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USAID Ethiopia Resilience Learning Activity

INNOVATION IN RESILIENCE SCALING TRAINING MANUAL

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ACTIVITY INFORMATION

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1. INTRODUCTION TO SCALING INNOVATION IN RESILIENCE

Disasters, shocks and stressors are becoming more prevalent and challenging globally. Resilience in the development sector is the ability of individuals, communities, and systems to anticipate, absorb, adapt to, and recover from these shocks and stresses. Innovations have become increasingly vital in providing new means of advancing resilience. Innovations can build long-term solutions that help individuals, households, communities, and systems mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses [1].

The word "innovation" is derived from the Latin verb "innovare", which means to renew [2]. At the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), innovation is defined as "the pursuit of novel approaches that lead to substantial improvements in addressing development challenges" [3].

The USAID Resilience Learning Activity (RLA), is an activity that supports USAID's resilience partners with learning, collaboration, and research, aims to adopt and scale-up proven USAID innovation ideas that build resilience among households, communities, and systems.

Overall, innovation and resilience are essential for building a more sustainable and equitable future for all. By working together, these two concepts can help to address the complex challenges facing the development sector and create a better world for everyone[4].

Innovation in international development:

USAID views innovation as the process of developing and applying new ideas, technologies, approaches, and partnerships to improve the effectiveness and impact of development programs. Innovation in international development can take many forms, including:

- *Technological:* This involves the development and use of new technologies or the adaptation of existing ones to solve development challenges. This could include innovations in healthcare, agriculture, energy, and more.
- *Economic growth/financial:* Financial innovations include the development of new mechanisms or models that provide new financing products, mechanisms, or technology for development, such as microfinance, peer-to-peer lending, or financial technology (FinTech).
- *Process/system:* Process innovation aims to improve or rethink existing systems, methods, or procedures to make them more efficient, cost-effective, and impactful. For example, streamlining supply chains for delivering humanitarian aid.
- *Social and behavioral:* This involves the design and implementation of interventions that aim to change behaviors, norms, or attitudes to address development issues, such as innovative approaches to promote inclusivity, gender equality or healthy practices.
- *Capacity building and skills development:* Innovations that are focused on education, training and building the capacity of individuals, organizations, and institutions.

- *Policy and regulation:* These types of innovations provide new policy/regulations solutions to help remove or reduce policy barriers to development outcomes.

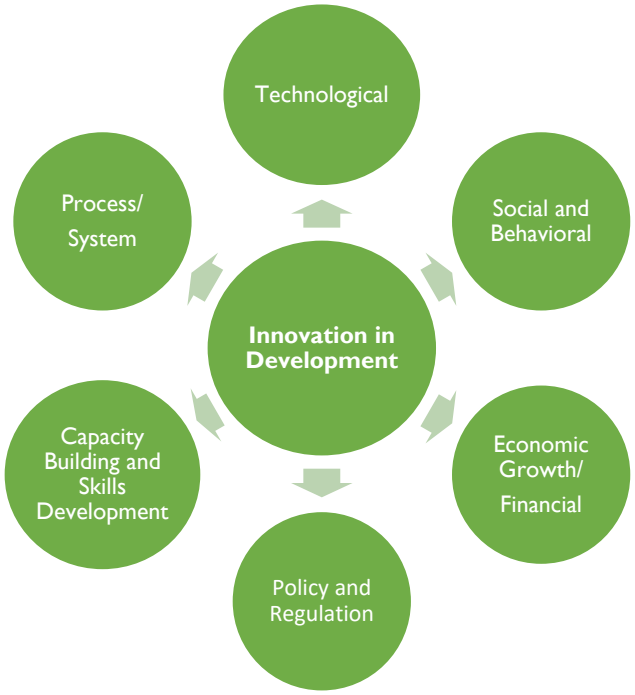

Figure 1: Forms of innovation

2. ASSESSING INNOVATION FOR SCALING

Scaling of innovations is the process of widespread adoption of an innovation that can help build resilience in larger contexts. The potential of an idea/intervention/initiative to undergo this process is referred as its scalability [5]. Selecting innovations with potential for scalability is a crucial step in the development process. To identify innovations that have the potential to be scaled effectively and be impactful, some criteria need to be considered.

Selecting innovations with scaling and impact potential needs to be based on criteria such as impact, resilience, sustainability, scalability, flexibility, adaptability, measurable outcomes, and cost effectiveness. The details of these criteria are discussed below:

Impact and Relevance

This assesses whether the innovation is addressing a significant problem or need by the targeted population, the following could be used as check points:

- Does the innovation address a significant problem or need in the target population?
- Is there a clear demand for the innovation within the community?
- Will the innovation have a positive and measurable impact on the lives of participants?

Sustainability

- Is the innovation financially sustainable in the long term, or does it have the potential to generate revenue or attract ongoing funding?
- Can the innovation adapt to changing circumstances, technologies, and market conditions?

Scalability

- Can the innovation be replicated or expanded to reach a larger population or geographic area without significant loss of quality or effectiveness?
- Are there clear strategies for scaling, such as a plan for increasing production, distribution, or access?

Feasibility

- Is the innovation technically feasible, and are the required resources and expertise available to implement it at scale?
- Are there regulatory or legal barriers that might impede scaling, and can these be addressed?

Adaptability

- Can the innovation be adapted to different contexts or populations while retaining its core effectiveness?
- Is the innovation flexible enough to evolve and improve over time based on user feedback and changing needs?

Measurable Outcomes

- Are there clear and quantifiable indicators to assess the impact and success of the innovation?
- Can progress toward scalability goals be tracked and evaluated regularly?

Cost-Effectiveness

- Is the innovation cost-effective compared to alternative solutions or interventions?

By carefully assessing innovations against selected criteria such as those listed above, initiatives/interventions with the greatest potential for successful scaling can be identified, which can ultimately lead to more significant and sustainable impact in the target communities.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

3.1 DEVELOPING A SCALING STRATEGY

Scaling up an innovation in resilience requires the development of a robust strategy that ensures effectiveness and sustainability. This strategy should involve routine feasibility assessments against important checkpoints, as detailed below [6]:

Checkpoints

Dissemination and Advocacy

- Personal: This includes activities such as training, technical assistance, dialogues on policy, cultivating champions, and engaging gatekeepers to promote the innovation.
- Impersonal: Utilize methods like websites, publications, policy briefs, and toolkits to reach a wider audience and create awareness.

Organizational Process

- Determine the scope of scaling up, considering the extent of geographic expansion that the innovation should cover.
- Decide on the pace of scaling up, whether it will be gradual or rapid.
- Assess the number of agencies or stakeholders involved in the scaling process.
- Determine whether the approach will be centralized or decentralized.
- Choose between an adaptive or fixed process, considering the need for flexibility.
- Decide whether the process will be participatory, involving various stakeholders, or donor/expert-driven.

Costs/Resource Mobilization

- Assess the costs associated with scaling up, including resource requirements.
- Explore the possibility of linking scaling up to macro-level funding mechanisms to secure necessary resources.
- Ensure that there is adequate budgetary allocation to support the scaling process.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Define special indicators to assess the process, outcomes, and impact of scaling up the innovation.
- Collect and analyze data to gauge the effectiveness of the innovation.
- Conduct special studies to delve deeper into specific aspects of the scaling process.
- Perform local assessments to gather insights from the communities or regions where the innovation is being implemented.
- Conduct environmental analysis to understand the broader context in which the innovation operates.

Partnerships

- Partnerships provide access to additional resources, expertise, and networks, enhancing the scalability and sustainability of the innovation.
- Collaborating with local organizations and leaders through partnerships improves community acceptance and ensures the innovation is culturally sensitive.

Scaling Strategies

There are four commonly used scaling-up strategies that can be applied based on the specific context and goals of the resilience innovation [16]:

1. *Incremental Scaling:* Gradual expansion of the innovation's reach and impact while maintaining its core features.

2. *Radical Scaling:* Rapid and extensive expansion of the innovation, often involving significant changes to adapt to new contexts.
3. *Disruptive Scaling:* Introducing the innovation in a way that disrupts existing systems or practices, potentially leading to transformative changes.
4. *Adjustment Scaling:* Making incremental adjustments to the innovation based on ongoing feedback and evaluation.

Incorporating these strategies and regularly assessing their feasibility against the processes and checkpoints listed above will help ensure the successful scaling of a resilience innovation, aligning it with the specific needs and contexts of the communities it aims to serve.

3.2 BUILDING A SKILLED AND MOTIVATED TEAM FOR SCALING

Building a skilled and motivated team is a crucial element in the successful scaling of any innovation or project. It's essential to establish a clear objective for the scaling effort, ensuring that all team members are aligned with these objectives [7]. When hiring new team members, prioritize individuals with the requisite skills and experience [8].

Creating a positive and supportive work environment is vital, as team members thrive when they feel valued, supported, and empowered [9]. To maintain focus and motivation, set clear goals and expectations for team members, emphasizing the significance of their contributions [10].

Flexibility and adaptability are essential as plans may need adjustments in response to unexpected challenges [8]. Above all, perseverance is key in the face of the often-challenging process of scaling innovation, and it's crucial to stay focused on the goals [9].

3.3 ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND ADAPTING THE STRATEGY AS NEEDED

Addressing challenges and adapting strategies during the scaling process is crucial for the success of any project, particularly when scaling an innovation. Below are some approaches that can help adapt strategies.

Be Prepared for Challenges: Scaling innovations often comes with obstacles such as lack of funding, resources, support, resistance to change, and other unforeseen challenges. Ensuring a solid funding plan, sufficient resources, a supportive network, and addressing resistance are essential components of preparation [7].

Gather Feedback: Continuous feedback from stakeholders like potential users, investors, and policymakers is vital during the scaling process. This feedback aids in identifying challenges and opportunities, enabling necessary adjustments to the scaling strategy [8].

Be Willing to Pivot: The most effective response to a challenge can be to pivot the scaling strategy, which involves making significant changes to the plan. While pivoting can be challenging, it can be necessary for success [9].

Persistence is Key: Scaling an innovation is a lengthy and demanding process which requires persistence to overcome challenges and maintain progress [10].

Celebrate Successes: Recognizing and celebrating achievements along the way is important for motivation and focus during the scaling journey [11].

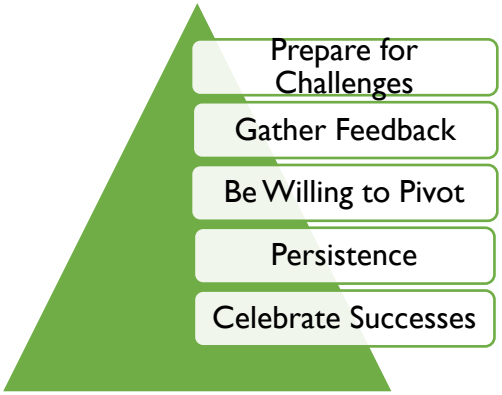

Figure 2: Approaches to adapt strategies based on feedback

3.4 ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY IN SCALING

Ensuring sustainability during the scaling process is vital for maintaining the long-term impact and success of an innovation. It is crucial to ensure that the innovation aligns with the specific needs of the community it serves. Understanding the challenges faced by the community and tailoring the innovation to address these challenges is fundamental [7].

Developing local capacity is key to sustainability. This involves training local individuals to use and maintain the innovation and creating a sustainable system for delivering its benefits [8]. Engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, including community members, government officials, and businesses ensures that the innovation is aligned with community needs and fosters sustainability by garnering support and involvement from the stakeholders [9]. Flexibility and adaptability are essential when scaling an innovation. Plans may need to be adjusted based on unforeseen circumstances or lessons learned from experience [10].

Continuous measurement of the innovation's impact is critical. This data allows for progress tracking and informs necessary adjustments, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively [11]. Incorporation of the above strategies into the scaling plan increases the likelihood of sustainable impact.

4. MEASURING IMPACT AND LEARNING

4.1 DESIGNING METRICS TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF SCALED INNOVATIONS

Designing metrics to measure the impact of scaled innovations is a critical step in assessing effectiveness and progress. Defining goals allows the team to understand whether the aim is to increase reach, impact, profitability, or achieve other specific objectives [7]. Select metrics that align with the goals and the nature of the innovation. Common metrics may include the number of participants, cost savings or revenue generated, reduced risk or vulnerability, improved quality of life, and satisfaction levels among users or stakeholders.

The chosen metrics must be both relevant to the objectives and measurable. The metrics should also be based on data that can be collected to allow tracking of progress. If a metric cannot be measured, it may not provide meaningful insights [8]. A single metric may not capture the full impact of the innovation. To gain a comprehensive understanding, employ a variety of metrics that cover different aspects of the initiative's outcomes and performance [9]. Recognize that the impact of the innovation may not be immediately apparent. Implement data collection processes over time to track changes and trends [10].

4.2 COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Collecting and analyzing data for continuous improvement is a crucial process when scaling an innovation. Well-defined improvement goals are essential for data collection and measurement [7]. Select data that directly aligns with the improvement goals and can be measured effectively. The chosen data, collected on a regular basis, should allow tracking of progress [8].

A variety of data collection methods, such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, or observational data, need to be employed depending on the goals and available resources [10]. A thorough analysis is then required which may involve statistical analysis or other appropriate methods to gain insights into areas for improvement [11]. Use the insights gained from data analysis to make enhancements to processes, products, or services [12]. It is important to note that the data collection and analysis process is iterative. This iterative approach ensures ongoing enhancements and refinements [12].

4.3 LEARNING FROM FAILURES AND SUCCESSES IN SCALING

Learning from both failures and successes is essential when scaling an innovation effectively. Below are key approaches that can facilitate the learning process.

Be Open to Feedback: Constructive feedback can provide valuable insights into what went wrong and how the strategy can be improved [7].

Don't Fear Failure: Failure is a natural part of the innovation process. Embrace it as an opportunity for growth and learning [8].

Celebrate Successes: Recognize and celebrate successes. This positive reinforcement not only boosts motivation but also encourages a culture of innovation within the team or organization [9].

Reflect on Experiences: Take time to reflect on experiences, both failures and successes. Reflection helps identify patterns, understand what works, and learn from past endeavors [10].

Share Experiences: Sharing insights can benefit others in their own scaling efforts, allowing them to learn from experiences and avoid making similar mistakes [11].

Persist: Maintain persistence and resilience, even in the face of failure. Persistence is key to overcoming obstacles [12].

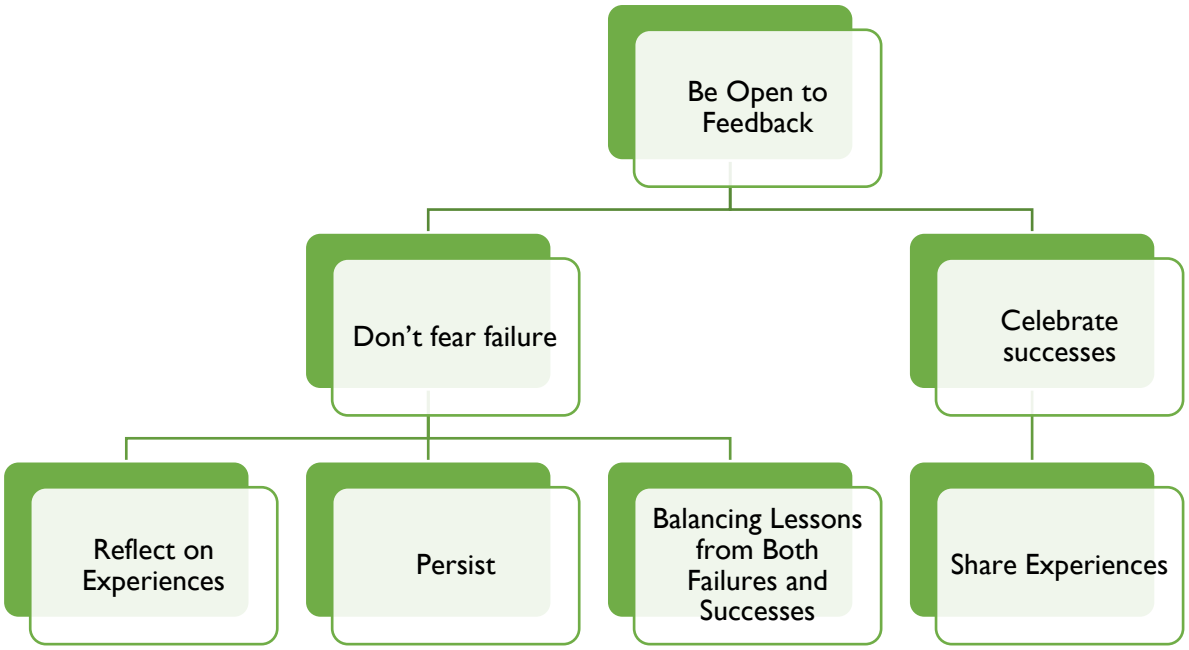

Figure 3: Approaches for learning from successes and failures

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

To enable strategic actors to come together to gain a better understanding of their own system, create joint visions of how it could improve and agree on practical ways to do it.

5.1 GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) are fundamental principles that aim to ensure equal rights, opportunities, and participation for individuals regardless of their gender, identity, or background. Gender equality involves addressing historical and structural gender-based inequalities, promoting equitable decision-making power, and ensuring equal access to resources for all genders. Social inclusion, on the other hand, focuses on providing equitable access to opportunities and services for individuals of diverse social, economic, or cultural backgrounds, preventing discrimination and exclusion among marginalized groups.

Incorporating GESI into the scaling of innovations is essential for fostering fairness, effectiveness, and sustainability in initiatives. This involves considering the needs of all individuals, involving underrepresented groups in the innovation process, challenging gender stereotypes, measuring the impact of innovations on GESI, and maintaining patience and persistence in efforts. Key strategies for integrating GESI into scaling innovation in resilience include conducting GESI analyses, designing initiatives that account for diversity, engaging with local communities, implementing gender-responsive data collection, and collaborating with GESI experts. Prioritizing GESI throughout the scaling process contributes to building more resilient and inclusive societies that benefit all community members. [7-11]

5.2 ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Ethics and accountability are fundamental principles that guide the behavior of individuals, organizations, and institutions. In the context of scaling innovation in resilience, they play a role in establishing trust, maintaining credibility, and achieving positive impacts. Ethics involves adhering to morally right principles and values, ensuring just and fair decisions and actions, and considering the

well-being of stakeholders throughout the innovation process. Accountability, on the other hand, encompasses taking responsibility for one's actions, promoting transparency, and being answerable to stakeholders for resource usage and the overall progress and impact of the initiative. crucial

Key considerations for upholding ethics and accountability in scaling innovation include transparency in communicating goals and intentions, respecting privacy and data usage, mitigating negative impacts on vulnerable populations, taking responsibility for both positive and negative effects, and involving stakeholders at every stage of the scaling process. By prioritizing ethics and accountability, organizations can build a foundation of integrity and responsibility that contributes to the success and positive outcomes of innovative initiatives in resilience. [7-15]

5.3 DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Data privacy and security are critical considerations when scaling innovation in resilience. Data privacy involves safeguarding individuals' personal information, ensuring informed consent, and controlling data collection and usage. Data security, on the other hand, focuses on protecting data from unauthorized access and breaches through measures like encryption and access controls.

To enhance data privacy and security, key practices include encryption, access controls, regular data backups, transparency in data handling, opt-out options, legal compliance, staff training, security vulnerability monitoring, and incident response planning. Strategies for ensuring data privacy and security during scaling include obtaining informed consent, minimizing data collection, conducting regular audits, managing third-party vendors, maintaining awareness of evolving regulations, and consistently communicating data privacy and security practices to stakeholders.

Prioritizing data privacy and security not only upholds ethical standards but also builds trust with stakeholders, contributes to responsible data handling, and supports success and sustainability. [7-15]

5.4 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental sustainability is an important principle that involves using resources in a manner that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. When scaling innovation in resilience, considering environmental sustainability is paramount for minimizing adverse impacts on the environment and fostering a healthier, more resilient planet. This entails designing innovations to be environmentally friendly by utilizing sustainable materials, reducing energy consumption, and minimizing waste [8]. It's vital to evaluate the environmental impact of innovations across their entire lifecycle, from manufacturing and transportation to use and disposal [13].

To ensure environmental sustainability while scaling innovation in resilience, integrating environmental considerations into design and development, promoting energy efficiency, waste reduction, ecosystem protection, and engaging with local communities are essential strategies [12]. By prioritizing environmental sustainability throughout the scaling process, the implementation can contribute not only to addressing immediate challenges but also to the long-term resilience and health of communities and ecosystems.

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