

Enterprise Urwibutso at Nyirangarama in Rulindo District, a brainchild of Sina Gérard has undertaken innovations in various food chains inspiring a generation of entrepreneurs as it continues to gain more ground in Rwanda and outside the country.

His first innovative idea in food products dates back 38 years ago when Sina from his parent's home started making donuts. The donuts called Urwibutso were so unique, delicious and very popular delicacy on the local market that they inspired more products.

The success of Enterprise Urwibutso was facilitated by the popularity of its products following the liberation of the country in 1994 that ushered in a new era liberalising innovation.

Sina Gérard, the founder and proprietor of Enterprise Urwibutso underlines that the enabling environment brought by the liberation of Rwanda has greatly contributed to the success of the company enabling innovations in food chains and quality products.

"Rwandans claimed back their dignity and whenever people work hard they are dignifying themselves," he observes. Emphasizing that good leadership and deep business reforms from the government which has given businesses the opportunity to boost made in Rwanda products.



Sina Gérard, the founder and proprietor of Enterprise Urwibutso

Enterprise Urwibutso has maintained value addition plus innovation to improve products ensuring that they are competitive on the local market as well as export so that the country gets foreign exchange earnings.

The company continues to undertake research to get new products and improve quality. The model here is to continue diversifying into different products like juices, flours, pepper, alcoholic drinks, water, dairy products to mention a few.

Starting with a few products from the bakery in the early 1980s, many delicacies have been added and improved. Then agro processing initiatives were started that released 'Aka..' line products every time, when ventured into juices as Agashya passion fruit juice it was unstoppable. The passion fruit juice became so popular

which inspired production of juices from a variety of other fruits including pineapple, mango, banana, carrots, strawberry and most recent sugarcane juice with ginger and lemon.

To improve the products Sina attended international study tours which prompted to start producing wine as Akarusho, from banana and strawberry. Then came the popular Akabanga oil chilli that is liked on the local and international market.

The list of products at Sina's Enterprise Urwibutso keeps growing like Akarabo biscuits, Akandi mineral water, Akanozo flours, Akaryoshye yogurt, Akawe milk, Akizewe Natural Honey, Akacu, Aka Mayonnaise, Akiwacu and Akingenzi sanitizer among others.

"My business was a response to the need to transform local products. Every year I have an innovation to introduce. What appeals is that these products are ordinary, they are made in Rwanda and for everyone globally." Sina notes.

The business acumen of Sina's makes many people think that he went to some top business schools but is a self-taught, determined and result-oriented business and social entrepreneur that always has a big plan.



### **Involvement in philanthropy work**

As an entrepreneur, Sina Gérard primarily focused on agriculture and started diversifying even to social work as he says it's about supporting community development and the next generation.

His philanthropy work has led to the establishment of Sina Gerard Foundation which built a school, Collège Fondation Sina Gérard, clinic and church, all these established at Nyirangarama to benefit the community.

Collège Fondation Sina Gérard provides free education to those from vulnerable families, from nursery level and secondary school level, including the boarding section. The school is built for low-income families, especially the ones Enterprise Urwibutso works with.

The school provide skills and knowledge in the sectors of Agriculture, Veterinary Technology, Food science and Technical skills.

With more than 2,100 students, 700 in nursery and primary level, the school aspires to become a centre of excellence where the young from low-income families can equip and enrich themselves with knowledge to help their communities get out of poverty.

As a staunch Catholic, Sina believes the religious doctrines have guided him and will help the students which prompted him to build the Chapel of St. Gerard at the College. This is meant to help raise the spiritual life, mostly for the students and also the neighbouring community.

Sina's message is primarily directed at the youth to work hard, be patient and will achieve their goals. He encourages innovation among the youth, and his wish is to make a difference in Rwanda by providing farmers with more opportunities.