

Note from *people and places*: this volunteer's placement was designed specifically for them – they went through our full matching process, as we've been doing with you. The placement report indicates their particular skills and experience – yours may be similar or completely different – your own placement will make best use of **your** experience and skills. Every volunteer is different – in what they give and what they gain. Reports from previous volunteers serve to give you as good a picture as possible about the project. If you have any questions about any of the detail in this report please do not hesitate to contact me at kate@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

Esme Hilliard - Upton Girls Centre, St Lucia

Dates 20/1/2014 – 28/2/2014

pre departure preparation – the placement outline and discussions with Dianne Ashman (*people and places' volunteer programme advisor*) was very helpful as enabled me to do some pre departure preparation and take appropriate resources.

orientation and preparation at the start of the placement – very helpful including doing the bus route to the Centre. Met with Sacred Sports regularly (*people and places' local partners: Sacred Sports Foundation*).

what did we do well? communication with Kate always thorough and helpful! Yinka always at the end of her phone if we needed her!

what could we do better? always try to get as much detail in advance of the placement and resources volunteer needs to take to placement. (Mine was pretty accurate!)

note: it is often challenging for our local partners and projects to provide fully accurate details – hence the need for all volunteers to approach their placements with a willingness to be adaptable and understanding

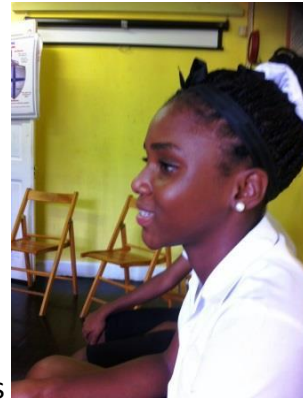
your experience and work – I used and left behind (2) workbook Build Your Own Rainbow – career and life management - Hopson & Scally. Bit old but some very useful. I had used it previously on myself and found it extremely useful. In the first week I got to know staff and clients (the girls) and developed an understanding of the ethos and aims of the centre. In the second week I was given my own timetable and sessions which I called *Taking Charge of My Life – if it's to be it's up to me*. I developed lesson plans including the following topics: self-empowerment, personal values, goals, aims, action planning, looking after yourself, skills, work values, what is work and getting experience of work, job interview role play and developing a CV.

1 Naboth's Nursery, Canterbury Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8AX
tel +44 (0) 8700 460 479 | email info@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

www.travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk



role play – interview skills



I baked carrot cakes with some of the girls which was fun!



The girls are given amazing support, guidance and boundaries – I thought the work being done at Upton was fantastic! The staff at Upton were incredibly supportive, welcoming and positive. Prisca (principal) and I met regularly and she gave me clear direction but also listened and accepted my ideas on lesson content.

Some of the staff and local volunteers - there were 2 FT counsellors to whom the girls had access whenever needed as well as planned sessions



Miss Josephine, FT counsellor



*Miriam & Alison,
volunteer social workers*



*Patricia, school secretary &
IT teacher with Esme*

your recommendations for the input of future volunteers - a particular area of your work which could be continued by others and how would you suggest this could be done? In fact Prisca arranged for a member of staff to continue using the workbook. In terms of what else, I've given this thought since my return and think it would be good to develop further ideas around being self-employed and developing a small business with very practical step by step guidance. I have passed on contact details to Prisca of someone I met that was involved in working with young people on entrepreneurial skills.

It was a really good placement! Success was that I seemed to have the skills that fitted in with Upton's requirements and was able to embrace the Upton ethos.

what was the highlight of your volunteer experience? The girls at Upton gradually showing their trust in me; some lovely conversations with the staff and developing relationships with them.



Maione & the girls making Valentines cards for people in care down the road - Maione volunteered there in her spare time!

would you recommend volunteering to other people, or not? Please tell us why. Of course! It's interesting, a chance to get to know another culture, meet new people, share ideas and experiences, to do something worthwhile.

how did you spend your leisure time? Swimming, sunbathing, drinking rum cocktails, discovering the island (mainly on local buses), Rotary party at Governor General's house, meeting lots of interesting people! It was great to have Val and Val there as volunteers/neighbours – we shared experiences over Happy Hour cocktails, invited each other to dinner and discovered parts of the island together.

how was your accommodation? Great! Near the beach and shops etc. spacious and simple.



Our pad in Saint Lucia



*chatting with the
Governor General*



*weekend trip to Marigot Bay
with co-volunteers*

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