

Minutes of Asia Pacific Regional Network Meeting at Amsterdam 2018 International Conference

Date: July 12, 2018 (5:30-6:30 pm)

Venue: RM 24 – 24, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Co-Chairs: Ruth Phillips, The University of Sydney University

Kin-man Chan, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

1. Asia Pacific Regional Conference 2019

Ruth reported that in the 2017 Regional Conference held at Jakarta, it was agreed by participants of the Asia Pacific Regional Network meeting that the 2019 regional conference should be hosted by Thammasat University and Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok after the offer was made by Dipendra K.C. The proposal was later approved by ISTR board.

The Asia Pacific Network were also in support of this proposal.

Participants of this meeting expressed their views on possible themes for the upcoming Asia Pacific Regional conference, including the following:

- i/ The role of place/space in non-profits;
- ii/ Changes in regulatory regimes (e.g. contraction of civil society space in China);
- iii/ Multiple roles of non-profits scholars (e.g. scholar-activists in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and others);
- iv/ Theory and practice/praxis in non-profits (e.g. service-learning and action research);
- v/ Shifting functions of non-profits;
- vi/ Digitalization and civil society (e.g. the involvement of CSOs and social media in election/political change such as in the case of Malaysia);
- vii/ Social innovations (such as social enterprises and impact investment);
- viii/ How to strengthen the nascent non-profit sector in Asia? How to make it stronger and more inclusive in the face of austerity and tremendous population growth in the region?

It was agreed that all of these suggestions would go forward to the organizing Committee for the next Asia Pacific Conference.

2. East Asia Third Sector Researchers Network

Kin-man reported that, based on decisions at the last ISTR international conference A/P network meeting, and with support from the ISTR Board, a communication network among scholars and students in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong was established a few months ago. The ultimate goal was to extend the network to third sector researchers in East Asia, including Japan and Korea. At this stage, however, it is Chinese language country focused and produces a monthly newsletter that is distributed through emails among more than 200 researchers in the region. The newsletter includes information on recent publications, conferences and job opportunities in the field. Abstracts of selected papers in *Voluntas*, *NVSQ*, *JSC* etc. are also translated into Chinese. A Facebook page and a Weibo page were also created to serve the same purpose.

When asked about the relationship between this network and the Asia Pacific Network, Kin-man explained that the East Asia Researchers Network is only for communication purpose with no intention and capacity for organizing any other activities such as conferences. A participant expresses concern on where the server for the communication network is hosted and whether members' privacy could be protected. Kin-man explained that the network was created by Prof. Xijin Jia in China, Prof. Min-hsiu Chiang in Taiwan and himself in Hong Kong but the server is hosted and maintained by the Chinese University of Hong Kong instead of any institute in China. The participants were satisfied with this arrangement.

It was also noted that there is no formal support for the A/P Network, unlike the Latin American Network partly due to the massive scale of the Asia Pacific and the difficult of having any fixed organization that represents such a large region. This the Network revolves around the conferences and those involved in the conference organization every 2 years.

3. Involvement of practitioners in conference

Some participants asked if ISTR would invite more practitioners to join our regional or international conference. Kin-man explained that, unlike CIVICUS, the nature of ISTR is more academic. We should, however, invite more civil society leaders and social entrepreneurs to help scholar-participants to understand the development of the sector in the host country through a plenary session. For example, distinguished CSR practitioners were invited to the 2017 regional conference to illuminate how CSR had contributed to a more sustainable development in Indonesia.

4. Wrap Up

Prior to finishing the meeting each attendee introduced themselves and described their area of research. This proved very useful and interesting and resulted in some discussion of potential interest in the 2021 A/P Conference being held in China.

A list of attendees and mails was taken and there was a commitment to send them these notes.