

CURRICULUM VITAE: AILSA JANE BUCKLEY

Ailsa has over 30 years of experience as a private sector development specialist, with extensive work across East Africa. She has led and managed inclusive business and market systems initiatives, bringing strong expertise in inclusive systems development and market competitiveness, with a particular focus on engaging the private sector to drive sustainable change. She has significant experience in capacity building for systems development, with a proven track record in the design and delivery of training, mentoring and coaching programmes. Ailsa has worked extensively with major donors, international NGOs, and private sector partners. She previously served as Regional Manager for Practical Action Consulting in East Africa, followed by her role as International Markets Specialist. She is currently the Global Guardian for Inclusive Systems Development at Swisscontact, based at the Springfield Centre, where she provides strategic leadership to ensure organisational coherence and quality in systems development practice. Her role spans shaping learning offers, supporting internal teams, and advising external clients. She leads the development and stewardship of the ISD framework, tools and network; promotes organisational learning and knowledge sharing; and ensures systems practice remains central to Swisscontact's work.

Educational Background

Professional Certificate in Executive Coaching (PCEC) from Henley Business School (2025). Received a broad foundation in a range of best practice, coaching competencies and models. International Coaching Federation (ICF) accredited coach.

MBA by distance learning from Leicester University Management Centre (2009). Learned the ins and outs of strategic decision-making, competitor analysis, and forecasting – plus a deep dive into leadership, entrepreneurship, and global strategies. Specialised in international marketing and e-commerce.

Post-Graduate Diploma in Management from Leicester University (2001). Earned remotely while mastering the art of managing organisations. Covered everything from strategic planning and organisational design to managing teams, international management, and social responsibility. Plus, got the lowdown on operations, marketing, finance, and HR.

First Class BA (Hons) in Fashion Design and Marketing from the University of Central Lancashire (1988).

Professional Background

Jan 2025 – present. The Springfield Centre. BASED IN UK. Inclusive Economic Development Advisor and Inclusive Systems Development Guardian.

Swisscontact's ISD Guardian and ISD trainer, advisor and coach - based at the SFC:

- Leading on shaping out and delivering the leadership team coaching offer for development organizations.
- Coordinating the Global ISD Network for onboarding trainings, Leadership Clinics and internal Learning Lab.
- Evolving ISD guidance and delivering quality ISD training across the regions (e.g. project teams in Eastern Europe and Eastern Africa).
- Expanding internal and external learning and sharing on ISD.
- Delivering training and technical support internally to acquisitions and projects – such as advising FCDO's global CASA program and SC's Empower Women project in Ukraine.
- Delivering technical support externally on ATR assignments – such as advisory services as part of UNIDO's MSD Helpdesks in DRC and Kenya.

Jan 2023 – Dec 2024. Swisscontact. CENTRAL EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA BASED IN KENYA. Inclusive Economic Development Advisor and Inclusive Systems Development Guardian.

ISD Guardianship and backstopping, plus designing and delivering Advisory and Training Services:

- Shaped ISD guidance based on internal needs, research and trends and streamlining ISD across all working areas.
- Crafted and delivered quality ISD training and mentoring programs across the regions (e.g. M4C Bangladesh).
- Kept the ISD toolkit fresh, shaping quality materials, and building e-learning offerings that work.
- Promoted internal learning and sharing on ISD through Leadership Clinics and the Learning Lab.
- Evolved and steered the Global ISD Network.
- Maintained and expanded external networks for ISD insights, thought leadership, and opportunities to show off our expertise and experience.
- Delivered technical ISD advice for new projects and getting new staff on board with ISD.

- Provided ISD training and advisory to FCDO's CASA program in Uganda, Nepal, Malawi, Rwanda, and Ethiopia.

Jan 2014 to Dec 2023. Swisscontact. CENTRAL EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA BASED IN KENYA. Global Inclusive Systems Development Guardian (40%) and CESAFA Regional Business and Markets Specialist (60%).

In charge of overseeing the mainstreaming of ISD globally. Also, steering of CESAFA Regional Business Plan and hitting financial targets while leading business development across the region—from relationship-building to partnership-making:

- Trained and mentored in systems thinking and practice, making sure that ISD guidelines are put to work.
- Trained, and co-mentored with up-and-coming ISD mentors and champions in the regions.
- Created and ran the ISD Learning Lab and the e-learning course.
- Delivered commercial ISD training at the 2022 Market Systems Symposium.
- Offered technical support on project bids.
- Provided strategic and technical ISD support to FCDO's CASA Program in Uganda, Malawi, and Nepal, with expansion into Rwanda and Ethiopia.
- Helped DFID's NUTEC program in Uganda and IMSAR project in Rwanda, with ongoing ISD training.
- Designed and supported SIDA's FAR Program and SDC's Horti Sempre Project in Mozambique with ISD guidance.
- Offered ISD expertise to GRM's Livelihoods and Food Security Program in Zimbabwe.
- Designed and supported an ISD project for TradeMark EA to boost trade in coffee, staples, and tourism for landlocked countries, while training 40 staff in Market Systems Development.
- Led Swisscontact's capacity-building efforts on Inclusive Markets in CESAFA, and mentored ISD experts worldwide with toolkits, training programs, and digital resources.
- Designed systemic interventions in Swisscontact's focus areas, including financial services and TVET.

April 2013 to Jan 2014. Practical Action Consulting. INTERNATIONAL BASED IN KENYA. International Markets Specialist.

The driving force behind PAC Global Markets Strategy, making sure that inclusive markets were woven into everything at PAC and PA. Strengthened PAC's market systems work and became the international face of Participatory Market Systems Development (PMSD):

- Delivered PMSD training across India and Kenya for NGOs, donors, and development pros, and trained PAC teams in the UK and Zimbabwe. Ran a PAC African markets summit, tackling MSD innovation and mentoring local teams.
- Developed 'learning from practice' products, case studies, and training resources for Practical Action's PMSD Roadmap.
- Facilitated the Practical Action Markets Forum, sharing lessons and successes in MSD.
- Led a virtual MSD training for Habitat for Humanity in Latin America and built a tailored online training package for their Guyana staff in the housing sector.
- Designed a regional market development program for TradeMark East Africa, from market selection to intervention modelling and results measurement.
- Mapped markets for EUEI-PDF in Rwanda, testing an MSD framework for energy projects, and creating more 'learning from practice' gems.

May 2010 to April 2013. Practical Action Consulting. EAST AFRICA BASED IN KENYA. Regional Consultancy Manager.

At the heart of driving the East Africa consultancy strategy, leading the charge into Rwanda and ensuring that innovative solutions were delivered to clients, all while keeping PAC EA's profitability in check. Guided the team, managed resources, and offered expert advice on market initiatives, as part of the regional management team:

- Delivered commercial training in Participatory Market Systems Development (PMSD) at the SEEP Network's 2012 Conference in DC.
- Developed and ran PMSD and emergency market mapping analysis (EMMA) training for clients like Christian Aid, CAFOD, Oxfam, Swisscontact, and more.
- Helped Christian Aid roll out market development approaches and tools globally, trained 40+ country directors, and mentored country offices, all while crafting 'learning from practice' resources.
- Created an interactive multimedia tool for program replication with the World Bank/IFC, and led an evaluation of Lighting Africa, creating a toolkit for scaling it across Africa.
- Developed a market facilitator's manual for Land O'Lakes and evaluated Kenya's 5-year VCD Dairy Sector Competitiveness Program, creating a toolkit for scaling.
- Led technical input for ILO's VCD projects in Somaliland and S Central Somalia, focusing on market development for livestock fodder and light engineering.

November 1995 – April 2010. SELF EMPLOYED. EAST AFRICA BASED IN KENYA. Self-employed enterprise development consultant (15 years).

Leading the charge in developing and delivering solutions for clients —planning, coordinating, implementing, and reporting. Worked with INGOs, private companies, and donors:

- Set up an M&E framework and created an interactive CD for Swisscontact's East Africa Financial Services Programme.
- Coached ICCO partners in Kenya on Fair Economic Development (FED) projects, trained in BDS market development and helped them develop a new country plan.
- Evaluated ILO's SEMA project in Uganda and created a resource tool for replication.
- Contributed to the Gates Foundation's Farmer First Study in Tanzania and Mali on behalf of Research International, diving into farming systems, farmer needs, and gender issues.
- Conducted BDS research for Technoserve's East African Dairy Development Project in Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda; and implemented BDS training for the project's consortium team.
- Helped Transfair USA evaluate coffee cooperatives in Kenya to boost production and quality, while exploring organic certification.
- Worked with 4 media houses in Kenya to create sustainable radio programs for Kenya's agricultural sector for DFID's Business Services Market Development Programme (BMSDP).
- Strengthened the African Women Agribusiness Network (AWAN) to boost exports and advocate for a better business environment for women in Africa.
- Managed an initiative to develop profitable and efficient business services and markets in the dairy sub-sector in Kenya for Intermediate Technology Development Group/ BSMDP.
- Supported FAO and CARE to develop private veterinary systems in Southern Sudan.
- Developed export markets for organic honey from Somalia and Sudan for USDA-FAS, implementing market research assessments in UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and crafting business models and marketing strategies.

And long-term assignments:

- Managed a year-long media intervention to boost agricultural info through ICT with FIT Resources for DFID's BMSDP.
- Promoted SME development and job creation in Somalia for the ILO, boosting local capacity through technical assistance. Attached for one year to the Somali Enterprise Employment and Livelihoods Project funded by DFID/DANIDA.
- Led market appraisals and ethical trade efforts for EC Somalia, linking local businesses to international markets. Attached for one year to the Somalia Income Diversification Project of Progressive Interventions funded by EC.
- Pushed Somali enterprise development with project performance measures, trade fairs, and SME support. Attached for one year to the Somalia Marketing Assistance and Product Promotion Project of Progressive Interventions funded by the EC.

Jan 1992 - Apr 1995. Under the auspices of VSO (Voluntary Services Overseas). KENYA. SME Development Advisor.

- **Apr 1994 - Apr 1995 KENYA GATSBY CHARITABLE TRUST, Nairobi.**
Crafted sector-specific training programs to help producers get their products in shape—whether it was product development, quality control, cracking the export game, or learning how to market.
- **Apr 1994 - Apr 1995: JISAIDIE COTTAGE INDUSTRIES, Nairobi.**
Acted as the product design guru for rural extension workers and producer groups, helping them diversify their products for new market opportunities, both at home and abroad. Boosted JCI's income potential, sourced fresh markets, and crafted materials to help extension workers empower local enterprises. Partnered up with ATOs overseas to make it all happen.
- **Jan 1992 - March 1994: MINISTRY OF CULTURE and SOCIAL SERVICES, Kitui District.**
Acted as the design/business advisor, boosting handcraft activities in rural areas. Ran training programs for community officers, developed resources for extension workers to kick-start local enterprises, and crafted a "Design for Profit" program to help small-scale entrepreneurs turn their ideas into cash.

Nov 1988 - Jan 1992. PARKWOOD COLLEGE, SHEFFIELD, UK. Associate Lecturer.

Lectured on the BTEC Fashion Diploma, shaping future designers with lessons in fashion, knitwear, life drawing, costume history, and business skills.

Nov 1988 - Jan 1992, HUDDERSFIELD TECHNICAL COLLEGE, UK. Part-time Lecturer.

Nov 1988 - Jan 1992, CALDERDALE COLLEGE, UK. Part-time Lecturer.

Lectured in fashion, textiles, and life drawing on the BTEC Ordinary National Diploma and Art and Design Foundation Courses – turning raw talent into future artists and designers.