

## **Topic: Opportunity Identification for Sustainable Entrepreneurship**

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### **Hands-on Workshop (4h)**

**Opportunity Identification for Sustainable Entrepreneurship.  
Perspectives with Systems Thinking**

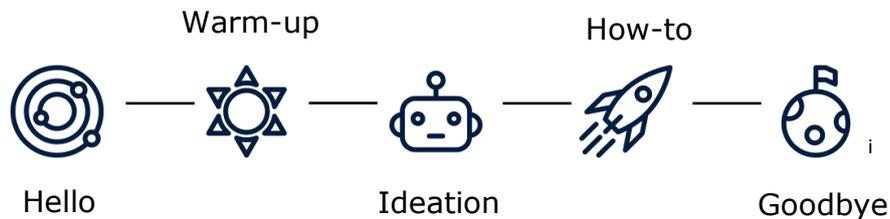
## **Abstract**

Sustainable Entrepreneurs integrate economic, ecological and social objectives taking profit as well as societal and environmental impact into account. With the help of systems thinking, entrepreneurs can identify entrepreneurial opportunities for sustainable development and reflect them in business structures accordingly. In this hands-on workshop, a systematic approach to opportunity identification will be introduced and explored. Furthermore, perspectives for sustainability in objectives (impact); output, input, personnel, material resources, organization (structure); business processes and management are discussed with the participants. The contents will be presented and applied with the participants. The introduced theory and tools serve as a basis for opportunity identification for next steps. Target group are entrepreneurship scholars and business administration graduate students with interest in sustainability issues (up to 16 students).

## Objectives

- Share information and knowledge on Sustainable Entrepreneurship
- Support sustainable idea identification holistically (systems theory)
- Create interest of participants to develop sustainable business ideas

## Structure



<i>Hello</i>	Input  <i>Sustainable Entrepreneurship</i> <i>Systems thinking</i>
<i>Warm-up</i>	Using Bauhaus technics and tools to wake creative potentials
<i>Ideation</i>	What issue catch my interest (in the frame of the sustainable development goals)?  How can this issue be tackled with Sustainable Entrepreneurship (strategy)?
<i>How-to</i>	What tools help and how to choose the right path?  Who will help (entrepreneurial ecosystem)?
<i>Wrap-up</i>	What comes next?

### Timing

45'	Hello
45'	Warm-up
45'	Ideation
45'	How-to
30'	Wrap-up (and Feedback)

### Materials

- Facilitator's toolcase (20+ pens, post-it notes)
- Four flexible metaplan walls

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Number of participants ≤ 16, time: 4h in total

# Background and target group

## *Sustainable Entrepreneurship*

Sustainable Entrepreneurship describes how entrepreneurs build new enterprises by discovering, evaluating and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities and transforming information into innovative products and services. Their orientation reflects on economic and non-economic objectives, whereby internal and external stakeholders are involved in the formulation of objectives ("embeddedness", see Dufays 2016, p. 61).<sup>ii</sup>

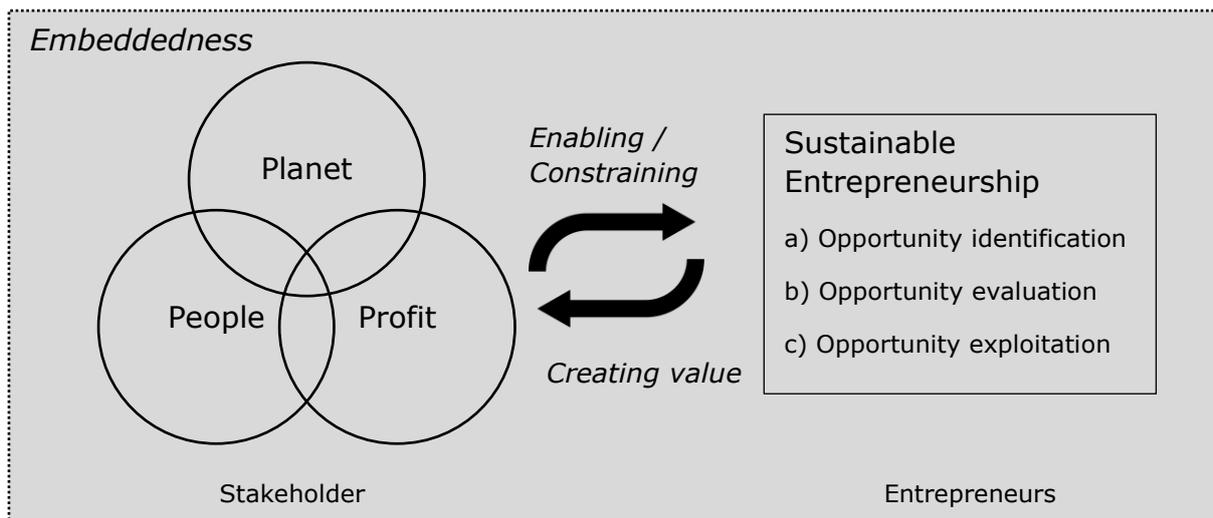


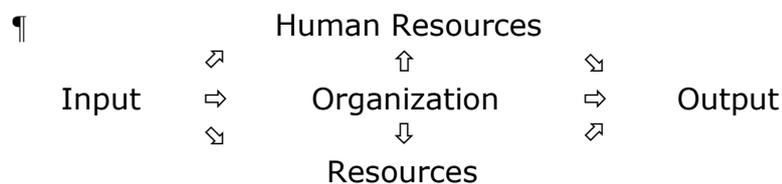
Figure 1: Model of embedded (Sustainable) Entrepreneurship, see Dufays 2016.

Sustainable Entrepreneurship refers to concepts such as the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington 1994).<sup>iii</sup> Therefore, it incorporates social, ecological and economic goals and aims for the economic, social and ecological development in a region.<sup>iv</sup>

But as Krueger et al. (2011, p. 288) states, "acting on an opportunity requires that someone first see that opportunity".<sup>v</sup> Useful instruments for the opportunity identification are approaches such as systems thinking.

## *Systems thinking*

With the help of a systems theory approach, sustainable development aspects are successfully transferred to business reality. The systems thinking approach looks at an enterprise considering its single factors interrelated:



The maxims of systems theory are neutrality, wholeness, integration, interdisciplinary and action orientation (Hartmann 2018)<sup>vi</sup> - making it predestined for dealing with issues in the field of sustainability. Taking into account the different factors sustainability issues will be transferred into sustainable business concepts.

## About me

Leonhard Gebhardt, who is working on digital transformation for SMEs at the HTW Berlin, will lead the workshop. He is doing his doctorate on sustainable entrepreneurship in regional (entrepreneurial) ecosystems at the University of Potsdam.

Leonhard Gebhardt has already conducted workshops with nonprofit executives and with international young people on the subject of social entrepreneurship (as part of an ERASMUS+ exchange project). Prior to his master's degree, he worked for Ashoka México y Centroamérica, where he was involved in various non-profit enterprises (in the field of peace work and conflict prevention). He teaches at Berlin universities.

### Presentations

„On the road to digital SMEs in Berlin“, held at the inspiration workshop „digital vocational school“ of the Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung (DKJS), ExRotaprint gGmbH (7.6.2018)

„Digital Transformation of Berlin Enterprises“, held with Prof. Dr. Matthias Hartmann for the association of entrepreneurs at Motzener Straße (20.2.2018)

„Digital Transformation and Sustainable Entrepreneurship in SMEs. Strategies and contextfactors of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Berlin“, held for the 21. Conference on Entrepreneurship, Innovation and SMEs (G-Forum 2017, 4.-6.10.2018)

„Digital transformation – easy to understand“, held with Ralf Waubke for an event organized by HWK Berlin (28.6.2017)

### Publications

Hartmann, Matthias; Gebhardt, Leonhard: Die neue Nachhaltigkeit im Unternehmertum. In: Schmeisser, Wilhelm et al., Neue Betriebswirtschaft. Theorien, Methoden, Geschäftsfelder, UVK-Verlag Tübingen, p. 593-617, 2018.

Hartmann, Matthias; Gebhardt, Leonhard: Schutzbedarfsanalyse für nachhaltiges Unternehmertum. In: Hartmann, Matthias, IT-Sicherheit für Handwerk und Mittelstand. Empfehlungen zur Digitalisierung, BWV Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, Berlin, 2017, p. 117-121.

Gebhardt, Leonhard; Waubke, Ralf: Projektbasierter Einsatz von wirkungsorientierten Evaluierungsmethoden. Eine Befragung von kleinen und mittleren gemeinnützigen Organisationen im Nahen Osten. In: Tagungsband zur 18. Nachwuchswissenschaftlerkonferenz (NWK18), Mittweida, 2017, S. 444-447.

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<sup>i</sup> [Abderraouf Omara: \*Space and astronomy\*](#), licensed as [CC \(Attribution 3.0 Unported\)](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Dufays, Frédéric (2016): Embeddedness as a facilitator of sustainable entrepreneurship. In: Jermier, John et al. *Sustainable entrepreneurship and social innovation* (Routledge), pp. 57-72.

<sup>iii</sup> Elkington, John (1994): Towards the Sustainable Corporation. Win-Win-Win Business Strategies for Sustainable Development. In: *California Management Review* 36 (2), pp. 90-100. DOI: 10.2307/41165746.

<sup>iv</sup> A current study on relevant literature on Sustainable Entrepreneurship offers Muñoz, Pablo; Cohen, Boyd (2018): Sustainable Entrepreneurship Research. Taking Stock and looking ahead. In: *Business Strategy & the Environment* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc) 27 (3), pp. 300-322. DOI: 10.1002/bse.2000.

<sup>v</sup> Krueger, Norris et al. (2011): Thinking „Sustainability“. The Role of Intentions, Cognitions, and Emotions in Understanding New Domains of Entrepreneurship. In: *Advances in Entrepreneurship, Firm Emergence and Growth* (Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.) (13), pp. 275-309.

<sup>vi</sup> Hartmann, Matthias (2018): Systemtheorie in der Betriebswirtschaft. In: Anshuman Khare et al. (Hg.): *Marktorientiertes Produkt- und Produktionsmanagement in digitalen Umwelten* (Gabler).