

Social Sustainability

Scouts4GreenApp

3.1. Introduction to Social Sustainability



Social Sustainability Curriculum 3.1:

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

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I. 2023 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals & Social Sustainability



The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



In 2015 United Nations member states approved and adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

The 2030 Agenda lists 17 Sustainable Development Goals, shortened as SDGs, which aim to address a range of interconnected global challenges, as well as promote sustainable development by the year 2030.

The 2030 Agenda is a universal call-to-action; together we can end poverty, hunger, protect our planet and ensure equitable prosperity.

The 17 SDGs include further 169 targets and may be divided into three themes: economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and social sustainability.

One of the central purposes of the 2030 Agenda is to foster global partnerships for sustainable development, bringing together governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations.



The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



The successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda relies on the following actions;

- Sufficient funding
- Transfer of technology
- Capacity building
- International cooperation

Each country committed to the 2030 Agenda produce regular country reviews and report on their progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Every year the United Nations Secretary General presents an annual SDG Progress report, which collects the national data of participant countries. The reports may be accessed here:

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals#implementation>

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



For the 2030 Agenda to succeed each country must:

- 1) Commit to the advancement of the SDGs
- 2) Recognize that each of the SDGs are interconnected
- 3) Take collective action to make progress

How do the SDGs benefit our planet?

- 1) They encourage the creation of a global framework for cooperation
- 2) Increase sustainability on planning and delivery level of policy actions
- 3) Advance a more equitable and democratic world, where more people are heard in decision-making processes
- 4) Built resilience for future challenges faced by the planet and humankind

What is Social Sustainability?

One of the themes of the Sustainable Development Goals is Social Sustainability.

The SDGs covered by Social Sustainability include:

SDG 1: No poverty

SDG 2: Zero hunger

SDG 3: Good health and well-being

SDG 4: Quality education

SDG 5: Gender equality

SDG I: No Poverty

Key target action: END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

HOW:

- Eradicating extreme poverty by 2030:
 - currently 836 million people live in extreme poverty
- Halving the proportion of people living in poverty by 2030
- Implementing appropriate social security systems and measures
- Ensuring everyone has an equal right to economic resources, basic services, ownership, and control over land and other forms of property
- Building resilience of the poor and the vulnerable to climate related incidents



SDG2: Zero Hunger

Key target action: END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

HOW:

- Ending hunger by 2030:
 - currently 795 million people suffer from malnutrition
- Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food
- Ending all forms of malnutrition
- Ensuring sustainable food production
- Doubling agricultural productivity incomes of small-scale food producers by 2030
- Implementing resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, helping maintain ecosystems
- Strengthening capacity to adapt to climate change
- Maintaining the genetic diversity of species



SDG3: Good Health and Well-Being

Key target action: ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

HOW:

- Reducing global maternity death rate by 2030
- Ending preventable deaths in newborns and children under 5 years of age:
 - currently 6 million children die each year before the age of 5
- Ending diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and combatting communicable diseases, such as hepatitis
- Reducing premature mortality rate from non-communicable diseases by a third by 2030
- Promoting mental health and well-being
- Halving the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
- Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services
- Achieving universal healthcare coverage
- Substantially reducing the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and pollution, as well as environmental contamination



SDG4: Quality Education

Key target action: ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

HOW:

- Ensuring completely free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education for all by 2030:
 - Currently 57 million children are left outside the school-system in developing countries
 - 103 million people do not have necessary reading skills
- Ensuring that everyone has access to quality early-childhood development, care and pre-primary education
- Ensuring equal access for all to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education
- Improving relevant skills for employment of young adults
- Eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to education and vocational training
- Ensuring that all youth and substantial number of adults achieve literacy and numeracy
- Ensuring that all learners acquire the skills and knowledge to promote sustainable development



SDG5: Gender Equality

Key target action: ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

HOW:

- Ending all forms of discrimination against girls and women everywhere
- Eliminating harmful gendered practices, such as child-, early- and forced marriages and female genital mutilation
- Recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work
- Ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making
- Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights



How does Social Sustainability relate to the other aspects of sustainability?



Social Sustainability is one of the three **interconnected** themes of sustainability, with the other two being Economic Sustainability and Environmental Sustainability. These themes are sometimes referred together as the **Triple Bottom Line**.

Understanding the relationships between these three themes is central to advancing them in a balanced and **holistic** manner, which leads to the creation of **resilient** communities across our planet.

Next we will look at how Social Sustainability relates to Economic and Environmental Sustainabilities.

Then we will explain the terms highlighted here in yellow and relate to their significance in understanding the themes of sustainability.

Relationship between Social Sustainability and Economic Sustainability

Social Sustainability and **Economic Sustainability** are intertwined.

Economic systems should support social well-being of people by:

- Providing equitable employment opportunities
- Offering fair wages
- Ensuring equitable distribution of available resources
- Advance socially sustainable practices, including inclusive employment policies and responsible business conduct
- Contributing to long term economic stability and resilience



Relationship between Social Sustainability and Environmental Sustainability



Social Sustainability and **Environmental Sustainability** are also closely linked.

- ↓ Well-functioning and balanced environment is the setting for the society to sustain itself in a healthy and equitable way.
- ↓ Harmful practices for the environment also have a negative impact on human health (SDG3) and their livelihoods (SDG8: Decent work and Economic Growth).
- ↓ As the environment declines through pollution and climate change, this will affect all communities, but especially those most vulnerable, such as indigenous communities and children.

How can Social Sustainability be advanced through the SDGs?



- The 17 SDGs together create a comprehensive framework for addressing shared challenges and the promotion of sustainability through the three themes for sustainability (Economic, Social, Environmental).
- In order to advance Social Sustainability through the relevant SDGs, social considerations need to be included in the planning, implementation and evaluation of initiatives.
- The following chart describes how Social Sustainability can be advanced through the most relevant Sustainable Development Goals for the theme.

Sustainable Development Goal	How to advance Social Sustainability
SDG1: No Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement policies and programmes that promote inclusive economic growth• Provide social protection to vulnerable groups• Ensure access to basic services
SDG2: Zero Hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement programmes that promote sustainable agriculture• Improve access to nutritious food• Enhance food distribution systems
SDG3: Good Health and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launch initiatives that focus on universal health coverage, disease prevention and mental health

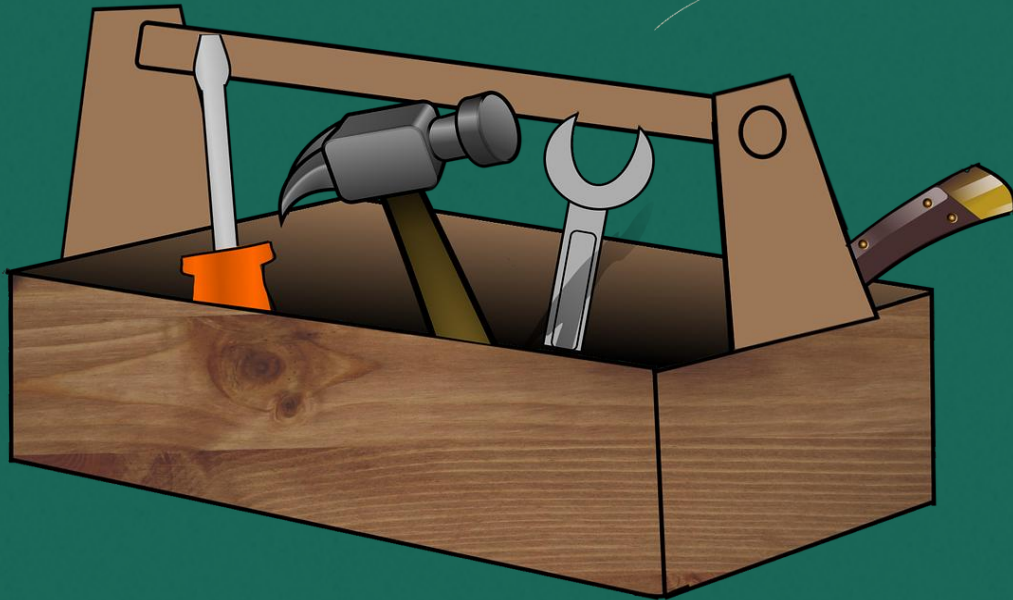
Sustainable Development Goal	How to advance Social Sustainability
SDG4: Quality Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all• Promoting lifelong learning opportunities• Addressing gender disparities in education
SDG5: Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminate discrimination, violence and bias based on gender• Ensure equal opportunities for education and employment
SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote policies that advance full and productive employment, fair wages, and safe working environments

Sustainable Development Goal	How to advance Social Sustainability
SDG10: Reduced Inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote initiatives that address income inequality, social discrimination, and marginalization of certain groups
SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create inclusive, safe and resilient cities• Improve housing, transportation and access to public spaces
SDG16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthening institutions• Promoting the rule of law• Ensuring the access to justice
SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fostering cooperation and partnerships between governments, businesses, civil society and other relevant stakeholders

2. Social Sustainability in the VET Landscape



Social Sustainability's significance to VET ecosystem



- In the context of vocational education and training (VET), Social Sustainability becomes a relevant theme as it directly impacts the trained workforce, communities and overall societal fabric.
- Social Sustainability directly focuses on the well-being of individuals and communities. Therefore, VET learners need to be aware of the ways in which Social Sustainability relates to the VET ecosystem.
- In this section we also look at Social Capital and how building it will help you gain skills necessary in the job market.

Three ways in which Social Sustainability relates to the VET ecosystem

ETHICAL EMPLOYMENT
PRACTICES

LIFELONG LEARNING

ADDRESSING
TECHNOLOGICAL
CHANGES



Three ways in which Social Sustainability relates to the VET ecosystem

VET programmes should instill ethical values and responsible practices in learners, not just as employees, but also as ethical members of society.

These include:

- Fair labour practices
- Respect for human rights
- Environmentally responsible behaviour in the workplace

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VET should encourage a lifelong learning approach.

Education and training should not be limited to a single phase of life, but be adaptable to changing circumstances and evolving needs of the workplace.

As learners update their skills continuously throughout their careers, they contribute to personal development and resilience of societies.

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VET programmes need to adapt to technological advancements so that learners can continuously learn relevant skills.

Adaptability is central to Social Sustainability, as it helps people to remain employed in the changing jobmarket, while reducing the risk of unemployment and social exclusion.

Building Social Capital



- Social Capital are a set of resources and benefits that individuals and groups develop through relationships and networks.
- In essence, Social Capital is the value within social relationships and the potential to access resources, information and support through these connections.
- Social Capital may at best have positive consequences: advancing cooperation, promoting social trust, contribute to the overall well-being of a community, enhance economic opportunities for individuals and communities.
- At worst, Social Capital can exclude individuals and groups, leading to inequality, and situations where some groups have more access to resources than others.
- **Social Capital may be divided into two groups:**

BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

- Strong ties and connections within a specific group or community.
- Close relationships between individuals who share similar characteristics (e.g. family members, close friends, members of specific social or cultural group)
- Bonding Social Capital strengthens social cohesion within a group

BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL

- Connections between different social groups or individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Bridging Social Capital facilitates the exchange of information and resources across a variety of networks.
- Bridging Social Capital may lead to a more diverse range of perspectives, access to a variety of resources, and the creation of social bridges between communities

Ways of building Social Capital

PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

This involvement helps you connect with others who share common interests and goals.

BUILD STRONG SOCIAL NETWORKS

Strong personal relations form the foundation of Social Capital.

BE TRUSTWORTHY

Trustworthiness builds confidence and encourages others to cooperate with you.

PROMOTE RECIPROCITY

Be willing to give and receive help. Reciprocal relationships strengthen social ties.

PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING

Involve other members of your community in decision-making. This inclusivity promotes a sense of ownership and shared responsibility over common issues.

FACILITATE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Networking opportunities provide a platform for individuals to connect and share resources.

SUPPORT SOCIAL INITIATIVES

Cooperative efforts for a common or a shared cause strengthen social bonds.

CULTIVATE SOCIAL SKILLS

Develop effective communication and interpersonal skills. Socially adept individuals often find it easier to develop Social Capital.

UTILIZE SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER ONLINE PLATFORMS

Online communities can provide additional avenues for building Social Capital. Especially if building face-to-face interpersonal skills prove to be challenging.

ATTEND SOCIAL EVENTS

Especially informal settings provide opportunities for casual interactions and the development of social connections. Be open to meeting new people and expanding your social circle.

VOLUNTEER IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Volunteering alongside others fosters a sense of camaraderie and share purpose.

BE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE

Positivity and optimism contribute to a healthy social environment. A positive atmosphere attracts and retains Social Capital.

3. Social Sustainability in Businesses



How does Social Sustainability manifest in businesses?



- Businesses are at the forefront along with governments, organizations and communities in advancing the principles of Social Sustainability.
- Often businesses choose, which socially sustainable principles to follow based on how profitable they are. However, the Sustainable Development Goals and their implementation has shown that achieving profits on a stable and long-term level are dependent on the holistic execution of the SDGs.
- Next we will look at how businesses utilize and benefit from Social Sustainability. After that we take a closer look at the concept of **DEI**: “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion”
- Finally, we will take a look at how businesses can respond to some of the relevant SDGs

Learning the significance of Social Sustainability for business ecosystems



BENEFIT FOR REPUTATION AND BRAND IMAGE

By prioritizing social sustainability businesses can contribute positively to their reputation and brand image.

WHY?

Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the ethical and social practices of businesses and companies they support.

A positive social impact can improve customer loyalty and further attract socially responsible consumers. Thus advancing socially sustainable consumption.

ENHANCED EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND PRODUCTIVITY

Socially sustainable practices can contribute to a more positive working environment.

WHY?

Research shows that companies that prioritize the well-being of employees, diversity and inclusion at workplace, as well as advance fair labour practices, tend to have a higher employee satisfaction, which in turn leads to increased productivity

Learning the significance of Social Sustainability for business ecosystems



ABILITY TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT

Socially responsible businesses are often more attractive to potential employees, especially among the younger generations of workers.

WHY?

By committing to social sustainability, a business can attract top talent and retain skilled workers, thus contributing to the overall success and innovation of the company.

FOSTERING COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Businesses that are socially sustainable actively engage with and support the communities in which they operate.

WHY?

This type of support and engagement often leads to improved community relations, which in turn foster positive partnerships with local stakeholders.

Companies that are perceived so-called "good corporate citizens" are also less likely to face regulatory and public relations challenges.

Learning the significance of Social Sustainability for business ecosystems



ABILITY TO MITIGATE RISK

By addressing social issues proactively, businesses may mitigate potential risks.

WHY?

A company that prioritizes fair labour practices is less likely to face suggestions of worker exploitation, which in turn would lead to legal, financial and reputational risks to the company.

ENSURING LONG-TERM VIABILITY OF BUSINESS

Applying socially sustainable practices contributes directly to the long-term viability of businesses.

WHY?

When businesses consider their impact on societies, they take more care to ensure that their operations are conducted ethically and with a focus on environmental and social responsibility. This, in turn, will lead to businesses that are more robust and resilient in the face of changing market dynamics.

Learning the significance of Social Sustainability for business ecosystems



INSIGHT INTO COMPLYING WITH REGULATIONS

Governments and regulatory bodies are implementing and enforcing more and more social responsibility standards to comply with the 2030 Agenda.

WHY?

Businesses that prioritize social sustainability are more likely to comply with current and future regulations, which will reduce the risk of legal and financial penalties, that would impact the reputation and profits of a business.

ADVANCING INNOVATION AND ADAPTABILITY

A business that is socially responsible tends to also be more innovatable and adaptable.

WHY?

Businesses and companies that consider the social implications of their policies and actions can identify new market opportunities, anticipate changing consumer preferences, and stay ahead in a competitive and evolving business landscape.

DEI: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives are becoming more and more important in the business ecosystem: in 2020 companies spent 7.5 billion dollars on DEI-related efforts. This figure is estimated to double by 2026 (source: *Global Parity Alliance: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lighthouses 2023*).

WHAT DRIVES THE ADVANCEMENT OF DEI IN BUSINESSES?

CAUSE	EFFECT
Expansion of social movements	Educating workforce on social justice and gender equality issues. Promoting products that advance equality.
Evolving consumer expectations	Creation of more consumer-conscious brands and products.
Social media	Learning how companies and brands can better communicate with consumers.
Pressure on investors	Investors are willing to pay more for ethical, diverse and inclusive companies.
Competition for talent	DEI incorporated into recruitment efforts. Employees want to work in a company that reflects their values.
Impact on company performance	Ethnically diverse and gender equal companies financially outperform other companies.

How can businesses respond to specific Sustainable Development Goals?



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL	BUSINESS RESPONSE
SDG3: Good Health and Well-Being	Support employee health and well-being initiatives
SDG4: Quality Education	Support education initiatives. Provide training opportunities for employees. Ensure marginalized communities have access to education.
SDG5: Gender Equality	Install equal opportunities policy. Advance pay equity. Create inclusive working environments.
SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	Ensure fair labour practices. Promote job creation. Provide decent working conditions.
SDG10: Reduced Inequalities	Address income inequality. Promote social inclusion. Ensure fair distribution of resources.
SDG16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	Promote ethical business practices. Respect human rights. Foster a culture of transparency.
SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals	Engage in partnerships with governments, civil society, communities and organizations.

4. Social Sustainability Lessons, Relevance & Ethical Considerations



Three lessons learned from advancing Social Sustainability

1. Inclusive Development

LESSON: Inclusive development is central for Social Sustainability. Exclusion based on socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity or disability should be eradicated as it slows societal progress. To advance societal progress, we need to design policies and initiatives that ensure equal access and opportunities for all members of society.

2. Long-Term Thinking

LESSON: Social Sustainability emphasizes long-term thinking. Solutions to problems and challenges should be designed with future generations in mind, focusing on creating conditions that enable ongoing well-being instead of short-term gains that may cause harm in the long-term.

3. Lifelong Learning

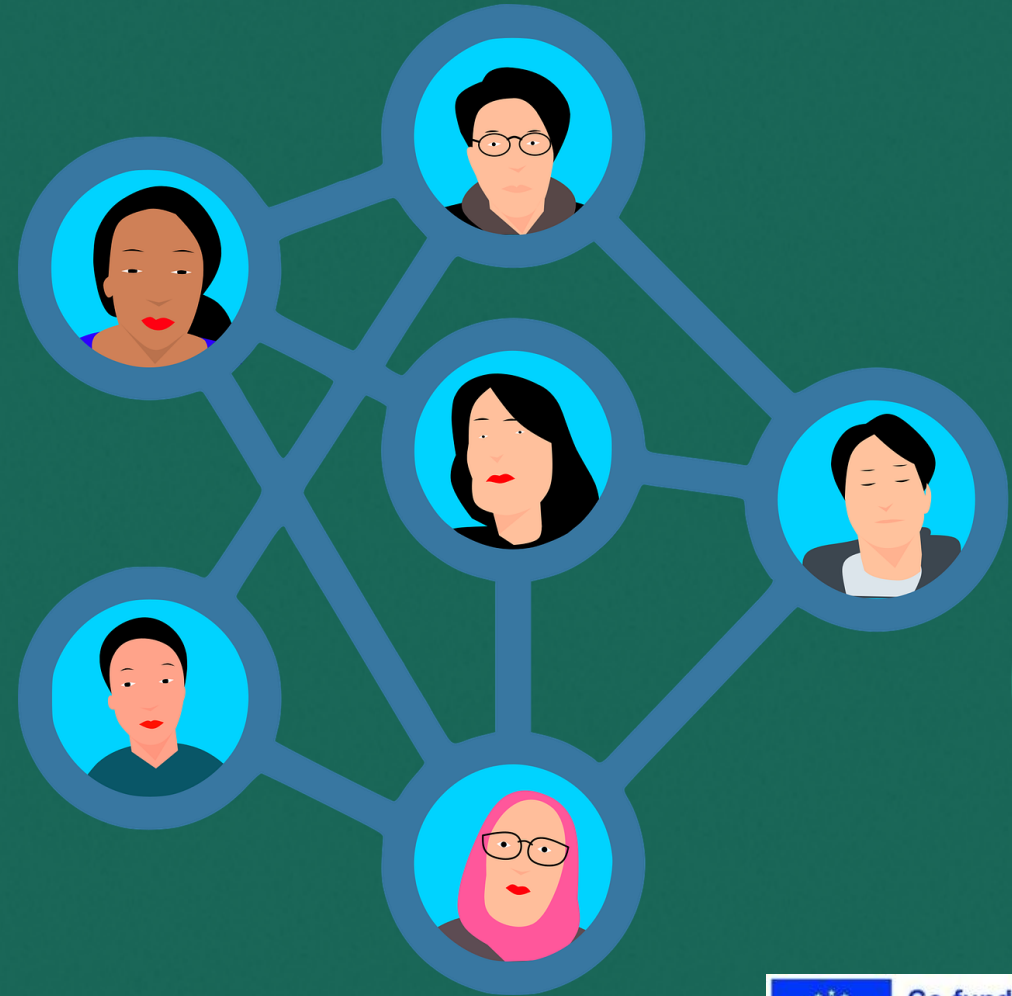
LESSON: Lifelong learning is important for personal and societal growth. Social Sustainability encourages continuous education and skill development, which in turn creates adaptable individuals and reduces the risk of social exclusion in a world that is quickly changing.

Arguing for the relevance of Social Sustainability

Why should we care about Social Sustainability?

Well, the themes associated with Social Sustainability have a practical impact on our lives and surroundings, bettering our well-being and creating a sustainable, equitable future.

On the following page we list 5 key reasons, why Social Sustainability is relevant for all of us.



Public Health and Human Well-Being

- Ensuring that people have access to education, healthcare, decent work and supportive social environment.
- Arguing got policies that promote healthy lifestyles and clean environments. This will lead to improved physical and mental well-being.
- A healthy and thriving population is more productive and there is less strain on healthcare systems.

Creating Resilient Communities that Acknowledge Cultural Diversity and Identity

- Creating societies and communities that better equipped to withstand challenges and crises.
- Respecting and promoting diverse cultural identities advances social cohesion and mutual understanding.
- Social cohesion, trust and cooperation enhances resilience.
- Social networks and support systems help in the face of adversities (e.g. natural disasters, health crises)

Long-term Economic Stability

- Inclusive economic policies contribute to long-term economic stability by promoting productivity and reducing social inequalities and disparities.
- A socially sustainable society produces a skilled and healthy workforce, which in turn reduces worker absences and healthcare costs.

Global Citizenship and Social License for Development

- Global citizenship emphasizes the interconnectness of individuals and communities worldwide. This leads to understanding the shared responsibility in tackling global challenges, such as the climate change.
- Social license means gaining the support and acceptance of local communities, which is central for the success and sustainability of policy initiatives and actions.

Social Capital, Trust and Education as Empowerment

- High levels of social capital are associated with increased trust, cooperation and a sense of belonging. This will lead to a more stable and supportive social environment.
- Accessible and quality education supply individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to fully participate in society. This will lead to personal growth and societal progress, benefitting all of humankind.



Ethical responsibility in addressing Social Sustainability issues

- When planning policies and implementing actions Individuals, organizations and governments should have to consider the ethical implications of their decisions to the communities, society and the environment.
- How to advance human well-being, equity and justice while facing the challenges and opportunities identified with Social Sustainability? The following chart lists ethical considerations and how to respond to them from the point-of-view of Social Sustainability.



Ethical consideration	Response
Ensuring equity and inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, programmes and actions should not discriminate • Policy and actions benefits should be distributed fairly across diverse populations • Addressing historical and systemic injustices
Ensuring transparency and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent decision-making • Taking accountability for negative social and environmental consequences • Open communication on intentions, strategies and outcomes
Fostering community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active engagement with communities affected by policies or initiatives • Including community members' input and perspectives in decision-making
Assessing social impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) before implementing policies and actions
Ensuring fair trade and responsible business practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing fair wages, safe working conditions and ethical supply chain practices • Fostering economic well-being among employees • Employers respecting the rights of workers

TASK:

Social Impact Assessment



In a nutshell: Social Impact Assessment (SIA)

- It is ethically responsible to conduct a Social Impact Assessment by governments, businesses, communities and organizations before implementing policies and actions.
- SIA involves:
 - The evaluation of potential positive and negative effects on communities
 - Consideration of how benefits and burdens are distributed within the communities
 - Planning the steps to mitigate adverse effects of the policy or action before implementation.

SIA: HOW TO PROCEED

- 1) Define the scope and purpose
- 2) Seek community engagement
- 3) Carry out baseline data collection
- 4) Identify and assess impact of proposed policy/ action
- 5) Take mitigation or enhancement measures depending on assessment
- 6) Model possible scenarios and plan outcomes
- 7) Report and document findings
- 8) Seek community feedback to validate assessment
- 9) Make decisions on how to proceed with implementation
- 10) Monitor progress and evaluate the outcomes

TASK: Conduct Social Impact Assessment

- **STEP 1:** Become acquainted with Scouts4GreenApp Social Impact Assessment – guide
- **STEP 2:** Choose the scope and purpose of your SIA
- **STEP 3:** Carry out research and measurements
- **STEP 4:** Propose an outcome
- **STEP 5:** Report findings and seek feedback



NEXT:

3.2 Social Sustainability in Action

