CAAT was set up in 1974 and is a broad coalition of groups and individuals working for the reduction and ultimate abolition of the international arms trade, together with progressive demilitarisation within arms-producing countries.

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Front Look out for opportunities to raise awareness – like this local festival in Stoke Newington
‘The work of Campaign Against Arms Trade is really great and uplifting. I wish we had something comparable in the US.’
Noam Chomsky, scholar and political analyst

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in helping us campaign against the arms trade. Without campaigners out and about around the country, raising awareness about the deadly impact of the arms trade, this awful business will never come to an end. Local campaigning in all its different forms is a vital part of CAAT’s work.

This guide has been put together to encourage and support you as an individual or as part of a local group to campaign on this important issue in your local area. It aims to give you some ideas about how to raise awareness of the arms trade, and then how to focus that awareness on key pressure points including the government and the arms companies themselves.

In addition, throughout the guide we have included stories from other local CAAT campaigners which show that just a few people working locally can make a real difference.

Good luck with your campaigning and do stay in contact with us here in the office. Remember, we are here to support you and want to hear your stories!

The CAAT team
020 7281 0297
Local Campaigns Co-ordinator annemarie@caat.org.uk

Resources and materials

CAAT produces many campaigning and information resources for local campaigners. These include campaign packs, information briefings, leaflets, posters, petitions and postcards. Check for our latest publications online at www.caat.org.uk/publications or ask the office to send you a publications list.

For regular updates on news and campaigns:
- Our website www.caat.org.uk is full of useful information, which is regularly updated.
- Our quarterly magazine, CAATnews, is a great source of news and inspiration. No arms trade campaigner should be without it!
- Sign up for monthly email updates from CAAT for the latest developments on campaigns and ways you can get involved.

To subscribe to CAATnews and/or the email list go to www.caat.org.uk/lists or phone the office.

Many of CAAT’s resources are free. For those involved in local campaigning CAAT also sends out a regular mailing, giving updates on current campaigns, and information on new resources and upcoming events. If you would like to receive this local campaigners’ mailing, please use the reply slip on the back cover, or email us at the address above.
Work with others

CAAT supporters can achieve a lot on their own, but even more when we work with others. The information throughout this guide will be useful to all of our supporters, including those who campaign individually. But whether you’re visiting your MP, setting up a street stall or planning a public meeting, it’s always good to share the work and encourage more people to get involved.

Find out if there is a group near you here: www.caat.org.uk/getinvolved/local/groups.php

Networking

Making contact with other groups and campaigners in your local area is very important. There are lots of groups working on issues that overlap with our aim of ending the arms trade. Examples of such issue groups include those working on human rights such as local Amnesty International groups; international development such as Oxfam; other peace groups such as CND, Pax Christi and Stop the War; and environmental campaigners such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. It may also be worth contacting local political parties, church or interfaith groups, trade union branches etc.

If you are already part of a local peace, human rights, environmental or international development group you could suggest that the group takes arms trade issues into account when undertaking their work. Or you could simply feed in information from CAATnews to the meeting.

Starting a local CAAT group

CAAT has supporters around the country who, like you, may be really keen to meet other CAAT supporters and take action together.

Tips for getting your group going

Get in touch with the CAAT Local Campaigns Co-ordinator and she will make sure you have advice and support as you start your local CAAT group.

Networking

Long-standing Local Contact
Dorothy Forbes describes how networking has helped her develop CAATs activities in her area

As the local contact for a relatively small organisation, but one with a vitally important message, I have always found networking with other groups critical in putting that message across. In the past couple of years my networking has become more (mainly non-party) political. It all started in the summer of 2006 when the war in Lebanon was at its height. Some of us spent a lot of time in the city centre, holding vigils and taking part in demos. With one hand attached to a banner I found the leaflets in my other hand being whisked out of it and, unusually, people were coming back for more. This was the CAAT leaflet calling for an arms embargo against Israel, which was tremendously popular among the large Muslim population of Birmingham.

During these weeks I went to many meetings held by various organisations concerned about the war and our government’s failure to take action. There was always an opportunity for discussion at these events; what I had to say about CAAT was received with interest and approval and, again, large numbers of the Stop Arming Israel leaflet were taken.

Since then I’ve continued to maintain these contacts. I’ve enjoyed visiting Mosques, something I had never done before, finding them to be extremely friendly and welcoming places. I have also invited my new contacts to join me in celebrating CAAT’s recent successes, and pointed out how even a very small organisation can achieve its objectives when it plans and focuses its campaigning in the way CAAT does.
Write to other CAAT supporters in your area. CAAT can ensure that your message for supporters in your area is sent out. In your initial mailing, you might like to include a survey to find out how people are interested in getting involved.

Ring other CAAT supporters in your area. Pick a group of people who live near you, who responded to the survey or letter and give them a call! Even if people haven’t responded to the letter, you’ll be surprised by how many people will be willing to help out in some way.

Personal links are really important in making people feel confident to get involved. Ask your friends whether they would like to join a CAAT group.

Organise a first event. Once you know there are a few people interested, work with them to organise your first event. Information on organising a stall or public meeting can be found in the Raising Awareness section on page 6.

Or organise a group of people to come along to one of our national events, such as CAAT’s protest at the BAE AGM (usually in early May), or our National Gathering (usually held in November). The National Gathering is a great opportunity to get to know and swap ideas with fellow campaigners, as well as to meet CAAT’s staff.

Once you have your group together, use this guide and CAAT’s other materials to think about what action you would like to take!

As your group develops, make sure new members are offered support and encouragement. Take the time to celebrate success and campaigning achievements to keep group morale high!

Setting up a CAAT group

Yanna Whitehead, Local Contact for Chichester, outlines how she grew her group, which expanded from 2 to 40 people in 18 months

“...How to start a local CAAT group in a C(onservative) area. As How to guides go, hopefully this is more convincing than How to place yourself above the Law – BAE Systems and Al Yamamah deals! Our CAAT group in Chichester (CACAAT) was launched when Sue Pike and I, supported by Chichester Quakers, organised a Raising Awareness Day for CAATs Shut DESO campaign. Within two hours over one hundred people had participated in CAAT’s poll and signed the petition at Chichester Cross, a central meeting point. Feedback we received emphasised there was an active interest in forming a group.

Subsequent Raising Awareness Days proved effective in campaigning and the CACAAT mailing list grew steadily. Supporters were involved in CAAT’s London events, links with the Local Campaigns Coordinator were developed and I was asked to become a local contact.

The catalyst that cemented and grew our group was CAAT’s Control BAE tour. We formed a small Steering Committee and worked hard to organise and promote the only south-east England tour date. On a stormy night over forty supporters, including some from Southampton, Lisa and Worthing, were enthused by the key speakers from CAAT and The Corner House.

In the run up to the Judicial Review into BAE-Saudi arms deals, several CACAAT members found themselves spontaneously approached while out and about locally. Word of mouth really works!

We now have six Steering Committee members coordinating specific roles and links with local Amnesty International, United Nations Association, World Development Movement (Worthing, Portsmouth), Churches Together in Chichester, S.E.Hants Peace Council, Chichester University and Chichester College.

Vitality CACAAT has a strong, active record of shared support and effective campaigning. We believe that every journey starts with one small step. CACAAT forges ahead with enthusiasm and commitment.
Raising awareness

Many campaigners say that when they have the opportunity to explain what the arms trade is about, they often get a very good response. That’s why raising awareness is so important. There are lots of creative ways to raise awareness in your area. Here we concentrate on organising a public meeting, running a street stall, and using the local media.

Holding a public meeting

Whilst to many people the thought of organising a public meeting on the arms trade is a daunting task, in fact with careful planning and preparation, you could have a highly successful event and raise a lot of awareness about the impact of the arms trade.

The most important elements of a good public meeting are:

- A central venue
- A good speaker
- Lots and lots of publicity

We can also help with publicity for instance by letting CAAT supporters in the area know about the event. It will be worth letting other local groups such as Amnesty International, World Development Movement, CND, Stop the War, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth know about the event so they can help publicise the meeting. Also, don’t forget to let the local press know that the meeting will be taking place, and send them a photo after the event.

Another idea to provide a focus and develop discussion at a public meeting is to show a film. CAAT has a short film called Where is the love? Contact the CAAT office for more details (claire@caat.org.uk). Or you could even make a film yourselves, like Brighton anti-arms trade group Smash EDO did (www.smashedo.org.uk).

Street stalls

Street stalls are a really important way to reach out to ordinary members of the public about issues such as the arms trade. They are a simple way to raise

Organising a meeting

Mark Bitel, Local Contact for Edinburgh

Our local CAAT group in Edinburgh planned a follow up event to the CAAT Control BAE speaking tour to coincide with the ruling from the judicial review. This meant we had to plan well ahead and hope that the ruling would be out in time. Fortunately, the ruling was announced 9 days beforehand, so this gave us lots of opportunities to promote the event in the media. We sent press releases to the media to coincide with the announcement.

As part of our strategy to attract younger people, we decided to hold the event as a ‘Question Time’ style debate with panellists including a politician, an academic, a union representative, and someone from CAAT. We wanted to have a genuine debate, so we invited people onto the panel that held a range of views. We also decided that the event should have the flavour of a festival, since Edinburgh is one of the world’s great festival capitals. Using our networks we made contact with some high profile Scottish musicians and comedians. I was surprised at how easy it was to get artists to support us and to perform for free. We had a folk/protest musician (who recently released a CD that was featured by the Herald as the CD of the week), and we had 2 top stand-up comedians and a professional compere. During the interval, a bar also helped to raise money for CAAT. We also distributed the latest CAAT postcards on controlling BAE, so hopefully Gordon Brown will be getting lots more postcards!

We worked closely with Jubilee Scotland to organise the event and they helped us to secure a fabulous free venue and helped us to produce a professional flyer for the event. We distributed the leaflets widely in churches, student union bars, notice boards and windows in shops, and gave out flyers at other events where we thought people might be interested in our cause.

The event went really well and many people told us how much they had enjoyed it.
awareness, build public pressure and recruit people to CAAT or to your local group. It is worth putting some time and thought into planning your stall, but to get one running, all that is required are some materials such as leaflets, petitions and posters, a table and some willing helpers!

**Tips for running a street stall**

- Focus your stall around one key message. This will be more attractive and easy to understand.
- Think about how your stall will look. Keep materials focused on your key aims and think about whether there are any props or banners that will help get your message across.
- Find a good location and choose the right time.
- Order the materials you will need from CAAT – posters, leaflets, postcards, petitions, briefings, badges, etc. Get hold of a table and tablecloth, lots of pens and clipboards and some paperweights.
- You only have a few seconds to grab someone’s attention so try using simple ‘openers’ to get them to stop. For example, “Would you like to sign a petition to stop the arms trade?” You could also approach people with a clipboard to draw them to your stall.
- Always have a ‘sign up for more info sheet’. If someone is very interested, remember to get a contact phone number or email address they might want to help you run the stall next time!

We have more detailed advice on running a street stall in our handout **Top tips for running an effective stall**. This can be found at www.caat.org.uk/getinvolved/runningastall.php or you can call the office for a copy.

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**Organising a street stall**

Robin Yu describes London CAAT groups successful street stall, which used their novel idea of an ‘opinionnaire’

During the Control BAE month of action last year, we set up a stall near Old Street station for a day to raise awareness about the campaign. We chose the location because it was outside the BAE/HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd) joint venture company offices.

An element of the event that raised some laughs was an opinionnaire. Passers-by were given the following five statements and were asked to indicate for each whether they thought they were likely, possible, unlikely or impossible:

- Elvis Presley is still alive
- There is/was a Loch Ness monster
- BAE is innocent of all bribery charges
- The Apollo moon landings were faked
- Aliens have visited Earth

Of the respondents, more people thought it was impossible that BAE is innocent of all the charges of bribery being investigated in six different countries than thought it was impossible that aliens have visited Earth or that there is or was a Loch Ness monster.

Approximately 86 per cent of those who responded said that it was either unlikely or impossible that BAE was innocent. More people thought it was unlikely that BAE was innocent than thought it was unlikely that Elvis is still alive! It is clear that the British public has already judged BAE.
Using the local media

Local media work is an important way of raising the profile of our campaign and informing public opinion. Once you start looking for opportunities for coverage, you'll be surprised by how many you will find. Many local newspapers will report on a protest, especially if it is distinctive or involves a photo stunt. You might also ring in to a local radio phone-in, get an article in community newsletters or websites, or write to the letters pages.

When approaching local media, remember these top tips

- Pick one key message and up to three key points you want to make and stick to them.
- Look for hooks for your publicity, e.g. a story in the paper the previous week, an event, demonstration or stall you have organised, a debate in the letters’ pages or a personal story angle.
- Think about whether there are opportunities for photos or footage to be taken and invite a photographer if so!
- Record any responses you have from reporters so that you can begin to build up personal links with them and get more coverage. Be sure to get in touch with them again when you have another story.

Letter writing

Letters in newspapers can reach a wide audience, bring up issues not raised in an article, create an impression of widespread support and are often read by the people we are trying to influence. In short, they are a really effective tool for our campaigning.

There always seem to be stories about cuts to services in our local newspapers. Why not write a letter about the amount of public money used to subsidise the arms trade, suggesting it be better spent on local services? Or write making links between the international arms trade and any local stories in your area, for example levels of gun crime, local arms company operations etc.

Keep your letter short and on one subject so that your key message isn’t edited out. Include your contact details in case the paper wants to verify who you are. Mention the article or issue you are relating your letter to in the first sentence. Write as often as you can; if you use a different hook for each letter then they all have a good chance of being printed!

Photo stunts

If you can’t think of a hook to get coverage for your campaign, then make one! Photo stunts work for visual media, as the image provides a hook for your campaign to be covered. If you are thinking of planning a press stunt:

- Brainstorm lots of ideas for how you could visually communicate your message: you might want to think about location, props, costumes or banners you could use. Pick one that you think clearly communicates your message, is feasible given your time and resources, and is quirky enough to get press coverage.
- Choose the right time for the event. If your local paper goes to print on Tuesday morning, don’t hold a photo stunt on Tuesday afternoon.
- Set aside time to make any props you need, develop a press release for your local media and ring around to follow it up.
Bring your own camera too, so that you can email the photo to your local media afterwards and send it to CAAT for the website, or possibly CAATnews.

More media advice

CAAT’s local media guide is an invaluable resource with tips on researching your local media, letter writing, writing a press release, TV and radio interviews and phone-ins and more. See it at www.caat.org.uk/getinvolved/mediaguide.php or order a copy from the office. You can also contact CAAT’s media co-ordinator at press@caat.org.uk or on 020 7281 0297 for advice.

Become a CAAT speaker

Speaking to groups of people to put CAAT’s campaigns and position across is essential to raising awareness and encouraging people to campaign. Even if you have no experience of public speaking, CAAT can support you to become a speaker so you can help carry out this important work.

CAAT speakers receive training and up-to-date advice on our campaigns. The role can involve:

- Pro-actively contacting groups such as the Fabian Society, trade unions, schools, local campaign groups and faith institutions for opportunities to speak.
- Helping CAAT respond to requests for speakers in your area.

If you receive a request to speak about CAAT, our guide on Top Tips for Public Speaking offers really useful advice. You can order a copy from the office or go to www.caat.org.uk/getinvolved/PublicSpeakingTips.php.

If you are interested in becoming a CAAT speaker, contact the Local Campaigns Co-ordinator on annemarie@caat.org.uk or at the office.

Other ideas

- Sign up to receive extra copies of CAATnews and other materials to distribute to other groups you are involved in.
- Ask if you can put up a display or leave leaflets about the arms trade in your local library, church, alternative shops or other public space.
- Invite a CAAT speaker to any group or organisation that you are involved in such as a union branch, a campaign group, Chamber of Commerce, Women’s Institute, etc.
- Write an article or a letter for the newsletter of any organisations you are involved in.
- Wear a CAAT badge – it helps to start conversations about the arms trade.
- Organise a service of peace at your local Church, Mosque, Synagogue or Temple. Or go one further and organise a multi-faith event. (CAAT has a Christian Network: contact Alun Morinan on christian@caat.org.uk, or phone the office.)
- Don’t forget to invite the media to any event you organise!

Using the letters pages

Ian Davison used information from CAAT to make a point humorously in his regional paper, The Glasgow Herald

"Please allow me on behalf of arms exporters to thank your readers for their annual £29 donation through taxation.

We appreciate warmly the £900 million that the government decided not to spend on new hospitals or schools or even conflict resolution and development aid. Above all I thank you for insuring us against losses when our customers fail to pay, a very welcome provision in our rather volatile trade.

Regrettably our products sometimes fall into the hands of people who actually use them; but last year we only sold arms to half of the countries that our government identified as having major human rights concerns, and only 90% of conflict casualties are civilians, and only 40% of these are children. I urge your readers to encourage further government spending in the weapons field.

"
Lobbying government

Without a doubt, if we want our campaign to succeed we are going to have to persuade the government to end the enormous amount of political and financial support it gives to the arms trade. The most effective way to influence government is to lobby our MPs to speak out on our behalf.

Pressure from within the constituency is frequently a key factor in influencing an MP’s views. Some people will have MPs with front-bench responsibilities for arms exports, foreign affairs or trade, or who sit on one of the relevant Select Committees. If you are one of these people, lobbying your MP could have a very important impact.

Lobbying other MPs is equally important. An MP who is sympathetic to ending arms export subsidies may be encouraged to take action in the House and in her or his party. An MP who is strongly supportive of the arms industry may reconsider the issue if a well-reasoned case is calmly presented by constituents. This is especially true if the MP encounters colleagues who have also been lobbied.

Finding out more about your MP

It is worth acquiring a bit of background information about your MP before contacting them.

To find out who your MP or other representative is, visit the following websites and do a quick search:

- www.writetothem.com
- UK parliament www.parliament.uk/people/index.cfm
- Scottish parliament www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp/membersPages
- Northern Ireland www.niassembly.gov.uk/members/members07.htm
- Wales www.assemblywales.org/memhome.htm

On some issues it is also worth contacting your MEP. See www.europarl.org.uk/uk_meps/MembersMain.htm

The following websites have useful background information on your representative:

- www.politics.guardian.co.uk
- www.epolitix.com
- www.theyworkforyou.com

You can email your MP quickly and easily via the latter website, although it is worth noting that some MPs seem to respond less frequently to emails than to letters that arrive in an envelope! All MPs can be written to at House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA. The usual, but not universal, formula for MPs’ email addresses is bloggsj@parliament.uk.

Writing letters

Individual letters can be very powerful. It is estimated that every letter received by a politician represents about 80 people who care but haven’t got around to writing. That is why politicians take notice of letters – each one represents at least 80 votes!

The best way to have influence through letter writing is to write to your own MP asking her or him to raise the issue with the relevant Minister. That way your MP becomes aware of the issues as well as the Minister. By convention, a letter forwarded by an MP to a Minister must receive a Ministerial reply.

It is easier, and tends to be more effective, to write about something specific rather than tackle the arms trade as a whole. CAATnews and our website are worth checking regularly for the latest lobbying and letter-writing ideas.
Tips for writing to your MP

- Be polite and concise – try to keep to one side of the paper.
- Write in your own words. Don’t just copy the text from somewhere else – make it personal.
- Tackle just one subject in a letter.
- Ask for a reply and send a copy to the CAAT office.

Meeting your MP

A step further than writing to your MP is to go yourself or with a small group to visit him or her to talk about the arms trade. The fact that you have made the effort to meet in person speaks volumes. It also means that you have a personal contact with your MP on which to build. These tips should help you feel confident and prepared to get the most out of the meeting.

Tips for visiting your MP

- Make a proper appointment, probably at your MP’s surgery.
- A group of about 2–4 people is probably a good size – you will be able to have a good discussion without being too intimidating.
- Feel confident about your subject – contact CAAT before you go for the latest campaign information and information on whether your MP has shown an interest in arms trade issues before.
- Decide on 3 key points you want to communicate and focus on these.
- Have 1 or 2 clear requests for action you would like your MP to take.

Follow up the meeting with a letter to confirm what was discussed and remind your MP of what action they have agreed to take. Let the CAAT office know how the meeting went!

Shut DESO Action Day and lobby of MPs

After CAAT’s last Shut DESO Action day, when over 250 people came from all over the UK, and from many different groups, to encircle DESO’s headquarters in central London, creating a human chain right around the building and designating it a global danger zone, a street poll was conducted, with over 700 members of the public polled. The results of the poll illustrated that the majority of the public did not think that public money should be spent on helping arms companies push their wares.

This action was followed in the afternoon by a local lobby of MPs, with nearly 50 people going to Westminster to lobby their MPs about DESO. The feedback we received afterwards showed how important this lobby was – unlike a lot of other issues, many MPs were ignorant of what DESO did.

Below are some examples of the false or inaccurate assumptions held by MPs who, prior to being lobbied by CAAT supporters, had no idea that DESO existed solely to maximise arms exports on behalf of companies:

- One MP said an MoD minister had told him, DESO only supports existing contracts and does not do sales. He said he was therefore expecting DESOs headcount to diminish over time.
- Another said he did not agree that DESO should be shut down. He argued that DESO helped the government to monitor and regulate where UK arms are sold.
- A third said he thought DESOs job was to issue export licenses. He seemed unaware of its marketing role, and didn’t know how many staff it employed or its annual budget.

These MPs were shocked to discover the truth, becoming sympathetic to the campaign as a result. The lobby was one of many successful actions taken by CAAT supporters over the years, which succeeded in getting DESO shut down at the end of 2007.
Challenging the arms companies

Arms companies always deny any responsibility for arms exports, arguing that the government alone is responsible. But whilst the government must take its share of the blame, so too must the companies themselves – after all, it is they who produce the armaments and they who bank the profits. Here we look at ways to challenge arms companies in your area.

Research

It is almost certain that within a short distance from where you live there is a company involved in some way with the arms trade. If you are interested to find out about companies in your area, contact us at the CAAT office.

However, we are not able to track every company and need local people to help us undertake research. This can include everything from watching out for information about the company in your local press to undertaking some basic research about the company in your local library. It’s amazing how much information libraries have on local companies. You could also approach the company directly for information. A good guide to company research has been produced by Corporate Watch on their website, www.corporatewatch.org.uk.

If you are interested in helping CAAT with its company research, please contact Ian Prichard on 0207 281 0297 or email ian@caat.org.uk.

Protest!

CAAT believes that it is important to directly challenge UK companies involved in the arms trade. One way to do this is through organising a protest at a site of one of the companies. This has the effect of letting the company know that many people do not think that the arms business is an ordinary, acceptable business. In addition, a protest can quite often generate a lot of publicity, which will raise awareness about the company and the arms trade in general.

CAAT is a nonviolent organisation and any protest organised under the name of CAAT needs to be nonviolent (see page 14).

The CAAT office can help you organise a protest, but some tips for organising a successful one include:
Nonviolent direct action

CAAT believes that if nonviolent direct action (NVDA) or civil disobedience is properly organised and if people are properly prepared, it can be a good way to take the campaign forward. Some years ago, whilst CAAT was campaigning to end the sale of Hawk aircraft and other military equipment to Indonesia, many people got together in small groups and undertook civil disobedience against the main company involved. For example, people stood on the runway at BAE’s test facility in Warton to prevent the company test-flying the aircraft. People also disrupted the company’s AGM.

If you are considering taking nonviolent direct action:
- Get in touch with CAAT’s Local Campaigns Coordinator for advice.
- Think about getting some training (see Useful Information on page 17).
- Spend time with the people you will do the action with to build up trust and plan for the action.
- Reflect on what roles you will need to allocate (e.g. legal observer, police liaison, media liaison, food and drink provision) and how you will make decisions during the action.
- Find out your legal rights. www.activistslegalproject.org.uk is a good place to start.

Other ideas

- Why not try to begin a correspondence with the chief executive of your local arms company?
- Think of a way to subvert arms company PR campaigns. For example, use their advertisements in newspapers as an opportunity to write in to raise awareness of the true impact of arms company activities.
- Some of the larger arms companies sponsor sports and community events. Try to challenge these attempts to gain good PR for the arms trade. For example, Chichester Area CAAT challenged the sponsorship of a local theatre production of ‘Funny Girl’ by US arms company Lockheed Martin.

In Birmingham a group of students from the People and Planet society entered the lecture theatre where a BAE recruitment presentation was being held and managed to briefly capture the lectern to address the audience on BAE’s corruption and human rights abuses around the world. The students then stayed to hear BAE’s own presentation and ask questions at the end. The protest followed a demonstration at a Careers Fair where students dressed as weapons inspectors cordoned off BAE’s stall to gather evidence against the company. They also gave out leaflets and held a mass die-in. These protests are part of a wider campaign against the presence of arms companies on campus, and their widespread involvement in university research.

Lancaster University students also protested against BAE Systems presence at their careers fair. They stood in front of BAE’s stall with a banner reading ‘Get a career in killing with BAE Systems’, and handed out leaflets and talked to students around the stall. Later they moved to one of the busiest parts of campus to hold a die-in around a banner reading ‘BAE Systems: a job to die for’. Many people stopped to ask about BAE and the protest. Two students later re-entered the careers fair and dropped a banner from a balcony. These actions mark the beginning of a campaign against the university’s investment in BAE. Lancaster University holds shares in BAE, and the Management School offers students the BAE Systems Certificate in Management, a course funded by, and run in conjunction with, the company.

At the end of term the Disarm UCL campaign put on a fake graduation ceremony to protest against UCL’s investment in arms companies. One student dressed as a military general handed out fake diplomas and toy guns to other students graduating in camouflage uniforms. The action definitely turned a few heads including that of the UCL Provost who happened to pass by. It was a fun action and got a lot of media coverage including the Times Higher, the Independent, the Evening Standard, the Guardian’s Comment is Free website and the New Statesman website.

See www.caat.org.uk/campaigns/unis0708
CAAT protest guidelines

CAAT is a nonviolent organisation. CAAT’s words and actions must be nonviolent and be seen by those external to CAAT as being nonviolent and this should be borne in mind at all times. Involvement in CAAT’s activities, demonstrations and protests is conditional on accepting the need to remain nonviolent throughout. It is also imperative that CAAT’s communications, publications and online presence are seen as nonviolent. It is highly recommended that participants in civil disobedience or NVDA (Nonviolent Direct Action) should take part in non-violence training before the action.

Occasionally, specific agreements or guidelines are made by CAAT for particular actions or protests. Taking part in these activities is therefore conditional on respecting all agreements and guidelines made for them. However, for all CAAT’s activities these general guidelines apply:

- We will be respectful of everyone, whether they are involved in the arms industry, police, passersby or other people involved in the protest, debate or activity.
- We will encourage sincere dialogue with all.
- We will not engage in or encourage others to engage in physical violence or verbal abuse towards any individual or undertake actions which could compromise the safety of others.
- In some situations, using heightened or confrontational language, for example in chants or slogans on placards, may appear to be threatening or aggressive, even if we do not find it so, and this may be discouraged.
- We will not carry anything that could be construed as a weapon.
- We will not bring, consume or participate under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs (except for medical purposes) on CAAT demonstrations or actions.
- During protests and other actions, people who perceive themselves to be the object of our protests, participants in the protests or even passers-by can become frustrated or simply lose their tempers. It is therefore imperative that we have a clear head, try to remain calm and do not mirror their behaviour.

If these guidelines are not adhered to, CAAT retains the right to ask people to leave the given event or remove the offending words.

Clean Investment Campaign

Mike Kavanaugh outlines Manchester CAAT’s ongoing campaign against Local Authority pension funds investment in the arms trade

Manchester CAAT launched a clean investment campaign in 2005. Greater Manchester Pension Fund (GMPF) is one of the UK’s biggest local authority pension funds, with over 200,000 members. In 2007 it was worth over £9.5 billion. Letter-writing to the fund, and protests at its open days for pensioners about its UK arms investments were initially regular events. Freedom of Information Act requests, however, revealed the fund also had arms investments in US, European and other overseas arms companies.

The 2005 campaign included producing leaflets on the issue, with separate petitions for fund members and council tax-payers to sign; this was well covered by the local media. Protests outside all the ten local authorities Town Halls were also held during 2005. We wrote to all Greater Manchester Councillors and correspondence was started with all ten council leaders. A website at www.endarmsprofits.org.uk explained the campaign and allowed individuals to send a letter of protest to Tameside Council’s leader. Trafford Council, Liberal Democrat and Labour Councillors, the Fund’s UNISON representatives and Greater Manchester’s UNISON branches gave their support as well as the Green Party and others. Further work with UNISON led to a resolution on local authority pension funds arms investments being passed at its 2007 national conference with another resolution expected on UNISON’s 2008 conference agenda.

Manchester CAAT’s actions led to considerable debate and increased awareness across Greater Manchester of the issue, and there have been reports in 2008 that the fund has reduced its arms investments. We believe that continued wide-ranging efforts, from letter-writing to protests etc, will ultimately lead to the end of arms investments being held by local authority pension funds.
Online campaigning

Campaigning on the web can be an incredibly quick and effective way to get your message out. But first think carefully about what your campaign needs and resources are; then you can decide which online tools are best for the job.

Get started with online campaigning

Create/Join a group on Facebook – www.facebook.com

This is only worth doing if you and most of your friends already have a profile on Facebook. If you are on Facebook and have not yet joined the CAAT Facebook group please do so and invite all your friends to join, too. If you want to campaign for CAAT locally set up your own Facebook group and invite all your supporters to it (examples of such groups on Facebook are London CAAT, Disarm UCL and others).

Set up a pledge on pledgebank – www.pledgebank.com

You could set up a pledge for CAAT on the pledgebank website. You could pledge to donate a certain sum to CAAT if ten or more people do the same, pledge to join the next CAAT event or demo if ten or more people do the same or any other ideas you can think of. If you have set up your pledge please make sure you promote it and that you hit your target.

Blog for CAAT

If you have something to say about the arms trade and you like to write why not blog for CAAT? If you have your own blog you could blog about CAAT issues once in a while. If you don’t have a blog you could join the CAAT bloggers on www.CAATBLOG.wordpress.com. For more info on how to blog for CAAT contact: press@caat.org.uk

If you have a very active local group you could set up your own blog on www.wordpress.com or www.blogger.com and update your supporters on your activities and events (example of a local blog: www.disarmucl.com).

Comment for CAAT

Whenever CAAT is in the news, or an article has been written on an arms trade issue and you have something to say on this search the web for articles with a comment function. You could put a comment supportive of CAAT on the article and if appropriate a link to the CAAT website. You might also want to keep an eye on YouTube for videos to comment on. If commenting please remain polite at all times and make sure you’ve got your facts right.

Publicise events and actions

If you want to spread the word about a particular action or promote an event you can post or send information to activist websites such as http://www.indynews.org.uk and http://www.schnews.org.uk. Don’t forget to add it to CAAT’s events pages by emailing annemarie@caat.org.uk.

More ideas

Setting up a website

If you decide you need your own website for a campaign, consider the type of information you will be presenting and the aims of the website. Who will be using it? For what purpose? Does it need a community feel? A good way to judge what best suits your needs is to explore other people’s sites.

Maintaining your online presence

It is important to keep updating and promoting your online presence. Keep contact details up-to-date, post any news and email your group any new developments. Widen your network by researching people online who you think would be interested in your campaign. Write contact emails to them outlining your goals, and establish a database of everyone who has become involved in your work. Then include them in your next email bulletin so you can keep growing your network.

Personalise your presence

Utilise the interests of local activists to personalise campaigning on the web. For example, one member of London CAAT used map site Platial to create the London Arms Trade Map (http://platial.com/map/London-Arms-Trade/24406), which has been seen over 3,000 times, won the 2007 Platial and Frappr award in the ‘Activism’ category and been copied onto other sites.

Have any more ideas on how to campaign for CAAT online? Email press@caat.org.uk
Raise money

As a campaigning organisation rather than a charity, we rely heavily on our supporters to help sustain our work. In fact, around 80% of our funding comes from supporter donations.

You can help us by organising a fundraising event in your area – not only will the money you raise enable us to keep the campaign alive, it’s another great way of introducing people to our work. Anything from a coffee morning to a sponsored sky dive will help bring in the money to support CAAT. In the past CAAT supporters have cooked dinner for friends in exchange for donations, organised a sale of unwanted Christmas presents and run marathons. Or you could simply organise a collection! Remember, whatever you organise, it should be fun!

If you are thinking of organising a fundraising event it’s worth talking to CAAT’s fundraiser, Sally Campbell, as she will have lots of good advice and tips. Contact her direct at sally@caat.org.uk or by phoning 020 7281 0297.

Organising a club night

Charlotte Manicom found a way to raise awareness, fundraise and put on a great night out all at the same time!

Nottingham is the home of “Demo”, a club night organised to raise money for various charities and political causes, which we hope gives an ethical facelift to Nottingham’s night life. Every month, by consensus decision-making, we decide to look at a particular issue, either because we wish to raise the profile of a local campaign, or because we have been approached for money. For the month of March we decided to focus on the Arms Trade.

Each month the club is decorated for the particular theme, and the venue, which begins the day as a few black rooms, is transformed with banners and decorations into a cave of rainbow colours and swirling messages. We hold painting sessions for banners, with messages like: “Beats not bombs”, “All the arms we need” and various facts intertwined with images. Meanwhile, other members of the demo crew create “Notes”. Notes are photocopied sheets of facts handed out to everyone at the door and are works of art in themselves. For the anti-arms trade night the Notes showed a decorated diagram of facts and ideas on the arms trade, with related events, internet links, possible actions and charity info hidden in the flowers and patterns.

Once in, Demo is a crazy night, with rooms of mellow acoustic acts to dub step DJs or live reggae bands, poetry reading in the cafe, freestyle drumming out in the fairy light tent... and all in good spirit for a brilliant cause. This format of an eclectic club night provides a platform both for local up and coming artists and current issues which many of those attending might not usually think about. It allows an outpouring of ideas and inspiration from young people motivated by these issues and, (hopefully), some of this is transferred to people who come!

Entry to Demo costs £5 and we raised around £500 for CAAT.
Useful information

Information and research

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) 020 7281 0297; www.caat.org.uk – we have reports, press archives and campaign information on our website. You can also contact the office to see if we have more research on a particular topic in our library.

British American Security Information Council (BASIC) 0207 324 4680; www.basicint.org – an independent research and advocacy organisation working towards a peaceful world.


Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR) 01303 851965; www.sgr.org.uk – promotes ethical science and technology; carries out research including on military issues.

Related campaigns

Conscience 0870 777 3223; www.conscienceonline.org.uk – peace tax campaign.

International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) 0207 065 0870; www.iansa.org – network of 800 groups working in 120 countries to stop the proliferation of small arms.

Landmine Action 0207 820 0222; www.landmineaction.org – co-ordinates UK campaigning against anti-personnel mines.

Training

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) 020 7281 0297; www.caat.org.uk – CAAT can offer speakers and workshops for our groups.

Seeds for Change 0845 458 4776; www.seedsforchange.org.uk – free or low-cost training for groups.


Alternatives to Violence 0207 324 4757 www.avpbritain.org.uk – workshops on resolving conflict without resorting to violence.

Left Use street theatre to make your point – this action at BAE System’s AGM questioned what they were ‘sweeping under the carpet’
Yes, I want to get involved!

PLEASE TICK BOX

☐ Please send me more details about being a CAAT Local Contact

☐ Please let me know if there is a Local Contact or CAAT Group in my area

☐ I can’t be a CAAT Local Contact at this time, but I can distribute CAAT materials in my local area. Please put me on the list to receive local campaigners mailings

Name ____________________________ Address ______________________________________ Postcode __________________

Telephone __________________________ Email ____________________________________

Remove form and post to: Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), 11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ, or email us at annemarie@caat.org.uk

Above Stigmatise the arms trade – Reed Elsevier sold the DSEi arms fair after CAAT’s campaign which included this die-in outside their offices.
Wanted: Local contacts

Local contacts are the life-blood of CAAT. They are key for raising awareness of the arms trade at a local level, whether on the high street, in their community, or through other related campaign groups. They are our link with MPs in their constituency and our way of challenging arms companies where they operate. They can also help bring local CAAT supporters together to take action as a group.

Could you be a CAAT Local Contact?

We always need people to be CAAT local contacts. Don't feel that you wouldn't be experienced enough to undertake the work. Most local contacts grow into the role after a short time. All that's needed is a bit of spare time and a commitment to end the arms trade.

If you are interested, tick the box on the reply form on page 18 and we will send you some more details. Alternatively you can email us (annemarie@caat.org.uk) or ring us at the office for a chat (020 7281 0297).

Remember, it may well be that someone else in your area is also thinking about doing something about the arms trade and we could put you in touch. Working together means we can have an even bigger impact and is more enjoyable.

Four Local Contacts describe what they do

Romey Chaffer, Durham

CAAT is one of the organisations supported by Peace Action Durham. At the monthly meetings I give a report on CAAT activities which is included in the minutes that are sent to all members, and I ask members to write letters, or take part in online petitions, when requests arise. We have stalls in Durham Market Place when we talk to as many shoppers as possible, and CAAT materials are available. Material is also made available on the stall at the annual Durham Miners' Gala, where many people have lively debates amongst the hot-dog stalls and Miners' Banners. We are providing material for a "Peace Workshop Day" organised by Durham University Students this summer.

Roger Knight, Bexleyheath

I lobbied my MP at the House of Commons. I had not done this before, although we had exchanged many letters.

My MP is Conservative, so I was well prepared for opinions very different to my own. I had a list of questions and points and was determined to work through them and not be side-tracked. My MP was very pleasant but most emphatic that the DESO office should not be closed and that arms should be sold anywhere they were needed. Following the meeting I wrote a letter of thanks. Later when the closure of DESO was announced I wrote to the Prime Minister thanking him and sent a copy to my MP.

Although I realise one visit was unlikely to change his mind, I do consider meeting my MP has helped to forge a cordial relationship. This may open the door to more constructive dialogue with him about the arms trade in future.

Monica Pearce, Bath

In Bath we hold CAAT actions as part of Bath Stop War Coalition. We have a weekly anti-war vigil on Saturday mornings outside Bath Abbey, and after hearing of the amazing success of the BAE/Saudi bribery judicial review, we made the vigil focus the BAE bribery inquiry. We already had lots of placards from the previous BAE vigil and gave out postcards to send to Gordon Brown to demand the re-opening of the inquiry. We always include CAAT campaigns and updates in our local CND/CAAT newsletter and also in our Bath Stop War email bulletin. Some of our members joined the ‘Shut DESO’ demo in London. We also had a public meeting on the BAE bribery scandal, addressed by a CAAT speaker.

Penny Walker, Coventry

We have a regular information stall on the third Saturday of every month from 10 til 12 noon. Annually we run a workshop each year in Peace Month and have a stall at the two day Leamington Peace Festival in June. We support the excellent actions at Warwick University and get down to CAAT national demonstrations in London. Street theatre has worked well in the past and we’re hoping to get that started again. We would welcome support with that!
Why campaign with CAAT?

‘CAAT is a frisky minx of an NGO who have done more good than harm for the world we live in and more harm than good to the arms dealers. I love them. These folk do serious business.’
Mark Thomas, comedian and activist

‘CAAT are David against the arms industries’ Goliath. BAE showed how seriously they view CAAT by repeatedly paying for spies to snoop on the campaigners. We should all take CAAT just as seriously, by showing our support for this excellent organisation.’
Solomon Hughes, journalist and author of War on Terror Inc

Left Engage the public – this group proved public distaste for the arms trade with an ‘opinionnaire’ on their stall