



experience quest

Kenya WaterRelief Project



Where? Rural communities around Mtito Andei, in Southern Kenya.

History: Experience Quest have been working in Kenya since 2005 with our project partner, Excellent Development. Significant drought in the region means supplies of clean water are scarce and local communities often have to walk up to 20km a day to collect water. Children often miss school in order to collect water and women are unable to spend as much time as needed farming their land. Excellent Development work with community self-help groups to provide simple sand dams to improve water supply.

Sand dams are concrete structures built across seasonally dry river beds, in order to force water underground when it rains. Over time, sand collects behind the dams, which in turn stores a large amount of water, filtering it and preventing it from evaporating. Dams do not completely stop the flow of the river and are designed to also allow water to continue downstream. Local people draw clean water from shallow wells in the sand and plant crops nearby, which flourish due to a plentiful supply of groundwater. They terrace the soil beside the sand dams and plant grass and trees to retain more moisture in the area. The families in the area spend weeks prior to the start of the project collecting all the sand, stones and water required for the dam construction.

Sustainability: Excellent Development are a UK registered charity and work year-round in Kenya to improve water resources and agricultural productivity. Alongside their work, Quest teams bring a financial commitment in the form of volunteer donations to Excellent Development, which go towards short and long term support for the project (materials for building the dams, maintenance of existing dams, development of environmental education resources and more).

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What will your students be doing? Construction work on the dams; mixing cement by hand, digging, carrying, moving sand and other manual labour. In two weeks a team would usually complete either one large dam, or two or more smaller dams. At each project site your students will be working alongside 50-100 members of the local community self-help group and the atmosphere is positively festive. The students will be encouraged to join in the singing and dancing as the community ladies keep morale up on the work site. The students may also have the chance to take part in terracing land and developing tree nurseries at existing dam sites. Working side by side with the community allows close friendships to be formed and teams will take part in homestays during a weekend to experience true Kenyan rural life.

Students will also have the opportunity to work in local schools, taking informal environmental education and English lessons as well as organising sports days and other activities for the children in the communities.

Other activity options: 4x4 safari to Tsavo National Park to spot the 'Big 5'; Boat safari on Lake Naivasha; Scuba diving, snorkeling or kite-surfing on the beaches of Malindi; Explore the historical town of Mombasa; Visit Nairobi's markets; Trek and mountain bike in Hell's Gate National Park.

