

# Van Evans

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## **Research Interests:**

- Volunteerism
- Latin America Philanthropy
- Religious Philanthropy

## **Research Methodologies:**

- Quantitative
- Qualitative

**Tentative Dissertation Title:** The Civil Society Sector of Columbia

**Primary Advisor:** Dwight Burlingame

## **Research Statement:**

The Republic of Colombia, with nearly 47 million inhabitants, is the fourth largest country by population in the Americas, after the U.S. (312 million), Brasil (206 million), and México (112 million) (DANE, 2012). It is the fifth largest country in Latin America geographically, after Brasil, México, Perú, and Argentina.

Colombia has had a rich history of philanthropy and solidarity since colonial times. Together, with the political strife of the past, these shed light on present day philanthropic practices and trends toward civil society formation in the country. In order to strategically address human challenges and strengthen civil society in Colombia, we first need to have a vision of what the philanthropic landscape actually looks like. Clark (2010) wrote of the need of "a robust system for the [cross-] national assessment of civil society, a vital exercise in the design of effective policies to tackle relative poverty and social exclusion in developing and transitional countries" (p.16). No such system exists in Colombia, and the extent and breadth of the sector is not known. The federal government has no single database that tracks the sector. How did Colombia come to have a thriving civil society sector yet lack a federal registry? What does the civil society sector look like? What policies today hinder or help the growth of the sector?

The goal of this case study is to offer a better understanding of the civil society sector in Colombia. The study will explain how the sector has evolved from colonial times to its present state, and will reveal the size, scope, and makeup of the different registered civil society entities within Colombia's borders. By gleaning and consolidating registration data and applying a taxonomy, this study will inform practitioners, politicians, and academics worldwide how to better engage Colombian philanthropy and civil society.

## **Personal Info:**

Van was a research associate at the School of Philanthropy at Indiana University and was part of the research team for *GivingUSA*, writing the chapter on religion for *GivingUSA 2012*. He is currently writing a chapter for *Generosidad en México (GivingMexico)* to be published in 2013. He has worked in Latin American philanthropy and development since 1998, and is founder of Generations Humanitarian, an NGO that builds orphanages and drop-in centers for street children in Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia.

He received a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Utah with an International certificate and a Master of Science degree in Nonprofit/NGO Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania. He was the 2012 summer associate for the Council on Foundations Global Philanthropy in Washington, D.C., and has participated in the Wharton Societal Wealth Program and the Harvard Business School's Social Enterprise Initiative. In addition to his native English, he speaks Spanish, Portuguese, and conversant Quechua.