EDITOR’S NOTE

It’s hard to believe it is already the end of March! For this month’s Spotlight section, we have included a conversation with Swati Shresth and Neha Nimble, Centre for Social Impact & Philanthropy (CSIP) at Ashoka University in Delhi. They have undertaken an extensive research project in talent management in the social sector.

Dr. Swati Shresth, Research Director at CSIP, is an academic with teaching and research experience across diverse research institutions. She has been engaged with the social sector for over 20 years and has extensive experience with organisations at the grassroots and international levels. She has a Ph.D. in History from Duke University and is interested in both academic and practice-oriented research.

Dr. Neha Nimble, Senior Manager-Research at CSIP, is a social science researcher and an intersectional feminist. She has previously worked with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai where she also undertook her Ph.D. Her areas of interest and expertise include gender, intersectionality, work, social exclusion, and civil society.

A big thank you to Neha and Swati for taking the time to talk to us and for your thoughtful answers.

In the coming months, we welcome contributions from you and would love to cover some countries that we have not had the chance to highlight yet. If you are connected to research centers in Asia and the Pacific, please let us know if you would like to contribute to our monthly newsletter.

Please be reminded that with much regret, we will be seeing some of our long-time readers off this month. If you’d like to stay connected, please renew your ISTR membership. As a member, you can take advantage of the numerous events offered by ISTR, including the series of six...
webinars on “The Future of Third Sector Research”. The first webinar of this series was held on 29 March 2023. The purpose of this series is to gather together the international academic community in order to set up an agenda for future research concerning the Third Sector worldwide. The basic idea is to move from an abstract level of analysis to a more empirical one, or form macro to micro (through the meso dimension). Five online sessions are organized to move from “theory” to “definition” and “classification” towards “aggregation” (measurement, counting) plus one session dedicated to the relationship between Third Sector and religion. The sixth and final session will synthesise the reasoning developed in the five previous ones. For more information and registration, please visit the Member section of the ISTR website.

Enjoy this month’s newsletter!

Linda, Fengshi, and Qianjin

In Spotlight: Talent Management in the Indian Social Sector
A Conversation with Swati Shresth and Neha Nimble, Centre for Social Impact & Philanthropy (CSIP)

Q1: You’ve been with the center for quite some time, can you tell us what made you want to work here?

Neha: I had been researching social issues at the grassroots for almost a decade before joining Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP) and was looking for an opportunity where I could use that experience to inform the larger social impact ecosystem about the challenges (especially the paucity and politics of funds) faced by the NPOs and communities. Also, I wanted to carry on working within the academic space so CSIP, India’s first-ever academic centre on philanthropy, provided a perfect middle point where my grassroots knowledge could add to where and how philanthropy can enable a resilient social sector. Also, the centre’s combined, intersectional focus on social impact and philanthropy allows working on projects that best leverage and maximise my skills and career aspirations.

Swati: I decided to join CSIP because it is the only credible research organisation based within the academic space that has been working on the whole social impact ecosystem in India. I had been part of the research community and NPOs for nearly 25 years and the centre’s impressive research portfolio (with reports like ‘Estimating Philanthropic Capital in India’ and ‘Regulatory Frameworks for India’s Voluntary Sector’) was a definite attraction for me. The fact that the centre also focuses on capacity building for funders and sector leaders has established it as a leader in matters of philanthropy and social impact. So, yes, I was happy to take this opportunity to shape and contribute to the conversations around these issues.

Q2: Neha, the Talent Study is a new addition to the studies that the Center for Social Impact and philanthropy puts out, can you explain what triggered it? And why now?

The study on ‘Talent Management in the Indian Social Sector’ is a collaborative project of two institutions - CSIP and the Indian School of Development Management (ISDM). And, the
A study was launched before we joined but over the course of the study we had enough opportunities to discuss and understand the genesis of it.

Ingrid Srinath, former Director, CSIP and Ravi Sreedharan, Founder and President, ISDM felt that for building a resilient social sector, it becomes imperative to understand and address the needs of its workers. The study is the first of its kind because while there exist a number of studies and frameworks to locate management of human resources in corporate (MBAs in HR) and government systems (public administration), there was no such data or framework that was relevant and adequate for understanding the talent management status and needs of social sector workers in India. The study started as a simple salary benchmarking in the sector but with subsequent consultations, it was found that the sector needed an overall evidence-based understanding of ‘what exists’ in terms of talent management (motivations, compensation, benefits, TM structures, policies, perceptions etc.).

As Ingrid and Ravi shared during the launch of the study reports, while ‘what exists’ can give us a springboard to start our conversations on where we should be, data on compensation, benefits and motivations allows informed decision-making for employers, funders as well as job aspirants.

Q3: How does this study complement the other research output of the center?

Our centre is relatively new (about six years old), and as its name suggests, our research concerns two broad themes- philanthropy and social impact. A lot of our research is on the scale, trends, and types of philanthropy, while at the same time, our effort is to fill the gaps in sector-level understanding of the social impact ecosystem in India. The well-being of the people who serve in the sector is as important as the causes and missions they dedicate themselves. Ironically, there are very few studies that document the motivations, barriers, desires and status of the people who drive the sector. CSIP’s and ISDM’s unique position and collective expertise allowed us to fill this missing gap in research on Indian nonprofits. Adding to our research on social impact and philanthropy, the study provides evidence to philanthropists and sector leaders to appropriately invest in the people who are working for a just and equitable society.

Q4: This study could be useful for both practitioners and academics, what are your plans to disseminate it further to both?

Yes, we are targeting both popular media as well as academic/ research publications and platforms. We plan to share the findings from the research in conferences (like ARNOVA, etc.) and other research convenings (like WINGS working groups and ISTR) as well. Importantly, we are about to complete the development of a publicly accessible microsite which will host compensation data and all the reports from the study. The idea is to inform relevant stakeholders about the academic as well as practical contributions of the findings of the study.

Q5: What lessons can academic or educational institutions offering, for instance, a Master’s Degree in Social Work learn from this study, how can it help them prepare students for their future roles?

There are several data portals (like Glassdoor) that exist for other sectors where an aspirant can inform themselves about what kind of salary to expect for which role in which organisation.
The microsite being developed will host such compensation data for social sector roles and provide a robust understanding of sector compensation to enable informed career choices for professionals aspiring to join the sector. In addition, the sector-level and organisation-specific findings also list what other factors can keep them motivated to join the sector and what can be the challenges if they join a certain kind of organisation. So, in a way, it empowers them to make a considered decision about working in the social sector.

Q6: One of the key findings of the report is that "The definition of talent and its “boundaries in the context of an organisation” keeps evolving as the needs of the organisation and the social sector are constantly evolving". How do you think can this be mitigated when trying to implement talent management?

Workers’ rights and commitment to justice and equity should be at the core of a well-thought-out talent management policy for any organisation. As needs of the organisations evolve, greater and commensurate investments in L&D would ensure that workers remain relevant to their organisations. Long-term institutional building is often dependent on enduring relationships between workers and organisations. Therefore, upskilling will go a long way in nurturing these relationships rather than hiring newer and newer talent.

Q7: Do you think research like this is replicable in other countries, with different structural conditions?

Absolutely. Issues like paucity of funds, dependency on intrinsic motivation, new, non-traditional talent pools and expectations of funders for immediate returns on investments are issues that affect talent in the social sector everywhere. So yes, any and every country, especially those in the Global South, can benefit from taking a stock of how the social sector’s talent is doing in terms of compensation, benefits, relationship with management styles, organisational culture, and leadership. Understanding what the talent brings to the sector and what the sector brings to the talent are crucial to building a sustainable ecosystem. The need to document the conditions and perceptions of the sector workers has become even more urgent in the post-COVID era which has amplified the role of the social sector in pushing the development needs of society more than ever.

If you look at the methodology of the study, you will find it has relevant and employable methods for all kinds of talent segments and organisations. In fact, one of the aspects of the study that we are most proud of is the use of frameworks that triangulate methodologies ranging from grounded theory for exploring drivers of talent to purely quantitative assessments for compensation benchmarking to best document related yet unique aspects of overall talent management. We are certain, if not the whole study, institutions across different countries can look towards our study to investigate one or more issues of talent management.

Q8: In light of “third sector research” would it be possible, according to you, to expand this program either geographically, longitudinally or both? Why would that be important or interesting?

Speaking about making this study longitudinal, yes we would very much want to continue taking a periodic assessment of at least the salary benchmarking every few years. Of course, this would depend on if we can get funding for the exercise. If we do this, it’ll be interesting to see how salaries for different talent segments (level and functions) and organisations change
over time. The current salary and benefits data also needs to be updated for nonprofits and funders to make updated, informed, evidence-led decisions about recruiting, staffing, funding and budgeting in future. As the sector grows in scale and complexity and with greater induction of specialised technical professionals, a longitudinal assessment will also be useful to capture the diversification of the typology of roles and organisations in the sector.

The study can also be expanded to further understand how the identities (gender, caste, tribes, sexuality, etc.) of ‘talent’ influence the roles and career trajectories in the social sector in general and specific categories of organisations in particular.

About geographically expanding the project, yes, it’ll be exciting to do a comparative study in collaboration with researchers based in other countries and economies. This would help us understand similarities, differences and patterns in the talent management practices in the nonprofit ecosystem. As researchers, it would be interesting to see how specific contexts and structures influence the experiences of sector workers. A comparative analysis would also be useful for peer learning and course correction in terms of salaries and other benefits offered to sector workers globally.

Core Academic Journals

VOLUNTAS, Volume 34, Issue 1

I Selected Abstract

Computational Social Science for Nonprofit Studies: Developing a Toolbox and Knowledge Base for the Field

Ji Ma, Islam Akef Ebeid, Arjen de Wit, Meiying Xu, Yongzheng Yang, René Bekkers & Pamala Wiepking

Abstract: How can computational social science (CSS) methods be applied in nonprofit and philanthropic studies? This paper summarizes and explains a range of relevant CSS methods from a research design perspective and highlights key applications in our field. We define CSS as a set of computationally intensive empirical methods for data management, concept representation, data analysis, and visualization. What makes the computational methods “social” is that the purpose of using these methods is to serve quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods social science research, such that theorization can have a solid ground. We illustrate the promise of CSS in our field by using it to construct the largest and most comprehensive database of scholarly references in our field, the Knowledge Infrastructure of Nonprofit and Philanthropic Studies (KINPS). Furthermore, we show that through the application of CSS in constructing and analyzing KINPS, we can better understand and facilitate the intellectual growth of our field. We conclude the article with cautions for using CSS and suggestions for future studies implementing CSS and KINPS.

Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Theorizing the Third Sector: Embedding Statistical and Methodological Developments Awaiting Broader Scholarly Take-up

Lester M. Salamon, Megan A. Haddock & Stefan Toepler

Abstract: This article reviews and calls attention to the work underlying significant improvements in the conceptualization, measurement and analysis of the third sector on a
comparative basis worldwide that have been made over the past three decades. This article provides an update on the current status of each measurement instrument, their institutionalization in the world’s major official statistical systems, and describes how they can work in concert to provide regular, robust, and accurate information about the third sector at the national level around the world. This article also represents a call to action for the research community to advocate for having these research tools implemented in their own countries, to protect the progress made, to support and provide oversight of their implementation, to use the resulting data in their own research, and to initiate improvements in the development of these tools in the future. Doing so will grow the base of cross-nationally comparable data on the third sector, will provide lenses for us to better see the features that make the civil society sector in each country distinct, and will open the way for vastly expanded empirically grounded theory-building in this field.

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Journal of Civil Society, Volume 18, Issue 4

I Selected Abstract

How do civil society organizations influence climate change politics? Evidence from India, Indonesia, and Finland

Eeva Luhtakallio, Tuomas Ylä-Anttila & Anu Lounela

Abstract: There in this article, the efforts of civil society organizations to influence climate change policymaking in three countries with very different traditions of democratic decision making are compared: in a newly developed democracy (Indonesia), in an established democracy in the Global South (India), and in an established democracy in the Global North with an exceptionally strong civil society (Finland). The empirical material consists of 57 in-depth interviews with Civil Society Organization (CSO) representatives. The following three arguments about CSO influence in climate change politics are made: (1) the nation-state is an important avenue of influence for most CSOs, alongside global institutions; (2) CSOs influence states through specific contact points, rather than by challenging the state as a uniform entity; and (3) CSO actors’ perception of influence in climate politics may be stronger where state capacity is weaker, rather than where civil society itself is strong.

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ISTR’s Members-Only Seminar Series on “The Future of Third Sector Research”

This seminar series builds on the special sessions organized during ISTR’s 15th International Conference in Montreal, which were designed to reflect on the impact of Lester M. Salamon’s research on the development of the field of Third Sector Studies. In his keynote address, Helmut Anheier, Hertie School, Germany & Luskin School of Public Affairs, UCLA, United States, encouraged the research community to build on the foundational knowledge and think boldly about the future directions for research and practice.

The purpose of this series is therefore to gather together the international scientific community in order to set up an agenda for future research concerning the Third Sector worldwide. The basic idea is to move from an abstract level of analysis to a more empirical one, or to say it different form macro to micro (throughout meso dimension). Five online sessions are organized to move from “theory” to “definition” and “classification” towards “aggregation” (measurement, counting) plus one session dedicated to the relationship between Third Sector and religion. A sixth and final session will synthesise the reasoning developed in the five previous ones.

This seminar series is chaired by Andrea Bassi, Associate Professor of Sociology at Bologna University, Italy. The Advisory Committee is comprised of Mario Aquino Alves, ISTR Board President, FGV São Paulo School of Business Administration, Brazil and Carolyn Cordery, ISTR President Elect, Victoria University, New Zealand.

Members, please sign in to register for the session series. Registering once will give you access to all six sessions, please join us for as many as you are able. After you register you will receive an email confirmation with link to suggested readings. You will receive a zoom link a week prior to each session, and a reminder on the day of.

Special Session at ISTR 2022 Montreal – Tools and Strategies for Measuring Volunteering: The Application of International Standards

Chair: Megan Haddock, ISTR, previously she managed the ILO Manual project
Panelists: Ksenija Fonovic, CSV Lazio, Italy

The International Labour Organization (ILO) sets global standards for the definition and measurement of work, both paid and unpaid. Governments the world over follow these standards and best practices to increase the likelihood of having internationally comparable data as well as comparability across time within a country (https://ilostat.ilo.org/about/standards/icls/). In 2008, the ILO’s International Conference of Labor Statisticians adopted a resolution, submitted by Lester M. Salamon and his research
team at the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, to support the development of guidance for the measurement of volunteering. That guidance manual was subsequently developed by an international Technical Experts Group led by Dr. Salamon. Their work ultimately resulted in the publication in 2011 of the ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work (ILO, 2011).

In 2013, the ILO clarified the official definition of “work” to include volunteering as a form of unpaid work (ILO 2013 Resolution 1) leading the way for the full integration of the measurement of volunteering in national measures of labor. More recently, the ILO has been working in collaboration with the United Nations Volunteers Programme to test the standards, refine them, and develop a wide arrange of tools to support their implementation.

Since the 2011 publication of the ILO Manual, the measurement of volunteering has become embedded in international standards and methodologies have become more sophisticated. But their implementation has been sporadic. Researchers, practitioners, and academics have an important role to play in how these measures are adopted at the country level (Guidi, Fonović, Cappadozzi. Springer, 2021). This workshop will bring participants up to speed on the latest developments in the international standards and will provide information about the tools and strategies for the collection and reporting of empirical and comparative data on volunteering.

Please visit here to watch the special session.

**Civic Space Report 2023: Fighting for Democratic Empowerment and Resilience**

Civil society is a cornerstone of democracy and rule of law. In the context of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine we are reminded that with few means and little power, in the context of conflicts, pandemics or natural disasters, civil society organisations and volunteers help people in need. They are often the first ones to arrive and the last ones to leave. They advocate for the common good and to ensure laws are not driven by corporate interest and for-profit pursues.

But across the EU, NGOs, associations and movements are experiencing pressures and challenges faced with the erosion of democratic processes and breaches of the rule of law.

In our Civic Space Report 2023, we highlight similar trends and patterns of deterioration of civic freedoms emerging across Europe. Access the full report now!

**New Book – Environmental Communication and Water Management in India: A Civil Society Perspective**

Ram Awtar Yadav & Kanchan K. Malik

This book analyses the underlying communication strategies and approaches of grassroots water management practices in India through a case study-based ethnographic approach.
Drawing from fieldwork experiences, this volume provides a detailed overview of Parmarth, a not-for-profit NGO, which is the case study for this research. It presents an in-depth theoretically informed analysis of data collected through multiple methods, which includes key informant interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, and document reviews, among other approaches.

The book examines Parmarth’s strategies and processes to mobilise women as important stakeholders in the region’s water conservation initiatives. It discusses communicative actions, tactics and campaigns in water interventions and the role of various stakeholders ranging from local community members to civil society.

Accessibly written, this volume is a must-read for scholars and researchers of media and communication studies, environmental communication, ecology studies, development studies, public policy, sustainable development, water management, sociology, and political science.

Call for Papers

2023 Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference

12–13 September 2023

This conference invites participants to explore these issues. The Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference 2023 is organised by the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN), in partnership with Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS), and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). It will provide a unique opportunity for academics, policy makers and practitioners from the UK and further afield to come together to share findings and discuss the implications of research for civil society.

Our Conference Track invites research contributions focused on ‘Action, difference, and change in local civil society’. These could include: specific case studies of local voluntary action; historical accounts of local change; comparative studies of localities; protest and activism within specific communities; cross-sector collaborations; geographical and place-based mapping; action research with local groups; and many other forms of project.

The conference aims to:

- Contribute to evidence and theory-building in the field
- Develop emerging research ideas
- Inform and be informed by the work of practitioners
- Inform and influence policy

We welcome submissions for individual papers, panel sessions and workshops. We are particularly keen to receive proposals for the Conference Theme, but also welcome papers that address any issues relevant to volunteering and the voluntary sector, aligned to the following streams:

- The Conference Theme – Action, difference, and change in local civil society
- Diversity, (in)equality and inclusion
- The Covid-19 pandemic and voluntary action
- Democracy and grassroots voluntary action
- Volunteering, participation and social action
- Advances in theory and methods
- Resources, including funding, fundraising, philanthropy, social enterprise, and social investment
- Organisational management and governance, including law and regulation
- Historical perspectives on civil society, the voluntary sector and volunteering
- Measuring civil society: outcomes, impact and social value

**Abstract submission**

You can submit your abstract here: [https://www.vssn.org.uk/abstract-submission-2023-vsvr-conference/](https://www.vssn.org.uk/abstract-submission-2023-vsvr-conference/)

When submitting abstracts, authors will be asked which streams they feel their paper will best fit within. We welcome contributions from those working in the voluntary sector and civil society, and research from a variety of disciplines, including sociology, social policy, politics, psychology, geography, economics, business studies, law, anthropology, philosophy and ethics.

**EIASM Workshop on Non-Profit Management in Aberdeen, UK**

**22–23 June 2023**

Globally third sector organisations are a growing feature of societies and play an essential role in supporting communities at all levels of society. Indeed, even more during the COVID-19 pandemic charitable organisations provided essential support and filled many gaps in public service provisions. As communities grapple the consequences of the pandemic and now the global recession, demand for the services and support of third sector organisations by the most vulnerable communities have continued to increase. As a result of the financial wreckage of the pandemic and this growing demand on charity services, leaders of charities are faced with significant financial challenges and a variety of capacity constraints.

The purpose of this workshop ‘The challenges of managing the third sector’ is to present and discuss in a stimulating academic environment high-quality research papers exploring the contemporary challenges in managing all kinds of non-profit organisations (NPOs). We seek to engage a global community of scholars and practitioners to explore the financial and managerial challenges facing this sector during the global pandemic and beyond. Potential contributors are encouraged to interpret this theme broadly, yet critically, including through applying diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives to a wide range of countries and regional settings. This workshop will be of interest not only to researchers active in this area, but also to policymakers, senior managers, and practitioners from all disciplines. The workshop organisers are particularly interested in the results of accounting, managerial, economic, policy and inter-disciplinary approaches that explore the contemporary challenges in managing third sector organisations during times of crisis.
• **Submissions of papers** to the Workshop should be made via the EIASM website **by 24th April 2023**.

• Notification of acceptance of papers will be made as of 2nd May 2023.

• Registration of authors must be made by 24th May 2023.

• Submission deadline for receipt of final completed papers for the conference is 5th June 2023.

A selection of the best papers will be eligible for submission to a special issue of *Financial Accountability and Management Journal* (Guest editors Audrey Paterson, Noel Hyndman, Marc Jegers, and Irvine Lapsley). FAM is ranked by the Association of Business Schools (ABS) as 3-rated. More information will be offered during the workshop.

**A virtual conference at the intersection of Urban Studies, Sociology, Cultural Studies and Design**

**Local Cultures – Global Spaces**

**05 – 07 December 2023**

The United Nations Human Rights and Habitat programmes connect how we live, to where we live. The association is premised on an understanding of cultures, communities and society through the lens of place. It sees them as inherently interlinked, and mutually reinforcing. Examining this liminal state, the **Local Cultures – Global Spaces** conference questions this idea as it appears at the intersection of cultural studies, sociology, human geography, architecture and urban planning.

It responds to debates around community networks and cultural traditions as independent of location. It addresses readings of the built environment as an isolated phenomena – as a series of constructed objects in, of, and for, themselves. Conversely, it acknowledges that how we live can be seen as inseparable from our built environments – our buildings, villages, towns and cities. In such readings, place may be defined as deterministic – as a central player influencing actions, and even identity. Positioning itself somewhere between these positions, Local Cultures – Global Spaces explores readings of societies and place as hybrid – as byproducts of the conflicting social, cultural and economic forces shaping our lives in multiple spheres.

If we take the city as a case in point, it can be critiqued as a site of displacement, economic inequity, gender marginalization and social exclusion. Viewed through such lenses, architecture, urban design and development policy simply ingrain the status quo. By contrast, for those celebrating cultural consumption, the city is a site for exchange – of ideas, experiences, identities, money, and more. Within this mix, the design of cities is central to the riches of globalization. It is where we find the Creative Class of Richard Florida, and where we enjoy the fruits of human production: cultural buildings, public spaces and the IT networks of the ‘smart city.’

In welcoming debates on these questions, Local Cultures – Global Spaces is a virtual conference involving a collaboration between Departments of Architecture, Sociology and Cultural Studies from universities in the UK, USA and China. It welcomes research papers,
cases studies, ethnographic analyses and project reports on any of the questions raised above, or any of the themes of its partner universities:

**Transforming a Precarious Present – People, Politics and Place**, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Rochester Institute of Technology, New York

**Revisiting Place – Current Global Conditions and Human-Spatial Relations**, Cultural Management Programme, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

**Decolonising Spatial Theories, Pedagogies & Practices**, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, Australia.

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**About Us**

The Asia Pacific Third-Sector Researchers Network (formerly the East Asia Third-Sector Researchers Network) is an initiative first launched by the ISTR (International Society for Third-Sector Research) and the Centre for Social Innovation Studies in the Chinese University.
of Hong Kong in 2016 to help scholars and students in East Asia and beyond to exchange information about publications, conferences and job vacancies in third-sector studies through this Newsletter. The scope of the Newsletter and the network has expanded to cover the entire Asia Pacific region since November 2018. Starting from January 2020, the School of Social Sciences, University of New South Wales, Sydney, has been the host of the Newsletter.