

Smile Malawi



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Smile Malawi was registered as a charity in England and Wales in 2004 and as an NGO in Malawi in June 2006. The main objective is to provide a home for vulnerable street children. The first Smile Malawi Childrens' Centre opened its doors in November 2006 and gave a home to 11 children who were jointly identified by Malawi Social Services and Smile Malawi from the streets of Blantyre. The charity also helps the local community of Ndokota with a developing outreach programme, primarily targeting the village children and local school.

Smile Malawi founder Elspeth Baecke has just returned from Malawi and writes, 'I went to Malawi with a long list of tasks and was able to achieve them all. Top priority was to offer a home to more children and, in conjunction with Social Services, we accepted another 4 boys aged 6 to 11 and 1 little girl, Natasha, aged 6. We also bought more beds, furniture and clothes so that we can now accommodate at least 20 children.'



Elspeth runs Smile Malawi in her free time in UK and has local staff in Malawi to manage the Centre and take care of the children. Charles, the Malawian Project Manager is continuing to liaise with Social Services and has accepted another 10 year old girl, Grace, since Elspeth's return.



Elspeth stayed out at the Centre and was very impressed with the smooth routine that Miriam, the matron (above with the girls) has developed. She really felt the sense of community that is now established. Spending time walking around the village with the Matron, she was greeted by lots of mothers and children and was shown how much their lives have improved. Smile Malawi has brought work and development to the village and the extended family network has ensured that many children and families are helped. These women were so grateful

for the borehole we provided, even though it's still a long hot walk away!



Several of our staff are building new houses and were proud to show them off. Nkwani, our head guard, has 3 children and lost his home when it collapsed in the rains of 2007. He now has a new home with a proper roof.



The village tailor was also engaged to make outfits and school uniforms for all our children. He brought his treadle machine and sat on the konde to make them, charging just £23 for the lot!



Elspeth was again struck by the many children that hang around the village during the day with nothing to do and nowhere to go. Some are school age but cannot attend the local school as they are too poor to buy uniform and books. She commissioned a survey to quantify the problem and identify how best Smile Malawi can help with this in the future. Proposals for a nursery school were also discussed and are to

be presented to the local chief soon. It is hoped that Smile Malawi will be able to assist with school fees and uniforms for the older children as well as providing a morning club with a bowl of porridge for the younger ones.



The village football team play on the land adjacent to the Centre and were thrilled to receive a proper kit from Smile Malawi. Everyone turned out to watch them win 3-1 in the hot sun. Top right is our teacher who organises plenty of activities for the children too.



Here is Elspeth and the teacher with our children and their village friends after another afternoon of football and games. The ground is very rough so balls don't last long so, if you have any ideas about this, please let us know!



If you would like to help towards the running costs of the Centre or for future development of the project, please visit our website or send a cheque to the address below.