

Scaling Impact or Impact at scale?



The quest: Impact at scale



- Grantmakers, donors, social and impact Investors want to achieve greater impact and return on investment for the resources they invest.
- Social purpose organisations want greater efficiency from their operations and interventions.
- Impacted stakeholders want more and better services.
- **The question is: How to balance the different expectations for achieving impact at scale?**

Interpreting impact scaling

Scaling is all about how you define increased or improved impact. Is it about reaching more people, providing more services or entering new markets, or considering new operating and delivery models?

01

Increase quantity and/or quality of impact

This can be interpreted as the number of impacts, the number of services or the number of impacted stakeholders.

02

Diversify the dimension of impact

This can be interpreted as the diversity of stakeholders served or the diversity of services delivered or the multiple locations where services are delivered.

03

Change the model or mechanism

This can be interpreted as the way services and products are delivered, replicated or distributed.



Scaling options

1

Multiplication

Offering services to more people

2

Diversification

Offering more/different services to more people in more locations.

3

Expansion

Creating new services for new stakeholder groups or creating new business/delivery or service models and dimensions of impact.



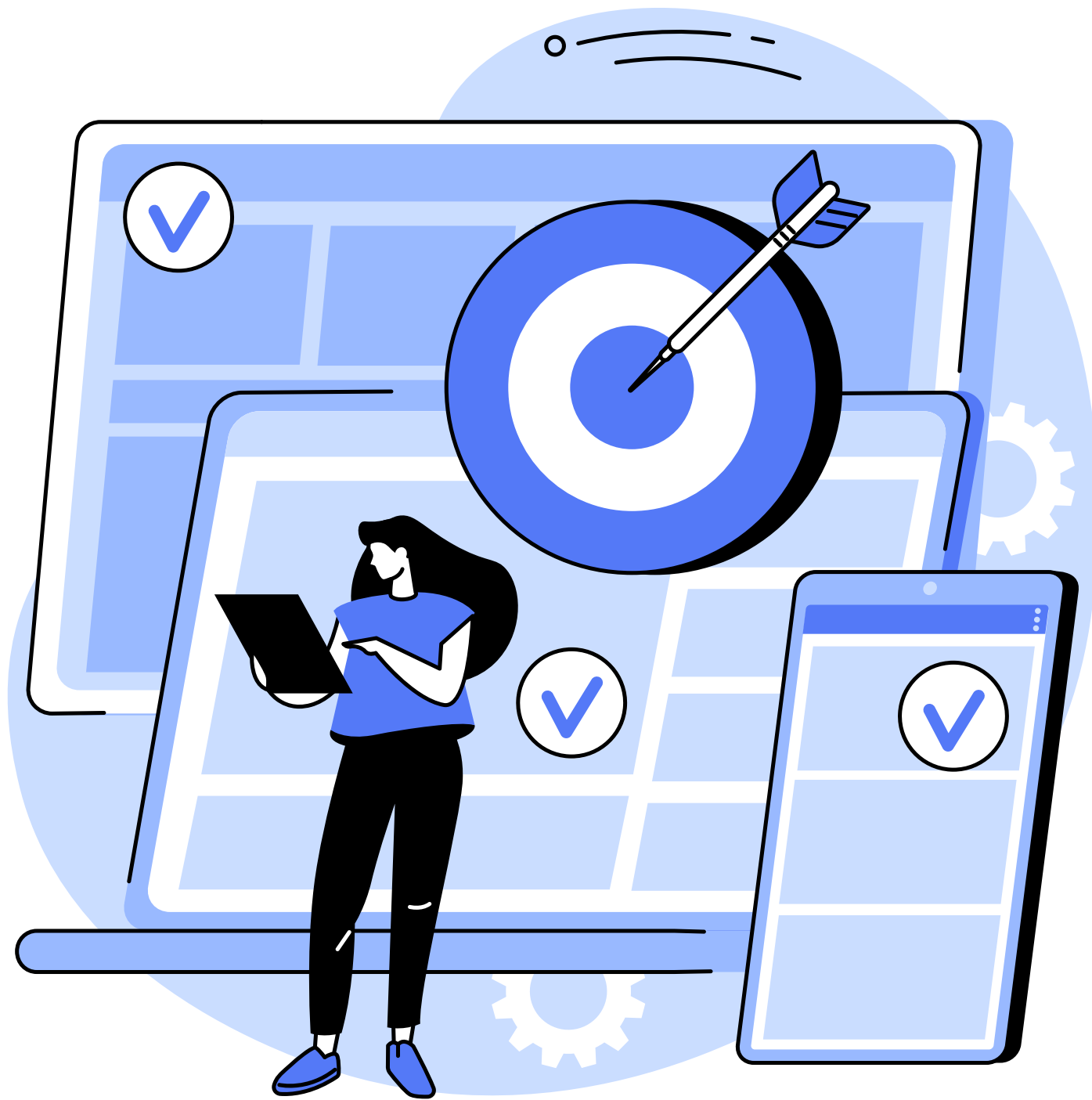
Scaling options



A **simplistic way** of looking at achieving greater **impact at scale** might look as follows:

- **Increase Quantity and/or Quality of Impact:**
 - Increase impact by providing existing programs more frequently or in greater quantity in current locations. Increase impact by improving quality of existing programs.
- **Diversify Communities Served:**
 - Increase impact by offering existing programs to new groups of people in current locations.
- **Diversify Services Offered:**
 - Increase impact by providing new programs addressing new issues in current locations.
- **Expand Geographically:**
 - Increase impact by offering existing/new programs in new locations.
- **Create new markets:**
 - Increase impact by creating cultural, political, or social change through large-scale social movements that influences public opinion, government policy or collective action in support of an issue that will increase/improve service delivery, increase the number of needs addressed or the number of people served in new markets.

Scaling risks



A **more complex way** to look at achieving bigger impact at greater scale will have to also consider:

- **The viability of the impact solution:**
 - Not all programs or interventions are the right/viable solutions to bring about social change in the first place. And by viable we mean solutions that proved to be effective in achieving social impact based on a funding model that is sustainable.
- **The viability of the impact organisation:**
 - Many organisations working in the sector are not geared for delivering impact at scale. Most are under resourced and there is simply not enough human or financial resources or technical competency, skills and experience to drive large scale impact.
- **The feasibility of different operating models to achieve impact at scale:**
 - Many organisations are stuck in executing their existing vision and mission and do not recognize scaling impact will require extensive change and resources – from strengthening processes and systems, to creating new products and services, entering new geographies and markets – all requiring new skills, competencies, partnerships and leadership to implement to drive impact at scale.

Strategies for scaling impact



Option 1

Organisational: Expand delivery capabilities – financial or human resources or technology or processes and systems.



Option 2

Partnerships: Collaboration, alliances and partnerships – to increase capacity and resources and delivery mechanisms.



Option 3

Programmatic: Extend reach and scale through advocacy and policy development, influencing awareness, norms and behaviours

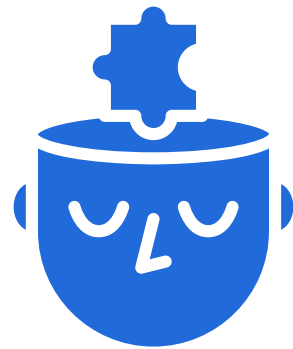
Determining the direction of scaled impact

Scaling happens on many levels:

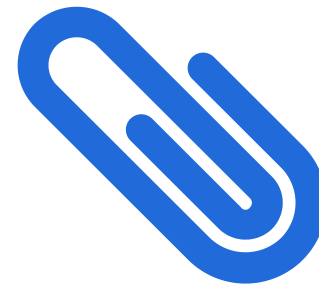
- **Scaling up:** Increase reach of impact
- **Scaling out:** Increase depth of impact
- **Scaling deep:** Increase the dimensions of impact i.e. type, duration and scale of impact
- **Scaling across:** Working across sectors with multiple actors to increase the scale, depth and duration of impact on systems



Scaling decisions



Scaling is not an imperative, it's a choice justified by evidence, supported by leadership commitment and available resources.



Scaling takes different forms, collaborative, cooperative, competitive, or complementary.



Scaling requires different structures to balance the magnitude, variety, and sustainability of impacts and there are generally tradeoffs to be made in scaling decisions.

Questions to guide your scaling process

Readiness

01 Are you ready to scale – does your theory of change clearly indicate the pathway to scale?

Responsiveness

02 Can you manage the scaling process – will your effectiveness and efficiency be compromised or enhanced, do you have the resources to scale?

Innovation

03 Are you sure of your scaling approach – does it mean diversification or replication, and will the sustainability of the existing impact improve or reduce by scaling?

Scaling impact is not easy. It requires courage and innovation as well as clear guidance on managing risks. It also requires additional resources, capacity and infrastructure as well as new competencies, skills and experience.



Evaluating and assessing the increased impact brought about through scaling

- During scaling performance management activities should focus on **continuous learning and improvement**.
- The increased scale of impact can be measured on a **macro level** (international or national), **micro level** (situational, contextual, theme or geography), **mezo level** (individual or collective) or **specific impact dimensions** (economic, social or environmental).

The process of scaling is not simplistic; it requires stakeholder support and buy-in, careful planning and assessment, and sufficient resources to maintain the quality and integrity of the scaling process.



Scaling success factors



Management Competencies

Scaling is heavily dependent on management competencies generally understood to mean the ability to apply business-oriented processes and structures.

Replicability and Resources

The replicability of the business, financial and development models as well as the ability to mobilise the necessary financial resources will directly determine and contribute to the success of any scaling efforts.

Final insights to scaling for greater impact

Scaling is not linear

The road to scale is complex and complicated and requires experimentation, feedback loops, innovation, and sometimes failure.

There are multiple pathways to scaling

Scaling can happen through organic growth, partnerships, advocacy, open source strategies and many other ways.

There will be many obstacles to scaling

While there is not one single perfect formula to scale, many individual parts make up the total solution, including people, systems, processes, resources, technology, and a wide range of methodologies.



Get in Touch

We have assisted many organisations with their scaling initiatives. This include using various social innovation or social investment and development approaches.

Achieving **IMPACT AT SCALE** is our ultimate objective.

Get in contact if you want to discuss your impact scaling requirements.



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