On the CUSP of Change:

Ethical and effective scaling of social norms programming for gender equality

Building bridges to more effective scaled programming

AIDS2018 – Women's Networking Zone
Booth #524 | Wednesday 25 July | 1530-1630

Community for Understanding Scale Up (CUSP)

Who we are

Our **social norms change for gender equality** initiatives, methodologies and materials have been / are being scaled up in different ways:

- ✓ mentioned in "best practices" roundups

- ✓ donors have recommended and/or prescribed them in their funding calls

- ✓ being used by many other groups – often in positive ways, sometimes in ways they were not originally designed for
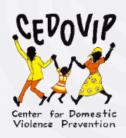
Who we are

ORGANIZATION	INITIATIVE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	TYPE OF INITIATIVE
Raising Voices/CEDOVIP	SASA! - Uganda	3-year community mobilization program for VAW and HIV prevention
Salamander Trust	Stepping Stones - Uganda	12-week facilitated peer-group training program to build communication and relationship skills
Tostan	Community Empowerment Program - Senegal	3-year holistic participatory human rights-based education program for adults and adolescents.
Multisectorial partnership	IMAGE Programme - South Africa	Microfinance for women combined with gender and HIV training
Oxfam	We Can - Bangladesh / Nepal	Large scale campaign to mobilize change makers
Institute for Reproductive Health, Pathfinder, Save the Children	GREAT - Uganda	Radio drama, community mobilization, group activities and service linkages
Sonke Gender Justice	One Man Can - South Africa	Community Education and mobilization to involve men in violence and HIV prevention
Puntos de Encuentro Nicaragua	We're Different / We're Equal (Sexto Sentido) - Nicaragua	"Social soap" TV series + multi-media, community capacity-building and organizing + multi-sector coalition building

One definition of
Scale up:

"Expanding, adapting and sustaining successful policies, programs or projects in different places and over time to reach a greater number of people."

Why we came together

- ✓ Side conversations about concerns and challenges as well as excitement about opportunities

- ✓ Interest in sharing and collectively analyzing experiences

- ✓ Commitment to synthesize and share lessons learned and recommendations for ethical and effective scale up practice

The context: Opportunities

- ✓ Growing evidence base on impact and importance of social / gender norms change as key for advancing gender equality and various kinds of outcomes

- ✓ Growing evidence base and knowledge about core principles and attributes of effective norms change initiatives

- ✓ Donor interest in scaling up of effective initiatives

Concerns and challenges

- ✓ Northern donor and research community emphasis on RCTs leads to exclusion and/or invisibility of other promising initiatives

- ✓ Pressure to expand reach and cut costs can lead to:

  - ▪ Cookie-cutter approach that doesn't adequately take new context into account

  - ▪ Abbreviation or mix-and-match implementation that may compromise core principles

- ✓ Less willingness to fund innovation in what is still a developing field

Aspects of Scale up

Horizontal: Geographical expansion, replication → adaptation

Vertical: Institutionalization via organizational policies and budgets

'Grafting': Adding components to an existing initiative

Wholly-owned: Original designers/implementers work directly in new region

Additive/Partnerships: Original implementers help scale with new partners

Multiplicative: New implementers take on work

Dissemination: Making how-to information freely available

Scale up processes/issues

Diffusion: Planned or spontaneous

Structure: Centralized/top-down or decentralized/bottom-up

Implementation: Standardized or flexible/adaptive

Pace: Rapid (often more popular with donors) or phased/gradual

Leadership: Expert/donor driven or participatory / local demand

Ups and downs: The case of Stepping Stones

Characteristics

- 12-week participatory peer-group training program to build communication and relationship skills, address gender norms, violence, HIV, stigma
- Structured stages led by trained facilitators ("staircase" approach)
- 4 different peer groups: adult women | adult men | adolescent girls | adolescent boys

Scale up

- Over last 15+ years, had been used/disseminated/adapted in many places in coordination with originators
- Now in 60+ languages in all continents

THEN…

- RCT of modified Stepping Stones in South Africa showed reduced intimate partner violence and HSV2.

MRC: Gambia –300 villages

What went right:

- In touch with originators for adaptation

- Facilitators went through process first as participants, then trained

- Worked with all groups, followed "staircase" approach

- Incorporated local priorities: condoms as fertility protection, involving imams in endorsing their use, added session on SRH.

- Multiple positive outcomes, eg reduced IPV, greater condom acceptance, greater cross-gender & cross-generational respect and collaboration.

DREAMS/PEPFAR – Africa

What went wrong:

- Prescribed to potential partners as condition for funding

- Not in touch with originators or contacted too late to correct mistakes

- Compromised key principles:
  - Not translated into local language.
  - No understanding of staircase model
  - Reduced duration, excluding some exercises
  - Inadequate training : facilitators thought they should promote traditional female behaviour to reduce VAW)
  - Instead of four peer groups, focus on adolescent girls, with partial involvement of male partners, no adult groups
- **Did harm:** DREAMS required HIV testing of adolescent girls. Those who tested positive were excluded, de facto exposing their status.

Some thoughts on ethical and effective scale up

BEFORE	PREPARATION	IMPLEMENTATION
• Talk with originators & in-country partners about appropriateness of adaptation/implementation in new context • Understand principles of core elements and discuss what kind of adaptation is necessary and/or possible for this setting • Assess whether time and resources are adequate (and don't go forward if not)	• Create advisory group for ongoing engagement • Build in process/time for new partners to internalize core principles and components and adapt • Engage end-users in adaptation, field testing and adjustments • Invest in and support staff and facilitators – personal processes	• Document ongoing adaptation and implementation • Continued support for staff and facilitators • Monitoring, learning, adjustment, evaluation

TRUE TO CORE PRINCIPLES | TRANSPARENCY | THEORY & EVIDENCE-INFORMED | ADAPT, LEARN AND EVOLVE | DO NO HARM

What can donors do

- Challenge exclusive / over-reliance on RCTs

- Avoid prescribing interventions to potential grantees

- Recognize that scaling of existing initiatives is not necessarily always the best option for effective and cost-efficient programming

- Encourage and invest in innovation based on core principles that underpin effective programming

If you want to scale up existing initiatives:

- Engage original designers for criteria and guidelines

- Do no harm: Commit to and invest in assuring core principles and components in adaptation, training, implementation

Further Reading

On the CUSP of Change: Effective scaling of social norms programming for gender equality

Thank you!