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**Media & Cultural Studies  
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## **Master of Arts**

**By Dissertation**

### **Brand New**

*Assessing the applicability of the recently  
published Non-profit Brand IDEA  
framework to the South African context.  
A case study of eight South African non-  
profit organisations*

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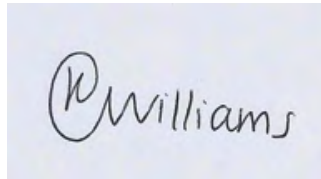
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**Date of Submission: 4 August 2015**

I declare that this project is my own work and that all the sources I have used to prepare it have been properly acknowledged.

Signed:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature consists of a stylized initial 'R' followed by the name 'Williams' in a cursive script.

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1 August 2015

## **Abstract**

The increasing pressures on the non-profit sector, in particular reference to funding, has meant that many non-profits in South Africa are having to adapt to compete in a global funding market and to professionalise to align with funders' demands. Many non-profits view their brand in a commercial light, primarily as a fundraising and marketing tool, however the Non-Profit Brand IDEA Model is a recently developed model that proposes a specific communication plan for brands in the non-profit sector. This model suggests that a strong brand can assist in achieving organisation impact, the ultimate goal of most non-profits. In addition, it proposes that the brand can be used to harness partnerships which alleviate the pressure for funding. As South Africa has a growing non-profit sector, this study assesses the applicability of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework in the South African context as it could provide a solution to the pressures facing this vital sector.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The value of brands in the for-profit sector has been well-established (Aaker, 2004; Steenkamp, Batra and Alden, 2001; van Riel and Fombrun, 2007; Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014; Richie, Swami and Weinberg, 1999). Indeed, in a television programme aired by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), young, junior school children instantly recognised global brands such as Coca-Cola, McDonalds and Pizza Hut (*The Secrets of Superbrands*, 2011). Many for-profit enterprises prioritise the promotion of their brand to achieve this widespread level of recognition (Cameron-Brown, 2006). In the non-profit sector, however, many view the brand as a negative concept, precisely because of this association of brands with large, profit-driven businesses, and emphasise the difference between their more altruistic goals, and commercial objectives (van Riel and Fombrun, 2007; Kylander and Stone, 2012; Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel<sup>1</sup>, researchers at the Hauser Centre for Nonprofit Organisations at Harvard University, in collaboration with the Rockefeller Institute, developed The Brand IDEA, a model for developing and improving brand communication and brand management in the non-profit sector. The model consists of three frameworks which build on each other. These frameworks are: the Paradigm Shift, the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and the Brand Cycle.

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that while the brand is an important tool for a non-profit organisation (NPO), it plays a different role in an NPO as opposed to that in a for-profit enterprise. This requires a reconceptualization of the brand for the non-profit sector.

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<sup>1</sup> This note is to clarify the references given when referring to literature on The Brand IDEA. The first article ('The role of Brand in the Nonprofit Sector on the Brand IDEA', 2012) was co-authored by Kylander and Stone, both of whom were on the research team that developed the Brand IDEA. The subsequent book *The Brand IDEA: managing Nonprofit Brands with Integrity, Democracy and Affinity* (2014), was co-authored by Laidler-Kylander (née Kylander) and Stenzel.

The Brand IDEA model is specifically for the brands in the non-profit sector and although NPOs may be wary of developing a brand for their organisation, citing concerns that it detracts from their community orientated vision (van Riel and Fombrun, 2007; Kylander and Stone, 2012; Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014), the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework of the Brand IDEA model is aimed at assisting NPOs to achieve impact in their mission.

In South Africa, with its large and vibrant non-profit sector and significant social issues (Stuart, 2013), this type of framework could be of value to many South African NPOs in their progress towards improving social issues in the country.

At a conference to present the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, many NPOs expressed their interest and enthusiasm (Kylander and Stone, 2012) for the framework but they mainly were American or international NPOs. How would this framework apply to South African based NPOs? This research question guided my research.

Through working on this project, I have found that research on brands is skewed towards the for-profit sector. My study aims to contribute to that gap and assess the applicability of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework in the South African non-profit sector. I have chosen to focus on the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework as it is the framework that guides the NPO to develop its brand. The third framework, the Brand Cycle, improves the brand and first framework, the Paradigm Shift, needs to be realised in order for the NPO to implement the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

The objectives for my study are:

- To understand the role of an NPO in South African society;
- To understand how the concept of a brand can be understood in a non-profit context;
- To assess the applicability of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework in an South African context in various sized NPOs;

- To understand if and how the framework needs to be adapted for the South African context depending on the match between the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and the reality of the South African non-profit landscape;
- To develop a resource model to guide South African NPOs to achieve the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, if needed.

In my study, a member of management from eight South African based NPOs of varying size and areas of interest, completed an email questionnaire on the brand in their NPO. Different sized NPOs were chosen in order to understand if the size of the organisation affects the applicability of the framework. It also makes the results of this study relevant to other South African NPOs, regardless of their size. The respondents were all a member of management to ensure comparability between their responses. These responses were analysed to understand the similarities and differences in brands between different sized NPOs and to the ideal role of the brand expressed in the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. After analysis of the data, an adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework was developed to address the common areas of weakness identified in the data analysis and render the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework applicable for the South African non-profit context. Additionally, the data analysis revealed that many South African NPOs appeared to have little experience in brands, brand communication or brand management. This meant that the foundation for even the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework was often lacking. Thus a detailed resource model was developed to guide the South African NPOs through practical application of the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

In answering my research question, 'Is the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework applicable in a South African non-profit organisation context?', a number of sub-topics will also be addressed:

- What is the role of the non-profit sector in South African society?
- What is the role of the NPO in South African society
- How has this role changed post 1994?



- Has this change lead to changes in the non-profit sector?
- What are current challenges for NPOs?
- How can one understand a brand in terms of an NPO?
- What is the value of a brand for an NPO?
- How can brands be used by NPOs?
- How does the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework fit an NPO in South Africa?
- Does the applicability of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework depend on the size of the South African NPO?
- Can the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework be adapted to fit the South African NPO better?

This project is divided into seven chapters with this introduction being the first Chapter. In Chapter 2, literature on the non-profit sector and brands is explored. Literature on the non-profit sector focuses on the South African non-profit sector, its history and its role in society. The literature on brands discusses brands in the non-profit sector, the value of a brand to an NPO, how brands can be used by NPOs, the Brand IDEA model and whether this model is suitable for the South African non-profit context.

Chapter 3 discusses Grounded theory and the Framework method as these formed the research methodology I employed. This chapter also includes a discussion of the development of the questionnaire and the resource model.

The focus of Chapter 4 is my analysis of the data from the questionnaire in terms of general brand perceptions and of the three elements (brand Integrity, brand Democracy and brand Affinity) of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework. I also comment on the response rate to the questionnaire and the identification of the organisations.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the findings from Chapter 4. These findings are summarised as general findings and specific findings related to the principles of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

Chapter 6 uses these findings to develop an adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and a resource model which provides practical guidance to NPOs to implement this adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

Chapter 7 presents a conclusion to my study and recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The non-profit sector worldwide has grown and this trend has been replicated in South Africa. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2015, the South African NPO<sup>2</sup> register (non-profit organisation) recorded, 137 909 registered NPOs, 2447 unregistered NPOs and 2000 NPO applications pending.

This large South African non-profit sector is explained by Weisbrod (1986 in Stuart, 2013: para 2) because '[n]onprofit provision of collective goods will be large in societies with high levels of inequality in individuals' effective demand for collective goods or high degrees of religious or ethnic heterogeneity'.

This legacy of South Africa's apartheid system, where laws divided society based on ethnic differences, is a country of great inequality. The GINI index which is a measure of inequality rated South Africa, in 2011, seventeen years after the first democratic election, as 65 out of 100, with 100 being perfect inequality (The World Bank, 2015). South Africa is also a very ethnically diverse country with 11 official languages (SouthAfrica.info, 2015). Both factors support the reasoning of Weisbrod (1986 in Stuart, 2013) for the large South African non-profit sector.

The South African non-profit sector, however, has made, and continues to make, a significant contribution to society. This is particularly so in the years post-1994 when the South African government began outsourcing projects to NPOs through partnerships. However, with the political and societal changes after 1994, came

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of my study, I will refer to all not for profit enterprises as non-profit organisations or NPOs. This is acceptable as section 1 of the South African Nonprofit Organisations Act 71 of 1997 defines an NPO as the following, 'An non-profit organisation is defined, in terms of section 1 of the Non-profit Organisations Act, as a trust, company or other association of persons established for a public purpose and of which its income and property are not distributable to its members or office bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered. Nongovernmental NPOs (NGOs) and community based non-profit organisations (CBOs) are collectively known as non-profit organisations (NPOs). In some instance, non-profit organisations are also referred to as Civil Society non-profit organisations (CSO).' (South Africa. Nonprofit Organisations Act 71 of 1997)

changes to the regulation of the non-profit sector. In exchange for financial assistance, the government required that NPOs become more professional and comply with legal requirements, such as those outlined in the legislation of the Nonprofit Organisations Act 71 of 1997 (Fioramonti, 2005, Habib, 2005, Stuart, 2013). Furthermore, international donors became more exacting on the outcomes of the projects they were funding. These factors resulted in the process of receiving funding becoming more selective and more demanding, thus favouring large, urban NPOs rather than smaller, rural NPOs (Fioramonti, 2005). This reporting culture puts pressure on NPOs to deliver outcomes and measurable impact<sup>3</sup> and encourages NPOs to professionalise their organisation (Stuart, 2013).

While smaller NPOs could find this new culture a challenge, in fact all NPOs could turn towards their brand to help them achieve this impact and assist in their overall professionalisation. This is ironic as NPOs have generally been distrustful of brands because of their traditional link to the commercial sector (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014) and possible association with excessive forms of capitalism and greed (Klein, 2010). Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014: p. 51) write that, in their study, 'close to 50 percent of our interviewees expressed some degree of ambivalence toward brands and the use of brand management in the non-profit sector'. Interestingly, researchers in the for-profit sector encountered this same unease when discussing developing a brand with for-profit entities (van Riel and Fombrun, 2007), despite that the importance of the organisation brand has been demonstrated (Aaker, 2004; Steenkamp, Batra and Alden, 2001; van Riel and Fombrun, 2007).

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) acknowledge this disquiet in the non-profit sector about a brand. However, they advocate for a revised understanding of the brand, specific to the non-profit sector. To support this argument, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) conducted 73 interviews with practitioners,

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<sup>3</sup> The term 'impact' in the non-profit sector refers to 'the broader or longer term change resulting from their [the NPO] activities' (Breckell, Harrison and Robert, 2010: Research findings)

consultants, funders and academics in 41 NPOs to understand their views of brands in NPOs and the role of a brand in an NPO. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) then developed a model, the Brand IDEA, based on their research. They believe this Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, which is the central framework of this model, will enable NPOs to use their brands as a strategic tool in the management of their organisations and, ultimately, increase the impact of the NPO in its efforts to achieve its social mission.

This model consists of three frameworks to guide the organisation to achieve successful brand communication and brand management. In the South African non-profit sector with a large number of NPOs, of various sizes, competing for limited funding and facing the pressures of the need for increased demand for professionalism of the sector from funders, capitalising on their brand to assist in achieving impact would be an important and valuable resource.

## **1 The non-profit sector in South Africa**

The non-profit sector in South Africa has played an important role in shaping society, particularly during the apartheid years through anti-apartheid NPOs, advocacy and support to marginalised groups (Heinrich, 2001; Fioramonti, 2005). Once, however, democracy had been achieved and the new government pledged to care for all the people, many NPOs had to shift their focus to objectives such as reconstruction, lobbying and monitoring the government (Heinrich, 2001; Fioramonti, 2005). This required new skills that were different from skills employed by NPOs during apartheid (Fioramonti, 2005). In the new democracy, many NPOs also went into partnership with the government to assist in the promised societal changes (Fioramonti, 2005, Habib, 2005, Stuart, 2013). Thus this post democracy period resulted in changes in the working requirements and environment for South African NPOs (Stuart, 2013)

The NPOs interviewed in my study demonstrate the diversity of the South African non-profit sector today where NPOs work in a range of areas in society. In my study the focus areas of the NPOs are child literacy, animal welfare and

child psychosocial support, health and early education, environmental awareness and education, faith-based social welfare, education for impoverished disabled children, environmental protection and rehabilitation and rural development.

In order to fully explore the role of the NPO in South African society, the non-profit sector needs to be defined.

### ***Defining the non-profit sector***

The place of the NPO in society seems to evoke different opinions. Salamon and Anheier (1999) place the NPO in the 'third sector' (Salamon and Anheier, 1992:p. 126) or the space between the state and market. Authors Fioramonti (2005), Habib (2005) and Heinrich (2001), however, agree that the non-profit sector is part of civil society.

The definition of civil society has also been much debated (Fine, 1997 in Fioramonti, 2005; Linz and Stepan, 1996 in Fioramonti, 2005; Anheier et al., 2001 in Fioramonti, 2005; Keane, 2003 in Fioramonti, 2005; Diamond, 1999 in Fioramonti, 2005). Over the years, definitions of civil society have become more selective and focused on the organisational aspect of civil society (Diamond, 1999 in Fioramonti, 2005). Fioramonti (2005) cites White's (1996) definition of civil society as 'an intermediate associational realm between the state and individuals, populated by NPOs and groups that are separate from the state, enjoy autonomy from the state, and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or advance their interests and values' (Fioramonti, 2005: p. 67). Fioramonti (2005), however, recognises that this definition does not suggest the plural nature of civil society which also consists of NPOs do not always share values or use peaceful means to promote their cause.

The place of civil society in broader society is also a topic of debate. Classical theorists and authors through the years have contributed their opinions.

Classical theorists such as Georg Hegel (1770-1831) and Karl Marx (1818- 1883) both saw civil society as inclusive of the economy but not the state. Each theorist, however, saw civil society's relationship to the state differently (Kurtz, 1999). Hegel saw civil society as being controlled by the state whereas Marx saw civil society as completely disengaged from the state and believed that it would actually overthrow the state in a populist revolution. Liberal theory saw civil society opposed to the state and its usually brutish power (Fioramonti, 2005). However, Bratton (1989 in Fioramonti, 2005) argues for a broader view of civil society, recognising that it is not always the state that holds the power in the relationship between civil society and the state and often there is a more balanced relationship between the two that relies on interdependence (Bratton 1989 in Fioramonti, 2005). To illustrate this, Fioramonti (2005) points to developing countries, such as South Africa, in which civil society, through NPOs, works closely with the state in the implementation of policies while relying on the state for funding.

Civil society has also been understood as the sphere in society which promotes democratic values and increases social capital (Putnam, 2001 in Fioramonti, 2005). This understanding, however, raises questions about how one can distinguish those NPOs that are formal, genuine democratic civil society NPOs from those that are more informal networks based on kinship, allegiances or those whose activities are outside of the legal system (Fioramonti, 2005). It has led some, such as Hegel, to question the assumption of unity in society that, theoretically, defined democratic civil society (Fioramonti, 2005). Hegel proposed two observations that demonstrated the potential inaccuracy of this assumption of unity. Fioramonti (2005) writes that Hegel's opinions were demonstrated through two examples in South African history.

Firstly, Hegel suggested that in fact there may be some groups in civil society which deliberately try to subvert this sense of unison and collectiveness (Whitehead, 1997 in Fioramonti, 2005). This absence of unity in a society can be seen in post apartheid in South Africa. Despite civil society and NPOs playing a large part in achieving a democratic South African state (Fioramonti, 2005), once

in power, government officials, many of whom had been part of the NPOs fighting for democracy, seemed to forget the important role the NPOs had played in ending apartheid or the role they could play in the newly democratic South Africa (Fioramonti, 2005). In turn, today the people of South Africa express little faith in the government and see the inequality gap increasing (Raghavan, 2012). In an ironic move, some NPOs today are critical of the progress and policies of the democratically elected government. Citizens have felt the need to organise community-led groups to arrange security patrols of their areas or form NPOs which use violence in protest against the government (Fioramonti, 2005).

Secondly, Hegel believed that civil society NPOs which demonstrate extreme exclusivity by restricting their membership to certain sectors of society, hamper democratic development rather than promote tolerance and respect (Carothers, 1999 in Fioramonti, 2005; Young, 2001 in Fioramonti, 2005). Examples of this could be seen during the apartheid era in South Africa. White trade unions and women's groups, flourished and supported the apartheid system (Fioramonti, 2005) but their success did not result in a more peaceful or tolerant society. Development of all groups of society was not prioritised, and consequently many civil society NPOs operated in black communities where they served as substitutes for the apartheid government through being service providers (Fioramonti, 2005).

Salamon and Anheier (1992) acknowledge this confusion in how to place civil society within broader society. However, they write that this debate over the place of civil society does not detract from the legitimacy of the sector. Civil society is, they argue, a legitimate and autonomous sector. Salamon and Anheier (1992) believe that the confusion rather stems from trying to define the sector, not over trying to define its legitimacy or place in society.

Salamon and Anheier (1992) state five reasons for the difficulty in defining the non-profit sector, which for these authors is the heart of the debate.



First there are different names for the sector, from the non-profit sector and the charitable sector to the independent sector. Second, there is confusion between philanthropy and the non-profit sector. These concepts are linked but distinct. Salamon and Anheier (1992) write that the non-profit sector is a set of private NPOs providing a range of information, advocacy and services, while philanthropy is the giving of gifts of time or valuables to the public. While NPOs may ask for charitable donations, philanthropy is not the only source of their income. Third, is the difficulty, due to their diversity, of trying to see all the NPOs as a whole with commonalities. Fourth, is the differing degree of structural formality of the NPOs which can range from community-based informal NPOs to formal business-type structures. Finally, historically strong links between the non-profit sector and other sectors, such as the state or religious sectors, have made it difficult to identify the non-profit sector as a separate sector (Salamon and Anheier, 1992).

The place of the non-profit sector within a society can therefore be debated but the legitimacy of the sector and the role of the NPO as a mediator, advocate and watchdog for society is established. South African NPOs have been acknowledged as playing a 'critical part in trying to resolve the challenges and inequalities prevalent in South African society' ('20 years on: the role of NPOs', 2014: para 1). This size of the non-profit sector in South Africa does, however, bring challenges, notably in the lack of clear distinctions between NPOs which can result in groups of NPOs being viewed as homogenous. Indeed, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) refer to this opinion as being that of funders and those outside the sector. It emphasises the importance for each NPO to stand out in a large and competitive sector. One way of achieving this distinction is through developing a strong brand.

The integral role of the NPO within society is clear and the South African non-profit sector also shows that it is open and capable to adaptation. This flexibility is important as Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel's (2014) recommendation to use the brand of the NPO to drive the growth of the NPO in the sector will require the traditional NPO mind-set to be overturned.

## ***Changes in the role of the NPO in South African society***

The role of the NPO and of civil society in South Africa has changed significantly post 1994 (Habib, 2005). Prior to the 1980s in apartheid South Africa, NPOs that were critical of the government or the socioeconomic state were suppressed (Habib, 2005). However, from the late 1970s, more NPOs started to develop clear anti-apartheid positions (Fioramonti, 2005) and anti-apartheid NPOs, like the unions and others associated with the black consciousness movement, such as the South African Students Organisation (African Studies Centre, no date), began to move to the forefront of society (Marx, 1992 in Habib, 2005). Some NPOs created alternative political structures such as people's courts and street committees and others, such as black trade unions, developed a more militaristic stance (Machay and Mathoho, 2001 in Fioramonti, 2005).

These anti-apartheid NPOs, however, continued to be stifled by the government through constant harassment (Habib, 2005) and thus lacked formal engagement in civil society, and between civil society and the state (Habib, 2005). Later, however, two factors would enable these NPOs to take on an increasingly prominent role in South African society.

First was the change in governmental attitudes towards black opposition and anti-apartheid NPOs. In the 1980s, President Botha partially liberated South African society by attempting to set up cooperation between the National Party (the ruling party) and the black opposition and allowed a greater engagement in mainstream civil society by the black opposition and anti-apartheid NPOs (Habib, 2005). However, this liberalisation was not wide-ranging and soon the government again began to actively repress groups within the anti-apartheid civil society. These groups, however, were not completely shut down, which allowed the anti-apartheid movement to remerge quickly once F.W. de Klerk became President and renewed and expanded the liberalisation initiative (Habib, 2005).

Second were the resources, both human and financial, that became available to NPOs in South Africa during this time. In the early 1980s, the number of people willing and able to commit to the anti-apartheid movement increased as many university students, who were politicised by the violent 1970s, were joined by political prisoners who were released in the 1980s. Together these groups allowed more anti-apartheid NPOs to form and for existing NPOs to become more visibly active (Habib, 2005). Though often not publically acknowledged, financial resources became available through private enterprises and foreign governments who, after learning of the June 16 student revolt and killings in 1976, showed their support for the anti-apartheid movement by donating to the NPOs working for the oppressed groups (Habib, 2005).

Post 1994, many changes occurred to the structure and role of South African NPOs. Several leaders of anti-apartheid NPOs joined the new government (Habib and Taylor, 1999 in Fioramonti, 2005) and previously shunned politically motivated NPOs had to join civil society, emphasising the new blurred lines between the state and civil society (Fioramonti, 2005). The focus of civil society shifted from achieving democracy or acting as service providers to those ignored by the government, to focus on areas such as reconstruction, lobbying and monitoring the new government (Heinrich, 2001; Fioramonti, 2005). The regulations of civil society also changed to be more supportive to NPOs. This restructuring was achieved through three processes. Firstly, by removing repressive legislature, allowing public scrutiny and protest activity (Habib, 2005). Secondly, through laws to reorganise the political environment, such as the Nonprofit Organisations Act of 1997 which recognised and regulated civil society and showed the government's willingness to work with NPOs and thirdly, the financial needs of NPOs was addressed through legislation and institutions to assist in funding (Habib, 2005). Indeed, funding for NPOs, which was an often secretive affair during the apartheid years, became more open post 1994. Foundations and private funders publicly expressed their interest in supporting NPOs (Heinrich, 2001; Fioramonti, 2005).

The overall effect of these changes was to create an environment that supported the work and development of NPOs and facilitated a cooperative relationship between the government and NPOs. Indeed, this divide between the government and civil society remains porous today (Fioramonti, 2005) with the government working with NPOs in the development of policies and policy implementation (Habib, 2005). Many NPOs also started working with private enterprises to address the needs of the new democratic state (Fioramonti, 2005, Habib, 2005, Stuart, 2013). This new way of working brought its own consequences. Partnerships with the government introduced tools such as log frames and results based management (Pratt and Myhrman, 2009 in Stuart, 2013) and partnerships with the private sector introduced a more commercial management style to NPOs (Dhupath, 2003 in Stuart, 2013).

Although this open relationship between NPOs and the government and between the government and civil society is better than the repressive relationship pre-1994 and has resulted in financial sustainability of many NPOs, the consequences have been commercialisation and professionalization of the non-profit sector and questions about the accountability of NPOs (Habib, 2005; Stuart, 2013). These concerns are still valid in 2015.

Interestingly, today the role of NPOs appears to have come full circle and many find themselves in the same role as during apartheid: acting as a service provider or supporting the weak or failing government services, ('20 years on: the role of NPOs', 2014). Their role in society, therefore, remains as important as ever. Challenges are different but still exist.

One of the greatest challenges facing the South African non-profit sector today is funding. The growth of the non-profit sector has led to increased competition over limited resources, with funding being of particular concern (Stuart, 2013). The structural reality of the South African non-profit sector also has created challenges ('20 years on the role of NPOs', 2014).

As the number of NPOs demanding funding has increased, this has resulted in a greater emphasis on transparency and measurable social impact (Gray and Bebbington, 2006 in Stuart, 2013). NPOs increasingly have to adhere to strict monitoring and evaluation (Pratt and Myhrman, 2009 in Stuart, 2013).

While some feel this greater transparency and accountability have benefited the non-profit sector, the concerns of the past endure and others feel that it has led to the commercialisation of the sector and resulted in NPOs which fail to adapt to this new trend, struggling to source funding (Stuart, 2013). As funders are valuable, they have increasing influence in the NPO that they choose to fund. Consequently, funders can influence changes in the organisational culture of the NPO to suit their requirements and/or oblige the NPO to take on professional staff (Stuart, 2013). This contributes to the commercialisation of the sector. Insisting on strict accountability is commendable but there needs to be support to help NPOs, especially smaller NPOs, to achieve this. This accountability trend has led to a 'report culture' (Stuart, 2013: para 8) in which NPOs have to continually account for 'activities completed', 'performance indicators met' and 'outputs achieved' (Stuart, 2013: para 8) rather than explain the humanitarian difference the project has made to the beneficiaries.

The challenge of these strict requirements from funders has been augmented by the recent global economic crisis which has reduced business's CSI (corporate social responsibility) budgets and individuals' ability to donate (Davis, 2012 in Stuart, 2013). NPOs are now progressively turning to the government for funding. This creates intense competition for limited government funding. Stuart (2013) cites Habib and Taylor (1999) in writing that the possible danger in this reliance on the government is reduced independence of NPOs especially since, as discussed above, NPOs are often expected to conform to the wishes of their funders. Some thus feel that South African NPOs are increasingly becoming vessels for their funders' agendas (Stuart, 2013). Given the historical role of NPOs in South Africa and the particular social needs of the country, this is a negative development as the lack of independence of NPOs diminishes the 'active citizenry' (Charities Aid Foundation South Africa, 2012, in Stuart, 2013: para: 10)

needed for to bring the significant impact needed. Furthermore, diminished funding can reduce the advocacy capacity of NPOs which is important in holding the government to account (Charities Aid Foundation South Africa, 2012 in Stuart, 2013).

The troubled non-profit funding landscape is yet further impacted by legislation and governmental inconsistency. The Nonprofit Organisation Act 71 of 1997, drafted to clarify the NPOs' role post 1994, states that the government must create an 'enabling environment' (The Nonprofit Organisation Act 71, 1997: s3(20) for the non-profit sector, 'to promote, support and enhance the capacity of NPO NPOs to perform their functions' (The Nonprofit Organisation Act 71, 1997: s3(25). However, this support is often lacking or negligent. Many NPOs have difficulty receiving government support, obtaining funding and growing their organisation (Stuart, 2013). Additionally, there have been instances where the concerns over NPO independence have come to fruition and the supposedly supportive role of society has become critical. In 2013, the South African Democratic Teachers Union, (SADTU) accused educational NPOs of hidden motives and of trying to undermine the government, (John, 2014). SADTU is a member of COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) and although the relationship between COSATU and the African National Congress (ANC), the ruling party, is currently volatile (Letsoalo, 2015), COSATU is part of a tripartite alliance with the ANC (COSATU website, no date). The views of COSATU can thus be deduced to be aligned to that of its important political partner.

The second challenge is also related to the growth of NPOs in South Africa. This challenge is that of the problems related to the structure of the non-profit sector and resultant tarnished image of the sector. Many view the South African non-profit sector as unregulated and uncoordinated with need for clearer methods for 'quantifying success' ('20 years on the role of NPOs', 2014: para 13). Money is put into the sector but there are often many NPOs working on the same project resulting in duplication of efforts and poor understanding of the social impact of this funding ('20 years on: the role of NPOs', 2014). Additionally, a lack of trust in and a reputation of poor financial management and corruption in a few South

African NPOs have undermined confidence in the entire sector and tainted all NPOs ('20 years on: the role of NPOs', 2014). Jarryd Smith, founder of The Second Chance Trust, says that South African NPOs need to be 'more open about their finances and how their money is spent' (Smith in '20 years on: the role of NPOs', 2014: para 20). In an already competitive funding market, this perception can hamper the fundraising efforts of NPOs or funders willingness to offer funding, thus further increasing competition for funding and pressure on NPOs to adhere to strict reporting.

In order to overcome these sectorial problems, the non-profit sector needs to adapt and aim for sustainability not dependency ('20 years on: the role of NPOs', 2014). Part of this new approach requires collaboration with other NPOs, the government and private sector, and more vigilance and leadership ('20 years on: the role of NPOs', 2014). The South African non-profit sector has achieved significant adaptations throughout its recent history and needs to continue to adapt as required.

A solution to these new challenges could lie with the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. The authors of this framework, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014), argue that successful implementation of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework could assist NPOs to achieve their mission and increase their impact through partnerships facilitated by the brand, thus addressing the funding challenges and need for an increased collaborative approach in the South African non-profit sector.

## **2 How can one understand brands in terms of the non-profit sector?**

### ***The differences between the for-profit and non-profit sectors***

Oster (1995 in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014) noted five key differences between NPO and for-profit sectors:

- Unlike for-profits, NPOs are more likely to be decentralised and focus on consensus building;
- In the NPO, employees are motivated by connections to the work as opposed to financial rewards;
- NPOs are more collaborative than competitive;
- NPOs have a broader range of stakeholders;
- NPOs are driven by their mission as opposed to profit.

These five differences show that NPOs and for-profits are different entities and thus the brand in each should not be seen in the same light. The role of the brand in each sector should be understood and treated differently. The Non-profit Brand IDEA framework is conceptualised specifically for brand communication and brand management in the non-profit sector to guide NPOs to use their brands successfully and is tailored to the needs of the non-profit sector.

As an example to illustrate the importance of a strong brand in an NPO, Laidler-Kylander, Quelch and Simonin (2007 in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014) write that there can be a 'disconnect' (Laidler-Kylander, Quelch and Simonin, 2007 in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014: p. 25) in an NPO when a funder or



benefactor cannot directly experience the service or products of the NPO. These services or products are distributed solely to the beneficiaries. Thus this funder or benefactor cannot use their evaluation of the quality of service or product provided by the NPO to make their decision to support the NPO. In this case, the brand can help inform this decision and thus should be managed and communicated in a way that befits this role.

### ***How can one define a brand?***

The American Marketing Association emphasises the role of differentiation in the role of a brand by defining a brand as a 'name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers' (*The American Marketing Association Dictionary* online, 1995).

Highlighting these tangible aspects and the role of a brand in consumer choice indicates why the brand in the for-profit sector is used to help drive sales through creating perceived quality and awareness (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Brands also help to build relationships between customers and the business through creating trust and preference (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

This role of brands in driving sales has tainted the image of brands as the rise of certain brands to global status bringing vast profits, worldwide recognition and international influence for their companies, has resulted in some people forming a dislike towards brands, seeing them as a signifier for gross capitalism and greed (Klein, 2010). Some have gone as far as linking the rise of omnipresent brands to an increasingly prevalent individual and corporate drive to be bigger, better and faster. Naomi Klein wrote her bestseller, *No Logo*, fifteen years ago which links the rise of brands to changes in the way businesses operate and thus also to politics and current affairs (Klein, 2010). In the book, Klein presents an argument that multinational corporations have become more powerful than governments but lack any accountability to the public and so are free to continue

in excessive profit-driven practices (Segerstrom, 2010). In *No Logo*, three spheres in which corporates have affected society are presented (Segerstrom, 2010). These are civic space, civic liberties and employment. Each of these areas is considered in the book. Corporates have reduced civic space by focusing on producing brands rather than products and production is outsourced (Segerstrom, 2010). Civic liberties or consumer choice is reduced by mergers and franchises, and employment opportunities are limited as corporates reduce their employees. The anger at these practices led, according to Klein, to the large-scale protests against large banks (large multinational corporations) and their relationship to government that took place in many cities in 2011. However, this view of brands is rooted in the commercial sector and Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) argue that brands in the non-profit sector have a different role to play and thus should not be seen in the same light as brands in the for-profit sector.

However, the concept of a brand in the for-profit sector is evolving to consider aspects not directly associated with its commercial orientation, such as psychological influence. Brand knowledge is the term for the cognitive representation of the brand (Peter and Olson, 2001 in Keller, 2003), or one's personal opinion of a brand. It includes all descriptive and evaluative elements of a brand. These elements include intangible aspects such as feelings, image and attitudes that the brand evokes (Keller, 2003). These more recent additions in defining a brand show the shift in thinking towards focusing on the more intangible aspects of a brand by describing the idea of a brand as an image in one's mind. This image is achieved through a combination of verbal, visual and emotional cues that encourage the individual to identify with, or feel a connection to, the brand and its corresponding business (van Riel and Fonbrun, 2007).

Furthermore, a brand can be understood from two perspectives: the brand identity which is the internal identity capturing the essence of the organisation and brand image which is the external understanding of the brand and helps to connect external stakeholders to the brand. Brands are not the reputation of the

organisation. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that reputation is the result of the brand and other perceptions of the organisation over time and across different stakeholders. The reputation reflects only the external aspect of a brand.

The definition of a brand in the non-profit sector is drawn more from the focus on the intangible than a definition focusing on tangible elements. The brand in the non-profit sector can be viewed as a message conveying the essence of an NPO, as a perception of the NPO by an external stakeholder or as a tool to guide decisions of potential investors, clients and partners (Kylander and Stone, 2012). Briefly, the brand of an NPO may be described as 'the mental impression people have of the organisation' (Stone in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014: ix).

Kylander and Stone (2012) explain that the difference in defining a brand between the for-profit and non-profit sector is due to a difference in the balance between competition and collaboration which are skewed differently in each sector.

The way in which one defines a brand will also influence the role one allocates to the brand (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014) and, in the non-profit sector, the role of the brand is multiple. These roles include

- to project authority and credibility and enable the NPO to make better use of its resources to fulfil its mission (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014);
- to help ensure the safety of field workers (Quelch and Laidler-Kylander, 2005 in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014);
- aid the implementation of projects (Quelch and Laidler-Kylander, 2005 in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014);
- provide internal cohesion (Quelch and Laidler-Kylander, 2005 in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014);

- to position the NPO for potential partnerships (Quelch and Laidler-Kylander, 2005 in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014);
- to create a perception of quality, which affects recruiting and fundraising by allowing the NPO to gain valuable employees and financial resources (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Brand management in the non-profit sector is therefore also different from its partner in the for-profit sector. Brand management and communications in the non-profit sector is concerned with creating dialogue or engagement in the development and communication of the NPO's image and identity (Kylander and Stone, 2014).

### ***The shift in understanding brands for NPOs***

The differences do not mean that brands are irrelevant in the non-profit sector but rather a shift needs to take place in understanding brands specifically for the non-profit sector (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). As the two sectors are different, each requires a unique approach to brand communication and brand management. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) term this shift a 'Paradigm Shift' (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014: p. 7) in understanding brands for the non-profit sector. This paradigm shift is critical and is the first framework that needs to be achieved by an NPO in order to successfully implement the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. In this shift, brands are no longer seen as fundraising and public relations tools but as a 'critical strategic asset focused on mission implementation' (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014: p. 7). Brands are seen as the embodiment of the NPO's mission and values and capture the NPO in its entirety (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). As a result, the responsibility for the brand no longer is solely that of the communications department but of the entire NPO as all internal stakeholders represent the NPO and therefore the brand (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Accordingly, the brand can be used

to clarify the position of the NPO, which can help in developing partnerships, rather than gain a competitive advantage (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

The impetus behind the development of this new understanding the NPO brand, is influenced by two trends impacting on the non-profit sector today: the rise of social media and marketing and the increase in partnerships and collaborations (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Social media have changed the way NPOs can relate and communicate with their external stakeholders (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Through social media, an NPO can reach large numbers of people at a low cost and the medium facilitates the opportunity for a two-way dialogue (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). These advantages make social media a popular communication tool with a reported 97% of the 480 NPOs taking part in a survey by the Case Foundation in collaboration with Social Media for Nonprofits reported to use Facebook to communicate (Sharma, 2014). However, the rise of social media has also brought about the need for changes to the communication system. Social media is fast moving and NPOs have to generate content quicker, the approval process has to be faster and the NPO has to be prepared to comment and engage (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Control of the information is not always possible because of the large number of people using social media. Information about the NPO can originate from other sources as social media as open and free communicative medium (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). While the loss of control of communications through social media may seem daunting to many NPOs, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write of the benefits of social media such as increased interaction, participation and potential supporter involvement. NPOs must adapt to these changes in communication and accept the lack of control of all communication related to their NPO.

Partnerships across the non-profit sector and between the NPO, for-profit and government sector have increased (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). This is particularly true in South Africa where the post 1994 government has outsourced many community projects to NPOs through governmental

partnerships (Heinrich, 2001; Fioramonti, 2005). Yankey and Willen (2010 in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014) believe this global trend has been driven by two main factors: the realisation by NPOs that they cannot achieve their mission alone; and the economic climate and many funders demanding that NPOs engage in effective and collaborative approaches in return for funding. NPOs have to adapt to these changes and be open and willing to enter into partnerships. NPOs need to be cognisant of these changes and make adjustments to the strategies of the NPO. This includes adapting brand communication and brand management (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

The Non-profit Brand IDEA framework builds on the paradigm shift and addresses these two trends. If an NPO is able to achieve the paradigm shift, it can progress to the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework which will guide the organisation to use its brand to capitalise on these trends and maximise the benefit these trends have brought.

### **3 What is the value of brands to the NPO?**

Having established the differences between the for-profit and the non-profit sector and thus the need for brand communication and brand management specific to the non-profit sector, the value of the brand to the non-profit sector, how to create and then develop a brand will now be discussed.

#### ***Brand equity***

The role of a brand in the for-profit sector is often linked to increasing the brand equity (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014), but what is this and does it differ in the non-profit sector?

In the for-profit sector, brand equity refers to the idea that a 'product's value to consumers, the trade and the firm is somehow enhanced when it is associated or

identified over time with a set of unique elements that define the brand concept' (Erden et al, 1999: p. 302). Understanding these elements and their influence on consumers will guide the for-profit to use its brand to increase its brand equity. The influence of these elements, however, is dynamic and is either directly or indirectly influenced by the effectiveness of the brand's marketing mix (Erden et al, 1999). Erdem et al (1999) write that brand management is often included with corporate communication as it is assumed that the primary brand management goal should be greater market awareness of the brand. Erdem et al. (1999) however, feel that if one assumes a broader understanding of brand equity, brand management should be included at all stages of the strategy to guide the marketing of the product or service. This strategy is referred to as the marketing mix as it consists of four factors to consider: price, product, promotion, and place (British Broadcasting Corporation GCSE Bitesize, 2014). This notion of including the brand at every stage of a multifactor strategy is similar to the proposal by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) to view the brand as essence of the NPO and a decision making tool in all strategic decisions. As in the for-profit sector, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) also believe that the brand is a tool to build brand equity. However, the manner of achieving brand equity is different in the non-profit sector as the drivers for brand equity in an NPO are different. There are four elements that drive brand equity in an NPO: trust, partnerships, consistency and focus.

Trust is the belief that the NPO will deliver on its promises. Trust is necessary to garner support for the NPO in partnerships with other entities. In the NPO brand equity model, trust both enables and results from partnerships (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

In the NPO brand equity model (Laidler-Kylander and Simonin, 2009 in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014), partnerships are linked to the pertinence of the work of the NPO in relation to the needs of society or a potential partner. The more pertinent an NPO appears, the easier it will find good partners and, in a strong partnership, the more pertinent or significant the NPO will appear. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) add that they believe partnerships are

essential to increase the operating capacity of an NPO and enable the NPO to fulfil its mission.

Consistency refers to uniformity of the brand image across stakeholders, over time and geographical locations (Fletcher, 2002 in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Consistency results in increased trust and visibility.

Focus is the result of a clear understanding of how the brand is differentiated from, and positioned to, other brands. It is also connected to how the NPO continues to strive to achieve its mission despite setbacks (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). The simpler an NPO's mission, the easier it is to maintain focus (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

The Non-profit Brand IDEA framework is designed to put in place the foundation of each of these brand equity drivers. Successful implementation of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, will allow the NPO to progress to the last framework, the Brand Cycle. This cycle takes the positive development of the NPO achieved through the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and develops these four drivers of brand equity in the NPO.

### ***Creating a brand identity***

Implementation of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework relies on the NPO having an established brand. This brand can then be harnessed to achieve objectives. Thus, before starting on the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, the NPO would first need to have an established brand. Having a structured approach to creating a brand identity is important and it helps lay the foundation for the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). A brand identity is the first step in creating a strong brand (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003 in Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan and McDonald, 2005; Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). A strong brand should capture the uniqueness of the organisation and position it relative to other NPOs (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).



Building a brand identity involves stakeholders in the NPO being able to answer four questions about the NPO but which should all be captured in the brand identity. The brand identity can be seen a summary of the core of the NPO.

Below are four questions which the brand identity of the NPO should address. Thus in developing the brand identity, the NPO should answer these questions to form the brand identity (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014):

- 1- Who are you?
- 2- What do you do?
- 3- Why does it matter?
- 4- How do you do the work? (van Riel and Fonbrun, (2007), include the question, 'what we stand for').

These questions must be able to be answered by both internal and external stakeholders. Both groups responses should be similar (van Riel and Fonbrun, 2007). The brand identity can also capture the future hopes of the organisation as it reflects where the organisation sees itself in the years to come, even if it is not currently in that position (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Likewise, the brand identity can include the history and culture of an NPO. Indeed, it can increase the strength of the brand identity when it is supported by past achievements (Aaker, 2003).

The questions reflect the paradigm shift (discussed above) in which the brand identity must be rooted in the strategy, mission and values of the NPO or its core. The importance of this relationship between the brand identity and the strategy, mission and values cannot be underestimated. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, (2014) believe the brand identity must be connected to the strategy in order for the NPO to fulfil its mission. This strategy can be referred to as the organisation's theory of change (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). If this relationship is strong, the brand becomes a part of all strategic decisions and is the responsibility of the entire leadership team. In this vein, brand communication is

the responsibility of the entire NPO as all the internal stakeholders should buy into the strategy of the NPO and thus the brand. If the internal stakeholders, know of and support the strategy, they should support the brand and will communicate it consistently (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Aligning the brand to the mission may first involve doing research into the current perception of the brand to understand where the brand image and brand identity deviates from the mission (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Internal discussions then need to be held to understand how to adjust this gap (van Riel and Fonbrun, 2007; Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014) and how to communicate the brand correctly internally and externally. It may be decided that the two views of the brand vary so greatly from the current desired brand identity and brand image, that a rebranding is necessary (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Rebranding can either be a rebranding of brand perceptions or a complete overhaul of the brand from the visual identity to the external stakeholders to whom it is communicated. NPOs evolve and the original brand may no longer be appropriate for the direction in which the NPO now focuses. Thus a new brand will need to be developed and communicated (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

In some NPOs, it may be decided that it is more important that the brand reflects values rather than the mission (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). This can be the case if an NPO has a wide reaching mission with many projects involved. Creating a brand that reflects the entire mission can be challenging and could weaken the brand through an apparent lack of focus. Sharing the values of the NPO can unite the NPO as much as a shared mission (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Values are also easier to capture in NPOs with different branches at each of which the local aim of the NPO may be different (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Values also remain relatively stable over time thus providing a stable basis for the brand.

The brand image, the external aspect of the brand identity, or the brand perception of external stakeholder, will be informed by the internal brand

identity (van Riel and Fonbrun, 2007). The brand image is also influenced by the differentiation and positioning of the brand; any experience of the brand, the NPO and its internal stakeholders; the visual identity of the brand such as the logo. The brand image becomes a powerful tool for the NPO when it is able to connect to the external stakeholders so that they feel they fully understand the brand and what it represents (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Brand image and identity, thus, are more than just the logo (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

The process of building a brand is structured and involves formal and active engagement by the NPO. Although all of the South African NPOs in my study reported having a brand, none reported following this process or aspects of it. For many of the NPOs in my study, the brand developed organically. This may seem an easier approach but it could actually be detrimental to the NPO if the brand is seen to be at odds with the strategy, mission or values of the NPO.

The brand building process is important but because it follows a structured approach, it may be simple for South African NPOs to achieve, even if they do not have experience in brand communication. Clear guidance on this process could help more South African NPOs to lay the foundation for a strong brand by following this process. It may seem time consuming, but the outcomes will assist the NPO in implementing the non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

### ***Developing the NPO brand***

Once the brand identity has been established, the brand needs to be developed through four steps in order for effective brand management to be realised. These steps will both assist in developing a solid brand but also assist in effective brand management as the information garnered through these four steps will guide the NPO in the management of the brand to uphold the strong foundation established through the initial brand development. According to Laidler-

Kylander and Stenzel (2014) the four steps involved in brand development in an NPO are differentiation, positioning, theory of change and internal branding.

Differentiation is defining what distinguishes the NPO from other similar NPOs. It involves understanding the organisation's strengths, weaknesses and any features, such as its mission or values that make it unique.

The process of differentiation allows an NPO to 'stand out' (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014:p. 39) which is important in the crowded funding landscape. Differentiation also implies that the NPO understands what it does and does not do (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). The process of laying boundaries around the focus of the NPO is important. Although NPOs may fear excluding certain areas of work as this may discourage certain funders, 'powerful brands need to take a stand and be distinctive, sometimes generating powerful emotional reactions' (Novy-Hildesly in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014: p. 39).

Although Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) recognise that while complete differentiation may be the ideal, few NPOs are able to fully differentiate themselves from other NPOs. If, however, a non-profit sector were to embrace effective brand management, such as through the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, a greater degree of differentiation could be achieved. This would be to the benefit of all the NPOs in the sector (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Positioning is the second step in effective brand development for the non-profit sector (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg (1999) agree that brand positioning is important in building an NPO brand. Positioning is 'the perception that a target stakeholder holds about a particular product, service or organisation, relative to its competitors' (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014: p. 40). It is how the organisation wants to be perceived by the external stakeholders compared to similar NPOs.

Effective positioning requires a thorough understanding of the needs and wants of the target group for the brand communication, and extensive knowledge of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses, capabilities and capacities relative to similar NPOs (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). It is linked to differentiation as the aspects that help the NPO distinguish itself, also contribute to how it is positioned in the non-profit sector.

In the process of positioning, the NPO firstly decides which of the tangible benefits (for example the number of services it provides) as well as which of the intangible aspects (for example, holistic values, a Christian ethos) to highlight in communication to the target group. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014), however, suggest that simple positioning based on *one* [authors' emphasis] defining attribute, either tangible or intangible, is the easiest way to achieve positive positioning which in turn leads to clarity on the organisation.

Secondly, positioning involves research into the perception of the organisation by internal and external stakeholders, as well as considering the brand image and the role of the reputation of the NPO (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Key internal and external stakeholders can be used as a polling sample to understand how the brand is currently positioned (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). These results could be represented graphically to make illustrate clearly the current brand position within the non-profit sector (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999).

Once the organisation understands how the brand is perceived internally and externally, it can decide if or where changes in the brand communication need to be made. Furthermore, what aspects need to be communicated in order for the brand to achieve its desired position internally and externally (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). This positioning strategy is a process that needs to be assessed continuously as the brand position must be maintained and updated over time (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999).

While differentiation and positioning in the for-profit sector are often used to create a competitive advantage, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that these two processes would be better suited to aid collaboration in the non-profit sector as working in partnership with other NPOs is a trend in the sector which is favoured by funders and allows NPOs to achieve their social goals.

Differentiation, positioning and brand management are interlinked and mutually reinforcing (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Effective differentiation allows the NPO to position itself positively and clearly in the minds of internal and external stakeholders which results in a unique and an accurate brand identity and image (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Through this effective differentiation, the brand reflects the positioning strategy and communicates and enhances the differentiation points (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg (1999) recognise the importance of positioning for NPO brands but also that the positioning and potential repositioning process involves costs and believe some NPOs may question its value, especially if the money could be used on charitable activities. However, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe these two processes are important for successful implementation of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

The third step in brand development is an NPO's theory of change. Theories of change describe how the organisation will achieve its impact through a chain of activities that lead to the desired positive change (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Being able to articulate the NPO's theory of change is important for the process of differentiation and positioning and the brand strategy but also for monitoring and evaluation (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

When developing the theory of change and describing each step needed to achieve the end goal, the organisation must ask itself:

1. Is our NPO best placed to accomplish this step or could it be better achieved by another NPO? If so, whom?

The answers to this question will help define the unique features of the NPO that differentiate it or make it best placed to achieve this step. The other NPOs identified can be noted as potential partners to help achieve the shared goal and enhance the skills contributed by the NPO (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

2. What role does the NPO's brand play in this step? Who is the target stakeholder group and how might the brand be better positioned to effectively communicate with this group?

The answers to this question, for each step, help the NPO to define the multiple stakeholders that the brand speaks to and how to better differentiate and position the NPO, through communication, in order to effectively reach these stakeholders (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Each step in the theory of change may have different target stakeholders.

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that the brand is important in developing and implementing the theory of change as it can help the organisation achieve its goals through facilitating partnerships and access to other necessary resources.

The final step of internal branding refers to communicating the brand to internal stakeholders (such as board members, employees and volunteers) to ensure that all internal stakeholders share a consistent internal brand identity (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). In the for-profit sector, internal branding is important for service companies in particular, as a large number of employees are interacting directly with the customer and are often the sole contact with the external public (Aaker, 2004; Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). This can also be true for NPOs, as often private individual supporters may only have contact with the fundraising staff and thus these interactions play an important part in their brand image of the NPO.

In my study, none of the eight South African NPOs reported following all four steps although some had worked on aspects of the steps. However, again this is a

structured process and so, with clear guidance, it could be something in which more South African NPOs could engage.

These four steps are different to the processes of brand building in the for-profit sector. Aaker (2004) identified seven elements to build a brand in the for-profit sector: heritage, values, consumer concern, employees, citizenship, corporate size and global or local orientation. This again reinforces the differences between brands in the for-profit and non-profit sector and underlines the notion of a paradigm shift for NPOs to accept.

## **4 How can brands be used by NPOs?**

### ***Benefits and risks of a brand in the non-profit sector***

Both Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg (1999) and Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) note that for the benefits of an NPO brand to be fulfilled, the brand needs to achieve alignment between the brand identity, brand image and the strategy, mission and values. This has been discussed above.

Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg (1999) cite six empirical reasons for NPOs to develop a brand.

#### **1. Multiple publics**

Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg (1999) write that NPOs generally have four publics: clients, funders, volunteers and the government. Brands can be a 'summary statement' (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999: p. 7) to communicate the core of the NPO to each group individually to address their specific need. There needs, however, to be an overall consistency in the brand communication so that the NPO does not appear to be different to each stakeholder. Effective



brand communication can also help to establish a relationship with the stakeholder, as has already been discussed.

To clients, a strong brand portrays quality and gives a statement on the philosophy of the NPO, which helps to guide them in deciding whether to support the NPO (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). To funders and government, a strong brand also offers assurances of trust and commitment. To volunteers, it can convey the benefits of working for the NPO, making it easier for them to decide to join the NPO as they can use the brand to determine if working for the NPO would suit their needs and wants. An NPO with a strong brand is also an attractive employment proposition (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999).

Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg (1999) also note the reverse effect of the brand on clients, volunteers, funders or the government is that the NPO can attract a certain type of stakeholder which can give the brand a reputation or create a stereotype of the type of volunteer at the NPO which can be deterrent to potential volunteers. Thus there is interdependence in the relationship between the brand and its external stakeholders (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999).

## 2. Need for trust

In developing a brand, the NPO must accept that it will have to protect the reputation of the brand in the public and will therefore have to take steps to prevent negative experiences and encourages positive ones (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). Repeated positive experiences of the brand help to create the belief by external stakeholders that the brand will deliver consistently well and thus is worthy of trust. This trust is as important in NPOs as in for-profits, as NPOs often rely on financial support from external stakeholders (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). Trust is equally important for funders who want to know their donations will be used appropriately. The brand of the NPO can help build trust between these external stakeholders and the NPO. This issue of trust between funders and the NPO is particularly relevant to the South African non-profit sector because past negative experiences by funders has tainted the entire

sector ('20 years on: the role of NPOs', 2014). Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) also talk about the role of trust internally which can be developed through the brand.

### 3. Long term perspective

The social mission of NPOs requires a long-term perspective, as the social gaps to address to achieve their mission are usually profound. The mission of NPOs is not a goal that can be achieved quickly, indeed short term solutions could be half measure attempts and so not seen as solving the underlying problem (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). Since NPOs adopt this long-term view, they do not face the pressures of creating effective brand management for quarterly results and can focus on development of the brand over the long-term. This is an advantage as brand development is complex and not a short-term process as can realised through the previous discussion on brand building and development (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999; Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

### 4. Public scrutiny

NPOs can attract more public attention than for-profit entities because NPOs are presumed to have a moral superiority over for-profits and also because NPOs are often working with vulnerable populations where it is critical no advantage is taken (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). NPOs may also often seek public attention to raise awareness of their work and the mission. Certain public fundraising campaigns may be geared to be highly publicised and so long-term brand management is important to remain trusted in the public eye (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999).

### 5. Increased competition

The increase in the number of NPOs and a decline in funding have resulted in increased competition for available resources, both financial and human (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999; Stuart, 2013; '20 years on the role of NPOs, 2014).

Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg (1999) write that this competitive landscape represents a mind-set shift for NPOs who, unlike for-profits, have not been naturally competitive. This change requires greater differentiation on behalf on the NPOS (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014; Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). A strong brand can reduce the competition as it helps to retain funders and staff/volunteers thus reducing the costs of new fundraising or recruitment. An established brand also creates a feeling of familiarity amongst the public and funders which is also a benefit as external stakeholders may be more willing to support the organisation (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) disagree that NPOs have to participate in this competition. Instead, they advocate for a collaborative approach with other NPOs to pool resources to achieve a shared goal.

#### 6. Image spillover

The brand image is the external stakeholders' impression of the NPO brand but, as Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write, due to lack of differentiation, this brand image can be applied to an entire field of NPOs within the sector. Several NPOs can thus be tarred with the same negative brand image, which is not beneficial (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014; Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999; '20 years on the role of NPOs, 2014). A brand can help the NPO to differentiate itself as well as develop a relationship between the NPO and its stakeholders when external stakeholders connect to for what the NPO stands (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014; Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). Under the Paradigm Shift, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that the brand can also help the NPO to build internal cohesion, trust, be a decision-making tool and help the NPO achieve meaningful impact. Long term and successful application of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework can also build brand equity.

These above reasons for the development of a brand are aspects related to working in the non-profit sector but there are also external factors where a brand can help the NPO to be successful.

- Globalisation

As a result of greater integration across economies and improved communication, NPOs now could share an arena with other NPOs from around the world (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). However, there are limited resources (for example, human, financial, social, environmental) and these resources must now be divided amongst a larger group of NPOs thus reducing the chances of an NPO of receiving all the resources it desires (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999; Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Conversely, NPOs who are successful, now have a global platform from which they can communicate and the possibly of expanding their operations and funding sources to create impact in locations that were previously not possible (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). When starting a new branch, the brand of the NPO can help to build recognition and trust (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). NPOs that already operate internationally now have a global audience to whom they can communicate through a globally reaching brand (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999).

- Internet

The internet allows a brand to reach, at a low cost, a wide range of geographical areas and people, for example through social media (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999; Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014; Verwey, 2001). The internet has changed communication patterns (Verwey, 2001) and thus traditional constraints such as location and size of the NPO are less important. The brand, as a tool of identification and differentiation, is central to success. Social media is one of the reasons that Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) promote the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework as a means to manage the NPO's brand in a time of reduced communication control through mediums such as social media.

- Changing public beliefs

Social preferences and public beliefs change (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). Brands can help NPOs survive these social changes by emphasising the values and benefits of the NPO that transcend public opinion, rather than aspects of the NPO which may be seen as controversial (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). Additionally, the relationship between the NPO and the external stakeholders that a brand helps to develop, can act as a cushion to these changes in public opinion and help to maintain support for the NPO.

However, Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg (1999) believe a brand is not essential for every NPO as brands come with risks. Some of these risks given by these authors are discussed below.

- Commercial association

If incorrectly managed, the NPO brand can make the NPO seem too commercial. External stakeholders may find it hard to grasp that the NPO is not a for-profit entity and so become unwilling to offer support (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014; Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). Brands are also costly, financially and in human resources, at the outset and over time, as the brand needs constant management. When resources are scarce, the costs may seem unjustifiable (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). Additionally, even if management support brand development, stakeholders may not, resulting difficulties and tension within the NPO (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999).

- Inconsistent brand messages

Brands, particularly of international NPOs or NPOs with bases in different locations, can unite and communicate a consistent professional message. This creates a strong NPO, a strong brand image and allows the success of one branch to colour another (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999). However, negative

events will also paint the other branches with the same brush, which can be hard to reverse (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999).

- Controversial links

An NPO brand can become linked to an overall social cause and be seen as the symbol of controversial beliefs or actions. This can lead to protests and demonstrations against the NPO and its work thus creating a negative brand image (Richie, Swarmi and Weinberg, 1999).

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) noted similar concerns about brands from NPO management in their research, however, they feel that using the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework can help to mitigate these risks as it is based on the brand as a unifying element and not a promotional tool.

In the long term, a brand can be valuable. The long term and overall effect of a brand leads to the development of a reputation (van Riel and Fonbrun, 2007). A good reputation helps to secure valuable employees who are attracted by the good reputation (van Riel and Fonbrun, 2007) and stands an NPO in good stead when crises arrive by helping the NPO to weather the storm (van Riel and Fonbrun, 2007). The cyclical nature of successful brand management forms part of the model proposed by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) for brand management in the non-profit sector. Thus successes are built on and positive growth is possible.

## **5 The Brand IDEA model for NPO brand communication and management**

The tenets of the Brand IDEA model (brand Integrity, brand Democracy, brand Ethics and brand Affinity) inspire the three frameworks prescribed by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) for NPOs to maximise their brand. These three

frameworks build on and towards each other and ultimately provide a complete guide to brand communication and brand management in the non-profit sector.

The first framework is the Paradigm Shift or the shift in understanding to view the brand as a strategic tool for the NPO. This is the first framework that must be accepted by NPOs in order to participate in the two other frameworks (Kylander and Stone, 2012). The second framework, the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, is a descriptive and normative framework, as it describes the ideal role of the brand in an NPO, and a diagnostic framework for NPOs to assess where their brand has areas of weakness (Laidler-Kylander, 2014). The final framework, the Brand Cycle Framework, explains the cyclical nature of brand management to ensure the aspects of the brand achieved through the second framework, can be continued and expanded. The frameworks were designed specifically for the non-profit sector and thus are of potential importance as most brand research focuses on the for-profit sector.

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) conducted their research in the United States of America (USA) but South Africa, with its large network of NPOs, could also benefit from this research. The Non-profit Brand IDEA framework will be the focus in my research to understand its applicability to the South African context. This framework is the focus as it is this framework that can guide NPOs to use their brand as a strategic tool to achieve their mission and bring positive transformation to the NPO. In my data collection, South African NPOs were interviewed on their brands, the role of their brand in their organisation and their views on brands. The NPOs were of different sizes to understand if size would impact the applicability of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

### ***A model to maximise the brand in an NPO***

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel's (2014) research grew from the shift in understanding brands for NPOs. Despite the growing awareness by NPOs of the broader role of brands in their sector beyond that of fundraising, marketing, and the tangible aspects of the brand, the frameworks used by NPOs to understand

brands originate from the for-profit sector (Kylander and Stone, 2012). In recognition of this void, a team of researchers from the Hauser Centre for Nonprofit Organisations at Harvard University with collaboration from the Rockefeller Institute developed a model, the Brand IDEA model, consisting of three conceptual frameworks designed to help NPOs to use their brands to 'contribute to sustaining their social impact, serving their mission, and staying true to their organisation's values and culture' (Kylander and Stone, 2012: p. 37). The principle framework in this model is called the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. The IDEA stands for brand Integrity, brand Democracy, brand Ethics and brand Affinity.

The basis of the Brand IDEA model is two themes that the researchers noted during their research: the distinctive pride that NPO managers have in their organisation and the distinctive role that brand plays in an NPO to create cohesion and build organisational capacity (Kylander and Stone, 2012).

This pride was expressed through the scepticism felt by many NPO managers of the role of brands in the non-profit sector as they felt that brands were associated with commercially orientated for-profits (Kylander and Stone, 2012). Their scepticism was expressed in four areas: commercialism; ethical concerns; resistance from the organisation and the impact of a brand on partnerships.

Kylander and Stone (2012) see these four areas of scepticism as reflecting pride in the non-profit sector and its difference to the for-profit sector: pride in the mission of the organisation; pride in the participatory approach; pride in the values that define the NPO and pride in supportive partnerships.

The brand also plays a different role with different stakeholders. To the internal stakeholders, the brand captures the essence of the NPO in its mission, values and purpose (Kylander and Stone, 2012). To external stakeholders, the brand communicates the image of the NPO (Kylander and Stone, 2012). These two themes, pride and the distinctive role of the brand in an NPO, guided the



development of the key framework in the model, the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

### **1. Framework 1: The Paradigm Shift**

This framework is the foundation for the subsequent frameworks. (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). In the Paradigm Shift, the management of the NPO accept that the brand is a strategic tool to aid the NPO in achieving its social mission (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). The brand, therefore, needs to embody the mission, values and strategy of the organisation. In this conceptualisation of the brand, the brand represents the core of the organisation and all the stakeholders share a responsibility for its communication.

### **2. Framework 2: The Non-profit Brand IDEA framework**

In the original article, the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework included four principles (brand Integrity, brand Democracy, brand Ethics and brand Affinity) (Kylander and Stone, 2012) but in the subsequent book by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) on the Brand IDEA model, application of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and increased understanding of this framework in practice, led the authors to place Ethics as part of brand Affinity (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). The 2014 version of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework is broken down into brand Integrity, brand Democracy and brand Affinity. A key feature of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework will be discussed, followed by a detailed discussion of each principle of the framework.

The participative process in the brand is the foundation of the entire Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. Burger (1999: p. 88), writing from a South African perspective also recognised this shift in communication from 'top-down to participatory development'. Brand Integrity is built on the participative process and brand Democracy leads from brand Integrity. During the participative process, internal and external stakeholders engage in discussions over defining the brand identity (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Indeed, Burger (1999:

p. 88) writes that a two-way communication between the internal and external stakeholders leads to 'co-ownership' of the discussion.

Once the brand identity can be succinctly defined, it needs to be clearly communicated to all internal stakeholders in order that they become brand ambassadors and can communicate an accurate and consistent brand identity (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). This participative process results in shared understanding of the brand for consistent brand communication and also a sense of unity by believing in the same brand which improves internal cohesion (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). The fact that the participatory process has been recognised as important in both the commercial communication field and is central to the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework shows its importance in effective communication.

### **Brand Integrity**

Brand Integrity occurs when the internally created brand identity matches the externally created brand image, or when the vision of the brand held by those within the organisation is the same as the vision of the brand held by external stakeholders. When this happens, the brand image, mission, values and brand identity are aligned, creating brand Integrity. Misalignment is often the driver for rebranding (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Achieving brand Integrity depends on first understanding, through research, the current brand identity and brand image (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). With this research in hand, the NPO can use it to define the intended internal and external perceptions of the brand and if, or how, the actual perceptions deviate from the intended perception. Internal and external stakeholders must be involved in this process of defining the brand identity and brand image. This is the participative approach recommended by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) to promote unity and commitment to the brand. The stakeholders value this participatory approach. The importance of this participative process has been highlighted in a South African context. In a study, based in KwaZulu-Natal,

South Africa, on different communication strategies for educational campaigns, respondents in the study preferred an interactive approach as they liked to be able to voice their opinions and engage in discussion (Burger, 1999). This South African perspective is in agreement with the view of Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014).

Once the brand identity and brand image can be defined, the NPO can redefine or reposition the brand identity and/or the brand image through communication in order that they are the same and correct (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). This process may result in rebranding if the organisation feels that the external image is completely different to the brand identity. The process of aligning the brand identity and brand image also guides the NPO to articulate the core of the NPO so that it can ensure that both brand identity and brand image communicate this core.

The benefits of brand Integrity are a strong brand as well as internal cohesion and trust between the NPO, its internal stakeholders and external stakeholders as all share the same understanding of the NPO (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Brand Integrity can also assist in decision-making because decisions which seem incongruent with the brand can be ruled out as compromising the brand Integrity and therefore the mission and values. In this vein, brand Integrity can also assist NPOs in deciding which projects and initiatives to develop to achieve the mission as well as those to abandon as they do not fit with the brand (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

This process of creating alignment, and thus brand Integrity, is an on-going process as perceptions can change and thus need to be monitored regularly to ensure the NPO maintains brand Integrity.

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) identified three concerns about brand Integrity that emerged from interviews with NPO managers in their study.

### 1. The delay between image and identity

When an NPO undergoes rebranding, the brand image can take time to change to align to this new brand identity (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). The greater the change, the longer it takes the brand image to align and for brand Integrity to be realised. Even if the brand identity has changed slowly over years, external stakeholders tend to retain their original brand image of the organisation and so the realignment process can take time. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) suggest that NPOs use this lag time to keep engaging external stakeholders with the correct brand identity to help facilitate solid brand Integrity.

### 2. Maintaining a focus on the mission

The views of external stakeholders are important but if influential external stakeholders have a different brand image that reflects their desire for the direction of the NPO, this must not lead the NPO to change its focus. Rather, the alignment process must take place through communication so that their brand image is aligned to the true brand identity. This can be particularly difficult with funders who can want to use the NPO to achieve personal goals, but they must be resisted (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

### 3. Fame and visibility

Brand management should focus on achieving brand Integrity and on using the brand as a strategic tool to achieve the mission. If brand management becomes focused on creating a famous brand and the well-recognised brand image does not accurately reflect the true brand identity or the social mission is forgotten, the trust between the NPO and external stakeholders can be damaged. This can also lead to negative brand images which can be difficult to change (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

## **Brand Democracy**

Brand Democracy means that the NPO trusts its internal and external stakeholders (such as staff, volunteers, trustees) to communicate 'their own understanding of the organisation's core identity' (Kylander and Stone, 2012: p. 40) or the brand identity. It requires a 'fundamental shift in the traditional approach to brand management' (Kylander and Stone, 2012: p. 40) to a democratic approach to communications and limited managerial control over the brand (Kylander and Stone, 2012). With the growth and popularity of social media, the benefits of brand Democracy are clear. Social media is hard to police and so achieving brand Democracy can ensure the NPO's brand remains consistent across all communications (Kylander and Stone, 2012). Additionally, encouraging the stakeholders to communicate the brand individually, such as through their personal stories about the brand, can help to differentiate the brand and make it more meaningful for all stakeholders. Interestingly, in a survey in the USA just over half of the 480 NPO respondents reported having one or more staff member communicating via social media while the other half were split between using a team with a communication guidebook to communicate on social media and those with no active social media communication (Sharma, 2014). This mirrors the results from my study in which half of the South African NPOs reported a more democratically inclined approach to brand communication (although not complete democracy). It shows that progress in this principle is being achieved, but perhaps with guidance and support, it could be more fully realised. Brand Democracy is also a means through which the NPO can achieve brand Integrity (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). There are three processes to achieve brand Democracy: firstly, the NPO must have achieved brand Integrity. As the participative process of defining the brand identity encourages the internal stakeholders to wholly accept the brand identity, to recognise the importance of brand management and feel a commitment to their part in brand communication (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Secondly, the NPO must accept that all stakeholders, both internal and external, are brand ambassadors and so can communicate the brand to others. Thus each stakeholder group must be empowered to communicate the brand authentically. The NPO will need to adapt communication strategies to reflect this role of democratic stakeholder communication (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Thirdly, the NPO can develop communication guidelines and templates to aid internal stakeholders in brand communication. Internal stakeholders can be further empowered through training workshops on the brand and brand communication and external stakeholders can be engaged through social media or other communication strategies. Any negative comments, particularly on social media, can easily be addressed by stakeholders if there is brand Integrity and brand Democracy (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Thus brand Democracy and brand Integrity are linked as the participative approach to the development of the brand identity helps create brand Integrity with the result that the NPO should feel comfortable in accepting that all stakeholders are brand ambassadors (brand Democracy) since, through brand Integrity, all communications should be true to the brand's mission and values (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). If some communication is seen as controversial, the NPO can use the opportunity to clarify its mission, values and strategy with the brand and debate whether this content is aligned with this.

However, as with brand Integrity, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) noted several challenges regarding brand Democracy that emerged during their interviews with NPOs.

- Sceptism

Interviewees felt that overcoming sceptism from within the NPO over the role and power of the brand was the biggest challenge to achieving brand Democracy. This sceptism can be addressed if management and internal stakeholders of the

NPO accept the Paradigm Shift and through internal branding for internal stakeholders who are sceptical (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

- Chaotic communications

There was concern that brand Democracy will not lead to greater uniformity in brand communications but inconsistency as the brand is communicated individually by a large number of people or that the brand will lose its focus as different stakeholders view the brand differently. For brand Democracy to be effective, there has to be brand Integrity and a clear vision of the brand. Without brand Integrity, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) acknowledge that 'brand anarchy' (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014: p. 94) is possible.

- Management support

Management of the NPO has to accept the principles of brand Democracy in order for it to be implemented successfully (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). However, in the new paradigm of understanding the brand, the brand is the responsibility of all in the NPO and so the management are not the only ones who have control over the brand (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

With the advent and growth of social media, this new approach to brand management and communication is a necessity as the NPO cannot manage or control all communication across social media (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Indeed social media can be a tool to implement brand Democracy. Although it may be more challenging for NPO with several branches, it is still possible to achieve brand Democracy (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

## **Brand Ethics**

Brand Ethics refers to the brand itself and 'the way it is deployed to reflect the core values of the organisation' (Kylander and Stone, 2012: p. 40). However, after conducting further research into the application of the Non-profit Brand

IDEA framework, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) felt that brand Ethics could be incorporated into brand Affinity.

### **Brand Affinity**

Brand Affinity is what the organisation does with the brand to maximise the organisation's impact. It is the way an NPO partners with other NPOs to extend its influence and achieve its goals (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Like brand Democracy, brand Affinity requires a mind-set change for the NPO to accept external partners to achieve its mission, to view the positioning process not competitively but collaboratively and to use the brand to build organisational capacity (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). This mind- set change can be facilitated through accepting the Paradigm Shift (the first framework).

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that two factors are responsible for the development of brand Affinity: increase in partnerships and a focus on external social goals.

Funders are increasingly requiring NPOs to work in partnership and NPOs are themselves realising that they require greater capacity to achieve impact and so turn to partner NPOs, who share the same social goal, to help them achieve this (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

NPOs are driven by a focus on achieving external social goals, rather than internal profit predications as in for-profit entities. Achieving these external social goals, may require that the NPO works in partnership as the steps needed to achieve the social goals are often profound and numerous (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

There are two processes involved in achieving brand Affinity. Firstly, the NPO uses its brand identity and theory of change to identify partner NPOs who share the same mission. The partner should share the same social goal, have a brand



that complements that of the NPO and fit with the mission and values of the NPO. The choice of partner is important as it can strengthen or weaken the brand image. Thus partners must be chosen carefully. (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Secondly, the NPO uses its brand to manage and add value to partnerships and increase impact (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). NPOs that share space, credit and promote collaboration are attractive to partners. Letting the partner NPO brand be more visible, also helps to build brand Affinity, strengthen the partnerships and its impact. Sharing the NPO's brand material with partners fosters trust, increases support and promotes a healthy partnership through transparency. Developing this trust lays the ground for future partnerships and thus improves brand (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Additionally, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) feel that this freedom of the brand brings the same benefits as brand Democracy. It helps to build a sense of responsibility to the brand and to desire to protect it. This open-source approach to brand material is in keeping with the new paradigm on branding in which brand Affinity is focused on social impact and generating support rather than on increasing brand visibility (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

The benefits of brand Affinity are that, through a partnership, the NPO is able to attain more profound and wider social impact (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014), which should be the aim of any NPO. Also by achieving their own goals and helping the partner NPO to achieve theirs, the NPO helps to build trust between partner NPOs and the community. Weaker brands can strengthen their own brands by working in partnership with stronger NPO brands. Stronger NPO brands can allow weaker brands to gain visibility and so strengthen goodwill between the NPOs and their stakeholders (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). The focus in a partnership should be on achieving social goals, not on self-benefit for the NPO. An NPO with brand Affinity also has achieved brand Integrity as it can clearly define its brand identity and theory of change and use these to identify suitable partners to achieve shared social goals (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Partnerships are also a good way to build brand equity through association with powerful brands (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). The stronger NPO brand can open doors for the weaker organisation and allow them to increase their organisational capacity. However, the benefits of brand Affinity rely on all partners focusing on shared social goals. If one NPO, especially the larger NPO, appears to emphasise their own brand, it can create tension and result in goals not being achieved (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). All NPOs need to accept and achieve brand Affinity for partnerships to be successful.

From the responses in their interviews, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014), defined two types of brand Affinity partnerships. In the first type of partnership, the NPOs are focused on the same activities and the emphasis is on joining forces to increase resources and the social impact (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). This partnership works best if the brand identities are equally visible and each brand identity can strengthen as a result of the association with the other brand.

In the second type of partnership, the partners are at different stages of the theory of change but both working towards the same goal (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). The NPOs require partners because the goals are not possible to achieve single-handedly (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). They use each other's skills to fill gaps in their own capacities without duplicating effort. The net effect is greater than each could have achieved individually (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). This partnership allows complex social issues to be addressed. Both brand identities and the reputations of the NPOs can be strengthened through working together to create positive impact (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

A new trend mentioned by some interviewees was cross-sector partnerships in which NPOs partner with corporates to achieve social goals. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write that in this type of partnership, the NPO brand can actually be used, through brand Affinity, to influence the corporate partner to increase the social and potential economic impact of the collaboration. For anyone in the NPO or partner organisation who is sceptical of the importance of

collaboration, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) feel that research generated on the social impact achieved through the collaboration will convince those whose aim is to achieve a difference in area of interest.

However, as with all the components of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, there are also concerns about brand Affinity that Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) reported during their research.

- Collaboration to achieve goals

For brand managers, especially those with a background in the for-profit sector, collaboration is not an easy decision. There may be a short-term decrease in brand visibility as the NPO collaborates with another brand, but Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write that in the long term, the collaborative effects increase brand visibility.

- Weakening of the brand equity through dilution

This concern rises from a for-profit brand management approach in which customer loyalty is a brand equity driver. However, as discussed previously, in the non-profit sector, brand equity is driven by trust, partnership and consistency. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that adopting the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework can strengthen brand equity as brand Affinity is the source of one of the key drivers of brand equity: partnerships. Trust develops from brand Integrity and consistency is advocated through all principles in the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and, while difficult to achieve constantly and in different locations, it can be strengthened by brand Affinity.

- Losing a sense of the organisation by becoming too attached to partners

Choosing partners who share a mission and values can alleviate this concern (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

- Partnerships are a drain on time and resources

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) argue that partnerships can benefit the NPO by increasing brand equity and can help them achieve their social goals.

The three components of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework discussed are interrelated and mutually supportive. Brand Integrity needs the participation of brand Democracy to be achieved and it is only by working to achieve brand Integrity that the NPO can empower stakeholders to be effective brand ambassadors and thus achieve brand Democracy. Once the NPO has achieved brand Integrity and brand Democracy, it can harness these gains for brand Affinity to develop strong partnerships to achieve its social goals and increase brand equity.

### **3. Framework 3: The Brand Cycle framework**

Brand management has a cyclical nature as communicating the same message of the NPO's mission, values and work to both internal and external stakeholders creates clear brand positioning and a strong brand identity which leads to unity internally and trust externally. Creating a strong and accepted brand identity, internal cohesion and trust can be achieved through effective implementation of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. Thus successful application of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework allows the NPO to progress to the third and final framework in the Brand IDEA model: the Brand Cycle. In this cyclical framework, the NPO builds on the benefits of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

Thus in the Brand Cycle framework, the brand is centred on the organisational strategy that is in turn is centred on the mission and values. The focus on the brand identity develops into internal cohesion, external trust and improved organisational capacity.

## **Internal cohesion**

By focusing on the brand identity and ensuring that all in the NPO understand and accept it, the NPO can develop cohesion internally. Internal cohesion is particularly important for NPOs which have branches across geographical locations (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). In these NPOs, the shared brand identity helps to unite everyone in all the NPOs over common goals through building cohesion and promoting shared values (Kylander and Stone, 2012). This aspect of the brand has been recognised in the South African context. Verwey (2001) writing in South Africa, appreciated that a strong bond over shared values would strengthen the unity between the branches of an organisation. Secondly if the NPO emphasises a focus on its brand identity, it helps internal stakeholders and departments to align their work to the same mission, values and strategy as reflected in the brand identity and ensures consistent decisions are made. (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Internal cohesion will be enhanced by empowering employees through brand Democracy.

## **External trust**

External trust is created when the internal brand identity and brand image are clear and aligned (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Trust is especially relevant between the NPO and external stakeholders as greater trust in the NPO, enables the NPO to work more efficiently (Kylander and Stone, 2012), to fulfil its mission, to create impact more easily and simplifies decision making (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Trust involves staying true to what is communicated and honest communication. This process is important for external stakeholders who will not experience the NPO directly and so their perception will be driven by their brand image (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Brand image is improved by trust and all the external stakeholders' interactions and experiences of the brand.

## **Organisational capacity**

Internal cohesion and external trust build greater organisational capacity (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). An NPO that is cohesive can use its resources more effectively, make better decisions and use the entire organisational capacity to increase social impact (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014) Trust will allow the NPO to work with important partners, beneficiaries and policymakers to work towards its mission and increase its social impact (Kylander and Stone, 2012). The NPO can then build a good reputation that will lead to an enhanced brand identity and image and start the cycle again. (Kylander and Stone, 2012). In contrast, NPOs that lack coherence or trust can struggle to build their organisational capacity and social impact (Kylander and Stone, 2012).

## **6 Can the Brand IDEA model suit the South African context?**

The Brand IDEA model was developed because of global trends, such as the rise of social media and an emphasis on collaboration. Thus in a globalised world, these trends are relevant in South Africa and therefore the Brand IDEA model, and in particular the central Non-profit Brand IDEA framework of the model is relevant. As a model developed specifically for the non-profit sector, this model is also suitable to be used for the analysis of communication in the South African non-profit sector. However, as discussed, the South African non-profit sector has undergone significant change in the last twenty years and it is only during this time that the sector became more regulated and pushed to professionalise. Thus, it could follow that many NPOs are not at the same level of development as many of the American NPOs included in the original study. This adaptability, however, also has a positive spinoff as it shows the flexibility of the South African non-profit sector. Although many South African NPOs may not be at the same professional level as their American counterparts, with guidance and support this vibrant network of NPOs could surely adapt once more and harness the benefits of their NPO brand through detailed guidance of an adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

## Brand IDEA Model comprises of three frameworks:

### Framework 1: Paradigm Shift

- The management of the NPO accept that the brand is a strategic tool to aid the NPO in achieving its social impact.
- The brand needs to embody the mission, values and strategy of the organisation.
- The brand represents the core of the organisation and all the stakeholders share a responsibility for its communication.

### Framework 2: Non-profit Brand IDEA framework

- Non-profit Brand IDEA framework is broken down into brand Integrity, brand Democracy and brand Affinity.
- Brand Integrity occurs when the internally created brand identity matches the externally created brand image, or when the vision of the brand held by those within the organisation is the same as the vision of the brand held by external stakeholders.
- Brand Democracy means that the NPO trusts its internal and external stakeholders (such as staff, volunteers, trustees) to communicate the brand identity.
- Brand Affinity is what the organisation does with the brand to maximise the organisation's impact. It is the way an NPO partners with other NPOs to extend its influence and achieve its goals.

### Framework 3: Brand Cycle

The brand is centred on the organisational strategy. The focus is on developing internal cohesion, external trust and improved organisational capacity.



## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This chapter will discuss the various methodologies involved in my study and in the study by the research team at the Hauser Centre on which my study is based. The chapter will begin with a discussion on grounded theory. Grounded theory informed the development of Non-profit Brand IDEA framework (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel's (2014).

The second section will discuss framework analysis, which is used in my study. In the third section, the use of questionnaires will be discussed, as this is the data collection method used in my study. Finally, the development of the resource model will be discussed.

### **1. Grounded theory methodology**

To develop their framework, Kylander and Stone (2012) used Glaser and Strauss's (1967) work on grounded theory. Grounded theory is a 'methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed' (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: p. 273). Although I did not develop a theory, I based my study on the research by the team that developed the Brand IDEA (Kylander and Stone, 2012; Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014) and thus was influenced by aspects of grounded theory in my research methodology.

In grounded theory, theory development and data analysis happen simultaneously (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). The researcher begins with data and through analysis, in which patterns or common codes emerge, theories are generated. Research from previous studies can also be incorporated into the study but the 'matching of theory' (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: p. 273) of this existing research to the new data must be ensured. Although my study did not aim to generate a new theory, the ideas behind this aspect of grounded theory were applied in my study. I used new data generated from my own



questionnaires and also incorporated research from Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) to reach a conclusion relevant to a new context.

At the time of its development, grounded theory was seen as unique as it was based on a notion of generating a new theory from data, as opposed to testing an existing theory with new data (Birks and Mills, 2011). Although guidelines for producing grounded theories have since been developed, it remains a unique methodology (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). To better understand the grounded theory methodology, its development relative to other qualitative methods will be discussed followed by a discussion of the framework method, within the qualitative methodology, that my study used.

Qualitative research, as a methodological approach, can be defined as a reaction to the positivist approach and a recognition of the need to find alternative methods of producing knowledge (O'Leary, 2010).

When grounded theory was developed in the late 1960s, quantitative research dominated (Seale, 2004). Quantitative based methodologies stressed objectivity, theory and replication of studies (Charmaz, 2006). Human experiences had to have quantifiable measures and the methodology 'assumed an unbiased and passive observer who collected facts but did not participate in creating them, the separation of facts from values, the existence of an external world separate from scientific observers and their methods, and the accumulation of knowledge about this world' (Charmaz, 2006: p. 8). Validity, in the quantitative tradition, was based on replicatable studies, technical methods and verifiable knowledge and thus research conducted using observation and interpretation was debated for its scientific value (Charmaz, 2006). Consequently research that did not fit the quantitative research design was ignored, or if qualitative research was used, it was a supplement to quantitative research design as opposed to standing on its own (Charmaz, 2006). Few new theories were being produced as quantitative researchers sought to test existing theories with scientific data rather than generate new theory (Charmaz, 2006).

The publication of Glaser and Strauss's book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967) was a response to changes in American society in which researchers started questioning their own place in their research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005 in Birks and Mills, 2011). Grounded theory was a method of legitimising qualitative research by making it more structured (El Hussien et al., 2014).

In defining grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) listed its several components (Charmaz, 2006):

- Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis;
- Constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived hypotheses;
- Using the constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis;
- Advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis;
- Memo writing to describe categories, specify their criteria, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps;
- Sampling aimed toward theory construction, not for population representativeness;
- Conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis.

These components gave researchers control over their research and 'allowed them to increase the analytic power' of their research topic (Charmaz, 2006: p. 10). Glaser and Strauss wanted to move qualitative research beyond descriptive

research to explanatory frameworks to provide understanding on the studied phenomena (Charmaz, 2006).

Grounded theory can be seen as combining aspects of the dominant quantitative approaches of the time with qualitative research approaches. Indeed, grounded theory reflects the background of its creators (Glaser and Strauss) by merging positivism and field research (Charmaz, 2006). Glaser had been taught in the rigorous quantitative research style and wanted to codify qualitative research. Codifying qualitative research involved detailing specific strategies to follow and therefore making the qualitative research process easier to understand (Charmaz, 2006). Glaser also endorsed the 'middle range' (Charmaz, 2006: p. 12) theories proposed by Robert Melton (1949). Middle range theories consist of 'abstract renderings of specific social phenomena that were grounded in data' (Charmaz, 2006: p. 12). Strauss's background too had an influence on the development of grounded theory. Strauss had been taught in the pragmatist tradition, which proposed that 'society, reality, and self are constructed through interaction and thus rely on language and communication' (Charmaz, 2006: p. 13). Interaction is interpretive and people can have different interpretations and meanings and create different interpretations and meanings (Charmaz, 2006). People can think and create their own actions, rather than just respond to external stimuli. Thus Strauss believed that people were active agents, rather than passive subjects controlled by social forces (Charmaz, 2006). Strauss believed that actions, not external structures were central to human existence; that people created structures through their actions and that subjective and social meanings relied on language and emerged through actions (Charmaz, 2006). Strauss therefore added ideas of human agency, subjective meanings, problem-solving practices and the open-ended study of action to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006).

For Glaser and Strauss, grounded theory explained new processes in theoretical terms and as well as the social reality in which they occur, their causes, conditions under which they can vary and their consequences (Charmaz, 2006). In grounded theory, researchers may have to reach across different theoretical

categories to find links to understand the relationships between multiple areas and to develop a new formal theory (Charmaz, 2006). In my study, I used predominately the work of Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014), which was written in an American context, to understand the similarities and differences in a South African context.

The assumption in grounded theory that people are independent actors who have their own views and understanding the impact of their, and other actor's actions on the research is key (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). This agency goes beyond just that of the research subjects but extends to the researchers themselves (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). The analysis of the research subjects should focus the researcher's attention on their own interpretations and force them to question these interpretations (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). In my study, an initial interpretation of the data could have suggested that many South African NPOs do not 'believe' in the importance of a brand. However, when one considers the pressures of the South African NPO context, one realises that the lack of focus on the brand in many NPOs could actually be partly due to pressures of the sector, which take away time and resources from brand management. In this way, deeper questioning of my initial interpretation of the data led to a more nuanced understanding.

This concept of multiple perspectives is central to theory development within grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). Strauss and Corbin (1994) write that not every actor's views have to be captured but those actors deemed significant must be incorporated into the theory. In my study, the entire organisation was not asked to complete the questionnaire on the organisation brand, but only one member of management or a 'significant actor' was asked for their opinion. Grounded theories connect these multiple perspectives through links, patterns and 'processes of action/interaction' (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: p. 280) which in turn are linked to consequences. Finding these links is assisted through the process of coding. In my study, the responses from the various NPOs were analysed for key words that 'linked' to, or indicated, their brand position. These key words were also 'linked' or compared to the key words and ideas in

each of the principles in the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. A table of these keywords can be found in the following chapter.

Coding is enhanced by theoretical sensitivity (Glaser, 1978, Strauss and Corbin, 1990 in Strauss and Corbin, 1994). Theoretical sensitivity is influenced by both the research and personal experience of the researcher (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). For example, the more theoretically sensitive the researcher is to issues such as class, gender and race, the more attention they will give these issues, such as in the process of sampling and analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). In grounded theory, the process of theoretical analysis involves the researcher considering how the data 'speaks' (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: p. 280) to them and in so doing, shapes them. Thus during the course of the research, the researcher is being affected by the subjects, the process of analysis and the experience of being with the subjects. Glaser (2002 in Shannak and Aldhmour, 2009) states that the literature review is considered to be data and is vital in grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin (1994) also stress the importance of the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher and how this develops, in part, through an in-depth review of the literature. In my study, I wanted to increase my theoretical sensitivity on the components of brand communication and brand management, especially in the non-profit sector and more particularly, the South African NPO context. Thus when coding and during data analysis, I was more aware of certain common responses that are specific to the South African non-profit sector. For example, from my literature review I understood that the sourcing of funding is competitive and pressured for most South African NPOs. Being theoretically sensitive to these contextual issues, made me more aware of their presence and implications, even if not explicit, during data analysis.

In the key components mentioned earlier, constant comparison is mentioned. In research which led to the development of the Brand IDEA principles (which form the basis of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework), grounded theory methodology was used and constant comparison was applied as an analysis tool (Kylander personal email). Constant comparison analysis falls under concurrent data generation or collection and analysis, which is the basis of grounded theory

(Birks and Mills, 2011). In my study, the data from one NPO was constantly compared to other data from the same organisational size category, to data from different organisational size categories and to the ideas of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

In the concurrent data process, the researcher generates or collects data with an initial sample. This data is then coded which leads the researcher to form an initial theory. More data is then collected to assess this theory. This would continue until no new ideas can be generated through the analysis. During the analysis, the researcher uses constant comparison in coding. This involves each key event in the data being compared to another from a different source, codes are compared to codes, codes to categories and categories to categories (Birks and Mills, 2011). This process of concurrent data collection and constant comparison analysis continues until a grounded theory has been fully developed. Thus grounded theory is inductive as it builds the theory from the data (Birks and Mills, 2011). This research process is a differentiating feature of grounded theory as other methodologies involve starting with a theory and collecting data to prove it (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 in Birks and Mills, 2011).

While I based my study on the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014) which cited grounded theory methodology as the theoretical methodology for the development of the framework (Kylander and Stone, 2012), I was influenced by aspects of this methodology in my own approach as can be seen above. However, there were variations between the strict ground theory approach detailed above and my study. I conducted my literature review before data analysis as the research of other authors, specifically Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) and Kylander and Stone (2012), guided my data analysis as I compared my responses to the ideal 'response' as described by these authors.

Criticisms of grounded theory have been that some feel it relies heavily on empirical data, considers fieldwork data as the source of its theories and is against the use of existing theories (Parker and Roffey, 1997 in Shannak and

Aldhmour, 2009). Selde'n (2005 in Shannak and Aldhmour, 2009) also believes that when adopting a grounded theory methodology, researchers are dependent on their theoretical sensitivity and how widely read they are, as interpretations do not simply emerge from the data without a researcher who is aware of what concepts and links for which to look out. I recognise these criticisms and addressed the concern of theoretical sensitivity with an extensive literature review, however, I based my study on the work of the Brand IDEA model (Kylander and Stone, 2012; Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014) and was thus influenced by their methodological choices as has been explained above.

## **2. The Framework method**

As a whole, the qualitative research methodology appreciates subjectivities, multiple perspectives and truths and the impact of research on the participants and researchers (O'Leary, 2010). This methodology also emphasizes depth of research as opposed to quantity. In my study, one framework, the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, was used to analyse in detail eight perceptions of a member of management of the brand communication and brand management in their NPO in South Africa.

Owing to the qualitative methodology rejecting the positivist stance of quantitative research, there have been questions asked of the credibility of qualitative research (O'Leary, 2010) but as O'Leary (2010) writes, these questions occur when qualitative research is evaluated according to positivist tradition. The strategies used in qualitative research are different to those in quantitative research but the aims are the same: to achieve a degree of neutrality or objectivity and consistency in the research methods (O'Leary, 2010). However, in qualitative research the criteria for these are neutrality not objectivity, dependability not reliability, authenticity not validity, transferability over generalizability and auditability over reproductibility (O'Leary, 2010). My study used a detailed study of literature and eight case studies to obtain an in-depth understanding of the research question. These six criteria will be discussed in terms of my study later in this chapter.

Triangulation is also important to add credibility to research (O'Leary, 2010). Triangulation can be defined as 'combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods or investigators in one study of a single phenomenon to converge on a single construct' (Yeasmin and Rahman, 2012: p. 156). Triangulation helps to balance qualitative research by using two research methods (Yeasmin and Rahman, 2012). It also adds credibility by confirming the results by having it revealed through two different sources (Yeasmin and Rahman, 2012). Moreover, any deficiencies in one method can possibly be overcome or reduced by using a secondary method as well (Yeasmin and Rahman, 2012). The two main reasons for the use of triangulation as identified by Shia (1998 in Yeasmin and Rahman, 2012) are: confirmation and completeness. In my study, triangulation is achieved by comparing a thematic analysis in the literature review with a thematic analysis in the data analysis to offer depth to my study on brand communication and brand management in the non-profit sector in South Africa.

As there are many research methods within the qualitative methodology, choosing the method to use depends on the structure of the data, the aims of the data and the ease of use of the method (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative research can provide exploratory data to provide new answers into a topic (O'Leary, 2010; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). My study is exploratory in that it is applying the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, that was developed using American or international NPOs, to NPOs based in South Africa in order to understand the applicability of the framework to the South African context. The research question is evaluative as it is seeking to understand the applicability of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework applied to NPOs of various sizes in the South African context (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994 in Srivastava and Thomson, 2009).

A framework analysis is the research method that is used in my study. The framework analysis falls under thematic analysis methods in qualitative research. Thematic approaches 'identify commonalities and differences in qualitative data, before focusing on relationships between different parts of the



data, thereby seeking to draw descriptive and/or explanatory conclusions clustered around themes' (Gale et al., 2013: p. 2). The framework analysis allows the researcher to compare across and within cases, which is a vital part of qualitative research (Gale et al., 2013). In my study, the ideal brand situation within an NPO as outlined in the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework in my literature review, is compared with the reality of various sized NPOs based in South Africa, as revealed through the data analysis of the questionnaire responses. The areas of difference it revealed allowed recommendations to be made.

In framework analysis, a distinction must be made between the terms: a conceptual framework, theoretical framework and a model. The conceptual framework can be defined as a visual or written product that 'explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them' (Huberman and Miles, 1994: p. 18). However, Maxwell (2013) writes that the conceptual framework could also be referred to as the theoretical framework, others also interchange the terms 'framework' and 'model'. The lack of definition of the conceptual framework was noted by Jabareen (2009) and thus he defined the conceptual framework as 'a plane' (Jabareen, 2009: p. 51) 'of interlinked concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena' (Jabareen, 2009: p. 51). To distinguish between a framework and a model, Jabareen (2009) writes that conceptual frameworks consist of concepts, models consist of variables. A concept according to Jabareen (2009) is related to other ideas and cannot stand alone while variables can be measured. The conceptual framework provides understanding rather than a theoretical explanation and cannot predict an outcome (Jabareen, 2009). I will adopt this understanding of a conceptual framework as the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework seeks to understand the role of brand within an NPO and, although it suggests that application of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework will result in a strong brand, it does not forecast the degree of success of the application of this framework to an NPO.

There are also different categories of frameworks. The Non-profit Brand IDEA framework developed as an inductive framework using grounded theory methodologies. It is also a descriptive framework as it developed from the multiple descriptions by brand and communication managers at NPOs. It can also be a normative framework as it explains how NPOs can manage their brand to achieve an ideal or normative state (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Using the framework method allows the researcher to follow clear steps and produce structured research (Gale et al., 2013). Gale et al. (2013) write that it is an advantageous method when one wants a holistic, descriptive overview of an entire data set. It is also an attractive choice for researchers who are exploring qualitative data for the first time as it provides a structure to guide analysis. My study aims to produce a modified Non-profit Brand IDEA framework which is suitable for the South African context. Thus it is appropriate that the framework method allows a clear and simple procedure as the adapted framework will ideally be used by anyone in a South African NPO, even those without a background in brand communication or brand management. However, a framework is not suitable for analysing all types of qualitative data as it cannot be used for heterogeneous data or data that covers many issues and the framework cannot be segmented (Gale et al., 2013).

Gale et al. (2013) write that although the framework method has been equated with a deductive method in qualitative research but using the framework method can produce both deductive or inductive findings, depending on its aim. My study aims to produce deductive findings based on an assessment of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework with the brands of South African NPOs.

The steps involved in the framework method are:

- Familiarisation
- Identifying Themes

- Indexing
- Charting
- Mapping and interpretation

Familiarisation involves the researcher familiarising themselves with the data collected through observation, reading or transcripts (Richie and Spencer, 1994 in Srivastava Thomson, 2009). Gale et al. (2013) write of becoming immersed in the data. In my study, familiarisation involved extensive reading on brands and the NPO context in South Africa which is detailed in my literature review.

The second step of identifying themes is key to qualitative research (O’Leary, 2010, Gale et al., 2013) and is thus a step in the framework method. In this process, the researcher may code or highlight recurring patterns in the research (Richie and Spencer, 1994 in Srivastava Thomson, 2009; Gale et al, 2013; O’Leary, 2010). In an inductive based question, this may be an open coding approach in which the data reveals the themes whereas deductive research codes for predetermined themes (Gale et al., 2013; O’Leary, 2010). In my study, the responses from the questionnaires from management at various NPOs was analysed and coded for themes relating to the principles of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework across the different sized NPOs in a deductive approach. These themes or keywords can be seen in the next chapter. In coding for these themes, I highlighted important words in each response which gave information about the brand in the particular organisation. These responses were then compared to the responses from other NPOs to that question within the same size category looking for similar keywords, to NPOs in other size categories and to the key points proposed in the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

In the third and fourth steps, these themes were then grouped or written down to give an overall impression of the research (Richie and Spencer, 1994 in Srivastava Thomson, 2009; Gale et al., 2013; O’Leary, 2010). In my analysis, I

grouped the responses according to the IDEA principles of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

The final stage is analysis of the themes to reveal commonalities, differences and key areas which help to realise the key aims of the study (Richie and Spencer, 1994 in Srivastava Thomson, 2009; gale et al., 2013; O'Leary, 2010). Any recommendations should reflect the context in which the data was collected (Richie and Spencer, 1994 in Srivastava Thomson, 2009). The analysis of my data did indeed reveal commonalities and differences as well as important points for the adaptation of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. A discussion of this information is in the following chapters.

### **3. Using questionnaires**

Kylander and Stone (2012) used interviews to gather their data. My study used a questionnaire sent to eighteen NPOs, with eight responses. The NPOs were chosen according to the size of the organisation and to represent a broad spectrum of the non-profit sector in South Africa. They ranged from NPOs with under five full-time employees to NPOs with branches nationally and more than twenty-five full-time employees. The selection process is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. The questionnaire was sent to one member of the management in each NPO in order that the opinions could be compared as each respondent is positioned similarly in the NPO.

Questionnaires can be used to gather the opinions of people and are useful when the researcher has facts that have already been established, as questionnaires can determine how generally these facts apply (Woods, 2006). As it is in my research, the questionnaire was used to gather opinions for the brand, brand communication and brand management in South African NPOs. My questionnaire is a cross-section survey as a specific sample (managers at South African NPOs) were chosen to represent the larger population (O'Leary, 2010). My questionnaire is a descriptive survey as the respondent describe the brand, brand communication and brand management in their NPO at present. The

questionnaire was emailed to all respondents. This was for convenience, speed and to maximize the ease of participation for respondents. Respondents could receive the questionnaire quickly, could complete it and return it easily with no extra cost in order. As in my study, there is a small sample, respondents could be contacted for clarification thus eliminating one of the disadvantages of self-administered surveys (O'Leary, 2010). However, another disadvantage of questionnaires is that one is unsure of the effort that the respondent has put into answering the questions or how truthful they are being (Woods, 2006). This disadvantage could not be addressed in my study but the questions included in my questionnaire were open-ended and encouraged the respondent to give their views in great detail. Consideration was given to avoid loaded questions and projecting assumptions of the brand onto the respondent. A table of the responses to the questionnaire can be found in the following chapter.

#### **4. Development of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed to be credible and was developed according to the indicators of credibility for qualitative research as outlined earlier by O'Leary (2010).

- Neutrality

I recognised that I had an understanding of the type of answers that would best fit the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and I did not want to project this understanding on to the respondents. I wanted the questions to be neutral to allow the respondent to answer honestly and without feeling a bias towards a particular answer. I aimed to avoid leading questions. As much as possible, the questions asked 'Do you' as opposed to 'How do you' which presupposes that the respondent does do this particular action.

- Subjectivity

I recognised my own presumptions and how this could lead to a biased reading of the data. I coded the responses of each organisation randomly without considering the size category. Through this, I attempted to avoid a subjective analysis by influencing my reading of the data by viewing it only through the lens of its size. Only after coding, were the responses compared to others within the same size category, across the size categories and to the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

- Authenticity

The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire themselves as opposed to dictating their responses to me. This helped to reduce the potential for NPOs to judge their responses depending on my emotions or behaviour. However, I acknowledge that there may have been reluctance by some NPOs to reveal the full truth of their brand if they felt it was 'weak' or would be the 'wrong' answer. I tried to reduce this by emphasising in the introduction to the questionnaire that *all* responses were valuable. However, this bias may be impossible to avoid without an intensive undercover observation period in each NPO. Owing to resource limitations this was not possible for my study and thus, when asking personal opinions from respondents about their work place, one must accept the possibility of the respondent not being wholly truthful either because they do not want to reveal the full workings of their brand or because they feel it would reflect badly on their management.

- Dependability

As questionnaires are subjective, the responses may not be reliable. The questionnaire was sent to a member of management at each NPO. If, however, a different person in the NPO had been asked to complete the questionnaire, the responses may have been different, as they would answer from their perspective. This is recognised but, due to time and resource constraints, every member of

each NPO could not be asked for their views. In order for the responses to be comparable, a member of management from each NPO was asked to complete the questionnaire. Thus each respondent has a similar position and organisation perspective. This is similar to the approach by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) who also spoke to management in NPOs.

However, the data collection process is well documented and systematic with the use of a questionnaire. The Brand IDEA principles of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework guided the analysis. This helps to ensure dependability.

- Transferability

The aim of my study is to understand the potential for the application of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework in the South African non-profit sector. A representative sample of South African NPOs was chosen to reflect the South African non-profit sector. Thus, it is hoped that the conclusions would be transferable.

In order to assure this, a sample of NPOs of different sizes and of different focus areas was chosen.

It is acknowledged that the sample could have been bigger to ensure greater transferability but resource constraints prevented this.

- Auditability

My study gives clear details of the methods used and how the findings were generated. Following the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework provided a platform to which my data could be compared, thus allowing clear observations to be made and methods to be followed.

It is recognised that the responses reflect each respondent's perspective of a brand which may be different to the understanding of a brand assumed by the

Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. However, I state clearly that I am using this framework, thus I am analysing the data according to its definitions and interpretations from this analysis guided my conclusions. Different frameworks may lead to different interpretations.

- Participant integrity

The participants were treated with integrity. All participants in the email invitation to the study were given a summary of the aims of my study to fully disclose its purpose. Each participant was given the choice to participate and they were told they could end their participation at any point. The participants were given the option of anonymity for themselves and/or their NPOs. They were not asked to answer any questions that could compromise themselves or their NPO.

### **Development of the questions**

Each of the questions will now be discussed in terms of why and how they were developed. The questions for each principle did not follow numerically in order for respondents not to recognise a pattern and for this to influence their responses.

- General brand perceptions: Questions 1, 2, 6, 7, 13

QUESTION 1: How do you understand the term 'brand' in relation to your organisation?

Question 1 was designed to understand if the NPOs view their brand as purely a public relations and fundraising tool, as is the traditional approach, or whether they had a broader perspective of their brand, which would bode well for acceptance of the IDEA principles in the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.



QUESTION 2: Does your organisation have a brand?

Question 2 was to ensure that respondents could answer the following questions about the NPO's brand. It was not the first question so that the respondent still had to answer the first question which would give insight into the prevalence of the traditional view of brands.

QUESTION 6: What is the purpose of the brand in your organisation?

Question 6 was linked to the aim behind question one and question twelve. The question aimed to uncover how the NPOs used their brand. The responses would indicate how progressed the organisation's were in the IDEA principles of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. These responses would also indicate whether the organisation had achieved the Paradigm Shift.

QUESTION 7: How would you describe the brand?

Question 7 was aimed at understanding if the NPOs had a broad view of their brand, or if they saw it in a traditional role, predominately from a visual dimension. The type of adjectives, such as innovative, honest or eye catching used would also indicate the NPO's view of the role of brand and whether they saw the brand as representative of the NPO.

QUESTION 13: Do you have another word for 'brand' what would make these questions more relevant to your organisation?

Question 13 was designed to allow NPOs to opportunity, having completed the questionnaire, to express how the questionnaire could have been changed to be more suitable for their understanding of a brand.

- Brand Integrity: Questions 3, 5, 5.1, 8, 8.1

QUESTION 3: How was the brand created?

Question 3 was for respondents to detail the process of brand creation in their NPO. There were two motives guiding its development. Firstly it was intended to understand if there was a participatory approach to the brand as this approach is central to the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. Secondly, I wanted to understand if the NPO appreciated the multiple aspects of a brand and if or how these different aspects of the brand were developed. The third aim was to discover if any of the NPOs had undergone the process of assessing brand image and brand identity to uncover any gaps, which could be corrected through brand management. This process is part of achieving brand Integrity. Through the responses, I would be able to determine to what extent the process to ensure brand Integrity had been followed. Brand Integrity is the first principle of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and the subsequent principles assume that the previous principles have been achieved.

QUESTION 5: Is the brand communicated within the organisation and how?

Question 5 was designed to understand if the NPO recognised the multiple ways in which a brand can be communicated internally and if, and to what extent, the NPOs communicated their brand to their internal stakeholders. This is important to ensure a consistent brand message. It was also aimed to uncover whether the NPO allowed for feedback from the internal stakeholders regarding the brand as this type of feedback is necessary for the process of achieving brand Integrity.

QUESTION 5.1: Is the brand communicated to the external public and how?

Question 5.1 was designed to understand if the NPO recognised the multiple ways in which a brand can be communicated externally and if, and to what extent, the NPOs communicated their brand externally. Again, it was also aimed to uncover whether the NPO allowed for feedback from the external

stakeholders regarding the brand as this type of feedback is necessary for the process of achieving brand Integrity.

QUESTION 8: Does the organisation receive feedback from the external public regarding their perception of the brand?

Question 8 was designed to determine whether the NPO actively seeks external feedback about the brand, even if it is not naturally given. This feedback is important in the process of achieving brand Integrity as one needs to ensure that internal and external perceptions of the brand are consistent. Allowing external stakeholders to engage in the brand is also important.

QUESTION 8.1: If so, [the organisation does receive external feedback on the brand] do these comments influence brand management and how.

Question 8.1 was designed to determine whether the NPO uses the feedback it receives, to correct a false brand image. This is a vital step in ensuring brand Integrity. The NPO's progress in this process indicates to what degree brand Integrity could be present. If the NPO expressed aspects that partly matched the ideal process of brand Integrity as explained previously, it could indicate a recognition on the part of the NPO of the importance of brand perceptions. This would bode well for the NPO accepting the need for brand Integrity.

- Brand Democracy: Questions 4, 9 and 10

QUESTION 4: Who in the organisation communicates the brand?

Question 4 was designed to understand to what degree the NPO had already achieved brand Democracy as in an NPO with brand Democracy, brand communication is shared amongst all the internal stakeholders, not just management.

#### QUESTION 9: Whose responsibility is brand management?

Question 9 is also designed to determine the level of brand Democracy in each organisation. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write of the importance of participation of internal stakeholders in the brand. Brand communication can, otherwise, seem like a dictatorial voice which the internal stakeholders are unlikely to accept. This potentially compromises the consistency of brand communication.

#### QUESTION 10: How regularly do meetings on brand management take place?

Question 10 was designed to determine how much importance the NPO places on brand management. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write that brand management is a continuous process. The authors also write that NPOs need to recognise the importance of their brand, beyond its public relations function. This is the Paradigm Shift that has been discussed extensively. Without management achieving the Shift, the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework is unlikely to succeed. The amount of time that management dedicate to the brand is an indication of how important they deem it to be. Under the Paradigm Shift, the brand should be seen as a tool to help achieve the mission and therefore key to the operation of the organisation.

- Brand Affinity: Questions 11 and 12

#### QUESTION 11: Has the brand assisted the organisation and how?

Question 11 was designed to determine the ways in which the NPOs feel their brand has assisted the organisation. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe the brand can be used to achieve the mission. Indeed, this is the essence of brand Affinity. Thus this question was designed to determine if the NPOs view their brand in this light, which would suggest that they have partly achieved brand Affinity. Another aspect of brand Affinity is using the brand to attract partners to achieve a shared social mission. This question was also designed to understand

whether any of the NPOs had used their brand in this way. The responses would indicate the organisation's progress in brand Affinity.

QUESTION 12: Do you feel that the brand has helped the organisation achieve its mission?

Question 12 asked the respondent directly whether the brand had helped the organisation to achieve its mission. This is part of brand Affinity and would indicate the NPO's progress in this principle. The responses would also be compared to the previous question which was more open ended about how the brand has helped the NPO in order to compare the responses.

## **5. Development of the resource model**

One of the realisations from the data analysis was that many South African NPOs lack brand experience and would need detailed guidance in order to harness the benefits of their brand according to the IDEA principles. The adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework would not be able to capture all the detail required to guide an NPO, inexperienced in brand communication and brand management, in implementing this framework. Thus a resource model would need to be developed to provide this detailed, practical guidance for NPOs to be able to implement the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

The definition of guidance according to the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* (2015) is 'a rule or instruction that shows or tells how something should be done'. In this case, the resource model shows an NPO how to implement the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

As my research employed a particular methodology, so the development of the resource model was guided by a methodology for the development of guidance or instruction documents.

There several processes to developing a clear guidance document. I used aspects of the process, that were relevant to my study, advocated by the Centre for Devices and Radiological Health in the USA to guide health equipment manufacturers to write clear guidance for the use of their products. These aspects are discussed below.

## **Planning**

- User research

It is important to understand the type of user that will be reading the guidance document. Their level of education, experience and language abilities will influence their understanding of the guidance document and this must be taken into account in its development. In my study, the users are South African NPOs who may have little or no experience in brand, brand communication or brand management. Thus the guidance document carried extensive detail as to the reasons for certain activities as well as practical suggestions for implementing the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

- Coordinated approach

Backinger and Kingsley (1993) refer to a coordinated approach to the design of the device and the writing of the guidance document. The design should reflect the abilities of the users, which should also influence the guidance document. In my study, I presented the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework as a graphic to make it easier to understand for South African NPOs. The visual representation of the adapted framework is clear with only key phrases. This visual representation of the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework may be sufficient for NPOs which are more established in their brand and do not require detailed guidance in order to implement the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. However, for NPOs with little background in brands, this visual guide can be used in conjunction with the resource model, which provides the detail and explanation for implementation of this adapted framework.

- Task analysis

This involves considering exactly how a user will use the device or in my study, how a South African NPO, with little experience in brands, would try to implement the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. One should consider the materials they might need, concerns and how mistakes could be corrected. This information should be included in the guidance document (Backinger and Kingsley, 1993).

In my study, I followed this advice and included practical suggestions for achieving each step in the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework as an NPO may understand the step but lack the ideas to put it into practice. The benefits of the IDEA principles were also discussed in the resource model to alleviate any concerns.

## **Writing**

- Format

The guidance document must be clearly laid out, such as through a flow-chart, with short but explanatory headings. The information gathered about the users will influence the layout and its complexity (Backinger and Kingsley, 1993).

The adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework is presented visually so the NPO already should understand the structure and process of the framework, but how to implement the framework is discussed in the resource model. I was very aware of the need to present the resource model in an easy to understand manner. The resource model follows the same progression of the graphic of the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and has clear, bold headings.

- Presentation of text

There are various ways in which words can be presented; through text, flow – charts or lists (Backinger and Kingsley, 1993).

My resource model uses text as I wanted to be able to provide detailed guidance. This detail would not be reader-friendly in a list or flow-chart format. Although text can seem overwhelming compared to a flow-chart or list and it is not easy to visualise the entire process (Backinger and Kingsley, 1993), I addressed these concerns by being aware of the need to not overwhelm the user. I supplemented the resource model with the visual presentation of the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework in order for an NPO to be able to visualise the process and the connections between steps.



## **Chapter 4: Data analysis and discussion**

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis. As previously discussed, this data was collected from an email questionnaire that was sent to a member of management at eighteen South African based NPOs. The aims behind the development of each question have already been discussed but the goals that guided the overall design of the questionnaire for data collection and data analysis were two fold: firstly, to uncover similarities and differences between the brand management and brand communication of the South African NPOs and the IDEA principles presented in the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, and secondly, to understand how these differences could result in an amended Non-profit Brand IDEA framework which is more suited to the South African NPO context. These goals were accomplished and the results will be discussed in this and the following chapter.

In this chapter, I will discuss the responses to the questions will be discussed according to the IDEA principle which they addressed, in terms of what they represent across and within size categories and in terms of the similarities and differences of the responses compared to the recommendations of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. This analysis will allow adaptations to the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework for the South African context.

### **1. Response rate**

Eighteen NPOs were originally identified using the NPO Register in South Africa and contacts from my experience in the non-profit sector. These NPOs were approached by email. These were selected to cover a range of areas of expertise and to comply with the three size requirements. The NPOs chosen represented a broad spectrum of areas from animal welfare, education and the environment, HIV and AIDS to child health and empowerment. The NPOs represented NPOs of with different numbers of staff. I labelled the categories as small (those NPOs

with fewer than five full time employees or only full-time volunteers and working locally), medium (five to twenty-five full time employees and working locally or provincially) and large (twenty-six plus full time employees with branches nationally).

Eight NPOs responded, resulting in a 44,44% return rate. One NPO returned the completed form but after the deadline and when data analysis had been completed. This was therefore considered a non-response. During three follow up emails, two other NPOs reported that the questionnaire was in the process of being completed but as yet, the completed questionnaire has not been returned. These two NPOs therefore also were counted as non-responses. Another respondent, although first agreeing to participate, once she received the questionnaire, felt her NPO had an informal approach to branding; it was “ ‘brand’ conscious but not in the ‘traditional’ sense’ “. My email stated that even if the respondent felt that their NPO did not have a brand, all the responses were important. However, this respondent did not return the questionnaire.

The poor response rate may reflect a general lack of formality in terms of brand management and communication across the South African non-profit sector which resulted in an unwillingness to respond to the questionnaire as it may have been felt it reflected ‘badly’ on their management of the organisation. Although I gave the option of anonymity for both the respondent and the organisation, some respondents may have felt unwilling to discuss their organisational practices even under anonymity.

Indeed, the feedback from the respondents that completed the questionnaire concurs. Many commented on the difficulty of having to define in words their brand and consider brand practices. This links to the general opinion of brands by NPOs that Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) also reported: brand management, in a formal sense, has not been adopted by many NPOs

## **2. Identification**

All the respondents requested anonymity for themselves and their NPOs so for clarification in the discussion, they will be identified as follows:

### **Small NPOs**

S1

This organisation works in animal welfare. It is run by a management committee of volunteers but two volunteers receive a minimal stipend.

S2

This organisation has a twofold program in literacy development through promoting conservation. It is staffed by three volunteers.

S3

This organisation works in environmental education and is staffed by three full time staff, one part time volunteer and seven other volunteers who assist intermittently.

### **Medium NPOs**

M1

This organisation works in child education and health. It is staffed by five full time staff.

M2

This organisation assists children with disabilities. It is staffed by 15 full time staff and ten volunteers.

## **Large NPOs**

L1

This is a conservation and environmental organisation. It has 86 to 152 permanent staff and 66 contract staff with a varying number of volunteers.

L2

This is a faith-based organisation with 65 full time employees and 70 volunteers.

L3

This organisation works in HIV and AIDS and tuberculosis care, education and prevention. It has 56 full time employees.

### **3. Data analysis process**

After receiving all the completed questionnaires, I then randomly analysed each response and used the highlighter tool to select key words in each response. The random nature of this coding process was to reduce a bias based on the size categories. After processing all the responses in this way, the highlighted keywords or codes from each NPO were copied into separate tables for their corresponding size category. These tables follow this page. The highlighted words are keywords from the response. These words indicate the relevant brand position for that question.

These coded responses were then analysed by comparing the key words of each NPO to others within its size category, across the size categories and against the principles of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. For example, in S1 and Question 4, the keywords are 'everyone in the ngo, volunteers, supporters, participants'. This was compared to the other responses from the Small category: 'directors -marketing consultant'; 'admin coordinator manager approves'. This question is part of Brand Democracy. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write that Brand Democracy means that all in the organisation communicate the

brand. Analysis of these three responses show that S1 appears to have a more democratic approach to brand communication as brand communication is not management led, as in the other two NPOs. However, the dominant view in the small category is that brand communication is not democratic. These responses were then compared the same responses from different size categories. The discussion of this data appears later in the chapter.

Although I used the coded tables for my analysis, I have presented the responses in the section in verbatim as much as possible to allow the reader to understand each response which may not have been possible with only my coded tables. However, to preserve the anonymity of the NPOs, some specific words have been removed to prevent identification. Substituted phrases are in square brackets. Codes as detailed above, are used to identify the NPOs.

Question	Small		
	S1	S2	S3
1 How do you understand the term 'brand' in relation to your organisation?	identity, unique	personality look and ethos	trademark market ourselves recognise us work adverts
2 Does the organisation have a brand?	yes	yes	yes. bright colours lively décor interactive, meaningful lessons signature bug hats facilitators also dress very brightly , 'bug suits' same colours and fonts when advertising so we are easy to recognise logo
3 How was the brand created?	gradually, informally	brand strategy values, mission, philosophy, goals etc	founder worked with graphic designer a logo colourful fun fun articles colour fun interest. [facilitators] took on this identity life- adding colour to everything photo original fonts regular newsletters branding clearly visible
4 Who in the organisation communicates the brand?	everyone in the ngo, volunteers, supporters, participants	directors -marketing consultant	admin coordinator manager approves.
5 Is the brand communicated within the organisation and how?	unconscious	yes	talk meetings display dress occasions founder presentations on branding marketing plan updated each year reviewed each term write articles and contribute own 'magic'
5.1 Is the brand communicated to the external public?	media releases, public events, facebook letterheads, website	yes tv advertising and social media	yes. logo and vision Hats same colours
6 What is the purpose of the brand?	to draw attention funding	credibility	well known well supported share goodness good happening mainly for funders
7 Describe the brand	unique, heart warming, intriguing	earthy, environmental, honest, forward thinking	clear, colourful and consistent, magic hats, children, fun learning

8 Does your organisation receive feedback from the external public regarding their perception of the brand?	word of mouth and Facebook	no	founder advises
8.1 If so, do these comments influence brand management and how?	influences Facebook posts and media release content		if relevant
9 Whose responsibility is brand management?	volunteers dealing with the public	directors- creative consultant	manager creative team restricting added blue still recognisable website different input from different people still recognisable
10 How regularly do meetings on brand management take place?	no	3-4 months	once a year as a team. 3-4 more times with manager and creative team
11 Has the brand assisted organisation and how?	attracted funding	credibility donors public awareness fundraising	funders
12 Do you feel brand has helped the organisation achieve its mission?	yes	yes	Indirectly speaks to funders created interest in the project hats, suits, colour
13 Do you have another word for 'brand' that would make these questions more relevant to your organisation?	identity	no	magic

Question	Medium	
	M1	M2
1 How do you understand the brand?	what we do and what we stand for	symbol and/or name that identifies intangible asset values
2 Does the organisation have a brand?	yes	yes
3 How was the brand created?	Logo=pictorial representation mission statement	changed slightly no funds for rebranding externally staff enjoyed internal rebranding motivated
4 Who in the organisation communicates the brand?	fundraiser/project coordinator, manager	others in the ngo sector, donors and prospective parents
5 Is the brand communicated within the organisation and how?	new person poster words pictures represent who we are what we do aspects in team meetings	t-shirts, banners values and ethics not into action plan or strategy
5.1 Is the brand communicated to the external public?	social media, website, newsletters, 5 min dvd.	latest annual report, banners letterhead
6 What is the purpose of the brand?	remain true to who we are focus in right direction	awareness and advocacy
7 Describe the brand	empowerment accountability and ethics.	symbol of caring for and supporting children with [disability]
8 Does your organisation receive feedback from the external public regarding their perception of the brand?	yes	no
8.1 If so, do these comments influence brand management and how?	clearer and clearer in how represent we do	try rectify problem communicate fix back to person
9 Whose responsibility is brand management?	manager and fundraiser	primary director, board, staff, parents
10 How regularly do meetings on brand management take place?	not specific meetings weekly meetings refer to what we do	no



11 Has the brand assisted organisation and how?	yes= gain clarity on what do and don't do	no
12 Do you feel brand has helped the organisation achieve its mission?	yes	no
13 Do you have another word for 'brand' that would make these questions more relevant to your organisation?	taken brand to be what people perceive our organisation to stand for	values

Large			
Question	L1	L2	L3
1 How do you understand the brand?	recognisable profile understanding of who we are and what we do.	name, symbol and slogan representing organisation. Autonomy in the design.	logo, tag line, feelings around what we do.
2 Does the organisation have a brand?	yes not always very clearly defined multi-faceted organisation not as recognisable	yes	yes
3 How was the brand created?	name has changed now acronym change to the acronym not well managed no budget never adopted the new name well change again lose some equity in the strapline people will know who we are	affiliated to national body international body with same brand	workshop shape the brand graphic designer logo
4 Who in the organisation communicates the brand?	Marketing & Communications	all communicate the brand through verbal and non-verbal communication. brand represents the NPO, links to the mission	all manager consistency
5 Is the brand communicated within the organisation and how?	corporate identity manual branded clothing for staff.	yes core values working culture design of projects	executive summary director keeps updating sending out to staff offering prizes for them to engage in it
5.1 Is the brand communicated to the external public?	all our verbal written marketing tools print and online patrons	yes. website, social media, presentations, school programs etc events, programs within communities,	behavouring consistently with values t-shirts, badges, signage one brand on it i.e. the logo.
6 What is the purpose of the brand?	gain recognition for the work secure further funding and project work to achieve our mission.	the international symbol and the slogan represent who we are	inspire hope meet together.
7 Describe the brand	all the sub-brands linked to the master brand verbal visual endorsement.	programs link to slogan and slogan symbolic	living and dynamic and humbling.
8 Does your organisation receive feedback from the external public regarding their perception of the brand?	yes Struggle public not know who are what we do master brand name not well known our strapline not paint good picture high profile projects people not link work and brand	yes	no
8.1 If so, do these comments influence brand management and how?	verbal written endorsement ensure external project brand associated organisation brand partner better-known entities establish brand target market.	perceptions help us clearly communicate who we are	conversations with other partners how to use the brand in different contexts.
9 Whose responsibility is brand management?	CEO and Marketing & Communications	leaders from different provinces	director

10 How regularly do meetings on brand management take place?	In Marketing & Communications meetings every two weeks.	leaders meet very quarter. Brand management is part of the agenda if there are matters arising.	Every month for 4 hours
11 Has the brand assisted organisation and how?	sense of provenance equity in the name long standing in field Need to be more widely recognised by business attract funding	positioning in ngo sector	defines our key message and outcome
12 Do you feel brand has helped the organisation achieve its mission?	Yes more effective mission affordable strengthen brand target market increase recognition.	keeps aligned to mission and values	Yes , only through living the brand honestly.
13 Do you have another word for 'brand' that would make these questions more relevant to your organisation?	'name' or 'logo'	no	brand key

## ***General brand perceptions***

Questions about the brand generally were asked to ascertain the organisation's perception of brands as this could further indicate the organisation's position on brands in the non-profit sector. Questions 1, 2, 6, 7 and 13 addressed this.

### **QUESTION 1: How do you understand the term 'brand' in relation to your organisation?**

S1 reported that the brand is like the 'identity' and is 'unique'.

S2 reported that the brand is the 'personality', 'look and ethos'.

S3 reported that the brand is like a 'trademark' and that the 'brand for us relates to how we market ourselves – so that people recognise us, our work and or our adverts etc'.

M1 reported that the brand is 'what we do and what we stand for'.

M2 reported that the brand is a 'symbol and/or name that identifies the organisation' and that it is 'an intangible asset in that it should carry values like trustworthy ethical etc which make it the brand of choice'.

L1 reported that the brand is a 'recognisable profile' and an 'understanding of who we are and what we do'.

L2 reported that the brand is a 'name, symbol and slogan representing the organisation' and autonomy in the 'design' as the NPO is part of a national body.

L3 reported that it is a 'logo, a tag line, feelings around what we do'.

## **Discussion**

The responses to question 1 are interesting as they indicate the view the NPO takes regarding its brand management.

In the small category, the answers to question 1 vary from expressing the 'identity' or 'personality' of the NPO to a 'trademark' and how the NPO is marketed. In the medium category, the answers also focus on the identity aspect of the brand as communicating the role of the NPO and its values to the public. The responses from the large category, mention identity or the brand as a 'profile' of the NPO and also the communicative aspect of communicating the work of the NPO.

It is interesting to note that from certain responses the brand is viewed as representative of the NPO. This bodes well for the potential success of the NPOs in implementing the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework as the IDEA principles consider the brand as the embodiment of the organisation. If NPOs can understand that their brand represents the core of the NPO, it should make accepting the ideas of brand management for the non-profit sector expressed in the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework easier to accept.

The brand is also seen as a communicative tool (to communicate the role of the organisation and its values). These are both accurate perceptions of the brand and are both also expressed in brand literature but Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that the role of the brand can go beyond this traditional communicative aspects to help build internal cohesion, trust and partnerships.

### **QUESTION 2: Does your organisation have a brand?**

All the NPOs reported having a brand.

S3 added that 'our organisation is known for its bright colour and lively decor at events, as well as interactive and meaningful lessons with our signature [outfits].

Education facilitators also dress very brightly and wear [unique outfits] to events. We try use the same colours and fonts when advertising so that we are easy to recognise. Our logo is similar to that of the [parent organisation] but less formal’.

L1 added, ‘although it is not always very clearly defined (we are a multi-faceted organisation), and it is not as recognisable as it should be considering [how long the organisation has been operating].

## **Discussion**

In question 2, all the NPOs reported that they had a brand but they had different ideas on a brand as noted in the responses to question 3 discussed later. This is important as it means that the following questions on the NPO’s brand are relevant.

### **QUESTION 6: What is the purpose of the brand in your organisation?**

S1 reported that the brand is to ‘draw attention’ and ‘attract funding’.

S2 reported that the brand is to ‘build credibility’ for the NPO.

S3 reported that the purpose of the brand is ‘to become well known and be well supported, to share good news of joyful activities and events – so that people know what good is actually happening out their but mainly for funding and for funders who like to be acknowledged for their input. Funders also like to support well known projects’.

M1 reported that the purpose of their brand is ‘to remain true to who we are and focus in the right direction’.

M2 reported that the purpose of the brand is ‘awareness and advocacy’.

L1 reported the brand is to 'gain recognition for the work we do throughout South African and the SADC region, which in turn will help us secure further funding and project work to achieve our mission'.

L2 reported that the brand ('specifically the international symbol') and the slogan represent who [the organisation] is'.

L3 reported that the purpose of the brand is 'to inspire hope when we meet together'.

## **Discussion**

Respondents from the small NPOs spoke of funding and building awareness for funding motives. These objectives are consistent with brand management from a commercial orientation in which the main role of the brand is financial. It shows the dominance of this traditional view of brands and mirrors many of the reactions that Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) received during their research. NPOs with this view of brands would struggle to implement the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework because the framework is based on the Paradigm Shift which re-orientates the understanding of a brand for the non-profit sector (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). In fact, many of the concerns regarding the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework from Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel's (2014) interviewees stemmed from having a for-profit view of brands. Without the NPO accepting the Paradigm Shift in which brands are seen as a strategic tool to aid the organisation attain its social mission, success with the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework is limited. However, one respondent from a small NPO, S2, did say that their purpose of their brand is to build credibility which links to the role of the brand in the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework as a means to build trust and increase social impact. This shows that although many small NPOs may automatically assume a for-profit orientation on brands, an understanding of a brand specific to the non-profit sector is possible.

In the medium NPOs, however, glimpses of this new understanding of a brand appear to be more present. The roles of the brand in the medium NPOs are beyond the traditional financial role of the brand and demonstrate recognition of the power of the brand as an important strategic tool. These respondents did not refer to the role of the brand in helping an NPO achieve its mission but understand that the brand represents the core of the organisation and thus can be used to guide decisions and can assist the NPO in its role (M2 'advocacy'), and suggests that an adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework could be used in South African NPOs.

Respondents from the large NPOs showed mixed responses with the purpose of the brand including both publicity related roles and roles linked to the mission. In L1, the brand is seen as a tool for generating increased funding. In L2, the role of the brand is as an identity or 'representing who we are'. L3 appears to understand the aspect of the brand that can link to the mission as L3 said the purpose of their brand is 'to inspire hope', alluding to their slogan. This aspect of the brand is discussed in brand Affinity.

A notable observation that supports the view that the traditional understanding of brands dominates the South African non-profit sector is that many NPOs spoke of their brands by referring to only their visual markers, that is the logo, colours and slogan. While a brand definitely has a visual element, which can be symbolic of values, organisation culture and mission, it has a more profound component as well, as the essence of the organisation, as a unifying tool in the NPO as well as representative of the mission, values and strategy of the NPO. This role of the brand as a signifier for important aspects of the brand was mentioned by a few NPOs (M1, L2 and L3). The brand in this form is part of brand Integrity in which the brand can guide the organisation in decision-making, as decisions that are incongruent with the brand, would steer the organisation away from its core, as well as brand Affinity in which the brand can be used to as a 'calling card' to attract partner NPOs. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) suggest that in developing a brand, the organisation should



consider the who, what and why of the organisation and use these answers to develop a brand that covers these questions.

In summary, four of the eight NPOs (S1, S3, M2, L1) said that their brands were a public relations tool to gain awareness and publicity (often for funding reasons), which shows the prevalence of the traditional view of brands. References, however, to the broader role a brand can play (in M1, L2 and L3) suggest that the South African non-profit sector may be open to the ideas expressed by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) and hence willing to implement the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and use their brands as a tool to achieve their mission.

### **QUESTION 7: How would you describe the brand?**

S1 described the brand as 'unique , heart warming, intriguing'.

S2 described the brand as 'earthy, environmental, honest, forward thinking'.

S3 described the brand as 'clear, colourful and consistent, magic hats, children, fun learning'.

M1 described the brand as 'empowerment, accountability, ethics'.

M2 described the brand as 'a symbol of caring for and supporting children with [the disability]'.

L1 reported 'the particular type of brand architecture [the NPO] has is endorsed, i.e. all the sub-brands are linked to the master brand by means of either a verbal or visual endorsement. '.

L2 described the symbolism of the logo and how it related to the organisation and its work.

L3 described the brand as 'living and dynamic and humbling'.

## **Discussion**

All the NPOs could describe their brand. Interestingly, the responses varied from describing the brand visually to more abstract terms. A brand should address the mission, values and strategy of the NPO. However, it is positive that all the NPOs could describe their brand as it shows that there has been a process of brand development as the NPOs have thought what they want the brand to 'be' or represent. Although the brand development process involves more than being able to describe the brand, it is important to note that all the NPOs have begun this process.

### **QUESTION 13: Do you have another word for 'brand' what would make these questions more relevant to your organisation?**

S1 suggested 'identity'.

S2 did not suggest an alternative.

S3 suggested that the NPO's unique outfits could replace the word brand.

M1 did not report an alternative word.

M2 suggested 'values'.

L1 suggested 'name' or 'logo'.

L2 did not offer an alternative word.

L3 reported that 'brand is the key word'.

## **Discussion**

Question 13 shows the variety in understanding a brand. All the responses are part of a brand but do not solely define a brand as a brand has multiple aspects. It could also suggest that the alternative word given for brand is the aspect of brand on which the NPO focuses. Thus this focus may explain some of the differences in some of the South African NPOs to the ideas of brand communication and brand management as described in the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

## ***Brand Integrity***

Brand Integrity refers to the alignment between the brand identity (the internal perception of the brand) and brand image (the external perception of the brand); and the mission, values and strategy of the NPO (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). When these are aligned, the NPO can achieve greater cohesion, trust and impact (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Questions 3, 5, 5.1, 8 and 8.1 are related to brand Integrity.

### **QUESTION 3: How was the brand created?**

S1 reported that the brand was created 'gradually', 'informally'.

S2 reported that the brand was created 'based on brand strategy which included values, mission, philosophy, goals etc'.

S3 reported that '[the founder], worked with a graphic designer to create a logo which [the founder] later changed to make it more colourful and fun. [The founder] was good at marketing and writing fun articles that showed the [education facilitators] in their [signature outfits] and learners wearing the colourful hats. The colour has added fun and interest to the project. [Education

facilitators] took on this identity and it has become a way of life- adding colour to everything. Articles are still published regularly and still include a fun and colourful photo. [The founder] never steered away from original fonts in adverts and letters. She built up a list of partners and friends who get regular newsletters with [project] info and branding clearly visible. It carried on naturally when [she] left.

M1 reported that the logo is 'a pictorial representation of hope we bring through education'. The mission statement of 'low cost, high impact health and early education is key to the brand and is used regularly'.

M2 reported, 'sorry before my time, however it was recently slightly changed and is more modern however this was done at a time when funds were low so there is not the money for the rebranding exercise in terms of external public, but it seems to have been successful in terms of internal public – staff and board enjoyed the exercise and were motivated by it.'

L1 reported, 'As we were established in 1926 this was a little before my time. The name has changed several times over the years, the most recent change being to [name withheld for anonymity] from which the acronym was born. Unfortunately the transition to the acronym was not very well managed (and there was no budget to do this well at the time – which was probably about ten years ago) so the public have never really adopted the new name well. We are currently considering changing our strapline from "[withheld to preserve anonymity]" to the full name of the organisation to help the process along. We may lose some equity in the strapline, but at least people will know who we are.'

L2 reported, '[the NPO] is affiliated to our national body. [The national body] is an international organisation'.

L3 reported, 'Key workshop run by VEGA School of Brand leadership in May 2013 helped shape the brand and drove me [the director] to being the brand and driving it's voice. We used a graphic designer to come up with the logo.'

## Discussion

In developing the brand, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write of four important steps: differentiation, positioning, establishing a theory of change and internal branding. While none of the NPOs mentioned all these steps under question 3 as part of their process of creating their brand, two did mention aspects of the steps.

In the small category, the responses to question 3 showed that the process varied from an informal approach involving all the volunteers, creating purely the visual aspects of a brand of logo design to a brand strategy including values, the mission, philosophy and goals. This last organisation, S2, has a marketing consultant on its board who guided this process and so perhaps has more of an awareness of the different aspects of a brand, such as the values, mission and philosophy.

The visual development of the brand was again mentioned in M1 and points to a common view of the brand as only from a visual perspective.

M2 reported that the organisation had undergone a rebranding to modernise the brand and involved the internal staff in the process of defining the new brand. Internal branding helps to build cohesion and support of the brand and brand management and is part of the steps recommended by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) in brand development. In a rebranding process, the new brand also needs to be communicated to external stakeholders and unfortunately funds prevented the organisation from doing this. Including the internal stakeholders is also part of the participative process which is central to the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and helps for internal stakeholders to feel a brand of the brand and committed to it. It is thus positive to see elements of the planned brand development that Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) suggest in M2 but as the NPO was not able to complete the entire process, it is possible that all the aspects of brand development were not considered. More importantly, not communicating the new brand to the external stakeholders means that they may

not change their brand image to align to the new brand identity. This lack of alignment can create confusion for the external stakeholders and weakens the brand. However, the process would have been completed were it not for lack of funds. Funding is a significant problem in the South African non-profit sector so finding an innovative solution would be valuable. The Non-profit Brand IDEA framework could be this solution as it promotes collaboration through which partners could assist the NPO in areas where it struggles. However, in order for an NPO to successfully implement the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, all the IDEA principles need to be attained.

L1 spoke of the development of the name of the organisation. This again suggests that few NPOs have completed a formal brand development process. If, however, the process was detailed in an easy to understand manner, NPOs may be able to complete formal brand development as this is necessary to implement the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

In L3, a workshop led by a local brand management school shaped the brand. A graphic designer then created the logo. This is the only NPO that reported a formal and comprehensive process to creating their brand. It suggests that it has recognised the importance of brand communication and brand management, which bodes well for its potential success in applying the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. It also shows what an NPO can achieve with its brand if it is given guidance. Thus, it suggests that all NPOs, with guidance, could develop their brand in a formal manner taking into consideration all the aspects of the brand, not just the visual component.

When describing the process that their organisation undertook in creating a brand, two NPOs (M2 and L2) said that they were not part of the original process and so could not say exactly how the brand developed. This could indicate a lack of communication of the brand internally and a lack of focus on brand management because brand management is a continuous process and it is important to understand how the brand has been managed or developed through the years.

In NPOs with many branches separated by distance, having a common brand identity and understanding is important for consistent communications (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that internal and external stakeholders of the NPO should be involved in brand development. It should not be management led. In an NPO with several branches this may be difficult to arrange. However, if perhaps each branch could facilitate a brand discussion in which representatives from the internal and external stakeholders discuss the development of the brand as per the brand identity given by the head office, this could encourage a sense of commitment and responsibility to the brand. The lack of knowledge of brand creation in L2, which is affiliated to an international body of the organisation, could suggest that this type of activity did not happen or that the brand development process was not repeated in the local branches or communicated to other branches. This is a pity as it is important that all in the NPO feel part of the brand development process. If not, the brand can seem to be 'forced' upon the internal stakeholders and they are unlikely to feel responsible for the brand. This would make brand Democracy difficult.

Thus the responses predominately mentioned how the brand was created from a visual design perspective. While the brand does include the design, this view of brands comes from a commercial perspective and does not include the intangible elements of a brand (van Riel and Fonbrun, 2007; Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). M1 recently undertook a rebranding but lack of funding prevented the rebranding process being extended to external public. Funding is a concern for most NPOs in South Africa because the competitive funding environment results in many NPOs struggling with funds (Stuart, 2013). Expense was a concern noted by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) in their research and by Richie, Swami and Weinberg (1999) and so it seems is a concern for most in the non-profit sector. However, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that the long-term benefits of a strong brand, which has Integrity, will be worth the initial cost of time and funds.

The process of brand development is fairly lengthy and involves strategic thinking and commitment from the organisation. The responses by M2 of aspects of internal branding and by L3 of initiating a formal brand development workshop, however, show that NPOs can achieve aspects of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. However, as they are the only two NPOs, it shows more guidance is needed on this process. If other NPOs were explained the potential benefits of their brand and the importance of the Paradigm Shift, they might also be more willing to work towards the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

My literature review discussed reasons why NPOs may be reticent to develop a brand for their organisation and included concerns over the traditional associations of commercialism with brands and ethical concerns about the NPO selling its values to make money. The Non-profit Brand IDEA framework dismisses these concerns as its IDEA principles are not based on using the brand for commercial reasons. In the South African NPOs, however, I believe the lack of formal brand management and communication strategy could also be due to a lack of awareness of the power of a brand to an NPO and also indicative of the pressure, both in terms of time and human resources, on many NPOs. With funding to NPOs being cut or reduced (Stuart, 2013; Davis, 2012 in Stuart, 2013), many NPOs cannot afford to hire staff who can coordinate the brand management and communication process and all staff are pressured to handle many different roles which focus primarily on increasing impact and outcomes for funding reports. Indeed, Stuart (2013) writes that a trend of increased accountability in the South African non-profit sector has led to a 'report culture' (Stuart, 2013: para 8) in which NPOs have to continually account for 'activities completed', 'performance indicators met' and 'outputs achieved' (Stuart, 2013: para 8). The focus is the impact in quantitative terms rather than a narrative report on the qualitative impact. Trying to achieve a high numerical impact is a struggle is particularly relevant for smaller NPOs (Stuart, 2013). It means that internal stakeholders generally do not have the time to focus on brand communication and management as it is not seen as a priority in light of the impact reports required by funders. The irony is that Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that a strong brand, achieved through implementing the



Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, can assist the organisation to achieve its social mission and increase its impact. The progress by L3 in its brand development is testament to the fact that it is possible for South African NPOs to develop their brand, even in the pressured local context. However, I believe that it shows the South African NPOs need dedicated guidance on their NPO brand as L3 was the only NPO who reported a formal brand creation process and this was achieved through a workshop of the brand management and communication school. If the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework was adapted to the South African context, it could provide the guidance for other NPOs.

**QUESTION 5: Is the brand communicated within the organisation and how?**

S1 reported that internal brand communication was ‘unconscious’.

S2 reported that the brand was communicated but did not elaborate as to how this happened.

S3 reported that brand communication occurred during meetings when the ‘brand’ was discussed in terms of ‘what to display’, ‘how to dress at specific occasions’. The founder also gives presentations on the brand. There is a ‘marketing plan which is updated each year and reviewed each term’ and the facilitators “write articles and contribute their own ‘magic’ “.

M1 reported that when a new person arrives at the organisation, the team ‘creates a poster with words and pictures that represent who we are and what we do’. They also discuss aspects of the brand in team meetings.

M2 reported that the brand is communicated ‘on t-shirts and banners’ and that ‘values and ethics have not been developed into an action plan or strategy’.

L1 reported that the brand is communicated through the corporate identity manual and branded clothing for staff.

L2 reported that the brand was communicated through the 'core values', 'working culture' and 'design of projects'.

L3 reported that the organisation has an executive summary which the director updates continuously and which he sends 'to staff offering prizes for them to engage in it'.

**QUESTION 5.1: Is the brand communicated to the external public and how?**

S1 reported that the brand is communicated through 'media releases, public events, Facebook, letterheads and the website'.

S2 reported that the brand is communicated externally through, 'TV advertising and social media'

S3 reported that, 'Yes. Logo and vision are often used or quoted in publications. [The signature hats] appear in most photos in articles. Events and adverts use the same colours so appear similar.'

M1 reported that the brand is communicated externally through 'social media, website, newsletters. We also have a 5 min DVD.'

M2 reported the brand is communicated externally through the 'latest annual report, banners, and letterhead'.

L1 reported that the brand is communicated externally through 'all our verbal and written communications and through our marketing tools (print and online). We also have patrons (some are minor celebrities) who help promote our brand.'

L2 reported that the brand is communicated externally through 'Website, social media, presentations, events, programs within communities, school programs etc'

L3 reported, 'Our brand is a tribe of hopeful people behaving [sic] consistently with our values. All t-shirts, badges, signage has only one brand on it i.e. the logo.'

## **Discussion**

Question 5 and 5.1 asked about internal and external communication of the brand. The questions were also intended to find out whether the NPOs engaged the internal and external stakeholders in brand creation to ensure that a consistent brand message was being communicated internally and externally.

Under Question 5, in the small NPOs, internal brand communication varied from an 'unconscious' process in S1 to meetings in which the brand was discussed in terms of 'what to display' and 'how to dress at specific occasions' in S3. S2 did not give details as to the internal brand communication process. S1 and S2 did not report any process to actively communicate the brand to the internal stakeholders and thus could not be assured that the internal stakeholders' understanding of the brand was correct or consistent.

S3 understood that the brand can be communicated through behaviour and dress and it is positive to note that 'facilitators' are involved in brand communication as they can write articles. The founder also gives presentations on the brand, which could help to ensure a consistent internal brand identity. However, this approach may not foster a commitment to the brand from the internal stakeholders and they are not involved in the discussion of the brand but rather are being told about the brand. A more participative approach would both ensure a shared and consistent internal brand identity and encourage a commitment to the brand as internal stakeholders would feel involved in the brand. However, there is progress by S3 in internal brand communication, which shows that small NPOs are capable of achieving aspects of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and suggests that if other smaller NPOs were given the opportunity, through a guided process, they would be able to implement the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

In the medium NPOs, there was more formal approach to brand communication. M1 used their brand to introduce a new employee to the NPO. The NPO recognises that the brand can convey 'who we are and what we do' and embody or summarise the NPO, which is why it can be used as part of an induction process. A team meeting is similar to the participative approach advocated by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) as if the internal stakeholder feels involved in the brand, they are more likely to feel a responsibility towards it. This also shows aspects of brand Democracy as the NPO includes internal stakeholders in the brand. M1 reported that the brand is discussed in 'team' meetings' which again shows how the internal stakeholders are included in the brand. Although the meetings are not a formal assessment of the brand, the meetings may ensure that the internal perception of the brand is consistent, as all the internal stakeholders would be briefed on the brand. These team meetings also allow management to address any queries about the brand from internal stakeholders, thus helping to ensure a consistent internal brand identity.

M2 spoke of the visual communication of the brand on clothing and banners. The brand is communicated visually but has many more aspects. This also does not suggest the internal stakeholders are told directly about the brand. However, M2 did mention, in response to a different question, that the organisation had undergone a rebranding and the 'staff' had enjoyed the process. During this process, the staff would have had the 'new' brand communicated to them. Ideally though, all the internal stakeholders (such as volunteers, trustees) would have been included to ensure that *all* internal stakeholders share the same vision. However, the staff may form the majority of internal stakeholders and thus their involvement is important. Through this participative approach, the management of the NPO should be able to accept that most of the internal stakeholders share a common brand perception.

In the large NPOs, there is again more formal internal brand communication. L1 uses a corporate identity manual and branded clothing. The manual is a suggestion by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) in brand Democracy to guide

brand communications. However, as a means of communicating the brand to internal stakeholders to ensure a shared brand identity, it is not interactive. Internal stakeholders would not have the chance to ask questions or to give feedback. It makes it hard to ensure that all share the same brand perception and it is not the participative approach promoted by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014). The internal stakeholders may feel less commitment to the brand as they have not had involvement in it.

L2 understood that the brand has many aspects and can be communicated through values and behaviour. However, the respondent did not mention how the brand is communicated to the internal stakeholders to ensure that when they do communicate the brand through their behaviour, the brand message communicated by all the internal stakeholders is consistent.

L3 reported a similar tool to L1 as they have an executive summary. Again this could not be an interactive approach but the respondent says that internal stakeholders are encouraged to interact with the document. This not only ensures that all the internal stakeholders should share a common understanding of the brand, but engaging them in the brand also helps to build a sense of responsibility to it so when they do communicate the brand, they do so in a positive and responsible manner.

Although none of the NPOs reported doing the four-step process recommended by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014), a number of NPOs reported concrete steps to ensure that internal stakeholders understood the brand and some tried to encourage participation in it. As some NPOs have already made progress in this area, it shows that they are willing to commit to the process of internal brand communication and that if guidance was given on how to improve this process, they may be amenable to it.

Under Question 5.1, when communicating the brand to the external public, most of the NPOs reported using the media, both print and social media, events, newsletters, annual reports, television and through the logo. The number of

communication channels shows awareness by NPOs of the importance of communicating the brand externally but all these responses do link to the traditional role of the brand as a publicity tool. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe the brand captures the core of the organisation and can also be communicated through actions, projects and values. Only L2 and L3 mentioned communicating their brand through actions, namely through the behaviour of their staff working according to the NPO's values, in the core values and the working culture. L3 referred to this as part of external communication of the brand and L2 referred to it as internal communication of the brand. Although, the brand can be communicated in actions *both* internally and externally, these two NPOs understood that the brand is more than a fixed, visual object that can be communicated through copy.

It is important that the brand is explained to external stakeholders, as well as internal stakeholders. External stakeholders are important and for many, especially in the non-profit sector, their perception of the NPO will be driven solely by their brand image as they will never personally experience the services of the NPO. Thus it is important to ensure they have a true brand image. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) note that this is particularly important in older NPOs that have changed or redefined their brand over the years as the external stakeholders may still retain their original brand image. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) advise using the lag time for the brand image to align with the brand identity by consistently communicating the brand to ensure the external stakeholders receive the correct brand image.

These three NPOs (L1, L2 and L3) may be the minority in this understanding of the depth of the brand, it does show that the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework can potentially be applied in the South African context, even if it needs a few adaptations for smaller NPOs which are less advanced in brand management.

**QUESTION 8: Does the organisation receive feedback from the external public regarding their perception of the brand?**

S1 reported that the organisation receives 'word of mouth and Facebook' feedback.

S2 reported that they did not receive external feedback about the brand.

S3 reported that the founder of the NPO advises on the brand.

M1 reported that they did receive feedback but did not elaborate on how.

M2: reported not receiving external feedback regarding the brand.

L1 reported that the NPO did receive external feedback and commented on the lack of recognition by the public of the brand, with the public 'not knowing who we are and what we do as our master brand name is not well known and our strapline does not paint an accurate/comprehensive picture of who we are and our mission'. The NPO is involved with several high profile projects but 'people don't always make the link between this work and brand'.

L2 reported that the organisation does receive external feedback but did not elaborate.

L3: reported not receiving external feedback regarding the brand

**QUESTION 8.1: If so, [the organisation does receive external feedback on the brand] do these comments influence brand management and how.**

S1 reported that the comments influence 'Facebook posts and media release content'.

S3 reported that if the comments are 'relevant' then they are taken on board but how they influence management was not explained.

M1 reported that 'We have found over the years that we have become clearer and clearer in how we represent what we do'.

M2 reported that they 'try to rectify the problem and communicate the fix back to the person'.

L1 reported that 'Where a visual endorsement is not possible because the logos [of different projects] are not ours, we need to always ensure that the verbal (or written) endorsement is always in place to ensure that the [project] brand is associated with [the organization brand]. We also look for opportunities to partner with better-known entities to help establish our brand in our target market.'

L2 reported that perceptions help them to communicate clearly 'who we are'.

L3 reported that 'key conversations with other partners help me learn how to use the brand in different contexts'.

## **Discussion**

The aim of question 8 and question 8.1 was to discover if any of the NPOs had undergone the process of assessing brand image and brand identity to uncover any gaps, which could be corrected through brand management. This process is part of achieving brand Integrity that requires that the internal and external perceptions of the brand are aligned. It also helps the organisation to establish its core, and it can then ensure that the brand captures this core. None of the NPOs reported following this procedure.

In Question 8, S1, S3, M1, L1 and L2 reported receiving external feedback regarding perceptions of the brand.



In S1, this feedback came via social media, which can be a good tool for assessing public opinion on the brand, but often only reaches those who know the brand well and not those who do not know much about the brand. Public surveys may be a better option to reach a wide range of the external public who have not had intimate experience of the brand.

In S3, this feedback came from the founder and so could not be considered representative of the general external public perception of the brand.

L1 commented that, although the NPO does receive feedback, the comment suggests that this feedback is not aligned with the internal, or at least the management's, perspective on the brand. This suggests a gap between the internal and external perceptions of the brand and is exactly what brand Integrity requires is corrected. L1 may have, indirectly, assessed the external brand image and the management understand the desired brand image so they should try to align the actual and desired brand image through communication. However, brand Integrity requires alignment between internal *and* external views and thus internal brand identity perceptions should also be assessed as management may be surprised to note that the internal stakeholders share the same view as the external stakeholders. The internal stakeholders may be communicating their (incorrect) message of the brand to the external stakeholders. Correcting both perceptions would bring brand Integrity and strengthen the brand by having a consistent brand identity and brand image.

In Question 8.1, three NPOs (M1, L2 and L3) reported that external feedback helps the organisation understand its role; and more importantly, to communicate 'who we are'; and how to use the brand for different stakeholders. This suggests that some NPOs do use feedback to *improve* brand communication. These practices, however, were in the minority. When asked if the comments from the public about the brand influence brand decisions, some of the responses were quite vague. This is possibly due to lack of formal brand management with regular brand management meetings or discussions.

The responses from S2 did not seem to *alter* brand communication. The feedback may have assisted the NPO to *understand* public perceptions, but only three of the NPOs (S1, L2 L3) suggested that the feedback makes them *change* their brand communication to *correct* brand perceptions that were false. S1 said that the feedback influences the choice of Facebook posts and 'media release content'.

Although L3 reported not to receive external feedback in question 8, in question 8.1, L3 said the feedback helped to know 'how to use the brand in different contexts'. It is positive to note that L3 realises that the brand can communicate to diverse stakeholder groups but the brand message must remain consistent amongst all stakeholder groups. This is an important concept in brand Democracy as it is hard to control all brand communication to all the various stakeholder groups. This is where brand Democracy can help.

L2 reported that 'perceptions help us clearly communicate who we are'. While this does not suggest that the management actively seek out this feedback or formally review this external feedback against the internal perception of the brand identity, management presumably would take steps to correct these external brand image perceptions if they were inaccurate.

In Question 8, M2 reported not to receive external feedback but in question 8.1, M2 said that external feedback would be acted on but it is assumed that this external feedback is about a problem. That external feedback could be about the brand does not seem to have been considered.

The activities reported by S1, L2 and L3 half the process of brand Integrity but management should actively seek both internal and external feedback on the brand. This external perspective should then, ideally, be checked against the internal perspective and any differences attended to through communication. It is true that the brand communicates to many different groups and, while it can be adjusted to target each group's specific needs, the overall brand message must remain consistent (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014)). It is encouraging to note that L3 recognised that their brand can be used to communicate to

various groups as it shows an understanding of the brand as capturing the essence of the NPO. However, L3, underwent a formal brand development workshop, and thus brand communication and brand management seemed to be emphasised. With similar guidance in the form of an adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and a resource model, other NPOs should be able to benefit from this same type of brand support and direction.

The sectorial challenges for NPOs in South Africa most likely also impact on the poor performance by many NPOs regarding their brand. While it is what Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) recommend, the alignment process would be time consuming and resource heavy and, in South Africa, with the pressure on a small team at most NPOs to meet objectives for funders or to manage the need from its beneficiaries, this type of time or resource commitment may not seem feasible. Organisational time and resource constraints are not a concern noted by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) but I believe it could be a legitimate concern for NPOs in South Africa with its great social need and the pressure on NPOs to help alleviate or ease this burden. However, this concern does not detract from the benefits for the NPO if it were able to achieve brand Integrity. Even the participatory process is in itself beneficial as it can create greater attachment to the brand and help to clarify it for all stakeholders.

With guidance on brand management from an adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and a resource model, the time on brand management and brand communication may also be reduced as the organisation could follow a focused plan, which can ultimately make the organisation more efficient.

Brand management is an on-going process (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014)

### ***Brand Democracy***

Brand Democracy refers to the management of an NPO allowing brand communication to be democratic and shared by all internal stakeholders and

external stakeholders (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Question 4, 9 and 10 addressed the principle of Brand Democracy.

#### **QUESTION 4: Who in the organisation communicates the brand?**

S1 reported that 'everyone in the ngo, volunteers, supporters, participants' communicate the brand.

S2 reported that communication is the responsibility of one of the directors who is a marketing consultant.

S3 reported that the administration coordinator drafts any communication and it is approved by the manager.

M1 reported that the fundraiser/project coordinator and the manager communicate the brand.

M2 reported that external stakeholders, 'others in the ngo sector, donors and prospective parents', communicated the brand.

L1 reported that Marketing and Communications communicate the brand.

L2 reported that everyone in the organisation communicates the brand through 'verbal and non-verbal communication' and that the 'brand represents the organisation and links to the mission'.

L3 reported that everyone in the organisation communicates the brand and the manager ensures consistency in communication.

#### **Discussion**

Kylander and Stone (2012) believe that an NPO which has achieved brand Democracy has empowered its stakeholders to 'communicate their own

understanding of the organisation's core identity' (Kylander and Stone, 2012: p. 40) or the brand identity. This requires a democratic approach to brand communication in which control by management is relinquished and communication is democratic with all being able to participate. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) recognise that this a difficult step for management to accept but that with the proliferation of social media, this step is inevitable, as the organisation cannot control all communication via social media. However, for the organisation to trust the stakeholders, brand Integrity, which results in everyone, internal and external to the organisation, sharing the same understanding of the brand, needs to have been achieved.

In the small NPOs, question 4 showed that brand communication varied from a democratic approach to a traditional, management led approach. Although S1 reported that the stakeholders communicate the brand, the brand of this NPO also developed informally and there are no formal meetings on brand management or active communication of the brand internally. Thus S1 cannot ensure consistent brand communication and the response rather suggests a lack of focus on brand communication in which strategic brand communication has not been formally discussed or implemented. In S2, one the directors is responsible for brand communication. In S3, management communicated the brand through a marketing strategy that is assessed periodically with the founding member holding the organisation to account if they feel the brand is 'becoming diluted'. These responses suggest that brand Integrity and brand Democracy has not been achieved naturally by the smaller NPOs. The NPOs cannot trust that the stakeholders will communicate the true brand as it has not been ensured that all the stakeholders share the same vision of the brand, hence the concerns over brand dilution. Also, management have not accepted the Paradigm Shift, in which brand communication is the responsibility of all stakeholders. The benefits of brand Integrity and brand Democracy go beyond improved brand communications; it can build trust, internal cohesion and improve efficiency, as all understand they are working towards the same vision.

In M1, the management communicate the brand. This is the traditional role but it is not democratic and Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe it is untenable when communication is increasingly via social media.

M2 reported a more democratic approach as it did not depend on management to communicate the brand, but relied on the external stakeholders ('others in the NGO sector, donors, prospective parents') to brand communication. External stakeholders must communicate the brand but it should be in conjunction with internal stakeholders. The internal stakeholders probably understand the brand, as M2 reported that a recent rebranding has taken place and the staff had felt motivated by the process. Funds did not extend to communicating the rebranding externally. However, if M2 reports that the external stakeholders are communicating the brand, the external stakeholders must have a correct image of the brand and thus it is important the 'updated' brand is communicated externally. Internal stakeholders would also communicate the brand, even if unintentionally, through their behaviour at the NPO, their choice of projects, their decisions as well as visually through the visual design. Internal stakeholders should therefore be told of the different aspects of brand and how they can communicate it correctly. This should also help to ensure consistency in brand communication. It would also be an opportunity to align the brand image and brand identity so that external and internal brand communication is consistent.

The response to question 4 showed that L1 maintained a traditional approach to brand communication with it being the responsibility of the Marketing and Communications team. In L2, reported that all in the NPO communicate the brand and that the brand represents the NPO and links to the mission. Moreover, L2 also said that the brand was communicated internally through its core values, working culture and projects. The brand represents the core of the NPO and if the entire NPO has a shared understanding of the brand or the core of the NPO, it can have many benefits, from building internal cohesion to assisting the NPO in its mission and establishing partnerships (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). It also makes brand Democracy possible as the internal stakeholders can be

trusted to communicate a consistent brand message and in this NPO, all do communicate the brand both verbally and non-verbally. L2 shows a good democratic approach to brand communications. However, L2 did not mention if the internal stakeholders were also permitted to communicate the brand through social media, not only through their actions. True brand Democracy allows the internal stakeholders the freedom to communicate the brand in a variety of ways, with guidance in the form of a manual or templates.

L3 also seemed to have achieved a close degree of brand Democracy. The respondent reported that all in the NPO communicate the brand and the director ensures the message is consistent. External stakeholders are not engaged to communicate the brand but L3 shows a democratic approach to brand communication, which is aligned with brand Democracy. However, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) suggest that if the NPO has achieved brand Integrity, management should be able to trust that the internal stakeholders will communicate the brand consistently. That the director feels the need to ensure brand communication is consistent, suggests this step has not been wholly achieved. L3 has an executive summary, which summarises the NPO, its values and mission, and this is reported to be circulated regularly amongst staff and prizes are used as an incentive for the staff to engage with the executive summary. This is an important step and shows a desire on behalf of the management to fully involve the internal stakeholders in the brand, but it is not the interactive participation that Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) recommend in brand Integrity. L3 used a workshop to develop its brand and clearly recognises the importance of brand communication but perhaps a greater degree of active inclusion of internal stakeholders in internal branding, such as through an interactive workshop similar to the one used to develop the brand originally, would result in greater trust of the acceptance of the brand internally. The executive summary could then be used as a brand guideline to aid internal stakeholders in their brand communication, as opposed to the source of internal branding.

Taken as a whole, these responses show that NPOs in South Africa have the potential to achieve the brand Democracy aspect of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework but it does require the NPO to achieve the Paradigm Shift and recognise that brand communication must be shared throughout the organisation. As more of the medium and large NPOs showed a less traditional view of brands, it suggests that larger NPOs are perhaps more able to implement the framework, possibly due to greater resources, both human and financial. However, with a guided process, other and particularly smaller, NPOs may also be able to implement this idea. This process, however, will have to include the Paradigm Shift as this could be what is preventing the other NPOs from achieving brand Democracy and detailed guidance through a resource model.

#### **QUESTION 9: Whose responsibility is brand management?**

S1 reported that brand management is the responsibility of 'volunteers dealing with the public'.

S2 reported that a director who is a creative consultant is responsible for brand management.

S3 reported that ' [the manager] keep[s] an eye on it but the creative team do the design work (2 people). Sometimes we feel a bit restricted by the [brand colours] in our logo so we have started adding background blues and other colours in reports etc but we need to keep an eye on our brand so that we are still recognised. We might change the colours one day but it's a big decision to make. Our new website has a slightly different feel to it – although you can see it is [the brand]– this is because when [the founder] left we had lots of different input from different people and so inevitably it is slightly changed.'

M1 reported that brand management is the responsibility of the manager and the fundraiser.



M2 reported that brand management is the responsibility of the primary director, board, staff and parents.

L1 reported that the CEO and Marketing and Communication are responsible for brand management.

L2 reported that the leaders (of the NPO) from the different provincial branches are responsible for brand management.

L3 reported that the director is responsible for brand management.

## **Discussion**

In terms of brand communication there was some evidence of a democratic approach to brand communication, but in terms of brand management (and therefore decision making), all the NPOs except S1 and S3, said that brand management was entirely managerial responsibility. S1 reported that all in the organisation are responsible and S3 said it was the responsibility of the manager and the creative team. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that a participatory approach, as discussed above, is important for internal and external stakeholders to feel ownership and pride in the brand, and thus communicate the brand with honesty and commitment. Indeed, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) also write that brand management can be seen as management imposing their view on internal stakeholders, which can lead to resentment, which is another reason why internal stakeholders should have their voices represented in brand management.

While S1 appears to have a democratic approach to brand management, it is actually not beneficial to say that 'brand management is the responsibility of 'volunteers dealing with the public' as brand management must be the responsibility of everyone in the NPO. These volunteers need support to know how they can communicate the brand and management needs to ensure that the volunteers understand the brand. S1 did not report a formal brand creation

process or a process to communicate the brand internally. This situation is the opposite of the traditional situation in which management control the brand but neither is desirable.

S3 said that the creative team of two people manage the brand. These two people may not be part of management but it is still not an inclusive process as the entire team should be involved in the brand. The respondent also spoke largely of the visual aspects of the brand, but the brand can also be communicated through actions, values and behaviour, which means that everyone in the NPO is communicating the brand, even if they do not realise it. As this is the case, it is important that everyone is involved in the brand, to understand it and feel a part of its management.

**QUESTION 10: How regularly do meetings on brand management take place?**

S1 reported that brand management meetings do not take place.

S2 reported that brand management meetings take place 'maybe once a year as a team and then about 3-4 more time by myself and the creative team'.

S3 reported that brand management meetings take place once a year as with all in the NPO and 'three to four more times with the manager and creative team'.

M1 reported that meetings specific to brand management do not take place but during weekly meetings 'we will refer back to what it is that we do'.

M2 reported that there are no brand management meetings.

L1 reported that brand management is incorporated in the fortnightly Marketing and Communications meetings.

L2 reported that the 'leaders' [of the NPO from different provinces] meet every quarter and brand management is discussed 'if there are matters arising'.

L3 reported that a brand management meeting is held every month for four hours.

## **Discussion**

Three of the NPOs (S3, M2 and L3) reported having regular brand management meetings but three others (M1, L1, L2) said that brand management could be mentioned in other general meetings. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write that brand management is a continuous process and the NPO should regularly assess its brand image versus its brand identity and try and reduce any differences through improved brand communication. The brand should also reflect the strategy of the NPO and so thus the brand should be part of strategic meetings. Strategies may change and the brand should reflect this change. Scheduled brand management meetings are thus important. Of the three NPOs that reported regular meetings, there were different levels of regularity and intensity. S3 and M2 met every three to four months and L3 met 'every month for four hours'. That these NPOs do regularly discuss the brand shows that some NPOs have recognised that the brand needs to be monitored and the commitment of these three NPOs to brand management suggests that the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework is possible for South African NPOs. It is also interesting that the three NPOs that reported regular brand meetings (S3, M2 and L3) are representative of all the size categories which suggest it should be possible for all South African NPOs to schedule the time and resources to brand management. The other NPOs may need more guidance and instruction on brand management. The third framework, the Brand Cycle, demonstrates the cyclical nature of brand management and how the cycle can strengthen itself, which again emphasises the importance of planned brand management.

Brand management meetings should, ideally, include a regular evaluation of the alignment of the brand to the mission, values and strategy, between the external

perception and internal perception of the brand and a brand communication strategy to address any corrections that need to be made regarding these first two aspects. Should there be misalignment, the brand communication strategy should be revised to close the gap. This process is part of brand Integrity. Brand Integrity, and indeed the entire Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, is based on the principle of participation. Representatives from internal and external stakeholders should be involved in the process of defining the brand identity. Not only will this improve internal cohesion by ensuring that all internal stakeholders share a common view of the organisation, that external brand perceptions are heard and addressed and engages external stakeholders in the brand, but it fosters support for brand management and communication as a whole.

### ***Brand Ethics***

This principle was incorporated into Brand Affinity in the 2014 edition of the framework and thus not addressed directly.

### ***Brand Affinity***

Brand Affinity refers to how the organisation uses the brand and in particular, how it uses it to achieve its mission (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Questions 11 and 12 addressed this principle.

### **QUESTION 11: Has the brand assisted the organisation and how?**

S1 reported that brand has 'attracted funding'.

S2 reported that the brand has assisted the NPO by 'building the brand and establishing credibility for it in the minds of donors and the public, we have created more awareness and it benefits fund-raising efforts'.

S3 reported 'Maybe indirectly. Not directly, but the 'loudness' of our brand speaks lots to funders, it has created a great amount of interest in the project. The [unique outfits] and colour in schools has contributed to the magic, the love of learning and the success of the project.'

M1 reported that the brand had assisted the organisation to 'gain clarity on what we do and don't do'.

M2 reported that the brand had not helped the NPO.

L1 reported that 'The [NPO brand] has a long history so it does give us a sense of provenance and there is some equity in the name – certainly in the [removed] field (government, NGO and civil society) but it would be beneficial for us to be more widely recognised by business, especially to attract more corporate funding.'

L2 reported that the brand assists with positioning within the NGO sector.

L3 reported that the brand helps to 'define our key message and outcomes'.

## **Discussion**

Brand Affinity is the final element of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and is concerned with how the NPO uses its brand to achieve its goals (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). The Non-profit Brand IDEA framework guides the NPO to brand Affinity and to the point where the strong brand can be used to attract suitable partners with whom the NPO can work with to achieve shared goals (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). However, this again requires that the management of the NPO has accepted the Paradigm Shift in which collaboration is promoted over competition. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write that the partnerships were one of the trends identified that guided the development of the Brand IDEA model and form part of the Paradigm Shift. Brand Affinity, in

particular, is informed by this trend in partnerships. Increasingly funders promote collaboration as a means to increase the impact (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014). Additionally, the social goals of the NPO may require partners to enable that they are fulfilled quickly and effectively (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

Predominately the view, however, from the respondents was that the brand helped secure funding, primarily through raising awareness of the NPO. However, in M1, L1 and L3 the brand helps 'to remain true to who we are and focus us in the right direction'; to 'gain recognition for the work we do throughout South African and the SADC [Southern African Development Community, which includes most of the countries in Southern Africa] region, which in turn will help us secure further funding and project work to achieve our mission' and to define 'the key message and outcomes'. These responses show how the brand can help focus the NPO on its mission and the essence of the NPO. It does not, however, suggest that the brand helps the organisation *achieve* 'who we are' or this 'outcome' or 'mission'.

L1, however, did under Question 8.1, mention that the NPO seeks partnerships with 'better-known entities to help establish our brand in our target market'. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write about the benefits of a smaller brand partnering with a larger brand, which can help the smaller brand to gain visibility and improve its relationship with external stakeholders. Thus it is encouraging that L1 views their brand in terms of building partnership, but brand Affinity views this partnership as a driver of achieving social goals and building trust.

The comments from M1 also allude to the outcomes of the process of differentiation, which Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) refer to as part of developing the brand. During differentiation, the management define the strengths, weaknesses and what sets the brand apart from similar NPOs. This process is important for brand Integrity and helps to clarify the brand. It is also important for the organisation to realise what it does *not* do and the comments

from this NPO suggest that their brand has helped them realise what they do and, by implication, the corollary.

M2 felt the brand had not helped the NPO. The brand has the potential to impact significantly on both the operations and social impact of the NPO. It can build trust and cohesion, which makes the NPO more effective and it can help the NPO in working towards its mission. This NPO needs to capitalise on its brand.

L2 mentioned that their brand helps with positioning the NPO within the non-profit sector. Positioning is part of the Brand IDEA model and used in the process of developing a brand, along with differentiating the brand, identifying its theory of change and internal branding. Positioning is also used in brand Affinity to identify suitable partners, however, it is only a step in the process of using the brand to achieve the mission. It is positive, however, to note that L2 views their brand as a tool beyond its traditional role but the positioning process could also be used to identify possible partners with whom the NPO can collaborate to achieve shared goals.

None of the NPOs, however, mentioned using the brand to build partnerships to help achieve a shared mission. This is the crux of brand Affinity. The lack of awareness of the ability of the brand to assist in achieving the social mission, however, is a common thread and was also apparent in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel's (2014) research. As has already been established, most of the NPOs selected have a traditional, for-profit orientated view of brands. In this perspective, NPOs do not collaborate to achieve goals but rather view similar NPOs as competitors, in this sector probably for funding. However, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) advocate collaboration in the non-profit sector, pointing to funder preference for partnerships and that the large social problems would be resolved or improved quicker with assistance. Since the achieving their social mission should be the focus of all NPOs, an opportunity to achieve this mission quickly should be embraced. Also, since funding is usually sought to fulfil this mission, offering an alternative through partnerships, which reduces the problems associated with external funding, is valuable.

Partnerships also increase trust in the NPO, which Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write is one of the drivers of brand equity in the NPO. Thus, not only would partnerships assist in achieving the organisation's mission but can build brand equity. A successful partnership and the strong trust it engenders, fosters other important partnerships and thus creates a beneficial cyclical process.

Viewing the brand with this broader role, however, is part of the shift in understanding a brand, which Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe the management of an NPO needs to accept before the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework can be implemented. It is a process which management need to accept and, as none of the NPOs mentioned actively using their brand to achieve their mission, it suggests that the Paradigm Shift has not wholly happened in the South African non-profit sector based on the responses of the NPOs selected. This could perhaps be due to lack of awareness and if the management of NPOs were made aware of the ideas of the Paradigm Shift and the resulting benefits for brand communication and brand management, they may be more willing to accept the it. Awareness and guidance is again what is needed.

**QUESTION 12: Do you feel that the brand has helped the organisation achieve its mission?**

S1 reported 'yes' with no further detail.

S2 reported 'yes' with no further detail.

S3 reported, 'indirectly. The loudness of brand speaks to funders and created interest in the project. [The signature outfits] and colour in schools has contributed to magic, the love of learning and project's success'.

M1 reported only 'yes'

M2 reported only 'no'.



L1 reported that 'Yes, however to be able to be even more effective in our mission we do need to find an affordable way to strengthen our brand in the hearts and minds of our target market and increase recognition.'

L2 reported that 'Yes, the brand keeps us aligned to our mission and core values'.

L3 reported, 'Yes, but only through living the brand honestly'.

## **Discussion**

There was a discrepancy in the answers to Question 11 and Question 12. Although almost all the NPOs reported in Question 12 that the brand had helped them achieve their mission, when asked in Question 11 how the brand assisted the NPO, none of the South African NPOs interviewed mentioned using their brand to achieve their mission.

M2 felt that its brand had not helped it achieve their mission. L1 noted that the brand had helped the NPO to achieve its mission but to 'be more effective in our mission', the NPO needs to find 'an affordable way to strengthen our brand in the hearts and minds of our target market and increase recognition'. The Non-profit Brand IDEA framework could assist in this. Again, the responses from the medium and large NPOs show a greater trend towards brand management in the vein of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. It appears to confirm the view that generally larger NPOs seem to be more progressive in using their brand as a strategic tool, beyond its marketing and public relations function. It suggests that the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework would need more steps to guide smaller NPOs to the point at which they would be more ready to implement the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. A resource model would be able to provide this detail.

L2 recognises the importance of the brand and that it can embody the NPO. In this way it can guide in decision making as decisions that would not fit with the brand can be rejected for not aligning with the organisation. This is true and the

brand should be used in this way. However, it can do more than focus the NPO on the mission, the brand could help the NPO achieve its mission or achieve significant social impact. None of the NPOs explained how the brand impacts on the activities of the NPO in its theory of change or its progress towards its mission. Under brand Affinity, this is the potential of the brand.

The respondent from L3 felt that the brand had helped the NPO but only 'through living the brand honestly'. It is true that the brand can help an NPO achieve its mission and help it focus on its mission, and indeed, this is one of the greatest benefits of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, but, in response to L3, it should be a given that the NPO is aligned to its brand during its work.

The variety of responses shows the variety in the way the brand is conceptualised and used in the South African NPO context. While some NPOs did have aspects of the principles of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, no NPO has fully implemented the brand Non-profit Brand IDEA framework. Most notably, many of the NPOs have not accepted the foundation on which the framework is built: the Paradigm Shift In particular, small NPOs were less progressed. I feel this indicates the many NPOs need guidance to lay the foundation on which they can implement the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework as well as detailed guidance to implement the framework. This type of detailed information points to the need for a resource model to supplement the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

## **Chapter 5: Findings summary and discussion**

The data analysis showed that many South African NPOs have not developed their brand strategy to the extent at which trying to implement the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework would be feasible or would make a significant difference to the NPO. This does not, however, suggest that the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework is not applicable in the South African context. Rather, adaptations need to be made to reflect the particular requirements of South Africa NPOs.

The findings of the data analysis can be summarised as three general findings influencing the structure of an adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework as well as seven specific findings related to the essential elements of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

### **1. General findings**

#### **1. Traditional brand communication**

The data analysis revealed that many South African NPOs have traditional, for-profit view of brands and see their brand predominately as a fundraising and publicity tool. This is precisely the view that the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework aims to revert. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) suggest that if management can achieve the Paradigm Shift, the changes involved in this new way of thinking about the brand, will render the traditional view of brands null as the Paradigm Shift promotes an entirely opposite view of brands.

#### **2. Underdeveloped brands**

Many of the NPOs in my study had not fully developed their brand which would make implementation of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework difficult as the framework clearly relies on the NPO having a fully developed brand.

### **3. Lack of experience in brand communication**

It also became apparent through the data that generally South African NPOs do not have internal stakeholders with experience in brand communication or brand management to guide the NPO in this field.

#### **How these findings influenced the adaptation of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework**

In relation to the development of the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework, three key directions were revealed. Firstly, that the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework would need to propel NPOs towards achieving the Paradigm Shift. This would have to involve a detailed account of what the Paradigm Shift entails in order for management to fully accept it. Secondly, it would have to guide the NPOs to fully develop their brand, not just the visual aspects as was the case for many of the NPOs in my study. Thirdly, it would have to provide detailed guidance in order for the NPOs to achieve the principles of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

In order to provide this detail and the level of guidance required to assist NPOs with little experience in brand communication, I developed a resource model for NPOs which is a detailed step-by-step guideline on implementing this adapted framework. This resource model will be discussed in the next chapter. The adapted framework can also be found in the next chapter.

## **2. Specific findings**

After analysing the results and the discussion in the previous chapter, seven specific findings related to key points of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework emerged. These will be discussed and related to the adaptations of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

1. Organisations have not fully achieved the Paradigm Shift
2. Organisations have not undertaken formal, comprehensive brand development
3. Internal communication of the brand is evident but can be improved
4. External communication focuses on written methods of communication
5. Ineffective brand alignment
6. Brand communication and brand management is predominately management's responsibility
7. The brand is not used to build partnerships or achieve the social mission

As in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel's (2014) Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework, the aspects flow from, and develop on, the preceding principle/step. Thus the seven themes will be discussed in the order in which they are addressed in the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

### **1. Achieving the Paradigm Shift**

This step is vital as it not achieving it precludes the successful implementation of the entire Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

The Paradigm Shift is a change in mind-set that needs to take place at management level in order that management recognise the value of the brand as a strategic tool. The brand is not only an asset to raise funds and publicity but represents the core of the organisation and can be used to, ultimately, assist the organisation in achieving its social mission.

As discussed earlier under General Findings, traditional brand communication is one of the consequences of not achieving the Paradigm Shift, but there are others, all of which which would also hamper the implementation of the Non-profit IDEA framework. In the responses to my questionnaire, the majority of the NPOs spoke of the role of their brand as a tool to raise funds and generate publicity. This is a traditional view of brands, which harks back to brands in the

for-profit sector. However, in the non-profit sector, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) propose that the role of the brand is different.

### **How would this influence the adaptation of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework?**

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel's (2014) Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework, focused on the principles of the Brand IDEA (Integrity, Democracy and Affinity). The Paradigm Shift was discussed in their 2014 book (*The Brand IDEA: Managing Nonprofit Brands with Integrity, Democracy and Affinity*) but it was not specifically included as part of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

This, I believe is a point at which the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework needs to be adapted for the South African context.

As discussed earlier, none of the South African non-profits interviewed showed that they had fully achieved this step. Thus, I feel it should be included as part of the framework as preparation for the implementation of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

## **2. Formal and comprehensive brand development**

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) write of four steps in brand development: differentiation, positioning, establishing a theory of change and internal branding. These were discussed in detail in my literature review.

However, most of the NPOs in my study spoke of the visual development of the brand (logo, name, colours) as opposed to the intangible aspects of the brand and how it represents the NPO.

It goes without saying that in order to implement the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework, an NPO needs a well-developed brand.

The lack of formal brand development may be due to lack of understanding of the processes involved and thus I feel more guidance on this topic is necessary. All of the organisations reported having a brand and could describe it. A certain level of thought and commitment has thus been given to the brand but the scope of all the aspects of the brand have not been realised or articulated. An adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework should thus address this.

### **How would this influence the adaptation of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework?**

Again Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel's (2014) Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework did not include brand development as part of the framework.

In South Africa, however, as seen from the responses, most of the NPOs need guidance in developing a complete brand and thus I feel this should be included in the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

Formal brand development should include the four steps outlined by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014).

### **3. Internal communication of the brand**

Although a few of the NPOs reported actively communicating their brand to internal stakeholders, for most, particularly smaller NPOs, it was not a formal, planned procedure.

It is important that everyone within the NPO shares the same view of the brand for communication consistency, especially as the internal stakeholders are an important part in the external stakeholder's brand image. Internal stakeholders contribute to the brand image by communicating the brand, even though it may be unintentional, through their actions and speech. Thus the brand message must be consistent and accurate.

Internal brand communication is important for brand Integrity and is also part of brand development and helps to build a sense of cohesion in an NPO because everyone is working for, and towards, the same brand.

### **How would this influence the adaptation of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework?**

In Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel's (2014) Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework, internal brand communication is included under brand Integrity.

The responses in my study, however, indicated that many of the NPOs did not actively communicate the brand to internal stakeholders. Thus it would not be possible for them to work towards brand Integrity. I therefore believe that in the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework, internal communication of the brand should be a separate step *before* the organisation works to achieve brand Integrity as the internal communication of the brand needs to take place in order for brand Integrity to be realised.

As many of the organisations do not have a background in communication, examples of internal brand communication should also be given in the resource model.

#### **4. External communication of the brand**

In my study, most of the NPO's reported communicating their brand externally through the traditional sources (newspapers, websites, newsletters, social media). However, the brand is communicated in all aspects of the NPO. This could be through values, projects, organisation culture, employee actions, colour or location of the office. In order to ensure a consistent brand message, the same brand needs to be communicated throughout the organisation.

While some of the medium and larger organisations understood this, some of the smaller organisations focused on traditional press communication.



## **How would this influence the adaptation of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework?**

In Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel's (2014) Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework, external brand communication is discussed under brand Integrity. However, as the responses from my study shows, many South African organisations are not strategically communicating their brand through all the various channels. The brand is still being communicated through the various channels but it is not planned and thus the quality of the communication cannot be assured. In order that external stakeholders receive a consistent brand message, the NPO must ensure that the brand message is communicated consistently.

Thus, as with internal brand communication, I feel that in the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework, external brand communication should be addressed prior to brand Integrity as it needs to be implemented before the organisation attempts brand Integrity.

To emphasise the need to communicate the brand both internally and externally, I have included these two aspects as separate steps. This should clearly show that internal and external communication of the brand are distinct actions that need to take place in the adapted Non-Profit Brand framework.

### **5. Partial alignment**

Alignment refers to the alignment between the brand and the mission, values and strategy; and the internal and external perceptions of the brand.

Four organisations, mostly in the medium and large category mentioned the brand in terms of the mission, values or strategy. Alignment, however, between the internal and external brand perceptions was not reported by any of the organisations in my study.

Gap analysis is the process of aligning these internal and external brand perceptions to result in brand Integrity. It involves assessing the internal and external perceptions of the brand for any differences then using communication to correct the differences or incorrect perceptions.

The closure of the 'gap' contributes, along with alignment of the brand to the mission, values and strategy, to brand Integrity.

### **How would this influence the adaptation of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework?**

Although Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) discuss brand Integrity in details, in the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework, I feel the internal/external brand perception alignment in brand Integrity could be explained simply through the gap analysis. This captures the essence of internal and external brand alignment in brand Integrity but avoids jargon which may confuse South African NPOs with little experience in brand communication.

Alignment between the brand and the mission, values and strategy was mentioned in responses by four of the organisations. Thus, although it may not have been implemented, this type of alignment was recognised as important. A detailed discussion could be included in the resource model but I feel, though it must be mentioned, it does not need to be emphasised in the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

### **6. Brand communication and brand management is management's responsibility**

This theme was seen in most of the NPOs. It is the traditional approach but under the Paradigm Shift, the brand is the responsibility of everyone in the NPO.

This concept is also the key point of brand Democracy that shows that brand Democracy has not been fully achieved by the South African organisations.

It is also important that the management do not appear to control the brand. This makes it unlikely that the rest of the NPO will feel a commitment or responsibility to the brand as they are not a part of it.

It may be difficult for management to accept that everyone in the NPO must be free to communicate the brand, as they wish, with only guidance from management. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014), however, believe that once an NPO has achieved brand Integrity, meaning the entire NPO shares a common view of the brand, this new approach to communication is possible and will not damage the brand.

### **How would this influence the adaptation of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework?**

As brand Democracy is poorly achieved by the South African organisations, I believe that to ensure that when a South African organisation reaches brand Democracy, it is ready and able to work towards achieving it, rather than being hampered by a communication methodology that is contradictory to the principles of brand Democracy. I suggest that the crucial principle of brand Democracy (that all in the NPO can communicate the brand freely) is included earlier in the adapted framework so that an NPO working through the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework can dedicate time to assimilating this process before progressing to brand Democracy on the framework and finding it is an impossible task.

### **7. Using the brand to develop partnerships**

The role of the brand in securing partnerships and helping the NPO to achieve its social mission is the focus of brand Affinity in the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

None of the organisations reported using the brand to develop partnerships. Some of the organisations reported that their brand helped them achieve the

mission of the NPO, however, this was predominately to secure funding or publicity.

In a context such as South Africa, with so much social need, the opportunity for organisations to collaborate to achieve social impact, should be embraced.

### **How would this influence the adaptation of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework?**

As none of the organisations reported achieving brand Affinity naturally, this should be addressed in the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework. The key issue is the need for organisations to achieve the Paradigm Shift as collaboration as opposed to competition is one of the aspects of the Paradigm Shift. However, as discussed earlier, few of the NPOs had made significant progress in this shift, which indicates the progression in the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and the need to emphasise the Paradigm Shift in the adapted version.

### **Findings conclusion**

Taking into account these general and specific findings, I would suggest a three-pronged approach with one 'framework' guiding the NPO in brand development, secondly through achieving the Paradigm Shift and lastly a 'framework' to guide the NPO through the implementation of the brand IDEA.

The adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework takes into consideration the conclusion above and highlights the progression between steps and the interaction of the IDEA principles. Thus a suggested version of this three framework approach for an adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework is presented in the following chapter.

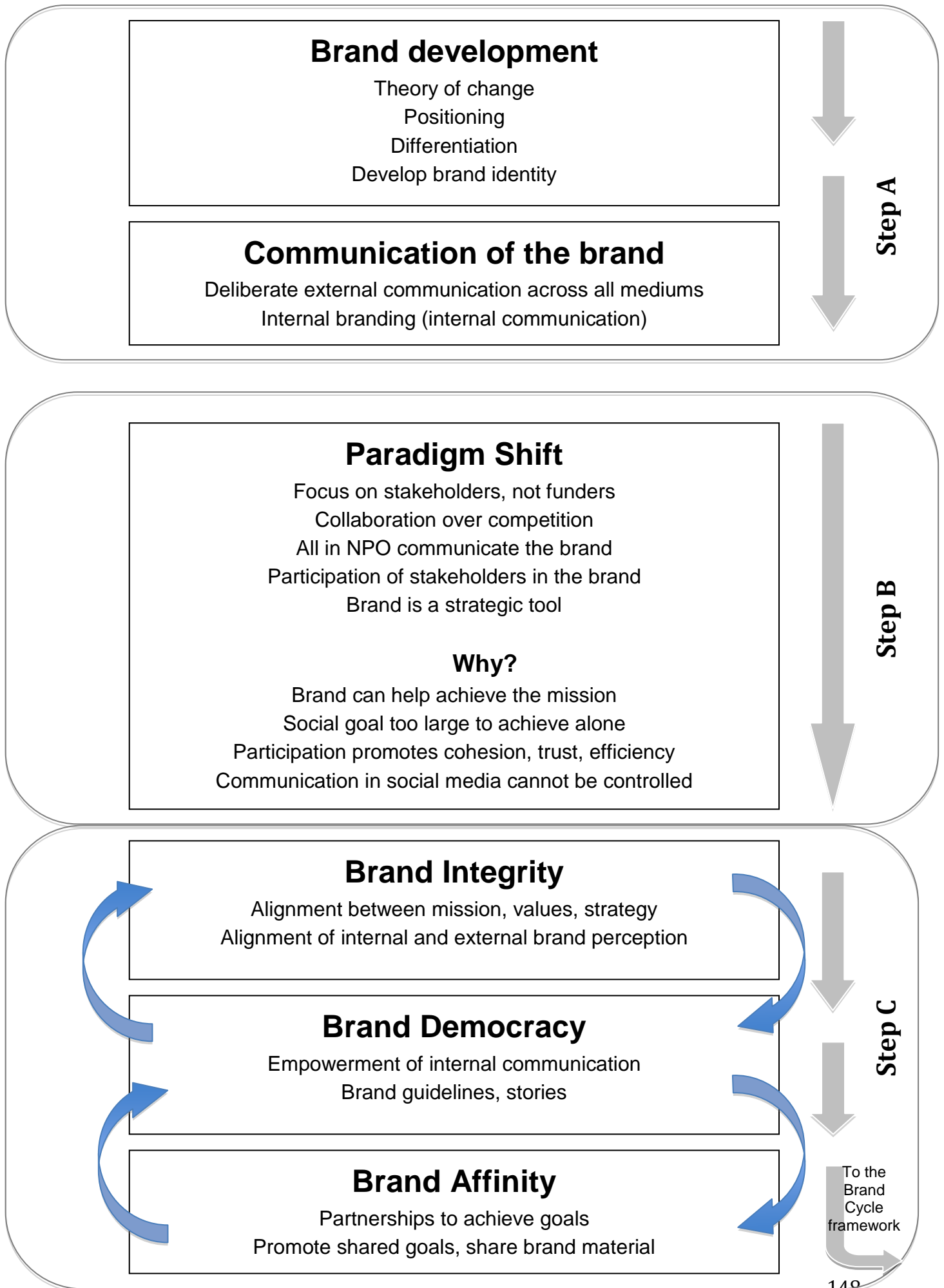
## **Chapter 6: Development of the resource model**

This project planned to evaluate the applicability of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework in a South African context through an assessment of a selection of South African NPOs. Any differences or important themes that were revealed during this analysis, would lead me to developing an adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework. This adapted framework can be found on the following page. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, I realised that many South African NPOs had poorly developed brands, which would make the application of even an adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework difficult as the framework clearly relies on the NPO having a developed brand. Also the NPOs, with a few exceptions, seemed to lack specialised brand communication or brand management experience and thus certain concepts which are taken for granted in the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework, would not have been realised in some South African NPOs.

As discussed in the previous chapter, this resource model will be a detailed version of the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework. Thus taking into consideration the adaptations made for the South African context, as well as providing step-by-step instructions so that the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework can be fully understood and utilised by a South African non-profit.

This chapter has a detailed discussion of each aspect of this resource model. The document is divided into three sections (A, B and C), as in the adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework, to cover the activities the organisation needs to undertake before starting on the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework (Section C).

# 1. Adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework



## **2. Resource model for the Adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework**

### ***Step A***

#### **Development of a brand identity**

The initial step in developing a brand is to develop the identity or what the brand must 'say' about the NPO, its work, its employees, its values; in essence how the brand can represent the entire NPO.

This process should involve internal stakeholders from all levels of the NPO to help to ensure that everyone feels a part of the brand and has a commitment to it. In large NPOs, representatives from the different internal stakeholder groups could be involved if it is not possible for all the internal stakeholders to be present.

A round table type of discussion would allow everyone the opportunity to express their views.

There are four questions the NPO can use to determine the brand identity (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014).

#### **1. Who is the NPO?**

This refers not just to a name but also to elements such as the type of organisation that it is, for example a non-governmental organisation; the position of the organisation in society, for example at the forefront of research development or its geographic location, for example international.

## 2. What does the NPO do?

This should cover all aspects of the organisation's work. This is, in essence, the mission statement of the NPO.

## 3. Why does the NPO do this work?

This should describe the need, how the organisation plays a part in addressing this need and the benefits that the beneficiaries would feel. This would also cover the values of the NPO.

## 4. How does the NPO do its work?

This should describe the process that the NPO implements to achieve its goals. This is the strategy of the NPO.

These answers should be as brief as possible but cover all aspects of the question.

The complete response to all four questions is the brand identity that matches the mission; values and strategy of the NPO. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) also suggest including reference to the vision for the NPO in these questions.

Ideally in NPOs which have several branches, representatives from each branch could attend this discussion. However, if this is not feasible, once the brand has been developed by the head office, internal stakeholders in each branch should be included in brand discussions with management about the brand, their feelings towards it and how they can use the brand. This is in order for them to feel involved in the brand.



## **Develop the brand**

Once the brand identity has been established, the NPO can begin to develop the brand.

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) describe four processes that should take place to develop the brand:

### 1. Differentiation

During the process of differentiation, representatives from the internal and external stakeholders of the NPO should write down the strengths, weakness and any defining features of the organisation.

This process helps the internal stakeholders of the organisation to understand how the organisation compares to similar organisations from their point of view, as well as from the view of the external stakeholders. It also helps to identify strengths or focus areas and weakness or areas to improve.

### 2. Positioning

Positioning involves placing the NPO in the sector, relative to similar organisations. For example, is it exactly the same as organisation X or is it stronger in aspect A which allows it to differentiate itself? Does organisation X work in a different aspect of the same social need as organisation Y but the external stakeholders thinks the two organisations do the same work?

These differences must be communicated to the external stakeholders to avoid confusion about what each NPO does or does not do. The brand communication can be used to provide this clarification.

This activity should involve both internal and external (public) stakeholders to assess how both the employees and public view the organisation and if there are any differences.

The NPO could use questionnaires, social media or open discussions with both internal and external stakeholders to gain this information.

### 3. Theory of change

The theory of change refers to the steps that need to take place to bring about the change that the NPO is working towards. For example, what are the chain of events that need to take place to implement an amendment to a child protection law?

The NPO should be able to say where it falls on this chain of events. For example, using the above situation, the NPO may be involved in advocacy to push legislators to amend the law.

While the NPO is discussing the steps needed to bring about the change/goal/improvement/impact it is working towards, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) suggest that the NPO needs to consider two questions at each of the steps:

1. Is our NPO best placed to accomplish this step or could it be better achieved by another organisation?  
If so, which organisation?

From the responses, the NPO may decide to focus on a different 'step' of its theory of change and/or partner with another organisation to achieve a step.

Partnering with another organisation may help the change/goal/improvement/impact to be reached quicker or increase the impact.

2. What role does our brand play in this step? Who is the target stakeholder group and how might the brand be better positioned to effectively communicate with this group?

The answers to this question show the brand's role in the theory of change. A brand always communicates to multiple stakeholder groups and each step in the theory of change may communicate to different group. For each group, the NPO may need to use different strategies to differentiate and position itself for this group. Thus the NPO should determine who are its different stakeholder groups for each step and how these groups could be more effectively reached through communication.

This could link back to problems revealed in differentiation and positioning if the target group does not have a clear understanding of how the NPO fits into the work taking place to bring about the desired change/goal/improvement/impact.

These three processes (differentiation, positioning and theory of change) link to Brand Affinity in the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

#### 4. Internal branding

This is the last of the steps in brand development.

Once the brand has been clearly defined and developed through the above steps, it must be communicated to all internal stakeholders.

Making sure that everyone within the NPO shares the same vision of the brand helps to ensure that a consistent brand is communicated to external stakeholders and can assist in accurate differentiation of the brand in the public arena.

This process of internal communication of the brand could take place through meetings in which the brand is discussed, posters or email communiqués. However the NPO chooses to communicate its brand internally, it is important that it is communicated clearly and consistently to all within the NPO.

### **Communicate the brand externally (to the public)**

Once the brand has been communicated to everyone within the NPO, it needs to be communicated to all external stakeholders. External brand communication could be through advertising, social media, group emails, posters, meetings or direct marketing tools.

Additionally, the NPO must be aware of the many intangible ways that a brand is communicated. Internal stakeholders communicate the brand through their actions, speech, and decisions. The NPO also communicates the brand through its values, projects and actions.

All the brand messages communicated to the internal and external public should be the same to ensure consistency and accurate brand perceptions.

These above processes in Section A may take many months but can result in a strong brand. I would suggest that the NPO works through these above steps before progressing to Section B.

### ***Step B***

#### **Management to accept the Paradigm Shift**

Management of the NPO need to accept this mind-set change in order to successfully implement the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

There are several principles of the Paradigm Shift.

1. Brands are a strategic tool

Brands represent the core of the NPO. Thus brands are seen as a strategic tool which can aid the NPO in achieving its social mission, as well as influence in the NPO internally through improving internal cohesion and trust. This is contrary to the traditional for-profit role of the brand as a publicity and fundraising tool.

2. Participation is key

The participatory approach is central to the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework. There must be participation of internal stakeholders in the development of the brand, of internal and external stakeholders in its communication and a participatory approach to partnerships

3. The brand embodies the NPO

As the brand should be seen as representing the core of the NPO, it can be used as a decision making tool. The expected result of any decision can be compared to what the brand represents to assess if the decision matches the brand.

Secondly, as the brand embodies the NPO, everyone within the NPO is a representative of the brand and should have the responsibility of brand communication. With the rise of social media, the NPO also needs to find a way to ensure positive brand communication across social media. Empowering the stakeholders to communicate a shared vision of the brand can help achieve this.

4. The brand can be used to identify partners and build relationships.

This may seem contradictory to many NPOs which work from a for-profit approach. However, in the non-profit sector, the NPOs should not be concerned with individual glory but rather achieving a greater, social goal. This goal is often

too great for the NPO to achieve alone. Collaboration must be promoted over competition. Successful partnerships can bring benefits other than social impact, for the NPO.

#### 5. Focus on the public, not funders

Under the Paradigm Shift, the brand is not a fundraising tool but is rather a strategic tool. It can be used to communicate the essence of the NPO to the external stakeholders, communicate the brand to the internal stakeholders and attract partners.

### ***Step C***

#### **Brand Integrity**

Brand Integrity is the first step in Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel's (2014) Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

Brand Integrity is what these authors call the situation when the internal and external stakeholders share a common view of the brand and when the brand aligns with the mission, values and overall organisational strategy.

It can be difficult to achieve as the external stakeholders' perception of the brand can change over time but regular assessment of the brand image can allow the NPO to act to correct poor brand images before they become entrenched. However, the ideal situation of complete alignment ensures that a consistent and correct brand message is being understood and communicated and that all projects are aligned to the brand.

Brand Integrity needs to be achieved before the NPO can progress to brand Democracy.

The process to achieve brand Integrity is two part. Part 1 as follows:

1. Determine the internal perception of the brand.

This can be achieved through meetings or questionnaires.

2. Take steps to correct an incorrect internal brand perception

The responses must be analysed and any discrepancies must be corrected through further communication, for example brand discussions, posters, email newsletters.

3. Determine the external perception of the brand.

This can be achieved through research in which members of the external stakeholder groups are asked questions on their perception of the NPO's brand.

4. Compare the differences and similarities between the internal and external brand perceptions

Once this data has been collected, the differences between the two perceptions must be analysed. The brand identity should be accurate as it has already been corrected through communication. Thus any differences between the brand identity and the brand image must be corrected through communication to the external stakeholders so that the brand image aligns to the brand identity and internal and external stakeholders share a consistent brand perception of the NPO.

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel suggest developing a 'steering committee' (2014:p. 129) to make sure the brand continues to be correctly perceived internally and externally. This committee should include a panel of representative external stakeholders (for example, funders, beneficiaries, a member of the public) to

monitor external brand perception and the impact of corrective communication on external stakeholders.

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) recommend that this four step process will need to be repeated regularly to ensure that there is always a consistent and correct brand image over both internal and external publics.

## Part 2

Aligning the brand to the mission, values and strategy involves connecting the brand to the 'who', 'what', 'why' and 'how' questions discussed earlier. Through this process, the brand should be aligned to the mission, values and strategy of the NPO.

If there is not alignment between the brand and the mission and values, repeat the discussion over the four questions to see how the brand can be reoriented to reflect the mission and values. This may then involve communication to redefine the brand for the internal and external stakeholders. The steps from Part 1 could be repeated to ensure correct alignment.

If the brand is not aligned to the strategy, consider how the brand contributes to the strategic plan for the NPO. The brand should fit the vision of the strategic plan.

## **Brand Democracy**

Brand Democracy is the second principle of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

Brand Democracy involves the management of the NPO allowing internal and external stakeholders to communicate the brand freely. There is a proviso: brand Integrity needs to have been achieved. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that if brand Integrity has been achieved and everyone within the



NPO share a common view of the brand, and they feel a commitment to the brand, they will communicate the brand in an authentic and responsible manner.

This democratic approach to communication is part of the Paradigm Shift that needs to be accepted by management, otherwise brand Democracy will be difficult to achieve.

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe brand Democracy is essential to achieve in an age where social media dominates as it is impossible for the NPO to control all brand communication on social media. Thus it is more effective to ensure this communication is accurate and consistent by empowering the stakeholders through brand Democracy.

Internal stakeholders could attend brand workshops where the brand and how it can be communicated is explained. These meetings should be interactive to promote the participatory approach. Engagement through social media or engagement campaigns allows the internal stakeholders to voice their opinions and feelings about the brand.

Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) suggest that personal stories from the stakeholders about the brand, their work, their own story, why they work for the NPO or their experience of the impact of the brand, can be very effective and empowering for all the stakeholders.

Another suggestion by Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) is to provide guidelines or templates which the internal stakeholders can adapt in their communication.

Brand Democracy is also particularly important for NPOS with several geographically spread branches.

## **Brand Affinity**

Brand Affinity is the final step in the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework.

Brand Affinity involves using the brand to achieve, or assist, in the social mission. This is through using the brand to develop partnerships with other brands.

Again, the concept behind brand Affinity is part of the Paradigm Shift where the NPO shifts from competition to collaboration.

To do achieve brand Affinity, the NPO should consider the outcomes of the theory of change procedure earlier in the framework. This procedure identified NPOs working towards the same mission.

The NPO should then consider its brand to identify suitable partners to help both NPOs achieve the shared mission. These partners can be working on the same 'step' in the theory of change or on a different 'step' but with the same end social mission.

Once the NPO has identified partners and established a working partnership, it must continue to promote collaboration.

The NPO must share credit and publicity. The larger, more visible brands, can allow smaller, weaker brands to become more visible in the partnership. This can be through increased media attention of their work in the partnership or allowing the partner organisation to speak about the shared work.

If there are sceptics about entering into partnerships in the NPO, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) suggest using figures, statistics and quantitative data to show increases in social impact due to a joint response.

The NPOs should also share brand material. For example, the NPO could develop posters and videos which the partner organisations can use to support common goals. Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) argue that this can promote trust and responsibility towards the brand as the partner organisations feel honoured at the trust the NPO shows them by allowing them use of the brand. This can ensure that they treat the brand with respect. It also helps to promote feelings of trust, support and collaboration, which will benefit the brand and encourage future partnerships.

The focus at all times should be on achieving the shared mission, rather than on milking a partnership or trying to benefit unduly.

This is the end of the resource model for the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework. Through implementing these above processes, Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) believe that the benefits will increase over time as the NPO builds on the successes achieved through the Non-Profit IDEA framework, as was discussed in my literature review.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

The importance of a brand is far reaching and can have a long-term impact on the success of an NPO (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel, 2014), especially in the South African context where NPOs are increasingly forced to be run professionally and maximise impact. Correct brand management can ensure that an NPO develops strong partnerships, which can assist in its achieving its social mission and build the credibility of the NPO. Good brand management can also promote internal strength through building trust and cohesion. This can help the NPO to achieve a solid brand image and ensure consistent behaviour, both in communications and actions. The Non-profit Brand IDEA framework demonstrates how NPO managers can be guided to achieve these outcomes. Additionally, using the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework can allow the NPO to progress to the Brand Cycle framework where it can build on the outcomes of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework and increase the brand equity of the NPO. The advantages of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework thus extend the long-term future of the NPO reinforcing the need for NPOs to work towards adopting the model and implementing the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

My study recognised that the IDEA principles of the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework have specific definitions, and different interpretations of a brand are clearly possible as demonstrated by the alternative word(s) for brands offered by the NPOs; words such as 'identity', 'values', 'name' and 'logo'. Thus the reported NPOs may feel that their brand is strong according to their understanding of a brand. However, this study was not aiming to understand the strength of current brand practices in South African NPOs, but rather to understand the applicability of the Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework to the South African context. This is because this framework has been developed by researchers specifically for NPOs and so would provide an effective guideline for NPOs wanting to develop their brands.

As established in my literature review, the South African non-profit sector is a challenging environment for NPOs. Funders require NPOs to be able to deliver quantitative impact in return for funding. The impact reports demanded by funders also stretch the capacity of some NPOs. Poor behaviour by certain NPOs has tarnished the South African non-profit sector for funders, thus increasing competition by NPOs for remaining vital funding. The Non-profit Brand IDEA framework provides an innovative solution to these funding pressures and overburdened NPOs by suggesting that successful implementation of the framework can help an NPO secure meaningful partnerships through which it can work towards shared goals, establish itself for collaborative funding ventures and, over time, improve its organisational capacity. As impact and funding are two key concerns for any NPO, this alone makes the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework an important consideration in any South African NPO, aside from the positive internal outcomes of the framework.

However, as it stands the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework would not be of use to many South African NPOs as they lack the brand foundation on which the framework builds. Thus an adapted Non-profit Brand IDEA framework was developed which takes the findings from the South African NPOs into consideration and includes extra steps to guide NPOs, including those with little experience in brand communication and brand management, to be able to benefit from the Non-profit Brand IDEA framework.

Granted there was a small sample, but the results are consistent. I, therefore, believe that the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework is useful and relevant to South African NPOs.

Due to the limitations of this study, I was not able to implement the adapted Non-Profit Brand IDEA framework in the NPOs in my study to analyse the results. This, however, opens up the opportunity to explore this aspect in future research.

My study also recognised the multiplicity of research in the field of brand literature but noted a lack of application of this theory to NPOs. A similar observation was made by Kylander and Stone (2012), which led them to develop the Brand IDEA model. There is a clear prospect for further research in this field as the non-profit sector is growing both globally and in South Africa and thus research in this sector is relevant.

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