



Koeksister Project: Making Your Town Resilient



What Is Resilience and What Does A Resilient Town Look Like?

Resilience explained: It's the ability of a system, such as a local economy or community, to withstand shock. It's the ability to flex, change, and to think on our feet in any given situation. Resilience is not a goal but a process, and it needs us to learn to adapt at the same time, preparing to transform. More than that, resilience should not be seen as a way to avoid the worst outcomes but rather an opportunity to change the way we live and to create economic models which are more equal while looking after the environment.



Resilient towns and communities are places where all residents can thrive. Where we can meet the needs of all residents in a town, while considering our environmental impact.

Why Do We Want A Town That Is Resilient?

Covid-19 and weather events like droughts taught us that our communities are not strong enough to cope with shocks to our economy, load shedding and events like floods and droughts. Even before Covid-19, we had inequality, joblessness and poverty. Our existing social, political and economic systems aren't able to fix these problems.

How Can We Make Our Town More Resilient?

We apply the Koeksister. The Koeksister is made from three strands which are plaited together.

We need to plait three concepts together to form a Koeksister or a South African model to build a sustainable economy for our towns.

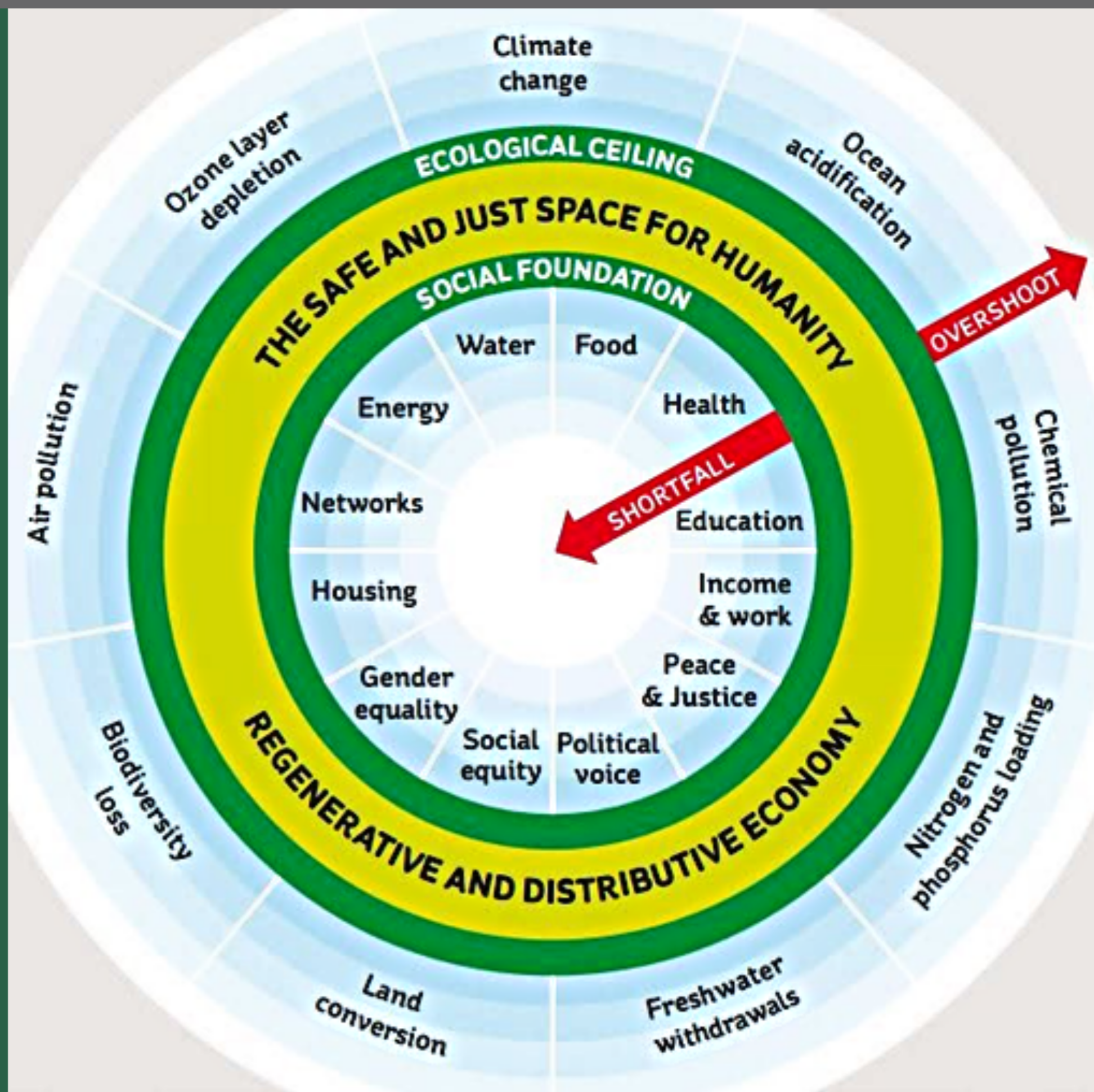
The three concepts are;

1. Doughnut Economics
2. Transition Towns
3. Commoning



1. Doughnut Economics

Doughnut Economics is a framework or an alternative economic way to identify humanity's 21st century challenges, combining the concept of planetary boundaries or problems in the environment with our social challenges. The doughnut gives us the 'Big Picture' so that we can understand our problems or challenges and find solutions to these challenges, supporting a balanced world in which people and the planet can thrive.



The social foundation and ecological foundation shows a safe and just space for humanity.

2. Transition Towns

The Transition Towns movement started in the United Kingdom. Transition Towns developed from the permaculture and localisation movement, while drawing inspiration from feminism and indigenous cultures.

The Transition Town movement was created to respond to climate change. Its strength lies in changing humanity's challenges into a positive way to do something new and special and it is a movement of communities rethinking and rebuilding our world. They ask: "What plan for action makes the most sense in the context of the challenges we have, using as few resources as possible?"



The Transition Towns movement approach focuses on:

- Localisation
- Resilience
- Low-carbon projects
- Community resources
- Natural limits (Not purely for personal profit)



A key part of the Transition Towns movement has been the REconomy Project. REconomy develops tools and ways to help communities develop ideas for how to relocalise (building a society based on local production of goods) key areas of local economies. It uses an Economic Evaluation tool, presenting how much income and how many jobs a localised economy might produce.

By applying the REconomy Economic Evaluation Tool, we will try to answer the following question:

- **What kind of incomes and businesses are needed in a carbon-focused, economically harsh and unequal society? How can we create conditions to relocalise economies in small towns?**
- **What are the possible positive and negative effects of relocalising the economy of a town?**
- **Can we increase the movement of funds in the local economy of South African towns and how will we do this?**
- **What is the job creation possibility of relocalising the economy in towns in South Africa?**

Transition Towns: Which Direction Can We Take for Towns in South Africa?

The Koeksister Project will look at four key areas:

- Food
- Energy
- Modifying homes to make them better adapted to extreme weather conditions
- An economy caring for its people



Then we will use public information to draw up a picture of what each sector could be worth, if we develop the demand for products and services by people and local businesses and use supply chains closer to home. For each area, we can identify job-creation potential, the financial impact for local and regional development, things that prevent relocating, and where money leaves or exits the local economy.

3.What is Commoning?

Commoning is described as a governance system or how communities can look after their resources as well as the community itself. Commoning identifies social standards and customs of how things are done to care for resources and to ease and resolve conflict. It encourages residents to work together using helpful behaviours and places sanctions those who have unhelpful behaviour or don't follow the rules that the community agrees on.



The Importance Of Collaboration and Collaborative Relationships

The one thing that is most likely to influence how our communities get through complex crises is the quality of relationships among members. A great deal depends on whether we show pro-social attitudes and responses, while discouraging blame and panic. Everyone must understand that we're all in this together. It is only by pulling together that we can hope to salvage and protect what is most valuable about our world, and improve our lives over the long term. A really good example of collaborative relationships is how bees work together to keep the hive going.

How Can You Get Involved?

Join a series of workshops to share information, make decisions and contribute to developing a model to make your town resilient

Acknowledgements

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