

## Eshe's diary day 4: A bus with a difference

**15-year-old Headliners reporter Eshe discovers how a bus in Jamaica is being used to save lives. And why an invite to the High Commissioner reception isn't a night off.**

Another early start to another busy day, but that's the hard life of being in Jamaica!

Just when I started to think that there couldn't possibly be anymore amazing, inspirational and passionate young people left in Jamaica, we are introduced to the team at Children First and the well-known Bashy Bus Kru.

Venturing out of Kingston and into Spanish town, made for another incredible day but a very different experience.

In Jamaica it was recently discovered that a lot of young people were having sex on the back of school buses, so at Children First they successfully decided to turn this negative into a positive. The Bashy Bus is unlike any other bus, for instance it is brightly multicoloured and it has no seats only a bed. Your original thought, like mine, may be that surely the bed is promoting having sex on the back of buses, but actually it is used to do HIV tests. One of the major features the Bashy Bus has to offer are it's free HIV tests, which are extremely popular testing tens of thousands of young people in the last two years.

Dance, drama and singing appear to come naturally to the Jamaicans, so it was no surprise to us when they said they did their peer education through performances. There are 11 different pieces ranging from drug abuse to teenage pregnancy or HIV/AIDS and depending on where they are going with the Bashy Bus they do a performance to suit the needs and major issues in that community, to banish any misunderstandings or discrimination.

But what did surprise us was most of what we had to do that day.

Firstly they sang us a really great fun song and then asked us to sing one back, and so we ended up singing S Club 7's Reach for the Stars as it was the only song we all knew the words to. After feeling slightly inadequate at our embarrassing choice of song against their performance, we were then found out we had to make up our own community drama in groups.

All of us youth advisers were cunningly pushed into the main roles and the Bashy Bus Kru decided to stand back and let us get on with it. Obviously resistant at first because we still had very little faith in our acting skills, we quickly realised we are a lot more creative than we thought. There were some impressive performances in the end, possibly the early work of some Oscar winners i.e. Joel's dying scene!

It got more outgoing and creative when we had to improvise an impression of something or someone, with Hannah singing Bob Marley and Alex being schizophrenic. I was truly impressed.

Giving a speech on life in the UK, after watching their terrific film on life in Jamaica, I felt like we were ruining the excitement of the day and being a bit boring but the entire Kru appeared really interested and asked tons of questions, so I soon stopped feeling like that.

To end the day they treated us to their performance on teenage pregnancy. It was absolutely remarkable and the confidence they all shine with is still breathtaking.

After in a short space of time, we all managed to get the media material we needed and our efficiency was very notable and made me really proud to be part of our group, because it was hard work with everyone wandering around and feeling really tired.

Rushing back to the hotel to get ready to go to a reception hosted by the High Commissioner, we were excited by the fact that we were actually going to have a whole night to relax and hang out with the young people we'd met throughout the week. But when we arrived we were told that we had to do two interviews and they took over an hour-and-a-half. Slightly disappointed by missing the majority of the reception which was actually for us, we realised quite how much work this trip involved.

After finally founding out exactly what a High Commissioner was, we were free to roam around and have a good time, which was exactly what we did, because who knows when we will be getting another chance to do that.

Another excellent day ended, it was also the only one that I didn't eat myself half to death.

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