From the rolling hills of Nyaruguru, southern Rwanda, a young Tharcisse Rutayisire embarked on a path filled with promise. Education beckoned, and in 1986, he ventured to Kigali, the bustling capital, to pursue his studies at APACOPE secondary school.

Little did he know, his journey would be marked not just by textbooks and classrooms, but by resilience, courage, and an unwavering entrepreneurial spirit.

Tharcisse Rutayisire, the owner of Grazia Hotel

Tragically, his studies were cut short in 1994 by the Genocide against the Tutsi. During this horrific period, Rutayisire fortunately survived the atrocities thanks to the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) who rescued him from St. Paul. He found refuge in Kabuye and later Byumba.

Returning to his home village, Rutayisire faced a heartbreaking reality – his father and three sisters were among those killed. Only his mother and youngest sibling survived.

“When I returned home, I became more determined to rebuild,” he underscores. Resourceful and determined, he secured a job working in an office, earning a modest Rwf 30,570 (approximately US$23.73) a month.

“Considering the circumstances, it wasn’t bad pay,” he reflects. “We did everything we could to rebuild our lives.”

However, Rutayisire’s entrepreneurial spirit, evident since childhood, soon led him down a different path. “Even as a young boy, I had a natural business sense,” he recalls. “I used to sell anything from groundnuts, avocados, cigarettes, and other items to earn money for my own needs.”

Rutayisire’s entrepreneurial journey began with a forex bureau, upon recognizing a growing market, he diversified into hardware shop and later into transport sector.

As numbers of foreign visitors to Rwanda rose and government’s growing emphasis on tourism, this inspired Rutayisire to venture hospitality, first with apartments to cater for the expanding tourism market.

Buoyed by the success of his initial apartment venture, he set his sights on a larger project: a hotel. While the initial investment seemed daunting, the conducive business environment fostered by good leadership encouraged everyone involved. He soon discovered a key turning point: access to bank loans. This access to finance became a game-changer, enabling him to secure the capital needed.

Constructing Grazia Hotel to provide unmatched comfort

In 2014, Rutayisire's vision became a reality when the doors of Grazia Hotel officially opened, welcoming its first guests.

Recalling the excitement of those first clients. 'It's a moment I'll never forget,' Rutayisire beams. Despite lacking formal training in hotel management, his passion for hospitality shone through. "My dedication to the business shows," he says with pride. 'I'm always present, ensuring everything runs smoothly and our guests have a wonderful experience.'"

Recognizing the importance of skilled staff. Grazia Hotel has built a strong team by hiring experienced and qualified hoteliers in various departments. Similarly, the architectural designs and construction were undertaken by qualified professionals.

The hotel keeps pace with evolving standards and trends. This means investing in products and state-of-the-art equipment.

In Kigali's prestigious Kimihurura neighborhood, Grazia Hotel stands out as one of Rwanda's premier hospitality destinations. Offering locally-inspired cuisine, luxurious accommodations, and unparalleled comfort, Grazia Hotel sets the standard for guest experience excellence.

Grazia Hotel offers ideal venues for business meetings, featuring excellent meeting spaces with stunning views to enhance productivity and relaxation. There are a variety of meeting rooms and layouts tailored to client needs.

The Hotel, prioritizes guest well-being with modern gym and spa facilities. Whether you seek fitness or relaxation, the amenities cater to all needs, ensuring a fulfilling

stay.

The success of Grazia Hotel is credited by its proprietor to the steadfast commitment of the leadership.

Since liberation, Rutayisire underlines that, President Kagame’s leadership has been pivotal in Rwanda’s success, creating equal opportunities for all entrepreneurs to thrive on a leveled playing field.