



Thematic Area 5: Fostering inclusive growth through community outreach and public awareness

General Topic: Social Media and Community Empowerment

Title: Social Media involvement in driving community change



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1. Introduction

The art of communicating among people has evolved from the days of sending messages via birds, telegrams via horsemen and switchboard operated telephone services to most recently using cellular services with high frequency and web-based applications. The latter termed 'New Media' refers to digital communication channels that have emerged with the introduction of the internet, changing the way information is created, shared, and consumed by people. It ranges from blogs and emails to social media platforms. A few of these are: WhatsApp, Facebook (Meta Business), Messenger, Instagram, X (formally Twitter), YouTube, Tik Tok, Snap Chat, Bluesky and Signal all allow for messages to be exchanged in quick succession among individuals and within groups.

Cambridge Dictionary defines social media as:

“Websites and computer programs that allow people to communicate and share information, opinions, pictures, videos, etc on the internet, especially social networking websites”

Social media is seemingly becoming the main form of communication offering instant access to information among family, friends and business customers. Messages on these platforms vary from informing and educating on different topics to urging one to act through business sales or participating in challenges (for example: the ice bucket challenge). With this mind, can social media be used by an adaptation project – The Climate-Resilient Water Sector in Grenada (G-CREWS) - as a digital communication tool

to further inform citizens of water challenges in light of climate change impacts, and drive them towards becoming change agents or water champions?

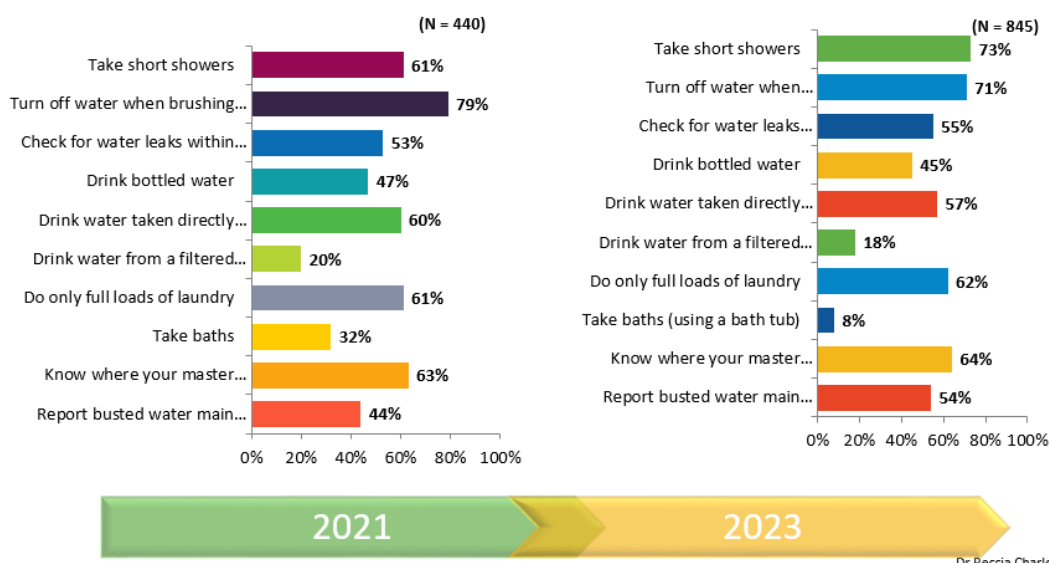
Additionally, should social media be the only medium used or it should be intertwined with the traditional media approaches of face-to-face engagements via townhall meetings, exhibitions, radio and tv appearances, and school visits to achieve involvement and behavioural change?

Both traditional and non-traditional communication channels have their pros and cons of existing alone or side by side. For the G-CREWS project to achieve its overarching goal of increasing the population's awareness of climate change, it utilizes both to ensure all age groups are informed.

However, specific focus in this paper will be placed on the results of its social media pages to show how behaviour change can be achieved.

Thus far, the responses received on the project's social media postings via messages and post reactions backed by results from a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey done in 2019 and 2023 have revealed changes in people's behaviour towards water management in light of climate change impacts. One result shows 73 percent of respondents in 2023 said they took short showers compared to 61 percent in 2021 and 54 percent indicated they have engaged in reporting leaks in 2023 compared to 44 percent in 2021. A list of other actions being taken by the Grenadian population towards water conservation can be found in the diagram below.

Currently in your everyday life, do you:



For a small island developing state with a population of approximately 118,000 people, Grenada's water sector continues to be challenged by climate change impacts of droughts, erratic rainfall and extreme heat events. Thus, getting citizens to have a greater appreciation for this precious finite resource – called water –and offering tips and strategies to adjust one's behaviour towards a resilient water sector is important.

2. Grenada's social media presence

Social media is said to be the biggest form of communication currently used among Grenadian citizens especially in the age group 18 – 45. According to the 2025 data portal report on the use of social media in Grenada, ***“65.3 thousand social media users were identified in January 2025, equating to 55.7 percent of the total population”***. This target group considered the next generation of leaders should be provided with

information that leads them to take some form of action regarding their water usage, and to work towards being champions of water and environmental stewards.

3. G-CREWS in a nutshell

Communication is essential in getting the population to fully understand the work of the G-CREWS project as it interacts with stakeholders from different sectors. As an adaptation project, funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN) under its International Climate Initiative (IKI) and the Government of Grenada, the US\$45 million-dollar project is set to revolutionize the water sector in the state of Grenada towards a more climate resilient one.

This is being done through a comprehensive, multi-level approach that includes appropriate governance measures of legislative and regulation improvements, economic incentives for the agriculture and tourism sectors, water infrastructure upgrades, awareness raising and the exchanging of successes and lessons learned.

Specific to awareness raising, the expected result is to have improved climate-resilient water users stemmed from infrastructure developments and legislative approaches which inform decision making and citizens' understanding of climate change impacts on the water sector.

4. G-CREWS: sparking climate action through social media

Resilience and adaptability are intertwined in building citizens knowledge on water management. The effectiveness of using different communication channels lies in the messaging being accurate, consistent, interesting and entertaining (ACIE).

Guided by its communication and social media strategies and supported by the communication and management committees, the project is using social media to educate, inform, and bring awareness to the citizens of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique on:

- the impacts of climate change on Grenada's water supply
- highlight the successes from adapting a resilience approach by showing climate-cost benefits and the human relief one can receive by adopting proactive approaches.

A structured dissemination approach has been used by the project for the past 5 years. A content calendar details monthly themes, gives details of the weekly posts, and shows followers growth on the different platforms - Facebook, Instagram, YouTube. Posts are generated around topics for example: Tip Tuesdays, Fact Fridays, Blog posts Wednesdays, International days related to water and project highlights or exciting news. Content analysis is done regularly to determine audience engagement with the posts and page overall.

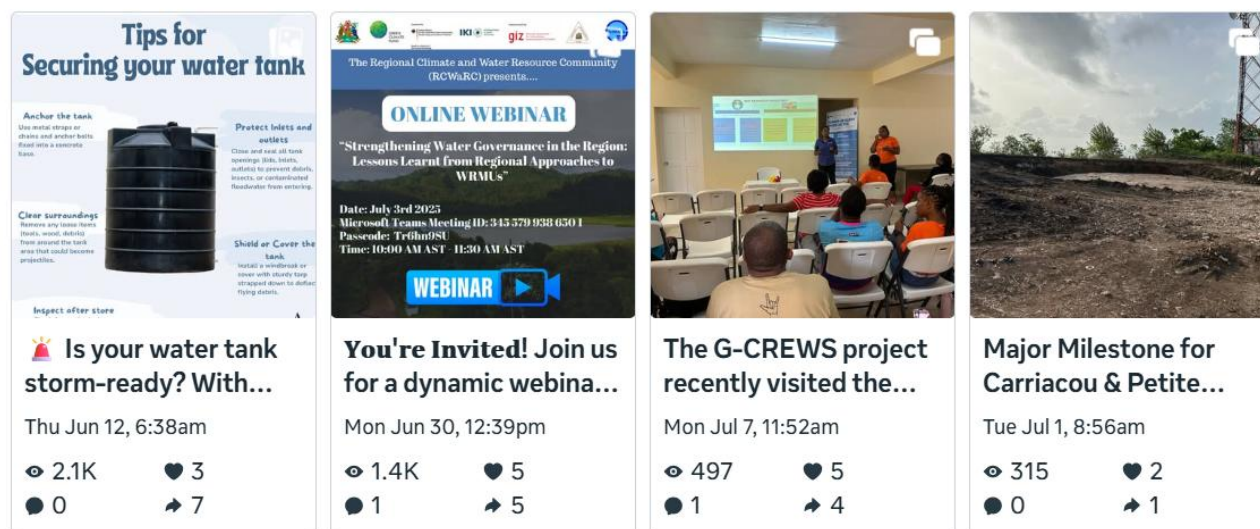
This regular monitoring enables content to be revised, making it more attractive for the audience. For instance, call to action flyers on how to install a rainwater harvesting system or a storytelling video where a beneficiary of a rainwater harvesting system speaks of how her trek for daily water is now a thing of the past thanks to the G-CREWS project.

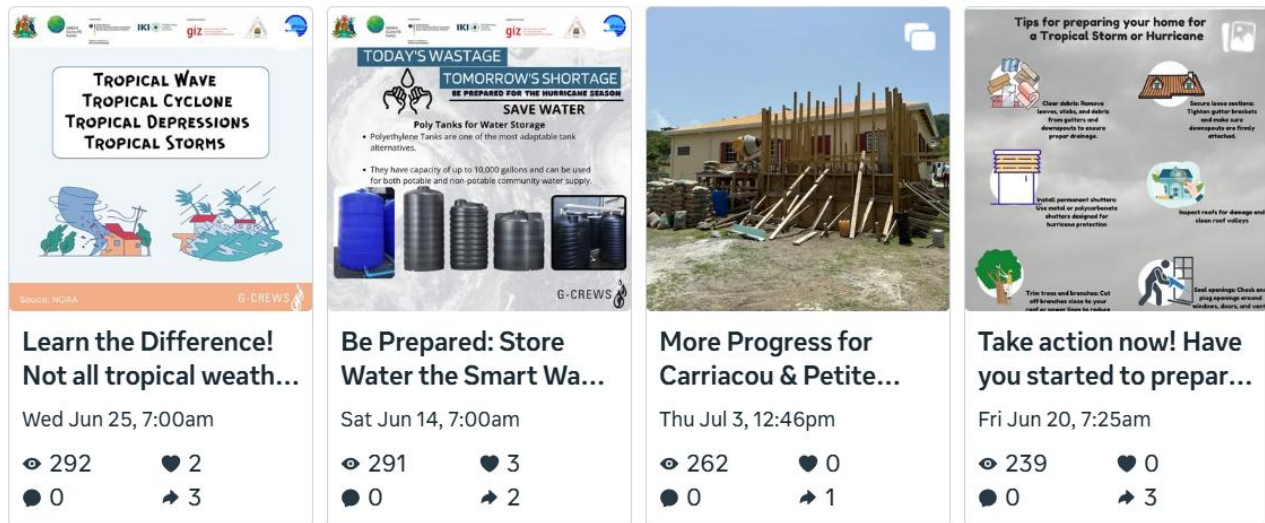
Another aspect of its dissemination plan involves collaborating and tagging partners social media platforms (like the National Water and Sewerage Authority (NAWASA) and Ministry of Agriculture). This helps the project's page to grow and also shows citizens the organizations working together to ensure they receive the ultimate benefits.

Additionally, the G-CREWS project collects analytics on gender and age ranges of the people interacting with the posts. This vital information allows the communications team to further tailor its messaging, resulting in dynamic pages and increased followers.

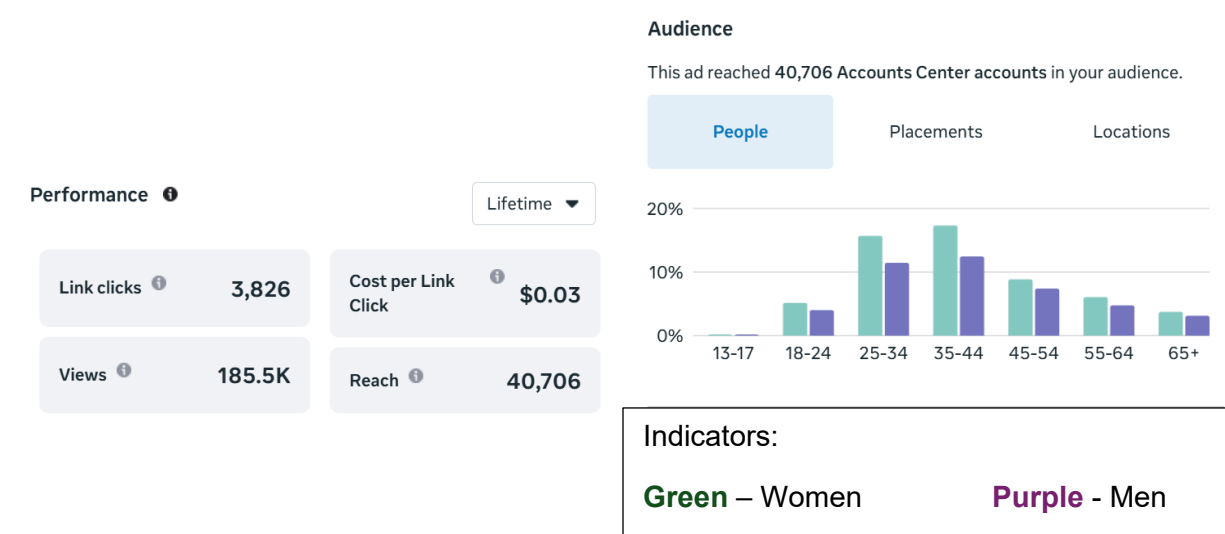
5. The results thus far!

Launched in November 2021, the G-CREWS social media platform grew from zero to over 1,847 on Facebook, 502 on Instagram and 177 on YouTube to date. A sample of top social media postings and their feedback can be seen in the 2 diagrams below.





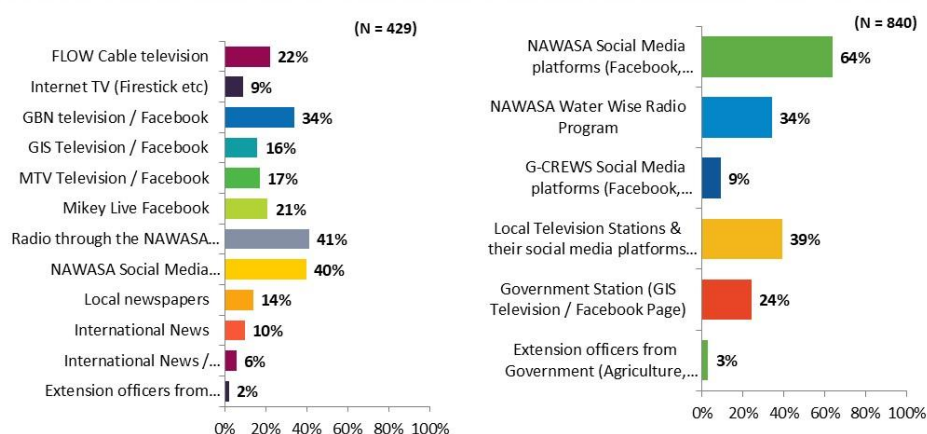
One method of getting more people to see your posts via these social media platforms is through 'boosting' – paying to show a social post to people who may not be following the project's page. This approach results in increased followers and likes, and proved very effective for the project. For example: A video on *"Have enough storage – Purchase a water tank today?"* received over 185,500 views and reached approximately 40,706 people on a budget of USD \$2.00 per day. The response resulted in numerous public inquiries: *"Where can I purchase a tank? What considerations must be explored when setting up one? How can I get it installed?"*



Further proof that social media has led to behaviour change can be seen in the KAP surveys done in 2021 and 2023. Social media, above all the other communication mediums, was the preferred channel of the 1,300 respondents collectively who answered this question on the 2 occasions.

Tapping into cross posting and collaborations on partners social media pages was clearly visible in the survey results. In the 2023 survey, an increase in the use of project partners NAWASA's social media platform from 40% in the baseline year of 2021 to 64% in 2023 was attained as depicted in figure below.

Where do you receive water resources information from (check all that apply)



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The use of influencers (popular social media bloggers) to drive your messaging is another area which stood out in the KAP surveys and resulted in followers' growth and audience interactions. This was witnessed in our social media analytics of carnival music videos, Christmas videos and a save water song.

6. Conclusion

Social Media platforms play a pivotal role in raising awareness and sharing timely information, especially to a young audience heavily influenced by trends in social media. The G-CREWS project witnessed the benefits of using social media to engage and spread climate resilient water messages. One key lesson learned is that social media pages should not operate in isolation but in collaboration with partner organizations in sharing content. This approach not only broadens reach and boost follower engagements but also highlights the collaborative nature of the project and shared commitment by the respective organizations towards achieving the project's goals.

With the increase in technology and trends, projects should explore the use of social media in sharing its messages and generating input from the beneficiaries and citizens in general. This medium can be used as part of its monitoring and evaluation efforts to determine the project's reach and help determine whether it is satisfying its overall objective.

7. References

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