

Community and Voluntary Sector Research Forum

25th November 2014

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Association of
Non-Governmental
Organisations of
Aotearoa



PROGRAMME

- When?** Tuesday, 25th November 2014, 3pm-5pm.
(Refreshments provided from 2.45pm)
- Where?** Victoria's Railway West Wing Room 501
(Victoria University's door on the left hand side of the Station; take the first lift to the 5th floor, or take one of the other lifts to the 4th floor and walk up a flight of stairs.)
- Speakers:** (see over the page for abstracts)
- **Sandra Grey and Charles Sedgwick:** "Findings from research into advocacy in NGOs"
 - **Sue Elliott:** "What silences NGOs in the refugee sector?"
 - **Emily Garden:** "Being Poor is Hard Work: The Family 100 Project as an Advocacy Tool"

RSVP BY 21st November TO: Jesse.Finn-Brown@vuw.ac.nz

Sandra Grey and Charles Sedgwick: "Findings from research into advocacy in NGOs"

Abstract: The importance of the community and voluntary sector in contributing to democratic debate is widely acknowledged in academic publications, by governments, and by the sector itself. However, our second survey of the New Zealand community and voluntary sector shows this role has not been uncontested or easily executed since the adoption of New Public Management governance techniques in the 1990s. In the first round of this research we found that democratic debate may be 'tolerated' in New Zealand but in many cases there is a climate of fear with regard to speaking out. Added to this are the high demands placed upon those organisations that win increasingly limited government

funding to meet the terms of their contracts which is also inhibiting engagement in policy debates. This second round of research allowed us to ascertain the effect of recent changes.

Bio: Sandra is a Senior Lecturer at Victoria University in the School of Social and Cultural Studies. She and Dr Charles Sedgwick recently completed this second round of research into the sector's role in our democracy.

Sue Elliott: "What silences NGOs in the refugee sector?"

Abstract: NGOs and civil society organisations provide a link between the communities they serve and government. They provide an avenue for the voices of marginalised groups to be heard and help keep government accountable. One of the strengths of the New Zealand refugee sector is the strength of the voice of people from a refugee background within it.

In this seminar Sue uses the refugee sector to highlight the changes in the ability of NGOs to advocate for change and focus ways in which they are being increasingly silenced. Sue argues that this has occurred as a result of growing restrictions on them as a result of the

enactment of neoliberal policies. The presentation will also highlight some of the ways in which refugee based organisations are overcoming these barriers.

Bio: Sue Elliott has worked in the refugee sector for more than 35 years as a teacher, researcher, consultant, facilitator, mentor, volunteer and ally. She has worked in New Zealand and the UK and internationally as a consultant for UNHCR. Currently she works most of the time as a lecturer in Social Practice at Unitec where she teaches community development, and human rights, including refugee issues. She has a particular interest in the role of civil society and advocacy.

Emily Garden: "Being Poor is Hard Work: The Family 100 Project as an Advocacy Tool"

Abstract: The Family 100 Research Project is a collaborative study led by the Auckland City Mission, following 100 families who were long-term users of the Mission's foodbank over the course of a year. Family 100 seeks to better understand what holds some families in a repeating cycle of poverty while others move on to more secure lives.

The Project is born out of the belief that a more constructive dialogue about the plight of people living in hardship is best achieved by hearing directly from the people who live in those circumstances. It is hoped that project findings will encourage constructive conversations with people on low incomes rather than divisive rhetoric about them, while better enabling support agencies to be more responsive to their needs.

In this presentation Emily will share key project findings, including the recent summary report 'Speaking for Ourselves – the truth about what keeps people in poverty from those who live it'. She will also discuss the role of Family 100 in supporting the Mission's advocacy work.

Bio: Emily Garden is the Project Officer for the Auckland City Mission's Family 100 Project. Emily is a social researcher with a background in sociology and cultural studies and visual communication. Emily's interest is in issues of social justice including poverty and inequality, stigma, discrimination and representation. She has worked for community mental health groups and also taught for several years at AUT University.