

# A brief history of Rwanda



**Rwanda is a landlocked country situated in central Africa.**

Known as the 'Land of 1000 Mountains' its altitude makes for a temperate climate and fertile green countryside. It is the second smallest country in Africa but is the most densely populated with over 11 million inhabitants.

**Its recent history has been one of conflict** and in 1959, three years prior to independence from Belgium, the majority ethnic group, the Hutus, overthrew the ruling Tutsi king. Over the next years thousands of Tutsi were killed or driven into exile.

More recently in 1990 a civil war began which, along with political and economic upheavals, raised ethnic tensions culminating **in the genocide of April 1994 when it is estimated over 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed.** Many fled to neighbouring countries for fear of retribution, but since then most refugees have returned.

**Through a new constitution and democratically elected government Rwanda is working hard to build a future.**

There is an emphasis that ethnicity no longer exists and that everyone is simply Rwandan. A Genocide Memorial Week is held every year while anything viewed as promoting genocide ideology is a punishable offence.

**Tearfund and Christian Aid have been working with partners in Rwanda for many years** and with support from World Development will be assisting **Moucecore**, a Rwandan Christian organisation focused on peace building, reconciliation and poverty alleviation working through local churches.



How can you help?

## Learn

Like the Moderator before his visit most of us know little about Rwanda other than the headlines about the genocide twenty years ago. Use the resources provided by World Development available online at [www.presbyterianireland.org/world-development](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/world-development) to find out more and to understand the transforming effect that church based sustainable development is achieving.

## Pray

**Prayer has been a vital activity** in the communities where Tearfund and Christian Aid partner Moucecore works in Rwanda. Use the information available through this World Development Appeal to pray knowledgeably for their work and the people involved.

## Give

**In Rwanda the emphasis is on people helping themselves.** However communities need the assistance of an organisation such as Moucecore with its trained staff and resources. By giving to World Development Appeal you will be directly helping sustainable development projects in Rwanda and India supported by Tearfund and Christian Aid working with local partners including Moucecore.

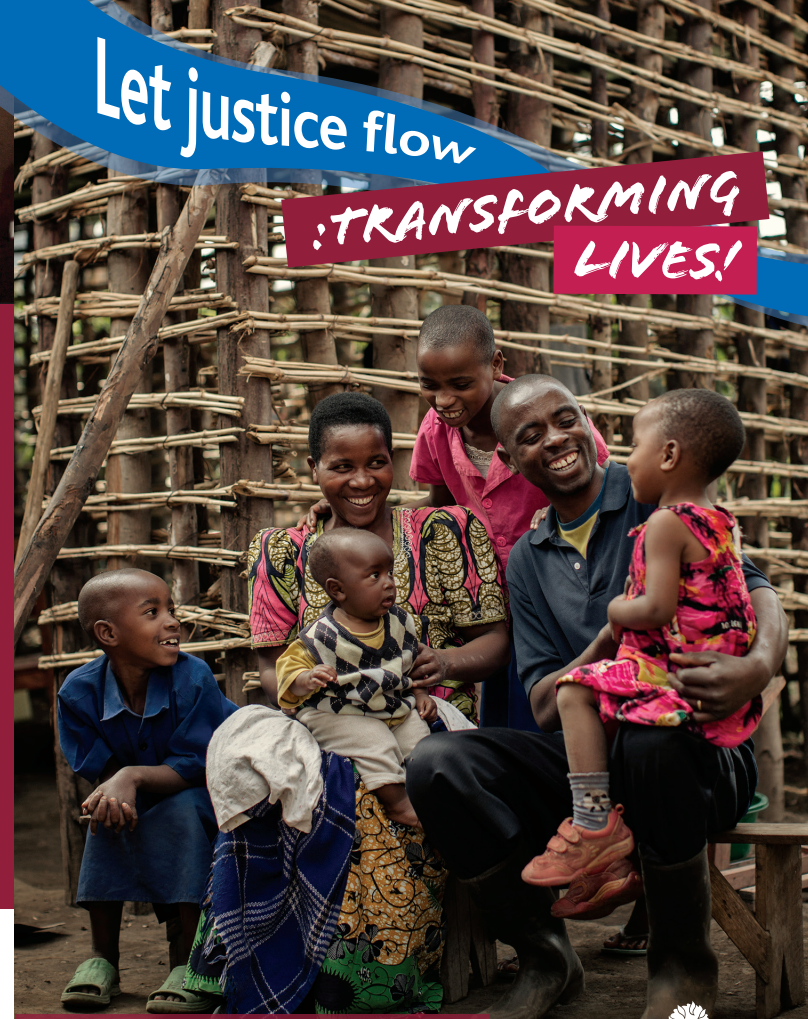


For further information:  
World Development, Assembly Buildings, Belfast BT1 6DW  
[www.presbyterianireland.org/world-development](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/world-development)



Let justice flow

:TRANSFORMING LIVES!



World Development Appeal 2013



**“As I travelled around Rwanda I experienced a country moving on from its past, people working together helping others and helping themselves and at the heart of everything was the Christian Church and people of faith working to transform lives and communities.”**

The words of Moderator Dr Rob Craig at the end of his visit to Rwanda where he saw the work of Presbyterian World Development partners Tearfund and Christian Aid.

Like most of us he had some knowledge of the Rwandan conflict when over 1 million people were killed in 100 days of horrific genocide.

What he found was a story of people rebuilding relationships, restoring trust and bringing about transformation for a better future.

**“Through our faith we established a unity that has allowed us to deal with common problems.”**

**Jacqueline,**  
President of Seekers of Peace

## **Rwanda is a country that is helping itself.**

Divided communities that once lived in fear and conflict are coming together, identifying their common needs, and working side by side to build a future. In all of this they are being assisted with expertise, resources and finance through churches and local Christian organisations who are partners with Tearfund and Christian Aid.

### **Burambi was like most villages after the genocide. A divided community where neither side would farm together, go to school together, collect water together or even worship together.**

However, over several years, the local women began to meet together through their shared faith and as relationships grew and trust developed they realised their common problems and particularly their need for clean water. Working together they constructed a rainwater harvesting tank that collected and stored clean water for community use.

As the community began to help themselves Moucecore offered its expertise and resources. Today the village has 114 water tanks serving 1224 households and both men's and women's groups in the church are transforming the lives of individuals and the community.

Janette and Viane live with their four children. Like many of their generation they grew up as orphans. Work was hard to find and they lived in a small grass house alongside their animals.

Janette became involved with the women's group, helping build water tanks and learning about cultivation and sanitation. Viane noticed such a change that he joined the men's group. Together they have worked hard with their fellow villagers for everyone's benefit.

A community programme has built better homes with good sanitation. Better agricultural techniques help people grow food for themselves with enough left over to sell through their farming co-operative.

Viane no longer has to travel to Uganda for work and can afford the cost of medical insurance for his family and education for his children.



### **On the other side of the country at Gitare it was again the women who were persuaded by their pastor to begin meeting together for prayer and Bible study.**

After two years enough trust existed to form a community action group which they called 'Seekers of Peace' and Jacqueline was elected as their President.

During the conflict she had lived as a refugee in the Democratic Republic of Congo before returning home to Rwanda with her husband and five children.

Under her leadership the women's group identified the main community need as housing but before embarking on a building programme they needed to raise money to pay for it. Together they formed a co-operative offering cleaning services and from their earnings contributed to a building fund.

Recognising the work done by the women Moucecore added its expertise and resources and today 25 houses have been completed with the emphasis on providing shelter for widows and older people.

**“Through God's Word we realise that we are all the same with no division and no fear,” says Jacqueline.**

**“Now we live together, celebrate together and mourn together as one.”**