

Abstract

Campaigning and advocacy are fundamental strategies that the NGO sector now employ to tackle the adverse effects of the international capitalist system, which has affected impoverished groups of people and countries in the last 30 years, imposing unfair rules and practices. The strategies of campaigning and advocacy (in principle based on the strong links between the North and the South, and between NGOs and community organisations) have been backed by some governments, the media and many other actors from the civil society, both at local and global level. However, these strategies have also been criticized and it has been argued that campaigns and advocacy work are more directed to NGOs own objectives. Issues regarding legitimacy, representation, autonomy, motivation and impact are at the core of that debate. This paper presents an assessment of all these issues from the point of view of the local activists themselves. Two main campaigns are used for the discussion, the Trade Justice and the Jubilee Debt campaigns. The evidence presented in this paper relies on the authors' reflections, interviews with campaigners and the Campaigns teams' documentation. We conclude that campaigning is effective for combating dominant international capitalism and increasing the accountability towards the poor.

Keywords: campaigns, community organisations, capitalism, advocacy, NGOs

Leonith Hinojosa is Research Associate and Teaching Fellow at the Institute for Development Policy and Management, School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester

Dave Pearce is from the World Development Movement, Manchester Group

Sarah Dumbleton is from the Salford Diocese Faith & Justice Commission

Acknowledgements

We gratefully thank the local campaigners in Manchester who provided insightful information for this paper. John Logan (ex-TJM/JDC member) greatly facilitated many contacts. This paper does not compromise the official view of TJM Manchester or any of the organisations to which each one of us belongs.