A Disconnected Process

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The challenge is often in global health monitoring and evaluation is this disconnection between the reality and the needs in the community or the health facility where the work is being carried out and the minds of people that are developing and designing the funding portfolios and the monitoring structure around that.

So, I was involved as a consultant, a number of years back, in writing a proposal for an HIV care and treatment project in Cote d'Ivoire and I've never been to Cote d'Ivoire. I was hired as a consultant, because I had a, you know, I was a consultant in monitoring & evaluation, I had extensive experience with HIV response. And I knew very well the monitoring and evaluation structure of PEPFAR and of the US government. And I knew how to write a proposal that looked good technically to the people that we're going to review the proposal.

I know some of the realities of generally of health facilities and in situations where the work is being carried out, but I don't know the context and Cote d'Ivoire, I don't know the issues there. So that's an example of a challenge.

And essentially what I was asked to do was to write a technically sound proposal that met the requirements of the funding organization. There was a request for proposal, this nonprofit based in Seattle was writing that proposal, and I provided the monitoring & evaluation, part of that proposal. Which was successful.

So, that that was an example of I would say a kind of a somewhat disconnected project design because I didn't have the knowledge of the context of the country. I trusted other people did. And I did have people in Cote d'Ivoire writing a proposal and reviewing it, and I was credited for that technical input. But I knew that it would need some connection when the project went to implementation and I was very clear in my work to identify that. Really what they needed me to do was to make the proposal look good to the donor and then there needed to be a later stage or that proposal was implemented in a way and brought to life in a way that really made sense for the country and the context that it was in. I wasn't involved at that stage, but I do trust that organization to do that, you know, they had an office in that country, they had staff in that country that knew the context very well and and I trusted that opposition to that I felt good about being involved in that project.

But it was a challenge. And I asked some questions along the way. That I got responses to and I was able to talk to some people there in Cote d'Ivoire and I felt good about that, in the end, but I do recognize that as a challenge. And that comes up quite often in proposal writing. Sometimes even in project launch and then again when you go to report writing because sometimes the data, from the field gets put into the system and then the person writing the

report is sitting somewhere else. Sometimes another country. And you have to try to write the narrative and the context for that data stream and that can be difficult. I've been in that situation as well. And it just requires coordination. And ideally, it requires spending time in that place and knowing it for a couple of years. First, I think that's the best practice. But that was a challenge. And that was a disconnection.