

Corporate Watch

MODULE 5:

RESEARCHING COMPANY HARM

AIMS OF THIS SECTION

- ▶ To gain an understanding of different ways to research company harm.
- ▶ To become more sensitive and skilful when speaking to people affected by a company.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ▶ What are the most obvious problems with the company's activities?
- ▶ Is there a particular pattern of destructive or exploitative behaviour?
- ▶ Who is suffering, or has suffered, because of its activity, and how?
- ▶ Has the company been involved in any particular controversies or scandals?

CASE STUDY: YARA

- ▶ Collaborated with people who had already been organising against Yara longer-term.
- ▶ Used advanced google search tools to unveil historical behaviour e.g. Yara+controversy.
- ▶ Worked through this systematically year by year (to help filter thousands of results).



MAPPING OUT COMPANY HARM

- ▶ People engaged in resistance to a company are commonly those harmed by the company itself e.g. a housing action group made up of tenants resisting a landlord.
- ▶ People directly affected should be your first port of call when mapping out company harm.
- ▶ They are often the people who have done the most significant research into a company and its behaviour already.



SPEAKING TO AFFECTED PEOPLE

- ▶ Whenever interviewing someone, you need to be aware of issues such as:
- ▶ Privacy and confidentiality.
- ▶ Safety of the person (e.g. are they at risk for speaking to you).
- ▶ Trauma e.g. the effect on this person disclosing something traumatic to you.
- ▶ Similarly, any support you need to listen to these stories.
- ▶ The differences in power and privilege.
- ▶ How much involvement or consent someone has over what you write, how it is edited and where it is shared.

SPEAKING TO AFFECTED PEOPLE

- ▶ If you can't meet people in person then phone calls, messages and emails can be useful.
- ▶ Ask for consent to record any calls.
- ▶ You may be able to find contacts in forums, Facebook groups and existing community organisations.
- ▶ You may be able to meet people directly e.g. disgruntled workers at a site.

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

- ▶ The Health and Safety Executive is a UK government agency responsible for the encouragement, regulation and enforcement of workplace health, safety and welfare - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/>
- ▶ Good resource for researching accidents and deaths at a workplace managed by a Company.
- ▶ See the register of notices and convictions: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/enforce/convictions.htm>



SUPPLY CHAINS

- ▶ If there are no obvious groups organising, a good place to start is by mapping out the company's supply chain.
- ▶ You will be able to see what it needs to function (and therefore, what or whom it is most likely exploiting).
- ▶ For example, Yara is a fertiliser company e.g. it needs phosphorous and potash.



COMPANY GROUPS AND SUBSIDIARIES

- ▶ Harm could be caused directly by the company, or it could be part of its subsidiaries or supply chain e.g. a sweatshop factory.
- ▶ By mapping the company group, you may see individuals involved in harmful activities under a different company name.



CASE STUDY: DALRADIAN

- ▶ [https://
corporatewatch.org/
resistingthegoldrush/](https://corporatewatch.org/resistingthegoldrush/)

