

Soundscapes of Zimbabwe: healing a nation one ear at a time

BY MAZVITA USEYA

We hear about the life, vision and legacy of Dr Clemence Chidziva — the surgeon transforming ear and hearing care into a new wonder of Zimbabwe.

Tucked in the heart of Southern Africa, landlocked and bordered by South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique, lies a gem called Zimbabwe. Known for its rich history and diverse wildlife, the country is home to some of Africa's most iconic natural wonders, including the thundering Victoria Falls and the mighty Zambezi River. Its diverse landscapes, from sweeping savannas to mountain ranges, offer a haven for wildlife and adventure-seekers alike. Beyond its natural beauty, Zimbabwe carries a rich cultural tapestry, woven from both colonial and



traditional African influences, seen in its vibrant cities and rural villages.

From the ancient ruins of Great Zimbabwe to the teeming Hwange National Park, this land holds countless treasures. And now, among its wonders is another story – the journey of Dr Clemence Chidziva and his team, whose dedication to advancing ear and hearing care adds a new kind of richness to the nation.

In a world that moves at the speed of light, the ability to hear is often taken for



granted – until it's gone. For Dr Clemence Chidziva, an ENT surgeon and visionary in Zimbabwe, sound is more than biology: it is memory, identity, human connection. Restoring it is more than a job: it is a calling. Born and raised in the rural heart of Chikwaka, Dr Chidziva's story begins not in the operating theatre, but in dusty clinics where he witnessed the pain of preventable suffering. From children with hearing loss caused by chronic infections to adults battling undiagnosed head and neck tumours, it was clear that ENT services were not just lacking, they were

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Dr Chidziva founded AudioMax Audiology Clinic in Harare in 2003.





Harare Eye Ear Nose and Throat Institute (HEENT).



almost nonexistent. During early clinical rotations in Chitungwiza, affectionately known as ‘musha mukuru,’ he realised that many of these conditions were treatable. What stood in the way wasn’t science, but access.

That realisation inspired his life’s mission: to revolutionise hearing and ENT care in Zimbabwe. His journey into the field of ENT surgery, coupled with audiology, is rooted in a deep sense of purpose: to restore one of the most profound human experiences – connection.

Over the last two decades, Dr Chidziva and his team have built a healthcare movement from the ground up. In 2003, he founded AudioMax Audiology Clinic in Harare, offering hearing assessments, custom ear protection and hearing aids for all ages. Recognising the need for integrated care, he established a neighbouring ENT outpatient clinic, staffed by skilled surgeons specialising in otology, rhinology, laryngology and paediatric ENT. This innovative approach then led to the creation of the Harare Eye Ear Nose and Throat Institute (HEENT), a state-of-the-art outpatient ENT theatre, led by esteemed surgeons. HEENT delivers cutting-edge care in ENT conditions, including cochlear implant surgeries – a pioneering feat in Zimbabwe – with over 18 successful procedures. Together, these facilities form the backbone of ENT care in Zimbabwe.

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Dr Chidziva’s impact extends beyond urban centres, social classes and demographics. WizEar – ‘With Zimbabwean Ears You Can Hear the World’ – a non-profit arm delivering audiological services to marginalised communities, aims to ensure that every individual, regardless of background or circumstance, can hear, thrive and reach their full potential. Partnering with civil society groups, ministries and donor organisation partners such as Nzeve Deaf Children’s Centre, Leonard Cheshire and Musami Mission, WizEar is now a cornerstone in public health, particularly at Sally Mugabe Central Hospital where it supports paediatric audiology services.

Yet, for Dr Chidziva, bricks and mortar aren’t enough. “It’s about people. And it’s about power and it’s about empowering Zimbabweans to care for Zimbabweans.” In 2018, he led the development of Zimbabwe’s first Bachelor of Science Honours degree in Audiology and Bachelor of Science Honours in Speech and Language Therapy at the University of Zimbabwe. Since then, 45 professionals have graduated, closing a critical gap in the country’s healthcare system.

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In Harare, Mutare and back in ‘musha mukuru,’ the clinics continue to grow, anchoring their services in community, equity and dignity. From industrial services and vestibular diagnostics to newborn screening, every offering reflects a comprehensive approach to hearing care, built on truly listening.

Zimbabwe can now add a new wonder to its name: an evolving ENT and audiology system built by its own sons and daughters. One decibel at a time, Dr Clemence Chidziva is helping the nation hear again. Every voice deserves to be heard. Every ear is worth listening to.



Scan this QR code to watch an interview with Dr Chidziva.



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