

OPINION

BY SHAFIK SSENOGA
SUB EDITORPOAR PROVES SPORT CAN BOOST
LOCAL ECONOMIES

The just concluded Pearl of Africa Rally (POAR) in the Ankole region once again demonstrated how motorsport can boost tourism, business and regional visibility. For the second consecutive year, Mbarara hosted the continental event and the city responded impressively through organization, hospitality and overwhelming public enthusiasm. Hotels, restaurants, bars and transport operators all enjoyed increased business during the rally week, while vendors, photographers, artisans and bodaboda riders benefited directly from the influx of visitors and motorsport fans.

The rally also promoted western Uganda's tourism potential. Foreign drivers and spectators experienced the beauty of the Ankole countryside, the long-horned cattle, Lake Mburo National Park and Igongo Cultural Centre. By combining sport, culture and nature, the event helped market Uganda as an attractive tourism destination beyond sport and wildlife alone.

However, there is still room for improvement. Organisers should invest more in digital promotion through social media campaigns, documentaries and wider television coverage to attract bigger international audiences.

Greater community involvement through cultural festivals, youth programmes and entertainment activities would strengthen public interest, while increased corporate sponsorship would improve competition standards, prize money and overall event quality.

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