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Profile Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken | Principal Consultant



Summary

An experienced INGO consultant, leadership development trainer and coach, change management expert, author, evaluator and analyst with strong knowledge of international development, civil society organizations, leadership development, organizational development/organizational change, social development and gender and leadership. Excellent strategic, organizational, team management, communication and mentoring skills. Strong analytical, research and evaluation skills. Co-author of *'Between Power and Irrelevance: the Future of Transnational NGOs'*, with Hans Peter Schmitz and George Mitchell, and published by Oxford University Press (July 2020). Co-author of several academic articles in peer reviewed journals; author of many practitioner-oriented reports, blog posts and essays. Podcast host of 'NGO Soul+Strategy'. Tosca is a Dutch national who has worked in multiple regions around the globe and who currently is living in the United States.

Experience

Tosca's experience spans think tanks, NGOs, the World Bank, UN and academia. She has worked on civil society issues and social development since 1988. Prior to being the Principal Consultant at Five Oaks Consulting, Tosca worked in a European think tank focused on governance in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean; various UN agencies and an American NGO in Cambodia; as Social Development Specialist in the World Bank; and as 'pracademic' at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Management at Syracuse University, USA, where she directed the Transnational NGO (TNGO) Initiative. The TNGO Initiative focuses on the governance, leadership development and effectiveness of transnationally operating NGOs.

Tosca has worked at the grassroots level in Cambodia as well as with top leaders of global, complex NGOs. She has produced published research, analytical reports, evaluations, essays and other 'thought leadership' outputs. She is a co-author of the book *'Between Power and Irrelevance: the Future of Transnational NGOs'*, which has already drawn a lot of interest.

Tosca has directed, managed and administered programs and had led multiple teams. She has engaged in senior leadership training design and delivery with over 250 NGO leaders, coached executive NGO leaders and facilitated strategic planning meetings as well as workshops. Tosca taught graduate level students including many mid-career students and has mentored many young professionals in international development and in nonprofit leadership.

She works on governance issues from a place of experience, having volunteered on several boards (InterAction, the US national platform for INGOs; Public Interest Registry, the whole sale operator of the Internet domain name .ORG which 10.5 million NGOs and nonprofits use across the globe; ProLiteracy, a premier adult literacy nonprofit in the US; and Cadasta, the start-up organization which supplies communities on their way to empowerment tech tools for accessible, affordable documentation of land rights. Tosca can provide a sector level overview of the changes nonprofits and NGOs should expect and has analyzed the effectiveness of change management approaches used by NGOs - she occasionally interacts with NGO boards on these topics. Organizational culture work is one of Tosca's particular interests.

Clients

From 2005-2018, while at Syracuse University, Tosca led about 20 senior leadership development training programs for nonprofit and INGO client organizations. Sometimes these were open enrollment programs; sometimes they were customized programs for major global NGOs such as ActionAid, Greenpeace, Amnesty, Oxfam, CIVICUS and Population Council. Tosca also led a two-year program with Population Council to institutionalize their in-house leadership development capacity. She also led several consulting teams on change management, on the request of Save the Children, CARE, Oxfam and Amnesty International.

Tosca launched her independent consulting practice in January 2019. Thus far, she has worked with Oxfam America on thought leadership as to the future of 'influencing NGOs'; with Transparency International on a review of its National Chapter accreditation process; and with Population Council and ProLiteracy on leadership development and executive coaching. She consults with ActionAid International on its Governance Review and with Heifer International's board and senior leadership team on strategy formation. Tosca has provided evaluation services to the Jewish Distribution Committee (JDC) and to the Transparency and Accountability Initiative. She has spoken at gatherings of leaders of Oxfam and the International Civil Society Centre about leadership during crisis, organizational resilience and innovation. She has also presented to leaders at World Vision, Church World Service and MEDA, and in academia about her co-authored book. Tosca has coached young leaders hosted through American Councils on virtual team leadership and general leadership skills. She has designed online courses on virtual team leadership skills for social sector leaders and facilitates an e-course on Leadership Behaviors for Humentum clients. Tosca has consulted with Trickle Up and Keystone Human Services International on Theory of Change formation and broader strategic planning. She also consults with client organizations on organizational anti-racism and diversity, equity and

inclusion strategies, and is a public speaker on the merits and limitations of diversity training. Tosca continues to teach as occasional Adjunct Instructor at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University (USA). She is an Ambassador in the Leap of Reason Ambassador network, an invitation-only group of high-profile nonprofit leaders, analysts, funders and consultants whose mission is to encourage a high performance-orientation among NGOs and nonprofits. Tosca is also a member of Charity Navigator's Consultative Council of Nonprofit Leaders. She also acts as InterAction Fellow in an honorary, voluntary role. InterAction is the largest coalition of INGOs in the United States. Tosca supports InterAction members in thinking through what 'next generation' norms INGOs should consider adopting in the near to mid-term future, to remain relevant, legitimate and effective.

Areas of support and focus

- skillful change management
- understanding of NGO sector level changes
- cutting edge leadership development and evaluation of such interventions
- virtual team leadership
- organizational culture work
- review of governance arrangements
- design and facilitation of planning meetings, strategy retreats and training
- organizational learning and evaluations
- organizational diversity, equity and inclusion strategies
- gender and leadership work
- feminist leadership work

Consulting philosophy

Tosca believes in accompaniment, not 'sage on the stage' or 'fly in, fly out' styles of consulting. She prefers to work with a defined set of organizations in which mutual trust, honesty and truly deep understanding of the organizational identity, mindset and DNA (culture) of client organizations is growing ever stronger. Tosca typically specializes in mid to large size, globally operating INGOs that have ambitious global agendas and frequently have complex organizational forms, although she also enjoys working with start-up, 'rebel' type of actors in civil society who challenge ways of working. And she enjoys exposing the two types to each other, to spur innovation.

Work history

2019 - Principal Consultant, *Five Oaks Consulting*, USA

InterAction Fellow (honorary), *InterAction* (the largest coalition of INGOs in the US)
Member (honorary), National Nonprofit Consultative Council, *Charity Navigator*

Moynihan Research Fellow (honorary), *Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, USA*

Ambassador, *Leap of Reason community* (honorary – an invitation-only community of professionals promoting an outcome orientation among NGOs)

2003-2019.1 Director, Transnational NGO Initiative, *Maxwell School*

1997-2001 Social Development Specialist, *World Bank* (headquarters as well as Vietnam)

1993-1994 Independent consultant, working with *UNDP* and *PACT* (an American NGO), Cambodia

1992-1993 District Electoral Supervisor, *United Nations Transitional Authority for Cambodia (UNTAC)*

1986-1992 Program and Research Officer, *European Center for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)*, Netherlands

Full CV and list of publications available upon request

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