

# *What is sustainable development?*

*The process in which human and other natural resources are sustained, to make sure that development continues.*

*Development which is permanent and can finance itself.*

*Working towards a more modern and industrial economy.*

*Development that should take place but with the future in mind.*

*Development whereby the economy of the country is stable.*

*Development that is continuous and will always be supported by the users, especially those at the grassroots.*

*Self development, and to serve and develop others.*

*The reflection of development from one to another, including government and citizens, on issues of agriculture and the environment.*

*Something that has to do with human resource development, starting from the grassroots level.*

*Maintainable development.*

*Development whereby support and maintenance continues.*

*Plans or projects that continue in some way so that they can last.*

*Development for continuity without interfering or destroying the environment, economy, agriculture and the tradition of the people.*

*A progressive development which is controlled.*

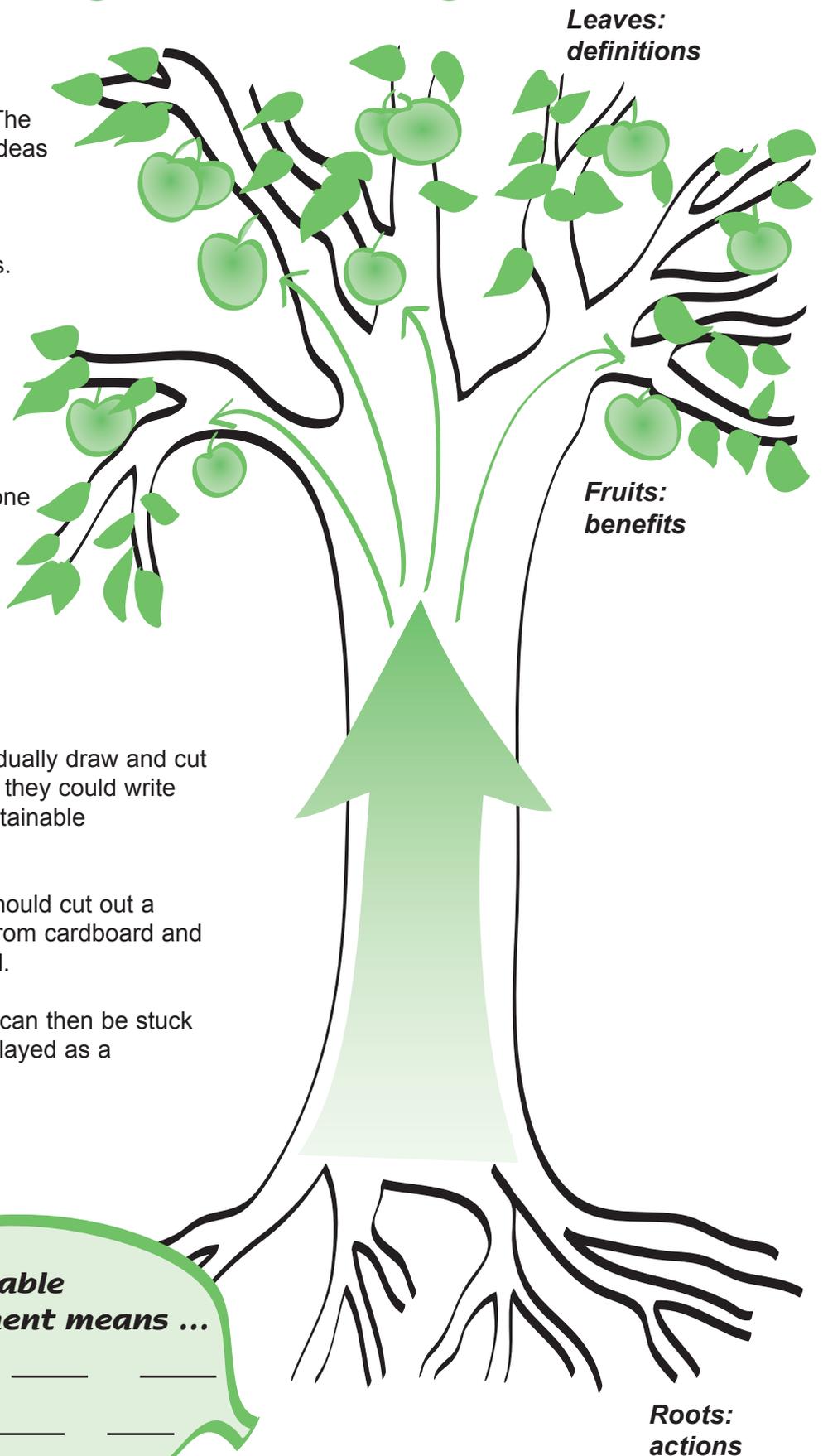
*A kind of development which will sustain a nation for a long period of time. It can also be a continuous self-help project which is geared towards the development of a nation.*

*Planning development for the future, and finding a suitable means of maintaining this development progressively and continuously.*

# A sustainability tree activity

How would teachers and children describe or define sustainable development? The first page above lists some ideas from Gambian schools.

- Children could read these definitions in small groups.
- Which do they agree with most? Which are they less sure of? Are there some definitions which conflict with others?
- Each group could select one definition it particularly likes and one which it is less sure of. These could then be presented to the whole class.
- What are the priorities?
- Children could then individually draw and cut out a leaf shape. On this they could write their own definition of sustainable development.
- The teacher or children should cut out a trunk and branch shape from cardboard and fix it to the classroom wall.
- Children's leaf definitions can then be stuck to the branches, and displayed as a 'sustainability tree'.



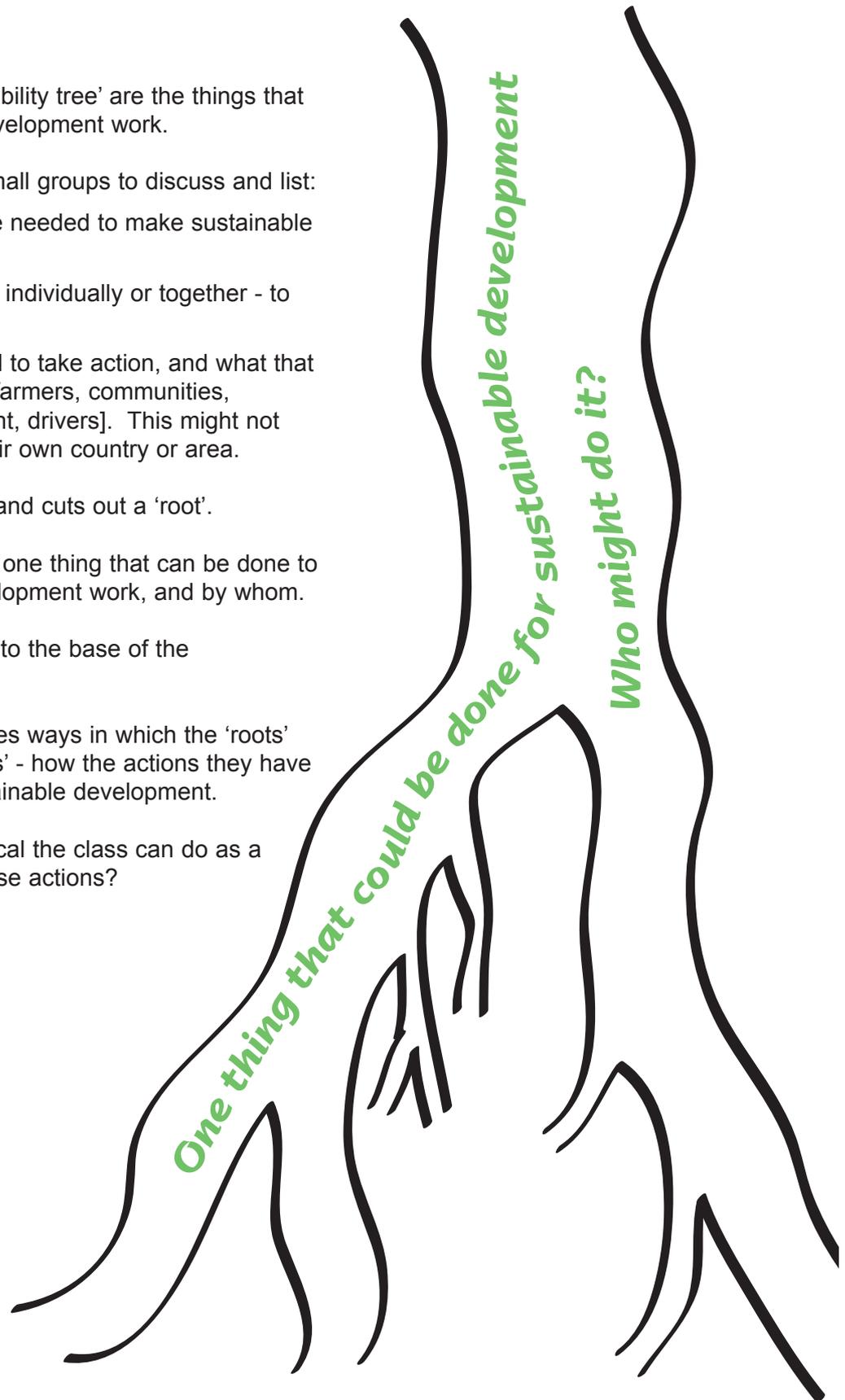
# Roots and fruits activity

The 'sustainability tree' activity could be extended further, by looking at 'roots' and 'fruits'.

## Roots

The 'roots' of the 'sustainability tree' are the things that help make sustainable development work.

- The children work in small groups to discuss and list:
  - what action might be needed to make sustainable development work;
  - what they could do - individually or together - to help with this;
  - who else might need to take action, and what that action might be [eg farmers, communities, teachers, government, drivers]. This might not just be people in their own country or area.
- Each child then draws and cuts out a 'root'.
- On their root they write one thing that can be done to make sustainable development work, and by whom.
- The roots are attached to the base of the 'sustainability tree'.
- The class then discusses ways in which the 'roots' help nourish the 'leaves' - how the actions they have suggested further sustainable development.
- Is there anything practical the class can do as a result of discussing these actions?



# Fruits

The 'fruits' of the 'sustainability tree' are the benefits of sustainable development:

- these include benefits for people, the environment, the economy, or several of these things together;
- this covers benefits to the local community, the nation and the wider world;
- they might be the results of particular actions, or they might be more general.



- Children work in small groups to discuss and list:
  - what good things come from sustainable development [the teacher could use the points on page 8 as a prompt];
  - who would benefit from this;
  - how these benefits would arise from the actions they have written as 'roots'.
- The children each draw a fruit, cut it out, and on it write one good thing which comes from sustainable development.
- These 'fruits' are then added to the 'sustainability tree'.
- The children read these and discuss them. How would they know if such a benefit was being achieved? What indicators would they use?

What you now have in your class is a unique 'concept map' of the children's ideas about sustainable development, the inputs that are needed to make it work, and the outputs of positive human action.

Keeping this displayed will serve as a touchstone during your class's work on sustainable development. It will give something for children to think about and for you and them to refer to.

It may be useful to return to the 'sustainability tree', and in particular the 'leaves', at the end of any work you do on sustainable development themes. Have children's ideas, priorities and definitions changed in the course of this work? Are there things they have written which they now want to amend?

*This activity may be copied for use in your classroom*