

FOCUS on Bugesera

RWANDA
Dispatch
APRIL - JULY 2026, ISSUE 85 AN INSIGHT INTO RWANDA

BUGESERA: CHASING BIG DREAMS
From overlooked region
to strategic hub



**HOW RWANDA DEPENDS ON
A COMPLEX NETWORK OF
OIL IT DOESN'T CONTROL**

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Bugesera, Nyamata
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Publishing Credits

CONTRIBUTORS

Aimable Twahirwa
Steven Nsamaza
Jeje Muhinde
Jane Munezero
Joan Mbabazi
George Kalisa
Gonzaga Muganwa
Elizabeth Tanganyika
John Mugisha
Viateur Nzeyimana
Steven Tumusiime

DESIGN AND LAYOUT MARKETING MANAGER MARKETING EXECUTIVES

Erick Sibo | 0788 554 350
Robert Mugabo
Camarade Innocent, Alex Ntaganzwa, Umurerwa Mary

TO EXPRESS VIEWS WRITE TO:

Dispatch
AN INSIGHT INTO RWANDA

Rwanda Dispatch, Remera - Gisementi
P.O. Box 453 Kigali Rwanda.
Administration and Editorial: +250 788 306 472
Marketing and Subscription:
+250 785 450 077 / 0781 540 672
Email: rwandadispatch1@gmail.com
X: [@rwandadispatch1](https://www.instagram.com/rwandadispatch1)
www.rwandadispatch.com

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Publisher's Note

In this latest issue, we focus on Bugesera District, a region that increasingly reflects Rwanda's ambitions for growth, connectivity, and transformation. Once known primarily for its vast open landscapes, Bugesera is becoming a hub of investment, innovation, and opportunity driven by major infrastructure projects, industrial expansion, and growing confidence in its future.

This edition explores the district's development journey in reshaping communities and attracting new investors. From the anticipated

international airport and the expanding Bugesera Special Economic Zone to emerging tourism destinations, the district is steadily positioning itself as a gateway for business and leisure. We also take readers above the landscape through a unique aerial perspective of its changing skyline, while highlighting eco-friendly destinations, where tourism, conservation, and community development come together in a uniquely Rwandan story.

This issue also follows the complex journey of oil from global production centres

to the East African coast and onward to Rwanda. As fuel remains central to transport, industry, and economic activity, understanding how these supply chains operate offers valuable insight into the forces that shape everyday life and national development.

In sport, we examine Bugesera's growing ambitions on and off the field. We get a sneak peek on the continued rise of Bugesera FC, this is proof that sport can serve as both a catalyst for development and a source of community pride.

Elsewhere, readers will find agri-business initiatives, analysis, development features, and inspiring human-interest stories that capture the energy and resilience of people driving change.

As we continue to embrace new ways of reaching audiences, we remain committed to producing every edition with care, curiosity, and purpose. For those who still value thoughtful storytelling and informed journalism, this issue is for you.

Until the next edition.

EDITORIAL

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said and Quoted



"Our strength as Africans lies in working together and supporting one another in addressing our common challenges."

Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of Tanzania.



"Food production necessitates the use of technology."

Dr. Telesphore Ndabamenye, Rwanda's Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources



"No African is a foreigner in Africa."

Julius Malema, South African politician and leader of Economic Freedom Fighters Party



"We must strive to work together with unity of purpose."

Prime Minister Dr. Justin Nsengiyumva



"An unprecedented reconciliation has emerged between Rwanda and France."

Emmanuel Macron, President of France



On the scene

M23 rebel soldier stands guard outside a laboratory in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, where samples from suspected Ebola cases are being tested. [May 2026, REUTERS]

Numbers that speak volumes

9.5
MAGNITUDE

THE 1960 GREAT CHILEAN EARTHQUAKE REMAINS THE MOST POWERFUL EARTHQUAKE EVER RECORDED, MEASURING 9.5 ON THE MOMENT MAGNITUDE SCALE. STRIKING NEAR VALDIVIA IN SOUTHERN CHILE, IT UNLEASHED DEVASTATING TSUNAMIS THAT CROSSED THE PACIFIC OCEAN, REACHING HAWAII, JAPAN AND THE PHILIPPINES. THE DISASTER CLAIMED BETWEEN 1,000 AND 6,000 LIVES, CAUSED WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTION, AND DEMONSTRATED THE IMMENSE FORCE OF NATURE ON A GLOBAL SCALE.

116
YEARS

THE LONGEST WAR IN RECORDED HISTORY LASTED FOR 116 YEAR DESPITE BEING KNOWN AS THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR. FOUGHT BETWEEN ENGLAND AND FRANCE FROM 1337 TO 1453, THE WAR RESHAPED THE POLITICAL MAP OF EUROPE AND HELPED FORGE THE NATIONAL IDENTITIES OF BOTH COUNTRIES. ITS CONCLUSION MARKED THE END OF MOST ENGLISH TERRITORIAL CLAIMS IN FRANCE AND LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR THE RISE OF MODERN NATION-STATES.

3,000
LANGUAGES

WITH MORE THAN 3,000 TRANSLATIONS, THE BIBLE IS THE MOST TRANSLATED BOOK IN HISTORY, UNDERSCORING ITS UNPARALLELED GLOBAL REACH AND INFLUENCE. FIRST TRANSLATED IN THE 3RD CENTURY BC THROUGH THE SEPTUAGINT, A GREEK VERSION OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES, ITS TRANSLATION JOURNEY HAS SPANNED MORE THAN TWO MILLENNIA, MAKING ITS MESSAGE ACCESSIBLE TO DIVERSE CULTURES, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD.

3,365
MILES

THE U.S. 20 ROUTE STRETCHING 3,365 MILES HOLDS THE TITLE OF THE LONGEST ROAD IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA SINCE 1963. THE COAST-TO-COAST ROUTE BEGINS IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, AND EXTENDS ALL THE WAY TO NEWPORT, OREGON. FOR MUCH OF ITS ROUTE, U.S. 20 RUNS ALMOST PARALLEL TO I-90, WHICH AT 3,020 MILES IS THE LONGEST INTERSTATE HIGHWAY IN THE COUNTRY.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor,

I want to applaud Rwanda Dispatch for its recent special issue on the Sudanese Community in Rwanda. The edition offered a thoughtful and moving portrayal of a community that has shown remarkable spirit in the face of extraordinary challenges.

What stood out most was how the stories balanced hardship with hope, highlighting Sudanese students, entrepreneurs, families, and professionals who are rebuilding their lives while contributing positively to Rwanda's social and economic fabric. The issue reminded readers that behind every migration story are individuals with dreams, talents, and aspirations.

At a time when global headlines often focus only on conflict, Rwanda Dispatch chose to tell more complete stories of perseverance, community, and human dignity. The issue was both informative and inspiring.

Thank you for bringing these important voices to your readers.

Sincerely,

A Rwanda Dispatch Reader





France turns a new page with Paris Genocide Memorial

French President Emmanuel Macron and Rwandan President Paul Kagame jointly inaugurated the first permanent memorial in Paris dedicated to victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, marking another significant step in the evolving relationship between France and Rwanda.

Known as “L’Archive” (The Archive), the monument stands along the banks of the Seine River and honours more than a million people killed during the genocide between April and July 1994. The

memorial features two black brass steles engraved with messages that commemorate the victims and preserve survivors’ memories.

During the unveiling ceremony, Macron described the memorial as the result of a long search for truth and a symbol of the reconciliation that has gradually emerged between the two nations. He emphasised that while the monument represents an important achievement, it is also part of an ongoing journey toward historical understanding.

President Kagame welcomed France’s efforts to confront its past and acknowledge its role in the events surrounding the genocide.

He praised the courage required to face historical responsibilities and noted that such actions help strengthen mutual trust and understanding.

The inauguration comes five years after Macron’s visit to Kigali, where he acknowledged France’s failure to respond adequately to warnings before the genocide.



Rwanda Establishes National Artificial Intelligence Agency

This June, a cabinet meeting approved the establishment of a National Artificial Intelligence Agency to accelerate AI development, adoption, investment, and governance in support of the country's digital transformation agenda.

The new agency will promote responsible AI use, attract investment, build local skills, and drive innovation across key sectors. The move positions Rwanda among countries creating dedicated AI institutions. It reflects its ambition to play a leading role in Africa's AI ecosystem while using emerging technologies to boost economic growth and improve public services.

Dubai and Doha Flights Resume, Boosting Rwanda's Export Trade

The resumption of RwandAir flights to Dubai and Doha is expected to ease market access challenges for Rwanda's horticulture exporters, particularly those dealing in perishable products such as avocados.

The three-month suspension due to the Iran war had disrupted exports,

strained buyer relationships, and increased losses as some produce was redirected to local markets. However, exporters still face challenges, including high freight costs, limited cargo space, and growing competition, underscoring the need for market diversification and value-added processing.

MTN seeks a cost-sharing model

Africa's biggest telecoms company MTN, is leading an industry push to relax national telecoms rules, pitching shared networks as a fix for the continent's \$100 billion digital infrastructure deficit, a senior executive told Semafor.

In practice, the shared model MTN proposes treats internet infrastructure as a critical public utility, with rivals co-

investing in a single physical network and competing only on the services they run over it. MTN and other networks are in talks with governments, Senior Vice President Ebenezer Asante said.

The World Bank estimates the continent faces a \$100 billion funding gap to pay for next-generation technologies, such as 5G rollouts and localised AI models.





World Cup 2026: Record 48 Teams and Unprecedented African Representation

The 2026 FIFA World Cup got underway on June 11 across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, marking the largest tournament in the competition's history. For the first time, 48 nations are competing for football's biggest

prize, up from 32 teams in previous editions. The tournament will feature 104 matches over 39 days, culminating in the final on July 19.

Africa is enjoying its strongest-ever representation at a men's World

Cup, with 10 nations qualifying for the expanded tournament.

The continent's representatives are Algeria, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa, and Tunisia.



Rwanda Eyes Nuclear Energy by Early 2030s

President Paul Kagame said on May 21, 2026, that Rwanda plans to begin developing nuclear energy technologies by the early 2030s as part of efforts to strengthen energy security and support industrial growth.

Speaking at the Nuclear Energy Innovation Summit for Africa in Kigali, Kagame said nuclear power could help expand reliable electricity access, modernise healthcare systems and support emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

The summit brought together African leaders, regulators, investors and energy experts amid growing interest in nuclear power across the continent as countries seek reliable alternatives to fossil fuels.

Kagame said Africa's nuclear ambitions would require stronger regional cooperation, private investment and credible regulatory systems to attract long-term financing.

RSSB Tigers make history with BAL 2026 Title

Rwanda's RSSB Tigers made history by becoming the first Rwandan team to win the prestigious Basketball Africa League title, defeating Angola's Petro de Luanda 90-88 in a thrilling final at BK Arena in Kigali.

Backed by a passionate home crowd, the Tigers staged a remarkable comeback to secure the continental crown. Guard Craig

Randall II was named the league's Most Valuable Player after a record-breaking season.

The 2026 BAL campaign also set new records for attendance, social media engagement, and commercial partnerships, highlighting the league's growing impact across Africa.

BNR hikes interest rate to 8.25% as inflation surges

In May 2026, the National Bank of Rwanda (BNR) raised its benchmark interest rate by 100 basis points to 8.25% as inflation accelerated beyond the central bank's target range amid rising global energy and transport costs.

Central Bank Governor Soraya Hakuziyaremye said the Monetary Policy Committee acted to contain

"persistent inflationary pressures" and preserve price stability.

Headline inflation climbed to 13% in April from 9.2% in March, driven largely by higher food, fuel and transport costs. The central bank now projects average inflation at 13.9% for 2026, up sharply from the 9.4% forecast issued in February.





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Navigating a Global Oil Web

How Rwanda depends on a complex network of oil it doesn't control

Every single drop of fuel pumped into a car or motorcycle in Rwanda has travelled thousands of miles across oceans and continents. It has been extracted from the deserts of the Gulf, refined in India, shipped over vast oceans, and hauled in heavy tankers across congested East African road corridors.

BY JEJJE MUHINDE

By the time it's poured inside a tank at any local fuel station, it carries the physical weight of a complex global network. With no oil fields, no domestic refineries, and no pipeline connecting to the coast, energy security here isn't just a matter of watching global prices. It is a relentless, high-stakes logistical balancing act played out every single day.

When global tensions flare and demand spikes unexpectedly, the liability of being at the very end of that long supply chain quickly becomes a stark reality. Behind the price tags at the pump lies a complex international web.

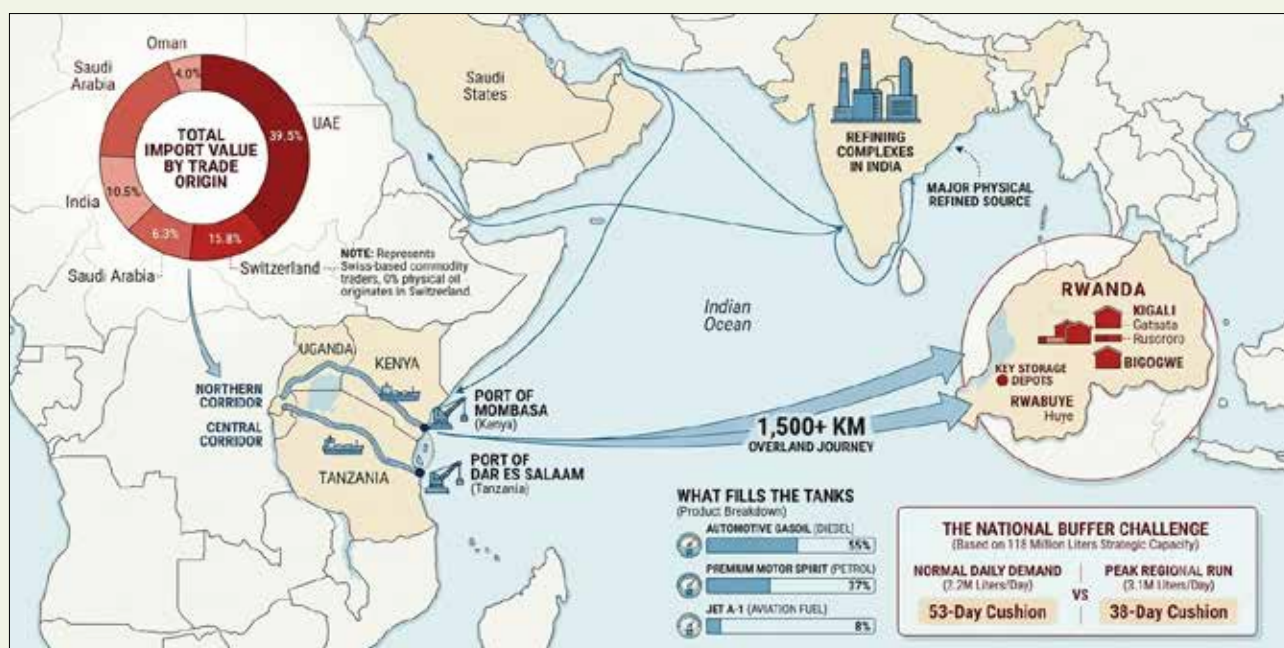
Across Oceans

The story of Fuel reaching Rwanda is a fascinating exercise in global geography. According to World Bank

statistics, nearly 40 per cent of the petroleum that keeps the country moving is financially brokered through the United Arab Emirates. Another 15 per cent is tied directly to the energy giants of Saudi Arabia, while roughly 10 per cent comes out of the massive, hyper-efficient refining complexes of India.

Annually, this amounts to approximately 730 million to 912 million litres.

Graphical illustration that Oil products travels to Rwanda reveals a highly structured global pipeline



Even landlocked Switzerland claims a six per cent stake in our trade books, not because they are drilling oil in the Alps, but because Swiss-based commodity trading houses are the ones financing and managing the complex contracts before fuel starts to move.

Regardless of whose stamp is on the financial

paperwork, the physical commodity arriving at Rwanda's borders is highly specific. Over half of all fuel imported in Rwanda is automotive diesel, the literal lifeblood of our logistics, construction, and industrial sectors and everyday public transport systems.

The rest is split between

petrol that fuels private vehicles, industrial oil and taxi-motos, and the specialised jet fuel that keeps industries and RwandAir aloft.

The Import Grid

To understand why fuel prices move the way they do, we have to look past the global oil headlines and trace the

actual mechanics of the supply grid. All Rwanda's petroleum needs are imported as fully refined liquids, primarily Premium Motor Spirit (Petrol), Automotive Gasoil (Diesel), and Jet A-1 (Aviation Fuel).

UN Comtrade data shows that the majority of Rwanda's oil products originate in the Middle East, with the United Arab Emirates as the dominant partner at 48.30%, followed by Saudi Arabia at 16.20% and Oman at 5.40%. Switzerland accounts for a significant 14.20%.

Imports from India account for 7.00%, alongside smaller shares from Singapore (2.90%) and Malaysia (1.40%)—the rest is sourced from East African neighbours such as Kenya and Tanzania.

When trade data attributes imports to countries like Switzerland or Singapore under what is called paper or merchant trading, it shifts the nature of global trade, in which physical commodities never lands in those countries.

Switzerland acts as the world's commercial switchboard. The oil moves from country A to B, but the invoice goes through Switzerland.

The oil journey

While contracts are signed with Dubai

RWANDA: SUMMARY OF FUEL STORAGE CAPACITIES

Strategic Reserve, Commercial, and PPP Facilities (2024 Estimates)

| | LOCATION / DEPOT | PRIMARY OWNER (GOVT/PRIVATE) | CAPACITY (Million Liters) | FUEL TYPES |
|--|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | RUSORORO (Kigali) | Government / PPP (e.g., SP) | 66.0 | Petrol, Diesel, Jet A-1 |
| 2 | GATSATA (Kigali) | Government | 15.4 | Petrol, Diesel, Kerosene |
| 3 | JABANA (Kigali) | Private (e.g., OilCom) | 20.0 | Petrol, Diesel |
| 4 | KABUYE (Kigali) | Private (e.g., ERP) | 5.8 | Petrol, Diesel |
| 5 | BIGOGWE (Nyabihu) | Government | 5.0 | Petrol, Diesel |
| 6 | RWABUYE (Huye) | Government | 3.8 | Petrol, Diesel |
| 7 | KANOMBE (KIA) | Government | 2.0 | Jet A-1 |
| TOTAL NATIONAL CAPACITY (installed) | | | 118.0 Million Liters | (Multiple Fuels) |

Note: Ongoing expansion aims to reach ~320M liters under PPP.

source by Rwanda Dispatch

RWANDADISPATCH

Over half of all fuel imported in Rwanda is automotive diesel, the literal lifeblood of our logistics, construction, and industrial sectors and everyday public transport systems.

or Swiss traders, the physical refined products enter Rwanda exclusively through two overland transport corridors from the Indian Ocean ports. The Central Corridor from Dar es Salaam passes through the Tanzania-Rusumo border and accounts for over 35.8% of total inbound cargo traffic.

The Northern Corridor, which runs through Mombasa in Kenya, passes through Uganda, entering via the Gatuna or Kagitumba border posts, and handles at least 27.1% of this regional logistics pipeline.

Furthermore, these imports must meet strict environmental metrics before they are cleared. The Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) enforces a rigorous 50 parts per million (ppm) sulfur

cap for both petrol and diesel to protect urban air quality, alongside strict density and octane rules to ensure engines perform efficiently.

When regional or international bottlenecks threaten this fragile flow, Rwanda's primary defence is its physical storage infrastructure.

Currently, Rwanda maintains a collective national storage capacity of 118 million litres split across a network of public and private strategic depots.

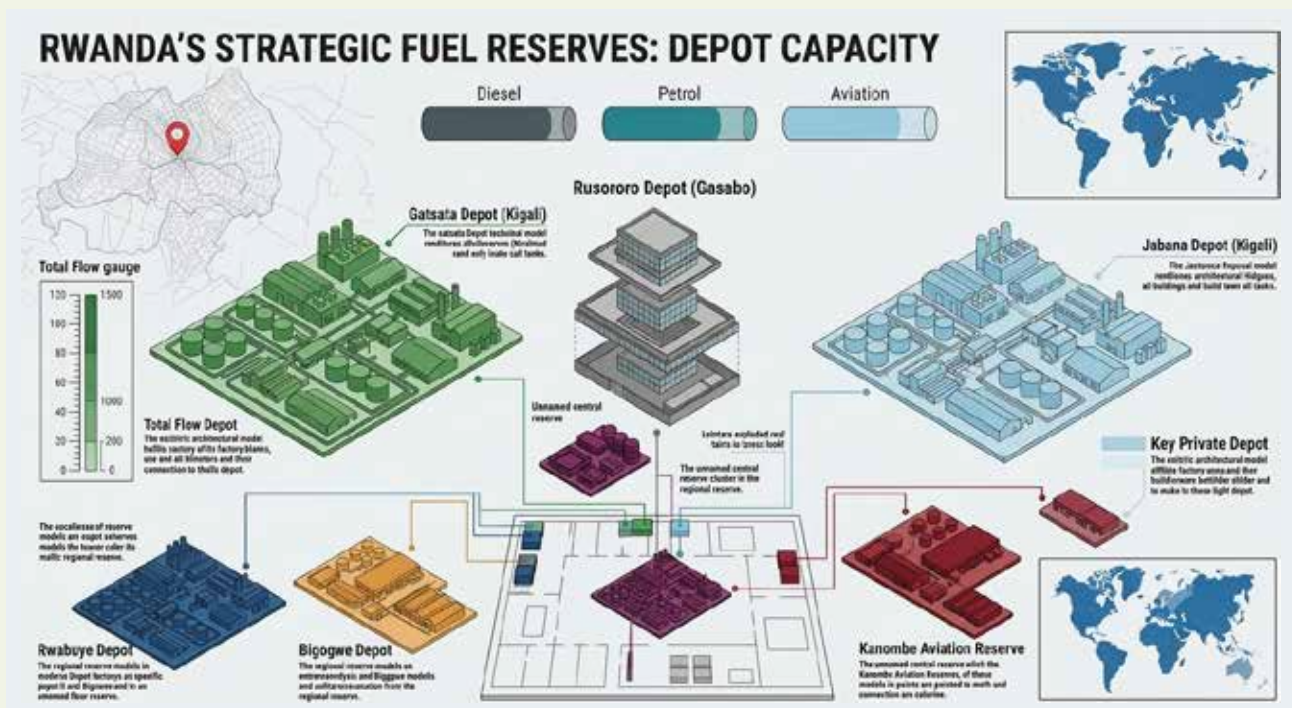
This 118-million litre reserve serves as a comfortable 50- to 60-day national buffer for the country. However, when unexpected cross-border demand drives daily consumption to 3.1 million litres, that emergency lifeline shrinks

to less than 38 days. Government has plans to expand storage capacity to 320 million litres.

This shrinking buffer explains why the Rwanda Utilities Regulator Authority (RURA) had to act so decisively this year when the war in the Middle East started.

The latest June 5, 2026, RURA revised retail pump price put diesel at Rwf.2,927 per litre catching up petrol prices which have been previously revised twice since the Iran conflict. The changes reflect developments in global oil markets as well as supply-side conditions affecting fuel importation and distribution.

Prime Minister Justin Nsengiyumva said, "The increase is driven by global oil market shocks,



Source: World Bank

especially instability in the Middle East. However, transport fares and essential services must not rise because of global shocks. He said government was subsidising about 18% of the cost of diesel to protect citizens from the full impact of global price increases.”

Eric Mutaganda, Chairperson of ASSIMPER, the association representing petroleum products importers, noted that soaring global fuel prices have sharply increased the financial resources needed to sustain current import levels.

“If the price has gone up more than five times, that means you need to increase your capital at the same level to be able to continue importing the same quantity,” he said.

Rwanda does not consume every drop of the \$671 million in fuel imported every year, re-exporting some to Eastern DRC. In the final quarter of 2025 alone, Rwanda re-exported about \$56.85 million in oil.

While petrol and diesel grab the headlines, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) has quietly become vital to Rwanda's energy mix. Sourced through the same way as oil, it now powers kitchens in homes, hotels, and schools. Yet, like any petroleum product, cooking gas remains entirely at the mercy of global price swings and regional transit hiccups.

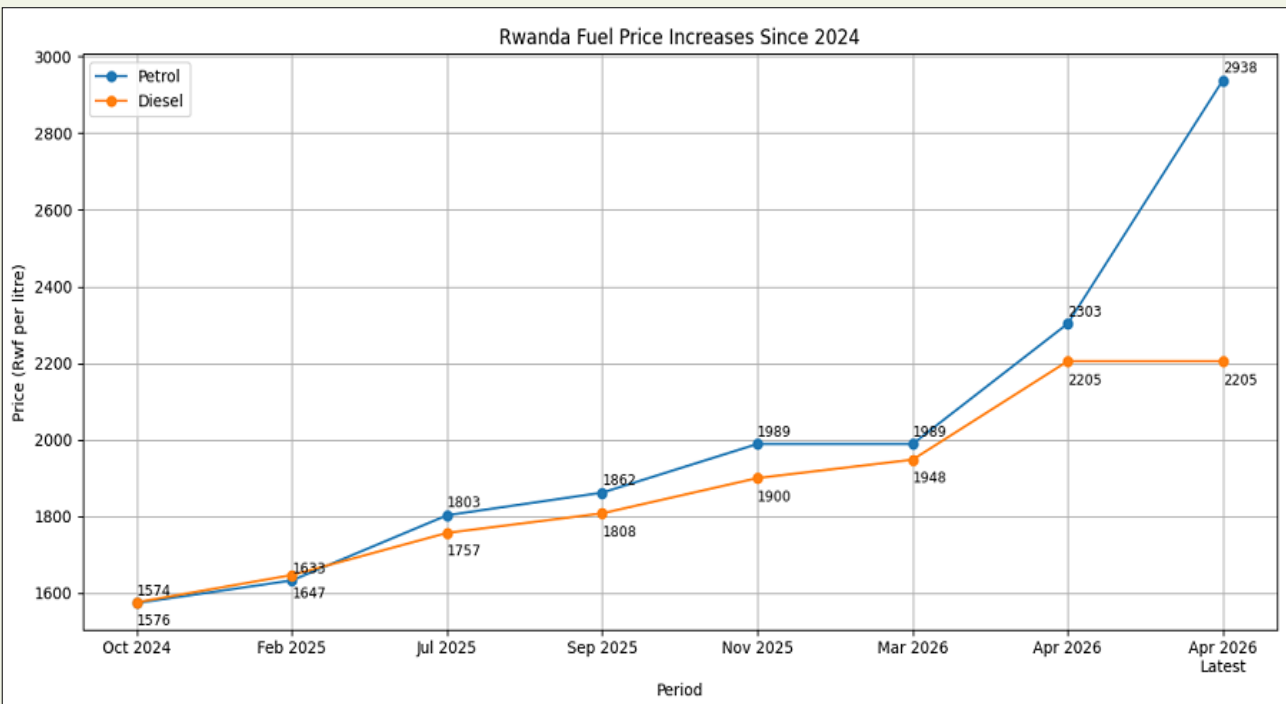
Even though Rwanda imports refined products rather than crude oil, local costs are tightly anchored to Brent Crude. When Middle East tensions or

production cuts squeeze global markets, refiners and international traders immediately pass those costs down the chain.

Brent crude hovered comfortably below \$75 a barrel for most of 2025, but repeated geopolitical flashpoints have triggered damaging price spikes. However, even minor global ripples add millions to the national import bill, inevitably hitting local consumers at the pump.

Sitting at the very end of the supply chain, every drop of fuel used in Rwanda requires a high-stakes logistical balancing act. When geopolitical tensions erupt, the shockwaves hit home immediately, as proven by recent price hikes and the long-term fix hinges entirely on infrastructure.

Currently, Rwanda maintains a collective national storage capacity of 118 million litres split across a network of public and private strategic depots.



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One-On-One with
Mutabazi Richard
the Mayor of Bugesera District

From a forgotten frontier to Rwanda's emerging gateway

For decades, Bugesera was associated with hardship, isolation, and neglect. Historically marked by displacement, poor infrastructure, and difficult living conditions, the district stood on the margins of national development. Today, however, Bugesera is rapidly emerging as one of Rwanda's most strategic and promising districts — driven by major infrastructure projects, growing investor confidence, and the transformative impact of a new International Airport.

At the centre of this transition is Mayor Richard Mutabazi, who believes the district's story is ultimately one of resilience, good governance, and long-term vision. Talking to Rwanda Dispatch's Steven Nsamaza, the Mayor reflects on Bugesera's difficult history, new opportunities, ambitions, and why he believes Bugesera is becoming a leading destination for investment and quality living in Rwanda.

Rwanda Dispatch [RD]: Bugesera was once known for hardship and isolation. Today, it's becoming known for opportunity. What does this shift mean to you?

Mayor: When you see good results, it is usually because there has been good leadership and a clear vision. Historically,



Richard Mutabazi, Mayor of Bugesera District.

Bugesera experienced very difficult conditions. People lived with limited infrastructure, poor services, and challenging

environmental conditions. In many ways, the district was neglected for a long time.

But after Rwanda's

liberation, good governance transformed the country, including Bugesera. Stability, security, and inclusive leadership created a new environment where people could work, invest, and improve their lives. Today, Bugesera is no longer seen as a remote or forgotten place. It is becoming a place people want to visit, invest in, and live in.

RD: Bugesera has a complex history marked by displacement and discrimination. How important is it to understand the district's history when discussing its current transformation?

Mayor: It is very important because understanding where we came from helps explain how far we have come. Historically, Bugesera



was heavily affected by discriminatory policies during the first and second republics. Many people, especially Tutsi families, were relocated here from other parts of the country. Families were separated from relatives, lost property, and were resettled in difficult conditions.



At the time, Bugesera lacked basic infrastructure and public services. After the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, the district had only one secondary school — Collège de Rilima, now Groupe Scolaire Rilima — which had originally been established mainly for Burundian refugees rather than residents.

People often associate Bugesera with tsetse flies, disease, and isolation. These conditions shaped the district's image for many years. But today, Bugesera represents resilience and recovery. The same district that once struggled with exclusion is now becoming one of Rwanda's fastest-growing development corridors.

RD: How are you benefiting from your proximity to Kigali while managing urban pressure?

Mayor: Our location is one of Bugesera's greatest strategic assets.

Being close to Kigali allows local producers to access large markets more easily. Farmers and businesses can transport goods quickly to the city, which improves economic activity and incomes.

At the same time, many people who work in Kigali now choose to live in Bugesera because land is more available and the cost of living can be lower. Professionals based in Kigali can easily travel to Bugesera for work and return the same day.

Bugesera also connects Kigali to the Eastern Province and borders Burundi. We are linked to districts such as Kicukiro, Rwamagana, Ngoma, Kamonyi, Ruhango, and Nyanza. This makes Bugesera an important geographic and economic corridor.

However, rapid growth also creates pressure. Demand for land has

increased significantly, and construction activity is growing very fast. That is why urban planning and proper land use are becoming increasingly important.

RD: What opportunities do you believe the new International Airport here will create for residents?

Mayor: The new airport is one of the largest investment projects in the region, and its impact will go far beyond aviation. First, it is already creating jobs through construction and related activities. Local suppliers are benefiting from demand for materials such as stones and sand sourced within the district.

Once operational, the airport will create opportunities in transport, hospitality, logistics, trade, and agriculture. For example, passengers and airport staff will require food, accommodation, and transport. This creates

opportunities for local producers to supply fresh vegetables, meat, and horticultural products.

We encourage our farmers and entrepreneurs to position themselves early to take advantage of these opportunities. The airport is also pushing us to invest in skills development. We are working with partners to prepare young people in areas such as customer service, languages, hospitality, and airport operations.

RD: There is increasing discussion about the district becoming a logistics and transport hub. What concrete steps are being taken to support that vision?

Mayor: Several major infrastructure projects are already underway. Key roads connecting the airport have been planned, including an expressway linking Kigali to the airport. Another



multi-lane road project is also being developed to reduce congestion and improve the movement of goods and people.

The Kigali logistics transport network is also expanding. New connections from the Masaka dry port via Bugesera to Burundi will strengthen regional trade and transport.

The broader infrastructure project covers hundreds of kilometres and connects strategic areas such as Juru, Rilima, Gako, and other important zones. These investments are laying the foundation for Bugesera to become a major logistics and connectivity hub, not only for Rwanda but for the wider region.

RD: Rapid growth often creates challenges in urban planning and land management. How is the district responding to rising land demand and development pressure?

Mayor: The increase in investment and construction demand has created both opportunities and challenges. Land prices have increased significantly, and we are receiving a very high number of requests for construction permits and development approvals.

One challenge is that some people purchased land years ago, before the district updated the current master plan. Today, certain areas are designated for industries, while others are reserved for housing,

education, or agriculture. Some investors may want to build near the airport even when that area is not zoned for their type of project.

This is why the master plan is being revised to reflect the new realities created by infrastructure developments. We are guiding investors toward approved development zones to ensure organised and sustainable urban growth.

RD: As an agricultural district, how are you balancing urbanisation with the need to protect farmland and support agriculture?

Mayor: Agriculture remains central to the livelihoods of many residents, and protecting agricultural land is very important. Fertile land must be preserved to ensure food security and sustainable development.

When investors want to establish projects such as schools or hospitals, we engage them and guide them toward suitable locations that do not affect productive farmland. Development must happen in a balanced way.

At the same time, we are investing in agricultural modernisation. Bugesera has strong agricultural potential, but it is also vulnerable to drought. That is why irrigation is a priority. Both large-scale and small-scale irrigation systems are being developed to help farmers increase productivity



despite climate challenges. We are also promoting agricultural transformation and value addition while strengthening cold chain systems and post-harvest handling.

RD: Infrastructure development has accelerated in recent years. What are some of the key priorities moving forward?

Mayor: Our goal is to achieve universal access to water and electricity by 2029. We want every household to be within 1

kilometre of a water source, and eventually within 500 metres for most residents.

We are expanding water supply infrastructure alongside industrial development to ensure sustainable growth. In the electricity sector, we are working with REG (Rwanda Energy Group) and private companies to expand access and improve reliability.

In some areas, we are upgrading from smaller transformers to higher-



you envision Bugesera in the next 10 to 15 years?

Mayor: I believe Bugesera will become one of Rwanda's leading economic gateways. The airport alone is expected to handle millions of passengers annually, including transit travellers. This will create enormous opportunities for investment, trade, tourism, and services.

As connectivity improves, Bugesera will continue attracting businesses, industries, and residents. But our focus is not only on growth — it is also on ensuring organised, sustainable, and inclusive development.

I encourage investors to arrive early and position themselves before the airport fully opens. There are opportunities in hotels, logistics, agriculture, housing, transport, and many other sectors.

For residents, I encourage them to remain patient and think long-term. Some people may be tempted to sell land quickly because prices are rising, but the long-term value of staying and participating in the district's growth may be much greater.

Ultimately, Bugesera's future is very promising. What makes me proudest is knowing that the transformation we are seeing is improving people's lives. That is the true meaning of development.

Thank you

capacity systems to support homes, businesses, and industries. Reliable electricity is essential for economic transformation, especially as more industries and businesses establish themselves in the district.

RD: Governance and citizen participation appear to be central to your approach. How are residents involved in Bugesera's transformation?

Mayor: Governance is essential in everything we do. Development cannot

succeed without strong follow-up and citizen participation. We work closely with residents and listen carefully to their suggestions and priorities.

Community meetings and citizen feedback help us identify service delivery gaps and areas that require improvement. When residents speak openly about challenges at the sector or cell level, it helps us strengthen accountability and improve services.

RD: Looking ahead, how do

We are investing in agricultural modernisation. Bugesera has strong agricultural potential, but it is also vulnerable to drought. That is why irrigation is a priority.

BUGESERA SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE FUELS INVESTMENT, JOBS AND INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

The special economic zone is attracting investors, expanding manufacturing capacity and strengthening Bugesera’s role in Rwanda’s industrial transformation.



Bugesera Special Economic Zone (BSEZ) is emerging as a key pillar of Rwanda’s industrial strategy, as construction and investor activity accelerate in one of the country’s largest planned industrial parks.

The zone is being developed through a public-private partnership between the Government of Rwanda and ARISE Integrated Industrial Platforms, with a combined investment of about \$100 million. Ownership is split 60 per cent for ARISE IIP and 40 per cent for the government.

Covering about 335 hectares in Gashora Sector, Bugesera District, the industrial park is located approximately 56 kilometres from Kigali and near a new international airport under construction. Officials say the location gives manufacturers direct access to key

transport networks and strengthens the district’s position as a future logistics and trade hub.

Development is progressing in phases, with roads, water systems, electricity networks and industrial facilities being rolled out to support manufacturing operations. According to officials, the first phase has reached about 85

per cent occupancy, reflecting growing investor confidence in the project.

Several factories are already operational, while others remain under construction. Industries represented in the zone include agro-processing, construction materials, packaging, textiles, timber processing and beverages. Emerging pharmaceutical and light

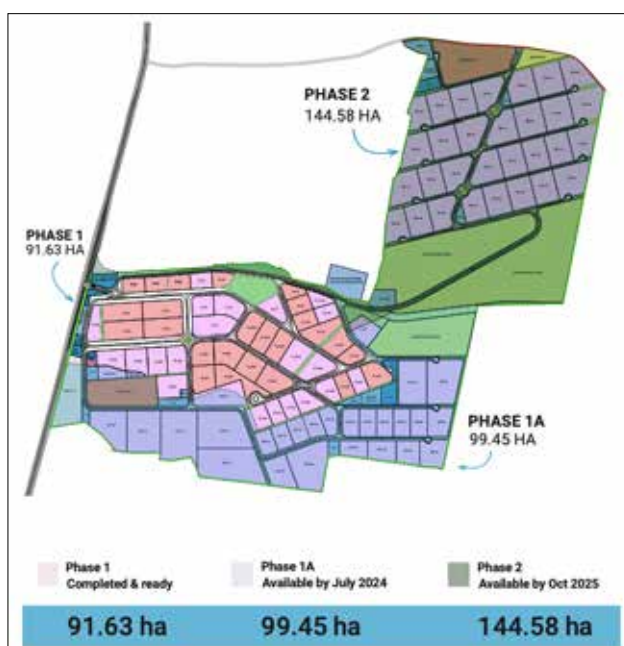
manufacturing facilities are also taking shape.

RDB Chief Investment Officer Michelle Umurungi said the zone has attracted about \$100 million in approved investments during its first phase.

“The zone has already recorded tangible progress in infrastructure delivery, including internal roads, water systems, wastewater facilities and electricity networks,” Umurungi said while appearing before a Senate Committee on Economy and Finance.

According to Pushpendra Kumar, Project and Operations Manager at BSEZ, the zone currently supports between 1,500 and 2,000 jobs across 12 operational companies. Five additional firms are under construction, while several others are assessing opportunities to establish operations within the park.

Once fully developed, BSEZ is expected to host more





than 75 industries and create approximately 45,000 direct jobs, supporting Rwanda’s efforts to expand its manufacturing base and boost exports.

Kumar noted that attracting companies into the zone remains a challenge, particularly as some industries continue to operate outside designated industrial parks. He also pointed to the absence of targeted incentives for firms choosing to locate within the special economic zone.

The project has also highlighted the need for continued infrastructure development. It has also invested in environmental and utility infrastructure, including wastewater treatment and sewage systems, as essential to supporting future industrial growth.

Kumar added that BSEZ management participates in community activities such as Umuganda and supports environmental sustainability initiatives.

Beyond manufacturing, the zone hosts Rwanda’s



The zone has already recorded tangible progress in infrastructure delivery, including internal roads, water systems, wastewater facilities and electricity networks.”

e-waste collection and recycling facility, which processes thousands of tonnes of electronic waste annually. The facility reflects growing efforts to integrate environmental

sustainability into the country’s industrial development agenda.

ARISE IIP operates industrial platforms across several African countries, including Gabon, Benin and Togo, and is expanding projects in other countries.

The zone is expected to strengthen Rwanda’s manufacturing sector by attracting new investment, expanding industrial production and creating employment opportunities. Its location near Kigali and regional transport routes is also expected to improve market access for businesses operating within the park.

As development continues, the Bugesera Special Economic Zone is steadily evolving into one of the most important industrial centres, underscoring the district’s growing role in the country’s economic transformation.



EAGLE VIEW: HOW WILLIAM SHYAKA IS BLENDING HOSPITALITY, AGRICULTURE AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

BY STEVEN NSAMAZA

On the tranquil shores of Lake Mirayi in Gashora of Bugesera District, rows of mango trees sway gently in the wind as long-horned Inyambo cattle graze nearby. Children laugh as they feed rabbits and ducks, while visitors take in the calm beauty of a countryside retreat that feels worlds away from the bustle of Kigali.



William Shyaka, Founder, Eagle View.

This is Eagle View Farm, a fast-growing hospitality and agribusiness brand founded by William Shyaka, a Rwandan entrepreneur whose journey from Europe back to his homeland is helping redefine tourism, farming and community development in Bugesera.

William represents a growing generation of Rwandans from the diaspora who have chosen to return home not only to invest but also to contribute to the transformation of their country.

Born in Rwanda but raised in Switzerland after leaving at the age of nine, William completed his studies in mechanical engineering and secured a stable career in Europe. Yet despite the comfort and opportunities abroad, Rwanda remained close to his heart.

His turning point came when President Paul Kagame visited Rwandans living in Europe and challenged them to think about what they could do for their country.

“That message stayed with me,” William recalls. “I kept asking myself how I could





contribute to building Rwanda.” In 2012, it was time to return home.

A VISION ROOTED IN OPPORTUNITY

Like many entrepreneurs, William’s journey did not begin with a grand master plan. It began with observation — seeing possibilities where others saw limitations.

While working with partners to operate 5 Swiss Hotel in Kigali, he became increasingly drawn to Bugesera, a region known for its lakes and vast landscapes but also for the harsh droughts that often affected local farmers.

He purchased land along Lake Mirayi



in Gashora Sector, convinced that the area held enormous untapped potential.

His entrepreneurial instincts sharpened further in 2015 when the closure of the Burundi-Rwanda border caused fruit prices to rise sharply due to supply shortages.

Seeing both a challenge and an opportunity, he planted mango trees. William had to think differently; with the water resources in Bugesera, he introduced modern irrigation systems to support farming activities.

Three years later, the farm was producing tonnes of mangoes.

Today, Eagle View Farm harvests more than 120 tonnes of mangoes annually, alongside oranges, avocados and other fruits destined for both local markets and export.

But for William, farming was never only about production.

For decades, farming has often been viewed by many young people as a low-status occupation.

William wanted to challenge that perception.

Seated on the porch of his newly completed lodge, overlooking neatly maintained orchards as peacocks gracefully roam the surroundings, William speaks passionately about agriculture as one of Rwanda’s greatest economic potentials.

“People underestimate farming,” he says. “But commercial agriculture can be more profitable than many professions people traditionally admire.”

His own experience reflects that belief. Despite operating one of the most successful restaurants in the centre of Kigali, William says returns from farming were far more rewarding.

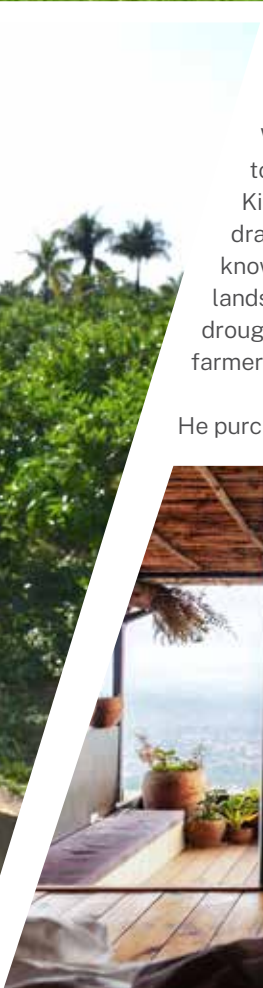
AT EAGLE VIEW FARM, AGRICULTURE MEETS INNOVATION AND TOURISM.

The property hosts a variety of livestock, including sheep, rabbits, ducks, geese, pigs, chickens and peacocks. Among the most treasured attractions are the majestic Inyambo cattle — Rwanda’s iconic long-horned breed deeply rooted in the country’s cultural heritage.

For William, the Inyambo are less about production and more about preserving identity and tradition.

“It’s my passion, Inyambo keep us connected to our roots.”

The farm has since evolved into an eco-friendly destination where families, especially children from Kigali, can reconnect with nature



and learn firsthand about food production and animal rearing.

Recognising the growing demand for recreational family spaces near the capital, William gradually transformed the farm into a hospitality destination.

Today, visitors not only tour orchards and livestock areas, but also enjoy accommodation, farm-to-table dining experiences and cultural entertainment.

More than 90 per cent of the food served at Eagle View Farm is sourced locally, much of it directly from the farm itself.

When the first passengers land in Bugesera, Eagle View wants to be ready to give them a true Rwandan experience



THE BIRTH OF THE EAGLE VIEW BRAND

William’s entry into hospitality took another leap during the COVID-19 pandemic. When his wife and children returned to Europe, he found himself living alone in a large house in Rebero, one of Kigali’s scenic hills overlooking the city.

Rather than leave the property underutilised, he transformed it into an Airbnb.

THE RESPONSE EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS.

Visitors were captivated

by the panoramic views of Kigali, and William quickly recognised the potential to create something bigger.

THAT IDEA BECAME EAGLE VIEW LODGE.

The name itself carries personal symbolism.

“An eagle is my favorite character,” William explains. “It observes things from afar, remains focused and steady. A good view helps people think clearly, and thoughtful minds lead to progress and development.”

The philosophy has shaped the growth of the Eagle

View brand, which now includes four expanding branches:

- Eagle View Lodge in Rebero
- Eagle View Residence in Kimihurura
- Eagle View Golf in Kacyiru
- Eagle View Farm in Gashora, Bugesera

Together, the branches are steadily evolving into what William hopes will become a nationwide hospitality chain.

BUILDING AROUND BUGESERA'S FUTURE

William is especially optimistic about the future of Bugesera as Rwanda prepares for the completion of the new international airport currently under construction in the district.

He believes the airport will dramatically transform the region into a major gateway for tourism, business and logistics.

“When the first passengers land in Bugesera, Eagle View wants to be ready to give them a true Rwandan experience,” he says.



His ambition is for Eagle View to become one of the first hospitality references for travellers arriving through the airport — offering visitors authentic experiences rooted in culture, nature and community. That vision aligns closely with the broader transformation of Bugesera District, which is rapidly positioning itself as one of Rwanda’s most strategic growth corridors.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH ENTERPRISE

Beyond business growth, William places strong emphasis on community empowerment.

Eagle View Farm employs agronomists, veterinarians, hospitality staff and numerous casual labourers during planting and harvesting seasons, with the majority recruited locally.

Women and youth from surrounding communities are among the biggest beneficiaries.

The farm also hosts study



tours for farmers from across Rwanda eager to learn about irrigation systems, fruit production and modern agricultural practices.

Meanwhile, children from workers’ families and neighbouring villages participate in cultural dance groups supported by Eagle View, helping preserve traditional heritage while creating entertainment opportunities.

As an art enthusiast, William also works closely with local artisans whose crafts and artworks are displayed across Eagle View properties.

For him, success means ensuring that growth benefits not only the business but the wider community around it.

A DREAM COMING FULL CIRCLE

Today, William continues to divide his life between Rwanda and Switzerland, where his family resides. Yet his heart and ambitions remain firmly rooted in Rwanda.

From the comfortable certainty of employment in Europe to the unpredictable journey of entrepreneurship back home, he has steadily

built a brand grounded in resilience, opportunity and national pride.

What began as a personal desire to “lay a brick” in building his homeland is now becoming a tangible reality.

Through hospitality, farming, tourism and community empowerment, William Shyaka is not only expanding the Eagle View brand — he is helping shape a new story of Bugesera District itself.

A story where agriculture meets innovation, tourism meets culture, and local communities grow alongside business success.

We are especially optimistic about the future of Bugesera as Rwanda prepares for the completion of the new international airport currently under construction in the district





SUNPREME LTD

Engineering Rwanda's future through precision and innovation

In the fast-evolving landscape of Bugesera District, where ambition meets opportunity, one company is quietly but powerfully shaping the future of Rwanda's industrial and infrastructure sectors. SUNPREME Ltd, an engineering firm, has emerged as a symbol of precision, innovation, and long-term national impact.

Founded in 2013 by Nikil Anand and Bineetha Nikil Anand, the company was built on a bold vision — to reduce Rwanda's reliance on imported engineering solutions while nurturing local talent and advancing homegrown manufacturing. What began as a shared passion for engineering excellence has grown into a cornerstone of Rwanda's development story.

Together, Nikil Anand and



Bineetha Nikil Anand have built SUNPREME through a partnership that perfectly complements each other's strengths. While Nikil

drives the engineering and innovation vision, Bineetha has played a vital role in general management, financial oversight, and

guiding the company's long-term direction. Her steady leadership and strategic support have made her a key pillar behind SUNPREME's growth and success.

At its core is a state-of-the-art fabrication and precision machine shop in Mayange, of Bugesera, equipped with advanced technologies such as CNC machining, EDM spark erosion, CNC milling, and turning centers. The facility also includes surface treatment systems like powder coating and electroplating, alongside a modern inspection center. This combination of technology and expertise allows SUNPREME to deliver high-quality structural steel fabrication, mechanical systems, and precision components that meet global standards.

But beyond machines and metal, it is people who define the company's impact.

From the outset, the founders placed a strong emphasis on building local capacity. By recruiting young graduates from Rwanda’s Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centres (IPRCs), the company has created a pipeline of skilled professionals equipped to contribute to the country’s industrial growth. With a remarkably high employee retention rate, this is a reflection of a workplace culture that values and rewards its workforce.

Workers benefit from structured incentives, including quarterly bonuses equivalent to an additional month’s salary and performance rewards upon successful project completion. In a rare and transformative initiative, Mr. Anand also facilitates housing for employees in Bugesera, offering homes based on merit, which they will retain even after leaving the company. This approach not only strengthens loyalty but also contributes to social stability and community development.

The company’s operational model is equally distinctive, focusing exclusively on specialized engineering projects, deliberately avoiding routine, walk-in jobs. “We take on the challenging jobs that need our expertise,” says Mr. Anand — a philosophy that underscores commitment to quality, reliability, and integrity.

Over the years, SUNPREME Ltd has worked on some of the most impressive landmark projects across Rwanda. The company played a key role in the structural



engineering of the bridge at Kigali Convention Centre, ensuring both durability and aesthetic excellence. At Kigali International Airport, the firm designed and constructed the VIP hangar and installed a sophisticated foam fire suppression system, enhancing aviation safety and infrastructure.

Its footprint extends to the new Bugesera International Airport, where SUNPREME

contributed to the development of a fabric unit, supporting one of Rwanda’s most ambitious infrastructure projects. In the energy sector, the company has delivered critical components for hydroelectric projects, including turbine installations and penstock systems, advancing Rwanda’s push for sustainable power.

From manufacturing a 50,000-liter storage tank to designing automated



warehouse gate systems and wastewater treatment reservoirs, SUNPREME’s work spans industries while maintaining a consistent standard of excellence. As Mr. Anand proudly notes, “In every landmark infrastructure in the country, you will find our footprint.”

This impact is particularly evident in Bugesera, where the company’s presence is helping to transform the district into an industrial and economic hub. By investing in advanced manufacturing, creating jobs, and supporting major infrastructure projects like Bugesera Special Economic Zone (BSEZ), SUNPREME is directly contributing to the district’s growth and Rwanda’s broader vision of self-reliance.

More importantly, the company embodies the spirit of “Made in Rwanda” — demonstrating that world-class engineering solutions can be designed and produced locally. In doing so, it is not only reducing import dependency but also instilling confidence in Rwanda’s industrial capabilities.

From an engineer who arrived in Rwanda for a job and chose to stay, to a company now embedded in the nation’s development journey, SUNPREME’s story is one of commitment, innovation, and transformation. As Rwanda continues to rise, the Anand family stands as both builders of infrastructure and possibility — engineering a future defined by resilience, skill, and homegrown excellence.



RUTAGARAMA'S JOURNEY OF VISION, PERSISTENCE AND HOSPITALITY EXCELLENCE

BY STEVEN NSAMAZA

In the heart of Nyamata town, where transformation is steadily reshaping Rwanda's economic landscape, one hotel has grown alongside the district's ambitions. What began as a simple observation during a field visit has evolved into one of Bugesera's most recognisable hospitality brands: Palast Rock Hotel.

For its founder, Aimable Rutagarama, the journey started long before the hotel officially opened its doors in 2013.

A trained construction engineer and founder of civil engineering consultancy firm Hycogec Consultants, Rutagarama had spent years working on infrastructure projects across

Rwanda. Towards the end of 2008, he had an opportunity of being part of a technical task force in charge of following up the proposed Bugesera International Airport project.



At the time, Nyamata was still a quiet town with limited infrastructure and few hospitality services.

“After field visits, we struggled to find a place where we could sit, work, or even hold discussions,” Rutagarama recalls. “That is when I realized

that if Bugesera was going to host an international airport, people would eventually need quality hospitality services,” notes Rutagarama.

That realization planted the seed for what would later become Palast Rock Hotel.

STARTING SMALL, DREAMING BIG

Rutagarama purchased a small piece of land from a friend in Nyamata, initially planning to build apartments or office spaces. But as Bugesera’s development plans became clearer and Rwanda’s economy continued to expand, the vision gradually shifted toward hospitality.

Rutagarama started small, building step by step with limited resources. “I believed Bugesera’s future would change,” he says. “The district already had development plans, and I knew that investing early would matter.”

When Palast Rock Hotel officially opened on New Year’s Day in 2013, it became the first fully-fledged hotel in Nyamata, offering services that were previously unavailable in the area.

The hotel initially featured 27 rooms, a restaurant, a bar, and the area’s first swimming pool — amenities that immediately filled a gap in the growing district.

For Rutagarama, community response became one of his strongest motivations. “It touched me deeply when people in Bugesera told me they were happy to finally have a place

HOSPITALITY

where they could access hotel services,” he says.

EXPANDING WITH BUGESERA

As Bugesera continued to attract investors, businesses, and travellers, Palast Rock Hotel expanded alongside the area’s growth.

In 2017, the hotel earned a three-star classification, but Rutagarama believes the hotel has since evolved far beyond that level through continuous upgrades and investments.

Additional facilities were added over the years, including 20 more rooms, conference halls, spa, gym, tennis court, and multiple restaurants and bars spread across the property.

Today, one of the hotel’s most notable additions is a modern events tent capable of hosting more than 1,000 guests, making the facility one of the district’s leading venues for conferences, weddings, and large gatherings.

Surrounded by spacious gardens and equipped with a large parking area, the hotel still has room for future expansion — something Rutagarama says remains part of the long-term strategy.

The revival and acceleration of the new Airport project have also reignited economic activity in the district, bringing renewed optimism to businesses.



“There was a period when the airport project slowed down, and many businesses, including ours, faced challenges,” he explains. “But today Bugesera’s economic activities are growing rapidly again.”

Positioned close to the new airport site, Palast Rock Hotel already serves professionals and workers involved in the project. Rutagarama says the hotel is preparing for even

greater opportunities ahead, including partnerships with airlines and services tailored to transit travellers.

BEYOND HOSPITALITY

Over the years, the business evolved into the broader Palast Group, which now includes hospitality, travel, logistics, and real estate ventures.

Among its growing portfolio is Palast Tours

& Travel, an agency that promotes Rwanda’s luxury tourism experiences. The company offers cultural tours, community-based tourism activities, visits to genocide memorial sites, and excursions around Bugesera’s lakes and natural attractions.

“We want travellers, especially those in transit, to experience Bugesera instead of simply passing through,” Rutagarama says.





an important training ground for students seeking internships in hospitality and tourism, with some eventually securing permanent employment.

For Rutagarama, success is measured less by profit and more by impact.

“What motivates me most is seeing something you started grow successfully and benefit people,” he says. “Whenever a project becomes part of solving community challenges, that gives me fulfilment.”

That philosophy continues to guide the Palast Group’s broader ambitions.

“Our long-term vision is for every subsidiary company to achieve excellence in its own sector,” he says. “For the hotel, at minimum, we want it to become a four-star establishment.”

As Bugesera continues its rapid transformation into one of Rwanda’s emerging economic corridors, Palast Rock Hotel stands as a reflection of how local entrepreneurship, patience, and vision can grow alongside national development.

From a simple need identified during a field visit to a hospitality landmark preparing for the arrival of an international airport, the story of Palast Rock Hotel mirrors the story of Bugesera itself — ambitious, evolving, and looking firmly towards the future.

The district’s improving road network, tourism potential, and peaceful environment have contributed to increased interest in Bugesera as both a destination and investment hub.

The group is also involved in one of Nyamata’s largest urban development projects — the construction of a modern market, a major business complex being developed in partnership

with the district and local investors.

Estimated at nearly \$20 million, the project is expected to include shopping malls, warehouses, restaurants, offices, and commercial spaces that could significantly reshape the town’s business environment.

Rutagarama says remaining committed to the project, even as

some investors withdrew, reflects his broader belief in long-term development.

A COMMUNITY-CENTERED VISION

Today, Palast Rock Hotel employs around 70 permanent staff members, alongside casual workers, and supports local farmers and suppliers who provide fresh produce and food products.

The hotel has also become



RWANDAN POULTRY INDUSTRY TRANSFORMED BY SINGAPOREAN VISION

In a small trading centre in Mayange Sector more than a decade ago, there was little to suggest that the area would one day become one of Rwanda's growing economic hubs. The landscape was largely undeveloped, with fewer homes and scattered small shops along the road. Today, the area is buzzing with activity, showing the district's evolution into one of the country's fastest-growing regions.

BY STEVEN NSAMAZA

Among the investors who saw potential in the area long before many others did was Shumei Lam, a Singaporean entrepreneur who founded Poultry East Africa Ltd (PEAL), becoming a significant contributor to economic and social development through poultry farming, food production, and job creation.

Lam first visited Rwanda in 2011 alongside her late father, Larry Lam, a



businessman with extensive operations across Africa. Her father, who always wanted to give back to communities, chose Rwanda out of all the countries he had worked in. While helping after buying Magerwa, she toured warehouses and was struck by one thing: nearly everything was imported.

“There must be opportunities here to boost local production,” she recalls thinking.

That observation planted a seed that would eventually

grow into PEAL, Rwanda's largest chicken meat producer and one of the country's most integrated poultry businesses.

When PEAL was established in 2012, Rwanda's poultry sector looked very different from what it is today. Professional feed mills were scarce, modern broiler farms were limited, and processing facilities and cold-chain logistics were virtually non-existent. To achieve its mission of making poultry protein affordable and accessible,





PEAL had to build almost the entire value chain itself.

The company invested in breeder farms, hatcheries, contract farming systems, processing facilities, logistics, and retail operations. It took a year and a half to acquire the land and a year for construction, licensing, and equipment installation before PEAL became operational in December 2014.

CREATING JOBS AND STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

One of PEAL's most visible contributions has been employment. The company employs about 135 full-time staff, with approximately 90 per cent of them coming from surrounding villages. Nearly all employees are Rwandan, reflecting the company's commitment to local capacity building.

Women have benefited from these opportunities, comprising more than 65 per cent of the workforce, many of whom support their households and invest in their families' futures. According to Lam, the impact extends far beyond the company's gates.

"When people have income, the whole ecosystem grows," she says.

The ripple effects are evident throughout the community, where increased economic activity has driven rapid development over the past decade.

The impact of PEAL is best illustrated through the stories of employees whose lives have changed alongside the company's growth.

Niyidukunda Gisele joined the company in 2019 after completing her studies in veterinary science.

Originally from Kigali, she moved to Mayange and now works in the company's hatchery operations.

She says the job gave her much more than employment. Through hands-on experience, she developed specialised poultry skills that complemented her academic training and allowed her to build a stable future.

Today, she is married and has a child. She credits PEAL with helping her establish her life in Mayange and providing the opportunity to support her family.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow here," she says. "The skills I have gained have helped me build a future for myself and my family."

Gasasira Albert's story mirrors the company's own growth. Joining as a young man right after completing high school, he seized the opportunity when the company was starting operations in his home village of Mayange.

Over the years, he worked his way through the ranks and now serves as the Processing Manager. He says the company invested heavily in his development, providing training locally and exposing him to skills and knowledge from other locations.

Like many employees, Gasasira built his personal life while working at PEAL. He married while with the company, and his wife also worked there for a time.

For him, the greatest benefit has been the experience and expertise he has acquired.

"Apart from earning a living, I have broadened my skills and knowledge," Gasasira observes. "Even if I left today, I would



be able to use what I have learned here in many other areas."

This reflects a broader pattern at PEAL where employment not only provides income, but also creates pathways for professional development,



family stability, and long-term opportunity.

Supporting Farmers, Raising Standards Through Knowledge and Innovation

Beyond direct employment, PEAL works with more than 450 contract farmers, most of whom are small-scale producers and many of whom are women.

The company provides chicks, feeds, vaccines, and technical support, then buys back the chickens after 45 days. This model, applied in partnership with One Acre Fund, allows farmers to participate in commercial poultry production without upfront capital.

For many rural families, the arrangement has become an important source of additional income and has introduced modern farming practices that improve productivity and resilience.

From the beginning, PEAL invested heavily in training and capacity

building. International experts were brought in to establish best practices and mentor local staff. Today, most leadership and technical positions are held by Rwandans.

Strict biosecurity measures have become central to the company's operations, helping protect flocks, improve food safety, and raise professional standards across the poultry industry.

MORE THAN A BUSINESS, GROWING FOR THE FUTURE

Despite PEAL's commercial success, it continues its social-impact investments. The company has supported local initiatives, including sponsoring Bugesera Football Club and supporting the women's cycling team, helping create opportunities for local athletes and strengthening community pride.

PEAL currently produces about 12,000 chickens every week and operates an expanding retail

network under its consumer brand, Cooko. The company plans to continue expanding across Rwanda and eventually into regional markets.

Lam believes the future remains bright as new infrastructure, tourism, and investment continue to drive demand for food and agricultural products.

"It's not just about making profits," she says. "It's about growing together with the community."

More than a decade after she first visited Rwanda, Lam's commitment remains rooted in the same idea that inspired her at the beginning, balancing responsibilities in Singapore and Rwanda. As PEAL grows, the stories of employees like Niyidukunda and Gasasira show that the company's impact is measured not only by the number of chickens produced or shops opened, but also by the lives transformed along the way.



Bringing Quality **Chicken** Closer

COOKO, the consumer brand of Poultry East Africa Ltd (PEAL), is making high-quality, affordable chicken more accessible to families across Rwanda. As Rwanda's largest chicken meat producer, PEAL launched Cooko to provide fresh, nutritious, and delicious chicken through a growing network of outlets in Kigali and Bugesera.

Offering a convenient supermarket-style shopping experience at local market prices, Cooko is helping make chicken an everyday choice rather than an occasional treat. Rich in protein, vitamins, and essential nutrients, chicken supports healthy living while delivering great taste. With Cooko, families can enjoy quality meals, celebrate everyday moments, and share the joy of good food.

COOKO SALES: +250 782 635 214 | sales@peal.rw



SHAPING GASHORA'S FUTURE THROUGH HOMEGROWN VISION AND INVESTMENT

BY JEJJE MUHINDE AND STEVEN NSAMAZA

As the late afternoon sun casts golden reflections across Lake Mirayi, visitors wander through the grounds of Ubumuntu Resort in Bugesera, Gashora Sector. Some relax on the resort's sandy beach, the only one of its kind in the district, while others take in the sweeping lake views from a corporate boat powered by a 150-horsepower engine.



To casual travellers, Ubumuntu Resort is a simple, beautiful tourism destination. But for its founder, Rogers Nziza Kimuli, the resort represents something much bigger. It isn't just a business; it's the engine driving a deeply personal mission to uplift and transform the surrounding community.

The resort is only one piece of what he calls the Ubumuntu ecosystem, a network of initiatives spanning education, nutrition, sports, agriculture, tourism, culture and healthcare. Together, they are designed to uplift local communities, beginning with the youngest generation.

"The question should never be what the country will do for you," Nziza says. "The question is what you can do for your country."

That belief has guided his work for nearly two decades.

At the heart of everything he does

is the concept of Ubumuntu, a Kinyarwanda word that embodies humanity, empathy and kindness. For Nziza, Rwanda itself provides the strongest example of that principle.

"When you look at what happened during the Genocide against the Tutsi and then see people choosing forgiveness and reconciliation, I believe Rwandans bear the true meaning of Ubumuntu."

It is this philosophy that inspired him to dedicate his life to community transformation.

Nziza's first visit to Bugesera was in 2006 while participating in a peace-building programme as a student. He encountered a district facing significant challenges, including food insecurity, limited infrastructure and few opportunities.

Many saw hardship. Nziza saw a possibility.

Among the places that captured his imagination was Rugunga Village in

Gashora, where he would eventually lay the foundations of what has become the Ubumuntu movement.

Determined to find homegrown solutions, he studied agriculture and water engineering at the University of Rwanda's Busogo Campus, believing that improved food production and access to water were essential building blocks for development.

His first major intervention focused on combating malnutrition through





kitchen gardens. The initiative encouraged families to grow nutritious vegetables next to their homes, improving both food security and health outcomes.

His interest and research into the project gained momentum. They attracted international attention, leading to his travelling to Japan and later earning him an opportunity to further his studies and research in the United States at Georgetown University.

For some young Africans, such opportunities become a permanent ticket abroad. Friends and colleagues encouraged him to stay.

He refused.

“I always knew I would come back home,” he says. “My dream was what I can do for my country.”

Upon completing his programme, he secured financial support that helped him expand his vision back home.

His conviction was simple: if communities are to develop, education must come first.

“To engineer real change, invest in the young,” he says.

That philosophy led him to establish Real Moon FC, a football academy offering free training opportunities to young players. Supported by experienced coaches and local partnerships, the academy aims not only to develop athletes but also to create future leaders and role models.



Starting the academy led him to realise the need to feed the young, while simultaneously establishing a school in Rugunga Village, providing young children with access to quality early learning opportunities.

That reality reinforced his belief that education, nutrition and sports must work together rather than as separate interventions.

Today, the Ubumuntu ecosystem includes three Early Childhood

Development Centres (ECDs) serving more than 600 children. The centres provide education, nutrition and care at no cost to families.

Milk supplied to the centres comes directly from Ubumuntu’s dairy farm, established as a sustainable solution to the project.

His commitment to child welfare extends beyond the academy. Over the years, he launched feeding programmes to support vulnerable children and, at one point, was caring for approximately 40 children under his own roof.

As the number of beneficiaries increased, so did the financial burden.

Rather than scaling back, he turned to fundraising, mobilising support from friends, partners and international networks who believed in the vision.

The result is an integrated development model that continues to grow.



When you look at what happened during the Genocide against the Tutsi and then see people choosing forgiveness and reconciliation, I believe Rwandans bear the true meaning of Ubumuntu.”



His ambition extends beyond identifying athletic talent. He wants to accompany young athletes throughout their journey until they can compete professionally.

The Ubumuntu ecosystem now extends into culture as well. Through the Ubumuntu Art Gallery, local creativity is showcased while preserving cultural identity and creating opportunities for artists.

Healthcare is next.

Construction of the Ubumuntu Clinic is expected to begin in August, adding another critical service to the growing network. The clinic is intended to complement the existing investments in education, nutrition and youth development.

TURNING HOSPITALITY INTO A FORCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Everything at Ubumuntu is designed to strengthen the community from the roots upward. The most visible part of this work today is tourism.

Ubumuntu Resort was never intended to be merely

a hospitality business. It was built to generate revenue to sustain Real Moon Football Academy, ECD centres, and other community programmes.

“All the money we mobilize is meant to support the children and community,” Nziza notes.

The strategy reflects his commitment to creating sustainable solutions rather than relying indefinitely on donors.

The resort is a proof of concept for Gashora’s raw tourism potential. Gashora is uniquely positioned within Rwanda’s geography. Nziza points out that Gashora is the only sector in the country surrounded by five lakes, eight marshlands and wetlands, and two rivers, including the Akagera River.

Factor in Bugesera’s rapidly improving infrastructure and proximity to the future



international airport, and he believes the area is poised for remarkable growth.

To capitalise on this, Nziza is planning new tourism attractions, including Rwanda's first over-lake zipline.

The goal is not only to attract visitors but to establish Gashora as a destination in its own right.

"My aim is to build the city of Gashora," he says.

To move beyond tourism, Nziza and a group of partners registered Gashora Region Investment Group, an initiative intended to mobilise capital for strategic investments throughout the area.

With shares valued at Rwf50 million each, the group is aggressively targeting investors willing to capitalise on long-term regional development.

For Nziza, the timing is ideal.



Road infrastructure now connects Bugesera more effectively to Kigali, Eastern Province and Southern Province, while major national investments continue to transform the district.

"This region was overlooked for a long time despite its enormous

potential," he says. "Now is the time to invest."

The impact of his work is already visible.

Across the various Ubumuntu initiatives, an estimated 2,000 people benefit directly or indirectly every day.

The ECD centres serve hundreds of children. The football academy supports young athletes. Some students receive sponsorship opportunities within Rwanda and abroad.

Employment opportunities have also expanded significantly.

More than 30 people work at the resort. Around 70 are employed in cattle farming operations, while others work in piggery, poultry, vegetable farming, and related activities.

Casual labour opportunities and home renovation support for vulnerable families further extend the initiative's reach.

The breadth of the ecosystem reflects the lessons Nziza accumulated throughout his career.

Before focusing fully on Ubumuntu, he worked on peace-building and national unity initiatives, contributed to programmes under Imbutu Foundation's Rwanda Speaks platform, and later worked with health-focused initiatives that promoted access to healthcare services for vulnerable communities.

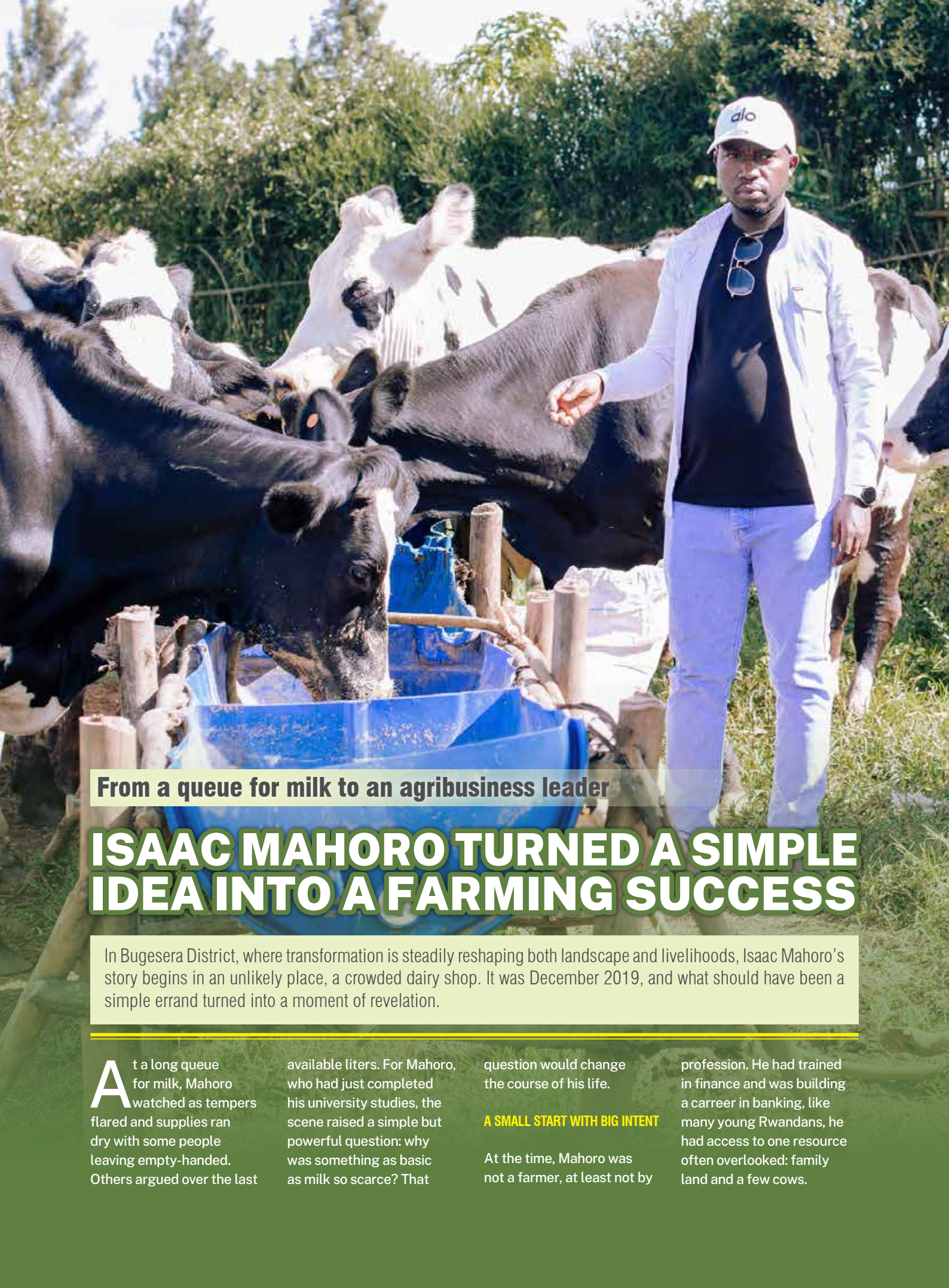
Those experiences reinforced his understanding that sustainable development requires interconnected solutions rather than isolated projects.

Sitting on the shores of Lake Mirayi today, it is easy to focus on the visible achievements: the resort, the farms, the schools and the growing tourism infrastructure.

But for Rogers Nziza Kimuli, the true measure of success lies elsewhere.

It lies in a child receiving an education, a young footballer pursuing a dream, a family gaining access to nutritious food, water or a community discovering new opportunities for prosperity. It lies in Ubumuntu.





From a queue for milk to an agribusiness leader

ISAAC MAHORO TURNED A SIMPLE IDEA INTO A FARMING SUCCESS

In Bugesera District, where transformation is steadily reshaping both landscape and livelihoods, Isaac Mahoro's story begins in an unlikely place, a crowded dairy shop. It was December 2019, and what should have been a simple errand turned into a moment of revelation.

At a long queue for milk, Mahoro watched as tempers flared and supplies ran dry with some people leaving empty-handed. Others argued over the last

available liters. For Mahoro, who had just completed his university studies, the scene raised a simple but powerful question: why was something as basic as milk so scarce? That

question would change the course of his life.

A SMALL START WITH BIG INTENT

At the time, Mahoro was not a farmer, at least not by

profession. He had trained in finance and was building a career in banking, like many young Rwandans, he had access to one resource often overlooked: family land and a few cows.

When he conceived the idea of producing milk, he collected two cows his parents had given him and put them on a small plot measuring just 20 by 20 meters in Rusagara Village, Maranyundo.

The cows produced about five liters of milk daily — more than his household could consume.

“That’s when I started thinking,” Mahoro recalls. “If this is already too much for us, what if I increased production?”

He set a modest goal: double production from five to ten liters. To do that, he acquired a third cow. The shift marked the beginning of his transition from subsistence to commercial thinking.

Soon, he was selling surplus milk and earning about Rwf100,000 per month. It wasn’t just extra income — it was proof of concept.

Mahoro’s growing interest in farming was reinforced by a message he had once heard from President Paul Kagame, encouraging young people to invest in agriculture as a pathway to sustainable development.

THAT MESSAGE STAYED WITH HIM.

“Connecting that idea with what I saw at the dairy gave me confidence,” he says. “I realized that if others were not doing enough, I could step in.”

With that conviction, Mahoro made a bold move. He secured a bank loan and

invested in ten hybrid cows, shifting to a zero-grazing system on approximately 1,000 square meters of land. At the same time, he began expanding his farming space, gradually building a more structured operation. From January 2020 to 2023, his growth was remarkable.

Milk production rose from a few liters to 300 liters per day. His herd expanded to 30 cows. And with that growth came employment — more than five permanent workers and several casual laborers found opportunities on his farm.

Mahoro was no longer just a banker experimenting with farming. He had become an agripreneur.

BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM, NOT JUST A FARM

What sets Mahoro apart is not just the scale of his farm, but the ecosystem he has built around it.

Understanding that farming does not exist in isolation, he developed a mutually beneficial system with his workers and the surrounding community. He provided compost manure to local farmers, who in turn supplied him with grass for feeding his cows. This exchange strengthened both productivity and relationships.

He also invested in modernizing his operations — introducing machines to chop grass, constructing proper cowsheds, and ensuring better animal care. His approach reflects a broader shift in Rwanda’s



agricultural sector: from traditional practices to efficiency-driven, climate-conscious systems.

Beyond livestock rearing, he has also established a thriving banana plantation and expanded his cattle farm to approximately 1.5 hectares. His herd has grown to over 50 cows, producing between 400 and 500 liters of milk daily. But numbers alone do not tell the full story.

Around his farm, a network of livelihoods has emerged. From workers managing livestock to those involved in feed supply, distribution and the banana plantation, more than 30 people now depend on the ecosystem he has created.

Even as his farming enterprise expanded, Mahoro did not abandon his professional career. He continues to work in the financial sector as a loan officer at Bugesera SACCO. This dual role — as a banker and a farmer — gives him a unique perspective.

On one hand, he understands the challenges entrepreneurs face in accessing finance. On the other, he embodies the possibilities that come with taking calculated risks.

A HEART FOR COMMUNITY, DREAMING BIGGER

Mahoro's impact extends far beyond his farm and workplace. His journey is deeply rooted in a sense of responsibility, to give back



to the community that shaped him. One moment, in particular, stands out.

While walking through his neighborhood, he encountered a young child, around five or six years old — who could neither stand nor speak due to severe malnutrition. The sight left a lasting impression.

From that moment, he made a decision: no child in his village should suffer from stunting due to lack of nutrition.

He began providing free milk to vulnerable children, supporting more than ten of them consistently over a period of two years. Every week, he also distributes at least 50 liters of milk

to vulnerable mothers in Rusagara Village. His efforts didn't stop there.

Each year, Mahoro pays Community-Based Health Insurance (mutuelle) for at least 100 vulnerable individuals in Nyamata Sector. He also participates in the Girinka program, donating a cow annually to a family in





need — restoring not just livelihoods, but dignity.

To him, these are acts of repayment. “The country has invested in my education and growth,” he says. “This is my way of giving back.”

Despite how far he has come, Mahoro is only getting started.

His vision is ambitious: to expand his herd to over 300 high-quality hybrid cows and produce more than 2,000 liters of milk daily. Such growth would not only increase his output but also multiply employment opportunities across the value chain.

He also dreams of increasing his

contributions to the community — donating more cows each year and supporting more families toward self-reliance.

For Mahoro, the cow is more than an economic asset. It is a symbol of wealth, stability, and joy.

“In our culture, when you have a cow, there

is happiness,” he says. “I want more families to experience that.”

START SMALL, BUT START

Mahoro offers powerful lessons especially to young people, he began with just two cows on a tiny plot of land.

Progress came through consistent effort. Farming, like life, comes with challenges. Success requires persistence and adaptability.

He believes the most valuable investment is not financial capital, but ideas and mindset. Limited land did not stop him. Instead, he focused on modern, efficient practices to maximize productivity.

As Bugesera continues its transformation into a hub of opportunity, Isaac Mahoro stands among those quietly shaping its future.

From a young graduate observing a milk shortage to a farmer producing hundreds of liters daily, his journey is a testament to what happens when insight meets action.

He did not wait for perfect conditions. He did not start with vast resources. He began with a question — and the courage to answer it. His story is a powerful reminder: sometimes, the path to transformation begins in the most ordinary of moments — even in a queue.



HOW ONE FATHER'S DREAM BUILT A LEADING SCHOOL IN RWANDA

Edward Munyaburanga turned a vision for his children into one of Rwanda's top-performing private schools

BY JETTE MUHINDE

Like many other Rwandans who returned home after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Edward Munyaburanga settled in Bugesera, in Rwanda's Eastern Province — a region that had long been marginalized and often referred to as the “forgotten land.”

As a student, Munyaburanga lived with his elder brother and vividly remembers how difficult it was to travel from Bugesera to Kigali.

“The journey to Kigali was a grueling three-hour marathon. The area was underdeveloped, and the idea of modern transformation was not even in anyone's wildest dreams,” he recalls.

After university, Munyaburanga returned to the district and began working in local government. As infrastructure gradually improved and the wheels of development began to turn,



he found himself with a front-row seat to Bugesera's transformation.

Seeing the district open up for development gave Munyaburanga a real turning point. Inspired by the rapid growth he observed while working at the district office, he felt it was time to venture into the private sector.

That moment came in 2008 following the birth of his firstborn child. As a concerned parent, he looked at the education landscape in Bugesera and

noticed a major gap. He began to wonder where his son would eventually go to school.

“Imagine, by then, there was only one French school in the district,” he remembers. “Then the government switched from French to English as the language of instruction.”

In 2009, armed with hope and a modest plot of land in Nyamata town, he registered HighLand School. It started with just 20 students and four teachers,

operating from rented, dilapidated buildings in a Catholic convent.

The early days were challenging. The area was still isolated, and convincing parents that high-quality education could exist outside Kigali was an uphill battle.

However, Munyaburanga refused to compromise on quality. He recruited some of the best teachers from across the region and hired a committed administrator to ensure the school operated with professionalism and precision as the school's motto states: Knowledge is Wealth.

The gamble paid off.

By 2013, HighLand School's first cohort sat for national examinations, and the results sent shockwaves across the district. Since then, the school has consistently ranked among the top-performing in the country.





In the 2023/2024 academic year, the Ministry of Education recognized HighLand School as the best performer in the national leaving examinations.

The school's physical growth has been equally impressive. In 2017, it moved to a modern and expansive campus. Today, the original 20 students have all graduated from higher education and the school's enrollment has grown to more than 1,100 students.

"My target was never just profit; it was the child's transformation," Munyaburanga explains. "When you focus on quality over money, you become accountable to both the country and God."

One of his proudest



achievements is seeing the first intake of 20 students successfully graduate from university.

"This shows that we achieved excellent performance at the national level," he says.

Munyaburanga is also proud that the school has become a magnet for students from across Rwanda. With all its 80

employees fully covered by health insurance and pension schemes, HighLand School has become an important pillar of the local community.

Nonetheless, the biggest victory is not just the school's growth, but the satisfaction of parents and the positive impact the institution has had on Bugesera.

Beyond the Classroom

Highland School's impact extends far beyond academics.

Today, the institution is actively involved in uplifting the community through various corporate social responsibility initiatives. These include supporting survivors of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, contributing to the development of Bugesera Football Club, and providing essential support to 50 pupils and other vulnerable members of the community.

Munyaburanga is not finished yet.

Within the next two years, he plans to launch a secondary school wing and introduce a Cambridge International section to attract students from across the globe.

"The role of a school has changed," he says. "It is no longer just about literacy and numeracy; it is about parenting and shaping the next generation of citizens. The driving force behind Highland School has always been — and still is — to produce competent learners who will become true agents of positive transformation in a changing world."



THE EVOLUTION OF SAVANA CENTRE: A STORY OF VISION AND ADAPTATION

In the heart of Bugesera District, where vast plains are steadily giving way to storied structures, paved roads, and rising investments, one story stands out as a reflection of the district's transformation. It is the journey of Savana Centre, a hospitality establishment in Nyamata, led by entrepreneur Pacifique Niwemuhoza.

entrepreneurs are playing a critical role in driving economic transformation. For Savana Centre, that contribution is visible in job creation, tax revenue, and the growing appeal of the district as a destination for business and leisure.

What began as a modest telecentre in 2005 has grown into one of the district's leading hospitality facilities — an evolution that mirrors Rwanda's gradual growth into a diversified, service-driven economy.

"At the time, telecentres played an important role in connecting communities,"

Pacifique recalls the initiative 201 years ago. "But as technology advanced, we saw the need to adapt."

Together with her husband, she made a bold decision: to pivot from ICT services to hospitality. By 2013, Savana Centre had officially opened its doors as a hotel, marking the beginning of a new chapter not only for the business, but also for Bugesera's emerging tourism and conference landscape.

Today, Savana Centre stands among the district's

largest hospitality establishments, boasting 54 self-contained rooms and a range of conference facilities. Yet its growth has been anything but sudden. Starting with just 11 rooms, the business expanded gradually — over 80 percent of it through self-financing.

"We chose a step-by-step approach," Pacifique explains. "It allowed us to grow sustainably while maintaining quality."

This steady rise reflects a broader pattern across Bugesera, where local

But beyond numbers, its impact is perhaps most felt in people.

Through collaboration with the Rwanda TVET Board, the hotel has become a training ground for young professionals. A recent nine-month internship program equipped youth from Bugesera with practical hospitality skills, preparing them for employment in an increasingly competitive sector.

"We believe in building talent from within the



Bugesera is becoming a strategic hub. Its proximity to Kigali and the pace of development make it very attractive for investors."





Board (RDB) have also facilitated business growth, easing processes such as the importation of specialized equipment.

“All these efforts have reduced operational barriers and allowed us to maintain high standards,” Pacifique notes.

Bugesera’s transformation is perhaps most symbolized by the ongoing development of the new international airport — a project set to redefine the district as a gateway for trade, tourism, and logistics. For businesses like Savana Centre, this represents both an opportunity and a validation of long-term investment decisions.

community,” says Pacifique. “It’s not just about running a business — it’s about creating opportunities.”

That philosophy extends to the hotel’s supply chain. By sourcing most of its food from local farmers, Savana Centre has built a network that supports rural livelihoods while ensuring fresh, high-quality produce for its guests. It is a model of inclusive growth, one that keeps economic benefits circulating in the area.

Partnerships have also played a key role in the centre’s journey. Working with Access to Finance Rwanda, the business is currently developing a five-year strategic plan aimed at strengthening sustainability and long-term impact. Such support, also others like women-led initiatives enterprises, have provided



both technical guidance and strategic direction.

Equally important has been the enabling environment created by government policies. Investments in

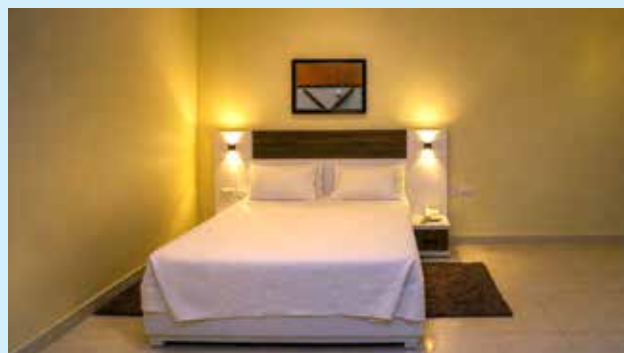
infrastructure like roads networks, connectivity, and urban development have made Bugesera increasingly accessible. Government agencies like Rwanda Development

“Bugesera is becoming a strategic hub,” Pacifique says. “Its proximity to Kigali and the pace of development make it very attractive for investors.”

Looking ahead, her vision aligns closely with that of the district itself: to see Bugesera evolve into a leading center for tourism, business, and innovation.

As the district continues to rise, stories like Savana Centre offer a powerful reminder that transformation is not only driven by large-scale projects, but also by the resilience and foresight of local entrepreneurs.

From a small telecentre to a thriving hospitality hub, the journey of Savana Centre is more than a business success, it is a testament to how adaptability, community focus, and strategic growth can shape the future of an entire region.



BUGESERA INVESTMENT GROUP

HOW LOCAL INVESTORS SHAPED A NEW URBAN STORY



Amb. Joseph Nsengimana, Chairman of BUGESERA INVESTMENT GROUP

BY ROBERT MUGABO

Not long ago, the journey from Nyamata to Kigali felt like an endurance test. The trip could stretch to three hours along dusty, unreliable roads, cutting through a landscape where signs of modern development were scarce. At the time, the idea of a thriving commercial hub seemed distant—almost unimaginable.

Today, that same journey takes a fraction of the time, and visitors arriving in Nyamata are greeted by modern buildings, bustling businesses and expanding infrastructure. Among the structures that symbolise this transformation stands a landmark commercial building developed by the Bugesera Investment Group (BUGESERA), a local investment body by residents who chose to become active

participants in the district's development.

Initially conceived as a public-private partnership project to be developed at every District level, it has been achieved only in Bugesera District.

The story of BUGESERA is closely intertwined with the story of Bugesera itself. This district has overcome a difficult history to emerge as one of Rwanda's fastest-growing economic frontiers.

"Bugesera was historically isolated and left out of many development opportunities that other regions enjoyed," says Ambassador Joseph Nsengimana, Chairman of BUGESERA. "For many years, people associated Bugesera with hardship. Yet today we are witnessing tremendous progress because of good leadership and the determination of citizens to contribute to their own development."

Ambassador Nsengimana knows that history well. He recalls how families, including his own, were relocated to Bugesera in 1959 during the colonial era. At the time, the district's harsh environment, characterised by dry savannah plains

and tsetse fly infestations, made life unbearable.

Those experiences, he says, taught many residents resilience and the importance of building for future generations.

The district faced even greater devastation during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, when countless lives were lost, and communities were torn apart. In the years that followed, however, Bugesera began a gradual recovery. New schools were established, health facilities expanded, banking services arrived, roads improved, and housing programs helped vulnerable survivors rebuild their lives.

As the district developed, local business leaders increasingly saw opportunities to contribute to its growth.

That vision led to the formation of the Bugesera Investment Group. Bringing together entrepreneurs,



We wanted to do more than watch development happen. We wanted to be part of it. The idea was to identify investments that could benefit both our members and the wider community."

professionals, and community leaders from various sectors, BUIG was established with a simple but ambitious objective: to invest in projects that would support community development while creating value for local investors.

“We wanted to do more than watch development happen,” says Eugene Higiroy, a businessman and member of BUIG. “We wanted to be part of it. The idea was to identify investments that could benefit both our members and the wider community.”

The group’s earliest discussions focused on addressing some of Bugesera’s long-standing challenges. One proposal explored processing and commercialising water to help tackle the area’s historical water shortages. Although the initiative did not materialise, it reflected the cooperative’s commitment to investing in projects with a meaningful impact.

As Bugesera continued to attract businesses and financial institutions, members identified another pressing need: modern commercial infrastructure.

At the time, several businesses, including banks, were seeking suitable premises to operate from. BUIG saw an opportunity to fill that gap while contributing to the modernisation of Nyamata’s town centre.

Pooling resources and securing financing, BUIG embarked on the construction of a modern



Emmanuel Bizumuremyi
Managing Director



Angelique Umwali
Vice Chairperson



Eugene Higiroy
Member of the Board



Eng. Jean Pierre Mukwende

multi-storey commercial building — an ambitious undertaking for a district that was only beginning to experience rapid urban growth.

“The concept was new for many people,” Ambassador Nsengimana recalls. “Some wondered whether businesses would occupy such a building. But we believed the district’s development would create demand, and we remained confident in the future of Bugesera.”

That confidence has since been rewarded.

Today, the building is fully occupied and serves as a vibrant hub of economic activity. Housing a range of businesses and services, it has become one of Nyamata’s most recognisable commercial landmarks and a visible symbol of local investment driving local development.

The project

has also demonstrated the strength of collective action. Members of BUIG contributed not only financial resources but also professional expertise and business experience, helping transform a shared vision into reality.

“The success of this building belongs to all the members,” says Nsengimana. “Everyone contributed according to their capacity, and together we created something that has become an important part of Bugesera’s development.”

With the project’s loan repayment nearing completion, BUIG is already planning its next chapter. Members are exploring opportunities linked to the district’s rapid growth, including investments around the forthcoming international airport, the industrial zone, tourism-related businesses, and developments that leverage Bugesera’s strategic location near the border with Burundi.

BUIG’s journey reflects a broader lesson about development. Its story is not just about a building — it is about a mindset. It reflects a shift from waiting for change to actively creating it.





FIELDS OF PURPOSE: **HOW RUTAYISIRE JACKSON CULTIVATED A NEW LIFE ON THE FARM**

Every thriving community has individuals whose journeys reflect its progress, and in Bugesera District, Rutayisire Michel Jackson is one such example. He stands as a symbol of determination, vision, and self-belief. Much like Bugesera itself, he has transformed challenges into opportunities, embodying a region that is steadily emerging as a hub of growth and possibility.

Rutayisire is many things: a genocide survivor, a former kadogo (child soldier), a peace advocate, businessman, sports leader, and above all, a farmer. But beyond these titles lies a deeper identity — one rooted in resilience

and an unwavering commitment to growth.

Today, his story unfolds not in the shadows of his past, but in the fields he cultivates, the businesses he runs, and the football club he leads. It is a story of reinvention, discipline,

and the quiet power of starting again.

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF A NEW LIFE

Rutayisire's journey into farming was not born out of convenience, it was a necessity shaped by

circumstance. After years of formal employment in education, peace-building, and sports administration, life took an unexpected turn when he lost his job at FERWAFWA. Faced with uncertainty, he made a decision that would redefine his future.



Rutayisire began his professional journey as a teacher after completing his studies, later transitioned into public service with the Gacaca court system. In 2012, he served in a United Nations peacekeeping mission in South Sudan, drawing on both his educational background and military experience. Back to his homeland, he joined Kigali Genocide Memorial under the Peace Education Program - playing a meaningful role in promoting unity and reconciliation through public engagement. Alongside this path, his enduring passion for football led him to work with FERWAFU, where he held key positions, including Head of Competitions and later Head of National Teams, his last formal employment.

Instead of chasing another office position, he returned home to Bugesera, where he had access to land and a modest number of local cattle. It was a bold move, one that many questioned.

“At that moment,” he reflects, “I realized I had to build something of my own.”

In 2017, with limited

savings and growing responsibilities, including his children’s education and expensive life in the capital Kigali, the stakes were high. Yet Rutayisire saw opportunity where others saw risk.

He began by selling at least two local cows for every one hybrid breed, an investment aimed at improving milk production. It was a small but strategic step.

He built a cowshed, dedicated large portions of his land to growing pasture, and immersed himself fully in dairy farming. Without any fallback income, farming became both his livelihood and his classroom.

“

Farming is not just about having cows, It’s about understanding them, caring for them, and committing your time fully.”

WHAT FOLLOWED WAS A TESTAMENT TO PERSISTENCE.

Starting with only five cows, within the first year, Rutayisire was producing nearly 300 liters of milk daily. Over time, his herd grew, his systems improved, and his confidence deepened. Today, his farm spans several hectares, with structured grazing areas, cultivated pastureland, and a well-managed cowshed housing high-quality breeds. But more than numbers, what defines his success is his mindset.

“Farming is not just about having cows, It’s about understanding them, caring for them, and committing your time fully.” Rutayisire has employed a full-time manager to run his farming activities.

FROM FARMER TO AGRIBUSINESS LEADER

Rutayisire’s farm has evolved from a survival project into a thriving agribusiness. As his expertise grew, so did his reputation. Farmers and investors from across the country began seeking his advice on cattle selection, breeding, and farm management.

What started as informal guidance soon became an additional income stream. Rutayisire found himself not only producing milk but also supplying improved cow breeds and sharing practical knowledge with others in the sector.

In many ways, he became a self-taught extension officer, bridging the gap between experience and opportunity.

His work has created employment for many in the area, from farmhands to workers involved in the broader dairy value chain. It has also contributed to improving local agricultural practices, proving that modern farming is not reserved for large-scale investors alone.

Rutayisire’s philosophy is simple but powerful: start with what you have, improve it, and remain consistent. He often encourages young people to reconsider agriculture — not as a last resort, but as a viable path to financial independence.

“There are opportunities everywhere,” he says. “Even a small piece of land can change your life if you use it well.”



LIFE BEYOND THE FARM

While farming forms the backbone of his success, Rutayisire has also built a diversified portfolio of businesses. His investments include rental houses, a commercial building, and a guest house — each a product of reinvesting profits from his agricultural ventures.

The guest house, in particular, reflects his forward-thinking approach. Located in a district increasingly attracting visitors and investors, it serves as both a source of income and a stepping stone toward a larger dream.

“My next goal is to turn the guesthouse into a full hotel,” he shares, noting that he already has land for expansion.

These ventures are not just about wealth creation; they are about stability, sustainability, and long-term vision. Rutayisire understands that true growth requires diversification and careful planning.

THE GAME CHANGER: LEADERSHIP IN SPORTS

Parallel to his work in agriculture and business is another enduring passion, football.

Rutayisire’s love for the sport began during his school years and continued throughout his professional life. His involvement in Rwanda’s football ecosystem,



including roles within FERWafa, equipped him with valuable experience in sports management.

In 2025, this journey reached a new milestone when he was elected President of Bugesera FC. For Rutayisire,

football is more than a game, it is a tool for transformation.

Under his leadership, Bugesera FC has gained renewed momentum. With a strengthened management structure and clear strategic goals,

the club is now performing at a level that reflects its potential. Competing in the first division of Rwanda’s Premier League, the team has set its sights on ranking among the league’s top six clubs.

His leadership style mirrors his approach to farming: disciplined, strategic, and grounded in teamwork.

“Success in football, just like in farming, requires patience and coordination,” he explains. “Everyone has a role to play.”

Beyond performance, Rutayisire sees football as a platform for youth engagement. In a region where opportunities were once limited, sports now offer a pathway for talent development, discipline, and social cohesion.

Lessons in Self-Development

Rutayisire’s journey offers profound lessons





AGRIBUSINESS

He warns against idleness and destructive habits like drug abuse, urging young people instead to set goals, work hard, and continuously improve themselves.

His own life stands as proof that success does not require vast resources — only determination, discipline, and the courage to begin.

in personal growth and resilience — lessons shaped not by theory, but by lived experience.

1. Start small, but think big

His farming journey began with just a few cows. Today, it is a thriving enterprise. Progress, he believes, starts with taking that first step.

2. Embrace consistency over shortcuts.

Whether managing livestock or leading a football club, Rutayisire emphasizes the value of steady effort. “Give your work time,” he advises.

3. Turn setbacks into opportunities.

Losing his job could have been the end of the road. Instead, it became the beginning of a new chapter.



Success in football, just like in farming, requires patience and coordination. Everyone has a role to play.”

CHALLENGES AND THE ROAD AHEAD

Despite his achievements, Rutayisire is candid about the challenges facing farmers in Bugesera. He points to gaps in dairy management systems and inefficiencies in land services as barriers that need addressing.

Yet, even in highlighting these issues, his outlook remains forward-looking. He believes that with better coordination and continued support from government programs such as agricultural subsidies, farmers can achieve even greater success.

As an opinion leader in Bugesera, Rutayisire frequently speaks to young people about responsibility and vision. His message is both urgent and hopeful. “The youth are the engine of development,” he says. “Avoid distractions. Focus on building something for your future.”

CULTIVATING A LEGACY

Standing in his fields, watching his cattle graze or listening to the distant echoes of a football match, Rutayisire represents a generation rewriting Rwanda’s story — one defined not by its past, but by its possibilities.

From a young boy navigating unimaginable hardship to a man shaping his community through agriculture, business, and sports, his journey is a powerful reminder that transformation is possible. In Bugesera, where the winds of change are blowing stronger each day, Rutayisire Jackson is not just witnessing progress — he is cultivating it.

And like the seeds he plants in his fields, his impact will continue to grow for years to come.

4. Invest in knowledge and passion.

His success in farming came from learning by doing, while his impact in sports is rooted in years of experience and genuine interest.

5. Create value, don't wait for it.

Rutayisire believes that success is not about the size of your starting capital, but about how effectively you use what you have.



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DROOM RESORT: WHERE COMFORT, COMMUNITY AND VISION CONVERGE



In the quiet but fast-transforming plains of Bugesera District, where Rwanda's future aviation and industrial hub are steadily coming into view, one local investment is redefining leisure and hospitality.

is well-stocked and serves a wide range of beverages, including beers, wines, spirits, soft drinks, and fresh juices.

A coffee shop welcomes both guests and members of the surrounding community, while a dedicated children's play ground ensures families can relax knowing their children are safe and entertained.

The resort's kitchen offers a variety of meals and fast food, with chefs available to prepare dishes on demand — an added convenience that has become a hallmark of the Droom experience.



WHERE ENTERTAINMENT MEETS COMMUNITY

What truly sets Droom Resort apart is its role as a social and entertainment hub, particularly on weekends.

Multiple large television screens broadcast different sporting events simultaneously, allowing fans to follow football, tennis, boxing, cycling, and more. This flexibility has made the resort a favorite gathering spot for sports enthusiasts.

Pool tables add to the experience, with occasional tournaments drawing participants from Kigali and other districts. These competitions, often accompanied by prizes,

DROOM RESORT, named after "Dream" in the Dutch is the brainchild of hospitality entrepreneur Constantine Karega.

What began as a modest accommodation facility in Kanzenze Sector in 2023 has grown into a vibrant destination attracting guests in Bugesera, from Kigali, the surrounding districts, and beyond.

At the heart of Droom Resort's appeal is its focus on comfort and discretion. The facility currently features eight self-contained rooms, each equipped with a TV and designed to offer guests privacy and independence.

Four rooms are categorized as VVIP, while the remaining are VIP, all providing a secure and serene environment. The layout allows guests to enjoy personalized service delivered directly to their rooms, creating a calm, uninterrupted experience.

“

The business employs around 40 full-time staff and an additional 10 part-time workers, particularly during peak periods.

Visitors arriving by car benefit from well-organized parking arrangements, including private access points that enhance both convenience and confidentiality.

“Our intention has always been to create a place where guests feel completely at ease — where privacy, comfort, and personalized service come naturally,” the Founder and Managing Director, Karega explains.

A COMPLETE LEISURE EXPERIENCE

Over time, the resort has expanded its offerings to cater to a diverse clientele. Its bar, a popular hangout



HOSPITALITY

Before the resort opened, residents often had to travel to Kigali for quality leisure experiences. Today, many can access similar services closer to home, saving both time and cost.

Karega's decision to invest in this area was guided by long-term vision. With major infrastructure projects such as Bugesera International Airport and the nearby industrial park, the region is expected to see increased business activity and visitor traffic.

In anticipation, Droom Resort is already expanding. Construction of a swimming pool is underway, and plans are in place to develop a 32-room, four-star hotel adjacent to the current facility.

"We saw where this area is heading," Karega notes. "Hospitality services will be essential, and we wanted to be part of that future from the beginning."

Today, Droom Resort hosts a wide range of events, with a blend of comfort, entertainment, and strong community focus. It welcomes local favorites as an emerging destination for weddings, corporate functions, anniversaries, and social gatherings.

As the region moves toward a future defined by connectivity and growth, Droom Resort stands as an early symbol of that transformation—a dream not only realized, but still unfolding.

have helped foster a loyal and growing community.

As the weekend sets in, the atmosphere becomes even more vibrant. Fridays and Saturdays feature guest artists, live band performances, and karaoke sessions—creating an inclusive space where people come together to unwind and connect.

Droom's appeal extends beyond leisure seekers to professionals working in the area. One Kenyan expatriate employed at a

nearby industrial facility describes the resort as an essential part of his routine.

"After long day's work, this is where we come to relax," he says. "The atmosphere is welcoming, services are reliable, and it truly feels like a home away from home."

Such testimonials reflect the resort's growing reputation among both local and international visitors, including guests from across Africa and beyond.

DRIVING LOCAL IMPACT

Beyond hospitality, Droom Resort is making a tangible contribution to the local economy. The business employs around 40 full-time staff and an additional 10 part-time workers, particularly during peak periods.

Many employees, as well as suppliers of food, livestock, and beverages, are sourced locally—supporting livelihoods and strengthens the surrounding economy.





FROM DUST TO DRIVE:

THE VISION, RISK, AND RENEWAL BEHIND HIGIRO'S JOURNEY

BY JOHN MUGISHA;

When Higiroy speaks about Bugesera District in the Eastern Province, he is not simply describing a place—he is recounting a journey he has lived, step by step. From the difficult years that followed the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi to the steady progress seen today, his experience mirrors the broader transformation of the district.

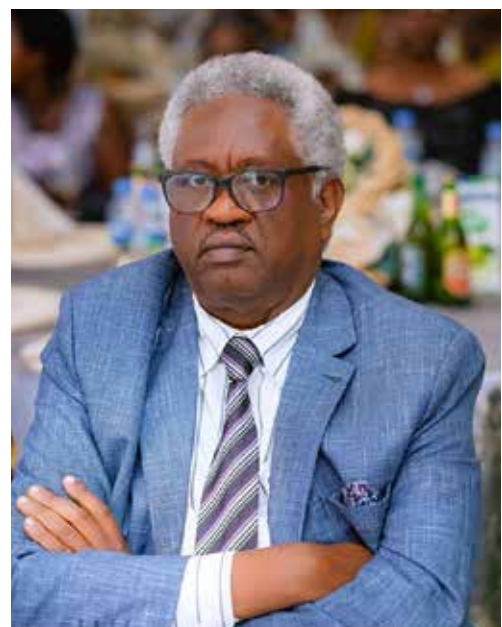
“Life was not easy,” he recalls. “People were traumatized after 1994, everyone carried wounds.”

In those early years, Bugesera faced both emotional and practical challenges. Communities were rebuilding after profound loss, while daily life remained harsh. Roads were poor, transport was limited, and economic

activity was slow. Even traveling to Kigali was uncertain.

“We had maybe six taxi vehicles,” Higiroy says. “Some days, you couldn’t find one going to Kigali.”

The journey itself was difficult. Dust from the roads would cover passengers, and many carried cloths to shield their clothes—



Eugene Higiroy



removing them only upon reaching Sonatubes in Kicukiro before entering Kigali. For Higiro, these conditions were not just inconveniences; they revealed gaps that needed solutions.

He became one of the first to invest in transport, stepping into a sector that was still underdeveloped. It was a practical decision, but also an early sign of his willingness to take risks in a place where opportunity was not yet obvious.

A turning point came in the mid-2000s, when improved

road infrastructure began to connect Bugesera more reliably to Kigali. The impact was immediate. Travel became easier, movement increased, and business activity began to grow.

Higiro credits government leadership, particularly President Paul Kagame, for driving this transformation. “That road changed a lot,” he says. “It showed us what good leadership can do. It opened Bugesera and changed our lives.”

With better access came new possibilities. Transport services expanded, and

trips to Kigali became more frequent and predictable. Gradually, the district began attracting attention. People from the capital started moving to Bugesera, drawn by its emerging potential.

Sensing that shift, Higiro made another bold move. Around 2010, he built a storied modern commercial building — something still uncommon in the area at the time. For him, it was more than a personal investment; it was a statement of belief in Bugesera’s future.

“I wanted people to see our town differently, and set an example as head of Private Sector in the area” he explains.

Over the years, that change became visible. New homes were built, businesses opened, and social spaces emerged. The district slowly took on a new identity — one defined by growth and possibility.

Access to financial services also improved. Banks and other institutions established a presence, making it easier for residents to save, invest, and expand their businesses. Higiro says this played a key role in transforming livelihoods.

“You see someone start small, and after some years, they have their own place,” he says. “That wasn’t common before.”

At the same time, large-scale developments signaled long-term confidence in the

area. Plans for major infrastructure, including an international airport, brought renewed attention to Bugesera and created jobs and opportunities for residents.

Today, the difference is clear. Life is more stable, and many families can think beyond daily survival. Education has become more accessible, and incomes have improved.

“We can take our children to school. We can work and plan for the future,” Higiro says.

Still, he believes the next chapter belongs to the younger generation. He speaks about them with both responsibility and hope.

“They have more opportunities than we had,” he says. “They need to use them well — study, work hard, and learn how to manage what they earn.”

For Higiro, the story of Bugesera is not defined by a single moment, but by steady progress over time. It is a story of people rebuilding their lives, taking chances, and adapting to change.

His own journey reflects that same path — from navigating hardship to investing in a district on the rise. As Bugesera continues to grow, his story stands as a reminder that transformation is not sudden. It is built, step by step, by those who choose to move forward.

FROM VISION TO VENUE: A STORY OF ENTERPRISE IN MOTION

Bugesera District is rapidly transforming from a quiet rural area into one of Rwanda's emerging centers for residence, investment, connectivity, and tourism. Alongside expanding infrastructure and growing economic activity, local entrepreneurs are helping shape the district's evolving identity.



One entrepreneur shaping development is Jean Claude Bariruka, founder of Happy Time: Resto-Bar & Pub in Nyamata. Established in 2016, Bariruka started a modest restaurant and bar at a time when Nyamata was still developing and economic activity remained limited. Despite this, Bariruka and his wife recognized the district's future potential.

"We had been living here since 2011, and we believed in what this place could become," he says.

Over time, Happy Time expanded into a diversified hospitality business. In

addition to food and drinks, it now includes a coffee shop, accommodation with 12 rooms, and an outside catering service for weddings, anniversaries, and institutional events. The establishment can host up to 300 guests and has become well known in Bugesera's social and business community.

The company's growth reflects careful planning and family commitment. Bariruka transitioned from work in the NGO sector into full-time entrepreneurship, while his wife, then a civil servant, helped manage and grow the business from its earliest days. Together, they built a family-

driven enterprise focused on discipline and long-term vision.

Today, Happy Time employs 16 people and sources most of its supplies from local producers and service providers. This local sourcing strengthens Bugesera's broader economic ecosystem.

Bariruka believes quality service is essential, especially in a district still building its reputation as a destination. Cleanliness, comfort, and customer care are central to the business.

"Good service doesn't just represent us — it represents the district," he says.

His perspective reflects Bugesera's wider development story.

However, development also brings challenges. For businesses like Happy Time, inconsistent electricity supply remains a major obstacle, which disrupt operations, and generators increases operating costs. These challenges highlight the need for infrastructure growth to keep-up the pace.



Despite this, Bariruka remains optimistic about Bugesera's future. He sees the district as a long-term investment destination across several sectors and credits local authorities for supporting investors.

Happy Time has become more than a business; it reflects how local entrepreneurs contribute to shaping Bugesera's future. While large infrastructure projects may transform the

landscape, enterprises like Happy Time help define the district's character, service culture, and sense of community.

As Bugesera continues to grow, Bariruka's story shows that development is driven not only by policy and investment, but also by individuals willing to believe in opportunity and create spaces where people can gather, connect, and feel at home.



BUGESERA: THE FORGOTTEN KINGDOM BEHIND RWANDA'S MODERN TRANSFORMATION

BY JOHN MUGISHA;

On a quiet morning in Mayange Sector, Anderia Uwamaboko pauses beside a flat stone partly hidden by grass. To passing children, it is just another rock. To

him, it is something else entirely — the seat of a king.

There is no plaque, no archaeological evidence, and no official record identifying it as a royal site. Yet in Bugesera, memory

often carries as much weight as documentation.

For generations, this area has told stories of bygone eras, describing a region that once existed not as a district but as a kingdom.

Today, Bugesera is widely known for its rapid development and its role in Rwanda's future growth. Yet beneath the expanding roads, housing estates, and monumental infrastructures lies a deeper history

shaped by ancient political power, displacement, hardship, and resilience.

A KINGDOM PRESERVED THROUGH MEMORY

Unlike many historical states, Bugesera left behind no surviving royal archives. Much of its early history exists through oral traditions, clan histories, and historical reconstruction.

Historian Jan Vansina, whose work remains influential in the study of Central African history, argued that oral traditions should not be dismissed as mere folklore. While shaped by social and political realities, they can preserve historical information across generations.

Within these traditions, Bugesera is associated with a kingdom believed to have emerged around

the 16th century and ruled by kings linked to the Bahondogo lineage. Names such as Nsoro Bihembe, Nsoro Sangano, and Nsoro Nyabarega recur in oral accounts throughout eastern Rwanda, although exact dates and successions remain difficult to verify.

What historians broadly agree upon is that Bugesera formed part of a dynamic political landscape that included the kingdoms of Urwanda, Igisaka, and Uburundi. Power shifted through warfare, alliances, and marriage ties, making Bugesera an important regional territory rather than a fixed empire.

FROM KINGDOM TO PLACE OF EXILE

For many residents, however, Bugesera is remembered not only as an ancient kingdom but

also as a destination for families displaced during the late colonial period and the years surrounding the 1959 Social Revolution.

Ambassador Joseph Nsengimana recalls arriving in Bugesera with his family in 1959 after being displaced from Rwankeri, in present-day Musanze District.

“I arrived in Bugesera with my parents in 1959,” he said. “Colonial authorities and local leaders displaced many Tutsis from different regions of Rwanda and sent them to Bugesera.”

He remembers families being relocated to a harsh and isolated environment where tsetse fly infestations devastated livestock and livelihoods.

At the time, Bugesera was sparsely populated and largely inhabited by cattle

keepers and small farming communities. The arrival of displaced families gradually transformed the district’s demographic landscape.

Many families came from cooler regions of northern and southern Rwanda and struggled to adapt to Bugesera’s unfamiliar climate, water shortages, disease burdens, and difficult farming conditions.

According to Richard Mutabazi, Mayor of Bugesera District, many arrived with little support and faced severe hardship.

“Herds of cattle perished due to tsetse fly infestations, depriving families of their livelihoods and plunging many into poverty, hunger, and starvation,” he said.

Mutabazi argues that these experiences were linked to governance systems that institutionalised ethnic discrimination during colonial rule and reinforced exclusion after independence.

During the First and Second Republics, members of targeted communities often required authorisation to travel, while checkpoints restricted movement. Educational opportunities also remained scarce. Before the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Bugesera reportedly had only one secondary school, Groupe Scolaire Rilima.

“Parts of Bugesera came to be regarded as areas mainly designated for Tutsis,”



Mutabazi said. “As a result, the region was excluded from many development initiatives that benefited other parts of the country.”

LIFE UNDER HARDSHIP

Jean-Baptiste Munyakore was among those who arrived in Bugesera in 1959 after fleeing violence in northern Rwanda.

Transported in a military truck alongside his wife, younger brother, grandmother, and other displaced families, he remembers being forced to leave nearly everything behind.

“We were only allowed to leave with only clothes on our backs and nothing else,” he recalls.

As they approached the Nyabarongo River basin, the landscape seemed unfamiliar and unforgiving.

“We opened our eyes to a land of savannah and marshes,” he said.

Like many residents of his generation, Munyakore recalls the long-standing belief that the spread of tsetse flies in Bugesera has been linked to deliberate colonial-era policies intended to undermine cattle keeping.

A DISTRICT TRANSFORMED

Despite this difficult past, Bugesera has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past three decades.

Following Rwanda’s reconstruction after 1994, investment in roads, schools, hospitals, health centres, and other public services expanded significantly across the district.

Its proximity to Kigali has accelerated growth, turning Bugesera into an

increasingly important residential and economic extension of the capital.

The construction of a new International Airport has further strengthened the district’s strategic importance within Rwanda’s development agenda.

Today, many residents commute daily to Kigali while choosing to live in Bugesera because of improved transport links, expanding infrastructure, and growing investment opportunities. Demand for land and housing continues to rise as new businesses and services emerge.

Once associated with exile, hardship, and neglect, Bugesera is increasingly recognised for growth, opportunity, and renewal.

MEMORY AND RENEWAL

Yet even as the district changes, older histories

remain embedded in its landscape.

Oral traditions, place names, and locally recognised landmarks — including stones and caves linked to royal narratives — continue to connect residents to a past that predates modern administrative boundaries.

Bugesera’s story is not simply one of a lost kingdom or a place of displacement. It is also a story of survival and transformation.

Today, ancient political memory, histories of exclusion, and modern development coexist within the same landscape.

Back in Mayange, the stone beside which Uwamaboko stands remains unchanged. To most people, it is just a rock. To others, it is a reminder that in Bugesera, history has never disappeared. It has simply taken on new forms.





INSIDE BUGESERA FC'S LONG ROAD BACK FROM THE BRINK

BY JEJJE MUHINDE

Now that the curtains have fallen on the 2025/26 National Football League season, Bugesera Football Club finds itself in a place that feels less like a finish line and more like the quiet stretch after a long, bumpy road finally begins to level out.

Just two seasons ago, Bugesera FC was fighting to remain in Rwanda's top flight. Every weekend carried survival weight. Results were unpredictable, pressure was constant, and the relegation zone never felt far away.

The 2023/24 season laid bare the extent of the club's problems. Bugesera finished 13th with 32 points from 30 matches, seven wins, 11 draws and 12 defeats. It was a campaign that exposed weaknesses both on the pitch and within the club's wider structure.

For supporters, it was exhausting. For the club, it was a warning.

As results deteriorated, former head coach Francis Halimagingo stepped down despite having seven months remaining on his contract. Around the same

period, the squad also began to unravel. Striker Umar Abba, the league's leading scorer in 2025, left for Polokwane City FC in South Africa at the end of the season.

Behind the scenes, tensions were rising further. Sources close to the club indicated that Bugesera FC spent at least Rwf 35 million in the final three matches of that campaign in a desperate attempt to avoid relegation.

In the end, survival felt less like relief and more like postponing the inevitable.

THE ESCAPE THAT CHANGED LITTLE

Bugesera's survival that season was sealed on the final day with a 3-0 victory over Etoile de l'Est in Ngoma District. It was a decisive result, and, in hindsight, a temporary escape.



Sports journalist Didace Ukulikiyindi believes that period was defining, but not transformative.

“What we’ve witnessed this season is not just an uptick in performances,” he said. “It is the painstaking reconstruction of Bugesera FC thanks to head coach Camarade, almost from the floorboards up.”

At the time, however, the underlying issues remained unresolved.

“When things started falling apart, the coach became the easiest target,” Didace said. “That is football’s oldest script; blame the manager, sack him, and avoid confronting the real issues higher up.”

He argues the deeper problem lies within the club’s administration.

“The bigger problem was a management committee that hesitated to invest when the club needed support the most,” he said. “That kind of financial caution cripples many clubs in this league, not just Bugesera.”

According to Didace, Bugesera FC’s struggles reflect a wider pattern in domestic football.

“They only react when the danger becomes impossible to ignore at the trapdoor,” he said. “Once relegation is staring them in the face, that’s when spending suddenly becomes urgent.”

That urgency defined their escape in 2024, but it did not prevent a repeat of instability the following season.

A threadbare squad, delayed wages, and



limited player support created a fragile environment.

“Footballers respond to stability and trust,” Didace said. “When players are not being paid on time and the club cannot provide the basics needed to compete, confidence disappears very quickly.”

THE TURNING POINT

What followed was less dramatic, but more significant: continuity.

Rather than overhaul the squad, new head coach Camarade Issa Bwanamwana, who took over from Francis, chose stability. He retained much of the core

group, recalled Abba, and leaned on experienced players including goalkeeper Jean De Dieu Nsabimana, Vincent Adams, Ishimwe Saleh, Seth Nkurunziza, Brian Muhinda, Moise Nyarugabo and Reuben Bala.

Alongside experience came renewal. Young players were



gradually introduced, including Moise Nyarugabo, one of the league's emerging talents in recent seasons.

"I am for one reason: to keep Bugesera FC in the top division. Finishing 10th was important, but the battle continues. We have the squad, the administration, and the hunger to win. From here on out." Coach Camarade, who awaits a contract renewal, said.

The approach marked a shift away from short-term survival thinking.

This time, the focus was on structure.

In Bugesera District, football is more than a sport. It is a constant presence in daily life, a source of pride and frustration in equal measure.

Yannick Mugabo, a passionate fan from Nyamata town, said, "In Bugesera District, football is more than a sport. It is a constant presence in daily life, a source of pride. Finishing 10th this season is far better than before. Our team performed well this season."

The club's results are debated widely, and emotions run high, joy in victory, disappointment in defeat. But beyond that emotional cycle, Bugesera FC also plays a broader role as a social and economic anchor, bringing top-flight football into the heart of the district.

That closeness comes



The bigger problem was a management committee that hesitated to invest when the club needed support the most. That kind of financial caution cripples many clubs in this league, not just Bugesera."

with responsibility and cost.

Mayor Richard Mutabazi of Bugesera District says local government funds around 90% of the club's operational budget.

"Running a team at this level is incredibly expensive," the Mayor said. "We have hospitals, roads and schools, among other things that must be built and maintained."

"Funding the club at 100% is an institutional impossibility. It is

not because we lack ambition, or because we do not dream of seeing Bugesera at the summit of the league. It is a matter of basic arithmetic and civic duty."

THE FINANCIAL REALITY BEHIND AMBITION

The mayor says the district must balance

sporting ambition with public responsibility.

"We have to keep balance in the budget; just enough to ensure the squad remains competitive and safely away from the relegation zone."

At present, the district is seeking private investors and corporate partners to strengthen the club's financial base.

"With the right private backing, we can build a stronger budget that allows us not just to

survive domestically, but to genuinely compete with other league heavyweights like Al Hilal, Al Merrikh or APR," he said.

STABILITY AT LAST; BUT QUESTIONS REMAIN

On the pitch, the signs of progress are visible. Bugesera finished the 2025/26 season safely in mid-table, mixing strong results, including a 2-0 win over AS Kigali, a 3-0 victory against Etincelles, and a 1-0 win over Police FC, with setbacks such as a 2-0 defeat to Al Hilal.

It is not a breakthrough season. But it is no longer a survival fight either.

For a club that once measured success in avoiding collapse, that shift matters.

The lessons of recent years, financial strain, managerial turnover, and squad instability, have been costly. But they have also reshaped the club's approach.

For the first time in a long time, Bugesera FC looks less like a team reacting to crisis, and more like one attempting to build beyond it.



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