

Before the 1990s, Rwanda's public job market was very narrow and reduced to a privilege of a few as nepotism was the order of the day. The vice had found refuge in the education sector as well. Consequently, the perpetual situation compelled many to engage in subsistence farming as the only option.

It is against this background that Aphrodis Misago decided to work with his elder brother who operated a small shop in Butare market to make ends meet. After joining his brother, he started catching up with life challenges, including access to necessities.

In 1986, the duo opened a bigger shop at a prime location in the centre of the present day Huye city in a bid to position themselves as progressive merchandise dealers.



Misago narrates that they opened a shop at Kwa Gitera a popular location in the town and continued their trade. Business flourished because this town served as the region's main trading centre, and its vantage location, which is in close proximity to Burundi and South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Unfortunately, as business started to prosper, the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi struck, destroying everything they had built. The elder brother was killed together with many family members, and Misago fled to Burundi for dear life. Over one million Tutsi were killed and the East African nation was devastated.

The Genocide reversed Misago's achievements and the loss of his brother and business created a regrettable impact. The aftermath of the genocide against the Tutsi was a very challenging period.

Increased responsibilities and experience became a catalyst to drive Misago back to his earlier business. He went back to the same town and reopened a shop from scratch.

The soft-spoken Misago recalls that shouldering new demands including supporting his family impelled him to work hard, and there was a lot of problems he had to deal with at the time. Shortly, he was motivated by the progress of his business.

However, all was not merry, a few years after resuming business a strange fire destroyed his shop to ashes and lost everything again. But, his fate was not at all a

factor to discourage him. Instead, he gathered guts to pursue his dreams with renewed momentum.



Huye modern market

Diversifying investments

Notably, the government of national unity set up after 1994 provided hope to many Rwandans. After stopping the genocide, a conducive business environment was established and the country recorded accelerated development in general.

When an opportunity came around in real estate, Misago was able to acquire the very building that housed his shop for decades. He secured a bank loan, bought the building and demolished it to build a storied commercial complex.

The 3-storied building is located opposite the City Modern Market in the heart of Huye city's commercial district. The building completed in 2011 changed the face of the city's skyline as well as facilitated development of the area.

Misago, also, a founding member of Ingenzi za Huye, a cooperative that is an engine of development that took the first step to build the biggest commercial structure in the city, Huye City Modern Market. To date, this progressive cooperative continues to invest in developmental initiatives.

Trade and real estate are not the only areas where Misago has invested, he is also into agro-processing where he owns a maize factory which is located in the neighbouring district, Gisagara.

His businesses are very important to the area because they employ a large number of locals as well accommodating different businesses in his buildings. He contributes to the economy of the country through tax contributions.

As an experienced businessman, Misago served as the Chairman of the Private Sector Federation (PSF) of Huye District until 2020. During his tenure, he worked closely with the district authorities to promote the interests of the private sector and development in the area.

He advises the youth to embrace the values such as hard work, patience, and stay focused in whatever they settle on their hands, which can lead them to success.

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