ROOM TO GROW



Vol. 1

What is Room to Grow?

This will not be another AI research report. It's the complete opposite, actually. Because while AI is on the rise and the internet is quickly turning into a sea of sameness, there is one thing that will always be everything AI is not. Thrilling, emotional, unpredictable; we're talking about sports. The biggest sports event in the world, the FIFA World Cup, has recently grown to include 48 teams, with the possibility to grow to 64 in the near future. It's a testament to the game becoming more global and more diverse. Can brands keep up with this new reality for the game, its players and its supporters? Let us guide you with this Room to Grow report.

Through Room to Grow, an initiative of Home Agency, we highlight popular domains that are still wide open for brands to step into, and advise them on becoming part of the conversation. This research project will show your brand builders untapped opportunities and where there's still room to grow.

We've dived into trend reports, cases and comments sections. We have conducted interviews with industry professionals and important voices like Tony Boakye and Hannah S, as well as visited various community screenings of this year's World Cup, in different parts of the Netherlands.

We hope you enjoy reading this as much as we enjoyed making it.

For every Room to Grow project, we choose a domain, a cultural entry point, and a relevant case to deep dive into, while asking the question: where is the room to grow?

This edition we cover the following:

Domain | Sport

Cultural entry point | Sport fandom in the diaspora

Case | World Cup Football

We will focus on how brands can make an impact in the "Dutch" market, while also drawing inspiration from international cases.



As a young boy, it became clear early on: playing football was not my talent. However, even while being such a bad player myself, football was the most important thing in my early life. Luckily, in the 90's Ajax was on a winning streak, including winning the Champions League. I collected everything from Ajax, and above my bed I always had the most recent team photo. My favourite players? Besides the legendary Kluivert, all players with an African background: Nwankwo Kanu, Finidi George, and of course Tijjani Babangida. For the first time in my life, I saw someone with a version of my own name (Baba) in a public role in the Netherlands. That made me proud. Representation in its purest form for an 8-year-old kid.

Working now in advertising, I dare to say that football is even where my love for building great brands started. It really began during the Euros in 2000. As an 11-year-old boy, I was completely sucked into a brand world. As part of Nike's worldwide brand campaign, Amsterdam's Olympic Stadium was turned into "Nike Park." In the park, you could play interactive football games to see how you matched up against players like Edgar Davids and Thierry Henry. After school, I was there as often as I could. Now, 26 years later, Nike is still the brand of that tournament to me. Funny detail: Adidas was actually the official sponsor of the tournament.

For the first twelve years of my life besides Ajax, the Dutch team came first. But in the early 2000s, I also started following the Senegalese team, my father's home country. It became more accessible to watch the games on Eurosport. I barely knew the players, but I felt the exact same pride as when the Netherlands played, and sometimes even more. I saw players with the same names as me on their shirts, and it felt like a way of connecting with my roots.

During those tournaments, you couldn't miss Western Union. I knew the brand well; as a family, we often used Western Union to send money back to our family in Senegal. The company already understood back then that by being present at the Africa Cup, they could reach a very important group in the diaspora. For me, this sponsorship added an emotional layer to the brand. Years later, when the clothing brand Daily Paper did a collaboration with Western Union, I understood this brand partnership instantly.

Fast forward to today, and I still follow the tournaments, but in a very different way. It's no longer just about the matches. I follow the Dutch and Senegalese teams closely through news sites, creators, the media teams of the countries themselves and of course the individual players.

The days of being limited by where you live and what is on TV are over. People in the Netherlands with a migration background support the Netherlands. But they also support Senegal, Morocco, Cape Verde, Curaçao, Indonesia or Turkey with equal and sometimes even more passion. They follow players closely, not just during international duty, but across their whole club journeys. And they do it with a lot of emotion as it's about more than football: it's a way to connect with your roots and bond with a shared culture.

This offers great opportunities for brands. And as Nike showed in 2000, you don't even have to be the official sponsor of the tournament to make the most impact. You just have to embrace the fact that for a huge group of people, the days of supporting only one country are gone. Respect and get to know their culture and traditions, get to know their teams, work with people from the diaspora across these different audiences, and build a long-term relationship with consumers through the sport. Because one thing is sure: football will always be a powerful tool to build authentic brand love.

At Home Agency, navigating these cultural intersections for brands is what we do best. Want to tap into multicultural fandom the right way? Drop me a message or let's grab a coffee.

Baba Toure

CEO & Founder Home

Research

Last summer's World Cup, hosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada, was the biggest in its history, having expanded from 32 teams to 48. More teams competing meant more countries and players getting to play on the biggest stage. And interestingly, these players are increasingly choosing to represent not the country where they were born, but the homeland of a parent or grandparent. Migration, colonialism and immigration have spread people around the globe, making many countries a mix of cultural backgrounds. This is the generation of the diaspora in sport.

But what exactly is the diaspora?

Diaspora (n.) — the dispersion or spread of a people from their original homeland.

With many of the next generation's biggest stars being diaspora kids, it has become deeply influential in world football. Lamine Yamal was born in Spain to an Equatorial Guinean mother and a Moroccan father. Kylian Mbappé was born in France to an Algerian mother and a Cameroonian father. And they're far from alone, players are increasingly connecting with these old and new roots, and the numbers show it: 24% of all World Cup players are part of the diaspora, with 300 of the 1,246 selected players representing a country different from the one they were born in (Source: De Volkskrant analysis, June 2026).

It's no surprise, then, that this tournament was also labeled the "Diaspora World Cup."

And this was not only the case on the field. Because it's not just the players; fans are shifting too. There is a term in Arabic for representing and cheering for multiple countries: "nus-nus", meaning "half-half". More and more suppworters back multiple countries at once, based on family ties, where they live, or the people around them. Heritage and diaspora ties are causing our fandom to be more fluid. (GWI Zeitgeist survey - World Cup Fan Segmentation report, Sept 2025)The era of the single, mono-national fan is starting to fade.

The world

The Netherlands has for years been a football nation fueled by diaspora players, from Ruud Gullit with roots in Suriname captaining the team to victory at the 1988 European Championship, to Virgil van Dijk, who also has a Surinamese father, captaining today's team. The Dutch national team now has players with Surinamese, Ghanaian, Togolese, Curacaoan, Ivorian, Moluccan and Caribbean backgrounds. But more and more players born in The Netherlands are also choosing to represent different nations.

The Netherlands ranks the second-largest birthplace of World Cup players: 67 World Cup participants were born there. Only France (99 players) ranks higher. Beyond the 25 players wearing Oranje, another 42 Dutch-born players represent other nations, including 25 for Curaçao and 6 for Cape Verde (Source: NOS World Cup data analysis, June 2026).

Rotterdam is the football diaspora hub, outranking many global football cities. The city produced 13 World Cup players at this tournament, surpassing Stockholm (11), Cairo (11), and Abidjan (11), placing it alongside Paris, London, and Montevideo (Source: Algemeen Dagblad / OpenStreetMap, June 2026). Rotterdam also has a unique connection to Cape Verde. Because of its long history of Cape Verdean migration, the city is often referred to as the "11th Cape Verdean island."

And all of this is not a passing moment; it is demographic reality. By the end of 2019, 24% of the Dutch population (4.2 million people) had a migration background. According to the latest CBS population projections, that share is expected to rise to 39% by 2060, to around 7.6 million people, significantly higher than the earlier 2017 projection of 34%. Of that group, 55% are projected to be first-generation migrants and 45% second generation. (Source: CBS, Prognose bevolking naar migratieachtergrond 2019–2060).

The diaspora generation is a pivotal part of the future of the Netherlands.

With that growth and impact also comes tension. Moroccan-Dutch players, and others with multiple backgrounds, are often pressured by traditional media to choose a side: are you Moroccan, or "truly" Dutch? But the truth is never that black and white. Many players refuse to choose one identity over the other, because they embody both at once. The same goes for supporters: waving a Moroccan flag one day, while wearing an Oranje shirt the next. That is not a contradiction, but a full expression of who they are. Not enough brands understand this duality and tension of their audience. They still see their audience as one dimensional. You are either Target Audience A or Target Audience B, never both. But every one who watches a World Cup game knows that football has always been, and will always remain, a place of shared passion, emotion and belonging.

> The battle of the underdogs, that's how it felt. We all were rooting for our diaspora countries and I would've loved to see a colonial country play against a colonized country in the finals.
>
> Joenis Jansen

> A welcome distraction for sure, but a necessary reminder as to how far we have to go to shake off the shackles of the west. This World Cup has bittersweet highs with special stories and moments of greatness, but it's stained with a sour imperial aftertaste.
>
> Samuel Uekermann-Laville

Beyond football itself, you can see something really beautiful and interesting emerging: diaspora communities breaking free from the (often colonial) past and, for the first time, fully standing in their own strength while also genuinely being seen. Not by adapting themselves, but precisely on the basis of their own identity, values, and cultural authenticity.

The enormous attention, pride, and visibility also show brands and companies what the impact and reach of this can be.

Hopefully this contributes to a greater awareness of the power of authentic representation. That target audiences don't always fit a "one size fits all" approach or a simple direct translation, and that there is in fact enormous potential in embracing different identities, stories, and cultures.

Nneka Davelaar

This was the first World Cup where I truly experienced it with all my friends with migration backgrounds. I cheered for more countries than ever: Bosnia, Cape Verde, Ecuador, Morocco, because of where my friends' roots lie."

This World Cup showed me again that football goes beyond the field. Everywhere, people gathered in cafés and restaurants not just for the match, but to celebrate culture together with whoever pulled up a chair.

That's what the World Cup means to me: people making it their own, politics, humor, grief, pride, all of it.

Ahmed Elshaarawi

Interview

How can brands tap into the diaspora and their dual identity at the World Cup in a meaningful way, knowing people root for multiple teams because they themselves or their friends were born across multiple cultural worlds?

To investigate this, we spoke to Hannah, cultural insight strategist and author of the Substack A Very Arab Time in My Life. Her expertise is the cultural and identity layer around sports(wear), brand strategy, and what sport can mean to diaspora communities in terms of identity, belonging, and self-expression. We talked about duality, ownership for grassroots communities and the room to grow for brands.

You Don't Have to Choose One Side

Hannah S on Diaspora, Football and the Brands Still Missing the Point

By Miles Momoh



What does it mean to belong to two places at once, without ever having to choose? For Hannah S, that question is not theoretical. It has shaped her identity, her career and the way she sees culture.

Hannah S

She grew up between Egypt and England, moving to Egypt at six and returning to the UK at sixteen. For years afterwards, she placed parts of her Arab identity aside. At home, that tension was present too: her Egyptian father embraced assimilation after moving to Britain, even changing his own name while still wanting his children to understand Arabic and stay connected to their roots.

Today, that duality is the foundation of Hannah's work. As a freelance insight strategist and trend forecaster, she helps brands understand the deeper meaning behind culture: the symbols, humour and behaviours that shape communities. She has spent years working with sportswear and lifestyle brands, decoding how identity and belonging show up through sport.

Recently, she has turned that same curiosity towards herself, writing about reconnecting with her Arab heritage. We spoke with Hannah ahead of the World Cup about football, diaspora identity and why brands still struggle to understand the communities they want to reach.

"I don't think picking a side is particularly relevant anymore"

For Hannah, the idea that diaspora communities must choose between their heritage and their home country, especially around sport events, feels outdated.

"I don't think picking a side is particularly relevant anymore to people," she says. "We're so global, so connected, so nomadic in our behaviours. I think playing within that duality and being able to support both is a really beautiful thing."

Her own football loyalties reflect that complexity. Egypt remains the emotional favourite.
"I will say I have money on Egypt winning. Not on England," she laughs. "I watched the game yesterday and I wanted them to lose. I'm not going to lie."

Her distance from England is not simply about football. It reflects a wider feeling of belonging.

"England and English football and everything kind of surrounding it, it's almost like an environment that doesn't want you there," she says. "Whenever you watch a football match in the UK and a black player maybe misses a goal, they get loads of racial hate. So it actually makes it quite difficult to support, weirdly."

Watching Egypt feels different. "There's a lot more love in the room," she says.

Culture cannot be understood from a spreadsheet

Hannah believes brands often approach diaspora communities from the outside, looking for quick signals instead of real understanding.

"There's a lot of fear around what brands can and can't do," she says. "And I think that comes from a lack of investment into actually finding out things, the semiotics of being from two places at once. The humour, the in-jokes, the visual language."

For her, genuine cultural insight requires leaving the office.

"Talk to academics about the history of places, talk to older people, talk to people in shops who deal with customers every day, and then talk to consumers and creatives. It's so multi-layered. Online searches and seeing for yourself really there's nothing comparable to it."

This is why she believes brands should stop copying each other.

"If there was one takeaway for a brand, it would be: stop copying each other," Hannah says. "The brands that are willing to experiment are speaking the same language as these communities already are."

Collaboration means giving up control

One of Hannah's biggest frustrations is the gap between claiming collaboration and actually sharing power.

"Don't control it," she says. "That's what I mean by meeting people where they are rather than trying to get them to assimilate to what you think it should be."

The best approach, she believes, is sometimes simply to support and step aside.

"Some brands will turn up and say: I'm going to help fund this and get out of your way, and we will support you but you can direct us. That's probably the best way to do it."

For Hannah, collaboration should be equal. "It's not just saying that you're collaborating. It's a 50/50 collaboration."

Football as a space for visibility

Hannah sees football as one of the most powerful places where identities become visible.

She points to Mohamed Salah's influence on perceptions of Muslims in England.

"He's done a lot for us. He's done a lot for Egyptians, for Muslims," she says. "People learn by seeing, don't they? They just see that he's just a good guy. He plays really well."

But she believes brands still overlook important audiences, especially Muslim women.

"I loved the initiative from Adidas where they created fanwear for women to watch football in," she says. "I think that's such a really lovely example of that deeper understanding of a niche community."
The opportunity is not only selling to these communities, but allowing them to feel ownership.

"I would like to see more work towards the diaspora owning or feeling like they own the brand," she says. "It's about giving people a platform."

Room to grow: show up after the whistle blows

For Hannah, the biggest mistake brands make is treating diaspora communities as a World Cup moment.

"Don't treat this like a campaign," she says. "Treat this time as an introduction to these communities and then follow through. Take their lead, give them access and actually listen."

The future, she believes, belongs to brands willing to invest before something becomes mainstream.

"Yes, it could look small," she says. "But it's about what happens within that community rather than what it looks like to a mass amount of people."

"Small has always been cool. If you meet a community at the start of its journey and you grow together, that makes the brand look like: 'I know what I'm doing here.'"

For Hannah, authenticity is not about arriving when everyone is already watching. It is about being there before the spotlight arrives.

Interview 2

United by diversity, not by one flag

Tony Roodenburg Boakye on Studio Diaspora, World Cup watch parties, and building a home away from home,

By Miles Momoh



Tony Boakye

What happens when you stop treating the World Cup as ninety minutes of orange, and start treating it as a mirror for all the communities living in one city? For Tony, initiator of the socio-societal project agency Common Culture, that question led to a full-blown movement: a series of free, community-led watch parties across Amsterdam that let Ghanaians, Cape Verdeans, Moroccans, Senegalese, Curaçaoans and everyone in between watch "their" match in a place that actually felt like theirs.

It started, fittingly, on a beach. We spoke to Tony about the babymoon that sparked the idea, why he refused to let it become a "culture-vulture party," and why the brands who hesitated at first are the ones now calling back.

"There's a bit of magic in grabbing a stranger and celebrating a goal together"

Tony traces the idea back further than he first admits. **"I have to say I'd been carrying around a certain kind of longing for a while,"** he says of a need to connect more with his own community, especially the Ghanaian one, and to bring people together at the right moments. The missing piece was simple: a place to actually do it. "Otherwise you still end up just watching it from home. The World Cup experience is at its absolute sickest when you're with a big group, in a place, meeting new people too."

The real spark came in January, on a babymoon in Curaçao. **"That island was completely 'pregnant with expectation.'".** he remembers the anthem, Blue Wave by Jeon, playing on repeat. Everyone in blue, the whole island already living in the spirit of something big about to happen. While talking to his sisters-in-law from Curaçao and seeing how the country's road to the World Cup was being followed by everyone around him, something clicked: the Netherlands is full of communities experiencing this same magic, each in their own way. "How sick would it be if, in a time when everyone is so focused on the differences between people, we could create the kind of unity a World Cup often brings to one country, but this time have that unity be through diversity."

He came back from vacation and pitched it to his partners at Common Culture, Luuk and Serginho. A whole five seconds later, *Studio Diaspora* was born.

"If you really want to celebrate a culture, you don't do that in 90 minutes"

A straightforward viewing party never felt like enough. **"I wanted to create a real 'home away from home,' where visitors would feel represented and could feel at home, even just for a moment,"** Tony says. That meant going beyond the screen: food, music, dressing up, engaging **"nearly every sense."**. From day one, Studio Diaspora's ambition was bigger than football.

"We can't look into these people's wallets"

Held at Studio Wieman and Klaproos, Studio Diaspora deliberately targeted a crowd of aunties, uncles and grandparents who would normally never set foot in those venues. Making that work meant handing over not just the keys, but full control. **"Everything had to come from the grassroots,"** Tony explains. "We treated the location and our facilities much like a canvas." Rather than booking a themed night and a caterer, the team sought out people from each diaspora community and asked them to actually help build it. **"These are the boundary conditions, this is the frame you get to work within, show us how you fill it in."**

That approach didn't land immediately. Some accused the project of contributing to gentrification. Why not host it in Zuidoost, at existing community centers? Tony pushes back on that reading, crediting his partner Serginho: it's also a way for Amsterdammers with a bicultural, diaspora background to reclaim certain spots in the city. **"A countermovement against gentrification."**

In the end it came down to two non-negotiables he set with the venues. **"Guys, we can't look into these people's wallets,"** he told them: every match under the Studio Diaspora flag would be free, and if people wanted to bring their own food or drinks from home instead of buying at the bar, that was fine too. **"We want to make sure they get a sense of belonging in that space."**

"The Senegalese and Cape Verdeans stole my heart"

Some of the turnouts caught Tony completely off guard. Officially, the City of Amsterdam has just 50 Senegalese residents on record. **"I'd genuinely recommend they go back and recount. Clearly some civil servant was sleeping on the job,"** he says. And the night Cape Verde played Argentina, Klaproos was packed wall to wall with Cape Verdeans, while Rotterdam needed two separate watch parties to keep up.

What surprised him most wasn't just where people came from, but why they kept coming back. **"Some people are also just fans of a culture, or have Moroccan friends, or just love the way a Moroccan elder speaks, or simply love football and are already Team Messi, so why not be Team Cape Verde too,"** he says. A crowd of regulars formed, consisting of people who'd decided that this was simply where they watched football now. Match after match. Whoever was playing.

"A bit of a Don Quichot situation"

Getting brands on board was the hardest part. **"It was genuinely hard work getting people to believe in this,"** Tony reveals that a lot of them were locked into an "Orange campaign" mindset and couldn't see how a diaspora-first concept fit their plans. Some who passed early, came back later asking for a spot that no longer existed. **"So at first it was a bit of a Don Quichot situation, believing in something really strongly while other people weren't convinced."**

His pitch to brands that are still hesitating: **"It comes down to showing that you're genuinely tapped into cultures. It's about actually meeting your target audience where they are."** In a country where national identity is increasingly fluid, locking into one box only gets you an audience that will eventually run dry, Tony argues.

More than football

Tony wants Studio Diaspora to outlast this World Cup entirely. AFCON, the Euros, and the 2030 tournament in Morocco, Spain and Portugal are all on his radar, but the ambition goes further than the football calendar. **"It's really going to become a platform for representation,"** he says. An ecosystem, part online and part physical, where different diaspora communities can feel seen and can learn about their neighbors. Events, celebrations, and meetups will offer people that are currently feeling isolated a way to find their community.

When asked about FIFA's proposed expansion to 64 teams, Tony didn't hesitate: **"We'll be adding Indonesia and Armenia,"** he laughs. **"The only people who mind are the traditional white media, who seem to think it dilutes the quality. That's nonsense. It only gets richer, the more countries you add."**

Brands Already Leading the Way

Patta x Nike x KNVB

What it is
A KNVB warm-up shirt for the Dutch national team, designed by Amsterdam streetwear label Patta with Nike, blending tulips and lions with the Surinamese ‘Ala kondre’ necklace.

Why it fits
It puts the Netherlands' multi-cultural reality, Dutch and Surinamese, on the actual national kit, not just in a campaign.

Added value
Instant credibility and heat, selling out in hours, with the backlash only further proving how much of a cultural nerve it hit.

What it is
A limited “WK Pack” of six kits representing nations that are closely tied to Rotterdam, including Suriname, despite not qualifying.



Why it fits
It’s the purest “both-and” (nus-nus) product: no forced choice between nations, support over results.

Added value
Hyper-local, street-level proof that this storytelling works without a mega budget.



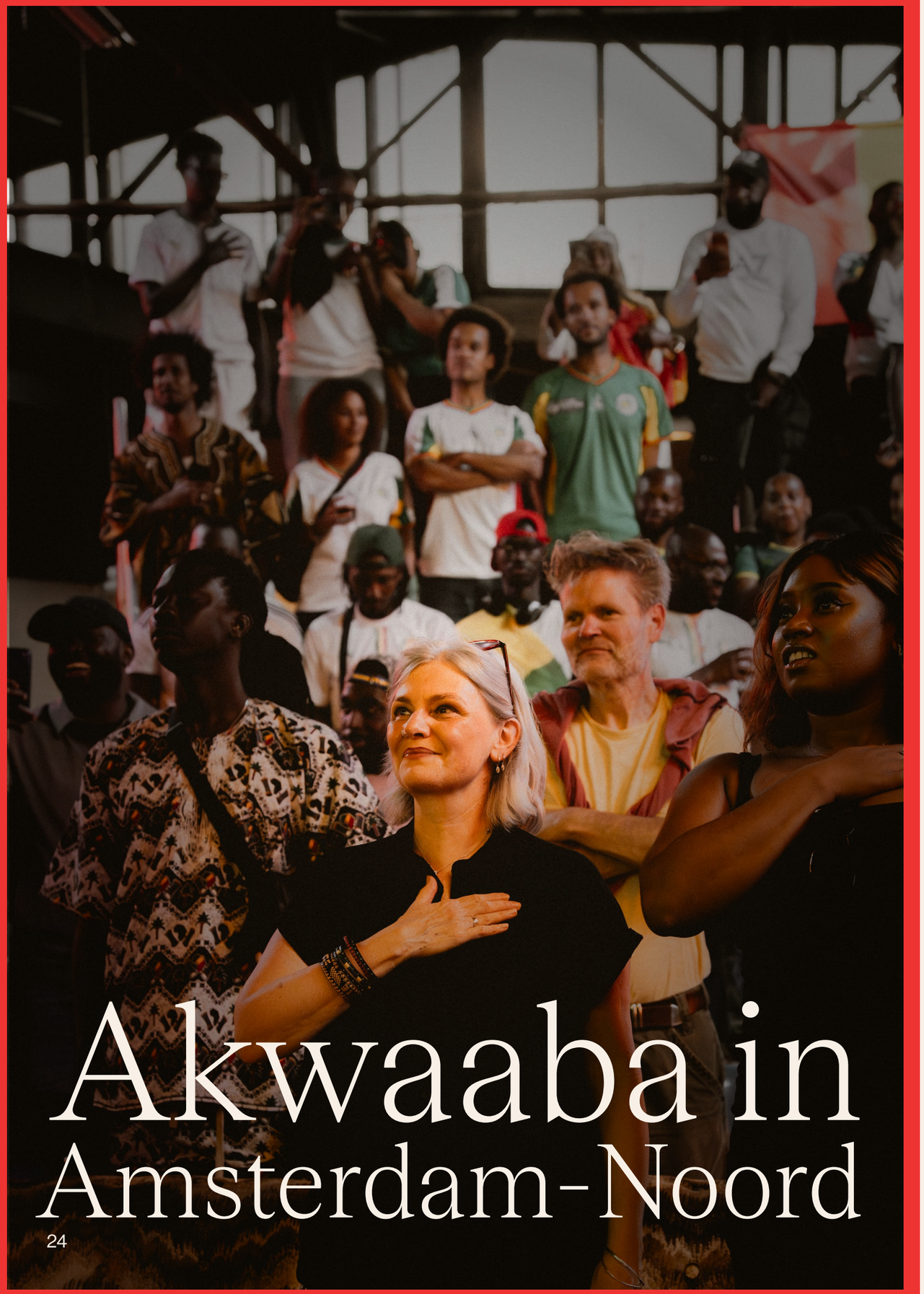




What it is
A special late-night delivery service during the World Cup group stage. Thuisbezorgd.nl “wakes up” fans just before kickoff of night matches (1-5am CET) with free snacks from local partner restaurants representing the Netherlands, Curaçao and Cape Verde.

Why it fits
Thuisbezorgd.nl understood that the World Cup timezones affected every community in the Netherlands, not just the oranje fans. By stepping in as the wake-up call, it offered real value to all fans trying to stay awake to support their team, diaspora or otherwise.

Added value
Real activation, not just campaign talk. Real drivers ring real doorbells with real partner food from the countries playing. Influencer hosts (Papatolletje & DJ wf) each bridge a specific community. The resulting content showed the Netherlands that behind different front doors in the Netherlands, different communities were supporting different countries.



Akwaaba in Amsterdam-Noord



It was a Tuesday summer night in Amsterdam. The outside of restaurant Klaproos looks like any other industrial styled restaurant in Amsterdam-Noord. Enter on a World Cup match night this past June, though, and the typical trendy Noord vibe disappears. For this World Cup, Klaproos has become Studio Diaspora, and for the Ghana–England group game, my three friends and I went to experience what that transformation actually feels like from the inside.

It was a steamy and warm day, the kind that blurs the line between indoors and out. Tables spilled onto the street; half the crowd inside chasing shade, the other half outside basking in the sun. Nobody seemed quite sure where the restaurant ended and the pavement began, but nobody seemed to mind either.

Inside the restaurant, a pop-up called Jollof Club had the room smelling of smoke and fragrant spices. In one corner, we could see a live taping of the Building Bridges podcast, with Gianni Zuiverloon and Bas van Veenendaal in conversation with Ghanaian-Dutch ex-footballer Jeffrey Sarpong. In another, Eben Badu, founder of The New Originals, was taking care of the music. And the game itself was hosted by artist Jay Way, looking much like how it usually does his own living room: the Ghanaian diaspora had en-masse found its way from the south of Amsterdam to Amsterdam Noord.

Nearly 200 people showed up, with Ghanaian uncles and Ghanaian kids sitting next to Amsterdam-Noord locals who'd simply wandered in looking for a screen. Because of the grassroots hands behind it, this didn't feel like any old bar with a match on. It felt like you were watching the game in Ghana.

For ninety minutes, the room roared the Black Stars to a hard-fought 0-0, in a fixture loaded with history. At every hydration break, classic Ghanaian tracks and popular Afrobeats hyped the crowd up for an extra quarter of passion on and off the field.

What the afternoon really proved was bigger than the scoreline. Football pulled people in, belonging and curiosity did the rest. It turning strangers into guests and guests into something closer to family. That's what makes an afternoon like this a blueprint, not just a party: it's proof of what happens when a community opens its door wide enough to let a whole street wander in.

And there's no reason a space like Studio Diaspora has to stop at one flag. The same door could just as easily host the Moroccan, the Brazilian, or the Senegalese community on a different night; a rotating home of belonging for all the countries in the World Cup.

My friends and I left that evening feeling fulfilled and sweaty, having made 10 new friends and a new country to root for.

The Netherlands has dozens of communities just like this one. If this World Cup showed anything, it's how much there is to build with, as well as how much room there is to grow before the next one.

1. Dual Fandom Is the Default, Not the Exception

24% of World Cup players represent a country other than the one they were born in. By 2060, 39% of the Dutch population will have a migration background, up from 24% today. There's a word for it: nus nus, half-half. "Pick a side" is a code that has already lost its legitimacy. And this is sport, the category where the purchase is the identity statement. A Morocco Hakimi shirt says something about you.

Implication for brands: Stop building campaigns around a single-nation narrative. Design for both-and, not either-or.

2. This Is Demographics, Not a Tournament Moment

If you want to tap into this global and national shift, start designing for both-and, as opposed to single-nation narratives"Treat this as a six-week activation and you're measuring on the wrong horizon, exactly the blind spot thirty years of effectiveness data (Binet & Field) already warns against. Brand building is slower, so anyone looking only six months out will underrate it.

Implication for brands: Fund this as a multi-year platform, not a tournament-length campaign. Budget and timelines should reflect a market shift, not a media moment.

3. Specificity Beats Generic Representation

Patta's homage to the multicultural fabric of Dutch society. Clan de Banlieue's shirt collection. Thuisbezorgd's switch of focus from fans of The Netherlands to fans in The Netherlands... None of these cases explicitly say "we embrace diversity." They touch on specific experiences, and the recognition found in them does more work than any slogan could ever do.

Implication for brands: Build on one real cultural detail, sourced from the community, not a broad diversity message. Specificity is what reads as credible.

4. Letting Go Is the Strategy, Not a Soft Add-on

Hannah S and Tony Boakye land on the same point independently: the strongest brands fund and step back. "These are the crayons, colour it in yourself," as Tony puts it. In a fandom, you win by cheering, not by taking the stage. Trust only comes after you've given something first.

Implication for brands: Hand creative control to the community you're backing. Show up to fund and support before you show up to ask for anything.

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A social first agency, We make brands relevant in the social-first era by creating work shaped by culture.

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- **De Volkskrant** — "Uitkomen voor je geboorteland? Een kwart van de WK-spelers draagt het shirt van een ander land" https://www.volkskrant.nl/kijkverder/v/2026/wk-voetbal-spelers-geboorteland-shirt~v3060402/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F
- **CBS** — Prognose bevolking naar migratieachtergrond 2019–2060
- **NRC - Naïm Derbali** — In het Marokkaanse elftal rekt het land de definitie van Marokkaans-zijn op (2026) https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2026/07/08/in-het-marokkaanse-elftal-rekt-het-land-de-definitie-van-marokkaans-zijn-op-a4932084
- **Slate** — "Diaspora communities and the World Cup: Congo, England, Ghana" https://slate.com/culture/2026/06/diaspora-communities-world-cup-congo-england-ghana.html
- **Time Africa** — "The Diaspora Era", over Afrikaanse voetbaldiaspora https://africa.time.com/africa/african-football-diaspora-players/

Tools

- **The Immigrant Factor** — interactieve tool over "teamsterkte" per land zonder migranten/tweede generatie https://www.theimmigrantfactor.com/

Boeken

- **Mustapha Essadik** — De voetbalkampioenen van Afrika

Newsletters/articels

- **Omar Kbiri** (Founder & Creative Strategist @ Maak: Culture, Campaigns & Creators) — "De Strategische Blinde Vlek: Waarom Sportmerken de Boot Missen in de Nieuwe Voetbalwereld", 30 juni 2026
- **Omar Kbiri** — "Waarom Kaapverdië en Congo Waardevoller Zijn Dan de Zoveelste 'Copy-Paste' Elite", 4 juli 2026
- **Hannah S.** — A Very Arab Time in My Life (Substack)
  - "Hi, You've Met Me in a Very Arab Time of My Life" — intro article about reclaiming Egyptian identity later in life
  - "Is the Football Jersey the New Slogan Tee?" — Jul 7
    On Arab pride, statement dressing, and the garment doing something the slogan tee never quite managed.
  - "A Very Arab Weekend" — Jun 25
    Three things in 48 hours: joy, community, solidarity.
  - "South of Your Moodboard: The Risky Boys" — Jun 16
    The second in a series of case studies from the Arab world.
  - "South of Your Moodboard No.1" — Jun 2
    Gozoour: a lesson in knowing where you come from.
  - "They'll Stream Your Music and March Against Your Mosque" — May 26
    On Arab culture having its biggest global moment in living memory, while the people it belongs to are still told they don't belong.
  - "Here For A Better Life. Better Than What, Exactly?" — May 12
    On the "better life" that brought parents West, the cultural cost, and why a generation of diaspora kids are turning back.

Merken / case studies (brand material)

- **Patta x Nike x KNVB** — capsule-collectie rond Surinaams-Nederlandse voetbalgeschiedenis https://patta.nl/blogs/raffles/patta-x-nike-x-knvb
- **UGG x Project 17 Cup 2026: Homegrown** — campagne-uitleg (Alex Iwobi / Project 17), incl. Instagram-post: https://www.instagram.com/p/DZdHF28ivTg