Tom Deacon introducing Ralph Underhill
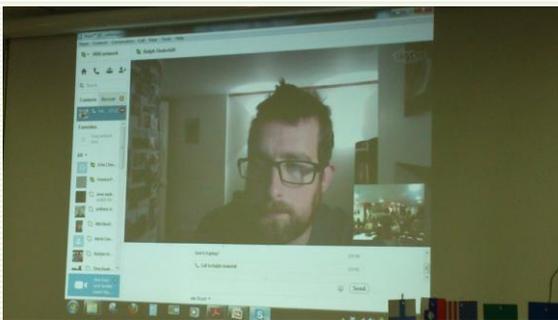
Ralph Underhill on the screen

This slide demonstrates the result, which shows that conservation organisations were not talking about any different things to the rest of the organisations the UK.

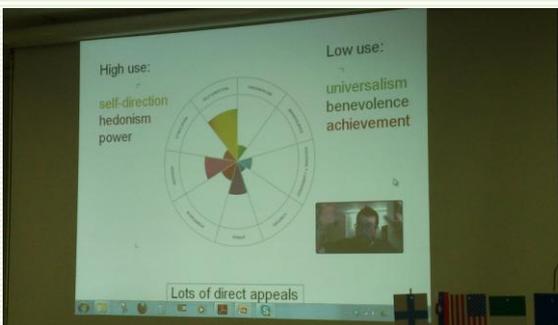## Common Cause for Nature

Ralph Underhill
live from London via video keynote speech

Ralph Underhill works at the Public Interest Research Centre in Wales where he coordinates the Common Cause for Nature project. Common Cause for Nature uses social psychology research into values and frames to examine how communications and experiences influence peoples motivations - this work and its relevance to the work of the Real World Learning Network will be the focus of his talk. Ralph is an environmentalist and conservationist with a background in lobbying and campaigning based on his academic background in zoology, science communication and conservation. He has also worked as a freelance journalist and is a cartoonist concentrating on conservation issues.

We started with a pair discussion on "What do you really value in life?" and continued in same pairs with the question "Why does Outdoor learning matter to you?"

Then Ralph Underhill talked about current challenges of sustainability:

Problems are getting worse, but the people are caring less. There is less public concern in recent times. The main reaction has been to provide more information, but this providing this information does not change people's minds or perspectives. If it's not information that helps people change their minds, what is it?

We think these are values, which have an impact on the way people think. Opinions, values & attitudes can all be changed and helped to change. Shalom Schwartz – a social researcher from Israel - found out in 65 countries, that there were 60 values that people shared mostly all over the world.

Out of this research a map was created that shows that values are related to each other: The closer they are together the more related they are. So it's much more easy to hold values that are close together, rather than far apart. Further values are in conflict with each other.

Schwartz found out that the values can be put into a variety of groups, e.g. self-direction, universalism (which is about caring about the planet') or benevolence (which is about caring for each other). These intrinsic values are associated with pro-social and environmental behaviours. Opposite to these groups are achievement and power representing extrinsic values. Intrinsic values are rewarding in

themselves, whereas extrinsic values need external validation, these work on reward from other people and/or things.

Ralph then presented some major principles how values work:

1. Characteristics - values are the end in themselves, not the means to the end. They are about the underlying goals rather than the methods.
2. Universal - we all have all the values, we just hold them to different extents.
3. Engaged - values can be appealed to, experiences can effect values.
4. See-saw-effect – it describes how related or in conflict values are. If we enhance one set of values on the scale, we find the opposite values diminish.
5. Bleed-over-effect – it describes another relation of values. If we activate one value in an area, we actually engage other values in this area.

Values can be engaged: Ralph describes some research that illustrated this point related to car-sharing. Groups of people were primed using intrinsic or extrinsic values. People were asked to draw a logo for a car sharing scheme, and then throw it in the rubbish bin. The researcher looked to see how many throw it into the recycling bin instead. A larger number of people from the intrinsic group recycled their logo.

Values can bleed over: Ralph also mentioned another example of research related to environment and carbon footprints. This demonstrates that we can get people to think about the environment, while actual talking about social values.

Tightly connected to our values are the frames which influence the implementation of our values. Framing is about relating words and concepts together, particularly in terms of relationships or power structures. As an example we looked at the framing implications of money in different ways: Financing a project the state can talk of a public investment or of spending taxpayer's money. The first term has more positive implications (common engagement for a project) and the other has negative implications (wasting money that was earned by each person through hard work). Framing implications depend on individual viewpoints. And also on communication: So the context is important, when you are saying things. Words change people perspective on something.

Concerning outdoor education linking frames to values has implications for outdoor experience. You can design activities that have extrinsic and intrinsic framing, within the activity, for example a competition on canoeing rapids or just silent listening for sounds.

In the real world things are complicated: If people hold a value strongly but sometimes doesn't always act in relation to the value. Sometimes the surroundings stop people, such as peer group pressure or social norms.

There has been research in UK on how we use values in the nature conservation sector. A commission by 13 conservation organisations was built up to look at the values they are using in their communication. A computer analysis of their communications has been made for a duration of six months. It has been looked at how often the words related to the different values and a detailed frames analysis was done.

The result was that conservation organisations were not talking about any different things compared to the rest of the organisations in the UK (see slide). You would expect that they would be, but they are not.

One very important aspect of the research is that experience is more significant than communication in terms of strengthening values.

You can download all reports and briefings of PIRC's research on values and also the Common Cause for Nature at http://valuesandframes.org.