Building State Capability and PDIA: Origins

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Origins of attention to state capability as an issue

- Increasing recognition on the part of development practitioners that the main issue was not a debate about “what” should be done, what the “right” policies or “right” budget allocations, but the question of “how”: How were policies and programs to be implemented in a sustained way with reasonable fidelity to design
Three stories

• A social safety net program during the crisis in Indonesia

• A trip to Afghanistan

• A village information meeting about learning in primary schools in India
Survey of youth in India aged 14 to 18

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Schooling</th>
<th>Percent correct</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 8 years complete</td>
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<td>8 or more years of school complete</td>
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<td>Enrolled as undergraduate</td>
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Survey of youth aged 14 to 18

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How we got to BSC and to PDIA

• Crazy is doing the same thing and expecting a different result, we had to understand the organizational techniques of successful failure
  – Isomorphic mimicry
  – Pre-mature load bearing
And that these were an optimal response to a system in which organizations could fail and thrive
PDIA from observation

• But we also saw lots of successes, many at scale and sustained.
• As we looked across the many sectors and fields and places where the three of us (me, Michael, Matt) had worked (public finance, justice, education, etc.)
• What were the common *principles* that were present in successes and absent in failures?
Fundamental difference

PDIA

• Problem Driven

• Iterative (a sense of active feedback from observation, performance, facts that allows for changes

• Adaptation (allows the design to change

BAU in development

• Solution driven

• Pre-planned and designed with “supervision” but implementation is following existing policies

• Adaptation only happens between projects, not within.