Paths to Scaling-up through Replication:
An Educational Perspective

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Abstract

Replication is found to be an essential approach to consider when scaling-up. This dissertation argues that while there is no one universally applicable path through which to achieve success, more can be done to support educational non-government organisations in choosing the best path to follow. This path is found to depend on the specific, individual circumstances and the context within which it operates. With the aid of diagrams, four known paths to replication are dissected to explore their advantages and disadvantages in the light of current development thinking. A definition and an exemplar for each are also provided. As a result of this discussion the importance of introducing a new path is highlighted, and the term 'Network replication' is coined. A further outcome is the notion of a Portfolio of replicable concepts which is introduced alongside arguments for its potential application for the wider development sector. The Portfolio criteria are then applied to one specific initiative, which is then used to illustrate how an organisation might choose which path is most likely to bring them scaling-up success. By introducing these new themes to the scaling-up debate, this dissertation brings the discourse forward and indicates a number of avenues for future research.

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How is replication best achieved by educational NGOs seeking scaling-up success?

Rationale

Since the non-government organisation (NGO) boom of the 1980s, NGOs have sought ways to increase or scale-up their impact (Mitlin et al, 2006). As NGOs have continued to grow in size, number and influence over the last thirty years, their traditional roles have also changed, with increasing expectations including calls for accountability, transparency and cost effectiveness. Where expectations were originally of an NGO community in its infancy, by 2004 NGOs accounted for around one third of all overseas development aid, with approximately US$23 billion of aid money being delivered through them (Lewis and Kanji, 2009). However, as of 2001, NGOs were only estimated to be benefiting 20% of poor people in the developing world (Reed, 2001). With such considerable international investment, their relatively small current reach and the increasing reliance on NGOs to deliver development assistance, the need to scale-up their impact has never been more significant.

While a number of paths are available for an NGO to scale-up their impact, this dissertation will concentrate on replication, a form of quantitative scaling-up or scaling-out geographically to reach a greater number of beneficiaries (Hartmann and Linn, 2008). The theory is discussed in Part 1, with a presentation of the background in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth, up-to-date discussion of the different paths for replication, with explanatory diagrams, definitions and a current educational example for each. Part 2 will apply this theory to practice, with Chapter 3 detailing the idea of implementing a Portfolio of replicable concepts. Chapter 4 will apply the Portfolio criteria to a specific educational NGO and will discuss which replication strategy might best help it achieve scaling-up success. It was personal involvement in establishing this NGO that inspired this dissertation. Having scaled-up intuitively using a number of approaches, a search through the literature for guidance on replication found that a detailed debate has not emerged since RPS (1994). Further to this, a literature review by Hartmann and Linn (2008) revealed that literature is particularly limited for education. In view of the renewed interest in scaling-up to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015, this was recognised as an opportune time to both revisit the subject and provide an educational perspective. This dissertation will therefore not only provide theory, but also insights in to how replication might be applied in practice to answer the question, 'How is replication best achieved by educational NGOs seeking scaling-up success?'

Part I – Background to the discussion

Chapter 1 presents the theory and background to the discourse, outlining the focus on educational NGOs and replication. Chapter 2 then debates the paths through which scaling-up success might be achieved.

1. Background to the discussion

1.1. Educational NGOs

This dissertation will focus specifically on educational NGOs which includes any not-for-profit local (LNGO) or international (INGO) non-government organisations seeking social, economic or political development, or positive change. This will also include community-based and grassroots support organisations. This section will seek to better understand their role in the development sector, and will draw heavily on the recent, comprehensive research presented by Lewis and Kanji (2009). While the diversity of NGOs cannot be overemphasised, their two typical roles are the delivery of basic services, and advocacy and campaigns for change. To this end, they can act as implementers, catalysts and partners in development. It is important to note that while the NGOs referred to in this dissertation primarily specialise in education, they might be simultaneously involved in a number of fields.

The exponential growth of the NGO sector over the past thirty years has been largely due to donors and governments seeking more flexible and participatory alternatives to project-based and government-to-government aid. The main comparative advantage of NGOs over governments is often cited as their proximity to local people and ability to reach those bypassed by existing services. Other advantages include the flexibility to innovate and experiment with new approaches, the ability to operate at lower costs due to voluntary input, and the freedom to target specific groups and promote new agendas including empowerment, gender and participation. However, these same attributes have also provoked the criticism that NGOs can undermine government provision and even that of more radical politicised change agents such as social movements. They have also been criticised for their lack of accountability, for imposing their own agendas and becoming self-interested, for lack of coordination and duplication of efforts, and the overall need to be more effective. While many of these criticisms result from generalisations and are ungrounded for many NGOs, it is essential to take them into account if the sector is really going to effect change. While this dissertation will explicitly address the need to be more effective, other benefits and criticisms will also be addressed.

1.2. Scaling-up

The term scaling-up can cause confusion as it is used to describe a wide range of processes for increasing impact, which are themselves defined in a variety of ways (Menter et al, 2004). In this dissertation scaling-up is taken to mean, "...expanding, adapting and sustaining successful policies, programs or projects in different places and over time to reach a greater number of people" (Hartmann and Linn, 2008, p.7). The inability to scale-up existing knowledge and experience has been cited by a range of scholars, practitioners, researchers, donors and policy-makers as a major barrier to overcoming many of the worlds social problems. Proven initiatives often remain undeveloped while precious energy and resources are absorbed in the process of 'reinventing the wheel', rather than 'reusing' it, or learning from the process of inventing it (Fleisch et al, 2008). As scaling-up implies providing a greater distribution of benefits over a wider range of beneficiaries, it can also be seen to increase equity and fairness (Gonsalves, 2001; CORE, 2005). The ability to scale-up successfully and sustainably is said to be an efficient and cost-effective way to increase development impact while promoting effectiveness (Hartmann and Linn, 2008, Fleisch et al, 2008). By considering and experimenting with a range of scaling-up strategies, NGOs, often of a local and transitory nature, might also become more effective at national and international levels (Edwards and Hulme, 1992; Sahley, 1999). As Hartmann and Linn (2007, p.1) found, NGOs are, "...all too often like small pebbles thrown into a big pond: they are limited in scale, short-lived, and therefore have little lasting impact." Scaling-up also helps NGOs become more than just 'islands of excellence' (Uvin et al, 2000).

While scaling-up has been seen as an obligation of successful initiatives while social needs remain high (Fleisch et al, 2008) it is important to understand that not all policies, programs or projects can or should be scaled-up. This decision is the first in any scaling-up process, and should not be undertaken lightly, or be unduly influenced by internal staff and leadership or external donors, interest groups or practitioners (Gonsalves, 2001; Uvin et al, 2000). While promising initiatives do exist which could be scaled-up to achieve development goals such as the MDGs, they must be carefully selected (Sachs, 2005). Once an initiative is judged as a good candidate for scaling-up, careful consideration should then be taken as to which strategy to use to achieve it. This choice must consider the individual NGO's circumstances, organisational capacity, culture, and the context it will operate in (Josiah, 2001; Edwards and Hulme, 1992). While a variety of paths exist, they should not be considered as discrete bordered categories, and it can be in a NGO's best interest to pursue several paths simultaneously (Samoff et al, 2005). A number of taxonomies exist to show the different paths an NGO might use to scale-up. I have used the most recent of these by Hartmann and Linn (2008) to create Figure 1.1, positioning replication as one option.

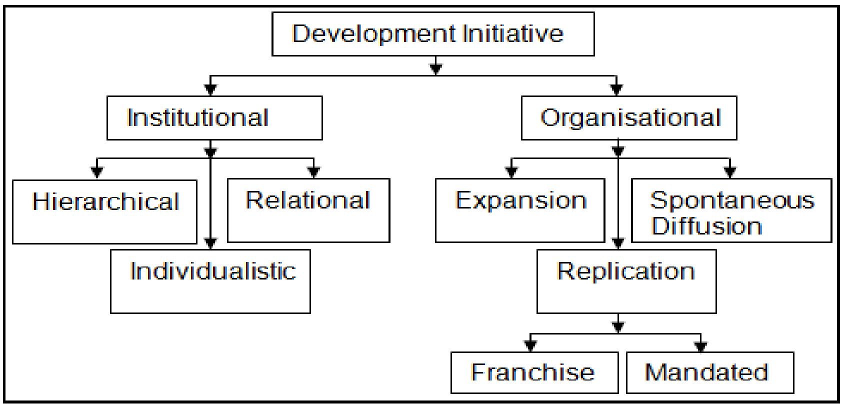

Figure 1.1. Paths to scaling-up

Interestingly, although this review was carried out after RPS (1994), it only provides two paths though which replication can be achieved. By adding the paths suggested by the earlier research two more paths emerge and it is upon these four, as shown in Figure 1.2, that this dissertation will be based.

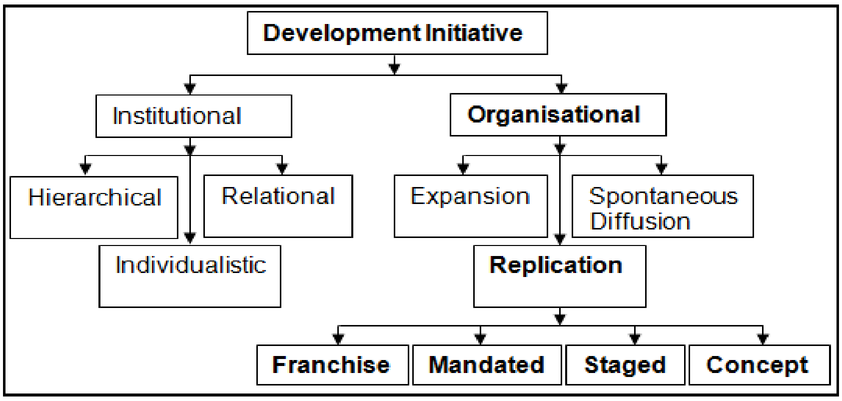

Figure 1.2. Paths to scaling-up and replication

1.3. Replication

As the term replication is often used in tandem with scaling-up, it is important to recognise that the concepts are different, and that the former is but one means of achieving the latter (Creech, 2008). While there is no agreement on these terms (Simmons et al, 2007), the definition of replication used throughout this dissertation is,

> "...the process of moving a tested prototype program to additional sites in keeping with the hard (invariable) and soft (variable) aspects of that particular program's components while remaining sensitive to the local context of each additional site" (RPS, 1994, p.1).

The essence of this definition is in recognising that an initiative will have certain essential or 'invariable' aspects, and other more flexible 'variable' aspects which can be tailored to specific contexts. The extent to which any variable aspects are adopted changes from case to case, and is influenced by which path is chosen for replication, as discussed in Chapter 2. The definition also refers to pre-tested initiatives, and as such the process of testing will not be a focus of this dissertation, but is taken to mean that there is evidence of its effectiveness and feasibility (WHO, 2009b). The definition also allows for replication to be carried out by the original organisation or by another (Uvin and Miller, 1996). This is different from the more narrow focus of some researchers who say it can only be carried out by external organisations (Cooley and Kohl, 2006; De Souza, 2008). It is important not to perceive replication as 'duplication', a 'cookie-cutter' or 'one-size-fits-all' approach, or as inherently 'top-down' or 'bureaucratic' (RPS, 1994; Fleisch et al, 2008; Uvin and Miller, 1996). As Figure 1.2 shows, a number of paths to replication exist, each impacting differently on the initiating organisation, with centralised or decentralised, mandatory or voluntary processes, involving an entire initiative or only the basic concept. The flexibility of the approach can go unrecognised, and overcoming these pre-conceived notions is one way this dissertation seeks to move the scaling-up discourse forward.

Choosing replication as a means of scaling-up has its own specific advantages and drawbacks. Many of these depend on which path is chosen as discussed in Chapter 2, but some are more generally applicable. The most apparent is the logical desire to see an initiative which has brought about positive change in one location, used to achieve the same successes elsewhere (Deak, 2008; Steele et al, 2008). This is supported by potential beneficiaries, NGOs, donors, aid agencies and the public sector, with replication having universal relevance in both developed and developing countries (Clark, 1991; Wazir and Oudenhoven, 1998). However, what works in one location might not have the same effect in another, and replication can only be used where an initiative is found to be both feasible and adaptable to the new context (Goldman, 2003; Clark, 1991). Replication provides an approach which does not require a ‘grand narrative’, and does not claim to be the ‘magical panacea’, but still progresses development by finding specific solutions to problems (Easterly, 2007; Deak, 2008). Taylor (2001) argues that scaling-up is the most urgent problem, as current models of development are not working, especially from sustainability and equity perspectives.

Replication can offer an NGO the ability to ‘think big’ while continuing to ‘think small’, or to remain true to the micro-level environment while increasing impact at a macro-level (Hulme, 2004). By replicating, NGOs can increase impact without ‘losing touch’ with local actors, or growing in size and overextending their capacity or entering in to diseconomies of scale, rendering them unsuccessful (Steele et al, 2008; Creech, 2008). However, some paths bring greater risks of this than others, as discussed in Chapter 2. Replication can increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness through the application of a diverse range of innovative, practical, relevant and sustainable approaches (Oudenhoven and Wazir, 1998; Fleisch et al, 2008). The economic benefits are increasingly important as public funds continue to decrease, while social distress and the need for ‘results’ continues (Goldman, 2003). This approach is particularly attractive for the education sector in developing countries where quality remains a real issue and demand often outstrips the supply of resources, equipment, material and trained teachers (Samoff et al, 2005). As testing on a small scale before scaling-up has been found to reduce the risk of failure and increase the likelihood of a return on investment, replication has become increasingly attractive to donors, many of whom now stipulate the possibility of scaling-up as a criterion for funding (Cooley and Kohl, 2006; Samoff et al, 2005).

While replication should not override the development of new initiatives per se, it has been argued that replicating existing initiatives is likely to be faster and less costly, and caters for NGOs who do not want or have the capacity and skills to develop their own initiatives (Goldman, 2003). Replication and the 'pilot' approach has also been seen as more scientific as it allows a model to be designed and tested for future replication (Sahley, 1999; Uvin and Miller, 1996). Replication thus reduces the design phase to refinement and adaptation, and can generate information to assist future decisions at new sites. Replication can also encourage coalition building and network formation where NGOs share experiences and participate in mutual learning, problem-solving and advocacy with other NGOs, agencies, donors and the public and private sector (Oudenhoven and Wazir, 1998; Goldman, 2003). However, as Chapter 3 suggests, more can be done to encourage these important exchanges, as they are not inherent in all cases and have great, underutilised potential. Replication can support the NGO sector in becoming more effective in solving problems and meeting global challenges, while still serving as an outlet for innovation and differences (Fleisch et al, 2008). To this end, replication should not replace alternative approaches, but should be recognised as an essential tool in the NGO sector's arsenal.

The decision to replicate can occur for several reasons including existing, gradual or sudden increases in local demand, in reaction to increases in funding, to fulfil the ambition of an organisation or other champion, or to fill gaps in existing public or private services (RPS, 1994; Goldmann, 2003). As replication is not the only way to increase impact, careful consideration must be taken to select this approach. The NGO must either have adequate resources, capacity and motivation to replicate the initiative itself, or encourage another organisation to do so. The implementing organisation must then reassess viability in a new location with a new structure, and must consider the impact on the original initiative (Clark, 1991). Adverse factors affecting replication include a lack of long-term funding, heavy reliance on specific unique factors such as a charismatic leader, an inability to articulate the aspects required for success, inhibiting factors in the new location such as government restrictions and a lack of knowledge about successful replication strategies (RPS, 1994). It may also be difficult to replicate initiatives which are highly resource or labour intensive (Sahley, 1999). For replication to succeed, its underlying principles must be identified and communicated throughout (UNESCO, 2005). Communication is also essential to help cope with the stresses of organisational change, establish new relationships and coalitions, overcome interpersonal conflicts and frustrations, and deal with 'information overload' and increased work requirements (Taylor et al, 1999).

Replication has been found to be particularly difficult in education where initiatives tend to be more complex and context-specific, making it more difficult to 'cross the chasm' from their original settings (Dede, 2005). Where an initiative requires the adoption of new pedagogical strategies, a further difficulty is observed, where even within the same school a strategy successful in one classroom might not succeed in another classroom with different students (Clarke et al, 2006). These educational interventions are substantially influenced by contextual variables which shape their practicality, desirability and effectiveness (Clarke and Dede, 2006). In these circumstances, where the decision is made to replicate an initiative, it is important to ensure the right path is chosen. Replicating complex or context-reliant initiatives might require a great deal of local adaptation to be successful. In this case it might be useful to distinguish between the essential invariable aspects and the more flexible variable aspects which could be removed if necessary.

Another consideration is the inherent resistance, or conservative response to change often observed in educational institutions as they strive to preserve their integrity (Dede, 2005). The ability to overcome barriers to change is essential for any organisation attempting scale-up. While not a focus of this dissertation, responses could include building organisational capacity for change management, selecting initiatives in keeping with existing strategies, careful planning, and considered communication to accommodate individuals who are risk-averse. Resistance due to national education policies and procedures can also present barriers (Dede, 2005), but also opportunities. An NGO in this situation might pursue a replication strategy which involves the public sector, or work within and towards existing national strategies for a more coherent educational approach, as advocated by the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness (2005). Even without national education policies, NGOs must consider the government and the impact it has on an initiatives success, as well as ensuring they are not seen as ‘agents of imperialism’ or instil fears of being supplanted (Clark, 1991). Overall, while educational initiatives do present their own inherent difficulties, as the examples in Chapter 2 show, it is still possible to replicate them effectively.

2. Paths to scaling-up through replication

This chapter will begin with a general discussion about the paths through which scaling-up might best be achieved through replication. Following this will be debates around the four paths to replication presented by RPS (1994, p.4), Mandated, Franchise, Staged and Concept. It will culminate in the presentation of a new path called Network replication, which draws on current development thinking while seeking to fill a gap that emerges between existing paths. The discussions will deliberately not be presented as guidelines, as it is evident that there is no one universal best path which all NGOs should follow. Also, as Oudenhoven and Wazir (1998, p.17) found, “It may well be that an informed uncertainty proves to be a better compass to go by in the debate on replication than a set of over-confident, but ill-informed recommendations.” These in-depth debates will include a definition, diagram, explanation, discussion and exemplar for each path. The diagrams are based on the descriptions of each path and were drawn to enhance understanding of how the paths work and to highlight the similarities and differences between them. It was by applying these visual methods, increasingly recognised for their importance in the field of social research (Prosser and Loxley, 2008), that the gap between current paths emerged and the idea of Network replication presented itself.

The literature presents two main lessons for successful replication, the first is to regard it as a learning process, and the second is that where structures and procedures are replicated, it should not be done mindlessly or unnecessarily, but should be appropriate to local circumstances (Uvin and Miller, 1996; Steele et al, 2008; Josiah, 2001). Learning, adapting and overcoming problems of magnitude are all said to help avoid replication failure, or falling in to the ‘replica trap’ (Dede, 2005; Dichter, 1989). As Simmons et al (2007, p.15) found, “...organizations with a capacity to learn are more likely to succeed in whatever they choose to do than organizations that are rigidly bound by rules and emphasize standardization.” The process not only involves evaluating the initiative, but also analysing its suitability for a new location, including carrying out risk, sustainability, stakeholder and situation analyses. Risks to the original organisations should also be considered and might manifest themselves in changes to accountability and governance, organisational structure, and changing reliance on funding mechanisms (Buckland, 1998; RPS, 1994). It is also important that increasing impact does not unduly sacrifice the quality of existing or future initiatives (Clark, 1991). In education, markers of quality often go beyond the initiative and include broad development objectives such as equity, empowerment, social transformation and sustainability, which must not be obscured by organisational objectives such as employment opportunities and job security (Samoff et al, 2005; Edwards and Hulme, 1992). This is especially important for participatory approaches which rely on trust and local input, which can be lost as an NGO grows in size (CORE, 2005; Hartmann and Linn, 2007). Growth can also risk informal processes, flexibility, adaptability, and the freedom to experiment, analyse and take action (Clark, 1991; Hulme, 2004). Where growth is required, special consideration must be given to ensure the initiative is not undermined while these cultural, systematic and structural changes take place (Edwards and Hulme, 1992).

2.1. Mandated replication - All the Way to the Top

The main objective of this approach is to increase the number of NGO initiatives by either partnering with or handing over to the government. While it can also be referred to as 'political replication', it should not be confused with strategies to influence public policy per se, although this can occur unintentionally, or be pursued simultaneously. With government support, implementation is typically carried out using a top-down approach, and is usually obligatory (RPS, 1994; Oudenhoven and Wazir, 1998).

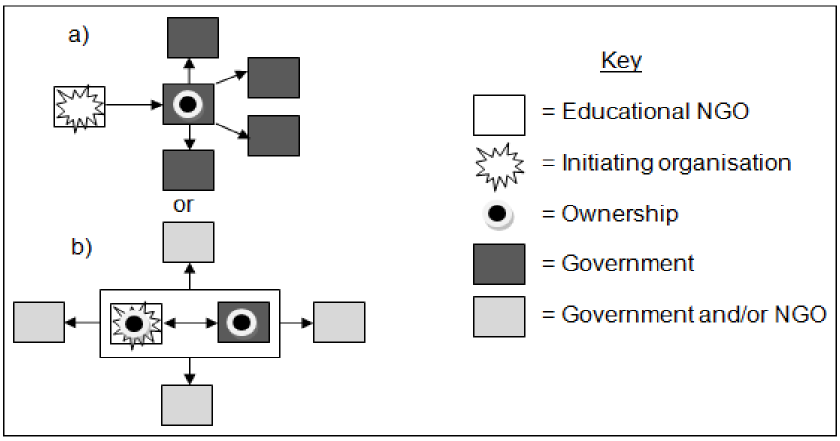

Figure 2.1. Mandated replication diagram

The diagram depicts the two paths through which an NGO might replicate its initiatives by involving the government. The first diagram shows the government taking ownership of the initiative, where the NGO acts as an innovator, piloting the initiative, demonstrating it to the government, and handing it over to be replicated by them. The second diagram shows the partnership model, where the NGO and government work together to replicate a program, with joint ownership of it. Uvin et al (2000) would class the first as ‘integration’ and the latter as ‘joint venturing’. With both approaches, each line of communication is one-way representing a more top-down approach, aside from the two-way communication between partners in the second approach. Demand is not essential for mandated replication to take place as the government can, for example, decide to roll out an initiative across all school districts (RPS, 1994).

The main advantage of this path is the large scale impact which can be achieved with governments, as they have the potential to reach people at a national level through existing systems (Hartmann and Linn, 2008). The mutual benefit of the relationship is that governments have new initiatives created and tested by NGOs, and NGOs increase the impact of their work. This is not to say the relationship is uncomplicated, governments and NGOs alike can be nervous about being co-opted and both approaches require a great deal of trust and confidence on both sides to be effective. This represents a problem if relationships are strained, and research has found mutual feelings of suspicion, threat, distrust, a lack of confidence in management capacity and a desire for exclusive control (Uvin, 1995; Uvin and Miller, 1996). These issues are magnified by the understanding that it is not only the benefits being shared, but also the risks (Lewis and Kanji, 2009). While government risks are related to the successful roll-out of the initiative, NGOs must weigh up the ‘trade-offs’ or ‘opportunity costs’ of pursuing this strategy in relation to others. They may struggle to work both with the government and as an advocate for fundamental change or social mobilisation, or risk being too closely associated with existing governments and voted out by subsequent parties (Edwards and Hulme, 1992). NGOs risk raising their profile and open themselves up to potential conflicts and increasing tensions with governments if they do not work cohesively (Clark, 1991). Another risk is to reputations should one political party or NGO receive negative press, its affiliates could be tainted by association.

A number of government constraints can necessitate the involvement of NGOs, including pragmatic constraints about having sufficient resources to deliver the required scope of educational coverage, and philosophical concerns about societal involvement in the educational sector (Miller-Grandvaux et al, 2002). Governments have also been perceived as large bureaucracies who find it difficult to design and test new innovations themselves, or tend to be ‘out of touch’ with local conditions. Piloting new initiatives can also be difficult for governments politically as pilots require targeting on a small, rather than national scale (Miller-Grandvaux et al, 2002). The role of NGOs as ‘innovators’ who can develop and test solutions to provide an example, or ‘light up a pathway’ to governments, has been established for some time (Sahley, 1999; Clark, 1991). However, careful planning and execution is required to ensure handover is effective. While particularly important in the first approach where the government takes over the initiative, this communication is also required for the second approach to establish a mutually beneficial partnership.

While the infinite mandate and national reach of governments can provide the greatest impact of all the paths, its more directive top-down approach can result in implementation in unsuitable locations. There may also be difficulty achieving ‘buy-in’ or acceptance from outside implementing organisations if they have not chosen to adopt the approach (RPS, 1994). Other problems include organisational congruence between government and NGOs in skills, procedures, ethos and values (Cooley and Kohl, 2006). Where highly motivated, dedicated, creative, patient initiators are replaced with salaried professionals, for example, motivation, incentives and working practices might change (Mansuri and Rao, 2004). While financing is often seen as an advantage, especially for providing start-up capital, difficulties here can occur when financial support is needed over time, especially if new political parties with different priorities are elected. However, utilising government support is seen overall as a good way to sustain an NGO initiative, and involvement in one initiative can have a positive impact on a government’s future priorities and decisions (Zhonghua, 2008). Care must be taken to ensure some flexibility and local adaptation is built in to the approach, as well as careful planning and forecasting for sustainability. Local flexibility and innovation can be particularly important for local teachers and change agents who require a level of autonomy sometimes stifled by standardisation (UNESCO, 2005). There is an argument that NGOs should not replace governmental responsibilities by replicating to a national level themselves, and should maintain a clear division of labour (UNDP, 2002). Internally, for a partnership to work it requires a fair balance of power between parties (Steele et al, 2008). As Clark (1991, p.75) suggests, NGOs at a national scale have three choices, "They can oppose the state, complement it, or reform it – but they cannot ignore it".

Box 1: Pratham's Balsakhi Program **(Banerjee et al, 2005)**

The Balsakhi Program, a remedial education program in India, was implemented in a number of Indian cities by the NGO Pratham, reaching tens of thousands of students before scaling-up to reach hundreds of thousands in collaboration with the Indian government in Mumbai from 1998 and Vadodada from 1999.

The program provides government schools with a teacher, usually a young woman who has completed secondary education, to work with children in third and fourth grades identified as having fallen behind their peers. Local conditions dictate the exact details, but they typically spend a few hours a day working with small classes going over what should have been learned in first and second grade, such as basic numeracy and literacy. Each teacher or Balsakhi (meaning 'child's friend') is provided with two weeks training and ongoing support as well as a set curriculum developed by Pratham.

The program, tested across contexts, was found to increase the average test score by 0.39 standard deviations and low scores by 0.6, and proved 10 times more cost-effective than hiring new teachers. The secrets to its success are believed to be its ease of replication, its low cost (teachers are paid US$10-15 a month and use any school space available), its resilience to teacher turnover (usually yearly), and the simple and standardised pedagogy and curriculum. The teachers offer learning not possible in the regular classroom, and are themselves from a similar background to which students can relate.

2.2. Franchise replication - A License to Change

Franchise replication is similar to the franchise approach used in the private sector, however in the development sector the focus is on development impact, rather than profits. The central agency, franchisor, or initiating NGO provides detailed, largely invariable program guidelines to another organisation or franchisee, in exchange for a contractual agreement to adhere to certain performance standards and maintain the initiative's integrity. The franchisor is likely to adopt a top-down approach, while providing continuous assistance, support and services to each franchisee (RPS, 1994; Oudenhoven and Wazir, 1998).

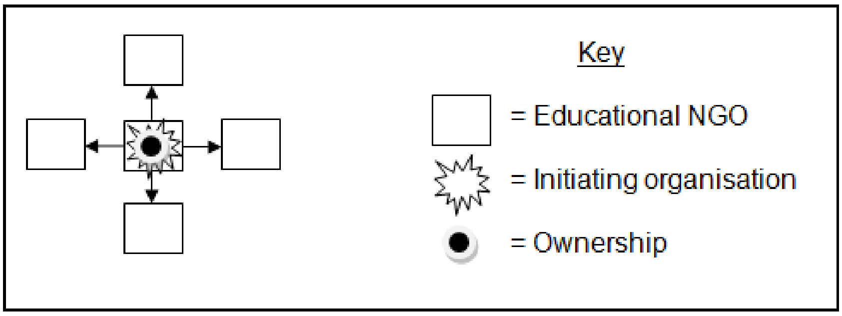

Figure 2.2. Franchise replication diagram

The diagram shows the initiating organisation acting as the central agent or franchisor for replication. Working with other NGOs, ownership is retained by the initiating organisation or franchisor, and the typically one-way communication is used for guidance, training, assistance and monitoring, to which the franchisee adheres. While some communication can channel back in to the franchisor, it is less likely to be formalised between franchisees. The initiative will have clear components, and typically requires a large proportion of the variable aspects to be passed on to the franchisee. The initiative is traditionally inflexible, and there is not usually much emphasis on adaptation to local contexts.

However, while traditionally regarded as a less flexible approach, there are ways of adapting it to achieve greater flexibility and creativity (Hartmann and Linn, 2008). Where a franchisor understands that each site is unique and the importance of adaptation to local contexts, they may encourage and even provide assistance in doing so. Where a less flexible approach is taken, this path can be the easiest one to manage and evaluate, as components would be uniform and performance standards set and observable (RPS, 1994). The most important factor is that the initiative is recognisable at each site, and franchisees meet certain performance standards, and are given support to do so from the franchisor. In an educational NGO, where the franchisor requires a high degree of adherence to the initial model, guidelines might include teaching guides and manuals, set class sizes and classroom layout and standards for teachers and support staff. On-going training and technical assistance provided by the franchisor can be a useful tool to achieve consistency across sites, acting as a reminder of the initiatives goals, mission and features, and assisting with context-based problem solving (RPS, 1994).

A recent study on Franchise replication was carried out by Fleisch et al (2008) and will be drawn on heavily here. While franchising has been used by the private sector for over eighty years, the standardisation of services and procedures has often been deemed inappropriate by the social sector as it became associated with terms like ‘one-size-fits-all’ and ‘McDonaldisation’. However, as well as the flexibility alluded to which can be obtained using this approach, there can also be increases in financial and personnel efficiency and effectiveness. If increased sector-wide, it could enhance overall quality, reduce failure rates and allow more rapid coverage through faster expansion of successful initiatives. Potential difficulties include risks to the original goals of the initiating organisation as it becomes a franchisor and to franchisees if their goals are not an exact fit with the initiative. Also, as each site can be perceived as the same organisation, often sharing a name, there is a risk that a negative reputation or failure at one site would impact negatively on others. On the other hand shared risk also means it is spread across more organisations, providing both initial and ongoing support. The other main difficulty is in balancing controls and the maintenance of standards with the independence each site requires. The central unit, while consuming a lot of the resources of the initiating organisation, can assist with marketing, reduce competition for funding, provide a central consultancy and take advantage of economies of scale by sharing these costs. However, to be chosen as a path, there must be sufficient demand for a large scale system to be established, and the initiating organisation would need the capacity, funding, time and expertise to implement the approach successfully and sustainably.

Box 2: UNESCO's Community Multimedia Centres (Creech, 2009)

A Community Multimedia Centre (CMC) offers community radio broadcasting and telecentre services (Internet and communications) through community-based facilities across Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and South Asia, expanding to Central and Eastern Europe. Initiated in 2004 by UNESCO, the central managing agency of the 39 pilots is the Communications and Information sector.

CMCs are intended to support community development by increasing economic opportunities and social inclusion through education, public participation and the exchange of knowledge, views and beliefs. The central agency provides support tools for training, management, action research and evaluation, as well as networking opportunities. Replication is underway to expand from two or three CMCs per country, to fifty or sixty in Mali, Mozambique and Senegal.

Large scale replication in countries where pilots have already been carried out is proposed in order to reach a 'critical mass' of CMCs to have impact and influence on a national level. Currently the central agency applies the model somewhat uniformly across situations and countries, and it has been suggested that a more flexible and possibly decentralised approach be adopted, despite demonstrated successes with the existing model.

2.3. Staged replication – One step at a time

Staged replication is usually carried out by the initiating organisation, although independent agents may assist with the process. It is carefully planned and highly structured, with an initiative usually passing through three stages. The initial pilot stage is used to determine viability, the demonstration stage for rigorous testing, monitoring and evaluations and the implementation stage for roll-out (RPS, 1994; Oudenhoven and Wazir, 1998).

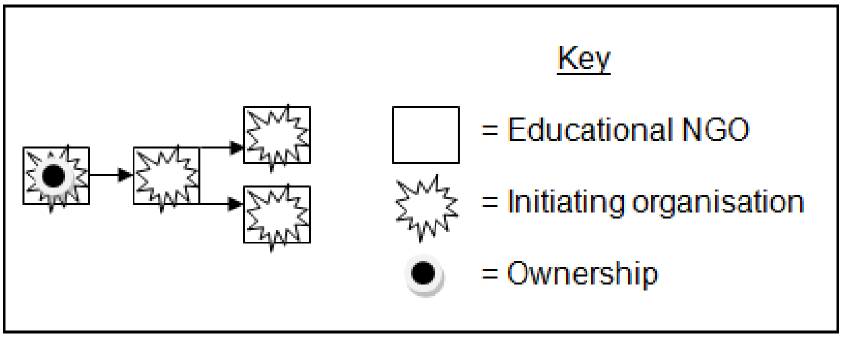

Figure 2.3. Staged replication diagram

As the diagram shows, Staged replication usually occurs through the initiating organisation, with ownership remaining with the original initiative. The subsequent replicated initiatives retain much of the integrity of the initial one, and although they are all within the same organisation, much of the expertise, to which subsequent sites defer for guidance, remains with the initiator. As the initiative goes through a great deal of testing and planning before rolling out to the next site, it lends itself to being represented as a chain branching out as roll-out occurs, with communication passed one-way to subsequent initiatives.

As this path offers a highly planned, strategic approach to replication, it tends to be quite time consuming, slow and costly, but arguably savings are made in the long term due to a reduced risk of failure. Indeed it has been said that it could yield the best results as it gradually builds on success through a process of identification and adaptation (UNESCO, 2005). This planned growth can be regarded as sensible and modest, ensuring basic viability while remaining in keeping with market and stakeholder potential, following careful plans with realistic timelines and targets based on detailed assessments (SEED, 2008). However, it can also be argued that it is high risk to the initiating organisation who replicates the initiative themselves risking their own finances and reputation. It is perhaps of little surprise then that so much care is taken and full roll out can take years (Ahmed and French, 2006). Following this path, an initiative must pass through two stages before being rolled out. The pilot stage, through which an initiative might pass a number of times before a replicable model emerges, and a demonstration stage where it is implemented in a number of test sites and closely monitored and evaluated over time, with rigorous testing and comparisons between intended goals and actual outcomes (RPS, 1994). Analogies can be drawn with new product development in the private sector.

While retaining the initiative within the same organisation overcomes some problems with differences between organisations, it also means they must have the resources and expertise themselves to replicate effectively. While this can be built up over time, one of the main concerns is whether, when moving to a new geographic area, they will have the local knowledge required to adapt to contextual differences (Fleisch et al, 2008). Where an NGO has limited experience, they might begin work at a limited scale to establish expertise, before moving in to surrounding areas, typically decreasing the cost per beneficiary with each new initiative (CORE, 2005). A drawback of this approach is arguably that organisational and technical aspects tend to be placed in preference of social and human aspects, with little appreciation of the impact and unpredictable nature of the latter (Oudenhoven and Wazir, 1998). Current development thinking, including the preference for participative approaches, makes the 'human' factor increasingly important to consider if an initiative is to be successful.

Box 3: BRAC's Non-Formal Primary Education (Ahmed and French, 2006)

The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), founded in 1972 and based in Bangladesh, is one of the largest development NGOs in the world, serving around 110 million people, largely due to its aptitude for replication. The Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) program was first piloted in 1985 and has subsequently scaled-up to provide over 31,000 primary schools and 16,000 pre-primary schools throughout Bangladesh.

NFPE provides schooling which feeds in to the formal education system upon completion and, using BRAC's own textbooks and educational quality, takes four years to complete instead of five. Sixty-five percent of students are girls, and special efforts are made to include hard-to-reach populations, those with disabilities and ethnic minorities.

It takes three to four years of concentrated piloting, refinement and planning for a new BRAC program to be scaled-up. The seven key scaling-up principles attributed to BRAC's success are: listening to the people, vision, piloting (for effectiveness and efficiency), training, down-to-earth management, evaluation and adaptation, and advocacy.

2.4. Concept replication - Adopt, Adapt and Improve

Concept replication is the most flexible of the approaches, with typically only the most necessary, invariable aspects of the original initiative being replicated to the new sites. It may be carried out by any organisation, including the initiating NGO, and there is no accountability for which aspects are transferred or how. Success is measured by how well it is adapted and sensitivity to local requirements. It tends to promote local ownership with a more bottom-up approach as it is usually demand-driven (RPS, 1994; Oudenhoven and Wazir, 1998).

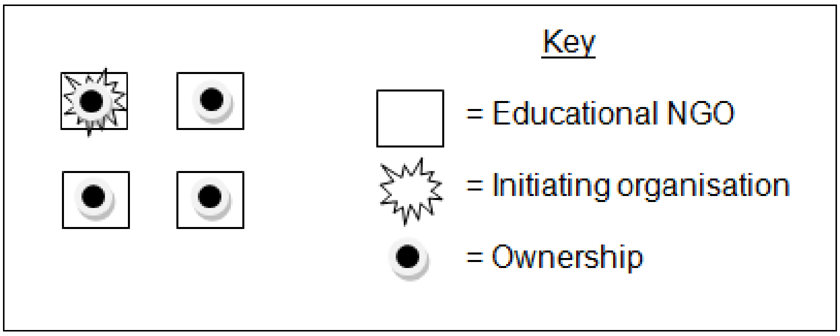

Figure 2.4. Concept replication diagram

With this path, any organisation can take the basic principles and components of the initiative, or the 'concept', and adapt it as much or as little as they choose to suit their own local requirements. There are no official lines of communication here, as the new sites take full ownership, and the initiating organisation does not have to be involved.

While the overall concept and goals may be replicated, consistency between sites is not required, with the main measure of success being respect for, and adaptation to local contexts (RPS, 1994). As new organisations display a high degree of local ownership and adaptation, this bottom-up, demand driven approach is likely to lead to high levels of local motivation for success. However, by stressing the importance of local adaptation and decentralised programming, there is the possibility of the initiative becoming unrecognisable from one site to the next. The core concept that dictated its success must be both transferred and retained if it is to remain successful. While not a risk to the initiating organisation unless new sites attempt to compete or be associated with it, there is also no risk mitigation as there is no accountability, no rules and no official lines of communication. If successful, although they would have little control over who replicates the initiative and how, this path offers a way to increase impact at little or no cost or effort to the initiator (Fleisch et al, 2008).

Box 4: Fundación Paraguaya's School in a Box (Meissner et al, 2009)

The London-based NGO Teach a Man to Fish was established in 2006 by the Paraguayan NGO Fundación Paraguaya to promote, raise awareness and aid understanding of the key features and objectives of their school model in Africa, Asia, and the European Union. Together they have made information on how to run a self-sufficient school available and accessible online through open-access "School in a Box" how-to guides, to encourage others to take the concept and replicate it. So far, 21 institutions have done so.

The schools themselves provide high quality, relevant, low-cost education to prepare rural youth to overcome poverty, using on-campus rural enterprises to generate income. Concept replication is used as local actors are considered the most effective at convincing authorities, teachers, parents and others about the merits of a new concept, and are best placed to adapt it to local conditions. It also allows a more rapid scale-up as replication is carried out by independent institutions.

The key to setting up a school is for external actors to use the guides to self-assess conditions for success prior to start-up, write a business plan, seek financing for start-up and operations, generate income to become self-sufficient, and organise the school to provide an effective education and student-life. Technical assistance and support is available at a cost, only if required. Emphasis is on local adaptation, flexibility, ownership, commitment and sustainability.

2.5. Network replication - Strength in Numbers

Network replication can be carried out by any organisation and requires only the core, invariable aspects of the original initiative to be replicated. The emphasis is not only on local adaptation, but also networking, two-way communication and mutual learning, with each organisation agreeing to join a network of organisations who are all working from the same original concept.

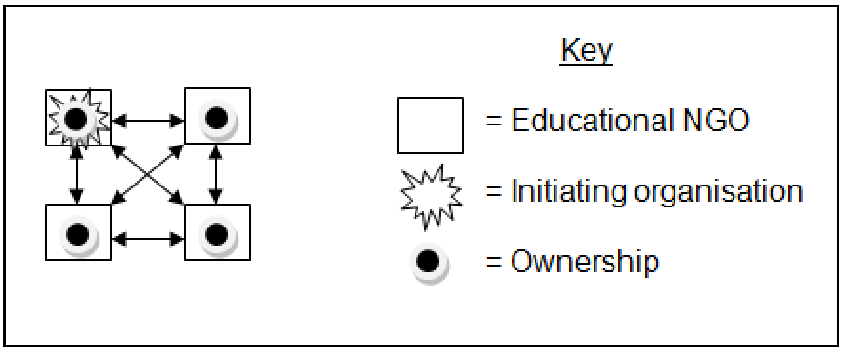

Figure 2.5. Network replication diagram

This diagram shows the emphasis on local ownership through local adaptation of the initial concept, as well as the two-way communication approach for mutual learning. The concept put forward by the initiating organisation is adopted and adapted by other organisations that in turn join the expanding network. By retaining the core, invariable elements of the initiative, each organisation is in a position to support and learn from each other, and assist in future replication.

Network replication offers a new path which bridges the gap between the lack of requirement for official communication in Concept replication, and the more top-down official lines offered by other approaches. By expressing the freedom of local adaptation, with the added benefits of mutual learning and support, this approach offers a path which is as yet not explicitly offered in the literature. Mutual learning would be possible between any or all organisations within the network, including the initiating organisation. As this is a new path introduced through this dissertation, it is not possible to provide a definitive example of it in practice, however there will be some discussion in Chapter 4 of an educational NGO which might seek to adopt this approach in the future. Debates about networking itself are available in the literature, and have been explored in the following discussion. Indeed, networking as a means of expanding outreach across institutional and political boundaries has been used by a number of NGOs in the past (Josiah, 2001). The need for a systematic approach integrating the processes of a learning community has been voiced before (Taylor, 2001), and network replication could provide a means of achieving it.

By each organisation recognising the advantages of being in the network, and agreeing to certain guiding principles within it, it is possible to make it mutually reinforcing, with each organisation invested in its success and development. At the same time, it is important to recognise that each network would be different, requiring greater or lesser levels of commitment and agreements, which themselves would need to be flexible to allow for changing needs and circumstances. Choosing this path is likely to take time, as networks would need to be established, and support and communication organised, as well as the time it takes to accept, support and develop relationships with new organisations joining the network. It is also likely a regular program of meetings would need to be established to discuss common concerns and help overcome them. However, it is likely this time would be rewarded, with new organisations bringing new vitality, partnerships, locations and knowledge to the network. Regular meetings could also be used to discuss mutual successes and future developments of the network, as well as innovations and ideas which members might choose to adopt going forward. Indeed, Nassimbeni and May (2009) found that the absence of a regular forum to coordinate and discuss common issues can have a negative impact on growth, sustainability, and the ability to learn from and share with others.

Another advantage of this path is economies of scale. While it would depend on the arrangements of a specific network, examples might include saving time and money by participating in joint marketing campaigns, or linking other partners in to the network. Risks of competition could also be overcome by making its avoidance part of the agreement. Other economies of scale could be gleaned by lobbying together, collectively pursuing funding, or assisting others in the network to start-up, or overcome difficulties such as skills or funding shortages. To put it another way, being collectively larger, would help them overcome a number of the disadvantages and risks of being individually smaller. Network replication also provides a way of avoiding losing important learning, as it might in other paths less mutual in their communication approaches. It also caters to the strengths of the NGO community, allowing for flexibility, innovation, creativity, and the ability to grow to whichever size they individually feel comfortable while being collectively larger. In doing so, NGOs can avoid risks associated with growth like entering into diseconomies of scale, or losing touch with local communities. By networking with similar organisations, small scale NGOs with low impact and influence can increase their power, security and leverage and can, for example, influence government policy. Networks have been used to provide collective support services, achieve common goals, mediate external relations, focus limited resources, avoid duplication of effort, solve large-scale problems, improve deficiencies, reduce the risk of failure, and increase overall effectiveness (Josiah, 2001; Edwards and Hulme, 1992). These, as well as an increase in institutional sustainability, all contribute to the development of partnerships being a key element of current development policy (Lewis and Kanji, 2009). When referring to collaboration between schools, although results were uneven, Ainscow (2010) found evidence of improved teaching and learning, professional development, capacity for change and implementation of innovations, more effective inductions and a more cooperative environment. Where existing partnerships and networks tend to be between somewhat dissimilar organisations, network replication explicitly requires members to have the same original concept in common, arguably providing even greater potential for cohesion and relevant mutual learning (Cooley and Kohl, 2006).

One criticism could be that the approach requires the aspiration, involvement and commitment of a variety of stakeholders. Also, while generally regarded as a low cost approach for expanding outreach, costs associated with networks such as increased staff responsibilities, training and the establishment and maintenance of communication can easily be underestimated (Lewis and Kanji, 2009). Ashman (2004) also explains that in practice, networks do not always work and can fall short of expectations, and suggests seven factors which permit organisational improvement through action learning. These include pre-existing social capital, including common norms, mutual trust and cooperation, strategic fit including common goals, proven and shared methodology, mutual benefits, and complementary functional roles, and supportive donor relationships where relevant. Added to this is the need for long term commitment, a share in governance, mutual trust and confidence, joint learning, and viewing problems and conflicts as opportunities for learning and improvement. Taking these aspects into consideration when carrying out Network replication is likely to increase success rates and allow potential pitfalls to be turned into mutual learning experiences. Numerous possibilities are associated with this path, each dependant upon the nature of the network and relationships within them. While a number have been touched on here, with the paths emphasis on mutual learning, creativity and innovation, a great deal more could be discovered in practice. Future research following the implementation of this path might be advantageous, particularly where a critical review and exploration of outcomes is carried out and disseminated to others.

Part II – Future and Practice

Part II applies the theory from Part 1 to practice. Chapter 3 suggests a portfolio of replicable concepts. Chapter 4 applies the Portfolio criteria to a specific educational NGO initiative and follows their choice of path for replication.

3: Portfolio of replicable concepts

This chapter outlines a suggestion to establish a publically available, primarily online Portfolio of replicable concepts. It begins with a discussion of why this is important, and the wider benefits and implications for the development sector. Following this is a discussion of similar, existing approaches and possible reasons why a Portfolio of replicable concepts is not currently available. Detail about how the Portfolio might work, and the importance of including both successful and unsuccessful initiatives follow. The criteria suggested for use in the Portfolio will be presented in Chapter 4, applied to an existing educational NGO.

3.1. Why the Portfolio is important

Having reviewed the available scaling-up literature, it became clear that while some case studies do exist, there is no single location, or standardised way in which these have been presented for use by others. This includes both examples of how organisations going through the scaling up process, and outlines of past initiatives and lessons learned from them. Given that one of the main criticisms of the NGO sector is its propensity to ‘reinvent the wheel’ it could reasonably be surmised that to avoid this, NGOs would need access to the knowledge that the ‘wheel’ had already been invented (Dichter, 1989). The Portfolio could provide an answer to this by expanding the evidence base on past initiatives and provide opportunities for wide scale adoption, accelerating the spread of new initiatives and providing links between research and policy (Ramanathan, 1992; Cooley and Kohl, 2006; Samoff et al, 2005; USAID, 2008). The Portfolio could provide a global learning community where mutual learning and knowledge sharing coexist with the provision of initiatives for replication through the Concept or Network paths. Online, free access to all could attract interest from a wide range of backgrounds, encouraging scaling-up across the sector.

The finding that the current evidence base is lacking and needs to be expanded and more widely disseminated is not new (Lopa, 2003; Ramanathan, 1992; Arbor, 2009; Cooley and Kohl, 2006; Edwards and Hulme, 1992; Goldman, 2003; Oudenhoven and Wazir, 1998; Snow, 2007; Sahley, 1999; Samoff et al, 2005). One suggestion to do this was to establish a database of in-depth, rigorous, objective and reliable program evaluations (Duflo, 2004). While this is indeed a laudable idea, one reason why it does not appear to have been established is the expertise, time and cost involved in carrying it out. A small NGO, for example, is unlikely to be able to invest in a project of this size. However, contributing to the Portfolio as conceptualised would require only a small amount of time to complete by an individual familiar with the project. Importantly, each contribution would involve completing a two-page outline including a basic diagram of how the concept works. Much of the information needed to complete this may already be available through websites, publications or previous evaluations. Where full length in-depth evaluations have been carried out, they could be provided via links from this original outline.

Current attempts at dissemination include development publications, seminars and international conferences (Sahley, 1999; Reed, 2001). However these strategies are often prone to publication bias whereby failed initiatives and the lessons learned from them are ignored, even though this information can be as useful as those which succeeded (Duflo, 2004). The most recent collection of case studies documenting experiences of scaling-up has been provided by perhaps the most widely referred to development agency, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This book, edited by Steele et al (2008) shows where current thinking lies in this area, with each case study averaging over fifteen pages of detailed accounts. While this level of detail can be useful, it can cause difficulty when trying to draw learning from them to apply to other situations. It would also be difficult to browse these case studies searching for inspiration for future initiatives. The Portfolio attempts to address this issue by providing a basic overview from which this detail could be linked. The case studies could also be searched by key words both online and in any printed editions.

The Portfolio would utilise the innovative and creative abilities of the NGO sector while providing information for organisations with greater resources, or those less inclined to create new initiatives to adopt them (Clark, 1991). Sahley (1999) was unclear why NGOs tend to constantly develop new projects and believed it may be due to changing donor priorities, an overemphasis on innovation or rapidly evolving environments. As many of these trends tend to be cyclical and differ from one situation to another, it could be useful to document these initiatives to inform future plans. Also, the expansion of knowledge as to what determines success or failure could lead to new training and technical support tools to improve effectiveness and rates of return, as well as strengthening advocacy for systematic approaches both for individual initiatives and the scaling-up process (Arbor, 2009; Ryan, 2004). The Portfolio would attempt to reveal rarely presented information on not only how an initiative works, but also perceptions of why, when, and the context within which it operated (Dede et al, 2005; Lopa, 2003; Dichter, 1989; Oudenhoven and Wazir, 1998).

A number of researchers have stated the importance of searching for successful initiatives and learning from what has and has not worked in the past (Easterly, 2007; Oudenhoven and Wazir 1998, Creech, 2008; Snow, 2007). It has been suggested that this information is a 'global public good' and could be used by a wide range of social actors including researchers, policy makers, practitioners, donors, national and international organisations, governments and NGOs (Duflo, 2004; Arbor, 2009). The Portfolio could also be used to increase awareness of initiatives to increase support, or provide a platform for donors to advertise initiatives they have been involved with, possibly encouraging future investments. By having such a wide reach, this information could not only improve development effectiveness, but by adding credibility and visibility to the various approaches, could also counter scepticism about development spending and help build long-term development support (Duflo, 2004).

Another reason why this Portfolio might not already exist is because of the inherent difficulty in both judging what made a pilot successful or unsuccessful, and knowing whether it is transferable to a new setting (Creech, 2008; Duflo, 2004). The level of analysis and number of pilot projects required to make this judgement can mean that only a small number of initiatives are reported on. The Portfolio could overcome this by allowing for the subjective nature of judgements by encouraging potential adopters to draw their own conclusions, and judge themselves whether a new location is feasible for the initiative, and whether they have the capacity to implement and sustain it (Binswanger and Aiyar, 2003; Dichter, 1989). Another difficulty could be that NGOs generally consider themselves as innovators, and are more attracted to developing new initiatives, than replicating those of others (Hartmann and Linn 2008; Dichter, 1989). Initiating NGOs might also be protective of their idea, or be uncomfortable handing it over and losing control of how it is adapted and whether it is done effectively (Fleisch et al, 2008). The initiating organisation might also feel threatened or concerned about increased competition or reduced business opportunities, as well as having issues with intellectual property and reputation by association (Creech, 2008; RPS, 1994). It has also been said that NGOs are resistant to monitoring and evaluation, and relationships between them are marked by criticism and rivalry rather than collaboration, which could impede the sharing of ideas (Dichter, 1989; Clark, 1991; Gonsalves, 2001). However, these arguments do not apply to all organisations, and there are many who do want to disseminate information and have their work replicated, as well as replicate the work of others. The initiating organisation could also choose what to add to the Portfolio, and the level of detail they provide.

Another risk for the education sector is that educators are often uneasy with the idea of 'best practices' as education is considered highly contextual and related not only to outcomes, but also to processes (Samoff et al, 2005). Cooley and Kohl (2006, p.9) refer to a set of categories used by the World Bank which provides a useful insight in to what is meant by these terms. Beginning with the lowest requirement for objective evidence, these terms start with 'innovation', then 'promising practice' using anecdotal reports and testimonials, followed by 'model' which requires evidence from a few cases. To be known as 'good practice' requires clear evaluations and evidence from several settings, 'best practice' requires additional impact evaluations and expert reviews, and finally 'policy principle' would be for widely applied truisms, essential for success. The Portfolio is envisaged to only require the evidence needed for the first three categories, and 'best practice' is unlikely to be suggested given the emphasis on concepts. Educators are therefore less likely to have an aversion to this approach. The other fear in education could be the risk that the Portfolio might encourage 'innovation overload', which occurs when a new initiative is introduced if the initial one does not appear to be producing results, often perpetuated by the desire for 'quick' solutions, and based on inadequate evidence (Samoff et al, 2005). Although guidelines could be provided alongside the Portfolio, the basic premise is that it provides information, the use to which it is put, would depend on the adopter.

3.2. How the Portfolio would work

The main goal of the Portfolio is to increase the overall impact and effectiveness of the sector by creating a learning community around initiative innovation, implementation, and scaling-up. It would primarily be designed to serve the key contributors and adopters, with application for a wider audience. The Portfolio would disseminate information primarily on pilot projects, where at least one new technical, process or organisational innovation is demonstrated, as applied to a specific problem or context (Cooley and Kohl, 2006; Hartmann and Linn, 2008). An example is provided in Chapter 4. By contributing to the Portfolio, these would then in effect become demonstration projects, where awareness of an existing model is raised to become better known and more widely accepted by potential users and decision makers (Cooley and Kohl, 2006). The concepts themselves would need to be simplified to clarify what is being scaled-up and make the initiative easy to understand, transfer and adapt, as well as removing elements which cannot or need not be replicated (Boyer et al, 2008; Duflo, 2004; Cooley and Kohl, 2006; Hartmann and Linn, 2008; WHO, 2009a). The Portfolio would usefully do this by distinguishing between invariable aspects essential for replication, and variable aspects which can be adopted or not, as shown in section 4.1.

It is important that information is provided with a wide ranging audience in mind, keeping vocabulary simple, accessible and understandable, as theoretical constructs from individual disciplines can render experiences unintelligible to others (Elliot and Lukes, 2008). To be of value, contributions must also be written in a way which allows the potential adopter to identify lessons learned, drawing their own generalisations and applicability to their own practices (Fajans et al, 2007). A prospective and retrospective outlook would also be useful, making future recommendations, as well as providing information on what has already been done (Arbor, 2009). The provision of contributors' contact details or websites would provide a platform whereby further information could be sought, or official training, workshops or supervision could be offered (Simmons et al, 2007). Updates could also be carried out by a Portfolio administrator, who could also act as a 'gatekeeper' for new contributions, providing advice and assistance where required and ensuring information added to the site is of good quality and in keeping with its design. By encouraging a wide range of contributors to share their knowledge, both local and international research and practitioner knowledge could be validated (Oudenhoven and Wazir, 1998). However it is essential that potential adopters also validate the information for themselves in their own contexts, as each case study is likely to be based on how embedded the contributor is in the concept and context within which they work (Elliot and Lukes, 2008). By including a range of organisations often inaccessible from the mainstream, the Portfolio could potentially open the sector up to a wide range of new approaches.

Potential adopters would then be able to search the initiatives and evaluate whether one can be adapted to their context, or create new initiatives based on these existing ideas. They could use the Portfolio for advice and guidance for their own plans, and draw on comparisons with other initiatives. If an existing approach is adopted, they would be expected to add their learning on a link from the original contribution, including their own evaluations and adaptations. This information would allow learning to be shared across regions and countries, helping initiatives grow and evolve, understanding the key role continuous improvement can play in spreading an innovation (UNESCO, 2005; Clarke and Dede, 2006; Robinson, 2009).
For the wider audience, it would also be possible to provide links to other websites, donors, useful documents, guidelines and journal articles and to create discussion boards, enhancing learning for anyone working in the field. There have been increasing challenges for educational research to contribute more effectively to policy and practice worldwide (Crossley and Holmes, 2001; Hartmann and Linn, 2008), and this could provide a platform for it. As Samoff et al, 2005, p.7) point out, “Where it is so difficult to find relevant research and to compare experiences in different settings, there can be little productive link between research and policy.” To this end, as referred to in section 3.1, it is important that the Portfolio actively encourages contributions with constructive criticism of projects which have not succeeded, as well as those which have (Nicolae, 2010; Duflo, 2004; Clark; 1991). This could allow those about to embark on similar projects to save valuable resources by understanding its limitations and abandoning it or adapting it where possible. However NGOs might require encouragement to provide information on failures as success stories often serve to provide evidence of success for future funding causing some NGOs to deliberately restrict objective evaluative studies and public dissemination (Clark, 1991). However, positive reporting and ignoring failures is said to cause a credibility gap, increased frustration, repetition of mistakes and wasted resources, making it essential to see all case studies as positive, whether successful or not (Nicolae, 2010). Thus the Portfolio is conceptualised not

only for the 'proliferation of success' (Deak, 2008), but also the dissemination and sharing of mutual knowledge and learning, in keeping with its goal.

4. Application in practice

This chapter will draw upon my own experience of being involved in establishing an educational NGO in Cambodia called Conversations with Foreigners (CWF). The chapter will serve two important functions. The first is to suggest and apply criteria for the Portfolio of replicable concepts discussed in Chapter 3, giving an idea of the outline and detail envisaged. The second is to use the information in this case study to assist a discussion of which path for replication from Chapter 2 would be best used by CWF to achieve scaling-up success.

4.1. Applying the Portfolio criteria

Name of the organisation initiating the model: Conversations with Foreigners (CWF)
Website or contact details: www.volunteerincambodia.org
Location of the organisation: Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
Project duration: Ongoing since September 2006.

Keywords (for search): Fundraising, School, Language, Cambodia.
Information valid as of: August 2010.
Sources of information: Website and internal documents.

Overall goal: To provide affordable, foreign taught conversational English language lessons to local adult students, while raising money for a rural LNGO.

Basic diagram of the model:

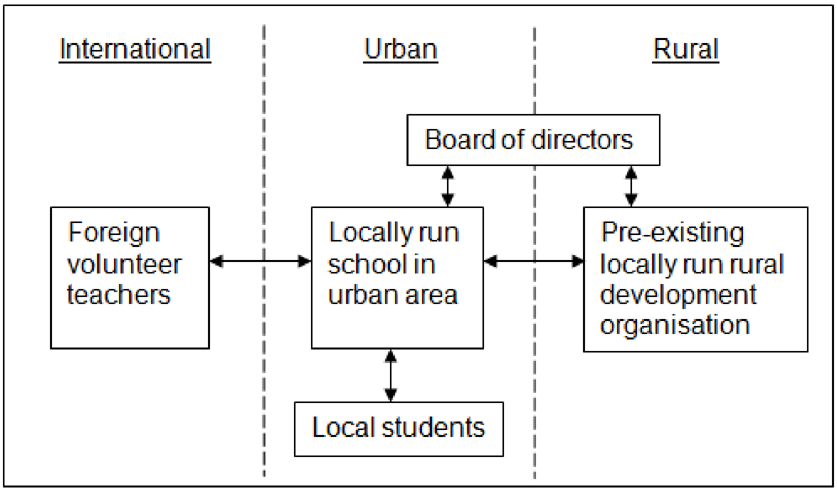

Figure 4.1. CWF concept diagram

Brief explanation of the model:

The central aspect of the model is a locally run urban school. The existing school teaches conversational English language to adults, but it could feasibly be used to teach other subject matter such as professional training. The school provides three months teaching to local students, in exchange for a low cost fee (relative to local prices) of US$30. As the school involves teaching practical conversational English skills with foreigners, courses are taught by unpaid foreign volunteers fluent in English, with no teaching experience required. The volunteers can either accommodate themselves independently, or pay to stay in group accommodation provided by the school. Any profit from the school is sent to support a local rural development organisation. Major decisions and the use of donations are ultimately overseen by a board of directors with members from both organisations, who meet monthly.

Invariable aspects (essential for success):

All aspects of the diagram above, unless the school is not for conversations with foreigners, then volunteers could also be local. The board of directors is important for accountability and sustainability, and the model is meant to be run by local people, for local people, with the assistance of volunteers. If the school is not going to be based in urban areas, viability and payment of tuition fees should be considered, as well as the possible negative impact and ‘demonstration effect’ (Guttentag, 2009) caused by having large numbers of largely inexperienced volunteers passing through more fragile rural environments. The school could raise money for any reliable worthy cause, but care should be taken that the money raised remains within the country, as the model is based on the internal movement of money to those most in need.

Variable aspects (not essential for success):

To study at the school students must have a basic level of English, with simple oral entry tests carried out to ascertain at which of the ten levels to enter students. The course book consists of a picture, vocabulary and interactive activities. Classrooms are set up in a participative horseshoe shape, with one teacher per class of up to ten students of mixed ages, genders and backgrounds. Students learn for one hour a day.

Cost of implementation and ongoing balance sheet (rounded):

Start up: US$5000	Gross Profit	Total Costs	Net Profit/Loss
Year 1 (September–December 2006):	US$11,600	US$15,000	-US$3,400
Year 2 (January–December 2007):	US$60,600	US$45,200	+US$15,400
Year 3 (January–December 2008):	US$95,400	US$59,000	+US$36,400

Success measures including number of beneficiaries served:

Number of students taught: 700 per semester currently, almost 5,000 in total.
Total funding to LNGO: US$37,700, first payment in 2007.
Number of paid staff members (all local): 16.
Total number of volunteers: over 200.
Self-sufficient: tuition fees cover school costs, volunteers pay for the volunteer house.

Reasons for success and/or failure:

The school is based on high local demand for conversational English classes in Phnom Penh mostly to help communicate more effectively with the growing number of tourists, and find employment in the growing NGO sector. By running a low cost school with volunteer teachers, tuition fees were just above the local alternative of classes of around 100 students per local teacher. This market niche meant that after the initial intake of students, demand was high enough to require a waiting list. The main risk is the models reliance on foreign volunteers. Although mediated somewhat by recruiting part-time foreign volunteers living locally, without ongoing marketing and recruitment and stable, safe conditions for volunteers, the school could not continue as it is. Changes might include a new curriculum taught by local volunteers.

Past scaling-up strategies:

The school has both expanded functionally, by closely partnering with a centre for Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), and has grown in size, moving to a new facility in 2008 to allow space for the increased number of classrooms.

Further advice or guidelines for adopters:

The participatory leadership style adopted by CWF was essential for its success. The team consists of all the local senior staff members, with two foreign volunteers involved only for the first two semesters. After this, foreign volunteer involvement was exclusively for capacity building, organisational development and communications.

Links (further information and contributions from adopters)

4.2. Selecting the best path for replication

As discussed in Chapter 1, the best path for an NGO to use to achieve scaling-up success depends largely on individual circumstances, contextual factors, and what the organisation wishes to achieve by scaling-up. The decision as to which path CWF might choose will be reached by process of elimination, using the paths presented in Chapter 2. Factors considered include the impact on, and capacity of, the initiating organisation, accountability and governance, desired scale, funding, quality, and internal processes and approach. The debate will also be considered in line with the goal of CWF to scale-up both abroad and within Cambodia.

The first two approaches have inherent difficulties which make them very unlikely to be adopted by CWF. The first approach is Mandated replication. As this approach requires the involvement of the public sector, and the school provides informal education, it is unlikely the government would want to make it mandatory. This approach might also cause difficulties with funding channels, as the school has the dual purpose of providing education while raising money for a rural LNGO. It may also struggle to scale-up internationally with no links to other governments. The second approach is Franchise replication, and the main issue here is scale. As CWF does not plan to roll out a large number of initiatives, at least not in the near future, there would be little demand for establishing a central replicating agent. Another limitation is the capacity of CWF to provide this, as it would take a great deal of time, expertise and money to be effective, and if ineffective, it could impact negatively on its reputation. It would also be difficult to franchise abroad with no experience outside of Cambodia.

Staged replication might be a useful approach for replication within Cambodia, however due both to inexperience abroad and the goal of CWF to raise money within the same country as the beneficiary, it would not be possible to use this approach to replicate abroad. Should CWF wish to do this by establishing a new beneficiary abroad, it would require new staff from that country with local expertise, and a great deal of adaptation to fit another countries' practice. As the aim of Staged replication is to test and refine an initiative rigorously before replicating on a large scale, and to retain the initiative within the same organisation, this would perhaps not be the best path to use when others are available. A more appropriate path might be Concept replication. This approach can allow a great deal of local adaptation and ownership, and is applicable both within and outside of Cambodia. The main advantage is that greater impact could be achieved at little risk to the initial organisation, especially where subsequent sites are outside Phnom Penh. However, in doing this, CWF are unlikely to have any interaction with, or direct benefits from the new site.

The most suitable approach is therefore likely to be Network replication. CWF could partake in mutual learning with the new site and not be limited by their own organisational capacity or international expertise. The degree of involvement could also be decided by the network agreement to ensure they do not overlap becoming competitors for students. There is also no lower limit on the number of organisations needed to take advantage of economies of scale and they could jointly market to volunteers. The network could also be built up slowly as it does not require one large roll-out. It also caters for CWF's more participatory approach, with local site adaptation, and would work overseas as well as in-country. After building up an initial network, CWF could actively seek more organisations to network with.

Conclusion

This dissertation started with the question, 'How is replication best achieved by educational NGOs seeking scaling-up success?' This question comes at a crucial time for NGOs who are increasingly recognised as central agents for the achievement of development goals, including the MDGs in five years time. Scaling-up is found to help overcome two main limitations of NGOs by increasing both their impact and effectiveness. This dissertation establishes replication as both an essential and varied path to consider. It also improves understanding of the different paths to replication, helping NGOs to decide which path to choose for scaling-up success. New diagrams, definitions and explanations of these paths are introduced to help achieve this. It also details the debates around the paths, allowing theorists and practitioners alike to reflect on their own experience and draw their own conclusions. The debate is enhanced by considering factors unique to education, and by providing current educational examples. Having followed these arguments to their fruition, it is clear that there is no one universally best way to achieve scaling-up success through replication, as it depends on a NGOs individual circumstances and context. A compelling case for a new path called 'Network replication' is also presented. Figure 5 positions Network replication within the scaling-up taxonomy.

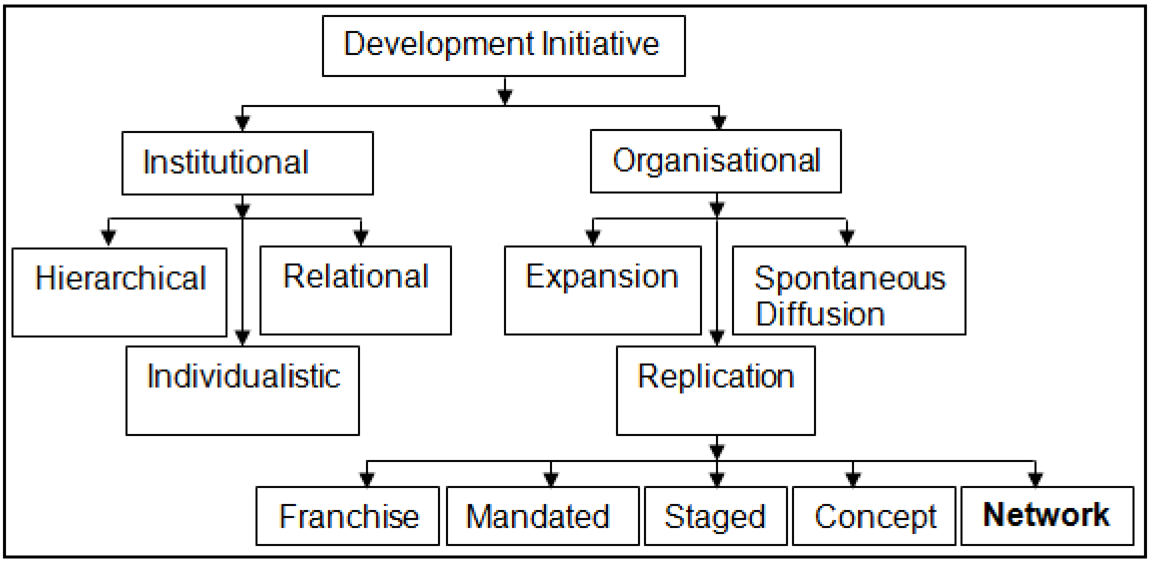

Figure 5. Approaches and paths to scaling-up

Three key suggestions for future research emerge from this dissertation. The first is to revisit the replication diagrams and ensure they fit all applications for the paths. The second is to carry out Network replication in practice and critically evaluate its successes and failures, disseminating information on its practical application and outcomes. The third is to assess the feasibility of establishing the Portfolio of replicable concepts put forward in this dissertation, and research how it could be applied most effectively. This would include revisiting the Portfolio criteria to ensure it provides all the detail needed to understand the basic concept of all initiatives, while remaining relatively short and simple in nature. Having established what is currently available in the literature and applied it to practice and to a specific educational initiative, this dissertation attempts to both bring the scaling-up discourse forward and indicate the possibilities for future research.

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