We were also able to glean a lot

of information about the adoption process in the place as well as the history of the organization (Children's Welfare society). It was all in all a fruitful endeavor. Even as I write this article, the memories are somewhat different with my brain trying to latch on the feelings evoked. But I know that with every passing day, the memories get reconstructed until they are just but a fond feeling.

But as Saint Josemaria says "Brief indeed is our time for loving, for giving, for making atonement. It would be very wrong, therefore, for us to waste it, or to cast this treasure irresponsibly overboard. **We mustn't squander this period of the world's history which God has entrusted to each one of us.**

And thus I conclude my long and windy tale of all our experiences. Here's to more like them. And to anyone out there reading this, I hope

that I have elicited feelings of delight and adventure to go out there and give.

Christine Ng'ang'an

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