



Integral Sustainability 101

A Brief Introduction to:

- ~ The Quadrants Element of the Integral Framework
- ~ Use of the Quadrants for Sustainable Development Initiatives

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To Learn More

www.integralinstitute.org. The first three papers can be obtained directly from the author.

Brown, Barrett C. (2005). Theory and practice of integral sustainable development: Part 1 – Quadrants and the practitioner. *AQAL: Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*, 1 (2), 351-386.

Brown, Barrett C. (2005). Theory and practice of integral sustainable development: Part 2 – Values, developmental levels, and natural design. *AQAL: Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*, 1 (2), 386-448.

Brown, Barrett C. and Riedy, Chris (in press). Use of the Integral Framework to Design Developmentally-Appropriate Sustainability Communications. Chapter in *Innovation, Education, and Communication for Sustainable Development*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang Scientific Publishers.

Hochachka, Gail (2005). *Developing sustainability, developing the self: An integral approach to international and community development*. University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia: POLIS Project on Ecological Governance. Available at: <http://www.drishti.ca/resources.htm>

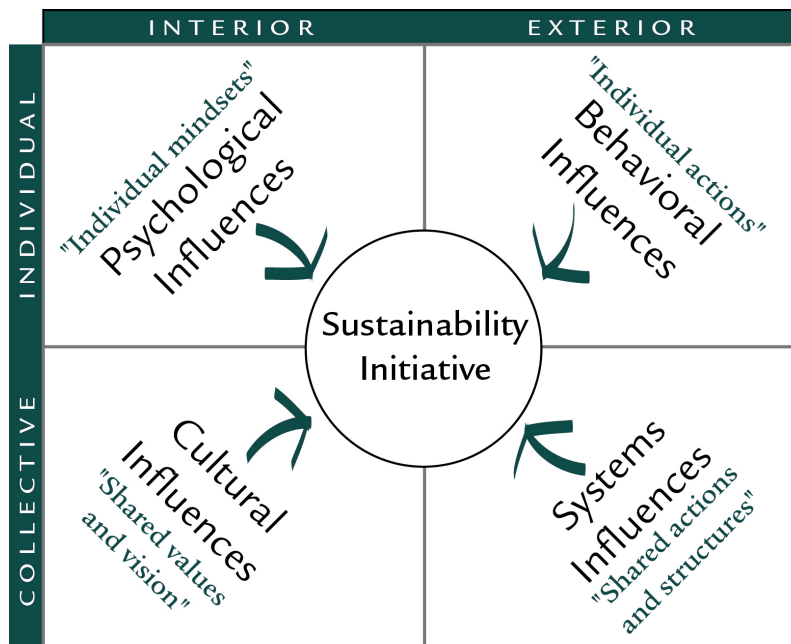


At a Glance

The Integral Framework is a comprehensive map of *systems, culture, psychology, and behavior*. It is used worldwide in some of the highest levels of business, government, and civil society. Quadrants are one of the five major elements of the Integral Framework. The other elements are Levels (stages of development), Lines (intelligences), States (of consciousness), and Types (e.g., personality or gender types).

Each quadrant is a lens, or perspective, on a different, but important, dimension of reality. By looking at a sustainability initiative through all of the quadrants, we are able to identify most, if not all, of the major forces which will influence the success or failure of that initiative. The quadrants can thus be used as a comprehensive map to help understand the terrain in which the initiative must succeed.

The Quadrants



To Use the Quadrants for Sustainable Development Initiatives

1. Clarify the initiative or central issue to be addressed.
2. Identify the forces revealed by each quadrant which might thwart the initiative or hinder resolution of the problematic issue.
3. Identify the forces revealed by each quadrant which might support the initiative or help resolve the issue.
4. Choose the thwarting and supporting forces which seem likely to have the greatest influence on the ultimate success or failure of your efforts.
5. Design an integrated response which addresses the major thwarting forces and builds off of the most influential supporting forces. Use tools and methodologies appropriate to each quadrant to respond to forces in that quadrant.
6. Implement the response.
7. Measure results to the greatest degree possible. Gather feedback.
8. Repeat process and design a more tailored response, based upon previous results and feedback.



The Territory Revealed by Each Quadrant (Contextualized for Sustainable Development)

PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCES

Individual-Interior: Self and Consciousness

The subjective, internal reality of an individual

Context: self-identity and consciousness; intentions; personal values; attitude; religious or spiritual beliefs; commitment (e.g., cognitive, emotional, moral); cognitive capacity; depth of responsibility; degree of care for others and the environment; etc.

Examples of areas addressed: psychological health and development; educational level; emotional intelligence; motivation and will; understanding of one’s role in the community and impact on the environment; personal goals; the practitioner’s mental model, and self-knowledge; a city-dweller’s disconnection from the natural world.

Tools for transformation: e.g., psychotherapy; religious or spiritual counseling; Enneagram analysis; Myers-Briggs testing; phenomenological research; self-questioning; body scanning; introspection; prayer; meditation; journaling; goal-setting; emotional literacy training; increased exposure to wild nature; vision quest; compassion practices.

BEHAVIORAL INFLUENCES

Individual-Exterior: Brain and Organism; Actions

The objective, external reality of an individual

Context: biological features; brain chemistry; bodily states; physical health; behaviors; skills; capabilities; actions; empirically measurable individual qualities; physical boundaries or surfaces; etc.

Examples of areas addressed: energy level and physical health of a practitioner; nutritional intake; pre- and post-natal care; conduct toward environment or opposite sex; routines; response to rules and regulations; birth control use; money management; computer skills; acidity or toxicity of a water source; metabolic responses to pollutants.

Tools for transformation: e.g., diet; hygiene; medication; exercise; weightlifting; preventative, allopathic, and/or complementary medicine; skill-building; clear rules, regulations, and guidance from a respected authority; use of sustainability technologies such as pollution filters, drip irrigation, solar panels, or a GPS system; use of litigation to enforce regulations or the Freedom of Information Act (in the USA) to acquire data.

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CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Collective-Interior: Cultures and Worldviews

The intersubjective, internal realities of groups

Context: shared values and worldviews; shared meaning; mutual resonance; cultural norms, boundaries and mores; language; customs; communication; relationships; symbolism; agreed upon ethics; etc.

Examples of areas addressed: cultural “appropriateness”; collective vision; relationship between practitioners and the community; relationship amongst community / family / organization members; stigmas; language differences; collective interpretation of power, class, race and gender inequities; collective perception of the environment and pollution.

Tools for transformation: e.g., dialogue; community-directed development; inclusive decision making; consensus-based strategic planning; organizational learning; support groups (religious or secular); trust-building exercises; participant-observer techniques; community visioning; cooperative participation; storytelling; collective introspection; group therapy; meme development and propagation; language skills development; communication skills development.

SYSTEMS INFLUENCES

Collective-Exterior: Social Systems & Environments

The interobjective, external realities of groups

Context: visible societal structures; systems and modes of production (economic, political, social, informational, educational, technological); strategies; policies; measures; work processes; technologies; natural systems, processes and interactions in the environment; etc.

Examples of areas addressed: stability and effectiveness of economic and political systems; legal frameworks; strength of technological, educational and healthcare infrastructure; poverty alleviation; actual power, class, race and gender inequities; job creation and trade; corporate regulation; organizational structure; food security; health of local biota or global biosphere; climate change; restoration, protection and sustainable use of natural resources; feedback loop efficiencies; bioaccumulation in food chains

Tools for transformation: e.g., policy-making; organized protest; shareholder activism; capacity building; systems thinking; complexity, chaos, and cybernetic theories; “upstream” strategies; organizational reengineering; micro-credit and micro-enterprise; pollution taxes; subsidies; regulations; natural resource restoration and management systems; geographic information systems; natural environmental changes; population changes.

[The following is from participants from Swaziland, during a United Nations Development Programme training. They used the quadrants to identify the main forces propagating HIV/AIDS.]

The Leadership Development Programme uses the Four-Quadrant Framework methodology, based on the work of scholar Ken Wilber, to map the epidemic. This framework divides individual and societal attitudes and behaviours into four categories: individual attitudes and feelings, individual behaviour, collective attitudes, and collective behaviour and responses. Participants in Swaziland completed the following example:

<p>Individual Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear, confusion • Uninformed/misinformed • Hopelessness, Despair • Denial, apathy • HIV = AIDS = Death 	<p>Individual Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unprotected, unsafe sex • Discrimination, stigmatisation • Lack of respect or compassion • Unfocused, irresponsible • Few people getting tested
<p>Collective Norms and Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's status in society • Gender relations • Foreign, non-Swazi problem • HIV/AIDS as punishment • Polygamous traditions and "polygamous mindset" • Common myths about HIV/AIDS • Sex as taboo subject • Lack of role models 	<p>Systems and Structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient education, dissemination of HIV/AIDS information • Laws supporting/perpetuating women's disempowerment • Bureaucratic hurdles • Not enough coordination, management and partnership • Insufficient training and capacity development • Insufficient resources at all levels • Insufficient education and prevention strategies among youth • Conflicting messages and initiatives • Many initiatives do not focus on or consider rural communities