

Anitha Urayeneza's earliest memories are of watching her operating a small shop selling goods to provide for her family. Man later, Urayeneza is a progressive entrepreneur and proprietor of a b empire, reveals that her single mother's situation to look after children including five of her own was of great inspiration in her se a better future.

Urayeneza is the Managing Director of NBG Group, a company with strong presence in manufacturing and another in hospitality. NBG runs a distillery producing gin and whisky while Romantic Gardens, is a luxurious hospitality facility known for hosting weddings and events in Gisozi, a suburb of Kigali City.

In a recent exclusive interview with Rwanda Dispatch, she said that the hard memories on how her mother struggled each day to fend for her family were a silver lining along her entrepreneurship journey. The single mother did everything possible ranging from odd jobs to a roadside vendor to raise Urayeneza and her siblings along shouldering other parental duties including paying for education, health insurance, and upkeep.

The values Urayeneza developed during her vulnerable childhood including deligence, resilience and innovativeness made her a successful student at Kigali Independent University (ULK). S caught up with the challenges of University students inc financial hardships by doing small businesses, and loathed over-dependence a syndrome among many students.



She sold bags, clothes, and jewelry to fellow students. It was a simple hustle, but to her, it was a stepping-stone to something greater.

“Learning from my mother, I s making small earnings to sup myself at the university and a being overly reliant on family. I make pocket money from the s of goods at campus,” she recalls.

Recognizing a high demand for photocopying notes, a service required by many students, she saved up her earnings and invested in a photocopy machine. With this, she took her business a step further by hiring someone to run the machine while she continued with her studies.

These small ventures started as a young girl laid the foundation for what would later become an impressive business empire.



BUILDING A FAMILY BUSINESS LEGACY

Today, Anitha Urayeneza is the Managing Director of NBG Group, which has created impact in manufacturing and hospitality. Despite her success as an entrepreneur, Urayeneza's journey was never smooth. Like many fresh graduates, she initially pursued formal employment, submitting job applications a common practice among university graduates.

"After graduation, I wanted to seek employment like everyone else. It felt like the right thing to do, something all young people admire," Urayeneza says, "but after a few failed applications, I lost interest and considered starting own business."

Just as her business was taking shape, Urayeneza met Norbert Gatera who has played a significant role in her journey. Later, Gatera became her husband and father of her children. Also, a young businessman, his encouragement strengthened her resolve to continue with him on an entrepreneurship path.



Their shared passion for business became the foundation of their relationship and professional growth. Together, they explored new opportunities, expanding their reach in business.

Urayeneza and Gatera are the founders and owners of NBG Group, Romantic Gardens, and a mobile phone company.

After tying the knot in 2008 their responsibilities stretched from business to family duties.

The duo's journey is proof that entrepreneurship isn't just about making money—it's about vision, resilience, and the courage to build something from nothing.

She advises the youth to always start small in business and grow gradually, because if you don't know how to manage a small business you can never manage a big one.

DIVERSIFYING BUSINESS PORTFOLIO

Having decided to live in suburbs of Kigali, the Gateras loved the neighborhood of Gisozi and bought a small piece land. But when opportunity presented itself for possible land expansion they already had plans to diversify their business undertakings.

They continued to expand by acquiring more land and established Romantic Gardens, the crown jewel of their empire. This idyllic hospitality establishment offers a breathtaking ambience for weddings and other special functions.

Later in years, NBG expanded into manufacturing by building a factory at the same location. The factory produces five spirits beverages namely; United Gin, American Gin, Ingwe Gin, Bombastic and Fimbo Gin.



Today, NBG Group employs more than 200 employees in its different portfolios and contributes to the development of the national economy through taxes.

NBG Group plans to expand by relocating the factory to the industrial area. The hospitality portfolio has also secured more land with plans of a hotel.

Urayeneza attributes the success of her family business and the progress of Rwanda's economy to peace, security and good governance.

"Rwanda has been blessed by the visionary leadership of HE President Paul Kagame and translates to a conducive business environment."

Rwanda has created an exceptional environment for businesses to flourish and the country stands out for its stability and well- defined business landscape supporting the players with various incentives.

"In Rwanda, no one can use his/her authority to undermine you as a citizen or your business. This helps to pursue personal progress along the confidence to dream and venture in different activities of the economy," she underlines.

"As women, we have been empowered and given confidence to do anything our male counterparts can do," Urayeneza emphasizes.

To young girls, Urayeneza urges them to embrace the culture of hard work and anything will be possible because Rwanda gives you the opportunity to dream and

achieve your dreams.

Urayeneza nurses a strong conviction that she will continue to work for her country in different capacities or where she can contribute more in building a nation that has inspired her so much.