

KE NAKO...

The Time is Now

World Cup Unites South Africa

It is impossible to describe the power of what has unfolded in the Rainbow Nation over the past two months. Hosting, participating in, and celebrating what many regard as the greatest spectacle within sport, the 2010 FIFA World Cup, was a collective experience beyond measure.

Historians and pundits the world over are still searching for words to describe what it meant for South Africa (and Africa as a continent by extension) to host the World Cup, let alone the wildly successful party they just threw for the world.

Barely 30 days after a Final Match that saw Spain reign as World Champions (joining their 2008 European Champion crown), it is as if a collective quiet has descended upon this nation. "What now?" is a common query these days, as if a nation of almost 50 million people don't quite know how to return to life as normal.

And that's the beautiful thing.

Life slowly but surely shifted as South Africa facilitated the sharing of 'the beautiful game' with the world. Living in a country beset with problems that make up a collective weariness in the world's mind (rampant unemployment, poverty, one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the world, high levels of violent crime), it is hard not to look with despair at our team's work here as a missional community of grace, our service as the proverbial 'drop in a bucket.' And yet, South Africa is changing all around us.

Mark Gevisser of The Guardian sums it up perfectly:

"We won" most of all, because we could finally say "we." Something shifted during the World Cup: with a team to support and half a million guests to take care of, we found ourselves all on the same side. The festive buzz of a million vuvuzelas came to override the habitual sounds of urban anxiety: the gunfire; the helicopters chasing stolen cars; the aggressive minibus taxis. Sure, it was holiday-time: daily matches, skiving from work, the cities aglitter with flags and foreigners. Still, for the first time in South Africa's history, it seemed, patriotism was not a political statement. South Africans were waving flags, and supporting their team out of a sense of joy and belonging, rather than the deficit-driven pride that has fueled both Afrikaner and African nationalism for so long.



Something profoundly good has settled in the hearts of South Africans throughout this land, and NieuCommunities South Africa cannot be more excited to play a role in calling forth this new growth as we mentor and send South Africans into sustainable mission throughout the globe. Ke Nako, indeed...the time is now!

by Chris Kamalski

NieuCommunities South Africa

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