*promoting effective community action through research*

ISSN 1755-1331

arvac BULLETIN

arvac

Issue 116

September 2011

# Dear Reader

"*To hell with good intentions.*"

With these words Ivan Illich in 1968 criticised those, who despite the intellectual insight into the difficulties of fruitful volunteer action continued in their, what he saw as harmful, actions unchanged.

He told them: *"You close your eyes because you want to go ahead and could not do so if you looked at some facts."*

This, in my view, is the unfortunate position we find ourselves in again today. Politicians and many voluntary and community sector organisations with the best intentions seem to be closing their eyes to the evidence from research and to go ahead without looking at unwelcome facts.

Critical voices appear unwelcome and evidence which doesn't fit the picture is greeted with silence. The debate appears still caught in a euphemistic language of challenges and opportunities and a reluctance to accept that things really can go wrong. In fact a reluctance to accept that things have already gone wrong.

It is difficult for me not to lose heart in the face of what sometimes even seems like hypocrisy.

ARVAC's answer to this, however, remains stubborn and clear. We will continue to support those willing to strengthen the evidence base about voluntary and community organisations in the UK and abroad. In this we want to fulfil our responsibility as researchers to look at all the evidence and not to close our eyes to evidence that may not suit at a particular time.

We are determined to present evidence even if some commentators think this may "*rock the boat*". ARVAC will support all researchers, including those who wish to undertake critical voluntary and community studies.

Not to prove a point but by glorious coincidence this is an edition of the bulletin offering a really wide spectrum of the subjects our studies are concerned with. It even offers a forum to those who want equality rather than Ferraris. Having recently stayed a night in Maranello, the home of the Ferrari factory, I think there is an interesting debate here. This hopefully illustrates my final point, that is to say, we should never take ourselves too seriously even in the face of good intentions.

I am of course as always grateful to all our contributors and to you, our supporters.

**Jurgen Grotz**

(editor)

**Inside this issue:**

**Bala Raju Nikku and Simone Galimberti**

## Promoting of a volunteering based society in Nepal

The promotion of a truly volunteering based society has been the major objective of the first ever course held in Nepal on Volunteerism, Civic Skills and Social Work promoted by Nepal School of Social Work and CCS Italy- Nepal Country Office.

With weekly classes held on Sunday, the Course tried to clarify the role that volunteerism can play in a developing country like Nepal with its recent story of internal turmoil and conflict and a stalled peace process causing chronic political instability.

Fifteen young professionals got engaged in the Course with passion, commitment and determination to turn Nepal into a "volunteering based society", a society united and cohesive because more and more common people decide to do something for the others.

Indeed there is a great need to demystify the different interpretations of volunteerism in societies besieged by poverty but also beset with the illusions of aid industry.

Wherever there are levels of high youth unemployment like in Nepal with lack of job opportunities for the new generations, volunteering, especially when it implies full time experience, is also often misinterpreted and ends up to be considered as an alternative to any type of employment. Therefore, there is confusion about the "boundaries" of the volunteering experience with an almost complete overlooking of the genuine forms of community engagement.

The Course is a unique experience that brought together local expertise from national and internal actors like UNV, VSO, Restless Development and Global Action Nepal, all institutions involved in the promotion of volunteerism in Nepal. In this way the participants were offered unique perspectives, understandings, vision on ways to "live" and practice the volunteer experience.

CCS Italy Nepal Country Office and Nepal School of Social Work, the organizers of the Course, succeeded to pull together the right "ingredients" for an innovative curriculum that covered broad areas of advocacy, policy analysis through case studies, access to local and internal expertise.

The Course importantly underlined the bond existing between social work and volunteerism. Indeed social work is an essential discipline for bringing cohesion, reducing social and economical disparities in a still strongly stratified society like the Nepali where vast inequalities are still pervasive among large sections of the populations still somehow fragmentized by ethnic and caste driven divides.

In this way social work should be considered as an indispensible subject of study for a considerable portion of volunteers all around the world involved in service delivery activities like care and fostering.

With enhanced ties between volunteerism and social work the Course advocated for a revolution in the mindset of the average citizens that should actively promote and practice volunteerism in order to lay the foundations for the so called "'volunteering based society" where volunteerism should be seen as an opportunity to change and improve the local communities regardless of age, caste or economic conditions. Considerable time was devoted to analyze traditional forms of solidarity that are embedded in the Nepali society, shying away misconceptions that volunteerism is a western construct.

The Course started with review and discussions of different meaning and terminologies of volunteerism with efforts to review and analyze different definitions starting from what has been defined by the Commission on the Future of Volunteerism in UK.

Referring to the most important international literature proved to be crucial as it helped the participants to come up with a locally grounded understanding of volunteerism whose features and characteristics has been reviewed and shaped by the participants through local perceptions and ideas.

A great deal of time was spent on discussing different model of local and national "infrastructures" and ways of governance for the promotion of volunteerism in Nepal.

Importantly Nepal boasts the Nepal Development Volunteering Service, NDVS that was initiated in the seventies as integral part of university curriculum to engage master level students in developing and social activities in rural areas of the Country. Unfortunately the importance of NDVS faded away and it now works more as kind of manpower agency for those looking for better and more lucrative jobs in the aid industry. Fortunately, there is a serious commitment from the Government of Nepal and from the leadership of NDVS itself to change the current situation.

The students engaged themselves in thinking about different scenarios for making volunteerism a national "habit", assessing and comparing different models for institutional promotion of volunteerism with deep discussions on different roles and responsibilities of the national stakeholders. Should the government purely acting as facilitator and catalyst or should it continue to be directly involved in the implementation? Which should be the role of community based and national nongovernmental organizations? How to ensure a strong win win situation that fosters an inclusive and effective partnership among state and non state actors? These are some of the questions raised and discussed during the modules focused on Governance and Legislation.

Discussing at local level, the participants worked out and thought about the suitability and feasibility of establishing volunteering hubs or centers, one of the best practices established in many western countries. In this regard, different models were also analyzed through case study analysis that looked at different implementing models used by leading charities like CSV, United Way and Hands On Network.

Considerable attention has been also devoted on the employer promoted volunteerism with reflections on how the private corporations are currently promoting volunteering opportunities for their employees. Is this something in the exclusive domain of western multinationals or is it something that can be adopted also by local Nepali companies? This was one of the questions raised and discussed by the participants through research, case studies presentations and working groups.

At the end of the course, each participant prepared a final dissertation that although, on average, could not match the international standards showed some interesting insights on the subject.

As wrap up event of the Course, an advocacy level workshop was organized on 27th of June at the presence of Ms Chanda Devi Rai, Country Director of CCS Italy Nepal Country Office, Amanda Jacobson from the American Embassy and Jagannath Adhikari, Director of NDVS as Chief Guest. The workshop was an opportunity for the participants not only to showcase their acquired knowledge in the field of volunteerism and social work but also initiate a long term advocacy work thanks to the launch of the Kathmandu Declaration on Volunteerism, a truly policy campaigning platform prepared by the students aimed at proposing practical ways to establish the volunteering based society.

The Course successfully graduated fifteen young but promising "Champions of Volunteerism", an encouraging sign indeed for the future of volunteering in the Himalayan Region. Not bad for a first edition and we are still at the beginning.

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## Susan Halford, Pauline Leonard and Katie Bruce

## Working Lives in the Voluntary and Community Sector

The political profile of the voluntary and community sector is currently as high as it has ever been: perhaps it is even at its height, given the present government's 'Big Society' agenda. In turn, there are enormous expectations on the sector to deliver and to do so more efficiently and effectively, across a broader range of activities and services, than either commercial or public sector providers. Exactly if and how the voluntary and community sector will be able to respond to this challenge remains to be seen, not least as the sector struggles for survival in the context of recession and the severe spending cuts of recent months. But one thing is certain: the outcomes will rest heavily on those who work in the sector – whether as paid staff or volunteers - and what they are able to achieve in these difficult times.

Despite this, we know relatively little about this workforce since most research – academic research at least – has focussed either on policy and governance frameworks or on service delivery and service users. Whilst we know more about volunteers than paid workers, this research has tended to concentrate on individual motivations and experiences, rather than integrating this into a broader understanding of the sector's diverse, complicated and distinctive workforce. Meanwhile, with some notable exceptions (Taylor 2005; Lewis 2011), academic research on work and working lives has paid relatively little attention to the voluntary and community sector, leaving open the question of differences and similarities in working lives across sectors, and failing to fully exploit potentially useful theoretical and analytical tools from the study of work in the analysis of the voluntary and community sector.

In contrast, our new research project, under the auspices of the Third Sector Research Centre (www.tsrc.ac.uk), focuses directly on the voluntary and community sector workforce. We think it is important to see that current pressures will play themselves out in the context of other related policy changes and longer term trends:

- Related policy changes, particularly the government's changing model for the delivery of health and social care, which include personalisation and commissioning;
- Longer term trends in the sector – for example, the increasing importance of formal qualifications, the increased bureaucratisation of the sector;
- Wider social and economic changes, for example the expansion of the digital economy and the environmental agenda.

But to understand how these trends intersect in everyday practice, how they shape the work, the workforce and the organization of the voluntary and community sector, our starting point is with the *people* that work in the sector, whether paid or unpaid. We want to learn about the everyday work that is done in trying to deliver the aims of voluntary and community organizations; the motivations, experiences and expertise of the paid workers and volunteers who must do this; and their hopes and fears for the future. In this way, we aim to learn how voluntary and community sector organizations are surviving, growing or even thriving in the current climate and the difficulties that they face.

We are currently in the middle of our fieldwork, in which we are carrying out in-depth studies of six diverse voluntary and community sector organizations – ranging from the very large to the very small, with varying degrees of voluntary input, work-

ing across different sub-sectors and in different parts of England and Wales. What we have found already needs some thinking about but here are some snippets from the field:

Where you are makes a difference!

The recessionary pressures and longer term trajectories are working themselves out in distinctive ways in different places. This is not just an effect of the geography of spending cuts, although this is important. Rather, it is linked to the spatially uneven nature of labour markets, and the different scales at which different types of labour market operate. Whilst Organization A in an area of high unemployment is 'benefitting' from job-centre placements of long-term unemployed people, especially young people in the NEET category; Organization B, involved high status, culturally fashionable activity in central London is attracting highly credentialed graduates unable to find paid work, who will work long hours as interns to boost their CVs. In both cases, the voluntary and community sector is being used as a way into, or back into paid employment but these practices are strongly differentiated at the intersection of class, education and place. Is voluntary work now playing an increasing part in the working lives and careers of a wider range of people? How stable is this? And is there a danger that the sector could become over reliant on these resources, which may disappear if and when the economy comes out of recession?

We don't all wear woolly jumpers and open toed sandals!

The popular conception that the community and voluntary sector 'does it differently' – sharing a distinctive set of values and practices – was roundly rejected by workers and volunteers across our organizations. The workforce certainly does not share a common identity, but is fragmented and this may be being exaggerated by recessionary pressures, as workers position social values as an 'optional extra' once 'reality bites' although this may also be linked to longer term divergence within the sector, for example between charities and (some?) social enterprises. In any case, it is clear that some members of the workforce are becoming far more pragmatic than ever about their longer term careers and the importance, or otherwise of the third sector. What does this mean for the future in terms of recruitment and retention?

These are just a couple of observations made from our research so far. But they show that the voluntary and community workforce is being shaped by multiple processes, working themselves out in diverse and complex ways. Our task now is to complete the fieldwork (the part we all like best!) and then to develop a systematic and robust analysis of our findings. We hope to be able to communicate more to you through the ARVC newsletter in the future. But in the meantime, we welcome any comments or thoughts on our project. We are committed to finding ways of ensuring that this research feeds into practitioner, academic, policy and political debates about the future of the sector (see www.soton.ac.uk/wfrc for information about our recent workshop on 'Work Futures in the Third Sector') and welcome any advice on this.

**Susan Halford is Professor of Sociology, Pauline Leonard is Reader and Katie Bruce is Senior Research Assistant at the TSRC and Work Futures Research Centre, Southampton University.**

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Notes

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## Michelle Jaffe

## Volunteering inside the prison walls

Prisoners are increasingly becoming seen as a resource by using their skills to assist prison staff, help other prisoners, and also help themselves. There is now an expectation by government that prisoners should 'engage', 'change' and 'use' their time inside to positive effect. There are a variety of ways in which prisoners can volunteer and contribute to both the outside community and the prison 'community' inside the prison walls. 'Peer 'support' or 'mentoring' schemes are increasingly favoured by the prison service and Ministry of Justice as a core strategy for reducing 're-offending'. These schemes involve prisoners assisting, advising and supporting one another by acting as mentors, role models and guides. Despite this there has been very little research that highlights the outcomes of peer mentoring and that explores the experiences of the volunteers themselves. In particular, insufficient attention has been paid to prisoners volunteering in the unique and special environment of the prison, where unequal power relationships between staff and prisoners and a high degree of control over the lives of prisoners are core features.

The 'Listener scheme' is in operation in the majority of prisons across England and Wales. It is a peer support scheme that was introduced in prisons by Samaritans - an organisation that provides confidential, non-judgemental, emotional support, 24 hours a day, across the UK to people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide (www.samaritans.org).

Prisoners are selected, trained and supported by Samaritans to provide emotional support to their fellow prisoners; they are known as 'Listeners' and they work under the same guidelines and practices as Samaritans. The preliminary findings below are based on research conducted in four prisons across England. Two were adult male prisons, one was a female prison and one was a young offender institution. Two of the establishments were operated by private sector organisations. The research used survey and interview based research with Listeners, prisoners and staff.

It emerged from the interviews that Listeners perceived themselves to be a more legitimate source of support for prisoners than prison staff because they understood the specific concerns of their peers. Issues that might be perceived by staff to be minor or irrelevant could be understood by Listeners to be painful and depriving for prisoners. One Listener commented:

> *It's understanding that person, being in that pain with them, giving them empathy and not sympathy.*

Listeners can be approached by prisoners to provide emotional support for a wide range of problems: bullying, coming to terms with their imprisonment, maintaining contact with family, self-harm, suicidal feelings, childhood abuse, bereavement, and relationship problems to mention but a few.

A number of issues emerged in Listeners' accounts related to the difficult subject matter of many of their contacts with prisoners, their experiences of high levels of prisoners' distress, and in some instances an over-reliance on Listener support by both staff and prisoners. Most Listener schemes have a 'rota' system in place whereby Listeners take turns to respond to prisoners for designated periods of time. However, Listeners described how staff, particularly staff that trusted them, would tend to select them more often to speak to prisoners. Under some circumstances, particular Listeners in certain locations in the prison could become burdened:

> *I was getting stressed because I was living on healthcare. All the prisoners were patients with mental issues. They've got loads of problems. I was the only one there – twenty four/seven. You know, only me. […] I couldn't sleep. I think they used me as much as they could.*

Samaritans have put in place a 'debriefing' system for Listeners and work with prison staff to support the scheme and resolve issues that arise, nevertheless under some circumstances the availability of Listener support can create situations where prisoner volunteers are heavily relied upon. Whilst on the outside a volunteer can complete a shift and return home, the prisoner who volunteers lives alongside those they support. As prisoners themselves, Listeners have a limited ability to 'withdraw' from these situations because they spend long periods of time in close proximity to their fellow inmates and a lack of privacy is a deliberate and inbuilt feature of prison life.

Whereas for people on the 'outside' volunteering is considered a part-time or marginal activity, this was not the case for Listeners 'inside', many of whom described their volunteering as a more full time responsibility or role:

> *As a Listener, you know, you are always looking out, rather than just waiting for the call, you are looking to see if someone needs you. It is just a matter of knocking on the door if someone isn't coming out of their pad ("cell").*

The Listeners interviewed revealed that their volunteering was more than just an activity; it provided them with an identity and a new way of 'doing their time'. Volunteering has been found to hold particular significance for certain populations such as elderly people, who have lost roles such as 'employee', 'parent' or 'productive member of the community'. (1)

It is feasible that volunteering has also enhanced significance for prisoners who have been forcibly removed from former roles on the outside. Listeners described their volunteering as having a very positive impact on their lives in prison by enhancing self-esteem, developing skills, fostering good relationships with prison staff and improving their ability to communicate.

Whilst it is argued prisoner volunteer work represents a promising area of development in improving support systems for prisoners, and in providing opportunities for prisoners to be more than passive subjects of institutional life, there needs to be more evidence to substantiate this. More attention should be directed to consider the reality of volunteer work for prisoners in the context of the additional pressures and constraints imposed by the nature of imprisonment. Moreover it needs to be acknowledged that volunteering 'inside' is inherently different from volunteering on the 'outside'.

A final report of this research will be published by Samaritans in 2012.

**Michelle Jaffe is PhD student with the Centre for Criminological Research at Keele University.**

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Notes

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# James DeFilippis, Robert Fisher and Eric Shragge (2010) Contesting Community : The Limits and Potential of Local Organizing London : Rutgers University Press

## Reviewed by John Diamond

### ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE: LESSONS FROM THE PAST

This is an important and timely book which ends with a really stirring call for activists, community based practitioners to use community organising as an explicitly political project to challenge "existing power" and (we should) "heed the varied lessons of the past, understand history better, and seek to become the history makers feared by those who have controlled the forces of history for more than a generation." I do recommend this book but I do so with reservations as well. So what follows is not an uncritical review.

One of the strengths of the book is that it is written in an accessible style which draws the reader into the case they are wanting to make. I think that the accessibility of the language together with the care they have taken to construct the narrative flow of the text illustrate a really important set of ideas which the book itself is concerned with : the case for community organising or radical community work is important and deserves a wider audience; that in the present context one of the legacies of neo-liberalism is its capacity to deradicalise those individuals involved in or promoting community development and to marginalise both individuals and communities themselves from challenging and contesting the decisions of the powerful; and that this can lead to an alternative script or narrative which results in the ideas themselves associated with and informed by radical community practice to become marginal or invisible. There is, I think, a real sense throughout the book of needing to hold onto the history and practice of community development and those ideas associated with community organising. The book is, therefore, a testament to the work of many individuals involved in groups and organisations who through their associations with each other developed the capacities and skills to want to organise things differently in their neighbourhoods. And through these social relationships sought to change the political and economic relationships in a time of real challenge and difficulty. The book is - clearly - a political handbook which draws together ideas, history(ies), practice and analysis from the USA, Canada and the UK to make the case for a radical and oppositional politics at the community / street level.

These experiences which the authors draw upon are central to their analysis and to the structure and organisation of the book. The pace and style of the writing opens the book up and enables the reader to 'share' experiences and ideas which - despite different political structures - offer different ways of working and provide fascinating insights into community politics and community development. But there are two key reservations I have about how the book has been framed. Firstly, they do spend a significant amount of space detailing the impact of neo-liberalism and the ways in which it has become a new orthodoxy which shapes and defines the relationships between the state, the market and the individual.

They are very clear about the damaging consequences for individuals, their families and communities of the dominance of neo-liberalism for advanced capitalist economies over the past 30 years.

As they argue (and as we know ourselves) the experience in the UK has resulted in the transformation of the relationships between the state and the individual. We can observe the ways in which local political (and administrative) institutions of the state have become weaker over the past 30 years. These weakened local institutions of both governance and service provision have a direct and negative impact on local communities. As they show in the book in particular places it is those networks and organisations which have developed in the tradition of community development and community organising which are sites of opposition and contestation. We know too that in many urban regeneration initiatives community organisations have occupied a really important role in holding to account the actions and decisions of planners and developers. We know too that out of these actions many, many community initiatives have developed and these too have morphed into community businesses and enterprises. But, the authors are much weaker in their analysis of the ways in which these businesses themselves replicate the social and economic relationships promoted by neo-liberalism. Part, I think, of the challenge of the market is to recognise that it is concerned with changing the nature of the social and economic relationships we have with it. Neither community businesses or community organising takes place in isolation from the dominant ideas and ideologies present in society. So it is a constant process of challenge and opposition. And I think there is a tendency in the book to minimise this.

Secondly, I think the authors underestimate the challenge presented by the present. In one sense they cannot be faulted by their timing. The book is appearing as we are still making sense of the global economic and banking collapse of 2008. Many of us assumed that in the wake of that crisis there would be a challenge to the existing and dominant ideas of neo-liberalism. And, at least, those who want the relationships between the market, the state and the individual might have their confidence dented. This book review is being written as the UK Coalition Government still seem confident of maintaining their austerity cuts and whilst growth in the economy remains low and in the USA the re-election of Obama is anything but certain. Across a number of advanced economies (including the USA and in Europe) the Far Right is able to mobilise and to claim some level of popular support. It is this development which in the UK has been seen as one factor in Labour losing the General Election in May 2010. It is also a factor in influencing the strategy of those around the Labour leader Ed Miliband to reach out to white working class voters as part of the 'Blue Labour' approach.

In the present context we are, I think, in a period of change and transition. It is this part of the discussion which, I think, is not fully explored in the book and is something, perhaps, that we in ARVAC could support: as the ideas of neo-liberalism persist and permeate society then there is a need for a counter narrative. Community development (or community organising) offers such a counter - narrative. It offers a different perspective to the one offered by Cameron in the UK. The final strength of this book is that it does assert a political voice into the community organising discourse. And despite some telling absences, which are often more interesting than those which are present, in the tales and stories they use to illustrate this wider set of arguments it remains an important read.

**Professor John Diamond works in the Centre for Local Policy Studies at Edge Hill University (Lancashire), UK.**

# Ben-Ami, D. (2010) *Ferraris for all, In defence of economic progress,* Bristol: Policy Press.

## Reviewed by Fleur Bragaglia

**Who needs Ferraris? I want equality.**

Ben-Ami is a journalist specialising in economics and finance. He currently writes a weekly column for *Fund Strategy* magazine and comments widely in the world media. (www.danielbenami). His latest book, *Ferraris for all,* investigates the reasons behind economic growth scepticism and argues for the current trend of fiscal austerity to be replaced with overt and unabashed financial growth. Although not obviously concerning community research, *Ferraris for all,* offers interesting insights – not all of which I agree with – into how the macro has direct affects on the micro. We have seen the affects of the government's austerity packages on deprivation levels in communities in the UK. At once we are angry at having to pay for a mistake that is not ours, but there is an acceptance that we must restrain our consumption for the future benefit for all. Ben-Ami argues that this is nonsense. He argues that restraint will not promote financial solvency but merely extenuate poverty and recession.

He argues that growth sceptics rather than being mediated and humane are actually elitist and conservative in believing that wealth must be held on by those who have and can't be passed down to those who have not. I believe in growth and see the benefit it has to the world's poor. But I also believe growth, in its excesses, has negative impacts on the environment, society, and morality. Therefore, growth should be regulated. That, according to Ben-Ami, makes me a growth sceptic. I am passionate about wealth redistribution but Ben-Ami sees me as someone who is limiting society's progress. He believes in growth for all as it can only bring benefits. This is an attractive concept for those who are pro-growth - I make money we all make money. But how realistic is that concept when the world's infrastructures will always support those who are better educated, better connected and better resourced. With my passion for wealth redistribution I hope to bring up the wealth of the poor and reduce the level of inequality. When society is more equal there will be less opportunity for exploitation.

The majority of the book is concerned with the arguments used by those opposed to financial growth. I would have preferred the majority of the book to focus on Ben-Ami's arguments for growth, potentially around his 10 principles for increased prosperity presented in the conclusion, but it was very clear what he disagreed with. One of his most controversial principles was that nature is something which should be controlled for the benefit of mankind. This smacks of arrogance in that something provided for us should be manipulated to suit our wanton desires. Ben-Ami argues '*We should not want to live in harmony with the planet.' (p.233).* Why not? Why can't we develop technology, mobility, communication and medicine that honours our environment and promotes humanity? Why are such ideals opposed? Whilst we are all driving our Ferraris did Ben-Ami ever think the view of barren wasteland might dampen the joy of the ride?

I was increasingly angered whilst reading this book, but, as a result, I am now clear on what I agree and disagree with in terms of economic growth. I have Ben-Ami to thank for that. Like him I agree growth benefits the world's poorest, but even he says there are not many who would argue against that. What I disagree with is when Ben-Ami believes inequality is irrelevant as it can't be adequately assessed. The New Economics Foundation is one organisation that states the importance of recognising inequality; 'For most of the past 15 years the UK has experienced sustained economic growth but geographical inequalities have widened, and pockets of severe deprivation have developed because the benefits of growth have not been equally shared'. (www.neweconomics.org) Inequality will always be an important barometer in community research in order to assess the opportunities open to those who have compared to those who have not. It is our responsibility as researchers to ensure our measurements stand up to criticism.

**Fleur Bragaglia is a Researcher at The Salvation Army.**

# INVITATION

# ARVAC Annual Conference and AGM

**Community Issues to Community Research to Community Movements: Making Connections**

**23 November 2011**

**AGM 11.30am – 12.30pm;**
**Conference 1pm – 4.30pm**

**Venue: Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisations**
**St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester M12 6FZ**

**For full information please see our website.**

Attendance is FREE but places are limited.
Please register and book a place by contacting:
Ruth Selwyn-Crome on 01603 591561 or community@uea.ac.uk

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promoting effective community action through research

About ARVAC

ARVAC (The Association for Research in the Voluntary and Community Sector) was established in 1978. It is a membership organisation and acts as a resource for people interested in research in or on community organisations.

We believe that voluntary and community organisations play a vital role in creating and sustaining healthy communities, and that research plays an essential role in increasing the effectiveness of those organisations involved in voluntary and community action.

**We want to hear from you:**

Please send us:

- News items
- Details of new publications, resources or websites
- Information about research in progress
- Meetings or events you would like us to publicise
- Comments or opinion pieces you would like to share with other ARVAC members

by e-mail to
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