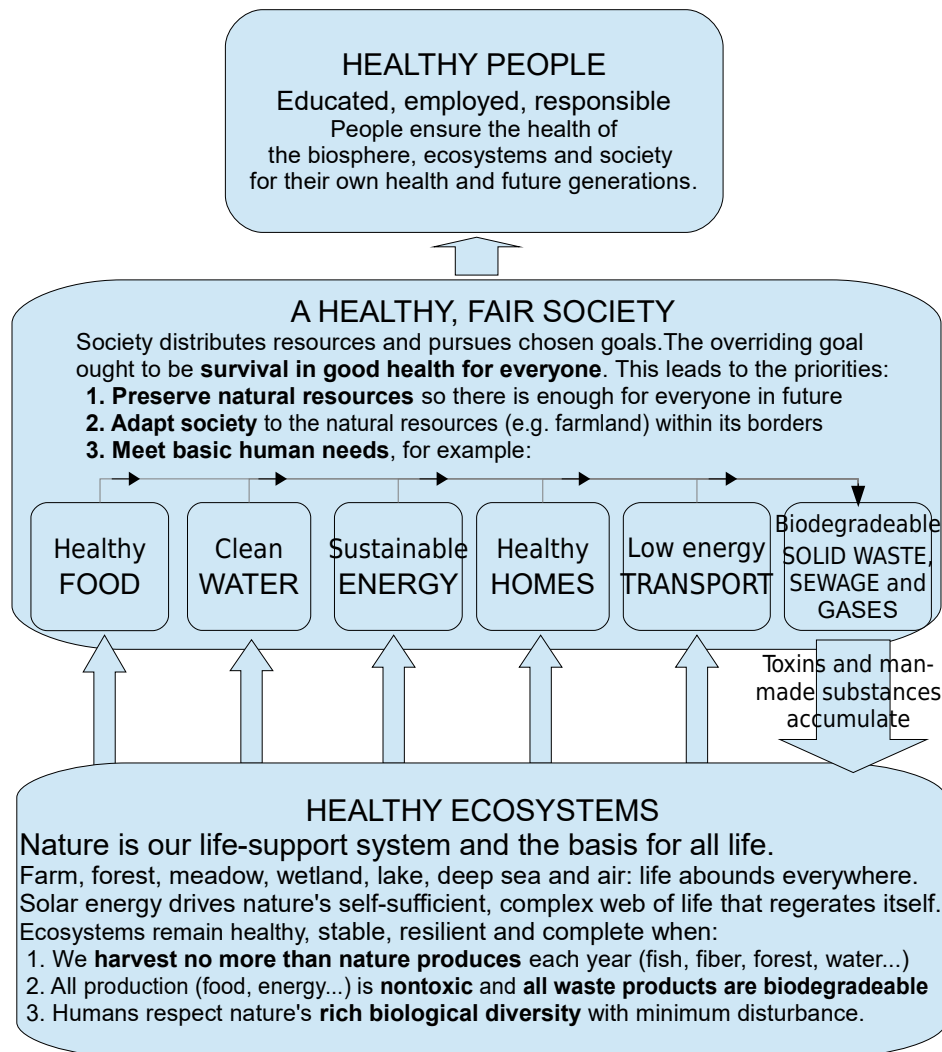


System Sustainability Diagram

Requirements for a long lasting, healthy society



Societies that last preserve their natural environment

Nature, with its interwoven ecosystems, each with its purpose and role (ecosystem service), is our life-support system and the foundation of all life. Nature provides us with everything we have and need, such as food, water, heat, building materials, clothes and even the air we breathe. Healthy ecosystems are the foundation for our health and well-being. But today we are steadily overdrawing our account, reducing nature's capital and threatening all of our futures, not least by dramatic climate change.

To survive, thrive and stay healthy (= social sustainability), we need to make sure that nature as a whole is healthy with each of its parts working fully (= ecological sustainability). This means restoring and preserving a stable climate, biological diversity, all remaining farmland as well as clean, unpolluted earth, air and water. How? The direction is clear: **reduce the human footprint**.

Definition: A sustainable society restores, preserves and builds up:

- (1) **natural resources/ecosystems** that sustain life (ecological sustainability)
- (2) **a population** size commensurate with domestic natural resources (social sustainability)
- (3) **human health** (physical, mental, social, existential) (social sustainability).

A sustainable economy serves society and contributes to ecosystem and human health.

Read further in the factsheet [Growth vs Health and Sustainability](#) and the links below.

Health: [Public Health 2.0: Planetary Health](#) (Rockefeller Foundation), [Health and climate](#) (Lancet), [Obesity](#) (Lancet), [Spirit Level](#) (Pickett, Wilkinson), [Little Things Matter: the impact of toxins on the developing brain](#) (Lanphear.), [Air Pollution's Invisible Toll](#) (Harvard), [Healthy Environment, Healthy People](#) (UNEP), [Better and better?](#) (Lund Univ.), [Environmental Health News](#) **Ecosystem health:** [Planetary Boundaries 2.0](#) (Steffen, Rockström), [Overdevelopment, Overpopulation, Overshoot](#) (Butler) **Sustainable solutions:** [Earth Policy Institute](#), [Drawdown](#), [Doughnut Economics](#) (Raworth), [Half Earth](#) (Wilson), [Club of Rome](#), [Ensia](#), [Yes Magazine](#), [UN SDGs](#), [Ecology Begins at Home](#). [A. Duncanson](#) 2019-02-20