



WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG?

- ethical issues in sustainable development



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The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of several green leaves. The leaves are covered with numerous small, clear water droplets, suggesting a recent rain or dew. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the leaves and the glistening of the water.

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Ethics = The way we think; do we do right or wrong? Ethics is part of the subject of philosophy. Man's perception and reasoning about what is right and wrong.

Morality = The way we act; right or wrong. That is, our actions in accordance with generally accepted rules of right and wrong.

*Values = our common ethical basis.
We are part of a nation, a group or a workplace.*

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ETHICS AND THE WORLD AROUND US

We live in different kinds of networks and we are affected by our environment, such as parents, classmates, work, media, society

- these factors affect our ethics and morality and
- these factors influence and shape our values, opinions and actions

A BRIEF REPETITION OF THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In 1987, the United Nations (UN) defined the concept of sustainable development:

“Sustainable development is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Over the years, there has been a need to develop the concept of sustainable development. In 2015, the UN published the Sustainable Development Program; Agenda 2030. Agenda 2030 contains seventeen global goals for economically, socially and ecologically sustainable development.

Our current government program (2019) contains goals for the advancement of sustainable development in Finland.

Sustainable development is divided into three areas of sustainability: social, economic and ecological sustainability.

1) Ecological / Environmental sustainability=

Areas and factors that have to do with the earth's ecosystem and sustainability. Questions about greenhouse gases, water quality, biodiversity, soil health are examples of issues in this area. The production and consumption of goods and services must not affect the carrying capacity of ecosystems, ie. nature must have time to recreate scarce resources. Glossary: **ecosystem**; all living things and their habitat in an area, **biodiversity**; diversity of both species and habitats.

2) Social and cultural sustainability=

Areas and factors that have to do with the well-being of the individual and of society; it is about justice, equality, trust and participation in society and about man's ability to realize his basic human needs in society, such as education and work. In this process, concepts such as justice, tolerance, peace, democracy, inclusion, human dignity, equality, gender equality, rights / obligations, trust and confidence become important. Social sustainability is of crucial importance for a democratic society. A socially sustainable society can withstand stress, is adaptable and prone to change (resilient).

3) Economic sustainability =

Economics is about managing resources, for instance income, liabilities, savings, property, etc. **Economic sustainability** means using, nurturing and maintaining human and material resources to create long-term sustainable values (for example capital, knowledge, raw materials) through better utilization, reuse and recycling of both renewable and non-renewable resources. Economic sustainable development means, for example, that it is important how things are produced and what products people buy and consume. Social sustainability presupposes a functioning economy. In sustainable economics, the current discussion is whether continuous economic growth is necessary or not.

ETIK & ETHICS & ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY. ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Issues and reasoning in environmental ethics:

What is the role of humans, homo sapiens, in nature? Are we a species among others or the steward of nature? Do other species or ecosystems have an intrinsic value or an instrumental value (= are useful to humans)?

Anthropocentrism (Antropos = human) means that we must strive for human thriving, that is, use and develop our potential. In such a point of view, humans stand above nature, and thus have the right to use nature. Deep ecology means that humanity is an integral part of nature, and that we must let nature have its own way, without our involvement, for example when it comes to forest fires and the regulation of animal populations.

Ecocide is described as “extensive damage to or destruction of ecosystems or habitats within a defined geographical area”. There are two types of ecocide, one caused by humans, such as the devastation of the Amazon rainforest, or nuclear war.

The second is the course of nature, without direct human involvement, such as tsunamis and hurricanes. Today, work is being done to ensure that ecocide is defined as an international crime and that ecocide legislation could be part of the Rome Statute. www.endecocide.se.

The Rome Statute covers the most serious crimes affecting the entire international community and is the basic document of the International Criminal Court in The Hague (ICC). Crimes that are currently being dealt with in The Hague’s criminal court are genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression.

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS; CONTINUES

Overconsumption is a major ethical problem! Do we consume in a way that exceeds nature's carrying capacity? Do we consume in a way that leads to permanent damage? Are we consuming the natural resources of future generations? Does everyone have an equal right to natural resources?

Global population is increasing; how does it affect our environment?


Who pays the price for pollution? Those who pollute or those who benefit from the business or those who can afford it? Or does pollution happen at the cost of the poorest, who cannot influence the situation? For example, **do we export our environmental problems** such as hazardous waste like plastic, computers, nuclear waste? "Not in my backyard", for instance "wind power; yes, but not where I live".

Environmental refugees due to for instance drought, rising sea levels; how do we relate to this in the future?

The precautionary principle. If we are unsure whether an activity or an action is causing significant harm, we should exercise extra caution.

Risk = probability*consequence. The risks can be compared to each other, for example in energy production (nuclear power to coal), the side effects of medicines in comparison with benefits, food production; the benefit and harm of pesticides.

Are we passing on environmental problems to the next generations?

An aerial photograph of a dense evergreen forest, likely a spruce or fir forest, with many tall, thin trees packed closely together. The forest is the background for the entire page.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Positive examples of measures that have been taken over the years; the development of waste management, renewable energy sources replacing fossil fuels, awareness of the impact of chemicals on the environment, for example the impact of CFCs on the ozone layer. According to the Finnish Environment Institute, greenhouse gas emissions in Finland have decreased by 24% between 2005-2020.

Advancements in technology that improve ecological sustainability, such as developing artificial carbon sinks, improved energy efficiency.

The impact of education on future solutions in sustainability.

The ability of the circular economy to influence our consumption of natural resources.

ETHICS & SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Issues and discussions in social sustainability

For example, how can **equality and diversity** be improved when an organization / company employs new personnel? Anonymous recruitment?

Ethical dilemma between social and ecological sustainability, such as the creation of new jobs, which strengthens social sustainability in society. However, from an environmental point of view, it is not indifferent in which industries the jobs are created.

How can organizations, for example educational institutions, **strengthen inclusion, participation and community?**

How can we **build trust in the authorities**, for example government recommendations during the Covid 19-pandemic.

We must take into account the fact that **fundamental rights sometimes conflict with each other**, for example, freedom of movement, our right to health, freedom of trade, self-determination, etc.

ETHICS & FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Non-renewable resources. Is it economically sustainable that, for example, non-renewable natural resources are used mainly in rich countries?

Ownership of renewable resources. Should Finland share its clean drinking water and its biomass, that acts as a carbon sink, such as growing forests?

Circular economy improves economic sustainability. Give examples.

Ethical investments. Is it possible to invest in companies that work with financial sustainability? Give examples.

Income level. What should a reasonable salary cover?

Generational perspective. Who is paying for future pensions? How many people's subsistence is paid by one person's day work?

Taxes. Social and ecological sustainability presupposes that we pay taxes.

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