



# Change the story

HOW INVESTING IN THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TB AND  
MALARIA CAN BUILD A SAFER, STRONGER MALARIA-FREE WORLD  
AND CHANGE THE STORY FOR MILLIONS OF CHILDREN

## THE STATE OF MALARIA

Despite huge progress over the last two decades in halving the mortality rate, every minute a child still dies from malaria. The global malaria fight faces a critical crossroads in 2025. The world is currently experiencing an ever changing and more challenging political context, with reductions in official development assistance (ODA) from G7 governments threatening a successful Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) replenishment and the future of many national malaria programmes currently uncertain. New modelling projects that if the Global Fund fails to increase funding, the world will experience a malaria resurgence between now and 2030.<sup>1</sup> Without increased investment in malaria tools and programmes over the next five years, not only will hundreds of thousands of additional children's lives be lost, but collective global health security will be threatened.

*Since its creation in 2002, the Global Fund has helped save 65 million lives and, in countries where it invests, malaria deaths have reduced by almost a third.<sup>2</sup>*

The Global Fund's partnership model provides nearly two thirds of all international financing for malaria programmes and has invested more than US\$19.5 billion in malaria control.<sup>3</sup>

Malaria is the furthest off track of all three diseases against the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal targets.<sup>4</sup> A perfect storm of challenges including resistance to existing tools, extreme weather events, economic instability, humanitarian crises, and funding shortfalls are making the fight against malaria harder. According to the World Health Organization's latest *World Malaria Report*, there were an estimated 263 million cases and almost 600,000 malaria deaths worldwide in 2023.<sup>5</sup>

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance will also replenish in 2025. It is crucial that both replenishments are successful as the malaria vaccines are not a silver bullet, they must be deployed alongside Global Fund programmes in order to save as many lives as possible. Failing to act now against malaria and invest in the Global Fund will lead to an upsurge in malaria cases and deaths.

A fully replenished Global Fund in 2025 will help save 23 million lives and prevent 400 million infections or cases across the three diseases. For this to be a reality, the Global Fund needs to raise US\$18 billion in its Eighth Replenishment. This investment will also help cut the combined annual death toll from AIDS, TB and malaria from 2.3 million in 2023 to 920,000 in 2029 in Global Fund-supported countries.<sup>6</sup>

By investing in the Global Fund, the world and the continent of Africa can help prevent a malaria resurgence, bolster safety, security and prosperity and help **Change the Story for millions.**



## KEY MESSAGES

- **The world is facing a malaria resurgence.** Hundreds of thousands more lives will be lost unless there is increased investment through the Global Fund's Eighth Replenishment.
- **Malaria threatens our global health security**, straining health systems and masking other diseases which could have pandemic potential.
- Getting back on track to ending malaria could **boost African economies by US\$142.7 billion** and increase international trade by US\$80.7 billion.
- The innovation pipeline offers much hope for the fight with scientists across Africa and the world working together to develop the tools that will end malaria once and for all. More than **13.2 million lives could be saved over the next 15 years from the successful roll out of existing and future malaria pipeline tools.**
- If the Global Fund is successful in raising US\$18 billion for the Eighth Replenishment it will help **save 23 million lives and prevent 400 million infections** or cases across the three diseases. It is estimated that **malaria cases could be more than halved by 2029 and the mortality rate could be cut by 68%.**

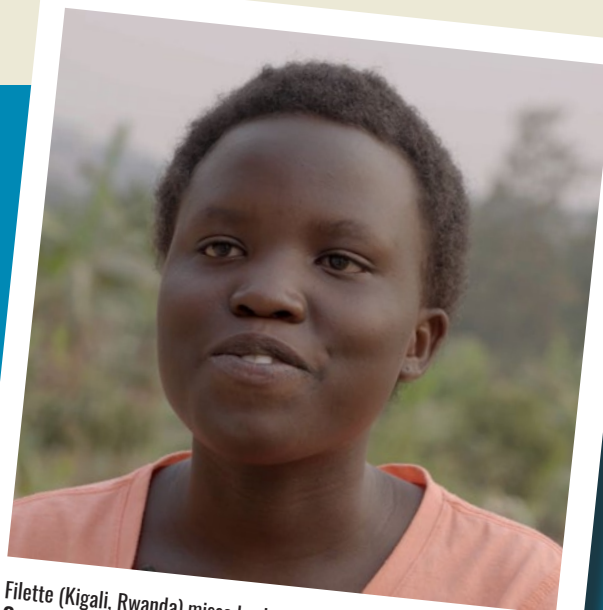
## MALARIA COST HER DAYS AT SCHOOL AND PUSHED HER FAMILY DEEPER INTO POVERTY

Filette, 14, lives on the outskirts of Kigali, Rwanda, and understands the burden of malaria all too well. When she fell sick, she missed school and her end-of-year exams. *"I had to take all my exams at once,"* she says. *"It was really stressful. You can't score well when you're taking them all at the same time."*

Malaria also brought financial strain. Filette's mother, without a steady income, had to stay home instead of working. *"She couldn't leave me alone when I was sick,"* Filette says. As a family on the breadline missing work meant making it harder to make ends meet, but it also made the medical costs even harder to bear.

She dreams of a malaria-free future. *"No one would miss school or die. Families wouldn't struggle to pay for treatment,"* she says. *"Sometimes, when you have malaria, you feel like you're going to die."*

Thankfully for Filette and future generations of children, Rwanda is leading the fight to reach zero malaria – thanks in a large part to the 60,000 community health workers that have been deployed across the country without whom people often reach medical help too late, risking their lives.



Filette (Kigali, Rwanda) missed school because of malaria.  
Credit: Malaria No More UK

## THE THREAT OF MALARIA TO GLOBAL PROSPERITY AND SECURITY

The world is facing a perfect storm for a malaria resurgence. In a scenario where the Global Fund fails to meet its replenishment target and only receives US\$11 billion for the next grant cycle (2027-2029), modelling from the Malaria Atlas Project (MAP) indicates that there will be an estimated **additional 137 million cases and up to 337,000 additional malaria deaths in Africa, of which over a quarter of a million would be children.**<sup>7</sup> A resurgence of malaria threatens not only those countries affected but our global health security.

**A third (33%) of fevers in sub-Saharan Africa still go undiagnosed.**<sup>8</sup> As malaria symptoms are similar to many other diseases, these undiagnosed fevers could be masking a deadly new threat with pandemic potential. With 249 million cases worldwide in 2023, malaria accounts for a large proportion of fevers circulating, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. When malaria thrives, it weakens health systems. It impinges on the capacity to test, diagnose and treat a myriad of other diseases and potentially dangerous pathogens. **In Nigeria and Mozambique around half of all outpatient consultations are for malaria.**<sup>9</sup>

Recent research has shown that extreme weather events, including cyclones and flooding, could contribute to an additional 550,000 malaria deaths annually by 2050. It highlights how climate change, conflict, and weak health systems exacerbate malaria transmission.<sup>10</sup> For example, **flooding in Pakistan in 2022 led to a tenfold increase in cases, from 400,000 in 2021 to over 4.2 million in 2023,**<sup>11</sup> undoing years of steady progress towards elimination. Similarly, Ethiopia, in the grip of conflict, saw an increase of 1.3 million cases between 2021 and 2022.<sup>12</sup>

The continued high number of malaria cases also places severe stress on countries' economies. **It is a leading cause of worker absenteeism, costing the African continent an estimated half a billion days of work each year.**<sup>13</sup> A malaria resurgence would not only severely impact countries' health systems to detect, diagnose and treat other diseases but it would also have a direct impact on poverty and economic prosperity. More people will be pushed into poverty, and the economic consequences would ripple across the world in terms of reductions in trade and growth.

## THE BENEFITS BEYOND MALARIA OF INVESTING IN THE GLOBAL FUND

### Investing in malaria reduction strengthens global health security

Investments in malaria reduction support the building of stronger and more climate-resilient health systems. They have built stronger disease surveillance systems which can respond to new threats (as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic), increased global research capacity, improved diagnostic capabilities and strengthened supply chains.<sup>14</sup>

Strong health systems are able to better detect and respond to emerging new diseases through robust surveillance and early identification and treatment. The Global Fund's investment in strong and responsive disease surveillance systems are enabling countries to rapidly address outbreaks of other diseases. In Malawi, Global Fund investments have

enabled districts to detect and report the recent measles and cholera outbreaks within 24 hours, overachieving on global targets.<sup>15</sup> The Global Fund directly invests around a third of total annual grant funding in health systems which support disease responses and enhance pandemic preparedness.<sup>16</sup>

If the Global Fund is successful in raising US\$18 billion for the Eighth Replenishment, it is expected that around **US\$6 billion would be directly invested in strengthening health systems.**<sup>17</sup> This would underpin the fight against the three diseases and enhance pandemic preparedness, climate resilience and the path to universal health coverage.

Changes to climate not only have direct impacts (such as the impacts felt by extreme weather events) but also threaten the capacity of health systems to respond to both endemic diseases like malaria and potential new threats. Building climate-resilient health systems that incorporate malaria control not only safeguards communities from climate-related health threats but also strengthens global health security. The Global Fund invests US\$2 billion a year to support low-and middle-income countries to build health and community systems that are resilient to changes in climate, pandemics and other threats.<sup>18</sup> Between 2024 and 2026, 71% of investments and **over 80% of malaria funding will support the 50 most climate vulnerable countries.**<sup>19</sup>

## SURVIVING CYCLONE FREDDY: A FAMILY'S BATTLE AGAINST THE THREAT OF MALARIA

Jose and Anabela, parents of four, remember cyclone Freddy that hit Boane, Mozambique, when Anabela was 9-months pregnant. With Jose on a night shift, Anabela was woken by a neighbour as floodwaters rose, she had no choice but to climb onto the roof with her children. Hours passed before boats rescued them.

A week later, they returned home, but stagnant water left by the floods led to a big malaria outbreak. Hospitals were overcrowded, and medicine was scarce. *"When my children got sick with malaria, I suffered a lot. Their mother was also suffering,"* Jose says. *"She was shaking and grinding her teeth. I thought she was about to die."*

*"I was afraid they would die, and if I die – the children, my husband, who was going to take care of them? Leaving my little children, my baby, especially as she was one month old. That disease is terrifying"* Anabela remembers.

Thanks to access to treatment, they recovered, but the trauma remains. Jose still checks mosquito nets every night. They are grateful for malaria interventions but worry as the frequency of extreme weather makes them more vulnerable to this deadly disease.



Jose & Anabela with their family in Boane, Mozambique.  
Credit: Malaria No More UK / Isac Vasco Júnior

## Investing in malaria reduction boosts the global economy

Research by Oxford Economics Africa commissioned for Malaria No More UK shows that investing in malaria control and elimination programmes doesn't just save lives, it's also economically smart.

The analysis shows that achieving the global targets of a 90% reduction in case incidence by 2030 **could significantly boost the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of malaria-endemic countries by US\$142.7 billion over the 2023 – 2030 period analysed.** This will also have global benefits by increasing international trade by US\$80.7 billion over the same time period, including direct trade benefits for G7 countries of US\$3.9 billion in additional exports.<sup>20</sup> This underscores the economic benefits of ending malaria, not just for affected endemic countries but for the whole global economy.

The Global Fund investment case shows that **for every dollar invested in fighting HIV, TB and malaria would result in US\$19 in health gains and economic returns.**<sup>21</sup> A US\$18 billion Replenishment would result in US\$323 billion in returns over 2027-2029. It also shows that the investments in the three diseases between 2024-29, would save US\$42 billion in primary health care costs. This equates to **freeing up 1.6 billion hospital days** that would have otherwise been needed for activities related to the three diseases and averting 3.1 billion outpatient visits.<sup>22</sup>

## THE WINDOW TO GET BACK ON TRACK

If the Global Fund is successful in reaching its target of US\$18 billion, it is estimated that **malaria cases could be more than halved by 2029 (260.3 million to 111.5 million) and the mortality rate could be cut by 68%.**<sup>23</sup> There would be an increase in use of long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets in sub-Saharan Africa from 49% in 2023 to 59% by 2029 and treatment of 263 million malaria cases through public sector systems between 2027 and 2029.<sup>24</sup>

In 2024, the Global Fund Board approved a new disease split for the 2026-2028 allocation period. Under this target split, 35% of all funding will be dedicated to malaria if there is a full replenishment, which is a significant increase in relative and absolute terms from the current allocation.<sup>25</sup> This additional funding is needed now more than ever in the face of a perfect storm for malaria resurgence. A successful Eighth Replenishment is critical to unlock the funding needed to prevent a surge in cases and deaths which would threaten the whole world.

## THE GLOBAL FUND CAN UNLOCK THE PROMISE OF INNOVATION

Despite the challenging context, there is much to hope for in the fight against malaria. Never has there been such a powerful set of tools: from vaccines to next generation mosquito nets and new antimalarial drugs. The Global Fund has played a vital role over the last two decades in expanding access to these tools. **In 2023, 44.6 million children received seasonal malaria chemoprevention, 15.5 million pregnant women**

**received preventive treatment, and 227 million mosquito nets were distributed** in Global Fund countries.<sup>26</sup> The progress made in increasing access to tools and reducing the burden have strengthened the resiliency of many countries.

This hope should be coupled with even greater optimism given the strength the malaria innovation pipeline provides to take the world closer to ending one of the world's deadliest diseases and creating a safer and more prosperous future for all. Scientists in Africa and across the world are working together to develop the game-changing innovations that will wipe out malaria once and for all with trials underway for innovative tools like genetically modified mosquitoes, monoclonal antibodies, long lasting injectables and second-generation vaccines.

Research by Imperial College London estimates more than **13.2 million lives could be saved over the next 15 years from existing and future malaria tools combined.** This means nearly 900,000 lives a year would not be cut short from a preventable, treatable disease.<sup>27</sup> Ten million of the lives saved would be children under five years of age. This will only be possible if the Global Fund gets the funding it needs to ensure the continued roll out of current malaria tools and the expansion of new ones.

## PREVENTING A MALARIA RESURGENCE

As the world faces a malaria resurgence that threatens us all, 2025 still offers an opportunity to act to and prevent a malaria resurgence. To do so, world leaders in both implementing and donor countries must increase funding for malaria. Bold commitments are required to support the Global Fund. In doing so, we can create a safer more prosperous world for all.

## KEY ASKS TO LEADERS:

*It is vital that leaders around the world step up and support the successful replenishment of the Global Fund to Change the Story for millions of children.*

### **Asks to all leaders:**

- *Seize the opportunity to Change the Story and make ambitious financial commitments to the Global Fund this year to ensure its successful replenishment*

### **Asks to implementing country leaders:**

- *Raise up and articulate the value of the Global Fund at all relevant opportunities to help ensure its successful replenishment*
- *Commit to accelerated action on malaria elimination*



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# Change the story

## **ABOUT ZERO MALARIA STARTS WITH ME AND THE CHANGE THE STORY CAMPAIGN**

Children under the age of five years are the most impacted by malaria, but their voices are rarely heard. Zero Malaria Starts with Me: Change the Story has been created to amplify the voices of those most affected by the disease, and ensure their stories are heard on national, regional and global stages. Through direct testimony from children, the campaign calls on leaders to invest in the fight against malaria to ensure that the next generation is the last one to face this preventable and treatable disease. The campaign is stewarded by the African Leaders Malaria Alliance and Malaria No More UK, with support from a range of other partners.

The Change the Story campaign is a key component of the Zero Malaria Starts with Me movement. Created in 2014 as a citizen led initiative in Senegal to increase awareness about malaria, the movement was endorsed by African Heads of State and Government in 2018 in support of the African Union goal to end malaria by 2030. The movement has expanded from a nationwide campaign to a pan-African movement calling for an end to the malaria for the benefit of all.