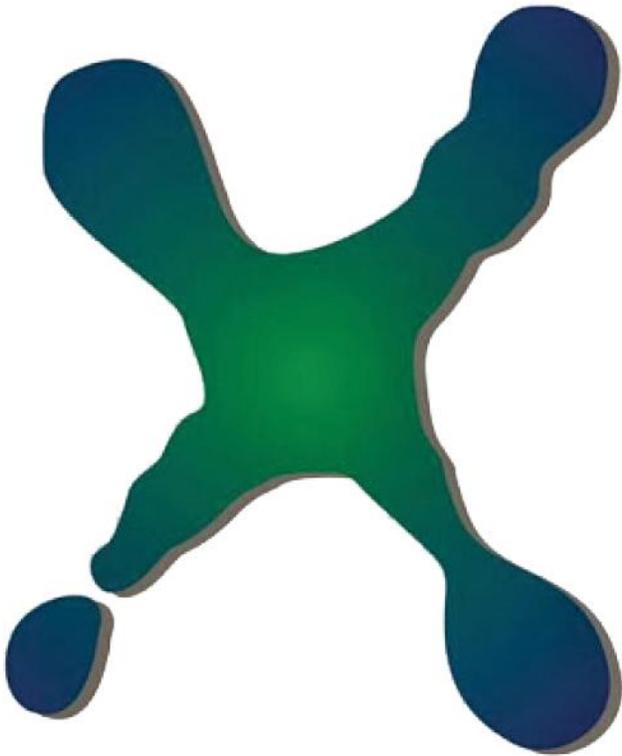


SWEATFREE TRIBE
INTERVIEW SERIES
PRESENTS



AN INTERVIEW WITH
Hans P. Theyer

www.ethixventures.com

We appreciate this opportunity to catch up with you as you embark on your journey growing and developing FTA. What are your goals for the organization in the coming months? What are some of your top priorities for your first year as Executive Director?

Our goal is to do the very best job we can to serve the smallholder farmers and workers who are at the heart of the Fair Trade movement. In particular, we are striving to enable more of their products to reach U.S. consumers, and allowing consumers to support farmers' development through their purchases. I want to look back and be able to say that in our first year, Fairtrade America worked with integrity, put producers first, and collaborated fully with producers, traders, Fair Trade activists and companies that want to use the FAIRTRADE Mark to build a more vibrant Fair Trade movement in the United States.

I am pleased that more and more brands are coming on board and showing great enthusiasm for what we are building here – we are excited to be partnering with Ben & Jerry's, Thanksgiving Coffee, Jim's Organic Coffee, Divine Chocolate, Green & Black's, Wholesome Sweeteners, Glee Gum and many other wonderful companies. More commercial partners are coming on board and we are working to ensure the highest quality of service for the brands, traders and producers we work with.

Another priority is to work closely with non-profit Fair Trade organizations, retailers of all sizes and our commercial partners to bring more Americans into the Fair Trade movement. There is so much potential for U.S. consumers to make a difference in shifting the balance of trade, and I believe Fairtrade America will only be effective if we work in concert with those who share our goals.

Finally, as a start-up organization it is my priority to work together with our board of directors to build a solid organizational infrastructure, grow our staff and build a sustainable organization.

As we're sure you're aware, there is some confusion surrounding fair trade in the United States. Can you help our readers understand the differences between Fair Trade USA and Fairtrade America?

I must point out that the United States is the world's largest market and Fair Trade sales currently represent just a tiny fraction, so there is plenty of room for both of our organizations and other certifiers to bring more U.S. consumers and companies into the Fair Trade movement.

There are a number of things that distinguish Fairtrade America, and I am happy to share my perspective on a few of them. At the core of what makes us unique is our connection to a truly global system. FAIRTRADE Mark has the distinction of being the most recognized ethical label worldwide. Products with the FAIRTRADE Mark are sold in over 120 countries, sourced from over 1,000 producer organizations (1.24 million farmers and workers) in 66 countries.

Only products carrying the international FAIRTRADE Mark meet rigorous internationally-agreed Fairtrade Standards that are recognized and respected by organizations around the world. These standards are developed through a strong multi-stakeholder process that includes companies, workers, farmers and dedicated fair trade organizations. And Fairtrade ensures that supply chains are monitored every step of the way, from farm to shelf on a very regular basis.

Another unique attribute and one that I am very proud of, is the international Fairtrade system's commitment to the small farmers and workers in developing nations who the center of Fairtrade. I was in Bonn, Germany on June 12th for Fairtrade International's annual General Assembly when, for the first time, producers had fully 50 percent of the decision-making power. Fairtrade is the first major certification system to pioneer such power-sharing, and being there, I could feel the importance the moment held for everyone in the room.

Fairtrade works with smallholder farmers who produce coffee, cocoa, cotton and sugar. Where we do work with hired labor in supply chains like tea and cut flowers, we have a robust strategy to improve Labor Standards to make sure workers get a fairer share of the benefits of trade and representation.

Fairtrade is also working to address the unmet demand of smallholder farmers for long-term loans. The Fairtrade Access Fund, a joint project of Fairtrade International, Incofin Investment Management and Grameen Foundation, distributed its first loans this year – a total of \$3.7 million – to seven cooperatives in Latin America. The Fund is continuing to gather steam; by the end of 2013 it is expected to grow to \$25 million, and will eventually expand to Africa and Asia.

Where do you see the major opportunities for Fairtrade America to add value to the Fair Trade Movement as a whole (in North America), especially in regards to the re-emergence of FLO (as Fairtrade America) in the US?

Together with Fairtrade Canada, I believe we can bring the best attributes of the international Fairtrade system to the broader movement in North America – rigorous standards, a multi-stakeholder approach and a clear focus on what is best for producers through their direct input. In my first weeks on the job I have enjoyed meeting so many leaders of the U.S. Fair Trade movement, and am committed to building our organization in a way that reflects what our stakeholders in the U.S. believe best serves the interest of small farmers and workers.

I believe Fairtrade America is in a particularly strong position to bring producers' perspectives into the U.S. Fair Trade movement. Three producer networks from Latin America, Africa and Asia represent half of Fairtrade International's decision-making, and Merling Preza, past-president of the CLAC producer network and General Manager of Prodecoop coffee co-operative in Nicaragua is a member of Fairtrade America's Board of Directors. Producers' opinions and ideas are critically important to my work leading Fairtrade America, and we will work to amplify their voices within the broad Fair Trade movement as well.

Finally, in addition to being another partner in the Fair Trade movement, we also see it as our job to listen to, understand and represent U.S. stakeholders' interests within the international Fairtrade system.

The Pacific Northwest must be proud of all the efforts of her citizens: Dana Geffner and [Ryan Zinn and Fair World Project](#), [Colette Cosner and Domestic Fair Trade Association](#), and now with your appointment within Fairtrade America. All of Seattle must be charged with renewed anticipation for the US Fair Trade Movement. Does Fairtrade America, under your direction, plan to strengthen (and spread) that momentum into all corners of our country?

Well, I am honored that you have included me in the same group as Dana, Ryan and Colette and their fine organizations – I admire their work very much. Fairtrade America is certainly aiming to help strengthen and spread the energy and enthusiasm for trade justice that is so present in Seattle and other parts of the Northwest. I will try to represent Seattle well when I move soon to that other Washington – D.C. – where Fairtrade America is headquartered.

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