Using Most Significant Change Methodology to Evaluate Impact of Scaling up a Family Planning Innovation in Four Countries
Susan Igras, Elizabeth Salazar, Marie Mukabatsinda, Sekou Traore, Karina Aziaza, Donald Cruz, Rebecka Lundgren
Studying Scale Up of Standard Days Method Integration (2007-2013)

• 5 year prospective, multi-site, comparative study of process and outcomes of scaling up a family planning innovation
• DR Congo, Guatemala, India (Jharkhand), Mali, Rwanda
• ExpandNet/WHO model that guides scale-up and insists core values should not ‘get lost’ during scale up
• SDM core values - reproductive rights, women’s empowerment, male involvement, equity
Standard Days Method Scale Up Logic Model

**Problem:** Gap in availability & access to Standard Days Method services

**INPUTS**
- Staff
- Partners
- Funds
- CycleBeads

**PROCESS**
- TA for systems adjustment
- Advocacy
- Capacity Building
- Quality Assurance – monitoring & supervision

**OUTPUTS**
- Providers trained
- Clinics offering Standard Days Method
- Demand oriented IEC
- Supportive partners/stakeholders
- Systems Harmonization

**OUTCOMES**
- Provider competency
- Awareness and use
- Availability of quality services
- Supportive policies

**Impact:** increased sustained availability of the Standard Days Method
M&E Data sources

- Benchmark monitoring (Semi annual)
- Event tracking (Timelines)
- Most Significant Change (MSC) story collection (1-2 times)
- Service statistics (Quarterly)

- Community surveys & facility assessments (1-2 times)
- Individual interviews with stakeholders (1-2 times)
Most Significant Change

Using a participatory, story-based methodology to complement other M&E data on Scale Up

www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf

J Dart and R Davies, A Dialogical, Story-Based Evaluation Tool: The MSC Technique, AJEval Vol 24 (2), 2003
Introducing a new FP method—Determining its value at scale

What is the value [return on investment] of adding a new method to existing program of a health system?

What is the value [meanings, reproductive rights, equity] to those offering and using the innovation?

**Most Significant Change methodology seeks ‘values and meanings’ analysis by systems users and by end users**
As an inductive, qualitative methodology, MSC can...

- Identify results / unexpected effects of scaling up not detected with quantitative M&E
- Explore how process of scaling up and its effects are viewed by those involved in the process
- Elucidate intangible aspects and values of method scale up (role of advocacy, champions, gender equity, informed choice)

As a participatory methodology, MSC can...

- Create a space for dialogue and reflection that contributes to program improvements, and,
- A common vision of scale up efforts
“Looking back over the last year, what do you think was the most significant change you have experienced as a result of Standard Days Method being offered in your community?”

And ask why?
Main Steps of MSC Process

1. Establish story ‘domains’
2. Collect MSC stories
3. Select the most significant of collected MSC stories
4. Verify information found in the stories
5. Share information with key FP stakeholders
What domains are we using?

- Domains are large categories of stories; they are not indicators
- Easier to manage analysis of a large number of stories
- Ensures comparison between similar types of change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in the lives of users of Standard Days Method</th>
<th>Changes signaled by service providers since Standard Days Method was introduced</th>
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<td>Changes signaled by managers since Standard Days Method was integrated into programs</td>
<td>Other changes</td>
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Most Significant **User Story** - Mali
Title: Harmony in our sexual relationship

**COMMITTEE**
Why most significant?
- SDM helps women to better understand how their bodies work
- Appropriate use of condoms by couple (only on fertile days)
- Importance of education talks for method acceptability
- Use has revitalized woman's relationship with her husband

**STORYTELLER**
Why most significant?
- Better understanding of how body works
- Unobtrusive method that allows autonomy in how sexual relationship is handled
- No need for resupplies or revisits to health center
- Revitalized sexual relationship with husband
Most Significant Program Manager Story - Mali

Title: Increasing CYP & strengthening clients’ right to choose

Storyteller and Committee - Why most significant?

SDM fosters equity and the respect of clients’ rights to choose,

Has increased CYP of FP programs,

Has increased the range of FP methods available to clients
Most Significant Provider Story - Mali
Title: I'm helping women in my community to better understand how to use CycleBeads

**STORYTELLER - Why most significant?**
She has become a FP resource to women in her community
Increased condom sales (and SDM sales)
Is now well known in her community (increased status)

**COMMITTEE - Why most significant?**
Shows importance of:
Community-based volunteers for promotion and correct use of SDM
Supporting women at community level
Having CycleBeads available at community level to increase access
Cross-country analysis of values and meanings of SDM recounted in MSC stories

- 142 MSC stories from 13 organizations and MOH Units in Guatemala, DR Congo, India, Rwanda
- MSC processes adapted to social-cultural and systems differences
- Level of participation varied by country
| Ideas, meanings, and values commonly repeated across countries | Preliminary Analysis: Significance of adding SDM - Story teller perspectives |
|---|---|---|
| **Managers** | **Providers** | **Users** |
| Adding SDM improved organizational image | Knowledge of fertility, cycle & how body works | Increased partner communication in intimate decisions & FP use |
| Improved ability to fulfill concept of client rights | More options available for those who can/will not use other methods (see left column) | Provides an effective FP option they can use (without side effects) |
| A solution to longstanding FP barriers – health, side effects, economic, religious beliefs | Increases number of FP users | Family benefits economically |
Some challenges

Methodology
• Initial skepticism of
• Participatory and inductive methodologies new to most
  • Story-based reflection and analysis of users are different qualitatively
    than classical FGDs and KI
• Participatory analysis - Significance relating to what standard?
• Potential sampling bias – *Just say No!* to FP success stories!

Process
• Financial support needed by most partner orgs for story collection and first round MSC story selection
• Had to be adapted to different cultural and health systems contexts
• Ability to tell good stories does not necessarily translate to capacity to collect quality stories and put them in writing
Use of MSC stories and analysis can improve a scale up process

• Reinforces commitment among scale up actors to the goal
• Allows mutual claiming of success and partner contributions (scale up is a process shared among organizations and people)
• Provides information about SDM introduction to stakeholders
Final thoughts: Would we include MSC in a Scale up M&E system again?

- Important to include evaluation of values when taking a new health innovation to scale
- Encourages stakeholder participation
- MSC methodology allows exploration of a systems perspective of value and meanings by those reached by the innovation
- Indicator-free, qualitative approach useful for capturing the unexpected and often unexplored results of large scale change and making more explicit the value of change
Most Significant User Story - Mali
Title: Harmony in our sexual relationship

I have four (4) children. Until I became aware of Standard Days Method, condoms have always been the form of contraception that my husband and I have used, for fear of side effects of other methods. Yet the constraints of using this method were starting to weigh heavily on me.

Approximately nine (9) months ago I found out about CycleBeads as part of a discussion on family planning organized by AMPPF agents. Since then, we have adopted this method. What attracted me first was that this was a natural method.

Ever since we started using this method I've noted many positive changes, both for myself and as part of my relationship:

- I have a better understanding of the way my body works, such as the days on which I'm fertile or not; this is something I never worried about before.

- Standard Days Method is a very unobtrusive method and allows wide autonomy in the way we handle our relationship.

- There is no need to get new supplies from the health care agent and no need for follow-up appointments at the health post.

- There is greater harmony in the sexual relations I have with my husband. Standard Days Method has revitalized our life as a couple. This is the most significant change. Ever since we adopted this method we only rarely suffer from the constraints connected with condoms, and this suits us perfectly.

Why most significant?

SDM helps women to better understand how their body works

Appropriate use of condoms by couple (only on fertile days)

Importance of education talks for method acceptability

Use has revitalized woman’s relationship with her husband
I am the program manager at the Malian Association for the Protection and Promotion of Families (AMPPF) and have held this position since 1990. I'm in charge of coordinating and following up all programs and projects for this organization.

I first heard about Standard Days Method in 2007 as part of activities organized by IRH to promote the method; the project coordinator subsequently requested our help to include the method at our service delivery points (SDPs).

The level of adoption of Standard Days Method is quite low because of clients’ limited interest, but this is probably due to the fact that the method is in its early days. Standard Days Method has increased the range of choices our clients have. It has also increased the CYP (couple-years of protection) of our FP services, even though the increase is not significant.

On the other hand, what is particularly important is respecting the client's right to choose. As AMPPF is a member of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), it attaches great importance to anything that can contribute to respecting this right, as it is an integral part of service quality criteria.

AMPPF has helped to improve the accessibility of Standard Days Method by adding it to its health care service delivery points and to community-based distribution (CBD).
Most Significant **Provider Story - Mali**

**Title:** I'm helping women in my community to better understand how to use CycleBeads

My name is Safiatou Haidara, I'm a saleswoman for beauty products, condoms and the necklace. My younger brother handles sales in my shop. One day, a friend of mine told me that promoters of condoms and CycleBeads needed an interpreter with a view to selling their products in small shops in Goundam. I went to meet them and when I arrived they told me what kind of change they were looking to make in their district through family planning and HIV control. They provided me with information about the beads, namely how to use it, eligibility criteria and the fertility mechanism.

After I received all this information we all left together to meet small shop owners and women’s groups in our district; I served as both interpreter and facilitator. This activity lasted one week.

When the promoters left, the women who had bought the beads came to see me so that I could show them once again how to use it, and often took the opportunity to ask me if I had any condoms to manage fertile days. Women's groups are now contacting me to provide explanations to various groups as a reminder on how to use the method, or they send me newly affiliated members of the group.

Thanks to this experience, my shop’s sales figures for condoms have increased as I’m able to easily supply both products. This led to a significant change in my life for I am now well known in the village.

**Why most significant?**

Shows importance of-

Community-based volunteers for promotion and correct use of SDM

Supporting women at community level

Having CycleBeads available at community level to increase access