

Transnational NGO Initiative

Annual report, 2013-14

The Transnational NGO Initiative

Transnational non-governmental organizations (TNGOs) profoundly shape 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 Vijeijken, 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.

Activities, 2013-14

The activities of the TNGO Initiative are organized along the three main areas, research, education, and practitioner engagement.

Research.

The TNGO Initiative has produced significant research output in well-respected journals, maintains a regular presence at major academic and practitioner conferences, and has initiated new research efforts on virtual NGO platforms as well as leadership training.

Publications and conference presentations

Refereed journal articles and book chapters

- Mitchell, George E. and Hans Peter Schmitz. 2014. Principled Instrumentalism: A Theory of Transnational NGO Behavior, *Review of International Studies*.
- Lecy, Jesse D., Ines Mergel, and Hans Peter Schmitz. 2014. Networks in Public Administration. *Current Scholarship in Review, Public Management Review* 16 (5), 643-665.
- Schmitz, Hans Peter. 2014. 'Non-State Actors in Human Rights Promotion,' *Handbook of Human Rights*, edited by Anja Mihr and Mark Gibney, London: Sage.

- Schmitz, Hans Peter and Kathryn Sikkink. 2013. International Human Rights, *Handbook of International Relations* (2nd edition), edited by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, London: Sage, 827-51.
- Schmitz, Hans Peter. 2013. Rebels without a cause? Transnational Diffusion and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), 1986-2011, *Transnational Dynamics of Civil War*, edited by Jeffrey T. Checkel, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 120-48.
- Mwangi, Wagaki, Lothar Rieth, and Hans Peter Schmitz. 2013. Encouraging Greater Compliance: Local Networks and the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), *The Persistent Power of Human Rights. From Commitment to Compliance*, edited by Thomas Risse, Stephen Ropp and Kathryn Sikkink, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 203-21.

Reports and short pieces

- Schmitz, Hans Peter. 2014. Addressing non-communicable diseases (NCDs): the role of the United States government, philanthropies, and civil society, *Dialogue Magazine* (King's College London, [link](#)).
- Schmitz, Hans Peter. 2013. Rights-based approaches to development: from rights 'talk' to joint action, *openGlobalRights*, November 27, openDemocracy ([link](#)).
- Schmitz, Hans Peter. 2013. Review of *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd edition, by Jack Donnelly, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, H-Diplo, H-Net Reviews. November ([link](#)).
- Bruno-van Vijfeijken, Tosca and Steve Lux. 2013. From Alliance to International. The Global Transformation of Save the Children. 2013 ([link](#)). *Snow Foundation Award for Best Case or Simulation in Collaborative Nonprofit Management, 2013*.

Accepted for publication

- Schmitz, Hans Peter et al. 'Transnational and multi-national/international associations,' *Palgrave Research Handbook on Volunteering and Nonprofit Associations*, edited by Robert A. Stebbins, Jürgen Grötz, and David Horton Smith, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan (with Thomas Davies, et al.).
- Schmitz, Hans Peter. Review of 'Socializing States. Promoting Human Rights through International Law,' by Ryan Goodman and Derek Jinks. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, *Perspectives on Politics*.
- Schmitz, Hans Peter. Review of 'Importing Democracy. The Role of NGOs in South Africa, Tajikistan, and Argentina,' by Julie Fisher, Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation Press, 2013, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*.

Selected conferences presentations

In 2013-14, 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), and the InterAction Forum.

2013 ARNOVA, Hartford, CT; 'Organizational Change in Big INGOs: Are they still catching up with the present or anticipating the future?' (Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken)

2014 International Studies Association (ISA), Toronto, 'Representational Models in Transnational Advocacy: Should We Care About 'Downward Accountability'?', (Hans Peter Schmitz)

2014 International Studies Association (ISA), Toronto, 'Rights-Based Approaches to Development: Implications for Public Administration?', (George E. Mitchell/Hans Peter Schmitz)

2014 InterAction Forum, 'Virtual NGOs: a phenomenon that is here to stay' (moderator: Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken)

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.

New Research and fundraising efforts

The TNGO Initiative won a Faculty Challenge grant from the Moynihan Institute to undertake a small, exploratory study on the strategies, tactics, organizational attributes and leadership of digitally enabled NGOs. This small, exploratory study will examine virtual, internet-based organizing platforms and organizations such as Change.org, Avaaz, ONE, Ushahidi, Kiva, Watsi and others. Questions include: How do virtual platforms compare and contrast with traditional, 'brick and mortar' NGOs? Do they provide lessons for these traditional NGOs? How should collaboration between these two types of civil society organizations be undertaken?

We also started a new applied research project with the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), a global provider of senior leadership development training, research and senior leadership assessment tools in the private and public sectors. After having collaborated with CCL for the first time during the design phase of the customized in-house senior leadership development training program for ActionAid, CCL and Maxwell started an investigation of 'next and best leadership development practices' in the TNGO sector. What have major TNGOs found to be the most

promising leadership development practices, and what can they learn from each other in that regard?

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 2013. The TNGO team administered the *Certificate of Advanced Study on Civil Society Organizations* which draws 8-10 students annually.

Hans Peter Schmitz served as a chair at the 2013 Public Diplomacy Symposium organized by the Association of Public Diplomacy Scholars at Syracuse University (November 1).

Tosca acted as faculty advisor for Public Administration workshops (in collaboration with *Save the Children and Childfund* as NGO clients). She also 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 started writing a teaching case analyzing the ongoing organizational transformation of *CARE International*. This activity is part of a 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 (which is expected to be finalized by late 2015) in graduate education, the case study will be used by *CARE* 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 panel titled 'Collaboration and Management: Expatriates and Local Staff in Transnational NGOs'. The panel explored the potential as well as tensions incorporated in relations between expatriate and local staff of TNGOs.

In addition, we hosted high-profile speakers throughout 2013-14, including:

- James Crowley, Accenture/Independent Consultant on Governance and Management in TNGOs (March 2014)
- Alison Tate, Director of External Relations, International Trade Union Federation (Moynihan TNGO Fellow, March 2014)
- Werner Schleiffer, retired WFP and NGO executive (February 2014)
- Shayna Plaut, Human rights scholar, University of British Columbia (November 2013)
- Kris Torgeson, former Secretary General, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

Five graduate and undergraduate students had the opportunity to complete research for the visiting Moynihan NGO Fellow. We hosted Alison Tate, Director of External Relations, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Tate offered several talks to faculty and students focused on the role of global trade unions in civil society and the place of labor rights in human rights.

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/

Practitioner engagement.

The TNGO Leadership Institute represents the flagship of our practitioner engagement efforts. This has spun off an interest among a few major TNGOs to have us design and offer in-house, customized senior leadership development programs in their organizations. The TNGO Initiative has also become involved in efforts to capture learning about organizational change among larger development and humanitarian organizations. We continue to facilitate an informal learning group among TNGO change leaders and change managers. This has led to requests by CARE to document their organizational transformation process (see above).

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 fourth iteration of the program was held May 18-23, 2014 and brought 14 participants to the Maxwell School.

Expansion of the Leadership Institute

The success of the TNGO Leadership Institute has led to demand for similar customized, in-house training programs. Tosca and Catherine Gerard will offer in August 2014 a leadership development program for ActionAid International. Some colleagues from Greenpeace and Amnesty International will also attend this program as part of an interest on their side to explore the possibility of coming to a shared multi-year future senior leadership program which would offer exciting opportunities for the TNGO Initiative. Population Council, another TNGO, has recently contracted with us to start a similar in-house program. These developments contribute 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. 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/

Plans for 2014-15

- Research: We continue to write a 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). The tentative title is 'Are transnational NGOs still relevant? Leadership perspectives in global context.' The book will be co-written by George E. Mitchell, Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken, and Hans Peter Schmitz.
- Research: Acquisition of external funding for research, based 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 or on our new exploratory research on virtual NGOs.
- 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: Finalization of the 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 networks among TNGOs.
- Practitioner engagement: Expansion of demand for customized, in-house leadership development programming in TNGOs.

Thank you

We thank the team members of the TNGO Initiative for their contributions in 2013-14: Carlo Abuyuan, Karla Dominguez, Catherine Gerard, Uwe Gneiting, Peg Hermann, Steve Lux, Marc Mason, George E. Mitchell, Dee Moskoff, Annie Msosa, Christiane Pagé, Shaundel Sanchez, and Julia Schulteis. We thank the Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs for its financial support and its staff for their administrative support throughout the year.

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Hans Peter Schmitz
Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken