Why we need Vision, Mission & Value congruence in the development sector

Vision, mission, and values are the guiding star of strategic planning, the beacon by which organizations (NGOs and not for profit organizations) set their strategic compasses and then align their everyday priority setting.

Before we consider these organizations we need to consider the “Human Resources” as organizations are made of people. Our psychological disposition allows us to see the importance of vision and values congruence. (We are all programmed from our childhood that if you do good you go to haven or attain nirvana and if we do bad things we go to hell or are reborn to suffer again) It is probably the easiest congruence to obtain as we have an intermediate step which is the congruence of “a given vision” and a person’s individual vision, which is important to individual motivation. The mission congruence is however a bit trickier to achieve even as individuals. The mission “What we do” is sometimes compromised for a variety of reasons and as such at times these actions (the little lies we tell) goes against our values and prevent us from living our values and mission. At a personal level these transgressions result in breakdown of relationships and in a worst case scenario may even result in jail time. When it comes to organizations we use:

1. **The VISION** (Where we want to go) being your organizations dream for at least a decade which defines our destiny.

2. **The MISSION** (What we will do) in terms of which skills and talents of our staff are used to do the activities that define the organizations existence.

3. **The VALUES** (Who we do what we do) in terms of the way we go about doing our activities which defines our behavior.

As with people the easiest congruence to obtain is the congruence of the organizational vision and its values. The vision mission congruence is also easier to establish with many tools, concepts and methods available to us to help develop a realistic mission. Many organizations are able to easily establish the logical link between vision and mission to get congruence. As with individuals the tough part is living the values and the mission in other words mission value congruence. As with the
individual, the mission is sometimes compromised for a variety of reasons. They range from getting ahead of competition for donor funds, personal interests, and nepotistic reasons etc; these compromise our values resulting in bribery & corruption, fraud and misappropriation which in many cases lead to insolvency. The modern world gives us many examples of this culminating in the 2009 financial crisis.

The development sector works increasingly in partnerships, networks and public, private civil society initiatives. In many developing countries the race is on to get into as many partnerships / alliances with NGOs, INGOs, CBOs, Networks, and Federations in pursuit of donor money. Most of these organizations pay little or no attention to the issue of vision, mission and value congruence and alignment. In fact the vision mission and value congruence goes to the heart of all the relationships the organization is likely to have as well. Therefore prudence dictates that when an organization needs to establish a long term relationship: At first they need to ensure that the organization achieves vision mission and values congruence. Second they need to find an organization which they need to enter into relationship with and ensure that they have achieved vision mission and value congruence. And finally ensure that the visions missions and values of these organizations align with each others. No matter what type of relationship the organization is looking for; be it partnerships, being in a network or federation, strategic alliances or a merger without this congruence / alignment combination the relationship is unlikely to deliver the desired results.