Every thriving community has individuals whose journeys reflect its progress, and in Bugesera District, Rutayisire Mitchel 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 FERWAFA. 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 FERWAFA, 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.

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.

Rutayisire as President of Bugesera FC after signing a sponsorship deal with Shame Lam, the founder of Poultry East Africa.

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 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.

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.

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.”

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.

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.