

Nollaig Murphy on her experience volunteering with OLA

This is how Nollaig Murphy from Derrygowna, Banteer, Co. Cork and a teacher at Scoil Ghoonatan, Bellevue, Mallow, sums up her four weeks as a volunteer with the Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles in a remote rural village, Mwamapalala, in Tanzania, West Africa.

My name is Nollaig Murphy and I am a primary school teacher. During the month of July 2012, I had the joy of spending almost four weeks teaching in a little village called Mamapalala in Tanzania. This wonderful experience will stay with me forever. The primary and secondary schools in this remote rural village are owned by the diocese of Shinyanga and run by the Sisters of Our Lady of Aposles (OLA for short) - a group of Missionary Sisters from Ardfoyle, Ballintemple, Cork City. The following is a brief account of my time in Tanzania; it is not always easy to capture a heartfelt experience in words!

I flew into Mwanza and stayed with the OLA Sisters in Mwanza for a night. Even at the airport the welcome I received from Sr. Cassie Hurley from Mitchelstown, Co. Cork and Sr. Perpetua from Ghana made me feel at ease straightaway. Having spent a lovely night in the convent and well rested after the long journey (delays included) myself and Sr. Anne Cahill from Watergrasshill, Co. Cork headed off again early the next morning for Mwamapalala which was to be my home for the next few weeks.

I started teaching the following morning in a primary school with Sr. Anne and Olivia (another volunteer) this was a summer camp for children wanting to learn English and improve their English for entry into the secondary school. After class the children would get 'Ugi' (porridge) to eat which they thoroughly enjoyed.

When the secondary school re-opened after their break, I taught English in some classes there too. The students in the secondary school varied in age from twelve year olds to twenty four year olds. One common thread among all the students was their eagerness to learn. I thoroughly enjoyed our daily classes; it was such a pleasure to teach such enthusiastic students! In the afternoons myself and Olivia would often go for walks in the semi-desert shrub lands where we would regularly hear '*Karibu, karibu*' meaning in the local language, '*welcome, welcome*'

Although these children and young adults may not possess many material things – the simplicity in their lives allows them to thoroughly enjoy life and be happy which they all do and are! I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Mwamapala.

“It genuinely was a life changing experience which will stay with me forever.”