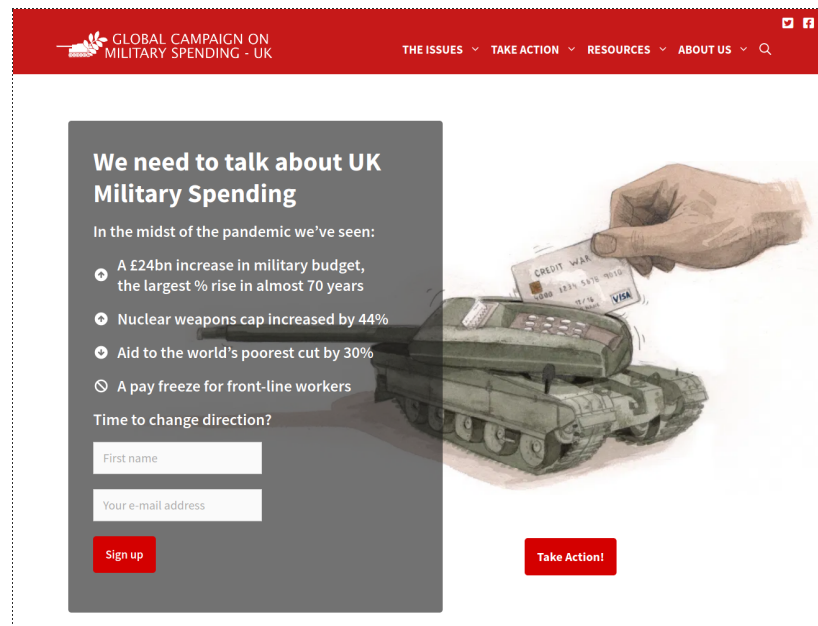


Report to Lansbury House Trust Fund from GCOMS UK

Lansbury House Trust awarded the Global Campaign on Military Spending UK a grant of £7,000 in August 2020 to create a new website and support the Steering Group in strengthening the network. An open recruitment process took place in September, with a very high level of candidates and work commenced on 6 November of that year - below is a report on the impact of said funding on the campaign to date.

Website

The main focus in the first few months was the redevelopment of the [GCOMS UK website](#). The previous website was not only outdated, but didn't function on mobile devices or meet accessibility guidelines. The design brief supplied by the steering group was that the site should be fully accessible, simple to navigate and allow for clear presentation of complex data in a way that was fully referenced. We are pleased with the result and were able to purchase 3 years of hosting, providing a solid resource going forward for grassroots campaigners and supporting groups.

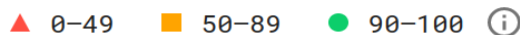


Below shows [the site's google pagespeed assessment](#) pre and post upgrade, combined with security and accessibility improvement it means that our campaign information will be much more visible to campaigners and the general public.

January 2021



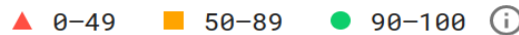
<https://demilitarize.org.uk/>



April 2021



<https://demilitarize.org.uk/>



Organisational Development

New supporting groups and steering group members

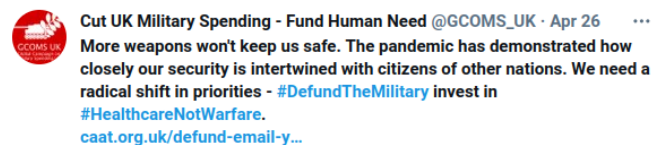
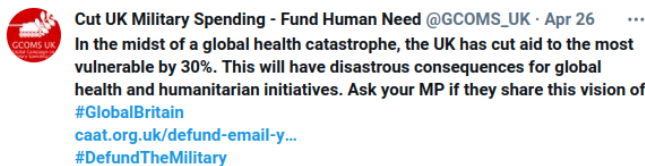
In the run-up to the Global Days of Action we welcomed three new supporting organisations: [Share the World's Resources](#), [War Resisters' International](#) and [Tipping Point North South](#). In addition we had two new additions to the GCOMS steering group, representing [Campaign Against Arms Trade](#) and [Global Justice Now](#); their contributions have already proved invaluable.

Expanding our grassroots network

In addition to new supporting organisations, we sought to build our own direct connections with grassroots campaigners for the first time. We set up a newsletter and mailchimp mailing list to manage contacts, placing sign-up forms prominently both on the website and on our social media. To date we've had 127 people sign-up for ongoing information. While these are not huge numbers we know that the information sent is both keenly read and shared, opening up the campaign to new communities. We see this as a fundamental building block for our future campaigning.

Establishing GCOMS on Social Media

We set up a twitter account in December and despite only having 208 followers (so far), we've achieved an [engagement score of 77](#) based on an average of 7.8 retweets and over 10 likes per tweet. Now we've met the six month requirement we're in the process of verifying the account with twitter, which will help us further increase our reach.



GCOMS and 3 others



Oxfam International and 6 others



Responding to key events

Autumn Statement

In response to the Autumn Statement and its unexpected increase in military spending (a further £16 billion on top of the £8 billion previously announced), GCOMS UK organised a UK twitterstorm. The event was very much an experiment for the Steering Group, but due to excellent networking **the #UKDefundWar hashtag reached over a million impressions** and engaged key political figures (see image right).



2021 Budget

In preparation for the March budget announcement and the parliamentary debate on spending plans, GCOMS UK produced a [briefing paper](#) (authored by Steering Group member Dr. Stuart Parkinson of Scientists for Global Responsibility). The Steering Group then went on to organise a live [webinar](#), where Stuart was joined by Dr. Kate Hudson (General Secretary of CND) & Deborah Burton (Director of Tipping Point North South). The event had over 150 attendees on Zoom, with many more watching on Facebook.

Activity during the Global Days of Action 2021 (GDAMS)

Social media activity

The UK was extremely active in the global 'twitterstorm' on 26th April with hundreds of tweets being shared thousands of times. Campaigners mobilised around the [#HealthcareNotWarfare](#) hashtag alongside the new [#DefundTheMilitary](#) tag. Many supporting organisations created their own [creative images and infographics](#) and we were bolstered by the support of additional major NGOs such as [Greenpeace International](#). Bringing together campaigners from climate, development & faith-based movements dramatically increased our global reach, with **the new hashtag alone reaching over 100 million impressions**. Many groups reported an uptick in new followers, and two organisations their 'most popular tweet ever', emphasising the benefits of collective action. In short, it's a fantastic way for us to keep raising awareness of runaway military spending, with the GDAMS message reaching millions of new people.

Twitter stats for #DefundTheMilitary during GDAMS



mentions

535



interactions

420.9K



reach

104.3M



shares

68.8K



likes

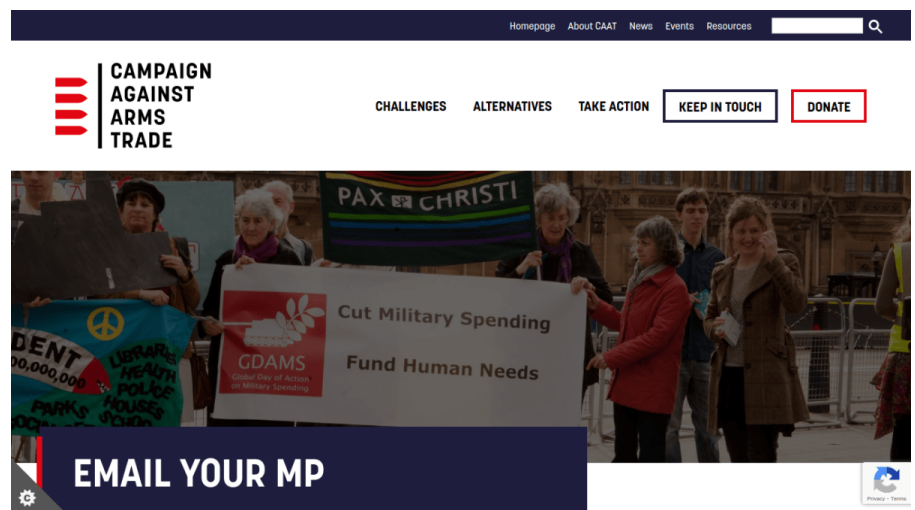
352.1K

Parliamentary Lobbying

We worked with [Campaign Against Arms Trade](#) to produce a lobbying tool to make it easier for supporters to contact their MPs. Over UK 80 MPs were lobbied on Military Spending by supporters via the tool.

A number of Scottish GCOMS UK network members organised a [Peace Hustings](#) of Parliamentary Candidates to coincide with the

release of the SIPRI figures on Military Spending. The hustings was attended by spokespeople from 5 different political parties contesting the Scottish elections.



Street demonstrations

We weren't just limited to online campaigning despite the continued lockdown, with a number of in-person events happening across the country.

[London Women in Black](#), held two vigils on April at the Edith Cavell statue, St. Martin's Place in central London, leafleting passers-by about the campaign.

While we return to our vigil we also remain in solidarity at a distance
Women in Black are everywhere, working against militarism and war.
Global Days of Action on Military Spending

DEFUND THE MILITARY
DEFEND THE PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

The world spent \$1.92 trillion on the military in 2019, a 3.6% increase over the previous year and the highest figure since the end of the Cold War. In the UK, in the midst of the COVID pandemic we have seen

- A £24 billion increase in the UK military budget
- Nuclear weapons cap increased by 44%
- Aid to the world's poorest cut by 30%

We join with others around the world to take action and demand major reductions of military spending at a crucial moment when we need to rethink where our priorities lie.

Find out about the UK GDAMS Campaign here : <https://demilitarize.org.uk/global-days-of-action/>

Sign this petition calling Boris Johnson to invest in healthcare not warfare



[Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign](#) and [Yorkshire CND](#) held a demonstration on April 30 at Menwith Hill US spy-base in **North Yorkshire**. The event was part of the 'International Day of Action Against Foreign Bases' called by IPB & GCOMS. Complete with a walk around the base, the event was covered in the [Morning Star](#) and the regional press.



Keighley Peace, Justice and Environment Network, held a vigil in **Keighley** town centre on the **1 May**. The [event was covered in the local press](#).



Linking struggles



Two GCOMS UK steering group members worked with the [COP26 Coalition](#) to highlight the links between militarism and climate change.

[View presentation](#)

The [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament](#) organised a '[Nurses not Nukes](#)' webinar to discuss government priorities in the light of the latest military spending figures.

GCOMS UK Co-ordinator Matt Fawcett discussed the recent military spending increases alongside campaigners on nurses pay and public health. [Download slides](#)

In the press

Alongside the events coverage, our [GCOMS UK Statement](#) was featured in the [Morning Star](#) and [Campaign Against Arms Trade led an innovative campaign](#) encouraging supporters to engage local press & radio on military spending. Local press is a great way to start discussions on local priorities and is avidly read by local MPs to gauge constituent concerns. We know of letters published in [Orkney News](#), [The Daily Echo](#), [The Derbyshire Times](#) and [The Surrey Advertiser](#).



Other network activities during GDAMS

[Pax Christi](#) produced an educational resource for GDAMS featuring materials for discussing security and spending priorities with young people. [View pdf](#)

GCOMS UK Steering Group member Daniel Jakopovich, Peace & Disarmament Manager at [Quakers in Britain](#), held online learning sessions on military spending organised by the Sheringham and Forest of Dean Quaker meetings.

GCOMS UK Steering Group member Philip Austin, Coordinator of Northern Friends Peace Board and Daniel Jakopovich **held an online workshop on ways to promote an anti-militarist approach to security** for Frandley and Gloucester Quakers. Philip and Daniel both later joined Tilly Martin, (Coordinator of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship) to hold online workshops for the Network of Christian Peace Organisations on militarism, with a major emphasis on the problem of military spending.

[Share the World's Resources](#) **launched a new petition** calling on the diversion of military spending to meet urgent global Covid needs.

On the final day of the GDAMS period, GCOMS UK Steering Group member Colin Archer and GCOMS UK Coordinator Matt Fawcett joined military spending campaigners from across Europe and Asia at the [13th Asia Europe People's Forum](#).

Next steps

Formally constituting GCOMS UK

The steering group is currently in the process of formally constituting the group as an Unincorporated Association. This will enable us to establish a bank account allowing for small donations via the website and opening up the opportunities in terms of further grant funding.

It is also an opportunity to set up transparent governance systems to better encourage the involvement of supporting organisations and the wider movement. We are also seeking to formalise a membership structure and are exploring a membership fee in order to help support ongoing coordination.

COP26 - Raising the opportunity cost of military spending

The steering group is also exploring the role for GCOMS UK outside of the Global Days of Action period. In particular during the recent G7 and NATO meetings the network was active in highlighting the opportunity cost of Military spending, particularly as it relates to the climate emergency. Fellowship for Reconciliation are leading on a GCOMS UK booklet for the COP26 meeting on militarism and the climate crisis.

Funding Impact

- Creation of a new website with a modern, mobile-first interface, which presents the issues in a clear and accessible way and provides the campaigners with fully referenced statistics with which to make their case.

- Despite the continued impact of Coronavirus (which wasn't foreseen in the initial funding application), the GCOMS UK network was able to deliver the most active GDAMS period in our ten year history in terms of both the number of events and their reach.
- Raising the issue of military spending via social media campaigns that ranked their reach in the millions.
- Strengthened and widened the UK Steering Group and added new organisations to the network.
- Begun the process of formalising the network via a constitution, the Steering Group will be making the most of the last 6 weeks of co-ordinator time to organise an AGM, setup bank accounts and establish financial reporting.

Proposed budget vs Actual spend

Income	Budget	Actual
Lansbury House Trust Fund	£7000	£7000
Contribution from supporting organisations	£680.00	£384.40
Total	£7680.00	£7384.40

Expenditure	Budget	Actual
Consultant for website and network coordination (8hrs x 40 weeks)	£6400	£6400*
Hardware / software <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years web hosting (£182.02) • Website plugins (£50.78) • Zoom webinar costs (£134.40) 	£120	£367.20
Travel costs	£160	£0
Steering Group contact contribution	£1000	£600
Total	£7680	£7367.20

*40 week contract ends 12 August 2021 (total paid to date £4480.00)