

A visit to Shearly Cripps Children's Home, Zimbabwe

When I visited Harare in the summer (2017) I was invited by Dr Gwen Kandawasvika to visit the Shearly Cripps Children's Home. This is an orphanage run by the Anglican Church CPCA, Diocese of Harare in Zimbabwe. It is a registered welfare organization. As with so many other organizations in Zimbabwe there is little or no money, and that also applies to the Anglican Church, Zimbabwe. The orphanage is approx 40 min drive outside Harare.

The Children's Home was founded in 1963 and is named after an English Anglican priest Arthur Shearly Cripps. He was a poet, activist and independent missionary to Zimbabwe who lived in Zimbabwe from 1901 until his death in 1952. Throughout his time in the country he fought tirelessly for African rights, and specifically African land. There is today a shrine at his grave.

The children in the home are from 6 month to 16 years old. Most of the children are found abandoned and picked up by police. They are then taken into care for 6 days by which time, a court ruling, because of the circumstances, transfer the responsibility for the child to the children's home. The daily care of the children is undertaken by a retired school teacher.

Some children have been abused by their family. Some of the children are born with HIV and need to go to hospital every month for anti viral injections. There is no financial support to medical treatment in Zimbabwe.

The home has 54 children: 34 children in primary education, 19 in secondary education and one finishing 12th year.

The current running expenses include medicines, stationary and food. They have a vegetable garden which supplies much of their vegetables. The children's home runs a piggery and had 70 pigs when we visited; sixteen were ready to be sold and that would make \$ 1500-2000. Another source of income was a mill where they milled maize for the local village. The few cattle we saw in the yard supplied the home with milk. The long term aim is to be financially self sufficient.

We were very well received and, after the introduction, shown round the children's home. The kitchen was well below the standard of "Mattilsynet" and the dishes were drying in the sunshine. The dormitories were clean, but according to our standards the bathroom needed upgrading. They had a small library.

There are plans to rebuild the home into family units in the future. The sick room was in desperate need of refurbishment. At present it is looking more like a storage room than a room for a child to recover. The donations from St.Edmund's Church in Oslo will go towards upgrading this room.



