

Sareta Thomas

OPERATIONAL EXECUTIVE AND SENIOR FINANCIAL PROFESSIONAL

Summary

I am a seasoned financial professional with over 21 years of experience in both International and National NGOs within the development sector. My expertise spans Financial Management, Financial Sustainability, Grant Management, and Governance, where I advise NGO teams, managers, and boards on best practices. I have a passion for NGO capacity building and strengthening and I have delivered over 200 training courses in more than 48 countries across Africa, the Caribbean, the US, UK, Europe, Asia, and the Pacific.



+27 73 257 4256

thomassareta@gmail.com

Gauteng, South Africa

Skills

- Leadership and Management:
- Training and Consultancy
- Finance Expertise
- Business Acumen
- Financial Management
- Organizational Excellence
- Capacity Building
- Entrepreneurship
- Coaching & Mentoring
- Risk management
- Strategic management
- Learning development
- Operational management
- Governance
- Financial sustainability
- Social enterprises
- Events management

Strengths

- Maximiser / Influencer
- Futuristic
- Achiever / Arranger
- Passionate
- Empowering
- Self-Assurance

Education

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE IN FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING

University of Pretoria, South Africa

Speaker & Lecturing Engagements

2009 - 2022

SA ACCOUNTING ACADEMY

South Africa: Cape Town / Durban / Johannesburg / Pretoria

- One day financial management workshops for non-profitable organisation

SA ACCOUNTING ACADEMY

South Africa: Johannesburg

- Speaker at the 2nd Annual Not-for-Profit Industry conference. Topic: Establishing a risk management and fraud prevention strategy for your NPO.

UNIVERSITY OF WITS

South Africa: Johannesburg

- Delivered sessions in Financial Management for the Diploma in Humanitarian Assistance that was delivered in conjunction with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

HUMENTUM

USA: Washington

- Presented various different sessions at Humentum's annual membership conferences.

FORD FOUNDATION

South Africa: Johannesburg

- Lead four sessions for Ford Foundation Build Grantees on Financial Resilience and Financial Sustainability.

PALLADIUM, SCALE

Nigeria: Abuja

- Speaker at their annual partner conference.



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Experience

HUMENTUM REGIONAL DIRECTOR, ARICA

2018 – 2023

I joined Humentum on a full-time basis in 2018 after being an independent senior consultant for legacy Mango since 2005, leading various capacity development projects, consultancies, and trainings for Mango over a period of 12 years.

As Regional Director, I was the organization's representative responsible for leading the development of Humentum's presence and relationships within the region as part of the Community team. This involved developing Humentum's presence and engagement with a range of donors, NGOs, partners, associates, and other stakeholders in the region. As Regional Director, I was responsible for the vision for the region and Humentum's role in achieving that vision, aligned with Humentum's overall values, vision, and mission. The role worked cross-functionally with Humentum's other teams to ensure Humentum's strategic and proactive response to the region's needs and priorities.

Key Responsibilities & Engagements:

- Operationalize Humentum's strategy within the region, creating and realizing region-adapted approaches.
- Act as the primary representative of Humentum within the region for the recruitment and retention of organizational members; responsible for the region membership sales/renewals targets.
- Engage members and clients in the region to create awareness of all relevant Humentum services.
- Develop relationships, build and promote effective partnerships with local actors (including donors, regional and national networks, individuals, associates) to reinforce local capability and positive influence in the region.
- Contribute to the risk management and quality control of work delivered by Humentum in the region through ongoing positive relationships with donors, stakeholders, and clients.
- Collaborate with Humentum's Growth and Delivery teams to:
 1. Develop region-appropriate services, products and market approaches responding to the needs of clients, members, and other relevant stakeholders.
 2. Support the recruitment and retention of a suitable roster of highly experienced regional associates to deliver Humentum's services within the region.
 3. Negotiate new clients and contracts for Humentum's consultancy and training services.
- Oversee the planning and delivery of Humentum's convening program within the region and support Humentum's advocacy efforts on critical issues impacting organizations operating in the region.
- Contribute to Humentum's knowledge management approach, through capturing and applying insights, innovations, and product information to improve the quality and applicability of Humentum services and products.
- As a subject matter expert, provide support, insights and peer review around Africa consultancies and trainings in Financial Management, Grant Management and Financial Sustainability and occasionally lead the projects.
- Develop standard consultancy and training products for Humentum.
- Lead an Africa market research to get a better understanding of our stakeholders and services needed.
- Present, publish, and network on behalf of Humentum.



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Types of Projects Lead and Managed:

- Organizational, Financial Management and Financial Sustainability assessments and capacity strengthening projects (mentoring / implementation of systems, structures, people and policies)
- Internal audits
- Fraud investigations
- Financial manual development
- Grant management systems and manuals
- Cost recovery assessment and policy development
- USAID assessments and policies

Clients:

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation;
- Ford Foundation
- Luminate Foundation
- We Effect
- Church of Sweden
- HandinHand Sweden / Zimbabwe
- ADRA
- WWF
- Disability Rights Fund
- Diakonia
- Nama Foundation
- Fairtrade
- Kisiizi Partners
- M2M
- Women Refugee Commission
- MUVA (OPM)
- Christian Aid
- Education Development Trust
- AMREF
- CWS
- Light of the World
- Living Goods.

MANGO UK (CURRENTLY KNOWN AS HUMENTUM) INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT

2006 - 2017

I joined Mango at the end of 2005 as a training associate, after I completed their Training for Trainers course in 2004. Mango's distinctive interactive training approach boosts staff skills and confidence for better efficiency across all levels of the organization. The purpose of all workshops is to empower individuals to be more effective and efficient.

Learning Development: Open Workshops & In-house Workshops

I have presented over 150 open workshops as well as in-house workshops in Practical Financial Management, Strategical Management, Grant Management, Risk Management, Fighting Fraud and Training for Trainers in the following countries:

- Malawi
- Tanzania
- Nigeria
- Somaliland
- Rwanda
- Mozambique
- Malaysia
- Ghana
- Zambia
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- Liberia
- Botswana
- Sudan
- Zimbabwe
- Eswatini
- Lesotho
- Cambodia
- Thailand
- India
- Sri Lanka
- Indonesia
- Fiji
- Nepal
- Myanmar
- Dubai
- Solomon Islands
- Kenya & Ethiopia

For the following NGOs:

- ADRA
- Afrika Kontakt
- AJWS
- American Red Cross
- Barclays
- BOFWA
- Caritas
- Care
- CIDRZ
- Christian Aid
- CRS
- Fairtrade Africa
- Ford Foundation
- ICCO
- IBIS
- Kenya Red Cross
- LDS
- LUCSA
- Merlin
- NAMA Foundation
- Oxfam
- Oxfam America
- OXFAM-AUS
- OSF
- Panos
- Pellum
- PLAN
- SAN
- SARCS
- Save Children
- SCCN
- SCUUK
- VSO
- TAC
- Trocaine
- Save the Children
- STAR Ghana
- WaterAid
- WWF



OPERATIONAL EXECUTIVE AND SENIOR FINANCIAL PROFESSIONAL

SAVE THE CHILDREN UK (BASED IN SOUTH AFRICA) REGIONAL FINANCE MANAGER

2003 - 2005

As Regional Finance Manager and part of the Senior Leadership Team, I was responsible for the Southern Africa Regional Office, SA and the Lesotho Programme.

DAMELIN COLLEGE SOUTH AFRICA PART TIME LECTURER

2003

Subjects: Financial Accounting 1 / Basic Bookkeeping / Business Accounting (degree level)

OWNER OF CHERRY ON THE TOP EVENTS CC & LIEVLAND WEDDING & FUNCTION VENUE CC

2003 - 2018

I organized and managed various events while also overseeing the operation and maintenance of the venue.

UK (LONDON) WORK EXPERIENCE

2001 - 2002: Tower Bridge Experience Finance Manager

2001: Family Housing Association Assistant Accountant

2000 - 2001: Apex Computer Recruitment Ltd Management Accountant

2000: Daily Telegraph Limited Bought Ledger

Consultancy Engagements (2006 - 2018)

FORD FOUNDATION

South Africa

Consulted the partners of the Ford Foundation Office for Southern Africa on best practices to develop a strategy to become financially sustainable.

NAMA FOUNDATION

Malaysia / Indonesia / Tanzania / Lebanon / Kyrgyzstan

Remote consulting for the partners of NAMA Foundation on best practices to develop a strategy to become financially sustainable.

FAIRTRADE AFRICA

Kenya / Ghana / South Africa / Cote d'ivoire

Organizational assessment of regional offices and guided staff on best practices.



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BRITISH COUNCIL, THE CITIZEN STATE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Sudan

Build the capacity of Sudanese civil society organisations to make the best possible use of the money they receive from BC-KLP and become more financially sustainable via short training courses which are attended by finance and non-finance staff members of the grantee, followed up with a mentoring visit to further build the skills and confidence of the grantee to apply what they have learned to their organisation. Introduced, inducted and coached mentors to deliver these short trainings and how to conduct the mentoring visits.

- Develop a sustainable source of capacity development services in fiduciary management within Sudan.
- Recruit mentors, conduct candidate assessments and interviews with CSSP
- Ongoing coaching and supporting of mentors.
- Training of CSSP / CSOs in Financial Management, Grant Management and Strategic Financial Management
- Training for trainers training for Mentors team

Supported the team (IME) to set-up a Social Enterprise in Sudan after the project in 2017.

BRITISH COUNCIL, CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT PROGRAMME (CSSP)

Ethiopia

Build the capacity of Ethiopian civil society organisations to make the best possible use of the money they receive from the BC- CSSP and become more financially sustainable via short training courses which are attended by finance and non-finance staff members of the grantee, followed up with a mentoring visit to further build the skills and confidence of the grantee to apply what they have learned to their organisation. Introduced, inducted, and coached mentors to deliver these short trainings and how to conduct the mentoring visits.

- Project Research and needs assessment
- Visits with Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) for a sample of grantees across the 5 regions, to identify management challenges.
- Design diagnostic system checklists / tools to conduct capacity assessment during the partner visits.
- Review and improve the grantee capacity assessment, tracking and reporting tools.
- Recruit mentors, conduct candidate assessments and interviews with CSSP.
- Design mentor's manual with all the different tools to assist mentors with role.
- Ongoing coaching and supporting of mentors.
- Training of CSSP / CSOs in Financial Management, Grant Management and Strategic Financial Management
- Training for trainers training for Mentors team
- Visits with Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) for a sample of grantees across the 5 regions, to identify management challenges.

Supported the team (Agar) to set-up a Social Enterprise in Ethiopia after the project 2018.



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BRITISH COUNCIL, ZAMBIA ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAMME (ZAP)

Zambia, Lusaka

Due Diligence review and presentation of Scope Of Work for Capacity Strengthening of local partners under ZAP.

DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH AND PROJECTS CENTRE (DRPC)

Nigeria, Abuja

Provide financial management capacity building support to local partners of the development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC) in Nigeria.

- Build the capacity of grantees to make the best possible use of the funding they receive from dRPC (Gates Foundation)
- Support partner organisations to strengthen their financial systems and procedures.

LABOUR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF ZIMBABWE (LEDRIZ)

Zimbabwe

LEDRIZ is conducting research into the financial sustainability of trade unions and labour support organisations across Africa. The research will collect good practices and lessons learned from surveyed organisations for the greater benefit of the labour movement.

- Mango Consultant assisted in the development of a set of questions that is well grounded in the topic of financial sustainability by reviewing a current draft of research questions. Mango made recommendations including additions and suggestions to ensure that LEDRIZ have covered all relevant areas, making recommendations and suggestions for improvement in the questionnaire.

MALAWI RED CROSS SOCIETY (MRCS)

Malawi

The purpose of this mission was to support MRCS in its effort to improve organizational development, specifically in the finance management system of MRCS. In order to develop and implement a robust financial management and accountable practices an assessment was conducted to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the finance system. Written recommendations for improving steps towards internationally recognized standards in the financial management was delivered.

- Facilitate financial management and capacity assessments
- Identify specific actions to build financial capacity and demonstrate progress towards improvements
- Consider whether existing and proposed systems are fit for purpose for existing activities, in line with Swiss Red Cross requirements and good practice in the development sector
- Consulted staff and management team, members of governing body, including treasurer and representative of other Partner National Societies



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WELLCOME TRUST ASSIGNMENT

South Africa / Kenya / Thailand / Vietnam / UK

Developed a bespoke management information and reporting solution for grant recipients in the major overseas programme.

WELLCOME TRUST ASSIGNMENT

Tanzania

Grant management capacity building of Wellcome Trust sub grantees in Africa.

- Design & deliver workshop: provide targeted support to the sub grantees based on the benchmark information gathered during the individual assessment of each grantee
- Designed training workbook and manual for participants to use during workshop and to take away

COMIC RELIEF ASSIGNMENT

Ghana / South Africa

Carry out a full financial audit of the project and determine if any of the spent of Comic Reliefs grant money is undocumented. To review receipts and supporting documents for purchases made in relation to the grant. As well as to undertake a due diligence review of applicants legal and compliance track record.

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE (SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE)

South Africa, Pretoria

Development of sub-grantee guidelines for the Southern Africa Region.

FINMARK TRUST (RSA)

South Africa

Preparing of the monthly management reporting and the quarterly report to the donors – DFID, Gates Foundation, Mastercard and Board of Trustees.

BRITISH RED CROSS (SOUTH AFRICA RED CROSS)

South Africa, KwaZulu Natal

Provided support, coaching, and learning development to ensure the establishment and operation of well-functioning control systems; and undertake staff development in all 6 branches. Visits on a quarterly basis and check all monthly donor reports remotely as well as assist with all the strategical decisions on the overall direction that needs to be taken to make this regional office successful in the long term.

SAVE THE CHILDREN

Tanzania / Mozambique / South Africa / Egypt / Sierra Leone

Various consultancies:

- Assessed the systems, procedures, and general compliance with financial requirements. I also identified the strengths and weaknesses in financial policies and procedures, financial management.
- Cover for the Finance Manager and assist with day-to-day finance and donor reporting and yearend.