ISTR Board Statement on Social Justice

The ISTR Board stands in solidarity with people around the world taking a stand in protest against systemic racism and violence against people of colour. The very public murder of George Floyd in the USA is a tragic loss to those who loved him and has come to symbolise the oppressive history of race relations in the USA and the wider systemic violations of human rights against minority populations that have taken place, and continue to take place, across the world. ISTR is a global community of researchers and practitioners who seek social justice via the building of knowledge about and the practical delivery of services and other support to people who are excluded or oppressed and supports transformative change that addresses inequality and social exclusion. The third sector is central to the mobilization and support of people seeking positive social change and the hope that we can all witness this happening in the most peaceful way possible. The ISTR Board also acknowledges the added suffering from the coronavirus pandemic, which has affected and devastated communities across the world, and recognizes the now evident vulnerability of people of colour, particularly where economic status and race ensure that those populations are at greater risk. The ISTR Board calls upon the wider membership of ISTR to share these sentiments of support in our research and actions going forward in these turbulent times.

Ruth Phillips, ISTR President, on behalf of the ISTR Board of Directors

Webinar Series

ISTR’s new webinar series provides a forum for member research and engagement in scholarly conversation with peers. These sessions will provide a venue to both share research perspectives and professional development strategies that will be of interest to a broad range of our members. Registration is required and some sessions are members only while some will be open to the global research community. To learn more, visit istr.org/webinar
ISTR is pleased to announce the winners of the first 
Civil Society Policy Impact Research Award 
(2020)

Two prizes are awarded for research documenting ef- 
fective civil society action resulting in a demonstrable 
public policy change. The winners are:

Ines Pousadela 
CIVICUS/Universidad ORT, Uruguay

Movilización social y representación 
política. La lucha del movimiento de 
mujeres por el aborto legal en Uruguay 
This is a compelling account of the 
country-wide effort of women’s organi-
zations and other civil society groups to 
overturn the criminalization of abortion 
in Uruguay. In a highly controversial policy area, Pou-
sadela does an outstanding job of identifying the key 
political factors supporting and opposed to a change 
in the law.

She develops a narrative of the struggle to form a co-
hesive social movement and sustain it against all odds 
which holds the reader until the final achievement of legis-
lation success. Documentation and analysis of the Uru-
guay experience played a role in the networking among 
women’s groups and other civil society actors leading to 
further change in abortion laws in Latin America.

Aline Goncalves de Souza & Eduardo Pannunzio 
Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV), Brazil

The Role of CSOs and Academy in Changing Bra-
zilian Public Policy: 
A Brief Case Study of Provisional Measure 870/2019

By Aline Gonçalves de Souza and Eduardo Pannunzio, Fundação 
Getulio Vargas (FGV), Brazil

Immediately after being sworn into office on January 1, 
2019, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro imposed a new Pro-
visional Measure (PM) on government oversight of domes-
tic and international Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). 
PM 870/2019 empowered the Secretariat of Government 
(Brazilian Ministry of Interior) with the authority to “super-
vise, coordinate, monitor and accompany the activities and 
actions of international organisations and non-governmental 
organisations across national territory” (PM 870/2019, 
Art. 5, II). PM is a law that is enacted by the President and 
comes into force immediately, being subject to subsequent 
approval by National Congress within 120 days.

The objective of this vaguely-worded provision was to cre-
ate a general rule permitting the supervision and monitor-
ing of the operations and activities of CSOs and interna-
tional organisations in Brazil by the Federal Government, 
moving us far away from our legal tradition. It thus raised 
significant concerns within Brazil’s CSO community, par-
ticularly given Bolsonaro’s public record of questioning the 
legitimacy of the CSO sector.

Within a few weeks, policy stakeholders and the CSO 
community articulated a plan of action to influence the na-
tional debate and to change the outcome for PM 870/2019. 
An important step was taken on February 21, 2019 when 
Aline Gonçalves de Souza, Eduardo Pannunzio and other 
researchers from FGV Law School hosted the 15th edition 
of the “São Paulo Dialogue between Compliance State 
Agencies and Civil Society Organisations.” In partnership 
with the Association of Sao Paulo’s Foundations and the 
National Council for Compliance (Conaci), the São Paulo
Dialogue brought together approximately 80 people, including representatives from CSOs, members of auditing state bodies, multilevel government officials, officials from the São Paulo State Public Defender’s Office, and scholars. Senior members of the Federal Government – including the Special Secretary for Social Articulation of the Secretariat of Government – were also present.

After the event in São Paulo (which was broadcasted live by FGV in its portal), an alliance of CSOs began to work on advocacy strategies seeking the suppression of damaging clauses in the provisional measure (namely item II of article 5 of PM 870/2019) during its discussions in the Brazilian Congress. Many groups and CSOs involved in the case, such as Pact for Democracy, Platform for a New CSO Regulatory Framework, Conectas Human Rights, Criminal Justice Network, Tide Setubal Foundation, ACT Health Promotion, Institute for Defense of the Right to Defense (IDDD), Brazilian Institute of Consumer Defense (IDEC) and Group of Institutes, Foundations and Companies (GIFE) were among those that played important roles and got very involved in the debates.

The more advocacy efforts were made, the more CSOs realised that, in the case of PM 870/2019, the government and its supporters in the Congress were not willing to negotiate the content of the matter. In response, Eduar-do Pannunzio, a researcher from FGV, developed a brief study to generate evidence that could better qualify the discussion and published a working paper entitled “Contributions to the Improvement of PM 870/2019 concerning the relations between the Federal Government and Civil Society Organisation.” Considering the contribution from other researchers and all the debate with CSOs and government officials, in the event in São Paulo, Pannunzio suggested an alternative wording for PM 870, with a particular focus on what was meant by the proposed monitoring of CSOs by federal authorities in Brazil. The coalition of CSOs decided to push for changes in the bill that would incorporate the rephrasing suggested by Pannunzio. In this way, they reorganised and intensified their advocacy strategy for influencing the public policy development in the National Congress.

The massive collective efforts of stakeholders paid off as debate on the bill progressed. The new wording that was suggested by Pannunzio in his working paper was presented by the coalition of CSOs and incorporated into the PM 870 official text, voted on both houses of the Brazilian National Congress and finally approved. The Presidency, who could have vetoed passages or the whole document, decided not to act. PM was then converted into Law 13.901 on November 11, 2019 with this final text:

[it is the attribution of the Secretary of Government to] II - coordinate the Federal Government’s dialogue with international organisations and civil society organisations operating in the national territory; monitor the actions and results of the Federal Government’s partnerships with these organisations and promote good practices for the enforcement of applicable legislation.

It is thanks to a combination of several factors that a more collaborative view on the role of the State in its interaction with CSOs prevailed in the case of PM 870/2019. This process was influenced by (i) articles, campaigns and mobilisation in the media; (ii) Scholars that researched and generated evidence to support advocacy and policy influence by presenting practical solutions to the challenges CSOs encountered in their dialogue with the National Congress and its representatives; and (iii) CSO’s mobilisation and advocacy in the Brazilian National Congress.

Given that the Brazilian Federal Government does not have in its structure a body that coordinates the government’s interface with CSOs, the change in item II of article 5 of PM 870/2019 impacted over 700.000 Brazilian CSOs. These coordinated advocacy and policy-influencing efforts resulted in significant achievements not only for CSOs but also for those affected by their work and for the Brazilian society as a whole.
ISTR Perspectives on COVID-19 and its Impact on the Third Sector

As the global pandemic impacts the Third Sector, we are pleased to share various perspectives from around the globe from our members.

A Centric System Adapts: The Philanthropic and Voluntary Response to the Covid-19 Outbreak in Wuhan, China

Dr. Yuanfeng Zhang is a Professor at the School of Public Administration at Zhongnan University of Economics & Law in Wuhan, China. Her research focuses on nonprofit organizations and public-private-partnerships in public services. She lived and worked in Wuhan for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, during which time she collected policy documents, more than 1,000 media reports, reviewed the websites of relevant agencies and interviewed staff members in two communities by phone. The following summary portion of a more complete paper in progress was prepared and edited by Megan Haddock, ISTR Program Manager.

The Covid-19 pandemic tested the adaptability of public health emergency management systems globally like never before; government systems of all kinds have encountered unprecedented challenges. Wuhan City, the capital city of Hubei Province, was the first to respond to this disaster. If the Covid-19 outbreak were a school exam, Wuhan City was the first to enter the examination room and accepted a closed-book test of unknown topics. Our forthcoming article analyzes the basic characteristics of the centric system of charitable donations and voluntary services management during the Covid-19 outbreak in Wuhan, why and how the Wuhan government made adaptive adjustments to this inter-organizational system, and discusses what lessons can be learned from Wuhan’s experiences.

China’s government-centric emergency management system has faced major challenges in the last 20 years, including the SARS outbreak in 2003, the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008, and the Yushu earthquake in 2010, each of which have provided lessons-learned (Sun, Xu, Li, et al. 2018). But none of these events fully prepared China for the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus which is quite different from the earthquakes and much more contagious than the SARS. Wuhan was the first of what subsequently became many cities to take the unprecedented extreme response measures to control the situation by enforcing the lock-down order on the February 23 for its then 7 million residents (the permanent population is 11.2 million according to the Wuhan Statistics Bureau, a third had left before the lock-down).

After the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, the central and local governments quickly issued a series of policies aimed at the prevention and control of the epidemic, including policies to guide the philanthropic and voluntary response. Five organizations located in Wuhan City were designated by the local and the central governments as being responsible for receiving donations and in-kind donations. The new policies granted the communities authority to mobilize volunteers in Covid-19 prevention and control under the leadership of local party committees and governments. The policies also made clear that the field voluntary services should only be provided by the local volunteers. Non-local charitable organizations and voluntary organizations were not allowed to send staff or volunteers to the Hubei Province including Wuhan City.

The public health emergency management system of Wuhan City is a highly hierarchical structure from the municipal government to districts and sub-districts and down to the communities. The whole system is under the unified_com-
mand of the Headquarters of Covid-19 Pandemic Control and Prevention (hereinafter referred to as the Headquarters). As will be outlined more fully in the complete paper; this system had met great pressures to make adjustment of itself during the 76 days of lock-down. It finally controlled the pandemic and reopened the city on April 8th.

Coordination of the Philanthropic Response

China’s emergency management system has gradually involved philanthropic participation in the past two decades by learning from the lessons in dealing with the disasters. For example, during the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, the government allowed nonprofit organizations to accept financial donations for the first time (this had previously only been allowed by government agencies). During the Yushu earthquake in 2010, the Qinghai provincial government once asked the nonprofit organizations to remit money, but it was quickly corrected to allow them to accept donations. (Jin, 2020) In 2020, it seems that Wuhan City had not fully learned these lessons, and almost repeated the mistakes made by the Qinghai provincial government.

Wuhan’s management of donated money and materials was not smooth at beginning and faced significant public criticism. According to the Headquarters’ policy, Wuhan Charity Federation was responsible for receiving financial donations and in-kind donations and the Wuhan Red Cross was designated as being responsible for receiving special materials for medical and epidemic prevention. The acceptance of donations by the designated institutions and the unified distribution of donations serves to overcome the problem of information islands and improve the efficiency of resource allocation, and to ensure the quality of donated materials. Right in the first week of the shut-down, Wuhan’s donation material management system collapsed under the weight of the donated items; the designated organizations did not have the capacity to manage or redistribute the materials, for which they faced major public criticism. The problem was resolved when the Wuhan Red Cross outsourced the management of donated materials to a local pharmaceutical logistics company, Jiuzhoutong Company (Pengpai News, 2020). Three officials of the designated organizations were fired. The Wuhan Municipal Government then rapidly improved the operating capacity of the donation management system and revised the donation management policy.

This, and other examples of public monitoring and criticism, ultimately provided a check on government activities and resulted in new courses of action and increased transparency. Due to these painful lessons, the Wuhan Government has significantly improved the availability of information about charitable donations.

Volunteer System Coordination

Volunteers played an irreplaceable role during the closure of Wuhan. The voluntary service system was also under the command the Headquarters. Compared with the storms experienced by the donation management system described above, volunteer services in Wuhan City during the shut-down were orderly and calm. Though there was some criticism and debate about the activities of the volunteers, particularly with regard to their safety and rights, the management of the volunteers was not plunged into the whirlpool of public opinion like that caused by its incompetence in managing the charitable donations. The voluntary service system was composed of thousands of separate, but coordinated, micro community units. It was a much more manageable internal system while the donation system was an extremely open dynamic system. During the first two or three weeks of the city closure, Wuhan residents fell into panic and confusion until these voluntary service systems were built in every community with the help of the local governments. They quickly organized to provide two types of volunteer services: community volunteers and medical service volunteers.

In the community, Community volunteer services covered all 7,148 neighborhoods in about 2000 communities in Wuhan. Volunteers engaged primarily in epidemic prevention and control (including body temperature inspection, entrance & exit control, disinfection and cleaning, infor-
information dissemination, psychological consultation, etc.) and life security (namely purchasing and distributing food and medicine).

These volunteers were organized and managed by the community committees under the support of the government. In a medium-sized community, there are typically about 10 staff to support the thousands of community residents. The Wuhan Municipal and District Governments arranged for party members and cadres of the communist party and the government agencies, mass organizations, public institutions and state-owned enterprises to support the work of communities, and asked them to assist the residents’ committee in organizing residents to carry out voluntary services. The cadres were asked to undertake the more high-risk work, such as patient transfer, transportation services, and doorman duty. Lower-risk activities were given to the other volunteers.

I investigated two communities: Community A has 9,000 residents, 10 staff members on the community committee, 16 cadres, and 62 common volunteers. Community B has nearly 20,000 residents, 18 staff members, 16 cadres, and more than 120 common volunteers. The sub-district government provided protection materials for volunteer services, uniformly purchased insurance for volunteers, and issued volunteer service certificates after the service.

Medical Volunteers. Volunteer services outside the community were limited in scale and were coordinated by volunteers and voluntary organizations. In terms of medical assistance, due to the support of the whole country, Wuhan has not yet mobilized professional medical volunteers to provide services on a large scale. Only a small number of volunteers participated in the construction of medical facilities, hospital treatment services, and in the management of donated materials. Some volunteers spontaneously organized convoys to provide medical staff with transportation to and from work when municipal bus service ended. Some volunteers provide medical staff with food, purchasing items and other services, providing free goods and services (such as an optical shop that provided free glasses repair services for medical staff, and college student volunteers provided online academic counseling for children of medical staff). And volunteers from outside the community provided online services. For example, two non-profit organizations in Beijing, with the support of the Beijing Civil Affairs Bureau, mobilized more than 1,000 professional volunteers nationwide to provide medical and psychological counseling online services for Wuhan residents.

Factors for Management Outcomes

It can be seen from Wuhan’s experience that China’s centralized cross-organizational system is very effective and efficient in internal mobilization and coordination, but there is a clear lack of adaptability in an open dynamic environment. It is learning “dynamic learning,” which tries to adjust based on positive or negative feedback (Rycroft, Dong, 2016: 31). In this process, information, cognition and technology are the most critical influencing factors.

Information exchange plays a fundamental role in the adaptive evolution of cross-organizational systems. Self-organization is increasingly achieved by relying on control processes (such as information feedback). (Rycroft, Dong, 2016: 73) The Municipal Wuhan Government’s initial attempts to control information about donations were rapidly adapted in reaction to public pressure to provide an unprecedented level of information disclosure. The City Government’s transformation from being besieged by public opinion to the producer of timely, accurate and complete information is jaw-dropping. However, misinformation and rumors have also caused problems for the government. Timely and comprehensive access to real information is of course important, and it is equally important to eliminate false information and rumors that mislead and interfere. Coronavirus misinformation lives online, despite efforts to stamp it out. (Herrera, 2020).

Cognition is an important factor that affects the adaptability of the system, and each subject’s cognition of the environment and roles will affect their decision-making and behavior. Cognition is central to performance in emergency management. Cognition is defined as the capacity to rec-
ognize the degree of emerging risk to which a community is exposed and to act on that information. (Comfort, 2001, 2007) The public’s perspectives on charity and awareness of voluntary action has generally increased, requiring the government to increasingly respect the wishes of donors, safeguard donors’ right to know, protect the rights and interests of volunteers, and monitor government actions, showing obvious progress. However, the public is also easily misled, believing and spreading false information. As will be explained in the full paper, the crisis of donation management in Wuhan is largely due to cognitive deviations between the government and other actors.

Finally, the importance of technology. From Wuhan’s experience, we can see technologies are very important in two ways. On the one hand, the effective participation of the voluntary sector heavily relies on the information and internet technologies. If it were not for the support of Internet infrastructure and the rapid increase in online service capabilities, large-scale coordination of super systems would be unimaginable. Another aspect are professional and supply chain management skills. Wuhan is one of the world’s largest pharmaceutical logistics centers, but the designated donation-accepting institutions did not cooperate with professional logistics companies in a timely manner when they found that they were not capable of handling the logistics, exposing the weakness of the charity system in Wuhan.

I hope that the Wuhan experiences will promote the public health emergency management system and will provide lessons-learned for improving its charitable and voluntary management systems so that these lessons can be applied when the next crisis comes.

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Australian NGOs and COVID-19
By Dr Elizabeth Cham, Business School, University of Technology Sydney

Australia has a long and proud history of charities and not-for-profits. For over 60,000 years its first nations people, through complex kinship networks, provided support to their clan. The first colonial charity was established twenty-five years after white settlement (The Benevolent Society 1813).

Prior to COVID-19, Australia had 600,000 not-for-profit organisations and they offered a diverse range of services from the cradle to the grave. The sector employed 1.3 million people, or 8.5% of the workforce. In economic terms, it contributed $43 billion (approximately 5%) to Australia’s GDP, almost double that of the agricultural industry. If one adds the valued contribution of the 4.6 million volunteers, a further $15 billion would be added. One agency alone, Uniting Care, has a footprint that is larger than McDonald’s Australian operations, employs more than 36,000 staff and 24,000 volunteers – more people than the coal mining industry.

As the COVID-19 lockdown is slowly lifted, what do we know about the shape and size of this important sector? At this early stage, there is very little published research, and it is too early for peer reviewed articles on the impact of the pandemic. Nevertheless, we do know that two areas – volunteering and fundraising - have been significantly affected. In successfully flattening the pandemic curve
Australia has seen volunteer activity reduce by two thirds (65.9%). Volunteering Australia estimates that this reduction is equivalent to 12.2 million hours per week.

Fundraising has also been seriously affected by the lockdown. Social distancing rules have resulted in NGOs not being able to do face to face fundraising events, including the suspension of street collections. The Fundraising Institute of Australia is predicting that income from community, philanthropy and business will fall by 20%-30% over the next nine months.

Another significant impact on NGOs, is the over one million Australians who overnight lost their jobs due to COVID-19. Food relief charities are seeing thousands who for the first time are struggling to put food on the table, most claiming they have never had to ask for help. Foodbank, Australia’s largest food relief organisation experienced double the demand in the first few weeks of the pandemic. Concurrently newspaper reports are suggesting that almost a fifth of charities who usually provide food relief have had to close their doors.

Agencies providing support to those affected by family violence have also witnessed a spike in the demand for their services during the COVID-19 shutdown. Research during the last two decades has documented how family violence increases after emergencies and natural disasters (USA after Katrina 2008; Canterbury, earthquake 2010; Australia Black Saturday bushfires 2009). Despite this causal link being well understood, police and shelters have been surprised by the one-third increase in calls for help.

We should remember that this unprecedented demand followed closely on the stress charities were dealing with during years of drought and the recent summer bushfires. Another major concern for not-for-profit organisations was the impact of the virus and the subsequent lockdown on their own employees, how many of staff would they need to terminate. Fortunately, on the 30th March 2020, the Australian Prime Minister announced a range of measures to support business and those they employ. This historically unprecedented scheme, known as JobKeeper, was an extensive down payment to ensure millions of Australians would keep their jobs and that businesses would survive and continue to employ after this crisis. The JobKeeper payment of A$1,500 per fortnight (70% of the median wage) was offered to employers for six months. Initially NGOs were excluded from the scheme, although after extensive lobbying the government announced that NGOs could also apply for the JobKeeper allowance. They were eligible if they could demonstrate that their fundraising capacity would diminish by 15% during the next six months.

The COVID-19 pandemic has already had a profound impact on Australia’s people and institutions. Research is needed to fully understand its impact on the NGO sector. Many members of the Australian New Zealand Third Sector Research Association (ANZTSR), ISTR’s sister body, have already commenced this work. Their findings will be important in helping develop policy for the sector post pandemic. Australia’s economic recovery cannot be left to market forces alone.

The New Normal: The Risk of Not Being Sustainable
By Daniel Barragán, Universidad de los Hemisferios, Ecuador, and ISTR Board of Directors

In recent weeks, we have been bombarded by an excess of information on how we got into this health crisis, how to manage it effectively, and how we should rethink the future in a scenario in which, apparently, we are going to continue facing zoonotic epidemics.

The truth is that humanity was not prepared, nor were we -nor are we still- aware of the impact that our daily practices have on nature, and how these actions, that may be the result of “several factors associated with both social and cultural patterns (for instance: the relationship of domestication and closeness to animals, or the wildlife trafficking for medicinal or nutritional use); as well as for the growth of population and the human activities that pressure and affect the planet and its ecosystems ” (Barragán & Montenegro, 2020), and have serious consequences for the planet’s sustainability. The evidence on the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic, and several epidemics that preceded it (such as MERS, SARS, avian influenza, or Ebola), have a zoonotic origin.

According to the United Nations Environment Program (2016), 75% of emerging infectious diseases have a zoonotic origin, mainly caused by the alteration of nature and its
natural dynamics. At the same time, this fact is enhanced by the effects of climate change.

Faced with the current situation, it is essential to understand that our lifestyle has led us to a situation of such magnitude that it has forced us to stop abruptly. It has shown us that the consequences for the great world powers as well as for developing countries have been very similar. It has made evident that inequality continues to be a factor that limits opportunities and has forced us to be reminded of the value public goods such as health and education or to simply long for the possibility of enjoying a visit to the park. We have seen how public management and health systems have collapsed in much of the world, but also how solidarity has emerged to help the most vulnerable members of society.

What it is important now is to rethink the future in that scenario of ‘new normality’ that allows us as a society to adapt to conditions and restrictions that we did not know 4 or 5 months ago, but above all that allows us to project our resilience based on what we learned from this crisis.

In the current context, one of the biggest concerns is economic recovery. Projections of declining economies, the impact on employment (both in the formal and informal economies) and the potential crisis on the social security systems are just some of the concerns (OIT, 2020). The latent risk is that the impetus to resolve the economic crisis may be counterproductive in environmental terms.

During the several weeks of confinement, a reduction in air pollution and greenhouse gases has been evidenced as a result of the paralysis of many industries including air and land transportation. This would seem to be a positive effect. On the other hand, news such as the decision to postpone COP 26 on climate change, the petition from the Colombian business sector to the national government to make the environmental consultation processes more flexible, or the collapse of oil prices, gives account of the risk of lowering climate ambition and reducing environmental standards - especially in countries that already have low levels of compliance - or deepening extractivism.

In the post pandemic scenario, we need to move towards a paradigm shift, in which the planet’s ecological boundaries and social well-being guide development. We must understand that economic growth, scientific and technological development, innovation, and public policies are only a means to achieving sustainability and not an end. If we do not achieve a balance between respectful, responsible use of the resources supplied by our ecosystems and the notion of well-being, we are doomed to fail as humanity. This not too distant future is going to test our resilience!

References:

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Global Philanthropy Across The Globe


What’s the impact of COVID-19? This question is not easy to answer. The impact is huge and enormous. The pandemic affects health systems, labor markets, jobs, income security, international politics, the quality of life and so on. Worldwide it causes many far-reaching changes with multiple consequences. This article has a limited scope by focusing at some of the consequences COVID-19 provokes for philanthropy globally. At the end we also discuss research on the effects of crises on giving behavior.

It is amazing that a philanthropist, Bill Gates, warned for a pandemic for years. This clearly demonstrates the signaling role philanthropy may play in some cases. In these days,

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1 Zoonotic diseases are all those infections that are transmitted from wild animals to humans.
however, governments and politicians dominate the media to legitimize their policies and to show their capacity in handling the problems that arise. It seems like governments rule the world.

However, does this image match with the reality in South America, the US and European countries like Spain? Governments may issue emergency laws and regulations, issue lockdowns, but their relief programs are often inadequate. Especially if the pandemic results in a long-term economic crisis. Major social problems will emerge and probably also political crises. How do people across the globe survive when the COVID-19 pandemic threatens their lives?

To put it in an abstract and theoretical frame: whether people are in Brazil, South Africa, Thailand, Mozambique, Italy, Canada or Russia, they are dependent for their daily living on their “family” which can include extended family and friends, income from economic activity “the market,” facilities provided by governments, or support from philanthropic initiatives or institutions. Ideally, then, everywhere in the world-- family, the market, government and philanthropy are the four main social institutions through which people meet their basic needs: food, financial security, health and education. If none of these institutions are present, people will starve or die.

Moreover, the rules, values and ethical principles used within these institutions differ. The family – at least in its ideal form – serves the interests of its own members through security, attention and affection. The market provides a livelihood through economic exchange, based upon self-interest but ideally tempered by the ethical principles of fair play and social responsibility. Governments, again ideally, serve “the public good” – a construct derived from the power struggle between parties and interest groups active in the political arena. Philanthropy, too, serves the “public good” but in a different way, and coming from a different direction: it is based not upon power; but upon community – the things that unite people. Perhaps it is better to refer to it as the “common good,” fed by involvement with that community.

In these chaotic times television and social media show a variety of philanthropic contributions: food-banks, humanitarian aid projects, the work of NGOs such as the Red Cross, the efforts of churches (caritas), foundations, companies, and citizen initiatives including a lot of fundraising campaigns. To put it in a very different and perhaps daring way: the world today experiences “The Golden Age of Philanthropy.” I do not mean the pledges of the High Net Worth community of the super-rich. On the contrary, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates philanthropy as a fundamental component of human organization, present in all countries in the world. It shows the societal significance of philanthropy and civil society.

If this point of view is agreed to, what conclusions can be drawn? This article offers space for shortly only two. The first is addressed to philanthropy and the philanthropy sector. The pandemic invites to step forward. Churches, endowed foundations, fundraising foundations, voluntary organizations, citizen initiatives, corporate foundations and even charity lotteries have to use this momentum to present themselves. To demand a place at the “COVID-19 policy table.”

Secondly, governments too have to realize that in the years ahead they can’t afford it alone. Till now no government in the world has started a “National Alliance” with the philanthropic and civil society sector. That’s again amazing if the massive problems at hand are taken into account.

Now, I will end this article down to earth by presenting results of empirical research on the effects of crises on giving. My colleague Prof. René Bekkers analyzed the effects of economic crises on fundraising in the Netherlands: “In a nutshell: economic indicators in the past had an effect in the Netherlands with a delay of at least a year, sometimes two. Unemployment has less strong effects, important are especially the development of the asset position (asset wealth) and in particular house prices (real estate). In any case, income in the Netherlands is less strongly related to giving behavior than wealth.

Here, the Netherlands differs from the US. There, giving behavior is much more volatile - more ad hoc, more cash and checks, but also more online. What will now happen in the Netherlands is highly dependent on the effects of the crisis on the financial position of citizens. As long as it is not endangered, the effects on willingness to give will be better. The giving behavior also depends on the fundraising activities that charity organizations manage to achieve. Now that face-to-face collections are no longer possible, the organizations that manage to make the transition to online-giving will be more successful”. These results are based on specific data on The Netherlands. They are food for thought; not claiming generalization.
ISTR News

ISTR Welcomes 13 East African PhD Students

One silver lining of the pandemic is the opportunity ISTR has had to work with our funders to redirect funding in new ways. A small amount of funds intended for the PhD Seminar in Montréal was set to expire, but the Ford Foundation agreed that we could instead use the funding to invite East African PhD Students to join our association on a complimentary basis through the end of 2021.

The students were identified based on the recommendations of ISTR members in the region. Four of these students previously participated in our 2019 African PhD Seminar but the remaining nine are new to ISTR altogether. Most have signed up to participate in the ISTR Mentoring Program, which we think is a terrific way to get to know our collegiate group of members.

Meet Damaris Wanjiku, PhD Student, School of Business Laikipia University, Nyahururu, Kenya

Dissertation working title: Kamweretho and the Economy of Affection Among the Kikuyu Women of Central Kenya

“I examine how the Kamweretho women groups fundrise to sustain the poor widows or mothers in the society, at the same time attaining moments to make themselves happy. Generally, women’s groups have been an integral part of the development of Africa since independence. Kamweretho is an emergent, non-formal women’s group found among the Kikuyu of central Kenya. From a broad perspective, it seeks to examine the thesis that women groups are an avenue for improving the welfare of group members and their families. Using Göran’s economy of affection theory, I show that Kamweretho groups’ operations and activities have a feminist agenda and often do not fit the conventional mechanisms associated with women groups. More so, they seem to question the authority of the traditional definition of a woman’s role and position in the Kenyan society.”

ISTR PhD Seminar Moves Online

Once the ISTR Conference in Montréal was postponed, the Society board, staff, and PhD Seminar Faculty co-chairs agreed that that continuing with the PhD Seminar online this summer would be a priority. It is well suited to the format and we know that many students will benefit from feedback on their doctoral research this year. We are pleased that nearly 80% of the students from 22 countries will join the 5th International Seminar online.

In its modified form, the PhD Seminar will consist of 2 plenary sessions and 4 small group sessions over the course of 6 days in July. The opening plenary will feature a keynote speech by Deena White, Department of Sociology, Université de Montréal. The second plenary will feature a Professional Development Workshop “Getting Published for PhD Students” by Susan Appe, ISTR Board Secretary and Co-Editor of Voluntas.

We are grateful to the students for their flexibility and patience, and for the ISTR Faculty that have agreed to participate in and facilitate the modified PhD Seminar small group session.

PhD Seminar Co-Chairs:
André-Anne Parent, School of Social Work, Université de Montréal, Canada
Anna Domaradzka, Institute for Social Studies, University of Warsaw, Poland

Faculty:
Ali Awni, School of Management and Director of the John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy, Civic Engagement and Responsible Business, The American University in Cairo, Egypt
New Journal Publication
Co-Responsibility in Building the Public Good in Latin America and the Caribbean

Compiled by Daniel Barragán, Anabel Cruz & Susan Appe

Building on our last special issue on the third sector and third sector organizations in Gobernar: The Journal of Latin American Public Policy and Governance (volume 2, Issue 3; Appe, Barragán & Cruz, 2018) we present a new collection of articles, most of which were presented at the 12th International Society for Third-Sector Research’s Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean held in Medellin, Colombia in July 2019.

The special issue is a reaction to the current situation in Latin America. The region as a whole has gone through a series of important changes in political, social, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions. The field of third sector studies and governance more generally has a role in producing knowledge about these changes. The questions that emerge generate discussion about of the role of all sectors in the conceptualization and achievement of the public good. The overarching question that drives this special issue is: How does co-responsibility in building and working towards the public good happen in the region?

For open access to the special issue and all of its contributions, see: https://orb.binghamton.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1077&context=gobernar

In Memorium
Beatriz Balian

Beatriz Balian passed away on May 28, 2020 in Buenos Aires, her hometown. A sociologist, a researcher, a mentor and educator, a loyal friend and devoted mother and grandmother, she made a significant impact in several generations of scholars and practitioners, both in Argentina and throughout the Latin American region.

Beatriz had a long career at the Catholic University of Argentina (UCA), where she graduated in Sociology in 1972 and got her PhD degree in 1996. At the UCA, she directed the Department of Sociology, the Center for Sociological Research, and the Postgraduate degree in Sociology. She was the Vice-dean of the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences between 1991 and 1993 and appointed vice-chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research in 2009, a position she held until 2016. She was also a professor at the University of Buenos Aires and Belgrano University. Her relevance in the educational field was revealed when she was elected in 2016 to preside over the National Academy of Education in Argentina, which she had joined in 2009. She was the author of several research pieces, especially about poverty, corporate social responsibility, and the role of civil society.

Beatriz was a proud ISTR member, and served on the board of directors between 2009 and 2012. She used to often acknowledge the valuable inspiration she found in the network’s international and regional gatherings. Many will recall her participation at the second international conference in 1996 in Mexico City, during the early days of ISTR. Or in Geneva, Dublin, Toronto or Barcelona. She was instrumental in the creation and establishment of the Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Network of ISTR and one of its most enthusiastic promoters. She attended most ISTR Latin American regional conferences, served as a member of the Academic Committee for several of them. She was also the host and organizer of the second ISTR Regional Conference for Latin America in
2001 and of the ninth one, in 2011. Her challenging questions at the closing ceremony of the Regional Conference in 2011 regarding how to strengthen and how to approach third sector research as an academic discipline on its own maybe still valid today.

Beatriz believed that academic research had to serve reality and the pursuit of just and equalitarian societies. This is why she was active and supportive with civil society organizations in her country, or at international level with CIVICUS, whose Civil Society Index research in Argentina she supervised.

Beatriz touched the lives of many people, with her empathy, warm smile, and dedication to the search of a better world. We will miss her dearly.

S. Wojciech Sokolowski

Colleagues are mourning the loss of ISTR member and colleague Wojciech Sokolowski, who died on Saturday, May 2 at age 67. Wojciech suffered for the past 10 years from a rare disease called Inclusion Body Myositis. Johns Hopkins University has published a notice with additional details about Wojciech’s work, which you can view here.

Wojciech had been a senior research associate at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies for almost 30 years. Lester Salamon, CCSS Director, said this in a blog post, “Wojciech joined our Center in 1992 and has been a stalwart and brilliant collaborator with me across a broad front of activities for nearly 30 years, from the early days of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, through our work with the United Nations and International Labor Organization to put the third sector on the economic map of the world, and to our work on nonprofit employment in the U.S. He was an incredibly skillful researcher and methodologist with an ability to find innovative solutions to virtually any research dilemma. He effectively mastered the arcane details of national income accounting and has effectively brought that to bear in our work with the United Nations to devise methodologies to assess the scale and character of the nonprofit sector. Indeed, with his voracious reading and academic curiosity, there are few topics on which Wojciech did not have an informed opinion.”

Wojciech authored more than 40 academic journal articles, books, and technical reports describing and explaining variations in national and cross-national patterns of organizational capacities and behavior. He is the author of Civil Society and the Professions in Eastern Europe: Social Change and Organization in Poland, and a co-author of several toolkits, manuals, and handbooks. His articles, authored individually or jointly with colleagues, have appeared in the International Journal of Voluntary and Non-Profit Organizations, VOLUNTAS, Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics, Nonprofit Management & Leadership, Northwestern Journal of International Human Rights, Journal of Civil Society, the International Journal of Contemporary Sociology, the International Journal of Cultural Policy, and several edited volumes.