

Research explores 'development and dreams'

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The 2010 FIFA world cup inspired one of the largest consolidated research exercises in South Africa in years. Culminating in a 2009 book, *Development and Dreams*, the research found the economic benefits of the global tournament had been wildly over-stated but its infrastructure and social legacies would be considerable, said co-editor Dr Udesch Pillay.

Development and Dreams: The urban legacy of the 2010 World Cup pulled together four years of research co-funded by the Development Bank of Southern Africa and led by the **Centre for Service Delivery** of the **Human Sciences Research Council**, or HSRC, which published the book. Pillay is the centre's director.

The FIFA 2010 World Cup Research Project combined academic and applied research. The academic component aimed to enhance understanding of mega events and urban development, in South Africa and internationally, through research conducted by the HSRC in collaboration with the Centre for Urban and Built Environment Studies (CUBES) at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Studies were commissioned into urban development experiences and lessons learned from other mega sporting events, the South African World Cup bid and its governance, integration of planning into the strategic frameworks of host cities and their efforts to enhance their images, urban regeneration and the legacy dimension of the tournament, among other aspects.

The applied work contributed to the planning of host cities and conducted public perception surveys from 2005 to 2007, based on 3,000 respondents, to benchmark attitudes towards the World Cup.

In 2006 and 2007, the HSRC, CUBES and Witwatersrand Institute for Social and Economic Research held international colloquia on hosting the World Cup. To disseminate the research, Pillay wrote a fortnightly 2010 column in the national paper *Business Day*, opinion pieces and interviews were published and there were presentations to seminars and conferences.

Development and Dreams pulled the research together and was co-edited by Pillay, Professor Richard Tomlinson of the faculty of architecture, building and planning at the University of Melbourne, and Dr Orli Bass of the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

There were three profound findings from the research, Pillay told *University World News*.

The first was that the economic benefits were over-stated: "The World Cup will not make a considerable positive contribution to gross domestic product, to economic growth or to tourism. This has little to do with the global recession. For various reasons the economic projections were inflated."

The event's contribution to GDP is now predicted to be between 0.2% and 0.5%, the boost to tourism is unlikely to exceed 0.5% of GDP and the World Cup will not help to significantly mitigate poverty or accelerate levels of basic service delivery. Still, some growth is not to be sneezed at, since the economy contracted by 1.8% in 2009, during the height of the recession.

Some 150,000 job opportunities were created but they were mostly temporary with little skills transfer. Further, increased trade and investment flows largely failed to materialise and increased imports for the event without growth in export trade widened the current account deficit to nearly 5%. There has been doubt about the financial sustainability of new stadiums.

Second, and more positively, Pillay said, "2010 will leave behind an infrastructure legacy". These contributions include an expanded and integrated public transport system, improvements to ports of entry, a stronger communications infrastructure and improvements to the service industry. The tangible benefits will advance South Africa's future economic growth.

"Third, the social legacy is considerable," said Pillay. "Patriotism, pride, social cohesion and identity formation are less tangible but still important spin-offs. The World Cup has provided a rallying point for South Africans."

The feel-good factor and excitement surrounding the World Cup has improved the public mood and encouraged nation-building, and South Africa's competence and ability to host this - and therefore other - mega-sporting events has been demonstrated on the global stage.

It has also, the research pointed out, provided opportunities to debunk Afro-pessimism, to celebrate South Africa and Africa's diversity, culture, identity and beauty, and to promote the continent internationally.

The public surveys revealed that the hopes of South Africans were likely to be realised in some areas and dashed in others. Three-quarters of people saw the three main benefits of the World Cup as economic growth, job creation and putting South Africa on the international map.

A third of people expected to benefit personally from job opportunities, but only half thought the benefits of the World Cup would be lasting. Four in five believed the country would be ready to host the World Cup, and the same proportion believed small business would benefit and that the event would make host cities more internationally competitive.

"The extent to which the social legacy is sustainable is, however, doubtful," Pillay told *University World*

News. "We are a quite divided nation.

"The question on 12 July will be what happens when it is all over and we realise that income inequalities, endemic poverty, job creation difficulties, a ruling alliance that is barely holding together and other major challenges are still there."

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