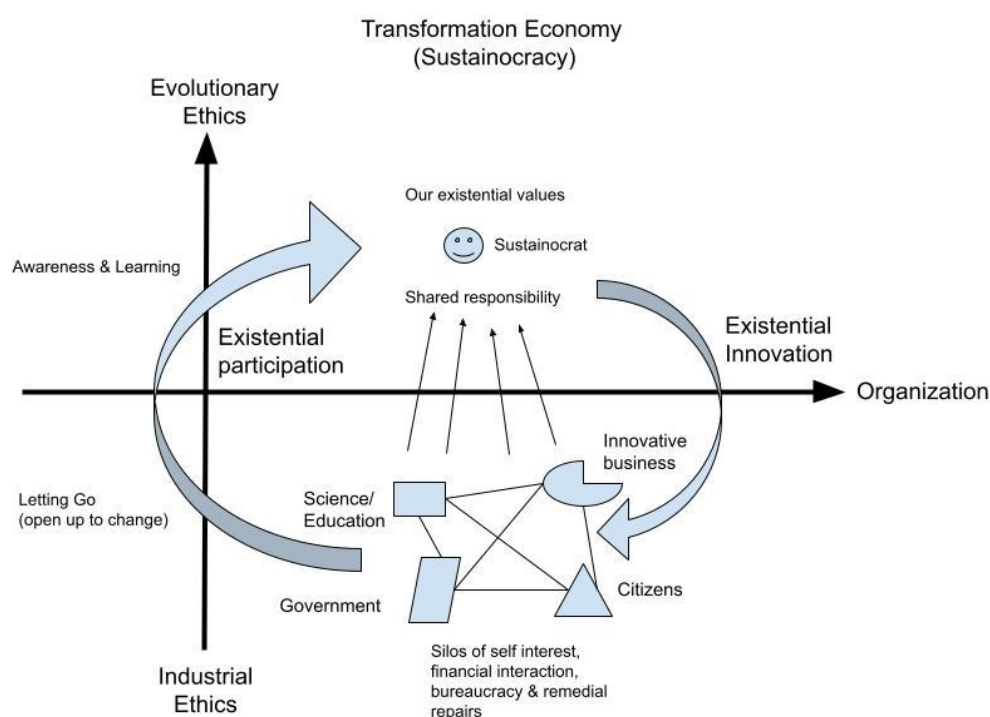


**In a World Full of Challenges New (L)earning Objectives Need to Be Introduced**  
**5th World Congress of Education**  
**November 15 - 17, 2023, Sapporo - Japan**

**Jean-Paul Close**  
**Ideological founder of Sustainocracy**  
**Eindhoven, the Netherlands**

**Abstract**



Jean-Paul Close

***Existentialist Ethics in Action: Sustainocracy for the Next Generation***

We tend to take our condition as human beings for granted. After all, we are born as such and develop ourselves within the guidance offered by our parents, society and the education we receive, organized contextually by our human surroundings. We hardly question the nature of our existence or the complexity of our self aware presence. We may never even consider this within the limitations of a small planet traveling through space or our reliance on nature as the source of our existence. On the other hand, in our current era, we are painfully becoming aware of our condition as the sixth cause of mass destruction of life ever since the birth of this planet. The previous five global disasters were never attributed to an intelligent, creative and self aware species. They were produced by volcano eruptions and meteorite strikes. This implies that we need to seriously revise what we are and how we interact with each

other and our planetary environment, people and institutions alike, in order to avoid further elimination of life, including eventually our own.

This article introduces Sustainocracy as an invitation to make an evolutionary step for humankind. It combines our unique abilities and creativity with our intense and long term learning process, to overcome our inner confusion of what we really are and what responsibilities that implies for our sustainable existence. The condition of a self destructive parasite on Earth does not fit our intellectual profile. Our evolutionary wisdom and awareness is gradually showing us the essential and natural values that are representative to assure our sustainable, long term perspectives. Over four billion years of a living environment around us teach us such lessons, as long as we are willing to have a look and identify ourselves with this learning. These values are not financial, nor tradable commodities in a financial world or hierarchy. They are natural essentials that we share with all living beings. This also translates into new phases in our learning objectives, organizational dynamics, priorities and applied societal methods for all our current and upcoming generations.

### **What are we?**

The unique and dominant abilities of the human being, compared to other living species, has brought us severe confusion of what we really are, ever since we learned how to use them to our benefit. Without the presence of a natural role model to refer to we needed to figure out our own reality through trial and error. It is quite normal that we, at an early age of our existence, attributed our fears and blessings to higher powers in nature and the universe. We gave them human behavioral characteristics such as creative power, anger, jealousy, care, greed, judgment, guilt, happiness, etc. Over time more rational explanations appeared, suggesting evolutionary steps that mentally and physically took us away from common biological ancestors. Other suggestions, within this same confusion about our origins, include the arrival of an extraterrestrial species, or stardust, in search for a new habitat. The commonality in all these suggestions is the miraculous, unprecedented and often inexplicable capabilities of the human being in a habitat without any natural predators, other than our competitive selves. These unique superpowers got us to gradually claim ownership over our surroundings, using it out of our self interest, defending it against others or fighting for desired takeovers. Certain scripts, that were classified as holy, were conveniently interpreted as justification of such claims by suggesting that humankind, or certain elites in its representation, was given stewardship over Earth's resources by those higher powers.

We learned to use fire to our benefit, and developed technologies for our wellness and to do warfare. We gradually invented our own political and financial ecosystem, with its related arrogance, hierarchies, ownership claims, manipulation, extraction and the commercialization of the Earth's resources. Whenever desired, and out of self interest, interregional territorial conflicts arose including use and (mis)use of

human resources and a total disrespect of the miracle of life that these resources represent. Our scientific knowledge developed further through our industrial processes for mass production and miniaturization, the movement and logistics of goods and people, while developing education to support the growth of these activities. Healthcare was deployed to remediate the related health consequences and sustain productivity. Expensive layers of regulations and bureaucracies tried to place some limitations to the negative environmental impact while maintaining functional controls and support over people and structures for the benefit of the system itself.

In more recent times we have become aware of the limitations of our planetary resources. Also the delicate balance of the living ecosystem, that we have been manipulating and influencing with our behavior, became evident. Within the lifetime of my own generation (1950's till now), the human population on Earth has tripled, reaching an unprecedented size of about eight billion souls. As we sustain an unlimited consumerist and competitive lifestyle, that has passed its existential threshold already in the 60's of the last century, we are overshooting every year the limitations of available and regenerative resources provided by our environment. It sparked the discussion about "sustainability" in the 70's (The Limits to Growth, Club of Rome, 1972<sup>1</sup>) and the meaning of it. It also sparked the tendency to develop diplomacy over warfare, in a new phase of our peace desired self domestication as a species. Gradually we are outgrowing our thousands of years of violent confrontations caused by our competitive quest for ownership, control and growth. A new era emerges on the horizon, an era that needs to be filled in with new behavioral norms, ethics and habits. An era that deepens our understanding of the meaning of life itself, our own complex reality as an unique manifestation of life and the imperative need to harmonize our existence with ourselves and our natural environment.

Sustainocracy became a first attempt to evolve society into a reality centered around sustainable human development, including the powerful and symbiotic harmonization with our natural environment. It developed ideologically and embryonically at first in 1996. Experimentation with the intentions brought important milestones until the announcement of the City of Tomorrow initiative (STIR Foundation, feb 2009), just after the financial crisis of 2008. Sustainocracy (Sustainable human development and a real time democracy of shared responsibilities) was published in the Netherlands in Dutch for the first time in 2012 to distinguish itself from the existing narratives. Ever since it has seen the growing engagement of numerous partners of all the silos of society, not only in the Netherlands but also elsewhere.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Club\\_of\\_Rome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Club_of_Rome)

### **The essential values for our existence**

Whatever the origins of the human presence on Earth, we do have certain things in common with all the other living organisms on this planet. We all use the same molecules that are available around us to manifest the diversity of lifeforms, including our own. My good friend, the late Prof. Dr. Paul de Blot JS, Jesuit and professor in business spirituality at Nyenrode Business University in the Netherlands, once asked his audience a challenging question. He pointed at a bird in the sky and asked: "Why do all those molecules that shape that bird stick together?". He openly wondered how these molecules would not dissolve in the rain or melt in hot weather? That type of fragility is what molecules show when they are not powerfully interconnected through the force of life. When the bird dies, this magical adhesive, this molecular bonding force disappears and the bird disintegrates back into its surroundings. We can equally apply this to ourselves. It makes us reflect into more depth about what we are and what this magical and powerful energy is that keeps us together as a living entity. It also may give us a glimpse at the miraculous uniqueness of each of us as individuals. At a larger scale this force of life can also apply to communities.

Apart from reflecting about the possible answers to these questions it is already a mind blowing experience for many to become aware of our physical, molecular and energetic reality. A reality that we respectfully share with all other living species around us. We all together form a sustainable, evolving ecosystem that has been present already for billions of years. We human beings appeared in this ecosystem only a few million years ago. We can even go a step further and show that our individual physical presence is not a single entity. It represents a delicate and complex ecosystem of its own in which billions of microscopic species connect and interact in a mutually symbiotic way. We start realizing that our inner world is as complex as our outer world, and its existence is mutually dependent. Why then would we manipulate, destroy or pollute it? Doesn't it become clear that by doing so we equally manipulate, destroy and pollute our own selves? This shows us that our own sustainable existence during our lifetime, and for the long term through our children and the children of our children, is very much related to the sense of responsibility we show to care for the environment. By doing so, we care for ourselves, our sustainable existence and lasting wellness.

Once we begin to understand the genuine nature of our existence, we start to respect certain things that before would not have captured our attention. We also stop taking certain things blindly for granted and pay more attention to the essential values of our existence. After all, what is more precious than that? Personally I only became aware of what such essentials could be when life's circumstances brought me into a situation of single fatherhood. I realized that we have a natural tendency to protect and guide our children with the help of our understanding of certain key values. Before my condition of fatherhood, my life had been of a highly educated, international executive in several multinational companies, resident and active in

various countries. Those key essentials of our existence had never been explicitly put in the forefront of my attention. I simply was blind to them, just like nearly everyone else. High school diplomas and several university degrees had covered many cognitive subjects, preparing me for an intelligent and productive life or career in a finance driven and dependent world. Never any attention was paid to our existence and resilience as a species, not at home, not at school nor as part of the religious catholic beliefs that were passed on in my family. Now, as a father, I gradually came across viewpoints that never seemed to have been important enough to be included in my training. I could not blame my uneducated blindness for being so irresponsible in many real human based issues. I could however blame myself if I would not adjust my behavior using my awareness breakthroughs. I suddenly realized that I still had a lot to learn, and unlearn.

Why would we prioritize as a society other things than our own sustainable development as a species? Are we so fixated within our own social-political-financial structures and agendas that we are totally blind of our dependence on our natural environment? If we carefully look at the way we structure our modern societies and the way we educate ourselves, we can easily see how much we have eliminated nature from our lives. We have created a mechanical reality around us and we act in it as if we were robots. In a way we are even expected to behave that way. The awareness breakthrough of us being a unique expression of nature itself is an “I am” revelation that goes beyond our molecular composition or the understanding of the complexity of our own individual natural ecosystem. No wonder that our societies have entered into a state that is known these days as the “anthropocene” (National Geographic: Anthropocene, 2022)<sup>2</sup>. This refers to the significant, lasting and destructive impact our human presence and activities have on Earth’s geography and ecosystems. If we are keeping ourselves ignorant about our life essentials we are bound to go from crisis into crisis all the time. This is a serious contradiction to our condition as a self aware, intelligent and creative species.

It is never too late to actually develop this understanding and act as a consequence. After all, who could be against our sustainable resilience as a human species? This can be interpreted as a cynical question in view of the huge material interests that have developed over time among the globalized human structures, hierarchies and power plays worldwide. On the other hand, when I became aware and started acting as a consequence, I did gradually find support, even at institutional levels of society. Analyzing, listing, inviting to participate, and publishing about our core essential values for our sustainable existence as a species, did have its impact. So what are those core values that I am referring to? When reaching back to my condition as a single father, most parents around the world will recognize those values as ones they tend to apply in their own family lives.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/anthropocene/>

Our main concerns towards our offspring are their health and safety. We tend to take responsibility together as parents. We also care for their learning process as they grow up and teach them how to fulfill their basic daily needs. It is our natural instinct that carries these values as a shared responsibility. We also defend those values towards and with others whenever we believe this is necessary.  
(The essential values are underlined).



Why then have we deviated from those essential values as a society? Why do we allow unhealthy and unsafe practices if they are only justified by financial gain? It is even becoming evident that the financial pressure placed on parents, as only means to have access to their basic needs, has created broken families, traumatized children in the upgrowing phases, and enormous levels of unbalance, even lack or deterioration of health in society. People develop behavioral problems, receive therapy or expensive healthcare, while pressure remains exerted to perform in order to sustain a system that increasingly creates more social separation, health and environmental problems than benefits. Meanwhile many people are demanding space, away from this forced dependence, to develop themselves in a different and more resilient way, physically, emotionally and spiritually. The overarching system tends to react with the introduction of limitations, controls, impediments, bureaucracy, new rules and increased financial pressure (inflation). Sometimes

aggression against their own population is applied in a painful attempt to sustain hierarchical self interests. These are all natural signs of the changes that are occurring in the twilight years, decades or centuries of societal transformations full of tensions. Ethical breakthroughs are to be expected.

### **Introducing Sustainocracy**

One of the main problems of an established, interests driven, overall mainstream reality is that it does not let itself be convinced to change, unless maybe hit by tragedy. Many people, NGO's and organized gatherings already were strongly criticizing "the system", often with street demonstrations, lawsuits, supporting political parties with harsh promises and other measures. This is all legitimate and over time we have seen that such actions can be successful, often at the expense of a war and a lot of suffering first. It forced "the system" to bend and accept some of the complaints, making adjustments to its functioning for the benefit of certain groups of people. Like this we have seen a number of social securities appear, voting rights for women, emancipation, etc. Although these measures satisfied the general public, it made "the system" more demanding, more expensive and people much more dependent. It never changed, it adapted and became more powerful.

Sustainocracy was introduced as a mindset of shared responsibilities. It applied not only to "the system" but also to the citizens. In fact, it addressed the citizens first because as such we are the living representatives of the (biological) human being. The essential and existential values of our existence affect us first. Institutions may have their legally registered identities like people, their foundational DNA is based on the functional, competitive financial surroundings in which they were set up. They do not represent the human being, they tend to represent their self interest, using the human beings where necessary. We are the workforce, consumers, political voters, "the market", etc. The majority of people are so used to this, that it is very difficult to change.

This does not mean that participating in Sustainocracy is out of reach of the institutions, on the contrary. Many institutions, that have their own values driven authenticity in the competitive political and financial world, learn to see great advantages in participating. Institutions are not stupid. After all, they consist of people that define their functioning. They see the overarching problems ahead but tend to have no means or power to initiate a new model all by themselves. When they are invited to participate many of them are grateful for the opportunity, even if this means the need for sincere self reflection of their own identity and the renewal of their contributions to this values driven environment. They see unprecedented opportunities arise that stimulate their leadership, seeing a new world emerge full of possibilities with little to no competition. Only institutions that are in survival mode have no time to develop moral justifications for engagement. They are just focused on short term income, no matter what. Similarly, certain organizations that were born and had grown in times of abuse of our planetary material resources, have their DNA

so firmly attached to their disastrous functioning, that it seems only possible to slow them down or stop them if a world crisis occurs. Or when the Sustainocratic alternative evolves in such a way that their presence is gradually eliminated from the societal equations in a natural way. This shows the diversity of situations that we can see in the panorama that displays itself in front of us. People in leadership positions in politics, science and business are all human beings. They run the same risks at a personal level as anyone else. They also have families to take care of. So when they are made aware of the need to care, they are confronted with a moral choice. They either do their best to act, or they don't and accept the fact that they can be blamed for it. When there was no choice, there could be no blame, only maybe the recognition of their professional blindness. After all, seeing our reality as a financial cost is also a way to feel responsible and care. Now we become aware that it also blindfolds us to a much larger reality and makes us vulnerable. Knowing this we can learn to see finance as a means and develop other ways and objectives than financial goals. The existential essentials and shared responsibility presented by Sustainocracy help to do this.

So Sustainocracy was introduced into institutions at human level, which is where it is most effective from an awareness and engagement point of view. Subsequently one can look at the diversity of functions that people occupy to see how they can integrate the newly developed awareness into their activities. Another aspect of Sustainocracy was that the essential values were presented as a shared responsibility of everyone, not just of political or financial leaders. This meant that these leaders could safely integrate the values into their functions and decision making, especially since these values started to resonate with the rest of their surroundings, including the local citizens, customers, voters and personnel.

Sustainocracy was not presented as yet another political party, a separate institution, a business, or anything like that. It was suggested as a common mindset switch, a necessary step in human, institutional and societal evolution, away from financial steering and dependence and into structured human natural values defense, recovery and sustainable maintenance. It is a step that is done by everyone together, citizens and institutions alike.

#### **Level 4 regional development**

Key in the evolutionary path is the aspect of "respect of the existing stakeholders" in society. We cannot deny that our economic development has brought a lot of good over the centuries. We cannot blame any of the stakeholders of the existing society directly or individually for the destruction that is taking place. The anthropocene has been provoked collectively and we are all involved. These stakeholders have developed their professional excellence within a functional context of financial growth that has guided their actions. Financial profitability and growth has been the name of the game on which the entire societal normative has been based. This financial growth desire was originally created by warfare, expressed in gold to be made



available to military forces. This model was extended into entrepreneurial services and products with two different scenarios. The first was based on speculation with shortages through the shipping industries. The second was based on planned agrarian and industrial processes for the delivery of products and services in abundance. In the 70's the gold backing of currencies was abandoned after which speculation around fear and shortages started to become the mainstream of financial markets, hierarchies and controls.

If today we divide the available money worldwide, created out of debt development over time, with the human population worldwide, we would make every human being in the world a millionaire. This shows that financial poverty in theory does not exist. What does exist is a financial dominance that is hungry for more at the expense of our planet and our fellow human beings. The related societal responsibilities, regional development, social securities, citizen engagement through labor, the worldwide shortages of natural resources, etc have created points of stress for all layers of society. The financial crisis in 2008 surprised the world that was still in the firm belief that everything could be solved through money. It opened the minds and doors for new ways of thinking. One of the understandings that developed was that:

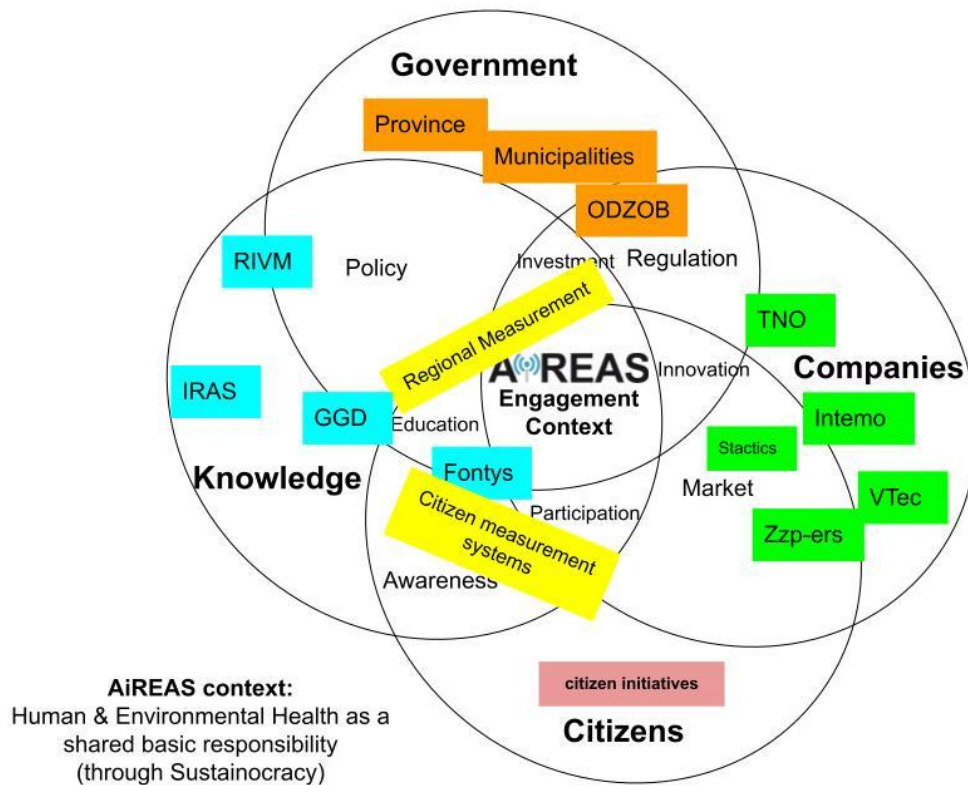
“Poverty is not the lack of financial means, it is the inability to be self-sufficient in the provision of one's basic needs.” The biggest (actual, moral and ethical) poverty worldwide is the forced dependence generated by the hierarchies of the financial world, no matter how rich they tend to present themselves”.

If we need to blame anything then it is this overarching context that needs to be addressed. If this overarching mindset is altered, then the same stakeholders transform their effectiveness within the new criteria. Since the positive invitation of Sustainocracy started in 2009 as “City of Tomorrow”, to participate in values driven cooperatives of such shared responsibilities, we have seen the gradual transformation of such institutions. They are still finance driven but place their activities in context of human, societal and environmental benefits. Money is just one of the many means. Positive engagement, creativity, insights, awareness, teamspirit, open communication, co-creation, are often more important than just money. This type of values driven entrepreneurship, that also involves local governments, is referred to as 4 x WIN (Entrepreneurship of the 21st century, Researchgate, 2022)<sup>3</sup>. In the venn-diagram below we see how the different stakeholder silos converge in the shared responsibility of co-creating and maintaining a healthy, unpolluted environment, referred to as the AiREAS (AiREAS, Sustainocracy for a Healthy City, Springer, 2016)<sup>4</sup> context.

---

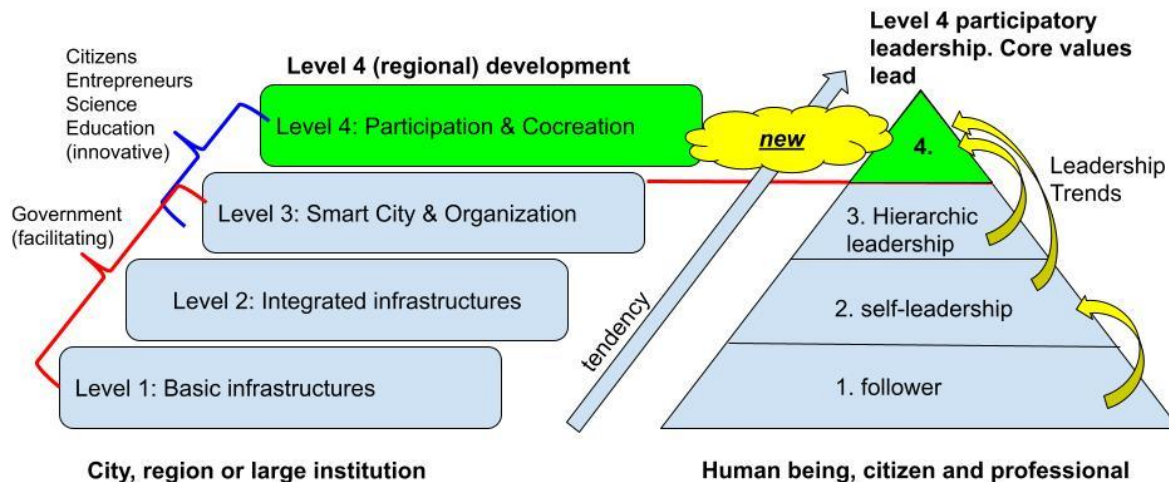
<sup>3</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364311933\\_Entrepreneurship\\_of\\_the\\_21st\\_century](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364311933_Entrepreneurship_of_the_21st_century)

<sup>4</sup> <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-26940-5>



The new layer of societal development, referred to as level 4 awareness driven shared responsibilities (see diagram below), is made partly possible with the level 3 SMART city approach. The technology driven SMART environment has filled the location with measurement techniques that help visualize the invisible of the dynamics of a society. We can now see how traffic moves and impacts on the environment, we see what the invisible air pollution does, how people cluster around specific areas, etc. If placed within the context of for instance “integral health” then it becomes clear what adjustments need to be made. But these adjustments need the involvement of the citizens that will be confronted with changes in their habits, lifestyle and conservative, behavioral comfort zones. In order to do this a shared responsibility approach shows to be more effective than a top down imposition.

Introducing level 4 in a community has an impact on everyone involved. It involves all leadership archetypes, their mission and interrelationships. It tends to strengthen their individual authenticity within the ecosystem which develops into lasting respect and cooperation. It also affects the underlying levels, as the transformation will put demand on the technologies used and the way the basic and integrated infrastructures need to be modified to accommodate the new dynamics within the region.



### Emerging world of Sustainocratic participation

#### A new overarching learning environment and reward system

As Sustainocracy and its sense of shared responsibility evolved, it equally developed the shared learning environment referred to as the essential value of “awareness”. City of Tomorrow had started experimenting with awareness based evening lectures. They were offered free of charge and attracted self aware people from all layers of the traditional society. Gradually university based PhD students became interested in taking the ideology, and its spinoffs, along in their research. Some of the topics that came across were:

- Business and Spirituality, the Sustainocratic way (Nyenrode Business University)
- The human right to develop our own insights of environmental hazards (University of Law, Tilburg)
- Playful systems for societal engagement in transformations (Technical University of Eindhoven)
- Measurement systems for exposure to air pollution (University of Utrecht)
- The instant effect of air pollution on school going children with respiratory problems (University of Twente)
- The water effectiveness of aquaponics (Avans high school)
- etc

Most of the topics were still very much related to environmental issues and connected strongly with the working of AiREAS. Within the City of Tomorrow other initiatives were born too, within the same field of shared responsibility but prioritizing

other combinations of the essential values. These clustered many citizens, NGOs, new age 4 x WIN (or at least multiple WIN) small and medium enterprises and science, with education to a minor extent. This was mainly because of the large institutional interests that still developed around societal dependence and financial speculation, rather than supporting the organization of social cohesion (COS3i, community for social inclusion, Researchgate, 2022)<sup>5</sup> and regional self sufficiency in fulfillment of basic needs (FRE2SH experience, 10 years of experimentation, Researchgate 2022)<sup>6</sup>. It was only a matter of time to see changes here too.

Gradually secondary schools started to open up to participate in activities related to the AiREAS approach. We called the learning environment “participatory learning”. It had a great impact on the pupils. They developed high levels of interest in all their learning dynamics, including the cognitive offerings of the school. This was because the essentials presented to them made everything relevant within the challenges they got involved in. They were invited to measure air quality in their classrooms, learn about technology, its applications, interpretation and creative thinking in teams to come up with solutions. The level of self leadership was enhanced and so was their positive self image in relation to their personal contribution to the team processes. This empowerment got them to pay much more attention to all the learning offered by the school and place it into context of the core values at hand with their own contributions.



---

5

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/365605345\\_Social\\_inclusion\\_in\\_the\\_shared\\_responsibility\\_of\\_our\\_core\\_natural\\_human\\_values\\_through\\_the\\_COS3i\\_initiative](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/365605345_Social_inclusion_in_the_shared_responsibility_of_our_core_natural_human_values_through_the_COS3i_initiative)

6

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/365579156\\_FRE2SH\\_experiences\\_Ten\\_years\\_of\\_open\\_experimentation\\_with\\_the\\_development\\_of\\_regional\\_regenerative\\_food\\_engagement\\_and\\_self\\_sufficiency](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/365579156_FRE2SH_experiences_Ten_years_of_open_experimentation_with_the_development_of_regional_regenerative_food_engagement_and_self_sufficiency)

Gradually the approach started affecting all levels of education. Certain institutions in the higher echelons of education started to call themselves “for society”, opening up their learning routines for participatory learning, together with the City of Tomorrow, AiREAS and Sustainocracy. The same happened at European level where a program called “Erasmus+” offered students and teachers the opportunity to travel and get acquainted with the functioning of other cultures. At first the subsidies were provided primarily around the traditional government dependence of job creations and employability. But gradually the European Community approach became much more oriented towards awareness development and the existential challenges at hand. It started to value programs for young people and their teachers that could break with the old comfort zones, allowing them to become more open minded towards new approaches. Empowering them to “be that change themselves” is a key step forward to develop the motivation of those youngsters and their innovative thinking and handling. Over the years we have received and inspired thousands of young people from all over Europe with Sustainocracy, our shared responsibility approach and sharing the essential values of our existence.

The whole program also showed the multiple rewards people receive with their engagement and involvement in developing the essential values. Rewards are not measured anymore solely in financial terms. Personal satisfaction, leadership, appraisal, empowerment, being heard, feeling significant, a positive self image, applied creativity, entrepreneurship, health, emotional fulfillment, etc have become equally or sometimes even more important. 4 x WIN shows this multidimensional type of entrepreneurial spirit that leverages every participant to a layer of unique recognition and importance. It gradually also transforms the economy from blind financial growth orientation, with numerous costly and often irreparable consequences, into forms of regional harmonization with constant triggers for values driven innovative exercises. People and institutions would start to engage professionally in these new values driven dynamics, finding each other in their objectives and operational routines. A positive, heart driven vibe is sensed in the entire community and the crossovers of the interactions between all actors. All of the actions become relevant for measurable integral wellness and healing processes that make a difference. All educational disciplines have found their inspiration in Sustainocracy already, whether it is architecture, regional development, political science, Artificial Intelligence, care for health systems, ICT, law, applied science, resilient food systems, psychology, anthropology, sociology, cook schools, humanistic sciences, persuasive technologies, environmental sciences, business sciences, hospitality, etc. Most recent developments are at the level of primary schools and the impact of this education on parents, neighborhoods and neighborhood design.

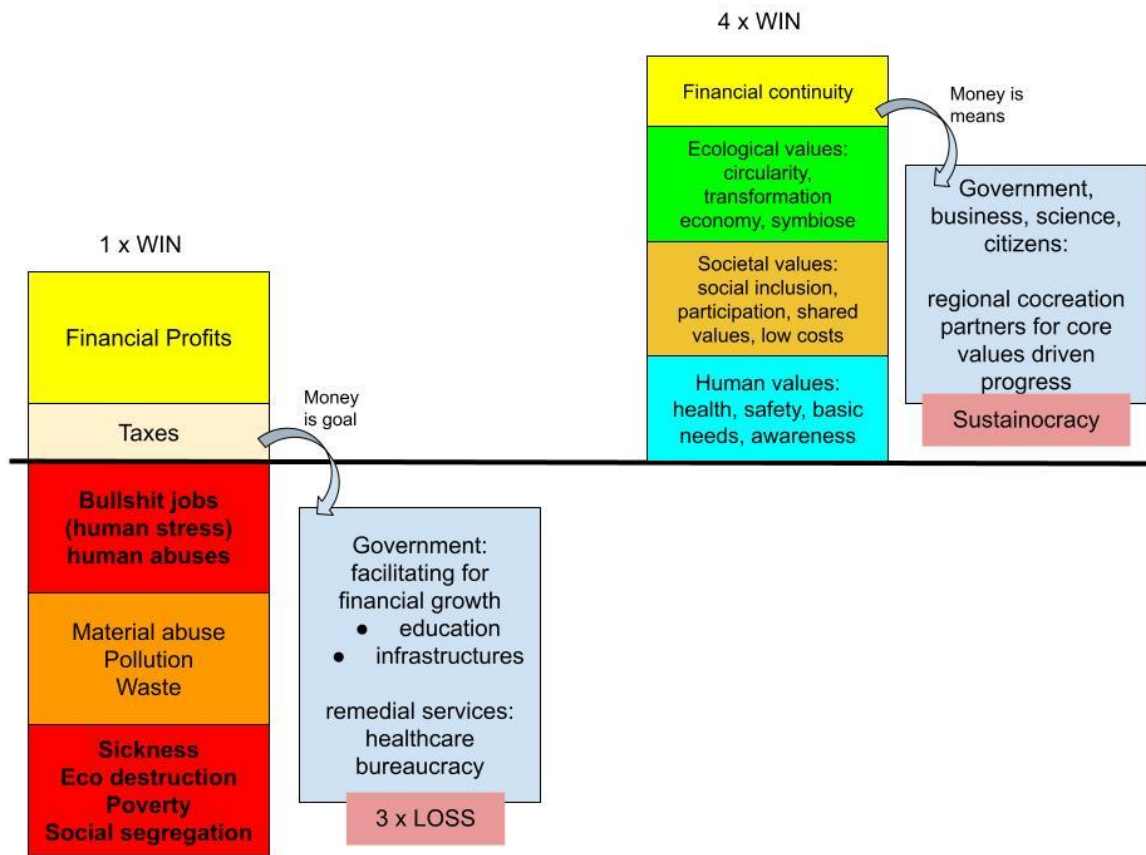
### **Final remarks**

Evolutionary steps are difficult, especially if they represent significant changes in behavior and societal positioning. Executives that visited the region of Eindhoven for



different reasons, learned about Sustainocracy and its approach. They were heard saying “it exists, we want it too”. In order to do this it cannot be a one side approach. In Eindhoven it took nearly 12 years to manifest itself strongly. It would never have happened if we had not first suffered the consequences of the financial crisis in 2008 and the threats to society presented by the level of air pollution in the region. It shows us that humankind tends to react and learn in a painful way. Chaos tends to open our minds for awareness and new layers of societal development. Enough chaos is present in the world right now, affecting us all in the short and long term. The priorities in regions may differ but the shared responsibilities presented here do not. It was Einstein that suggested that “we cannot resolve problems with the same thinking that caused them”. But the changing of our overarching mindset needs to be done at societal level, with all the stakeholders involved. “Healthy city” or regional “Sustainocracy” developments motivate people and institutions to contribute to it. “Growth city” too, but in a different way, attracting different players. Often the following political remarks were heard about a local industry with lots of pollution that affects lots of local citizens: “They produce a lot of labor”. That is not a justification for pollution. Their business and impact on the labor market may be important but this business also has an environmental and health responsibility. We have surrounded the use of a hammer or a knife with ethical considerations, why have we not done the same with polluting industries or politics?

With the appearance of healthy business expressions in a region the integral economy improves, healthcare can be reduced while overall wellness goes up. It is a regional leadership choice to take the essential values seriously and create an environment of togetherness that develops such wellness. It will become attractive for people, especially parents with small children, to value such environments more than highly polluted, unsafe regions where priorities differ. Responsibility is not politics, nor financial economics. It is an overarching way of life that leads to values driven politics and economics, not the other way around. Everyone can do it, as long as we do it together.



Eindhoven, September 2023