

WE VALUE

CASE STUDY



Echeri Consultores, Mexico

Background

Echeri Consultores is a non-profit organisation based in Michoacan, Mexico that promotes environmental conservation through values education and the arts. It is affiliated with the Earth Charter Initiative (ECI), a founding partner of the ESDinds (Education for Sustainable Development indicators) Project Consortium, which created WeValue.

The indicators were used in two separate Echeri programmes in February 2010:

- a) A programme working with 9-13 year olds in 15 schools in the Purepecha indigenous communities. It includes arts workshops on environmental conservation and values; guided reflection on local ecosystems; and tree planting workshops, enabling the children to establish tree nurseries in the school grounds and conduct reforestation activities in the wider community.
- b) A multi-cultural group of around 19 youth aged 12-21, called Juatarhu ("Forest" in Purepecha), meeting every week. The activities of Jutarhu are similar to those of the schools programme, but with greater scope and depth, incorporating large reforestation campaigns and municipal arts festivals.

Exploring Values

The facilitator chose four values from a shortlist of six recommended by the ESDinds project team (Unity in Diversity, Trust, Empowerment and Justice) and, for each value, asked them to think of real-life examples illustrating it. The group compared their answers and decided to focus on Unity in Diversity, which they decided to rename Collaboration in Diversity, and Care and Respect for the Community of Life. They felt that these two indicators 'included all the others within them'.

Measuring the Indicators

The Echeri staff chose 12 indicators that related to 'Collaboration in Diversity', and 10 indicators relating to the value of 'Care and Respect for the Community of Life'.

To measure these indicators, Echeri staff (in close collaboration with a researcher from the WeValue team) selected creative ways of getting evidence that were suitable for children and youth, many of them with low levels of literacy. These methods were mainly based on the arts and physical movement, rather than questionnaires or paper-based surveys.

Evidence based on what people think and feel

Stand on a Colour (spatial survey): Some of the indicators were turned into questions with a three-point scale of responses (A lot – More or less – A little). For example, the indicator 'People follow the group norms' was changed to 'Do you feel that people follow the group norms?' A large spiral was formed with coloured cloths of three different colours, each colour representing one of the three possible answers. The questions were read out aloud, and the members of the Juatarhu youth group were asked to go and stand on the colour that best reflected their response. After the survey, the facilitators held a **group discussion** with all the youth, to explore their different answers and gain a deeper sense of what the indicators meant to them.



Vote with your Feet (spatial survey): In the schools programme, the playground was divided into three areas representing the three possible answers (A lot – More or less – A little). The children were asked to go and stand in the area that best reflected their response.

Posture Vote (corporal survey): Questions were asked and the children could answer 'Strongly agree' by standing up and raising their arms, 'Agree' by staying in their seats, 'No opinion' by folding their arms, or 'Disagree' by leaving their chairs.



Hand Painting Circle (word elicitation): This method was used to help the youth put their emotions into words. Each member of the youth group was asked to do a painting on their neighbour's hand to represent their feelings at the end of a reforestation campaign, and then to describe their painting. The coordinator recorded the emotional vocabulary used by all the individual members of the group, and then put the lists together for a whole-group perspective.

Theatrical Comprehension Test: Theatre was used as a vehicle for a traditional comprehension test, with the facilitators either role-playing multiple choice answers and letting the school children choose the one they felt was accurate, or role-playing a process (e.g. tree planting) with errors, and asking children to spot and explain all the errors.

Key Informant Interviews: In-depth interviews with project coordinators were used to supplement the information obtained through other methods.

Evidence based on things that can be seen, counted or measured

Tree Nurseries: The team collected information on the state of the tree nurseries in participating schools – looking at whether the plastic sheeting was intact or torn, whether there was any litter or graffiti, etc, and recording numerical data on the survival of seedlings and trees.

Benefits of the WeValue Process for Echeri

These are just a few of the benefits described by the project director. To learn more, download the full report [here](#).

- The project transformed the way in which Echeri evaluates its youth programme. Beyond reflecting on the outcomes of the actions carried out by the group, the director can now get clear and specific information on the **“human results” of the group’s activities**, i.e. the individual processes of each group member in relation to the broader vision. It **strengthened her understanding of the inner dimension in the youth group: the participants’ motivation and consciousness**.
- The youth publicly expressed a view that **by “making values visible”**, the project had helped them to understand one another better and to value much more what they’re doing. As the project director explained: **“They’ve always felt very united, but now they know why they’re united.”**
- **The processes of talking about values and using the indicators, in themselves, drew the youth participants’ attention to aspects of the group’s work that needed improvement.** This was reflected in **renewed commitment** to respecting the norms that they had set for themselves, such as arriving on time and updating the group’s blog, which in turn transformed the group relationship and greatly enhanced the functioning of the CSO.
- In the schools setting, where evaluation used to be done by giving every child a two-page questionnaire to fill out, **using the ‘Vote with your Feet’ and ‘Posture Vote’ exercises saved paper and time, as well as being more fun** for the children to do.
- For the schools programme, **the results confirmed the extent to which pupils had assimilated the values** that were promoted as a core goal of the project.
- The WeValue indicators **significantly affected the CSO’s strategic planning, assisting it to prioritise activities** in the context of time and funding constraints. Echeri decided that in the coming year they would not carry out as many activities, but would **focus on those with the highest impact on themselves, their communities and their ecosystem**, on the basis of information provided by the indicators.
- The findings from the measurement were incorporated into Echeri’s report to its major donor, providing a way to **demonstrate the scale of its achievements** by relating the results obtained with the 1500 children in the schools programme to the overall demographics of the area.
- As a result of WeValue, **the donor has reconceptualised the work of Echeri as something of international relevance, no longer just a local project.** This is of critical importance to the future of the CSO in a highly competitive funding climate, in which the donor has been forced to cut the number of projects that it can support by over 50%.