

Trade policy

International Trade is carried out within a system of rules and agreements. But the rules are stacked in favour of the rich. Traidcraft is campaigning to change those rules so that poor people can feel the benefits of trade.



The rules of trade are set by governments - through institutions like the World Trade Organisation and through regional agreements between particular countries. The International Monetary Fund and World Bank also apply conditions to aid and loans which affect the way poor countries trade and run their economies.

The problem with trade rules

- Unequal Partners: rich countries abuse the system and bully poorer countries into agreeing to rules which favour the rich.
- One size doesn't fit all: rich countries use trade rules to force poor countries to open their economies to goods from rich countries (known as trade liberalisation). But poor countries' farmers and industries aren't ready to compete. 20 years of forced liberalisation has devastated many poor countries resulting in huge job losses, poor health care and less education.
- Do as we say, not as we do: rich countries succeeded by protecting their farmers and industries. They are using trade rules to deny poor countries the same rights.

Trade policy is a huge area, and rather than spread ourselves too thinly, we currently focus our work on a set of agreements called Economic Partnership Agreements.

Find out more

- [What are Economic Partnership Agreements?](#)

The EU is currently negotiating a set of trade agreements known as Economic Partnership Agreements. These are free trade agreements, forcing developing countries to open up their markets to EU imports. This would have a devastating effect on local economics as well as regional trade, and lead to disastrous consequences for millions of people.

- [Read our reports on trade policy.](#)