

# Sustainable Development Theory

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“If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.”

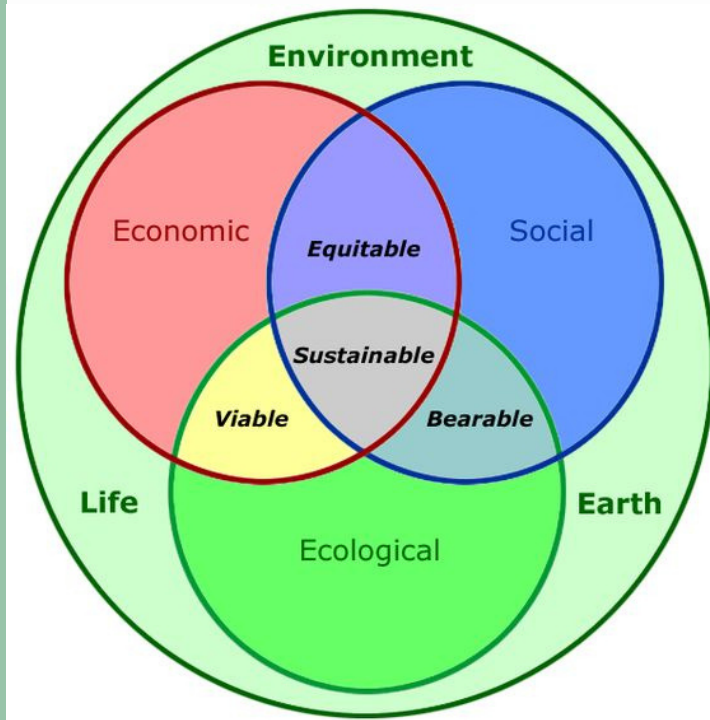
## How can we define Sustainable Development Theory?

The term sustainable development, often abbreviated as “SD,” has gained popularity among contemporary development discourse. However, it still seems unclear as many people continue to question its history, meaning, and paradigm. Sustainable development is the idea that human societies must live and meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is a way of organizing society so that it can exist in the long term.

## Sustainability vs Sustainable Development Theory

Sustainability is often referred to as a long-term goal that people, companies, or organizations try to achieve, while sustainable development is thought of as the several pathways and processes that can be taken to achieve sustainability.

The three fundamental dimensions, or pillars, of sustainability are economic, social, and ecological. They are not mutually exclusive but can be mutually reinforcing.



The diagram incorporates the three pillars of sustainability including the symbiotic relationship of life on Earth and the surrounding environment that the systems within rely on.

There is an optimal interaction between all of the spheres which work together to result in sustainability. Confusion arises when claims of sustainability are made which do not encompass all of the spheres. When brainstorming a project or claim, ensure that it falls into each category of the diagram for a successful and sustainable outcome.



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD



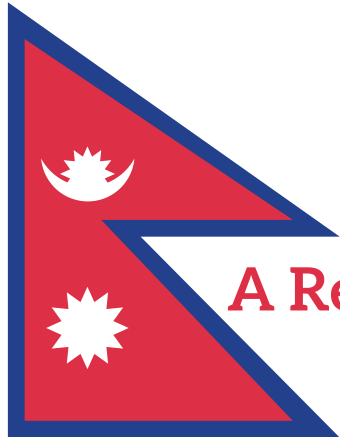
## Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which provides a blueprint for peace and prosperity for all people and the planet. At the center of this agenda lies the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an urgent call for action by all developed and developing countries in a global partnership. The 17 SDGs build upon decades of work by several countries and the UN.

In order to make the 2030 Agenda a reality, strong advocacy and outreach activities must continue to promote commitment by all stakeholders to implement these global goals.

## Discussion Questions

- What are some businesses you can think of that incorporate sustainable practices?
- How can you measure sustainability?
- Compare two companies with similar products or businesses and explain why one is more sustainable than the other.



## A Real-Life Example: Case Study



One example of a sustainable and successful project implemented was in Nepal. The Integrating Population and Health into Forestry Management Agendas program in Nepal addressed the issue of deforestation from indoor air pollution due to wood fires, fuel-wood harvesting, and acute respiratory infections from smoke inhalation. The Nepal project came about to be successful due to the sustainable practices they undertook. This included the “empowerment of community forest user groups with population, health, and environment program know-how and appropriate technology” which resulted in the revelation that non-governmental organizations can aid in the cross-sectoral responses to development issues, such as those in Nepal. These sustainable efforts combined with the population, health, and environment approach proved to be an effective method for attaining sustainable development while meeting conservation and health objectives.

To learn more about the Nepal Case Study, go to: [bit.ly/NepalCaseStudy](https://bit.ly/NepalCaseStudy).

