

# First Call for Papers

## International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR) Seventh Regional Conference for Latin America and Caribbean



### 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar-Congress for Third Sector Research

#### *Civil society and inter-sector cooperation in Latin America: Challenges of the environment*

1 – 3 July 2009

Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico City

Civil society participation in the political transition process in Latin America was crucial to ensure a new democratic framework in the region at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The contribution by social movements and civil organizations to peacefully dismantle authoritarian regimes managed to add visibility to the transformational potential of the citizenry. Additionally, it had an effect on the various organized forms in which civil society was able to position itself in a key manner to understand the complex dynamics of social and political change that continued after the end of the Cold War. In parallel, along with the growth in the number and impact of citizen organizations, Latin American societies began to demand greater diversification from civil organizations in their areas of action and stronger accountability in their work.

Currently, in complex socio-political contexts, rapidly changing socio-economic situations and widely heterogeneous socio-cultural environments, civil society organizations (CSOs) in the region face several challenges. Some of these include: the reinforcement of the paradigm shift that has gradually changed from a welfare focus to more integral models of social development; a higher degree of professionalism of CSOs; greater transparency and accountability given the greater expectations of various stakeholders (sponsors and donors, beneficiaries, government, operational teams, among others); and the construction of an identity and institutional sustainability to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with other sectors. Recently, additional challenges of a global nature have surfaced (including the food and financial crises) that demand reflection on the manner in which the third sector in the region can contribute to convert these adverse circumstances into opportunities for social change. In the region, this task is linked to the difficult relations civil society actors have had with governments and with the private business sector. New forms of inter-sector collaboration are being explored and their discussion and dissemination are tasks that have only recently begun.

The main objective of the *Seventh Regional Conference of ISTR for Latin America and the Caribbean* is to offer a space for the exchange of ideas, theoretical frameworks and methodologies.

The most specific objectives include the following:

1. Increase knowledge regarding different characteristics, relationships and processes of CSOs in various stages of socio-political and socio-economic development (stability and crisis), taking into account prior work presented at earlier regional conferences.
2. Delineate a classification of CSOs in Latin America and the Caribbean and advance in knowledge as compared to other regions with the objective of providing materials for cooperation, promotion of sustainable social development and the sector strengthening.
3. Generate knowledge that helps clarify the role of the third sector given the current social, economic and political problems at local, regional and global levels.

## **CENTRAL THEMES**

For the purposes of this conference, the third sector is defined in a broad manner and includes, for example, non-government organizations, not-for-profit organizations, associations, social economy organizations, community organizations, mutual benefit societies, self-help organizations, labor unions, religious organizations and cooperatives.

### **I. Civil society economic perspective**

Methods of association such as cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, social enterprises and micro-finance companies (which operate differently than strictly for-profit companies) have proven to be viable alternatives for local development in various countries. What is civil society organizations' role for development in the region? What experiences have been of high impact? What are the social and institutional pre-requisites for these models to operate properly? How do social economy methods of association face an adverse global economic environment? What contributions and challenges do civil organizations have for socio-economic inclusion processes? Social economy, micro-financing and other similar proposals are appropriate for this theme.

### **II. Identity, accountability and legitimacy**

To increase impact and sustainability, civil society organizations are moving toward higher levels of institutionalization. The definition of a clear identity, congruence between values and operational strategies, transparency mechanisms and accountability, systematic diagnosis and the diversification of financing sources are fundamental elements for the sustainability of civil organizations. What is the relationship among organizational identity, accountability and legitimacy? What have been the changes in the third sector in the region in these issues? How can CSOs optimize financial and human resources for management and fulfillment of objectives? How does identity contribute to the construction of networks and strategic alliances? What are the elements of organizational sustainability? What are the pending challenges regarding the institutionalism of organized civil society in the region? What are their life cycles and social

integration? What is the experience of civil organizations in public accountability? What is their contribution to policy formulation?

### **III. Participation and social movements**

Citizen participation in political affairs is not unambiguous, but rather is expressed through various forms of collective action. Historically, social movements have promoted cultural and political change through their influence on the structure of the public agenda. What are the characteristics of social movements in Latin America and the Caribbean? How do social movements promote the transformation of political regimes? What factors set off collective action by the citizenry? What role does social capital have in social movements? What is the existing link between regional and global movements? What are the forms and challenges of citizen participation and volunteering?

### **IV. Characteristics and processes of intra- and inter-sector cooperation of civil organizations**

The establishment of networks and alliances to achieve common objectives can make civil society organizations' actions more effective. However, coordinated actions among various participants are often inhibited by structural and short term factors. As such, identifying the experiences and models that have been able to overcome obstacles to cooperation is important. What types of relations do civil society organizations have with the private and public sectors? What inter-sector communication models have had proven high impacts? What are the issues or questions that facilitate or inhibit relations of cooperation and alliances?

### **V. Legal and fiscal frameworks**

The existence of an institutional framework that promotes growth and sustainability of civil society organizations in the region are pending challenges. Advances in the transformation of legal and fiscal frameworks in Latin America and the Caribbean have been scarce and sporadic. It is necessary to reflect on the importance of establishing a public agenda that proposes legal modifications to give incentives to increase the number of civil society initiatives. What are the characteristics of the region's legal frameworks? What types of fiscal incentives are required to strengthen CSO growth? What experiences can be shared?

### **VI. Community, development and environment**

In Latin America, there seems to be a dilemma between economic and social development of communities and the conservation and recovery of the natural and environmental wealth of its territories. Indigenous and rural communities are faced with this problem in a setting of great economic and political pressure that occasionally leads to situations of violence. This is an important context where civil organizations have a special profile. What is the participation of civil organizations in the use, care and preservation of natural resources and the environment? How is this related to the needs and development of local training?

### **Other topics**

Papers on topics not mentioned above may also be proposed. Those papers dealing with content that is relevant for the third sector in the region may be selected and included in the program by the Conference's academic committee.

### **GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTATION OF ABSTRACTS**

The Conference Academic Committee encourages proposals from all countries where research on Latin America and the Caribbean is carried out, as well as proposals from professionals who conduct research in the sector. As such, articles and round table discussions that broach more than one country will be given special attention so as to stimulate comparative studies. A limited number of scholarships and subsidies will be available for researchers from Latin America and the Caribbean, including Mexico with accepted proposals. Proposals will be accepted in articles (lecture), round tables or posters. Please indicate the format when sending your proposal. Likewise, a limited number of unabridged written and oral presentations in English will be accepted. Proposals shall be in accordance with the following guidelines:

#### **INDIVIDUAL PAPERS**

1. Abstracts to be evaluated must be no longer than 800 words and must be sent in Word format to [jstr@lasociedadcivil.org](mailto:jstr@lasociedadcivil.org).
2. Proposals for papers may be sent in Spanish, Portuguese or English.
3. Abstract:
  - ❖ Must include a temporary title that clearly defines the issue, as well as the central theme of the conference for which it is proposed.
  - ❖ It must: (a) summarize the argument of the article; (b) put the issue in the context of a broader range of literature; (c) indicate the relevance of the issue for an international audience; and (d) establish an empirical and/or theoretical or practical basis; and
  - ❖ The summary must have a length of between 500 and 800 words. Summaries that do not meet these requirements will not be considered for review.
  - ❖ Each summary must be accompanied by a file with the following data: a) presenter name, b) name of institution to which presenter belongs and c) e-mail and telephone number.

#### **PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

4. Issue related panel discussions may be proposed. There must be a minimum of three and a maximum of four panelists. Each of the papers included in the panel discussion must meet the requirements listed for individual papers. The name of the proposed panel and the name of the panel coordinator must be included in the abstract.
5. The proposed panel discussion theme must include the name of the panel, the name of the panel coordinator and the titles of the papers included (a maximum of four papers per panel will be accepted). Please remember that proposals for panel discussions must be accompanied by an abstract that identifies and justifies the theme of the panel. Proposals for a round table that do

not include complete summaries along with the information of the author of each article will not be considered. The panel coordinator must guarantee that each presenter of the proposed articles commits to attend the conference.

## **POSTERS**

6. The poster session offers an alternative to complete research article presentations. Please remember to indicate your preference for this presentation type when sending your proposal. Young researchers are especially encouraged to share their work through this method of presentation, which is an opportunity to present their completed or in-progress research projects. Posters will remain on display throughout the conference. A special session will be held so that attendees can meet the authors and discuss their work. Information on the various poster formats will be sent to those individuals whose proposals have been accepted.

7. To present poster projects, the same requirements for individual papers apply. At the beginning of the abstract, it must be clearly specified that the work is being proposed in the poster format.

8. Articles, posters or round table proposals that meet the basic requirements will be reviewed by three independent reviewers. During this process, the names of the author and the other two reviewers will be omitted. Only proposals with good academic level will be accepted. Once the conference/congress concludes, a group of articles will be selected and reviewed to be included in two volumes that will be published by the organizing committee.

Abstracts will be judged by an international academic committee based on the following criteria:

- Contribution to the scope of the conference's objectives.
- Relevance regarding the central themes.
- Appropriateness of proposed methodology. The committee especially encourages the presentation of works that use comparative analysis.
- Contribution to the diversity of viewpoints regarding organized civil society.
- Clarity in the presentation of the paper.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

- Deadline for submission of abstracts: 20 February 2009.
- Authors will be notified of proposal acceptance by 15 March 2009.
- Authors of accepted works may request grants for participation in the Conference before 15 April 2009.
- Authors of accepted works must confirm their participation by 15 May.
- Complete accepted works must be delivered by 1 June 2009. The maximum length of complete papers is 12,000 words. Other editorial guidelines will be provided following acceptance of the paper.

**Questions and comments may be directed to:**

ISTR - Latin America	Tecnológico de Monterrey	CEMEFI
Anabel Cruz	Alberto Hernández Baqueiro	Carlos Cordurier Real

<a href="mailto:acruz@lasociedadcivil.org">acruz@lasociedadcivil.org</a>	<a href="mailto:albherna@itesm.mx">albherna@itesm.mx</a>	<a href="mailto:carlos@cemefi.org">carlos@cemefi.org</a>
--	--	--

Mexico City, 6 November 2008.

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**Academic Committee**

- Beatriz Balián, UCA, Argentina
- Mario Roitter, CEDES, Argentina
- Jacqueline Butcher, CEMEFI, Mexico, and ISTR President
- Carlos Cordourier Real, CEMEFI, Mexico
- Gustavo Verduzco, *Colegio de México* (College of Mexico)
- Alberto Hernández Baqueiro, Monterrey Institute of Technology, Mexico
- Luis Serra, *Red Nicaragüense por la Democracia y el Desarrollo Local* (Nicaraguan Network for Democracy for Local Development), Nicaragua
- Felipe Portocarrero, *Universidad del Pacífico* (Pacific University), Peru
- José I. Vega, University of Puerto Rico
- Anabel Cruz, ICD, Uruguay, and ISTR Latin America