

14th ISTR Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference

22nd Congress on Research in the Third Sector



Governance, innovation and new collaborative forms for the common good in Latin America and the Caribbean

August 6, 2025



XIV Conferencia Regional para América Latina y el Caribe

XXII Congreso de Investigación sobre el Tercer Sector



Facultad de Responsabilidad Social



Cemefi

Conference at a Glance

- 176 participating researchers and doctoral students
- 20 countries represented
- 16 universities participated in the Academic Committee
- 101 research presentations
- 7 roundtable discussions
- 31 simultaneous research sessions
- 1 book presentation
- 1 book fair with 13 publishers
- 1 Data Walk hosted by GivingTuesday
- 1 folklórico presentation by School of Arts



Latin American and Caribbean countries represented

- Antigua y Barbuda
- Argentina
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Honduras
- Jamaica
- Nicaragua
- Puerto Rico
- Uruguay
- Mexico

Other countries represented

- Belgium
- Canada
- Egypt
- United States of America
- Philippines
- Japan
- Lebanon



General Information

The Anáhuac University, School of Social Responsibility, and the Mexican Center for Philanthropy (Cemefi) co-hosted the 14th ISTR Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Society for Third Sector Research from July 2-4, 2025, in Mexico City Mexico. The event was combined with Cemefi's 22nd Congress of Research on the Third Sector. The beautiful campus of Anáhuac University served as the site for the conference.

The conference theme was “Governance, innovation and new collaborative forms for the common good in Latin America and the Caribbean.” This theme reflects the increasing hybridization of the sector in the region, and the recognition that effective governance relies on strong public-private partnerships to address societal challenges. The call for papers invited submissions that would describe innovations in this process that drives transformative changes and new collaborative forms that have strategically positioned themselves to achieve outcomes for the common good. These themes were not only the focus of the research but also served as the foundation for the dialogue that unfolded throughout the conference.

The conference brought together 176 participants from 20 countries. More than 101 papers were presented in total, including seven roundtables, one book presentation, and a *Data Walk* hosted by GivingTuesday. Presentations featured the latest research on governance, innovation, and new collaborative forms across Latin America and the Caribbean spanning key areas including volunteering, philanthropy, teaching, and sustainability. The conference fostered meaningful engagement among representatives from academia, civil society, and government, providing a platform to explore key themes, exchange significant research findings, and strengthen the connection between theory and practice.

The success of this conference would not have been possible without the expertise and dedication of the conference committee chairs, committee members, and volunteers. We are especially grateful to Luz Mairym López-Rodríguez, Associate Professor at the University of Puerto Rico for chairing the Academic Committee, ISTR Board member Humberto Muñoz Grandé, Coordinator of the Ph.D. of Innovation in Social Responsibility and Sustainability at Anáhuac University and Romina Farias Pelayo, Director of Information at the Mexican Center for Philanthropy (Cemefi) for chairing the Organizing Committee, and Adriana Reynaga Professor at Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico for chairing the PhD Seminar. We also greatly appreciate the hospitality of the Anáhuac University and the coordination and support of staff and students from the School of Social Responsibility, especially Director Carlos Ramos Cárdenas Artigas.

We invite you view all the conference materials:

[The full call for papers](#), [detailed program](#), [papers](#), [presentations](#), and [photos](#)



Conference Committees

International Academic Committee

Chair: Luz Mairym López-Rodríguez, Puerto Rico

Allan C Q Barbosa, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Gabriel Berger, San Andres University, Argentina

Daniel A. Díaz Vera, Adolfo Ibanez University, Chile

Emilia González Carmona, Center for Philanthropy and Social Investment, Adolfo Ibanez University, Chile

Ignacio Irarrazaval, Center for Public Policy, Catholic University, Chile

Maria Fernanda Martínez Valladares, Anáhuac University, Mexico and Central American Technological University, Honduras

Ines M. Pousadela, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Uruguay

Maria del Carmen Zenck, Casa Grande University, Ecuador

Organizing Committee

Humberto Muñoz Grandé, Anáhuac University, Mexico

Romina Farias Pelayo, Mexican Center for Philanthropy (Cemefi)

Local Academic Committee

Adriana Reynaga, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, UNAM

Pablo González Ulloa, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, UNAM

Judith Pérez Soria, El Colegio Mexiquense, A.C.

Jacqueline Butcher, Center for Research and Studies on Civil Society

Pedro Isnardo de la Cruz, National School of Social Work, UNAM

Guadalupe Serna Pérez, Dr. José María Luis Mora Research Institute

Rocío Echeverría González, Laura Hernández Villalobos, Center for Economic, Administrative, and Social Research, IPN

Claudia Luengas and Tomás Magaña, Ministry of Welfare

Oscar de los Reyes Heredia, Monterrey Institute of Technology

Laura Elena Romero López, University of the Americas, Puebla

Miguel R. González Ibarra, Autonomous Metropolitan University, Iztapalapa Campus

Miguel Moreno Plata, Autonomous University of Mexico City

Andrés Ramírez Portilla, Marimar Sanz Abbud, Ibero-American University, Mexico City

Yazím Mendoza Reyes, Pan-American University

Conference Keynote Address

Jesús Silva-Herzog Márquez emphasized the urgency of reclaiming moderation in contemporary politics, especially in a context dominated by polarization and inflammatory rhetoric. In his address, he pointed out that the figure of the moderate has been unfairly relegated to the role of the coward or the lukewarm, when in reality it represents a commitment to reason, doubt, and democratic deliberation. In contrast to the visceral nature of populist leaders—who reduce politics to a battle between friends and enemies—the moderate is someone who champions dialogue, pluralism, and consensus-building, essential elements for a healthy democracy but increasingly disregarded in public debate.

Silva-Herzog Márquez warned that this discursive aggressiveness not only emanates from power but has seeped into society, where it also stigmatizes reflective citizens, critical academics, and impartial researchers. The figure of the intellectual is viewed with suspicion, as if their search for nuance and complexity were a betrayal of collective emotions. In this climate of bitterness, politics becomes a spectacle of absolute assertions and blind loyalties, where there is no room for ambivalence or critical thinking. Recovering moderation, then, is not a simple gesture of style, but an urgent ethical and political task to resist authoritarian simplification and rebuild a public space where difference is not a cause of hatred, but of dialogue.



Discussion on civic space in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Puerto Rico

The panelists presented a general assessment of what is happening in their respective countries. In Nicaragua, civic space has been severely restricted in recent years, with a government that has intensified its repression of freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. Journalists, activists, and human rights defenders face harassment, criminalization, and forced exile. Public demonstrations have been de facto banned, and numerous civil society organizations have been closed under legal pretexts. Universities, traditionally spaces for critical thinking, have been impacted; many have lost their legal status, their facilities have been confiscated, and their faculty and students have been persecuted for expressing positions contrary to the government.

In El Salvador, the government has promoted a discourse of confrontation with the independent press and has pushed for legal reforms that limit the work of social organizations. Although some forms of public assembly are more permissible, they tend to be controlled, and universities,

especially public ones, have been subject to political pressure and budget cuts. While in Puerto Rico, although a democratic framework prevails, the economic crisis and political dependence on the United States government have generated tension in the civic space.



Luis Aguilar Vázquez from the *Universidad Centroamericana de El Salvador*

Guillermo Carrión Madariaga from *Nicaragua Nunca Más*

Mairym Lopez-Rodriguez from the *Universidad de Puerto Rico*

Moderator: Humberto Muñoz Grande from the *Universidad de Anáhuac - México*

GivingTuesday's Data Walk

GivingTuesday organized a Data Walk for participants in the LAC Conference to explore. The *Data Walk* was an interactive, participatory method of exploring data that helped make research more engaging and applicable. The *Data Walk* encouraged conference participants to engage in conversation, reflection, and collective learning, making data more approachable and useful for real-world impact. This experience provided an important tool to move beyond static, academic presentations and instead “*take your research for a walk*”—turning it into a tool for dialogue, understanding, and transformative action.

Anita Gallagher, who leads the strategy and partnership work for the Latin America & Caribbean Hub of GivingTuesday organized the event. ISTR has partnered with GivingTuesday to build better research to practice connections thanks to support from The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of the Government of Canada, the federal research funding agency that supports research and training in the humanities and social sciences. The [GivingTuesday Data Commons](#) works with partners across sectors and borders to understand the drivers and impacts of all types of generosity, analyze the effects of networks and collective action, explore giving behaviors and patterns, and use data to inspire more giving around the world. Their partnerships with data providers and commissioned research activities have resulted in the generation of several robust useful databases for researchers and data scientists to explore and use for their projects.

Case Studies: A Value Proposition for Teaching, Research, and Practice

The session examined how case studies prove to be an effective tool for preparing students to enter the sector and outlined how educators have successfully used case studies in both classroom settings and civil society capacity-building spaces. Susan Appe of the University at Albany, SUNY and a board member of ISTR, moderated the session which featured insights from Gabriel Berger from Universidad San Andrés, Argentina and Emilia González from Adolfo Ibáñez University – Center for Philanthropy and Social Investment, Chile.

Participants analyzed the effectiveness of teaching cases as a learning method, shared tips for developing them, and identified ways to locate strong cases for educational purposes. The session also highlighted how the process of developing teaching cases had contributed to impactful research projects, illustrating the synergy between teaching and scholarly work.

Future of Civil Society and the Role of Research: Research for Practice

This session explored how research could better meet the evolving needs of civil society and support its response to global challenges. Romina Farías, Information Center Director at Cemei, facilitated the discussion with Guillermo Correa, Executive Director of RACI Argentina, and Inés M. Pousadela, Senior Research Specialist at CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation



Central to the discussion was an emphasis on the urgent need for civil society to rethink its practices amid increasing global pressures. The speakers highlighted the disconnect between academic research and the practical needs of civil society organizations, calling for more actionable, relevant insights. The discussion focused on bridging this gap, showing how research can become a tool for strengthening civil society's effectiveness, resilience, and impact.

PhD Seminar

A PhD Seminar was held on July 1st and 2nd in advance of the conference. The Seminar hosted 14 doctoral students from seven countries. Adriana Reynaga from Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico chaired the seminar and brought together senior scholars Lenis Y. Araque (Colombia), Miguel Centeno (USA), Saúl Antonio Cuandón Vieyra (Mexico), Miguel Ángel Rivera Herrera (Mexico), and Maria Fernanda Martínez Valladares (Honduras) as PhD Seminar faculty who thoughtfully engaged with doctoral students, offering valuable feedback on their research and creating meaningful opportunities for networking and career development.

The Seminar started with the professional development session “Navigating the Doctoral Journey,” delivered by Dr. Karla Valverde, Professor at the Center for Political Studies at Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico. Dr. Valverde advised students to pick a research topic that is meaningful, feasible and relevant. She encouraged students to build a good relationship with their dissertation supervisor. Finally, she offered her thoughts on how to maintain a healthy balance between academic progress and well-being.

From there, students gathered in small groups with PhD Seminar faculty. Each student was allotted time to discuss their doctoral research with the group and obtain feedback from peers and faculty. As one student said, “These were hours of high-level academic and research exchange, where ideas were challenged, concerns were shared, and bridges were built across different research contexts.”

The Seminar finished on July 2nd with a second professional development session “How to Publish?,” which was delivered by Susan Appe, University at Albany, SUNY, who is a past VOLUNTAS Editor-in Chief. Students learned about what is expected during the submission process and how to avoid predatory journals.



Students from the Doctorate in CSR program at Anáhuac University together with PhD Seminar students

During the conference, the Seminar students and faculty met once again on July 3rd for the 3-Minute Thesis Competition where students presented a short and engaging version of their dissertation using a single slide. The winner of the 3-Minute Thesis Competition was Viridiana Ulloa Bobadilla from Mexico with her research titled “The ‘care society’ as a pillar of justice and gender equity in Latin American civil society.”

Two students received an honorable mention for the award: André Manoel from Brazil with his research titled “Findings and disagreements in the context of urban governance” and Denisse Alvarez de Linch from Ecuador with her research titled “Social organization of care, relational autonomy, and professionalization of care in the well-being of the elderly: A case study in Guayaquil, Ecuador.” The three winners shared their presentations with the entire conference during the closing session on July 4.



Viridiana Ulloa Bobadilla



André Manoel



Denisse Alvarez de Linch

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