

International Beliefs and Values Institute

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Mission

The mission of the International Beliefs and Values Institute (IBAVI) is to examine, describe and explain the linkages between the implicit or explicit beliefs and values of individuals, groups, organizations, governments and societies around the world and those actions, policies or practices that are demonstrably grounded in or legitimized by these specific beliefs and values. This mission and the concomitant activities of the IBAVI shall be deliberately pluralistic, critically-minded and self-reflective, grounded in sound scholarship, and informed by reasoned dialogue.

Purpose

The purpose of the IBAVI is to demonstrate that human beliefs and values are:

- central mediating processes for behavior at individual and societal levels, but they may or may not be “known” (i.e., may be implicit or non-conscious), and are not necessarily logically grounded.
- determined by an individual’s history, larger culture and unique Zeitgeist, inculcated over time, and may or may not transcend (i.e., may be relative to) a specific time and place.
- acquired and maintained via complex interactions among developmental, affective and attributional processes.
- inextricably and ultimately linked to the actions, policies and practices of individuals, groups, organizations, governments and societies.

Rationale

Analysis of recent events and available evidence suggests that it is neither unreasonable nor alarmist to conclude that we are placing ourselves at increasing risk of causing negative and potentially irreversible consequences for humanity and our planet. As such, a critical mass of the world’s population must come to understand that the actions, practices, and policies of individuals, groups, organizations, governments, and societies are mediated by beliefs and values that may be highly subjective, non-conscious and self-serving rather than just, equitable, rational and sustainable. Such understanding must be sufficiently achieved in the near future by a substantial proportion of the world’s population - as well as those who are in positions of relative power and influence - and subsequently translated into relevant actions, practices, and policies. To accomplish these goals, the international academic community - in concert with allied individuals and organizations in the public and private sectors - must become much more proactive and deliberate, in order to organize and direct its vast analytic capacity toward an understanding of these real world issues, and subsequently translate what we discover and assemble into terms that can be readily apprehended by the academy, policy makers and the public at large.

Toward these ends, and more specifically, the International Beliefs and Values Institute maintains that we must establish a more just, equitable, rational and sustainable world order, in which:

- conflicts can be resolved through dialogue, reason, mutual understanding and reconciliation;
- human and minority rights are demonstrably respected and protected;
- the ecosystem and natural resources upon which life depends are secured and preserved;
- individuals and groups are neither persecuted nor denied equal access to education or social, legal, political and economic resources for arbitrary and capricious reasons (e.g., of ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, political views, religious faith or lack thereof, social and economic status, or family lineage);
- educational systems deliberately expose students of all ages to the perspectives and experiences of individuals, groups and cultures around the world; and
- tolerance and understanding supplant hatred and violence in matters of cultural difference and religious faith.

Scholarship

The IBAVI engages in a range of scholarly activities, including but not limited to the promotion of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research regarding the etiology and maintenance of beliefs, values, and worldviews, translation of such research into accessible media and materials, development of web-based resources, and co-sponsorship of relevant scholarly events.

Education

Consistent with its mission, rationale, and purpose - and complementary with its scholarly emphasis - the IBAVI sponsors and engages in a range of educational activities and initiatives designed to promote a greater understanding of the “what,” “how” and “why” of beliefs and values. That is, the IBAVI is interested not only in showing what human beings believe and value around the world (a descriptive level of analysis), but exploring and providing credible answers as to how, why, and under what circumstances human beliefs and values are acquired, maintained, and/or transformed (an explanatory level of analysis). In addition to these descriptive and explanatory issues, the IBAVI is interested in promoting efforts to translate such belief/value information so that it may be integrated within various processes and experiences across the educational continuum.