



student action on world poverty and the environment

Forum 2006: Fundraising Session

The Fundraising consultation was split into two sessions. The first looked at the draft corporate guidelines, while the second explored the importance of (and ways forward for) fundraising from the Network.

Session 1: Corporate Guidelines Consultation:

The issue:

People & Planet has raised money in sponsorship from businesses for much of the past 10 years. Following a request from the network working group on democracy - and in order to improve transparency and introduce a framework for fundraisers - the fundraising team have drafted a set of ethical guidelines for corporate sponsorship. The Forum session was an opportunity for the network to feed into the development of these guidelines before they are finally agreed.

What you said:

"Proper research of corporates is absolutely necessary"

"We need to make People & Planet's philosophy clear before we can use it to measure against corporates"

"Most people seem to be 'in the middle' about the general idea of sponsorship"

"Corporates interfere with democracy - focus on other sources!"

"Corporates are a practical necessity"

"Need the same depth of research for all sources of funding - corporate and otherwise"

"We need to firm up some of the language - its a bit vague"

"Need to emphasise pursuing trust and network fundraising"

"Need an upper limit on how much corporate sponsorship we should have as a proportion of overall income - no more than 15%"

"We need much more information for the network on fundraising - more transparency"

"Need to approach companies on our terms"

"Apprehensive - should be discussing whether to have sponsorship?"

"Will this affect our credibility?"

"Need to be clear what we mean by sponsorship - logos?"

"Remove clause 3.2!"

"Fine - but we would like more transparency - more information on the web about deals"

"Guidelines need to be much more lenient - anyone can sponsor us, as long as we set conditions"

"NGOs will associate us with these firms"

"Firms may take advantage of us - 'Greenwashing'"

"Important to know why people want to donate. Anon. donations may be from corporate manipulators - e.g. Shell money for STOP ESSO "

The spectrum line:

Go away and re-write _____ Fine _____ Too lenient!



Taking the issue forward

Fundraising from corporates is clearly an emotive issue, with some individuals at the Forum expressing strong views that we should aim to drop corporate fundraising from our strategy. We need to take these concerns on board. We also need to recognise that some strong voices were raised in favour of more lenient fundraising policies.

There appeared to be broad consensus that, on a practical level, dropping all corporate fundraising at this point in time is not a realistic option. On that principle, we need to work on developing guidelines so that they address or at least mitigate some of these concerns while permitting P&P to remain financially viable.

We should also recognise concerns raised about transparency – why did this feel like a 'new' issue when we have been doing it for so long? Clearly, there needs to be a mechanism for involving the network in a more systematic way on funding issues.

A proposal is put forward that we should establish a network fundraising reference group in order to discuss fundraising issues on an on-going basis, and in order to those most interested in the issue up to date with what is going on. **NB:** due to Fundraising Team workload in the early part of the financial year, this isn't going to happen for a couple of months – but we will do our best to get it organised in the summer.

Finally, the Fundraising Team will work on the website to ensure that more clear information is posted about where P&P gets its money from.

Session 2: Fundraising From the Network Consultation:

The issue

People & Planet has very little 'un-restricted' money, and is structurally reliant on restricted funding in the form of grants (from trusts, NGOs, statutory donors and corporates). This is a really serious issue for a campaigning organisation, and has major implications for our independence, democratic governance and financial sustainability.

While other campaigning organisations, such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, World Development Movement and War on Want obtain up to 90% of their money from 'non-grant' sources, People & Planet is closer to 25%. Perhaps more fundamentally, only 2-3% of this non-grant funding comes directly from the Network.

On the positive side, a lot has already been done – some groups and individuals within the Network have put a lot of energy into raising money, and Network Fundraising has actually doubled in the last 12 months. But there is still a long way to go before this will make a real difference to People & Planet's sustainability.

We wanted to consult the Network about what the barriers were to people getting involved in fundraising, and what ideas they had about how we take this forward.

What you said

• *About the barriers to increased income from the student body*

"We were unaware that People & Planet needed money - until last year"

"People & Planet has an ambiguity of cause, identity and direction"

"Perceptions of bureaucracy - Hippy"

"Campaigning needs to be the priority"

"We are students - maybe approach ex-P&Pers for funds"

"People prefer to give money for practical causes"

"Perceived to be much harder to raise money for campaigning"

"Too much time and energy"

"Groups don't think of it first"

"Need feedback on results"

"Basically asking people to fund ourselves"

"Need more information on how money is spent"

"Competing demands within the network - and from other charities"

"Students are poor"

"People don't know People & Planet are national"

"Other charities are more worthy"

• *About what we can do to increase network income*

→ Get a fundraising representative onto the MC

→ An affiliation fee (for groups)

→ Suggested donation with packs

→ Support from student unions

→ Membership fee

→ Establish our own social enterprise or business e.g. cafe, shop or ethical careers service

→ Stalls, donations, merchandise

→ Internet fundraising drive

→ Campaign-specific merchandising

- Gigs
- Inspiring list on web of fundraising ideas
- Specific fundraising role on student groups?

Taking the issue forward

A fairly common theme in this (and previous) consultations is that not enough was communicated about the need for money prior to last year. There is obviously a need for on-going communication about this, and to publicise and highlight successes.

The fundraising reference group proposed after the corporate guidelines session may also provide a useful way of keeping the Network up to date, and serve as a way of mobilising support and generating ideas. The suggestions made in the 'ideas' part of the session will be a useful starting point for these discussions.