Sustainability frameworks

'*The problem is not one of lack of knowledge, but of the conditions of existence' **Adolfo Alban**

'What world do we want to build? What kind of futures do people really want?' **Arturo Escobar**

Doughnut Economics

The Doughnut Economics framework was developed by University of Oxford economist, Kate Raworth. The model draws on the Stockholm Resilience Centre's concept of nine planetary boundaries that humanity must remain within if we are to maintain a habitable planet. The nine planetary boundaries are pictured in an adapted format in the image below and include: climate change; land conversion; ocean acidification; air pollution; and loss of biodiversity. Alongside this sits a range of social foundations that are deemed necessary for a fair and just society, including: peace and justice; energy; water; food; education; and political voice.

Between these is the 'doughnut' – the safe and just space for humanity. As an economist, Raworth is highly critical of economic growth and hyper-consumption as a measure of success at the expense of environmental integrity or individual wellbeing. Raworth advocates instead for a regenerative approach to societal design, from circular economies to environmental restoration programmes.


Doughnut Economics: CC BY-SA 4.0 1

Planetary Health

The Planetary Health framework was developed by a range of experts in the fields of health, education and ecology. The framework is intended for Higher Education institutions, but aims to foster life-long learning rather than working towards a set of pre-determined outcomes and objectives. As seen in the image on the right, it is separated into five overlapping domains. Interconnection with Nature sits at the heart of these and is the '*central and urgent task of education institutions… to re-imagine our relationship with Nature*'.

The authors argue that reconnecting with Nature can only be achieved by moving beyond western paradigms that have created a false dichotomy between humans and Nature, resulting in domination and exploitation of the natural world.
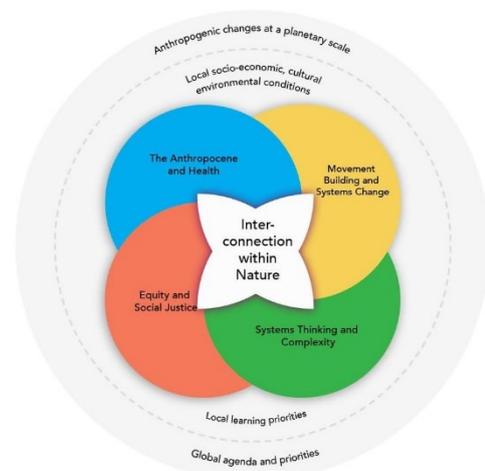
Planetary Health Education Framework, 2021

To address this disconnect, educators must engage students cognitively (*in terms of their sense of connection with the natural world),* socio-emotionally (*in terms of their ability to care for the natural world),* and behaviourally (*in terms of a commitment to take action*). A range of indigenous worldviews and perspectives are cited as examples of alternative ways of being in relation to the natural world, and the authors argue for a consideration of Indigenous <u>and</u> Western knowledge paradigms, as opposed to Indigenous <u>vs.</u> Western systems of knowing, in education and practice.

17 Principles of Environmental Justice

The 17 Principles of Environmental Justice were developed as part of the first People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in Washington in 1991. The Principles affirm the right of all people to be free from environmental harm and the dispossession of their lands. In the US, the Environmental Justice movement was established as a response to issues of Environmental Racism, whereby it was found that black communities were being disproportionately impacted by the dumping of toxic environmental waste compared to white communities. At the forefront of the Environmental Justice movement in the US is Dr Robert Bullard, who began researching examples of toxic waste dumping in the 1970s. Dr Bullard argues that the environmental issues that we are facing today must be solved through a justice and equity lens.

Example Principles:

- Principle 1: '*Environmental Justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction'*
- Principle 7: '*Environmental Justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation'*.

Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals are a global and universal agenda to achieve Peace and Prosperity for all by 2030. The Goals cover a wide range of interconnecting topics, from Gender Equality and Zero Hunger to Climate Action and Life Below Water. At the heart of the Goals is the principle that '*no one should be left behind*' in the move towards a more just an equal society. In 2015, 197 countries around the world, including the UK, signed up to achieving the Goals. The Goals are not legally binding and no measures have been put in place to formally hold countries to account on the progress they are making towards the indicators that underpin the high-level targets.

Sustainable Development Goals: CC BY-NC 4.0

The Goals have been adopted by a range of organisations from businesses to the education sector, and are being used to frame approaches to embedding sustainability into everyday practices and procedures, including as part of the annual Times Higher Education Impact rankings.

UNESCO have produced guidance materials to support the adoption of SDG 4: Quality Education through the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development. This focuses on a set of key competencies as well as specific learning objectives aligned to each of the Goals.