I very much endorse what Andrew Sims began by talking about, in terms of thinking about the role of evidence within a wider setting. I think evidence matters a lot because I think that the starting point is that we are trying to find out what is right and wrong and what truth is. I know truth sounds a strange thing because there are different truths, but there are things that work and there are things that fail and it is important that we constantly try to work out what we want to do.

So from an Oxfam perspective, one of the reasons why we do think that evidence matters is that even in relation to campaigning, when we choose our campaigns we try to pull together what people are saying about how the world is changing, to look at what is coming from our programme staff and the people that we work with and to ask what the big issues are, based on that kind of thinking and evidence. That is the starting point for campaigning: to know what the right issues are to campaign about, based on knowing what issues are important, in this case to poor people around the world. You could choose to campaign on any issue if it works in advertising or because it is an easy issue to campaign on, but it is important to choose issues which will really make a difference to the lives of billions of people around the world if you change them.

The other reason why evidence is important, and this is particularly in terms of strategy for campaigning, is that evidence is ammunition in the war, in the campaign: to prove the point in an intellectual sense and to win the argument in the more intellectual and policy-driven debate, but also to find the killer facts and the human interest stories to win the popular debate in that war. I am not sure which is more important but both play out equally when you want to achieve change.

The real question behind all of this is how change happens. I do not think there is a single answer to that and the question of how much evidence matters will be partly determined by how the change happens in different situations. For example, I have just been in Columbia for two weeks working with some of our programme staff right out in the rural mountain areas where you have the ELN, the FARC and the paramilitaries and I do not think in that situation that evidence matters at all. Nobody sits down and discusses the root causes of conflict in Columbia. When you are thinking about strategies for change, it comes back to politics and conflict and war and you have to think of very different strategies to make change happen in that situation, which is much more to do with how you remove some of the causes which are fuelling the conflict and how you empower people to take back the space that has been denied them in terms of politics and their own lives.

So the first point I want to make is that I do think evidence matters in actually understanding what is happening and in the ammunition in the war, but it is only one part of a much bigger strategy to achieve change. The really important question that we should be asking ourselves every time we develop a campaign, or in anything that we do, is how does change happen and what would it take to achieve that change. That is a hard question to answer because the world is changing very fast politically and where governments were stronger, now we have corporations who are stronger; where in the past we had more than one superpower, now we have only one, but we also have the public, the media and all these different factors that contribute to change happening.

The second thing I wanted to say is that within that context, evidence matters at different times. Today we have a meeting with Patricia Hewitt MP to talk about the run up to Cancun and trade. In Paris there is a meeting with Jacques Chirac about the G8 which is a week and a bit away and there is a meeting with Tony Blair to talk about the same thing. In Cancun we are likely to decide very little that will benefit poor countries, it is extraordinarily depressing at the moment if you look at these meetings and what they are actually going to deliver, given the promises that have been made in the last few years about a development round and given what we had at the G8 in Canada last year about a new agenda for Africa. We are actually, in all probability, going to get even less. It is not in those situations a question of evidence, it is a matter of pure political will. It is equally about the fact that Iraq has sucked every bit of political energy from every other possibility of progress on other issues. So you have at the G8 a proposal by President Chirac for a moratorium on export subsidies - a modest proposal, probably a proposal to divert attention away from them undermining the CAP reform, but it is still a proposal. The reason that it will not be agreed in Evian is that President Bush will not agree it because President Chirac is proposing it, because of Iraq. It is as simple as that. And the White House say that that is not the case but the British Government will tell you that it is.
So within my opening point that evidence does matter but within the context. I wanted to make this second point, that evidence at the right moment matters but at other moments it is really about sheer political pressure. The only thing that will change the G8 and Cancun will be if hundreds of thousands of people take to the streets. Probably if these hundreds of thousands of people who took to the streets used violence and caused a riot, it would have more impact than Oxfam or Net organising peaceful demonstrations. Sadly I think that is the only thing that will get into the media and I am not endorsing that kind of violence, but we are in that stage of how political change can happen.

I just want to say something about how campaigns can work effectively to achieve change, and then how you think about evidence and research within them. I think there are some things that we have collectively learnt about campaigning in the last ten years. It is important to understand these and then to think about what you do in research. There are some things that we have learnt about campaign planning which you have to think about in research as well. We have learnt some things about why campaigns succeed or fail and I will mention these briefly.

Firstly (and we have learnt this from the environment movement), it is really important to have a campaign which is a kind of ‘wedge’, which has at its heart a very strong focus but which illustrates a wider point. So all Greenpeace campaigns are about things like whales and oil rigs. They are actually about the environment, but they focus on an example of injustice which illustrates a wider point. That is the only way to break into the popular media. Campaigns like that have problems, solutions and villains - and they need villains. I know that is simplistic but if you are going to get into The Sun and the popular media, you need to break issues down into human interest stories and have campaigns that are specific whilst illustrating wider points.

If you look at our campaigning on trade at the moment, there are campaigns about the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), for example World Development Movement (WDM), which is about health in education. There are campaigns about access to medicines and patents. There are campaigns about coffee and other issues. But they are all campaigns, in effect, about how globalisation does not work for poor people and how rules are rigged. If you had a campaign simply about how rules are rigged and how globalisation does not work for poor people, you would talk to readers of The Guardian but that is not going to achieve the kind of change that we need. So we need these specific campaigns but we have to remember that they are wedges and the bigger change is what we are after.

Secondly, we have learnt that campaigns only succeed if they are broad coalitions. Not the kind of Stalinist ‘uncoalitions’ with a central secretariat that tells everyone what to do, but loose coalitions with common objectives, agenda settings and timelines. So the Jubilee campaign, though it probably did have some elements of Stalinism at the heart of it, in general was a loose coalition. The campaigns at the moment about cutting the cost of medicine, which include groups like Pac in South Africa, Third World Network and groups like the Nada group in America, are very loose coalitions within a joint strategy, where the objectives are determined and the odd joint action is agreed but it is a case of ‘a thousand flowers blooming’. The real way to achieve change is not through each organisation doing its own thing. They have to run their own campaigns, but they are in wider coalitions of change. I think we have got better at understanding how some of those alliances work, north and south (the south being particularly crucial in that).

The third element that I want to mention is that we have tactics that we have always split up and I think we have to do them together. I spent five years in Washington doing high-level lobbying and that has been a kind of discipline. I remember in the IMF days how one would pitch up and literally be laughed at as you sat there and tried to explain some of the things that Andrew Sims was talking about earlier. It was only really when Jubilee kicked in and you got the mass mobilisation that they created the space for the change to happen. So high-level lobbying; popular campaigning; media; doing it in alliances north and south; doing research to underpin that strategy, those are the things you need to bring about change.

Then there are practical choices about when you do it. You need sometimes to shake the tree with mass, direct and confrontational campaigning, but you also need to know the right moment to do the deal. The question then is who has the right to make that deal. We are in that situation at the moment with, for example, the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement and the WTO. A deal has to be done at some point, but everyone is frightened that the deal will be less than people want. NGOs have created with some southern governments a space for the deal, but who is going to decide what the compromise is going to be? It is going to be a hard choice because southern NGOs fear that large organisations like Oxfam will sell them down the river by saying that they will do the deal; we feel that southern governments are going to do the deal prematurely, and as we get closer to Cancun and there is no deal on intellectual property and the TRIPS agreement, it is going to be very embarrassing for northern governments. You have to hold out, because this was promised two years ago, but if you leave it too long you might lose the momentum.
Sometimes we are in danger in the wider civil society / NGO movement of not knowing when to do each of those strategies. We can get into campaigning for campaigning's sake and never do the deal, but we have to win sometimes, move on and fight the next battle, because these are all wedges in that bigger battle. If we give the impression that we are only interested in the next media headline or we are only interested in campaigning for campaigning's sake then we lose credibility with the people whom we are trying to influence, because they think we are always going to be moving the goal posts and that they will never do anything that will satisfy us. We have to understand those dynamics.

The final point on campaign methodology is what Adrian [Lovett?] who used to work with me in Jubilee 2000 calls 'the Birmingham moment'. I think that it is about understanding the moment when the terms of the debate change - not when you get the policy victory, but when you have won the argument with decision-makers and opinion formers and also won the public argument. That is the moment when you are most powerful in achieving change. The question then is how you capture the benefit of that moment to achieve change. In Birmingham at the G8 all those years ago basically Jubilee changed the terms of the debate on debt and from there on in, it has been about capturing the benefits. We have not captured the benefits as much as we wanted, but that moment was extraordinarily powerful in that suddenly no-one was talking about not doing debt relief and even the IMF had stopped laughing. The debate had become about how much and how far and how to do it. Understanding that is very important in campaigning and achieving change.

Those are some of the lessons that we have learnt from recent campaigns and it is a matter of applying those methodologies and strategies to how we develop and implement campaigns. One further point: the important way to build a coalition is not unilaterally to develop a campaign and then go and negotiate with partners and allies in the south to work with you on the implementation of this. The way that I think research and analysis comes in at the beginning is that by doing it together, you are determining the policy and determining the campaign and that creates a solid foundation for a real coalition to achieve change. We are trying to do that at the moment on some of our campaigns and it takes a lot of time.

One of the campaigns which we are developing as part of our work on trade is about women's labour, which we are developing for 2004. We are working with twelve southern organisations who are running national campaigns. We have been negotiating since January 2002 on everything from joint research to the objectives of the campaign to how it will be launched and which of the campaigns will be highlighted at the global level and the campaign will not be launched until 2004. The downside is that that has taken two years of investment and a lot of transactional costs. The upside is that this is genuinely joint campaign owned by these allies who feel that they have not just shaped the strategy, they have shaped the content, the objectives, the research and they have done or commissioned some of the research themselves, helped to write the report and have ownership of it from beginning to end.

Where the evidence and the research comes in is as an integral part of the campaign and it is not a thing you do before doing the campaign. Doing the research together is part of forming the trust and relationships as well as about coming up with the evidence that will form the basis of the campaign.

One example of how this works out in practice is the campaigning around access to medicine and patents which I referred to earlier. From an Oxfam point of view, we do original research, we have a research team and researchers who we work with all around the world, but this is not on the scale of the World Bank or ODI or the Department for International Development and it is quite targeted. So for example, on the labour research which I mentioned, we have done a lot of interviews and collected data and analysis about supply chains in a number of different countries, we have done questionnaires and focus groups with women workers themselves and we combine that with other research. We also do a lot of secondary research and we unapologetically steal everyone else's analyses and research.

That is what we did with the campaign on access to medicines: we stole a lot of research from everyone; we did some of our own in places like the Dominican Republic, Bangladesh and Pakistan; we commissioned papers and we put all of that together and produced reports. We also researched companies and that is where I come back to the idea of problems, solutions and villains. I know it is wrong, we should not demonise companies completely because they are also part of the solution, but it was important to put the spotlight on them and that type of research, which is not just about the issue but about how companies use their power, showed for example in Thailand how companies had basically bribed and bullied the Thai government not to introduce a drug. We did research on both Glaxo and Pfizer which we then used to present to investors in Wall Street and the City who then asked for meetings with these companies to talk through the research, saying that whether or not they believed Oxfam, what its research was saying was a risk to the company's profits and something needed to be done about it.
These are all strategies and tactics about how research is very important both in forming the coalition and in convincing important people like investors who can then exert an influence on the companies in terms of winning the argument on an issue like patents.

Lastly, we also work with a lot of academics on areas like patents, people like Professor Peter Drahos, who helped shape what we were doing and saying and pointed us in the direction where we could identify other research.

So the ingredients for success, going back to my first points, were that this campaign was a very powerful wedge - it is about medicine, about HIV/AIDS. Then the drugs companies put Nelson Mandela in the dock which was a really stupid thing to do and which made the campaign about patents and medicines huge and we benefited from that. It was a wide alliance, a lot of southern groups in Thailand, Brazil, South Africa and also American groups, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), VSO and many others, and it had a corporate angle which made it very newsworthy (with big companies like Garnier getting twenty-two million pound pay-offs). All of these things make it more campaignable, but at the heart of it was a solid case, that actually nobody has been able to dispute: that there is a connection between patents and access to medicines. It is not the only issue, which is also about basic health services, but making that case and winning the argument allowed all of the rest of it to happen.