



Scaling Social Impact through Organisational Capacity Building

The discourse around social impact organisations, more often than not, includes the need to achieve scale. One side of the coin is the denominator or the scale at which the social problem exists, and the breadth that needs to be covered to solve the problem. The other side of the coin is the organisation's capability – both in terms of quality and quantity – to achieve the requisite scale. Simply put, scaling up both programmes as well as organisations to achieve the desired impact in the ecosystem go hand-in-hand.

Non-profit leaders will concur that scale means different things to different organisations. It depends, among other things, on the problem they are trying to solve, the geographies where the problem persists, and the beneficiaries they are focusing on based on their theory of change. Accordingly, the pathways to scale differ as well. There can therefore be no cookie-cutter approach to scaling up for impact.

Sattva's decade-long experience of engaging with non-profits of different sizes and maturity levels has however, helped us identify a key tenet – **organisational capacity building** – which when customised, can enable an organisation to become 'scale up ready'. There are multiple components to this exercise, and our experience says that every non-profit that wishes to scale requires one or more of these.

- **Re-alignment of Mission and Vision:** Before embarking upon the creation of a scale-up strategy, non-profits caught in the throes of growth need to relocate their North Star. This holds true even for large scale mature non-profits who have been in the ecosystem for ages. For instance, Sattva helped a 40-year old organisation working on child welfare to re-create the mission of the organisation in the context of the larger vision, which then enabled them to focus on depth of impact, instead of spreading themselves too thin to achieve breadth alone.
- **Development of Fundraising Strategy:** The ability to create impact is contingent upon the non-profit's ability to stay in business and scale, which in turn is largely dependent on the availability of funding. A robust fundraising strategy is therefore very important for any non-profit. Sattva has worked with diverse organisations across various sectors, and some as old as 20 years, to develop a deep understanding of what makes fundraising strategies work. It often starts with conducting fundraising diagnostics to understand past performance, which feeds into new fundraising strategies that define target funder segments, key value propositions and critical success factors. This is then further reinforced by building fundraising capacity of the organisation across people, processes, messaging and networks.
- **Restructuring of organisations (Systems, Processes, People) and Change Management:** As organisations grow to scale their impact, their people and processes need to accommodate the changes that come with scale. Sattva has encountered



examples of large organisations which have scaled to 400+ districts in India while holding on to centralised decision-making structures, resulting in bottlenecks across the organisation. The solutions in such instances have included developing a second line of leadership to decentralise decision-making, organisational restructuring to create new departments and restructure existing ones, developing standard operating procedures for old and new processes, developing capacity building plans for people, and creating change management plans to help these changes percolate across roles and ranks within the organisation.

- **Developing Scale-up Blueprints and Products for Programs of organisations:** Growing an organisation and its programmes requires various strategies and levers. Sattva has demonstrated that standardising blueprints for scale and developing innovative products can enable organisations to implement their programmes at scale. Designing programmes and processes, building monitoring and evaluation frameworks for measuring effectiveness and efficiency of programmes, and using technology as an enabler to scale programmes have been some of tried and tested ways in which we have enabled organisations to scale their programmes and impact, the most shining testimony of which has been an education non-profit which grew its programme from 4 to 13 states in the country in 3 years.

Since the need of each organisation on its pathway to scale is unique, the solutions have to be customised as well. **Programme and organisational diagnostics** to understand the gaps that need filling, **custom-made strategies** to address the specific requirements of an organisation, and **implementation support** on an organisation's scale-up journey are, therefore, all integral cogs for enabling an organisation to achieve the scale that is necessary to create the intended impact. While externalities like regulatory environment and availability of funding may limit the growth of organisations at times, organisational capacity building can help overcome some of the challenges associated with becoming 'scale up ready'.

Sattva has been working with various non-profits and organisations to help them define their social impact goals and optimise their capacity building efforts. Our focus is to solve critical problems and find scalable solutions.

- To read more about our work, check: <https://www.sattva.co.in/our-work/>
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