



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## Knowledge for Development (KfD) 2005

### Connecting People

### Working Smarter

### Getting Results

***“The true engine of today’s organizations is the brainpower of its employees.”***

— *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Knowledge Management*

***“I now see that knowledge is a resource, and just as you manage resources like funding, people and time, we must find a way to manage our knowledge to get the most from it.”***

— Aurelio Mavone,  
Knowledge Coordinator,  
USAID Mozambique  
(after the knowledge  
coordinator workshop)

### What KfD is

USAID created the Knowledge for Development (KfD) Program to connect people with what and who they need to know to “work smarter” in concert with others to accomplish USAID’s mission. KfD helps people adapt to rapidly changing events, policies, and strategies by making information and experience easy to find and use for informed decisions and actions.

### Why KfD is important

USAID is one of the world’s premier development agencies, known for its rich international development experience. Its people work worldwide, generating knowledge and requiring timely information wherever they are. USAID’s knowledge can be found in reports in a mission in Zagreb, in databases in Cairo, in the expertise and skills of a Honduran employee, or in the head of an employee in Washington. This knowledge can be lost as people move from one post to another within the organization or as someone retires. KfD supports the capturing and sharing of this experience that is so important for continued success.

### What KfD does

- Provides timely, accurate, accessible information
- Improves capture of USAID experience
- Applies lessons and replicate successes to achieve results more efficiently
- Retains and shares institutional memory

### How we do it

- **After Action Review (AAR)**—the tool for immediate review of an event—what went well and why, what to improve and how.
- **Communities of Practice (CoP)**—a means for collaboration and dialogue between people invested in common goals, issues, or business practices.
- **Yellow Pages**—the place to access USAID’s essential collection of knowledge assets from your desktop.

***“HR and KfD are joined at the hip in launching new initiatives to establish a USAID expertise locator system and find a way to plumb knowledge and experience from folks who are retiring from the agency.”***

— David Eckerson,  
Chief Human Capital  
Officer, USAID

***“USAID does development by delivering technical assistance and training. Thus its work is all about managing information and knowledge.”***

— Emmy Simmons,  
former Assistant  
Administrator for the  
Economic Growth,  
Agriculture and Trade  
Bureau, USAID

- **Collaborative tools**—standards and guidelines for an integrated set of tools to facilitate collaboration among USAID staff, partners, and beneficiaries.
- **Expertise Locator**—connecting people by linking those wanting knowledge with those who have it.
- **USAID’s Web Portal**—a one-stop resource for business inside and outside of USAID.
- **USAID Taxonomy**—the standards and guidelines to define the Agency’s system of information classification speeding storage and retrieval.

#### **Knowledge in Action: The CO Forum Story**

Mike Walsh, a contracting officer in REDSO/Nairobi, wanted to strengthen collaboration among USAID contracting professionals. He said, “In USAID, especially in the procurement area where I work, there is an abundance of great ideas, but little time, little opportunity and reluctance to share and learn from each other.” Because the Office of Acquisitions and Assistance (OAA) was short staffed and faced constant turnover of Contracting Officers (COs), they needed to build organizational memory, to mentor new hires and Foreign Service nationals, and to do peer reviews of best practices. Mike’s efforts, his continued interest, his time and energy, and his consultations with knowledge management practitioners, led to the development of an online Community of Practice, called the CO Forum that was inaugurated in October 2002. When Mike left Nairobi to study at the War College for a year, the CO Forum lost its founder and champion, causing it to flounder for a while. Mike, now the Director of the OAA in Washington, reinitiated the CO Forum which he continues champion. After restarting the CO Forum, he said, “I am more convinced than ever that this is the right way to go—sharing information instead of hoarding it.”

#### **Who we are**

Contact the KfD team to obtain more information, request KfD services, or share your knowledge:

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