

## KMTF Meeting – February 9, 2017 | 11:00 AM

Attendance (including hosts and presenters): 16

- *CORE Group KM Team Introductions*
- *Went over poll questions (Holly)*
- *Went over agenda (Yemisi)*
- April Thompson's Presentation: **Learn to Fail...Or Fail to Learn: A Few Observations in Organizational Learning from Failure**
  - Engineers Without Borders puts together an annual, publicly available failure report
    - Address from CEO George Roter
    - Inspired the start of forums on failure
  - People were willing and interested in talking about failure in failure forums.
  - Freak Out Forums – Peer-assisted problem solving sessions to address critical project issues before they became failures.
  - Observations:
    - People have hesitations on asking for help on failure or problems. Having some brave souls speak out begins to model the benefits of speaking out to others.
    - But cultural shifts don't happen overnight. It takes time to unlearn certain attitudes on failure, so it's important for leaders to acknowledge failures.
  - Failure isn't about sharing it for failure's sake, but for learning from it and solving problems.
  - **Questions?**
  - *Yemisi: Asked April to share about the failure champions.*
    - You find champions everywhere in KM
    - Hopefully this can reach to country and program level
  - *Lynette: Could you give some examples of what has emerged from the various failure activities?*
  - *Ellen: You mentioned remotely facilitating services, could you talk about what that looks like?*
    - Followed up with Freak Out Forum participants to let them know they wanted to offer that service, to workshop failure. Some people did step forward. It's challenging to bring people together for this on a call, so we would create a web page for that issue with a video from the person explaining their problem, and then brought together people to weigh in on this via email.
  - *Laura O: What are some examples you've used to facilitate positive dialogue about failure? Did you use any specific facilitation techniques?*
  - *Julie: It's difficult to define "failure." How is it different from a lesson learned? Are small, personal failures worth capturing, or are we mostly talking about larger, project-level failures?*
    - Part of talking about failure is drawing out lessons learned.
    - It's good to have someone who wasn't involved help facilitate.

- Vidhya's Presentation: **Learning from Failure: CARE's Analysis of Why We Lose**
  - Failure analysis at CARE called "Why We Lose"
  - Any given year we lose 35-45% of proposals we submit, and 1/3 of our funding is from USG. So, we wanted to get better at this.
  - When you get a loss letter with details of why you lost, it's really valuable. When we don't get them, we ask USAID for a full debrief.
  - Also started having an After Action Review with about 60 questions to stakeholders who worked on the proposal.
  - We then put all our results in a spreadsheet for analysis and then year-to-year, looked at the trends and patterns.
  - We shared our results with everyone who worked with us and wrote summaries of our analysis every two years, looking at what we could do better.
  - We then changed our approach to business, developed a process for proposal development.
  - We have improved remarkably in 8 years.
  - **Questions**
  - *Cheryl: Were AARs done only for losses?*
    - No, we do them for all. There's also a question about what we did well.
  - *Ellen: How much analysis is done by proposal vs. annually?*
    - We do them by proposal. We submit ~75 proposals. And then every two years we compile our data.
  - *Shelia: How often are the failure analyses reviewed within CARE? Are they reviewed at the beginning of each bidding/proposal process?*
    - We send out our analysis every chance we get. We want to build a culture of learning, and learning about failure.
  - *Cheryl: What communications do you use to reach and engage international staff?*
    - Initially, we do an email blast. We would also include it in our quarterly newsletter, the CEO's monthly newsletter, and regional-centered webinars. Any chance we get to send it out, we take.
  
- *Went to breakout rooms.*
  - Please share a story about a challenging project you've been a part of, one in which the team failed to meet certain objectives. What did you learn from this experience?
  - How does your project/program/organization talk about failure? What are some activities/techniques used at your organization to discover failure? What are some activities/techniques used at your organization to learn from failure?
  - **Two breakout rooms.**
    - Answers/discussion points typed up in notepad.
  
- Breakout Group 1 Summary
  - Ellen: Using AARs to frame failure but also successes and find a way to leverage that; leveraging a pre-mortem for work planning; using AARs throughout a project, not just at the end; make use of the team at-large AND smaller sub-groups; methods of easing resistance to talking about failure and making it not as personal (don't focus on the individual, let time pass, lead by example, look at the success as well)

- Breakout Group 2 Summary
  - Lynette: More difficult to talk across teams than in teams, and the systems to do that aren't in place; what kind of technology to we use to support this; suggestion of failure happy hour; some organizations are internally open to talk about failure to inform future events; "Failing Forward" quarterly series; if we have solutions, is it a failure?
  
- *Plans for KMTF in 2017 (Shelia)*
  - Starting a KMTF Newsletter going out on February 15
    - Going out every other month
    - Let us know if you have any content!
  - Lynette will be putting together a Learning Agenda Workbook to accompany AND standalone from the workshop
  - Check out the discussion forum