

One of the most important, and least understood, attributes of a sustainable and effective community is the **systems it adopts to embody its principles and realize its aims**. The following list shows the seven systems that in my opinion are the most important for a community to establish. They are listed in alphabetical order, because the order of implementation depends on the conditions present in the community and the resources available for this process.

Each system title is followed by the *core values of community* (Connection, Equivalence, Effectiveness) mainly related to the system. Then there are several “foundational questions” to help begin to develop effective and sustainable community systems. Please keep in mind that these are not the only questions possible and that the process of systems development and implementation can be intricate and requires dedication and buy-in.

1. Decision Making *Equivalence, Effectiveness*
  - a. Who makes what decisions? How are decisions delegated?
  - b. What is the method for making decisions? (e.g. majority vote, consent, unanimity, etc.)
  - c. What are the processes and procedures for group decision making?
2. Economic *Equivalence, Effectiveness*
  - a. What is the economic basis of the community? (e.g. money exchange, gift economy, barter, etc.)
  - b. What are the processes and procedures for handling economic / financial tasks?
  - c. Who has responsibility for financial matters?
3. Feedback *Connection, Equivalence*
  - a. What is the community culture about giving and receiving feedback, whether for the community in general or among individuals?
  - b. What is the mechanism for a member to offer feedback about the quality of their experience in the community? Who is responsible for receiving this feedback and acting on it?
  - c. How is feedback incorporated into other systems, structures and processes?

4. Governance and Organizational Structure *Connection, Equivalence, Effectiveness*
  - a. How is power understood within the community? How is decision making authority distributed and delegated?
  - b. How is the community organized to get things done? How is it organized to make decisions? Is there a difference?
  - c. What are the connections between and among groups/teams at different levels of governance?
5. Information *Connection, Effectiveness*
  - a. What are the structural pathways for information flow? What is the primary means for sharing information within the community?
  - b. What information is available to whom? Who controls the flow of information within the community?
  - c. What is the “memory system” for preserving historical information in an accessible way?
6. Membership *Connection, Equivalence*
  - a. What does it mean to be a “member” of the community? What are the privileges and responsibilities of membership?
  - b. What is the process for becoming a member? What is the process for removing a member?
  - c. Who has a say in whether a particular person becomes a member or is removed from membership?
7. Restorative *Connection, Equivalence*
  - a. What is the community culture about dispute, difference and conflict? (e.g. ignoring, avoiding, embracing)
  - b. What is the community’s dream about how to engage conflict?
  - c. What resources are available in the community to engage conflict in an effective way? How does the community develop more resources to engage conflict?