This discussion focused on the concept of the Living Values Project, and the issues involved in its implementation. The evidence available for the discussion consisted of presentations by David Lock (the origins and coordinator of the project); Olga Savinna (the introduction of the project at the People’s Friendship University, Moscow); and by Caroline Parker (on the experience of the University of Stockholm). The transcripts of these are provided elsewhere, and these notes address the observations raised in the discussions.

1. It was evident that there has been difficulty in defining what precisely a ‘value’ is, compared with a ‘principle’ or a ‘belief’. The important point seems to be that values are essentially ends, rather than the specific activities which are the means to achieving these ends. Behind any activity lies an underlying motivation and set of beliefs which are the values. It is affirmed that what is meaningful for the particular university is the critical issue.

2. The motivations for undertaking the project are commonly agreed with variations as appropriate.

3. There does appear to be a consensus that universities implementing the project do need clear conceptualisations of the phases and processes through which they are proceeding to embed the values before the start, including
   • initiation phase
   • identification and design of the values and their operating characteristics
   • transmission of the values
   • means of embedding the operating characteristics of the values.

   How these are conceived and undertaken is very much a matter for individual universities in their context. Failure to conceptualise the phases is likely to result in uncertainty and drift.

4. The conceptualisation of the values and their operating characteristics needs to be supported by
   • a combination of an university wide framework collectively arrived at through widespread discussions and so-called “bottom-up” contributions enlisting the wisdom and concrete preferences of the various interest groups
   • the engagement of academic and administrative staff; students; regional stakeholders of various constituencies; university governance and leadership
   • research/opinion surveys to assist in the diagnosis of the existing values situation; legitimise rankings of preferred issues; consulting on proposals; and consulting on implementation.

5. Various organisational mechanisms were felt to be generally appropriate, namely
• a Coordinating Council/Values Forum as a place for steering the project; for resulting any conflict; for aligning activities with values; and general dissemination. Membership is clearly a matter of concern, and could either be a relatively small quasi-cultural group supplemented by a range of consultative methods or a larger forum with a balanced structure of roles, social groups etc. (see para 4 above)

• an effective Champion working with the Rector to ensure that the process is effectively managed

• the role of the university’s P.R, communications and HR departments are critical.

6. The mechanisms for the sustainability of the project need continuing attention, and this necessitates careful analysis of the elements/activities which give effect to the values i.e. systematic attention to the embedding processes, as outlined in the Guidelines and other case studies presented.

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