

Country Handbook: Rwanda



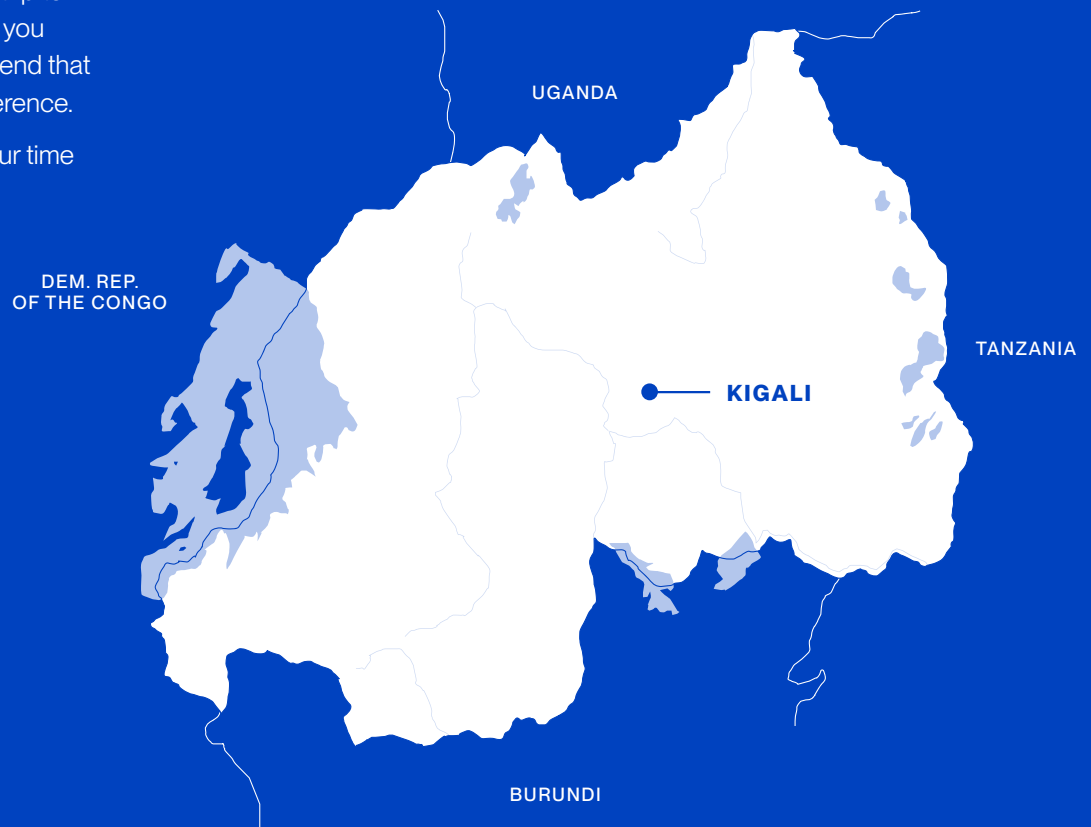
Introduction

100km

Travelling to see the work of Compassion and our local church partners firsthand is an unforgettable experience. On this trip, you'll see for yourself how children are known, loved and protected by their church communities and are being released from poverty in Jesus' name.

This Country Handbook is designed to start preparing you for your trip to Rwanda. Please read it before you depart, and we'd also recommend that you keep it handy for easy reference.

We pray that God will bless your time in Rwanda!



Country Information



Rwanda is known as 'The Land of a Thousand Hills' for its breathtaking mountainous terrain and natural scenery. In recent years, Rwandan culture has prioritised peace and unity between one another.

Main languages:

Kinyarwanda, English, French

Climate:

Tropical temperate (pleasant temperatures year-round)

Main religions:

Protestant (57.7%),
Roman Catholic (38.2%),
Muslim (2.1%)

Currency:

Rwandan Franc



Compassion in Rwanda

Compassion has been working to release children from poverty in Jesus' name in Rwanda since 1970. Nearly half the population are experiencing multidimensional poverty.

Compassion's Child Sponsorship Program is tailored to be age-appropriate for each child.

Children **AGED 1 TO 3** receive home-based care.

Children and youth **AGED 3 AND OLDER** attend their local Compassion centre on weekends, usually on Saturdays.



For more information on Rwanda, scan the QR code or visit: compassion.com.au/where-we-work/rwanda

Compassion assisted children in Rwanda typically attend program activities at their local child development centres. Here is an example of what a typical program day looks like:

9:00am - A time of prayer and devotion. Children are given porridge in the morning for breakfast before starting the first lesson.

10:30am - Break time, when children can play in a safe environment and develop friendships.

11:00am - Social-emotional lessons ranging from conflict resolution to developing healthy self-esteem and godly character. Children often come from challenging home environments and are taught social and personal skills.

12:00pm - Lunch and social time. Children receive a full meal for lunch which usually consists of rice, posho (a common East African dish made with cornmeal) or Irish potatoes with beans and green vegetables.

1:00pm - Health lessons, in which children learn practical health and hygiene tips. Example topics include how to prevent malaria and HIV transmission.

2:00pm - Letter writing and career planning. Older children work with local staff to identify their strengths and interests and set goals for their future.

In addition to Compassion's curriculum, children in Rwanda are also introduced to Rwandan national values such as self-identity, loving their country, unity, reconciliation and striving toward self-reliance. Many centres teach Rwandan cultural dance as a way of maintaining and owning Rwandan culture.

Older students receive vocational skills training in areas like computer training, carpentry, motor vehicle repair, dressmaking, cooking and hairdressing.

Cultural Considerations



Clothing

- **Women:** Dresses, skirts, jeans and loose pants are all acceptable. Please dress modestly, ensuring skirts are below the knee and necklines are modest.
- **Men:** Long pants are recommended. Shorts are acceptable in some places but are not recommended for visiting local families or churches.
- Business casual attire is recommended for attending church services or visiting family homes.
- Open-toed shoes and sandals should be avoided.
- Piercings and tattoos are acceptable but uncommon. Be prepared that people may comment on them.

Greetings

- Greetings vary depending on the area, but a simple handshake or hug are usually appropriate. Please follow the advice of your Trips and Visits Specialist when greeting someone of the opposite gender.
- When men meet other men, it is common for the left hand to be placed on the right elbow or forearm when shaking hands as a sign of respect.
- If an elder is seated when you greet them, bending or stooping down is recommended.

Eating and drinking

- When eating with a large group, it is best practice for children to be served first.
- It is common for families to eat meals in silence.
- Consuming alcohol may be considered inappropriate by local Christians.

Emergency contact information

Local emergency number: 112
Compassion Rwanda office: 011-250-583552
Australian Embassy: +63 2 7757 8100

Language

- Useful Kinyarwanda phrases:
Hello: Muraho
How are you? Amakuru?
Goodbye: Murabeho
What is your name? Witwa nde?
My name is: Nitwa
Thank you: Murakoze
- The Rwandan genocide is a very sensitive topic. It is best to wait for someone to share their experience before asking them directly. To promote unity, it is now illegal to discuss different ethnic groups or ask someone about their ethnicity.
- Cattle are an important measure of someone's social standing. You may hear descriptions of how many cows something or someone is worth.

Body language

- It is best to avoid winking as this may confuse people.
- People often stand very close to one another when speaking.
- Individuals usually have minimal eye contact with a superior when conversing to show respect.

Public outings

- Access to good toilets is limited. It is recommended you carry some toilet paper or tissues in case you need to use a public toilet.
- Cash is preferable in many places.
- Please ask permission before you photograph any local people. This can include photos taken from a moving vehicle, so be sure to check with your driver or Trips and Visits Specialist first.



Key Challenges and Prayer Points

A history of ethnic tension culminated in the devastating genocide of 1994, in which more than 800,000 people were killed. The Rwandan government has been promoting unity in recent years, but there are many survivors still healing from losing their families and homes. Please pray that successful reconciliation measures will continue and that Rwandans will know profound peace.

In the aftermath of the genocide, many millions more found themselves pushed into poverty. The COVID-19 pandemic and the global food crisis has made it even more difficult for people to meet their basic needs. Please pray for our local church partners as they respond to needs in their communities and work to release children from poverty.

Many children are suffering from malnutrition. According to the World Health Organisation, 29.8 per cent of children under 5 are experiencing stunted growth. Please pray for God's provision over families struggling to afford food and ask that our local church partners can continue to provide tailored care to help children recover.



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