

From the shores of Lake Malawi to London bridge.

I got to know about the Encephalitis International in June 2022 when I went to Liverpool to attend a NeuroID conference. I also learnt that the organisation holds an annual conference.. that one has to apply in order to be a part of the upcoming conference. I was excited about it and decided to give it a try. The rest is history.. I made it to London!

The trip itself was exhausting but I loved every bit of it. I made friends along the way as well as at the conference. I made a lot of connections within the neurologists' circle which will last a lifetime. These are people who are a call or an email away from me, ready to help with patient care and even just to chat. A circle that is ready to help me on my path to becoming a neurologist.

The conference lasted two days but it felt that I had known these people for a lifetime. The endless smiles, yummy food, educative presentations.. made the stay worthwhile.

One thing I have learnt in life is to aim high. Higher than your current step. This has been my goal and will forever be. My life revolves around my job which involves taking care of my patients. I wish to give them the best care with what is available at my disposal. The sad part is that there are not enough human and material resources in my current workplace such that diagnosing some conditions is impossible. And so I work hard – reading about new developments in patient care and learning from colleagues who are working in better-equipped settings. And that is how I will get to the next step.

I was inspired by stories of how colleagues discovered their careers or how some of them switched from one to the other. The biggest lesson from all this is that anything is possible so long as you put your heart into it. I am positive that the encephalitis family team that I am anchored to now will be able to guide me through my career path.

My heart goes out to families that have been affected by encephalitis. They are doing the most by taking care of encephalitis patients. Selfless individuals who put their lives on hold and dedicate their time and energy to loved ones who have encephalitis. I wish to offer my support to this amazing group of people.

Many thanks to the Encephalitis International for offering me a bursary which enabled me to attend the conference and make connections within the encephalitis team. Please do this for others as well.

I am looking forward to commemorating the World Encephalitis Day on 22nd of February. A day that serves as a reminder of the burden of disease and gives a chance to reflect on how we can make lives affected by encephalitis better.

My name is Memory Siwombo and I come from Malawi, the warm heart of Africa.