



# LGT Impact Fellowship

Testimonial



**Interview with Joshua Ayuo, Impact Measurement and Evaluation Fellow at Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association in Kenya. Prior to joining the LGT Impact Fellowship 2020 cohort, Joshua has gained over 7 years of experience in program management, monitoring, evaluation in the development sector in the areas of Gender, Human Rights, Education and Climate Change.**

**How is your current work with your host organizations different from what you used to do before?**

“My previous organization, a gender-based NGO, and my host organization during the Fellowship, MMWCA, are slightly different in terms of content scope and geographic scope with some similarities in terms of cross-cutting issues such as inclusion. One unique difference between the two organizations, however, is that MMWCA adopts new aspects of impact measurement and management practice using a lean data approach, moving away from reporting basic performance indicators. This is a fast, reliable customer-centric approach to impact measurement that helps an organization turn its impact thesis into quantified, measurable results.

This unique and non-conventional approach is to not only consider listening to the people that matter the most such as beneficiaries, employees, customers in conservation, where investments are primarily focusing on, but to also take into account the benchmarked impact results to compare and improve performance. Thanks to my close collaboration with [60 decibels](#), an impact measurement agency that MMWCA had partnered with, that I was able to learn about the lean data concept. This concept takes a participatory approach by allowing beneficiaries to voice their feedback about interventions and provide high-quality data to help organizations optimize their impact.”

**What have you achieved together with your host organization?**

“My most important achievement was to embed an impact-driven practice within MMWCA’s programming that aligns with the organization’s goals and its strategy. This practice consists of two aspects: 1) a good impact measurement frameworks and 2) internal capacity with regards to staff skills.

I was able to put in place supportive tools and impact frameworks, etc., while also training the team on impact-driven programming and how the team can evidence their work.

Another important achievement was my contribution to fundraising efforts within the organization. I came on board in the middle of the COVID-19 crisis and hence MMWCA had stepped up its fundraising efforts to ensure that the conservation work stays afloat. My involvement included ideation of concepts and development of proposals to sustain local livelihoods and ensure the ecological integrity of the Mara landscape. One of the key areas where I celebrate my achievements is the fundraising opportunity for a USAID funded project. This was going to be the first time MMWCA received direct funding from USAID. We drafted a very solid Theory of Change as well as monitoring frameworks for this grant that ensured MMWCA successfully received the award. In addition, I was privileged to be part of the team that led the project inception phase including holding stakeholders consultative forums on the new grant. Through this contribution, MMWCA increased its funding by USD 2 Million which would go a long way in securing the local livelihoods and sustaining conservation work during the pandemic period.

For both these important achievements – the impact-driven practice, as well as the fundraising – my specific skills and experiences in impact measurement and fundraising, came in handy. MMWCA could benefit from my impact measurement and management skills in reviewing impact matrix, aligning projects to strategy, building Theory of Change, evidencing impact, etc.; and also my fundraising skills, including proposal writing, participation in fundraising activities, generating fundraising products, e.g. knowledge products about lessons learnt, etc.”

**After your Fellowship experience, what will you do differently now?**

“The Fellowship introduced me to new concepts of impact measurement and management such as lean data, which is different from traditional monitoring practices for compliance purposes, and therefore I am going to embrace the lean data approach also in the future by looking at different dimensions of impact. That learning and exposure will create some shifts in my normal practice and also a shift in interest in different career paths. From theory to practice, the Fellowship allowed me to perfect my conservation practice and learn how to embed impact measurement and management in the conservation space.”

**What has been the most impressive moment of this Fellowship?**

“There have been major transitions during my Fellowship, which have been impressive moments of my Fellowship: First of all, in my personal life has changed during this period, as I settled, got married, founded a family. The second transition was to shift into the conservation space, with a growing interest in this space and borrowing a lot from my previous gender work on inclusion. Since this was a natural transition, it was very easy to plug and play my knowledge and skills and hence I was able to contribute to the team quickly by conceptualizing conservation work and supporting raising funds for it. The third transition will hopefully be to get a foothold in the conservation space permanently once I complete my Fellowship extension.”

**How would you describe your Fellowship experience in 3 words?**

“Insightful, impactful, exploratory.”



## Maasai Mara a Wildlife Conservancies Association

### Context

The Maasai Mara holds 25% of the country's remaining wildlife, but faces three interlinked challenges:

- Threats and damages to the ecosystem (wildlife and vegetation) due to fencing, overgrazing and increased alternative land-use practices. This not only decimates the ecosystem's unique biodiversity, but also undermines its role in performing vital ecosystem services, such as carbon storage and water cycling.
- Poverty of the local Maasai population in the surrounding areas as the pre-existing conservancy models provided only few local economic benefits in terms of land-lease payments, employment and grazing land.
- Exclusion of the local Maasai population from decision making regarding conservation and tourism related activities on their land.

### Solution

- Many conservancies in Kenya are run solely by tourist operators. The Mara conservancies have developed a unique conservancy model in which both tourism operators and the local Maasai landowners are equally represented on the conservancy board and involved in decision making.
- The model empowers the Maasai economically through income from land leases and employment as rangers, as well as in the tourist camps within the conservancies. The local population (both land and non-land owners) also benefits from other co-created projects, including women's empowerment, carbon capture, waste management or education.
- Conservancies enable the Maasai to continue their traditional, pastoralist way of life as it allows for controlled grazing within conservancies. This limits overgrazing serves to promote the health of the ecosystem and maintains the longevity of livestock farming - a significant activity of the Maasai culture.

### Impact

- The 16 Maasai Mara conservancies provide a stable income for close to 16,000 households, benefitting almost 150,000 local people.
- Since the formation of the first conservancies, there has been a dramatic increase in wildlife, e.g. with Naboisho conservancy now believed to have one of the highest lion densities in Africa and is home to over 220 recorded bird species.
- The conservancy model is being replicated with the aim to secure the entire Greater Mara Ecosystem (ca. 4'000 km<sup>2</sup>) other endangered ecosystems.

The model ensures:

- Increased income to landowners: up to 3x from earned land-lease fees and additional income from employment within the conservancy.
- Wildlife protection: the Naboisho model encourages co-existence between local communities and wildlife thus reducing human-wildlife conflicts.
- Improved quality of life: through benefits achieved through Naboisho programs that support access to clean water, access to renewable energy, education programs, and the promotion of women's economic activity.