



Danish Javed

Biomedical Science

Words can't describe the experience of volunteering in Malawi. I enjoyed every second of it and hope to go again in the future. From day 1 we started learning Chichewa (the main language spoken in Malawi) and a little about the culture and African music by meeting a chief and an artist. Over the next 3 weeks we spent the weekdays teaching at different schools, working on referencing and refurbishing a library, visiting clinics and hospitals, going to Tilitonse community centre, fixing boreholes for communities, making mud bricks for a new school, experiencing the local markets and going to Blantyre.



One of our biggest projects was to refurbish and reference Mbame library for the school children. The library was in a bad state and a lot of the books were not suitable for the children as they were too complicated or irrelevant. As a group we had to remove the books from the shelves, clean and sand the shelves down for painting, nail the shelves to the wall and categorise and add all books to a database. We then introduced the library to the children and read books to them. They loved it!



By helping staff at Fisherman's Rest we were able to fix 4 boreholes for different communities. Some of them had gone without a borehole for 2 years and the women and children in these villages had to walk long distances each day to get water. We spent a day making bricks for a new school in a more rural village and would also occasionally go to the community centre to play football or volleyball with the community. There was a film night towards the end and The Jungle Book was played for the whole community to watch.

Through visiting clinics and hospitals we experienced the difference in health care between the UK and Malawi and how they manage with such limited supplies and facilities. I still

remember visiting Chikwawa district hospital which had a huge shortage of staff. The hospital supports a district of 500,000 people but had only two doctors.

During our final week at Fisherman's Rest we met with the head teachers of three schools and organised a day to teach Maths, English, Science and Life Skills to students ranging from standard 3 to standard 8. We spent the evenings planning lessons and both the group and the children enjoyed and benefitted from the lessons greatly.



On the weekends we'd have activities which were amazing. The first activity was going on a safari at Majete and camping in the Africa park reserve. We saw elephants, hippos, crocodiles, monkeys, impala, warthogs and the leftovers of a lion's meal! The next activity was climbing Mount Mulanje, Africa's second highest mountain. We stayed 2 nights whilst climbing at 2 different lodges without electricity and had to cook our own food which was fun. We spent our final few days going to Nanchengwa lodge which was the highlight of my trip. We went on a boat ride in Lake Malawi and snorkelling. During our final 2 days we spent our time in the village next to Nanchengwa and got a real feel of life in Malawi and the community spirit by visiting the families of children born with albinism, visiting the nursery and watching a performance done by masked dancers. The children at the nursery really enjoyed the toys, colouring books, tennis balls and bubbles we brought for them, and got really attached to us.



Masked Nyau dancers perform in the lakeside village the group visited

I would like to thank IEMS and DASH for their generous support in helping fund this trip to Malawi and helping us make a difference.



Dan with one of the young friends he made in Malawi

Dan raised more than £600 through his community in Birmingham which was used to support community projects at Fisherman's Rest, including mending boreholes so communities have access to safe water and making a donation to a lake-side mosque to enable them to buy materials to build an outside shelter as their mosque is too small to accommodate everyone in the village.

The imam (below) talks to the group.

