

The Aspen Institute: AGLN Fellow Exchange

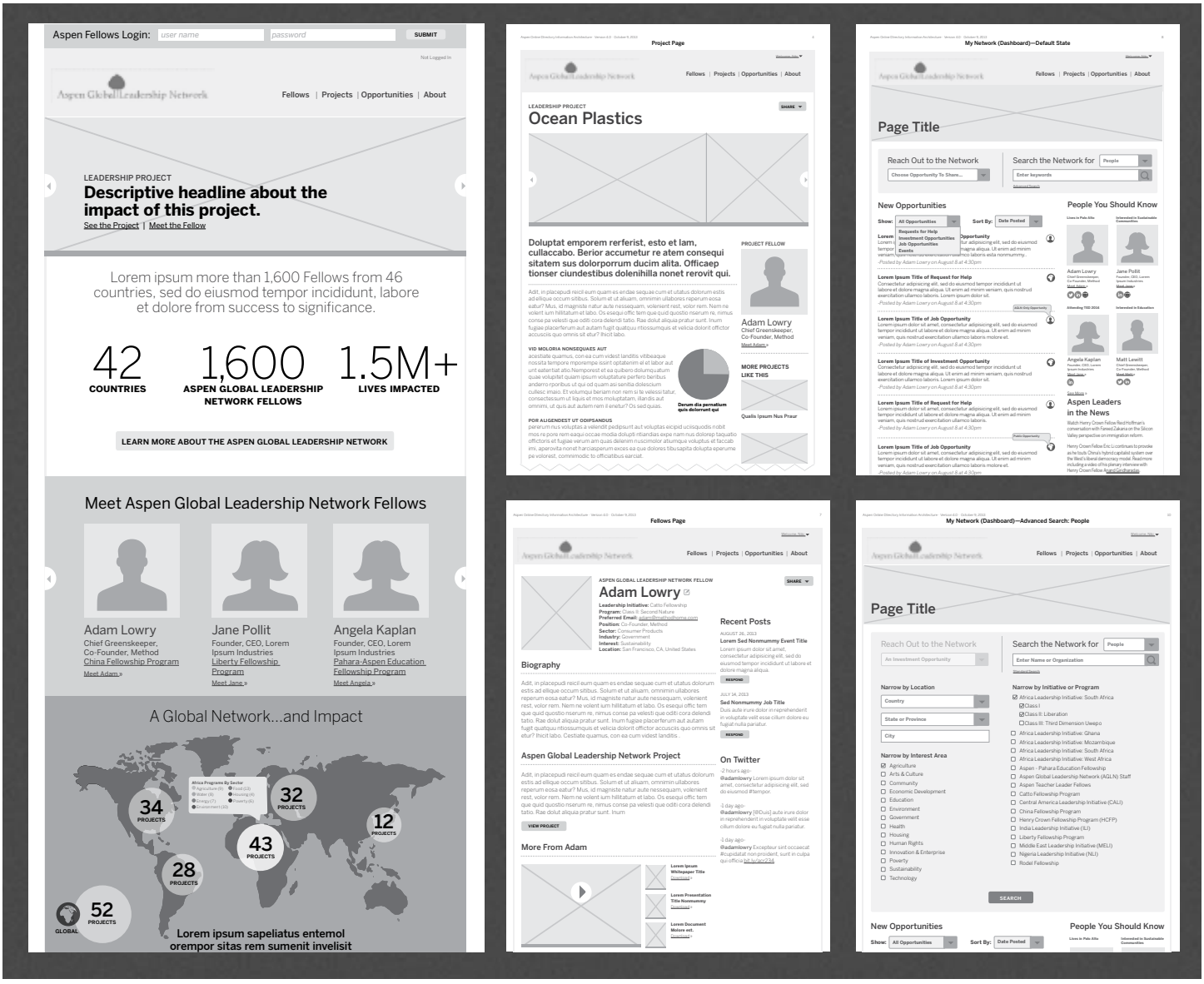
Connecting a Global Community of Social Entrepreneurs

The Aspen Institute's Global Leadership Network is made up innovative thinkers and doers from around the world who are selected by The Aspen Institute to become Fellows, and make a commitment to apply their considerable acumen, creativity, and experience to help solve some of the world's biggest challenges. With a 4-year Online Directory that primarily served to make Fellow contact information from the AGLN's Raiser's Edge CRM accessible within the Network, The Aspen Institute asked MSDS to help them improve their website and make it a more valuable resource for their Fellows to increase their impact. Their top priorities? Finding new ways create a deeper engagement between the AGLN and more than 1,900 Fellows from around the world, and increasing collaboration between these entrepreneurial leaders to help increase their positive global impact.



AGLN Online Directory: Before Redesign

More an online white pages than an online community, the existing AGLN Online Directory delivered a limited user experience, significantly reducing its value to AGLN Fellows. Private and fully password-protected, it also seriously limited The Aspen Institute's ability to raise awareness of the incredible work their global network of social entrepreneurs was engaged in. Maximizing the full potential of the AGLN's website required more than just a face-lift. It would take rethinking the website's relationship to Fellows, how it could increase collaboration, and how it could better communicate key issues and the AGLN's impact to the broader public.



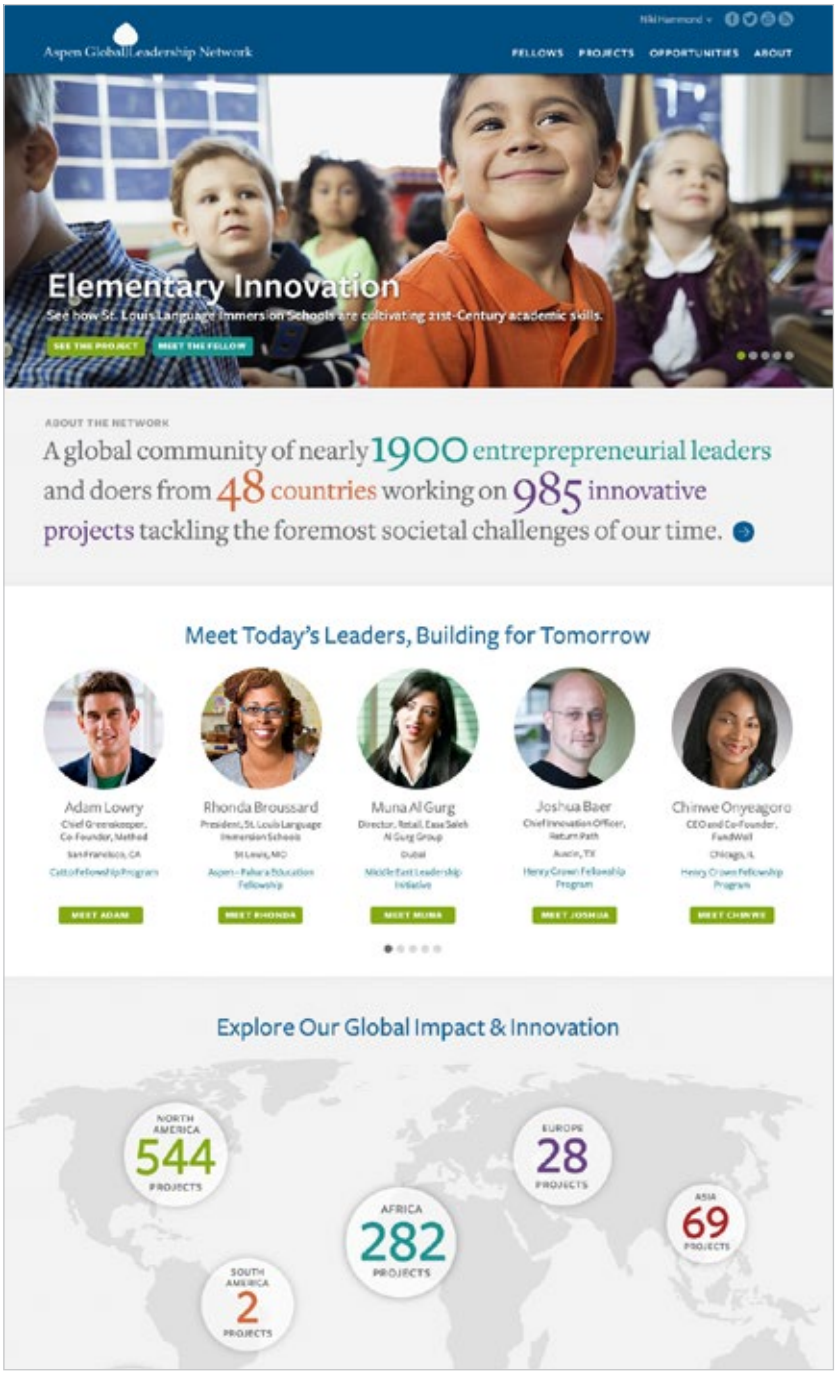
Interactive Strategy & Information Architecture

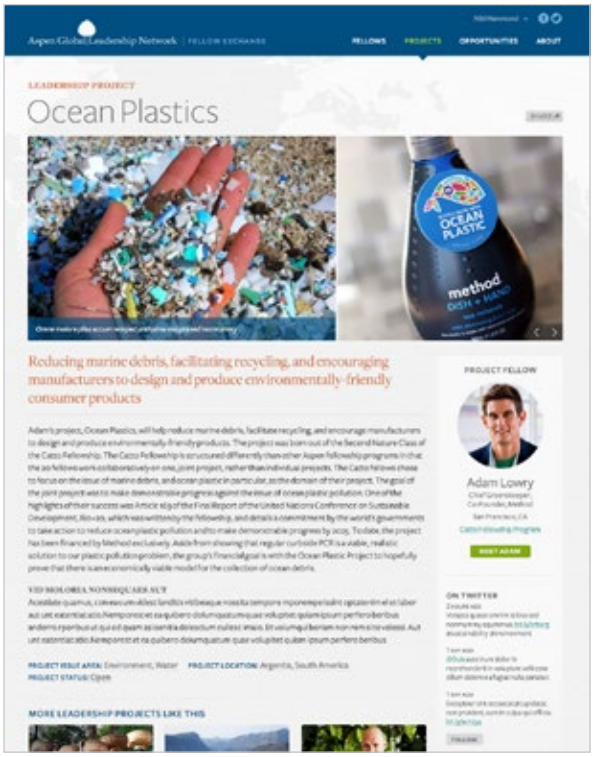
Seeing an opportunity to increase the Online Directory's value, we recommended turning the closed-network website into a public-facing one that would educate and inspire. We increased opportunities for collaboration and strengthened community with content strategy organizing everything by geography, issues, and interests. We then gave Fellows a platform to tell greater impact stories with new, editorially rich Leadership Project pages. Improved profiles allow Fellows to easily edit their own bios and share their work to increase knowledge sharing. We gave Fellows the ability to announce job, investment, and other opportunities within the Network or to the broader public; then added robust search and customizable email subscription services to help them stay connected to issues, people, and projects in which they're interested.

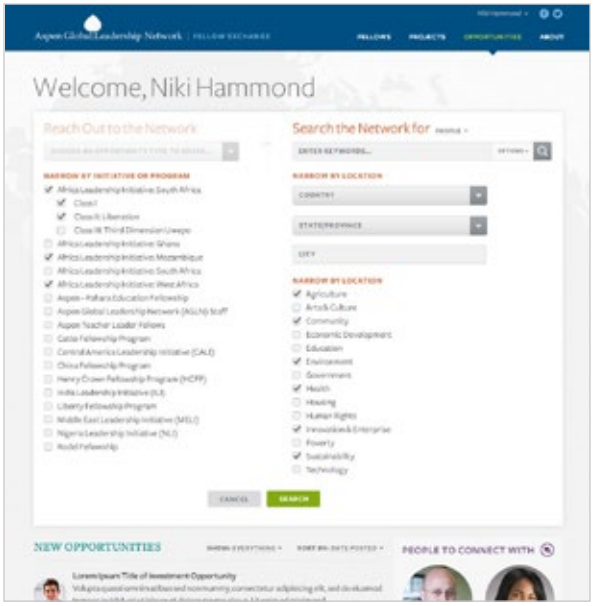


AGLN.AspenInstitute.org Branding & Website Design

With the framework for a dynamic online community in place, it was time to develop an equally strong brand, starting by renaming the website the "AGLN Fellow Exchange." Design strategy emphasized balancing the need to deliver a rich visual experience while maintaining superior usability for the task-focused site. Designed on a responsive framework, the Fellow Exchange combines bold imagery with a system of highly structured typography and user interface controls that make interacting with the website a pleasure on any device. The new AGLN Fellow Exchange transforms The Aspen Institute's previously private, static website into a network of social innovation—increasing awareness and opportunities to collaborate, while demonstrating the impact AGLN Fellows are having on serious global challenges.







Our Client's Take

"We needed a website that would better engage our constituency and convey the dynamism of their social projects. MSDS expanded our thinking, helping us find new ways to engage our members and reach entirely new audiences. Their people were true partners throughout, asking the right questions, actively listening to our needs, and applying the strategic, creative and technical expertise needed to succeed."

Caitlin Colegrove, AGLN Network & Communications Manager