

Strategic Values-Based Communication for Motivating Change towards Sustainability

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Values, Communication, Sustainability and Everything in Between:

Strategic Values-Based Communication for Motivating Change towards Sustainability

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“Values are like a muscle, the more you exercise them the stronger they get”
(ter Kuile 2013)

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Abstract: In the face of the complexity and the urgency of the sustainability challenge, communication of sustainability to the public to motivate behaviour change is found to be an urgent concern. Communication based on appealing to the values of the audience is particularly powerful in addressing social and ecological concerns. Previous research has shown that there is a positive correlation between appealing to intrinsic values and motivation for sustainable behaviours, as opposed to activation of extrinsic values which might lead to the counter outcome. This research seeks to investigate how values-based communication for sustainability can be applied strategically within the third sector based on the activation of intrinsic values. The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD) was used as a conceptual frame to enhance the contextualization of the topic and analyse the findings. Ten interviews were conducted with experts and practitioners in the field, aiming to capture the current application of the concept, the enablers, and barriers for implementing it as well as potential key factors for a successful and strategic practice of values-based communication. Interview findings indicated that a strategic approach is lacking when values-based communication is applied. Based on these findings, a set of recommendations were developed with the intention of serving practitioners and experts in the field. The primary aim of this study is to contribute to the enhancement of the strategic application of values-based communication for sustainability.

Keywords: Values-based communication, sustainable development, Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD), intrinsic values, Non-governmental organisation (NGO)

Statement of Contribution

This thesis is the result of four and a half intensive months with unremitting efforts from all the team members. The starting point was a common interest in communicating sustainability and a shared intention of having an enjoyable and inspiring thesis journey, we travelled through smooth and rough waters together.

As researchers exploring communicating sustainability through values, it was of major importance for us to allow our own values to guide us through the process:

- Openness; we created a safe space to share expectations, intentions, opinions, and constructive feedback
- Respect; we made sure ideas and opinions were fully expressed, and respected each others' personal needs and ways of working
- Love and care; we never forgot what is most important in life, and gave each other support, love and care through the whole intense journey
- Humour; being able to take a step back, see the comical side of a stressed moment and not to take ourselves too seriously have allowed us to sustain a good relationship and a fresh interest in the topic

Davida was our head planner, making timelines and list of tasks, although she tended to be over optimistic regarding time planning. Her endurance when the list of tasks was long and the evenings got longer was remarkable. She was maybe the most efficient writer of us all, and contributed greatly to the production of the text. In the group setting, Davida was always constructive, encouraging, open for discussion, and trying to find solutions that worked for all.

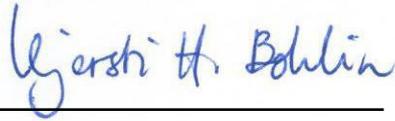
Var was our creative designer, both relating to process and figures. With creative ideas and constructive questions he consistently reviewed the research process, ensured that we choose the right direction and used the right tools. As for the aesthetic parts, he used his skills to design the figures and tables and has even hand drawn some of them. The presentation slides were also designed by his hand, and he did most of the verbatim transcribing. Even when his personal situation was very challenging he insisted on doing his share of the work, and did so in the best way.

Kjersti made an essential contribution in bringing the concept of values-based communication to the teams' attention. She created the initial contact with the Common Cause network, contacted informants, and arranged a workshop on values-based communication for our classmates and local residents. Kjersti put great efforts in editing and formatting the text in the most professional way, never compromising on the fine details. She kept challenging our minds with questions and unclarities, and provided room for insightful discussions.

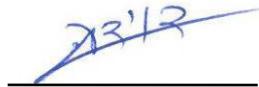
By and large, everybody have been involved and contributed throughout every step of the process. The development of the goals and research questions were done in collaboration. All of us interviewed, coded, created themes, analyzed the results and created the set of suggested recommendations. Similarly, we all wrote and edited different parts of the text, up to the current phase which we cannot identify whose words are whose in the final paper.

Responsibilities were divided and followed up by reviewing each others' work. We discussed burning questions and decisions needed to be taken, built on each others' ideas, tried to avoid personal biases, and went through the process and the content together again and again, until everyone was satisfied with the result. The group dynamics have been very inspiring, supportive and relaxed, which made the process as valuable as the outcome.

We shared the responsibilities, the exploration, and the enjoyment of creation – so that the outcome feels like it is truly ours.



Kjersti Helgeland Bohlin



Davida Ginter



Varuzhan Sahakyan

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We wish to thank everyone who provided our team guidance, support and inspiration during our thesis journey.

We are grateful to the experts and practitioners in the field who kindly shared their valuable time, rich expertise and insightful advices. We extend our gratefulness to the Public Interest Research Centre (PIRC) for providing us access to pre-published material.

A special note of appreciation goes to the Common Cause Network for the comprehensive work they have done in collecting and presenting scientifically based knowledge on the broad impact of helpful and intrinsic values, and the respective values-based approach. It has been very inspiring to read the reports and get to speak to different people associated with the network. Insights from this communication have strengthened our belief that there is a solid and valid place for helpful values within communication practices.

We are grateful to MSLS staff, especially our supervisor Marco Valente, for his patience, persistence, wisdom and kindness throughout the entire process. We wish to also thank the Program Director MSLS program, Tracy Meisterheim, for her contribution and advice on setting the big picture for our thesis. The communication with staff was overall experienced as being in the spirit of co-creation.

We wish to thank our shadow group for support and constructive feedback, our fellow students Lucia, Kyla, Zenoby, Johanne, Zachary, Marco and Sonya for English proofreading as well as the rest of the MSLS student for being supportive, providing a creative space and sharing insights on process and content. This atmosphere fuelled our enthusiasm and inspired us to throughout our journey.

And last but not least, we wish to thank our families and friends for having been there for us, from times of grief to moments of enlightenment.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The impacts of several decades of unsustainable practices are shown around the world more than ever. Local incidents as well as global consequences are becoming more and more present and relevant to different parts of the world, posing an urgent need to face the sustainability challenge. These facts are constantly presented to the public. Nevertheless, the change towards sustainability is for many reasons found to be slow and not sufficient.

It is found that giving people the “hard” facts and appealing to logic is merely enough to motivate behaviour change, as opposed to appealing to their values and emotions (Westen et al. 2007). A relevant connection has been found between certain types of values, also known as intrinsic values (such as universalism and self-direction) and concerns about social and environmental issues (Milfont et al. 2006, De Groot and Steg 2009). At the same time, the opposite type of values, known as extrinsic values (such as power and hedonism) are contradicting sustainable behaviour and focusing on self-enhancing achievements (Spini and Doise 1998). Values can be activated and strengthened further on, and weakened by activation of the opposite types of values. Therefore, the opportunity to communicate sustainability messages through intrinsic values, in order to motivate lasting behaviour change, stands out clearly.

The concept of values-based communication was identified in this research as highly relevant to address the need for conveying the sustainability challenge. The researchers identified two main directions to implement values-based communication: the Intrinsic Approach - which appeals to peoples’ intrinsic values - and the Marketing Approach - which reflects peoples’ current dominant values. The latter approach was found to be the dominant one in current communication practices. The consequence could be activation and strengthening of extrinsic values, which in turn leads to reinforcing unsustainable behaviours.

This research sought to contribute to a better prioritisation between the two approaches for the reasons mentioned. The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD) was chosen for that purpose, as being a conceptual framework suitable for solving problems in complex systems. As it builds on a generic Five Level Framework, it also is useful for providing clear, structured guidance on how to define success and build a strategic path towards its achievement, meaning using the Intrinsic Approach more strategically in the context of values-based communication for sustainability.

The main research question set for the current study was:

How can values-based communication be applied strategically to communicate sustainability messages?

This question was supported by several sub-questions:

Supporting question 1 (SQ1): What characterises the current use of values-based communication for communicating Sustainability messages within NGOs?

Supporting question 2 (SQ2): What are the enablers and barriers for using VBC for sustainability?

Supporting question 3 (SQ3): What are seen as key factors for strategic application of values-based communication for communicating sustainability messages (by practitioners and experts in the field)?

Methods

The research was designed according to Maxwell’s model for qualitative research, due to its advantages as an iterative process and its holistic approach. The different research phases aimed to answer the supportive questions, which in turn completed a clear answer to the primary research question. The research methods were chosen according to their ability to carry out the different phases, as described in table below.

Research phase	Purpose	Method
1	Data collection of characteristics of the current use of values-based communication (SQ1), enablers and barriers (SQ2), and key factors for strategic application of values-based communication	Interviews with experts and practitioners in the field of values-based communication, supportive literature review of a report conducting content analysis of communication practices (Blackmore et al. 2013)
2	Analysis of the findings	Coding and themes creation, SWOT analysis, Five Level Framework analysis
3	Extraction of guidelines and recommendations for strategic use of values-based communication for sustainability	Integration of the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD) concepts
4	Validity and reliability check	Triangulation, comparison, and validation of the recommendations by experts and practitioners from the field

The sample for the interviews was six experts and four practitioners in the field of values-based communication for sustainability. All practitioner informants came from organisations that engage with sustainability issues and applied values-based communication in their work. Expert informants have performed research on values-based communication and/or have a solid experience from working with organisations in the field. Criteria for the selection were that informants should be familiar with what is in the study labelled as the Intrinsic Approach.

Results

Characteristics of the current use of values-based communication

The main findings revealed that the Intrinsic Approach is neither common nor widespread among NGOs working towards sustainability, and considered quite novel. It was also found that the NGOs are lacking knowledge and awareness of the approach, both regarding the different types of values and their relation to sustainability, and ways to apply the concept. Other findings were that there is a lack of strategic approach when implementing values-based communication for sustainability, as well as lack of consideration of possible side effects and management of trade-offs when appealing to extrinsic values.

Barriers for values-based communication

The barriers that hinder the Intrinsic Approach from being implemented by NGOs were found to be: the dominance of the Marketing Approach in society; the negative impacts of activating extrinsic values; lack of good examples and pioneers applying the concept; the complexity of the sustainability challenge; lack of resources such as time; funding and guidance; difficulty in measuring changes with qualitative nature; and dominance of short-term perspective within NGOs.

Enablers for values-based communication

The enablers which could facilitate the application of the Intrinsic Approach were found to be: the robust scientific base for this approach; that values-based communication is intuitive and that it helps people feel like they are part of the bigger picture; that most people consider intrinsic values as more important than extrinsic ones and the “knock-on” effect which relates to the effect that activating one intrinsic value is likely to motivate a variety of sustainable behaviours.

Key factors for effective and strategic application of values-based communication

13 key factors that were seen by practitioners and experts as crucial for strategic values-based communication emerged from this research. These are the following, clustered into three thematic groups:

- Key factors related to the way of implementing the concept: embodying authenticity, consistency, transparency and integrity related to the values the organisation communicate, the importance of effective communications styles including adjusted language, engagement based communication activities such as community setting and participatory process, and knowing the target audience.
- Key factors related to strategic considerations: aiming for systemic change, having a clear and measurable definition of success, managing trade-offs and side effects, and collaboration with other organisations.
- Key factors related to the content of the communication messages and practices: knowledge and awareness of the Intrinsic Approach, activation of intrinsic values, avoidance of activation of extrinsic values, and empowering people.

Discussion

The tension between the current use of values-based communication for sustainability and the key factors for strategic application of it were analysed through the Five Level Framework lens. The analysis revealed gaps related to lack of understanding of the Intrinsic Approach, lack of definition of success - meaning a vision of behaviour change towards sustainability and measurable goals to get there, absence of strategic guidelines for the work with values, and shortness of relevant actions as well tools to implement these actions.

In order to capture an answer to the main research question, the different threads were gathered and led to extraction of suggested recommendations for a better strategic application of values-based communication for sustainability. These recommendations were additionally informed by the FSSD concepts, in order to address strategic planning methods that were not drawn from the interviews, and compared to existing guiding principles presented by the Common Cause network (Holmes et al. 2011, Crompton 2010). A final list of 15 recommendations was created, presented in the following table.

Recommendations informed by FSSD concepts	
System	See the big picture: understand the organisation in relation to others, as part of society and as part of the global ecosystem
	Build Knowledge and Awareness: Get familiar with different types of values, the way to activate them, and the importance of the intrinsic values for sustainable development
Success	Have a shared definition of sustainability
	Aim for systemic and lasting change: have a long-term and overarching vision
	Set clear, measurable goals: define measurable criteria for success
Strategic	Backcast from success: identify the steps needed to reach a predefined vision
	Prioritise communication activities according to tailored and strategic guidelines derived from your vision
	Cultivate intrinsic values
	Avoid and challenge extrinsic values
	Embody the values you communicate: be authentic, consistent, transparent and have integrity
	Manage trade-offs and consider side-effects: assess the wider consequences of your communication
Actions and Tools	Create an action plan
	Favour engagement based communication: interact with your audience
	Collaborate with other organisations: join efforts to create added value
	Choose methods and tools aligned with the intrinsic values-based communication

Conclusion

This research sought to make a contribution to the field of values-based communication for sustainability by first identifying the gaps between the current application of it by NGOs and a more strategic way to conduct it, and secondly by suggesting recommendations for implementing the Intrinsic Approach. The intention was not to provide practical guidance for practitioners using values-based communication for sustainability, but rather to inform the audience of experts and practitioners who are already working with intrinsic values for sustainability, with strategic inputs for implementing the concept.

Further research threads could be the following:

- What are the potential possibilities of implementing the Intrinsic Approach in business related fields?
- What are the key factors for a successful application and adaptation of the Intrinsic Approach across different cultures and different parts of the world?

Glossary

Backcasting: A planning method, in which future desired conditions are envisioned and steps are defined to reach those conditions based on the current reality. Backcasting starts with defining a desirable future and then works backwards to identify policies and programs that will connect the future to the present. The fundamental question of backcasting asks: "If we want to attain a certain goal, what actions must be taken to get there?" (Tinker 1996, Holmberg and Robèrt 2000, Brandes and Brooks 2005).

Common Cause: A Network based in the UK. It attempts to foster knowledge and understanding of the importance of values in response to the social and environmental challenges faced by humanity. Their main approach is to activate and strengthen intrinsic values.

Communication: Activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, visuals, signals, writing, or behaviour. Communication is any act by which one person gives to or receives from another person information about that person's needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge, or affective states. Communication may be intentional or unintentional, may involve conventional or unconventional signals, may take linguistic or non-linguistic forms, and may occur through spoken or other modes.

Extrinsic values: Values which are centred on external approval or rewards.

Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD): A planning model for solving complicated problems in complex systems with sustainability as the desired outcome (Holmberg and Robèrt 2000).

Framing (social science): Frames are a set of concepts and theoretical perspectives on how individuals, groups, and societies organise, perceive, and communicate about reality; the individual's perception of the meanings attributed to words or phrases. Frames are mental structures that allow us to understand the world, and they are constructs that activate and strengthen particular values (Andor 1985). Values are abstract concepts, but they are made more concrete by an understanding of frames, and the way in which frames serve as vehicles to strengthen particular values in society.

Intrinsic values: Values which are relying on inherently rewarding pursuits and associated with greater concerns than individual ones, such as social justice and environmental behaviour.

Sustainability: A state in which the socio-ecological system is not systematically undermined by society. The four basic sustainability principles must be met in order to have a sustainable society.

Sustainability challenge: The challenge faced by society as a result of systematically increasing unsustainable practices within the biosphere.

Sustainability Principles (SPs): In a sustainable society, nature is not:

1. ...concentrations of substances extracted from the Earth's crust;
2. ...concentrations of substances produced by society;

3. ...degradation by physical means;

And in society,

4. ... people are not subject to conditions that systematically undermine their capacity to meet their needs (Ny et al. 2006).

SWOT analysis: A structured planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business venture. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favourable and unfavourable to achieving that objective.

Values Circumplex: A graphic model of values developed by Shalom H. Schwartz (1992). The circumplex contains 10 broad domains of values, representing a list of 64 different personal values. These domains are organized around two cross axes, which their polar are opposite to one another.

Values: Commitments of individual persons to pursue and support certain directions or types of action for the collectivity as a system and hence derivatively for their own roles in the collectivity (Parsons 1960, 172); desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people's lives (Schwartz 1996).

Values-based communication: A concept that addresses personal or societal values of a target audience. The intended result is to build a personal connection between a certain issue and receiver. This connection can be used to further inspire both attitude and behaviour change.

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1 Introduction

The consequences of society's unsustainable practices are visible around the world every day. Local incidents, like bad air quality, illegal waste dumps and unfair wage conditions, and global impacts like climate change, shortage of resources and biodiversity loss compete for people's attention. It is evident that significant changes are needed. It is also obvious that it is urgent, and that the change will involve and influence all of us. We cannot expect that a specific person, group, or organisation will be responsible for fixing the problem. Each one of us has to change the way we think and act. The matter at hand is to realize how to catalyze and facilitate such a change.

1.1 The Sustainability Challenge

Climate change increasingly affects more and more of the world's population. The scientific evidence that climate change exists in large part due to the activities of human society is solid and extensive. The increase in global mean temperatures and concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere lead to a wide array of consequences. Acidification of the oceans, more extreme weather and loss of biodiversity are just a few examples of the severe effects due to climate change (IPCC 2007).

In addition to climate change related problems, humanity faces other major environmental and social challenges that are of global scale. Hunger, violence, pollution, destruction of ecosystems and water shortage are examples of consequences of humanity's unsustainable practices. The damage caused to natural systems by human activity are so great, that the term "anthropocene" has been proposed as a new name for the current geologic epoch in which people have become a world-altering force (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000).

To understand the sustainability challenge, it is important to have an understanding of the human society as part of a bigger system. The earth represents a system with limited resources. It is evident that the pressure that society is putting on the world's ecosystems is affecting the whole socio-ecological system's ability to sustain itself. Together with the exponential growth of population and consumption volumes, it is clear that human society as a whole is on an unsustainable path. An illustrative way of depicting this development is through a metaphor, called the funnel metaphor, as seen in Figure 1.1 (Robert et al. 2000). The funnel illustrates the current unsustainable development with regards to society within the biosphere. The steadily closing funnel walls represent the diminishing capacity of the socio-ecological system to support human society. The more the funnel walls close in, the bigger the degradation and the fewer the possibilities to manoeuvre and change direction. The goal is to abstain from hitting the walls and make it to the opening of the funnel where the walls no longer decline, which symbolizes the reaching of a sustainable society.

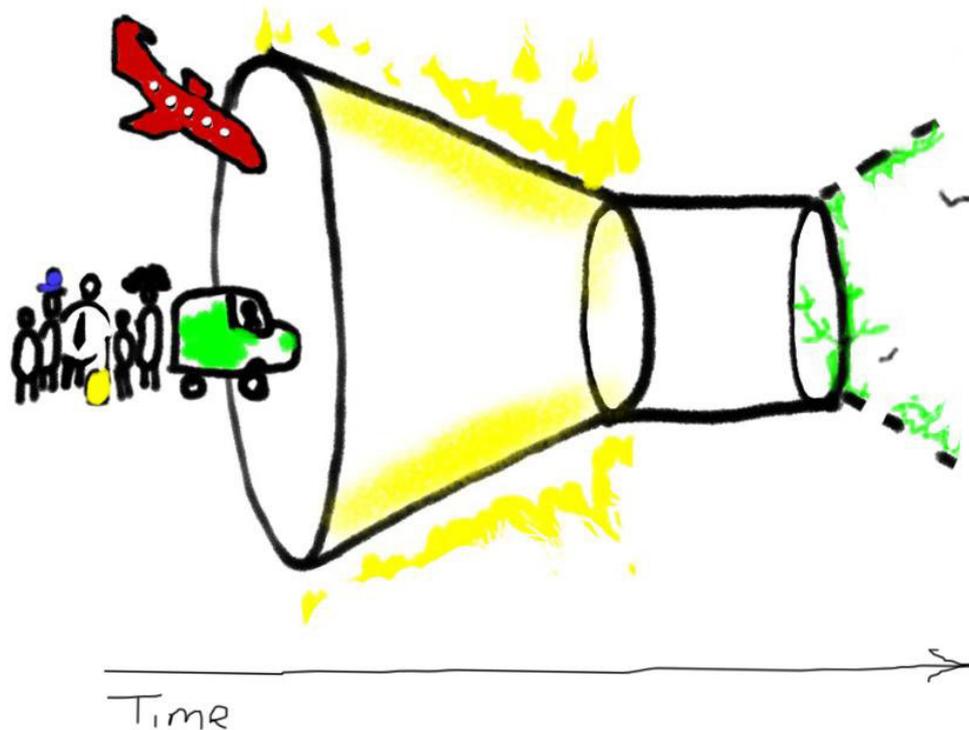


Figure 1.1: The Funnel Metaphor: The closing funnel walls represent the degradation of the socio-ecological system, the levelling of the walls represents a sustainable future, and the opening of the walls represents a restorative society

These world-altering problems are sometimes referred to as bigger-than-self problems, meaning that it is not in people's direct self interest to solve them or that the personal return on investment is not proportional to the invested effort or resources (Crompton 2010). The manner in which such problems are addressed, like eradicating poverty, changing unsustainable consumption patterns and altering unsustainable management of the world's natural resources, are recognized as overarching goals and essential requirements for sustainable development. A global, transformational shift towards sustainability is an urgent concern for the world leaders (United Nations 2012). At the same time, a need for adopting a long-term system perspective for creating the transition for sustainable future is essential (Grin, Rotmans and Schot 2010).

This transition towards sustainability must happen not in centuries or generations, but within a matter of years since the limits of what the earth can restore have been exceeded. It must also be more holistic, involving not only institutions and technology but also the attitudes and habits that sustain them (Macy 2007, 142). As Charles Kettering articulated: "The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought us progress" (Cook et al. 2007).

1.2 The Communication Challenge

The multitude and availability of communication channels and the manner in which information is available in general have never been bigger. But in spite of the growing available factual basis, the visibility of the consequences and the urgency to face society's unsustainable practices, the message is not coming across both quickly enough, or in a way that leads to the needed changes in policy and behaviour (Crompton 2010).

Studies have found that simply giving people the facts and explaining the sustainability challenge are often ineffective in awakening their concern (Barr 2003). Facts are not irrelevant, but when making decisions in high-stakes and emotional political situations, people's feelings generally overrule facts (Westen et al. 2007). Research shows that values are of major importance in shaping our motivation to engage with bigger-than-self problems or for the greater common good (Crompton 2013). According to cognitive linguist George Lakoff, the reason for this is that if facts are not in line with a person's values, "the facts bounce off" (Lakoff 2004, 17). To flood people with data and facts on the assumption that the truth eventually will conquer its competitors might backfire; if "the truth carries implications that threaten people's cultural values, then [confronting them with this data] is likely to harden their resistance and increase their willingness to support alternative arguments, no matter how lacking in evidence" (Kahan 2010, 297).

Based on the knowledge of the importance of values for motivating people to face bigger-than-self problems and how values can both inspire and lead to resistance, it is clear that a different approach is needed for communicating sustainability. Due to this importance, it is seen as a pressing concern that campaigns, communication practices and public policies are executed with an awareness of their larger impact on shaping society's values (Crompton 2010). Addressing people's values as well as considering values in general when conducting communication practices is essential for the outcome of the communication in both the positive and negative sense. The further research explores the avenues of incorporating values for communicating sustainability in ways that catalyse lasting behaviour change.

1.3 Values

The term value developed gradually in the fields of sociology, philosophy and economics, and became more common at the end of the 19th century when early sociologists used it to discuss the question of societal integration (Von Groddeck 2010). Due to the increase in differentiations, a question arose as to what was holding society together? The answer was seen in moral, social and cultural value, as it was in the pre-modern society (Parsons 1960). Talcott Parsons suggested that "values in this sense are commitments of individual persons to pursue and support certain directions or types of action for the collectivity as a system and hence derivatively for their own roles in the collectivity" (Parsons 1960, 172).

For this research, the definition by Shalom H. Schwartz's theory is applied, under which values are described as "desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people's lives" (Schwartz 1996). Schwartz's work is recognized as fundamental in the research field of values. It derives a typology of values by reasoning that they represent three universal requirements of human existence: biological needs, requisites of coordinated social interaction and demands of group survival and functioning. "Groups and individuals represent these requirements cognitively as specific values about which they

communicate in order to explain, coordinate, and rationalize behaviour" (Schwartz 1996, 122).

Empirical studies demonstrate that people's values can be organized in a consistent and meaningful pattern across a large variety of cultures. Circular maps, showing the relationship between values are called value circumplex; the concept is based on empirical data and allows the mapping of personal values. There are several such models, yet Schwartz's theory of integrated value systems contains the most comprehensive set of different motivational types of values recognized across cultures. Each value type contains a number of single values that are clustered to form relatively reliable indexes of values priorities (Schwartz 1992). The full list of values associated with the different groups is found in Appendix A.

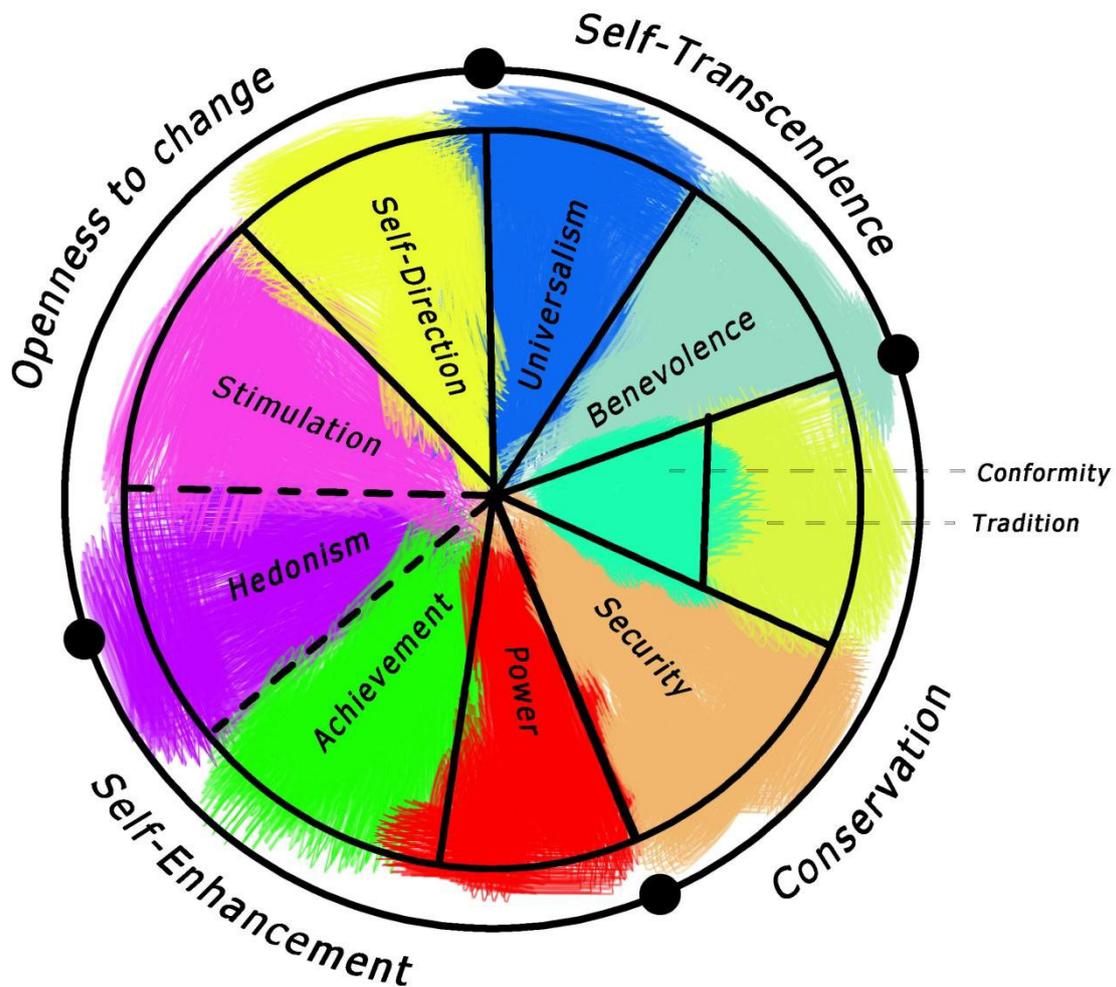


Figure 1.2: The Values Theory: Theoretical model of relations among 10 types of values, organised by motivational similarities and dissimilarities (Adapted from: Schwartz 1992).

The ten groups of values are commonly distributed along two major axes (as shown in the circumplex, Figure 1.2):

Self-transcendence as opposed to self-enhancement

Openness to change as opposed to conservation

- Self-transcendence types of values are generally concerned with the contented state of others
- Self-enhancement types of values are based on concern with personal status and success
- Openness to change types of values are focusing on independence and willing to accept change
- Conservation types of values are aligned with preservation of the past and resistance to change.

1.3.1 Values for Sustainability

A connection has been found between one's values and one's personal goals. Personal goals can be clustered according to similarities or conflicts between them. Two of these clusters - "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" (Kasser et al. 2005) - are particularly relevant for the issue of sustainability.

Intrinsic and extrinsic goals are corresponding with self-transcendence and self-enhancement values. These are not completely overlapping, but can be combined into the two concepts "intrinsic values" and "extrinsic values". Extrinsic values are centred on external approval or rewards; intrinsic values on more inherently rewarding pursuits (Holmes et al. 2011).

An extensive range of work has been done on the relationship between values, concern about bigger-than-self problems and motivation to engage in line with this concern (Crompton 2010, Holmes et al. 2011).

Intrinsic values, especially universalism and self-direction, are associated with greater concern about bigger-than-self problems such as social justice (Schwartz 2006) or environmental behaviour (Milfont et al. 2006), and the motivation to address them. On the other hand, individuals and cultures that put greater weight on extrinsic values like power and security, are found to be less worried about global conflict or the abuse of human rights (Spini and Doise 1998) and more prejudiced towards outsiders (Duriez et al. 2007). Extrinsic values can also be used to foster concern about environmental issues, but the resulting concern from such use is found to be limited to the egoistic consideration of potential negative consequences for oneself (Schultz et al. 2005). It can be concluded that altruistic and universalistic considerations are shown to provide a stronger and more stable basis for pro-environmental behaviour than egoistic values (De Groot and Steg 2009).

1.3.2 Activation of Values

Within the field of social psychology the possibility of strengthening personal values through communication, a process known as "activating values", has been widely examined. Values are activated through a person's mental models, also known as "frames". Frames are mental structures that allow us to understand the world, and they are constructs that activate and strengthen particular values (Andor 1985). Values are abstract concepts, however, understanding of frames, can drastically improve the understanding of values because frames as mental structures hold values and the activation of frames accordingly activates values. Therefore, activating frames through communication helps embedding particular values both

individually and culturally. This implies that processes that strengthen intrinsic values should be of interest to anyone concerned about addressing bigger-than-self problems and motivating sustainable behaviour. On the other side of the equation, research has revealed when a particular set of values are activated, the opposing values (as seen in Figure 1.2) tend to be suppressed or weakened (Holmes et al. 2011). This implies that appealing to extrinsic values can weaken intrinsic ones and the opposite. This fact is of particular relevance for communicators of sustainability messages and shall be more closely examined in the context of values-based communication in the section further to come.

1.4 Values-based Communication

The concept of values-based communication, as implied by its name, seems to address the need that was articulated in the previous paragraphs. Literature review reveals the lack of a clear, unified definition for the concept. However, some definitions have been collected and re-examined by the authors, and the following definition is used for this study:

Values-based communication is a concept that addresses personal or societal values of a target audience. The intended result is to build a personal connection between a certain issue and receiver. This connection can be used to further inspire both attitude and behaviour change. (This definition draws on Bell 2011, Sightline Institute n.d. and FrameWorks Institute 2009)

Values-based communication offers a number of benefits that are in the interest of communicators (Sightline Institute n.d.):

- Establishing connection and building consensus for common ground. People with similar opinions may have disagreements on details, for example on matters relating to legislation. However, shared values related to the concepts of family, equality, liberty, etc. have the potential to bring people together, create common ground and serve as bases for future productive discussions.
- Addressing values facilitates the establishment of a common language. Communicating to audiences through words, symbols or stories, etc. that activate values, facilitates the creation of a common language.
- Values resonate with people on an emotional as well as intellectual level. It is believed that values, besides engaging people mentally, significantly involve their emotions by strengthening the connection to the subject at hand.
- Stating values consistently and clearly adds authenticity. It is believed that by clearly and consistently communicating one's values and principles adds authenticity to the communicator's image.

Values-based communication is commonly used in the political field, the commercial marketing sector and the third sector. Even though the use is found to be varied, literature review and preliminary exploration lead the authors to identify two main directions of values-based communication.

One approach is anchored in the practice of the marketing field and focuses on identifying what seem to be the dominant values of the audience or customers, and then promoting a message by appealing to those values. Commercial products and services are not primarily sold only on the basis of facts like price, quality or nutritional content, but also on the

premises of contributing to a better life, a successful self image or saving money (Crompton 2010), which activate and strengthen extrinsic values. Examples related to sustainability range from promoting sustainable behaviour by financial reasoning, such as saving money by installing solar panels, or getting tax cuts when buying an environmentally friendly car, to arguing for foreign aid as a way to develop a commercial market for national businesses. To distinguish this type of values-based communication approach from other approaches that will be discussed further in this study, the term Marketing Approach is applied. In addition to the description of the marketing approach it has to be noted that it is a commonly known fact that this approach is dominant and is being used repeatedly in the context of sustainability compared to other approaches.

Another practice of values-based communication exists at the heart of which lies the idea of intentionally promoting only intrinsic values. The main source of examples of this approach was found in relation to The Common Cause Network in the UK. The Common Cause Network attempts to foster knowledge and understanding of the importance of values in response to the social and environmental challenges faced by humanity. The main approach is to activate and strengthen intrinsic values (Common Cause n.d.). To distinguish this type of values-based communication approach from the other approach mentioned in this study, the term Intrinsic Approach is used.

The report “Common Cause: The case for working with our cultural values” presents eight principles for civil society organisations which, according to the report, are “in the course of responding to an understanding of values and the frames that help to strengthen these” (Crompton 2010):

1. Be transparent and participatory, and demand the same standard from others.
2. Ensure that communications and campaigns embody the values that they seek to promote.
3. Be prepared to work for systemic change.
4. Build new coalitions.
5. Understand the full impact of policy.
6. Manage trade-offs where these are unavoidable.
7. Tailor the message to the audience.
8. Make it fun and dare to dream.

Another publication, the Common Cause Handbook, provides five guiding principles for organisations that wish to work with values to create lasting change, to help them shape their activities (Holmes et al. 2011):

1. Explore Values
2. Nurture intrinsic values
3. Challenge extrinsic values
4. See the big picture
5. Work together

These documents provide an in depth exploration of the scientific background for values-based communication, as well as the use of values in communication today. Based on the presented facts about the values theory, values-based communication, and the relevance of this for sustainable development, it becomes apparent that there is need for awareness, knowledge and understanding of values, and how to engage with values-based communication practices for organisations operating in this field. Knowledge and awareness

on how to engage with values and implement values based communication can make the difference between aiming for short-term or long-term success - or between solving the problems or perpetuating them. The need for a basic level of such knowledge and awareness within any organisation engaging with values-based communication is a core assumption for this study.

1.5 The Need for Strategic Approach

The already mentioned facts emphasise the important role values play in motivating behaviour and how values-based communication can be a powerful tool for communicators. In addition, it was presented earlier that some ways of applying values-based communication are likely to contribute to perpetuating unsustainable practices. However, there is evidence that the promotion of intrinsic values can motivate lasting attitude change and behaviour shift that are favourable for sustainability.

A strategic approach can help put sustainability on the public agenda, get organisations focused on the same goal and be the basis for measurable and transformational change. From the preliminary research it appears that the Intrinsic Approach is not commonly endorsed, even though good efforts are made from e.g. the Common Cause Network. For the current research, the authors have chosen to apply the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development for addressing the points presented above.

1.6 The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD)



The FSSD is an analytical and planning tool, developed for addressing sustainability problems in complex systems and designed for problem analysis, decision making, and for use for strategic action plans (Holmberg and Robert 2000). It is based on a generic five level framework: system, success, strategic guidelines, actions and tools (Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3: The Five Level Framework for Planning in Complex Systems

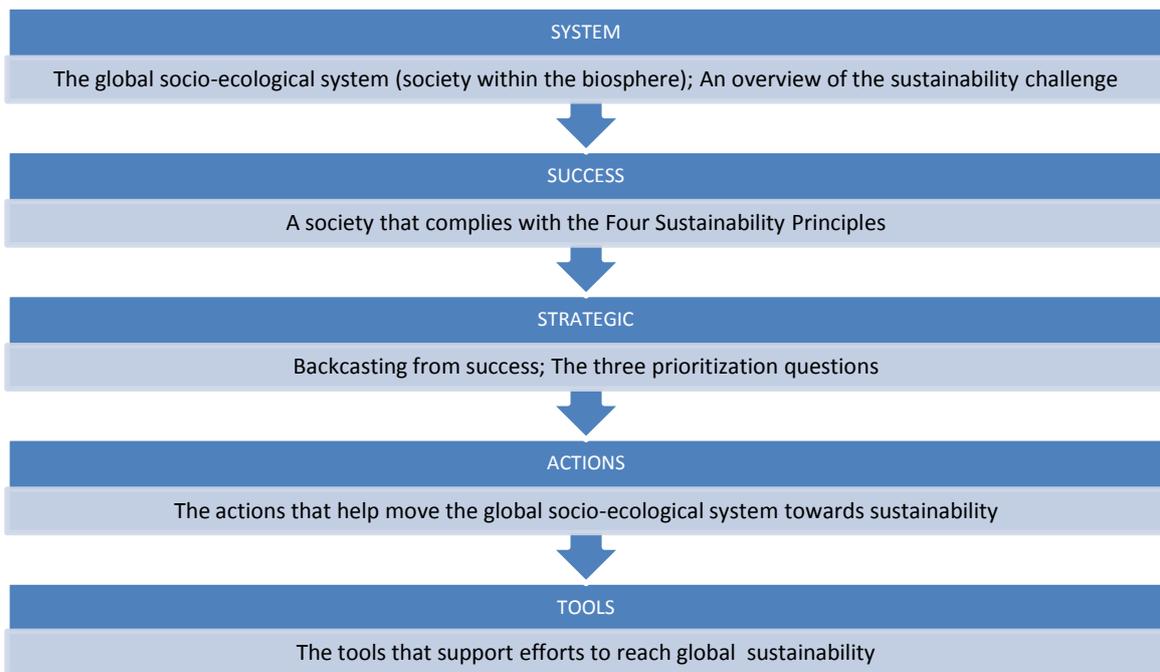


Figure 1.4: The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD)

The FSSD is a unique and efficiency-proven analytical framework with regards to its potential to contribute to the process of transforming society towards sustainability. FSSD provides the user with concepts to analyse systems at large, create a vision and understand the gaps between the current situation and the vision. It also describes how to proceed with concrete steps towards the vision and clear instructions on how to prioritise among possible actions. An overview of the FSSD structure is provided in Figure 1.4.

System level: The first level of the FSSD enhances shared understanding of the system's interconnections, boundaries and limitations. From individuals through organisations and society to the entire biosphere, all sub-systems operate within the constraints of natural laws and have continuous impacts both locally and globally.

Success level: The second level emphasises the importance of a shared and well defined vision for success, ranging from a global perspective (society and the biosphere) to any sub-system within the global one. Ideally, the definition of success should be clear widely agreed upon and based on basic principles, such as the following:

1. necessary to achieve the goal
2. sufficient to achieve to goal
3. general enough to be used in different contexts
4. concrete enough to guide actions
5. non-overlapping in order to enable comprehension and structured analysis of the issues

In order to define success in the global level, meaning a sustainable civilization (illustrated in Figure 1.1), there have been set boundary conditions based on scientific foundations (Ny et al. 2006). These boundaries, named the "Four Sustainability Principles" (also known in the business and scientific community as the "TNS System Conditions") determine that society should not contribute to any systematic degradation of nature, nor create conditions preventing people from meeting their own needs within the system in order for it to be

sustainable. By identifying the main causes of unsustainability, it is possible to describe and envision a sustainable society where contributions to those causes are eliminated.

The four sustainability principles are the following (Ny et al. 2006):

In a sustainable society nature is not subject to systematically increasing...

1. Concentrations of substances extracted from the earth's crust;
2. Concentrations of substances produced by society;
3. Degradation by physical means;
And in society,
4. People are not subject to conditions that systematically undermine their capacity to meet their needs.

Strategic level: The third level brings the importance of a strategic approach when dealing with complex systems. A main concept that the FSSD applies is backcasting. This is a strategic planning methodology which involves envisioning of a desired future and then identifying steps, which are necessary to bridge the gap between the current reality of the system and the envisioned future. Backcasting can be based on imagined future scenarios, but in the context of the FSSD backcasting is done from an envisioned future which is in line with the four sustainability principles. (Holmberg and Robert 2000)

The rationale behind backcasting from principles instead of scenarios can be supported by the following three reasons:

1. In a complex system such as the global socio-ecological system, it is almost impossible to reach a consensus on which of the different scenarios, that different people have in mind;
2. In an unpredictable system such as society operating within the biosphere, it is almost impossible to predict the future in terms of development (for example future technology);
3. With lack of system boundaries, there is a risk of perpetuating the current problems. It is, however, possible to integrate the two approaches, as long as the factors for success are well defined. At the same time, when moving strategically towards a goal it is required to articulate in advance particular guidelines in order not to get "off track" along the way.

The strategic level within the FSSD offers three main prioritisation questions for selecting from among the suggested actions and tools the ones that are strategic for reaching the vision. The three prioritisation questions are the following:

1. Does this action lead in the right direction?
2. Can it serve as a flexible platform for future improvements?
3. Does it provide sufficient return on investment?

Other guidelines and prioritisation questions can be added according to the specific context and based on the system description.

Actions level: The fourth level contains possible actions that can be taken in the process of moving towards sustainability, after having been prioritised according to guidelines put forward in the strategic level.

Tools level: The fifth level contains possible tools and concepts that either exist or need to be developed in order to support the implementation of the chosen actions. It is important to mention that though the five levels are structured in some order, it is not entirely linear process but rather an iterative one.

The FSSD as an analytical framework can be introduced into the according processes of the implementation of values-based communication, for the purpose of strategic enhancement.

1.7 Research Purpose

The overarching purpose, which led the authors to conduct the current research, was to contribute to the motivation of behaviour change towards sustainability, while using positive communication practices. This goal is believed to be achieved by activating and strengthening of the intrinsic values through values-based communication, which as introduced earlier proves to be a powerful tool for contributing to the desired behavioural change. Derived from the above is the core purpose for this research: to explore and articulate the most strategic way to apply values-based communication from the Intrinsic Approach.

1.8 Research Questions

The primary research question is the following:

How can values-based communication be applied strategically to communicate sustainability messages?

This question will be supported by several sub-questions:

Supporting question 1 (SQ1): What characterises the current use of values-based communication for communicating Sustainability messages within NGOs?

Supporting question 2 (SQ2): What are the enablers and barriers for using values-based communication for sustainability?

Supporting question 3 (SQ3): What are seen as key factors for strategic application of values-based communication for communicating sustainability messages?

1.9 Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study is centred on values-based communication within the context of sustainability. It focuses on presuming good examples of the use of values-based communication. To find such examples was not easy, and for practical reasons most of the organisations and experts were found through the homepage and reports of the Common Cause Network. This brings into the study more influence from one source, in this case the United Kingdom. All the organisations are NGOs. Based on experience, the authors believe that the findings are relevant for Western Europe. The authors recognise that a broader sample of data would have strengthened the study. In addition, because of time constraints

the literature review was not exhaustive and the number of conducted interviews and case studies was limited.

Throughout the broader market and in academic circles, the term values-based communication or values communication is also used to describe the communication of a company's or organisation's core values. This implies communicating core values to employees, customers and other stakeholders. However, this type of values-based communication is not within the scope of this study.

1.10 Intended Audience

The intended outcome of this study is to develop a set of recommendations for the strategic use of values-based communication for sustainability. The primary audience for whom these recommendations may be useful are people, groups or organisations who aim to contribute to sustainable development and use communication practices as part of their operations. The study is mainly conducted within the third sector, but the outcome might be found relevant also for other sectors. For example, communicators from other fields like marketing and advertising might find this strategy useful and wish to make a contribution to the sustainability transition.

2 Methods

2.1 Research design

This research has been designed according to Maxwell's model for qualitative research, due to its advantages as an iterative process with a holistic approach (Maxwell 2005). The FSSD as a conceptual framework was used in the study, both to contextualise the need for this research (the context of the topic of values-based communication with regards to global sustainability challenge), and to inform the recommendations extracted by the authors in the Discussion chapter with additional strategic considerations. A generic Five Level Framework was chosen for analysing the findings.

The research, conducted to answer the main research question, was comprised of four phases:

1. Data collection on characteristics of the current use of values-based communication (SQ1), the enablers and barriers (SQ2), and the key factors for strategic application of values-based communication for sustainability (SQ3).
2. Analysis of the findings.
3. Extraction of guidelines and recommendations for strategic use of values-based communication for sustainability.
4. Validity and reliability check.

2.2 Research Methods

For each phase suitable qualitative methods were adapted. The next section will specify the different methods used in the current research, transparently discussing the context and the limitations.

2.2.1 Data collection

The main data collection method used in this study was semi-structured interviews with experts and practitioners that work with values-based communication for sustainability. The questions were structured according to the Five Level Framework starting with definitions and theoretical considerations on the system level, leading to definitions of success up to the tools level, where questions were asked about more concrete tools used in the process of communication.

In addition, findings from the report "Common Cause for Nature" (Blackmore et al. 2013) were used to support the results. The report consists of a thorough content analysis of all external communications produced by 13 nature conservation organisations in the United Kingdom for a six month period. The "Common Cause for Nature" report was analysed in order to reveal data related to the research questions. Findings were woven into the results chapter in a way that present whether they are supportive or contradictive to the findings which emerged from the interviews conducted for the current research. The report was found very relevant, especially as the time frame for this study would not allow any independent thorough content analysis that requires knowledge in the field of cognitive linguistics.

Since there is no single definition of values-based communication and the terminology around values and values-based communication is quite ambiguous, the interviewees were introduced to the following definition:

Values-based communication is a concept that addresses personal or societal values of a target audience. The intended result is to build a personal connection between sender and receiver. This connection can be used to further inspire both attitude and behaviour change.

Based on findings from the research, this definition was later slightly altered (see section 1.4).

Separate sets of interview questions were made for experts and practitioners (see Appendix B). They were designed on the basis of several considerations. The questions were meant to capture inputs that answered the different sub-questions, and allowed a Five Level Framework analysis of the findings. For that purpose, the questionnaire was structured according to the different five levels. Interviewees, however, were not aware of the existence of such a structure. Interview questions were formatted using simple and understandable language. Explanations of ambiguous terms were prepared and offered in order to avoid misinterpretations and efforts were made to design the interview so that it could be kept within a timeframe of maximum 50 to 60 minutes. Prior to conducting the interview, the questions were tested on one person and adjustments were made according to the feedback.

Practitioner and expert informants were asked different sets of questions to reveal relevant information on values-based communication.

The characteristics of the current practice of values-based communication were revealed by direct questions posed to the expert informants. The practitioner informants were asked a set of detailed questions on how values-based communication was applied in their organisation. The expert informants were also asked about how strategic they saw the current practice of values-based communication for sustainability, and were offered an explanation on what was meant by strategic application.

Information about the enablers and barriers was found both by asking about best practices as well as key factors and obstacles/barriers for good and effective use of values-based communication for sustainability. The original supporting question two was “What are the best practices for using values-based communication for sustainability?” However, the answers given during the interviews revealed difficulty in defining “best practices for using values-based communication for sustainability”. On the other hand, interviewees repeatedly mentioned the challenges that are currently hindering the use of values-based communication for sustainability. They also emphasized some characteristics that could be identified as supportive. Consequently, supporting question two was changed to “What are the enablers and barriers for using values-based communication for sustainability?”

Key factors were identified by asking both experts and practitioners directly what they see as key factors for good and effective use of values-based communication for sustainability. Experts were also asked what could make the practice of values-based communication for sustainability more strategic. The importance of the key factors for the strategic application of values-based communication for sustainability was particularly stressed in reference to the informants’ own experience and knowledge.

2.2.2 Sample

Experts and practitioners in the field of values-based communication for sustainability were approached regarding participating in interviews. Requests were sent to eight experts, and six replied positively; 11 requests were sent out to practitioners of which six replied positively. Of these only four could be conducted within the appropriate time frame. Prior to the formal interviews, three informal interviews were conducted to allow the research team to gain wider knowledge in the field of values-based communication and the connection between values and motivation for sustainability.

All practitioner informants represented organisations that engage with sustainability issues and have had applied values-based communication in their work. Expert informants were identified for having conducted research on values-based communication and/or having experience in working with organisations in the field.

Criteria for the selection of informants were that they should be familiar not only with values-based communication, but the Intrinsic Approach in particular. In practice this meant they all were familiar with the “Common Cause Handbook” (Holmes 2011). As a consequence, all four organisations were located in the UK. Experts were located in the UK (4), the US (1), and Sweden (1).

2.2.3 Interview Process

All interviews were conducted on-line through Skype or Google Hang-out. While the quality of the sound varied, it was not found to affect delivery of the content. Interviews were designed in a way that the informants were able to present their opinion even on questions that were not directly related to the fixed questions. Answers to one question often happened to provide answers to some of the other questions.

2.2.4 Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Notes were also taken during the interviews to support the transcription and further analysis. Then the transcribed text was prepared by identifying and dividing it into meaningful utterances. Two coders coded each interview individually, and a third person reviewed the coding. The codes were not pre-decided. When interview data from one question was found to be directly relevant for another question, it was coded according to its content. In the next phase all codes were clustered into themes that were not pre-decided but rather organically emerged from the data. The themes then were broken down into sub-themes and in some cases sub-sub-themes, in order to find patterns and connections. This was an iterative process where the themes were constantly re-examined.

A SWOT analysis, regarding the use of the Intrinsic Approach by NGOs, was chosen to summarize the main findings from SQ1 and SQ2. The SWOT analysis is a widely recognized method for gathering, structuring, presenting and reviewing extensive data. The analysis contributed to dividing the characteristics, enablers and barriers into internal and external factors. The SWOT analysis was chosen for this study, considering its usefulness for understanding, analysis and drawing conclusions for a variety of situations.

The Five Level Framework was chosen as a lens to analyse the findings for the discussion, in order to identify the gaps between the current use of values-based communication for sustainability and a strategic application of the concept. From the discussion and analysis of the main findings, a set of recommendations for the strategic use of values-based communication were extracted. Furthermore, the FSSD was applied to discuss and inform these recommendations to strategically enhance both their context and the application in relation to sustainability.

2.2.5 Validation

The validation of the research was woven into the entire process in order to overcome potential validity threats. The following validation methods were chosen to fit qualitative research (Maxwell 2005).

Rich data. Interview questions were tested before conducting the formal interview by three informal conversations and by colleagues from the MSLS program, to ensure clarity and avoidance of leading questions and researchers' bias. The interview questions were aimed at capturing both the content of the communication processes, such as which kind of values are being conveyed, and the practical side of the communication practices, such as setting (face to face or community based-communication), style and language, and tools for communication.

Triangulation. Three different triangulation processes were applied in the research to enhance the validity of the results and conclusions:

- Data triangulation Data was collected by interviewing both practitioners using values-based communication in different types of NGOs, and experts in values-based communication from different fields of academia, business and third sector.
- Methods triangulation Different methods were used during the entire research process in order to ensure different perspectives for stronger validity. Interviews and content analysis of the "Common Cause for Nature" report (2013) were used for data collection. SWOT analysis was used to summarise the findings, and a Five Level Framework analysis of the findings was conducted during the discussion.
- Investigator triangulation All three authors fully participated in the data collection process, the coding of the interviews, and the creation of the themes. The analysis conducted during the research was reviewed by all three researchers to minimise gaps and misinterpretations and to enhance the overall validity.

Respondent validation. During the phases of the discussion and the conclusion, the recommendations articulated by the researchers were sent back to interviewees and other experts in the field, as well as two sustainability practitioners who are not familiar with the field of values-based communication. Six responses were received and the recommendations were adjusted according to the inputs. In order to reduce chances for misinterpretations, the quotes integrated in this paper were sent back for the participants' approval,

Comparison. Another part of the validation process was to compare the suggested recommendations in this research with existing guiding principles, presented in the Common Cause report and handbook (Crompton 2010, Holmes et al. 2011). The purpose of this comparison was to review the alignment of this research outcome with the existing guiding principles, and to point out the new contribution of this research.

3 Results

3.1 Overview of the Themes

The table below presents an overview of the categories and themes that emerged from the codes, related to the supporting research questions.

Table 3.1: Categories and themes that emerged during the data collection and clustering process

SQ1	SQ2		SQ3		
Characteristics of current use	Barriers	Enablers	Key factors		
extent of use of the Intrinsic Approach	dominance of the Marketing Approach	robust scientific base for the Intrinsic Approach	authenticity & consistency	aiming for systemic & lasting behaviour change	building knowledge & awareness of the Intrinsic Approach
knowledge & awareness of the Intrinsic Approach	negative impacts of extrinsic values	values-based communication is intuitive	transparency & integrity	having a clear & measurable definition of success	activation of intrinsic values
structured & strategic application of Intrinsic Approach	lack of knowledge & awareness of the Intrinsic Approach	people feel part of a bigger picture	communication styles	managing trade-offs & considering side-effects	avoiding activating extrinsic values
consideration of side-effects of values-based communication	lack of good examples or pioneers	most people consider intrinsic values to be more important than extrinsic	engagement based communication	collaborating with other organisations	empowering people
	complexity of the sustainability issue		knowing the audience		
	lack of resources	“knock-on” effect: activating one intrinsic value can motivate a variety of sustainable behaviours			
	difficulty in measuring change of a qualitative nature				
	dominance of short-term perspective & small scale approach				

The next sections will present the results in more details as well as field examples to support the findings.

3.2 Questions Asked

The research process included interviews with six experts and four practitioners in the field of values-based communication for sustainability, as described in-depth in the Methods chapter. Two different sets of questions were used (see Appendix B for full list of questions).

Practitioners were asked questions aiming to reveal:

- Their understanding of the role of values in communicating sustainability and relationship between different values and motivation towards sustainable behaviour, and the application of this knowledge within the organisation.
- If and how values are integrated in their organisation's communication strategy or other overarching communication plans or strategies.
- The extent to which guidelines, actions, and tools for values-based communication for sustainability.
- The key factors and barriers for effective use of values in communicating sustainability by their organisation.
- Examples of the integration of values when designing or planning communication for sustainability.

Experts were asked a slightly different set of questions. While practitioners described a more personal experience of values-based communication based on their own direct practices, experts made statements on the overall state of the field of values-based communication. The questions presented to the experts sought to reveal:

- The characteristics of today's use of values-based communication for sustainability.
- The key factors and barriers for good and effective use of values-based communication for sustainability.
- Examples of best practices.
- Their opinion about how strategic the current practice of values-based communication for sustainability is, and what could possibly make it more strategic.

It is worth noting that in some cases, informants provided information that answered other questions presented during the interview, or questions only presented to the other group of informants. In these cases the answers were still counted and captured as valid results. This also implies that other informants possibly could have provided similar answers, but it is not evident since they were not asked about it directly. These unanticipated findings were included, considering that they add depth and details to the points discussed.

An additional important note is that during the interviews, the research team did not use the term "Intrinsic Approach", but rather used "values-based communication for sustainability". This is, as explained previously, due to the fact that the term was coined by the researchers during the research process. A similar process happened with regards to the term "Marketing Approach", which was not introduced directly to the interviewees and was coined for the purpose of this research at a later stage. However, the findings presented in this chapter are formulated with these two terms for consistency and clarity reasons.

3.3 Results Related to SQ1

The following section presents results related to supporting question 1, "What characterises the current use of values-based communication for communicating sustainability messages within NGOs?" The findings are clustered and introduced under themes emerging from the findings for easier navigation.

Extent of use of the Intrinsic Approach. A recurring comment from all ten informants was that according to their knowledge and experience, the Intrinsic Approach is neither widespread nor commonly used:

I don't think there are many environmental organisations which are consciously doing it [using values-based communication]. There are undoubtedly those that are not consciously doing it, but they wouldn't necessarily call it values-based communication. They would probably call it maintaining their integrity. (Crompton 2013)

Two of the experts also commented the Intrinsic Approach is a new approach, though some organisations applied it unconsciously. One of the experts pointed out a positive correlation between the size of an organisation and the chosen approach for values-based communication, and suggested that small size organisations are more likely to use the Intrinsic Approach:

If you look at who communicates intrinsically, it's often smaller, more community based organisations. And they often appeal to intrinsic values because they have to. They don't have a big budget; they rely on people's kindness, generosity and reciprocity of giving and taking. (ter Kuile 2013)

On the same note, the same expert mentioned that large organisations communicating to large audiences are more likely to use the Marketing Approach:

You'll often see a company, a corporation, a profit making organisation or even an organisation in the charity section which are more corporate [...] - they have a bigger staff or a government department - they are very much attracted to the extrinsic language because they want to have this big audience. (ter Kuile 2013)

Knowledge and awareness of values-based communication for sustainability. Four out of six experts mentioned that there is lack of knowledge and awareness about values, or of their role and impact in communication for sustainability. This included a lack of awareness of intrinsic and extrinsic values, the difference between the Marketing Approach and the Intrinsic Approach and knowledge on how to integrate values in communication, "In terms whether it's being used with that awareness - it is completely lacking in some places or some people don't quite know what to do with that [the Intrinsic Approach]. It's still slightly twisted area of change in some ways." (Blackmore 2013)

Regarding the extent of knowledge and awareness the practitioners had about values-based communication for sustainability, they were asked questions meant to capture this degree of knowledge and awareness, such as "What values do you seek to activate while communicating sustainability messages?". All of the practitioners demonstrated knowledge of the difference between the Intrinsic Approach and the Marketing Approach.

Two of the practitioners mentioned, however, that this knowledge was still not fully integrated within their organisation. This relates both to spreading the knowledge among the staff and to integrating it into the organisation's communication strategies.

The "Common Cause for Nature" report supports the finding regarding the lack of knowledge and awareness about values for sustainability. The study revealed that NGOs are frequently appeal to extrinsic values and not to intrinsic values, despite the evidence of the positive connection between the Intrinsic Approach and behaviour change towards sustainability. The content analysis of external communication documents of conservation

organisations revealed that “universalism and benevolence have an incredibly low usage.” (Blackmore et al. 2013)

Structured and strategic approach towards values-based communication for sustainability. To capture how strategic values-based communication is being applied today, the practitioners were asked specific questions about their organisational practices, related to strategic processes as defined by the Five Level Framework (5LF). Therefore the findings below are presented under the respective 5LF levels. The experts, on the other hand, were asked directly about how strategic they find the current practice of values based communication for sustainability. To avoid misinterpretation and inconsistency, they were introduced with a clarification of the term strategic approach. This was defined as an approach where one takes into account the bigger picture and has a long-term perspective, has a definition of success and has a strategic plan to achieve success.

In general, from the experts’ point of view, five out of six clearly expressed that current practices of values-based communication for sustainability are not strategic.

- Systems level

Related to understanding of the system which they are engaging with (the values system), the practitioners were asked if they have a shared definition of values that is agreed upon within the organisation. All four practitioners responded that they did not have a definition of values.

Conflicts and competition among organisations as opposed to cooperation within the third sector, were also highlighted by one practitioner and one expert, the last one provided this comment, “The problem [is] that organisations are competing with each other. They are all working to make the world more sustainable or the water cleaner, but they don’t talk to each other about it.” (Bell 2013)

Another expert also connected the state of not being strategic with the fact that on the arena of the Intrinsic Approach, no organisation is leading the way and there are not many best practices out there to learn from or build on.

- Success level

The findings revealed three main areas related to measuring success as a strategic aspect: lack of clear and defined goals, lack of ways to measure qualitative outcomes, and lack of long-term perspective goals.

- Lack of defined goals related to values

Two of the NGOs had general goals for their communication practices, but not specifically related to values. Four experts commented that success was often defined in a short-term perspective.

The “Common Cause for Nature” report enhanced these findings, “Many campaign successes are clearly measurable, while their impacts on values tend to go unnoticed. This only makes it more likely that the values impacts are ignored and extrinsic values are inadvertently reinforced”. (Blackmore et al. 2013)

- Lack of ways to measure qualitative outcome

Regarding ways to measure success, two of the practitioners stated that they had such a way, or were in the process of developing it:

There are three aspects [for measuring success within our work]. One from an artistic point of view: Is this an imaginative, exciting and interesting piece of work that people have appreciated? Secondly, does it engage with people? It's about the way that we do it. The third one is about attitudes and behaviour. That is where are looking at longer term evaluation. That is why we are developing this evaluation tool. (Andrews 2013)

Three of the experts also touched upon the lack of ways to measure success. In the experts' opinion, the absence of efficient methods to measure qualitative change hinders the organisations' assessment of whether the communication process was worth conducting. A reason pointed out for the need to come up with better ways to measure success was that currently, organisations do not look at wider effects of their communication processes, and the broad impact is not considered.

Having measures of success were linked to the likelihood of getting funding. Both experts and practitioners commented on the difficulty to acquire funding without conforming to the expectations of those who provide funding:

It's not necessarily easy to get funding to do that [focusing on values rather than environmental issues]. Most people are funded in the environmental sector to do work on specific issues. There is often a need to jump through hoops and be able to show that you have spoken to 2000 people about specific issues such as recycling or energy. (Phillips 2013)

A related finding was that "a major consideration here is the current discourse around showing effectiveness of charitable funds" (Blackmore et al. 2013), meaning that NGOs are required to demonstrate measurable and short-term success in order to get funding, and they do not consider broad term or wider definition of success related to values.

- Lack of long-term perspective goals

Measuring quantitative outcomes in a short time perspective was perceived as the most common approach, as described by one of the experts:

The measures of success have often been quite lacking. What organisations are looking at regarding what success is, [are] always things like the number of members they have, or the amount of money they've raised that year, or the amount of new members, or how many Facebook likes they got. (Blackmore 2013)

- Strategic level

When asked whether they consider values in overarching communication strategies, half of the practitioners confirmed positively.

When asked about the use of guidelines, only one reported having such guidelines. Though the three other practitioners replied negatively, one of them provided a document that contained principles the authors identified as guidelines for the use of values. The informant

however was not familiar with the content. A connection with organisation size was found, as the smaller worked more informally and the two larger organisations had formal strategies.

- Actions level

One of the three practitioners stated their organisation had planned actions for values-based communication that included presentations, workshops and sessions conducted by Common Cause practitioners. Others could not point out any planned actions of this kind. One expert supported this finding by stating that organisations do not know how to connect rhetoric to an action plan. The quote below provides the context for the opinion expressed:

I can think of very, very few examples of where people in social justice organisations are genuinely thinking about how can we strengthen a certain set of values in society. Anything more than the highest rhetorical level. People throw the language of values around a lot. But I don't think anybody I've ever seen has connected the rhetoric to an action plan with a realistic time scale. That includes myself. (Kirk 2013)

- Tools level

Regarding the use of tools for values-based communication, three practitioners reported that they used tools within the organisations, with one noting that only senior members had knowledge of these tools. The need for tools to implement strategic values-based communication was recurrently expressed.

One expert reported of having developed specific tools for the practitioners they train, in order to give practical assistance for applying values-based communication.

Considering side-effects of values-based communication. A recurring view from half of the experts was that possible side-effects from values-based communication were not considered. These findings mainly pointed at negative effects, as illustrated by this quote from an expert:

The responsibility that a social or environmental organisation has in the course of communication of a particular issue that they consider to be of importance arises, because their communications are likely to have effects on people's attitudes on a wider range of social and environmental issues, which they [the organisation] are not working on, but still wouldn't want weakening public opinion towards. (Crompton 2013)

On the other hand, it was stated that there can be positive side-effects, for example pro-social behaviour developing as a result of activating intrinsic values for sustainability.

In describing the current reality, The "Common Cause for Nature" report (Blackmore et al. 2013) points out that many organisations largely rely on negative framing of messages, which can potentially produce an effect opposite to that of inspiring environmentally friendly behaviour. The report also describes a high incidence of values conflicts in the NGOs external communications, where texts contained opposing values, in other words they were conveying both intrinsic and extrinsic values at the same time.

3.4 Results related to SQ2

3.4.1 Barriers for the use of values-based communication for sustainability in the current reality

The following section is focusing on different factors that were seen as barriers by the interviewees. Barriers are understood as obstacles or hindrances for the implementation of the Intrinsic Approach within NGOs.

Dominance of the Marketing Approach. A barrier stated by all six experts is the dominance of the Marketing Approach within Western culture and society. It was also stated that the Marketing Approach is deeply rooted in societal structures, as described in the quote below by one of the experts:

The main obstacle is that we live in a world where marketing approach, marketing values, are [...] ubiquitous, so it's difficult to pinpoint them because they are everywhere. Everything in the consumer capitalism environment is oriented toward making the individual feel first dissatisfied, and then encourages them to consume in order to try to feel better. One of the marketer's favourite tricks is to use universalist values as gloss on top of appeals to the achievement and power values. That's when you get things like 'greenwash'. It's everywhere, we're drenched in cleverly disguised extrinsic values, and it's very difficult to communicate in a way that stands in genuine opposition to that. (Kirk 2013)

One expert and one practitioner expressed that intrinsic values are sometimes being misused in the Marketing Approach, for instance when promoting values such as sharing and kindness are being used to sell products which are neither good for people's health nor for the environment.

The findings revealed that NGOs appeal to different sets of values for different audiences. When addressing the governmental and business sectors, the Marketing Approach was perceived by NGOs to be more relevant than the Intrinsic Approach as stated by three of the expert informants as well as two practitioners.

This view is also present in the "Common Cause for Nature" report, "During workshops, and in response to the survey, a large number of people within the sector felt strongly that it was necessary to talk to particular audiences in more extrinsic ways to be persuasive – particularly regarding money and profit lines. This was argued to be the case particularly with sections of business and government." (Blackmore et al. 2013)

The informants counted several root causes for the dominance of the Marketing Approach within the field of values-based communication:

- The Marketing Approach is more developed than the Intrinsic Approach, "I think to make the distinction, the Futerra approach, the extrinsic approach is pretty developed. They have been doing it for ten years; they have a big client base. There are other agencies which are now using a similar methodology. I think that's pretty established. [...] The Intrinsic Approach is still very novel. People are still figuring it out" (ter Kuile 2013)

- The Marketing Approach is more common because it is easier to act upon, “You have to be very clear and determined with your own intent to communicate in a values based way [...] If you take your eye off the ball for a second, you will find that you or people around you fall back to a marketing approach because it’s the default option, and therefore the easier and in many ways more obvious and logical thing to do.” (Kirk 2013)
- It is hard to implement the Intrinsic Approach into an extrinsic structure, “[...] it is so difficult to put this [intrinsic] approach into existing structures: the financial incentives are difficult, the metrics are different.” (ter Kuile 2013)
- It is hard to communicate intrinsic values when mass media are filled with stories and news activating extrinsic values, “In a newspaper, where you've got stories about celebrities or people with power doing bad things, then [...] it might be quite difficult to get people's attention with something which is intrinsic or more positive.” (Blackmore 2013)

Related to the dominance of the Marketing Approach the informants mentioned that the approach is not being questioned enough, that it is taken for granted, and not being challenged:

Coca-Cola is a good example of a company promoting happiness, values of sharing and kindness to sell their product which isn't very good for people or the environment. There is a whole battle against that. But part of the work is to help people think critically about what's happening in terms of how they are being sold products, which values are being appealed to and whether it's morally right. (Phillips 2013)

Negative impacts of extrinsic values. All of the practitioners, as well as all the experts, repeatedly commented on the importance of activating only intrinsic values and try one's best to avoid activating extrinsic values. According to one of the experts, repeated activation of certain values, results in them becoming more rooted. One expert pointed out that changes in attitudes and behaviours motivated through extrinsic communication might be counterproductive to achieving sustainability.

One of the experts referred to the example of regulatory measures, such as policy tools, which are effective only in a short-term perspective. It was stated this was due to the fact that they either reinforce or exercise sanctions for stimulating certain behaviour, which doesn't originate out of motivation driven by a value. Changes attained by such mechanisms have a risk of bouncing back once the regulation is lifted. The same expert also described the activation of extrinsic values as so destructive to the extent that it would make more sense to not communicate values at all.

Lack of knowledge and awareness of the Intrinsic Approach. Four out of six experts reported a lack of both knowledge and awareness regarding the importance of values for sustainability in general, and intrinsic values in particular. Although this theme was identified already as a characteristic of the current reality, it is still referred as a barrier since it functions as an obstacle for appealing to the right values and achieving the desired outcomes for sustainability.

Lack of good examples and pioneers. Four experts commented on the lack of good examples of NGOs using the Intrinsic Approach. This barrier was identified for example in the following statement by one of the experts, “I can think of very, very few examples of where people are genuinely thinking about how can we increase a certain set of values in society. [...] There is no organisation that is really leading the way.” (Kirk 2013)

The complexity of the sustainability challenge. Another barrier that emerged from four interviewees and the “Common Cause for Nature” report (Blackmore et al. 2013) was the complexity of the sustainability challenge. The reason the informants gave for it being a barrier was that the complexity in turn leads to a large variety of approaches and solutions, not necessarily aligned with the Intrinsic Approach for values-based communication. In other words, differences within the field of values-based communication are a result of a difference in the analysis of the problem.

Difficulty in measuring change of a qualitative nature. The difficulty of measuring environmental or societal behaviour change was pointed out by half of the experts and half of the practitioners. It was stated that the difficulty in assessing whether the desired behaviour change actually happened, leads NGOs to foster a different approach rather than the intrinsic one, and it is therefore considered as a barrier to the implementation of this approach.

Two of the experts related this difficulty to lack of suitable tools to measure the behaviour change, and suggested that it entails a need for tools that capture change in a broad perspective. In addition, one practitioner and one expert noted that the measurement of this kind of change is manageable, yet limited regarding to its ability to reflect an objective reality:

It is not very easy to measure [behaviour change]. Most of the measures are in surveys and they are self-reported measures, because you cannot measure if the people who report that they did behave in a certain way - actually did. It might be some kind of wish to appear in a better light when you answer the survey. [...] You have the classic example of difficulty with surveys: 30% of respondents in the surveys say that they buy eco-labels, but only 3% of the products in stores are eco-label. (Matti 2013)

One of the practitioners mentioned that the organisation he is working for did develop such a measurement tool, though it has not been tested yet in a large scale:

We did some portrait values questionnaires, [...] but only with a small sample of 30 people out of a population around 600-700. We did [it] to see which values people hold to be important, pre-project and then post-project. By doing the PVQ's pre and post project, we would hope to provide evidence to show that our project has the ability to create a shift in values from extrinsic to intrinsic. (Phillips 2013)

Lack of resources. A barrier identified by two practitioners and three experts is the lack of different resources for implementing values-based communication according to the Intrinsic Approach. This includes lack of funding for the NGOs to implement communication processes related to values, lack of time - either to explore the field of values-based communication or to implement the Intrinsic Approach within the organisation, and lack of tools and guidance on values-based communication in general and the Intrinsic Approach in particular.

One of the experts – pointed out that the communication agency she is working for have developed some relevant tools for sustainability practitioners, “As soon as we say to them that [...] the values are the way, [they say] of course we should be doing that! And then we give them very specific tools to do so. Hopefully it’s easy and replicable.” (Bell 2013)

Dominance of short-term perspective and small scale approach. As already described under the current use of values-based communication, aiming at short-term immediate outcomes was identified by the interviewees as a characteristic of values-based communication practices today. Three experts and two practitioners pointed out this characteristic as being a barrier for the Intrinsic Approach.

One of the practitioners articulated as a reason for the dominance of short-term perspective the connection between the funding mechanism and the choice of organisations to focus on short-term changes or single issues in their communication practices. The explanation was that funding of NGOs’ activity usually relies on specific issues or goals. Therefore, NGOs tend to focus on these single issues and short-term purposes, rather than applying a long-term approach that is likely to achieve a wider impact for sustainability. As stated by the practitioner, “It’s a matter of whether people have the patience to invest in work that takes a bit longer, because shifting values doesn’t happen overnight. It takes a while. So, that is a barrier we are facing from a practical point of view of funding this work.” (Phillips 2013)

Another practitioner mentioned that is it hard to communicate intrinsic values to mass market, “Being countercultural and communicating with a mass market can be really hard without trying to appeal to people’s own individual benefit.” (Gardner 2013)

The experts touched upon the conflict between short-term outcomes and long-term change with an emphasis on the point that extrinsic values, while being more widespread, are also more relevant in the short-term within the context of current communication practices:

Currently we use very short-term feedback mechanisms. If I don’t have 50,000 people respond within a short timeline, I say it’s a failure. We capture this piece on the short-term, but we also need to be thinking long-term and also thinking outside our immediate area of impact. (ter Kuile 2013)

3.4.2 Enablers for the use of values-based communication for sustainability in the current reality

The following section is focusing on different factors seen as enablers by the interviewees. Enablers are understood as factors that have the potential to promote the implementation of the Intrinsic Approach in NGOs’. The first three factors are inherent strengths of the Intrinsic Approach and therefore considered naturally as enablers. The last two factors are positive outcomes related to the Intrinsic Approach which can convince an NGO or a communicator to foster that approach, and are therefore considered as enablers for spreading the use of the approach.

Values-based communication is intuitive. All six experts mentioned that communicating messages through values is very intuitive, which makes values-based communication easy to learn and apply. The interviewees refer to examples they came across while working with organisations, where people felt that even though they were not familiar with the concepts of

values-based communication it still made sense to them as communicators. This finding was identified as an enabler, well described by one of the interviewed experts:

When we go through the trainings on values-based communication and teach them how to do it, [they] feel like all along they knew it but they didn't know how [...]. When we talk about it [...] you can see light bulbs going up over their head, like Oh yes, that's the piece that was missing this whole time! (Bell 2013)

Robust scientific base for the Intrinsic Approach. The preliminary literature review revealed the existence of a robust scientific base of values-based communication for sustainability (Spini and Doise 1998, Schultz et al. 2005, Schwartz 2006, Milfont et al. 2006, Duriez et al. 2007, De Groot and Steg 2009, Crompton 2010, and Holmes et al. 2011). This was identified by three experts as an enabler. For example, one emphasised the advantage of the Intrinsic Approach in comparison to other approaches, as empirically evident based, "There is a good deal of empirical evidence of the importance of values-based communication, whereas there isn't evidence for some alternative approaches." (Crompton 2013)

Most people hold intrinsic values to be more important than extrinsic. Another enabler strongly emphasized by one of the experts is that most people not only hold intrinsic values, but actually consider them more important than extrinsic ones:

We are arguing that the evidence suggests that for most people, intrinsic values seem to be hold to be more important than extrinsic values. Even those people, who seem to be particularly oriented towards extrinsic values, still hold intrinsic values to be relatively more important. (Crompton 2013)

The Intrinsic Approach helps people to feel part of a bigger picture. The Intrinsic Approach can help people feel that they are part of a bigger picture, an enabler stated by three practitioners and five experts. The point that when people feel part of a larger context they are more empowered to act was repeated by the informants.

I guess Fairtrade Fortnight is the event when we try to pull it all together by providing a national overarching theme. And when we have had success I think it's been when we have demonstrated to people that they are feeding into a bigger picture and that they are a part of something on a national or even an international scale. It also requires their creativity and their input and their action. (Gardner 2013)

The "knock-on" effect: activating one intrinsic value can motivate a variety of sustainable behaviours. Two of the experts as well as one practitioner pointed out that activating one intrinsic value can motivate a variety of sustainable behaviours, considered as a "knock-on" effect¹. Due to the wide range of interrelations between values and corresponding behaviours upon which they have an influence, the activation of intrinsic values was claimed to cause a wide range of impacts. The quote from a practitioner below illustrates the point about encouraging the activation of intrinsic values with an anticipated knock-on effect:

As a broad set, we would say [we are trying to reinforce] the benevolence and the universalism values. It is on that understanding that if you reinforce values of care and empathy then you are going to also reinforce others that are closely related, for

¹ A secondary or incidental effect

example, protecting the environment. It's that range of intrinsic values. (Phillips 2013)

Furthermore, one expert went on to suggest that a set of intrinsic values, earlier described as the helpful values, are in the best interest of any NGO to promote and activate, because they lead to the strengthening and establishment of greater common good. The quote below explains this point more thoroughly:

There is a set of values that are in the interest of any NGO to engage and strengthen irrespective of the issue on which it works. If it's an issue which relates to greater common good or what we call bigger than self problems, then it's likely that an appeal to the action rooted in intrinsic values is going to be of greater systemic value. (Crompton 2013)

3.4.3 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats: SWOT Analysis for the use of the Intrinsic Approach by NGOs

In order to summarise key findings of SQ1 and SQ2, the authors conducted a SWOT analysis for the use of values-based communication for sustainability by NGOs. The summary below offers an overview of the current characteristics that could either inhibit or increase the efficacy of values-based communication by NGOs for sustainability. It also offers a structure of the findings that distinguish between internal and external characteristics, all identified through interviews and content analysis. This makes it easy to identify what are the strengths or weaknesses inherent to the concept such as scientific foundation, or the organisation such as the organisation's economy and culture, versus the opportunities or threats that derive from external sources such as social influences and economical structure.

Table 3.2: SWOT analysis for the use of the Intrinsic Approach by NGOs

<i>Internal</i>	<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values-based communication is intuitive • Existence of a few good examples of NGOs applying the Intrinsic Approach • The Intrinsic Approach helps the communicators & the audience to see the bigger picture 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge & awareness of the Intrinsic Approach within NGOs • Lack of resources • Difficulty to measure changes with qualitative nature • Lack of strategic approach • Short-term perspective dominates within NGOs • Difficulty to manage trade-offs
	<i>External</i>	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People consider intrinsic values as more important than extrinsic ones • Engaging with Intrinsic values is of common interest to many NGOs • Values-based communication is intuitive • Robust scientific base for the Intrinsic Approach • “Knock-on effect”: Activating one intrinsic value can influence several sustainable behaviours

3.5 Results Related to SQ3

In order to answer the third sub-question and identify what are seen as key factors for strategic values-based communication both practitioners and experts were asked directly: “In your experience, what do you see as key factors for good and effective use of values-based communication for sustainability?” However, answers to additional questions also revealed some key factors, such as a question presented to the experts: Do you have any examples of best practices? What makes this a “best practice”?

Practitioners were asked to provide descriptions of specific examples of values-based communication which have been done in their organisation, and some additional key factors were extracted from the answers. It is important to note that in some cases the questions aimed to explore issues not related to key factors; however, the answers provided were incorporated by the authors into the category of key factors for strategic and effective values-based communication for sustainability.

3.5.1 Key factors related to the way of implementing the Intrinsic Approach

Authenticity and consistency. One expert and two practitioners pointed out the importance of authenticity and consistency related to conveying values, as shown in this comment by a practitioner:

Unless people are actually living those values they are trying to reinforce, they won't be good at doing it. We always try to be authentic. [...] It doesn't work if you are going around telling people to ride a bike when you are driving a car. The key factor is the person delivering it and how consistent they are with the values they are trying to promote. (Phillips 2013)

Moreover, all of the practitioners pointed out the necessity of making sure all employees and staff were familiar with and fully understood values-based communication. It was also mentioned by two that their organisations ensured that new staff or cooperation partners held values in line with their own.

Transparency and integrity. Other factors mentioned as key factors were transparency and integrity related to both the communicator and the organisation. Informants mentioned some examples of what this could entail, such as openness, listening and honesty. One informant highlighted the importance for a communicator to be very clear with his or hers intention to appeal to certain values.

Communication styles. The importance of effective communication style was mentioned by three of the experts and one practitioner. This implied both use of tools such as barriers analysis, the use of multiple communication channels, and the need to be self-aware of one's communication style. Furthermore, three of the experts and three of the practitioners commented on the importance of conscious use of language. Simple language and the need to adapt language to audience were highlighted. Other factors mentioned were not to use aggressive language and to emphasise positive communication.

Knowing the audience. Having knowledge about the audience you aim to address was pointed out as essential to effective values-based communication by five experts and two practitioners. This implied the importance of knowing the underlying values of the audience, and understanding of what kind of values people hold. The importance of being responsive to the needs of an audience, and have an understanding of individual needs and interests, was also pointed out.

Other statements were made about the strategic application of values-based communication, saying that approaching an audience is a question of strategy. One expert also advocated the necessity of using focus groups as a tool to get to know the audience better and become familiar with their values. One of the practitioners pointed out that knowing the audience entails the understanding that environmental concerns are just a small part of people's concerns.

Engagement based communication. Several concrete ways to communicate sustainability messages in a way that enhances motivation for behaviour change, emerged from the interview data:

- The use of participatory processes, as an effective way to strengthen intrinsic values, was pointed out by four experts and four practitioners. This means involvement of the audience can be a motivator for behaviour change or can influence values. The “Common Cause for Nature” report (Blackmore et al. 2013) states that many donors to organisations are willing to engage in ways such as campaigning and volunteering.
- A related approach also recurrently proposed by the four practitioners and four of the experts as valuable, was to communicate values through experiences. Experiences were connected to learning, mobilisation of volunteers and activation of intrinsic values.
- Communication through a community based process was seen by four practitioners and four experts as a good way of engaging peoples with values. To build or strengthen social fabric was pointed out as a key factor.
- Face to face communication with people was found by one expert and one practitioner as valuable, since they can give the opportunities to emerging conversations about values.
- Creativity based processes was also seen by one practitioner to be a positive way to stimulate peoples values.

3.5.2 Key factors related to the content of the communication messages and practices

Knowledge and awareness of values-based communication. The need for knowledge and awareness about intrinsic and extrinsic values was highlighted as a key factor by four of the practitioners and five experts. The informants stated that organisations must make sure values are intrinsically understood and consciously engaged with. This aspect is described in more detail under Current Reality and Barriers.

Activation of intrinsic values. Activation and strengthening of intrinsic values was seen as the core of the Intrinsic Approach by five of the experts and all four practitioners. This was presented as a key factor for making people receptive to sustainable behaviour and motivating lasting behaviour change. One of the experts emphasised that if sustainability is not framed within intrinsic values then the concern will not last, “If we don’t think of the environment as a values issue, then people’s opinions of the environment and the environmental problems change overnight, depending on natural disasters and media reports. And then the awareness goes up and after goes down again” (Matti 2013)

It was also mentioned by one of the practitioners that it is important to make people aware that they are acting from intrinsic values. The example described bellow was related to a community project aiming to increase recycling, which last between 9-18 months and involve the community workers as volunteers, “Throughout that process, we are making people aware that they are acting from their values of care, empathy and kindness, sharing and compassion.” (Phillips 2013)

Avoidance of extrinsic values. Negative effects of communicating extrinsic values were repeatedly pointed out by five experts and three practitioners. Their use was described as having destructive consequences, associated with behaviour change that will not be long-lasting, and as being less effective. Addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic values at the same time was particularly warned against.

Empowering people. Two of the practitioners saw empowerment of people as a key factor for successful values-based communication for sustainability. One of the practitioners suggested that it is important to empower people to feel in charge and powerful, and pointed out that the purpose of this is to help people make a difference. It was also suggested by the same practitioner that to give people ideas and provide them with a direction might empower them towards sustainability. Another practitioner pointed out the importance of making people feel valuable when conveying sustainability messages through intrinsic values.

3.5.3 Key factors related to strategic considerations

Aiming for systemic and lasting behaviour change. A predominant concern expressed by five of the experts and three of the practitioners was that a long-term perspective is essential when applying the Intrinsic Approach. Entailed in this is the importance of aiming for systemic behaviour change by addressing the people that are likely to change and not the most extrinsic driven people, and building a critical mass of people to drive systemic change. Four experts as well as three practitioners also frequently referred to how the Intrinsic Approach can assist in addressing problems in their wider context, as well as shaping systemic thinking.

Another issue commented on by three experts and one practitioner was the need to lobby for policy changes to reinforce intrinsic values. The informants pointed out the importance of third sector organisations lobbying for policy interventions and legislative changes, in order to support the NGOs' efforts and to reinforce intrinsic values. One of the experts also highlighted the importance of NGOs being conscious when lobbying for interventions and legislative changes, and support initiatives that are likely to reinforce intrinsic values.

Managing trade-offs and consideration of side-effects. The need to manage trade-off and consider side-effects was expressed by five of the experts and one practitioner. The experts pointed out that it is sometimes necessary or unavoidable to appeal to extrinsic values in order to start with small changes towards sustainability; yet it is important in these cases to consider all possible side-effects that could be the consequence of extrinsic motivation, and therefore trade-offs should be managed carefully. This was seen in line with the need for long time perspective, and considering trade-offs in a wide frame. The practitioner provided the following example:

In England, within the field of recycling, [...] people are given vouchers to recycle. And those are heavily marketed as being effective ways to change behaviour. They might change recycling behaviour on a single issue, but the damage they do to other sustainability behaviour by reinforcing extrinsic values is a bit more dangerous. (Phillips 2013)

Collaborating with other organisations. Cooperation between NGOs was pointed out by two experts and one practitioner as a key factor. This aspect is presented in-depth under the category characteristics of current use of values-based communication, within the theme "Structured and strategic approach towards values-based communication for sustainability". One expert suggested that different NGOs could benefit from communicating the same messages, since the outcome might have a wider scale impact:

If we could get them [the organisations] to say the same message; if we could come in, and give them a training, and figure out the best value, and then have each of them

do their own thing and say the same message - that would be incredible. That would magnify the effect, it would be more people involved, it would be great. And there are some organisations that do that. (Bell 2013)

Having a clear and measurable definition of success. A clear and specific goal was seen as a crucial point for the Intrinsic Approach by three practitioners and one expert. A similar necessity was expressed with regards to defining measurable success. Behaviour and attitude change were referred as criteria for measuring success, and it was also stated that measurable success inspire people. This finding was supported by one of the experts, who advocated the need to foster new ways to measure success, including measuring broader impacts of actions that traditionally are ignored:

If I am advertising an environmentally friendly car for example, on a big poster as you drive past, one in a thousand ends up buying the car, but all thousand people have seen the advertisement and it's shifting their mental mode. We need to find better ways of capturing the other thousand people, so we get a better sense of what we call the mindprint. With carbon we have footprint but we're interested in what's the mindprint of advertising. (ter Kuile 2013)

4 Discussion

In this chapter the results are first discussed in accordance with the research sub-questions. Sub-questions one and two are discussed in the frame of the SWOT analysis presented under Results chapter and sub-question three is discussed according to the emerged key factors. The main research question is discussed first through a Five Level Framework analysis of the findings. Afterwards, from the whole discussion a set of recommendations for strategic application of values-based communication for sustainability is extracted. These recommendations are further informed by the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD), and compared with existing guiding principles for the Intrinsic Approach.

The chapter concludes with limitations and strengths of this research as well as suggestions for future research. The findings discussed here are all presented previously in the Results chapter, where details and quantification of the data are described.

4.1 Discussion of SQ1 and SQ2 through the SWOT Analysis

4.1.1 Weaknesses

The main challenge for NGOs wanting to apply the Intrinsic Approach was found to be lack of knowledge and awareness within the organisation. From the expert informants' point of view, this was a general characteristic of the third sector. As presented in the Introduction chapter, there is a robust scientific platform for the fundamental knowledge about values and their relation to sustainability. Yet it is only in recent years that scientific work has been done which emphasises how values can promote behaviour change towards sustainability (De Groot and Steg 2009). This novelty might be one of the reasons for this characteristic, in the way that NGOs have not yet been exposed to this knowledge. The researchers also suggest looking at this in the context of the dominance of the Marketing Approach and its ubiquitous impact on society. This is discussed in greater depth in the following section on external threats.

The results from the interviews with the practitioners revealed that their application of the Intrinsic Approach lacked strategic aspects according to the preset description of a strategic approach (See section 3.3, under Structured and strategic approach). Finding that the two bigger organisations had more formal strategies than the two smaller ones might not be surprising, naturally larger organisations need more systems and structures to ensure common understanding and practices. Smaller organisations do not necessarily have the same need for formalisation. A practitioner described their informal approach which put the emphasis on making sure the employees embody the values rather than having a written strategy when asked if they considered values in their communication strategy:

It's not like - we read the Common Cause report recently, put this in a strategy or intellectual frame and then put it into everyday practices. It is difficult. You got to embody ideas and values in everything you do. That is how we try to be. The people

we employ have to have the values, and an understanding of how that relates with how we communicate. (Gittins 2013)

Realising that a formal approach with values embedded in a communication strategy might not be the best approach for all organisations, the researchers still argue for the value of a concrete strategy where the NGOs work with values is integrated. Co-creating the strategy involving employees, members and other relevant stakeholders might turn out to be the most valuable part of the process. In larger organisations, a formal strategy where the organisation's approach to values-based communication is stated, can contribute to transparency, consistency and integrity. Once organisations build their communication strategies with an initial intention to appeal solely to intrinsic values - a positive outcome is likely to be the result.

Lack of resources within the NGOs was also identified as a barrier. This included tight budgets, which the researchers saw as closely linked to the lack of personnel and time to invest in exploring the Intrinsic Approach. With restricted resources it can be challenging to bring other issues besides the organisation's core mission to the agenda. This is also in accordance with the researchers own experience both in the private, governmental and the third sector. But it might be the case, that with a higher awareness of the Intrinsic Approach within NGOs, the issue would be prioritised. This could also be connected to the identified need of being more strategic, related to aspects such as the shortage of clear goals and the prioritisation processes, which could lead to the ineffective use of resources.

Related to a shortage of resources is the matter of funding. In the presented results, lack of funding was found to be a barrier as most environmental funding is received for specific issues and often with a short-term goal. As a consequence, it was found to be hard to get funding for purposes with a broad and long-term focus, which the Intrinsic Approach aimed to capture. The findings also revealed a short-term perspective within NGOs. These findings are all in accordance with other research that shows how both NGOs and funders primarily focused on short-term, functional accountability activities at the expense of more long-term, strategic approaches (Ebrahim 2003). The need for a long-term system perspective for moving towards sustainability (Grin, Rotmans and Schot 2010) has been stated previously in this study.

Measurable goals are found to contribute to the effectiveness of the outcome (Cohen, Mohrman and Mohrman 1999), a conclusion the researchers found relevant for a strategic application of values-based communication. The difficulty of measuring impacts with a qualitative nature, and to capture the full range of impact, was pointed out as a barrier by the informants. This entails the need for a systems perspective, to be able to see the big picture and capture both positive and negative side-effects. When aiming for lasting behaviour change, the researchers consider it highly important that NGOs foster awareness to measure the full impact of their activities. Without this awareness there is a risk of implementing measures that turn out to be counterproductive in the long run - because possible trade-offs and side-effects were not considered or managed (Crompton 2010). This leads directly to another barrier, namely the lack of tools aligned with the Intrinsic Approach.

This barrier might hamper the organisations' application of the Intrinsic Approach. The researchers suggest that strategic tools e.g. the analysis of trade-offs or side-effects, or indicators for measuring impact would be of great help for organisations applying the Intrinsic Approach, to assist in choosing the best actions and track progress. Systems tools for

measuring the direct positive or negative effects in the system, such as behaviour change, in a long-term perspective, could be of great importance for implementation of values-based communication. More knowledge of the long time effects of activating different types of values might help raise the general awareness and put values on the public agenda. The researchers assume that the dominance of the Marketing Approach (discussed further on in this section), is entailing a need for a guidance provided to NGOs in engaging with the novel Intrinsic Approach. This need could also be related to values being abstract figures, and hence can be hard to grasp. Communicators might find it hard to translate positive intentions about values into practical communication. The researchers therefore see the need for capacity tools that assist the learning process for the Intrinsic Approach.

4.1.2 Threats

In addition to the lack of knowledge and awareness of the Intrinsic Approach within NGOs, there is also a barrier relating to lack of this knowledge and awareness within the society and amongst the organisation's stakeholders. When organisations, bodies or people working with an NGO are not aware of the importance of intrinsic values for sustainability - it might be harder for the NGO to implement the Intrinsic Approach, since it could collide with the stakeholders' perspective. The challenge with getting funding for broader perspective issues in a long-term perspective was discussed above. The researchers believe this factor highlights the importance of raising the awareness of the Intrinsic Approach on a broader level, especially by policymakers and funders.

One of the examples, given by an expert, reflected how ignorance about the values theory in communication agencies affects NGOs who acquire their services (ter Kuile 2013). If a communication agency persuasively suggests a campaign based on extrinsic values, it might be difficult for the NGO to withstand this pressure and stay consistent with the Intrinsic Approach.

The dominance of what the researchers refer to as the Marketing Approach was presented in the Introduction. The identification of it as a barrier by the informants was not surprising. The notion that the Marketing Approach is so ubiquitous represents a structural challenge for the organisations. It is hard to convey intrinsic values when other messages from the media are contradictory. Materialism, self-success, individual power, authority - are all topics related to extrinsic values, which are commonly emphasised in different media channels and are likely to influence collective and individual attitudes and behaviours. The audience is primed for extrinsic values, so it might be extremely tempting for organisations to apply the same approach and appeal to personal gain like saving money or the chances of winning a prize.

The findings also revealed that organisations distinguished between audiences, and communicating the language of money and profit was stated as necessary especially when approaching the sectors of business and governments. This is in accordance with the researchers own experiences in these sectors, that the use of financial arguments, for example, environmental issues is widely applied and rarely questioned. One of the researchers with 11 years experience in the municipal sector reflects that even within an organisation with such a clear non-commercial purpose, the Marketing Approach is taken for granted and rarely challenged. That in turn might lead to implementation of measures that

only have short-term effects or could even be counterproductive to sustainability in the long run.

The researchers suggest that a valuable contribution by the third sector could be to question and challenge the existing extrinsic ways of communication. It is proposed that the effect of such efforts could be enhanced by a common effort by several organisations. This leads to another threat identified in the findings, namely lack of cooperation and conflicts between NGOs. In the light of competition for funding and peoples' attention it might seem not surprising. On the other hand, the researchers have experienced and are familiar with a several different examples of both formal and informal cooperation amongst NGOs and between NGOs and other sectors like governmental and business. This could imply that there is a great potential for cooperation between organisations, to challenge extrinsic values and activate intrinsic ones, reach out for a larger audience and learn from each other. The researchers suggest that a further possible implication could be that cooperating organisations constituting a stronger position could impact stakeholders to engage with the Intrinsic Approach. This in turn could allow better support such as regulation and funding.

4.1.3 Strengths

Values-based communication was found to be an intuitive process, and this was seen as an important enabler for the Intrinsic Approach. This virtue was experienced by the researchers when arranging a workshop conveying the Intrinsic Approach. After the workshop four participants independently shared that they were very excited because it made so much sense in relation to their body of knowledge on sustainability, and filled a gap in their knowledge they did not know existed. The researchers perceive this intuitiveness as an advantage, especially when introducing the Intrinsic Approach to volunteers, members of NGOs and others not having communication as their field of expertise. The approach is supported by solid scientific data, but it is not necessary to be a scholar to understand and apply it.

Based on the finding that values-based communication helps people to see the bigger picture, the researchers suggest that the approach can enhance a systems perspective. As stated in the Introduction chapter, one of the key components of facing the sustainability challenge is adopting a system perspective, to see how the different parts of the system are related and affect each other. The complexity of the sustainability issue and its trans-disciplinary implications can often make it hard for people to see how different global aspects, such as climate change, biodiversity loss and ocean acidification, relate to them.

4.1.4 Opportunities

The scientific base for values-based communication was stated to be beneficial by providing a solid argument for the engagement of the Intrinsic Approach. The research team experienced this advantage during the Intrinsic Approach workshop when the Director of the MSLS² program - stated that the approach was very relevant for the program curriculum, and the scientific base is a prerequisite for it to be considered.

The effect where activating one value can lead to the activation of other values and associated behaviours can be beneficial for organisations using values-based communication.

² Master in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability, Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden

This property, also referred to as the “knock-on effect” (Blackmore 2013) or the “bleed-over effect” (Holmes et al. 2011), can potentially enhance the achievement of behaviour change towards sustainability. The researchers suggest that this could be considered as a significant advantage of the Intrinsic Approach, both to motivate collaboration between organisations and by giving NGOs a wider range of values to engage with.

It was stated by one of the expert that most people hold intrinsic values to be more important than extrinsic values. Large cross-cultural studies support this statement, where the values universalism, benevolence and self-direction are found to be consistently most important, and the values tradition, power and stimulation least important (Schwartz and Bardi 2001). The researchers believe this is an important argument that supports the Intrinsic Approach, and a fact that should be communicated more vigorously.

The finding that engaging with intrinsic values is a common factor for many NGOs leads the researchers to strengthen the argument introduced earlier that the Intrinsic Approach could facilitate cooperation between NGOs. Even if they operate in different fields, the interest of activating and strengthening intrinsic values could act as a platform for cooperation. The benefits and possibilities of cooperation were discussed previously in this section under Competition and conflicts between organisations.

4.2 Discussion of SQ3: Key Factors

Authenticity and consistency related to values were both found to be key factors for successful application of the Intrinsic Approach. The importance of employees understanding the Intrinsic Approach and embodying the values that the organisation seek to promote were held to be essential. This finding is not surprising in light of the previous discussed dominance of the Marketing Approach. The “temptations” and possibilities to engage extrinsic values are many, and this calls for vigilance within the organisation to minimise unintended activation of extrinsic values.

The risk of losing credibility if the organisation or parts of it act in a way that clearly contradicts the values they otherwise communicate or front seems high. There are numerous examples of organisations and persons scrutinised in media because they were caught contradicting what they communicate. The consequences may be loss of trustworthiness amongst their stakeholders and the risk of losing for example members, funding or cooperation partners. Similar importance is associated with consistency, meaning to stay on the same track of communication related to values, a finding which is supported by literature arguing that communicating conflicting values can be perceived as inconsistency, and leads to ambivalent feelings and conflicting attitudes (Maio 2010).

The key factor of transparency and integrity can also be seen in the context of building trust and being consistent. The importance of transparency as an ethical issue for organisations applying values-based communication is highlighted in the report “Common Cause: The Case for Working with our Cultural Values”. The report also argues that civil society organisations should take the role of leading the way of opening a public discussion about values in campaigns and marketing, help build public understanding and critical reflection on the issue and demand similar standards from other organisations. (Crompton 2010)

The researchers see integrity as a necessary virtue to be both authentic and consistent. Integrity means loyalty to one's own values, beliefs, principles, etc., as demonstrated through actions and behaviours. In practice, acting with integrity could entail refusing to cooperate with organisations promoting values that are not in line with your own values, or reject funding when engaging extrinsic values is expected by the funders. Integrity can be seen as important both for building the organisation's internal culture and building trust amongst stakeholders.

Several findings were related to engagement based communication as a chosen setting for the Intrinsic Approach, as oppose to passive, one way communication. The interviewees highlighted how different ways of engaging with people could provide a stepping stone for effective communication. Activities like excursions, voluntary work or festivals can provide an opportunity to make people experience the value of nature, helping others or social equality. The researchers suggest that when involving people rather than giving them a passive role as receivers of a messages or donors; they are more likely to be receptive to change.

Another key factor was aiming for systemic change – as oppose to short-term change related to a narrow issue. As presented in the Introduction chapter, to enhance systemic and lasting behaviour change towards a sustainable society, a long-term perspective is required. This is connected to the ability to see the big picture and how the purpose of your organisation is interlinked with other topics in a greater system. It is also connected to the fact that values can be activated, strengthened or weakened (see section 1.3.2). Systemic change requires not only activation of values but strengthening of the helpful values (see section 1.3.1) in the society (Crompton 2010). On the other hand, it becomes clear that of activating and strengthening extrinsic values will lead to a weakening of the helpful intrinsic values. This demonstrates the counter productivity of an inconsistent approach in a long-term perspective.

Derived from the previous point is another key factor related to defining success, namely the need for a clear, measurable definition of success. Setting a clear goal or definition of success related to values is a way of ensuring a shared understanding within the organisation and being able to evaluate activities by measuring their contribution to reaching the goal are fundamental for a strategic approach. The findings showed that measuring qualitative success or results in a wider perspective could be a challenge for many NGOs. The researchers emphasise the importance of developing or employing practical and available tools that can assist the NGOs in this process.

Another relevant key factor is managing trade-offs. As suggested earlier, a strategic framework such as the Five Level Framework could help communicators foster a wider perspective and analyse a situation in a way that uncover potential implications of different trade-offs, and in that way to assist in making long-term, strategic choices. If an organisation attempts to consider the wider impact of their communication practices, a process of prioritisation according to predefined criteria could be highly useful. The criteria could, for example, assist in mapping the values activated by a specific campaign, how these specific values influence other values and possible effects like behaviour change.

Collaboration between organisations was defined as a key factor for a successful implementation of values-based communication towards sustainability, and at the same time conflicts between organisations were stated as a barrier. A better cooperation between an organisation and all its stakeholders could contribute to a more strategic use of resources,

mutual learning, and greater receptiveness for the Intrinsic Approach. It is therefore recommended by the researchers to strive for more collaboration in the third sector in particular and with other relevant organisations in general. Examples of initiatives are to join efforts for specific initiative to enhance the effect and reach out for a wider audience, and conduct shared values-based communication training workshops for employees.

The necessity of knowledge and awareness regarding the Intrinsic Approach was discussed thoroughly in the SWOT summary. It is therefore recommended for organisations striving to contribute to sustainability while using strategic values-based communication, to start with practices that are aiming to raise awareness and gain more knowledge.

Derived from the required knowledge about values are the key factors emphasising activation of intrinsic values and avoiding activation of extrinsic ones, which are consistently supported by the body of evidence presented in the Introduction chapter. Other findings discussed above, such as Negative impacts of activating extrinsic values, Marketing Approach is dominant and not being questioned, and Difficulty to manage trade-offs - all advocate against activation of extrinsic values. Being realistic and familiar with the 21st century western society and culture, the authors believe that it is impossible to fully avoid activation of extrinsic values, even with the best intentions. It is therefore suggested to first avoid and challenge extrinsic values in every step of the communication process and secondly minimise their activation.

Finally, a key factor related to knowing the audience in the communication process was stated as essential to communication in general, not solely values-based communication. This key factor might seem to contradict the entire Intrinsic Approach, which argues for appealing only to intrinsic values rather than targeting what seems to be the audience's dominant values, which could be also extrinsic ones. Nevertheless, it is important to differentiate between the two; targeting an audience and then tailoring the message do not necessarily change the content of the message and appeal to extrinsic values, but rather to match the setting, to fit the language, and to choose the right media channels for this audience.

4.3 Answering the Main Research question: How can values-based communication be applied strategically to communicate sustainability messages?

4.3.1 Five Level Framework Analysis

In order to make a connection between two poles - the current use of values-based communication for sustainability by NGOs and the key factors found to constitute a strategic application of it - a Five Level Framework analysis was conducted. The purpose of the analysis was to identify the main gaps or alignments between the two poles.

System level. The System Level relates to information about the system which the organisation is a part of, or a system which the organisation is engaged with, in this study the system of values and values-based communication within the NGOs' sector. The researchers identified a gap between the current level of knowledge and awareness and a basic level

introduced in the Introduction chapter as substantial for organisation engaging with values-based communication.

An additional gap was identified regarding the discussed benefits of collaboration between organisations and the current reality, in some instances characterised by competition and conflicts.

Success level. The success level addresses the need for a shared definition of success, in other words which are the goals the organisation wishes to achieve. The researchers identified a gap between the key factor related to defining clear and measurable goals for the organisation's communication practices and a deficiency of these within NGOs. On the other hand, findings revealed that two out of the four NGOs do have clear and measurable goals for their communication practices. The existence of such examples implies that this practice would be advisable to achieve for a larger portion of the NGOs.

Related to the need for clear and measurable goals is the gap identified between the necessity of considering side-effects derived from the communication practices and the revealed difficulty in identifying these side-effects and measuring them. It seems evident that supporting tools could contribute to overcoming this barrier. A whole systems perspective can be seen as a prerequisite to achieve this.

Not only understanding and considering, but also measuring the wider impact of the communication practices, could be substantial to evaluate progress towards achieving the organisations preset goals. The results suggest that the lack of measuring the qualitatively results represents a missed opportunity. Measuring the wider impacts could be a way to substantiate these positive aspects and provide transparency around the organisations' overall impact.

Strategic level. The strategic level focuses on strategic guidelines that can help an organisation to choose and prioritise actions that will lead towards accomplishing their goals. In light of the challenges with using the Intrinsic Approach, such as the dominant position of the Marketing Approach and the lack of knowledge and awareness of the Values Theory, the researchers suggest that strategic guidelines to facilitate the organisation's application of the Intrinsic Approach could be of great importance. However, as presented in the results, this level was mostly lacking within the NGOs.

The last gap on the strategic level relates to managing trade-offs when extrinsic values activation cannot be avoided. The researchers' suggest that knowledge and awareness of trade-offs are essential for an effective prioritisation process.

Actions level. This level is concerned with the concrete actions that an organisation chooses to move towards their goal. The results suggest that specific actions related to values-based communication were for the most part absent. This finding is not surprising with respect to the lack of clear and measurable goals and formal strategies. Lack of strategic action plans for values-based communication suggests that the organisations miss the advantages of having a clear, planned path to reach their goals. Implications of this can be a non-coherent approach, where resources are not used optimally and progress is slow.

Tools level. The tools level addresses the need for and use of concrete tools that can support the organisation in the planning process and in implementation of actions. The discussion

highlighted a need for good tools and a lack of use of tools in the organisation’s application of values-based communication. The researchers suggest that joint efforts and sharing of tools and methods between the NGOs could be an important contribution to help close this gap.

4.3.2 Suggested Recommendations

The trends were gathered from the Five Level Framework Analysis and discussion above into a set of recommendations for strategic application of values-based communication for sustainability (Table 4.1). A matrix of which findings are incorporated in which recommendations is found in Appendix C.

Table 4.1: Recommendations for strategic application of values-based communication for sustainability, extracted from the findings

Recommendations Extracted from this Research	
System	See the big picture: understand the organisation in relation to others, as part of society and as part of the global ecosystem
	Build knowledge and awareness: get familiar with different types of values, the way to activate them, and the importance of the intrinsic values for sustainable development
Success	Aim for systemic and lasting change: have a long term and overarching vision
	Set clear, measurable goals: define measurable criteria for success
Strategic	Prioritise communication activities according to tailored and strategic guidelines derived from your vision
	Cultivate intrinsic values
	Avoid and challenge extrinsic values
	Embody the values you communicate: be authentic, consistent, transparent and have integrity
	Manage trade-offs and consider side-effects: assess the wider consequences of your communication
Actions and Tools	Create an action plan
	Favour engagement based communication: interact with your audience
	Collaborate with other organisations: join efforts to create added value
	Choose methods and tools aligned with the intrinsic values-based communication

4.3.3 Informing the recommendations with the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD)

The FSSD, as presented in the Introduction, is a robust planning and analyzing framework which is designed to facilitate organisations to strategically move towards sustainability. For NGOs aiming to contribute to a sustainable society, it is vital to have a shared understanding of what they mean by a sustainable society. Such a shared understanding is a prerequisite for being able to define vision and goals that will contribute to a sustainable future. This leads the researchers to the following recommendation: Have a shared understanding of sustainability.

Another important aspect for a strategic approach is three main prioritisation questions to assist in prioritising the most promising actions and tools for reaching the vision (as presented in the Introduction chapter). The researchers suggest that these prioritisation questions would be a good strategic supplement to the other recommendations, or any other prioritization questions relevant to the specific context of the organisation, in order to prioritize communication practices related to values. The prioritisation questions are added under the guideline Prioritise communication activities according to tailored and strategic guidelines derived from your vision.

The backcasting approach, as presented in the Introduction chapter, concerns the process of starting from a vision for a sustainable future and planning the most suitable steps and actions needed in order to reach success. The common use of forecasting is likely to perpetuate the current practices, which could include maintaining the current trend of appealing to extrinsic values. backcasting from a vision related to lasting behaviour change can aid a persistent implementation of the Intrinsic Approach. This entails a further recommendation: Backcast from Success: Identify the steps needed to reach a pre-defined vision

The Five Level Framework provides a logical frame for a planning process, and is used to structure the recommendations. (Presented in Table 4.2 below)

4.3.4 Comparison with existing principles for values-based communication for sustainability

As presented in the Introduction chapter, the Common Cause network suggests two different sets of guiding principles in two publications (Crompton 2010 and Holmes et al. 2012). These principles are based on scientific data and field examples, but as far as the researchers know, not upon a strategic framework. The purpose of this comparison is to identify gaps and overlaps between the presented recommendations and the existing guiding principles. A summary of the comparison is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: A comparison between the proposed recommendations from this study and the guiding principles presented in the Common Cause report and handbook³

	Recommendations Extracted from this Research	Common Cause Guiding Principles
System	See the big picture: understand the organisation in relation to others, as part of society and as part of the global ecosystem	Understand the full impact of policy (1,5) See the big picture (2,4) Ensure that communications and campaigns embody the values that they seek to promote (1,2)
	Build knowledge and awareness: Get familiar with different types of values, the way to activate them, and the importance of the intrinsic values for sustainable development	Explore values (2, 1)
Success	Have a shared definition of sustainability	
	Aim for systemic and lasting change: have a long-term and overarching vision	Be prepared to work for systemic change (1,3) See the big picture (2,4) Make it fun and dare to dream
	Set clear, measurable goals: define measurable criteria for success	Be prepared to work for systemic change (1,3)
Strategic	Backcast from success: identify the steps needed to reach a predefined vision	
	Prioritise communication activities according to tailored and strategic guidelines derived from your vision	
	Cultivate intrinsic values	Nurture intrinsic values (2,2)
	Avoid and challenge extrinsic values	Challenge extrinsic values (2,3)
	Embody the values you communicate: be authentic, consistent, transparent and have integrity	Be transparent and participatory and demand the same standard from others (1,1) Ensure that communications and campaigns embody the values that they seek to promote (1, 2) Be prepared to work for systemic change (1,3)
	Manage trade-offs and consider side-effects: assess the wider consequences of your communication	Manage trade-offs where they are unavoidable (1,6) See the big picture (2.4)
Actions and Tools	Create an action plan	
	Favour engagement based communication: interact with your audience	
	Collaborate with other organisations: join efforts to create added value	Build new coalitions (1,4) Work together (2, 5)
	Choose methods and tools aligned with the intrinsic values-based communication	Tailor the message to the audience (1,7)

³ Numbers attached to the Common Cause principles are representing the source: 1 stands for the report “Common Cause: The case for working with our cultural values” (Crompton 2010) and 2 stands for “The Common Cause Handbook” (Holmes et al. 2011), and the secondary number represents the number of the principle in the original publication

The comparison shows a relatively large overlap between the present recommendations and the Common Cause guiding principles. The following aspects are in common: the importance of seeing the big picture, the exploration of values, the notion of working for systemic change, the activation of extrinsic values as oppose to challenging extrinsic values, transparency and authenticity (embodying of the values), management of trade-offs, and building coalitions and collaborations.

On the other hand, there are also disparities found in the above comparison. “Make it fun and dare to dream” and “Tailor the message to the audience” are two principles suggested by the Common Cause that are not fully entailed in the present recommendations. The first one highlights the need for compelling and enthusiastic approaches based on helpful deep frames, and the use of dreams (visions) to show people alternative futures. Although this relates to the recommendation of aiming for systemic and lasting change, it entails additional meaning and practical suggestions for approaching the audience. As for the second one, is it advocating audience segmentation as helpful to align language, but emphasises that only helpful values should be strengthened, not just any values the audience holds strongest. This could be considered in line with the guideline on choosing methods and tools aligned with the Intrinsic Approach.

As for recommendations suggested in this research that seem to be missing in the Common Cause list of principles, these are mainly related to the structural frame and the strategic concepts provided by the Five Level Framework and the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development; having a shared understanding of sustainability, backcasting from a vision, prioritising communication practices and actions according to strategic guidelines, creating an action plan, favour engagement-based communication processes, and using tools and methodologies aligned with the Intrinsic Approach. This is not surprising, due to the fact that the current research identified a need for a more strategic application of values-based communication towards sustainability, and therefore the new recommendations are created with that intention.

It can be summarised that the added value and new contribution of the current recommendations is the strategic framework provided to the practice of values-based communication towards sustainability.

4.3.5 Practical use of the recommendations

The findings, as expressed in the proposed recommendations, are by themselves not necessarily accessible for practitioners without a quite solid background in values and values-based communication. This implies that the results could be of value for experts in the field that could use this study to supplement and inform their own base of knowledge. In order to make the recommendations clearer and brighter for external readers, they are elaborated with in-depth explanations and links to other relevant sources in Appendix D.

4.3.6 Strengths and Limitations

The strengths and limitations of this research process, as well as possible implications are discussed in-depth below.

Limitations

- **Sample.** The sample which was chosen for this research is relatively small (four practitioners and six experts) and western world centred (all organisations are located in the UK, experts are spread around the US, UK and Sweden). This derived from the difficulty to find interviewees aligned with the research criteria for informants, such as working hand-on with values-based communication for sustainability and familiarity with the Common Cause work. As a consequence, the results and their interpretation within the discussion should be read with that notion. It is possible that findings are being influenced by the characteristics of the chosen sample.
- **Content: shared understanding of definitions.** As stated in the introduction of this research, the lack of unified and shared definition of values-based communication, and the relatively novelty of using values-based communication for sustainability, revealed a need for the research team to create some definitions especially for the purpose of this study. This refers to the suggested definition of values-based communication, the Marketing Approach, the Intrinsic Approach - which its name was coined by the authors. The suggested definition of values-based communication was presented to the informants, which were offered to comment on it in order to adjust and evolve it. However, despite the revision of the definition, this is considered as a limitation since the informants were not familiar with it previous to the interviews.

With regards to the concepts the Intrinsic Approach and the Marketing Approach, the authors articulates these only after conducting the interviews, since they emerged from the findings and literature review. It is possible that different participants understood differently the meaning of these two approaches, due to lack of a shared term and definition during the interview period of time.

- **The choice of the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development as a conceptual framework.** The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development was used as the conceptual framework for this research. The research team strongly advocate the relevancy of this framework but wish to note that no other conceptual frameworks were considered to be used in this research. This is due to the fact that this study was conducted within the Master program in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability, which is based on this framework.

Strengths

- **Applicability**
Although this research was conducted with practitioner informants from NGOs, it is still believed to be highly relevant to other types of organisations. It is suggested that the discussion of the findings and perhaps the conclusion is applicable to other settings, for example organisations other than NGOs such as governmental bodies or businesses, and geographical area indifferent than the UK and the western world.
- **Solid scientific base**
The study is relying on an extensive literature review, which is broad enough to cover different aspects in the fields of sustainability, communication, and values, yet remains focused on the solid values theory (Schwartz 1992), which in turn relies on profound scientific base regarding values (Rokeach 1973). It is therefore believed by the authors

that the fundamental building blocks of this research providing a solid ground for the new findings and conclusions.

- **The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development as a conceptual filter**
The use of the FSSD as a conceptual framework provided an efficient filter for the literature review stage and the topic selection process. It is common to start a research journey with a general idea and direction in mind, and then reading through a wide range of sources. This in turn could lead to a loss of focus within the topic which followed by a too broad research question, trying to capture too much information in one research. The framework provided, among other functions, a useful filter to avoid drowning in the details and remain focus and coherent with regards to the research questions. This could be considered as a strategic planning of this research process, which corresponds well with the content and provide authenticity to the final outcome.
- **Co-creation, shadow groups feedback and reviewed process**
The research process was characterized by its cooperative nature, from the premise that joint efforts enrich the outcome. This process contained several components. The first is Co-creation by team of three researchers, identified a shared interest in the field of communicating sustainability. Every step of the process, from choosing the topic, through data gathering until the final conclusions, was agreed upon within the team and conducted with consensus. At the same time, the advantage of a three member's team was also used for critical observation of each of the different research components. In that way, it has diminished the possibility of miss-interpretations and other academic risks. The second is using shadow group, which functioned as opponents for this research, in order to cross check any possibilities of research gaps, inconsistency in the process or within the findings or analysis, and unclarity with regards to the flow of the study and the final set of recommendations. Finally, a reviewed process along the way, contained fixed checking points and several presentations of the research phases for a constructive feedback, allowed an evolving process of exploration, where each piece of the final puzzle was re-examined over and over.

4.3.7 Further Research Threads

As the research and the discussion findings have been summarized, the authors wish to set forward a number of ideas for possible further research topics. A few potential avenues for further research have been identified and suggested below.

What are the potential possibilities of implementing the Intrinsic Approach in business related fields? The mere thinking about this raises contradictions, since findings of this research revealed that extrinsic values dominate the business field. It is a place which is highly monetary driven and operates on logic that is aimed at maximizing profits. How could values opposite each other in the values circumplex (Schwartz 1992) coexist when "business is business" and often won't voluntarily sacrifice profit? The authors believe that a full transition towards a sustainable society is not just a matter of implementing tools and techniques, but a more fundamental mental model shift. This possibility of integrating intrinsic thinking and communication in the business world is a footstep in the door towards wider societal change.

What are the key factors for a successful application and adaptation of the Intrinsic Approach across different cultures and different parts of the world? Despite the fact that values are of universal nature and repeat across different cultures, there is still room to explore the priority rank or the intensity of these values across different population groups. Even more, considering that all of these research findings came from the western world and that this approach itself has been nominated and promoted in the west, it could be asked how it all would work in other geographic and ethnic parts of the world. This research topic that proposed is aimed at finding out the different possible factors that would be worth considering for a successful adaptation of the Intrinsic Approach across broader cultural settings.

5 Conclusion

The facts about the sustainability challenge are ubiquitous, yet it seems that communicators fail to raise awareness and motivate the needed behaviour change towards a more sustainable society. Current communication practices is to one extent characterised by appealing to people's fear, overwhelming them with facts, or trying to "sell" the desired sustainable behaviour through financial incentives.

Through the initial literature review the researchers identified the potential of values-based communication as a concept that may make a significant contribution to motivate behaviour change toward sustainability. The robust scientific evidence that the approach is based on, and interesting current initiatives to promote and develop it in relation to sustainability, led the researchers to their main research question: How can values-based communication be applied strategically to communicate sustainability messages? The discussion can be concluded in three main points:

Lack of strategic approach for values-based communication for sustainability. As anticipated, findings related to the current use of values-based communication for sustainability in the NGO sector revealed strategic shortcomings. The Five Level Framework analysis revealed gaps on each level, drawing the conclusion that there is room to enhance the current practices to become more strategic. A relevant question to be asked is therefore, what can be done in order to bridge the gap?

Suggested recommendations for a strategic application of values-based communication for sustainability. From the research findings and the discussion that followed, a set of 15 recommendations were extracted (see Appendix D). The recommendations were informed by the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development in order to ensure a strategic approach. In comparison with existing knowledge in the field of values-based communication for sustainability, the new recommendations seem to first and foremost contribute with a stepwise strategic process and new strategic concepts, which leads to the third conclusion:

A strategic application of the Intrinsic Approach could enhance the contribution of the third sector for sustainability. The research team acknowledges the role of the third sector in the needed shift towards sustainability. Consequently, the hope is that the presented recommendations may inspire NGOs to embrace a systems perspective and support collaborative efforts to create a sustainable society.

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Appendix A: The Ten Groups of Values

The ten groups of values listed by Schwartz (1992):

1. Self-direction. Independent thought and action; choosing, creating, exploring.
2. Stimulation. Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life.
3. Hedonism. Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself.
4. Achievement. Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.
5. Power. Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.
6. Security. Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self.
7. Conformity. Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.
8. Tradition. Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self.
9. Benevolence. Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (the 'in-group').
10. Universalism. Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.

Appendix B: Interviews Questions

Questions presented to practitioners:

1. Can you describe your position in the organisation, your main responsibilities and how long you have had this position?
2. What do you see as the role of values in communicating sustainability?
3. Does your organisation consider values in your communication strategy or other overarching communication plans or strategies?
4. Questions related to strategic processes:
 - System:
 - Do you have a definition of values, if so, what is it?
 - Are you familiar with any relations between different types of values and sustainable behaviour/motivation to face sustainability issues?
 - Success:
 - Do you have a goal or vision of success for your communication practices? If so, could you describe it?
 - Do you have a way to measure success? (How do you know when you reach success?)
 - Which values do you seek to promote or aim to activate/strengthen/appeal to when communicating sustainability messages? This could be both directly or indirectly.
 - Which values do you seek to avoid to activate, challenge or deactivate when communicating sustainability messages?
 - Strategic:
 - Do you have any guidelines or considerations for **how** to incorporate or use values in your communication, and if so, what are they?
 - Actions:
 - Do you have any specifically planned measures/actions for the use of values in communication, and if so, which?
 - Tools:
 - Do you use any tools for your work with values, and if so, which? (E.g. Common Cause Handbook or toolkit for working with values in communication)
5. Concrete examples of the use of Values-based communication in your organisation:
Can you give examples of such use? E.g. project, event, conference, campaign, document, web-page and so on.
6. In your experience, what do you see as key factors for good and effective use of values-based communication for sustainability?
7. What do you see as obstacles/barriers for good and effective use of values-based communication for sustainability?
8. Are there any other things you would like to add about values-based communication for sustainability?

Questions presented to experts:

1. Can you describe your field of work related to values?
2. What characterises the use of values-based communication for sustainability today?
3. In your experience, what do you see as key factors for good and effective use of values-based communication for sustainability?
4.
 - a. What do you see as obstacles/barriers for good and effective use of values-based communication for sustainability?
 - b. Are there any values you would recommend to avoid to activate?
 - c. What's your opinion on the best way to approach people who strongly hold extrinsic values?
5. Do you have any examples of best practices? What makes this a "best practice"?
6. In your opinion, how strategic is the current practice of values-based communication for sustainability? What could possibly make it more strategic?
By strategic, we mean an approach that takes into account the big picture, has a long-term perspective, defines success (vision), and provides a strategic plan to reach that vision, according to pre-set guidelines.
7. Are there any other things you would like to add related to the conversation we have had?

Appendix C: Connection between the Findings and the Recommendations

The following matrix describes which findings were incorporated in the recommendations:

	See the Big Picture	Build Knowledge and Awareness	Shared Definition of Sustainability	Systemic and Lasting Change	Clear, Measurable Goals	Prioritise activities according to tailored and strategic guidelines	Cultivate Intrinsic Values	Avoid and Challenge Extrinsic Values	Embody the Values you Communicate	Manage Trade-offs and Consider Side-effects	Create an Action Plan	Favour Engagement Based Communication	Collaborate with other organisations	methods and tools aligned with the intrinsic values-based communication
Dominance of marketing approach								x						
Negative impact of intrinsic values								x						
Lack of knowledge and awareness		x									x			
Lack of resources		x												x
Lack of good examples and pioneers														
Complexity of sustainability	x									x				
Difficulty in measuring change with a qualitative nature					x									
Dominance of short term perspective & small scale approach				x										
Robust scientific base for VBC		x												
VBC is intuitive		x												
People feel part of bigger picture				x										
Intrinsic values considered more important than extrinsic							x							
“knock-on” effect				x										
Authenticity & consistency									x					
Transparency & integrity									x					
Communication styles												x		
Engagement based communication												x		
Aiming for systemic & lasting behaviour change	x													x
Having clear & measurable definition of success					x									
Managing trade-offs & consider side-effects										x				
Collaborate with other organisations	x													x
Knowledge & awareness of VBC		x												
Activation of intrinsic values							x							
Avoidance of extrinsic values								x						
Empowering people				x										

Appendix D: Suggested Recommendations for Strategic Application of Values-based Communication for Sustainability

Introduction

Values-based communication is found to be an important driver to motivate behaviour change when it comes to complex, overarching issues like sustainability. Nevertheless, not all values are considered helpful for motivating behaviour change for sustainability, as some types of values are found to be counterproductive. To pursue a systematic change towards sustainability, a strategic approach is needed, where values-based communication is used with intent and awareness.

The following recommendations for a strategic application of values based communication for sustainability are the product of research based on input from practitioners and experts in the field analysed by the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD). The research was conducted by MSLS⁴ students in the spring of 2013. The research revealed that a broader systems perspective and strategic considerations are needed when applying values-based communication. The new contribution of this research is therefore a strategic structured process to enhance the effectiveness of values-based communication for sustainability.

Who are these recommendations for?

These recommendations are aimed at people, groups or organisations that use communication as part of their commitment to sustainability. Values-based communication for sustainability can be applied by all sectors; nevertheless the role of third sector organisations in the transition towards sustainability was the starting point for this research. A collective strategic effort by third sector organisations could contribute to an even greater impact and be a leverage point for a systemic change.

Background knowledge

In order to make the most out of the following recommendations, it is advisable to have basic knowledge on values-based communication, the values theory by Schwartz (1992)⁵ and the connection between certain types of values and sustainability. At the end of this document is a list of useful resources for this required knowledge.

How to read and use this document

The recommendations are structured under the five levels of the FSSD. Although the levels are succeeding each other, they are inter-related. The recommendations are focusing on key considerations to be aware of when conveying values for sustainability in the most strategic and effective way, and are not intended to be practical instructions or self-explanatory guidelines. When referring to “organisation” in the recommendations, it means the organisation designing and applying values-based communication - in other words the sender of the message.

⁴ Master in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability, Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden

⁵ *The values theory by Schwartz (1992): Theoretical model of relations among 10 types of values, organized by motivational similarities and dissimilarities*

Recommendations

Systems Perspective

1. See the big picture: Understand the organisation in relation to others, as part of society and as part of the global ecosystem

An organisation does not work in a vacuum, and to understand the bigger socio-ecological system it is a part of is essential. Knowledge and awareness of other relevant entities such as stakeholders, governmental bodies and local communities are needed for several reasons. One of them is the importance of understanding how communication practices influence others and how the organisation is being influenced. Another one is the potential for cooperation with other entities, and possible benefits such as a more effective use of resources or the opportunity to reach out to a bigger audience. Organisations should therefore explore the system they are operating within, and understand how its parts are interconnecting and influence each other, to apply values-based communication in the most effective and strategic way.

2. Build knowledge and awareness: Get familiar with different types of values, the way to activate them, and the importance of the intrinsic values⁶ for sustainable development

Values-based communication should rely on a profound understanding of the values theory. Knowing the different types of values, how values influence behaviour and how they can be activated and strengthened through communication is fundamental. More specific knowledge of the helpful effect of intrinsic values and potentially unfavourable effects of activating extrinsic values⁷ is necessary to avoid impacts that could be counterproductive in the long run.

Reaching Success

3. Have a shared definition of sustainability

For organisations aiming to contribute to a sustainable society, it is vital to have a shared understanding of what they mean by a sustainable society. Such a shared understanding is a prerequisite for being able to define a vision and goals that will contribute to a sustainable future, and is also vital to ensure consistency regarding messages and communication methods. The four scientifically based [sustainability principles](#) offered by The Natural Step is suggested as a definition. They are designed to define what society must stop doing in order to preserve the socio-ecological system.



⁶ Intrinsic values are values that are inherently rewarding to pursue, such as creativity, concern for others and affiliation to friends and family ([Common Cause Handbook](#)).

⁷ Extrinsic values are centred on external approval or rewards, such as social status, material success and authority ([Common Cause Handbook](#))

4. **Aim for systemic and lasting change: Have a long-term and overarching vision**
Based on the understanding of the system one operates within and the shared definition of sustainability and the organisation's role in building a sustainable society, the organisation should envision a desirable future and build an overarching vision for success. Related to values-based communication, how are values part of the organisation's vision and how can values-based communication contribute to reaching the vision?

5. **Set Clear, Measurable Goals: Define measurable criteria for success**
Concrete goals should be derived from the overarching vision, to lead the organisation towards success. It is equally important to be able to know whether you are progressing or have reached success. This implies that goals should be measurable, and a method to evaluate progress is required. On the other hand, it should be warned against setting narrow, short-term goals that might be easy to measure - instead of broader, long-term goals that capture the desired shift of e.g. values or behaviour. Goals can be related to both internal matters such as level of employees' knowledge of the role of values for sustainability, and external practices such as motivating certain behaviour change through campaigns.

Strategic Considerations

6. **Backcast from success: Identify the steps needed to reach a pre-defined vision**
The backcasting approach concerns the process of starting from a vision of a sustainable future and planning the most suitable steps and actions needed in order to reach success. The common use of forecasting is likely to perpetuate the current practices, which could include maintaining the current trend of appealing to extrinsic values. Backcasting from a vision related to lasting behaviour change can aid a persistent implementation of the values-based communication for sustainability.

7. **Prioritise communication activities according to tailored and strategic guidelines derived from your vision**
Setting criteria or strategic guidelines in advance for the process of prioritising and choosing actions that will lead to the organisation's vision is at the heart of strategic planning. These guidelines function as a filter that enables strategic decisions regarding actions and tools needed to reach set goals. Therefore, they could help prioritise communication practices related to values.

The FSSD suggests three prioritisation questions:

- Does this action lead in the right direction? (Towards the vision and sustainable development).
- Can it serve as a flexible platform for future improvements? (Does this action lead to a "dead-end", or can it be built on for further actions?)
- Does it provide a sufficient return on investment? (Return of investment can imply e.g. economic, social, cultural gains).

Additional and specific prioritisation questions should be tailored; they should be derived from the context, issue and other relevant considerations for the organisation.

8. **Cultivate intrinsic values**
Activation and strengthening of intrinsic values are the fundament of values-based communication for sustainability. Part of being strategic is staying on the right path towards the vision; intrinsic values could be used as a lighthouse, guiding the communicator safely in the right direction.

9. Avoid and challenge extrinsic values

Extrinsic values are found to undermine sustainable behaviour in a long-term perspective, and activating them for sustainability could lead to a counterproductive outcome. Extrinsic values and influences are currently dominant in society, and organisations can play an important role in challenging this trend instead of reinforcing un-sustainable behaviour.

10. Embody the values you communicate: Be authentic, consistent, transparent, and have integrity

This is all general advice highlighting the importance of being true to the values the organisation engage with at all times. This requires an understanding and awareness of values that are shared by all employees. Another aspect is to be transparent regarding which values the organisation aim to activate, and why. This can contribute to both raising public awareness and a public discussion on how values are used in marketing. On the other hand, lack of transparency can be a form of manipulation of the audience, a practice not in line with intrinsic values.

11. Manage trade-offs and consider side-effects: Assess the wider consequences of your communication

It is not always possible to avoid extrinsic values and focus only on the activation of intrinsic values. In that case, trade-offs need to be explored and managed to ensure that negative effects do not override the long-term efforts for sustainability. Side-effects can be both positive and negative, and come in addition to the intended main impacts of communication practices. To identify and consider possible side-effects in advance is a prerequisite for a strategic approach.

Actions and Tools

12. Create an action plan

A defined plan with actions is part of a strategic approach to reach the organisation's goals. Actions are selected with the help of strategic considerations and prioritisation questions, to ensure the best and most effective approach. Actions related to values-based communication could have both an internal focus, such as training of new employees regarding the role of values for sustainability, and external such as specific campaigns for sustainability.

13. Favour engagement based communication: Interact with your audience

Engaging with the audience is especially rewarding while using values-based communication, since it creates an inviting setting an atmosphere for people to be receptive to messages relying on values. Participation of the audience, creation of experiences, and working with communities in order to enhance social fabric - are effective ways to engage the audience's values. Creative activities and art are other ways to engage with the audience.

14. Collaborate with other organisations: Join efforts to create added value

Based on the understanding of the organisation as part of a bigger picture and how it influences and is influenced by other entities, it is valuable to explore possibilities for cooperation. The impact of the third sector as a driving force for sustainability could be greatly enhanced with joint efforts. Collaboration can be powerful and should be considered, whether it is for pursuing a common cause, sharing ideas, resources or experience. The outcome of co-creation usually exceeds the total value of input.

15. Choose methods and tools aligned with the intrinsic values-based communication
To ensure consistency it is important that communication methods and tools are aligned with intrinsic values-based communication. This could imply, for example, the choice of using an eco-certified printing company, fair trade campaign materials or organic food at an event, or ensuring the involvement of young people when planning a campaign intended for that audience. When it comes to sustainability, not only what is communicated, but also how it is communicated matters.

Additional sources

The Common Cause webpage www.valuesandframes.org

The Natural Step <http://www.naturalstep.org/>