

cfp **südostasien** 2/2018

Topic: Organic, Fair and what else? - Sustainable products in Southeast Asia

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More than 40 years ago, activists in Germany began to implement their ideas of an alternative trade system with the help of "one world shops". Influenced by dependency theory, they sought to give global trade a more equitable structure through price guarantees for producers in the Global South and education for consumers in the Global North.

Since then, fair trade and organic products in European stores have become mass-produced, even entering the discounters. Sustainability-labels, aiming to give consumers a quiet conscience, are now so omnipresent that related adviser literature has become bestsellers.

But who benefits from the "label economy"? Does a transition to organic and/or fair trade labelled products really improve the life of the producers? Do labels contribute to a "different world" by promoting collective and resource-efficient modes of production? Or is "fair trade" not too often just a commodity trade that makes the neo-colonial reality look a little less bad with a consumer-friendly image?

Looking at today's advertisements or packaging of fair-trade products, these are often a current version of the old colonial stereotypes: there the happy, indigenous producer in his exotic small-scale farmer environment, here the modern, cosmopolitan and charitable consumer.

In the upcoming issue of **südostasien**, we want to focus on the situation of the producers and whether fair trade and/or organic certification improve their lives. At the same time we want to examine how serious companies are about fulfilling the promises they frequently make at voluntary round tables and in sustainability alliances e.g. in the palm oil and textile industries. Rather than just focussing on those products exported to Europe, however, we also want to find out more about movements for more sustainable consumption and corresponding production in the Southeast Asian countries themselves.

In particular, we are interested in the following questions:

- In which sectors in Southeast Asia's economy does organic and fair trade play a significant role and why?
- how fair and sustainable are mainstream labels such as the RSPO, FSC, MADE-BY etc?
- Who has the authority to issue labels, how did and do they come up and what are the costs for the producers?
- Which movements for sustainable consumption and production exist in the countries of Southeast Asia and what influence do they have? (e.g. Green Net in Thailand, Panay Fair Trade Center Philippines but also smaller and local fair trade/bio or DIY movements)
- Do alternative trade concepts also promote alternative economies, e.g. by supporting collectives/cooperatives?
- To what extent can the living situation of the producers be improved through organic and fair trade?

We would like to address these (and other) questions in as many different forms of expression as possible: in-depth-reports, portraits, interviews or photo essays. We are looking forward to your ideas

Deadline for submissions (max. 15.000 characters) is the 1st of August 2018. Please include

relevant and titled photographs of sufficient quality (300dpi) and make sure the copyright is dealt with beforehand. We are also looking for short reviews of books, films and music about or from Southeast Asia. Contact email: soa_mag@asienhaus.de

Mission statement: **südostasien** gathers voices from and about Southeast Asia on current developments in politics, economics, ecology, society and culture. Four key topics each year collect contributions on the region and on the respective countries of Southeast Asia and their global/ international relationships. **südostasien** sees itself as a pluralist forum for a dialogue driven by solidarity and critique of domination. **südostasien** aims to create a space for discussions between actors in Southeast Asia and Germany with proximity to and knowledge of social movements. **südostasien** deals with the possibilities of transnational solidarity work in the face of unequal power relationships between the Global North and the South. With regard to the above mentioned principles **südostasien** wants to provide food for thought to German readers.

Our next topics are:

- Ghosts in Southeast Asia (Deadline October 2018)
- Labour Movements in Southeast Asia (Deadline January 2019)
- Plastic and plastic waste in Southeast Asia (deadline April 2019)