

## Bridging Music, VR, and Care: Tafadzwa's Innovative Approach to Social Care

Tafadzwa, a 35-year-old healthcare musician, educator, and innovator from Zimbabwe, has always believed in the power of music. Her journey from aspiring musician to pioneering the use of virtual reality (VR) in social care highlights a fusion of compassion, creativity, and cutting-edge technology. After migrating to the UK in 2019, she established Sekond Chance, a company offering personalised music and VR sessions to children with autism and elderly individuals, particularly people living with dementia. Through her innovative approach, Tafadzwa has found a way to surface cherished memories, create emotional connections, and offer therapeutic experiences, all through the power of music and VR.

### A New World of Possibilities

For Tafadzwa, moving from Zimbabwe to the UK was not just a geographical change but a cultural shift that opened up new possibilities. "I was exposed to technology and a world of no limitations where I could be anything I want. I could be more than a musician," she shares. The UK offered her the opportunity to explore healthcare and technology in ways that weren't available in Zimbabwe, pushing her to think beyond traditional music therapy and delve into the potential of VR in care settings.

### Blending Music, VR, and Care

Tafadzwa's idea to use VR to engage children with special needs and the elderly stemmed from her experiences working as a teaching assistant in special educational needs (SEN) schools. "I realised that the SEN students were capable of so much more than just listening to music during lessons," she explains. This led to the development of her music app, designed with the help of her brother, a tech expert. Together, they created a tool that allows individuals with reduced abilities to play music and explore new environments virtually.

### Creating Emotional Connections

One memorable experience involved a terminally ill woman in a care home who, thanks to the VR technology, was able to virtually visit a location of her choice. "She said she felt like she was physically there and was grateful for the experience because it made her forget the pain she was in," Tafadzwa recalls. These moments of emotional connection drive her passion and underline the profound impact of her work.

### Personalised VR Experiences for Dementia Care

At the heart of Sekond Chance's success is the personalisation of its services. Tafadzwa and her team create bespoke VR experiences for elderly individuals, particularly those with dementia. By virtually transporting them to familiar places from their past, the sessions trigger pleasant memories and interactions among residents in care homes. The team even record areas that residents once lived in to offer a tailored experience. "These experiences help them remember memories they might have forgotten. It triggers interactions amongst other care home residents as they narrate what they've seen."

### Bridging the Gap Between Carers and Technology

One of the challenges Tafadzwa faces is bridging the gap between carers and new technologies like VR. Recognising that many carers might struggle with adapting to these tools, Sekond Chance provides hands-on facilitation and is working on developing a toolkit and training

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course to empower carers to use the technology confidently. This forward-thinking approach is aimed at making VR an accessible and effective tool across various care settings.

### Overcoming Barriers as a Female Entrepreneur

As a female entrepreneur and person of colour in both the tech and care sectors, Tafadzwa has faced her fair share of obstacles. "Some emails have been ignored, doors have been closed in my face, and during sessions, I've been told off. But there's nothing else I'd rather do," she says. Her resilience in the face of adversity is unwavering. "I would rather fail trying than imagine it." This determination is a cornerstone of her success and a testament to her belief in making a difference through Sekond Chance.

### Inspiring the Next Generation of Female Entrepreneurs

For aspiring female entrepreneurs, especially those from minority backgrounds, Tafadzwa's advice is clear: follow your passions fearlessly and remain persistent. "Women should seek out communities and resources that support their entrepreneurial journeys," she emphasises, underscoring the importance of perseverance and seeking support in challenging industries.

### The Future of Music and VR in Social Care

Looking ahead, Tafadzwa envisions VR becoming a core tool in both educational and care settings. Sekond Chance aims to expand its reach, using technology to impact more communities and offering immersive VR experiences to both children and elderly individuals. "We are just getting started in our mission to change lives through music and VR," she says with conviction.

Tafadzwa's journey is one of innovation, resilience, and a deep commitment to enhancing the lives of those in care. With Sekond Chance, she is proving that technology and music, when combined, can unlock new ways of supporting and connecting with the most vulnerable among us. Her story is a powerful reminder that with creativity, passion, and persistence, one can truly make a difference.

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