Special COVID-19 Newsletter

Scaling Up Community of Practice

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to share with you Newsletter #17 of the Scaling Up Community of Practice (CoP).

In this Newsletter, we depart from our past format and focus exclusively on the COVID-19 crisis, a crisis that confronts the world with problems of a scale and of an urgency rarely seen before. We thought that our Scaling Up Community of Practice might contribute in a small way by consolidating lessons from our scaling experience with relevance for addressing these urgent needs, while also beginning the important process of learning from the crisis response to improve swift and scaled up responses to future crises and long-term development challenges.

We are very grateful to all those CoP members who found time during these weeks and months of self-isolation and stress to respond to our call for contributions. What you sent us back is testament to the remarkable readiness of all of you to respond with energy, imagination and persistence to this global challenge, with one eye on the immediate task at hand and the other looking to the future. We are proud to be part of your effort in a small way.

We have tried to summarize at the outset a few preliminary take-ways from your contributions. These cannot do justice to all you have sent us, and we apologize if not everyone is credited in the summary. We encourage all readers to at least glance across all the contributions, even as you will understandably focus on those sections most directly of interest to you. There is much to be learned from each and every one of the contributions and there is much hope and encouragement to be derived from looking across the great of range of thoughtful and thought-provoking pieces.

As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions on this Newsletter and, more generally, on the CoP and its working groups.

With many thanks for your support,

Larry Cooley, MSI, and Johannes Linn, Brookings/R4D

Overview of Scaling Issues and Options in Response to COVID-19

Larry Cooley and Johannes Linn

Introduction

On 15 April 2020, we issued a call to participants of the Scaling Up Community of Practice (CoP) requesting contributions to a special CoP Newsletter dedicated to the challenges and implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. We believed that our cross-sectoral and diverse CoP with its focus on scaling could make a significant contribution to ongoing efforts to respond to the dramatic health, economic and social impacts of this virus.

In our view, lessons and insights regarding the achievement of outcomes at scale should be central to the immediate response to, and longer-term recovery from, the COVID pandemic for the following reasons:

- First, the scale of the crisis and its impact, combined with the urgency of finding a response, means that we have to do all we can to draw on our experience with scaling up interventions in the past -- experience drawn especially, but not exclusively, from previous crisis situations.
- Second, the COVID crisis is likely to change not only the scale of the development problem, but also the nature of the problem. This will require different solutions and modalities to proceed at accelerated speed from ideation to full implementation – another issue our community has been discussing for several years.
- Third, responding to the crisis at scale will place a special burden on proven ways of ensuring that unexpected outcomes and the principle of "do no harm" – principles central to the scaling discussion -- are reflected and respected to the maximum extent possible.
- Finally, we can help the global community to learn lessons about scaling the global response to COVID-19 that can contribute to preparation for future crises; and to extract lessons about scaling from this massive response/recovery with implications for scaling up development impact under non-crisis situations.

With these considerations in mind, we invited CoP members to contribute their experience and thoughts on how the scaling lens can usefully be applied during and following this current crisis. We were particularly interested in experiences and perspectives that may have relevance across sectoral and thematic areas.

We were not disappointed. With 40 submissions, some reporting on more than one initiative, we received an impressive response in the core areas of the CoP's engagement. We grouped the responses by main areas:

- General
- Agriculture and rural development
- Community engagement
- Education
- Health
- Social enterprises
- Social protection

- Youth
- Special features

We begin with an overview of some preliminary observations and lessons.

Preliminary findings

Everyone is affected – and it's not only about health. The first, and perhaps obvious, conclusion is that everyone and everything is affected by the crisis. As the contribution by *GIZ* notes, the immediate as well as long-term impact on poverty in the world will be significant and it will dramatically increase the need for new solutions at scale to leave no one behind. Indeed, the crisis will likely increase fragility in many poorer countries.

Yet, there are great differences across countries and sectors in actual and appropriate response. As the contribution from *Y-Rise* stresses, differences must be noted especially between high-income and low-income countries -- the experience with the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone may be more relevant for low-income countries than that of Korea or New Zealand. Barriers and enabling factors are critical, including demographic characteristics, the level of informality in the economy, fiscal space, institutional capacity, ITC and information constraints, and effective mobilization networks. And there are differences in challenges and responses across sectors or areas of engagement, as reflected, for example, in the experience gathered by the *Million Lives Club*.

The crisis response has to be about short-term needs and about opportunities for longer-term change. As colleagues from **Rice University** report, new research will assess how people's attitudes and behavior may be affected by the crisis, which will be important to understand its longer-term implications for policy. The crisis in fact represents an opportunity to accelerate systems change, which in turn requires "thinking out-side the box" (*Millions Learning*).

The crisis calls for the development of new approaches to address global development challenges. In response to this realization, initiatives are underway to identify innovations and innovators (*R4D's Global Innovation Hub*) and "hackathons" to support the scaling of promising innovations (*GIZ)*. *IDRC* offers approaches to scaling under conditions of high uncertainty; and various contributors stress the role that can be played by better data (*ExpandNe*t interview). Many, including *Millions Learning*, emphasize the role of and possibilities for real-time knowledge sharing.

Digitalization and IT technology will play a key role in reaching scale not only during the crisis, but also beyond. The role of IT technology is dramatically demonstrated by keeping us connected with each other during the lock-down of billions of people. But it is also highly relevant for specific development areas, most notably for schooling, as demonstrated by *Educate!* in its efforts to integrate digital learning not only during the crisis, but also beyond; by *CRS* in its distribution of millions of bed nets to fight malaria in Benin during the pandemic; and by *CGD* with its report on digitalization of social protection in South Asia as a means to support the poor during the crisis.

Specific challenges will confront responses at scale in major areas of development.
- In health, fighting COVID-19 will be critical, including setting up country-appropriate testing approaches (*Rockefeller Foundation*), applying lessons from the Ebola crisis (*Co-Impact*, *Save the Children*), addressing mobility and logistical constraints in maintaining health care and health supply chains (*E2A, EvidenceAction, ExpandNet*) and integrating IT solutions (*CRS*). At

the same time, it will be important to ensure that other health challenges (including vaccinations) do not get neglected and to shore up health systems more generally, including and especially for women (*Co-Impact*, et al).

- For agriculture and food security, support for well-functioning value chains (Including assured inputs and output markets), for rural enterprises and for the rural poor will be critical (*ARD Working Group*, *IFAD*, *HarvestPlus*, *Nwuneli,* et al).
- In education, supporting children while out of school with remote education and alternatives to school meals, but also getting them back to schools as soon as reasonably safe will be essential, while integrating the lessons from remote learning *(Education Working Group*, *Educate!, Millions Learning, Room to Read*, et al).
- Young people represent a major demographic cohort in many lower income countries and – while probably less susceptible to the virus – will be especially affected by the socio-economic fall-out from the crisis. Youth employment opportunities (*USAID*, *Youth at Work*, *World Learning, MSI*) will have to be protected and created, to help avoid lasting social traumata (*USAID*).
- For social enterprises, as for many small and medium enterprises, there are heightened risks of survival and various initiatives are underway to assist them during the crisis and beyond (*Social Enterprise Working Group*, *CASE*).
- Community engagement is critical during the times of crisis to help protect and rebuild (*GOAL*), and the role of women in communities deserves particular attention and support (*CARE*).

Agencies involved in development and development assistance will have to adapt during and after the COVID-19 crisis. Contributors noted that decentralized delivery systems help during the crisis in overcoming the loss of mobility (*E2A*), that delivery agencies have to take double roles (e.g., extension agents and teachers serve also by delivering key health messages and even supplies, esp. in remote rural areas) (*Millions Learning, Syngenta Foundation*), that M&E systems need to be radically transformed to meet the demands of pace, scale, social distancing, and uncertainty (**MSI),** and agencies have to be flexible in adjusting their service delivery models (*EvidenceAction*). The big international development agencies (e.g., *IFAD*) have a special role to play and are adapting their delivery modalities in various ways to disburse greater amounts of financing, as well as speed up and increase the impact of their support, while also looking towards improving the longer-term development prospects once the crisis has passed. A key question for them will be whether they can retain the use of simplified procedures and speedy response learned during the crisis and become more nimble and efficient in their support for developing countries in normal times.

General

GIZ

"Leave no one behind" will be even more important during and after COVID-19. The World Bank estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic could push about 49 million people into extreme poverty in 2020. More than ever, the international community is called to "leave no one behind" (LNOB), in order to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. Drawing on lessons from the field, a current study by GIZ illustrates how to put LNOB into practice and implement it at scale, by providing concrete tools and approaches across the phases of the project cycle, and for different levels of capacity development. https://www.poverty-inequality.com/leave-no-one-behind-guidelines-for-project-planners-and-practitioners-2/

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A hackathon for scalable innovations to address the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath. COVID-19 has placed a heavy burden on developing countries, unravelling more than a decade of progress with enormous social and economic consequences. In response, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), together with "Team Europe" partners including the EU Commission, other EU member states, tech companies, and civil society, mobilized a global hackathon #SmartDevelopmentHack. The call for solutions ended on April 27. Digital solution providers will be matched with local implementation partners. The best teams will enter a two-day intensive hackathon, present their proposal to a jury and potentially receive significant financial support for adaptation and scaling. For more information about the #SmartDevelopmentHack, go to: https://toolkit-digitalisierung.de/smartdevelopmenthack-en/

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Global Innovation Exchange at Results for Development (R4D)

The COVID-19 Innovation Hub. To facilitate the uptake and scale of COVID-19 innovations, Global Innovation Exchange (GIE) and partners including USAID, DFAT and KOICA have developed the COVID-19 Innovation Hub (C19IH). Since its soft launch, C19IH has featured 700+ deployable to inspirational innovations categorized across 12 COVID-19 response areas, and 80+ funding opportunities to help innovators find follow-on funding. Partners are welcome to contribute to a smaller list of COVID-19 Recognized Innovations identified for their COVID-19 efforts such as those by UNDP Singapore, Y Combinator, or the South Korean Government. To enable learning, the C19IH has started to visualize COVID-19 innovation data and trends and welcomes partnerships to analyze and capture lessons learned about innovations adapting and scaling in response to COVID-19, and beyond. You can email the GIE team at partners@globalinnovationexchange.org to discuss partnerships or with questions.

During the early outreach, 100+ innovators provided brief COVID-19 activity updates that are being reviewed to select and recognize promising innovations for their COVID-19 efforts. Partners can join this effort by:
1. sharing innovations they have identified for their COVID-19 efforts,
2. requesting a tailored shortlist of innovations that may be a potentially good fit for your COVID-19 efforts,

3. exploring deeper collaborations to help these innovations reach where needed and to capture stories and lessons about adapting and scaling innovations in a time of crisis.

You can email the GIE team at partners@globalinnovationexchange.org to discuss partnerships or with questions.

Global Innovation Exchange (GIE) is the largest, searchable development innovation database showcasing 15,000+ innovations and USD1.5 billion+ of funding opportunities with 45,000+ registered users and 50+ partners. Its mission is to help scale the most promising innovations by powering data, tools, connectivity, and analysis for various actors in the development ecosystem. For social entrepreneurs and innovators, GIE is a free tool to discover funding, showcase their innovations, and access new opportunities.

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IDRC

IDRC's new scaling handbook. IDRC's Scaling Playbook supports the use of guiding principles for scaling science in response to COVID-19. The pace and global reach of the COVID-19 pandemic calls for approaches to scaling that start from a place of great uncertainty—about the virus itself and the consequences of the disease, and response measures across a wide range of contexts. More than ever, considerations of scaling potential research impacts must be present from the very early stages of scientific inquiry. Based on the experiences of researchers around the world, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has identified a set of principles to inform scaling strategies that aim to achieve the right scale of impact for people and the planet. To guide researchers in the application of these principles, IDRC recently released the *Scaling Playbook*. It leads researchers through considerations at each stage of a typical research process to help put scaling intentions into action. Experiences of researchers supported by IDRC have demonstrated how applying this set of guiding principles can promote flexibility and adaptive decision-making in scaling processes, particularly in times of uncertainty. The *Scaling Playbook: A Practical Guide for Researchers* is available in English, French and Spanish.

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LINC

A new survey of CSO responses to COVID-19. LINC conducted an independent survey of national, regional, and local civil society organizations (CSOs) to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting their work and the communities they serve. The findings of the survey capture timely information from grassroots NGOs in the developing world. Based on the survey responses, the report provides recommendations from CSOs and questions posed by CSOs to international financial and technical support providers on how to best support them through this crisis and for the future. Find survey report here: https://linclocal.org/covid-19/ The survey includes responses from more than 120 CSOs from low- and middle-income countries in Asia, Africa, Southeastern Europe and Latin America and from a range of technical sectors.

Million Lives Club

A club of organizations that have successfully scaled up may point the way towards responding to the COVID-19 crisis. The first cohort of the Million Lives Club (MLC) was launched in September 2019, when the Club recognized 44 high-impact, high potential social impact organizations with innovations that are improving the lives of those living on less than $5/day. Many of our Members

are now adapting their innovations in response to COVID-19. The Club is currently working to see what lessons can be learned from this group of rapidly scaling innovators and how they are pivoting to this new context. One initial insight has emerged from looking at the MLC Members who have pivoted to address COVID and which sectors they are working in. Using the Global Innovation Exchange's categories, it appears that Members have been working through Emergency Communications, Data, and Education - more than half have self-categorized in these three themes. Conversely, there are very few to no MLC Members currently operating in the transport or policy areas.

While only a modest sample of innovators, this may point towards COVID-19 response areas that are generally better served, or underserved, by innovation. MLC will be sharing more in-depth information on Members' responses to COVID-19 in the MLC Journal soon. In the meantime, the MLC is continuing to accept applications, so please encourage innovators in your networks to apply.

Inspired by themes drawn from the Learning Agenda, the Million Lives Club is also planning a series of roundtables to respond to our Members' needs and to produce research outputs. Our first roundtable session will focus on COVID-19 and how MLC Members are responding, as well as how Partners can assist them.

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Management Systems International (MSI)

Adapting planning, monitoring and research for impact at scale during COVID-19. Management Systems International (MSI) established a team to focus on understanding the implications of COVID-19 as it relates to planning, monitoring, and research and how to rapidly achieve the necessary scale in COVID-19 response and recovery programming. In order to respond effectively, donors and governments will need to understand the secondary effects of COVID-19 in a broader, multi-sectoral context. Information collected through conventional and third-party monitoring during the initial response phase can provide a foundation for rapid assessments, and other research to identify appropriate assistance during recovery and how to take it to scale. This information will be critical for informing adaptive, evidence-based decision-making in a new and rapidly evolving environment. For more detailed information and white papers on making sense of COVID-19 data and adapting monitoring and research approaches in the COVID-19 context, please visit https://www.msiworldwide.com/our-impact/covid-19-msi-action.

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Rice University

Research on the long-term effects of COVID-19 on human behavior. Rodica Damian (Department of Psychology, University of Houston), Patrick Hill (Washington University in St. Louis), and Fred Oswald (Department of Psychological Sciences, Rice University) are currently developing a collaborative research project addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, which presents a widespread and major life adversity unlike any in recent history. The research explores the long-term effect of COVID-19 on human development following adversity across different social contexts (occupational, educational, community, family, lifestyle, health, and financial). The study will address questions such as: How do people change in response to adversity? Does adversity across different social contexts impact people differently? Who thrives and who suffers in the wake of COVID-19? Social-personality psychology, positive psychology, and affective science provide several different theoretical frameworks to help address these questions.

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Y-RISE

Designing a country-level response at scale to COVID-19. Y-RISE, a program at Yale University focusing on scaling up development impact, has thrown all its resources into responding to the COVID-19 crisis, with a particular focus on Bangladesh. Its preliminary analysis concludes that COVID-induced problems and required response differ significantly between high-income and low-income countries; the experience with the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone may be more relevant than that of Korea or New Zealand; scale and speed are essential; barriers and enabling factors need to be addressed, including demographic characteristics, the prevalence of informality in the economy, fiscal space, institutional capacity, ITC and information constraints, and lack of information and data; effective mobilization of knowledge and stakeholder networks is critical in the crisis response at scale. For more information see these three sources:
https://1930181.mediaspace.kaltura.com/media/1_blgmz2mm
https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/10/poor-countries-social-distancing-coronavirus/
https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/op-ed/2020/04/06/responding-to-covid-19-in-the-developing-world
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IPA

No one currently knows how to successfully scale COVID-19 responses. Given the unprecedented circumstances, lessons from the field must be taken with a pinch of salt and, during this moment of rapid adaptation, deliberate learning is more important than ever. But when it comes to understanding impact, COVID-19 has put organizations in a double bind: getting the right monitoring data just got a lot harder, precisely at the moment when it's needed most. In a series of blog posts, the Right-Fit Evidence Unit is sharing their advice on how to create Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems that support the scaling of effective interventions. You can find the first one, focused on advice to funders, here.

J-PAL

Over the years, J-PAL affiliated researchers have built a large body of evidence that contains policy lessons on topics ranging from social protection to health to education. One way that J-PAL is working to leverage this body of research and evidence is by supporting innovative work with governments to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 using data and evidence-based approaches. Through J-PAL's Innovation in Government Initiative (IGI), J-PAL has directly supported five such projects in the past month focusing on health, education, and social protection. Where J-PAL has existing partnerships with policymakers, they are also sharing some general insights that may be relevant for issues that they are facing. This includes interventions that may increase adherence to COVID-19 guidelines, considerations for rolling out social protection programs, ideas for keeping students engaged at home, and others.

Agriculture and Rural Development

ARD Working Group of the Scaling Up CoP

Developing an appropriate response at scale to COVID-19 in agriculture and rural development. Members of the Agriculture and Rural Development working group discussed how insights from scaling can help affected parties to recover from the current crisis and mitigate future ones. Some of the recognized opportunities for an improved "new normal" were gathered in this blog. Among the important messages are these: (1) agriculture, rural development and food security are key areas affected by COVID-19 and need to be supported in their response and recovery; (2) agricultural and food value chains are very vulnerable to disruption in this crisis and need to be protected and rebuilt; (3) the COVID-19 pandemic reveals a range of interdependencies and synergies among sectors and institutions and presents numerous opportunities to break silos. The full recording of the webinar is available on http://paepard.blogspot.com/2020/04/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-ard-and-food.html

The next virtual meeting of the Agriculture and Rural Development Working Group will take place on 20th of May 9:30 am EST on the topic of "Rapid scaling in response to COVID-19: experiences from Africa.

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CIMMYT

How can agricultural practice best respond to the challenges of COVID-19? The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) set up mini-task forces to address key issues around COVID-19. The products of these efforts include a blog "wheat diseases in times of the COVID-19 crisis" by Hans Braun, Director of the Global Wheat Program, where he establishes parallels between wheat blast, a nasty crop epidemic that has been spreading very fast, and COVID-19. Baudron and Liégeois published a blog stating that safeguarding biodiversity is essential to prevent the next COVID-19 linking the biodiversity crisis as a leading factor in the emergence the disease. Further blogs will be posted soon on the role of agricultural mechanization and labor availability during times of lock-downs and social distancing. Finally, keep your eyes open for a blog on "the golden age of ecological intensification" vs farming that relies heavily on external inputs.

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IFAD

IFAD responds to COVID-19 with an ambitious program to scale up its engagement. IFAD's strategic response to the COVID-19 crisis is centered on a coordinated range of activities that address immediate impacts, prevent the erosion of results from past and ongoing operations, and put in place the building blocks to support post-crisis recovery. To achieve these goals, its response is organized into four broad categories:

1. **Identify immediate solutions**

IFAD's country teams are already working with governments to find immediate solutions within ongoing projects. So far, over 100 projects across 65 countries have identified measures that can be put into action as part of the COVID-19 response. In India, Mexico and Palestine, for example, there are plans to purchase agricultural surpluses from farmers to ease the effects of reduced market access. And efforts to improve access to inputs have either been planned or are already being implemented in several other countries, including Angola, Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eritrea, Ghana, Indonesia and Viet Nam. These efforts draw from a wide-ranging set of options tailored to the needs of local people in the context of the pandemic.

2. **Scale up**

IFAD have launched a multi-donor COVID-19 [Rural Poor Stimulus Facility](#) to provide a more scaled-up response to complement our repurposed activities. The Facility will safeguard the food security and resilience of poor rural people by ensuring timely access to inputs, information, markets and liquidity. It will be targeted first and foremost at IFAD's project beneficiaries, to ensure that the positive impacts they have achieved are not reversed. To enable IFAD to reach the scale needed, it aims to mobilize at least US$200 million from Member States and other donors. The Facility will focus on the following activities:

- Provide inputs for production of crops, livestock and fisheries to small-scale producers so that they can weather the immediate effects of the economic crisis.
- Facilitate access to markets to support small-scale farmers to sell their products in conditions where restricted movement is interrupting the functioning of markets, including providing logistics and storage support.
- Provide targeted funds for rural financial services to ensure sufficient liquidity is available and to ease immediate loan repayment requirements to maintain services, markets and jobs for poor rural people.
- Use digital services to share key information on production, weather, finance and markets.

3. **Advise and support**

IFAD is advising and supporting governments as they work to mitigate some of the potentially most severe impacts of the crisis. In Bangladesh, for example, a [proposal for maintaining essential transport and logistics](#) for agriculture has become part of the national response plan.

4. **Look to the long term**

As governments begin to enact their long-term recovery plans, IFAD is proposing to take action to support them in rebuilding rural economies and refocusing efforts to eradicate rural poverty and hunger in a post–COVID-19 context. Key initiatives include supporting governments as they develop plans to accelerate recovery, rebuilding the resilience of rural livelihoods, and addressing structural inequalities so that, when the next crisis strikes, we are able to protect those most at risk of being left behind.

HarvestPlus

HarvestPlus works to build up the first line of defense against the crisis: seed delivery. As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food systems continues, its effects on food and nutrition security, health, and livelihoods are becoming serious and widespread. In Colombia, HarvestPlus and partners ensure that seeds are delivered by mail to 1,550 smallholder farming households through traditional mail operators coupled with virtual trainings. In Uganda, agro-shops at churches and schools serve as pop-up agro-dealers allowing farmers to buy seeds at a safe social distance. In Zimbabwe, HarvestPlus is remotely recording farmers' reactions, via phone surveys, on the performance and taste of new varieties. HarvestPlus also keeps the farmers up to date about preventive measures on farms, and the importance of enhanced nutrition in boosting the

immune system. In Bangladesh, field facilitators make sure that farmers are linked to the value chain and provide guidance remotely. A recent HarvestPlus blog post discusses these and other efforts HarvestPlus staff are making to reach beneficiaries amid COVID-19 restrictions.

HarvestPlus also has an ambition to reach one billion consumers with more nutritious staple crops by 2030, with the support of partners. In this context, HarvestPlus introduced the use of digital technologies for several delivery programs, technologies that are even more vital today during the pandemic. In Nigeria, HarvestPlus leads the efforts to have a marketing digital portal called "BioFort Stat", aiming to collect data on biofortification activities along the value chain. Also, HarvestPlus is partnering with the New Fork, to apply blockchain distributed ledger technology for traceability of biofortified seeds and food products. In Uganda, HarvestPlus has been linking farmers to markets, empowering the supply chain by providing agronomic updates, and enhancing the seed systems by making use of technologies such as the sweet potato app, led in coordination with the government.

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Sahel Consulting

An African think tank responds to the COVID-19 crisis. Many global experts have underscored that this pandemic is a 12-18-month battle, and that the world should expect future pandemics and shocks linked to climate change and other crises. As a result, there is an urgent need to transform and strengthen food ecosystems so that we are better prepared to keep people nourished going forward, by taking four steps. First, we urgently need reliable and credible data. Second, all actors on the food ecosystem need to collaborate by sharing information across value chains and between sectors. Third, we need to reorganize the places where people go to buy and eat food. Finally, we must support small and medium-sized enterprises in the agriculture and food landscapes to redesign their business models to ensure resilience to shocks. (See https://sahelconsult.com/covid-19-strengthening-west-africas-fragile-food-ecosystems-ndidi-nwuneli/)

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Syngenta Foundation

Syngenta Foundation aims to serve rural communities in a new double role in responding to COVID-19. Not being an "obvious candidate" doesn't stop one from helping! The Syngenta Foundation (SFSA) is neither experienced in healthcare nor in emergency response. (Helping Bangladesh farmers get re-started after flooding was one recent exception). For its funding, SFSA has no charitable public benefactors on whose generosity it can call in crises. However, it does have some crucial assets. As an agricultural organization, SFSA is widely present in the countryside, knows what smallholders and their businesses currently need most, and can help provide it. Agricultural organizations are also at the heart of the food chain serving urban areas. As well as its own employees, in India, SFSA also has colleagues "on the ground" in much larger numbers thanks to scaling up our Agri-Entrepreneur (AE) initiative. Together with Tata Trusts, they recently created the AE Growth Foundation as a catalytic scaling platform. This organization already has over 2700 local entrepreneurs, each serving some 150-200 of their farming neighbors. In normal times, the focus is on agricultural advancement, but in recent weeks, more than 1500 AEs have taken on a double role. They are ensuring that crops get to market locally while logistics operators stay at home. That is good for consumers and provides farmers with income. At the same time, they are working closely with farm families to prevent the spread of disease and

deliver health and sanitation services. The availability of such people, deeply committed to their local communities, is proving a double lifeline for highly vulnerable smallholders. Here's more.
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Community Engagement

GOAL

Community engagement will play a critical role in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. There have been many agencies, voicing through various fora, their concerns around maintaining community engagement in the face of different protective government measures around COVID-19. Many have been assuming that community engagement has to cease. But GOAL's experiences from Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis demonstrated that the maintenance of community engagement with two-way community dialogue was pivotal to both the effective management of disease as well as other critical services. GOAL's Community Engagement Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) uses a Community Led Action approach, which was adapted from GOAL's 2014 Community Led Ebola Action (CLEA). GOAL also developed a Community-Led Action resource guide to the approach, aimed at those planning, monitoring, or communicating in the context of CLA, and a Field Manual for Community Mobilisers. Arabic, Spanish and French copies of the field manual will also be available shortly. All relevant documents are available here: https://www.goalglobal.org/impact-learning/
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Education

Education Working Group of Scaling Up CoP

The Scaling Up Education Working Group explores how best to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. The CoP's Education Working Group hosted a webinar on April 9, 2020, to discuss how members are continuing to provide learning opportunities in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and more specifically:
- Discuss immediate and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on children's education.
- Share information about current education efforts underway in response to COVID-19 crisis and where the education community can learn from other efforts.
- Explore where the Education Working Group can contribute and add value, in the short- and long-term.

A summary of the discussion can be found at the end of this Newsletter under "Special Features". A full recording of the webinar can be found here:
https://msiworldwide.egnyte.com/dl/ZJb1m3aRfb (link expires October 1, 2020; password: EducationWebinar)

Educate!

Continue learning during and after the COVID-19 crisis at scale with digital means. We know from previous crises that youth will be disproportionately impacted by the economic shock triggered by the current pandemic. At the same time, the spread of virus has resulted in the most significant disruption to formal education in recent history. For girls, the impacts of the virus will be even greater, and the implications will reach beyond just educational outcomes to social spillovers, including marriage, childbearing, and more. Our challenge now is to determine how to help youth continue to develop skills under the current circumstances and return to school when that is possible.

Many of Africa's youth do not have the infrastructure or resources to transition their studies to distance learning. Access to smartphones and internet is scarce in the region, and other virtual learning platforms do not effectively engage youth. Confronted with these realities, Educate!'s goal is to develop distance learning programs that can be scaled to large number of youth while providing a quality educational experience making use of the following pathways:

1. Virtual learning via radio: In Uganda, Educate! is working to convert its skills-based curriculum to a format that can be delivered via radio. Educate! is also partnering with the Rwanda Education Board (REB) in Rwanda to deliver upper secondary subjects via radio, including Entrepreneurship and Physics.
2. Engagement via telecommunications – Robocalls and SMS: Educate! aims to move beyond simply distributing educational content. Based on a belief that it is critical for youth to have two-way engagement to develop skills, in Uganda, Educate! plans to deploy automated phone calls ("robocalls") which deliver educational content and learning prompts. Students then further apply and engage with content via text.
3. Social media engagement, creatively leveraging a countrywide youth network: Educate! aims to leverage the strong engagement with current and former participants on social media to 1) combat the spread of misinformation and contribute to the dissemination of accurate information (including where to locate reliable sources on COVID-19) and 2) foster youth's continued engagement with their education.
4. Educating motorcycle-taxi drivers on COVID-19 safety measures: To respond to government regulations restricting movement across East Africa, Educate! is exploring repurposing its program in Kenya to train motorcycle taxi drivers on how to safely distribute food while minimizing the spread of COVID-19.

When schools reopen and Educate! can again implement its model in-person, they plan to integrate these distance learning strategies into their evidence-based model to strengthen its impact.

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Millions Learning at Brookings

Applying scaling lessons in education to the COVID-19 response. In the midst of this global pandemic and the resultant closure of schools across more than 190 countries, the education community is reflecting in real-time on how systems undergo large-scale transformation—how governments, businesses, schools, cities, and communities adapt and make fundamental changes to existing ways of working. Prior to the spread of COVID-19, the Center for Universal Education (CUE) at Brookings had been reflecting with its partners on how difficult it is – and what is needed -- to change a system; and a key lesson from that experience was that systems almost always prefer the status quo and often require a crisis to transform.

It is striking the extent to which some of the key principles related to scaling and systems change turn out to be relevant in shaping responses to this pandemic. CUE highlighted some of these efforts by Real-time Scaling Lab partners in this recent blog post.

CUE's analysis suggests that the pandemic offers a potential window of opportunity to accelerate systems change, enabling education decision-makers to think outside the box about how education systems can best deliver quality learning opportunities for children and youth at large-scale. This includes drawing lessons from past education crises. (Full blog reflecting on COVID-19 and systems transformation available here.)

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Room to Read

Responding to the COVID-19 crisis at national scale with appropriate remote learning tools. As school systems across the globe shut down to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, Room to Read looked across its portfolio to identify programmatic pivots to support education systems and children's learning. Emergency Education requires particularly close coordination with government partners, implementing organizations, and donors. Room to Read also identified programmatic pivots it could use to quickly scale changes across its own operations allowing it to reach students immediately and buying needed planning time for system level interventions.

In that first phase, Room to Read opened up its digital platform https://literacycloud.org/, originally designed for a project in Indonesia, for broader access. They identified an additional 750 books in 21 languages and read-aloud videos for the platform. Across eight countries in Asia and Africa, Room to Read staff immediately began using mobile technology to provide individual mentoring to secondary school girls and adapted its risk and response protocols and data collection methods to, in real time, identify girls at risk of not returning to school.

In the next phase, Room to Read began is implementing interventions jointly with government and NGO partners. In Bangladesh, Room to Read is providing the Government learning materials for the Ministry of Education's learning platform https://eduhub.gov.bd/all-partners/RoomtoReadcaae91a. This includes instruction videos, read-aloud videos, and animated TV episodes based on Room to Read's storybooks. In Cambodia, in coordination with the Ministry of Education and implementing partners, Room to Read is helping share video instruction and learning materials for students accessed by parents in online communities.

In coordination with government and NGO partners in Rwanda, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, Room to Read teams are recording instruction and education programming content for radio instruction including literacy instruction, story books read aloud, and tips for parents to support students' learning at home. The home recordings are shared with local radio stations for broadcast.

Teams are identifying existing and emerging supply chains to coordinate with food distribution and medical distribution chains, to add hard copy learning materials as part of the essential goods distributed to students. Room to Read's teams are exploring opportunities for government schools to take books out of libraries and make them available for distribution to students at home.; but identifying functioning supply chains for hard copy learning materials is still proving illusive in many countries.

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RTI

Addressing learning loss for children. A team at RTI is working on analyzing the likely learning loss for children in LMICs due to COVID-19. Using data from numerous Early Grade Ready Assessments, RTI will estimate the likely impact of school closures so ministries of education and their partners can design interventions to help students catch-up once schooling resumes and to inform revisions to expected targets for improved learning outcomes.
http://shared.rti.org/content/calculating-educational-impact-covid-19%C2%A0-closed-schools-lost-learning-unequal-impact
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Health

CARE

Supporting government for health system response during COVID-19: CARE continues to respond to COVID-19 and adapt programming to ensure that access to health services continues for the most marginalized and vulnerable communities, in addition to supporting their prevention against COVID-19. In India, CARE's Bihar Technical Support Program, a health systems project working across all 38 districts of Bihar state in India, has mobilized over 1500 staff to support the Government of Bihar in contact tracing, monitoring, infection control and systems strengthening, in response to COVID-19. CARE's efforts in Bihar and wider efforts across multiple states in India are reaching 104 million people. Check out the Bihar Technical Support Program's response to COVID-19 here to learn more about actions being taken at the policy, facility and community levels.

Women in communities leading COVID-19 response. "We have faced so many challenges that we have overcome. We're convinced that our collective determination will beat COVID too." (Hawa Guindo, Mali). As they have done for dozens of crises before COVID, women VSLA (village savings and loan association) members are providing solutions that keep themselves, their families, and their communities safe. Supporting 10.3 million VSLA members. VSLAs in 9 countries have already adapted what they're doing to respond to COVID, reaching more than 3.6 million members. Women in more countries are adapting their VSLAs every day to meet the challenge. CARE/**Mali,** for example, is putting women front and center of the response, helping VSLA women make videos that explain how to fight COVID and what VSLA groups need; and in Niger, CARE assisted VSLA groups to negotiate with private sector companies to get needed handwashing supplies.
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CGD

Priority-Setting for Better Health during the COVID-19 crisis: The international Decision Support Initiative. As the number of COIVD-19 cases continues to rise and developing country governments are faced with tough decisions and weak health systems, priority-setting can save lives. Watch the new video to learn more about CGD and the International Decision Support Initiative's (iDSI) work on priority-setting, capacity-building, and more.

Co-Impact

COVID-19, gender and country systems – lesson from the Ebola crisis. As was the case during the Ebola crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened gender-based inequalities around the world and brought the weaknesses of health and other public systems into sharp relief. Such moments of crisis exacerbate deep-seated structural discrimination, leaving women more vulnerable and less able to influence decision-making. With health, education, and economic systems coming to a halt, it is more difficult for women and girls to receive health care and access decent work opportunities, even as they are compelled to pick up a disproportionate share of unpaid care. Resources for reproductive and sexual health are often diverted to the emergency response, undermining women's ability to make decisions about their bodies and secure their wellbeing. Women are also at more risk due to intensified gender violence and have decreased access to services and protections.

Countries with relatively stronger systems, particularly those that are accessible and inclusive, are better positioned to respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19. Strong health systems with a robust community component are more likely to be able to prevent, detect, and treat, as well as ensure non-interruption of other priority health services. School systems that are designed to involve local communities, promote safe environments for teachers and students, and foster open communication are better equipped to weather the crisis. Similarly, social protection systems that are crucial for safeguarding the poor and vulnerable, can be expanded to disburse more or larger cash transfers to existing and other at-risk groups.

These observations and other lessons from the Ebola crisis highlight the importance of shoring up national systems and supporting them to be more gender inclusive. Strengthening existing systems that generally have the mandate, infrastructure, staffing and experience in place is likely to reach more people, be more effective and more sustainable – and strengthen country resilience to withstand the next crisis – than creating separate standalone projects. Incorporating gender analysis and gender-inclusive design in the responses to the pandemic, as well as promoting women in leadership positions, starting now instead of waiting for the crisis to be over, will help ensure that the needs, interests and talents of women are well represented and more likely to achieve gender-equitable outcomes at scale.

Note also this article co-authored by Olivia Leland and program partner Raj Panjabi: https://www.forbes.com/sites/coronavirusfrontlines/2020/04/30/lessons-from-ebola-its-not-enough-to-fight-one-disease-outbreakyou-have-to-build-systems-that-can-prevent-the-next-ones/#7a0018cf7d19

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CRS

Benin Digitization of Insecticide Treated Net Distribution – Adapting to COVID-19 at Scale. The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to erode the impacts of large-scale public health programs because limitations on mobility and interactions can impede the provision of vital health services.

In Benin, rapidly identifying and applying adaptations at scale enabled malaria prevention activities to reach over nine million people safely. With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has been working with the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) in Benin to digitize the Insecticide-Treated Nets (ITNs) through a mass distribution campaign. In the face of COVID-19, CRS and its partners rapidly adapted its

programming to enable digitization of the ITN distribution at scale, while maintaining physical distancing and other COVID-19 preventive measures.

The work began in late December 2019 with the pre-test ITN campaign to pilot the CRS Cash and Asset Transfer (CAT) Strategy for the distribution of 553,809 ITNs to 994,903 people in Benin. The lessons learned from the pre-test campaign in one health zone of the country were used to scale up the nationwide ITN campaign through which a total of 14,436,518 people living in 3,474,545 households were registered by household enumeration conducted in all departments of the country by 6,350 campaign staff.

The COVID-19 global pandemic has affected the way ITN distributions can occur. CRS worked with the NMCP to modify the approach from a fixed post distribution to "door to door', maintaining appropriate physical distancing. This allowed households to receive ITNs without gathering in groups at distribution points. Some trainings were virtualized while others were conducted in classrooms with small numbers of persons per class, with distancing, well-ventilated rooms, and other COVID-19 preventive measures strictly enforced. For further learning outside of the classroom, video training sessions were developed for participants.

The digital mapping dashboard and CAT platform enables NMCP local managers to remotely supervise ITN distributions, and virtual daily review meetings are conducted to trouble shoot problems. Satellite imagery mapping of every building in Benin enables the program to pinpoint which households have or have not received ITNs. With geographic data, CRS set up a simple, user friendly dashboard that enables Ministry of Health supervisors and other stakeholders to easily track distribution and ensure complete coverage.

In the first 4 days of the campaign, the following results were achieved:

- 5,208,285 ITNs were distributed to 9,242,527 people in 2,071,849 households.
- 17,295 campaign personnel were trained and deployed under COVID-19 precautionary measures to execute ITN distributions.

Automated messages (SMS and voice) were sent to households to reinforce malaria prevention communication and explain how to hang, use, and care for the ITNs.

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E2A

Addressing mobility and logistical constraints under COVID-19. It's clear that a key challenge presented by COVID-19 is loss of mobility. Even before this novel coronavirus outbreak, scale-up approaches like adaptive management were frequently hobbled by logistic barriers to the collection of data, and by the centralization of the data analysis, managers needed to be nimble decision-makers. COVID-19 is forcing changes in these systems, sometimes for the better. To illustrate the potential upside of decentralized adaptive management, read about a technique used by the Evidence to Action (E2A) Project and Syntegral in Niger—to translate and scale up the University Leadership for Change program—by sharing responsibility for sense-making with the frontline, where contextual experience is invaluable, as it will be to scaling up COVID-19 solutions. Blog: Perceptions matter. And COVID-19 reminds adaptive managers that frontline perceptions may matter the most.
Brief: Pioneering Tools for Adapting Family Planning and Reproductive Health Interventions in Complex, Dynamic Environments
Report: University Leadership for Change: Adapting and Scaling to the Community Level
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EvidenceAction

Evidence Action seeks to leverage its existing resources and relationships to support communities in their response to COVID-19.

Dispensers for safe water. EvidenceAction's Dispensers for Safe Water program provides sustained access to safe water for approximately 4 million people across rural Kenya, Uganda, and Malawi. The water is provided through chlorine dispensers installed at local water points and serviced by a last-mile supply chain – a strong, nimble transport network that reaches over 16,500 villages, plus over 54,000 volunteer promoters nominated by their community and trained to promote dispenser use.

COVID threatens major disruptions of life-saving services, including clean water. Recognizing this, EvidenceAction teams rapidly mobilized to ensure an uninterrupted supply of clean water, rapidly adapting their transport network to deliver three months' worth of their usual deliveries in two weeks. They sought to creatively adapt the model – developing and printing stickers with hygiene messages and illustrations to be placed on dispensers so that individuals can see them while fetching water, hence minimizing the need for direct contact with households. In addition, going forward, most household data collection will be collected through phone-based surveys rather than conducted in person.

With the supplies secured to safeguard clean water access to millions, EvidenceAction is now focused on leveraging its network to boost support to these communities in as many ways as possible. They have commenced a multi-pronged approach to support a) frequent handwashing with soap, b) frequent disinfection of commonly used surfaces, and c) rapid recovery of dispensers in anticipation of issues such as increased breakages, chlorine shortages, and behavioral lapses.

Deworming interventions. In India, EvidenceAction's work involves supporting governments to deliver high-impact, cost-effective health interventions at scale. Through Evidence Action's Deworm the World Initiative, they support the Government of India to reach over 250 million children each year through National Deworming Day and provide customized support in 11 states. They also provide technical assistance to the country's Weekly Iron and Folic Supplementation (WIFS) program. These government-led programs demonstrably improve health and education outcomes for hundreds of millions of children across the country.

With National Deworming Day and WIFS temporarily on hold due to the pandemic, their team in India stands willing and ready to assist its government partners where EvidenceAction's people and expertise can be of use in planning for and mitigating COVID-related challenges. They are currently working in five states—Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Tripura, Haryana, and Jharkhand—and expect to support more in the coming month with social media content and design, mass SMSes, tele-calling, data analysis and dashboards, and communications to health workers and people in quarantine. Learn more about this in the blogs below:

Global Response: https://www.evidenceaction.org/our-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic/

Safe water and hygiene: https://www.evidenceaction.org/now-more-than-ever-safe-water-and-safe-hygiene-practices-are-essential/

And stay tuned for an upcoming blog post on how Deworm the World is supporting COVID response and adapting its platform to maintain its scale.

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Rockefeller Foundation

A national Covid-19 Testing Action Plan for the US: This plan outlines how to scale up testing in the United States and reopen the country's workplaces and communities in a safer way. It involves three key objectives: increasing testing production and supplies; establishing a Covid Community Healthcare Corps; and creating a data commons and a digital platform to support the first two objectives. See https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/national-covid-19-testing-action-plan/?utm_source=Rockefeller+Foundation+eAlerts&utm_campaign=6bec7099e5-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_APR_COVID19_ACTION_RESEND&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6138ee88b7-6bec7099e5-215672613&goal=0_6138ee88b7-6bec7099e5-215672613&mc_cid=6bec7099e5&mc_eid=8947e62ca9

Save the Children

Lessons from Ebola. Save the Children UK's Samy Ahmar reflects on how DRC handled the deadly Ebola epidemic and highlights examples that may be useful for the COVID-19 response.
- Working across the "service chain."
- Testing and contact tracing.
- Equitable access to care, protection, and vaccines.
- Decentralization.

Scaling up vaccine development

The path to a COVID-19 vaccine. Governments can't be hoping for a vaccine without actually funding its development and deployment across the world. Ahead of the EU pledging conference for a COVID-19 vaccine, this op-ed by Friederike Röder of Global Citizen in Europe discusses what is at stake and what can be done.

Social Enterprises

Social Enterprises Working Group of the Scaling Up CoP

The Social Enterprises Scaling Up Working Group responds to the COVID-19 crisis. The Working Group hosted a lively COVID-19 virtual roundtable discussion on April 17 that highlighted innovative actions being taken to support Social Enterprises (SE) and their clients during these challenging times. It heard about SE COVID responses from SEWA, Alfanar, Endeva and also learned about following initiatives:
- Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship developed a webpage with resources to assist SEs to be more resilient during COVID 19
- Duke University's Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship will be posting interviews with social entrepreneurs on how they scale in the face of disruptions. Interviews will be available here in the coming weeks
- Global Innovation Exchange (GIE) built a COVID-19 Innovation Hub showcasing initiatives in 12 areas including humanitarian assistance, community connections, and workforce support

- The Maker Mask initiative provides an open source 3D printable mask to enable communities to create respiratory masks locally and quickly
- iBAN has set up a special COVID-19 section on their platform featuring in-field, practical insights. The objective is to bring practical COVID-19- related insights to the attention of its global audience of inclusive business practitioners
- The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and partners are hosting a global hackathon that will match COVID challenges and solutions providers to leverage finance for the roll out of responses to COVID-19 crises.

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Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship (CASE)

Scaling Through Mass Disruption from *Scaling Pathways*. How do social enterprises and the funders that support them achieve impact at scale even in times of crisis, such as outbreak of war or disease? In light of the mass disruption caused by COVID-19, CASE at Duke is working with its Scaling Pathways partners on a new video interview series called *Scaling Through Mass Disruption*, which captures how social enterprises are adapting, pivoting, managing finances, engaging teams, and so much more in times of crisis. The social enterprises interviewed share advice and insights that are not only relevant for the present situation, but also help identify trends and lessons learned that can prepare organizations for inevitable future crises and disruptions. Keep checking back as they add more interviews, shorter clips on critical topics, and brief write-ups. Questions? Email CASE@fuqua.duke.edu. *Scaling Pathways is a partnership between the Skoll Foundation, USAID, Mercy Corps Ventures, and CASE at Duke to curate and share scaling insights from the world's leading social entrepreneurs. See more at ScalingPathways.com.*

COVIDCAP.com – helping social entrepreneurs meeting cash needs during the crisis: On March 26, 2020, CASE and CASE i3 at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business launched a searchable website to help any entrepreneur in the world, for-profit or nonprofit, struggling due to the economic impacts of COVID-19, to locate cash relief resources in their community. As of April 22, 2020, covidcap.com listed over 500 regional, national and global capital relief offers launched in the prior few weeks and worth over $710 billion. www.COVIDCAP.com is for any small business, nonprofit, enterprise, b-corporation, social entrepreneur or entrepreneur. It includes grants, loans and other cash equivalents, like tax rebates or reduced fees. The site does not include resources for individuals, governments, etc. The list includes regional resources (in part of a country), national resources (in one country), and global resources (in more than one country) that are or were available around the world.

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Stanford Social Innovation Review (SSIR)

How should the social sector respond to the evolving COVID-19 crisis? In this series, *SSIR* will present insight from social change leaders around the globe to help organizations face the systemic, operational, and strategic challenges that will test the limits of their capabilities. It addresses questions such as: How will nonprofits, foundations, philanthropic organizations, and social justice advocates emerge from the pandemic? What unique insight and capabilities can civil society bring to bear on the problems the world now faces? How will organizations manage potentially calamitous challenges to funding their operations?

Social Protection

CGD

Using What You Have to Scale up Payments for COVID Response: Early Indications from South Asia. Effective social assistance during this crisis hinges on countries' abilities to scale up spending and quickly provide resources to their most vulnerable populations. In a new post, Alan Gelb and Anit Mukherjee look at how investing in digital capacity in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh has helped scale up social protection.

https://www.cgdev.org/blog/using-what-you-have-scale-payments-covid-response-early-indications-south-asia?utm_source=200428&utm_medium=cgd_email&utm_campaign=cgd_weekly

Youth

Youth at Work

Youth At Work is a global Community of Learning (CoL) launched in late 2019 through a partnership between MSI, USAID, the World Bank, World Learning, and Rice University. The goal of this COL is to engage a group of practitioners, policy experts, and strategic thinkers through a series of thought-leadership events aiming at sharing and advancing knowledge, best practices, and lessons-learned about scaling up youth employment interventions globally – a goal that takes on special meaning during and post COVID-19.

The CoL held its first thought-leadership conference in late 2019 to discuss the respective roles of the private sector, host governments, and non-formal institutions in scaling up youth employment programs. A fourth cross-cutting theme on data and evidence was also discussed at length during that event. A link to the document that capture the knowledge shared during the first event can be found here: Youth at Work Learning Series #1 (link expires October 31, 2020; Password: YouthLearningSeries).

The CoL planned four follow-on learning series events during 2020 to discuss in depth each of the four themes identified during the kick-off meeting as key pillars for scaling up youth employment programs. However, and given the significant impact of COVID-19 on youth unemployment globally, the CoL's partners decided to shift the discussion of the next event to focus on scaling up youth employment programs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dramatic increases in already-high levels of youth unemployment in the aftermath of COVID-19, compounded by the effects of current lockdowns, are widely recognized as potentially destabilizing factors, especially in fragile states. Youth unemployment in some countries has already reached 50-60% underscoring the need for solutions that can be implemented rapidly and at scale. Many youth employment programs are turning into "cash-for-work" interventions to

meet such challenges, however they are struggling to reach marginalized youth operating in the informal sector. Donors, private sector employers, and host governments are examining digital banking solutions at scale to meet these urgent needs for cash transfer in order to put youth to work, but most of these schemes are handicapped by the limited digital banking infrastructure in many developing countries. Similarly, efforts to make greater use of distance learning to help out-of-work youth acquire skills to meet the growing needs of emerging local supply chains confront inherited challenges that constrain the ability of distance learning programs to scale up rapidly and to reach the most affected populations.

Given these complexities around youth employment program during and after COVID-19, the CoL plans to hold a virtual conference in early June to discuss how stakeholders including donors, host governments, private employers, and NGOs can form effective partnerships to meet this complex problem at scale.

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World Learning

Supporting youth employment during COVID-19. In Algeria, World Learning is implementing the Algeria Entrepreneurship & Employment Project with MEPI/State Department funding. The project provides demand-driven training for youth employment, focused support to accelerate the growth of SMEs in priority non-petroleum sectors, and incubation of youth-led B2B enterprises that will help SMEs resolve bottlenecks to growth. In the wake of the COVID-19 closures, the project is making immediate adjustments to its project activities, and also looking at how to pivot the project to support the overall economic outlook for Algeria. It is refocusing its market-driven approach to focus on industry sectors and sub-sectors of most likely employment resilience, including recognition of the increased demand for products such as nonwoven plastics as well as increased importance of building digital skills, while also adapting to connectivity challenges in Algeria and work with more marginalized populations. It is also transforming its business growth acceleration workshops into formats that are accessible to target companies, including email-based distance learning modalities.

The program is recalibrating its approach to focus on business survival and employment retention in the first instance, and incorporating new occupational safety trainings on how to accomplish social distancing in an industry setting, to support industry partners in being able to safely stay open, while at the same time creating a focused corps of young people trained in an essential new area of expertise.

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Special Features

The Education Scaling-Up Education Working Group: Report on a Meeting

The Education Working Group hosted a webinar on April 9, 2020, to discuss how members are continuing (or exploring how to continue) learning opportunities in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and more specifically to:

- Discuss immediate and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on children's education.
- Share information about current education efforts underway in response to COVID-19 crisis and where the education community can learn from other efforts.
- Explore where the Education Working Group can contribute and add value, in the short- and long-term.

Speakers included Molly Curtiss (Senior Research Analyst, Center for Universal Education with Brookings), Rebecca Winthrop (Senior Fellow and Co-Director of the Center for Universal Education with Brookings) and Mary Burns (Senior Learning Technologist with EDC). Discussion began with a review of the likely short- and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on the education sector, including interruptions to learning, child protection risks, spillover effects of economic hardships on families, and decreased funding for the education sector.

The application of core programming principles in Education in Emergency responses, such as 'do no harm' and 'building back better', to the COVID-19 education sector response was also a key focus. It was noted that, in a post-COVID 19 world, there may be greater appetite for experimentation and adaptation to 21st century realities. In essence, this enacts an EiE (Engineering is Elementary) principle to create an emergency response with a development vision.

Working Group members also discussed at length the use of education technology to mitigate the detrimental effects of COVID-19 on student achievement and wellbeing, and the varying effectiveness of different platforms such as phones and Interactive radio Instruction.

The challenge of implementing and scaling effective distance education strategies, creating compensatory/remedial education models to make up for lost instructional time in particular for disadvantaged students, and providing the support teachers and parents need during this time remains a key discussion topic for the Working Group. A full recording of the webinar can be found here: https://msiworldwide.egnyte.com/dl/ZJb1m3aRfb (link expires October 1, 2020; password: EducationWebinar).

Non-Exhaustive List of Resources:

UNESCO tracking impact on education & compiling national education plans and policies: https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse; https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/

Global Education Cluster compiling global, regional, country-level resources: https://educationcluster.app.box.com/s/b15ifcny1wh0v6kujujfk8csh5o783xa

UNICEF issued IASC guidance with WHO and IFRC on COVID-19 prevention & control in schools: https://educationcluster.app.box.com/s/qgyxvghxv4mhluy790h6s9jf6ek1q9l4

World Bank tracking impact on education and compiling key resources: https://www.worldbank.org/en/data/interactive/2020/03/24/world-bank-education-and-covid-19

Harvard & OECD developing decision-making framework to guide education decision-makers to develop & implement effective responses
 Global Business Coalition for Education compiling resources & tools from ~75 global companies: https://bit.ly/2x9dUuc
Education Alliance compiling landscape reviews and other resources: https://www.meducationalliance.org/?page_id=59
Ed Tech Hub sharing open educational resources: https://edtechhub.org/oer/
HundrED & OECD publishing curated list of resources and webinars to train educators: https://hundred.org/en/collections/quality-education-for-all-during-coronavirus
Innovation Edge sharing parenting resources: https://innovationedge.org.za/parenting-resources/

Strengthening Family Planning under COVID-19 in Nigeria: ExpandNet Discussion with Dr. Sada Danmusa

In Nigeria, ExpandNet is collaborating with the Technical Support Unit (TSU) project led by Dr. Sada Danmusa who leads an NGO called Development Outcomes and Support Center (DOS.Center). A key focus of this ambitious project is to strengthen the family planning (FP) capacity of state government leaders to take ownership and more effectively implement the country's family planning program. The project uses various mechanisms to strengthen these leaders' capacity to use data to set priorities, manage implementation, and adapt innovations and best practices for continuous improvement of family planning outcomes. One of those mechanisms, the Transparency, Advocacy and Capacity Building (TRAC) platform supports quarterly meetings to build the skills of state leaders from the various geo-political zones in Nigeria to use data for decision making and disparity analysis in family planning performance. These efforts, combined with other interventions at the federal and state level, have generated new commitments to improve family planning and reproductive health outcomes.

In the current phase, the project has worked in the Northwest and Southwest zones of Nigeria. Over the next three years, the plan is to scale up the TRAC platform to cover the remaining four geopolitical zones of Nigeria, and thereby all states in the country.

The COVID-19 epidemic in Nigeria, however, challenges Dr. Sada and his NGO to continue to progress. Below are his responses to five questions the ExpandNet Secretariat team asked him about how he expects to deal with the crisis (the interview was edited for space and clarity by both Dr. Sada and the ExpandNet Secretariat):

ExpandNet: *Will you be able to continue the TRAC meetings during the COVID-19 epidemic in Nigeria?*

Dr. Sada: Within the larger goal of ensuring government ownership, we see the COVID-19 situation as a further opportunity to challenge the government folks to demonstrate their leadership abilities and provide direction for their states. We started discussions at both national and state levels towards this new normal and have so far agreed on a comprehensive shift on how states will continue to lead these processes and other program activities. These include the following:

- Hold TRAC meetings remotely: The project will support state leaders to continue to lead TRAC meetings online during the lock-down period. We have discussed with the states how we might support them to hold these online meetings. Training is needed on how to interact

online, how to host meetings, how do you move into group work, how do you move into plenary session. We have discussed this with our IT person and will be holding these trainings for the TRAC members as we move forward. If remote meetings work well, we will continue online meetings after the crisis is over. It will greatly reduce the cost and time for travel, which has been a big challenge for top leaders.

- Revamp pre-meeting preparations and planning: Since online meetings can only be held for a short period of time (as against physical meetings), we will support states to make adequate preparations to hold short, targeted and effective meetings. In that vein, we have created WhatsApp groups to hold timely and iterative planning preparations, which would include sharing of documents, data and plans.
- Move to sharing and using electronic documents, rather than hardcopy documents which they are more used to.

As facilitators, we will continue to provide technical assistance in data review and quality assessment and will provide key questions and guidance for disparity analysis and discussions.

ExpandNet: *How will you address the COVID-19 crisis in the TRAC meetings?*

Dr. Sada: As our major focus is enhancing government capacity for leadership, most of the initiatives and mechanisms we employ are transferable across programs and issues. A key example is our focus on building capacity for evidence-based decision-making. Presently, leaders draw data specific to their states from the national health information system (NHIMS), review such data for quality, and analyze it to bring out what it is saying about the program. This forms the basis for decision-making and planning.

The response to the COVID-19 epidemic clearly requires real-time data analysis and decision-making, the skills we seek to strengthen among the leaders. Going forward, we will add Local Government Area (LGA) analysis of COVID-19 data through the TRAC communication channels, thereby providing more nuanced understanding on how the virus and the response to it are evolving at these lower levels. We recognize of course that in comparison with family planning there remain many unknowns about COVID-19 that will have to be addressed as the crisis evolves. However, having this lower level data visibility is critical to quickly responding to the epidemic and addressing it within the overall health system context.

ExpandNet: *What other adaptations do you plan to make to cope with the COVID-19 crisis?*

Dr. Sada: We look at this in the context of building capacity of governments to continue their role of coordination and delivery of health services. Therefore, we are holding brainstorming sessions with government officials to develop context-specific plans to ensure continuation of service delivery. So far, we have:

- Started building capacity of government officials on information technology (IT) to be able to work remotely. We see them beginning to appreciate the need for an institutional shift towards electronic governance, which the government had already been discussing before this pandemic. It is important to note that this new normal will require a big paradigm shift of government institutions to embrace electronic governance along the whole chain from the national level to the level of LGAs. We will support as many as possible of the state governments participating in the TRACs to make this shift.
- Supporting government to search for targeted solutions to ensure services reach communities within and beyond the lockdown periods. Our main focus is working with the states within the TRACs to strengthen devolution of tasks to lower-level providers and other community channels by encouraging expanded implementation of the health provider task-shifting policy

from higher to lower level cadres. This will be especially important now for family planning because higher level providers will be needed to combat COVID-19.

- In addition, we are implementing decisions reached by the national committee on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services in response to the COVID-19 situation which are focused on ensuring that SRH services continue. For instance, there is a need for strong advocacy to get local authorities to allow proprietary patent medical vendors (PPMVs) to stock some contraceptives.

ExpandNet: *Contraceptive supply stockouts were already a major issue in Nigeria. How do you think COVID-19 will affect the FP medical supplies system? Will there be contraceptive medicines and supplies available to provide FP services.*

Dr. Sada: The TSU is working through its participation on the national Procurement, Supply and Management Committee to ensure states are fully involved in decisions related to supplies from the national level. Overall, we envisage that the COVID situation is an opportunity to facilitate progress in decentralizing procurement and distribution of commodities, which are currently centralized at the national level.

ExpandNet: *You are working within the principles of government ownership and capacity building which are so central to scaling up. Other key lessons about scale up that are centrally related to what you are doing, are: 1) Keep the innovation simple; and 2) Avoid overly rapid pace of scaling up. By seeking to address the COVID-19 pandemic in addition to family planning, you are adding to the complexity of the TRAC innovation. Moreover, by seeking to scale up from the NW and SW zones of Nigeria to the entire country in the period of 3 years you are moving relatively fast. Please discuss what appears to be a contrast between key scale-up lessons we have learned and your plans for expanding the innovation and reaching national scale with a relatively rapid pace.*

Dr. Sada: We view this issue at two levels:

1. Even though we focus on FP, the whole TRAC process is based upon the basic foundation for scale-up – capacity for evidence-based decision-making, adoption of best practices and innovations, direction and strategy setting etc. - rather than the detailed scale-up of individual interventions. Therefore, we anticipate that this is going to be a replicative scale-up of a mechanism about which we already have good lessons learned from the initial two TRAC zonal platforms.

2. In terms of scale up of specific programs (i.e. from FP alone to FP + Covid-19), we believe that even though this type of scale-up presents risks when done speedily, we already have an existing, expandable mechanism that can adapt to absorb as many programs as the leaders have responsibility for. Certainly Covid-19 is a new situation and there are a lot of 'unknowns'. However, we also feel a crisis at such a scale as the COVID-19 will change how the whole system operates, including the way the system scales up interventions. Consequently, we view adding Covid-19 to the current TRAC process as an opportunity to further test and adapt the overall health system and its supportive structures.

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Ahlan Simsim: Pivoting ECD and Caregiver Support in Response to COVID-19 in Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Sesame Workshop have teamed up to create **Ahlan Simsim** ("Welcome Sesame" in Arabic), a program that delivers critical early learning and nurturing care to children and caregivers affected by displacement in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Through in-person direct services across the region a new, local version of *Sesame Street*, Ahlan Simsim reaches displaced and host community families wherever they are—from classrooms and health clinics to TV and mobile devices—with the vital early childhood development (ECD) resources they need in order to thrive. Fueled by a groundbreaking $100 million grant from the MacArthur Foundation and additional support from the LEGO Foundation, Ahlan Simsim is also elevating awareness, engaging policymakers, spearheading research, and increasing investment in ECD in crisis settings.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, further destabilizing the vulnerable communities Ahlan Simsim serves, the team has adapted engagement modalities and content packages to continue to reach children and caregivers during this time when in-person activities are not possible. ECD materials originally designed for use through in-person programming have been adapted for digital dissemination. Our programs focus on disseminating key messages addressing COVID-19 prevention, caregiver and child wellbeing, and the importance of ECD, and play-based age-appropriate activities caregivers can use to engage their children in the home to promote healthy early development. Descriptions of each activity are provided to caregivers via a voice note (in local dialect) on WhatsApp guiding caregivers through simple activities supporting language skills, social-emotional learning, hygiene and physical movement.

At end of March, the Ahlan Simsim team conducted a rapid test of content packages with 200 caregivers across Iraq, Lebanon and Northeast and Northwest Syria, further adapting the content and delivery in response. IRC's Ahlan Simsim teams began disseminating adapted content to caregivers in mid-April and the next stage of this program adaptation will see roll out of the a mass message distribution application, allowing users to select which content they would like to receive and enabling two-way communication so that chat bots or Ahlan Simsim facilitators can easily respond to caregiver questions. Discussions are on-going in the different countries with key ministries and local CSO who are interested in sharing these messages through their existing channels.

Additionally, the Ahlan Simsim team is coordinating across IRC sectors (Health, Child Protection, Women's Empowerment) to embed ECD messages within communication and materials disseminated via other sectors' distribution systems. This approach is aligned with the cross-sectoral nature of ECD and, as with Ahlan Simsim's in-person programming, meets children and caregivers wherever they access services or information.

Click here for the full report on the Ahlan Simsim COVID-19 program adaptation.

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Nourishing Africa: A Program of Outreach on COVID-19 Crisis Impact and Solutions

At the beginning of this month, Sahel Consulting through its NourishingAfrica.com initiative created a series of weekly Covid-19 webinars focused on the effects of the pandemic on the African agriculture and food landscape. These webinars have brought in leading voices from across the Continent and beyond to share critical insights on how African governments and the international development community can support the agriculture and food ecosystem during this period, as well as how joint stakeholder efforts can help to build a resilient food system against future shocks in Africa. They have also provided very practical insights from the entrepreneurs in our ecosystem. They also partnered with the Inclusive Business Network (iBAN), SAFIN, and African Family Firms on the various webinars to ensure insights and experiences and to reach a wider audience. Click on the links below to listen to the recorded audio of the webinars.

https://nourishingafrica.com/podcast/covid-19-and-the-food-sector-building-a-resilient-food-system-in-africa/
https://nourishingafrica.com/podcast/covid-19-leveraging-innovation-and-technology-to-avert-a-looming-food-crisis-in-africa/
https://nourishingafrica.com/podcast/covid-19-building-resilient-and-inclusive-agribusiness-models-in-africa/

Sahel Capital Agribusiness Managers also launched a COVID-19 webinar series featuring business leaders to share practical guidelines on how business owners can build resilient businesses in the midst of a crisis, with specific focus on the food and agriculture sector. On Tuesday 28th April, they will be discussing how agribusiness owners and managers can navigate workforce management during these times. Register to attend: https://sahelcp.com/workforce/, and listen to the recorded audio of their previous webinars by clicking on this link: https://sahelcp.com/growing-your-business-in-a-crisis.

The Sahel Scholars Conference is a component of the annual Sahel Scholars Programme (SASP) introduced by Sahel Consulting Agriculture and Nutrition Limited and Sahel Capital Agribusiness Managers Limited in 2017 with the aim to empower outstanding Nigerian students through conferences, internships, mentorship and scholarships. Every year, Sahel organizes conferences across selected universities in Nigeria and engages scholars to participate in a four-week internship, providing scholarship support for their final year of study. Given the current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, they will host the Sahel Scholars Conference online this year on 6th May 2020 on the conference theme: 'Leveraging Innovation and Technology to Enhance Food Security in Post COVID Nigeria'. (https://sahelconsult.com/ssc-2020/)

Nourishing Africa, a virtual home for entrepreneurs transforming the agriculture and food landscape across Africa, has created a 'COVID-19' page on its hub dedicated to sharing insights and experiences from entrepreneurs across Africa focusing on how their businesses are affected and the support they need. This is coupled with a 'movement' they have started on social media platforms celebrating heroic entrepreneurs who are still operating in this period, braving the odds to put food on all our tables while taking necessary precautions. (https://nourishingafrica.com/covid-19)

Nourishing Africa has also created a weekly newsletter that features agri-food actors across Africa, chronicling the impact of the pandemic on their activities. The newsletter also spotlights emerging stakeholder initiatives to support the sector at this critical time. You can sign up to receive this newsletter on The Nourishing Africa Hub.

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The Scaling up Community of Practice and Its Working Groups

The Scaling Up Community of Practice was set up five years ago. Its purpose is to provide a platform for knowledge exchange among experts and practitioners on approaches to scaling up development interventions, for developing partnerships, and for championing the idea that scaling up development impact is critical for achieving global development aspirations, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change aspirations. Currently, eight working groups actively operate under the umbrella of the Scaling Up Community of Practice. Recent activities by working groups in response to the COVID-19 crisis are reported as part of the sectoral and thematic sections of this Newsletter. For more information on the agenda of each working group and on how to join and contribute to a working group, please contact the respective chairperson(s) or reach out directly to Larry (LCooley@msi-inc.com) or Johannes (jlinn@brookings.edu) who founded and co-chair the Community of Practice.

Working group topic and coordinators

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