

RWANDA



Hello! My name is Jean-Pierre and I'm Rwandan. Recently, I researched my country that is located in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. It's my pleasure to share what I learned with you. Pick a heading and start exploring Rwanda!



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Canadian International
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de
développement international



COUNTRY DESCRIPTION

As you can see from the map, my country is located in the heart of Africa. It is a landlocked country, that is to say, it is surrounded by other countries, and does not have access to the sea or the ocean. Rwanda is situated south of Uganda, and north of Burundi. Equally, it is bordered by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west, and Tanzania to the east.

My country has a surface area of 26 338 km². It is small! In comparison, Rwanda could fit into Canada's surface area 379 times. Meanwhile, Quebec is 63 times larger than Rwanda!

Kigali is my country's capital and also the most populated city. Butare, Gitarama, Cyangugu, and Ruhengeri are also among the most important cities in Rwanda.

My country produces tea and coffee for exportation, that is, to sell outside of the country. Rwandan crops include potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, beans, sorghum, bananas, and a variety of other fruits and vegetables.

In Rwanda, the countryside is lush, and there are many rivers. We have no lack of rain or water. Our climate is characterized by two rainy seasons (from February to April, and from November to January) and two dry seasons. The sun shines almost the whole year. Regardless of the season, average daily temperature is approximately 24°C.

A tragic event took place in 1994 in my country. More than 800,000 people were killed in a **civil war**. Many people say that a **genocide** took place.



Did you know?

Rwanda is nicknamed *Country of One Thousand Hills*. My country is bounded by a chain of volcanoes to the north. Furthermore, our capital Kigali sits at an altitude of 1,400 metres! A large part of the country is located at a higher altitude than this city.



Surface Area

26 338 km² (Canada : 9 984 670 km²)



Climate

Tropical



Temperature

Temperate because of the altitude. Between 18 and 20 °C.



Relief

High volcanoes to the north (3 500m à 4 500m). Numerous hills and mountains as well as plateaus



Natural Resources

Tea, coffee, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, beans, sorghum, bananas, etc.

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION

Population

Over 8 million people live in my country. More than four out of every five Rwandans live in the countryside. Among the working population, most work in agriculture; almost nine people out of ten. Workers that occupy other domains represent more than 10% of the Rwandan working population. This 10% includes people that are trained in the service industry, trades skills, chauffeurs, merchants, businessmen, and professionals.

Life expectancy is less in Rwanda than in your country. In my country, a person can hope to live about 47 years, whereas in Canada a person can live almost 80 years; almost double the time!

The genocide of 1994 caused the death of more than 800,000 Rwandans, and has left many scars on the population of my country. For example, in my country many youths are orphans, thousands of women are afflicted by HIV/AIDS, and a large part of the population is still traumatized by what they lived through and saw.

Given what I just mentioned, surely you can understand why over half of the Rwandan population is less than 20 years old. If you come to Rwanda, you will have no problems meeting someone your own age!

Did you know that?

49 % of the ministers in my country are women. They make up a strong proportion of the senators and ministers. Accordingly, Rwanda is the country with the greatest degree of female participation in positions of power in the world.

In my country, we speak Kinyarwanda. A small percentage of the population also speaks French (5 %) and English (2 %). Here are some words in Kinyarwanda. This way, you'll be able to say hello to people if you ever visit.

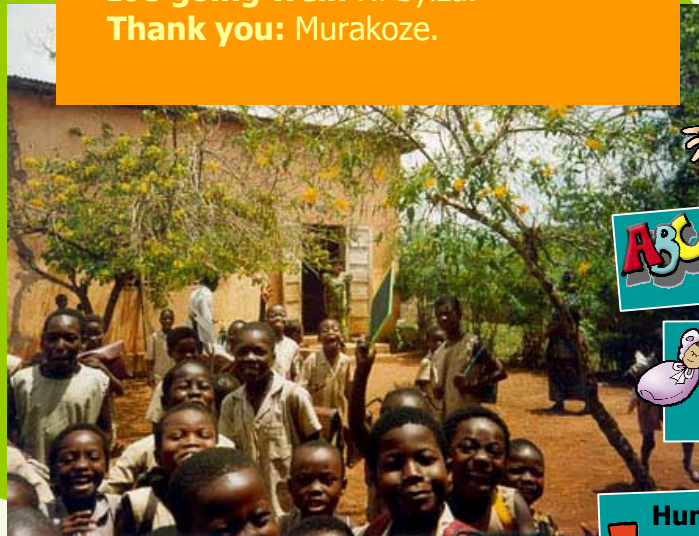
Hello: Muraho.

Good evening: Mwiriweho.

How is it going? : Makuru ki?

It's going well: Ni byiza.

Thank you: Murakoze.



Facts at a Glance



Number of Inhabitants

9 millions (2005)



Density (number of people per Km²)

346 inhabitants/km² (2005)



Life Expectancy

44 (2004)



Purchasing Power¹

US\$ 1 300 (2004)



People Without a job

60% (2004)



People who can read and write

64% (2004)



Mortality rate under 5 years of age

203 per 1000 children (2004)



Human Development Index (HDI)²

159th out of 177 countries (2003)



Ecological Footprint³

0,7 (2001)

Population

History

Let me tell you briefly about the history of my country. Before Rwanda was colonized by Germany, the principal economic activities were ranching and farming. These activities determined a family's social status in Rwandan society. The more cows a Rwandan possessed, the more influence they enjoyed.

At this period in time, the word *Tutsi* was used in Rwanda to mean "cattle tender", and it identified a rich person. Conversely, *Hutu* meant "farmer" and, by consequence, a person that was less well-off. The *Twas*, members of a less privileged community, were hunters and gatherers. Individuals could cross classes if they accumulated wealth.

"Ruanda" (Rwanda's original name) was a German colony until 1918. After the First World War, my country was entrusted to Belgium. Belgian colonizers introduced a national identification system that was based on ethnic discrimination. They favoured educating the Tutsis and encouraged the notion that the Hutus were inferior. Thus, inequality was favoured! This had a huge impact on the history of Rwanda.

In 1959, the Tutsis reclaimed their independence. In response, the colonizers evicted Tutsi chiefs from the colonial administration, and so, the Hutus took power. A climate of extreme violence took hold in Rwanda. A large number of Rwandans, mostly Tutsis, were either killed or exiled. In 1962, Rwanda gained its independence.

After independence, the Tutsis were excluded from positions of responsibility and their access to education was limited. Numerous conflicts ensued and thousands of Tutsis sought refuge in other countries.

In 1990, a civil war erupted in Rwanda. The violence peaked in April 1994 and genocide took place in my country. Roughly 800,000 Rwandans died in about 100 days. What a tragedy! Today, we are trying to rebuild our country and relations between us.



Did you know that?

My ancestors escaped slavery? In fact, Europeans only discovered my country in 1858. Rwanda is situated outside of the area of countries where the slave trade was practiced. This trade consisted of the purchase of blacks for sale in the New World (the Americas).

History



Did you know that?

Did you know that Rwandan plant-based medicine is still used even though we have modern medicine?

Here is a website where you'll be able to find lots of information on Rwanda and Rwandan culture:

www.rwandatourism.com/culture.htm

If you want to hear Rwanda's national anthem, visit the following link:
www.david.national-anthems.net/rw.htm



Culture

My father often tells me exciting stories that he learned when he was young. He tells me that when I'm big, I will also have to tell all these stories to my children. The oral traditions of my country are very strong. They are traditions that are passed down through the generations verbally. They constitute our culture through words, legends, tales and stories of the hunt and of war, or humorous stories.

Music and dance are also very important in our lives. The *lulunga* is an instrument that often accompanies our music and dances. Do you know this string-instrument? It resembles a harp. We must not forget the tambourines that give our social events rhythm!

Another tradition in my country is art. In the villages we make ceramics, sculptures out of wood, paintings, and we also do wickerwork. Wickerwork (chairs, baskets, decorations) is woven out of rattan, wicker, or even reeds (dried plants). You have to be handy with your hands to be able to create these works of art that are pretty and often very practical!

In Rwanda, people are very religious. More than half are Roman Catholic, and a quarter are Protestant. Some are Muslim while others practice local religions.

To make your mouth water, here are a few typical Rwandan dishes: green banana with green peas; manioc with dried beans; chicken with peanut butter; and goat brochettes. They all taste so good! Also, I'm sure your parents would love the banana wine and sorghum beer that we make.

Culture



Challenges

Challenges

People in my country face many challenges. Here are a few examples:

My country is one of the poorest in Africa. Since the 1990s, this situation has been made worse by conflicts. More than 6 out of 10 people live in poverty. Among the poor, sometimes children, elders, or women whose husbands are in prison have to run the family. There are also young people, who don't have any particular job skills and are without employment, or they are farmers but have no land to cultivate. Lack of food is a problem, especially for Rwandans who live in rural areas.

Another challenge is the problem of electricity. Less than 4 people out of 100 are connected to the electricity grid, and the grid is far from providing for their needs. People suffer frequent power shortages and long blackouts. At my home, we don't have electricity yet. I hope that one day we will enjoy electricity like you do.

Rwanda must also face many problems with regards to the environment. Firstly, refugees from other countries came to Rwanda, and they cleared trees for farmland, causing deforestation. Since wood is the only source of energy for most Rwandans, deforestation continues to this day. Deforestation causes the erosion of soil.

My father also explained to me that Rwanda also suffers from overgrazing. Overgrazing occurs when grazing livestock put too much pressure on the vegetation, impeding its ability to regenerate. Also, the poor management of waste material has adverse effects on human health.

Another challenge that affects Rwanda is the HIV/AIDS virus that affects 7.4% of the population. Lastly, there is the problem of delivering justice; many participants in the massacres still have not been charged and imprisoned, while innocent people are held in prison unjustly.

Despite these difficulties my people are full of spirit, and are warm and welcoming. I hope you will visit us one day.



Solutions

My country benefits from international cooperation projects. Here is an example of one such project that is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and that is helping many Rwandans following the conflicts of the past!

Development and Peace, the official international development organization of the Catholic Church in Canada, is cooperating with local partners in my country to work towards the reconstruction of Rwanda after the genocide. It's impressive to see what can be achieved when we all work together!

The reconstruction programs have resulted in the construction of more than 2,000 houses across Rwanda. Can you imagine how important this kind of help is to the inhabitants of my country who are trying to rebuild their lives? In addition to putting a roof over the heads of all these refugees, the houses have allowed groups to reunite after having been torn apart.

My mother explained to me how people have come together since the genocide. She told me that widows banded together to take care of thousands of orphans. Grassroots associations have formed in order to jumpstart farming and ranching. Lastly, human rights organizations have taken it upon themselves to promote the peace and reconciliation process.

To learn more about this international cooperation project, visit the following website:

www.devdp.org/testA/news/communiques2004_12-e.htm

Did you know that you can work towards a better world too? In being willing to accept fault and apologize, by fighting racism and discrimination, by not giving up in the face of difficulty, and by being thankful for all that you enjoy in life, you will be an inspiration to everyone that crosses your path!



Solutions

Glossary

Colony:

Territory that is but occupied by another nation despite being separate from the nation. The nation runs the territory and keeps it in a state of dependence.

Discrimination:

The act of isolating a group of people and treating them differently, often more poorly.

Erosion:

Degradation, progressive wear of a substance by water or wind.

Genocide:

Deliberate destruction or elimination of an ethnic group (humans that possess similar characteristics such as language or culture).

Civil war:

Armed struggle between citizens of the same state.

Purchasing Power¹:

Purchasing power is the capacity to buy goods and services with a given income.

Human Development Index ² :

The Human Development Report issued by the UN, which classifies 177 countries according to life-expectancy, education, literacy, and income.

Ecological Footprint³ :

It measures how much land and water area is necessary to provide one person's sustenance.



To learn more about Rwanda, check out the following web sites:

- ✓ www.in-terre-actif.com/english
- ✓ www.ethiquette.ca
- ✓ www.equiterre.org/en
- ✓ www.amnesty.org
- ✓ www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/youthzone

Glossary

Questions

- 1) Which virus is responsible for AIDS?
 - a) VHS
 - b) DVD
 - c) HIV
- 2) African country greatly affected by HIV/AIDS
 - a) Rwanda
 - b) Morocco
 - c) Egypt
- 3) Governmental organization financially helping the Canadian Public Health Association working in Rwanda on the AIDS problem.
 - a) COKE
 - b) CIDA
 - c) CAC
- 4) In several parts of Africa, this business represents the only way for a woman to obtain income to provide for herself and her family. It however increases the risk of contracting HIV.
 - a) Dancer
 - b) Nurse
 - c) Prostitution
- 5) The AIDS virus can also be caught by:
 - a) Touching the skin of an infected person
 - b) Consumption of raw meat
 - c) Secondary smoke
 - d) Having unprotected sexual intercourse
- 6) The drugs allowing the people living with AIDS to be maintained alive are not accessible to the great majority of the population in Rwanda. Why is this so?
 - a) Only the older people have the right to receive these drugs
 - b) They are reserved for white people only
 - c) The drugs are too expensive: the poor people infected are condemned to die
- 7) Of the following solutions, which would help reduce the spread of AIDS in the population?
 - a) Force a curfew
 - b) Teach the population about AIDS
 - c) Vaccinate the children
- 8) To reduce AIDS, the Women's Rights Defense in Rwanda works to:
 - a) Protect women against sexual aggression
 - b) Reduce men's rights
 - c) Legalize prostitution
- 9) There are drugs which allow pregnant women infected by HIV to reduce the risk of transmitting AIDS to:
 - a) Their parents
 - b) Their children
 - c) Their spouse
- 10) Why are the poorest populations more affected with AIDS?
 - a) There is a lack of education and information.
 - b) Women have to work as prostitutes to survive.
 - c) Frequent sexual aggression and lack of protection towards women
 - d) Health care is inaccessible and the drugs are too expensive.
 - e) All of the above and more.

Game

Instructions

To play you will need:

- A token for each player
- The game board which you will find on the following page
- The page of questions suggested above
- A dice

To begin, each player rolls the dice. The player with the highest number will be the first to play. To start, you must answer Question 1 correctly (refer to the list of questions above). With each correct answer, you can move your token one space. If you land at the exit of the hospital, you will have to answer the 3 suggested questions to continue the game. If you manage to visit all the patients in the hospital for people with AIDS, or to answer Question 7 correctly, you win the game!



Answers

1-a)
2-a)
3-b)
4-c)
5-d)
6-c)
7-b)
8-a)
9-b)
10-a)

HOSPITAL

START



QUESTION 1



GOOD NEWS!
THE WIFE OF THIS
PATIENT HAS NOT BEEN
INFECTED WITH HIV



GO FORWARD 2 SQUARES

QUESTION 2



QUESTION 3



QUESTION 7



QUESTION 6



QUESTION 5



A PATIENT
HAS DIED FROM
AIDS



GO BACK 3 SQUARES

QUESTION 4



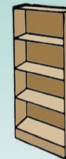
A MOTHER HAS
TRANSMITTED HIV TO
HER CHILD

GO BACK 1 SQUARE

QUESTION 8



THE HOSPITAL
IS OUT OF
MEDICATION



GO BACK 2 SQUARES

QUESTION 9



EXIT

QUESTION 10