

Understanding Sustainable Community Development

Exercise

Frank Cookingham, December 2016

Consider the following descriptions of sustainable development (Retrieve from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/effect-community-participation-sustainability-based-calebwasilwa>; section 1.4):

There are many definitions of sustainable development, including this landmark one which first appeared in 1987: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Bruntland, 1987).

The ability of an organization to develop a strategy of growth and development that continues to function indefinitely (World Bank, 1992).

There are various ways of defining sustainability in the context of development projects which depend on the perspectives and priorities of the stakeholders (Cannon, 1999). Sustainability can be defined as the ability of a system of any kind to endure and be healthy over the long term.

A "sustainable society" is one that is healthy, vital, resilient, and able to creatively adapt to changing conditions over time.

Sustainability can also be defined as the continuing of project benefits beyond the project period, and the continuation of local action stimulated by the project, and the generation of successor services and initiatives as a result of Project-built local capacity (Honadle & VanSant as cited in Kamarah, 2001, p.262-263). The project is considered to be sustainable in the short term when "the project activities and benefits continued at least 3 years after the life of the project". This is the prominent definition that will be adopted for this study. (Bossert, 1990, p.1016).

For sustainable development to be realized, the community must play a role (Pearce 1994). Sustainable development should be defined by people themselves, to represent an ongoing process of self-realisation and empowerment. The community is supposed to be brought into focus through participation. Without the community becoming both the architects and engineers of the concept, sustainability of the project may not be achieved since the community is unlikely to take responsibility for something they do not own themselves. (Redclift 1992)

- List the key elements of sustainability that are appropriate for your agency's mission.

- For each element of mission sustainability describe the major processes or activities or conditions that weaken it, and those that strengthen it.
- Describe specifically what you in your position in the agency can do to overcome obstacles to mission sustainability and to facilitate progress toward mission sustainability.
- Describe implications of this reflection for your professional and spiritual development.

May many be blessed through your work and intercessory prayer.