

**Chiedza Child Care Centre (CCCC)** is a local NGO in Harare, Zimbabwe. Harare is the capital and most populous city (about 2 million) in Zimbabwe. We rode past on the highway late last week; you may have noticed the poor rural districts south of Harare. This is where CCCC operates. It was established in 2001 to respond to the impact of HIV and AIDS with meals and early childhood education services to children who had been orphaned due to AIDS related illnesses.



With the advent of anti-retroviral drugs, the organization has expanded its focus to include families and their communities, and developed a holistic model premised on four thematic areas: Child Protection, Education, Health & Nutrition and Economic Strengthening. Their vision is a Zimbabwe where children are happy, healthy and empowered with bright futures.

Tadiwa's story (read the whole thing at: <https://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/assets/files/Stephen-Lewis-Foundation-Grassroots-2019.pdf>) says everything we could want to know about how the CCCC operates. As you read this, try to imagine how anyone would navigate through this without help! They are indeed, "life-saving interventions."

*When Tadiwa\* was 6, he lost both parents to AIDS. As with millions of children orphaned by the AIDS pandemic, his grandmother was the only person left to raise him. During a community visit, a Chiedza volunteer met Tadiwa and his grandmother, Joyce. Volunteers are integral to Chiedza's holistic strategy. Their connections to communities encourage openness and trust, crucial to supporting people in vulnerable situations. The volunteer recognized that Tadiwa, then 9, was ill, and supported Joyce in understanding the importance of taking him for health check-ups. He later tested positive for HIV, so Chiedza helped with access to antiretroviral treatment (ART). Chiedza understood that for Tadiwa to regain his health, they needed to take a household approach that addressed both the emotional and material needs of the family. They helped his grandmother navigate the complex process of disclosing Tadiwa's HIV status to him, in an age appropriate way. Chiedza then provided food packages, and assisted Joyce in obtaining his birth certificate, a crucial document when accessing government services and the formal school system. In addition, she joined a group for caregivers, which provided support and information to help raise Tadiwa, understand the complex and evolving nature of ART regimens, and find a safe space to share with people in similar circumstances.*

*For Tadiwa, Chiedza worked to equip him with the skills and support to live positively with HIV. Despite being on treatment and knowing his status, Tadiwa needed help to understand why he had to adhere to his medication for the rest of his life. He needed the psychosocial support to deal with the loneliness, discrimination, and stigma that often accompanies an HIV diagnosis. These were life-saving interventions. Many of Tadiwa's peers living with HIV across sub-Saharan Africa fall between the cracks during the transition between pediatric care and the adult system. Statistics paint a grim picture: at a time when AIDS-related deaths in Africa are dropping for adults and children, they are rising sharply for teenagers. However, Chiedza and his grandmother were there to ensure that Tadiwa had the tools he needed. In addition to the material support his family received, he was enrolled in one of their youth support groups in Mbare, where he participated in counselling. "Support groups helped me to know things I didn't know," Tadiwa said. "I know that if I take my medications, I'll live longer." He also made more friends and joined the Chiedza School Study Group. One day, he hopes to be a doctor.*

CCCC is also the organization responsible for the Grannies Netball team that was featured on our VG4A Facebook page recently: <https://www.facebook.com/Victoria-Grandmothers-for-Africa-115977452288>.

CCCC website: [chiedza.org](http://chiedza.org)

CCCC FB page: <https://www.facebook.com/chiedzachildcarecentre>

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