

The Global Fund Saves Lives Like Mine

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By Moses Owori

The most vivid memory I have of my mum is her groaning during the last few minutes of her life, as she battled AIDS.

I was pre-school aged and about to lose my mother. My mum had five boys, each with a different father. I was born third. At the time of her death, she was "married" to a Kenyan man, the father of my younger brother. She was travelling back from Kenya to Uganda when her condition deteriorated. She never made it home.

Back in Kenya, our oldest brother was waiting for our return. We never heard from him again because she was the only one who knew where he lived.

When my mother died, my other older brother and I were shipped off to our fathers'. My Kenyan brother was adopted by an aunt (my mum's younger sister) and I went to my dad's. Before my mum died, our youngest brother succumbed to tuberculosis. He had been infected with HIV in the womb and was barely a year old.

Just like that, our family had been destroyed. Over two decades on, and I am still yet to hear from my two older brothers. I don't know where they live, or if they are still alive.

At my father's, I found an abusive stepmother, so an aunt (my father's only sister) took me to an orphanage out of pity. I stayed at the orphanage for four years, during which time my dad passed away.

The aunt, who had adopted my younger brother, took me on and I have lived with her since.

This is my story. But I wasn't alone. There were hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, more similar experiences all over the developing world at the time. Prior to antiretroviral treatment and prevention of mother to child transmission, deaths from HIV/AIDS were widespread and the number of helpless orphaned children high. My brother and I are both HIV negative, meaning my mother got infected after our births.

The only disease we wrestled with growing up was malaria, which made us lose several school days every time it struck. My mother and youngest brother did not live long after they became infected because treatment wasn't available.

My brother and I were the lucky ones. We had relatives who were willing and could afford to take us on; most children in similar situations do not have this 'luxury'. The establishment of the

Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in early 2000s was a welcome relief to millions of families like mine.

[Since its inception in 2002](#), 8.1 million people have been put on lifelong antiretroviral treatment for HIV, which will help millions live longer. An additional 13.2 million and 515 million cases have been treated for malaria and TB respectively.

With the new \$13 billion investment case for the 2017-2019 Global Fund replenishment, an [additional 8 million lives](#) could be saved from the three diseases.

The Global Fund gets its resources from several international donors, including the UK. The UK government has been a generous contributor to date, [pledging £1 billion](#) at the last replenishment. It is vital that they continue to show strong support for the fund and push other donors to invest as well.

If donors meet the funds ambitious target, we can help ensure families stay together and thrive.

Moses Owori was born and raised in Uganda, is part of the [RESULTS UK](#) London grassroots campaign group. He has lived in London for about a year, and has recently completed a Master's in International Public Health Nutrition from the University of Westminster. He is passionate about rural development policy and advocacy and plans to start an organisation in Uganda to ensure that voices and priorities of ordinary Ugandans are factored into health and nutrition policies. You can follow Moses on Twitter [@owori_jr](#)

*This blog is part of the blog series: **AIDS, TB and Malaria: It's High Time for Us to End It. For Good** by the [Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development \(ICAD\)](#) in recognition of The Global Fund's Fifth Replenishment. The blog series runs from August 29 to October 3, 2016 and features a selection of blogs written by our member and partner organizations. Contributors share their broad range of perspectives and insight on the work of The Global Fund and the opportunity that this moment presents us one year following the inauguration of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this blog series are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of ICAD.