



# Friends of Sick Children in Malawi



('FOSCiM' and 'FOSC')

[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.



**AUTUMN 2021**



Malawi is one of the very poorest nations of the World.

**\*99.2p of every £1\* received by FOSCiM from donors applied for the frontline needs in Malawi. Very few charities can claim that sort of outcome.**

Welcome to our Autumn 2021 newsletter and update.



Before going any further I must apologise to Queen Dube's husband who, in the photograph of Queen in the Spring newsletter, I labelled as Malawi's President, His Excellency Dr Lazarus Chakwera!!!

Moving on quickly while still blushing, in the Northern Hemisphere there are early signs of autumn and in Malawi the rainy season will soon replace the dry season. In Malawi the forecasts of a good maize harvest seem, thankfully, to have been proved accurate.

Updating on Covid-19, July saw a third spike in cases and at the time of writing Malawi reports a cumulative 61,609 cases with 2,283 deaths. The population is roughly 20m. Many colleagues and supporters in Malawi have been 'touched' by the pandemic, some with tragic consequences and we feel for them.

In this edition of our newsletter the focus will be on:

- Introducing George Chagaluka, new Clinical Head of Paediatrics & Child Health
- Looking forward ~ the Priorities for Paediatrics in Malawi
- Essential facilities and services ~ an update
- Fundraising stories – The Malawi 3 Peaks Challenge
- Mobilising Malawi's Children
- Sea Containers

Fear not, the amount of text and lack of pictures in the first few pages will be balanced further on by pictures from Malawi!

## **INTRODUCING Dr George Chagaluka**



Our Spring 2021 newsletter announced that George Chagaluka was taking over from Queen Dube as Clinical Head of Paediatric and Child Health at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital following Queen's move to a new national role. So, it is time now to find out a bit more about George.

George is a consultant paediatric oncologist who is also a Clinical Lecturer for the College of Medicine and is a board member at the Palliative Care Trust, World Child Cancer (Malawi), Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance, Friends of Sick Children, and the Malaria Advisory Board.

George was born in 1973 in the rural area of Rumphu District in the Northern part of Malawi. Rumphu is one of the most beautiful districts in the country. The western side has a beautiful National Park called Nyika and the eastern part shares a boundary with Lake Malawi. His dad was a primary school teacher and his mother looked after him and his three siblings. George's grandmother had a significant influence on him from an early age. She taught him respect for elders, the value of education, the value of honesty and the spirit of working hard. She was also responsible for his love of fishing!

Following primary school George was selected to Robert Blake Secondary School, one of the elite boys' secondary schools, this one run by Protestant missionaries from South Africa. After secondary school, he went to the Malawi College of Medicine for undergraduate training. In the College, he joined a class of nineteen students, of whom only 13 graduated. Internship was hard due to the high patient to doctor ratio resulting in most of his intern time being spent in the hospital. By the time he finished internship, he had lost almost ten percent of his body weight! After internship, he found his love for paediatrics, the QECH

department at that time being headed by the inimitable Professor Elizabeth Molyneux. George recalls the phenomenal team spirit, the support and the supervision of the junior staff. In 2007, he joined the department as a junior registrar followed two years later by two years of senior rotation in South Africa. During his senior rotation in South Africa, his housemate was Dr Chimalizeni who is the current Academic Head of Paediatrics at QECH. George became a paediatrician in 2013 and went for sub-speciality training in oncology in 2013, completing in 2015.

George is married to Angela, a senior banker and they have two children, Jeromy and Hazel.

George's faith is a very important part of his life. He is also an excellent athlete who has done several marathons to raise money for his hospital department and he has taken part in the infamous Mulanje Porters' Race, The Three Peaks Race and the famous Blantyre Marathon.

As regular newsletter readers will recall, once a year he also has more than a passing acquaintance with Santa Claus!



George hiking on Mount Mulanje

George is quick to express his gratitude for his mentors Prof Elizabeth Molyneux and Prof Neil Kennedy, and the wonderful work they have put into the paediatric department supported by FOSC and FOSCiM.

His vision is to see a paediatric department which is self-reliant, conducts high quality research and boasts an increased number of sub-specialists providing even higher quality paediatric care for Malawi ..... and for neighbouring countries.

I am sure you will join me in wishing George every success in achieving his (and our) vision.

### **The next few years ~ the PRIORITIES**

*What follows is the very important platform upon which the whole team aim to continue the successful progress achieved over the last 20 years.*

The Covid-19 Pandemic has impacted the focus of the work in Malawi to establish and develop sustainable paediatrics for the children who make up half of the population and are its future.

Supporters will be familiar with the team's long term objective of creating **sustainable** paediatric healthcare in Malawi. In this context 'sustainability' means that through the education and training of Malawians - in their own nation and to the highest standards possible – they will become largely self-sufficient in the foreseeable future in leading, managing and delivering paediatric healthcare in Malawi.

Until the Covid-19 pandemic, Education and Training were relatively secure but having sufficient numbers of paediatric ward staff was problematic. Donors came to the rescue in this regard by funding the employment and conversion to paediatrics of more mature general nurses. Alas, this group was at the greatest risk as regards Covid-19 so, in their very best interests and with their agreement, they were released.

On the other hand, a timely and positive product of Covid-19 was The Malawi Ministry of Health appointing many newly qualified staff. This helped with the new Covid-created void in paediatric ward staff, albeit that so much lost experience cannot be replaced overnight. At the same time, the Malawi Employment Laws as regards death in service also presented significant financial risks to charity funded staff appointments so these new developments required a reduction in our exposure to such potential liabilities.

Whilst staffing has become less of a problem, the previously secure area of Education and Training of healthcare professionals has become more challenging.

With all that as context, the outline plan for the next 5 years is to major on three areas:

1. Specialist Paediatric Education and Training of Malawians
2. Improving and Developing the Paediatric Healthcare Infrastructure
3. Augmenting Clinical Care

### **Specialist Paediatric Education and Training**

Headcount needs have been reviewed and the detailed costs with respect to, but not limited to, postgraduate MMED training, paediatric and child health nursing, and postgraduate BSc training are available and sponsors are now being sought to support individuals through their training. **PLEASE consider 'adopting' through funding one or more persons in training and contact me for further details.**

### **Improving and Developing the Paediatric Healthcare Infrastructure**

The new HDU and the A&E project are discussed in the next section of this newsletter so I will not duplicate here except to say that there is currently a funding gap of approx. £100,000 in the A&E project so **PLEASE contact me if you would like to help either directly or by introduction to possible sources of funds.**

It is very early days but it is hoped to **re-purpose some existing space** to become a specialist cardiology area, relocate the nursing station and create an isolation area.

Again, early days but there are ideas for creating an adolescent ward.

General refurbishment of the whole paediatric department is required – roofing, guttering, plumbing, drainage, painting, windows and access routes.

**PLEASE contact me if you would like to help with any of these, either directly or by introduction to possible sources of funds for any of these needs.**

## Augmenting Clinical Care

There are limits currently to the nature of healthcare able to be offered so the team are always looking to push the limits outwards. The excellent One Stop Centre, created to deal with girls and women who are the subject of abuse, is a good case in point. Other areas of specialist care also need to be expanded and improved. Malawian specialists have completed their training and are establishing clinics in areas such as cardiology that need space and equipment. Specialties need the support of special diagnostic investigations, nutritional support, medication and therapies.

**PLEASE contact me if you would like to help either directly or by introduction to possible sources of funds for any of these needs.**

**For the avoidance of doubt**, as well as the above, our very successful collaboration with the Orthopaedic Workshop to make wheelchairs, home chairs for tots and other devices for children with severe mobility issues will definitely continue **and** we will continue to be delighted to accept donations for any issues of particular interest to donors or for the other needs described in our website. [www.friendsofsickchildreninmalawi.org](http://www.friendsofsickchildreninmalawi.org)

## Essential Facilities and Services

Building the new **High Dependency Unit for Children** became a reality during the summer. I have no hesitation in once again thanking FOSCiM supporters **Arthur & Sheila Dolby** and **The Foundation of the Order of the Fleur de Lys**, amongst the other donors, for helping to make this happen through their generosity.

The official opening and full functioning of the unit is expected in October. Covid has had a negative impact upon the timely supply of essential equipment for the unit. Pictures from the opening will be in our next newsletter.



*Three of the project team on site.*

The project to re-design and upgrade the **Children's Accident and Emergency** building has been activated very recently and a report on progress will be in the next newsletter. To achieve all the hopes for the facilities in the building will require about £100,000 more than is currently secured so **if you would like to help either directly or by introduction to possible sources of funds for this vital project please contact me.**

## FUNDRAISING Stories

Variously described as 'The Malawi 3 Peaks Challenge' and 'A Hike for Life', paediatric staff and friends in Malawi undertook this gruelling challenge and at the same time raised funds for the current priorities at Paeds QECH. £3,000 [MK 3.3m] was raised – a magnificent achievement. Here are some images from the event. There simply is not room for all the great photographs I received so apologies for anyone who isn't featured. Conspicuous by her absence was running and hiking fanatic 'Joe' Langton who was unable to take part this time due to an injury.



**Some of the amazing Paeds staff and friends conquering the Malawi's 3 Peaks – Michuru, Ndirande and Soche.**

A big **THANK YOU** also to **Ben and Abi Kennedy** who asked for their wedding presents to be donations to our One Stop Centre treating women and children victims of abuse. We wish Ben and Abi a long and happy marriage.



Meanwhile father of the groom **Neil Kennedy and friends** embarked on a fundraising 'Last Man Standing' running venture involving running predetermined laps in a relay which continued until all but one participant had dropped out because they could run no further. What can you say?

*left Richard Thompson and Neil – two of the last men standing (and still smiling!)*

Between both the Kennedy events the One Stop Centre benefitted to the tune of £4,000 and another £2,250 went to the fund to support the education of Malawians in Paediatrics. Again, a big thank you to them and all involved.

## **Mobilising Malawi's Children**

Following on from the record smashing Christmas 2020 appeal, things soon returned to something approaching normal at the Workshop. At time of writing the delivered wheelchair count has reached 1,062 and 830 home chairs for tots.

**Christmas 2021:** Such was the amazing demand last Christmas that the order book for this Christmas is already **OPEN**; a separate note went out in September. Please do not hesitate to email me with your order and details of those for whom you are making the donation. We will again apply a first come first served approach to fulfilling Christmas orders.

A donation of £100 (if Gift Aid is available) or £125 if not, funds a wheelchair.

£15 (if Gift Aid is available) or £18.75 if not funds a home chair for tots.

Donations for orthotic devices are also hoped for and last year a donor couple initiated a small fund so that colleagues could fund shoes for children whose orthoses would be ineffective without them but the family do not have the means to purchase shoes for their child. If this would be of interest please specify.

## **Sea Containers**

Two more Cycle of Good containers arrived this year containing some of the work of our small army of knitters, sewers and crocheters; donations of medical consumables from Dolby Vivisol and others; and other donated items. In total an amazing 200 cartons were sent out measuring a combined 8.5 cubic metres.

We are very sad to report the passing of one of the stalwart knitters, 89 year old Gladys Crownshaw. Over a period of many years Gladys knitted hundreds of woolly hats for premature babies and as a friend of hers told us “she enjoyed every minute of knitting them and her husband Ken was often despatched to buy wool when her stocks were running low.” **Rest in Peace Gladys.**



## What now?

Throughout this edition of our newsletter I have put in a lot of individual pleas for support and help in finding support; they are all marked in **red**.

**The need for financial support cannot be sugar coated and much of what has been and can be achieved is thanks to donors and supporters who believe in what is being achieved.**

**We are always proud to say that more than 99% of every donation received is available for use ‘at the frontline’ for the healthcare of Malawi’s children.**

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 or Joe for a ‘chat’ at:

[gordon@friendsofsickchildreninmalawi.org](mailto:gordon@friendsofsickchildreninmalawi.org)

[joelangton@doctors.org.uk](mailto:joelangton@doctors.org.uk)

**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 on line, intermediaries like PayPal and Just Giving all deduct charges from your donations but you can now opt to cover some of their charges so that more of your donation comes to the charity.

**Please note** that Virgin Money Giving is closing down so we now have a link at JustGiving for any fundraising challenges you wish to set up:

<https://justgiving.com/friendsofsickchildreninmalawi>

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



~g~

**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: at HSBC**

Account name: Friends of Sick Children in Malawi  
Bank sort code : 40 – 11 – 04  
Bank account : 2 1 6 1 2 0 6 9

**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

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**Finally**, on behalf of everyone involved in ‘the project’ in Malawi and those tens of thousands of children and families who benefit every day from your generosity, a very big thank you and please keep supporting us to whatever extent and in whatever way you feel able.

Sincerely,

*Gordon*



Gordon Cowie MBE  
Founder and Chair of Trustees  
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