



Scaling and Systems Change: Overview

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Scaling Community of Practice Annual Workshop
8 November 2021

Dimensions of Scaling and Systems Change



Scaling and Systems Change have in common they are both approaches to affecting large-scale change

1. Starting points: Innovation vs. System
 2. Role of innovations: Focal point vs. One of many change levers
 3. Extent of systems change
 - Depth: working at only micro/retail level, or meso or macro? (scale)
 - Breadth: number and range of interconnected/interrelated systems
 - Amount of Change
 4. Locus of Systems Change: Micro, Meso, or Macro
 5. Types of Systems Change: Organizational vs. Institutional (rules, power relations, beliefs, mindsets, social norms)
- ❖ Choices have implications for participation, systems analysis

Typology of Large-Scale Change



	Goal	Breadth & Amount of Systems Change	Depth of Systems Change	Type of Systems Change
Traditional Scaling	Large Numbers	Minimal	Micro (Meso)	focus on Production & Distribution
Scaling from a Systems Perspective	Large Numbers, Sustainable Impact	Sufficient to Create Space for Scaling	Meso/Macro	Organizational Capacity, Capability, Resources
Transformational Scaling	Sustainable, Optimal Scale	Maximal given resources: address equity, reach	Meso/Macro	Organizational Plus some Institutional
Narrow Systems Change	System Strengthening Effectiveness	One system Maximal Efficiency	Meso	Organizational Capacity, Capability,
Broad Systems Change	Transformational Change, Optimal Scale	Multiple Systems, Maximal Change	Depth: Meso/Macro	Organizational & Institutional

Critiques of Scaling and Systems Change



- Critique of Scaling
 - Traditional Scaling often not sustainable, unintended consequences
 - Scaling without systems perspective ignores and can reinforce existing inequities, aligns with system constraints but doesn't expand them
 - Ignores complexity of many urgent issues; leading to limited impact
 - Systems change allows for transformative change, greater depth, breadth and transformation, focus on institutions, interrelationships, equity
- Critique of Systems Change
 - Too ambitious given systems, funding and time constraints in low resource environments
 - Overemphasizes participation and systems analysis; paralysis by analysis
 - Scaling (with systems perspective) already hard enough, broad systems change impractical, not feasible, takes decades
 - Scaling, when done right, eventually will lead to systems change once sufficient scale is reached

Conclusions



- Scaling and Systems Change are a continuum
- Traditional scaling approaches pay inadequate attention to systems, clearly more is needed; how much more is the question, or even when to start with systems?
- More systems change increases likelihood of greater (broader, deeper) impact at scale, sustainability, and addressing questions of equity, indirect effects, complexity
- BUT require extra time, effort, resources. How much more is feasible, practical or desirable depends on:
 - Goals, Context, Time and Resources available
 - WHO you are. Where you are situated in the system, makes a huge difference in terms of how you frame these questions, the resources you have, the goals (and incentives) you have

THANK YOU



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