



**Gary Waterworth Owen,
CEO, ResponseAbility Alliance, UK**

Gary is an [artist](#), entrepreneur and adventurer. Inspired in 1992 while working at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, he founded the ResponseABILITY Alliance. The last fifteen years of his life has been devoted to helping individuals and companies develop and enhance their abilities to effectively respond to the challenges of thriving and not just surviving in the 21st Century. Response Ability is once again the core focus of his most recent initiative -'[Lengthen Your Stride](#)'- a unique personal and corporate transformation programme conducted in the Sinai desert.

His business vision and mission as an entrepreneur includes growing what was originally a small design agency into what became a successful furniture and interior design consultancy, construction company, manufacturing plant and direct marketing company with all divisions under the umbrella of the South African based - Colourplast Group. In the late seventies, long before the 'Green/Eco business' revolution, Gary began recycling alluvial diamond and marble mining waste in South West Africa (now Namibia), into architectural finishes. This product was applied and exported throughout Africa and the USA.

Inspired from an early age by the Artist/Explorer Thomas Baines – who amongst many expeditions, accompanied David Livingstone's exploration of the Zambezi, Gary pursued his own natural talent as a painter. His paintings have been exhibited in London, New York, Paris and Johannesburg and have been acquired by private collectors. The proceeds of which have often helped support responsible tourism projects, artists with AIDS, arts and crafts projects for the peoples of Namibia and Zimbabwe, along with the conservation of wildlife in KwaZulu-Natal.

Gary was born and raised in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). His home town of Bulawayo, abuts the outstanding Matopos National Park at the edge of the Kalahari Desert. This landscape along with the Victoria Falls and Hwange National Park to the North, and the mountains of the Vumba, Chimanimani, and Inyanga to the East, not only inspired him as an artist but helped him draw on the richness and diversity of southern Africa. It seduced him into a world of exploration, creativity, and an unrelenting passion for adventure. His time as a soldier in the early seventies equipped him well for the numerous personal development and leadership expeditions he has undertaken since.

Gary is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Open Africa and Artists for Peace Justice and Civil Liberties. He serves on the advisory boards of a number of responsible tourism, eco-design and socially responsible organisations in Africa and Europe and was recently appointed to the International Honorary Advisory Council of the SOR Foundation: www.sorfoundation.org

