



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Introduction to Sustainability

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



www.uwtsd.ac.uk

What is 'Sustainability'?



Definitions

- **Literal:** able to be continued over a period of time
- **Tolba, 1984a:** ecologically sustainable or environmentally sound development
- ★ • **Bundtland Commission, 1987:** development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs ★
- **Board on Sustainable Development, 2002:** reconciliation of society's goals with its environmental limits over the long term
- **The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015:** [development that] recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, combating inequality within and among countries, preserving the planet, creating sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and fostering social inclusion are linked to each other and are interdependent.

How have the definitions of Sustainability and Sustainable Development evolved over time?

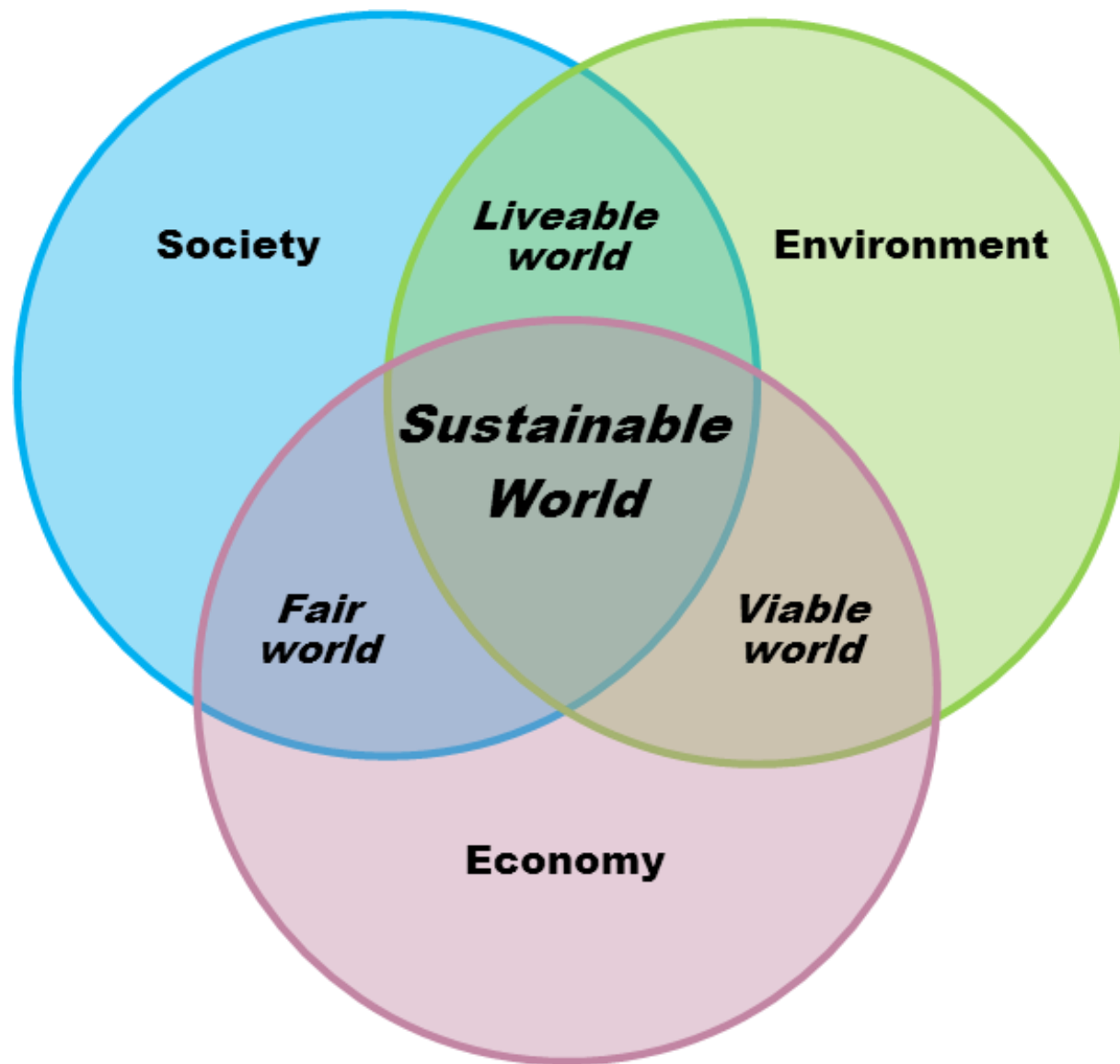
- Inter-generational focus
 - Thinking less about abstract “continuous growth” and more about the tangible effects of today’s actions on tomorrow’s outcomes
 - ‘How will our actions affect our children, or their children?’
- Inter-disciplinary focus
 - Thinking less about a single aspect of sustainability and more about the holistic nature of growth and development
 - ‘What is the price of continued economic growth?’
 - ‘What is the price of complete environmental protection?’
 - ‘What is the price of maintaining society as it currently exists?’
- Wider scope
 - Thinking more about the holistic nature of problems and how they relate to one another, rather than individually addressing each

Sustainability Now

- Who/what frames our current thinking on sustainability and sustainable development?
 - UN Sustainable Development Goals
 - OECD Better Life Index
 - Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015

The three pillars of Sustainability

- Environment
 - How can we maintain the ecological conditions that are necessary to human survival on earth?
- Society
 - How can we maintain the traditions, values, cultures, and institutions that we desire, fostering participation and inclusion?
- Economy
 - How can we continue to support the growth/expansion of the global economy and prevent a declining standard of living?



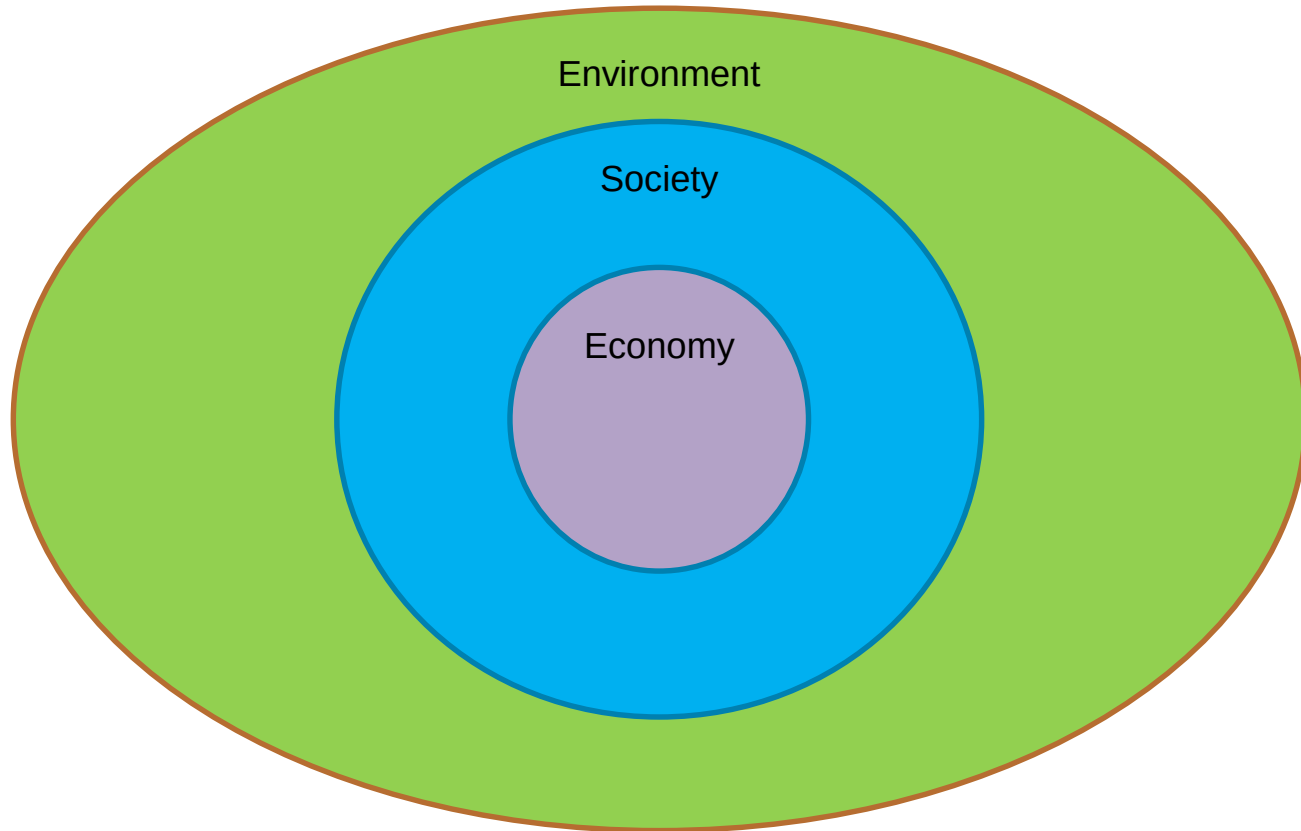
The Spaces In Between

- What does it mean to have a 'Viable' world?
- What does it mean to have a 'Fair' world?
- What does it mean to have a 'Liveable' world?
- What does it mean to have a 'Sustainable' world?

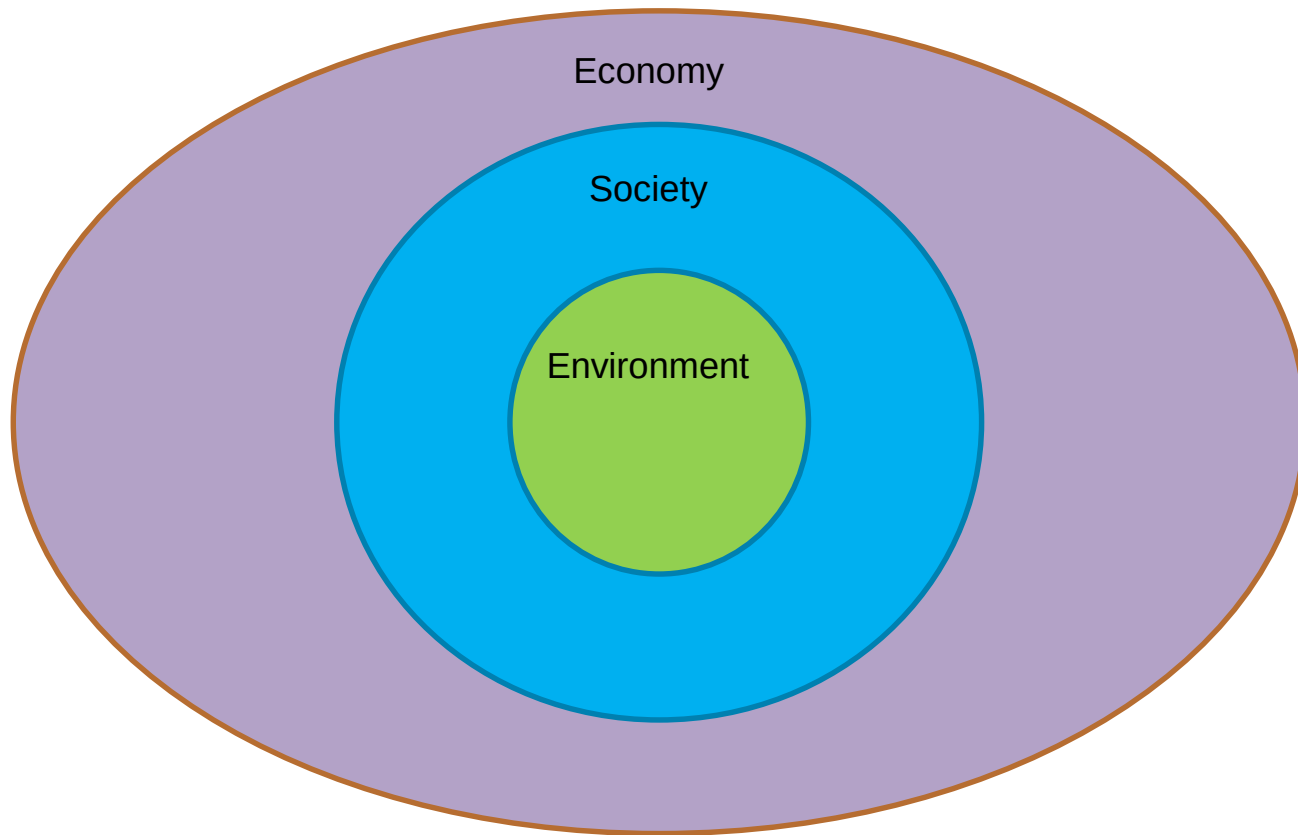
Main Theories

- Depending on whether you come from an environmentalist, humanist, or business viewpoint, the way that you view Sustainability will vary

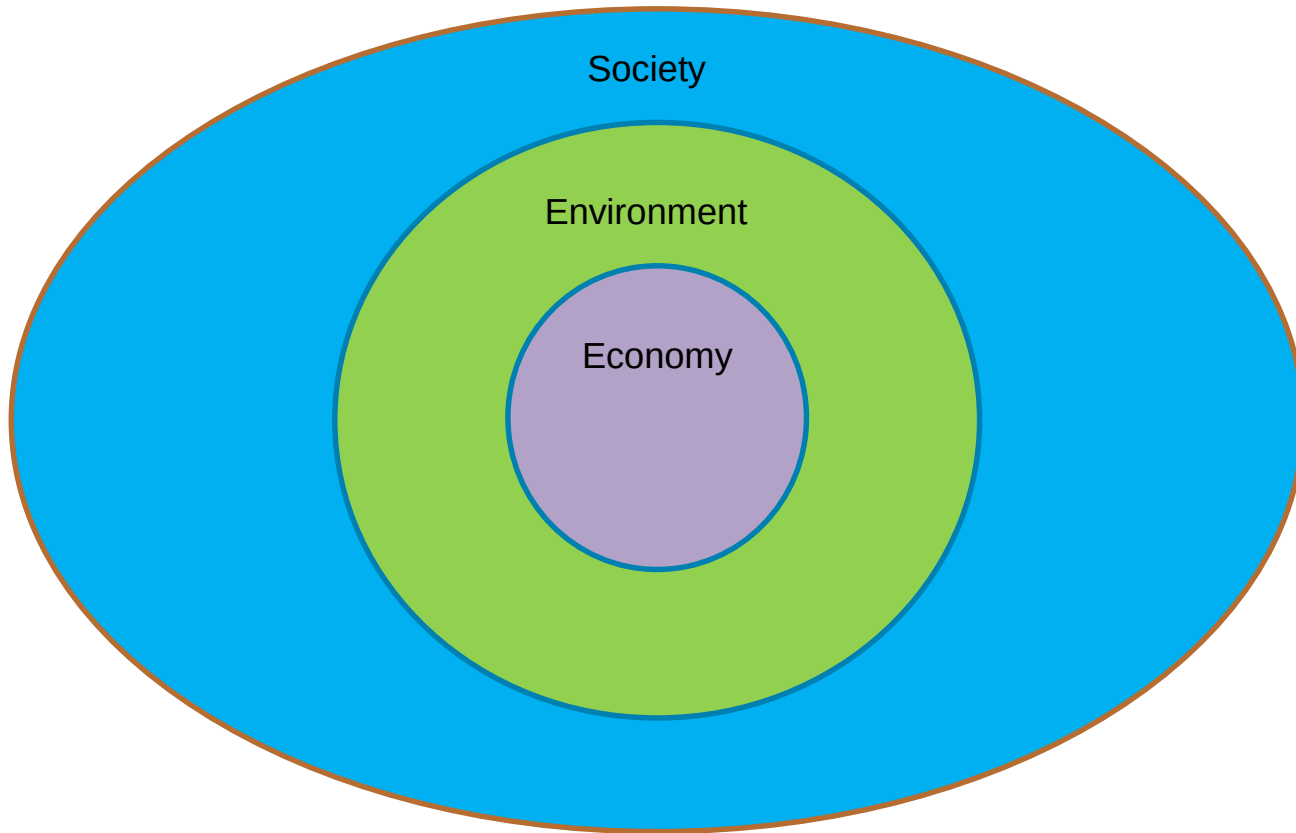
Environmentalist



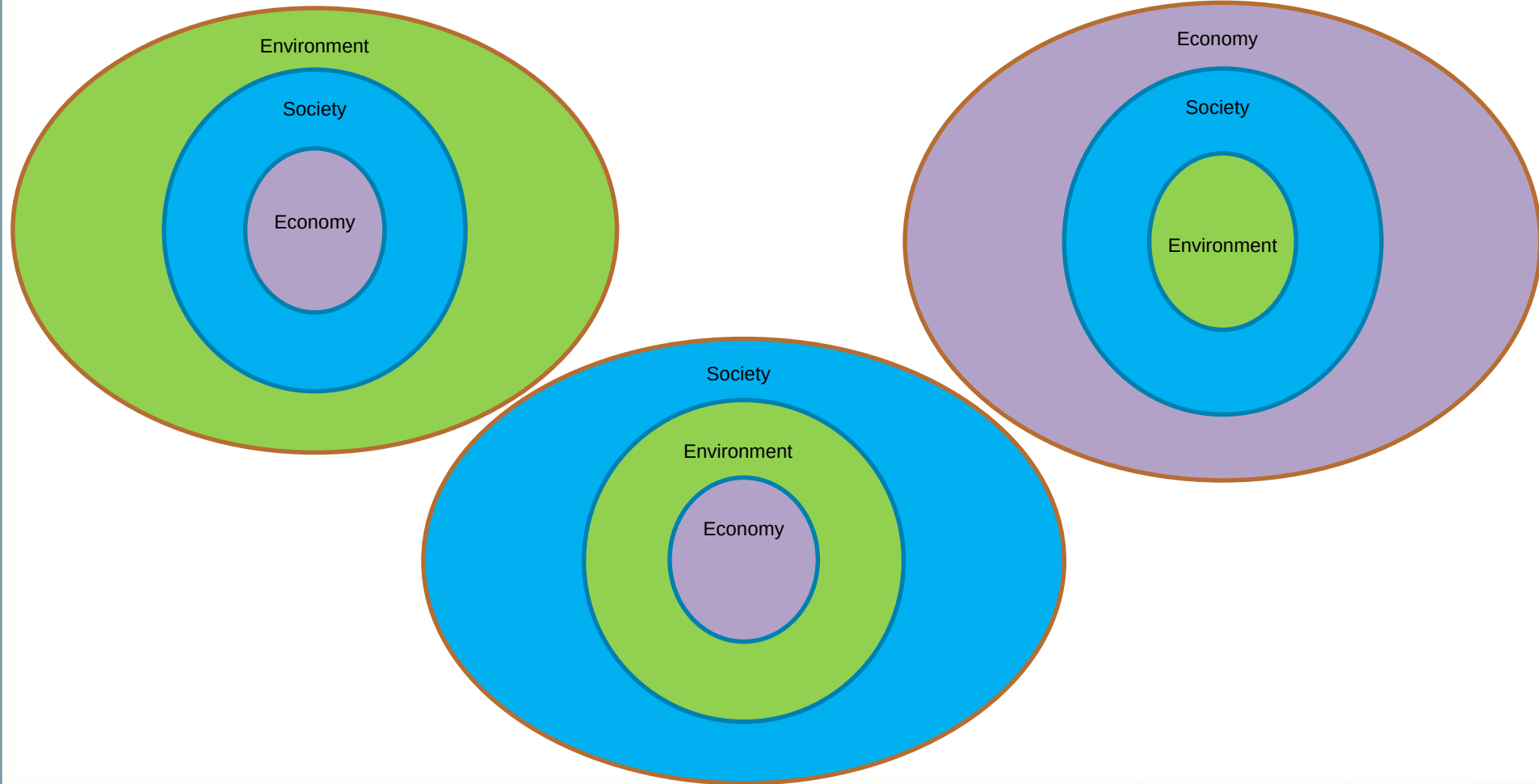
Economist



Humanist



What do YOU believe?



What makes Sustainability so difficult to achieve?

- Think for a moment about the vast complexity of each of the three pillars in turn
 - Imagine situations where we have tried to impact on a single system and have seen repercussions throughout others
 - Fixing Society: Eugene Schieffelin and Shakespeare's birds in Central Park
 - In an effort to improve society [by bringing the sounds of Shakespeare's plays to the masses through the park], E.S. impacted the environment [by introducing invasive species that damaged native birds] and the economy [with the high costs of attempting to conserve local wildlife]
 - Fixing the Economy: Japanese Knotweed and the Victorian Railways
 - In an effort to improve the economy [by using a soil-fixing plant to prevent erosion of railway lines and make transportation cheaper and easier to maintain] the Victorians impacted the environment [by introducing an invasive species that damaged native plants] and society [by damaging people's property, upsetting systems like mortgage applications, impacting the value of agricultural land, etc.]
 - Fixing the Environment: African Elephants in rural Kenya
 - Efforts to protect the environment [through maintaining and expanding habitats for African elephants] have led to conflict with society [as rapidly expanding communities overlap with protected elephant land] and damage to the economy [as farmers' livelihoods are damaged by 'elephant raids']