

Issue Brief #7: Scaling Programs & Growing Impact with the Social Innovation Fund



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Issue Brief #7: *Scaling Programs and Growing Impact with the Social Innovation Fund*

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1. Introduction

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) leverages public and private resources to grow community solutions based on evidence of results. The National Assessment of the SIF seeks to document and capture the impact the SIF has on key program stakeholders. Findings from this multi-component independent assessment, sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service's (CNCS) Office of Research and Evaluation and conducted by ICF International, will tell the story of the SIF and identify lessons learned. The SIF makes grants to experienced grant-making organizations, which identify promising programs within communities through an open and competitive process and distribute funds to high-performing nonprofit organizations that implement them, and match the federal funds dollar-for-dollar. SIF subgrantees also match the funding they receive dollar-for-dollar. All SIF-funded interventions undergo rigorous, independent evaluations to advance the base of evidence for the funded intervention.

Key Research Questions:

- What does “scaling/growing impact” mean in the context of the SIF program?
- What are the necessary conditions for successful scaling?
- How has the SIF helped grantees and subgrantees scale programs that work?

Scaling is one of the SIF's pillars and addresses its goal of “finding what works, and making it work for more people,” —growing the impact of the work. Specifically, the Congressional authorization requires grantees to use funds received through the SIF to “make subgrants to community organizations that will use the funds to replicate or expand proven initiatives, or support new initiatives, in low-income communities.”¹ Results from the SIF National Assessment's grantee survey² showed that SIF grantees increased their reliance on rigorous evaluation as a basis for selecting programs to scale up. As this issue brief demonstrates, the SIF has supported grantees and subgrantees in deciding how, when, and where to scale their programs and helped them build capacity and support to implement their scaling models.

This issue brief shares best practices and lessons about ways that SIF grantees and their subgrantees used evidence of effectiveness to deepen or broaden their impact. The brief first presents an overview of approaches that SIF grantees and subgrantees have employed to scale their programs. It then presents information about factors that contributed to successful scaling and outlines ways that the SIF has supported scaling efforts. Each section provides a set of action-oriented recommendations. Some related resources about scaling are also included. This brief is informed by interviews with four SIF “Classic”³ grantees, three of their subgrantees, one funding partner, and two experts in the field.

“Organizations like GEO, the SIF, and others have been successful in shifting conversations about scaling in the field to be more complex, in recognizing that it's not about scale for scale's sake. It's about growing impact, and this can happen in several ways. Often people talk about nonprofits as though they're a monolithic entity, but the range of problems to solve and the range of strategies they're using to solve those problems is incredibly wide. It doesn't make sense to boil down scale to one simplistic definition of opening more offices or increasing the number of clients served.”

—Meghan Duffy, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations

¹ Section 198K (i), National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, Public Law 101-610, from http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1990_serviceact_as%20amended%20through%20pl%20111-13.pdf

² Zhang, X., Griffith, J., Sun, J., Malakoff, L., Pershing, J., Marsland, W., Peters, K., & Field, E. (2015) The SIF's Impact on Strengthening Organizational Capacity, Fairfax, VA: ICF International.

³ The SIF has two grant programs: Classic and Pay for Success (PFS). The Classic program unites public and private resources to evaluate and grow innovative community-based solutions that have evidence of results in low-income communities. PFS is an innovative contracting and financing model that leverages philanthropic and private dollars to fund services up front, with the government, or other entity, paying after they generate results. This issue brief focuses on SIF Classic only.

2. Approaches to Growing Impact/Scaling

Through the SIF's investments in evaluation and scale, grantees and subgrantees have implemented a variety of approaches to growing impact. They have expanded the numbers of people served in an existing location or replicated or adapted effective models in new environments for new populations, often with new funding sources. At the outset of their SIF grants, grantees and their subgrantee partners articulated their approaches to growing program impact in scaling plans and used the plans to monitor progress throughout the grant period. The scaling plans included growth goals, plans for achieving the goals, resources to be invested in scaling, planned actions to achieve goals, plans for monitoring progress, and potential risk and challenges. Over time, grantees and subgrantees also have stepped back to analyze their approaches to the problems they were trying to solve and expanded their thinking about the meaning of growing impact to incorporate deepening services and outcomes. Throughout the SIF, grantees and subgrantees have learned more about what it requires to grow the impact of their work, and they grew their programs—through expansion, replication, or adaptation—as they developed the evidence, opportunities, and resources to do so.

“So the question then is shifting... from how do you scale this particular program to how do you scale the impact of the program, which may not be linear with replication. It may be that you can share what you've learned through technical assistance or you can focus on policy change. So, the biggest shift I've seen is for those that have scaled successfully and have evidence of what works, a real hard look at different strategies for truly scaling the impact of their work...When I look at organizations in SIF...this is the problem they're grappling with...they are saying, 'My first three year plan was to go from 1,000 to 1,500 young people.' Is it satisfying to go then from 1,500 to 2,000 or would my time and effort be better spent on figuring out how I share what I'm learning in a way that would influence tens of thousands of kids?”

—Jeff Bradach, The Bridgespan Group

2.1 Expanding in the Current Location

Grantees and subgrantees used SIF and match funding to serve more people in their current locations. For example, between the start of its SIF grant in 2010 and 2015, New Profit, Inc. provided technical assistance to help almost all of its subgrantees meet their goal of doubling the number of youth ages 12-24 served by programs designed to increase high school graduation, college enrollment, and employment.

2.2 Expanding to New Locations and Target Populations

Some grantees and subgrantees scaled their work by funding effective models in new locations. In expanding to new locations or populations, SIF scaling efforts retained a strong focus on evidence, data-driven approaches, and competitive selection, all prominent characteristics of the SIF. When they expanded their SIF programs to new environments, however, grantees and subgrantees had to make decisions regarding program fidelity—which elements needed to remain unchanged and which could be modified to better fit the new needs and context. A number of grantees and subgrantees adapted their program model as they scaled, depending on evidence, funding environments, or populations served.

Through its 2010 SIF grant, REDF funded programs to create job opportunities for people who face barriers to employment. Prior to its SIF grant, REDF funded three or four social enterprises at any one time. With the SIF, REDF increased the number of subgrantees it funded to 10, expanded one in an additional location, and collected a comparable set of data from different programs to examine which adaptations of the social enterprise model were likely to be most successful in terms of employment and retention of the target population. REDF learned that adaptation of the social enterprise model was required to build a sustainable, replicable model at scale. Prior to the SIF, REDF worked primarily in the San Francisco Bay area. When REDF expanded its SIF program to fund organizations doing similar work in southern California, it saw the need to adapt its program to the new environment, given the different

labor market, business climate, and population needing employment. However, REDF identified three core elements common to all its funded programs: transitional jobs suited to the skills of the target population, work environments supportive of people overcoming barriers to work, and connections to support services to help people sustain employment. Having these three core elements helped REDF sustain its attention to providing job opportunities for underserved people in all the communities where it operates.

Expanding to a new location often meant augmenting staff and infrastructure at both the current and the new locations. Although some staff and resources can be shared across locations, the program in the new location may require additional dedicated administrative or programmatic staff with different skills or knowledge to serve new populations or community needs. When implementing a program in a new location, organizations had to look carefully at their staff's capacity and ensure that resources were in place to support the work at both the current and new locations.

2.3 Expanding and Deepening Services

After setting initial goals to quickly increase the number of people served, some grantees and subgrantees realized they needed to offer a more comprehensive set of services to meet their objectives and have an impact. This insight sometimes meant deciding to expand the depth of services as well as the number of people served. AIDS United subgrantee Medical AIDS Outreach, for example, achieved its mission to provide HIV care to patients in rural areas by serving those patients more holistically, with interventions that offered more comprehensive services—such as mental health and pharmacy consultations via telemedicine. Doing so produced better outcomes for clients.

When grantees and subgrantees deepened services, it often positioned them to produce greater impact. This shift attracted additional funding, which enabled further scaling of their programs. With its 2011 SIF grant, Mile High United Way (MHUW) set out to fund organizations working to improve literacy outcomes for 25,000 children across the state of Colorado. As the organization built evidence about effective implementation models and developed the needed organizational infrastructure, it shifted its approach to expanding and deepening its services to a smaller number of children and families than originally planned. This depth of service produced positive outcomes, including evidence that children who received services were better prepared when they entered kindergarten, a finding that garnered support for scaling.

“Our original proposal was to serve 25,000 children across Colorado, but it didn't happen that way. We're serving a smaller amount of children and families at a much deeper level and building the organization to serve children and families more completely with an intervention they now feel more confident about.”

—Jerene Petersen, SIF grantee, Mile High United Way

Recommendations for choosing a growing impact/scaling approach:

- Consider supporting initiatives that deepen services and strengthen outcomes, as well as those that serve more people or implement a program model in new locations, as the basis for further scaling.
- Distinguish those aspects of the model integral to its effectiveness from those that can be adapted to address the demands of new populations, locations, or funding and organizational environments.

Scaling Quality Child Care Certification in Colorado

The Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition (CSPC) grew the Providers Advancing School Outcomes (PASO) program, funded through a 2011 SIF subgrant from Mile High United Way. After initially focusing on developing the skills of independent child care providers, CSPC shifted to spreading its child care training model to new communities across the state. Many families in Colorado rely on family, friends, and neighbors for child care, so the program's goal was to train these caregivers, enhance the quality of care for young Colorado children, and better prepare them for kindergarten. The training of child care providers has had a significant impact on kindergarten readiness in Colorado. Through the SIF, one of the program's sites underwent a process evaluation, and the results suggested revising its training so that participants could receive the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) certification. Now, upon program completion, participants receive CDA certification. CDA was attractive, because it reduced barriers to participation (e.g., did not require proof of U.S. citizenship) and streamlined the training, shortened from 13 months to nine.

In exploring different models for scaling the program over the next few years, CSPC seeks to identify organizations already invested in their communities, expand the impact of curriculum training instruction, and secure more sustainable funding. For example, CSPC is partnering with other community organizations and school districts to serve family, friends, and neighbors, and the children in their care.

One opportunity for extending the program beyond CSPC's ability is to directly deliver the train-the-trainer model for the PASO curriculum to guide implementation in new communities in Colorado. This approach echoes the SIF leverage model by identifying communities of high need with partners who want to develop the leadership infrastructure to host the program. CSPC hopes to provide these communities with initial grants—which the communities would match—to purchase the PASO curriculum and train-the-trainer model to deliver the trainings in the high quality intensive manner essential to their success. CSPC's role would be that of trainer, quality assurance entity, and evaluator, rather than implementer. CSPC is also considering creating a training institute to offer the CDA curriculum through a fee-for-service model, which would diversify the organization's revenue stream as well as increase the impact of its work. CSPC continues to work with Mile High United Way, philanthropic groups in Colorado, and other potential funders to raise financing to implement its scaling approach.

3. Conditions for Successful Scaling

The SIF was the first opportunity for many grantees and subgrantees to emphasize scaling strongly and systematically. Because the SIF encouraged grantees and subgrantees to think carefully about how to scale their programs, they came away with insights about the factors that contribute to successful scaling. To scale successfully, both the intervention and the implementing organization must be ready. For interventions, readiness requires strong evidence and documentation of need; for organizations, both capacity and deep local knowledge are required.

3.1 Strong Evidence of Effectiveness

SIF-funded programs entered the SIF with at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness and built further evidence through evaluation. Evidence was the basis for deciding how, when, and which programs to scale, and programs could not scale effectively without strong evidence. The emphasis on evidence gave grantees a foundation from which to interpret evaluation results, identify what worked, and use data to improve programs. In addition, evidence of effectiveness encouraged funders to invest because it gave them confidence the programs would succeed. Both the SIF emphasis on evaluation and its relatively long period of funding, which allowed time to gather and analyze evidence, were important factors in successful scaling.

"It's been good to capture the challenges and successes over five years and adjust on the ground. When we create tools, it'll definitely be better informed because of the length of what SIF provided us."

—Maura Riordan, SIF grantee, AIDS United

The evidence that the SIF developed shed light on what worked and where there were challenges, and organizations adjusted accordingly. For example, REDF's evaluation of its employment programs

showed that beneficiaries were getting jobs, but that employment did not always increase their net income and, despite increased earned income, access to housing and other benefits declined. These findings prompted REDF to concentrate more on building career pathways to follow initial employment.

Evidence also helped grantees and subgrantees make the case to funders to support the growth of programs that had received SIF support. AIDS United subgrantees Medical AIDS Outreach and Action AIDS indicated that the capacity to show the rigor of their evaluation designs and the results placed them in a more competitive position in new funding pools. As a result, they received funding to grow their programs from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and Medicaid.

Evidence and Need for Service

Evidence alone did not always determine what programs were scaled. For example, building a substantial body of evidence was, in some cases, less important than proposing a program that was appealing, even if the evidence was only preliminary. SIF grantee Mile High United Way had met with its funders to present preliminary evidence and explore paths toward future funding. However, because one of the programs on which it presented evidence—a preschool program implemented by one of the subgrantees—was appealing and met a local need, a foundation within a local school district decided to fully fund the expansion after a year, before final evaluation data were available, and adopt the program as part of the district-wide curriculum.

3.2 Need for Services

The programs supported by the SIF provided benefits to underserved people and communities. Programs were successful and scalable when the interventions addressed well-recognized needs in the communities served. MHUW subgrantee Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition (CSPC) was confident that its Providers Advancing School Outcomes (PASO) program would succeed, because the need for service was so high. PASO provided independent child care provider training in a state where 57% of children with both parents working receive care from family, friends, and neighbors outside of licensed child care facilities.

REDF subgrantee Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), based in New York City, provided employment services to a specific population—people returning from prison. It wanted to expand its program to other parts of the country. CEO chose to expand the program to implementation sites that already had a strong re-entry center, because the need for CEO's services was evident and not yet addressed. There was also infrastructure already in place to support the services. In making these scaling decisions, CEO identified six high-level growth criteria⁴:

1. **The specific service is needed.** For CEO to operate a minimum number of work crews, it required enough people re-entering the community from prison.
2. **The location meets the minimum criteria for scale.** CEO had to be confident that there was a gap in the services delivered to the local re-entering population, which CEO could address.
3. **A referral pipeline can be developed.** CEO obtained commitments from state parole officials and local officers to refer people leaving prison to the program.
4. **Local knowledge can be acquired.** CEO leveraged its ability to navigate the complex governments, political structures, and community dynamics of the community.
5. **There is a government champion.** CEO developed and maintained strong relationships with supporters from within the government in order to sustain the program.

⁴ Source: <http://www.mdc.org/publication/successful-prisoner-reentry-program-expands>

6. **Partners to support implementation are available.** CEO partnered with job providers to ensure that they could cover the costs of work crews over time and offer employees the opportunity to acquire basic work skills.

3.3 Deep Local Knowledge and Relationships

Local relationships were a critical condition for scaling, especially when implementing a program in new locations. In addition to understanding the program and the need for services, it was important to know the community's key players and funders to fully understand the feasibility of implementing a particular intervention.

"In thinking about national scaling, we see in Colorado how critical local relationships are and how critical it is for organizations to understand the context, know the donors, and know the players. It is hard to scale a national program locally without a really strong foundation, regardless of whether the evidence is there."

—Kenzie Strong, SIF grantee, Mile High United Way

This consideration was especially important when introducing a national model to a new place. MHUW brought a model for improving literacy to Colorado with the SIF. Working in Colorado posed challenges, because the state is very rural, with a few large urban areas, and strong local control. MHUW staff implemented the program, bringing existing relationships to the work of implementation, which

eased the process of supporting growth in new locations across the state. Without MHUW's involvement, an organization from outside Colorado would have had difficulty gaining acceptance for the program within the state.

When REDF expanded its program to a new community, it chose the Los Angeles area, because its business community, government, philanthropy, and nonprofit players all saw the value and supported the program model. REDF also did its homework and learned that social enterprises already existed in the area, indicating strong support for this type of intervention. REDF knew that even though it could not fund all the entities it wanted to, the area contained many other funders to work with, and they believed they could galvanize resources over time to expand the work.

3.4 Infrastructure/Organizational Capacity

Scaling required programs to have the organizational capacity to support growth. Before deciding to scale programs, SIF grantees looked closely at organizational readiness.⁵ Growing a program that met SIF standards required grantees and subgrantees to invest in performance measurement, data use, leadership, governance, financial management capabilities, technology infrastructure, human resources, and administrative support. SIF grantees sought to identify subgrantees with the organizational readiness to grow their impact and invested in increasing their organizational capacity.

The SIF dramatically influenced how MHUW chose to invest. MHUW set out to improve literacy outcomes for Colorado children, but the SIF's focus on growing impact prompted MHUW to ensure that the organizations it funded had the organizational strength to support growth. MHUW learned that sufficient

"The message to organizations is, 'They can scale, but if they want to scale with impact, investment in fundamentals is necessary.'"

—Kenzie Strong, SIF grantee, Mile High United Way

⁵ Grantees "make subgrants of a sufficient size and scope to enable the community organizations to build their capacity to manage initiatives, and sustain replication or expansion of the initiatives." Section 198K (i), National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, Public Law 101-610, from http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1990_serviceact_as%20amended%20through%20pl%2011-13.pdf.

organizational capacity was a prerequisite to impact and growth. It found that by investing in sound organizations with the ability to get from outputs to outcomes, literacy outcomes followed.

As programs scaled, organizations had to continue to grow the infrastructure at its original location and at new locations, to support the changes that scaling brought about, such as reliance on new funding. During the SIF, programs typically operated with one primary revenue source. As the SIF funding ended and programs grew, their funding often came from a combination of smaller sources. CEO noted that, after SIF funding ended, it had to grow its infrastructure and dedicate resources to manage funding from multiple sources. CEO continues to build the organizational infrastructure necessary to coordinate its smaller funding sources, identify alignment among the funders' requirements, and comply with those requirements.

3.5 Well-Documented Models

For scaling to occur, the model being scaled must be stable and well-documented. Grantees and subgrantees developed implementation manuals and toolkits to document how the program models functioned, which supported scaling while keeping the key aspects of the successful model intact. The documentation also gave other organizations a starting point from which to implement the model to serve a new population or new location.

Through the SIF, AIDS United found that the peer navigator model, implemented by many of its subgrantees, in which care providers themselves receive HIV services, was successful in recruiting clients and retaining them in care. AIDS United subgrantee Christie's Place found the peer navigator model and its mental health services particularly effective for HIV care with the women it served. AIDS United encouraged uptake of the peer navigator model by documenting best practices, implementation guidance, and preliminary evaluation results from its subgrantees in a guidance manual. Similarly, by the end of the SIF grant, MHUW expects to support the development of a detailed implementation manual for each of its subgrantees, which will outline exactly how each site implemented its model, facilitating the model's adoption by other organizations. Many MHUW subgrantees would not have the capacity or resources to create these implementation manuals without the support MHUW provided through the SIF.

Recommendations for creating the right conditions to scale:

- Use evidence to identify what works, ensure the model is stable (or strengthen as needed), attract potential funders, and scale programs identified as effective.
- Assess the need for services and the resources available in communities, including supply (e.g., people needing employment) and demand (e.g., need for new employees).
- Know the environment and cultivate relationships where the program is to be scaled.
- Document successful models to support scaling to new populations and new locations.

4. The Role of the SIF in Scaling

Through their scaling efforts, grantees and subgrantees learned the conditions for successful scaling. They also provided insights into the ways that being part of the SIF contributed to scaling. The SIF emphasized growing impact by requiring grantees to

"When you can say [to foundations], 'These are our subgrantees doing stellar work,' it has opened up some doors when subgrantees have applied at those foundations."

—Maura Riordan, SIF grantee, AIDS United

develop and implement scaling plans, as well as providing grantees with the time and resources to focus on building evidence and scaling. Also, the intermediary model—a core aspect of the SIF, in which competitively selected organizations fund innovative nonprofit organizations and state and local government entities to implement programs—influenced how grantees and subgrantees worked together to grow the impact of SIF-funded programs.

The roles of grantees and subgrantees were different yet complementary. The grantees interviewed for this issue brief funded subgrantees to support new initiatives to address particular social needs and achieve outcomes within SIF’s focus areas. These grantees agreed that their subgrantees each owned and implemented its own model for scaling its intervention, which collectively scaled up the subgrantees’ and grantee’s work, and grantees supported their subgrantees’ efforts to replicate and expand their models. In other instances, grantees may have worked with multiple subgrantees to implement a single program model in multiple locations. Under either model, the scaling efforts of subgrantees benefit from the support of their intermediary grantmaker. Through the SIF, grantees supported their subgrantees by increasing their capacity and visibility to successfully scale programs, and they did this in various ways, described below.

4.1 Expanding Opportunities for Funding

Being part of the SIF raised the credibility of subgrantees, and helped them transform their credibility into capital. REDF subgrantee CEO reported that being part of the SIF gave credibility that “opened the door” when they went to other funders. Additionally, SIF grantees used their influence to facilitate the visibility and access of their subgrantees to a wider pool of potential funders, including local funders, those concerned with similar populations, or those interested in funding a model.

“If an individual donor gave us the same amount of money as the SIF, it would not have had the same impact. It was the ability to say we had built in partnerships with these foundations...These acted as good housekeeping seals of approval when you're going into new markets...They would signal, ‘Oh, these folks are for real. They've been vetted, and they're going to put skin in the game.’”

–Sam Schaeffer, SIF subgrantee, Center for Employment Opportunities

Some grantees, such as AIDS United, ensured their funders knew about the work of their subgrantees and facilitated connections between subgrantees and funders they thought were a good match. AIDS United helped its subgrantees capitalize on funding opportunities by providing letters of support that highlighted their robust evaluation work, compliance capacity, and financial accountability.

Grantees also promoted the subgrantees’ work among external stakeholders. AIDS United’s support elevated Christie’s Place in the eyes of national stakeholders. In part because of the association between Christie’s Place and AIDS United, recommendations developed by a 2014 federal interagency working group listed Christie’s Place as one of three organizations furthering trauma-informed HIV care. As Christie’s Place continues to grow its programming, this national recognition could lead to additional opportunities for funding.

4.2 Building Organizational Capacity

The role of SIF grantees in scaling was of support and capacity building. Infrastructure and organizational capacity are important conditions for successful scaling, and SIF grantees helped their subgrantees build this capacity. The grantees spent time and resources developing training, tools, and guidance around scaling and sustainability, such as MHUW’s “What Works” event, which brought subgrantees and funders together to share lessons learned and highlight critical needs for the organizations going forward. MHUW is also planning training that engages community partners to help

subgrantees think through their approach to scaling, assess their strengths and weaknesses, and quickly identify resources to support the work after the SIF funding cycle ends. The goal is for subgrantees to leave the SIF with a clear path forward for sustaining and scaling their work.⁶

“One thing we are hopeful to continue to do is capacity building assistance for other organizations. I would hate for someone to do it from scratch after our five years...There is so much we’ve taken from how we’ve implemented the project that could be valuable for other organizations.”

–Erin Falvey, SIF subgrantee, Christie’s Place

Another way that grantees and subgrantees supported scaling up of promising models was by drawing on their experience in the SIF to provide guidance to organizations doing similar work. Two of AIDS United’s subgrantees shared the expertise gained through implementing their programs with organizations implementing similar programs. Subgrantee Medical AIDS Outreach, which provides

HIV care via telemedicine in Alabama, obtained funding through an AmeriCorps program to provide guidance to an HIV service organization on the launch of a telemedicine program in rural New Mexico. Medical AIDS Outreach also obtained a capacity building grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help other HIV service organizations navigate healthcare reform and the changing healthcare landscape.

4.3 Enhancing Implementation Partnerships

Grantees drew on their influence to invite a wide network of partners to support program implementation. Grantees helped their subgrantees engage new partners in philanthropy, government, and the private sector to influence decision-making, inform organizational practices, build relationships, and learn about new models for implementation to enable programmatic scaling.

As REDF progressed through its 2010 SIF grant and then obtained a second grant in 2015, it learned it needed to engage a variety of community partners to expand its focus to support career progression. REDF engaged mainstream employers that could provide opportunities for a second job after the initial social enterprise job—drawing on support from the business community, private sector companies, human service agencies, workforce development agencies, economic development offices, and chambers of commerce—to keep people employed and advance them in their employment trajectory. In addition, when REDF relied exclusively on private dollars to fund programs, it could choose programs to fund without a competitive process transparent to the public. As the evidence base grew with SIF funding, along with its portfolio, REDF incorporated a variety of public and private funding and established a transparent, competitive process and criteria for selecting its portfolio. REDF also introduced more voices to the table to influence its decision-making about programs to fund.

Contributing to the Research

A benefit of providing capacity building support to other organizations was that grantees and subgrantees became known experts with research-based evidence to back up their work. In sharing their expertise and results, they have contributed to the body of research around their work. REDF, for example, set up REDFworkshop.org and SE4Jobs.org knowledge sharing websites that contributed widespread expertise to the field. AIDS United subgrantee Christie’s Place presented the results of its control group study at conferences and networked with other organizations there, conducted a half-day workshop focused on the intersection of HIV and violence, and participated in related webinars. Increasing the visibility of evidence-based evaluation results helped subgrantees obtain funding to grow and scale programs and contributed to more investment in the field as a whole.

⁶ Funded entities must provide “information describing the process by which the eligible entity selected, or will select, community organizations to receive the subgrants, to ensure that the community organizations can sustain the initiatives after the subgrant period concludes through reliable public revenues, earned income, or private sector funding.” Section 198K (i), National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, Public Law 101-610, from http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1990_serviceact_as%20amended%20through%20p1%2011-13.pdf.

Recommendations for grantees to support subgrantees in scaling:

- Leverage grantee standing in the field to promote the work of subgrantees to existing funding networks and other potential funders.
- Help subgrantees develop the capacity to implement on a broader scale and obtain the support to do so, for example, convening partners to support implementation and helping them build the organizational infrastructure to meet scaling goals.

The “Next Generation” of Scaling after SIF: State Street Foundation & Boston WINS

2010 SIF grantee New Profit, Inc. engaged State Street Foundation, a corporate foundation, as a co-funder and partner to support the Pathways Fund. Pathways is New Profit’s SIF initiative to invest in promising innovations to transition low-income youth from high school through post-secondary education to productive employment. New Profit engaged its SIF co-funders in a learning network that offered direct interaction and influence with New Profit leadership and SIF subgrantees.

Participating in this learning network gave State Street a variety of insights into the venture philanthropy approach, including the importance of evidence-based programs, strong management and leadership, and scaling. Based on State Street’s objective of increasing its social impact in its headquarters city of Boston, State Street leveraged knowledge gained from participating in Pathways to its design in 2015 of an innovative approach that became known as Boston Workforce Investment Network (Boston WINS). Boston WINS is a four-year, \$20 million initiative to support five high-performing partners to enhance the odds for college and career success for students in Boston Public Schools. Under the WINS program, the company has also pledged to hire 1,000 Boston youth served by the WINS partners. In several ways Boston WINS represents an adaptation and scaling of a SIF program, with three key characteristics.

- **Replicating what works.** Based on what State Street learned from its involvement in Pathways, Boston WINS replicated key principles of the SIF and Pathways models, such as an emphasis on data and accountability, selecting and implementing interventions based on evidence of effectiveness, engaging strong organizations as grantees, and building an evidence base.
- **Adapting.** State Street implemented the Boston WINS program with an adaptation of the SIF’s intermediary model. Similar to the way that New Profit funded organizations to implement the Pathways program, State Street funded organizations to scale the services of proven performers across the Boston Public Schools high school system. Although State Street’s design of Boston WINS was informed by lessons gleaned from the Pathways experience, it also diverged from that model in significant ways. Boston WINS conducted a competitive selection process for its partners but did not implement the SIF-required full and open competition, instead identifying qualified candidates to participate in the rigorous application and due diligence process. State Street engaged New Profit to help identify and select highly qualified organizations to fund. Another key difference built into the Boston WINS model is the requirement that the five partners work within a network approach in order to achieve better student results through active coordination than they could achieve acting alone. As a major Boston employer, State Street was also able to enhance its social investment through its commitment to hire 1,000 Boston youth.
- **Extending the impact.** Boston WINS is now focused on enhancing the impact of its work through managing the collaborative efforts of the organizations it funds. Consistent with State Street’s commitment to invest in the communities where it operates, State Street funds organizations to operate the Boston WINS program only within the Boston area and requires them to actively collaborate with one another through the concept of “Coordinated Action.” WINS partner organizations are evaluated based on their ability to scale and to add value through participation in the partner organization network. The WINS network approach requires the partners, all of which have Boston operations, to share data, coordinate, and identify gaps among the populations served for increased positive outcomes.

5. Conclusion

As SIF participants implemented and evaluated their programs, they did so with the goal of growing the impact of their work to accomplish the most good for the most people. The SIF helped grantees and subgrantees better articulate what it means to scale—growing the number of people served, expanding to new locations, and expanding and deepening service. Grantees and subgrantees found that the elements of successful scaling included strong evidence, organizational capacity, services keyed to critical needs, deep local knowledge, and well-documented models. The SIF also provided participants with the opportunity, evidence, partnerships, and assistance needed to scale. The support SIF provided to grantees and the support grantees provided to their subgrantees were a positive result of the SIF intermediary model that led to expanded opportunities for funding, increased organizational capacity, and increased collaboration among partners. The conditions for growing impact identified in this brief serve as a basis for expanding the conversation about scaling programs that work.

About This Issue Brief

This issue brief was informed by discussions with the following people:

- Maura Riordan and Melissa Werner, AIDS United (2010 SIF grantee) and Erin Falvey from subgrantee Christie’s Place
- Jerene Petersen and Kenzie Strong, Mile High United Way (2011 SIF grantee) and Richard Garcia, Valerie Gonzales, and Jim Pollicita from subgrantee Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition
- Carla Javits, REDF (2010 and 2015 SIF grantee) and Sam Schaeffer from subgrantee Center for Employment Opportunities
- Tulaine Montgomery, New Profit, Inc. (2010 SIF grantee) and Joe McGrail from funding partner State Street Foundation
- Jeff Bradach, The Bridgespan Group
- Meghan Duffy, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations

Scaling Resources

The SIF scaling experience reflects and extends the field’s work related to scaling. Additional resources include:

- [Using Evidence to Scale What Works: 2015 State of the SIF Report](#)
- [The Bridgespan Group’s Transformative Scale Resource Center](#)
- [Scaling What Works: A Learning Initiative of Grantmakers for Effective Organizations](#)
- [A Successful Prisoner Reentry Program Expands: Lessons from the Replication of the Center for Employment Opportunities](#)

About the Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund, an initiative of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) under the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, is a new approach by the federal government to address urgent national challenges. The fund mobilizes public and private resources to grow the impact of promising, innovative community-based solutions that have evidence of compelling results in three areas of priority need: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development.

The operating model of the SIF is distinguished by the following six elements:

Innovation | Evidence | Scale | Grantmakers | Match | Knowledge Sharing

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