



Alliance for Sustainability

Ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just and humane

To bring the Sustainability and the Natural Step Framework in your organization, business, or community contact:

- **Sean Gosiewski** Executive Director. Alliance for Sustainability, 612-250-0389, sean@afors.org or
- **Terry Gips** (Alliance President and CEO of Sustainability Associates, 612-374-4765, terry@afors.org <http://www.sustainabilityassociates.us>)

Including Fundamental Human Needs in Planning

Human needs and human-scale development,[1] developed by Manfred Max-Neef and others (Antonio Elizalde and Martin Hopenhayn), are seen as ontological (stemming from the condition of being human), are few, finite and classifiable (as distinct from the conventional notion of conventional economic "wants" that are infinite and insatiable).[2]

They are also constant through all human cultures and across historical time periods. What changes over time and between cultures is the strategies by which these needs (and created desires) are satisfied. Human needs can be understood as a system—i.e., they are interrelated and interactive. In this system, there is no hierarchy of needs (apart from the basic need for subsistence or survival) as postulated by Western psychologists such as Maslow, rather, simultaneity, complementarity and trade-offs are features of the process of needs satisfaction.

Manfred Max-Neef and his colleagues developed a taxonomy of human needs and a process by which communities can identify their "wealths" and "poverties" according to how their fundamental human needs are satisfied.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamental_human_needs

Need	Being (qualities)	Having (things)	Doing (actions)	Interacting (settings)
Subsistence	physical and mental health	food, shelter, work	feed, clothe, rest, work	living environment, social setting
Protection	care, adaptability, autonomy	social security, health systems, work	co-operate, plan, take care of, help	social environment, dwelling
Affection	respect, sense of humour, generosity, sensuality	friendships, family, relationships with nature	share, take care of, sexual activity, express emotions	privacy, intimate spaces of togetherness
Understanding	critical capacity, curiosity, intuition	literature, teachers, policies, educational	analyse, study, meditate, investigate,	schools, families, universities, communities,
Participation	receptiveness, dedication, sense of humour	responsibilities, duties, work, rights	cooperate, dissent, express opinions	associations, parties, churches, neighbourhoods
Leisure	imagination, tranquility, spontaneity	games, parties, peace of mind	day-dream, remember, relax, have fun	landscapes, intimate spaces, places to be alone
Creation	imagination, boldness, inventiveness, curiosity	abilities, skills, work, techniques	invent, build, design, work, compose, interpret	spaces for expression, workshops, audiences
Identity	sense of belonging, self-esteem, consistency	language, religions, work, customs, values, norms	get to know oneself, grow, commit oneself	places one belongs to, everyday settings
Freedom	autonomy, passion, self-esteem, open-mindedness	equal rights	dissent, choose, run risks, develop awareness	anywhere

The Natural Step and Fundamental Human Needs – By Terry Gips, President, Alliance for Sustainability

The Natural Step specifies that there are four conditions for planetary sustainability. The first three are ecologically-focused and the fourth mixes social and efficient considerations: "Just and efficient use of resources to meet the basic needs of all people."

To address the issue of basic needs, the Natural Step is utilizing the basic needs analysis of Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef ("Development and human needs" in *Real-life Economics: Understanding Wealth Creation*, Paul Ekins and Manfred Max-Neef, London and NY: Routledge). His work has been at the core of human scale development in Latin America. Unfortunately, few Americans are aware of it. Max-Neef's concepts are used extensively by the Natural Step community facilitators in Sweden.

Max-Neef postulates that "basic needs are finite, few and classifiable" and that they "are the same in all cultures and all historical periods." Rather than there being a hierarchy of needs as presented by Maslow, he believes these needs are always present. "What changes, both over time and through cultures, is the way or means by which the needs are satisfied." He believes needs are not substitutable--you can have lots of one fulfilled but it doesn't do anything about the rest. At the same time, through our selection of satisfiers, we can fulfill more than one need at once.

He suggests there are nine basic human needs: subsistence, protection/security, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity/meaning and freedom. He believes there may be a tenth, transcendence, but is not sure that it is universal (I would suggest it is).

Some of the needs and their satisfiers (there is not necessarily a one-to-one correspondence) are very straightforward, such as protection (curative and health systems) and understanding (formal or informal education). But in other cases we confuse needs and satisfiers. For example, he believes food and shelter are not needs, but rather, satisfiers of the need for subsistence. There are different ways we can meet that need, such as infant formula or breast feeding. Bottle feeding will satisfy the need for subsistence, but breast feeding will simultaneously satisfy the needs for subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, identity and freedom.

Each society adopts different methods for the satisfaction of the same fundamental needs. "We may go so far as to say that one of the aspects that define a culture is its choice of satisfiers. Whether a person belongs to a consumerist or to an ascetic society, his/her fundamental human needs are the same."

The good news ecologically is that it is possible to actually have more satisfaction with less stuff. It's not the materials and energy that provide satisfaction, but the degree to which basic needs are met. Instead of voluntary simplicity (the idea of living with less, which I practice but which presently has a limited audience), abundance can be offered. We can say to people that they can have more of what they've always wanted (safe, healthy, and attractive communities and environments) and less of what they never wanted (violence, fear, abuse, pollution, injustice, etc.). It doesn't take more resources, just a design based on meeting fundamental human needs. Such an approach can be quite attractive in American society because rather than having to give up things, Americans can have an abundance of what they've always wanted.

Blue Zones - Live longer & be happier. www.bluezones.com

Human Centered Design Stanford <http://dschool.stanford.edu>

Pillsbury United Communities is using this approach to develop a new grocery store in North Minneapolis <http://mynorthmarket.org/> - Contact Adair Mosley www.puc-mn.org/impact-areas/asset-creation/business-ventures

Genuine Progress Indicator www.rprogress.org/sustainability_indicators/genuine_progress_indicator.htm

World Happiness Report <http://mynorthmarket.org/>

HAPPY - The Movie - a compelling journey around the world in search of what really makes us Happy www.thehappy movie.com

USING THE NATURAL STEP FRAMEWORK TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

The Alliance uses Sustainability and the Natural Step Framework to empower teams in businesses, organizations, communities, and municipalities to quickly develop a shared understanding of sustainability, a compelling sustainability vision, and practical action plans. The framework is based on four basic sustainability principles, ABCD visioning, and a back-casting action-planning approach. www.allianceforsustainability.com/programs/natural-step-framework/

To learn more about how to use Sustainability and the Natural Step Framework in your organization, business, or community please contact:

- **Sean Gosiewski** (Executive Director of Alliance for Sustainability, 612-250-0389, sean@afors.org or
- **Terry Gips** (Alliance President and CEO of Sustainability Associates, 612-374-4765, terry@afors.org <http://www.sustainabilityassociates.us>

Local Examples of Communities we have supported to develop sustainability plans using the Natural Step

Sustainability Guide Plan – Burnsville www.ci.burnsville.mn.us/DocumentView.aspx?DID=1287

City of Mahtomedi Sustainability Plan – 2011 www.ci.mahtomedi.mn.us

St. Cloud - Sustainability Framework Plan www.ci.stcloud.mn.us/1224/Sustainability-Framework-Plan

National Examples of Cities using the Natural Step

- **Madison, WI**, www.cityofmadison.com/sustainability/naturalStep
- **Resort Municipality of Whistler, BC** www.naturalstep.ca/resort-municipality-of-whistler
- **Santa Monica, CA**, www.thenaturalstep.org/city-of-santa-monica-california-usa

APA Policy Guide on Planning for Sustainability

Based on the Natural Step Framework www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/sustainability.htm