



Reflections of an Amazing Trip

Head of Catering, Jacqui McPeake has travelled to Malawi with One Water to see how the team helps make a difference through their contributions. Jacqui tells us first-hand what the experience was like.



I received a very random telephone call on 13 October from our key contact at Peros. Would you like to go to Malawi to visit the clean water projects that Manchester Met has supported with the sales of One Water?

Six weeks later I find myself travelling to Malawi with a few essentials and a bag full of pens, crayons, stickers, colouring books, balls and baby clothes **donated by my colleagues in the Facilities teams**. We had an itinerary and had spoken to each other via a conference call. I didn't know anybody and I am not very keen on flying – so three flights later, travelling overnight we arrive at Chilekai International

Airport with the group, soon to be known as #Malawi16.

We were collected at the airport and taken straight to our first community visit. We were all tired and a little disorientated and we were then greeted by a whole community **running towards us singing and dancing**. This group of happy people overwhelmed us, tissues were passed round -not a dry eye amongst us. The village was Maneya Malda- we were given some tools and shown how to dismantle the water pump. The rubber seal that is required to create a vacuum to force water through the pipes had perished and we replaced it at a cost of 50 pence. The community were

so happy that their water source was working again.

We moved on to the second site, Kabuki Village, and we were again greeted by the community with a very warm welcome and singing and dancing. Again we fixed the water pump and were shown the previous water source, which was difficult to reach and it highlighted just **how much the communities rely on the water pumps** as a source of clean water.

The next day we were out on the road by 7.00am and during the day we visited four communities across Malawi –Chiteza Village, Braiton Village, Kalupsya and Alufeli Village. The welcome was always the

same, overwhelming and heart-breaking. We **worked closely as a team** to help mend the pumps and mingle with the community, joining in the singing and dancing.

The next day we visited Heremani Village, which is a tea plantation and we met the committee responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the water pump. They were a **very organised community with an obvious pride in their water pump** – they had even written in the cement the name of their community and added the date. It was spotless. Again we joined in the singing and dancing and also visited Mitoche Primary School in Mulanje.



The following morning we visited a school to assist in their morning feeding programme. All school children receive a mug of fortified porridge (they have to bring their own mug). This scheme ensures that the children **have at least one meal a day** and are better equipped to learn. The children walk for up to two hours to get to school and teachers often walk for three. The roads are hard with stones and rocks, and often the children do not have shoes. The second school we visited had a bridge built through charity funds because during the heavy rainy season small children sometimes drowned whilst trying to cross the river. The trip was hard

work, **emotional and enlightening**. The work of the One Foundation through the sales of One Water supports communities across Africa by ensuring that there are clean water sources. This is just the beginning, with improved health the children still have a long difficult walk to school – something our children take for granted. The feeding programmes ensure that the children eat breakfast which helps them to learn. The more successful schools need more buildings as the classes are too big - I took a reading class sitting under a tree. In order to build more buildings they have to make the bricks in moulds and leave the bricks to set in kilns made

from mud.

The clean water supply is a first step to enable these lovely people who live in such poverty to **start to plan for a future and teach the next generation** how to become self-sufficient and to build successful communities. The One

Foundation provide **valuable ongoing support** and as I have been given an amazing opportunity to experience first-hand the impact that the projects have. I am currently considering joining a 100km sponsored walk with our #Malawi16 group next year – so watch this space!

