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Scaling up Local Innovations for Transformational Change

United Nations Development Programme

Scaling up local development initiatives are important for achieving the MDGs and human development. While significant progress has been made towards meeting the MDG targets globally, large disparities still persist within countries. Poverty remains concentrated in rural areas and urban slums, and the vulnerable and marginalized groups and communities, including women and girls, continue to suffer from an exclusion from development benefits, deprived of assets, opportunities and capabilities.

Participatory and community driven interventions across different development contexts demonstrate that MDGs are achievable even in the most challenging contexts. However these successful initiatives that draw on breakthrough innovations, including 'low carbon' methods, are not being scaled up.

Scaling up entails deepening of a development impact, reaching out to those 'left behind' and ensuring the sustainability and adaptability of results. It is not just about replicating successes to cover larger groups or populations. It involves:

- Strengthening joint support at the local level to deliver higher development impact, including addressing inequalities across regions and populations;
- Addressing the knowledge gaps in scaling up in different country contexts to move beyond 'pilots';
- Supporting advocacy and activism at the local level, and not relying only on top-down approach to 'trickle down' to communities.

A scaled up investment delivers a multiplier development impact across MDGs, spurs policy and institutional reforms, and adapts and sustains successful policies and programs for benefiting a greater number of the poor. This is underpinned by the Human Rights Principles of promoting accessibility, availability, and quality for key MDG services, and in the process of scaling up ensuring non-discrimination, participation, and accountability.

Rwanda:

Thanks to a strong government commitment to peace and development in the aftermath of conflict, successful pilots have been carried out to support gender empowerment and provide an integrated package of education and health services to the vulnerable groups. The next phase of scaling up will support Rwanda's long-term development strategy, the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme, and expand sustainable employment opportunities for youth and women through integrated support that will provide access to essential services such as energy and water and promote green' business technologies and practices.



Photo: Deborah Espinosa/UNDP Rwanda

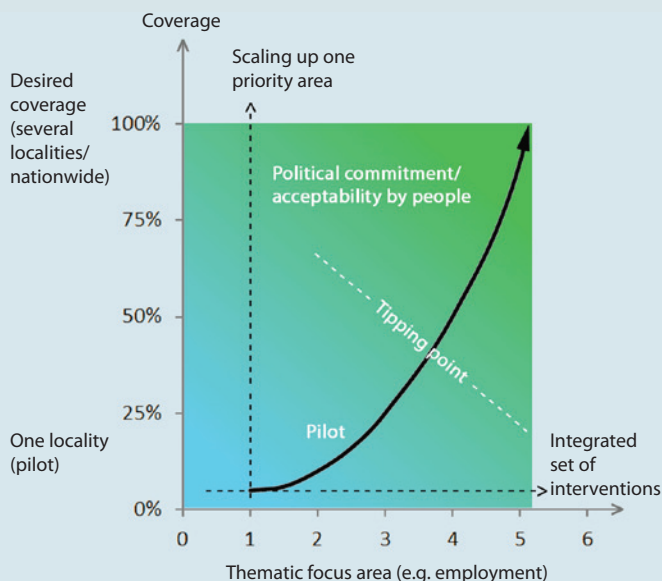
Why is scaling up local development relevant to the work of UNDP?

There is a lack of systematic attempts to convert pilots into larger scale initiatives that bring multiplier development effects, including long lasting policy impact. Also, no sufficient linkages have been made to date between the national level MDG commitments and local level realities, leading to under-investments at the local level. Knowledge and lessons learned from scaling up processes are not sufficiently documented and effectively shared.

How does scaling up take place?

The key 'enablers' of scaling up processes include: (a) political drivers such as leadership, vision and sustained commitment through political cycles; (b) supportive institutional, policy and capacity environments; (c) strengthened national-local linkages both vertically and horizontally; (d) astute political economy analysis, or the ability to distinguish between 'golden' opportunities and 'black holes' of development intervention; and (e) predictable, medium-term fiscal commitments and well designed and executed M&E systems for evidence based programming are also crucial in scaling up processes.

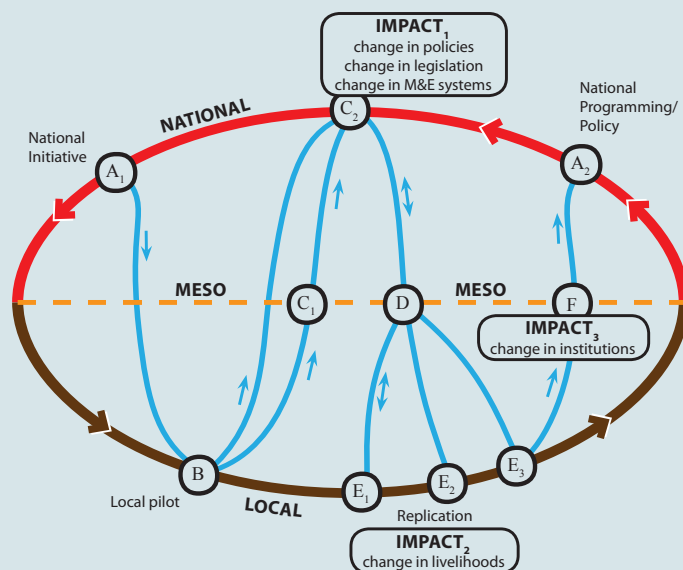
Conceptualizing Scaling Up



In conceptualizing scaling up, what are the knowledge gaps?

Review of country programmes and existing literature reveals further need to: (a) examine what constitutes scaling up in different development contexts, (b) effectively track and measure impact of various scaling up initiatives, and (c) reconcile top-down development approaches with the bottom-up processes to institutionalize development results.

How to Scale Up? Roadmap



How do we strengthen local-national linkages?

Local-national linkages must be strengthened at three levels: (a) the planning and implementation of service delivery at the micro level, (b) the institutional and organizational arrangements at the meso level, and (c) the development of sectoral and national policies and visioning, and investments in core national systems at the macro level. This process is not linear: in order to ensure sustainability, local-national linkages must also be strengthened horizontally by linking with other development stakeholders at the national level.

SCALING UP LOCAL INNOVATIONS FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

A GLOBAL PROGRAMME PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL

The “Scaling Up Local Innovations for Transformational Change” is a joint UNDP-UNCDF global programme that responds to the above challenges by strengthening our joint support to deliver higher MDG and human development impact at the local level, addressing the knowledge gaps in different country contexts to move beyond ‘pilots,’ and advocating for increased MDG investments to directly benefit local communities and ‘left behind’ groups.

What are the practical implications for UNDP programming?

Scaling up ‘successes’ is not about ‘giving hand outs’ to the poor. UNDP programmes need to be carefully designed to build on the national vision and seize ‘golden’ opportunities, especially on those emerging from the political space created after upheavals, new elections and other changes. In the current restrictive financing environment, UNDP should prioritize the development support that yields the highest dividend, with strong local-national linkages made from the outset. Investments in policy coherence, multi-practice programming and integrated local development support are crucial. UNDP’s development support should also be effectively monitored and tracked for evidence-based advocacy.

Nepal:

Despite a decade-long conflict and its aftermath, initiatives such as the Micro-Enterprise Development Programme and the Rural Energy Development Programme have demonstrated tangible successes in supporting small businesses development among the vulnerable populations by providing access to energy and financial services. The next phase of scaling up will strengthen synergies between existing interventions to deepen ‘the multiplier’ effect and link local services, such as electricity generated through micro-hydro plants to the national systems and grids, thereby expanding economic benefits for local communities.

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, investments in human resources, employment generation and environmental protection remain key priorities. Support for inter-municipal cooperation has tangibly benefited local administrations and citizens through the promotion of technology-based services for tax collection, urban planning, and financial and administrative management. The next stage of scaling up will focus on employment generation through public-private partnerships, with special attention to the creation of ‘green jobs’ and women’s empowerment, targeting ‘pockets of poverty’ throughout the country.

Who will bear the costs of scaling up?

Financing for scaling up initiatives cannot come solely from international donors and national governments, particularly in the context of the recent economic and financial crisis. Other financing mechanisms, such as public-private financing, must be encouraged in order to ensure success and sustainability. The case of scaling up rural energy services in Nepal, for example, illustrates how the financing dilemma can be addressed through policies that encourage investments from other financing mechanisms, including the private sector and local communities.





Photo: Javier Ramirez/UNDP Colombia

Colombia:

Colombia's municipalities and local territories have adopted MDG-based local development plans, and have successfully piloted interventions targeting groups affected by chronic poverty and insecurity. The scaling up of Inclusive Economic Development interventions will be carried out in localities that have high levels of unemployment and informal jobs, and are home to internally displaced populations, ethnic minorities and border areas.

Is there an exit strategy? Where does UNDP's role 'end'?

UNDP employs a human rights based approach to the scaling up initiative, which means that we support national and local efforts to influence: (a) the outcome (availability, accessibility and quality) of development services, and (b) processes (participation, non-discrimination, and accountability). UNDP thus plays a catalytic role in seizing the 'golden' opportunities and building on existing successes at different stages of development processes and political economy dynamics.

What are some immediate next steps?

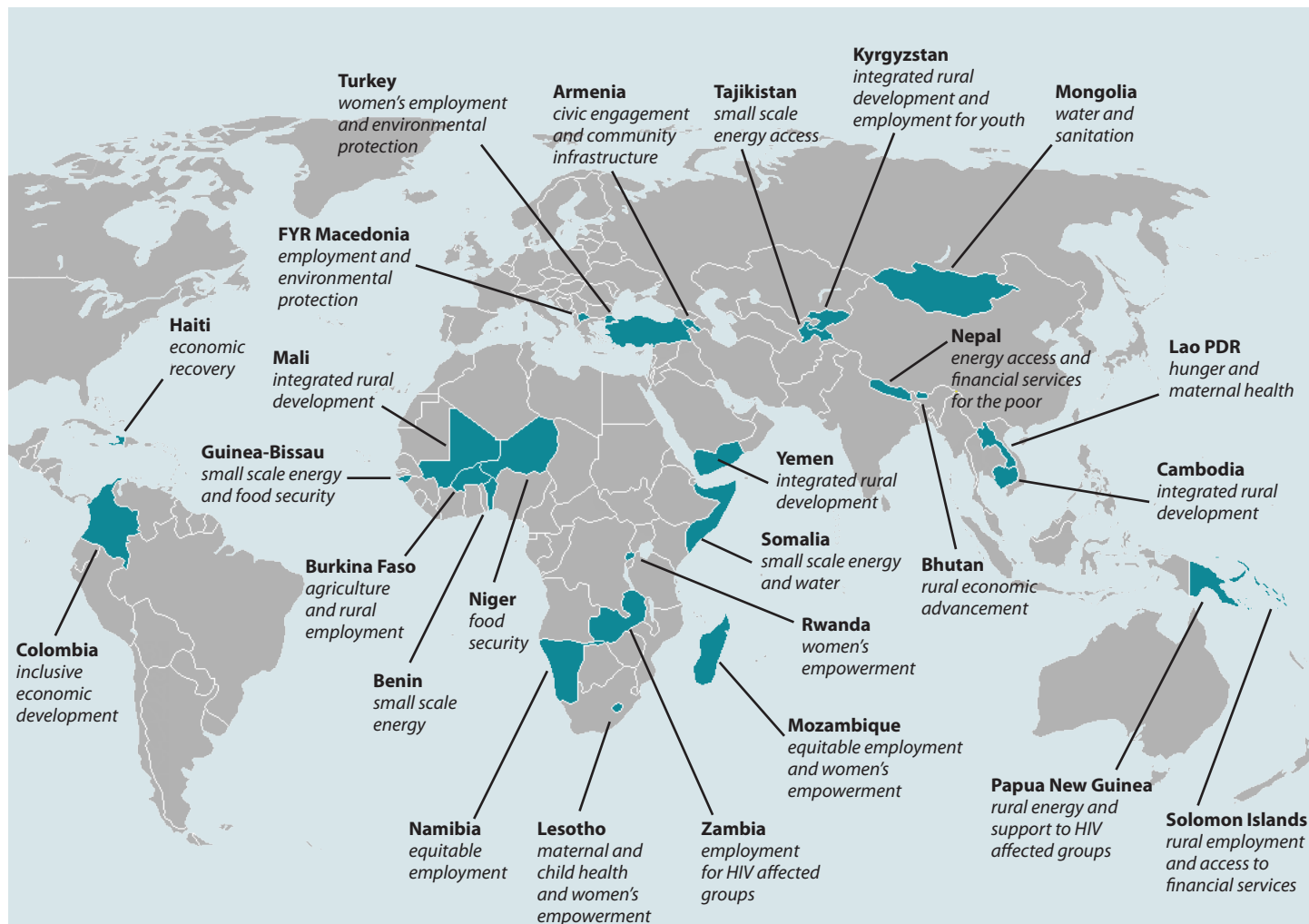
This year, BDP Poverty Group, working with other practices, Regional Bureaus, UNCDF and the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, will continue to strengthen the UNDP knowledge base on the scaling up concept by developing a programmatic operational note and a series of country case studies. It will also provide practical policy advice to country offices in designing and implementing sound scaling up initiatives that are sustainable, flexible and adaptable, building on existing efforts. UNDP is developing a multi-practice integrated framework to advance the local governance and local development agenda.



Photo: Gregory D. Johnsen/UNDP Yemen

Yemen:

Since 2003, the Decentralization and Local Development Support programme has been assisting the Government of Yemen to effectively implement decentralization reforms. In addition to creating a mechanism to support local governments in the planning, budgeting and implementation of local development priorities, this initiative has helped to deliver basic services that disproportionately benefitted women and girls. The scaling up phase will continue focusing on 'multiplier' investments such as a job creation for youth, natural resources management, and will help promote social cohesion by strengthening citizen participation and improving accountability mechanisms at the local level.



For more information, please join the Teamworks space on Local Governance and Local Development: <https://undp.unteamworks.org/node/16872>.



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