

CORPORATE POWER AT THE FORUM: FULL SESSION WRITE UP

Questions to Proposers for Clarification (Saturday AM)

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1. ETHICAL INVESTMENT (Jonny Watler)

- Q. Is the campaign redundant, as lots of Student Unions are already working on it?
A. No – People & Planet groups can work on it autonomously from Student Unions. We can do direct actions and exert more pressure, especially on the national level e.g. through an Ethical Investment League.
- Q. Would we follow the same model as for the US Ethical Investment League
A. We could build on this model.

2. ENDING EXPLOITATION (Alex Wood)

- Q. In what ways does this campaign proposal differ from previous and current P&P campaigns on Economic Justice?
A. This campaign would go much wider e.g. seeking to build a coalition around the idea of a global living wage.
- Q. Would the campaign include issues around unionisation and co-operatives?
A. Yes e.g. the definition of sweat-shops includes things about being able to unionise. These concepts are relevant to all sectors.

3. PUBLIC SERVICE NOT FOR PROFIT (Beccy Talmy)

- Q. Does this campaign proposal seek legislative change?
A. The campaign would start with a survey to get user feedback on local transport. We would then go to the local companies with the demands. If these demands were not met, then we would seek re-nationalisation. The issue is reallocation of resources.
- Q. Given the name of the campaign proposal, would the campaign include sectors other than just transport?
A. Potentially. Transport is just an example that feeds in well to the general idea.

4. RECLAIM AND REGROW (Amy Hall & Alys Mumford)

- Q. Would this campaign be economically viable for institutions to implement? E.g. Catering departments frequently argue that Fairtrade is too expensive and will cause people to go elsewhere.
A. Fairtrade would only be on strand of the campaign, which would include other options that wouldn't necessarily be more expensive e.g. locally sourced produce. A key part of the campaign would indeed be research on this issue of alternative suppliers.

5. RECLAIM EDUCATION (Emma Hughes & Devin Dunseith)

- Q. Could this campaign be extended to look at related issues such as tuition fees and the outsourcing of services?
A. Yes, this broadening could take place in the long-term. The link would be that in order to end the need for corporate funding, the government must provide better funding for education.
- Q. Would we suggest small/local/good companies who could fund education?
A. No. We are against all corporate funding of education. Education must be properly funded by the government.

6. TAX JUSTICE (Hanna Plant)

Q. Would this campaign only be about awareness-raising? How could we evaluate the campaign's success?

A. Not just about awareness. The exciting thing would be that our involvement could help unite the tax justice movement. We would have a great deal of influence as students and could actually affect taxation problems.

7. TOTAL ETHICAL PROCUREMENT (Matt McMullen & Jim Cranshaw)

No questions.

General Q&A (Saturday PM)

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Round One

- a. How would your campaign proposal work in schools/colleges?**
- b. Will it excite apathetic students?**
- c. How can your campaign reach out students in new/FE institutions? e.g. not all universities have investments.**

1. ETHICAL INVESTMENT (Jonny Watler & Mark ????)

- a. Ethical Investment isn't hugely relevant in schools/colleges, but many sixth formers go on to university so the awareness-raising and educational aspects of the campaign could work for them and are important.
- b. An Ethical Investment Policy can broaden out from just investment to procurement, so will appeal to students.
- c. New universities do also have investments. At the end of the day, it's about a transparent and democratic process that will engage students in a participative role.

2. ENDING EXPLOITATION (Alex Wood)

- a. Campaigning is a journey which needs an understandable start. For schools/colleges, this start is Fairtrade – lots of these institutions still don't have Fairtrade status. After that, the campaign could go on to focus on sweatshop issues. It's about taking proactive action and critical thinking.
- b. Another part of the campaign proposal is about ending exploitation of workers in this country. This is very relevant in the current financial meltdown and will also interest non-usual people e.g. student workers. Note the importance of unions - we're all workers.
- c. As above, we can move from Fairtrade to focus on sweatshops, which helps build up the layers. Relevance to student workers will also make it relevant to vocational/FE students.

3. PUBLIC SERVICE NOT FOR PROFIT (Beccy Talmy)

- a. It is a strength of this campaign proposal that it's not limited to universities – sixth formers heavily rely on public transport.
- b. The 'selfish interest' angle will get people on board! From this, we can move onto the wider

implications of the campaign e.g. for those people campaigning on this issue in Chile, for trade unions, regarding the allocation of resources.

- c. This is a student issue applicable across the whole network.

4. RECLAIM AND REGROW (Amy Hall & Alys Mumford)

- a. In schools, the campaign could focus on healthy eating, canteens and tuck shops, community growing projects. It would appeal to teachers for holiday projects etc.
- b. Food affects everyone! It can excite people as it educates about the alternatives that are available and encourages people to challenge brand loyalty.
- c. Could work on several levels e.g. the campaign could be relevant to students on vocational gardening courses, catering courses, tourism courses, etc.

5. RECLAIM EDUCATION (Emma Hughes & Devin Dunseith)

- a. The campaign is clearly pertinent to schools/colleges: remember the examples [in the presentation] of E-ON sponsoring school conferences, Nestle, and the vast amounts of money spent by corporations targeting classrooms. Students can take actions in their own schools/colleges e.g. leaflets, alternative careers' fairs.
- b. This campaign could address apathy, as frustration already exists about the lack of diversity in careers' fairs. The recent student occupations have shown that new people can get involved and will in this campaign.
- c. Aspects for new institutions could include diversifying careers' fairs and campaigning for public good research.

6. TAX JUSTICE (Hanna Plant)

- a. The issue could be approached from many angles for sixth formers e.g. the exposed tax avoidance of U2. This kind of focus on popular culture will engage young people. It is to be hoped that learning about the issue might influence sixth formers when it comes to choosing a university.
- b. Apathy could be addressed through using popular culture examples as above. Another potential route to engage people is by recognising the ethnic diversity of P&P e.g. any country-specific campaigning could engage that particular community.
- c. Resources are available to us (e.g. from the Tax Justice Network) to run this campaign in new institutions.

7. TOTAL ETHICAL PROCUREMENT (Matt McMullen & Jim Cranshaw)

- a. The campaign is relevant to sixth formers in the same way, as it's all about procurement e.g. school uniforms (could include boycotts of unethical suppliers), school canteens, renewable energy, waste systems.
- b. There are different types of actions to engage a wide range of people e.g. institutional change (lobbying Vice Chancellors), national change (lobbying government), direct action. Another things that excites people is the speed at which change can happen, as seen in the recent Fruit of the Loom actions which led to many contracts being pulled.
- c. We're still learning about our FE/HE work, but we've discovered that students in post-1992 institutions want to see changes in their own institutions. Work we've been doing in

Coventry has also proved that labour rights is an attractive topic.

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Round Two...

- a. **People & Planet campaigns are usually run in solidarity with those in the Global South. Does your campaign proposal do this or are we moving away from this focus?**
- b. **Could some of the issues raised in the various proposals be better solved through a co-operative model e.g. co-operative ownership of a local bus company?**
- c. **Why should WE run this campaign?**

1. TOTAL ETHICAL PROCUREMENT (Matt McMullen & Jim Cranshaw)

- a. A good example is the recent actions around Fruit of the Loom, where campaigners were in direct contact with workers. The boycott was called by the workers, and we responded to meet their demands. Lots of the goods that we buy and the resources that we use are produced in or come from the Global South – clearly linked!
- b. It's not possible to do our own small models of procurement, but the campaign is about leading by example. By getting universities to form buying consortiums, we would be creating a model for ethical procurement and then we could get the government to legislate for this.
- c. The campaign is a good progression from our Go Green and Fairtrade campaigns – now the demand is that everything should be ethically produced.

2. TAX JUSTICE (Hanna Plant)

- a. Tax evasion takes money from developing countries that they could be using for infrastructure projects, etc. By contrast to achieving tax justice, aid is unsustainable and creates dependency, as well as associated corruption problems.
- b. The student voice isn't currently being heard on this issue and should be, especially as UK universities have many international students.
- c. Specific actions can be done in universities, but we will need to be united as a national campaign.

3. RECLAIM EDUCATION (Emma Hughes & Devin Dunseith)

- a. As part of the campaign we could link up with international student movements, demanding proper funding for all educational institutions. Solidarity is important and so too is taking power where we can - on campus. This campaign would do both.
- b. We can encourage food co-operatives etc as part of the campaign, but we also need a strategic analysis to challenge corporate power.
- c. The campaign is about democratic accountability in an issue that directly affects students. It draws on our Go Green and Ethical Investment campaigning and past actions e.g. disruption of careers' fairs.

4. RECLAIM AND REGROW (Amy Hall & Alys Mumford)

- a. Promoting Fairtrade is in solidarity with the Global South. The aspect of promoting local food could be a weakness, although could perhaps be framed in terms of the damaging environmental impacts arising from food miles. Another example is the way that we could link in with worker-led campaigns such as Killer Coke.
- b. Yes, co-ops can be a big part of this campaign.
- c. Students are a big body in the UK capable of effective campaigning that will have a real impact on corporations. The campaign would work well with P&P's autonomous groups structure, and enable us to get more people involved.

5. PUBLIC SERVICE NOT FOR PROFIT (Beccy Talmy)

- a. Corporate control of public services is a global issue. Also, if we can't take back control ourselves, it's a disempowering example. We can build concrete links with campaigners in the Global South to share examples.
- b. Local level campaigns exist e.g. RNT Transport Workers, but it's hard to challenge corporations on the local level alone, so we also need to call for public ownership on the national level.
- c. As students, we have the time to run this campaigns. Student unions cannot act on topics not directly related to the university [ultra vires], but P&P can. The campaign proposal draws together socialist/reformist/environmental/radical interests, and challenges corporate power at its roots.

6. ENDING EXPLOITATION (Alex Wood)

- a. Originally P&P was known as Third World First. This split of the world is no longer possible as globalisation makes us one economic village e.g. as evident in the race to the bottom. As such, it's key to take action on this both with UK workers and with workers in the Global South.
- b. Co-ops are the ultimate solution. We must not legitimise some corporations. However, tactically note that we must first engage with workers who may not know about co-ops. To do this we could go through the trade unions.
- c. In the US, United Students Against Sweatshops have had huge successes in terms of membership of sweat-free consortiums and the recent Fruit of the Loom boycotts. Finally, many students are also workers. It's crucial for us to relate to issues such as this that are key for many students, especially FE students.

7. ETHICAL INVESTMENT (Jonny Watler & Mark)

- a. The campaign proposal is about our universities and our money, but the effects of corporations are felt most in the Global South.
- b. We're all stakeholders in our universities; this is a way for us to have a say.
- c. An Ethical Investment League would build on the successes of the Green League and actually makes a difference. Many Ethical Investment campaigns are already running, to which we could give a huge boost by choosing this campaign and building a coalition. This would lead to national, sustained pressure on universities to adopt Ethical Investment policies – they don't want to fall behind! The campaign would be good for autonomous actions. Finally, we have good ties and leverage with universities.

Small Group Discussions: Which campaign strand criteria do the proposals
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least meet and how could these be overcome? (Saturday PM)
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Campaign strand: Reclaim Education

Write up by Bronwen Smith-Thomas

Group 1

Criteria addressed: Is demanded by those affected or in solidarity with them.

Summary:

Problem is that 'those affected' are students, but most students don't demand change (perhaps because they aren't aware of the problem).

The group discussed the following ways to address this:

- argue that we care and as students we are demanding change
- the campaign is about raising awareness of the wider analysis of corporate power in education (and this will lead to demands for change)
- in solidarity with other groups (eg NUT), who are affected and are demanding change.

Transcription of group's flipchart:

Why is this a problem?

- students as the people affected? But students generally accepting of brands.
- NUT – teachers campaigning against corporate influence and academics.
- If you speak to students they don't want curriculum influenced by corporates
- Problems in education students are aware of but don't necessarily link to corporations – eg get active – aware their school doesn't have enough school equipment.
- Solution = awareness raising, talking about these issues on campus – worrying that it's not being demanded – that's why it's important.
- Is in solidarity with people who believe in importance of education as common good – but how many students hold that view?
- And we're students – we're demanding it!
- That's what the campaign's doing :)
- damaging influence of corporations directly in solidarity with those affected by climate change/suffering worker abuse etc.
- GATS? Corporatisation internationally?
- Will depend on issues in own institution – depends on target eg Fruit of the Loom vs Cadburys get active – who is affected?

- We are those affected – do students care? Yes, we do! Care about problems, don't always tie that into wider analysis.
- NUT.

Group 2

Criteria addressed: Opportunities for co-operation with other groups in the Global South.

Summary:

Problem is that there aren't many Southern groups working on this.

The group discussed the following ways to address this:

- While not many groups (that we know of) in the South are working on corporate power in education, there are campaigns on specific corporations, and this campaign could tie in with those.
- There are groups working in the UK (Education Not for Sale, CAAT) that we could work with.
- It's about how corporations affect OUR education but will have long-term impacts in the global South too.

Transcription of group's flipchart:

- indirectly – via harming corporation – V long term. But lots of short term goals.
- Not many groups that can be directly worked with – in education? But there are groups working on particular corporations that can focus on.
- Is very broad – but highlights wider issues.
- Groups in UK – Education Not For Sale and Campaign Against Arms Trade.
- Is about how corporations affect OUR education – but will have knock on effects.
- What can we do realistically? Balance?

Campaign strand: Reclaim & Regrow

Write up by James

Group 1

Criteria addressed: tackles a root cause of a significant human rights, poverty or environmental injustice. It could link these together.

- There are no direct demands on corporations
- Local based, so not about root causes
- Needs to ensure the alternatives proposed are fully ethical

- Will the alternatives have an adverse effect on workers and jobs?

Solutions (with a view to changing proposal):

- Proposal needs to express what the root problems are (i.e. industrial farming, famine, worker exploitation, climate change)
- Needs an emphasis on education as way to engage public
- Needs emphasis on both reclaim and regrow
- Join up with other national campaigns
- or use NUSL as direct link
- Convince MNCs to go Fairtrade (for example)
- This may not be a solution
- Needs stronger and more specific demands on corporates
- Need to write up ethical criteria to check that what is being proposed is actually ethical

Group 2

Criteria addressed: is demanded by those affected or in solidarity with them.

- Depends where the food is coming from
- Is there public demand for such schemes? (i.e. Transition towns)
- Should the meat industry be included/mentioned?
- Are workers in going to actually be effected more by this by losing jobs?

Solutions (with a view to changing proposal):

- More clarification required on root causes and problems
- Need to research to check that those affected are demanding a change
- More research into alternatives needed to make sure it is actually a better alternative

Key accumulated feedback from both groups

- Proposal needs to clarify what root causes are and who is affected
- Proposal needs to ensure workers in global south are not going to lose jobs and actually be worse off
- Proposal needs to include a large element of education to ensure the above two points fundamental when discussing the issue
- Proposal needs to have tight, well-researched alternatives which are definitely better.

Campaign strand: Public Service Not Profit

Write up by Jamie Clarke

Criteria Considered: *tackles a root cause of a significant human rights, poverty or environmental injustice. It could link these together.*

- societies poorest use public transport most often
- privatisation not appropriate for public services
- reduce climate change and pollution by move to public transport
- links to global issues of poverty and climate change
- increase fares leads to increasing inequality
- challenge government investment priorities eg. Arms Trade

Criteria Considered: Has specific achievable goals

- use awareness raising tools such as street theatre to draw attention to the alternatives and combine this with a survey to engage public and create list of demands
- aim to gain support from MPs
- create a network of unions/colleges/schools to link with local campaigns
- take demands to corporations
- use tools such as Fare strikes
-

Criteria Considered:... fits in with and draws from current and past P&P campaigns

- follows old campaign values but moves on to address the underlying issues of privatisation and the wider audience
- can appeal to radical and less so alike in network

Some of the goals weren't thought to be specific and achievable.

- Specifically "Campaigning for democratic alternatives" is too vague. Therefore changing the demand to focus on specific policy change would improve the campaign option.
- The demand for a sweatfree campus was also thought to be too general as a sweatshop is defined as any place of work which doesn't conform to the international labour rights standards.

The issue of temporary and agency workers operating in the UK lacked a clear framework for change. It was unclear whether the campaign would aim to change temporary or agency workers to become full time employees or whether it would focus on the living wage issue.

The changes in working conditions could be achieved through lobbying for universities to sign up to a particular corporate social responsibility.

Currently government is going through to improve workers conditions and there was the worry the issue was being looked at by them.

With reference to the Asia Floor Wage part of the campaign it was felt that the goal was a good one, but the power of UK students to influence governments in Asia to adopt a living wage was very indirect. The method of influencing them would be Students >lobby> UK government >lobby> Asian governments> change laws.

Group 2

The second group was looking at campaign criteria 10.

There was an initial concern that People & Planet would be copying other groups but after discussion it was felt that People & Planet has unique access to young people and institutions that other groups don't and vice versa.

There was concern over the overlap with Redress Fashion but opportunities exist that haven't been exploited.

If this campaign option was chosen it would be very important for a fresh launch to distinguish the campaign from Redress Fashion.

Creating links with the global south would be key to communicate the personal stories of individuals who are suffering due to sweatshop labour and other exploitative practices. This would be key to motivating people about this campaign.

People & Planet could act as a "union voice" to represent those groups who are unable to have their own voice heard.

Corporate Power

Campaign strand: Ending exploitation

Write up by Richard Roaf

Group 1

The group was looking at campaign criteria 3.

Some of the goals weren't thought to be specific and achievable.

- Specifically "Campaigning for democratic alternatives" is too vague. Therefore changing the demand to focus on specific policy change would improve the campaign option.
- The demand for a sweatfree campus was also thought to be too general as a sweatshop is defined as any place of work which doesn't conform to the international labour rights standards.

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The Forum. Corporate Power Session One. Total Ethical Procurement Small Group Work. Hannah

Weakness no.1:

Criteria 3: has specific, achievable goals or aims at a local, national or international level over its planned lifetime. It could have several interim goals as well as or instead of one big goal.

- Is this over-ambitious? 'Total' ethical procurement. Is this possible?
- Worries that this could result in a lack of direction.

-However Criteria 7 is that goals shouldn't be too specific. Perhaps this aspect of TEP is a strength?

Solutions:

- Clear demands which are flexible enough to be applied in each specific uni context are needed
- Legal guidelines already exist which can help create these.
- Increase cross network communication: should set up process for sharing arguments and achievements between groups.
- e.g. It can be really difficult to get a permanent member of staff at uni (e.g. an environmental manager). Would be helpful if people shared arguments which were successful in persuading uni to employ someone.

Weakness no.2:

Criteria 8: can involve the network in planning and running to encourage understand of the issue and more generally active global citizenship.

Solutions:

- Again, the importance of creating cross-group communication was emphasised as a means to meet this criteria.

- Share achievements, goals and skills between groups
- Different groups should come together to plan and work towards shared goals.

Create a co-operative aspect to the campaign.

Corporate Power campaign discussion

Ethical Investment (EI) group

Campaign strand criteria exercise

The group identified 2 campaign strands that they would like to discuss – strand 5 (5 dots) and strand 3 (3 dots). (All other campaigns strands received only 1 dot).

Campaign strand number 5:

An ideal campaign is relevant to students, in schools, colleges and universities; both in the existing P&P network and those we seek to engage, particularly in Further Education Colleges, newer universities and schools in disadvantaged communities.

. The group identified that the EI proposal was not inclusive of sixth form and college students and felt that there was the opportunity to merge the EI proposal with other proposals to help make it more inclusive of the sixth form/college network.

. If the second campaign that will be chosen was something that worked well for sixth form and college students then the ethical investment campaign proposal could be chosen.

. The group did feel that there was some relevance for college and sixth form students as many will go on to university

- Some sixth form students go to private institutions where money is invested unethically
- The campaign proposal could look at personal investment to get sixth formers looking at ethical investment (banking, for example)

Campaign strand number 3:

An ideal campaign has specific, achievable goals or aims at a local, national or international level over its planned lifetime. It could have several interim goals as well as or instead of one big goal.

. The group felt that there were lots of specific goals for universities:

- Ethical policy
- Divestment/engagement
- Ethical steering group

. The proposal could be broadened nationally via an ethics and environment league. There was some discussion about how the green league would fit into this.

. There was group discussion around what is ethical. It would be hard to define:

- Where do you draw the line?
- Could become similar to greenwash for some institutions
- It was felt that we shouldn't necessarily shy away from the discussion around what is ethical – this could be a positive aspect, not negative, and could be discussed as part of global citizenship.

. It was felt that an ethics league may just double up on our green league work – could we just not incorporate the two

- This would need further discussion

Corporate Power Session: Tax Justice Strand

1. Draws on strengths as a student network

Problem:

• An issue already campaigned on by other organisation such as the tax justice network – are we best placed to make a difference?

Solutions:

- Targets could be linked to students (such as the big four and banks)
- Students are directly affected by this issue through HE funding
- Use our power over educational institutions
- Use creative campaign actions/approaches – ridiculing government organisations and agencies for rent from tax evading orgs etc
- Be the youth voice in this campaign – bringing different perspective and energy
- potential for lobbying MPs – dispersed network would be useful here
- Use our credibility as a student network to put more weight behind campaign

2. Demanded by those affected or in solidarity with them

Problem:

• Unsure if there are civil soc/ grassroots calls for tax justice in the global south – the assumption is that the civil populations will benefit if governments use funds appropriately

Solutions:

- Autonomous groups each could focus specific country linked to the origins/ethnicity of local population, student body. This would present an opportunity to build direct links with local community and communities in the global south – this would require careful research
- To overcome the potential of government corruptions to prevent tax funds being redistributed fairly we would need to work with NGOs already campaigning on this issue such as tax justice network

Unstructured Small Group Discussions (Saturday PM)

Corporate Power

General Small Group Discussion (James)

- Like campaigns which have local/institutional focus
- Things that affect your life
- Least favoured campaigns focus on too big a target

- Transport and Reclaim Education have strong anti-capitalism focus but on a local level
- TEP and Ethical Investment do not reject capitalism (shorter term goals)
- In fact, TEP could be seen as promoting consumerism

- Merge ethical investment with reclaim education?
- No investments in unethical corporations and no corporates in education are very similar outcomes

- TEP encompasses other ethical strands
- could combine with others
- play into strength of wide range of campaigns/ers
- 4 proposals merged into 1?
- Could this all risk weakening the proposal?
- If 4 combined, could continue consensus decision making process after weekend
- Could we actually use all 4 proposals effectively in after they have been merged
- Not all of them need support from P&P office (Ethical Investment)

Corporate Power

General Small Group Discussion (Bronwen)

General:

- could link different elements of uni/education focused campaigns – but would need to be specific.

Public Service Not Profit:

- different in different localities
- too specific

Tax Justice:

- Very big – need to deal with global level – but London/UK very important part of this picture.
- Less to do on a local level – direct action but not much community level activities.
- What will happen to tax money?
- Able to solve problems – could build links with the Global South
- Really tackles corporate power
- Transparency also critical – of the government and the financial sector.

Total Ethical Procurement:

- very broad – could be stretched to include a lot of different things
- Lots of scope.
- Could integrate food and agri-business.

Reclaim and Regrow:

- can link to global farming issues (not just local)

- Less focused on corporate power
- Although farms ARE corporations
- Issues included in other campaigns (eg Go Green?)
- But these are not focused on the big problem of food
- Food as an important issue and corporations will become more involved in it in future.
- For schools could link to vending machines and canteens.
- Could link to GMOs/patents
- Not as narrow an issue as presented – huge corporate farms: but question over whether this angle was intended by proposers
- Agri-business reliant on oil – peak oil leading to famine
- Not as much attention to this issue – invisible / least exposed.
- Too much overlap with climate campaigns?

Ethical Investment:

- Not relevant to 6F/FE

Reclaim Education:

- not as relevant to Global South
- Root cause = power of corporations and the negative impacts of this, and P&P can tackle this best via educational links of corporations.
- Talks to STUDENT network – students demanding change.
- Question of relevance for schools?
 - Funding
 - research not relevant for schools
 - curriculum and citizenship relevant
 - vending machines and canteens
 - careers angle could link to 6F/FE too.

End Exploitation:

- Most explicitly anti-capitalist
 - does CP campaign HAVE to be about anti-capitalism? What about responsible corporations?
 - Is this a good thing?
 - Will it put people off?
- Could be presented in different way – more like Redress Fashion – using the consumerist angle.

Corporate Power: Small Group Discussion. Ellie

Tax Justice

- A new issue for P&P
- Students don't pay tax will our voice be credible
- Targets are too indirect – corporate angle (e.g. focusing on the big four accounting firms) won't work at all uni
- High profile tax evaders (e.g. the Queen, Prince Philip Green) are good targets
- Students could use our power as consumers against banks, retail evaders but we are not the only a market
- Difficult to implement in unis – the issue is too big for us to have an impact on – other strands are more direct and tangible
- Existing orgs/NGOs tackle the tax issue
- Being student network might be a weakness as students are not big tax payers – this could be a chance for our campaign to have a wider appeal in the community

Ending Exploitation

- Draws too heavily on Redress Fashion – the network can continue Redress the new campaign should be different
- Already in action and more locally focused

Ethical

Potential to merge campaign strands: Ending Exploitation, Total Ethical Procurement (TEP), EI, Reclaim and Regrow

- EI fits with TEP
- EI and Reclaim Education are similar
- EI promotes some form of corporate investment which Reclaim Education is against
- Reclaim Education more intellectualised not so accessible

Total Ethical Procurement

- TEP good for small groups, and diversity of network
- TEP raises one big question: what is ethical?
- Groups allowed more autonomy in approach to TEP
- TEP focuses on eradicating bad investment
- Can TEP be effective as a network wide campaign with such a flexible definition of what is ethical
- TEP needs a sexier name

The Forum. Corporate Power Small Group Discussion Session (Hannah)

Ethical Investment is not relevant to half the network and smaller, newer universities. This is a problem.

Total Ethical Procurement is very broad. Clearer guidance is needed

- Getting unis to sign up to DSP
- Daunting, this could be disillusioning

- There is a lack of short term goals; (though it was also put that there are four coherent goals)
- 'Ethical': what does that mean? How should we define the term?
- Campaigning is always long term and gradually small changes occur.

Reclaim and Regrow

- Unis make money through outsourcing which can be put back into the uni.
- Can be outsourced to a more ethical company
- At Cardiff they have a co-op which is getting lots of orders. Food boxes etc are something good for groups to do around campus
- Does this need support from the P&P office?
- Link to poverty? Taking trade away from global south?
- Practical difficulties: e.g. to find allotments in London and other cities

Reclaim Education

- Filled all criteria, good for 6th forms
- But schools need money, unis need research funding
- Would need to be able to offer alternatives
- Less link to the global south. What about poverty and campaigning in solidarity with those affected by it? Is it too political for P&P?
- We are working in solidarity because we are the group affected
- In LT corporate influence does affect the global south
- Good and bad corporations. Maybe needs more regulation.

Corporate Power campaign discussion

Small group discussion after star spectrum

The topics of discussion focussed on the following:

- Possible merge of campaign proposals
- Ethical investment, ending exploitation and reclaim education all steer towards similar areas
- Ethical investment could be problematic
- Some unis already have EI policies that are great
- It could encourage loss of investment
- Ending exploitation proposal was felt to be too close to the trade justice campaigning that People and Planet are currently doing. It was felt that we should have a change and do something different.
- A potential need for a completely separate ethical league
- Total ethical procurement proposal – it was felt that it would be difficult to define 'total'. It is very broad, where would you start, is it even achievable?
- The radical element of the total ethical procurement proposal could be a benefit and pull in support generating widespread awareness.
- It was felt it would be good to have a campaign that has a lot of scope and can be broader
- The potential for a good national element as well as achievable university goals
- Reclaim and regrow proposal may be a difficult campaign as a lot of other organisations are running with this

- Also when thinking about this campaign, allotments automatically spring to mind, so it may not necessarily be that engaging to students initially.
- Boycotting of corporate companies on campus may not be relevant to some universities
- People and Planet focuses on education and skilling up students. That's what we have experience doing, so tax justice would probably work quite well and fit with this.
- We at P&P should play a role in educating the public and local people as well.
- There is a need for balance between national campaign elements and strong student/uni based lobbying elements.

Corporate Power

General Small Group Discussion (Richard)

Total Ethical Procurement:

- Could go beyond being “another label” and incorporate a radical analysis
- Must address the issue of how much consumerism do we want

Reclaim and Regrow:

- NUS is already doing this.
- Too easy?
- Not radical enough.

Ethical Investment:

- Has been thought about for ages.
- Tried and failed?
- Excludes unis and 6th forms without big investments. It was recognised that all campaigns have exceptions e.g. Go Green isn't applicable at universities which already have all four factors.
- Ethical investment should be an ongoing process and not take a simplistic approach of ethical/unethical.
- Could include ethical investment as part of total ethical procurement
- There is a range of tactics e.g. threatening to disinvest

Reclaim Education:

- Is this already being done?
- Isn't very People & Planet? Could this damage us?
- Could counteract this and focus on the corporation part of the campaign and not the educational institutions part.
- Debate over whether free education should be a part of Reclaim Education.
- Should emphasize that it must be government funded rather than funded by individuals or corporations.

End Exploitation:

- Questioned whether campaigning on living wage in a recession was a good idea. Could this lead to job losses?

Jamie.

Strengths (this is based on random flipchart that appeared and not on my session)

- Affects everyone – not just students and people who are ethically minded
 - would save people money
 - easier to get people involved and gain support
 - public transport drives everyone mad
- Small steps: local services – move to national train services and then link to public ownership
- Reducing carbon emissions – through move to public transport
- Cheaper – as petrol rises in price
- Resulting network between students, Unis, companies, councils, wider community will be useful
- Better services lead to better access to areas currently outside of main public transport routes, particularly students, elderly, school-aged who can't drive.

Open Session Discussion

This group (11 students, 2 staff) assembled to ask the question: Is there any overlap between corporate power campaign proposals that could strengthen any particular proposal? This happened Saturday evening, after the proposals had been discussed, but before the final, decision making session on the Sunday.

The outcome was that there were no amendments to the campaigns as proposed that would affect the decision making session. However, the group felt it was a useful discussion.

The group quickly came up with many overlaps in one of: aims, tactics, strategies or concepts; the campaigns fell easily into groups. Notable ideas were:

- The analysis of the *Ending Exploitation* campaign could be applied to the *Total Ethical Procurement* campaign.
- The *Reclaim Education* campaign could easily be an over-arching campaign that included *Total Ethical Procurement* and *Ethical Investment*.
- Combine many of the campaigns into a new bigger one. This was ruled out because it would have meant voting to re-open nominations and restarting the process that had already been running for the best part of a year(!).

But participants kept coming back to the need for the campaign to be specific, achievable and focussed. Ultimately, all the campaigns were obviously linked/grouped by the fact that they were all focusing on corporate power! The group recognised the careful thought put into each discrete campaign, and concluded that nothing could easily be “bolted-on” at this point in the proceedings.

The suggestions above are relevant to the two campaigns that ended up getting chosen (*Reclaim Education* and *Total Ethical Procurement*) and these will be fed into the process of developing these campaigns by the new Corporate Power Campaigns Officer in the Support Office.

Large Group Discussion – Sunday AM

On Sunday there was a facilitated full group discussion giving people a chance to debate the options, before voting.

CORPORATE POWER AT THE FORUM (Juliette)

Alex

Discussions held on the Corporate Power proposals during Saturday night’s open session suggest that many people perceive Reclaim Education as being quite broad. Today, we need to make a specific decision as to what the Office is to implement in September.

Johanna

We need to clarify what the Reclaim Education proposal actually is: a focus on research, careers and sponsorship. We should be careful of what it actually is as opposed to just liking the name!

Robbie

The campaign we choose must have good content and also be empowering e.g. Public Service not for Profit is about taking control in the local community and Reclaim Education is about taking control of campus.

Emma

Just to re-iterate that Reclaim Education does have three specific proposed areas to focus on: research, careers, sponsorship.

Rhiannon

Whatever campaign we choose must be suitable for the sixth form network.

Amanda

Just wondering whether Ethical Investment could be a strategy within the Reclaim Education campaign?

Emma

Potentially it could be a tactic under Reclaim Education. However, Reclaim Education’s final aims and analysis go further than EI – it’s about ending corporate education entirely, not about making corporations more ethical.

Devin

There is some potential for a merge but we need to work out our priority.

Beccy

At various points questions have been raised as to whether the various proposals are realistic?

However, there will always be resistance to the issues on which we campaign, and we shouldn't let this influence us. We have the energy and the ability and can achieve any of the campaigns with hard work. Also, it's crucial that we remember we're choosing a new Corporate Power campaign – so which campaign proposal really goes to the heart of issues of corporate power and has the potential to bring about fundamental change?

Harry

On Ethical Investment, achieving an EI policy wouldn't be the end of a campaign. It's not just about getting rid of companies but also about using the university's power as an investor to engage with corporations. Disinvestment can be a tool to change corporate behaviour. Although the campaign isn't totally applicable to all campuses or to sixth formers, so many P&P groups have been campaigning on this for so long without any national co-ordination and as such it would be such a shame if we let this opportunity pass. Even if it's not chosen as the main campaign, I hope that EI could be used as a tactic or strategy within something else.

Daniel

Could Total Ethical Procurement be part of Reclaim Education?

Devin

Well, there is always potential for an institution's ethical policy to be extended to include all procurement areas.

Emma

However, when we wrote the Reclaim Education proposal, we deliberately chose to focus on the areas of research, careers and sponsorship and not on procurement because the campaign is not meant to be about ethical consumerism.

Matt

Include TEP as part of Reclaim Education would make it far too broad. Procurement alone is a huge area and as such can't go well as part of another campaign, although perhaps some parts of it could be brought in. Over all though, the issue of supply chains is a huge one so we can't just add in extra stuff – we won't have enough resources to do so.

Jason

Do the environmental elements of the Green League need to be separated from other ethical elements? For instance, do we need another 'ethical' league to compare wider ethical issues?

Jonny

Ethical Investment would include just such an Ethical League.

Alex

As Beccy mentioned, resistance is important. We mustn't be inward looking but we must build alliances with other people including non-students. Non-students have agency too, and we must strengthen these links. Also, I feel that a campaign about investing in 'ethical' companies is problematic e.g. the example of Cadburys. We could easily end up legitimising corporations and therefore giving them more power. Finally, Redress Fashion is a fantastic campaign and it's a shame that it's never been properly supported.

Molly

Ethical Investment is about engagement, not just about disinvestment.

Emily B

With Ethical Investment in mind, it would be wrong for us to choose a campaign that's not relevant to all universities.

Beccy

Some unis such as St Andrew's already have an Ethical Investment policy. We could all just link up

and keep it going forward anyway.

John

This suggestion – to have an informal EI working group – came up at the Forum two years ago. It really needs more than this.

Robbie

One of the strengths of the Ethical Investment proposal is the idea of having a League, but maybe we also need to choose another campaign strand that's relevant for sixth formers. As for universities, they will sign up to a policy and once this has been achieved you've got a great tool to move on to focus on other issues such as research and procurement. As such, ethical investment is a good strategic tool. Finally, on recruitment (a proposed focus of Reclaim Education), we should remember that having dodgy companies on campus provides a great campaigning opportunity! As such, banning them from campus isn't necessarily effective.

Devin

Reclaim Education isn't about banning dodgy companies, it's about increasing diversity at careers' fairs. We believe it shouldn't just be companies that can afford to pay for a stall who are represented.

Matt

The vast majority of sixth forms and colleges are state-run and don't have private investments. As such, the Ethical Investment campaign won't be inspiring for them as it would just be about learning and not about taking action. Also not all sixth formers will go on to uni, when the campaign would become relevant. The sixth form network is a huge part of P&P – there are more sixth form groups than uni groups – so we really need to choose a campaign that will inspire them.

Beccy

On public transport, it's an environmental issue, it affects the Global South, it's an issue for us – who else will campaign on it? It also applies to everyone.

Ric

We are the largest student activist network in the UK. Woo! There's been some talk of merging various campaign ideas from different proposals, but we need to recognise that we can build up the campaign through different campaign strands over the next six years. Let's not merge everything, but instead today choose two strands that are complimentary and recognise that other strands can be the next step later on between 2009 and 2015. On the topic of careers, kicking companies off campus isn't a symbolic act, but really makes companies suffer. It would also be very popular if we were able to offer more diversity at careers' fairs e.g. public service jobs.

Molly

I have a question for Alex. The Ending Exploitation campaign proposal builds on a lot of our previous Trade Justice campaigns. This is good, but these campaigns challenge abuses of corporate power, not the root of corporate power itself.

Alex

It does draw on these Trade Justice campaigns, but it aims to go further to actually tackle the corporations themselves by promoting co-operatives and sweat-free institutions as an alternative. People having a democratic input into a corporation is an amazing place to start.

Amy

There was a suggestion to have a Green League and a separate Ethical League – but are these necessarily two separate things?

Tim

A lot of our strategies – worryingly – seem to be about tinkering, especially league tables, which frankly are a neo-liberal ranking tool.

Jonny

Our strength in our university network. Whilst it's great to have sixth formers on board, their power to do autonomous actions is limited.

Matt

We must see that taking action within sixth forms and college institutions is really empowering, helping to create a generation that understands the root causes of current problems, how and why we got here. It may not get media coverage, but it's still crucial.

Pete

Above all, we need to choose a campaign that will capture the imagination of students and will breed a popular distrust of corporations.

Voting

The first round of voting (using STV) took place following this discussion, to choose two out of the seven campaign proposals to go forward. The two campaigns chosen in this round of voting were Total Ethical Procurement and Reclaim Education.

CORPORATE POWER AT THE FORUM (Juliette)

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Group Discussion to decide order of new campaigns (Sunday AM – after first round of voting in which Total Ethical Procurement and Reclaim Education were the two campaigns chosen)
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Total Ethical Procurement as a campaign needs a long time to implement, so maybe that should start first.

Beccy

Reclaim Education is current given the recent student occupations and the issue of careers and careers' fairs.

Robbie

There will be a Higher Education Review in 2010 that could include looking at the role of corporations.

Devin

Total Ethical Procurement would follow on well from campaigns such as Redress Fashion/Redress Education. On the other hand, Reclaim Education could draw on the energy from the student occupations.

Jason

We have gained a lot of experience and resources from involvement in Climate Camp that would be useful for campaigning about corporations on campus e.g. E-ON, RBS.

Alex

Right now there is an international boycott of Fruit of the Loom taking place (including by 20 universities in the US) – this could tie in directly with the Total Ethical Procurement campaign right now.

Matt

For clarification – the new campaign for sixth formers needs to start in September. Total Ethical

Procurement may be more relevant for sixth formers.

Harry

Reclaim Education would need to start by the beginning of university terms.

Amanda

What needs to come first is education about the issues (Reclaim Education), then followed by Total Ethical Procurement. Otherwise, students may not understand why we're calling for TEP.

Tom

Total Ethical Procurement is something that small groups can aim for – it's easier to explain and to do. Total Ethical Procurement has a clear goal, whereas Reclaim Education is too vague.

Rhiannon

Total Ethical Procurement would need to be run for a long time. Reclaim Education is more relevant for the more elite universities, so maybe it should come as a second option to TEP.

Tim

Reclaim Education isn't just for the top unis. It addresses corporate influence on the education sector as a whole and the government's agenda on this issue. As such, it may even be more relevant for new universities.

Johanna

If we choose Reclaim Education, we can start it in September as we can give our views to the Office on what resources etc they should seek to prioritise for development.

Beccy

The question must be what will follow on better. Reclaim Education will lay the groundwork for Total Ethical Procurement.

Alice

There are lots of existing resources out there that schools could use on Fairtrade, as part of either campaign.

The second round of voting followed this discussion. In this second round, Reclaim Education was chosen as the first campaign to be launched, followed by Total Ethical Procurement.