

## Asia/Pacific ISTR Regional Network

### **Second ISTR Asia and Pacific Regional Conference 2001**

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The Second ISTR Asia and Pacific Regional Conference was held in Osaka, Japan, from 26-28 October 2001. The Host Committee for the Conference was drawn from many universities in Japan and chaired by Masaaki Homma. The Program Committee was chaired by Mark Lyons. The Asian Third Sector Research Unit at the University of Technology, Sydney worked as the secretariat of the Program Committee. ISTR treasurer, Masayuki Deguchi, provided most of the support for the conference.

The two and a half day conference had twenty-two papers sessions (with four concurrent sessions) and four plenary sessions. Sixty-six papers were delivered at the conference (for the abstracts please see: [www.asianphilanthropy.org/ndev](http://www.asianphilanthropy.org/ndev)). One paper session and one plenary session were delivered in Japanese with simultaneous translation. The conference was attended by over 100 scholars and practitioners from 15 countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Many papers dealt with aspects of volunteering (8), giving (7), role of social capital in Asian sustainable development (7), performance and achievement of Third Sector organisations (7), and management, governance, and accountability of Third Sector organisations (6). Other common themes in individual papers were related to cooperation and relationships among the three sectors, gender issues, development, and empowerment. The conference covered the full range of the Third Sector and included papers on co-operatives, the social economy and social enterprise. Several papers used sophisticated quantitative techniques of data analysis, but the great majority utilised various qualitative methodologies.

"The Role of Volunteering and the Third Sector in Building Stronger Communities" was the major focus of the conference. As befitted the UN international year of the volunteer, several papers dealt with volunteering, including a keynote address by Virginia Hodgkinson, ISTR president. Another keynote by Masaaki Homma, professor of economics at Osaka University and a member of the council of economic advisers to the government of Japan, proposed that the economic recovery of the Japanese economy depended on the continuing growth of the Japanese nonprofit sector.

The first plenary session was on Institutional Development in Third Sector Research. Virginia Hodgkinson (USA), appraised the worldwide development in this context, while Rosemary Leonard (Australia/New Zealand), Gopa Kumar (India), Naoto Yamauchi (Japan), and Tae-Kyu Park (Korea) discussed their respective country/regional networks, three of which had been formed since the last regional conference in Bangkok in 1999. Sami Hasan reported on Asia Pacific Philanthropy Information Network (APPIN) and its Website ([www.asianphilanthropy.org](http://www.asianphilanthropy.org)). The session testified to the growing strength of third sector research in the world's most populous and culturally diverse region.

Another plenary session was devoted to "New Findings from Cross-National Asian Third Sector Research." The major project—research on resource mobilisation—reported in the session was initiated by the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium (APPC) and jointly sponsored. This research collected case studies of fundraising from different sources by nonprofits in several countries: India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan, and surveys of giving in the first four countries. The other research reported was that undertaken for the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Project in Korea and the Philippines. The development of the ISTR Asia Pacific Network was discussed in the final plenary. The meeting decided that the regional network should remain informal, but to review the need to move to a more formal system in two to four years time. The session decided to make more use of APPIN website and develop a regional newsletter to keep the members informed about the individuals and research institutions in the region and their research initiatives and outcomes. It was also decided that future conferences will concentrate on a more distinct theme, eg. governance of nonprofit organisations with one or two panel(s) on the theme(s) initiated by invited speakers. Future conference organisers should also encourage

people to identify topics for further discussion outside of formal sessions. In the next conference, local non-profits will be invited to present posters and talk about their organisations, perhaps for 1½ hours per day. The next conference will be held in South Asia, possibly India, in 2003.