



### Professional profile

Mary Lagaay brings over seven years national and international experience in research, monitoring and evaluation. Since joining Itad in 2017, she has worked on a formative evaluation of UNICEF's approach to health systems strengthening (HSS), focused on examining UNICEF's efforts on HSS across different levels of the organization in order to facilitate learning from experience. In addition, she has worked on two theory based evaluations of paediatric and adolescent HIV testing and counselling programmes being funded by the ELMA foundation in South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Swaziland and Zambia. Mary has also completed an evaluation of the Norwegian Aid Administration's practice of Results-Based Management.

Prior to joining Itad, Mary was a Researcher at Plan International, where she supported the organisation to produce and utilise evidence to measure performance, report to donors, inform programme design and improve strategic decision making. Based within Plan International's global headquarters, she provided technical support and global over-sight to country offices to ensure programme monitoring and evaluation met specific donor requirements and adhered to internal programme quality procedures. She also took a leading role in supporting country offices to ensure that research being commissioned included gender sensitive methodologies, given the specific disadvantages facing women and girls in developing countries. Mary's role at Plan International provided an in-depth understanding of the processes and challenges around measuring complex interventions within an international NGO working with multiple partners. She was also responsible for the design, implementation and management of global research projects related to children's rights on topics including Ebola, birth registration, youth employment, child marriage, disability, gender and inclusion. She holds an MSc in Social Policy Research from the London School of Economics where she received in-depth training in quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

### Nationality

British

### Languages

English (mother tongue), Spanish (basic)

### Country experience

Ethiopia, Ghana, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Brazil, South Africa, Uganda, Norway, United Kingdom

### Education

#### 2011 - 2012 MSc Social Policy Research (Distinction)

London School of Economics

#### 2003 - 2006 BA History (2:1)

University of Exeter

### Employment

#### 2017 - Present Consultant

Itad

#### 2013 - 2017 Research Manager

Plan International

- Supported country offices with evaluation design in line with specific donor requirements
- Contributed to the development of Plan International's programme quality procedures
- Provision of capacity-building workshops for country office staff on designing and conducting research and evaluation, ethical practice, analysing data and utilising evidence
- Designed, managed and coordinated global research projects related to children's rights
- Maintained a 'gender lens' within all research and evaluation assignments in line with a strategic focus on addressing harmful social norms and inequality for girls
- Conducted and supervised primary field research with programme stakeholders
- Active member in a number of research reference groups
- Designed and implemented ethics approval process for all primary research conducted by Plan International and managed a number of external ethics applications
- Managed Plan International's database (Cognos) of 1.4 million sponsored children. Created dashboards and info-graphics in cooperation with ICT, and provided training on the database and software in various countries and online
- Supported collection, collation and disaggregation of global data for strategic planning
- Responsible for liaison and partnerships with universities, research institutes and other parties to further the creation of knowledge within international development
- Presented research and evidence at a range of international conferences

#### 2012 - 2013 Policy and Parliamentary Officer

### National Children's Bureau

- Coordinated the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children (an interest group for MP's and Peers) and the Children's Inter-Agency Group (voluntary and statutory executives working with the UK government to improve services for children and young people)
- Drafted and edited thematic policy reports on specific issues related to children and young people. Maintained a strong focus on the participation of children and young people and 'the voice of the child' within research, policy and decision-making
- Maintained relationships with key parliamentarians and stakeholders to aid targeted dissemination of policy reports

2009 - 2011

### Project Administrator

#### Oasis Project

- Designed and implemented innovative measurement frameworks to evaluate a range of services for women, children and young people affected by drug and alcohol misuse
- Interviews and focus groups conducted with children affected by drug and alcohol misuse in order to understand their needs to inform project design
- Analysed data to: measure and improve understanding on the impact of the organisation; identify gaps in service provision; improve performance; influence strategy

## Project experience

2017 - present

### UNICEF Programming in Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) – A Formative Evaluation

Role: Evaluator | Client: UNICEF | Location: Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sierra Leone

Given the strategic importance of UNICEF's engagement in HSS, it has contracted Itad to undertake a formative evaluation of the organisation's approach to HSS, focused on examining UNICEF's efforts on HSS across different levels of the organization in order to facilitate learning from experience.

Now in its second year, the evaluation is theory-based, centred on the use of an overarching theory of change (ToC) for UNICEF's work in HSS, which elaborates the theoretical causal pathways through which UNICEF intends to effect change. Two separate but inter-related domains of UNICEF's engagement in HSS are examined – namely, how UNICEF as an organization is supporting the changes sought in its approach, and how programme implementation is supporting HSS at country level.

Mary's role in the evaluation involves coordinating the design, fieldwork planning, analysis and write up of 6 in-depth country case studies. This includes liaison with each UNICEF country office and management of national consultants in each country. She is also responsible for undertaking data collection in Sierra Leone and will contribute to the final evaluation report, drawing out key learning for UNICEF at both global and country levels.

2017 - Present

### Evaluation of ELMA-funded "Unfinished Business" Paediatric and Adolescent HIV Programme

Role: Evaluator | Client: The ELMA Foundation | Location: South Africa, Uganda

After a multi-year series of investments, the ELMA Foundation has commissioned Itad to evaluate its contribution to paediatric and adolescent HIV treatment and care in South Africa and Uganda.

The evaluation is built around testing a theory of change which lays out the objectives and activities of the ELMA Unfinished Business program and illustrates how it is designed to contribute to improved outcomes for paediatric and adolescent HIV testing and treatment. The theory of change is being interrogated through:

- Analysis of HIV testing, treatment, and retention data using the HIV cascade of care as an organizing framework
- Qualitative data collection to form country case studies assessing how the Unfinished Business programme has (or has not) contributed to outcomes as articulated by the theory of change

Mary's responsibilities on the project have included obtaining IRB ethics approval, facilitating a theory of change workshop with programme stakeholders, coordinating a multi-country team of evaluators, liaising with multiple implementing partners to gather programme data and schedule fieldwork, design of data collection and analysis tools and writing sections of the evaluation reports.

2017 - Present

### Evaluation of an Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundation Programme to Accelerate POC/PITC Testing

Role: Evaluator | Client: The ELMA Foundation | Location: Kenya, Swaziland, Zambia

Among the ELMA Foundation's suite of investments is a 36-month grant to the Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) to expand access to HIV testing and treatment in Kenya, Swaziland, and Zambia for children aged 18 months to 19 years old.

The programme evaluation being conducted by Itad aims to assess outcomes to accelerate Point of Care (POC) testing and Provider Initiated Testing and Counselling (PITC) in the three programme countries and inform future investments and the direction of ELMA's HIV portfolio.

Mary's activities have included design of data collection and analysis tools, undertaking qualitative fieldwork in Kenya, analysis of qualitative data using the 'Dedoose' software package and writing sections of the evaluation report.

**2017 - 2018**

### **Evaluation of The Norwegian Aid Administration's Practice of Results-Based Management (RBM)**

Role: Evaluator | Client: NORAD | Location: Norway

This evaluation used a theory based and utilisation focussed design to investigate how RBM is put into practice in the Norwegian aid administration, and its link with improved partner effectiveness and ultimately improved development outcomes.

Using a case study based approach, Mary's role involved reviewing existing results frameworks, strategies, policies, plans and guidance from the Norwegian aid administration as well as conducting interviews with key stakeholders involved in RBM to understand the current state of play and identify any changes since an evaluation of results measurement in 2014. Findings from the case studies were validated with a wider range of CSOs and aid administration stakeholders through a series of workshops. Using a theory of change as the overarching framework, data was compared and synthesised to draw out key learning and insights for the Norwegian aid administration.

**2016 - 2017**

### **Youth Building the Future: Critical Factors for Youth Employment Outcomes**

Role: Research Coordinator | Client: Plan International / Accenture | Location: Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador

Research commissioned by Plan International in partnership with Accenture to develop a set of 'critical factors' for youth employment programmes, based on the experiences the 'Youth Building the Future' programme in Brazil, Colombia and El Salvador.

Mary's activities included consultation with programme staff to design the Terms of Reference and development of the M & E framework for the 'Youth Building the Future' programme to ensure alignment with research design and donor requirements. An external research team and local programme staff were coordinated to arrange KII's, focus groups and workshops. The study design included implementation of a multi-stakeholder digital survey with youth and key programme stakeholders.

**2015 - 2016**

### **Being Sponsored: The influence of Plan International's Sponsorship Model**

Role: Lead Researcher | Client: Plan International | Location: Cambodia, Ghana, Ethiopia, Peru

Participatory research conducted with children, families and other stakeholders for an internal review of the Plan International child sponsorship model.

Mary's role was first to lead on the study design, centred on child-friendly and gender-sensitive participatory methods. She then carried out extensive primary research with children, families and stakeholders in Ghana and Ethiopia, followed by consultation and validation workshops with Plan International country staff. Qualitative data analysis was undertaken alongside quantitative analysis of global data and a final report was co-drafted synthesising data from four country case studies.

**2014 - 2015**

### **Ebola: Beyond the Health Emergency**

Role: Research Coordinator | Client: Plan International / DFID | Location: Liberia, Sierra Leone

Research study commissioned by Plan International to investigate the consequences of the 2014 Ebola outbreak for children and their communities in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Mary supported the design of the terms of reference through consultation with programme staff in a challenging external environment. She commissioned and managed a research consultant and local partners and advised on qualitative study design with a specific focus on participatory methods and accessing vulnerable populations.

**2013 - 2014**

### **Birth registration and children's rights**



**Role:** Research Coordinator | **Client:** Plan International / HDF | **Location:** India, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Vietnam

Four-country mixed methods research study commissioned by Plan International to investigate the benefits of birth registration for the individual (micro level) and for the state (macro level).

Mary coordinated two external research teams to undertake a mixed methods study design, including liaison with local programme staff to arrange KII's, focus groups and workshops. She edited the final research report and supported integration of qualitative and quantitative findings.

### Selected publications

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- Monteath-van Dok, A, Lagaay, M, Renoir, M, Clarke, A. (2016) Being Sponsored: A qualitative study in Cambodia, Ethiopia, Ghana and Peru to understand the influence of Plan International's sponsorship model, Plan International (forthcoming)
- Rothe, D, Gallinetti, J, Lagaay, M, Campbell, L (2015) Ebola: Beyond the health emergency, Plan International
- Apland, A, Blitz, B, Hamilton, C, Lagaay, M, Lakshman, R, Yarrow, L. (2014) Birth registration and children's rights: A complex story, Plan International
- Lagaay, M. & Courtney, L. (2013) Time to listen: Independent advocacy within the child protection process, National Children's Bureau