



Inside Knowledge. Outside Perspective.

Coaching and facilitation for
technical experts, leaders &
teams in knowledge institutions



Certified Executive Coach
 **COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

 Certified Team Coach
Marshall Goldsmith
Stakeholder Centered Coaching

M Noordeloos

Marco Noordeloos

When expertise is no longer enough

Most of my clients were trained to produce rigorous knowledge: research, policy, technical analysis. Then each step up the career ladder asks for work that training did not cover. The expert is asked to manage a team. The team leader runs a department. The director speaks for the institution to boards, funders, governments, and staff.

The context around these careers has also changed. Mandates stretch while budgets contract. Evidence no longer ends arguments; often it starts them. AI is changing how teams produce work and how far they trust what colleagues hand them. The middle layer that turns strategy into delivery is carrying more with thinner support.

I knew these organisations from the inside before I began coaching and facilitating in them. Today I work with the experts, managers, teams, and senior leaders who carry them. Clients do not need to explain the institutional terrain from scratch. That difference shows up in the first conversation.

THIRTY YEARS, THREE CAREERS

1995 – 2005

Technical Expert

My career began as a researcher with academic training in biology and environmental management. Science for development rewarded rigour, specialist judgement, individual performance, and delivery of technical outputs. That was the contract my first career ran on.

2005 – 2015

Head of a Function

I then spent a decade in management roles in research institutions across Europe, Asia, and Africa. I headed the M&E function in matrix organisations where authority and accountability rarely lined up, and where egos or disagreement in a room mattered more than the formal agenda.

2015 – today

Coach & Facilitator

In a knowledge sector where professionals are paid to think, my highest-leverage contribution was often to bring process and structure for a group to use its collective intelligence. In 2015, after a decade of formal training in coaching and adult development, I made it my full-time job.

*My coaching and facilitation services draw on all three careers: the rigour of technical work, the realities of managing inside complex institutions, and the craft of helping smart people think when the room is under pressure. **It enables me to understand clients and their organisational context as someone who had to deliver inside them.***

**30+
years**

international
experience

**10+
years**

full-time coaching
& facilitation

**500+
leaders**

coached
one-to-one

**75+
countries**

on-site facilitation,
coaching, training

WHO I WORK WITH

My coaching and facilitation serve four kinds of organisation; most of my clients sit in their upper and middle tiers.

The work usually starts with one of these conversations:



Executives, Directors, Programme Leaders

The more senior the role, the more filtered the signal becomes. People still speak, but less directly; disagreement arrives softened and late, often through channels that are already political. Decisions grow more exposed while honest counsel grows scarcer. These leaders come for a confidential space to think out loud, with someone who knows the terrain and holds no stake in the answer.



HR Directors and Heads of Learning

The brief might be a leadership programme for a senior cohort, or a middle tier asked to carry more with less support. Underneath sits the harder question: how do we build leadership capacity that still holds once the programme ends and the pressure returns? That question shapes every design, and the design starts from the institution's own cases.



Technical Experts in Management Roles

The move from technical work to managerial work is the most underestimated transition in these institutions, and the least supported. Authority becomes ambiguous, and decisions stop having answers that expertise alone can settle. There is a quieter loss too, rarely named: the technical work that built the career is often the first thing the calendar gives up. I have made that move myself, and the coaching draws on it.



Leadership Teams and Working Groups

Some calls come early, from a team in formation. More come late, from a team that has worked together for years. The symptoms differ: careful politeness in the room while disagreement is saved for the corridor, and decisions that get remade more often than made. What these teams share is that they cannot shift the pattern from inside it. Coaching is built into the team's real work rather than a single away-day.

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE



UN agencies, multilaterals & (inter-) governmental bodies.

Mandates negotiated with member states; delivery carried by chiefs and directors several levels below. They inherit ambitions they did not set, with budgets that shrink between planning and delivery. My work is to help them think clearly when expectations and resources no longer match, and to keep a team steady while the institution restructures around it.

SCIENCE & ACADEMIA



Universities, research centres, & science programmes.

Credibility is built on expertise, but leadership asks for a different kind of work. Former peers become direct reports, and decisions about money and people are informed by evidence yet rarely settled by it. Funding is contracting and research itself is politically contested. My work is to help research leaders carry institutional leadership without surrendering rigour.

UPPER AND MIDDLE MANAGEMENT ACROSS SECTORS

Across these sectors, much of my work sits in the upper and middle tier: directors, heads of department, and senior programme staff, most of whom began as technical experts. They now manage people who were peers last year, absorb conflict that once went elsewhere, delegate work they could still do faster themselves, and hold direction in teams dispersed across cultures and time zones. When this layer is overloaded, executive decisions come back as partial implementation or quiet drift. When the middle thinks and performs well, the whole institution does.

CIVIL SOCIETY



INGOs, foundations & advocacy networks.

When funding is retreating while the need grows, financial choices quickly become values choices: what to protect, what to stop, and what to ask the people who remain to carry. The work is to help leaders make those decisions clearly while keeping trust with staff, partners, donors, and the communities & stakeholders they serve.

CORPORATE ESG



Sustainability & ESG functions in the private sector.

Sustainability leaders influence without full authority and keep long-term risks visible in systems that reward short horizons. The agenda is politically contested: regulations diverge by region, and commitments once announced with pride are now defended quietly. I help them keep the agenda credible with people who set budgets.

WHAT I DO

I offer four engagement types, often in combination. The choice depends on where the work needs to happen: with one leader, with a team over time, in a high-stakes room, or across a cohort.

Individual Coaching

- For experts and leaders whose role has outgrown the habits that made them effective.
- The starting point is usually a live issue: a larger mandate, difficult feedback, a strained stakeholder relationship, a team that needs different leadership, or a transition into a more exposed role. Coaching addresses the issue and the judgement underneath it: how the leader reads the room, uses authority, and makes decisions under pressure.
- Engagements run three to nine months, with regular conversations, applied work between sessions, often a 360° assessment, and a closing review against agreed objectives.
- The test is whether colleagues and stakeholders notice a difference in how the person leads.

"Marco, I got more out of a few one-hour coaching sessions with you than from several years of management training."

Dr. Fabricio Guariglia
Director, Prosecutions Division
International Criminal Court
(ICC)

Team Coaching

- For leadership teams, programme teams, and working groups that need to think and decide together.
- The starting point is usually a repeated pattern: the same conversations keep returning, decisions stay unclear, disagreement moves outside the room, or change has arrived faster than the team's habits have adapted.
- Engagements run over several months, because team patterns reassert themselves after any single event. The arc often includes a diagnostic, an opening retreat, follow-up sessions built into the team's real work, and periodic review of what is changing.
- The test is whether the team can surface the real issue, use disagreement well, make decisions that hold, and act together under pressure.

"The results were as quickly felt in the improvement of teamwork in the Department as in the realization of my own objectives."

Pascal Delue
HR Director, Technical Centre
for Agricultural and Rural
Cooperation (CTA)
(now: Director of
Administration, EU Agency for
Asylum (EUAA)),



"A big thank you Marco for your excellent facilitation of our teambuilding retreat in Nairobi."

Daniel Cooney
Director, Communication Division
UN Environment Programme
(UNEP)

"Marco did an excellent job in designing and organizing our technical workshop. He really adds value with his institutional knowledge and proactive approach."

Dr. Benjamin Davis
Director, ESP Division,
Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations (FAO)

Facilitation

- For strategy sessions, offsites, retreats, and other conversations where the quality of the room will shape what happens afterwards. Day-to-day meetings are built for updates and delivery; high-stakes gatherings need stronger design.
- Preparation carries much of the value: a design conversation with the client, pre-interviews where useful, careful sequencing of the questions, and clarity on decisions, outputs, and follow-through. The leader can participate in the conversation rather than having to chair the process, defend the agenda, and manage the room all at once.
- The test is whether what the room decided still stands a month later.

Training & Workshops

- For cohorts and professional groups that need a practical shared language for recurring leadership problems: a senior leadership cohort, a middle-management tier, technical experts moving into management, or an internal coach pool.
- Formats range from half-day workshops to multi-session programmes. Common themes include leadership transitions, feedback conversations, delegation, and decision-making. The work is built around the institution's own cases, so participants practise on situations they actually face rather than generic classroom examples.
- The test is whether the group still uses the shared language, unprompted, weeks after the room has emptied.

DIAGNOSTICS & TOOLS

I use research-informed diagnostics and developmental tools when they bring rigour to work that would otherwise remain vague or difficult to discuss. Some gather feedback from the system around a leader or team; others examine how a leader makes meaning, or why a committed change does not hold. The tool is never the intervention. Its value is to make a pattern specific enough to work with.

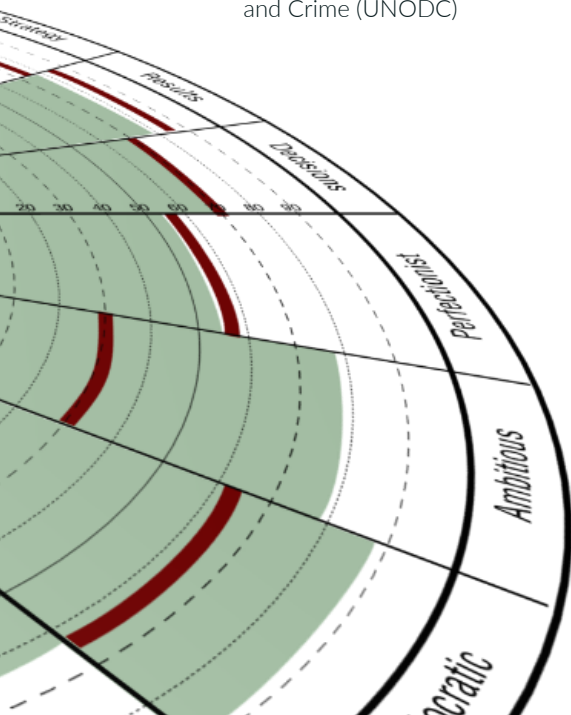


"I am impressed by how you used 360° feedback to target areas where I needed to improve, and the wisely designed coaching sessions during this last year. Since then, I initiated several changes in our office and I feel more confident."

Dr. Amare Hailelassie
Head of Office, East Africa &
Nile Basin, International Water
Management Institute

"I found the coaching and behavioural assessment extremely insightful and empowered me to better manage office conflict situations."

Asma Fakhri
Coordinator, Opioid Strategy
United Nations Office on Drugs
and Crime (UNODC)



Leadership Circle 360 Profile

The Leadership Circle Profile is a research-based 360-degree leadership assessment that links observable leadership impact with the assumptions and reactive patterns that may be driving it. Drawing on leadership, psychology, and adult-development research, it helps move coaching beyond general feedback into the internal logic underneath behaviour: how a leader uses authority, handles risk, relates under pressure, and translates intent into results.

BRITE Team Effectiveness

BRITE Team Effectiveness is a diagnostic from Leadership Circle that examines how an intact team functions as a system: shared mindset, structure, safety and cohesion, information flow, and results. It brings evidence into a conversation often left to anecdote, helping the team see where alignment is strong, where friction sits, where information gets distorted or delayed, and what patterns are affecting its ability to think, decide, and deliver together.

Immunity to Change

The Immunity to Change Map is a developmental tool from Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey for understanding why capable, committed people struggle to make changes they genuinely intend. It does not treat the pattern as a willpower problem. It surfaces the hidden commitments and assumptions that protect current behaviours, so they can be tested rather than obeyed. A stuck behavioural pattern becomes an examinable hypothesis, not a personal defect or vague intention to "do better."

Subject-Object Interview

The Subject-Object Interview is a developmental interview grounded in Robert Kegan's constructive-developmental theory. It is not a personality test, a measure of intelligence, or an assessment of style. It examines how a leader makes meaning: what they can step back from and reflect on, and what still shapes them from outside their awareness. This matters when the role now asks for a broader perspective than skill or knowledge alone can provide.

SPEAKING & WEBINARS

I speak at professional networks, sector conferences, and internal webinars. The talks start from questions the audience is already carrying, and they stay close to the ground: the material comes from hundreds of coaching conversations with senior experts and leaders in these institutions, and from years spent in similar roles myself. People should leave with insights and language they can use in their next meeting.

SAMPLE TOPICS

When Expertise Is No Longer Enough:

From being your expertise to having it.



Collective Thinking Under Pressure:

What stakes and scrutiny do to a room of experts.



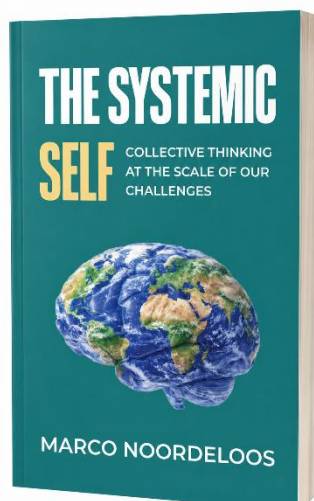
Leading Knowledge Institutions

Through contraction, AI, and political contestation.



The Systemic Self:

Collective thinking at the scale of our challenges.



Book launch: October 2026

The Systemic Self:

Collective Thinking at the Scale of Our Challenges

Capable people in well-run institutions keep drifting toward collective outcomes none of them would choose. The Systemic Self argues this is a failure of design: the way institutions meet and decide runs on inherited defaults, and those defaults suppress the thinking our hardest problems demand. The book makes the case for designing the conditions a group thinks inside as deliberately as institutions already design strategy and budgets.





Scan the QR code or visit noordeloos.cc to schedule an introductory call.

