



Chapter 3

Scaling Up

Why Scaling up is Important?

The most important issue in the fight against HIV/AIDS is how to scale up existing programs that are only reaching small numbers of people to the national level and to build capacity for new programs which, having proven their efficiency and effectively, can also be expanded. Scaling up has become an important means of addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic because;

- Organizations addressing the epidemic, especially in civil society but also in the public sector, lack scale and impact;
- HIV/AIDS program implementers are innovative and influential but may be reluctant or find it difficult to expand the scope and depth of their activities;
- The war against HIV/AIDS requires scaling up in volume and the kinds of services provided by all partners.
- Many effective programmes are remaining at the pilot scale and not taking advantage of the additional financial resources becoming available.
- HIV/AIDS lacks organizational / activity history – i.e. many of the the interventions (VCT, treatment programs etc.) may be new in a country and the mechanisms for coordination (i.e. NACs) are relatively recent. This is unlike other types of scaling up that have been talked about in the past like immunization, family planning, etc.

Scaling up can help to ensure the success of programs while they are rapidly expanding to meet the ever-increasing demands of affected communities. Scaling up is also an important consideration for treatment acceleration programs in order to expand effective programs to broader coverage. In view of limited resources, it is important to plan programs that reach as many of the targeted population as possible. Scaling up HIV/AIDS programs addresses issues like:

- Increasing access and demand;
- Improving quality;
- Reaching new target audiences;
- Introducing new technologies (e.g., prevention, antiretroviral therapy, etc.);
- Increasing/scaling up of coordination mechanisms to ensure coverage, prevent duplication and increase communication;
- Increasing M&E
- Expanding the capacity of institutions, both in terms of funding existing skill levels and resourcing the administrative/logistics infrastructure as well as upgrading skills levels if appropriate.

2. What is Scaling-up?

“Scaling-up” is the process of expanding the scale of activities and institutions with the ultimate objective of increasing the numbers of people reached and/or the impact on HIV/AIDS. Scaling up may entail; expanding coverage, altering the type or intensity of coverage, increasing impact or improving quality. While there is no precise definition, scaled-up programs usually reach (or provide access for) substantially more of the targeted population within a specified area.

Today’s challenge is not only deciding what to scale up, but how, including:

- Assessing what systems, leadership, and investments are needed to shift from a random collection of organizations providing various services to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic to an integrated program capable of providing and sustaining services for an ever-increasing number of clients.
- Determining how to operate at program levels which requires strong local leadership and buy-in from diverse local stakeholders, development agencies, and donors who may think they have little in common with each other.
- To achieve credibility and sustainability, the program must be led by local partners (Public, NGO/FBO, CBO, etc) who have the authority and leadership to champion its development.
- Ensuring sustainable financial mechanisms for program support. There is considerable concern over scaling up when there is no assurance of medium and long term funding. This is a particular challenge where organizations are asked to undertake scaling up and yet only one year’s funding is assured. The reality is that just developing the organizational infrastructure can take many months, let alone the activities themselves.

There are certain steps which need to be considered before scaling up;

- **Have a vision/plan to scale up from the beginning of the project**

From the start of a scaling up program, there should be a clear road map on how the specific approach could be expanded if it is successful. Adequate planning is an important component of the scaling up process. Policy support, leadership, networks, and funding all relate to the feasibility of “going to scale”. It is critical that all organizations and “players” who will be counted on to move the program to scale must be involved from the start to best support expansion efforts. The potential and possible steps for achieving the desired scale should be discussed and those responsible should be identified and provided with adequate time and resources to ensure that the required steps are followed. If the activity is designed a pilot or demonstration project it should also consider the requirements of translating such activities to broad scale during the planning phase.

- **Determine the effectiveness of the approach**

It is important to establish that the technical intervention, methodology or approach that is being considered for scaling up leads to desired results through carefully evaluated and documented monitoring and evaluation. The demand for innovative and new approaches to involving communities in improving their interventions is, in some cases, leading to scaling up some approaches too quickly, without proof that the new approaches really do improve programs or lead to other positive results.

- **Assess the potential to scale up**

Not all programs have the potential to scale up, or at least not in their existing form. It is important to assess the possibilities for scaling up and the potential barriers.

- **Build a consensus to scale up**

Building consensus for scaling up among decision makers, implementers and leaders of those who participate in the program is very important. The proposed interventions should be introduced and the case for its added value to key individuals and groups should be presented clearly to assure their buy in.

- **Advocate for supportive policies**

Before expanding a HIV/AIDS scaling up program, the existing policies in the country should be evaluated to determine whether they present barriers to effective large-scale program implementation.

- **Secure comprehensive funding**

The amount of funding needed for large-scale programs is often not available through only one donor. Or, only a “package” of donor financing will assure full financial coverage, including the funding of operating costs, especially salaries, logistics, administration, etc. There may be a need to negotiate contracts, budgets, and work plans with a number of technical partners and donors.

- **Establish and maintain a monitoring and evaluation system**

National HIV/AIDS programs implementers need to meet regularly at the local, regional and national levels to monitor progress, identify problems, develop innovative solutions, strengthen skills and build teams. It is important to establish participatory systems that provide for regular monitoring of process and outcome indicators. Instruments and tools to help program teams monitor their progress should be developed and used to synthesize information and detect trends over time which will feed in to the future scaling up program planning and implementation review.

- **Support institutional development for scale**

For community action to be sustained over the long term on a larger scale, it needs to depend not on individuals but on organizations and/or networks dedicated to HIV/AIDS.

3. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

- Scaling up involves expanding institutions as well as expanding programs. Expanding institutions require up-front investments in administrative and fiduciary infrastructure, increased staff, mobility and logistics levels, etc before direct program funding can be used. Scaling up institutions requires donors to be prepared to fund local costs and operating costs, including salaries for the medium to long term rather than on a “declining” basis. Scaling up should not be started unless external funders are prepared to maintain their institutional support for the long term, especially in the resource poor countries that are particularly affected by HIV-AIDS.
- To scale up successfully, program management and coordination systems must be carefully designed so that information, human and financial resources can be used most effectively to reach greater numbers of the target population. And partnerships and networks providing the infrastructure support and leadership for going to scale should be involved from the beginning of programs design and planning.
- Programs intended for scaling-up should be pilot, evaluated and assessed to determine whether expansion is feasible. This should also include detailed cost estimates.
- Learning from experience. Any effort to achieve scale and increase the range of services available will benefit from hard-won “lessons learned” elsewhere. Knowledge transfer should support learning from experience, especially in the dynamic environment surrounding the HIV/AIDS epidemic. New technologies and networks are now available to create communities and practices around critical areas. The scaling-up framework should include a learning framework that will help structure knowledge to be applied to problems encountered during scale-up.

- In order to scale up district level programs to national levels; governments, multilateral institutions and bilateral donors should be willing to empower communities and local and sectoral HIV/AIDS committees with financial resources and enlist those people who have successfully implemented the small scale programs to train and guide the larger numbers of locally credible volunteers needed to reach the entire population.
- Training and technical assistance in successful program methodologies must be provided to larger population and IEC campaigns should be used to spread the methodology, tools and lessons learned on a regional, national or international level. A nationwide small team can be established that will provide technical assistance and training to other organizations or communities that choose to scale up their programs.

Box 3.1: Having a very good understanding of what needs to be scaled up is very important for successful programs

In 2002, the Federal Government of Nigeria decided to scale up the ARV treatment program. The take off was very slow because there was no concurrent scale up of VCT. However, once the program got going, the demand was huge, and at the end of 2003 drugs ran out, and the quality of the program in some places was very poor. ARV drugs are now back in the health facilities, but some patients were without drugs for three months. There were a number of lessons learned for scaling up. Most importantly the 'package' that is being scaled up needs to be clearly defined. In this case, drugs were scaled up without the prior scaling up of VCT, logistics management (supply chain etc) training of health personnel, treatment of OIs, laboratory services and M&E systems. This story tells us that despite the good intentions of scaling up treatment programs, if poorly managed scaling up may lead to long term damage such as treatment resistance and program credibility.

- Working with communities/organizations which have participated in the successful initial pilot scaling up sites to establish them as "living universities" where others who want to learn the methodology can go to get hands-on training and field experience.
- Spread the use of successful methods and tools through regional or international workshops/conferences. Training tools can be introduced at workshops where participants can practice using them. Support groups of trainees can be established so that they can learn from each other's experiences and provide assistance with common issues.
- Develop mechanisms to aid communities that are interested in replicating or adapting the methodology or using the tools that are already proven to be successful.⁷
- Look beyond linear or one-on-one partnerships. Inter-organizational learning involves not only sharing each other's special skills, but also the pool of technical resources that may be made available through established networks.
- Consider scaling up HIV/AIDS activities first within organizations that already have existing infrastructure and coverage. For example, faith based organizations have enormous reach/coverage.

Invest and maintain continuous M&E and good program supervision. Scaling up is about "learning by doing" which requires a willingness and capacity to redesign, adjust and be flexible continuously.

⁷ Contact information at the end of the television or radio programs or print stories can lead the audience to a web site or contact address for more information to share lessons learned.