

Welcome to this **Dunod podcast** to help you with your studies. Today, we are going to talk about **sustainability**.

The term “sustainability” refers to the ability to maintain or support a process over time without depleting the planet’s natural or physical resources. It is often broken down into three core concepts: economic, environmental, and social.

- Economic sustainability focuses on preserving the natural resources providing physical inputs for economic production, including both renewable and exhaustible resources.
- Environmental sustainability focuses on the life support system, such as the atmosphere, water sources, or soil, that must be maintained for economic production or human life (and all forms of life) to even be possible.
- Social sustainability focuses on the human effects of economic systems, and includes attempts to eradicate poverty, hunger, and combat all forms of inequalities.

The United Nations created the World Commission on Environment and Development to study the connection between ecological health, economic development, and social equity. Its first report in 1987 has become the benchmark for defining sustainable development. This blueprint for attaining sustainability is defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Sustainability is a crucial concept in today’s world, and many businesses and governments have committed to reaching sustainable goals, such as reducing their environmental footprints and conserving resources as much as possible. Investors and business leaders are also actively embracing sustainability investments, known as “green investments”. However, skeptics have accused some companies of “greenwashing” -- the practice of misleading the public to make businesses look more environmentally friendly than they really are, to secure profits, market shares, and maintain their image and reputation among current and future consumers.

Here are a few examples of sustainability from around the world:

- ✚ The Zero-Budget Natural Farming movement in India, which promotes natural farming practices which do not require chemical fertilizers or pesticides, thus reducing the environmental impact of agricultural activities.
- ✚ Sea salt production on the Isle of Wight, in the U.K, using traditional methods to reduce its environmental impact.
- ✚ Banana leaf tableware in Asia: biodegradable tableware is made from banana leaves, so that less plastic and other non-biodegradable materials are used.
- ✚ Fairphone in The Netherlands produces smartphones specifically designed to be sustainable, with a focus on the ethical sourcing of materials and reducing electronic waste.
- ✚ In Japan, race car tires are recycled into new products to reduce the amount of waste dumped in landfills.

What can we do to be more sustainable in your daily life? Here are a few tips:

- ✚ Reduce your consumption, limit your waste, reuse anything you can, and recycle properly: the classic mantra for sustainability!
- ✚ Conserve water, as it is a very precious resource, and there is already a shortage in various parts of the world. Take shorter showers, fix leaks, and use low-flow toilets and faucets.
- ✚ Eat sustainably. That means choosing food grown and produced in environmentally friendly ways, locally. Plant-based foods and organic, locally grown produce are ideal to limit animal waste, pollution, deforestation, etc.
- ✚ Use energy-efficient appliances to save money and energy. Turn off your lights when you leave, program heaters and boilers, unplug appliances when not needed.
- ✚ Take advantage of public transportation or carpool. Cars are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.
- ✚ Buy sustainable products, made from sustainable materials, such as bamboo or recycled plastic or paper. Many products are also certified by various organizations, and they are trust-worthy.
- ✚ Support those businesses which are committed to sustainability and boycott those which are not.
- ✚ If possible, plant your own garden. Even people in apartment buildings can grow a few things on their balconies and window sills. Growing your own food and herbs is a great way to be more sustainable. Choose native plants adapted to your local climate and require less water and maintenance.
- ✚ Educate yourself and be aware of what sustainability means and how you can make a difference, even on your own scale.

In a nutshell: sustainability is an important concept nowadays which we cannot ignore as it can help us create a better future for ourselves and future generations.

Beware!

Sustainability and environmentalism are two concepts that are often used interchangeably, but they have different meanings and consequently are not interchangeable.

Sustainability refers to the ability to maintain or support a process over time without depleting natural or physical resources.

Environmentalism is an ideology and social movement dedicated to protecting the natural world from human-induced changes and man-made sources of pollution and environmental damage. That involves efforts to conserve biodiversity, reduce pollution, and support nature. Environmentalists work towards policy changes and environmental regulations, raise public awareness, and champion the preservation of wilderness, ecosystems, flora and fauna.

