

The inventiveness and development of Huye City Modern Market undeniably beatified the City. The commercial complex that upgraded the skyline of the city houses this outstanding market in Rwanda's Southern region. Currently, the biggest commercial facility in Huye District and Southern Province was among the first of its kind in the country.

There is a direct link between Huye city and this market hence the regression of the southern city directly impacted on the progress of the cooperative, which basically ventures in trade and investment.

Top officials from Ingenzi za Huye Cooperative say they completed one of the landmark buildings in Huye city that houses a modern market where over 700 traders work from, and are embarking on other development projects.

Francine Murekatete, the President of Ingenzi za Huye revealed that they have embarked on the construction of a new three-storied structure in a bid to expand the facilities and increase convenience for the traders.

The cooperative, which was established 2007, had three major objectives including construction of commercial buildings to facilitate traders and develop the city, build residences and import basic commodities that are not easily accessed on the local market.



The Modern Market became their first venture exclusively started by the cooperative that brings together members subscribing to the private sector who after conceptualizing the idea secured initial resources including a bank loan.

“We did not have a lot of money so we applied for a bank loan which we used to build the modern market,” said Leopold Mubera, Vice President of the cooperative.

Mubera revealed that the complex has 65 rooms, spacious open spaces that can be partitioned according to the client’s space requirements, other two host wears stalls and food stuffs. This building housing about 700 businesses is still underutilized with about 20 per cent vacant.

The underutilization of such a facility in the centre of Huye City is blamed on the snail pace growth partly blamed on the relocation of headquarters of major public institutions like the University of Rwanda (UR), Agriculture Research Institute (ISAR), Institute of Scientific and Technological Research (IRST) and the museum.

Previously, Rwanda's second city and centre of education, and home to the national museum was adversely affected by the relocation of a wide range of faculties of UR. Other events that affected the development of Huye include temporary closure of Burundi-Rwanda border post (Akanyaru) and development of the Kivu Belt alternative highway.

In general, Huye ceased to be a formidable city that attracted workers from all walks of life, and a tourist destination.

"The University almost relocated all principal faculties, and this affected us variously - even as government tried bringing the institutions back the city is no longer as it used to be because many of people left and Huye is not as endowed with tourist attractions as other regions in the country," said Murekatete.

She adds: "The University community formed a formidable market as they would depend on the market for food and other commodities."

We still have hope that the promise of H.E President Paul Kagame of returning those public institutions will sooner or later be a reality, she explained.

The city also experienced a decline in the volume of trade and rate of investment due to the emergency of Kivu Belt highway. Many districts in south-western Rwanda such as Rusizi, Nyamagabe, Nyamasheke and Karongi were potential catchment areas of Huye.

Murekatete told Rwanda Dispatch that the opened highway that starts from Rusizi via Karongi reduced the traffic in Huye as inhabitants of that region have a shorter route to Kigali hence sidelining Huye.

"The passengers to Kigali have the option of a shorter route created since the opening of the road from Rusizi via Karongi and nothing comes from Bukavu in DR Congo passes in Huye any longer," said the President of the cooperative.

The indefinite closure Akanyaru/Kanyaru Haut border affected businesses leading to a halt of some commodities that used to be traded in Huye market and many Burundians, especially the border communities used the market often.

Appealing for launch of tourist attractions in Huye

The leadership of the Cooperative call for the Government of Rwanda through

Rwanda Development Board (RDB) to consider launching new tourist places in Huye, saying there are forests that can be gazetted tourist areas if animals are introduced in there.

The head of the cooperative says that Huye is lacking tourist activities that can pull crowds of tourists in spite of the area being a promising tourism destination. To this effect, the cooperative leaders call for government intervention for the area to maximally exploit its tourism potential.



Ingenzi za Huye Cooperative support to local development

Ingenzi za Huye is laying its contributions towards the progress of Huye district through various ways like investments, creating jobs and facilitating trade that pay taxes to bring revenue for government.

Secondly, they contribute money on annual basis towards Huye District vote for public health insurance exclusively for the most vulnerable people in the district that subscribe to the first category of Ubudehe.

The cooperative is responsive to all government programmes, they said. They partners with local authorities in implementing policies and programmes that aim at uplifting the welfare of citizens. They have been at the forefront of rolling out the Girinka programme among others.

“As a cooperative, we are proud of being a model in the country in as far as the building infrastructures that facilitate the growth of the economy,” observes Mubera.

The cooperative says their market was the first one of its kind in the country and they are proud of having shared their experiences with many other traders and investors from across the country that built similar markets later.

The Vice President gave the current state of the cooperative stressing that as members they relate well with one another and have not encountered yet a challenge linked to any internal wrangles.

Murekatete observes that they organize regular retreats and get-togethers where they exhaustively deliberate on affairs of local development adding that they are proud of the unity of members and the manner they reach consensus whenever a decision is taken.

“We were eleven when the cooperative started and we have walked the journey together to the day. The only problem we experienced was when one of our members passed on while another one absconded but we replaced the later, we are now ten,” said the Vice President.

He observes that the idea of creating their cooperative is traced to the countrywide awareness campaign by H.E President Kagame about the role of cooperatives in fast tracking national development.

The cooperative extends gratitude to H.E President Kagame for his undying commitment to mobilize Rwandans to create cooperatives along the journey of delivering themselves from poverty as well as improving living standards.

Lastly, they heartily thank Huye District authorities for standing with them in all situations, particularly for various support since they started traders’ cooperative in Huye.