



Global express




The rapid response information series for schools
on world events in the news

TEACHERS' NOTES
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Fair trade



Philip Wolmuth/Panos Pictures

-  How is world trade organised?
-  What is fair trade about?
-  Becoming a fair trade school

WHILE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE depend on world trade for their survival, there is great controversy about how it is organised. **Global express** examines the current problems with world trade and explores solutions for fairer trade.

What is
Global express?

Global express
helps you teach
about topical global
issues and events.

Contains

Instant photocopiable
classroom activities for
8 to 14 year olds.

Primary

- Awareness of fair and unfair trade
- Empathy

Secondary

- Understanding trade rules
- Fair trade benefits
- Action for justice

Curriculum

- Literacy
- English
- Geography
- Citizenship
- 5-14 Curriculum Guidelines (Scotland)

World trade: the issues

On 10 September 2003, delegates from 146 countries met in the Mexican city of Cancun to discuss and decide the rules about how they trade with each other.

This was a World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting of government ministers. Four days later, the talks broke down when rich and poor countries could not reach agreement. Some people argue that the collapse of the talks is not a bad thing, on the grounds that 'no deal is better than a bad deal' for poor countries. Others argue that richer countries may now enter into more trade agreements with poor countries on a one-to-one basis rather than as a whole. This will actually make it more difficult for the latter to benefit from trade in the future.

The talks failed because rich and poor countries could not reach agreement on two key issues. The first and most contentious of these was agriculture. Rich countries were accused of double standards. They urged poor countries to open their markets while not being prepared to either open their own or reduce the huge subsidies to their own farmers. In the end, the rich countries would not agree to the abolition of all export subsidies, which make their agricultural products cheaper on world markets. The second issue was over large international companies being able to invest more easily in developing countries. Many countries felt that they would lose control of their resources, and argued that the WTO was not the best place for discussions like these.

A trading history

Historically there have been strong disagreements between advocates of free trade and those of protectionism. From the time of the Industrial Revolution, today's rich countries have periodically used tariff barriers to protect their growing industries from competition. Today, from a position of strength, they

advocate free trade through the WTO.

In 1947, just after the Second World War, countries met in Geneva, Switzerland, to try to give an early boost to freer trade as part of the process of rebuilding the global economy. Some 23 countries decided to reduce taxes on importing goods (tariffs) and on October 30, 1947, signed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (known as GATT). Tariffs on industrial goods were cut from 40% to less than 5%, in order to encourage more trade between countries. Between 1947 and 1994, eight successful trade rounds followed.

Many of those countries that did not take part in this process suffered slower economic growth and declining living standards while those that signed up prospered. Hence many people argue that this proves that freeing up trade can boost a country's economic growth.

In 1995 the World Trade Organisation was created in Geneva as a result of the 1986 GATT round launched in Uruguay. Discussions moved to encompass more complex areas such as intellectual property rights, agriculture and services that were not covered by GATT. GATT was a provisional legal agreement, whereas the WTO is an organisation, which countries can join provided they agree to abide by WTO permanent agreements.

As rich countries prospered in the post-war years, they made agreements with each other and with their own farmers to protect them from the impact of world markets, particularly the 'threat' of cheaper imports. In Europe, the policy known as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), takes up about 50% of the EU budget. According to some, this results in people in rich countries having to pay more for their food – about 42% more throughout Europe. It also results in over-supply as farmers get paid more for producing

more whether or not it's needed.

This oversupply is then sold to poorer countries more cheaply than if they produced the food themselves. More than three quarters of the 900 million people in developing countries living on less than one dollar per day are farmers. Policies such as CAP prevent them from exporting their produce as they cannot compete with low EC prices. They also face a flood of very cheap agricultural products being 'dumped' in their own markets, making it harder to sell their own food at home.

What now?

The collapse of the world trade talks may be a turning point in the history of free trade. Previously, rich countries have been able to persuade poor ones into agreeing with what they wanted by offering them aid or political support. But at Cancun, the larger developing countries - including China, Brazil and India - united to help fend off pressure from more powerful nations.

However, many say that now richer nations such as the EU, will start negotiating with countries on an individual basis rather than as a whole as they would have had to have done through the WTO. The US has already signed its own free trade agreements with Singapore and Chile, and is negotiating with five Central American nations.

In Cancun, South Korean farmer Lee Kyung Hae fatally stabbed himself through the heart in protest at the unfairness of world trade. His act provided confirmation that when it comes to trade, emotions run high. For many people, trade is literally a matter of life and death.

Pressure for fair trade

New alliances between Southern countries have increased their confidence and changed the balance of power in the WTO. At Cancun, the G20 formed one such alliance, which includes all the big developing countries, notably Brazil, China, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Nigeria, Indonesia and South Africa. This called for an end to export subsidies for farmers in the EU and USA that encourage dumping.

There are strong social movements emanating from the South such as Via Campesina, a global alliance of small family farmers, peasants, the landless and rural labourers. They believe food is a right, not a commodity, and that their job, the production of food, is fundamental to all human existence. For this reason they argue that trade in food should not be ruled by the WTO. They want 'food sovereignty'. This means:

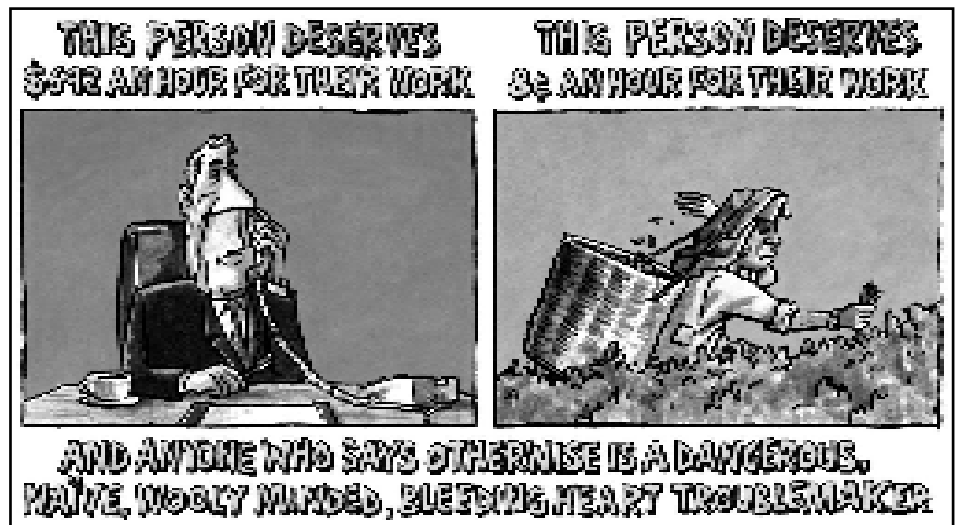
- reforming the global food trade to end dumping and subsidies to EC and US farmers
- protecting local markets
- ensuring fair prices for small farmers
- putting domestic food crops before export crops
- farming sustainably.

Overall they believe farmers, especially women, not agribusiness, should have more control of food production.

In the UK, the Trade Justice Movement, made up of leading aid agencies, environmental campaigners,

Agribusiness

This is made up of the big transnational corporations that control much of the food chain. Through the governments of the countries of the North, they have great influence with the WTO encouraging free trade in agricultural goods.



Polyp

trade unions, churches and consumer groups argue that the benefits of trade will only reach the poor if trade rules are weighted in favour of poor people and the environment. The UK government on the other hand believes that free trade can reduce world poverty while at the same time benefiting British industry and consumers. The Trade Justice Movement is arguing for a more democratic World Trade Organisation which gives poorer countries a stronger voice.

So is the WTO the right trade organisation for the reality of international trade today? In theory it is democratic with each country having an equal say. Members do have the power to change the rules. There will be testing times ahead!

Fair Trade

The Fair Trade campaign is part of this wider global movement for trade justice. It aims to provide an alternative model to the way that conventional international trade works by building fairer trading relationships between consumers who live in the North and commodity producers in the South. Many farmers and workers in the South depend on selling products such as tea, coffee and cocoa for their livelihoods.

However prices fluctuate widely and farmers do not get a fair share of the benefits of trade. Working conditions are often unsafe with low wages paid.

Fair Trade is about justice, not charity. Fair Trade production ensures

- small scale farmers receive a fair and guaranteed price for their product and workers in plantations and factories receive a fair wage
- a social premium, a set amount of money paid on top of the guaranteed price, is given to producers to invest in the development of their communities
- long-term trading contracts are provided so that farmers can have a degree of security
- minimum health, safety and environmental standards are guaranteed
- no child or forced labour can occur
- farmers may be encouraged to form co-operatives, whilst plantation and factory workers are free to join trade unions.

Products that carry the Fairtrade Mark are guaranteed to meet these standards. It is argued that by selling and purchasing goods that have been fairly traded we can improve the prospects of many people in the South.

World trade fact file

World Trade Organisation (WTO)

The WTO is an international organisation comprising 146 member countries (as of April 2003). An additional 32 nations have observer status. Its Director-General is Supachai Panitchpakdi from Thailand.

It was set up to

- administer WTO trade agreements
- provide a forum for trade negotiations
- handle trade disputes
- monitor national trade policies
- provide technical assistance and training for developing countries.

G20

The USA, the EC and the corporations that they represent have largely controlled trade rules. At Cancun the Southern countries of G20 formed a new opposing power bloc within the WTO. G20 is the name for a new alliance of developing countries. It includes India, China, Brazil, South Africa, and Turkey. Already it represents two-thirds of the world's farmers.

South-South cooperation

South-south cooperation has been around for some time, however, but it has so far failed to dent the North's power in international economic affairs.

Early 1960s: the Non-Aligned Movement attracted over a hundred

countries which were not aligned to either the West or the Soviet Union.

Late 1960s: the Group of 77 developing countries, which pressed the development case at international conferences.

Mid 1970s: The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) raised oil prices. This gave producers of other primary commodities the hope that they could do the same.

2003 at Cancun: the G20, which includes all the big developing countries, notably Brazil, China, India and South Africa, made an alliance to press for changes to trade rules to give a better deal for developing countries.

Source: John Madeley

Transnational corporations (TNCs)

Almost 70% of world trade is between TNCs. In today's world it is corporations that trade, not countries. The WTO has no role in regulating these powerful traders. They employ millions of workers, either directly or through subcontractors, on low wages and in often hazardous conditions that violate basic labour rights. Because of their size and power many TNCs operate beyond the control of national governments who are often desperate for foreign investment and unlikely to complain.

Source: *New Internationalist*

Free trade

Some argue that it leads to an efficient allocation of resources with food being produced at the lowest cost. But others point out that while consumers may gain from cheap imports, this only works if they have the money to buy them. For local food producers, meanwhile, cheap imports compete with and undermine their own production, driving many of them into poverty. Because agriculture in the USA and Europe is heavily subsidised, Southern producers cannot

compete. Critics believe free trade is not really free, and is certainly not fair.

Overproduction

Countries which have developed their capacity to produce and export cash crops are confronted with falling prices due to chronic world overproduction. Under free market pressure, quota agreements to prevent overproduction collapsed. This has caused the price of coffee to crash almost 50% in the past 3 years. Millions of coffee farmers face ruin. Families are unable to buy medicines, enough food or send their children to school. The big 4 corporations make the profits while farmers get a smaller and smaller share of market value.

Source: Fairtrade Foundation

Did you know...

- Rich countries provide £200 billion of subsidies each year for their farmers.
- For every £1 given in aid to poor countries, they lose £2 to rich countries because of unfair trade barriers against their exports.
- More than 40% of the world's population live in low-income countries, yet these countries account for just 3% of world trade.
- In Africa alone, a 1% increase in the share of world trade would generate \$70 billion, five times what the continent gets in aid.
- Africa has lost the equivalent of 50 pence in every pound received in aid because of the falling prices it receives for its commodities.
- Coffee prices have fallen 70% since 1997, costing exporters in poor countries \$8 billion.

Source: Fairtrade website

- The United Nations estimates that unfair trade rules deny poor countries £1.3 billion every year.

Front cover: Boxing bananas at a packing station on a smallholding in Castle Bruce, Dominica, in preparation for shipment to the UK under the Fairtrade scheme.

Fair Trade fact file

Products that carry the Fairtrade Mark are guaranteed to meet certain minimum standards. See page 3 for details of these.

Cocoa, coffee, tea, bananas, mangos, pineapples, sugar, chocolate, snacks, biscuits, orange juice and honey are currently available with the Fairtrade Mark in the UK. Other fresh fruit, rice and cotton are all in development. Annual sales of Fairtrade products in the UK have now reached £63 million. As a result of these, a minimum of 500,000 farmers and workers throughout Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia benefit from a better deal.

Sales of Fairtrade products in Co-op stores expanded from £100,000 to £7.5 million in 4 years from 1998 to 2002. Sainsbury's now sells 1 million Fairtrade Marked bananas a week.

Fairtrade internationally involves 360 producer groups, representing 4.5 million producers and their families in 45 countries.

Source: *Fair Comment*, August 2003



The Trade Justice Movement is calling for these changes:

- For rich countries to remove barriers to imports for all low-income countries. This would encourage the latter's exports.
- To stop forcing poor countries to open their markets and to allow them to support their producers.
- To ban agricultural subsidies in the North, thus stopping overproduction and the dumping of surplus food.
- Action to stabilise prices for primary commodities at higher levels so that more is paid to small farmers.

Fair trade, local and global

When Garstang, in Lancashire, was declared a Fairtrade town, local dairy farmers marched down High Street with a banner declaring 'We want a fair share of the bottle!'. The fact is that small farmers across the world, whether they be cocoa farmers in Ghana or hill farmers in the UK, are so often forced to sell their produce for less than it cost to produce it. Why do farmers get a raw deal with only 7% of the money consumers spend on food? The consumer likes to buy cheap, so supermarkets force the price down. But cheap food has detrimental consequences for the lives of farmers and for the environment. Fair trade has shown that consumers are willing to pay a fair price for food. This helps lead to sustainable development. A pilot project is now being run to bring the fair trade system to our own local farmers.

Becoming a Fair Trade school

Ideas and questions for an action plan:

- **Get informed:** Where can we get hold of resources and materials on fair trade? Introduce the idea of fair trade during a school assembly and follow up with workshops in each class. Teach about fair trade in a range of curriculum areas. Can we get hold of fair trade education resources? Hold a debate about fair trade to argue the pros and cons and raise awareness.
- **Trying the products:** Arrange a tasting of Fairtrade products to attract interest and show how good they are. Set up a fair trade stall or hold a fair trade display where all the school community and visitors will be able to see it. Hold a fair trade event for the wider community - a Fairtrade coffee morning, a games evening, fair or harvest festival. Tie an activity in with a national event, such as Fairtrade Fortnight, the first two weeks in March.
- **Change in practice:** Serve only Fairtrade tea and coffee, in the staff room and to visitors. Or should there be a choice? Serve Fairtrade snack and chocolate bars at the school's tuck shop. Should we provide vending machines with Fairtrade and organic snacks? Find out what produce the school canteen uses. Is it locally produced? Is it fairly traded?
- **Fair trade in the community:** Look at page 7 for ideas.

... "I said to my Dad 'Can we buy Fairtrade bananas?' He said 'What's Fairtrade?' I told him 'It's getting paid a fair price for what you make'." ... Alexandra, age 8

IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Curriculum links

PRIMARY

Literacy: non-fiction.

English: speaking and listening; writing in response to stimuli.

Personal, social and health education and citizenship: research, discuss, debate topical issues; participate; explain their views on issues that affect themselves and society.

SECONDARY

English: speaking and listening; non-fiction texts; information texts; writing to analyse, review, comment.

Citizenship: the world as a global community; interconnectedness of people and places; topical issues; personal opinion; the world as a global community; discuss and debate; considering others' experiences; skills of participation and responsible action.

Geography: interdependence through trade; development issues; environmental issues; issues of topical significance.

Religious and Moral Education: justice and fairness; values and moral issues.

Trade: unfair and fair

Age range: 8-12

Purpose: To raise children's knowledge about trade and awareness that it may be fair or unfair.

Ask the children: is all the food we eat grown here in this country? Where does some of it come from? Can they name any countries? Use a world map or globe to point out some of these.

Introduce the idea of people working to make a living. What would be a fair living? Does everyone get a fair living for what they do in this country? Some jobs, such as cleaners, get very low pay. What would be 'fair' to people wherever they work?

Using FT1, ask the children to write

down their ideas. Share these, making a class list of unfair and fair trade.

Growing our bananas

Purpose: To raise awareness of the different working conditions in which bananas are grown.

Ask the children: what is your favourite fruit? Bananas are the most popular fruit sold in the UK. Ask the pupils to read through page FT2. In pairs or small groups discuss and note down some answers to the questions. As a whole class list what is fair about the situation of Maudrie Davroux and her family, and what is unfair about life on the plantation. What would need to change on the plantation to make life fairer for those working there? Would our bananas cost more as a result?

Be ethical: buy Fairtrade

Age range: 8-14

Purpose: To read about, empathise with and reflect on the views of someone with direct experience of unfair trade.

Arrange for a speaker to visit the class to talk about fair trade. See if it possible to get someone from a Southern country, a person with direct experience of the damaging impact trade rules can have on peoples' livelihoods. Traidcraft can arrange for speakers too. Ask the speaker if he/she would be prepared to be interviewed by the class. Prior to the visit, prepare the pupils by giving any background you can to the speaker's country and the topic. Ask the pupils to work in groups to make up any questions they would like to ask the speaker. Share these with the whole class, generating a list and putting this in logical order.

The North-South divide

Age range: 10-14

Purpose: To discover geographical facts about North and South and the trade between them. To explore reasons for this division.

Using FT4, use a globe or an atlas to find the location of the countries named. Use two different colours - one to indicate the countries where the multinational companies are based; the other for the producing countries. Use a key to indicate the three different commodities. Have any of the students heard the terms 'North' and 'South' in this context? Students may know of terms like 'Third World', rich/poor countries, developed/developing world. This is another way of conceptualising world divisions. Discuss with the class what the terms imply. 'Developing' can mean "you're not up to our standard yet". 'Poor' may refer to material poverty, but there is the danger that these can imply inferiority in other ways, such as in cultural or social terms. North-South has a more neutral resonance, but can serve to help illustrate the very real power divisions in the world, such as over the control of trade and markets. It is still a crude division. Is there poverty in the North?.. in the UK? Are all countries in the South materially poor? Additional information is available on teacher page 4.

Trade rules, OK?

Age range: 12-14

Purpose: To learn vocabulary and better understand economic concepts relating to trade. To understand how trade rules work, benefiting some whilst impoverishing others.

Using page FT5 ask pupils to work in

IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM

[continued from page 6]

pairs on the definitions. You may want to check the understanding of some of the words in the definitions. Check the answers (which are at the bottom of this page!) and discuss the definitions with the whole class. Have they heard of these words in relation to the UK or the EC? The terms are used again in the case studies below on page FT5 and illustrate something of the impact of current trade rules on countries of the South.

Ask the students to work in pairs on each case study in turn. Who benefits in each example? What is the impact on poverty and who is affected? How might trade rules be altered to improve the conditions of poor farmers and plantation workers? Ask the students to draw up a list of proposals saying what they think the effect would be of each. Who might lose some of their benefits under suggested changes? Look at the website of the Trade Justice Movement. Additional information is available on teacher pages 4 and 5.

Being active for justice

Age range: 8-14

Purpose: To raise pupils' awareness of the issues of fair trade and to reflect on what can be done to act for justice.

Ask pupils to look at the photographs on page FT6 and work through the answers to the questions in pairs or small groups. Then discuss the answers with the whole class. Ask the pupils to make notes about each of the messages on the posters to build up an argument for the stocking of fair trade goods by local shops and supermarkets. These could be turned into letters asking what the different supermarkets are doing. They could find out what fair traded goods are being stocked and what their policies towards fair traded goods are.

Discuss with pupils whether they have had experience of a demonstration. What was it about? How did it feel? What other ways are there of trying to bring about change? Ask pupils to design their own posters. They could research information about particular products - coffee, bananas, trainers, - the working conditions of their producers, to help provide detail for the posters. This could contribute to a fair trade display or stall in school.

Benefits of Fair Trade

Age range: 10-14

Purpose: To create a feeling that change is possible. To become aware of the improvements that can be made to people's lives through their purchases of Fairtrade goods.

Children can often share with us a feeling of hopelessness towards global problems. It is important that they are made aware of success stories and that their actions make a difference.

Look at FT7. Imagine life for a person before becoming part of a Fairtrade scheme. Discuss the differences in the quality of lives that people experience as a result of schemes.

Ask pupils to find out where their clothes and shoes have come from. Look at the labels for a start. What companies sold these? Were they made overseas? Research the conditions of the people who made the clothes and shoes. Write to the companies requesting information on their products, the wages they pay workers, etc. Were they fairly traded? Note that not all fairly traded goods carry the Fairtrade Mark.

It's your choice!

Age range: 12-14

Purpose: To explore consumer ethics and reflect on their own choices and responsibilities.

Clarify the meaning of 'ethics'. Ask the pupils to think of any products they have heard of being bought or boycotted. Generate lists of these together with the belief associated with them. Individually, pupils note down what they would personally do in relation to these. Read through what the two retailers believe. Discuss with a partner – are they persuaded to buy fairly traded goods? What do they do in practice? What are the other factors that influence what you buy? What does the term 'global citizen' mean to them? What does it imply?

Find where fairly traded goods can be bought locally. Would they be prepared to encourage their families to buy these regularly? Additional information is available on teacher page 5.

Fair Trade in the community

Age range: 8-14

Purpose: To research fair trade in the community and to put forward views and ideas based on this.

Arrange a visit to a fair trade shop. Carry out a survey of local sources of fair trade, for example local supermarkets. What about fairly traded products that don't carry the Fairtrade Mark? Survey supermarket prices - how do Fairtrade products compare? Identify companies that consumers should endorse because of their fair trade practices and produce their own local guide. Write to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to encourage our government to act to make trade rules more just.

Recommended resources

AVAILABLE MAIL ORDER FROM DEP
Postage and packing will be charged extra.

All you need for a Fair Trade Assembly. £1
Plans for three assemblies involving minimal preparation and maximum participation, highlighting different types of trade: chocolate, bananas and fashion.

Best of the Bunch, £2
Banana production in the Windward Islands.

Bananas Unpeeled. £10
A video for age 13+ with teaching and action notes looking at banana production in Latin America.

The Truth about Bananas
An information and activity pack for age 10+ with action notes, discussion ideas and role plays.

Chocolate Game. £4.75
A simulation game for age 11-18+ where players discover the influence our purchasing power has on the lives of cocoa producers.

Fair Trade in Action. £16
This flexible pack introduces students 11-14 to the concept of fair trade. With video, case studies, photographs and a simple to play whole class game.

Go Bananas. £13.00
A KS 2 photopack with activities looking at the journey of a banana from the Caribbean to the UK. This (third) edition includes a literacy activity and fully updated curriculum links.

Local Citizen, Global Citizen. £12.99
A lively KS 2 pack to help children explore and understand the concepts of development and interdependence. The Global Cake game introduces pupils to the complications of trade, as

well as the unfairness of it. Follow up activities ensure the subject is well-covered.

Making a Meal of It. £13.95
Why are some people hungry even though they grow food? This photopack will help children 8-14 examine issues of food and development.

BACKGROUND READING

Ethical Shopping. £7.99
An up-to-date look at fair and ethical trade for the responsible consumer. Age 16+.

No-Nonsense Guide to Fair Trade. £7
One of the new series from New Internationalist, crammed with facts and figures.

Rethinking Globalization. £25
A rich collection of essays, photos, cartoons and poems providing a one-stop education on wealth, poverty, trade and corporate power. With sections on sweatshops and child labour as well

Websites

- www.maketrade4fair.com Oxfam. Lots of accessible information on the issues, and the impact on people's lives.
- www.fairtrade.org.uk Fairtrade Foundation. Promotes Fair Trade and monitors the Fairtrade Mark. Links to resources, teaching and campaigning ideas.
- www.tjm.org.uk Trade Justice Movement.
- www.wdm.org.uk/campaign/WTO.htm The World Development Movement campaigns for real reform of the WTO to put people's needs before free trade.
- www.wto.org The World Trade Organisation website.
- www.bananalink.org.uk/ Banana Link campaigns for small producers in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America.
- www.bafts.org.uk/ British Association for Fair Trade Shops (BAFTS). A network of independent shops across the UK.
- www.traidcraft.co.uk/ Traidcraft. Distributes Fair Trade food and crafts.
- www.newint.org The New Internationalist site looking a world poverty and inequality with up-to-date reports on world trade issues.

Global express aims to enable young people to gain a greater understanding of the context in which news stories from the developing world happen, and to build links between their experience of life in the UK and their understanding of development issues. Editions reach teachers within 10 days of a high-profile news story, and provide materials that help answer young people's questions and increase their critical awareness of how the media can influence their image of the developing world.

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Visit the **Global express** web site: <http://www.dep.org.uk/globalexpress>

Previous editions

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Edition 1, Tune into the News, is a 16-page edition which has activities on the media and exploring controversial issues.