

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 Children's Centre opened its doors in November 2006 and now gives a home to 25 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 has gone through some major changes in Malawi since the last newsletter, brought about by the Manager, Charles, deciding to leave to set up his own import business. Founder Elspeth Baecke has just returned from a short visit to make sure the new set up is working well and to meet the new staff.



Firstly, we have a new Administration Assistant, Ndashu who has taken over all the accounts and paperwork. Then there is another Charles, who has been employed as the driver for the Centre. He is the son of the former village chief and is locally well known.



They started with us in June and the new regime is working well. We also have 2 new children at the Centre who were removed from the streets by the Social Services and brought to us. This is 7 year old Stephen who told Elspeth that he had to beg in the streets to get enough to eat each day.



And this is his older brother Elias, who was very rough to start with but has settled quickly and is fast becoming the comic amongst the children.



Elspeth stayed at the Centre's small guest house for the first time this trip and was pleased how comfortable it is.



It was used in May this year when 3 teachers from Canterbury Christ Church College stayed at the Centre and went to teach each day at Machemba school. This was part of Smile Malawi's programme of help for the children's school and proved very successful. The teachers had a very rewarding time and loved staying at the Centre with the children. The house is also available for holidays with the children – email Elspeth if you would like a holiday with a difference!



This is the current village chief with the Smile Malawi children and Elspeth. The Chief is still an important part of village life in Malawi and Elspeth

always pays her a short visit to exchange greetings and talk of any developments in the area. She also came to see Elspeth this time with a request for help with the costs of a small building to hold a club for the orphans in the village who naturally congregate outside her house each day. This is something that Smile Malawi has wanted to get involved with for some time so it was agreed that Ndashu would draw up a proposal with the Chief and Elspeth will pursue funding in the UK. The villagers will make the bricks and provide labour in partnership with Smile Malawi.



The children are on holiday now from school and were all there to see Elspeth off on her return to UK. 14 year old Grace will be starting at secondary school in September and Ndashu has been asked to find a suitable one in Blantyre. If anyone is interested in sponsoring one of the children through secondary school please let Elspeth know as this is not free in Malawi. Next year it will be the turn of Elijah and Funny so we have to start planning that too. 14 year old Elijah is doing very well at school despite missing so much due to his earlier heart problems. It is now almost a year since he underwent life-saving surgery and he returned to the Maputo Heart Institute in Mozambique in June for his annual check. We now have help from a young Malawian doctor, Wanangwa Chisenga, and he also visited while Elspeth was there and gave a good report of his progress.

There are still hundreds of street children and village orphans who need help. If you would like to help with the running costs of the Children's Centre, please visit our website or send a cheque to Smile Malawi at the address below.