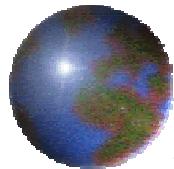


YOU CAN'T PLEASE ALL OF THE PEOPLE ALL OF THE TIME

**The importance of identity within South African Renewable
Energy Non-Governmental Organisations**

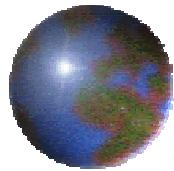
Peter Lukey

Working Paper: 2001-1 (draft only), January 2001



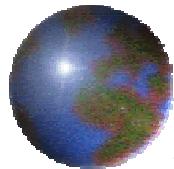
What I hope to cover

- Introduction
- NGO Identity
- Developing the model
- Different types of interventions – different NGO identities
- Organisational Schizophrenia
- Networking, partnerships and compacts
- Don't say sorry
- Clear identity – the potential



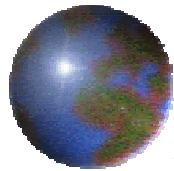
Introduction

- “the space afforded and claimed by civil society during the Apartheid era in South Africa and that which is held by civil society... [now] is very different and raises different dynamics for organisations to grapple with.” (Hallowes, 1999)



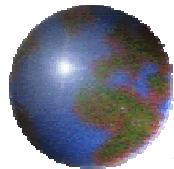
RENGOs – a definition

- Although far broader than the traditional definition of NGOs which normally focuses on “public interest groups”, for the purpose of this discussion, RENGOs include all those civil society organisations directly involved in the renewable energy sector (business associations, research institutions, special interest groups, etc.), as well as organisations that regard renewable energy as one of the potential solutions to environmental problems, typically, environmental NGOs and some development NGOs.



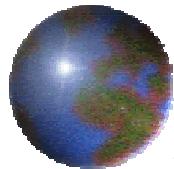
NGO Identity

- In his discussion on “NGOs as Social Actors”, Gan (1998) states that each NGO has its own identity and that this identity defines the NGO’s rules and principles and, further that: “Institutional identity is established as a result of the social and cultural settings in which institutions are rooted”, and; “transfer of knowledge in decision-making processes, patterns of policy change, strategy setting, technological innovation, etc., are largely determined by institutional identities”.



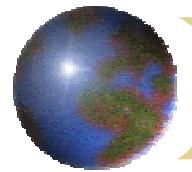
Developing the Model

- A Desired Outcome for Renewable Energy in South Africa
- *In the year 2020, 20% of South Africa's electricity demand is supplied from renewable energy sources.*



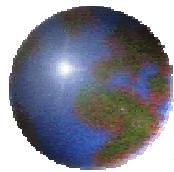
Intermediate Objectives

- *The Government of the day prioritises the use of renewable energy sources to meet new energy needs as well as the replacement of non-renewable energy sources with renewable energy sources;*
- b. *The best available information and technology is understood, available and utilised, including information relating to the social, economic and environmental impact of this technology;*
- c. *A legislative and business environment exists which encourages the use of renewable energy sources to meet new energy needs as well as the replacement of non-renewable energy sources with renewable energy sources.*



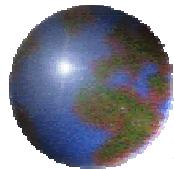
Different types of interventions – different NGO identities

- Activism and demonstration
- Academic / Research and Development
- Business



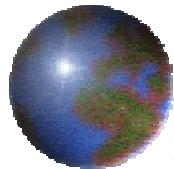
Organisational Schizophrenia

- an organisation which is made up of idealists, development practitioners, academics and entrepreneurs and which attempts to implement all of the interventions described above, is, at least, going to suffer from a serious identity and credibility crisis
- it is also unlikely to produce outputs that will be acceptable to all of its members.
- A recipe for disaster, or, at least, a guarantee that the organisation will spent more time in attempting to deal with internal conflicting interests than it will on contributing to the realisation of the development objective.
- Furthermore, schizophrenic organisations are often perceived as having 'hidden agendas'



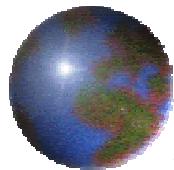
Networking, partnerships and compacts

- Often NGO relationships are described using the ecological term symbiosis, but as symbiosis also includes parasitic relationships, I prefer the term mutualism. Mutualism has been defined as “an intimate relationship between two or more living organisms that is beneficial to all the participants”



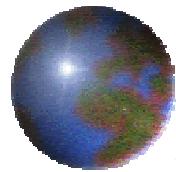
Never Having to Say You Are Sorry

- Activists are often accused of having their heads in the clouds, but there is no need to apologise for this, because if you are 'staking the high moral ground' it is quite acceptable to have your head in the clouds.
- Business associations are seen as being 'only in it for the money'. Once again, no apologies are needed - being in it for the money is exactly what business is about.



The Potential for RENGOs Who Are Easily Identifiable

- Reducing distrust within both the RENGO sector itself and within the RENGO beneficiary community
- Increased RENGO networking, partnerships and compacts
- Reduced competition within the RENGO sector for access to decision makers and potential funding sources
- Increased potential for strengthening and expanding the RENGO sector
- Increased potential for drawing in new role players for increasing the RENGO sector's civil society mandate
- increased potential for the RENGO sector to speak with one voice when it comes to the 'big picture' - the renewable energy development objective.



Conclusion

- Clarity of identity must be regarded as being fundamental to the success of organisations. This clarity may result in conflict with agencies apposed to the sector's objectives, but the advantages far exceed this disadvantage - you cannot, and indeed, should not, attempt to please all of the people all of the time.