

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID**HARMONY INSTITUTE****WHAT IS HARMONY?**

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The purpose of this document is to explain the word Harmony and point to its practical applications as a framework and foundation for sustainability. It is intended as a model for discussion and the creation of projects which rely on Harmony principles to promote sustainability. We are grateful to the Prince's Foundation for their initial work and ideas.

The word Harmony is of ancient Greek origin. Amongst its meanings was a 'fitting together' or 'joining together', and to achieve Harmony was a primary goal of many classical thinkers and activists. The wider philosophy of Harmony contains two key features:

1. everything in the universe is interconnected and interrelated.
2. there is an underlying order in the universe.

The conclusion is that if we recognise such interconnectivity then the world will be more harmonious. (We use the word harmony with a small 'h' to mean peaceful, and Harmony with a capital 'H' when we talk about Harmony as order in the universe).

These ideas actually have a wide basis in many cultures. The idea of interconnectivity, of the world as a single living organism, is fundamental to most if not all of what we know as indigenous cultures. Harmony is central to traditional Chinese philosophies, such as Taoism, as well as Indian world-views. In Europe such ideas were generally accepted until the transition of the Renaissance into the early modern period, but survived even though as a minority view. In modern academia the idea that all things exist in a relationship with all other things is based on an interpretation of the revolutionary theories of early 20th century science – relativity and quantum mechanics - and is especially influential amongst anthropologists. Even the concept of laws of physics points to an underlying order. In some versions, both ancient and modern, the underlying level of existence is geometrical. Often it is bound up with consciousness. Our fundamental proposition is that the concept of Harmony provides a framework for thought and action, which can assist with asking questions about, and finding solutions to environmental crises and social problems, modifying our attitudes and behaviour.

In Wales the Well-being of Future Generations Act acknowledges interconnectivity by taking as its basis the ways in which our actions have consequences for future generations.

UWTSD's Strategic Plan for 2017-22 draws on the Act to make this statement:

Sustainable development, by behaving in a way which ensures that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and by systematically embedding this principle in our approach to teaching and learning.

Harmony comes with a rich philosophical background but can also be deeply practical.

The foundation of the Harmony Institute at UWTSD was prompted by the publication of the book *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World*, written by HRH The Prince of Wales, the University's

patron, together with Ian Skelly and Tony Juniper, the current chair of Natural England and former director of Friends of the Earth. The book covers a range of subjects, including the way we plan and design urban spaces; the way we farm and produce our food; the way we process waste; our approach to medical care and also our adherence to an economic model which presupposes limitless growth and exploitation of the Earth's resources. The Prince of Wales has continued to campaign for the principles he outlined in the book in his Sustainable Markets Initiative he has brought together a wide range of collaborators, including from business, and has stressed how important it is to listen to indigenous cultures and 'First Peoples'. For example, he consulted with leaders of the First Nations of Canada as he prepared for the launch of the Initiative, and when he subsequently drew up his Earth Charter, the Terra Carta.

The two fundamental features of Harmony (interconnectedness and order) can also be described as:

1. Wholeness, i.e. holistic thinking and a recognition that we need to look at whole systems and whole solutions. This does not mean that we can't look at small scale situations and individual instances, just that we need to recognise interconnectivity.
2. Relationship, i.e. the understanding that nothing exists that does not have a series of relationships to its wider environment or ecosystem, and that these relationships may extend much further than realised.

Our working definition of Harmony in the University was written by David Cadman, one of our Harmony Professors of Practice.

"Harmony is an expression of wholeness, a way of looking at ourselves and the world of which we are part. It's about connections and relationships. The emotional, intellectual and physical are all connected. We are connected to our environments, both built and natural; and all the parts of our communities and their environments are connected, too. Harmony asks questions about relationship, justice, fairness and respect in economic, social and political relationships. As an integrative discipline it can be expressed in ideas and practice."
(David Cadman 23 May 2017).

Note that we emphasise the asking of questions: Harmony is therefore not a fixed and dogmatic concept, but rather one we can work with and apply to individual situations. One such important question concerns our relationship with the wider environment. Some religious and philosophical traditions place human beings, at least in part, outside nature: in such views the body is part of nature, but the soul is not. Central to the standard worldview of modern science is the idea that we stand outside the world and can act upon it. The mainstream model of modern economics likewise assumes that we can pollute the world and exploit its resources (including people) with no consequences. These models are now seriously questioned and relate to the problem of whether we as human beings are entirely and completely part of the natural world rather than being apart from it.

Many people are questioning the view that humanity is separate to nature both by developing new, nature-centred models such as ecocentrism and deep ecology.

In the Harmony perspective we humans are an expression of the complete system. We *are* nature, just as a tree or a flower is nature. Every living thing is intimately interconnected with every other living thing, so profoundly interconnected that the mesh or web of sustaining connections makes it impossible for one living thing to exist and function separately from all else. Imagine, for example, how long we would last without the oxygen produced by the microscopic algae, bacteria and

plankton that live in the fragile ecosystems of the world's oceans, or the millions of bacteria that live in our own bodies consuming the food that keeps us going.

Another familiar illustration of such interconnectivity in practice is the metaphor which underpins complexity theory and chaos theory – that a butterfly flapping its wings on one side of the Earth causes a hurricane on the other side.

One of the great obstacles to our collective attempts to avert the ecological catastrophe that now looms so large is that we have lost this perspective, the *feeling of belonging* to nature. Even when people show genuine concern and a genuine love for nature, the shift in thinking described in *Harmony* which has shaped the mainstream attitude means that nature still tends to form a backdrop to our lives. On an intellectual level we may be able to say that we are “immersed in nature,” but it is not so easy to bring to consciousness the true sense of the connectedness that implies.

If we begin with the recognition of interconnectedness then qualities like diversity, adaptability and resilience come into play. They must be born in mind at every stage and that is possible simply by asking the same question over and over again: have we considered the impact our actions will have on the whole and on the relationships therein? This question is our guide to formulating a framework for Harmony in practice.

As Western civilisation became more scientifically adept and technologically more sophisticated, so the gap between humanity and nature's integrated systems began to get wider, creating the fracture that is now responsible for the greatest crisis in the history of humanity. Global economies now depend entirely for their prosperity upon an approach to nature's processes and resources that shows scant regard for their capacity to endure in the long term. It is widely known that coal and oil supplies are not going to last forever, but we show less concern for the reductions in fish in the oceans, the acres of fertile soils that are being dramatically depleted or supplies of minerals like phosphorus. All these resources are being spent to feed short-term gains and win a degree of short-lived prosperity as we accelerate the rush for yet more modernisation and yet more unfettered economic activity which remains wilfully indifferent to nature's limits. In some cases, an indifference that is total. We are now pushing the boundaries so far that those limits are being tested to breaking point, all to discover if it is possible to do without nature altogether.

Harmony is not some sort of algorithm that produces a single set of principles or solutions. It is better described as a network made up of principles, approaches and practices. These reveal whole systems at work, and the interconnections and relationships within them. This is why the same question referred to earlier must be present at each point of the decision-making process: how does our plan or intention affect the system as a whole, and will it nurture or damage the system's resilient capacity to sustain itself? Each initiative, each plan or proposition, must be tested against this critical question so that no part of the system should ever be allowed to over-ride the well-being and balance of the whole.

Thought is often given to how economic development can happen without its unbalancing factors like social well-being and ecological and environmental health. However, those factors (often referred to in economic terms as 'capitals') are too often considered separately. Metaphorically they are put into 'silos' and, crucially, they are only measured quantifiably. For example, when trees are planted in a development, success is more likely to be measured by how many trees are planted, not whether the most appropriate and beneficial species are used, nor whether their location and arrangement best helps to create abundant ecological corridors.

An example of resilience in nature is provided by the interconnected structure of a spider's web with a structure supported upon four separated vertical columns. If a strand of the web is pulled or pushed it will not break because it has resilience. Its resilience comes from the relationship it has with all the other strands, so it is harder to destroy than a single column which, if pushed or pulled in the same way, will cause the structure to collapse. A single column is less stable than a spider's web, and its collapse may also cause the others to collapse. Resilience is also a part of harmony in nature, seen though the balance an interplay of equal and opposite forces.

We also see beauty in the natural world. The balance of a tree's leafless outline against a winter sky or in the perfection of an opening rose bud. We find instant, unprompted delight when we see such harmony in action. It feels pleasing and makes us feel it is 'right.' So how do we create a coherent framework for Harmony in Practice that matches this 'rightness' and allows individuals or groups in different areas of activity to evolve the framework to best meet the needs of their own discipline?

Principles of Practice

Beginning with Wholeness and Relationships, we have worked out six principles of Harmony in practice. It is

- Rooted: Harmony in Practice must be "of a place," it must embed itself deeply in the area in which it is operating. Locality is significant.
- Connected: Harmony in Practice must be the product of an understanding of the relationships and mutual circularity of a give-and-take approach, rather than the limited view of reductive separateness
- Balanced: Harmony in Practice must take a holistic view, take as much as possible into account and be in good proportion, aiming to achieve a balance.
- Resilient: Harmony in Practice must look both forward and backward and be designed to withstand or recover quickly from shocks or disruptions
- Prudent: Harmony in Practice must involve acting with, or showing care and thought for, the future

If we follow these principles then we may better achieve sustainability. It is also important that these six principles are not THE principles. They are a guide and there might be fewer (if we combine them), or more, if we distinguish different components in one. They provide a framework for thought, planning and action.

It is also helpful to look at the concept of 'capitals'. Normally capital means finance, but we can also identify different kinds of capital.

- Natural capital: the resources of the natural world.
- Social capital: communities and social networks.
- Personal capital: developing and understanding ourselves
- Financial capital: finance and money
- Built capital: the built environment, our houses, places of work, towns, cities and transport infrastructures.

Each of these capitals is, of course, interconnected, they must work with and in relation to each other, not be engaged with separately or on their own.

Exploring 'capitals' in the round can help us identify policies which are 'Harmony-compliant', recognizing interconnectivity. For example:

- in business, the circular economy aims to eliminate waste;

- in architecture and design we should aim for a built environment which removes pollution and waste from the construction process and produces buildings which are pleasant for people to live in.
- in education we aim for a rounded curriculum, which includes engaging children with the world of plants and animals, aims to benefit the whole person;
- in health, social prescribing aims to reduce over-dependence on medicines which are sometimes necessary but also bring side-effects;
- in communities the aim must be social inclusion.
- In farming the emphasis should be on an understanding of the health of ecosystems, as well as high welfare standards.

A Harmony in Practice Matrix

The intersection or relationships between the different components of Harmony and the principles of practice allows us to construct a grid which includes values, systems and resources, all of which are connected and in relationship with each other. This grid, or matrix can be used to ask questions, prompt dialogue and help our search for practical solutions to problems of sustainability.

	NATURAL	SOCIAL	FINANCIAL	BUILT
ROOTED	<u>Native</u> What do you find rooted in a particular place or activity?	<u>Belonging</u> How do you create social ties/attachments?	<u>Stewardship</u> How do you create a sense of ownership?	<u>Place-Making</u> How do you provide a sense of identity and belonging?
CONNECTED	<u>Ecosystems</u> How do you understand and integrate a relationship to the natural world?	<u>Social Exchange</u> How do you create meaningful interactions and engagement?	<u>Integrated</u> How does this work embed itself into local and global systems?	<u>Interconnected</u> How do we break out of silos and ensure all constituent parts are linked?
BALANCED	<u>Biodiverse</u> What is the appropriate amount of a particular species in a place so that it can live symbiotically?	<u>Mixed</u> What is the appropriate mix of a particular demographic or relationship so that it is representative of the whole?	<u>Diverse</u> How can you ensure that the financial or economic system has a good spread of variables from local to global?	<u>Proportional</u> Is the place or project designed harmoniously so it is both legible and beautiful?
RESILIENT	<u>Regenerative</u> Can the species, habitat or project survive abnormal conditions and survive and adapt?	<u>Localised</u> Does the community have the will and social cohesion to rebound from difficult situations?	<u>Adaptable</u> Does the economy/financial structure have the right structure to withstand shocks to the system?	<u>Durable</u> Can the place withstand unforeseen circumstances and change or adapt accordingly?
PRUDENT	<u>Conservation</u> Which elements of the natural system are best to keep and nurture?	<u>Community</u> How do you invest in the local community to ensure the various parts are capable of living together harmoniously?	<u>Reinvestment</u> How do you ensure that you are living off the interest and not the capital and that it respects nature?	<u>Preservation</u> How do you ensure adequate skills and resources to repair, upkeep or upgrade the place?

Harmony in Building Community: The matrix below demonstrates how the Prince’s Foundation has populated this model as it relates to the theme of “Building Community”.

 <p>Natural</p>	 <p>Social</p>	 <p>Financial</p>	 <p>Built</p>
<p>NATIVE The incorporation of species and materials adapted or suited to the area, e.g. reflect the local area in gardens and landscaping</p>	<p>BELONGING Identification between people and place expressed through friendship, culture and local traditions, e.g. hold community events in a public building or place</p>	<p>STEWARDSHIP Secure and diverse forms of tenancy and community management of assets, e.g. enable the community to create housing and services suited to their needs</p>	<p>PLACE-MAKING Delightful places that people love and want to be in, e.g. craft buildings that consider local styles, materials, climate and context and give a distinct local character</p>
<p>ECOSYSTEMS Local ecosystems remain whole by retaining and creating links. e.g. maintain wildlife corridors and natural water courses</p>	<p>SOCIAL EXCHANGE A network of social and community organisations that promote connections between people, e.g. support clubs, sports teams, cafés, and volunteer opportunities</p>	<p>INTEGRATED Accessible capital and local goods as well as supported commercial hubs and local trading, e.g. facilitate local markets and supply chains</p>	<p>INTERCONNECTED Neighbourhoods with linked walkable streets allowing access to public spaces and transportation, e.g. develop logical routes where all daily needs are within a five-minute walk</p>
<p>Balanced BIODIVERSE HABITAT A sustainable relationship between man, animals and plants, e.g. produce diverse crops around a town for food security</p>	<p>MIXED An inclusive, diverse and mixed population that is tolerant and respectful, e.g. provide homes that the community can afford</p>	<p>DIVERSE A mixed local economy and a mixed profile of investment, e.g. make local goods available and affordable</p>	<p>PROPORTIONAL Places with beautiful and well-scaled architecture and a mix of building types, e.g. design a high street with decorated shop fronts</p>
<p>Resilient REGENERATIVE The ability for the natural environment to respond and adapt to changes in climate and human activity, e.g. include natural drainage systems to reduce the risk of flooding</p>	<p>LOCAL GOVERNANCE Local planning and organising frameworks and life-long education opportunities, e.g. promote education and skills training opportunities for all ages</p>	<p>ADAPTABLE A flexible economic framework with a broad range of economic activities at different scales, e.g. build new housing in phases, using a sustainable growth model</p>	<p>DURABLE Building types, spaces and uses that are suited for the region that can adapt and change over time, e.g. plan houses that could become flats, businesses or small shops</p>
<p>Prudent CONSERVATION The protection, management and enhancement of natural resources, e.g. use sustainably harvested timber and other natural materials</p>	<p>ACCESS TO SERVICES Safe community facilities and amenities for people, e.g. maintain a centrally located library and health and job centres</p>	<p>REINVESTMENT Fragal financial planning with a vision of quality giving long-term returns. e.g. incorporate timely maintenance and community reinvestment schemes</p>	<p>PRESERVATION A priority to refurbish and renovate with recycled and lasting materials and renewable resources, e.g. use passive cooling and heating and employ renewable energy sources</p>
<p>Sustainable Urban Drainage, Upton, UK Masterplan by The Prince's Foundation</p>	<p>The Library, Rose Town, Jamaica, Masterplan by The Prince's Foundation</p>	<p>Local commerce in the market at Brownsword Hall, Poundbury</p>	<p>A high-density, mixed-use neighbourhood in Waterloo</p>

This matrix is designed to inform a series of questions to be put to communities or key stakeholders involved in any particular Harmony focused project or strategy under the headings of Natural, Social, Financial and Built capital. Building on the fundamental idea of people living harmoniously with each other and the planet, this framework blends these four capitals with a set of values to understand

the specific areas in more detail and to ensure they are not seen in isolation or as a 'tick-box' exercise.

When using the framework from the perspective of building community, where community engagement is fundamental, those leading the particular project should use this to develop a series of relevant and simple questions in order to listen and record the feedback. It is important that all of the areas are turned into questions, so even if the project is focussed on ecology it should try and cover elements of Built Capital, even if there is very little human intervention. This is deliberate in that it challenges a silo mentality and avoids people just thinking about their own specialism without addressing impacts in other areas. It is important that facilitators engage people in conversations to draw out as much information as possible and their views or concerns. It is important that people discuss the links between all these areas and the impact one area or issue has on the other.

The framework should then be populated with both positive and negative feedback and a composite framework prepared for each. A strategy should then be developed that builds on the positive attributes recorded and seeks to 'heal' or 'transform' those negative elements recorded. It is important to note that the best strategies will transform as many areas of the framework in one area and therefore be holistic.

By way of example, during a Prince's Foundation project in Newmarket, it emerged that some of the single parents working in the local stables were not able to get their children looked after easily or cheaply as they started work so early. This issue was brought up via questions under the Social and Economic columns as it impacted both. The strategy developed was for the suggestion of an early breakfast club, which in turn had both social and economic benefits. There was a Built element to this as well, as where that club might be located was also an important factor.

While this is a simple example, it evidences that this matrix is not just a way for an individual or group to develop a project or strategy but is also a way of continually informing implementation of that project – in the case of "Harmony in Building Community" it is a way of engaging communities around particular issues to collect detailed feedback that is holistic and not in silos and to create harmonious strategies to improve the status-quo.