

# Smile Malawi



## NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2007

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 street children from Blantyre. There are estimated to be 3500 children sleeping on the streets of the city. The charity also aims to help the local community of Ndokota and has already provided food for the village during the famine of 2005 and donated a new deep borehole earlier in 2007 to supply the village with fresh water.

The Smile Malawi Childrens' Centre opened its doors to the first children in November 2006. The children were jointly identified by Malawi Social Services and Smile Malawi from the streets of Blantyre. They arrived in filthy clothes and were all hungry and malnourished.



The seven girls and four boys all settled in really quickly and have flourished under the care of our matron, Miriam, and her team of village helpers. Just look at the boys now!



Gift and Brian, at 12 years old, are our eldest boys, and Junior and Joseph at the front, are only 3 and 4 years old. They look so smart in their new clothes, donated by Claysmore School in Dorset. The older children all attend the local primary school, where they have settled well and are enjoying the daily routine. Some had never been to school before but it was the first thing they asked for after coming to the Centre. A local tailor was found to make uniforms and the children

were thrilled. Here they are setting off one morning:



The four youngest children are taught at home by The Centre's own teacher and are thriving. This is Elizabeth age 4 who was very poorly when she first came to us!



The Centre has space for 9 more children but the Government wanted us to start small. The local Director is now satisfied with progress and so we were able to accept a new arrival on September 2. Peter is 9 years, has no family and has survived in the streets for years on his own.



We have 6 ladies who are employed from the village to help with the care of the children and there have recently been two additions to their families too. This is Bertha, who gave birth to a baby girl last week.



Bertha was found unconscious on the floor at work one evening in February. After a quick call to Smile Malawi founder Elspeth Baecke in UK, our Malawian Project Manager Charles rushed out to the Centre and drove her to hospital in Blantyre, where she was found to be suffering from cerebral malaria. Without immediate treatment she would have died but she was given medication and was well enough to go home the next day. Elspeth met her for the first time in April and says, "That phone call saved Bertha's life as there was no other transport in the village to get her to the hospital. Thankfully, her 2 older children still have their mother and her new baby survived to be born healthy". Lastly, this is Margaret with her new son:



***If you would like to help us 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.***