



Inside ISTR

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THIRD-SECTOR RESEARCH

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President's Column

I am very pleased to take this opportunity to write my first President's Column for the ISTR Newsletter. Since taking over the role of President in January this year I have been extremely busy with the many activities of and changes in ISTR. We are well on the way to holding regional conferences in Bangkok, Thailand (where the entire Board will hold its annual meeting) and in Medellín, Colombia in July this year. We will also hold PhD seminars for local research students at both conferences. In addition, we are running a special PhD seminar in Johannesburg, South Africa in collaboration with the Africa Centre for Philanthropy and Social Investment at the Wits Business School in May, 2019.

I am personally looking forward to being part of faculty for this seminar along with a number of other ISTR colleagues. The PhD Seminar in South Africa is an ISTR investment in emerging third sector researchers in the Africa Region and is aimed at establishing a collaborative relationship with the newly established Wits Business School's Centre for Philanthropy and Social Investment, which is holding a forum subsequent to the PhD Seminar. The ISTR Board is very committed to supporting regional development and much of our collective energy goes into supporting these events every second year. Of course, this can only happen with the enormous efforts of local ISTR members investing many hours in organising such events and in doing so reinforcing ISTR's global reach and diverse membership.

Along with the Academic Chairs, Professor John Mohan and Associate Professor Patricia Mendonca and the local organising committee in Canada, we are ensuring that developments are well underway for the 2020 ISTR International Conference to be held in Montreal. As always, I am impressed by the forward planning that goes into these events, driven very much by the hard work of our secretariat and tireless Executive Director, Margery Daniels. Not only is Margery keeping all of the future events on track toward success, she has single-handedly managed significant transformations within ISTR as we have now decoupled from our embedded relationship with John Hopkins



University and become our own entity as ISTR Org. This transformation to greater independence was facilitated by many hours of voluntary work from expert ISTR members, particularly by Professor Oonagh Breen who has put her lawyer skills to the task of writing new bylaws for the new ISTR organization. I am very pleased to know that Oonagh will be following my footsteps as the next President of ISTR. This change also means significant restructuring of our financial management and we are very pleased to have an Accounting Academic, Professor Carolyn Corderly, as our newly appointed treasurer managing this transition.

Finally, I would like to comment on the importance of the work that our all of our member researchers are doing in a global context characterized by high political and economic volatility. These are uncertain times, where issues of inequality, poverty, marginalisation, conflict, climate catastrophes, undemocratic forces and social and political division are constant among the issues that we all face. The third sector, civil society, however, remains a constant in this divided world and our task is to continue to support, scrutinise and understand its role and impact in the world. For me, at this point in history, that is why ISTR is important and is hopefully building important knowledge for the ongoing role of the third sector.

Ruth Phillips
President

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