

Chapter 4: Large Scale Change and System Leadership

In designing the program, FSSAI realized that it would need to go beyond the traditional standard setting and regulatory-only approaches of many developed countries and it took a different approach. Integrating food safety, public health nutrition, and environmental sustainability, the program goes beyond preventing unsafe food to proactively promoting safe, healthy, and sustainable food; creates consumer awareness and demand; works with industry, using a mix of regulatory, enabling, and capacity-building approaches, and goes beyond traditional food safety regulatory mechanisms in an effort to tackle the informal economy.

Initiatives

Eat Right India packaged complex elements into three simple themes that are easy to understand and remember: Eat safe, Eat healthy, and Eat sustainable. It developed a wide range of initiatives to reach its multiple audiences in a variety of ways. Among its initiatives are the following:

- To disseminate its messages, it engages networks of research and academic institutions, consumer organizations, and professionals in food and nutrition.
- To enhance citizens' knowledge of the basics of food safety and nutrition, it developed a toolkit, e-courses, an online quiz, and materials for school children.
- It builds the capacity of food handlers at places of worship to adopt and maintain food safety and hygiene; enables the collection of used cooking oil for conversion to biodiesel fuel; and reduces food waste by connecting food business operators, surplus food distribution organizations, and people who need food.
- It works with street food vendors to raise the quality, hygiene, and safety of their food; and it provides hygiene ratings to food service establishments, empowering consumers to make informed choices when they eat out.

Potential for Large-Scale Change

Over the next five years, FSSAI intends to scale up Eat Right India across the nation, involving individual states and both broadening and deepening its initiatives. Mapping the key elements of Eat Right India to the Large-Scale Change Model developed by England's National Health Service reveals that the program is well grounded in the 10 principles that underpin large-scale change.

1. It is moving toward a new vision, one that is not incremental but transformational.
2. It has identified and communicated key themes that people can relate to and that will make a big difference: Eat safe, Eat healthy, and Eat sustainable.
3. It involves "multiples of things" — that is, multiple stakeholders, agendas, points of view, needs and wants, details, and systems that need change.

4. To distribute leadership, it has framed the issues in ways that engage and mobilize the imagination, energy, and will of a large number of diverse stakeholders.
5. Its changes are mutually reinforcing across multiple processes and subsystems—that is, its many activities connect with others and allow audiences to receive its messages and participate in the movement in many ways.
6. The leaders of the program have continually refreshed the story, with constant framing and reframing of the vision and varied means of communication, attracting new and active supporters.
7. The program’s planning and designs has been based on monitoring progress and have been adapted in response to feedback.
8. It has been open to the contributions of many sources of leadership.
9. It has begun transforming mind-sets, leading to inherently sustainable change.
10. As the program moves forwards, it will be important to bear in mind the need to maintain and refresh the leaders’ energy over the long haul. Large-scale change can take time, and it is important that the leaders not run out of steam.

Systems Leadership

It is well understood that leaders play a key role in conceptualizing and driving change. A comparison of the key aspects of the leadership FSSAI has exerted in creating and launching Eat Right India with the elements highlighted in the Harvard Kennedy School’s Systems Leadership Model² indicates that FSSAI has applied the essential skills:

- Understanding the system that shapes the challenge they seek to address;
- Catalyzing and supporting collective action among relevant stakeholders; and
- Listening, learning, and leading through coordination with and empowerment of others.

Leading Systems Change

The Systems Leadership Model further set out five key elements of the system change process. The FSSAI leadership has shown success in implementing the first two elements, Convene and Commit, and Look and Learn—that is, they effectively convened and engaged with a range of stakeholders, and they draw ideas and learning from many stakeholders and brainstorming sessions, getting perspectives from several quarters. They have demonstrated promise in the third element, Engage and Energize, by successfully engaging with and mobilizing a wide range of stakeholders. However, FSSAI has some way to go to show success in the two elements of Act with Accountability and Review and Revise: it will be crucial to establish and agree on frameworks for mutual accountability for results in pursuit of the larger goal, and to establish systems for “review and revision.”

Areas for Further Attention

The analyses clearly bring out that Eat Right India has made a very promising start. Although it is a relatively new initiative, its vision, design, and early implementation reflect all the elements of large-scale-change and a systems leadership approach. Thus, it has the potential to bring about sustainable change. At the same time, it has a long and challenging journey ahead. Several points will need attention as Eat Right India is scaled up. Leadership development efforts will need to be designed, implemented, and institutionalized at all levels—national, state, and local. For rapid scale-up, it will be important to get states on board and to develop systems to build their capacity and share new developments, tools, and resources.

- To institutionalize the change, it will be important to give attention to establishing relevant policies (central and state), realigning organizational structures at FSSAI and its regional offices and at state health departments, and establishing accountability systems for collective action.
- FSSAI should set up platforms with defined structure, function, and resources to fulfil the national and international learning needs and the knowledge creation and exchange needs of Eat Right India. Linkages and partnerships with national and international schools and universities could add value to the research and learning from Eat Right India.
- Eat Right India needs to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework for knowledge management, including a strong monitoring and evaluation on system. Specifically, a state-of-the-art management information system to meet the monitoring needs of Eat Right India and a dashboard to monitor progress and share it widely with all stakeholders will be key.

Furthermore, periodic assessments and evaluations to determine the impact of current strategies and approaches and to inform future directions and improvements is important.

To ensure that resource availability matches the program scope and scale, FSSAI should undertake a full resource mapping and planning, including at the state level, and should urge/engage with/incentivize states to commit and allocate greater resources for Eat Right India. xiv I. Introduction

References

1. National Health Service, England. Leading Large-Scale Change – A Practical Guide, 2018. (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/practical-guide-large-scale-change-april-2018-sml.pdf>)
2. Lisa Dreier, Jane Nelson, and David Nabarro, “Systems Leadership for Sustainable Development: Strategies for Achieving Systems Change,” Harvard Kennedy School Corporate Responsibility Initiative Research Paper, September 2019. (<https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/mrcbg/files/Systems%20Leadership.pdf>)