In designing the future, Fufa must build local design capacity

Most clubs struggles to attract modest corporate backing



Godfrey Drabe
Stadiums

In the modern sports landscape, a football club is no longer just a group of eleven players on a pitch; it is a brand, a community hub, and a commercial entity.

For the Federation of Uganda Football Associations (Fufa), the journey toward the Professionalization and Commercialization of the game as outlined in the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan cannot be achieved solely through better coaching or refereeing.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of clubs like Onduparaka, Mbarara City, or Kitara, Fufa must invest in design capacity building nationwide. This involves empowering clubs with the skills to design their own business models, visual identities, and sustainable infrastructure.

Most Ugandan clubs struggle to attract corporate sponsorship because they lack a professional "package."

Design capacity building teaches clubs how to create consistent visual identity logos, kits, and digital media assets that resonate with fans and sponsors alike.

A well-designed brand creates an emotional bond with the local community, turning casual viewers into loyal season-ticket holders. Marketability: Sponsors are more likely to partner with a club that has a clean, professional aesthetic and a clear "story" to tell.

As climate change impacts match schedules through unpredictable weather, the design of local pitches and stadiums becomes a survival issue.

Fufa's capacity building should include training on sustainable stadium design.

Designing facilities with smart irrigation, rainwater harvesting, and energy-efficient lighting reduces the crushing monthly utility bills that often bankrupt smaller clubs.

Using locally sourced, resilient materials ensures that community pitches remain playable year-round, reducing the need for expensive, frequent repairs.

Sustainability requires more than just gate collections. Clubs need the "design thinking" skills to build diversified revenue streams.

Designing the stadium layout to include vending spaces for local artisans or fan zones can triple revenue per attendee.

Capacity building helps clubs design curriculum-based academies that develop players not just for the first team, but as "exportable assets" to foreign leagues, providing a vital injection of transfer capital.

In 2026, data is as important as the ball. Clubs need the capacity to design and manage digital systems for.

Fan Engagement: Using social media and apps to reach the diaspora and younger demographics.

Designing simple data collection methods for player health and scouting, ensuring the club doesn't lose its best talent due to poor record-keeping.

Currently, there is a massive resource gap between Kampala-based giants and regional clubs.

By decentralizing design training, Fufa ensures that a club in Gulu, Mbale or Arua has the same professional "look and feel" as one in the capital.

This levels the playing field for national sponsorships and ensures the Uganda Premier League (UPL) is a product worth buying as a whole.

"We cannot demand the fruits of professionalism without first watering the roots of capacity. A club that looks professional, acts professional, and builds sustainably is a club that survives."

Fufa has already seen success with the Clubs Pro Agenda and Famaco (Football Administration and Management Course).

The next evolution should be a specialized Design & Innovation Module tailored to the Ugandan context.

By teaching clubs to design their own destiny from the kits they wear to the stadiums they build Fufa won't just be managing football; it will be engineering a self-sustaining industry that thrives for generations.



Beneficiary. An upgrade of the MTN Omondi, Lugogo, the home of KCCA FC, has been ongoing for the past few years but this cannot be repeated in many areas. PHOTO/ COURTESY

The writer is the former head of communication, marketing and PR manager of Onduparaka

CamScanner