

THE SMALLER PICTURE

A CLOSER LOOK AT **THE CHILDREN WHO INSPIRED US** IN ZAMBIA



ENABLING MARGINALISED CHILDREN

ACCESS EARLY EDUCATION

Every child has dreams and for seven-year old Misheck from Luampa, Zambia, he dreams of being a doctor. He says he wants to treat sick people in the hospital.



Misheck attends a specialised nursery (ECCDE centre) at Museta Community School, supported by Save the Children. He has experience of being treated by doctors throughout his early childhood, as he has hearing difficulties.

An orphan, Misheck has been raised by his grandparents since the age of three. His grandparents are peasant farmers who grow cassava and maize for a living.

Misheck's grandmother remembers him experiencing hearing problems and pain at age three, and later on he would bleed from the ears. He was taken to the hospital from time to time but the grandparents did not realise that the hearing problem had graduated to a hearing disability. Misheck would lag behind in activities at nursery.

Save the Children's training for ECCDE nursery teachers promotes skills which help to identify and handle children with disabilities. It was soon realised that Misheck needed to be positioned in a place where he would hear better and benefit from the teacher's instructions. Misheck now sits in the front row so he can hear instructions.

The teacher said: "Before I realised Misheck was hard of hearing, I didn't know why he couldn't understand certain instructions in class. At the 'Inclusive Education' workshop I learnt to identify children with disabilities. I became more observant in my teaching sessions and that is when I realised Misheck could be having challenges hearing the instructions.

"I called in on his grandmother to check and she confirmed she'd been taking him to the clinic for medical services. Since Misheck started sitting in the front row, he understands instructions and his performance has since improved."

Teachers at this school now use play sessions to observe children to identify children that exhibit difficulties. They then begin to pay extra attention to ascertain exactly what the problem or disability could be, before looking for a solution.

Misheck is one of the children who has since been screened to verify whether he needs an assistive device (hearing aid). Once results show that he needs a hearing aid, Save the Children will procure the device so that his hearing problem could be minimised and his academic performance improved.

Save the Children has supported Museta community school with furniture, construction of outdoor play facilities and provision of instructional materials and training of ECCDE teachers.

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