GUIDE FOR MALAWI VOLUNTEERS 2024 (V8)



Introduction

This brief guide has been put together to give some basic advice and information about your forthcoming volunteering placement in Malawi. We have used feedback from previous volunteers to try to answer the most asked questions, but it is not exhaustive and should not replace either common sense or lessons learned from your previous travels. Whilst Krizevac Project will endeavour to make your stay safe, productive and enjoyable, you remain responsible for your own personal wellbeing, this guide should help you to prepare and make the most of your trip.

Krizevac Project Background

This UK-registered charity is building on its informal beginnings since 2000 in which the second KRIZEVAC (hill of the cross) was completed on Mount Michiru, Malawi. The first such Krizevac in Medjugorje, Croatia, continues to attract thousands of pilgrims annually. Drawn by a positive desire to get things done, the Krizevac Project founders have now been joined by people of all faiths and no faith who share an impatience to throw aside the earnest planning and anthropological research-orientation of much conventional development in favour of direct action.





Following the construction of the cross, in 2006 Krizevac Project built St James Parish Primary School, which is now attended by nearly 2000 Chilomoni children each day.

But when asking the community “what next” the cry was loud and clear “jobs”. Chilomoni is a township on the edge of Blantyre, one of the largest cities in Malawi. People move to Chilomoni for cheap housing in the hope of finding work in the city, but jobs are hard to

find. Rapid urban growth confounds the problem as more people seek fewer opportunities, but the message from the community was not to give us money, it was to give us opportunity. This conversation was the beginning of something special and the founding of our guiding principle to generate the funding needed to transform

the community within the community itself; breaking traditional reliance on external funding and charity handouts.

So, in 2007, Krizevac helped to establish Beehive Centre for Social Enterprise and now the township around the base of the mountain is being transformed through the creation of a number of enterprises which include everything from brick making to computer and plant rental. Beehive Centre for Social Enterprise is a locally managed and governed project supported by Krizevac to provide training and local employment opportunities.



Since 2007 Krizevac has focused nearly all of its efforts on supporting the growth and success of Beehive, although our ambition is to work in a similar way in many more communities in the future.

Today, Beehive employs between 500-700 people and has trained thousands more. Beehive enjoys a brand-new campus facility constructed by its own team of designers and builders. None of this would have been possible without the expert input, training and support of a huge number of international volunteers. All volunteers are qualified to at least degree level and have a minimum of five years' work experience in their chosen

field. Beehive identifies the need for each volunteer and works with Krizevac to help establish who is the right person for the job, Krizevac then organises the work placement on behalf of Beehive.

Projects

Whilst the majority of our efforts are focused on the support for Beehive Centre for Social Enterprise, Krizevac also supports:

- St James Parish Church (including the Friends of Medjugorje and the Way of the Cross)
- St James Primary School (approximately 2000 children aged 5 -16ish)

Current Beehive projects include:

- **Mary Queen of Peace Campus** with consists of:
  - Mother Teresa Children's Centre.
  - St Kizito Primary School.
  - Carlos Acutis Secondary School
  - John Paul II IT and Leadership Training Institute.

- **Tailoring** - training courses and social enterprises- Introduction, certificate & diploma courses.
- **Bee Bikes** - a social enterprise selling bikes donated from the UK.
- **Torrent Plant and Vehicle Hire**- a social enterprise renting trucks/flatbeds. Bowsers, JCB'S and forklifts to organisations throughout Malawi, this is Beehive's principal income generator.
- **Bee tech** - an IT based social enterprise providing jobs to learners from JPII on a "learn and earn" scheme. Current projects are scanning documents for local businesses.
- **Bee Digital** - offering web site development and loading skills to up work.
- **Construction projects** - both to build local infrastructure and expand Beehive facilities.

Volunteering in Malawi a brief overview

People volunteer their time for several reasons and motivations, but most people state a desire to “put something back” to help a community and to learn something of the world.

You will find that whatever your reason for volunteering, you will be welcomed into this warm and friendly community by local residents. They are eager to learn and train and we ask all volunteers to bear in mind that whatever their role, they must work in an empowering way that will build capacity so that new skills are left behind in the community at the end of the voluntary placement.



Whatever your reason for volunteering, you will find that work and life in Malawi can be difficult at times, if this is your first time in a developing country, you may find your everyday encounters with poverty to be challenging and at times, upsetting. Krizevac aims to support all volunteers to gain a perspective and understanding of these issues, but you will need to question your inner resilience before committing to the project and check with yourself that you are prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

Krizevac Project will help you to check with yourself if you are right for a placement in Malawi. You will have contact with a member of staff who will assess your CV, obtain employer references/ police clearance and talk with you about your expectations and abilities. This provides us with a greater understanding of your skills, personality and preferences, enabling us to identify a placement that is right for you. These discussions will take place through a meeting, by email or by telephone, according to your circumstances. We anticipate that all potential volunteers will make every effort to prepare themselves for their trip. This includes proactively seeking external information about life and work in Malawi. However, the remainder of this guide should provide answers to some of your questions.

Pre-departure Information

Do I need to raise funds for the charity?

Depending on your position you may be asked to raise up to £3000. However, as most placements are advertised, we would in these circumstances not ask you to raise funds to cover the costs of your placement with us. We recruit our volunteers because they are skilled professionals, your time is the donation you give to us. We cover most but not all of the expenses associated with volunteering overseas.

Normally Krizevac Project is able to fund:

- One set of return flights from Heathrow to Blantyre, Malawi per year. You must make your own way to the airport, you can also fly from other airports, the difference in cost will be paid for by you.
- Travel
- Insurance
- Medical vaccinations and Malaria treatment
- Visa costs
- Board and lodging in our volunteer's accommodation. Breakfast – self-service and evening meal. Feel free to take your lunch to work from the food at the village.

Krizevac is a charity so if at any time you feel able to fund some or all of these elements

yourself, please make this known to us as it will save valuable charity funds.
We keep in close contact by phone, email and text throughout the pre-departure time with all our volunteers and we'll keep you informed and check with you to make sure all arrangements are clear and meet all needs.

Volunteers rights and responsibilities
All volunteers sign a Memorandum of Understanding, this outlines our responsibilities to you and yours to your host organisation (normally Beehive).

Where can I find information about Malawi?
Please do read as much as you possibly can about Malawi before you leave. Talk to people who have been there and ask to be put in touch with previous volunteers. There is a wealth of information out there, try:
Essential reading:
http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/sub-saharan-africa/malawi
http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/africa/malawi.aspx
General reading:
http://www.malawitourism.com/
http://www.chichewagrammar.net/
www.krizevac.org
Or buy a real book:
http://www.amazon.co.uk/Malawi-Travel-Guides-Philip-Briggs/dp/184162313X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1358777861&sr=8-1

What medical concerns should I have?
Once your placement is agreed you need to make an appointment to see your GP or a Travel Clinic. We can give you general hints and tips on the kinds of issues you will need to consider, but we are not medical experts, and you will need to follow professional health advice as to what vaccinations you require.

You must, however, inform Krizevac Project of any existing medical conditions. We will ask you to complete an emergency contact form which gives you space to tell us of anything that may affect your placement.

Many medical practices can support our work by waiving the charges for vaccinations and Malaria treatment. When you do have to pay, we ask you to obtain a receipt for all transactions, please send these receipts to us and we will reimburse you for the costs incurred.

What insurance do I need?

It is your responsibility to make sure that you are insured for your trip, please advise us of your insurance costs before you pay for it, we reimburse pre-agreed insurance costs. You must ensure that your insurer will cover 'working holidays' or volunteering abroad and quotes will vary for each individual, depending on your own circumstances.

Please send us electronic confirmation or a receipt of your insurance premium so that we can reimburse your costs.

You must remember that while insurance may cover the cost of medical expenses or loss of personal belongings upon your return, you will need to pay for expenses yourself whilst in Malawi and claim back money on your return.

What are the visa requirements for Malawi?
Krizevac Project liaises with the team in Malawi as well as the Malawi High Commission to check visa requirements. Currently, all volunteers enter Malawi on a 90-day tourist visa, and this is updated by the Beehive team once you are in Malawi.

Krizevac will give you the visa, not necessary to obtain your visa at the airport when you land in Malawi. If you live in London (or in another city with a Malawian Commission or Embassy) you may prefer to get your visa in advance, please let Krizevac know if this is the case. No longer applicable Jan 2024.

Tourist visas cost $75 payable in US dollars cash at the airport, Krizevac covers this cost. N/A

About one week prior to your departure, you will receive an email with very detailed travel and arrival instructions.

Also **check the current validity of your passport.**

All travellers will need a passport valid for at least 90 days following your departure date from Malawi. However, we strongly recommend always travelling with 6 months' validity on your passport. Citizens of United Kingdom can refer to www.ips.gov.uk for forms and instructions for new passport applications and British passport renewals.

Additionally **make sure your passport has at least 6 blank Visa pages.**

Most destinations, including Malawi, require that you have adequate un-used pages in your passport, allowing for any necessary stamps upon arrival and departure. We recommend that you have at least two free pages in Visas section of your passport before

any international travel. British citizens can get extra passport pages added to their passports at www.ips.gov.uk.

Are there any other documents I need?
If you are staying in Malawi for more than 90 days, you will need to apply for an International Driving licence you can do this at the Post Office:
http://www.postoffice.co.uk/international-driving-permit

Emergency Contacts
Krizevac will provide you with the name and contact details of a staff member who will act as emergency contact for you and your family.

An emergency at home while you are in Malawi - if your family cannot contact you directly, they should phone or text Krizevac. Krizevac will then make sure you are immediately contacted in Malawi. If necessary, Krizevac will make arrangements to get the volunteer home as quickly as possible. If there is a cost attached to this, we will, as the volunteer to make an insurance claim and reimburse Krizevac for any costs incurred. An emergency generally constitutes a life-changing illness or death of an immediate family member. But if the emergency is something other than this, please talk to Krizevac, we will still help.

An emergency in Malawi - in the event of serious illness, accident, or other life-changing situation, Krizevac will endeavor to provide immediate local support and will follow this by re-patriating the volunteer home if necessary. In this event Krizevac will liaise with your named next of kin (whose details the volunteer provides on the emergency contact form). If there is a cost attached to this, we will, as the volunteer to make an insurance claim and reimburse Krizevac for any costs incurred.

How much money will I need?
This question is one of the hardest for us to answer, simply because it very much depends on how you intend to live once you are in Malawi. However, we can offer some general guidance and highlight some considerations you should have.



Volunteering is not a cheap undertaking, even with the support we offer. You should expect to incur some costs, and you should never plan to save money during your placement.

The first thing to consider is how you will meet any financial obligations you have in your home country. If you own a property, you will still need to fund mortgage repayments, likewise for any other debts or loans. Many volunteers will rent out their homes, but there are never guarantees that tenants will stay, and you may have gaps in the rental income you receive. Some volunteers choose to take their car off the road to save a little on tax. Nearly all volunteers are taking a sabbatical from employment or have left their current positions; in this case you will need to consider all standing orders or direct debits that will continue while you are away. Volunteers are also fully responsible for making their own tax and National Insurance obligations are fulfilled while they are in Malawi.

Whilst in Malawi, Krizevac provides board and lodging (2/3 basic meals a day), but there are daily expenses you could incur. These include but are not limited to:

Additional food - we provide local meals to unpaid volunteers (if you are receiving a stipend, we do not provide lunch), this does not include provision of costly imported items such as processed meats or cheese for example. Most volunteers will top up their own provisions with a weekly shop.

Meals and drinks out and about - most volunteers will go out to eat occasionally or go to a bar at the weekends. Meals in restaurants can cost a comparable amount to what you would expect to pay in the UK. Although, if you are clever about sticking to local food, you will find affordable options.

Toiletries and personal needs - shampoo, toothpaste, sunscreen etc... This is all available most of the time in Malawi, but you should expect to pay more than you do in the UK, it helps if you are not fussy about the brand that you would like.

Internet and phone - There is sporadic internet access at Beehive which you can access for email and work purposes. However, all volunteers find that they want to establish phone and internet use for personal use at home and you need to meet this cost. There's more about this in the "staying connected" section below.

Travel - most volunteers plan to explore Malawi and make the most of their African experience. You'll need to plan to pay for vehicle hire and fuel (normally at least as much as you would pay in the UK) or public transport. Accommodation ranges from back-packer cheap up to the exclusive safari options (approx. $175 per stay)

So how much you need very much depends on your lifestyle expectations.

Please be realistic about how much financial issues can impact on your wellbeing or levels of stress; you need to bear in mind that you will be working hard in Malawi and depending on the time of year, you can be working in incredible heat, which is physically tiring. You are also isolated from your normal support networks at home. This can leave you unexpectedly vulnerable to any additional pressures, such as those caused by worrying about money. Be realistic about your ability to take on the huge commitment and personal sacrifice of volunteering your services for a six-month period.

The currency for Malawi is the Kwacha, it is not possible to get Kwacha in advance. Take Sterling or dollars with you, the best place to change money is at the bank, but the exchange rate is better for cash (black market). It is possible to use visa debit cards at some ATMs, but you will be charged for this. There are a growing number of places that will accept a credit card, you will find it useful to have one if you want to eat at more expensive restaurants or holiday destinations and it is useful to take one for emergencies. A useful app to use is Talkremit.com and has the best exchange rate.

How will I stay connected to friends and family back in my home country?
It is easier than ever to stay connected while you are away, but it is essential that you bring a non-contract, unlocked smart phone.

When you arrive in Malawi you will need to obtain a local sim (we will help you to do this). This will replace your UK number (unless you have a dual sim phone), so if it is essential that you retain your UK telephone number you will need to bring two phones, but we highly recommend that you plan so that this is not necessary.

Your Malawi sim will be pay-as-you-go, you will be given instructions locally about how you top it up. You will also need to register your sim by taking your phone and passport to the network provider, but again, you will be helped to do this locally.

The most economical way to make international calls is to use some of your phone credit to buy a data-bundle (again, you will be given instructions locally as to how to do this). Data is incredibly cheap in Malawi, Airtel: Prepaid | Postpaid | 4G this is generally sufficient to keep up with emails, make calls using WhatsApp or skype and to check in to social media accounts. Volunteers are responsible for funding their own internet access.

There is no wi-fi access in the volunteers' accommodation.

There are some local hotels/ cafes with wi-fi, this can be slow so should not be relied upon.

There is wi-fi access for work purposes only at Beehive, this is not consistent and can be slow. If you find you regularly need to use your own data credit for work purposes, you may claim the money for this through the Beehive requisition system - this must be agreed with your line-manager in advance.

You may want to tether your phone to your laptop or create a private hot spot from your phone so that you can work online from a tablet or laptop. If you are uncertain about how to go about this, please ask our advice before you leave for Malawi.

Our top-tips:

- Ensure your phone has your favourite apps installed before you leave for Malawi. WhatsApp is fairly essential as it is the main method of communicating with your fellow volunteers and local team in Malawi, as well as keeping in touch with home.
- Ensure your contacts are saved to your phone, not your sim before you leave for Malawi, that way you will still have them when you swap to a local sim.
- Install your email app to your phone and have your emails synchronized before you leave for Malawi.

A few more things to bear in mind:

- If you invest in expensive high-tech equipment you will need to consider its security. You can choose to add some items for specific cover on your travel insurance.
- Do not plan to use gadgets that stretch you beyond your comfort zone in terms of ability to use technology, if you have never used a smart phone at home, you will not automatically know how to use one in Malawi!
- If you know there are films, books, music, or work resources that you know you will need or want, download them all in the UK before you leave for Malawi to save internet credit.
- While internet reliability has improved hugely in recent years, power-outages are common in Malawi. It is a good idea to have a power bank to keep your phone charged. It is also a good idea to advise your friends and family that there may be times you cannot be contacted due to lack of power.



Use of blogs, taking photos and sharing information

All volunteers are keen to record their trip and life in Malawi through taking photos of local life, posting updates on social networking sites, or taking information home to create presentations for work colleagues. This is an important part of your trip and Krizevac supports all efforts to communicate about causes and issues affecting Malawi. However, there is a delicate balance between sharing information and intruding on people's privacy.

Please bear in mind the following guidelines for the use of electronic, pictorial, and written information gained during your stay:

- Most volunteers walk the same route to work. It is a beautiful microcosm of local life, full of colour and vividness, so the temptation is to take your camera out to capture the images. But if you multiply by how many volunteers we host (more than 150

between 2009 and 2023) you can imagine that locals may get tired of constantly being the subject matter of “tourist” photos. Please be sensitive to this and think before you snap.

- If you post on social networking sites, be aware that you have no control of who sees that information or how it is then used. Please do not name colleagues or project beneficiaries without prior consent. Please do not post any photos of children at MTCC or other Beehive projects without the consent of your line-manager first.

- Malawians are generally self-aware enough of their situation to recognise that development organisations would sometimes like to “sell” stories of poverty to further a cause. Again, please be sensitive to how blogs or internet postings can be read by a local.

In terms of blogs, please follow this guidance:

- Blogs that identify the author as a Krizevac of Beehive volunteer should include the disclaimer that *‘the views expressed in this weblog are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect those of Krizevac or Beehive’*.
- Krizevac is bound by UK Data Protection policy and volunteers should ensure their blogs abide by these basic principles. The Data Protection Act exists to protect individuals’ personal details. Please see page 48: Data protection and confidentiality or contact Krizevac for further information.
- As a volunteer associated with Krizevac and your local host project, your actions will reflect on you, on the charity and on other volunteers. You therefore have certain personal and legal responsibilities. Volunteers should think carefully about what they write about Krizevac, partner organisations, other Krizevac volunteers and staff, and other individuals.

If you wish to use information gained throughout your placement in Malawi to create talks and presentations on your return to the UK, please contact Krizevac for guidance. Whilst we encourage you to help publicise our cause and work, you will have access to privileged information including reports, budgets, case studies etc. Any written or pictorial information obtained through working with us remain our intellectual property and we will help you to decide the appropriateness of any information used in awareness raising activities.

How will I get to Malawi?

We will discuss travel needs with you, flights are likely to leave from Heathrow Airport and you will need to arrange your transport to get there. We appreciate that you may want to travel a particular route, but all flight bookings will be made with a balance of cost efficiency and convenience in mind so that we are able to make the best use of funds.

What should I pack?
This depends on the time of year!
Malawi is warm/ hot for most of the year but during:
July - August temperatures can drop to being quite cold, especially during evenings and early mornings. You will need some warm jumpers, pyjamas and cosy socks etc... if your placement is during the Malawian “winter”.

Late November until March or April - it will rain heavily almost every day. You will need a good raincoat or umbrella (a sturdy one!) and footwear suitable for walking on muddy flooded roads.

Here is a brief list of common essentials that you’ll need at any time of year. Check luggage limits before you leave as they vary between airlines.

- Passport and tickets
- 4 x spare passport photos for visa applications in Malawi
- UK driving license for stays of less than 90 days. An international driving license for longer stays.
- Photocopies of all documents in case of loss or theft
- A smart phone, charging lead (UK three pin) and a power bank with charging lead.
- Malaria treatment - we provide mosquito nets over all beds
- Mosquito repellent (50% DEET)
- High factor sun cream
- Light weight clothes
- Something a bit warmer for mornings and evenings, long sleeves and trousers help to keep mosquitoes away
- Sturdy Flip-flops
- Walking shoes or trainers
- Swimming kit (it is more acceptable and comfortable for women to cover with a sarong or wrap)
- A raincoat and umbrella for rainy season
- Wash kit - including personal medication, spare glasses etc... depending on your needs, we provide towels
- Torch and / or solar light to manage the frequent and lengthy power cuts.
- Batteries and charging leads (UK three-point sockets are standard)
- Laptop

- Entertainment- most volunteers benefit from bringing some DVD's to while away long evenings. Books, games, puzzle books etc... can all help too.
- A water bottle / flask if you prefer to drink boiled water. We provide a large flask for storing water in your own fridge, but you may want something for daily carrying around.

There are shops where you can purchase most things you may forget, but there will be little choice, and it is best to plan ahead for your own needs.

We would strongly advise that you travel with a well packed piece of hand luggage as well as your hold baggage (hold baggage does unfortunately go astray occasionally). Keep essentials such as medication and a change of clothes in a hand luggage bag, as well as anything valuable - this will ensure you survive until your main bag is recovered.

Dress Code
In our policy we ask that volunteers act with courtesy and consideration to all colleagues, this includes respecting dress codes whether these are formally written or implicitly followed.

Generally, Malawians like to dress smartly and conventionally for work; vest tops and jeans may not be acceptable, although it does depend on your role and position in the organisation. For those of us not used to working in heat, it can be tempting to wear as little as possible but please bear in mind this may not be viewed positively by your Malawian colleagues. Plan for lightweight natural fabrics that allow you to cover your skin (which is also important for your health) but that enable you to stay cool.

Tattoos and body piercings are not common in Malawi and are sometimes viewed negatively. Please be prepared to cover tattoos or remove piercings if asked to do so by your Malawian colleagues.

Men tend to wear shirts rather than t-shirts, lightweight trousers rather than shorts.

Women - trousers are now much more acceptable than they used to be in Malawi, and you will be fine to wear them to work. But this is a fairly recent change and traditionally women have always worn skirts that fall well below the knee. You may want to take some longer skirts for more formal meetings or trips to more traditional rural areas. The reality for women is that you will also need to be careful of how you dress outside of work. While you are at the volunteers' accommodation, visiting more developed tourist areas or friends' houses, you can dress however you feel most comfortable. However, while you are out

shopping in town, traveling around, or visiting more traditional areas, the truth is that you will be noticed and judged by what you wear. For your safety and well-being, we strongly advise that you dress sensibly and, to an extent, modestly. Please look at those around you to establish the norm and ask for advice from those who have been in Malawi for longer than you.

Shipping Items from the UK

For a six-month typical placement in Malawi we would expect that you will be able to pack all you need in the generous luggage allowance. But we do occasionally ship personal items inside the containers we load in Stoke on Trent for volunteers who are staying for longer periods.

We are happy to ship:

- For unpaid volunteers with no stipend: 2 "banana boxes" or equivalent per six months.
- For anyone working on a stipend or salary: we will ship items but charge at £200 per cubic meter.

Please ask us for more details as there are some restricted items that we cannot ship.

What about arrival in Malawi?

You will be met at the airport; we always endeavour to give you the name of who is collecting you in your travel information email. You will then be driven to Chilomoni or helped to the coach to transport you to Blantyre and your new home in Chilomoni.

We operate a “buddy” system for new volunteers. Your buddy will show you around Mitsidi Volunteers House. They will help you with your phone, internet and your first bits of shopping. They will also introduce you to your line manager who will have organised your workplace induction.

Life in Malawi

Staying at Mitsidi
Mitsidi is our volunteers' housing. It is about a 15-minute walk away from the Beehive campus in the heart of Chilomoni.



There is a large five-bedroom house surrounded by wooded gardens. There are a further 12 small houses/ bedsits within the grounds, these are generally given to the local staff. There is also a swimming pool in the grounds to help you stay fit and healthy.





We normally have between 2-8 volunteers at Mitsidi at any one time, although it is all dependent on the needs of the project, so there are times when there may just be one volunteer staying there. The accommodation is also used by local staff and students, so at times it can be quite a busy environment.

Generally, there is a great balance of group activity and respect for personal privacy. You are not obliged to join in with meals, group outings or activities. But you may find that it is convenient to do so, you will find that you begin to appreciate the value of having your evening meal cooked for you when you have worked a long day in the heat! And at weekends it is often cheaper to share fuel costs on a group trip somewhere than it is to strike out alone.

There is no formal system for how Mitsidi should run in terms of group management. Normally common sense prevails. For example, you are not obliged to let others know when and where you are going out to, but you will sometimes get a text from someone, just to check you are safe. If there is ever a problem with “compound life” it’s normally best to voice it sooner rather than later, and supper time is often a good place for group discussions. However, it is also good to check with yourself whether an issue needs to be raised at all, sometimes it may be more sensible to accept imperfections in people and situations, few of us are perfect after all!

Nearly all volunteers are housed in the main house where you have a shared kitchen and bathroom facilities, hot and cold running water, western style toilets, a shower and electricity. Although both water and electricity can go off from time to time, mostly this is for a few hours at a time, but you can occasionally be without power or hot water for a period of days.

We occasionally accommodate married couples, but only if there is a voluntary role for both people. There is no guarantee that couples are allocated one of the small two-bedroom houses.

With respect to the ethos and values of the charity, there is no co-habitation of non-married couples, and you are asked to respect this throughout your stay at Mitsidi. Please read the Krizevac Project Volunteers Policy for more information about the ethos of the charity.







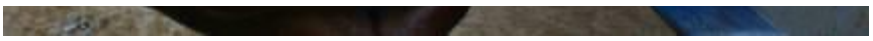
Charles lives on site in his own house with his family. Charles is an excellent cook who also manages all the cooks, guards, and cleaners on site. His English is excellent, and he will do his best to help you with any concerns or needs.

There are a few commonsense house rules:

- Smoking is restricted to outside areas only, and we ask that you do not smoke in the presence of children
- Please live quietly and be mindful of the example you are setting to local families
- Please keep all communal areas clean and tidy, this is especially true for the kitchen, you will have problems with rodents and cockroaches if it is not always kept spotless and this is everyone's responsibility

Food and Drink, Breakfast is usually cereal, toast, tea/coffee, fresh fruit; all volunteers take food from the main house to cater for themselves.

Lunch is served at your place of work. There is a weekly menu, usually Nsima (local maize porridge), fresh fruit, fish/beef/chicken, veg. Lunch is only provided for unpaid volunteers. You may have to pay for this, you can also take leftovers from Mitsidi or make a sandwich.



Snacks Tea, coffee, and fresh fruit are available all day for you to help yourself. 'Western' treats such as chocolate and crisps are available but expensive and so are not provided by the charity, you can buy this type of thing in town which is an easy mini-bus ride away. Charles can provide you with crates of soft drinks or local beers, you pay him for this directly yourself.

Supper is the main meal of the day at Mitsidi served at 6.30pm. Let Charles know by 3pm at the latest if you will **not** be eating the main meal so that we can cook the right amount. It is usually fresh salad and a hot meal. Charles finishes work as the meal is served, so it is the volunteers' responsibility to wash and dry up after dinner.

Vegetarian diets are easily catered for, if you have additional dietary requirements, you must let us know in advance.

At weekends it is everyone's job to help out with cooking and washing up unless you plan to eat out or self-cater.

NB: If volunteers wish to invite friends and family to stay in charity accommodation this must be approved in advance by Vince Owen and will depend on room availability. Visitors' rates are agreed at Beehive.

Laundry
Each room has a laundry bag. Please put your dirty clothes to be washed in these and leave them on your bedroom floor when needed. The staff will collect them and wash them, (please be considerate and don't create needless laundry), you are expected to wash your own underwear, it is improper and disrespectful to give it to the cleaners to wash. If you would like your bedding and towels to be replaced, please strip your bed and leave the sheets on your bedroom floor. Your laundry will be washed and ironed and returned to your house. The washing machine is normally available for the volunteers to use in the evenings and at the weekend if you prefer to look after yourself.

Security
There are security guards on site at Mitsidi for 24 hours a day, their job is to ensure only authorised people are on site. There are individual locks on each house door, and each house has a lockable metal locker to store valuables. Please note security of your own possessions are your own responsibility; we do not accept liability for loss or damage, it is best to consider whether you really need to take valuable or sentimental items with you.

In terms of your personal safety, we advise that you take all normal precautions to keep yourself safe. Walking around during daylight is not generally a problem, although you will attract attention, especially if you are Caucasian. Avoid crowds and stay away from demonstrations or disturbances. In line with Foreign Office advice, we do not recommend that you walk around after dark. If you make trips to town in the evenings, arrange for a car to drive straight to your destination and return without making unnecessary stops (for fuel etc...).

Staying Healthy
Drinking water- The water at Mitsidi comes from a 30foot deep bore hole and should be safe to drink straight from the tap. However, you are welcome to stick to boiled/ cooled water and there are clean flasks available to do this. Please help by keeping the flasks topped up with boiled water.

Malaria - is one of the biggest health problems in Malawi. The best way to avoid it is to not get bitten, this means- remaining inside as much as possible from dusk onwards. Covering your arms and legs with clothing. Using a DEET repellent spray. Sleeping under your bed net. It is also strongly recommended that you take Malaria prophylactic medication throughout your stay. Warning signs to watch out for include: a general fluey

feeling, sickness, raised temperature and you will be helped to get tested for Malaria quickly and easily in town if you display any symptoms.

Other sickness - Please make sure you read the NHS advice given in the link above about staying healthy in sub-Saharan Africa. It is extremely like that from time-to-time you may succumb to the odd bout of sickness. You will help yourself by eating a healthy diet and drinking plenty of clean boiled water. But in the event of anything more than a minor “bug” there is always someone on hand to help you to the doctors. There are excellent medical facilities in Blantyre, which is a 15-minute drive from Mitsidi.

Please note: all medical care in Malawi is private and must be paid for in advance. Whilst this is mostly affordable, an overnight stay in hospital may cost over £100. We will of course help to meet immediate need and will never leave you in the lurch, but you must be prepared to repay local medical costs by claiming on your travel insurance.

You can also help yourself by keeping a healthy and sensible attitude towards:
Alcohol – until recently the cultural norm in Malawi was largely alcohol free. It is still more common to find that locals do not drink alcohol. However, it is available fairly cheaply and group dymanics can often lean to escalations.
Not only does this put you in a position where you may be judged unfairly and damage your own reputation (as well as that of the charity), you may also place yourself in a vulnerable position through diminished judgement and ability. Please respect local cultural standards. If your behaviour causes offence or damages Krizevac’s reputation in your placement country, the program staff may decide to review your volunteer status.

Please also bear in mind that Beehive has a “zero tolerance” to drink driving, if you are out and about in a Beehive vehicle, you must nominate a designated alcohol-free driver or find alternative transport home.

Sexual Relationships - Sexual behavioral norms, including acceptability of un-married sex and same-sex couples, vary across the world; Malawi is very traditional in its cultural views. HIV/AIDS rates are on the decrease, but the latest statistics are that 1 in 8 of the adult population is HIV positive. Bearing these two facts in mind, along with the fact that the teachings of the Catholic Church are our guiding principles, we do not condone engaging in any sexual activities whilst staying in Malawi. Breaches of this may result in an immediate termination of your volunteering placement.

Swimming in Lake Malawi - Schistosomiasis is a type of infection caused by parasites that live in fresh water, such as rivers or lakes, in subtropical and tropical regions worldwide. Schistosomiasis is also known as bilharzia. It is present in Lake Malawi, and you need to think carefully about whether you want to take the risk. There is locally held

knowledge of how to treat Bilharzia simply and easily with tablets purchased over the counter at chemists in Malawi, and you will be given plenty of advice. However, we cannot advise as to the efficacy or safety of this treatment, and we would strongly recommend that you request a full health screen from your GP on your return to the UK if you have been in the water at the lake. The NHS provides the following advice:

"There is currently no vaccine available for schistosomiasis, so it is important to take precautions when travelling in parts of the world where the infection is widespread. This includes not swimming or wading in fresh water." Full guidance at: http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/schistosomiasis/Pages/Introduction.aspx

Keeping Busy

Whilst the primary focus of your trip is your working role, you will have free time to do as you wish.

You will normally work Monday-Friday 7.30am until 4.30pm, however your line manager in Malawi will confirm your hours of work.

There are limited opportunities to get out and about in the evenings after work due to the limitations of vehicle availability. You will need to come prepared to while away evenings at Mitsidi. Most volunteers appreciate having a DVD player and music on their laptop (although there is a communal set-up in the main house). There is a small selection of films and books to share at Mitsidi. There is also a piano (not guaranteed to be in tune), a guitar, darts board and of course the swimming pool. You do need to be fairly creative about developing some hobbies or activities to occupy the time when you cannot get out.

Things are easier to do on weekends and holidays. Minibuses run frequently from Mitisidi to Blantyre. From the road at the bottom of the Mitisidi site you can wait at the junction and a minibus generally comes along every 20 minutes. It is approx. Kw100 to get to Blantyre (this will vary depending on the local economy). In Blantyre there are a few bars and restaurants as well as a selection of shops and bustling markets where you can buy almost anything. You can also take a further minibus towards Limbe if you want to visit the big Shoprite complex, a large "hyper-market" where you can stock up for your daily needs. There is also a cinema here. To return home by mini-bus you either walk to the top-end of the market (you will see lines and lines of mini-buses) and ask for the Sigrege (pronounced si-greg-ay) bus, someone will always point you in the right direction. Or you can catch the more frequent Chilomoni bus from the main road outside Ryalls Hotel, this will take you to the centre of Chilomoni where you then walk home following the familiar route that you use for work. Other volunteers and your local colleagues will help you work it all out, but it is usually best to just have a go and if in doubt, ask! There is always someone willing to help, even if they do want a few kwachas from you for doing so! The minibuses do not operate

after dark, it is possible to get a taxi (although not always during the rainy season), so most volunteers get in the habit of arranging daytime excursions.





If you want to travel further afield and Malawi is so beautiful that we heartily recommend that you do, there are lots of public transport options. The National Bus Company is reliable, cheap and runs to most major towns throughout Malawi. From the coach stops you can pick up minibuses to the Lake, to Mulange (3rd highest mountain in Africa with some beautiful walks and swimming in mountain pools), to Liwonde or Majete National Parks (elephants, zebra, and hippo galore!) or to Dedza with the ancient rock art.



Vehicle Use

Krizevac Project does not provide any vehicles for use by volunteers. Beehive does have some vehicles allocated to some essential positions (for example, the Children's Centre Manager has a vehicle allocated to them for emergency use), but generally these vehicles are kept at Beehive to conserve fuel for the use it is intended for.

You must make sure you read the Beehive vehicle policy prior to driving a vehicle if one is allocated to your position.

In Malawi, you drive on the left-hand side of the road. Beware of minibuses suddenly pulling out in front of you or goats stepping out into the road. Speed limits are strictly monitored by traffic police, and you will be fined for any infringement. You may also be fined if your vehicle does not carry the proper tax and insurance discs, if your vehicle is not in drivable condition or if you do not carry your driving license or wear your seatbelt. There are frequent fuel shortages, it is illegal to carry spare fuel in a can and you must plan to safely complete your journey and to adapt your plans if you cannot safely complete your journey.

Overall, public transport is easier, cheaper and less hassle!

Language: As always, when travelling, local people will appreciate all efforts to

communicate in the local language. In Malawi, Chichewa and English are both officially used, although of lots of people are more fluent in Chichewa than they are in English. You will pick up the standard greetings quickly enough; Chichewa is a straightforward language to learn. But why not take the time to learn more!
You could:

- Spend some time with the school children, help their English and let them teach you in return.
- Join as a group of volunteers to recruit a Chichewa teacher to come to Mitsidi
- Ask lots of questions of your work colleagues
- Or start learning before you go, there is an excellent new book, it is also available online at: http://www.chichewagrammar.net/



Extending your stay

Volunteer placements are generally 6 months long. Very occasionally, because of specific project needs, the local manager of your project will ask if you are able to extend your stay. It will be your choice whether to accept and it will depend on your personal circumstances. If an extension is agreed, you will liaise with the UK office to make changes to your flights.

Police Checks

If you normally work with children or vulnerable adults, or any other position that would require you to have a police check (DBS, formerly known as CRB) in the UK, Krizevac highly recommends that you visit the local police to obtain a police check relating to the time you spent in Malawi, prior to your departure. This is to ensure that you have continuity of clearance. However, Krizevac CANNOT guarantee that a Malawian police check will be accepted by prospective employers. We are happy to write a letter confirming that you have not been the subject of criminal or safeguarding investigations to supplement a police check. Again, we cannot guarantee this will be accepted by employers and you must agree to accept this risk.

Returning Home

When preparing to leave Malawi, you will be saying goodbye to lots of new friends and will no doubt have plenty of mixed emotions about returning to the 'real world'. There are a few common issues that come up in relation to your departure.

It is only natural that you will have formed close relationships with work colleagues, fellow ex-pats, and local families. Many people view a volunteer's departure as an ideal opportunity to make requests for gifts. It is up to you how you respond to these requests. If you do decide to help by leaving a gift of some of your clothing, work resources, or even

money, we ask that you do this in person and that you make clear it is a personal gift and does not reflect the policy of your host organisation. Please do not ask other volunteers or local staff to organise gifts on your behalf after your departure, this can lead to misunderstandings.

Any items left at Mitsidi that you do not wish to take home will be sold at a “jumble sale” to raise funds for Mother Teresa Children’s Centre, the allocations committee will ensure that funds raised are used fairly.

Think carefully about sharing personal contact information, some volunteers find that they receive begging or request letters, emails, and phone calls after their return.

Please ensure that you have all your relevant travel documents well before you travel. Please contact your airline 72 hours prior to departure to check your flight is as scheduled.

After you return home, you will receive a quick message from Krizevac to check you have arrived safely. After a few weeks (to give you time to catch up with the important people in your life) we will send you a questionnaire and we would appreciate all responses. If you would like to continue your involvement with Krizevac Project, you can talk to the UK office about the level of support you would like to offer.

