

Rwandan football is brimming with potential! Picture passionate fans cheering, talented players scoring goals, and the entire country dreaming of big wins.

However, a significant hurdle exists: some clubs are grappling with financial difficulties, experiencing frequent leadership turnovers, and are confined to outdated operational methods.

To many observers, these challenges are hindering the advancement of Rwandan football. The absence of diversified ownership models is stifling progress. It is imperative to transcend mere adjustments to ownership structures and instead adopt a multi-faceted approach for sustainable success.

Even big clubs like Kiyovu SC face these issues. Remember last September, Kiyovu Sports president Juvenal Mvukiyehe resigned from his position citing personal reasons. Since then, it has been a roller coaster.

Well, members of SC Kiyovu then elected Jean François Régis Ndorimana for a new three-year term as club president, however that has not changed anything, the club is struggling to even pay staff.

Head coach Petros Koukouras mutually agreed with the team to leave the club after only five months in order to relieve the budget from his contract due to the financial problems the club is facing this season.

For most local clubs, a change of leadership has always created a sense of unease and vulnerability about job security and fair treatment during difficult financial times.

These changes at the top of football clubs make it hard to plan for the future, and they have made it hard for teams like Kiyovu Sports.

What this has shown is that relying only on fan ownership isn't always the answer, especially when money is tight.

Instead of just arguing about who owns the clubs, Rwandan local football clubs need to change course to fix everything that's wrong. Sure, finding good owners is important, but that's not enough.

Clubs like Kiyovu SC, Bugesera FC, Amagaju, Sunrise, and Musanze FC who rely on district funding face a dual challenge.

Relying solely on district funding is a recipe for financial vulnerability, as evidenced by Kiyovu SC's current struggles. This is the reason why most of these local clubs end up in huge debts. Embracing diversified ownership models offers a pathway towards financial stability.

Imagine Rayon Sports FC with fans cheering alongside partners like Skol as a stakeholder, while smart investors help build world-class facilities and attract talented players.

This is the future Rwandan football deserves – a future where passion, vision, and strategic partnerships propel the country's clubs to continental glory.

Additionally, expanding on the benefits of fan co-ownership explains how fan investment provides a financial buffer, local knowledge, and marketing potential.

The other key point is that collaborating with socially conscious businesses like Skol as stakeholder in the club, isn't just about financial support. It can create a partnership aligned with strong values and opens doors to new networks, fostering long-term growth.

The third point is that, apart from Rayon, others clubs like Kiyovu, Sunrise FC to mention but a few can carefully choose local or international investors that can bring capital and business expertise to the table.

Today, the world of sports is witnessing a surge in celebrity ownership and investment, with figures like LeBron James actively participating in both American and international soccer teams.

Similarly, Rwandan singer-songwriter Bruce Melodie recently secured an investment in the UGB basketball team, demonstrating the growing trend of local celebrities contributing to the sports landscape.

Leveraging the expertise of co-ownership can unlock strategic investments in infrastructure development, player acquisition, and other key areas.

This synergistic approach can lead to improved facilities, attracting higher-caliber players, and ultimately, increased competitiveness on both the domestic and continental stages.

Remember what happened to Tanzania's Simba FC? They got a strong leader,

invested wisely, and now they're doing great! Rwandan clubs can do the same.

Tanzania's richest man, Mohammed Dewji, made a \$10 million bid to acquire a controlling stake of at least 51% in Simba SC, today, it is one of the most successful soccer clubs in the Tanzanian Premier League.

Simba hires high quality players and they've invested in key infrastructure – including a \$2.5 million modern Simba SC stadium and training ground in Bunju, located on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam.

Private ownership often leads to the appointment of professional management with expertise in the sports industry. This has brought greater efficiency, strategic planning, and business acumen to Simba's operations.

Well, clubs like APR FC or Police FC have the resources, they have been successful because they receive funding from institutions like the army or police. However, they too face drawbacks.

This can be seen in the reduced fan and community influence over the club's decision-making processes and priorities. They face uncertainty in the future like ownership changes, or management reshuffles.

Don't let anyone tell you there's just one solution. Fixing club football takes teamwork! Fans, leaders, investors, and everyone in between needs to work together.

By doing this, Rwandan football clubs can make sure they have good leaders, enough money, and happy fans. This will lead to Rwandan football shining on the big stage!