

Editor's notes

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On January 1st, we formally assumed the editorship of VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations. We are grateful for this wonderful opportunity and thank the board members of ISTR, International Society for Third Sector Research, for their trust and good co-operation. Also we thank Bernard Enjolras for the work he has done for the journal in the past years, especially for having the journal taken up in the ISI rankings. Last but not least, we want to thank all those of you, who have done the highly valuable—and often unseen—work of reviewing. We all know that the scientific community relies on such voluntary efforts. Please forgive us when we again ask you to review: given the current level of submissions, we need to approach over a thousand reviewers each year.

As the official journal of the International Society for Third Sector Research, Voluntas reflects the research and developments of the ISTR community. Thus, it is an important platform for scientific research on voluntary and nonprofit organizations. The considerable growth of interest in the journal has led to a higher number of submissions and to the increase from four to six issues per year now. Whereas six years ago there would have been less than a hundred submissions per year, there are now around three hundred. Although the size and numbers of issues have expanded, the rejection rate has nonetheless gone up sharply. Both the impact factor and the significance as a forum for leading academic debates on third sector issues have been on the way up over the past five years.

The development of the journal is therefore a success story, both regarding content, quality, and academic reputation. We will maintain and further develop these qualities. The following aspects are important to increase Voluntas contribution:

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- *Maintaining the journal's status as a home for different disciplines and fields.* The community of third sector researchers is very heterogeneous including economists, lawyers, political scientists, psychologists, sociologists, and social and public policy analysts. This implies a clear commitment to a multidisciplinary orientation.
- *Strengthening the international orientation.* Voluntas is the most global research journal on the area between the state, market, and household sectors. In 2015, manuscripts were submitted from 45 countries. In 2014, almost 25 % were from North America, over 35 % from Europe, and more than 25 % from Asia Pacific, with large numbers in Australia and China. The number of readers in Latin America, Middle East, and Africa is growing. We will develop a strategy to encourage readership and successful submissions from regions that are still underrepresented.
- *Encouraging comparative research.* We encourage authors to hand in manuscripts that go beyond single countries and regions. All theme issues must now include at least one comparative analysis. This will enhance the significance of our output for a broader audience.
- *Being as close at current developments as possible.* Scientific research takes time and cannot react as timely to events as other forms of publications. Nevertheless, we will do our best to make Voluntas to take the lead regarding the scientific reflection of current topics. One example for this will be the upcoming call for papers on the role of the third sector in the migration and refugee crisis.
- *Encouraging open access publications.* There are at present far-reaching discussions on open access policies, which could radically affect academic publishing. We do not know how these will conclude and how this will affect the journal. In the meantime, we will encourage open access publication wherever possible. Already we have assured that one article in each issue will be temporarily available for free.

We look forward to working with you over the coming years.

Taco Brandsen & Ruth Simsa.