POVERTY REDUCTION THAT WORKS

Experience of Scaling Up Development Success

UNDP

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Poverty Reduction that Works

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Experience of Scaling Up Development Success

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Foreword

This compilation of global experience examines twenty examples of innovative targeted poverty reduction interventions from 15 countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Nepal, Paraguay, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. The key questions asked are: what makes good practice for targeted poverty reduction, and how can this good practice be scaled up? What has worked and why? The book concludes that there are five inherent tensions limiting the impact of intervention design and implementation, and contains case studies where most of these challenges have been addressed. This has enabled micro-level initiatives to reduce poverty.

This book has come out of a process that lasted over a year, involving extensive consultation with colleagues around the world leading to an exciting participatory conference on MDG localization in Sri Lanka. Local poverty initiatives play a significant role in a continent where inequality is rising as fast as national incomes. Obviously this does not deny the critical significance of a poverty-reducing macro-environment. High growth and reasonable levels of equity are the foundation of poverty reduction. These pillars, however, leave some communities in the shadow of prosperity. Targeted micro-interventions throw light on the marginalized and build just societies.

This MDG localization initiative was led by Juan Mayo Ragragio, Paul Steele, Neil Fernando, Maneka Weddikkara and Sanath Manage of the UNDP Regional Centre in Colombo (RCC). We would like to thank all the development practitioners who shared their experience in the case studies presented here, and Earthscan publishers who efficiently brought this to publication.

The lessons of this book are carefully crafted to warn against over-simplistic replication models. The conference focused on a dialogue among practitioners on how to apply lessons learned pragmatically under diverse environments. This is a publication of the Millennium Development Goal Initiative at RCC, which is a programme designed to assist countries in accelerating progress towards their MDG attainment.

O. Noman.

Omar Noman
Chief of Policies and Programmes UNDP Regional Centre in Colombo

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACHR	Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
ADDCN	Association of District Development Committees
AI	artificial insemination
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ANR	Asociación Nacional Republicana
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
ASHG	artisan self help group
BAPPENAS	National Development Planning Agency
Basin	Building Advisory Services and Information Network
BLDC	Balkh Livestock Development Centre
BPL	below poverty line
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
BSHIIP	Bindoy Social Health Insurance Indigence Program
CA	conservation agriculture
CBET	Chambok Community-Based Ecotourism
CBMIS	community-based monitoring information system
CBO	community-based organization
CCBEN	Cambodian Community Based Ecotourism Network
CDB	commune development board
CDD	community-driven development
CDF	community development fund
CDP	commune development plan
CEMA	Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs
CFPR/TUP	Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction/Targeting the Ultra-Poor
CHC	city health centre
CMAC	Cambodia Mine Action Committee
CMS	content management system
COGENT	International Coconut Genetic Resources Network
COM	Community Operations Manual
CPLTC	Community Professional Learning and Training Centre
CPN(M)	Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

CSC	community score card
CSR	corporate social responsibility
CVC	community voice card
CVT	community voice tool
CWMB	community's civil work management board
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DDC	district development committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DPCU	district project coordination unit
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRRO	District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer
DTF	Development Technocrats' Forum
DWMA	Distributed Work Management Application
EGPRSP	Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
EOC	emergency operation centre
ERSAP	Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FNCCI	Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry
GO	Government Order
GoI	Government of India
GoN	Government of Nepal
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
GoTN	Government of Tamil Nadu
HEPR	hunger eradication and poverty reduction
HRDC	human resource development centre
HRDP	Ha Tinh Rural Development Project
IAY	Indira Awaas Yojana
ICT	information and communications technology
IDP	internally displaced person
IDS	integrated dairy scheme
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IGVGD	Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development
IPGRI	International Plant Genetic Resources Institute
IPM	integrated pest management
IRDA	Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority
KDU	Kabul Dairy Union
KPEL	Kemitraan Pembagunan Ekonomi Loka
LED	local economic development
LGU	local government unit
LPA	local public administration
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MBN	minimum basis needs

MC	management committee
MCC	milk collection centre
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFI	microfinance institution
MLD	Ministry of Local Development
MNBEID	Ministry of Nation Building and Estate Infrastructure Development
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MOWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MPCS	milk producers' cooperative society
MPDF	Municipal Partnership Development Fund
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MuAN	Municipal Association of Nepal
NCCM	National Council for Childhood and Motherhood
NGO	non-government organization
NHIA	National Health Insurance Act
NPC	National Planning Commission
OVOP	One Village One Product
PC	people's company
PCA	Philippine Coconut Authority
PCF	production centre functionary
Phil-Health	Philippine Health Insurance Corporation
PMCDB	Project Micro-Credit Development Board
PMDP	Participatory Municipal Development Planning
PPA	participatory poverty assessment
PPCU	Provincial Project Coordination Unit
PPP	public–private partnership
PRSP	poverty reduction strategy paper
PSU	project support unit
RCF	revolving credit fund
RHU	rural health unit
RMC	rural market centre
RoI	returns on investment
RRD	Relief and Rehabilitation Directorate
RUNET	Rural–Urban Linkage Network
RUPP	Rural Urban Partnership Programme
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SEDEMA	Socio-economic Development Programme for Ethnic Minority Areas
SEWA	Self-employed Women's Association
SHG	self-help group
SME	small and medium enterprise

SRA	Social Reform Agenda
TA	technical assistance
TDU	technology demonstration unit
THF	Tibet Heritage Fund
TLO	tole/lane organization
UIC	urban information centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNTRS	United Nations Team for Recovery Support in Tamil Nadu
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VCSG	village credit and savings groups
VDC	village development committee
VDF	Village Development Fund
VDP	village development programme
VFU	veterinary field unit
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding
VO	village organization
VSCO	Village Savings and Investment Organization
VSHLI	Village Self Help Learning Initiative
WFP	World Food Programme
WSCG	women's saving and credit group
WSHG	women's self help group
WUA	water users' association
WTO	World Trade Organization
YAPD	Youth Association for Population and Development
YSDF	Youth Skill Development Fund

Overview

Paul Steele, Neil Fernando and Maneka Weddikkara

Targeted poverty reduction efforts

The Asia-Pacific region is home to more than half the world's population and over 60 per cent of the world's poor people (UNESCAP/ADB/UNDP, 2007). Rapid progress in poverty reduction in the region is crucial if the world is to make significant progress toward meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

To ensure that countries are able to achieve the MDGs by 2015, macro-policies to generate growth are crucial. In many countries, especially in Asia, macro-economic policies are relatively stable and the economy of Asia as a whole is growing at over 6 per cent per year. Many countries such as China and India are growing by over 8 per cent per annum (World Bank, 2008b). The ideological battles between the role of the market and the state have diminished – often constrained by the imperatives of globalization and competition for both domestic and foreign private capital.

Millions have been lifted out of poverty by this rapid economic growth – especially in China, India and, to some extent, Bangladesh. But rapid growth has still left many poor people behind. Major pockets of poverty remain. Across Asia, over 70 per cent of poor people live in rural areas (World Bank, 2008b), although they often depend on non-farm incomes through remittances or other financial transfers. There are also increasing numbers of poor people living in slums; Asia is the world's most rapidly urbanizing region. Reduction of poverty in urban slums is a specific MDG target (Target 11). In China, the inland western regions remain much poorer than the booming coastal belt. Some Indian states such as Bihar and Orissa have much higher poverty levels than the national average. Some groups in society – the elderly, children, the disabled, female-headed households and people marginalized by caste, religion and displaced by conflict – are particularly vulnerable to poverty (World Bank, 2008b). To lift these people out of poverty, more than stable macro-economic policies may be needed. It is vital that pro-poor macro-economic policies are complemented by targeted poverty reduction interventions.

In addition to Asia's rapid economic changes, there have been major changes in Asia's political context. Asia has made remarkable progress in democratization. The majority of Asian countries are now democratic for the first time in history. Nonetheless many countries across Asia are struggling with political pluralism. Often these struggles are based on class and religion, but also on ethnicity, caste and clan loyalties to certain political patrons. The struggles can manifest themselves as tensions between central and local decision making, devolution of power and minority rights. Aspects of the struggles can be seen across Asia in countries such as India, China, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

This book reviews how innovative, targeted poverty reduction initiatives have arisen in Asia's dramatically changing economic and political context. Such targeted poverty reduction approaches need to be thoroughly analysed and documented to reveal why some have succeeded and others failed. The book provides valuable lessons on the nature of targeted poverty reduction initiatives and the factors that explain a successful initiative. What worked and why? How can mistakes be avoided and more effective approaches introduced? What are the lessons of these initiatives for improving development outcomes?

Targeted poverty reduction programmes need to be scaled up if they are to have a significant poverty impact. Local 'pilot' projects need to expand beyond their cocoon if they are to be taken seriously. There are many examples of targeted poverty reduction that support a single village or group of villages. There are many NGOs that have targeted poverty reduction programmes, but these remain isolated islands of success. The challenge is to scale up and ultimately support thousands and even millions of poor people to raise themselves out of poverty. How to address this challenge of scaling up is at the heart of the book.

In the following chapters, 20 case studies from around the world – with a main focus on the Asia-Pacific region are analysed using a standard approach to identify what makes good practice for targeted poverty reduction and how can such good practice be scaled up. The book concludes that there are inherent challenges and tensions in intervention design and implementation – which is why scaling up is inherently difficult and there is no standard blueprint. However there are certain lessons that can be learned and when certain challenges and tensions are resolved, scaling up is possible. It is by broadening poverty reduction efforts from primarily a macro-economic and national emphasis to also include targeted poverty reduction interventions that all of Asia's poor people will eventually be lifted out of absolute poverty.

Case studies

To understand scaling up of targeted poverty reduction, it was decided to review existing good practice. A call for good practice in targeted poverty reduction was issued in early 2007 and solicited almost 100 case studies from more than 20 countries spanning Asia, Africa and Latin America. Twenty of the most illuminating abstracts were selected based on agreed criteria including their recognition as a good practice by a third party and their demonstration of scaling up. These case studies were then invited for presentation and discussion at a conference held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in October 2007. The 20 studies were selected from 15 countries, with 17 studies from Asia (including South, South East and East Asia), and 3 from outside Asia (Mexico, Paraguay and Egypt) (see Table 0.1). Contributions came from a range of practitioners working in civil society, government and donor agencies.

Table 0.1 *Case studies and their themes*

THE CASE STUDIES	COUNTRY	THEME/MAIN FOCUS
Part I – Employment Generation and Participatory Area Development		
Chapter 1: Good Practice of the Chambok Community-Based Ecotourism Project in Cambodia	Cambodia	Community-based ecotourism, focusing on environmental conservation and the provision of income generation alternatives
Chapter 2: Promoting Social Mobilization and Appropriate Housing Technologies for Disaster Mitigation and Poverty Reduction in Orissa	India	The use of cost-effective disaster-resistant housing technologies using sustainable artisan self help groups. Linking habitats with sustainable livelihood opportunities
Chapter 3: Upgrading Housing as a Strategy for Poverty Reduction: The Case of Old Lahsa, Tibet	China	Demonstrates how the upgrading of housing and infrastructure can be combined to promote preservation in a participatory way
Part II – Local Economic Development		
Chapter 4: Poverty Reduction through Local Economic Development: 'Pathway out of Poverty' in Indonesia	Indonesia	Creating economic opportunities and growth at sub-national levels
Chapter 5: Poverty Reduction through Rural–Urban Linkages: The Case of Rural–Urban Partnership Programme in Nepal	Nepal	People's participation and enterprise development activities for livelihood options; rural–urban linkages for balanced development and ICT
Chapter 6: One Tambon One Product, Thailand	Thailand	Poverty reduction of the local community through the generation of employment and income
Part III – Agriculture and Rural Development for Poverty Reduction		
Chapter 7: Dairy Projects in Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Innovative approaches for increased milk production, processing of value added products and marketing involving formation of cooperatives

Table 0.1 *(continued)*

THE CASE STUDIES	COUNTRY	THEME/MAIN FOCUS
Chapter 8: Information Communications Technology for Poverty Reduction: Bringing the Technology to Rural and Disadvantaged Communities in Western China	China	Demonstrates an innovative 'multiple-step flow model', involving school teachers, to diffuse on-line agricultural information among rural farmers who do not have access to the internet
Chapter 9: How Joint Action Can Increase Production while Contributing to Poverty Reduction: The Case of Frutika in Paraguay	Paraguay	Public–private partnership
Chapter 10: Poverty Reduction and Millennium Development Goal Localization: A Case Study of Ha Tinh Rural Development Project in Vietnam	Vietnam	Decentralized participatory planning and implementation of community development plans, the development of community-based organizations and the community-implemented Village Infrastructure Development Fund, and social microfinance through the development of women's saving and credit groups
Chapter 11: Good Practice for Poverty Reduction in Coconut-Growing Communities in the Philippines	Philippines	How four good practices associated with coconut farming can reduce the poverty of coconut farmers
Part IV – Localization of Millennium Development Goals and Monitoring		
Chapter 12: Community Driven Development to Improve Livelihoods: The 'Gemidiriya' Project in Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	Employment generation and rural poverty reduction based on the Community Driven Development strategy
Chapter 13: Recent Experience with Community Voice Card: An Innovative Tool for Assessing Service Delivery for the Millennium Development Goals	India	Important lessons from the piloting experiences of a participatory report/score card method
Chapter 14: The P135 Programme for Socio-economic Development of Communes Facing Extreme Difficulties in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas in Vietnam	Vietnam	Targeted budget support for localizing the MDG achievement
Chapter 15: Empowering Women through Home-Based Income Earning Opportunities in Malaysia	Malaysia	Shows the tenacity and innovativeness of homemakers in building a grassroots e-community that promotes information technologies, self-help and economic self-reliance

Table 0.1 *(continued)*

THE CASE STUDIES	COUNTRY	THEME/MAIN FOCUS
Part V – Social Safety Nets and Microfinance		
Chapter 16: Poverty Reduction and Millennium Development Goal Localization: A case study of the Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development Programme in Bangladesh	Bangladesh	Food relief programmes linked to income generating activities supported by microfinance
Chapter 17: Beating the Odds: How Progresa/Oportunidades Became Mexico's Major Poverty Alleviation Programme	Mexico	Substituting food transfers for cash transfers for the extreme poor
Chapter 18: The Phil-Health Indigent Program: A Locality-Based Health Insurance Programme for the Poor in the Philippines	Philippines	An innovative approach employed by several local government units in the Philippines to extend the health insurance coverage to the poor
Chapter 19: VimoSEWA Self Employed Women's Association Microinsurance Programme in India	India	Shares the experiences of a successful microinsurance programme operated by an organization of poor self-employed women workers
Part VI – Community Mobilization and Advocacy for the Millennium Development Goals		
Chapter 20: Sailing the Nile for the Millennium Development Goals: A Yearly Festival of Development, Human Rights and Volunteerism in Egypt	Egypt	An innovative joint initiative with UN Agencies in Egypt aiming to raise awareness, trigger local action and bring United Nations agencies together around the MDGs.

Good practice in targeted poverty reduction

The examples that are showcased in this book illustrate many aspects of good practice in targeted poverty reduction as reviewed below.

Targeting poor people

One important characteristic is the emphasis on identifying or targeting poor people. The case studies demonstrate that aggregate economic growth does not necessarily benefit all of the poor, especially those living in areas or groups still burdened with the consequences of conflict and geographical isolation. Initiatives to address these 'pockets' of severe poverty and directly reach out to the socially excluded can include direct support targeted at the geographical area, at particular groups (for example the elderly) or at sectors where the poor can benefit most.

In this context, one of the challenges of poverty reduction is how to target effectively. Targeting has both advantages and disadvantages in terms of the economic cost of a programme, political acceptability and social inclusion. Sometimes attempts to target the poor can be undermined by 'leakages' when other people benefit through political interference or because a programme is badly designed. Targeting varies depending on what kind of benefits are being provided, such as cash and credit or in kind benefits such as food, training or materials. Self-targeting can be used as a way to reduce leakages, for example, setting wages at a level that would not interest non-poor people.

In terms of the case studies presented here, geographical targeting can be seen in some programmes that focus on certain poor areas, such as the P135 programme of Vietnam. Other programmes such as Progressa in Mexico target particular groups of poor people. Other programmes explicitly target young people, such as unemployed youth in the Lhasa housing programme. Many of the programmes provide a particular focus on women as they are often prone to poverty but when given some assistance may be the most effective in lifting themselves and their children out of poverty. Still other case studies illustrate programmes that target sectors where the poor can benefit most, such as labour-intensive construction in Lhasa, Tibet, or ecotourism in Cambodia.

In order to make sure that targeting works there is a need for effective assessments both at the start of the intervention to form the baseline and as the intervention takes place. There is also a need for accountability mechanisms to ensure that these results are used to reform programmes as required. Many of the case studies reviewed here are notable for the impressive datasets they use to monitor their results and impacts.

Improving the assets of poor people

Poor people are poor for many reasons but a common characteristic is their lack of different kinds of assets – physical, financial, human, social and natural, as set out by the so called 'livelihoods framework'. The obvious implication is that reduction in poverty involves an increase in their asset base in terms of these five key assets:

- *Physical* – many of the case studies focus on increasing the physical infrastructure of an area (the roads, market and storage facilities),such as the case studies for Nepal, Vietnam and Sri Lanka;
- *Financial* – many of the programmes focus on the provision of different types of finance – microfinance to start a business in Sri Lanka or insurance in times of need in India and Bangladesh, or health insurance in the Philippines;
- *Human* – many of the programmes seek to improve the skills base of the poor, often through training. Examples are the housing programme in Orissa, India and the dairy programme in Afghanistan;
- *Natural capital* – the poor are often the most dependent on natural capital and several programmes seek to make their use of nature more productive. This

includes the dairy programme in Afghanistan and the coconut programme in the Philippines

- *Social* – this refers to the networks and organizations to support poor people. Almost all the interventions include some aspect of increasing social capital, particularly the example from Malaysia focusing on group formation among home-based women workers, and the example from China on the role of information technology in creating networks among farmers. There are also interventions to develop market linkages such as the One Tambon One Product market development programme in Thailand.

In addition to directly supporting the assets of the poor, the livelihoods framework also identifies the importance of the broader context, or what some have called the enabling context, that can either advance or constrain poverty reduction. Several of the case studies identify interventions around information dissemination, advocacy and mobilization to increase the voice of the poor and highlight their concerns. The two most obvious examples are the use of 'voice cards' in the Indian case study, which allow poor people to express their views on service quality, and the MDG advocacy campaign in Egypt that seeks to highlight poverty issues in an innovative way.

Areas of intervention for poverty reduction

In summary, it is worth highlighting four major areas: employment, local economic development, agricultural development and social safety nets as instruments of micro-level poverty interventions. These are all areas that are increasingly receiving attention as key components of targeted poverty reduction efforts.

Employment generation

For most development practitioners, the creation of employment is central to poverty reduction.[1] Many of the case studies highlight the importance of increasing the availability of employment for the poor and their increasing labour productivity. This can be in a rural area as in the example of ecotourism in Cambodia, or in an urban area such as construction work in Lhasa in Tibet.

Local economic development

The Thailand case study of One Tambon One Product, the case from Indonesia and the case of Rural Urban Partnership Programme from Nepal are examples of local economic development (LED)[2] projects. The study from Thailand is a good example of using local competitive advantage to create sustainable employment.

Agricultural rural development for poverty reduction[3]

Agriculture as a tool for poverty reduction is not a new theme and it has its successes and failures. However given that it is a source of livelihood for an estimated 86 per cent of rural people and provides jobs for 1.3 billion smallholders and landless workers, it is of great importance and yet has been overlooked over the last decade. Of the developing world's 5.5 billion people, 3 billion live in rural areas (World Bank 2008b). The cases from Afghanistan, Paraguay, the Ha Tinh project in Vietnam, the information and communications technology (ICT) project in China and poverty reduction using coconut-based interventions in the Philippines address the theme of agriculture. The case from Vietnam reveals valuable experience on decentralized participatory planning and implementation of commune development plans. The case from Afghanistan presents the experiences of an integrated dairy development project that uses innovative approaches for increased milk production, processing for value added products and marketing involving the formation of cooperatives. The case from Paraguay illustrates how small farmers through a public–private partnership with Frutika, a Paraguayan fruit juice company, and regional government were able to reduce their poverty.

Social safety nets and microfinance[4]

Improved access and efficient provision of savings, credit, and insurance facilities can enable the poor to ease their consumption, manage their risks better, build their assets gradually, develop their microenterprises, enhance their income earning capacity, and enjoy an improved quality of life. Social safety net-based interventions are illustrated in this book by the cases of the Self Employed Women's Assocation in India, Progresa in Mexico, the Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development Programme in Bangladesh and health insurance in the Philippines.

Decision making by poor people themselves

The 20 case studies reviewed here are consistent with other research that demonstrates that an intervention must be driven by the target group themselves – in particular recognizing the prime role poor people occupy in the development process (Gillespie, 2003). This may also require appropriate 'capacity', defined as 'the ability of individuals, organisations and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner' (Theisohn and Wignaraja, 2007). Creating the necessary conditions and providing the essential ingredients for poor people to help themselves is crucial when undertaking targeted poverty reduction.

So the success of a beneficiary driven development process or a targeted poverty reduction initiative depends partly on the group itself. The target group has to be involved from the outset of a project but with its role not limited to design but also including projecting outcomes, selecting interventions and so on.[5] The 'Gemidiriya' (meaning strength or courage of the village) Community Development and Livelihood Improvement Project in Sri Lanka is an example of decision making by the beneficiary poor themselves, while the crucial involvement of the target group in the planning and implementation process of the project is widely reflected in both Ha Tinh Rural Development Project in Vietnam and Rural Urban Partnership Project in Nepal.

The paradox of scaling up development success

A recurring dilemma surrounding successful micro poverty interventions is how they can be scaled up. One of the reasons why local or community-led development projects work is because the target beneficiaries are empowered to help themselves rather than creating a climate of dependency that many large-scale government- or donor-led projects create (Easterley, 2007).[6] But how do we keep the dynamism of the beneficiary-led approach while also allowing this to be scaled up and replicated? How can dynamism be institutionalized? Resolving this paradox, by reviewing a wealth of practical experience, is the aim of the book.

Scaling up is basically to take an intervention and apply it to a larger target group (Uvin, 1995).[7] Scaling up implies adaptation, modification and improvement and not just replication. Thus scaling up applies not only to a particular technology and techniques, but more importantly to principles and processes.

Much of the discussion of scaling up is focused on non-government organizations (NGOs), where distinctions are drawn between quantitative scaling up, functional scaling up, political scaling up and organizational scaling up (Uvin, 1995; Hooper et al, 2004). However these different types of scaling up are often difficult to distinguish in practice – and our scope here is not just single organizations but whole development processes. So here the term scaling up is used simply to mean impacting a larger target group.

Scaling up is necessary for increased impact of development practice. Where initial or pilot interventions have succeeded, scaling up is the logical next step. Successful pilots remain as islands of successes unless they are scaled up. However one should recognize that scaling up can rarely be done in one big bang at the national level. Moreover, any attempt to scale up successful initiatives needs to recognize the fact that what works at one scale is not likely to work at another scale; shifts in scale involve shifts in scope (Binswanger and Swaminathan, 2003). Simple replications of successful initiatives or an expansion of them may well produce 'diseconomies of scale' and render them unsuccessful (Binswanger and Swaminathan, 2003).

There are many factors that need to be considered when taking an intervention for scaling up. For example, logistically, is it possible to scale up a small project if the target groups are dispersed over a large geographic area or if the different groups have varying contextual challenges? What is the cost–benefit calculation?

Resolving the tensions that limit scaling up

Reviewing the 20 case studies illustrates that there are inherent tensions in many development interventions to target poverty reduction. Thus it is not surprising that so many fail – or are never scaled up beyond their initial focus. Resolving these inherent tensions is at the heart of successful scaling up. We identify eight key tensions and below examine how the case studies have successfully addressed these tensions:

- integration with government systems vs challenging anti-poor government structures;
- political ownership vs political interference;
- leadership vs dominance;
- realistic timelines vs quick wins;
- public–private partnerships vs monopoly by certain stakeholders;
- new technology and innovation vs indigenous knowledge;
- financial viability vs affordability; and
- flexibility vs predictability.

Integration with government systems vs challenging anti-poor government structures

Analysis of scaling up consistently emphasizes the need to link with existing government systems and receive political commitment (Uvin, 1995; Hooper et al, 2006; DFID, 2001). In many cases there is a need to integrate with these existing government systems rather than creating an antagonistic relationship from the start. The challenge is that often targeted poverty reduction can only be achieved by challenging some aspects of existing political and government structures. This can be overcome by ensuring that key government and political institutions are encouraged and coopted into supporting the programme.

The approach of the coconut project from the Philippines was to institutionalize the coconut-based farming systems poverty reduction approach. To do this, the programme collaborated with the Department of Agrarian Reform, the Department of Agriculture through its regional field offices, the Bureau of Agricultural Research, the Department of Trade and Industry, the local government units and the private sector suppliers of inputs (seeds and fertilizers). It conducted joint project planning with the Barangay Development Council to incorporate the project into the Barangay Integrated Development Plan and eventually into the Municipal Development Plan to make it eligible for funding by the municipal government. The project was also linked with local and international development organizations and donors to generate funding for replicating the project in other sites. The challenge of institutionalizing this project was overcome through aggressive advocacy that convinced the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Agrarian Reform and the Department of Trade and Industry to provide support to the project in cash and in kind.

The 'Gemidiriya' project in Sri Lanka faced the challenge of convincing the political and administrative cadres at lower levels to accept the 'community-driven' nature of the project. The case study illustrates several approaches to overcoming this challenge. First, the village organizations practiced principles of good governance by making the project model less threatening and more supportive to prudent political interests. Second, as the majority of leadership positions in the VOs are held by women, it has promoted inclusion of the poor and the youth while maintaining credit discipline and demonstrating results on the ground. As people have benefited from the project they have readily shown their gratitude and appreciation to the government. Third, bureaucrats have been involved as facilitators in order to experience the usefulness of including people in their own development activities. These bureaucrats have in turn become the guardians of the rules and principles of the 'Gemidiriya' project.

In some parts of Asia, integrating with government systems is made harder as these institutions are often weak or even non-existent. However this can be seen as an opportunity if the programme engages creatively to try to promote the kind of institutions that would be most supportive. For example for Nepal's Rural Urban Partnership Programme, the absence of elected representatives in local bodies created a major challenge to project implementation. The appointment of government employees in lieu of elected representatives hindered the programme's objective of improving good governance by making authorities (such as the mayor and other elected representatives) accountable for the delivery of public services, through the political empowerment of communities. To counteract this problem, a request was made to the Government of Nepal to form executive bodies with an all-party alliance in the local governments. The recognition and willingness to address the issue was in fact the first step to overcoming this challenge.

Political ownership vs political interference

Political commitment and ownership are important factors often cited by practitioners as being key to the successful scaling up of a project. By creating ownership not only among the beneficiaries and donors but also among political stakeholders, the likelihood of success in scaling up is increased. However at the same time there is a tension that comes with political commitment that is political interference. Although political commitment is necessary, it is important that the project beneficiaries are able to play a role in the design, development and implementation of the project without undue external influence. From the point of view of the donors, it is important that beneficiaries are selected based on need rather than influenced by political stakeholders. Here the challenge is to engage government without it taking over the project in ways that undermine its overall goals and objectives.

Political commitment cannot be created in a vacuum; it needs an enabling climate created by a lively and empowered civil society, free media, strong NGOs and so on (Binswanger and Swaminathan, 2003). The case study from Mexico is a good example of the ability of a programme to achieve political ownership without politicization of a project. Progresa started in 1997 with coverage of 300,000 families in the poorest rural areas and a budget of almost US$59 million. After three presidential terms, it is now the largest targeted social programme in Mexico both in coverage (benefiting 5 million families or 25 per cent of the total population) and in budget (reaching US$3.3 billion in 2007). What were the critical elements for policy change and continuity of Progresa in Mexico? First was President Zedillo's political will and his support to the Ministry of Finance, specifically to the Deputy Minister for Budget Mr Santiago Levy, who was one of the main architects and the champion of the programme since its beginnings. Second was the fact that the Ministry of Finance proposed and conducted the design and implementation of the programme and the change in the poverty alleviation strategy. This ministry had both legal authority and access to information to monitor all ministries and agencies of the federal government.

Indonesia's LED programme demonstrates that for an approach to be successful, an optimal level of engagement by the government needs to be determined. In some locations excessive involvement by the government proved to be counterproductive, making many feel that the government wanted to set the agenda, thus undermining the participative nature of the fora. Although this issue was not completely addressed, the incremental approach of this project enabled improvements and corrective action to be taken during implementation.

The Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development programme in Bangladesh provides another example of the tensions that exist between political ownership vs interference. Differences between the key partners occasionally challenged the programme. These differences included views about the proper objectives of the programme. While WFP and BRAC emphasized the developmental aspects of the programme's partnership, local government representatives tended to emphasize the food aid aspects, as distribution of government food aid is an important feature of the role of local politicians. Differences between partners over the purpose and management of the savings component and problems relating to leakage and corruption also emerged over time. These partnership challenges were addressed through the development of closer interaction and dialogue between partners, and initiatives to improve transparency in food grain distribution and savings management.

Leadership vs dominance

Civil society leadership or championship of a programme by a single key individual is often vital to many interventions – particularly at the outset. However once a programme starts to mature and needs to be scaled up, this dominance by a single individual or leader can be counterproductive, leading to dominance rather than leadership. This is why dynamic civil society leadership, which can be crucial for catalyzing lackadaisical government systems, can ultimately undermine sustainability if it prevents a broader institutional arrangement from developing. The problem of dominant leadership has plagued many local poverty initiatives and is often a key reason for initial success, but it is ultimately unsustainable. Several of the case studies highlight the role of dynamic civil groups and NGOs in driving the interventions, but where these organizations are a 'one person show', overly dependent on a single individual, then this may endanger their institutional sustainability.

Realistic timelines vs quick wins

This challenge requires balancing the need for long lead times to allow effective implementation with the need to ensure quick wins and rapid visible results in order to encourage the participation of poor people. Poor people often have little free time and value the present more than the future (known as a high discount rate). So programmes need to avoid focusing excessively on long-term planning and capacity building without a tangible improvement in the human development of the poor.

The LED project in Indonesia is a case in point. Here the dichotomy between building institutional frameworks over the long term and the quick delivery of economic services in the short term was a challenge. Although, the development of institutional frameworks and capacities takes a long time, the producers who were the primary beneficiaries of this project naturally wanted rapid economic gains. The programme had to be flexible to respond to both these demands with some initial gains, while also focusing on longer term strategic planning.

The 'Gemidiriya' project in Sri Lanka also balances long-term improvements with short-term grants and loans. The project started as a 12-year programme in 2004 with a grant from the World Bank of US$51 million for the implementation of the first four-year phase. The Government of Sri Lanka's contribution is US$11 million and the contribution of the local communities is US$7.8 million. Is such a large-scale project financially viable? In terms of achievements, the 'Gemidiriya' project is impressive. Over a period of two and a half years during 2004–2007, the 'Gemidiriya' model was scaled up to 850 villages and 850,000 people; 210,000 people have road access and 80,000 people have drinking water facilities. The project has also provided opportunities for skills development and income generation for nearly 80,000 people and trained more than 25,000 members on the preparation of village development plans, financial management, procurement procedures and so on.

Public–private partnerships vs monopoly by certain stakeholders

Partnerships between the government and private sector in what are often called public–private partnerships (PPPs) have grown exponentially in recent years. However there is a need to get the balance right. In some cases, these partnerships are overly dominated by government while in other cases there may be excessive control by a single company or group of private sector representatives. This balance is not easy to achieve and yet it is crucial to many types of targeted poverty reduction.[8]

The factors contributing to a successful PPP are a favourable political and statutory environment, a clear revenue system and detailed business plan/contract, among others. Even with these factors in place, PPPs can be faced with tensions between different stakeholders especially when one or two monopolize the partnership. The cases of One Tambon One Product from Thailand and Frutika from Paraguay are good examples of PPPs that have largely overcome these challenges.

The Frutika PPP gradually developed from a technical assistance project for soil recovery, initially implemented by GTZ (German technical cooperation agency) in 1998. This project did not have a concrete project design. Instead, it started with a soil recovery programme with the idea of fruit production as a suitable alternative to traditional crops, especially given the opportunity of exporting the products through the PPP. It was a process that grew slowly over a period of ten years. Although not all institutions were included in the planning process, they were aware of its activities and the central and local governments provided their support by convincing farmers to participate in the project and through the Caazapá 2013 Development Plan. The fact that public and private sector stakeholders were involved in developing this plan was crucial for the future success of Frutika PPP, as it brought all relevant stakeholders to the same forum and made them work toward a common goal. However although Frutika is a successful PPP, historically PPPs in Paraguay have been difficult to establish and seldom have successful outcomes. The GTZ-Frutika experience shows that PPPs can work and that it is possible to create a win–win alliance. However, in the case of GTZ-Frutika, this is as a result of a sequence of years of previous work concentrating on soil recovery and environmental agriculture, combined with participatory strategic planning processes resulting in the Caazapá 2013 plan.

One Tambon One Product is another example of a successful PPP with a close partnership between the government, banks and entrepreneurs. In 2001, the Government of Thailand announced the establishment of the project to respond to the Five-year National Economic and Social Development Plan for poverty reduction. In the same year, the National Committee on Administration of the

One Tambon One Product Project, chaired by the Deputy Prime-Minister was established. Strategies and action plans for the project implementation were set up by the Prime-Minister's Office. This ongoing project has been one of the most successful PPPs in Thailand.

The Partnerships for Local Economic Development Project (Kemitraan Pembagunan Ekonomi Lokal) implemented in Indonesia demonstrates a successful case of a PPP creating economic opportunities for the poor. With a view to improving access to larger markets, more than 60 partnerships were established around key business sub-sectors that had a concentration of micro and small enterprises. Among others, the sectors included coffee, horticulture, fish processing, lobster and shrimp farming and handicrafts. In a number of provinces, partnerships were officially formalized and received financial support from local government budgets. These partnerships created an institutional framework to address multidimensional problems affecting the region's competitiveness. Furthermore, the programme facilitated the partnerships to remove their constraints, to seek new ways of regulating businesses and assist in formulating policies for pro-poor development. The programme contributed towards stimulating local economic activities by empowering local producers, improving their access to markets, introducing improved production techniques and implementing pro-business policies thereby boosting incomes.

New technology and innovation vs indigenous knowledge

One of the key factors that contribute to the success of targeted poverty reduction is the transferability of knowledge and the ability to apply the principles of success elsewhere. It is often important to bring in new technology and innovation but also important to use existing indigenous knowledge. This creates ownership and expertise within the community from the outset and provides the opportunity for indigenous knowledge to be shared and preserved. The challenge is that often new technology and knowledge may be resisted or seen as expensive or high risk.

There are examples where new technology and knowledge have been innovatively used. Two case studies from Malaysia and China highlight the innovative role of the internet. In the case study from Western China, the use of the internet together with traditional methods of distribution of information has allowed farmers in a remote area to learn new farming techniques and adapt their own techniques to obtain maximum benefit in their farming practices. One of the unique findings of the case lies in the significant role that rural schools play in the extension of the internet. In Jinta, village schools served as an important link to relay web-based content to the farmers. This is a real example of how one village managed to overcome the digital divide through traditional methods.

However there are also examples where new technologies and knowledge were initially resisted. The case studies from the construction sector in India and China provide good examples of this type of tension and show that in construction, habits may be especially resistant to change. In Orissa, people initially resisted new disaster resistant technologies until they saw local masons apply them to their own homes. In the case of Lhasa, there was similar resistance to new forms of construction and maintenance until people had seen them with their own eyes. This shows the importance of demonstration to change behaviour.

Financial viability vs affordability

Financial viability is often key for programmes to keep going. While funding can be sought from donors and government, there is an increasing focus on part contributions by poor people. This not only generates funds but can also put in place incentives for poor people to demand effective programmes. However the challenge is that while the financial contribution by the poor seems to have some institutional benefits, it may also be counterproductive if it marginalizes the very poor.

Many of the programmes featured in this book were faced with this tension. For example it arises in the case of Mexico and some of the microfinance projects such as in Bangladesh. Through stringent beneficiary targeting, the projects were able to ensure that the benefits were worth the expense. However it is important to also consider sustainability when looking at financial viability. Is the project sustainable without external funding? These are questions that most projects are faced with when significant donor funding is a necessary component of the project. The success of the 'Gemidiriya' project would suggest that despite the high cost of the project and the project methodology that requires participants to contribute to the community fund, some part contribution is affordable by the community members.

One of the early challenges faced by the insurance project of the Self Employed Women's Association in India was negotiating the systems of the insurance company for claims eligibility and processing. Another was the difficulty in balancing the affordability of the insurance product and the protection that it offers. As the membership increased and became more geographically dispersed, ensuring regular contact with members became difficult. While financial viability is the goal of the insurance project, it is also a major challenge as the costs of administering a micro-insurance programme have to be balanced while keeping the product affordable to the poor. Despite claims to the contrary, the programme clearly demonstrates that the poor are willing to pay for insurance in order to protect themselves from unexpected losses. Educating members about health and economic security benefits of the insurance scheme was a crucial factor to ensure the success of the programme.

Flexibility vs predictability and focus

The ability to adapt to a changing local context is crucial. This is often a common factor that most practitioners emphasize as important to successful scaling up. Adaptation is needed for scaling up in different contexts (Binswanger and Swaminathan, 2003). This requires a 'learning by doing' attitude and being flexible and open to change. However the challenge is that programmes need clear goals and objectives to monitor progress and achieve results. This creates tension between flexibility and predictability.

The case from Cambodia is a case in point. Chambok is a unique example of a successful community-based ecotourism project in Cambodia that has enabled people to generate income from tourism and convinced them to protect their natural resources. The low level of education among villagers was a major obstacle to project implementation. The flexibility of the project was such that the Mlup Baitong was able to spend a significant amount of time in building capacity of the Management Committee members. This often involved repeating training sessions several times to ensure that members are able to take responsibility for implementing activities under the project. It was difficult for the project to persuade villagers, Committee members, local authorities and tourists to adapt to the innovative approaches and procedures. The project initially had difficulty in protecting the forest in and around the site from logging, hunting, forest fires, forestland encroachment, and clearance, but owing to the persistent efforts of Mlup Baitong to raise awareness of nature conservation through the cooperation of all stakeholders, effective mechanisms were established to address these challenges. Although the project ensured predictability and focus by keeping to its original aims, it was flexible in adjusting activities to address new difficulties.

Conclusions and recommendations

This Overview has identified certain tensions that determine whether a targeted poverty reduction intervention works and can be scaled up. During the design and implementation of an intervention, these tensions need to be addressed. The recommendations below summarize the lessons drawn from the case studies on ways to resolve each of the eight tensions:

- *Integration with government systems vs challenging anti-poor government structures* – coopt key government and political authorities into the programme through joint planning and design, training, ultimately institutionalizing the programme.
- *Political ownership vs political interference* – dialogue, publicity and an incrementalist approach are necessary to develop political ownership while limiting interference.

- *Leadership vs dominance* – dynamic individual leadership especially at the start must be balanced with shifting to more broad-based support as the programme matures.
- *Realistic timelines vs quick wins* – while many programmes seek to develop more strategic longer-term interventions, there is a need to also have at the start interventions that produce some quick tangible results to avoid planning fatigue.
- *Public – private partnerships vs monopoly by certain stakeholders* – equitable PPPs require a favourable political and statutory environment, clear systems for managing revenues and a detailed business plan and contract.
- *New technology and innovation vs indigenous knowledge* – new technology can build on existing knowledge and be viewed more receptively if it is disseminated by trusted channels (for example, masons who use new construction techniques on their own homes) and in ways that people can see with their own eyes.
- *Financial viability vs affordability* – beneficiary contributions are important and close dialogue with poor people can identify ways to design a programme so that it becomes affordable.
- *Flexibility vs predictability* – it is necessary to show flexibility in programme activities, but the overall goals and objectives of the programme should be kept fixed to ensure predictability.

These recommendations are not straightforward, which is why targeted poverty reduction often remains an elusive challenge. But when these challenges can be resolved, as in the case studies showcased in this book, poverty reduction can work.

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Notes

1 Decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives, and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men (ILO, 2008).

2 'Local Economic Development (LED) is a practical concept to strengthen the economic capacity of a locality and focuses on local competitive advantages' (ILO, 2008). Others suggest LED to be a process that helps communities work together to achieve sustainable economic growth that enables increased employment, prosperity and quality of life (Swinburn, 2002).

3 The 2008 *World Development Report* states that 'In the 21st century, agriculture continues to be a fundamental instrument for sustainable development and poverty reduction. Three of every four poor people in developing countries live in rural areas' (World Bank, 2008b).

4 Social safety nets are transfers that are non-contributory in nature and target the poor and those vulnerable to poverty from shocks (World Bank, 2008a). The FAO (2003) defines social safety nets as cash or in-kind transfer programmes that seek to reduce poverty through redistributing wealth and/or protecting households against income shocks. Food safety nets are a subset of social safety nets and aim to assure a minimum amount of food consumption and/or protect households against shocks to food consumption (FA0, 2003). As ADB (2007) defines, microfinance is the provision of a broad range of financial services such as deposits, loans, payment services, money transfers and insurance to poor and low-income households and their microenterprises. Microfinance can be a critical element of an effective poverty reduction strategy.

5 Dongier et al (2003) contend that so-called 'community-driven development' (CDD) gives control of decisions and resources to community groups. CDD treats poor people as assets and partners in the development process, building on their institutions and resources. In other words, the target group determines the outcomes of the project and benefits. This focus on the poor themselves is a recommendation of the controversial book by William Easterly (2007) who focuses on the need to have feedback from poor people themselves.

6 In Easterly's analysis, top-down planners are contrasted with bottom-up seekers.

7 However, there are several more nuanced definitions. Some authors (IIRR, 1999) draw a distinction between *vertical* movement of experience, knowledge and impact that affect the higher level organizations of a sector or society, and *horizontal* spread within a sector or locality (for example, among farmers only without involving other stakeholder groups up the ladder).

8 UNDP's South–South unit defines PPPs as a contractual agreement between the public sector (government) and the private sector (for-profit companies). Under these agreements, the resources and risks of both are shared to meet a specific public need. This contractual relationship may include non-profit groups (either NGOs or special purpose organizations created by government action). In all cases, however, at least one for-profit entity (thus the 'private' in public–private partnership) is included. PPPs may be developed by a single government partner or through technical cooperation between two or more countries (NCPPP, 2008).

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PART I

Employment Generation and Participatory Area Development