



**Kieron Breen**

**Exercise, Nutrition & Health**

This summer I embarked on a trip via Coventry University into the unknown, to a country in Africa named Malawi. Unbeknown to me was the massive effect it would have on me as a person. I can honestly say it was the best experience of my life; I met a group of amazing people who I can now call good friends and helped many people of Malawi in schools and local communities.

Volunteering in schools was a real eye opener, some classes had in excess of 100 pupils per class in comparison to England where there are nearer 30. What was even more unbelievable to witness was that, in some cases a teacher may not even turn up, leaving kids without any education. It was a remarkable honour to help teach in these schools and the joy on the children's faces was remarkable, as to them we were like celebrities and they hung off our every word. The positive impact we had on the children in such a small time was so enriching, and they were so kind, happy and appreciative of our being there.

Opportunities to help feed the kids during school time were incredible. Their meals were simple; it consisted of soya, maize and sugar. It didn't taste great, yet to some; this was potentially their only meal of the day. Seeing this was another eye-opener into the problems such people face on a daily basis, and it was now I realised just how lucky we are here in the Western world.



One of the most poignant moments for me was when we went to a local village to fix a bore hole. This was the local communities' only means of water- without the need to walk miles upon miles in searing heat. It hadn't been operational for over two years and we completed

the task in less than an hour; the aftermath was something I will never forget. The whole community, who were watching intently, began singing and dancing for joy followed by a moving speech on how happy and grateful they were for our work. It was hard to believe how what seemed such a small job brought so much joy and happiness to those in Malawi.



Overall the people we met daily were always highly hospitable, there was always time for a chat or to ask if we were ok; they couldn't do enough for us. It was so humbling to see how even in such poor conditions, the people of Malawi continue to smile and make the best of what they have. Everybody worked so hard just to survive in such deprived areas with limited resources.

