

Values-Based Learning Toolkits

Growing a Shared Vision

A Toolkit for Schools



Activities for Organisational and Staff Development

GROWING A SHARED VISION - A TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS

TOOLKITS OF VALUES-BASED ACTIVITIES AND INDICATORS
FOR EDUCATION FOR RESPONSIBLE LIVING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Methods Toolkit : *Measuring What Matters - Values-based indicators*

Student Toolkit: *Discovering What Matters - A journey of thinking and feeling*

Staff Toolkit: *Growing a Shared Vision - A toolkit for schools*

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Foreword

We are at a turning point in history. The world's leading environmental scientists agree that the twenty-first century is a critical time for the future of our planet. If carbon emissions continue at current levels, the planet may warm by more than 2°C within a few decades.

Many people, when faced with these statistics, carry on with 'business as usual'. The problem seems too huge to engage with, and it's much easier to pretend it isn't happening.

But another response is to **commit ourselves to taking action**, however small or insignificant it might seem. Encouraged by inspirational teachers or our own inner motivation, we can choose to contribute to the 'Great Transition'. Little by little, one day at a time, we can help to build communities that are fairer, more caring, more peaceful, more respectful of the Earth and its limits, more creative, more values-led... more *sustainable*.

The future in our hands

As educators, we're faced with what looks like an impossible task. The world leaders who will eventually be tasked with getting humanity through this crisis are ... sitting in our classrooms right now.

We need to train them for jobs that don't yet exist. We need to equip them with skills that we might never have been taught – like the ability to see situations from different viewpoints, resolve conflicts without violence, or relate mindfully and joyfully to the natural world.

What is Values-Based Learning?

The Values-Based Learning toolkits result from an international project which aims to inspire people to understand 'achievement' and 'success' in new ways - not just in terms of exam grades, but in terms of **acquiring the skills and values needed to survive and thrive in the 21st century**.

The Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living (PERL) is a group of educators and researchers who have spent more than a decade learning about the **values** at the heart of sustainable schools and societies. These values include, among others, *trust, compassion, creativity, empowerment, and care and respect for the community of life*.

This research has been used to create a set of Values-Based Learning activities and assessment toolkits for secondary school (high school) teachers and students. There are three toolkits that are complementary in their uses:

- **Measuring What Matters - Values-Based Indicators:** While values underly much of human behaviour, they have long been considered intangible and unmeasurable. New methods and indicators pioneered by a European Union-funded research project show how values are expressed and can be measured. This module explains the background and approach for those who want to create their own indicators adapted to their needs.
- **Discovering What Matters: A journey of thinking and feeling:** To what extent have students already acquired the **values**, as well as the skills, knowledge, attitudes and personal qualities, which will enable them to survive and thrive in the 21st century? Can they understand more clearly what their own values are, and learn to live by them? In which areas do they need more help? This toolkit includes both a menu of indicators and examples of activities ready to use. It can be used directly by student groups.

- **Growing a Shared Vision - A toolkit for schools:** Are we ‘walking our talk’ as educators? Is our school a living example of a vibrant, sustainable community? Do we provide a supportive learning environment for staff and students, and empower them as agents of positive change? This toolkit provides tools to assess whether the educational environment we create for our students facilitates acquiring responsible values.

How does it work?

The toolkits include different levels of **values-based indicators**, one for individual students or teachers, and the other for school evaluation. Participating teachers, students, parents and/or administrators work together to choose a few useful and relevant indicators. The wording of the indicators can be changed if necessary, and suitable measurement methods are then identified.

One important aspect of Values-Based Learning is that it is not about being judged by outsiders, or trying to meet criteria that have been set by other people. Instead, it is a learning journey where teachers, students and friends of the school work together to take stock of what has already been achieved – in terms of those **intangible, values-related ‘achievements’** often missed by national exams and inspections – and what is still needed.

Participating schools have full control of decision-making about which activities and indicators to choose, who will get involved, and how the activities will be carried out. Some possibilities are:

- **Surveys** designed by students or teachers, using questionnaires or creative methods
- **A co-enquiry group** of teachers, support staff and students who meet in a lunch break or after school, e.g. discussing one question per week in depth
- **Teacher-designed activities** within relevant subject lessons, e.g. Personal and Social Education, Religious Studies, Geography or Sociology
- **Art clubs or classes** that respond to the questions, e.g. through painting, sculpture, graffiti art, photography, participatory video, drama, dance, music, or digital arts
- **Observation** of teaching and learning by ‘critical friends’ of the school (e.g. members of the Board of Governors or the Parent-Teacher Association)

1. Introduction

One function of schools is to help students to become responsible citizens, respectful of society, the planet and its boundaries. They should learn to think critically about world problems and become self-motivated to adopt lifestyles and consumption patterns that are:

- a) **environmentally responsible**, respecting the need for our civilization to remain within planetary environmental boundaries; and
- b) **socially responsible**, contributing to social justice with an equitable and sustainable distribution of the limited resources available to the world population.

School curricula generally include scientific information on the state of the planet and its resources, the challenges of climate change, biodiversity conservation, food and water security, pollution control, and other environmental problems, and social science perspectives on the human population, its consumption patterns and social and economic disparities.

However there is a knowledge-action gap when scientific knowledge is not sufficient to change behaviour. Motivation and commitment are generally rooted at a deeper level of emotions and values, and formal education has always had a responsibility to inculcate the fundamental values of a nation and culture in each new generation of citizens. This is the focus of values-based learning. A third important component is the institutional framework that can either encourage or impede changes in behaviour. This toolkit addresses whether the school provides institutional commitment and support for changes in student values, activities and behaviour.

Today the emerging global challenges of sustainability mean that every human being, as a citizen of the world, needs to learn the values, rights and responsibilities necessary to live in harmony with each other and with the natural endowments of our planet - and to ensure that the planet's capacity to support human life comfortably is preserved for future generations. Values-based learning focuses on education at this deeper level of values and thus raises their visibility in the curriculum.

Some of the goals of values-based learning are to:

- Raise the self-esteem of each student and promote resilience and sustainability of self, concentrating on whole life skills.
- Give each student the time to think about and listen to themselves, then about what matters most in their lives.
- Use this greater self knowledge to look at and question their lives now and in the future and surroundings to see how their newly awakened values can be incorporated into their lives.
- Allow students to collaborate with other students to prioritise their values and then translate them into action, enabling them to live their values.
- Empower the students so they feel they can continue to build on these skills to enrich their futures.

A school that sees the importance of values-based learning must look beyond the content of the curriculum itself, and ask to what extent the whole educational environment of the school facilitates such learning. The key points in this process are summarized below. A more detailed discussion of the conceptual framework for transformational learning is provided in Annex 1.

- Values-based learning recognizes three complementary things that are required to change behaviour: intellectual understanding, values and motivation, and institutional encouragement and support.
- An environment that facilitates transformational learning produces deep imbedded learning that shifts the way people think and act.
- Indicators can crystallize key concepts and values and expand the vision of what is possible.
- Nothing is imposed by this methodology. You select the tools most relevant to your curriculum and your environmental social, economic and cultural context.
- You may discover new things that are important to your school, develop a vocabulary to express them, and find teaching methods to share them with students.
- The school's teaching staff and administration can build a shared vision of the learning environment they want to create to foster responsible living and sustainability.
- Your school's values will become clearer and integrated into your vision, mission, goals and priorities.

2. Values in Education

Education is already strongly values-driven. Many schools and universities, and most civil society organizations that provide educational activities, already have a formal Mission Statement that refers explicitly to a list of specific values that they want to promote. Most faith-based educational institutions also have very clear values, although they might express them in different ways - perhaps in relation to a Holy Book.

If your school already has a strong values focus, you might like to use the indicators in this toolkit to compare the values of the school as a whole with the personal values of staff and/or students, to see how much they overlap. The indicators might also help you to evaluate the extent to which your school's values are really translated into action.

Schools in secular educational systems may never have thought much about values before. This does not mean that values are not there, only that they are invisible and people may not be conscious of them. The indicators can help to make these values visible, and in the process, to clarify your vision, mission, goals and priorities.

If your school does not yet have a clear values focus, you might like to start discussions or even formal workshops among the teachers with the aim of trying to reach a consensus about the school's values, before working with the indicators. Alternatively, you could start with the indicators and let the 'values statement' emerge naturally as a result of that process.

School Values and Indicators

Schools are one place with a formal mission to transmit values from one generation to the next, and teachers are often some of the most important role models for young people outside of the family.

Our values relate to whatever is valuable to us, individually or collectively – the things that give our lives their meaning. Some people value material wealth and ‘things’, which happen to be easy to measure. Others may value things that are less tangible like honesty, integrity, justice, courage, respect, or community spirit, which are often called moral, spiritual, higher or ethical values.

If you value intangible things and want to teach them to your students, how do you know when you are doing well? How do you measure trustworthiness, love, self-discipline, friendliness or patience? If your goal is to empower youth, increase social cohesion or promote democratic decision-making, how do you know if you’ve achieved it – or whether you’ve made a tiny bit of progress, or none at all? The student toolkit *Discovering What Matters* provides indicators for assessing your impact on student values, or you can adapt some of the personal indicators proposed below.

The school indicators show how values are expressed in the school environment and the teaching process. They can help you to evaluate your school (or other educational organization), and the environment created by administrators and teachers to foster values-based learning in its students. You can use these indicators to measure improvements in the educational environment over time; or simply take them as suggestions for the kind of teaching environment you may want to create. The toolkit will show you how to use indicators to strengthen your educational activities, create shared understanding, boost morale, and learn new ways of teaching.

There are more indicators in the lists than you can work with in any practical way. You will need to select a limited number of indicators that are most relevant to your particular situation and the content of your educational activities. After you’ve chosen the most relevant indicators, you can adapt them to suit your specific context, and choose which measurement methods work best for you.

Building a common language around values in your school

The process can also help you to discuss values more freely in a common language. One teacher might say that the school’s primary goal for the year is to increase ‘*Student Engagement*’, while another thinks it’s really all about ‘*Creating a Culture of Change*’. Meanwhile, your aim is to stimulate more ‘*Participation*’. Other colleagues keep talking about something they call ‘*Social Entrepreneurship*’.

... But everyone agrees that these five indicators sum up what they *really* mean:

Students want to bring about change in their school and the wider community
Students have a sense of power that they <u>can</u> effect change in their school and the wider community
Students understand mistakes as opportunities to learn and improve
Students explore issues that are slightly uncomfortable for them
Students participate actively in discussions about issues that affect their lifestyles

Agreeing on these indicators provides a starting point, because you are all much clearer about what you're trying to achieve, and what 'success' would look like in practice. Once you've measured the indicators and collected your data, you'll be able to show 'something intangible' that is a valuable result of the educational activity.

All you have to do then is reach a consensus about what to call it. You might convince everyone else that *Participation* is the best word after all, or you might decide to call it *Social Entrepreneurship*... or even come up with a completely new word or phrase, like *Boldness*, *Courage*, *Being Change-makers* or *Being Proactive*. But whichever word you use, you have found a way to measure whether your school environment is fostering it in students.

3. Getting started

The *Measuring What Matters* toolkit describes the general approach to values-based indicators used in these toolkits and the methodologies available to indicate the presence of these values. The *Discovering What Matters* toolkit provides indicators for use with students, either by teachers in a classroom or other educational situation, or by students themselves. This toolkit, *Growing a Shared Vision*, looks more broadly at the educational environment created in a school by its administrators and teaching staff, as it may facilitate values-based learning about responsible living and sustainability.

There are three components to this toolkit:

1. Indicators of values-based skills that can help the teaching staff, and indeed the whole school community, to understand their own values better.
2. Indicators of the educational environment in the school, and the ways it can facilitate values-based learning.
3. Group activities that can help to bring out values and stimulate reflection on the school learning environment.

In addition to these activities, teachers may wish to try out some of the activities in the student toolkit *Discovering What Matters*, as if they were students, to understand better how these activities contribute to the learning process.

Each component can be used separately, if that is what the school is interested in. In combination, they offer a systematic way of assessing your school's educational environment. You will adapt the process to your own needs and opportunities, but the basic workflow suggested is:

- Select and adapt the most relevant indicators for your school
- Decide how to measure
- Plan and carry out the first activities and measurements
- Link indicators with values
- Crystallize outcomes

Who to Involve

The first step is to decide *who* to involve in using the toolkit and its indicators for a school assessment. The people who benefit most are those who participate most deeply in designing, planning and making decisions.

Think about everyone connected with your school – the **administrators**, the **teachers**, **parents** and **volunteers** outside the school, **governors**, and the **students** who benefit most directly from it. How can you involve them in choosing and using values-based indicators, so that they can share in the benefits?

Once you have decided who is going to be involved in the evaluation, the next question is how far you want them to be involved. For evaluating a school or other educational organization as a whole, you might want more institutional buy-in. It is possible to define four different levels of participation in a school evaluation with values-based indicators.

1. The department of education and/or national or local school administrators choose the Indicators and measurement methods, design assessment tools, collect data, analyse the results and report back to the community.
2. As 1) but the teachers provide advice and input, especially in the design.
3. There is equal involvement of administrators and teachers throughout.
4. Teachers, volunteers, even students make all the decisions, design assessment methods, and prepare reports.

More participation is not always 'best'! Sometimes it won't be practical, or even appropriate, for everyone to participate at a deep level in everything.

You can choose the level that works best for you, taking into account the structure of your school (or equivalent), how many helpers you have, and how much time you have available.

4. Indicators of values-based skills

Below is a reference list of values-based indicators for use by or with staff or students. **Please note that you are not expected to use all these indicators.** You should select a small number (3-10) that are practical to apply in your particular activity.

To select from the list, start by rating each indicator as: 3: essential, 2: desirable, 1: possibly useful or 0: not relevant. If you are working as a group, you can then combine your rankings to see which indicators stand out, and then discuss them in the group. (Some of the indicators include options in brackets from which you can choose one or more wordings.) The result should be a tentative short-list of working indicators, which of course you can modify as you go along.

If you are a teacher, staff or student group, you might make the indicators more personal by replacing the word "People" with "We" or "us", and "their" by "our".

General Indicators	Score
People respect, appreciate, and find ways to understand the differences in others	
People have self-respect	
People acknowledge and incorporate different points of view	
People resolve conflicts through dialogue	
People listen to other people and try to understand what they really mean	
People' behaviour is consistent with their words	
People take responsibility for their learning and use their own initiative	
People think critically about the ideas and information given to them	
People feel they have the courage to be themselves, even when going against the mainstream	
People are able to act as 'critical friends', giving honest and helpful feedback to each other	

Specific Indicators A: Knowledge and Understanding	Score
People apply their subject knowledge and skills to understanding real-world problems	
People understand the way nature is organized in systems and cycles	
People understand how they relate to other-than-human creatures, and with the natural environment in their local area	
People have an insight into possible consequences of their own actions and those of others	
People understand how to be in relationship to, and care for, particular species of plants and animals	

People think about what they buy and what they throw away, remembering that future generations will depend on the same natural resources as they do now	
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Specific Indicators B: Self-Knowledge	Score
People learn to be comfortable with who they are	
People develop their own personal style by getting to know their interests, attitudes and sensitivities	
People recognize themselves as co-creators of their social world	
People use mindfulness as a way of coping with problems	
People discover meaning and purpose for themselves	
People see new meanings that change or deepen their understanding of what they're doing now, what they hope to do, and why	

Specific Indicators C: A Culture of Change	Score
People feel they have the power to create change and solve problems in their local communities	
People ask 'big questions' and look for answers in the wider community	
People use mistakes as starting points for learning and growth	
People have the courage to take a step beyond their comfort zone	

Specific Indicators D: Emotional Connection	Score
People find or create safe spaces to express their emotions (e.g. nature, art, music, friendship groups)	
People feel connected to other people and the world around them	
People show empathy and care towards humans and other-than-human creatures	
People celebrate, and show gratitude for, the generosity of nature	
People have a deep-rooted sense of belonging in nature	
People find a space of peace and healing in nature	
People are absorbed in the wild world with joyful mindfulness, offering their attention fully and reverently	
People experience nature as a source of personal fulfilment	

Specific Indicators E: Skills	Score
People feel they are acquiring practical skills for real life, not just theoretical knowledge	
People can proactively care for endangered species and ecosystems, abandoned pets and damaged habitats	
People help others to solve conflicts, by listening to both sides and trying to find acceptable solutions	
People remember to use non-violent communication in tense situations (e.g. using 'I feel' statements rather than blaming others)	
People make discoveries through feeling, imagination and sensing, not only through thinking	
People learn decision-making that takes into account the social, economic and environmental needs of future generations	
People resist the pressure (e.g. from advertisers) to buy things they don't really need	
People learn curiosity, conjecture, prediction and exploration	
People are able to synthesize information, not only to analyze it	
People connect knowledge from different subjects, as a way of thinking about solutions to difficult problems	
People develop the skill of recognizing systems and patterns	

Specific Indicators F: Cultural Competence	Score
People enjoy and employ their deep imagination (dreams, intuition and visions)	
People immerse themselves deeply in the arts, using art to reflect impulses and feelings that arise within them	

List of STUDENT INDICATORS for skills and values

The following list of student indicators is taken from the student values-based learning toolkit Discovering What Matters. It has been adapted by students from the longer list given above, and shows how such an adaptation can be done. It could be used for students as part of a larger school evaluation for values-based learning.

Student indicators	Score
Taking responsibility for our learning and using our own initiative	
Having an insight into possible consequences of what we say and do	
Using our mistakes as starting points for learning and growth	
Connecting knowledge from different subjects, as a way of thinking about solutions to difficult problems	
Thinking critically about the ideas and information that are given to us	
Having the courage to take a step beyond our 'comfort zone'	
Helping people to solve conflicts, by listening to both sides and trying to find acceptable solutions	
Listening to other people and trying to understand what they really mean	
Acknowledging and incorporating different points of view (e.g. in our thinking, writing, research)	
Finding the courage to be ourselves	
Feeling that we have the power to create change and solve problems in our local communities	
Remembering to use non-violent communication in tense situations (e.g. using 'I feel' statements rather than blaming others)	
Finding or creating safe spaces to express our emotions (e.g. nature, art, music, friendship groups)	
Applying our subject knowledge and skills to understanding problems in our local communities (schools / families / neighbourhoods etc.)	
Thinking about what we buy and what we throw away, remembering that future generations will depend on the same natural resources as we do now	
Resisting the pressure (e.g. from advertisers) to buy things we don't really need	
Caring for our environment - especially endangered species and ecosystems, injured or unwanted wildlife, and damaged habitats	
Learning to be comfortable with who we are	
Having a strong sense of belonging in nature	
Developing our own personal style by getting to know interests, attitudes and sensitivities	
Thinking of ways to reduce waste, carbon emissions and pollution	
Evaluating what's important to us and what isn't	
Looking after ourselves and our families	
Communicating face to face, spending quality time with people	
Accepting others instead of judging them	
Choosing jobs that we love, not only thinking about how much we can earn	

5. Indicators for Schools and Organizations

The following indicators can be used to assess the educational establishment and the environment it creates for students' learning about values. This includes whether the school or organization itself sets an example of sustainable practices.

It may be useful for you to score the indicators on a scale from 0 (not relevant) to 3 (essential) to help you prioritize those that you would like to assess, before finally selecting a limited number (3-10) for actual use.

Policies	Score
The school makes every effort to understand and plan for students' diverse needs, and to provide a suitable education for each individual student	
The school acts in a manner that is impartial and non-discriminatory (not discriminating on any basis, including nationality, ethnic origin, colour, gender, sexual orientation, creed or religion)	
The school does not tolerate back-biting or bullying	
The school implements a policy of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) purchasing environmentally sustainable products, e.g. recycled paper, even if cheaper alternatives exist; (b) procuring some or all of its energy from renewable sources; (c) reducing carbon emissions; (d) sustainable waste management, e.g. recycling or reducing waste; (e) ethical investment 	
The school offers appropriate, multi-tiered support and guidance to students with problems	
The school is integrated with the local community	
The school makes every effort to understand and plan for students' diverse needs, and to provide a suitable education for each individual student	

Teaching and Learning Strategies	Score
Teachers develop lessons that are based on the memorable rather than memorization	
Teachers open (a) each other's, (b) students' hearts and minds to new ideas	
A wide variety of teaching and learning styles are used	
Teachers find creative ways to increase engagement with students	
Knowledge is increased through hands-on activities	
Teachers discuss with students what they think education is all about	
Teachers give students time to interact and process their learning	

Cross-Cutting Theme 1: Compassion, Caring, Respect, Student-Centredness	Score
Teachers listen with sensitivity and empathy to students	
[(a) Teachers, (b) students and (c) parents] feel the school has a caring ethos	
The school has an embedded culture of respect for students' abilities	
Teachers see every student as a unique spirit to be cherished	

Cross-Cutting Theme 2: Engagement, Initiative, Responsibility	Score
Students [(a) feel that they are encouraged, (b) are taking the opportunity] to develop their own visions and goals for projects, and/or for the whole school	
Students [(a) feel that they are encouraged, (b) are taking the opportunity] to identify problems and develop solutions, on their own or as groups	
Teachers take conscious action [(a) to give every student an equal opportunity, (b) to encourage students] to express their opinions	

Cross-Cutting Theme 3: Learning Environment, Positivity, Happiness	Score
Staff morale and commitment levels are high	
[(a) Teachers, (b) students, and (c) parents] generally feel upbeat, positive and happy about the school	
The school is a vibrant community where teachers and students are stimulated with new ideas, thoughts, directions and possibilities	

Cross-Cutting Theme 4: Reflection, Criticality, Openness, Creativity, Risk-Taking	Score
Teachers and students help each other to reach out and take risks in their teaching and learning	
Teachers build [(a) their own, (b) each other's, (c) students'] capacity for deep reflection out of moments where things go wrong	
Teachers see themselves as 'learners' rather than 'knowers'	
Students, teachers and parents see themselves as part of a learning community with shared reference points	
Teachers and students challenge each other to rethink what they do	
Teachers are open to learning from students	

Cross-Cutting Theme 5: Transformation	Score
[(a) Teachers, (b) students, (c) parents] feel the school provides a space in which students can flourish	
[(a) Teachers, (b) students] feel that they are provided with opportunities for personal growth	

6. Selecting your indicators

With each of the above indicator lists, the next step is for the people you have identified to look at the list of indicators and shortlist the ones that you think would be relevant for your school.

Then go through the list of relevant indicators a second time and choose a few that are 'very relevant'. Do this by thinking about what's important for the success of your school, *not* about what is present or missing right now. Take your time with this step.

You might need to make several copies of the list. It is often helpful to give a separate form to each of the people involved, and then come together as a group after everyone has made their initial selection, in order to agree on a final shortlist. On the other hand, you might prefer to discuss the indicators as a group from the start, and fill out the form after you have reached a consensus.

After you have shortlisted the indicators that look relevant, adapt them to your school by making them more specific, or changing words and phrases that are not quite right for you.

You might find it helpful to reflect on the following questions first individually, and with the group of people that chose the indicators:

- Why did we choose these particular indicators?
- What makes them so relevant or important to us?
- Can we measure them all (bearing in mind our resources and time)?
- If not, which would we most like to measure, and why?

The simplest way to measure the selected indicators is with a questionnaire, or in a focus group discussion or other activity as described below. Other measurement methods are described in the toolkit *Measuring What Matters*.

If your school already has well-defined values, you might already be able to see some links between your values and the indicators that you have chosen. Otherwise you can think about it later, after measuring the indicators.

7. Linking Indicators and Values

It may be that you already have some values in mind that you want to measure: Respect, Justice, Integrity, Trustworthiness, for example. It is normally possible to use the toolkit this way round, but you will need an extra discussion step to link your values to the indicators. We recommend that you involve as many people as possible in this step, as values are very subjective. If you can build a consensus at your school (even if it takes a lot of compromise!) about which indicators are relevant to each of your values, you can then measure each of the indicators in turn, and draw conclusions about values by putting them all together.

The words and phrases that we use in everyday language to represent values (which we will call *value-labels*) are symbols for abstract concepts that exist in people's minds. When we hear somebody talk about "respect", we can easily assume that we understand what they mean - but do we really?

The challenge of working with value-labels is that people understand them differently, depending on their own cultural background, education, life experiences and current contexts. Abstract value-labels like *respect* or *justice* may mean very different things to a school principal, a parent, a religious leader, and a Year 10 student who belongs to an urban gang. In order to assess a value in a school context, a shared understanding needs to be created – linking the value-label to specific, measurable indicators, and then to assessment tools or activities.

The activities in this toolkit, such as Guided Visualization (below) can stimulate this process by encouraging people (teachers, staff, and/or students) to reflect on what values might look like in their school when they are 'lived out' in the best way possible.

What we mean by values, and other activities and methodologies for measuring indicators and values, are described in the toolkit *Measuring What Matters*.

8. Activities

The following group activities can be used to bring out and reflect on the values in your school or organization. Together they can encourage creative thinking and discussion about your educational enterprise and the values you want to exemplify and communicate to your students.

Activity 1	Silent Catch
Goals	To help the participants relax and bond. To use non-verbal communication. To promote a stress-free environment, allowing their inner thoughts to surface. To introduce a reflective mindset.
Description	Participants throw a ball to each other at random in silence for a certain amount of time. They will try to keep the ball in play by making an eye-contact. After a while, another ball can be thrown in to add challenge and fun to the game. No one goes out if they don't catch the ball. The play continues until the facilitator ends it.
Required materials	A small ball.
Preparation	Clear a space to play.
Approximate time needed	5-10 minutes
Facilitation tips	Encourage non-verbal communication In the most successful cases, the members of the group are often very comfortable with silence – treating it not as a warning sign that people are not participating enough, but as a space in which the 'inner voice' can be heard.
Reflection	<p>Understanding the experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened? • How did you feel during the activity? <p>Recognising skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills did you use during the game? • How did you communicate with others? <p>Relating it to real life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would the skills that you used here be useful in your life?

Activity 2	“The first thing you think of when I say ”
Goals	To set the participants on the path of thinking about themselves and the learning environment of their school. The participants create their own individual understanding of their immediate environment and explore together what it means.
Description	<p>Each category is read out. The participants write the first thing that comes into their heads on a post-it note or small piece of paper. Their answers can be placed on a table or stuck on a large piece of paper (one per category).</p> <p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Name of your School] • Student life • Sustainability • Participation • Hopes for the future
Required materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 piece of large paper for each category • 5 small pieces of paper (e.g. post-it notes) for each participant • Pens for everyone
Preparation	Write the name of each category in the middle of the large paper and divide out the post it notes for each participant.
Approximate time needed	30 minutes
Facilitation tips	Encourage the participants to write whatever comes to mind. It can be a thought, a feeling, a question or “I don’t know”, good or bad.
Reflection	<p>Understanding the experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you feel when trying to write a reaction to each category? <p>Recognising skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills did you use during this activity by yourself? • and with others? <p>Relating it to real life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn from this experience? • What does it tell you about the meaning of these things in your school?

Activity 3	Guided Visualization
Goals	<p>To stimulate individual reflection about what values mean to people.</p> <p>To achieve group convergence about what values mean in the school context.</p>
Description	<p>1) Individual reflection</p> <p>The “best Case Scenario” text (below) is read out to the group while they reflect and take notes. The “Best Case Scenario” form can be used to record each participant’s insights.</p> <p>2) Group reflection</p> <p>The “Best Case Scenario” forms are posted together, or they can be cut in pieces, grouped by values, reassembled on a large sheet, and lines drawn between related values. The group discusses the ideas and values, listening for the truth, allowing consensus to emerge on the unspoken agreement already implicit in collective action.</p>
Required materials	<p>Paper and pens, ideally in a variety of colours for notes, mind-maps or sketches</p> <p>Best Case Scenario forms (Annex 2), scissors and tape or tack</p>
Preparation	<p>The facilitator may find it helpful to practice the script with a colleague before the activity, to gain a feel for when to pause and for how long.</p>
Approximate time needed	<p>Estimated 20 minutes for individual reflection and 30 minutes or more for group reflection</p>
Facilitation tips	<p>A facilitator reads the script aloud to a group, which could include senior management, other teachers, non-teaching staff, governors, parents and students. The facilitator needs to read slowly and clearly, pausing for around 30 seconds at the end of each line. About 5-10 minutes can be allowed after the script reading for group members to finish capturing their reflections on paper. The ideas can be reassembled by values, before a facilitated group discussion in which each person is encouraged to share their ideas in whatever way feels comfortable to them. The facilitator’s role is crucial in seeking areas of consensus and drawing out shared values.</p>

	<p>This approach may be most effective when reflecting about what a specific value (e.g. 'justice' or 'empowerment') might look like in practice. In order for shared understanding to be created, the context needs to be clearly pre-defined. For example, ask participants to think about how the value could be lived out in a particular sustainability activity; within a specific class or year group; across the school as a whole; or in a partnership between the school and a community group. For more discussion of this activity, see the toolkit Measuring What Matters.</p>
<p>Reflection</p>	<p>Consider how are values expressed in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication within the school • the way people relate to one another • how people relate to the natural environment • the way decisions, plans and changes are made • how parents, administrators, and the wider community are engaged in what the school is doing

Sample 'Best-Case Scenario' script for guided visualisation

This is an exercise designed to stimulate creative thinking.

Please feel free to write, draw or doodle anything that comes into your mind at any time while the script is being read out. If you prefer, you can just listen to the text with your eyes closed and then make notes after it's finished. Either way is fine – it's your choice.

After I finish reading the script, I'll give you about [5-10] more minutes to capture your ideas, thoughts and dreams on the paper. The notes or sketches that you make are for your personal use, and you can choose what to share during the group discussion – you won't have to show your paper to anyone unless you want to.

Please start by picturing this school as you experience it now – think about the people, the places, the interactions, the learning experiences, and the feelings you associate with it.

Now picture the school in a 'best case' scenario, where things are happening in the way that you would ideally like them to be. Please feel free to be imaginative in your thinking and disregard any current constraints – this is your dream situation.

We will now take a few moments to explore your 'best case' scenario in more detail. Here are some prompts:

- What is communication like?
- How do people relate to one another?
- How do people relate to the natural environment?
- How are decisions, plans and changes made?
- How are parents, administrators/board members, and the wider community engaged in what the school is doing?

Finally, please think about the values that come to mind when you envisage this scenario.

Activity	Focus Group Discussion
Goals	To learn more about an issue identified through another measurement method, such as a questionnaire or guided visualization.
Description	A Focus Group Discussion is a conversation involving a small group of people (ideally between six and twelve, although there are no strict rules) that focuses on selected topics of interest, in either an informal or a formal setting. Telephone conferencing, instant messaging or Skype can also be used. Usually, there is a facilitator who guides the discussion to obtain the group's opinions about specific themes or issues.
Required materials	Equipment for recording and transcription, or note taking
Preparation	Select the specific themes or issues for discussion
Approximate time needed	Estimated 30-60 minutes
Facilitation tips	If the discussion isn't recorded for later analysis, you'll need a good note-taker as well as the facilitator.
Reflection	<p>The group discussion can provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • insights into the reasons behind people's feelings and actions • the reasons why they answered a question in the way that they did • real-life examples of 'values in action'.

9. Analyzing the results

The activities in this toolkit will provide material for a deep reflection on the part of all those involved in the school: teachers, administrators, support staff, even parents or their representatives. You should all talk about what you have experienced and learned, and what this may mean for the school in terms of its learning environment, curriculum and teaching methods.

You could organize one or more reflection sessions guided by a facilitator to reflect on your experience and feelings, and to listen to the different views of all those involved. There should be an atmosphere of trust, with everyone feeling free to express themselves regardless of their formal role in the school. Deep reflection can give the insights necessary to understand the consequences of your present school environment and how it might be improved. In a large school, you could start with a reflection session with interested teachers, and then bring in administrators and other representatives of the larger school community.

Ultimately these reflections should lead to concrete action on the part of those responsible. Individual initiatives by a teacher in the classroom will be encouraged if they are understood and supported by the administration, and become part of a larger set of school initiatives. The new thinking could be captured in a school charter, mission statement or teacher's handbook. Selected indicators could be integrated into the school's assessment processes. Values-based learning for responsible living and sustainability could become an explicit school goal.

ANNEX 1

The conceptual framework for transformational learning

The learning environment that a school or other educational activity creates for its students is as critical as the training and motivation of its teachers. This toolkit provides some indicators and activities that can bring out those qualities and processes that can facilitate values-based learning, both in the teaching staff and in the school itself. They are an invitation to explore some of the fundamental principles underlying effective education and to create an environment for transformational learning.

The values-based indicators at the heart of these toolkits were originally developed to provide indicators for measurement, but they were also found to be an extremely useful tool to *crystallize* really key concepts and to stimulate values-based learning.

In working through the indicator list, you may suddenly have a new perspective on yourselves and your school. You may start the process saying that you already know your values, but find at the end that you will decide on new ones. You will have new ideas, talk to each other, discuss differences in your results, and, perhaps get excited over the new choices available.

Every organisation has its own culture, language, and ways of communicating what it does. But when you see the reference list of values-based indicators, you will find not only 'indicators' that relate to these familiar concepts, but also a host of other indicators that stem from real experience. It is rather like going into an ice-cream parlour and seeing tens of flavours of ice cream – flavours you had not even conceived of previously. And, suddenly, you might find that, instead of vanilla, strawberry or chocolate, your favourite flavours are actually mango, or passion fruit. You stand back in amazement, and within minutes let go of an old 'favourite', and pick out new favourites. This can start a new process of transformational learning within your school as you share new possibilities and explore their meaning for what you thought and felt, and how you taught before.

Because some of the values-based indicators were taken directly from interviews with educators, and others are derived from work with civil society organizations and other values-based entities, the language is very friendly to users. But even more importantly – the content is really applicable to the school situation.

It is important to note that these activities and indicators do not impose any particular set of predetermined sustainability values, but should help a school to select the tools most relevant to its curriculum, and environmental, social, economic and cultural context.

Discovering Useful New Indicators

Discovering new, useful indicators means that you have identified new things that are fundamentally important to your school that you want to measure. You may also decide to consciously change the focus of your educational activities – your priorities, your educational aims, your action plans. For example, your students might still have environmental projects, but now you focus more of your energy on improving outcomes relating to empowerment.

If the process leads to schools measuring things that were not previously measured, then these things need names. The indicator list will introduce you to a vocabulary that is relevant to schools and similar organizations. This will help you to develop a shared vocabulary in the school. When teachers discover things on the list that they think are important to them and their teaching – even more important than their existing ideas – then those words take on real meaning; they relate to something tangible.

Values-based indicators can help you communicate to staff, pupils, parents and the wider society, about what your school or educational project hopes to achieve and what it can

offer the world. You can consciously aim for educational outcomes that previously seemed intangible and beyond reach.

Almost certainly, this will bring to your school a new energy and lease on life. You will have something fundamentally important to bring to the learning process. You can teach the old materials in new ways.

Transformational Learning

Transformational learning takes place all the way through the process.

- First, as teachers read through the indicator list, they will be thinking and reflecting on something very deep – their own personal values and those of the students they are teaching.
- Secondly, as they compare their results with colleagues, there will be rich discussions about what they have just discovered, and why they might have seen some things differently.
- This will lead them to exploring the vocabulary in the list, and reflecting on how it applies to them and their activities.

Transformational learning is highly prized in education. It means that some deep, embedded learning has taken place to the extent that individuals are 'transformed' in some manner – that the way they think or act or learn has shifted. In this case for the teachers, there is no pre-determined outcome – the intention is not to shift participants in a particular direction. What happens in the values-based learning process is that they shift themselves onto their 'crystallized' ideas. What is really useful is when several individuals do it together, at the same time.

Based on this new understanding of the importance of values, and of the educational activities that can help students to form their own values, the teaching environment and methods will also evolve to create transformational learning in all the students.

If the goal is to help students become conscious of the challenges of sustainability, and to lay the foundation for responsible lifestyles, then this will have life-long impact and be a high point of their education.

A Shared Vision

For a school in particular, where transformational learning can increase the impact and effectiveness of the whole educational process, an agreement on values-based indicators can help to define a whole new learning environment. Using this toolkit, the 'values' of the school can be crystallised, and all the teaching staff can develop a shared vocabulary. Instead of moving in slightly different directions and speaking differently, they will be moving in a similar direction and using the same language.

If the teachers go on to the next stages of the indicator process, to decide on measurement methods, do the measurements and reflect on the results, their shared vision will be further strengthened, and will be passed on to the students. Be prepared for lots of new suggestions within the school.

The transformation can reach even further. We are living in an age where GDP economics focusing on material wealth – the untouchable cornerstone of Western society for several decades – is now seen as inadequate. But society is only beginning to explore ways to measure or even to speak about the range of things that are important to it that are not directly linked to GDP.

Perhaps even more importantly, transformational learning can help participants internalize concepts of Sustainable Development in the broadest sense. It is generally acknowledged that achieving sustainability will require radical changes in human society to preserve and begin to restore the natural capital on which we depend. This in turn requires that each individual make the transition to a new relationship with ourselves, with other species, and with the planet that is our home, involving learning with head, heart and spirit. Creating the school environment where such learning takes place is a challenge, and these activities should help to meet it.

We need new ways to view our world, and to understand what things we really value. Many of those things we value were commonly considered impossible to measure. Now we are finding ways to measure them. It is natural that we will move through a period of adjustment until they are drawn out of the invisible, into the visible. That is what the values-based learning system and its indicators was designed to do.



ANNEX 2: 'Best case scenario' form

Staff, governors and parents can be asked to complete this form for each of your school's espoused values. Completed forms can be cut into pieces along the grey lines, if wished, to facilitate aggregation of all the responses relating to each of the values.

Our Values	What would this look like in a 'best case' scenario? What would people do? What might they say?



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