Campaigns at work

A guide to campaigning for homeworker organisations, unions, campaign groups and activists

By Annie Delaney

A HomeWorkers Worldwide Publication
Delaney, Annie
Campaigns at work
A guide to campaigning for homeworker organisations, unions, campaign groups and activists

ISBN 0-9752237-0-4

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First published 2004

A HomeWorkers Worldwide Publication
HWW aims to improve visibility, organisation and representation of homeworkers and their organisations.

Supported by
Trades Union Congress
Brotherhood of St Laurence

The partners supporting this campaign manual are committed to supporting and improving homeworkers' conditions and assisting workers to organise and take action.

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The aim of this manual is to provide guidelines, ideas and processes to assist you to develop your own approach to campaigning. The manual breaks down a campaign into distinct areas and offers practical ways to develop a planned approach that encourages participation and leadership from homeworkers. In addition, it promotes the use of visible props and creative actions to educate consumers, form alliances with a range of organisations and individuals, and work in solidarity with unions and worker organisations.

Campaigns are an effective way to make change. Campaigns can assist to improve workers’ lives and build worker organisations, to educate communities, build local and global solidarity, pressure corporations to be responsible for workers’ conditions and make governments accountable. Campaigns can be effective tools to protect workers, support industrial action, put pressure on governments to introduce protection and regulation, pass new laws and stop the erosion of existing worker protection.

Campaigns alone may not change the world but they can build momentum, educate and train new activists and leaders, and be part of broader people’s movements for change.

Homeworkers
This manual aims to address the particular needs of homeworkers and their organisations which may include local village savings groups, local or national unions or associations or support groups who are assisting homeworkers to form their own organisations.

Homeworkers are some of the most vulnerable and poorest workers working in the informal employment sector and exist in every country. The majority are women with little alternative choice of employment. Homeworkers fall into two categories: dependent workers who work on a piece rate and usually produce for a subcontractor, or middle persons in a contract chain. In addition, independent homeworkers or own-account workers produce goods for direct sale through street stalls, shops or the local village and sometimes to traders or subcontractors. Homework is increasingly being linked to trends in global trade and production in industries such as garments, shoes, metal and vehicles, jewellery and gems, food preparation and selling, packing and assembly of fresh and manufactured goods, and a broad range of services.

Homeworkers are rarely mentioned in national statistics and are not recognised as part of the workforce. Most governments are content to keep the informal sector undefined and vague. Homeworkers are often left out of union organising strategies and do not get much attention from non-government agencies (NGOs) which often focus on income generation schemes without making the links to worker conditions and organising. Legislation that protects the rights of homeworkers is atypical in most countries. The employer benefits because large pools of workers are invisible, underpaid and isolated, limiting collective organisation and any access to unions.
Organising
Organise, organise and organise. This is the key message on how to improve homeworkers’ conditions and how to assist workers in informal employment to win more secure work with better wages and rights.

Global action
Many groups are already doing amazing campaigns that inspire and inform our work. This manual is too small to describe them. You can check the resources section and see what others are doing to get some ideas. Make globalisation work for workers by sharing strategies, organising experiences and supporting each other, and seeing what others are doing. Acting locally and thinking globally can make your campaign work. Get others to support you and keep you nourished and enthused to keep going. Your campaign can be just a click away.

Why a manual on campaigning?
The idea for this manual came out of meetings of homeworker organisations who wanted to understand how the homeworker campaign had worked in Australia. As most activists know, if you are working at the grassroots level it’s difficult to take time out to document and share ideas about what you are doing and it’s particularly difficult to find time to document it. This manual aims to contribute to the documentation of successful campaign strategies and assist homeworkers to organise. Sharing subversive, creative and engaging campaign ideas will especially help women workers to be mobilised, empowered and lead their own struggles.
This chapter will discuss why campaigns can make change and how consumer campaigns can be useful to homeworkers in a range of contexts. It includes examples to assist you to think about why and how you can start your own campaign.

What is a campaign?
A campaign is a series of coordinated events that may include public speaking, protests, meetings and publications with the aim of achieving a social or political goal. A campaign can go for a few months or weeks, or be ongoing, to achieve a range of outcomes but never quite coming to an end.

There have been many effective global campaigns such as, the campaign against the Vietnam war, apartheid in South Africa, child slavery, genetically modified crops, Nestlé baby milk formula, sweatshops, e.g. Gap and Nike, and corporate global dominance and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and free trade policies, to name just a few issues which are being globally campaigned against. There are campaigns that are local but have global links, such as the Chiapas Zapatista movement in Mexico and the MST – the Landless People’s Movement in Brazil.

Why campaign?
It is easy to identify problems but it’s more difficult to think about ways to influence and change something for the better. It takes courage, energy and resources to start a campaign. Having said that, let’s get started.

Start a campaign to support homeworkers
The situation of homeworkers globally is very difficult. Few have regular work or secure markets for their products. They are often isolated and poorly paid, with little representation. They often do not consider themselves workers. Homeworkers are making products for national or international brands and receive very low rates. Their products are sold for big profits. Because homeworkers are more isolated, more marginalised and unorganised, it takes more effort, time and resources to locate and contact homeworkers than it does when workers are in one location like a factory.
A campaign can assist homeworkers to come together and decide their
Australian Homeworkers Campaign

The Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia (TCFUA) began contacting homeworkers in 1994 and conducted a national phone service in 10 languages for homeworkers to call to talk about their work problems. After talking to thousands of homeworkers, the union published a report in 1995, *The Hidden Cost of Fashion*. This report exposed the issue through the media to the public, to government and to the industry. The union then began talking to groups to establish a community campaign to support homeworkers to improve their conditions. In 1996, the union joined with community partners and formed a campaign called FairWear. The aim of the FairWear campaign is to eliminate the exploitation of home-based workers and to assist homeworkers in the garment industry to achieve their rights to a living wage, to organise and to work in a safe and healthy environment.

The union sought out community partners to work on the campaign because it recognised that the exploitation of home-based workers was such a big problem and outside of the union’s expertise and way of working. And having few resources, it knew it would need assistance to take on such a task. The union estimated that there were over 300,000 homeworkers in the garment sector alone, that they had little understanding of their rights, were frightened and intimidated, and did not even see themselves as workers. The garment industry had become structured around subcontracting and outwork and would not acknowledge this as a widespread problem, nor something that they were responsible for.

The campaign has had a focus on home-based homeworkers or homeworkers (terms used interchangeably) producing garments in Australia for the national market. The TCFUA and FairWear have used information on subcontracted chains to improve homeworkers’ conditions, organise homeworkers, gain legislation and put a Retailers/Manufacturers Homeworkers Code in place.

How campaigns can assist homeworkers

Consumer campaigns can be useful for homeworkers because they have little industrial strength. Homeworkers can gain industrial strength if companies are aware that there is public support for fair work conditions. Factory workers may go on strike, sit-in or go-slow as a

**How consumer campaigns can assist homeworkers**

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**Checklist**

**How campaigns can be used**

- To join a group of people together to improve or change their situation
- To get global organisations to improve their policies
- To support a group of people in another area to win a struggle
- To get people to think about new ideas and to raise awareness
- To stop construction of e.g. dams, mines or prisons
- To seek recognition for a group of disadvantaged people/workers
- To get compensation for a group of people
- To get a government to pass a new law, change a policy
- To change corporate behaviour to improve workers’ conditions
- To educate people to understand and become active around an issue

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**Consumer campaigns**

Consumer campaigns can be about getting consumers to support better standards for the workers who make the products or to improve services. Consumer campaigns may focus on a company to get it to provide a better quality service, improve standards or to lower charges. Already there are a number of consumers who are willing to go to some effort to buy products they believe are better for the environment, fairer to workers, do not use toxic materials, use recycled materials or packaging, or use other standards like dolphin-friendly tuna or preservative-free food. Most of these standards have come about because consumers have raised it with companies in response to groups campaigning to introduce standards and processes to monitor them.

The aim of a consumer campaign is to assist workers to get people to start asking questions about the things they buy: ‘Did the worker who make this get a fair wage?’ ‘Was she exploited?’ ‘Am I helping if I buy this or can I buy another brand?’ It is to encourage consumers to ask questions at stores, support laws for homeworkers and educate people to become more aware of workers’ conditions.
way of influencing corporations to negotiate. But for homeworkers this strategy would usually mean losing their work permanently.

Building public support and awareness around homeworkers assists them and their representatives to negotiate and make demands on companies. It can assist homeworkers to have the confidence and capacity to improve their conditions.

Who are consumers?
Consumers are everyone: shoppers, workers, members of clubs, school communities and shareholders. Many companies direct their products towards certain groups: women, children, women between 18-25, young men aged 13-19, young girls aged 9-16, men over 45 etc. This is done through advertising, packaging and branding.

Brands and consumer campaigns
Many companies, especially international corporations like sportswear giants Nike and adidas, those selling clothes, electronics, cars, toys, or drinks like Coke and Pepsi, or food companies such as Kraft or Sara Lee, have repackaged themselves and the way they market their goods to emphasise the positive effect of using their product, ‘the brand’. Their advertising suggests that if you use their product you will get the boy or girl, be successful, be popular, get rich, realise your dreams etc.

Large corporations no longer sell simply a running shoe or a computer. Instead they sell the image of the product. This is known as branding. Branding enables companies to sell a product at a much higher price and people still buy it because of its image. Revlon founder, Charles Revson, described this well: ‘In the factory, we make cosmetics, in the store we sell hope.’ This is a worldwide trend. These corporations spend hundreds of millions of dollars a year to get their message across, in celebrity sponsorship, promotion and advertising.

Campaigns on bad working conditions can dent a company’s image, if the campaign gets its message across.

Why reach out to consumers – can they really help?
Consumers are the people who buy these companies’ products. They can influence a company to change its practices. This is not just the big international brands. Many local or national companies have many competitors. If you get one company to agree to sign a good collective agreement or agree to the monitoring of subcontractors for homeworkers’ conditions, this sets a minimum standard for all the other companies.

Is a consumer campaign possible in so-called newly industrialised countries?
People in producer countries often question the value of a consumer campaign and have said, ‘A consumer campaign will not work here because no one cares if someone receives little money. It’s not like the US or Europe and we don’t want workers to lose their work.’
People in many countries are involved in daily, small consumer campaigns. If someone becomes sick after eating at a local food stall or restaurant, they will stop going to that stall or restaurant until something has been done to improve standards.

People make decisions every day about what they buy, whether it’s rice for the daily meal or clothes for a special occasion. Or whether to buy Nike running shoes or a small unknown brand for one tenth of the price.

It’s not always the middle classes who are the first to support campaigns. It’s worth considering targeting companies that are well known to working-class people. Many surveys have shown that working people are more sympathetic to other workers’ problems because they know it’s difficult to get a fair deal. Alternatively, there are companies who are exclusive and expensive, and a campaign that links them to bad working conditions can be effective because everyone knows they can afford to pay fair rates.

If you think about a consumer campaign as getting a message out to the public who then send a message to a company, then this is possible in any context anywhere in the world.

If you can get consumers to sign a petition, a letter, put a thumb print, send an email or call the company, if you can get the local media to talk to the workers and to ask the company questions, then you can begin to have an effect. You can convey to a company that consumers who usually buy their products are concerned about the conditions of homeworkers.

**Checklist for a consumer campaign**

- Talk to the workers
- Have a clear message
- Know what information you want to tell the consumer
- Know what you want the consumer to do
- Identify the company or group of companies you want to target
- Know what you want the companies to do

**EXAMPLE**

**How a local consumer campaign can work**

The Australian union called meetings with homeworkers and asked them what they thought needed to change. Most homeworkers said, ‘the big companies need to pay more’. They knew that the work they did was hard and poorly paid even though they didn’t know that laws existed or that there were set minimum rates for all garment workers. Workers had contact with small subcontractors who often said that this is all the big company would pay them. The homeworkers knew that the big companies forced small factories to work for less and less and that this meant that homeworkers received very little for their work. Homeworkers were asked to speak to the media and a government inquiry about their problems. Then the union began negotiating with employers about a code for the retailers to sign.

The FairWear campaign began by making public a list of retailers, headed by companies whose homeworkers had reported making clothes for $2 an hour. The campaign demanded that companies sign on to a voluntary Homeworkers Code developed by the union and industry employers. Once a few companies had signed the Code, those who hadn’t were accused by the campaign of profiting from the exploitation of workers and not willing to take steps to stop it. It created the good guys and the bad guys list. The list was given out to consumers outside stores. It created an incentive for retailers to be on the good guys list and raised consumers’ awareness about the problem.

**What can you achieve, what does it involve?**

Try doing a brainstorm that lists some of the homeworkers’ products and who buys them to help you think about who you want to target to get a better deal.
Brainstorm starting a campaign for flower garland workers in India

*What are homeworkers making?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Who buys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flower garlands</td>
<td>People on street and at temples, subcontractors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petticoats</td>
<td>Market vendors, subcontractors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaf plates</td>
<td>People on street, subcontractors, stores, market vendors, hotels and temples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Campaign aims: to lobby for flower garland makers to be legally recognised, have a minimum rate of pay, become registered and for a welfare board to provide benefits for registered workers.

Married women buy and wear the garlands and that most are sold on stalls in the market, streets or outside temples.

If the seller gets 100 rupees for selling garlands, the homeworker will get 3 rupees.

*Consider*

Could you get consumers to buy more garlands direct from makers?

Could you interest consumers in supporting women having better pay and legal recognition by signing a petition?

Could you get consumers to buy direct from garland makers who are group members?

Could you attach a label or mark to garlands made by group members?

Could you use consumers’ support for buying direct from group members to lobby government?

Is there a union or another organisation that could state publicly that they will only buy garlands from group members because they want to support these workers to have fair treatment. Remember, everyone is a consumer, so you can use groups who are allies to promote your campaign. (See chapter two on alliances.)

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Brainstorm starting a homeworkers campaign in the UK

List areas homeworkers are working

List sectors homeworkers are working

Have meetings with homeworkers

Ask them if they are receiving the minimum wage, how many hours they work and what they think could be done to improve their conditions.

*Brainstorm*

**Homeworker sectors**

- Christmas crackers
- Garments
- Electronic circuit boards
- Packing tights
- Packing cards

**Make what brands**

- Bang Bang Crackers

**Demand on brands**

e.g. fair paid work for homeworkers

*Consider*

How much are homeworkers receiving for making the product?

What you want companies to do?

What information can you give to consumers?

What can consumers do? (See chapter three for more about planning your campaign)
Starting your campaign

This is not a boycott. Consumer campaigns educate consumers to make informed purchases and put pressure on companies to change corporate behaviour.

It is very difficult to get everyone to stop buying a product and continue to do this. Boycotts have rarely worked because people don’t want to stop buying the product unless there is an alternative that is not as bad. There are also concerns that if you stop buying a product, workers will lose their jobs. This is especially a concern in countries where corporations go because workers have few rights, are paid low wages with little legal protection. If there is pressure on the brand the companies are likely to leave. It is better to create a positive incentive for companies to improve standards driven by consumers’ concern.

This does not mean you cannot ask people to stop buying a product. You can recommend that they buy another product, because that company has improved its standards.

In your country there will have been well known campaigns. Ask people what has worked, and see if you can adapt these strategies to your campaign. Sometimes doing something others have done before and adapting it to new circumstances, even if it is a simple idea, can catch people’s attention and assist you to get your message across.

Summary
Campaigns are great for changing attitudes, assisting workers to win better conditions, making a problem widely known and putting pressure on governments and corporations. This chapter gets you to think about the purpose of a consumer campaign for homeworkers and how to think about getting started.

Check List

Getting started
- Decide what you want to campaign about
- Check with the workers first
- Don’t set priorities for a campaign without asking the workers what they want
- Make sure that you have your facts straight and a written record of sources
- Unions need to work with other workers in the same sector to find the homeworkers and find out what they think
- Do not think about why it won’t work, think about how you can make it work
Starting your campaign

This chapter looks at planning your campaign and working out the aims, goals and tasks. It includes suggestions about how to decide on your campaign structure, which groups to work with and giving your campaign a name. Use this information as a guide to get started and develop your own way of planning what you want to do.

How to plan your campaign
Planning is about setting down the direction and events for your campaign. It can be a guide to keep you on track. As you begin to plan your campaign, remember to think about how you will involve the homeworkers. See chapter five for more on participation.

The vision
Think big to work out your campaign vision, which is what you ultimately want to achieve. Once you have put down your vision, the next step is to think about how you can reach your vision, and you will probably have a few or several aims under the vision. Think of the vision as a mission statement and the aims are the themes to work towards to implement the vision.

EXAMPLE

Starting the FairWear Campaign
FairWear, a campaign for homeworkers, began with about 30 national groups meeting and agreeing to a name for the campaign, selecting one of four options. Next the group agreed on ten aims for the campaign.

The campaign decided to work in a decentralised way. Each organisation would join the coalition having agreed to the aims. They could use the materials produced centrally, take the message and activities out to their own groups. Unions, churches and faith groups, women’s and student organisations and others decided to produce a flier, develop an activist kit and launched the campaign with the aim of attracting media attention. It was agreed that at the end of the first 12 months there would be an evaluation of what had been achieved. Annual planning and evaluation meetings have continued as a way of ensuring the campaign stays on track and relevant.

The campaign has been going for over eight years and the aims are still as relevant today. The flier, developed in 1996, is still being used today because the campaign developed it for a long-term campaign. The campaign has had many successes but the vision and aims have not as yet been realised.
Campaign aims

After you have decided your campaign vision, it’s time to write down the aims. The aims are the campaign’s demands or ongoing activities. Aims may not be easily measured, for example, you can’t say when you have completed educating consumers about the issue. Some aims are achievable in a limited time, for example, to lobby the government to ratify the International Labour Organisation Convention on Home Work. It is a good idea to think about the political orientation of your campaign and express this in the aims. The aims can be general statements or demands and express what you want to change. This will assist you in attracting the groups and individuals you want to support your campaign.

EXAMPLE

Campaign aims (adapted from the FairWear campaign aims)

Vision: To eliminate the exploitation of homeworkers

• To encourage retailers and manufacturers to support and adopt a code of practice that will guarantee the production of such goods free of exploitation.

• To lobby the Government to ratify the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention and Recommendations on Home Work.

• To urge the Government to develop initiatives which encourage homeworkers to move into the formal economy with legal and social protection.

• To coordinate and resource supporting organisations in a way which fosters decentralised and autonomous activities. This campaign is to be a low-bureaucracy campaign coalition.

• To educate consumers about ethical shopping, to enable them to support industry initiatives, which guarantee goods, produced free of exploitation.

• To support the role of trade unions who actively take up negotiating and carrying out collective bargaining, which includes homeworkers, or other representative organisations of homeworkers.

• To work in co-operation with international campaigns and international homeworker groups.

• To encourage companies to support and adopt a code of conduct in their overseas production.

Doing a three-year plan

Write down your goals for the first three years. A longer term picture can assist the campaign to work out the strategy and ways to build the campaign. It can assist you to think forward and be proactive about how you promote your campaign and work towards your aims. Remember, you can change details later, but it is useful to be imaginative and think broadly. Sometimes the ideas that seem a bit wild can be the best ones.

Your campaign goals are things that you can tick off as you do them. If you don’t get them done, you can use the plan to evaluate what stopped you reaching these goals.
**Brainstorm campaign goals for three years**

- Homeworkers will be 30% organised and have improved pay
- Homeworkers will have some legal protection
- The government will ratify the ILO Convention
- Homeworkers will be majority participants in campaign
- The campaign will have strong links with local, national and international unions
- Have strong links with international campaigns
- Have campaign groups in five regions of the country
- National initiative for companies engaging homeworkers
- Consumers will be aware of homeworkers issues
- Campaign will have positive profile with local and national media etc.

**Doing a one-year plan**

Write down your goals for year one; this will include what you hope to achieve or want to work towards achieving.

**Campaign goals in year one**

- Campaign launched and known in the general community
- Campaign flier distributed
- Web site up and running
- Increased visibility of homeworkers
- Organised homeworkers in areas where no work has been done before
- Identified companies that use homeworkers and retailers who sell their products
- Made links with local and national media
- Built campaign network
- Have regular actions
- Have a supporters’ list
- Campaign newsletter
- Community education strategy developed
**Making a timeline and task list for the first year**

The next thing to consider is a plan for year one; this is getting down to being practical — the what, when, how and who.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>Who</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Launch campaign</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>talk to partners, plan launch etc.</td>
<td>JB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have campaign flier</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>write flier, get few groups to check</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have web site</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>find student to do web site, write info..</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do photo exhibition</td>
<td>August following year</td>
<td>find artist to assist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have meetings with</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>build organising strategy</td>
<td>OT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeworkers</td>
<td></td>
<td>set up meetings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>train leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile companies</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>identify which companies are the best</td>
<td>AJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>targets</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>talk to homeworkers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>public / media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make list of companies</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>meet with companies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make links with local</td>
<td>November – December</td>
<td>action group formed, training</td>
<td>MO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alternative, national media</td>
<td>March</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First action</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>collect names of supporters ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write and send out</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>info, talks, leaflet public events etc.</td>
<td>KG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First newsletter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research, report etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop education tools</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Decide if you intend to have a short-term campaign or a long-term campaign

A short-term campaign aims to get an outcome within a few weeks or months. This may need a different approach to a campaign that is going to take a lot of work over years to get any improvements for workers. Getting a consumer campaign to support homeworkers could take up to two years to gain a strong profile in the community. Whether it’s for a short period focused on one issue or years of campaigning, how you plan the campaign, what you want to do and how you do it is the same, but you are working towards different outcomes. A long-term campaign will involve different stages and requires ongoing energy to revitalise and keep the momentum going.

Decide about the campaign structure

Deciding how to structure your campaign will influence how other parts of the campaign are developed and carried out. Remember that even amongst like-minded people with the best intentions, there may be disagreement about how to proceed or what tactics to use. You need to prepare for this from the beginning. Being clear about what the structure is and how decisions will be made will keep everyone happy most of the time.

Options to consider about the structure of your campaign

You could have key groups or individuals form a committee and agree to everything together by consensus or vote by majority. This is called a centralised campaign where the parties involved in the campaign decide everything together on an ongoing basis. Another way to organise your campaign is to have key groups or individuals agree to the campaign aims and purpose. Then each group may conduct activities with their members and still do some activities together. This is working in a decentralised way, and it avoids having to meet together to agree on all activities and campaign tactics.

Some campaigns establish affinity groups that work separately or occasionally come together when a representative from each affinity group meet to make decisions. Other campaigns have a central committee that decides everything and all must follow the central committee decisions.

If you are not sure how you want to structure your campaign try listing the positive and negatives of working in each way. Decide which way suits you best by adopting the one with the longest positive list.

**EXAMPLE**

**Brainstorm the best structure for your campaign**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have more people involved</td>
<td>Cannot meet and discuss new things quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage homeworkers to be involved</td>
<td>Groups need lots of support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message will come from different groups</td>
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Think about what resources you will need

When you have done your planning and written down all your fabulous ideas, you need to think about how all the tasks will get done. What resources do you have, who can help do the work and how realistic is it to do given everyone is working on the campaign in his or her spare time? Homeworkers have little time because they are only paid for the work they do, so they can’t give up much productive time. Is there any support to help you to set up the campaign? Do you need to fundraise? Can you get started anyway?

Making alliances

Building alliances or partnerships with other groups can assist you to get your campaign message to a wider range of people, strengthen the campaign, give the impression that it is bigger and spread the workload. If you have worked out your aims and goals already, it is easier to approach others to ask them if they support your campaign and how they could participate.

Mapping your alliances

It is a good idea to write down which groups already support you, which may support you and those with who you have little contact but you would like their support or participation in the campaign in some way.

There are a few ways you can do this exercise. One way is to draw a circle on a large sheet of paper and in the middle write the campaign. Then add others to the picture, as either close or far away from the campaign circle, to help you decide which people are already supportive and active or those that are not. Another way is to list potential campaign supporters into categories like strong, medium or weak and work out how many strong supporters you have and how many are weak. See example brainstorm alliances.

There may be groups in the weak column with whom you would like to work more closely. They may be a group with strong links to a particular community that you would like to work with. This exercise can help you to know where you have strong links, where the links are weak and identify where some relationships may need more work. Don’t just stick with the groups you already know and work with.

If you are doing this exercise with a few groups together you already have strong support. You may want to spend more time on potential partners or supporters in the medium and weak categories.
Starting your campaign

**Campaigns at work**

**Brainstorm alliances**

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**Benefits of encouraging a broad range of groups to join the campaign**

Having a broad range of organisations involved as partners in a coalition or committee can assist you to get your message out to more and a broader range of people. If you can have a community, church or mosque leader talking about why they support homeworkers getting fair pay it’s different, it’s unexpected. It’s not just the union saying it; it’s support for what the homeworkers are saying. Campaign partners who publicly endorse your campaign can use their organisations’ standing to increase the campaign’s prominence and get people involved to support it where they wouldn’t normally. Your campaign is more likely to succeed if you have a broad range of organisations and people in your coalition.

Remember that you should try and make alliances with groups that support your campaign aims. You don’t have to agree with all the aims or activities of the other groups, as long as there is agreement on the aims of the campaign. The broader the campaign is, the better.

**Informing consumers**

**Campaign name**

Consumers are going about their daily business and don’t know what you know. Your campaign name and message needs to make sense to people outside the campaign. Try to avoid naming your campaign something that is fashionable this month, or a play on words. Remember, it may need to last a few years and it may need to be translated into other

**EXAMPLE**

**Hunter Gatherer ethical business**

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (an Australian community-based charity) has established Hunter Gatherer, an ethical retail outlet for new and recycled clothes. Hunter Gatherer has become an accredited company under the Australian Homeworkers Code and carries the ‘No Sweatshop Label’ as a sign of its compliance. It has supported the FairWear campaign and as a partner, promotes the campaign aims; often speaks from its own organisational perspective about homeworker’s problems and encourages corporations in a range of forums to become socially responsible. It is a good example of ethical business in practice and is active in promoting the campaign and educating consumers.
languages. Think whether it works for a range of ages and cultures. Your
campaign name is what you want people to get to know. It’s best to be
short and to convey the flavour of the campaign. Avoid using an acronym
like FIST unless it’s very clear.

Your message

The name and message are what you want people to get to know and
support. Your message is like your brand. It’s what you want people
to become aware of. If your message is, for example, to ‘end the
exploitation of homeworkers’, it’s general but also states your purpose.
People immediately know what you are on about. If your message is
‘end sweatshop conditions’, again people will understand immediately
what it is about. Compared to a message such as ‘Justice Now’, it is
not clear who you want justice for, or why — it doesn’t convey enough
information.

Tools to get your message out

The main purpose of writing, talking or publishing is to convey
information to people and ask them to do something.

To inspire people to understand your campaign and to do something,
you need information, such as a leaflet or flier, that states very clearly
what is the problem, what the campaign is asking the companies and/or
the government to do, what you want people to do and where they can
go to get more information or get involved.

It’s a good idea to think through in the campaign planning stage what
campaign tools you want. Standard materials for a campaign are a flier, a
banner with the name or campaign message on it, perhaps a petition or a
standard letter to send to a target company or to the government. If you
can have a web site, this is very useful because people can find out more
and do things from looking up your web site.

If people in your local area are not very literate, you could have a song or
a picture explain your campaign and message. This can work in many
places. Remember, many people will not read lots of print but they may
get your message from one picture or a banner. See chapter four for
more on being visible.

The ideas and possibilities for what you can use and do to get your
message across are endless. See the resources section for ideas and look up
what others have done.

Summary

Planning your campaign and working out the vision, aims and goals
will guide you to where you are going and help you to be clear to
others about how they can get involved or support the campaign. This
chapter gets you to think about how to plan your campaign, work out
with whom to work and how to get your campaign message out to
consumers.
This chapter looks at how to develop your own campaign style, encourage diversity in your activities and improve your skills to carry out successful actions.

Campaign action

Actions, protests, stunts and demonstrations are activities and opportunities to make demands, get a message across and embarrass a corporation, encourage a government to change policy, or make a statement at an event. There are numerous ways to get your message across including civil disobedience, sit-ins, vigils, strikes, mass rallies/meetings, blockades, singing protests, ad busting, occupations, online actions, prayer vigils and much more.

Decide what kind of actions you want to do. Don’t just do what you have always done. Think about trying something different. Some groups have become known for the way they carry out stunts. For example, Greenpeace is known for its strategic and media-friendly stunts to highlight illegal whaling or environmental damage.

It is a good idea is to think about your actions or stunts, how to make them strategic, research who the target is and why, and know what effect you want to have. Stunts usually involve fewer people, are focused towards the media or to have maximum impact on the chosen target.

Building diversity into your campaign

If your campaign aims to involve a broad range of individuals and organisations, it is useful to think about doing a variety of activities. It’s important that people can participate where they feel comfortable and you can introduce training and support for people to learn new skills.

Most campaigns involve a broad range of activities from protests, writing and distributing letters, fliers and information sheets, talking to the media, public speaking, doing community education workshops and training, street theatre etc. It is up to you to decide what kind of activities you want to do. For example, if you decide you only want to do blockades, it may limit who will be involved in your campaign and how your message gets across. If you want to encourage diverse participation, you need to value all the activities people may do.
Different levels of action – strength through diversity

Respecting diversity and having a multifaceted approach can give the appearance of more people involved and allows people to participate where they are comfortable. Some people will be fine doing a direct action outside a store while others will be content to collect signatures or write letters to companies. If you build into your campaign a broad range of tools and activities, more people can participate.

Some groups will want to do actions their own way. You don’t only have to have big protests with everyone together. A group may want to support your campaign and choose to adopt a store and do a weekly event outside it. This is another way to encourage diversity. If you can make sure that everyone involved in your campaign uses the same campaign tools, and gives the same message, it can give the impression that your campaign is everywhere.

EXAMPLE

A diverse action

Here is an example of one way to have a multifaceted approach in your campaign. Begin by identifying a target company and what you want them to do. In a planning meeting, brainstorm all the activities that can support putting pressure on the company. Then distribute the list to your campaign network. There may be one or two events on the list you decide you will plan in detail. Other activities may need a slogan for a banner, a standard letter, a petition, a postcard, information on a web site etc. Prepare the materials that everyone can use. Try to build a range of activities and use the tools at each event you are planning.

You may decide that a small group will drop a giant banner at the company headquarters on the day of its annual general meeting. Others will leaflet shareholders attending the meeting and a group will go inside and attempt to speak in support of the company adopting ethical standards for homeworkers in their subcontracting chain. In the background you may have other supporters emailing the company, writing letters, calling radio talkback and writing to newspapers. Similarly, you may arrange a few key organisations to put out media releases to emphasise that a broad range of groups are concerned about the issue. This example demonstrates that every action can support and complement another action. Building your activities this way maximises pressure on your target and concentrates energy to have the desired effect.

How to prepare supporter organisations

Preparing supporter organisations to build support for homeworkers can include a range of things. If you want groups to take independent action to work towards your campaign aims, then you need to prepare them. Holding briefing meetings and providing briefing documents for leaders of those organisations is a good idea. Speakers’ notes can assist more people to be able to talk at community forums, which is especially important to assist workers.

Choosing the target

Evidence, facts and details of what is happening to homeworkers on the ground is the best intelligence to determine which companies need encouragement to do the right thing and improve their standards. The most important information about companies will come from the homeworkers themselves. Which labels they are making, what their work conditions are like, which company pays the lowest prices,
Campaigns at work

Taking action

Evidence from the workers about the subcontract chain or other details. Unions will have the information of what is going on in the industry. Union campaigns have used information found in company rubbish bins, research on company business reviews or information from union members in workplaces. Try to get information about key industry players including which companies are influential in opposing improvements for workers. See chapter six for more information on working with unions.

Building in wins

Campaigning is hard work and having wins along the way will keep you going and encourage your supporters to stay involved. Well thought out and planned actions will have the biggest impact. It is worth spending more time on planning in detail for the first few actions so that you maximise their effect and get the companies to take your campaign seriously. As you build the campaign profile you will increase your capacity to make demands, consumers will hear about it, companies will want to avoid public shaming and bad publicity, and, homeworkers will be able to use the momentum created by the campaign to negotiate.

Involving campaign partners

The FairWear campaign sought a diverse group of community partners to speak publicly about why homeworkers need legal protection. The leaders attended a briefing session and received briefing documents and were encouraged to raise the issue whenever they had an opportunity. It took years to get legislation for homeworkers. Over that time a number of the leaders were interviewed by the media about other issues and were also able to raise the issue of why legal protection was important for homeworkers. The briefing sessions assisted in the organisation increasing its commitment to the campaign, as the leaders became more informed, others in the organisation became aware and involved. Because FairWear had developed a positive image with the media and had consumer support, a number of organisations were happy to support it and have their organisation publicly linked to the campaign.

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Campaign Alert

If you contact a company and say that you are going to do a protest outside their store and will target the company until they sign an agreement to ensure homeworkers get fair pay, be ready to do it. Don’t bluff. Companies will take you seriously if you can give them bad publicity. If you cannot carry it through, the campaign will lose credibility.
Strategic targeting

A FairWear demand was that retailers sign on to a homeworkers code. One company was targeted because it was leading the opposition to the code from within the retailers’ association. The first action against the company involved union and community leaders going into a store with a garment made by a homeworker. The homeworker was to be paid $5.00 to make the overcoat, which was on sale in the store for $250.00. The protest received national media coverage. The campaign then planned in detail a huge protest that would include a number of events at the same retailer’s prominent store. The campaign notified the company that it was being targeted and on the eve of the protest the company signed the code. A number of other retailers quickly followed to sign the code. The campaign repeated this strategy, which led to 140 signatories to the code.

Campaigning skills

Brainstorm a list of possible activities your campaign could do, look up the resources list and see if you can get any ideas from other campaigns. Think about campaigns that have happened in your country and what has helped them become popular, get support or be successful. How did you know about them?

Think about one of the best protests that you have been to. What did you like about it? What made it a positive experience or a success?

Do a quick check around your group to see if you have the skills to do some of the action ideas. Make a note of the ones that you are not sure about.

If you decide to form an action group or do some planning or training, spend some time working out how you want to do actions. You might have quite a diverse group with different experience and you might find it useful to spend some time agreeing to some principles about how you work together. The benefit of doing this will be that when you are out on the street you are all working to the same aim, to get the same message across and have the same effect. This is one of the ways to build your campaign profile and ensure that the target company takes you seriously. Many groups have a particular way of doing actions. Developing your campaign style of doing actions will build the campaign’s momentum. Be prepared that some groups may not participate in street actions but are willing to be involved in other ways.

Training

It is quite common when groups organise protests to do training workshops on a range of activities including non-violent direct action, sit-ins, pickets, blockades, civil disobedience, singing, music making and theatre. Planning what you want to happen, anticipating what could go wrong, or knowing who will take responsibility for different parts, all contribute to an event being successful.

You might already have a range of skills in your group and you can get different people to run small training workshops, or you can seek other groups who have done some of these things to do workshops on actions.
and strategic planning of actions. Remember, try using the skills you have and applying them in new ways. If you can come up with some clever ways to make your point then it helps to get your campaign known.

If you decide to have training, it’s a good idea to include many people from a range of groups who are involved in the campaign. This way, if they want to go and do something on their own, their action will be consistent; it also assists you to build your campaign’s style and way of doing actions. See chapter four for more ideas on training and making your campaign visible.

**Doing the action**

The first time a new group sets off to do an action can be scary. It may be just leafleting outside a market, a government office, a factory, an employer’s house or a company headquarters. Whatever you decide to do, it’s good to be prepared because you want your campaign for homeworkers to have an impact. If you want to include a lot of people in a protest, you may not be able to train everyone, but you can make sure that a core group have been involved in the training and they can brief others who come to the action before it begins.

**Learning campaigning skills**

The FairWear campaign formed an action group. Its membership was very diverse in ages, backgrounds, political views and experience. Before the group began going to stores to protest they wanted to feel like they knew what they were doing. The campaign asked activists who had a lot of experience in planning detailed actions to run a workshop to assist the group to develop skills and to work out how they wanted to do actions. The workshop proved a very positive experience because people were able to recognise that combined they had a lot of experience and they were all dedicated to developing creative and innovative ways to get the message across. The group decided they wanted to do actions in a retail store but needed to role-play how it would work. Having done the role-play, they gained a better understanding about how to liaise with media and the police and communicate with workers in the store. It also confirmed how to make sure the message was clear.

The action group decided that they were going to do actions, which would involve around 20 people and sometimes fewer, that they would have an action aim and an action plan. They would use a running sheet. An action coordinator would make sure it went to plan, another person would talk to shop assistants before the action began, and there would be delegated police liaison and media liaison roles. They decided that part of the campaign strategy would be to give the police and company being targeted 24 hours notice before the event, except when the plan involved surprise elements.

Built into actions were standard roles, and everyone who came would participate in some way. All actions would have different levels of involvement to ensure a range of people could participate and actions would run for a set time and be enjoyable. After the group did its first action they evaluated how it went, what went well, what didn’t work, how they could improve it. The next time and a few times after that, the group didn’t get to do the planned action because the companies kept agreeing to the campaign’s demands before the action went ahead. This reinforced to the campaign that they had the right approach and should continue to plan actions in the same way. The action group continued to have training days with old members training new and contributing to new activists learning skills to apply in other campaigns. The action group works as an independent group within the campaign.
Summary

This chapter gets you to think about your campaign style and to encourage diversity in your actions, and the types of groups involved in your campaign. This way your campaign will maximise the effect it will have on who ever you want to target. Improving your skills, and working out your tactics to carry out successful actions will help you to be visible and get your message across.
This chapter looks at ways to make your campaign highly visible and increase the visibility of homeworkers. Being visible is about how you present your campaign, what you do and how you do it. Using the media, the internet and campaign tools and props are some of the ways that can help you to build your campaign profile and get the issue known in the community. Here are some ideas to get you started.

**Having the right tools for the job**

To be visible to the media, to companies, to government, workers and consumers, you need to think about what tools will assist you to get your campaign known, talked about and supported.

Campaigns need a range of tools to help get the message across. Props are the things you can use at an action, at an information table in the street, doing street theatre or at a rally to get people’s attention and convey your message. Props can visually get out your campaign message or be a different way to deliver your message. The range of tools and props you can use are only limited by your imagination.

Campaign tools can include your campaign flier and information sheet, fact sheets, newsletters, postcards, web sites and posters. Props can include placards, banners, slides to project on to buildings, pictures showing homeworkers at work, their conditions, where they work etc, giant cardboard figures, puppets, paper maché faces of well-known politicians or public figures, banners to drop down the sides of buildings, effigies, redesigns of corporate logos and slogans, e.g. the Nike ‘just do it’, fixed or mobile bill boards, ad busting posters, people dressed as a giant sewing machine or a giant running shoe etc.

It is a good idea to have a few props to get started. A basic tool kit could include your campaign flier, a banner with your main message or slogan on it, a banner with your campaign logo and aim that you can display whenever you are doing an event.

Finding a few artists to support your campaign can really help get a campaign’s props department going. Some people are particularly good at putting your ideas into a visual image. This can really help your
campaign because it may be a visual image that really inspires people to find out what your campaign is about and become active. There are groups of artists who do art for political issues. Find art students or an existing group to help you visualise your message.

Having visual props outside a store, at a meeting with workers, at a rally or whatever event you plan, can make you stand out in the crowd, give the appearance that there are more of you than there really are and encourage people to come over to find out what you are doing.

**Building your campaign profile**

In previous chapters we have discussed planning your campaign and campaign aims, defining and building your campaign actions and having an impact on target companies.

The first way to get people to know about your campaign and what you are about is by announcing you exist. There are lots of ways to do this: a launch, an action, announcing positive breakthroughs, giving companies sweatshop awards, and getting media coverage of such events. At any event, display your campaign name, have a clear message and information that clearly states what is the problem and what people can do. A campaign slogan is a good way to get known. If you continually use the slogan over time it will become known and your campaign will be linked through the slogan. A slogan can be a simple demand ‘Stop the War’, ‘Respect Workers Rights’, ‘Shop of Shame’, or a saying that becomes linked to the campaign, for example, ‘No Dams’ or ‘Buy Nothing Day’.

What tactics you decide to use will help define your campaign to a range of people including workers, consumers, the media, government and companies. Tactics are the way you decide to conduct actions and the way your campaign materials and tools are presented and used. For example, you may decide that your campaign tactic will be not to enter into dialogue with companies, that this will be the responsibility of another group, such as the unions. Your focus may be on doing actions, education and supporting workers. If your tactic is using non-violent direct action methods, this will mean that you are likely to use more confrontational ways to deliver a message to your target or the way you choose to expose the extent of the homeworkers’ problems to the community.

**EXAMPLE**

**FairWear**

FairWear began with a campaign tool kit that included a flier, a banner with the FairWear logo and aim, and banners with the campaign message. The campaign had a day of banner making that involved a core message – Wage Justice for Outworkers (another term for homeworkers) – traced onto calico cotton and then painted. The campaign also made simple cardboard placards with a stick in the middle to hold them up. The placards on one half read Shop of Shame the bottom was left blank to be added to as needed. These materials were all made for very little money but have lasted for years as the main props used at FairWear events.

You don’t have to spend a lot of money to get your message across but it is useful to have a clear message that you can use over again. FairWear actions often involve only 6-12 people, have visual props at every event, which assists them to get media coverage, local support and to maximise impact on the target.
Try something new, look for ideas and inspiration from what others have done, be creative and have fun. Don’t just do what has always been done, try something different. By being different and having your own way of doing things, your own style, you will build momentum, interest and support for your campaign.

**Different tactics**

Many campaigns use a particular style or way of doing things. Some groups, for example, throw pies in the faces of company CEOs and government officials; Greenpeace does media friendly stunts but rarely rallies; unions use large rallies and strikes as a key way to get their message across; Bolivian people movements use road blockades as a way to get their demands met; MST in Brazil use repeated land occupations to reclaim unproductive land.

Non-violent resistance and unique ways of people with little power trying to reclaim dignity, rights and justice are being used everywhere.

**Using the media**

In most countries media ownership is in the hands of a powerful rich few, or governments. International media monopoly means that many people if they have access to a television are watching a syndicated version of news through CNN or cable TV channels.

Media conglomerates are not friendly to workers’ causes but that does not mean you cannot use the media to get your message out. There is also a growing industry of alternative independent media through community radio and television, online news through the internet, Indy media where people video and photograph their own protests and events and make them accessible for people to watch via email, mail and the internet.

One of the first ways to get the media to know about you is to email, fax or send a media release telling them about your event or action. It is common to follow up your media release by phoning and telling the media outlet why they should attend your event. A media release is usually one page. Give it an interesting heading; state what is going to happen and where, and include some comments from the person who will be your media spokesperson.

Look at developing a relationship with individual journalists so you can call them when there is a new development or encourage them to do more in-depth stories or give them exclusive coverage of your event. Giving a journalist or a media outlet an exclusive means that you let them know before the event but don’t tell other media outlets until it has happened. This way you are sure of some coverage but it’s not guaranteed to be widespread. You can build your campaign profile with the media by doing actions that are visual, interesting and of news interest to the media. This way your campaign will become known within the media as a good news story and worth attending.

Sometimes the media will contact you because they are interested in doing a story about the workers or a particular brand and the workers’
When the media initiate the contact with you, it is a good idea to negotiate very clear ground rules for how they report the story. Resourcing a story for the media can take up a lot of workers’ time and the media may have other issues they want to include that do not support your campaign. Having clear aims, as discussed in chapter three, will help you to be clear about what and how you want to work with the media.

If you plan your action in such a way that you have a clear idea of what message you want the media to get across on the news that night, then you are more likely to get the media to report favourably about your campaign. This will not always be in your control but having a very clear message and a well-planned event will help you to control the media message.

Media training

It is a good idea to have media training for workers, campaign coordinators, campaign workers and volunteers, key partner organisation leaders etc. Remember, companies spend millions of dollars on their branding, advertising and public relations. It is common for companies to employ public relations experts to counter campaigns. They will be prepared so you need to be too.

Discussing the media and the message you want to get across is important. It will help homeworkers to become more confident and informed and also ensures that any campaign workers or supporters link it back to the campaign aims and strategies. Training homeworkers to talk to the media and to do public speaking is a very effective way for them to be a powerful voice for people to understand their problems. You can practice interviewing each other and use tape recorders and video cameras to play back and help each other to improve being clear and getting your message across. The hardest thing to learn about talking to the media is saying what you need to say and not answering the questions the media ask you. Or in other words, using the questions they ask to give the answers you want to give. This takes skill and practice and it is worth spending a bit of time practicing so that homeworkers and media spokespeople get the message right.

A variety of campaign events are an effective way to involve the media, and increase the campaign profile. These may include: launches or campaign events or new stages of a campaign, new research or survey findings, a worker phone-in, presenting petitions, calling on the government to hold an inquiry, publishing open letters to companies, creating awards for companies that pay homeworkers the lowest, or have relocated because campaigns pressured them to improve workers’ conditions. Solidarity actions where workers in your country do coordinated activities with workers in another country near the company headquarters. Remember, don’t just have a few people at any event, try to have homeworkers, your campaign banner and banners and placards – make it visual. This way it is more media friendly and is more likely to have a photo printed or become a television story. Another useful way to hook a media story is to have your event on a significant day. For example, International Women’s Day, May Day, the anniversary of a nationally significant day for women or workers, or on a day that the target company is making an announcement or the government is doing
something related to your issue. Appropriating other people’s events, such as fashion parades, trade fairs, company annual general meetings and company product launches can get attention because it creates a contrasting message.

If your campaign goes for a few years, you may face the new challenge of how to keep getting attention. You may have already done lots of launches, events and actions. The media has covered the situation of homeworkers in your areas numerous times. The government has held an inquiry. But little has really changed for the homeworkers in terms of their work conditions. You then need to think about a new angle or a new way to present the same information and issues, or new visual messages to get the media’s attention or that of the people you want to take notice.

Documenting your campaign
Being visual or having photo opportunities can assist to get your campaign into the media; it can also be a good tool for your campaign to use to encourage people to support you.

Document everything you do. This will help you in a number of ways. It builds a history of what you have done and you can share your ideas and make them available to other campaigns. It is satisfying to people who have been involved in the planning and participated in the activities to see it on the web site, in the newspaper or the campaign newsletter. It can keep the enthusiasm and momentum of a campaign going when it is a hard slog and not much is changing.

Photos, video, digital photos, drawings, posters, cartoons, written documentation, individuals’ stories, individuals’ reactions can all go on a web site, be sent out to local media, go into newsletters, be embroidered to tell the story, painted onto murals or put into songs. Photos are good material for newsletters, information sheets and fliers to build more interest and support for the next stage of your campaign.

You can use a good photo from your last action on an invitation to a meeting.

EXAMPLE
Bride action photo used for a planning meeting invitation

Campaign Alert
Remember to be seen is to be heard. A picture is worth a thousand words. Pictures can convey the essence of what an issue is about and can inspire people to want to know about your campaign and what they can do to help.

Checklist
Maintaining interest and involvement in the campaign

Keep people in the campaign up to date and informed
Send notes from meetings to all campaign supporters to keep them in touch
Have email or mail contact lists
Distribute and display any media reports to workers and campaign supporters
Use community radio and media to keep people informed and up to date
Document the campaign using pictures, stories etc for updates, new developments or problems to let people know what is happening and how they can contribute
Document and share workers’ wins and successes
Celebrate wins – acknowledge small or significant advances in the campaign
Evaluate what you have done so far and plan the next stage and make any improvements
Document workers’ wins and campaign successes. It is important for homeworkers to have examples of what has happened before; they may be worried that they will lose their work. It’s also useful for people to know that their support counts and they contributed to the win.

**Getting your facts straight**

It is very important to get your facts straight and for your campaign to be known as a reliable source of information. This is particularly the case with homeworkers, who are usually paid on a piece-rate basis. The hourly rate they earn will be a best estimate, unless an accurate timing has been done. Don’t forget that homeworkers also incur work expenses and are rarely paid for them.

**What you can do?**

Wherever possible, get homeworkers to speak themselves about their pay and conditions. They know their own situation best. When this is not possible and homeworkers ask other campaigners to speak on their behalf, check your facts carefully and don’t make wild exaggerations. Let the facts speak for themselves.

The same goes for any printed materials that you distribute. Use direct quotes from homeworkers and don’t exaggerate.

Most big retailers’ first response to campaigns is to deny any knowledge of homeworkers in their supply chain. It is vital that you have a careful record of evidence that you can demonstrate if challenged on facts.

You may need to change names in order to conceal a homeworker’s identity. Never reveal the identity of individual homeworkers unless they have given explicit permission. Don’t say that homeworkers are employed by the big stores or companies unless you know this is true. Usually, homeworkers are working for smaller companies or subcontractors who supply the big retailers.

**Campaigning on the internet**

Some people hail the internet as one of the most significant campaign tools. It can be a useful tool, but not everyone has access to it nor can it replace workers talking to other workers or mass protest on the streets. The internet, email, web sites, virtual or cyber-protest have their place and can attract people to read information, to sign an online petition or send a letter of support or protest or share information about your campaign by forwarding it on to other people. The internet is fast – information can move across the globe in a couple of hours.

Emailing an urgent appeal, or using web sites to inform people can be useful. You can get people to email, fax or mail letters to send to companies, sign petitions to complement or become another part of your campaign strategy.

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**Campaign Alert**

If a company challenges your campaign and you are proved to have published or broadcast inaccurate information, you will be discredited. If you are careful about your facts, you will soon become respected as a source of accurate information.
Ad busting, also known as culture jamming, is a useful tool to use on the internet because it is visual and can convey a message about the company or who ever you are targeting.

If your campaign is very local and is not linked to international brands, you can still use the internet to get people to support you. For example, you can get them to send letters to your local or national government, or even make links to groups who may be able to use an event in their country to support homeworkers in a local area. Think about what the issues are in your campaign and how they link to other issues going on in the world. By making these links, people outside your campaign will find it easier to understand and support you.

Summary
This chapter focuses on being visible and what campaign tools will make your campaign more visible. Having a clear purpose and knowing what you want people to do will assist you when using the media and the internet. Training homeworkers in dealing with the media and getting your campaign facts right will help to build your campaign profile and get the issue known in the community.

EXAMPLE

Campaigning on the internet
Zapatista is the people’s movement of Chiapas, the indigenous people of Mexico who have effectively managed international media and Internet communication to gain a high profile and international support for their struggle. The Chiapas people have built autonomous Zapatista communities that support self-sustainable communities through music, water management, coffee growing, textiles, video making, gardening and protecting the environment.

Despite Zapatista having strong links with the anti-globalisation movement and international information that is distributed via the internet, they have only had direct access to the internet since January 2004, while previously their message was sent out for them through others. Zapatista have consciously linked their own struggle as indigenous people for justice, dignity and land with anti-globalisation. For example they launched the movement’s demands and initiated ‘the uprising’ on the day the North American Free Trade Agreement was enacted. They have been savvy in how they use the media and the internet to link with global movements and gain support and also to match this with their work in their communities of ongoing resistance in many forms.

A clear lesson from the is if you have strong collective action and a grass roots community organisation and link your struggle to the a global struggle then it is easier to get support. Similarly, they were able to get assistance from others to link to the global online community. You don’t need to have your own web site or even access to the internet to have effective online information and links. But at least you need to know others who can do this for you.
**How to get people to be interested and be active online**

- Present your campaign information in a clear precise way
- Be clear what you want people to do – have a what you can do section
- If you want people to email or write letters provide the contact names and addresses
- Link your issues to other global issues that people will connect with
- Keep your information and developments up to date
- Create list servers or put out regular email updates
- Ask for sponsors or people to donate
- Ask people to forward your information on to others

**Using the media**

- Train workers and others to talk to the media
- Have a campaign media spokesperson
- Have a clear message and image you want to get across to the media
- Be visual and create newsworthy events
- Document your activities and publicise your activities
Homeworkers’ participation

Encouraging homeworkers’ input and participation in your campaign can give strength to workers’ empowerment and assist their organising strategies. How you work with and involve homeworkers will contribute to how successful your campaign is.

Working with homeworkers

Some homeworker groups or unions may be organising homeworkers but have not tried campaigning strategies to assist their work to improve workers’ conditions. Others may have been involved in campaigns to support homeworkers’ rights but have not begun to organise homeworkers.

Whatever stage you are up to in your work to organise homeworkers, it is useful to consider what tools you can use, and how to link the campaigning issues to your organising strategy.

There are tools available to assist you in making contact with homeworkers to facilitate organisation by mapping the areas and sectors homeworkers work in. Using tools such as the HomeWorkers Worldwide information packs on horizontal and vertical mapping is a useful place to begin. These mapping packs provide tools and examples of what others have done to successfully begin locating homeworkers, bringing groups of homeworkers together and building organisation.

Training, confidence building, income generation projects, language and literacy skills, savings groups, craft skills, skills and information exchanges and organising exchanges have all been successful in building homeworkers’ involvement in unions and worker organisations or helping them to form their own.

Identifying homeworkers’ needs can only come from asking them what they think needs to improve or change, what are their priorities and how they want others to support them.

If homeworkers are involved in developing the campaign aims and plans, the campaign will be stronger and better off for it. Homeworkers hold valuable information about their work arrangements, the supply chains, and what they think will help improve their working conditions. Their powerful personal stories can help convince the community to give
their support. Without a direct link to the homeworkers, a campaign may suffer from top-down strategies that ultimately do not benefit the workers and could actually make them worse off.

There is nothing wrong in having a campaign that supports homeworkers’ rights where people who do not work directly with homeworkers do the primary campaigning. In fact this is the whole idea – that you engage a range of organisations to do this. A group that works directly with homeworkers will be the link between the workers and the campaign. You will need to define how this will work. Elsewhere, it may be the workers themselves who drive the campaign work and link directly with others. Workers may vary in how much time they can give to campaigning, but they can still have an important role in defining how the campaigning happens. Working out an effective way to communicate the workers’ input to the campaign will help keep the focus on how workers are organising and using the campaign to meet their needs.

**Building campaigning into organising strategies**

Encourage leaders from the homeworkers in each sector or area to do training and discuss issues. Seek out other workers’ views and provide feedback.

Training leaders on broader issues, such as globalisation, supply chains, marketing, trends in their industry – whatever is of use to the group of workers and can be linked to the campaign – will assist leaders to become more responsive and confident.

Encouraging leaders to be homeworker spokespeople for the campaign is a good idea. You may need to find ways to support them if it means they have less time to earn an income. Another way to get the experiences of homeworkers out to the public is to make a video where homeworkers describe their work and tell their own stories, or write testimonies or statements. This way groups outside the campaign can better understand why homeworkers need support but the workers don’t have to go and talk face-to-face at every small meeting.

Making links between homeworkers involved in local organising struggles and campaign supporters can assist both groups to understand the issues better. For example, when a group of workers is attempting to recover unpaid wages from a company, they can ask supporters to come to the factory with them to demand to be paid. Or they can ask supporters to go to the shop where the products are sold and demand the factory pay the workers. This strategy can be an effective way to get an immediate response – get the workers paid. It does not need an individual to identify herself but it can be on behalf of a group of workers and it is less likely that workers will experience any repercussions. Collecting individual worker statements and making them public (while removing all identifiable details) to consumers and to the media can assist in educating the public about the problems homeworkers face. This kind of partnership can really help build workers’ confidence.

Taking groups of homeworkers and other supporters to key meetings with employers, government or to other forums can assist in bringing across the human side of the issue. It is difficult for politicians to say
they cannot do anything when a homeworker has just described working
16 hours a day, explained why her children have to work and testified
that she gets paid far less than any minimum standards. It is very good
for homeworkers to hear directly what decision makers or companies
say in meetings. It can assist workers to understand why companies or
others need to be pressured to change their behaviour.

EXAMPLE

A homeworker speaks at Parliament
Huang, a homeworker, addressed a meeting of school students, teachers and politicians. He described his and
his wife’s story of being garment homeworkers in Australia: how hard they worked, how badly they were treated
and how it had affected their lives, their children and why he was asking the government to help homeworkers to
have laws to protect them like other workers. At the end of his talk there was not one dry eye in the room. His
personal story and the way he described it conveyed the emotion and human side of the campaign’s struggle.

Getting workers’ trust
Combine gains for workers with campaigning strategies to increase
homeworkers’ willingness to be involved in stunts, rallies and public
speaking to further your campaign. The best way of gaining the trust of
workers is to prove that your campaign aims will bring about benefits
to them collectively. Whatever the aim – to gain legal protection, a
company code, better pay for workers in one supply chain – if workers
are part of decision making and setting the agenda, they will find it
easier to trust what others are doing and know there is support for them
when they need it.

EXAMPLE

Homeworkers lobby for legislation
Homeworkers played a key role in the campaign to lobby governments to get legislation in New South Wales and
Victoria. This was combined with community campaigning, union lobbying and FairWear stunts and events that
targeted the government.

Leaders were trained to talk at government inquiries, public meetings and to the media. The workers together
with union and FairWear representatives attended meetings with government officials. The homeworkers wrote
out what they wanted to say to the politicians and practiced speaking before the meeting. At the meeting instead
of the politicians giving a talk to the homeworkers, each homeworker made their statement and then asked the
politicians questions. The workers set the agenda and took control of the meeting confronting the politicians as
a group of highly organised, articulate and committed workers. The homeworkers became educated through this
process because they were confronted directly with government and opposition party views which contradicted
what they thought the politicians would think and do.

The workers also began to understand some of the dirty tricks and propaganda used by politicians to avoid what
was best for homeworkers. The process to win legislation took a long time especially in Victoria and ultimately it
took a change of government and still a lot of lobbying for the legislation to go through.

Homeworkers participated in a targeted pre-election campaign strategy, holding protests outside the electoral
offices of any government politician who had spoken against legislation for homeworkers, writing to the local
media and leafleting commuters at railway stations each morning. FairWear supporters complemented
homeworkers’ activities by visiting politicians in the electorate with a giant sewing machine. Betty the sewing
machine would ask the politicians questions in front of the media to publicly embarrass them. Over the years it
took to get legislation through, many of the homeworker leaders become disillusioned and thought nothing would
change. A new group of leaders were trained and took over from the old group and eventually the legislation was
passed.
Protecting homeworkers’ work

The biggest risk homeworkers face is losing their work. In particular, homeworkers doing subcontracted work for local or international supply chains are vulnerable to losing their work if campaign strategies are not well planned. In some circumstances, even with the best plans, companies fleeing bad publicity will mean homeworkers lose their work.

Sometimes the company will move no matter what. Companies may already have plans to relocate production to an area where labour costs are cheaper and there is less legal protection for workers. A company being targeted by the campaign may say the campaign is driving it away or the union is forcing it to relocate.

Worldwide it is common for workers to face company reprisals for organising, joining unions and fighting to improve their working conditions. Homeworkers need to be aware of the risks and be part of the decision about how the campaign proceeds.

Local campaigns

Dependent homeworkers working in subcontracting chains are more vulnerable to losing work if only a few workers have been contacted and there is no strong organisation of homeworkers across the supply chain. For example, if one small workshop is targeted to improve wages and conditions or other work conditions, it may lose work from the larger company or it may move production somewhere else. Understanding the supply chain, how many suppliers produce for a larger company, where their competitors produce and whether they use homeworkers are all important facts to find out before you approach companies directly.

Strong links to workers in the formal sector, in factories and other enterprises owned by the same company will also assist in protecting homeworkers placing demands on a company.

Strategies that benefit enterprise-based workers also need to consider whether they will have a negative effect on homeworkers. If a union aims to organise workers at each level in the supply chain, it may need to consider how this is done in a way that benefits all the workers. Developing strategies that protect workers’ identity can help to keep them in work.

Making industry-wide demands to improve standards, codes, laws and regulation for homeworkers’ protection is easier than focusing on individual companies unless you are prepared and have all the facts. Companies who have already said they will do something to improve homeworkers’ conditions can be compared to those who have not made any commitment.

Strategies to support independent or own-account homeworkers to protect their work include making sure that workers are involved in identifying the links in the supply chain. Removing middle people can improve workers’ pay if they are organised and clear about what they want to achieve. Again, you need to make sure that there are no others who will step in and replace the middle person. Ensure that the workers
are all clear about the new structure of selling their work and the method of distributing their earnings.

Improving marketing and labelling to promote goods made by homeworkers who are members of an organisation or union can be a positive way for consumers to support them. Making sector-wide demands for secure places to sell their goods, minimum wage standards or other benefits can prevent workers being subject to harassment from local police or authorities.

**Global campaigns**

Global campaigns to support homeworkers will work best when the workers are involved in setting the aims and deciding how the campaign can assist them to organise and/or be self-sustaining. Global campaigns often produce reports, have pictures, and focus on certain brands because they are already doing this work. If you have connections to global campaigns or want to make such connections you need to set clear guidelines about how you work and what kind of solidarity you need. Also ask supporters what they need from you to campaign in their country.

Homeworkers can participate in local action research and make contact with other homeworkers, collect information and be involved in planning the campaign strategies to assist in organising and campaigning. Integrating homeworkers’ visibility and issues into training at all levels for unions, worker organisations, campaign and solidarity groups as well as non-government organisations and international human rights organisations, will assist in working in a more cohesive way.

Establishing a process for campaigns to respond to requests from you and then give feedback to the homeworkers will allow you to work closely from the workers’ needs to drive the campaign. It is easy for people campaigning against retailers in one country to go off and do things on their own, without maintaining close links with those producing in another country. The campaign may do things which they think will help, but which in fact makes things worse for homeworkers in the other country.

Protecting homeworkers’ work in this instance requires that the campaign has clear aims and guidelines for how any support campaign will work with the homeworkers’ organisation. This may seem obvious, but it is not easy to maintain good and consistent communication across different countries and language barriers.

**Evaluation**

Evaluate your campaign aims and strategies and focus on how the workers feel about the campaign. Do they think the campaign is helping? If they do, how? If not, why not? This is important feedback to keep it all on track and make sure that all parts of your campaign are working together and building on each other. This approach will ensure it encourages participation, values diversity and works towards its aims through well thought out and planned strategies and tactics.
Summary

This chapter discusses ways to encourage homeworkers’ participation in the campaign. Gaining homeworkers trust depends upon understanding the issues that affect them and giving them the time to work out their priorities for the campaign. Change does not come quickly and homeworkers need to improve their leadership skills and confidence to organise, and to be able to make effective links with local and global campaign partners.
Building alliances between homeworker groups and unions can support homeworkers to organise. Unions and community groups that are involved in community campaigning for homeworkers can benefit by gaining increased public support for their organisations. A lot can be achieved for homeworkers with a powerful alliance that brings together formal and informal worker organisations.

Alliances
In chapter two we discussed building partnerships as an important way to build campaigns. Alliances between homeworker groups and unions are another aspect to this. In many countries, the groups organising and supporting homeworkers are not registered trade unions. Many unions are working to organise workers in the informal economy but some are not. In many countries new unions of homeworkers and informal worker groups are emerging and want to link with existing national and international union federations. In some countries, homeworkers groups may register associations or cooperatives because it is not easy to register a union.

Organising dependent homeworkers working for subcontracting chains is one of the biggest challenges. They are invisible, isolated and often consider themselves outside the mainstream system. Organising homeworkers is not impossible but it is difficult. The challenge is to adapt existing organising strategies and develop new strategies to suit workers in informal and home-based work arrangements.

There are many examples of how unions and homeworker organisations have effectively organised homeworkers. Documentation of successful organising models and experiences is available. For organising models see information about HomeWorkers Worldwide Mapping Packs in the resources section.

Unions being relevant to homeworkers
For any organisation to be relevant to homeworkers you first need to talk to the homeworkers and identify their needs and priorities. Identify how you will work in their interests and gain their trust. Educate yourselves and your members on how the union or organisation can work in the interests of all workers.
Unions may have to change some aspects of how they work and adapt organising strategies to be relevant to homeworkers. Cooperation and support by members in workplaces is also needed to understand the links between homeworkers and enterprise-based workers. The leadership of the union needs to be behind any changes to integrate them into the day-to-day work of the union.

Training and education is required for all levels of the union and ways have to be found to link this to the campaigning strategy. A union may have a homeworker speak about her work to a group of union delegates or at a branch meeting, as well as community groups who are involved in campaigning for homeworkers. The more workers are exposed to the homeworkers and can make the connections, the easier it will be for them to work out how they can be supportive and involved in a campaign.

Many homeworker support groups have developed strong alliances with local unions to encourage homeworkers to organise. These alliances build on the skills and experience of local homeworker organisations and unions to improve the homeworkers’ capacity to form their own unions or join existing ones.

**EXAMPLE**

**Alliances working to organise homeworkers in India**

In the southern state of Tamil Nadu, India, a local rural organisation – the READ Foundation – has been working to set up self-help groups with garment homeworkers. These groups were initially savings groups but gradually have taken up other activities, helping women buy raw materials in bulk and sell their products collectively. READ has worked with and been supported by the local union to train homeworkers and lobby for better conditions.

READ has set up a group of women fieldworkers who go out and contact garment homeworkers in the villages. Together with the union, they have encouraged the women to register with the Tamil Nadu Manual Workers’ Welfare Board, which gives a range of welfare benefits to workers who join it. The union has also supported the work by providing trainers for sessions run in the villages for the homeworkers on issues such as women’s rights or family law. The union has also supported many small local meetings as well as mass meetings involving hundreds of homeworkers. The READ Foundation and the union are now extending their work to homeworkers in other sectors and geographical areas.

**EXAMPLE**

**Alliances in Chile**

In Chile, seaweed homeworkers in the south supported by women’s organisation, CECAM, organised to improve living conditions by removing the middle person who bought the seaweed for a low price. Workers received training and support from CECAM to organise and develop a local trade union. Their incomes have more than doubled and they now have greater control over how they work without pressure from the middle person. They are part of an international contracting chain selling seaweed on to international cosmetics firms and food producers.

In Chile, CECAM is encouraging the formation of local organisations of homeworkers, including those from the garment and footwear sectors, through education and support. These new local trade unions of homeworkers have formed regional organisations and are developing alliances with formal trade unions. Some factories and workshops where the work goes have been identified and the formal unions in the factories contacted.
Campaigns at work

Making links between formal and informal workers

An important way for alliances between formal and informal workers to succeed is to make sure that the union and activists make some direct links with homeworkers. Often the workers working in small workshops know where the work is being contracted out to, or may even make the deliveries. Tracing the supply chain and understanding where each worker is located in the chain can assist to develop strategies that link to the homeworkers. Workers may need some awareness raising, face-to-face meetings with homeworkers, and training to understand what they have in common with the homeworkers.

In many industries where work is subcontracted, employers use it as a way to get work done cheaply and avoid minimum standards, if any exist. This strategy is used by employers to split workers, make workers feel insecure and can cause on-site workers to blame homeworkers for working for less or for not being union members.

It is not uncommon for workers in factories to take work home or distribute it to others who work at home; they may live in the same neighbourhood, speak the same first language, or be associated in another way. This can confuse worker solidarity and makes it difficult for workers to see they all have something in common.

The message for formal workers is that by improving the standards and conditions for homeworkers they are helping to maintain standards for themselves and all workers. If workers are directly involved in the organising strategy, the planning and setting of goals and dialoguing with homeworkers, they can work out ways to overcome some of the barriers.

Alliances in Nepal

In Nepal, Home Based Worker Concern Society, Nepal (HBWCSN) was set up two years ago and has carried out initial work in two districts, Sunsari in the east, and in Kathmandu. It has carried out surveys of homeworkers in three sectors in each district and followed this up with local and district meetings. Homeworkers are making bead necklaces and other jewellery; weaving traditional cloth, knitting, spinning and carding wool for the carpet industry.

In each district, HBWCSN has set up a basic structure of locally-based savings groups, with a representative committee district level bringing women together from each sector. Its priority at national level is to lobby the government for a law protecting homeworkers. At a national meeting held in January 2004, representatives of all the national union federations in Nepal pledged their support for this campaign. Given the fact that the majority of workers in Nepal are informal, it also made a commitment to find ways of working together to develop grassroots organisation of homeworkers.
Campaigns at work

The right to collective bargaining

Collective bargaining consists of negotiations between an employer and a group of workers to agree on the conditions of employment. It results in a collective agreement. Employers usually only recognise a formal trade union to negotiate on behalf of the workers, and sometimes conditions are laid down by law as to when an employer has to recognise a trade union or when a union or other labour organisation can represent workers. Sometimes there are laws, regulations and judicial decisions defining the scope of collective bargaining. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Core convention on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention (No. 98) concerns the Application of the Principles of the Right to Organize and to Bargain Collectively.

Check out your national and state laws, and whether your country has ratified the core ILO conventions known as fundamental rights at work or other conventions, and if homeworkers are covered or excluded from laws in your country. In some countries, a collective agreement becomes law for that group of workers and the company, in other countries it does not, it is just an agreement but is not legally binding.

In 1998, all members of the ILO, which is the vast majority of governments in the world, agreed to the declaration on fundamental principals and rights at work, known as core labour standards. Whether your government has ratified the relevant conventions or not, it probably agreed to abide by these core labour standards which include the right of free association and collective bargaining.

Including homeworkers in workplace collective bargaining

Workers in factories connecting with homeworkers will build industrial strength and organising. In earlier sections we have discussed the importance of talking to the homeworkers and identifying their needs, and how vulnerable they are to losing their work. See chapter five for more on homeworkers’ participation.

Workers in the formal sector wanting to negotiate collective agreements need to be aware that if they agree to include homeworkers into their bargaining and campaign strategies, that it needs to benefit everyone. Some factory-based workers and union officials may think it’s better to have no outsourced work and homeworkers and that this way, workers

Linking formal sector workers with homeworkers

The Australian Textile Union (TCFUA) as part of its campaign to fight tariff reductions, developed campaign materials for workers across the industries it covered – textile, garment and footwear. The poster and flier made the link between workers in factories and homeworkers. The message was along the lines of: industry standards for all workers, ethical practices for corporations by ending exploitation; and jobs for the future. The union effectively educated workers to link the future of their jobs and industry with fair standards for all workers including homeworkers and the community campaign message for retailers and manufacturers to sign ethical agreements with the union.
in the factories will get better conditions. This principle would work if there was no outsourcing. But the reality in a globalised economy is that outsourcing and homework is on the increase in all countries.

The industrial and organising reality is that you need to adopt strategies that improve conditions for all workers, including homeworkers. If you gain benefits for some at the expense of others, then you will lose the workers’ trust and risk not being able to organise amongst a group of workers whose numbers are increasing.

Planning a collective bargaining campaign, for example, can involve brainstorming a whole range of activities and then developing your agreement aims and strategies. When you have made your list, collected information and answered all the questions, go ahead and plan your campaign. Use the ideas in the earlier chapters on campaigning to integrate into your campaign for a collective agreement.

How you involve homeworkers and their issues at this early stage, and well before you are at the negotiating table, will have a big influence on how successful you are in integrating and being relevant to homeworkers down the track.

**EXAMPLE**

**Brainstorm activities and planning process for a collective agreement campaign**

Meet with workers to map contract chain

Research if company sources from outside area, nationally, internationally

Are there links that can be made to support workers working for the same company elsewhere?

Identify each competitor’s contract chain

Meet with homeworkers to identify what issues are important for them

Collect information from homeworkers on supply chain, work conditions etc

List workers top 20 demands

How will this campaign assist in organising unorganised workers?

Survey workers and get them to prioritise their top demands

Work out if factory workers support homeworkers and if not what can help them to understand the need for unity

Are there any state, national or global standards that the company can be asked to sign on to, or other public statements of support for homeworkers?

Are there any national laws or potential laws for homeworkers that the company can make a public statement to support?

Is the company a well-known brand or does it make for well-known brands?

Can this be a focused part of community campaigning?

How can a broader group support the workers demands?

Who are our allies; do we need to do more work to build allies in certain areas or with certain groups?

Are there other groups of workers that could support workers for their collective agreement campaign?

Think through what corporate spin will be put on your issue and build this into your campaign plan.
What to include in your collective agreement

One of the key things for unions and collective agreements is the status of workers. The laws vary and can be complicated on this. So unions need to make the point in any agreement that homeworkers are recognised as employees. To avoid legal arguments, the union should simply insist that homeworkers are employees and entitled to the same rights as workers in the factory. If a minimum wage law exists, it should apply whether they are employees or not. It covers all workers, as do some other laws such as holiday pay, no discrimination etc. But on principle it should be argued that homeworkers are workers.

Another point about making agreements that include homeworkers is the conversion of the piece rate to a basic hourly minimum rate. Make sure that piece rates are realistic and if necessary insist on a time study. Homeworkers’ tasks may also include jobs not done by factory workers, for example, collecting and delivering work.

In some countries it is common for a rate to be set, for example, for sewing a pair of uppers (shoes). Then the work is given to an intermediary who is responsible for delivering and collecting goods, as well as quality control. The intermediary is not paid by the company but takes her/his commission from the rate for the job.

If this is the system, the homeworkers are by definition not getting the rate for the job, as obviously the intermediary does not work for nothing. Many of the examples referred to here are about the garment industry. Remember, the garment industry is not the only, or even the main, sector where homework is found. From the campaigning point of view this means that we have to find new ways to campaign around homeworkers making components for industries such as the car industry or for electrical lighting, television or computers, where it is more difficult to find out who is the end-user. Imagination is needed.

How factory/workplace-based workers can help homeworkers

Factory-based workers can assist homeworkers by including in their collective agreement demands about issues that affect homeworkers. These issues may not be the highest priority issues for the factory workers but it helps them to understand more about the homeworkers’ situation, how they are connected, and they may be able to use it as a pressure point against the company. Workers can be involved in making industry-wide demands for codes, laws and increased supply chain transparency and monitoring, to name a few things.

How homeworkers can help workplace-based workers

Homeworkers can provide the factory-based workers with information about their work conditions, the supply chain, competitors and small workshops making the same products. This information can be used in a campaigning approach to collective bargaining that builds another layer into the strategy and will mobilise broader community support for the workers’ situation.
Working with unions – working with homeworkers

Campaigns at work

A campaign for a collective agreement

Garment workers in one factory in Australia campaigned for several months for a collective agreement that included an industry-wide list of demands. One of the demands was that the company become accredited to the Homeworkers Code of Practice. The group of workers spoke 15 different languages and had never been on strike before.

The workers did some planning on the campaign and with some help researched the company, where work was subcontracted to, where work was going and what were the conditions of the workers in the small workshops and the homeworkers. They also gathered information on the profits of the company, CEO salary levels and whom they did work for. As they went through this process they realised just how much information they had about the way the company operated. When all the information was collected, they worked out their campaign aims and strategies to target the company in the most public way possible. They made links with workers and their unions in banks, insurance companies and nursing because they made their uniforms. They organised protests outside some of these workplaces with support from the other industry workers. They collected personal statements from homeworkers making the company’s products and with FairWear targeted all companies linked to these workers making their uniforms. The main message in their collective agreement campaign was: fair industry standards and an end to sweatshop conditions. They managed to have strong support from workers in other industries and at the same time put pressure on their own employer and other corporations to join the ethical code for homeworkers.

By integrating and supporting homeworkers’ issues into their campaign, the workers were able to get their message across with increased community support. The result was that workers won a good agreement and the company was forced to review its whole supply chain, improve monitoring procedures with the union and join the Homeworkers Code. The workers evaluated their actions after the campaign and realised that it would have been difficult to get public support and media attention for their collective agreement without having made the links to the broader message to end sweatshop conditions in the industry.

Working in local, national and international solidarity

Global unions, non-government organisations (NGOs) and campaigns have improved how they trace global chains and document workers’ conditions. There is considerable attention being given to labour rights in global production networks and supply chains, much of which is focused on codes of conduct, monitoring and compliance as part of corporate initiatives to protect their brand reputation. The next step is using this information to assist homeworkers locally to organise and improve their conditions.

This can be done through partnerships and alliances between local and international unions, NGOs, community groups and homeworker organisations to develop and support organising strategies and to ensure local homeworker groups make the necessary links to gain recognition and promote their campaign.

Cooperation between local, national and global organisations and campaigns can assist homeworkers. Global and national union federations and other organisations can share information and data on company movements, seek national or global collective agreements that break new ground for homeworkers’ protection and rights, promote standards for ethical codes that integrate homeworkers and demand increased supply chain monitoring. As homeworkers and other workers in informal employment become more visible and part of global advocacy, their capacity to organise and be recognised locally increases.
Creative use of laws, legal instruments and other tools for campaigning

Use your campaign tools and apply them to a range of activities including: getting corporations to sign an industry code for homeworkers, lobbying for homeworkers’ legislation, or to demand your government ratifies the ILO Convention on Home Work and the core conventions known as the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

There may be existing legislation, regulations and policies at national or state levels or even municipal level that can be implemented to make companies more accountable. Ask some labour experts, lawyers and others to identify all the laws that could potentially be activated to assist homeworkers. There may be old laws that officials have rarely acted on that you can insist become activated, or existing laws that include good principles, that you could work to have applied to homeworkers. Look at the various laws and labour regulations you identify and think about how they can be used creatively towards your campaign aims.

Remember that governments regularly review and amend laws at the request of employers and larger corporations to erode protection for workers.

Evaluation

Evaluate everything you do and give yourselves some time to reflect, regroup, consider if things are working, amend your plans, change tactics and review your decision-making process. This approach will keep you on track, realistic about what you can do and how to do it. Allow everyone involved to have a say and most importantly do a reality check on what are the benefits for homeworkers.

EXAMPLE

Using existing laws to campaign for homeworkers

The Australian labour law provides garment homeworkers pay equity with factory workers. However, this rarely occurs. The national industry law known as the ‘Clothing Trades Award’ aims to ensure that homeworkers and others receive their legal entitlements. Homeworkers earn on average $2 to $3 (US $1 to $1.50) an hour compared with the legal minimum rate of $13 (US $7.50) an hour. The union began to prosecute large groups of companies for breaches of this law. In one state, over 100 companies were prosecuted in a five-year period between 1998 and 2003, for over 800 breaches.

The Australian campaign has used legal prosecutions together with community campaigning to justify why new laws for homeworkers are needed; why companies should accredit to the voluntary homeworkers code; and why the government needs to legislate to make the voluntary code a mandatory legally binding law for retailers.

In many countries this would be difficult to replicate because unions may not have the power to prosecute companies. However, it may be possible for unions and other groups to work with authorities to prosecute companies if enough pressure is placed on them to do something.
Summary
This chapter looks at how unions and homeworker groups can work in alliance to assist homeworkers to organise. Strategies to link formal sector workers to homeworkers will help to improve homeworkers’ visibility and increase understanding and the capacity to protect all workers’ conditions through collective agreements, codes and legislation. Campaign partners at local and global levels need to exchange information and make strong links to improve the organisation of homeworkers and other workers in informal employment.

Checklist

Working with homeworkers
Meet with homeworkers and find out the workers’ priorities
Organise training and groups that homeworkers will benefit from
Unions and homeworker groups meet and discuss formal and informal workers’ issues
Nominate a person within the union/group to drive the issue/campaign
Conduct training at every level of the union about homeworkers
For every union activity ask how is this relevant or how it affects homeworkers
Link your strategies for a collective agreement to the campaign for homeworkers
Map the subcontracting chain and use this information in organising and campaigns
Plan for different ways of working and different tactics to strengthen the campaign
Use collective agreements and laws to improve conditions, make homeworkers visible and further the campaign aims

Evaluation
Take some time after actions and events to check how it went
Have an annual evaluation to see where the campaign is up to
Check the things you did against your plan
Congratulate yourselves on the successes
Give your campaign a report card what we have done well, what we could improve
Plan the next stage of the campaign
Here are some of the many campaigns and information sites you can access on the internet. Start by checking out some of these web sites and you will quickly find lots of interesting and useful campaign ideas and links to the global community. The following are mainly English language sites, but useful for ideas and if you want international support for your campaign. A number of web sites do have links to materials in other languages.

**CAMPAIGN WEB SITES**

- **www.maquilasolidarity.org**  
  Macquila Solidarity Network  
  This site has great section on action tools for campaigning, has online resources, you can order their campaign information and also download it from the site.

- **www.cleanclothes.org**  
  Clean clothes campaign: European based campaign against sweatshop conditions in garment and shoe industry.

- **www.peta.org**  
  People for ethical treatment of animals (PETA) has a good ‘what you can do’ page.

- **www.petitiononline.com**  
  You can set up petitions for people to sign online.

- **www.adbusters.org**  
  Adbusters: uses corporate brands and logos against the owners includes ideas on cultural jamming.

- **www.fairolympics.com**  
  International campaign by ICFTU, Clean Clothes Campaign and Oxfam. Olympics campaign to support sportswear workers.

- **www/hrw.org**  
  Human rights watch: a ‘what you can do section’ is provided under campaigns.

- **www.caa.org.au/campaigns/nike**  
  Nike watch: has campaigns and action sections, good email lists and news updates.

- **www.which.net/campaigns**  
  Consumer associations campaigns.

- **www.mstbrazil.org**  
  English  
  **www.mst.org.br**  
  Portuguese  
  Landless peoples movement of Brazil MST: has good example of donations for their work – support a MST activist. A list server and good links to other sites and movements.

- **www.artandrevolution.net**  
  US-based information about art activists.

- **www.agp.org**  
  Peoples global action: Forthcoming Protests, directories of groups. Has info in lots of languages.

- **www.riseup.net**  
  In English and Portuguese. Riseup provides free web hosting for activists and south based groups. It hosts thousands of lists on a number of issues.

- **www.zmag.org/chiapas**  
  one of Zapatistas in cyberspace broad range of information and activities on Zapatista movement.

- **www.protest.net**  
  List of global actions and activist information.

- **www.oneworld.net**  
  Online coverage of global human rights issues.

- **www.greenpeace.org**  
  Greenpeace site includes a good example of cyber activist community.

- **www.McSpotlight.org**  
  McSpotlight is campaigns about McDonalds but also has good links to other campaigns and issues.

- **www.fairwear.org.au**  
  The FairWear Campaign.
www.globalexchange.org/campaigns  Good information on economic rights, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation.


INFORMATION WEB SITES


www.essential.org/monitor  Multinational monitor: provides free information about corporations to activists south based groups and individuals about corporations operating in their countries.


www.corpwatch.org  Corporate Watch – resources to help you find information about trans-national companies.

www.corporatewatch.org.uk  A guide to researching UK companies.

www.ilo.org  International Labour Organisation (ILO): can get copies of labour conventions and see which countries have ratified each convention.


www.theyesmen.org  The yes men are imposters that infiltrate meetings, behind the scenes of big business and make the stories from inside public.

www.learnwebskills.com  This US web site has online tutorial for company research on the web.

www.virtualchase.com  A free internet site that provides tools about how to research on the web about the law and companies.

www.ibisworld.com  Sells company information, you can get limited free information.

ORGANISING WEB SITES

www.homeworkersww.org.uk  HomeWorkers Worldwide Information on homework and mapping and organising strategies of homeworker organisations globally.

www.labourstart.org  Can subscribe to get updates, will put out action alerts for supporters to respond to. Has information in many languages.

www.tieasia.org  Transnationals Information Exchange (TIE) – Asia Regional labour network that covers Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Thailand. Publications, information and campaigns around labour and trade issues.

http://caw.jinbo.net  CAW Committee for Asian Women. Information, campaigns and resources on labour issues.

www.women-ww.org  Women Working Worldwide. Info, resources and publications on women and work issues.

www.workersrights.org  US based Workers Rights Consortium

www.tuc.org  Trade Union Congress UK, National Trade union federation and part of national campaign on homework in UK. Other sites for UK include: www.tuc.org.uk  www.unionreps.org.uk  and www.worksmart.org.uk  .

Check the sites of national union federation(s) in your country.

www.icftu.org  International Confederation of free trade unions (ICFTU) links to global unions and labour campaigns. English, French and Spanish.

www.global-unions.org  10 global union federations that make up membership of ICFTU, each global union federation site has its own campaigns, news and information.

MEDIA GUIDES AND TOOLS WEB SITES

www.media-alliance.org  Has links to media related sites.


www.commondreams.org  US-based online news centre for the progressive community. Has links to international news services.
www.indymedia.org
Independent media centre has links to international centres. Good examples of groups being the media, putting their own issues out to global community.

www.videoactivism.org
US based Information and resources on video and media activism

www.devmedia.org Information and resources on women working with media for development and democracy. In English, Spanish and French.

BOOKS ON GLOBAL MOVEMENTS, CAMPAIGNS AND IDEAS


A HomeWorkers Worldwide Publication
HWW aims to improve visibility, organisation and representation of homeworkers and their organisations. Supported by:
Trades Union Congress (TUC)
The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL)

For further information or to access a copy of this manual contact:
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www.bsl.org.au

The aim of this manual is to provide guidelines, ideas and processes to assist you to develop your own approach to campaigning to improve the visibility and organisation of homeworkers. The manual breaks down a campaign into distinct areas and offers practical ways to develop a planned approach that encourages participation and leadership from workers. In addition, it promotes the use of visible props and creative actions to educate consumers, form alliances with a range of organisations and individuals, and work in solidarity with unions and worker organisations.