

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT DECISIONMAKERS FOCUSED ON SCALING IMPACT IN EDUCATION

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 government decisionmakers engaged in the process of identifying, adapting, implementing, scaling, and

sustaining education initiatives at local, regional, or national levels. This can include education officials at the district and central levels, officials at other relevant line ministries such as ministries of finance and youth employment, as well as other national-level policy makers.

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 (TEC) - 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.

World Map Callouts:

- 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 (TEC)

Recommendations for scaling impact in education



Engage diverse stakeholders within and outside government in the process of scaling and institutionalizing a new policy or program.

- 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.
- How?**
- Regularly convene diverse stakeholders to plan and reflect on the scaling process collaboratively, including colleagues in other government departments, nongovernmental organizations with relevant expertise or related experience, and funding partners.
 - Establish coordinating structures with a systems-wide lens to make decisions, harmonize efforts, and ensure the work of scaling advances.
 - Look for opportunities to engage in peer learning and exchange around scaling.



Foster trusting, collaborative relationships with these diverse stakeholders.

- Why?** Issues such as capacity limitations, power dynamics, politicized topics, and equity can be a stumbling block for scaling unless openly acknowledged and collaboratively addressed.
- How?**
- Facilitate honest and open discussion with partners about sensitive topics, including capacity and resource limitations, challenges with quality and equity, and constraints in the education system. Be open to partner insights, even if they appear critical of the current system. Focus on being united around the shared goal of improving education outcomes for all children.
 - Explore innovative ways of addressing capacity limitations and other constraints that hinder scaling, including by leveraging the [distinctive strengths](#) of partners and finding ways for [roles to evolve over time](#).



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?**
- 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.
 - Actively engage teachers, school heads, supervisors, and trainers in scaling processes, including soliciting their input on the program design, adaptations, and contextualization.
 - 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. Work with implementers and educators to test local adaptations that respond to these challenges.
 - In addition to offering quality training on the new initiative, provide ongoing support to teachers to help them apply what they learned. This can be through coaching, peer learning groups, and hybrid learning resources. Find ways to offer professional recognition for participation in training.



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?**
- Work closely with partners to make plans for government monitoring systems to gradually take on all aspects of monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities related to the initiative.
 - Consider establishing a participatory, action research processes like the Real-time Scaling Lab for documenting the scaling process in rich detail.
 - Collect detailed and disaggregated data on costs and use this data to guide decisions about scaling.
 - Make information about budget processes and timelines widely available to external partners so they can gather necessary related data.



Be prepared to adapt, pivot, and make mistakes.

- Why?** Scaling is not a static process; the approach, strategy, roles, and areas of focus necessarily change over time. Flexibility is essential.
- How?**
- Adapt based on new insights. Be open to revising both the initiative itself and the scaling strategy based on evidence about how it is working.
 - Actively plan the process of infusing each aspect of a program or policy into existing government processes and systems. This includes tracking and planning progress and making strategic adjustments related to:
 - Leadership within government
 - Alignment with policies, plans, curricula, and standards
 - Human and financial resources including training, supervision, and support
 - Materials development and procurement
 - Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
 - Community buy-in
 - Equity and inclusion
 - Plan for and protect time to pause, reflect, and adapt. Build in time to assess tradeoffs confronted, mistakes made, and adjustments needed to balance scaling goals at different levels of the system.



Plan for a phased approach to scaling.

- Why?** Scaling is a long, complex, non-linear journey that can take up to 15-20 years. Understanding this timeframe and planning for different phases can break this process into manageable steps, create the flexibility to respond to changes and emerging insights, and help ensure quality, equity, and sustainability are maintained through expansion.
- How?**
- Don't rush the scaling process or sacrifice long-term planning and time for reflection in service of short-term demands.
 - Consider undertaking a phased approach to scaling, with a series of medium-term targets.
 - Employ tailored scaling strategies for different levels of the education system and/or different geographies and populations.
 - Develop a clear understanding with scaling partners of how roles and responsibilities will shift in the scaling process and plan for these changes concretely from the beginning.

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/>

These recommendations come from the “Scaling impact in education for transformative change: Practical recommendations from the Real-time Scaling Labs” report. This report was co-authored (in alphabetical order) by Molly Curtiss Wyss, Maya Elliott, Jenny Perlman Robinson, and Ghulam Omar Qargha, with invaluable assistance from Brad Olsen and Katie Portnoy. We are grateful to our CUE colleagues Sara Coffey, Christina Kwauk, Larry Cooley, and Patrick Hannahan for their invaluable contributions to the Realtime Scaling Labs project. **CUE expresses our deepest gratitude to our Real-time Scaling Lab partners and colleagues, who graciously allowed us to learn alongside them and who inspired us with their tireless efforts to ensure all children and young people have access to quality education.**

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