During the 1980s the job market in Rwanda was very narrow and restricted to a few know who is who, the education sector was not for everyone and the only available option was the subsistence farming. Athanase Ndagijimana left his home village in Nyaruguru to seek greener pastures after seeing no future in his parent's undeveloped farming.

Muhanga was a relatively booming town in central Rwanda in the 1980s when Ndagijimana arrived there, gave a shot at its informal trade and later set-up a small retail shop dealing in all kinds of commodities.

A few years operating his shop then the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi struck leaving him as many others paralysed having lost many in his family including his wife and some of his children, friends, neighbours, customers and a run-out business.

Following the genocide against the Tutsi, Ndagijimana picked up the pieces using the experience gained to open yet another shop in Muhanga town. This was forced by the new responsibilities of taking care of those in family who had survived including orphaned children with nowhere else to turn to.

"The new responsibilities to support my big family required to work harder than before to ensure that the children go to school and give others hope to live," notes Ndagijimana. Resolving never to fail providing for his family and worked hard but with support from the new leadership there was hope.

"The unity government established in 1994 gave us hope and strength to live, work hard as well to support the survivors like orphaned children providing education and health which gave us the strength," he said.

The children have grown having completed their education, he proudly indicates how many have overcome the turbulent times they passed through and are supporting them to start their
own families.

Today, Ndagijimana is a model businessman in Muhanga where he owns three commercial buildings in the town, he built them in 2004, 2011 and 2016.

The buildings in the centre of Muhanga town have contributed in the development

of the area making it more vibrant and good candidate to be a secondary city to the capital Kigali.

His businesses are also very important to the area because they employee a large number of locals as well the businesses in his buildings. Secondary, he contributes to the economy of the country through tax contributions.As he advances into old age still has the strength and more things he wishes to undertake but also has advice for the young ones. Currently he had two building projects one in Muhanga town and another somewhere else.

Ndagijimana advises the youth to be confident in what they do, trust in elders and more importantly follow the leaders of the country, who have a good vision for tomorrow. The leadership in Rwanda is visionary and has set the course for the country to prosper by proving a conducive environment to operate.

He emphasizes that the country is now at peace unlike before when he was starting to work and for once in the country's history the younger people don't have to worry because Rwanda is safe with opportunities and they can undertake whatever they need to do.

An important piece of his advice to the youth and those starting businesses is to always follow government policies and pay taxes promptly as an important factor to lead them to success.

He says that no one can develop without paying taxes and when you break the law, you are punished which takes you backwards.

Ndagijimana is thankful of what the leadership in Rwanda has done for the country, stopping the genocide against the Tutsi, liberating the country from the bad politics of sectarianism that was destroying Rwanda.

Following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, government restored hope and provided a new breath of life to millions, he attests that the new hope gave him the strength to continue to work because without it he was lost as many Rwandans would have been lost.