



**As missionary disciples, we are called to respond to the needs of migrants. Today, an unprecedented number of people live in a country other than their birthplace and a staggering 70 million people are currently displaced. We can lead the way by offering assistance to refugees, including creating dignified housing and training opportunities for livelihoods.**

## Creating a home in displacement

**Annet wakes up in the morning and fetches water.** She prepares porridge for 13-year-old Emmanuel, 8-year-old Irene, and 6-year-old Gladys, sweeps the compound, and cleans the house all before lunch, which she also prepares for the children. She is in charge of dinner and bath time, as well. Annet is only 16 years old and the head of her household in the Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement in northeastern Uganda.

In 2016, ongoing violence in South Sudan forced Annet to flee south with her siblings to neighboring Uganda. There, she joined the 230,000 people—most of them South Sudanese—who live in Bidi Bidi, making it the largest refugee settlement in the world. Around 86% of its residents are women and children.

“I think a refugee is someone who leaves a place with nothing,” says Annet, whose parents are deceased.

Life in Bidi Bidi is challenging—especially for a young woman trying to raise three siblings. Shelter is precarious, as is human safety. Illness is a constant worry and frequent reality. Clean water and food are precious.

In *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis reminds us that “having a home has much to do with a sense of personal dignity and the growth of families.” Catholic Relief Services responds to this profound need by improving living conditions for people who have been displaced. At Bidi Bidi, CRS installed 1,194 latrines and built 1,226 safe shelters with windows and doors that lock—Annet and her siblings received one of each. Through CRS’ hands-on training and seed distribution, Annet has been able to feed her family

by growing sorghum, sweet potatoes, and eggplant in her own garden plot. CRS also involves young people age 18 and older in building shelters and latrines, so they may eventually return to their home countries with valuable vocational skills.

A place to call home means Annet can rest a little easier at night knowing her family is safe. “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.”

CRS recognizes the need to live a safe and dignified life during displacement. We lead the way in helping people find stability in unstable times by offering safe shelters that become homes, and training for livelihoods. Because living in a refugee settlement shouldn’t put refugees’ lives on pause.

**Join us at [crs.org/leadtheway](https://crs.org/leadtheway)**

**and by texting LEAD NOW to 306-44**