

JOURNEY TO SIERRA LEONE

■ CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Every person has basic rights that make life truly human. Corresponding to our rights, we all have duties and responsibilities to one another, our families and the larger society.

ENCOUNTER KUMBA

Waisa didn't spend a single day in school. When she was young, no one thought girls should receive an education. Plus, there was work to do. She helped her twelve siblings at her family's farm. She was responsible for helping her mom sell meat to their neighbors.

Now, things have changed in Sinkunia, a town in the north of Sierra Leone. Waisa knows the importance of education—especially for girls. "If there's education, Sierra Leone will develop," she says. "Our students will make sure of it."

That's why Waisa insists that her 12-year-old granddaughter, Kumba, attends the nearby CRS-sponsored school, so she can learn how to make a difference in her community and her country. And, through the nutritious lunch that CRS gives to each student every day, Kumba and her classmates can focus on their studies and not on their hunger.

Kumba's favorite subject is math because she likes the challenge. And when she completes her education, she wants to be a nurse. A nurse, Kumba says, helps cure the sick, and if there were more nurses in Sinkunia, those who get sick wouldn't have to leave the town to get healthcare.

Waisa is proud of her granddaughter and continues to work hard to support her. With no shade from the hot sun, Waisa cares for the family's garden, watering eggplants, tomatoes, onions and more to be harvested and sold through the streets of Sinkunia. Kumba helps, too, visiting the garden every day after school.

"I'm happy if I can support my daughters and granddaughters, even through university," Waisa says. With a smile, she adds, "I know that educated girls help their parents and their communities."



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A good education doesn't just benefit the student. It benefits the family, the community, and the common good, allowing individuals to flourish without needing to leave home.

FACTS TO CONSIDER

Population: 6,163,195

Size: 71,740 square miles; slightly smaller than South Carolina

- After a 10-year civil war in the 1990s, CRS projects in Sierra Leone are helping to rebuild the country with a focus on integrating peacebuilding.
- Rates of child and maternal mortality are high, levels of education are low, and, despite rich resource endowments and abundant land, more than 60 percent of Sierra Leoneans live on less than \$1.25 a day.
- The Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone in 2014 was the worst the world has seen, covering the entire country and causing thousands of deaths. CRS was one of the organizations on the front lines controlling the outbreak.



For downloadable photos, visit crsricebowl.org/photos and watch a video about Kumba at crsricebowl.org/stories.