



# Inside ISTR

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THIRD-SECTOR RESEARCH

April – May 2019

## ISTR/Wits PhD Seminar – University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa – A Faculty Perspective

Ruth Phillips, ISTR President

It gave me great pleasure to be a member of faculty in the Johannesburg PhD seminar in May 2019. Through a decision by the ISTR Board we had decided that instead of having an Africa Regional conference, ISTR would invest its regional effort this year in a PhD seminar conducted just prior to the inaugural **Africa Centre for Philanthropy and Social Investment** conference entitled *The State of African Philanthropy: Setting the Agenda*, at the Wits Business School in Johannesburg. Through a collaboration with Bhekinkosi Moyo, the Centre Director (as well as being a member of the ISTR Board), students from across Africa and beyond had four days of stimulating engagement in issues related to the third sector. This formula proved to be a great success for the students who, because of their dispersion across the continent, do not often have the chance to meet with other researchers in their field.

It was also a great honour for the PhD Seminar faculty to be able to attend the Pan-African conference on philanthropy as it was the first of its kind, and enabled enormous insight into not only philanthropy in Africa but the wider third sector and its geopolitical context.

Reflecting ISTR's diversity, our faculty members came from across the world and South African institutions: Annette Zimmer (Germany) and Alan Fowler (South Africa) were co-chairs of the seminar; Imhotep Alagidede (South Africa), Ali Awni (Egypt), Una Osili (USA), Shauna Mottiar (South Africa) and myself (Australia). This group therefore included two past presidents, Alan and Annette, and the current president, myself.



The student group was equally diverse, with 20 students from universities in Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe, USA, United Kingdom and Australia. They were divided into three groups according to their research inquiries that were of course all related to doing research in Africa, but reflected the usual interdisciplinary diversity of all ISTR events. The seminar ensured that all students got an ample opportunity to present about their project and gain valuable feedback from faculty and their fellow students. The scope of research topics about the third sector was impressive and augers well for the future of research across Africa. Faculty collaborated to do three professional development workshops on writing in the third sector, publishing third sector research, and research methodology. There was also a Three Minute Thesis competition that went very well – if you're not familiar, this is a competition between students that requires them to present their research in three minutes with the use of only one Power Point slide (no other props). Eleven students competed and the judges had a tough time deciding on an outright winner, so awarded two students equal first and a runner-up. They received modest cash prizes from ISTR. As I have been involved in many of these competitions, I can say that this event was



of a high standard and proved to be highly engaging for all involved.

All involved in the seminar felt it was valuable and rewarding. As the students all got to stay at the same hotel -- they could form solid friendships and wider networks (another consistent outcome of



the ISTR PhD seminar model). The opportunity to attend the conference was also a highlight as many high-profile academics, CEOs of foundations and third sector organizations presented. It was a packed schedule over the four days so all of us were exhausted by the end, but in that very satisfied way after a wholly enriching experience. Of course, none of this could have happened without the extensive collaborative work between ISTR's Megan Had-

dock who coordinated the logistics for the PhD seminar and Margery Daniels, ISTR's Executive Director, who negotiated the partnership with Bheki Moyo, Director of the Africa Centre for Philanthropy and Social Investment, and the people from the Centre including Kati-

ana Ramsamy, Research Fundraiser and Belinda Keratiloe Mogotsi, Programme Manager. There was also an amazing team of students from Wits and a team of drivers who ensured that everyone was well catered for and transported from place to place on time! ISTR is also very grateful to the Mott Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York for grants that generously supported the seminar.



### Call for Contributions

### Fourteenth International Conference of the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR)

MONTREAL, CANADA  
7 July – 10 July 2020

Global Civil Society in  
Uncertain Times: Strengthening  
Diversity and Sustainability



DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: 26 OCTOBER 2019

Click [here](#) to read in English  
Click [here](#) to read in French

ISTR International Conferences provide a dynamic forum for the exchange of cutting edge research findings in the field of Third Sector Studies. The conferences bring to-



gether over 600 scholars from more than 85 countries around the globe – both north and south—to share their comparative approaches and multidisciplinary knowledge about civil society, philanthropy, and the nongovernmental sector. ISTR conferences are noted for their diversity of topics, themes, research methods and enormous engagement of the delegates.

## Regional Conferences

### ISTR Asia Pacific Regional Conference

June 11 is the deadline for general participants registration. Join us for what is shaping up to be a very exciting and dynamic regional conference in Bangkok on July 15-16. The conference will feature:

- Opening Keynote: *Civil Society Regulation and Organizational Culture: Reflections on Theory and Practice in China*  
Anthony J. Spires, Centre for Contemporary Chinese Studies, Asia Institute, The University of Melbourne
- Remarks by Professor Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, *Reflecting on my research journey of social movements and civil society in Taiwan and beyond*. He is the founding president of



the Taiwan Association for Third Sector Research (TATSR) and Senior Advisor to the President.

- 90+ research paper presentations and panels. Read the conference abstracts: [https://www.istr.org/page/AP\\_2019\\_Abstracts](https://www.istr.org/page/AP_2019_Abstracts)
- Reception, lunches, and networking with colleagues from Asia and around the world.

### ISTR Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Conference

Non-authors may register until June 11. Join us at Universidad EAFIT in Medellín, Colombia July 3-5 for a memorable regional conference. The conference will feature:

- Opening Keynote: Dr. Julieta Lemaitre Ripoll, Associate Professor of the School of Law, Universidad de los Andes, Bogota, Colombia. Professor Ripoll's research interests include law and social movements, law and ideology and is part of the research group on law and social transformation, IDEAS.

- Panel Magistral  
"La importancia de las fundaciones en la elaboración de políticas públicas: herramientas para una incidencia efectiva"

Participants:

Santiago Leyva y Adolfo Esalava:

Profesores EAFIT

Diana Fernández: el caso de la Fundación Sura

Natalia Garay: El caso de Niñez ya

Marcela Barón: El caso de la Fundación Concreto

Paula Escobar: El caso de Fundación Éxito



- Of course, the conference will feature the latest research from the region. **Read the abstracts of registered participants** to date, a session on Getting Published, granting of the GENEROSAS 2019 Award (Generous Women), a reception, lunches, and networking with your colleagues from the region and around the world.

Coming soon...Call for Applications for ISTR's 5th International PhD Seminar in Montreal 2020. Applications will be due in September.



## ISTR/Wits African PhD Seminar Student Reflection

By Kidist Ibrie Yasin

Originally from Ethiopia, Kidist is a first-year Ph.D. student at the IUPUI Lilly Family School of Philanthropy in Indianapolis, Indiana, United States.

My journey to a PhD study in Philanthropy has already opened several opportunities in less than a year, the most recent of which was four days in May to participate in the ISTR/WITS African PhD Seminar and Annual Philanthropy Conference, that was held in the beautiful city of Gold, Johannesburg, South Africa. A chance to hear about my dissertation from world-class experts, networking with fellow PhD students with diverse backgrounds, participating and becoming a victor in a three-minute thesis competition, getting a chance to present my work in front of scholars and leaders of the third sector across the world, and my experience at the Wits Business School is a treasure that I will always vividly remember.

During the two-day PhD Seminar, 20 students were teamed into three groups, each consisting of at least two senior faculty and six or seven students. This was a unique opportunity where students got a chance to present their work and obtain detailed individual feedback from the group. My group, themed general philanthropy, was awesome; it included Professor Alan Fowler and Professor Una Osili, and five more PhD students who study in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, UK, and the US. They generously gave me, well thought and insightful comments, that clarified nuanced issues, and evoked deeper thinking into my work, and an essential dataset for my dissertation was also suggested. Listening to and actively participating during the presentations of my group members also widened my understanding in several areas of philanthropy and boosted my confidence in expressing my views in academic settings.

The three minute thesis competition, was a moment that made me very nervous, yet ended with massive excitement. When I was announced a co-winner of the competition, I was shocked, and became speechless! Being the winner of such a competition in an international platform embodies great motivation, strong energy, and a sense of the higher significance of the work that I do. In fact, I am very grateful for my entire teammates, and especially Professor Una Osili and my friend Tiara Dungy (a 2nd year PhD student in my



school), who was also in attendance and convinced me to sign up just a day before the competition, and kept encouraging me to the last moment, even when I nearly declined my participation out of anxiety.

All the senior faculty were extremely helpful. I was able to have an extensive talk with most of them during coffee and lunch breaks. I also had a chance to interview Professor Imhotep Aligidede, Professor Ali Awni, Professor Alan Fowler, and Professor Jacob Mati about their work, for a project in my school, that aims to study the intersection of philanthropy, religion, and youth development globally.

The two-day conference on African philanthropy that followed the PhD Seminar was intensive, yet filled with interesting panel discussions that broadened my knowledge about the state of African philanthropy. The rationale and need for philanthropy for African countries, the influence of religion and community on practices of philanthropy, and the legal and policy framework for philanthropy in the continent were among the topics addressed from which I gained a lot of input, especially for a book chapter I am writing this summer on the philanthropic landscape in Ethiopia. Moreover, the connections and networks I created, in both the Seminar and the Conference, provided me with information on funding opportunities for my summer travel to Ethiopia for my research work and writing a book chapter.

It would not be complete if I close my essay without mentioning how I enjoyed the lunch and coffee treats on each day, and the memorable dinner at the Moyos Shop; Pap and stir-fried squashes were my most favorite and delicious cuisines that I will definitely miss whenever I think of South Africa.