

Value Assessment in work of Higher Education

Reflections of a non-specialist

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Main challenges

of university assessment in sustainable development education:

- What is sustainability?
- What is development?
- Are the two compatible?
- What is education for sustainable development?
- What should be the content?

Key components

- Systems perspective
- Long-term view
- Dynamic process (balance, not target)
- Including economic, social, environmental dimensions
- Adding institutional, cultural, ethical factors
- Integrating all the dimensions

What are we missing?

- Beyond scientific/intellectual knowledge to intangibles
- Motivation, emotional commitment
- Changes in behaviour/lifestyle
- Challenging assumptions, culturally-determined preconceptions (i.e. aggressive-competitive vs. altruistic-cooperative)

Values

- Sustainable development is an ethical concept (all humanity, poverty alleviation, future generations)
- Values, beliefs, ethics are a key driver
- WSSD acknowledged the ethical dimension
- How do we incorporate values into SD education and implementation?

Assessment challenges

- Science knowledge (test scores) versus scientific creativity
- Intellectual understanding versus emotional commitment
- Diversity in capacities and needs versus single standard of measurement
- Specialists versus generalists



**The Development of Indicators and Assessment
Tools for CSO Projects Promoting Values-based
Education for Sustainable Development**

ESDinds Project

A research project for Civil Society Organizations

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ESDinds Partners

Academic Partners:

University of Brighton (UK)

Charles University (Prague)

Civil Society Organization (CSO) Partners:

Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC, UK)

Earth Charter Initiative (Sweden/Costa Rica)

European Bahá'í Business Forum (EBBF)

People's Theatre (Germany)



Values:

behaviour that benefits society

- The individual operates on a spectrum from egotistical to altruistic, infantile to mature, base impulses to cooperative
- In society this is expressed as power-hungry, seeking status and social dominance, versus conscientious, egalitarian, communitarian
- The latter generally contribute to greater social good and higher integration

Bringing Values into Sustainable Development Education

- Usually focus on environmental facts, economic and social challenges
- An intellectual understanding is seldom sufficient to change behaviour
- Education should also operate at the level of values and ethics
- How can we assess educational impact at this level?
- Are there indicators that can measure the changes we are trying to bring through our

The ESDinds Project was CSO driven

- CSOs defined what values are important and what they wanted to measure, i.e. implementing values or spiritual principles
- Researchers helped to define assessment methodologies and indicators
- CSOs trialled indicators in their projects
- Joint evaluation and sharing of experience
- The indicators that were developed and tested were shared more widely
- A final conference presented the results of the

The first step: crystallising the values

- Need to be clear about what you are trying to do
- in a way that might make it measurable
- Many organizations discovered values they had not realized were important
- This crystallization of their values was itself an important outcome

ESDinds initial values

The values for which the project developed 166 indicators are:

- Unity in diversity
- Trust/Trustworthiness
- Justice
- Empowerment
- Integrity
- Respect for the community of life
(the environment)

Trust/Trustworthiness

Atmosphere of Trust

1. Trust supports the creation of a positive atmosphere
2. People treat each other with respect
3. Partners feel that different traditions, ideas, and approaches have been respected.
4. Partners feel that their worth and value has been acknowledged.
5. Level of tolerance and appreciation of different genders, cultures and life forms
6. People do not gossip or back-bite about their fellow employees, subordinates, superiors, and partners.
7. Employees discuss honestly any concerns on work or personal issues without reprisals and feel that they are listened to
8. People feel there is a safe space created where they can share their feelings and opinions without fear of negative comments
9. People share personal challenges and issues openly and respectfully with people in the organization
10. People tell the truth even if it is unpleasant
11. Team cooperation is related to the level of trust in the team
12. People feel that decision making and communication in the organisation is trustworthy

Trust/Trustworthiness

Perception and Presence of Trust

13. Individual/organisation/partner is trusted to fulfill their commitments.
14. Partners are trusted to satisfactorily deliver their commitments without the need for formal agreements.
15. Trusted partners are given flexibility to do things differently within a prescribed structure.
16. Staff feel that they are given freedom to develop and deliver their work in the manner they feel is most appropriate, and that the organisation will support them in doing so.
17. Flexible working arrangements are available to trusted staff to enable them to complete their work in the manner they feel is most appropriate.
18. Stakeholders, the local community, partners trust the organisation and/or project partner
19. Stakeholders, the community and partners trust the individuals they have relationships with within an organisation
20. Individuals, colleagues, organisations, partners are perceived to be trustworthy, truthful, honest, transparent, and respectful and practice integrity in their interactions with others
21. Role of trustworthiness in an entity's decision to purchase from/deal with an organisation
22. Existence of collaborative, cooperative, trusting informal relationships
23. Partners trust that each shares a commitment and willingness to collaborate for a similar vision
24. Degree to which the quality of the results from a project is due to the level of cooperation, collaboration and trust
25. People are given large responsibilities that challenge them
26. Trust in peoples capacities leads to active participation

Trust/Trustworthiness

Building and Maintaining Trust

27. Role of trustworthiness in the formation and maintenance of relationships between partners
28. Trust between partners is built on strong personal relationships
29. Organisation maintains support, contact and commitment to partners over the long term
30. Organisations do not ask partners to do things that they didn't want to do, or steer partners in a direction that they did not want to go.
31. Partnerships are not formed with ulterior motives
32. Where trust is lacking, partners take steps to initiate dialogue
33. Open dialogue exists between project partners
34. Differences are resolved through dialogue in a way that produces learning and growth
35. Agreed upon commitments from projects involving cooperation are fulfilled
36. Commitments and responsibilities agreed to are fulfilled
37. Commitments to provide funding or other support to partners are adhered to
38. Goals are reviewed between committed parties to determine what has and has not been achieved
39. Committed parties admit to and rectify mistakes and poor decisions when made
40. Internal and external communications are transparent, fair, honest, and accurate in representing the organisation
41. The organisation is transparent about the process and outcomes of decision-making, openly sharing information with employees
42. Teams identify the criteria they use to assess trustworthiness of each other

Trust/Trustworthiness

Living Ethical Principles

- 43. Presence and implementation of policies and procedures restricting and disciplining practices of corruption
- 44. Disciplinary procedures exist to deal with dishonest employees
- 45. Truth-seeking, non-judgmental, confidential channels, which are trusted, are in place for individuals/teams seeking guidance on the application of ethics, reporting violations and examining violations of ethics
- 46. Parties are treated with impartiality
- 47. Presence of a policy outlining ethical obligations (eg. code of conduct)
- 48. Presence of law requiring transparency, accountability and no tolerance of corruption in public and private institutions.
- 49. Steadfast commitment to ethical values despite temptations or costs
- 50. Desirable employees joined the organisation because they perceive it to promote and live by ethical principles
- 51. Absence of anti-social and corrupt behaviours
- 52. Individuals/partners/organisation live the values they promote
- 53. Number of successful negotiations due to perceived trustworthiness and integrity of the organisation
- 54. People strive to be honest and truthful towards the self – inside and outside.
- 55. People strive to bring their lives and actions into accordance with ethical values
- 56. Individuals are consistent in putting ethical values into practice
- 57. People/communities/ organisations / governments respect human rights and promote them

The project case studies

- University of Guanajuato, Mexico (Earth Charter)
- Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change, Sierra Leone (Red Cross)
- Echeri Consultores, Mexico (Earth Charter)
- Lush Cosmetics, Italy (EBBF)
- People's Theater, Germany
- Muslim women's group, London (ARC)
- Financial services company, Luxembourg (EBBF)

CASE STUDY - Guanajuato University, Mexico

The Environmental Institutional Programme of Guanajuato University (PIMAUG) is a cross-faculty initiative structured around 6 strategic areas:

- a) Assisting students to develop a holistic vision of the environment.
- b) Promoting sustainable resource use and waste management.
- c) Diffusion of a culture of environmental awareness, through a variety of media.
- d) Interdisciplinary research.
- e) Training in environmental issues through diplomas and Masters programmes.
- f) Social participation and inter-institutional partnership.



Guanajuato PIMAUG

- PIMAUG has a peer education programme in which Guanajuato University students train to run workshops inspired by the Earth Charter for other students.
- PIMAUG sponsors and coordinates a number of groups, such as the responsible consumer student group; the waste recycling student group, the habitat student group (dedicated to reforestation), and the group of staff coordinators of the environmental management system in each administrative and academic unit.
- Many of the students who participate in these programmes do so as part of the compulsory service element of their courses, for which they gain university credits, while others do so solely out of desire to volunteer.

Relevance of Indicators

- All 14 draft indicators for Empowerment and all 11 for Trust were validated as relevant by the PIMAUG group. Also validated as relevant were 6 of the 19 draft indicators for Integrity, 6 of the 8 draft indicators for Justice, 9 of the 12 draft indicators for Unity in Diversity, and 10 of the 79 draft indicators for the value of Care and Respect for the Community of Life
- Only one indicator from the Care and Respect for the Community of Life value cluster and nine Empowerment indicators (three head indicators and six sub-indicators) were taken forward to the assessment stage

Guanajuato Indicators

- People/partners become aware of how their existing knowledge, skills, networks, resources, and traditions can contribute to the project/organisation/team. Their contribution is encouraged, and people/partners feel that their talents, ideas and skills have contributed to the outcomes of the project/organization/team.
- Workshop facilitators and participants are given autonomy and trust to fulfil responsibilities, at the same time receiving encouragement and support
- Workshop participants are encouraged to express their opinion
- The organisation/team aims to provide all, especially children and youth, with educational opportunities that empower them to contribute actively to sustainable

Guanajuato Indicators

- Individuals feel they are encouraged to reach their potential, and are provided with opportunities for personal growth.
- Individuals a) develop programs and deliver solutions on their own, b) and have a sense of power that they can effect change.
- Work is viewed as a form of service (to the well-being and prosperity of all creation)
- People are given the opportunity to explore and reflect upon their own ideas and traditions, and then to develop their own vision and goals.
- People have identified their own responses to an issue, rather than just agreeing with the ideas of others.
- The project's activities / events produce an emotional connection to the community of life in participants

Guanajuato Assessment Tools

- Spatial and corporal surveys
- Semi-structured non-participative observation
- Focus group discussions
- Personal action plans
- Word elicitation – What/Why grid
- Key informant interviews

Guanajuato - Why engage?

- Earth Charter is about transforming values into action, the “heart” of the University
- The University already has good environmental measures, but the deeper dimension of the Earth Charter vision, the degree to which those values are present and transformative, there has been no way to rigorously know. WE VALUE provides a way.
- The indicators articulated deeply held aspirations and priorities which had until now not received systematic attention
- The process of reflection and selection of the indicators, even before measurement, had a significant cultural impact on the PIMAUG unit and enthused participants – transformational learning.

Guanajuato - The process

- The PIMAUG team members found that the very act of reflecting on the indicators - even before associating them to specific assessment tools - allowed them to envisage new connections between their current activities, potential new areas of work that could be developed, and strategic decisions that they would like to take.
- The results of the assessment were also useful to PIMAUG in helping them to understand the efficacy of their workshops, identifying the factors involved in genuine empowerment, and providing insights into how motivation can be translated into effective action.

Guanajuato key benefits

- The culture of PIMAUG has experienced a change. The Earth Charter workshop leaders report a greater sense of effectiveness as a result of a clearer and more precise focus on values in their workshop delivery.
- The personal impact of the indicators has affected how a manager has dealt with conflict, and generated a much more participatory approach in her work with volunteers.
- The unit has a greater unity of vision, and participants in the focus group discussions have reported having reconnected or been re-inspired in their work.
- Integrating the indicators into regular evaluation has increased group insight into their own application of values and led to understanding success in terms of values in a practical way.

The WE VALUE approach

The We Value partnership carrying forward the ESDinds concept can help with three things:

CRYSTALLIZING

- what is *actually* important to the programme

MEASURING

- finding appropriate ways to assess what is important

COMMUNICATING

- to funders, to the public
- building a new, shared, vocabulary – *values-based*

Can measuring values be rigorous?

Yes – if the user wants them to be.

For a rigorous measurement of the presence of a particular value, then be clear which indicators are considered to be valid for it, and use more than one indicator.

For a rigorous indicator, use more than one measurement method.

Often a simple measurement will be sufficient; rigor is not needed every time

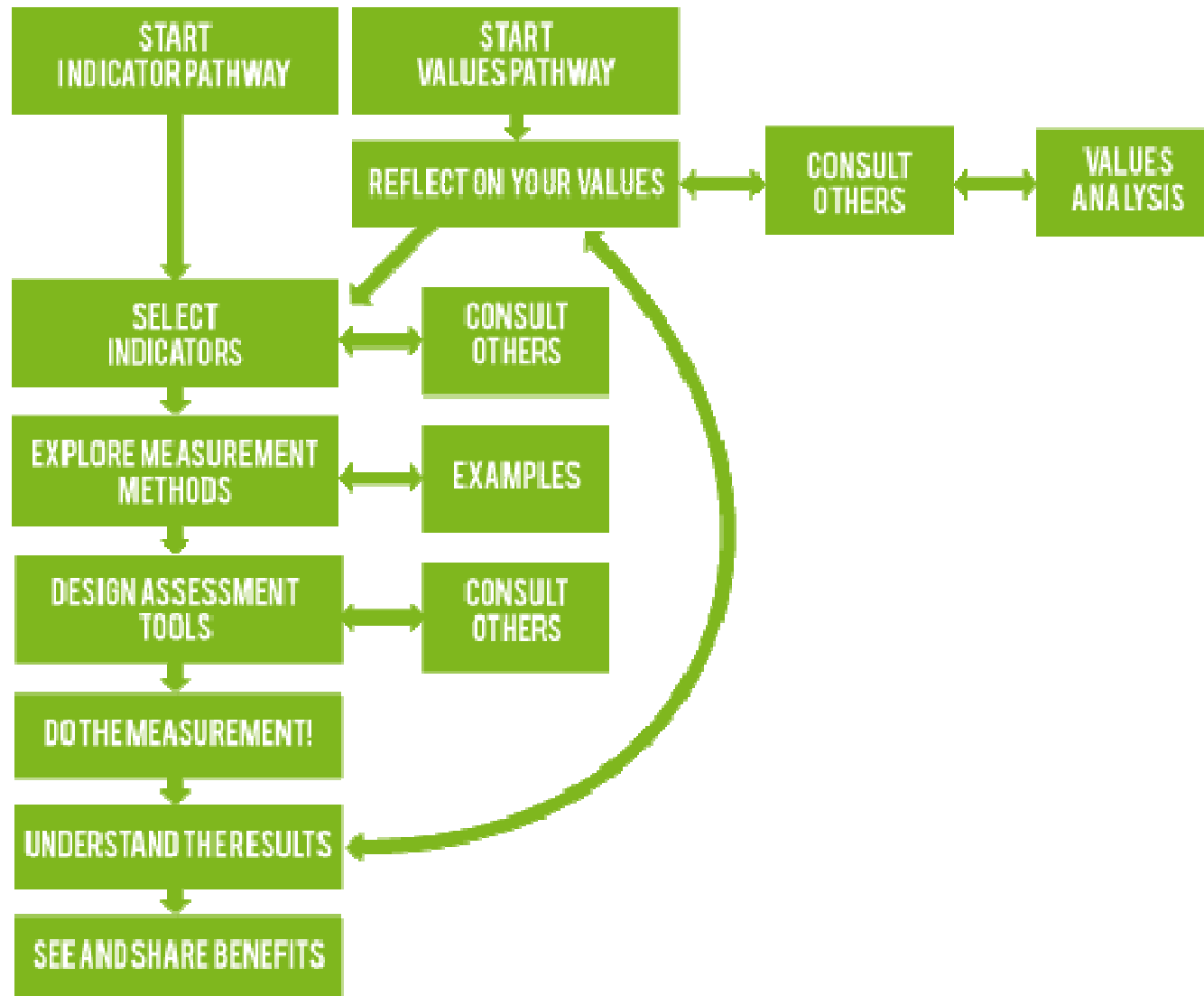
How do we know we are really measuring a value?

Only the user can know that.

No outsider can tell what the presence of a value looks like in a programme; the user needs to decide. The master list of 166 indicators comes from many organizations, so it is normal that others find it useful.

Then the user needs to decide what a good measurement of that indicator would be.

The WeValue Process



Indicators: proof of concept

- Measuring behaviours or feelings linked to values is possible
- Agreeing to a common values interpretation can be done within a programme or organization
- This gives the measurements internal consistency and validity
- Indicators can show the state of values or change over time

Making the invisible visible

- Indicators can make the values in a programme more visible
- When something can be measured, it becomes important
- Values can then be consciously encouraged or cultivated
- The programme or course becomes more values-driven
- Strong values are linked to more effective outcomes

Imbedding values more widely

- All human activity can benefit from stronger values
- Measurement methodologies are sufficiently flexible to adapt to most situations
- The approach can incorporate almost any values framework
- Measuring desirable behaviours and values becomes positively reinforcing
- Human facilitation may be more effective than a textbook approach

Conference

Making the Invisible Visible

An emerging Community of Practice in
Indicators, Sustainability and Values

16 - 18 December 2010, University of Brighton

presenting the results of the ESDinds project

This International Conference with a wide range of organizations - including educators, businesses, civil society organizations (CSOs), social enterprises - discussed measuring human values at the project level

<http://www.brighton.ac.uk/sdecu/research/esdinds/conference/index.html>

Conference report: <http://iefworld.org/conf14.html>

A community of practice

The wevalue.org partnership and website provide a place to take this work forward and share experience

WE VALUE.ORG



Lessons for further work in higher education

- Increasing the values content of ESD, internalized and externalized
- Developing practical assessment tools and procedures (larger scales)
- Anticipating new careers and preparing students for them
- Overcoming disciplinary boundaries
- Balancing specialization and generalization

Rio +20

- Ethical principles as foundation for international action and green economy
- Proposals for UN structures for ethical debate and assessment
- Do we need to train new kinds of sustainability professionals?

A tropical sunset scene with palm trees and a reflection on the water. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a bright orange glow across the sky and reflecting on the calm water. The silhouettes of palm trees are visible in the foreground, framing the scene.

Thank you

Indicators of values may help to make education
for sustainable development more effective