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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>INITIATIVE &amp; COUNTRY OF ORIGIN</th>
<th>TYPE OF INITIATIVE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raising Voices/CEDOVIP</td>
<td>SASA! - Uganda</td>
<td>3-year community mobilization program for VAW and HIV prevention</td>
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<td>Salamander Trust</td>
<td>Stepping Stones - Uganda</td>
<td>12-week facilitated peer-group training program to build communication and relationship skills</td>
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<td>Tostan</td>
<td>Community Empowerment Program - Senegal</td>
<td>3-year holistic participatory human rights-based education program for adults and adolescents.</td>
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<td>Multisectorial partnership</td>
<td>IMAGE Programme - South Africa</td>
<td>Microfinance for women combined with gender and HIV training</td>
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<td>Oxfam</td>
<td>We Can - Bangladesh / Nepal</td>
<td>Large scale campaign to mobilize change makers</td>
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<td>Institute for Reproductive Health, Pathfinder, Save the Children</td>
<td>GREAT - Uganda</td>
<td>Radio drama, community mobilization, group activities and service linkages</td>
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<td>Sonke Gender Justice</td>
<td>One Man Can - South Africa</td>
<td>Community Education and mobilization to involve men in violence and HIV prevention</td>
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<td>Puntos de Encuentro Nicaragua</td>
<td>We’re Different / We’re Equal (Sexto Sentido) - Nicaragua</td>
<td>&quot;Social soap&quot; TV series + multi-media, community capacity-building and organizing + multi-sector coalition building</td>
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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:
  o Not translated into local language.
  o No understanding of staircase model
  o Reduced duration, excluding some exercises
  o Inadequate training: facilitators thought they should promote traditional female behaviour to reduce VAW
  o 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

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<th>BEFORE</th>
<th>PREPARATION</th>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION</th>
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| • 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
Thank you!