

Lana Lovasic – Curriculum Vitae

PROFILE

With a variety of experience over the past 17+ years, my common motivation has been an entrepreneurial drive to apply inclusive innovation to change the world towards a more fair, equitable and sustainable place. A results-driven, analytical problem-solver, I've been a consultant, entrepreneur, and an impact investor. I have developed expertise in economic development, social enterprise and the social economy, with special focus on innovative finance, incubation and acceleration, impact ecosystem building, and related research and policy work. I enjoy partnership building and have networks spanning academia, private, public and international organisation sectors in Africa, Europe and North America. As Director and Co-Founder of several social enterprises, and leader of multicultural teams, I am often approached as a thought leader and conference speaker.

Key clients and partnerships have included the ILO, UNDP, USDA, British Council, YBI, Social Enterprise UK, Plan International, Group SOS, ACT Grupa, Gov. of Finland, Toshiba, Flanders Government, Gov. of South Africa, Industrial Development Corporation, the European Union, Olam Agri, and others.

EDUCATION

- **Innovation and Entrepreneurship Certificate Courses:** Stanford University, USA November 2017 – 2020
- **MBA, IOMBA program:** Université de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland September 2008 – May 2010
- **Honours Bachelor of Science:** University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, September 1998 – June 2003
- **Investment Management Training:** ANDE, South Africa, September 2015
- **Certificate in Environmental Management:** University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, June 2012

BOARD SEATS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

- **Simanye Trust, Trustee (January 2019 – present)**
 - Early-stage impact fund for innovative social enterprises
- **Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE), SA Steering Committee Member (February 2016 – August 2020)**
 - Focused on promoting small and growing businesses
- **Tembeka Social Investment, Credit Review Committee member (March 2013 – March 2014)**
- **Co-President of Net Impact chapter at University of Geneva (Sep. 08 – July 09)**
- **Geneva Forum on Social Change, Education Panel Coordinator (Dec. 08 – May 09)**

CONTACT

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Citizenships/permits:

Croatia (EU), Canada, South Africa (permanent residence)

KEY EXPERTISE

- Strategic leadership and management
- Social enterprise and the social economy
- Social innovation and innovation strategy
- Impact investing
- International development
- Acceleration and incubation of enterprises
- Entrepreneurship
- Policy development
- Research and advisory – applied and academic
- Writing, speaking and thought leadership
- Private sector engagement in development
- Partnership building and collaboration
- Human centric problem solving

WORK EXPERIENCE

Unite Us, Croatia / EU

Founder and Director

December 2020 – present

- Establishment of a global development consultancy, which is part of the C-lever.org network. Focused on large scale development projects and strategy, with work in themes such as social innovation, startup and enterprise ecosystem development, impact investing, and related policy and research.

Simanye, South Africa / Africa

Director and Co-Founder

January 2011 – December 2020

- Director and Co-founder of a business focusing on both consulting (social enterprise and economic development) as well as impact investing in early-stage social enterprises and the new economy as a whole
- Acted as expert advisor and project lead on 20+ projects over 10 years in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Responsible for management of business with 15-20 staff, including other consultants, analysts and administrative staff as well as several external partners in addition to overall business strategy

Impact Hub Joburg, South Africa

Co-Founder and acting CEO

November 2015 – November 2020

- Helped set up the Johannesburg arm of a global network of impact accelerators and incubators with co-working, events and programmes for impact entrepreneurs and changemakers
- Led overall business strategy, financial management, and business development, as well as innovation and entrepreneur development content initially but stepped in as acting CEO for the 2018 year before hiring the new permanent CEO in 2019.

Rooftop Roots, South Africa

Co-founder and Director

December 2014 – June 2019

- Invested in and helped start up an urban aquaponics / hydroponic farm in the inner city of Johannesburg based on a social enterprise model (has now been incorporated into the FEED initiative)

Greater Rustenburg Community Foundation, South Africa

CSI Liaison & Communications Manager

January 2010 – December 2010

- Helped develop the overall marketing and communications strategy of this community foundation, in addition to building private sector networks with a goal to changing corporate social responsibility policies of large businesses and raising additional funds. Also responsible for contributing to program evaluation and building innovative models for enterprise solutions to poverty, and project and programme support on asset-based community development.

The Townships Project & Tembeka Social Investment, South Africa

Microfinance Consultant

July 2009 – November 2009

Zimbabwe Advocacy Office, Geneva, Switzerland

Strategy Consultant

Apr. 2009 – July 2009

Richardson Partners Financial, Toronto, Canada

Branch and Marketing Assistant

Nov. 2007 – Aug. 2008

Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme, Nagasaki, Japan

ALT and Prefectural ALT

Aug. 2005 – Aug. 2007

Moneris Solutions, Toronto, Canada

Chargeback and Relations Officer

Nov. 2003 – Aug. 2005

Centre for Research in Neurodegenerative Disease, Toronto, Canada

Research Assistant

Nov 2001 – May 2003

SAMPLE OF KEY PROJECTS

Client	Year	Country	Description	Key skills
Better Cotton	2025 (in progress)	Global	Team lead for development of a strategy toolkit to assist Better Cotton countries in developing their country level strategies. The project has a strong research and development component followed by anticipated testing and implementation of the toolkit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy • Capacity building • Agriculture • Advocacy • Sustainability
UNDP / MTI	2025 (in progress)	Eritrea	Working with UNDP and the Ministry of Trade and Industry on mapping of investment opportunities aligned to sustainability goals in Eritrea. Additional elements include development of innovation ecosystems and value chains, and understanding various SME development pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact investing • Policy • Research • Capacity building
Olam Agri	2024 - 2025	Global	Led a research team focused on the efficacy of various interventions in achieving an improved farmer income across several agricultural value chains including cotton, rice and sesame. Focus was on several countries including Nigeria, Chad, Ivory Coast, and Thailand. The specific goal was to determine how to best understand impact in financial terms as a return on investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SROI / ROI • Research • Value chains • Business plans • Innovation • Agriculture • Evaluation
LWR / C-Lever	2023 – ongoing (in progress)	Nigeria	Part of a team of local and international consultants helping conduct research and deliver innovative solutions for cocoa sector traceability, sustainability, and value chain business strengthening through capacity building. Particular focus on policy recommendations, and transformation across the value chain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • SME / startups • Value chains • Sustainability • Capacity building • Traceability
Pact	2023	Global	Led work on a global strategy related to understanding and then packaging of a products and services offering for a large international NGO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy • Marketing / Business Dev • Innovation
UNDP / ThreeArrows	2022 - 2023	Sierra Leone	Part of a team of local and international experts focused on mapping the national development needs and policy priorities of Sierra Leone. The end result was the development of an SDG Investor Map of key sectors and business models for commercial private sector investment that could facilitate both economic development as well as impact positively on SDG outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact investing • Policy • Research
UNDP	2021 - 2022	Azerbaijan	Led a year-long project on building social enterprise ecosystems and policy recommendations for Azerbaijan. This involved large scale senior stakeholder consultations and workshops as well as extensive primary and secondary research. The final deliverable was a concrete set of policy recommendations for the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social enterprise • Policy • Research • Public sector • Consultations

Foundation Partnership and Civil Society Development	2022	Croatia	Led work for a public foundation in Croatia on collaborative design of policy recommendations for Istria County relating to social innovation and social entrepreneurship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social enterprise • Innovation • Policy
Group SOS / ILO	2021	Sub-Saharan Africa various	Was part of a panel of experts who had inputs into research methodology and overall approach for a multi-country study across Africa on social innovation .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social innovation • Research
Plan International	2021	Global south focused	Helped evaluate an existing debt-based impact fund , and then assisted with formulating a new strategy (including instrument recommendations) and way forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact investing
ACT Group	2021 - 2022	Croatia	Strategy, instrument design, and implementation plan for a social innovation fund linked to capacity building for CSOs and social enterprises in Croatia for ACT Group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact investing
British Council	2019 - 2020	South Africa	Led a large South Africa wide research project for the British Council (with support of Social Enterprise UK as part of global work) on the state of social and creative enterprise (document link in next section). I also presented the findings in a series of webinars that were quite well received.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social enterprise • SMEs • Research
ILO / South African Government	2018 - 2021	South Africa	Carried out evidence-based research as part of development of the social economy policy for the South African government, culminating in a Green Paper (focused on the impact investing landscape as well as technology innovation for social economy). At a later stage, I also helped review the policy development process with a view to documenting key learnings and helping evaluate the efficacy of the process that was followed (document link in next section).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact investing • Innovation • Technology • Policy • Research • Consultations • Evaluation
Social Enterprise UK / Youth Business International	2021	Global	Worked with Social Enterprise UK and Turkish Social Entrepreneurs Network on a global study of effective support for social and green enterprises which involved both a document review as well as key interviews and mapping of tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social enterprise • Research • Strategy
EuropeAid	2019	Malawi	Led a EU project in Malawi helping a public Trust develop a social enterprise model for revenue generation as well as an overall resource mobilisation strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social enterprise • Strategy
Government of Finland	2019 - 2020	South Africa	Research and strategy work for Government of Finland into funding startups in the circular economy space, culminating in funding guidelines and policies for their team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact investing
GIBS (University of Pretoria)	2021	South Africa	Co-lectured an MBA course on Social Enterprise and Impact Investing at GIBS (one of SA's top business schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact investing
Government of Flanders /	2016	South Africa	Supported in the evaluation of a large public fund in South Africa which had been funded by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact investing

Industrial Development Corporation			Government of Flanders, and subsequently led the development of a fund strategy to best support social enterprises in the country from an ecosystems level going forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation • Strategy
Various – program implementation	2015 - 2020	South Africa	Design and implementation of various incubation and acceleration programmes for Impact Hub Joburg, focused on SDGs related theme areas and with heavy innovation components. Also personally led delivery of innovation-based workshops such as in Design Thinking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incubation • Program design and implementation • Innovation
Various – corporate supply chain	2011 - 2018	South Africa	Various projects working on supplier and enterprise development strategies for large multinational corporates (mostly in heavy industry sectors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SME development • Supply chain
Various - coaching	2010 - present	Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe	Advised a range of social enterprises on their overall strategy but focused most on business model, market assessment, marketing and general operations as well as business development and fundraising. Have done this in Africa and Europe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching • Strategy • Business development

SAMPLE OF KEY PUBLICATIONS

- **UNDP Sierra Leone.** SDG Investor Map. <https://www.undp.org/sierra-leone/publications/sierra-leone-sdg-investor-map> (co-written with Sawa Nakagawa)
- **ILO.** South Africa's Social and Solidarity Economy - an evaluation of the policy development process. https://webapps.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/---ro-abidjan/---ilo-pretoria/documents/publication/wcms_840977.pdf (co-written with Kate Gardner)
- **UNDP Azerbaijan.** Policy and ecosystem recommendations for supporting social enterprises in Azerbaijan. <https://www.undp.org/azerbaijan/publications/policy-and-ecosystem-recommendations-supporting-social-enterprises-azerbaijan-0>
- **British Council.** DICE Programme - Creative and Social Enterprise in South Africa. https://www.britishcouncil.org.za/sites/default/files/surveying_creative_and_social_enterprise_in_sa.pdf
- **EU Interreg Mediterranean.** Policy Brief: Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship Recommendations for Region of Istria, Croatia: <https://opensocialclusters.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Policy-Brief-Foundation-Istria-and-Regional-coordinator-Istria.pdf>