

# EXPLORING BRANDING IN THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR: A CASE STUDY OF THE GIRL GUIDES' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

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## ABSTRACT

*This article reports on a case study of the Girl Guides' Association of South Africa (GGASA) in an attempt to recommend a corporate communication strategy for the organisation. A theoretical construct combining principles of corporate communication theory (including the role of image and identity), brand management as well as social marketing is suggested as a possible basis for improving the brand management of a non-profit service organisation. In this qualitative study of restricted scope the purpose was to test the feasibility of the above-mentioned theoretical construct by a perception analysis of the organisation's external and internal publics. The analysis included documents created to communicate with external and internal publics. The findings indicate that the diverse messages that are currently communicated via the GGASA's corporate communication process are hampering the growth of the organisation. Recommendations include the creation of a strong brand that will improve the visibility of the GGASA and consequently help to create a persistent presence in the minds of the organisation's publics.*

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## **INTRODUCTION: THE GIRL GUIDES' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (GGASA)**

Non-profit organisations (NPOs) globally play a very specific developmental role in civil society. The Girl Guides' Association of South Africa (GGASA) is one of nearly 100 000 NPOs in the country and a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). WAGGGS is the largest women's organisation in the world dedicated to the development and advancement of girls and young women (GGASA 2002a).

As a national and voluntary educational organisation the GGASA comprise a network of 800 local guiding units throughout South Africa. A unit consists of 20 to 25 members. Based on a clearly defined value system, the GGASA's mission is to actively develop the full potential of all South African girls and women.

In 1998 the "Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Ontwikkelingsamenwerking" (NOVIB) funded and executed a pilot capacity building project for the GGASA which focused on improving its organisational capacity. The positive results of this two-year pilot programme indicated the need to expand the programme nationally (GGASA 2002b). A progressively dynamic programme was consequently developed to accelerate the growth of the organisation and improve the image of "guiding" in the South African society. This strategic plan included the necessity to explore ways to develop and manage the corporate branding, identity and image of the GGASA.

The objective of this article is to report on a study in which the GGASA's current corporate branding, identity and image were investigated and suggestions for improvement were made on the basis of an interdisciplinary theoretical construct and an explorative survey of restricted scope.

## **THE NPO SECTOR IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The defining characteristic of the NPO sector is its voluntary and developmental nature. NPOs in South Africa are engaged in a wide spectrum of activities ranging from services, mobilising resources, research and innovation, human resource development, public information, education and advocacy.

Before the 19th century no organised welfare services existed in South Africa. A national conference in 1916 recommended the co-ordination of private welfare services and in the late twenties a number of National Welfare Councils were constituted. Today NPOs are founded within the Non-profit Organisations Act, no. 71 of 1997. Different kinds of legal entities for NPOs exist today which include Section 21 companies, trusts, and voluntary associations. Although the key

defining characteristics of NPOs can be described as voluntary, independent, not-for-profit and not for self-serving aims, the NPO sector has become a dominant economic force all over the world and is often referred to as the “third sector”. NPOs demonstrate many of the entrepreneurial qualities of a business. The main difference is that an NPO’s “profit” is primarily social development.

The most recent survey identified 98 920 NPOs across all sectors in South Africa with a revenue source of R14 billion supported by nearly 1.5 million volunteers (Swilling & Russell 2002). The size of the NPO sector in South Africa is an indication of the important role it plays in the South African civil society. The NPO sector currently shares the market with for-profit corporations and public agencies. Consequently NPOs now face increasing competition — competition that forces NPOs to employ effective management methods. For survival and sustainability it has become necessary for NPOs to adopt some of the managerial techniques and systems of the for-profit corporations.

An important management function of for-profit organisations is the implementation and management of a corporate communication strategy. It is assumed here that the improvement of the communication between NPOs and their internal and external publics may contribute as positively to their management practices and service delivery as is the case in for-profit organisations. The role that an NPO’s corporate brand plays in its corporate communication strategy, specifically in shaping the identity and image of the organisation, is the focus.

## **CORPORATE COMMUNICATION**

Most organisations use three basic forms of communication: management communication, marketing communication and organisational communication. Corporate communication “encompasses all three” (Van Riel 1992: 1). The differences between these three forms of corporate communication as described by Van Riel (1992: 1-4) are presented in Table 1 below.

**TABLE 1: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE THREE MAINS FORMS OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION**

<b>Management communication</b>	<b>Marketing communication</b>	<b>Organisational communication</b>
This refers to communication by managers with internal and	This includes: -Advertising -Direct mail	This includes: -Public relations -Public affairs

external publics	-Personal selling -Sponsorships	-Investor relations -Environmental communication -Corporate advertising -Internal communication
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### Corporate identity and image

The image of an organisation is a reflection of the organisation's reality and it is therefore the way an organisation is seen through the eyes of its publics. Identity, on the other hand, is the visual manifestation of the organisation's reality as seen in, for instance, its logo, buildings and stationary. Identity and image are created by the organisation when it interacts with its different publics. Van Riel (1992: 28) refers to symbols, communication and behaviour as the corporate identity mix. Identity is created when an organisation communicates with its publics. They form perceptions based on such messages. Corporate identity and image are therefore the two central concepts in corporate communication (Van Riel 1992: 25; Argenti 1998: 56). Pickton and Broderick (2001: 25) view brand management as the third leg of a corporate communication triangle similar to the one Van Riel (1992) and Argenti (1998) refer to. Just like product brands, corporate brands comprise three overlapping concepts, namely corporate personality, identity and image (Pickton & Broderick 2001: 25). This relationship is presented in Table 2 below.

**TABLE 2: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CORPORATE PERSONALITY, IDENTITY AND IMAGE**

<b>Corporate personality</b>	<b>Corporate identity</b>	<b>Corporate image</b>
The refers to composite organisational traits, characteristics and spirit	The forms the basis of how the organisation is known and understood. It is the means by which the corporate personality is expressed	This refers to the impression of an organisation created by the corporate identity as perceived by the target publics

A poor image can be disastrous for an NPO (Clift 1998: 7). NPOs should therefore constantly strive to know and understand how their publics perceive them in order to ensure that that they reach out effectively to these publics by fashioning their corporate communication strategy according to their publics' perceptions. Since NPOs work mainly in the development field, Servaes's (1995: 45) views

on participatory communication resonate in Cliff's approach. Servaes highlights the importance of sharing information, knowledge, trust, commitment and a right attitude in development projects with specific target audiences. Applied to NPOs, this suggests that knowledge about the publics of an NPO will affect all stakeholders positively. Timely research can point the way to more meaningful relationships with donors, volunteers and other key publics (Heinz & Robinson 1999: 86).

Any NPO needs to occupy a space in the mind of its target public. The way to attract the public's attention is by creating awareness (Radtke 1998: 18). Only then will the public engage with the organisation and ultimately act. NPOs that take control of their corporate communication strategy and succeed to build a strong image and identity will become leaders in a specific field. NPOs should therefore consider the application of the principles of corporate communication when marketing their organisations. Successful marketing will ensure that their services are utilised effectively, their developmental goals are achieved and that they receive the necessary support from their target publics. This will ensure the sustainability of the organisation. Although "branding and image building once was thought to be foreign to NPOs, they are moving to create stronger brands images, recognisable logos and marketing initiatives they believe are critical to their survival" (Feder 1998: 1).

## **Branding**

Only when an organisation's image and identity are known, can it constitute a brand with real power to act on behalf of a perceived common good. Branding is consequently much more "than the naming per se or the creation of an external indication that a product or service has received an organisation's imprint" (Kapferer 1992: 9). The brand is the organisation's external façade and needs to be maintained and expanded (Kapferer 1992: 9).

To Kapferer (1992: 34) the essence of brand identity lies in an organisation's individuality, its long term goals and ambitions, its consistency, its values, its basic truths and its recognition signs. Aaker (2002: 44) developed a brand identity planning model in which strong brands are determined by their "brand equity". Brand equity is defined as the brand assets (or liabilities) linked to a brand's name. He groups these assets into four dimensions:

- *Brand awareness* affects perceptions and taste. People like the familiar and develop positive attitudes to things that are familiar to them (Aaker 2002: 17).
- *Perceived quality* influences brand associations and has been shown to affect profitability.

- *Brand association* is anything that connects the public to the brand, including imagery, product attributes, brand personalities and symbols. Brand management involves *inter alia* determining which associations to develop and then creating programmes that will link these associations to the brand.
- *Brand loyalty* refers to the strengthening of the size and intensity of each loyal segment of the brand. A brand with a small but intensely loyal customer base can have significant equity.

A company's real value therefore lies outside the business itself, in the minds of the potential customer. This is also true for the "service brands" of NPOs. The difference is that service brands demand a specific relationship between target public and organisation because services, which are the "products" of NPOs, are invisible.

### **Social marketing**

To help overcome this problem, the correlative theory of social marketing can be considered to help ensure that an NPO is perceived by its publics as a super brand. Social marketing is basically the application of generic marketing principles to a specific class of problems (Kotler & Andreasen 1991: 427). All marketers are in the profession of creating, building, and maintaining exchanges. Because exchanges only take place when a targeted member of the public takes an action, the ultimate objective of generic marketing is to influence behaviour. In social marketing, the objective of the marketer is to change social behaviour — not to benefit the marketer, but primarily to benefit society in general. Social marketing programmes are therefore by definition generic marketing programmes carried out to change behaviour that are of interest to an individual or society (Andreasen 1995: 9).

A social marketing framework contains many points of application in the NPO sector. Because the bottom line of social marketing is to influence behaviour, this framework and its concepts can be applied to influence volunteers, government agents, donors, staff members as well as a range of potential intermediaries and other cooperating organisations. Social marketing can contribute to a strong image-building programme that will increase the visibility of NPOs (McClellan, Rebello-Rao & Wyszomirski 1999: 169). Any NPO not constantly in view will lose public awareness, interest and support.

Another critical concept for designing a successful social marketing programme is the preparation of a sound strategic plan. The different elements of strategic social marketing are:

- extensive background analyses, including target publics analysis;

- a core marketing strategy;
- marketing procedures designs which include benchmarks and feedback mechanisms;
- pre-tests of key programme elements;
- implementation of the strategy; and
- monitoring and adjustment.

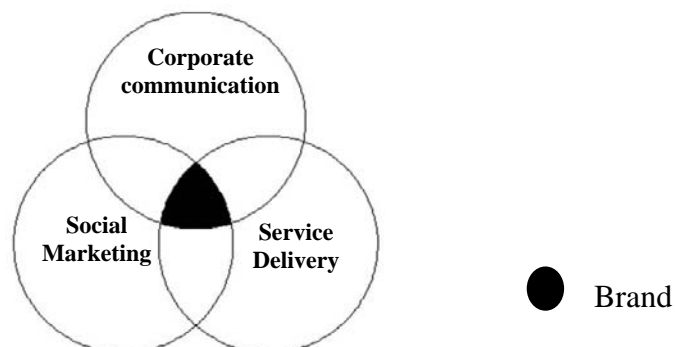
This strategic social marketing process is continuous and indefinite. It is not a one-way activity with a neat beginning and end (Andreasen 1995: 73). Target audiences should be a central and constant part of the process in order to ensure that the publics are aware of an organisation’s image and identity.

### **A THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT TOWARDS A CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR NPOs**

In theory it seems as if the theoretical views of corporate communication, branding and brand management and social marketing as described above can be integrated to plan corporate communication strategies for NPOs. In this theoretical construct the service brand of NPOs constitutes the identity and image of the organisation. The brand is the departure point. Without strong branding it would not be possible to implement an effective social marketing campaign and/or a corporate communication strategy.

This construct is diagrammatically represented below. The brand is indicated as the core element in an NPO’s corporate communication strategy around which corporate communication, social marketing and service delivery converge to create a framework for a successful corporate communication strategy.

**FIGURE 1: BRANDING AS THE CORE ELEMENT IN A CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**



This theoretical viewpoint was used to explore how the GGASA could more successfully develop and manage its corporate communication strategy.

### **EXPLORING THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE GGASA**

This case study of an explorative nature wanted to elicit a deeper understanding of the world of the GGASA. A qualitative research design was chosen that would enable the researcher to elicit **and** understand the perceptions of the publics who interact with the GGASA. The aim of the survey was not to make generalisable findings but to understand and interpret the world of the GGASA. Therefore the sampling procedures, the data collection methods, the analysis of the data as well the reportage of the findings followed the procedures described as suitable for qualitative research (Leedy 1997: 155, 156; Cassell & Symon 1995: 2; Neuman 2000).

The research population for this study was divided into two groups comprising members of the GGASA’s internal and external publics. They were selected by purposive and convenience sampling. Data was collected from them by using pre tested semi-structured interviews as well as focus group discussions based on perception analysis. A summary of the research process is presented in Table 3.

**TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

<b>Data collection method</b>	<b>Internal public</b>	<b>External public</b>
Semi-structured interviews	<p><i>9-21 March 2004, GGASA National Office</i>  <i>Officials of the GGASA</i>                      -Chief Commissioner, Eugenia Mbekeni                      -National President, Isabella Winkie Direko                      -Chairperson of the Communication and Marketing Sub-committee, Hillary White</p> <p><i>30 August 2004, GGASA National Office</i>                      -Deputy Chief Commissioner, Kennia Plaskitt</p>	<p><i>May 2004</i>                      -National funders of the GGASA                      -NOVIB, M. Demenint                      -National Development Agency, Nokulunga Tsholoba                      Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation, Herman Brouwer</p>
Focus group	<i>19 March 2004, GGASA National</i>	



discussions	<p><i>Office</i></p> <p><i>GGASA members</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Regional Commissioners</li> <li>-National Board members</li> <li>-Chairpersons of different sub-committees</li> </ul> <p><i>14 June 2004, GGASA National Office</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-GGASA members of the National Support Centre Management and staff</li> </ul>	
Focus group discussions	<p><i>30 August 2004, Willowmore High School (Boksburg/Benoni Unit)</i></p> <p>School going members of GGASA units</p> <p><i>30 January 2005 at the Fountains Camp Site, Pretoria</i></p> <p>School going members of GGASA units</p>	<p><i>30 August 2004, Willowmore High School (Boksburg/Benoni Unit)</i></p> <p>Non-members at schools</p> <p><i>7 February 2005 Sutherland High School, Centurion, Pretoria</i></p> <p>Non-members at schools</p>

All the available GGASA communication materials like news clippings, printed advertisements, radio and television coverage, brochures and posters, publications, newsletters, annual general meeting reports, stationery, website, badges and corporate gifts, uniforms, name boards and banners, vehicle branding, constitution, policy organisation and rules, communication and marketing modules, and the GGASA Strategic plan of August 2005 were also collected.

One problem occurred during the research process that impacted on the reliability of the study. Interviews arranged with members of the corporate sector and funders of the GGASA as representatives of the external public were cancelled at short notice. The GGASA management requested the researcher not to interview them since they had not long ago taken part in a study conducted by management where they were asked to complete questionnaires about their perceptions of the GGASA. Management made copies of these completed questionnaires available to the researcher. Although interviews would have provided in-depth data of a better quality and consequently a better understanding of the external public's perceptions, the data collected from the questionnaires was sufficient to obtain insight, albeit not comprehensive, into the perceptions of the GGASA's external public.

After the data was collected, the recordings of the interviews and focus group discussions were numbered and transcribed. The data obtained from the individual interviews, questionnaires and

documents was then analysed manually using a qualitative content analysis process (Berg 1998). Two independent researchers took part in the analysis to enhance reliability. The data was coded manually into four broad pre-determined categories. They were:

- the aims of the GGASA as communicated by the corporate branding, identity and image of the GGASA;
- the principles of the GGASA as communicated by the corporate branding, identity and image of the GGASA;
- the characteristics of the corporate communication strategy of the GGASA inferred from the corporate branding, identity and image of the GGASA; and
- the perceptions about the GGASA as communicated by the corporate branding, identity and image of the GGASA.

Smaller codes emerged in each of these categories. They will be indicated in the discussion of the outcome of the data analysis below.

## **THE CORPORATE BRANDING, IDENTITY AND IMAGE OF THE GGASA AS PERCEIVED BY ITS EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL PUBLICS**

The nature of the GGASA's corporate branding identity and image is discussed according to the four broad categories into which the data was coded.

### **The aims of the GGASA**

The following codes emerged in this category:

#### *Intercultural nature*

Both the external and internal public realised that one of the specific aims communicated by the GGASA is that it wants to offer an intercultural platform for girls and young women to develop as empowered individuals: "I am able to do my job well ... — because it was part of my mind frame that they are my mates, all cultures and race. Without Guiding it would not have been possible. The sharing of different cultures and experiences of people are just fantastic!" (SS111A4). The GGASA offers its members the opportunity to form closer relationships (between cultural groups) and have a better understanding of each other: "We rangers, we are just very much closer to each other" (FG1A3M). The internal public agreed that the intercultural nature of the GGASA made them who they are today. The external public noted the potential of the GGASA to reach out to women in South Africa with a diverse background: "the GGASA had been intercultural since its inception" (SS11EA4).

### *Leadership building*

An asset of the GGASA is that the promotion of leadership is seen as part of the identity of the organisation (FG1A3). The internal public felt that the GGASA's methods and programmes are conducive to develop leadership skills: "Girls Guides offered me the opportunity to have my say. Girls must be leaders" (SSIIA2). The external public also saw the GGASA as a training facility where (specifically black) women can be empowered to take on leadership responsibilities in society (SSIIIEA1). The prominence of the leadership building perception is probably enhanced by the GGASA's slogan: "Once a Guide, always a Guide; a Guide will lead."

### *Female development focus*

The GGASA's role in general skills transfer and the consequent developmental focus of girls/women could be seen quite clearly. The internal public saw the GGASA as "... an opportunity to push girls ..." (SSIIIA2). They noted that "It is especially in the under-resourced areas where women are empowered" (FGIA2M) and that "GGASA teaches us about being a woman and how to live in this world" (FGIA3). The external audience saw the GGASA as an organisation that can prepare girls positively for the future in line with the GGASA's motto: "Be prepared." The external public perceived the girls as nature lovers, independent individuals who are able to survive and "stand on their own feet" (FGEA2).

### *High values and responsibility*

The internal audience saw the Girl Guiders as role models who are honest in the execution of their duties. The Promise of the GGASA is seen as a unique factor that reminds Guiders about their responsibilities and helps them to adhere to high values. "One is able to question yourself when you do something: is this what is expected of me?" (FG1A2) and "It teaches you responsibility and is not just something you do on a Friday" (FGIA2). In contrast the external audience saw the GGASA as very traditional with specific outdated routines, e.g. the oath and songs. The external public is not always aware of the values system endorsed by the GGASA.

## **The principles of the GGASA**

The following codes emerged in this category:

### *Social skills development*

The internal public considered social skills development as an important principle. The social experiences and opportunities that the GGASA offers girls are considered invaluable: "It gave me

the most wonderful life experiences ... I had the opportunity to study overseas ... to share opportunities ... to develop as an individual ...” (SSIIIA4) and “ ... at the Guides we learn ... how to understand ourselves, learn not to judge others...” (FGIA2). The external public saw guiding as an extramural activity for girls that give them the opportunity to meet people and make friends.

### *A sense of belonging*

It came out very strongly that the internal public sees the GGASA as girls who subscribe to a specific lifestyle. Members noted that they had been members since Grade 4 and were still members after 22 years and more: “Once a Guider — always a guider!” (FGIA3); “Girl Guides are part of our tradition ... I want my children also to be one” (SSIIA2); “I am a member since the age of 11 and it is part of our tradition” (SSIIIA3) and “The GGASA is part of our family ... it is a generation activity” (SSIIIA1). Their uniforms and badges were seen as a symbol of the feeling that they belong to a specific group and that they want to wear the uniform because it strengthens the unity perception. It stands out as a very specific brand statement. The external public associated the GGASA with the “Brownies” because of the GGASA’s uniform and badges and commented that the GGASA is an outdated movement with traditional routines. Yet they do perceive their sense of pride and that they could not be influenced by others (FGEA2).

### *Voluntary nature*

Respondents of both the internal and external publics acknowledged the voluntary nature of the GGASA and indicated that it must be preserved. Especially GGASA members felt strongly about this: “Guiding must be work done from the heart” (SSIIIA2). Although it is difficult to market the values of voluntary work, it seems critical to preserve this aspect.

### *Networking*

The importance of international links and networks were stressed by both publics. As the GGASA is a founder member of the worldwide movement (WAGGGS), it offers great opportunities to its members to attend international events. The external public regarded this as one of the GGASA’s biggest strengths and saw the GGASA as an organisation that is well positioned for skills transfer because its networks can maximise its impact.

### *Business principles*

The funders representing the external public felt positive about the fact that the GGASA is managed according to sound business principles: “The GGASA is one of the few organisations we fund that meets our stringent reporting procedures” (SSIIIEA2). It was further noted that the strength of the

organisation lies in the corporate culture of the organisation (SSIIEA3). This perception was supported by the analysis of the GGASA's documents i.e. manuals, proposals, strategic plan and others printed materials that are produced for the external public.

### **The characteristics of the corporate communication strategy of the GGASA**

The following codes emerged in this category:

#### *Logo/image/brand*

The presentation of the logo of the GGASA was seen as problematic by both publics: "It is not a visible logo ... all is happening behind close doors"; "The GGASA should be more upfront ... less apologetic" (SSIIIA2); "The GGASA's brand is unknown — people know about the Scouts because they do more ..." (FGEA1) and "...we never see them" (FGEA2). It seems as if visibility is a great problem. One of the focus group discussions with representatives of the external public was conducted at the school of which the Deputy Commissioner of the GGASA is the principal. Not one of the respondents from this school was aware of the existence of the GGASA.

The analysis of documents also made it clear that there is no consistency in the presentation of the look and feel of the GGASA's brand. There is, for example, a different logo for the different ranks of members, for the different groups (e.g. Brownies, Rangers, etc.), for world membership, for the Africa region and for the GGASA.

Although a house style and the corporate image for the GGASA are set out in the publication entitled *Communication and Marketing Module* (GGASA 2004) it is not applied consistently in practice. The fact that the GGASA logo is not presented on the GGASA uniform speaks for itself.

The stylised trefoil is the actual GGASA logo. The trefoil symbolises the unity provided by membership of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (GGASA 2004: 9). The stylised trefoil is illustrated below.

**FIGURE 2: THE TREFOIL**



On the GGASA’s website and on some of the GGASA documentation, the stylised trefoil is presented together with three other logos.

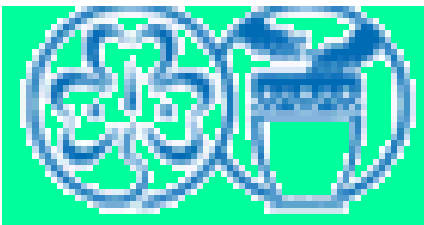
The South African GGASA logo combined with the flag represents the history of the South African Guides and Scouts and their pride that it was in South Africa that the founder, Lord Robert Baden-Powell of Gilwell, first envisaged and described his ideas in his book *Scouting for Boys* (GGASA 2004: 9).

**FIGURE 3: THE SOUTH AFRICAN GGASA LOGO**



In the GGASA’s African Region logo the drums are symbols of communication in Africa and therefore signify the region.

**FIGURE 4: THE GGASA’S AFRICAN REGION LOGO**



Since the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) was formed in 1928, with South Africa’s GGASA a founder member, the WAGGGS member logo is used as the enrolment badge to all new members in the GGASA (GGASA 2004: 9).

**FIGURE 5: THE WAGGGS MEMBER LOGO**



### *Diverse activities*

Further confusion regarding the brand of the GGASA was noted by representatives of the internal public. The activities of various regions are diverse. In the East Rand, where more money is available, activities focus on science and technology projects, whereas in the under-resourced Soweto the focus is on HIV/Aids awareness. The important role of religion was stressed by the internal public, probably because the GGASA was, and still is, based in the black townships at Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian churches. “Churches push it as an extra-mural activity as the activities provide physical and mental exercise” (SSIIA2) and the GGASA “incorporates all aspects of life: spiritual, physical and cognitive” (FGIA3). The external public was not aware of this and perceived the GGASA as an organisation known for its outdoor activities like camping and the physical development of the girls.

### *Uniforms and badges*

The uniforms and badges were mentioned by the respondents of both publics and were strongly associated with the GGASA. The members saw the uniform as a form of branding: “I am hooked by the uniform” (FGIA3) and “We love the uniform” (FGIA4). Some members of the external public perceived the uniform as outdated and felt that it contributed to the perception that the GGASA is not a society for modern girls and women.

## **How the GGASA is perceived**

### *The internal public’s perception*

Most respondents representing the internal public were aware that the image of the GGASA was one of “goody-goodies” and “tea makers”. They know that they are associated with “cookies”, “nerds” and “little girls in blue dresses selling cookies”. They are sometimes mocked and only girls with a high self-esteem manage to ignore the mocking. Some drop out. This indicates that the GGASA should move towards creating an image that is relevant to the young women of today. This must include “having fun”, “sharing things” and taking part in outdoor activities. Creating respect for young women should be the framework.

Members saw it as their own responsibility to manage the image change of the movement. “It is us that must send this message across ... to ensure an understanding of the changes that have taken place in the GGASA” (GGASAIIIA2) and “Changes must start from within and then be promoted to the outside world” (GGASAIIIA4).

Members were of the opinion that transformation is the most prominent challenge for the leadership of the GGASA. There were, however, fears of losing the traditions of the GGASA. Respondents agreed that changes in leadership should receive priority in a corporate communication strategy, and that the GGASA needs to stay flexible and to keep introducing new current issues.

### *The external public's perceptions*

The general perception of the outside world was that Girl Guiders are old-fashioned and stereotyped by images of tying knots, singing, making tea and other mundane activities. Associating words were the same: “the goody-goodies”, “goody-two shoes”, “always doing everything right” and “selling cookies”. The attitude and feeling towards GGASA members was “Don’t you have a life?” (FGEA2).

The external public suggested three priority areas as their vision for the GGASA. This includes the governance structure, a continuation of the transformation process and the establishment of a reputation as a relevant and meaningful partner in development related activities in South Africa.

## **CONCLUSIVE REMARKS**

Although the findings are not based on a comprehensive survey, some important indicators have been identified.

There were similarities between the perceptions of the internal and external publics of the GGASA. Both publics feel positive about the GGASA’s focus on intercultural contact, the development focus on various levels, the voluntary nature of the organisation, its networking capacity and the fact that it creates a feeling of unity and belonging amongst its members.

While the internal public perceived the GGASA as a value-based organisation that enriches their lives, the external public saw it as outdated and old-fashioned. These different perceptions of the lifestyle and activities of the members of the GGASA can be attributed to the inadequate brand management of the organisation and are caused by the communication of contradictory messages about the identity and image of the organisation.

In the section below methods to address these problems are be proposed.

## **IMPROVING THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE GGASA**

Based on the theoretical construct suggested earlier in the article the corporate communication



strategy of the GGASA should centre on a coordinated effort to ensure quality brand management that would create a positive identity and image.

The internal public's resolve to change outdated perceptions of the GGASA as well as the recommendations elicited from the external public regarding their vision for the GGASA should be aligned and integrated to create a new identity and image of the organisation. The new identity and image should centre on a strong brand. This will lead to an improvement in the effectiveness of the organisation's corporate communication, the building of relationships with its publics and the achievement of its developmental objectives.

The process to create a strong brand could centre on Aaker's (2002: 46) four dimensions of brand management.

- The GGASA management should strive to build a solid *brand awareness* campaign to create a consensual feeling of familiarity among target publics. The most important factor is that an upgraded GGASA logo should be created that presents a more comprehensive picture of the identity and image of the organisation. The stylised trefoil, the emblem, logotype and brand message should all form part of a combined logo presented to the external and internal public to ensure a unified brand experience of the organisation. A prototype of the improved logo is suggested in Figure 6 below.

**FIGURE 6: A PROTOTYPE OF THE IMPROVED GGASA LOGO**



- The brand message “Guiding advances Girls and Women” should be publicized as the *perceived quality* in a concerted corporate communication strategy in which the intercultural and development principles are clearly communicated so that no confusion is created.

- The GGASA management should determine which *brand associations* should be developed. Strong associations that already exist are outdoor activity, leadership, values and voluntary service. Programmes should be created that link these associations consistently to the GGASA brand.
- The GGASA should strive to attain *brand loyalty* by building support amongst a small but loyal public base that can have significant equity and help to raise awareness.

The visibility of the GGASA could be improved by employing social marketing principles to persuade target publics to either join or support the GGASA for the benefit of society. In order to create a persistent presence, the GGASA needs to build and maintain relationships by communicating their service brand effectively. This should be regarded as an ongoing activity. An investment in the building of a good public profile and solid reputation should result in an increased support base and consequently more valued and respected organisation with greater possibilities for expansion.

## **CONCLUSION**

Theoretically at least, it seems as if the approach suggested in this article might be of value in aiding NPOs to conceptualise and execute a corporate communication strategy that is in line with their aims and nature so that they can more effectively contribute to the development of South Africa's civil society. To test the construct's practical applicability would need a more comprehensive study.

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