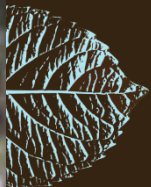




Achieving Social Equity



Social Inequity

The international economic system funnels wealth away from local populations to elite groups who largely control international resource use patterns.

In the United States, the top one percent of the population own 50% of the entire wealth of the country.

This leads to decision-making that is biased in favor of those with more money, who are often far removed from the consequences of their decisions.

Actual Distribution of Wealth
in the US



What US citizens think is the
distribution of Wealth



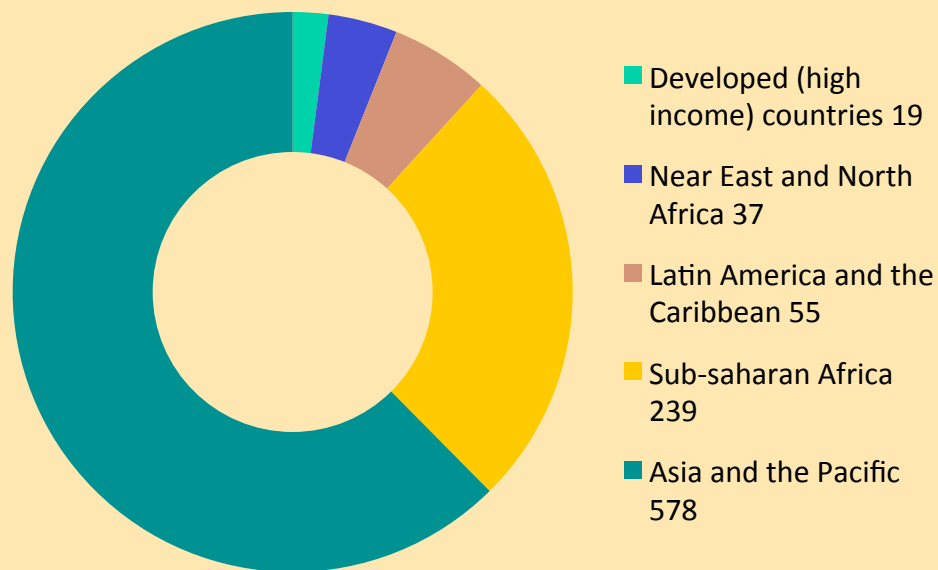
What they think would be an
ideal distribution of Wealth



Social Inequity, population and undernourishment

When low-income groups hurt by these decisions, they often do not have the power to negotiate for environmental standards.

In poorer countries, the inequity leads poor uneducated families to have more children. This is because they often do not understand how to use contraception and because they rely on children as a form of old-age insurance.



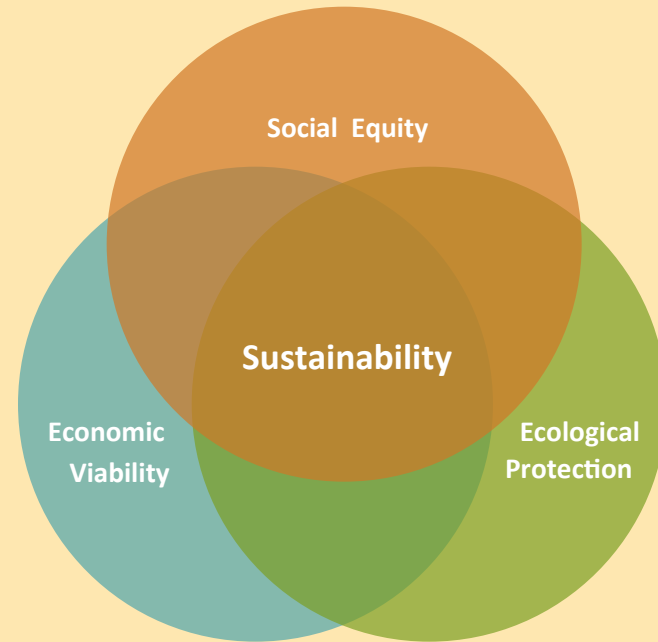
Undernourished populations 2010,
a Global total of 925 million people.

Achieving Social Equity

On a pragmatic level, global sustainability cannot be achieved without improving social equity.

Attempts to improve social equity are often hampered by a lack of clear data and confusion about which of many social criteria to address.

This lack of clarity makes it difficult to knowledgeably plan or claim advances in social equity and, therefore, sustainability.



Social Quality Indicators

The United Nations proposed this social framework with thirty-five social indicators to help assess the social performance of companies and their products. Deciding which indicators to pursue on a given project, and collecting the data in a consistent manner can be challenging.

Code of Practice for a Social-Economical LCA

United Nations Environmental Programme
Life Cycle Initiative 2008

Employee

Freedom of association & Collective bargaining
Child Labor, Forced Labor
Fair Wages, Working Hours
Equal opportunities/Discrimination
Health and Safety of employee
Social Benefits/Social Security

Company

Adoption of corporate social responsibility management
Corruption & Responsible political involvement
Fair competition (including government assistance)
Respect for intellectual property rights
Total number of legal actions against

Society

Public commitments to sustainability issues
Employment creation
Vocational training
Contribution to stable economic development
Prevention & mitigation of armed conflicts

Local community

Community engagement
Secure, Safe & healthy living conditions of community
Respect of indigenous rights
Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge
Land acquisition, delocalization and migration

Consumer

Health & Safety of consumer
Consumer Privacy
Compliance with consumer regulations
Transparent business information
Practices to insure Consumers Satisfaction+

Social-washing

Similar to “greenwashing”, social-washing is often a deliberate strategy adopted by an organization (like a company) to make deceptive claims about its products, services, or practices.

Social-washing makes deceptive claims about social performance. Social washing often focuses attention on small successes in order to obscure large problems.



Please do not ask about the 60% of our employees that we fired last year.

Designers Can Contribute

Designers can act judiciously and remain skeptical about social claims made by material, manufacturing and component suppliers.

Designers and companies can support organizations that set standards for social accountability, such as Fairtrade International.

When working on large projects, studies or corporate projects, designers can advocate to create a decision-making group that includes representation from employees, the community, and society.



Certifiers such as Fairtrade International, claim that their practices have provided *“decent living and working conditions for over one million small-scale and marginalized producers and poor workers in developing countries.”*

Achieving Social Equity

With time, organization and effort, social equity can be realized by meeting the basic needs of all people in all societies.

Workers mining ore for conflict metals in Africa.



Achieving Social Equity

Team exercise

In a small team, look at a cell phone and think about how it is made, used and disposed of.

- 1) Select one social quality indicator from each of the five categories, and discuss how the selected social qualities are affected by the cell phone. Consider the entire life cycle of the cell phone (extraction, manufacturing, distribution, use, end of life) to identify a life cycle phase when the selected criteria is most applicable.

Social Quality Indicators **Team exercise**

Select one social quality indicator from each of the five categories, and discuss how the selected social qualities are affected by the cell phone. Consider the entire life cycle of the cell phone (extraction, manufacturing, distribution, use, end of life) to identify a life cycle phase when the selected criteria is most applicable.

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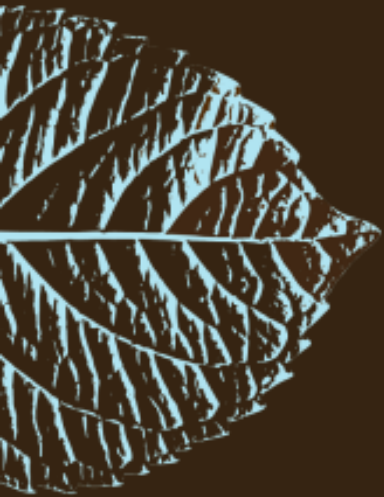
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Okala Practitioner

Integrating Ecological Design

This presentation is part of an educational presentation series that supports teaching from the *Okala Practitioner* guide.

Okala Practitioner and these presentations were created by the Okala Team to disseminate fact-based knowledge about ecological design to the design disciplines and business.

Unless provided in the presentations, Information sources are found in the *Okala Practitioner* guide.

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The Okala Team initiated the collaboration with the US EPA and the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA) in 2003. The team developed Okala Practitioner with support from Autodesk, IBM, Eastman Chemical and the IDSA Ecodesign Section.

***Okala Practitioner* is available through [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Background information and the free Okala Ecodesign Strategy App can be found at [Okala.net](https://www.okala.net)**

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