

up front

rough trade

For years, rich countries have dominated international trade talks, demanding more and more concessions from poorer and less powerful states.

But mass protests and resistance from civil society groups around the world have helped to challenge this power. Global trade talks have repeatedly collapsed as developing countries refuse to trade their future away for yet more promises they know will be broken.

Now the European Union is trying to get what it wants by dealing directly with individual countries, making it easier to bully them. Yet more and more people are standing up against the creation of deals that will spell disaster for hundreds of millions of farmers, workers and people living in poverty.

War on Want is campaigning alongside those most affected by globalisation and playing a leading role in the fight against unfair trade. September 2008



Our partners are creating alternatives to corporate-led global trade and putting people's lives before profits.

Nearly every country in the world now relies on the globalised trade system to provide the things that consumers demand – from food to clothes to oil. The rules of this system are set at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), a deeply undemocratic institution that has been controlled by powerful countries since it was created in 1995.

Under their influence, the WTO has rigorously pursued the removal of 'barriers to trade', stripping away protections from developing countries that could help local farmers and manufacturers to stay in business, as well as bring in vital taxes.

As a result of such moves, many countries have seen their markets flooded with cheap goods from overseas, massively increasing unemployment and poverty. The prices paid to local farmers for their crops have plummeted, while local businesses go under and factory workers suffer deteriorating conditions and job insecurity.

Many more people are forced into the informal economy, where they try to survive by selling their goods on the street and with no support from the state. On top of that, government revenues for public services like schools and hospitals, already insufficient, have come under even more pressure.

Going bilateral

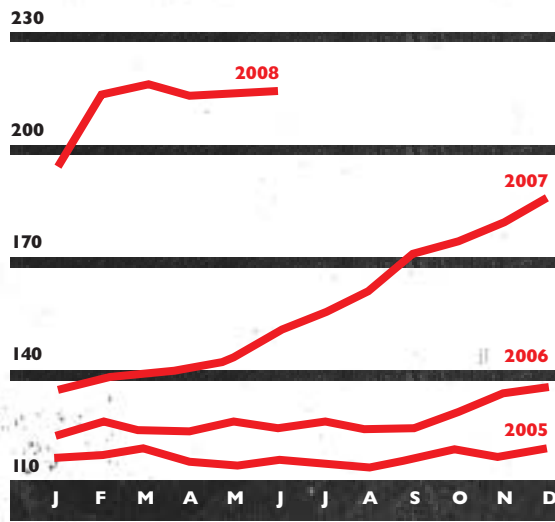
War on Want has campaigned hard against the WTO over the last seven years, alongside our partners in dozens of countries. We organised discussions, took part in protests and lobbied governments to reject the deals. Our pressure paid off when in 2003, 2006 and July 2008 poor countries refused to be railroaded into signing a bad deal.

Now, with the WTO locked in permanent crisis, the European Union is turning its attention to bilateral deals with individual countries or regions. These new free trade agreements could cause even more damage than the global talks at the WTO, as the EU pushes ahead with a wide-ranging agenda designed to serve the interests of European business rather than working people.

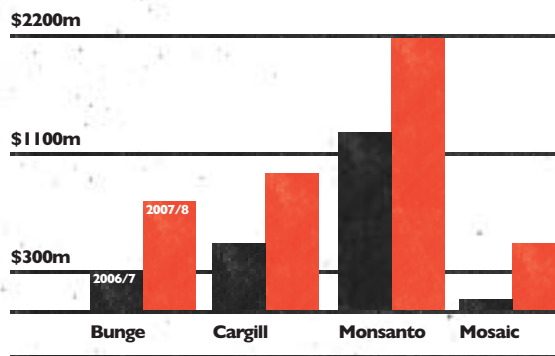
As well as trying to open up markets in developing countries for its manufacturing firms, the EU particularly wants to open up new markets in services. This means privatising essential services like water, education, energy and health, turning them from a right into a source of profit. The agenda is being set not by the needs of billions of poor people, but by the insatiable drive for profits by European companies, many of which specialise in services.

While global food prices spiral out of control, industrial food companies' profits have risen sharply

FAO Food Price Index 2005 - 08



Agribusiness profits
Quarter 1 April - June of each year*
Profits indicate gross profit or net earnings according to availability of statistics. Source GRAIN



In response, War on Want has launched a new campaign against these bilateral deals. We will work particularly with trade unions and women's groups, to mobilise against the free trade agenda and highlight how it undermines labour and women's rights both in Europe and globally.

A new way forward

Our partners are also slowly but surely creating alternatives to the relentless march of corporate-led global trade. Working closely with people who are most affected by this skewed system, organisations and movements like MONLAR in Sri Lanka and the MST in Brazil are developing sustainable, small-scale agriculture that stops poor farmers being dependent on world markets, while the National Peasants Union (UNAC) in Mozambique lobbies for access to land that will enable them to support themselves.

We also fund many groups struggling for workers' rights in sweatshops and the rights of people outside formal employment, who often lack any voice in government policy making. Organisations like Codemuh in Honduras and AZIEA in Zambia are in the front line of the fight against deprivation and powerlessness caused by globalised trade.

Your support ensures that our partners, who can find it hard to secure funding because of

the radical and sometimes dangerous nature of what they do, can continue their vital work.

Global resistance

But at the root of the problems with international trade lie the rules that promote profits for corporations while millions fail to benefit. That's why we need you to help change the rules at their source, by pressing European politicians to think again.

This year offers us an important opportunity to change EU policy on trade. Elections to the European Parliament are due to take place next summer, and together with campaigns groups from across Europe we are demanding a new approach from our MEPs.

Together with many others in Latin America, Africa and Asia, we are part of a global resistance to unfair trade that is bringing together people's movements, trade unions, workers and farmers to create a new trade system that puts people before profit. Please add your voice by filling in the card opposite and sending it back to us.

As the world struggles under the weight of food, energy, environmental and financial crises, it is more urgent than ever that fundamental changes in the global economy are made now.

Please add your voice by filling in the card opposite and sending it back to us.

Despite the controversy and resistance surrounding recent trade deals, the European Union (EU) is still pursuing an aggressive free trade agenda, in order to open new markets to European business. If this is allowed to continue, millions more people will be pushed into poverty, losing their jobs and seeing their public services deteriorate.

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Any good achieved with European aid will be undone as poor countries will continue to lose vast amounts of money through a grossly unfair world trade system. I believe that European citizens will also suffer as our social protections and rights are undermined, while the interests of corporations are aggressively promoted. I therefore call on you to use all means at your disposal to:

- Call for a full-scale review of EU trade policy and push for a new strategy that puts the rights of poor and marginalised people at its centre.
- Make trade policy making more democratic and accountable, including much greater sharing of information and real participation by civil society.

Yours sincerely,

Name in full

Email

Address

My local MEP
c/o War on Want
FREEPOST

We will give this card to
the MEP for your area



What your donation could achieve:

- £250 could help us to bring activists from the developing world to Europe to lobby governments directly.
- £100 could help our partners train local farmers to grow fruit and vegetables for their families.
- £50 could help publish a report raising awareness of the massive job losses caused by free trade.

www.waronwant.org

Support War on Want's campaign today to stop the EU serving the interests of companies and to improve the lives of the poor. Your donations can provide practical help to people directly affected by the current global trade system. Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to:

War on Want, FREEPOST

Name

Address please write in capitals

Postcode

Email please write clearly

I enclose a cheque / CAF Voucher / Postal Order /
CAF Card / made payable to War on Want

Please debit my Mastercard / Visa / Switch

Amount

Card Number

Valid From Expiry Date

Issue Number Switch Only

Security Code last 3 digits on your signature strip

Name of Cardholder

Signature(s)

Date

Gift Aid declaration: I am a UK tax payer and would like War on Want to reclaim the tax on all donations I have made during the 6 years prior to this date and any future donations I make.

NB: To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income tax or capital gains tax must be at least equal to the amount we will claim in the next tax year (currently 25p for each £1 you give with a further 3p contribution from HMRC until 2011).

Please tick if you DON'T want more information about War on Want's work



Sanchala in a home-garden created by the project

Sanchala Podimanike lives in Morayaya, Sri Lanka – a village benefiting from a project War on Want is supporting. She became involved with the project a year ago and says this has made a massive improvement to her family's life.

Immunity against the food crisis

War on Want's partner organisation in Sri Lanka, MONLAR, supports people like Sanchala by promoting sustainable agriculture and self-sufficiency. MONLAR provides farmers with training, seeds, equipment and knowledge of organic agriculture. The aim is to support farmers to produce enough fruit and vegetables for family consumption and to sell any surplus in the local market.

The training Sanchala has received has improved her skills and knowledge and she now makes her own fertiliser from compost and cultivates her crops in a more systematic way. With only a small plot of land she is able to grow a wide variety of crops such as peas, pumpkin, aubergine, yams and soya beans, providing her family with a healthy and varied diet. She even produces extra that she sells from home or at the local market, saying:

"When we only had my husband's wage this was not enough to cover food costs and other household expenditure, but now we don't have to buy any food so we have noticed little of the increases in food prices."

Now they can save parts of her husband's salary and some of the income from selling vegetables. This has enabled them to start building their own house and Sanchala's hope for the future is to continue growing vegetables so they can complete their house.

The ability to avoid the problems of national and global markets is stressed by many of the farmers involved in this project. One farmer, Vijitha Luxman, says: "The home-garden works as a kind of immune system: if prices go up nationally or internationally, we can survive without government support as we grow our own food." Farmers in Hennagara village say that they have not experienced the effects of the food crisis and only heard about it through the radio.

In a country that depends on imports of food staples like rice that has seen its price treble over the last year, War on Want is proud to support partner organisations that are helping people to grow their own food and make an income from their own produce to overcome poverty.

NEWS

Thank you to all those who donated so generously to our Palestine appeal in the last Up Front in June. We have raised over £13,000 towards our target of £25,000 (you can still donate!). These kind gifts will go a long way to ensure that through our local partners and campaigning in the UK, we will continue to demand an end to the occupation and poverty faced by Palestinians each and every day. War on Want staff have recently visited Palestine and fuller accounts of what they saw and learned will be reported on the War on Want website: www.waronwant.org

War on Want is proud to announce that we have joined forces with two new groups in South Africa, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign and Durban-based Abahlali baseMjondolo. These two partnerships will complement our existing work with partners in the country. They fight against evictions of slum-dwellers in South Africa and demand good, affordable public services such as water and electricity from the authorities. Through these new partnerships, we will help people who live in precarious housing conditions and broaden our existing work to help people who work outside the formal employment sector in Africa and across the developing world.

A front-page news story in The Guardian produced with our help secured a coveted prize in the One World Media Awards in June. Senior news reporter Karen McVeigh won the press section award for her story on workers making clothes for British stores who work for up to 80 hours a week for as little as 4p an hour in Bangladesh. The annual awards are run by the One World Broadcasting Trust, which aims to increase understanding between developed and developing countries. The judges chose McVeigh's story because the piece made the retailers pledge to improve working conditions in their supply chains.

We are happy to report a significant victory for our partner, the Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions. Eight prominent activists from the union had been accused by the Iraqi oil minister of 'illegal activities' and threatened with relocation from their workplaces in Basra to the much more dangerous cities of Baghdad and Nassiriyah. War on Want joined

with Iraqi unions, the British TUC and human rights activists to protest the move, which was a politically motivated attempt to silence the trade unionists and their opposition to the privatisation of Iraq's oil. Under this pressure, the government reversed its decision.

As the Bush administration comes to an end, it is becoming increasingly impatient with the stalled oil privatisation in Iraq and significantly increasing their pressure on the government to push it through. Take action with us on 11 October as we demonstrate with the Hands Off Iraqi Oil coalition to mark the last 100 days of Bush and Cheney in power and demonstrate against the Iraqi oil sell-off. For more details, visit the events page of our website.

Following on from the success of our photo exhibition on informal work in Zambia last year, we are delighted to be hosting a new exhibition in October with photographs from our partner in Guatemala, Conrado de La Cruz. These inspiring images by Julio Etchart show how our partner is giving child labourers their childhoods back through play and education outside their work time. The exhibition can be seen on the mezzanine floor at Rich Mix in East London. For more details, visit the events page of our website.



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War on Want, Development House,
56 - 64 Leonard Street, London EC2A 4LT
t: 020 7549 0555 f: 020 7549 0556