

Ashley E. Hufft

Phone: (646) 415-3447 | e-mail: aehufft@gmail.com | Address: 700 W. 31st Street, Suite 1506, Kansas City, MO 64108

LEGAL | OPERATIONS | STRATEGY | PARTNERSHIPS | SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Executive-level attorney, operational leader and strategic advisor, with over 20 years' experience in corporate, finance & international law, as both law firm Partner and in-house General Counsel. Career reflects a diverse private sector and non-profit background, managing large, diverse teams & complex operations and developing /directing multi-stakeholder social, environment & economic development programs in the U.S. and Africa. Strong negotiator, problem-solver, systems thinker and collaborator. Passionate about building inclusive cultures, sustainable businesses & social impact.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

THE SDG CENTER FOR AFRICA (SDGC/A), Kigali, Rwanda

2017 – 2019

General Counsel & Senior Strategic Advisor

Part of the start-up team at newly established international organization, formed by the U.N. Secretary General to work with African governments, private sector, academia and civil society to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Set up legal, operational and governance functions and oversaw legal compliance of programs across Africa.
- Grew partnerships with Japan, Sweden, national development banks, UN agencies and various private sector partners.
- Successfully opened Sub-regional Center in Zambia and negotiated government agreements to establish office in Liberia.
- Developed SDG/A's 5-year strategic plan and related operational and resource mobilization frameworks.
- Provided legal, policy & strategic advice, advocacy and secured partnerships for several flagship initiatives, including health systems accountability, national development bank reform, rainwater harvesting and improvement of tertiary education.
- Created fund mechanisms to finance the SDGs on health, education and water throughout Africa.
- Represented the SDGC/A at major pan-African and global forums on the SDGs; wrote articles on behalf of the Director.
- Led all-staff retreats, developed and managed staff work plans for Director, and created a cultural "blueprint" for offices.

TEACH FOR AMERICA (TFA), Kansas City, MO

2016 – 2017

Senior Managing Director & Chief of Staff (Interim Role)

At the request of the Regional Board and Executive Director, joined in an interim capacity to develop the Chief of Staff role for the TFA Kansas City region in order to consolidate the operations, finance, development, and communications functions under one department led by the Chief of Staff.

- Acted as special advisor to the Executive Director on strategic direction, and helped build the regions' capacity to implement its strategic plan, coordinating across all functions/staff.
- Oversaw the engagement and cultivation of philanthropic stakeholders and coordinated partnership strategies / operations.
- Directed a number of multi-faceted, cross-functional, high-priority initiatives, including on data collection and launch of a new alumni fellowship program.
- Led staff onboarding, career development and transitions, worked with Executive Director to seek and cultivate talent.

THE MILLENNIUM PROMISE ALLIANCE (MP), New York, NY

2009 – 2015

Managing Director & General Counsel (2012 – 2015)

Chief of Staff & General Counsel (2009 – 2011)

Served as the top executive of MP, a leading international non-profit organization supporting integrated social and business development programs across sub-Saharan Africa through its operational platform, the Millennium Villages Project. As Managing Director, had final authority for all operational, financial, legal, and development matters. Oversight extended across New York headquarters, Nairobi and Dakar regional offices and local operations in 10 African countries, with 1000+ staff total.

- Implemented the strategic plan of MP in coordination with the Global Board and senior leadership team.
- Developed and monitored progress against work plans and addressed operational gaps to achieve the Project's goals in health, education, agriculture, business development and infrastructure.
- Developed and oversaw a \$35 million annual operating budget and ensured strong financial management, accounting, internal controls and reporting systems (including donor reporting) internationally.

- Coordinated affiliate boards in Canada, Japan, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom to ensure successful fundraising around the world. Served as a Board member of MP Canada.
- Oversaw MP's implementation partnerships, including the Earth Institute at Columbia University, the U.N., the UK's DFID, Korea, Japan and the Islamic Development Bank.
- Designed and led an 18-month restructuring of MP to transition African operations from the U.N. to in-house management. Included integrating a 1000+ member workforce in 14 locations into newly designed organizational structures for Operations, HR, Finance, Legal and ITC departments.
- Executed a strategy to scale-up the organization's activities into multiple new countries in Africa.
- As General Counsel, served as head of MP's legal department covering all activities in the U.S. and Africa.
 - Final authority on all legal and regulatory issues, including governance, contracts and corporate, non-profit, employment, immigration, intellectual property, Foreign Corrupt Practices and other laws.
 - Developed and enforced organizational policies and procedures, and oversaw internal audits and investigations.
 - Oversaw the legal and strategic planning of business development in Africa, with focus on agri-business; established farmer-based organizations, refined business plans and helped structure potential investments, credit schemes, loan guarantees, and supplier, marketing and purchasing arrangements.

ALSTON & BIRD (A&B), New York, NY & Atlanta, GA

1998 – 2009

Partner, Mergers & Acquisition, Private Equity & Securities (2006-2009)

Associate (1998 - 2005)

As a Partner at this AmLaw 100 international law firm, provided a broad range of corporate governance, transactional and securities law expertise to Fortune 500 corporations, closely held companies, private equity sponsors, investment banks, senior executives and boards of directors.

- Represented public and private companies in a variety of complex domestic and cross-border mergers, acquisitions and divestitures, equity and debt financings and other complex business transactions.
- Represented companies, funds and other private investors in all aspects of the investment cycle, including fund formation, early-stage venture capital investments, later-stage growth financings, going-private transactions and leveraged buyouts and recapitalizations.
- Served as head and founder of firm's *Global Services Task Force: sub-Saharan Africa*, with objective to bring a sub-Saharan Africa geographic focus to the firm's client base. Wrote client advisories and lectured at seminars on African investment.
- Member of the Associates' Committee, Hiring Committee and Women Lawyers Steering Committee.

THE MILLENNIUM CITIES INITIATIVE (MCI), Kisumu, Kenya

2007

Millennium Cities Representative for Kenya

While on a 15-month sabbatical from A&B, worked with the Kenyan Government and United Nations to spearhead The Millennium Cities Initiative, a strategy to attract investment from foreign countries to develop sustainable business enterprises in Kenya.

- Project manager, launched and coordinated all MCI activities in Kenya, along with Ministry of Planning and local governmental authorities, the Government of Finland and the UN Development Program.
- Led foreign investor due diligence missions to Kisumu and other areas of western Kenya.
- Analyzed the investment opportunities, infrastructure and regulatory environment related to foreign direct investment into Kisumu and managed law firms, KPMG, UNIDO and other consultants in these areas.
- Co-authored *Invest in Kenya: Focus Kisumu*, the first comprehensive investment guide for an African city.
- Established an investment promotion office in Kisumu in collaboration with the Kenya Investment Authority.

TEACH FOR AMERICA (TFA), Jackson, LA

1993 – 1995

Corps Member and First Grade Teacher

As an early corps member of Teach For America, assisted senior leadership with strategic direction of the organization. Served as a first grade teacher of an inclusive classroom containing 50% "special needs" children.

- Creator, leader and fundraiser of the *Jackson Peace Mural Project*, a children's art and nonviolence program.
- Developed and administered an after-school enrichment and tutoring program for the entire school.

EDUCATION

Juris Doctor, Harvard Law School, Cambridge, MA
Harvard Legal Aid Bureau member

B.A., Anthropology, *summa cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa, Harvard College, Cambridge, MA
Varsity Women's Lightweight Rowing Team

Admitted to New York and Georgia Bars
Admission in process for Missouri and Kansas Bars

OTHER INFORMATION

- **Dakar, Senegal**, studied French while working on a book of short stories. **January – July 2020**
Intermediate-level French (still studying)
- **Millennium Promise**, Strategic Advisor & Interim General Counsel **2016 – 2017**
After resigning as Managing Director, provided ongoing legal and strategic advice to assist transition of organization to new leadership. Served as Secretary of Board of Directors.
- **Humanity for Children**, Board member **July 2019 – present**
Funds and implements community-based initiatives for health, education, safety and economic empowerment in Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania.
- **Teach for America – Kansas City**, Board member **October 2020 – present**
Works toward the day when every child will receive an excellent and equitable education. Finds and nurtures leaders who commit to expanding opportunities for low income children, beginning with at least two teaching in a public school.