**Lesson Plan 1 – The origins of the Rwandan genocide**

When starting a new topic it is always important to explore what the pupils already know (or think they know). Ask the pupils if they have seen any of the following films:

* Hotel Rwanda
* Shooting Dogs (‘Beyond the Gates’ if used in the USA)
* Sometimes in April
* Shake hands with the Devil

Find out whether pupils know what the Rwandan genocide was, when it happened, who was involved etc. If knowledge is very minimal this may best be done through a simple question and answer session. With older pupils that demonstrate significant existing knowledge, then this can be formalised through completing a spider diagram (see activity 1a).

By asking the pupils what they already know it allows misconceptions to appear which can then be tackled. It also highlights to the pupils how little they know and often helps to generate a desire to learn.

Continue the lesson with the following two questions:

* **Where is Rwanda?** (see slides 2 and 3)

Rwanda is a land-locked state located in east Africa. It is part of the Great Lakes region and is bordered by Tanzania, Burundi, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

* **What is genocide?** (see slides 4 and 5)

(Encourage pupils to try to answer this question before giving the definition. This will help misconceptions to become apparent and highlight some of the notions and connotations which pupils may attach to the word.)

Genocide is a technical term, which has a legal definition. It has been under-used and over-used since its creation by Raphael Lemkin in 1944, a Polish-Jewish legal scholar who coined the phrase to describe the Nazi atrocities against the Jews. The word comes from the Greek *genos* meaning birth or race and the Latin word *cidium* meaning to cut or to kill.

In 1951 the United Nations legally defined genocide as:

Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

* Killing members of the group;
* Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
* Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
* Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group
* Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide - Article II

**What were the long-term causes and background to the Rwandan genocide?** (see activity 1b)

Activity

Cut out the eight boxes and give them to the pupils. Ask them to read the boxes and put them in a chronological order. A variation on this activity could be that the class is divided into 8 groups and each group has to exchange their information with another group until everyone has all 8 facts. Pupils can either copy out the facts or glue them onto a sheet of paper in order.

Teacher hint: It is important to discuss the background of the genocide with the pupils and talk about the important role that the colonial powers, especially Belgium, had on shaping the notion of differentness. The title of ‘Hutu’, ‘Tutsi’ and ‘Twa’ was far more flexible before Belgium rule and it was based on socio-economic status as well as ethnicity. Inter-marriage between Hutus and Tutsis was very common in Rwanda, especially in the south of the country. The Belgium division of Rwandan ethnicities was crudely determined, based on 19th century racial theories and involved methods such as measuring head size, nose size and height.

Explain to pupils that the identity card system which the Belgians introduced in the early 1930s was still in use at the time of genocide. Hutu militiamen made people show their identity card. A Tutsi identity card, or the failure to produce one, would almost certainly lead to that individual being killed. (see slide 5).