

History and Purposes

Below are the Brief History and Purposes (from Section By-Laws, Draft #3) of the ARNOVA Section on Community and Grassroots Associations:

Brief History of ARNOVA Community and Grassroots Associations Section

In 1994, David Horton Smith (Boston College) sought permission from the ARNOVA Board of Directors to form a Section on Grassroots Associations. This request and the fact that both Smith and Ram Cnaan (University of Pennsylvania) had initiated metropolitan area ARNOVA-like groups led to a multi-year Board consideration of a general policy for Affinity Groups, culminating in the November 1998 Board adoption of the "Statement on Sections of the Association" and the June 1999 Board adoption of the "Statement of Procedures for Sections."

In November 1995, Siegrun Fox Freyss (California State University, Los Angeles) Chaired a Luncheon Roundtable Discussion on Grassroots Associations at the annual ARNOVA Conference, seeking to stimulate interest in the field. In November 1996, John Messer (Susquehanna Institute) Chaired another Luncheon Roundtable Discussion on Grassroots Associations at the annual ARNOVA Conference with similar intent. For the December 1997 ARNOVA Conference, Smith organized five Luncheon Roundtable Discussions on different topics related to community and grassroots associations, together with a Mini-Plenary Panel Session on the field, exploring the formation of a new Section on this interest area. Over 50 people attended these 1997 sessions.

In November 1998, a pre-ARNOVA Conference Affinity Group meeting on Community and Grassroots Associations was held for two hours, organized overall by Smith, with the leadership participation of Cnaan, Kenneth Perkins (Longwood College), and Jo Anne Schneider (University of Wisconsin-Parkside). During the period 1997-1999, Perkins was instrumental in contacting 48 persons on a computerized mailing list he created for the budding Section based on Conference session sign-up sheets. He communicated the names of interested persons to Roger Lohmann (University of West Virginia), who created a list-serve Internet discussion group "CGAP-L" that serves but is larger than the official membership of the Section.

The Internet contact address of the Listserv is CGAP-L@WVNVM.WVNET.EDU. Anyone interested in community and grassroots associations may participate, and may join the Listserv without cost by communicating with Lohmann at rlohmann@wvu.edu. Once a member of the Listserv, one can send an email to CGAP-L@WVNVM.WVNET.EDU with any subject heading and the message will be communicated to all Listserv participants. [By the end of January 2001 there were more than 200 Listserv participants, including you.]

In late 1998 and 1999, Smith organized a set of 30 Co-Founders of the Section on Community and Grassroots Associations, all of whom were then-current members of ARNOVA--- representing both genders, multiple racial-ethnic backgrounds, a variety of social science disciplines and professions, different nations, and academics/practitioners/ graduate students. Smith was Founding Chair, and the Founding Deputy Chairs were Thomasina Borkman (George Mason University), Cnaan, Perkins, and Schneider. This list of Co-Founders was submitted to

the ARNOVA Board of Directors via the then Executive Director Anita Plotinsky on 10/4/1999 by Smith along with a formal request for a Section on Community and Grassroots Associations. An additional petition for formal Section status was signed by about 25 attendees at the November 1999 Pre-ARNOVA Conference Section Meeting and submitted to the ARNOVA Board. This Section Meeting was organized and chaired by Borkman.

The ARNOVA Board of Directors unanimously approved the petition and granted such status on November 9, 1999. The first elections were held in summer 2000, with Borkman and Carl Milofsky (Bucknell University) becoming the first elected Co-Chairs (tie-vote). The latter planned and ran the first official Section Meeting from 4-6PM on November 15, 2000, the day prior to the ARNOVA Conference, and chaired the first dinner meeting of the Executive Committee the same evening.

Purposes of ARNOVA Community and Grassroots Associations Section

The purpose or mission of the Section is (1) to foster and express the interests of current ARNOVA members in community and grassroots associations, and (2) to attract new ARNOVA members with these interests.

To fulfill these basic purposes, the Section will do the following:

(a) Organize and run a Section Meeting in conjunction with the annual ARNOVA Conference, usually from 4-6 PM on the afternoon before the main Conference begins the next day.

(b) Organize and run an annual Section Executive Committee Dinner Meeting on the evening before the regular ARNOVA Conference.

(c) Organize and run a biennial mail (or e-mail) balloting in even-numbered years for election of officers (Chair and Deputy Chair) and six other members of the Executive Committee (our term for the Steering Committee), with the actual balloting run through the ARNOVA Executive Office.

(d) Referee ARNOVA Conference proposals dealing with community and grassroots associations topics in cooperation with the ARNOVA Vice-President for Meetings.

(e) Recommend annual Section dues to the ARNOVA Board of Directors and prepare a proposed Annual Budget in consultation with the ARNOVA Executive Office and submit this Budget for approval as part of the regular budget of ARNOVA.

(f) Maintain current, complete, and accurate financial records in consultation with the ARNOVA Executive Office as required by the ARNOVA Statement on Sections. Prepare and submit to the annual Section Meeting a preliminary current year annual Financial Statement, seeking changes and approval. Then submit a final, updated version to the ARNOVA Board through the Executive Office on January 15 of each year for the preceding calendar year.

(g) Prepare an Annual Report on Section activities and current Section membership, submitting a preliminary version of this Report to the annual Section Meeting and Executive Committee Meeting, and then a final version to the ARNOVA Board through the Executive Office by January 15 of each year for the preceding calendar year.

(h) Prepare and send one or more e-mail “newsletters” (news updates and information) to the Section membership each year. These communications, usually sent by CGAP-L Listserv, will ordinarily include a Report on the annual Section Meeting and the Annual Report of the Section.

(i) Maintain an email discussion group (computer Listserv of email addresses and names), CGAP-L, through Roger Lohmann at West Virginia University or his designate, to foster communication among Section members and others interested in community and grassroots associations. CGAP-L will usually include the names of all present and former Section members, of all people who are on sign-up sheets from Section Meetings or Section-sponsored panel discussions, of all Section Co-Founders, of ARNOVA members who have indicated a research interest in community and grassroots associations or self-help and mutual assistance groups in the current or prior ARNOVA Membership Directory, and of anyone else who seeks to participate.

(j) Perform outreach at least once a year via email Listserv to participants in CGAP-L and also ARNOVA-L, seeking new members for the Section.

(k) Abide by the limitations on ARNOVA Sections as stated in point XI of the ARNOVA "Statement on Sections of the Association" and the ARNOVA “Statement of Procedures for Sections,” both as amended from time to time.

(l) Perform such other activities as may further the foregoing mission, purposes, and activities.