

Our team of 14 people recently returned from a mission trip to Mozambique, in Southern Africa. We stayed in a village called Cambine and were lucky enough to meet the amazing people who lived there and witness how the average person lives in Mozambique. I personally was able to take away many memories from this trip, along with a new perspective of how life is lived in other parts of the world.

There are so many experiences and events which all happened in the week and a half that we were in Cambine that it is hard to pick out just a few to talk about and explain. The things that really stick out in my mind are how hard the men worked on the guest house, the playful orphans, and the loving widows. Our team had several groups, a construction group, a medical group and a group which helped to teach at the seminary. I was a part of the construction group and was able to work with the plumber and an orphan named Sevelito. It was obvious how much pride these men took in their work. Not one African man there wore work shoes, just sandals, and some were even barefoot, but that did not matter to them. The determination of the men really showed me how much they wanted to improve the condition that they were living in. When I returned home to the United States, the one question people asked the most was, "How did they get to the state of poverty that they are currently in?" I think most of the people who asked me this question believed that it was either laziness or lack of education which caused this problem. After going to Africa and working with the people there, I know for a fact that laziness is not a cause.

During our stay in Cambine, we visited the orphanage twice. The first visit was to give the orphans a checkup. I was a part of the distraction team, which was to keep the orphans from getting nervous about their checkup. We brought along a soccer ball to play with, and a very competitive soccer game erupted with Andrew, Alix, Erin and I stuck in the middle. The old soccer ball they had been using was worn down all the way to the rubber bladder, and had several big holes in it, so the new ball that we brought made them extremely happy. We played soccer for hours until it was time to go, and told them we would be back the next day. When we returned the next day, the orphans sang us songs to greet us right before getting back to playing. We played more soccer and colored pictures and tried to talk to each other the best we could despite our limited Portuguese and their limited English. The entire time I was there, I did not see a kids face which did not have a smile on it. It really amazed me, given the circumstances in which they were living, but they found a way to make the best of it.

We took one day to drive an hour away from Cambine to visit the widows. I had no idea what to expect, but from listening to everybody talk about their past experiences with the widows, I knew it had to be something special. When we arrived, we were greeted by the group of old women. They grabbed their straw mats, sat in a semi-circle, and began to sing us songs. After they stopped singing, we presented them with gifts such as hoodies and a cloth cross. Just like everybody else that I have met in Mozambique, the widows were very determined and hard working. Their bodies were bent and worn from years of hard work, but they kept on going. One woman had fallen about a month before we had arrived and broken her hip. It had healed wrong, and she could no longer walk. For the past month, she was dragging herself around the compound to get where she needed to go. While we were there, we carried her to the semi-circle, the foot washing, and the dinner. The widows were such gracious hosts, and they really let us know how much they appreciated everything that we did for them.

It is easy to see how God is at work in Mozambique. His people there are determined, hardworking, and most of all, happy. There are so many other people and events that I could talk about, but these three events are what stick out the most in my mind. I am so thankful that I was able to go on this trip and experience life in Mozambique.

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