

Uganda



Uganda, officially the Republic of Uganda, is a landlocked country in East Africa. Its name comes from the Buganda kingdom, which is one of the largest traditional kingdoms within present day Uganda. Uganda's current borders were set by the British who colonized the country in the late 1800's. It covers an area the size of the



Millions gather for the Ugandan Martyrs' Feast celebration

state of Montana and its population is roughly 35 times that state's! The capital city of Uganda is Kampala.

Most people who live in Uganda are Christian

(about 84%); the Roman Catholic Church has the largest number of members of all Christian groups—about 42% - followed by the Anglican Church of Uganda. The Christian faith was introduced by missionaries in the late 19th century beginning with a story still central to the faith of Ugandan Catholics—that of the Ugandan Martyrs. St. Charles Lwanga and his companions, most of whom were younger than 22, gave up their lives rather than renounce their new faith brought to them by missionaries. Every year on June 3, over a million people gather from across Africa at a Shrine built on the site of the martyrdom to celebrate the sacrifice of these young men. (See MCA's June 2013 Saint of the Month for the full story)

Health care is a problem for the average Ugandan. There is on average only one doctor for every 8,000 people in the country. Fourteen percent of children under five years of age are underweight.

While most people in the city (about 91%) have access to indoor plumbing and running water, many people who live in the rural areas do not.

MCA in Uganda

This makes the risk of contracting hepatitis A and E and Typhoid Fever very high. These diseases come from the dirty water or from washing foods with that water.

According to the World Health Organization, Uganda has the highest rate of transmission of Malaria in the world, killing between 70,000 and 100,000 children annually. Most families spend close to 25% of their income on Malaria treatment every year. Simple mosquito nets over the beds of children, some provided by MCA funds, make a huge difference.



Although elementary education is compulsory in Uganda, many children do not go to school, especially in the rural areas. There are two main reasons for this: 1) children are needed as labor on their family farms and 2) most families in rural Uganda live on about \$1.25 per person per day and can't afford to buy the necessary uniforms or school supplies. Girls are most affected as they are often kept home to care for others.

St. Maria Goretti School in Rushoroza, Kabale Diocese is a wonderful example of how the **Missionary Childhood Association** is making a difference in the lives of Ugandan children through Catholic education.

Set in the hills of southwestern Uganda, the boarding school is a place where children learn their Catholic faith along with strong fundamentals of academics. The students are also trained in a strong work ethic—Their school motto is “United We Stand”.

Children at St. Maria Goretti School are responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of their crowded dormitories and bathrooms; even the youngest also wash all their own laundry by hand, including their bed sheets.



Laundry day at school.

One of the most popular activities at the school is gathering weekly for the meeting of the **Missionary Childhood Association**. Students come together to sing, pray the World Mission Rosary and learn more about how their sacrifices help other children around the world learn more about Jesus. The **MCA** members even have a uniform of shorts or a skirt, a t-shirt and a neckerchief that they wear on school days, instead of their regular school uniform.



Last year, **MCA** members worldwide sacrificed \$20,000 for the children in Kabale Diocese, Uganda.

Missionary Childhood Association

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