

# Transnational NGO Initiative

Annual report, 2012-13

## I. The Transnational NGO Initiative

Transnational non-governmental organizations (TNGOs) are increasingly important actors in global affairs. The TNGO Initiative advances the understanding of these actors through research, education, and practitioner engagement. The program grew out of 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 conducted between 2005 and 2008.

Led by Hans Peter Schmitz, the research component of the TNGO Initiative focuses on the governance, leadership and effectiveness of transnational NGOs. Other research areas include the role of rights-based approaches in development 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 the Transnational NGO Leadership Institute. Our educational efforts include a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Civil Society Organizations, hosting the TNGO (Graduate) Student Group, and facilitating internships as well as 'capstone' projects and related student research practicum opportunities.

## II. Activities, 2012-13

**Research.** Activities include publications and leadership in a broader, international TNGO research community.

### *Publications and conference presentations*

Refereed journal articles and book chapters

- Berlan, David and Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken 2013. The Planned Close of an NGO: Evidence for a New Organizational Form? *Voluntas* 24 (1): 262-275.
- Schmitz, Hans Peter 2013. International Human Rights, *Handbook of International Relations* (2nd edition), edited by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, London: Sage, 827-51 (with Kathryn Sikkink).
- Bloodgood, Elizabeth A. and Hans Peter Schmitz 2013. The INGO Research Agenda. A Community Approach to Challenges in Method and Theory, *Routledge Handbook of International Organization*, edited by Bob Reinalda, Routledge, 67-79.
- Lecy, Jesse D., Ines Mergel, and Hans Peter Schmitz. 2013. Networks in Public Administration. Current Scholarship in Review, *Public Management Review*.
- Mitchell, George E. 2012. The Construct of Organizational Effectiveness: Perspectives from Leaders of International Nonprofits in the United States. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*.

- Mitchell, George E. 2012. "Strategic Responses to Resource Dependence among Transnational NGOs Registered in the United States." *Voluntas*.
- Schmitz, Hans Peter 2012. A Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) in Practice: Evaluating NGO Development Efforts, *Polity* 44 (4), 523-541.

#### Reports and short pieces

- Teaching case study on the Global Transformation of Save the Children International; this case study won the First Prize in an international, blind peer reviewed competition for teaching cases hosted by the Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration (PARCC)
- Review of Sarah S. Stroup 'Borders among activists,' Ithaca: Cornell UP, *H-Diplo*.
- Review of Jeremy Youde 'Global Health Governance,' Cambridge: Polity Press, *Global Public Health*.

#### Accepted for publication

- Mitchell, George E. and Hans Peter Schmitz. Principled Instrumentalism: A Theory of Transnational NGO Behavior, *Review of International Studies*.
- Schmitz, Hans Peter. 'Non-State Actors in Human Rights Promotion,' in: *Handbook of Human Rights*, edited by Anja Mihr and Mark Gibney, London: Sage.

#### *Selected conferences presentations*

In 2012-13, 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 Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA), and the InterAction Forum.

2012 ARNOVA, Indianapolis, IN, November 15-17; paper presented: "Advancing the Organizational Effectiveness Debate: The Domain-Measurement-Stakeholder Model" (with Jesse Lecy, Georgia State University)

2013 International Studies Association (ISA), San Francisco, April 3-6; paper presented: "Governing NCDs: the role of private actors in global health policies"

2013 Alcohol Policy AP 16, Washington, DC, April 4-5; paper presented: "The Global Health Community on Alcohol Control: successes and limits of evidence-based advocacy"

2013 Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA); paper presented: "The Role of Science and Advocacy Networks in Global Alcohol and Tobacco Control;" roundtable participant 'Internal Affairs: How the Structure of NGOs Transforms Human Rights,' by Wendy Wong, Cornell UP (2012)

### *TNGO research group*

The TNGO Initiative is leading a loosely organized international research group, which brings together scholars from different disciplines sharing an interest in studying international NGOs. A 2011 grant received from the International Studies Association (ISA) has led to the production of an edited volume on research methods. The book proposal was prepared during the spring 2013 and will be submitted to publishers in August.

In 2013, Hans Peter Schmitz joined a Multi-Disciplinary NGO Working Group, informally led by Ann Swidler (Berkeley), Jennifer Brass (Indiana), and himself. The goal of the working group is to organize a workshop to develop a funding proposal for NSF's "Rebuilding the Mosaic" multi-disciplinary research goal (see: [http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/sbe\\_2020/](http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/sbe_2020/)). The preliminary target may be the Science of Organizations (SoO) program.

### *Fundraising efforts*

In August 2012, a funding proposal developed jointly with John Burdick, Anthropology, was submitted to the political science program at the National Science Foundation. The proposal titled 'Comparative evaluation of human-rights-based approaches (HRBA) in Guatemala' received a number of positive reviews, but was ultimately not awarded support (decision: February 2013).

**Education.** The TNGO Initiative provided a broad 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 fall semester 2012.

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

Tosca acted as faculty advisor for Public Administration workshops (in collaboration with *Search for Common Ground*, the *Center on the Advancement of Non-Violent Strategies (CANVAS)* and *World Vision* 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.

In collaboration with Steve Lux, Director of Maxwell's Executive Education Program, Tosca completed a teaching case analyzing the 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 case study will be used by *Save the Children* colleagues for sharing with both internal staff and external peers.

We continued to host the TNGO Student Group, which offers student-run workshops and talks. This year, the Student Group hosted, among others, a talk titled 'Managing Stakeholder Relationships in Transnational Nonprofits.' In addition, we hosted high-profile speakers throughout 2012-13, including:

- Subarna Mathes, iScale (September 2012)
- Dr. Steven Livingston, Professor of Media and Public Affairs and International Affairs at George Washington University (October 2012)
- Srdja Popovic, Executive Director of the Center for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies (January 2013)
- Dean Hirsch, former president of World Vision International (February 2013)
- Uygur Özesmi, Global Leadership Team member of *Change.org* (Moynihan TNGO fellow)
- Dr. Nisha Agrawal, CEO of Oxfam India (April 2013)

Eight graduate and undergraduate students had the opportunity to complete research for the visiting Moynihan NGO Fellow. We hosted Dr. Uygur Özesmi, Regional Director of *Change.org*. Özesmi offered several talks to faculty and students focused on servant leadership.

We continue to expand 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/](http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/tngo/interview_series/Interview_Series/)

Hans Peter Schmitz was invited by the SU chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha to discuss the role of NGOs in addressing human trafficking (January 30, 2013, Watson Theatre).

**Practitioner engagement.** The TNGO Leadership Institute represents the flagship of our practitioner engagement efforts. The TNGO Initiative has also become involved in deliberations about organizational change among larger development and humanitarian organizations.

### *The TNGO Leadership Institute*

In 2011, the TNGO Initiative launched a major new annual leadership preparation program for practitioners. It is targeted at second tier NGO staff members who wish to prepare for top leadership positions. This one-week executive leadership program is 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 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 is regularly facilitated by a number of scholarships offered by foundations.

The third iteration of the program was held May 19-24, 2013 and brought 18 participants to the Maxwell School. Details about participants and programming can be found here:

<https://www.maxwell.syr.edu/leadershipinstitute/>.

#### Expansion of the Leadership Institute

The success of the TNGO Leadership Institute has led to demand for similar customized, in-house training programs. Tosca has been asked to design and offer such as leadership development program for ActionAid International, a major TNGO with whom we have had a long standing relationship. Population Council, another TNGO, is exploring a similar opportunity with us. This contributes in important ways to the financial sustainability of the Initiative.

#### External funding for the Leadership Institute

The TNGO Leadership Institute was awarded a West Family Foundation grant for 2013-2016. This grant will cover core development and administration costs and allow us to invest in new programming.

#### *INGO Learning Group on Organizational Change*

The TNGO Initiative continues to co-facilitate an informal INGO Learning Group on Organizational Change among seven to ten major organizations. During the past year, we co-facilitated several teleconferences on specific dimensions of leading change, and Tosca will co-facilitate a one day face to face Learning Day in London in early July 2013. The aim is to document the learning in formats useful to practitioners as well as scholars. Additional information can be found here:

[http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/tngo/INGO\\_Learning\\_Group\\_on\\_Organizational\\_Change/](http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/tngo/INGO_Learning_Group_on_Organizational_Change/).

### **III. Plans for 2013-14**

- Research: Writing of book on TNGOs that focuses on future challenges facing the TNGO sector. The book will be based on three main sources: the NSF funded interview study (1), additional in-depth interviews with TNGO thought leaders on future challenges (2), and a Bridgespan Group/InterAction survey on CEO perspectives on changes in the funding and operational landscapes for US TNGOs (3). A book prospectus was completed in June 2013; the tentative title is 'Are transnational NGOs still relevant? Leadership perspectives in global context.' The book is co-written by George E. Mitchell, Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken, and Hans Peter Schmitz.
- Research: Acquisition of external funding for research, either based on existing 2012 NSF proposal on rights-based approaches or on ongoing research focused on Non-

Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and the efficacy of non-state actors in agenda setting and influencing major global governance institutions.

- Research: Completion and publication of edited volume titled 'Researching INGOs: Innovations in Data, Method and Analysis' by Elizabeth Bloodgood and Hans Peter Schmitz.
- Practitioner engagement: Development of one additional module of the Leadership Institute. In the coming year, the TNGO team hopes to pilot an additional 'module' for targeted audiences based on expressed demand, focused on how to lead effective coalitions, alliances and partnership among TNGOs.
- Practitioner engagement: Expansion of demand for customized, in-house leadership development programming in TNGOs.
- Fundraising: The TNGO Initiative will approach American Express in 2013-14 with a menu of options that may be of interest to them in the area of leadership development in the international nonprofit sector.

### **Thank you**

We thank the team members of the TNGO Initiative for their contributions in 2012-13: Uwe Gneiting, Peg Hermann, Kalila Jackson-Spieker, Jesse D. Lecy, Megan Lucas, Kirsten Masi, George E. Mitchell, Andrijana Vojnovic, Elizabeth Webster, and Wendy Wicker. We thank the Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs for its financial support and its staff for their administrative support throughout the year.

July 6, 2013  
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