

Sarah Hughes

Strategy and social innovation

Social innovator with 30 years' experience in start-ups, charities, business and consultancy; working across strategy, product and service design. Focused on social change, effective philanthropy, impact investing and tech-for-good. Passionate about youth empowerment, women and girls issues, and evidence practise. Seeking freelance, project or associate roles in purposeful organisations building a #sharedsociety and shifting the status quo.

Professional Overview

Executive leader and entrepreneur focused on collaboration and community, democratising knowledge and co-creating social change.

Experienced relationship builder, able to relate to others, coach and collaborate with empathy and curiosity, creating trust and optimising people and their ideas.

Enterprising, creative & commercial with a varied background in strategy, new product development, marketing, pitching/fundraising and operations.

Versatile, tech-empowered generalist, skilled in all business areas from hiring to finance, marketing and sales, events to governance, business models to digital, automation and e-commerce.

Open work style, based on thoughtful attention, calm confidence and warm collegiality.

Current NED Roles

Advisory Board Member, Charizone (purpose-led business creating trustworthy charity evaluation data for donors)

Trustee, Project Lighthouse (UK charity supporting women survivors of domestic abuse and child removal)

Advisor, Apps for Good (UK charity coaching young students in social design)

Career Experience – Executive Leadership

The Beacon Collaborative (UK registered charity)

June 2022 to present

Beacon's mission is to grow effective philanthropy among wealth-holders in the UK.

Philanthropy Network Director

From Sept 2023

Developing a new proposition for peer-to-peer engagement of wealth-holders. Raised first 25K grant for a personal runway to pitch and deliver a 3 year sustainable business plan.

Executive Director

June 2022 to Sept 23

As the charity's first Executive Director, I built the team and operations and formed a 3-year strategy to move from a project focus to core mission services.

Key contributions and successes:

- Created and Host of the UK's first national digital network for philanthropy and social investment (168 influential members) as well as two peer communities of purpose for wealthy philanthropists (25 members) and impact investors (54 members).
- Played a contributory role in advocacy at government and sector level.
- Co-led and authored Individual Impact Investing Commission of 11 impact investing pioneers, in partnership with Big Society Capital.
- Co-designed the prestigious by invitation Beacon Philanthropy and Impact Forum
- Raised £100K in unrestricted donations.
- Created Beacon's peer engagement and mentoring framework and platforms.

- Transformed the charity's communications and collaborations strategy.

Mishi Music for Wellness (limited company | start up)

Cofounder

Mar 2020 to Present

Bootstrapping a social microbusiness offering a therapeutic music app to improve sleep, focus and wellbeing. 20,000 downloads, NHS prison trial underway and piloting a workplace offer.

Fiz.com (limited company with 9 angel investors)

Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer

2013-2019

Fiz was a global platform that algorithmically evaluated crowd reviews to find popular points of interest for travellers. Raised just under £700K, secured marquee clients and monthly recurring revenues but hit market roadblocks in 2017, pivoted in 2018 and closed voluntarily in 2019. IP sale thwarted in early 2020 due to the pandemic.

Career Experience – Strategic Consultancy

Charity21 (sole trader)

Mar 2020- May 2022

Strategy & Innovation Consultant, supporting charities and social enterprises

- Associate at The Researchery for a Beacon Collaborative Commission looking at individual impact investing in the UK, leading to a research report that is a first in its category
- Engaged by Power to Change to support a community business Managing Director with digital transformation
- Business transformation at Chapel & York (commercial enterprise), defending a baseline net profit margin through Covid19 and ultimately saving £100K
- Associate at Insley Consulting Ltd conducting an evaluation, impact and scaling study for climate activism charity Surfers Against Sewage

Digital Transformation

2005-2013

Freelance consultant for UK charities including Action for Children, Wildlife Trusts, WaterAid, Christian Aid, Citizenship Foundation and Big Society Network focusing on digital strategy, marcomms and online fundraising.

Career Experience – Leadership and Operations

Charities Aid Foundation (registered charity)

1996- 2005

Head of New Media – first digital hire at CAF, creating new digital products and services across 12 countries with a few firsts: a charity Internet Service Provider, a donation portal, a grants platform and a charity e-banking service. Hired team, built web development practises, managed agencies and created external partnerships.

Reed Elsevier Group Plc (international publishing business)

1993- 1996

Product Manager –Manager of titles including Kompass Directory, Banker's Almanac and others, fast track leadership candidate, pioneer of new digital products.

Early Career Experience – Management and Operations

Conseil des Communes et Regions d'Europe (CCRE) (NGO)

1991- 1993

Project Manager & Translator at Council of European Municipalities & Regions, Paris, supporting cross-border collaboration projects, organising multiple cooperation events and developing tri-lingual briefing papers

International Commercial Centre

1990-1991

Assistant Manager, Gibraltar

Education, Qualifications and Courses

- BA Modern Languages in French and Spanish: 2,1, King's College London
- Marketing Diploma, London School of Publishing
- SPOC (Scrum Product Owner)
- TQUK Level 1 Mental Health Awareness
- Acumen social entrepreneurship and global citizenship courses
- French (A Level, business conversant)
- Spanish (A Level, business conversant)
- German (A Level, conversational)

Additional Information

UK Citizen - Flexible on location including overseas. Comfortable with distributed team-working and hybrid office-home arrangements.

Interests: sailing and water activities (RYA Competent Crew; PADI Open Water Diver) skiing, yoga and music meditation. Self-guided study in a range of civil society subjects.

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References available on request