

# WORLD DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENT LOCAL GROUPS HANDBOOK



**Introduction /2**

**1. Organising basics /4**

**2. Support for groups /7**

**3. Building your group /9**

**4. Running a WDM campaign /12**

**5. Fundraising /14**

**6. Using local media /15**

**7. Lobbying politicians /18**

**World Development  
Movement**  
Justice for the world's poor

# INTRODUCTION

WDM exists to achieve justice for the world's poor majority through campaigns which tackle the root causes of poverty. It is a democratic campaigning network of members and local groups based in Britain.

WDM was set up as an incorporated organisation rather than a charity to directly influence the democratic process and each of the political parties. WDM's research and educational work is supported through the WDM Trust, a registered charity.

We often use the following text to describe ourselves:

*The World Development Movement (WDM) campaigns for a world without poverty and injustice. We work in solidarity with activists around the world to tackle the causes of poverty. We research and promote positive alternatives which put the rights of poor communities before the interests of big business.*

## A BRIEF HISTORY

WDM was launched in 1970 and has its origins in the 'World Poverty Action' groups started in the 1960s by people involved in charities and development education who saw the need for political action. A new organisation was needed because of the restrictions British charity laws placed on charities' campaigning activities.

Over the years, WDM has grown steadily and campaigned successfully on a wide range of development issues. It has developed from a small network into a nation-wide democratic organisation with groups, affiliates and individual members. Through a biennially elected Council and an Area Representatives' Forum, the membership guides WDM's policies and campaigns.

## LOCAL GROUPS ARE VITAL

Local campaigning groups are central to the way that WDM achieves change. They promote WDM in their area, lobby politicians, get our campaigns profile in local media and distribute the research and campaigns materials that the paid staff produce.

Our credibility as an organisation is partly based on the

visibility of our supporters who demonstrate popular concern for global justice and development issues. The most effective way to be visible and promote our campaigns is to organise as a group, and there is lots of support available from the WDM office to help you do this.

## AREAS AND AREA REPS

WDM currently has around 60 local groups around the country. These are split into areas for three reasons: to ensure groups have democratic input into running WDM; to ensure good communication between the office, the council and groups; and to provide support for groups more easily through area representatives.



A list of the current area reps and their contact details can be found on the WDM website, or can be sent to you from the office. The reps are elected by the region they represent and meet at the Area Representatives' Forum. This in turn elects three people to sit on the Council, together with the nine others who are directly elected by the membership.

You can find more details of the structure of WDM in the appendices.

## WDM PUBLICATIONS

As well as reports and campaigns materials, WDM produces three main regular publications.

- *E-News* is a monthly email newsletter which is sent to all members whose email addresses we have, plus anyone else who signs up.
- *Action* magazine is a professionally produced magazine which is sent to all national members three times a year.
- *Think Global* is an update produced 'in house' and sent to groups and anyone who has signed up to be an activist. It arrives at the beginning of each month (except August) by post and/or email. In addition to the main group contact, any number of group members can get it by email - just go to [www.wdm.org.uk/think-global](http://www.wdm.org.uk/think-global) to sign up.

## THANK YOU

WDM would not achieve the campaign successes we do without the consistent efforts, energy and commitment of our network of local groups. You are a vital part of the global justice movement, so thank you, and we hope you find this handbook useful.



Action magazine from February 2010.

# 1. ORGANISING BASICS

There is no particular blueprint for organising a successful group, but there are a few basics that you will almost certainly need to do.

## MEETING REGULARLY

Getting together as a group on a regular basis is important so that you can talk, get to know each other and decide what campaign action you are going to take. Most groups meet once a month, near the beginning of the month to tie in with the *Think Global* mailing.

It's a good idea for as many people in the group to read *Think Global* before the meeting as possible, so you don't have to spend time going through it. As many people as you like can receive the mailing by email, and it is available in the 'Community' section of the WDM website too.

You will need to decide during your meeting how many of the suggested activities you can manage as a group in the coming months. There may also be local events or issues related to global justice which you want to get involved in. WDM local groups are encouraged to prioritise the campaigns we are running nationally to ensure the campaigning effectiveness of the movement. However, there's nothing to stop you getting involved in other issues if you have the capacity.

Think carefully about where you meet. Groups meet in

lots of different kinds of places including community centres, development education/environmental centres, rooms attached to pubs and their own homes. Cost is obviously an important factor to consider but it is equally important to think about how inviting your meeting place might be to potential members. Is it easy to get to in the evening? Is it inviting? Would anyone be happy to meet there?

Meetings in cold and draughty halls, for example, are unlikely to succeed in the long run – but meetings in more pleasant or social surroundings are. Meetings in private homes can seem exclusive (without intending to be) as can meetings in religious buildings. Meetings in pubs may be off-putting to others.

## ASSIGNING GROUP ROLES

As part of the WDM Agreement we ask groups to provide us with the details of a contact person, who should have a reliable address, telephone number and ideally an email address so that we can publicise your group and communicate easily with you. The contact person should therefore be prepared to have their details sent out to members of the public by the WDM office. This person also makes sure that all the other members of the group have access to the campaign information and resources that we send your group.

We also recommend that groups have a treasurer who takes responsibility for looking after the group's money and for paying your annual group subscription. Different groups divide up their work in different ways, but the strongest ones tend to share the load amongst a number of people rather than having just one or two key organisers.

In addition to the group contact and treasurer, you might find some of these roles useful:

- **Chair:** organises and chairs the meetings and makes sure that everyone is involved and has the chance to contribute.
- **Secretary:** takes brief minutes, noting action points and keeps the group's records.
- **Current campaign coordinator:** responsible for keeping everyone up to date on what is happening in the current campaign(s)
- **Press liaison:** organises sending out press releases

### Tips to avoid boring meetings

Avoid spending too much time poring over previous minutes, just check back on the key action points.

Make sure that you take some form of action in your meeting, whether that be planning a press stunt or even just filling in campaign postcards.

Invite relevant speakers from time to time, either from another organisation locally, or from the WDM office to talk about a campaign.

You could also show a short film if the equipment is available. Contact the WDM office for suggestions and film loans.

to the local press, writing letters and setting up photo opportunities

- Fundraiser: responsible for raising funds for your local group
- Membership secretary: for finding and looking after new members
- Events/stalls organiser: to coordinate public meetings and attendance at the events of other organisations. This could incorporate responsibility for collating materials for stalls.
- MP/MEP liaison person: for setting up meetings with politicians and coordinating visits.

Of course, roles can be combined depending on how many people you have willing to take them on, and you certainly don't need to have people in all these roles when you're starting out. However, it can be useful to assign formal roles, as it encourages people to take responsibility and spreads the work out over a larger group of people.

## DEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING

It's also important to make sure that everyone has the chance to say what they think and contribute to decisions. In order to work effectively as a group, everyone needs to feel listened to when they want to speak and no-one should make decisions on behalf of the group unless the group has agreed that they can.

Some groups find it helpful to have a set of rules which clarify how they operate. This can be particularly useful in the unlikely event of having to deal with a difficult group member. If you think this would be useful for your group, have a look at the model constitution in the appendices; you can adapt this for your own group.

## COMMUNICATING WITHIN YOUR GROUP

Telephone trees are the traditional way for sharing information within a campaign group. All you need to do is to divide your group membership by a sensible number and then give each person 2 or 3 telephone numbers each. Even if you mainly use email to communicate, it's worth considering using a telephone tree sometimes, as it can help get firm commitments out of people!

As well as the secretary simply keeping an email list on their computer, 'elists' or 'egroups' can be a useful way of organising. If people feel they can opt out when they want to, they are more likely to join in the first place.



Bristol WDM run a stall at a local festival

Google groups (<http://groups.google.com>) is one way to set up such a list, or try something more specifically activist-orientated, like Riseup (<http://lists.riseup.net>).

There are two main kinds of email lists. Fully interactive lists allow all members to post and respond to each other. This is the most useful kind of list for the core group of all those who at least sometimes play a role in the group. You could also run a newsletter-style list, where only the list owner can send out emails. This is a good way to build up a wider group of people who don't have time to get involved in organising, but might like to know about public meetings or other events you are putting on.

If you use this kind of list, it's best to send out a regular email, in a standard format no more than once a month. Think of it like a traditional newsletter, just sent in email form. It can also be printed out and sent to anyone who doesn't use email, of course. Whatever format you use, many WDM groups use a local newsletter to keep a wider group of people involved in the life of their group.

## KEEPING RECORDS

Try to keep a scrapbook of your activities such as photos or articles in the press, and make sure you know the date and the publication. This can be invaluable when you are putting up displays about your group, telling new members what you have done so far, giving the WDM office material for including in *Think Global*, or just generally making your group members feel good at the end of the year.



WDM local groups and staff members joined tens of thousands of others on the Put People First march in London in 2009.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

Holding an occasional social event can also be a good way of fundraising and an unthreatening way of inviting new people along. The strongest groups are often those that socialise together from time to time as well as just meeting at meetings.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

As part of the WDM Agreement we require groups not to discriminate against any person based on race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, class, gender, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or family situation.

## USE OF THE WDM NAME

Groups are asked to use their full group name whenever making any public statements, for instance 'Edinburgh World Development Movement'. This applies to any correspondence, publicity, press releases and events. There may be cases (eg campaigning on particular companies) where it is necessary to be particularly

careful to avoid libel. WDM generally provides draft press releases for local action, but if a group wishes to draft a different press release or letter, staff are happy to check it before publication.

## 2. SUPPORT FOR GROUPS

The network development officer is the member of staff who coordinates support for WDM groups. If you have any queries about any aspect of group campaigning or organisation please ask for her/him, or email [groups@wdm.org.uk](mailto:groups@wdm.org.uk)

### AREA REPRESENTATIVES

You can feed ideas and comments into the organisation through your Area Representative. There is a list of reps on the WDM website, and an updated list, with contact details, is sent out periodically with your *Think Global* mailing. Please contact your rep if you have ideas for improved support or you want to give feedback about a campaign.

Representatives meet three times a year at the Area Reps' Forum in different parts of Britain. This is an opportunity for reps to put forward and discuss ideas and feedback from group members. Your rep will contact you prior to each forum meeting to see if there is anything that you would like to raise. Reps also have an input into the content of group resources and ideas for action so you can also tell them what works well and what doesn't.

### TRAINING AND EVENTS

WDM runs a variety of events during the year, with some variation from year to year. These can include:

- Conferences on campaign issues with high profile campaigners, including speakers from the global south.
- Speaker tours, where one southern speaker speaks at lots of meetings around the country, hosted by WDM local groups.
- Specialised training days for group members focusing on a particular skill or skills such as public speaking or working with the media.
- Campaigner conventions, which combine shorter training sessions with campaign information meetings and sometimes outside speakers.

Every year in December we circulate a questionnaire to groups through which you are able to say what your training needs are. You can also contact the network development officer if you have specific needs. We may

be able to help by organising an ad hoc session for your group.

### GROUPS PROJECT FUND

The groups project fund is a special fund which groups can apply to for mini-grants to help stage campaign events, conferences or recruitment campaigns. The project should result in WDM gaining publicity for a specific campaign, increasing its membership, or both.

Money is allocated on a 'matched funding' basis, which means half of the total cost of the project must be met by the local group, either from existing funds or by fundraising. Full details of what you can apply for and how to apply can be found in the Appendices section of this handbook.

### GROUP RESOURCES

In addition to campaign materials (campaign postcards, leaflets, briefings and so on) and *Think Global*, WDM has some specific resources to help local groups. To order campaign materials, you can email [wdm@wdm.org.uk](mailto:wdm@wdm.org.uk) or phone 020 7820 4900. Please allow at least a week for orders to arrive, although we can sometimes process urgent orders more quickly so long as you phone us.

It's best to contact the network development officer if you would like local group flyers and posters personalised with your group's details. They can be used in cafés, community centres, waiting rooms, colleges or shops. The WDM office can do the personalising for you.

### MEMBERSHIP LABEL PRINTOUTS

As a registered WDM group you can make requests for labels for the WDM members in your area so that you can invite them to WDM events and actions. You can do this on an ad hoc basis when you need to.

To remain within data protection rules, the labels can only be used for mailings advertising WDM events and campaigns. You should not make your own records using the addresses on the labels, and of course, you

should not supply those addresses to anyone else.

Also because of data protection rules, we are not able to provide you with email and telephone contacts for individual members. However, we can circulate publicity emails to members in your area on your group's behalf.

Each new member who joins WDM nationally is sent the details of their local group in their welcome pack so that they are able to get involved if they wish. However, it can be useful to back this up with a mailing from the local group from time to time, especially when you have an interesting event for them to come to.

## USING THE WDM WEBSITE

The 'community' section of the WDM website is where you can get all the resources you need for effective local campaigning. Go to [www.wdm.org.uk/community](http://www.wdm.org.uk/community) where you'll find pdf versions of the Think Global mailings and any enclosures that are sent out with them, tips for effective campaigning, and the opportunity to share skills with others in the WDM network.

There's also a regularly updated photo gallery of local groups in action (send your photos to the network development officer!) and a tool for anyone to find their local group by entering their postcode. We aim to keep developing this part of the website to ensure it meets the needs of the network.

## GROUP WEBSITES

In addition, each WDM group can have their own mini-website, linked in to the main WDM website in various ways, but with groups able to provide details of their meetings, write blog posts, upload photos of their activities and so on. The sites are run using Wordpress software, which is an easy-to-use blogging system.

It's up to you whether you use your site to regularly post information and news, or maintain it more as a static page where generic information about your group's activities and your contact details can be found. However, WDM's website officer is happy to give advice and training, either over the phone or via a visit to your group, so unfamiliarity with the software shouldn't be a barrier to using your site effectively. A regularly updated group site is a sign to potential new members that your group is active and an interesting



Oxford WDM's website, based on the local groups website template.

place to be! There are more details about using your group website in the appendices to this handbook.

## PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

WDM has Public Liability insurance. All registered WDM groups are covered by this insurance. The amount of indemnity is £5,000,000 for any one occurrence. The insurance does not apply to the first £250 of damages, costs and expenses payable in respect of each and every occurrence of loss of, or damage to property.

You may be asked to provide evidence of this insurance cover by your local council or venue when you are organising an event. If so, contact the network development officer to request a copy of the insurance schedule.

# 3. BUILDING YOUR GROUP

Raising WDM's profile locally is an essential part of campaigning. Quite simply, the more people know us the easier we will find it to get press coverage and the more political clout we will have. If your group has a high profile locally you will be seen as more powerful in the eyes of your campaign targets, you will encourage more people to get involved in your group, and your campaigning and lobbying will be stronger.

## NEW MEMBERS ARE IMPORTANT

As a local group your members may not have lots of spare time in which to run special promotion campaigns, but you can make promoting WDM and your group an integral part of all your campaigning activities. Always think of getting more people involved whenever you plan any activities.

Bringing new people into the orbit of your group is important for a number of reasons. There is always some natural turnover in group membership as members move away or have to prioritise other things. Over time new members can take on tasks that others have had to drop and you can avoid any one person becoming overburdened.

New members also bring new ideas, skills, experience and perspectives. This can help keep your group dynamic and ensure you get feedback from sympathetic people who nevertheless are not too immersed to be objective.

And of course, the more people who are involved, the more multipliers there are for the campaigns you are running, and the more significant you will seem in the eyes of politicians and the local media.

## MAKING IT EASY TO JOIN

The best way to get new members involved is by doing regular campaign activities. It might sound obvious, but potential members are more likely to join a group that they can see is active. But at the same time, don't forget to actually ask people to get involved.

There are a few simple things to remember in making it easy for people to join:

- Always bring sign-up sheets. A standard one is available from the office, which allows people to express an interest in WDM nationally, in their local group, or both. If you have one to hand at every WDM activity, you can easily collect new people's details.
- Always advertise any meetings you have that involve speakers or a video showing to a wider audience. Whilst you shouldn't expect floods of new people as a result, your meeting can be made to appeal to some extra people who want to get involved.
- If you're giving or hosting a talk, always remember to include an appeal to join.
- Always follow up new contacts efficiently. After collecting a new set of contact details, send an email out within the next few days introducing your group and inviting them to the next meeting.

There is also a standard local groups leaflet available from the office which we can personalise with your group's details. Its great for using on stalls or sometimes even for leaving in particularly friendly



WDM local group members are joined by Nepali campaigner Gopal Chintan to oppose Severn Trent's involvement in the proposed privatisation of Kathmandu's water system in 2007.

or aligned cafés or community centres. Contact the network team at the office to order some of these leaflets.

## **KEEPING NEW MEMBERS HOOKED**

Be as welcoming as possible to new members. If someone new turns up to your group meeting, make sure you run it in a way that doesn't exclude them. At an appropriate point, show them all the latest campaign information and tell them what your group does. You can also direct them to the 'Community' section of the WDM website for past issues of *Think Global* and other information. Always introduce a new person to everybody in the group.

Try not to resist new ideas. If you do not like stunts and street activities but a new member comes along who is keen to campaign in that way try to support them.

Find out what new members' skills are. See if they would like to try doing a simple campaign action or help out with something. Try not to leap on new people or overburden them but do give everyone the opportunity to do something if they wish. This takes the burden off key group members and ensures that new people feel involved.

## **NETWORKING LOCALLY**

There are a number of kinds of local groups who may be useful allies when campaigning locally, or who may be

interested in being kept up to date with WDM's work.

The biggest overlap between WDM and student activism is probably with national student network People & Planet ([www.peopleandplanet.org](http://www.peopleandplanet.org)). WDM collaborates with People & Planet at a national level, but some local WDM groups have also developed productive relationships with People & Planet groups at their local university. Be aware, however, that student turnover means some effort generally needs to be put into renewing the relationship each year.

There are also often other groups affiliated to student unions, especially at universities where People & Planet are not present. It may be worth investigating this when in search of new allies. Particular courses may also yield some interest, including development studies, human geography, politics or Latin American, African or Asian Studies. A guest talk to a particular course about WDM's work can be one way in here. Masters students can be good targets for recruitment to WDM as they tend to be less involved in campaigning activities within the university itself.

Peace and justice organisations are local non-denominational Christian groups active on issues which cross over with those of WDM. Some are affiliated to WDM nationally. It is worth knowing them if there is one in your area.

Other groups which it is worth knowing include local branches of trade unions, the trades council for your area (the umbrella group for trade union branches at a local level), and maybe local political party branches.

## **ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING**

Once you've got your group's web presence sorted out (see section 2), you might want to move on to making the most of social networking sites to help build your group and local campaign work. This will depend a bit on the demographics of your existing group, but something like Facebook can be a useful way to involve new people, especially those in their 20s and 30s. Facebook works well for campaigning because lots of people have a profile on it. It also allows you to set up virtual groups and for those groups to advertise events and invite people to them. An existing group member will have to have a profile already or be prepared to set one up, and then get a feel for how Facebook works.

Of course there are lots of other forms of social networking, with new ones being invented all the time.

### **Key messages for encouraging people to join**

**WDM doesn't give aid or run programmes – we campaign against the institutions and power structures that keep people poor. We do this in partnership and solidarity with campaigners in the global south.**

**WDM achieves results. Give an example of a fairly recent campaign victory.**

**One of the main reasons we win is our network of local groups, taking action up and down the country.**

**At a national level we depend on lots of people giving relatively small amounts of money to keep us going.**



Bradford WDM group members join 'the wave' climate change demonstration in 2009.

On the other hand, some have already started to fall out of fashion. Think of them simply as extra ways to communicate with the world which might work for your group.

Twitter is another good way of connecting with people online and is particularly useful for getting visitors to your website. WDM's website officer is available to provide advice on how you can best use social media for campaigning and is happy to come out and visit your group.

## REVITALISING YOUR GROUP

All groups go through peaks and troughs, but there's usually something you can do to revitalise a group that has lost a bit of steam. Speaking to your area rep or the network development officer can be very useful in such a situation. It will probably also be helpful for them to come to a meeting, where they can give advice and offer an outsider's perspective.

Together you should come up with a plan to get your group back on its feet. This could include prioritising so that you do just one or two things but do them well; start meeting somewhere more inviting; plan an event that helps relaunch the group; and think about other new ways to recruit new members.

## DEALING WITH DIFFICULT MEMBERS

Group harmony may be very occasionally disrupted by someone's behaviour that is not acceptable to other members. It is important to emphasise that these are not problems which occur that often, but if they do it is

better to deal with the situation straight away than to hope that the problem will disappear.

Sometimes a group member can be domineering or disruptive in the group. They probably don't realise they are doing it, and good chairing can minimise disruption. Give everybody a time limit on contributions to keep the discussion flowing, and don't be afraid to be politely assertive if someone runs over time.

If you would like help and advice on how to go about dealing with difficult members, please contact the network development officer and/or your area representative. WDM needs to ensure that everyone is treated fairly but we do take these problems seriously and are always happy to discuss difficulties in full confidence.

## 4. RUNNING A WDM CAMPAIGN

It is a local group's job to take WDM campaigns out into your local community - to the media, the public and to the decision makers who you can hold accountable. WDM always provides you with the necessary briefings and local action packs to guide you in planning your local campaigns.

A typical campaign pack would contain a whole range of ideas from the very simple action card to the more extravagant photo stunt. We will always ask you to think about imaginative ways in which you can raise the profile of a campaign locally, and share ideas that we can pass on to other groups.

Whilst you are out there campaigning in your region, you can be sure that many other groups are doing the same across Britain. What might seem like a small action is contributing to a powerful nationwide lobby.

### OBJECTIVES

When campaigning, be sure to work towards defined objectives, which could include:

- To educate, persuade and put pressure on your campaign targets (e.g. your MP, a corporation etc)
- To obtain media coverage
- To engage with and educate the public about the campaign in order to get their support
- To raise awareness about WDM locally

Then look at the resources you have available in terms of time, people and equipment.

### STREET STALLS

One effective way to distribute campaign literature is by running a street stall. You can often get lots of action cards signed quite quickly, as well as getting the opportunity to talk about our issues with totally new people.

You do not need permission to set up a stall on publicly-owned land (ie all ordinary streets), you just need to ensure that you aren't blocking the pavement by doing so. In any case it is best to set up where there is a wider space so that people can stop to look at your stall.

It is important to make your stall look attractive and tidy. If you are using a paste table, try getting a piece of coloured material to cover it. Bring a range of materials, but not so many that the eye is overwhelmed, and lay them out so that the most important materials are most noticeable.

It is best to focus on getting one particular action card or petition signed. Before you start, get all the group members together and think about how you are going to approach people. What's the simplest and most interesting line you can use to approach people with? If you have more than two people helping with the stall, some of you can use clipboards and rove around the stall getting sign-ups.

If you run a street stall in the town centre during shopping hours you can reach lots of people. The downside can be that people are in a hurry and not inclined to stop. So it is also useful to run stalls at events where people have more time, or where a greater proportion of them are likely to be sympathetic. Keep a look out for such events locally, including fairs and festivals.

### STUNTS

Because the issues we deal with can often seem complex and remote, WDM activists have to be creative in getting the message across to both the press and the public. This can involve dressing up around a theme, using props or incorporating some kind of fun, interactive element to a stall you are running. Stunts can be used to attract the general public to take action, or to encourage the local press to cover your story (see section 6 for more on using your local media).

WDM campaigners will often come up with ready made stunts for particular campaigns and provide some of the props you need. However, there is nothing to stop you from inventing your own at other times – especially if group members are theatrically or artistically minded.

### PUBLIC MEETINGS AND TALKS

It is often a good idea to put on a public meeting to raise the profile of a particular campaign. WDM staff



Members of WDM groups in London bring some creativity to communicating our 2009 trade campaign.

are always available to give an expert talk about the campaign, provided enough notice is given. Public meetings are a great way to involve new people and those already in your group who are only able to be involved occasionally.

You will need to advertise the details of your event widely at least two weeks in advance using noticeboards, email lists and leaflets in cafés and other local venues. Colleges and universities, community centres, churches and libraries should all be covered. More tips for running a successful event can be found in the appendices.

It can also be really useful for members of the group to give a short talk about a campaign to a meeting of another local organisation, such as a local political party, trade union branch, or trades council (a federation of trade union branches in a local area). WDM staff can give you advice on the key points to cover in such a talk, which should be no longer than ten minutes.

## **LOBBYING**

Writing letters to a government minister or your local MP or MEP can have real influence, especially if the

same person gets lots of letters. WDM often provides template letters for local groups, although it can be even more effective if groups rewrite them and incorporate their own local details.

Many MPs actively seek a dialogue with local campaigners and are happy to have face-to-face meetings with groups such as WDM. See section 6 on lobbying politicians for more details.

## 5. FUNDRAISING

It is useful for groups to have a specific bank account to hold funds collected at events and via membership fees. You will need limited funds to cover campaigning costs such as postage, photocopying, venue hire for meetings and events, and materials and props for stunts. However, remember that you can always apply to the groups project fund for additional money if required; we want to enable groups to carry out effective activities, without finances being a barrier.

### LOCAL MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Your group may decide to charge an annual member subscription. This fee varies across WDM groups (from £3 to £10 a year), so feel free to set a membership sub which you feel is reasonable and which will adequately support your activities. For fundraising purposes, it may be useful for this sub to apply to members on your wider mailing list as well as to core members who regularly attend meetings.

For example, you may have a sign up sheet at events where people can give contact details for your mailing list, and in addition people can choose to be 'a supporter of X group', giving a donation of £5 a year. You may find that plenty of people are willing to donate in this way, particularly if they support the aims of the group but do not have the time to be actively involved.

### NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Becoming a national member is in itself an important way to take action. As a member, you receive *Action* magazine three times a year, plus you will become part of a democratic membership organisation. But most of all, your membership fee helps support our vital campaigning and policy research work.

An annual membership costs just £24 (waged) or £12 (unwaged). To find out which of your members are already national members, contact the network team.

When encouraging new people to join your group you can use the 'free membership' forms. These provide new group members with a year's national membership for free; after a year we will contact them, asking if they would like to continue their membership at a paid level.

### EVENTS

Events are a great way to raise money to support WDM's campaigns; although of course they can act as an effective way to raise awareness of our issues as well. In the past WDM groups have held pub quizzes, themed dinners, film screenings and coffee mornings. Funds raised at events such as film evenings can be boosted by group members making cakes and snacks to be sold on the night.

Sponsored events are also a good way to raise money. If you or anyone in your group, or even a friend or family member, is taking part in a sponsored event why not raise funds for WDM? This form of fundraising has become even easier since the 'Just Giving' website ([www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com)) and similar online fundraising sites have been set up.

Just set up your own page and circulate the link far and wide. You'll be surprised at how quickly people can meet their fundraising target. To request an information pack about sponsored events with WDM, contact the fundraising team on 020 7820 4900.

For more ideas on raising funds locally you could try the book *Tried and tested ideas for local fundraising* by Sarah Passingham, published by the Directory of Social Change. Your local library or voluntary resource centre may have a copy, or you can buy it from [www.dsc.org.uk/publications](http://www.dsc.org.uk/publications)



Flyer for a WDM fundraiser in Brighton

## 6. USING LOCAL MEDIA

One of the most effective ways of bringing pressure to bear on a campaign target is to get some exposure in the media. Local groups can play a vital role in campaigns by publishing articles, letters and photographs in newspapers and talking about campaigns on local radio.

Media coverage is also a key tool in attracting new members to your group, and generally raising the profile of the group in your area.

Each campaign pack has detailed ideas for raising the campaign with the press, as well as a draft press release for guidance.

### PRESS CONTACT PERSON

You may like to nominate one or two people in your group to deal with the media and write any press releases. The role of a press officer is to:

- Organise press coverage of local group events.
- Be responsible for all contacts with local media.
- Collect and collate press cuttings for group records and displays.
- Write press releases.

Important requirements for press officers are:

- A daytime telephone contact number – mobile phone essential.
- Access to a computer and the internet.

A press contact who can only be contacted in the evening may be ineffectual as journalists only work office hours. Reporters who are unsure about attending an event you are organising are more likely to come if you give them a daytime number, so they can get more details from you.

Local papers are far more likely to use a press release that's emailed in the body of the text rather than sent as an attachment.

### PRESS CONTACTS LIST

Compile a press list of all your local media outlets, freesheets, local and regional papers, radio and

TV stations. The website of your local paper or radio station should list other media in the area. Alternatively there will be in a media directory in the reference section of your library or contact the WDM media officer for a list. It is well worth adding local specialised newsletters and journals of other local organisations like Friends of the Earth and Amnesty International, parish councils and other local bodies.

Make a note of names, phone and email contacts. Get in touch with them and say that you are the press contact for your WDM group and ask for information on deadlines:

- When do papers etc. go to press?
- When is the deadline for listings, details of local events for the 'what's on' columns and for letters to the editor?
- Evening papers: Deadline for the first edition.
- Local radio: Deadline for news bulletins.

It is important to be able to send things to news editors and picture editors by name. Update the list frequently. Once you have met or spoken to a particular journalist, add their name to a contacts list. Building a working relationship with local reporters is sure to improve your coverage.

### PHOTOGRAPHS

It's a good idea to send photos you have taken to picture desks, and you should contact the journalist to ask if they would like to see photos to go with a stunt that you have talked to them about. To use it, they will need the photo to be a high resolution jpeg, but to start with you could send them a link to images that you have put on a photo site like Flickr ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)) or send a small thumbnail image so they can see the photo.

### KNOWING WHAT WORKS

Look at copies of local papers, listen to radio phone-ins and news programmes so that you can get a sense of the stories they actually use and the way they use them. If you can provide a press release and photo that is ready tailored to fit, you stand much more chance of getting some coverage.

## The cost of stopping climate change: [PLACE NAME] campaigners take action

### Photo opportunity

What: Local campaigners from [PLACE] will deliver a giant invoice to [NAME] MP demanding payment of the UK's 'climate debt' of more than £600 billion to the world's poorest people

When: [XXX]

Where: [XXX]

Why: Campaigners from the World Development Movement [XXX] group will insist that it is time for the UK to pay the cost of climate change in the developing world and ask MP [NAME] to act.

The anti-poverty campaigners from [PLACE] say that the UK has grown rich on the back of burning fossil fuels, pushing the planet to the brink of climate catastrophe. Climate change is now killing more than 300,000 a year, and is only set to get worse. Because the UK, and other rich countries, caused this crisis they now have a massive 'climate debt' to its victims.

The campaigners from [PLACE] will tell MP [NAME] that the £600 billion would fund renewable energy infrastructure in the developing world and contribute towards allowing developing countries to adapt to the effects of climate change, some of which are already unavoidable. The world's poorest people should not have to pay the price of adapting to the effects of climate change, or the costs of developing in a climate-friendly way. Rich countries must pay the price of the crisis they have caused.

[NAME], who lives in [PLACE], from the World Development Movement [XXX] group said:

"Countries like [PLACE] have caused the climate crisis. It's time they pay the price. It's time they pay the price of the crisis they have caused."

You can use letters to publicise your group and to express an opinion about something which may be in the national press.

It is crucial to emphasise the local importance and impact of issues raised by WDM campaigns. If your press release appears to be solely about faraway people and faraway places it is unlikely to be used, as local publications tend to insist on relevance to local people. Therefore always have this in mind when planning how to present your case to a reporter. In your press release always quote a local person. Where possible highlight an issue's impact on local inhabitants, stress links and find relevant pegs to hang your story around.

## WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

This is not as onerous a task as it might at first seem. There is a standard format for press releases that takes account of the fact that a busy journalist will just skim through your release. It is therefore vital that you present the information in a straightforward manner.

- In the first paragraph you should briefly explain who, what, why and where, emphasising the local links.
- Use plain English and short words, sentences and paragraphs.

- Try to keep your release to one side of an A4 page.
- Stick to facts in the text and use quotes to give opinions or add colour to your piece. You can quote yourself as group spokesperson (if you have agreed this with the rest of the group) or somebody else in the group. Try to make the quotes lively, don't be afraid to use more emotive language in your quote.
- Use a short, punchy and preferably attention-grabbing headline for your release.
- Remember to use 'World Development Movement (WDM)' rather than 'WDM'.
- Above your title make sure that you say 'Date', then 'For immediate release' or 'embargoed until...' and 'photo opportunity' if there is one with the date and venue.
- At the bottom of your release put "For Further information contact: ....." and leave a daytime telephone number.
- Also at the bottom under 'notes for the editor' it is worth giving a brief explanation of WDM.

## USING LOCAL RADIO

If you are organising an event which you would like lots of members of the public to attend, target What's On and Helpline shows – they may be able to give you a plug.

Local stations are often very small affairs and rarely have the resources to visit you, so it is likely that any interview will be at the studio or by telephone. They prefer land lines.

People sometimes panic about being interviewed – they get stage nerves or assume that the interviewer will try to catch them out by asking them the most difficult questions. This is rarely the case. The radio journalist is purely after a good story, even if there can also be a drive towards sensationalism.

The important thing is to stick to the facts and the research from WDM to support your arguments. Assume that the interviewer is on your side and aim to tell your story as clearly and informatively as possible.

Ask in advance what will be covered and what the questions will be. Use ordinary language, give lots of examples and avoid jargon. Remember that a lot of people don't know what the WTO is, or know what the World Bank does. Make it personal if you can. Say how you feel affected or concerned to make the issue come to life.

It is also worth listening out for magazine programmes and phone-ins which you might be able to phone in to and talk about a WDM campaign.

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## **KEEPING PRESS RECORDS**

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Cut out all the articles/photos and record any radio interviews that are organised by your local group and keep them in a file or cuttings book. Send copies to the network development officer. WDM is always keen to see what kind of coverage a campaign gets across Britain. This helps us evaluate our campaigns and develop our ongoing strategy.

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## **BE PERSISTENT AND PROACTIVE**

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Remember you won't always succeed in getting coverage, and occasionally you may find that what does get printed is completely inaccurate. However, do keep on having a go. Time and time again we have discovered that our campaign targets care about the smallest mention in the press. Remember that you are part of a UK-wide network and that every tiny snippet of coverage is part of a bigger picture that can effect change.

If you're having problems and need advice, or haven't

taken on media work before, call WDM's media officer on 020 7820 4913. He or she may well be busy, but will always get back to local groups as soon as possible.

# 7. LOBBYING POLITICIANS

One of WDM's core aims is to win changes in government policy in Britain and Europe that will improve the lives of poor communities in the global south. Constituency lobbying can:

- Keep the profile of development issues high amongst politicians in Britain.
- Raise issues with ministers via MPs, thus building political pressure to change policy.
- Bolster and lend credibility to lobbying done by WDM's staff.

It is a cornerstone of our democracy that our elected representatives listen to, and take into account, the concerns of their constituents. Because of the unjust way the global economy works, many of the decisions which affect the lives of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America are made in Europe, including Britain. That's why lobbying is so important.

## WHO TO LOBBY

When it comes to lobbying, WDM's first stop would normally be to lobby MPs because they have the most influence in the areas relevant to our campaigns, for example, direct access to the UK government ministers making key decisions in policy areas on which we hope to have an impact. However, there may be cases where it is appropriate to lobby other levels of government.

Many groups find that they have members in more than one constituency and therefore that they are able to lobby more than one MP. This is good news as you can have more of an impact in your area if you are lobbying two or more politicians. It is worth checking with group members what their postcodes are and then using the website [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com) to find which constituencies your membership covers.

## FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR MP

The more you know about your local representative the better able you will be to lobby them effectively. The website [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com) allows you to keep up with the voting record and interests of your MP. You can also go to the library and look them up in Dods Parliamentary Companion, which gives a brief profile of MPs.

Another way of finding out more is to give their researcher or secretary a ring. Not all politicians have researchers but all have a secretary. You can find out who they are through your local constituency office or by ringing their parliamentary office (parliament's switchboard number is 020 7219 3000). It is worth building up a friendly relationship with your MP's staff. Explain that you are a group working on world poverty issues in the constituency and that you wondered if your elected representative has any related interests, background or sits on any relevant select committees.

## WRITING LETTERS TO YOUR MP

Writing letters is the most common method of raising issues with your elected representative and one of the most effective. Politicians are obliged to answer all constituents' letters. They will invariably pass them on to the relevant minister who is in turn obliged to respond to them, and they will then forward the minister's response to you. Writing a letter to your elected representative therefore also raises the issue with the minister. If you can demonstrate that your concerns are of constituency interest the local politician is likely to be even more attentive.

Letters to politicians usually pass through the filter of their staff first. They get hundreds of letters a week. In order to ensure yours is noticed:

- Keep it concise (preferably no more than one side of A4) and simple, addressing only one issue at a time.
- Pay attention to presentation. Detail is important too. Check correct spelling of all names and addresses etc.
- With Early Day Motions, make sure that your elected representative is not already one of those sponsoring an EDM. If you find that your elected representative is a sponsor you could write to congratulate them instead. Government ministers won't sign EDMs, but it is still worth writing to them about the issue.
- Ensure that you get your facts right. WDM will provide you with background briefings on campaigns but if you are not sure about something please give the office a ring.
- If you have a representative who is unsympathetic to WDM or our issues, it might be worth writing a

letter just as a concerned constituent, as you may get a more helpful response.

- A politician will notice the volume of letters they get on a subject. Try to write individually rather than as a group, or as well as a group letter.
- Ask specific questions, particularly questions that they need to consider before answering. This will help ensure they read your letter and the minister's response.
- Standard letters are more likely to get a standard party drafted response if writing several letters as a group. A carefully worded individual letter should stand out more and get a more prompt reply.

Follow letters up the following week with a phone call to the MP's office.

## FACE TO FACE MEETINGS

All elected politicians hold regular surgeries in their constituencies so that people have direct access to them. You can find out the times of your own surgery by contacting your constituency office or your library.

In order to get a decent amount of time with your elected representative it is best to ring in advance to make an appointment, otherwise you could find that you are only given a few minutes. Constituency surgeries are often very busy with people who have very pressing personal needs. Politicians may take unkindly to a WDM delegation descending unannounced on the constituency office to talk about world poverty issues.

MPs spend most of the week in Westminster usually from Monday lunchtime to Thursday evening/Friday morning. Parliament is in recess from the end of July to end of October and also takes a break for two weeks or more at Christmas and Easter. Most MPs run constituency surgeries on Fridays or Saturdays.

When trying to book a meeting it is worth bearing in mind that calls made early in a parliamentary session, when the politician has lots of time, are more likely to meet with a favourable response than those made near the close. On average such meetings last between ten minutes and half an hour, so be as succinct as possible.

## HOW TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

It is a good idea to go with a delegation of people to give the impression you are more than just a lone



South East London WDM lobby Lewisham West MP Jim Dowd (left) on paying the UK's climate debt in November 2009.

voice. Try and explain clearly to the politician's office in advance why you want the meeting, what issues you want to discuss and what the aim of the meeting is. Ensure your contribution is suitably pitched to the politician's level of knowledge. Some politicians may know very little, if anything, about the issues we want to raise.

While it is not essential to know everything about a subject, be well prepared. Anticipate both sides of the argument – knowing what you want and why your representative could object to it (particularly if not naturally sympathetic) is a good way of preparing. Always ask your representative to do something specific such as signing an EDM or asking a question in parliament.

Get one of your members to take notes at the meeting and follow the meeting up with a letter to say thanks for their time, reiterate any key points and remind them of any proposed action.

## THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Because each region of the UK is represented by a group of MEPs, you can contact any or all of the MEPs who represent your area when you wish to raise an issue. However it might be more appropriate to raise an issue with a particular MEP because they sit on a

## Lobbying MPs on climate change

In 2008 over 25 WDM groups took part in the climate change bill week of action, alongside other campaigning organisations including Friends of the Earth, CAFOD and Christian Aid. The groups held press stunts using Gordon Brown masks and cardboard aeroplanes to highlight the contradiction of omitting aviation from emissions reduction targets. In addition, some groups held stalls, went street-campaigning and marched through town-centres with banners and placards. The proliferation of local press coverage that resulted from this week of action brought significant pressure to bear on MPs who had already been lobbied by letter and face to face on the issue of strengthening the draft climate change bill. And it worked!

When the climate change bill became an Act the government had made amendments committing to an emissions reduction target of 80 per cent, with annual targets, and aviation and shipping emissions were included; these amendments covered all three of the key asks campaigners were pushing for throughout the draft bill process. The turnaround during this process was due in no small part to the concerted efforts of activists all over the country who made strengthening the climate change bill a key issue for their MPs.

relevant committee, or because they are likely to be sympathetic.

MEPs divide their time between working in their region, attending committee and political group meetings in Brussels, and spending one week a month in Strasbourg when the full parliament meets. This means that they can be difficult to get hold of and that they don't necessarily run surgeries in the same way as MPs (although some do).

However, you should be able to make an appointment to meet any of your MEPs. Their contact details can be obtained from the UK office of the European parliament, at [www.europarl.org.uk](http://www.europarl.org.uk) or on 020 7227 4300.

WDM will advise local groups when it is useful to contact your MEP and about what.

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## SUPPORT FROM WDM

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Just like with other forms of campaigning, the WDM office will give you all the support you need to lobby your elected representatives effectively. WDM staff produce briefings tailored specifically to politicians and written advice when we want you to lobby over a specific issue, including through the monthly *Think Global* mailing. WDM campaigners are also happy to give group members advice over the phone.