

# Alumni Across Continents: GPS provides ‘a great education and has paid off over 30-plus years’



*The following is part of the GPS Alumni Across Continents series, highlighting the accomplishments of our alumni living and working around the globe.*



Tamiko Sher '91 | Contributed photo

Tamiko Sher, who earned a Master of Pacific International Affairs (MPIA) in 1991, is based in Johannesburg, South Africa and holds dual roles: executive director of the [African Institute for Entrepreneurship \(AIfE\)](#), a non-governmental organization (NGO), and owner/manager of her private virtual consulting company, [Z.A. ZEN Consulting](#). The consulting firm specializes in strategic entrepreneurship development through innovative solutions and focuses on three key areas: entrepreneurship, research-based solutions and knowledge management and innovation.

Sher, who co-founded AIfE with two partners, originally located to South Africa in 1996 for a job with Coca-Cola. Now a permanent resident, her mission through AIfE is to address the gap in entrepreneurship development in a way that translates into actionable insights to create real benefits in growing entrepreneurs.

“The reason we started AIfE is to fill an important gap on the African continent for research in new technology, approaches and methodologies that seek to identify and create entrepreneurship opportunities,” Sher said.

At AIfE, Sher and her team recently published a definitive guide on the drone industry in South Africa, and they are working to launch a series on drone tech, fin tech, health tech and ed tech, with a focus on women in tech, for South Africa’s largest telecommunications company, along with a three-day Women and Drones Africa conference. The team is currently engaged with the Centre of Excellence in Financial Services (COEFS) doing a large-scale research project for one of South Africa’s largest financial institutions.

Throughout her career, Sher has gained in-depth work experience in several countries - including South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and Japan, with exposure to the U.S., India, Mozambique and Ghana - successfully developing and implementing strategic business plans at macro and micro levels.

“GPS was an incredibly important foundation for my career. I’d always thought that traditional policy and/or MBAs were too narrow, and the combined approach seemed more relevant to the complexity of today’s world,” Sher said. “I still use what I learned at GPS in my daily work - whether we are working with government, private sector or institutions - and the multi-layered focus helps us bridge the gap between these areas. I’ve also been able to work in any of these

areas: I started in the private sector, have done extensive work with government and multilateral institutions and have now co-founded my own NGO, so it's come full circle."

Sher credits her time at GPS with the success across her impressive career, which gave her the tools to provide a specialist's understanding of the intersection between government and public policy, the private sector, NGOs and entrepreneurs.

"It's a great education and has paid off over 30-plus years," Sher said.