

## 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 2002. 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. 23 disabled young people 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 special needs 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. In the last 12 months we have raised funds to set aside an area of land for the young people to grow vegetables – more information about this project can be found under the link 'Projects supported'. The purpose of doing so was threefold, one, so that they had a healthy nutritious diet, two, that the project would be self-sustaining and three, so that the young people would learn practical skills appropriate for the rural area in which they live.

We would like to consolidate these threefold aims further by providing animals (pigs & chickens) for the young people to look after. In order to do this we need to build a chicken coop and a piggery. The chicken coop will cost £4,067 & the piggery will cost £6,733 The total cost for both the chicken coop and the piggery is £10,800.

The number of young people benefitting from the project has grown from six in 2011 to 23 this year. Of these 23 young people; 10 are deaf and mute, 4 are completely blind, 3 suffer from Myopia (short-sightedness), 3 are intellectually challenged, 2 are physically handicapped (one of whom has also difficulty in speaking) and 1 is partially blind. All come from poor households.

### **How African Mission can support these disabled young people in 2023:**

It costs £600 per year to cover the school fees and living costs for each young person. This means we need to raise £10,800 annually.

**Perhaps you could sponsor one child for one year?**

**Or maybe you could help us raise the £10,800 needed to build a new piggery and chicken coop?**

**This project is life changing for these young people in that it widens their horizons, giving them access to an education and a community that otherwise would be denied to them.**