



Bethany Doda

Dietetics

My time in Malawi was the experience of a lifetime; the country is beautiful and definitely deserves its name the warm heart of Africa. It stood out to me how friendly and how happy everyone was all the time with such a sense of community, such a contrast to in the UK. Money truly doesn't buy happiness; people there have what they need to survive and are content.

One of my highlights was when we went out with a team who fix bore holes. The villagers were so happy and generous, offering us food which they had cooked for us and bottles of fizzy drinks as a gesture of thanks. At the second bore hole the women all came to the bore hole and were singing and dancing with us which was really nice.



Lesson planning and teaching children at three different schools was such a rewarding experience. It was wonderful to receive praise from a teacher who had really enjoyed our lesson and asked for some of our resources. We were able to use our knowledge and to make a small impact on the children's education.



Left: Beth and Lauren teaching

Below: Beth and Bryony in a classroom (still under construction!)



We went out to visit two clinics in Malawi and also a hospital. In the rural clinic I was surprised by how well they coped with so few resources and such a high patient to staff ratio. The midwife was very good and practised a sterile technique when cleaning the baby's belly button to prevent infection. The facilities were better than I expected and they had two

beds in the delivery suite but we were told it is often not enough and women deliver on the floor.

We worked on two different libraries whilst we were there. I was in a group of four and we referenced and sorted through all of the books. We then painted the library to make it more inviting and fun for the children. We went for a jungle theme and painted grass, monkey, snake, flowers and a book tree. We tried to make it useful to learn from, so I painted a rainbow with colours underneath and we also had a poster with times tables on. It was really rewarding to complete this and provide a much improved library.



Working with the children was always such a rewarding experience, when reading in the libraries the children were always so engaged.

During our stay at Nanchengwa lodge at Lake Malawi we visited Mdalacikowa Nursery where we all donated some toys as they had nothing before we arrived. The children's smiles lit up the room when we gave them each a toy to play with.



We spent two mornings playing with the children, this was a lovely experience and really good fun. They sang twinkle twinkle little star to us in English and they loved playing clapping games.



The 157 young children at the nursery line up to greet us

We were fully immersed into the Malawian culture, we wandered around the village where we stayed and got to see what life was like there. As soon as we stepped outside we had children running up to us to hold our hands. It was really interesting for me to see women cooking and also to see inside a home. Also in the village we got to see the Nyau dancers who are part of a secret society, it is a traditional dance performed by masked dancers taking on the characteristics of a character or animal in order to teach a lesson. I enjoyed watching this and found it completely unlike anything I had ever seen before

It really made me reflect when I got back home on how much we all have; so much is unnecessary and unappreciated.

I got so much out of this trip and enjoyed all of the work we did out there. This adventure exceeded my expectations and I have taken away so much from it.



Lauren, Bryony (left) and Beth
learning Chichewa at Fisherman's
Rest