

# SUCCESS STORY

## Reducing Child Discrimination

### Community Based Childcare Centres help reduce discrimination against disabled children



*Chifundo's grandmother said, "Equal treatment at this CBCC has made other children realize that children or people with disabilities are also human beings. As of now Chifundo has a lot of friends."*

Some "decent" and "wise" people in Malawi stay away from malformed people or children who are physically challenged. Chifundo Mtegha, a 10 year-old disabled orphan is one such child. He lost his father when he was one year old, when his mother was forced to marry another man. Due to his disability, his mother left him at his grandmother's house.

His grandmother, Joyce Mphande, earns a living through some piece work commonly called ganyu. Whenever his grandmother went out to work, she could easily keep him indoors because he could neither walk nor talk. Other children would stay away from him when he happened to be outdoors, and they would call him abusive names, which made him fear socializing.

The introduction of Community Based Childcare Centres (CBCCs) by Towwirane HIV/AIDS Organization through the Pact-sponsored Orphan and Vulnerable Childcare (OVC) Program has solved Chifundo's problems of being discriminated against, ignored and insulted just because of his disability. Additionally, his difficulties walking and talking led him to be enrolled at Kaulira CBCC, where children under five learn, socialize, and receive psychosocial support.

Since he was introduced to the CBCC, his situation has positively changed. He is now able to speak, talk, and interact with other children. His grandmother is even a trained caregiver, something that has increased his chances of learning, socializing, and finding support.

During the interview, Chifundo twists his hands before voicing out a word or a sentence. The simple thing he could do before speaking is smile and some body language showing excitement. Truly, CBCCs have saved the lives of such children from being kept indoors, insulted, ignored or separated from friends.