



● Social Justice

Social justice is a central pillar of social democracy, which is what the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung stands for. Trade unions are key actors in promoting democracy and social justice. Promoting social dialogue and labour relations based on social partnership and thus promoting trade unions is one of the core tasks of our international activities in our approximately 100 projects world-wide. These activities are carried out in close cooperation with the German Trade Union Confederation DGB and its affiliates.



● Shaping Globalisation in a Socially Just Way

The dynamics of globalisation is mainly driven by economic interests. In the social sphere this has increased marginalisation and exclusion, and the living conditions of millions of workers have deteriorated. Together with our partners, we support the introduction and respect of global rules and norms that regulate globalisation in a socially just way.

● Strong Trade Unions

For unions, too, globalisation is a challenge of vital significance. On the national level, we promote unions as effective representatives of their members' interests and as democratic actors in their respective societies. Furthermore, we support trade unions in getting more involved in global issues.

● Gender Equality

Very often, women are over-proportionally affected by the negative consequences of globalisation. We strive for women and men having an equal influence on political decisions so that they both can benefit in the same way.



● Global Trade Union Organisations

The core of our international trade union work is the co-operation with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the Global Union Federations (GUF's). The ICFTU is a global confederation of 233 national trade union federations with 151 million members in 152 countries. GUF's are global federations of industrial unions on the sectoral level. We also support trade union networks that have emerged to deal with issues of international trade and finance or specific problems such as the fight against HIV/AIDS.

● Regional Alliances

The different processes of regional integration first and foremost follow economic interests. But increasingly trade unions also work together regionally in order to defend their interests in these regional settings as well. We promote and support such alliances, for example in the European Union, in Central and Eastern Europe, in South America's Common Market MERCOSUR, in Southern Africa, and in South-East Asia.

● International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's)

An important partner of the FES is the ILO, which plays a pivotal role in setting international minimum labour standards and developing the concept of "decent work". On a number of specific issues, such as the implementation and the monitoring of codes of conduct for multinational enterprises, "fair trade", or political lobbying for workers' rights, different NGO's are also relevant for our work.

● Education and Training

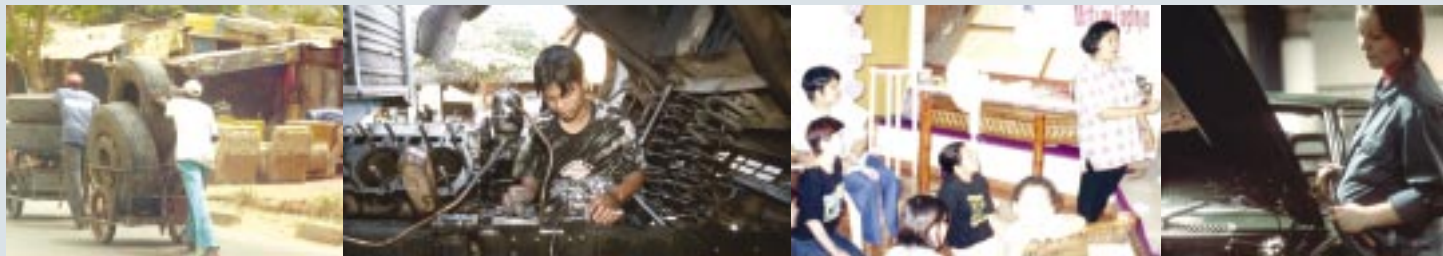
Most unions in the South act in a hostile environment – a fact that strongly impairs their potentials to develop and their chances to succeed. It is our major concern to enable these unions to play a relevant role on the national level, to engage other stakeholders in dialogue, to build alliances and to shape national policies. This, however, is only possible if unions are strong and competent enough, to represent their members' interests, and to be respected as powerful actors by their governments, employers' organisations and societies at large. Here, training and advice play an important role.

For these reasons, we also support a masters course on "Global Labour Policies" at the University of Kassel and the Berlin School of Economics.

www.global-labour-university.de

● Global Trade Union Policies

Globalisation also manifests itself in the increasing importance of global regulations for international trade and finance. The institutions of "global governance", in particular the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), as well as the influence of multinational corporations have an impact on the room for manoeuvre of national governments and national economic and social policies. Trade unions not only must be powerful national actors but also become capable of acting globally through cooperation and networking. We want to support this process in particular in the following thematical areas:



● Implementation of Social Standards

Social standards can be an effective tool in building a social framework for globalisation. They include core labour standards, (freedom of association, the right to bargain collectively, the prohibition of child labour and of forced labour, non-discrimination at the workplace), as well as other social norms, for example, on health and safety. Like the German federal government, we continue to work for the respect of social standards to become a globally accepted goal.

● Economic Integration and Social Rights

Economic integration agreements first and foremost follow an economic logic whereas the social dimension is often neglected. Together with our trade union partners, we try to impress upon governments and employers the need for safeguarding social minimum standards in economic integration or when concluding multilateral and bilateral trade agreements.

● Multinational Corporations

The working conditions in transnational corporations often differ widely between their different workplaces in various global locations. We support the Global Union Federations in their endeavour to sign and monitor globally binding framework agreements for multinational corporations

within their respective industrial sectors, thus creating a binding regulatory framework of minimum standards for these corporations and their suppliers. This also includes the promotion of global union networks on the company level.

● “Codes of Conduct” and “Fair Trade”

Codes of Conduct that the companies adopt themselves or “fair trade” which also includes social criteria cannot replace an efficient labour legislation nor the protective power of collective agreements. However, they are important tools in order to create an awareness of social problems and to facilitate the formation of trade unions. We support unions as well as NGO’s in their endeavour to carry out a number of these initiatives.

● “Trade Union Rights are Human Rights”

Fundamental social rights which have been adopted by the ILO and the UN are still ignored and violated across the world. This reaches from restrictions to legitimate trade union work, and the suppression of union organising to situations where trade unionists are systematically intimidated, tortured and assassinated.

We support programmes to defend fundamental human and trade union rights in the different countries and regions.

Global Network of FES-offices

Each of the roughly 100 field offices of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung carries out national trade union programmes and takes part in the implementation of regional and global trade union activities. These activities are developed by a trade union support team at head office in cooperation with our partners.

Further Information

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Founded in 1925 as Germany's first political foundation, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is a private, non-profit organisation committed to the precepts of social democracy. It bears the name of the first democratically elected president of Germany, Friedrich Ebert, preserving his legacy: the promotion of freedom, solidarity and social justice through the political process. The FES undertakes to carry out this mission in Germany and abroad through its programmes promoting political education, international cooperation, study and research.

Globalisation and Social Justice

The Promotion of Trade Unions in International Cooperation

