



Education for disabled young people, Fatima Mission, Zimbabwe

Fatima Mission is a large mission based in rural Zimbabwe. The majority of those living within its boundaries are poor subsistence farmers reliant on Maize, Chomolia (a green vegetable) and a few cows, goats or chickens as their only source of food. The mission is run by a Roman Catholic order of Franciscans priests known as The Order of Friars Minor Capuchin or Capuchins for short. The priest in overall charge is Fr Jeya who has been at the mission since March 2005. It has a church, a pastoral centre, a number of primary and secondary schools, a clinic and a project for disabled children within its boundaries.

A particularly vulnerable group living within Fatima Mission are those who are disabled (blind, deaf or mute) and Fr Jeya was particularly anxious that they should be given the opportunity of an education. 17 disabled young people and 2 blind adults live at the pastoral centre during term time and attend a nearby school. The school is the only school in the province offering a specific education for blind and mute children. Above is a photo of some of young people. In addition to their academic education they also learn skills to help them live and prosper with their disabilities. Before coming to Fatima many of these children led very isolated lives and were faced with a bleak future. Thanks to the educating they are receiving and the fact that they are living in community with others, their confidence and ability to relate with others is growing.

Of the 17 young people, 10 have hearing impairments, 6 are visually impaired and 1 is physically handicapped. Many of the children were being looked after by a single parent or a relative, many of whom who are in poor health and living in poverty.

How African Mission can support these disabled young people in 2022:

1. It costs £510 per year to cover the school fees and living costs for each young person.
2. The pastoral centre where the young people live needs to be repainted and some of the doors needs to be replaced – see photos below. This will cost **£1,500**

