

Stefan Hippler, founder and Chairperson of HOPE Cape Town, was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit

Stefan Hippler is the founder of the children's project HOPE Cape Town and has been engaged in the fight against HIV/AIDS in South Africa for many years. Now the native of the German town Bitburg was honoured in Cape Town with the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Stefan Hippler was awarded the Cross of the German Order of Merit on 11.03.2021 at the Ambassador's Residence in Cape Town by the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Cape Town Matthias Hansen and on behalf of the Federal President Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

In the laudation it is said: "Pastor Hippler is honoured for his extraordinary commitment in the underprivileged areas of Cape Town for over 20 years, for the prevention and medical treatment of HIV/AIDS and for a dignified, self-determined life with this disease. He founded the non-for-profit organization HOPE Cape Town, which is his personal life's work. As a German priest in South Africa, he has also enhanced Germany's reputation and confidence in Germany's integrity in the host country in a special way with this deeply humanitarian work."

In 1997, Stefan Hippler arrived in Cape Town as pastor of the German-speaking Catholic community, where he also came into contact with the issue of HIV and AIDS. Together with the doctor Prof. Monika Esser, he founded the HOPE Cape Town project in 2001, which he still heads today. While providing the children with medication was the central task in the beginning, today the project takes care of the affected children and communities holistically, from the mother's pregnancy to vocational training.

One of the greatest successes is the fact that the transmission rate of the HI virus from mother to child has been reduced within the last ten years in the Western Cape region from 30 percent to 1 percent.

Congratulations on your well-deserved achievement Reverend Father Stefan Hippler!