10. TRYING TO BE GOOD

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Project management 101 *by Zavanak*

10.3 Sustainability in projects

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The epiphany

1945 – 1970
Limitless resources, industrial and scientific development, weak stakeholders, rapid rise in living standards

1970 – 1990
Concerns over pollution, saving the ozone layer, nuclear accidents, birth of the environmental movement

1990 – 2015
Alarm over global warming, then climate change, rise of green politics, commitments to targets to reduce carbon emissions, but developing economies press ahead

Since 2015
Accelerating switch to renewables, rapidly phasing out oil and coal, environmental activism, net-zero commitments, meeting target remains uncertain

Chris Leboutillier from Pexels.com
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Major challenges to sustainability in projects

Constructing and running buildings consumes 36% of the world's energy and 40% of energy-related carbon emissions.

Cement production accounts for 6% of carbon emissions

Steel production accounts for 8% of carbon emissions

Regulators are suspicious of wood, which has many benefits

Alternative materials often perform less well

People lack skills and experience using alternative materials

The technology and techniques of new materials and methods are immature

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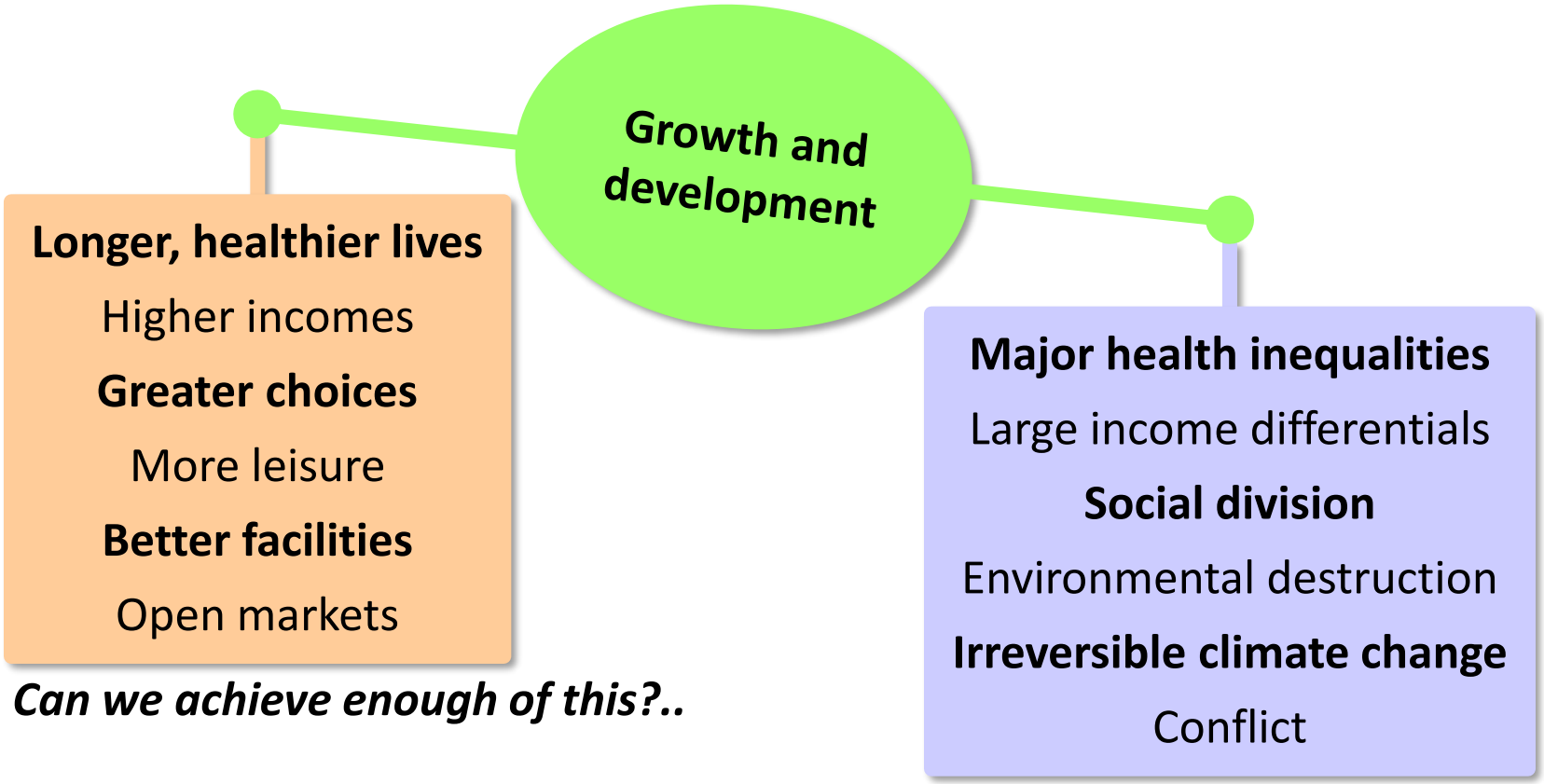
The balancing act



Can we achieve enough of this?..

…without producing this.

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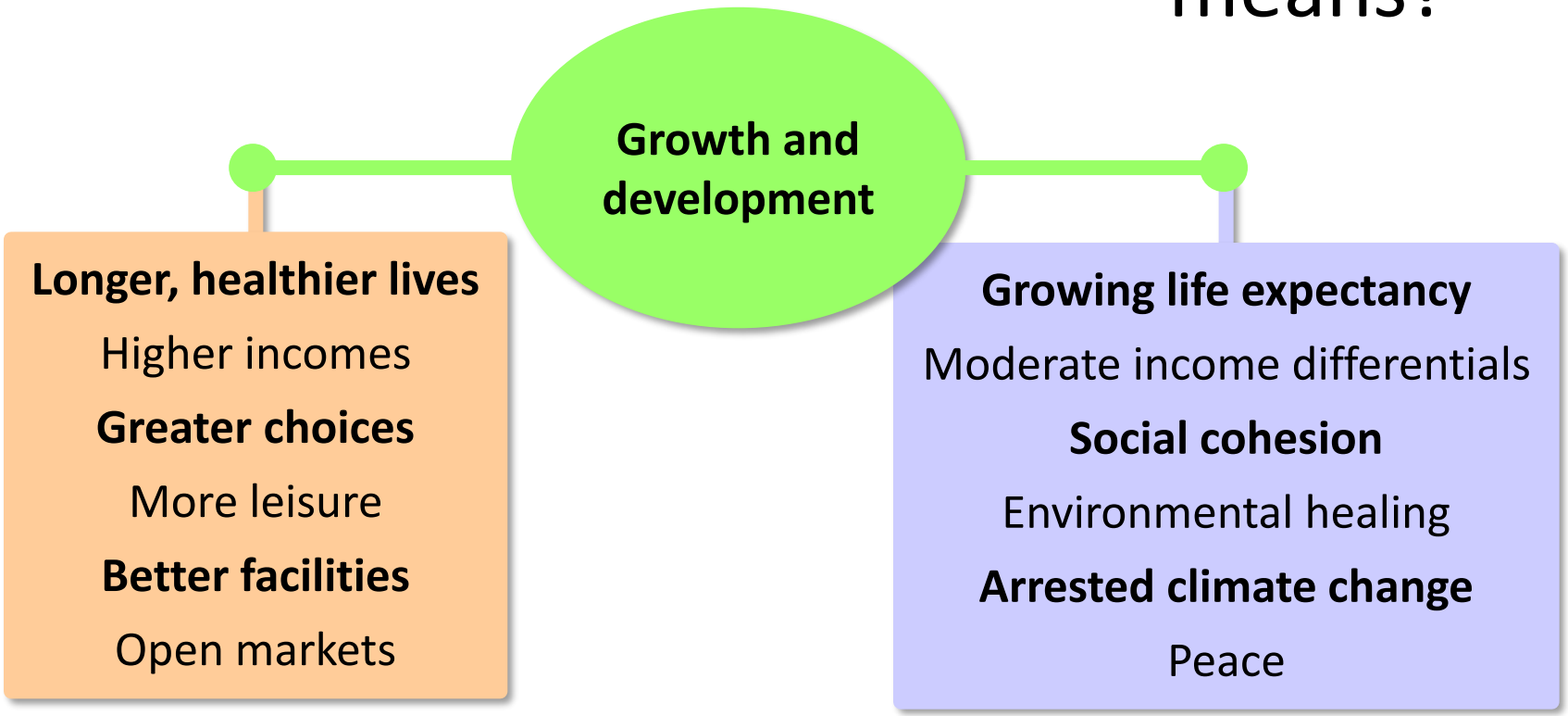
Is this what sustainability means?



What we do, we can carry on doing indefinitely.

Improvement is focused on sustainability as well as effectiveness and efficiency.

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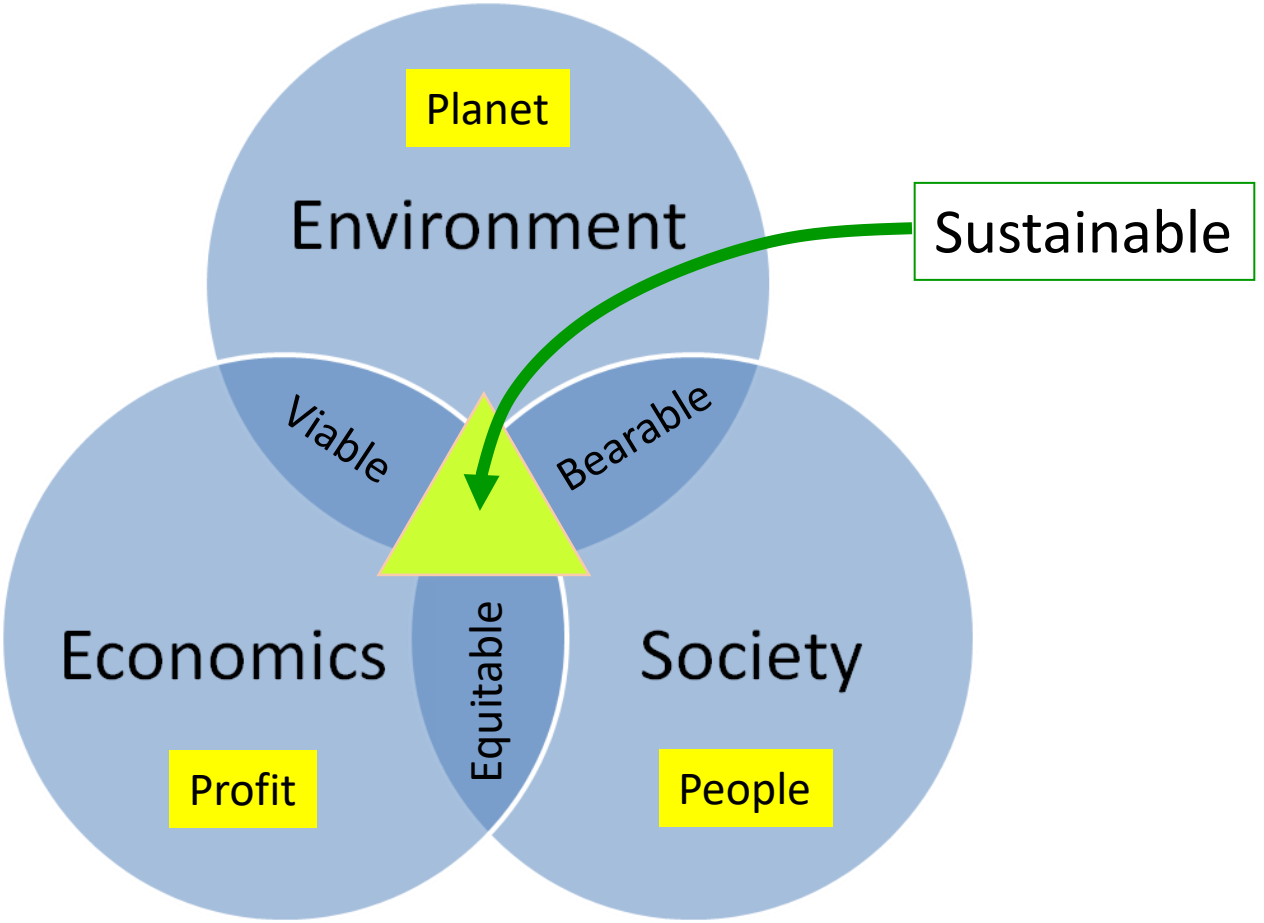
A sustainability model



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Why organisations have to be sustainable

- Meet the expectations of their stakeholders
- **Improve their public image**
- Be able to trade in certain markets
- **Meet compulsory regulations and obey laws**
- Get a competitive advantage
- **Reduce costs of operation**

Being sustainable has become an essential part of the way organisations function. In many aspects it is not optional, so the question is not, "do you work sustainably?" It is, "how well do you work sustainably?"

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More challenges to being sustainable

- **Controversy over what is sustainable – e.g. Biomass**
- Irresponsible protest groups – e.g. GM crops
- **NIMBYism**
- Sacrificing our standard of living
- **What people will do versus what they say they will do – e.g. the price of organic food**
- Sustainability may cost jobs

Corporate behaviour

- 'Greenwashing'
- **Being 100% sustainable is impossible**
- Supporting bad science
- **Supporting the side that fits their own agenda**

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