

# JOURNEY TO UGANDA

## ■ CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS

### OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

Jesus tells us to give special care to those who are most in need. He reminds us of our Christian duty to give a voice to those who are unheard and to help those who are most vulnerable.

#### ENCOUNTER ANNET

Annet's youngest sister calls her Mom—and for good reason. Since their parents' deaths 4 years ago, 16-year-old Annet has been caring for her three siblings: Gladys, 6, Irene, 8 and Emmanuel, 10.

It hasn't been easy. Ongoing violence in their home country, South Sudan, forced Annet to take her siblings and flee south to neighboring Uganda. It was a dangerous journey, but Annet kept them safe despite threats from rebel soldiers.

For more than 2 years now, Annet and her siblings have been living in Bidi Bidi, one of the world's largest refugee settlements. Formed in 2015, Bidi Bidi is home to nearly 300,000 people—many South Sudanese who, like Annet, fled for their lives to Uganda.

While Annet is happy to be away from the violence, life in Bidi Bidi is hard—especially for a young woman trying to raise her siblings. That's why CRS is building houses for families like Annet's. A place to call home means Annet can rest a little easier at night knowing her family is safe.

But that's not all. CRS is also helping people like Annet learn to farm and is giving them the tools they need to succeed. Annet was given her own plot of land to plant on so she will be able to continue providing for her siblings.

For her, that's the most important thing. While she wants her family to return to South Sudan one day, for now she knows that Bidi Bidi is the safer option. In the meantime, she encourages



Photo by Philip Laubner/CRS

her siblings to go to school and does all she can to ensure they'll have a bright future.

"My hope is to raise my siblings," she says. "And I know I can do it with the help of CRS and my Catholic faith."

#### SHARE THE JOURNEY

Shelter is necessary for a dignified life—when families are forced to migrate, finding safe shelter becomes uncertain.

#### FACTS TO CONSIDER

**Population:** 39,570,125

**Size:** 241,038 square miles; slightly smaller than Oregon

- Described as the "Pearl of Africa," Uganda is defined by its rich culture and diverse flora and fauna, but has suffered from civil war, poverty and a devastating AIDS epidemic .
- Uganda has received about 180 refugees a day since January 1, 2018, as South Sudanese people flee violence in their country; more than 1 million refugees are now living in settlements in northwestern Uganda.
- Uganda is unique in its openness and hospitality toward refugees, allowing them to move about freely, work and establish businesses.



For downloadable photos, visit [csrtricebowl.org/photos](https://csrtricebowl.org/photos) and watch a video about Annet at [csrtricebowl.org/stories](https://csrtricebowl.org/stories).