

GGC Global Studies Program Alum Co-Founds Coffee Company

Some people celebrate life achievements by travelling to Disney's resorts. GGC graduate Andrew T. Shook (2016) moved to Amsterdam and created a coffee company instead.

Shook took insights from his studies (major in international business and minor in geography), combined them with wisdom gained in the Global Studies Certificate, and mixed them with a love of coffee. He formed a partnership with two others. Together they founded *The Seven Elements*, a specialty company based in The Netherlands and farmed in Peru.

The Seven Elements takes its name from the UN's sustainability model. It trains Peruvian indigenous communities in permaculture, which in many ways cares for the supply chain. The coffee is grown in the Amazon rainforest under the shade of large trees. In the Oxapampa-Ashaninka-Yanesha Biosphere Reserve, the local farmers apply permaculture principles to transform coffee farming in a way that protects and regenerates local biodiversity.

The company also seeks to care for its employees who are comprised of the Yanesha peoples. *The Seven Elements* pays more than twice the fair trade price and also offers profit sharing.



Shook with colleague at the Amsterdam Coffee Festival. He discovered that his studies at GGC prepared him for the rigors of international business.



Andrew T. Shook in Peru

The company provides Project C.U.R.E medical aid kits to the deep jungle indigenous village medical posts. The best feeling for Shook is being part of an effort to deliver medical donations to underserved clinics, providing health and healing to families in need.

Another gratification for Shook related to healing the land. When others heard about their biosphere restoration projects, global players wanted to help. GIZ Germany sent a team to GIS (Geographic Information System) map the crops to digitally monitor sustainability. A popular cafe in Italy featured them on a well-received coffee table book. *Cosmopolitan Italy* published their story in a lifestyle feature. They are now moving 24-ton shipments by sea container. This demand has created sustainable jobs for farmers.

Shook credits lessons learned at GGC for helping him to succeed, including introducing him to the cultures and regions where he works, the applications of geographic information systems, and the importance of natural resources and sustainable agriculture.

By Joseph Henderson and Richard Rawls

LINK:

www.the7elements.com