



COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE AND POLICY PATHWAYS FOR ECOHEATH: *A DVANCING EQUITY THROUGH CO-PRODUCTION, LIVED EXPERIENCE, AND SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL GOVERNANCE*

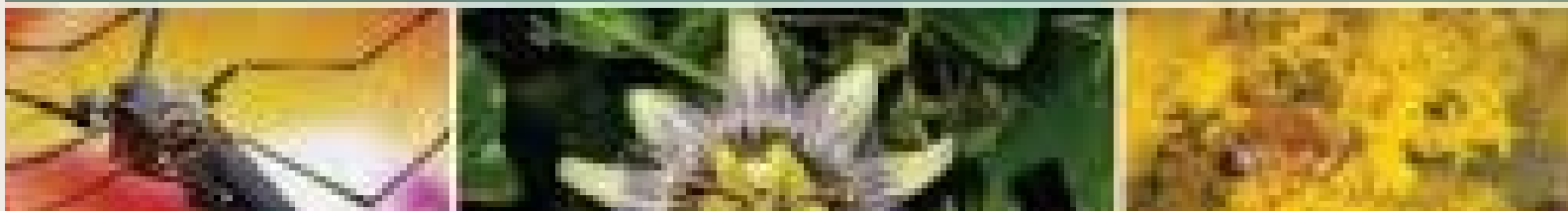
Dr. ANNMARIE CROSSE PhD
30th Health Promotion Annual
Conference
25th June, 2026

The Rockefeller Foundation–Lancet Commission on
planetary health

Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch:
report of The Rockefeller Foundation–Lancet Commission on
planetary health

Connecting Global Priorities: Biodiversity and Human Health

A State of Knowledge Review



Ecological Determinants of Health

Earth's life-supporting systems...[that] encompass
not just human needs, but the needs of all life

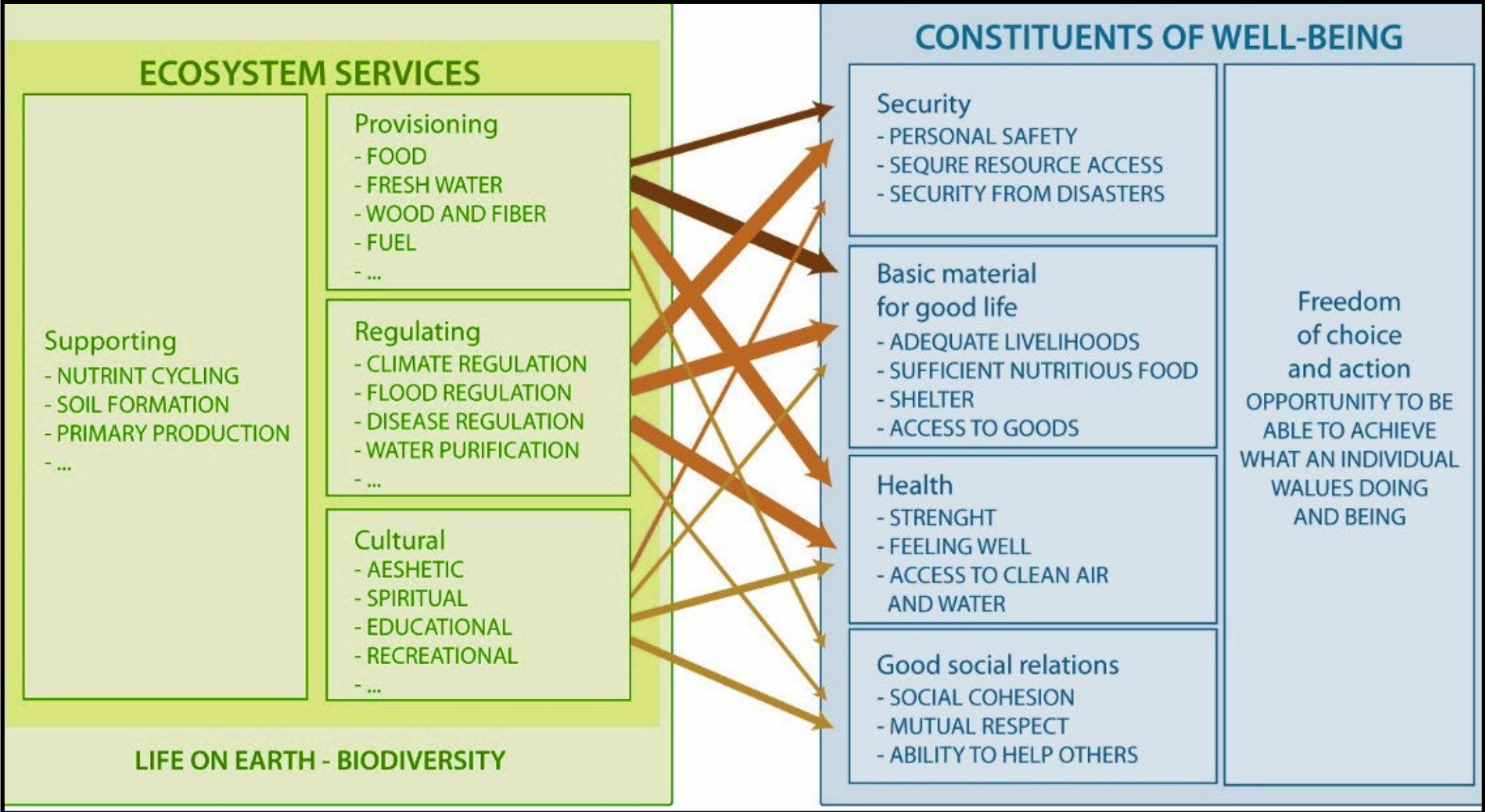
Ecological and Social Justice are inseparable

**“Planetary health is the health of human civilisation and
the state of the natural systems on which it depends.”**
(Lancet, 2015)

**“The health of ecosystems is deteriorating more rapidly
than ever. We are eroding the very foundation of our
economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of
life worldwide”**
(Watson, R, 2019)

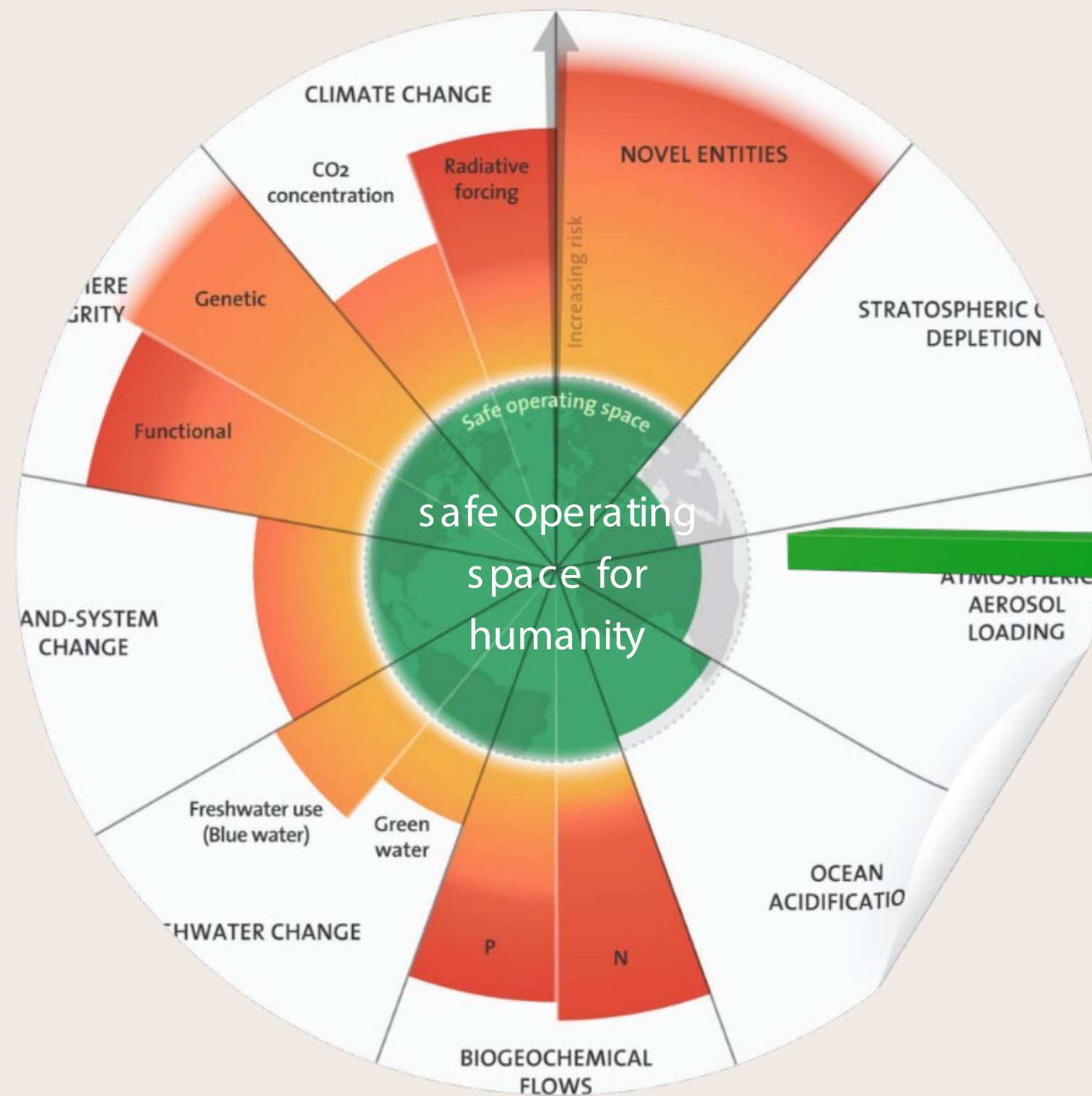
**“The benefits and burdens of development are inequitably
distributed, resulting in both ecological and social
injustice. ”**
(Hancock, T, 2021).

Ecological Determinants of Health



Planetary Boundaries & the Safe Operating Space

Interconnected Socio -Ecological Systems



(Steffen.W, 2015; Richardson.K, 2023)



(Raworth, K, 2017)



Healthy Planet

Healthy Places

Healthy people

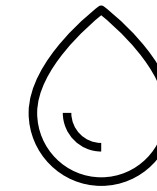


How can we live equitably in the
Safe Operating Space?





Objectives



To examine community awareness, knowledge and understanding of the interconnections between population health, ecosystem services and sustainability



To investigate community challenges and opportunities in relation to integrating the ecological determinants of health into community health planning

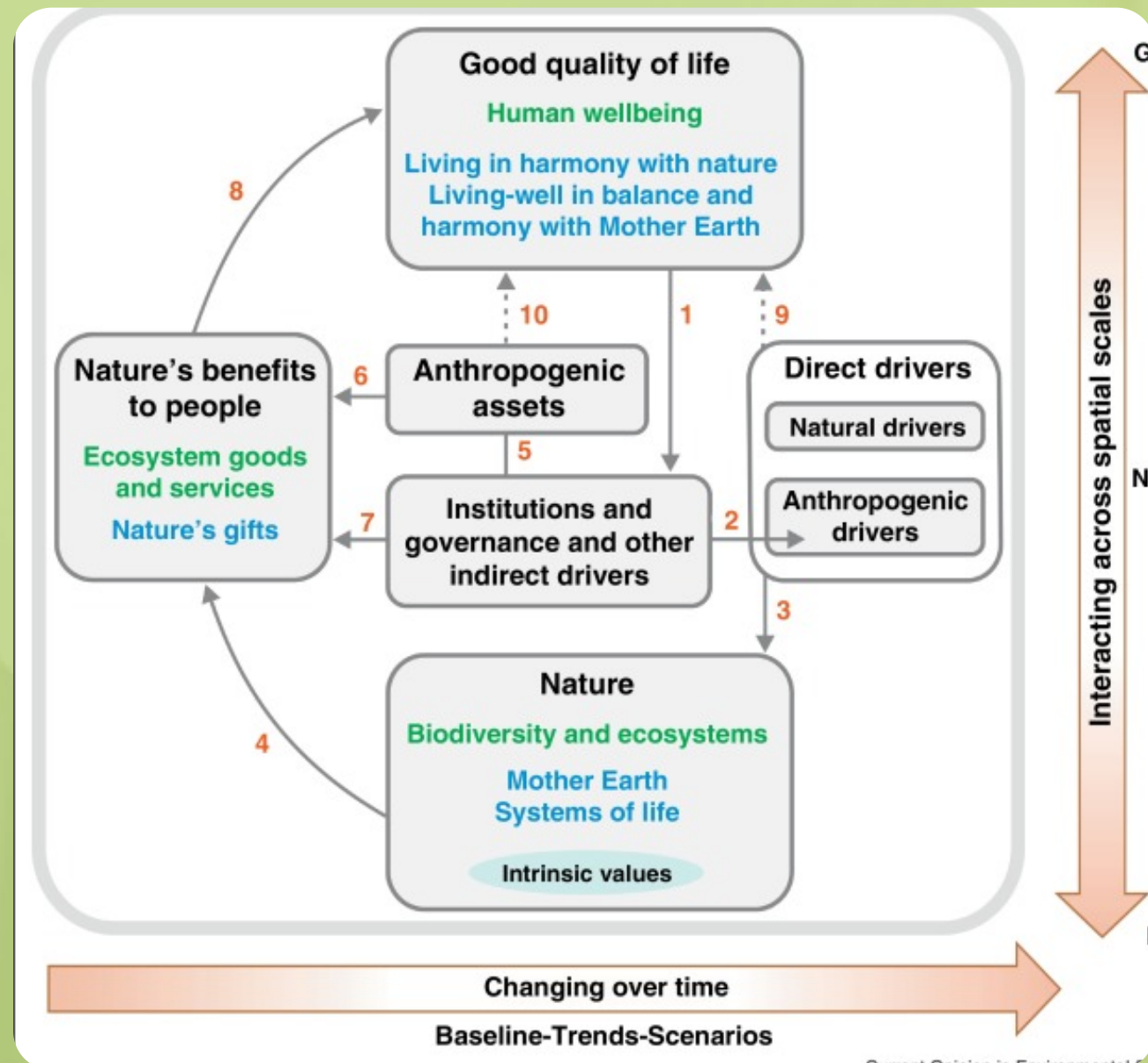
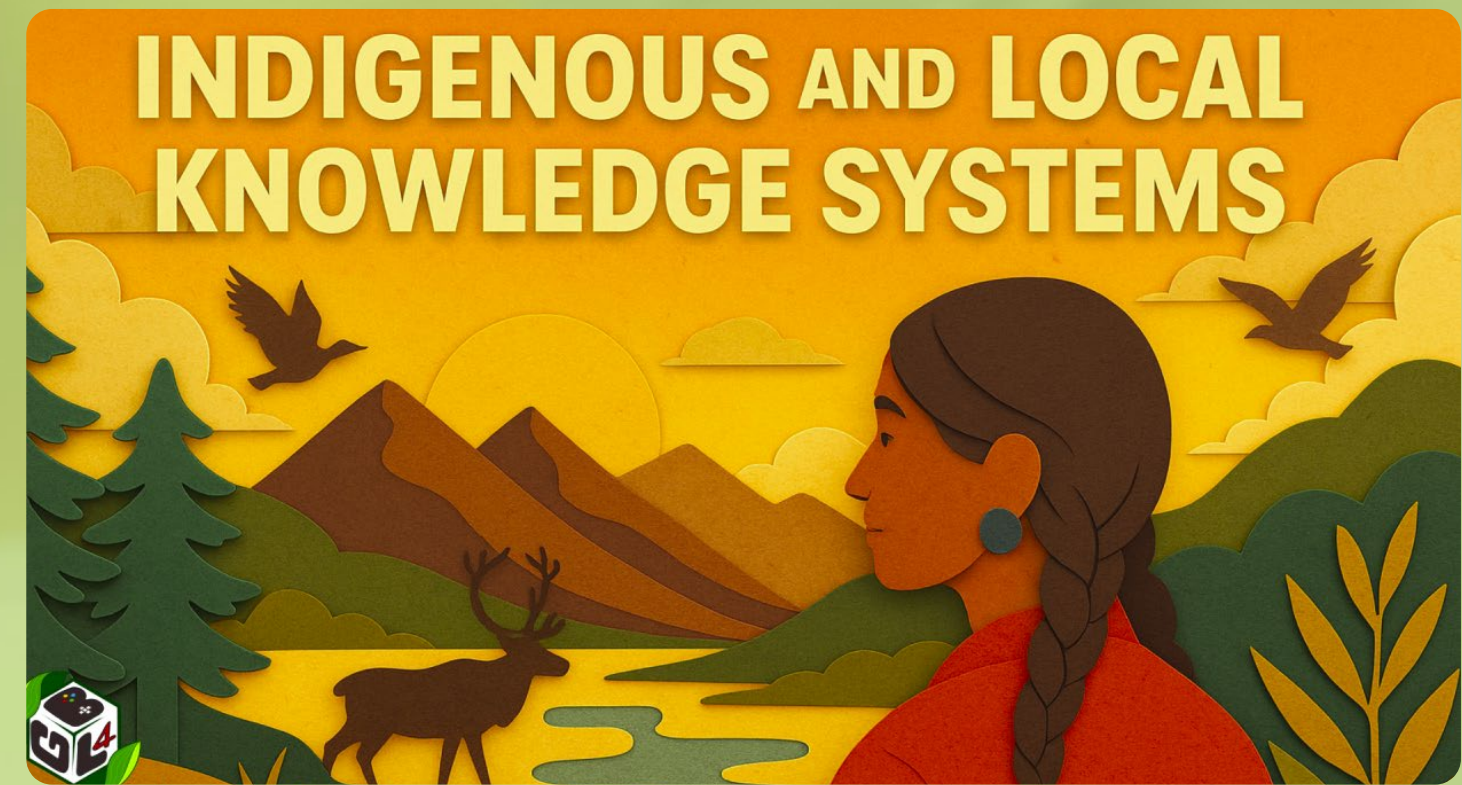


To identify the main themes and methods required to support the development of a community based EcoHealth toolkit



To establish key pathways to integrate EcoHealth into policy and planning at a local community level

Literature Review & Policy Landscape



- Key conceptual approaches & theoretical frameworks
- Models and methods for mapping socio -ecological health
- Community knowledge systems and mapping tools
- A review of the policy landscape: International , EU, National

Participatory research on community knowledge and policy pathways for EcoHealth



International Journal of
Environmental Research
and Public Health



Case Report

Bridging Knowledge Systems: A Community-Participatory Approach to EcoHealth

Ann Marie Crosse, Margaret M. Barry, Mary Jo Lavelle * and Jane Sixsmith

RESEARCH ARTICLE

RESEARCH 17



AL PERSPECTIVES FOR SCIENCE AND S
RSPEKTIVEN FÜR WISSENSCHAFT UND

Participatory research on community knowledge of health, ecosystem services, and sustainability

Understanding and valuing local ecosystems requires integrating community knowledge. This study explores socio-ecological determinants of health, ecosystem services, and sustainability in a rural Irish community (N=121) using a community-based participatory research approach. It highlights key findings, details the participatory methodology and discusses future applications.

Ann Marie Crosse , Mary Jo Lavelle , Frances Fahy , Margaret M. Barry 



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Research Article

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Policymakers' perspectives on community participation in EcoHealth policy

Ann Marie Crosse^{1,*}, Mary Jo Lavelle¹, Martin Power¹, Margaret M. Barry¹

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Research Process

1

Community Research CBPR
Place based
Participative tools
Community mapping
Lifestage 10-89yrs
Sectoral approach

2

Community Verification
Place based
Participative Tools
'Habitats for Health' map
n=148

3

Senior Policy Makers
Health, Environment, Climate
Change, Sustainability
n=20



T.1

Nature based direct health
and wellbeing benefits

Subthemes (n=10)

- Restorative Health
- Green and blue exercise
- Sensory connections
- Nostalgic connections
- Sense of safety and security
- Beauty of nature
- Fresh air
- Benefits of wild and foraged food
- Negative mental health benefits
- Negative physical health benefits

T.2

Ecosystem services and
indirect health and wellbeing

Subthemes (n=6)

- Wildlife & biodiversity
- Water management
- Carbon sequestration
- Pollination
- Regeneration
- Economic benefits

T.3

Actions to raise community
awareness and
understanding of nature's
benefits to health

Subthemes (n=3)

- Awareness of nature, biodiversity and ecosystem value
- Community action to increase awareness and understanding
- Inclusive language

T.4

Community action on
protection, restoration and
management of nature and
local habitats

Subthemes (n= 5)

- Human impacts/ degradation
- Rural development Pollution
- Community based projects for nature, health and sustainability
- Community based projects to protect habitats and biodiversity



I like the rhythm of the waves (C), the smell of the earth (F)
Walking in the woodlands is good for physical and mental health (Y).
I like to watch huge waves from a distance, makes me feel safe (Ch).
Sphagnum moss has antibacterial benefits (O).

Woodlands are rich with trees, birds, insects and lots of wildlife (boglands, grasslands, mudflats). Bogland helps to stop floods (F), grasslands are good for the bees, we need pollination, farming the land provides employment.

We don't appreciate what we have til we lose it, we need to protect and enhance our environment. We need to learn more - days like this , I'm surprised at the benefits, different ways, stories, sharing workshops, over consumption



People need three things - they need to be able to access nature, to connect with the message and to have easy to understand information (O) Language, the words we use can put people off (Y)



Co beneficial
eco community projects
integrating local habitats
into community health
audits

POLICY MAKERS N= 20



Theme 1

Community Engagement

- Place-based participative processes
- Value community knowledge systems
- Local constraints & barriers

Theme 2

Policy Coherence

- National Leadership
- Vertical and horizontal policy alignment

Theme 3

Multisector Working

- Bridging knowledge systems
- Power sharing
- Multisector operational support structure

Theme 4

Practical supports

- Guidance and support
- Language
- EcoHealth Toolkit

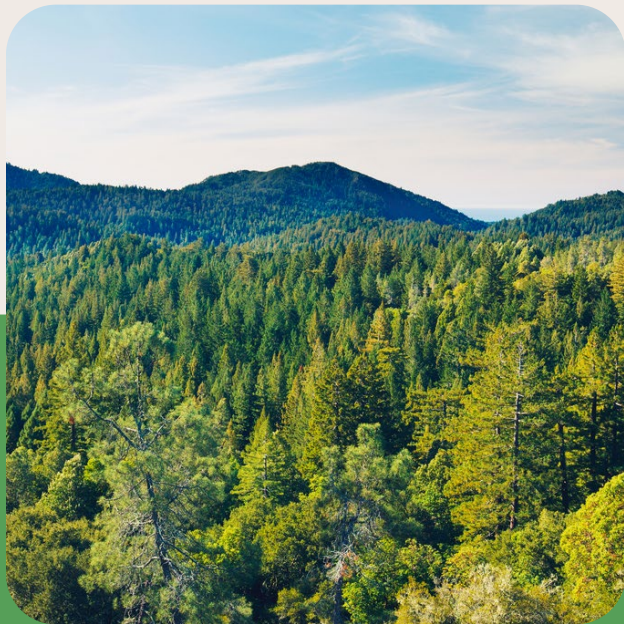
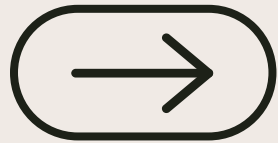
People know the place they live in, its something that interests them (HS)
Its easy enough to tick the engagement box,
but real colloboration means asking who holds power and who's williung
to share it? LAC

Socio - ecological interconnections need to be a fundamental
driver, there are implications and ripples across everything EPA
A national policy position would provide coherence and
coordination DOE

Competing agendas and the absence of shared cross -cutting priorities
are major barriers to developing and implementing polices (HS)
A local structure would support conversation, synergistic working,
multisector implementaiton and measurement (HSE. EPA)

Key sectors like health or climate as starting points, then expand to include other sectors.
A shared socio -ecological action and impact dashboard aligned with national and
European targets (ECC). Its about connecting the dots, talking to each other (ECC) we
clear guidance templates, supports (LA, HSE, EPA)

Integrated Findings - 5 Domains



**Valuing
Community
Knowledge & lived
experience in local
SE issues**



**Knowledge
Mobilisation &
Place based
participatory
processes**



**Community
knowledge
systems in
Socio- ecological
governance**



**Cross sectoral
collaboration &
policy coherence**



**Role of tools,
language and
support
infrastructure**

Insights

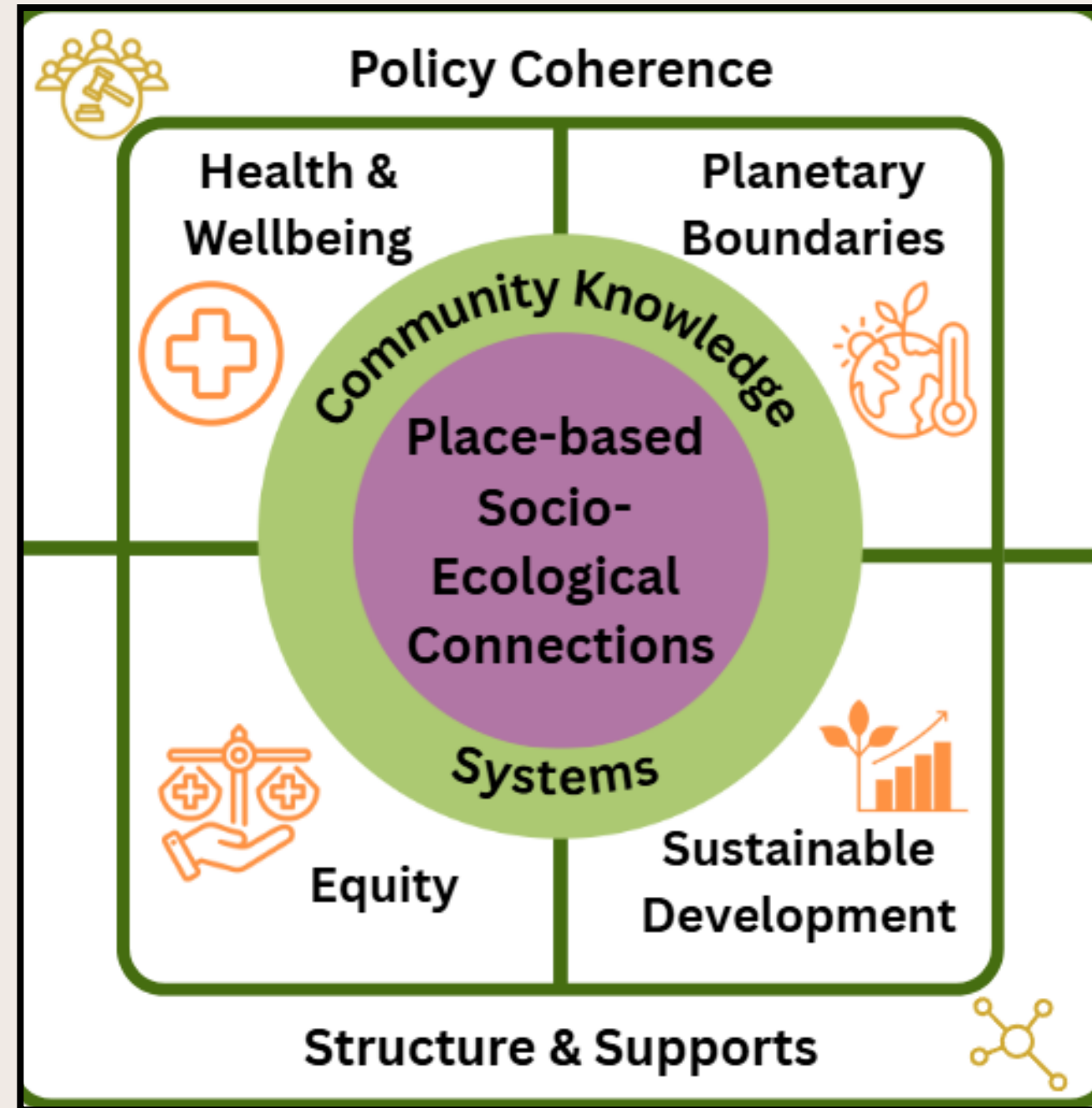


**Participatory
methods enable
integration of
knowledge across
sectors/cohorts**

Equity and sustainability are central to meaningful impact

Structures & Processes required for effective intersectoral working

PLANETARY HEALTH & WELLBEING SOCIETY



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*“Healthy ecosystems,
healthy communities
and health equity
are not separate agendas,
they are fundamentally
interconnected .*

THANK YOU

annmarie.crosse@hse.ie

We are part of the earth and it is part of us " Chief Seattle