

these and community organization generally with non-structural, self-help interventions. By the end of the decade, some of us were engaged in the national organization for welfare rights; recognizing that neighborhood-based training programs didn't create employment opportunities, some advocated "new careers for the poor" and full employment or a guaranteed income. Angry about the project's confrontational approach to local institutions, Epstein refers to MFY's "*clamor* for client and resident participation" (p. 33, emphasis added). He further states that the author of a housing report "*moans* about the complexity of the issues (p. 31, emphasis added), and its evaluations are deemed "decrepit, self-serving" (p. 52).

A professor of social work, Epstein offers no solutions whatsoever to the problems he analyzes. What can he possibly teach social work students except that their profession's commitment to improving social conditions is doomed to failure?

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Michael B. Fabricant, *Organizing for Educational Justice: The Campaign for Public School Reform in the South Bronx*. University of Minnesota Press, 2010. \$22.95, paperback.

Over the past two decades many community organizing groups have turned their attention to improving public schools in low-income urban neighborhoods. They have done so at the insistence of their members, but with some reluctance. Fabricant points out that education organizing demands the stomach and resources needed for protracted struggle, coupled with astute strategists, flexible tacticians, strong relationships, and most importantly, the hearts and minds of a committed base of parents. And still, decisive victories can be elusive. As an organizer remarked once, public education is the "Vietnam" of community organizing.

In *Organizing for Educational Justice*, Fabricant provides a fine-grained account of the Community Collaborative to Improve School District 9 (CC9), an organizing coalition with the goal of improving classroom instruction through a Lead Teacher program. Fabricant's work adds to the case studies

that characterize much of the research done in this field, and like other studies, challenges the notion that school reform is solely the domain of education professionals. The CC9 campaign is the story of Black, Latino, and immigrant parents of the South Bronx participating in forming policies and practices that ensure fairness and quality in their children's education.

Fabricant roots the work of CC9 in a hybrid of the confrontational organizing tradition of Saul Alinsky and the relational organizing and leadership development of Ella Baker and others in the Civil Rights Movement. As Fabricant points out, CC9's campaign, although unique to the New York context, provides important lessons for all those working to preserve and improve public schools at a time when neoliberal policies have diminished financial resources to public schools and legitimized privatization.

The objective of CC9's Campaign for Lead Teachers was to improve classroom instruction by attracting experienced teachers to South Bronx schools. These lead teachers would mentor new and inexperienced teachers, thus contributing to their retention and slowing the revolving door of inexperienced teachers moving in and out of the schools. The Campaign was an initiative of nine community-based organizations led by experienced education organizer Eric Zachary and supported by the Community Improvement Program (CIP), then at New York University and now at Brown. Fabricant relates how the collaborative generated an alliance with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and developed relationships with Department of Education (DOE) staff, all the while pressing the Chancellor and DOE to provide the necessary resources for a Lead Teacher program. He attributes the successes of the campaign in part to the convergence of interests among parties: CC9 parents wanted reforms that would improve teaching and learning, the UFT sought a career ladder for teachers, and the DOE needed programs in which to invest new resources for low-performing schools, won by a state-level organizing initiative called the Campaign for Fiscal Equity.

Fabricant does not make the mistake of telling a facile story by telling only of Campaign successes. He relates the difficulties of harnessing the efforts of nine community-based organizations more accustomed to service provision than to organizing. The groups' uneven commitment to the collaboration

created tensions and contributed to the turnover of organizers hired by the groups. In addition, mounting a cross-school, district-level campaign that focused attention on building relationships with the “top”—the UFT and the DOE—while also needing to renew and expand the parent base at the “bottom” strained the organizers’ capacity. Fabricant recounts the personal transformation of many parent leaders and the deep loyalty and trust that formed among parents and with organizers, but he also tells that despite the constant work the organizers committed to developing parent leaders, sometimes experienced staff needed to intervene when parents did not seem able to fully represent the campaign.

It is impossible to read this book without having tremendous admiration for all those who participated in the Campaign—their intelligence, their caring, their perseverance, their commitment to public education. In an era where public institutions are under attack, CC9 had a vision for public spaces where ordinary citizens could exercise their essential democratic rights and responsibilities. In carving out that space, South Bronx parents were able to make schools a little more accountable to their dreams for their children.

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Kathleen M. Coll, *Remaking Citizenship: Latina Immigrants and New American Politics*. Stanford University Press, 2010. \$22.95, paperback.

This book, based on a qualitative study conducted with thirty Latina immigrants and active members of *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* (MUA), a community organization founded in California in the early 1990s, contributes to the knowledge base on Latinas in the United States. The study participants were between their 20s and 40s, non-English speaking and of diverse migratory statuses. Many of them were single mothers receiving some type of public assistance, and most had migrated to the U.S. in the early 1990s.

MUA’s creation was a response to the specific social and political conditions of California in the 80s and 90s. The author was the coordinator of the Committee for Health Rights in Central America, and she joined MUA as a research