

MATANDANI
PRIMARY SCHOOL - MALAWI



Volunteer Booklet

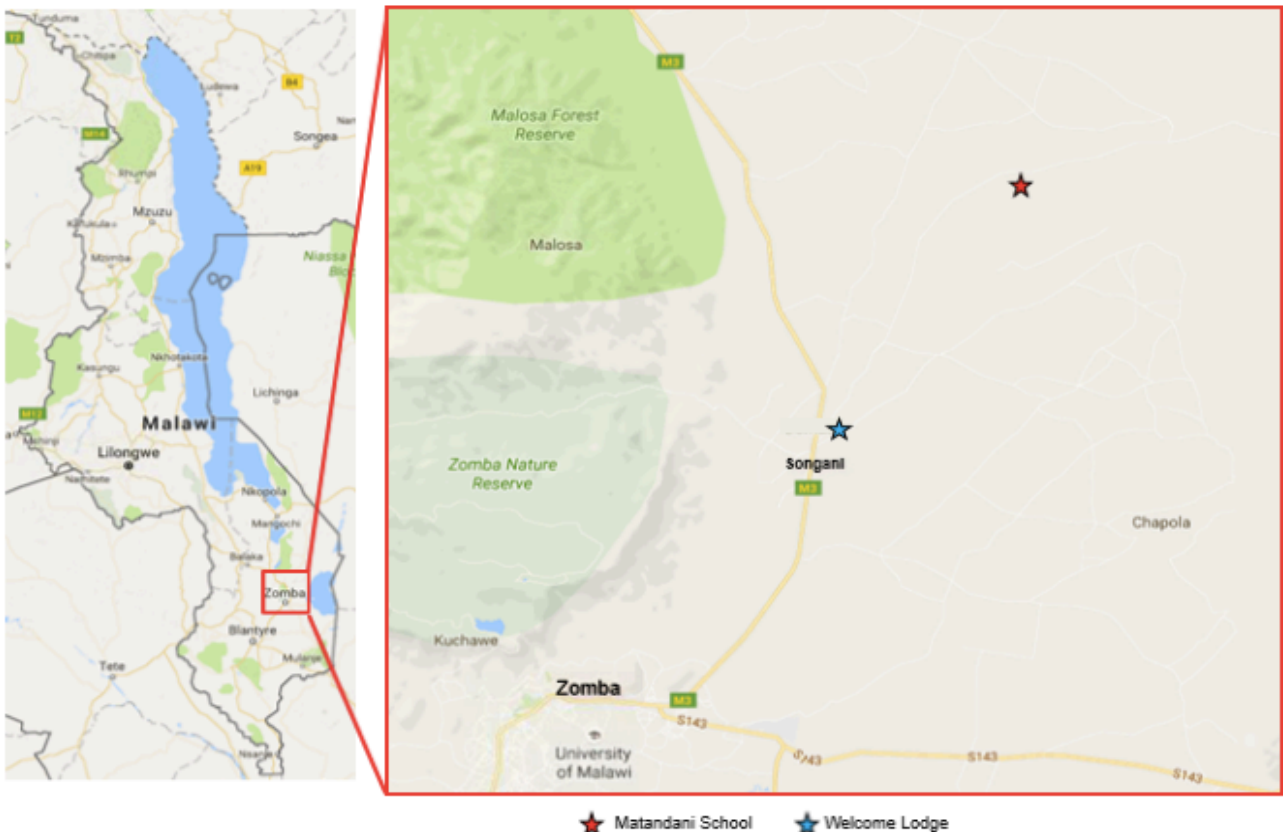
www.matandani.com

Matandani School Location

The school is located at Matandani which is 7km along a dirt road from **Songani** (nearest village), which is a further 10km from **Zomba** by main tarmac road (nearest town), **Zomba** is 1.5 hours from **Blantyre** (nearest city).

Accommodation: Further details are below, you will be staying at the Welcome Lodge in Songani.

Area Map – Zomba Town and Songani showing location of Guesthouse and Matandani School



★ Matandani School

★ Welcome Lodge

Visas

The requirement to get a visa is new, please check out the website because it is different depending on your nationality. For Irish and British citizens you can get a visa on arrival, which costs \$75 for 3 months, or \$150 for multiple entry (you must have dollars or pounds to pay for this). The multiple entry one is valid for 6 months, more information can be found here: <http://www.malawihighcommission.co.uk/index.php/visa>.

However, for both of these visas you have to renew them after 30 days. This can be done in a local police station, where you would extend it by 30 days at a costs of MK5000.

Flights

Blantyre is the best airport to fly into, it's around 1.5 to 2 hours from Songani. You have two options to get from Blantyre to the accommodation in Songani:

Taxi: we use a lovely local guy here called Suman to pick people up from the airport and he charges MK20,000 which is roughly €28.

Taxi and bus combo: if you don't have much luggage you can get local buses, and that would be cheaper, but takes a lot longer. This would cost around MK12000, and would involve getting a taxi into Blantyre town (MK10,000), then a bus onwards to Zomba (MK1700) and then finally a bus from Zomba to Songani (MK200). The total time could be 3-4 hours, or higher. Buses do not leave here until they are full. Do not attempt this journey any later than noon, as you do not want to be travelling in the dark. It gets dark around 5.30pm here every day of the year.

If there are two or more of you, it's much easier to get a taxi and the cost would effectively be the same. It's also a welcome treat after travelling for several hours! Songani itself is located alongside the main road so it is very easy access from Blantyre by car.

The other option is to fly to the capital, Lilongwe, however it is much further away, roughly 5 hours drive. There are many flights a week connecting on to Blantyre anyway.

Accommodation

Welcome Lodge sits just off the main road through Songani. Matandani school is around 7km away, and Zomba (former capital) is 10km away. Volunteers nearly always stay at Welcome Lodge in Songani; a basic but perfectly safe and hospitable place to stay. Every room is a double en-suite with flushing toilet and shower. Each room is fitted with a large mosquito net over the bed.

Meals can also be arranged at the guesthouse, however a big grocery shop in either Blantyre or Zomba is highly recommended as there just isn't a selection of food in Songani. The accommodation is secure and currently it costs MK140,000 a month, which is roughly €170 a month. Breakfast can be arranged but making your own provides more variety and choice, and is much faster!

Laundry can be done both at the guesthouse and by Mary (Deputy Principal) at the school.

The school itself is 7km down a (dirt) road from the school. There are a number of ways to get to and from there. One option is to get a bicycle taxi, or *njinga*. They cost the equivalent of about 50p and are safe. Some volunteers choose to buy bicycles. There are charity shops in Zomba and a decent second hand bike can be bought for prices starting at around £40. There are also some bikes left at Matandani school that you could use while there that were left by past volunteers!



The Welcome Lodge in Songani



Food

Restaurants that we can recommend in Zomba:

- **Casa Rossa** - lovely Italian food, pricey by Malawian standards
- **Tasty Bites** – a mixture of every type of food.
- **Steers** – a South African burger place (typical western burger and chips)
- **African Heritage** – a lovely café selling salads and light bites/tasty sandwiches (best coffee in town) MK2000
- **Pakachere Hostel** – an international hostel with good food, outdoor fires, volleyball MK1500 - 4000
- **Dominos** – a restaurant/bar with a mixture of food (pizzas, burgers, chicken and chips) MK2000 - 4000

Finances:

This is rough indication of costs:

- Accommodation is roughly MK140,000 per month
- Weekend at the lake: MK50,000 (staying in a dorm room, travelling by local minibuses)
- Climbing Mount Mulanje: MK80,000 (3 days, 2 nights, including guide)
- Food: MK30,000 per month (2 meals out a week)
- Tomatoes (MK100 for a pile), Apple (MK150 each), Avocado (MK250 each), Fanta (MK250 per glass bottle), 500ml water (MK300), 5 litre water (MK660), dozen oranges (MK700), crisps (MK750)
- Laundry - Mary does a carrier bag full for MK500

You can live very reasonably in Malawi, but once you start having weekends away and staying in Western places your budget will sky rocket.

Pre Trips:

Make sure all your vaccinations are up to date. You must get vaccinations against Typhoid, Hepatitis A and Tetanus. It is not essential, but consider getting vaccinations for Hepatitis B, Cholera and Rabies. A vaccination against Yellow Fever is required.

Mobile Phones

If you want to use your existing phone out here, make sure that it is unlocked, or bring an unlocked phone with you. It is very cheap to buy a sim card here AIRTEL (MK500) and 1gb of data is 2850. There is no Wi-Fi in Malawi.

Essentials to Pack

- Malaria tablets - although it possible to buy these out here- please be aware that Malarioan Malaria prevention drug is easy on the stomach and head but makes one very sensitive to light so be mindful of sunburn.
- Warm clothing- The months on June, July and August are mild in Malawi, and in the Songani area (which is elevated) it can be quite chilly at night.
- Deet insect repellent (make sure it contains deet- the higher % the better)
- General medication you take- you can also access a lot of medicine out here, but if you are uncertain pack it!
- Sunscreen- hard to find out here and expensive
- Towel and swimwear (for lake visits, you would really struggle to buy swimwear out here, especially as a girl)
- Toiletries; especially shampoo, and conditioner-which is difficult to find in shops in Malawi.
- A small bag/rucksack for getting to school and back and weekends away.

Other items you might consider bringing for your comfort

- Head torch, torch or lantern. (Electricity goes out very frequently) A candle in the room is also handy.
- A durable water bottle (you can then buy a 5l bottle and decant into a smaller one)
- Sleeping bag liner (for weekends away)
- Eye Drops- especially if you wear contacts
- Laptop for work
- Back up charger (Electricity goes out frequently)
- Hiking boots/Trainers if you want to climb Mount Mulanje
- Duct tape; very handy for temporarily mending or fixing things on the spot
- A Leatherman or Swiss Army knife
- Multi Plug Socket as there's only one electricity point in the rooms at the guesthouse.
- A wash kit that hangs up
- Snacks- chocolate, muesli bars, candy etc.

****Please be aware that the majority of things (besides those mentioned above) can be purchased in Malawi. You don't need to pack as much as you think you do.**

Main areas of work you would get involved with is:

There are always general repairs and maintenance in need of attention at Matandani. If it's something you cannot fix yourself there are local builders/carpenters etc. happy to take on a paid job!

It's all about modelling teaching and practice at Matandani. You will be surprised at how compromised the teachers in many areas. Lessons can be taught in basically anything appropriate to them and it would be invaluable to all.

It is a good idea to liaise with a particular teacher from a year group and focus on what his or her classroom needs. Find out where the children are having trouble in exams and focus on these things (especially in the older classes)

Most of the classrooms are lacking meaningful displays on the walls. It is easy to browse through the curriculum books to look for inspiration. Teachers are also happy to make suggestions or requests on what they would like. Many displays were made last year using rice bags and permanent marker; eliminating the risk of water and dust damage to the posters.

There is a good selection of sports equipment in the school. Modelled PE lessons and organised matches are always welcomed by the teachers and students.

Organisation: The classrooms and office are always in need of a good rearranging or organising.

Uniforms: The children's uniforms are sometimes the only clothes they own hence they become damaged or tattered. Tailors can be organised to come to school, even some of the teachers double as tailors as a side-line.

Outside each classroom is a small garden area. A horticulture and care lesson can be modelled for the children.

Art is a lesson rarely taught at Matandani. In Zomba there are some stationary supplies shop and the children and teachers would relish a lesson in this area.

Key People:

School Head-teacher (Mary) +265 (0)881357033 and Deputy Head-teacher (Kenneth) +265 (0)884305449 are really welcoming, accommodating and open to new ideas.

Other volunteers:

There's also a community of volunteers (from the Peace Corps, US Aid and various smaller organisations) that are based in and around Zomba, so you wouldn't be short of people to hang out with at weekends or go on weekend trips with. There's a WhatsApp group that we could include you on!

USEFUL Phone numbers or Emails

- Kenneth - Deputy Head-teacher at Matandani **+265 (0)884305449**
- Suman - Taxi Driver - **+265 (0)881143317**
- Lawrence - Reliable Bike Taxi Driver (njinja) **+265 (0)888664451**
- Winston - Malambe Camp - Cape McClear **+265 (0)999618676**
Manager of great beach hostel (cheapest) - beach huts or dorm
- Reckson - Guide for Mulanje Mountain Trip **+265 (0)882 857390**
- Satemwa Tea Estate - email for booking lodge or hotel
accomodation@satemwa.com
<http://www.satemwa.com/index>
- Mufasa Eco Lodge - Contact Riki - Monkey Bay **+265 (0)993080057**
<https://www.facebook.com/mufasaecolodge/>
- Mushroom Farm - Livingstonia
<https://www.facebook.com/themushroomfarmmalawi/?fref=ts>
- Kande Beach - Near Nhkata Bay **+265 (0)888263500**
<http://kandebeach.com/>

Places to see and visit while in Malawi

With a half-day every Friday, weekends can be filled with lots of opportunities to see Malawi and let your hair down. Choose from some of these highlights below;

* Liwondwe National Park - plenty of Hippos and Elephants



* Zomba Plateau - a great walk at top of plateau with waterfall and great views



* Blantyre City - nearby 1hr 30mins - Shopping and good food

* Mulanje Mountains (3rd tallest mountain in Africa) - amazing hiking,



* Satemwa Tea and Coffee Estate - Thyolo, South of Blantyre





*** Lake Malawi - with recommended places to stay**

- Monkey Bay (Mufasa Eco Lodge)



- Cape McClear (Malambe Camp)



- Nkhata Bay (Mayoka Village)



- Livingstonia (Mushroom Farm)



- Kande Beach (Kande Beach)



* Likoma Island - Stunning island in the middle of Lake Malawi (*takes a long time to get here + you would need 5-7 days minimum for this trip!*)

