

# **‘Let Justice Flow: Transforming Lives!’**

## **World Development Appeal 2013**

### **Rwanda**

#### **Introduction**

Almost 20 years have passed since the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, and in all the ways with which we in Ireland are familiar, the past is both past and very present. And yet Rwanda is not the same country it was only a short time ago. Small, landlocked, and with a population (2011) of only 11 million people, this is a country which experienced such devastation, both in terms of human brutality and in terms of infrastructural collapse, that there was in the short term at least no past to which people might seek to return.

And so with an urgency and focus born of their recent history, and with the help of the international community, Rwanda is creating a future for itself. It remains a poor country, with 65% of the population living on less than 1 USD/day. Climate change and harsh weather patterns affect subsistence farming, as they do elsewhere. Slowly but surely, however, once shattered lives and communities are being transformed. And in the forefront of that transformation is Moucecore (Christian Movement for Evangelisation, Counselling, and Reconciliation), one of our partners in this year’s World Development Appeal.

#### **Project Details**

Moucecore engages with local churches to help them address concrete issues of community development, from food security to rehabilitation and peace building. The aim of Moucecore is to enable both spiritual and socio-economic transformation in church and community, and the motto they have taken for themselves is *“Being transformed to transform others”*.

In keeping with the call to the Church to become a place of transformation, Moucecore encourages congregations to develop a biblically-grounded capacity to discern local needs, and then to equip themselves with the skills they will themselves need for the work of sustainable development. Workshops enable church leaders and members to learn how to set up and run self-help groups, as well as teaching organic farming skills, such as livestock shed construction and water conservation. STGs (Solidarity Transformation Groups) make it possible for people whose past stories still hold much unresolved pain to work together on concrete projects that now serve the common good. In doing so, they do not change the past, but they create a different context for the future, and for living with what they have to bear.

In a country in which the vast majority of people identify themselves as Christian, this approach, is bearing the fruit of hope. As local church communities gather on a weekly basis, not just for worship but also to strengthen and deepen their faith through Bible conversations and prayer, they learn also to embrace the work of community development and peace building as integral to their life and witness. And extraordinary things begin to happen!

## **Let Justice Flow!**

First hand stories of lives and communities being transformed through the work of our partner Moucecore are available to download from the BMO site, as well as on CD. However, Abel Mukiza, from the Southern Province of Rwanda, also wants to tell his story.

Abel was born in a very poor family of five children, and he expected that poverty would be the condition of his adult life as well. When he came in contact with Moucecore, however, his story began to move in a different direction.

*When Moucecore came, Abel says, I received the message of being transformed and transforming my community. I responded positively to that message, and joined an STG, which I have been in since 2009. Today, I am a new Abel, with a present and a future.*

*My attitude started changing as I underwent the holistic transformation training and counselling. I also learned agricultural skills, and how to save and use credit. I started applying what I was taught, and today, I am proud of who I am. I have four cows, and managed to pay school fees for my younger brother, who completed school as a result, went to university and now works at a secondary school.*

*Today I also have my own land, which I bought. By working on the land, I produce enough food for my whole family. I have achieved all these things because of the training I received from Moucecore, which caused me to change my attitude, find hope, and work hard.*

It is our privilege this year, in cooperation with Tearfund, to partner with **Moucecore**, and to stand in solidarity with the people of Rwanda. In keeping with the call to the Church to become a place of transformation, in which the dignity of the most vulnerable is upheld, structures of injustice can be effectively addressed, and communities joyfully reshape their own lives in response to the gospel, we stand with them in proclaiming: **Let Justice Flow!**