

## **Change a Life in Uganda**

According to the CIA World Factbook, the Republic of Uganda on the continent of Africa is well endowed with natural resources “including fertile soils, regular rainfall, and sizable mineral deposits of copper, cobalt, gold, and other minerals.” In 2000, Uganda qualified for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Relief debt relief and the Paris Club debt relief assisting the government’s attempts to stabilize the economy. However, in the year 2001, it was estimated that 35% of the population still lived below the poverty line.

Much like many other impoverished countries in Africa, Uganda suffers with HIV and AIDS. Of the 32,369,558 Ugandans 77,000 die each year due to HIV/AIDS. Ugandans are also at a very high risk of bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, malaria, plague, rabies, African trypanosomiasis, and schistosomiasis.

Uganda is also in the midst of a brutal war that has gone on for almost 20 years. According to many sources, children in Uganda are at constant risk of being stolen from their families and forced to become soldiers or “wives” of the rebel army led by Joseph Kony. Northern Uganda is an unsafe place for children and adults. People are brutally killed by children who are forced to kill for fear of being killed. Some have been forced to kill their own mothers. Those who have escaped to refuge camps are crammed into tiny mud huts. According to a report by BBC, there is often one well to provide water for five thousand people. Malnutrition is common, and food is scarce. This is an area desperately and urgently in need of help.