



# Tropical News

Center for Tropical Ecology & Conservation  
Antioch University New England in Keene, New Hampshire

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Editor: Laura Hilberg

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Photo by Emily Dark

## Director's Note

By Peter Palmiotto, D.F.

### Our Mission

The Center for Tropical Ecology and Conservation is a non-profit organization at Antioch University New England which promotes the sustainable and just use of tropical ecosystems by training conservation leaders, conducting conservation research with partner organizations, and serving as an educational resource for the New England region.

As I reflect on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CTEC, I must also reflect on my own 10 years at Antioch. As Beth Kaplin mentioned in the spring edition of *Tropical News*, I joined CTEC in 2001, the same semester I came to Antioch. In that newsletter, Beth summarized the highlights and accomplishments of CTEC's first 10 years as an organization and described the initiatives we plan for the next 10 years. I'm impressed CTEC has been successful in achieving Beth's vision of a community where individuals with a strong interest in and passion for the tropics can gather, share, and find a home.

Whether it is our own students, who increase in numbers annually, scientists (such as Richard Estes), conservationists (such as Eleanor Briggs), or interested community members, many gather at our annual symposia and the numerous brown bag talks we host each semester. CTEC has worked to fulfill its mission, promoting sustainable and just use of tropical ecosystems by training conservation leaders, conducting research with partner organizations, and serving as an educational resource for the New England region.

(Continued on page 2)



Photo by Emily Dark

*(Director's Note, continued from page 1)*

CTEC has supported and trained numerous international students who bring the skills of the interdisciplinary education offered at Antioch back to their countries. They bring back a sense of community, collaboration and caring that radiates from CTEC's activities and events. In turn, these students bring to Antioch and the greater community their own experiences and culture, expanding our own perspectives. In a time of economic and social unrest, we need to share these perspectives with others and remind ourselves that these times are even more challenging for other people around the world. CTEC, with its vibrant community of US and international members, plays a critical role in the education of all AUNE graduate students, faculty, and community members. In the next 10 years we will continue to play this role as we strive to achieve our mission.

In this newsletter you will read about fair trade, which is one of the many links that connect us to the tropics. Please join us for our fair trade symposium in November to learn about and discuss issues associated with the fair trade movement. A market with fair trade items for sale will occur during the symposium – great holiday gifts! Come, learn, and join our CTEC learning community.



**November 5, 2011**  
Antioch University New England



The Center for Tropical Ecology and Conservation  
Presents the 7th Annual Symposium

**Fair Trade:**  
**Bringing Sustainability to Everyone**  
**& Fair Trade Market\***

\*the market will be held 10-3, is free, and is open to the public

Registration Fees: \$35 early registration (before October 28th) / \$25 student / \$45 walk-in

To register for the event, visit us online at [www.centerfortropicalecology.org/events/fairtrade.cfm](http://www.centerfortropicalecology.org/events/fairtrade.cfm)  
For more information, contact CTEC Education Coordinator Tierney Rosenstock ([trosenstock@antioch.edu](mailto:trosenstock@antioch.edu))

# Fair Trade Defined

By Tierney Rosenstock

As you browse the coffee aisle at your local grocery store, you have probably noticed the labels on some of the myriad of flavors and brands: “Fair Trade” or “Fair Trade Certified”. While coffee is the best known carrier of fair trade labels, it is not the only product by any means. Other foods, such as tea, chocolate, and fruit can also be fair trade certified, as well as clothes, personal accessories like jewelry or handbags, toys, and many other items. But what is fair trade and where did the idea of fair trade come from?

*Fair trade* is a social movement that aims to alleviate poverty in developing countries by setting a minimum price for purchased goods. This economic system is designed to create equitable, long-term partnerships between producers and consumers (“Fair Trade Towns USA” 2011). Furthermore, fair trade supports safe working conditions for adults, ensures the rights of children, promotes environmental stewardship, and respects cultural identity. By encouraging safer, more responsible practices, producers are enabled to improve their lives and have greater control over their future (“Fair Trade International” 2011)

Fair trade may seem like a relatively new movement, but it has actually been around for a long time! In 1946, the US company Ten Thousand Villages (then Self Help Crafts) started buying needlework directly from artisans in Puerto Rico. At the same time, an unrelated nonprofit called SERRV began trading with low-income Southern communities. Twelve years later, the first formal “Fair Trade” store opened, selling only 100% fair trade goods.

The United States was not the only country starting to

look at Fair Trade in the mid-twentieth century. In the 1950s, Europe started the first fair trade organization in the world, “Oxfam UK”. Soon initiatives were popping up in the Netherlands and other European countries. By the 1960s, NGOs in Asia, Africa, and Latin America began to follow suit.

After 60 years of networking, advocacy campaigns, and other work to raise public awareness, the fair trade movement has become relatively well known worldwide. Fair trade certification began in the 1980s, and was first limited to coffee. Today, the responsibility of setting international fair trade standards for foods is handled by Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International (FLO). Some 20 food products have been labeled (“World Fair Trade Organization” 2011), but clothing, personal accessories, and household goods do not have a certification system. As mainstream companies continue to become more aware of consumer demand for fair trade products, the movement will become increasingly stronger and more widespread, hopefully creating a better quality of life for the people we depend on to supply us with imported goods.

## Sources Cited

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- WFTO - 60 Years of Fair Trade. 2011, July 25. Retrieved August 18, 2011, from [http://www.wfto.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=17&limit=1&limitstart=1](http://www.wfto.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=17&limit=1&limitstart=1).

## Visiting Scholar at Antioch University New England

Jean Pierre Kabuyenge, instructor in the Biology Department, Faculty of Science, National University of Rwanda (NUR), is visiting the Environmental Studies Dept at Antioch University New England from 4 Oct to 9 November. Funded by the MacArthur Foundation project that Beth Kaplin works with at NUR, he will be observing classes, interacting with students and instructors, and participating in meetings while with us. His visit is facilitated by CTEC. If you would like to meet Jean Pierre please contact Laura Hilberg, CTEC Outreach Coordinator at [lhilberg@antioch.edu](mailto:lhilberg@antioch.edu).





Buy 100% organic, fair trade coffee, locally designed and printed t-shirts, and coffee mugs from the

**Center for Tropical Ecology and Conservation**

[www.centerfortropicalectology.org](http://www.centerfortropicalectology.org)



All proceeds go towards a student scholarship for CTEC students pursuing research in the tropics

Interested in tropical research? Join CTEC today, or contact us at [ctec@antioch.edu](mailto:ctec@antioch.edu)



*We would like to thank all of those who bought coffee and T-shirts in support of the Student Scholarship Fund!*

## CTEC Events Calendar

**October 13, 2011**  
11:30am-12:30pm

**Conservation, Community and Education in Costa Rica: The Work of CIRENAS (Centro de Investigacion de Recursos Naturales y Sociales)**  
By Caroline Grew and Tucker Szymkowicz, co-founders of CIRENAS

**October 27, 2011**  
11:30am-12:30pm

**Human destruction of migratory wildebeest populations in the Serengeti**  
By Richard Estes, Ph.D, Smithsonian Conservation and Research Center, CTEC Research Associate

**November 5, 2011**  
9:00am-4:00pm

**Fair Trade: Bringing Sustainability to Everyone**  
Annual Symposium & Fair Trade Market  
Featuring keynote speaker Dean Cycon, founder and CEO of Dean's Beans Organic Coffee

**November 10, 2011**  
11:30am-12:30pm

**Working with the Regional Network for Conservation Educators in the Albertine Rift (RNCEAR)**  
By Kayla Cranston, Ph.D Candidate, Environmental Studies Dept., AUNE  
*and*  
**Conservation Experience in Surinam**  
By Charissa Jones, M.S. Candidate, Environmental Studies Dept., AUNE

## The Challenge of Fairness: An Interview with Dean Cycon of Dean's Beans Organic Coffee

By Laura Hilberg

Dean Cycon, founder and CEO of Dean's Beans, started his company 18 years ago in an effort to model the ways that a business could address social, environmental, and trade justice in the challenging world market of international coffee. Serving the New England region and beyond from a small plant and warehouse in Orange, MA, he is providing organic, fair trade coffee to consumers while also offering community and economic support to farmers and their families in tropical regions where the coffee is grown.

In early June, I interviewed Cycon about his thoughts on the fair trade model. Fair trade product certification was formally introduced in the US in 1998, and occurs here primarily through TransFair, an international program that documents the economic relationship between Fair Trade buyers and sellers. Cycon was quick to acknowledge the benefits of Fair Trade, but cautioned that "Fair Trade can not be thought of as a cure for everything, just a useful tool." It provides farmers with a predetermined minimum price for their coffee crop, encourages the organization of coops and the development of more democratic communities, and allows farmers more direct access to the market. But Cycon also believes the Fair Trade system has let down the overall fair trade movement. According to Cycon, Fair Trade certification requires very little of businesses seeking to certify their products, and many have only a minor commitment to fair trade and the socially just practices that underlie it. Fair Trade coffee need not be organic or of a standard quality grown; certification guarantees only that the farmer was paid a premium (a certain amount per pound in addition to the actual market price).

Growing coffee can be a resource-intensive process, and Cycon strongly believes that the consumption of resources in the tropics affects us here in New England. The continued loss of tropical forest for the purpose of increasing land use for agriculture puts ever-

***"Every time there's a gain in awareness, an institutional form meant to manifest that awareness evolves. In that dynamic is the seed of the destruction of that awareness."***

***- Dean Cycon***

increasing limits on plant and wildlife habitat in one of the most biological diverse areas of the world. One of the easiest ways to see our connection is to listen to the dawn chorus of our favorite songbirds – catbirds, warblers, finches, thrushes, and blackbirds are all examples of birds that yearly travel hundreds or thousands of miles to winter in the world's tropical regions. Increasing conversion of forest to agricultural land use can create other dangers as well, such as the release of carbon previously stored in forests, air pollution, agricultural pollutants running off the fields and into water sources, and even altered weather patterns.

In addition, the increased production of goods for export uses up finite resources that tropical areas could be using to provide for their own needs in the present and future. Cycon gave the example of Costa Rica, where much of the land that once grew rice for local consumption has now been turned over to coffee or vegetables (like broccoli). After shipping all of this food out of the country, Costa Rica has diminished food security, because they must now import rice to feed their own citizens. By paying farmers a living wage and encouraging them to seek out other economic opportunities, the fair trade movement attempts to conserve resources, increase a country's independence and self-sufficiency, and preserve the important benefits and services that a well-functioning tropical ecosystem provides to everyone. Cycon looked me in the eye towards the end of our interview and said, "Here's a quote for you: The substitution of internal food security for short-term slash and burn export agriculture is probably the most destructive force in the tropical world today."

Cycon has, for now, left the Fair Trade certification program and is trying to make others aware of the ways that he feels they are not meeting their stated mission and values. He is "looking for the new edge," ever mindful of the ways his own business can model the commitment to social justice and environmental conservation held by the original fair trade movement. He will be speaking in more depth on the subject as the keynote presentation for the upcoming CTEC symposium titled "Fair Trade: Bringing Sustainability to Everyone (to be held November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 at Antioch New England).

# Fair Trade Goods



Photo by Emily Dark

*The following merchants will be participating in the Fair Trade Market happening during the upcoming CTEC Symposium on Nov. 5, 2011. The market is open to registered participants as well as the general public. The vendors and their beautiful goods will be available for questions and purchases from 10am-3pm at Antioch University New England.*

## **Jewelry, Clothing, Accessories, & Gifts**

### **Project Have Hope**

www.projecthavehope.org  
 PO Box 602  
 Malden, MA 02148  
 (339)206-4626

*Beautiful, handmade paper bead jewelry from woman in Uganda.*

### **Bead for Life**

www.beadforlife.org  
 2336 Canyon Blvd, Suite 202  
 Boulder, CO 80302  
 (888)339-5901

*Colorful beads made of recycled paper from women in Uganda.*

### **The Dancing Sun LLC**

www.dancingsunvt.com  
 229 Main St.  
 Brattleboro, VT 05301  
 (802)257-2731

*A unique selection of clothing, jewelry, and gifts to brighten your day.*

### **Dolma Fair Trade**

www.dolmafairtrade.com  
 180 Flynn Ave, Suite 5  
 Burlington, VT 05401  
 (888)406-6151

*Personal accessories and home décor handmade in India.*

### **KUSIKUY Clothing Company LLC**

www.kusikuy.com  
 314 Upper Houghton Rd.  
 Marlboro, VT 05344  
 (802)254-2273

*Fine hand knit garments by knitting groups throughout the Bolivian countryside.*

## **Coffee & Chocolate**

### **Dean's Beans**

www.deansbeans.com  
 50 R.W. Moore Ave.  
 Orange, MA 01364  
 (978)544-2002

*Whole bean specialty coffees that are organic, fair-trade, kosher, and roasted in small batches at the beanery in Orange, MA.*

### **Burdick's Chocolates**

www.burdickchocolate.com  
 47 Main St.  
 Walpole, NH 03608  
 (800)229-2419

*Gourmet, artisanal chocolates made with cocoa grown by farmers from Grenada.*



Photo by Emily Dark

# Fair Trade... Cell Phones?

By Tierney Rosenstock

In recent years, fair trade labels have become ever more prominent in grocery stores. Most readers of this newsletter are probably familiar with fair trade coffee or chocolate, for example. You may even be familiar with the idea of fair trade fruit, clothing, and other artisanal items such as jewelry. Large companies like Starbucks and Ben & Jerry's have even jumped on the fair trade bandwagon. One item you may not think about as a candidate for fair trade, however, is the cell phone. Yes, I said fair trade cell phone.

Did you ever wonder where all the cell phone components come from? Our cell phones are manufactured using somewhere between 20-22 different mineral components (Taylor 2011). Many of these minerals are mined within the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Mining industries are mainly under the control of militias and the regular national army. The constant battle between these factions is fueled by finances gained, in part, by control over the mining industry. The Congolese people are being repressed and are controlled through brutal force and sexual assault (Allen 2009). You may heard of "blood diamonds" before. Well now the term "blood mobile" has been coined as well (Taylor 2011).

Being forced to work in mines and to endure inhumane conditions is not all the Congolese must endure. Without access to more sophisticated mining equipment and technology, almost all the mining work is done by hand. Furthermore, some of the mine shafts are so large that workers do not re-emerge for days at a time. Even children are made to work in the mining process. Although the Congolese government is trying to regain control over the mining industry, which would create safer working conditions, the battle is long from over (Allen 2009).

So how can you help? A first step is to help minimize demand by keeping your existing phone as long as possible. When you must replace it, try to sell or give away your old cell phone to someone else. Or, recycle your phone using a responsible recycling company who will optimize the breakdown and reuse of the mineral components. By keeping, re-using or recycling your cell phone you prevent the need for further mining of minerals for a new phone.

If you buy a new phone, research the manufacturer. In an interview with Jorgen Theisman by Cynthia Taylor of the radio show *Living on Earth* (2011), Nokia spokesman Theisman claims the company is already making the fairest phone on the market. Theisman said Nokia cannot guarantee 100% conflict free mineral use, but the company does not allow their suppliers to purchase minerals from conflict areas. Furthermore, Theisman says that the company reduced the number of components that contain conflict minerals in them from six to one in 2001. However, I searched the Nokia website and could not find information about mineral and component sourcing.

Another initiative to keep an eye on is Fair Phone ([fairphone.com](http://fairphone.com)). Fair Phone was created by Bas Van Abel, creative director of the Waag Society in Amsterdam, and Nathalie Ankersmit, from the Dutch Institute for Southern Africa. Together they plan to create the world's first 100% conflict free mobile phone. The duo recently travelled to Congo where they visited mining villages. Bas and Nathalie purchased cobalt, a component in cell phone batteries, directly from the miners that they plan to use in their fair phones. Although the phones are not yet available, Bas and Nathalie are optimistic that Fair Phone will soon be a reality (Taylor 2011; "Fair Phone" n.d.).



Photo by Tierney Rosenstock

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## Center for Tropical Ecology and Conservation

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### HOW YOU CAN HELP?

**The Center for Tropical Ecology & Conservation is a non-profit organization and as such, greatly depends on the contributions of individuals like you.**

Contributions may be offered for general operations, or may be designated to support one of our three main project areas – research, education, or student support.

You can find more information about our current projects online at:

[www.centerfortropicalectology.org](http://www.centerfortropicalectology.org)

You can also contact us at  
**(603)283-2348**  
or  
[ctec.ane@antioch.edu](mailto:ctec.ane@antioch.edu)

Your support helps  
make it happen!

**THANK YOU!**

- Yes, I would like to donate to the Center.  
I have enclosed a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_.

#### **Make checks payable to Antioch University New England**

- I would like my donation to go to:

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- Student Support
- General

- I am not able to donate at this time but please add me to your contact list so I can receive notification of CTEC Events.

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