ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

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PRESENTATION TO BLUESTAR ASHRAM

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PRESENTATION TO BLUESTAR ASHRAM

- The Environment
- The World Today
- Holistic Strategies
- Science, Spirituality and Development
- The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

“*The real act of discovery consists not in finding new lands but in seeing with new eyes*.” -Marcel Proust

"For efforts to protect the environment and promote sustainable livelihoods in a just society; science, economics and technology are necessary but not sufficient. When we approach the horizon where causes must be sought and remedial, protective or preventive action chosen, we have to move into the social and cultural space of values, lifestyles and interests which mould behavior, shape societies, affect environment and decide our future."

DIMENSIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE (1)

The dimensions include:

- Problem definition
- The symptoms
- The causes
- Spatial scales and spheres of influence
- Temporal scales
- Barriers to solutions
- Strategic approaches to solutions
- The themes of the seminar

DIMENSIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE (2)

Definition:

The environment is natural and built. It comprises the air, the land, soil, water, living things and built facilities; and most importantly the linkages among these such as matter, energy and information flows and associated relationships.

SYMPTOMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS (3)

- Solid waste
- Sewage and liquid waste
- Drinking water quality and supply
- Degradation of the coastal and marine environment
- Soil erosion
- Management of toxic and hazardous substances
- Forest and water shed degradation
- Dumping of extra-regional hazardous and toxic wastes
- Air and noise pollution
- Ozone depletion
- Global warming - sea level rise/storms
- Historical resources degradation
- Natural disasters

CAUSES OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS (4)

Root causes lie in:

A value system which stresses maximal accumulation of material wealth rather than moral and ethical values, equity and social justice.

- People's ability to produce waste faster than natural ecosystems can absorb and recycle them, i.e. in exceeding nature's assimilative capacity.
- Over consumption and excessive waste generation due to affluence.
- Disregard for the intrinsic linkages between society and nature.
- Local degradation due to poverty.
- Unequal access to natural resources, technology and financial resources.
- Production patterns and structure of the economic output.
- Ignorance of how to do things better.

SPATIAL SCALES AND SPHERES OF RESPONSIBILITY (1)

The problems are caused and appropriate corrective action has to be addressed at different levels of social organisation, e.g.:

Individual - education, changes in value system

Local groups - advocacy awareness

Families

Village communities - demonstration projects

Churches

Professional organisation - involvement in national decision making

NGOs

SPATIAL SCALES AND SPHERES OF RESPONSIBILITY (2)

National Level

- National policy
- Development planning and control
- Legislation
- Fiscal and economic incentives

SPATIAL SCALES AND SPHERES OF RESPONSIBILITY (3)

Regional Level
(CARICOM)

- Protection of the Caribbean sea
- Trade Policies
- Harmonisation of legislation, standards and guidelines
- Common foreign policy positions

BARRIERS TO SOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

(after Trudgill, 1990)

- **Agreement** - on what we (social groups) want to achieve
- **Knowledge** - what do we need to know in order to solve the problem
- **Technology** - do we have the technology that is required
- **Economic** - the economic considerations necessary for problem solving
- **Social** - the social realities that must be taken into account (including cultural)
- **Political** - lack of political will/ priority or support

A.K.T.E.S.P.

These barriers need not all exist nor in the order listed. Several might also overlap

STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO SOLUTION (OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS)

- Public education and awareness
- Research, training, information acquisition/ dissemination
- Formulation of policies and plans
- Institutional strengthening
- Legislation, (standards and guidelines)
- Fiscal and economic incentives
- Financial and technological support
- Development and packaging of appropriate tools, e.g. EIA’s, audits, etc.

ENVIRONMENTAL SURPRISES: PLANNING FOR THE UNEXPECTED

- Monoculture technologies are brittle, so plan for diversity.
- Direct opposition to a natural force is generally counterproductive, so plan to work with nature.
- You can never have just one effect, so plan to have several.
- Solutions are almost never permanent, so plan to keep on planning.
- None of us may find the answer alone, but together we probably can.

THE WORLD IN WHICH YOU WILL MAKE (ARE MAKING) YOUR LIVELIHOOD

- KNOWLEDGE BASED ECONOMIES
- URBAN vs. RURAL vs. LINKED
- MORE WEALTH THAN EVER
- NETWORKED - MORE CONNECTED
- GLOBALIZED
  - FREER TRADE
  - FAST MOVEMEMENT OF CAPITAL
  - FASTER, CHEAPER COMMUNICATIONS
  - EASY ACCESS TO INFORMATION

BUT ALSO A WORLD WITH:

- **GREATER INEQUALITIES WITHIN AND BETWEEN COUNTRIES**
- **MORE PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY**
- **LESS WORRY ABOUT OVER POPULATION**
- **CONTINUING ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS**
- **LESS PREDICTABILITY - MORE UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE**
- **PLURIACTIVITY RATHER THAN SINGLE JOB**
- **MORE “AND” THAN “OR”**

HOLISTIC STRATEGIES (1)

What are they?

- Whole systems thinking, approaches, policies, programmes
- Attempts to treat reality as it is in all its complexity rather than dealing with “manageable” parts.

Why are they attractive?

- They have the potential of providing solutions with fewer negative impacts
- Win-win solutions, e.g. poverty-environment nexus
- Solutions that are more equitable and sustainable

HOLISTIC STRATEGIES (2)

Why are they so challenging?

- 300 years of reductionist education which has been highly successful in many ways, but whose limits are becoming more evident
- Reductionist linear approaches are not wrong, they are just partial truths
- Sectoral institutions trying to solve cross-sectoral (holistic) problems
- Mono-disciplinary → multi-disciplinary → interdisciplinary
- Sectoral policies and programmes living within sectoral insitutions
- Turf protection and empire building
- Must deal with higher levels of complexity
- Divide between knowledge and policy communities

HOLISTIC STRATEGIES (3)

How to make them work? (Lessons Learned)

- Use them only when necessary
- Changing the way we teach development studies and do development research
- Design institutions with porous walls and many plugs
- Reward team effort over individuals
- Use holistic concepts and analytical frameworks but be prepared to use sectoral entry points for implementation and then seek convergence
- Have a shared (common) vision
- Complexity (and chaos) theory will be helpful to bridge disciplines
- Consensus and conflict resolution skills are of prime importance

FROM ANALYSIS TO SYNTHESIS OR → AND EXAMPLES

- I think therefore I am (*Descartes*)
- I am because we are (*African*)

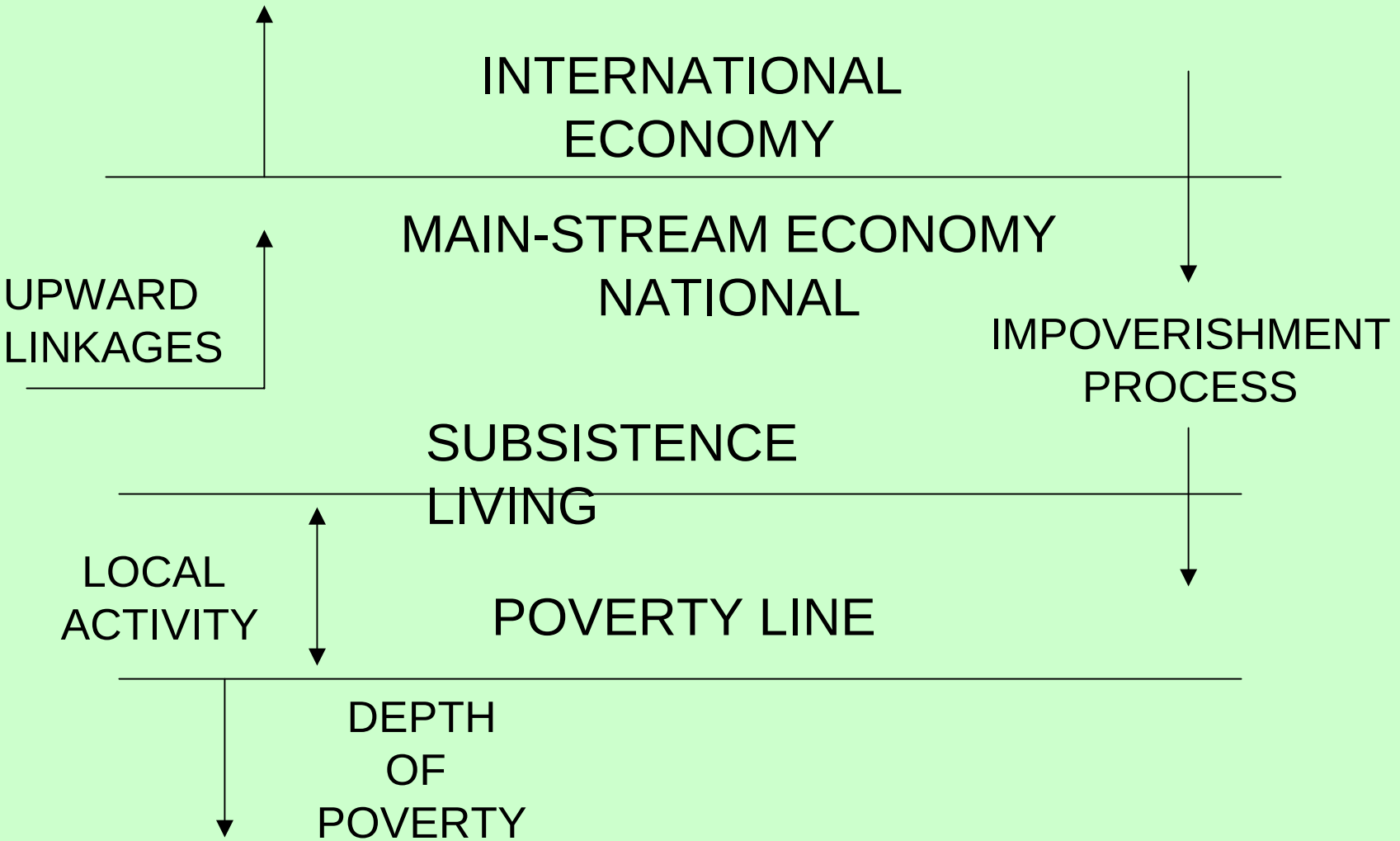
- Counting APPLES and ORANGES

- To have and to be

“Have we been blinded by all the tremendous successes that the journey of analysis and of science and technology has brought? Have we perhaps separated too much between analysis and synthesis, between taking apart and putting together, between the brain and the heart?”

SL Approach as a Strategy for Poverty Reduction in a Sustainable Way

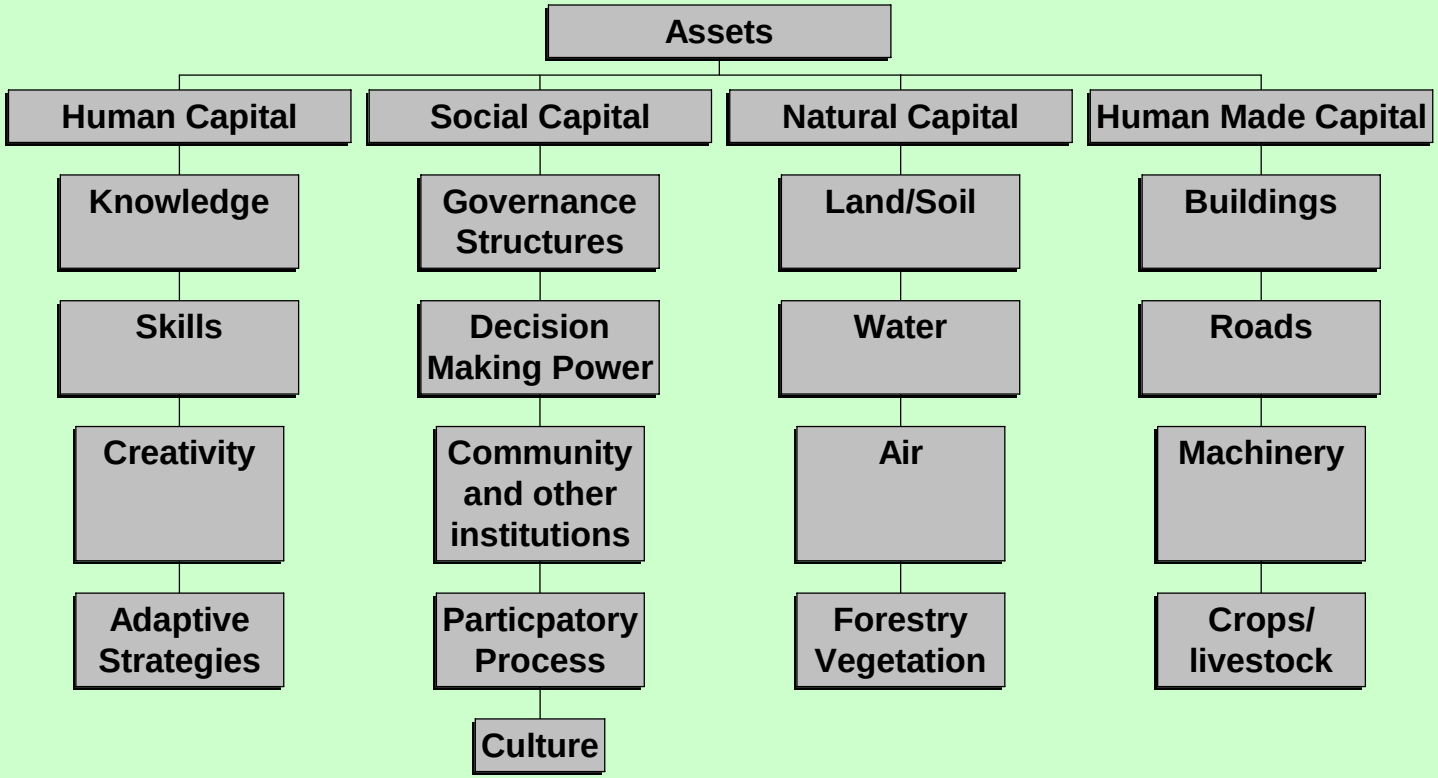
FROM POVERTY TO LIVELIHOODS TO SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS



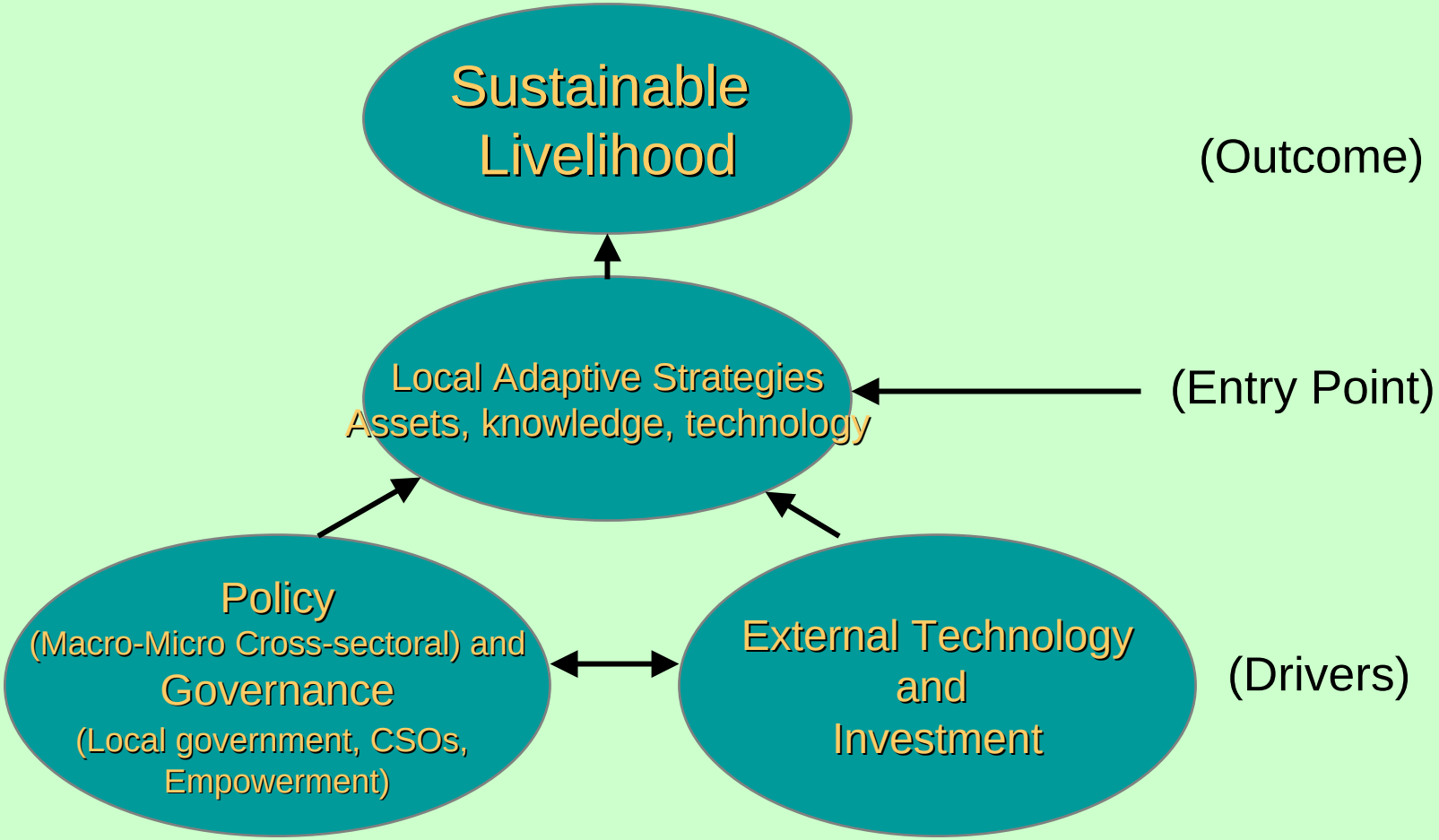
Sustainable Livelihoods Concept

- Livelihoods
  - Activities
  - Entitlements
  - Assets
- Sustainability
  - Capacity to cope with shocks and stresses
  - Economic efficiency
  - Social equity
  - Ecological integrity

Livelihoods and their Sustainability: Towards an Analytical Construct



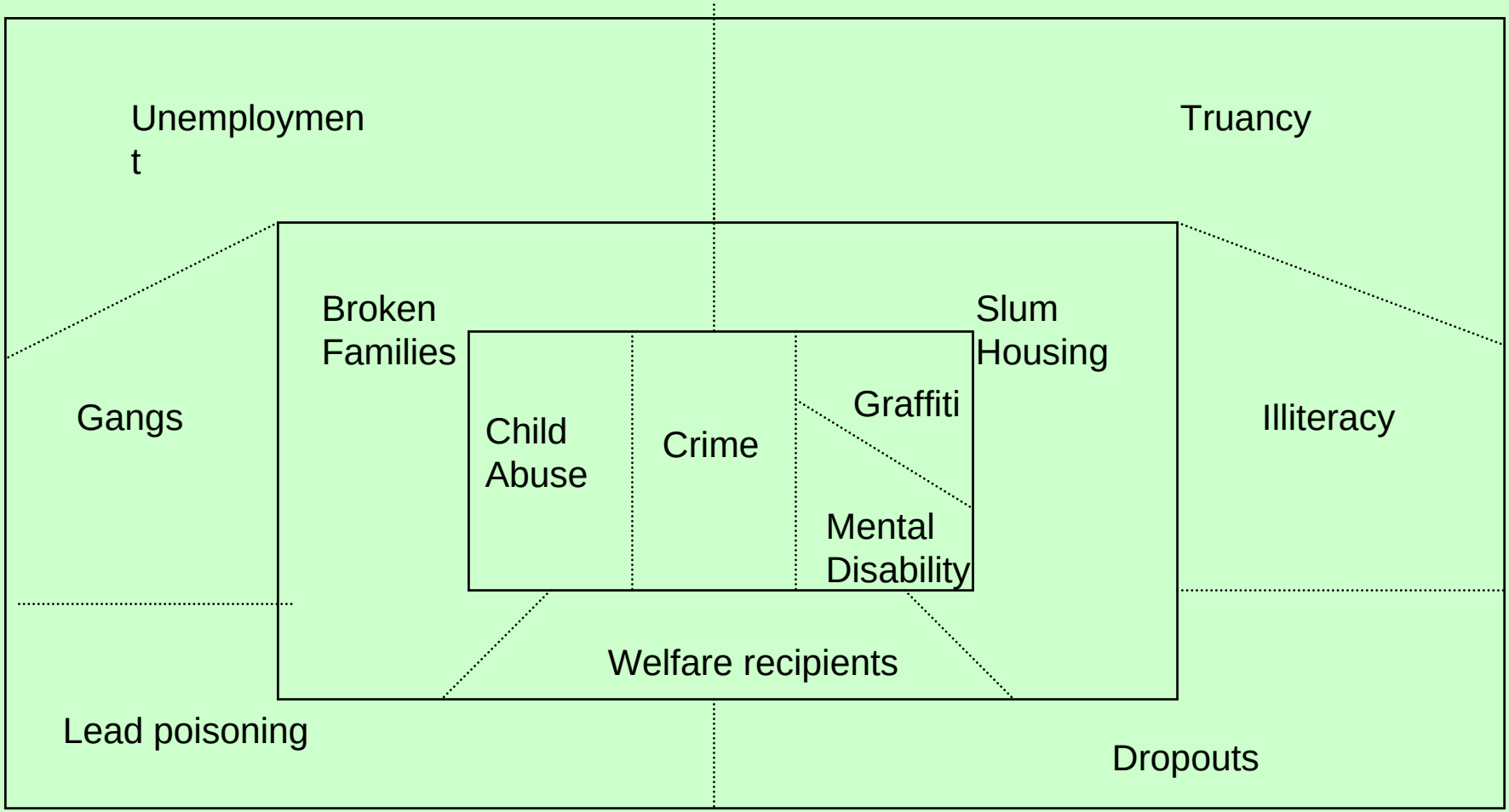
Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods



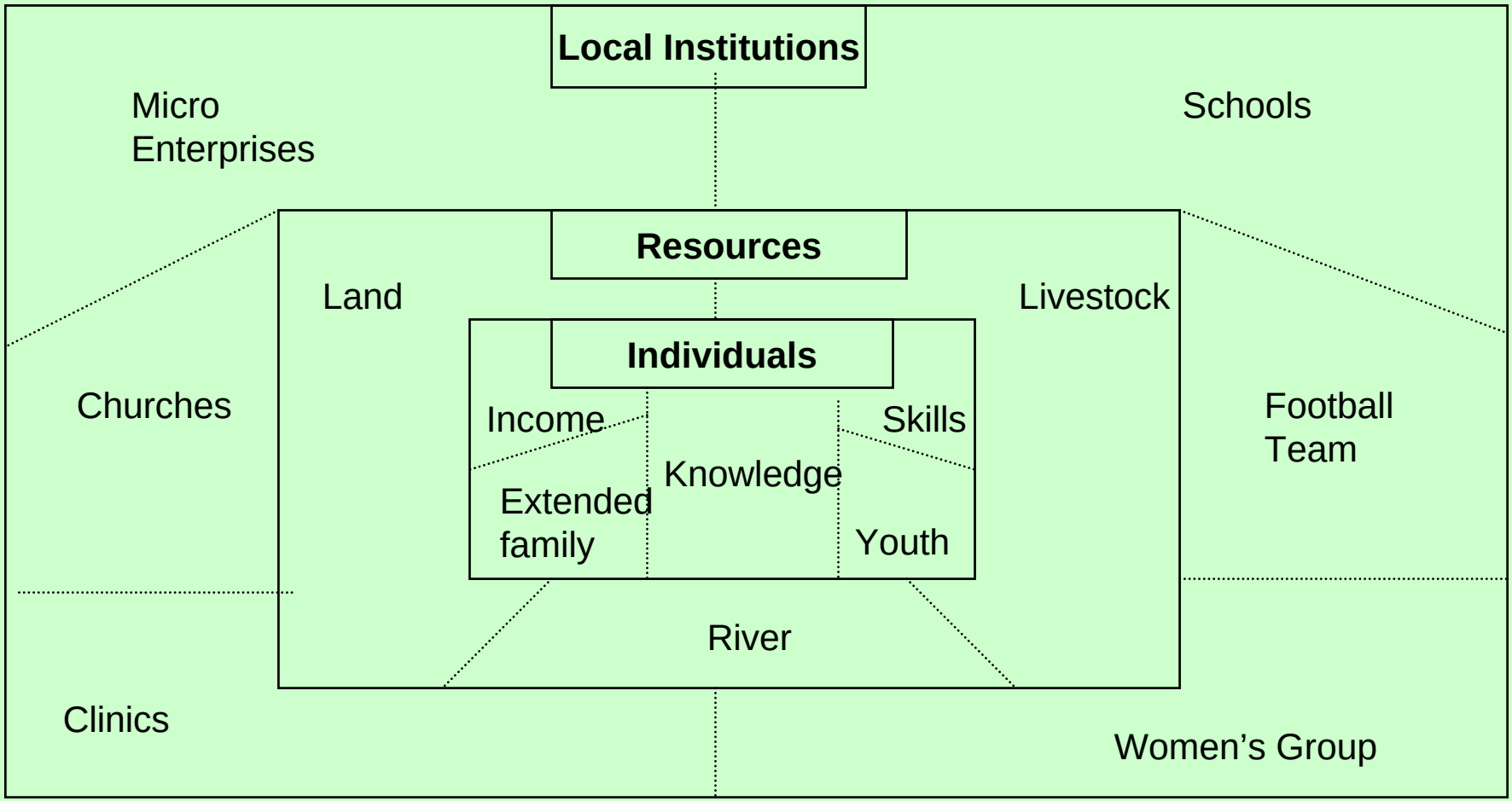
Operational Steps of Sustainable Livelihoods: Livelihoods Methodology

1. Participatory - assessment of assets, adaptive strategies, livelihood activities, entitlements, knowledge (Note: focus is on community assets rather than needs)
2. Policy - analysis of the macro, micro an sectoral policies and governance arrangements which impinge on people's livelihood strategies
3. Technology - Assess potential contributions of science and technology that complement indigenous knowledge systems
4. Investments - identification of social and economic investments mechanisms which help or hinder existing livelihood strategies
5. 1,2,3, and 4 are interactive not sequential and are gender desegregated

Community Needs Map



Community Assets Map



APPRECIATIVE PLANNING AND ACTION

- **One Goal:**
  - Seeking the root cause of success
- **Two Laws:**
  - What you seek is what you find
  - Where you believe you are going is where you will end up
- **Three Principles:**
  - If you look for problems, you find more problems
  - If you look for successes, you find more successes
  - If you have faith in your dreams, you can

APPRECIATIVE PLANNING AND ACTION

DISCOVERY	DREAM	DESIGN	DELIVERY	REFLECTION
(Success Map) "What gives life to this community?" What are our successes?" What's best…" -Seeking what works, and what works best	(Future Map) Vision of future – "looking ahead 10 yrs; 20 yrs". What's our vision for even better?"	(Group Dialogue) "Constructing the future" "Next steps" 5 year general plan 1 year action plan	(Delivery) "Actions we can take now" Immediately: same day, same place, Tasks to start now that can be done in 10-30 minutes	(Re-Discovery) "What was the best?" "Sharing and reflection of best and even better…" (Participatory Monitoring) Celebrate, enjoy!

Religion, Spirituality and Development

Sustainable Livelihoods approach as building on Assets as capital - human, social, natural and physical

- Spirituality as human capital
- Religion as social capital
- Positive aspects for development, resilience, etc.
  - Role of church, spiritual groups, family, etc.
  - Strength of individual determination

Science and Spirituality

- Parallels between oriental religions and quantum physics, e.g. the Cosmic dance of Shiva (Natraj) and the movement of electrons in the atom

- The scientist and the saint are both engaged in the quest for knowledge and meaning. The convergence of methodology grows through the physical to biological, to psychological, to paranormal, to spiritual

The Way Forward

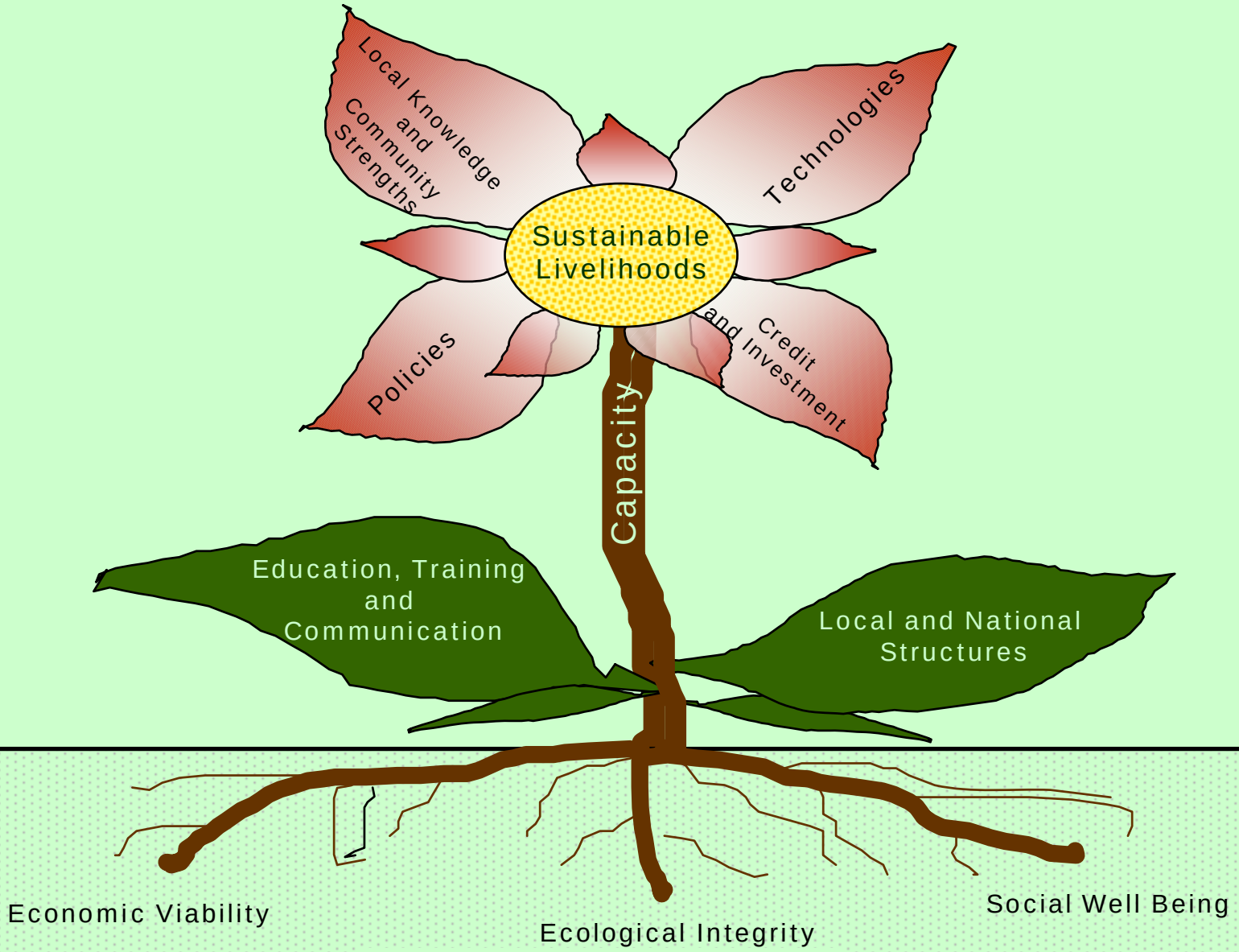
Science has moved from Newtonian through quantum physics and thermodynamics; and is now in the sphere of chaos and complexity on the one hand and molecular biology on the other. Development, however, is still largely rooted in Newtonian principles, using grossly inefficient designs, tools and approaches. The paper, “Development from the Inside Out” discusses this debacle in detail and proposes a way forward using the Caribbean as an illustration.

The Way Forward

If we are to improve the performance of the development enterprise a quantum leap is required from our current dominant thinking, underlying assumptions, principles, approach and research agenda.

The way forward is not to abandon completely Newtonian principles but rather to recognize their limitations and incorporate the value of the other insights now available. In other words, adopt a co-evolutionary systems approach. One practical way of doing this is through the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, which is briefly discussed in "Development from Inside Out".

ISD's Integrated Framework for Sustainable Livelihood



The Roots of Sustainable Development

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- The Environment
- The World Today
- Holistic Strategies
- Science, Spirituality and Development
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For more details on applying the SL Approach, please see the websites:

http://www.undp.org/sl

http://www.eldis@ids.ac.uk