

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF INFRASTRUCTURE, INDUSTRIALIZATION AND ECO-INDUSTRIAL INNOVATIONS¹

Omelianenko Olena, Kornus Olesia, Omelyanenko Vitaliy
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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable community development has emerged as a central focus of global policy and academic discourse as we confront the pressing issues of climate change, economic inequality, and environmental degradation. One of the core elements that enable the development of sustainable communities is the establishment of resilient adaptive infrastructure. Infrastructure, not only in the traditional sense of roads and buildings but also in terms of renewable energy systems, waste management and water conservation technologies, is crucial in shaping communities' ability to endure and thrive. Sustainable infrastructure, when designed with environmental goals in mind, helps communities reduce their carbon footprint, lower energy consumption and maintain ecological balance. As industrialization continues to play a significant role in economic growth, it has historically led to environmental challenges such as pollution, resource depletion, and unsustainable land use practices. However, the evolution of industrial practices into eco-industrial models represents a new era of transformation. Eco-industrial parks create a symbiotic relationship among industries, reduce waste, and promote energy efficiency, benefiting both the local economy and the environment. The shift toward more sustainable industrial practices calls for an integrated approach that links industrialization with eco-friendly technologies and innovations. It challenges traditional paradigms of development, urging us to reconsider how communities, industries, and ecosystems interact. The intersection of

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sustainable infrastructure, industrialization, and eco-technological innovations forms the foundation for a new model of community development that not only supports economic growth but also ensures the preservation of the planet for future generations.

The goal of this research is to explore the relationship between sustainable infrastructure, industrialization, and community development, with a particular focus on the role of eco-industrial parks. This study seeks to analyze how sustainable industrialization practices and green infrastructure contribute to the formation of resilient communities capable of facing the modern challenges.

1. General idea of sustainable communities

Sustainable communities are those that thrive socially, economically and environmentally without compromising the needs of future generations. In a world facing rapid urbanization, environmental degradation and growing social inequities, the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities have emerged as a key goal for ensuring long-term human prosperity. The concept of sustainability within communities encompasses various interrelated dimensions, including environmental stewardship, economic vitality, social equity and cultural preservation. By weaving these dimensions into a cohesive framework, societies can create inclusive environments where all individuals can flourish.

According to approach of Institute for Sustainable Communities² a sustainable community «takes into account and addresses multiple human needs, not just one at the exclusion of all others. It is a place where people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives feel welcome and safe, where every group has a seat at the decision-making table and where prosperity is shared. It takes a long-term perspective – focusing on anticipating and adapting to change in both the present and future. A sustainable community manages its human, natural and financial capital to meet current needs while ensuring that adequate resources are available for future generations». Key elements of Institute for Sustainable Communities sustainable community approach are presented in Table 1.

At the heart of sustainable communities lies the principle of environmental stewardship. Sustainable communities are designed to function within the limits of the planet's resources, prioritizing the conservation of natural systems.

² What is a Sustainable Community? Institute for Sustainable Communities. URL: <https://sustain.org/about/what-is-a-sustainable-community/#:~:text=A%20sustainable%20community%20manages%20its,in%20more%20than%2030%20countries.>

Table 1

General idea of sustainable community³

<p>LEADERSHIP, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY</p> <p>Equal opportunity for all individuals to participate in and influence decisions that affect each of their lives.</p> <p>Adequate access to public information.</p> <p>A viable, nongovernmental sector.</p> <p>An atmosphere of respect and tolerance for diverse viewpoints, beliefs and values.</p> <p>Encourages individuals of all ages, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religions and physical ability to take responsibility based upon a shared vision.</p> <p>Political stability.</p> <p>Does not compromise the sustainability of other communities.</p>	<p>ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY</p> <p>Satisfaction of basic human needs for clean air and water and nutritious, uncontaminated food.</p> <p>Protection and enhancement of local and regional ecosystems and biological diversity.</p> <p>Conservation of water, land, energy and nonrenewable resources, including maximum feasible reduction, recovery and reuse and recycling of waste.</p> <p>Utilization of prevention strategies and appropriate technology to minimize pollution emissions.</p> <p>Use of renewable resources no faster than their rate of renewal.</p>
<p>ECONOMIC SECURITY</p> <p>A diverse and financially viable economic base.</p> <p>Reinvestment of resources in local economy.</p> <p>Maximization of local ownership of businesses.</p> <p>Meaningful employment opportunities for all citizens.</p> <p>Provision of job training and education to help the workforce adjust to future needs.</p>	<p>SOCIAL WELL-BEING</p> <p>A reliable food supply that optimizes local production.</p> <p>Adequate health services, safe and healthy housing and high-quality education for all members of the community.</p> <p>Maintains a place that is safe from crime and aggression.</p> <p>Fosters a community spirit that creates a sense of belonging, a sense of place and a sense of self-worth.</p> <p>Stimulation of creative expression through the arts.</p> <p>Protection and enhancement of public spaces and historic resources.</p> <p>Provision for a healthy work environment.</p> <p>Adaptability to changing circumstances and conditions.</p>

³ What is a Sustainable Community? Institute for Sustainable Communities. URL: <https://sustain.org/about/what-is-a-sustainable-community>

Green infrastructure, renewable energy, sustainable transportation and responsible waste management form the backbone of such environmental efforts. For instance, communities that emphasize renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power significantly reduce their dependence on fossil fuels, lowering greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change. Similarly, urban planning that incorporates green spaces and eco-friendly building designs enhances biodiversity, improves air quality and creates pleasant living conditions for residents.

Equally integral to sustainable communities is the principle of economic vitality. A resilient community supports a dynamic local economy, fostering innovation and adaptability in the face of global challenges. This involves promoting economic diversification, encouraging local entrepreneurship and providing opportunities for decent work. A vibrant local economy not only provides economic security but also ensures the circulation of resources within the community, reducing dependency on external markets. Sustainable economic practices such as fair trade, ethical production and the circular economy further contribute to this goal by minimizing waste and ensuring equitable wealth distribution.

Social equity forms another crucial pillar of sustainable communities. The success of any society hinges on its ability to nurture inclusivity, providing equitable access to resources, education, healthcare and opportunities for all individuals, regardless of socioeconomic background, gender or ethnicity. Inclusive communities actively dismantle systemic barriers, addressing issues such as poverty, discrimination and social isolation. For example, equitable urban development initiatives may involve building affordable housing, ensuring accessibility for individuals with disabilities and integrating marginalized groups into the social and economic fabric. When every individual feels valued and has the opportunity to contribute meaningfully, the community becomes stronger and more cohesive.

Technological advancements are also reshaping the landscape of sustainable development. From smart cities utilizing data-driven solutions for resource efficiency to decentralized energy systems revolutionizing power generation, technology is enabling communities to achieve sustainability in novel ways. Digital platforms can enhance community participation, facilitate knowledge sharing and streamline service delivery, creating a more interconnected and efficient society. However, the adoption of technology must be equitable and inclusive, ensuring that its benefits reach all segments of the population.

Building sustainable communities is a multidimensional and ongoing process that requires collaboration across sectors, disciplines and borders. Governments, businesses, non-profits and individuals must work together to

align their efforts toward shared goals. While the path is challenging, the rewards are profound. Sustainable communities not only provide a high quality of life for current residents but also safeguard the prospects of future generations, creating resilient and vibrant societies that stand as exemplars of harmony and coexistence. By embracing sustainability as a way of life, humanity can ensure a thriving future for people and the planet alike.

Internal resources are a cornerstone of sustainable community development, providing the foundation for self-sufficiency, resilience and adaptability to challenges. Harnessing and effectively utilizing these resources reduces dependency on external assistance, strengthens the autonomy of communities and supports the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

Internal resources are critical to enhancing community resilience. In times of crisis (economic downturns, environmental disasters, social disruptions etc.) communities with robust internal systems are better equipped to respond and recover. Local networks, skills and resources enable quicker adaptation to changing circumstances, fostering a sense of security and empowerment among residents.

Sustainable communities built on internal resources cultivate a model of long-term self-sufficiency. By relying on what they already possess and developing strategies to enhance these assets, such communities establish a foundation for future growth. This approach aligns closely with the principles of sustainability, ensuring that development today does not come at the cost of future generations.

2. Sustainable infrastructure as a driver of sustainable communities' development

Infrastructure plays a critical role in the development and prosperity of communities, serving as the foundation upon which economic, social and environmental progress is built⁴. From transportation networks to energy grids, water systems, communication technologies and social amenities, infrastructure connects people, facilitates opportunities and enables resilience. It is not only a physical backbone but also a driver of growth, equity and sustainability, deeply influencing the quality of life and overall stability within communities.

The Global Commission on Economy and Climate defined infrastructure as: “structures and facilities that underpin power and other

⁴ Empowering communities: nexus of infrastructure and local prosperity: collective monograph. Ed. by Olena Omelianenko and Olha Prokopenko (authors: V. Omelyanenko, O. Skyba, O. Iermakova, I. Pidorycheva, I. Petrova, M. Yachmenyk, N. Illiashenko). Tallinn: Teadmus OÜ. 2024. 415 p.

energy systems (including upstream infrastructure, such as the fuel production sector), transport, telecommunications, water and waste management. It includes investments in systems that improve resource efficiency and demand-side management, such as energy and water efficiency measures. Infrastructure includes both traditional types of infrastructure (including energy to public transport, buildings, water supply and sanitation) and, critically, also natural infrastructure (such as forest landscapes, wetlands and watershed protection)⁵.

At its core, infrastructure provides the basic necessities that allow communities to function effectively. Roads, bridges and public transit systems, for example, enhance mobility, enabling people to access education, healthcare and employment opportunities. Efficient transportation networks not only save time but also reduce the costs of moving goods and services, contributing to a more vibrant local economy. Similarly, reliable energy infrastructure ensures that businesses can operate smoothly and households have access to essential amenities, such as lighting, heating and communication.

One of the most transformative aspects of infrastructure is its ability to spur economic growth. Communities with well-developed infrastructure are better positioned to attract investments, support entrepreneurship and create jobs. A modern transportation system connects local businesses to national and international markets, expanding economic opportunities. Investments in digital infrastructure, such as broadband networks, further amplify these benefits by unlocking access to the digital economy. In an era where information technology drives innovation, high-speed internet becomes a critical enabler of education, e-commerce and remote work, leveling the playing field for rural and urban communities alike⁶.

Infrastructure also plays a vital role in promoting social equity and inclusion. Well-designed public facilities, such as schools, libraries and community centers, provide spaces for learning, recreation and social interaction, strengthening the social fabric. Water supply systems, sanitation and healthcare infrastructure ensure that essential services are accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status. Equitable infrastructure development bridges the gap between disadvantaged populations and opportunities, fostering inclusivity and reducing inequalities.

⁵ Mansell P., Philbin S. P., Broyd T. Development of a New Business Model to Measure Organizational and Project-Level SDG Impact – Case Study of a Water Utility Company. Sustainability. 2020. 12(16). 6413. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12166413>

⁶ Omelyanenko V. A., Fantaiev V. E. Methodical aspects of assessing the impact of implementation stages of smart city projects on the social and economic impacts. *Achievements of the Economy: Prospects and Innovations*. 2024. № 9. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13326540>

Environmental sustainability is another key dimension of infrastructure's role in community development. Infrastructure can mitigate or exacerbate environmental challenges depending on how it is designed and managed. Sustainable infrastructure, such as renewable energy systems, green buildings and climate-resilient transport networks, reduces ecological footprints and supports long-term community well-being. Urban planning that integrates green infrastructure (parks, green roofs, wetlands etc.) not only enhances biodiversity but also improves air and water quality. Such initiatives highlight the interconnectedness of infrastructure and the natural environment, emphasizing the need for sustainable approaches to development.

The resilience of communities is also heavily tied to the quality of their infrastructure. Well-maintained and adaptable systems ensure that communities can withstand and recover from natural disasters, economic downturns or other disruptions. For instance, robust drainage systems and flood barriers protect urban areas from extreme weather events, while decentralized energy grids can prevent widespread outages during crises. Infrastructure that prioritizes disaster preparedness and mitigation safeguards lives, livelihoods and investments, allowing communities to bounce back more effectively from adverse events.

Fig. 1 outlines a process for infrastructure prioritization to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It begins with an SDG-based infrastructure vision and identifies the anticipated performance gap under future scenarios. The process incorporates analysis of existing infrastructure performance, drivers of future needs (such as population growth, urbanization and climate change) and scenario planning through participatory analysis and system modeling.

Based on these inputs, policies and investments are formulated to address future infrastructure needs sustainably, leading to a comprehensive infrastructure plan that includes phased interventions, adaptation strategies, institutional capacity building and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

In rural areas infrastructure development is especially transformative, often serving as a lifeline that connects remote populations with larger economic and social systems. Improved roads and transportation links allow farmers to bring their goods to markets, reducing post-harvest losses and increasing incomes. Access to electricity and digital networks enables rural schools and healthcare centers to offer better services, fostering human capital development. In turn, these investments reduce rural-urban migration by improving the living standards and opportunities in rural communities.

However, the benefits of infrastructure development depend on careful planning, adequate investment and inclusive implementation. Poorly planned or underfunded infrastructure can lead to inefficiencies, inequities and

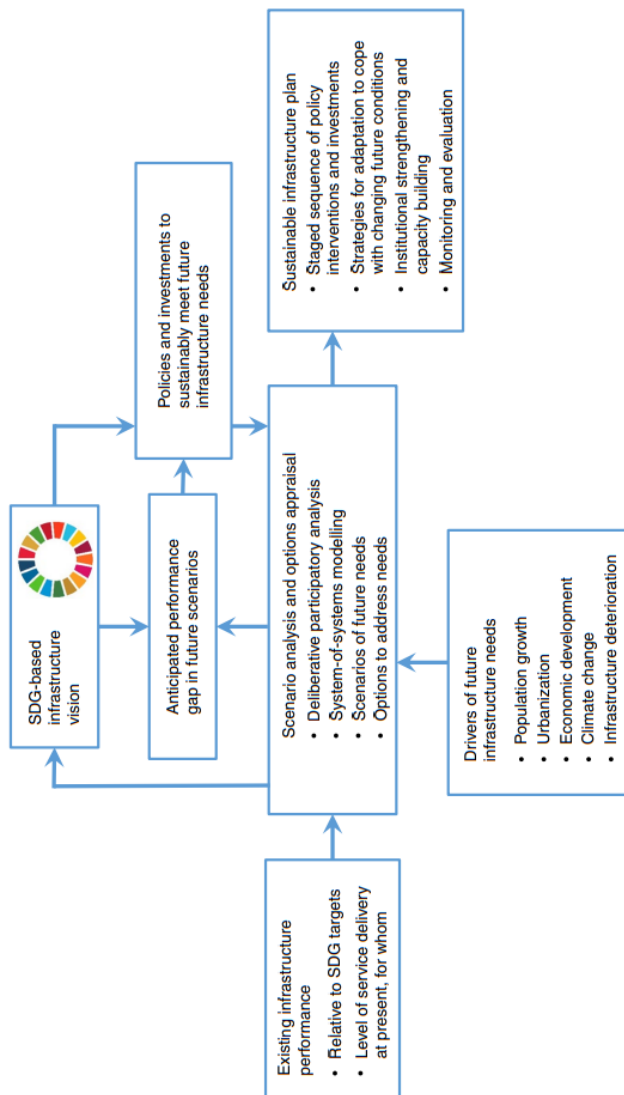


Fig. 1. Process for infrastructure prioritization to meet the SDGs¹

environmental degradation. For instance, traffic congestion caused by inadequate transportation planning not only costs time and money but also increases air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, large infrastructure projects that disregard community needs or environmental considerations can displace populations and cause long-term harm.

So infrastructure is a fundamental driver of community development, impacting every aspect of life from economic productivity to social well-being and environmental sustainability. By connecting people, facilitating access to services and enabling resilience, infrastructure lays the groundwork for vibrant, thriving communities. The challenge for policymakers, planners and stakeholders is to ensure that infrastructure is developed in an inclusive, sustainable and forward-looking manner, balancing immediate needs with long-term aspirations. Done right, infrastructure investment becomes more than just a technical endeavor; it becomes a transformative force that elevates entire communities, helping them to prosper and endure in an ever-changing world.

Combining concepts of sustainable development and infrastructure provides a starting point for a definition of sustainable infrastructure and subsequent higher-level frameworks for sustainability and sustainable infrastructure.

Considering the above-mentioned frameworks, principles and standards the IDB Group defines sustainable infrastructure as follows: “sustainable infrastructure refers to infrastructure projects that are planned, designed, constructed, operated and decommissioned in a manner to ensure economic and financial, social, environmental (including climate resilience) and institutional sustainability over the entire life cycle of the project”⁷.

Sustainable infrastructure is infrastructure that delivers long-term economic, social and environmental (ESE) benefits. It is critical to achieving global climate targets and Sustainable Development Goals and to a strong and resilient global economy. Investing in sustainable infrastructure is more important now than ever before, as the world faces a climate crisis, a global economic slowdown and the need to address inequalities that disproportionately affect the most vulnerable people. Sustainable infrastructure presents a tremendous opportunity for positive change⁸:

79% of global greenhouse gas emissions are related to infrastructure;

⁷ What is Sustainable Infrastructure? A Framework to Guide Sustainability Across the Project Cycle. Inter American Development Bank; IDB Invest. 2018. URL: <https://publications.iadb.org/en/what-sustainable-infrastructure-framework-guide-sustainability-across-project-cycle>

⁸ The World Bank (2024). Sustainable Infrastructure. <https://www.gihub.org/sustainable-infrastructure/>

4% growth in global GDP by 2030 is possible with clean energy investments;

92% of SDG targets are achievable through infrastructure investment.

One major barrier to decarbonising infrastructure and achieving the SDGs is the shortfall of investment in sustainable infrastructure, which we call the ‘sustainable infrastructure investment gap’. Estimates show that roughly \$2.6 trillion is required annually through 2030 to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and stay on a path to net-zero by 2050. Closing the gap could require more than three times the current level of investment in clean energy and 70% of the spending required is needed in emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs)⁹.

Fig. 2 demonstrates the significant and growing economic losses caused by natural disasters, highlighting the vital importance of sustainable infrastructure in addressing these challenges. As disasters such as storms, floods and droughts intensify, the role of infrastructure becomes increasingly central in shaping a region’s resilience. Sustainable infrastructure serves as both a protective barrier against disaster impacts and a means of reducing vulnerability over time.

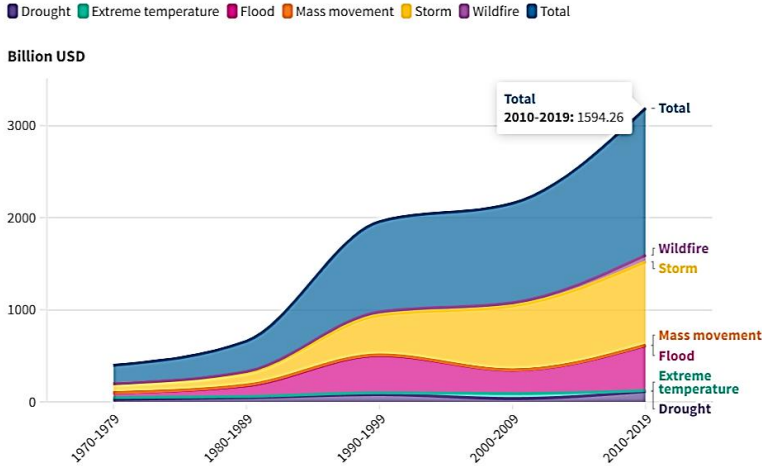


Fig. 2. Economic losses from climate-related extreme events
Billion USD, 2021 base year¹⁰

⁹ The World Bank (2024). Sustainable Infrastructure. <https://www.gihub.org/sustainable-infrastructure/>

¹⁰ Sustainable and resilient infrastructure. OECD. URL: <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sustainable-and-resilient-infrastructure.htm>

The steady rise in economic losses reflected in the chart suggests a correlation between the increasing frequency and intensity of natural hazards and the exposure of existing infrastructure. Urbanization and development, while contributing to economic growth, have also increased the concentration of critical infrastructure in vulnerable areas. This underscores the need for infrastructure that can withstand extreme events, such as reinforced buildings, flood control systems and adaptable energy networks.

Moreover, sustainable infrastructure plays a key role in long-term recovery and resilience-building. Investments in green technologies, climate-resilient designs and nature-based solutions can significantly reduce both immediate damages and the ripple effects of disasters. By aligning infrastructure development with principles of sustainability, communities can mitigate future risks and manage the rising economic costs associated with climate change, as depicted in the chart.

This visualization serves as a reminder that the future of disaster mitigation and economic stability depends on prioritizing sustainable and adaptive infrastructure, capable of protecting lives, economies and ecosystems in an era of increasing natural hazards.

3. Industrialization of communities: modern pathways to transformation and sustainable development issues

Industrialization has long been a transformative force in shaping societies, redefining economies and accelerating progress. For communities, industrialization can catalyze significant advancements, fostering economic growth, technological innovation and social development. It creates opportunities for employment, enhances the standard of living and contributes to the self-sufficiency of local economies. However, the process of industrialization must be carefully managed to ensure equitable growth and sustainable practices, avoiding adverse consequences such as environmental degradation and social inequality.

At its core industrialization involves the shift from agrarian-based economies to those centered on manufacturing and industry. This transformation fundamentally alters the structure of communities, diversifying their economic base and reducing dependence on traditional, often volatile, agricultural sectors. In this context, the industrialization of communities facilitates economic resilience by creating more stable income sources and developing infrastructure to support industrial activities. Factories, workshops and technological hubs become pivotal sites of production, providing local populations with jobs and contributing to regional economic growth.

Economic development is one of the most immediate and apparent outcomes of industrialization. As industries establish themselves within communities, they generate jobs across various skill levels from unskilled labor to highly specialized roles. This employment growth not only improves individual income levels but also stimulates local economies through increased spending and investment. Moreover, industrialized communities often benefit from improved infrastructure such as roads, energy grids and communication networks, which are necessary to support industrial operations. These improvements, in turn, enhance access to services and create a ripple effect that spurs economic activity in other sectors, such as commerce and services.

Industrialization also drives technological innovation, a critical aspect of modern development. By encouraging the adoption of new technologies and the development of specialized skills among workers, industrialized communities become more competitive and integrated into national and global markets. For instance, advances in automation, robotics and green technologies can make local industries more efficient and sustainable. Over time, the integration of technology fosters a culture of innovation that extends beyond industries, influencing education, governance and other facets of community life.

Social changes accompany the economic benefits of industrialization. Access to stable employment opportunities often leads to improved living standards, including better housing, healthcare and education. With more financial resources, families can invest in their children's futures, creating a positive cycle of opportunity and empowerment. Moreover, the concentration of industries often leads to urbanization, as people migrate to industrial hubs in search of work. This demographic shift results in a more dynamic and diverse community, fostering cultural exchange and innovation. However, it also poses challenges, such as the strain on housing and public services, which must be addressed through strategic urban planning.

Despite its many benefits, industrialization is not without its challenges. Environmental concerns are among the most pressing issues, as industrial activities often lead to pollution, resource depletion and habitat destruction. The reliance on fossil fuels in traditional industrialization processes has contributed significantly to climate change, prompting the need for more sustainable and eco-friendly approaches. Communities undergoing industrialization must prioritize green industrial practices, such as adopting renewable energy sources, implementing waste reduction strategies and investing in cleaner technologies. This not only minimizes the environmental footprint but also aligns with global sustainability goals, ensuring the longevity of industrial development.

Another critical challenge is ensuring social equity during the industrialization process. If poorly managed, industrialization can exacerbate income inequality and lead to social divisions. For example, while some members of the community may thrive in high-paying industrial jobs, others may struggle to adapt, particularly those lacking the skills needed in an industrial economy. To address this, communities must invest in education and vocational training programs to equip their populations with the skills required for industrial jobs. Inclusivity must be a guiding principle, ensuring that the benefits of industrialization are distributed fairly across all social groups.

Industrialization can also disrupt traditional ways of life, particularly in rural and agrarian communities. The shift to industrial economies often results in the displacement of small-scale farmers and artisans, who may find themselves unable to compete with large-scale industrial operations. This highlights the need for balanced industrial policies that preserve the cultural and economic contributions of traditional livelihoods while fostering modern industries. Diversified economic strategies that integrate agriculture, craftsmanship and industry can create a more harmonious and sustainable development model for communities.

For post-conflict or recovering communities, industrialization offers a unique opportunity to rebuild and revitalize. The establishment of industries can provide employment for displaced populations, generate revenue for reconstruction and stimulate economic recovery. However, it is crucial that industrialization in such contexts be planned with sensitivity to social cohesion, environmental restoration and long-term stability. Partnerships with international organizations, private investors and local governments can play a pivotal role in ensuring that industrialization efforts are both effective and sustainable.

Modern community industrialization increasingly relies on digital technologies, automation and artificial intelligence. Automation improves production efficiency, reduces costs and fosters innovation. Industry 4.0 integrates the Internet of Things, big data and analytics into manufacturing processes, enhancing competitiveness and attracting investments. These advancements create new job opportunities in high-tech and IT sectors, reducing dependence on traditional industries and enabling communities to diversify their economies.

The decentralization of economic activities across different regions is a crucial factor in industrialization. It allows less developed communities to access resources and support for launching local industrial initiatives. Modern trends include the establishment of regional industrial clusters that unite manufacturers, researchers and government bodies to tackle economic challenges collaboratively. In particular, state support programs and

international grant initiatives are instrumental in post-conflict region recovery, encouraging investments and developing industries tailored to local needs.

Sustainability has become a cornerstone of contemporary industrialization. Communities are increasingly adopting green technologies aimed at reducing carbon emissions, recycling waste and utilizing renewable energy sources. Solar, wind and bioenergy projects empower communities with energy independence while minimizing environmental impact. Eco-industrial parks represent a model for balancing economic growth and environmental protection, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Industrialization drives urbanization, prompting migration to urban hubs and increasing demand for infrastructure, housing, education and healthcare. In response, communities invest heavily in transportation and logistics infrastructure, communication networks and smart technologies for urban resource management. Smart cities have emerged as vital models for sustainable industrial development, integrating advanced technology to optimize urban planning and enhance quality of life.

The COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical crises have intensified the trend toward production localization. Manufacturers are increasingly prioritizing shorter supply chains and situating production closer to end-users to reduce dependency on global networks. This shift promotes local community development through job creation, investment attraction and improved supply chain security.

A critical direction in modern industrialization is the development of human capital. As advanced manufacturing processes require skilled labor, communities are heavily investing in education, vocational training and research initiatives. Partnerships between communities, educational institutions and businesses are instrumental in fostering innovative environments and expanding opportunities for local populations.

Modern industrialization increasingly integrates principles of CSR. Industrial enterprises are focusing on not only profit but also their social and environmental responsibilities. They engage in community development by funding infrastructure projects, education, healthcare and cultural initiatives. This approach strengthens community ties, enhances industrial reputation and ensures inclusive benefits from industrial activities.

The integration of digitalization into industrial activities remains a dominant trend. Advanced technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence and 3D printing are revolutionizing production methods, making them more flexible and efficient. Digitalization also enables better resource allocation and promotes transparency in industrial operations, boosting community confidence in industrial projects.

The quest for sustainable development in the context of community industrialization presents a complex and multidimensional set of challenges. These challenges stem from the necessity to balance economic growth, environmental stewardship and social equity. Industrialization can serve as a catalyst for progress, but if improperly managed, it risks deepening inequality, exacerbating environmental degradation and undermining community well-being. Addressing these issues requires nuanced strategies that account for the unique circumstances of each community while aligning with broader global sustainability goals.

A central challenge lies in reconciling industrial growth with environmental preservation. Traditional industrial processes often result in significant environmental externalities, including greenhouse gas emissions, resource depletion and pollution. Communities undergoing industrialization face the dual burden of fostering economic development while mitigating harm to natural ecosystems. This is particularly problematic in regions where weak regulatory frameworks or insufficient enforcement allow unsustainable practices to proliferate. The transition to environmentally friendly industrial models, such as adopting renewable energy sources, enhancing waste recycling mechanisms and improving energy efficiency, demands substantial investment, which many communities, particularly those in developing regions, may lack.

Economic disparities further complicate sustainable industrialization. Industrial growth is often accompanied by unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. Communities may experience uneven benefits, with a small elite reaping most of the rewards while marginalized groups, such as low-income families, minorities or indigenous populations, face adverse impacts. This can manifest in the form of inadequate wages, poor working conditions, or displacement caused by industrial land use. Sustainable development efforts must therefore prioritize social inclusivity by fostering fair labor practices, equitable access to education and training and policies that address systemic inequalities.

Urbanization is another dimension intertwined with community industrialization, creating both opportunities and challenges. Industrialization often drives urban expansion as populations migrate to cities seeking employment opportunities. This rapid urbanization can overwhelm infrastructure, leading to challenges in housing, transportation, sanitation and healthcare. Informal settlements or slums may emerge, characterized by inadequate living conditions and heightened vulnerability to environmental and economic shocks. Smart urban planning and substantial investment in infrastructure are essential to mitigate these risks, ensuring that urbanization enhances, rather than diminishes, quality of life.

The global nature of industrial supply chains introduces additional challenges for communities striving for sustainable development. Modern industries often depend on globalized production and distribution networks, which can create vulnerabilities to geopolitical instability, trade disruptions and supply chain inefficiencies. Furthermore, reliance on imported materials or outsourced labor may undermine local economies, reducing opportunities for community-driven development. To counter these trends, communities need to emphasize localization and resilience by investing in local production capacities, developing diversified economies and fostering partnerships that strengthen regional supply chains.

Another pressing issue is the impact of technological transformation on labor markets. The rise of automation and artificial intelligence has transformed traditional industrial roles, rendering some jobs obsolete while creating demand for highly specialized skills. Communities face the challenge of ensuring that workers are equipped with the knowledge and abilities necessary to adapt to these changes. Without proactive investment in education and workforce development, technological disruptions could exacerbate unemployment and social dislocation. Vocational training programs, lifelong learning initiatives and collaboration with private sector stakeholders are crucial to mitigate these risks and enable a smooth transition to future-ready industries.

Environmental justice represents a critical intersection of community well-being and industrialization. Industrial facilities are often located in economically disadvantaged areas, where land is cheaper and regulatory oversight may be less stringent. These communities are disproportionately exposed to industrial pollution, health risks and environmental degradation. The uneven burden of environmental harm reflects broader inequities and necessitates comprehensive policies that prioritize environmental justice. Industry leaders and policymakers must engage local populations in decision-making processes, ensuring that their voices guide the development of sustainable industrial practices that align with the community's needs and aspirations.

The financial requirements of sustainable industrialization present another formidable obstacle. Green technologies, advanced infrastructure and workforce development programs often require significant investment, which may be beyond the reach of communities with limited budgets. Access to funding remains a persistent issue, exacerbated by economic instability and shifting geopolitical landscapes. Collaborative efforts between governments, private investors and international organizations are essential to bridge the funding gap and provide communities with the resources needed to implement sustainable strategies effectively.

Addressing the global climate crisis is perhaps the most urgent challenge facing industrializing communities. The need to curb emissions and transition to low-carbon economies is both a moral imperative and a practical necessity to avert catastrophic environmental consequences. Communities must navigate the complexities of phasing out carbon-intensive industries while ensuring that economic stability and employment opportunities are maintained. Renewable energy adoption, carbon capture technologies and the development of green industries are crucial components of this transition, but they require robust planning, international cooperation and significant technological innovation.

4. Eco-industrial parks as of sustainable infrastructure of communities

The concept of eco-industrial parks (EIPs) traces its origins back to the early 1990s, gaining significant momentum and broader adoption by 2018. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) defines an EIP as a collective of businesses coexisting on shared premises, with a unified goal of enhancing environmental, economic and social performance. This is achieved through joint efforts in addressing environmental challenges and managing resources efficiently. While this definition shares some similarities with the traditional industrial park model, the EIP approach offers a far more comprehensive and transformative framework.

Fig. 3 illustrates two contrasting approaches to industrial park management: the traditional industrial park model and the eco-industrial park (EIP) model. This visual representation underscores the shift from a linear production system to a more sustainable and circular system.

In a traditional industrial park, industries operate as separate entities with minimal interaction or collaboration. The system is inherently linear, beginning with the extraction of natural resources. These resources are processed into products, which are distributed for consumption. However, a significant drawback of this model is the generation of waste that is not reintegrated into the production cycle. Waste products are often discarded, leading to environmental pollution and inefficient resource utilization. This approach places substantial pressure on natural resources and contributes to a range of sustainability issues.

In contrast, the eco-industrial park introduces a transformative shift towards a circular system. This model emphasizes the integration of industries within a shared network where collaboration fosters resource efficiency. Natural resources are still the starting point, but the waste generated by one industry is repurposed as a resource for another. This closed-loop system minimizes the disposal of waste and maximizes the reuse and recycling of materials. The circular process exemplifies the concept

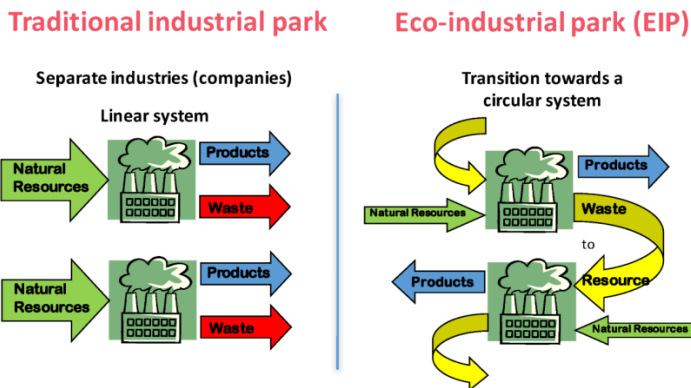


Fig. 3. Two contrasting approaches to industrial park management¹¹

of industrial symbiosis, where industries work together to optimize resource flows, reducing environmental impacts and conserving natural resources.

Moreover, the circular nature of EIPs aligns with broader global goals for sustainable development. The approach not only enhances environmental protection but also offers economic and social advantages. Companies can reduce costs associated with waste management and resource procurement while fostering innovation and creating opportunities for collaboration. Additionally, EIPs contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting responsible consumption and production practices.

Ultimately, Fig. 3 encapsulates the fundamental difference between the two approaches: traditional industrial parks represent an outdated, unsustainable model, whereas eco-industrial parks illustrate a forward-thinking solution aimed at fostering sustainability and resilience. The transition from a linear to a circular system is vital for addressing the challenges posed by resource depletion, climate change and waste generation in a world with growing environmental and economic concerns.

A central feature of EIPs is the implementation of industrial symbiosis, a synergy-driven process that encourages businesses to exchange resources—such as materials, energy, water and by-products. This collaborative exchange minimizes waste, optimizes resource use and significantly reduces environmental impact, creating a sustainable industrial ecosystem. Through such initiatives, companies not only contribute to environmental protection but also gain competitive advantages by cutting costs and improving operational efficiency.

¹¹ Jayawardane H. Eco-industrial Parks. 2020. URL: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/eco-industrial-parks-heshan-jayawardane/>

Another vital aspect of the EIP model is its emphasis on fostering community collaboration. Unlike conventional industrial parks, EIPs aim to promote inclusive and sustainable development by integrating the needs of local communities into their operations. This approach strengthens ties between industries and their neighboring populations, driving shared prosperity while addressing social and environmental concerns.

One of the key strengths of the EIP concept is its adaptability. It is not limited to newly established industrial parks but can also be effectively integrated into existing ones. By transforming traditional industrial areas into eco-industrial systems, businesses can collectively move toward sustainability without the need to build infrastructure from scratch.

In essence, the EIP model represents a paradigm shift in industrial development. It bridges the gap between environmental stewardship and economic growth while prioritizing social well-being. By promoting a holistic approach to resource management, waste reduction and community engagement, eco-industrial parks pave the way for a more sustainable and inclusive industrial future.

Fig. 4 presents the fundamental components that define the concept of EIPs, emphasizing a holistic and sustainable approach to industrial development. This framework highlights the interplay between environmental responsibility, economic efficiency and social well-being, all of which are vital to achieving long-term sustainability.



Fig. 4. Key components of eco-industrial parks¹²

¹² Eco-Industrial Parks Programme. URL: <https://www.industrialefficiency.co.za/eco-industrial-parks-programme/>

One of the core pillars of this model is the effective management and governance of parks. This component ensures that eco-industrial parks operate under clear guidelines and principles that promote sustainable practices. Park management involves the coordination of resources, the establishment of policies and the creation of a structured system that facilitates collaboration between businesses while addressing the broader environmental, economic and social goals. Strong governance is instrumental in maintaining transparency, ensuring compliance and fostering an environment where industrial symbiosis and sustainability are prioritized.

Another critical element is the focus on resource efficiency and cleaner production processes. This aspect underscores the importance of minimizing waste and optimizing the use of natural resources. By integrating advanced technologies and innovative practices, eco-industrial parks enhance the environmental performance of industries. Cleaner production not only reduces pollution but also allows industries to cut costs, improve their competitiveness and contribute to the global efforts to mitigate climate change. This component demonstrates the commitment of EIPs to sustainability through the use of renewable resources and the reduction of harmful environmental impacts.

Industrial and infrastructure synergies form the next crucial component in the framework of EIPs. This involves fostering interconnected systems where industries can share resources, by-products and services to improve efficiency and reduce waste. Infrastructure within these parks is designed to support such collaboration, enabling businesses to leverage economies of scale while maintaining sustainability as a guiding principle. Industrial symbiosis creates a circular economy within the park, encouraging the reuse and recycling of materials while reducing the dependency on virgin resources.

The concept of healthy and integrated workforces, alongside industry-urban synergies, introduces the social dimension of EIPs. This component places people at the center of industrial development by promoting inclusive growth and ensuring the well-being of workers and surrounding communities. Integrating industrial parks with urban areas allows for the sharing of resources, such as housing, transportation and social infrastructure, thereby creating a balanced coexistence between industrial operations and residential zones. This harmonious integration improves the quality of life for workers, supports local development and reduces potential social conflicts.

Finally, spatial planning and zoning represent the foundation upon which all other components are built. This component ensures that the physical layout and design of the eco-industrial park maximize efficiency and sustainability. Strategic zoning allows for the separation and optimization of industrial, residential and green spaces, minimizing environmental impacts

and facilitating smoother operations. Spatial planning considers factors such as land use, waste management and logistics, ensuring that the park is designed to align with long-term sustainability goals.

In essence, the diagram highlights how these interconnected components (effective governance, resource efficiency, industrial symbiosis, community integration and strategic spatial planning) work together to create thriving and sustainable eco-industrial parks. By addressing environmental, economic and social aspects simultaneously, these parks set a benchmark for modern industrial development and play a pivotal role in achieving global sustainability targets. The EIP model represents not only a transformative approach to industrialization but also a commitment to ensuring a better future for industries, communities and the planet.

Fig. 5 provides a visual representation of the concept of Eco-Industrial Parks and their integration within the framework of SDGs. At its core, the diagram places eco-industrial parks in the center, signifying their pivotal role in promoting sustainability and innovation within industries. Surrounding this central element are symbols and numbers representing specific SDGs, which highlight the multifaceted contributions of eco-industrial parks to sustainable development.



Fig. 5. Integration of Eco-Industrial Parks concept within the framework of SDGs¹³

¹³ Eco-Industrial Parks Programme. URL: <https://www.industrialefficiency.co.za/eeco-industrial-parks-programme/>

One of the keys focus of the image is on Gender Equality (SDG 5), as represented by the symbol of gender inclusivity. This reflects the importance of empowering all genders and ensuring equal opportunities within the operational structures of eco-industrial parks. By fostering equitable workplaces and leadership roles, these parks contribute to broader societal progress.

Another significant SDG illustrated is Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), shown through an upward-trending graph. This element emphasizes the ability of eco-industrial parks to create jobs, support sustainable economic activities and improve productivity while maintaining environmental responsibility. This interconnectedness ensures that industrial growth aligns with principles of inclusivity and sustainability.

The focus on Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), symbolized by interlocked building blocks, underlines the role of these parks in driving industrial transformation. By incorporating advanced technologies, innovative waste management solutions and sustainable infrastructure, eco-industrial parks enhance efficiency and resilience in industrial operations.

The inclusion of Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) signifies a commitment to promoting circular economy principles. This is visualized through a recycling symbol, representing the importance of minimizing waste, optimizing resource use and adopting sustainable practices. Eco-industrial parks play a critical role in achieving these objectives by fostering collaboration among industries to share resources and reduce environmental impacts.

Water sustainability is highlighted through the symbol of a water droplet and faucet, representing Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6). This acknowledges the vital need for efficient water management within these parks, including the recycling and responsible use of water resources. It also aligns with the broader goals of ensuring clean water accessibility for communities and preserving local ecosystems.

Renewable energy initiatives are represented by the sun symbol for Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7). This showcases the potential of eco-industrial parks to drive the adoption of renewable energy sources, reduce dependence on fossil fuels and promote energy efficiency within industrial processes. Such efforts are critical in reducing carbon footprints and fostering energy resilience. Finally, Climate Action (SDG 13) is depicted through the image of a globe, symbolizing the global urgency to address climate change. Eco-industrial parks are shown as active contributors to this goal by adopting climate-friendly practices, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing climate resilience through green technologies.

Overall, the image conveys how eco-industrial parks embody the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable

development. By aligning with these SDGs, they demonstrate a comprehensive approach to transforming traditional industries into hubs of innovation, inclusivity and environmental stewardship, paving the way for a sustainable future.

Table 2 outlines the key environmental, social and economic drivers that justify the establishment and development of Eco-Industrial Parks, highlighting their importance in fostering sustainable development. Each category of drivers demonstrates the ways in which EIPs can address global challenges and deliver multidimensional benefits to stakeholders.

Table 2

Drivers and benefits of eco-industrial parks¹⁴

Drivers group	List of drivers	Description
Key environmental drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change commitments at the national level; • Policy mechanisms (e.g., tax holidays and market mechanisms, such as carbon pricing); • Greening the supply chain through circular economy practices,⁸ which can lead to improved resource management, resource conservation and reduced climate impacts; • Cost-effective infrastructure which adapts to climate change; • Responding to environmental and social concerns from consumers and neighbouring communities; • Impetus to improve efficiency and growth. 	<p>The imperatives of environmental protection, climate change mitigation and resource use efficiency are making the case for EIPs stronger. Industry accounts for a significant portion of global emissions and has wide-reaching environmental and community impacts. EIPs can make a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, thereby contributing toward the implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Reaching these targets will require significant and long-lasting changes in energy and industrial greenhouse gas emissions. In this context, EIPs have the potential to play an important role.</p>

¹⁴ World Bank. 2021. International Framework for Eco-Industrial Parks v.2. Washington, DC: World Bank. URL: <https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/2021-04/An%20international%20framework%20for%20eco-industrial%20parks%20v2.0.pdf>

Table 1 (continuance)

Key social drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better working conditions; • Creation of local employment; • Improvement of gender equality within the park; • Better security and crime prevention; • Provision of social infrastructure to workers and community; • Support for local community well-being and community outreach; • Provision of vocational training; • Improved occupational health and safety; • Transition to more sustainable land use. 	<p>With increasing industrial output in developing and emerging economies alike, an EIP framework can help to maintain social standards and protection of employees and the wider community.</p> <p>Integrating social quality standards within industrial parks is becoming increasingly important. Evidence suggests that friction between communities and industrial parks can occur due to poor preparedness for dealing with emergencies, concerns about operational standards and increasing encroachment of industrial developments into residential areas. In addition, industrial parks often depend on local labor, resources from surrounding communities, social infrastructure and in some cases housing and wider social services.</p>
Key economic drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct and indirect employment creation; • Skills-upgrading of the labor force; • Linkages between industrial park firms, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and communities outside the industrial park; • Technology and knowledge transfer through foreign direct investment; • Demonstrable benefits following the application of good international industry practices and regional development approaches. 	<p>EIPs can provide a wide range of economic benefits, in particular, employment creation. EIPs often involve the creation of an enhanced social infrastructure, which is particularly important for developing countries. Indirect benefits may be difficult to quantify, but are increasingly important for the long-term economic sustainability of parks and firms.</p>

The environmental aspect emphasizes the critical role of EIPs in addressing climate change, resource efficiency and environmental protection. Commitments to climate change mitigation at the national level and policy mechanisms, such as tax incentives and carbon pricing, are highlighted as enablers for green initiatives within industrial parks. Furthermore, the promotion of circular economy practices contributes to improved resource management and conservation, reducing climate impacts. The development of cost-effective, climate-adaptive infrastructure further strengthens the environmental argument for EIPs. Additionally, EIPs can address the concerns of neighboring communities and consumers by demonstrating responsiveness to social and environmental issues. A focus on improving efficiency and driving sustainable growth reinforces their role in achieving targets under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. By reducing greenhouse gas emissions and aligning with these commitments, EIPs provide a vital pathway toward achieving environmental goals.

The social dimension focuses on the potential of EIPs to improve living and working conditions for individuals and communities. This includes creating local employment opportunities, enhancing gender equality and improving workplace security and crime prevention measures.

Beyond the industrial workforce, EIPs are instrumental in providing social infrastructure for workers and local communities, such as healthcare, education and housing. Initiatives like vocational training and better occupational health and safety standards further elevate their social impact. Additionally, sustainable land use and community outreach programs foster a harmonious relationship between EIPs and their surrounding communities.

However, the table 2 underscores the challenges posed by friction between communities and industrial parks, such as emergency preparedness and the encroachment of industrial developments into residential areas. An EIP framework can address these challenges through careful planning, ensuring the maintenance of social standards and community well-being.

Economically, EIPs contribute significantly by driving both direct and indirect employment creation, enhancing workforce skills and facilitating technology and knowledge transfer. EIPs also strengthen linkages between firms within the park, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the surrounding communities, promoting economic integration. Foreign direct investment (FDI) often plays a crucial role in enabling these parks to implement advanced technologies and global best practices. The development of infrastructure tied to EIPs, especially in developing countries, fosters regional economic development and offers indirect benefits that are vital for the long-term sustainability of these parks and their associated firms. These

economic benefits make EIPs attractive not only for private investors but also for governments seeking sustainable industrial growth.

Overall, the table articulates that EIPs have the potential to address pressing environmental issues like climate change, while also driving social development and economic growth. By integrating environmental sustainability, social standards and economic incentives, EIPs provide a holistic framework for advancing sustainable development, particularly in developing and emerging economies. This multi-pronged approach positions EIPs as a cornerstone of future industrial development models.

CONCLUSION

Sustainable communities represent a harmonious balance between environmental stewardship, economic vitality, social equity and cultural preservation, ensuring a high quality of life for current and future generations. These communities thrive by leveraging internal resources – natural, human and financial – while fostering inclusivity, resilience and self-sufficiency. Key to their success are practices like renewable energy adoption, local entrepreneurship, equitable resource distribution and participatory governance, which collectively enhance adaptability to global challenges. By embracing sustainability as a multidimensional and ongoing process, communities not only safeguard their present well-being but also pave the way for a resilient and prosperous future.

Sustainable infrastructure forms the foundation for resilient and thriving communities by integrating economic, social and environmental dimensions. It encompasses transportation systems, energy grids, water supply, digital networks and social amenities, designed and managed to ensure long-term sustainability. This approach enables equitable access to services, enhances economic productivity and promotes environmental preservation. By prioritizing green technologies, climate-resilient designs and inclusive planning, sustainable infrastructure not only mitigates risks from natural disasters and climate change but also reduces inequalities and fosters community well-being. Such investments are crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, addressing global challenges and building a resilient future.

Industrialization holds immense potential as a catalyst for the transformation and sustainable development of communities, offering opportunities for economic growth, technological innovation and improved quality of life. However, its successful implementation requires a careful balance of social equity, environmental stewardship and economic advancement. Communities must embrace modern trends, such as green technologies, digitalization and localization, while fostering inclusivity and

sustainability in all processes. By adopting innovative, people-centric and environmentally conscious approaches, industrialization can pave modern pathways for resilient, equitable and sustainable communities, aligning local development with global sustainability goals.

Eco-industrial parks exemplify a transformative approach to sustainable community infrastructure by integrating environmental stewardship, economic growth and social inclusivity. By adopting circular economy principles and promoting industrial symbiosis, EIPs enable resource efficiency, waste reduction and collaboration between industries. They offer multifaceted benefits, including environmental conservation, cost reductions, innovation and enhanced community well-being. Moreover, their alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals highlights their potential to address global challenges such as climate change, resource depletion and social inequality. This holistic framework underscores EIPs as a forward-thinking solution for fostering resilient and sustainable industrial ecosystems.

SUMMARY

The article explores the role of sustainable infrastructure, industrialization, and eco-innovations in fostering resilient and thriving communities. It highlights the importance of adaptive infrastructure—including renewable energy systems, waste management, and water conservation technologies—as a cornerstone for achieving social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Particular emphasis is placed on the concept of eco-industrial parks (EIPs), which promote industrial symbiosis through the shared use of resources, cost optimization, and minimization of environmental impact. The article examines the interplay between these elements and their influence on community development, aligning them with global SDGs.

The study underscores the significance of green infrastructure, climate-resilient innovations, and the active integration of local communities into industrial processes as essential strategies for long-term economic growth, social equity, and environmental preservation. By adopting circular economy principles and fostering collaboration among industries, EIPs demonstrate the transformative potential to address climate change, reduce resource depletion, and promote inclusive and sustainable industrial ecosystems. This comprehensive approach positions eco-industrial parks and sustainable infrastructure as fundamental components for creating a balanced future that ensures prosperity for current and future generations while safeguarding the planet.

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Information about the authors:

Omelianenko Olena Mykolaivna,

Doctor of Philosophy (Economics),

Senior Researcher at the Department

of Business Economics and Administration,

Sumy State Pedagogical University named after A. S. Makarenko

87, Romenska str., Sumy, 40002, Ukraine

Kornus Olesia Hryhorivna,
Candidate of Geographical Science, Associate Professor,
Head of the Department of General and Regional Geography,
Sumy State Pedagogical University named after A. S. Makarenko
87, Romenska str., Sumy, 40002, Ukraine

Omelyanenko Vitaliy Anatoliiovych,
Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor,
Professor at the Department of General and Regional Geography,
Sumy State Pedagogical University named after A. S. Makarenko
87, Romenska str., Sumy, 40002, Ukraine