



Thursday 12th December, we took off our Poverty Truth hats and all met at Planet Leisure to celebrate Christmas our way – ten pin bowling and hearty food!

I let the side down and neglected to wear Christmas attire, however the rest of us showed up in festive jumpers, earrings and sparkly t shirts.

We got our drinks – hot chocolate, squirty cream and marshmallows being the festive favourite - and split into teams, those who wanted the barriers up and those who were feeling brave and ready to face the challenge full on. The tub of chocolates was cracked open, and the bowling began.

For some, it was their first experience of bowling, so time was spent explaining the rules and how to hold the ball. There were some nervous faces as they approached the lane and launched the ball for the very first time. Confidence grew and we were soon like a group of pros with several strikes being scored.

As we took our turns, our peers shouted encouragement from the sidelines, commiserating if our ball rolled down the gutter, celebrating if we knocked down some pins. Chitchat was had and new connections were made. Two of our commissioners discovered they are both ex-military and their faces beamed as they shared stories and experiences with each other. For a few hours the commissioners were able to leave their troubles behind, laugh, relax and have some much-needed fun!

We took a break for food, by this time we were getting pretty warm, and the hot chocolate was abandoned in favour of iced water, fizzy cola and orange juice. We tucked into pizza, burgers, fries and chicken while learning from one of our commissioners that it was a very significant day for him as 12th December is Kenyan Independence Day.

Stuffed with food, we struggled to finish our final game but with a gallant effort we bowled our last balls with some of us ending with scores in the 100's – sadly mine wasn't one of them! We parted ways sharing Christmas cheer and best wishes for the New Year!

Cathryn and I reflected the next day on what an enjoyable time we'd had although we were both suffering from aching arms and necks from the 'out of the norm' exertion!

Now to spend time with family and friends before coming back in the New Year rested up and raring to go!