

COMMUNICATING VALUES:

A VALUES-LED APPROACH TO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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ABOUT VALUES LAB

We support and mentor organisations and networks to enhance their effectiveness by identifying, engaging, and giving expression to their core values.

We are particularly concerned to engage and embed values that motivate the promotion of equality, the prevention of discrimination, and respect for, and the protection, fulfillment of human rights.

We believe in the potential of values to effect social change and enable collective action.

We pioneer the development of tools and resources for: values-led communication strategies; values-led planning and evaluation; values auditing for organisations; and values-led employment and service provision, procedures and practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Values are powerful tools for leveraging social change: one commentator describing them as “the bedrock of effective politics”¹. When our personal values are activated, our emotions are engaged². When communications for social change are values-led, this increases the potential to powerfully bind people to issues of social and environmental concern and consequently, to mobilise them to take action.

Strategic consideration is rarely given by organisations, however, to the values being communicated in social change strategies, despite the fact that all relevant communications carry a set of explicit and implicit values. Those values being communicated may be motivating target audience to care, or they may be having the opposite effect.

Decades of empirical research provides compelling evidence that certain values we all hold, when activated, motivate us to think beyond our own interests to a concern for the welfare of other people and the environment. Understanding how values work allows us to better understand how to engage the values that will ensure our social change strategies are more effective.

Work for social change essentially involves storytelling. Whether the goal is policy or legislative change, increasing public awareness, or protesting an injustice, we are essentially telling a story about the problem, and the change we seek to address the problem. Values play a significant role in these narratives for social change. Every story we tell carries a set of values that unconsciously signal to the audience why they should be concerned and what is at stake. This publication aims to support a values-led approach to strategic communication for social change. It is a call to campaigners and activists to champion the values, in their communication work, that will promote and sustain wider social change.

Part one of the publication sets out the case for a values-led approach to strategic communication for social change. Part two explores how our values operate and how our pro-social values are prioritised or suppressed, and part three discusses the implications of this for our strategic communication for social change. Part four explores the use of frames, framing and storytelling to carry the values that will underpin the change sought and the concluding part five offers practical tools for organisations and campaigns to adopt a values-led approach to their strategic communication, to engage and mobilise target audiences.

We recommend that organisations interested in adopting a values-led approach to their communications would do so in the context of adopting a whole organisation approach to being values-led. Our previous publication offers information and tools to support organisations to take a broad organisational approach to becoming values-led³.

¹ Monbiot, G. (2017). *Out of the Wreckage: a new politics for an age of crisis*. Verso, London and New York.
² Maio, G. R. and Olsen, J. M. (1998) *Values as truisms: evidence and implications*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 294-311.
³ Mullen, R. (2018). *Values-Led Organisations: Releasing the Potential of Values*. Values Lab www.values-lab.ie

PART ONE

FOUNDATIONS

VALUES

Values are those deeply held ideals that we consider to be important. Our personal values are key motivators regarding how we want to live our lives and are central to the development of our self-concept⁴. Our core values each form the basis of a specific set of beliefs and attitudes, which in turn drive a large range of actions and behaviours: from the careers we choose and the causes we support, to how we spend our free time and the products we buy⁵.

Values have a similar motivational effect for organisations, in that they are central to shaping the culture of an organisation (its priorities, processes and practices). Increasingly, research is identifying the link between organisational effectiveness and living core organisational values⁶. Civil society organisations and campaign networks readily acknowledge their work as values-based, however, it is also the case that rarely is the time taken to reflect on, and ensure that agreed organisational values are dominant in shaping strategic objectives and ongoing operations. This can be due to several factors, including:

- an assumption that core values are operational without any explicit naming or monitoring of these values,
- an assumption of a shared understanding of the core values underpinning the organisation's strategy and how those values are to be engaged and communicated.

Organisations and campaign networks need to go beyond reflection and agreement on core values, to bridge the gap between core values remaining at the level of abstract ideals, to becoming concretised, in terms of what they suggest for strategic objectives, processes, and practices.

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS VALUES

A common set of core values provides a thread of connectivity between diverse civil society networks and organisations that share a common vision of pursuing a more just and equal world. These common values frame the work of many organisations and networks and serve as a basis for linkage and alliance building. A more explicit focus on common values and their role in all aspects of civil society work would enable greater impact.

'Equality' is commonly cited as a core value of civil society organisations and campaigns working to address systemic inequalities for diverse groups. 'Equality' is also a broad strategic goal comprising a number of specific values that are engaged as part of the broad strategy for social change that emanates from such a goal. It is a similar case with human rights. For this reason, it is useful to examine the core set of values that together might motivate the broader goals of promoting equality and protecting, respecting and fulfilling human rights. We suggest the following five values as underpinning and motivating the goals, actions, and practice of promoting equality, eradicating poverty, and protecting, respecting and fulfilling human rights⁷:

- **Autonomy:** encompassing choice, personal agency, self-determination, freedom, and capacity to make choices.
- **Democracy:** encompassing participation, voice, empowerment, influence, and accountability from those in positions of power.
- **Dignity:** encompassing respect, human worth, and relationships of care and love.
- **Inclusion:** encompassing a valuing of diversity, and being part of one's community.
- **Social Justice:** encompassing a balanced distribution of wealth, income, jobs and social goods, and the absence of privilege and entitlement.

4

Rokeach, M. (1973). *The Nature of Human Values*. New York, NY: Free Press.Jackoby, W. G. (2011). *Measuring Value Choices: Are Rank Orders Valid Indicators?* University of Michigan State University, Presentation at the 2011 Annual Meetings of the Midwest 6 Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, 31, 2011.5 Schwartz, S. (2011). *Studying Values: Personal Adventure Future Directions*. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 44 (3) 307-319.Brickman, S. J. et al (2005). *Values Interests and Environmental Preferences for the School Context*. Australian Association of Educational Research, Sydney.Caprara, G. V. and Steca, P. (2007). *Prosocial Agency: the contribution of values and self-efficacy beliefs to pro-social behaviour across ages*, *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 26 (3)220-241.6 Freedman, R. E. and Auster, E. R. (2015). *Bridging the Values Gap: how authentic organisations bring values to life*. Borrett- Koehler Publishers, BK Business book, Oakland, CA.7 Crowley, N. (May 2015). *Equality and Human rights: an Integrated Approach: setting standards for the Irish equality and human rights infrastructure*. *The Equality and Rights Alliance, Dublin*.

www.ericampaign.org

Many civil society organisations and campaigning networks, working to promote equality and address human rights concerns, will share some or all of these values in pursuit of their diverse strategic goals. There is potential, therefore, in pursuing a collective engagement to promoting and engaging these values with target audiences as a means of driving equality and human rights outcomes on a range of issues that would benefit a greater number of people.

This framework of underpinning values connecting equality and human rights could be further expanded to include a core value or values that encompass connecting goals concerned with environmental protection and climate justice. The values-led approach outlined in this publication mainly focuses on advocacy in the areas of equality and human rights, however, other organisations (mainly UK-based) have developed excellent materials and tools applying a values-led analysis to work on environmental sustainability⁸.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Strategic communication for social change is a multidimensional process involving the purposeful use of communication as a central element in the organisation or campaign network's strategy for social change. The principle aims of strategic communication for social change include:

Mobilising: rallying the support base to organise and take action on issues of concern;

Engaging: motivating the wider public to understand an issue and building a popular demand for change; and

Influencing: informing and influencing the agenda of power-holders on the change needed.

Each of these aims will be strengthened if underpinned and shaped by the equality

and human rights values that motivate the social change sought. A values-led approach to strategic communications involves an organisation or campaign network seeking to disrupt dominant narratives that engage values of self-interest and values that present change as a threat, by offering new and alternative narratives that engage pro-social values.

WHY A VALUES-LED APPROACH TO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION?

Imagine a more equal society: one where resources, power, status, and respect are distributed to ensure more equal outcomes for groups and individuals experiencing inequality, discrimination and social exclusion. A society where human rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled and where the protection of the environment is a priority. Building a demand for, and bringing about this type of systemic change, requires the engagement and re-prioritisation of equality and human rights values at individual, community, and societal levels.

We live in a time that fosters, validates, and perpetuates values that promote the pursuit of self-interest over the pursuit of common interest. The dominance of neoliberalism in our economic and political systems has all-pervasively and consciously engaged values of competition, and values that motivate the pursuit of individual wealth, status, and power. The imprint of neoliberalism and its value system, can be seen in: the pervasiveness of celebrity culture across mainstream media; the influence of social media in creating competition between people; and the recasting of people as consumers rather than citizens, in particular by consumer advertising. All of this contributes to a prioritisation of self-interest values over those values that foster interpersonal and community connection⁹.

In addition to a pervasive engagement of self-interest values, dominant media narratives consistently engage values of security and conformity, by presenting progressive change, for those who experience inequality and discrimination, as a threat to traditional values, economic security, and the status quo.

All of this leads to a dominance of values that are oppositional to the values of dignity, inclusion, democracy, autonomy, and social justice. In many respects civil society has sought to adapt to this dominant value set and to operate within its confines, rather than confront it. The strategic approach of civil society organisations and networks largely involves focusing energy on seeking to convince the power holders to implement piecemeal change and to do so on their terms within the parameters of their current thinking.

This civil society strategy is largely employed in place of mobilising a popular demand to drive change, by communicating outside of, and beyond the traditional sites of power. As a result, civil society organisations and networks have failed to connect with, and engage in the cultural battle that is being waged, whereby values that are oppositional to equality and human rights are being prioritised, values that ultimately hamper and block the social change being pursued. Values of competition, individual gain, social status, security, and conformity will never motivate people to pursue a demand for a more just and equal society.

A more expansive approach to social change is required: one based on engaging in this cultural battle over values. The equality and human rights values shared by civil society can serve as a key focus in building a shared motivation for social change. Strategic communication then comes centre stage in such an approach. It can be utilised to: build narratives to bring forward these values; communicate in ways that engage people with these values; and create a societal prioritisation of these values.

It may seem like a mammoth task to counter the power and resources of those institutions that propagate the self-interest and security values that dominate our institutional, political, and public discourse. However, while the limited capacity of one organisation or campaign network to address this issue is recognised, it can be countered by shared endeavour by organisations across the sector. The connectivity of shared values offers the prospect of mutual gains on diverse issues for different groups, through collective engagement of those values in the strategic communication of all. Optimism is further available from something that receives more attention later in this publication, the fact that people generally are more likely to place higher importance on pro-social values than on values of self-interest: they just need encouragement to give effect to them and an understanding that these values are shared.

VALUES-LED STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AS PART OF A BROADER SOCIAL CHANGE STRATEGY

Values-led strategic communication will need to be situated within the broader change strategy of an organisation or campaign network. Change strategies have traditionally been underpinned by three core elements:

- Analysis:** the quality of this is central to understanding the immediate and root causes of a social issue and to informing the decisions on what outcomes will be pursued to address the issue. Analysis of this nature will encompass:
- an understanding of the systemic nature of inequality and the unequal distribution of resources, power, status, and respect; and
 - an understanding of the identity, situation and experience of the groups in society that are more vulnerable to discrimination, inequality and rights violations.

PART ONE

Mobilisation: the quality of this is central to actively engaging, mobilising, organising, and amplifying the voice of the powerless and those who are in solidarity with them. It will include employing participatory strategies and tactics.

Action: the quality of this is central to identifying and deploying the tactics to be employed in pursuit of outcomes of justice and equality and to leveraging the enablers that can secure the change sought. It will include the empowerment and mobilisation of people most affected by the issue.

Values, given their potential to enable more effective change strategies, need to be established and integrated as a fourth element of a broader change strategy alongside analysis and action. Values, and the quality of our engagement of values, are a necessary explicit fourth element, for the following reasons:

- Values are the building blocks in the formation of people's beliefs and attitudes and consequently inform and shape their analysis of social issues,
- Organisations and networks campaigning and advocating for equality, human rights, and environmental sustainability are values-based, values (explicit and implicit) inform the design and delivery of actions, practice and processes, therefore, it is important to ensure a coherence between the values held and the values that inform the culture of the organisation¹⁰.
- Values (implicitly and explicitly) are embedded in the narrative of our social change messages: they are a

powerful means of engaging target audiences to prioritise equality, human rights, and environmental sustainability.

10 Mullen, R. (2018). Op cit.

PART TWO

VALUES: HOW VALUES WORK

HOW VALUES WORK

Our personal values are best understood as part of an interactive values system rather than as singular unrelated entities. Across the range of values we hold, each of us will prioritise our values differently: the highest ranked values being of most centrality to our concept of the ideal self¹¹.

The most established and empirically tested model of personal values, as an interactive system, was developed by Shalom Schwartz¹².

FIGURE 1.



Schwartz identifies three universal human requirements which values serve: basic survival and safety needs; the need for interpersonal connection; and group survival needs. His model identifies 56 values that are universally held by people: this is found to hold constant across different countries and diverse cultures (FIGURE 1.)¹³.

Values research, in over eighty countries worldwide, indicates that each of us hold all of these values, what varies, is the priority

ranking individuals afford to specific values. The particular values we rank, as either high or low priority, will be shaped by our experiences, needs, aspirations, priorities, and physical environment.

The plotting of the values in the model is not random, but a reflection of the motivational relationship between the different values people hold. The proximity, or distance, between the values, as they are plotted, reflects their compatible or incompatible motivational goals. Values that are furthest apart have the least compatible motivation and values that are closest have the most compatible motivation.

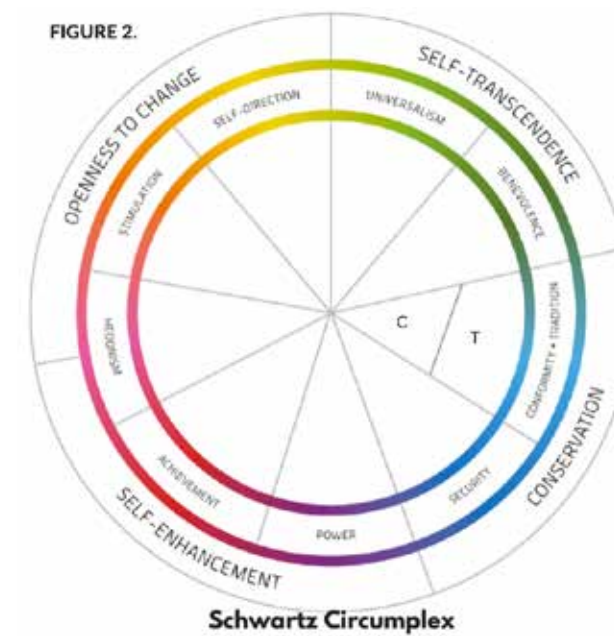
The values of equality and social power, for example, have a highly incompatible motivation, as indicated by the distance between them.

The values of equality, and protecting the environment, on the other hand, have a highly compatible motivation, as indicated by their proximity.

Through his research, Schwartz identified that these universally held values can be grouped according to ten value types, each reflecting a distinct motivational goal (FIGURE 2.).

The circular arrangement of the values (referred to as a circumplex) reflects the motivational continuum between and across the value types.

FIGURE 2.



The motivational goal expressed by each value type is set out in FIGURE 2a.

FIGURE 2a. Value Types: Motivational Goals

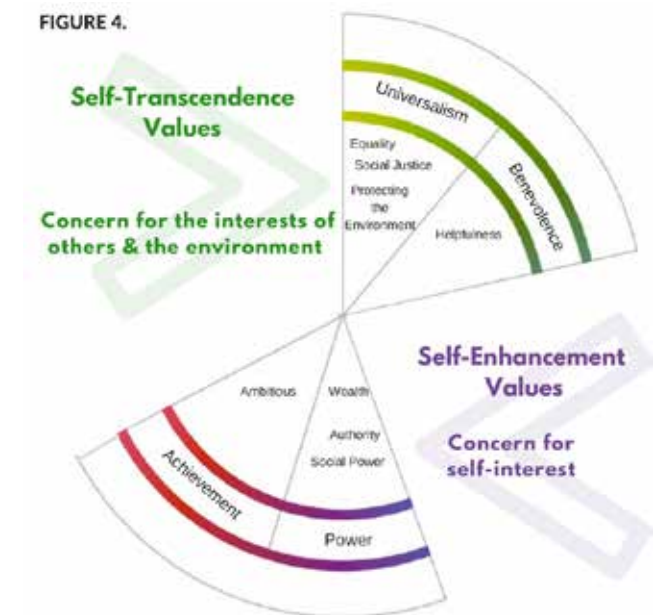
	Universalism understanding, concern for equality and protecting the welfare of all people, appreciation of nature		Power social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.
	Benevolence preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact.		Achievement personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.
	Tradition respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides.		Hedonism pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself.
	Conformity restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.		Stimulation excitement, novelty, and challenge in life
	Security safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self.		Self-direction independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring.

The model includes a further higher-order grouping to the value types, based on the compatibility or incompatibility of their motivational goals. These higher-order groupings are divided along two dimensions: self-transcendence versus self-enhancement

values, and openness to change versus conservation values¹⁴.

Self-Transcendence versus Self-Enhancement

FIGURE 4.



Self-enhancement values (encompassing power and achievement values) and self-transcendence values (encompassing universalism and benevolence values) have oppositional motivational goals (FIGURE 4.). Their opposing motivational goals can be summarised as: pursuing self-interests (self-enhancement values) versus transcending self-interests to consider the interests of others and the environment (self-transcendence values). There is a pro-social motivation underlying self-transcendence values. Research finds that people who highly rank self-transcendence values, are

more likely to exhibit attitudes and behaviours that express a concern for promoting equality, protecting the rights of minorities and protecting the environment¹⁵. Similarly, it is found that people who highly rank oppositional self-enhancement values are more likely to hold prejudicial attitudes towards minorities¹⁶ and

11 Rokeach, M. (1973). *The Nature of Human Values*, NY Free Press, New York, US.

12 Schwartz, S. (1992) Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 25, 1-65.

13 Graphic sourced from the Common Cause Foundation UK.

14 The term 'conservation' here does not refer to 'conservation' as this term applies to environmental conservation, but pertains to conservatism and values associated with a desire to conform to tradition, concern with security, and resistance to change.

15 Schwartz, S. (2007). *Universalism values and the inclusiveness of our moral universe*. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 38(6): 711-728.

16 Cohrs, J.C., et al. (2007). *Determinants of human rights attitudes and behavior: A comparison and integration of psychological perspectives*. *Political Psychology*, 28(4): 441-469.

Milfont, T. L., et al. (2006). *A Cross-Cultural study of environmental motive concerns and their implications for pro-environmental behaviour*. *Environment and Behavior*, 38 (6), 745-767.

Schiefer, D. et al. (2010). *Cultural values and outgroup negativity: a cross-cultural analysis of early and late adolescence*, *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 40, 635-651.

to exhibit discriminatory behaviour towards minorities .

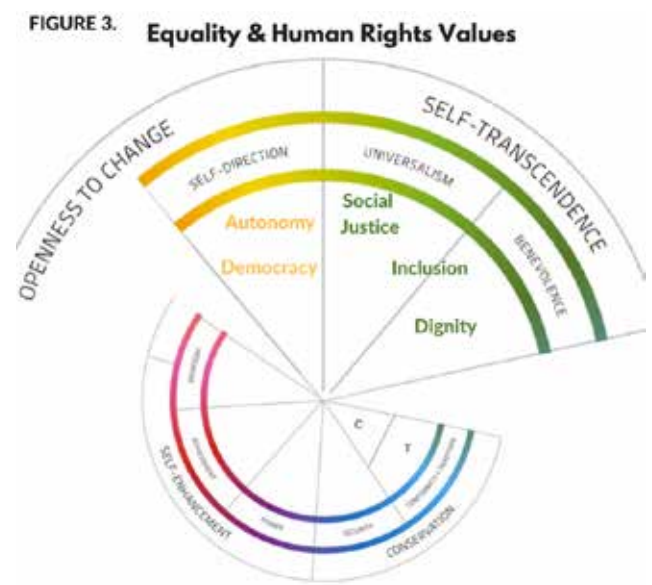
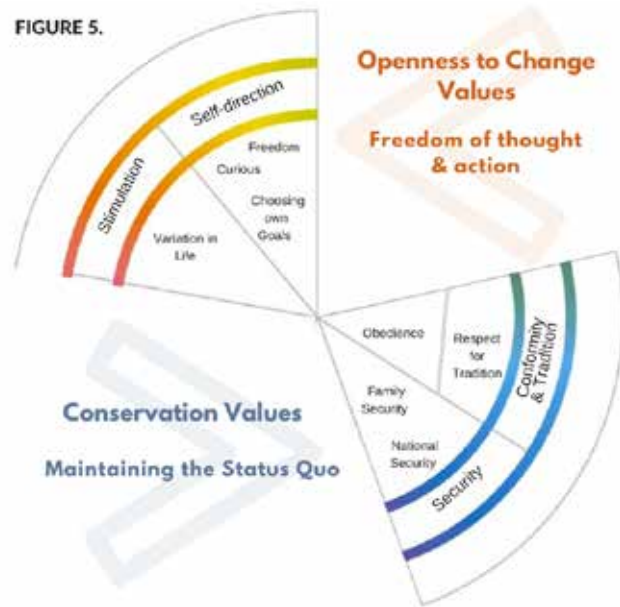
Openness to Change versus Conservation

Openness to change values (encompassing self-direction and stimulation values) and conservation values (encompassing security, tradition, and conformity values) have oppositional motivational goals (FIGURE 5.). Their opposing motivational goals can be summarised as: freedom of thought and action (openness to change values) versus maintaining the status quo (conservation values).

Aligned with the pro-autonomy goal of openness to change values, research finds that people who highly rank these values are more positively disposed to ensuring the freedom and choices of groups and individuals and are more welcoming

This dynamic of goal compatibility or incompatibility between different values, suggests that a person's high priority and low priority values would tend to cluster. In other words, we might assume that someone who highly ranks universalism values, is also likely to give high ranking to benevolence and self-direction values, given their compatible motivational goals, and that they are more likely to give a lower ranking to oppositional power and achievement values. Research, in over eighty countries worldwide, has consistently validated the model in this regard, that is, that people's value priorities tend to cluster around compatible value types¹⁹. One study, involving 1,800 students in fifteen countries, found that participants who highly ranked values relating to financial success and wealth were also most likely to give lowest priority to pro-social values²⁰.

The five values suggested as underpinning equality and human rights, outlined earlier: autonomy, social justice, inclusion, democracy, and dignity, express openness-to change values (self-direction) and self-transcendence values (universalism and benevolence values) (FIGURE 3.).



of diversity and difference¹⁷. Conversely, people who highly rank oppositional conservation values are more likely to react negatively to difference and to any perceived threats to the status quo¹⁸.

THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF VALUES

Whatever a person's priority values might be, they will also hold the full range of values that correspond to the different motivational goals in the model. Different values will dominate or wane in importance, depending on: individual needs at different times; how different values are activated by their environment; and whether the individual has the opportunity to pursue their priority values.

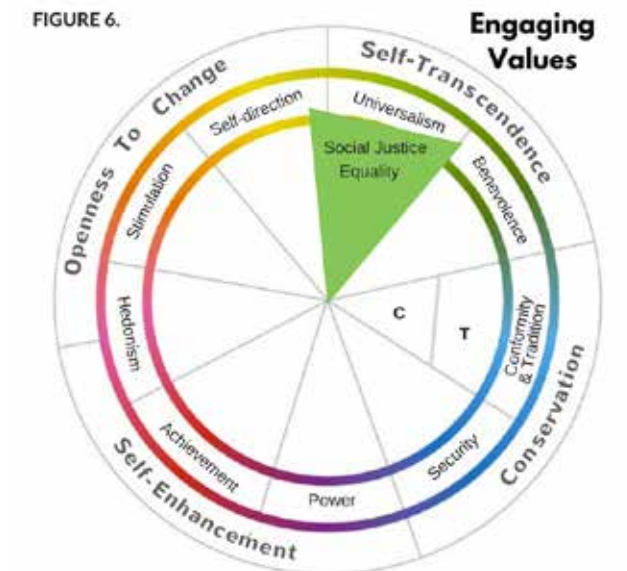
Whether we are making fairly mundane choices, such as what cereal to buy, or more important decisions, such as what political party to vote for, the interplay between the different values we hold helps us to navigate these choices and decisions²¹. Knowing that a person highly ranks the value of equality, for example, is insufficient to give us the full picture regarding the likely dominance of this value in guiding their attitudes and behaviours regarding different equality-related issues. We need to know what other highly ranked values this person holds and their ranking of the value of equality within their overall value system.

There is, therefore, an ongoing, largely unconscious, process of balancing between our values as we navigate our lives. This balancing between our values gives rise to a number of key dynamic effects that have implications for strategic communication that motivates social change:

1. Repeated engagement of specific values strengthens those values:

Our values are engaged continuously as we interact with people, institutions, public discourse, and our physical environment. When specific values are activated, this prompts us to give immediate priority to those values and to orient our thinking and behaviour in alignment with those values (FIGURE 6.)²².

Research shows, for example, that when people's equality values are activated there is a reduction in spontaneous prejudice and discriminatory behaviour²³. Similarly, studies have found that where benevolence values of helpfulness are activated, people have been shown to be more likely to donate time, or money to a cause²⁴.



When specific values are repeatedly engaged they are given greater priority, in that our actions and thinking will be more aligned with those values being repeatedly engaged. Values are like muscles in this regard, becoming stronger with repeated engagement. Experiments involving priming the value of equality, not only resulted in participants being more favourably disposed to equality concerns and related organisations, but this engagement was sustained for up to six months following the conclusion of the research²⁵.

2. Engaging specific values causes a bleed-over effect with neighbouring values:

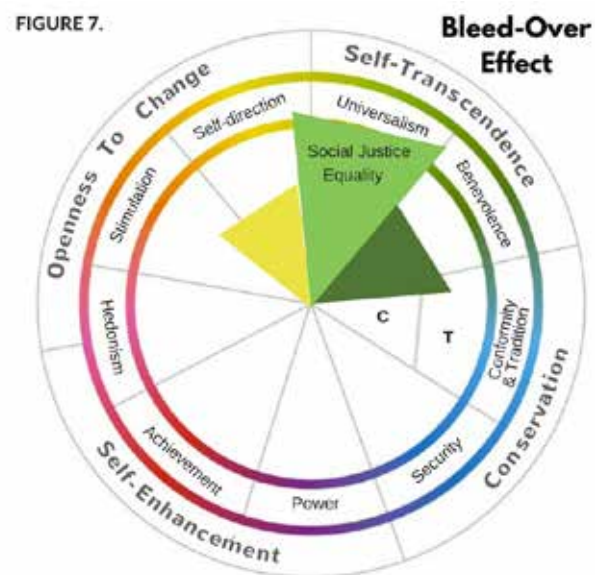
Adjacent value types, in the circumplex model, have compatible motivational goals. When values from one segment of the circumplex are

17 Strauss, J.P., et al. (2008). Demographics, individual value structures, and diversity attitudes in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Change Management*, 8(2): 147-170.
 18 Sagiv, L. and Schwartz, S. (1995). Value Priorities and Readiness for Out-Group Social Contact. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 437-448.
 19 Davidov, E. et al. (2008). Values and support for immigration: A cross-country comparison. *European Sociological Review*, 24, 583-599.
 19 The Schwartz model forms the basis of the World Values Surveys (conducted every four years) as well as the values section of the European Social Survey (conducted every two years).
 20 Grouzet, F. M. E., et al. (2005). The Structure of Goal Contents Across 15 Cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89(5), 800-816.

21 Maio, G. R. (2017). *The Psychology of Human Values*. Routledge, London and New York.
 22 Maio, G. R. (2017). Op cit.
 23 Hertel, G. and Kerr, N. L. (2001). Priming in-group favoritism: The Impact of Normative Scripts in the Minimal Group Paradigm. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36, 1305-1317.
 24 Maio, G. R. et al (2009). Changing, Priming and Acting on values: effects via motivational relations in a circular model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 97 (4), 699-715
 25 Bernard, M. M. et al (2003). The Vulnerability of Values to Attack: Inoculation of Values and Value-Related Attitudes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29, 63-75.

engaged, there is found to be a consequent 'bleed-over' effect on neighbouring compatible values, causing them to also become temporarily relevant (Figure 7.).

This effect was demonstrated in a UK-based study involving over six hundred people²⁶. Participants were given information to read about either the work of a disability organisation or an environmental organisation. The texts



given to the participants were taken directly from the organisations' communications but were adapted to activate self-transcendence values, or self-enhancement values, or a mix of both self-transcendence and self-enhancement values.

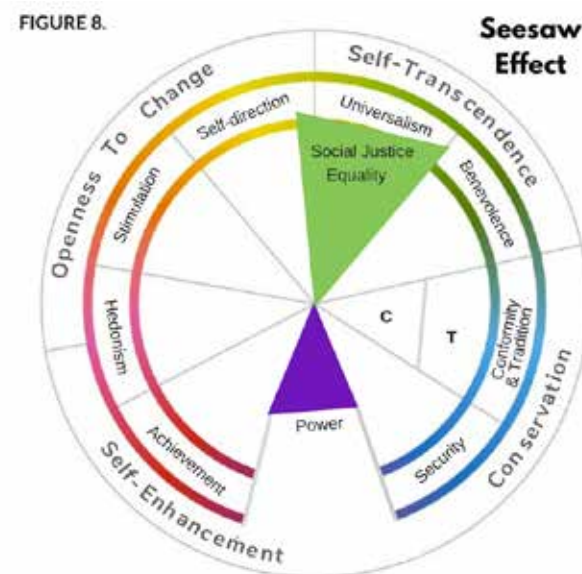
Where self-transcendence values only were being primed, universalism values were primed in the environmental text and self-direction values in the disability text. The researchers predicted that by activating *either* universalism values or self-direction values, there would be a bleed-over effect, given the compatibility of these neighbouring values. The results verified these predictions. Regardless of whether participants were given information about the environmental organisation or the disability organisation, they

were more likely to offer to take action to support *either* cause, despite the significantly different remits of both organisations.

3. Engaging specific values has a suppressing effect on values with opposing motivation:

Values with oppositional motivation cannot be pursued at the same time, as it is psychologically difficult for individuals to simultaneously engage values with incompatible motivational goals²⁷. For instance, if universalism values are being engaged, akin to how a seesaw works, opposing self-enhancement values, concerned with self-interest, are simultaneously being suppressed and vice-versa (Figure 8.).

The UK-based study, mentioned above, also demonstrated this seesaw effect. One aspect



of the study involved participants completing a personal values questionnaire, three months before the experiments were conducted, to determine whether they were more personally orientated towards self-enhancement or self-transcendence values. In the experiments, however, participants were randomly assigned to the different groups, regardless of their personal

values orientation²⁸. Participants who were given text primed with self-transcendence values were more likely to offer to take action to support an organisation than participants who were given text primed with self-enhancement values. Significantly, the personal values orientation of participants who had read text primed with self-transcendence values did not have any bearing on their willingness to support the organisation. Participants whose personal values were more oriented towards self-enhancement were just as likely to offer support to the organisation as participants whose personal values were more oriented to self-transcendence.

It would seem to be the case that by engaging self-transcendence values, the opposing self-enhancement values of participants were temporarily suppressed, thereby increasing their motivation towards a concern for the welfare of others or the environment.

VALUE PRIORITIES

Values data from the European Social Surveys²⁹ indicate that, on average, people across the European Union place greater priority on self-transcendence values³⁰ (particularly benevolence values) than other values. Security values and self-direction values also average out as being of high priority. On average, power values are afforded the least priority by people across the European Union.

The picture for Ireland is consistent with that of the rest of the European Union, with benevolence values emerging as the values that, on average, people identify as being of greatest priority. Following benevolence values, security values and universalism values average as the most prioritised values by people in Ireland and power values are afforded lowest priority³¹.

SOCIETAL VALUES

Values research focusing on the values of larger population sizes, offers interesting insights regarding the dominant values that exist within and across countries and how this might inform social change strategies (notwithstanding that particular groups within a country may espouse cultural values that run contrary to those of the dominant culture).

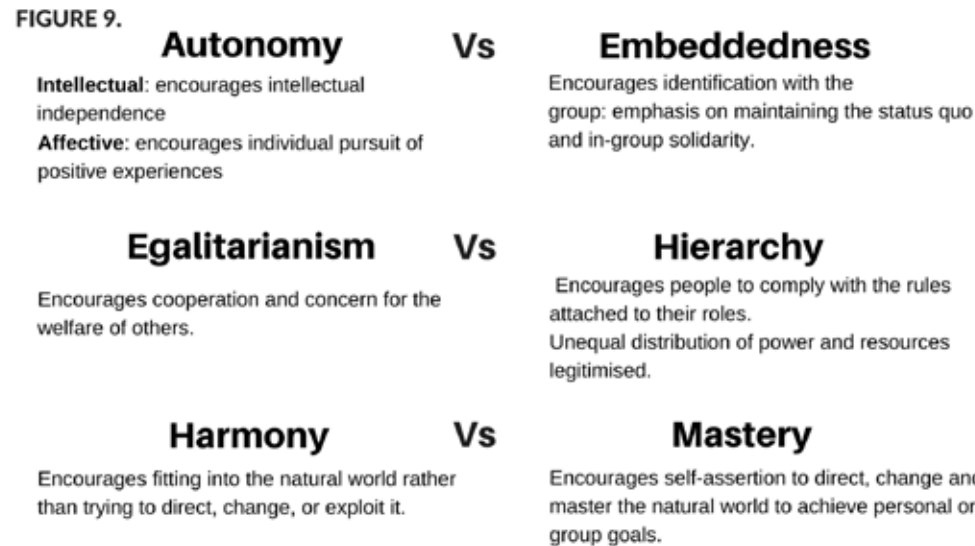
Following the development of the personal value systems model, Schwartz developed a cultural values model, to capture the value dimensions held at the wider societal level³². The model is derived from the identification of three fundamental issues facing all societies, to:

- define the nature of the relationship between the individual and the group;
- regulate how people behave in order to maintain the fabric of society;
- and
- regulate people's treatment of the natural and social environment.

The model identifies seven cultural value orientations: Autonomy (sub-divided into two types: intellectual and affective); Embeddedness; Egalitarianism; Hierarchy; Harmony; and Mastery. These seven cultural value orientations represent three opposing value dimensions: Autonomy versus Embeddedness; Egalitarianism versus Hierarchy; and Harmony versus Mastery (Figure 9.).

26 Crompton, T. et al (2014). *No Cause Is An Island: How People Are Influenced By Values Regardless of the Cause*. Common Cause Foundation, London.
27 Maio, G. R. (2017). Op cit.

28 Crompton, T. et al (2014). Op cit.
29 The European Social Survey questions on respondents' values are based on the Schwartz personal values questionnaires that are used to conduct the World Values Surveys.
30 Blackmore, E. et al (2015) *Valuing Equality: How equality bodies can use values to create a more equal and accepting Europe*. Public Interest Research Centre. Published by Equinet European Network of Equality Bodies. 23 EU Member States are included, using data from the European social Survey 2008 and 2012.
31 Ibid. It is noteworthy that security values also dominate as having significant priority across EU member states: 9 of 23 EU member states average security values as having greatest priority and a further 6 countries average security values as the second most prioritised values. 23 EU Member States are included, using data from the European social Survey 2008 and 2012.
32 Schwartz, S. (2006). *A Theory of Cultural Value Orientations: Explication and Applications*, *Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Volume 5, issue 2-3. Schwartz devised the cultural values model using values data collected over a number of decades in over seventy countries. Each group (not the individual) served as the unit of analysis.



a reciprocal relationship with the natural and social environment, versus an emphasis on controlling and changing the social and natural environment for personal or group gains. Harmony values include: protecting the environment and a world at peace.

tend to emphasise egalitarianism, autonomy, and harmony values. Ireland follows a similar pattern, with one exception: Ireland is more inclined to an emphasis on mastery values over harmony values than its Western European neighbours³³.

VALUES-ACTION GAP

The evidence from large-scale values surveys indicates that Western European countries are more disposed to values of egalitarianism, autonomy, and harmony. The evidence also indicates that at the individual level people are more likely to prioritise personal values of benevolence and self-direction. This evidence raises a key question: why are European countries not characterised by greater levels of equality, greater respect for diversity, and lower levels of discrimination? There would appear to be a gap between the values people say they prioritise and the values they *pursue* in reality. This phenomenon is referred to as a values-action gap and a number of reasons have been identified to account for why it occurs. The main issues in this regard are:

- The pursuit of power, security, conformity and tradition values is psychologically connected to the alleviation of anxiety³⁶. Evidence suggests that mass media stimulate our anxieties and fears, thus causing us to prioritise the pursuit of these values in order to alleviate these anxieties³⁷. In addition, incidents in our environment can trigger anxiety-based values: research indicates, for example, that large-scale events, such as terrorist attacks, cause people to re-prioritise security values in the immediate aftermath of such incidents³⁸.

- While more people are found to prioritise pro-social values, they are also prone to erroneously believe that they are alone in prioritising these values and that other people are higher in self-interest values³⁹. In this context, people can be less motivated to pursue value goals centered on issues of social and environmental concerns, believing themselves to be in a minority in terms of caring about these issues.

- Our actions and behaviours in different contexts and situations, will, in part, be influenced by the relative importance of different priority values we hold. Sometimes, where competing priority values are being engaged, in the assessment of an idea, person, or issue, this can give rise to value conflicts, which results in feelings of ambivalence about the issue, person or idea being evaluated. For example, someone who places high priority on universalism values and security values may feel ambivalent about supporting a pro-immigration policy if this policy promotes values of equality (universalism values), but also threatens security values (relating to national or economic security)⁴⁰.

Autonomy versus embeddedness:

This opposition refers to whether cultures are oriented towards an emphasis on personal autonomy (intellectual and/or affective) versus an emphasis on identifying with the in-group and its shared way of life. Autonomy values include: creativity, broadmindedness, curiosity, pleasure and variety. Embeddedness values include: security, respect for tradition, obedience, politeness and social order.

Egalitarianism versus hierarchy:

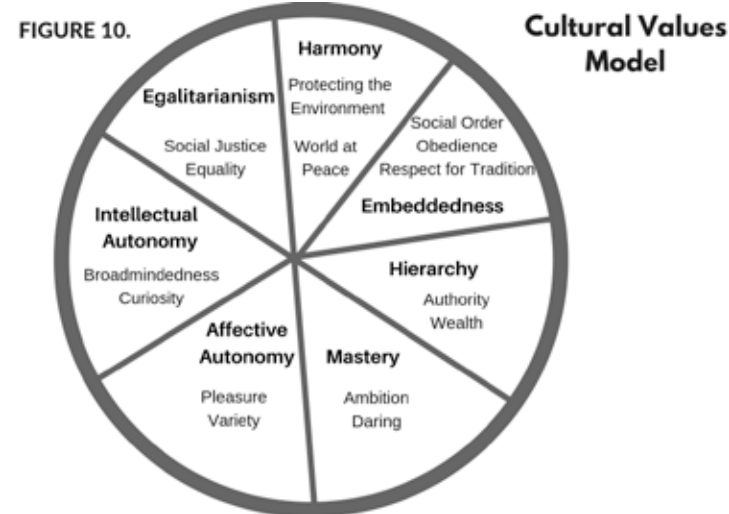
This opposition refers to whether cultures are oriented towards an emphasis on concern for the welfare of others and mutual cooperation, versus an emphasis on hierarchical structures and legitimising the unequal distribution of power. Egalitarian values include: social justice, equality, responsibility, helpfulness, and honesty. Hierarchy values include: social power, wealth, and authority.

Harmony versus mastery:

This opposition refers to whether cultures are oriented towards an emphasis on having

Mastery values include: ambition, influence, daring, choosing own goals, and independence.

The compatibility or otherwise of the seven cultural types is, similar to the personal values model, plotted on a circular continuum of motivation (FIGURE 10.). The cultural value



goals of harmony, egalitarianism and autonomy share a compatible motivation, and the cultural value goals of embeddedness, hierarchy and mastery share a compatible motivation.

The data gathered as part of the cultural values mapping was on the basis of each country sample group (rather than each person) serving as a unit of analysis. The survey data indicate that Western European countries

- Our environment or social context is more likely to regularly and consistently engage self-enhancement values (through consumer advertising and mass media). This can result in self-interest values being strengthened at the expense of pro-social values. Studies indicate, for example, that corporate advertising has a significant impact on strengthening self-enhancement values, associated with social status, financial success and social recognition³⁴. This can be exacerbated by people's belief that they have limited ability to exercise their value preferences, having grown accustomed to yielding their choice to outside forces³⁵.

33 Schwartz, S. (2008). The 7 Schwartz cultural value orientation scores for 80 countries. 10.13140/RG.2.1.3313.3040.

34 See for example, Kasser, T. et al (2007). *Some Costs of American Corporate Capitalism: A Psychological Exploration of Value and Goal Conflicts*. *Psychological Inquiry*, 18(1):1–22.
 35 Maio, G. R. (2017). Op cit.
 36 Schwartz, S. (2006). Op cit.
 37 Maio, G. R. (2017). Op cit.
 38 Maio, G. R. (2017). Op cit.
 39 Common Cause Foundation (2016) *Perceptions Matter: The Common Cause UK Values Survey*, London: Common Cause Foundation.
 40 Maio, G. R. (2017). Op cit.

PART THREE

VALUES-LED STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

As previously noted, the strategic communication focus of an organisation, or campaigning network, will predominantly focus on three key target objectives:

- **Mobilising:** (the support base),
- **Engaging:** (the wider public), and
- **Influencing:** (decision-makers).

Organisations and networks need to establish how best to communicate the equality and human rights values that motivate the social change sought. This strategic communication challenge needs to be met by attention to the content of communications, and the choice of approach and tactics employed to implement communication activities and deliver on communication objectives.

People hold a complex mix of values that motivate the pursuit of competing or complimentary goals. It is important to consider the ways in which communications content and approach might be engaging or suppressing the values motivating alignment with the social change sought. There are a number of actions that organisations can take to pursue more effective, values-led strategic communication:

1. Engage those values that will motivate the social change sought:

If we want people to be motivated to support societal change for equality and human rights, engaging aligned values, with our audiences, is of primary importance. Strategic communication should consistently and repeatedly engage self-transcendence and self-direction values, through the diversity of communications channels, tools and tactics employed.

This is not about attempting to change people's values, it is about engaging and giving priority to pro-social values they already hold. As noted

previously, our values operate like muscles and just as muscles are strengthened, repeatedly engaging certain values will strengthen those values in target audiences.

It is also important to avoid engaging a mix of values, with opposing motivational goals, in campaign messaging. This approach may seem like an effective way to appeal to the diversity of priority values held across target audiences, however, people cannot engage opposing values simultaneously. Mixed-value messaging is confusing and does not 'stick' with audiences.

2. Avoid engaging values that will suppress motivation for the social change sought:

Appealing to self-enhancement values suppresses motivation for concern about the welfare of others, broader equality, and the protection of the environment. Appealing to security or conformity values motivates a desire to maintain the status quo and suppresses the values that would motivate an interest in creativity and change. Further, if our communications provoke feelings of anxiety and insecurity in presenting the case for change, there is a danger of suppressing, rather than enhancing, people's ability to think beyond their own concerns or those of their own immediate group.

This following campaign poster on challenging ageism is an example of a message that engages self-enhancement values in an effort to persuade the audience to be concerned about others (in this case older people)⁴¹. The self-transcendence that is required ends up being undermined. The tagline "Fight ageism. You are not getting any younger" engages values of self-interest rather than values of social justice. By underscoring, rather than challenging, obsession with physical perfection, self-enhancement values are engaged in the audience. Values concerned with the pursuit of social status, linked here to the status associated with a youthful appearance, likely calls up an insecurity around ageing that may exacerbate the focus on self and ironically feed an ageist culture.



Values	Feelings	Motivation
Self-Enhancement: (social status)	Insecurity	Concern for Self (physical appearance)

3. Be creative in communicating the values that can strengthen motivation for progressive change:

The bleed-over effect between neighbouring values offers valuable potential to be strategically creative in how we strengthen universalism values with our audiences.

If our strategic communication seeks to motivate social change for equality and human rights, the priority is to engage universalism values. The bleed-over effect between neighbouring values offers valuable potential to be strategically creative in how we strengthen universalism values with our audiences. Flowing from this, our strategic communication could also engage value types with compatible motivations to strengthen universalism values among our target audiences. This allows our communications to creatively

engage audiences to care about equality by engaging, for example, values of self-direction on the one hand or benevolence on the other hand.

Oxfam’s “Be Humankind” campaign message⁴², is concerned with social justice but chooses to engage benevolence values. The campaign cleverly ties the words “human” and “kind” together to remind of the shared humanity of all people. By engaging the benevolence value of kindness, this message can serve to strengthen associated values concerned with social justice and environmental justice (larger themes being addressed by the organisation) thereby bringing target audiences closer to the global work of Oxfam.



Values	Bleed-Over Values	Motivation
Benevolence: (kindness, helpful, friendship)	Universalism: (equality, social justice)	Interdependence & concern for others

Alongside values-led messages and visuals, strategic communication can employ tactics that will engage pro-social values with target audiences. The fundraising tactic (opposite) by the UK-based homeless not-for-profit, St Mungo’s, is an example ⁴³. It engages self-direction values such as creativity by inviting people to knit and donate hats, host fundraising initiatives around the theme of making hats, or share a selfie in their favourite hat on social media.

4. Engage values, aligned with the social change sought, with all target audiences

Work for social change requires organisations and networks to engage and mobilise specific and diverse target audiences beyond the general public, including: elected representatives; key opinion formers and decision-makers; civil society allies; funders and supporters. Given this, it can be the case that a range of communication strategies, drawing on different communications perspectives, are employed.



Values	Bleed-Over Values	Motivation
Self-Direction: (creativity, individuality)	Universalism: (equality, broadmindedness)	Independence, diverse thinking & action.

The typical communications approach is to tailor the communication message to have relevance for the specific audience, based on what we believe will motivate or mobilise that audience. Caution is needed to ensure that, in tailoring audience-specific messages, there is not a corresponding divergence from engaging pro-social values, such that tailored messaging engages values that will act against the values that would motivate support for social change for equality and human rights.

Communicating a business case for equality and diversity provides one example of where the equality message is often tailored to what is understood to be most effective with a business audience. Communications aimed at business leaders, to increase the diversity of their workforce, are often exclusively centered on highlighting benefits of increased business profit, better management decision-making, and enhanced employee performance, productivity, and loyalty. This messaging engages self-enhancement values of ambition, success, wealth and status in the target audience and is

42 <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/agencies-line-oxfam-brand-pitch/1007557> accessed July 2, 2018.

43 www.woollyhatday.org accessed online July 2, 2018.

counter-productive to a longer-term strategy to promote equality.

This example is typical of the sort of messaging on workplace diversity likely to engage self-enhancement values ⁴⁴:

"The business case for diversity seems intuitive. Teams of mixed gender, ethnicity, physical ability, age and sexual orientation are more representative of customers.....An American Sociological Association study (found) that for every 1 per cent rise in the rate of gender diversity and ethnic diversity in a workforce there is a 3 and 9 per cent rise in sales revenue, respectively."

Values	Motivation
Self-Enhancement: Wealth	Concern for self-interests: wealth

This business-case for diversity messaging does not take into account that every individual holds *both* pro-social and pro-self-interest values. It is possible, therefore, to motivate business leaders to be concerned to increase employee diversity by appealing to self-transcendence values and/or self-direction values. The example to the right illustrates how a 'business case for diversity' message can be communicated while engaging these values ⁴⁵:

Language is important, and in this example, the word "thrive" is an effective way to frame notions of "productivity" and "profitability" for a business audience, but without engaging self-enhancement values, which the latter words are likely to do.

"We all know that variety is the spice of life – and this couldn't be more applicable than in the workplace. If you actively promote equality and diversity – and have a policy to match -then your business will thrive and people of all backgrounds can come together and achieve success.....Diversity helps you to develop. Businesses can't continue to grow if everyone within them thinks the same, acts the same and has the same interests. Diversity means that your business will be open to new ideas and new ways of thinking and you're much more likely to succeed."

Values	Motivation
Self-Transcendence: Benevolence (helpfulness)	Concern for diversity of ideas and actions, creativity and openness to new ways of doing things
Openness-to-Change: Self-Direction (creativity, curiosity) Stimulation: (variety)	

Fundraising communications provide another example, often employing strategies derived from commercial perspectives of marketing and advertising. Marketing approaches might, for example, use focus groups to determine what motivates a particular target audience, with a view to reflecting the values and goals of that audience in any subsequent communication ⁴⁶. It makes sense to interrogate the perspectives and motivations of different target audiences, with a view to understanding the message that will better resonate with those audiences. However, it becomes problematic when message-tailoring results in the activation of values that are likely to suppress motivation for social change for equality and human rights

and encourage motivation for self-interest. This can happen all too easily when the outcome of focus groups drives an approach based on replicating the values currently prioritised by those members of the target audience.

5. Employ your organisation's core values explicitly as a lens through which all your communication is filtered

The values that are central to driving social change for equality and human rights tend to underpin the core work of organisations and campaign networks concerned with such social change. It is logical, therefore, that these same values are a central feature of the messages and tactics for strategic communication by these organisations. Just as in all other areas of the organisation's work and operations, communication campaign messages, visuals, and tactics should be devised and assessed through the lens of these core values.

In employing values as a lens, the objective is to consistently engage audiences with the values that motivate the social change sought, values that audiences already hold but may not always prioritise. Transparency is important in underpinning this approach with integrity. Unlike marketing approaches (where the perceived priority values of an audience are reflected back to them, akin to using values as a mirror) the values as a lens approach is a strategic endeavour to mobilise audiences to reprioritise their pro-social values, which the campaigning organisation transparently holds and champions. It is important therefore, to be explicit with target audiences about the core values that underpin what the organisation stands for.

Values-led Communication: Guiding Principles

- ★ **Be consistent:** strategic communications should consistently engage self-transcendence and self-direction values, through the diversity of communications channels, tools, tactics and messaging employed.
- ★ **Be creative:** engage values with compatible motivation to support the activation of universalism values with audiences.
- ★ **Be careful:** avoid engaging values that will suppress people's motivation for social change.
- ★ **Be transparent:** ensure your audiences know your values standpoint and consider these values as the lens through which all of your strategic communications are filtered.
- ★ **Be strategic:** think beyond your strategic communications and apply a whole-organisation approach to being values-led.

⁴⁴ Tim Smedley, May 14, 2014: "The evidence is growing: there really is a business case for diversity" Financial Times, online edition.
⁴⁵ Law at Work The Right Advice: "The Benefits of Diversity in the Workplace". Accessed online July 2: <https://lawatworkci.com/the-benefits-of-diversity-in-the-workplace/>
⁴⁶ For more information on values-led communications for fundraising: Crompton, T. and Weinstein, N. (2015) *Common cause Communication: A toolkit for charities*. Common Cause Foundation, UK.

PART FOUR

ENGAGING VALUES IN OUR STORIES OF CHANGE

When we consider how people make sense of a social issue, the traditional thinking holds that they will seek out the facts of the matter, rationally and objectively consider those facts, and then come to an informed understanding about the issue. In reality, however, the way in which we make sense of information is more complex.

People are hard-wired for narrative rather than facts, and in attempting to make sense of information, people will tend to look for the 'story' being told and whether this story rings true for them and resonates with their priority values. If the story rings true, it will generally be accepted as the 'truth', regardless of whether the facts utterly refute that 'truth'. The more often the person hears this particular story to explain the issue at hand, the more solidified this 'truth' becomes in their thinking.

How the story of an issue is composed therefore, (the choice of words, metaphors, and associated imagery used) will ultimately determine how the audience receives and interprets the story. The concepts of frames and framing are key in this process.

FRAMES AND FRAMING

Frames are cognitive structures, embedded in our unconscious, that enable us to make sense of information, and ultimately, of the world around us ⁴⁷. Frames are activated through language. When we hear or read a word, or phrase, the frame we hold in our head, in relation to that word or phrase, is activated. This process is happening continuously and at an unconscious level.

A cognitive frame contains three key elements: ideas, values, and emotions. If we hear the word "home", for example, the cognitive frame we hold for this word is activated. This cognitive frame will contain certain ideas, emotions, and

values, related to our lived experience of the word "home" that, when activated, imbue the word "home" with meaning.

The cognitive frames we hold are shaped by our experiences and our interaction with the world. Institutions such as family, the education system, cultural institutions, the media, corporate advertising, government policy and political discourse, all play a key role in shaping the cognitive frames we have developed to understand the world. Our cognitive frames are adapted as we take in new information related to those frames.

Surface frames refer to the language (words and metaphors) we see and hear, that activates our cognitive frames ⁴⁸. The process of framing refers to the selective use of surface frames to evoke certain cognitive frames. Political and media discourse, for example, is often 'framed' in particular ways, to direct audiences to think in certain ways about an issue, by calling up particular cognitive frames.

The media framing of how different communities responded to the floods that devastated New Orleans, following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, provides a telling example of this process. The two photographs below appeared in the media in August 2005 during the Hurricane's aftermath. The captions accompanying the photos are transcribed verbatim.

In the first photograph, the accompanying caption frames the story of the young man in the flood, with a key word: "looting". This word, or surface frame, activates specific cognitive frames in the audience. The accompanying image serves to reinforce the surface frame.

47
48

Lakoff, G. (2014). *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*. Chelsea Green Publishing, U.S.
ibid.



"A young man walks through chest deep floodwater after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug 30, 2005."

photo: Associated Press/ Dave Martin

"Looting"

Frame

IDEAS
chaos/ violence/ am I safe? breakdown of law & order criminals Vs victims
EMOTIONS
anxiety anger insecurity
VALUES
Conservation: security

In the first photograph and caption the protagonist is framed as a criminal. The word "looting" is most likely to activate a cognitive frame of:

- Ideas: relating to criminals rather than victims and the breakdown of law and order, chaos, and danger.
- Emotions: anxiety, anger and insecurity.
- Values: relating to personal, family and community safety and security (Conservation values). As noted previously, conservation values are anxiety- based values and when engaged, make us less open to anything that might threaten the status quo.

The second photograph above, of two people caught in the flood, is framed very differently, with the key word "finding" activating a different cognitive frame.

In the second photograph and caption, the protagonists are framed as survivors. The word "finding" is most likely to activate a cognitive frame of:



"Two residents wade through chest deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina"

photo: Getty Images News Chris Graythen and Stringer

"Finding"

Frame

IDEAS
discovery treasure explorer adventure
EMOTIONS
curious
VALUES
Openness-to-Change: excitement, curiosity, exploration

- Ideas: relating to adventure, exploration and being entrepreneurial.
- Emotions: curiosity, endeavour, bravery against the odds.
- Values: relating to self-determination, excitement, curiosity, creativity, and exploration (openness-to-change values). As noted previously, openness-to-change values, when engaged, make us more open to new ideas and diversity.

The consumers of these two stories, will have very different values engaged because of the different surface frames used and the values they activate through the cognitive frames called up. The first story activates security-related values with the surface frame of "looting".

Audiences who already afford high priority to security-related values will have those values further strengthened, audiences who do not afford high priority to security-related values, will nonetheless, give some immediate priority to these values as they are engaged. The more often this surface frame is repeated (for example via mass media and other key institutions) the stronger the corresponding cognitive frames will become and the more likely the ideas they call up will become part of the audience 'common sense'⁴⁹. The second story activates openness-to-change values with the surface frame of "finding" with similar consequences in relation to those particular values.

The imagery associated with the two surface frames adds a further core and problematic dimension. The first photograph with its imagery of a Black person and surface frame of 'looting' reinforces cognitive frames that have a racist dimension. Frames and framing, therefore, have consequences. Surface frames activate cognitive frames that we hold and, in turn, reinforce and strengthen the values embedded in those frames. In our work for social change, this offers potential to remind people of the pro-social values they hold and to strengthen those values in our audiences.

TELLING A NEW STORY TO CHAMPION OUR VALUES

"Without a new story, a story that is positive and propositional, rather than reactive and oppositional, nothing changes. With such a story, everything changes"⁵⁰.

Stories are a powerful means of engaging values, because the emotions on which stories draw are intertwined with our values. Stories have the potential to maintain the status quo or to disrupt the status quo. The status quo is disrupted when we engage audiences with our stories to reprioritise their values towards those values underpinning social change for equality and human rights.

Neoliberalism is arguably the current dominant political meta-narrative, from which many stories of our current times are drawn. Underpinned by self-enhancement values of wealth, social status, and social power, the protagonists of the neoliberal narrative consume, compete, and reject cooperation and community, in favour of an aggressive individualism. The neoliberal narrative has found its way into the language and approach of civil society: with the 'activist' replaced by the 'social entrepreneur' and the 'participant' by the 'customer', 'client', or 'service user'.

If civil society is to disrupt and dislodge such dominant narratives, it will be necessary to tell new stories rather than simply challenging the current ones. Challenging the current stories ends up merely reinforcing the cognitive frames they are triggering. Telling new stories will involve using surface frames that trigger very different cognitive frames so that our stories engage, strengthen and champion pro-social values in our audience.

In the process of developing a story of change, there are a number of important issues to consider:

1. Find frames that will engage pro-social values that connect to your vision

Telling a new and compelling story of change is not simply a matter of finding language and visuals that will resonate with audiences. The challenge is to find language and visuals (surface frames) capable of activating or adapting cognitive frames held by your audiences that engage their pro-social values. This framing process involves developing a convincing story, using language and visuals that align with your vision of change and which can trigger cognitive frames that carry the values, ideas, and emotions that will motivate a demand for this vision of change to be realised.

49 Lakoff, G. (2014). Op cit
50 Monbiot, G. (2017). Op cit. page 6.

2. Don't use the language of your opponent to challenge an unhelpful cognitive frame.

If your story of change seeks to re-frame an issue by disrupting a dominant narrative, it is important to avoid using the language of that dominant narrative in an attempt to challenge that narrative. This will merely call up the cognitive frame that carries the ideas, values, and emotions that are oppositional to the change you seek. Negating a frame ultimately activates that frame and only serves to strengthen it in people's minds ⁵¹.

A campaign to defend universal pensioner benefits attempted to tell the story of older people's contribution to the economy, in the example below. This story is counter-productive, however, due to the use of the surface frame "burden" and associated text. In attempting to challenge a dominant and problematic narrative (that older people are a burden) the story merely activates the associated cognitive frames in the audience, which in turn is likely to reinforce this position and ultimately undermine the goal of the campaign and block the change sought ⁵².



3. Stories for change should seek to widen the cognitive frame to include the systemic problem or solution

Print and broadcast media tend to favour narratives that focus on specific incidents or the particular experience of an individual, without any reference to, or analysis of, the wider systemic issues at play. In framing terms, this is referred to as episodic framing.

Telling individual stories, about the impact of discrimination and inequality, for example, can be a powerful means of deploying surface frames that trigger the cognitive frames that will engage pro-social values in the audience. However, without reference to the systemic root causes of discrimination and inequality, stories about the experience of one individual or incident do little to change or disrupt the dominant story of discrimination and inequality and its associated values: one that views inequality as a failure of the individual, rather than a failure of the system and one that calls up values of self-enhancement rather than of self-transcendence.

Thematic framing, on the other hand, widens the frame by including reference to the broader political and systemic issues underlying the incident or the individual's experience. Stories for social change should introduce a wider narrative that looks beyond the individual and captures the systemic dimension to the issue. This requires a thematic framing approach over an episodic framing approach. It involves threading a systemic analysis through the story of change, in order to engage the pro-social values that will motivate people to support the necessary systemic change.

4. Know your target audiences and test out your proposed story of change on them

Whether your strategic communication objective is to mobilise, engage, or influence, it is important to have some understanding of what your target audiences think about your field and issue of concern: the stories they tell, the surface frames contained in those stories, and the cognitive frames these activate and their associated values ⁵³.

Your target audiences will exist on a continuum: from people who strongly oppose, to people who strongly support. In the middle of this continuum are the larger percentage: the segment of your audience, often referred to as the 'moveable' or 'conflicted' middle, that will hold mixed views and conflicting value priorities on your issue.

This movable middle is most usefully identified as the primary focus for campaigning efforts, as they are open to being persuaded to support or oppose the change being pursued.

It is important to garner some insight into the stories (and associated frames) that are important to your moveable middle audience. This will include some analysis of the cognitive frames and associated values held, and how these enable or block your vision of change ⁵⁴.

This audience analysis would aim to:

- identify and analyse the stories your target audiences tell, that are related to your issue and wider objectives, and the dominant surface frames in these stories,
- identify and analyse the cognitive frames activated by these stories and the values embedded in these frames,
- map the gap between your vision for change and associated values, and the frames held by your moveable middle audiences, with a view to identifying the potential areas for alignment.

Separately at a later point, your story of change should be tested with different target audiences. This will provide important information to assess whether your story of change has potential to change or disrupt the dominant narrative and/or to mobilise people to care about your issue, by engaging pro-social values ⁵⁵.

5. Develop your story of change in collaboration with people most affected by the issue

Your story of change should be true to, and should seek to amplify the voices of, those most affected by the issue you seek to address. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the crafting

of your story of change is a process of collective collaboration.

A collaborative approach will include a particular concern for two elements of your story:

- the characters: how are people affected by the issue portrayed in your story? Are they active or passive characters?
- the messengers: who do you choose to communicate your story to key audiences? What values do these messengers embody?

6. Pursue your storytelling with integrity and openness

In political discourse framing is often used manipulatively to 'spin' an issue in a particular way to the target audience. The manipulation of a frame involves using language that is the opposite of what you believe, in order to persuade or mollify a target audience.

In 2005, for example, U.S Conservatives introduced legislation that had a stated aim of reducing environmental pollution, it was called the "Clear Skies Act": a clever framing that suggested an initiative to protect the environment. In reality the initiative relaxed regulations on individual power plants, allowing them to increase their emissions ⁵⁶.

It is important, in work to re-frame or disrupt current dominant narratives, to tell our stories of change with integrity, and to reject spin tactics and their manipulative use of frames. Our approach must seek to do the opposite: transparently communicate our core values and the beliefs and principles that flow from those values. Transparency and integrity should be key guiding principles in how we communicate to target audiences.

51 Lakoff, G. (2014). Op cit.

52 Wembley Matters Blog (Thursday, September 15, 2015). Pensioners Fight Back: Hands Off Universal Benefits. Campaign by the National Pensioners Convention. Accessed online, July 21, 2018: <https://wembleymatters.blogspot.com/2015/09/pensioners-fight-back-hands-off.html>

53 A useful resource on analysing the frames audiences hold, is a collaborative project in the U.K to explore how the economy is framed: (2018). *Framing The Economy: how to win the case for a better system*. Published by NEON, NEF, FrameWorks Institute and the Public Interest Research Centre.

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55 For more information on audience testing, see: *Equinet & PIRC (2017) Framing Equality: Communication Handbook for Equality Bodies*. Commissioned by the European Network of equality Bodies, Brussels, Belgium. Equinet:

56 Easterbrook, G. *Clear Skies, No Lies* *New York Times*, February 16, 2005. Online edition accessed July 21, 2018.

PART FIVE

TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING A VALUE-LED STORY OF CHANGE

TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING A VALUES-LED STORY OF CHANGE

There are three key stages in taking a values-led approach to strategic communication and crafting new stories for change to engage pro-social values. Tools that can be used in implementing each of these stages are introduced below.

STAGE 1. PREPARING THE GROUND:

- identify the values that will underpin your story of change,
- analyse where and how these values are currently communicated by your organisation, and
- gather ideas and material to develop your story of change.

STAGE 2. UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE:

- gather information on how people talk about your issue, and
- analyse the dominant surface frames in this thinking, the related cognitive frames, and the values embedded in these frames.

STAGE 3. CREATING YOUR STORY OF CHANGE:

- develop enabling frames that carry and engage your values, and
- test your story of change, and related messages, with key audiences.

Stage 1. Preparing the Ground

A. Identify the core values you wish to engage:

VALUES

The first step in developing a values-led story of change is agreeing the core values that will be at the heart of this story.

The suggested five values underpinning equality and human rights are a good starting point for this analysis. Some or all of these values should be central to your story of change as they have the potential to motivate the change sought.

Democracy | Inclusion | Autonomy | Dignity | Social Justice

Which values do we want to engage with our audiences to motivate the change we seek?

- > Select 2 or 3 values, that could draw from the above, that:
 - reflect, or most closely align with, your organisation's core values.
- > Build consensus among the team, on:
 - a shared definition for each of the values you have selected: that aligns with your vision and mission.
 - a shared agreement on what broad strategic objectives each of these values suggest.

B. Assess where selected values are currently being engaged:

VALUES

Once you have identified the values that you wish to engage with your audiences, it is useful to assess where and how you are engaging people with these values in your current communications.

This will involve reviewing your communication content, tactics and channels, to identify where and how you are effectively engaging the identified values. This will generate material and ideas to assist you to develop your story of change.

Analyse your Communications:

- > Select some different examples of your communications that effectively engage one or more of the values:
 - What are the stories being told?
 - How do these stories engage the values?
 - Does the language/visuals used, activate particular frames that engage these values?

C. Explore how your collaborators would engage the values:

VALUES

Another way to generate ideas and material to develop your story of change, is to identify a number of people with a good understanding of the vision you are trying to communicate. This would include: people affected by the issue/with experience advocating and campaigning on the issue/ with a good understanding of the stories you might tell about your vision.

There are different ways you can gather this information: in group or one-to-one conversations, or by creative story-focused exercises, such as the one suggested here.

Group Exercise

- > Present the values you have identified that will be at the centre of your story of change.
- > Ask participants to work in small groups to identify an inspiring/hopeful story (from their lived experience and/or work) that embodies one or more of the values.

Tip: encourage people to get creative by illustrating their story or acting it out as a short drama.

- > Analyse the stories by considering:
 - the words and metaphors used and the frames these engage,
 - how the values are linked to a hopeful/ inspiring vision of change,
 - common themes emerging.

VALUES

When you have completed Stage 1. Preparing the Ground, you should have:

- > an agreed set of values that your broad story of change would carry and that you seek to engage with your target audiences,
- > a shared understanding among the team of the meaning of the selected values,
- > an understanding of how the values are currently engaged through the different communications materials and channels of the organisation, and
- > the broad brush strokes of your story of change, including: ideas about the words, metaphors, images, that would carry the values in your story.

Stage 2. Understanding your Audiences



The next stage involves getting to know your target audiences: analysing how people talk about equality and human rights concerns more broadly, and more specifically, how they talk about the issue on which you are seeking change.

In this process you are seeking to learn about the frames your audiences hold relevant to equality and human rights issues and your specific issue of concern. This will help you to better understand the frames that will enable your story of change.

A. Gather material on your audiences:

There are a number of ways to gather information for this exercise, depending on what financial and human resources you have available. In gathering this information, every effort should be made to hear from your moveable middle audience.

Whatever method, or combination of methods, you use, look beyond people's attitudes, to the stories they tell: what words /phrases/metaphors do they use? what is implied about issues, people, and groups, in the stories they tell? are there broad narratives emerging? Your analysis seeks to identify common themes and reoccurring words/phrases/metaphors in these narratives.

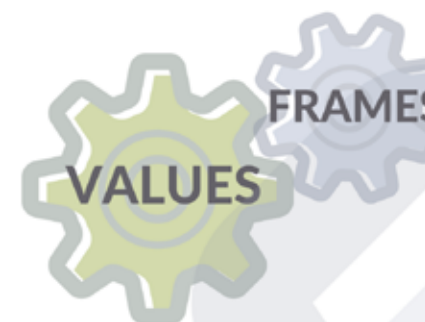
With a low budget:

- hold one-to-one, or focus group conversations with people who hold a range of views on equality & human rights issues broadly and on your issue,
- analyse the comments sections of online articles,
- analyse radio/TV debates and discussions,
- conduct online surveys and distribute through social media/networks.

With a budget:

- hold one-to-one in-depth interviews or focus groups with a representative sample of the public,
- commission a survey of a representative sample of the public.

Questions for your audience analysis:



Here are some suggested broad questions to help you better understand your audiences. These can form the basis of your one-to-one/ focus group discussions and survey questions.

These general questions would lead into more targeted questions relating to your specific issue.

Your specific issue questions could usefully include reference to the values that you have agreed will underpin your story of change, to determine whether, and how your audiences prioritise these values.

- > What is important to you in life? what motivates you? what do you value in life?
- > What values are important to you? where do you see those values in action in your community/wider society? what would need to happen to make these values more dominant in wider society?
- > What social change in recent times in Ireland have you observed? what are your thoughts on this change? what do you think motivated this change?
- > What change would you most like to see that would benefit your community/ wider society?
- > What issue affecting your community/wider society is of greatest concern to you? How should this issue be addressed?

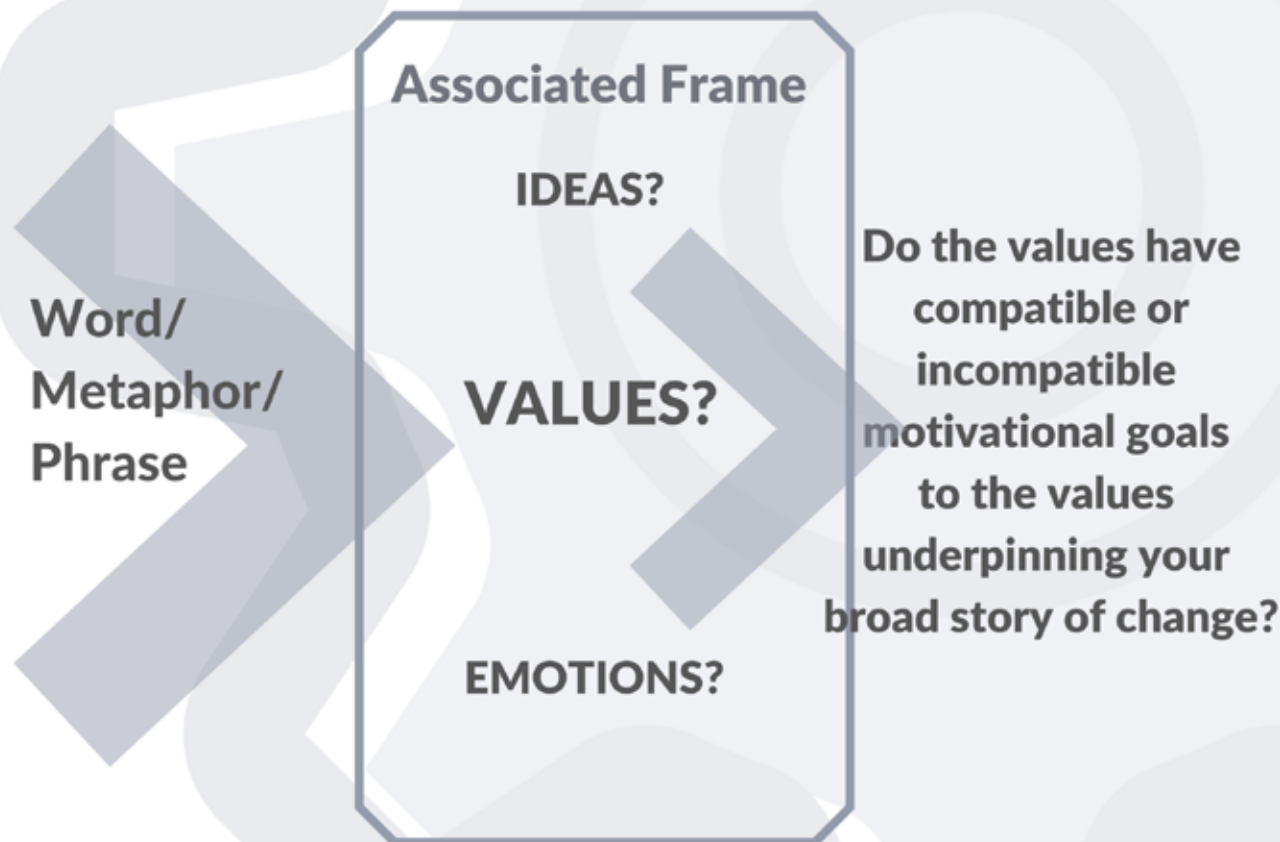
B. Analyse the surface frames:

By identifying the reoccurring words/phrases/metaphors people use to talk about your issue, you are getting closer to understanding the cognitive frames they hold and the values embedded in these cognitive frames. This step is to further unpack these frames.

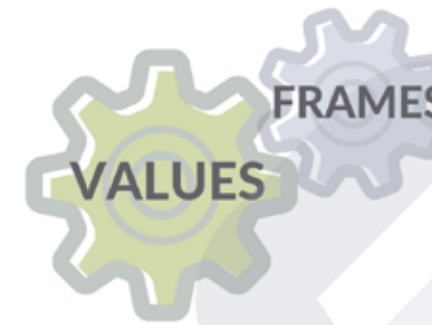


Using the framework below, analyse the **reoccurring** surface frames (words/ metaphors/ phrases) to understand:

- the cognitive frames and embedded values these surface frames suggest, and
- the surface frames that activate values aligned with, or incompatible to, the values underpinning our broad story of change?.



Tip: some words/ metaphors/ phrases may suggest more than one cognitive frame. In this case, place the word/metaphor/phrase in the centre and map the suggested associated cognitive phrases.



When you have completed Stage 2. Understanding your Audiences, you should have:

- > an understanding of how key target audiences (in particular the moveable middle) talk about equality and human rights issues generally, and your issue specifically: things they assume to be the 'truth',
- > an analysis of the dominant surface frames they use: reoccurring words/ metaphors/ phrases,
- > an analysis of the cognitive frames (ideas, values and emotions) activated by the dominant surface frames held,
- > an understanding of the dominant values prioritised by your audiences and those values that are compatible/ incompatible with the values underpinning your story of change.

Stage 3. Creating your Story of Change



In order to create your story of change it is necessary to look at your findings from Stage 2., analyse what these mean for your story of change and in doing so, review your Stage 1. outcomes for adjustment and refining.

A. Develop enabling frames

Following Stage 2., you will have identified reoccurring frames (words/ metaphors/ phrases) in the narrative of your audiences. **Some of these frames are enabling: they engage the values you have identified (Stage 1.) that will underpin your story of change.**

Using the framework below, select a couple of key enabling frames you have identified (from Stage 2.) and use these frames to help craft the narrative for your story of change:

What messages can we develop from this frame to communicate the hopeful/ inspiring vision of our story of change?

What messages can we develop from this frame that could reinforce enabling beliefs, or challenge unhelpful beliefs, about the issue, in our story of change?

What messages can we develop from this frame to communicate the problem our story of change seeks to address?

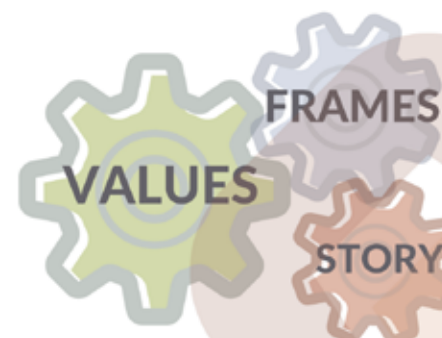
Enabling Frame

Are there particular metaphors/ messages that are 'sticky': will resonate with audiences?

What messages can we develop from this frame that will mobilise audiences to take action in support of our story of change?

Tip: once you have explored the use of enabling frames to build the narrative of your story of change, you can revisit the outcomes of Step 1. to ensure any new messages align with the agreed broad vision of your story of change.

B. Test your messages



At this point you will have crafted a broad story of change that:

- reflects your vision,
- engages the values that underpin your vision, and
- makes effective use of the dominant enabling frames underpinning the thinking of your audiences on the issue.

Your broad story of change will act like a meta-narrative, from which all of your messages will be drawn. Audience-specific messages will be tailored, but they should always be derived from your broad story of change and should always reflect and engage the core values underpinning your broad story of change.

Testing your messages:

- > consider values to be the active ingredient of your story of change: all testing should include a focus on whether you are engaging your core values,
- > know what you are testing: is your message aimed to mobilise, to change/challenge thinking, to set out the problem, or to attract funding?
- > test with the right audience sample: if your message aims to attract funding, for example, test it with potential funders; if your message is intended to persuade your moveable middle, test it with that audience,
- > don't make assumptions about what will/won't work with different audiences: testing will help you to examine your assumptions,
- > when testing a message, include any visuals intended to accompany that message to test those also,
- > metaphors have huge potential to paint a rich picture for your audience and to reframe the issue in their heads. Testing new metaphors, therefore, should be a priority,
- > find the right methodology: a focus group might be good to generate discussion on a new metaphor, but, given the limited numbers, would be less effective to test a message with a moveable middle audience.



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