

Green Thinking – Thinking about Sustainability

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“The world we have created is a product of our thinking. If we want to change the world, we have to change our thinking”. Albert Einstein

The Perspective

The challenges of consumerist and individualistic culture, rapid globalization and the clear presence of the effects of global warming, add to increasing inequality and loss of biodiversity. For some time we, as people and as nations, have focused on making profits and shareholders have been the most important stakeholders. But times are changing. Societal pressure, along with a higher consciousness in both business and politics, is slowly starting to change the rules of the game. Perhaps things are not moving as fast as desired, but progress is slowly happening. People are becoming more and more willing to embrace sustainability in their daily lives.

What is Green thinking?

Green thinking refers to being aware of our interconnectedness with the world and reflecting on the unintended damage we cause to nature in the daily course of human and business life. Green thinking means following practices that can lead to actions and lifestyles to be more environmentally friendly, which in turn helps to preserve the environment surrounding its natural resources for future and current generations. Green Thinking aims to engage and inspire listeners to discover and do more, to help build a brighter future. Covering topics from ecological emergencies to the future of fashion, and from environmental management in conflict zones to the world of work.



“THINK GREEN” means to pursue knowledge and practices that can lead to more environmentally friendly and ecologically responsible decisions and lifestyles, which can help protect the environment and sustain its natural resources for current and future generations.

Sustainability and Green economy

Humanity has always depended on the services provided by the biosphere and its ecosystems. Furthermore, the biosphere is itself the product of life on Earth. The composition of the atmosphere and soil, the cycling of elements through air and waterways, and many other ecological assets are all the result of living processes — and all are maintained and replenished by living ecosystems. The world is faced with increased demand for environmental resources but their supply is limited due to overuse and misuse. Sustainable development aims at promoting the kind of development that minimises environmental problems and meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs. A prerequisite for achieving a shift in economic thinking is learning about and understanding of the concept of Green economy and sustainable development as well as of the link between the multiple crises to unsustainable economic activities. It might entail a re-orientation of values and attitudes and has to encompass a broad variety of actors, ranging from the individual consumer, to policy makers and multinational corporations.

Sustainability is a paradigm for thinking about the future in which environmental, societal and economic considerations are equitable in the pursuit of an improved lifestyle. Most of the economies are developing with breakneck velocities and becoming epicentres of unsustainable global growth. Immense utilization of natural resources, waste generation and ecological irresponsibility are the reasons for such a dire situation. With the world polity debating over issues like climate change, water resources, food security, energy efficiency for the last few decades, it is evident that sustainability and green thinking has taken root in all approaches and dialogues. Governments are rethinking their developmental paths adopted to ensure a sustainable lifestyle. Industry, academic institutions, public sectors are taking serious advancement to implement the same.

Green thinking and Sustainability

The overall idea behind the Green thinking concept is the understanding of nature as something limited. Lozano (2008), in his article “Envisioning sustainability three-dimensionally,” reviews the concept of environmental sustainability established by several authors and states that the Green thinking can be quoted as “use of natural resources without going beyond the carrying capacities and the production of pollutants without passing the biodegradation limits of the receiving system.”

Therefore, the general purpose of Green thinking can be

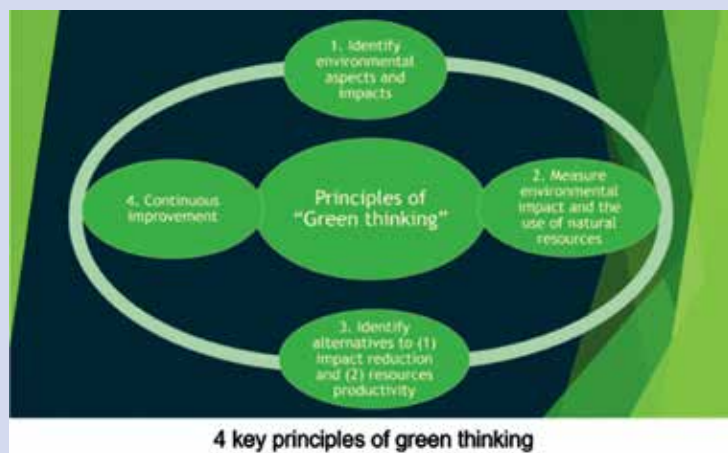
described in one dimension (Environment), with two main focuses (Moreira et al., 2010): (1) Producing with the maximum productivity in the use of natural resources and with the (2) minimum environmental impact

A number of mechanisms have been proposed by which companies can assess, monitor, and record the environmental impacts of their products, processes, and other activities and verify that plans to reduce impacts will be effective. In general terms, Green thinking practices can be generalized by four common key principles:

- 1. Identify environmental aspects and impacts
- 2. Measure environmental impact and the use of natural resources
- 3. Identify alternatives to (1) impact reduction and (2) resources productivity
- 4. Continuous improvement

Open the process

- Attaining sustainability in innovation calls for a perception shift within the business as well as among consumers. New ideas and knowledge systems are required, which often means embracing the open innovation models that, until now, some businesses have been reluctant to adopt.
- The more perspectives you have, the better the chances of bringing new ideas into the innovation process. You need suppliers, service providers and customers working together on sustainability, solving challenges in our different sectors. It's the only way.



The obvious benefits of green living include improved sustainability both within individuals and the world, as well as the conspicuous benefit of improving the state of the environment by taking direct action to reduce climate change and global warming.

Green Thinking is Profitable

It is a common misconception, to associate environmental responsibility to expense. In fact, organisations are too often reluctant to act up on responsible behaviour, because they are afraid to gain too little or fail maintain their profit. There is no doubt that companies have to be profitable to survive and earn a higher return on shareholders' equity than they would realise by depositing money in a bank. But

companies should be seen as more than just an “economic machines”.

Indeed, there are clear evidence that those companies that are eco-friendly and practice responsible business activities are financially outperforming others that don't. A study by non-profit CDP, supports this claim and argues that companies that are actively taking steps towards environmental responsibility, are securing 18% higher return on investment (ROI) than companies that don't.

We must all sign up and be part of that future

Thinking green is betting on renewable energy. Look at the sky, instead of under the ground. Solar and wind power, especially, are already cheaper than power based on fossil fuels, according to the latest analysis from Bloomberg New Energy Finance (BNEF). Even the International Energy Agency admitted that “solar energy is the cheapest electricity in history” in its World Energy Outlook 2020. And it is an incremental trend. Nor should we forget the brutal drop in energy storage costs.

Thinking green is using recycled materials. Believe in the reincarnation of things. The cost of recycling and optimising techniques is increasingly lowering the prices of these materials and their use is becoming more and more frequent. So much so that, according to the last TechSci Research report, the global plastics recycling market will grow 23 per cent between 2020 and 2025, to reach 110 billion U.S. dollars.

Thinking green is knowing that there are less harmful alternatives for the planet. Abandon traditional plastic for PLA, which is biodegradable and increasingly accessible; put aside traditional ink and bet on new options like soy; support green building models, which advocate near-zero consumption and the use of renewable materials; or join electric mobility, among other things.

Thinking green is embracing digitisation. Change pollution clouds for cloud work. New ways of communication and cooperative work save time and costs by avoiding travel and, therefore, emissions. Some emissions — those derived from road transport — dropped by 10 per cent this year due to blockades and movement restrictions to stop the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. It was the largest reduction in history, according to the latest report from Global Carbon Project.

We must all contribute, do our bit, be part of change, or better yet, be the engine of change, to accelerate it. For our planet. For our children and grandchildren. For ourselves... And for the economy.

Still wondering what colour to think of?

Thinking green, therefore, is actually thinking...

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