

Principal Consultant

Professional profile

James Robinson is a Principal Consultant at Itad where he leads the Private Sector Development, Markets and Trade Theme. He is an experienced senior manager, Project Director and Team Leader and has a strong understanding of a breadth of inclusive economic development approaches. He has in-country experience across Africa and Asia, working on a variety of projects and programmes for different development partners at local and national level. He has considerable experience leading complex evaluations using theory-based approaches and mixed-methods. He is also an excellent facilitator and specialises in leading Theory of Change, Strategy and Learning and processes.

At present he is the Project Director for the Mastercard Foundation's Savings Learning Lab where he provides strategic oversight of the Lab and leads the additional strategic research and evaluations, we are undertaking to support Mastercard's Young Africa Works strategy. He is also Project Director for our Strategic Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning partnership with the Gatsby Foundation supporting the foundation at organisation level but also providing support to programmes. James also leads the Independent monitoring Evaluation and Learning unit for the Sustainable Urban Economic Development programme Kenya and Itad's Evaluation of the UK Caribbean Infrastructure fund- implemented by the Caribbean Development Bank.

Before joining Itad, James was Country Director at Christian Aid in Burundi where he led all work in the country including inclusive market development and health programmes.

Nationality British

Languages English (mother tongue), French (working proficiency)

Country experience Afghanistan, Burundi, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Myanmar, Peru, South Sudan, Tanzania, Zimbabwe

Education

2006 - 2007 **MSc, Environmental Sustainability**
University of Edinburgh

2002 - 2005 **BSc, Environmental Science**
University of Leeds

Employment

2018 - Present **Principal Consultant, & Private Sector Development Theme Lead**
Itad Ltd., UK

2016 - 2018 **Senior Consultant**
Itad Ltd., UK

2014 - 2016 **Burundi Country Director**
Christian Aid, Burundi

2011 - 2014 **PROMISE Manager/Programme Advisor**
Christian Aid, UK

2011 **Technical Specialist**
Salix Finance, UK

2010 **Impact Advisor**
Voluntary Services Overseas, Cambodia

2008 - 2009 **Micro Enterprise and Project Management Advisor**
CDA Cambodia and VSO Cambodia

Project experience

2016 - Present **Mastercard Foundation Savings Learning Lab**

Role: Project Director | Client: Mastercard Foundation | Location: Multi-country

Supporting the MasterCard Foundation to deepen their knowledge of the portfolio of work. Supporting implementing partners to develop effective monitoring, evaluation, research and learning plans, and improve their approach to evidence generation and learning. Conduct complimentary additional research and knowledge curation, including primary research and evidence mapping.

Leads additional research and evaluation activities to support the foundations Young Africa Works strategy. Including retrospective assessments of previous work, research in to appropriate implementation strategies and evaluations of current programmes.

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- 2018 - Present Strategic Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Partnership**
Role: Project Director | Client: Gatsby Foundation | Location: Multi-country
Leadership of Itad's support to strengthen the Gatsby approach to monitoring and evaluation, particularly in relation to its objectives of achieving sector transformation. Oversees technical quality of overall support at organisational and programme level as well as leading support to specific programmes.
- 2018 - Present Independent MEL Unit for the Sustainable Urban Economic Development Programme Kenya**
Role: Project Director | Client: DFID | Location: Multi-country
Itad has been appointed to deliver the monitoring, evaluation and learning component of SUED to support programme learning and adaptation, and contribute to the global knowledge base on what works and doesn't work in bringing about sustainable urban development at the town/country level. James provides strategic input and overall leadership of the contract. Ensuring quality of learning and monitoring support and deliverables. Responsible for liaison with DFID on scheduling and contractual matters.
- 2020 - Present Evaluation of the UK Caribbean Infrastructure Fund (UKCIF)**
Role: Project Director | Client: DFID | Location: Multi-country
Itad has been appointed to undertake an Evaluation of the £300million UK Caribbean Infrastructure Fund. The evaluation will assess the development impact of a variety of infrastructure projects across the Caribbean, providing a robust assessment of the effectiveness of technical assistance and financial support.
- 2017 - 2019 Evaluation of Rural Roads and Livelihoods - Tanzania**
Role: Project Director | Client: DFID | Location: Tanzania
Itad led the evaluation of two DFID-funded Improving Rural Access in Tanzania (IRAT) Programme and the Livelihood Enhancement through Agricultural Development (LEAD) programme. Oversaw the undertaking, analysis and writing of the two Mid Term Reviews. Worked with DFID and Team Leader to ensure that the evaluations met DFID's needs and were in a form that could be utilised by stakeholders. Oversaw the final evaluation of IRAT and presented findings to DFID, Government of Kenya and a wider stakeholder interest group in Tanzania.
- 2018 - 2019 Thematic Evaluation - Inclusive Economic Development**
Role: Project Director | Client: FCO | Location: Multi-country
Evaluation of inclusive economic development as part of M&E services to the FCO's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund in North Africa. James provided strategic input and overall leadership of the contract. Ensuring quality of support and deliverables. Oversaw quality of the process and evaluation products. Manage Team Leader and project manager.
- 2017 - Present Evaluation of a climate-smart business programme**
Role: Project Director and business lead | Client: Good Energies Foundation | Location: Multi-country
Provided overall leadership to the evaluation of a Good Energies Foundation funded multi-year programme focused on incubating climate-smart business to overcome poverty-driven deforestation. Supported design and implementation of a utilisation focussed evaluation combining programme level analysis with two in-country assessments of progress. Facilitated ToC and recommendations through a co-creation process.
- 2017 - Present BEAM Exchange**
Role: Researcher | Client: DFID | Location: DFID
Undertook a review of the current evidence of impact of programmes that employ market systems approaches. Presented results at BEAM/ DCED conference.
- 2011 Sustainable Livelihoods for Mekong Biodiversity and Critical Wetland Resource Conservation**
Role: Team Leader and independent MEL Consultant | Client: CRDT Cambodia | Location: Cambodia/UK
Led a baseline survey including designing data collection tools and undertaking analysis. Established Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework for the 'Sustainable Livelihoods for Mekong Biodiversity and Critical Wetland Resource Conservation in Cambodia' project.
- 2010 Accenture funded Making Markets Work for the Poor - Cambodia**

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Role: Impact Advisor | Client: VSO | Location: Cambodia

Developed nested monitoring systems with in-country partners as part of a global project and supported baseline data collection and aggregation at a global level.

2009

Catfish Market Participatory Value Chain Analysis

Role: Market Chain Analysis Consultant | Client: Oxfam | Location: Cambodia

Conducted a "Participatory Value Chain Analysis" of the catfish market in North-East Cambodia. Designed research and evaluation tools and undertook fieldwork with a team of research assistants

2009

Social Enterprise feasibility assessment

Role: Team Leader | Client: Cambodian Rural Development Team | Location: Cambodia

Undertook a feasibility and market opportunity for a number of potential social enterprises for CRDT to invest in. Facilitated discussions and developed initial business plans alongside team for two investments.

2007

Evaluation on the Role of Microfinance in East Africa

Role: Consultant | Client: LTS International | Location: East Africa

James undertook a detailed evaluation of the role of microfinance in East Africa with a particular focus on its role in environmental protection in collaboration with two other researchers.