

# WHAT IS COMMUNITY ORGANISING?

Broad-based community organising asserts that the biggest cause of the injustices faced by our people is the lack of **power** of civil society to hold powerful organisations of the state and the market to account for the decisions they make that impact on our lives.

By building **diverse alliances** of the institutions where large numbers of people meet and associate (churches, mosques, schools, synagogues, trade unions, residents' associations, community groups) we are able to harness their collective power to take action on a range of issues, build accountable relationships with powerful politicians, civil servants and business leaders, and transform our communities for the **common good**.

Citizens Cymru is the national home of community organising in Wales.

## 5 STEPS TO ACHIEVING SOCIAL CHANGE WITH CITIZENS



## 5 STEPS TO SOCIAL CHANGE

1. Citizens **ORGANISE**: we train people to build relational power (their ability to act) by bringing diverse community institutions together into a team to work for the common good;
2. Citizens **LISTEN**: we train people to listen to each other and their communities to find out what is putting pressure on citizens, families and communities. We spot issues of social injustice that make people's lives difficult but which they feel powerless to do anything about.
3. Citizens **PLAN**: we train ordinary people to act as citizen leaders in their neighbourhoods - to find the issues they can agree on, to research what solution might address the injustice, who has the power to bring that solution about, and what strategy will get Citizens around the negotiating table with the decision-maker;
4. Citizens **ACT**: we train people to participate (with hundreds of others) in fun, imaginative, (and legal!) actions to prompt a reaction from our target. The 'reaction' we seek is an invitation to mutually respectful and accountable dialogue in pursuit of change, social justice and the common good.
5. Citizens **NEGOTIATE**: we train our members to achieve social change by negotiating effectively with decision-makers in government or business world whose decisions impact our members.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Citizens Cymru Wales has achieved many community organising successes since launching in 2014:

- Trained hundreds of local people to become more **effective community leaders** using the skills of community organising;
- The **Living Wage** campaign has convinced businesses (Ikea, Capital Law, Knox & Wells) and public sector organisations (Cardiff Council, Cardiff University, Welsh Government) to pay the Living Wage rather than the minimum wage to their low-paid workers – lifting thousands of families out of working poverty.
- Most of our 'wins' are **local**:
  - a zebra crossing in Merthyr;
  - first halal Nando's in Cardiff;
  - safe routes to school in Llanedeyrn & St Athan;
  - no-car zone at an Ely primary;
  - refugees resettled in Barry;
  - improved buses for pupils;
  - community sponsorship of refugees in West Wales.



*Living Wage won at Welsh Government and 100 employers across the nation.*



*Nando's opens first chain restaurant for Muslims & non-Muslims to eat together.*



*Community sponsorship of Syrian refugee families in Fishguard & Narberth.*