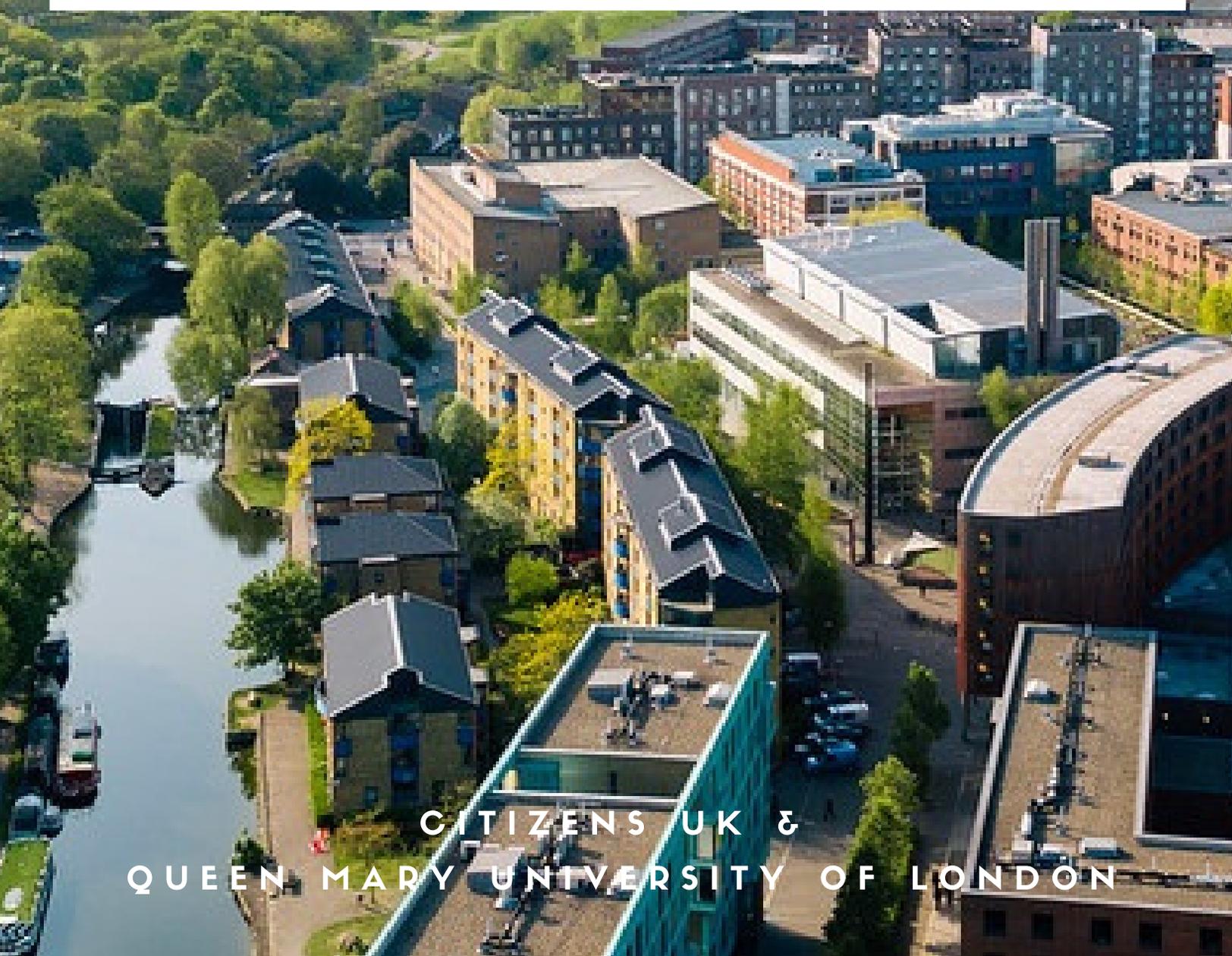




2021 CIVIL  
SOCIETY INTERNSHIP

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL



CITIZENS UK &  
QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON





Reflections from our  
placement with  
Citizens UK as part of  
the POL301 module  
from the School of  
Politics and  
International Relations  
at Queen Mary  
University of London

Reflections by:

Alya Adekola

Asmaa Abdulkarim

Bilen Barzaghi

Erin Scarsbrook

Michael Brook

Miriam Larocque

Natalie Velarde

Oceane Morrisson

Rebecca Jackson-Walley

Scott Emery

Shahin Haider

Sophie Thomhave-Lee

Tabitha Purlow

Tara Jenkins

# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

DR. JOE HOOVER.....	1
AFSANA SALIK.....	11
CITIZENS UK.....	111
INTRODUCTION.....	1
SPONSOR REFUGEES.....	2
ONE-TO-ONES.....	4
CONCEPT OF POWER.....	6
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY.....	8
CIVIL SOCIETY.....	10
POL301 PLACEMENT.....	12
SKILLS DEVELOPED.....	14
WOMEN 100.....	16
SELF-INTEREST.....	18
POLITICS OF COMMUNITY ORGANISING.....	20
LIVIGN WAGE CAMPAIGN.....	22
APPLICATION PROCESS.....	24
POWER ANALYSIS.....	26
FUTURE IN COMMUNITY ORGANISING.....	28
SURVEY RESULTS.....	30
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	33

*Dr. Joseph Hoover, professor at Queen Mary University of London and Module Convenor for POL301 Civil Society Internship*

Getting the civil society internship started has been the work of many years and I'm thrilled to see it finally come together this year—a year filled with unique and profound challenges. For me, it brings together what is best about political engagement and university education by giving our wonderful, highly-motivated students a chance to be involved with the vibrant and active communities of London—and in coming together, to do the work of democracy. And democracy is work, hard but joyful work that is not done once election ballots have been cast, it depends on the always ongoing effort to bring people together to build and use their power collectively. And democracy is also learning, demanding but empowering learning about our common problems, the power of our communities, and the struggles for justice we can win. Meeting with the students during the internship and hearing about the work and learning they've done, I'm immensely proud of them. That pride extends to both Citizens UK and the School of Politics and International Relations at QMUL, as the partnership between our institutions made the internship possible. I'm also so proud of Afsana Salik's work to make the internship a reality, it wouldn't have happened without her effort and enthusiasm. As the students themselves testify, doing the work of politics, doing the work of democracy, is challenging and rewarding, frustrating and exhilarating, quotidian and transformative. To those that made it happen—including our outstanding first cohort of students: what a lovely thing we've done! Let's keep it going!

# DR. JOSEPH HOOVER



*Afsana Salik, Leader and Community Organiser for Citizens UK and TELCO and Module Mentor for POL301 Civil Society Internship*

While studying my undergraduate degree at Queen Mary University of London, with the School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR), I was introduced to Community Organising. I found both my course and Community Organising to be so interconnected. While my professors at SPIR teach about what politics is and the political theories, I was learning how to do the politics with Citizens UK. I could easily practice my knowledge in everyday life. I thoroughly enjoyed the combination of academia and activism. Since 2014, I have had a dream to bring Community Organising into part of academic learning. Soon after I graduated I was offered the Community Organising role for Tower Hamlets Citizens, that helped me to work on my dream. I am so grateful to my professors at SPIR especially Dr Joe Hoover who believed in me and gave me the opportunity to design a module for students, which is engaging, creative and fun. The aim of the module is to encourage students to focus on local communities. Social Justice is such a central part for Queen Mary, thus the relationship with Citizens UK is a special one. Citizens UK is all about creating an effective democracy that works for all. For that we need civil society to work together, connect with the local communities, build strong relationships with local mosques, churches and organisations and bring changes for the wider community. Community organising gives power back to the people, so they learn the theory, develop leaders and demand change. Being a mentor for 14 SPIR interns for the last 3 months, I have learnt how much these types of learning are needed and appropriated. Students have shared similar experiences about community organising as I had 5 years ago. While students were learning about community organising with me, they were developing some soft and transparent skills by working on campaigns and projects with organisers from 14 boroughs in London.

# A F S A N A S A L I K



They were able to build strong relationships with some local leaders from churches, mosques and others. I am so proud of them. As a proud alumni of SPIR and Community Organiser for Citizens UK, this pride is mutual for both SPIR and Citizens UK as the partnership between these institutions made the internship possible. I am so looking forward to strengthening this relationship and continue to offer this opportunity for future students who have the potential to become leaders and change the community in the best way possible.

# CITIZENS UK

"Citizens UK is a people power alliance of diverse local communities working together for the common good.

Our mission is to develop local leaders, strengthen local organisations which are the lifeblood of their communities and make change.

Our member communities are deeply rooted in their local areas. These schools, universities, churches, mosques, synagogues, parent groups, health trusts, charities and unions, are important civic institutions which connect every day to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Through the method of Community Organising we enable communities and local leaders to develop their voice and come together with the power and strategy to make real change."



*"We're a people powered alliance dedicated to challenging injustice and building stronger communities"*

*Citizens UK 2021*

# INTRODUCTION

This book is the product of a placement, run by the School of Politics and International Relations at Queen Mary University of London. Professor Joe Hoover, and Community Leader and Organiser Afsana Salik brought together a team of 14 third year students, training them as interns in community organizing and future leaders for change. Over the course of 12 weeks, these students have represented Queen Mary in their community, shadowing and assisting Citizens UK in their multiple campaigns, as well as creating and leading their own campaign for Mental Health in their university.

This book aims to share the journeys of these students throughout their placement, reflecting on things like their campaigns, their understanding of community organising, events like International Women's Day, amongst other topics. Equally, we aim to inspire other students to join this placement in the future, in hopes that they learn as much about community organising as we did. While the placement is normally held in East London, this year forced the placement to be held remotely, nevertheless giving us first-hand experience into community organising. It is clear to us that this is an invaluable experience which develops young leaders into creating the change they want to see in the world.

In the pages that follow you will find reflection on some stories that highlight the placement, we hope that you find in them the inspiration to become a part of change.

*"As we find ourselves more in need of hope than ever before, we know we need not wait for that hope before we act. It is not hope that leads to action, but rather action that leads to hope."*

*London Citizens  
Manifesto 2021*

# ALYA ADEKOLA

## "SPONSOR REFUGEES"

I have really enjoyed working for Sponsor Refugees over the last 12 weeks and I found that as time went by my knowledge of the process of Community Sponsorship grew massively from the first week in which I was unsure of exactly what Sponsor Refugees did. I now feel extremely comfortable and at home when promoting Community Sponsorship to new people without the supervision of our campaign lead. I have also really enjoyed independently identifying potential Community Sponsorship groups and subsequently reaching out to them. The work I have done with Sponsor Refugees is incredibly fulfilling, the nature of the work (refugee resettlement) has meant that I have had the pleasure of coming across some of the nicest and most kind-hearted people that society has to offer who all share the same vision of wanting to make positive changes to the lives of refugees. I have really enjoyed working with my campaign lead (Kimie) alongside the two other interns in my group. Kimie has really given me free rein to come up with my own ideas on how to spread awareness of Community Sponsorship and has encouraged my independence from day one. My favourite aspect of working with Sponsor Refugees has been creating a Welcome Pack resource that will be used even after our team has finished with the internship as it succinctly explains the process of Community Sponsorship to potential groups.



I have had countless opportunities to learn and improve my knowledge of the Community Sponsorship process, from the weekly "Lunch and Learns" to attending calls with Reset and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), every week has presented me with new and interesting information on all the different components of Community Sponsorship. I have also been tasked with responsibilities such as creating agendas for meetings and creating a strategy for how to grow Community Sponsorship in Scotland.

My general experience with Sponsor Refugees has been insightful and I am appreciative and have a lot of respect for the work they do. This experience has been very overwhelmingly positive, so much so that I feel it is necessary that after university is over and once I am in a fixed location I too must get involved with the Community Sponsorship of a refugee family as I have learnt and seen first hand all the incredible benefits of being involved.

**SPONSOR REFUGEES**  
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT  
**COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP**

"I wasn't looking to change my life - I have a busy job, teenage kids, lots of friends and am generally pretty fulfilled. But **Community Sponsorship did change my life**. Welcoming a family and having the privilege of resettling them into our rural Devon community turned my world upside down. On paper, it is the opportunity for ordinary people, like me, to provide a safe space for a vulnerable family who have been forced out of their homes due to war, conflict or persecution.

In reality it is far bigger than that. It is getting to know a broad cross-section of your local community who share the same values as you, but you may never have come to know. It is the bond that grows between that group as you meet together and push and pull over how we can best prepare and care for the family. It is then greeting the family at the airport and getting plunged into their world of life and colour and different foods, different perspectives, different cultural understandings, different life experiences and an immediate closeness that takes you by surprise. All of which, brings such a richness to your life that you never even realised you were missing.

This might explain why we went on to do it 4 more times and are still trying for more."

**Susannah Baler**  
Trustee of The Provell Foundation and Lead Sponsor for refugee welcome groups across North Devon.

**SPONSOR REFUGEES** 2

**What is in this guide?**

- What is Community Sponsorship? 4
- Why get involved? 5
- Stages of Community Sponsorship 6
- Alternative Methods of Involvement 13
- Frequently Asked Questions 16
- Contact Us 17

# SPONSOR REFUGEES

## Who we are?

### OUR HISTORY

Sponsor Refugees: The Citizens UK Foundation for the Sponsorship of Refugees was established in October 2017. The Foundation is a project of Citizens UK which organises communities to act together for power, social justice and the common good. Citizens UK first called for the introduction of sponsorship of refugees, based on the Canadian model, at the height of the refugee crisis in September 2015. Sponsor Refugees was launched at the East London Mosque on Monday 9th October 2017 with an event which brought together more than 200 people from across the UK.

**SPONSOR REFUGEES**  
Citizens UK Foundation for Community Sponsorship of Refugees

### OUR VISION

A healthy democracy with civil society at its heart. A Britain that is more open and welcoming.

**SPONSOR REFUGEES**  
Citizens UK Foundation for Community Sponsorship of Refugees

### OUR MISSION

Putting communities at the heart of welcoming refugees. Supporting refugees to rebuild their lives in Britain. Promoting community sponsorship as a core part of refugee protection. Celebrating strengthened communities, where everybody lives well together.

**SPONSOR REFUGEES**  
Citizens UK Foundation for Community Sponsorship of Refugees

### OUR VALUES

We welcome refugees. We are committed. We are pioneers. We work in partnership.

# ASMAA

# ABDULKARIM

## "ONE-TO-ONES"

The most vital aspect of community organising is building relationships through one-to-ones. As a community organiser, it is essential to stay engaged in fluid conversations with other community organisers, leaders, the public, religious communities, schools etc., to identify self-interest and develop a deep understanding of communities' concerns.

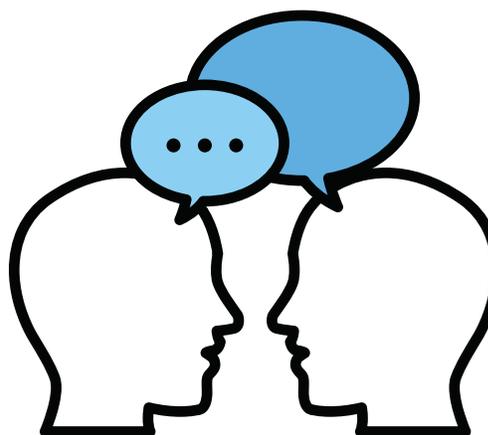
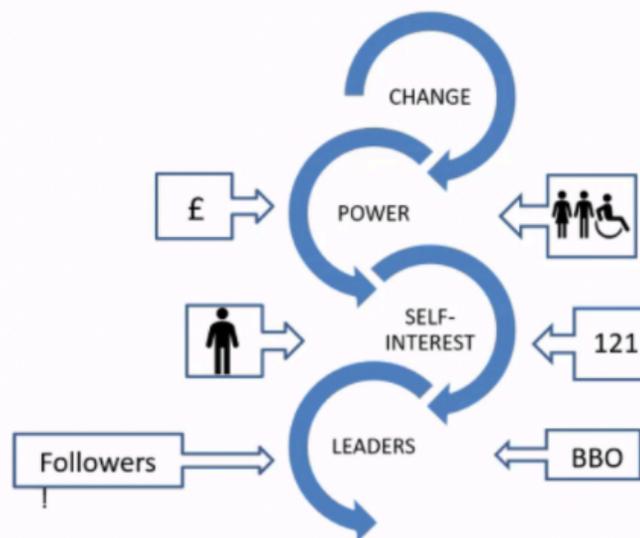
While shadowing my assigned organiser, I was given the task to conduct at least three one-to-ones a week to develop relationships with other leaders, other students on the internship, and people who could help us on campaigns. To get to know all the other students on the internship and introduce myself, I aimed to have at least one one-to-one a week. This allowed me to understand the other students and spark exciting conversations that later helped us develop a mental health campaign on our own. I enjoyed this opportunity to meet everyone personally outside of training and campaign work as this one-to-one's allowed us to get an insight into other campaigns and stay up to date with what everyone is doing with their organisers.

Simultaneously, it was nerve-wracking to start with because I had to reach out to people and ask to meet outside of hours with no planned agenda. However, as time went by, it became easier because we were all in the same boat. Besides building relationships with my peers, I also interacted with other leaders and community organisers involved in the campaigns I was working on.



I was tasked with reaching out to members of a mosque and asking for a one-to-one meeting where my campaign manager was shadowing to facilitate me whenever I needed help.. These one-to-ones took place to introduce ourselves and the campaign to mosque leaders to encourage them to join the campaign. This was very challenging because I struggle with a lot of anxiety. To reach out to senior members of a mosque was way out of my comfort zone, which I think has been necessary to build me into a better community organiser and more confident speaker. Additionally, this experience also showed me the importance of building personal relationships with communities and keeping this relationship strong through constant contact.

Overall, in community organising, listening and understanding people and their experiences is crucial for the job. This is called the 80-20 rule. It means that we listen for 80% of the time and speak for only 20% of the time. This means that listening to others is fundamental.



## The structure of a 121

### Opening:

Tell your name, credentials, tell your story (in no more than 4 minutes), then stop to let the other person respond to share theirs'.

### Middle:

Focus is on the other person.

Find out who they are, why they do what they do,  
Get some depth, not everything!

### End:

Ask them if they have questions for you.

Ask them if they have references for you - any one else who they think you should be meeting with.

# B I L E N

# B A R Z A G H I

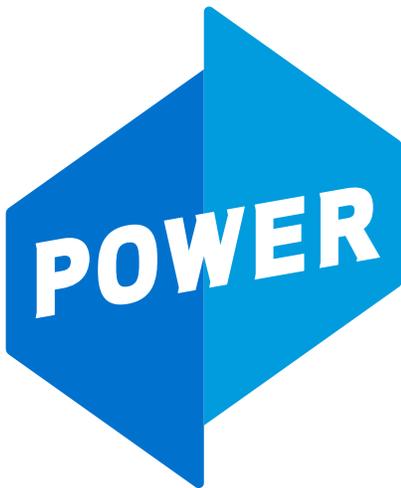
# " C O N C E P T O F P O W E R "

The concept of power has multiple nuances of meaning which in turn fuel different connotations. Starting with a fairly neutral definition, I would depict power as the ability to achieve purpose and affect change. What determines the connotation of power and its potential harmfulness, is the way in which it is used.

Mainly, we can identify four types of power: "power over", "power with", "power to" and "power within". On a general basis, leaders who use "power over", work with the premise that power has to be protected by using fear. The ultimate goal of "power over" is to leverage fear, divide and destabilise, give false sense of certitude and safety, based on nostalgia or ideology over facts. One way to maintain this kind of power is to give people a sense of certainty, even if it is just based on ideology and give people someone to blame for their discomfort. Essentially, "power over" is maintained through fear, demonstrating ever increasing capacity for cruelty (shaming, bullying etc) especially towards the most vulnerable groups. In this context, freedoms are used to polarise and being at service of other people is seen as a weakness. "Power over" makes people feel powerless, desperate, isolated. "Power over" dehumanises and stands at the starting line of hate, genocide and many other atrocities. On the other side, "power with" and "power to", share power with people. Leaders who work with "power with", "power to" and "power within", believe that power becomes infinite when shared with others



In this case, the goal is to leverage unity and community. The idea of decency is seen as the function of self-respect and respect for others. All the perspectives are acclaimed, and discomfort is normalised. Through this type of power, meaningful change and accountability can be achieved. Community organising is closer to this nuance of power. In this context, leadership is seen as the responsibility to serve others, rather than others being “served by you”. The ultimate goal is to empower people and not just concentrate power in the hands of a few and advocate for the people. Actions are empathy driven and human value is at the centre of everything. In order to achieve change, it is necessary to work with people and build relational power through one-to-one conversations and power analysis. The bigger the change you aim for, the bigger the amount of power you need. “You only get the justice that you have the power to make happen” (Bolton, 2017).



*from The New Yorker*

### **Six Degrees of Lois Weisberg**

*She's a grandmother, she lives in a big house in Chicago, and you've never heard of her. Does she run the world?*

**by Malcolm Gladwell**

Everyone who knows Lois Weisberg has a story about meeting Lois Weisberg, and although she has done thousands of things in her life and met thousands of people, all the stories are pretty much the same. Lois (everyone calls her Lois) is invariably smoking a cigarette and drinking one of her dozen or so daily cups of coffee. She will have been up until two or three the previous morning, and up again at seven or seven thirty, because she hardly seems to sleep.

In some accounts -- particularly if the meeting took place in the winter -- she'll be wearing her white, fur topped Dr. Zhivago boots with gold tights; but she may have on her platform tennis shoes, or the leather jacket with the little studs on it, or maybe an outrageous piece of costume jewelry, and, always, those huge, rhinestone-studded glasses that make her big eyes look positively enormous.

Cindy Mitchell first met Lois twenty-three years ago, when she bundled up her baby and ran outside into one of those frigid Chicago winter mornings because some people from the Chicago Park District were about to cart away a beautiful sculpture of Carl von Linné from the park across the street. Lois happened to be driving by at the time, and, seeing all the commotion, she slammed on her brakes, charged out of her car -- all five feet of her -- and began asking Cindy questions, rat-a-tat-tat: "Who are you? What's going on here? Why do you care?"

Own your  
**POWER**

# ERIN

# SCARSBROOK

# "INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY"

All of us have been impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, whether directly or indirectly. However, women and girls have also been fighting a shadow pandemic alongside the COVID-19 crisis, gender inequality. The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities such as home and childcare responsibilities, whilst resulting in the rise of violence against women and girls during lockdown. Experts have even estimated that the pandemic could erase up to 25 years of progress made in regards to women's rights and gender equality.

In times like this, as a woman it is easy to feel isolated and alone, therefore events like International Women's Day are incredibly important in providing an opportunity to recognise and celebrate women in our personal lives, as well as in society more generally. Women100's International Women's Day Event was nothing short of this. Over 115 diverse, brilliant women and girls joined together on Saturday 6th March to celebrate the talent and resilience of women within the local community. The atmosphere was indescribable and even more remarkable given that the event was hosted virtually - the love, warmth and connection was overwhelming and made me incredibly proud to be a woman sharing a space with so many other incredible women and girls. Therefore for me, although the COVID-19 Pandemic has been a brutal reminder of the injustices we face as women, the International Women's Day Event hosted by Women100 has made me truly appreciate the power of women.



It has opened my eyes to the limitless possibilities available to us if only we come together as a collective to make change. So although at times we may feel small, and we may feel powerless, International Women’s Day is an indication of how powerful women and girls are if only we believe in ourselves and our ability to challenge injustices to achieve change.

The work of Women100 and other exceptional women’s charities shows that with challenge comes change. So, will you join us in choosing to challenge inequality?

# Happy INTERNATIONAL Women's Day



## Roll Calls

Redbridge - Karin - SSPP  
 Brent and Harrow - Nabila  
 Barking and Dagenham - Vanessa  
 Waltham Forest - Averil  
 Newham - Caroline  
 Hackney - Asmaa  
 Tower Hamlets - Sajeda  
 Coventry University London - Shweta  
 Women 100- Erin

Follow us on Twitter:  
 @women100uk @TELCOCitizens @CitizensUK @Nearneighbours and #FromChallengeComesChange

# MICHAEL BROOK

## "CIVIL SOCIETY"

One of the biggest lessons I have learnt from my time working with Citizens UK is just how important a strong civil society is to ensure that our democracy operates with the needs of its citizens at its forefront. As a Politics student, it is unbelievably frustrating to see politics that is working against the community, putting certain communities at risk of stagnation and instability. If the needs of community are not met by governments and politicians, then who will help the communities who live with inequality? That is where civil society organisations such as Citizens UK come in.

Civil Society acts as an important sector that can ensure that governments uphold their commitments that they have made to the communities they are tasked to serve. In the UK, civil society comprises of a multitude of different organisations that are distinct from the government and, have the development of the community and its citizens at the top of their agenda. Citizens UK's continued community work contributes towards building a strong civil society that can ensure that its citizens are never forgotten in the decision making. This is done by forging strong relationships amongst different community groups, all united in cold anger with a desire to change the social inequality that persists in this world. These alliances are formed by developing strong leaders who can take the initiative and are not afraid to take action against the injustice in our communities. .



This is what Civil Society is all about, generating relational power that creates change by having community leaders at seat of the table who can challenge decision makers. One of the most memorable experiences of seeing a strong civil society was when the “Building Back Together: Levelling Up” Campaign arranged a summit with Rt Hon Robert Jenrick: Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The meeting had a turnout of almost 300 citizens from across the country, who all wanted to see Mr Jenrick work with us at Citizens UK to increase funding for genuinely affordable housing as well as providing routes out of poverty that tackle homelessness. Through the use of powerful stories from an array of great leaders from communities across the country, we emerged victorious as Mr Jenrick agreed to further meetings with Citizens UK about plans to implement Community Land Trusts that put community interests at the heart of housing, whilst fighting unaffordable housing and homelessness.

This powerful statement of people power showed just how important strong civil society organisations are in order to ensure that politics is serving the community. From a personal perspective, seeing democracy in action has been so inspiring. My politics degree teaches me about the political injustices of the modern day, which made me more frustrated as I struggled to see the solutions to these injustices. Working with Citizens UK in civil society has shown the capabilities of this sector at making real change that aims to unite people to show resilience by challenging decision makers.



## CITIZENS UK SUMMIT: BUILDING BACK TOGETHER

Citizens UK is working towards a national summit with Rt Hon Robert Jenrick on March 3rd 5-6.30pm, 2021. The Citizens UK Housing Summit is an opportunity to reflect on **where we are as a country when it comes to housing and how we might work with local and national government in their efforts to build back better**. We are working across Chapters and partnering with [Create Streets](#) to develop a series of events culminating in an assembly with senior Government officials and decision makers.



# MIRIAM

# LAROCQUE

# "POL301 PLACEMENT"

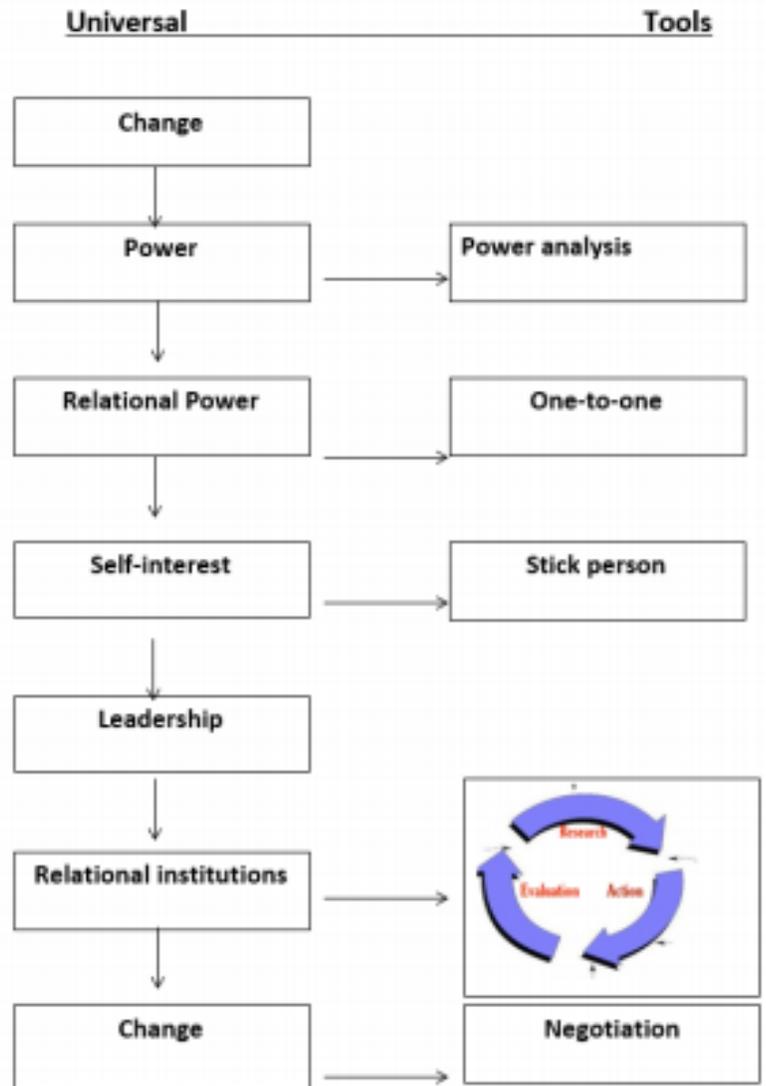
Community Organising is a powerful method of creating change and creating leaders. Prior to studying at university I had not heard of this and did not know how to make change on a more local level, or the impact of building relationships within the community. Since participating in a number of Citizens' actions, one of my favourite aspects of Community Organising is the involvement of young people who want to make a change. I have found it so inspiring to see young leaders from secondary schools across London chairing meetings with hundreds of attendees. Their confidence to do this is incredible – I cannot imagine having had such a responsibility at that age. The engagement of young people in Citizens' actions is very effective and shows the real impact of their work on future generations through both making change and empowering young leaders.

This placement has given us the opportunity to work with different campaigns both locally and nationally. I have been working with the Sponsor Refugees team whose work appeared initially very different to Community Organising but involves the same values through emphasis on community, relationship building and empowering both the community and refugee families. The process of Community Sponsorship was new to me when I joined this team and now, having learnt so much, I am able to advocate for this process and help form new sponsorship groups.



I have seen a huge cross-generational, cross-country network of people welcoming refugee families to the UK, trying to change the narrative about refugees often seen in the news. I really wish I were more certain about my post university plans so I could also start a group – hopefully in the future I will!

Our placement also included training with an Organiser, Afsana Salik, during which we have learnt so much, including the theory of power and five steps of social change. We are currently implementing these teachings through launching our own campaign at Queen Mary University. Although, I have found this to be very difficult at times, trying to implement our learnings as we go along, it has been invaluable to learning how we can actually make a change, even as a group of only 14 students, through the power of turn out and relationship building. As we are all working on different campaigns, I have gained further insight into Community Organising through sharing our experiences, for instance the importance of storytelling, training for local leaders, and the involvement of local people at every stage of Organising. I have really enjoyed being able to compare and exchange experiences and feel like I've been able to learn twice as much through others' stories.



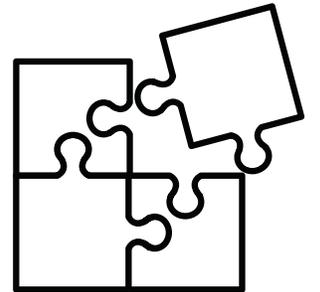
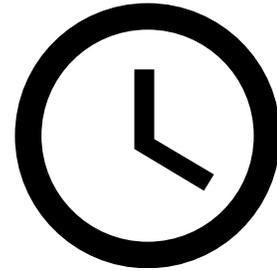
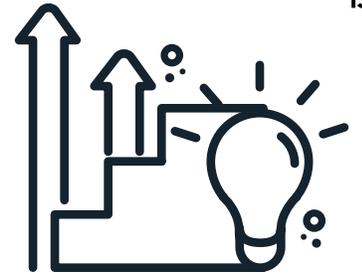
# NATALIE

# VELARDE

## "SKILLS DEVELOPED"

Community organising involves flexibility and commitment. Some days your schedule is full, other days your commitments may be cancelled. This is no easy task for the un-organised person. I was challenged into creating and frequently updating a schedule, as well as showing flexibility in my availability to these commitments. It was not rare to see events start early in the morning, and others up to six in the afternoon. Community Organising is fun, challenging and ever-changing, but most importantly, it is rewarding. Every time change occurs, every time justice is achieved, it makes it all worth it. I'll confess that I struggled with the schedule a lot as I have been in Mexico for the duration of the placement. Having a six hour difference has definitely been challenging, with events at three or four in the morning, I have come to understand the degree of my commitment to the placement. Taking advantage of every learning opportunity regardless of the time it was for me. I struggled, I truly did sometimes, but I must say it has all been worth it. Another skill that I have further developed during this placement is leadership, in terms of initiative and having people listen to you. This particularly happened for me in the International Women's Day event where I was tasked with timekeeping. I had never done timekeeping before, nor had I ever had such a big role in a significant event. I was dead nervous!





I was the person who would interrupt and cut off people if they went over their time limit. Needless to say the only two people I had to interrupt were literally an MP and a Chancellor! At that moment I had the power over two people of significant power in the UK! It was honestly nerve wrecking, and I could not believe I did it, but it was my job. Timekeeping became a task that is truly essential for events like these to be a success! I am so thankful for this experience that put me out of my comfort zone, even when I thought I was already comfortable as a leader. I had only truly led people equal to me, or even those whom I had some sort of authority over, but never someone who is in an actual position of power. This placement taught me things I would have never expected to learn, things I thought I did well, but made me take them a step further. These are only a few of the skills I developed, but I could go on for ages about the many things Citizens and Afsana have taught me.



# OCÉANE

# MORRISSON

# "WOMEN 100"

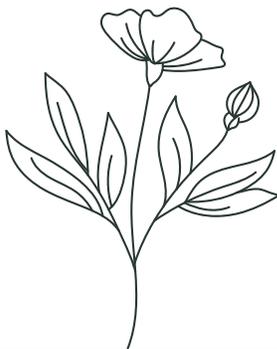
When I first heard that I was going to be working with Afsana in a group called Women100, I was very excited. I had a gut feeling that my experience with them will be fruitful and productive. Being surrounded by a group of smart and strong women of different ethnicities and faiths was something that I already was familiar with considering my upbringing, but it always remains a surprise to see that there are so many others who are women like me and share the same interests and passions as myself. As far as I can remember, our first meeting included an introduction and I was shadowing Afsana for most of the time. Additionally, I was also assigned individual tasks that included producing flyers, videos and research projects.

My first individual task required me to produce a flyer to promote and inform women from Citizens UK to attend intensive community organising training sessions for 3 days. Doing this was not as overwhelming as I thought it would be because I took a lot of pleasure in participating.

At the same time, my efforts were very appreciated by everyone in the team, so it kept on encouraging me to do more. Although I was very shy and took some time to make myself feel comfortable, I genuinely enjoyed getting to know other powerful women from different boroughs. Shadowing and note taking is something I really enjoy doing, because it allows me to put my listening skills to practice in a very fast-paced environment.



Every meeting felt like a “behind the scenes” of major actions we were about to organise, like the International Women’s Day event for instance. Despite the fact that it was very challenging for everyone to invest equal amounts of time in practicing, we still managed to construct a very successful event that inspired so many other women. Personally, it was such an important moment because it felt empowering to be part of something so huge and significant. The placement as a whole allowed me to learn and discover more things about myself, but I definitely think that working with such an influential group has taught me that no matter how old or what background I come from, I am still able to contribute to something huge and change people’s lives.



## TELCO WOMEN 100 PRESENTS: COMMUNITY ORGANISING TRAINING FOR WOMEN

Our aim is to increase women’s participation in the decision-making process. In these sessions you will be trained and eventually acquire tools and skills to make change in your local community. You must attend all sessions in order to complete this training.

Come attend our online training sessions on the:  
 Tuesday 16th February: 5.30pm-7.00pm  
 Wednesday 17th February: 5.30-7.00pm  
 Thursday 18th February: 5.30-7.00pm

For any enquiries contact Afsana Salik:  
[afsana.salik@citizensuk.org](mailto:afsana.salik@citizensuk.org)

**CITIZENS UK NEAR NEIGHBOURS**



# REBECCA

## JACKSON-WALLEY

### "SELF-INTEREST"

One of the key concepts we have learnt about during our training with Citizens UK is self interest - it being something that everyone has going into a conversation, whether they are initially aware of it or not. Learning about self interest was particularly interesting for me, because it made me think about this agenda everyone has, and the things that they are looking to gain from any given situation as a positive, rather than as something selfish. I especially found the 'stick-man' task useful, because it really encouraged us to take the time to reflect on what our own self-interest is, and question whether we always prioritize the right things. Particularly when working on a political campaign, you need to be able to go into discussions knowing what you want to get out of them, and while I would have previously found this perspective cold, perhaps even immoral, understanding the role of self interest in a new way has taught me of its true importance. Our training on self interest is also linked in well with some of the other key concepts we have learnt about, such as 1-2-1s, for it helped emphasise the importance of learning about the other individuals' self interests through your 1-2-1 conversations. Learning about it as a possible power building mechanism was also really eye-opening, because if you can understand what the interest of others is, then you are able to use that to your advance when negotiating or attempting to convince someone to support your campaign. Overall, I think my new understanding of self interest, as something other than selfishness, is going to be applicable to my personal life, as well as my political/non-profit career, because it made me think about the actions of others in a new way and reminded me that a little bit of self-prioritisation is necessary in order to get the outcome you want.



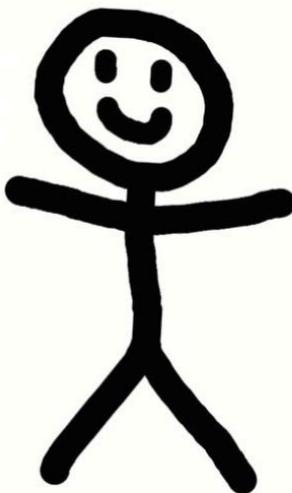
# My Stick-Person

**Most important people to me:**  
parents, grandparents, siblings & close friends

**Institutions:** QMUL,  
Citizens UK, Sir John Cass Hall

**important events in my life:**  
Living in the US & Italy for a while,  
moving to London (&Cass)  
Inter railing Europe

**What makes me happy?**  
my friends & family, traveling,  
music, skating, exploring



**How do I spent my money?**  
rent (living city I like)  
traveling, clothes, having a good  
time with friends

**What makes me angry?**  
the fact that there are so many  
people who are so less privileged  
then me simply because of where  
they were born

**Hopes and fears?**  
Hope that the world is going to  
become a more equal place  
I'm scared that inequality is  
going to grow

**How to do I spend my time?**  
Uni work & internship & part time job  
as much time as possible with my  
friends because they make me  
happiest

**Relationship:**  
daughter, granddaughter,  
sister, aunt, friend

**Ambition:**  
want to graduate Uni with a 1st  
Want to be successful and well  
respected within my field



# SCOTT EMERY

## "POLITICS OF COMMUNITY ORGANISING"

Those of us who wonder about the answers to these questions are concerned with politics and the nature of power in society. We are concerned for a number of reasons but primarily because we care. We care about purpose of power and the agenda it facilitates. We care about how power is distributed and within whom it is vested. We care about the scope of power and its dynamic with autonomy. But above all we care because we know that to realize the change we want to see, we need power.

Acquiring power is where things get tricky for it necessitates entering the game of politics, a game long shaped within the corridors of power by those who so fiercely defend it. This is no secret. Generation upon generation has found political power to be wielded exclusively by a political class quite unlike themselves. Unable to see ourselves reflected within this game of suits and boardrooms we feel an otherness that weakens our political agency and moves us towards a politics of anger but not change. Whilst this perception is clearly related to the actual practice of politics, it is ill-founded, the product of a societal misdiagnosis of politics as solely between state and market elites. This is not politics for politics is everywhere, but rather, a manifestation of the dire health of democracy.

At Citizens we make an important contribution to this discussion of practicing politics, one which government-after-government has systematically neglected in the UK. We talk about Civil Society, upholding it as the key to unlocking real participatory democracy for all.



Civil Society represents the missing piece of our democratic jigsaw, long preventing us from understanding its full picture which includes you and I in equal measure to the rich and powerful, why? Because we too are politically powerful when enriched by the relational power of community. By building community networks of people and organizations, we create a power much greater than that of the individual, for its objectives are rooted in the desires of the community and as such carry its collective power. Power in this way is the essence of civil society for it is one of the few tools at citizens' disposal capable of counterbalancing the elite dominion over power. This is true so far as civil society is powerful enough to perform its democratic function of holding politicians and market elites to account, a process I've found to be much smoother in a room full of committed citizens than by my own efforts. For whilst brushing off the concerns of one citizen is light-work, brushing off a citizen collective has far greater repercussions, the kind that can not be so easily ignored. As both voters and consumers, we the people are the kingmakers for competing products and the brand of legitimacy worn by government. It is upon the foundations of our consent - this social contract of sorts - that power was intended to be wielded, and yet when have we truly felt like we have consented to the changes in this country? Perhaps this is why we are concerned about politics but do not acknowledge ourselves as politically powerful people. It is not often we give second chances when we feel our consent has been disregarded and yet that is exactly what we must do if civil society is again to represent a force in our democracy.

This is the politics of community organizing and the way we realise the change we want to see, by encouraging those who have lost faith in politics to reimagine it with one's community at its centre. The politics of community organizing is one which sees us identifying and empowering community leaders, bringing people of all walks of life together under one banner, listening to the realities that others face, at all times spreading the message of hope and solidarity. This is politics for those who care.

***“What power have you got? Where did you get it from? In whose interests do you exercise it? To whom are you accountable? And how can we get rid of you” – Tony Benn***



# SHAHIN PATEL

## "LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN"

I have enjoyed working for the Living wage campaign for Citizens UK and I have found that my knowledge on community organising and campaigning has grown over the past 12 weeks. I was able to see the importance of campaign efforts to tackle inequality and low pay in London. The Living wage campaign was initiated in 2001 and has sought to recognise the valuable work of low-wage workers such as cleaners, security guards, caterers, and care workers. I was able to shadow the Living wage action team consisted of an alliance of local schools, faith institutions and the Living wage foundation (LWF).

I was able to learn how the LWF recruit and accredit employers. A key point for employers to become accredited focuses on paying the living wage (hourly rate of £10.88). They also make a commitment to provide their workers (aged 18 and above) with minimum 16 hours of work per week and decent notice period for shifts (4 weeks).

I enjoyed learning about how community organising and how it can turn into collective action by working alongside Alistair and other local organisations. During the placement, I was able to contribute research and power analysis on the Royal Docks, for their plans of helping Royal docks to become a living wage place.

It was exciting to see that Newham Citizens had gotten many organisations to sign up to become a Living wage employer, such as London City Airport, Tate & Lyle, and Newham council through inspiring campaigning efforts from member institutions like St Antony's school's song "build back better".



They used other campaigning methods such as of low wage workers testifying their hardships or the use video clips of workers who have been positively impacted by earning the living wage. The campaign has produced tangible improvements to the material conditions of workers through providing them with a fair wage, as workers feel more valued and committed to their job.



It is important to note that, from the 28.2 million people employed in the UK, 28% of BAME workers are working below Real LW, compared to 15% of white workers, although BAME population makes up only 13% of the population. Hence, one can see that the Living wage is not only a gendered issue, but also a race issue, that still needs to be tackled. The pandemic that the living wage campaign is still needed to turn recognition (clapping)of key workers into action to create social justice, to enable London to become a living wage place.



# SOPHIE

# THOMHAVE-LEE

# "APPLICATION PROCESS"

The application process for the opportunity to be part a 12-week internship with Citizens UK was a really valuable experience. This process included an initial presentation by Afsana Salik about the core values of Citizens UK, their current work and the values and skills people who wish to get involved should have. This was great to hear about the opportunities we would have the privilege to be involved in.

After deciding this was the right opportunity for me, I then had to produce a CV and cover letter alongside having a 1-2-1 interview with Afsana. This not only allowed me to develop employability skills on paper, but the interview itself gave me an insight into how Citizens UK value getting to know you as a person, rather than a candidate. It was then after this interview that we found out we got our place and met for the first time as a group. The interview involved questions about a time we have seen power in action, used our own power for change and how we would plan on inspiring people as leaders.

The application process was accessible for anyone interested in the internship and was a friendly and supportive experience. It was really valuable to learn about the core values a great community organiser would have and reflect on our own experiences and values. Rather than being a daunting experience, because Citizens UK focuses on importance of building relationships, the interview was an exciting opportunity to get to know everyone involved in the internship and discover shared passions.



## ▼ PLACEMENT DETAILS

The module involves a placement of 2 days per week running during Semester 2 of the student's final year, book-ended by two workshops at QM, the first in January, where those taking the module prepare for their placement, and the second, in April, where students will reflect on their experiences.

Essentially, students will work in a local civil society organisation (TELCO) between January and Easter, for 2 days per week—students will arrange their working schedule around their timetable and the organisation's needs. Students will be assessed in the middle by writing a job advert for their role, and at the end via a Reflective Journal. Students chosen by an organisation will be required to drop 30 credits worth of modules they are currently due to take in Semester Two.

**\*\*Please note, students should not do this until they are offered a placement\*\***

During the placement students will complete approximately 50 hours (4 hours per week) of formal training in community organising, along with approximately 100 hours (8 hours per week) of practical work

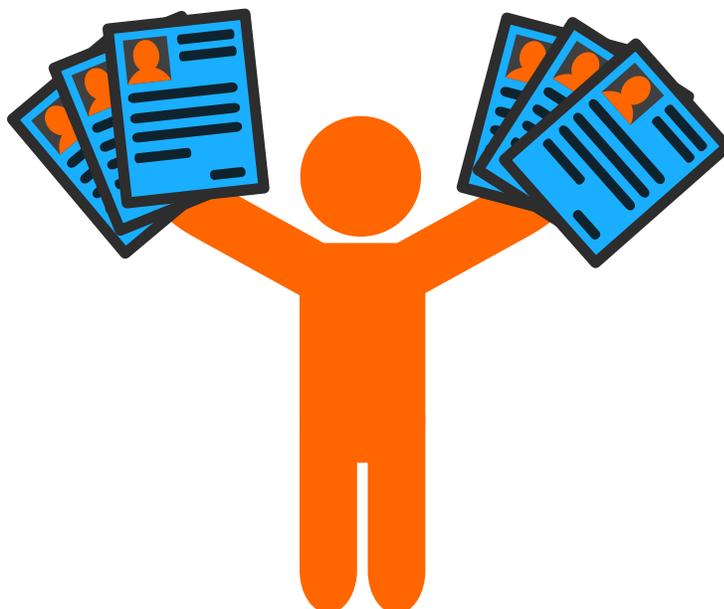


## POL301 - CIVIL SOCIETY - INTERNSHIP 2020/21

[Home](#) > [POL301 - Civil Society - Internship 2020/21](#)



This module is designed to give those who take it a view of civil society and political activism from the inside out. Students will spend two days per week between January and April working for a civil society organisation in London. The module will be assessed by students completing a short coursework and reflective journal of their day-to-day experiences.



I would encourage anyone who is interested to get involved; it's an amazing experience and the reward of creating change together as a team is a powerful feeling

# TABITHA

# PURSLOW

## "POWER ANALYSIS"

Before beginning my internship working with Citizens UK, I had not heard of a Power Analysis. Though I recognised the importance of understanding the key players and power holders in any given situation, a power analysis helped me to develop a logical method to establish those in power, and the hierarchy of power which may exist to help when leading community-led campaigns.

A power analysis is an essential process when starting a community campaign. This begins with noting all the relevant individuals with power who may be able to support the campaign, if a campaign is centred in making change within a specific institution this will mostly all be individuals with important roles in the institution, if it was making change within a community more generally it would list perhaps council members, and the other notable community leaders. The power analysis focuses on individual people, rather than a whole group, as this ensures you can build relational power, such as having a one to one meeting, as this may make it easier to draw sympathy and also delivers a more straightforward path to results.

In our example, we made a power analysis for our project on improving Mental Health Services at Queen Mary. After we had established what our problems were with the quality of services and lack of support for Mental Health, we then made a Power Analysis in format of a graph.



We needed to decide how much power an individual may have in our campaign- as shown on the y-axis we wrote 'Power' and on the x-axis we measured 'Support'. We then placed people from our own opinions on whether we thought these individuals- based on their role within QM, we also then gave them three defined roles 'Decision makers', 'Organised allies' and 'Unorganised allies'. This process helped us research more on our project and also encouraged us to reach out to individuals when it was clear they would be important to progress.

By creating my own power analysis, I learnt about the established power structures which exist within Queen Mary, and also helped me to reflect on how important it is to draw attention on individuals power, and how power can be used in different ways. I found a power analysis hard at first, as I felt it was difficult for me to define someone's power myself, but by discussing it with other interns and the community organisers I better understood how essential they are. Because building relationships with power figures is a key aim of community organising to make change happen, and if you're not working with power you're against it, and that can't always get the best result. As we're often reminded throughout our time working with Citizens UK, if you're not at the table, you're probably on the menu!

**POWER**

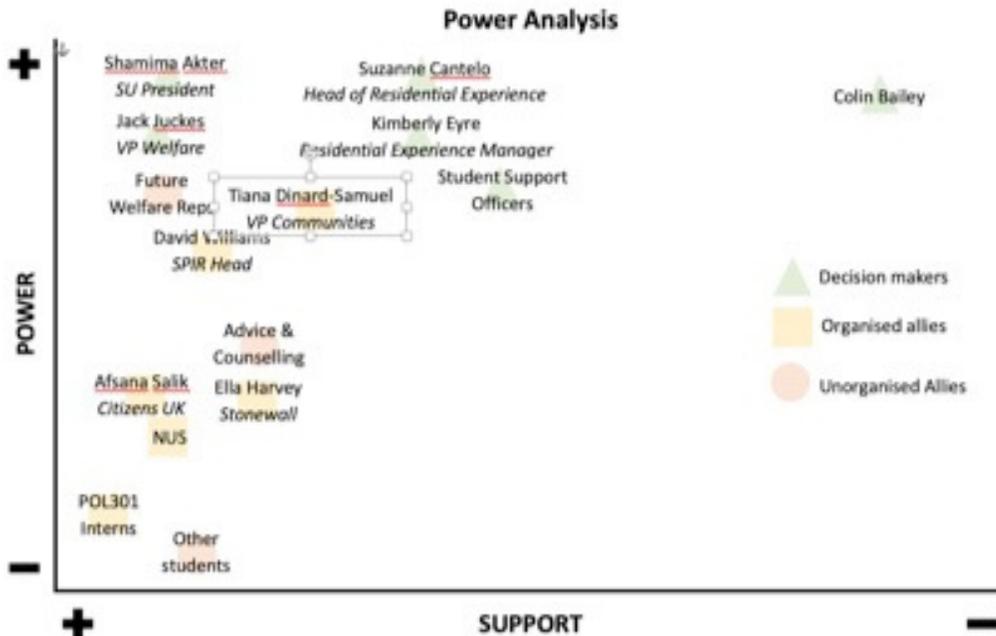
Argument- At the beginning. If you want change, you need power. The kind of power we are comfortable with is relational power.

# POWER

**Power analysis**

**NOTES AND REFLECTIONS**

Argument- We have established that in order to make change you need power and that in Citizens UK we build relational power. We have also established that in order to act effectively in the real world, you need to understand how power works. This session is about a practical tool to help us understand how power works around us.



# TARA JENKINS

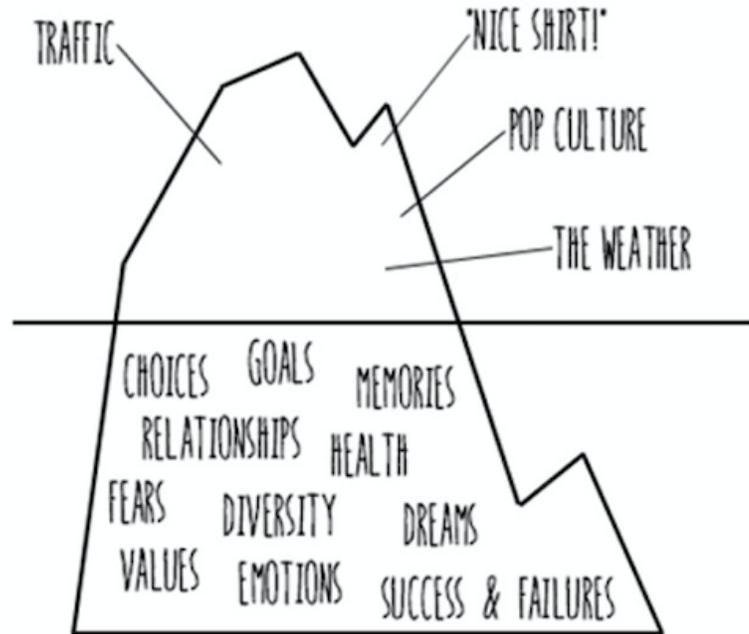
## "FUTURE IN COMMUNITY ORGANISING"

Before starting my placement at CitizensUK I felt like change seemed impossible. Exhausted from party politics I wanted to explore and understand alternative methods of change. Having very minimal knowledge of CitizensUK prior to starting my placement I was hesitant, for much of my knowledge associated power only being possible at the top of the hierarchy. CitizensUK challenged this perspective, leaders are all around us with their own stories and concerns for what needs to be changed. This focus on leadership is something I will take forward with me. In particular, the focus on relational listening through one to ones. Whilst these seemed daunting at first, it is a worthwhile task as you are able to truly understand the individual in front of you, especially if you apply the 'stick-person' model. This allows you to focus on areas that matter to them, who the most important people around them are, what makes them happy, what makes them angry, and also what power they hold. This is mostly drawn out from individuals they know, or institutions they are a part of. However, developing leaders is a constant process. Because of this, it is important to set personal targets and schedule reflections in, in order to see the progress, you have made and recognise your achievements. This is something that can be quite difficult, especially for myself, as I constantly feel like I should be doing more without recognising what I have already done first.



Because of this, I found the evaluation step of actions incredibly important, as it is a great way for not only yourself but for other leaders to take ownership of their achievements.

Whilst I may not find myself working in Community Organising, although I would certainly look for such a position, CitizensUK's values are invaluable and are worthwhile in being implemented into other institutions. Power does not need to be held by only the few, we can all strive to get a seat at the table. At the same time, we must work with leaders in the community, not speak for them, otherwise we risk overshadowing the important issues that individuals truly want to see justice on.



# Evaluation

- +the diversity of who is here - so good!
- From [redacted] ELATT to Everyone:
  - +activities
- From [redacted] to Everyone:
  - + discussion
- From [redacted] ELATT to Everyone:
  - Good presentations
- From [redacted] to Everyone:
  - + connecting with very diverse women
- From [redacted] to Everyone:
  - Stick-woman homework ++
- From [redacted] to Everyone:
  - more training
- From [redacted] Everyone:
  - +hearing everyone's one-to-ones/thoughts

It's about *"bringing up stories that reveal people's deepest commitments and the experiences that gave rise to them"* (Chambers, pg. 45, Roots for Radicals)

- From [redacted] to Everyone:
  - focused
- From [redacted] to Everyone:
  - intrigued
- From [redacted] to Everyone:
  - purposeful
- From [redacted] to Everyone:
  - good
- From [redacted] to Everyone:
  - engaged
- From [redacted] ELATT to Everyone:
  - I feel affirmed
- From [redacted] to Everyone:
  - energised
- From [redacted] to Everyone:
  - Agree reflective



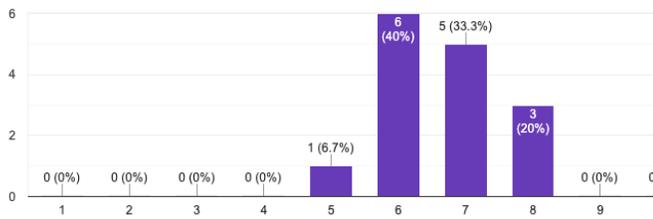
# SURVEY RESULTS

## BEFORE & AFTER THE PLACEMENT

### BEFORE

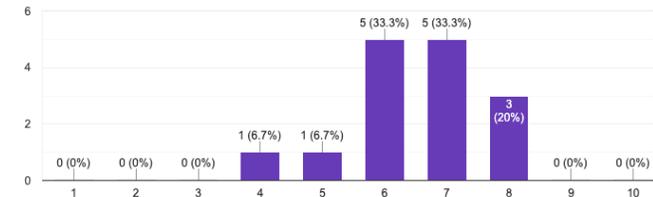
How do you rate your current leadership skills?

15 responses



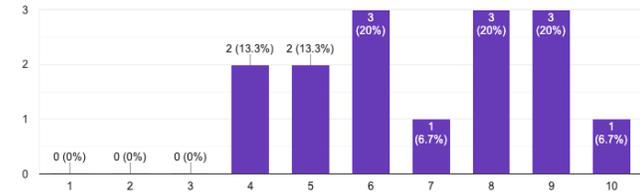
How do you rate your current public speaking skills?

15 responses



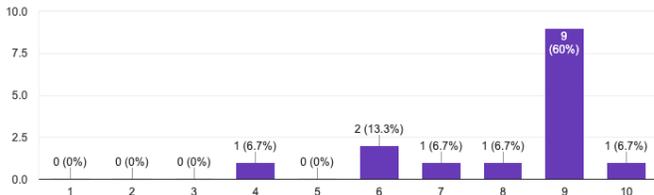
How do you rate your organisation skills?

15 responses



How confident are you in building relationships with people different to yourself?

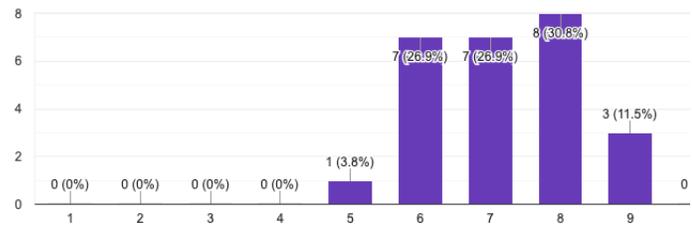
15 responses



### AFTER

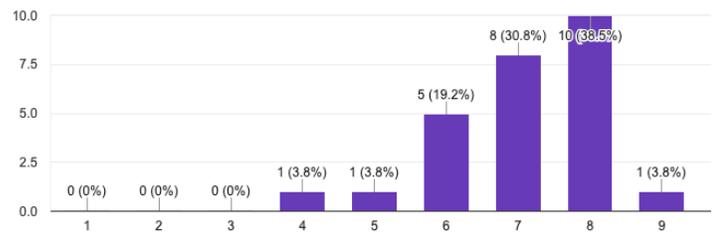
How do you rate your current leadership skills?

26 responses



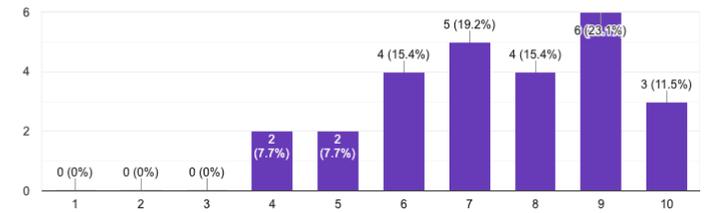
How do you rate your current public speaking skills?

26 responses



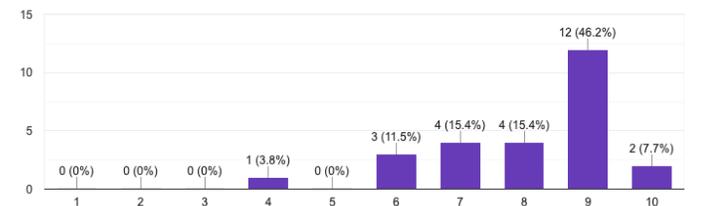
How do you rate your organisation skills?

26 responses



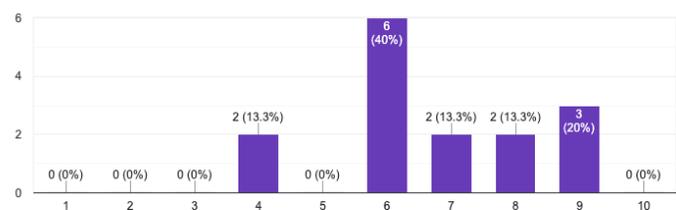
How confident are you in building relationships with people different to yourself?

26 responses



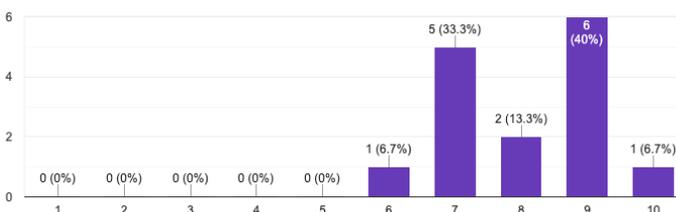
How do you rate your storytelling skills

15 responses



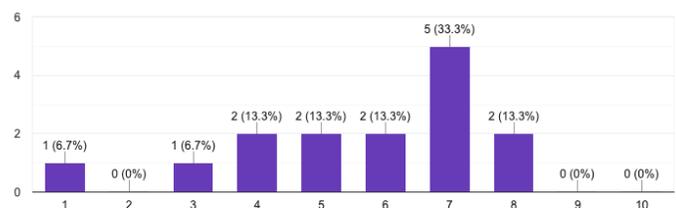
How do you rate your teamwork skills?

15 responses



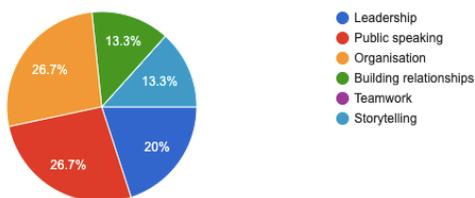
How well do you feel connected to Tower Hamlets

15 responses



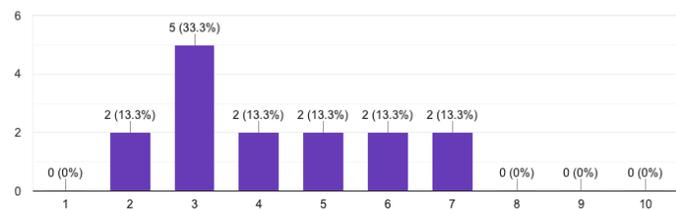
What is one skill you want to improve on by the end of the internship?

5 responses



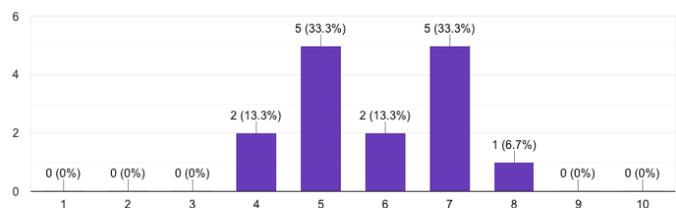
How engaged are you with the local power? e.g. decision makers

15 responses



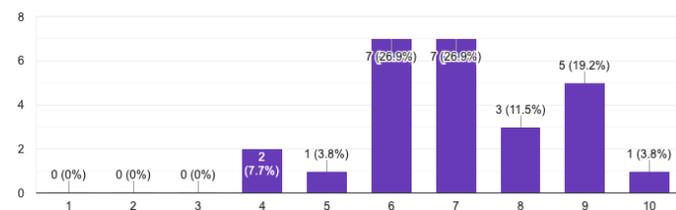
How much understanding do you have of community organising?

15 responses



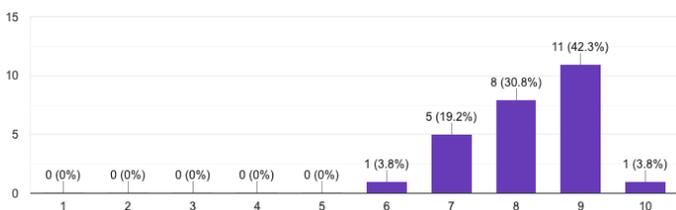
How do you rate your storytelling skills

26 responses



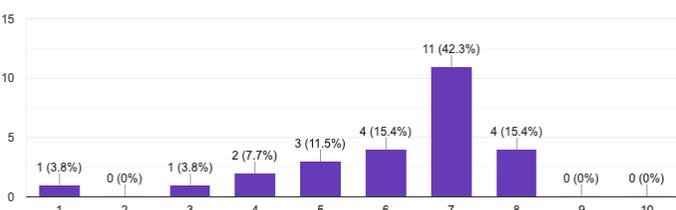
How do you rate your teamwork skills?

26 responses



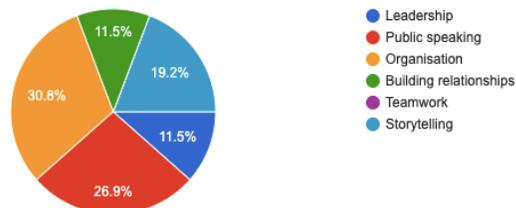
How well do you feel connected to Tower Hamlets

26 responses



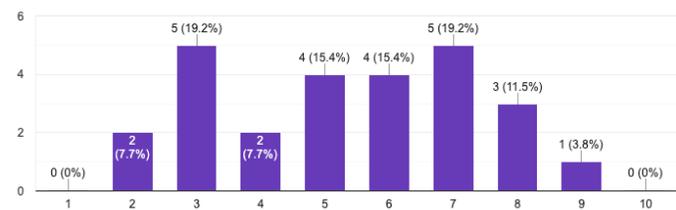
What is one skill you want to improve on by the end of the internship?

26 responses



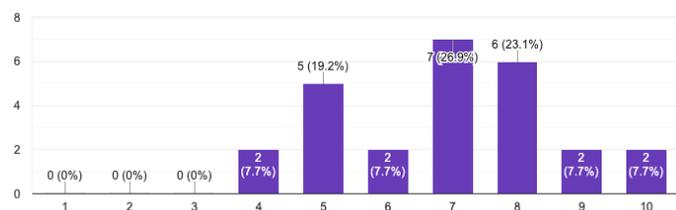
How engaged are you with the local power? e.g. decision makers

26 responses



How much understanding do you have of community organising?

26 responses



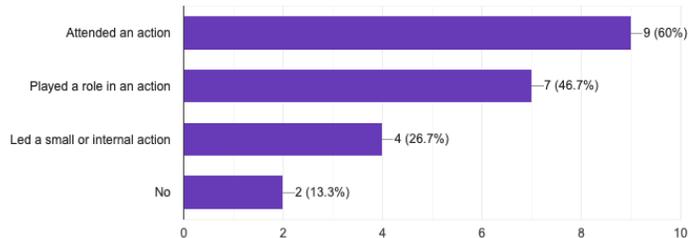
Before the internship, had you been involved in achieving change?

15 responses



Before the internship, had you done any of the following in taking action?

15 responses



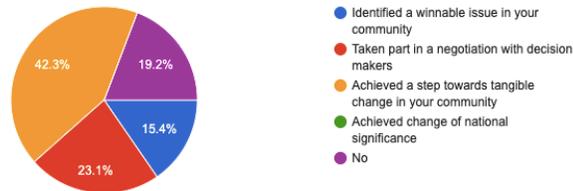
Before the internship, which out of these would you feel confident doing regards storytelling?

15 responses



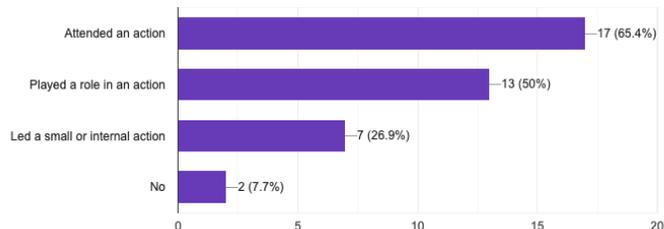
Before the internship, had you been involved in achieving change?

26 responses



Before the internship, had you done any of the following in taking action?

26 responses



Before the internship, which out of these would you feel confident doing regards storytelling?

26 responses



Not only had the placement improved our leadership, storytelling, public speaking and organisational skills, but it has also made us feel more confident, more involved with our communities, and more engaged with change.

We hope that these results serve as inspiration to others looking to be a part of both this placement, as well as community organising.

Working with Citizens UK is a life-changing experience, focused on developing leaders for change, fighting for justice, and giving people hope.





# THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF OUR JOURNEY IN COMMUNITY ORGANISING

SPECIAL THANKS TO EVERYONE IN  
THIS BOOK FOR THEIR  
COMMITMENT TO THIS  
PLACEMENT;

THANKS TO JOE HOOVER AND  
AFSANA SALIK FOR FACILITATING  
THIS PLACEMENT;

THANKS TO ALL CITIZENS UK  
LEADERS FOR THEIR GUIDANCE  
AND SUPPORT;

THANKS TO QUEEN MARY  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON AND SPIR  
FOR THEIR COLLABORATION.

***citizens***<sup>uk</sup>



**Queen Mary**  
University of London

