



**Developing Effective Campaigns for Financial Sector Advocacy  
Highlighting Environmental Risks & Challenges**  
Fair Finance Asia Webinar, 2 July 2020

**1. Background**

As the world around us is changing rapidly and there is an unprecedented need to engage with financial sector actors on the issue of climate change, the importance of long term research, campaigning and multi-stakeholder engagement has become critical. For CSOs, it is even more pertinent to ensure that indigenous and vulnerable communities' voices are at the forefront on issues of environment, and communities are taken into account on decisions that affect them; and CSO networks need to ensure that international financial sector and private sector actors respect the rights of vulnerable communities. Such areas of intervention is multi-faceted and requires a multitude of resources.

**Objectives**

This webinar, therefore, was organized to facilitate a better understanding among Fair Finance Asia coalitions networks of effective campaign strategies focusing on environmental risks and challenges through:

- Developing case studies and data driven evidence focused on climate change;
- Using Quick Intervention Cases (QICs) to build on current public debates or controversial discussions to make a link between environmental issues and lending or investments done by financial institutions;
- Highlighting the intersection between the environment and the indigenous communities, and how financial sector actors including hedge funds and international financial institutions can be held accountable for their irresponsible financial activities.

**2. Presentations by speakers**

**Richard Buch from Facing Finance**

Richard's presentation focused on how to develop data-driven research and case studies with a focus on the environment. The main point from his presentation is for CSOs to use case studies as tools to expose critical issues, and push for positive changes in the finance and investment policies of FIs with a focus on climate change and other ecological aspects. The major recommendations for developing effective case studies as highlighted by Richard are:

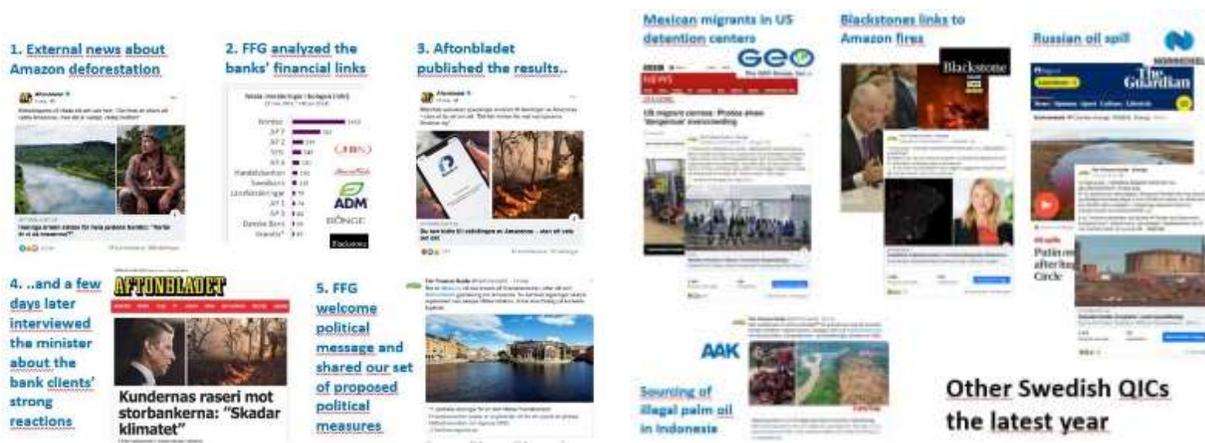
- Make the issues relevant and easily understandable for the audiences.
- Build the link between social and ecological issues in specific sectors, e.g., fossil fuel extraction.
- Start with few meaningful case studies on the same topic for follow up.
- Involve environmental CSOs that can provide expertise in technical content development.
- Have good pictures!



**Jakob König from Fair Finance Sweden**

Jakob's presentation focused on quick intervention cases (QICs), why such QICs were necessary, and how CSOs can use these QICs more effectively. The main points from his presentation were:

1. Highlighting that QICs were quick studies linking banks to a current controversy or hot topic. He stated the reasons why QICs were important: to hold banks to account, contrast banks' policy commitments with their practices, show pattern of weak sustainability considerations, and for CSOs to stay relevant and updated.
2. Jakob provided an overview of the process on how to effectively implement QICs. In essence, availability of sound data is critical to deliver impactful QICs, therefore, making it important for CSOs to conduct more thorough case studies through which they can make a deeper analysis of systemic issues.
3. Jakob also shared practical experiences in implementing QICs, and mobilizing media contacts to ensure these QICs are being taken up by journalists who are interested in making financial links to controversial issues.





### **Anirudha Nagar, Accountability Counsel**

Anirudha's presentation focussed on leveraging the intersection between environment, indigenous community, and social justice. Main points from his presentation were:

1. Highlighting the work of Accountability Counsel (AC) as an organization working to amplify the voices of communities around the world to protect their human rights and environment, Anirudha highlighted how locally led strategies needs to be prioritized.
2. Exemplifying the Ridge to Reef project of Myanmar which is being funded by the Global Environment Facility together with the UNDP, Anirudha talked about how to engage with different stakeholders and the ways to access remedy. He talked about some of the potential challenges while engaging with communities, such as potential for failed negotiations, resources required, loss of momentum and retaliations.
3. The potential benefits of a community-led paradigm as highlighted are that it helps bring greater international scrutiny/exposure to abuses, amplify community voices to funders, build media attention, lead to suspension of project, potential financial compensation for vulnerable communities, and changing procedures and approaches at institutions.

### **3. Important highlights & actions**

- While developing the engagement plan, it is critical that CSOs such as the Fair Finance Asia network advocate for the integration of the 'E' criteria in the funding decisions of financial institutions; and this E criterion should take into account a community-led/ driven approach.
- When engaging with different financial sector actors, it is important that CSOs focus not only on highlighting the problem, but also providing potential solutions.
- While implementing campaign strategies such as QICs, the relevant national and regional contexts should be kept in mind. What works in Europe would not necessarily work in the Asian context, but the opportunities of cross-cultural and multi-perspective learning are important for building capacity. The bottom line really is that CSOs should be fully aware of who their target audiences are and how to effectively present the issues in the way they would be able to relate to.
- It should be kept in mind that doing QICs on pertinent topics will have many added benefits - not the least being connected to the present narrative and media attention. However, it should be important to note that doing only QICs will not work, systemic problems have to be highlighted and therein case studies are critical.
- What's the ultimate goal? For FFA/FFI, it's improved policies and practices by financial institutions. By highlighting issues through our case studies, QICs, and community-led campaigns, we are putting pressure on these FIs to adhere to ESG standards, and use their financial leverage to then properly engage with the companies they finance to conduct their businesses responsibly.

### **4. Participant Profile**

There were a total of 45 participants that attended the "Developing Effective Campaigns" webinar. Of these, 21 were women (47%), 16 were men (36%), and the remainder did not specify their gender (18%). The majority of participants were CSOs (67%), predominantly from the Fair Finance network (whether Fair Finance International or Fair Finance Asia). There remaining participants (33%) were predominantly from Oxfam-related programs (such as the TROSA and Mekong Water Governance Program), and a few research organizations that are linked to Fair Finance Asia, such as SOMO.



## 5. Feedback from Participants

Survey responses were collected from the 2/07/2020 and the 7/07/2020. A total of eight participants (18% of the total attendees) responded to the survey. There was no negative feedback for the webinar, with the vast majority of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing that the topic was relevant to their organization's line of work (100%), the learning objectives of the training were met (87.5%) the content was relevant to their country's context (75%), and that they would be able to apply the lessons learned in the webinar to improve finance sector advocacy work to do with environmental issues (75%).

Respondents were also quite satisfied with the presentations, with the vast majority strongly agreeing or agreeing that the webinar was at an appropriate level for understanding key concepts (87.5%), the speakers explained content well and were able to answer questions clearly and concisely (87.5%), and that the presentation was delivered at a good pace for optimal learning (75%). Overall, 87.5% of respondents found the seminar to be a high-quality capacity-building session.

In terms of qualitative comments, respondents most common feedback was that added time for questions would have been beneficial, as well as more time for the presentations themselves; a few respondents felt that there needed to be a little more detail and that the presentations were a little rushed. One respondent suggested that a follow-up webinar on the practical ways to connect community needs to Fair Finance's work would be beneficial.