Almost 30 years after the Genocide against the Tutsi, Shyira Diocese has evolved into a centre for spiritual renewal and socio-economic progress in northern Rwanda. Founded in 1984, with origins linked to Anglican missionaries from the 1930s, the Diocese serves the districts of Burera, Gakenke, Musanze, and parts of Nyabihu.

Over the years, the Diocese has gained recognition for its spiritual guidance and vital contributions to healing and development in communities deeply affected by Rwanda's past.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Samuel Mugisha Mugiraneza, the Bishop of Shyira Diocese

Over the past forty years, the Diocese's impact is evident in the lives it has changed and the ongoing advancements it fosters through its four key areas: Evangelism, Education, Health, and Socio- Economic Development. The Diocese of Shyira is dedicated to transforming individuals into disciples of Jesus Christ, who disciple others through a comprehensive, evangelical framework that includes Archdeaconries, the Mothers' Union, Community Bible Study, and the Church Community Mobilization Program. Central to this mission is preaching the gospel and making disciples by teaching the Word of God.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Samuel Mugisha Mugiraneza, the Bishop of Shyira Diocese, notes that the Diocese has seen considerable success during this time. He credits this progress to former Bishops' efforts, the nation's stability, infrastructure development, and the forward-thinking leadership of President Paul Kagame, who has emphasized the importance of education for the populace.

Bishop Mugisha remarked that the Diocese has put considerable effort into educating and rehabilitating genocide survivors. He emphasized Bishop Rucyahana's important role in this endeavour by founding Sonrise school in Musanze City.

The school was opened to help orphans and less privileged children when the country was reconstructing after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Today, the Diocese has 53 schools: 36 Primary Schools, 8 Nine-YBE (3 Twelve–YBE), Four Secondary Boarding Schools, two private schools, and one College (MIPC).

Furthermore, through infrastructure and community initiatives, landmarks in the Diocese were erected like the construction of Shyira Cathedral, participation in promoting unity and reconciliation among different groups affected by the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Mugisha observes that, when Bishop Rucyahana was replaced by Bishop Laurent Mbanda, the Diocese grew stronger and more community initiatives were introduced to aid the community in returning to normalcy like early childhood development initiatives. Bishop Mbanda also focused on making the Diocese self-sufficient by launching projects that would reduce reliance on foreign donations.

The church has made notable progress in setting up Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres and various projects through Compassion to assist children. 198 preschool/ daycare centres are engaged, with 17,901 and 311 Caregivers in all ECD Centres. 33 are under one egg program. ECD program supports children in their critical years, providing holistic access to early learning and stimulation, good nutrition, good health, hygiene, and protection.

In 2017, while serving as the development officer at Shyira Diocese, Rt. Rev. Dr. Mugisha reorganized the management of its educational institutions and motivated the local community to save and invest in development initiatives. This effort resulted in the construction of commercial buildings in Burera, Mukamira, Gakenke, and Nova Building in Musanze City, a commercial complex that accommodates offices and businesses.

More investments are ongoing like a three-story commercial complex in Musanze City. These strategic investments have created a reliable and increasing source of income for the Diocese enhancing its ability to support essential programs.

Shyira Diocese’s commitment to growth goes beyond just infrastructure. Since 2018, under the guidance of Rt. Rev. Dr. Mugisha, the Diocese has prioritized ensuring pastors receive adequate theological education at East African Christian University. More than 44 pastors, including those who have already been trained, have been sent for further studies.

Bishop Mugisha has pioneered infrastructure development such as building churches where 36 new churches have been inaugurated. There are four high rise

churches and one ground building under construction in Gasebeya, Kabyaza, Gitare and Gakenke,

He says that the Diocese will continue to contribute to development in Northern Rwanda through the establishment of churches to foster community unity, education, and ensuring the well-being of the community. Most importantly, Shyira Diocese has instilled a love for God, self, and neighbours, promoting self-improvement, diligence, and harmony while steering clear of conflicts stemming from the Genocide.

Alongside their theological growth, pastors are encouraged and empowered to create self- sustaining projects to support themselves and their congregations. This effort improves the pastors' financial situations and enhances the economic independence of their church communities.

In line with its commitment to socioeconomic change, the church has promoted savings programs for women. More than 40 women's groups across the districts of Musanze, Gakenke, Burera, and Nyabihu receive financial assistance from the church. The church has also launched livestock donation initiatives, where families are given animals and encouraged to share the offspring with others, promoting generosity and sustainability.

In addition to savings, these women's groups have gained from the "Mothers' Union" program, which offers financial support for small business ventures. This program has been especially beneficial for teenage mothers who have left school, providing them with skills in tailoring to help them generate income. Furthermore, the Mothers' Union has built a property estate in Musanze District, which they rent to make an income.

Shyira Diocese is dedicated to enhancing health promotion and prevention while improving the primary healthcare system's quality, safety, and performance. The Diocese has established and supports various health facilities, including four health posts and Kimonyi, a model health centre in Musanze City.

Through decades of transformation, Shyira Diocese stands as a testament to resilience, faith, and progress in Northern Rwanda. Rooted in a mission of spiritual

renewal, community service, and socio-economic advancement, the Diocese has evolved into a vital pillar supporting education, healthcare, and development initiatives for the region.

Under the guidance of Rt. Rev. Dr. Samuel Mugisha Mugiraneza, Shyira Diocese continues to embody its mission of fostering unity, hope, and opportunity, providing a powerful example of how faith-driven leadership can impact generations.