



in
MALAWI



and



**Kitchen Table
Charities Trust**

CHANGING LIVES BY THINKING SMALL

1,000 wheelchairs for children in Malawi

KTCT has been a staunch and greatly valued supporter from the start in 2013 of our efforts to help mobilise the children of Malawi who are unfortunate to suffer from severe mobility issues. We collaborate with the Orthopaedic Workshop at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, Blantyre, Malawi to make wheelchairs, home chairs for tots and various orthotic devices, all for children.

From the outset, KTCT was attracted by the many 'dividends' that accrue from mobilising one child. A reminder of these is as follows:

1. The quality of life for children with severe mobility problems is greatly improved.
 - No longer are they confined to a life on the floor/ground or the backs of willing guardians. (same for home chairs for tots)
 - Posture issues are catered for in the assessment and manufacture.
 - For many children it means they can attend school.
 - For many it means they can socialize with children of their own age.
2. A parent or guardian unable to work because of having to attend to the needs of their child may be freed to take work and earn much needed money for the family. In one of the World's poorest nations this is a survival 'must' for most families.

3. Parents and guardians are freed from the risks of developing back problems carrying growing children on their backs.
4. Valuable local employment and skills acquisition are secured and developed at the Hospital Workshop.

The Government of Malawi still do not provide mobility aids for anyone and applying World Health Organisation statistics, there are probably 100,000 children in Malawi with mobility disabilities.

This month we were able to mobilise with a wheelchair our 1,000th child since the start of this project in 2013. This milestone was reached in no small part through the support of KTCT which is why we are delighted to dedicate wheelchair #1,000 to KTCT.

Covid-19 prevented us going to Malawi to enjoy the moment but colleagues have sent the following pictures.



Lost in the centre is **Davie Luwishi** – guest of honour – aboard his new wheelchair
 From the back and left to right, Wilson Nanungu (Head of Department - Orthopaedic Centre), Mr and Mrs Luwishi (parents), Ms Linely Chewere (Deputy Hospital Director), Robster Nyirenda (former Head of Department - Orthopaedic Centre) retired, Matilda Lali and Merlin Majawa (representing FOSCIM). Front – members of the Workshop team Alex Jambo, Gilbert Chimpanzi, Langsfield Mwahimba, John Mmora and Lameck Mbungu.



Davie lives with his parents in Josam Village, Somba in Blantyre Rural, Malawi. He is the first born child in the family of two children. He will soon be 8 years old. He used to go to school when he was of light weight but since 2019 he stopped due to an increase in weight, lack of sitting and mobility aids. His parents are still willing to take him back to school but can no longer carry him.

He has Cerebral Palsy (Microcephaly) and the many challenges that accompany that condition.

Before having a wheelchair he spent much of his time lying on a mat and had few friends, even those who live in their neighbourhood. His parents were not able to do enough piece works to earn a living as they could not leave him alone. His mother or his sibling could not manage to carry him due to his weight. He was increasingly regarded as a burden to the

family hence the need of a wheelchair to bring relief to family members who have been lifting and carrying him. It will also improve his sitting posture and balance as he has weak trunk muscles. It will prevent him from acquiring secondary complications such as scoliosis and pressure sores.

He has now been assessed and well fitted with a child's wheelchair appropriate to his specific needs with a pressure relieving cushion which will provide him with maximum support and comfort. His parents are now planning to take him back to school and they will be free to work and do other income generating activities that they were not able to do before.

Mr. Nyirenda (former Manager of the Workshop, now retired) is giving instructions to Davie's parents as to how the wheelchair can be safely and effectively used. He also explained about care and maintenance.



GIFT PRESENTATION

To mark this special milestone the family were presented with a cash gift of MK 50,000.

Davie's parents were very happy and greatly surprised to be receiving not only the wheelchair but a cash gift. They are asking God to continue blessing the donors so that they continue with their charity work they are doing for poor children in Malawi. The cash will help to buy some clothes for Davie and will help them to start a small business buying and selling fish, helping the whole family.

Tour of the Workshop

The Deputy Hospital Director enjoyed a tour of the Workshop and said she was impressed with the work done at the Orthopaedic Centre, not having visited before. She was shown the various activity stations especially in the workshop extension funded by FOSCiM. Picture was taken in the welding room. The Director advised Davie's parents to take good care of the wheelchair and to use it as instructed. They should not use it as a transport for other goods but rather to change Davie's life for the better and promote his good health and be able to socialise with his friends.



Finally, the Workshop 'gang' wanted a group photo with Davie and his parents to include the missing technician who was the photographer of the day, Langsfield Mwahimba.