

**Voluntary Sector Studies Network Day Seminar
Glasgow, 18th May 2017, 10.30 am-4.00 pm**

Call for papers

Border Crossings: Implications for Civil Society in a 'Dis'-United Kingdom

We are pleased to let you know that the **next Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) Day Seminar will take place in Govan, Glasgow on Thursday 18th May: 10.30am - 4.00pm**. Please put the date in your diary now!

Theme

The next VSSN day seminar is being hosted by colleagues from the University of Glasgow and will take place at the [Pearce Institute](#), a community space in Govan, Glasgow. The seminar will consider the implications of changing relationships within the UK and in the UK's relationship with Europe for the third sector and civil society more broadly.

We are witnessing a period of significant change in geo-political relationships, driven in part by the voice of the individual citizen through referenda. Within the United Kingdom, the notion of unity – and indeed of a kingdom – is being increasingly challenged by the momentum of devolution. Since referenda in Scotland and Wales (1997) and Northern Ireland (1998), these countries have been negotiating devolution arrangements with varying degrees of independence from Westminster. This momentum is keenly experienced in Scotland where the recent independence referendum narrowly failed by a vote of 55% to 45% in September of 2014. Westminster's promises of further devolution to Scotland are currently in play, a pre-referendum strategy that some believe swayed the referendum outcome in favour of the 'no' side.

In June 2016 UK citizens voted narrowly to leave the European Union by a margin of 52% for 'Brexit' and 48% to remain. The already complex relationships within the union are now further exacerbated by this vote, particularly given that a majority of Scottish and Northern Irish citizens voted to remain in the EU as did a number of English towns and cities, most notably London. The recent confirmation that the UK government will be negotiating a 'hard Brexit' is deepening existing tensions, and the discussion of a second independence vote in Scotland is firmly on the agenda.

There is disunity with the European Union, within the UK, and amongst citizens, with people identifying with the 'remain' or 'leave' camps, and in the case of Scotland with the 'yes' or 'no' sides. This disunity is also experienced between city and state and between large urban centres and rural areas. Amongst these divides we are also seeing an upsurge in populist and anti-establishment movements linked to a reactionary politics of identity as citizens respond to failures in social and economic policies, with racism, xenophobia and incivility emerging (JRF, 2016).

What are the implications for the third sector of these complex political dynamics amongst the four nations of the United Kingdom and their future relationships with Europe; and between the citizen, conflicting civil society groups and the state?

The May seminar will explore these broad themes and their potential impact on civil society, the third sector and third sector research. Further questions include:

- What is the future for the third sector and third sector research within and across the UK with increasing devolution, especially given growing differences between the UK's four nations?
- How can third sector researchers and practitioners learn from policy divergence and convergence within the UK?
- How can the organised or formal third sector make a unique contribution to civil society?
- What are the tensions between wider civil society, social action and formal third sector organisations?
- Could there be greater solidarity across the UK's third sectors and what would this look like? What is the role of infrastructure bodies in creating solidarity?
- What are the anticipated or possible implications of Brexit on the third sector and on future third sector research?

Submitting an abstract

We welcome presentations from researchers, academics, doctoral students and practitioners in voluntary organisations who are doing research that can shine a light on the issues raised in this call. We will be pleased to consider papers that provide empirical, theoretical, methodological, practice or policy insights associated with our theme. Papers are usually based on completed or on-going research (qualitative or quantitative) or a review of the evidence or literature in an area of interest to voluntary sector researchers.

If you would like to propose a paper for the day, **please submit an abstract of around 250 words** and a brief biography by email to vssnseminar@gmail.com no later than **8th March 2017**. Your abstract should contain a question, problem or dilemma arising from theory, practice or earlier research findings, the argument you intend to make, and how this contributes to the theme for the day. If selected, your abstract will be posted on VSSN website and you will need to book and pay to attend and present at the seminar.

Voluntary Sector Review, VSSN's journal is planning a special issue linked to these themes later in the year and will welcome submission of completed papers – research policy and practice – submitted in response to this call. The journal is free with VSSN membership – for more details see <http://www.vssn.org.uk/journal/voluntary-sector-review/>

For any other queries, or if you wish to discuss a proposed paper's suitability, please email Jane Cullingworth at j.cullingworth.1@research.gla.ac.uk or Laura Lebec at l.lebec.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Attending the event

VSSN aims to promote an understanding of the UK voluntary sector through research. The event is aimed at researchers, academics, doctoral students and practitioners in voluntary organisations or foundations interested in the UK voluntary sector. We also welcome policy makers engaged in relevant fields. We are always pleased to meet and receive contributions from colleagues in similar settings in other countries who are involved in the field. The working language is English.

Booking will open once the programme is finalised.

We look forward to welcoming you to Glasgow on the 18th of May.

Future VSSN Days Seminars

The VSSN Steering Group is also seeking host institutions or organisations for future Day Seminars. Anyone wishing to express an interest should contact the VSSN Steering Group via info@vssn.org.uk for an initial discussion.