



We Need to Act

Jonathan Jansen

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I believe that citizen action is vitally necessary as we come out of the heady days of post-apartheid euphoria. Professor Jonathan Jansen has become a trusted commentator on the state of South Africa -- reminding us of our past and asking citizens to leave their comfort zones and contribute to righting the wrongs of our society. Why should we get involved? Jansen gives seven compelling reasons: If ordinary citizens do nothing, we face even greater social instability in the light of stubborn unemployment and crises in the poorest of schools. If we do nothing we become part of the narrative of hopelessness. Without our action, millions of marginalised people could be doomed. If we do nothing we fail to demonstrate to the next generation how to live full lives. We must serve to compensate for the wrongs of our shared past. We must give back once we have been able to move ahead. We must take our places in the long chain of activists who have over centuries opposed poverty, illiteracy, government and gangs to give us this tender young democracy to work with. The articles in this collection, previously published in *The Times*, focus on education and the social realities of South African society. Jansen by turn horrifies us, inspires us and reminds us of the power of individual action.

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