

## Scaling up

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A few years ago I was rather shocked by people's enthusiastic reaction to a small project undertaken in India. It had produced some very interesting findings, developed and tested a technology in the field and challenged a few 'project norms'. However, the project came to an end, had no chance of being scaled up, and ultimately had no impact on indoor air quality in a single house. As it happens, the project was my responsibility. While the methodology and lessons learned may have contributed to the success of subsequent projects, I felt uneasy that as a community of development professionals, we were too easily satisfied.

### The place of pilots

Small projects and pilots are vital in developing effective, sustainable household energy interventions. They can help us determine whether interventions are safe, effective, appropriate, demanded and saleable in 'real life' conditions. We have a responsibility to ensure these in household energy interventions so that we do not damage people's health, waste their time and money, and lose their trust. However, without scaling up they only ever stand to benefit a few people.

The Millennium Development Goals require us to take scaling up seriously and measure our successes in terms of reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, aiding access to education, reducing hunger and malnutrition and so on. What indicators do we use to measure the success of our interventions? Testing or proving a technology in the field may be very important, but are not enough. These goals challenge us to be braver in our objectives. Success should ultimately be measured by the (direct or indirect) contribution made to sustainable, widespread self-expanding benefits to the quality of life of the poor.

### Scaling up in *Boiling Point* 50

The papers in this issue of *Boiling Point* describe many different situations, present many (sometimes opposing) opinions, and tell diverse stories from around the globe.

Brewis describes developing a strong marketing strategy, brand building and paying commissions to sales staff, while Dutta describes how grant money is *invested* rather than just expended. With all its benefits, taking a business approach gives us the responsibility to ensure we are not merely delivering goods that waste people's money.

O'Neal presents a case for capital-intensive mass production of stoves in factories, which contrasts interestingly with Brewis' findings that small workshops and a labour-intensive approach give a good compromise between quality and price. Karve also describes success through supporting entrepreneurs.

Provision of finance and health impacts as advocacy messages are described in Acharya's description of Scaling up biogas in Nepal, and Cecelski explores the impact of women's status and the value of their labour.

The theme of partnership emerges strongly: Brewis and Dutta stress the importance of embracing the skills of different partners, whilst Palit describes complex institutional partnerships. Mazzoni describes public-private partnerships as a vehicle to affordable electricity for the poor.

### Scaling up elsewhere . . .

The following outlines some of the recommendations for scaling up resulting from research recently undertaken at WEDC:

- Form partnerships and get people focusing on what they do best:
- NGOs for community mobilisation

- Businesses for rigorous financial viability and marketing strategies
- Municipalities and governments for resources and a conducive policy environment
- Financing institutions for responsible credit
- Poor people, as experts on their own needs, resources, limitations and aspirations.
- Ensure a market exists, and if not, develop one – employ marketing specialists,
- Respond to the legislative environment; if supportive – work with it, if not work around and/or try to change it
- Speak to people. Speak to people. Speak to people.

This project involved pilot composting projects, but the themes shared are striking.

### Communication

There is considerable scope for cross learning between the energy, water, hygiene and sanitation sectors

The value of communication within the energy sector is highlighted in Owala's paper. Honest communication is key to upscaling: no one can learn anything useful from a failed pilot described success, or from lessons learned in a project which are never shared.

*Boiling Point* is an invaluable vehicle for sharing lessons learned, experiences and contributing to successful scaling up of household interventions for the benefit of the poor.

*Jonathan has both a technical and social science background which he applies to a range of activities. Since developing stoves with villagers in India in 2000, he has been applying and teaching what he learned at the Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC) UK*