

## NDT Kenya 2016 – Olivia Hellas Report

The 2016 NDT tour to Kenya was without a doubt the best of experience of my life. Before going on the tour I was a little apprehensive despite being given as much information as possible from Julie and Monica I was excited but nervous about the unknown. I was really excited to be part of the amazing work NDT do because I had heard how much of a difference it makes to children's lives, this was all put into perspective once we arrived. It sounds silly but I felt like I was in a film when we began our journey in Africa because I vaguely knew what to expect but it was more surreal than anticipated. The 'tourist' time before we started coaching gave us a chance to bond whilst seeing the sights which definitely helped us to gel as a group. The night before the first day of coaching we had a team meeting where we got to meet the local volunteers and some of the teachers, for me this was where it really sank in that we were about to coach netball to children who spoke a completely different language and knew little English but the prospect of the challenge was motivating.



At dinner on the Sunday evening we had a meeting to discuss what we would be coaching on the first day, the handbooks provided by Julie and Monica were really useful and we then selected some drills and games from the book that we would then use on Monday. We were also taught 'The Chicken Song' that I will unfortunately never forget! Although, the children loved it. We were then paired up on the Monday morning with our local volunteers and the students we would be coaching, the children were really enthusiastic and eager to learn which made the week ahead so worthwhile. After every night of coaching we had a meeting to discuss the days positives and issues, if any, and discussed the next day and what we were going to coach. Some of these meetings were more challenging than others i.e. the ones without electricity! (All part of the experience). Every day travelling too and from coaching destinations was far from boring with various different modes of transport being used, my favourite being our transport from the morning session to lunch which happened to be the back of a bicycle, which is more comfortable than you might think! As a coach it was a pleasure to see the progress and improvement of every single individual.

The most difficult day by far was selecting just 10 players from each school to play in the tournament on Friday, because of their enthusiasm alone I wanted to pick them all. Tournament day was pretty hectic because of course we live in "mzungu" time and the schools live in African time, which both have very different concepts of time! We all felt so much fulfilment and achievement in organising the schools, the tournament and just seeing the children have fun playing netball, it was even better when one of my schools were Runners Up for the shield. After tournament day we travelled back to Uganda where we stayed for the final weekend of our trip where we did some shopping, bungee jumping for those that wanted to and white water rafted down the River Nile which was a fantastic experience.

I was surprised how much we were with the locals and how much we 'lived their life', we learnt how to make chapattis which was our staple diet for a week! We also learnt how to wash clothes African style, I'm not sure I will be taking that to Uni! The team and the locals are what made this trip so enjoyable. We got on really well as a group and the locals gave us the best African experience they could, particular shout out to Mary and Brenda! When it was time to say goodbye there were a few tears (mainly from Julie), after one of the best 12 days of my life I didn't want to leave because I met some of the most amazing people I have ever met, who are doing amazing things for the children and for netball as a whole. I will support NDT in anyway I can in the future because they really are changing lives and I am proud to say I was a part of that.



**2 September 2016**