

## Definitions of Sustainability

### Sustain

1. provide with the basic necessities required to support or preserve life, livelihood or existence; provide for the needs of;
2. endure, stand, bear up against;
3. maintain or keep (an action or process) going continuously... (Barber, 1462)

### Sustainable

1. (esp. of development) that conserves an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources;
2. that may be maintained, esp. at a particular level (Barber, 1462)

### Brundtland Commission Report

The concept of sustainability is frequently attributed to the 1987 Brundtland Commission report, *Our Common Future*, chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland when she was the Prime Minister of Norway. The report reads, "*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (Brundtland 1987, 24).

### Fraser Basin Council's Charter for Sustainability

The Charter defines sustainability as, "Living and managing activities in a way that balances social, economic, environmental and institutional considerations to meet our needs and those of future generations." (Fraser Basin Council, 2009)

### Union of Conservation Scientists (IUCN), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

...sustainable development, sustainable growth, and sustainable use have been used interchangeably, as if their meanings were the same. They are not. Sustainable growth is a contradiction in terms: nothing physical can grow indefinitely "Sustainable use" is applicable only to renewable resources: it means using them at rates within their capacity for renewal. "Sustainable development" is used in this Strategy [Caring for the Earth, a Strategy for Sustainable Living] to mean: improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems. A "sustainable economy" is the product of sustainable development. It maintains its natural resource base. It can continue to develop by adapting, and through improvements in knowledge, organization, technical efficiency, and wisdom. A "sustainable society" lives by the nine principles outlined in this chapter...

1. Respect and care for the community of life.
2. Improve the quality of human life
3. Conserve the Earth's vitality and diversity
4. Minimize the depletion of non-renewable resources
5. Keep within the earth's carrying capacity
6. Change personal attitudes and practices
7. Enable communities to care for their own environments.
8. Provide a national framework for integrating development and conservation.
9. Create a global alliance (IUCN, UNEP, WWF, 1991)

### The Natural Step

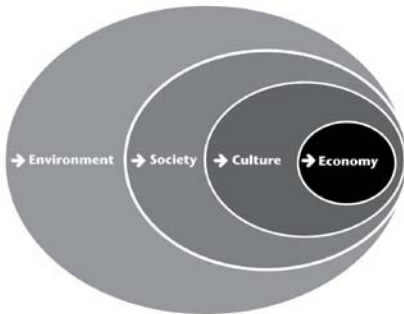
“In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing...

I...concentrations of substances extracted from the earth’s crust

II...concentrations of substances produced by society

III...degradation by physical means and, in that society...

IV...people are not subject to conditions that systematically undermine their capacity to meet their needs (Holmberg and Robèrt 2000, 10; Ny et al. 2006).



### Models

**The Nested Egg:** We need to recognize that economy is a “creation” of our society, and our society exists within the natural environment. The environment can exist without us! Human society can exist without the “economy” as we presently think of it.

**The Four-pillar model of sustainability:** Jon Hawkes, a cultural analyst and one of Australia’s leading commentators on cultural policy, wrote *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture’s Essential Role in Public Planning...* His four-pillar model recognizes that a community’s vitality and quality of life is closely related to the vitality and quality of its cultural engagement, expression, dialogue and celebration. This model further demonstrates that the contribution of culture to building lively cities and communities where people want to live, work and visit plays a major role in supporting social and economic health. The following models of support this four-pillar approach: (*Creative City Network of Canada*)

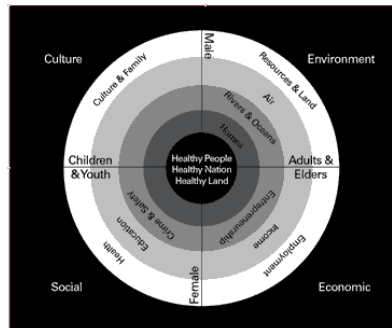
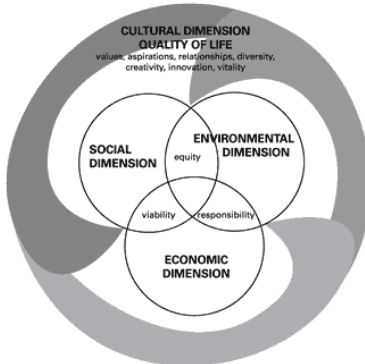


Figure 1: Source: Catherin Runnalls, 2006, MA thesis for Royal Rhodes University, adapted from Hawkes, 2001 and others.

Figure 2: Nathan Cardinal & Emilie Adin's An urban Aboriginal life: The 2005 indicators report on the quality of life of Aboriginal people in the Greater Vancouver region, Centre for Native Policy and Research

## References

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Holmberg, J. and Robèrt, K-H. "Backcasting from non-overlapping Sustainability Principles – a Framework for Strategic Planning" International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology 7 (2000) : 291-308.

IUCN/UNEP/WWF, Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living, Gland, Switzerland, 1991, p10.