



On the CUSP of Change:

Ethical and effective scaling of social norms programming for gender equality

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 and with innovative adaptations, sometimes in ways that are problematic

Who we are



Salamander Trust
ON THE RIGHT(S) TRACK



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 related to ethical and effective scale up practice

The context: Opportunities

- ✓ Growing evidence on impact and importance of social and gender norms change for advancing gender equality and related outcomes
- ✓ Growing evidence 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

Scale up types

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 20 years, had been used/disseminated/adapted in many places, often in coordination with creators
- Now in 60+ languages in all continents
- 2008 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 creators 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:** 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 creators, or contacted too late to do adequate adaptation, and went ahead anyway because of donor pressure to start
- Compromised key principles:
 - No systematic adaptation process, including translation into local languages.
 - Reduced duration, no understanding of staircase model, excluded important exercises
 - Instead of four peer groups, focus on HIV- adolescent girls, with only partial involvement of male partners, no adult groups
 - Inadequate facilitator training
- **Did harm:**
 - DREAMS required HIV testing of adolescent girls. While those who tested positive were offered treatment, they were excluded, de facto exposing their status.
 - Facilitators mistakenly thought they should promote traditional female behavior to reduce VAW

Collective CUSP experiences

Pitfalls:

- Shortcuts that compromise core principles and mechanisms
- Replication without adequate adaptation
- Implementers not yet fully on board with key principles
- Inadequate training of facilitators / promoters

Consequences:

- May result in harm to people and communities
- Can negatively affect creators and credibility of initiatives
- Poor investment in terms of actual bang for buck

Considerations

- Understanding what works in terms of principles and mechanisms is fundamental
- Replication of RCT-tested initiatives doesn't guarantee cost-effective positive outcomes in other settings
- Prescribing interventions to potential grantees can lead to poor scale-up, lack of success and a wasted investment
- We're still learning: Invest in innovation guided by knowledge of the core principles.

Recommendations for ethical and effective scale up

BEFORE	PREPARATION	IMPLEMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk with creators & 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) – including funding for TA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Document ongoing adaptation and implementation• Continued support for staff and facilitators• Monitoring, learning, adjustment, evaluation



Some final thoughts

Bad news 😞

No cheap and quick fix

Good news 😊

Principles and mechanisms are free

Further reading

<https://tinyurl.com/CUSP2017>

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

Overview

Over the past 10 years, the evidence base on the effectiveness of programs focused on changing social norms to achieve gender equality has grown. A number of approaches and methodologies demonstrate significant impact in preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG) and in advancing women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Activists, organizations, governments, researchers, and donors now want to know how best to scale up these initiatives to reach more communities and increase sustainable impact. This is a critical moment, rich with opportunity. It also comes with risks and challenges.

In this brief, we provide practical insights and advice for programmers, funders, researchers, and policymakers as they take social norms programming to scale. Drawing on our broad and diverse experiences globally as practitioners and activists, we also highlight key challenges embedded in social norms change work and ways to overcome them. Most importantly, we suggest that effectively transforming harmful social norms at scale requires moving beyond the current thinking of scale as a numbers exercise to better reflect key principles from social norms change work. At this critical moment, we encourage the international development community to: 1) ensure that gendered, social justice principles and values are prioritized when programming at scale; and, 2) support innovation of new social norms change approaches that also reflect these principles. We believe that embracing this approach while prioritizing the agency, well-being and safety of communities is essential to achieving impact and ensuring sustainability.

Who we are

The Community for Understanding Scale Up (CUSP) working group was borne out of informal discussions between Raising Voices (author of SASA) and Salamander Trust (author of *Stepping Stones*), about the opportunities and challenges that emerge when external groups scale up our respective methodologies. Recognizing our shared experiences, we invited seven other organizations from across three continents to join us, each of which has designed social norms change initiatives for preventing VAWG and improving SRHR. Most of us have, or will be, working with other stakeholders across the globe to scale up these approaches (see page 12 for organizational summaries of CUSP members).

Community for Understanding Scale up (CUSP)

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Thank you!

JOIN HANDS TO
PREVENT DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE AND
HIV/AIDS
IN
MULAGO II