ACTION GUIDE

people & planet

student action on world poverty and the environment
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In 2019, 24,050 migrants were detained and 21,100 forced to leave the UK. The UK government has paid £150 million over three years to evict and dismantle refugee camps at Calais and fund police harassment of asylum-seekers and volunteers. The removal of safe routes to Europe kills an average of six people a day in the Mediterranean.

We are a student movement fighting for a world in which everyone has the right to move and the right to access public goods regardless of documentation. To most students, the fight for migrant justice might seem distant. However, as this guide will show, almost every Vice-Chancellor in the UK spends thousands of pounds of tuition fee money and hundreds of hours of staff time upholding an unjust border regime. If you agree Universities should be centres of learning, not instruments of border control, then you agree with our mission.

JOIN THE FIGHT. HELP US WIN
WHY UNDOING BORDERS?

Universities should be places of learning and exchange for all. More often than not, however, the size of your bank account and the colour of your skin determine your experience with higher education. Perhaps, then, it shouldn’t be surprising that Universities are so eager to work with the border regime, which also exists to uphold the privilege of the rich and powerful. The case of Adriana Ortega-Zeifert, a PHD Student at the University of Manchester, exemplifies this. Ortega-Zeifert is a long-term UK resident and groundbreaking cancer researcher. However, she is currently being threatened with jail, deportation, and losing custody of her children to her abusive ex-partner for submitting paper copies of certain documentation late. Ortega-Zeifert had submitted the correct documentation online. The government had decided that making life difficult for a migrant caught out on a technicality was literally more important than finding a cure for cancer. Worse, the University of Manchester, which describes itself as a “global community...where everyone belongs” sided with the Home Office, leaving Ortega-Zeifert without support. This isn’t unusual. UK Universities are complicit in helping the Home Office deport students and staff, in upholding hostile environment surveillance, in blocking people’s access to education based on class and nationality. It’s not a coincidence that the encroachment of borders into higher education has coincided with increasing tuition fees, living costs, and other barriers to less wealthy students. Both are part of the same phenomenon, Universities changing from open, public places of learning, to instruments for profit making and social control. However, the reverse is also true. Every victory over borders on campus brings us closer to open, liberated and accessible Universities for everyone.

I FEEL THAT IF WE DON’T TAKE SERIOUSLY THE WAYS IN WHICH RACISM IS EMBEDDED IN STRUCTURES OF INSTITUTIONS, IF WE_ASSUME THAT THERE MUST BE AN IDENTIFIABLE RACIST WHO IS THE PERPETRATOR, THEN WE WON’T EVER SUCCEEDED IN ERRADICATING RACISM - ANGELA DAVIS

WHY UNDOING BORDERS?

This guide is a brief introduction to the border regime, particularly how it advances into universities. It is also an action guide: a suggested path of action to build an arm of our national movement at your university, along with some strategic resources to campaign effectively.

While the border regime might seem too entrenched and complex to fight, it’s actually surprisingly vulnerable to student action. Like any regime, rather than being a single entity, the border regime is made up of dozens of smaller parts, whose consent and collaboration it relies on to keep functioning. We can draw on a wealth of knowledge about the border regime that has been produced through everyday resistance - both by migrants who find ways to assert their right to move and to organise against the violations of the system, and by groups that fight alongside them in solidarity. If we reclaim the institutions (like Universities) that support and enable the border regime, then we can limit its ability to destroy people’s lives. The Home Office might be hard to reach with student activism, but their Vice-Chancellor collaborators are vulnerable to the bad publicity and bottom-up pressure that we can hit them with.
THE BORDER REGIME

Borders may evoke the image of fences, but they operate as a whole system of interlinked institutions and processes that aim to control people’s movement, their labour and their daily lives.

WHAT IS THE BORDER REGIME?

The Border Regime is the overall name for the system of laws, conditions and structures that control people’s movement. It is too huge and multifaceted for us to describe in detail, but its main components are described below.

**INDEFINITE DETENTION**

Britain is the only country in Europe to allow indefinite detention, holding over 30,000 people (including children) in Government detention centres every year, for no crime other than irregular migration. The UK’s detention regime has expanded 16 times between 1993 and 2015. Detention centres have been at the forefront of prison privatisation, constructed and managed by corporations like G4S, Mitie, Serco and others at profit margins of up to 20%. The Government gives lucrative contracts to these private companies, which the Shaw Review revealed to be forcing refugees to work for less than £1 an hour. Revolts by detainees have highlighted the systematic abuse and humiliation they are subjected to by private security and the detention regime more widely.

**DEPORTATION**

Over 12,000 people are deported from the UK every year, with a further 20,000 coerced into leaving ‘voluntarily’. These removals are often violent - shown by the death of Jimmy Mubenga at the hands of G4S security guards in 2010. The government’s deportation targets lead to intensifying racist surveillance and detention, as well as fast-track removals so as to tick statistical boxes. The Government spends hundreds of thousands of pounds chartering flights which are filled by people of targeted nationalities and depart in the middle of the night to increase confusion and reduce resistance.

**ICE RAIDS**

While they have recently gained notoriety in the USA, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Raids are brutally present in the lives of UK migrants too. They serve to meet deportation targets, particularly to fill charter flights. ICE squads are sent on “fishing” expeditions to round up people of targeted ethnicities and nationalities, involving racial profiling in areas with large BAME communities or often taking the form of workplace raids. These often involve illegal, coerced entry, and excessive violence. Employers like Byron and Deliveroo snitch on their workers, using ICE to stop workers organising for better pay and conditions.
WHAT IS THE BORDER REGIME?

CRIMINALISATION
In the last 15 years there has been an increasing criminalisation both of migration and of failure by people like landlords and employers to report to the Home Office. While there is no formal legal definition of an "illegal" immigrant, this rhetoric has helped reinforce the narrative about "illegal" immigration and has justified giving police-like powers to immigration enforcement officers. Immigration enforcement’s increased discretionary powers make life considerably harder and more fearful for a lot of migrants.

SURVEILLANCE
In order to enforce the hostile environment, the Home Office forces people and institutions to spy on and report their fellow citizens. Whether letting bosses or landlords use the threat of deportation to control people, or forcing charities and medical staff to spy on those they are supposed to be helping, the Home Office uses surveillance to divide society, break communal solidarity, and isolate migrants. In the UK, thousands of people are held in limbo struggling to regularise their status. The agreements and requirements to deliver personal data to the Home Office enable the persecution of those whose status becomes irregular or who work without permission. The hostile environment also blocks the provision of basic services and survival becomes very difficult for many. It should however, be kept in mind that this surveillance network is not impossible to break - schools and hospitals were prevented from having to share details of pupils and patients by huge campaigns by doctors, parents, teachers and activists.

FINANCIAL BARRIERS
Poverty has always been used to control people, and the treatment of migrants is no exception. Asylum seekers in the UK are banned from working, and forced to live on less than £40 a week, leaving many struggling to afford the cost of basic necessities. Meanwhile, the cost for applying for settled status and citizenship has increased by 238% over the last 5 years. An increasing number of migrants are also given No Recourse to Public Funds, meaning they cannot access payments like Universal Credit or other benefits, effectively enforcing destitution. On top of this, ease of access to public goods like education often follows racialised lines. Even as many migrants struggle for survival, the government is increasing the cost of basic services like health and education.

THE BORDER REGIME MONSTER
This is an illustration of the “border regime monster” done by Corporate Watch. You can read their full guide to the border regime here, but the main takeaway for our purposes is that the border regime is made of many different components. Hinder one, and the whole monster gets weaker!

Image from Corporate Watch
BORDERS AND RACE

Migration is entangled with the history of colonialism and race. Colonial murder and extraction created the wealth that Europe defends behind borders today. The legacy of colonial states has produced extreme forms of political insecurity, environmental destruction, and ongoing imperial war-making has destabilised region after region, driving people from their homes. Borders are legal, political-economic, and physical measures that control the movement and the access to resources based on origin and location. They are also partially porous. Capital flows across, labour movement is controlled in a manner that maximises extraction, but the majority of resources and wealth are enclosed for a tiny section of the global population. This operation of race in the creation of borders also interacts with race hatred, in a cowardly balancing act between the profit interests of big business and appeasement of the far right.

While people’s living and working conditions grew more and more precarious, government chose to capitulate to the scapegoating of migrants rather than challenge the fundamental political-economic processes the far right took advantage of. In times of economic hardship, race is used to other populations, breaking class solidarity and causing resentment. Racialised populations are also often a testing ground for new forms of policing and deprivation. Hostile Environment policies, like PREVENT, co-opt citizens and institutions supposedly dedicated to the well-being into surveillance. Their are part of an overall shift that outsources policing to citizens and, in the name of security, erodes our collective freedoms.

Migrant justice, on the other hand, is justice for all. Migrant organising has always been at the forefront of demands for structural transformation. The struggle against borders pushes the horizon of political possibility!
ATTENDANCE MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE

STAFF AS BORDER GUARDS

Under the hostile environment Universities are required to monitor the attendance and immigration status of migrant students. This turns learning environments into policing zones and academic staff into border guards, forcing them to dedicate hundreds of hours of teaching time towards helping the government deport their students. As well as wasting time and money, it also means that while Home students who miss class get wellbeing advice, migrant students get deportation threats. This has terrible effects on student wellbeing, isolating and stigmatising largely ethnic minority students.

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) department of the Home Office holds the threat of withdrawing universities’ visa sponsor licence that allows universities to support international students’ visas if universities do not comply. With cuts to education funding, uncapped international fees are crucial sources of funding to universities, which increasingly operate like businesses. UKVI issues vague ‘guidance’ to universities, which produce their own systems of risk assessment, requirements, monitoring, etc. Universities become responsible for excluding students who may have difficulty meeting financial requirements or finishing a course, and of surveilling and passing on information if there is a change in students’ visa status or if they discern a pattern in attendance that suggests a student may be working without Home Office permission.

Rather than prioritising students’ rights and well-being, universities create policies which prioritise ‘effective compliance’ with the border regime and reducing what they term as ‘risk’. There is a proliferation of bureaucracies, check-points and training for compliance with no focus on the threat of discrimination. Universities are also overstepping UKVI guidance – for example, by creating the category of ‘high-risk countries’ for which academic and financial admissions requirements are more stringent, by enforcing more points of attendance monitoring than formally required and sub-contracting this monitoring to companies like SEAtS, and by maintaining extra close-locks with the Home Office and refusing support to targeted students.

During the UCU strikes in 2018, 2019 and 2020, the threat of deportation was also used as a tool to frighten international students into crossing picket lines, further isolating them from their classmates and forcing those that supported the strikes into painful moral dilemmas. The surveillance requirements have been loosened slightly during the pandemic, but many Universities still overfulfil the requirements, and many others threaten to bring them back once Coronavirus subsides.

It won’t surprise you to learn that accessing University is becoming increasingly difficult for those without money. Money matters – and it matters even more when you have to pay huge amounts for things that should be free and obvious such as the right to stay and live in the UK, healthcare and education. Going to university becomes a luxury, when it should be normal.

This is particularly true for those with temporary immigration status. Firstly, and most obviously, international students pay more than four times as much as UK students. This is combined with rocketing Visa fees and tightening Visa requirements. While international students are often stereotyped as wealthy, this is far from always the case, and these barriers have made it almost impossible for working-class international students to access an education in the UK.

On top of this, many young people in the UK who are en route to citizenship and have a temporary immigration status are barred from accessing affordable higher education.

Exclusion from student finance: Most students with Limited Leave to Remain, have lost their right to a student loan and financial assistance in 2012 when a new education regulation came into effect Campaigning groups such as Let Us Learn (now We Belong) have resisted and secured some changes, but still, large numbers of young people fall through the gaps - if they have not lived in the UK for more than half of their life and who cannot prove a minimum of three years residence. This is to say nothing of student asylum seekers, who have to pay extortionate fees while banned from working and given less than £40 a week to live on, or international students with No Recourse to Public Funds who found themselves starving or homeless due to the pandemic. As a result, Universities become another part of the general struggle to stay afloat within the “hostile environment”.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

WE BELONG

In 2014 a group of young people who were unable to take up their places at universities came together to make a change. They founded Let Us Learn and launched the Young, Gifted and Blocked campaign. The campaigners have since then expanded their organising to address and reclaim their right to citizenship. Read their most recent report “Normality is a Luxury”. It lays out the experiences of 14 young people and how the hostile environment and “limited leave to remain” is blighting their and other young people’s lives – www.webelong.org.uk

Let Us Learn (now We Belong) have
CONTROLLING DISSENT

As with businesses, border controls often allow universities to crack down on dissent, either with explicit intention, or as a by-product of the regime.

Universities are also employers, and with marketisation, they increasingly manage labour in the same way as profit-hungry corporations. More and more staff work on precarious contracts and large sections of operations are sub-contracted to external agencies (some of which are also involved in managing detention centres). In these work environments, the irregular status of migrants has been used to crush labour organising, and immigration policing requirements have also produced indirect restrictions.

UKVI SPONSORSHIP LICENSE
Thousands of international students had their education endangered when UKVI cancelled this licence. This event is indicative of the Home Office policy of cracking down more harshly on what past Home Secretary Amber Rudd called ‘lower quality’ universities – that is, universities with less resources and more working class and PoC students.

UCL SPOT-CHECKS
In 2018 UCL staff received emails instructing to implement a range of monitoring activities, including spot-checks of students’ ID, alongside the threat of a £20,000 fine of those who failed to report irregularity in a student’s status. Staff expressed public outrage, and UCL finally retracted the instruction and issued an apology.

SOAS
After a successful Justice for Cleaners campaign that won workers the Living Wage and trade union rights, ISS, the cleaning contractor, tricked and trapped staff with a fake ‘emergency’ meeting into a raid. The cleaners were locked in a room and interrogated one-by-one.

UCU STRIKES
During the sector-wide University and College Union (UCU) strikes against pension restructuring in 2018, staff discovered that attendance requirements under hostile environment policy endangered their jobs if they chose to strike. Mobilisation resulted in a change to policy so that strike action is a formal exception from these requirements.

HOW DO WE FIGHT IT?
UNDOING BORDERS DEMANDS

The current border regime extends its claws into every area of our lives. We want to crush these claws where we, as students, can reach them. Most importantly, it means fighting any limitations on who can move, who can belong, and who can live, work and study with dignity.

Concretely, this means:

1. **EDUCATION FOR ALL**
   We are demanding that universities classify applicants with temporary immigration status as ‘home’ students for fee purposes, and to provide them with bursaries and administrative support. We are demanding that universities remove any additional academic and financial requirements for international applicants put in place to minimise visa rejection figures.

2. **STOP SURVEILLANCE**
   We are demanding that universities remove all measures of monitoring that infringe on legislation protecting human rights, civil liberties and equality and to end subcontracting of data-collection to private companies. We are demanding that training gives priority to these duties over compliance with the Home Office.

3. **NO DETENTION NO DEPORTATION**
   We are demanding that universities take every precaution in order not to deliver students and staff into immigration detention, to support those who are detained or under threat of detention or deportation, and to intervene to ensure staff’s freedom of association.

We are campaigning for Vice-Chancellors of UK Universities to sign the Pledge Against Hostile Environment.

PLEDGE AGAINST THE HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

Our strategy to do this is based around a ‘Pledge Against the Hostile Environment’. Students will campaign for the Vice-Chancellor and the major unions on campus to publicly sign this pledge. The pledge is a standard declaration across universities that asserts a condemnation of hostile environment policies and commits to creating a sanctuary from these within the university.

1. **We aim** to reverse the spread of hostile environment mechanisms of surveillance through the university, and to block any further advance.

2. **We aim** to turn the university actively against the scheme of denying access and erecting financial barriers: by designating students with temporary status under ‘home’ fee status, offering full bursaries and providing other financial and administrative support.

3. **We aim** to publicise our campaign as widely as possible, to help delegitimise anti-immigration policies, and to establish the possibility of universities as one of many sites of sanctuary for migrants.

Organising for firewalls against data-sharing has worked phenomenally in the NHS and in schools. However, the threat of losing the visa sponsorship licence – to the great detriment of international students – makes it difficult to campaign for total boycott as a first step in universities, particularly without an existing unified movement. A public condemnation is a powerful first move in building this kind of movement, and also provides material for campaigning which challenges the legality and legitimacy of the system as a whole.

Getting Universities to sign up to this pledge is a big step, so it needs to be approached tactically. Undoing Borders groups have focused on aspects of the pledge to respond to specific moments and issues, creating momentum around demands. For example, surveillance monitoring was a heavy focus during the UCU strikes, as University administrations were using it to force international students to cross picket lines. During the Coronavirus pandemic, we’ve focused on financial support as the economic impact of the virus has thrown student poverty and precariousness of people with a temporary immigration status into a starker light. We have also focused on hostile environment attendance monitoring as the suspension of the Home Office requirement to do this has lead to an inconsistent application across Universities, and given us a “common-sense” foot in the door to push this.
STEP 1: BUILD YOUR GROUP

Your first priority is going to be recruiting like minded students and other allies for the campaign. Here’s how best to do it.

REACH OUT
Reach out to people you know who might be interested - remembering to focus on international students or those with irregular immigration status. Put out a call on social media, speak to any groups or societies you think might be interested. (even if they’re not directly political - if your University has an international society, they might have come across these issues.) Think hard about any gaps in your group, and skills, experiences or knowledge that might be lacking when you’re thinking about recruiting people.

RECRUIT
Even with social distancing, recruiting supporters is easier than it looks, but you need to be utterly shameless about it. Put a post on Facebook asking for interest and message everyone who likes or comments on it. If your University has an anonymous posting page, make a similar post in order to reach respondents outside of your immediate circle of Facebook friends. Halls of residence are also a good place to recruit first years, so if you have any members who live in halls have them ask around in hall group chats for potential recruits.

HOLD A MEETING
Make sure you hold a meeting with your new supporters as soon as possible. Give as many people as possible the chance to input on your strategy, and make sure everyone leaves the meeting with a specific action point they can work on.

STEP 2: RESEARCH & PLAN

The nature of border policing at universities means there is no single policy across all universities, so it will be necessary to research specifics - and helpful if you feed that back into People & Planet! However, it is good practice in all campaigns to do some research and plan your strategy before beginning.

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY POLICY
The purpose of this initial research is to get an overall sense of what you are up against before you begin. Don’t get too bogged down in the details; you will find out more along the way. Start forming links with unions – your SU officers may have or be able to obtain information, and staff Unions like the UCU, GMB and Unison will provide access to staff who are forced to implement or be on the receiving end of these policies and can provide detailed knowledge. Contact the Justice for Workers group if there is one on campus.

Important details to check include the Universities academic engagement policy for how it implements immigration enforcement, and whether it offers scholarships and financial support for people with temporary immigration status/limited leave to remain. It’s also worth looking at how many hours of staff time, are spent on monitoring attendance and “academic engagement” and thus on upholding the hostile environment on campus. If you want to get people really angry, calculate how much this costs Universities in salary payments. Whatever details you look for, make sure you’re using the research process to build alliances and contacts with staff unions, with international student networks, with any groups on campus doing similar work to you.

RESEARCH WHAT HAS BEEN DONE
Because of the high rate of turnover at universities, research and organising work that has already been done often gets lost, and different groups may not realise they are running related campaigns. Reach out to those who may know – e.g. SU Officers, other groups, often PhD students or staff who have been around longer. You can also contact People & Planet to put you in touch with campaigns at other universities.

MAP THE BATTLEGROUND
One of the most important tools of any campaign is the power map. This helps you figure out allies and targets for the campaign by mapping out the groups, individuals and institutions on campus on two axes, based on how powerful they are and how much they support you. This power map should be updated regularly as the campaign continues.
STEP 3: PLAN A STRATEGY

No campaign can succeed without a clear strategic plan. While it might seem daunting putting together something on this stage, there are a few steps you can follow to strategic success.

1. Start from the ending and work backwards. Clearly envision the outcome you want to achieve, and then think about what you need to make happen in order to achieve it.

2. Make sure you clearly study the terrain for potential allies, threats and opportunities. Once you’ve power-mapped your University, you can split the people on it into supporters you need to mobilise, neutrals you need to convince, and opponents you need to raise doubt in.

3. Also think about weaknesses and vulnerabilities you can target for your University. Do they have a bad reputation for accessibility? Are they trying to market themselves as international and open? Has anything happened that might make them vulnerable to bad press or keen for good publicity?

STEP 4: CHOOSE YOUR TACTICS

Once you’ve got your overall strategy and vision, it’s time to decide on tactics. Tactics are smaller parts of your plan leading up to bigger goals. Here’s some Do’s and Don’t’s for how to do it:

**DO** - Plan and prepare. Make sure everyone knows their part in the plan, and who to contact if they have any questions. Try to tip off your allies as far ahead in the future as possible.

**DO** - Go big. While there is value in online actions, they can often be ignored if they’re not sufficiently dramatic. Don’t be afraid to push the boat out and be controversial in order to get people talking.

**DO** - Follow through. Remember that the effect of any action depends on the coverage and reaction to it. Make sure you have a clear plan for what to do no matter how successful the action.

**DON’T** - Overcomplicate things. The language, message, and target of these campaigns should be as clear as possible. The more time it takes people to understand things, the less easy it is to get them involved.

**DON’T** - Lose control. While passion has its place in campaigning, you’re dealing with people who are looking for an excuse to delegitimise you. Make sure everything you do positions yourselves as the reasonable ones.

**DON’T** - Mistake going viral for being effective. Just getting a lot of shares isn’t likely to change things - you need to make sure you’re effectively targeting your campaign at establishing a narrative, or extracting a response. Use the tactic star for reference.
**STEP 5: PUBLICISE YOURSELVES**

With face-to-face communications limited due to Covid, social media and online communications are more important than ever. It’s important to get your group out there, and even more important to make sure the tools you use fit the job. Here’s a brief overview of what platforms to use for what ends.

**MAILING LISTS**

Use these to keep your supporters updated on campaigns, actions and breaking news. People will tend to stop reading if they get too spammy, so make sure only to send them out when necessary, and that each one contains a proper call to action.

**FACEBOOK**

This is used to communicate with your “digital inner circle” – basically, people you know personally. As a result, you can use it to get the word out to people who support you, and use more personal, emotive messages. Facebook is also a great platform for sharing videos, graphics and other forms of media – the shorter and more impactful the better.

**TWITTER**

Like Facebook, Twitter can be used to make messages go viral. However, rather than spreading information, it can also be used to talk to people – whether answering questions, tagging potential supporters, or dunking on political opponents. Twitter is also a good place to talk to journalists – look out for the hashtag #journorequest, or just DM or tweet at people you want to talk to.

**INSTAGRAM**

Instagram is less likely than Facebook and Twitter to have posts go viral, but it is a great medium for posting visual or “real time” content (for example, live streaming interviews, actions or messages to your supporters.) It’s also a useful tool for cross-pollination. People who follow a page on Instagram are more likely to also start following on Facebook and Twitter than vice versa.

Obviously, the opportunities for social media use don’t end there. You can check out the Petition Tool on People and Planet’s website, our digital action guide for more resources, or email undoingborders@peopleandplanet.org to set up a digital action workshop.

**PETITIONS & OPEN LETTERS**

It’s useful to have an easy-access way for people to be involved, and also to have a tangible record of widespread support you can refer to while campaigning. Think about ways to keep your petition or open letter circulating – do coordinated shares on social media, ask people to sign it at stalls while leafleting, email it out to mailing lists you’ve compiled from events, and try to get news of it into the student press.

**STEP 6: EDUCATE PEOPLE**

Most Universities market themselves as open, international institutions, and most students will believe them. As a result, it’s important tool in campaigning is to get the word out about the hostile environment on campus. There are a few methods you can use to do this effectively:

1. Centre migrant voices in your campaigning, coalition-building, and comms. Not only is this good practice morally, but it’s also a useful campaigning method – people respond better to immediate personal testimony.

2. Make sure you’re posting as regularly, and as strategically as you can. Shorter messages are better than long ones, and a mix of calls to action, information and opinion will increase interest in your feed. Keep an eye on which posts do and don’t perform well. Consider setting up a social media calendar to plan posts in advance.

3. Use a wide variety of tools in order to reach people – simply posting information on social media isn’t going to reach everyone. Host film screenings, talks and workshops (reach out to undoingborders@peopleandplanet.org if you want one run), and make sure to check out our digital organising guide for more information.
Local and student media are important allies in any campaign, but there are some important things to keep in mind:

1. Map out the media landscape at your University as fully as possible. Think about student newspapers, radio outlets, and local journalists, and make a second power map taking into account their reach and their supportiveness.

2. Journalists are more attracted to emotive “hooks” than facts and logic. Think of things that can make your story more appealing to people who aren’t too clued up on the issues - a local angle, a personal story, a shocking statistic or a creative, attention-grabbing stunt.

3. Think about what sorts of actions are likely to get media attention and reach on social media. Ensure that you inform a media outlet(s) prior to an action. Arrange for someone to take photos/videos, and always do a social media post afterwards and coordinate sharing to get reach.

4. As your group grows and you put together more ambitious actions, your relationship with the press will become more important. Make sure you have at least a couple of people on your group working on this - whether looking for opportunities for publicity, finding shareable content, or drafting up press releases. (You can find an example press release here)

One of the campaign goals is to have all major unions at your university sign the pledge. Borders on campus affect both students and staff - and affect precarious workers particularly harshly in universities where large proportions of cleaning, catering and security staff are migrant workers. Resistance to the advance of the border regime must be fought by students and staff in solidarity. As we have seen earlier in the guide, managing labour and controlling workers’ organised dissent is central to the ways that the border regime operates. A campaign against borders that centres workers’ justice attacks the lynchpins of the regime and commits itself to a genuine vision of democratisation, which has to challenge the relationships of finance and labour that structure the universities-as-corporations we see today.

You can also submit motions to your student council. These are often symbolic, but passing one can represent an easy win for your group, opening paths for further action and getting more media publicity. You can check out the draft SU motion over on the People & Planet website. Remember that you want to be gaining unions’ formal public support for the pledge (both as a goal in itself and to provide further strength to the campaign), but you also want to be building relationships and organising together in the future. Also reciprocate the support: stand in solidarity with workers’ struggles when your support is needed!
STEP 8: NEGOTIATE

If you get management to agree to a meeting, there are a few things to keep in mind.

**Take on the group dynamics:** Go in a group, or at least as pairs, and make a detailed record of what is said. Try to research before into the people who will be present: what their inclinations may be and their level of influence in the decision-making process – e.g. at some universities, the Chief Financial Officer has disproportionate influence.

**BE COOL**

**Be cool:** If you get management to agree to a meeting, there are a few things to keep in mind.

**Hold Them to Account!**

Don’t allow them to water down the pledge either in its public condemnation of the hostile environment or in its concrete commitments to minimising compliance and providing financial support to those with temporary status. See pg 28 on following through.

**KEEP PEOPLE UPDATED**

Use print and social media – make regular public statements on the process. Exercise some caution about when and what to release, but remember that your accountability is to the movement and not to university management. It is important to keep these processes in the public eye to balance the power dynamics stiting the negotiations heavily to their side.

**DON’T BE DISHEARTENED!**

It is very possible that you may not get what you wanted out of these. This is just a stage in the process. Stick to your fight and regroup and escalate if necessary.

**STEP 9: ESCALATE**

If the University refuses to act once you’ve met with them, it’s time to turn up the heat. This might seem difficult during a time of social distancing, but there are a few things to keep in mind to make it easier:

1. Make sure you think before you act. Strategise clearly what the reasons for and targets of your escalation are. Think about what will grab the attention of students and the media, and what will hit the University where it hurts.
2. Make clear in ALL your publicity that you’re taking this action only because polite negotiation didn’t work. This shifts the onus of explaining why you’re being disruptive over to the University.
3. Remember that it’s not just the action itself that is important, but the leadup (making sure media is tipped off, that your allies are prepared to amplify you) and follow-through (making sure the action is covered, and followed up on.)
4. Use humour if possible. Humour not only makes you look more attractive to both students and media, it also helps erode both apathy and fear which are blocks on getting involved in activism. You can find more information about this on the next page!
DIRECT ACTION ONLINE

Here are some examples of online direct actions you can take to escalate your campaign.

**DISRUPTION**
Find some way to creatively disrupt public meetings like online graduations and open days.

**OCCUPATION**
These can be done online far more easily and impactfully online than in person: First jam up the phone lines. Have as many activists as you can call up an agreed number (your VC or Press Department) with a pre-arranged script. If they start hanging up, leave a message. While this is going on, arrange negative comments on University social media, and mass-negative reviews of their Facebook page. All of this increases the pressure placed on the University.

**ZOOMBOMBING**
Intruding into video calls to leave messages and images which call out the University can cause significant disruption for minimum cost. Make sure you go in without a recognisable profile, and any follow-up media coverage does not name participants.

**SPOOFING**
This one is fairly simple, and involves parodying University communications to make a point. If they have a hashtag you can hijack, or a logo or symbol you can alter, make sure it gets shared all over Facebook.

**DIGITAL ARTBUILDS**
Digital art builds involve different folk each contributing a piece of artwork that will form part of a bigger one. We used this tactic for the 2020 Barclays’ AGM, sharing the image during a tweetstorm. Thanks to a strong social media plan, it reached 18,000 people!

STEP 10: WIN!

There may be a cycle back and forth between negotiating and escalating, but at some point, you will win! The VC will sign the pledge. But don’t just leave it at that – the win needs to be public across the university, locally and ideally even nationally in order to take fully effect.

**CELEBRATE**
You just won. Have a party. We have to celebrate when mass democratic power gains victory for justice.

**MEDIA**
It’s absolutely vital that this victory gets as wide coverage as possible. Contact People & Planet for further support in this process.

**KEEP UP MOMENTUM**
Many campaigns will run out of steam slightly when they’ve won their first victory. Make sure that even as you celebrate your victory, you’re not resting on your laurels, but rather working out how you can build up to your next move.

**FOLLOW THROUGH**
The pledge is part of the win, but management has to come through on their commitments in order to concretely block the advance of the hostile environment in the university. See the next page for more.
FOLLOW THROUGH

Remember, even if you VC or Principal has signed the Pledge Against the Hostile Environment, the campaign isn’t over! You will need to follow up to make sure your University does what it pledged to do. Don’t be shy – you won’t lose your gains you’ve made by keeping the campaign going; keeping up the pressure means your university is more likely to stick to its word and take your demands seriously.

Follow through on the Undoing Borders campaign aims and hold your university to account on the commitments in the Pledge Against the Hostile Environment:

- Get your university to reverse the infiltration of hostile environment into campus by reviewing their monitoring and surveillance mechanisms in line with putting student and staff rights first. Campaign to block any further advance on the discriminatory surveillance of students and staff.
- Remind your university of their duties under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (including the right of everyone to education), the EU General Data Protection Regulation (including its principles of data minimisation, purpose limitation and storage limitation), the UK Human Rights Act (including Article 8: right to privacy and Article 14 against discrimination), and the UK Equality Act (including the universities’ Public Sector Equality Duty).
- Get your university to provide full bursaries and other financial and administrative support for students with a temporary status. We will not allow our peers with ‘limited leave to remain’ or any other type of temporary status to be denied their right to public education.
- Publicise your campaign as widely as possible! If your VC or one of the major unions on campus have signed or are about to sign the pledge – go big and make a fuss about it. This is a a powerful tool for deligitimising anti-immigration policies and the Hostile Environment as a whole.

A WALL IS JUST A WALL AND NOTHING MORE AT ALL. IT CAN BE BROKEN DOWN

- ASSATA SHAKUR

AFTERWORD

Thanks for reading our action guide. We know we’ve thrown a lot of information at you but here are the important things to take away.

1. The border regime is huge and seemingly impregnable, but it can be beaten. The Vice-Chancellors that uphold it are vulnerable to negative media attention, and to creative, persistent pressure from below.

2. We are living through chaotic, frightening times. But the decision to suspend Home Office surveillance during the pandemic proves it’s possible to make progress. It’s our duty to keep trying to build a better world through this pandemic.

3. You are not alone in this fight. There are groups, individuals and institutions across the country that share your outrage, that want to help you. Reach out to us and we’ll put you in touch. Remember, when we fight together, we win together.
DETAINEE SUPPORT GROUPS
When you think of the thousands of people in immigration detention across the UK, you might find yourself overwhelmed and struggling to come up with practical ways to support those behind bars, let alone to end detention. There are, however, different ways to do solidarity work and to support people in detention here and now. Groups such as SOAS Detainee Support in London or the Unity Centre in Glasgow give practical support and organise solidarity actions to break the isolation of immigration detention. This support can go from speaking to people in detention on the phone or visiting them to organising direct actions in front of detention centres. Contact us if you need support, email: undoingborders@peopleandplanet.org

DEPORTATION ACTION
There are different forms of exercising practical solidarity to resist deportations. Knowing the law and powers of immigration officers and police can help protect you and other people: if you or someone else you know could benefit from advice on their case, you can turn to organisations such as Right to Remain and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI). Different tactics are used to delay deportations such as phone blockades when someone’s deportation time is known and people call up and tweet at airlines asking them not to assist in deporting someone. Check out End Deportations – a collective campaign calling for the abolition of deportations and detention centres.

RESISTANCE ON CAMPUS
When our peers, fellow students and staff on campus are under risk of detention and deportation it is for all of us to stand up and resist. Unis Resist Border Controls (URBC) have led on campaigning and casework support to international students & staff across the UK. URBC is a national campaign made up of British, EU, non-EU, migrant students, lecturers, & university workers opposed to Home Office surveillance, the Hostile Environment, and border controls on UK campuses: unisresistbordercontrol.org.uk

GUIDES
Whether it’s writing press releases or lobbying Vice-Chancellors, it’s important you know your stuff, and are empowered to build a fighting movement.

Luckily, you’re not alone! On the People & Planet website you can find plenty of tools to skill up, including:

» A **Movement Building Action Guide** – so you can build a fighting movement.

» A **Collective Liberation Guide** – so your group is accessible and effectively fighting every form of oppression.

» A **Digital Campaigning guide** – so you can organise in an age of social distancing.

We also offer **workshops** to train and strategise your campaigns. Workshops include: Undoing Borders; campaign strategy workshop; media training; and many others.
USEFUL RESOURCES

BORDERS & WALLS
The UK Border Regime – a critical guide, Corporate Watch (can be downloaded for free on the Corporate Watch homepage), corporatewatch.org
Migration Control – who gets paid to stops the worlds refugees?, migration-control.taz.de
Refugee Rights Europe, refugeerights.org.uk
Anti-Raids Network, antiraids.net
Detained Voices, detainedvoices.com

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT
A Guide to the Hostile Environment, Liberty, libertyhumanright.org.uk
Unis Resist Border Control, unisresistbordercontrols.org.uk
Patients Not Passports Toolkit, Docs Not Cops, patientsnotpassports.co.uk

IMMIGRATION RULES & CITIZENSHIP
We Belong, webelong.org.uk
Right to Remain Toolkit, righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit
Free Movement, freemovement.org.uk

CAMPAIGN RESOURCES
https://wagingnonviolence.org
https://mobilisationlab.org
https://beautifultrouble.org
https://canvasopedia.org
https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/ten-key-resources-activists-organizers/
https://www.thechangeagency.org/campaigners-toolkit/links/resources-for-activists-and-organizers/

There are lots more resources available for you to use in your campaign on our website. Contact us if you want us to run a training on campus, including Undoing Borders campaign training, media spokesperson training or campaign strategy training.

Logos, fonts and graphics can all be downloaded from the People & Planet website.

YOU HAVE TO ACT AS IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO RADICALLY TRANSFORM THE WORLD. AND YOU HAVE TO DO IT ALL THE TIME.

- ANGELA DAVIS
THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to read the Undoing Borders Action Guide! We hope it will be useful in planning and running your campaign. Remember to contact People & Planet for support with all the different aspects of this as well as letting us know how you’re doing so we can publicise your progress to the wider movement!

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