



# Lake Malawi Teaching Project

ASSIST TEACHERS IN  
UNDERSTAFFED, UNDER-RESOURCED  
RURAL SCHOOLS

Mangochi District, Malawi

VA32 working in Malawi with project partners



## Who Should Apply?

Motivated, flexible and proactive volunteers looking to assist and support rural school teachers in some of the poorest rural schools in Malawi. This project is also ideal for teaching students looking for teaching practice and people considering a career in teaching or education.

## Project Highlights

- ⇒ Help improve the education of children who are willing and eager to learn
- ⇒ Teach extra classes in afternoons where smaller group sizes allow more personal attention
- ⇒ Lead fun afternoon activities, such as wildlife clubs, arts and crafts, reading clubs and drama
- ⇒ Teach adult education sessions, providing skills development and vocational training to rural communities
- ⇒ 'Teach the teachers' and students computer skills, as part of our new initiative to introduce IT to schools and communities

**VOLUNTEER AFRICA 32° SOUTH**

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## Project Background

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, with over half of the population living below the poverty line and an average daily income in rural areas of less than 50 pence. Many schools have a ratio of more than 100 students to each permanent teacher and are in real need of volunteer support.

All children in Malawi are entitled to free primary school education. However, this is often of a low standard, particularly in rural areas, due to the very large class sizes. Resources are often extremely limited; children will sit on the floor and often do not have exercise books, pens, or pencils. In some schools there are not even enough classrooms to accommodate the students, so younger children are taught outside, writing their answers in the dirt.

In Mangochi District, at the southern end of Lake Malawi, there are a number of rural schools that are seriously under-funded. This is where we need your help as a teaching volunteer. English, as your first language, is an important subject that you can help to teach effectively; as well as other core subjects, including maths and science, depending upon your experience and knowledge. Marked improvements in the exam results have been recorded at the schools in which volunteers have been assisting, so you can be sure that you will make a real difference to the education of the children that attend.

## Your Role As A Volunteer

As a teaching volunteer you will be able to support the teachers by assisting in one of the local primary schools. Volunteers with considerable teaching experience may be placed at a community secondary school.

You will become very much involved with helping to improve the education of the children, who are generally eager to learn. In addition, you may have the opportunity to teach adult education classes, providing skills development to rural communities and help teachers develop their computer skills, as part of our initiative to introduce IT to schools and communities.

You will assist with teaching curriculum subjects in the mornings (including English, maths and sciences) and in the afternoons you will plan and lead extra-curricular classes.

Schools start and finish earlier in Malawi than in the UK and many other western countries. You will leave the volunteer house at 07.00 each day and either walk, or be driven to the school that you have been placed at. You will generally be assigned to a specific standard (year group- but remember the students may be of a range of ages) and a partner teacher, who you will work closely with throughout your time at the project. Class sizes can be extremely large; between 60 and 100 students and sometimes more.



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## Afternoon Activities

You will generally finish teaching in the morning at between 11-12 am and will have a welcome lunch break back at the volunteer house, during the hottest part of the day, before the afternoon teaching sessions begin.

Afternoon activities vary between schools. They include:

- Library club, which enables you to work with smaller groups of children, improving reading and conversational English, or focusing on specific subjects
- Wildlife and environment clubs
- IT lessons - this is an exciting new initiative. IT is initially taught to the teachers, with classes being introduced for the students once the teachers have achieved a basic competence, in order to be able to assist. You do not need any specific computer skills to teach these sessions.
- Drama, music, arts and crafts, depending on your personal interests

Our on-site project co-ordinators will try to involve you in the activities that you are most interested in, but a certain amount of flexibility may be required, in order to maintain the continuity of all clubs and activities.



### Volunteer Profile

A minimum age of 18 applies for all **VA32** placements. Depending on your previous experience you may be required to complete a basic weekend, or online TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) course. If you have limited teaching experience we would recommend this anyway, as your experience and the value you bring to the project will be improved by the teaching ideas and confidence that you will gain. There is no maximum age, as long as you are fit and healthy enough to participate in project activities.

Malawians believe that appearance is important and whilst teaching, females are expected to wear long skirts that come well below the knee and tops that cover your shoulders and cleavage. Males should wear smart trousers and a shirt with a collar.

Please remember to be respectful and considerate if you wish to suggest any improvements, or new ideas that you feel would benefit the project. Staff at the schools and projects may have different cultural expectations and values to those that you believe to be right, or appropriate. They may work to Africa time, which at times may seem relaxed to the point of being horizontal. However, the co-ordinators have much more experience at managing local project relationships than you, so ask for their advice if you are unsure about something and please listen to it. Who knows you may even learn to relax a little more yourself!



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# Volunteer Life

## Accommodation & Meals

You will stay in a comfortable, shared house in a rural village in the Mangochi District. The house is located on the shores of the stunning Lake Malawi. The area in which volunteers are based (and Malawi in general) is very safe, but the house is fenced and gated for additional security and privacy.

The bedrooms in the volunteer house are large shared rooms, generally with single or bunk beds. Mosquito nets are provided and the rooms either have en-suite facilities, or an adjacent bathroom; all with western style flush toilets and showers.

The staff at the house includes a cook to prepare meals for you and a housekeeper to clean. Three meals a day are provided. Breakfast is on a self-service basis and usually consists of toast, or pancakes, and tea and coffee. Lunch usually consists of sandwiches, pasta, soups, salads, or similar; or a packed lunch can be provided if you are not returning to the house in the middle of the day. A hot dinner will be prepared for you in the evenings.



## Orientation & Support

Your orientation will typically take place the day after arrival. This will include:

- An introduction to Malawian culture
- Your health and safety whilst in Malawi
- Money and transportation in Malawi
- Workplace ethics
- Basic local greetings
- An introduction to some of the project staff
- An introduction and background to your project activities
- Weekend excursions and free time

In the afternoon of the orientation day, you will be taken on a familiarisation tour of the local area and nearest town, including the local market there. This will provide an opportunity to buy cheaply priced local material for wrap-around skirts if you need to. Throughout your stay in Malawi you will have the support and guidance of your project co-ordinator, as well as the other project staff who you will be working alongside. They will provide competent assistance, advice and be able to answer any questions that you may have on a daily basis.



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## Program Fees & Dates

There are start dates every second Monday throughout the year.

See our website under the [rates and dates](#) tab for current rates on this project.

### What's included in the program fee?

- Airport transfers upon arrival and departure (Monday arrivals only)
- Accommodation in shared volunteer house
- Three meals a day whilst on project
- All project related transport
- Support of our experienced on-site project co-ordinators
- On site orientation

### What's not included?

- Flights
- Snacks, drinks and meals outside of project
- Personal Insurance
- Extra excursions and trips

## Getting There

Arrange your flights to arrive at Lilongwe Airport in Malawi prior to 2pm on the date specified. Upon arrival, you will be met by a project representative and will be transferred to the accommodation; about three and a half hours drive from the airport.

## Booking Process

Contact us on [info@volunteerafrica.co.za](mailto:info@volunteerafrica.co.za) or +27 (0)43 738 5523. Our travel and bookings guru Karen will email an application form to you asap. This needs to be filled in and returned to us and upon receipt we will invoice you for a 35% deposit which is needed to confirm your placement on project. The remainder of the fee is due one month prior to arrival.



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