

Day 21 - Friday 8th August

We had arrived at another day many Jolters had been waiting for - off to visit the Ekuzukekeni Orphan Day Centre. This is part of an ongoing building project called "Build a Future", working in the local community. After breakfast at Sondzela's, we were ready to get our hands dirty with some digging and planting fruit trees as well as ornamental grasses. Some of the team also got stuck in to a '60 minute makeover' for the new kitchen, although the fresh coat of paint seemed to end up as widely distributed on the painting team themselves as on the kitchen

walls... We were able to share our lunches with the children and have some time to play, sing and dance with them before saying reluctant goodbyes.

The afternoon was spent in the beautiful gardens of Malendela's restaurant and guesthouse. We played rugby, crochet and football, as well as taking some time to relax and chat with beautiful views over the mountains to enjoy. We stayed there for a delicious three course dinner as the sun set behind us - a beautiful end to a great day.



Day 22 - Saturday 9th August

We were very excited to hear that today involved a 3.30am start! Before dawn was upon us, we were waving goodbye to Sondzela's and were off to Mozambique. The border was breached within a couple of hours, and with visas sorted, we entered the last country of our trip.

The larger of our vehicles seemed to be of particularly interest to the Mozambique traffic police, who stopped us eight times with seemingly no reason to, before letting us continue on our travels! Jack attempted to create the world's longest loom band, whilst more singing and quizzes entertained the other troops. It was amazing to see the Indian Ocean and the palm trees lining the streets.

After fifteen hours on the road, we were thrilled to reach Barra Lodge and settle into our villas - a lovely dinner on the beach was awaiting us before we headed to bed.

Day 23 - Sunday 10th August

After breakfast by the pool, we were back on our buses ready for an exciting day down at Tofo beach. Convening at a local watersports school, we were given a safety briefing, snorkel, fins and goggles, and then most of us walked (Hannah making a dramatic entrance with her sand-dune slide!) down to the sea... Toby and Beth, meanwhile, travelled down in the lap of luxury on one of the boats, waving down at us as they passed by!

Our morning's activity was an Ocean Safari. We boarded our speed boats and set off - what a thrill as we bounced over the waves! We couldn't believe our luck when just a few minutes after reaching our observation area, one of the guides spotted a whale shark! These are very elusive creatures and we all excitedly jumped in the water with our



snorkels and masks at the ready. Swimming with these enormous mammals was a truly memorable experience. Special mention goes to Chantelle, Steph, Bethany and Jade who overcame significant nerves to take the plunge, and also to Toby whose acrobatics throwing himself over the side of the rig did not go unnoticed! We could hardly believe that our next sightings were even bigger animals - the hump-back whales. From our boats, we were treated to a real show from a number of these majestic creatures, who seemed to wave and acknowledge us by spouting water as they went past.



After packed lunches on the beach, we divided into three groups and rotated through games on the beach, shopping at the local craft market and surfing lessons. Harvey showed particular skill in riding the waves and Shelby and Jess drove some hard bargains down at the stalls.

By dinner time we were thoroughly worn out after a busy day, but managed to stuff ourselves full of pizza before heading to our chalets for the night.

Day 24 - Monday 11th August

During breakfast, we were entertained by further hump-back whales frolicking in the glistening Indian Ocean as we ate on the beach. After gathering our things, we loaded into 4x4 pick-up trucks in true African style - not the comfiest of journeys...

After a short ride along the sand dunes, we arrived by the sea and were met by the crews manning three Dhow boats. After cramming into the small wooden boats with traditional sails, we headed off into the sun. Everything seemed to be going smoothly until one of the boats chose a path that led into the side of one of the others... Fortunately, despite Buzza's best efforts to throw himself between the two, we escaped unscathed. Ian also livened up our journey, taking a short swim in the shallow sea at the mid-point... Further teamwork was required when one of the boats repeatedly beached on sandbanks, requiring pushing out by some of the JOLters to continue our course. Or reward on arrival at the island was a seafood feast provided by the village chief Eric and his fourteen wives! We soon learnt how to eat crabs fresh from the shell and tried mussels, prawns and calamari too. We were treated to an after dinner show from some of the chief's many children, and special additions from Hannah, Yasar, Richy and Jamie E were well received. A tour around the island let us see their school, churches and hospital, as well as meet some of the other children who lived there.



We sailed back to the mainland whilst the sun set, and were chased by the tide which had come in unbelievably far, well beyond where we had driven to that morning. A long walk to the vehicles was completed with resilience and good spirits by all, including Beth who came in floating on a surfboard alongside the group!

After our final dinner at Barra lodge, we packed our bags again and settled in for our last night.

