

Smile Malawi



NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2011

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 2006 and now gives a home to 33 children who were jointly identified by Malawi Social Services and Smile Malawi from the streets of Blantyre and the local village. The charity also helps the local community of Ndokota with a developing outreach programme, primarily targeting the children and local school.

It has been a busy year at Smile Malawi and we have grown and started several new initiatives to raise funds. Founder Elspeth has just spent a month in Malawi to review progress and arrange completion of various projects. Top priority was to meet the 6 new children that we have taken in from the local village as part of our outreach programme. These are the youngest two, Matthew and Fatsani, adorable 3 year old orphans who were in desperate need of food and care.



The children were offered a home after negotiations were made with the village chief in June. Smile Malawi was lucky to have a UK volunteer, Carolyn, staying for 3 months during the summer and she helped our matron Miriam to sort out the approvals.



These are the other 4 children, 8 year old Stephano, 10 year old Ulemu, 10 year old Margaret and 6 year old Samson in the front. All were living with elderly relatives in the village after their mothers had passed away. They were malnourished and in a sorry state but they are now healthy and happy and going to the local school. Carolyn also set up our first attempt at a farming business in Malawi to raise funds to help run the Children's Centre. We are now the proud owners of 10 pigs with the aim of breeding and selling the meat. Our thanks go to her for managing the building of the pigsty,

employing the man to care for the pigs and researching the market for sales.



In July we also had 2 other visitors from the UK, Annabel and Irene, who helped at Mchemba School as part of our continued partnership with the Head to help with teaching staff. Then, in August, an engineering colleague of Elspeth, Geoff, and his partner Michelle, stayed for 2 weeks during their trip through Africa. He wanted to help so Elspeth gave him the plans for the new bedroom accommodation for the boys before he left England. With assistance from our older boys, he set out and dug the foundations.



Geoff then helped pour the concrete, procured the bricks and other materials and employed the local builders to start the walls. Elspeth sent messages from UK to the builders so that, when she arrived on 1 October, the brickwork was up to the top of window level and she was able to buy



the lintels, complete the brickwork and finalise the roof during her stay.



The aim was to get the building weather proof before the rains start this month and well-wishers in UK had given her the £2800 for the roof. Elspeth gathered quotes for the final fit-out while there and we will complete the building next year once funding is found. She estimates a further £5000 is needed so please watch out for fundraising appeals to give our 19 boys much needed space.



The children all love to help and have plenty of energy even in the heat. There is a severe shortage of fuel in Malawi so transport is restricted but the big girls and boys decided to walk over a mile to the maize mill to get the flour for their dinners, carrying the corn on their heads. They were happy to get there under their own steam!

Finally, many thanks go to Elspeth's friends Mike and Margaret, who spent the month in Malawi with her and worked tirelessly to decorate and update our guest accommodation so that we can develop our holiday business in 2012 to help with funding.

We still need more regular funding. 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.