

Globethics Repository



Crisis, equity, inclusion, diversity : higher education, digital education and the world we want

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository.
More information on Globethics see <https://www.globethics.net>. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see <https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy>.

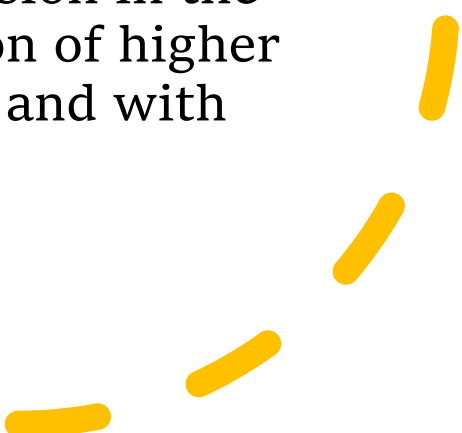
Item Type	Conference paper/presentation
Authors	Unterhalter, Elaine
Rights	All rights reserved
Download date	2026-07-14 14:37:31
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/4139406

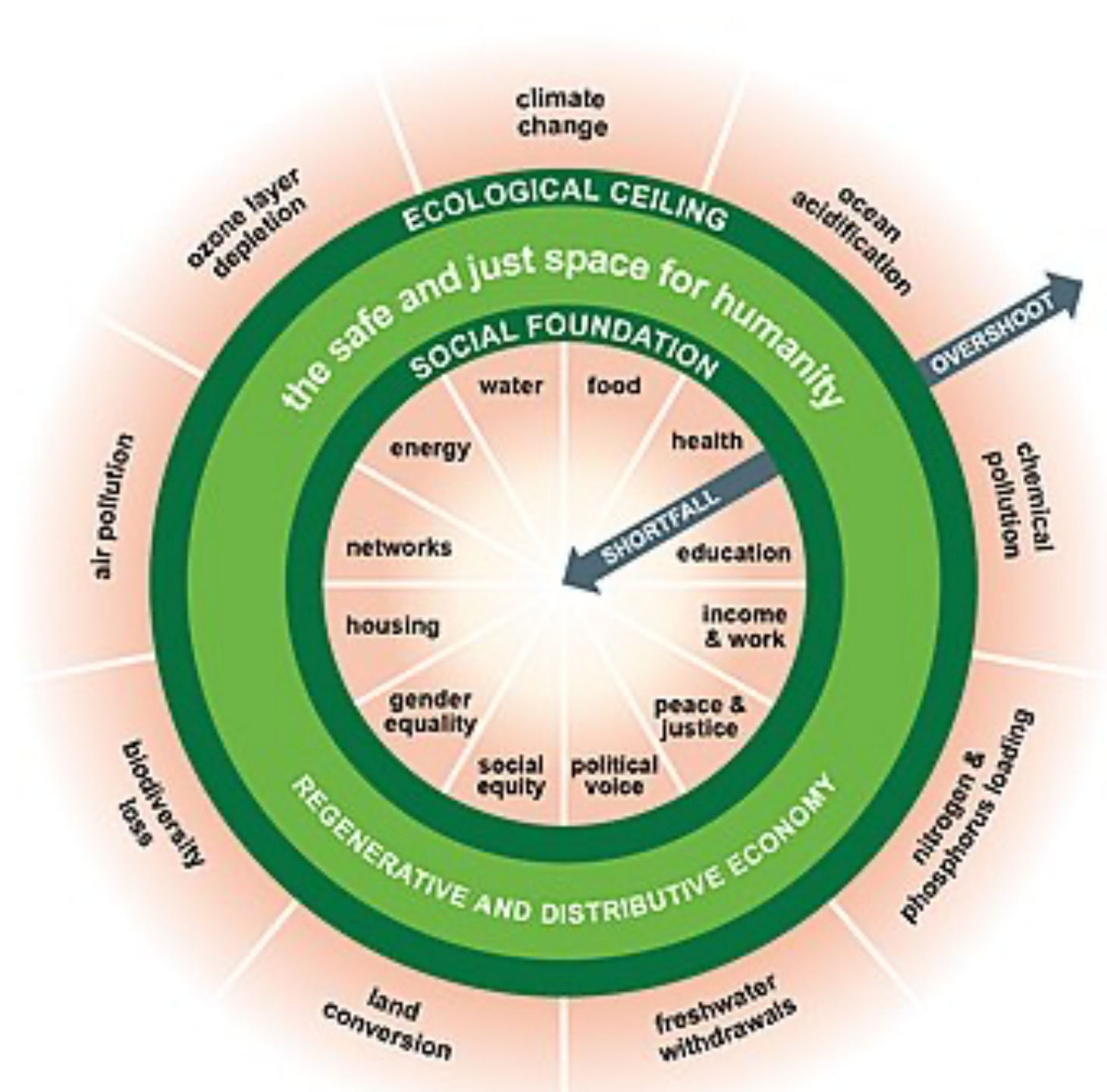
Crisis, equity, inclusion, diversity: higher education, digital education and the world we want

Elaine Unterhalter



Setting the scene: what do we know about...

1. ...the nature and extent of different harms associated with the climate crisis and *COVID-19 in the higher education sector in different parts of the world* , the connections of higher education with other phases of education, and with human development ?
 2. ... the *Short-term immediate responses and longer-term structural approaches needed to mitigate these harms acknowledging planetary boundaries*
 3.the *longer-term changes* (opportunities and threats) associated with the rise of digital education in thinking about equity, diversity and inclusion in the higher education sector and the connection of higher education with other phases of education and with human development
- 





Three meanings of
equity & the
challenge of
multidimensionality
and intersection

- Equity from below
- Equity from above
- Equity from the middle

*Challenges of connection & intersection: what
kind of space is higher education?*



Higher education : diverse relationships

ACCESS

- fragile widening participation agendas
- many forms of discrimination and exclusion because of race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, refugee status, disability
- Balances and trade offs?

PARTICIPATION

- Learning and teaching
- Mental Health and Well-Being
- Physical Health and Nutrition
- Access to Support Services
- Risks of gender based violence, ethnic or other forms of violence
- Critical curricula and controversy

QUALITY

- Training of key workers – teachers, health workers, engineers
- Research
- Graduate skills
- Institutional management
- Conditions of work

OUTCOMES: Instrumental and intrinsic

- Disrupted learning , disrupted knowledge production. reduction in earnings
- Worsening conditions for staff
- Widened arenas for connection – how deep? how sustainable?

CONNECTIONS

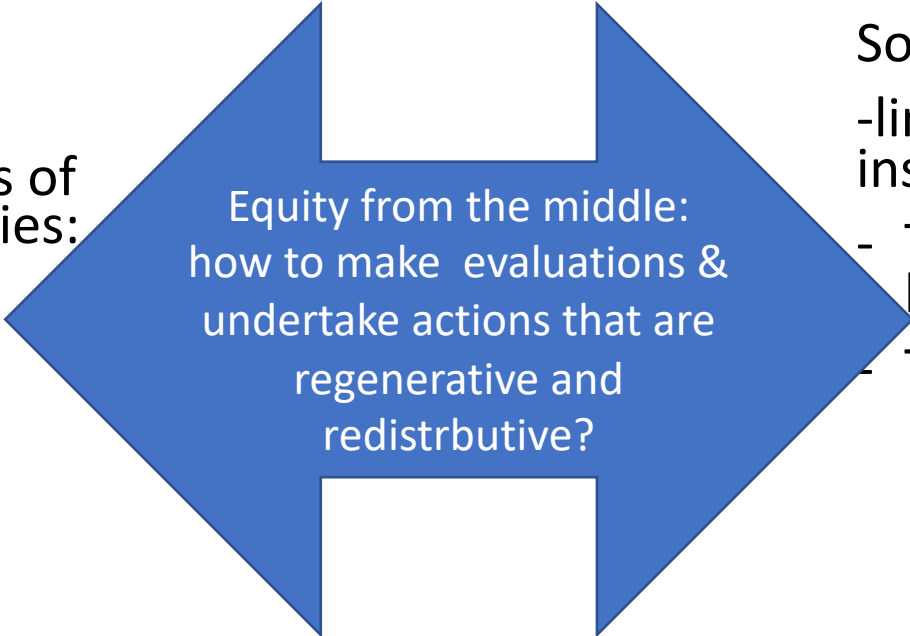
Changing the sense of the local, the national, the international

Equity, diversity and thinking about digital technologies

Equity from below:
diversity and
inclusion as a
resource;

some problems of
new technologies:

- affordability,
- accessibility,
- adaptability,
- availability,
- acceptability



Equity from the middle:
how to make evaluations &
undertake actions that are
regenerative and
redistributive?

Equity from above:

managing diversity and inclusion

Some problems of new technologies:

- limited global, national and institutional ethical framings
- Transnational tech companies with limited national accountability
- Trade off or social justice?

Harmful effects of COVID pandemic identified in systematic review (Unterhalter et al, 2021)

Access - Exclusion of students from historically disadvantaged groups and disruption of widening participation initiatives

Participation - Students experiences of poverty; reductions in mental health and wellbeing; gender based violence

Quality - Changes in curriculum and pedagogy through online delivery; Stress and distress amongst staff and research students; lack of management preparation for pandemic

Outcomes - Reduced job opportunities for graduates due to disrupted education

Connections - Diminished motivation of historically excluded groups with entering university; increased inequalities; stress to idea of connection between universities and communities

Thinking about mitigation: social relations stand out

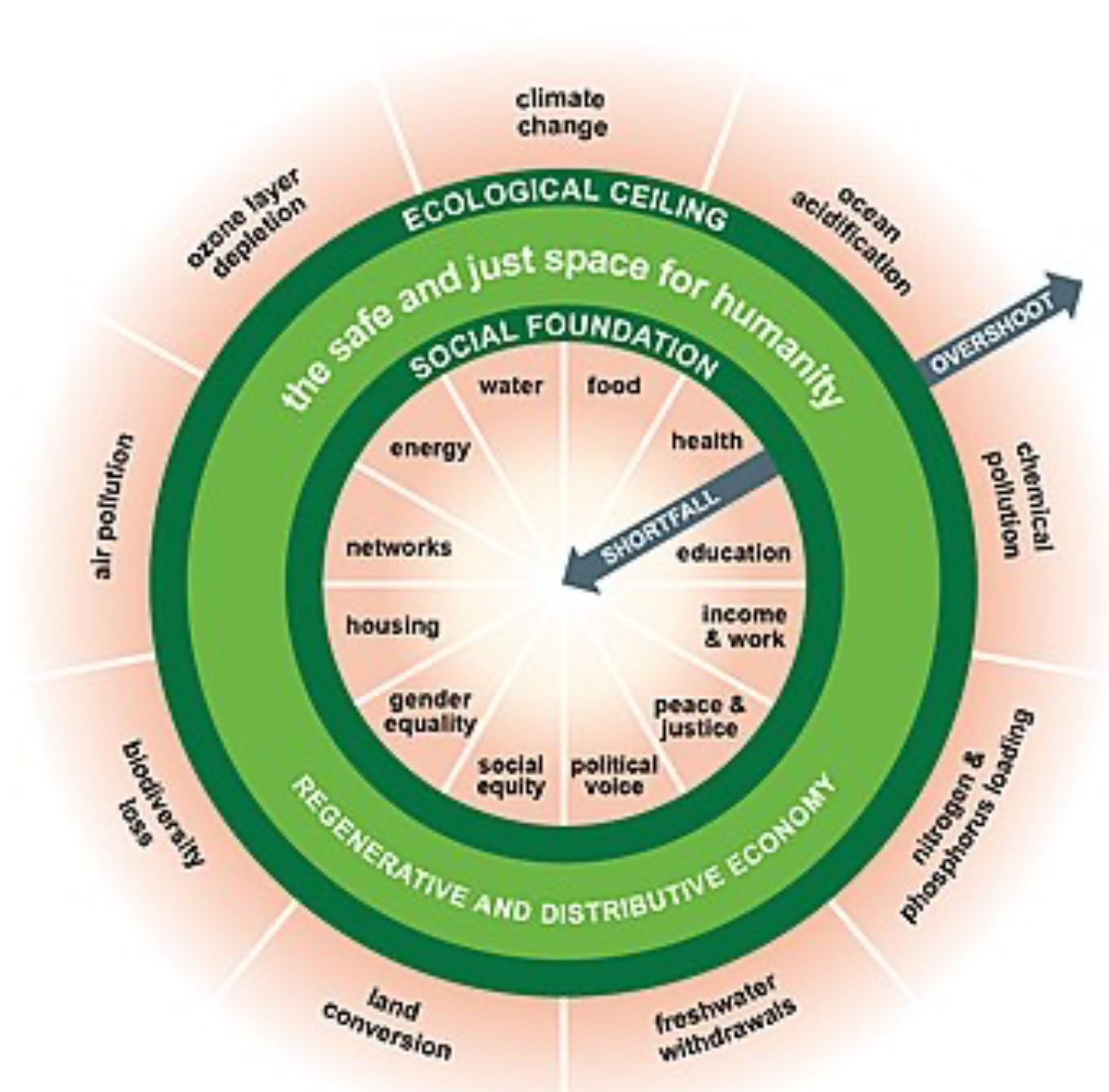
Relevant literature on effects on the higher education sector of:

- pandemics (HIV and SARS),
- environmental disasters (floods, earthquakes, tsunami),
- economic crises (2008 financial crash)
- conflict and protracted emergency

39 systematic reviews and 13 empirical studies of mitigations to the harms we had identified with examples drawn from UK, US, New Zealand, South Africa, Malaysia, Japan and Italy

Evidence on addressing the harms identified :

- **Access** - Tailor programmes for secondary school pupils from historically disadvantaged groups to support successful enrolment in higher education
- **Participation** -Generous financial support with fees and living expenses; More extensive provision of wide range of mental health and wellbeing services, with easier access to services
- **Quality** -Adapting online or blended learning in ways appropriate to specific programmes and students; Teaching and researching about disasters and pandemics as part of mainstream higher education curriculum and research programmes; Improving higher education disaster management planning
- **Outcomes** - Supporting graduates into work through partnerships between HEIs, employers and policy makers
- **Connections** - Build partnerships in knowledge development, teaching and organisation building



References

Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut economics: seven ways to think like a 21st-century economist*. Chelsea Green Publishing.

McCowan, T. (2019). *Higher education for and beyond the sustainable development goals*. Springer Nature.

McCowan, T., & Unterhalter, E. (Eds.). (2021). *Education and international development: An introduction*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (2nd edition)

Unterhalter, E. (2009). What is equity in education? Reflections from the capability approach. *Studies in philosophy and education*, 28(5), 415-424.

Unterhalter, E. (2010). Considering equality, equity and higher education pedagogies in the context of globalization. In E. Unterhalter & V. Carpentier. *Global inequalities and higher education. Whose interests are we serving?* London: Palgrave 91-116.

Unterhalter, E., & Howell, C. (2021). Unaligned connections or enlarging engagements? Tertiary education in developing countries and the implementation of the SDGs. *Higher Education*, 81(1), 9-29.

Unterhalter E, Howell C, Vigurs C, France R, Candy B (2021) Mitigating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Higher Education: a rapid evidence review. London: EPPI Centre, UCL Social Research Institute, University College London