

# Exploring Hope

# DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON CREATING A FAIRER SOCIETY

A fair society is one that is just, inclusive and embracing of all without any barriers to participation based on sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, ethnicity, age, class, ability or any other social difference. One where there is access to healthcare and education, technology, justice, strong institutions, peace and security, social protection, decent work and housing. But how can research truly contribute to creating global equity and diversity without showcasing diverse voices that are underrepresented in academia or paying specific attention to the Global South?

Including books addressing key challenges and issues within the social sciences which are essential to creating a fairer society for all with specific reference to the Global South, *Diverse Perspectives on Creating a Fairer Society* amplifies underrepresented voices showcasing Black, Asian and minority ethnic voices, authorship from the Global South and academics who work to amplify diverse voices.

With the primary aim of showcasing authorship and voices from beyond the Global North, the series welcomes submissions from established and junior authors on cutting-edge and high-level research on key topics that feature in global news and public debate, specifically from and about the Global South in national and international contexts. Harnessing research across a range of diversities of people and places to generate previously unheard insights, the series offers a truly global perspective on the current societal debates of the 21st century bringing contemporary debate in the social sciences from diverse voices to light.

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Diverse Perspectives on Creating a Fairer Society

# Exploring Hope: Case Studies of Innovation, Change and Development in the Global South

EDITED BY

**MARCELO SILI (EDITOR-IN-CHIEF)**

*National Scientific and Technical Research Council  
(CONICET) - Universidad Nacional del Sur, Argentina*

**ANDRÉS KOZEL**

*National Scientific and Technical Research Council  
(CONICET) – Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Argentina*

**SAMIRA MIZBAR**

*National Assessment Body of the Higher Council of Education,  
Training and Scientific Research, Morocco*

**AVIRAM SHARMA**

*University of Vigo, Spain*

AND

**ANA CASADO**

*National Scientific and Technical Research Council  
(CONICET) – Universidad Provincial del Sudoeste, Argentina*



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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# List of Editors

Marcelo Sili [Editor]	<i>National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) - Universidad Nacional del Sur, Argentina</i>
Andrés Kozel [Co-editor]	<i>National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) - Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Argentina</i>
Samira Mizbar [Co-editor]	<i>National Assessment Body of the Higher Council of Education, Training and Scientific Research, Morocco</i>
Aviram Sharma [Co-editor]	<i>University of Vigo, Spain</i>
Ana Casado [Co-editor]	<i>National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) - Universidad Provincial del Sudoeste, Argentina</i>
Gustavo Valente [Producer of maps and photographs]	<i>Centro ADETER, Departamento de Geografía y Turismo, Universidad Nacional del Sur, Argentina</i>
Antonella Mauri [Producer of maps and photographs]	<i>Centro ADETER, Departamento de Geografía y Turismo, Universidad Nacional del Sur, Argentina</i>

*This page intentionally left blank*

# List of Contributors

Fazlullah Akhtar	<i>Center for Development Research (ZEF), Bonn, Germany</i>
Murad Ali	<i>University of Malakand, Pakistan</i>
María José Aparicio Meza	<i>Universidad Nacional de Asunción, Paraguay</i>
Deyani Alejandra Ávila Martínez	<i>National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Mexico</i>
Usman Khalid Awan	<i>Center for Development Research (ZEF), Bonn, Germany</i>
Abdul Haseeb Azizi	<i>Center for Development Research (ZEF), Bonn, Germany</i>
Mairon G. Bastos Lima	<i>Stockholm Environment Institute, Sweden</i>
Christian Borgemeister	<i>Center for Development Research (ZEF), Bonn, Germany</i>
Fernando Calderón Gutiérrez	<i>Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Argentina</i>
Anwasha Chakraborty	<i>University of Bologna, Italy</i>
Rosa Cuesta	<i>Instituto Geográfico Militar, Ecuador</i>
Ahmad Dermawan	<i>School of Economics and Business, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås, Norway</i>
Idrissa Yaya Diandy	<i>Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, Senegal</i>
Sangay Dorji	<i>Paro College of Education, Royal University of Bhutan, Bhutan</i>
Driss El Yazami	<i>Conseil National des Droits de l'Homme, Morocco</i>

*xvi List of Contributors*

María Luisa Eschenhagen	<i>Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Colombia</i>
Federico Escribal	<i>Universidad Nacional de las Artes, Argentina</i>
José Andrés Fuentes	<i>Consejo Directivo del Grupo Cooperativo Yomol A'tel, México</i>
Beatriz Garcés Beltrán	<i>Engineer and philosopher, Medellín, Colombia</i>
Juan José García Pérez	<i>Fundación para el desarrollo colectivo y autónomo del hábitat Cíclica (Fundación CÍCLICA) Chile</i>
Camila Gonçalves De Mario	<i>Universidade Candido Mendes (UCAM), Brazil</i>
Pablo Grilli	<i>Universidad Nacional Arturo Jauretche, Argentina</i>
Otto Hospes	<i>Wageningen University, Netherlands</i>
Amado Insfrán Ortíz	<i>Universidad Nacional de Asunción, Paraguay</i>
Sandra Iturrieta Olivares	<i>Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile</i>
J. Enkhsaikhan	<i>Blue Banner NGO, Mongolia</i>
Elizabeth Jiménez	<i>CIDES-UMSA, Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, Bolivia</i>
Li Juan	<i>Shanghai International Studies University, China</i>
Kavitha Kuruganti	<i>Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture, India</i>
Alejandra Larrazábal	<i>Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (CIGA-UNAM), Mexico</i>
Pema Latsho	<i>Paro College of Education, Royal University of Bhutan, Bhutan</i>
Diana Tamara Martínez Ruiz	<i>National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Mexico</i>

Javier Enrique Medina Vásquez	<i>Universidad del Valle, Cali, Colombia</i>
Yadira Méndez Lemus	<i>Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (CIGA-UNAM), Mexico</i>
Asaah Sumaila Mohammed	<i>CK Tedam University of Technology and Applied Science, Ghana</i>
Édgar Adrián Mora	<i>Universidad Iberoamericana e Instituto de Educación Media Superior de la Ciudad de México, México</i>
Ossere Nganongo	<i>Université Marien NGOUABI, Republic of Congo</i>
Paula Lucía Olaizola	<i>Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria, Argentina</i>
Claudia Ospina Aldana	<i>Rimisp – Centro Latinoamericano para el Desarrollo Rural, Colombia</i>
Poonam Pandey	<i>University of Vigo, Spain</i>
Fabricio Pereira da Silva	<i>Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO), Brazil</i>
Alejandro Rivero Villar	<i>Centro de Investigación y Posgrado en Humanidades, Ciencias e Ingeniería – Instituto de Estudios Superiores de la Ciudad de México “Rosario Castellanos”, Mexico</i>
Norma Angélica Rodríguez Valladares	<i>Centro de Estudios en Geografía Humana de El Colegio de Michoacán A.C., Mexico</i>
Cinthia Fabiola Ruiz López	<i>Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (CIGA-UNAM), Mexico</i>
Nelida Sotelo	<i>Centro de Estudios sobre la Acción y el Desarrollo Territorial (ADETER), Departamento de Geografía y Turismo, UNS, Argentina</i>
Carmiña Soto	<i>Universidad Nacional de Asunción, Paraguay</i>
Crain Soudien	<i>Nelson Mandela University, Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth), South Africa</i>

*xviii List of Contributors*

Bernhard Tischbein	<i>Center for Development Research (ZEF), Bonn, Germany</i>
Rodrigo Tizón	<i>Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA), Argentina</i>
Milena Umaña Maldonado	<i>Rimisp – Centro Latinoamericano para el Desarrollo Rural, Colombia</i>
Antonio Vieyra	<i>Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (CIGA-UNAM), Mexico</i>
Martha Villagómez	<i>Instituto Geográfico Militar, Ecuador</i>
Seetha I. Wickremasinghe	<i>National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka</i>
Zhongshi Yuan	<i>Shanghai International Studies University, China</i>
Jingting Zhang	<i>Shanghai International Studies University, China</i>

# Foreword

*Rahma Bourquia*

Sociologist and Anthropologist, Member of the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco

This book brings together articles by authors from countries on three continents: Africa, Latin America and Asia, presenting experiences of projects and initiatives reflecting the dynamics of development. What emerges from these articles is that many countries that in the past had to live through the colonial experience have, in the post-colonial period, undertaken reconstruction by establishing institutions and putting in place policies to overcome deficits in human development in the fields of education, health and employment, while at the same time deploying technological infrastructures and strengthening both agriculture and environmental conservation. In terms of political institutions, initiatives are being undertaken in several countries to strengthen the democratisation process, and by putting in place mechanisms for social inclusion. There have also been initiatives and significant progress in improving the conditions of women and their integration into the economic fabric, with measures to strengthen their capacities. Other articles deal with immigration policies that make the mobility of populations a phenomenon that promotes human intermingling and preserves links between peoples. Progress has been made, and much remains to be done in the countries of the South, where successful experiments are emerging.

In some countries of the South, young people are trying to assert themselves and express their ideas, driven by a desire to play a part in building their countries. New forms of political expression are emerging to break free from the shackles of the past and make their voices heard, both in their own countries and on the world stage. In most of these countries, civil societies are serving as vectors of innovation in the fields of education, health, democratisation and the fight against corruption. Countries that have experienced social, political and ethnic upheaval have been able to find mechanisms for conflict resolution and reconciliation in favour of appeasement and reconstruction and serve as a model of reference.

At present, all countries are going through a period marked by the end of a pandemic that has revealed the vulnerability of those who were unable to protect themselves against the scourge. The post-pandemic period has also disrupted economies and created inflation, which is not happening without reinforcing inequalities between populations, and testing the resilience of societies to overcome

its effects. Today, the Russia–Ukraine war raises the spectre of an upheaval in the global balance of power. Despite all the constraints that accompany this global upheaval, the promising beginnings of a new era are on the horizon. Against this backdrop, the Global South is attempting to chart a new path of hope through the experiences of a development process at work, so that it becomes a plural voice that is heard throughout the world.

In the context of the significant changes that the world is going through, the dynamics of the countries of the Global South, despite structural and cyclical constraints, have become a reality. The chapters in this book reflect the idea of a South that speaks for itself and demonstrates the dynamics of concrete experiences that hold out the promise of hope. By recounting initiatives and projects from countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia, the authors collectively draw up a map of success stories and tell of a hope for the present that presages a promise for the future.

## Acknowledgements

The search for new and innovative ways to improve the quality of life and sustainability of the countries of the Global South is not a solitary task. Hundreds of thousands of people around the world are building new ideas and initiatives every day to change reality with hope. Building the future is a collective task.

Through this work, we have gathered many people who intend to raise their voices and show concrete examples that allow us to affirm the hope for a better future.

We would like to thank all of them for their hard work in the preparation of each of the chapters, which are definitely messages of hope.

Special thanks to the editors of Emerald for believing in this call for *Exploring Hope* in all the countries of the Global South. They have supported this work with total freedom and breadth of vision, thus contributing to spreading a new message about the reality of the countries of this part of the world.

A special thanks to Rahma Bourquia, who inspired this work and accompanied us with immense wisdom and human quality since its beginning.

To Fernando Calderón Gutiérrez, who has given us his wise words at the conclusion of this work, reinforcing the idea and the call to build a more humane future for all of us who live in the Global South.

Finally, particular thanks to Andrés Kozel, for his advice and support in the construction of new ideas and proposals for the future of the countries of the Global South.

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# General Introduction: Building Hope, Perspectives and Experiences from the Global South

*Marcelo Sili*

*CONICET, Universidad Nacional del Sur, Argentina*

The idea and concept of the global south are controversial and polysemic. It is used to group together all those countries and territories that have less beneficial development conditions, with significant levels of poverty, inequality and marginalisation, often linked to their heavy colonial history and economic and cultural dependence. The concept of the global south has been referenced to the countries formerly known as the third world. In recent decades, however, this concept has been extended and applied not only to the previously mentioned third-world countries, but also to cities and regions. Thus, it is argued that there are not only countries in the global south, but also territories that can be called ‘souths’ in northern countries, referring to poor and marginalised areas in richer countries, as well as ‘northern’ or rich areas in the countries of the global south.

The common element of these territories, countries or regions, is the presence of a heavy legacy of colonisation and imperial hegemonies, which defined conditioned but very heterogeneous development trajectories, resulting in very different situations today. There are countries and regions where very traditional production systems persist, based on dense family farming, with communities trying to sustain themselves in very discouraging contexts, marked by a lack of infrastructure and employment and by high levels of poverty and violence. The existence of difficult determinations, conditioning factors and realities in the global south cannot be ignored: famine, violence and corrupt leaders, massive migration, environmental deterioration, among many other things. There is clearly a profuse bibliography on these problems around the world, both in developed countries and in the countries of the global south, as well as hundreds of institutions and research networks that point out and diagnose all these problems.

However, in spite of the strong conditionalities derived from the forms of insertion of countries in global contexts, four key elements have been observed in recent decades that can generate new conditions for the reconfiguration of social,

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political and economic relations. These are, firstly, the profound technological change in terms of communications, mobility and production systems; secondly, the social and cultural change around the relationship between society and nature; thirdly, the change in the global conditions of accumulation, which entails profound novelties in terms of geopolitics and the game of actors. Fourthly, the demand coming from developing societies for an accelerated process of development in terms of democracy and justice led by actors of civil society, youth and media. These four elements open up possibilities for the generation of new initiatives, eventually capable of reconfiguring the dominant socio-technical model.

For example, at the level of political and social development, new initiatives are emerging in the political arena in some countries of the global south that are engaging in the democratic process. We find also other countries that have established ways for reconciliation after periods of violence. Many other developing countries have undertaken reforms of education or adopted a gender policy to improve the status of women or policies to reduce poverty. The issue of the role of the state in development is raised, especially since the pandemic period has created a concern about the role of the state and its reform. New initiatives can be observed also in terms of production (small industries, agroecology, bioeconomy with high added value, renewable energies, etc.), as well as in other dimensions: tourism and enjoyment of spaces; rescue and revaluation of socio-cultural heritage (recovery of sites, recovery of gastronomic heritage, etc.); protection of natural resources, landscape and habitat (revaluation of landscapes, bioconstruction); migration and installation of young people in rural areas or small cities, among others.

These developments feedback on each other, generating retroactive loops, system effects, causal chains, etc., in many cases creating virtuous processes of varying size and complexity. These initiatives are triggered by profound technological change, by the search for democracy and peace and also by a growing concern and interest in the protection and care of the environment.

There is no doubt that development is a holistic model dealing with the integration of developing countries into the global economy, considering the role of the state in each country in leading development and setting policies, in providing innovative solutions to the economic constraints, in establishing the democratic process, in establishing a system of governance and accountability, and in developing culture and capacity building among the population.

Thus, there seems to be reason to believe that the undeniable panorama of constraints and difficulties may finally begin to be reversed and overcome, giving way to more hopeful dynamics and realities.

The main idea of this book is to identify in developing countries of the global south specific innovative and successful projects and processes that are having a structural impact in changing the model of development, and that make it possible to imagine new development paths in the Global South. Thus, this book seeks to qualify, question and even refute the monolithic ideas and images of the impossibility of building opportunities for improving the quality of life and overcoming the different constraints of development in the Global South. It is a book based on the premise as it is stated in the book *New Paths of Development: Perspectives from the Global South*

The first premise is that it is necessary to regain confidence in the future. This means to overcome any determinism that mainstreams the defining features of the current scenario or the undesirable consequences it potentially contains. It is essential to believe in the viability of other future world-systems. Therefore, overcoming fatalism and restoring confidence in the future is a fundamental stance, as trust is the basic raw material for building visions and alternative pathways for a more equitable future. (Bourqia & Sili, 2021, p. 13)

In this sense, the book can be considered and understood as a kaleidoscope of opportunities and potentialities in the global south, which opens the doors to think about the future with more hope.

### **Hope Is the Keyword in This Book**

Indeed, one of the most notorious features that characterise the countries of the global south is the double meaning of the idea of the future. On the one hand, the future is viewed and perceived critically, with a certain disillusionment, as it is a view constructed from the inertia of a present that does not offer peace, justice, wealth and happiness; it is a view constructed from poverty, marginality, war and chaos. If the countries of the global south stick to and persist in this outlook, it is logical to remain in a vicious circle of disillusionment and lack of future projects, because the future has no meaning. However, in the pain of everyday life, hunger, war and marginalisation, new ideas about the future are also being built, about possible futures, which are always in the process of being realised and which are based on the idea of hope.

Hope constitutes, by definition, the search for alleviation of everyday problems; it is, as Bloch says (Bloch, 2004), a consciousness that seeks in the future what has not yet been given, an anticipatory consciousness of a possible world, of a better world. This hope is based on the human impulse towards Happiness, which is why it clearly constitutes the motor of history, since it does not remain a simple utopia, but is an action that builds new futures.

Hope constitutes a movement towards the good, not simply a desire (Eagleton), therefore it does not arise on its own, it needs a process of conscious, arduous, systematic construction, anchored in everyday reality. An inactive society does not build hope but remains submerged in the conditioning facts of history and in dependence on other societies or countries. Hope is built with patience, not like wishes that are sporadic, fleeting and random, this construction of hope requires not only enthusiasm, but also reason anchored in real and significant facts, with experiences, with people's work, because hope is also a pedagogical process of learning how people build the world and their future (Eagleton, 2016). People, societies and countries themselves construct hope at the same time as they construct their daily actions and projects in search of a better future. Therefore, hope is not an empty element of reality, but is nourished by reality itself, which, although hard and often suffering, is a conscious reality and, therefore, thought and understood in order to be overcome. Thus, hope is not a magical and naïve force; on the contrary, there is only hope when there are also possibilities for the future, but also possibilities for failure and darkness.

Hope is also to be understood as the vital energy that builds, despite all restrictions and limitations, new goals and new meanings of the future, a future expressed in potential, for which it is important to strive, because it creates meaning in the empty course of time (Bloch, 2004). Hope, understood as the vital energy of a society, contributes to effective action, since hoping for that desired future implies striving to make it a reality.

This book is based on the idea that innovation processes and people's projects are an input for the construction of a better future. We think of the actions, or innovative projects that emerge in the countries of the global south, not only as innovative processes in themselves, but also as instruments illuminated by hope for building a different future.

Five interrelated questions emerge to identify innovative policies or actions and new realities and processes that have a structural impact on society:

1. What type of initiatives can be observed, and what are their trajectories? We are interested in understanding the socio-cultural and economic motivations that encourage these new practices, as well as their trajectories, in order to understand their contextual conditions and their opportunities for replication.
2. What are the factors that make or limit the development of these initiatives? Understanding this will make it possible to systematise causes and effects and also to define more clearly the policy options for sustaining the new dynamics.
3. Who are the key actors in these processes of change and what forms of organisation have they promoted? (governance). We are interested in understanding the forms of organisation of collective action and private action, because this is relevant for thinking about new forms of governance and the promotion of national development.
4. Do these innovations really contribute to the structuring and organisation of new sustainable development dynamics?
5. Do these initiatives, which currently appear as 'niche' activities, have the capacity to transform themselves into a stable system of action and thus influence and modify the dominant socio-technical model, structuring a new development logic and dynamics? This question is crucial, as it invites us to analyse whether these initiatives can overcome the instance of 'special cases', to become structuring initiatives of another development model.

The backbone hypothesis of the book is that in the Global South there are emerging initiatives sustained on the basis of new contextual conditions, expectations and visions of development, such as the growing concern for the environment and habitat, new forms of relationship with nature, new consumption patterns, new demands for rights and democracy, and the search for new and greater opportunities for economic development and employment. These innovative processes are integrated into the current socio-technical regime and modified over time; this dynamic would make it possible to reconfigure the current socio-technical regime and from there modify and build new development itineraries and trajectories, capable of offering new opportunities to the population.

Clearly, the structural problems of the Global South are not denied, but the book defines itself precisely as the ‘book of current and future opportunities’ or as the ‘book of ongoing experiences that should be enhanced’. This contrast is legitimate and important and defines and distinguishes this work. Seen in this way, this book has a clear political intentionality, aimed at generating and focusing a new message on the opportunities for building a better future. It is a work that extends several of the lines opened by the book *New Paths of Development*, published in 2021.

In order to open the debate and to reflect on the opportunities for development in the countries of the Global South, this book presents a number of significant cases of innovation (36 cases), which suggest new ways of solving structural problems. In brief, each case will be a ‘lesson to be considered’, an example of opportunities for development alternatives. These are successful experiences that have left their traces have had an impact on the development of their societies and have opened the doors to new paths of development. Each of these 36 cases or experiences is presented by different authors from Latin America, Africa and Asia, as well as by colleagues from other continents related to the development problems of their countries and regions of origin.

These innovative experiences or cases have been regrouped and organised into five main thematic parts, as follows:

1. **In Search for Peace and Democracy-Building.** This part emphasises experiences that have made it possible to overcome violence in many countries as a result of guerrilla warfare, inter-ethnic wars, border conflicts, conflicts over the monopolisation of resources, or reconciliation and transitional justice after dictatorship or apartheid etc. But also, through this part, we can observe cases of strengthening identities and revaluing cultural heritage in a broad sense. The aim is to show through these cases how the countries of the Global South manage to build their own culture, revaluing their roots and their cultures, which are ultimately what allows them to sustain themselves in the dynamics of globalisation. In this thematic part, 6 cases or innovative experiences are presented.
2. **Organising Territories and Infrastructures to Improve Life.** The objective in this part is to identify innovative experiences in territorial planning and organisation and in the creation and management of infrastructures (roads, water, energy), improvements in collective facilities (community centres, schools, hospitals) and housing, to generate better living conditions, improve the quality of life and reduce territorial imbalances and conflicts. We observe how societies are constructing decentralisation and innovative forms of territorial management of the countryside, of cities, which can point to new itineraries of territorial planning, management and development. In this thematic part, 7 cases or innovative experiences are presented.
3. **Revitalising the Economy with a Sustainable Approach.** Emphasis is placed on showing experiences of overcoming the traditional productive matrix and the construction of other productive itineraries capable of generating employment in a dignified and sustainable manner. Innovative processes are presented that can mark alternative paths of development, but not only product innovations,

but above all innovations in the ways of producing, linking societies, solving problems, and illuminating new paths and ways of doing things. We also explore the new opportunities generated in each of the countries, beyond the approach of adaptation and competitiveness that marks the dynamics of capitalist globalisation, and which has allowed many countries to compete in the world market. In this thematic part, 8 cases or innovative experiences are presented.

4. **Ensuring Environmental Sustainability.** In this part, the aim is to identify experiences that point the way to environmental sustainability, both in urban and rural areas. These may be experiences linked to the protection of natural ecosystems (forests, forests, grasslands, and maritime coasts), as well as to the reduction of environmental risks and conflicts and the deterioration of the environment due to human intervention (solid waste, pollution in general, reduction of species, among others). In this thematic part, 6 cases or innovative experiences are presented.
5. **Inclusive and Caring Worlds.** In this part, we want to present cases of socially innovative processes or policies that were applied with success and had a great impact in education, building capacities, health, poverty, gender, youth, etc. This part emphasises experiences that have made it possible to overcome violence in many countries as a result of guerrilla warfare, inter-ethnic wars, border conflicts, conflicts over the monopolisation of resources, or reconciliation and transitional justice after dictatorship or apartheid, etc. But also, through this part, we can observe cases of strengthening identities and revaluing cultural heritage in a broad sense. In this thematic part, 9 cases or innovative experiences are presented.

Many of the initiatives analysed can be considered niche actions and special cases, but in other cases, many of these have given rise to more structured and sustainable public policies over time. In sum, this book will offer a kaleidoscopic panorama of some 36 cases linked to hopeful experiences of development alternatives in the Global South, enriched with cartography, infographics and photographs.

The book is organised as follows: in addition to this general introduction, five main thematic parts are presented, within each of which there is a brief introduction that explains the different cases of this part from a cross-cutting and comparative perspective. Then, within each of these parts, the different chapters or case studies are presented. Finally, a general conclusion of the whole book is presented, in terms of a general reflection on the future and Hope in the countries of the Global South.

## References

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Part 1

# **In Search for Peace and Democracy-Building**