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Dear Reader,

It brings a smile to my face to remember how barely six years ago my colleagues in HR, OD, plus business leaders and educators, would raise a curious eyebrow when I talked about "sustainability". These were the times before the Al Gore movie "An Inconvenient Truth", before the Nobel Prize and more importantly, before many climate-related catastrophes that caught the world's attention.

Today the term has become more accepted, but also its interpretations have multiplied, and numerous other terms and acronyms are emerging daily. So I thought it would be helpful to start a little Sustainability Lexicon.

Enjoy the reading!

Isabel Rimanoczy  
Editor

#### Quote of the Month

*"You create your own universe as you go along."*

Winston Churchill (1874-1965)



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## Sustainability Lexicon

By Isabel Rimanoczy

**Affluenza**

Term used by critics of capitalism and consumerism. "A painful,

	contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of more" (John de Graaf, David Wann & Thomas H. Naylor). Often results in an epidemic of stress, overwork, waste and indebtedness caused by the pursuit of financial "success". An unsustainable addiction to economic growth.
<b>Biodiversity</b>	The degree of variation of life forms within a given ecosystem, or an entire planet. Biodiversity is a measure of the health of ecosystems. Greater biodiversity implies greater health.
<b>Biomimicry</b>	The examination of nature, its models, systems, processes, and elements to emulate or take inspiration from in order to solve human problems.
<b>Biosphere</b>	The global sum of all ecosystems. It can also be called the zone of life on Earth, a closed (apart from solar and cosmic radiation) and self-regulating system. From the broadest biophysiological point of view, the biosphere is the global ecological system integrating all living beings and their relationships, including their interaction with the elements of the lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere. The biosphere is postulated to have evolved, beginning through a process of biogenesis or biopoesis, at least some 3.5 billion years ago.
<b>Carbon Neutral Lifestyles</b>	Having a net zero carbon footprint, refers to achieving net zero carbon emissions by balancing a measured amount of carbon released with an equivalent amount sequestered or offset.
<b>Carrying Capacity</b>	The number of individuals an environment can support without significant negative impacts to the given organism and its environment given the food, habitat, water and other necessities available in the environment.
<b>Circular Material Flow</b>	Production that reuses materials as much as possible.
<b>Corporate Citizenship</b>	Term used to describe a company's role in, or responsibilities towards, society.
<b>Cradle to Cradle Design</b>	Industrial and social framework that seeks to create systems that are not just efficient but essentially waste free. It began as responsibility "cradle to grave", meaning the manufacturer being responsible for the disposal of the product, evolved into "cradle to cradle", where the manufacturer reuses or recycles the components, to avoid any waste.
<b>CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)</b>	Also called corporate conscience, citizenship, social performance, or sustainable responsible business, CSR is a form of corporate self-

	<p>regulation integrated into a business model. CSR policy functions as a built-in, self-regulating mechanism whereby business monitors and ensures its active compliance with the spirit of the law, ethical standards, and international norms. The goal of CSR is to embrace responsibility for the company's actions and to encourage a positive impact through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and all other members of the public sphere. Furthermore, CSR-focused businesses would proactively promote the public interest by encouraging community growth and development, and voluntarily eliminating practices that harm the public sphere, regardless of legality. CSR is the deliberate inclusion of public interest into corporate decision-making, and the honoring of a triple bottom line: people, planet, profit.</p>
<b>Deep Ecology Principles</b>	<p>Principles for the well-being of all life on Earth and the richness and diversity of life forms. This is only compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population and the end of human interference with the nonhuman world. To achieve this, deep ecologists advocate policies for basic economic, technological, and ideological structures that will improve the quality of life rather than the standard of living.</p>
<b>Dematerialization</b>	<p>In economics, dematerialization refers to the absolute or relative reduction in the quantity of materials required to serve economic functions in society. In common terms, dematerialization means doing more with less.</p>
<b>Earth Charter</b>	<p>International declaration of fundamental values and principles considered useful by its supporters for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. Created by a global consultation process, and endorsed by organizations representing millions of people, the Charter "seeks to inspire in all peoples a sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family, the greater community of life, and future generations."<sup>[1]</sup> It calls upon humanity to help create a global partnership at a critical juncture in history. The Earth Charter's ethical vision proposes that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace are interdependent and indivisible.</p>
<b>Eco-design</b>	<p>Ecodesign is an approach to design of a product with special consideration for the environmental impacts of the product during its whole lifecycle. In a life cycle assessment the life cycle of a product is usually divided into procurement, manufacture, use and disposal.</p>
<b>Eco-efficiency</b>	<p>The term eco-efficiency was coined by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) in its 1992 publication "Changing Course". It is based on the concept of creating more goods and services while using fewer resources and creating less waste and pollution. The 1992 Earth Summit endorsed eco-efficiency as a means for companies to implement Agenda 21 in the private sector, and the term has become synonymous with a management philosophy geared</p>

	<p>towards sustainability. According to the WBCSD definition, eco-efficiency is achieved through the delivery of "competitively priced goods and services that satisfy human needs and bring quality of life while progressively reducing environmental impacts of goods and resource intensity throughout the entire life-cycle to a level at least in line with the Earth's estimated carrying capacity." This concept describes a vision for the production of economically valuable goods and services while reducing the ecological impacts of production. In other words eco-efficiency means producing more with less. According to the WBCSD, critical aspects of eco-efficiency are: A reduction in the material intensity of goods or services; A reduction in the energy intensity of goods or services; Reduced dispersion of toxic materials; Improved recyclability; Maximum use of renewable resources; Greater durability of products; Increased service intensity of goods and services.</p>
<b>Ecological Footprint</b>	<p>The measure of human demand on the Earth's ecosystems. It compares human demand with planet Earth's ecological capacity to regenerate. It represents the amount of biologically productive land and sea area needed to regenerate the resources a human population consumes and to absorb and render harmless the corresponding waste. Using this assessment, it is possible to estimate how much of the Earth (or how many planet Earths) it would take to support humanity if everybody lived a given lifestyle. For 2006, humanity's total ecological footprint was estimated at 1.4 planet Earths — in other words, humanity uses ecological services 1.4 times as fast as Earth can renew them.</p>
<b><u>Ecolabelling</u></b>	<p>Ecolabels and Green Stickers are labeling systems for food and consumer products. Ecolabels are often voluntary, but Green Stickers are mandated by law in North America for major appliances and automobiles. They are a form of sustainability measurement directed at consumers, intended to make it easy to take environmental concerns into account when shopping. Some labels quantify pollution or energy consumption by way of index scores or units of measurement; others simply assert compliance with a set of practices or minimum requirements for sustainability or reduction of harm to the environment.</p>
<b>Eco-municipalities</b>	<p>The eco-municipality movement is participatory, involving community members in a bottom-up approach. They are local government area that have adopted ecological and social justice values in their charter. The development of eco-municipalities stems from changing systems in Sweden, where more than seventy municipal governments have accepted varying principles of sustainability in their operations as well as community-wide decision making processes. The purpose of these policies is to increase the overall sustainability of the community.</p>
<b><u>Ecosystem Services</u></b>	<p>Humankind benefits from a multitude of resources and processes that are supplied by natural ecosystems. Collectively, these benefits are known as ecosystem services and include products like clean drinking water and processes such as the decomposition of wastes. While scientists and environmentalists have discussed ecosystem services for decades, these services were popularized and their definitions</p>

	formalized by the United Nations 2004 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), a four-year study involving more than 1,300 scientists worldwide.
<b>Eco-villages – Transition Towns</b>	Transition towns and rural eco-villages seek to create self-reliant communities based on principles of simple living, which maximize self-sufficiency particularly in food production. These principles, on a broader scale, underpin the concept of a bioregional economy. Other approaches, loosely based around new urbanism, are successfully reducing environmental impacts by altering the built environment to create and preserve sustainable cities which support sustainable transport. Residents in compact urban neighborhoods drive fewer miles, and have significantly lower environmental impacts across a range of measures, compared with those living in sprawling suburbs.
<b>Environmental Performance Index</b>	Method of quantifying and numerically benchmarking the environmental performance of a country's policies. This index was developed from the Pilot Environmental Performance Index, first published in 2002, and designed to supplement the environmental targets set forth in the U.N. Millennium Development Goals.
<b>Ethical Consumerism</b>	Intentional purchase of products and services that the customer considers to be made ethically. This may mean with minimal harm to or exploitation of humans, animals and/or the natural environment. Ethical consumerism is practiced through 'positive buying' in that ethical products are favored, or through 'moral boycott', that is negative purchasing and company-based purchasing.
<b>Extended Product Responsibility (EPR)</b>	Also known as product stewardship, EPR uses financial incentives to encourage manufacturers to design environmentally-friendly products by holding producers liable for the costs of managing their products at end of life. This tactic attempts to relieve local governments of the costs of managing certain priority products by forcing manufacturers to internalize the cost of recycling within the product price. EPR promotes that producers (usually brand owners) have the greatest control over product design and marketing and therefore have the greatest ability and responsibility to reduce toxicity and waste. EPR may take the form of a reuse, buy-back, or recycling program, or in energy production from waste materials. The producer may also choose to delegate this responsibility to a third party, a so-called producer responsibility organization (PRO), which is paid by the producer for spent-product management. In this way, EPR shifts responsibility for waste from government to private industry, obliging producers, importers and/or sellers to internalize waste management costs in their product prices and ensuring the sustainable and safe handling of the remains of their products.
<b>Global Compact</b>	The United Nations Global Compact is a strategic policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption.

<p><b>Global Reporting Initiative</b></p>	<p>The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) produces one of the world's most prevalent standards for sustainability reporting — also known as ecological footprint reporting, Environmental Social Governance (ESG) reporting, Triple Bottom Line (TBL) reporting, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reporting. Sustainability reporting is a form of value reporting where an organization publicly communicates their economic, environmental, and social performance. GRI seeks to make sustainability reporting by all organizations as routine as, and comparable to, financial reporting. GRI Guidelines are regarded to be widely used. As of January 2009, more than 1,500 organizations from 60 countries use the Guidelines to produce their sustainability reports.</p>
<p><b>Greenhouse Effect</b></p>	<p>Process by which thermal radiation from a planetary surface is absorbed by atmospheric greenhouse gases, and is re-radiated in all directions. Since part of this re-radiation is back towards the surface, energy is transferred to the surface and the lower atmosphere. As a result, the temperature there is higher than it would be if direct heating by solar radiation were the only warming mechanism.</p>
<p><b>Greenhouse Gases</b></p>	<p>The primary greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone. Anthropogenic greenhouse gases are due to human activity from: burning of fossil fuels and deforestation leading to higher carbon dioxide concentrations in the air; land use change (mainly deforestation in the tropics) accounts for up to one third of total anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; livestock enteric fermentation and manure management, paddy rice farming, land use and wetland changes, pipeline losses, and covered vented landfill emissions leading to higher methane atmospheric concentrations. Many of the newer style fully vented septic systems that enhance and target the fermentation process also are sources of atmospheric methane; use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in refrigeration systems, and use of CFCs and halons in fire suppression systems and manufacturing processes; agricultural activities, including the use of fertilizers, that lead to higher nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) concentrations.</p>
<p><b>Greenwashing</b></p>	<p>The deceptive use of green PR or green marketing in order to promote a misleading perception that a company's policies or products (such as goods or services) are environmentally friendly.</p>
<p><b>Gross Happiness Index</b></p>	<p>The concept of gross national happiness (GNH) was developed in an attempt to define an indicator that measures quality of life or social progress in more holistic and psychological terms than gross domestic product (GDP). The term was coined in 1972 by Bhutan's former King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who has opened Bhutan to the age of modernization, soon after the demise of his father, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk. He used the phrase to signal his commitment to building an economy that would serve Bhutan's unique culture based on Buddhist spiritual values.</p>
<p><b>Human Development Index</b></p>	<p>The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic used to</p>

	<p>rank countries by level of "human development" and to separate developed (high development), developing (middle development), and underdeveloped (low development) countries. The statistic is composed from data on life expectancy, education and per-capita GNI (Gross National Income) as an indicator of standard of living).</p>
<b>Industrial Ecology</b>	<p>Study of material and energy flows through industrial systems. The global industrial economy can be modeled as a network of industrial processes that extract resources from the Earth and transform those resources into commodities which can be bought and sold to meet the needs of humanity. Industrial ecology seeks to quantify the material flows and document the industrial processes that make modern society function. Industrial ecologists are often concerned with the impacts that industrial activities have on the environment, with use of the planet's supply of natural resources, and with problems of waste disposal. Industrial ecology is a young but growing multidisciplinary field of research which combines aspects of engineering, economics, sociology, toxicology and the natural sciences.</p>
<b>IPCC (International Panel for Climate Change)</b>	<p>International Panel for Climate Change: scientific intergovernmental body tasked with reviewing and assessing the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change. It provides the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic consequences, notably the risk of climate change caused by human activity. The panel was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), two agencies of the United Nations.</p>
<b>ISO 140001</b>	<p>ISO 14000 is a series of documents relating to the implementation of an Environmental Management System. The objective is for ISO 14001 to control environmental impact of the organization's actions and continually increase the environmental performance as measured against objectives. Many organizations decide to implement ISO 14001 and obtain registration because it assures customers, shareholders, suppliers, regulators and the community at large that the company has a good Environmental Management System (EMS) in place. An organization with an effective EMS will typically meet customer expectations and comply with regulations better than an organization that does not have an effective EMS. Many organizations require their suppliers to have ISO 14001 Registration.</p>
<b>LEED (Leadership in Energy &amp; Environmental Design)</b>	<p>Leadership in Energy &amp; Environmental Design (LEED) is an internationally recognized green building certification system, providing third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies intended to improve performance in metrics such as energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.</p>

<b>Lifecycle Analysis</b>	A life cycle assessment (LCA) —also known as life cycle analysis, ecobalance, and cradle-to-grave analysis — is a technique to assess each and every impact associated with all the stages of a process from cradle-to-grave (i.e., from raw materials through materials processing, manufacture, distribution, use, repair and maintenance, and disposal or recycling). LCA's can help avoid a narrow outlook on environmental, social and economic concerns. This is achieved by: Compiling an inventory of relevant energy and material inputs and environmental releases; Evaluating the potential impacts associated with identified inputs and releases; Interpreting the results to help you make a more informed decision.
<b>Millennium Ecosystem Assessment</b>	International synthesis by over 1000 of the world's leading biological scientists that analyses the state of the Earth's ecosystems and provides summaries and guidelines for decision-makers. It concludes that human activity is having a significant and escalating impact on the biodiversity of world ecosystems, reducing both their resilience and biocapacity. The report refers to natural systems as humanity's "life-support system", providing essential "ecosystem services". The assessment measures 24 ecosystem services concluding that only four have shown improvement over the last 50 years, 15 are in serious decline, and five are in a precarious condition.
<b>Millennium Development Goals</b>	Eight international development goals that all 192 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. They include eradicating extreme poverty, reducing child mortality rates, fighting disease epidemics such as AIDS, and developing a global partnership for development.
<b>Natural Capital</b>	Natural capital is the extension of the economic notion of capital (manufactured means of production) to goods and services relating to the natural environment. Natural capital is thus the stock of natural ecosystems that yields a flow of valuable ecosystem goods or services into the future. For example, a stock of trees or fish provides a flow of new trees or fish, a flow which can be indefinitely sustainable. Natural capital may also provide services like recycling wastes or water catchment and erosion control. Since the flow of services from ecosystems requires that they function as whole systems, the structure and diversity of the system are important components of natural capital.
<b>Permaculture</b>	Sustainable land use design. This is based on ecological and biological principles, often using patterns that occur in nature to maximize effect and minimize work. Permaculture aims to create stable, productive systems that provide for human needs, harmoniously integrating the land with its inhabitants. Elements in a system are viewed in relationship to other elements, where the outputs of one element become the inputs of another. Within a Permaculture system, work is minimized, "wastes" become resources, productivity and yields increase, and environments are restored. Permaculture principles can be applied to any environment, at any scale from dense urban settlements to individual homes, from farms to entire regions.



	The first recorded modern practice of permaculture as a systematic method was by Austrian farmer Sepp Holzer in the 1960s, but the method was scientifically developed by Australians Bill Mollison and David Holmgren and their associates during the 1970s.
<b>PRI (Principles of Responsible Investment)</b>	Principles of Responsible Investment (PRI) is an initiative and a set of aspirational and voluntary guidelines for investors wishing to address environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) issues. Over 850 companies have signed up to the principles.
<b>PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education)</b>	Principles for Responsible Management Education. UN-sponsored initiative to inspire and champion responsible management education, research and thought-leadership globally. The United Nations has recognised the central role of education, and has declared a decade of education for sustainable development, 2005–2014, which aims to "challenge us all to adopt new behaviors and practices to secure our future".
<b>Product Stewardship</b>	Product stewardship is a concept whereby environmental protection centers around the product itself, and everyone involved in the lifespan of the product is called upon to take up responsibility to reduce its environmental impact. For manufacturers, this includes planning for, and if necessary, paying for the recycling or disposal of the product at the end of its useful life. This may be achieved, in part, by redesigning products to use fewer harmful substances, to be more durable, reusable and recyclable, and to make products from recycled materials. For retailers and consumers, this means taking an active role in ensuring the proper disposal or recycling of an end-of-life product.
<b>Slow Food</b>	International movement founded by Carlo Petrini in 1986. Promoted as an alternative to fast food, it strives to preserve traditional and regional cuisine and encourages farming of plants, seeds and livestock characteristic of the local ecosystem. It was the first established part of the broader Slow movement. The movement has since expanded globally to over 132 countries. Its goals of sustainable foods and promotion of local small businesses are paralleled by a political agenda directed against globalization of agricultural products.
<b>Social Entrepreneur</b>	A social entrepreneur recognizes a social problem and uses entrepreneurial principles to organize, create and manage a venture to achieve social change.
<b>Sustainability</b>	"Sustainability is improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting eco-systems", IUCN/UNEP/WWF (1991). "Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living." Gland, Switzerland. Retrieved on: 2009-03-29.
<b>Sustainable Development</b>	The most popular definition is that of the Brundtland Commission of


	<p>the United Nations on March 20, 1987: "sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This definition is widely used, yet requires further defining . Is it the 'development' that is to be sustainable or our present state we want to sustain? What are our 'needs' and how are they different to 'wants'?; when we say 'future generations' — how many?; and how do we know what they will 'need'? Inherent within the interpretation of this definition is the problem of differing interpretations based on different values systems. One person's need is another's luxury.</p>
<p><b>The Living Planet Index (LPI)</b></p>	<p>The LPI provides the general public, scientists and policy-makers with information on trends in the abundance of the world's vertebrates and offers insights into which habitats or ecosystems have species that are declining most rapidly. This information can be used to define the impact humans are having on the planet and for guiding actions to address biodiversity loss. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is working in collaboration with the Institute of Zoology (IoZ), the research division of the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), to further develop the project which began in 1997. Between 1970 and 2003, the index fell by about 30%. This global trend suggests that we are degrading natural ecosystems at a rate unprecedented in human history.</p>
<p><b>Tragedy of the Commons.</b></p>	<p>The tragedy of the commons is a dilemma arising from the situation in which multiple individuals, acting independently and rationally consulting their own self-interest, will ultimately deplete a shared limited resource even when it is clear that it is not in anyone's long-term interest for this to happen. This dilemma was first described in an influential article titled "The Tragedy of the Commons," written by Garrett Hardin and first published in the journal <i>Science</i> in 1968.</p>
<p><b>Triple Bottom Line</b></p>	<p>Also known as "people, planet, profit" or "the three pillars" captures an expanded spectrum of values and criteria for measuring organizational (and societal) success: economic, ecological and social.</p>
<p><b>World Business Council for Sustainable Development</b></p>	<p>The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) is a CEO-led, global association of some 200 international companies dealing exclusively with business and sustainable development. The WBCSD sees itself as a catalyst, both in the sense that it can catalyze businesses to buy into the concept of sustainable development and to change the way they run their operations. The organization also sees itself as a catalyst in the process of global policy development, by representing and promoting the role of business in achieving sustainable development. Its origins date back to the 1992 Rio Summit, when Stephan Schmidheiny, a Swiss business entrepreneur, was appointed chief adviser for business and industry to the Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), better known as the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit of 1992.</p>




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