

Technical Reporting



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What is technical writing?



- Technical writing is the art of breaking down complex information or jargon into easily digestible formats and understandable content for an intended audience
- A technical writer communicates in a way that presents technical information in such a manner that the reader can use the information for an intended purpose. A development practitioner should be able to communicate appropriately with different stakeholders and populations.



is Technical Reporting

- Technical reporting is a cornerstone of effective project management, particularly for donor-funded initiatives. These reports not only communicate progress and outcomes but also build trust, demonstrate accountability, and ensure the flow of future funding (Smith, 2020).
- In the context of CSOs, A technical report is a document that provides a detailed and structured account of a specific technical project, experiment or research. It is usually written to communicate technical information to an intended audience

Technical Reporting Technical Writing

- **Technical writing**, is a broad term that refers to creating clear, concise documents that explain complex information in a way that is easy to understand. Examples include user manuals, instruction guides, how-to articles, and process documentation. The main goal of technical writing is to help the reader understand or use a product, process, or concept.
- **Technical reporting**, on the other hand, is a specific type of technical writing. A technical report is a formal document that provides detailed information about a specific project, experiment, or study. Technical reporting is usually intended for a more specialized audience, such as donors or managers who need detailed and structured information to make decisions or assess progress.



Why Technical Reporting Matters



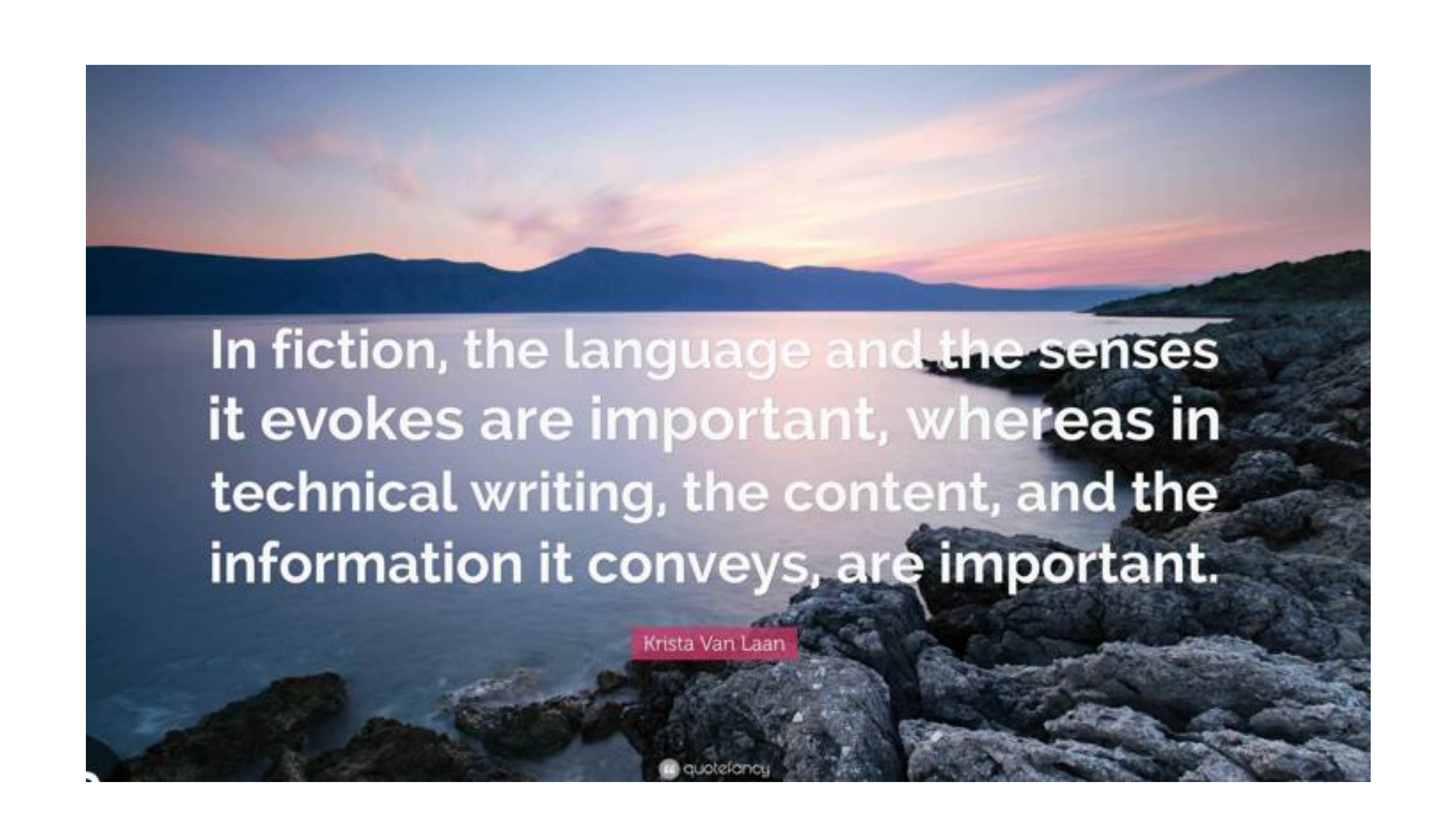
- **Demonstrates Impact and Ensures donor confidence:** A well-crafted report shows how donor funds have been used effectively and the outcomes achieved.
- **Ensures Accountability:** Donors and stakeholders want clear evidence that funds are being used wisely.
- **Communicates progress and outcomes:** This is used to inform decision-making
- **Tells the Story of the Project:** A good technical report conveys not only what has been done but also what has been learned.

Objectives of Technical Reporting

The primary objectives of technical reporting are to:

- Inform donors of project progress and impact
- Ensure compliance with donor requirements
- Facilitate internal and external learning and capacity building (UNDP, 2019)





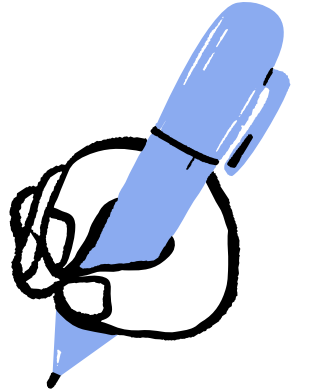
In fiction, the language and the senses it evokes are important, whereas in technical writing, the content, and the information it conveys, are important.

Krista Van Laan

Key Components of a Technical Report

Depending on what your identified objectives are, a **well-structured technical report typically includes:**

1. Executive summary
2. Project background and objectives
3. Methodology and activities
4. Results and achievements (supported by data visualization)
5. Challenges and lessons learned
6. Recommendations and next steps
7. Annexes (financial details, raw data, etc.)



Best Practices in Technical Reporting



- **Clarity and conciseness:** Avoid unnecessary jargon and focus on clear language
- **Evidence-based reporting:** Use data, case studies, and testimonials to support claims
- **Alignment with donor guidelines:** Adhere to reporting templates and timelines
- **Visual presentation:** Incorporate charts, infographics, and images to enhance understanding
- **Timeliness:** Submit reports according to agreed schedules
- **Proper referencing:** This increases credibility and avoids plagiarism. The Harvard referencing style is commonly used:
 - In-text citation example: (Smith, 2020)
 - Reference list entry: Smith, J. (2020) Project Reporting Essentials. 2nd edn. London: Routledge.

Common Pitfalls in Technical Reporting

Some frequent mistakes in technical reporting include:

- Excessive technical jargon without explanation
- Insufficient use of data or evidence
- Overlooking donor feedback
- Ambiguous or vague language
- Not adding essential information or attachments



CAPACITY BUILDING



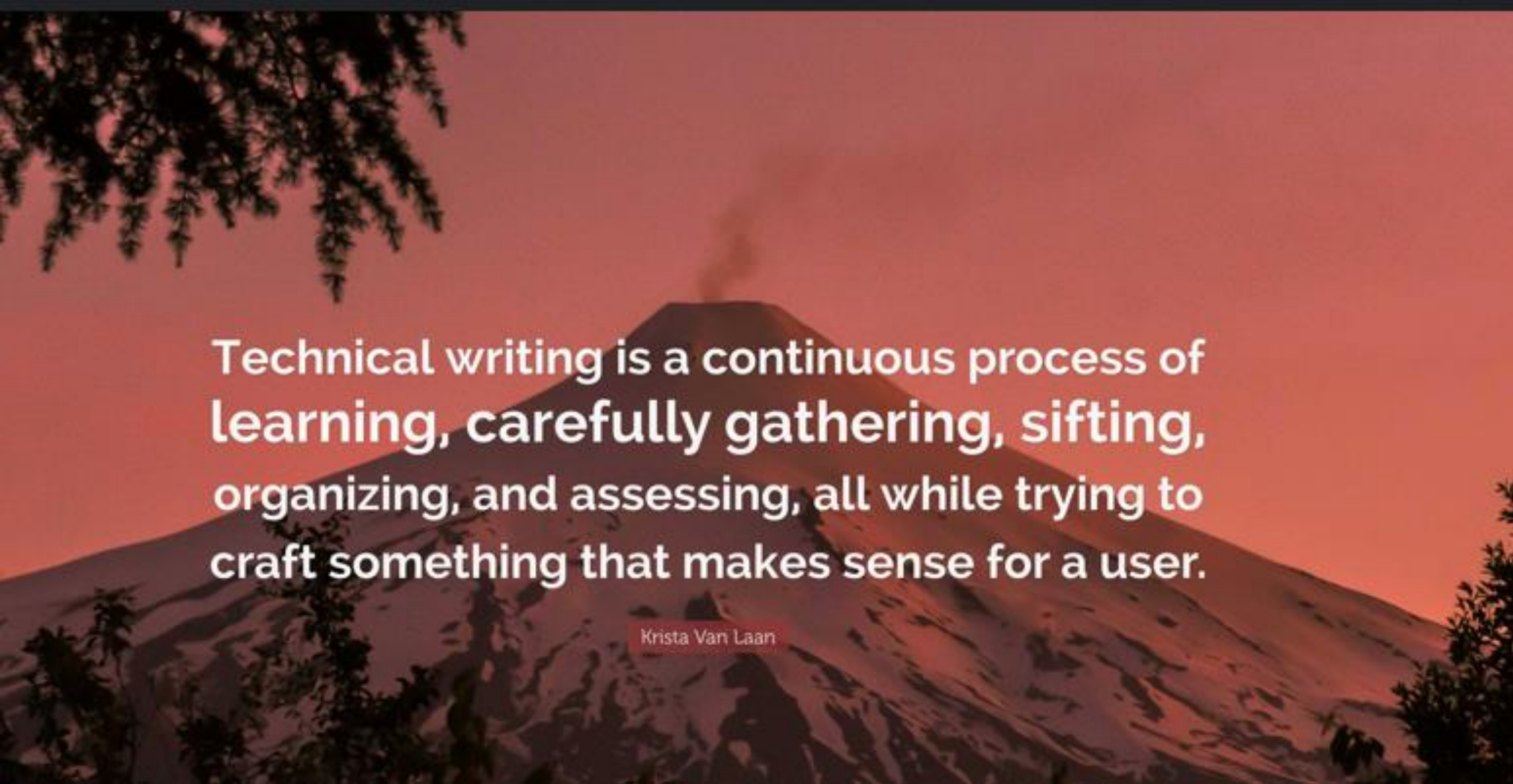
To improve technical reporting, organizations should:

- Train staff on report writing and donor requirements regardless of their job functions
- Conduct internal peer reviews
- Utilize standardized templates and checklists (OECD, 2017)

Tips for Impact Reporting

1. **Use Before-and-After Comparisons:** Show how things have changed as a result of your efforts with clear “before” and “after” examples or photos.
2. **Present Clear Data and Metrics:** use easy-to-understand statistics, charts, and infographics to highlight key achievements and outcomes.
3. **Create Short Videos:** Videos can powerfully convey emotion and context. Feature interviews, event highlights, or project recaps.
4. **Publish Annual Impact Reports:** Summarize your yearly achievements with a combination of stories, data, and visuals in a professionally designed report.
5. **Share Success Stories and Testimonials:** Personal stories from beneficiaries or volunteers make your impact relatable and memorable, helping supporters connect emotionally with your mission.





Technical writing is a continuous process of learning, carefully gathering, sifting, organizing, and assessing, all while trying to craft something that makes sense for a user.

Krista Van Laan

CASE STUDY #1

You are philanthropist and a player in the aviation sector. You are part of a team considering funding requests from CSOs in Nigeria and you are reviewing the application of a youth-focused NGO in Abuja that submitted a grant proposal filled with technical jargon.

You are unfamiliar with the specific terms and struggle to understand the project's value.

What will be your decision and why?



CASE STUDY #2

- During a training in Lagos, participants reviewed two versions of a report to award points.
- The first was written as a single, dense paragraph, while the second was formatted with headings and bullet points.
- Which do you think scored higher?



CASE STUDY #3

- A women's group in Jos found that including a short story about Kaneng, a market vendor whose life was changed by their program, made their report more memorable to donors.
- Why do you think it stood out?
- What if the women's group had great stories but tacky financial reporting, what do you think the donor's reaction would be?





take a moment to

REFLECT

*Thank
You*