Excluding Darfur, the most shocking genocides post-Holocaust have happened in Rwanda and Bosnia. In these two very different places, ethnic differences led to mass killings and to a disintegration of the government. In Bosnia, over 300,000 were killed, and in Rwanda close to a million people were killed. It’s been a little over a decade for both genocides, and both countries have had time to begin their economies again and repair their country. I decided to look at the unemployment rates for both countries and to look at how these countries are attempting to fix that unemployment number. I feel that this is important, because both places are different: different resources, ethnic makeup and locations. I feel that taking into account the unemployment rate will reveal how these countries have redeveloped their economies.

Prior to the genocide, Bosnia was an industrial force. The country exported large amounts of steel and coal, vegetables and ore. During the war, these factories were bombed and have remained destroyed to this day. Rwanda, on the other hand, greatly relied on exporting coffee. Once the coffee market prices were lowered, coffee farmers were left without sustenance. It was the destruction of the economies that have slowed progress.

Bosnia is currently still looking at reformation of the economic system. According to 2000 statistics, over 410,000 people are unemployed. That’s about 15% of the working age population without a job. With such a high unemployed population, people are more apt to live on government programs or not work at all. Each major city had at least one factory that was the livelihood of the local population. With the destruction of those key employers many cannot find jobs elsewhere. Those who are professors, or civil engineers, or have other specialized training have a much easier time finding a job. Without the government helping to reestablish the old companies, most people will remain without a job. Such a high unemployment rate will impact other aspects of life, such as spending money, marriage, education and health. Without sufficient funds people will be prone to staying single because they cannot afford to support a family.

Rwanda, on the other hand, has over 2.4 million without a job- 3.6% according to the 2002 statistics by ANC.org. When one looks at the population differences, it’s easy to see which country has a bigger unemployment rate. While Rwanda has a much larger population, yet they are dealing with the unemployment issue much more easily. They are implementing very business friendly policies than are actually drawing in some very rich companies.

Both of the these countries faced a devastating event, yet the reforms each implemented greatly vary. Rwanda abolished the identity cards and set about presenting themselves as a unified nation, Bosnia still relies on the old religious divisions, and those religious divisions tend to influence policy more. This social division is impacting the effect of the reforms.

Rwandan population today is approximately 8,648,248, yet their economy is more robust and growing than that of Bosnia. Earlier this year, Microsoft and Nokia invested into the new Rwandan service sector. The investment of these two giant economic juggernauts has stimulated the economy and is being helped by the Rwandan president’s business friendly policy that is creating change for the Rwandan people and creating jobs that they so desperately need. Bosnia, on the other hand, has no mechanisms or procedures for stimulating the growth of less developed areas in the country.
economy provides no possibilities for faster employment and there are no facilities or incentives for a free market and tax concessions. It’s precisely this sort of obstacle that will keep the economy struggling and a large percentage of people unemployed. Rwandan population is twice the number of Bosnia, yet their progress is amazing.

With this continued effort into drawing more businesses, Rwanda could become a major leading African economic force. They have certainly set a course for achieving at least a middle economic standing by 2020, where as Bosnia has not made any long term plans for economic rejuvenation.

I suspect that the economy in Bosnia will not pick up anytime soon. We are still clinging to religious groups and letting religion influence much of our economic policy. In a way, I can understand why. People picked sides during the war in order to protect themselves. It seems a risky move even know to leave a side that sheltered you in order to promote economic welfare. People are more likely to look out for themselves and not everybody else. What Bosnia needs to do is to unite, regardless of religious differences and realize that they all need a job and money. Rwanda has put aside the Hutu/Tutsi difference in their social/economic sphere (though personal mistrust and preference may continue) and that move has jump started their economy. Until Bosnia can make that leap, we will be left unemployed and open to more emigration by people seeking jobs. Meanwhile, Rwanda could become the next giant software/cell phone conglomerate.

SOURCES:


http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/anctoday/2003/text/at47.txt