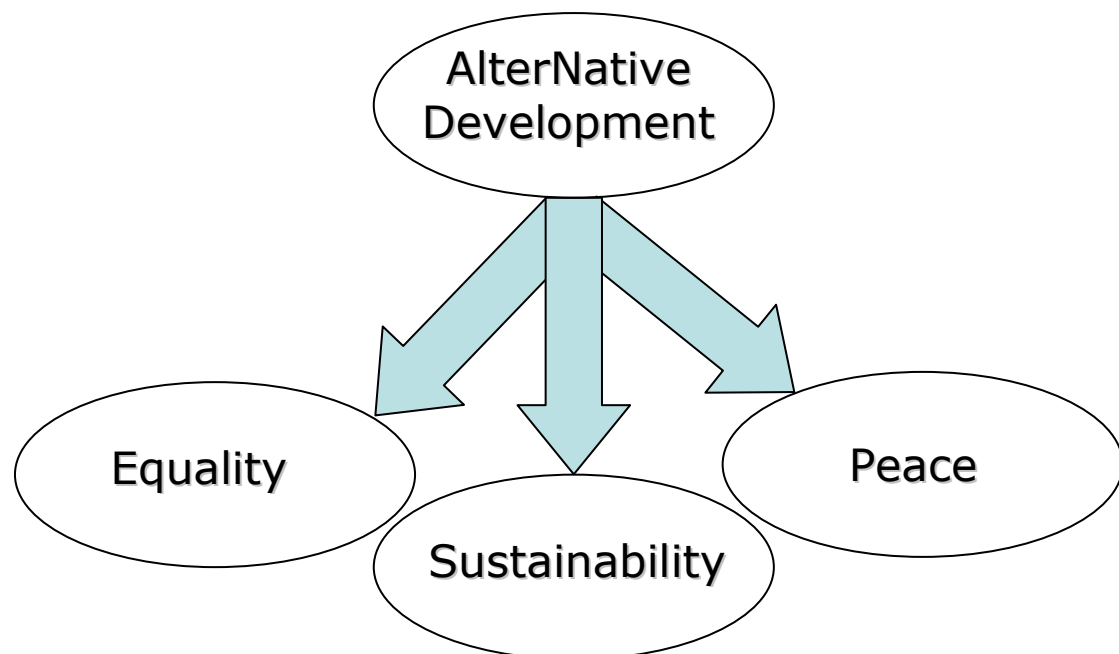


ESP Manifesto for AlterNative Development

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the broad consensus among leaders of the 'free' world was that poverty and inequality had to be eliminated in order to achieve and sustain world peace. Development in the form of modernisation was envisioned as the all encompassing remedy for the problems of poverty and inequality. After more than half a century of development, these problems persist and in some cases, the situation has worsened. In the UN's Millennium Development Goals, announced in 2000, the eradication of poverty was right on top of the eight goals listed as requiring global attention and action. Many critics of development have argued that development, instead of eliminating poverty and inequality, has in reality and paradoxically led to growing impoverishment and social fragmentation, accentuating human misery and hardship and ruining the lives of many. Some critical observers have even contended that development, especially the promotion of capitalism and commoditisation, has brought about extensive ecological degradation and has spurred ethnic conflict and collective violence in numerous countries. Some critics, postdevelopmentalists, have recommended discarding the whole concept and practice of development. I think that we must retain the concept of development because its moral intent is arguably virtuous, while it is the hidden agendas of western-inspired and sponsored development that make it sinister. We have to challenge and work cooperatively towards replacing the sort of development that leaves people worse off economically, culturally and socially, that violates nature, and that incites conflict and collective violence. I propose we strive for an AlterNative Development focused on the principles and ideals of Equality, Sustainability and Peace (ESP).



AlterNative development will be guided by an extra-sensory perception that challenges and subverts regimes and practices that bring about greater inequality, ecological degradation, and violent conflict. Such a perception emanates from the mind through critical thought and imagination but also from the heart through feelings and sensitivity. AlterNative development is envisaged as an alternative to destructive,

oppressive, and exploitative western-inspired development and one that is in touch with, and touched by, the aspirations and expressions of the Native—indigenous communities, marginalised peoples, and the disadvantaged.

Equality, sustainability and peace are not three separate ideals but they are intertwined and interconnected. Striving for equality will help eradicate poverty as it has been observed that people are poor because they have unequal access to food and resources to which they are entitled. People treated unequally and/or socially excluded are often resentful and this has been a cause of conflict and collective violence, usually by the states and dominant groups in their attempts to crush protests and demonstrations. It is also difficult, if not impossible, to live sustainably socially and ecologically under conditions of poverty and inequality. Hence, striving for equality will nurture ecological and social sustainability and foster peace. I believe that peace, which is commonly defined as the absence of violence, is the norm in human life and collective violence the aberration. To maintain and restore peaceful co-existence and communal cohesion in the world today, we need to learn from people who have developed cultures that avert and avoid conflict. In such cultures, people are socially inclusive, adhere to a nonviolent ethos, maintain civil interactions with other people, treat fellow humans with dignity and respect, promote the celebration of cultural diversity, and uphold the principles of social justice and equality. We can learn from peoples and cultures that value and practice equality, peace and sustainability and then advocate and promote these lessons to a wider audience. We must live sustainably to fulfil our needs and keep greed and avarice a bay. Greed breeds inequality. AlterNative Development centred on Equality, Sustainability, and Peace (ESP) is my vision for a better future for humanity and my mission is to advocate and promote ESP.