



SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIES AS PART OF A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

AGE RANGE
15-18

LESSON PLAN #
4 of 4

What is a Sustainable Economy?

A sustainable economy is an economic system that balances the well-being of people, the planet, and future generations. An ideal and sustainable economy is one which provides for the greatest amount of general well-being with the least amount of resource use and environmental harm. A sustainable economy strives for prosperity while safeguarding our planet and ensuring a better future for all.

Importance of Sustainable Economies for Healthy Communities

Sustainable economies play a crucial role in fostering healthy communities. A sustainable economy isn't just about financial gains; it's about creating a harmonious balance between economic, social and environmental factors. It allows communities to be partially or fully self sufficient on many levels, including financially.

- **Environmental Well-Being:** A sustainable economy prioritizes environmental health. It aims to reduce pollution, conserve natural resources, and protect ecosystems. When communities have clean air, water, and green spaces, residents experience better physical and mental well-being. By promoting sustainable practices, such as renewable energy, waste reduction, and efficient transportation, we create a healthier environment for everyone.
- **Quality of Life:** A sustainable economy improves the overall quality of life. It provides affordable housing, efficient transportation options, and access to essential services. When people can afford basic necessities, live in safe neighborhoods, and enjoy recreational spaces, their well-being improves.
- **Long-Term Prosperity:** Sustainable practices ensure that resources are used wisely, avoiding depletion. This leads to long-term prosperity. Healthy communities benefit from economic growth that doesn't compromise future generations' well-being.
- **Economic Resilience:** Sustainable practices enhance economic stability. Diversifying the economy, investing in local businesses, and supporting small enterprises creates a robust foundation. When communities have a resilient economy, they can withstand shocks (such as pandemics or natural disasters) and recover more effectively.
- **Social Equity:** A sustainable economy strives for equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. It ensures that no one is left behind. Healthy communities thrive when there is social inclusion, equal access to education, healthcare and employment opportunities. A sustainable economy contributes to reducing disparities and promoting social cohesion.

Benefits of Sustainable Economies in Communities

- **Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Sustainable economic activity leads to lower emissions of greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide), helping us to do our part to contribute to a healthier climate.
- **Creating More Jobs and Opportunities:** Sustainable communities provide a welcoming home to generate employment opportunities through green jobs in areas such as eco-tourism and by supporting local and small scaled businesses and sustainability focused innovation.
- **Preserving Natural Resources:** Sustainable economies prioritize resource conservation. By creating an atmosphere in a community to drive efficient use of resources and to minimize waste local ecosystems, forests, and water bodies will benefit.
- **Resilience and Long-Term Stability:** Sustainable economies are better equipped to withstand shocks (economic, environmental, or social). This is because they are rich with diversification and are less depending on the broader society to thrive as other businesses in traditional urban centers. There is a sense of community and connection in an eco community with both the people and the businesses - that helps to enable such resilience.
- **Improved Public Health:** Cleaner air, water, and reduced exposure to pollutants lead to better health outcomes. Active transportation is supported in eco communities by promoting walking, cycling, and shared transit to reduce sedentary lifestyles. Sustainable economies support a balance of health and social wellness which naturally nurtures improved health.
- **Global Reputation and Collaboration:** Nations with strong sustainability practices gain international respect and collaboration on global challenges (e.g., climate change) becomes more effective.



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Examples of Sustainable Economic Activities

Some examples of sustainable economic practices that contribute to long-term financial stability while minimizing negative impacts on the environment and society include:

- **Growth of Recycling and Repurposing:** Businesses, individuals, and communities can create an economic opportunity from upcycling and e-cycling!
- **Green Jobs Creation:** Careers related to sustainability, such as renewable energy technicians, environmental consultants, and green builders can play a role in a sustainable economy.
- **Sustainable Fish Farming:** Aquaculture practices that prioritize environmental impact and fish welfare could provide both a source of food and revenue into your community.
- **Training and Learning:** There is a growing interest and need for low impact living. An eco community has the perfect environment for people to come and learn through short term or long term experiences in sustainable community living. This could include learning in the areas of green building, eco community governance, gardening, including Indigenous medicine gardens. This is a common source of revenue for eco communities around the world.
- **Micro-Farming:** Small-scale, local farming reduces transportation emissions and supports community resilience. Rooftop gardens, urban agriculture and vertical gardens are all great options!
- **Circular Economy Models:** Designing and signing products for longevity, repairability, and recyclability. Emphasizing reuse, remanufacturing, and minimizing waste are a great way to ensure a sustainable economy.
- **Promoting Eco-Conscious Products:** Businesses that prioritize sustainability tap into the growing consumer demand for eco-conscious products. Reduced operational costs and innovation result from sustainable practices, fostering business resilience in a dynamically evolving global market.
- **Mental Health Supports:** Many eco communities have the added benefits of improved health and wellness. Experiences at an eco community and in the surrounding nature provide a service that could potential help aid those with mental health challenges, while creating a source of income.

Here are some creative ways to generate revenue in an eco community while maintaining a commitment to environmental sustainability:

- **Fundraising:** Organize specific projects, events, or campaigns within your community space to raise funds. Engage your community members in activities like quiz nights, fun runs, or potluck dinners. Make it easy for people to donate by setting up electronic and physical donation boxes and by using QR code posters.
- **Eco-Friendly Rental Properties:** Invest in adding properties in your community that support low impact and eco friendly living. These accommodations can be rented out on short or long term basis which creates a source of revenue while further educating and exposing new individuals to this lifestyle.
- **Sharing Economies:** Leverage your community assets by sharing them with others in return for income. Consider renting out parts of your property or space for events, workshops, or classes that are eco minded. Use existing online marketplaces to automate booking and payment processes.
- **Monetize Unused Spaces:** Transform and rent out areas that are currently underutilized in your community. Examples include converting a vacant room into a co-working space or offering storage solutions. Be creative and find ways to maximize the potential of your community space.

Remember, generating revenue doesn't have to compromise your eco-friendly values. By exploring these avenues, you can support your community's mission while protecting the earth.

