



UNRISD

UNITED NATIONS
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT

**Research
for Social
Change**

RESEARCH PROGRAMME



Alternative Economies for Transformation

Building better economic alternatives for a fair and sustainable future

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a hopeful consensus on the vision for a sustainable future. However, this vision cannot be achieved without well-founded alternatives to the prevailing ideas, institutions, and actions that support dominant economic ideologies and development models that prioritize profit maximization over purpose, people and the planet. In this context, an increasing number of policy makers and development stakeholders around the world have expressed interest in new and innovative thinking, institutions, policies and practices that promote socially and environmentally sustainable production, exchange and consumption of goods and services, from the global and macro to the local and micro.

The Alternative Economies for Transformation programme answers the urgent call for rigorous research, evidence, analysis, models and tools that advance the search for more sustainable, egalitarian and ecologically sound futures. Critically, the programme considers the underlying norms and values, policy implications, and possibilities for progressive politics and collective action to push forward an economic agenda to reduce inequalities, build toward a new eco-social contract and promote sustainable development on multiple fronts.

WHAT WE DO



Shape international development discourse and practices that challenge the status quo on economic systems.



Stimulate and drive meaningful transformation of economic systems.



Build consensus around alternative socioeconomic relations and activities as a catalyst for creating a sustainable future.



Establish alternative political, economic and social models and approaches that are equitable and environmentally conscious.

OUR PRIORITY CONCERNS

- Economic and social development
- Environment and peace
- Household debt
- Measurement and indicators
- Social and solidarity economy
- Alternative economics policies

GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS



Global, borders and borderlands, fragile and conflict-affected countries, middle-income countries or emerging economies, low-income countries

OUR PARTNERS*



THE GOVERNMENT
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* UNRISD is funded through voluntary contributions, independent of the United Nations general budget. Through this, we maintain our autonomy to undertake critical research and provide a neutral ground for policy discussion. Recent funding partners include ministries, foundations, NGOs, UN agencies and the private sector. For a full list of donors and partners, visit www.unrisd.org/funding.

OUR CURRENT PROJECTS

The AE4T programme coordinates and undertakes research on a number of issues areas, provides expert advisory support and fosters new research collaborations. It also plays a leading role in advocating for better economic alternatives for an egalitarian and sustainable future.

www.unrisd.org/ae4t

Sustainable Development Performance Indicators

The Sustainable Development Performance Indicators (SDPI) project aims to enhance corporate sustainability measurement and reporting by introducing trend analysis, contextualization and systemic transformation. It addresses gaps in current approaches, such as Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) frameworks, and includes both large firms and SSE entities. The project evaluates the adequacy of existing methods, expands sustainability measurement and reporting, and tests SDPI to meet modern challenges. This initiative aligns with the 2030 Agenda's vision for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development, recognizing the potential of SSE enterprises in this area.

[Discover more](#)



Social and Solidarity Economy

The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) involves enterprises and organizations focused on economic, social and environmental activities for collective benefit, emphasizing care for people and the planet, equality, fairness and transparency. A global movement has promoted SSE as an alternative socioeconomic approach for over two decades. Despite increased recognition, SSE remains relatively new to many policy makers. This project, in collaboration with the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on SSE (UNTFSSSE), aims to provide comprehensive knowledge and guidance on SSE to policymakers and practitioners, enriching discussions, raising awareness of its contributions to sustainable development, and making information widely accessible.

[Discover more](#)



Life Economies for Sustainable Development

The Life Economies for Sustainable Development Project, led by the Global Alliance for Life Economies Research and Innovation (GALERI), with significant contributions from UNRISD in developing concepts and synthesizing findings into transformative policy frameworks, aims to identify the root causes of inequality. The project also explores innovative economic systems that integrate sustainable growth, societal well-being, and environmental health. The project includes a study on how Life Economies affect inequality. It also features a baseline study that looks at developmental impacts using case studies. Using multi-dimensional analyses and participatory methodologies, the project offers actionable policy recommendations to foster inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.

[Discover more](#)



International Forum "We, the Youth"

The International Forum "We, the Youth" is an annual platform for youth-led action and collaboration launching in 2025 under the theme "Our Sustainable Future: Peace and Cooperation". Designed to address pressing global challenges, it emphasizes peace, equality and sustainability through inclusive dialogue and creative solutions. The Forum focuses on several key activities. It organizes the Our Sustainable Future conference and encourages collaboration between different sectors. The Forum also uses music for solidarity through concerts and holds Walk the Talk debates. The expected results include creating innovative solutions, influencing policy changes, and forming long-term partnerships. UNRISD is important to the Forum because it helps develop themes and provide strategic guidance. This ensures that the Forum achieves lasting and meaningful outcomes that align with global goals.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LIBRARY



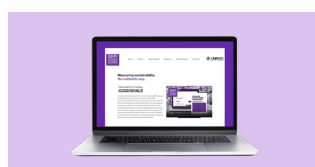
BOOK

Encyclopedia of the Social and Solidarity Economy



MANUAL

Authentic Sustainability Assessment: A User Manual for the Sustainable Development Performance Indicators



PLATFORM

Sustainable Development Performance Indicators Online Platform



TRAINING COURSE

INSTITUTIONAL

Advanced Programme on Human Rights and Sustainable Development (APOHS)



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