

THE FUTURE FOR UNION COMMUNITY ORGANISING



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About this publication

Unions21 provides an 'open space' for discussion on the future of the trade union movement and the world of work. Unions21 has helped shape unions since 1993 by providing evidence, advice, new thinking and networks.

The growing interest in union community organising and the development of community-based strategies is an area which Unions21 has been exploring for several years.

This year we held roundtable discussions in Brighton and Nottingham to bring those at the forefront of union community organising together.

At the Brighton event in April our panellist were Mathew Danaher, UNISON's community organising coordinator; Dr Ian Greenwood from the University of Leeds; Stewart Owadally a Community Organiser for Movement for Change and Simon Burgess from Brighton Labour Party. The event was chaired by Paul Bromley, a Regional Officer from the Society of Radiographers.

At our event in Nottingham in June we brought together Liane Groves, Unite Community National Organiser;

Rob Jenks, Senior Community Organiser of the TSSA; George Gabriel from Nottingham Citizens and the event was chaired by Catherine Atkinson, Secretary of the Society of Labour Lawyers.

Our roundtable discussions (available to watch on youtube.com/Unions21) have helped shaped this publication, which we hope will stimulate much needed further debate and analysis of union community organising, its strengths and weaknesses, and significance to the future of unions.

Sue Ferns

Chair of Unions21



Unions21 roundtable in Nottingham

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One such beneficiary is the 999 Club, which offers comfort, respite, advice and guidance to the most isolated, excluded and lonely people in society. The Club's 5,000 users suffer multiple problems, often the result of rotten childhoods, which manifest into any combination - homeless, addicted, physically and mentally-ill, ex-offenders, victims of crime and abuse, elderly as well as the neglected and vulnerable children of the 999 Club's users.

The 999 Club operates two centres in one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the London Borough of Lewisham, namely Deptford and Downham. The Club also runs a small nursery for vulnerable families and every winter, a temporary night shelter.

Thanks to the support of our charity which has pledged a 4 year grant to help fund the salary of the Club's Advice & Advocacy Worker, Alison sees approximately 75 people a month. Many of these people do not have the literacy skills to be able to deal with bureaucracy and many find the housing and benefit system confusing, alien and intimidating.

The following case illustrates the 999 Club's work thanks to our financial support:-

'M' is 57 years old and has worked all of his life in a variety of jobs, renting lodgings as he went along. When his last job finished, he could not find another and so, when his money ran out, he became homeless and ended up in the 999 Club night shelter. Alison found him a room in a shared house in Abbey Wood, owned by a private landlord, with whom she has developed a good working relationship. She secured a Crisis Loan and helped him apply for benefits. M now has a roof over his head while he looks for further work.

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Foreword

For the people, of the people, by the people – Unions and community organising - Kevin Rowan and Carl Roper

Over recent years the use of the terms 'community organising' and 'community campaigning' has increased considerably within the trade union and wider labour movement. They have been used to describe a range of activities from genuine community based organising to community campaigning and coalition building. The increased prevalence of 'community' in the discourse around how to establish and maintain 'strong unions' reflects a growing aspiration of trade unions and other organisations to reach out to new groups of people and to give voice and through that power to those in society in most need of it.

A number of trade unions now have community organising strategies and have employed dedicated community organisers. To take a few examples, TSSA is using community organising practices of coalition building to build support amongst commuters for their rail campaigns and last year Unite launched its Community membership scheme, an attempt to engage with and mobilise unemployed workers. Unison has a programme of reaching into communities through 'Community Learning Champions' and many unions have used the Union Learning Fund ULF to take the 'learning offer' into community groups and organisations. The Labour Party, particularly since the election of Ed Miliband as leader, has

embraced community organising and has employed American community organiser Arnie Graf to advise on how it can revitalise its constituency parties; and of course Movement for Change, although not formally linked to the Labour Party was established in 2010.

This is all enormously welcome and encouraging. At a time when the pressures on ordinary people from government policies and employers can appear overwhelming, the increase in community and people centred organising that has the specific purpose of capturing and using the power that people create when working in collaboration with each other is massively important.

Whilst the jury is still out in respect of evaluating the impact of these and other initiatives, they do show a propensity to innovation and a determination to reach parts of the community and sectors of the economy where union presence and influence is limited.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume all communities are 'unorganised'. Regardless of whether the community is defined by place or locality, common identity, or just common interest there is often some form of organisation to be found. It is often the institutional cultural

clash that is a source of tension between disciplined, democratic, well-established, trade union organisational structures and the more spontaneous, often issue-led, bottom-up dynamics of community organisations.

These tensions are, of course, also opportunities, affording unions the chance to identify common cause, and to collaborate and coalesce on the basis of genuine dynamic activism. This aspiration is certainly central to the TUC's recently launched 'Campaign Plan' which seeks to place the TUC on a much stronger campaign footing.

Of course unions were the original community organisers, and indeed existing union workplace reps are eight times more likely to be active in their local communities than other members of the general public. On this basis, the relationships that we develop with other 'community organising' advocates and organisations should be based less on them teaching us how to organise but rather on that all important question of how we can turn the power we create working with each other into power over campaign targets.

That is not to say that unions have nothing

“ There is clearly a sense that reaching into communities increases the trade union voice, both in terms of how loudly it is heard and also how widely.”

to learn from others in respect of actions, tactics and strategies but all too often the

representatives of community orientated campaign groups and organisations display an ignorance of what unions are and have achieved whenever they speak of us and sometimes even to us. There can sometimes also be a tendency in the determination to embrace community organising to forget the strengths of trade union organisation and what it has achieved. Compare the number of times you've read glowing testaments by progressive journalists (and even some trade union officials) to the great work of London Citizens in respect of the Living Wage, to the scarcity of coverage given to the wage increases secured by unions, the jobs and services saved or the work of our workplace reps who every day make life at work better or even just more tolerable for tens of thousands of people.

Last year the TUC as part of its Future that Works campaign ran what were in effect three community organising pilots in the North West, the Midlands and North London. They were useful not only in that they produced some innovative and effective campaign work, but also in what they revealed about the awareness of and capacity to engage in collaborative community organising at a local and even hyper-local level.

Whilst the pilots received support from some unions nationally and regionally, engagement by local union branches was less consistent. There are good reasons for this, not least the massive pressure local reps are under in the current political and industrial context, but just as reps are the real face of the union at work, they can make the biggest union contribution to community organising.

The pilots also revealed what we have long suspected, that in the UK the extent of structured and purposeful community

organising and what the Australian community organiser and academic Amanda Tattersall has called 'power coalitions' is limited. Although subject to a great deal of discussion and attention over recent years, there remains a significant lack of understanding about community organising in the UK and relatively few examples, particularly outside London, of it being practiced. This suggests that organisations (unions and others) aren't yet geared up to make the necessary investment of resources and compromises in respect of policy and modes of operation that are required to both engage with and make community organising and campaigning effective.

As well as drawing lessons from this recent initiative, unions might draw some lessons from the early years of the New Unionism project that saw the development of the Organising Academy. We would do well to avoid what has been called 'organising fundamentalism' - a tendency to see the process of organising, rather than the outcome, as more important; and linked to this, we should not be afraid to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of what we are doing.

The most basic test of the effectiveness of any campaign is 'are we winning?' but if you're looking for something more sophisticated you may look to the aforementioned Amada Tattersall, Janice Fine from the US and our own Jane Holgate; all of whom have produced excellent work studying and evaluation community organising in a variety of contexts.

All three suggest that successful community organising and coalition building initiatives contain the following elements; they create and strengthen alliances; they build an understanding

within communities of power and leverage and use innovative tactics to successfully mobilise people against clear campaign targets (whoever it is who can give the constituency what they want). Unions might also ask if we are increasing our reach, influence and organisational capacity?

There is clearly a sense that reaching into communities increases the trade union voice, both in terms of how loudly it is heard and also how widely. There is also little doubt that broader campaign coalitions, particularly those that embrace groups and individuals hit hardest by the coalition government's austerity and cuts programme, add considerable weight to the relevance and legitimacy of TUC and union campaigns.

In the context of public services

“ Finding new ways for people to hear about and experience the campaigning dynamic of trade unions is important.”

campaigning, for example, trade unions are often unfairly characterised as 'provider interests'. Community based campaigning helps to demonstrate that trade unions are not merely concerned with jobs, employment standards and pay (not that there is anything wrong with that), but that their priorities also extend to service provision, both in terms of quality and of scope.

This is important as here is a gap between public opinion and experience of trade unions. The concept of trade unions and being in one is certainly more popular than

both the statistics on union membership and the coverage in the media would suggest. The problem for unions is that too many people have never had a lived experience of being in a union and think that unions are a good idea for people other than themselves, so finding new ways for people to hear about and experience the campaigning dynamic of trade unions is important.

The extent to which this genuinely collective voice is resonating with audiences that don't already share our values and influencing those who are the target of our campaigns, is less clear. There is little evidence, yet, that the government is inclined to change course in respect of its economic policy and whilst the majority of the public believe that the cuts are unfair, they still believe that they are necessary.

“ Learning from what has been undertaken and achieved so far will be critical.”

To conclude, it is clear that a more strategic, properly resourced and widely

supported emphasis on community organising offers unions the opportunity to supplement the all important task of increasing union membership and recognition and improve the work they do in relation to three key areas of activity.

Firstly, reaching out to the majority of workers in the UK who don't work in a unionised workplace, in a way that enables us to demonstrate our relevance to them and effectiveness as campaigning organisations. Secondly, improving our industrial leverage by bringing pressure to bear on employers from a much broader base than just the union members in a particular workplace or company. Finally, to win wide public support for political and economic campaigns on a range of issues from a new economy, decent services and rights and respect at work.

Learning from what has been undertaken and achieved so far will be critical, as will finding the answers that enable the movement to cover the hard yards of turning membership of community coalitions into membership of stronger unions that can create not just better workplaces for our members but a fairer society for all.

1: Introduction

A turn to community organising in the UK?

Professor Jane Holgate

Recent years have seen a number of UK unions considering how to (re) engage with communities in order to rebuild the links that were so important to the origins and development of trade unionism. We've seen parts of the UK union movement investing time and resources into exploring whether community organising can engage new actors and new union members in fighting for workers rights and against social injustice more broadly.

But are we really witnessing a turn to community-based organising and, if so, in what form/s, and what does this mean for the unions involved? What role are 'new actors' playing in the employment relationship? And, is this a fundamental shift in the organising agenda, or as some critics claim a retreat from industrial organising?

While it's important not to exaggerate the extent to which UK unions are involving themselves in community organising, it's noteworthy that the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and a number of affiliate unions are taking significant steps to broaden their base and work with communities outside their normal spheres of operation.

In 2008, the TUC initiated a 'Active Unions, Active Communities' project whereby it funded a number of trades union councils

undertaking organising work with local community organisations. The aim was to assess the advantages of this type of work. The conclusion was that:

The time is ripe for greater community engagement and partnership working between voluntary and community organisations and British trade unions... developing community-based strategies in conjunction with other third sector groups will be crucial to the success of campaigns against imminent public sector cuts, determining whether unions can successfully win the hearts and minds of the broader public at national, regional and local levels.

Clearly, the global economic crisis of 2008 and the subsequent cuts to jobs and workers' terms and conditions of employment, as well as the increase in unemployment have been important factors in helping to focus union minds. While most unions have never recovered the ground they lost in terms of power and membership following the adoption of neoliberal economic policies and the recession in the 1980s, the crisis which began in 2008 and is predicted to continue for many years yet, is unprecedented in recent memory. It's resulting in significant numbers of union jobs being lost as the cuts hit hardest in the highly unionised public sector.

As such, we have seen unions such as Public and Commercial Services union and Unison take steps to make alliances with community organisations to build up their membership and organisation. So too, the GMB union, who received £305k from the Union Modernisation Fund in 2008 for a community organising project, adopted an approach 'to work purely in the communities and not the workplace. This was a new strategy for a union, and built on the developing methodology and experience of community organising.'

But private sector unions are also looking to community organising to strengthen their negotiating power with government and employers. The rail union, the Transport Salaried Staff Association (TSSA), set up a community organising team in 2010, trying to forge a common purpose and interest among rail users who are concerned about fare increases and ticket office closures on the railways.

In December 2011, Unite—the UK's largest private sector trade union—announced it was introducing a new membership scheme 'to ensure those pushed to the margins of society can benefit from collective power'. Unite's new 'community membership' category is aimed at students, people who are unemployed and others not in work—categories of people who normally don't have a relationship with unions. Unite claims that their community organising initiative will 'organise the marginalised and revolutionise British trade unionism'. While perhaps a little overstated, Unite's community organising initiative is a significant development in the UK union movement's 'turn' towards community organising.

So, as we can see, there's a range of community organising activity that has begun to develop over the last few years. It is, as yet, only small scale. Nevertheless,

this activity and the much wider debates taking place around community organising, for example by the government and its 'Big Society' and the Labour Party's 'Movement for Change' are creating a certain amount of 'noise' and interest around this issue. But are these new developments, or a return to the past?

Unions and community: origins and developments

As we know the history of trade union formation in the UK is inextricably linked to the places and spaces in which people lived and worked. In the early days of the formation of journeymen's associations in the late eighteenth century, and even, in some places, well into the twentieth century, most workers lived in the vicinity of their work. This meant that communities and workers were closely bound together in their localities in a way that is much less the case today.

As trade union historian Malcolm Chase notes, trade unions, until the nineteenth-century, occupied a more central place in the associational life of their members, where they would engage in self-help initiatives outside of the workplace and in the local communities in which they were situated. He explains:

Unions were far from simply being an expression of new solidarities engendered by industrialisation... The communities in which they [trade unionists] lived and worked had their own networks, structures and therefore capacities to organise... Trade union consciousness and community consciousness were virtually coterminous.

However, these strong links between trade union consciousness and community consciousness have been severely

weakened and, in most places no longer exist. As unions developed power and became incorporated into industrial relations machinery and the institutions of capitalism through the process of tripartism, the links between unions and community became less conscious. Even more so, when the Thatcher governments succeeded in undermining trade union power and trade union membership was halved. During this period unions became more inward looking and more focused on servicing their surviving membership, and unions became less visible in the wider community.

Union decline and power has sparked considerable debate over the future of trade unions, and particularly, unions' ability to transform themselves into organisations able to respond to the current social, political and economic climate of our time. For the last couple of decades academic attention has been focused on the behaviour of national trade union federations, particularly in the USA, Australia and the UK as they have attempted to instil an organising strategy based upon a particular model of union organising.

Now, two decades later, after the shift to the 'organising model', there is a sense that another 'turn' maybe on the way: while community organising, or more specifically in this context, community unionism, has a longer legacy and tradition in the USA, there has been growing interest in the subject in the UK.

What are the factors behind the interest in community unionism?

While the focus in unions is still largely on servicing and industrial concerns, there's a sense that a broader social and political message (one that goes beyond worker self-interest) is needed to re-assert the importance of unions in the current age

and, part of this, involves building external solidarity with the wider communities beyond the workplace.

It's argued here that this approach is largely motivated by three things: the success of the broad-based community organisation, London Citizens and its high profile campaign for a living wage; local and national politicians noticing how this organisation is able to mobilise local people around community activity, and thirdly; unions and political parties waking up to the potential for growth within their own organisations.

By way of explanation: London Citizens — a broad-based community organisation, made up largely of faith communities, schools, universities, a few union branches, and a small number of NGOs—began campaigning for a London Living Wage in east London in 2001. Since then, it has persuaded over 100 employers to provide the living wage to their staff. Leading organisations like KPMG and Barclays, the Olympic Delivery Authority and the Greater London Authority have become living wage employers and become influential advocates.

Jane Wills, long time researcher into the living wage, has calculated that the campaign has won over £70 million, lifting over 10,000 families out of working poverty. London Citizens has employed campaign tactics, such as holding public figures to account at large assemblies, where CEOs and political figures, are asked to commit to support the organisation's demands in front of thousands of London Citizens' members. This traditional community organising tactic—holding politicians to account in front of their electorate has been highly successful. Their public assemblies have gained mass media coverage and raised the profile of Citizens UK and that

of community organising, more generally. This community coalition is credited with the instigation of a wider debate and development around community organising in the UK.

It's spurred on the UK Labour Party, which had to contend with losing the last General Election and over half its membership since 1997, to experiment with community organising. Following his election as Labour leader, Ed Milliband, employed Arnie Graf, long-time USA community organiser and director of the Industrial Areas Foundation, as a consultant. Graf has been brought in to help revitalise the Labour Party using a grass-roots community organising approach of building one-to-one relationships, empowering members, and engaging a more diverse set of members who want to play an active role in the party and their local communities.

In addition, David Miliband, Foreign Secretary in the last Labour Government, set up Movement for Change (MfC) during his campaign for leadership of the Labour Party to engage Labour Party members in London Citizens' style house meetings and one-to-one discussions with the aim of creating a 10,000 strong army of community organisers.

MfC has a team of professional community organisers and claims to have trained around 1500 Labour Party members and claims its roots within co-operative groups, trade unions, community societies and local Labour parties, which make up the wider labour movement.

These actions and events have made a significant contribution to the current and growing interest by trade unions in community organising in the UK, but what are the theoretical debates around

community/union organising? How do they help us analyse what is taking place? And, what do they add to our understanding of the role of different actors in the employment relationship in today's economic climate and increasingly fragmenting labour markets?

Class or 'community'?: debates on community unionism

The source of today's debates on community unionism can be traced back to the 1960s and in particular, to C Wright Mills' Letter to the New Left. In this paper, Mills criticises 'the Left' who cling to labour, or the working class' as the agents of change: 'Such a labour metaphysic, I think, is a legacy from Victorian Marxism that is now quite unrealistic...Of course we can't "write off the working class." But we must study all that, and freshly. Where labour exists as an agency, of course we must work with it, but we must not treat it as The Necessary Lever'. Others have claimed the US civil rights movement as contributing to the shift to community-based politics and praxis, whereby those marginalised sections of society had not been incorporated into the system in the way that the organised working-class had by operating inside the corporate system through business unionism.

Writers in these early days struggled to develop a theory of community unionism, finding it difficult to identify where in 'the community' the organised resistance would emerge, particularly as this was likely to be without 'working-class consciousness' and a coherent political ideology around which to collectivise. For example, James O'Connor in a paper on 'Towards a theory of community unions' states: 'the only really baffling problem with which community unions will have to contend is the problem of tactics; there is no political weapon easily available which can replace the

industrial strike, although it may very well be that civil disobedience is the seed from which more effective and appropriate tactics will grow’.

Since this time, the debates have, more recently, coalesced around a number of key points: definition – for example trying to conceptualise what is meant by community unionism; the different types of union/community engagement and whether or not this is just another form of social movement unionism; the different factors influencing union engagement in community organising—e.g. ad hoc instrumentalism, supportive coalition, mutual support, or deep coalition-building; the tensions and constraints on unions working outside the industrial arena, and the role of ‘new actors’ in the employment relationship.

The main points of agreement, though, are that the changing geographies of employment, the economic crisis and its devastating impact upon workers, and the inability of unions to motivate their members to act, are all leading to a realisation that unions need to broaden the scope of their activity. And, that, unions can’t do this alone.

Another question posed earlier was what does community organising mean for the unions involved. For a number of unions it has meant an investment of significant financial resource, but more importantly, it has meant questioning their traditional tactics and strategies and looking to develop different ways of working that are able to incorporate the type of ‘new actors’ getting involved in the employment relationship. In accommodating non-traditional partners, it has meant unions ceding some of their control on their ‘side’ of the employment relationship.

But there are also a number of other issues for unions to consider when entering into community-coalitions, particularly in terms of their obligations to members, their democratic structures and decision-making.

This idea of ‘new actors’ getting involved in employment relations and how unions deal with their role is at the heart of how union/community organising can and does work in practice. We have seen an expansion of research and writing on non-union forms of organisation around work-related issues, most notably around workers centres in the USA and the extensive interest in the community organising of groups like Citizens UK and their counterparts in the US, Germany and Australia. Yet, there is perhaps, a need to understand the concept and role of new actors in community-unionism more widely.

Rather than thinking of these new actors as just additional players in shaping employment relations at the workplace/ community level, we perhaps need to think much more broadly about the role these new actors could play as they intervene in community/union-organising, but also to study what they may add towards developing the strategic thinking necessary to build external solidarity.

For example, as Richard Hyman, Emeritus Professor of Industrial Relations, has pointed out, unions need to respond to the external and internal challenges that have had such a detrimental affect on collective representation. And, to do this, unions need the type of strategic thinking that comes from ‘a leadership team from diverse backgrounds and with a range of organisational experiences’ but is least likely when there is a homogeneous leadership group deeply embedded in bureaucratic routines’.

If you were to compare community organisers and trade unionists, you may find more community organisers fitting into the former category and trade union leadership into the latter. Despite women now having a higher membership than men in the UK union movement and black workers having a higher union density than white workers, the majority of lay and staff leadership of trade unions remains, to use that well worn phrase, 'pale, male and stale'. So there is perhaps a lesson here for unions to consider how to expand and develop the diversity of their organisations if they are to reach into the wider constituencies of non-members.

As we have seen from community groups like London Citizens, UK Uncut and other NGOs, the strategic choices made by these new actors operating 'in the community' and outside the industrial relations model (with its focus on the workplace) may be very different to those of unions, management or the state. Less constrained by rules, legal processes and employment contracts, these other actors are able to engage in less-conventional methods of activity to persuade the 'traditional actors' (the state, employers and trade unions) to change their behaviour.

This has been evident in the living-wage campaigns where moral arguments, public pressure, embarrassment and the notion of corporate social responsibility have been used to good effect to put forward social justice arguments. In many ways this could be seen as a move away from the 'class' arguments that have been central to left politics and much 'traditional' (and industrial focused) trade union consciousness. As C Wright Mill's said, and as was quoted earlier, 'where labour exists as an agency, of course we must work with it, but we must not treat it as The Necessary Lever'. Here, in these forms of community organising, we are witnessing agency

outside of the 'traditional working class' not only playing a new role in the employment relationship, but also providing an answer to James O'Connor's 'baffling problem' of what tactics community unions can use to be effective in the employment arena.

Traditionally unions have tied themselves to traditional class politics with industrial action in the form of strikes as the ultimate threat to force employers into agreement. But the declining power of the union movement has removed this threat from many unions, weakening their ability to act to defend their members' jobs and terms and conditions, such that a number are now rethinking or reshaping their overall purpose.

The global economic crisis and the response to it from the many spontaneous social justice movements that have sprung up in the UK and across the world (e.g. the Occupy movement and UK Uncut)—most of which are community-based—are perhaps examples of 'other actors' that O'Connor talked about providing the seed of civil disobedience from which more effective and appropriate tactics could arise.

It is perhaps time, that we, as industrial relations academics and active trade unionists, take a much greater step outside the arena of workplace industrial relations to give more thought to the neglected spaces of social reproduction and consumption and the wider communities in which workers live their lives. To do so might give greater insight into how unions need to respond to declining power at the point of production and how 'community' might be harnessed as an important and powerful actor both in the employment relationship and in the broader social and political demands made by unions.

2: Community organising at the heart of a union

Michael Leahy, General Secretary of Community the Union

Our history in the community

Recently, much has been made of unions recruiting unemployed members, as if this is something new for the movement. The National League of the Blind and Disabled (NLBD), a founding section of Community, has been representing and advocating for unemployed disabled people since it was founded in 1899. It was the march of NLBD members in 1920 that was not only an example of community organising but also inspired the Jarrow March many years later. The NLBD march successfully put pressure on the government to introduce the Blind Persons Act 1920, which created a statutory duty to 'promote the welfare of blind persons'. The union continued to recognise that pragmatic political change was as necessary to support disabled people as was an industrial organising strategy and this required organising in communities as well as workplaces.

The ethos of supporting our members beyond the workplace, when they lost employment or were made redundant, is something that was among the founding principles for Community almost a decade ago. Both the ISTC and KFAT unions, which merged to form Community, were strongly identified with particular industrial communities across the UK – such as the steel towns of South Wales or the footwear industry in Northamptonshire. Both unions

had a shared experience of industrial decline through the 80s and 90s but both retained their strong identities in the areas where they had represented members. In particular, the ISTC's response to industrial change was not just to campaign against steel plant closures, but also to support members leaving the steel industry to gain new skills and new employment. Consequently, many former steelworkers, who were retrained through the union's own learning and support organisation, not only retained their membership as they moved into new employment but also retained an identity as an ISTC or Community member.

Through organising these members, Community now has a network of 'community branches' across the UK, with active branch committees, getting involved in community activities as well as supporting branch members with traditional union representation.

Beyond the workplace

Thus the union has retained close ties to particular towns or areas even when the industry, the original reason for our presence, has gone. Community continues to see itself as an integral part of the community in those areas and recognises that its responsibilities extend well beyond the workplace, hence the union's name. The question then arises of how you

organise in those communities. For the union it has manifested itself in two ways, which to some extent inter-linked. First of all is building relationships that secure ongoing community support for our members' jobs and their industries, which can be mobilised if a workplace comes under threat. The second form is when we look beyond the factory gate to the world outside and take action to create better communities where our members live.

Our ability to be effective in our members' communities is still founded on the industrial strength of the union. Strong, organised workplace branches will always remain essential to delivering for members in workplaces and in their communities. Without industrial credibility or strength in numbers, our ability to act is limited. But because we remain industrially powerful in many sectors and workplaces then that provides the capacity to reach out beyond our industrial base.

Saving our Steel

Perhaps the best example of mobilising community support for our members was with the 'Save our Steel' campaign on Teesside. At the end of 2009, Corus (now Tata Steel), announced the mothballing of the Redcar steelmaking and ironmaking works. Although the union successfully worked with the company to avoid any hard redundancies, hundreds of people took early retirement or voluntary redundancy and therefore, thousands of jobs were lost. The union was determined to restart steelmaking on Teesside and so the 'Save our Steel' campaign began.

Community organising practitioners talk about the importance of developing leaders who can motivate and mobilise people to make change in their communities. The 'Save our Steel' campaign had just such a person in

Geoff Waterfield, Community branch secretary and Chair of the Multi-Union Committee at Corus in Redcar. Geoff was the spokesperson for an entire community when he talked passionately about the need to keep steelmaking on Teesside. Stories are important when you try to move people to action and the following quote from Geoff, in an interview with the New Statesman, gives an example of what inspired people to join the campaign:

"When I see a blast furnace, I see a thing of beauty. I see something that has given thousands and thousands of people a way of life, a good, honest wage, the ability to pay their mortgages, go on holidays, and bring up their families. That to me is fabulous, that is a beautiful thing. When you come to Middlesbrough and see that skyline . . . that blast furnace is the heart of Teesside. As long as it pumps, there is life in Teesside. ICI were massive around here and they fell to pieces. When the hard times come, people just pull out. But you can't just pull out of the steel industry."

The belief that the steel industry had to stay on Teesside is what motivated Geoff and his colleagues to build relationships and win backing right across the area. The local council building flew the Save our Steel flag throughout the campaign. Middlesbrough Football Club was an active supporter, giving campaigners the opportunity to parade the Save our Steel banner around the pitch before a match and getting its players to train in Save our Steel t-shirts. Local churches were also involved, with the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, giving his personal backing. Through these relationships and with the support and resources of the union, Geoff and his team mobilised over 7,000 people on a Save our Steel march through Redcar.

The pride and passion in being a steel community was what inspired the eventual owner, SSI, to come forward. SSI's President, Win Viriyaprapaikit, had seen coverage of the march and could see that a company that invested in Redcar steel would have not only a skilled and committed workforce but also the support of an entire community.

Tragically, Geoff didn't get to see his dream of steelmaking restarting on Teesside. He died suddenly of leukaemia in August 2011 and SSI restarted production in April 2012. A memorial to Geoff was commissioned and is fittingly made from the last steel slab produced before the mothballing and the first slab produced by SSI. Through the power to organise beyond the workplace we'd saved our steel.

Power in our communities

As a Labour Party affiliated union, we recognised we needed to do things differently when Labour lost the election but we also understood that being out of power in Westminster didn't mean being out of power in our communities. So since the Coalition took office, there has been an increasing focus on how we can support our members to mitigate the worst excesses of the government's austerity measures. This means the union centrally providing both small amounts of financial support but also looking at building the capacity of our members to take action in their communities.

However, to keep community organising at the heart of what we do we understand that we should improve the effectiveness of our members' interventions in their communities. This means supporting members to develop their skills – to build relationships, run listening campaigns and move people to action. We have found an excellent partner in Movement for Change

in helping the union to achieve that aim. A number of activists have participated in intensive training and many of them have gone on to lead campaigns in their local areas on issues such as the living wage or payday lending. Movement for Change also facilitated a session at our conference and we will be building on the action pledges that were made by delegates. Some of our branches have built relationships with local food banks. In Scunthorpe, the organising capacity of Community activists has seen the local food bank, set up by Scunthorpe Baptist Church, receive record food donations as well as benefit from a successful fundraising drive to cover the warehousing costs for the year. Now our activists are getting organised to change the service the food bank provides so that it doesn't just distribute food but also provides more support and guidance when people are referred to the food bank.

Community is looking to extend this type of community project to other areas of the UK where we are organised.

Investing in our communities

Organising a community is made easier by investing in that community to empower people. That's why we're developing a new community-based project. Led by Community members, the project brings pupils from deprived backgrounds (those on free school meals, in local authority care, young carers, or from a family with no experience of higher education) in years 9, 10 and 11 at Sandfields and GlanAfan Comprehensive Schools in Port Talbot together with students from Swansea University undergraduate and postgraduate courses who, along with local Community activists, will act as mentors. Working with partners the South West Wales Reaching Wider Partnership (SWWRWP) and Swansea University, the project aims to benefit individual pupils by

raising attainment and aspiration to higher level study; enhancing support for more able pupils from deprived backgrounds; and reinforcing existing widening-access support experienced by pupils.

This is a good example of how our own community unionism is rooted in our members' communities – outward-facing, beyond the workplace and investing in the future of a community.

Conclusion

As this booklet demonstrates, there is a good deal of debate around regarding what community organising or community unionism actually does for trade unions. From Community's point of view we do not see it as a separate activity that can be taken or left. For us, it is at the heart of the ethos of the union. It's about creating a sense of belonging and maintaining a sense of community.

Nevertheless, there are practical benefits that arise from this. Our high retention rates of those who have left industries where we were traditionally organised is proof that this approach works. Furthermore, what our members achieved on Teesside has been reinforced by a higher membership density than we had under the previous owners. This is partly because the new workforce recognised just how far the union was prepared to go to protect their jobs and partly because the confidence and cohesion that our reps developed through the community campaign was brought into re-organising their workplace.

From Community's point of view there is no debate around community organising – other than how we can best develop and support our members to do more of it. We are a growing union and this is underpinned by what we do in our members' communities. We want that to continue.

3: A path to building a more powerful movement

James Scott, Community Organiser for Movement for Change

Unions are turning to the tools of community organising because they offer a means for building a stronger and more active membership while at the same time resonating with traditional forms of union organising

Modern community organising was developed by Saul Alinsky in 1930s Chicago. His first organising project was the Back of the Yards Neighbourhood Council, a 'People's Organisation' that sought to bridge the divide between the community based politics of Chicago's churches and the industrial politics of the local Packinghouse Workers Union. This experience led Alinsky to establish the Industrial Areas Foundation, a US-wide alliance of people's organisations that exists to this day. Over the following decades, generations of professional community organisers took Alinsky's political techniques and built similar local organisations across America. In the 1980s his model of politics was brought to Britain by Citizens UK, and is now being used within the Labour Movement by Movement for Change.

The purpose of community organising is to build a civil society powerful enough to be able to hold to account both the market and the state. It does this by generating power for the powerless; identifying and

training new civil leaders, building lasting public relationships of self-interest between individuals and institutions within civil society, and by taking direct action that brings about change. Community unionism is the act of a trade union participating as an equal partner within a 'People's Organisation' of civil society institutions. For example, a trade union branch may choose to become a member of a local alliance alongside faith groups, other union branches, schools, universities and NGOs. That alliance will then agree issues of common concern across all member institutions, and work collectively to take action on those issues.

By this definition community unionism is not just the act of trade unions becoming active beyond the workplace, be that the establishment of a union-ran community centre or the building of community campaigns. Rather it is when a union organisation decides to engage as a full and equal member in a broad alliance alongside other civil society institutions. While some union organisations may choose to engage in a local alliance in this way, others may wish to use the tools and principles of community organising to build the capacity of their membership and to develop a culture of action. For this approach, there are four key tools (all with significant cross-over between the

traditional tools of a union organiser) that can be used. These are currently deployed and taught by Movement for Change when working in partnership with organisations across the Labour Movement.

1. The Individual Meeting

The primary tool of a community organiser, used to build public relationships and the power of your union organisation.

2. An Organising Strategy

To ensure intentionality and strategic purpose in all your work, outlining your objectives and tactics.

3. Actions and Reactions

Taking action that leads to purposeful change are both a means and an end in community organising.

4. Training and Evaluation

Evaluation and leadership training are hallmarks of community organising, but can be neglected in the Labour Movement.

Strategic campaigning, rooted in pragmatism, an ability to listen and an honest assessment of power, is a hallmark of community organising. Indeed, the strategic considerations of community organisers in the UK draw them apart from those campaigners who revel in idealism, in uncontrolled anger, and those who employ ineffective tactics that succeed only in diminishing the power of the labour movement and encouraging those on the right. If our tactics are to be steps towards achieving our campaign objectives, then they must do just that; they must move us closer, in capacity or actuality, to the world we wish to see. Or to put it another way, the action is in the reaction, and those reactions must be strategically useful for achieving a campaign win.

I will tell the story of two Movement for Change campaigns to illustrate these points.

Movement for Change activists in Cardiff took an unexpected and fun action to achieve their campaign objectives. Through 121s they learnt that their city's private rented housing was in a bad state. Absent landlords, terrible conditions, animal infestations, dishonest letting agents; all problems told through stories from people across the community. Sensing widespread anger, and having built the right relationships through their 121s, the M4C activists decided to form Home Sweet Home (HSH), a campaign group that aimed to improve the condition of privately rented homes in Cardiff.



Home Sweet Valentines Day

The first act of HSH was to develop their organising strategy. They undertook a power analysis of the private rented sector in Cardiff, and then cut down the big problems into specific issues. A number of the specific issues were then put into the 'HSH Charter'; that landlords ensure tenants have their contact details, that landlords commit to responding promptly to tenants, and that tenants to be given a welcome pack outlining contact details and responsibilities for the tenant, landlord and letting agent. The challenge they then faced was getting letting agents and landlords to sign up to the Charter. This required action.

Looking ahead, they realised Valentine's Day was approaching. Rather than protesting outside letting agents, shouting out their complaints and grievances, the group decided to personally deliver a Valentine's Day cards to each of the local letting agents. Shocked and amused, the workers and bosses in the letting agents could not help but begin talking to them. The activists then told them about the HSH Charter and then arranged follow up meetings. Those later meetings led to agreement to work together, and then public commitments to the Charter. By doing the unexpected the activists gave themselves the chance to build positive public relationships with one of the targets of their campaign, a necessity if your organising is going to win positive change.

In Southampton Movement for Change activists faced similar challenges. They developed a Sharkstoppers campaign group that would focus on the predatory nature and high costs of payday lenders. The first step in their strategy was to fully understand the problem by conducting mystery shopping of the local payday lenders, banks and credit unions in their communities, roll playing different scenarios and seeing who was given a loan and who was rejected. They realised the payday lenders faced no competition from the banks or credit union; if you wanted a small loan quickly, they were the only places in the city to go.

In assessing their power they realised they were quite a long way from being able to ask the mainstream banks to provide more loans to people in the city. They were a few dozen activists in a city on the south coast, far from the centre of global financial power in London. They therefore decided to focus on the two local credit unions. How could the Sharkstoppers get these small local unions to provide more loans in a way that

would undercut and challenge pay day lenders in the city?

Before approaching the credit unions they needed some leverage. To get this they asked Southampton Council to implement a pay roll deduction system, meaning all staff would be able to save each month into the credit union. Strong existing relationships with local Councillors, a letter sent to the Leader of the Council as well as the local press, and what was simply a good (and free) idea, meant the Council agreed to their ask. With this agreement the Sharkstoppers had what they needed.



M4C Planning Meeting

The larger of the local credit unions was invited to a public meeting. Their President and Vice-President were eager to meet the local activists who had gone out their way to win payroll deduction, a policy they had been considering pursuing for some time. In the meeting the activists told stories of high cost loan and the feeling of being abandoned by the banks. They then began negotiations. Would the credit union use these additional savers to provide more loans to those on low incomes? The implicit threat at this point was that the Sharkstoppers campaign would encourage new savers to go to the other credit union. An agreement was therefore reached that for every two savers recruited to the credit union, one additional loan would be made available to someone earning under £15k. A win that means for poorer communities

in Southampton an alternative to payday lenders is now more available.

As detailed in these stories, actions should be carefully considered. They must build your organisation's power, develop the strength of public relationships, and provide opportunities for leadership development. Actions that are historically repetitive, driven by pre-existing assumptions, or which fail to build new and stronger public relationships (such as petitions) are unlikely to succeed. However embedding a culture of strategy and action within an organisation is a challenge.

To face up to this challenge means placing a greater emphasis on training and evaluation, both formal and informal. Some people have an intuitive ability to act politically within public life, most do not. Those who do not can learn to act in public life through training. On the Movement for Change Intensive Residential training course we teach the techniques needed for building public relationships through 121s, how to conduct a power analysis, negotiation with powerful targets, creating an organising strategy, and the telling of your political narrative. These techniques have been taught to elected officials and lead activists from across the UK and Europe, who have then used them to build the power and capacity of their organisations. Informal training is that which goes on in the relationship between professional community organiser and activist, and in the development of a lead activist represents a far larger proportion of the total training delivered by the community organiser.

Conclusion

Community organising presents a means for achieving greater organisational capacity and strength, and as such hints at a path to building a more powerful union movement in the UK. However the use of community organising is still a new experiment for many, offering a novel way for disorganising and reorganising our politics in the Labour Movement. As such there are many challenges and diversions. But commitment, time, and support from professional community organisers will bring an energy and passion to our activism. That way we will see political action that leads both to a stronger movement in the future while also creating the change we want to see in our society now.

4a: TSSA's London Taxi and Private Hire Project

Rob Jenks, TSSA Senior Community Organiser



Action outside Windsor House, 23rd November 2011, with some of the supporters.



From left to right: Jim Kelly (Unite Taxis), Grant Davies (LCDC), Manuel Cortes, TSSA General Secretary and Steve McNamara (LTDA) after signing the Statement of Principle

On 1st November 2011 the TSSA trade union was confronted with Transport for London's (TfL) announcement that it had carried out a tendering exercise to privatise the London Taxi and Private Hire (TPH) Office and that it had selected two

bidders to choose from, both based in the Midlands.

Despite TfL claiming there would be no effect on the hundred people who worked in TPH, two thirds of them would have had to relocate to the Midlands whilst job cuts were secretly planned amongst the Compliance Officers who were to remain in London.

TfL's Finance Board was set to approve the privatisation on 23rd November 2011 and so in a little over three weeks, we had to plan and execute a campaign.

I had worked for the union for ten years when the issue blew up, with most of that time involved with organising and representing workers in railway companies. Earlier in 2011 I had moved into the union's new Community Organising Team in an exciting and unique trade union project that has become known as Together for Transport.

In what became known as the TPH campaign, TSSA planned both industrial and community organising elements, the latter on the basis that the privatisation had the potential to fatally weaken the London Mayor's Safer Travel at Night Scheme by cutting jobs amongst the very staff who

audit and inspect private hire taxi drivers with the purpose of cutting down on unlicensed activity.

The scale of the public safety issue can be seen by the fact that in 2009/10 alone, 143 sexual assaults had taken place in unlicensed private hire vehicles whilst over a six year period from 2003, 6000 unlicensed drivers were arrested.

Cuts to jobs amongst key Compliance Officer staff would have led to reductions in the number of inspections with the potential for even more assaults when the Mayor's initiative, begun in 2003, was seeking to eradicate the threat to women.

“ The issue has confirmed for TSSA just how important working with community groups can be in bringing additional influence to bear on employers because many of their actions will impact on service users.”

Community organising is about drawing people and groups together around a common self-interest, even if they come at it from different perspectives. By acting together they can increase their power and influence over decision makers and so we had to know, both, who might be interested and what the common interest could be.

Listening to our members in the TPH Office we were able to readily identify the key concern of public safety in unlicensed

private hire taxis as the core message that many organisations outside TfL might listen to and rally around once they understood it was under threat.

What we found was that the black cab groups such as the London Cab Drivers Club, Unite Taxi Branch and others readily saw this message and enthusiastically joined with our initial demonstrations and leafleting sessions outside TfL's HQ at Palestra and again at Windsor House. We also engaged with London Assembly Members on the Transport Committee and contacted TfL Board members to make our case. Additionally, we had discussions with groups outside the taxi trade and political circles who we believed might be interested in public safety.

With the mounting pressure, TfL withdrew the privatisation threat but went onto embark on a productivity review within the TPH office, threatening a possible future attempt at privatisation if targets were not met.

Whilst this was a success, TSSA also recognised the on-going threat to workers' jobs and the impact that that would have on public safety and so through a series of relationship building meetings with the leaders of a number of organised groups outside our own membership we devised a statement of principles that called for retaining the TPH office in the public sector as part of TfL, as well as for increases in the staff who inspect and audit taxi drivers. The statement went onto form the basis for a joint alliance with the three black cab groups recognised by TfL as well as several other groups including Transport for All and the London Region of the National Pensioners Convention.

Reaching out to London Assembly Members also led to specific manifesto

commitment by Labour's 2012 London Mayoral candidate, Ken Livingstone, that would have removed any future prospect of TPH privatisation.

The work of the Alliance continued into making a joint approach to TPH management over the internal review which union members' staff representatives were telling us was seeking to ignore the concerns of service users and workers alike. At the same time, TSSA worked closely with union reps through industrial channels to build strong arguments to resist and modify change to rosters, hours of duty and the introduction of performance targets.

TPH refused to meet with our Alliance but the pressure of this approach, combined with TSSA's industrial work meant that review proposals were amended and our claim for additional – not less – Compliance Officers was conceded.

What have we learnt from this Project to date?

The issue has confirmed for TSSA just how important working with community groups can be in bringing additional influence to bear on employers because many of their actions will impact on service users. This was why the union set up the Community Organising Team in the first place.

Building relationships with service users on the basis of a common self-interest, particularly with leaders from organised groups who can get their own members to play a part in a campaign is crucial to be able to demonstrate the power to act and bring additional influence to bear.

What is also interesting is that when dealing with an organisation like TPH that appears to be trying to divide and control different groups in order to advance its own

agenda, by bringing those various groups together it removes the power – defined as the ability to act – on the part of the target organisation or individual.

We have also learnt that in identifying the common self-interest – as with public safety – requires us to be genuinely receptive and not rigid or insistent that it is our way or no way, even if we believe we know the concerns that service users should have. This knowledge also allows us to identify those organisations who may wish to work with us but it also needs to be understood that at its heart is the need to build relationships with individuals – leaders – from those organisations and which may require a period of time to work at in order for the differing perspectives to be fully understood and commitments secured.

The success of the TPH campaign – and others – means TSSA will continue to apply this method in other arenas.

4b: The community campaign to save rail manufacturing in Derby

George Woods, TSSA Community Organiser



The Bombardier Community Support Group protests outside a meeting of rail business leaders



Our public meeting in September 2011 attracted over 300 people and revitalised the campaign

The story of British manufacturing over the past two decades has not been a happy one. Successive waves of factory closures have laid waste to whole communities and

decimated the supply of decent jobs. Many areas have never recovered.

Often the union movement has led fierce resistance to this onslaught, but much of the time it has been forced to join the rest of their country to bear witness to the devastation, powerlessly. The demise of British manufacturing perpetuated a parallel demise in the power of the British trade union movement.

This meant that when the government announced in June 2011 that a critical new train-manufacturing contract had been awarded to German-based Siemens, and not to Derby-based Bombardier, much more was at stake than at first appeared.

Under threat was not just a contract, but the future of the entire tradition of rail manufacturing in Britain. Thirty thousand jobs hung in the balance, but on top of that many knew that if Bombardier were to close it would mean the loss of Britain's capacity to ever build trains and associated engineering projects again. The expertise would be lost, exported elsewhere for good. For the country that gave the railways to the world, the decision acquired an additional historic significance.

The campaign that was mounted and sustained for more than a year to counter this threat contains lessons for how we can fight not just to preserve our industrial heritage and protect union members, but how we can work with and organise communities to fight alongside us.

The union movement has not always known how to nurture relationships with those outside of our movement, who might have a different set of values or experiences to us. What the Bombardier campaign demonstrated was that not only is this a challenge that our movement must take up, but that we cannot afford not to. As community unionism writer Amanda Tattersall put it, 'When union density was at its peak, unions exercised social and economic influence alone. Today, the "workers united" are frequently defeated. Social isolation and membership decline make it ever more necessary for unions to unite with other social forces if they are to successfully advance a broad vision of economic and social justice.' If unions are to win on our issues we need to join with all those in society who share our vision and can join us in practical action. Bombardier offers some clues as to how we can do this effectively.

It was obvious from the outset that the people of Derby were deeply opposed to the government decision. Local MP Chris Williamson began a petition of Parliament that quickly amassed 50,000 names. A march saw more than 5,000 local people turn out to show their support, the largest demonstration in the city for decades. Backing for Bombardier workers even came from Derby County Football Club, whose players wore solidarity t-shirts on match-day.

The strength of community feeling on the issue was clear, but as the summer wore

on the momentum began to dissipate. Everyone who has ever ran a campaign knows that this is normal. Without new developments in a campaign, and without a win to enthuse supporters, interest can wane. The potential for continuing to organise the community remained but action was required to make it coherent. TSSA was approached by a group of Derby climate change activists and others in August. We were able to quickly agree some common values and ideas and decided that it was worth exploring what could be done together to re-energise the community and put new pressure on the government to change tack.

The community support group was launched with a successful rally that attracted over 300 people and displayed the broad backing that the campaign had thus far generated. As Peter Robinson of the Derby Climate Coalition said on the night, the group set out to "work alongside the unions and workers, but able to involve friends, families and members of the public. There are a lot of things that can and need to be done." On the panel were not just plant workers and leaders of the four unions that represented the Bombardier workforce, but also two local MPs, Chris Williamson and Margaret Beckett, and climate activists. Statements of support were read out from neighbouring Tory MPs and the leader of the council. Crucially, local business representatives were present. The meeting was covered extensively by local media, and was pitched as reinvigorating the city for the critical next few months of the campaign. Plant workers and local councillors from across the political spectrum were well represented.

Arising out of the rally, an open meeting for everyone who wanted to become active in the campaign was announced, and out

of that a series of regular actions were agreed. Some participants who had never been involved in a community campaign became part of our alliance. The unions, some of whom had treated the formation of the community group warily, unsure of its purpose, were soon reassured by our steadfast strategy of respect for the workforce's wishes and our desire to put solidarity with them before other considerations.

The breadth of the alliance brought its own rewards. The support of numerous local businesses aided the campaign practically. For example, one local hotel allowed us use of its conference room for meetings and press conferences. And everyone was excited when our backing from the local Christian community helped secure a visit to Derby and a comment on the issue from the then Archbishop of Canterbury. The council, ran by a coalition of Conservative and Liberal Democrat councillors, helped the unions to fund a legal challenge to their own government's decision, which allowed us to build an unprecedented consensus in the community.

For a few months, frenetic activity surrounded the campaign, attracting national media coverage and fierce debates in the corridors of power. The unions chartered a train – the 'Spirit of Derby' – to London so that hundreds of plant workers and their families could attend Parliament for the Transport Select Committee's hearing on the crisis. The community activists supported the initiative and were present on their day, helping the campaign to reach into all of Derby's communities.

As is so often the case, the campaign's energy and ambition ultimately proved too little to obtain the unequivocal wins we wanted. In reality, the resolution of the

issues was messier and more complex than we would have liked. We were not able to halt the significant number of redundancies at Bombardier, but the pressure felt by the government on the issue evidently lay behind their decision to send some additional contracts Derby's way. Whilst these were not on the scale of the contract awarded to Siemens (not finalised until June 2013), they have allowed Bombardier to continue, in a much reduced form, in Derby.

In my view, we made other less obvious steps forward. There is a greater understanding of shared purpose between the labour movement and environmental campaigners in Derby today than there was previously. Both have shown their resolve and creativity to the other, and my hope is that a mutual respect now exists. I learnt a number of other lessons.

First, be smart when you pick your goals. In a campaign such as the one around Bombardier in Derby, it became easy for confusion and demoralisation to set in. I learnt from this the importance of coming to a common understanding from the beginning of what it is you are setting out to achieve. It's not rocket science, but identifying a few 'small wins' at the start would have encouraged us to stay focused and committed on what had brought us together in the first place.

Secondly, community organising isn't some great mystery. It's about applying the same techniques and skills that we use to organise our workplaces to our neighbourhoods. It involves raising the capacity of a community to exercise power. We often mistake campaigning for organising, but the litmus test is sustainability. If an organisation, or a collective or people, remain active on various issues after the initial excitement,

you've been organising. If not, you've probably just been campaigning. That's the difference as I see it.

Lastly, it is only natural that community organising will take time to be accepted among trade unionists. It took many years for the benefits of the organising agenda to be fully recognised and then integrated into our movement's industrial strategies. Now it is at the heart of everything we do. Previously sceptical union activists and officials were won over as they saw the advantages of organising compared to the narrow business unionism, or servicing which characterised union activity in the 1990s.

Similarly, community organising will come to be seen as an indispensable tool at our disposal. Remarkable progress on this has already been made. Most people, quite reasonably, will need to witness the power of this new approach themselves. For trade union community organisers, that's a challenge we must aim to meet!

5: The Professional Footballers' Association

Supporting social responsibility

John Hudson – PFA Director of Community

During the past twelve months the PFA have been instrumental in raising awareness of the pivotal role of our members in areas of Health, Education, Social Inclusion and Equalities whilst also offering guidance and support to football clubs to ensure greater commitment to the communities they continue to serve. This is a key component of our strategic support as all 92 clubs signed up to a capability status, which formalises Player Appearance procedures whilst embracing the real nature of Corporate Social Responsibility.

It was Nelson Mandela who stated 'One of the most difficult things is not to change society - but to change yourself', which couldn't be more accurate as we seek to change the mindset of many individuals who create problems in the world today. The PFA have encouraged players to become more comfortable with their different 'off field' commitments and as a result greater impact has been seen throughout many of the social intervention and community cohesion activities. Positive change in our society will only come when players and clubs understand that real investment in the local communities can be the catalyst for greater change not just for the future of our young people but also the revival of our inner cities. The

greatest asset for clubs to implement these changes can be through its players and the community departments have shown that they are the ideal vehicle to create the best environment for change to happen.

It is seven years since the PFA created its first statistical analysis for community player involvement to underline the dedication and commitment of our members. Community Champions and Player Ambassadors are now integrated into the club's programmes, whilst player Foundations have steadily increased over the past 12 months highlighting the philanthropic nature shown by many of the modern players. Current and former players such as James Milner, Robbie Elliott, Daniel Agger, Kashif Siddiqi, Kevin Betsy, Billy Sharpe along with Edwin, Brian and Mark Stein have all set up their own charitable Foundations with the help of the PFA over the past 12 months as we seek to encourage and support greater social responsibility through the advancement of education, heightened awareness for research, the improvement of health and the promotion of many other good causes both at home and abroad.

Player involvement has increased year on year with over 37,000 community player appearances undertaken by Professional

player's across all 92 clubs last season. The process and impact created is only as good as the people involved so if you can engage a player and identify their passion for community work then great things can be achieved.

Cardiff City provided the highest number of appearances for last season. The players were actively involved in all of their thematic areas and provided great access for community groups and fans at the Vale Training Ground facility. Credit must also go to the manager Malky Mackay who has always encouraged player engagement on a local level.

At the start of the 2011/12 season PFA members from the Premier League agreed to introduce and adopt a Player's kit scheme, which saw over 1,000 free Nike football kits distributed to under 16's teams in most need of assistance across the country. The players recognised the need to help young people's participation in grassroots football and each Premier League squad donated £25,000 for this exclusive purpose creating a £500,000 charitable fund. Each player also had the opportunity to choose a junior team or school of their choice which they presented to many of their former junior clubs or Primary schools. Jamie Carragher (Liverpool F.C.) and Leighton Baines (Everton F.C.) both took advantage to visit their former schools to the delight of both the children and teachers. Leighton who paid a surprise visit to coach the young children stated:

"It's really important that as players we give back to the local community and invest in the future. Watching the young people enjoying the coaching session in their new kit was a really special moment and I'm so glad I was able to help out."

These sentiments were echoed by all the players and the Premier League Players kit initiative will continue this season with further financial contributions from our members.

The close relationship with many of our charitable partners especially the Premier League (through the Premier League Charity Fund), the Football League (through the Football League Trust) and the Football Conference Trust has enabled greater quality of activity whilst ensuring that the governance, through monitoring and evaluation, has offered the highest standards of delivery. In addition the PFA have continued to work closely with many other national partners including; Coaching for Hope, The England Footballers Foundation, The Bobby Moore Fund and Know the Score (Bowel Cancer Awareness), The Princes Trust, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Show Racism the Red Card and Kick it Out (Anti-Racism programmes) along with our International partners FIFPro (the World Player's Union) all of whom are detailed within the evaluation.

In March 2012, Tamika Mkandawire (Millwall F.C.) was recognised at the Football League Awards for his outstanding contributions to help combat gun and knife crime in the Lewisham (South London) area with the support of the Millwall F.C. Community department. He received the PFA Player in the Community Award from PFA Chairman Clarke Carlisle and follows some exceptional winners from previous years in Graham Murty, Zesh Rehman and Darren Moore.

Conclusion

A recent study by the Premier League highlighted that 4.7 billion people in 720 million homes worldwide watched Premier League action during the 2011/12 season exposing every incident, goal and reaction. The awareness has generated significant income for the game but with that income players are under increased scrutiny from the media who magnify every incident. It is therefore more important than ever to continue to improve the image of our game, continue to provide outstanding entertainment and to continue to acknowledge our social responsibilities.

The PFA is a supporter union of Unions21



Unions21