



LIVE CHAT WITH KENYAN FRIENDS

In Year 8 Geography we have been investigating tourism in Mombasa, Kenya as part of our 'Personal connections' unit.

Through the "Personal Connections Unit" students researched issues such as costs, inclusions in holidays, fair wages for workers and the impact of tourists on the environment in Mombasa, Kenya. For many students in 8C Geography the reality of living in poverty but working in a "5 star Tourist Resort" came as a stark contrast to life in Australia and created a number of questions.

As an extension of our class work I gathered together 8C's excellent questions and concerns about life in Kenya. I then sent these questions through to Bishop Evans Mkala and Mrs Serah Evans. These two exceptional people not only run a church in the slum area of Kayole (Nairobi City) but also work tirelessly at a "Hope Centre". This is a small room they rent in the same area as the church. Woman who are in distress or have suddenly become homeless, have no food or are in complete desperation.

The Hope Centre is a place where they can provide comfort, a cup of tea (sometimes due to costs) and help for those in distress. Bishop Evans and Serah are close friends and they agreed, with enthusiasm, to stay up to 1am so it coincided with 8C's Geography lesson. They could then answer the student's questions in a live video conversation link up which we projected up onto our classroom's large video screens. The students listened to Bishop Evans and Serah Evans insightful answers, which then created a few more! We all found this incredibly valuable as it gave them an opportunity to ask the tough questions that are often left unanswered. Issues such as education, what happens to toilet waste since there are no toilets in the area, transport to work, fresh water or lack of, sickness that is caused by contamination of food/water, diseases, what kind of clothes are worn by people and what businesses look like in their area.

Moving around the room, with my laptop, student asked their supplementary questions and personally meet them. We also had the opportunity to pray together for their work, guidance as to how we can support work such as theirs' and for long term problems in Kenya, Africa.

One awesome outcome of our conversation was Bishop and Serah Evans being able to tell the students that they ARE privileged living here in Australia and attending a school such as Thomas Hassall Anglican College. That the students should never take for granted the water that is clean from our drinking taps, the shoes they wear, the clothes they have and their parent's support in so many different ways.

Classroom learning can also be about students gaining new insights and valuing what we have, being thankful for what we have and understanding the personal story of others in our world.

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