VI. Sustainability and Scale-up

- Defining Sustainability
- Sustainability seen as a Systemic Change Process
- Scale-up is Systemic Change
- Sustaining & Scaling-up What? Making a Strong Argument
- What’s Involved in Sustaining and Scaling-up Valued Functions?
- Guidelines, Stages, and Steps
Too many good programs initiated as specially funded projects, pilots, and demonstrations tend to be lost when the period of special funding ends. We have developed a guide/toolkit which is designed as a resource aid for those in schools and communities who are concerned about sustaining valuable initiatives and innovations*.

The following material is excerpted from that work.

Optimally, sustainability should be a focus from day one of a project’s implementation. With most projects, pilots, and demonstrations, however, the pressure of just becoming operational often means that sustainability is not a major focus until well into the work and close to the end of the temporary funding. The guidebook has been developed with this reality in mind.

*Sustaining School and Community Efforts to Enhance Outcomes for Children and Youth: A Guidebook and Tool Kit.
Downloadable at – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/
The following material is oriented to the idea that the essence of sustainability is making systemic changes. In particular, the guide emphasizes that the likelihood of sustaining good approaches for enhancing outcomes for children, youth, and communities is increased if the functions are integrated into the fabric of existing support programs and services and school improvement efforts.

Also, we stress that equity requires that any good work that can benefit students in one school should be replicated in every school (taken to scale) so that all students in a school district have an opportunity to experience the benefits. And this, of course, involves systemic changes.
Defining Sustainability

A dictionary definition indicates that *to sustain* is “to keep in existence; to maintain; to nurture; to keep from failing; to endure” (American Heritage Dictionary, 1994).

***************

Another way to view sustainability is in terms of institutionalizing system changes.

As Robert Kramer (2002) states: “Institutionalization is the active process of establishing your initiative – not merely continuing your program, but developing relationships, practices, and procedures that become a lasting part of the community.”

***************

And, with respect to new directions for student support:

The aim of sustainability is to facilitate continuation of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach that supports students, families, schools, and communities.

Doing so requires effective planning which includes:

- resource mapping
- alignment of interventions and outcomes throughout a system
- implementation of effective mechanisms and/or structures
- reallocation of resources
Two Alternative Ways of Thinking about Sustaining Programs

(1) Give us more money so we can carry on the work.

(2) We need to make systemic changes because if we don’t we will lose some valued functions.
Sustainability as Systemic Change

With a view to sustaining valued functions, most demonstration projects and initiatives can be a catalyst for systemic change.

More to the point, it is frequently the case that such projects must produce systemic changes or much of what they have developed is unlikely to be sustained.
About Scale-Up

• Pilots and demonstrations are not ends in themselves.

• Most are meant to show what is worth doing in other schools and neighborhood.

• A basic commitment to equity demands that effective practices be scaled-up.

• This is what it means to ensure that all youngsters are provided an equal opportunity to succeed.

• Replicating and scaling-up good practices requires sophisticated systemic change strategies.
Some *First Challenges* in Shifting Thinking About Sustainability and Scale-up

When more money is unlikely, first challenges are for project staff to:

- start thinking in terms of no *new* money (e.g., thinking about redeploying, leveraging)
- overcome “Project Mentality” and accept that what is required is systemic change
- reframe the work as part of the organization’s fundamental mission (e.g., *No Child Left Behind*)
- enlist the support of key leaders and champions and find ways to join decision making tables
- learn more about catalyzing systemic change.
What’s Involved in Sustaining and Scaling-up Valued Functions?

Summary of Some Specific Concerns Related to Sustainability Planning and Implementation

(1) Nature and scope of focus

- What specific functions are to be sustained (e.g., specific interventions or program packages)
- Will one or more sites/organizations be involved?
- Is the intent to make system-wide changes?

(2) Key facets related to undertaking any area of focus

- Ongoing social marketing
- Articulation of a clear, shared vision for the work
- Ensuring there is a major policy commitment from all participating partners
- Negotiating partnership agreements
- Designating leadership
- Enhancing/developing an infrastructure based on a clear articulation of essential functions (e.g., mechanisms for governance and priority setting, steering, operations, resource mapping and coordination; strong facilitation related to all mechanisms)
- Redeploying resources and establishing new ones
- Building capacity (especially personnel development and strategies for addressing personnel and other stakeholder mobility)
- Establishing standards, evaluation processes, and accountability procedures

(3) Phases related to making systemic changes

- Creating readiness (motivation and capability – enhancing the climate/culture for change)
- Initial implementation (phasing-in the new with well-designed guidance and support)
- Institutionalization (maintaining and sustaining the new)
- Ongoing evolution and creative renewal
Sustaining & Scaling-up What? Making a Strong Argument

- It’s not about sustaining someone’s job; it’s about sustaining important functions.

- It’s not about another grant; it’s about Systemic Change that builds on the strong foundation you establish.

- It’s not just about safety and health; it’s about a broad perspective for addressing barriers to student learning (and in the process creating safe and healthy schools and students)
Strong arguments are framed within a “big picture” context of school and community efforts to strengthen students, families, schools, and/or neighborhoods.

They make the case by

(a) focusing on *specific functions* that are essential to achieving highly valued outcomes and that will be lost when a project ends,

(b) connecting those functions with the overall vision and mission of the institutions asked to sustain them, and

(c) clarifying cost-effective strategies for maintaining the functions.
Guidelines, Stages, and Steps
A Few Guidelines

• To counter marginalization, translate interventions into functions that are essential to the institution’s mission and accountability measures and frame them in terms of a comprehensive approach.

• To avoid fragmentation of effort and counterproductive competition among staff, design and implement new and expanded school-based activities in ways that integrate them fully with existing school programs, services, and personnel.

• Use acquisition of extra-mural funding to leverage commitments for the type of systemic changes that will be essential to sustaining and scaling-up valued functions. (In doing so, establish clear priorities, and revisit memoranda of understanding -- MOUs -- to leverage stronger commitments.

• Focus first on the redeployment of current resources so that recommendations for systemic change are based on existing resources as much as is feasible. (This requires mapping and analyzing the available resource base.) Requests for additional resources are made only after it is evident that major gaps cannot be filled using existing resources more efficiently.

• Design and establish an infrastructure that not only can carry out program functions, but also connects with decision making bodies and is capable of facilitating systemic change. For example, someone must be responsible for facilitating the creation of motivational readiness for any specific systemic change.

• Use effectiveness data and information on cost-effectiveness in advocating for sustaining specific activities and approaches.

• Identify a critical mass of “champions” to advocate and expedite and established them as an active steering body.

• Throughout, pursue social marketing and formative and benchmark evaluation.
Stage A: Preparing the Argument for Valued Functions

Stage B: Mobilizing Interest, Consensus, and Support among Key Stakeholders

Stage C: Clarifying Feasibility

Stage D: Proceeding with Specific Systemic Changes
Stage A: Preparing the Argument for Valued Functions

The process of preparing a strong argument begins by ensuring that advocates for sustaining (and eventually scaling-up) a project’s functions understand the larger context in which such functions play a role. Of particular importance is awareness of prevailing and pending policies, institutional priorities, and their current status and how existing resources might be redeployed to sustain and scale-up valued functions that otherwise will be lost.

With this in mind, there are five steps to pursue in readying the argument:

1. Developing an understanding of the local “big picture” context for all relevant interventions. This involves, for example, amassing information that clarifies the school and community vision, mission statements, current policies, and major agenda priorities.

2. Developing an understanding of the current status of efforts to accomplish goals related to the school and community vision, for example, clarifying the degree to which current priorities are well-founded and the rate of progress toward addressing major problems and promoting healthy development.

3. Delineating the functions, tasks, and accomplishments the project initiative has contributed with respect to the larger agenda and where the functions fit in terms of current policy and program priorities.

4. Clarifying what functions will be lost if the school(s) and community do not sustain them and take them to scale. The emphasis here is on articulating the implications of the loss in terms of negative impact on achieving the larger agenda.

5. Articulating cost-effective strategies for valued functions, for example, focusing on how functions can be integrated with existing activity and supported with existing resources, how some existing resources can be redeployed to underwrite the functions, how current efforts can be used to leverage new funds.
Stage B: Mobilizing Interest, Consensus, and Support among Key Stakeholders

In presenting the argument for sustainability, it is important to have a critical mass of influential and well-informed stakeholders who will be potent advocates for the initiative. The steps involved in developing this cadre of supporters include:

6. Identifying champions and other individuals who are committed to the functions and clarifying the mechanism(s) for bringing supporters together to steer and work for sustainability and scale-up.

7. Planning and implementing a “social marketing” strategy to mobilize a critical mass of stakeholder support.

8. Planning and implementing strategies to obtain the support of key policy makers, such as administrators and school boards.

Stage C: Clarifying Feasibility

The preceding steps all contribute to creating initial readiness for making decisions to sustain and scale-up valued functions. Next steps encompass formulating plans that clarify specific ways the functions can become part of the larger school and community agenda. This raises considerations related to infrastructure and daily operations and the full range of systemic change concerns. These are addressed by:

9. Clarifying how the functions can be institutionalized through existing, modified, or new infrastructure and operational mechanisms, for example, mechanisms for leadership, administration, capacity building, resource deployment, and integration of efforts.

10. Clarifying how necessary changes can be accomplished, for example, mechanisms for steering change, external and internal change agents, and underwriting for the change process.

11. Formulating a longer-range strategic plan for maintaining momentum, progress, quality improvement, and creative renewal.
By this point in the process, the following matters should have been clarified:
(a) what valued functions could be lost,
(b) why they should be saved, and
(c) who can help champion a campaign for saving them.

In addition, strong motivational readiness for the necessary systemic changes should have been established. Done effectively, the process will have engendered strong motivational readiness for the necessary systemic changes.

---

**Stage D: Proceeding with Specific Systemic Changes**

At this juncture, it is time to initiate the implementation process for the necessary systemic changes. Because substantive change requires stakeholder readiness, it is essential to determine if the preceding steps accomplished the task. If not, it becomes necessary to revisit some of the earlier steps. Then, it is a matter of carrying out the plans made during Stage C with full appreciation of the complex dynamics that arise whenever complex systems undergo change.

Specific steps encompass:

12. Assessing, and if necessary enhancing, readiness to proceed with systemic changes needed to sustain valued functions.

13. Establishing an infrastructure and action plan for carrying out the changes.

14. Anticipating barriers and how to handle them.

15. Negotiating initial agreements, such as a memorandum of understanding.

16. Maintaining high levels of commitment to accomplishing necessary systemic changes, for example, ensuring each task/objective is attainable, ensuring effective task facilitation and follow-through, negotiating long-term agreements and policy, celebrating each success, and facilitating renewal.
Clearly, the many steps and tasks described above call for a high degree of commitment and relentlessness of effort.

Major systemic changes are not easily accomplished.

Awareness of the myriad political and bureaucratic difficulties involved in making major institutional changes, especially with limited financial resources, leads to the caution that the type of approach described is not a straight-forward sequential process.

Rather, the work proceeds and changes emerge in overlapping and spiraling ways.
Some Tools:

> Assessing Readiness for Systemic Change

> Benchmarks for Monitoring and Reviewing Progress

> Reflecting on the Foundation that has been Established
Tool for analyses: Assessing Readiness for Systemic Change
(Focus is on School/Community Approaches to Addressing Barriers to Learning, Promoting Healthy Development, & Closing the Achievement Gap)

Location: Date Started Date Completed Current Status

I. Orienting Stakeholders

A. Basic ideas and relevant research base are introduced to key stakeholders using "social marketing" strategies
   > school administrators
   > school staff
   > families in the community
   > business stakeholders

B. Opportunities for interchange are provided & additional in-depth presentations are made to build a critical mass of consensus for systemic changes

C. Ongoing evaluation of interest is conducted until a critical mass of stakeholders indicate readiness to pursue a policy commitment

D. Ratification and sponsorship are elicited from a critical mass of stakeholders

II. Establishing Policy Commitment & Framework

E. Establishment of a high level policy and assurance of leadership commitment

F. Policy is translated into an inspiring vision, a framework, and a strategic plan that phases in changes using a realistic time line

G. Policy is translated into appropriate resource allocations (leadership, staff, space, budget, time)

H. Establishment of incentives for change (e.g., intrinsically valued outcomes, expectations for success, recognitions, rewards)

I. Establishment of procedural options that reflect stakeholder strengths and from which those expected to implement change can select strategies they see as workable

J. Establishment of an infrastructure and processes that facilitate change efforts

K. Establishment of a change agent position

L. Establishment of temporary infrastructure mechanisms for making systemic changes

M. Initial capacity-building – developing essential skills among stakeholders to begin implementation

N. Benchmarks are used to provide feedback on progress and to make necessary improvement in the process for creating readiness
## Benchmarks for Monitoring and Reviewing Progress of Sustainability Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date started</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Preparing the Argument for Sustaining Valued Functions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing an understanding of the <em>current status</em> of the local big picture agenda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying how specific functions have contributed to the big picture agenda (e.g., data on results) and where the functions fit in terms of current policy and program priorities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying what valued functions will be lost if the school(s) and community do not determine ways to sustain them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Mobilizing Interest, Consensus, and Support among Key Stakeholders</strong></td>
<td>Date started</td>
<td>Date Completed</td>
<td>Current Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying champions for the functions and clarifying the mechanism(s) for bringing a broad base of supporters together to work on sustainability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying cost-effective strategies for sustaining functions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and implementing a “social marketing” strategy specifically to garner a critical mass of stakeholder support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and implementing strategies to obtain the support of key policy makers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III. Clarifying Feasibility</strong></td>
<td>Date started</td>
<td>Date Completed</td>
<td>Current Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying how the functions can be institutionalized into existing, modified, or new infrastructure of organizational and operational mechanisms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying how necessary changes can be accomplished</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulating a longer-range strategic plan for maintaining momentum, progress, quality improvement, and creative renewal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. Proceeding with Specific Systemic Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Date started</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessing readiness to proceed with specific systemic changes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing an infrastructure and action plan for carrying out the changes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating barriers and how to handle them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating and renegotiating initial agreements (e.g., MOUs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining high levels of commitment to accomplishing desirable and necessary systemic changes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An overarching benchmark involves the monitoring of the implementation of the evaluation action plan.

Planners must understand the environment in which they work and acknowledge the chaos that is present.

W. Sybouts
Reflecting on the Foundation that has been Established

• As one basis for group discussions, it will help if you take a few minutes to reflect on your experiences and any key insights you acquired from this presentation.

• Then, take a few more minutes to jot down your responses to the following questions.

• Then, discuss your responses with the others who are concerned about this.

(1) What has been accomplished so far as a direct result of the project?

(2) What important functions do you fear will be lost at the end of the project?

(3) What strategic steps are needed to ensure continuation of these important functions and accomplishments?
For more indepth resources to help address barriers to learning and close the achievement gap, go to our website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu and browse and download at no cost Center developed resources (hard copies are available). You can also directly link to other resources and Centers from our website.

A Few Examples of Center developed resources related to sustainability are:

Introductory Packets:
  > Financial Strategies to Aid in Addressing Barriers to Learning
  > Working Collaboratively: From School-Based Teams to School-Community-Higher Education Connections

Resource Aid Packets:
  > Addressing Barriers to Learning: A Set of Surveys to Map What a School Has and What It Needs
  > Guidelines for a Student Support Component

Technical Aid Packets
  > Resource Mapping and Management to Address Barriers to Learning: An Intervention for Systemic Change

Technical Assistance Samplers:
  > A Sampling of Outcome Findings from Intervention Relevant to Addressing Barriers to Learning

Guides to Practice:
  > School-Community Partnerships: A Guide
  > Sustaining School-Community Partnerships to Enhance Outcomes for Children and Youth: A Guidebook and Tool Kit

Continuing Education Modules:
  > Developing Resource-Oriented Mechanisms to Enhance Learning Supports
  > Leadership Training: Moving in New Directions for Student Support

Center Reports:
  > Restructuring Boards of Education to Enhance Schools’ Effectiveness in Addressing Barriers to Student Learning
  > Organization Facilitators: A Change Agent for Systemic School and Community Changes
  > Framing New Directions for School Counselors, Psychologists, & Social Workers
  > New Directions for School & Community Initiatives to Address Barriers to Learning: Two examples of White Papers to Inform and Guide Policy Makers

See the entire resource list online, and if you don’t find what you need, call us (toll free) at 866-846-4843 or email Linda Taylor at ltaylor@ucla.edu.

You can also be added to our newsletter mailing list, monthly electronic newsletter, or weekly practitioner listserv. Just email us your contact information.