

CHAPTER 27 DRAFT BLUEPRINT: RUNNING LAPS

The LAPS framework provides a holistic roadmap for driving and cultivating a sustainability mindset. Sustainability is not just a choice; it's a commitment. LAPS is a symbol of leadership's commitment in getting us there.



Practice the mindset of sustainability leadership within the LAPS framework using the guided steps below – these are intended to prompt critical thinking about how to apply the concepts in a way that makes the reflection exercise more targeted and actionable.

Consider which aspects would be required for the comprehensive review of an organization's current status and careful examination of relevant case studies surrounding the topic, including familiarization with best practices and a collective action plan.

Explore what leads to the regular cadence of thoughtful reflection and revision, and consider the value of its circular, iterative process – a do-loop!

LEARNING LAPS: AN EXERCISE UNTO ITSELF!

I want to share a personal experience as a sort of case study for the LAPS framework. I often talk about the absence of communal and pro-social goals in my STEM educational journey leading to my sense of 'lostness'. After I was appointed 3M's first ever Chief Science Advocate, I found the opportunity to deeply reflect – to understand what it was that I had felt traversing my journey. Did any others feel the way I had felt? And what could I do in my leadership role as an advocate to make the journey better for others?

I discovered that the feeling, that nagging sense of uneasiness, actually had a name: "communal goal incongruity." I cold-called the lead researcher Professor Amanda Diekman to thank them – I felt uniquely validated. Prof. Diekman's vast research in the area shows that stereotypically female careers are perceived as geared toward communal values, while stereotypically male

careers are geared toward more agentic values. STEM careers are perceived to have agentic affordances and a strong perception of lower communal affordances. The pursuit of academic excellence, often singularly focused on content mastery, had left me yearning for a more communal and purposeful dimension. This realization propelled my exploration into the significance of communal goals in STEM education, sparking a journey of reflection and purpose discovery.

The cold call to Prof. Diekman was followed by a few years of research collaboration funded by 3M. Our research explored the impact of reflecting on purpose for students pursuing STEM degrees, particularly those historically excluded. Through a randomized trial with 466 STEM students, the study found that encouraging students to consider their 'why' for pursuing STEM led to various positive outcomes, such as improved beliefs about their major, a sense of authentic belonging, and reduced stress. Our findings were published in *Nature Scientific Reports* in 2024: "Purpose reflection benefits minoritized students' motivation and well-being in STEM." It is a warm feeling.

The work of spreading the word amongst many of the stakeholders has begun. We are actively partnering with STEM faculty and conducting workshops using a repository of reflective exercises to encourage students to think about their purpose for pursuing STEM. This PRISM (**P**urpose **R**eflection **I**ntegration in **S**TEM **M**odalities) repository is tailored for STEM faculty to integrate into their classrooms and will be hosted on an open science website. It is free to access and download. There will also be provision for faculty to add their own PRISM exercises and a discussion board to post experiences with implementation in various classes and any adaptations. In parallel, we have interacted with many organizations and conducted a session at the American Association for Advancement of Science (AAAS) Annual meeting to discuss the shared responsibility across the ecosystem to advance the cause.

We are advocating for change through sound technical work, putting science behind science advocacy. The hope is to create a lasting impact on the STEM ecosystem toward Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" and SDG 5 to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," according to the United Nations.

LEADERSHIP AND LEGACY:

- How are the elements of leadership and legacy brought to life in this case study?
- With that in mind, identify a sustainability opportunity or challenge within your organization, company, community, or personal life.
- What leadership decisions and/or actions address this challenge?
- Outline a plan on how a leadership role can be taken in addressing this challenge and leaving a positive sustainability legacy.

Case Study

.....

.....

My Life

.....

.....

ALLYSHIP AND ADVOCACY:

- Where do you think there could potentially be resistance to sustainability efforts in the organization or company’s value chain?
- What are the key points of a persuasive message or campaign that resonate for you, specifically as they demonstrate allyship and advocacy for sustainability?

.....

.....

.....

PARTNERSHIP AND PRIMACY:

- Where can the organization or company collaborate with the public to improve sustainability?
- Describe a partnership strategy you would enjoy that engages the public.

.....

.....

STEWARDSHIP AND DIPLOMACY:

- Consider the relationships between the ecosystem and stakeholders, identifying the issue(s) and the stakeholders.
 - What do you think is necessary to bring all parties together to address the issue?
-
-
-

ADVANCED PRACTICE

The landscape around the Sustainable Development Goals and how to best achieve these goals is constantly changing based on yesterday, today, and tomorrow. As more data and information becomes available, new insights are gained and the strategy and tactics need to be adjusted and altered. It is such a complex and multifaceted issue with a lot of entanglements that become visible with the push and pull of systems, processes and people, and global and societal norms. For that reason, this worksheet is intended to provoke thought and train the thought process.

The idea here is to play the CEO of You, Inc. and take the LAPS – examine all aspects and reflect upon where the lapse may be, in leadership and legacy, allyship and advocacy, partnership and primacy, stewardship and diplomacy.

Scenario: *You have been asked to lead a sustainability goal for your company, You, Inc., where you are the CEO. Consider the dynamics of your household; whether it includes family members, pets, roommates, or if it's a solo operation.*

Step 1. Goal-setting

Examples: You may decide to set the goal of minimizing meat consumption, reducing single-use plastics, or committing to composting.

You, Inc.'s Sustainability Goal

Your responsibility as a leader doesn't end with setting the goal. How would you like to create a culture that can support and empower attainment of the goal? Consider: What process will you use to develop the goal? Do you need

more information? How will you explain your goal to your people (whoever they are)?

Using the next steps, consider how you want to develop the goal, paint a bold vision, and describe the impact of that vision to those involved.

Step 2. Data Collection

Gathering information is a process that involves baselining, benchmarking, and engaging in consultations to arrive at the target.

Building on the examples above, relevant data might include current practices in shopping and buying practices, or daily habits that affect the goal. Are there paper-based packaging alternatives for the products you use? What limits you from choosing reusable water bottles? Is there a local grocery store that sells bulk items?"

What are the current conditions affecting the implementation of your goal?

.....
.....
.....

Step 3. Critical Thinking

Along your journey of commitment, you will start seeing the world with a new lens. How will you leverage your unique perspective in the context of You, Inc.'s circumstances and your goal?

.....
.....
.....

Step 4. Stakeholder Involvement

Consider how public attitudes and mainstream concepts impact your choices and options.

Who are your allies? How will you advocate to them for your visions?

What's in it for them?

(i.e., How do they benefit from your commitment?)

.....

.....

.....

What steps can you take to create and inspire others to join? Are there other friends, family, coworkers, and/or volunteer groups that you can enlist?

.....

.....

How do you deal with those who have different priorities and/or different viewpoints? How did you exercise stewardship and diplomacy to inform and inspire them to support your vision or take action toward it?

.....

.....

Step 5. Iterative Improvement

What did you learn in the process?

.....

What issues did you anticipate?

.....

What issues did you actually encounter?

.....

What did you learn about the role of leadership and vision of legacy through this exercise?

.....

Good leaders, with keen foresight, recognize that embedding sustainability at the core of the company gives a meaningful purpose and a strategic vision that can navigate change and bridge to the future, purposefully.