

# Theme 2: VALUES

An important challenge for education in supporting sustainability is overcoming the prevailing knowledge/action gap related to sustainable consumption and behavior change. Even though people know that their actions have negative impacts, and threatens their future, this often does not lead to specific change in behavior. Education thus has to work at the level of emotions and values to build motivation for change. With the help of inspirational teachers and their own inner values, students can choose to contribute to the 'Great Transition'. Little by little, one day at a time, they can learn to build communities that are fairer, more caring, more peaceful, more respectful of the Earth and its limits, more creative, more values-led... and more sustainable.

The generation we are teaching today will eventually be challenged with getting humanity through these crises. They need to be trained for jobs that don't even exist yet. They need to be equipped with skills that are currently not taught – like the ability to understand complex systems, see situations from different view-points, resolve conflicts without violence, or relate mindfully and joyfully to the natural world.

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 oneself, and to reflect on what matters most in their lives.
- Use this greater self-knowledge to look at and question their lives now and in the future, as well as their surroundings, to see how their newly awakened values can be better incorporated into their daily lives.
- Allow students to collaborate with each other to prioritize their values and find ways to 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.

These values include, among others, trust, compassion, creativity, empowerment, and care and respect for the community of life. 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 values-based learning.

## Values and indicators 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 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 with other 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.



There are three components to this topic:





- 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.

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.

## 2a Activity “The future we want”

Students think of and verbalize their hopes for the future. All opinions are shared in a circle by adding “yes, and”.

 <b>Sustainable development skills</b>	Anticipatory competency; Strategic competency; Collaboration competency; Self-awareness competency.
 <b>Curriculum</b>	Languages; Psychology; Ethics; History; Social studies / civics.
 <b>Tips and recommendation</b>	This activity can be done at an organizational level (e.g. hopes for the future of your school / group / project etc) or at the level of wider society, or both. Each student needs to be asked to listen to the other students before saying their own sentence. The point is to support each other and acknowledge different kinds of hopes. Make sure the rule is to accept others' contribution even if they don't agree. If they disagree with the hope mentioned before them, ask them to think about whether they can add another element to the story to make it more acceptable to them.
 <b>Materials needed</b>	Paper and pencil.

**INSTRUCTION:** Arrange the room so that everyone can sit in one large circle. Choose one person to write down all the hopes on the large paper, and another to write each hope on a separate strip of paper.

We each think of our hopes for the future. Someone starts by saying: “In the future I hope to see...” and add their own hope to the sentence. Each person takes a turn to say “yes” to accept the sentence said by the preceding person, then “and” before adding their own hope. Go around the group twice.





This activity will help to think about future we want and then verbalize our vision for others. By agreeing to accept the previous hope, we create a space where we know our own hopes will be accepted. You can group hopes into common categories if this is useful for further discussions.

Questions:

- *What happened?*
- *Were you working together?*
- *What skills did you use during this activity by yourself?*
- *What skills did you use doing activity with others?*
- *Are these realistic hopes?*
- *What skills do you need to make these a reality?*

## 2b Activity “Indicators of skills and values”

Students evaluate their school or class environment by considering various skills and values listed in the table.

 <b>Sustainable development skills</b>	System thinking competency; Normative competency; Critical thinking competency; Integrated problem-solving competency.
 <b>Curriculum</b>	Languages; Literacy; Psychology; Ethics; History; Social studies / civics.
 <b>Tips and recommendation</b>	There are more indicators in the lists in Annex 2 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 assessment methods work best for you.
 <b>Materials needed</b>	List of indicators (Annex 1, 2, 3)

**INSTRUCTION:** Copy the indicator list for everyone and one large size list.

This activity can be done in different ways:

### 1) Individually

The indicator list (see Annex 1) is introduced as ideas that are important for some people. Ask everyone to read and think about how they feel about the indicators, marking the five most important ones with a ✓ and the five least important ones with a X. There are no right or wrong answers.

### 2) Collectively

We gather around a large size list of indicators on a table (from Annex 2). We place sweets/tokens on our own choices of most important ones (one for each indicator). We discuss together and decide collectively five most important ones. We can move the sweets/tokens if we change our minds and can add new indicators by writing in the blank spaces.

### 3) Clustering

Cut the indicators (large font versions from Annex 3) into separate strips and group them. This allows us to make sense of our own connections instead of seeing the indicators as an isolated list of sentences. We can make our own rules about how to group them, and whether to bring in some or all of our own values-based indicators ('hopes for the future') from previous activity as well.

Questions:

- Which were your most important values?
- Have they changed? Why?
- How was it to work with others?
- Did you use any of the skills while doing the exercise?
- Did you know you have this many skills already?
- How does that make you feel?
- In what kind of situations can you practice these skills?

## 2c Activity "Spatial Survey"

Students prioritizing and measuring the skills and values that they either have or would like to develop in order to empower changes.

 <b>Sustainable development skills</b>	System thinking competency; Normative competency.
 <b>Curriculum</b>	Psychology; Ethics; History; Social studies / civics.
 <b>Tips and recommendation</b>	Ask the students to go with what they really feel and ignore where the others stand. They can stand in between the markers if they want to.



## Materials needed

Be prepared pieces of paper saying „Not at all“, „a little“, „adequate“, „good“, „excellent“;  
List of indicators (Annex 1);  
Pens and paper.

**INSTRUCTION:** This activity have 2 steps: prioritizing and measuring.

### 1) Prioritizing

We choose our 3 most important indicators (these can be from activity “The future we want“, and/or the printed indicators from Annex1). Write each of the chosen indicators on a piece of paper.

### 2) Measuring

The 3 pieces of paper representing the most important indicators are stuck on the wall at one end of the classroom. Students all start from the opposite wall, marking the “not at all” point, and move to the mark where they feel their school is at. Repeat this for each indicator.

Measure by eye the halfway point of the classroom or hall, and place the “adequate”, then place the markers for “a little” and “good” half way to each end. Opposite ends of the room form the “not at all” and “excellent” (see room plan below).

Plan of the classroom or hall for Spatial Survey.

Stick the marker for **‘not at all’** on the wall at this end of the room. Students start here.  
If they feel the indicator is not being lived out at all, they stand still and don’t move forward.

Place the marker for **‘a little’** on the floor here.  
Students move to this point if they feel the indicator is only being lived out a little in the school.

Stick the marker for **‘adequate’** on the floor here.  
Students move to this point if they feel the indicator is being lived out adequately.

Stick the marker for **‘good’** on the floor here.  
Students move to this point if they feel the indicator is being lived out well.

Stick the marker for **‘excellent’**, and the indicator, on the wall here.  
Students stand next to the indicator if they feel it is being lived out as well as it could be.

Questions:

- *What happened here?*
- *How did you choose the three most important indicators?*
- *Were you able to think for yourself?*
- *To what degree did you hide your real belief once you saw where others had chosen to stand?*
- *What does this tell you?*

## Annex 1 – for activities: „Indicators of skills and values“, „Spatial Survey“

### The list of INDICATORS for skills and values

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, sports)	
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 just thinking about how much we can earn	

## Annex 2 – for activity „Indicators of skills and values“

Checklist of Indicators

### INDICATORS FOR STUDENTS

General Indicators	Score
We respect, appreciate, and find ways to understand the differences between people	
We have self-respect	
We acknowledge and incorporate different points of view (e.g. in our thinking, writing, research, etc)	
We resolve conflicts through dialogue	
We listen to other people and try to understand what they really mean	
We walk our talk	
We take responsibility for our learning and use our own initiative	
We think critically about the ideas and information that are given to us	
We find the courage to be ourselves	
We are able to act as ‘critical friends’, giving honest and helpful feedback to each other	

Specific Indicators A: Knowledge and Understanding	Score
We apply our subject knowledge and skills to understanding problems in our local communities (school/family/neighbourhood)	
We understand how we relate to other-than-human creatures, and with the natural environment of our local area	
We have an insight into possible consequences of what we say and do	
We understand how to be in relationship to, and care for, particular species of plants and animals	
We think about what we buy and what we throw away, remembering that future generations will depend on the same natural resources as we do now	

Specific Indicators B: Self-Knowledge	Score
We learn to be comfortable with who we are	
We develop our own personal style by getting to know our interests, attitudes and sensitivities	
We recognize ourselves as co-creators of our social world	
We use mindfulness as a way of coping with problems	
We discover meaning and purpose for ourselves	
We see new meanings that change or deepen our understanding of what we’re doing now, what we hope to do, and why	

Specific Indicators C: A Culture of Change	Score
We feel that we have the power to create change and solve problems in our local communities	
We ask ‘big questions’ and look for answers in the wider community	

We use mistakes as starting points for learning and growth	
We have the courage to take a step beyond our 'comfort zone'	

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

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

<b>Specific Indicators F: Cultural Competence</b>	<b>Score</b>
We enjoy and employ our deep imagination (dreams, intuition and visions)	
We immerse ourselves deeply in the arts, using art to reflect impulses and feelings that arise within us	



## INDICATORS FOR SCHOOLS

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: purchasing environmentally sustainable products, e.g. recycled paper, even if cheaper alternatives exist; procuring some or all of its energy from renewable sources; reducing carbon emissions; sustainable waste management, e.g. recycling or reducing waste; 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 that 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:	Score

<b>Learning Environment, Positivity, Happiness</b>	
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	

<b>Cross-Cutting Theme 4: Reflection, Criticality, Openness, Creativity, Risk-Taking</b>	<b>Score</b>
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	

<b>Cross-Cutting Theme 5: Transformation</b>	<b>Score</b>
[(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	

### **Annex 3** – for activity „Indicators of skills and values“

Indicators in large font. These can be cut up into separate Strips.

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, sports)

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 just thinking about how much we can earn