SuSanA Discussion Forum
A tool to accelerate learning within the sanitation sector

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Overview

- The SuSanA Discussion Forum
- Opportunities
- Challenges and ways to improve
I. Open discussion forum since 2011

- All posts can be viewed by anyone
- Only registered SuSanA users can write a post
- Posts are found by Google searches
- Goal is to make knowledge, ideas, debates more accessible to everyone (inside and outside of SuSanA)
- About 5200 registered users
- About 25,000 page views per months
- High quality moderation (mainly funded by SEI)
II. Thematic Discussion Series

- Better harvest the knowledge of the discussion forum
- Structured discussion on a thematic topic
- Lengths: about 2-3 weeks
- Pre-engage thematic leader(s)
- Involve a coordinator that produces short summaries and a synthesis of the discussion
- Other outputs may be: webinars, wiki entry, wikipedia article etc.
- Increase the availability of knowledge on the topics (e.g. through synthesis documents, wiki entries etc.)
II. Thematic Discussion Series since 2015

- Sanitation Ladder
- Urban Sanitation Finance - From Macro to Micro Level

Next TDS about SDGs starting 1st September
III. Linking Webinars and Forum Discussion

“Many of the questions were answered in the chat rooms but as always we couldn’t get to you all so as promised I am posting a few outstanding questions here and encourage all of you to continue the discussion here [on the Forum].”
IV. The WikiProject Sanitation & the Forum

- Started in December 2014
- Initiated by James Heilman (*Physician*, *Wikipedia administrator*, *Wikimedia Foundation Board member*) and Elisabeth von Münch (*SuSanA forum community manager*)

**Goal:** To benefit the world by giving the general public and professionals in all areas that touch on sanitation topics information which they can all read, appreciate, and respect, free of charge

- About 200 article „tagged“ for this WikiProject
- “Harnessing the wisdom of the Forum crowd”
IV. The WikiProject Sanitation

- Objectives of WikiProject Sanitation
  - improve sanitation related articles on Wikipedia
  - raise awareness amongst the general public in all countries about the sanitation crisis in developing countries
  - add links to sanitation issues into articles where such links were so far omitted (for example article on malnutrition)
  - ensure that the lead paragraph of articles is written in basic, clear English so that they can easily be translated into other languages as part of WikiProject Medicine Translation Taskforce
  - promote further engagement by other sectors

- If you want to know more or have any questions contact Elisabeth von Münch: elisabeth.muench@ostella.de
V. Challenges

Perceived constraints to engage actively with SuSanA / Forum

- **Language** (English is the common language and used in a high quality)
- **Initimidation**, because of high standards and perceived „learnedness“ of other participants
- People may not always connect the reality of their projects with a more **academic” discussion** on the forum.
- **Time** – many posts written in the people’s spare time.
V. Ideas to improve the SuSanA network

And ideas of how to overcome them

- Offer a language edit of forum posts
- „featured articles“ that are authored by practitioners (in a blog post style)
- Implement an „anonymous question button“
- …

→ Please let us know your ideas and thoughts!