



## Asia Pacific Third-Sector Researchers Network Newsletter

ISSUE 10 | October 2025

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### EDITOR'S NOTE

It is a great honor to contribute to the Spotlight section of this issue of the ISTR Asia Pacific Newsletter. My name is Herlin Chien, and I am a Professor of Political Science/Sustainability Science at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences in National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, Taiwan. I am also serving as Director of General Education Center, host of Taiwan Sustainability Hub at NPUST (TSH@NPUST) 1.5 food and consumption transition and Deputy Dean for Office of Sustainable Development.

I am also the head for Asian Civil Society Research Network - Taiwan Charter. For the past fifteen years, I have been engaging with NGOs such as Citizen Congress Watch (CCW) in Taipei to promote the development of Parliamentary Monitoring Organization (PMOs) in Taiwan to consolidate democratic

system. In recent years, my endeavor goes beyond Taiwan to identify, train and link PMOs in Asia Pacific region for collectively achieving SDG 16 on inclusive society and strong institutions. I must emphasize that the rise of NGOs in Taiwan began after the lift of martial law in 1987. Ever since, the growth of civil society in Taiwan has been pivotal for every democratic progress.

For those eager to explore more, I invite you to follow [Voluntas](#), ISTR's flagship publication, and engage with our dynamic growing community on [LinkedIn](#). Also, please check out the call for the 17th ISTR International Conference, Lisbon, July 14-17, 2026.

With best regards,

Prof. Dr. Herlin Chien  
College of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Deputy-CEO, Office of Sustainable Development  
National Pingtung University of Science and Technology (NPUST),  
Pingtung, Taiwan

## In Spotlight:

In Spotlight:

Asian Civil Society Research Network (ACSRN) – Taiwan Charter

By Herlin Chien and Akihiro Ogawa

[Asian Civil Society Research Network \(ACSRN\) – Taiwan Charter](#) was newly established in early 2023 and hosted by Prof. Dr. Herlin Chien from College of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, Pingtung, Taiwan. It is one of the two Charters for this broader [ACSRN](#) network of scholars and practitioners in Asia Pacific region who share common research interests in exploring development of civil society and non-state actors.

Since its inception, one of the flagship programs pushed by ACSRN – Taiwan Charter is the promotion of [Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations](#) (PMOs) concept across countries in the region. In essence, PMOs aim to play a role during non-election time to engage citizens and civil society in observing, monitoring and assessing the performance of Parliament or individual Member of Parliament to ensure SDG 16 on building inclusive societies and effective, accountable and strong institutions can be attainable.

Although current trend shows that regional progress on SDG 16 and especially on accountable Parliament is slow and even off-track, this lack of attention also provides a window of opportunities to initiate peer learning among CSOs in different countries in Asia to be acquainted with the best practices and a variety of challenges faced in different circumstances embedded in the kaleidoscope of political cultures with institutional barriers. Political changes and the progress of democratization are by nature incremental. Yet our collective effort of PMOs joined by CSOs in the region can potentially be game changers to help reverse democratic decline.

In 2025, we have organized several monthly online and face-to-face meetings in the Philippines and Malaysia with CSOs in more than 10 Asian countries for discussion and preparation of upcoming “Asia Parliament Transparency Index”. This index serves as a comprehensive, regionally relevant framework for assessing the level of openness and accountability in Asian parliaments, allowing civil society organizations to advocate for greater transparency. The following four tentative dimensions of Parliament Transparency is under discussion and can be subject to future revision based on ongoing practical feedback provided by CSOs and Parliaments in Asia:

- Dimension 1: Transparency in parliament operations
- Dimension 2: Institutional legal framework
- Dimension 3: Accountability
- Dimension 4: Citizen participation

For further reading of our collective effort in promoting PMOs in Asia, please refer to an interview conducted and published by *Melbourne Asia Review* – an initiative of the Asia Institute at University of Melbourne: Herlin Chien, 2024, [Interview: How parliamentary monitoring organizations are helping consolidate emerging democracies](#), *Melbourne Asia Review*, Edition 19, September 2, 2024. Following our visit to Malaysia in August, the ACSRN hosted another event in Japan, in September 2025. The Social Science Research Council (SSRC) of the United States provided an Abe Fellows Network Collaborative Grant of \$20,000 to support a key in-person meeting in Tokyo, held from September 18-19, 2025 <https://www.peopo.org/news/821377>. This meeting, titled "Empowering Asian Legislatures:

A Transparency Initiative Leveraging Japan's E-Government Expertise" aimed to address the concerning trend of democratic backsliding across the Asia-Pacific region, where legislatures are often weakened and civil society acts as a vital "last line of defense". The event was organized by a core team that includes Akihiro Ogawa from the University of Melbourne, Apichai Shipper from Georgetown University, Pinar Temocin from the University of Tokyo, and Hiroko Aihara of Japan Perspective News—all members of the ACSRN. Ogawa and Shipper are both former Abe Fellows, and Aihara was an Abe Fellow Journalist. This two-day workshop brought together PMO professionals from 10 countries in Asia (the list of invited PMOs is available below). A significant part of the agenda involved learning from Japan's democracy and digital governance, including inviting Mr. Taro Kono, a former minister of digital transformation and foreign affairs, to understand the strategies and mechanisms behind Japan's consistent global leadership in e-government and e-participation. Japan notably ranked first in 2022 and second in 2024 in the United Nations E-Government Survey.

#### List of Invited PMOs to the Tokyo meeting

- Citizen Congress Watch, Taiwan
- WeVis, Thailand
- Indonesian Parliamentary Center
- Indonesian Centre for Law and Policy Studies
- Legal Network for Truthful Elections, Philippines
- MyMP, Malaysia
- PRISMA, Malaysia
- Sinar Project, Malaysia
- National Center for Comprehensive Development, Mongolia
- Verité Research, Sri Lanka
- Code for Japan
- Center for Freedom of Information, South Korea
- Committee for Free and Fair Election in Cambodia
- Directorio Legislativo, Argentina

### Core Academic Journal

**VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organization, Volume 36, Issue 4**

#### I Selected Abstract

Let us be Clear: Why and how to Demonstrate data and Methods Transparency in Nonprofit Research

*René Bekkers, Cassandra M. Chapman, Annayah M. B. Prosser, Pamala Wiepking & Michael Meyer*

#### Abstract:

Transparency means being honest and open about one's practices. Transparency is considered a gold standard in the nonprofit sector and associated with a range of positive outcomes. We propose that transparency should also become a guiding principle and documented practice for nonprofit scholars. In this article, we articulate the context for discussing transparency in social science research and the potential risks of not being transparent. Acknowledging the epistemic and methodological diversity of our field—and therefore, the need for flexibility in how transparency will

be practiced by different scholars—we encourage nonprofit researchers to consider how they can enhance their research transparency. To this end, we outline the benefits of transparency and offer concrete suggestions for different ways to demonstrate transparency in nonprofit research.

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13. Book Review: Zamumtima Chijere, Nonprofit Social Enterprises: Lessons from Africa, CSR, Sustainability, Ethics & Governance, Springer Cham, Cham, Switzerland, 2024, XIII, 141 pp., 5 B/W illustrations, EUR 128.39 (eBook), ISBN 978-3-031-60234-4  
*Refika Ayu Bella Pratiwi & Khurotul A'yun*
14. Book Review: Social Cohesion and Resilience Through Citizen Engagement: A Place-Based Approach  
*Imoleayo Adeyeri*
15. Book Review: Theo Schuyt, Philanthropology: The Science of Philanthropy, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2024, 123 pp., Bibliography, \$119.00 (eBook), \$159.00 (Hardcover)  
*Cássio Aogui*

## Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Volume 54, Issue 5, October 2025

### I Selected Abstract

Why Cooperation in Volunteer Work Can Fail Despite the Best Intentions: Conflicting Ideas in Narrations From Volunteers

*Andreas Kewes, Moritz Müller, and Chantal Munsch*

#### Abstract:

This article provides an analysis of narratives about day-to-day cooperation between volunteers. It shows what challenges there are to cooperation, even when those involved share the same objectives and want to cooperate. Our analysis of the narrative interviews revealed two contrasting ideas volunteers have about cooperation: The first idea likens cooperation to a jigsaw puzzle, with volunteers emphasizing their mutual dependence. The second idea draws a comparison with pieces in a board game, with volunteers asserting their autonomy and acting strategically in dealing with others. The two ideas are shown to be incompatible, leading to volunteers taking rather critical views of each other. This shows the importance of a more nuanced analysis of different ideas of cooperation in volunteer work and of not taking successful cooperation as a given. Our practical conclusion is that the manner of cooperation in volunteer work needs to be negotiated more thoroughly.

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*Samuel Anokye Nyarko, Leif Atle Beisland, and Roy Mersland*
10. Book Review: Preparing leaders of nonprofit organizations: Contemporary perspectives by Brown, W. A., & Hale, M. (Eds.)  
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11. Book Review: Innovation for social change: How wildly successful nonprofits inspire and deliver results by Kral, L.  
*Jessica Whitmore*

## **Publications | News | Reports in the Sector**

### **Free to Think 2025: Attacks on Higher Education Linked to Democratic Decline**

Free to Think is an annual report by [Scholars at Risk's](#) Academic Freedom Monitoring Project. This [year's report](#) documents 395 attacks on higher education communities in 49 countries and territories. It explores global attacks on higher education, highlighting examples like the Taliban's exclusion of women and dissenters in Afghanistan and U.S. government pressure on institutions. The report urges the sharing of information, institutional support, legal protections, and funding to safeguard academic freedom.

## John Mohan announces the publication of his new book

John Mohan's book "[\*Volunteering in the United Kingdom: The spirit of service\*](#)" explores the long-term impact of voluntary services. It critiques major claims about volunteer benefits, noting that they often lack strong research support. While volunteering has potential benefits, it usually doesn't significantly reduce social inequalities, and its overall effect is limited.

## Call for Papers | Call for Panels | Conferences | Webinar (Repost) CFP: 17<sup>th</sup> ISTR International Conference, Lisbon, July 14-17, 2026 *"Imagining the Next Generation: Strengthening the Foundations of the Third Sector"*

In a polarized world, communication, collaboration, and understanding are vital. Third-sector organizations are key to community development, but funding cuts threaten civil society research and academic freedom. Despite this, universities and private groups still produce quality research. At the 2026 conference, we aim to shape the next generation of the third sector by strengthening connections and knowledge exchange between research and practice, countries and cultures, communities and organizations, funders and recipients, as well as new technologies and established methods.

Conference tracks include Teaching and Knowledge Exchange, AI/Tech in Research, Funding and Philanthropy, Volunteering and Community Participation, Social Work Policy and Practice, Social Economy, Social Enterprise, Governance and Leadership, Environmental Sustainability, Social Movements, Regulation, and Emerging Nonprofit and Third Sector Areas. For more information, click [here](#). Abstract submission deadline: **October 31, 2025**

## ISTR PhD Seminar: 9<sup>th</sup> International PhD Seminar, Lisbon

The [ISTR PhD Seminar](#) is designed for doctoral students researching the third sector and civil society globally, offering a platform for interaction with senior scholars and peers. Participants engage in intellectual discussions, reflect on theoretical frameworks, and explore career strategies in a supportive environment. Key activities include small group discussions for feedback on research, plenary sessions, professional development presentations by prominent scholars, and a voluntary 3-minute thesis competition. Applicants are required to submit an abstract by **October 31, 2025**, a motivation statement, and a confirmation of their doctoral student status.

## Call for Conference Abstracts: International Research Society for Public Management (IRSPM), Edith Cowan University

The IRSPM 2026 Scientific Committee invites abstract proposals for the conference taking place from April 8-10, 2026, at Edith Cowan University's Joondalup Campus in Perth, Australia. The call for abstracts, open until **October 12, 2025**, focuses on the theme "*Breaking Boundaries: Wellbeing, Innovation, and the Future of Public Management.*" Submissions that contribute to scholarly debate and advance the field of public management theory and practice are encouraged. For more details, click [here](#).

## Webinar: Public Policy and Philanthropy, Walter Panzirer, Indiana University

The Lilly Family School of Philanthropy is conducting a series of interviews with leaders to explore the relationship between philanthropy and policy. On **October 15, 2025**, Dr. Amir

Pasic and Diane Kaplan engage with Walter Panzirer to discuss policy and philanthropy matters. For more details and registration, click [here](#).

### **CFP: 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Research in Social Sciences, Bangkok, Thailand**

The [RSSCONF](#) organizing committee invites submissions for the “10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Research in Social Science”, scheduled on **November 7 to 9, 2025**. The conference primarily focuses on emerging issues and innovations across politics, the humanities, communications, law, education, and other social science disciplines. Abstract submission deadline: **October 17, 2025**. For more information, click [here](#).

### **Conference (Hybrid): International Conference on Social Movements (ICSM-25), The Society for Education (SFE), India**

The SFE is hosting ICSM-25 to bring together scholars, educators, and professionals from across India and beyond to explore emerging trends, technological advancements, and innovative research in the field of social movements. Abstract submission deadline: **October 19, 2025**. For more information, click [here](#).

### **Call for Panels: Reimagining Development, Development Studies Association (DSA), Hybrid at University College Dublin**

The [DSA-2026](#) is inviting proposals for panels and workshops related to the theme “*reimagining development: power, agency and futures in an uncertain world.*” Submission should critically examine how power dynamics and new forms of agency impact development through themes such as decolonization, digital inequality, climate justice, geopolitical shifts, and grassroots movements. Various session formats are encouraged, including paper panels, roundtables, and experimental approaches. The submission deadline: **October 20, 2025**. For more details, click [here](#).

### **Career News:**

#### **Lecturer: (Teaching) in Middle East Politics, Politics and International Studies, The SOAS University of London**

The SOAS University of London is hiring a full-time Lecturer (Teaching) in Middle East Politics. Responsibilities include teaching undergraduate and graduate courses, as well as advising dissertations. Application deadline: **October 12, 2025**. For more details, click [here](#).

#### **Grant Opportunity: AFP Foundation for Philanthropy**

The AFP Foundation for Philanthropy is offering funding for the Levis Fundraising Research grants, targeting projects related to fundraising performance. Awards are up to \$50,000. Fundraising professionals are encouraged to collaborate with academic institutions on the design of proposals. Application deadline: **October 31, 2025**. For more details, click [here](#).

#### **Assistant Professor/Associate Professor/Professor: Anthropology, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology**

The School of Humanities and Social Science at the Division of Humanities seeks a substantive-track position in Anthropology. The applicant should be an expert in environmental anthropology and possess a strong publication record. Application deadline: **November 1, 2025**. For more details, click [here](#).

### **Research Stipend: The Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC)**

The Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) seeks applications for research stipends. It will provide individual awardees with up to \$5,000 to cover travel and accommodation costs associated with research at the RAC. Applicants should prepare a brief narrative that explains their research project, its importance to current scholarship, and its contribution to the proposed topic. Application deadline: **November 7, 2025**, For more details, click [here](#).

### **Post-Doctoral Associate in the Division of Social Science, New York University of Abu Dhabi**

The NYU Abu Dhabi is accepting applications for a Postdoctoral Associate in the Division of Social Science. Applicants should hold or be close to completing a PhD in sociology, social psychology, computational social science, or a closely related field. Application deadline: **November 15, 2025**, For more information, click [here](#).

### **Faculty Position: Civil Society Organization Development and Program Management, Azim Premji University**

The Azim Premji University is seeking applications for faculty positions in Civil Society Organization Development and Program Management. The full-time role requires designing training programs, monitoring their effectiveness, and contributing to capacity development. For more details, click [here](#).

## Contact Us

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### About Us

The Asia Pacific Third-Sector Researchers Network (formerly the East Asia Third-Sector Researchers Network) was launched by ISTR in 2016 to help scholars and students in East Asia and beyond 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. Since January 2024, the Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur (IITJ) has been hosting the newsletter.