Breakout Group A: Taking approaches to scale through replication and diffusion

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The new development approaches like DDD, TWP and PDIA call for customizing solutions to the problem-at-hand, local context, and local capacities. They warn against cookie cutter and one-size-fits-all programs and – instead – encourage understanding of inherent capability traps and political nuances first before prescribing a solution. They promote positive deviance and diffusion, rather than massive scale-up of best practices.

But if context is supreme, how do we determine which approaches are truly replicable, be it the adaptive design of the modality itself or iterative process of implementation? Once identified, how do we take these approaches themselves to scale? How do we get more governments and development programs to adopt iterative learning processes? How do we get them to take on more flexible, responsive and fit-for-purpose design and monitoring evaluation frameworks? How do we get them to weigh both political and technical considerations into policy options and decisions?

This Group is aimed to deliberate examples of taking some aspects of the new development approaches to scale; discuss what works and does not work; and craft practical solutions that can be tried on real cases that the participants are experiencing in their actual work.

Day 1: Identify the real problem

Share case studies or examples of trialing some aspects of DDD/TWP/PDIA. Be specific about:

- What was the problem that you were trying to solve?
- What was the conventional way of solving the problem? And what new strategy/behavior/approach did you try in applying DDD, TWP or PDIA?
- How does this illustrate a key principle of DDD, TWP or PDIA?
- What were the challenges (if any) you faced in implementing this different approach in that setting and how did you resolve them at the time?
- What were some of the enabling factors that allowed this different approach to work (if at all?)
- What factors did you consider in deciding to scale-up the approach further?
- How did you make it happen? Through gradual diffusion or a replication plan?
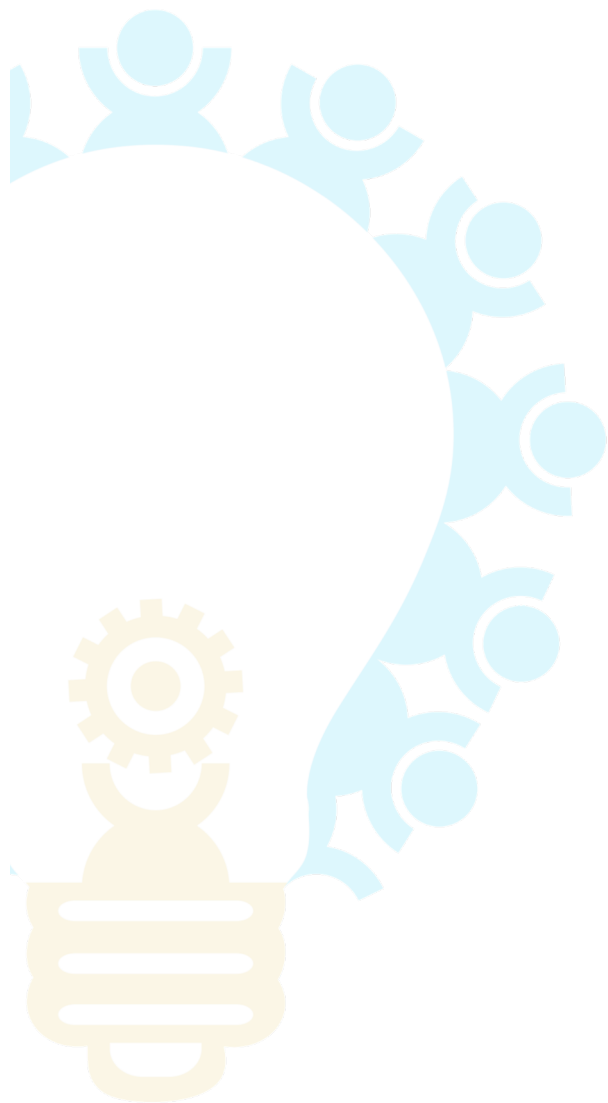- What was the outcome?

Day 2: Develop solutions

Using the same examples from Day 1 (or others), discuss the successes and challenges in scaling up the approach. Identify practical considerations and solutions in scaling up.

- When and how did you decide when the approach should be scaled up?
- What were the challenges that you faced and successes achieved? What were the enabling factors that contributed to the successes achieved?
- What were some of your lessons learned for future work?
- How do you identify problems that are systemic or common across multiple locations?
- Under what conditions would you consider NOT to scale up the approach?
- Should we scale up the approach or the solution?
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Please come prepared with case studies or examples from your own work that respond to the above. Those who did not share a case on Day 1 can present a new case to discuss on Day 2. We will follow all the same steps in discussing each case. You are welcomed to also share any questions or challenges that you are grappling with in relation to scaling up DDD/TWP/PDIA approaches. At the end of Day 2, we will summarize the key takeaways and practical solutions.