

Designing For Scale

Perspectives on Scaling Youth Employability Programs

*“The problems and challenges we face are scaling-
our solutions must do the same.”*

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Overview

- Confessions
- Why scale social programs?
- Experience from the non-profit & private sectors
- Defining & characterizing scaling for social programs
- Typologies of scaling
- Disincentives & challenges
- Success factors – what are we learning?

Illustrated by current experiences in Brazil, South Africa and Mozambique

Why scale social programs?

- “If you can’t replicate this pilot, then you will have failed.”
- The potential to rapidly increase impact and create a firestorm of positive change
- Increasing donor demand
- Helps achieve system-wide impact – tipping point
- Leveraging knowledge & experience can increase the speed of replicating & the odds of achieving outcomes
- Increase opportunities for broad benefit
- Provide easy access to expertise and experience
- Optimizing the use of funding and other resources
- Evidence that one theory of change is better than others

Experience with scaling

- Social programs that have scaled?
- Private sector experience?
- What can we learn from the private sector?
- Is the private sector more successful at scaling? Why?
- How is the social sector different?

Defining & characterizing scaling

Going to scale is a process of extending and expanding change, social benefit and value by increasing the number of people ***benefiting from a change*** that they have ***adopted and adapted***.

- Scaling seeks to:
 - reproduce quality ***results***, not just recreate physical attributes
 - create a ***tipping point*** where change is self-replicating and sustaining
 - optimize ***per-person costs*** without reducing quality of results
- Scaling is an ***active process*** that doesn't happen by accident
- “At the heart of replication is the movement of an organization's ***theory of change*** to a new location.”*

*Jeffrey Bradach, “The Challenge of Replicating Social Programs”

Scaling Typology – some attributes

- Scaling across cultures
- Scaling across geography
- Scaling in numbers and types of people involved:
 - across socio-economic groups, gender, ethnicities, age, degree of challenges, etc.
- Scaling across time
- Scaling across donors
- Scaling with types of funding (grants vs. income)
- Scaling across types of organizations
- Not all projects/programs can or should scale

Success Factors for Scaling - 1

- **Design for scale** from the very start
 - Most people don't start a project or pilot with the intent of purposefully NOT scaling. However, designing pilots and new programs to enable scaling from the start seems rare. Therefore, we are essentially deciding not to scale when we start.
- A clear & concise mission that **all** understand, believe in & act on
- Fully understand your **customers and clients**
- Articulate **organization's theory of change** based on evidence
- Define the **minimum critical specifications**
- Identify and strengthen **local champions & strong leadership**
- Enable and support **local ownership & autonomy**
- Speak to the **heart** not just the mind
- **Pull** (demand) is better than **Push** (supply)

Success Factors - 2

- Articulate **steps** in the core processes of the theory of change
- **Organizational culture** is usually critical
- Create & use **measurable performance standards**
- Identify **weak links** & strategies to address them
- Actively **measure > learn > reflect > act > measure > learn**
....
- Leverage the **power of association** and networks
- **Understand the larger system and the political economy**
- Enable **adaption & evolution** without changing core identity
- Understand **incentive systems** that catalyze & sustain change
- Create ways to measure change & track key **performance**

Disincentives & Challenges - 1

- Donor addiction to the newest “innovative” ideas
- Resources for investing in scale are scarce
- Organizational competitiveness
- Individual & organizational egos - “Not invented here”
- Weak communication & “marketing” systems
- A lack of a culture for scaling
- Pilots or projects strongly tied to one personality
- The complexity of social problems and solutions
- Scaling is very difficult and won’t happen by accident

Disincentives & Challenges - 2

- The NGO disease and a lack of rigor
- Urgency of survival mitigates against investing in scale
- Centralizing decision making & control
- Conventional “wisdom” and traditional practices
- Political economy & local interest groups may resist scaling
- Unwillingness to pay the real cost of scaling up
- A lack of attention to potential harm

Concluding Thoughts

- Less complex projects targeting one or a few discrete changes are more readily scalable than complex projects
- What do we do with complex programs that address complex problems in complex environments, where the time frame for results and impact are long?
 - Employability programs for disadvantaged youth
 - Entrepreneurship and enterprise programs for youth
- Scaling is difficult, but not scaling is no longer an option
- A collective vision for scaling and ways for achieving scale are needed
- ICTs are a powerful enabler for achieving scale



Thank you!

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