

VALUES IN TRAINING FOR CITIZEN SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

1. What are Values?

Values involve **learning what is right or wrong, and then doing the right thing** -- but "the right thing" is not nearly as straightforward as conveyed in a great deal of values literature. Most ethical dilemmas are not simply a matter of "Should A steal from B?" or "Should B lie to his superior?"

Some believe **there's always a right thing to do based on moral principle**, and others believe the **right thing to do depends on the situation** -- ultimately it's up to the individual. Many philosophers consider values to be the "**science of conduct.**" Values include the **fundamental ground rules by which we live our lives**. Many ethicists consider emerging ethical beliefs to be "state of the art" legal matters, i.e., what becomes an ethical guideline today is often translated to a law, regulation or rule tomorrow. Values which guide *how we ought to behave* are considered *moral values*, e.g., values such as respect, honesty, fairness, responsibility, etc. Statements around how these values are applied are sometimes called moral or ethical principles.

Values are guiding principles that each individual shall embrace and give importance to in the day to day decision making and action within the organisation. The values and beliefs of an organisation indicate what matters are to be attended to most strictly. In the case of citizen sector training institutes, *achieving the targets* of imparting training to specific number of trainees in a specific period of time, or *completing a specific training series*, or *raising some additional funds* through training, or *inviting some irrelevant participants* for the sake of external relations could be four different values in different organisations. These suggest what kind of information is taken most seriously for decision making purposes. Values also define what kind of people are most respected: community, corporate bosses, or general public.

Values are the beliefs we hold about the way we want to conduct our business. They define what we consider valuable and the behaviour we expect from every member when acting on behalf of the organisation.

Note that many people react that values, with its continuing attention to “doing the right thing,” only assert the obvious (“be good,” “don't lie,” etc.), and so these people don't take values seriously. For many of us, these principles of the obvious can go right out of the door during times of stress or when it comes to personal interest. Consequently, values can be strong preventative medicine.

2. Values in Training

The concept of values has thus come to mean various things to various people, but generally, *it's coming to know what is right or wrong and doing what's right* -- this is in regard to effects of services and in relationships with the multiple stakeholders of citizen sector organisations. The main stakeholders, undoubtedly, are trainees and their parent organisations – community or other non-government organisations. Attention to training in values and values in training has become critical with the growing awareness about organisational development and wide exposure to various kinds of training institutes. Values in training that were previously taken for granted are now strongly questioned. Due consideration to this fact would reveal that many of the values that we still practice are no longer followed in the advance training institutions. We need to have a clear moral compass to guide trainers through complex dilemmas about what is right or wrong.

It is important to have a clearly defined set of training values. They need to be written down, but more important they need to be the real way trainers act or are expected to act in their respective organisations. The best way to model a value is to demonstrate their priority by acting according to the values when at the moment it might not appear to be in the “best interest” of the organisation. For instance, an organisation has to achieve a target of training 120 community members in a specific quarter of the year. If the value is “ensuring effectiveness of training through selecting the right person for the right training,” *the trainer need to refuse a batch of trainees, imparting training to whom is clearly show wastage of time and resources.* Or in another case, the only way it appears that you will get a raise is to send a *relative of a Board of Directors to a training abroad.* You have a training value that say you do not nominate an irrelevant person to a training. *You refuse to nominate the wrong person, possibly jeopardising your promotion or raise in salary.*

Attention to values sensitises trainers, management and staff to how they should act. Perhaps most important, attention to values helps ensure that when leaders and managers are struggling in times of crises and confusion, they retain a strong moral compass. However, trainers’ attention to values provides numerous other benefits, as well.

3. Two Broad Areas of Values

3.1 Managerial mischief. Managerial mischief includes "illegal, unethical, or questionable practices" of individual trainers or organizations, as well as the causes of such behaviours and remedies to eradicate them. For instance, reporting the same training to two different donors as an event arranged on their funds. There has been a great deal written about managerial mischief, leading many to believe that values are merely a matter of preaching the basics of what is right and wrong. More often, though, values are a matter of dealing with dilemmas that have no clear indication of what is right or wrong. But managerial mischief like over-budgeting training cost, conducting irrelevant training just for sake of utilising training budget, mismanagement of contracts and agreements (budgeting the same training to two different donors), etc can be easily avoided.

3.2 Moral mazes. The other broad area of values is "moral mazes of management" and includes the numerous ethical problems that trainers must deal with on a daily basis, such as potential conflicts of interest, wrongful use of resources, improper nomination to training for personal interest, hiring incompetent training consultants for interests other than imparting effective training to the satisfaction of stakeholders.

Values are now a Training discipline. Values have long been considered as a management discipline, especially since the birth of the social responsibility movement in the 1960s. However, values in training and values of trainers are an important influence on the overall values of an organisation. Many researchers, schools and managers have recognized this broader constituency abroad, and in their planning have put additional focus on the values in training.

The emergence of values in training is similar to other management disciplines. For example, training organizations and resource centres realized that they needed to manage a more positive image to the public and so the recent discipline of values in training was born. Organizations realized they needed to better manage their human resources and so the recent discipline of focusing on values in human resources was born.

Note that 90% of schools in Europe and United States now provide some form of training to trainers in values. Today, values can be managed through use of codes of values, codes of conduct, roles of trainers and values committees, policies and procedures, procedures to resolve ethical dilemmas, values training, etc.

Some of the moral principles in training could be as follows:

1. Training is a non-exploitative activity. Its basic values are integrity, impartiality and respect. Trainers must take the same degree of care to work ethically whether the training is paid or unpaid.
2. Trainers must consider and address their own prejudices and stereotyping. They must also address the prejudices and stereotyping of their trainees. They must ensure that an anti-discriminatory approach is integral to all the training they provide.
3. Trainers must take all reasonable steps to monitor and develop their competence as trainers and work within the limits of that competence.
4. Trainers must clarify the limits of confidentiality within the training process at the beginning of the training programme.
5. The terms and conditions on which the training is offered must be made clear to trainees before the start of the training programme. Subsequent revision of these terms must be agreed in advance of any changes.
6. Trainers must maintain and establish appropriate boundaries between themselves and their trainees so that working relationships are not confused with friendship or other relationships.
7. Trainers must recognise the value and dignity of trainees, with due regard to issues of origin, status, gender, age, beliefs, sex or disability.
8. Trainers shall encourage and facilitate the self-development and self-awareness of trainees, so that trainees learn to integrate practice and personal insights.
9. The roles of trainee and client must be kept separate during the training; where painful personal issues are revealed, trainers are responsible for suggesting and encouraging further in-depth work outside the training context.

4. Common Misconceptions About Values

Lack of involvement from trainers in the field of values has spawned a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding about values. When someone brings up the topic of values, it tends to bring up cynicism, righteousness and paranoia. In Pakistan, at least, no one has seriously raised the issue of Trainers' values or values in training. Many of us believe *values* seem to contain *a great deal of preaching*. Alternatively, they believe it to be *superfluous* because it seems to merely *assert the obvious: "do good!"*

Values Literature is Often Far Too Simplistic -- Many of us think values are Irrelevant. Discussions about values often avoid many of the difficult questions. Case studies to explore ethical dilemmas are often far too simplistic, presented as if every real-life situation has a right and wrong e.g., "should I lie, cheat or steal?" No case studies are available about values in training. Consequently, many trainers believe values are irrelevant because too much values training avoids the real-to-life complexities in leading organizations. Ethical decisions as trainers are not easy because they are the difference between right -- and right. It ought to be fairly easy to choose between right and wrong by relying on principles, but activity often demands that we select from alternatives that are neither wholly right or wholly wrong. *We need to explore real to the training world complexities to remove the misconception that values are irrelevant.*

4.1 Nothing serious is involved so we do not need attention to values. Most of the ethical dilemmas are highly complex. One knows when they have a significant ethical conflict and when there is presence of

- a) significant value conflicts among differing interests,

- b) real alternatives that are equally justifiable, and
- c) significant consequences on "stakeholders" in the situation.

The Golden Rule of honesty and courtesy is not really applicable. It is only when presented with complex ethical dilemmas, most people realize there is a wide "grey area" when trying to apply ethical principles.

4.2 Values are a discipline best led by management. Lack of involvement of trainers in values literature has led many to believe that values is a fad or movement, having little to do with the day-to-day realities of training or citizen organization as they are mostly believed to be the need of corporate sector. However, values are both management and training discipline with a programmatic approach that includes several practical tools.

4.3 Values are superfluous -- it only asserts the obvious: The value of a code of values to an organization is its priority and focus regarding certain ethical values. Trainers must look what values are lacking and are not thus obvious in training sector and trainers, and then focus on them. For example, from organisational point of view, it is obvious that all people should be honest. However, despite being obvious, if an organization is struggling around continuing occasions of deceit, a priority on honesty is very timely -- and honesty should be listed in that organization's code of values for trainers. Note that a code of values is an organic instrument that changes with the needs the organization.

4.4 Values cannot be managed. Actually, values are always "managed" -- but, too often, indirectly. For example, in training the behaviour of the lead trainer is a strong moral influence on behaviour of trainees. Similarly, strategic priorities (profit maximization, continuity of programme, expansion at all costs without addressing its known weaknesses, more focus on cosmetics than the substance and quality, etc.) can be very strong influences on morality. Stated values, like rules and regulations, directly influence behaviours to be more ethical, usually in a manner that improves the general good and/or minimizes harm.

4.5 Our organization or training programme doesn't violate the law, so we are ethical. One can often be unethical, yet operate within the limits of the law, e.g., withhold information from donors, fudge on training budgets, constantly complain about others, discouraging others from excelling in the same training field, etc. However, breaking the law often starts with unethical behaviour that has gone unnoticed. The "**boil the frog**" phenomenon is a useful parable here: If you put a frog in hot water, it immediately jumps out. If you put a frog in cool water and slowly heat up the water, you can

eventually boil the frog. The frog does not seem to notice the adverse change in its environment.

5. Managing Training and Trainer Values

Trainers need more practical tools and information to understand their values and how to manage them. For managing values in training programmes, the trainers need to:

- Establish their role in managing over all organisational values
- Assess values requirements for trainers
- Establish required training values and behaviours
- Align organizational behaviours with training values
- Develop awareness and sensitivity to ethical issues
- Integrate ethical guidelines to decision making
- Structure mechanisms to resolving ethical dilemmas

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING VALUES

The following guidelines would ensure operation of values management in training programmes in a meaningful fashion:

1. **Just as** the process of strategic planning is much more important than the plan produced by the process. The same is true for values management in training programmes, which would, of course, produce deliverables, e.g., codes, policies and procedures, budget items, meeting minutes, authorization forms, newsletters, etc. However, the most important aspect from a values management in training programme is the process of reflection and dialogue started with NGORC sponsored Trainer's Retreat 2001 for producing these deliverables.
2. The best of **ethical values and intentions** are relatively **meaningless unless they generate fair and just behaviours**. That's why this Trainers' Retreat and the follow up events should not only generate lists of ethical values, or codes of values, but also generate policies, procedures and training that translate those values to appropriate behaviours.
3. The best way to handle training related **ethical dilemmas is to avoid their occurrence in the first place**. The present exercise of developing codes of values and codes of conduct for trainers would sensitise trainers to ethical considerations and minimize the chances of unethical behaviour occurring in the first place.
4. **This Trainers Retreat is an opportunity to make values decisions in groups, and make decisions public, as appropriate**. This workshop would produce better quality decisions due to inclusion of diverse interests and perspectives,

- and increased credibility of the decision process and outcome due to reduction of suspicion of unfair bias.
5. **Integrating training values with other organisational values.** By developing the training values during this workshop, the trainers would be able to assist in developing personnel policies, reflect on what ethical values they would like to be most prominent in the organization's culture and then design policies to produce these behaviours.

6. Developing Codes of Values in Training

A code of values specifies the ethical rules of operation. It's the "thou shalt not's." **Codes of conduct** specify **actions** and *codes of values* are *general guides to decisions* about those actions. Codes of conduct contain examples of appropriate behaviour to be meaningful.

Consider the following **guidelines** when developing codes of values:

- 6.1 **Review which values produce** the top three or four **traits of a highly ethical and successful service** in training, (e.g., for accountants: objectivity, confidentiality, accuracy, etc.). Identify which values produce behaviours that exhibit these traits.
- 6.2 **Identify values needed to address current issues in training.**
- 6.3 **Collect descriptions of behaviours** that produce the issues. Consider which of these issues is ethical in nature, e.g. issues in regard to respect, fairness and honesty.
- 6.4 **Identify the behaviours needed** to resolve these issues.
- 6.5 **Identify which values would generate those preferred behaviours.**
- 6.6 **Identify what behaviours are needed** to build on strengths, shore up weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities and guard against threats?
- 6.7 **Consider any top ethical values in training that might be prized by stakeholders.** For example, consider expectations of clients/NGOs, funders, members of the local community, etc.
- 6.8 **Collect from the above steps, the top five to ten ethical values** which are high priorities in training programmes and trainers.

- 6.9 **Compose code of trainer and training values;** attempt to associate with each value, two example behaviours which reflect each value. Critics of codes of values assert that they seem vacuous because many only list ethical values and do not clarify these values by associating examples of behaviours.
- 6.10 **Include wording that indicates all trainers are expected to conform to the values stated in the code of values.** Add wording that indicates where trainers can go if they have any questions.
- 6.11 **Obtain review from key trainers not present in the workshop.**
- 6.12 **Announce and distribute the new code of values.**
- 6.13 **Update the code at least once a year.** As stated earlier, the most important aspect of codes is developing them, not the code itself. Continued dialogue and reflection around ethical values produces ethical sensitivity and consensus. Therefore, revisit these codes at least once a year -- preferably during the Trainers Retreat.

7. **Developing Code of Conduct for Training Sector**

Codes of conduct are increasingly sophisticated. Consider the following guidelines when developing codes of conduct:

1. **Identify key behaviours needed to adhere to** the ethical values proclaimed in the code of values for trainers, ethical behaviours needed in HRD, behaviours to address current issues in trainer values, and behaviours needed to reach strategic goals in the field of training.
2. **Include wording that indicates all trainers** are expected to conform to the behaviours specified in the code of conduct. Add wording that indicates where trainers can go if they have any questions.
3. **Obtain review from key trainers of other organizations.**
4. **Announce and distribute the new code of conduct** Ensure each trainer has a copy and post codes in each trainer's office. (Note that you cannot include preferred behaviours for every possible ethical dilemma that might arise.)
5. **Examples** of topics typically addressed by codes of conduct include: preferred style of dress, following instructions of superiors, being reliable and prompt, maintaining confidentiality, not accepting personal gifts from stakeholders as a result of organisation role, avoiding racial or sexual discrimination, avoiding conflict of interest, complying with laws and regulations, not using organization's property for personal use, not

discriminating against race or age, and reporting illegal or questionable activity.

8. Benefits of Managing Values in Training

The following list describes some of benefits from managing values in training sector.

1. **Attention to values in training would substantially improve the organisation and society.** Until 1940s children in Europe and United States worked 16-hour days. Workers' limbs were torn off and disabled workers were condemned to poverty and often to starvation. Employees in private sector in Pakistan are still hired and fired based on personalities. Influence is applied through intimidation and harassment. Society abroad reacted and demanded that organisations place high value on fairness and equal rights. Government agencies were established. Unions were organized. Laws and regulations were established. But we still have a long way to go. Starting with training and trainer could be a good start in this direction.
2. **Values help maintain a moral course.** HRD usually is the main coordinating and capacity building component in citizen organisations. But in common practice, HRD is so marginalized in overall management that during turbulent times, there is often no clear moral compass to guide or enable trainers to influence through complex conflicts about what is right or wrong. Continuing attention to values would sensitise trainers and other staff to how they can effectively contribute.
3. **Training in actualisation of values and Trainer values would cultivate strong teamwork.** *Usually, an organization finds surprising disparity between its preferred values and the values actually reflected by behaviours.* Attention and dialogue among trainers regarding values would build openness and integrity -- critical ingredients of strong community of professionals.
4. **Stated values would help avoid acts of omission.** Stated trainer values would detect ethical issues and violations early on so they can be reported or addressed.
5. **Values of Training sector would promote a strong public image.** Attention to values is also strong public relations -- admittedly, managing values should not be done primarily for reasons of public relations. People see an organization regularly gives attention to its values and values people more than self-perpetuation and profit.