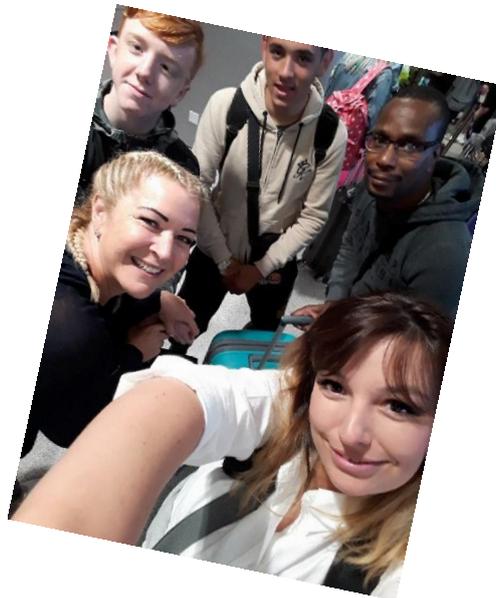


## Kenya Trip 2018

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I had the privilege of visiting Kenya with an amazing organisation called The Alternative School at the end of June early July. It has been a dream of mine to do cross cultural visits with UK young people. To get the chance to go away with them and two of their amazing pupils was incredible.

TAS like N-Gage works with those who for a huge number of reasons are struggling and have been excluded from mainstream schools. They are experts at setting young people back on the right path. All the staff I have met have very similar values and approaches to young people as N-Gage including never giving up and being a safe space for young people. They have an unbelievable ethos.

After long flights, we arrived in Kenya and went into the school/orphanage. Seeing the school and the orphanage in Kenya was a real eye opener. The school brought a tear to my eye as this was the first class I saw, especially as the kids were the same age as my youngest daughter, so seeing the environment contrast was quite stark.

We can sometimes have ideas (as westerners) that we go abroad just to bless others, in my view that couldn't be further from my experience on this trip, as it taught me a lot.

In school the pupils had deep friendships and there was a sense of togetherness and community and a hunger to learn. No bad behaviour, just pupils with their head down working and looking to better themselves.

Every day the pupils greeted us with a smile. I have to say on both trips to the school (and the orphanage) I saw happy faces. Which can sometimes be a huge difference in our own lives. At the orphanage we got to hear some of the residents rapping and dancing, oh wow, they were very talented.

On the trip I took three old work laptops and gave one to Fisher, who is the son of Christina who runs the orphanage and school. In this picture you will see two people from opposite sides of the globe united in a shared love of music.



From my experience of being in Kenya, I am currently in the process of thinking about setting up a foundation. This would be to offer practical support and skills to pupils in the orphanage and school. By this I mean helping to provide skillsets, so pupils can own and develop things like; recycling old laptops and phones, gardening equipment and social enterprises. When I gave Fisher the laptop I could literally see the cogs in his head spinning, thinking about how he could use the laptop that had just been given to him. Having such a foundation to provide practical support would enable pupils to have more life skills so they can become even more self-sufficient.

Have a good look at the Sway article, its brilliant. I would like to thank Kirsty Ann Pugh Founder and Executive Principal at TAS for trusting me to be a part of this amazing trip. Kirsty Sowerski and Elise from the school for making me feel welcome on the trip and being great travel mates.

Finally, thanks to the two pupils who were amazing. Brilliant behaviour, they took everything in their stride and were a credit to their school, families and selves.

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**Christie Spurling**

**Founder and CEO**

**N-Gage**

