

# Smile Malawi



## NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2006

Smile Malawi was registered as a charitable trust in England and Wales in October 2004. The main objective of the charity is to provide a home for street children from Blantyre with educational and recreational facilities. Additionally the charity aims to help the local community by building a nursery school and health centre for the benefit of Ndokota village.

In May 2005 construction of the first building of the Smile Malawi Childrens' Centre started. The work was carried out by local craftsmen under the management of Malawian trustee Glad Munthali and his nephew Charles. The building was habitable by August when founder Elspeth Baecke arrived for her scheduled visit to pursue the next steps of the project.



The visit gave Elspeth first hand experience of building in Malawi and the problems in obtaining certain materials. From this she has been able to plan the rest of the project.

During her stay she was welcomed by the Chief and local villagers of Ndokota. She was constantly surrounded by the little children who loved to sing for her or just stand and watch the progress next to their village.



But behind their happy faces lay another story and it was soon clear that all these lovely children were hungry. Something none of us in the West can really understand. The President of Malawi announced that his country was in grip of a famine and declared a National Emergency. 85% of Malawi's population rely on growing their own food for survival but the rains had failed again in 2005 leaving a severe shortage of

maize. When Elspeth returned to England she was haunted by thoughts of those hungry children.



So, after many long distance phone calls, Smile Malawi, with Glad's help in Malawi, arranged for 30 Tonnes of maize to be delivered to the village. An emergency appeal in England raised the funds in less than one month.

Elspeth returned to Ndokota later in January to be greeted by the Chief who wanted to thank all the people in the UK for preventing starvation in his village. The Government was grateful and confirmed that the charity would soon be an official NGO (non-government organisation) in Malawi. The office of the President approved the name of Smile Malawi and, by the time this is printed, the charity will be registered in Malawi.

The charity is now focussed on completing the final touches to the house and getting ready to offer a home to the first street children. Before we can do this though we need to ensure that we have sufficient committed monthly income for the running costs of the Centre, providing the right care and security for the children.



*If you can spare just a small amount each month to help run the Centre, please complete the form on the reverse of this and send it, or a copy, to Elspeth who will arrange it with your bank directly. Alternatively, you can donate to the charity via the website.*