USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUCCESS STORY
FRAMEweb

Social Media Mobilizing Development

FRAMEweb Social Media Tool - Twitter

The FRAME website (www.frameweb.org), part of the Capitalizing Knowledge, Connecting Communities (CK2C) program, facilitates knowledge sharing through its social media tools supporting Communities of Practice and Natural Resources

10 years ago, the term "social media" didn't exist in the international development vocabulary. However, the concept of connecting practioners with shared experiences in a virtual setting was already being pioneered by USAID through the creation of FRAMEweb.org. Today, FRAMEweb continues this tradition of social engagement by harnessing social media tools, making it a cutting edge example of open government (Gov 2.0) for development.

At its core, international development is about transferring skills, knowledge and technology. Therefore, knowledge management (KM) and development are a natural fit, with KM providing the toolkit to apply this transfer at a larger scale with a smaller budget. This is especially true in sectors such as environment and NRM that are rapidly changing due to human and natural drivers. FRAMEweb currently reaches over 2,600 practitioners primarily from developing countries - connecting, educating and taking stock of their field-based lessons learned on a global scale and in real time through the use of social media tools.

Content on FRAMEweb.org is user-generated. Discussion forums can be accessed online or through email. A Tools and Resources space consists of new videos, reports, presentations and success stories that are shared regularly. An interactive online map (GeoExplorer) is built on a state-of-the-art geographic information system. Knowledge sharing on FRAMEweb is geared towards bringing together NRM practitioners from around the world who may have never interacted otherwise. This bottom-up, grassroots transfer of NRM development information is a constantly growing environment in which members can share insights and best practices or ask for advice. Hands on facilitation helps broaden networking and connections across the entire NRM sphere (NGOs, donors, governments, scholars and the private sector). A question posted about climate change in one community will be shared in various ways, through relating it to other relevant topics in

other communities, or through active "push" messaging by a facilitator, allowing for a larger audience to become aware of the question and respond.

Social engagement tools such as Twitter, customized RSS news feeds (aggregated news information automatically published and updated on the site), e-newsletters and targeted emails reach out to people and draw them back to a central, collaborative space broadening audience reach. This has resulted in better message targeting to those that are interested in specific topics within NRM.

The original model of connecting communities virtually after they have met in person has evolved with the expansion of social media over the years. While FRAMEweb does still support this type of community, there has been an explosion in spontaneous, user-generated sharing, brought about through increased visibility in web-searches like Google and internet access throughout the world. New members are joining daily with no previous connection to the CK2C program or to "physical" memberships on the ground, and many find us through another web-based outlet. They seek to connect with other like-minded professionals using social media as a vehicle to share ideas. The Sustainable Land Management Community is one example. Originally designed as a follow-on activity to meetings in Africa, this community has grown over the years to include resources and discussion contributions from newer members who did not attend the original meetings. Years later, events related to the original land management community discussions were hosted at USAID in Washington, DC were "tweeted" to the rest of the FRAMEweb community in real-time allowing for much broader access to the presentations.

FRAMEweb continues to stay current with regular updates to the software platform, added tools for analysis within the GeoExplorer mapping tool, and outreach to members. It is a successful example of broad-reaching development collaboration on a modest budget. Many of the FRAMEweb tools are out-of-the-box or free applications (such as Twitter and RSS). The site manages over 2,600 accounts, 1,100 contributions and 108 discussions with two part-time staff.

Today, FRAMEweb is an ever expanding network of people and knowledge, utilizing a modern technology to help communicate ideas and successes, and bridge the distance from place to place and culture to culture. As more NRM practitioners discover the power of FRAMEweb's social media approach for sharing information and improving development, the snowball effect will continue, building on the depth and richness of resources and discussions.

FRAMEweb Engagement Tools

- Customized news RSS feeds for each community
- Twitter account
- User-generated discussion platform
- User-generated Tools & Resources section
- Interactive member network with options to "Favorite" people or content
- Tag cloud for easy browsing
- User-generated online GIS map of NRM activities
- Dynamic e-newsletter
- Linkages to external sites such as RMportal.net and AgLinks