

Annual Report 2016

Overview

SumOfUs is a community of people committed to curbing the growing power of corporations. We want to buy from, work for, and invest in companies that respect the environment, treat their staff well, and respect democracy. And we're not afraid to stand up to them when they don't. Together, our 10 million members act as a global consumer watchdog.



Digital technology allows us to run and win campaigns in record time. We connect consumers, workers, and investors from around the world at the touch of a button.

Our Campaigns in 2016

SumOfUs campaigns combine public education, rapid-response online organizing and long-term strategic campaigning. Some of our recent and current campaigns are:

Stop TTIP and TPP

The overarching goal of our work was to use SumOfUs' strength in global mass mobilization to problematize and ultimately defeat the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

At the moment, negotiations for TTIP are on ice. And, with the US pulling out, the TPP has become meaningless. Although it was President Trump who delivered the final blow to the TPP, there is little doubt that robust public opposition to the deal in many countries played a significant part in either delaying the ratification of the TPP or making it politically unviable. Years of growing opposition across Europe has prepared TTIP for a similar development. And, in October 2016, negotiators failed to conclude the latest round of talks.

Whether through encouraging our members to send letters to the editor about the TPP, or placing ads on corporate lobbying on TTIP in relevant Brussel media outlets, SumOfUs members have continued to be at the forefront of forcing the deals into the light of public scrutiny. As a result, the TPP and TTIP became increasingly problematic to defend.

Protecting the Rainforest: Sustainable Palm Oil Production

We have been campaigning against the deforestation caused by palm oil plantations built on virgin rainforest since June 2013.

Throughout 2016, we've continued to work to stop palm oil deforestation. Our strategic value-add to this coalition has been:

1. **Rapid Response:** We engage our millions of supporters with timely action opportunities against corporations benefiting from deforestation within just hours of major breaking campaign opportunities.
2. **Viral Content Creation:** We produce content that travels through online social channels, to turn palm oil into an issue in every household and kitchen.
3. **Campaigning in Europe and Australia:** We use our significant and rapidly-growing supporter bases in Europe and Australia to increase the pressure on companies internationally, as well as sending out all our campaigns in French and German.



Climate: Fossil Fuels Exploitation

We have worked the US, Canada, and throughout the world to fight climate change, particularly through opposing fossil fuel expansion. We continue fight the construction, expansion, and operation of dangerous pipelines that would increase CO2 levels worldwide. Another tenet of our climate work is that we strive to always center the voices and the rights of Indigenous people and other people on the frontlines the struggle. In particular, we worked on:

1. **Dakota Access Pipeline:** We have stood with the Standing Rock Sioux Nation to stop the DAPL. The most strategic way we could be involved in fighting the Dakota Pipeline is to stop its financing, so that was where we focused our efforts. We created the first and biggest petition calling on the banks to stop funding the pipeline, which in turn caused other Climate and First Nations solidarity groups to join the fight against the banks. Our members have so far successfully pressured two banks, Bank DNB (Norway) and Bayern LB (Germany), to pull their investment from DAPL.
2. **Shareholder pressure on tar sands companies and oil companies:** Together with First Nations representatives, we presented resolutions and questions at the AGMs of tar sands companies Kinder Morgan and Suncor. We also used shareholder activism to put pressure on oil companies Exxon, and Chevron to stop investing in further fossil fuels expansion. We worked closely with partners to advance the narrative that further investment in fossil fuels exploitation is financially irresponsible.

We presented resolutions at these companies' AGMs, as well as getting our members involved through using an online tool to "Vote Your Pension." Using this tool, individuals can hold to account the large funds that invest their pensions, and ask them to speak up on issues. Pension funds almost always vote with the company, so activism towards them is a fairly new type of pressure with a lot of room to grow. After working the tool developed by a partner organization for the past two years, this year we developed our own pension activism tool to better meet the needs of our members.

Other Campaigns

We ran many other campaigns throughout 2016 to reduce corporate power and strengthen human rights, environmental sustainability, and democracy. A few of our other wins and "wedge" victories in 2016 were:

- **Glyphosate:** We've been part of a huge coalition to block the renewal of the glyphosate licence (active ingredient of Monsanto's Roundup, weed killer the most sold in the world representing 40% of Monsanto's revenues). On every of one the EU votes (four votes in a row), we succeeded in pushing big EU governments like France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands not back the renewal of the glyphosate licence.
- We had a huge petition asking **David Cameron** to fully disclose his tax affairs and he did!
- After we pressured mining company **Newmont** to stop development of the Conga Mine, Newmont said (in one of its shareholder reports) that it will delay the development of the Conga Mine indefinitely.
- We supported a partner-led campaign asking **Coke** to stop sponsoring the Republican National Convention because of (then candidate) Trump's divisive hate speech. Coke didn't pull out its initial \$75,000 in funding, but it is canceled its previously promised additional \$700,000.
- We got 23% of the shareholder vote on our proxy asking **Amazon** to audit its practices for human rights violations.
- Berta Caceres, a prominent indigenous rights activist from Honduras, was killed in her home for her work trying to stop the Agua Zarca mega-dam in her community in Honduras. We quickly sent out a petition targeting **FMO Development Bank** for their



investment in the dam. A week later they suspended all investments, a month later they stopped funding in Agua Zarca.

Annual Expenditure

Our total expenditure in 2016 was \$4,933,627 USD.

SumOfUs is a US 501(c)(4) organization. We do substantial 501(c)(3)-appropriate work educating consumers, which we often fund through grants to our educational fund at the Tides Foundation.

Looking forward to 2017

We will continue campaigning to stop exploitative trade deals, prevent deforestation, reduce climate change, and other important work. In addition to continuing our corporate accountability campaigning, we are looking to focus our energy in a few other important directions, internal to our organization. Specifically we are focusing on:

- **Integrated campaigns:** We are honing our “business model” by putting more energy towards our campaigns which make change in the world and also raise funds from our members, engage our members to return to take action, and are “growthy” (members share the campaigns with their circles).
- **Anti-oppressive leadership:** We have committed to anti-oppression work with a consultant and created a anti-oppression leadership team to address cultural, racial, and other dynamics at SumOfUs, as well as to look at our campaigns through an anti-oppression lens.
- **Vision:** We have a new Executive Director, Hannah Lownsborough, who started work with us in November 2016. She will bring her own understanding of the work and help us hone our vision so we can be ever more effective.
- **Experiments:** We have recently restructured some of our campaign work so that our Campaign Managers and Directors will have more ongoing oversight and development of expertise in their regional areas and thematic specialties.

