

The parents & brothers come to visit

My first visitors; Mum, Dad and my brothers (Matthew and Andrew). It was so lovely to see them!

We spent the first little while just doing normal, everyday things. They came to an Arabic class, an English class, to Refuge, to the orphanage, to church, to Garbage City. They also got to meet some of my friends, and spend time getting to know them a bit. My veggie man was particularly excited about meeting them!

While in the city they were able to stay in a house that is fairly close to mine. This worked fantastically, and they really enjoyed having a house to come home to after a big day out.

We went away on a trip to the South. It was a fantastic trip, we saw so many things in such a short time. One of the highlights was probably seeing Matthew and Andrew wearing Arab headdresses while riding a camel!

After we got back to the city, we did a little trip to the North (meaning we travelled from the very bottom of this country, to the very top!). We ate fish by the Sea, went to the Museum, and spent time walking around and exploring. It was nice to have a break from the city, and be able to be a tourist for a little while!

The five of us managed to conquer the art of squeezing into one taxi together, and by the end of their trip the family were also getting quite good at the perilous road crossings!

Their trip went really quickly, and before I knew it it was time to say goodbye. It was a lovely few weeks.

Refuge

Work has been really busy this last week. Claudette (the other dietitian) and I have been madly trying to prepare resources and presentations for the training course we are running next week. It is kind of exciting, as the project I have been working on for the last few months is almost done! However, it's also been pretty stressful, as there has been a lot of last-minute jobs to do. On the positive side, I got to spend a lovely afternoon with Claudette and Ghada this week. Ghada is getting married in 2 months, so we decided to have a mini-Hens night substitute! We went to a ceramics café, where you can choose a piece of pottery to paint while drinking coffee! It was great spending some time with these two outside work hours. Claudette and Ghada are what I will miss most about working at the Refuge.



Learning Arabic

It's been a little while since I talked about my Arabic learning, so I thought I would fill you in! My language classes stopped for the month of July, as my classmates were travelling. I didn't want to lose the little Arabic I'd learnt, so I asked one of my local friends to tutor me for the month. This has been fantastic!

In class we learn mainly grammar, with little time for conversation. However, with my friend I am learning new vocabulary and am getting a LOT of practice talking. This has also been a great way of learning more about the local culture. I am now feeling a little more confident at speaking Arabic in everyday situations.

It has been surprising what a huge difference a little language can make! The locals love that we are trying to learn Arabic, and are always keen to teach us new words and help us practice. It has definitely helped with building relationships with locals.

Church

Church is in a suburb about 45 minutes away by Metro. Its where the orphanage is that I visit once a week. Last week I went to visit the church that most of the orphanage boys go to. I thought it was fantastic! One of my German friends was preaching, so the sermon was in English. The church was nice and small, and the people were overly welcoming. The music was great too, just guitar and a local hand drum. Plus I could pick up enough of the words to know what it was talking about! It was so great to have fellowship with some local Christians.

I also got to meet a lovely bunch of local girls there. It was so encouraging seeing their attitude and outlook on life, and to see how much we had in common, despite all our obvious differences. I am hoping to visit this church again, and spend more time getting to know these girls in the future.



Meet F.

F. is one of the boys from the orphanage. He is 18 and in his first year of university. F. does a lot of work with street kids here in the city.

I have learnt so much from him, and his generosity to the kids. Growing up in an orphanage F. doesn't have much. However, seeing how generous he is with the little he has, has been a bit of a wake-up call for me. I once asked F. if he found working with the street kids difficult. He said to me "Katie, if you've got God in your heart, its easy". This is so evident in F's life. He knows he has been forgiven and given much, so he loves these kids with joy, in response to this.