

## **Onaoluwa Abimbola**

***“Until every country has won the battle against preventable infectious diseases like Malaria, no one is safe.”***

Onaoluwa recently completed a Master’s degree in Chemical Pathology at the University of Ibadan. Currently, Onaoluwa works as a medical laboratory scientist ensuring accurate diagnosis of diseases at Ifo General Hospital in Ogun State.

In 2013, Onaoluwa was travelling to Owo in Ondo State from a short trip in Asaba in Delta State when she began to feel feverish and unwell. Conscious of the cost of medical attention, Onaoluwa put off going to the hospital, but by morning, she was delirious and had no idea where she was. Onaoluwa was rushed to hospital, where she was wrongly diagnosed as suffering from psychosis, and admitted to the psychiatric ward. The actual cause of her illness – cerebral malaria – went untreated for three days. Onaoluwa lost a year of her life recovering, including losing her place in the National Youth Service Corps of Nigeria until 2015.

Once the underlying cause of Onaoluwa’s illness had been identified and treated, she began the long road to recovery, tackling both the physical and mental effects of the disease. The impact on Onaoluwa’s mental health inspired her to write a book, *‘From depression to hope’*, to support and inspire others. Motivated by her experience, she works to help diagnose communicable diseases and periodically conducts community-wide health assessments and education sessions.

Aware that many are not as lucky as she was, and cognisant of the burden of malaria in Nigeria and across Africa, Ona is determined to play a role in achieving SDG 3 and ensuring healthcare access for all.