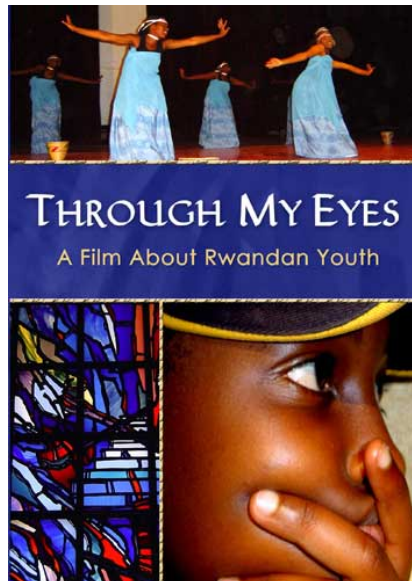




Through My Eyes

Guidebook



To order this and other programs call:
(888) 570-5400

www.choicesvideo.net

Choices, Inc.
421 S. Beverly Drive 5th Floor
Beverly Hills, California 90212

© 2006 Choices, Inc. All rights reserved

RWANDA



Nationality: *noun:* Rwandan(s)
adjective: Rwandan

Country name: *conventional long form:* Republic of Rwanda
conventional short form: Rwanda
local long form: Republika y'u Rwanda
local short form: Rwanda
former: Ruanda, German East Africa

Location: Central Africa, east of Democratic Republic of the Congo

Area: 26,338 sq km (10,169 sq miles)

Population: 8,648,248 (2002)

Population Density: 314.1 per sq km. Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa

Ethnic groups: Hutu 84%, Tutsi 15%, Twa (Pygmoid) 1%

Language: The official languages are Kinyarwanda, French and English. Kiswahili is used for trade and commerce.

Religion: Animist (50 per cent), Christian (mostly Roman Catholic) and an Islamic minority.

Literacy: *definition:* age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 70.4%
male: 76.3%
female: 64.7% (2003 est.)

Capital: Kigali, population: 233,640 (1991).

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than Maryland

Border countries: Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Uganda

Geography: Rwanda is a small, land locked country in eastern / central Africa. It has five volcanoes and 23 lakes as well as several rivers. A large part of the country has an elevation of between 1,500 and 2,500 meters.

In prehistoric times as much as one third of Rwanda was covered with mountain rainforest. Today the only large tract of forest left in Rwanda is Nyungwe in the southwestern part of the country; it covers almost 1000 square kilometers. Some areas of forest are also found in the Volcanoes National Park in the northeast, but most of the natural vegetation here is bamboo forest and open moorland.

The highlands in large parts of the country are now dominated by the terraced agriculture that gives the Rwandan countryside its beautiful and pleasant character. The eastern part of Rwanda has entirely different vegetation, the typical African bush, a mix of savannah and grassland dominated by acacia trees as well as large tracts of marshlands and swamps. The Virunga volcanoes, rising steeply from Lake Kivu in the west, slope down first to a hilly central plateau and further eastwards to an area of marshy lakes around the upper reaches of the A'Kagera River, where the A'Kagera National Park is situated.

Geography - note: landlocked; most of the country is savanna grassland with the population predominantly rural

Government type: republic; presidential, multiparty system

Government: Republic since 1962. Gained independence from Belgium in 1962.

Head of State: President Paul Kagame since 2000.

Head of Government: Prime Minister Bernard Makuza since 2000.

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal adult

Labor force - by occupation: *agriculture: 90% industry and services: 10%*

Population below poverty line: 60% (2001 est.)

Agriculture - products: coffee, tea, pyrethrum (insecticide made from chrysanthemums), bananas, beans, sorghum, potatoes; livestock

Industries: cement, agricultural products, small-scale beverages, soap, furniture, shoes, plastic goods, textiles, cigarettes

Economy - overview: Rwanda is a poor rural country with about 90% of the population engaged in (mainly subsistence) agriculture. It is the most densely populated country in Africa and is landlocked with few natural resources and minimal industry. Primary foreign exchange earners are coffee and tea. The 1994 genocide decimated Rwanda's fragile economic base, severely impoverished the population, particularly women, and eroded the country's ability to attract private and external investment. However, Rwanda has made substantial progress in stabilizing and rehabilitating its economy to pre-1994 levels, although poverty levels are higher now.

Background: In 1959, three years before independence from Belgium, the majority ethnic group, the Hutus, overthrew the ruling Tutsi king. Over the next several years, thousands of Tutsis were killed, and some 150,000 driven into exile in neighboring countries. The children of these exiles later formed a rebel group, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), and began a civil war in 1990. The war, along with several political and economic upheavals, exacerbated ethnic tensions, culminating in April 1994 in the genocide of roughly 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. The Tutsi rebels defeated the Hutu regime and ended the killing in July 1994, but approximately 2 million Hutu refugees - many fearing Tutsi retribution - fled to neighboring Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, and the former Zaire. Since then, most of the refugees have returned to Rwanda, but about 10,000 remain in neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo and have formed an extremist insurgency bent on retaking Rwanda, much as the RPF tried in 1990. Despite substantial international assistance and political reforms - including Rwanda's first local elections in March 1999 and its first post-genocide presidential and legislative elections in August and September 2003 - the country continues to struggle to boost investment and agricultural output, and ethnic reconciliation is complicated by the real and perceived Tutsi political dominance. Kigali's increasing centralization and intolerance of dissent, the nagging Hutu extremist insurgency across the border, and Rwandan involvement in two wars in recent years in the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to hinder Rwanda's efforts to escape its bloody legacy.

Social Conventions: The traditional way of life is based on agriculture and cattle. The Rwandans settle in the fertile areas, but they do not form villages, each family being surrounded by its own fields. The majority of the population belong to the Hutu tribe. There is a significant Tutsi minority (15 per cent) and a smaller minority of Twa, a mixed race of traditional potters and hunters and said to be the country's first inhabitants. Normal social courtesies apply.

Discussion Questions:

- 1. Discuss how using art and creative endeavors allows someone to cope with difficult and/or traumatic parts of their life.**
- 2. How can art be used to discuss important and/or sensitive subjects that are not easily brought up especially for community discussion?**
- 3. Focus on one of the youth profiled in the film. Discuss how they used the arts to overcome their own personal problem. Ask how you would have dealt with the same problem using art.**
- 4. Visual and performing arts are used frequently to bring attention to larger social issues. One example was the AIDS quilt created back in the 1980s to focus on HIV deaths in the United States. Research other prominent uses of the arts to focus on larger issues and discuss with your class/group.**
- 5. The film discusses at-risk youth and those who are forced to live on the street. How can art be used to reach these youth and offer them hope and a means to better their education? Research similar programs in your area and find out how you can get involved.**