

Lorna Tychostup

(US) +1 845.489.8038 (E) tycho56@aol.com Work Profile:
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/lornatychostup>

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Over 20 years experience working regionally and internationally as a communications and outreach, media, and public relations consultant, educator and professional photographer, video director/producer, writer and editor for NGOs, USAID, and private sector entities. Excellent verbal, written, editorial, social media, research and analytical skills; expert ability to edit complex technical content into content accessible to broad audiences; and detail oriented with a keen ability to develop and implement overall strategy, mission, brand and key messages while maintaining a sense of humor. Using exceptional diplomatic instincts and skills, comfortable working in diverse, highly pressurized and culturally sensitive environments. Proficient at developing positive, influential and collaborative relationships, I thrive in dynamic, flexible, large or small team environments while effectively coordinating multiple projects and meeting all deadlines.

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- **2015 – 2017: Communications Director** – My most recent position with the USAID-Iraq *Governance Strengthening Project/Taqadum* was the most challenging and delightful of my career. Managing and building the capacity of a 10+ member communications team, together we produced 125-200p Quarterly Reports and 25-50p magazine-style Weekly Reports (complete with special features, success stories, profiles, op-eds, sidebars, etc.) capturing the activities of 140+ staff located in 15 provinces. As the *project's* only native English speaker, I was responsible for art direction, design, and editing of all English- and Arabic-language Communications deliverables. I developed a magazine-style Weekly Report format that garnered the attention of Congressional, State Department, Pentagon, and other Washington, D.C. entities, and was shared with USAID Missions worldwide as a model to follow.
- **2017:** A special highlight of my work with *GSP/Taqadum* was to direct and produce nine YouTube-accessible USAID-branded video shorts (5 to 12 minutes in length) highlighting the *project's* trajectory and successes. Also accessible via *GSP/Taqadum's website*, these videos serve as guides for governments and organizations interested in implementing successful decentralization processes.
- **1999-2010: Publishing** – Approached publishers of the popular mid-Hudson Valley-based monthly publication *Chronogram Magazine* (60,000 distribution), and successfully pitched the addition of a news and politics section devoted to in-depth reportage. Specifically designed to provide readers with a progressive, local-to-global/global-to-local perspective, under my direct guidance and outreach as **Senior Editor**, readership and ad sales increased exponentially both regionally and nationally, and initiated an international reach.
- **2010 – 2011: Communications and Outreach** – Developed and implemented strategic communications plan for the **USAID Iraq National Capacity Development *Tatweer*** (\$340 million over 4.5 years), a public sector reform program that administered training/technical assistance to over 100,000 Iraqi civil servants in 15 government offices. Responsible for production of all communication materials, including success stories (deliverables, photography, one-pagers, briefs and press releases; was Field Producer/Director for official USAID/*Tatweer* documentary film: [Iraq – A Partnership for the Future](#).
- **2003 to present: Iraq Consultant/Reporting/Capacity Building** – Working in Iraq since February 2003 – first as an independent journalist/photographer, and then adding media/public awareness training to the mix – have successfully transmitted highly complex developments and untold stories of individuals, government, and non-government organizations to national and international audiences. Living in unprotected hotels and apartments, as well as security

compounds, consistently working closely with Iraqi non-profit organizations and key social/political figures in both outreach and consultant capacities, my experience has been unique – earning me unprecedented access and perspective.

- **2007 – 2009: Capacity Building/Mentoring, Public Relations, Grant Writing and Marketing** – As communications consultant to *Nature Iraq* – Iraq’s first and only environmental conservation NGO – successfully increased public awareness efforts, while training staff to do the same. Oversaw development of official website, brochures, and posters; acted as lead writer/editor of USD\$2M USAID socio-economic development grant; prepared a team of native Arabic/Kurdish-speaking *Nature Iraq* scientists to deliver individual, back-to-back English language PowerPoint presentations to an international audience (500+) at the first Middle Eastern Biodiversity Congress. The highly successful outcome saw presenters invited back for a repeat performance. Created a conference-site photo gallery exhibit consisting of nature and wildlife photographs, posters, brochures, books, and other public outreach items, which attracted hundreds of conference-goers and resulted in record sales of books, and increased regional and international awareness of *Nature Iraq*’s mission.

WORK EXPERIENCE

International Consultant

1996 – Present

Consultation services assisting national and international organizations, businesses, and professionals in the design and implementation of communication strategies, brand development, event planning, and writing, editing, researching, and steering art direction in the production of campaigns, articles, proposals, websites, technical reports, PPT presentations, and other communication tools. Work completed in the field (long- and short-term) and remotely on a per-project basis with a focus on quick turn-around of an elegant, culturally appropriate, language-sensitive, and confidential product.

Chemonics, USAID-Iraq GSP/Taqadum, Baghdad/Erbil, Iraq

June 2015 – Present

Communications Director

- Reporting directly to the Chief of Party, responsible for all Communication reporting materials related to the *project’s* four components: Finance, Legal, Organizational Development, and Service Delivery in 15 Iraq provinces.
- Responsible for the development, design, editing, and production of Weekly and Quarterly Reports, success stories, briefs, spotlights, fact sheets, talking points, banners, annual bi-lingual photo calendars, website content; and all communications, outreach, photographic, video, and conference support and materials, including Legacy (closeout) products.
- Directed and produced nine USAID-Iraq GSP/Taqadum Legacy videos (5 to 12 minutes in length) documenting the *project’s* work in all four component areas. All are YouTube accessible via [the project’s official website](#).
- Responsible for supervising and building the capacity of a 10+ Communications Department team; developing an organizational structure, complete with guidelines, tools, clarification of job descriptions and responsibilities, media relations, stakeholder engagement, and reputational risk.
- Successfully redesigned the *project’s* Weekly Report concept and focus, and implemented an efficient production schedule to match an intense weekly deadline addressing 80+ weekly activity reports to produce a 26-50 page feature magazine-style product.
- Oversaw development and implementation of an online e-ARS program (Activity Report System) that allowed field staff to easily upload activity reports, which were then vetted by a hierarchy of supervisors and filtered to either the M&E or Communications Depts. The system tracked and documented each report, supporting documents, and photos from originator through all supervisors, and included timelines for each.
- Developed, implemented, and supervised the Google Drive-based Communications Knowledge Management System that housed all Comms content, including photos, training

and other materials, tools, completed translations (Arabic to English, English to Arabic), USAID deliverables, terminology/grammar guides, spellings/titles list, and templates.

State University of New York at New Paltz – Communication, Digital Media, and Journalism Dept.

Adjunct Professor

Jan 2014 – May 2015

Classes: Journalism 1 (4cr), Photojournalism 1 (3cr), Intro to Public Relations (3cr), and Media Research Methods (4cr).

ACDI/VOCA, USAID-Iraq Broadening Participation Through Civil Society Program (BPCSP) Reporting Officer (remote)

Oct 2013 – Dec 2014

- Responsible for researching and writing program Success Stories; and liaised with Country Director, Program Manager Assistant Program Manager, Community Development Specialist, and other national staff to provide technical assistance on production of program reports, program design and development, and other communications responsibilities.

AECOM-Iraq, USAID/Iraq Financial Development Project, Baghdad, Iraq

April – July 2011

Communications and Media Consultant and Trainer

- Developed, advised, and implemented a comprehensive English/Arabic culturally sensitive Financial Development media campaign inclusive of building a nascent project brand and marketing plan aimed at engaging stakeholders, media, and target audiences.
- Coordinated with USAID, US Embassy, US Ambassador, Iraqi banking officials and project training coordinator to plan and execute several major, high profile and culturally sensitive events.
- Trained/built capacity of staff regarding public speaking, marketing materials, and logistics.
- Drafted, designed and oversaw creation of high quality, culturally sensitive USAID branding- and marketing guideline-compliant communication tools, including speeches, briefs, talking points, event-related press releases and invitations, and all documents used in media outreach.
- Liaised with USAID press office and with media officials to ensure USAID-compliant coverage of events
- Provided photography services for all major, high profile events.

***Chronogram Magazine*, Kingston, NY**

1995 – Dec 2012

Senior Editor/News & Politics Editor/Reporter/Photographer

- Conceived, developed, wrote and provided photos for 3-7000-word feature articles on complex national and international political, environmental and human rights issues with a focus on the Middle East, AfPak, Northern Africa and South Asia aimed at connecting readers to a progressive, local-to-global/global-to-local perspective.
- Worked closely with and trained writers in the commissioning, development, and editing of above-mentioned articles.
- Oversaw editorial quality, style, budget, photo acquisition and final layout.
- Interviewed notables such as: **Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Robert Baer, Jarret Brachman, Fawaz Gerges, Chris Hedges, Rana Husseini, George Lakoff, James Longley, Frank McCourt, Scott Ritter, PW Singer, Alexander Wendt, and Ambassador Joseph Wilson.**
- Foreign assignments included **Iraq/Middle East** (Feb 2003 to 2011), **Syria** (2010), **Morocco** (2004) and **Chiapas, Mexico** (1995-97).

Management Systems International, USAID-Iraq *Tatweer* Program, Baghdad Feb 2010 – Feb 2011

Senior Communications and Outreach Specialist

- Developed and implemented a coherent English/Arabic/Kurdish culturally sensitive communications/public awareness and closeout strategy for the flagship USAID-Iraq *Tatweer* National Capacity Development Program.

- Researched, wrote, edited, and designed (via field visits, strategic assessments, and interviews) highly effective USAID-compliant communication tools including success stories, fact sheets, press releases, brochures and posters, as well as official (deliverable) success stories.
- Liaised and fostered collaborative working/instructional relationships with project senior advisors, staff, USAID and external partners: Iraqi government officials, NGOs, private sector groups and stakeholders.
- Edited/assisted the production of annual, quarterly, monthly and other USAID-compliant reports ensuring compliance with all USAID branding and communications guidelines.
- Field producer/director for official USAID-Iraq *Tatweer* documentary film: [Iraq – A Partnership for the Future](#)
- Assisted maintenance and development of official website: www.Tatweer-Iraq.com.
- Developed strategic relationships with local and international media.
- Trained/built capacity of project team staff in the writing, polishing and formatting of USAID-compliant reports and success stories; and managed field report writing process, including collecting and compiling information from country team members.
- Provided photography services for trainings, meetings and major high profile events.

Nature Iraq (NGO), Sulaimani, Kurdistan-Iraq **2007 – 2009**
Communications and Outreach Consultant

- **Public Relations and Marketing** – Developed, provided content for and steered art direction of official website: www.natureiraq.org Responsible for writing, editing, art direction, and photographic/video documentation of projects and events for use in reports, brochures, posters and media distribution.
- **Communications and Outreach** – Developed/edited/reviewed reports, grant proposals, press releases, and official brochure.
- **Training/Capacity Building** – English language instruction, public speaking, report writing, photography, and PowerPoint presentation focused on improving and expanding public outreach abilities and strategies of native Iraqi and Kurdish Arabic speakers.
- **Photography Trainer** – Determined needs and implemented project goals, equipment needs and trainings. Conducted trainings with ten-plus staff photographers in both office and remote/rural field areas in all aspects of digital photography including basic camera use, shooting technique, lighting, lens/camera care, and editing and management of digital photo files.

SGI Sustainable Engineering, Sarameola di Rubano, Italy **2007 – 2008**
Editorial Consultant

- Responsible for editing reports regarding reconstruction and socio-economic development planning in Iraq, specifically Old City Mosul.

American Friends Service Committee, USA **2003 – 2008**
Consultant

- Supplied hundreds of Iraq-specific images used to brand and as part of **AFSC's** highly effective *Eyes Wide Open Exhibit on the Human Cost of War* (also known as *"Boots"* project) shown at 100+ sites nationwide.

Woodstock Film Festival, Woodstock, NY **2001 and 2002**
Director of Photography

- Acted as head photographer, managed photographic staff and edited/produced/cataloged all related festival images.

Scenic Hudson, Poughkeepsie, NY
2001

Public Relations Specialist for Great River Sweep

- Developed/implemented highly effective PR campaign: media relations/media list revision, and wrote/distributed press releases.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Iraq Expert – Commentator

2003 – Present

- **Guest speaker:** **We Move Forward Women’s Conference 2012, 2018**
- **Lecturer/keynote speaker:** At 100+ US college/university and other venues (Adelphi, Hofstra, Kansas U Medical Center, Marymount, NYU, Pace, Penn State, St. Lawrence, Vassar, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State U; Universities of Central Florida, Cincinnati, Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, Penn State, Pittsburgh et al).
- **Radio & TV appearances:** FOX, NBC, ABC affiliates and NPR (national/international).
- **Guest speaker:** Representing *Bordering On Treason*, the award-winning documentary (2013) by filmmaker, Trish Dalton, which captures the first nine years (2003-2011) of my Iraq-related work.

WRITING and PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTIONS

1996 – Present

Commercial: *Foreign Policy, Wall Street Journal, Major League Baseball Magazine, The Women’s Times, Yes!, Z Magazine.*

Academic: *Iran Scenarios 2015 - NYU Center for Global Affairs; Perspectives on Global Issues; Humanus Journal on Human Rights; Methodologies in Peace Research, University of Tromso, Norway.*

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

1995 – Present

Self-proprietor: *Runaway Woman Productions*

Specializing in photojournalism, event, architectural, portrait, and landscape photography for use in reportage, website design, marketing and public relations. Long-term clients have included: the State Universities of New York at New Paltz and Dutchess County Community College; the *American Friends Service Committee*; and *Chronogram Magazine*.

EDUCATION

New York University, NY

MS Center for Global Affairs, Concentrations: International Relations, 2009, GPA 3.7

SUNY Empire State College at New Paltz, NY

BA Cultural Studies; Major: Creative Writing, 1999, GPA 4.0

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