



Transitioning Well: *Building Sustainable Solutions*



VillageReach’s mission is to transform health care delivery to reach everyone. Our solutions are designed to improve equity and access to primary health care for the most under-reached people.

Once we prove a solution’s impact, our approach is to achieve government adoption and then transition its management and operation to the government and its partners. We believe that this approach provides the greatest chance for a public health solution to achieve sustained impact at scale.

By transitioning solutions from VillageReach we can also focus our resources on solving other pressing health problems.

We define transition as the process of integrating a solution into existing public health care systems. As part of a transition, a government may decide the private sector or another partner should manage or operate part or all of a solution that it owns.

VillageReach launched an initiative called Transitioning Well in 2019 to shape a new approach and engage stakeholders in transitioning solutions. The innovative approach supports our 2030 Strategy to **transition solutions to government** and partners and provide them with the financial and technical support they need to **manage and sustain** the solutions over time. Our many years of refining this approach has shown that it works. We now have several successful examples of transitions to government, the private sector, and local NGOs for sustainable impact at scale.

At the center of this innovative approach are deep partnerships, where solutions are co-created with government and are in alignment with government priorities.

This document provides an overview of Transitioning Well and how VillageReach is working to enable successful transitions.

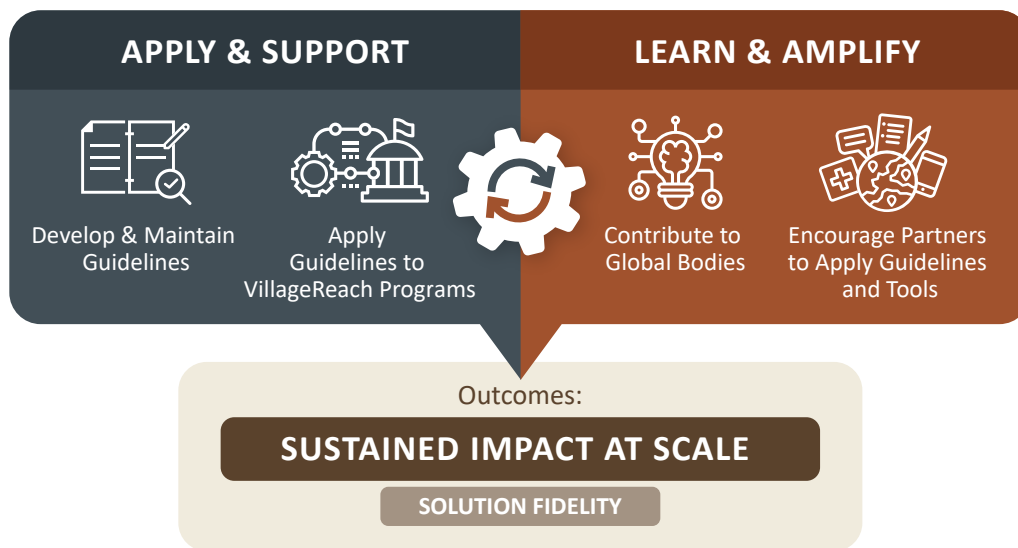


TRANSITIONING WELL APPROACH

The Transitioning Well approach is grounded in two types of activities:

- 1 Apply & Support** - build a supportive organizational structure at VillageReach to transition solutions to government; and
- 2 Learn & Amplify** - engage stakeholders for mutual learning and iteration on best practices.

We believe that the activities in these two areas will help more solutions achieve sustained impact at scale.



APPLY & SUPPORT

Building a supportive organizational structure for transition requires VillageReach to incorporate transition-related activities into all phases of program activity, including design, implementation and evaluation. Partnering with government stakeholders from the solution design phase is essential. This means designing the solution with government and identifying the appropriate partner(s) to manage or operate the solution long term.

Another important part of building this structure is training key individuals. VillageReach developed role descriptions for two key positions essential to this process based on our experience to date: the Transition Lead, who is responsible for managing transition activities with the government and relevant partners, and the Transition Coach, who supports the Transition Lead in applying guidelines.

We also developed guidelines with detailed standard operating procedures and worked examples to use with our government partners and related stakeholders. We systematically apply them to our programs, and continue to refine them over time as we capture more lessons and share them with others. We have also begun training and coaching governments, other social impact organizations, and donors on the guidelines for use in their own solutions and organizations.

APPLY & SUPPORT: STAGES OF TRANSITION

VillageReach's transition process is organized into three stages: (1) Define and Begin to Implement, (2) Continue Implementation and Plan for Transition, and (3) Transition and Sustain. The transition process is not always linear so iteration is required. See appendix for more details on the guidelines that are referenced.



STAGE 1

Define and Begin to Implement the Solution

- Co-develop a solution with government based on a problem identified as a priority by government.
- Develop a **Solution Description** that defines the scope of the solution.
- Begin solution implementation – in this case it may be on a small scale, e.g., in one province or district.
- Develop a **Solution Toolkit** containing the elements needed to operate the solution long term.
- Develop a cost model and do a **Solution Costing** to understand the operational costs.
- Conduct an impact evaluation to assess whether the initial solution is effective.

STAGE 2

Continue Implementation and Plan for Transition

- Conduct a **Transition Strategy Go/No-Go** to determine if a solution is ready for the Transition Strategy and planning process.
- Hold a **Stakeholder Alignment Workshop** to align on the post transition vision.
- Continue solution implementation while planning for transition.
- Set key directions on timing, funding and roles and responsibilities as part of a **Transition Strategy**. Formalize in an agreement with government.
- Evaluate solution maturity and the context influencing solution success via the **Transition Readiness Checklist**. This is based on dimensions outlined in our [transition to government framework](#). We recommend conducting the checklist multiple times throughout the transition process to adapt to changing solution maturity and context.
- Re-evaluate solution costs at this point and begin planning for inclusion in adopting partners' budgets.
- Define the actions and timing for transition based on checklist results through a **Transition Plan**.
- Develop and implement a **Skills Development Plan** to build the skills needed for long term impactful operation of the solution.
- Develop an **Evaluation and Adaptation Plan** to measure Key Performance Indicators and the transition process at least one year after the transition.

STAGE 3

Transition and Sustain the Solution

- Continue solution implementation and activities defined in the Transition Plan.
- Conduct formal handover to government.
- Refine the **Evaluation and Adaptation Plan** and evaluate the transition with the government partner.

The government may identify a need for ongoing external technical assistance after transition. Following a transition, we recommend that funders support a final evaluation, commissioned by the new solution owners and/or managers, to gauge to what extent a solution has maintained impact and quality post transition.



Integrating solutions into public sector systems is complex and requires deep collaboration, yet practical tools and examples are few and not well understood. VillageReach and its partners Spring Impact and Spark Health Africa, with the support of a coalition of funders, spearheaded the Learning Network to begin to address this. The intent was to help source, develop, test and share best practices to improve the way solutions transition to government.

Our landscape research with dozens of stakeholders revealed that realizing successful transitions requires a shift in deeply-entrenched power dynamics between funders, governments and social impact organizations.

Through several events, the landscape analysis and conversations with government teams, the strong desire to move beyond principles to providing practical guidance became clear. With over 15 governments, donors, and organizations, we developed the [Journey to Scale with Government Tool](#) and [Stakeholder Alignment Workshop](#). These tools help establish shared language to describe the journey, provide guidance for successful partnership and set a contextual framework for transition and sustainability. These tools are available to all interested organizations.

We regularly share our experience and contribute to organizations focused on scaling and sustaining innovations. These include, but are not limited to, the SDG Sustainability Technical Working Group, the WHO Innovation Forum Call to Action Steering Committee, and the HealthTech Hub Africa Intergovernmental Working Group and Blueprint for Scaling Innovation.

We have coached several organizations and donors on their sustainability- related processes and on integrating transition-related activities into their goals and workplans. We have also developed Transitioning Well services for other social impact organization and donors based on our tools and experience. These services complement well-established frameworks like ExpandNet's Scaling Innovations and IDIA's Mountain Model.

We believe that if the journey to government adoption is well understood by all, power can be more evenly distributed among key stakeholders, and result in more sustainable health solutions in Africa. With more sustainable health solutions, governments can better support the health needs of their populations, reaching the people who need them most.

For questions regarding our Transitioning Well initiative please email transitioningwell@villagereach.org

APPENDIX: Transitioning Well Guideline and Tools

APPLY & SUPPORT

STAGE 1: DEFINE AND BEGIN TO IMPLEMENT THE SOLUTION

Solution Description Guideline	This guideline helps stakeholders identify the core elements needed to operate a solution. It provides instructions on how to define the solution scope and its elements, and how to create and validate the solution description. VillageReach recommends developing a solution description at the beginning of program implementation.
Solution Toolkit Guideline	This guideline covers instructions for how to create a solution toolkit that ensures all operational staff have the required knowledge for effective solution implementation. A solution toolkit ensures that individuals responsible for each part of the solution can easily access standard operating procedures, reference materials and tools needed to carry out activities that sustain solution fidelity and impact, including quality assurance.
Solution Costing Guideline	This guideline provides stakeholders with tools and approaches for solution costing. For a government/partner to embed a solution they must know the ongoing operating cost. Specific guidance on cost model development, actual costing and cost estimating is needed to design affordable solutions, identify opportunities for solution cost improvement, develop long-term financing plans, develop budgets and produce solid funding requests.

STAGE 2: CONTINUE IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN FOR TRANSITION

Transition Strategy Go/No-Go Checklist Tool	The purpose of this tool is to help teams make pragmatic decisions on whether your program (the country specific implementation of a given solution) should consider being transitioned (moving to the Transition Strategy stage) for scale up by the government or another organization or for ongoing sustainability through the government or other organization at this time OR whether it should be transitioned later, or thoughtfully closed out.
Transition Strategy Guideline	This guideline helps solution owners and partners identify and document the goals and vision for transition. It helps align the solution team and government or receiving partner around roles and responsibilities for solution operation, staffing and funding, expected geographical coverage of the solution at the point of transition, risks and mitigating factors and timing of transition.
Transition Readiness Checklist (TRC) Guideline	This guideline helps stakeholders understand when and how to assess the readiness of a solution to transition using the TRC tool. It also details how the checklist should be applied, and the stakeholders who should participate in the process. It is supported by the Transition Readiness Checklist Tool, that provides a detailed description of the seven critical dimensions outlined in the transition to government framework and how to assess each dimension.
Transition Plan Guideline	This guideline aids stakeholders to develop, update and maintain a Transition Plan. It includes required actions and associated timelines to address any gaps identified through the TRC.
Skills Development Plan Guideline	This guideline helps stakeholders design a plan that develops or enhances the necessary skills for individuals working at the entities managing or operating the solution post transition. This plan assumes that with the right skills, solution impact and fidelity can be maintained over time.

STAGE 3: TRANSITION AND SUSTAIN THE SOLUTION

Evaluation and Adaptation Plan Guideline	This guideline provides stakeholders with direction on how to monitor solution key performance indicators throughout a transition, as well as how to evaluate solution fidelity and impact post transition. It also evaluates the transition process itself, highlighting the role of contextual factors, facilitators, challenges and lessons learned for future solutions' transition to government. (The plan is developed in Stage 2 and carried out and refined in Stage 3.
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LEARN & AMPLIFY

Journey to Scale with Government Adoption Tool	Developed in partnership with Spring Impact, this tool establishes shared language to describe the journey of solution adoption by government, indicates guidance for successful partnerships and sets a contextual framework for other Transitioning Well tools and best practices.
Stakeholder Alignment Workshop Guideline	Developed originally with Spring Impact to complement the Journey to Scale with Government, these workshop materials help align governments, social impact organizations, and donors on what they are trying to achieve with the embedding of a solution into public systems and define actionable ways of working to achieve those goals and mitigating the challenges they foresee.