Learning About Learning: Lessons on Implementing a KM and Learning Project from the USAID KDMD Project

Tools

What we mean by Tools:

Knowledge management (KM) and learning activities utilize many different tools that capture and share ideas and information in ways that reinforce KM and learning cycles.

Why it matters:

These tools provide transparency, document best practice, inform stakeholders and team members, and prevent the need to reinvent the wheel. In all, KM and learning tools make it easier to do quality, consistent work.

How it works:

No one tool can fit all the needs of a KM and learning approach, and so it's important to think about integrating tools based on their purpose and how they will be used. Certainly there are a plethora of tools to choose from and it can be overwhelming to decide. For this reason, strategy matters – it's counterproductive to have the same information in different places so be very clear about what belongs where and how people should use different tools. Tools are also only as good as the people who use them and the way that their information is managed. Build a culture where people use these tools consistently by incentivizing their use or setting up reminders to update various tools. Over time and with evidence that these tools work, they become adopted into a daily routine of collaboration and information sharing.

What it looks like:

One of the most frequently used tools within the KDMD Project is the team wiki which serves as a repository of knowledge and best practice across the team. All team members have access to edit the wiki and each month the top wiki contributor is recognized at the team meeting. In time, the wiki has become the go to place for all information about KDMD and the variety of knowledge generation, capture, sharing, and application activities that the team implements.

Learn More:

Some key tools for KM and learning include (note that many of these tools serve multiple purposes):

Knowledge Generation
- Research, communications strategies, communities of practice, word clouds, shared workspaces, audio visual materials

Knowledge Curation
- Design software, presentations, meetings, social media, screencasts, project management systems

Knowledge Sharing
- Newsletters, webinars, calendars, teleconferencing, email marketing, videos, file sharing

Knowledge Application
- Wikis, training, hands-on experience, websites, analytics, assessments, surveys