

Transnational NGO Initiative

Annual report, 2011-12

The annual report for the TNGO Initiative is divided into three parts: mission of the TNGO Initiative (1), overview of 2011-12 activities (2), and plans for 2012-13 (3).

The Transnational NGO Initiative

Transnational non-governmental organizations (TNGOs) and their networks play an increasingly important role in defining and addressing major global challenges. The TNGO Initiative focuses on these actors and advances the understanding of TNGOs as core players in global affairs through research, education, and practitioner engagement. The TNGO Initiative grew out of a National Science Foundation Grant No. SES-0527679 (Transnational NGOs as Agents of Change: Toward Understanding Their Governance, Leadership, and Effectiveness), an interview study of 152 US-based TNGO leaders.

Led by Hans Peter Schmitz, the research component of the TNGO Initiative focuses on the governance, leadership and effectiveness of transnational NGOs. Building on the original TNGO study, our research has expanded to the study of rights-based approaches in development, organizational change, and the role of non-state actors in global health. Under the leadership of Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken, the practitioner engagement component encompasses the Moynihan Fellowship program and an annual Transnational NGO Leadership Institute. With regard to education, we offer a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Civil Society Organizations, host the TNGO (Graduate) Student Group, and facilitate internships as well as 'capstone' projects and related student research practicum opportunities.

Activities, 2011-12

Research.

The main accomplishments include the successful placement of graduate team members in tenure track positions (1), the publication of peer-reviewed articles (2), and the acquisition of research grants and other external funds (3).

Placement. Two former graduate students associated with the TNGO Initiative started in the fall 2011 in their first tenure track positions. George Mitchell joined the Department of Political Science at City College of New York. Haley Swedlund started teaching at the School of Management, Radboud University, Nijmegen/Netherlands.

Publications and conference presentations. Members of the TNGO Initiative have published research in refereed journals and practitioner-oriented outlets.

Published in 2011-12:

Refereed journal articles and book chapters

- 'The Construct of Organizational Effectiveness' (George E. Mitchell) *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, doi:10.1177/0899764011434589 (2012).
- 'Accountability of Transnational NGOs: Aspirations vs. Practice' (Hans Peter Schmitz, Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken and Paloma Raggo), *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, doi:10.1177/0899764011431165 (2012).
- 'Non-Governmental and Not-for-Profit Organizational Effectiveness: A Modern Synthesis' (with Jesse D. Leczy, Hans Peter Schmitz, and Haley Swedlund), *Voluntas. International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 23 (2), 434-457 (2012).
- 'Corporations and NGOs: When Accountability leads to Co-optation' (Dorothea Baur and Hans Peter Schmitz), *Journal of Business Ethics*, 106 (1), 9-21 (2012).
- 'A Gap between Ambition and Effectiveness' (with Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken), *Journal of Civil Society*, 7 (3), 287-92 (2011).
- Transnational NGOs and Human Rights in a post-9/11 World (Hans Peter Schmitz), in *Human Rights in the 21st Century. Continuity and Change since 9/11*, ed. by Michael Goodhart and Anja Mihr, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 203-221.

Reports and short pieces

- 'To Challenge or Respect Constraints? The effects of leadership style' (Christiane Pagé), in *Monday Developments* 30, 23-4 (2011).
- 'Causal Linkages between Rights Based Approaches and Improved Program Outcomes: a Review,' evaluation report commissioned by Plan International USA (Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken, Uwe Gneiting, and Hans Peter Schmitz), Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs. Maxwell School, Syracuse University, July 2011.
- 'Democratic Imperatives: Innovations in Rights, Participation, and Economic Citizenship (Michael Goodhart, Archon Fung, Varun Gauri, Siri Gloppen, Louise Haagh, Patrick Heller, Carole Pateman, Enrique Peruzzotti, Anja Rudiger, Hans Peter Schmitz, Guy Standing, Brian Wampler, and Susanna Wing), Washington, DC: American Political Science Association (<http://bit.ly/2011taskforce>).

Accepted for publication

- 'The Planned Close of an NGO: Evidence for a New Organizational Form?' (David Berlan and Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken), *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* (forthcoming).

- 'A Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) in Practice: Evaluating NGO Development Efforts (Hans Peter Schmitz),' *Polity* (forthcoming).
- 'Non-State Actors in Human Rights Promotion,' (Hans Peter Schmitz), in: *Handbook of Human Rights*, edited by Anja Mihr and Mark Gibney, London: Sage.
- Review of Sarah S. Stroup 'Borders among activists' (Hans Peter Schmitz) *H-Diplo*.
- Review of Sarah S. Stroup 'Borders among activists' (George E. Mitchell) *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*.

Under review

- 'Moving beyond the boundaries of network research in public administration. (Jesse Lecy, Ines Mergel, and Hans Peter Schmitz).
- 'The Strategic Pursuit of Impact: A Cross-Sectoral Analysis of Transnational NGOs' (George E. Mitchell and Hans Peter Schmitz).
- Collaborative Propensities Among Transnational NGOs Registered in the United States (George E. Mitchell).
- Strategic Response to Resource Dependence Among Transnational NGOs Registered in the United States (George E. Mitchell).
- The Roles of US Transnational NGOs in the World System: A Typological Analysis (George E. Mitchell).

In addition to the external publications, we have inaugurated the TNGO *Practitioner Brief Series*. The series summarizes academic research on transnational NGOs and highlights the main practical lessons and insights. The current list includes:

- Brief No. 3: *Accountability of Transnational NGOs*, authored by Hans Peter Schmitz, Paloma Raggo, Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken, and Chan Woong Shin.
- Brief No. 2: *Defining Organizational Effectiveness: Mobilizing Scholarship for Practice*, authored by Jesse D. Lecy, Hans Peter Schmitz, and Haley Swedlund.
- Brief No. 1: *Defining Organizational Effectiveness*, authored by George E. Mitchell and Cesar Sevilla.

Conferences. In 2011-12, research completed by members of the TNGO Initiative was presented at academic conferences, including the annual meetings of the Association for Research on Non-Profit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), the International Studies Association (ISA), the American Political Science Association (APSA), InterAction, and CIVICUS. At the most recent APSA meetings, results from TNGO research on rights-based approaches was published in the 2011 presidential task force report 'Democratic Imperatives: Innovations in Rights, Participation, and Economic Citizenship (members: Michael Goodhart, Archon Fung, Varun Gauri, Siri Gloppen, Louise Haagh, Patrick Heller, Carole Pateman, Enrique Peruzzotti, Anja Rudiger, Hans Peter Schmitz, Guy Standing, Brian Wampler, and Susanna Wing), Washington, DC: American Political Science Association (<http://bit.ly/2011taskforce>).

In April 2012, Hans Peter Schmitz gave a keynote address titled 'Human rights advocacy in the 21st century,' at the *Global Conference for Human Rights Defenders Networks*, organized by Freedom House, in Washington, DC. In May 2012, Tosca Bruno-van Vijeijken chaired a panel at the InterAction Annual Forum on Evaluation of Rights Based Approaches. Uwe Gneiting presented 'The politics of compliance: legitimacy conflicts and private governance in Guatemala' at the *Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*, Boston June 28-30, 2012.

Research grants and other external funding

The TNGO Initiative regularly raises funding for research and practitioner engagement and has also developed a significant stream of income based on consultancy work.

Consultancies: In 2011, we worked with Plan International USA and completed a review focused on the effectiveness of Plan's Child-Centered Community Development (CCCD) programs (contract: \$22,000).

INGO research group. The TNGO Initiative has been leading for a few years a loosely organized INGO Research Group, which brings together scholars from different disciplines sharing an interest in studying international NGOs. We regularly organize side-meetings at academic conferences. In the summer of 2011, we successfully applied for a \$23,000 grant from the International Studies Association (ISA) to bring together 25 scholars from the U.S., Canada, and Europe for a one-day workshop at the annual ISA meetings in San Diego in April 2012. The workshop led to a number of ongoing research collaborations focused on upcoming conferences and solidified the TNGO Initiative's role in sustaining an international INGO research group (grant received \$23,000).

Global health. The TNGO Initiative applied successfully for two internal grants from the Maxwell Dean's Office and the Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration (PARCC). Both grants are designed to produce external grant proposals for academic research (support received: \$4,100)

Ongoing fundraising efforts. In collaboration with Professor John Burdick, Anthropology, we are preparing grant proposals for various prospective funders which aim at leveraging our experience in Guatemala as well as our previous work on rights-based approaches. The proposal is built around a collaborative relationship between the Maxwell School, transnational NGOs (including Plan, Oxfam, Save the Children) operating in Guatemala, and Landivar University, a university based in Guatemala City. In June 2012, we also submitted a competitive proposal to Plan International for a consultancy titled 'Operational Standards for Plan International's Child-Centred Community Development (CCCD) Approach.'

Education

The TNGO Initiative provided an array of courses and other learning opportunities to students at the Maxwell School and Syracuse University.

Graduate level. Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken taught a graduate course titled *Global Governance and Civil Society* in the spring semester. One of the course requirements is a research practicum focusing on data needs of practitioner partners. In the past year, the seminar worked with Charity Navigator (CN) on beta testing its draft CN 3.0 methodology for rating nonprofit organizations on how they measure as well as publically report on results. While CN 3.0 is still some years away from being implemented, it will likely influence the practice of results measurement and reporting among NGOs in the US. This work complements Tosca's work on the Advisory Panel of Charity Navigator.

In addition, Tosca acted as faculty advisor for Public Administration workshops (in collaboration with *Save the Children* and *Partners for Change* as NGO clients). She also served as faculty advisor for independent study projects by individual students, and regularly offered internship and career advice to students interested in the TNGO sector.

Tosca, in collaboration with Steve Lux, Director of the Executive Education Program, wrote a teaching case on the significant recent organizational transformation of *Save the Children*.. This activity is part of an emerging new area of research as well as practitioner engagement work around how to lead and manage organizational change processes in TNGOs. Besides using this teaching case in graduate education, the documentation will also result in a public presentation which will be used by *Save the Children* colleagues for sharing with both internal staff as well as external peers.

The TNGO team again administered the *Certificate of Advanced Study on Civil Society Organizations* which draws 8-10 students annually.

We continued to host the TNGO Student Group, which offers student-run workshops and talks. This year, the Student Group hosted, among others, a workshop on how to establish and sustain a transnational NGO.

Volunteer students benefited from their assignment to perform research for visiting Moynihan NGO Fellow Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, General Secretary of the *Young Women's Christian's Association (YWCA)*. The topic of research was shared, intergenerational and transformative leadership.

This year, we also hosted several scholars: Marshall Ganz, the well-known social movement scholar at Harvard University and Patrice McMahon from the University of Nebraska (Lincoln), who is an expert in the role of NGOs in post conflict settings.

Finally, we have also added new material to our series of brief conversational web interviews with visiting scholars and practitioners to educate students and faculty about issues in the world of civil society research and practice. This has proven to be a useful teaching tool for many Maxwell courses. The interview series can be found at:

http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/tngo/interview_series/Interview_Series/

Undergraduate level. TNGO team members regularly offer undergraduate courses related to the TNGO Initiative's areas of activities.¹ During the spring 2012 semester, Christiane Pagé taught the 300-level course *Leadership & Civil Society Organizations* and Chan Woong Shin offered the course *The Politics of Global Humanitarianism*. Hans Peter Schmitz supervised the completion of an Honors thesis written by Catherine DiVita (International Relations) on rights-based approaches in Latin America. In May, the study was selected as the best thesis in the Social Sciences (award: \$500).

Practitioner engagement

In 2011, the TNGO Initiative launched a major new leadership preparation program targeted at NGO practitioners. The inaugural Transnational NGO Leadership Institute (LI) drew 16 participants from eleven nations and took place from September 15-19, 2011. It was targeted at the second tier NGO staff members who wish to prepare for top leadership positions. This one week executive leadership program was designed to respond to a need for greater attention to leadership transition and succession issues in the international nonprofit sector. Our regular interactions with practitioners have shown that leaders working at the second tier are much less networked than top leaders; they are surprisingly rarely considered for top positions, and are not well prepared to take the 'leadership leap' to the top level. The Institute addressed this gap under the guidance of a Steering Group of top NGO leaders. Participation of NGO practitioners from low-income nations was facilitated by securing a number of scholarships from foundations.

The second Institute was held May 20-25, 2012 and brought again 16 participants to the Maxwell School. Both were well reviewed by participants. In the future, the TNGO team hopes to add additional 'modules' for targeted audiences based on expressed demand. Examples currently explored are leading and managing significant organizational change in TNGOs, and how to lead effective coalitions, alliances and partnership among TNGOs (<https://www.maxwell.syr.edu/leadershipinstitute/>).

We held exploratory discussions with potential European partners to jointly launch a Europe-based TNGO Leadership Institute program geared towards European and African NGO leaders in the summer of 2013.

In 2011-12, we hosted two practitioners for talks:

- Stanley Arugumam, who leads ActionAid's Leadership Development visited the TNGO Initiative in October to explore potential collaboration around leadership development needs in ActionAid.
- David Harvey, CEO of ProLiteracy, the Syracuse based adult literacy NGO, visited in March to speak about leading organizational change. Tosca is a board member of ProLiteracy.

¹ In 2010, Hans Peter Schmitz taught the distinction course *Organizing Global Activism* and in the spring semester of 2011, George Mitchell taught *TNGOs in World Affairs*, a course that offered students opportunities to contribute to the Wikimedia Foundation's Public Policy Initiative.

This past March, we hosted another Moynihan NGO Fellow for a two-week period: Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, General Secretary of the *Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)*. Nyaradzayi offered several talks to faculty and students and her presence allowed us to learn more about faith based and gender focused organizations, as well as about the concept of intergenerational leadership.

Based on earlier exploratory research efforts with CARE US and Oxfam on processes of organizational change in large TNGOs, Tosca was invited to Cambridge, UK to facilitate some cross-organizational learning sessions among seven large TNGOs: Amnesty International, Save the Children, Oxfam, ActionAid, World Vision, CARE and Islamic Relief. This applied research and cross-organizational learning will continue in 2012-2013 with follow up learning sessions, and aims to result in documentation of how to lead, manage as well as evaluate large scale organizational change in TNGOs.

Plans for 2012-13

The main goals for 2012/13 are:

- To conceptualize and write a book on TNGOs;
- To conceptualize a new research project on Non-Communicable Diseases and the efficacy of non-state actors in agenda setting and influencing major global governance institutions;
- To raise funding for a small empirical, field-based research project on local level democratic practices in Guatemala and the influence of TNGOs with rights-based approaches;
- To develop the concept for one additional module of the Leadership Institute;
- To launch a joint Leadership Institute for European and African NGO audiences, co-created with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in the UK and Oxford Human Resources.

Fundraising: The TNGO Initiative will continue to pursue research- and consultancy-oriented funding opportunities. The main focus with regard to research is on rights-based approaches (in collaboration with John Burdick, Anthropology) as well as on non-communicable diseases (NCDs). With regard to RBA, we will be following up on an initially unsuccessful application to the National Science Foundation by targeting two to three foundation sin the next year with a revised proposal. With regard to NCDs, we are planning on producing a first grant proposal by the end of the summer 2012. Submissions of letters of interests for consultancies tend to be more short-term and we anticipate several opportunities in the upcoming year.

INGO research group: Following up on the successful ISA workshop in April 2012, the TNGO Initiative will continue to serve as a leader in coordinating and organizing researchers interested in INGOs as global players. Follow-up meetings for 2012-13 are planned at the ARNOVA and ISA conferences.

Book project: George Mitchell is taking the lead on developing a text book on NGOs, designed to follow-up on and update a 'classic' treatment on the internationalization of NGOs: Lindenber,

Marc, and Coralie Bryant. 2001. *Going Global. Transforming Relief and Development NGOs*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

Research on Rights-Based Approaches: Related to the fundraising entry above, we will continue to build our expertise in this area. We are developing an article on the organizational implications of adopting, implementing and evaluating rights based approaches in TNGOs, together with leaders in ActionAid which has been at the forefront of reflecting on these issues for the past ten years.

Thank you

We thank the team members of the TNGO Initiative for their contributions in 2011-12: Anastasia Brainich, Uwe Gneiting, Peg Hermann, Jesse D. Lecy, George E. Mitchell, Christiane Pagé, Paloma Raggio, Chan Woong Shin, Wendy Wicker, Matt Whitnall, and Oana Zabava. We thank the Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs for its financial support.

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Hans Peter Schmitz
Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken