



'CALL THE MIDWIFE' STAR
**LAURA
 MAIN**
 IS INSPIRED
 BY PRINCE
 HARRY'S
 SENTEBALE
 CHARITY



When *Call the Midwife's* Laura Main visited Lesotho to see the work carried out by Prince Harry's charity Sentebale, she had no idea that it would be perfect preparation for filming the fifth series of the hit drama.

Laura, who plays Shelagh Turner, has been supporting Sentebale since becoming aware of its work when she visited the charity's garden at the Chelsea Flower Show two years ago.

Sentebale helps Lesotho's most vulnerable children – one in three are orphans and many are victims of extreme poverty and HIV/Aids – and Laura was struck by the parallels with the BBC's 1950s drama.

"I'd wanted to get out to Lesotho since I first heard of Sentebale," says Laura, 34, who grew up in Aberdeen but lives in London with her partner,

actor Stephen McGlynn. "What I didn't expect was for it to be brilliant research for *Call the Midwife*. Meeting all the amazing people who help look after the children, I realised this is what our show is about: exceptional people caring for others. It's moving to be around people like that and seeing the hard work they do with so much dedication and enjoyment. It was an inspiring, unforgettable trip."

ROYAL CONNECTION

Over four days in the southern African kingdom, Laura visited the Kananelo Centre for the Deaf and a Touching Tiny Lives centre. She also paid a visit to St Bernadette's centre for visually impaired children and a Herd Boys' School, where she met Lesotho's Prince Seeiso, who set up Sentebale with Prince Harry after

Harry spent time in the country during his gap year ten years ago.

Since starting filming *Call the Midwife* in 2011, Laura says she feels much more comfortable working with children and felt very at home at the Touching Tiny Lives centre.

"It was a bit like when we're filming a clinic scene and there's lots of children and babies around and you're playing with them. That was when I thought, 'This feels familiar territory.' They all seem happy but when you're told their stories and why they're there, it's heart-breaking.

"Lesotho is a very special place," Laura adds. "Seeing what Sentebale does has connected me to the country like never before."



INTERVIEW: RACHEL CORCORAN

For more info or to donate, visit sentebale.org.

PHOTOS: SENTEBALE/LAURA MAIN

Laura wears a Basotho hat (above) during a visit to Sentebale's Herd Boys' Night School in the highlands, where (below left) she meets Prince Seeiso, who founded Sentebale with Prince Harry. "It was impressive to see the way he communicated with the boys and how he's so hands-on," Laura tells us. "He cares deeply about giving everyone a chance. He's great fun, too – I can see how he and Prince Harry hit it off!"



Back to school: Laura joins a class of children at Mants'ase Children's Home, a residential home for orphaned and abandoned children, which receives support from Sentebale



'Meeting the amazing people, I realised this is what *Call the Midwife* is about: exceptional people caring for others'



All smiles: Laura enjoys a cuddle with a young child at Touching Tiny Lives, a grassroots organisation supported by Sentebale that cares for malnourished under-fives. "It was a bit like when we're filming a clinic scene," says the actress (insert left, in her role in *Call the Midwife*)



Laura plays with young orphans at Mants'ase Children's Home (left) and dons a hard hat to walk round the site of the Mamohato Children's Centre (right), with Sentebale's Tumising Leduma), which is due to open later this year to provide support via residential camps for children with HIV. "It was an inspiring, unforgettable trip," says the actress

