MENDELEY CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT — INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
Leveraging Mendeley Groups to achieve sustained awareness and impact

The IFPRI — leading research for a hunger,-malnutrition, and poverty free world

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), established in 1975, provides evidence-based policy solutions to sustainably end hunger and malnutrition and reduce poverty. The institute conducts research, communicates results, optimizes partnerships, and builds capacity to ensure sustainable food production, promote healthy food systems, improve markets and trade, transform agriculture, build resilience, and strengthen institutions and governance. Gender is considered in all of the institute’s work. IFPRI collaborates with partners around the world, including development implementers, public institutions, the private sector, and farmers’ organizations, to ensure that local, national, regional, and global food policies are based on evidence. IFPRI is a member of the CGIAR Consortium.

The research conducted at the IFPRI is essential to advancing its mission of a hunger, malnutrition, and poverty free world. Furthermore, the complexity of the challenges and the global impact of the institute's work require the timely organization and dissemination of information.

This can only be achieved in a dynamic forum that cultivates the transfer of knowledge and facilitates engagement and exchange among stakeholders. Luz Marina Alvare, Head of Knowledge Management and Indira Yerramareddy, Information & Knowledge Management Specialist at IFPRI, believe that Mendeley Groups has had a significant and positive impact on the way IFPRI researchers manage and communicate their findings. Furthermore, they find it valuable that IFPRI can use Mendeley Groups as a way to promote the awareness and mission of the research institute.

Mendeley Groups for different purposes

IFPRI takes advantage of the features of Mendeley Groups to address different objectives related to knowledge management and exchange.

• At the simplest level, IFPRI showcases its publications on its website by embedding it within a public Mendeley Group and promoting it to over 3 million Mendeley users.
• IFPRI tracks and further promotes its authors’ papers, both those published with the institute and externally, on its site and help drive more recognition to its researchers and policy makers.
• IFPRI also uses Mendeley and the groups as a marketing channel to promote its conferences, idea exchanges, and encourages member discussions.

IfPRI uses multiple Mendeley groups successfully. One of the largest groups is the Agriculture, Nutrition and Health Group (http://www.mendeley.com/groups/844241/agriculture-nutrition-and-health), which has over 280 members.

A group born from a conference and grown to a community

The Agriculture, Nutrition and Health Group arose from a conference in 2011 on "Leveraging Agriculture for Improving Nutrition and Health." The
goal was to bring together information and ideas about the connections between these three topics and to identify best practices in policies and programs. Particularly important was to enable an open discussion and invite an international audience to participate and contribute knowledge.

The immediate impact of the group was a tangible increase in visibility for the conference and the IFPRI, as well as the establishment of a large, active, and highly diverse community. Members include students, researchers, librarians, and economists from all over the world with a common interest in exploring synergies between agriculture, nutrition and health that can lead to more effective policies and programs. Wanting to create a sustained impact, the IFPRI encouraged continued use of the group by delivering feedback, triggering discussions, and promoting membership. The result of these efforts is a global forum that reflects the dynamic nature of its topic. Members benefit not only from a dedicated source of current information; they also take advantage of the group to catalog and manage articles, search relevant papers, and crosslink to social media elements where they can post comments, learn if members like a recently published article, and share outside of the group through Facebook, Twitter or email. Some members even ask for informal review of manuscripts.

Who is interested in my work?

When asked what motivates researchers at IFPRI to join groups such as Agriculture, Nutrition and Health, Luz Marina Alvare highlights on one hand, the benefit to the research community as a whole, where each contribution from individuals members augments and extends the impact that the overall community has on policy changes. On the other hand, she says “the resulting publications and accumulated knowledge from our researchers’ work are like their treasures. They wish to have them in a safe place that allows them to not only manage and showcase them easily, but also provides information about how the community responds to their work.” Luz Marina Alvare identifies the ability to embed reference libraries into a website and the insights from readership statistics in Mendeley as two strong motivators for IFPRI researchers. Combining these features, a researcher needs to manage their publications only in Mendeley and those changes are automatically updated on institutional or personal websites and in collective bibliographies. The readership statistics can then be used to assess the impact of their work.

To capture and share their thoughts

“Mendeley allows our researchers to capture and share their thoughts; to show the impact of their research”
– Luz Marina Alvare

With Mendeley Groups, the IFPRI can couple the communication features of social media with the systematic development and management of collections. In this way, Luz Marina Alvare and her team practice true Knowledge Management that goes beyond the cataloging of documents to encompass also the use and propagation of information. The exchange of opinions and experiences is equally important to outcomes of programs advised by IFPRI as the data and insights recorded in publications. Mendeley Groups facilitate that exchange and the collective bibliographies that emerge, linked to member discussions and insights, are an unparalleled repository of knowledge.

Indira Yerramareddy is an Information and Knowledge Management Specialist in IFPRI. She develops different resource portals that organize IFPRI research data and publications. She created and still maintains ‘Agriculture, Nutrition and Health’ group and other IFPRI groups. She trains and supports researchers on different academic and social media tools including Mendeley.
The many faces of Mendeley Groups

Dr. Daeqing He and his graduate student, Wei Jeng, from the University of Pittsburgh, investigate virtual collaboration and data sharing behavior in academic communities. In multiple studies on active Mendeley Groups, they report on the diversity of their uses. While the pervasive objectives are to collect references and gather like-minded people, He and Jeng also found examples of groups serving as:

- Repositories for institutions
- Current contents for periodicals
- Topic-specific libraries
- Class material management sites

What motivates Mendeley group members?

Surveyed members of open Mendeley Groups named information and networking as the top reasons to join a group. Researchers become members or followers of a group because they wish to keep abreast of current topics and connect with individuals in their research field. Contributing to publication lists and gaining professional visibility were also important, ranking as top motives for respondents who are members in 5 or more groups.

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