

Engaging Citizens to Ensure our Democracy: The Role and Potential of Educational Institutions

Neil Jameson & Sebastien Chapleau

For Students, Teachers, Governors, Parents and Carers, and Organisers

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'We should not, must not, dare not be complacent about the health and future of British democracy. Unless we become a nation of engaged citizens our democracy is not secure.'

Lord Irvine of Laird, Lord Chancellor, 1998 (as quoted in The Crick Report)

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CITIZENSUK
reweaving the fabric of society

Engaging Citizens to Ensure our Democracy:
The Role and Potential of Educational Institutions
by Neil Jameson & Sebastien Chapleau
Citizens UK

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Foreword

“Teaching the art of politics in action” – a phrase coined by the late Bernard Crick – illustrates one of the principal challenges for CITIZENS UK. Can CITIZENS UK play a role in revitalising the political culture of our country? This is no small task. In 1950, 84% of the electorate turned out to vote but only 65% did so in 2010. A survey of first-time voters carried out for Radio 1, just before the last election, reported that 30% did not believe their vote would count and 20% felt they did not know enough about politics to make a decision. Despite these comments, however, more than half claimed they would vote if they could do so online or using text messaging. And, from the 15.5 million votes cast during the last series of the X Factor, we know young people like voting.

So can politics be revitalised simply by installing better voting technology? My answer is ‘yes’ if politics is defined as – and limited to – voting for a government every five or so years but ‘no’ if it lives up to its true mission. Politics is about ‘people power’ and must surely encompass groups of citizens taking collective decisions on behalf of their society based on justice, equality, fairness, safety, sustainability and the need for cohesion.

These are many of the goals on which the two primary and three secondary schools and the one Sixth Form College represented here have set their sights. Pupils, teachers, school leaders and Community Organisers have campaigned for community cohesion and for streets safe from muggers, traffic or rodents; housing with enough space for families to live with dignity; and for workers to be paid a living wage. Their successes are living proof that the CITIZENS UK philosophy of learning by action actually works.

All those who have taken part are to be congratulated. I feel confident that each of the school communities will also have benefited from this experience. In addition to the specific campaign achievements, a passion for involvement in practical politics, hopefully, has been ignited in the next generation of voters.

At the time of writing, many countries in the Middle East are seething with citizens demonstrating – mostly amazingly peacefully – for democracy. Those of us living in countries which long ago achieved this are reminded daily of its importance and its price. This should stir us from apathy and inspire us to do more to enhance our own democratic systems.

The possibility of democracy was won in 1928 when – following the suffragettes’ valiant struggle – women finally joined men in gaining the vote. But its reality demands more than the right to put a cross in a ballot box. Genuine democracy entails active citizenship to elect worthy leaders, monitor the work done in our name and campaign vigorously on important issues.

Schools should be key players in this process. They should exist for the common good. Their role is to nurture the future. Yet, all too often, our school leaders have held back, afraid to stand out, worried about the possible consequences of being labelled ‘political’. The work of CITIZENS UK shows how well-trained support can emancipate schools from this tradition and inspire school leaders to grasp the positive aspects of politics and, in doing so, help reclaim democracy for our society.

*Professor Peter Mortimore OBE, Director of the Institute of Education (1994–2000)
Spring 2011*

Preface: ‘Securing our Democracy’

This concept paper is intended to be helpful to students, teachers, governors, parents, policy makers and Community Organisers, when they reflect on the role that schools, colleges and universities could play as key ‘anchor institutions’ in our neighbourhoods.

CITIZENS UK appreciates that this role is seen by most as primarily educational, giving young people the skills and qualifications necessary to enter the world of work to ensure that Britain maintains its role in the global market.

More recently schools have been required to focus on broader challenges like the promotion of community cohesion, ensuring that ‘every child matters’, and the teaching of citizenship.

CITIZENS UK and our affiliate member alliances, like LONDON CITIZENS, has more than fifteen years’ experience of working with member schools, colleges and universities to support not just these objectives but also to respond to Lord Irvine’s call for Britain to become a ‘nation of engaged citizens’ in order ‘to secure our democracy’.

This paper lays out some of our broad philosophy and includes six brief case studies of how this theory has been put into practice in London since 1996 by inspirational leaders and their colleagues, assisted by Community Organisers from CITIZENS UK. It is dedicated to the memory and love of politics of the late Bernard Crick, author of ‘In Defence of Politics’ and The Crick Report on teaching citizenship in schools.

So first the dedication:

This concept paper is dedicated to the memory and teachings of Sir Bernard Crick (1929–2008), political philosopher and historian, academic, humanist, honorary fellow of the CITIZENS UK Institute (1999) and citizen.

Following a distinguished early career as an academic in the United States and the London School of Economics (LSE), Crick wrote his formative book ‘In Defence of Politics’ in 1962 whilst still teaching political philosophy and theory at the LSE. The book was a passionate call for the practice of politics as the ‘best non violent way of making change possible in a democracy’ to be taken very seriously. His book was translated into five

languages and stressed the crucial importance of politics and the 'nobility' of the calling to engage in politics. He emphasises that he does not mean 'partisan politics' or 'party politics' but the politics as practised by the ancient Greeks and honoured by Aristotle meaning, literally, 'the polis' or city state.

For the last twenty years, CITIZENS UK's sister organization in the USA has been 'The Industrial Areas Foundation' (IAF). IAF was formally founded by the late Saul Alinsky in 1971 just before he died, though Alinsky had been a practising Community Organiser working primarily in Chicago since the mid-thirties. Alinsky wrote his two formative books on politics - 'Reveille for Radicals' in 1946 and then 'Rules for Radicals' in 1971. Following Alinsky's death, Ed Chambers was appointed Executive Director. Chambers brought order and a structure to IAF and skilfully set about refining the early experiences of IAF practice in politics (focusing on organising local civic, values-led institutions, particularly faith communities; rejecting public money in order to remain independent; seeking and developing local leadership; developing a curriculum). Chambers also recognised the urgent need to create the profession of Community Organising as a serious option for talented young people, with a passion for politics, to join and stay with as a vocation and career.

The first and primary book, which was required reading for IAF Organisers (after Alinsky's books), was Bernard Crick's 'In Defence of Politics'. This later became the recommended book for the early UK Community Organisers and the first generation of community leaders who started with the fledgling CITIZENS UK in 1989.

Crick was appointed Professor of Political Theory at Sheffield University in 1965 and it was there that he taught the young David Blunkett. Blunkett was later to become secretary of state for education in Blair's first Labour government in 1997. Crick moved to be professor of politics at Birkbeck College in 1971 and then took early retirement in 1984 at the relatively early age of 55 and moved to Edinburgh where he settled for the rest of his life.

However, 'relational power' being long lasting this was not the end of the story. Thirteen years later, in 1997, Bernard Crick had a call from his old student in Sheffield, David Blunkett MP and was invited to chair New Labour's 'Advisory Group on Citizenship'. Blunkett and many in the new administration were alarmed at the lack of interest in politics and government and the declining pattern of voting in local and national elections.

The legitimacy of the any government is an issue in a democracy. In 1994, DEMOS published a paper called 'The Lost Generation'. This paper was a wake-up call for all political parties and initiatives. The DEMOS report registered the early evidence that the established pattern of 18- to 25-year olds not voting or participating in public life used to change as people married or settled down and they started to vote and be more interested in politics from 25 to 35 years onwards. This pattern was changing and the report indicated that whole 'generations' of 25 to 35 year olds chose to remain outside of public life, disinterested in politics and rejecting the opportunity to vote or even register to vote.

Crick's cross party 'Advisory Group on Citizenship - Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools' was intended to come up with a strategy which challenged this pattern of political disengagement by the young.

Throughout 1997, Bernard Crick and his fellow Commissioners toured the country to hear and see evidence of an interest in politics and civic life. CITIZENS UK leaders from The East London Communities Organisation (TELCO) invited Professor Crick to meet with some of their young student leaders at a round table on politics hosted by Norlington Secondary School, in Leyton. He came in November 1997 and was amazed and touched to hear how seriously his book 'In Defence of Politics' was being taken by IAF (across the USA) and by CITIZENS UK organisers and leaders. He was impressed by what he heard and saw of our work with schools and credited CITIZENS 'good practice' when the final report was published in 1998.

'[CITIZENS UK] is an [...] alliance which aims to help people in localities to combine to affect the well-being of their communities by their own actions. Their 'Iron Rule' is never do for others what they can do for themselves. TELCO is an alliance which is especially active with and between schools and local communities'.

In 1999, Professor Crick joined Andrew Marr as guest speakers at the national launch of CITIZENS UK's 'Institute for Community Organising' at the Bishopsgate Institute, east London. In June 2000, Bernard Crick attended the first national 'CITIZENS UK Lecture on Civil Society' given amongst others by the new cardinal, Cormac Murphy O'Connor and the secretary general of The Muslim Council of Britain, Iqbal Sacranie. At the same event Professor Crick accepted the award as the first honorary fellow of the CITIZENS UK Institute and made much of the fact that he was particularly touched by this award

from a seemingly majority faith alliance since he was also vice chair of The Humanist Society. Crick was generous in his praise of CITIZENS UK and it was here that he coined what has since become our strap line: 'Teaching the art of politics in action'.

For the next five years the relationship with Bernard Crick grew and strengthened to even include an abortive attempt to set up an EDINBURGH CITIZENS. He was a regular at TELCO Assemblies and loved the politics and the active participation of our member schools and colleges. He attended the historic launch of The Living Wage Campaign in Walthamstow Town Hall in 2001. He was knighted for his services to citizenship in schools in 2002 and died in his beloved Edinburgh in 2008.

For all his tremendous efforts and missionary zeal for politics and citizenship and even though the government then made the teaching of citizenship in secondary schools compulsory the jury is still out on the actual impact this has had on voting figures and the participation of young people in public life. As the state in the form of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority moved in on this brave and well-meaning initiative, it became an extra burden on already hard-pressed and often disillusioned teachers. Norlington School and most of the TELCO member schools proved the schools of choice for placements and internships for the new generation of professionally qualified citizenship teachers in the early and middle part of the decade.

Crick's advice that 'politics and citizenship were best learned by doing' and that the 'doing' of politics was indeed an 'art' and not a 'science' caused real tension when simultaneously schools were being squeezed into SATs testing, league tables and regular Ofsted inspections, which focused primarily on exam results. The quality of the relationship between the school and the other major stakeholder in a child's life - the parents - was considered in passing by the inspection regime. The relationships with the neighbouring institutions never considered and the context of the child's life and learning experience a political football.

CITIZENS UK has tried to remain true to the original vision of building and sustaining 'the polis' that originally excited Sir Bernard Crick and who gave us recognition in his formative report - though it was early days for us in building broad-based alliances, which included schools, to 'teach the art of politics in action'. TELCO has grown into LONDON CITIZENS with South London Citizens, West London Citizens and North London Citizens, providing area Chapters of member groups all working together for the common

good. A large part of our 230 or so member organisations are schools, colleges or universities. In 2011, Sebastien Chapleau, who has been a professional Community Organiser with CITIZENS UK since 2008, starting initially in Greenwich and now working in Hackney, was assigned to support CITIZENS UK's strategy around schools.

There are few government reports that are so relevant and urgent and written with such eloquence and passion as what has now become 'The Crick Report'. The argument at the heart of the Crick Report is core to CITIZENS UK'S day-to-day work:

'We aim at no less than a change in the political culture of this country both nationally and locally: for people to think of themselves as active citizens, willing, able and equipped to have an influence on public life and with the critical capacities to weigh up the evidence before speaking and acting: to build and to extend radically to young people the best existing traditions of community involvement and public service and to make them individually confident in finding new forms of involvement and action among themselves. There are worrying levels of apathy, ignorance and cynicism about public life. These, unless tackled at every level, could well diminish the hoped-for benefits both of constitutional reform and of the changing nature of the welfare state.'

Engaging Citizens to Secure our Democracy – The Role and Potential of Educational Institutions

CITIZENS UK is the primary training institute promoting broad-based Community Organising in the UK as a method to build and strengthen civil society and the key institutions of faith, education, union and local association to work together for the common good and to be 'the polis'. We work through affiliate CITIZENS groups like LONDON CITIZENS and share the same charitable objectives of 'capacity building for public life and the strengthening of the key local institutions of civil society'. LONDON CITIZENS is now the UK's largest and most diverse community organisation with, as of March 2011, about 230 dues-paying member groups.

CITIZENS UK's model for education reform is based upon our fifteen years experience of working with schools across London. Our mission has always been to increase student achievement and aspirations by building collaborative relationships between students, teachers and governors with their neighbouring community institutions and the business community.

Many studies have concluded that meaningful parental and community involvement in schools and colleges results in better student achievement. It also makes sense that such constructive involvement can result in greater community interest in school reform, improvement and funding as well as increased teacher morale. UK schools have been buffeted by reform and change depending on whichever party is in control but rarely, if ever, have these changes come from or been owned by the host community. Any school reform needs the understanding and support of all segments of the community and without it then the reform is less likely to succeed.

CITIZENS UK is increasingly interested in deliberately organising communities – amongst other things – around the support for schools and colleges and, if necessary, in their restructuring. In parts of London less and less tax payers have children in state schools and so there is less ownership or understanding of the common good as it applies to state education. Ideally the entire community needs to be meaningfully involved in the education system and feel accountable for its results – this cannot be left to a handful of bureaucrats and professional educators.

Strengthening Parental Involvement and Dramatically Improving Performance of a Struggling Comprehensive School

*Norlington School for Boys, Leyton, Waltham Forest, E10 6JZ
Founded in 1903. 580 boys. Intake, on average, 120 per year.
Motto: 'Wisdom is Strength'. 1998 27% A-Cs at GCSE. 2008 56% A-Cs.
2003 won the National Schools Basketball Championship.*

Inspirational Leader: Neil Primrose (Headteacher)

Community Organiser: Neil Jameson

Time Scale: September 1999 to September 2001

Scene Setting: TELCO (The East London Communities Organisation) was launched as London's first broad-based community organisation in November 1996 with an initial dues-paying membership of 40 institutions - one of which was St Michael's Anglican Church, in Chingford. Neil Primrose and his family were active members of this congregation and he attended some local workshops on Community Organising. In 1997, Neil Primrose persuaded his governors to pay the dues for his school to join TELCO - the same time as Bernard Crick was called out of retirement to head up New Labour's plans to introduce citizenship into schools.

Regular Open Meetings and Parents Welcoming Group: Primrose decided to establish a weekly lunch time TELCO group of students (and some staff) to focus on local issues and concerns. At parents evenings, they provided a welcome desk which included literature about TELCO and encouraged parents to share their concerns about the neighbourhood. In the same year Bernard Crick visited Norlington to see some of the early impact of TELCO's approach and he also arranged for Neil Primrose to visit David Blunkett, secretary of state for education to share some of his vision for an integrated school serving the community whilst improving results. The TELCO group both hosted and attended the regular meetings of TELCO's strategy team and enjoyed the fellowship and camaraderie of meeting citizens from across east London.

Research Action and Training: The first issue the school TELCO group chose to tackle concerned access to some derelict railway land adjacent to the school's small playground. This had been an issue for years and letters to the council, papers etc. had got nowhere. With the help of the Organiser an action team of senior boys was established and together they did a power analysis of who they needed to meet to try and get access to the derelict land and so extend the playground. They also met with a journalist from the weekly paper who began to regularly cover both this story and events at Norlington. The school was in the news with positive stories and 'first choice' applications began to grow. Meanwhile, several interested staff were sent on national CITIZENS training with the school finding supply cover to allow them to do this in work time. The first research action worked well and within six months the land had been handed to the school as an extension to the playground and the borough agreed to pay for the structural work needed. The group of 12 boys had grown tremendously in the process through their experience of leading negotiations - and Neil Primrose was then appointed headteacher.

Build and Strengthen Your Allies and Seek Out New Leaders: In September 1999, there was a spate of muggings for mobile phones in and around the school. Norlington's TELCO leaders shared this with the broader TELCO membership, particularly their closest neighbour members St George's RC Congregation and Noor-ul-Islam Mosque, both in Walthamstow. Neil Primrose decided to call a public meeting of parents and neighbours to try and broaden interest in the issue and see what energy there was for any concerted action. Nearly 100 parents attended the public meeting - as did leaders from the local TELCO communities. The meeting was run using CITIZENS methods of tight but effective chairing; testimony; rounds and an action plan (which had been discussed and planned beforehand by the TELCO planning group of staff and students). The meeting agreed to set up the 'Norlington Enquiry into Street Safety in Leyton Commission' - and parents and students were invited to sign up for this three month commitment (of a maximum of 4 meetings none longer than 90 minutes). 65 people signed up and became the first CITIZENS Commission. We then persuaded a local resident (a CITIZENS UK Trustee who had just been given a life peerage - Baroness Kathleen

Richardson) to head up the Commission and sign the various letters to the police etc which were then posted. The press covered the event and the action and the police very quickly got involved and were co-opted onto one of the four working groups which were serviced and supported by the TELCO Organiser and some of the senior students. Leaders from other TELCO communities in the neighbourhood also joined the Commission.

Improving the Public Realm By Working Together for the Common Good:
'The Norlington Enquiry' took evidence from both local agencies and national schemes which had focused on the same problem. We learned about the way police officers get allocated to a borough and were persuaded that Walthamstow was poorly served and understaffed. Both the police and council lobbied the Commission to use its profile and independence to lobby the Metropolitan Police for more officers. This was done and happened during 1999-2000. The Commission reported in the Spring of 1999 (the Organiser wrote the report with help from staff and students) and several recommendations were made to improve the safety of the area - CCTV, more visible police at key times, better lighting, etc. The school then took the findings and turned them into teaching opportunities in the academic year starting September 1999. This worked particularly well for the Drama and the Geography Departments. Norlington students led the borough in preparing detailed maps which highlighted the safest routes to school and the various danger spots to avoid. This was drafted at a workshop of 200 students and staff from across the borough meeting in the Town Hall and attended by press, police, councillors, etc. TELCO's Organiser contrived an opportunity for the Norlington team to meet with the then commissioner of the Metropolitan Police at Scotland Yard and to do several TV appearances on regional BBC - and in the summer of 2001, before 1,200 citizens at a TELCO Assembly in Walthamstow Town Hall, the first 'Safe Route to School' Map was presented to the deputy commissioner of the police. He enthusiastically endorsed the whole process - and confirmed that the number of reported muggings and offences in Leyton and the area round the school had dropped dramatically over this 36-month period - and the number of full time-officers had been increased by 15%.

The reaction to all this parent- and community-focused activity was substantial and undoubtedly assisted with the slow but sure rise of the SATs Test scores and the GCSE results. It also made Norlington the favoured choice for placement for the PGCE students seeking practical experience of 'active citizenship' as envisaged by Bernard Crick. The relationship between the school, the neighbours and the parents improved dramatically. The neighbours in the streets around the schools looked out for the boys' safety at the beginning and end of the day and the parents' involvement in school business, parents evenings and volunteering much increased. The school could regularly turn out between 80 and 100 people (teachers, parents, support staff and students) to TELCO's Assemblies in the period 1998 to 2002.

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES

The global market and changes in society place extra burdens on schools. The response of the state is to add to the responsibility of the schools since, often, they are the last remaining example of inclusive state provision on an estate or neighbourhood - e.g. increased racism or break downs in relationships in society lead to schools being given the responsibility to promote 'community cohesion'. The social problems of poverty, drugs, violence, low aspirations, poor housing and joblessness are neither limited to, nor a product of, what happens inside a school. Increasingly schools and colleges also face the challenge of preparing their students for work in a global economy which requires multiple skills and great adaptability.

Richard Sennett's book 'The Culture of the New Capitalism' argues that those who will succeed in the new labour market must be flexible and talented, not necessarily highly skilled or even experienced. He writes that: 'As experience increases, it loses value. Skill is the ability to learn new tricks fast to survive.'

Many schools lack additional resources or flexibility to deal with these challenges, but to avoid or ignore them can lead to drop out, failure rates and a levelling off of achievement.

Children spend on average 15% of their time in school and thus 85% of their time is spent being educated by their family, their peers and the TV. The state pours its resources into that 15% and pays less attention to the 85%. But surely, if parents really are the co-educators of their children, to not capitalise on their good will, self-interest and leadership is to miss one of the most important and significant resources in any student's life. It has been our experience that when a school knows its parents, works with them, values them, respects them and will even fight for them, then this relationship becomes reciprocal - the parents will fight for the school and ensure that their children treat the school and its learning methods with respect.

Developing Parental Engagement, Their Understanding of Power and Building Links Between Neighbours

St Joseph's Primary School, Commerell Street, Greenwich SE10 9AN

200 5-11 year olds, from various parts of Greenwich and neighbouring Lewisham

Inspirational Leaders: Clare Morris (parent), Caroline O'Neil (parent), Christine Okoibhole (parent), Yasmin Francis (parent), Angie Myers (parent), Tina Purcell (parent), Roberta Ardern (parent), Catherine Green (Headteacher), Anna, Alex, Ethan (pupils at St Joseph's)
Community Organiser: Sebastien Chapleau
Timescale: September to December 2008

Scene Setting: *When a parent comes to you and says that she's really worried about her child walking to school because drivers along Blackwall Lane (leading to the Blackwall Tunnel, which is one of the busiest arteries into east London from south London, and which sees thousands of vehicles every morning, just before the beginning of the school day), you know this might be an issue to get parents to think about.*

St Joseph's is a one-form entry school, at the heart of east Greenwich. Thinking of Greenwich, one tends to picture its Royal Park, the Observatory, its world famous museum and market, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. These are in west Greenwich. Many others often think of north Greenwich, where you have the venue which in 2010 was voted best entertainment venue in the world: the O2 Centre (the Millennium Dome, as many still call it). St Joseph's sits on the verge of that. It is ten minutes away from the Royal Park and other world-famous attractions, but doesn't quite compare to that in terms of the neighbourhood it is in. It is just off a busy road that leads to the O2 Centre and just behind a series of council flat blocks. As many local residents often comment, east Greenwich is an area which many people go through, on their way to the O2 Centre on one side, or the Royal Park and the market on the other.

Over the years, a lot of money has been invested in the areas that surround east Greenwich. The area surrounding the O2 Centre has seen hundreds of luxury flats and offices built, a new state-of-the-art tube station. West Greenwich is currently seeing large refurbishments, including

that of the market and its surrounding.

Within such a context, some parents at St Joseph's have often felt left out, and rather neglected. Caroline O'Neil, whose son Ethan almost got run over a few times by dangerous drivers on Blackwall Lane, began a campaign to get a School Crossing Patrol near the school to make her, and others', children safer. As she says "When we had a lollipop lady on Blackwall Lane things were better. We want a lollipop lady back!"

How Do You Use a Specific Issue to Build and Understand Power?

Caroline, very determined to get a School Crossing Patrol back on Blackwall Lane, made numerous phone calls to the local council's safety team. To her surprise, nothing ever got done and she kept being transferred from one person to another. Accountability at the council, was, she started thinking, rather blurred. "Who is in charge, and who could get things done?" were questions she should have thought of earlier. What was needed was for Caroline to have a clearer understanding of power: her own power, and that of Greenwich Council.

The Importance of Research Action to Build Power and Test Out If An Issue Is Really An Issue. Bringing a team of parents together one evening, in September 2008, we realised that we needed to be a bit more sophisticated. In other words, we needed to organise ourselves and have a plan. Now, was Caroline and her son Ethan's issue an issue which others cared about? To understand where we stood in terms of this, and to develop stronger links between members of the community (involving St Joseph's and its neighbours), it was decided to launch a research action in the schools, as well as the two other schools immediately next to St Joseph's. Parents approached other parents in the mornings and at the end of the school day, asking questions about street safety and possible solutions which would help improve things. Doing this, anecdotes about the lollipop lady that used to work on Blackwall Lane kept coming up in conversations. Caroline's fondness for a 'situation as it used to be' (world as it should be) was shared by many, and using this as a catalyst to get people's reactions, hundreds to people agreed to sign a petition to show their support, sharing testimonies about their own children being knocked

over by unvigilant drivers. This issue was a real issue.

Understanding Your Opponent's Self-Interest Is Key and Having a Strategy to Agitate Power is Essential. Now that the team had the support of the wider community – the headteachers, parents and pupils from the two schools next to St Joseph's were very much on board – we needed to see how we could move things on and achieve our goal. To get power to recognise our call it was thought important to build alliances. This, because of the research action, we did very well with other schools. We also needed to build links between ourselves and public officials who might be able to support us. As a first step, we met with a council officer. This meeting was important in terms of developing our awareness of the council's priorities, financial situation and bureaucracy. It was also useful in terms of developing the leadership of the parents involved in the campaign. For emerging leaders, it was a good lesson in how to plan for a meeting, chair a meeting and speak with one voice. We also met with local councillors to get them involved in the campaign. Two out of the three local councillors for the ward where St Joseph's is situated became keen to support us, especially as they became aware of the hundreds of signatures collected and the strong alliance of institutions built.

Tension is Needed to Speed Things Up. Action is the Oxygen of a Campaign. Thus far, we'd been keen to build links between members of the community and local councillors. However, things were at the risk of getting caught in, what we thought, were unnecessary and potentially dangerous, bureaucratic processes. As we'd met with our local councillors, it became clear that Greenwich Council had specific ways of doing things in terms of School Crossing Patrols. We were told that roads would have to be inspected at various times, on clear days, and by a specific team of experts at the council. Then, a report would have to be produced and a decision might be made. What that meant for us was: our voice is not that important (we are not 'experts', even though we know the local area much better than most 'experts' at the council), the support of the community does not seem paramount and, most importantly, the life of Ethan isn't a key part in this equation. But, as Ethan had clearly said during our first meeting with the council officer: "What is more important? Numbers or

me? Is my life not what we should be talking about here?" As we knew we had a point, based on personal testimonies, but also because of the fact that there are hundreds of cars going past the schools in the morning and at the end of the school day, we concluded that a report would only delay things and that we had to speed things up. Change often happens when tension is brought in, so we gathered again as a team and developed a plan of action. We knew that one of the council's key self-interests was publicity, and any pressure around their image might be helpful for us. Our plan, therefore, became clear. We had to become lollipop ladies and gentlemen ourselves and publicise our demands more overtly. Identifying talents and expertise in our group, a team of children and parents designed our own 'stop sign' or 'lollipop'. We found high visibility jackets in our cupboards. We designed flyers to let people know what we were doing. For a whole week, we took things in turn: some of us would look after the children, as we'd dropped them off at school twenty minutes earlier than normal, some of us would put on high visibility jackets to be clearly seen by cars and members of the community and some of us carried on getting people to sign our petition, handing out lollipops to children and parents on their way to school. We helped our own children cross the road safely and we made a fuss about it. The local press got involved and things did move on quickly as a consequence. The daily actions we took were great fun, really helped strengthen the links between all of us and beyond and led to cars slowing down as they approached traffic lights! We were good at all these things and parents developed their leadership further: Christine Okoibhole became the most popular lollipop lady east Greenwich had ever seen and passers-by applauded Angie Myers and Tina Purcell as they gave out lollipops, interviewed people and encouraged children to be safer on the streets. The community woke up to its needs and didn't just watch, but got involved.

The Action is in the Reaction. Our petition was taken to the next full council meeting by our local councillors. Whether or not an 'official' report was produced is still unclear but, what is sure is that a few weeks later a new School Crossing Patrol was introduced. One of the difficulties the council officer raised with us when we met her is that they sometimes struggle in terms of recruitment of School Crossing Patrols: we offered to help

advertise the position and support them in identifying a suitable candidate. The new lollipop lady was recruited quickly and from St Joseph's. Now, as well as cook great food for our children at lunchtime, she helps them cross the road before and after school.

Action Builds Trust Between People. Start Small, and Grow as You Win. Starting with this very focused issue, we built a strong team of amazing leaders. Winning was great, but wasn't an end in itself. We gathered again a few weeks later to see what else we could do. The group had trebled in size since we first began and involved parents and children from other schools, as well as neighbours. The leaders' ability to plan and work together had become much clearer. The meetings we held together were now much better chaired and Clare Morris, another parent whose leadership had clearly shone as we developed our initial campaign, led us, in that meeting, into a longer-term plan. "What else can we do around east Greenwich to make sure we keep our kids safe?" was the question we had to answer. It became clear that we'd developed good links between ourselves, but there were other members/neighbours in our community that we should approach. It was agreed to follow the example of our South London Citizens friends in Lewisham who'd initiated the idea of approaching local shops to build relationships with them and get them to become 'CitySafe Havens'. A 'CitySafe Haven' is a place where people can seek refuge when in danger. It is also a place where you know people will always call the police when something happens on the streets: 100% reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour. Agreeing to try this out in Greenwich, parents and children at St Joseph's agreed to approach shopkeepers on Trafalgar Road and Woolwich Road. Since we began this work, walks have been held by community leaders from local schools, visiting shops on a regular basis to let them know who we are and find out who they are, ask them how they feel about the community and what we can do together to improve the local area, sign them up as 'CitySafe Havens', offer them flowers and chocolates to thank them for their support and, simply, develop a sense of neighbourliness and trust between all. There are now 70 shops signed up in east Greenwich and, following Lewisham where the first 'CitySafe Retail Zone' was launched in October 2010, the first 'CitySafe Neighbourhood' in the country was launched in

November 2010, with the strong support of the Greenwich Police. This work has connected Greenwich leaders to other leaders across London, as the CitySafe campaign built local actions all over the capital. There are now more than 250 'City Safe Havens' in London and the campaign is supported by the Mayor (Boris Johnson) and his Deputy (Kit Malthouse). The London Metropolitan Police is also supportive. From local to London-wide the community is reclaiming our streets.

CITIZENS UK has demonstrated that Community Organising strategies can significantly improve the school climate and culture – as well as student achievement. We operate through three key organising principles;

1. organise from an institutional base at a local level (such as faith community, local association or traders association)
2. develop relationships by building on the self-interest of the many individuals involved in a school's community and neighbourhood.
3. provide ongoing, effective leadership training.

Schools Benefiting From Public Citizens' Actions and Introducing Social Teaching to Students

Trinity Catholic High School, Woodford Green, Redbridge IG8 OTP
11-18 years. 1,705 mixed. 85% A-Cs at GCSE

Inspirational Leaders: Dr Paul Doherty (Headteacher), Sister Josephine Canny (Chaplain)

Community Organiser: Paul Bunyan

Time Scale: 2002 to 2006

Scene Setting: Trinity is a very successful RC secondary school driven by a charismatic head and great staff team. The head summarises his vision of a 'good school' on the website and states that every child should follow their 'eternal destiny', that they are unique in the eyes of God and in their relationship to Christ and their neighbour. He also states: 'Trinity must be aware our community is linked to others be it the family, parish, local or national community – we should ask what can we do for others rather

than what can others do for us!'

Team Building and a Rounded Education: Dr Doherty delegated not just the pastoral care and the counselling to his chaplain but he also encouraged her inclination to be a talent spotter amongst the students and to use their membership of TELCO (joining in 2000) as a way of developing a team of enthusiastic young students in the art of politics and public life. Sr Josephine Canny attended the national CITIZENS training and then encouraged two or three of her colleagues (with the school funding supply cover) to follow her example. Initially, the school attended strategy team meetings and Assemblies regularly and with enthusiasm but had no particular issues themselves. It also deepened their relationship with the nearby parish congregation of St Thomas's who also joined TELCO.

Making History, Teaching History and Experiencing History: Trinity School was present when TELCO launched the UK's first Living Wage Campaign in front of 1,200 people at Walthamstow Town Hall in 2001. This campaign is intended to persuade all employers to pay their staff and contract staff a Living Wage of about £2.00 more an hour because of the costs of living in London. Trinity School's first reaction this was to review their own contracts and ensure their cleaners, caterers and security staff were paid the Living Wage (then £6.30 an hour) or would move towards it as contracts expired. Whilst it was and is important that TELCO's own members set an example on fair wages, this campaign was really aimed at major employers – like the NHS. Therefore, the first sector that TELCO leaders decided to lobby was the five NHS hospitals and their trusts in east London where cleaners and ancillary staff had been paid no more than the minimum wage for the last ten years. Letters were sent and meetings requested but little progress made. TELCO leaders decided that what was needed was an event or (media) action which would both involve our people but also put the pressure on the hospitals to meet with us and review their wages policy. A march or witness was called for, ending in a public rally where TELCO's proposals were ratified and power brokers invited to respond.

The Mile End Road or If You Have Popular History On Your Doorstep Make The Most Of it! The organisers proposed that the march should not just build the organisation and promote the political agenda of the campaign but it should also be used to teach our members the history of popular dissent and action – well before universal suffrage. It was also decided that the event needed to be in the morning to try and make the evening BBC News – and that there needed to be at least 500 people present for it to be newsworthy. The TELCO Organiser took this dilemma to Paul Doherty well before any decision was made about the viability of this ambitious proposal. He asked Dr Doherty if he would support such an event and release about 100 people to attend it – assuming it did not clash with exams etc. After a suitable pause, Dr Paul Doherty agreed and even offered to get his Media Studies Department to put together a film and record the whole event. It is important to stress that he did not reach this decision lightly but actually referred to his job description and the growing obligations on heads to promote community cohesion. He pointed out that, as a head, he has just been obliged to teach ‘citizenship’ and that as a Catholic head he also had an obligation to promote Catholic social teaching which meant to tackle social injustice. This was his defence in the event of any difficulties (on the day the march did make the national BBC news and our schools were criticised for getting involved by an MP, but the action was defended eloquently and passionately by our old friend and mentor, Bernard Crick). Dr Doherty also shared the plan with his governors and had their approval. The Mile End Road has been the scene of many significant events over the centuries going as far back as Wat Tyler and the Peasants Revolt in 1381. More recently, it is where the Pankhurst’s set up their store for East End Suffragettes in 1908 and before that the Match Girls of Bow and early trade unions marched up and down the road to bring attention to their cause.

Use the Expertise and Resources of CITIZENS to Train and Learn: It was agreed that TELCO would employ two extra part-time Organisers/teachers in the six months before the proposed march. One Organiser was employed to provide teaching materials for our primary and secondary schools on the social history of the Mile End Road (the Suffragettes proved the most popular) and the other was employed to try and engage the

‘sleeping lion’ of the black majority churches. Most of the staff in low wage contract jobs were black and many attended Pentecostal or Independent churches. Trinity took a lead on both fronts and the chaplain brought student leaders to all the planning meetings and ensured the teaching materials were shared across the school in formal lessons and in assemblies.

The Action is in the Reaction: Two coaches packed with Trinity students and staff assembled at the chosen location on the day of the action and the head girl gave a passionate speech on the very spot that the Pankhurst’s had set up their ‘Votes for Women’ stall in 1908. On the day it poured with rain and everyone was soaked – the banners, the primary school children, the Bishops, the hospital workers and the 400 other TELCO leaders who turned out at 11.00am to try and make the TV News (which they did). Many of the student planning team described it as the best day of their lives so far – and all agreed that the rain only added to the feeling of solidarity as they walked together behind a drum, down this historic road and into a rally in the Peoples Palace at Queen Mary University of London. There, they heard speeches and oratory from the cleaners, the religious leaders, Billy Bragg and the mayor’s senior representative Lee Jasper who promised Mayor Livingstone’s support for this struggle. The Homerton Hospital was the first to agree to TELCO’s demands, followed by Royal London, Mile End and Whipps Cross – none without a struggle and some tension. All who were there at that Living Wage march down the Mile End Road in 2003 agreed it was worth it and they would never forget it.

RESPECTING AND NURTURING LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS

Schools and colleges exist within communities, each with a unique geography, history and culture. In most areas, the school campus is but one of a number of stable institutions (sociologists call them anchor institutions) which include faith groups and civic associations. Families can associate with a number of institutions that serve as links between themselves and the community at large.

In communities under pressure, the variety of ties that link individuals and families to the community are either lacking or extremely attenuated. Or some ties exist but the schools may not be integrated with those networks.

In trying to organise effective parent and community power projects, CITIZENS UK has found that faith communities are uniquely situated to play an important role since they also work to support and help families. They are often the only surviving institution that members of disadvantaged communities have maintained supportive ties with – particularly with minority communities. Also, for parents who had a bad experience of school or who lack confidence then the church hall can provide a comfortable place to begin involvement.

LONDON CITIZENS members include trade union branches, residents groups, ethnic and refugee groups as well as most faith traditions. The role of congregations in school reform is not to promote their particular religion but to provide a bridge and link families, schools and other groups together and thus guide the communities children into successful lives as adults.

DEVELOPING PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH SELF-INTEREST

The formation of any mutually respectful collaborative partnership must address the interests of students, teachers, governors, parents, neighbours and all other players the partnership wants to include.

Parents naturally have a deep interest in their children's educational success, but they also have hopes for their own lives and worries which they need help with and often share those worries with their neighbours – poor housing, gangs, the threat of regeneration. If they do get involved in their children's education this can often be in the hope that it will further their own personal development and sense of efficacy.

Although it may seem tempting to some teachers to manage without significant community involvement, research shows consistently that student achievement improves when parents and communities are involved.

Understanding the need to work together requires dialogue between parents, teachers, students and community members about their values, goals and hopes – for both their

children and also themselves. This can be done through focused conversations (one-to-ones) which help identify the issues that are of interest to all parties. The focus of any subsequent action must then be on the issues identified by these individuals.

Teaching the Art of Listening to Students and Reaching Out to the Wider Community to be Part of the Overall Governance of London

Cardinal Wiseman School, Ealing.

*Founded in 1959. Motto: 'Education for all = Achievement for All'.
11-19 year olds. 1,863 students. 2007 97% A-Cs GCSE and one of the top 20 comprehensive schools in the country.*

*Inspirational Leaders: Paul Patrick (Headteacher), Cecilia Finn (Chaplain)
Community Organisers: Catherine Howarth and Julie Camacho*

Scene Setting: *West London Citizens (WLC) was launched as a Chapter at an Assembly of LONDON CITIZENS in October 2006 with 30 member institutions including Cardinal Wiseman School. Cecilia Finn, their chaplain, had been linked to CITIZENS UK since the founding of TELCO in 1996 when she helped prepare the banners and bunting for the Assembly. Paul Patrick became head in 1997 and quickly set out to build on the good works of this large Catholic comprehensive – and so over the next ten years and under his powerful leadership the school went from strength to strength with a strong emphasis on education for the whole child. When approached about joining WLC he had no hesitation and readily paid the £1,800 annual membership dues and made WLC a key part of the school's outreach and citizenship program. The school then provided a key role in developing WLC membership in both Ealing and wider west London, with students and some staff getting involved at every level – preparing banners for Assemblies, chiring and time keeping at WLC Assemblies, joining negotiating teams and actions which relate to both local and cross London events and regularly providing their large choir to add to the passion and performance of these critical parts of WLC's democratic practice.*

Local Actions Lead to Listening and New Relationships: The first Ealing CITIZENS action that member groups like Cardinal Wiseman voted to pursue became known as 'Bin the Rats' and was focused on action to improve the collection of waste to prevent the growth in the rat population in Southall. This issue was not anticipated but only came about by WLC leaders being disciplined about organising practice and spending some months before the first Assembly on a cross-member listening Campaign. It was felt that this issue was real, winnable, touched lots of people and could be personalised around the new Conservative leader of the council and polarised around the issue of wheelie bins for Southall (there were none) and black bags (there were too many and the rats liked them). WLC won this one - wheelie bins were introduced to Southall and more frequent garbage collections took place - the rat population retreated.

If You Have Them, Then Capitalise on the Assets of a 2,000 People School Community and Reach Out: In early 2007, all LONDON CITIZENS members were asked to consider what action, if any, they wanted to take in the upcoming mayoral election of May 2008. It was decided to act and hold a very large Accountability Assembly for the main mayoral candidates but before that to initiate a large and comprehensive listening campaign on the theme of - 'what do you want to say to the mayor of London'? Cecelia Finn and colleagues had already set up a regular WLC 'club' for the senior pupils they were seeking to develop and so they seized the moment to build the listening campaign into the structure of the school day and schedule. The students prepared simple questionnaires and, rather than leave them in piles around the school, they set to and went out as teams to all the tutor groups and staff and non-teaching staff meetings to fill them in. They also used the opportunity of a series of parents' evenings and open evenings for prospective students to greet the parents and families, explain who they were and what they were doing and help fill in the forms. They collected over 2,000 responses with a wide range of comments from action for better housing to street safety - and then processed the various comments and weighted them using the various methods of analysis they had learned in their maths and statistics classes. LONDON CITIZENS then held local borough and cross west London meetings for these results to be fed in and voted on by the other members of WLC - they learned the

need to compromise, debate, argue and the politics of give and take. On April 9th 2008, when 2,500 of LONDON CITIZENS packed Methodist Central Hall at a Mayoral Accountability Assembly the school turned out 80 students, parents, and staff to see their proposals put to the main party candidates - even though it was the school holidays!

Ofsted Scores Community Cohesion High: On 3rd December 2008, the school scored as 'outstanding' during their Ofsted Inspection led by Asyia Kazmi. He scored 'community cohesion' 'outstanding' too - and noted early on in his report: 'Students are taught to be active citizens within the school community, also locally and globally. Students are members of the WLC program to improve life in the local community and have won an award for their work'. (LONDON CITIZENS Trustees awarded Cardinal Wiseman 'Secondary School of the Year' in 2007 for their outstanding contribution to citizenship and the common good.)

Schools and their community neighbours are more likely to work together when they see that the issues to be addressed are those they themselves worked to identify.

Central to CITIZENS UK's model of parental and community involvement is the use of the following types of meetings with parents, school personnel and community members. The aim is to strengthen relationships and build teams of leaders who can act together to improve the life of their community.

- a) One-to-One Meetings: These are at the core of our organising strategy. They are 45-minute, deliberate conversations about what matters to the two people meeting (this is what we call their self-interests, i.e. the things that make them 'tick', 'angry' or 'passionate'). They take place in a quiet location and could be initiated by the school and an in-service training day a term could be given up to tutors visiting the homes of their tutor groups for this purpose. It is from these meetings that the shared agenda for action grows.
- b) House, or Small-Group, Meetings: These meetings of five to ten people bring together neighbours or clusters of people who have shown interest in working together through the one-to-ones. The issues that matter to the group are refined, prioritised and sometimes some sorts of research actions are agreed.

c) **Action Team Meetings:** Once an action has been agreed – and is ideally shared by several house groups – then the keenest of the cross-neighbourhood team of leaders meet to agree tactics and strategies for some sort of resolution to the issue that they share.

Thinking About the Place of the School in its Community, Issues to Reflect on can Include:

- What is the mission of the school?
- What is the role of parents and the community in that mission?
- How best to engage the other stakeholders in the education process in the development of the schools mission?
- What is the self-interest of the various institutions and individuals who are engaged in school restructuring and improvement?

Once this process is complete a draft mission statement can be agreed and shared with the larger community for debate and eventual affirmation. Maybe action points are added to support this and evaluation built in at every stage.

d) **Neighbourhood, Borough, or Area CITIZENS Strategy Meetings and Assemblies:** If the issue that is identified affects other members of the community, as well as the school community, it should be taken to the various CITIZENS meetings or action teams that are taking place throughout the year. This is where many learn true democratic activity – with strangers who have other interests but maybe still share the same values base. The role of the Assemblies is to ratify business once it has been cleared and debated locally – it is also when all the power brokers that share the interests of the neighbourhoods might be invited to attend and respond – the MP, leader of the council, business leader, etc.

As described above, a face-to-face conversation can lead to the building of a local team who can address local issues. Local teams can connect to other local teams through their area CITIZENS' strategy meetings, and are thus able to address bigger issues. Area meetings can meet with other area meetings and thus develop Chapter-wide campaigns. At every level, leaders from local institutions can build relationships with other leaders interested in change. At every level, leaders grow and feel more confident and play their rightful role as 'active citizens'. Students and parents can work together

with teachers and neighbours and be the change they want to see in their local community.

Making the School the Centre of the Community

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Battersea Park Road, Wandsworth SW8 4BE

Founded in 1870 by the Parish Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Joseph (itself founded in 1868).

Motto: 'foster and maintain Christian values in conjunction with the family and the parish.'

Inspirational Leaders: Father John Clarke (Parish Priest), Michael Lobo (Headteacher)

Community Organisers: Bernadette Farrell, Dermot Bryers, Joanna Purkis, Sebastien Chapleau

Scene Setting: *South London Citizens (SLC) was founded as a Chapter of LONDON CITIZENS in November 2004 with an initial membership of 30 institutions, mainly faith associations and trade unions, but only one primary school. Father John Clarke was sent to London in 2006 after working for 30 years in Brazil. He immediately sought out CITIZENS and started volunteering for us and was very active in the first major Strangers into Citizens march to Trafalgar Square in May 2007. He did both the 2-day and the 6-day trainings in Community Organising. When he was later appointed parish priest at Our Lady of Mount Carmel he set about introducing SLC to his congregation and the parish primary school.*

Seek Out the Self-Interest of the Institution: *SLC Organisers met Michael Lobo the new head of St Mary's and listened to his two interests – survival (the school was losing numbers and was not well known in the area) and helping the parents speak English and get to know each other. In Spring 2007, Lead Organiser Bernadette Farrell led an inset day for the school community with Fr John Clarke and Michael Lobo at which mixed groups of teachers, governors, parents, meals supervisors and other staff shared*

their hopes and vision for the school. Developing a community school with its own nursery and attracting local families were high on the agenda. The parish represented a large immigrant population. Dermot Bryers, an Organiser and qualified Teacher of English as a Second Language, had recently launched 'English for Action' lessons to support CITIZENS member groups where English language was an issue. Dermot ran a series of classes for parents during the day in the spring and summer term of 2007. Fellowship was had, new relationships flourished and certificates and a graduation took place of the first batch of students in July 2007 in front of a packed school hall.

Reach Out to the Neighbours and Promote the School's Interest: Following the action plan from the inset day, SLC organised a neighbourhood walk from St Mary's to meet all the new intake of families who were sending their children to the school that September. A combination of Community Organisers, students from the CITIZENS' summer academy, parents from the English classes, the parish and some teaching and non-teaching staff gathered in the school hall at 3 o'clock towards the end of the summer term and paired up ready to spread out across the local estate and catchment area. Names and address of new parents were shared and it was agreed all would report back to the school hall for an evaluation and some refreshment in 90 minutes. Father John Clarke led the way on each action and was a guiding spirit in the school's progress. Joanna Purkis and Dermot Bryers ensured that each pair visited about 4 new families in the time allowed and spent 15 to 20 minutes talking to each, thanking them for choosing St Mary's and sharing stories about the area and the families' hopes and dreams. The local press covered this simple but very effective action and the news spread quickly amongst both current and potential families. The news was: 'St Mary's is interested in us!!' Applications for children to start at the school increased and a nursery was added. Parents hosted barbecues and welcome events for new families in the school grounds. The school developed a reputation for being friendly and welcoming and this counts for a lot when parents try to decide what school is best for their young children.

Every School Community is an Opportunity for Action and Learning: It was clear from the English for Action students that learning English was not the only interest of the parents of St Mary's Primary School. Many families were living in very overcrowded housing - private rented or council - and turned to SLC for support. SLC invited Peter Ambrose, professor of housing at Brighton University to put together a questionnaire and Father John Clarke ensured that they were completed by 80% of the families - using his authority, humour and strong relationships to make sure that this worked. Workshops were held and an SLC action team of parents, parish and other SLC member communities was set up to process the results of the questionnaires and agree a plan of action. Sebastien Chapleau, SLC primary schools Organiser, ensured that children's and teachers' experience and educational priorities informed the research and remained at the heart of the process. In December 2008, under Bernadette Farrell's direction the school produced a special Christmas video letter aimed at Roy Evans, the director of housing for Wandsworth, telling the story and seeking a working relationship. At the same time LONDON CITIZENS awarded Michael Lobo and his school community the award for 'Best Primary School of the Year'.

Turn a Crisis into an Opportunity for Learning and Development: The 'St Mary's Housing Survey' presented the school with the stark evidence that almost all the families in the school were living in unsatisfactory and overcrowded accommodation - and that this was effecting their children's learning, development and aspirations. There was a brief meeting of SLC leaders with the director of housing for Wandsworth but he questioned the quality of the survey and asked for more evidence of difficulties before he could persuade his department to act. The action team, with the support of the SLC strategy team, voted to set up their own Housing Commission and use this opportunity to accrue more solid evidence of the problem of overcrowding and to apply more pressure on the council to act. CITIZENS did what has become a well tried and tested organising tactic and invited four weighty 'professionals' to be commissioners and to meet three or four times over a six-month period. These included Professor Peter Mortimore (the former director of the Institute of Education), Sir Michael Harris (a Judge), Professor Peter Ambrose (a housing professor) and Robina

Raffetry (a retired housing adviser and activist), with Dermot Bryers and Bernadette Farrell acting as secretaries to the commission. Evidence was collected from three Wandsworth Primary Schools – through surveys and a major public hearing in the Town Hall (booked by SLC) which was held in April 2009. In September 2009, the director of housing and many interested councillors attended a SLC public meeting where the commissioners shared their initial findings and developing recommendations. This was quite a tense meeting since Wandsworth Council felt both put upon and picked on. The SLC action team readily agreed to postpone any final publication until the council had both had time for the right of reply and also time to double-check and visit some of the worst instances of overcrowding. SLC's 'Housing Our Future' report was finally published and launched at The Institute of Education (with comment and reaction from the council included) in December 2009.

Wandsworth Housing Department responded positively to many of the recommendations of the report. Some of the worst-affected families were re-housed within the area. Additional points for overcrowding, alternative storage solutions (e.g. bike storage) on estates, re-conversions of existing housing stock and new-build family-sized rented homes were underway at the time of writing. The council also welcomed Space-Max – a community-led scheme set up by SLC to provide creative short-term solutions and better use of space in cramped homes thanks to the efforts of local volunteers like architect Robert Law of St Mary's Anglican Church. Over 300 families had been involved in this unique process of learning and action during 2009. Several SLC member groups, as well as St Mary's Primary School, took part, particularly Balham Community Church and Hyderi Islamic Centre.

PROVIDE ONGOING TRAINING TO SUPPORT THE BUILDING OF RELATIONSHIPS

CITIZENS UK has been called a 'university of the streets'. At our best, we are a learning organisation, teaching the 'art of organising and politics in action', focused on the engagement and development of our leaders. We employ professional Community Organisers whose job it is to teach and train and support the development of a new

generation of civic leadership across the communities or area they are employed to serve. In London, almost every CITIZENS Organiser has responsibility for one or two boroughs and their job is to support any civil society organisation that is prepared to join LONDON CITIZENS and work with their neighbours on shared issues and with a shared vision of a more integrated and effective borough.

Training sessions can take place in schools, in church halls or in homes through small group meetings. Some of the key tools used in Community Organising include:

Power Analysis: A core principle of Organising is the need to think about and understand power (the ability to act) and relational power particularly (the ability to act and be influenced). Doing a 'power analysis' of an area, an institution or a Borough is critical to any learning. This is a practical exercise and relies on a reasonable knowledge of the stake holders in a neighbourhood, the key power brokers and the people and system that might help or hinder the growth and development of the school in its neighbourhood.

Understanding the System (or Understanding How the 'World As It Is' Operates): A school which is keen to involve its parents and neighbours in its delivery of the all-round education experience will be prepared to run sessions on 'the system' and discuss how power operates around the school, the council, the Education Department and where it all fits together. With the right information this allows parents, students, staff and the community to:

- Discuss their vision of schools – e.g. brainstorm about the 'ideal school' and the 'ideal neighbourhood'.
- Discuss and develop new roles for parents at schools.
- Plan for local CITIZENS meetings in the neighbourhood around shared issues e.g. traffic; the threat of drugs or gangs; poor housing.
- Organise neighbourhood walks from the school when teachers, students and parents go and visit new parents or neighbouring institutions to greet them and engage with them.
- Learn about educational theory and practices that effect their children. Parents will be interested in a school that is interested in them first and foremost – a school that only sees parents as a way of 'adding value' to the learning experience misses the point.
- Effective leadership development: in communities with little tradition of public

- action a school's efforts to develop community leadership will take time.
- This should lead to a redefining of the role of parents in a school and they and the wider family become key resources with expertise to share – some may be craftsmen, nurses, bankers, artists, storytellers, fluent in many languages or just great with children.

Using the Student Community Around a School to Strengthen Social Capital and Bring Hope and Security to our Streets

St Bonaventure and St Angela's Sixth Form, Newham E7 9QD

St Bonaventure's was founded in 1875 by the nearby Franciscan Friary of St Antony's in Forest Gate and St Angela's was founded in 1862 by the nearby Ursuline Convent of Sisters. They share a Sixth Form of 600 students – with the Boys School having a total of 1,300 11-18 boys and achieving 80% A-C's at GCSE and the girls school with 1,337 girls and 88% A-C's in 2007.

Inspirational Leaders: Paul Amuzie (Student)

Community Organisers: Matthew Bolton and Emmanuel Gotora

Scene Setting: TELCO was founded in 1996 and recruited St Bonaventure's and St Angela's School(s) into membership the following year. CITIZENS UK paid for the then head of St Angela's, Delia Smith to travel to Texas with other heads (including Neil Primrose from Norlington) to visit some of the schools in membership of the 120 school strong Alliance Schools Program run by CITIZENS UK's sister organisation in the USA – The Industrial Areas Foundation. The chair of governors of St Bonaventure's is Father John Armitage, an outstanding TELCO leader and the then parish priest of St Margaret's RC Church, Canning Town and later of St Antony's, Forest Gate. From 1997 to 2007, the schools and their Sixth Form stayed in membership but very few teachers got involved, none attended national CITIZENS training (unlike Norlington School, where supply teachers were employed to allow senior teachers time off to attend) and their occasional turn out at Assemblies was rarely above 15 students and sometimes nil. In 2007, Matthew Bolton was appointed Lead Organiser with TELCO and

took a special interest in Newham and St Bon's and Angela's student body – he also worked with Sister Una McCreesh, the retired head of St Angela's (and former chair of trustees for LONDON CITIZENS) to try and find a more constructive role for the schools in TELCO – and this included St Antony's Primary School (under the long term leadership of Sister Kathleen Colmer and a founding member of TELCO in 1996). In the Spring of 2007, Matthew Bolton organised a series of workshops in Forest Gate for member schools to encourage peer mentoring and joint work. One evening Paul Amuzie, a year eleven student in the Sixth Form, attended one of these workshops in St Antony's Primary School. Matthew Bolton later met with Paul for a one-to-one. Matthew saw Paul's leadership potential and Paul saw the potential of TELCO to help move his experience of life outside the narrow confines of the school and into the wider public arena. In the summer of 2007 one of the students at the Sixth Form was involved in a fight on a bus after school and badly injured – this happened at a time of several other seemingly mindless and unrelated killings of mostly black young people by black young people across London. TELCO and other LONDON CITIZENS members had just started their ambitious Listen to London campaign in preparation for the four-yearly campaign for mayor in London which was to come to a head by May 2008 with an election.

Make the Most of the Moment and Use the Signs of the Times as an Opportunity Not for Despair but to Build and Develop Leaders: The spate of injuries and murders across London in the summer of 2007 led to the predictable tough words from the police, aimless peace marches from traditional church leaders wringing their hands and hoping for something to happen – and some tough and strategic thinking from Paul Amuzie and his student colleagues. Paul met regularly with his Organiser, Matthew Bolton, and together they began to consider a whole new campaign for LONDON CITIZENS which built on the very thing that CITIZENS UK does best – teach relationship building. Over the summer of 2007 they organised a 'summer in the park' play and away day for local primary and secondary children to meet in West Ham Park, play games and get to know each other. However, the tragic deaths and injuries of young people mostly in gang-related injuries continued and escalated in the autumn of 2007 and new year of 2008. By February 2008, Paul and his

student colleague Senyo Aidan had started a weekly TELCO club, at their Sixth Form but also they had the framework for a significant new campaign which they called CitySafe. That month over 500 delegates from across LONDON CITIZENS' 120 member communities met at St Paul's, Hammersmith to consider the various proposals for action that had come out of the six month listening campaign in preparation for the mayoral election in May 2008. On the evening of the delegates Assembly in February 2008 CITIZENS leaders argued and debated passionately for better housing, rights for new migrants and other social justice concerns. However, the issue and campaign that won the day and was voted number one was put eloquently and poignantly by Paul Amuzie and his student colleagues - CitySafe.

[See Greenwich case study above for details of what CitySafe is about and how it is developing across London].

SUMMARY

Work and families have changed dramatically in the last 20 years and techniques for involving parents (when only one worked and one stayed home) have long since proved inadequate. The flexibility of work and the pressures on parents to work harder means that schools need to be more sophisticated if they are to gain parental support and active involvement. If parents and community members are informed, already have links to neighbouring institutions, have been trained in the building of public relationships and acting collaboratively then it is more likely that they would be prepared to be involved in shaping the school's environment and support the education program to meet the needs of both the children and the community.

Building strong relationships with parents and community leaders is increasingly important to a school's success. As the government expects schools to provide more services of support and promote 'community cohesion' then a school that is not in relationship with their community will face an extra burden and isolation.

CITIZENS UK proposes this model of education and indeed education reform only in the context of membership of a broad-based community organisation like LONDON CITIZENS and with access to a professional Community Organiser with the capacity to help orchestrate this sort of development plan and change of culture. This absolutely needs the enthusiastic approval of the head and probably the governors - and then involvement of senior staff and their participation at each stage. It is the job of the Organiser not to do all the work but to recruit, identify and develop leaders, looking beyond the 'usual suspects' and seeking talent wider than the regular volunteers (assuming there are any). The CITIZENS Organiser should also be able to help with strategic vision, using their position to agitate and challenge others to think about their self-interest broadly and in new ways.

- Such an education reform process ideally starts with the interests of all the stakeholders of the school community being identified.
- It works best with heads who do not want to simply be compliance officers but educational leaders and entrepreneurs.
- There should be a core group of teachers, non-teaching staff and even some senior pupils who are interested in team building and collaboration.
- There should also be a similar group of community and local business leaders,

parents, ex- pupils and neighbours who understand that the community has a large interest in the success of their local school or schools.

- Finally there should be an Organiser or a community leader who has been trained by CITIZENS UK with the skill to bring these stakeholders together and oversee the whole learning process.

List of schools currently in membership of CITIZENS UK:

Alexandra Park School (NLC)
Al-Sadiq-Al-Zahra School (NLC)
ARK Academy (NLC)
Bethnal Green Technology College (Shoreditch Citizens)
Canon Barnett Primary School (Shoreditch Citizens)
Cardinal Pole Catholic School (TELCO)
Cardinal Wiseman Roman Catholic School (WLC)
City and Islington College (Shoreditch Citizens)
Cleves Primary School (TELCO)
Crest Academy (NLC)
Curwen Primary School (TELCO)
De Beauvoir Primary School (Shoreditch Citizens)
Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Language College (NLC)
Gladesmore Community School (NLC)
Hackney Community College (Shoreditch Citizens)
Hackney Free and Parochial School (TELCO)
Highgate Wood School Arts College (NLC)
Holy Family College (TELCO)
Kingsbury High School (NLC)
La Retraite Catholic Girls School (SLC)
La Sainte Union Catholic Secondary School (NLC)
Lilian Baylis Technology School (SLC)
Lister Community School (TELCO)
Little Ilford School (TELCO)
Milton Keynes Academy (Citizens:mk)
Morden Mount Primary School (SLC)
Mount Carmel RC Technology College for Girls (NLC)
Norlington School for Boys (TELCO)
Notre Dame R.C. Secondary Girls' School (SLC)
Our Lady's Convent High School (TELCO)
Plaistow Primary School (TELCO)
Portway Primary School (TELCO)
Prendergast Ladywell Fields College (SLC)
Queensbridge Primary School (Shoreditch Citizens)

Randal Cremer Primary School (Shoreditch Citizens)
Rushey Green Primary (SLC)
Selwyn Primary School (TELCO)
Sir George Monoux College (TELCO)
Skinners' Academy (TELCO)
Southern Road Primary School (TELCO)
St Alfege with St Peter's Primary School (SLC)
St Angela's and St Bonaventure's Sixth Form College (TELCO)
St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College (WLC)
St Dominic's Primary School (TELCO)
St Joseph's Primary School (SLC)
St Mark's RC School (WLC)
St Matthew's Academy (SLC)
St Monica's Primary School (Shoreditch Citizens)
St Pauls Catholic School (Citizens:mk)
St Ursula's Convent School (SLC)
St Winefride's Catholic Primary School (TELCO)
St Winifred's Primary (SLC)
Stantonbury Campus School (Citizens:mk)
Surrey Square Junior School (SLC)
The Charter School (SLC)
Trinity Catholic High School (TELCO)
Upton Cross Primary School (TELCO)

“So can politics be revitalised simply by installing better voting technology? My answer is ‘yes’ if politics is defined as – and limited to – voting for a government every five or so years but ‘no’ if it lives up to its true mission. Politics is about ‘people power’ and must surely encompass groups of citizens taking collective decisions on behalf of their society based on justice, equality, fairness, safety, sustainability and the need for cohesion.

These are many of the goals on which the two primary and three secondary schools and the one Sixth Form College represented here have set their sights. Pupils, teachers, school leaders and Community Organisers have campaigned for community cohesion and for streets safe from muggers, traffic or rodents; housing with enough space for families to live with dignity; and for workers to be paid a living wage. Their successes are living proof that the CITIZENS UK philosophy of learning by action actually works.”

Professor Peter Mortimore OBE, Director of the Institute of Education (1994-2000)

Neil Jameson is Founding Executive Director of CITIZENS UK and Lead Organiser of London Citizens. He is the most experienced Community Organiser in the UK with 22 years experience building, funding, and sustaining diverse broad-based Citizens Organisations like LONDON CITIZENS. He has developed and taught the CITIZENS UK Community Organising curriculum to over 3,000 local leaders drawn from some of the country’s most disadvantaged areas. He has also established the first professional Guild of Community Organisers which has successfully attracted and supports over 25 full time Community Organisers who work with member communities in London, Milton Keynes, and several others cities and towns across the country.

Sebastien Chapeau has been a professional Community Organiser with CITIZENS UK since 2008, and is based in Hackney, East London. He has trained hundreds of community leaders of all ages and backgrounds in schools, faith communities, and local civic institutions. As well as training leaders in the methods of Community Organising, he has been organising leaders to win Living Wage campaigns in four major London universities. He has also supported leaders with the development of CitySafe zones across various neighbourhoods in London. Before joining the staff team at CITIZENS UK, he worked in a primary school in south-east London where he integrated Community Organising methods into his role as a teacher, working closely with parents/carers, children, neighbours, and local institutions. Sebastien is the Senior Organiser at CITIZENS UK focusing on issues of Community Organising in schools.

For more details about Citizens UK, visit our website: www.citizensuk.org



ABOVE: Parents, teachers and students from London Citizens member schools and colleges gather on London’s South Bank on April 5th 2011 to welcome the International Olympic Committee to London. They are celebrating the London 2012 Olympics being the first ‘Living Wage Olympics’ and the working relationship struck with the officials of the London Olympics family by London Citizens in 2004.