



Welcome to volunteering with Phunzira!

This pack will tell you everything you need to know about volunteering with Phunzira, including:

- Visa requirements
- Flight options
- Entry into Malawi
- Travel to Ruarwe
- Accommodation
- Eating
- Costs involved
- Volunteer responsibilities
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- Travelling Malawi
- Travelling Africa
- Cultural awareness
- Medical matters

For more information on volunteering with educational, life skills or recreational activities please contact

Rosa: rosa@phunzira.org

For more information on volunteering with health initiatives in north Malawi

please contact Georgina: georgina@phunzira.org

For more information on the project or organising fundraisers in the UK

please consult our website: www.phunzira.org

Malawi: Ten Facts

Capital:	Lilongwe
Population:	Approx. 15 million
Currency:	Malawi Kwacha (MK or MWK) £1 ≈ MK250
International Dialling Code:	+265
President:	Bingu wa Mutharika
Main Languages:	English (official), Chichewa (national), Chitumbuka (north)
Cities:	Lilongwe, Mzuzu, Karonga, Zomba, Blantyre
Dominant Religions:	Protestant (55%), Catholic (20%), Muslim (20%)
Average Birth Rate per Woman:	5.9 children
Lake Malawi:	Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Visa requirements

A valid passport with at least six months to expiry date (from intended exit date) is required to enter Malawi. If your passport is likely to expire you should get a new one before arriving. Tourist visas, which are valid for 1 month, are issued upon entry and are free-of-charge. They can be extended up to a further 60 days at any of the immigration offices found in most major towns (including Nkhata Bay and Mzuzu), at a cost of MK5,000 (approx. £25) per month.

Volunteers staying for over 3 months in Malawi have the option of leaving the country for 3 days, after which point they will be issued a new tourist visa upon re-entry into Malawi, which can again be extended a further 60 days at the same cost as mentioned above. There are many interesting places to visit (Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia, Zanzibar, etc.) but the total costs can be high. The alternative is to apply for a Temporary Residents Permit (TRP), which will cost MK30,000 (approx. £125) for 6 months. These permits are easily obtainable from within Malawi and should not be organised prior to travelling.

For more detailed information on visas please contact:

Malawi High Commission; London
33 Grosvenor Street, Mayfair, London, W1K 4QT
0203 235 1077

Malawi has diplomatic representation in Belgium (Brussels), Canada (Ontario), France (Paris), Germany (Bonn), Japan (Tokyo), Kenya (Nairobi), Mozambique (Maputo), Namibia (Windhoek), South Africa (Pretoria), UK (London), USA (Washington), Zambia (Lusaka) and Zimbabwe (Harare).

Flight options

There are no direct flights from the UK to Malawi. The main airlines that fly regularly to Lilongwe (the Capital) are *Ethiopian Airlines*, *Kenya Airways* and *South African Airways*. The easiest way to fly is with one stopover, however adding more stopovers usually decreases the cost of your flight. In general, Ethiopian Airlines is viewed as the cheaper option (though at peak times of the year there is less of a difference in price). For those who are not too fond of travelling long distances and prefer to have entertainment onboard, Kenya Airways and South African Airways have a personal TV for each passenger.

Entry into Malawi

If you are flying in from the UK with one stopover, you will arrive in Lilongwe approximately 15 hours after original departure. It is at this point that you will receive a tourist stamp in your passport that will last for one month before requiring renewal. On your immigration form under purpose of visit please enter 'tourist'.

In general Malawi is considered to be a safe country where tourists are not at great risk, however in Lilongwe petty crimes and robberies can be frequent so visitors should make sure to watch their bags and carry small amounts of cash.

All volunteers are advised to stay in Lilongwe for at least one night once they arrive in the country. There are many places to stay in the Capital, from tourist lodges to plush hotels. For those on a typical traveller's budget Phunzira recommends staying at *Mabuya Camp*, a lodge owned by a British couple that has chalets, dorms, camping, showers with hot water, cooking areas, and an internet room with wi-fi. The owners will be able to provide advice on bus routes and timetables for getting to the north. A taxi to Mabuya Camp from the airport should cost MK4,500 (£19) - taxis are all unmarked and easy to find at the airport upon arrival.

The lodge gets very packed during peak season so make sure to book in advance with Tom or Janey by emailing bookings@mabuyacamp.com. For more information on the accommodation offered at the lodge, visit www.mabuyacamp.com.

Travel to Ruarwe

The aim is to get from Lilongwe (Central Region) to Nkhata Bay (northern Region), where volunteers will be met by a Phunzira representative. There are buses that travel north along the lakeshore, going from Lilongwe to Nkhata Bay via Salima, that cost around MK1,200 (£5.50) and take between 8 - 12 hours. We recommend volunteers going to Nkhata Bay to stay at *Butterfly Space*, a tourist lodge run by two English ladies, Josie and Alice. For more information on the accommodation offered at the lodge, visit www.butterfly-space.com. All information relating to Phunzira will be kept at the reception and Phunzira volunteers will receive a 50% discount on accommodation during their stay, so a dorm bed would cost £2.10 per night and a chalet would cost £3.40 per night.

Alternatively you can travel from Lilongwe to Mzuzu, located 50 km west of Nkhata Bay and one of the five main cities in Malawi. From the main bus station in Lilongwe there are numerous buses, both large and small, that leave for Mzuzu throughout the morning. The journey costs approximately MK1,200 (£5.50) and takes between 5 - 8 hours. From there you can travel to Nkhata Bay on a mini bus (approximately one hour long and costing approximately £2.50), or if you are looking for a place to stay then Mzuzu Zu is relatively cheap and well known for its full English breakfast!

To get to Ruarwe volunteers must travel on the ferry (*ilala*) from Nkhata Bay on the first Sunday after they arrive. This will cost approximately MK850 (£3.40) and takes about 5 hours, with beautiful views along the way.

Accommodation

While we are awaiting construction of volunteer accommodation, *Zulunkhuni River Lodge* have very kindly offered free accommodation for all our volunteers. Zulunkhuni is a functioning lodge set in a beautiful location along the lakeshore, with waterfalls backing onto it. Please be aware that Zulunkhuni is operating as a business and must attend to guests' needs as a priority. Volunteers should therefore expect to be sleeping in the dormitory or camping and may have to move around during their stay. We are extremely grateful to the owners for their generosity and we ask all volunteers to respect the lodge and treat it well.

Volunteers are asked to bring their own tent and sleeping bag. If you are sleeping in the dormitory sheets will be provided on arrival and volunteers will be responsible for washing their own sheets during their. A laundry service is available at the lodge for a small fee. Mosquito nets are provided on every bed but we recommend volunteers to also bring their own.

There is one shower and one toilet at the lodge and volunteers should expect cold showers. It is very hot during the summer months so after a sweaty day at work a cold shower is often all that is desired!

There is no electricity at the lodge or in Ruarwe as a whole so after dark the lanterns come out. The staff at Zulunkhuni are very friendly and helpful so rest assured there will always be someone around to assist with any problems. There is also extremely good security both day and night at the lodge.

We hope to start building our own volunteer accommodation in the not too distant future with a similar setup.

If you volunteering for a short period and wish to stay in one of the chalets at the lodge you are most welcome to do so. This will cost the normal, daily rate of MK1,750 per person for a double chalet and MK2,500 per person for the beautiful stonehouse (including breakfast).

Eating

Ruarwe is a very remote and rural village. Volunteers need to be aware that there is very little available to buy from anywhere within walking distance. Fresh food is seasonal and variable in availability. One of Phunzira's priorities is to ensure volunteers eat well and stay healthy, but this does take some forward planning.

Volunteers will be asked to select a *catered* or *self-catered* option, which they can choose on a weekly basis.

Catered

This option will mean eating food cooked by Zulunkhuni River Lodge (from their standard menu) at the same price as regular guests and payable to the lodge at the end each week. Food at the lodge is varied and delicious, and is freshly prepared on a daily basis by their local chefs.

Breakfast: The kitchen opens at 7am and the lodge offers an extensive menu ranging from eggs on toast to a full English breakfast, pancakes, french toast and rice pudding. The prices range from MK400- MK1,000 (£1.60 - £4).

Lunch: All volunteers are expected to eat lunch provided at the centre, Nyumba ya Masambiro (NYM). If you are going for the catered option you will still have to pay MK750 (£3) each week for lunch. For more details please see later.

Dinner: There is a set meal every night at the lodge and it is usually eaten together with any other guests/catered volunteers staying there. The menu is varied but usually vegetarian / soya based with the occasional exception of chicken or goat sourced locally. Meals include fish and chips, spaghetti bolognese, curry, chilli con carne and handmade tortellini! If you have special requirements the staff will always do their best to accommodate you. Dinner costs MK1,200 (£5) for a main meal + MK300 (£1.20) for dessert.

Self-Catered

Until volunteer accommodation is built there is a basic, covered kitchen area at the lodge with two paraffin stoves, a preparation area and a storage area. All cooking utensils and crockery / cutlery will also be provided. This area is solely for the use of volunteers, not guests staying at the lodge.

Please remember this is rural living and as previously mentioned purchasing food is not the easiest task, nor cooking it! However, it is part of the experience of living in a remote village and we believe that cooking together as group of volunteers in this simple way can be a very enjoyable experience. To ensure there is always enough basic items to cook with, Phunzira will be transporting the necessities (including some dry foods) bought in bulk from outside of Ruarwe for which there will be a small fee of MK1,500 (£6) per week, payable to our volunteer co-ordinator in local currency. This will cover the cost for the basic items needed to self-cater.

- Rice
- Beans
- Soya
- Flour
- Salt
- Sugar
- Tea
- Powdered milk
- Cooking oil
- Paraffin
- Soap

Other perishable foods can be bought in Ruarwe and it will be up to volunteers to cover the cost either individually or as a group contributing to a 'pot'. Perishables available locally include:

- A range of vegetables (mostly grown in NYM's gardens and therefore helping to put money back into the project) e.g. tomatoes, onions, aubergines, okra, lettuce, courgettes... and a host of other crops that we are trialling in our gardens
- Eggs at MK45 each (20 pence)
- Fish (caught by local fisherman)
- Chicken (locally sourced from the village)

A typical day in Ruarwe if you are self-catered will be as follows:

Breakfast: We can only offer a rice porridge included in the previously mentioned cost. Bread rolls are sometimes available in Ruarwe at MK25 (10 pence) each, but if you would like to have things like cereal, oat porridge, peanut butter, honey, etc. then these should be purchased by volunteers in Mzuzu or Nkhata Bay before travelling to Ruarwe. If you are staying for over a month then you should buy enough for 3 weeks. In the future we hope to run a small tuck shop where such items would be available.

Lunch: Catered and self-catered volunteers will all have lunch at NYM (for self-catered volunteers this is already included in the weekly contribution). We expect everyone to eat lunch together with our local staff at the centre. This is a great experience that allows everyone to get to know each other better, and learning about Ruarwe's culture and people is paramount to our ethos as a charity. Lunch will be cooked by staff at NYM and will consist of local Malawian cuisine such as rice or nsima (dried and pounded cassava), cooked with beans / usipa (fish) / greens from the garden.

Dinner: As basic or creative as you wish using the ingredients mentioned above. Again, these items can be supplemented by extra goods such as pasta, herbs, spices, tin foods etc which should be bought by individuals (at their own cost) in Mzuzu or Nkhata Bay before travelling to Ruarwe.

We appreciate that from time to time self-catered volunteers might like to treat themselves to meals ordered at the lodge, which is of course no problem. Please don't be too daunted by all this information concerning food - we are just keen to highlight what is accessible to volunteers staying in Ruarwe so we can ensure that everyone eats well and stays healthy! We are a small charity working in the village and we pride ourselves on working as team and supporting each other.

Explanation of Costs

Please note that we do not charge anything for people wishing to volunteer with Phunzira. The costs stated here merely cover essential accommodation and food costs, and have been kept to an absolute minimum.

Accommodation: dormitory or camping free-of-charge

Self-catered: MK1,500 (£6) per week for basics (+ approx. MK1,500 per week for perishables)

Catered: all costs are payable to Zulunkhuni Lodge (not Phunzira) + MK750 (£3) per week payable to Phunzira for lunch

Individual costs: these are different for each volunteer and usually include items such as travel expenses, supplemented food, washing powder for clothes etc.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Construction (from Jul 10 onwards):

Type of volunteer: *Skilled and unskilled*

Project/area of work: *Volunteers will be helping with the building of compost toilets, 2 laboratories and volunteer accommodation, with the help of the community and on the land that Phunzira has acquired in Ruarwe. Phunzira has pledged to build basic rammed earth laboratories at two secondary schools just outside of Ruarwe village.*

Responsibilities:

- *Work individually or in pairs to take charge of smaller groups consisting of members of the local community in order to share skills in construction work.*
- *The centre and volunteer areas will be simple structures so unskilled volunteers with a passion for building are most welcome.*
- *Most building equipment will be on-site before volunteers arrive, but occasional trips to the city by ferry will be necessary in order to purchase further materials.*

NB: Construction volunteers should do some basic research on building with rammed earth before leaving for Malawi.

Location: *All factions of the centre, including the volunteer accommodation, will be built on the land acquired by Phunzira in Ruarwe village. The laboratories will be built in Khondowe (2 hr walk away) and Bunga (1.5 hr walk away).*

Languages: *English (Phunzira will always try to provide translators for Chitumbuka).*

Academic Tutorials (from Jan 12 onwards):

Type of volunteer: *Skilled*

Project/area of work: *We will initially concentrate on subjects that students are experiencing problems with at JCE and MSCE level (equivalent to GCSE and A-Level): Science, Mathematics and English.*

Responsibilities:

- *Run weekly tutorials for secondary school students and possibly adults (depending on the growing demand within the community) that are activity-based and focus on the benefits of learning in a group environment.*
- *Look at the relevance of the subject in the world outside the classroom, and the ways in which the skills learnt at school can be applied to other parts of life.*
- *Construct a system whereby secondary and primary schools can borrow relevant academic materials belonging to the centre.*
- *If teachers wish, they would be most welcome to run classes at either of the secondary schools linked to the centre, including teacher training sessions for staff.*

Location: *All tutorials will take place in the centre in Ruarwe. On occasion, sessions may also run outdoors and at either of the secondary schools involved (Khondowe - 2 hr away, and Bunga - 1.5 hr away).*

Languages: *All classes will be run in English. A Chitumbuka translator will be present for adult sessions.*

Life Skills Sessions (from Jan 12 onwards):

Type of volunteer: *Skilled*

Project/area of work: *HIV/ AIDS awareness; crop cultivation; fishing.*

Responsibilities:

- *Run sessions at the centre: the number of these will depend on the growing demand within the community.*
- *Devise creative pamphlets and information sheets that can be left in the life skills room.*

HIV/ AIDS Awareness - *Volunteers are expected to:*

- *Provide information on the virus itself and transmission*
- *Give information and advice on prevention*
- *Help to encourage individuals and their families to visit test centres*
- *Deconstruct pre-existing rumours and myths surrounding HIV*
- *For children, teach through more abstract methods using tools such as dance, song and drama*
- *Work to reduce stigmatism and encourage conversations about HIV from an early age and across genders*
- *Initiate ways in which the community can act as a support network for those who are in need of help and care*

Note: Adult sessions will be separate for men and women.

Crop Cultivation - *Volunteers are expected to:*

- *Teach how to keep the soil well irrigated and in good condition for growing*
- *Planting the seeds: differentiate between different kinds of soil and optimal distances for planting different seeds*
- *Provide information on different methods of crop fertilisation*
- *Equipment: explain and demonstrate any equipment involved*
- *Initiate ways in which the community can work together to sell produce both locally and in Nkhata Bay/Mzuzu*
- *Help individuals that attend the sessions by providing advice on growing crops on their own land, and run occasional sessions outside the centre in other NYM target areas*
- *Help the gardeners at the centre to organise produce in order for it to be sold to nearby lodges and in Ruarwe village.*

Fishing - *Volunteers are expected to:*

- *Develop our onsite pond and spread knowledge about farming fish*
- *Demonstrate how to make and repair nets of different sizes*
- *Explain the risks involved to the individual (safety precautions etc.) and to the environment (over fishing etc.)*
- *Show methods used to fish in deep waters*
- *Establish smaller groups to work together to sell fish outside of Ruarwe*

Other workshops - Volunteers are most welcome to run sessions on other life skills, academics or youth-orientated initiatives that will aid the charity in fulfilling its objectives. Some examples:

- *Business management training*
- *IT skills*
- *Water sanitation*
- *Women's groups*

If you are interested in running a workshop then please email Rosa (rosa@phunzira.org) with a brief proposal.

Location: *All workshops and sessions will take place in the centre in Ruarwe in the life skills room but, in case of overlap, any of the teaching rooms may also be used. Volunteers may also wish to run sessions outside the centre, which they are more than welcome to do.*

Languages: *Classes will be run in English. We will provide a Chitumbuka translator to be present at some sessions and to translate any pamphlets/ information sheets.*

Youth-Orientated Initiatives (from Jan 12 onwards):

Type of volunteer: *Skilled and unskilled*

Project/area of work: *Volunteers will assist in promoting education and healthy play-time for those attending the youth centre at NYM, as well as help to run the youth-orientated initiatives that stem from it.*

Responsibilities:

- *Help local volunteers to oversee the children and young adults at the youth centre in NYM three times a week*
- *Assist with organising and running youth clubs for both under 18 year olds and 18-25 year olds at the centre*
- *Organise occasional outdoor trips for the older youth club relating to health and community development, with the possibility of linking up with other nearby youth groups to embark on monthly community service*
- *Assist with extra initiatives at NYM that stem from the youth centre, such as sports sessions, drama classes and art workshops*

Location: *Most groups will be run from the youth centre at NYM but some sessions will take place in an outdoor setting in Ruarwe village. Community service outings will always take place in one of the four main target areas: Ruarwe, Khondowe, Bunga or Banda.*

Languages: *English, with some local volunteers providing assistance with Chitumbuka translation.*

Phunzira responsibilities

When volunteers arrive they will be greeted in Nkhata Bay by a Phunzira representative and escorted to the centre in Ruarwe by boat or ferry.

Volunteer Co-ordinator's Duties:

- Welcome volunteers in Nkhata Bay and escort them to the centre, providing them with any necessary forms and information.
- Escort all volunteers to their sleeping area and be available to answer any questions on the project.
- Provide volunteers with all the necessary equipment in order to prepare for running tutorials, sessions and workshops at the centre.
- Run group sessions with volunteers at least once a week in order to discuss any issues or achievements from the previous week.
- Escort volunteers suffering from severe illness to the private doctor or hospital in Nkhata Bay.

Please note at present we do not have an established volunteer co-ordinator but there is always someone available to carry out these duties. If you are interested in the role of volunteer co-ordinator please contact rosa@phunzira.org.

Travelling Malawi

Since Ruarwe is a very remote location, volunteers will wish to take breaks in order to travel around Malawi. To allow for this long-term volunteers should aim to work in Ruarwe for a 3-week stretch and then take a 1-week break. There are some beautiful areas around Ruarwe and Khondowe for camping, and visitors to Ruarwe often embark on a 5hr walk south (with plenty of good swimming and snorkelling spots) to Usisya, where Temwa carries out much of their community work (Temwa is the acting NGO for the district in which Phunzira's community work is carried out).

Every Sunday morning the ferry passes Ruarwe on its journey north towards Ncharo and Chilumba, and then heads back down south, passing Ruarwe early Monday morning on its way to Monkey Bay. Ruarwe is one stop north of Usisya and two stops north of Nkhata Bay, a place many volunteers may wish to visit regularly due to its high level of tourism and lively atmosphere. Lake Malawi contains over 90% of all the fresh water fish species on the planet, and Nkhata Bay has a very good reputation with divers (see www.aquafrica.co.uk).

Volunteers should consult Rosa (rosa@phunzira.org) if they wish to travel Malawi more extensively during their stay. There are some beautiful places to explore, including Mount Mulanje and the Zomba Plateau in the south, Mushroom Farm and Nyika Reserve in the north, and both Chizumulu and Likoma, two beautiful islands that lie in Lake Malawi not far off the coast of Mozambique.

Volunteers planning to arrive in October should note that Malawi has a yearly festival called the *Lake of Stars*, which normally runs at the beginning of the month. It has hosted acts such as Andy Cato (Groove Armada), DJ Yoda and Annie Mac, as well as some of Malawi's biggest stars (Lucius Banda, Joseph Tembo and the Black Missionaries). For more information visit their website: www.lakeofstars.org.

Ferry (ilala) schedule:

NORTH BOUND			
Day	Route	Arrival	Departure
Friday	MONKEY BAY	-----	10.00
Friday	CHIPOKA	13.00	16.00
Saturday	NKHOTAKOTA	00.00	02.00
Saturday	METANGULA [MZ]	06.00	08.00
Saturday	COBUE [MZ]	12.00	13.00
Saturday	LIKOMA ISLAND	13.30	18.00
Saturday	CHIZUMULU ISLAND	19.30	22.00
Sunday	NKHATA BAY	01.00	05.00
Sunday	USISYA	07.30	09.30
Sunday	RUARWE	10.15	11.15
Sunday	NCHARO	12.00	13.00
Sunday	CHILUMBA	17.00	-----

SOUTH BOUND			
Day	Route	Arrival	Departure
Monday	CHILUMBA	-----	01.00
Monday	NCHARO	05.00	06.00
Monday	RUARWE	06.45	08.00
Monday	USISYA	08.45	10.30
Monday	NKHATA BAY	12.45	20.00
Tuesday	CHIZUMULU ISLAND	23.00	02.00
Tuesday	LIKOMA ISLAND	03.15	06.15
Tuesday	COBUE [MZ]	07.00	08.00
Tuesday	METANGULA [MZ]	12.00	14.00
Tuesday	NKHOTAKOTA	17.30	19.30
Wednesday	CHIPOKA	03.30	07.30
Wednesday	MONKEY BAY	10.30	-----

Travelling Africa

Volunteers that wish to travel through other parts of Africa before or after their trip to Malawi must consult a travel clinic in order to check whether they need to take extra precautions, such as a yellow fever injection. You can get to Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia fairly easily by road, and Mozambique can also be arrived at by boat.

Volunteers should check visa restrictions for these countries (visas do not need to be obtained beforehand but the cost may vary depending on the country you are going to, and the country you are from).

It is also fairly easy to travel to South Africa by land, and many visitors to Malawi choose to do this and then fly back to their home country from there.

Cultural awareness

Ruarwe is a very remote and local village and most adults do not have a very good command of the English language. Volunteers staying for longer than a period of 2 - 3 months should consider learning essential words and phrases in Chitumbuka in order to communicate better with the surrounding community.

Female volunteers should be aware that in the towns and villages, it is normally respectful to have your knees covered (and in some cases, your shoulders). Some practices in Malawi are very different to what volunteers may be used to at home. Visitors to the centre do not have to agree with all the customs around them but should act respectfully towards them and endeavour to understand the complex cultural history that has often shaped them.

Medical matters

The main potential problem affecting volunteers is **malaria**. We insist on all our volunteers organising malaria prophylaxis prior to travel. Make sure you are taking your anti-malarial tablets each day (or week, if you are taking Lariam), and continue to take them for the recommended time after you get home. Even though there are not too many problems in general with mosquitoes in Ruarwe, you should always use a mosquito net. Make sure to apply mosquito repellent (preferably with 25% - 50% Deet), and try to cover yourself up at night. If you start feeling any symptoms of malaria then immediately notify the volunteer co-ordinator.

HIV/AIDS is a problem all over Malawi and many volunteers arrive unaware of the risks involved in entering into long-term relationships. All volunteers in such a situation, whether they consider themselves to be in long-term or short-term relationships, should make sure they use condoms. There are confidential clinics in Nkhata Bay that offer free HIV/AIDS tests with same-day results.

We also insist that all our volunteers purchase comprehensive travel / health insurance prior to travel and you will need to provide us with details of your insurance policy when you arrive along with emergency contact details and a signed code of conduct (forms available). If a volunteer should fall sick there is a private doctor and public hospital in Nkhata Bay (and a public hospital in Mzuzu). If a volunteer should suffer a serious condition in Ruarwe there will always be someone available to assist them with getting to appropriate health services.

Important: Make sure you have read Phunzira's *Medical Pack*, which contains more detailed information about medical matters and emergencies.