

From "Apartheid" To "A Partheid" In Africa

By Wayne Visser

(on return from ALDS in Kenya)

"Kwa Heri, Kenya" - Goodbye and stay well! You have taught me much and now I must return home, but not without a message for my people and for AIESEC in South Africa. My message to them is: WAKE UP! WE'RE PART OF AFRICA! AND IT'S NOT ALL BAD!

The problem with South Africa is that it still considers itself as the exclusive first world island off the tip of Africa. Have you checked your atlas lately - we're joined to the rest of the continent! And surprise, surprise we're not that different from many of our brother and sister countries. Take Kenya for instance: Kenya also has flashy skyscrapers, card telephones and CNN; they also have a culturally diverse population and all the problems which come with it (they have 42 tribal groups to be exact); they also face the challenges of poverty and income inequality; and most importantly they also have beautiful, intelligent, concerned people living with them within their borders.

It's time we put our preconceptions and our misconceptions behind us, and start to realise that we have things to learn and to gain from reintegrating into the African family. South Africa has an important role to play in this continent; not as a patronising grandparent, but as a child among the children of Africa, learning, growing, sometimes squabbling, but ever striving to be better.

Simply put, the time has come for our "Apartheid" from Africa to be transformed into "A Partheid with Africa".

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