CREATING EQUITEA

a monthly forum to discuss topics related to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) in Astronomy, Physics, and STEM.

https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/physics/research/astro/seminars/equitea

0. WHY EQUITEA?

STEM has a problem
ED&I is often an afterthought (if thought about at all) and is not embedded into our practise

How do we change this?
Specifically, how do we change this *as early-career researchers?*

➡ **My solution: create an Equitea!**
Inspiration: the University of Michigan Astronomy Dept. "Equi-Tea"

"Science, despite its claims of objectivity, does not happen in a vacuum – science is part and product of a society that is shaped by and for a specific subset of identities."
- Lila Leatherman

POSTER GOAL
inspire similar initiatives in other research groups!

1. PURPOSE OF EQUITEA

i. INITIATE DISCUSSION

talking about something -> more awareness -> more understanding -> empathy and allyship ➡ **meaningful change** (… hopefully!)

once a month, hour-long seminar: half presentation on a topic, half discussion

encourage everyone in our research group to attend and contribute
★ students and staff
★ regardless of minority status (education is important, allies are important)
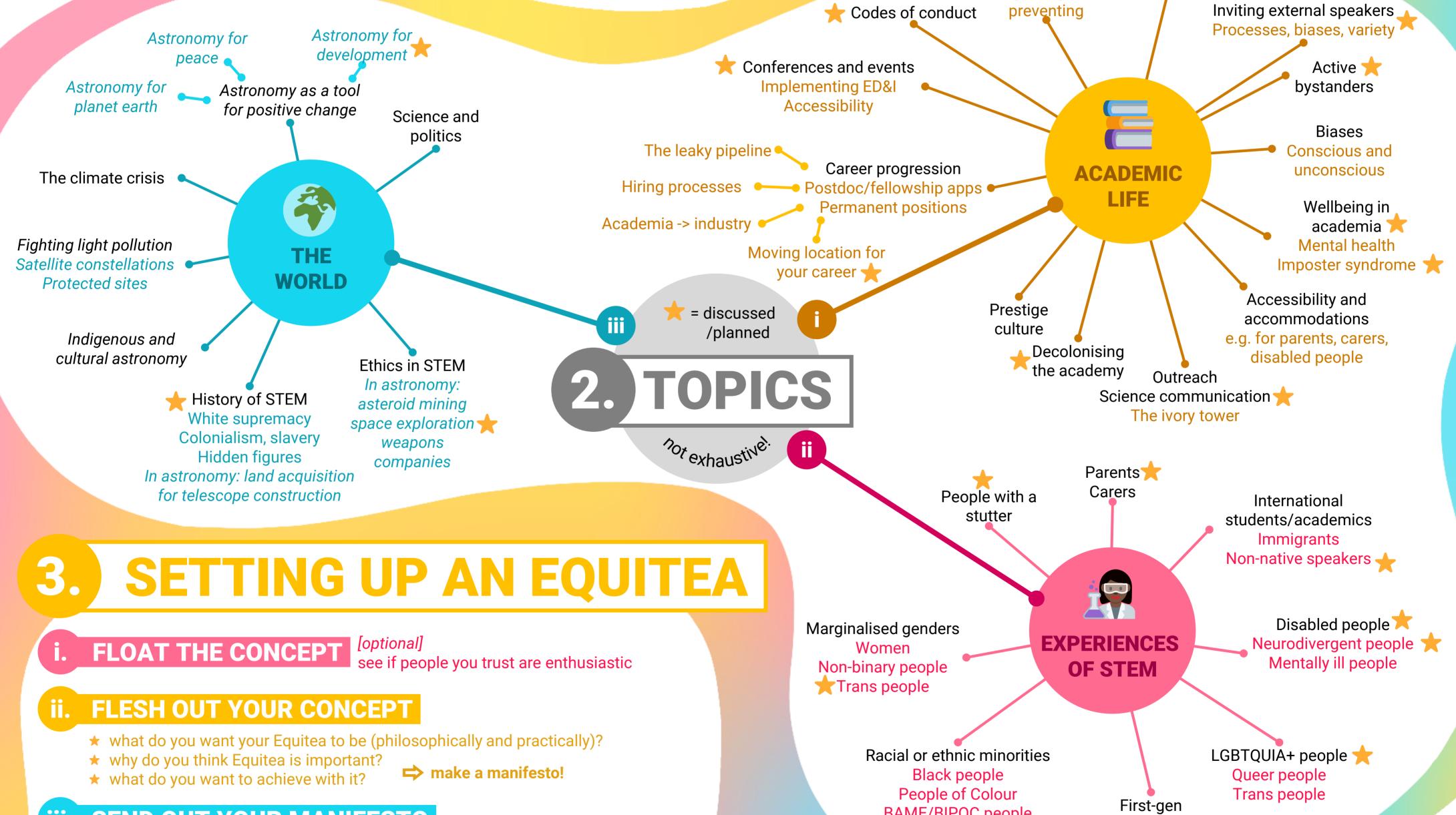
ii. GATHER RESOURCES

we want to make it easy for people to think about ED&I in academia
★ for teaching/tutoring students, planning events, considering and implementing departmental policies/practices…
★ removing that hurdle of people having to hunt for these resources (a deterrent)

we host and share resources via…
★ a resources page on our website
★ a slack channel in our group slack for people to send resources they find (and discuss sessions and topics)
★ recording and minuting our sessions

2. TOPICS
not exhaustive!

★ = discussed /planned

THE WORLD

Astronomy for peace
Astronomy for development
Astronomy for planet earth
Astronomy as a tool for positive change
Science and politics
The climate crisis
Fighting light pollution
Satellite constellations
Protected sites
Indigenous and cultural astronomy
★ History of STEM
White supremacy
Colonialism, slavery
Hidden figures
In astronomy: land acquisition for telescope construction
Ethics in STEM
In astronomy: asteroid mining space exploration weapons companies

i. ACADEMIC LIFE

Sexual misconduct
Reporting and preventing
Collaborations
★ Codes of conduct
Inviting external speakers
Processes, biases, variety
★ Conferences and events
Implementing ED&I Accessibility
Active bystanders
The leaky pipeline
Hiring processes
Career progression
Postdoc/fellowship apps
Permanent positions
Academia -> industry
Moving location for your career
Biases
Conscious and unconscious
Wellbeing in academia
Mental health
Imposter syndrome
Accessibility and accommodations
e.g. for parents, carers, disabled people
Prestige culture
Decolonising the academy
Outreach
Science communication
The ivory tower

ii. EXPERIENCES OF STEM

People with a stutter
Parents
Carers
International students/academics
Immigrants
Non-native speakers
Marginalised genders
Women
Non-binary people
★ Trans people
Disabled people
Neurodivergent people
Mentally ill people
Racial or ethnic minorities
Black people
People of Colour
BAME/BIPOC people
First-gen students /academics
LGBTQUIA+ people
Queer people
Trans people

3. SETTING UP AN EQUITEA

i. FLOAT THE CONCEPT
[optional]
see if people you trust are enthusiastic

ii. FLESH OUT YOUR CONCEPT
★ what do you want your Equitea to be (philosophically and practically)?
★ why do you think Equitea is important?
★ what do you want to achieve with it?
➡ **make a manifesto!**

iii. SEND OUT YOUR MANIFESTO
★ get people on board – start small, or cc all
★ perhaps include an expression of interest form

iv. FORM A COMMITTEE
but remember to consider minority stress
➡ **recruit allies!**

v. ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK
★ committee chat (we used slack)
★ setting up a webpage (we used a departmental page)
★ writing a code of conduct (borrow from examples)
★ deciding on format of sessions – length, division of time
★ logistics of meetings:
  ★ frequency of meetings (monthly), when (poll your dept), online vs in-person (we do hybrid), Q&A (we use sli.do), chairing (voluntary), note-taking and recording (google docs and Teams)
★ funding? (we have IATL funding)
★ plan your first few sessions!

vi. RUN YOUR FIRST MEETING
remember to notify people in advance!
it doesn't have to be perfect!

vii. REFLECT
★ take a breather
★ what went well, what didn't?
★ collect feedback from participants

vii YOUR EQUITEA'S FUTURE
★ think towards the future and the sustainability of your Equitea
★ invite external speakers!
★ think again about funding
★ keep your webpage updated
★ think about changing up your format
★ think about hosting notes and recordings from sessions - publish think pieces?
★ keep learning, keep having fun!
★ remember to take breaks. delegate. cancel a session if you need to

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