

Theorizing Volunteering for Development: How ISTR XII in Stockholm Sparked an Intercontinental Collaboration

At the XII ISTR Conference in Stockholm in 2016, Nichole Georgeou from Western Sydney University delivered her paper in a panel on theoretical frameworks in volunteering for development. Nichole spoke on *'Theorising international volunteering for development: civil society or market society?'* and was unpacking the conflation between development volunteer placements and volunteer tourism. During the questions, Benjamin Haas, from the University of Cologne, commented that using gift and reciprocity theory might be a useful method to advance theorising new trajectories of engagement in volunteering for and in development.

Nichole and Benjamin continued their discussions in a Swedish beer garden, and agreed to embark on an exciting theoretical project that aimed to understand current trends and new trajectories within volunteering for development, such as voluntourism, state funded youth volunteer programs and student volunteering. These new models blend state funding with neoliberal individualism, the non-profit sector and the for-profit sector, thus disrupting the traditional notion that volunteering occurs within civil society. Nichole and Benjamin presented the results of their collaboration at this year's ISTR XIII conference in Amsterdam with their paper *'Power, Exchange and Solidarity: Towards a (new) theoretical conceptualization of volunteering for development'*. Their paper sparked a lively and very fruitful academic debate and they are currently revising it with a view to publication this year.

Both Nichole and Benjamin appreciated the advan-

tages of writing a joint paper over such a vast distance. The distance and time factors actually facilitated the writing process as a late-night draft in one country became the first thing to do for the co-author who was starting a new day. They both worked on refining the synthesis of ideas through their joint collaboration and look forward to continuing their scholarly writing partnership across time and space. Their collaboration would not have been possible without ISTR XII in Stockholm (and a sunny Swedish beer garden).



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