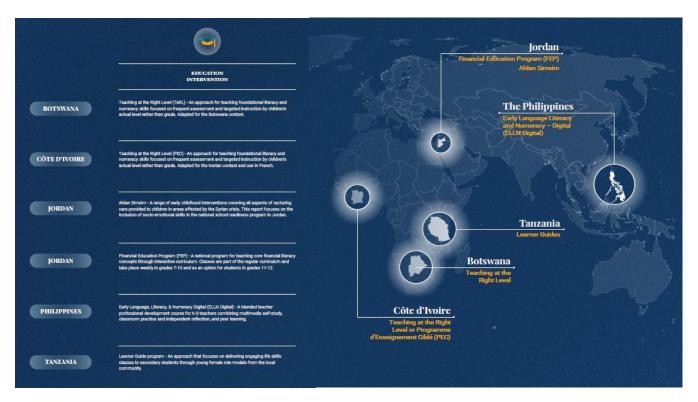# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION IMPLEMENTERS FOCUSED ON SCALING IMPACT

This brief provides a targeted synthesis of recommendations from the report, "Scaling impact in education for transformative change: Practical recommendations from the Real-time Scaling Labs." It is intended for international funder organizations—including private philanthropy and bilateral and multilateral institutions—that finance quality education initiatives and support grantees and partners in the process of identifying, adapting, implementing, scaling, and sustaining education policies and programs. More details on the project research and methodology are included at the end of this brief.

EDUCATION INTERVENTION

BOTSWANA — Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) - An approach for teaching foundational literacy and numeracy skills focused on frequent assessment and targeted instruction by children's actual level rather than grade. Adapted for the Botswana context.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE — Teaching at the Right Level (PEC) - An approach for teaching foundational literacy and numeracy skills focused on frequent assessment and targeted instruction by children's actual level rather than grade. Adapted for the Ivorian context and use in French.

JORDAN — Ahlan Simsim - A range of early childhood interventions covering all aspects of nurturing care provided to children in areas affected by the Syrian crisis. This report focuses on the inclusion of socio-emotional skills in the national school readiness program in Jordan.

JORDAN — Financial Education Program (FEP) - A national program for teaching core financial literacy concepts through interactive curriculum. Classes are part of the regular curriculum and take place weekly in grades 7-10 and as an option for students in grades 11-12.

PHILIPPINES — Early Language, Literacy, & Numeracy Digital (ELLN Digital) - A blended teacher professional development course for K-3 teachers combining multimedia self-study, classroom practice and independent reflection, and peer learning.

TANZANIA — Learner Guide program - An approach that focuses on delivering engaging life skills classes to secondary students through young female role models from the local community.

Jordan — Financial Education Program (FEP) / Ahlan Simsim

The Philippines — Early Language Literacy and Numeracy – Digital (ELLN-Digital)

Tanzania — Learner Guides

Botswana — Teaching at the Right Level

Côte d'Ivoire — Teaching at the Right Level or Programme d'Enseignement Ciblé (PEC)

Recommendations for scaling impact in education

	Engage with diverse stakeholders, including government representatives, civil society, donors, researchers, teachers, and other education personnel.
Why?	Actively involving actors from various roles and viewpoints strengthens the scaling process—bringing in new perspectives, complementary skills, and additional resources and strengthening buy-in. This includes cultivating a diverse set of champions who can foster buy-in at different levels of the system.

How?	• Cultivate and engage a diverse set of champions, including through:
	    o Inviting participation in multistakeholder reflection meetings
	    o Sharing data regularly and in accessible formats
	    o Hosting site visits to demonstrate visible results
	    o Soliciting genuine input in scaling decision-making
	    o Leveraging champions' networks to foster new champions
	• Don't mistake support from a few high-level individuals as synonymous with demand or buy-in across the system. Be deliberate about cultivating support at different levels– from national leaders to regional policymakers to community partners to teachers.
	• Dedicate early meetings with key stakeholders to discussing understandings of scaling, aligning around the vision for impact at scale, and identifying core drivers to support the scaling path. While time intensive, these steps are essential for laying a strong foundation for the scaling process.
	• Take time to identify those who might stand to lose as an initiative expands and address their concerns.

	Foster trusting, collaborative relationships with these diverse stakeholders, particularly those who will deliver and fund at scale.
Why?	Infusing an initiative throughout an education system requires more than just passing delivery over to government actors or setting a deadline for "handover." It entails planning for and gradually transitioning all aspects of the initiative into existing processes, including training, monitoring, and financing. It also includes aligning efforts to local priorities. Fostering collaboration and ownership among diverse actors from the beginning ensures that the transition to scale is a collective endeavor.
How?	• Pay attention from the start to who will eventually deliver and fund the initiative at scale and engage with them as early as possible (from the pilot stage if you can). In addition to building trust, this can help foster buy-in, determine what is feasible at scale, identify capacity gaps and data needs, and demonstrate the potential for a solution to work in the system. • Make time for honest conversations about what is feasible for each scaling partner (and the broader system) in terms of time, capacity, and resources. Use this information to decide how stakeholder roles will evolve during the scaling process. • Be prepared to progressively give up individual and organizational attribution and visibility in order to achieve progress towards the shared scaling going of expanding and deepening impact.

Use timely, relevant, and diverse data sources to inform scaling decisions.

Why? Monitoring initiatives as they scale requires different methodological approaches and tools than monitoring a pilot or an initiative at smaller scale. This includes gathering data on the scaling process, whether the initiative is maintaining its effect, the costs of sustaining an initiative at scale, and what changes might be necessary to the model and the scaling strategy.

How?
- Don't limit data collected on scaling to reach or impact measures. Include qualitative and quantitative data on scaling processes, costs, indicators of buy-in and capacity, and implementation evidence from educators. Look at the resources section at the bottom of this brief for some tools that can support these types of data collection.
- Build process indicators into monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans, including measures related to pivots, adaptations, and decisions to scale down. Participatory, action research processes like the Real-time Scaling Lab (RTSL) are one avenue for documenting the scaling process in rich detail.
- Share data regularly with stakeholders, not just at the end of the project or in final reports. Target and tailor data presentation to different stakeholder groups.
- Collect disaggregated data to understand challenges related to access and inclusion. Be prepared to develop targeted approaches for specific groups if you find that expansion into the existing system is inadvertently replicating existing inequities.

Cultivate buy-in for the initiative and support behavior change among educators and school leaders.

Why? Policy adoption does not automatically translate to quality, equitable, sustainable, and faithful implementation in the classroom. Scaling strategies must deliberately find avenues to cultivate engagement, emphasize alignment with existing policies and activities, and support behavior change among teachers and school leaders.

How?
- Actively engage teachers, school heads, supervisors, and trainers in scaling, including soliciting their input on the program design, adaptations, and contextualization.
- Consider sustainable ways to incentivize educators to implement the initiative with quality and commitment. Don't underestimate the additional time and effort required on their part. Where relevant, illustrate how the new approach can relieve workload or support educators to better undertake their roles.
- Assess how factors in the broader education ecosystem such as working conditions, teacher retention rates, language of instruction, and class sizes might hinder quality uptake and identify avenues to address them.
- In addition to offering quality training and professional development on the new initiative, provide ongoing support to teachers to translate training into practice. Fostering peer learning communities to support educators to directly connect and learn from each other is one approach.

Be flexible and plan for iteration.

Why? Scaling is not a static process; the approach, strategy, roles, and areas of focus necessarily change over time.

How?
- Adapt scaling strategies based on new insights, lessons learned, and changes in the education ecosystem. Begin with a diagnosis of the challenge or opportunity faced, determine adaptations to test in response, collect data to measure if the change led to improvement, and analyze results.
- Be willing to share what is not working with government partners, donors, implementers, and peer organizations. Learning communities and multistakeholder groups such as the RTSL can provide useful avenues for exchange and collaborative problem solving.

- Plan for adaptation and iteration when developing workplans and budgets. It is easier to make changes when iteration is already built into the timeline and expectations.
- Not everything should be scaled. Be prepared to scale down or pivot away from ideas when they are not creating the desired impact or are unsustainable.

Be ready to seize windows of opportunity when they arise.

Why? While windows of opportunity for scaling cannot usually be anticipated, they can be prepared for. Scaling often moves in fits and starts so being ready to act when a moment of opportunity arises is often what sets successful scaling teams apart.

How?
- Have evidence of impact and cost data ready to share.
- Keep track of developments in the enabling environment to identify areas of potential or existing policy alignment that may arise.
- Foster and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders. This entails including them in formal strategy meetings but also staying in regular contact through informal meetings and phone calls.

Plan for a phased approach to scaling.

Why? Scaling is a long, complex, non-linear journey that can take up to 15-20 years. It requires a systematic approach to ensure quality, equity, and sustainability are maintained through expansion. Understanding this timeframe and planning for different phases can break this process into manageable steps and create the flexibility to respond to changes and emerging insights.

How?
- Use pilot and expansion phases to establish proof of concept and test how the approach could be infused into the education system in different ways.
- Don't sacrifice long-term planning for scale and time for reflection in service of short-term demands.
- Include periodic moments for reflection on the scaling process in your regular workplan. Use this time to assess tradeoffs confronted, mistakes made, and adjustments needed to balance scaling goals at different levels of the system.

Research Summary

These recommendations come from findings from the Real-time Scaling Labs project, co-created by the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution with partner institutions around the world, which included four years of participatory, qualitative research on the process of scaling in five countries. In each location, the scaling lab process combined ongoing documentation and analysis of the scaling journey with a series of in-person and virtual convenings that brought together a diverse group of key stakeholders to collectively plan for sustainable scale, discuss and reflect on challenges and opportunities faced, and develop and test adaptations and course corrections to scaling strategies through an iterative learning process. Data from each lab was collected, analyzed, and used in real-time to inform the scaling decisions for each initiative, and to develop individual case studies detailing the scaling journey during the period of the project. Process data and evidence were also analyzed across cases to identify common trends about how key drivers support the scaling process.

Where can I find more information?

Scaling impact in education for transformative change: Practical recommendations from the Real-time Scaling Labs.	
Country Case Studies: • Adapting, innovating, and scaling foundational learning: Four lessons from scaling Teaching at the Right Level in Botswana • Improving children's reading and math at large scale in Côte d'Ivoire: The story of scaling PEC • Improving financial literacy skills for young people: Scaling the financial education program in Jordan • Improving learning and life skills for marginalized children: Scaling the Learner Guide Program in Tanzania	**Scaling Tools and Resources:** • Institutionalization Tracker • Scaling Strategy Worksheet • Adaptation Tracker • Real-time Scaling Lab Guidelines • Education Scalability Checklist
Project Website: https://www.brookings.edu/project/millions-learning/	