



Lauren Rogers

Biomedical Science

As soon as I heard Pat (Lund) talk about this trip in one of my lectures, I knew I had to go! So, on the run up to the trip during the summer I was collecting toys for the children we would be visiting while we were out there, trying to figure out what to pack, and chatting to my team mates over a Facebook site that I created and over WhatsApp. As the date to fly came closer I grew more and more apprehensive; what were the others like? Will I enjoy it? What would I do if I didn't? However, when we all arrived at the airport, we instantly became friends and we knew we were going to have an enjoyable experience. The plane journey took a very long time but we managed to keep ourselves entertained, sharing our concerns for the weeks ahead.

We arrived in Malawi and I was the most excited I have ever been. I just wanted to get started right away. My phone wouldn't connect to the network out there, so I could not immediately contact my worried parents to tell them I had arrived safely, this concerned me a bit but the hustle and bustle of the first few days soon distracted me. I wasn't quite sure what to expect for these three weeks at Fisherman's Rest, as we hadn't had that much information about a schedule. This left me even more apprehensive as I like to know what I would be doing and it worries me when I don't know what is going on, especially in a place I'd never been before!

As things progressed through the first week, we all agreed on a schedule which involved finishing referencing the libraries; painting the libraries; teaching; visiting clinics and hospitals and giving toys to and helping out at a nursery in a rural village by the lake, where we stayed in Nanchengwa Lodge. Now that we had a plan, I felt I could focus more on completing the activities and learning from them.

During the first week we were reading with children in English, trying to teach them and reinforce their learning. Some children were very good at reading but others struggled and I had to try to make them recognise the way the word looked on the page



and, where possible, add an action to it so that they could remember.

I enjoyed doing this and became better at it as we progressed through the weeks. At first my confidence was low and I was quite shy so I wasn't really engaging with the children: but by the time it came to teaching in the third week, I was really confident and excited to teach classes of up to 180 children!



Another experience that sticks with me is when a group of us went with Harrison and Stevie (Fisherman's Rest employees) to fix broken bore holes. The first one we went to was in



someone's back garden and you had to walk up some steps to reach it. Harrison, Stevie and one of the women from the village got cracking as everyone else watched, including children. This bore hole had been out of action for two years and now that it is fixed it means that people do not have to travel far into other villages to get water. The villagers here were so kind! They gave us fresh beans, "meatballs" which were beans mashed with spices and onion and then fried, and a fizzy drink each.

At the second bore hole, the men helped to fix the bore hole and the women sang and danced and we joined in! It was such a joyful experience. They sang one song about people coming to fix the bore hole to give them water again. When we got back to Fisherman's Rest I



asked one of the kitchen staff if they knew it and she taught it to me!

This trip was truly uplifting and completely unforgettable! I have learned a lot about how different cultures differ across the world and have more respect for those with cultures that differ from my own. I have also greatly increased my confidence and feel more comfortable with myself as a person. I will never forget this experience!



*Team DASH to Malawi 2014 – Walking up Mount Mulanje*