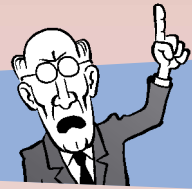


For years now, big shots in business and government have told us...



“Globalization is not a policy choice, it’s a fact.”

“Giving corporations more freedom will lift people out of poverty. Governments need to get out of the way, and let the market make decisions.”



“Globalization is irreversible!”



But most Canadians, along with people around the world, know better...

What’s been a bonanza for big corporations and private investors has been bad news for the rest of us — and for the public good. Our resources and the environment are under threat. Our public services such as health care are being cut and privatized. Our jobs and the promise of a living wage are being steadily eroded.

On the global stage, the Canadian government has become an important ally to the United States in pushing the flawed free trade model on unwilling countries around the world.

But we believe that a better Canada, and a better world, is possible.



Why is free trade and economic globalization failing most people?

It favours corporate rights over community rights.

Free trade agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) give special rights to big corporations through “investor state dispute settlement mechanisms.” Even though companies don’t sign these treaties and have no obligations to respect them, they are allowed to sue governments if public interest laws hamper their ability to make a profit.



It widens the gap between rich and poor.

Several United Nations and World Bank reports demonstrate that the gap between rich and poor is growing between countries and within countries. We see it in the U.S. and Canada, where 16 per cent of children live below the poverty line. Not surprisingly, studies done for the 10th anniversary of NAFTA show that Canadians’ standard of living is falling, that our social programs are being reduced or privatized, and that more and more people are working part-time, insecure jobs with few benefits.

It undermines democracy.

Most free trade agreements have some sort of “necessity” language. This means that national, provincial or municipal government regulation can’t be “more burdensome than necessary” to commercial interests. Who decides whether public interest laws are “burdensome” for business? Elected officials don’t! Trade experts in Geneva or Washington make these kinds of decisions behind closed doors.

It prevents people from producing food for their livelihoods.

Farming is a way of life for millions of people and a pillar of communities around the world. But free trade favours concentration of production and increases the power of multinational corporations. Giant agribusiness companies, often subsidized by governments, push down the price of commodities, flooding the markets with their cheap products. This is forcing millions of peasants and family farmers out of business in northern and southern countries alike.

There are thousands of alternatives! Here is how we can start to change the rules of the game...

Protect the “global commons.”

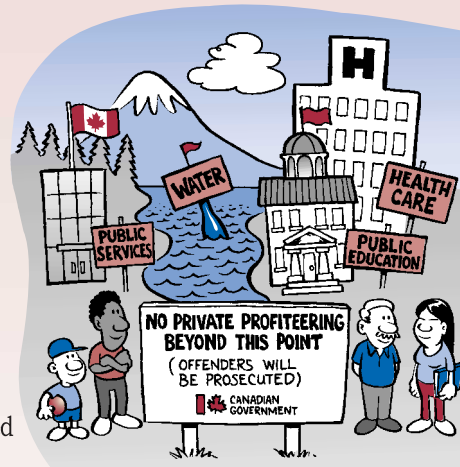
Free trade agreements give too much power to corporations, and not enough power to citizens. Some things — like water, education, culture and public services — should be considered part of the “global commons,” and excluded from a trade system based on profit incentives.

Strengthen and enforce multilateral agreements on the environment and human rights.

Multilateral environmental and human rights agreements like the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should take precedence over trade agreements. We live in an interdependent world, and Canada should be using its connections with other countries to protect the environment and improve people’s living conditions.

Use national legislation to protect public services.

National governments can make laws that protect public services from being taken over by profit-seeking corporations. Venezuela’s constitution prohibits the privatization of public services, Mexico protects its vital oil resources and Uruguay recently amended its constitution to declare water a human right.



Support local economies.

Free trade favours export-led economic growth, sacrificing small farmers, producers and business owners in the process. We should encourage and support local, community-based economic development, allowing people to take control of their livelihoods and communities.

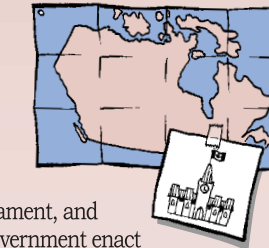
Here’s how you can help make trade work for people:



Locally

- Buy local produce, and support community-owned small businesses.
- Encourage local agriculture, even in urban areas.
- Write letters to the editor of community and national newspapers, explaining why we need to make trade work for everyone.
- Organize a conference with other community groups in your neighbourhood, exploring the alternatives to corporate globalization.

Nationally



- Encourage your friends and neighbours to vote.
- Contact your Member of Parliament, and demand that the Canadian government enact national policies that protect water, energy and public services from the reaches of trade agreements.

Internationally



- Join the fight to strengthen international treaties to protect the environment, culture, water, labour rights and human rights.
- Join organizations that are working for global social justice — like the Council of Canadians.
- Buy fair trade products.

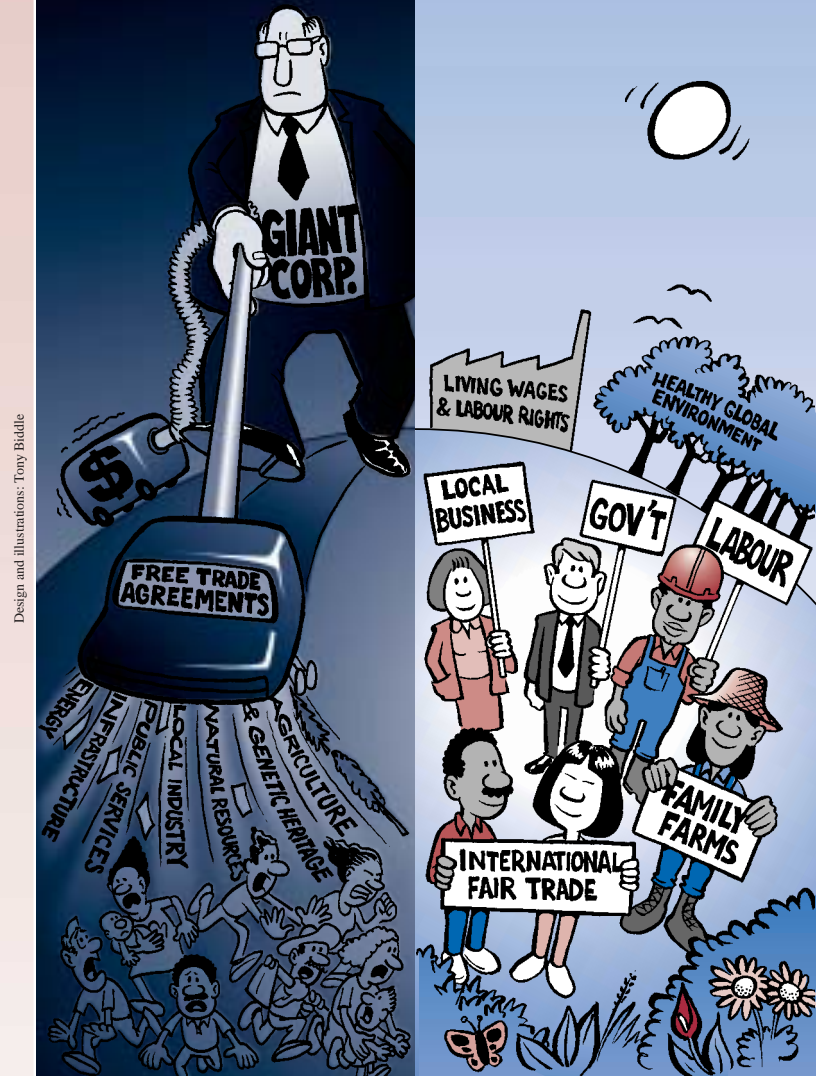
There are thousands of alternatives! Help make trade work for everyone.

For more information on how to support fair trade in your community, please visit www.canadians.org, or call 1-800-387-7177.



What’s wrong with world trade?

What are the alternatives?



Design and illustrations: Tony Bidde

Help us make trade work for everyone.

