



## Digital Sustainability Education

**Format** 2 hour Workshop

**Ort** Olten, Future Perfect Office

**Output**

- Identification of team and company values
- Mapping possible product risks

**Follow-up**

- Workshop series: In-depth workshop for values, risks, and responsibility
- Creating a Value Compass

The goal of Future Perfect's team is to anchor sustainability education in vocational school curricula. The start-up aims to convey crucial content through a fun and interactive digital platform. Information and activities found on the platform are prepared in such a way that they can be used in conjunction with usual lesson plans.

All team members participated in the ethix workshop, which opened a dialogue about their values, reflections about value-based teamwork, and the identification of ethical risk areas about their project. The "Ethical Product Canvas," developed by ethix, structured the discussion and facilitated the identification of values and ethical risks.

## Mission

By embedding a digital learning tool, Future Perfect wants to spread knowledge about sustainability and sustainable action strategies among young adults. The overarching goal is to help create a world without environmental destruction. With its playful approach, the platform also increases the joy and fun in learning. The innovative aspects of the Platform were explained with the following logic:

Promoting independent learning -> Fostering the ability to reflect

Low access threshold through integration in school curricula and use of a digital platform -> Reaching a large number of young adults

Interesting lessons -> Sustainability is combined with positive emotions (fun) and therefore achieve bigger learning effect for a more effective change impact

## Values Mapping

The discussion highlighted diverse values of which the most important ones are listed below. They are split into two categories:

### 1. Internal Structure

Finding a good balance between internal structures is crucial for the team. The desire for rules and structured processes can be in opposition with promoting a flexible, open and democratic office culture. Implemented structures should support problem-solving processes on two levels: First, the allocation of responsibilities and, second, in the search for approaches to constructive and objective conflict resolution.

Through open discussions between team members and the goal of supporting one another, Future Perfect wants to build a strong, cooperative team. They hope that this can lead to team member

satisfaction so that they can successfully work on dynamic innovation together.

In addition, working on something meaningful and authentic is crucial for the team. This is underscored by their orientation to the proverb “practice what you preach.” Among other things, they strive to keep their work fun and enjoyable as this would otherwise also be lost in their end products. If work is fun and meaningful, a motivated team can develop, which is flexible and is willing to “go the extra mile.”

## 2. Externally communicated values

Future Perfect aims to create added value for teachers, young adults and, based on the long term effects of education, society as a whole. Integrity and authenticity play an important role for the team and transparency is important to realize these. Therefore, fun, meaningful work, openness and a democratic approach are decisive not only for internal, but also for external communication.

## Mapping of ethical product risks

The discussion also centered on identifying ethical risk areas. They can be organized into the following four clusters:

### 1. Data and Transparency

- In regard to students: Users must be clearly informed about what data is collected, stored, for what purpose, and by whom.
- Within the group: Data published on the platform (e.g. rankings) could have an influence on the self-esteem and social relationships of students. Data can allow constant comparisons between fellow students and thus increase performance pressure.
- Privacy: The digital platform provides teachers with control mechanisms: They can track students in a different way than is otherwise possible, which can be used to support students with different learning abilities. However, this could also violate aspects of an individual’s privacy. The team roughly defined privacy as a space in which you can be who you want, how you want to be, and gives an individual freedom of action. If, for example, teachers can monitor when and how students are doing their work and the data is used to expose students publicly, this could be a violation of privacy.

The team thought about possible solutions to privacy issues including: checking the third parties who manage the data, adjusting which data teachers have access to via the platform, and ensuring that students are transparently informed about data handling.

## 2. The Problem with digital fun

Fun is an important platform component that can trigger intrinsic motivation and increase potential learning effects. However, gamification can also lead to a loss of intrinsic motivation when winning points becomes the primary goal. It can also result in stress or dissatisfaction for the students if they are repeatedly ranked last on the ranking list.

The team agrees that they are the ones responsible for carefully designing activities using different methods to avoid negative consequences from gamification as much as possible and to strengthen the positive aspects.

## 3. Loss of personal contact

- **Loss of empathy:** If digitizing learning content leads to a minimization of direct teacher-student contact, then it can have negative impacts on the development of social skills.
- **Standardization:** Assessing young adults on the basis of easily quantifiable measures could be intensified through the use of on-line platforms. This could depersonalize evaluation processes.

By determining which interactions are required by platform activities, the team can influence personal factors. For example, they have developed activities that require exchanges in the “real world.”

## 4. Interactions with users

At a certain point, digital products must be concretely implemented and used by specific users. Teachers could use the platform for other purposes by changing content and thus influencing students in unforeseen way, for example politically.

As a potential solution, the team sees drafting a kind of “code of conduct” for the platform as a potential way to inform users on how to properly implement the digital tool.

## Follow-Ups

### Values Compass

The team members agree on many points. Despite this, they see the benefits in identifying and concretely defining their core values as these can provide a solid orientation for the company.

### Risk Canvas and Strategies

A future in-depth elaboration of the risks can help identify concrete strategies for the company to strategically mitigate these.

ethix – Lab für Innovation Ethics is made possible by Engagement Migros, the development fund of the Migros Group.

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