



## Asia Pacific Third-Sector Researchers Network Newsletter

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### CONTENTS

Editor's Note

In Spotlight:

Core Academic Journals:

VOLUNTAS: International Journal  
of Voluntary and Nonprofit  
Organization, Volume 37, Issue 3

Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector  
Quarterly: Volume 55, Issue 4

News in the Sector

Call for Papers | Conferences | Workshop

Career News

Contact Us

### EDITOR'S NOTE

I am delighted to introduce Md. Shumon Zihady, as the guest editor for this month's, Asia Pacific Newsletter. He is a PhD researcher in the Department of Development and Sustainability at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Thailand. His research focuses on native philanthropy, civil society, and sustainable financing pathways for local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Bangladesh. He holds a Master of Public Administration (MPA) from the University of Exeter, United Kingdom. Professionally, he serves as a Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Public Administration, Government of Bangladesh, where he has gained experience in public administration, local governance, and public policy.

Md. Shumon Zihady has also worked with the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC),

Thailand, contributing to initiatives on disaster risk reduction, climate resilience, and sustainable development. His broader research interests include philanthropy, governance, civil society, disaster resilience, and sustainable development.

The third sector has become a key contributor in Bangladesh national development with a strong collaboration among the government, INGOs, NGOs, and local communities. And, Md. Shumon Zihady, elaborates on the landscape of the NGO sector in Bangladesh in the spotlight section.

I invite you to follow [Voluntas](#), ISTR's flagship publication. To engage with our dynamic growing community please join us on [LinkedIn](#). Also, please regularly visit for more details on the 14th ISTR Asia-Pacific Regional Conference, scheduled for October 19-21, 2027 in Taiwan, <https://www.istr.org/page/AsiaPacific>.

Warm regards,

Dr. Farhat Naz

## **In Spotlight:**

### **Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Sangha (TMSS); Advancing Women's Empowerment and Education through Community Engagement and Financial Resilience in Bangladesh**

**By Md. Shumon Zihady, PhD Candidate, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Thailand**

#### ***Civil Society Organization landscape in Bangladesh***

The NGO sector in Bangladesh is a thriving catalyst, with around 24,000 NGOs in operation, contributing to the improvement of education, healthcare, disaster management, women's empowerment, rural development, and poverty reduction. This sector has also become a key contributor in national development with a strong collaboration among the government, INGOs, NGOs, and local communities. Many organizations such as BRAC, ASA, TMSS, FIVDB, RDRS, and PROSHIKA along with many more grassroots NGOs are regulated and facilitated by the NGO Affairs Bureau. Though it is noticeable that the recent decline in the donor funding has created financial challenges for the NGOs resulting in innovative financing and moving towards local resource mobilization to strengthen their resilience. Here TMSS emerges as a notable example.

#### ***TMSS: from inception to Development***

Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Sangha (TMSS) is one of Bangladesh's largest women-led development organizations, demonstrating a particular model of community-based and economically sustainable civil society development. The organization was founded in 1964 and was recognized under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Hosne Ara Begum in 1980. TMSS has evolved into a multifaceted development institution from being a local initiative in Bogura, operating across almost every region of Bangladesh. Rather than depending only on donor funding, TMSS has developed its own integrated financing architecture, incorporating many sources, such as social enterprises, microfinance, educational institutions, philanthropy, members' contributions, and internally generated income. This versatile financing mechanism enables TMSS in maintaining its long-term operational sustainability while effectively responding to the local development agenda. Through this evolution, TMSS portrays that financial sustainability is not only rooted in accounting strategy but also in its capacity to introduce institutional diversification.

TMSS's Approach is Grounded in:

- Economic and social empowerment of Women
- Integrated development rather than isolated interventions
- Community ownership and participation
- Institutional self-reliance and financial sustainability
- Innovation through local solutions

#### ***Women Empowerment as the Driving Force***

TMSS's one of the major guiding principles is women empowerment. Since its inception has driven it to enable millions of women in strengthening their social position and economic independence through initiatives such as; microfinance programmes, vocational skills development, entrepreneurship promotion, healthcare services, legal awareness, climate resilience initiatives, and livelihood support. Through integrated Health-Education-

Microfinance (HEM) method, TMSS demonstrates how financial inclusion and human development outcomes can be a blended approach.

### ***Education as a Pathway for Social Transformation***

Education is another fundamental pillar of TMSS's development philosophy. Its strategically developed integrated education network catalyzes education beyond a social service, honing learners' skills into transforming them as skilled professionals. TMSS has created a continuous pipeline of human capital development through its strategically tailored technical training and specialized professional mentorship in higher education. Such as; establishment of Pundra University of Science and Technology in 2001, TMSS Medical College, Dental Unit, Nursing College, Medical Institute of Research and Technology, and Medical Assistant Training School providing higher education and competency-based education in critical healthcare professions. TMSS has been addressing Bangladesh's shortage of qualified health personnel, improving access to quality healthcare, and enhancing graduates' employability. This strategy not only creates social impact but also its vast network of services creates economic flow through tuition fees, professional training, and specialized education services.

### ***Community Engagement and Local Resource Mobilization***

TMSS leads with its strong community ownership and social legitimacy. To my experience, as an Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in Bogura, local people do not see TMSS as a donor-driven NGO rather a permanent community institution. This trust was built through decades of continuous engagement with local communities in microfinance, healthcare, education, WASH, agriculture, and livelihood programmes. Through savings groups, volunteers, and beneficiary networks TMSS encourages local participation in programme planning and implementation. This community-based approach not only strengthens accountability but also reduces implementation costs, and enables the organization to mobilize local human and social capital alongside financial resources. As a result, community ownership has become a strategic asset that enhances both the effectiveness of development interventions and TMSS's long-term financial resilience.

### ***Financial Sustainability Beyond Donor Dependency***

TMSS's integrated financial model includes; microfinance, healthcare, education, social enterprises, members' savings, and selective donor funding. According to its 2021 audit, grants and donations accounted for BDT 316 million (less than 5% of total organizational income of BDT 7.61 billion). Whereas income from microfinance operations exceeded BDT 6.5 billion, educational institutions generated BDT 232 million in tuition and admission fees, healthcare services contributed BDT 287 million through service charges and members' savings reached BDT 12.38 billion. TMSS currently operates 42 social enterprises, 1 university, 5 colleges, 5 hospitals, and serves over 1.8 million microfinance members through its Health-Education-Microfinance (HEM) model. This diversified income structure has significantly reduced dependence on donor funding and increased financial resilience.

### ***Partnerships and Institutional Collaboration***

TMSS has a far-reaching impact with its locally generated resources coupled with its vast network of institutional partnerships. It collaborates with government agencies, development partners, financial institutions, and the private sector in implementing programmes encompassing sectors like health, education, climate resilience, agriculture, and livelihoods. For example, around 30,000 rural micro-entrepreneurs will get loan support of USD 18 million through TMSS's partnership with HSBC. On the other hand, TMSS's collaboration with Standard Chartered Bangladesh has benefited around 100,000 farmers through climate-smart agriculture, quality inputs, and technical support. These strategic alliances have enabled

TMSS in leveraging external expertise and finance while maintaining a strong foundation for institutional sustainability.

### ***Lessons for NGO Sustainability***

For long-term NGO sustainability, the TMSS's financial management approach portrays the importance of diversified sources, rather than relying solely on external grants. TMSS leverages from multiple revenue stream such as; microfinance, education, healthcare, social enterprises, and members' savings, supported by strong community ownership and strategic partnerships. TMSS has transformed locally mobilized resources into sustainable development investments. This integrated approach provides a crucial model for NGOs in Bangladesh and other developing countries seeking greater financial resilience, institutional autonomy, and long-term social impact.

### **Links:**

<https://tmss-bd.org>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270991290\\_Poverty\\_Reduction\\_Through\\_Self\\_Employment\\_of\\_Women\\_A\\_Study\\_on\\_Thengamara\\_Mohila\\_Sabuj\\_Sangha\\_TMSS](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270991290_Poverty_Reduction_Through_Self_Employment_of_Women_A_Study_on_Thengamara_Mohila_Sabuj_Sangha_TMSS)

<https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/276650/>

## **Core Academic Journals**

**VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organization, Volume 37, Issue 3**

### **I Selected Abstract**

*Encounters of Community-Based Initiatives and the State: A Relational Perspective*

*Allard de Graaf, Antonella Maiello, Carola van Eijk*

### **Abstract:**

Community-based initiatives (CBIs) are groups of citizens operating as a community in order to provide public goods or services. CBIs can contribute to social change to tackle persistent challenges, but this depends on their encounters with the state. We argue that CBI scholarship lacks the conceptual tools to capture the full scope of these encounters. We position CBIs beyond a public service context as part of a democratic and contested public sphere. From this, we propose a relational understanding of state–CBI encounters as dynamically made up of diverse relationalities, drawing on state–society scholarship from multiple disciplines. Through an integrative literature review, we develop a two-step heuristic that distinguishes between functional, transformational, confrontational, and cohabitative encounters and identifies possibilities for shifts in the encounter. The heuristic aids both scholars and practitioners in understanding state–CBI encounters in relation to change and in navigating encounters in the pursuit of public goals. We conclude with a research agenda for further understanding state–CBI encounters.

## **II Contents**

1. Encounters of Community-Based Initiatives and the State: A Relational Perspective  
*Allard de Graaf, Antonella Maiello, Carola van Eijk*
2. Revisiting Institutionalization: Informalization in Civil Society Organizations  
*Rashed Al Jayousi, Yuko Nishide*
3. Third Space, Hybridity, and the Third Sector: Postcolonial Perspectives on Collective Identity in Global Social Welfare  
*Stefan van der Hoek*
4. Volunteering in Sweden and the Discourse of Change: Historical Trends and Theoretical Explanations  
*Johan von Essen, Ebba Henrekson, Erik Lundberg*
5. Between Restrictions and Reactions: Civil Society in Times of Multiple Crises in Germany—Shrinking Spaces for Post-Migrant Alliances  
*Christian Sowa, Ebtisam Ramadan, Anja Schöll, Till Sträter*
6. Faith and Activism against Gender-Based Violence: The Case of the Japanese Military Sexual Slavery  
*Jae-Eun Noh*
7. Signaling Creditworthiness: Exploring Debt Access among Chinese Nonprofits  
*Jiahuan Lu, Qiaozhen Liu, Qiang Dong*
8. Value-Based Drivers of Humanitarian Donation Intentions in a Muslim Context: The Moderating Role of Religiosity  
*M. Shabri Abd. Majid, Ridwan Nurdin, Maulidar Agustina, Muhammad Nasir, Y. Yahya, H. Hafasnuddin*
9. Donor Motivation and Civil Society Regimes from a Cross-Cultural and Institutional Perspective  
*Hsin-Yu Hung, Hsuan-Wei Lee*
10. What Volunteers Do: Toward a Task-Centered Framework for Recognizing Informal Volunteering  
*Lærke Høgenhaven*
11. Strategic Stealth in Intersectional Boundary-Spanning: Adaptive Digital Fundraising Practices of Grassroots Gender NGOs in China  
*Ling Han, Yidan Bi*
12. Giving Voice or Quelling Dissent? The Case of the Civil Society Advocating for Climate Change through SDG 13 in Spain  
*S. Ilgu Ozler*
13. Enhancing Social Participation and Recognition through Volunteering for People with Disabilities in Thailand  
*Nara Khamkhom, Paranee Visuttipun, Wiraman Niyomphol, Kasama Yakoh, Tavee Cheasuwantavee*

14. Book Review: Giuseppe Ugazio and Milos Maricic (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence and Philanthropy*, Routledge, London and New York, 2025, pp. 597, bibliography, index, £172.50 (hardback).  
*Ridvan Kocaman*
15. Book Review: Nathan Chappell and Scott Rosenkrans, *Nonprofit AI: A Comprehensive Guide to Implementing Artificial Intelligence for Social Good*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ, 2025, pp. 309, \$28.00.  
*Salman Bin Habib*
16. Book Review: Marie J. Bouchard and Damien Rousseliere (ed.), *A Modern Guide to the Social and Solidarity Economy*, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2026, pp. 344, index, £145.00.  
*Nicolae Cuta*

## Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly: Volume 55, Issue 4

### I Selected Abstract

#### Virtual Philanthropy: Exploring Its Definition and Perceived Social Impact Through a Mixed-Method Approach

*Shihua Ye, Zhongsheng Wu, Xiaochen Gong, Yiming Dai & Jieyu Wu*

#### Abstract:

Virtual philanthropy, as a novel and distinct mode of digital giving, is expanding the boundaries of traditional philanthropy. Yet, little is known about this new phenomenon, which warrants academic inquiry. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to conceptualize virtual philanthropy and examine the conditions under which the cases of virtual philanthropy generate higher perceived social impact. Based on cross-case comparative analyses of 40 global cases, we identify three core dimensions: nature of donation, donation mechanism, and beneficiaries, and three common characteristics: gamification, public-benefits, and stickiness. By employing fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA), we identify three configurations associated with higher perceived social impact: Gamified Public-Benefit Path (C1), Sticky Public-Benefit Path (C2), and Ad Revenue with Single-Cause Path (C3). These findings contribute to addressing the ambiguity surrounding the definition of virtual philanthropy and offer practical insights for philanthropic practitioners seeking to design effective virtual philanthropy initiatives with high social impact.

### II Contents

1. NGO–Government Relations in States With Weak Institutions: Avoiding the State While Supplementing Resource Gaps  
*Shawn Flanigan & Alexa Bejinariu*
2. Retaining Volunteers Through Political Economic Change: Austerity, Boundary Work, and the Making of an Unpaid Workforce in Newcastle’s Parks  
*Marion Ernwein*

3. Enabling Factors and Barriers to Volunteering (Potentials) in the Second Half of Life: The Role of Gender and Informal Caregiving in Germany  
*Frank Micheel, Alina Schmitz & Martina Brandt*
4. “Giving Time in My Own Time”: Autonomous Volunteering as an Understudied Phenomenon  
*Debbie Haski-Leventhal, Irit Alony & Allison R. Russell*
5. How to Co-Produce Elderly Care: Volunteer Coordination by Municipalities or Voluntary Organisations?  
*Tord Skogedal Lindén & Håkon Solbu Trætteberg*
6. Volunteers’ Interest in Skill-Based Rewards and in Awards in Nonprofit Organizations: A Study of Volunteer Recognition in France  
*Guillaume Plaisance*
7. Virtual Philanthropy: Exploring Its Definition and Perceived Social Impact Through a Mixed-Method Approach  
*Shihua Ye, Zhongsheng Wu, Xiaochen Gong, Yiming Dai & Jieyu Wu*
8. What Do We Know About Asian Nonprofit Research? A Systematic Review and Bibliometric Analysis of 60 Years of Progress and Regional Variations  
*Tamaki Onishi, Helen K. Liu, Alisa V. Moldavanova & Naoto Yamauchi*
9. Bridging Divides or Widening Gaps? Nonprofit Organizations’ Efforts for Migrant Inclusion in Two Global Cities  
*Yan Long, Wei Luo & Berta Terzieva*
10. Effects of Different Leadership Styles on Workers in Ukrainian Non-Profit Organisations  
*Hanna Kaitandzhian, Javier Llorens-Montes & Araceli Rojo*
11. *Book Review: Non-profit governance: Twelve frameworks for organisations and research by Brown, W. (Plaisance G. and Belghit A. G., Eds.). New York: Routledge. 242 pp., \$180, ebook \$48.44; ISBN: 9781032599861 (Hardback)*  
*William A. Brown*
12. *Book Review: Volunteering in the United Kingdom: The spirit of service by Mohan, J.. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 320 pp., £20.00; ISBN: 9781526145529 (paperback).*  
*Jon Dean*

## News in the Sector

### Donations to Australian and New Zealand Third Sector Research (ANZTSR) now tax deductible

Australian and New Zealand Third Sector Research ([ANZTSR](#)) is very pleased to share that our organisation has been successful in securing charitable registration and Deductible Gift

Recipient (DGR) status for our research fund. This means that donations for third sector research are now tax deductible for Australian taxpayers.

### **VII International Congress on Continuing Education: Knowledge Nodes Walking towards new axioms, November 26 and 27, 2026 (online congress)**

The International Congress on Continuing Education “Knowledge Nodes” is an annual, multidisciplinary event open to the university, teaching, scientific, and research community. Its main objective is to provide an ideal forum for showcasing and fostering the exchange of recent research findings, doctoral dissertations, ongoing projects, and other academic contributions that promote professional development, continuing education, and ongoing training in the academic and scientific fields. For more details, click [here](#).

### **Call for papers: Global Perspectives on Use of AI in Public Management and Policy**

This [Special Issue](#) aims to advance the understanding and discourse about challenges and opportunities at the intersection of AI technology and implementation, policy, and public management. Submit your idea to [marytschirhart@gwu.edu](mailto:marytschirhart@gwu.edu) and [berryjamesr@vcu.edu](mailto:berryjamesr@vcu.edu) in no more than 500 words. Manuscripts should be submitted online at [www.mdpi.com](http://www.mdpi.com) by registering and logging in to this website.

### **Latin American and Caribbean Regional Doctoral Seminar: [Call for Applications](#), July 5-6, 2027**

The International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR), in collaboration with the Center for Philanthropy and Social Investments (CEFIS) of the Adolfo Ibáñez University, will organize a seminar for doctoral students from any country at all stages of their doctoral research on topics directly related to the Third Sector, such as civil society, the non-profit sector, philanthropy, social economy, social investment, third sector social innovation, corporate social investment and volunteering, among others. Click the [link](#) to apply. Application deadline: December 1, 2026

### **Call for Papers | Conferences | Workshop**

#### **CFP | 12th Oceanic Conference on International Studies (OCIS 2027), 7–9 July 2027, Suva, Fiji.**

The 12th Oceanic Conference on International Studies (OCIS 2027) invites submissions for its upcoming conference to be held on 7–9 July 2027 at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji. Organised by the University of the South Pacific and the Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs at the Australian National University, the conference welcomes papers, panels, roundtables, and innovative sessions exploring international studies, global politics, environmental politics, international development, migration, human rights, Indigenous approaches, and related fields. Abstract submission deadline: 31 October 2026, For more details, click [here](#).

#### **CFP | The 18th Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities (ACAH2027), 15–19 May 2027, Tokyo, Japan.**

The 18th Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities (ACAH2027) invites submissions for its upcoming conference in Tokyo, Japan, organised by the International Academic Forum

(IAFOR) in association with the IAFOR Research Centre at the Osaka School of International Public Policy (OSIPP), The University of Osaka. The conference provides an interdisciplinary platform for researchers and scholars to present research and exchange ideas across disciplinary and national boundaries. Abstract submission deadline: 27 November 2026, For more details, click [here](#).

### **CFP | International Conference on Sociology of Inequality and Social Justice (ICSISJ-26), 17–18 November 2026, Sydney, Australia**

The International Conference on Sociology of Inequality and Social Justice (ICSISJ-26) invites submissions for its upcoming conference to be held on 17–18 November 2026 in Sydney, Australia. The key themes of this conference include sociological theories of inequality, social justice movements, intersectionality issues, economic inequality, poverty, and gender studies. Abstract submission deadline: 23 October 2026, For more details, click [here](#).

### **Conference | International Conference on Community Resilience and Local Governance (ICCRLG-26), 12–13 October 2026, Osaka, Japan**

The International Conference on Community Resilience and Local Governance (ICCRLG-26) invites submissions for its upcoming conference to be held on 12–13 October 2026 in Osaka, Japan. The conference provides a platform for researchers and scholars to discuss issues related to community resilience, local governance, sustainable development, disaster management, and social transformation. Abstract submission deadline: 17 September 2026, For more details, click [here](#).

### **Conference | XXI World Congress of Sociology, 4–10 July 2027, Gwangju, Republic of Korea**

The International Sociological Association (ISA) invites abstract submissions for the XXI World Congress of Sociology, to be held on 4–10 July 2027 in Gwangju, Republic of Korea. Under the theme Global Sociology in Turbulent Times, the Congress aims to explore how sociology can understand and respond to contemporary global challenges, including social inequalities, environmental crises, and transformations in democracy and society. Abstract submission deadline: 14 October 2026, For more details, click [here](#).

### **Career News:**

#### **Opportunity | National Endowment for Democracy (NED) Grants 2026, Funding for NGOs, Civil Society and Independent Media Worldwide**

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) Grants Program 2026 invites proposals from independent nongovernmental organisations working to advance democratic values, strengthen institutions, protect human rights, support independent media, promote civic participation, and improve accountability worldwide. The programme supports initiatives led by civil society organisations, civic groups, and independent media organisations, particularly those working in challenging political environments. NED awards more than 2,000 grants annually to nongovernmental groups across more than 100 countries. Application deadline: 21 September 2026, For more details, click [here](#).

#### **Job Opportunity | Lecturer in Sociology, Australian National University (ANU), Canberra, Australia**

The Australian National University (ANU) invites applications for a Lecturer in Sociology within its School of Sociology. The full-time, fixed-term position offers opportunities for

teaching and research in areas including global sociology, postcolonial studies, sociology of ethnicity, inequalities and development, public sociology, and social research methods. Application deadline: 27 September 2026, For more details, click [here](#).

### **Paper Award | ISA WG11 Violence and Society Best Paper Award 2026, International Sociological Association**

The International Sociological Association invites submissions for its ISA WG11 Violence and Society Best Paper Award for original papers that make a significant contribution to the sociological understanding of violence, including its causes, societal responses, theoretical development, and measurement. Papers may be solo or co-authored, must be unpublished, and should not exceed 10,000 words. And it must be presented at the XXI ISA World Congress of Sociology in Gwangju, South Korea, in July 2027. Award: Certificate + US\$250 toward ISA registration or travel. Submission deadline: 15 October 2026, For more details, click [here](#).

### **Job Opportunity | Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in Sociology, The University of Hong Kong (HKU), Hong Kong**

The University of Hong Kong (HKU) invites applications for a Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology. The position welcomes scholars working on sociological and interdisciplinary studies of contemporary society, with particular interest in areas such as digital society, social change, inequality, technology and society, and emerging social issues. Application deadline: 30 September 2026, For more details, click [here](#).

### **Opportunity | Postdoctoral Fellow in Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong**

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University invites applications for a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Applied Social Sciences. The position involves conducting research and evaluation studies as well as supporting academic activities. Applicants should hold a doctoral degree in Sociology, Social Work, or a related discipline, with no more than five years of post-qualification experience. Application deadline: Open until fulfilled, For more details, click [here](#).

### **Fellowship Opportunity | Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) 2027, University of Sydney, Australia**

The University of Sydney invites applications from international students for its Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) scholarships to pursue a higher degree by research, including PhD programmes. The scholarship provides a full tuition fee offset, an annual stipend of AUD 44,293 (2027 rate), and relocation and thesis allowances. Application deadline: 11 September 2026, For more details, click [here](#).

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### About Us

The Asia Pacific Third-Sector Researchers Network (formerly the East Asia Third-Sector Researchers Network) was launched by ISTR in 2016 to help scholars and students in East Asia and beyond exchange information about publications, conferences, and job vacancies in third-sector studies through this newsletter. The scope of the newsletter and the network has expanded to cover the entire Asia Pacific region since November 2018.