
MELISSA A. STEVENS

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SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Highly accomplished and visionary senior philanthropic leader with local, national, and international NGOs. Focus on philanthropic relations, Indigenous rights, gender equity, education, LGBTQI+ rights, climate justice, immigrant justice, human rights, the environment, democracy and arts & culture. Extensive experience in resource mobilization, executive direction, nonprofit consulting, fundraising, organizational development, program direction, international NGOs, and social impact. Fluent in Spanish and beginning French. International experience living in Latin America and Europe. American citizen and French resident.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

PUENTE SOUTHWEST: BUILDING BRIDGES TO GLOBAL GOOD 2020-Present
Santa Fe, New Mexico and southern France

CEO and Co-founder of Social Impact Consultancy/Philanthropic Advisory

Founded and currently leads a consultancy specializing in social justice philanthropy, driving strategy, program development, and resource mobilization for organizations focused on issues such as climate justice, gender equity, Indigenous rights and LGBTQI+ rights. Expertise includes developing philanthropic partnerships, crafting fundraising strategies, identifying and cultivating major donors (HNWIs), and providing high-level coaching for professionals. Notable Clients: Political Research Associates, International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (US), and the Calala Fund for Women.

CULTURAL SURVIVAL— Santa Fe, New Mexico and Cambridge, MA 2016-2019
Director of Philanthropic Partnerships

Resource mobilization. Raised \$5,000,000 for FY18 and FY19. Developed and coordinated strategies to ensure leveraging and pursuit of grant and individual donor funds for international nonprofit. Directed and managed institutional donor portfolio and cultivated new individual donors focused on Indigenous Women and climate. Wrote and edited letters of inquiry, grant proposals, and donor stewardship reports. Increased awareness of CS's mission and work through partnerships, funding campaigns, communications, outreach, presentations, special events, and conference panels. Planned, executed, and organized successful fundraising events nationally. Created successful multi-year campaigns.

NONPROFIT CONSULTING & STRATEGY- USA 2015-2016

Led change management efforts with imagination and care, ensuring alignment of staff, leadership, and advisory bodies around evolving mission and goals. Secured funding aligned with mission-driven outcomes for Federally Qualified Health Centers: Marin City Health and Wellness, California and Williamson Health and Wellness Center, West Virginia. **Nonprofit Clients:** Women's Environmental Climate Action Network, Voices for Biodiversity.

MATCH NEW MEXICO— Santa Fe, New Mexico 2013-2015
Executive Director

Served as executive director for statewide mentoring program focusing on children's literacy based on international program. Directed program in innovative yearlong curriculum. Tripled number of mentoring "matches" and provided ongoing training and supervision. Served as liaison for schools, and universities. Planned successful gala to raise awareness and cultivate donors. Partnered with local climate initiative. Recruited and trained student mentors, mentor coordinators and volunteers. Designed and taught university seminar on mentoring at the University of New Mexico (UNM).

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SANTA FE GIRLS' SCHOOL— *Santa Fe, New Mexico*

2012-2013

Development and Marketing Director

Designed and executed fundraising strategy for environmental and feminist focused girls' school. Created database system to track new and existing donors. Ensured financial stability through enrollment and annual fundraising including gala auction, annual appeal, and donor-centered events. Activated successful marketing plan for environmental curriculum and program. Designed fundraising strategies grounded in solidarity, feminist principles, reciprocity and sustainability.

ACADEMY FOR THE LOVE OF LEARNING— *Santa Fe, New Mexico*

2007-2012

Community Development Manager and Program Manager

Directed and designed immigrant focused program *El Otro Lado: The Stories That Connect Us* integrating New Mexico residents in a community-wide public art project led by a local activist artist. Designed grassroots fundraising programs, created and implemented volunteer systems, coordinated client/donor events and tours, and developed and managed project budgets. Designed and stewarded adaptive staffing structures and internal systems, fostering resilient, equitable organizational cultures aligned with bold social and environmental missions. Raised funds for targeted initiatives, such as *Seton Archives*, *El Otro Lado* and *Teacher Renewal* program.

INSTITUTE FOR COLLABORATIVE CHANGE — *Santa Fe, New Mexico*

2006-2007

Strategist and Fundraiser for Nonprofit Organizations

Facilitated transformative board retreats, fundraising and strategic planning projects for diverse nonprofits including National Indian Youth Leadership Project, Sage Council for Indigenous Rights, The Arcus Foundation and The Santa Fe Rape Crisis Center (now Solace Crisis Treatment Center).

PERMACULTURA AMERICA LATINA — *Santa Fe, New Mexico*

2003-2006

Executive Director

Led international environmental nonprofit supporting sustainable systems design and environmental education for eight sites throughout Latin America with an operating budget of over \$1.5 million. Directed grassroots environmental projects in Guatemala, El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru, Haiti, and Brazil. 75% increase in donations over three years. Provided capacity building to international organizations. Managed fiscal sponsorship of other climate entities. Hired, trained, and supervised staff and interns. Initiated new funding streams with local foundations. Planned, funded, and managed international permaculture conference in San Lucas Tolimán, Guatemala. Developed comprehensive accounting, internship, and management systems for international projects. Built partnerships that centered frontline leadership in policy and global philanthropy conversations.

COMMUNITY TOOLBOX: CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH — *San Francisco, CA*

2003

Grants Manager

Provided funding and technical assistance to community-based organizations focusing on environmental justice issues in low-income communities of color throughout the United States. Organized grant administration managed financial records and client database, researched funding prospects, and wrote grants and reports to funders. Participated in the grant-making process to administer capacity building grants to parent-based organizations. Provided organizational development to build internal capacity.

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EDUCATION

LAKE FOREST COLLEGE – *Lake Forest, Illinois.*

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Comparative World Literature with Concentration in Spanish and Sociology, Coursework in Social Justice & Feminist Activism. Urban Studies with Associated Colleges of the Midwest.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF TRAINING – *Granada, Spain. Focused on culture, language and history of Spain.*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

OPPORTUNITY COLLABORATION-

Fellow in yearlong networking cohort focused on social/economic justice 2021

RACE FORWARD-

Building Racial Equity Foundations Workshop 2020

THE COUNCIL ON THE UNCERTAIN HUMAN FUTURE

2018-25

Clark University-Collective insight and creative possibilities for the climate realities ahead

FUNDRAISING FROM THE HEART WITH LYNNE TWIST – *Albuquerque & Santa Fe, New Mexico*

2016

Training focusing on fundraising practices to sustain long-term donor relationships

BOARD, FELLOWSHIPS AND ADVISORY MEMBERSHIPS

THE BREAK– *San Sebastian, Spain*

Fellow in 3-month professional program for European Union Women Entrepreneurs 2022

SOFIA CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – *Albuquerque, NM (Advisory Board)*

2012-19

The Sofia Center nurtures and restores educators' sense of calling and purpose and empowers educators to be creators of innovative change in their schools and communities.

EARTH CARE – *Santa Fe, NM (Advisory Board Member)*

2012-13

Earth Care educates and empowers young people to create healthy, just, and sustainable communities focusing on environmental justice and communities of color.

ACTIVIST AND NETWORKING GROUPS 2017-2025

EDGE FUNDERS ALLIANCE Climate Justice Working Group, ongoing since 2021

WASAN NETWORK "Leveraging Learning in Relational Approaches" COP 2024-2025

NEXUS GLOBAL DELEGATE (NEW YORK AND MIAMI) 2017-2024

SKILLS

LANGUAGES: Spanish (Fluent), French (Beginning)

TECHNICAL SKILLS: CRM software, project management tools, financial reporting, grant writing & prospecting, grant reporting, and individual donor cultivation.

SOFT SKILLS: Strategic planning, fundraising, marketing, leadership, communication (written & verbal), negotiation, relationship building, events, cross-cultural communication, development coaching, managing remote teams.