



Maurine’s story illustrates progress against HIV and AIDS since 2000.

In the *early 2000s* when [Maurine Murenga](#) was diagnosed with HIV there was little access to treatment in Kenya and a lot of stigma around the disease.

In *2002*, Maurine could not access services to prevent mother-to-child transmission and her son, Earl, contracted HIV from her at birth.

In *2003*, Maurine and her son were able to begin free treatment when [The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria](#) started funding programs in Kenya.

In *2013*, Maurine had another son who is HIV-free.

Now Maurine works, is an advocate, and her sons are healthy.

**Maurine will be a guest speaker on one of our Fact & Action Calls in 2016!*

December 1 is World AIDS Day.

This year’s theme is “Getting to zero” – zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination against people affected by HIV and AIDS, and zero AIDS-related deaths. This is an apt theme as the recently signed Sustainable Development Goals include within Goal 3 an aim to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

Achievements to celebrate on World AIDS Day include:

- New infections and deaths from HIV and AIDS dropped 40% since 2000.
- 15 million people are on treatment, compared to 300,000 in 2000.

Areas for concern to highlight on World AIDS Day include:

- 60% of HIV-positive people do not have access to treatment.
- Preventable, treatable TB accounts for 1 in 3 deaths of people with HIV.

3 GOOD HEALTH



HIV is no longer the death sentence it was just 15 years ago, but still killed 1.2 million people in 2014.

What is HIV? Human Immunodeficiency Virus damages the immune system, and interferes with the body's ability to fight organisms that cause disease. Currently HIV has no cure or vaccine. A person who is diagnosed early and has access to treatment can live a normal, healthy life. *What is AIDS?* Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome is the final stage of HIV infection that occurs when the body’s immune system is badly damaged. Opportunistic infections can occur, such as Tuberculosis (TB) and people typically live just 1-3 years once they have AIDS. With access to treatment for HIV, AIDS can be prevented.

Treatment for HIV consists of antiretrovirals (ARVs), a type of medication that stops the virus from replicating within the body and helps prevent the breakdown of the immune system. ARVs have another benefit: in addition to treatment, they also help prevent the transmission of the virus. Studies have shown that people on ARV therapy reduce their chances of transmitting the virus by 97 percent.

An estimated 4.9 million (3.7–6.3 million) people were living with HIV in [Australia’s aid priority region](#), Asia and the Pacific, in 2012. Regionally, numbers of new HIV infections have fallen by 26% since 2001, with a number of countries reducing infections by over 50% in that time. Globally, young women between the ages of 15 and 24 are most vulnerable to becoming infected with HIV. Infection rates for adolescent girls and young women are double those for young men in the same age group. With [the empowerment of women and girls in our region](#) forming a priority area for Australian aid, there is a clear need to invest in ending this epidemic.

Australia’s investment in the fight against HIV and AIDS is at risk due to cuts to Australian aid. The current estimate of Australia's aid in 2016-17 is \$200 million lower than in 2015-16. The Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO – due in December) may confirm if this further cut is to proceed. Australia’s capacity to invest further in HIV and protect the progress that has been made is in doubt due to actual and prospective Budget cuts.

Strong Australian investment in the Global Fund will help ensure progress against HIV and AIDS.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria is a partnership organisation designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, TB and malaria as epidemics. Founded in 2002, the Global Fund is a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by the diseases. The Global Fund raises and invests nearly US\$4 billion a year to support programs run by local experts in countries and communities most in need.

There are 15 million people around the world today accessing treatment for HIV - 8.1 million of them because of programs supported by the Global Fund. Today, AIDS is no longer a death sentence: with proper medical care, an HIV-positive person can expect to have the same lifespan as someone who is not infected.

Australia joined the Global Fund in 2004 with an initial pledge of AU\$25 million over three years, and by the end of 2016 will have contributed a total of AU\$610 million. Its pledge in both 2011-2013 and 2014-2016 has been AU\$200 million. The impact of this investment has been:

- Saving an estimated 235,000 lives of people with these diseases from 2004 to 2014.
- Supporting access to antiretroviral medication for 110,000 people with HIV.

Despite Australia's consistent contributions to the Global Fund since 2004, Australia's pledges have been traditionally lower in per capita terms and also as a percentage of total aid than other wealthy developed nations such as the USA and UK. As [the global community seeks to enhance investment and accelerate progress](#) to achieve SDG 3 by 2030, a decreased pledge from Australia would be a step in the wrong direction.

**No Cost, Huge Benefit: a Life Saved**

Leiyoeung Tai, 48, is a trader of used water bottles and tin cans in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. When he discovered he was HIV-positive, he was already seriously ill but had to keep working in order to survive. Paying for medication was out of the question. Fortunately, Tai was able to access treatment free of charge through a program supported by the Global Fund. He regained his strength and no longer worries that the virus will prevent him from making a living. (From [The Global Fund](#))

Take action: Write a letter to the editor (and/or an op-ed)

Ask: Protect progress against HIV and AIDS - don't cut Australian aid in MYEFO.



Opportunities to write:

- World AIDS Day (Dec 1) – linking local media about HIV and AIDS to the global situation, and what needs to happen next to achieve SDG3 and beat this epidemic by 2030.
- Human Rights Day (Dec 10) – linking local media about human rights issues to the universal right to healthcare, the people missing out on HIV treatment, and the need to “get to zero”.
- Christmas/New Year – sharing your Christmas wish or New Year's Resolution to build a world with zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

For more help, including a list of newspaper contact details for sending your letter, and guides to writing letters and op-eds, see our online toolkit at www.results.org.au/get-involved/resources-tools

If you need help, please ask your Group Leader, or Gina - our Grassroots Engagement Manager. The impact of your action can be multiplied if RESULTS knows about it, so please tell us what action you take.

Email us: info@results.org.au