



experience quest

Malawi Orphan & Community Project



Where? Rural communities around Blantyre, Southern Malawi

History: Experience Quest has been working in Malawi since 2005. With our local partner NGO, Joshua Orphan and Community Care (JOCC). JOCC was established by a community self help group in Pensulo, a rural community just outside Blantyre and has since expanded to work in 19 similar areas. Each of these communities may be supporting as many as 100 orphaned and vulnerable children, usually a result of the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country. The famed warmth of the Malawian way of life means these children are taken in by grandparents, older siblings or caring neighbours; often those already struggling to provide enough food to go around. JOCC works to alleviate pressure on these families by improving community infrastructure; establishing feeding centres where children receive 2 of their 3 meals a day; improving education facilities allowing more children to attend school; improving medical facilities; sponsoring children through secondary school (which is not free in Malawi); and setting up small scale income-generating initiatives such as local bakeries.

Sustainability: JOCC is a UK registered charity and is based in Blantyre. Its staff work year-round and most were born and raised in the communities in which JOCC works. As such they understand intimately the needs and complex problems of these communities and can ensure that all work is community driven. Alongside their work, Quest teams bring a financial commitment in the form of volunteer donations to JOCC, which go towards short and long term support for the project. This could, for example, go towards the building of new feeding centres, the provision of food for the centres, or the maintenance and upkeep of school and clinic buildings.

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What will your students be doing? Construction work, building feeding centre, school or medical facilities. Students will be mixing cement by hand, carrying, digging, laying bricks, plastering and painting. Usually teams will complete one building or a variety of smaller projects, working alongside local builders and JOCC staff. Your students will also be working in existing feeding centres which cater for around 50-100 under fives. They will be assisting local volunteers at meal times and organising educational activities and songs for the children at the centre.

There will also be the opportunity for your students to work closely with local youth groups, learning more about rural life from their Malawian peers; and to work in local primary schools organising sports days and taking informal English lessons. Your students will have the chance to become truly integrated into the community in which they are working, taking part in football matches and visiting local churches, and will form close friendships with the builders on the project site, children at the feeding centres and young people in the youth groups.

Other activity options: Following the project there is the opportunity to take a 4x4 and/or boat safari through Liwonde National Park; visit the stunning Lake Malawi at Cape Maclear; trek on Mt Mulanje and visit the tea plantations; walk in the hills around Blantyre and visit the Hyena Caves at Mt Mchiru and more.

