

Key aspects of sovereign organisations

What are some of the key aspects of the identity of a sovereign organisation or movement?



... such an organisation strives to know and work with its own purpose. It works on and out of clear principles and values and has the courage to hold onto these.



... it is an authentic expression of the will and voice of its own constituents. It can provide services but is not the service provider of another organisation's purpose, and while it may accept funding it is not a surrogate vehicle for the funded projects of outside agencies.



... a sovereign organisation is culturally and structurally unique, not a clone of some external "best practice" template.



... a sovereign organisation is politically conscious, knows its rights and responsibilities and understands the power relationships it is held in.



... a sovereign organisation is able to cooperate and work with co-travellers and peers without losing its sense of self. Sovereignty does not denote parochial, insular behaviour, though there may be phases of independence, of inward development and of finding own identity, before opening up to collaboration.



... sovereignty is both a quality and a process of continual learning. The ability to learn and adapt will determine its sovereignty in a changing and volatile world and thus its increasing effectiveness. A sovereign organisation learns from many and varied sources, primarily its own hard-earned experience, but also through its diverse horizontal learning relationships with co-travellers and peers.

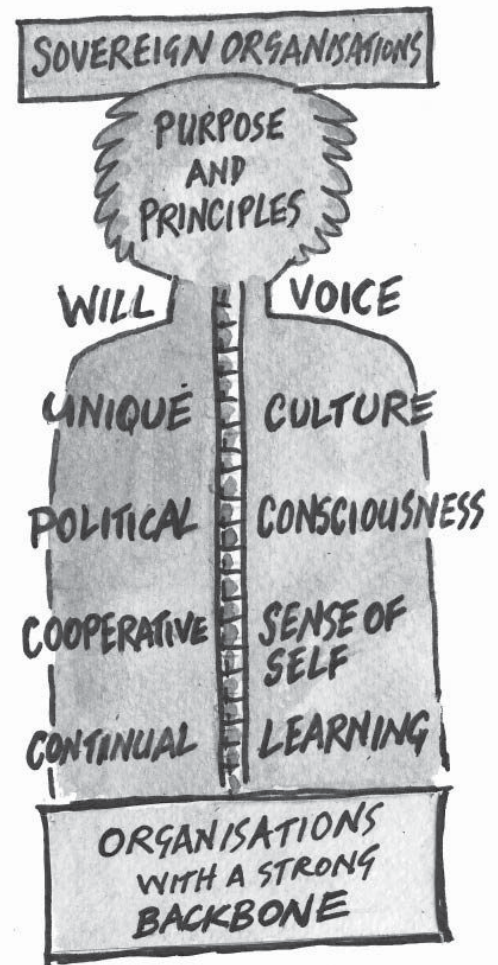


... a sovereign organisation is unlikely to meet the criteria of most donors.

FINDING THE REAL CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICE

It is in encouraging and supporting these qualities and processes that we may find the real challenges of developmental practice for NGOs and donors. What it requires is the time to see what is living in communities that is authentic, that has potential, accompanied by a deep respect for what is local and indigenous and a subtlety of practice to give thoughtful and careful support where it is needed.

It also requires facilitators and donors who are working on their own sovereignty, beholden to their own purposes and values, derived from the needs and rights of the people and organisations they seek to support.



“What it requires is a deep respect for what is local and indigenous and a subtlety of practice to give thoughtful and careful support where it is needed.”