

If we can do it, why can't we?

By [Brian Letsogo](#)

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Everyone has been talking about the possibility of Bafana Bafana advancing to the knockout stages of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and that seems to be a goal for many South Africans. Other people are interested in proving to the world that South Africa can host a successful world cup, as well as striving to correct negative reports about our country.



If Bafana Bafana succeed, it would be the first time that they get through the group stages of the world cup - not only would this be a huge achievement, but it would also be proof that Bafana Bafana can compete with the best in the world.

As for correcting negative reports, we have gone as far as sending some geography lessons to Britain, to prove that, NO, Rustenburg is nowhere near Ventersdorp, so the Queen's boys are quite safe! We've even had to prove that there is no civil war in South Africa.

We've had to prove ourselves to the world, in so many respects (and often unnecessarily) just to show that we can host the world in this magnificent event. And, after all of these hurdles, there will be a proof on Friday, 11 June 2010, proof that great things can (and do) happen on African soil.

Why should we?

So, for us, the success of Bafana and the successful world cup held in Africa - for the first time in the over a hundred years of FIFA's existence - would mean that we have succeeded in our goals as hosts. But why should we continuously prove ourselves to other people?

Aren't we "forgetting" ourselves in a quest to please others? Aren't we being left in the dark trying to shine the sun for others? Haven't we done a lot as a country for the world to start automatically noticing us? Weren't we the first country outside Europe to join FIFA in 1909? Aren't we the first African country to host the world cup? What more should we prove to others?

I think we have been - for a long time now - trying to prove ourselves to the world, and that will not stop until we stop. Let us shift the spotlight to ourselves, let us look at what happened to us as a country, let us - for a change - acknowledge what we have proven to ourselves as a country.

Without any doubt, it is quite clear that sport can bring people together, and even now it has brought the South African nation together.

We look back

We all look back at 1995 and remember Tata Mandela holding the Rugby World Cup trophy, an event that would be eternally memorable.

We look back at 1996, and we remember Neil Tovey being the first white player to hold the African Cup of Nations trophy (even if he were wearing the wrong T-shirt!) That's a picture that brought hope and therefore can never be erased from our minds.

Both these occasions brought the nation together.

Today, as we host the biggest sporting event in the world, South African flags are flying high (although some are upside down - red on the top, people!). People are wearing their Bafana Bafana T-shirts on Fridays, everyone is blowing their vuvuzelas, the Super 14 Rugby final has been played and enjoyed in Soweto (yes, Soweto!), local sceptics have been transformed into optimists, everyone believes in our team and those who could not pronounce Dikgacoi, call him KG instead of Dikgawhawhat!

The bottom line

The bottom line is that the nation has come together and everyone has heeded the call to unite as one. Through our differences, however diversified we are, we have become one proud nation, and that is evident from the South Africans (men and women; black and white; straight and gay; drunk and sober) proudly flying their SA flags high. (Oh, and by the way, Whites, please learn the "Nkosi Sikelela" part and Darkies, please learn "Die Stem" part of the national anthem!)

So we will have proven that we can be united, as one nation and as a country. And when we do, we should continue in the same spirit to heal the social ills of our country. The corporates that became involved at any level to be associated somehow with the world cup here should in the same spirit work towards healing the social ills of our country.

A nation that can unite to wear yellow T-shirts on a Friday can also unite to promote education in the country. The nation that can support the Bulls at Soweto and Bafana at Loftus can also support a non-racial society. A nation that can unite to blow vuvuzelas in support of Bafana Bafana can also unite to blow away crime in our society.

If we can heed a call to stand together during the world cup, why can't we heed a call to build a better society? If we all stand together as a country and play our respective roles positively, what can stop us?

Can and will overcome

A nation that stands together against poverty can and will overcome poverty. Our social ills as a nation are caused by members of the nation, and if we stand together as a nation, we will transform those negative one to become members of the winning nation.

As we have proven to the world that we can, and have proven to ourselves that we can, let us in the same spirit continue the legacy of a nation united for a good cause. Let us unite against poverty, let us unite against crime, let us unite for education, let us unite for us, let us unite eternally and let that be the priceless legacy of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Well done to Bafana Bafana in advance!!!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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