

Introducing OnEarth

The first project of development education for kindergartens in the Czech Republic, the very first information materials about fair trade in Czech, the first Czech textbook for English teachers awarded by the British Council, the first shop selling fair trade food products in the Czech Republic, national Fair Trade Day celebrations organized since 2004, more than 2000 media articles about fair trade and working conditions in developing countries initiated – these are just several facts known to people who are familiar with OnEarth – society for fair trade (*NaZemi – společnost pro fair trade*).

What started in 2003 as an informal group of students, various NGO workers and travellers willing to support fair trade (at that time completely unknown in the Czech Republic) is today an established, respected and leading Czech organization working in the development education and awareness raising field. Currently, OnEarth has about 20 employees and over 70 volunteers. Its main office is located in Brno, media office in Prague, and volunteer groups in Brno, Prague and five other cities.

The mission of OnEarth is to facilitate opportunities for active people in developing countries to make a decent living out of their work and pave their way out of poverty. The main programmes are:

Corporate accountability

In cooperation with European and Southern partners we monitor working conditions under which goods for Czech consumers are produced. Together with our partners we lead campaigns to influence Czech and European corporations as well as other commercial and political stakeholders to improve social and environmental conditions in their own and their suppliers' production facilities in developing countries. In the communication with the public we focus on specific product groups such as garments, toys, IT or bananas and pineapples.

For example, in the fall of 2010 our Chinese and Vietnamese partners undertook a research for us in local facilities producing outdoor clothing and other textile products for major outdoor clothing brands. This research was supported by a study among European (including Czech) outdoor clothing companies investigating their attitudes towards corporate accountability, especially with regard to respecting human rights in their supply chains. The main outcomes of the research – discovering extremely poor working conditions and human rights violations – were then publicized in the spring 2011 attracting a big media interest. Shortly after, the Czech outdoor clothing companies that were involved in the research made the first steps towards developing policies of corporate responsibility within their supply chains.

Fair trade

Since 2003 we have promoted fair trade as a way of trade which effectively supports poor and marginalized communities of farmers and craftsmen in developing countries. We have been responsible for a vast majority of public relations work on fair trade in the Czech Republic. We initiate hundreds of media outputs every year, organize celebrations of the World Fair Trade Day, give lectures and run a website on fair trade, organize the national Fairtrade Towns campaign and promote fair trade among major commercial actors.

The recent celebrations of the World Fair Trade Day in May 2011 saw an unprecedented success. We tried hard to involve as many local actors (individuals, NGOs, town halls, zoos etc.) as we could into participating in the event called the Fair Breakfast. The idea was to bring own breakfast, friends and have a breakfast together. Altogether over 2500 people participated in this common breakfast in 41 Czech towns on the 14th of May at 10 am. The breakfast events were covered extensively by local as well as national media. Our monitoring recorded over 150

articles in printed media only. Also local organizers provided us with a very positive feedback and expressed their eagerness to organize similar events in the future. We are all looking forward to organizing the World Fair Trade Day celebrations in a similar manner in May 2012.

As a way of supporting fair trade we run fair trade shops in 3 towns. The aim of these specialized shops is to provide Czechs with the opportunity to meet and shop for the widest range of fair trade food and crafts. The profit from the sales is used to support other activities of the organization. The shops are run by volunteer groups in Brno, Prague and Olomouc. The volunteer groups are also involved in occasional selling of fair trade products. In order to have direct connections with fair trade producers we import crafts directly from India.

OnEarth is one of the founding members of the Czech Fair Trade Association (Asociace pro fair trade), which is a national platform of organizations engaged in the fair trade movement.

Global Education Centre

We promote global education (sometimes called development education) in schools and in other governmental and non-governmental educational institutions. The aims of our Global Education Centre are (i) to increase consumers' long-term attitudes and motivations towards more sustainable consumption patterns and (ii) to develop attitudes of global responsibility among students.

In 2006 and 2007 we developed the educational program called “World in the Shopping Cart”, which we have run since then. The program consists of a set of 8 interactive workshops for school classrooms on topics such as coffee and unfair trade, cocoa and child labour, clothes and poor working conditions in the garment industry, bananas and agrochemicals, coca-cola and the role of multinational corporations in developing countries. The program is taught by our lecturers in schools and, additionally, it has been taken over by many NGOs involved in the environmental education.

We also develop, produce and distribute teaching materials for teachers. Most of the publications take form of lesson scenarios to be used easily by teachers in their classrooms. The English translations of the majority of the materials are also available. Our book for teachers, “Global Issues in ELT Classroom”, was awarded the British Council Price for Innovation in Teaching English in 2010.

Last but not least, we organise seminars for teachers and other pedagogical workers. In all our educational work we employ innovative pedagogical methods such as reading and writing for critical thinking, methods of active learning as well as other participative, cooperative and interactive methods.

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This article has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Polish Green Network and its partners and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union. The article has been produced also as a part of the project “Central European partnership for sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty” co-financed by the International Visegrad Fund.