

Searching for Alternatives: Perspectives on Fair Trade & Development

North-South Perspectives on Fair Trade Certification

Patrick Clark
MA, Global Governance, University of Waterloo

My presentation will address perceptions of Fair Trade in the North and the South. As an undergraduate in the International Development Studies program at Trent University, I had the opportunity to participate in the Trent-in-Ecuador (TIE) year abroad program in 2006-2007. Through the TIE program I completed a three-month research placement with a cooperative of small-scale coffee farmers' Federacion Regional de Asociaciones de Pequeños Cafetaleros del Sur (FAPECAFES). FAPECAFES is comprised of 1500 small coffee farming families, in five local associations spread out over four provinces in southern Ecuador who market and export their coffee beans through the cooperative. I conducted a consultation with the membership of the cooperative, which was based on a questionnaire which was sent to FAPECAFES from the Network of Small Fair Trade Producers of Latin America and the Caribbean (the CLAC) called, "Consultation of Small Fair Trade Producers: Present State and Future of Fair Trade". Through my research I was able to assess the internal dynamics of the cooperative as well as interpret the sentiments of the farmers on Fair Trade and the certification for Fair Trade products which is governed by Fair Trade Labelling Organizations International (FLO). I will juxtapose the findings of my research in Ecuador with some reflections on my own experiences as a student and activist pushing for Fair Trade products and procurement policies in Canada. Finally, I will discuss the implications of the gap between perceptions of Fair Trade in Canada vs. coffee producers in Ecuador.

"Information Communication Technologies for Development...The Con of Development?" A Critical Analysis of Technology for Development within CARICOM

Vivienne Edward
MA, IDS, Saint Mary's University

While there is a growing debate on the issue of a 'digital divide', there can be no disputing the presence of inequality with regards to physical access to and use of ICTs across the globe. Digital and information access are now being classified as new additions to the existing parameters for the evaluative measures of poverty (more recently coined digital poverty). Using ICT for development initiatives, development institutions such as the World Bank and UNDP, are therefore attempting to reduce poverty by creating ICT access to poorer communities. There also can be no dispute that this divide is an implicit reflection of the inequality that already persists between developed and developing countries. We have in place processes that have and continue to keep the world in a state of divides, processes that are systemic and endemic to how we operate in the global economy. Processes

such as non mutual beneficial technology transfer agreements and unfair market policies that are pillared on neoliberal capitalistic principles that in so far have advanced the interests of a few, at the expense of most. As such there is a tendency in current development literature however to severely overstate the potentialities of ICTD and underestimate other contributing factors to the global poverty problem. It therefore begs to question whether, given the structural conditions that continue to perpetuate poverty, the inclusion of ICTs in the poverty reduction agenda is designed merely as an ameliorative tool to treat the symptoms of poverty and not a long term solution to treat the actual cause.

The Role of the Social Economy in Local Development: The Case of Peru

Dan McKenzie
MA, IDS, Saint Mary's University

This paper presents the findings of a Masters thesis in International Development Studies. The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of the social/solidarity economy in Cuzco, Peru, and how it relates to local development. The social economy is best understood as the third sector, whose mode of production is noticeably different from that of the first system (profit maximizing, private economy) and the second system (state-controlled, public sector). It is also historically linked to local movements that attempt to seek other interwoven goals such as the satisfaction of basic needs (that have not been met by the functions of the first or second sector), political empowerment, economic equality, and the cultural significance of economic activity. In the literature review of this thesis, three priorities are identified that serve to create a theoretical framework that differentiates between the liberal economy and the social economy. These priorities are inclusive growth, economic democracy, and social innovation. Findings are presented based on the current literature on the topic, opinion polls and socioeconomic statistics, and field research that was conducted in Peru in early 2008. Findings are assessed against the theoretical framework, and are followed by policy recommendations that are aimed to strengthen the social economy in the Peruvian context.