

Smile Malawi



CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2008

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 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.

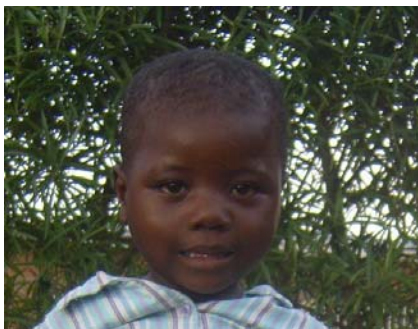
Christmas week 2008 started with great excitement at the Smile Malawi Children's Centre as the children and staff welcomed four more vulnerable children to their new home. This is Elijah, age 12 and Emily, age 11.



And this is Funny, age 14. Along with Emily's younger sister Eliza, see later, these children were all living on the streets with no-one to care for them.



Smile Malawi now has 21 children living at the Centre and, after church on Christmas Day, they all tucked in to a large dinner of chicken with rice and vegetables. Can you imagine how excited little Eliza, who is only 4, was!



Our children are very fortunate though as they have plenty to eat. Most Malawian children get nothing special for Christmas as their parents are too poor. Life in Malawi is very different to the UK and no-one can afford to buy

presents for their children or even have a special meal on Christmas Day. But since 2006 Smile Malawi has made sure that Christmas is a special time for the children of Ndokota village.



The village children are invited to bring their own cups and plates for a Christmas party in the afternoon. This year there were so many children that the village church was offered for us to use to give out the food and drinks.



The children then went out on the football pitch outside to eat and play games. Word had spread in the area and this year there were over 600 children altogether, from several nearby villages.



After lots of fun there was still one more treat in store for the children, something which is funded by a special Christmas donation each year from friends of Smile Malawi in UK. The children were organised into

groups and 150 children from different families were invited down to the house to collect their special gift – a chicken, which is a rare luxury, to take home. It was getting dark by the time they lined up patiently outside.



After the village children had left it was time for our own children to receive their shoe boxes of little gifts, which had been sent out from UK before Christmas. Each box was donated by a different supporter and the children could not wait to see what was inside.



Fortunately, there were plenty of spare toys and games as an extra 4 boxes had to be made up at the last minute for the new children!



The cost of running the Centre has recently soared due to the falling exchange rate of sterling. If you would like to help, please visit our website or send a cheque to the address below.