



LGT Impact Fellowship

Testimonial



Interview with Kathryn Cassibry, Partnerships and Fundraising Officer at mothers2mothers (m2m), Maputo, Mozambique. Prior to joining the LGT Impact Fellowship 2020 cohort, Kathryn has built a track record in development and non-profit management in the US.

What motivated you to participate in the Fellowship program?

“When I graduated from my Masters, I felt stuck between two paths – two different worlds. On the one hand graduating from a European business school allowed me to take the international business route, but on the other hand, having worked in the social sector before, I felt pulled back into that sector with the vision of having a positive impact on the world. When I saw the the LGT Impact Fellowship I realized that it was the perfect combination of several aspects, giving me the opportunity to use my business skills in a business development role at an international public health NGO and it is also sponsored by an important philanthropy investor. Moreover, I had heard of both before, LGT Venture Philanthropy and mothers2mothers, thanks to my thesis on Impact Bonds, and I knew that both are respectful organizations I would like to work for.”

What have been the highlights of working with your host organization and LGT VP so far? What have been the challenges?

“The most important general highlight first and foremost was to get to know, care and respect all the work mothers2mothers has done. Especially working with them in 2021, their 20-year anniversary, which was a year of retrospection for them. For example, they have achieved virtual elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, they employed 12’000 HIV positive women as healthcare workers and have impacted 13 million clients, which is very impressive. It was a tremendous learning opportunity for me to work in a health organization during a global pandemic and learn how they ensured that their peer-to-peer model could safely operate during the pandemic. COVID-19 caused, however, also large challenges during my Fellowship. My role as Partnerships and Fundraising Officer is a people- and relationship-focused role and building relationships through virtual meetings can be difficult. In addition, unfortunately, the circumstances of COVID-19 didn’t allow me to travel to Maputo, Mozambique as originally intended. At first my travels got delayed, but at the end I have spent the entire Fellowship year working remotely. Finally, another highlight was working with the LGT Venture Philanthropy team – the Investment Director for m2m, as well as the Fellowship team. All the one-on-one support provided to Fellows, the webinars, the check-in calls with the entire cohort have been very helpful.”

What is the value of this experience for you? (What have you learnt about yourself, other people, the organization/sector, region, etc. of your engagement)

“The value of the Fellowship for me was to test out and see whether going back to the NGO world was the right career track for me. When I was younger I had already gotten exposure to the social sector in the US, though it was domestic and more community based, however, the Fellowship gave me the chance to do this kind of work on a much higher international level and at a bigger scale. It was a unique opportunity to learn how a larger NGO works in the ecosystem, how they collaborate with the private and the public sector, UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral institutions and other implementing partners, how the processes work, how they form their strategy, etc. So what I took out from the Fellowship was the discovery process that I do want to pursue a career in this sector and continue on in a similar role.”

What would you compare the experience of being a Fellow to?

“I would compare the experience of being a Fellow to being a regular employee at the organization – but better! When I applied for the Fellowship I was concerned that it would be another internship or that I wouldn’t be able to integrate into the organization, especially since I wasn’t able to travel to Mozambique. However, I never felt that way. One of the largest benefits for organizations to participate in the Fellowship program is for them to create roles as a vision of a step they want to take in the future, i.e. a new direction, a new role, a new opportunity. As a Fellow you represent that change the organization envisions. And hence, as much as you as a Fellow want the organization to succeed, they want you to succeed to ultimately implement the change.

How would you describe your Fellowship experience in 3 words?

Engaging, warm, formative



Problem

In parts of Africa, up to 75% of babies born to HIV+ mothers stand to lose their mothers to AIDS-related illnesses. Lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS and fear of stigma prevent mothers living with HIV/AIDS from searching the right kind of support to prevent transmission and learning to live with HIV/AIDS.

Solution

- m2m hires HIV+ mothers to educate and support new HIV+ mothers to learn how to live with HIV/AIDS
- Education and empowerment tools prevent mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV/AIDS during and after pregnancy, combat stigma within families and communities, support a mother’s adherence to medical treatment, and reduce the likelihood of AIDS orphans
- m2m’s enhanced program model (EPM) provides reproductive, maternal, newborn, child health (RMNCH) to HIV+ and HIV- women and their families to improve overall health
- Since 2012, m2m has decreased the number of sites it is directly working at and has focused more on capacity building for governments to include the mentor mother model into their health facilities m2m’s “exit strategy“ is for local host governments to take over the treatment of mothers

Impact

Impact m2m	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
# of new HIV+ women clients enrolled (in '000s)	97	140	74	68	186	No longer used; patients reached: 901	Patients reached: 1'331
# of sites (supported by m2m)	350	321	309	267	317	317	511
# of active countries	6	6	7	8	8	9	10