

## Dear friends of Stiftung House of Encouragement

When Desmond Tutu repeatedly described the country's diverse people as "Rainbow people of God" during the apartheid era in South Africa, he associated this with a vision of people of all skin colors and cultures living together in freedom. Today, this idea is most clearly reflected in the annual celebration of Heritage Day, the day of cultural heritage and national consciousness of unity. Until 1994, this day was known as "Shaka Day" and commemorated the legendary Zulu King Shaka, who in the 19th century united the multitude of Zulu clans in eastern South Africa into one nation to resist European settlers together. Zulu King Shaka died in 1825.

In his inaugural address as the first president of an apartheid-free South Africa in 1994, Nelson Mandela took Tutu's words and shaped them into a political and social statement that struck at the soul of the nation: "We are entering into an agreement that we will build a society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk upright, without fear in their hearts, confident in their inalienable right to human dignity - a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world." Mandela, along with Desmond Tutu, who died in 2021, preached "forgiveness and reconciliation." Only in this way, he said, could the extreme historical burdens be overcome and a national identity as a South African be developed beyond one's own ethnic group. Today, it is clear that there is still quite a way to go to achieve this goal. This process is made more difficult by political and economic problems, overlaid by corruption and criminality.

For the white population, "Heritage Day" has rather established itself as "Braai Day". "Braai" comes from the Afrikaans language and means "barbecue." In fact, "braai" is a word that has established itself in all South African national languages, and a weekend "braai" together with friends and families is one of the most typical South African passions and leisure activities - whether poor or rich, Zulu, Xhosa, Indian, Boer or British - a braai always goes everywhere in South Africa.

It is different for a large number of black South Africans. They are proud of their ancestry and like to wear their traditional dress, for example at weddings or other festivities. The traditions, ancient beliefs with their rituals and ancestral culture are not equally weighted in all tribes. Especially the Zulu tribe is very tradition-conscious and maintains various customs and rituals. They come from Kwa Zulu Natal and keep their language, even if they live in the province of Gauteng (Johannesburg/ Pretoria). Often they do not speak Sotho, the common language in the region, or do not want to speak it. In large parts of the country, the taxi business is dominated by the Zulus. Another example of the strict tradition we see in the Ndebele group, where still today it is common that the young men have to buy their future wives from their parents with "lobola", i.e. money or goods in kind, such as cows and goats. The price is not negotiated by the groom, but by an uncle or other relative.

The roots and traditions are also very much evident in the fact that kingship, chieftainship and headmanship are recognized in the new constitution.

SOSHANGUVE, the name of the township, is composed of the tribes that had founded this settlement. SO = Sotho, from Northern and Southern Sotho / SHA = Shangaan, also called Tsongas / NGU = Nguni tribes, which are Ndebeles, Zulus, Swatis and Xhosas / VE = Vendas, who come from the northeast of the country. Today about 10 different tribes live in Soshanguve with 10 languages in the community. More than two million inhabitants live in the townships Soshanguve, Mabopane, Ga-Rankuwa and Winterveldt, which have grown together. The exact number is not known, because huge areas are populated with shacks time and again.

There is a great diversity in this population with colourful traditional dresses, special dishes, expressive dances and interesting artistic traditions. Best known are the beadworks of the Ndebele and Zulu people.

This year our team celebrated "Heritage Day" with the children and the foster mothers at the center. The children learned a little more about the different traditions and roots of their families. Women from six different tribes were represented. On this occasion, the foster mothers were again allowed to take home a food basket.



*As always at such gatherings, there is singing and dancing.*



*Our children had great fun performing various traditional dances and loved dressing up colourfully.*



*Our entire team also enjoyed the event.*

Finally, we would like to express our sincere thanks to those who supported us at the autumn market in Dürnten. The turnover was very good and we were able to present our Foundation to a wider group of people.

*Walter und Estelle Bosshard*

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Bubikon/Soshanguve, 2 November 2022