



Hellen Amuge, Uganda



I, Hellen Amuge, was born in 1962. I was born nicely, nothing was bad. In 1987, I passed through problems of being beaten by the Uganda People's Army and four men raped me after killing my father. They refused [to bury] the dead body, for three days I was not allowed to bury him, then they left that one. That time it finished like that. My husband started looking at me like I was not his woman, he told me I was no longer his wife because of the raping.

But all that I have overcome.

In 1995, a man came to me telling me, "I have seen you," and we started staying together. I could not know what my [HIV] status was because no one had the machines for the test. In

2003, the Lord's Resistance Army came to Northeastern Uganda. On June 15, 2003 the rebels caught me with four women. They did so again to me; four men raped me again. When I reached my husband he told me, "You maybe you pack your things and go. I am tired of today, you will not remain here." I said, "What is this?" I told my husband, "It is not me that wanted to be like that, but maybe it is God's plan." I told him, "Now let me stay alone with my children." He said, "If you want any man, you go with, but you're not my wife again." I said "Thank you."

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At the end of 2003, the NGOs came in the camp and told people about testing for HIV and other diseases. In December of 2003 they came and tested my blood and I got the news that I was positive. I went and told my husband that I am positive, and that I didn't know whether he was safe and that he needed to go and know his status. He answered me, "What are you telling me?" I said, "No, you go, don't refuse." It took long to test his blood.

I started taking pills in the next week and I went for my CD4 checking. I found that I had 192, so the doctor told me to go back after one week and he gave me ARVs to start because he feared the medicine might react badly. And then the husband also went for testing and he came to me and said, "We are now the same way, forgive me for what I have done to you before." Since then we are staying together. That is how I get positive with HIV. Thank you. •