



Scaling up

Social Proyects



Scaling up Social Projects ¹



Over the last few years, in Latin America, the tension between the solutions reached by local impact projects and the scope and depth of the problems generated by the increase of poverty, educational exclusion, unemployment, lack of access to basic health care services, housing problems, and the vulnerability of the rights of children and teenagers, among other problems, has promoted the need to develop strategies that will help public policies achieve greater impact. In this way, the scaling up of projects became an area of relevance

not only for public policies but also for Civil Society organizations.

The initiative called *"Component for global learning. Scalable Social Projects"*, was developed within the scale-up program to Promote New Learning Communities, and was voluntarily organized by eleven social organizations from Latin America and Spain². FUNDACION SES was in charge of the project's general coordination, and each participating organization led one of the different topics based on their knowledge, experience and interests.

The component of global learning

FUNDACION SES learning strategy was developed through activities involving virtual and in person participation, virtual discussion forums, International Seminars - B. A. 2005-2006, Montevideo 2007-, and Internships where experiences were discussed in Chile, Paraguay and Argentina. This learning proposal implied the development of a stage by stage process, allowing the participants to have access to the theoretical contribution of important academic figures (Forums and Seminars) and the practical knowledge resulting from the exchange of experiences and the field visits (Forums and Internships). As a result of the Internships, participants were able to see, in each of the areas visited, how each institution understands, defines and applies the concept of "scale", how they recognize the context, confront their own experiences and generate inter-institutional ties.



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In 2001, a group of IYF-member organizations set out to build specific knowledge about their own practices in scale-up projects. The meetings held in Medellín 2001 and Washington 2003 served as the starting point for discussion and gave rise to question and reflection sessions which were taken up in the learning initiative that FUNDACION SES coordinated during 2005 - 2007.

¹ This document summarizes part of the collective production from a group of social organizations in Latin America between 2005 and 2007, with reference to how to scale up social projects. Content design and editing was carried out by José María Ñanco, from the area of Education at FUNDACION SES.

² Participating organizations were: Fundación Abrinq (Brazil), Fundación Achnu (Chile) Fundación CIRD (Paraguay), Corporación Región (Colombia), Fundación Esplai (Spain), Foro Juvenil (Uruguay), Iniciativa Costera Marino (Avina- Costa Rica), Fundación Oportunitas (Venezuela), Fundación Otras Voces (Argentina), Fundación SES (Argentina), Avina (Argentina). This initiative also counted with the participation and cooperation of U. B. A (University of Buenos Aires), The New School University (USA), and Lucent Technologies (Argentina).

Lessons about the practice

In methodological terms, a potentially scalable program encompasses different types of strategies that allow increasing its impact:

- I. Increased coverage.
- II. Replication.
- III. Incidence on Public Policies.

The basic core of replication is the key component. It is constituted by the essential elements that give the project its identity and which will be present in each scale-up project.

The identification of the project's "basic core" is a strategy that helps solve potential "tensions" between the centrally-designed program structure and its different local adaptations.



2005 Meeting

Thematic areas

The reflection on action resulted in defining six large fields with scale perspective.

Social impact and impact on public policies

If a project is to impact on public policies it needs to be designed to be scaled up, i.e. that the problem is taken up by the state so that activities are conducted on a much larger area and with a much broader, more general scope. In order to scale projects, social organizations need legitimacy and representation, which are developed acting in, with and for the community. Legitimacy results from having a technical and political knowledge and a specific work methodology that allow Civil Society Organizations to have a privileged position in the public arena. The impact objectives should be planned together with the project and evaluated by means of indicators.

Social actors and community involvement



2005 Meeting

Civil Society Organizations are social actors that take up a social problem and act in the public sphere, calling upon the state to take it up in its hands and then develop relevant public policies.

Those projects that interpret the demands from the local communities, and that are based on their needs, values and customs, and the requirements stemming from the context, have greater chances of being successfully scaled up.

For those changes to act as a legitimate, feasible, effective and sustainable response, it is necessary to have forums where policies can be developed through participatory, democratic processes, which enable the agreement on a long term public strategy.

Sustainability

Sustainable is defined as anything that maintains its added value throughout time. For projects to maintain their added value throughout time, two types of rationality need to be coordinated: technical and political. Technical rationality produces results and is effective; political rationality enables the creation of social capital and the subsequent ownership of proposals. Economic, political and social sustainability require the support of strong inter-institutional networks. Associative projects developed based the consensus of all the actors involved create a social capital that gives greater chances of political sustainability to the different proposals.



Meeting 2005

Working in Networks



Meeting 2006

Scaling up projects involves a long term projection in contexts of increasing coordination. The development of networks and alliances or partnerships not only increases social power and the capacity of negotiation of the civil society, especially those that suffer exclusion to a greater extent. It also increases the speed and coverage of experiences and collective learning, facilitates the transfer of resources and skills by connecting public and private sectors, and promotes a culture of sustained participation in a set of values that contribute to democratization and inclusive development.

The development of a collective vision in each of the levels of the scale favors greater relevance, meaningfulness and a longer life for the different proposals.

Training

It is impossible to scale up a project without considering that the process must enable replication. In the training sessions about scale-up projects, the focus is on communicating the crucial aspects that give the project its identity and which, as such, are the core components to be transferred. Communicating these contents encompasses three type of knowledge: concept-, procedure- and attitude-based knowledge. Cultural or social diversity enhance the training process and allow us to think of an issue from multiple

perspectives when building up knowledge. In a scale-up process, it is necessary to distinguish between the training needs of the replicating organization and the training needs of the regional organizations vis-à-vis the experience or project.



Meeting 2006

Evaluating the impact

In evaluating scale-up projects, we can focus on two areas

- 1.- Whether we achieved the desired impact
- 2.- Whether the strategy for project scale-up was the most adequate for the impact we sought to achieve.

1.- The evaluation of the impact of the scale up process should assess the increased coverage, the level of impact of the structural problem, the degree of inter-sector activities, the impact of the replication, sustainability and extension of the different experiences, and the impact on public policies.

2.- Besides these points, the evaluation of the strategy for program scale-up involves three distinct moments:

Ex - ante evaluation (of feasibility and sustainability), which enables making decisions in connection with the implementation of the strategy; *Process evaluation*, to know whether it is satisfactory or adequate/inadequate; *Effects and Impact evaluation* to know the effects and impact achieved.

Management of resources and budget

Scaling-up involves expansion and high costs work against this. Even if the initial scaling up of a project necessarily requires an increase in operational costs, the subsequent scaling and the eventual economy of scale generated result in lower operational costs. A project conceived as “scalable” should be a low cost project. The budget of scale-up projects demands effective administration of expenses in terms of benefits, and intelligent investment in terms of the capacity to mobilize resources.

Strengthening local alliances and participating in pre-existing programs in each location not only results in the improved use of resources but is also an important sustainability strategy.



Meeting in 2007



Meeting in 2007



Virtual Forum 2005-2007



Virtual Newsletter Nº 6

Methodological Proposals

- **Have prior knowledge.** To increase project impact by scaling it up, it is necessary to have prior knowledge about the real conditions of the scaling up process. This knowledge stems from the previous systematization of the experience to be scaled up and the lessons learned.
- **Determine the basic core for replication.** The basic core for replication includes the key methodological mechanism to replicate the experience in different contexts, which is structured around the values and the ethical-political principles defined in the proposal (core of values).
- **Determine the locations** by identifying regions in connection with the size and depth of the problem according to the information derived from official indicators or from local surveys.
- **Determine coverage** involves identifying the scope for the program or initiative. In strategies for project scale-up, it is necessary to quantify (in percentages) the number of target addressees to be reached in order to address the problem, and for the proposal as a whole to have impact on the society and public policies.
- **Adapt organizational changes.** The different scale-up experiences teach us that it is essential to develop a communication strategy that can be adapted to different contexts.
- **Define network identification, selection and management criteria** and the development of coordination mechanisms.
- **Design and plan training processes for each level.** Before training is implemented, it is necessary to diagnose the training needs by identifying the knowledge, procedures and skills required by the technical teams and the local actors. A key component of any scalable training process lies in having contents that can be adapted to the different contexts without adversely affecting the training core, and developing training materials adequate for each level.
- **Plan administration and budget.** To achieve sustainable local development, the key criterion in budget planning is to mobilize resources, which requires implementing the redistribution and circulation of resources existing in the community. It is important to remember that a scalable project is a low-cost project. Scaling up involves expansion, and high costs work against this.
- **Determine scaling-up monitoring and evaluation variables.** In scale-up projects, technical and political management are evaluated, i.e. issues that are related to processes, results, and meeting schedules, but also a political vision and perspective linked to potential impact.

