

... our role in the future Programme

The theme of NICVA's annual conference this year will be 'The value of voluntary and community organisations: our role in the future'.

This conference will build on the work of the Carnegie Inquiry into the future of civil society in the UK and Ireland. Over the past two years the Inquiry has been exploring themes such as:

- the distinctive roles of civil society associations in tackling increasing fragmentation and socio-economic divides in society;
- the links between civil society, social justice and growing pressure on global resources;
- the distinctive roles that civil society associations play in creating safe spaces for meaningful deliberation where difference can be articulated and acknowledged.

Based on this, NICVA will begin to explore what the voluntary and community sector's role should be in Northern Ireland.

Over the past decade there have been debates in Great Britain and Ireland on the various roles voluntary and community organisations

can play — as service deliverer, voice for the marginalised, a space for citizens to form their views together and feed into the political sphere and a building block in developing democracy.

NICVA would now like to open up a dialogue on these issues in Northern Ireland. There is substantial international literature and a broad consensus exists on the contribution of an independent voluntary and community sector as a realm of organised, active and engaged citizens, working together and building associational skills which are directly transferrable into democratic participation at many levels and to building peace and reconciliation.

Political perspectives on both left and right have found reasons to value this. NICVA wants to engage all interested parties in discussing the sector's future contribution to a new devolved Northern Ireland.

This conference will be the opening event in a series of conversations that we hope to facilitate over the coming months.

- 9.00 Registration
- 9.30 Welcome and setting the context, NICVA
- 10.00 *The future of civil society* — findings from the Carnegie Inquiry, **George Reid**
- 10.30 *The role of voluntary and community organisations in Northern Ireland* — senior government representative
- 10.50 Panel discussion, including elected representatives
- 11.15 Workshops (including tea and coffee) to reflect on the key issues raised — MLA speakers in each
- 12.30 **AGM**
- 1.00 Lunch

Check out the conference website at www.nicva.org/annualconference for details.

When, where and cost:
Friday 21 November 2008, 10.00am - 1.00pm
NICVA, 61 Duncairn Gardens,
Belfast BT15 2GB.

Free for full NICVA members (1 place per organisation only).

Extra member delegate rate £50 per person.
Non members £65 per person.

NB: There is a 20% cancellation fee if you book but do not advise us that you can't attend within 5 working days notice of the event.

... our role in the future Conference and AGM booking form

NAME _____ JOB TITLE _____

ORGANISATION _____

ADDRESS _____

TEL _____ FAX _____

EMAIL _____

Please tick if you have:

- Any particular requirement regarding access
- Any particular dietary requirements

Please explain:

Please use a separate (photocopied) form for each delegate.

Please complete and return the form to:

Teresa Flanagan, NICVA, 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast BT15 2GB by **Friday 14 November**.
(Please enclose your cheque, if appropriate, made payable to NICVA.)

All the latest conference news can be found online at www.nicva.org, one of NICVA's family of websites:

www.nicva.org - a site for the organisation

www.communityni.org - a site for the wider sector and general public

www.grant-tracker.org - a funding site

www.communitybuyer.org - a directory of companies that provide products and services for the voluntary and community sector