Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians

Global Network support document

Creating and Maintaining Groups in the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians

WHY creating groups/communities?

Groups are useful to

1. help users access **relevant content** directly; and
2. help users feel that they can access **help from peers** directly.

However, groups can also cannibalize user attention and fragment the energy of the network. They should therefore NOT be created massively and unilaterally but their relevance should be systematically assessed beforehand. If a group does not attract activity, its relevance should be reviewed again and may lead to closing it. (Depending on the purpose of the group it might be a good idea to have a start AND an end date for a group, even if it is decided later on, to keep it alive if lots of things are happening in the group.)

> **Note about terminology:** The Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians in its entirety is referred to as the **"Network"**. The Network has an **"All Network group"** where everybody can write and read. In addition, the Network has a series of open and closed **"Groups"** which were created by members of the Network. In the mobile app of Yammer, Groups are also called **"Communities"**. Groups and Communities are the same thing.

The ideal scenario to assess relevance is if the group is simply providing a space where a **restricted community**, gathered around a **common challenge**, can start **exchanging knowledge** and directly usable information.

To remember how to assess the relevance, think of a fried egg (sunny-side up) on a frying pan. The egg yolk (the common challenge that started the discussion) is at the center. The white (the restricted community of peers that

needs a place to discuss) is bigger than the initial challenge. And the frying pan (the discussion/knowledge exchanging space) will provide the place and energy to cook solutions to challenges that the restricted community has encountered. Oh, and, if the challenge is poorly defined or off-focus, the egg yolk is going to spill over on the white.

Challenges can be a language barrier, in which case a group in a specific language will be created, or the preparation of an event, or a place where consultations take place around a policy issue, etc. In each and every case, you MUST make sure that dedicated members of the group will nurture the discussion. Dedicated members should also **curate relevant content** from the main discussion space ("All Network" group) and share it with the group and should also **feed relevant discussion results back** from the group to the All Network group. This will prevent the members from being disconnected from the All Network discussion and, reversely, allow the All Network group to get curated insights about what's happening in specialized circles (the groups). (Curated in this context means adapted to the interests and knowledge level of the target audience.)

To allow a group to take off, a consultation (by definition limited in time and with a definite objective) can be organized as an icebreaker.

Collaborating across groups

Users don't always share their posts in the most suitable group, especially if the users are new to the Global Network. In the following some strategies are explained how to deal with this.

Moving discussions

If a specific discussion thread in the All Network group seems to be too specific and if there is a specialized group which is better suited to discuss the matter, the discussion can be moved between groups (from the All Network group to any other group, between groups, and back from a specific (private or public) group to the All Network group which is accessible by all).

Sharing discussions in other groups

Apart from moving a discussion from one group to another, you can also share that discussion with other groups. **Note**: If you share a discussion from a private group only those users who are members of that group will be able

to see the full conversation thread. Non-members of the private group will only see the specific post (but not the full thread).

Sub-groups

Yammer does **not** support sub-groups (groups within groups) but there are workarounds if this feature / organizational structure is needed for very large groups. In this case it is possible to have one large group which serves as the main focal group for a topic (e.g. "Economic Statistics") and several related groups for more focused discussions on subtopics (using group names like for example "ECON – Trade statistics" or "Trade statistics (ECON)" which indicate that they belong to a main group.) The title of these "sub-groups" (including the part of the name which indicates the main group) should not be too long.

How to create groups in the Global Network?

Before creating a group, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Who are the members I want to gather in this sub-group?**
    - Topic(s) to be covered?
    - Level of seniority?
    - Local/global?
    - Event-related or not time-sensitive?
    - How many people do I expect to gather?
    - How focused/broad do I want to recruit?
    - Is any other group already gathering the same population/covering the same topic?
    - Is membership in the group open to everyone (open/public group) or restricted (closed/private group)?

- **Why do I want to gather some members in a group?**
    - Is there any other group existing on this topic/region/level?
    - What do I expect from the members? (sharing best practices, documents, ideas, working on projects, …)
    - Why do you think this population needs a dedicated group?
    - After one year, what outcomes do I expect from this group?
    - To what need(s) will this group respond?
    - Why gathering online?
    - Why can't the expected activity stay on the "All network" group?
    - How can this group help with the daily activities of members?

- **What resources do I have to manage a group?**
    - Who will be facilitating this group? Will I be alone? With colleagues?
    - At what frequency am I/are we planning to post in the group?
    - What kind of content am I/are we planning to post there? Any live activities? Any campaigns?
    - How am I planning to promote this group to the relevant people?
    - How will I be monitoring the activity of this group and when?

- **How much** do I want to put in it?
    - What if the group doesn't take off as expected?
    - How do I plan to measure success?
    - Who else could I mobilize for support?
    - What if I change job/position and this group is very active?
    - Do I want to read/react/comment on all posts?
    - Am I ready to spend time daily on the network? (How much time?)

Quick Guide to successfully launch a group

Before creating the group

- Assess relevance and answer to the list of questions above.
- Identify co-facilitators and make sure they commit to create and curate content.
- Identify potential members (already in the network or to invite in the network).
- Decide whether the group should follow a timeline, including a moment for closure.
- How many messages are we expecting from the members? Until which level do we consider it as active?

Before launch

- Find a name (a good name should be short, contain the focus of the group, be it a topic, a location, or something else). Think of a short description of the core purpose of the group, and add more information inside the group. Prepare an icon for the group (and a background image on the mobile app).
- Decide if your group will be closed/private (you will need to approve requests to join) or open/public (any member of the Global Network can join).
- Decide if you would actively add relevant people to the group or if you expect people to join the group on their own initiative.
- Identify the type of content members would enjoy/need.
- Decide how frequently you are planning to post, staying relevant to the focus.
- Prepare introductory posts (in the All Network group and the group that you have created), invitation emails, and/or Yammer private messages to send to potential members.
- Distribute the tasks among the main facilitators.
- Prepare a dozen substantive posts, with some exclusive/original/unexpected content and schedule to post them in the first weeks (60 to 90-day activity plan for the group).
- Try out the functionalities of the Yammer platform by requesting the access to the UNSD Sandbox network: https://www.yammer.com/unsdexternalnetworksandbox/
- Make a plan how you wish to advertise the group using emails, Twitter, the Global Network, professional networks like LinkedIn or Xing, UNSD Brown Bags, EGs, TSGs, major events like the Statistical Commission and its Side Events or the World Data Forum.
- Schedule dedicated time to follow the activity of the group (Daily is best, why not 10 minutes at the beginning of the day?) – or distribute clearly this responsibility among facilitators.

When you're all set

- Create the group on Yammer (check the Yammer101 posts, and ask yuxi.zhang@un.org and/or loschky@un.org for support).
- You can prepare the group as a private group and then switch it to be a public group. You can also first make the group private and unlisted while you prepare it for the launch. (Please note: That a group can be launched as a public group and then made private and vice versa.)
- Discuss with network admins (Yuxi Zhang and/or Alexander Loschky) on how to add new users to the group and hence to the Global Network.
- Send invitations to join the group to selected people.
- (Ways to add people -- for the webinar)
  - share link to the group (sign-up screen if they're not on the Global Network) - press join button.
  - add them directly (needs to be discussed with network admins).

After launch

- Post about the group in the "All Network" group, if relevant.
- Post a welcome message within the group to greet all new members.
- Post at least one message per day during the first two weeks (except weekends).
- Like, react and share new incoming posts.
- Explore and test the "Question", "Poll", "Praise" features for some posts.
- Ask your new members to introduce themselves or introduce their specialty (or launch a more elaborate icebreaker).
- @mention within and outside the group where appropriate to draw attention to the group. (Please note: If you are not a member of a private group and you are mentioned in that group you will only see that conversation / thread and you will not see other conversations in the group.)
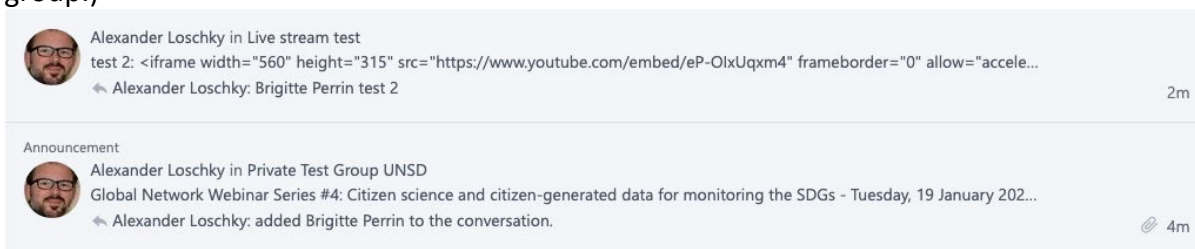
- Upload all necessary documents to the group and pin important documents to the "Network Resources" section of the group.

After a couple of weeks

- Follow insights of the group and assess the level of engagement, the most successful posts, identify the "champions" and engage them.
- Schedule activities like webinars, live chats, or #hashtag campaigns for your group.
- Assess on a regular basis the relevance of the group and the quality/relevance of the content shared.
- How many messages have been posted by the members? What is the read rate of the messages on average (average number of times a post is read by unique users)? Do we consider it as active (different groups can have different levels of activity)?

What to do if the group does not take off or if you need to re-launch the group after a phase of inactivity

- Discuss with co-facilitators and network admins if the group is still needed or if it should be closed.
- Plan activities to "re-launch" the group if needed. This is also something to consider after holiday periods after which traffic becomes very low.
- Design a short survey to investigate why people are not more active and what contents users expect.

For more help and support contact:

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