Urwagwa, a traditional Rwandan banana ale cherished locally and beyond, holds a time-honored legacy deeply ingrained in social customs and economic sustenance. Passed down through generations, its presence graces significant events like marriage ceremonies and is a vital income source for many.

However, as demand for Urwagwa surged, its quality faced a precarious decline. Compromised standards became evident, exacerbated by the need for prolonged storage. Recognizing this challenge as an opportunity for innovation, Placide Tuyishimire embarked on a mission to modernize Urwagwa brewing.

Tuyishimire Placide, the CEO and founder of CETRAF

Drawing from his familial roots steeped in the art of brewing banana ale, Tuyishimire established the Centre de Transformation Agro-Alimentaire en Afrique (CETRAF), envisioning a future where tradition meets modernity in perfect harmony.

While studying at INES Ruhengeri University in Musanze, Tuyishimire's entrepreneurial spirit propelled him into action. In 2010, armed with a blend of personal savings and a strategic loan, he temporarily paused his academic pursuits to give life to CETRAF.

Today, CETRAF stands tall as a beacon of innovation in local brewing, boasting a repertoire of distinctive products under its CETRAF beer brand. Among its prized offerings are the beloved banana ale alongside the tantalizing ginger beer, each crafted with meticulous attention to quality and tradition, ushering banana ale into a new era of excellence.

While honoring the timeless authenticity of banana ale, CETRAF has boldly ventured into both elevating quality standards and refining branding. Central to the company's ethos is an unwavering dedication to excellence, accentuated by a carefully guarded secret ingredient that enhances the drink's distinctive flavor profile.

Thanks to CETRAF's tireless efforts, Rwandans now savor Urwagwa with unparalleled freshness and quality, all sourced and produced locally. The company proudly bears the stamp of approval from the Rwanda Standards Board, a testament to its unwavering commitment to meeting and exceeding rigorous quality

benchmarks.

From its modest origins, CETRAF initially churned out around 200 crates of beers daily. However, propelled by a steadfast commitment to growth and innovation, production capacity has soared to approximately 50,000 crates per month, with ambitious plans for further expansion on the horizon.

What began as a modest operation with just 30 employees has blossomed into a thriving enterprise that now empowers over 500 workers. CETRAF's reach extends far and wide, with a robust network of at least 130 distribution points spanning the length and breadth of the country.

Despite facing initial setbacks, Tuyishimire remained resolutely optimistic about the company's trajectory. Recognizing the imperative of substantial investments in fostering both growth and upholding quality standards, he persevered through the challenges with unwavering determination.

Reflecting on the journey, Tuyishimire acknowledges the supportive business environment in Rwanda, which serves as a fertile ground for aspiring entrepreneurs and investors alike. He challenges the notion that doing business in Rwanda is arduous, attributing any such perceptions to either a lack of initiative or a reluctance to embrace the inherent opportunities.

Indeed, challenges persist, from sourcing raw materials to securing packaging supplies, yet CETRAF presses on undeterred. Tuyishimire remains buoyed by the unwavering support of the government for locally made products and the ongoing influx of investments into the country.

Despite these hurdles, CETRAF's offerings, proudly bearing the "Made in Rwanda" insignia, continue to resonate with consumers, who increasingly recognize and appreciate the superior quality offered by homegrown enterprises.

Looking to the future, Tuyishimire's vision extends beyond mere commercial success. He envisions a legacy that transcends generations, epitomized by ambitious projects he is undertaking in the City of Musanze.

To Tuyishimire, investing in Rwanda isn’t just about business; it’s about creating lasting impact and securing a prosperous future for his nation.

To the youth, Tuyishimire emphasizes the virtues of confidence, perseverance, hard work, and prudent financial management. He underscores the importance of initiating ventures with whatever resources are at hand, rather than waiting for an elusive windfall, as true success stems from action, determination, and a willingness to embrace opportunity.