



student action on world poverty and the environment

## Proposal for second campaign theme from 2009/10

DEADLINE for ideas Sunday 6 January 2008

<http://peopleandplanet.org/forum/08>

### Your details

Please provide the names of People & Planet group members who are putting this proposal forward (there may be up to 4 proposers but there should be at least 2):

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### Your proposal for second campaign theme from 2009/10

Total word limit for this section: **1000 words**.

Title	Peace
Summary of your proposal for The Forum Guide (no more than 200 words).	War is bad. Peace is a fundamental human right of which many people in the world are robbed, and this is unacceptable. People & Planet can use its passionate and influential voice to seek a world of less violence by campaigning on matters where we can have an effect. This would include: the causes of conflict, for example water shortages and the culture of violence; the means of conflict, for example nuclear weapons and the arms trade; and methods for tackling these, for example in peace education and divestment from arms companies. Peace is also an essential condition for addressing other issues such as global

warming, poverty and health. Indeed, what is the point in us trying to halt climate change in order to protect the human race, if those humans are just going to carry on killing one another?

**What** is the proposed campaign theme?

The causes and means of execution of conflict are the focus. 'Conflict' could be taken to include oppressive military regimes, dictatorships and terrorism as well as head-to-head wars.

Possible strands:

Arms -

Weapons made in the west often find their way to dodgy regimes indirectly. Stricter measures are needed from the governing bodies to prevent this from happening. Disinvestment of universities and local councils from arms companies has already been spreading across the UK, thanks to P&P.

Nuclear Weapons –

The UK's nuclear weaponry is a controversial matter, but it cannot be denied that these pose a huge threat to both people and planet. Many P&P members have shown their disapproval by demonstrating at Faslane.

Water and other environmental resources -

This is often a major cause of conflict, so if we could help everyone to have access to essential resources, there would be no need to fight over them. This might involve campaigning against water privatisation, teamed with the World Development Movement.

Peace education and addressing the culture of violence -

There are already groups of P&P students who visit schools with presentations and workshops on conflict and nuclear weapons. This would be an ideal activity for the 6<sup>th</sup> form groups, or groups who wanted to have a local focus. There is generally very little awareness of what wars are happening where, which hinders people from acting on the issues. An interactive 'conflict map' screensaver for all university and school computers would be an idea, and some comprehensive publicity.

**Why** are you proposing this campaign theme?

*1 . . . is a significant human rights, poverty and/or environmental injustice.*

Firstly, war negates many people's right to live. It often deprives them of the right to food, water and medicine, especially as aid workers are unable to access the area. Many children are denied education in becoming child soldiers. Torture and rape are as weapons of war are inhumane abuses of human rights. Where there is war, people live in fear, and this is unjust while others live in relative safety.

The enormous cost of war – or being prepared for war – severely reduces the amount of money which countries have to spend on tackling poverty, as well as damaging their economy.

War causes direct environmental damage in the areas where it occurs, for example by pollution and destruction of habitats, as well as contributing hugely to greenhouse gas emissions with all its tanks, planes and transporting. Nuclear weapons are a potentially catastrophic environmental hazard.

*2 . . . is raised by those affected or in solidarity with them.*

Several calls have been made from poor countries asking Britain to stop exporting arms to certain governments. Most people experiencing war would welcome a call for peace.

*3 . . . can be tackled by People & Planet as a student network.*

We may not be able to, or want to, influence governments on such huge issues as war, but we can make a positive contribution in ways such as divestment and education as described above.

*4 . . . could include a variety of campaign goals and targets developed.*

'Peace' will never be obtained perfectly, of course, but the broad title does mean that the scope is wide for campaign strands. There are many tangible changes that we can work towards, as described above.

*5 . . . is meaningful to students across the People & Planet Network, by age, geography, interest experience and skills.*

This is a global issue; therefore it is as important to each People & Planet member as much as the next. The wide range of possible action-points means that some groups can choose to exercise their political experience and skills in influencing the government's legislation, while others may prefer the more local task of asking their university to disinvest in arms companies.

*6 . . . has opportunities for cooperation with other groups, including those in the Global South.*

The campaign theme would be well received throughout the community: the aspiration of peace is common to all. P&P already has links with groups such as Stop the War, CAAT, and WDM. Cooperation with groups in war-torn areas is also possible, and would be extremely beneficial in awareness-raising as well as contributing towards the global cooperation that prevents conflict.

*7 . . . can be contributed to by People & Planet in a unique way and plays on our strengths as a student network.*

P&P's strongest assets here are its youthful passion and idealism that holds on to its values, as well as a respected and well-known voice which can influence governing bodies. P&P believes in peace – its non-violent means of campaigning demonstrates this.

*8 . . . has a body of research and resources available to us in order to develop the campaign.*

Many organisations have worked, and do work on this. A bit of a trawl on the web leads you to:

Campaigns organisations -

<http://www.for.org.uk/resources>

<http://www.quno.org/publications/pubProgramme.htm>

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/issues/conflict/introduction.html>

<http://www.controlarms.org/>

More academic stuff -

[http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/UCDP/our\\_data.htm](http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/UCDP/our_data.htm)

<http://www.correlatesofwar.org/>

Also, crucially, the media would be a very good resource for campaigns on current conflicts – both for getting information and for making our voice heard.

*9 . . . fits in with and draws from current and past People & Planet's campaigns.*

The arms trade has not been a P&P campaign since 2003, but this history would certainly help a future campaign. As a theme which will be running alongside Climate Change for the years to come, 'Peace' is ideal. Action on Climate change needs global cooperation, which cannot occur if countries are at war. But we also need peace as a *reason* to act on climate change: as stated above, there is no point in preserving civilisation if we continue killing each other.

If you need any help or advice relating to completing this form please contact your support office contact or Joe in the Forum team [joe.greenwood@peopleandplanet.org](mailto:joe.greenwood@peopleandplanet.org) or call 01865 245678

When completed, please return by email to [forum@peopleandplanet.org](mailto:forum@peopleandplanet.org)