

Motion proposed by the Theme Group on Alternative Models of Well-being and sustainable Development

To the Delegates Conference 2018

Be it resolved by the Delegates Conference 2018:

From 2018 to 2023 terre des hommes (tdh) will work on the issue

“Towards well-being beyond development”

The importance of alternative societal and economic development for implementing children’s and human rights

as a focal theme.

We want to assess models and exchange knowledge and practices beyond development to find a joint understanding within tdh-stakeholder groups.

Relevant milestones are:

- 1 **Examples of current international program activity** by tdh, such as “Our Rivers, Our Lives” (Mekong Region), “Youth as promoter of soil health and biodiversity” (West Bengal, India), “Aba” (Peru), illustrate best practice in the regions. A program strategy to promote alternative development models must be drafted on the basis of experience with model projects.
- 2 **Participation:** Up until the end of 2019 there will be an in-depth discussion in the association on the opportunities for alternative development (formats: regional conferences, annual general meeting, tdh Newsletter). The topic will be presented and discussed in the regional partner platforms.
- 3 **Advocacy:** Persons with political and social responsibility will be invited to participate – in order to support and broaden the discussion process. Involving representatives of all the regions, an effort will be made to hold an international conference to launch further activities.
- 4 **Coalition strategy:** Experts from other civil society organisations will be invited to participate in the discussion. Well-founded and strategically meaningful coalitions are aimed for, in order to broaden the public effect of the topic. In this context, tdh will also check on the contribution we can make to the ‘post-growth movement’.
- 5 At the next Delegates Conference there will be a document to replace the EPP.

Background

The Delegates Conference (DC) in 2013 had resolved that, until 2018, terre des hommes would work on the issue “alternative models of welfare and development” as a focal theme and would take forward a tdh strategy to promote approaches to alternative development fostering an autonomous life, particularly of children, in harmony with nature.

The focal theme was largely pursued from 2013 to 2018 by the German Theme Group “Alternative welfare and development models” and in individual projects in the regions of Southeast Asia, South

Asia and Latin America. The Theme Group has developed various proposals on how tdh can contribute in a more focused way to an alternative development.

So far the projected structured involvement of project partners has not taken place - one reason also being that the handling of the focal theme decided by the DC is still to be broadened in the project regions themselves. /the project regions themselves still have to broaden their handling of the focal theme, as decided by the DC.

Discussion so far has led to the following proposals:

Alternative development aims for economic, ecological and social sustainability. These aims are not free of contradiction and call for a careful balance of interests.

Alternative development must be participatory and from the grassroots

Individual aspects of alternative development have been included in the document for decision on strategic goals for 2018 (ecological child rights, gender justice and participation) and are reflected in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which terre des hommes refers to, inter alia.

However, the economic, social and political upheavals in all parts of the world, plus the ecological issue that is crucial for our future, call for forward-looking responses in additions. In this context, there will be a fundamental transformation in the following areas:

1. Economic justice

The problem

The continuing North-South gap between the rich industrial nations and 'developing countries' is still leading to considerable economic injustices.

The strong emerging economies and newly industrialised countries (particularly China) are new players that are securing resources for themselves worldwide through economic and political power politics. That is creating new forms of partnership, but also of dependence, and armed conflicts are risked or even provoked.

The responsibility for global injustices lies, above all, with the (old and new) industrialised nations, that as colonial and economic powers largely caused this situation and are still causing it. An alternative trade and economic policy is therefore required, that dismantles the structurally unjust economic relations and established transparent and fair rules between the states, i.e. based on partnership. Here the social elites from politics and business, from culture and academia, at home and abroad, must seek a just balance.

Thematic areas and options for action

For terre des hommes, the following thematic areas, in particular, offer opportunities for public relations and project activity:

- The policy of agricultural subsidies, particularly in the European Union, that puts increasing pressure on people to flee,
- the policy of appropriating land and resources, as practiced by state and non-state actors from the global North in the countries of the global South, as well as in the areas outside national jurisprudence,
- the destructive effect of post-colonial linkage of interests between global companies and the corrupt elites in the countries of the 'South',
- the identification and public dissemination of options promoting economic justice as best practice,

- raising the issue of responsibility – particularly by the EU – for fair trade relations based on partnership,
- changing the ‘imperialist way of life’ of people in industrialized states in the spirit of the SDGs, through sustainable development.

2. Ecological integrity and inter-generational justice

The problem

The permanent and unbridled growth and consumption of commodities has led to a situation where the planetary limits of the earth are being dramatically crossed in different dimensions.

The same growth mechanisms are leading to considerable ecological injustices and threats to the ecological balance, that will be exacerbated by the increase in the earth’s population.

That is why the consumerist attitude to natural resources must be replaced by a careful attitude minimising human interventions and respecting natural cycles. Only that way can ecosystems and biodiversity be maintained worldwide and the grave consequences of so many environmental problems be reduced.

Future generations also need relevant resources and intact habitats, in which ecological interactions are in long-term balance, so that they can shape their socio-cultural, economic and political conditions.

Thematic areas and options for action

The quest for alternative development, linking economic justice with ecological integrity and inter-generational justice, is the central challenge for the future livability of this planet.

For tdh and its partners there are practical options for action, as shown e.g. by the project “Our Rivers, Our Lives” in the Southeast Asia region. With its commitment to ecological child rights, where terre des hommes has achieved an opinion leadership among the relevant organisations, options for action present themselves primarily in relation to the practical compatibility of economic, ecological and social necessities.

3. Cultural diversity

The problem

The idea of a positive development towards ‘welfare’ in a comprehensive sense is strongly influenced by traditions and religious ties and norms. Political and economic decisions must therefore be taken with respect for the diversity of cultures, life philosophies, knowledge systems, values, economic basis for life and community (including the indigenous peoples and local communities). At the same time, children’s and human rights must be preserved in their totality including gender justice and the equal value of cultures. They are the binding yardstick against which traditional beliefs must be measured as well.

Thematic areas and options for action

For terre des hommes, many different approaches and possibilities for action exist on the basis of many years of experience in project activity based on partnership, particularly relative to

- an acceptance of cultural diversity in the context of children’s and human rights, and

- a holistic approach, taking account of the traditions and religious norms in the overall strategy to improve living conditions and implement children's and human rights.

4. Learning from one another

The problem

Recognising people as having equal rights, learning from other cultures and life projects, and thereby calling our own ideas and routines, are essential preconditions for a peaceful, just and sustainable development. terre des hommes is aware that tension may develop between our overriding imperatives, i.e. between between the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A solution can only come about through dialogue based on partnership.

Thematic areas and options for action

Together with its partners, tdh can create spaces enabling this learning process for children, young people and adults. tdh can thereby send signals against selfishness, sensationalism and racism.

tdh can support the exchange on ways of initiating alternative development, contribute through its project activity to open and respectful dealings with other people and cultures and, as a learning organisation, integrate the resultant findings into its activities.

tdh here makes a practical contribution to the necessary social engagement with alternatives to current political practice, which is increasingly destroying the social achievements and ecological foundations of our society.