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 <a href="https://www.hse.gov.uk/">https://www.hse.gov.uk/</a>
- Good resource for researching accidents and deaths at a workplace managed by a Company.
- See the register of notices and convictions: <a href="https://www.hse.gov.uk/enforce/convictions.htm">https://www.hse.gov.uk/enforce/convictions.htm</a>



## **SUPPLY CHAINS**

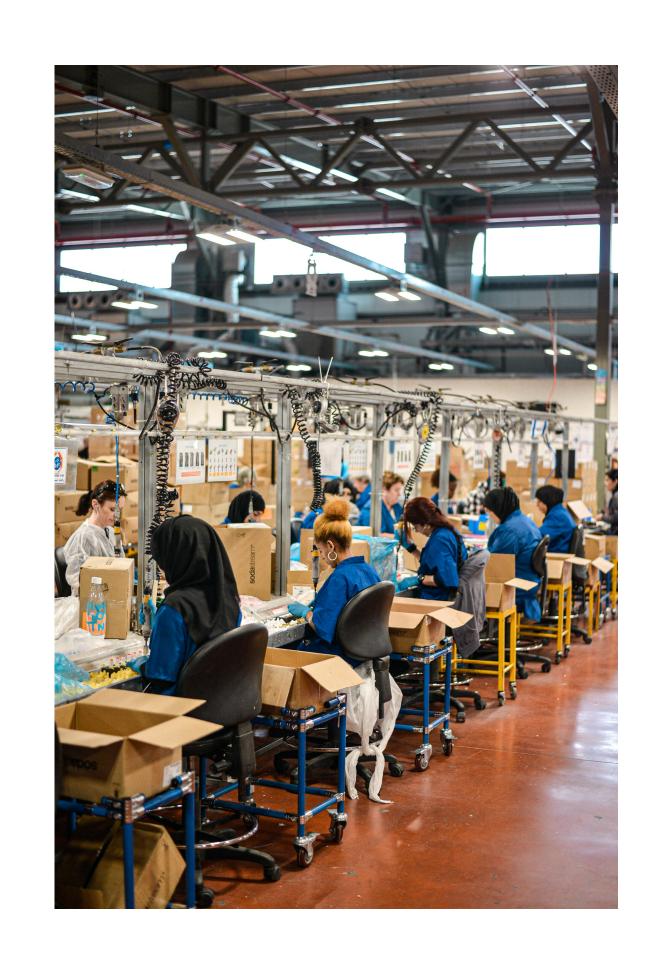
- If there are no obvious groups organising, a good place to start is by mapping out the company's supply chain.
- You will be able to see what it needs to function (and therefore, what or whom it is most likely exploiting).
- For example, Yara is a fertiliser company e.g. it needs phosphorous and potash.





#### 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/

