

WORKSHOP
“Development and Values: Indicators and Impact”
with partners from the University of Brighton “We Value” Project
16 June 2011, New York



Following an introduction of host Global Vision Institute (GVI), attention was drawn to the theme of development and values as the second quarter of the organization’s programming, and persons attending introduced themselves and how their work related to this theme.

GVI Vice President Dr. Joni Carley invited participants to share their experiences of the integration of values into the work and culture of their own organizations. Participants noted, inter alia, the need to negotiate around the different values system backgrounds that colleagues brought with them in order to arrive at mutual understanding; lack of transparency in organizational culture and governance; and the need to have a common interest such as peace that motivates people to move from intellectual and abstract ideals to action e.g. a walk for the International Day of Peace.

Options



In exploring options and approaches for ensuring that values are integrated into work and workplace culture, the “We Value” Project was presented. Research Officers Elona Hoover and Gemma Burford of the University of Brighton Sustainable Development Coordination Unit

joined from the UK. They outlined the project's background in community development projects and the efforts of civil society organizations (CSOs) to evaluate their values and the impacts of these values on their work. Drawing on the efforts of four organizations and two research institutions, the initiative asked "What values contribute to the success of your project?" using a range of assessment methods, and generating a final list of 166 values indicators.

The indicators were applied to various projects. This allowed for participants to identify gaps between prescribed values norms e.g. integrity and diversity, and actual behaviors. One notable example was of a youth CSO in Mexico, where young people sought to bridge the gap.

The impacts and potential areas for practical application by organizations include:

1. Transforming structures to better reflect values important to an organization
2. Better aligning individual and group behaviors to organizational values
3. Enhanced communication flows
4. Increased involvement of beneficiaries in decision-making, including with donors
5. Enriched inter-personal relationships
6. Improved relationships between organizations and the physical environment

Ms. Burford noted that the approach also has the effect of "making the invisible visible" by opening up conversations that would otherwise not likely take place. She asserted that what the University of Brighton has brought to the field of values research is not only a 'product' (the WeValue web platform with its list of 166 indicators) but also a 'process' (a methodology for creating values-based indicators relevant to a particular interest group). Ms. Hoover observed that the research was based on both grounded theory, action research and drew from a variety of conceptualizations of values. Furthermore, the indicators selected during the project were those linked to values identified as most important for the four partner CSOs, and most useful and relevant in the field for organizations to use on the ground.

Actions and commitments



Dr. Carley asked participants to identify concrete actions they could commit to take to ensure that values are integrated into their work and workplace culture based on the options for application outlined.

Among the commitments shared were:

- Devising a common goal
- Better valuing the input of others
- More inclusive decision-making
- Coming up with a clear action plan
- Greater efforts at communication
- The decision to become a better listener
- The commitment to be more non-judgmental in working with colleagues
- Communicating goals to colleagues and asking for guidance and learning at work
- Promoting a more action-oriented and more humble UN

GVI President Alisa Clarke reiterated the importance of seeing the integration of values as a process, and invited participants to consider posting progress on their commitment on the GVI website online forum. Participants were also encouraged to make use of the WeValue web resources. The workshop participants warmly thanked Ms. Hoover and Ms. Burford for sharing their work and time with the group.