

Alternative economies prioritize community and environmental well-being, often attempting to reduce global and national dependencies. These economies have the potential to reduce pollution and resource depletion, increase the benefits of community building, and improve the quality of life. In contrast, the mainstream capitalist economy is profit-motivated and leads to exploitation and crises. These economies in the Global South, such as Buen Vivir, Ubuntu, and Gandhian Economy of Permanence, offer an opportunity to move beyond the Western culture of development.

Beun Vivir

“With Buen Vivir, the subject of wellbeing is not [about the] individual, but the individual in the social context of their community and in a unique environmental situation.”

Capitalism promotes individual rights to own, sell, keep, and have. Sumak Kawsay (Buen Vivir) from South America values community, ecology, and culture over individual rights. This worldview seeks a balance between quality of life, community, and Nature. Well-being is only possible within a community and interpretations vary according to culture, history, and ecology.

Buen Vivir rejects manipulative rationality and the idea of a linear history. **It rejects productivist progress and a singular understanding of development. Instead, it advocates for a complex vision of progress that needs to be imagined and built.**

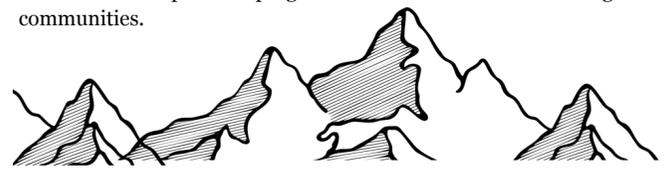
Key Features

Buen Vivir acknowledges that there are several ways to give value, such as esthetic, cultural, historical, environmental, spiritual and so on. The omnipresence of capital categories (such as human capital or natural capital) are resized to be just one way to give value and included within broader frameworks.

- (i) Rights of nature
- (ii) Community well-being
- (iii) Decolonization
- (iv) Plurinational state
- (v) Economic pluralism
- (vi) Democratization

Limitations

Buen Vivir requires significant changes to capitalistic modes of production. A decrease in extractive industries and an increase in sustainable activities such as manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and knowledge production must be planned. Popular support is essential for success. Criticisms of ecologist/ post-developmental approaches include lack of political pragmatism and idealisation of indigenous communities.



Economy of Permanence

“Non-violence is a fundamental corner-stone of the Economy of Permanence....***The solution lies in self control and self discipline and aligning our wills with the needs of society as a whole***”

The colonial mode of production entailed a world-wide division of labour with control exerted by the metropolises so that they derived maximum benefit. The method of production is centralised and this deprives other peoples of freedom and converts them into slaves to produce the raw materials needed by the mother country and to consume the goods it manufactures. The values that accompany this large-scale production of standardised goods are material ones making the multiplicity of wants rather than the simplicity of needs, a sign of culture and civilization.

Each nation and region producing its own primary needs-food, clothing and shelter to the extent possible. Foreign trade should be carried out only in luxury goods and avoided in the case of essential items. There should be no over exploitation of non-renewable mineral reserves for the sake of luxury consumption. Such an economic structure will not necessitate violence among nations. Pacifists in the West need to examine their own lives and standard of living and see whether they are willing to simplify their lifestyles because there is no other way for peace between peoples and nations. Among the youth moral considerations need to be raised and money values lowered if there is to be a peaceful world.

Key Features

Relationship with Nature

The relationship between people and Nature is vital for an economy of permanence. All elements of Nature, animate and inanimate, cooperate to maintain continuity. Humans, as part of Nature, must obey its ways to survive and preserve themselves.

Work and Leisure

Work must contain leisure and rest for it to be proper and wholesome, and the worker’s personality must be stamped upon the product.

Administration and Industry

Small-scale industry, such as cottage and home industry, could provide employment in India, whereas large-scale industry would be limited to key industries, public utilities, and national monopolies under state control. Production would follow demand and consumption, not advertising, and distribution would be part of production and consumption, not requiring further coercion. Village panchayats with universal adult suffrage could ensure village democracy.

Limitations

Indian Economist Tarlock Singh argues that transforming the rural economy into a cooperative system is essential for India to put its manpower resources to productive use, raise the productivity of land and labour, and eradicate extreme forms of poverty. This transformation must come from the bottom up and cannot be imposed from above.

1. Lack of Financial Resources
2. If the economies are supposed to be localized to maintain value in the community and respond to local issues, then what are the methods of generating a larger challenge to globalized capitalism?
3. Education and Health
4. Traditional & Cultural Fabric of Society (Transitions)

Salient Features

Community and alternative economies reflect contradictory qualities to the mainstream, including : place-attached, small-scale, local ownership and ethical.

1. Shared Commitment : Collective and co-operative thinking and working founded on the socio-cultural, economic, and ecological commons, respecting both common custodianship as well as individual freedoms and choices and innovations within such collectivities.
2. Relationship with Nature
3. From grass-roots and then upwards
4. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (Sanskrit for *the world is my family*) : Equity, justice, inclusion and access
5. Socially Embedded : Alternative economies focus on acknowledging, recognizing, and even propagating the socially embedded character of economies.
6. Decentralised and Dispersed : Coordinating a division of labour among geographically dispersed groups.



Ubuntu

“A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from **knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole** and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed.”

Ubuntu is a South African ethical ideology that emphasizes the importance of relationships between people and their environment. It is derived from the Zulu and Xhosa languages and is seen as a traditional African concept. Ubuntu is connected to the idea of an African Renaissance and can be roughly translated as “the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity”.

Key Features

Ubuntu sees community rather than self-determination as the essential aspect of personhood.

Ubuntu in business promotes wealth sharing and access to basic services for all. African markets are based on endurance, loyalty, sharing, hard work, concern for others, resilience and generosity. Community cohesion is maintained through *nyumba* (households) and *riika* (age groups). Inequalities and disparities are controlled to preserve unity and good relations. Solidarity and collaboration are supported through *ngwatio* (labour pools) and *matega* (resource pools).

1. Communal Responsibility
2. Interdependence
3. Resilience
4. Economic justice
5. Inclusiveness

Limitations

Ubuntu is a traditional African morality that has been rediscovered and reinterpreted by elites. It is often celebrated for its idealism, but there are some undesirable aspects of traditional African morality that should be addressed. Furthermore, the emphasis on its traditional origins raises questions about which practices and values should be included in Ubuntu and how they should be judged. Globalisation has also raised questions about how Ubuntu can be used as a tool for transformation. Finally, the distinctiveness of Ubuntu should be highlighted in order to contrast it with the profit-based modus operandi of the business sector.



Flourishing : Exploring alternative socio-economic systems in the Global South