



MY WAY

Matt Kinsella MRICS

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSOCIATE, ONE ACRE FUND, KENYA

THE BEGINNING

I never wanted to work a nine-to-five office job, which is partly what drew me to surveying – it allows people to forge their own career path. After university, I took a graduate diploma in building surveying and found a junior role with property and construction consultant Gleeds in its Bristol office. Two and a half years later, I sat my APC and became a chartered building surveyor in 2008.

THE CAREER BREAK

I've always been drawn to the social and sustainability aspects of construction and project management. After a short spell in private practice in 2010 with commercial building consultants Malcolm Hollis, I decided to focus all my efforts on moving into the international development sector. I began volunteering one day a week with Renewable World, an NGO that provides clean water and electricity to rural communities. I worked as an assistant to the CEO, which led to me recently joining the board of directors for their East African entity. In 2014 I suffered a devastating loss when my wife died in a car accident. I almost lost my life, too. That's when my priorities became clear – I quit my job to volunteer full time for nine months in Kenya, Nepal and Peru.

THE PRESENT

I now work as an infrastructure associate for One Acre Fund in western Kenya. The organisation serves smallholder farmers in six countries in the East African region, working to improve their productivity and profits, to allow them to grow their way out of poverty. I enjoy my work immensely, and I'm part of a team managing the construction of a new global headquarters and two staff housing developments. My location is pretty incredible, too – the Maasai Mara, Lake Victoria and the Ugandan border are all just a few hours away.

THE FUTURE

I've been in this role for only a few months, so the projects will keep me more than occupied for the next year at least. But 10 years from now, I hope to be doing something similar, perhaps at director level. My aim for 2017 is to climb Africa's five highest mountain peaks to raise money for Renewable World.

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TIMELINE

2001 History of art degree, University of Leeds

2005 Masters in building surveying; joins Gleeds in Bristol

2008 Earns chartered status

2010 Begins volunteering for charitable organisations while working at Malcolm Hollis

2012 Part-time role at NGO Renewable World

2015 Takes part in RICS advisory panel on advancement of responsible business practice

2016 Joins One Acre Fund in western Kenya