

# **The SANE Symposium**

*In The Eye Of The Storm*

**Joseph Edozien**

**24 May 2008  
Cape Town  
South Africa**

**A Synopsis**

**By  
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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

South African New Economics Network (SANE) is an independent network of individuals and organizations who have committed themselves to work together towards building a viable economic system in South Africa. The 2 main goals of SANE are to transform South Africa's economy through networking and the creation of alternative economic frameworks for action; and by encouraging and facilitating the application of *New Economics* principles, policies, and solutions to the critical issues facing the country.

The SANE symposium, on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2008, marked the occasion in which individuals and organizations, as public participants, came together to discuss global energy, food, financial and environmental crises. These engagements would assist SANE to establish its new economic solutions agendas for 2008/2009. Furthermore, SANE's significant role as a South African national resource, and its activities, were highlighted.

60 participants attended the symposium. They were made up of individuals and representatives from various organizations. The 1-day programme firstly highlighted global crises in relation to South Africa. This was then followed by interactive dialogue sessions. These dialogue sessions looked at building SANE's action program. The recommendations made included SANE's empowerment of and networking with other organizations, a shift of SANE from theory-building to practical implementations in demonstration projects, recruitment of SANE Executive Programme Directors to address community building processes and closing of economic gaps where the need is greatest, introduction of monitoring and evaluation strategies. These ideas were suggested as tools that could assist towards creation of common and inclusive sustainable economic agendas and activities.

This report, not only serves as a record of the discussions and agreements reached during the symposium; but also as a guiding document for local solutions suggested and future activities that SANE aspires to get involved in.

## **2.        ACRONYMS**

SANE	South African New Economic Network
SIGSC	Simultaneous Interlocking Global Systemic Crises
EPD	Executive Programme Director
UCT	University of Cape Town
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation



## SANE SYMPOSIUM AGENDA

Date: 24 May 2008    Time: 9am-3pm    Venue: UCT (Kramer Building)

### Objectives:

- To host the 1<sup>st</sup> SANE symposium in Cape Town-South Africa
- To discuss mechanisms of developing a common sustainable economic agenda
- To design a plan of related events and activities for the year 2008/9

### Programme of events:

09h00-09h30 – Informal ‘Meet and Greet’ - Refreshments served.

09h30-10h00 – **“In the Eye of the Storm:” Contemplating Global Crises**  
– Joseph Edozien

10h00-11h30 – **SANEstorming! Part I – What should we do?**  
(AN INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE)

11h30-11h45– Tea Break

11h45-12h00 – **BUILDING SANE’S PROGRAM TOGETHER**

Context 1 – SANE’S Annual Program – *Joseph Edozien*

Context 2 – SANE’S Annual Conference – *Andrew Weeks*

12h00-13h00 – **SANEstorming! Part II: Building SANE’S Action Program Together!**  
(AN INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE)

(A Light lunch was served during this second session.)

13h00-13h40 – **CONCLUDING SESSION**

- a.) Consolidation of ideas from Parts I & II
- b.) New ideas and suggestions

13h40-14h00 – **Wrap up of proposals & FAREWELL** – *Joseph Edozien*



## SANE SYMPOSIUM

24<sup>th</sup> May 2008

Session 1: 0930Hr-1000Hr

Chairperson: J. Edozien

*The first session focused on presenting an overview of SANE's function and activities in relation to the global crises and contextualizing it to South Africa.*

### **Welcome, Joseph Edozien (SANE Chairman)**

Joseph Edozien welcomed all participants and requested them to observe a moment of silence for the xenophobic-related violence that South Africa had been experiencing. He then briefly explained the purpose of the symposium and gave a brief outline of the program. In his welcoming speech, the Chairman touched on the failure of neo-liberal economics as a trend being felt worldwide and stressed that, for the present and the future, partnerships for alternative economic solutions are essential. All participants were encouraged to make contributions to the economic transformation process.

### ***“In the eye of the storm:” Contemplating Global Crises by J. Edozien***

In his presentation, the Chairman equated the current crises to dangerous opportunities and encouraged the participants to look within the risks and be dynamic/prolific in finding solutions. He argued that these crises and opportunities are relevant to Cape Town and South Africa because both reflected the global dynamics in their demographic makeup and socio-economic stresses. The Chairman pointed out that the dynamics currently taking place in South Africa were both a precursor and a reflector of those taking place on the global stage. SIGSC was put into context and seen systemically as an interlocking complex of issues. The diverse manifestations of paradigm maladaptation were highlighted. Difficulties were noted as arising from

people trying to cope inconflently with the anxieties brought about by global and local occurrences. Financial malignancy was explored in terms of compound interest forcing unnatural and unsustainable growth worldwide and debt-monetisation corrupting all values. The exponential augmentation of core contextual variables outlined included population, money, debt, material production, and resource consumption.

The impending system malfunctions revolve around natural resource scarcities with overwhelmed human emotional coping mechanisms and cognitive comprehension limits leading to socio-political breakdowns. In a situation of paradigm crashes, life would be viewed as being stressful and aimless to people; leading to alienation at different levels e.g. between various cultures, ethnicities, people, nations, regions of the world, etc. It was emphasized that stress-based coping in response to global crises would be amplified and heightened by other systemic complexities. A historical re-balancing process was observed to be playing out in the rise of Asia and is reflected in the growing restlessness of the South African majority. Climatic change was noted to be a complex global issue with both natural and human causes but with the human causation element leading to eco-systemic hyper-stresses such as reduced biodiversity, water shortages, peaking resource extractions, and diminishing arable land availabilities, etc. The Chairman also discussed the paradigm crashes which were currently playing out psychosocially, politically and financially. And he discussed the need for new perceptions of humanity about itself and its relation to its world and to each other.

The intricacies of SIGSC were briefly explained and there was an emphasis on the study of values as they relate to *New Economics*, including the need to avoid becoming *over-technologized* which leads to a dehumanization process. The significance of *New Economics* was discussed in relation to grassroots involvement and partnerships. It was also emphasized that SANE was/is not a fixed concept, but a model of experimentation that develops economic alternatives. Mono-cultural economics was seen as a risky path because it limited key elements of sustainability such as cultural diversity. New economic thinking would have to be sensitive to culture and work to fit different kinds of economic systems to different needs and places. It could not be a “one size fits all” sort of economic thinking. Mainstream

media was thought to be stifling in regards to fundamental economic reforms. The ability and capacity of the South African government to deliver the economic promises made during the liberation struggle was discussed. At the end of the presentation, a hypothetical question/statement was raised on the actual and potential role of South Africa in Africa and in the globalising world.

Session 2: 1000Hr-1130Hr

Facilitator: J. Edozien

### **SANEstorming Part 1**

#### **An interactive dialogue: “What should we do?”**

*The focus of this session was the co-creation of local solutions that were realistic and collectively achievable. The participants were invited to give their opinions.*

The main points raised by Symposium Participants were:

- The disconnection between finance and the real economy was highlighted. It was suggested that there was a need to look into factors mentioned above as a way to establish and maintain control in futures markets (Anthony).
- It was pointed out that the behind the scenes financial derivatives market was at least ten times larger than the global real economy. This was seen as a potentially disastrous situation.
- It was suggested that the application of feasible new economic strategies and tactics in the emerging communities and impoverished areas will ensure success (Jerry).
- Polarization was questioned in relation to symposium attendance and the objectives outlined (Themba & Lawrence). It was suggested that it was vital to reach out to marginalised communities and get them involved (Themba); since their marginalization would impact on the future that SANE was trying to create (Lawrence)
- It was suggested that South Africa needs to spearhead new economic development projects which could have a ripple effect on the neighbouring countries. Senior participants with expertise were challenged to contribute their expertise and knowledge towards the search for viable alternatives (Helga).
- The present population growth was stressed and emphasis was on the need to look into the future and sustainability; as a global issue and not just one affecting South Africa.
- Food production in relation to the population growth was questioned. A contradictory notion was raised that the world has enough food to feed everyone. The problem was maldistribution. (Terry Bell)

- Population increase was linked to resource shortages and was seen to impact on sustainability measures already in place. There was a call to improve on the systems already existing rather than starting afresh.
- Negative relationships in the environment were highlighted with a focus on eco-systems. An example of Zimbabwe was given. Short term gains and profits lead to disintegration of the eco-system (Apiwe).
- “Xenophobia” was linked to poverty and rampant and increasing unemployment. The current government was alleged to have created this situation and was accused of being dishonest with its citizens (Commander Z).
- Over-population was seen as an issue with 20% of population consuming 80% of resources. There was emphasis on communities to get involved and come up with solutions. SANE was encouraged to work with numerous diverse groups in order to achieve greater agendas set.
- It was noted that SANE has an exceptional theoretical base but lacks practical action which could hinder its progress. Participants were urged to commit and get involved in the identification of strategies, projects etc in order to find focussed action. SANE was encouraged to advertise by word of mouth, to get working groups together, take different multi-disciplinary approaches and incorporate students and interns in strategizing and implementation of projects (Andrew).
- “Xenophobia” was explained as a manifestation of the magnitude of the economic problems facing South Africa. The recommendation made was to use SANE’s principles in poverty alleviation in small rural towns.
- SANE was seen to have numerous broad ideas. There was a suggestion for SANE to prune and focus which could create opportunities for collaboration (Henry).
- It was observed that there seems to be 2 positions taken during the symposium i.e. academic/formal (present) and grassroots/informal (not present). There was a concern over development of intellectuals and a lack of authority position. Challenges stressed were careful selection of resources, how to overcome polarization, ‘giving selves authoritative positions’ and the disconnection of SANE from those it is trying to assist. (Essa & Andrew).

- It was noted that “consuming capitalism creates dependence, whereas the way forward was towards self-sufficiency”. Schools were criticized for not teaching practical skills.
- The concept of the new economy was re-explained and participants were requested to let the process unfold so as not to jeopardize potentials. “Us and them” was explained as being a mentality of colonizers. It was stressed that when “us” is the theory and “them” are the subject peoples to be helped, then there is a likelihood of the process not succeeding. SANE’s purpose was viewed as giving allowance to and being open to multiple agendas (Neema).
- There was a suggestion that more needs to be done to make SANE stronger and more useful for participants. Suggestion was that small groups should be formed, talent exchange should be encouraged and that people should motivate each other (Themba).
- The key future economic stability measures were viewed to depend on storage and efficiency (Gareth).
- SANE should work actively on the grassroots level to facilitate “on the ground” change with practical and useful projects and by reaching out to marginalised communities in a respectful manner.
- SANE should also work actively to influence Parliament and Government on the macro-economic policy level with its visions, ideas, principles, theories, and policy recommendations to effect fundamental macro-structural change in a nation-wide way. (Aart R. de Lange, Founder of SANE)

**SANE's Chairman's responses:**

- In agreement that there was a disconnect between SANE and its natural constituency in impoverished and marginalised areas where the need for a new economics was clearly greatest and that issues related to food and fuel sovereignty ought to be addressed with urgency. In addition, he asked a hypothetical question related to the possibility of changing the mainstream in terms of strategic levels and approach.
- South African population growth and economic sustainability measures were to be looked at jointly. There is a short-term maldistribution problem and a longer-term population pressure on available resources problem.
- Issues evolving out of unfair distribution of resources ought to be addressed from the perspective of understanding that the current economic system is designed to deliver resources unfairly. Sustainable fair distribution would require systemic change.
- SANE will work simultaneously on both the grassroots and national policy levels. It will work to help mobilise and empower civil society activities with its new economics knowledge base and programmes and also influence Parliament and Government with its national level ideas and policy recommendations.
- SANE will actively seek to form partnerships with people and other organisations and within civil society in general. The Chairman saw the remobilisation of civil society as essential to any practical hope of building a new economy that delivers better on South Africa's constitutional promises.
- Participants were challenged to shift from focusing on theory towards focusing on practical implementation strategies.

The main points from the discussion as highlighted by the Chairman include: theoretical versus practical measures, South African progress being significant but insufficient to the need, alternative economic practical measures need to happen on the ground, the need to establish who SANE's audience is and should be, and lastly that knowledge on how to engage with the grassroots levels as a way to progress is vital -- especially in marginalised and impoverished areas. Nevertheless, high-level influencing and educating activities should not be neglected and need to be made more focused and effective.

Session 3: 1145Hr-1200Hr

Facilitator: J. Edozien

**Building SANE's action program together: SANE's annual program**

*The focus of this session was to explain SANE's annual program in relation to co-creating an efficient practical plan together.*

The main points highlighted in the SANE Chairman's presentation were:

- SANE needs to grow beyond the core group and to go where the need is greatest. In addition, SANE needs to reflect the people and culture of the country where its charter operates.
- The current mainstream economic paradigm was seen to be inconsistent with the goals of the liberation struggle. Thus, the fundamental values and principles of SANE and the importance of having a new economic paradigm were explained. The paradigm needs to be multi-levelled and decentralised, sensitive to and respectful of nature and culture, oriented toward community empowering self-sufficiencies, cyclic and re-cyclic in nature as opposed to linear, facilitate economic diversity, based on non-interest bearing monetary creation and localised exchange processes, and serve everyone equitably and well, not only a few should benefit.
- Mutual exchange of talents, ideas, information etc is vital for progress.
- The economy ought to give space for life 'to be liveable and enjoyed,' by all.
- SANE was reported to have been built on an idea-capital base. The 'pregnancy' metaphor was used to explain the birthing of these ideas as practical projects. Hence, the role of networking was emphasized.
- SANE as an NGO required restructuring. The Chairman explained the restructuring and the needs and principles behind it, including the requirement to maintain governance and accountability while building a flexible and expansive organisation open to all which could galvanise communities of interest and inspire creativity and innovation.
- It was suggested that the current economy had indications of liberation struggle objectives not being achieved.

- It is vital for SANE to educate people, in a culturally sensitive manner, and in response to their needs e.g. poverty, violence, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, etc.
- There was need to look at specific areas and co-ordinate activities within those areas as suggested, while exchange and volunteerism are encouraged.
- A hypothetical question was raised on SANE's transitional form and where it was heading. SANE's restructuring was said to depend on developing a very active and involved community of interest around SANE and since there was no formal membership all were welcomed to participate actively and creatively.
- SANE was said to be a national resource, belonging to the country. It was brought to everyone's attention that proposal submissions were open to all.
- SANE's public programs highlighted include the symposium, conference and the post-conference symposium; which were open to all.
- Participants were encouraged to assist SANE deliver its value to the country, in any way.

**Issues & suggestions arising during the above presentation:**

- The need to prioritize projects (Themba)
- Selection of SANE's projects
- For SANE to be more structured and expand the board for inclusivity (Essa).
- Future makeup of the Board was discussed.
- Explanation of the budget:

**SANE Responses:**

- Project selection depends on proposals submitted and availability of funds. (Andrew Weeks)
- The board should not be bigger than the active executive implementation part of the organisation, the metaphor of a toadstool was used to explain this idea. (Joseph Edozien)
- The budget for 2008 was around R1 million. There are 3 main funders and it's mainly used for research, education and promoting local economies, including the setup of a large new *Community Exchange System* in Khayelitsha and other pilot demonstration projects. (Vanessa Wittbooi)

Session 4: 1200Hr-1300Hr

Facilitator: J. Edozien

**SANEstorming Part 2**

**An interactive dialogue: “Building SANE’s action program together”**

*The focus of this session was the co-creation of action programs that were realistic and collectively achievable. The participants were invited to give their opinions.*

The main points raised by Symposium Participants were:

- The need to focus on what was achievable and pursue that.
- Importance of SANE to align with the poor.
- SANE’s complements for capitalism and big economy.
- SANE’s mechanisms “for delivery of values?”
- Transparency issues, SANE advised on pace of work, select executives and trustees based on interest and drive even if not representative of context, duplication of services to be avoided though contact with other organizations and empowerment of others for growth and development.
- The need for full time staff, M & E, and networking to accomplish objectives set and to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.
- To include young people, other modes of advertising were proposed.
- A participant agreed to assist in Langa, Khayelitsha and Gugulethu areas.
- Verification was needed on accessibility and SANE’s targets.
- There was a suggestion that SANE employ managers and involve community leaders to help keep people motivated in the projects.
- SANE’s remarkable values based on less-damaging principles were highlighted.
- Gateway magazine offered to market developments and write on ongoing projects.

**SANE's Chairman's responses:**

- SANE's ends are enormous; thus, involvement in many projects is vital towards greater achievements and ripple effects. Vision, coherence, discipline, ability to measure achievements and develop practical strategies and tactics would lead to successes.
- A clarification was made that SANE's target was not the poor but building an economic system that can deliver social justice. This would aid the poor more than anything, but also uplift and empower everyone together.
- Through research, SANE established that financial capitalism impoverishes most people in South Africa and is linked to the underlying need which caused the liberation struggle. SANE has values, ideas, tools, mechanisms, and policy recommendations that can viably deliver needed economic outcomes.
- Many of SANE's ideas are applicable in a transitional economic phase in South Africa through SANE's *Community Exchange System*, SANE's recommendations for a transactional tax to replace income tax, SANE's ideas on taxing social bads rather than social goods, including value to be placed on unpaid work e.g. child-rearing and volunteering, SANE's ideas on creative methods of basic income provision, SANE's frameworks for local-centric economic development, and SANE's food and fuel sovereignty concepts, etc.
- Emphasis was placed on SANE's EPD's becoming point-persons for involved and actively working communities of interest.
- It was noted that it is empowering to work with other organizations.
- The willing participants were enlisted as volunteers.
- A refurbished and revitalised website will be instrumental in providing access to SANE's work, etc.
- Prolific and creative use the Internet and Digital New Media tools, including cell phones, to aid in SANE's work, activities integration, and outreach efforts would be emphasized.
- One of SANE's M & E structures was accountability to funders. It was further suggested that should other M & E tools be adopted, that they

ought to be organic, friendly, not encroach on EPD's creativity, and should be accountable for results achieved.

- SANE would always be a think tank, but it needed to become a do mover too. SANE would become more of a general programme manager of practical implementations and pilot demonstration projects reflecting its ideas, ideals, and theories.
- General institutional funding would be sought to support and further develop SANE's reach, research, and activities. This would be a challenge, but was soluble as SANE's contributions and impacts became more evident and concrete.

Session 5: 1300Hr-1315Hr

Facilitator: A. Weeks

**Building SANE's action program together: SANE's annual conference**

*The focus of this session was the involvement of participants in giving their opinions in regards to the upcoming conference.*

The main points raised by Mr. Weeks were:

- Conference will be in July (with possibility of making it an annual event).
- The purpose is for it to provide a theoretical platform for action.
- No membership is required i.e. members are participants and vice versa.
- It was open for symposium participants to reflect on what they want i.e. talks, activities etc.
- The conference keynote speaker is Paul McKay from Germany. In the future, there will be opportunities for members to suggest keynote speakers.
- The *Margaret Legum Memorial Lectures* are scheduled to begin as part of acknowledging her great contributions to SANE.
- Conference assistance requested from members e.g. in media, getting info etc.
- The program has not been completed, but a provisional one is on the website.
- Conference date is 19<sup>th</sup> July. The venue initially chosen was UCT, but suggestions for other venues were open.

Continuation of Session 5: 1400Hr-1440Hr

Facilitator: A. Weeks

*The focus of the session was to involve the participants in suggesting interesting topics and a venue for the upcoming conference.*

- It was suggested that the topics recommended ought to showcase SANE's ideas and its emerging programs. The target audience is middle-class intellectuals, townships outreach, people interested in new economics, and youth.

- Approximately 8 venues were suggested. Votes were taken and St. Francis Langa and UCT emerged with equal and high number of votes. These are the 2 venues which will be considered.
- The conference will be free of charge i.e. no entry fee; but donations will be accepted.
- A social was suggested as a mode for further engagements/discussions.
- A DVD titled “Money Is Debt” was suggested for future lectures and or during the conference they can be screened in-between presentations.
- The working title is “*SANEwave 2008!*”
- The themes suggested included:
  - i) “It doesn’t have to be like this”
  - ii) “Only after every river has run dry...”
  - iii) “You’re the solution”
  - iv) “Money never sleeps”
- The topics suggested should be catchy and draw attention. Some included:
  - i) “The GDP Debate”
  - ii) “The energy debate”
  - iii) “Theory behind how we get screwed” i.e. on the neo-liberal model
  - iv) “Transferring talents”
  - v) “Economics 101”
  - vi) “Meaningful work, meaningless jobs”
  - vii) “Drawing on debt”
  - viii) “How to live a sustainable life”
  - ix) Alternative footprints

**\*whole list is available on request**

Session 6: 1440-1500Hrs

Facilitator: J. Edozien

**Concluding Session: Consolidation of ideas from parts 1 and 2.**

*The focus of this session was to amalgamate the points raised in the previous sessions.*

The points highlighted by the Chairman included:

- The significance of the historical theoretical and socio-economic values foundation(s) of SANE and the empowerment of other organizations with its ideas and new economic frameworks for action.
- The importance of transforming thoughts and theories into actions.
- Crossing social gaps was stressed, especially reaching people where the need for a new economics is greatest and most urgent – most especially in marginalised and impoverished communities.
- A focus on “*How Can SANE Cross The Chasm?*” and reach where the need for what it has to offer is greatest.
- M & E needs to be addressed. It should be done in a creative manner that encourages participation and innovation.
- In “pruning and focus” SANE is to address issues using an organic and experimental approach towards finding the most effective interventions. In addition, SANE ought to focus empirically and not just theoretically.
- SANE’s EPD’s will be tasked to address community building processes, which are essential.
- Partnerships are important; as involvement tends to keep the communities and its members energized.
- SANE is a tool for economic evolution; a national resource that assists in defining and designing the economy in a way that is beyond the theoretical and helps to deliver a better life for all South Africans as demanded by the goals of the liberation struggle.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The symposium adjourned at 1500Hrs.