

REAL

Consulting Group

www.realconsultinggroup.com

...analysis from alternative angles...



ABOUT US

REAL Consulting Group provides a range of research, evaluation, and applied learning services to relief and development organizations, civil society organizations, universities/colleges, NGOs, charities, governments, businesses, and other entities needing perspectives and insight on political, social, and economic realities. As a small, boutique consultancy, we are heavily engaged with our clients personally. We work closely as a team, but also maintain an extensive network of scholars and technical specialists across Africa and beyond.

While conceptualized in 2015, REAL was officially launched in 2018 by Dr. Kenly Fenio and Dr. Steven Lichty. Together we have over 30 years' experience working across Africa, Asia, Europe, and other regions of the world. Our ability to deliver multi-method, holistic solutions arises from our extensive professional background across an array of sectors, but also from our academic background and familiarity with culturally relevant ethnographic and qualitative approaches, as well as our skills with quantitative methods (including use of NVivo, NodeXL, Stata, Kumu, SPSS, SurveyCTO, etc.). REAL may or may not be an acronym. Our professional environment is dominated by acronyms though, so in that case, REAL stands for Research, Evaluation, and Applied Learning; but in short, we are just REAL. REAL Research, REAL Insight, REAL Analysis, and REAL Synthesis.



SECTORS OF EXPERTISE

REAL works across the following interrelated global sectors:



Agriculture/
Value Chains



Children and Youth



Democracy/Law/
Governance



Disaster Relief/
Development



Education



Environment/
Ecology



Gender/
Women



Health (HIV/AIDS/
Malaria/TB)



Justice/Conflict/
Reconciliation



Leadership Capacity
Building



Social
Entrepreneurship



Wildlife/
Conservation

APPROACH

REAL's mission is to bridge local knowledge and our academic expertise with the needs of NGOs, private sector, and governments to provide assessments, studies, and evaluations that contribute insight and understandings (both conceptually and practically) by incorporating underlying cultural contexts in developing socio-economic settings. We specialize in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environments where linear models of change are often too simplistic and thus ineffective. As a "bridge" REAL approaches projects with the following attributes

ANALYTICAL

Employing effective iterative analytical approaches and processes of syntheses to provide practical and relevant insight

TRANSFORMATION

Knowing that the most transformational programmes are often the least measurable and the most measurable projects the least transformational

COLLABORATIVE

Delivering a broad range of solutions based on a collaborative process that involves all major stakeholders

DESIGN

Relying on components of human-centered design, complexity theory, systems thinking, and cultural intelligence models

MULTI-METHODS

Utilizing mixed-methods (quantitative, qualitative, and interpretive) for data triangulation, synthesis, and analytical quality

INSIGHTS

Providing insight into the challenges arising from different development axioms, power dynamics, and paradigms



By pulling together different viewpoints and building and leveraging a critical solidarity, REAL is strategically placed to deliver research and evaluation services based on both emic and etic perspectives for a variety of clients' needs.

SERVICES



REAL provides several services for clients, as well as bespoke consultancy packages, based on the following options:

Outcome Harvesting, Developmental, Utilisation-Focused, Performance, and Impact Evaluation

Tailor-made evaluations that better capture results and long-term impact in complex environments where traditional methods overlook nuanced aspects of hidden socio-economic systems and cultural values

Deep Dive Research

Extensive ethnographic study of peoples and communities to capture hidden assets, perspectives, world-views (often described as cultural 'informal institutions') that can help or hinder development projects

Strategic Insight

Multi-sectoral experience across Africa, plus a deep understanding of the mental models, cultural practices, and religious beliefs enable us to inform clients' strategic engagement across Africa

Revivage Services

Repair, vitalization, and salvage of research and evaluation projects conducted by other consultants/firms that have gone awry due to unforeseen circumstances and/or poor delivery of contracted services

Academic and Research Capacity Building

Engagement with undergraduate, graduate, post-grad students and faculty on how to effectively engage with research design, methodologies, developing data collection tools, and analytic frameworks.

Programme Design

Utilization of design thinking for human-centered systems and theories of change to develop holistic and creative approaches to programme strategy, implementation, evaluation, and learning

MERL Capacity Building

Increasing the analytical/synthesis, research, and evaluation capabilities of local staff and partners/stakeholders via training, coaching, and/or mentoring

Desk and Literature Research

In-house study of a specific topic, delivered as an analytical presentation and/or report

CLIENTS

Some of our clients include:



Africom



Break Margins Africa



C4D Lab



Care



Concern



DAI



Mars



Oxfam



Save The Children



Tangaza University



Tearfund



World Vision



World Bank



USAID



U.S. State Department

*A detailed project portfolio is available on our website: www.realconsultinggroup.com



CO-FOUNDERS & MANAGING PARTNERS

Dr. Kenly Fenio has two decades of experience specializing in social research in Africa, particularly concerning conceptualizing, implementing, and analysis of research projects in Eastern and Southern African communities. She resides in Maputo, Mozambique, and is also the director of KGF Pesquisas & Associados in Mozambique, a local research firm specializing in qualitative research, evaluations and assessments. Her research projects often focus on hard-to-reach communities and prevalent topics include humanitarian assistance, health, WASH, climate change, disaster relief, gender, conservation and trafficking, public and private policy and governance. She spent six years with the U.S. State Department in INR's Office of Opinion Research and also with the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues where she oversaw grants and advised policymakers on gender issues in Africa. Prior to State, she taught undergraduate and graduate courses at Virginia Tech. She holds a PhD in Political Science and Public Policy (focus on sub-Saharan Africa) from the University of Florida. Her research experience focuses on community and culture, including the use of DAC criteria for topics such as policy and humanitarian assistance, climate change, disaster relief, and health and gender. Kenly is also proficient in Portuguese.



Dr. Kenly Fenio



Dr. Steven Lichty

Dr. Steven Lichty has nearly 20 years' experience in various sectors across Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. His professional experiences include design, monitoring, and evaluation of a range of global democracy promotion and humanitarian aid programmes, including those in post-conflict, transitional, and fragile environments. He has worked with Outcome Harvesting/ Mapping, systems thinking/mapping, social network analysis, and human-centered design approaches. He also has programme management experience in various sectors, taught at multiple education levels, and

conducted extensive research in Africa and Asia. Steven also works as a consultant and adviser to universities, serving as an academic, research, and leadership capacity builder. He has a PhD in African Studies from the University of Florida and maintains a research interest in unlocking creativity/critical thinking skills in African students, cultural influence, effective use of theories of change, political anthropology of power, systems thinking for social transformation, and building futures thinking capacities.

CORE VALUES



We value other cultures and celebrate the diversity found in our world today. We continue to leverage our deep understanding of places and people to help translate between the various approaches, paradigms, intent, and activities that can often bring confusion to multiple stakeholders based in different countries.



Partnerships are crucial and we choose to remain cognizant of the power dynamics that can occur between different social, economic, and educational levels. We value the voice and insight of those who may be marginalized, as they have important insight that is often overlooked.



Being mindful in the present is key to understanding the past and unlocking future potential. We stop. We breathe. We listen. We contemplate. And from there we develop appropriate action plans and strategies.



We recognize that many communities and societies maintain different metrics for growth, change, and development. Understanding this foundational paradigm influences any theory of change or eventual outcomes desired. We ensure that our consultancies account for this.



We value seeing communities and individuals flourish and are dedicated to bringing the appropriate resources to help our clients actualize this, even if this entails deferring to other organizations better situated to assist.



We know that often the most transformational interventions are the least measurable and what can be easily measured typically the least impactful. We value working creatively with clients to surmount these measurement challenges.



We remain extremely flexible and adaptable to changing global contexts. For example, during the evolving COVID-19 global pandemic, our projects necessitated a rapid restructuring of methodologies to facilitate remote work via Skype/WhatsApp/Zoom/mobile phone.

CONTACT DETAILS

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