



CASE



#4: USING DATA TO POWER SCALE

1. USE DATA TO: IDENTIFY THE OPPORTUNITY FOR INNOVATION

- **Change the Framing Question – and Thus the Opportunity.**

When Habitat for Humanity calculated that it would take over 1,000 years to achieve their vision of ending the housing challenge with their current model, they reframed their driving question **from “How many houses can we build?” to “What would it take to meaningfully reduce the housing challenge in every geography?”** This new frame opened their minds to new approaches, including advocacy, market development, and more.

- **Look for Gaps in Impact, Reach, & Critical Adjacencies.**

Use both quantitative and qualitative data to better understand your gaps in impact and reach: are there certain populations you are not serving well, are there areas in which your impact is not as deep as your aspirations, or are there factors that are getting in the way of your efforts having their intended impact?

- **Prioritize Client/Beneficiary Input.**

[Meaningful client/beneficiary input](#) and insights are often best gathered by listening – which many organizations miss as they put too much value on quantitative metrics. When Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County spoke with leaders in one large neighborhood, they realized that what the community wanted was broader neighborhood revitalization – not just new or rehabilitated houses – which led Habitat to test a more holistic partnership effort with public and private sector community partners.

2. USE DATA TO: CONDUCT TESTS AND DRIVE DECISION-MAKING

Example: [One Acre Fund’s Scale Innovations process](#).

- **Start Small to De-Risk and Form Hypotheses to Test.**

Use desk research and conversations with key stakeholders to gather initial insights and identify analogues from which you can learn.

- **Set Key Success Criteria.**

Establish parameters for measuring success, including those that monitor the balance between impact, reach, and feasibility (including costs and capacity needs). Habitat of Forsyth County identified two key success criteria for the community: young families moving in and crime decreasing. These criteria, alongside the organization’s own feasibility criteria, drove both test design and evaluation metrics.

- **Establish Early Indicators of Success.**

Many target outcomes and success criteria will only be known over the long-term, so establish early indicators that will help you learn if you are on the right path or need to adjust. These indicators can provide evidence you are addressing perceived barriers. For example, for Habitat, this could be early indicators that borrowers are paying back housing microloans on time.

OVERARCHING DATA PRINCIPLES:

- **Collect [data that drives action](#).**
- **Ensure [metrics center your beneficiaries](#).**
- **Consider what key stakeholders want to learn.**
- **Evidence of impact is nothing without evidence of feasible implementation.**

BONUS!

[Axioms shared by Jonathan Reckford](#)

“The only thing worse than partnering... is not partnering.” *Partnering can be a challenge, but it is essential for long-term change.*

“One person’s innovation is another person’s heresy.” *Remember that change will always disrupt some people – so be thoughtful in managing that change.*

“Be religious about your principles, but not your tactics.” *Principles and values must frame your effort, but tactics can be changed.*

“If there’s mist in the pulpit, there’s fog in the pew.” *Ensure there is a shared clarity and theory of change around what you are trying to accomplish.*

Thank you to Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International, for his insights.

For more: [“Using Data to Power Scale,”](#) [Scale Stories repository](#), and [CASE’s website](#)