

SEMIR TANOVIC

69-54 Ingram Street, Forest Hills, NY 11375

semirtanovic@gmail.com | +1 (347) 623 – 9610 | www.linkedin.com/in/semirtanovic/

NGO, Non-Profit and Foundation Management Executive

25 years of international leadership in complex organizations. Track record of success in Global Operations, HR, Administration and team building. Created a one-team culture of excellence, bringing together teams across 60 countries. Led financial health measures and change management. Regarded as strategic thinker, thought leader, problem solver, silos remover and a true DEI champion.

Organizational Culture, Team Leadership, Interdepartmental Cohesion and Silos Removal

- **Human Resources** - As a COO, supervised heads of HR. **Improved internal mobility by roughly 20%**. Instituted staff coaching and mentorship as a key performance metric for managers. Formalized and institutionalized nurturing and recognizing talent and improved staff development and visibly increased **retention**, engagement and true staff participation. Always **created very diverse teams**, by consistently championing DEI in all my organizations. Created a culture of performance and excellence by strengthening staff recognition and capacity building.
- **Organizational Culture Transformation** - Transformed culture in three organizations, managing change and creating a strong positive and aligned **global One-Team culture**, based on DEI principles and respect for all team members. Recognized for quickly turning disillusionment and demoralization into engagement, strong focus, high performance and DEI improvements.
- Created **Staff Engagement Committee** whose main purpose was to mobilize the healthy energy of staff and direct it into a common exercise related to our mission. This facilitated staff cohesion and sentiment of belonging to the same cause.
- **Team leadership** - Led international teams of up to 300 across 60 countries. Viewed as a leader who “consistently **attracts talent**.” Dramatically improved retention of strong performers. Championed staff acknowledgement and development, including mentoring and promotions, implementing DEI and principles of a just work environment.
- **Team Cohesion** - Created systems that **removed the disconnect between teams operating in different locations** (even different continents), thus enhancing the coordination, synchronization and overall efficiency and team cohesion.

Strategic Operational, Administration and Fiscal Leadership

- **Safety and security** - Created system for physical security and safety of staff and properties, **focusing on kidnapping and threat mitigation, reputational risk management and office vulnerabilities**. Drove adoption of new procedures for travel security, overseas and at US offices, that resulted with major risk mitigation, designed a dashboard-like system to activate travel suspension procedures when necessary.
- **Real estate strategy** - Created and implemented Real Estate strategy that **saved over \$25m** at my previous employer by negotiating three deals that **reduced leasing cost by 80%**. Efficiently managed property holdings on three continents.
- **Budget management & fiscal responsibility** - Successfully improved financial health and fiscal responsibility and performance in several organizations, e.g., **turned a \$1.5m deficit into a \$2.5m surplus** in less than 1.5 years. Introduced sound procedures and processes into all fiscal matters, facilitating a high level of accountability in making informed decisions related to budget creation, monitoring all budgetary trends, and fostering long-term financial stability.
- **Operational efficiency** - Created and implemented operational strategies:
 - Dramatically improved operational performance and efficiency, e.g., aligned logistics and supply chain globally in complex organizations, driving **28% savings in supply chain costs worldwide** and creating a cadre of experts.
 - Delivered countless **process improvements** that increased supply chain accuracy and accountability.

Fundraising, Negotiation, Public-Private Partnerships, Stakeholder Alignment and Consensus Building

- **Negotiation and leadership skills** - Drawing on my refugee background, achieved alignment among NGOs, donors, governments, UN bodies, militaries and militias that ensured safe working environments, e.g., in Sudan negotiated safe passage for local staff between North and South (in The Nuba Mountains). In Bosnian war, ensured safe passage for International Rescue Committee’s (IRC) local staff during the siege of Mostar and Sarajevo. In Ethiopia, negotiated a solution to a security dispute between the local population and the Shimelba Refugee Camp population.
- **Led public-private partnership** efforts all over the world, for complex infrastructural and natural resource management, negotiating collaboration between stakeholders such as governments, corporations and local populations, e.g. one-million-dollar water infrastructure in South Sudan, rural conservation and regenerative agriculture project in Ethiopia, **environmental conservation programming** including reforestation, mountain trail preservation and de-mining efforts;
- **Fundraising skills** - Record of strong fundraising skills, especially during the work at the IRC. Participated in numerous fundraising campaigns, with excellent results.

Excerpts from 360 degree feedback reviews: “motivational leader...thought leader...innovative...amazing manager... true mentor and coach...attracts talent...utterly reliable...genuine DEI champion...problem solver...consensus builder... calm under pressure...removes silos and coordinates departments...good judgment...makes things happen...both strategic and tactical...extremely organized”.

EXPERIENCE**Bosnian Herzegovinian American Academy of Arts and Science (BHAAAS)****2017 – Present****Chief Operating Officer**

Jan 2025 – Present

- Led creation and implementation of all operational policies;
- Supervised CFO, HR and field team in policies implementation;
- Created Organization's first Standard Operating Procedure;
- Improved fiscal, operational and administrative accountability throughout the Organization;
- Created and implemented Organization's first public-private collaboration/synchronization plan and strategy;
- Improved financial stability of the organization through numerous strategic measures and fiscal initiatives.

Member Board of Directors

2020 – Present

Consultant - Global Operations, Administration and Fiscal Management

2017 – Present

- Led implementation of operational strategies for this NGO, developed in consulting role;
- Developed operational strategy that has been relied on by the Organization since 2019; led its execution;
- Built fundraising team, including attracting volunteers; improved balance sheet by at least 20%;
- Created procedures and protocols for managing operational challenges, implementing a centralized approach improving efficiency;
- Developed strategy for organizing conferences that optimized attendee experience, conference feasibility and impact.

The Rockefeller Foundation**2019 – March 2024**

Held two operations senior leadership roles, both with executive responsibilities.

Managing Director, Operations - RF Catalytic Capital (RFCC)

2022 – March 2024

Responsible for developing and executing operational strategy and processes, with a budget of \$700 million. Created RFCC's strategy for becoming a **fiscal sponsor**. Lead team of operations professionals.

Strategic Operational Leadership, Execution and Team Cohesion

- Led operational and strategic transformation that has **raised expectations for division growth**, from \$700m currently to at least \$2bn and possibly \$10bn by 2030;
- Drove successful **change management**, ensuring quick adoption of new strategy and policies;
- Led strategy and process that resulted in 40+ policies which improved fiscal and operational effectiveness.

Real Estate Strategy, Budget and Project Management, and Operations Efficiency

- Led and managed five complex real estate projects to successful completion in the U.S. and Kenya;
- Brought an **\$80m renovation project** at NY headquarters to completion, within budget and within timeline;
- Identified and built out conference space in New York that created new convening capabilities;
- Identified and negotiated DC office space; managed renovation to on-time/budget completion;
- **Improved security** in Kenyan and U.S. offices, including identifying and resolving building security gaps.

Internal & External Partnerships

- Led the program of fiscal sponsorship, one of the core duties of the post;
- Provided vital operational support to incubated entities that ensured their near-term success;
- Building relationships with potential donors such as the U.S. DOE and like-minded foundations;
- Identified potential grantees who met standards and led the assessment process for collaboration;
- Improved communication and coordination between internal departments.

Managing Director (Operations Management) - Foundation Services

2019 – 2022

Managed Foundation Services Department (FS), which provides all operational functions for Real Estate, Supply Chain, Contracts, Travel, Security and Safety, Buildouts as well as DC Office and Regional Offices (Nairobi and Bangkok) operations and coordination.

Team and Capability-Building, Interdepartmental Cohesion and Silos Removal

- Transformed demoralized organization into a **highly engaged, high-performing, One-Team culture**, in less than 100 days. Created Staff Engagement Committee. From another department head in 360 reports: *"I can't believe how quickly Semir turned this around"*;
- Created the most diverse unit/team in the Foundation;
- Introduced systems for improved interdepartmental cohesion, coordination and collaboration;
- Filled gap in operational policies, greatly improving efficiency and adherence to best practices.

Real Estate Strategy, Budget and Project Management and Operational Efficiency

Created organizational policy and strategy for Foundation's real estate decisions, leading to collective investment of approximately \$120 million (based on 'stay vs. go' analysis). Examples include:

- Led renovation and **buildout of 120,000 sf HQ**, valued at \$80 million, including identifying and negotiating space at 80% discount. Completed **under budget and on schedule** despite Covid-related supply chain challenges. Supervised renovation of Nairobi and DC offices, both on-time and on-budget;

- Led the process of identifying and negotiating swing space during renovations, getting an 80% discount, saving over \$25 m;
- Identified and **led the negotiation** for 19,000 sf convening space that the Foundation added to its holdings;
- Managed the successful real estate buildout in DC office (valued at approx. \$7 million) and for Pandemic Prevention Institute (PPI, RF's subsidiary) (valued at approx. \$7 million) – met all deadlines/budgets;
- Identified a real estate-related security problem in the RF's Nairobi office, pro-actively found and helped negotiate a safer location (valued at approx. \$5 million).

Security and Safety

Carried out regular security analyses for all Foundation's offices on 3 continents; doubled the number of scenarios for which the Foundation is prepared.

- Changed the previous, outdated security protocol and created a new, comprehensive one, including **Business Continuity Plan** and Security cooperation protocols.
- Elevated safety of all staff by **mitigating kidnapping risks, reputational and international travel threats**, including recommending the suspension/allowance of travel to different destinations. Improved physical security of all offices.
- **Improved travel security** by expanding cooperation between ISOS (leading firm for security advice, evacuation services, etc.), our travel agent and RF's travel team.
- Initiated move of Nairobi Office to new location, for security reasons, including **new office security protocols and procedures**.

Facilities Administration

Supervised the Facilities function, including Head of Facilities. Led RFPs to identify real estate, architectural and construction firms to provide services to the Foundation.

- Led creation of Covid-related Return-to-Office protocols, resulting in **zero Covid transmissions** in office.
- Ensured architectural firms incorporated safety and security standards into design.
- Improved buildings' readiness for RF's reputational risks and threats.
- Visibly improved performance of the facilities team in a very short time.
- Re-designed facilities procedures, optimizing security while reducing unnecessary inconvenience.

Travel and Events

Created and rolled out **Foundation-wide travel policy** for travel spend of \$5 million, including major improvements to the agent reporting format.

Procurement

Created and implemented **procurement policy** governing \$13 million budget, over 600 contracts per year. Developed RFP process, supplier tracking and control systems, training for users of procurement services.

Regional Offices Coordination with the HQ

Improved coordination by initiating inter-office regular communication on operational issues; standardized all operational sectors that could be standardized and synchronized those that couldn't.

Vital Strategies, New York, New York

2015 – 2018

Senior Vice President for Global Operations

Oversaw global operation of a rapidly expanding non-profit organization **spanning over 50 countries**; created and implemented strategic vision for Human Resources, Recruiting, Supply Chain & Risk Management, IT, Legal Issues, Travel & Security Issues and Policy; built a culture of teamwork and cooperation.

- Member of Senior Management Team responsible for developing organizational and departmental strategies; substantially **improved fiscal responsibility and HR Operations**;
- **Created Human Resources Unit** to implement HR policies (e.g., insurance package, compensation scales, professional growth opportunities, performance evaluation system, team building, staff retention). Required staff mentorship, driving a healthy work culture and shared values; through DEI measures, **substantially grew diversity in the HQ**;
- **Facilitated the successful merger** of 2 smaller organizations into Vital Strategies and led change management;
- **Established Global Supply Chain Team** and implemented transparent, reviewable operational processes;
- Supervised an outside IT consulting firm; recruited **first IT director**, started and supervised IT Department;
- Created overall **Standard Operating Procedure** for the whole Global Operations Sector;
- **Negotiated new office space** in prime area of NYC Financial District, saving over \$2 million in build-up costs;
- Introduced a **global One-Team culture** into 2 different organizations on 4 continents. Brought about high collaboration levels, elevated staff morale; built a culture of excellence and cooperation;
- Led RFP for Health Insurance Providers and Plan Options. Led a team in selecting a widely popular health plan;
- Created and implemented the first Employee Manual, Security, Procurement, Travel, and RFP Policies;
- Created and supervised **Legal Department**.

International Rescue Committee (IRC), New York, New York**1992 – 2015**

Held a variety of operational and program-related leadership roles, and a record of steady promotion.

Global Operations, Director of Global Supply Chain (GSC)**2009 – 2015**

Created and **led an international team of 300+ in 60 countries** that successfully transformed Global Supply Chain;

- Led the **public-private** partnership efforts globally;
- **Centralized operations and supply chain**, achieving global savings of 28% via improved purchasing power;
- **Created Global Departmental budget** and always succeeded in observing its parameters;
- **Introduced common global procurement process**, which enabled optimal system utilization;
- **Improved global travel efficiency** and safety; led Travel Services team in managing \$7m annual bookings and 2,700 transactions per year – with zero errors;
- **Created global performance tracking system**, including dashboard and processes, that enabled dramatic improvements in efficiency, compliance and staff/supplier performance;
- Reengineered Temp Hiring process, **substantially improving quality of hires**;
- Established and maintained excellent working relationships with suppliers, ensuring first-class service;
- Credited with achieving One-Team spirit, culture of excellence and highest level of DEI in organization.

Global Operations, Deputy Director for Global Procurement**2007 – 2009****Overseas Programs, Program Officer for Global Operations****2006 – 2007****Overseas Programs, Program Manager for Horn of Africa****2002 – 2006****Overseas Programs, Program Specialist for Asia and East Africa****1998 – 2002****Overseas Programs, Program Assistant for Asia and Newly Independent States of USSR****1995 – 1998****Overseas Programs, Program Assistant for Former Yugoslavia****1993 – 1995****IRC Bosnia and Herzegovina, Head of Herzegovina Regional Office****1992 – 1993**

Established operations in Mostar/Jablanica region. Under war siege, managed HR, logistics and distribution, shelter, health, winterization, micro-enterprise, industry rehabilitation, local production, agriculture, education, security.

- **Supervised budget of over \$19 million**, recruited and supervised all local staff members;
- Led **environmental conservation programming** including reforestation, mountain trail preservation and de-mining efforts;
- Created and implemented the regional programs and operations strategy in a very complex and perilous war-time environment;
- Created teams that worked well together despite often extremely different political views and ethnic backgrounds during a hostile, siege situation.

DAS Travel, Dubrovnik, Croatia**1989 – 2019**

Founder, Co-Owner and Chief Operating Officer

EDUCATION**University of Zagreb, Inter University Center, Dubrovnik, Croatia****1991**

Post Graduate Candidate: American Studies (Completed all credits and half of the exams. Finals interrupted by outbreak of the war.

University of Sarajevo, Philosophy Faculty, Department of Linguistics, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina**Master of Arts in Arabic Studies and Linguistics****1986**

In addition to courses, completed a one-year practicum in Libya in the field of translation (Arabic-English-Bosnian).

Bachelor of Arts**1985**

Double Major in English Language & English & American Literature and Arabic Language, Literature & Civilization.

LANGUAGES

- Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian/Montenegrin – Native (including the Cyrillic alphabet)
- English – Excellent/Fully Fluent
- Arabic – Fluent (including reading, writing and speaking)
- Macedonian – Fluent

HOBBIES

- Music (concert guitarist)
- Mountain hiking/climbing