IMAGO
Global Grassroots

2023
ANNUAL
REPORT

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I look back on 2023, the story is about our own scaling up. We have more than doubled our client engagements while at the same time, our knowledge-based work has gone to the next level. The corresponding growth in our human and financial resources has given us first-hand experience of the challenges many of our clients face as they scale up. We have been on our own scaling journey and that is exciting but also requires strategic choices and investing in the foundations of our organization.

Imago's board has been such an important partner in this journey with an important shift in 2023. From weekly meetings with our new chair, Veronica Zavala, to frequent discussions with our Finance subcommittee, (John Wilton and Vince Jeong) the strategic engagement of our board has shifted to match the moment. Their work has focused on directions for future growth as well as the need to invest in the financial and people foundations to make this scaling up not only sustainable but also contributes to building the next stage.

Throughout 2023, we have worked with organizations across the globe including (in alphabetical order): Araucania Aprende, Balloon Latam, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Espacio Público, Foncodes, Fundação CAEd, Fundación Colunga, , Fundación Infancia Primero, Fundación Trabün, Fundación 99, Formando Chile, Huella Local, the Inter American Development Bank (IDB), Instituto Gesto, Laboratório de Educação, Lever for Change, (an Affiliate of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation), The Nature Conservancy, Pratham, Project Concern International India, SEWA, SEWA Bharat, Solar Sister, Transforming Rural India Foundation, UNDP Tunisia, UN Women, the World Bank and 3ie.

Our work in India continued with a successful first year of the implementation of scaling up the Unnant Project, a SEWA innovation , through 3 states : Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Jarkhand, We have set up demonstration centers across these states and have MoUs with the State Livelihood Mission in all of them with a goal to scale to 100 processing centers that should provide livelihood opportunities for thousands of women in Self Help Groups. The interventions included in our two Adaptive Evaluations with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are ending in 2023-2024 so the work is reaching a new stage that brings all the learnings together.

At the end of 2023 we published the book Scaling up Development Impact which provides a framework I developed through 10 years of teaching at the Harvard Kennedy School. The book includes examples of the application of this framework to many of the organizations we have worked at Imago over the same period. It has been an exciting moment to share what has emerged in the last decade and broaden the conversation to consider how we may do development differently in the years to come. For more on the book, visit www.imagogg.org/scaling-up-book.

Thank you to our stakeholders for their unwavering support. In 2023 we raised over $41,160 through the Community Connections Campaign in the World Bank and received very important core support from the Sall Family Foundation.

Thank you.

Isabel Guerrero
Co-Founder and Executive Director

ABOUT US

Since 2014, we have been working with incredible organizations that are transforming their communities, helping them build the scaffolding to scale their impact.
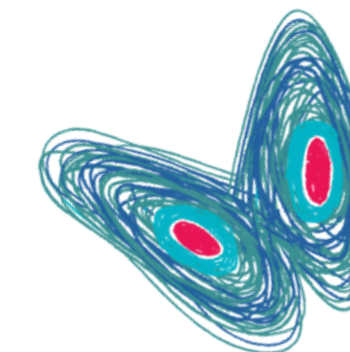
Our Mission

A world in which the innovations and solutions developed at the grassroots can reach global scale.

Our Vision

Changing development thinking and practices around poverty alleviation.

WE ARE IMAGO GLOBAL GRASSROOTS

Imago works with mission-driven organizations to build capacity and scale impact in a way that respects their unique contexts and strengths.

Motivating our work is the belief that solutions are embedded within local communities. For Imago, this is both a core value and instrumental for greater impact. We believe sustainable solutions to the most difficult development problems must tap into a diversity of experiences and always have the end user at the center.

Our approach is multidisciplinary, drawing from the fields of economics, business, design thinking, and organizational psychology, to help organizations solve technical and adaptive challenges and co-create a pathway to scale.

We work together with organizations to address the critical questions for scaling up such as strategic planning, nurturing a culture of learning, monitoring and evaluation, and mainstreaming agile methods for process innovation.

Internally, our team has continued to grow and is comprised of experienced professionals from different cultural backgrounds, ages, and areas of expertise. We are supported by phenomenal and likeminded advisors and partners that believe in the power of scaling up solutions developed at the grassroots.
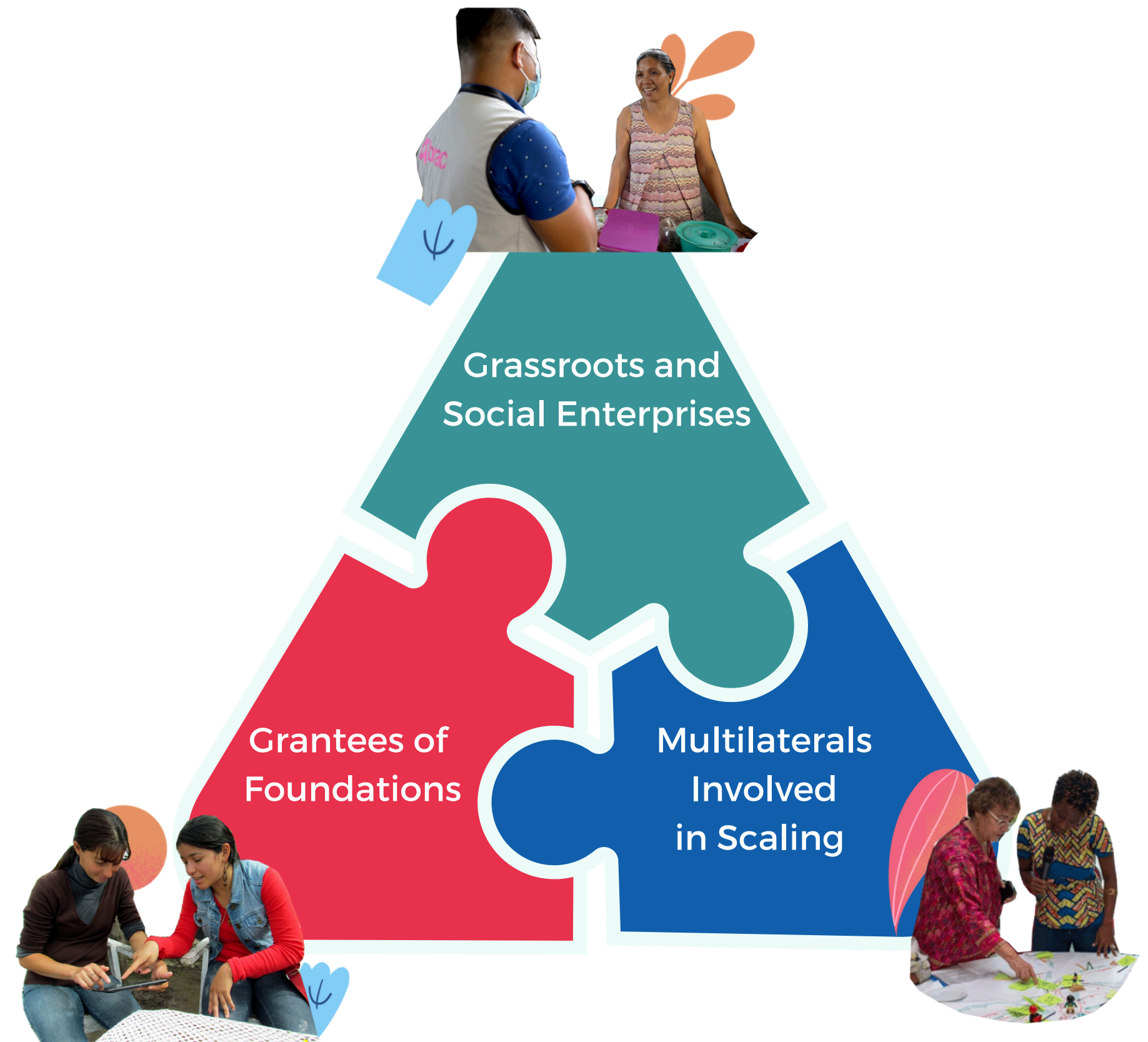
OUR WORK IN 2023

OUR WORK

As we approach our 10-year anniversary, our commitment of working alongside mission driven organizations to scale their impact is stronger than ever.

We continue to primarily work with three categories of organizations: **iconic grassroots organizations and social enterprises, grantees of foundations, and multilaterals involved in scaling.**

All are committed to and working on innovative solutions to some of the world's toughest challenges, are interested in considering organizational change and transformation, and are ready to think about what is takes to scale their services and impact while remaining true to their core values.

Grassroots and Social Enterprises

Grantees of Foundations

Multilaterals Involved in Scaling

GRASSROOTS AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

From the outset, grassroots and social enterprises are at the core of Imago's approach, work, and primary client base. These organizations and their profound local knowledge of their communities inspire and guide our work.

FUNDACIÓN INFANCIA PRIMERO (FIP)

Fundación Infancia Primero (FIP) is a transformative leader in Chile's childhood development sector, seeking to strengthen emotional wellbeing and early childhood development, through improving bonds with parents and caretakers so that children can reach their maximum potential. In 2023, the Imago team worked with FIP to support a process to scale up one of their early childhood programs, Crecer Jugando (CJ).

FIP began implementing CJ through a pilot program in the Colina and El Bosque departments in 2015 and, by 2023, has reached 19 departments (states). Imago and FIP partnered to develop a roadmap to scale CJ at a national level through a one-year collaboration consisting of the three phased approach developed by Imago: diagnosis, co-creation of a scaling roadmap and implementation support.

The work with FIP has expanded our understanding of the challenges grassroots organizations face when trying to scale through the government and has also become a great source of inspiration about the impact our scaling up framework can have in communities in Latin America. We are thrilled to continue working directly with FIP through the first half of 2024.

Photos: Imago team training at the processing center in Bero, Jharkhand

OUR WORK IN INDIA

UNNAT PROJECT

2023 was a successful first year in implementing the Unnat project in which Imago began scaling a women-owned and managed agro enterprise model across three states in India - Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand. The model an innovation of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA). In 2023, 5 demonstration centers were set up - 1 in Jharkhand (Bero), 2 in Madhya Pradesh (Guna and Raisen), and 2 in Uttar Pradesh (Tappal and Varanasi).

This work builds on results from Imago's work under 3ie's Swashakt program which developed a pilot that was ready for scaling through support from the women-led community institutions with the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), a flagship government program part of the Ministry of Rural Development. The model aims to integrate local agricultural value chains with entrepreneurial networks of self-help group (SHG) members to create additional income opportunities for 80,000 rural women across the three states.

OUR WORK WITH

GRANTEES OF FOUNDATIONS

Working with grantees of foundations has helped Imago scale our impact and reach more organizations. We work with Foundations on a range of activities: from assessing which organizations are most ready to scale, to working with them to define their scaling up pathways, and capacity building offers to strengthen proposed work or engage in a series of courses to support their progress.

LEVER FOR CHANGE

Imago has worked with Lever for Change, an affiliate of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to support the capacity building of Bold Solutions Network organizations through a series of workstreams: Scaling Up; Feminine Leadership; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ); and Adaptive Evaluation.

In 2023, our work expanded to provide technical support to the five finalist organizations in the Maternal and Infant Health Award, managed by Lever for Change, as they developed and strengthened their final proposals with a focus on scaling up locally-led solutions. Organizations represented innovative, community-driven projects focused on improving maternal and infant health in Kenya, Uganda, Colombia and Guatemala.

The lead recipient of the $12 million Maternal and Infant Health Award was Lwala Community Alliance of Kenya. In partnership with Dandelion Africa, Lwala will scale community health services in three regions in Kenya that experience the highest rates of maternal and infant mortality. Their community-led health model will support nearly 1 million women and infants in experiencing safer pregnancy, delivery and first year of life.

To learn more about all awardees see: maternalinfanthealthaward.org

Photo: Lwala Community Health

Photo: SinergiasONG

FUNDACIÓN OLIVO

In Chile, we have deepened our work with Olivo, a Foundation that works with civil society organizations to implement projects that contribute to improving the quality of life of individuals and communities across Chile. When our work began, Olivo was a relatively new foundation. Today, supporting organizations to scale up is a key focus of their work and mission, paving the way for other foundations and demonstrating the power of how a focused approach to scaling can deliver outcomes.

In 2023, we concluded the co-creation of two Scaling Up roadmaps for Olivo grantees in Chile (Balloon Latam and Araucania Aprende), and we also launched a second collaboration to develop a one-year collaboration with four additional orgnaizations from Olivo's portfolio working in Education and Local Development (Fundación Trabün, Formando Chile, Huella Local and Fundación 99).

OUR WORK WITH

MULTILATERALS INVOLVED IN SCALING

As our work has continued to expand to new areas, Imago has continued to engage multilateral organizations involved and interested in scaling. These organizations can play an important, intermediary role with the ability to finance innovation and scaling up before it is enabled through larger avenues of support. This intermediary function is essential as we think about how to support grassroots organizations and solutions in reaching global scale.

THE INNOVATION LAB OF THE IDB

Our 2022 Annual Report highlighted our work with the IDB Lab, the innovation laboratory of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Our work to enrich and further refine their concept of scale, identify scale success factors and conditions in the current IDB Lab portfolio to learn from, and co-develop an implementable approach to assess scalability of projects, and improve scaling metrics throughout their lifecycle was released to the public in 2023. This publication was well received by key stakeholders as a new way of supporting scalable projects within multilaterals.

UNDP TUNISIA

In 2023, we worked with UNDP Tunisia to create an Adaptive Evaluation strategy for their gender-based violence (GBV) portfolio of interventions. GBV is a complex, multifaceted problem involving the judiciary, the police, and societal norms around marriage, family, and violence. UNDP Tunisia has multiple projects in each of these areas, but they are often evaluated in silos, without a full understanding of their collective impacts on the broader system.

Over 5 months, Imago worked closely with UNDP Tunisia, to map the system, and assess how interventions by UNDP, other multilaterals, and NGOs are interconnected and help dampen self-reinforcing feedback loops perpetuating the problem. We also developed an Adaptive Evaluation process to monitor, learn, and adapt the portfolio using the system analysis to leverage synergies across interventions and eventually change the system toward better outcomes.
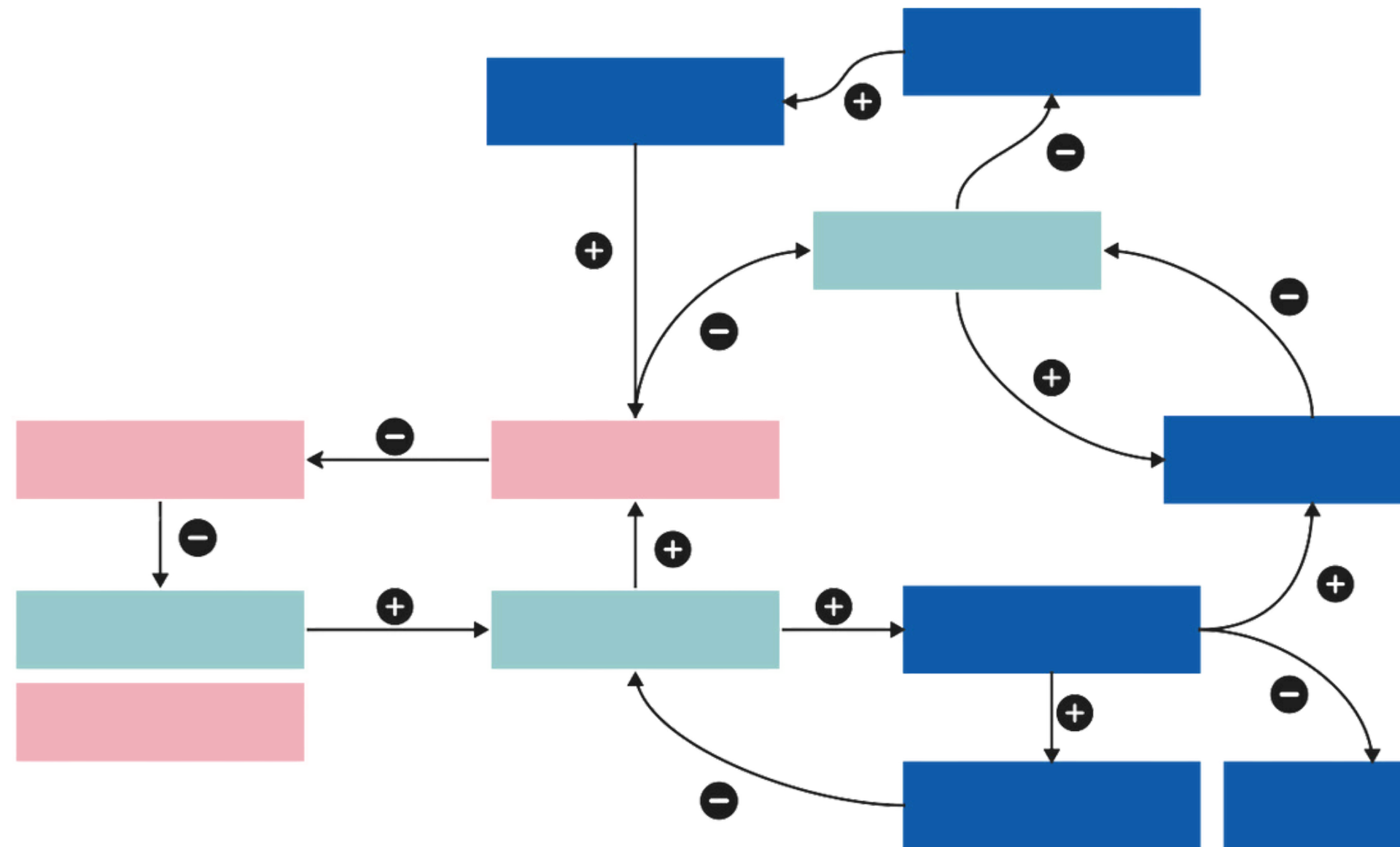

Image: Example of system mapping in our adaptive evaluation approach. For illustrative purposes only.

GROWING OUR KNOWLEDGE

In our knowledge pillar in 2023, we prioritized strengthening our self-publishing capabilities. This investment allows us to more effectively share our insights and expertise with a wider audience, and has supported the growth of our internal knowledge sharing practices.

By making our research and frameworks publicly available, we hope to contribute to the broader conversation about how best to achieve our collective mission of creating positive social change.

ADAPTIVE EVALUATION

Adaptive Evaluation is an approach to systematic learning developed by Imago to support systems change and scaling up. It was born out of a realization that scaling development impact requires navigating complex systems through exploratory learning; and that existing techniques in development economics were not necessarily designed to assess systems change.

In 2023, Imago was involved in five adaptive evaluation engagements. With UNDP Tunisia, we co-created an Adaptive Evaluation strategy for their gender-based violence (GBV) portfolio of interventions (see above).

In India, we continued our work on two ongoing muti-year Adaptive Evaluations with the Gates Foundation. One involves designing and assessing a Women's Enterprise Support System for SEWA's women collective enterprises, and the other examines the convergence of two government rural development programs for women's economic empowerment in Bihar (in partnership with Project Concern International-India) and Madhya Pradesh (in collaboration with the Transform Rural India Foundation). In 2023, the penultimate year for both projects, we presented results from testing theories of change with unfolding qualitative and quantitative evidence (using an adapted version of process tracing). Along with our evaluation partners, Insights and Sambodhi, we also rolled out and shared insights from large sample surveys of rural women.

In Brazil, Imago concluded two education projects. With Fundação CAEd, we assessed education policies to overcome post-COVID learning gaps in the city of Recife, using process tracing in nine schools to provide policy insights. With Instituto Gesto, we developed a strategy to scale Pratham's Teaching at the Right Level in six municipalities, conducting two workshops and a series monthly advisory check-ins to ensure iterative learning and effective policy implementation.

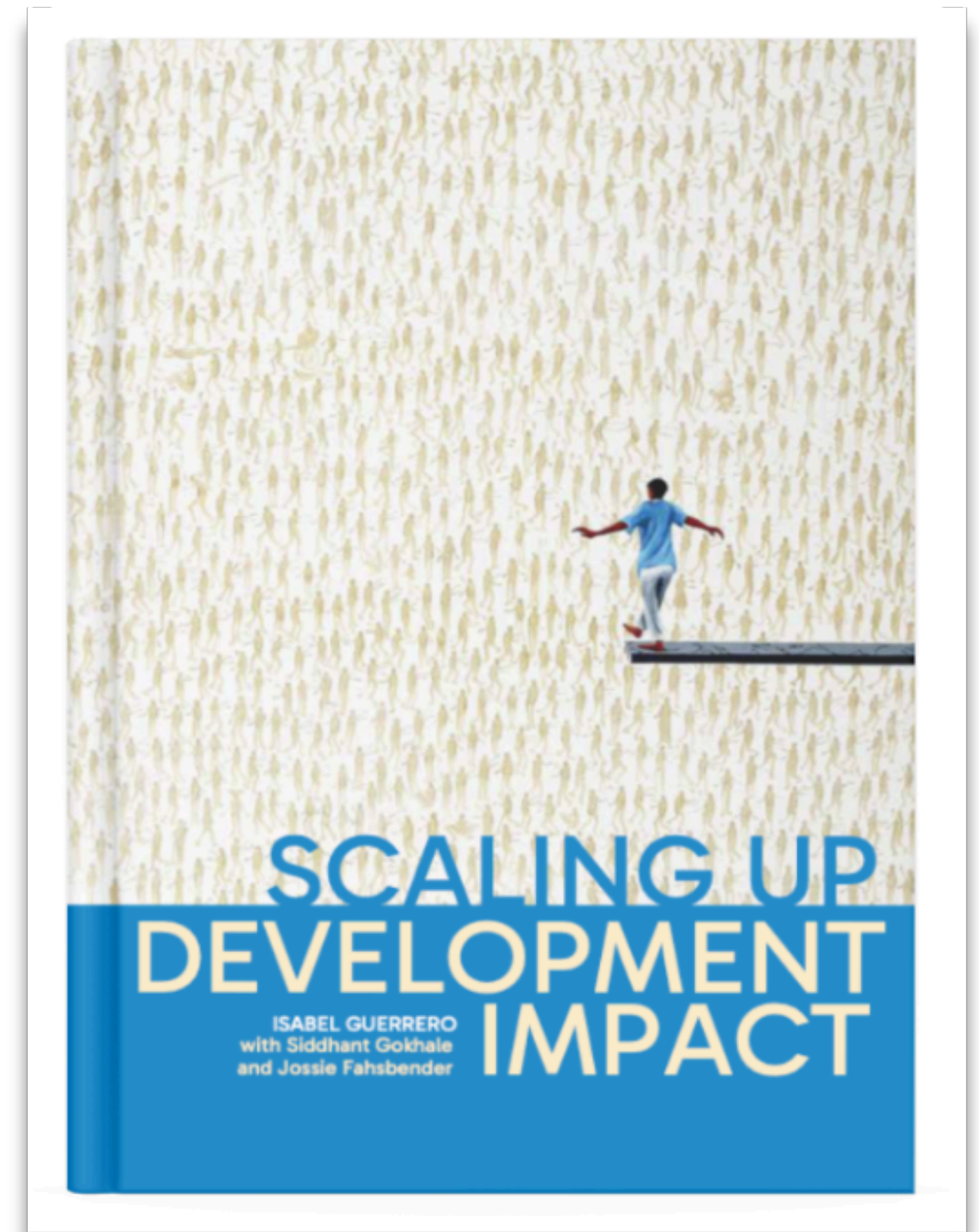Adaptive Evaluation
— A Complexity- based approach to Systematic Learning for Innovation and Scaling in Development

Siddhant Gokhale and Michael Walton
Sep 9, 2022

Imago Global Grassroots, 1110 Vermont Avenue NcW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20005

SCALING UP DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

As part of our mission to change development thinking and practices, 2023 marked an exciting milestone: the release of Scaling Up Development Impact, a book by Imago's Isabel Guerrero, Siddhant Gokhale, and Jossie Fahsbender. This comes at a pivotal moment. Despite significant strides in development, many big development challenges loom large. The UN Sustainable Development Goals have outlined some of these challenges to overcome by 2030. Against this backdrop, understanding scale is mission-critical.

"Scaling Up Development Impact" draws from a decade of experience in supporting grassroots organizations to scale impact at Imago and pulls insights from a Harvard Kennedy School course with the same name. The book weaves together organizational experiences, showcasing real-life journeys toward increased impact. It bridges concepts relevant to scaling up from various disciplines, including economics, psychology, systems thinking, design thinking, and adaptive evaluation and management. Ultimately, the book is a guide with clear questions to accompany the scaling process. We hope this book enriches the conversation around scaling and empowers change-makers with concepts, practical tools, and frameworks for creating lasting scalable solutions.
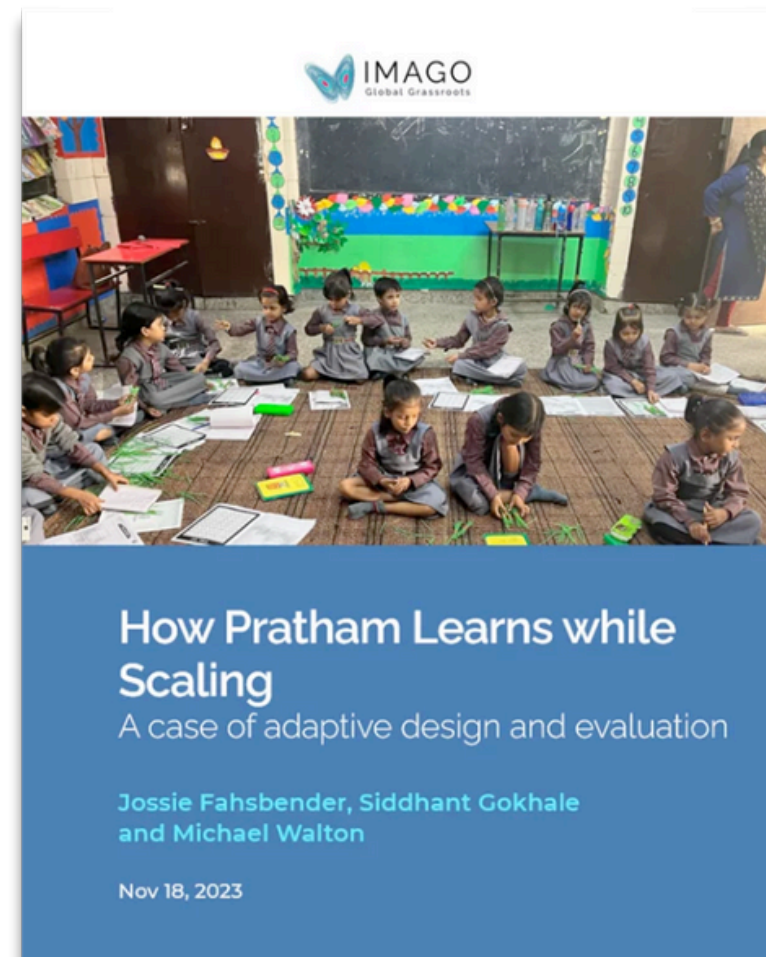
OUR NEW BOOK

SCALING UP DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

Scaling Up Development Impact was launched in 2023 with a series of in-person events in India and Chile. In India, launched the book in Delhi, and in Ahmedabad with the Self-Employed Women's Association. In Chile, the book was launched at the UN Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean. Many thanks to the many distinguished panellists for their insightful discussions on scaling up, and their enthusiasm to change the world.

ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS

At Imago, we are constantly looking to push the boundaries of our thinking around poverty alleviation, whether it is in terms of intellectual contributions or creative practices. A selection of our contributions in 2023 is below. To learn more visit our Ideas and Insights and Featured Series page on our website for a full exhibition of our articles, papers, and curations (https://imagogg.org/ideas-and-insights).

What combination of features are associated with scalable and sustainable last-mile service delivery models? A Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Ojas and Siddhant Gokhale

Oct 9, 2023

How Pratham Learns while Scaling
A case of adaptive design and evaluation

Jossie Fahsbender, Siddhant Gokhale and Michael Walton

Nov 18, 2023

HARVARD
Advanced Leadership Initiative
Social Impact Review

Articles   About   Submit

Adaptive Evaluation for Innovation and Scaling

Oct 10 · Written By Siddhant Gokhale and Michael Walton

OUR BOARD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (2023)

- Veronica Zavala (Chair)
- Rema Hanna
- Zachary Green
- Michael Walton
- Isabel Guerrero
- Kerry Yang
- John Wilton
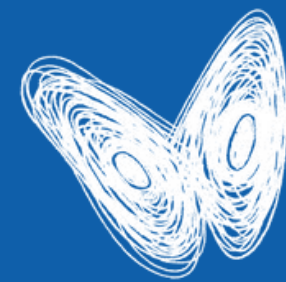- Vince Jeong
- Krystin Jones

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS WITH GRATITUDE

We sincerely thank the Sall Family Foundation for its 2023 contribution to Imago's core funds. This continued, generous contribution will help us maintain our work serving grassroots organizations that are closest to the ground or owned by the poor in LATAM.

We would also like to thank individual donors Kathie Krumm, Lucy Lytton, Miguel López, Tania Begazo Gomez, Thyra Riley, and John Blaxall that gave generous gifts to Imago through the 2023 Community Connections Campaign in the World Bank. Finally, a very special acknowledgement to Praful Patel, Isabel Guerrero, and Michael Walton for their tireless and continued dedication to raising the visibility of Imago among partners and philanthropic supporters and their generous gifts in 2023.