

SEED-SCALE Process of Community Change

In the early 1990s, Future Generations and Johns Hopkins University conducted a disciplined review of how communities change. This research drew on evidence over the last century, involved UNICEF, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the experience of many organizations. The focus was on what has worked in the field of development over the last one-hundred years, specifically on how to take community-based successes to regional scale and how to sustain impact over time. Exemplary cases included UNICEF's China Model Counties project, which scaled up primary health care to 100 counties reaching 400 million people, and the Green Revolution.

This global review identified core principles that create the necessary enabling conditions to propel the world's most successful large scale and sustainable community change efforts. These key elements were simplified and packaged into a systematic process known as SEED-SCALE.

SEED is the process of activating empowerment at the community level and growing a local success. SCALE is the expansion of this activity, both in geographic coverage and across development sectors for sustained improvement in quality of life.

Four principles underlie SEED-SCALE. When a community employs these principles, momentum for change grows and solutions evolve to fit local circumstances.

The four principles are:

1. Build from Success: Strengthen what is working
2. Create Three-way Partnerships among community, government, and outside change agents
3. Make decisions based on evidence, not opinions
4. Seek behavior change as the primary outcome

Using these principles, communities determine their own priorities and focus on practical solutions through the implementation of workplans.

Workplans are implemented with the guidance of seven tasks:

1. Create or recreate a Local Coordinating Committee
2. Identify past successes to make more effective
3. Visit other communities to learn methods that can be adapted
4. Self-evaluate your community to gather evidence about needs and seek actions that can be achieved
5. Focus on community priorities and create workplans
6. Take action and encourage partners to do their tasks
7. Make needed mid-course corrections

In addition to sustaining momentum, this process extends change to regional scale. Successful communities become regional centers for action learning and experimentation that can rapidly train others. Successful communities in this second wave become extension sites themselves, and so on, creating an exponential expansion of change.

SEED-SCALE has been applied in varying degrees in 26 countries within a diverse range of cultural, political, and economic contexts and across a wide range of sectors, including conservation, health, literacy, and peacebuilding.

It is effective in reaching the previously unreached, the poorest quintile of humanity that is unable to access available services. Rather than extending services to these communities, SEED-SCALE grows their capacity and confidence for self-help so that they may reach out and break through the barriers that had prevented access.

Field-practitioners, organizations, communities, and government may all use SEED-SCALE to adapt and improve their existing work. SEED-SCALE has also been used by organizations as an evaluation tool.

More details and a self-paced curriculum are available online at: www.seed-scale.org.

More details are in the book, *Empowerment on an Unstable Planet: From Seeds of Human Energy to a Scale of Global Change*, published by Oxford University Press.