

October Report 2006

The focus for this visit was threefold. Firstly to see the progress on the building of Masiye school, secondly to visit smaller villages to see the orphan situations in their homes and thirdly to gather as much information as we could for starting our mobile clinic next year.

Both Gaynor and myself went out to Malawi leaving the UK on the Wednesday 4th to arrive on the 5th. We were in store for a busy couple of weeks, which we expected. During previous trips we have mainly kept to the 6 main centres where people would come to see us. This covered more people, but in fact never gave us a true picture of the smaller satellite villages and the conditions that the orphan and vulnerable children were living in. We purposely wanted to avoid the main centres and focus on the smaller villages.

On arrival we had a short meeting with Kafumbi and Essie, so that we could arrive at a more fixed itinerary as we had kept it pretty flexible so that we could be taken to the places in most need. I had also anticipated a couple of large meetings with the committee members for each area (total of 60 people) and I felt concerned about the amount of time this would take up, along with the logistical difficulty of getting people together from great distances. We felt it was important to look at the future of Landirani and of course include them in their vision.



As it happened there have been a number of the committee members that have shown great dedication and have been gathering information for the charity regarding the amount of orphans and who they are staying with etc. It was also apparent that many other committee members were not really interested in helping the charity, but presumed that there would be money in it for them. They dropped by the wayside. As yet we have not given any money for their help as we felt it was important to feel they were doing something to help their own community. With these dedicated people, we felt we would form an executive committee who would oversee different responsibilities in the villages. There are eight people in total and the responsibilities they are now given are:

- 1) Social Welfare; - Fickson Mtsatsula Phiri
- 2) Education – Artwell Kalumbizira
- 3) Health – Damalekani Chatsalira
- 4) Youth activities – Kingsley Mchenga
- 5) Religion – Justine Mkotamo
- 6) Women groups – Virginia Chisuzi
- 7) Agriculture – Andrew Chipeni
- 8) Building – Simon Potifer

There are of course interlinks between all responsibilities. We decided it would be more fruitful to meet with these eight people to discuss their findings in the villages and decide on which areas to visit. Earlier in the year we had bought a bike for each area (6 in total) therefore we felt it would be right for this group to use these, so that they could get around the villages easier. We of course made this up to have one bike each.

We have set them a very difficult task in finding out all the orphans and what situation they are living in, as there are so many villages to cover. This will take time, but is essential for us to know where the help is needed most and also to monitor how the support we are giving is actually helping. For example we need to keep a record of which child has been given a uniform or blanket, or who has been distributed food from our Orphan Maize Gardens. We had a very successful meeting with these executive committees and decided that on Monday we would not delay and go straight into the villages.

On the Saturday after changing very large amounts of money in the bank, we went shopping. Kafumbi was late in picking us up today, 8.45am but it was obviously meant to be since when I got out of the bank, Kafumbi was talking to a well-dressed lady. After introductions we found that she assisted in the training we sent them on in Blantyre earlier in the year. She works for UNICEF and had been posted to Lilongwe. I have been trying to get in contact with UNICEF to help us, but have not had any luck. Now I have an email address to contact which is great.

On with the shopping.... 30 packets of vegetable seeds, a torch, a bike, a sewing machine, 14 boxes of 72 soaps, 14 10kg bags of salt, 10 bags of maize seed and 36 bags of fertiliser, 6 footballs and 6 netballs and finally a tray and 6 plates as a wedding gift. Not your normal shopping day! We rushed back to Kiboko and changed in 1 minute flat, to then go on to Kafumbi's niece's wedding which was at Lumbadzi. That was quite an experience, a lot of people, a lot of noise and quite disorganised. We eventually sat out in the back of the truck as it all got too much. We weren't there long before we were called for and given a chair to sit on amongst the wedding party. Unlike here, traditionally people give money to the couple to start off their life, and presents are not the norm, although sometimes are given. We couldn't quite understand the many baskets going round to collect money, with bridesmaids picking up 20 kwacha notes (10p) that had dropped on the ground. We realised when we got back at 5.00 that we hadn't eaten since breakfast.

Sunday came around very quickly, and we put on our African costumes ready to be taken to Church. A 2 ¼ hour service!! A good sermon and the singing was brilliant and very uplifting. After the service we met up with Mary, Susan's sister from St Matthew's Church, Surbiton. We had a wonderful afternoon with her family, Praise, her husband and Faith, her daughter! Her mother Ann was there, who was sooooo happy and pleased to meet us. Susan phoned while we were there! We had lunch of nsima, rice, chicken and cabbage. I love the traditional

food, but I think you could get bored of it if you had it day after day, since we are so used to such a variety of food at home. We also met Praise's family before being given a lift back to the camp where we sorted out bags of clothing for our trips to 16 villages. How are we going to do it? We must be mad!!

First thing on Monday we went to visit the Bank Manager from the National Bank of Malawi, who had donated 400,000MK worth of school books to Landirani. It was great to know that some of the more wealthy people in Malawi are willing to help their own people. He was a lovely man and his photo is amongst the 'Thank-you's' on the website. I think he would be willing to help us in the future.

The first area to cover was 'Lumbadzi' where Virginia comes from. For us it was a really memorable day. The first visit was to Mkukula where we met a young girl (Jennifer) around 4 years old, dressed in rags. We didn't realise that we were going to visit her mother. Her mother was 32 and also in rags, you could see her breasts through the torn garment. She had 4 children from 4 to 8 years old. She was supporting them on her own, since her husband had died. She had an amputated leg as she had suffered cancer and the other foot had been affected by leprosy. She walked with crutches. Out of her 4 children, one was severely disabled both mentally and physically and had to be helped to walk and fell asleep where ever he was put. He couldn't talk and dribbled saliva. Her house was a nice hut, but the grass roof was in need of repair, since you could see lots of sky through it, meaning when the rains come they will get soaked. We gave all the children some clothes but unfortunately didn't have any adult clothing with us. Luckily I had worn a top with a vest top underneath, so took that off to give her. Good old H&N!



Not orphan but very vulnerable

We were then taken to meet a 15 year old girl whose mother had died and father had run away to find a new wife. She had been left with 3 siblings to bring up. So that she could buy food she had sold her body and then fell pregnant. There was a small baby in another room, but I must say well cared for. Again her roof was in need of repair and we gave her some packets of vegetable seeds asking if she could grow them and then have something to eat. She would hopefully have enough to sell at the market for some income.

We went on to Dzole where we were faced with a pathetic sight. Miriam (named by Gaynor) was a 15 year old girl who looked like she had cerebral palsy, her legs were twisted and she was dribbling saliva onto her rags of a dress. She couldn't talk, but as I approached her to hold her hand, she wiped it on her clothing as if to clean it. This showed intelligence and by looking into her eyes she seemed to understand what was happening. She was left in the dirt clutching some old worn out plastic bowls which were ingrained with dirt. She was an orphan and her grandparents looked after her. We spoke with her grandfather who was obviously very ill and couldn't cope with her. We found that she lived in an adjacent hut around 5ft in diameter and when we looked inside tears came to our eyes. She slept on a piece of plastic, with a ragged blanket to keep her warm, the roof was half-exposed letting any rain directly in. It looked as though the hut was used as a dustbin, with rubbish mixed up with her own excrement. She was unable to take herself to the toilet and others didn't bother with her. It is very difficult to comprehend how humans can be so neglected because they have a disability, having worked for 16 years with others who are disabled, I found this very difficult. In their culture it is often thought that if you have a disability you have evil spirits in you and you are put to the side of the village or even outcast totally.



Before



After

Our immediate reaction was to clean her, clean her hut and give her new clothes. We did this and I must say how proud I was of our executive committee who were dressed in their best clothes, yet got their hands dirty and cleared the hut and then smeared clean mud (a bit of a contradiction!) over her floor. We then washed her in a little brick walled enclosure with no door or roof and the floor was covered in small rocks so that the water could soak away. Virginia got a bowl of water and started washing the girl who was sitting on these uncomfortable stones, but was obviously pleased to be cleaned. I helped clean her legs and feet and found it a very spiritual experience thinking of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples and having his own washed with tears from an 'unclean' prostitute. I then held Miriam up so that her back areas could be washed, she clung on to my waist with amazing strength, but she could have only been about 4 stone. We then put some clean clothes on her and sat her back down on some plastic near her bowls; she was a different child. She just smiled at us. I wondered if she had ever been washed before. Her old dress could have stood up on it's own since it was so caked with saliva and dirt. I really feel that there has to be some kind of education on disability. I didn't realise it at the time, but doing what we did was already an education, in that these people can be touched and handled without catching any evil spirits. In fact Kafumbi said they had all learnt a lesson that day. Virginia will

be returning to check that Miriam is being cared for and to take her some new bowls, a sleeping mat and a blanket.



In the same village we were taken to another side where we could hear screaming, a real scared sort of screaming. There was a girl, also around 15, whose body was totally contorted. She had both physical and mental disability. At first I thought she might be screaming in pain, but in hindsight I think she probably spent most of her life in her hut, in the dark and she was scared being brought in the light with so many people around her. Her eyes were flickering from side-to-side, we didn't stay very long, but were happy to see she was well kept, clean and had extended family helping her.

In both these villages we made a small distribution of salt, soap, clothing and vegetable seeds. It went very smoothly and was well organised by the committees, who wrote down every name that received anything. Again the speeches were too long, but we did address this and got our visits down to a fine art by the end of the week! We met Pauline who is one of our Secondary Sponsorship orphan children.

At the end of our day, after dropping the committees off at various points, we got back to Kiboko camp around 5.00pm feeling pretty exhausted but it was good to have time to reflect on the day. We have been so impressed by the committee that we said we would like to show our appreciation by taking them out for a meal later during our stay. This seemed to be a good idea; it will be good to bond with all of them during our trip.

Tuesday and we were in the M'Bang'ombe area, which is the closest to the airport, about 10km. We stopped in Chitzeka village where we were shown another lady with a physical disability, we also met an albino lady whose face was badly burnt and although she obviously didn't know what she looked like, as she fluttered her eyelashes at the camera, she really was not a pretty sight. I had got badly burnt on my shoulders the day before, as we had forgotten to pack sun cream and after looking around Lilongwe we could only find sun block in the chemist. Nevertheless, I thought she needed it much more than me, so hopefully it will protect her face from the sun.



Albino lady



orphans

There were a lot of orphans in a very poor state, we made our distribution and managed to give some of the children some new clothing. Some of their faces were filled with desperation. It was at this village that our eighth committee member was appointed. Simon had been on the training programme earlier in the year and has shown great dedication and took on the responsibility of building since Kingsley had both Building and Youth to cover. We left seed and fertiliser at this village.

We then travelled on to Namanyanga school to meet Tawanga, a boy who was looking after himself. We were told he was 9, but in fact he was about 12. He was at school, so we couldn't meet him in his hut. We discovered that he had a mother who had left him to remarry! He had looked after cattle for a year to get money to feed himself. We made a further distribution and also a presentation of a football. Gaynor was very happy to meet up with Tina, who we had met in tears last October as she desperately held her dying baby brother and had a sick grandmother at home. We had put her with a foster family and she was so much happier and she looked well cared for. Gaynor gave her some gifts for school, pencils, books etc. which she was thrilled about.



Footballs bring such fun

We then moved on to Mkalapadzua which is where we would like to build our second school. There was great celebration when we arrived, with about 8 boys dancing and playing the drums. We did a further distribution along with leaving seed and fertiliser, since they had shown very willing last year to grow an orphan maize garden, so we thought we would give them some this year.

On our way back towards the airport, we stopped at M'Bang'ombe Clinic to pick up information for Judith's visit next year. Dama works here as a night watchman. We met Judith Binga the nurse in charge who gave us details on how the clinic functioned. It seemed that they had very few staff; out of 10 staff only 3 were trained in any form. It really was a clinic for under 5's and dealt with nutrition, births and vaccination programmes. Back to camp again without lunch, although the committee were fed by the villagers in Mkalapadzua. We really need to make better use of our time, it is lovely to have time to talk and see dances, but we are here for such a limited time and have a lot to get through. I suggested to Kafumbi on the way home that we would not be involved in the distributions as the committee could handle that, while we looked around the village getting the information we needed.



Women receiving fertiliser



Children celebrate with drumming

Off to Nambuma area today (Wednesday), which is the furthest area about 60km away and know that we are in for a long day. We collected a few provisions before we left, as Essie told us her mother would cook lunch for us. A couple of chickens, cabbages and a bag of rice.

First village was Chinganyama, which was a well looked after village and had a lot of builders, as many of the houses were brick built, rather than round mud huts we had seen in most other villages. There was also a lot of livestock and piles of compost around, which was a good sign of self-sufficiency. They were mainly tobacco farmers here. There seemed to be an abundance of twins in this village, so something in the genes! We met an old chief who was very thin, who showed us some of the huts in disrepair. One orphan we met was crippled in his hand and walked with a limp, we found out that he was being looked after by his aunt, but she had gone to hospital to look after someone else, so her eldest son of around 18 was looking after him. Some of the clothing the children had, if you can call it clothing was terrible. Gaynor had the inspiration to buy an old shirt from a boy we had given a new t-shirt to. They will still keep their 2nd tattered clothing as additional to wear, even if it is in a sorry state. We paid well over the odds of around £1, so that we could bring it back to show people in the UK what their clothing is like, as you don't always get a real idea from a photo. They had an

open well and we said we would provide some cement to build it up. We did a small distribution and the chief was so grateful he would hardly let go of our hands.



Chief of the village



Open well to be built up

We then moved on to Kamwale, where we met an old man called 'two pence'. He survived on handouts, as he had no family left. His hut looked as though it would collapse if there was any heavy rain. We arranged with the youth to fix it up for him in return for a football. We met a blind lady with a 2 year old child who looked very malnourished, soft grey hair and little reaction in his eyes. She apparently was married to a blind man. Another short distribution and left some plastic sheeting to put on some of the roofs that needed repair.



Blind lady with malnourished child

The third village was Katontha, where we found a 15 year old girl on the outskirts of the village sitting on a piece of plastic with tears rolling down her face. Not sobbing, but silent tears. She obviously had a lower age level than 15, with a blank look when asked questions, no food, and her mother had gone to hospital. When I asked where she lived I was shown a house with no roof on at all. Luckily

we had a packet of biscuits in the car which we gave to her, along with some clothing. We were then introduced to a blind man that coped very well on his own, and played the guitar. He played a song for us, not too tuneful though! This village had many young people very scared of us 'Azungu' (white people) as it was a village not visited by other people.



Blind man playing guitar



Left to fend for herself

We arrived at Essie's parents' house at 4.00 for lunch! We knew we were going out later for dinner, so ate very little to be polite. We stayed until 5.00, but then didn't get back until 7.00. We had a mega quick shower and out with Ben and Eda for a meal by 7.20! Ben said that he had a good mechanic who would come and sort out the noise from the car; it makes a really bad noise when you reverse.

Thursday 12th October.

I nearly wrote a day of rest, but I will rephrase that to a day in Lilongwe. We first walked down to the old town, about half an hour walk to meet Pheroce at Kiboko Hotel. Pheroce had been our driver in April when we went on Safari, and is interested in taking out a group next April for us. We also wanted to look at the hotel as a possibility to stay as the camp is pretty basic. It was all very nice, but maybe a bit expensive. We got some lunch provisions and met Kafumbi at 10.10. He had been out to Masiye School to deliver some cement as they had run out.

We went to their office to have a meeting that lasted until 4.00pm, with a short break for lunch in between. A very productive meeting, with so much to cover. Ben came over with his mechanic, and solved the problem after taking the car away for a couple of hours. What a lovely guy. He didn't want any money, but I insisted and gave him around £15. We also met Smile who had dealt with the importation of the car, which we had been charged so much for. It was an interesting conversation, and with my diving in at the beginning giving him an earful, really he was just doing his job, and he advised us to write about our case with the charity details to see if we could get a rebate. Worth a try anyway. We tried to get some mosquito nets, but same story as last year where we have to write a charity letter to order them. I had hoped this would be done in advance of us arriving, but it didn't, so will have to transfer money for this to be ordered. It is important as the rainy season is approaching and they can make such a difference.

Back at camp by 5.00 and time for us to unwind a little before preparing for tomorrow which will be another long day.

We finally sussed it today, and had the best organised time so far. Met Jason at breakfast, who was an interesting 'Medical Scientist, photographer' and traveller of course! He said that he may know of someone interested in becoming Project Manager and will put her in contact with me. Collected at 8.20, giving Glen an American traveller who had been stranded a lift into town to change his ticket. Besides the first day, I have done all the driving, which I don't mind, but it can become very tiring by the end of the day. I think Kafumbi finds it difficult. After filling up with petrol we left Lilongwe by 9.30 and got into Kalonga by 11.00am. It seemed a well off village (in relative terms of course) with 2 boreholes and a lot of farmers, who had brick-built houses. We have decided that we will not provide fertiliser in future. Last year it was necessary to make sure they had a reasonable harvest, but we need to encourage organic methods if they are to ever become self-sufficient. Fertiliser is so expensive and some clever manufacturer has got everyone reliant on it. Next year we will provide seed to the villages that can provide the best compost, and they have a whole year to make it.

Our second visit was to Maselero. We met an 11 year old girl orphan who was epileptic and had fainted into an open fire. Both her legs and one arm, and side of her body were very badly burnt. Some of the sores were open wounds with flies swarming around them. Her left arm she had left in an upright position, and the skin had grafted together, meaning that she was unable to open it up. Possibly she had broken her elbow when falling and that is why she had kept it in this closed position. She would need an operation to release it. She was living with her grandmother and her aunts. We were very concerned that she should be in hospital, but her grandmother was not fit enough to stay with her in hospital. We will try and see if her aunts will accompany her, I am afraid her wounds will become infected and she will die. She already looked very weak. You wonder how many people we are missing in these villages that are desperate for help but nobody knows about them.



Arm fused together



Open wounds and foot bound

We then met a female chief, which was unusual. More unusual she was totally blind, but totally independent. Her roof needed repair, so we agreed to provide some plastic sheeting to make it rain proof. While we were going around seeing

people, the other committee members were handing out distributions, and we had much better use of our time. 1.00pm and we had already visited 2 villages!

The last village in the Nambuma area was Tizwire, which was Andrew's village. They always take such a pride in looking good, that you imagine they must come from a lovely house, with well dressed children, but looks can be deceptive. We met some of his children who were not particularly well dressed. We met a lady who's husband had gone mad, and chopped off both her arms from the elbow when she was 3 months pregnant. She was very lucky to have been taken to South Africa and had a good operation. Her husband has been put in jail for 19 years and she successfully had her baby which we held. She was 3 months old. She had good support, with family around her to help look after the baby. The village was pretty poor in comparison to the others we had seen, with the children badly dressed and very dirty.



Lady with chopped off arms



Poor orphan

We dropped in a present to Bernard Junior, Essie's youngest son who now lives with his grandparents in Nambuma. He was so pleased with his 'beanie' hat. Back at Lilongwe at 4.30 where we bought a blanket for the old man we will be seeing on Monday, along with some food for Jacob who we will see on Tuesday. Not much money left now, but bought what plastic sheeting we could for the roofs. Back at camp by 5.00 and had dinner with Glen the American we had met earlier. As we were talking there was a thud, and Glen looked stunned (as did we) and even more the gecko that had fallen from the ceiling onto his plate! Luckily he had finished eating. We sat talking for ages afterwards and he kindly gave us a donation of \$100. It never ceases to amaze me how people can be so generous and trusting of us.

Up by 6.30, ready by 8.15, when Kafumbi arrived and we went off into town. After dropping Kafumbi off to sort out his nephew's wedding, and Essie into the office to work on the account books, we were on our way down to the Lake by 9.00. Filled up with petrol on route and arrived at Chezi exactly at 10.00am as planned. How amazingly British of us! There was a great sound of music and we discovered that the children were practising for a festival in a few weeks time. All the orphans were either dancing, singing or playing instruments. It was such a fantastic sound. We had such a good talk with Mercedes from the Mission and she invited us to

return on Wednesday morning where we could accompany them on their mobile clinic visit. This was not an opportunity to miss, so agreed to meet them then. She was horrified by some of our sights we had seen this week, particularly the epileptic girl who was badly burnt. After a very welcome cup of tea, went on our way to Senga Bay. We found 'Cool Runnings' at the Lake side, a wonderful piece of Paradise. We booked in and had a sandwich before heading off to Mua Mission which in hindsight was not a good decision. One positive outcome was that we bought 15 sleeping mats for £1.50 each. This is the place to buy them, as they make them here. It was 70km away and the carvings were quite expensive. The Cultural visit was very interesting but all in all a lot of driving and I felt shattered by 6.00pm after doing 300km! A double gin and tonic was in order and the hot shower very, very welcome. We met Samantha the owner who went to the same school as me in Blantyre, many years ago of course! She was wonderful and made us feel very welcome. We are looking forward to chilling out tomorrow morning.



Fishing by the lake



Cool Runnings

Sunday morning and day of rest. We had a short time chilling before I linked up with Samantha who talked about her experiences in running a mobile clinic and the sort of things she comes across most days. There is so much to learn, but luckily that is not my field and will leave it up to the professionals. Sam just has so much energy and survives on 4 hours sleep a night. She can also talk until the cows come home, all very interesting, maybe she is hyperactive! It was so useful talking to her as we found out she also supplies wheelchairs, so we will try and link up with her for some of the disabled people in the villages. We then spoke with Marcus whose parents are involved in the Malawi Project supplying Nakulipala next to Blessings Hospital near Lumbadzi. We had a bite for lunch before a very quick time in the Lake, so we could say we had been in. We spoke to an amazing guy called Steve who was driving from Cape Town to London in a Beach Buggy called 'operation bear' building awareness and gathering information about child rape. Click on www.operationbear.za.org and Oprah Winfrey will donate \$1 for every hit. Before we knew it we were packed and left by 3.00. A quick visit to Safari Beach Lodge to get some info on prices and then on to get some carvings to take home.

Into the lion's den! It is so draining with all the battering and haggling going on, there is really no pleasure in it at all. I came away with such a headache. We also stopped on route to get some water carriers. They look so cool, but really don't know how we are going to get them home! Back at Kiboko camp at 6.30, a quick meal and sorted out some finances before hitting the sack by 10.00.

Monday, and the start of our last week. We got a few provisions in Lilongwe and wanted to get some money from the bank, but for some reason it didn't open so we didn't want to waste time hanging around. We picked up Essie and then seed and

fertiliser and on to the office to get Virginia and the salt and soap for distribution. We got changed into the outfits that Essie had given to a tailor to make up, and it was absolutely hilarious! Gaynor's was about 3 times too big and she rolled it up and up and it looked like we were wearing glorified sacks! If it were not so funny we would have cried! We also packed up the sewing machine and headed off. We stopped at the old man, who was so, so grateful for his gifts of blanket, sleeping mat and food. He couldn't believe it, all his Christmas's had come at once. It was so little but so much for him.



Grateful old man



Traditional dancers

On to Masiye to see the progress of the school. We went to the local village to visit some of the elderly who are finding life very difficult. The school is looking great and up to roof level. The floor and plastering still need to be done. They had also started the foundations of the kitchen and store room, which was a bonus. They had provided lunch, but this time we had to pay for it, which was great as it was making money for themselves. There was great celebration with our arrival, and children were singing and dancing. The ladies were dancing, which we joined in with. The Primary Inspector for this district, Clemens Chinchenga, also joined us, along with the new minister from Chimwang'ombe. We then had a short drama from the teenagers, they are such a laugh. Then it was on to the distributions to the various people. Firstly the items we had brought for the school, some learning resources and toys for the pre-school. The football strip for 2 teams donated by Coventry City Football Club looked great; we just need to get them some boots.

The sewing machine, knitting needles and wool, and jewellery bits passed on to the women, the seed and fertiliser to the chiefs and finally the salt, soap and clothes to the orphans. It was all very well organised and the committees wrote everything down. I managed to have a chat to the Foreman who was not happy with the lack of payment and not being able to get on with the next phase. I said he was to write down a list of all materials he needed and the amounts he expected for labour and we would sort it out immediately. He seemed to speak good English.



Foundations to kitchen/store



First two classes nearly finished



Coventry Strip



Dancers

Tonight we took all the committee back to Kiboko Camp for their meal and to stay the night. They were very excited about it, and many had probably not slept in a bed before. It is very basic, but to them it was something very different. We had arranged with Luca (the cook) to supply a meal for us around 7.00pm. We were back at the camp by 6.15, so time for a wash and a drink before dinner. Gaynor and I had arranged some team building games. We feel it is important that we all get to know each other well. They don't really know much about each other either. It was a really fun evening, and they thought Chinese whispers was really hilarious, especially in Chichewa!

Tuesday and into Kafutwe area. Before leaving Lilongwe we visited the District Director of Education, Rocky Hausi and had an interesting meeting with him. We talked about funding for a library at Chikutu school, and he suggested that we go to the Assembly for financial help. Off to get money from the bank, and some provision before heading off to meet with the Foreman. We paid him to date, and he gave me a list of materials needed to complete the first block and the kitchen/store. Off to the first village, Kachitza.



Old man at Kachitza

Zozo who has lost use of his left side,
looked after by his mother

There was an old man we had met last year, his wife had died 1 month ago and he looked incredibly sad. His daughter had left her husband to come and look after him. We did a quick distribution here before moving on to Chizumba Village (Justine's village). We met a lady who fixes up hand pump wells, so we must make note to use her for the charity. There is a high percentage of orphans here, although it is difficult to say as they call vulnerable children orphans. We will take up the fact that if you have no mother you are an orphan, as it is the mother who looks after you in Malawi, and often if she dies the father just goes off to find another wife; not caring for his children. They had 135 orphans in a village of 200 homes. We met a 50 year old man called Zozo who looked as though he had had a stroke and couldn't use his left side. He got around by putting his left leg on top of his right leg and pulling himself around on his bottom with his right hand. He was in a really sorry state, and cared for by his 82 year old mother. I asked if he would like a wheelchair if I could get one, he put his right fist to his heart, beating it, and sobbed and sobbed. It really was a moving and pathetic sight. Again we did a short distribution and then went on to visit Jacob at Chiwoko.



Jacob

He is just an amazing person. We had taken him a pillow and some clothes and food. He is obviously in so much pain, but we found that his open wounds in his right arm have not been kept clean as they should have done. We had bought antiseptic wash and clean bandages so hope someone will do this for him. You keep wondering if this will be the last time we see him, but now this is the third visit to him. He says he will be alive for Jacob (my youngest son) to visit him!

Finally on to Chakale village (Fixon's village) to find that his wife and daughter had to go to hospital suddenly. We met a couple of orphan boys looking after each other, the older boy was about 15 and the younger 11. We didn't like the attitude of the chiefs in this village; it was very much like give us everything, without them doing anything themselves.



Orphan brothers outside their hut

It had been a very long day and back at Kiboko at 7.00. No lunch or dinner, but luckily a good breakfast kept us going! We sat through the accounts books, and shattered bed by 11.00pm knowing that we would have an early start tomorrow to be at St Mary's by 8.00am.

Well, very British again! Dead on time, in fact 5 minutes early! We had dropped Essie off at the office and then Kafumbi at the industrial estate for building materials' clutching his shopping list to get quotes for us. We desperately need a Project Manager who can deal with these sorts of things as I think it is difficult for him.

St Mary's morning was very interesting and we were taken along with a Nissan Patrol 4 x 4 into a remote area some 15km away. They were building a clinic through the Red Cross and it was brilliant. It was again mainly under 5's and pregnant women along with vaccination programmes. We learnt a lot in the morning and made copious notes for our colleagues coming out next year to set up our clinic. They also work a lot with the local Government and WHO (World Health Organisation). We returned to St Mary's where we joined them for lunch, which was very welcome since we hadn't had a meal since yesterday breakfast time! We met up with Essie and Kafumbi in the office by 2.00pm. Kafumbi seemed very tired I think our trip and this morning's task is taking its toll. He had done very well, and had various quotes. Each block is going to cost us £5,400, back to our original quote. Ben arrived about 2.45 to take us off to SOS. This was an orphanage but was self-sufficient and like a little town. It has its own homes and schools. It also did some outreach programmes that seemed really interesting, and something we need to look at, at a future point. They also did quite a lot for disability, which we will keep in mind for Miriam if things don't work out in the village. Back at camp by 4.00 for a brief meeting with Kafumbi and Essie followed by a meal and then carried on finishing looking at the accounts and finishing around 7.30. There is so much to fit in to an all too short a visit. We are leaving tomorrow and have not packed a thing, so we had to do something!

Last day and up at 6.30. We were going to walk down to town but Mary and Praise turned up with some gifts for us to take home, so they gave us a lift down. Praise is very poorly and suffering with malaria. I changed all my remaining money and

bought a few bits to take home. We met up with Kafumbi and Essie and went to the National AIDS Commission to see what information we could pick up. We picked up a lot of useful information and will make an appointment for next time, as we have the doctor's business card with direct email contact. We need to also link up with Kate who is now Minister for Gender.

Back at Kiboko and sorted out our final finances paying Kafumbi and Essie and leaving some for fuel and cement for the building work. We gave a Dutch girl a lift to the airport. Met all the committee at the airport who had come to see us off. They are all very thoughtful. It had taken Artwell 3 hours cycling! We had a little time to offer them a drink and chips. We were presented with some lovely clothes that they had all contributed towards and Essie had made them. They were really beautiful.

Before we knew it, we were boarding the plane and off to Kenya and then back home. Can't wait to get back to the family!



Kiboko Camp restaurant



Gaynor outside our A frame