

Round-table discussions on the topic: “Why are we here? What big questions do the attendees have?”

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WHY ARE WE HERE? MOTIVATIONS, PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNING FROM EACHOTHER

- New perspectives
- To engage with passionate peers
- Building wisdom through shared experience
- Opportunity to expand breadth at thinking about my role in development activities and see if I could gain new and usable insights and knowledge
- To create solutions to the world.
- Listen and learn as much as I can about international development
- Why am I here? Innovation processes are often challenging. I can learn some things from the other people in the room in terms of how they see challenges and what the main issues are
- What motivates people to do this work?
- How do “we” help people? What is “our” role?
- Why am I here? How to be a more effective engineering professional in the development sector? I see it as part of my life journey.
- Why am I here? Great parallels across engineering/social science/technology problems from sanitation, agriculture, public health, environment

CHALLENGING “THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL” APPROACH, BUT ALSO FINDING SUCCESSES

- What approaches have worked?
- Speaking truth to power

- Can AID-based “interventions” ever be sustainable solutions?
- Does the language we are using in the room continue to affirm detrimental hierarchies? The “money/funders” above the “researchers/engineers/sociologists” above the “people on the ground”?
- The current development model seems problematic. Do we need a new model of development?
- Define successes in engineering development
- Build a practical, employable framework for socio/technical projects/innovations/solutions built out of respect and humility
- Brainstorm on how to do programs differently
- To look squarely at success and failures...and try to find generalizations / a working model

PUTTING COMPLEX & INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS TOGETHER & IMPLEMENTING THEM

- How do we implement planning/design/implementation process that actually incorporate technical factors, that are adaptive to contextual issues, and that are financially and operationally viable?
- How to design, implement, and evaluate a truly interdisciplinary development intervention
- Should we actively develop [create] adoption process (and how)? (e.g. cellphone marketing)
- Work with multiple interdisciplinary team in a more effective way
- How do social scientists see how we can implement engineering technologies?
- Learn more about designing, planning, and implementing projects more effectively
- Develop [design / create] a program that has more impactful results for local community & meaningful outcomes
- How do I (as an engineer) meaningfully engage social scientists in collaborative research?
- What metrics(?) can promote accountability and yet maintain meaning?
- Are we over thinking?
- Why does helping people have to be a science?
- How can we engender commitment to outcomes?
- Why do people accept “goal displacement” (e.g. “the students learned anyway”)?

TECHNOLOGY DESIGN FACTORS

- How can we design low cost technically efficient appropriate technologies?
- How can stakeholders contribute to the design process?
- What does it take to create/make things that work?
- Understand more about “design thinking”
- What is the time scale of the design process?
- How do I meaningfully integrate social factors into the process of technology innovation?

SOCIAL/CULTURAL BALANCE & CONSIDERATIONS

- What if people don’t want new technologies?

- When is it societally ok to require adoption of a technology and who gets to make that decision?
- Why do we have to be involved – what if we weren't?
- Do we focus too much on the household when understanding the problem?
- How do we identify in the target community social preferences relevant to an intervention?
 - Which host preferences constitute infeasible constraints in an engineering intervention?

POWER DYNAMICS / INEQUALITIES: WHO SETS THE AGENDA?

Stakeholders/Recipients/People

- Discuss how to do “power differently” *The note taker assumed this was a question related to human agency and empowerment, but could have also been interpreted as a question about the power grid/microgrids/distributed generation.*
- The need for development is mainly due to inequality, > if everyone had the same resources available, we would all have the same access to technology. How do we address this issue of inequality? (Ideally all countries and groups of people should have resources to design and implement their own solutions.)
- How do we coordinate the host preference with those of the interveners with respect to outcomes?
- Billions has been spent on “aid” and more is still needed. Is the “aid” model hindering community agency/empowerment?

Shifting funder priorities

- Can funders (donors: research) be pushed to support more integrated engineering and social science?
- How to shift funders priority focusing more on applied solutions?

Researchers / University / Academia?

- Is academic training useful to solve big problems? How can we make it so, if not?
- How can we leverage education?

ACHIEVING LONG TERM IMPACTS

- How do we develop [create] (and then implement) long term visions? (solving today's and (transition) to solve tomorrow's problems?)
- Approaches/methods to gauge long-term impact in “development”?
- What makes “interventions” effective over the long-term?
- How does tech affect long-term development? How this “factor” relates to others?
- Why do people do things that they know will not work / be effective?
- Why is it so hard to make an impact and help people?