

Rich Tarro, Kenya – October 2020

One family's perseverance through the pandemic

Although the families I work with in my [HOPE](#) ministry in Kenya face everyday challenges beyond what most of us could imagine, they also encounter difficulties that are typical of any family dealing with the coronavirus. Like many families throughout the world, their lives have been greatly affected by the pandemic, but they persevere in the face of this adversity. Like many of us, the pandemic has forced them to reevaluate what is important in their lives and better appreciate what they do have.

It has been said that God doesn't give you more than you can handle, but when I see firsthand the trials that families in my HOPE project endure, it sometimes feels as if God has quite different expectations for each of us.

I want to share with you the story of a family who is persevering in the face of great hardship, a family who is grateful for what they have rather than complaining about what they lack, a family who is so appreciative of the little bit of help HOPE is able to provide them. It is families like these that inspire the work that I do.

Sumbul and Manal (names have been changed) are two sisters supported by HOPE. Sumbul is 12, jovial and active, and likes to help her mother with household chores. She is in fifth grade. Her younger sister Manal is 10 and in second grade. Although somewhat shy compared to her older sister, Manal loves playing with her friends. While Sumbul likes helping her mother around the house and is eager to assist with any household chore, Manal much prefers singing over doing housework.

Sumbul and Manal's mother, Zaara, is HIV-positive. Like many of those infected with HIV, whose weakened immune systems are more susceptible to other diseases, Zaara also has tuberculosis. TB is the leading cause of death among people living with HIV, accounting for more than one third of all AIDS-related deaths. This is the second time Zaara has contracted TB.

While there are many programs in place in Kenya to provide antiretroviral drugs to those living with HIV, there are no such large-scale programs for TB medication. This sadly leaves families like Zaara's to have to choose between medication and food. As a result, Zaara's TB has largely gone untreated.



Sumbul (back left) and Manal (right), with their mother, Zaara, and their two younger siblings



Sumbul

Besides Sumbul and Manal, Zaara has two other children—a 3-year-old and a six-month-old. While this amount of responsibility would be challenging enough for any mother, caring for four children is a near impossible task for a woman in Zaara’s medical condition. The combination of AIDS and TB, which leaves Zaara very weak most of the time, makes it difficult for her to function normally and hard for her to perform the household chores on which the family depends.

Zaara’s husband, Rami, earns money by working construction and performing other casual jobs.

When Zaara was first diagnosed with HIV shortly after their marriage in 2007, Rami was devastated. Confused and angry, he left the family for two years and during that time had no contact with them. However, over time, Rami was able to come to terms with Zaara’s condition and eventually returned home to his family.

HOPE assisted Rami and Zaara with counseling to help them put their lives back together. Rami is now better equipped to deal with Zaara’s HIV condition, and their lives together as a family are moving in a positive direction.

Zaara, Rami and the four children live in a one-room mud house locate in a densely populated informal settlement with no electricity and no running water. The family relies on solar lamps, which HOPE provided them two years ago, for light.

Like many day laborers in Kenya, it has been very difficult for Rami to find work during the pandemic. As a result, Rami and Zaara have been struggling to put food on the table. Many days the family eats only a single meal. Some days, they go without food altogether.

Their family is one of the HOPE families we have been supporting with our continuing emergency food distributions. They are so grateful for that food and have told us they are only surviving by the grace of God. The family is also happy for the soap that we include in our distributions. As they cannot afford to buy soap, they were only using plain water to wash.



Manal

The family has asked us to thank you, our donors, and told us that it is their prayer that we continue helping with food until the pandemic is over.

Mungu ni mwema. God is good.

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Please consider supporting our distribution of urgently needed emergency food assistance to our needy families during this COVID-19 pandemic.
To donate by MAIL, please return the bottom portion of this newsletter along with your payment in the provided envelope.
To donate ONLINE, please go to mklm.org/RTarro
Thank you very much for your generosity!

Your generous donations will support both my ministry with orphans and families who have been affected by HIV/AIDS and the Missioner Sustenance Fund that helps to keep me and my fellow lay missionaries in mission. Thank you!

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