CIVICUS seeks papers for the 10th International Society for Third Sector Research conference to be held in Siena, Italy

The 10th International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR) on the theme “Democratisation, Marketisation and the third sector”, will take place during July 10-13, 2012 in Siena, Italy.

This Tenth International Conference of ISTR marks the 20th anniversary of the formation of this global community of scholars and interested others dedicated to the creation, discussion, and advancement of knowledge pertaining to the Third Sector and its impact on human and planetary well-being and development internationally.

In this era of far-reaching changes in the way that societies are organised, the Third Sector is playing a critical role and has significantly gained importance in many countries. Democratisation and the role of civil society in social integration and participation are in the spotlight with recent mobilisations particularly in the Middle East and ongoing suppression of civil society under authoritarian regimes in parts of the world. New media, social networks and other technological innovations raise new opportunities and challenges for organising collective action and the diversity of civil society.

CIVICUS discussion panels

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation considers the collection, analysis and publication of data about the state of civil society as the first steps in the participatory research process and the promotion of enhanced knowledge about and improved policy to support civil society.

CIVICUS is committed to strengthening its research, assessment and reflection on civil society, and to involve as many partners as possible. The ISTR global conference provides a very suitable occasion for deepening exploration of CIVICUS’ research into civil society, strengthening research partnerships and to look at a diversity of international contexts.

CIVICUS is therefore planning to organise three panels at the ISTR 2012 conference, to be held in Siena, Italy, from 10 to 13 July 2012.

These sessions are designed to attract an international audience, including academics and professionals from universities, think tanks, government agencies, civil society, and beyond.

Negotiating trade offs in civil society assessments

The CIVICUS Civil Society Index aims to be internationally comparable while respecting the specificities of the civil society in individual countries. In practice, this
implies compromises between desires to generate internationally comparable data and to invest in process that enable civil society strengthening and ownership at the local level.

How to negotiate these obvious tensions, how to please different groups of stakeholders and how to make choices between what may be two ultimately incompatible aims will be the focus of this session.

Bridging the gaps between assessment and action

The world is replete with civil society assessments, with over 40 listed in the recent UNDP users' guide. But a frequent critique of these assessments is that a huge amount of high quality analysis leads to relatively little in the way of implementable recommendations, actions and impact.

The CIVICUS Civil Society Index, for example, describes itself as an 'action research project' but acknowledges that is stronger on research than action, with detailed analysis often concluding in vague recommendations. What inhibits the translation of research into action, and how can that be addressed?

Civil society funding - beyond donors, beyond CSOs

Established CSOs report increased volatility of their funding as donors retrench in the face of economic and political crises. But what are the more nuanced trends in funding, in different regions, in different parts of civil society, and from different financing sources?

This session will present and discuss the findings of the new CIVICUS research project into changing patterns of civil society funding, which takes a disaggregated approach to civil society, connects funding issues to wider concerns about the quality of the enabling environment for civil society and examines what new partnerships - including between different aspects of civil society and with alternative sources of funding - are possible.

Call for Papers

In this context, CIVICUS, as an organiser of three panels at the 10th ISTR conference, is seeking abstract submission from researchers and practitioners for the Siena event. 15 papers will be selected for panel discussion.

According to the ISTR rules, abstracts should be sent to the panel organisers, in this case CIVICUS, to be reviewed by them. After the internal review and selection process, CIVICUS will submit panel proposal(s), along with the abstracts that were selected to be presented at the conference. The final decisions about acceptances to the conference will be made by the ISTR after submitting the panel proposal.

To be considered for review, an abstract must include:
• A working title that clearly identifies the conference theme being addressed,
• A statement of the empirical or theoretical concern,
• A short summary locating the concern within a wider literature
• A concise account of the empirical or theoretical methodological approach
• The main arguments of the paper and an indication of the supporting evidence.
• A statement of the main conclusions and their relevance to an international audience.

The abstract should be approximately 600 words in length, but no less than 400 or more than 800 words.

Selection Process

CIVICUS will notify the authors who are being considered to be part of a panel about a week before the final deadline for proposal submission to ISTR, so that those persons who cannot be accommodated within one of the CIVICUS panel proposals have the possibility to apply directly to the conference organisers.

Last date for submission of application is October 3, 2011.

All abstracts should be sent to research@civicus.org with copy to olga.kononykhina@civicus.org.

Language: Please note that English will be the official language of the conference. Papers and presentations are expected to be delivered in English

Schedule

3 October 2011 Deadline to submit proposals
17 October 2011 Proposal status notifications
24 October 2011

Selected proposals will be submitted as part of the panel submissions to ISTR

Contact

For inquires about paper proposals

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