



Friends of Sick Children in Malawi

FOSCiM registered charity number 1140578
FOSC registered charity number (Malawi) C647/2013

Establishing and developing sustainable paediatrics for the 50% of Malawians who are children.



WELCOME to our
AUTUMN 2024
Newsletter + Update



In 2023 *97.4p of every £1* received by FOSCiM from donors was applied for the frontline needs of sick children in Malawi. Very few charities can claim that sort of outcome.



The tiny country with the big heart

The cost of living - or just the cost of survival - for so many in Malawi has increased enormously since the currency was devalued a year ago. An important impact of this is covered later below.

Life in Malawi

I am often asked about life in Malawi, a nation well known for its smiling, friendly people. Malawi remains one of the poorest countries in the world despite making some economic and structural reforms to try to assist economic growth. The economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, which employs over 80% of the population and is vulnerable to external shocks, particularly climatic shocks of which there have been several in recent years. Sadly, farming practices in Malawi also lead to soil erosion and reduced fertility.

The Government declared a state of disaster in March as the country entered its dry season with very low food stocks. Malawi consumes around 3.5 million tonnes of maize every year, but only 2.9 million tonnes will be harvested according to Government estimates – a shortfall of 600,000 tonnes.

One of the biggest environmental challenges in Malawi is deforestation. Malawi was once heavily forested across the entire country. It also has declining fisheries and limited institutional capacity to manage natural resources.

Malawi's economic outlook remains uncertain. In 2024-25 the economy is likely to remain saddled with still-high inflation and exchange-rate instability (following a large currency devaluation of 44% in late 2023).

Against this backdrop and with your greatly valued support, our medical and related colleagues confront all the challenges put before them as they continue to develop sustainable paediatric healthcare and facilities, all to improve the life chances of the children of Malawi.

Why We Need Help With Funds

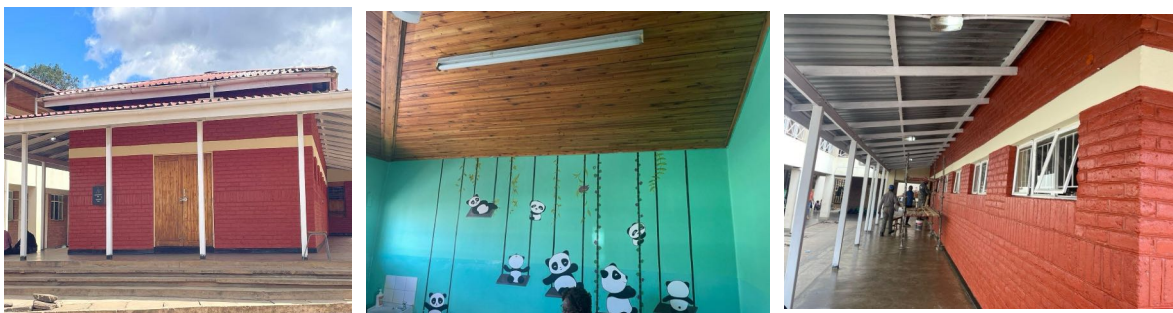
1. To create sustainability of paediatrics in Malawi through supporting the development of Malawians in paediatrics. (see examples below)
2. Maintaining, improving and developing the healthcare facilities for children.

Since Our Spring 2024 Newsletter

The Alexis Fund has been busy again, funding the following facilities developments.

1. The Paediatric Medical Bay and Outpatients underwent a much needed refurbishment.

In the shadows of the recently rebuilt and refurbished Paediatric Accident & Emergency Centre, the Medical Bay and Outpatients were exposed as badly needing refurbishment for the sake of both patients and staff.



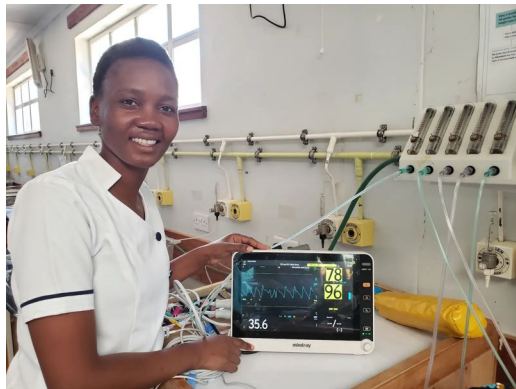
The Alexis Fund came to the rescue and medical Consultant George Chagaluka oversaw the project. The new décor inside might just have the first sightings of pandas in Africa!

2. Neonatology – heaters/air con and vital signs monitors.

Neonatology Consultant Kondwani Kawaza (see Spring 2024 feature) oversaw procuring 7 wall heaters/air con units plus 3 vital signs monitors for the neonatology wards. The Alexis Fund again provided the finance.

It can get stiflingly hot indoors at certain times of the year and surprisingly cold at other times. Being able to regulate the inside temperature is particularly important for the 'clients' of

neonatology. Vital signs monitors are another essential piece of kit and demand was stretching existing units so adding to the available units helps enormously.



New

vital signs monitors in action at Neonatology



Some of the 7 wall heaters/air con units installed in Neonatology.

One impact of the HIGH cost of living in Malawi

One of the important elements of being able to deliver healthcare to the children is having post-graduate registrars in the team. Government salaries (already modest) for these team members have fallen so far behind the daily costs of living in Malawi that recently hospital departments have found themselves having to find funds to augment their salaries with stipends just so as to secure the numbers they need to fully function.

Paediatrics has been no exception. Courtesy of two of our donors we have been able to find a *partial short term* solution for the next 12 months, but what happens after that could prove seriously problematic without Government intervention, which is unlikely given that the next General Election is expected in a year's time and governments everywhere tend to avoid spending decisions in a run up to an election.

Donor help means that we are currently able to offer MWK 250,000 / £ 110 per month to help post grad registrars who sign up to Paediatrics.

Would you like to add your help to this major issue, or even to 'adopt' a registrar for a year in paediatrics. The annual cost per registrar is currently £1,325 [or just £1,060 plus Gift Aid] but any contribution towards that amount would be very welcome.

Please contact me: gordon@foscim.org

Our collaboration to mobilise Malawi's children

First of all, if you have not received our **annual Christmas appeal email** please let me know **asap** at gordon@foscim.org.

A wheelchair STILL costs **just £100.00** if the donor is a UK taxpayer and Gift Aid is available, **or £125.00 if not**. A home chair for tots costs **just £16.00** if the donor is a UK taxpayer and Gift Aid is available, **or £20.00 if not**. Orthotic devices costs around **£15 per item** if Gift Aid available or **£18.75 if not**.

At time of writing, 1,443 wheelchairs and 1,288 home chairs have been delivered to children in need. The costs of materials in Malawi keep rising, but for our donors this is offset by the falling value of the Malawi Kwacha.

A Milestone: In mid year, Orthopaedic Workshop Manager, Wilson Nanungu presided over the 1,000th wheelchair made and delivered since he took charge of the workshop. The recipient was 8 years old Shadreck Zuze from Thom-mbaya Village, Lundu, Chikwawa. Shadreck has Cerebral Palsy Spastic Quadriplegia. He was referred to the orthopaedic workshop by a group of women called "Umodzi" [Unity] who saw him lying on a mat beside his grass thatched home in the village.



Sponsored Education

Here are some of the current beneficiaries of sponsored education support from some of our donors. All are progressing satisfactorily and without exception they all expressed their sincere gratitude for the support they are receiving and how it will contribute significantly to the future quality of paediatric healthcare in Malawi.

Madalitso Daza

I am a Nursing Officer in the Paediatric High Dependency Unit at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, but currently at school. I am a Postgraduate student pursuing a Masters of Science in Child Health Nursing at the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences- Lilongwe Campus. Our program is a two year PG course which started in September 2023 and is expected to be done by December 2025. Currently we are through with first year modules but still working on research protocols while waiting for the end of year examination results. The next academic year will start on 30th September 2024.

Mphatso Kadzibwa

I am a Clinical officer working at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Paediatrics and Child Health Department and currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Paediatrics and Child Health at Kamuzu University of Health Sciences

(KUHeS). I started school in February 2022. Currently, I am in the final year of my studies which I expect to finish by December 2024.

Herrings Ranking Kambale

I am in the first year of my three years period of study. I am a Nurse working at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in the Paediatric Accident and Emergency Ward but currently studying for a Bachelor of Sciences in Nursing and Midwifery UPGRADING at Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, Lilongwe campus. I started school in February 2024 and expected to finish in December 2026.

Matilda Lali

A much-valued medical secretary and 'back office' contact point for FOSCiM, Matilda is now on the last lap of a B.Sc. in Applied Statistics. The Paediatric Department's ability to record, track and analyse medical data will be greatly enhanced by Matilda's new skills set.

Daina Nyondo Mombe

I am a nurse working at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in the Paediatric High Dependency Unit but currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Child Health Nursing at Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS). I started school last year in February 2023. Currently, I am in my final year of my studies and I am expected to finish school this year in December 2024.

Agnes Mpinga

I am at Kamuzu University of Health Sciences where I am pursuing my MSc in Child Health Nursing. Thanks to your sponsorship, I am pleased to inform you of the significant progress I have made towards completing my studies. I am in the final stages of my academic programme, with just my research project remaining to be finalised.

Esnart Ngwira

One of our nurses completing their first year pursuing a Master of Science in Child Health Nursing at Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS) which has recently been moved to the Lilongwe campus.

Patricia Sibayu

A Senior Nursing Officer with nine years of invaluable experience in Neonatal Care at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital's Paediatrics and Obstetrics department. Armed with a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing and Midwifery from Mzuzu University (2014) she has now embarked upon a Masters degree in neonatology.

Henderson Wasili

I am a Nurse working at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in the Paediatric Nursery Ward but currently studying for a Bachelor of Sciences in Child Health Nursing at Kumuzu University of Health Sciences, Lilongwe campus. I started

school last year in February 2023 and expect to finish school this year in December 2024.

On the High Seas

In May another 42 boxes (2.23 cu. mtrs.) of medical consumables, handmade re-usable feminine hygiene kits, blankets, hats and baby and child clothing, pencils



for the classroom and items for the orthopaedic workshop were loaded on a Cycle of Good sea container. Thank you to all those ladies who continue to amaze with the quality and quantity of their work; their generosity is immense and greatly appreciated. Big thanks to Oliver Bytom of Withybed Limited for transporting me and everything to Cycle of Good in Stoke.

The inestimable Matilda and Merline receiving the boxes

Going to Malawi

I am planning to go to Malawi before the end of the year. I will of course be spending most of the time with colleagues at the hospital, but there are also a number of other projects in the Blantyre area that I have promised to visit and I will also be meeting with much valued local supporters.

I will report back to you either early in the new year or in the Spring 2025 newsletter.

[Editor's note: Gordon is of course paying for his own travel and expenses for his Malawi trip.]

In the meantime

YOUR Support

It is your support that makes possible all the developments that you read about in our newsletters.

We are always proud to say that more than 97% of every donation received is available for use 'at the frontline' for the healthcare of Malawi's children. [2023 - 97.4%]. How many charities can make that boast?

If you would like to discuss how you might help us with any of our funding or other needs, challenges and issues, please simply email me for a 'chat' at gordon@foscim.org

To make a donation.....you can do this online or directly by bank to bank payment or by cheque if in the UK. Bank to bank donations or donating by cheque are free of charge, but only in the UK.

Please be aware that if you donate online, intermediaries like PayPal and Just Giving all deduct charges from your donations but when making your donation you may be able to opt to cover some of their charges so that more of your donation comes to the charity.

<https://justgiving.com/friendsofsickchildreninmalawi>

IMPORTANT ~ Donors who are also UK taxpayers should donate through FOSCiM (rather than FOSC). This is so that 25% Gift Aid can be added to their donations courtesy of HM Government.

Bank details for direct donations:

Please identify yourself in the appropriate box of the electronic transfer so we know who to thank.

UK - FOSCiM bank details:

Account name: Friends of Sick Children in Malawi
Bank sort code: 40 – 11 – 04
Bank account: 21612069

Malawi - FOSC bank details:

Bank : National Bank of Malawi
Swift Code (BIC) : NBMAMWMWXXX
IBAN / Account : 358328 Bank code: 002
Branch name: Chichiri branch
Reference : FOSC GBP AC

And finally, on behalf of everyone involved in supporting the establishment and development of sustainable paediatric healthcare for the 50% of the population of Malawi who are children, and on behalf of those tens of thousands of children and families who benefit from your generosity, a very big thank you and please keep supporting us to whatever extent and in whatever way you feel able.

Please feel free to email me for 'a chat' if you would like to explore further any of the issues raised in this newsletter or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Gordon

If in future you would prefer not to receive our newsletter please advise us at the email address above. The same applies for any other communications that we may send from time to time.

Gordon Cowie MBE
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