

INDUCTEE

Connie DeJong Ph.D.

Graduated 1990
Resides Columbus, Ohio

“Connie DeJong has changed the lives of hundreds to thousands of folks in Columbus, and especially around the world,” says Megan Fitze, manager of *Global Gallery*, a non-profit Fair Trade store in Columbus selling handcrafted goods on behalf of artisans in developing countries all over the world. “Connie’s compassion for people in general, but especially international craftsmen and women, is what drives her daily force of boundless energy.”

After graduation from high school, Connie enrolled at Lake Forest College in Illinois and received her Bachelor of Arts degree as an independent scholar in Ethnomusicology in 1995. She managed *Global Gallery* for a year, but in 1996 she chose to enter the Peace Corps as an Urban Youth Development volunteer in Quito, Ecuador. That experience shaped her life. When she returned to the *Global Gallery*, her goal was to broaden even further the opportunities of developing country artisans, extending her Fair Trade work beyond what the single *Global Gallery* establishment could do. At the same time she has continued to broaden her own knowledge. She received a MA in Comparative Studies from OSU in 2005 and, in 2008 she earned a Ph.D in Cultural Policy and Arts Administration, again from OSU.

First she extended the reach of *Global Gallery* with three more stores, selling products from farmers and craftspeople in over 40 countries; as a regular member of the faculty at The Ohio State University, she has introduced a Fair Trade unit and its far-reaching advantages. She has set up a family center for homeless or orphaned children in La Paz, Bolivia, and serves as a product director for the implementation of a Fair Trade program (Project Hope + Charite) to fund an orphan care program in the Central African Republic (CAR). She has done similar work with various groups in Pune, India; Santiago, Chile; Kathmandu, Nepal; Lhasa, Tibet; Ecuador; Peru; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Merida, Mexico, and others. She has studied abroad in Australia, India, Cuba, and Egypt, always driven by her compassion for the people, her mission of Fair Trade, and her dedication to changing the lives of the people she touches. Most recently, Connie with Heidi Maybruck and Lynn Stan opened a store called *Celebrate Local* to establish an outlet where Ohio craftsmen and women can market hundreds of goods and crafts of their making.

Connie is frequently asked to consult on issues related to fair trade practices, business and micro-enterprise development. She has planned, spoken to, or participated in many local events—International Studies with OSU student groups, Ohio Designer Craftsmen, Columbus Council on World Affairs, Greater Columbus Arts Council, City of Joy, Ten Thousand Villages, Higher Grounds, Grounds for Change, to name only a few.

Lee Link, director of the former International Business Program at Gahanna Lincoln High School, described Connie best when he wrote, “Connie is a change-maker, in the very best sense of the word, and she has improved the lives of countless artisans, workers and other individuals—many of them women who are the sole provider for an extended family—through her work to implement fair trade principles that aim to provide fair, living wages to workers, to provide opportunities for education and training, and to seek a more equitable relationship between marginalized workers and the organizations who purchase their products.”

Connie DeJong is currently the Executive Director of Global Gallery, Retail Operations Director of *Celebrate Local*, Owner and Creative Director of World Peaces (a Fair Trade wholesale company) and lecturer in the Department of Consumer Sciences at The Ohio State University (specifically teaching a retail lab course for students running their own Fair Trade store). She is recognized for her humanitarian and educational work and as an expert in the areas of strategic management, diversity, financial analysis, and international import and customs logistics.