

I have recently returned from a visit to Zimbabwe where the focus was kids and pigs! The kids came first (of course). The day after arriving in Zimbabwe I went out to Shearly Cripps Home at Chikwaka. There we admired the new solar electricity which American donors helped to install, and the newly recreated garden which is now largely feeding the 30 children, again paid for by donors in Hilton Head Island. The next day we went on to the Honde Valley.

It's always good to have a success story to tell in Zimbabwe. The pig project is one of them. These pigs were given to Tariro a few years ago and they were not prospering, so they were moved to a piece of land Tariro had acquired in the Honde Valley. It is just two years since the land was acquired, and 18 months since the pigs moved there. It has completely changed their fortunes. The land is producing excellent crops on a small scale: sugar beans, cabbages, and, this year, maize. These are the right crops to ensure the regeneration of the soil as we use it. Then the pigs – they have grown to a herd of 75 and more coming. They are now self-supporting and within a few months should be providing a few thousand dollars a month to Tariro, which should plug the funding gap we have recently found.

At the same time, their manure fertilises the land so we don't use artificial fertilizer. They also provide jobs for two of the Tariro boys. That has been

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another joy: Chengetai from St Augustine's Children's Home is now full-time manager of the project. Nyasha Chikukwa has been working happily with him for the past 6 months, but will shortly go off to University to study mechanical engineering.

Back to kids. From the Honde Valley we drove down to Penhalonga to see the sisters and meet up with three girls and a boy Tariro supports there. Then on to Daramombe School 200 miles away, where Priscilla is studying for A levels and Willard has just moved into Form Two. Willard admitted to having got 9 As (out of 11 subjects) at the end of Form One.

Another long drive then took us to Shurugwi where we met a little band of teenagers whose lives have been transformed by Tariro. Without Tariro, they would be doing nothing, or struggling to survive. Now they are well engaged in schoolwork and key members of their local mission church. Memory was there, thoroughly enjoying her Industrial Chemistry at Gweru University. Arnold in Form Four is preparing for O levels, Joram and Panashe a year below that, and Tashinga and Miriam have just come into Form One.

Now I've had news that the O level results are out and Ruvarashe at Bonda has got 13 O levels, 7 of them As. That is amazing. She will go on to A level.

Nokutenda has also done well to get 9 O levels with 2 As. She has already set her heart on becoming a proper chef, which is great; much more practical than pursuing a more academic option.

The three new University students – Memory, Rejoice and Munyaradzi have also done well in their first semester exams. Knowing their backgrounds as I do it is incredibly moving to see them now succeeding at university.

Our next adventure with these youngsters will be to bring all of those doing Maths to Gweru after Easter to have a week's intensive maths coaching from a

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former CR student, Tina Minett Stevens. It should be a lot of fun. We will be staying in the Holy Spirit Monastery so they will get a fair amount of Christian teaching and sacramental experience in between the maths.

I am now also applying for a grant to begin a new Tariro project, helping young people in the Tsvingwe district near Penhalonga to resist the corruption of the local illegal mining activity and stay in school. I hope there will be more news on this before long.

Thank you as always for all your support.

With my very best wishes,

Nicolas CR

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