

ABB's Arleta Mukhesi on navigating a global transition

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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While Arleta Mukhesi's phobia of blood dashed her initial dream of becoming a doctor, she's since found a new passion in finance and is a rising star in the field. After starting out as a graduate-in-training at ABB, she's since become a global early talent partner and, more recently, a business finance analyst at ABB France.

Looking ahead, Mukhesi has her sights set on becoming a chartered accountant.

This Youth Month, she shares with us what drew her to a career in finance, how she's managed the transition to a global division at ABB, and how young employees are being supported and empowered at the organisation.

Share with us a bit about yourself and how you started your career at ABB.

I studied a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting degree at the University of Limpopo and I am currently studying towards a Bachelor of Honours in Management Accounting at the University of South Africa.

I started working at ABB South Africa as a graduate-in-training under the finance department during November 2021 and was in the programme for nine months. I then received a better permanent offer to join the global trainee finance track as a global early talent partner. It is a two-year programme whereby you are given a chance to rotate within different divisions in different countries at ABB to acquire knowledge and become more of an expert in your role in order to better ABB.



Arleta Mukhesi, global early talent partner and business finance analyst at ABB France

Did you always want to work in finance? What drew you to the profession?

During my high school life, I dreamt of becoming a doctor, but then I have a phobia of blood. This then meant I had to find an alternative career path, so I decided to study a Bachelor of Accounting at university. I then fell in love with the concept - I love solving problems and not always doing repetitive stuff. And here I am, furthering my studies to become a management accountant.

You've also just started as a business finance analyst at ABB France. How did you manage the transition to being employed at a global division?

Firstly, it has not been an easy transitional journey. It requires continuous learning and a dedication to learn the system, language and understanding the culture. You have to be a fast learner to grasp tasks quickly. Plus, moving to a country where English is not widely used is a challenge, as during meetings I would feel left out and no sense of belonging.

But after having chats with my mentor and trainees who are on the same journey with me, my home manager, host manager and other colleagues, it helped ease things. They made me realise that to transition well, one should be vulnerable, open and speak up about how they feel and where they need help.

Sharing the experience with my host and home manager helped them understand what was happening, and they gave me some advice on what to do and sometimes they intervened when necessary. The important key is to ask questions when I

don't understand and ask for help when I need it.

▣ **What does being a global early talent partner at ABB entail?**

A global early talent partner is a trainee programme that allows trainees to acquire experience at a global level by rotating from one role to another after six months for a period of two years. It helps trainees to learn and understand how diverse ABB is, the systems used in different countries and the interesting part is networking.

It teaches trainees how to network and allows them to meet different people in different corners of the ABB world. Also, to be able to improve how things are done at work in my home country (ABB South Africa in this case). The role helps with continuous learning, and it guarantees the trainee permanent employment at the end of the programme, and it allows the trainee to acquire more experience in a short period of time.



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▣ **Your career path requires that you constantly further your education. Why is this important to you?**

What I like about ABB is that it encourages continuous learning. We also had a webinar that explains the importance to learn, connect and grow and I believe that the more you learn, the more you grow. ABB cares and invests in the growth of its employees.

Learning and furthering my studies, I believe, is the most important core for my growth and gaining new experiences in my finance career stream. Like they say, you will never grow fully if you don't plant a seed in a fertile soul. Learning also helps me to discover myself regarding what I love to do under the finance department.

▣ **What are some of your short- and long-term career goals?**

My short-term career goal is to complete my Bachelor of Honours in Management Accounting this year. Also, to take some ABB learning courses that will improve my performance to be more effective. My long-term goal is to register with UK CIMA to further my studies to become a Chartered Institute of Management Accountant.

“ My dream is to have these four letters (CIMA) after my name. And in the future, to become a chartered accountant (CA). ”

▣ **How are young employees being supported and empowered at ABB?**

ABB is enabling youth empowerment by developing programmes such as the Graduate-in-Training programme, whereby they train new university graduates on soft skills, work experience and even enrolls graduates into a Management Practice for Finance qualification.

Furthermore, the training for engineering or electrical engineering graduates assists them in knowing how to work and handle people as well as boosts their confidence.

ABB also enables youth empowerment by encouraging graduates to be innovative and be creative in what they do and also to think outside the box.

▣ **As we celebrate Youth Month in SA, do you have any words of encouragement for those starting out in their careers?**

Youth Month honours the youth that died in 1976 for quality education. During Youth Month, as a country, we have to reflect on our education system and assess whether it is favouring the future of upcoming youth, building our youth to be innovative in thinking of creative ways of building a better future for our country, society, and also to reduce the current high unemployment rate we currently face.

■ You've been voted president for the day. What's the first thing on your to-do list?

The first thing on my to-do list is to improve our education system and to modify the current curriculum to have employable youth and youth that can also create jobs. Our education system needs to move with the times. Technology is evolving and changing every second of the day. Therefore, we must get experts on how we can improve our education system.

Another important thing on my mind is how we can try and combat the unemployment rate by starting a project whereby we have convenient public transport. Every city should have a metro rail, buses, and trams like they have in European countries. Imagine how many people would be employed in the transport industry by government. It will help generate revenue, the public will have safer, convenient transport and the unemployment rate will decrease.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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