



International Society for Third-Sector Research

Strategic Plan 2025-2029

ISTR's Mission

To advance knowledge about the Third Sector/Civil Society.

Through its continuing operations, the Society seeks to:

- a) Motivate excellence in the research & study of the Third Sector/Civil Society and promote impactful dissemination & utilization of that knowledge, ideas, & research findings;
- b) Foster a global community and inclusive networking and learning amongst Third Sector/Civil Society scholars, practitioners, policymakers in all parts of the world and in all disciplines;
- c) Support research-informed teaching on all aspects of the Third Sector/Civil Society at all levels of education.

To serve these purposes, the Society will hold research meetings & conferences; foster publications; support emerging scholars; and engage in other activities that further its mission.

Over the next five years ISTR will focus on these key areas of activity:

Motivating excellence in the research & study of the Third Sector/Civil Society and promoting impactful dissemination and utilization of that knowledge, those ideas & research findings by:

- Supporting *Voluntas* Editors in transitioning to a new team and publisher.
- Reviewing ISTR publication outlets for effectiveness in fostering research excellence.
- Working with the global Third Sector community, including established and growing networks in different regions and the Research Center Directors network, to identify opportunities for supporting research excellence. This dedicated program will include writing seminars, working paper workshops, *Voluntas* Special Issues, and joint applications for funded projects.

Fostering inclusive networking and learning amongst Third Sector/Civil Society scholars, practitioners, and policymakers in all parts of the world and in all disciplines by:

- Ensuring ISTR's Affinity Groups actively encourage a regular timetable of online events and activities.
- Increasing access, developing events, and encouraging Third Sector research in regions where ISTR has lower representation (Africa, MENA, & Central Asia).

- Further developing the Research Center Directors network and institutional partnerships to reach into the global community of Third Sector scholars.
- Keeping Third Sector scholars, practitioners, institutional partners, and policymakers informed of ISTR activities.
 - i. Exploring alternative means for participation to broaden the reach of ISTR & growth of the inclusive global community.
 - ii. Considering services that can be provided to non-members while encouraging membership to ensure the society's resilience.

Supporting research-informed teaching on all aspects of the Third Sector/Civil Society at all levels of education by:

- Ensuring that ISTR members are able to access relevant resources to teach about Third Sector issues & link research to practice. This may include:
 - i. Developing & maintaining a teaching resource database.
 - ii. Designing specific webinars to support teaching.
 - iii. Publishing teaching case studies & other resources.
 - iv. Supporting a wider range of Third Sector Centers by encouraging our Research Center Directors' Network in their teaching activities.

Ensuring ISTR remains resilient & maintains good governance by:

- Improving ISTR's future prospects of financial sustainability by securing adequate funding to ensure the achievement of its mission into the future.
- Effectively transitioning to a new Executive Director who is well supported by the Board.
- Undertaking a mid-term strategic & operational review in 2027.

Continuing areas of focus:

- Convene international (2026, 2028) & regional (2025, 2027, 2029) conferences that are attractive to participants.
- Fostering community through Affinity Groups, online discussions & presentations.
- Facilitating broad participation by Board members through meetings & subcommittees to maintain a strong governance ethic and ensure policies are appropriate.
- Supporting members and accomplishing our mission in times of crises.

Approved by the ISTR Board of Directors, July 2024