

Today, I'm going to continue with my series of 'Getting to know our planet' with the country of Rwanda. What do you know about this central african nation? What springs to mind when you hear the name Rwanda? Before I began this study, I didn't know much at all about this country, apart from the conflicts between the Hutus and the Tutsis, and the genocide of 1994. However, in 2009 a report by CNN called Rwanda the greatest success story of Africa. It is stable, its average income has tripled in the past ten years, and it has developed positive international relationships. It has turned itself around and become a model for developing countries. How has it managed to do all of this? The answer is good leadership and sensible foreign aid. Its economy is still growing at a rapid rate, such as 11% in 2008. Rwanda is well known for its mountain gorillas which live in the Volcanoes National Park. Out of the one million tourists who visit each year, many choose to track these large primates. The savannah, forests, and rolling hills keep the visitors coming back, and have helped the economy greatly. Though Rwanda is so successful, it is actually a very small country. It is under 27 thousand square kilometers, and land locked by Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since its independence from Belgium in 1962, and its initial civil problems, it has become a safe and democratic country which protects all Rwandans from discrimination of any kind. Its capital is Kigali, its currency is the rwandan franc, and its population is over 10 million. It has recently adopted the goal of becoming a knowledge based economy by 2020 with every child owning a laptop in the next five years. That is quite an ambition. But, judging by its record, Rwanda is determined, organized, and will meet its goals.

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: currency, stable, to turn oneself around/ a business around, to be well known for...

1. The currency of Europe is the euro, but in England we still use the pound sterling.
2. The doctors told me that her condition is stable; she is awake and doesn't need oxygen or medications.
3. That guy really has turned himself around; he used to be unskilled, but he went back to school. He used to be unemployed, but now he has a decent job.
Another example: We must turn this economy around before it is too late.
4. He is well known for his funny stories; he can make any audience laugh.