BUILDING SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG KEY POLICY CONSTITUENCIES: FINDINGS FROM THE U.S.

MARCH 2012
INTRODUCTION

The Building Support for International Development study provides a roadmap for the development community for connecting more meaningfully with key constituencies in donor-country discussions about international development policy issues and priorities. The study, launched by InterMedia in 2011 with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, included qualitative and quantitative research with three key target groups:

INTERESTED CITIZENS
Members of the public who are predisposed to engagement with international development issues, based on their self-reported interest in global health and international development issues, and their previous participation in activities in support of development causes (such as donating, volunteering, writing to public officials, etc.)

INFLUENTIALS
Citizens with the potential to influence decisions by governmental officials on development policies.

GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKERS
Elected and appointed officials who are engaged in forming and implementing national policies on international development and global health.

The Building Support study covers the four largest bi-lateral aid donors—France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States—as well as China, which is fast becoming a major player in the aid arena.

This country summary report focuses on the findings from the U.S. and is drawn from a nationally representative urban survey with U.S. citizens and in-depth interviews with influentials and government decision-makers, conducted between May and September 2011.

ABOUT INTERMEDIATE

InterMedia (www.intermedia.org) is a global research and consulting group providing strategic guidance and insight on effective engagement and networking strategies online and offline. A not-for-profit social enterprise, InterMedia equips clients to communicate and connect effectively with communities worldwide.

Based in Nairobi, Kenya; Washington, D.C.; and London, U.K., InterMedia has worked in more than 100 developing countries. InterMedia research experts use innovative techniques to understand how information, communication and media resources can deliver impact.


For more information about the Building Support for International Development study, or to arrange a customized Building Support workshop, contact:

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FINDINGS FROM THE U.S.

TOP CHALLENGES FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The image shows the top challenges for developing countries cited by government decision-makers.*

PLEASE NOTE: Government decision-makers rely heavily on specialized sources and their professional networks to stay informed about international development. They use traditional media for current news and events, but generally not for information on international development.

SOURCE: INTERMEDIA IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKERS IN THE U.S. (N=10)

TOP MEDIA AND SPECIALIZED SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The image shows the top media and specialized sources used by government decision-makers for information on international development.*

PLEASE NOTE: Government decision-makers generally do not use Facebook and Twitter to stay informed about international development.

SOURCE: INTERMEDIA IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKERS IN THE U.S. (N=10)

TOP SOCIAL MEDIA SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The image displays the key blogs used by government decision-makers for information on international development.

PLEASE NOTE: Government decision-makers generally do not use Facebook and Twitter to stay informed about international development.

SOURCE: INTERMEDIA IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKERS IN THE U.S. (N=10)

FAVORED CHAMPIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL HEALTH

The image shows the preferred champions for international development and global health cited by government decision-makers.*

SOURCE: INTERMEDIA IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKERS IN THE U.S. (N=10)

* THE SIZE OF A SHAPE INDICATES THE NUMBER OF TIMES THAT VARIOUS RESPONSES WERE MENTIONED

** THE BUILDING SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDY WAS FUNDED BY THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION. HOWEVER, INTERVIEWEES AND SURVEY RESPONDENTS WERE NOT INFORMED OF THIS. IDENTIFICATION OF BILL OR MELINDA GATES AS FAVORED CHAMPIONS WAS THUS INCIDENTAL.
INFLUENTIALS

TOP CHALLENGES FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
The image shows the top challenges for developing countries cited by influentials.*

PLEASE NOTE: Influentials rely heavily on specialized sources such as documents from development organizations and briefings from government departments to stay informed about international development. Traditional media are used as sources of background and contextual information on international development.

SOURCE: INTERMEDIA IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH INFLUENTIALS IN THE U.S. (N=16)

TOP MEDIA AND SPECIALIZED SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
The image shows the top media and specialized sources used by influentials for information on international development.*

PLEASE NOTE: Influentials generally do not use Facebook and Twitter to stay informed about international development.

SOURCE: INTERMEDIA IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH INFLUENTIALS IN THE U.S. (N=16)

FAVORED CHAMPIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL HEALTH
The image shows the preferred champions for international development and global health cited by influentials.*

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* THE SIZE OF A SHAPE INDICATES THE NUMBER OF TIMES THATVARIOUS RESPONSES WERE MENTIONED.

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Flexible identification of Bill or Melinda Gates as favored champions was thus incidental.

SOURCE: INTERMEDIA IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH INFLUENTIALS IN THE U.S. (N=16)
INTERESTED CITIZENS

TOP CHALLENGES FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The image shows the percentage of interested citizens that identified these issues as one of the top three challenges for developing countries.

- 52% Access to Health
- 47% Access to Education
- 41% Poverty
- 36% Corruption
- 30% Food Supply
- 25% Spread of Infectious Diseases
- 14% Access to Financial Services

WHO HAS THE MAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOVERNMENTS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES</th>
<th>GOVERNMENTS OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES</th>
<th>INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: INTERMEDIA SURVEY OF INTERESTED CITIZENS IN THE U.S. (N=1,001, 16+)

HOW MUCH IS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DOING TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?

- 39% Just the Right Amount
- 24% Too Little
- 31% Too Much
- 6% DK/Refused

SOURCE: INTERMEDIA SURVEY OF INTERESTED CITIZENS IN THE U.S. (N=1,001, 16+)
KEY PLATFORMS AND SOURCES FOR INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **41%** use TV as one of their main sources of information on international development
- **25%** use newspapers as one of their main sources of information on international development
- **22%** use news websites as one of their main sources of information on international development

**Most Used TV Stations**
- **37%** CNN
- **25%** FOX NEWS
- **19%** NBC

**Most Used Newspapers**
- **29%** THE NEW YORK TIMES
- **10%** THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
- **7%** LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

**Most Used News Websites**
- **24%** THE NEW YORK TIMES
- **23%** CNN
- **13%** MSNBC

**Other Social Media Sources**
- **7%**
- **1%**
- **1%**

FAVORED CHAMPIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The image shows the top five champions for international development cited by interested citizens.*

1. **Barack Obama**
   - President of the U.S.

2. **Hillary Clinton**
   - Secretary of State of the U.S.

3. **Bill Clinton**
   - Former President of the U.S.

4. **Bill Gates**
   - Co-Chairman of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

5. **Jimmy Carter**
   - Former President of the U.S.

*THE SIZE OF A SHAPE INDICATES THE NUMBER OF TIMES THAT VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS WERE MENTIONED

FAVORED CHAMPIONS FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

The image shows the top five champions for global health cited by interested citizens.*

1. **Barack Obama**
   - President of the U.S.

2. **Hillary Clinton**
   - Secretary of State of the U.S.

3. **Bill Clinton**
   - Former President of the U.S.

4. **Bill Gates**
   - Co-Chairman of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

5. **Dr. Regina Benjamin**
   - Surgeon General of the U.S.

*THE BUILDING SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDY WAS FUNDED BY THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION. HOWEVER, INTERVIEWEES AND SURVEY RESPONDENTS WERE NOT INFORMED OF THIS. IDENTIFICATION OF BILL OR MELINDA GATES AS FAVORED CHAMPIONS WAS THEREFORE INCIDENTAL.

**Source:** Intermedia Survey of Interested Citizens in the U.S. (N=1,001, 16+)

**Please Note:** U.S. interested citizens use Facebook to share news items and videos about development issues such as women’s rights in Southeast Asia. They also ‘like’ Facebook pages of multilateral institutions such as the World Health Organization, through which they receive news and updates.

**Source:** Intermedia Survey of Interested Citizens in the U.S. (N=945 interested citizens who received information about international development in the past year)
**FINDINGS FROM THE U.S.**

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**MOTIVATORS OF ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Interested citizens named the activities that they participated in during the past year to support international development efforts. For each of the activities that they engaged in, they also named the main reasons for their participation. The image below shows the three most quoted reasons for engagement for each of the activities included in the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I DONATED BECAUSE...</strong></td>
<td>I FELT I COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE SOMEONE’S LIFE</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I HAD A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THAT PARTICULAR CAUSE</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I FELT FORTUNATE AND WANTED TO GIVE BACK TO OTHERS</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I VOLUNTEERED BECAUSE...</strong></td>
<td>I FELT I COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE SOMEONE’S LIFE</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I HAD A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THAT PARTICULAR CAUSE</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I FELT FORTUNATE AND WANTED TO GIVE BACK TO OTHERS</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I SIGNED A PETITION BECAUSE...</strong></td>
<td>I FELT I COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE SOMEONE’S LIFE</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I FELT EMOTIONALLY MOVED BY SOMETHING I HAD SEEN OR HEARD</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I HAD A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THAT PARTICULAR CAUSE</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I WROTE TO THE GOVERNMENT BECAUSE...</strong></td>
<td>I FELT I COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE SOMEONE’S LIFE</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I HAD A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THAT PARTICULAR CAUSE</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I WANTED TO FEEL I’M NOT POWERLESS IN THE FACE OF NEED</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I FUNDRAISED BECAUSE...</strong></td>
<td>I FELT I COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE SOMEONE’S LIFE</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I HAD A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THAT PARTICULAR CAUSE</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I FELT FORTUNATE AND WANTED TO GIVE BACK TO OTHERS</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I ATTENDED AN EVENT BECAUSE...</strong></td>
<td>I FELT I COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE SOMEONE’S LIFE</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I HAD A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THAT PARTICULAR CAUSE</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I SAW A STORY SHOWING DATA OR EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATING THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I SHARED INFORMATION ONLINE BECAUSE...</strong></td>
<td>I FELT I COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE SOMEONE’S LIFE</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I HAD A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THAT PARTICULAR CAUSE</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I FELT EMOTIONALLY MOVED BY SOMETHING I HAD SEEN OR HEARD</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I SHARED A PERSONAL STORY OR EXPERIENCE ONLINE BECAUSE...</strong></td>
<td>I FELT I COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE SOMEONE’S LIFE</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I HAD A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THAT PARTICULAR CAUSE</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I FELT EMOTIONALLY MOVED BY SOMETHING I HAD SEEN OR HEARD</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** INTERMEDIA SURVEY OF INTERESTED CITIZENS IN U.S. (N=1,001, 16+)
ForIntermedialas.com

FINDINGS FROM THE U.S.

JOINING THE DISCUSSION:

The Building Support Community site includes the following:

- Electronic version of the Building Support for International Development main report
- Country summary reports for the twelve countries covered in this project – China, France, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S.
- Comments from Facebook users

You can share reactions to the Building Support study as well as exchange ideas with interested parties and stakeholders in the global development policy community on InterMedia’s Building Support Portal at www.intermedia.org/buildsupport and on Twitter at #buildsupport.

KEY CHALLENGES

INTERESTED CITIZENS

- Interested citizens in the U.S. often find the language used by the development community confusing and too vague, which has a negative impact on their interest and willingness to engage in development issues. They also consider U.S. military interventions abroad a part of their government’s international development efforts, which contributes to the misconceptions about the share of GDP that the U.S. is currently spending on foreign aid.

- Efforts to improve the dialogue with interested citizens in the U.S. may be hampered by their low tendency to actively seek out information on development issues and low use of social media for this purpose. A large majority receives information on development passively, through prominent TV channels and print media, such as CNN and the New York Times.

INFLUENTIALS

- Influentials in the U.S. lack formal and structured means of engagement with government decision-makers. Communication takes place on an ad-hoc basis and is concentrated around major events, such as the U.N. and G20 summits.

- They obtain information and advice on international development primarily from trusted personal and professional networks and specialized sources, and may thus be difficult to reach.

- Social media, such as Twitter, may not be the best tool for engaging influentials, as most of them consider information conveyed via Twitter notably less trustworthy and more difficult to verify than information from other sources.

GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKERS

- U.S. government decision-makers are reluctant to engage with entities they are unfamiliar with and feel are agenda driven. Reaching them may thus be particularly difficult for smaller development organizations, which do not yet have an established relationship with decision-makers in their area of work.

- They struggle with development information overload and are looking for effective ways of filtering relevant content. Information is typically filtered by junior staff, which affects the development community’s opportunities to reach the decision-makers directly.

KEY INFORMATION NEEDS

INTERESTED CITIZENS

- U.S. interested citizens require more specific and jargon-free information on international development and activities of the U.S. government in this area. This includes accurate and factual information about the current level of foreign aid and the differences between targeted development efforts and military engagement.

- They also call for clear evidence of the positive impact of U.S. international development efforts and financial assistance to developing countries. They are particularly interested in personal stories of those who have benefited from or been involved in these activities.

INFLUENTIALS

- Influentials in the U.S. lack formal and structured means of engagement with government decision-makers. Communication takes place on an ad-hoc basis and is concentrated around major events, such as the U.N. and G20 summits.

- They have very diverse information needs and require tailored communication and engagement strategies. Academics and NGOs seek very specific, up-to-date information and robust data in their area of expertise, while journalists require broader information on development issues and the impact of development policies.

GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKERS

- They look for expert advice, objective policy input on issues they work on and up-to-date data-based evidence provided by the sources they trust. They call for materials that are concise and allow them to effectively digest the information provided and make evidence-based, informed decisions.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

INTERESTED CITIZENS

- Raise awareness and fill knowledge gaps by distributing the informational content on development issues through key mass media sources, such as CNN, Fox News, the New York Times and MSNBC. Where possible, illustrate the positive impact of development efforts through personal stories of people living in developing countries as well as U.S. citizens engaged in international development.

- Avoid jargon in the communications of development issues and use language which is easy to understand, to ensure that citizens do not feel alienated from the issues.

- Promote opportunities for greater engagement in international development that do not require a lot of effort and allow for both individual and group participation. Activities facilitated through an institution, such as a school or at a workplace, are likely to be successful.

- Promote sharing of online links to development issues and campaigns through social media as well as via email. Forty-four percent of all interested citizens in the U.S. said that they shared information on development issues online, more than in any other country included in this study.

INFLUENTIALS & GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKERS

- Support a program of more structured and targeted engagement (online and offline) between government decision-makers and influentials. This could include the creation of a central neutral platform where influentials and government decision-makers working in the same area can regularly exchange information, knowledge and advice on specific development issues of their interest.

- Engage with specialized sources, media and bloggers whom influentials rely on for information on development issues. This includes sources such the Center for Global Development, William Easterly (Aid Watch blog) and Owen Barder (Owen Abroad blog).

- Provide a regular, independently curated digest of research studies and development news for government decision-makers. The digest should be provided to the government decision-makers’ information gatekeepers and also made available through key sources that are used and trusted by both government decision-makers and the influentials, for example the Economist and the New York Times.