



# RCD Women's News

Issue no: 19, September 2006

## **why women?**

Putting women's human rights back on the political and public agenda

The Women's Resource Centre launched the **why women?** campaign in March this year, which calls on the Government and funders to acknowledge the systematic discrimination women continue to face, and to sustainably fund and support the women's sector.

### **Gender equality**

We are very concerned that the current Government work on gender equality, including the new gender equality duty (which means public bodies will now have to 'promote equality of opportunity between men and women'), is not acknowledging discrimination against women. Our fear is that without this acknowledgement, any law or practice will only promote 'equal', meaning 'the same' – without any analysis or understanding of the need to address systematic discrimination against women.

### **Funding for women's organisations**

Women's organisations make up 7% of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) – yet they only receive 1.2% of central government funding for the VCS. We are seeing many well-established women's organisations that are much-needed closing down due to lack of funding. While funding for the VCS has always been patchy, the situation now is becoming critical. With the current government trend on farming public service delivery out to the private sector and the VCS, procurement – specific contracts drawn up by the public sector, outlining specific service delivery – is already meaning less grants available for the VCS. It also means a fundamental shift away from an independent VCS to an agenda written up by the Government.

Small and marginalised VCS, such as the women's sector, BME sector and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) sectors, are unlikely to access procurement funding as small organisations do not have the infrastructure to manage large bids. We are hopeful that good practice develops on partnerships for procurement bids, but we have concerns about what will happen in practice. And marginalised issues (like no recourse to public funds, affecting primarily BME women) are unlikely to feature in procurement bids.

The **Why women?** campaign: We have a number of resources including postcards, posters, a short film about women's organisations, and the **why women?** research report. This highlights the key unique factors of women's organisations. We recently produced a pilot study into the economic value of the women's sector. This found that women's organisations save the Government money. We had our local MP submit an Early Day Motion (which is like a petition for MPs to show they are supportive of a specific issue) supporting better funding for women's organisations. 77 MPs have signed this so far. We are still lobbying the ALG to stop any proposed cuts to their grants scheme. And we have over 530 sign-ups to the campaign.

The key messages we are sending out to the Government and funders are that you can use our research to show:

- women's organisations provide value for money – they save the Government money
- women's organisations challenge discrimination and violence against women, and promote equality
- women's organisations provide unique solutions to meet women's needs
- women's organisations change lives – they work with the most marginalised communities of women.

Please support the campaign by signing up, asking your local MP to sign our EDM. For more information, including access to our research and campaign materials, visit [www.whywomen.org.uk](http://www.whywomen.org.uk) or contact Darlene Corry, WRC Policy Officer at [darlene@wrc.org.uk](mailto:darlene@wrc.org.uk) or 020 7324 3030.

## Funding

**The Global Fund for Women** is an international network of women and men committed to a world of equality and social justice. They advocate for and defend women's human rights by making grants available to support groups around the world.

The Global Fund supports organisations which demonstrate a clear commitment to women's equality and female human rights; show concern about the way women are viewed and view themselves in society; are governed and directed by women; consist of a group of women working together and are based outside of the United States. Grants range from \$500 to \$20,000

For more information visit  
[www.globalfundforwomen.org/3grant/criteria-guidelines.html](http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/3grant/criteria-guidelines.html)

## Events

### **Third Sector Review – a stronger voice for women's organisations**

Women's Resource Centre, in partnership with other women's umbrella organisations, is holding a consultation event for women's groups on **Tuesday 3 October**. The event will bring together women's organisations from across the country to learn about the Government's plans, discuss the needs of women's organisations, and to put women's organisations' views across to the Government. Venue: University of London Union, Time: 10.30-4pm.

For further information call 020 7324 3030 or email [admin@wrc.org.uk](mailto:admin@wrc.org.uk).

### **Women with no recourse to public funds: where is the humanity?**

Women's Resource Centre and Southall Black Sisters are launching a free resource pack for women's organisations and also their campaign: **Abolish No Recourse to Public Funds on 26 October 2006**.

Venue: Diana Memorial Fund (London, SE1)  
For more information call 020 7324 3030 or email [admin@wrc.org.uk](mailto:admin@wrc.org.uk)

## Training

**Stella Project** is running

- Basic Drugs and Alcohol Awareness training on **28 September 2006**. Priority is given to domestic violence service providers. The course is tailored to meet basic awareness of substances and their effects; and to understand related legal and health issues.

Costs: £75 for voluntary organisations and £100 for statutory organisations.

For more information call 020 7785 3862 or email [stellaproject@gldvp.org.uk](mailto:stellaproject@gldvp.org.uk)

**Women's Resource Centre (WRC)** is running

- Monitoring and Evaluation training on **17 October 2006** in order to have effective planning and delivery of an organisation's work and collect information for funders and stakeholders.
- Introduction to Influencing Government Policy on **18 October 2006** to provide information and skills that influence Government policy at local, regional and national levels.

Venue: WRC Office. Free for members

For more information call 020 7324 3030 or email [info@wrc.org.uk](mailto:info@wrc.org.uk)

**Education Action International** will host free human rights advocacy courses from **8 November to 25 January**. The course provides practical training for refugees and asylum seekers in the UK who are or want to work to advocate for human rights both in the UK and internationally. Deadline for application is **29 September 2006**.

For more information contact Sonia Omar on 0207 426 5814 or email [enquiries@refugee-advocacy-project.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@refugee-advocacy-project.org.uk)

## Support to employment

**Women Like Us** is a service that aims to support women with children back into part-time, flexible or self-employment in North London.

For more information call 0207 281 6522 or email [Business@womenlikeus.org.uk](mailto:Business@womenlikeus.org.uk)

To submit any articles about women's asylum issues, email [penny.mclean@refugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:penny.mclean@refugeecouncil.org.uk)