



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):

Proposer 1

Name	Sarah Waldron
Email	
Address	
Phone	
People & Planet group	Support Office

Proposer 2

Name	Anna Wolmuth
Email	
Address	
Phone	
People & Planet group	Support Office

Your proposal for second campaign theme from 2009/10

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

Title	People and planet before profit
Summary of your proposal for The Forum Guide (no more than 200 words).	<p>The size and influence of some corporations dwarfs that of many countries. The unaccountable economic and political might of corporations is used to drive an economic model based on unsustainable consumption, and create policies that keep the poor poor, degrade our environment, abuse human rights and undermine democracy. Corporate decision making is based on maximising profits not social needs or environmental sustainability. The campaign would demand that corporations are held accountable for their impact on people and planet, and for public policy to be based on meeting social needs, rather than delivering private profit.</p> <p>The campaign theme could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging the takeover of public services and space by corporations - at home and abroad; • Strengthening national and international legislation to govern corporate behaviour; • Challenging corporate influence internationally – e.g. promotion of privatisation and unfettered trade liberalisation, abusing market power, transfer of wealth from developing countries through avoidance of tax; • Exposing the impacts of a specific industry sector, e.g. manufacturing, extractive industries; • Corporate influence on education – e.g. the

- involvement of companies in setting the curriculum in academy schools, sponsorship setting priorities in university research
- Positive alternatives e.g. union rights, co-operatives, broader 'ethical' business practices

What is the proposed campaign theme?

Please see summary above.

Why are you proposing this campaign theme?

(Use this space to explain why your proposed campaign theme is important and how meets the following 9 criteria)

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

It tackles the root causes of economic, human rights and environmental injustice by holding powerful companies to account for their impact. Corporations are currently able to use their economic power to drain wealth from poor countries, and behave in ways which infringe people's rights and damage the environment, and mechanisms to govern their behaviour and hold them to account are limited. Our rights to healthcare, education, water etc. are threatened when it is private companies providing these services for a profit. Some people are excluded from these services through inability to pay and democratic control over key elements of our lives is undermined. By failing to hold corporations responsible for their negative impact, and by allowing national and international policy to be driven by corporate interests, not the interests of people and planet, governments are cooperating in, and perpetuating, these injustices.

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

It affects us all – in the West, with specific examples we can tackle in the UK, and in the global South. Campaigning for companies to be held to account for their impact and against the privatisation of public services demonstrates powerfully how it is the same forces of corporate domination operating around the world, and limiting the power of all of us to achieve change

From garment workers organising for a living wage in Bangladesh; Indian farmers driven into debt by the high cost of fertilisers and GM seeds; patients' groups in South Africa fighting to access affordable medicines; biofuel 'solutions' to climate change driving food poverty; to UK farmers trying to get a fair price from Tesco people worldwide are trying to defend their rights and regain control over their lives. And there are plenty of encouraging stories of success to spur us on, such as the migrant workers in Florida fighting fast-food chains for fair pay and the Bolivians in Cocha Bamba who reclaimed control of their water supply from a private company.

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

There are opportunities for local action for sixth form, FE and university groups, and working together across the UK we could have an impact on national and international policy.

There's lots of potential for actions focused around our strong-hold of education institutions. Our schools and universities themselves can have a powerful influence on companies both directly and indirectly, as large purchasers of goods and services, and as big institutional investors. They are a major recruiting ground for most companies – we represent the target market as consumers and employees for most corporations leaving us well placed to influence their behaviour.

In addition to the many education specific targets and tactics we can choose (privatisation of education, corporate sponsorship, ethical investment, purchasing), we shouldn't forget that our strength as a network, and our ability to raise awareness among fellow students and the general public, allows us to take on a really important role in campaigns to change national and international policy.

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

This can (and needs to) be tackled at a number of levels, offering a variety of targets. The campaign summary suggests a variety of goals and targets – locally, national and internationally, with a variety of tactics applicable – from lobbying politicians or local decision makers to media stunts, and direct action.

It also offers both a critique (i.e. unaccountable corporations driven by profit damaging people and planet) – and positive solutions: prioritising people’s welfare and the environment - whether through from legislation, alternative policy making structures, or different methods of organising, e.g. co-operatives.

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

There are loads of options; we’d just need to pick carefully what is most important given all these considerations, and which targets would give us the most coherent, effective campaign that offers something to everyone.

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

Lots. It should offer an opportunity for really responsive (including rapid response) actions, in support of grass-roots organisations taking on particular companies, but also longer term collaborations including with trade union coalitions here in the UK (a source of funding for P&P?), and internationally, local community campaigns like Keep Our NHS Public, other NGOs such as WDM or War on Want, research organisations such as Corporate Watch, coalitions such as the Corporate Responsibility coalition, and international networks such as the Tax Justice Network.

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

Yes, see above. And corporate campaigning offers real opportunities for creative action on all levels, there are a lot of education focused opportunities, and the long-term, action focused, radical, coherent campaign we can offer is just what’s needed.

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

Reams of the stuff (see 6 above for a small flavour of some of the diverse organisations working on different aspects of this issue).

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

Fairtrade. Redress Fashion. Ethical Investment. RBS. Treat AIDS Now (who really devised TRIPS?), Trade Justice Movement campaigning on WTO and company law reform. Getting Pepsi out of Burma. The supermarket campaign. Stop Esso.

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 or call 01865 245678

When completed, please return by email to forum@peopleandplanet.org