



**2015 GLOBAL DIASPORA WEEK LAUNCH EVENT**  
**October 9, 2015**  
**Notes**

**Session Title:** Global Innovation Exchange Focus Group

**Speaker(s):** Alexis Bonnell (USAID), Katie Shipley (Development Alternatives, Inc.)

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**Session Summary:**

**Key Themes:**

1. Ways that members of the diaspora find the Innovation Exchange useful:
  - a. Using the Exchange as a resource for their own ventures
    - i. Finding funding or mentoring
    - ii. Conducting research
      1. Knowing what exists out there
      2. Finding funding opportunities, keeping track of deadlines
      3. Seeing who else got funded and using that as a baseline for their own applications
    - iii. Capacity-building
      1. Finding best practices
      2. It would be helpful to put up sample business development plans and guidance sustainability planning
    - iv. Opportunity for expansion, being able to scale their business globally
  2. Ways that diasporans and innovators can connect
    - a. When looking for partners in emerging market, diaspora innovators don't need to reinvent the wheel
      - i. If diaspora have an idea in their home country, the Exchange can help them find somebody on the ground to make it happen
      - ii. The Exchange serves as a search engine to find people who are seeking partners
  3. Diasporans are in a position to be leaders in innovation
    - a. They're often successful and have skills that they can contribute to development
      - i. They are eager to find people to mentor through the Exchange, with an affinity for youth
    - b. This is a platform that they can use to scale globally

**Notable Quotes/Soundbites:**

- *“Having a marketing plan for the Exchange is essential—Diasporas are online, yes, but where are they online? They can be on, but hard to find” –Diaspora Marketing Professional*

**Discussion Topics/Audience Questions:**

- When searching for your diaspora: what keywords do you use?
  - Country name, skills, category, sector
- Would a diaspora landing page be useful?
  - Country-specific pages with a diaspora sub-section would be more useful
- Would it be helpful for people to identify as diaspora?
  - Diaspora vs local: important distinction because members of the diaspora have different perspectives
- Giving back and then following up with the impact of the project
  - What was the cash leverage? Overhead costs?
- Cultural norms around the word “exchange,”
  - some people may be afraid of sharing ideas; adding a disclaimer letting people know that your ideas are yours only
- Having a peer group or an advisory board with people from different cultures on the Exchange