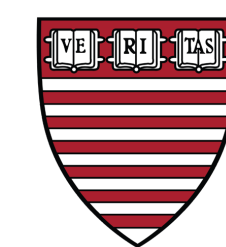


Reflecting on a Decade of Building State Capability around the World

October 19, 2023



HARVARD Kennedy School

Building State Capability

BSC: Who We Are

Building State Capability (BSC) empowers public organizations to find context appropriate solutions to their problems, thus improving the implementation of their policies and programs

We believe that problems are entry points to change and working in teams is the vehicle for change.

We have developed a dynamic step-by-step approach called **Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)** to empower action, facilitate the emergence of local solutions, and create new capabilities to solve public problems.

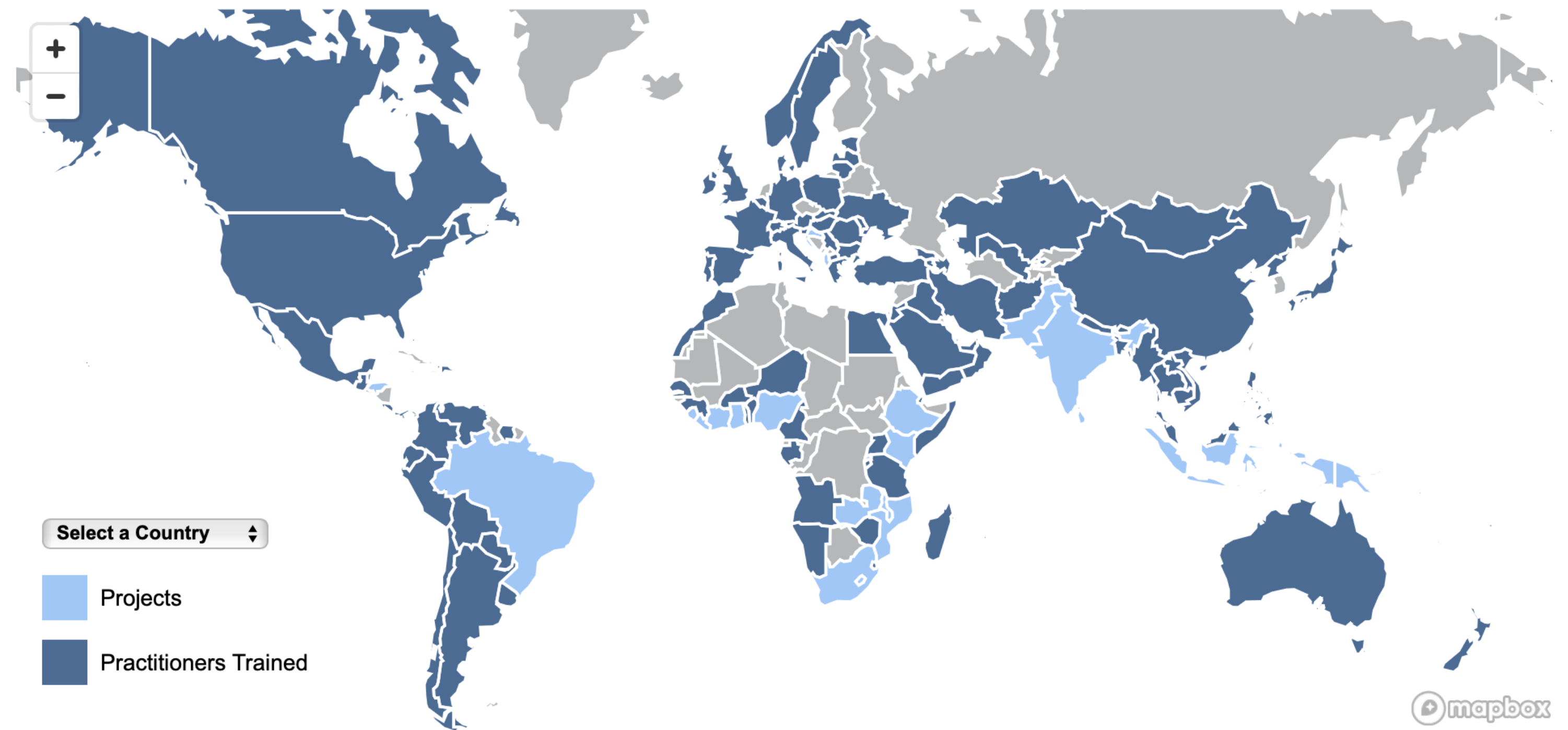


Anisha Poobalan, Matt Andrews, Salimah Samji, Daniel Barjum, Kathryn Lang.

BSC: What We Do

We convene implementation teams who work iteratively to solve their own nominated problems. The teams learn new problem-solving tools and achieve results as well as tangible capacity gains.

We have trained and engaged with over 3,500 practitioners in 148 countries and created a global community of practice.



Year 0_2012: BSC Launch

WIDER

Annual
Lecture

16



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

UNU-WIDER

World Institute for Development
Economics Research

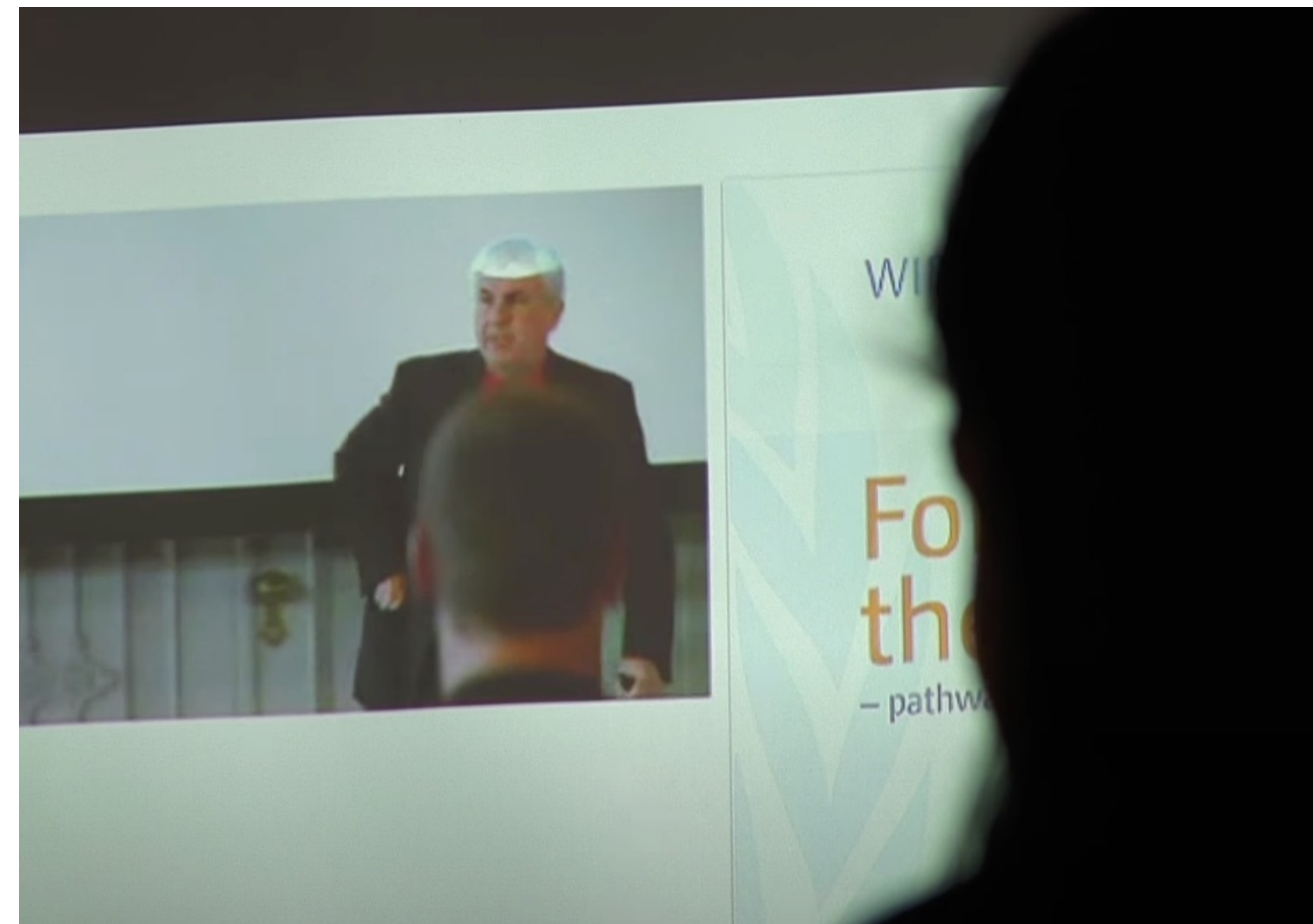
www.wider.unu.edu

Folk and the Formula

– pathways to capable states

15.00–17.00

27 September 2012



Year 1_2013: 8 Papers + Book outline



OUR WORK PUBLICATIONS DATA



Governance and fragility

Part of 'ReCom – research and communication on foreign aid' project



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

UNU-WIDER

World Institute for Development
Economics Research

Working Paper No. 2012/64

Escaping Capability Traps Through Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)

Matt Andrews¹, Lant Pritchett¹ and
Michael Woolcock²

July 2012

Year 1_2013: Untying Development



We hosted a workshop to discuss the challenge of creating a governance agenda focused on solving country-specific problems with local people and emphasize learning by doing.



Year 1_2013: Launched BSC Blog

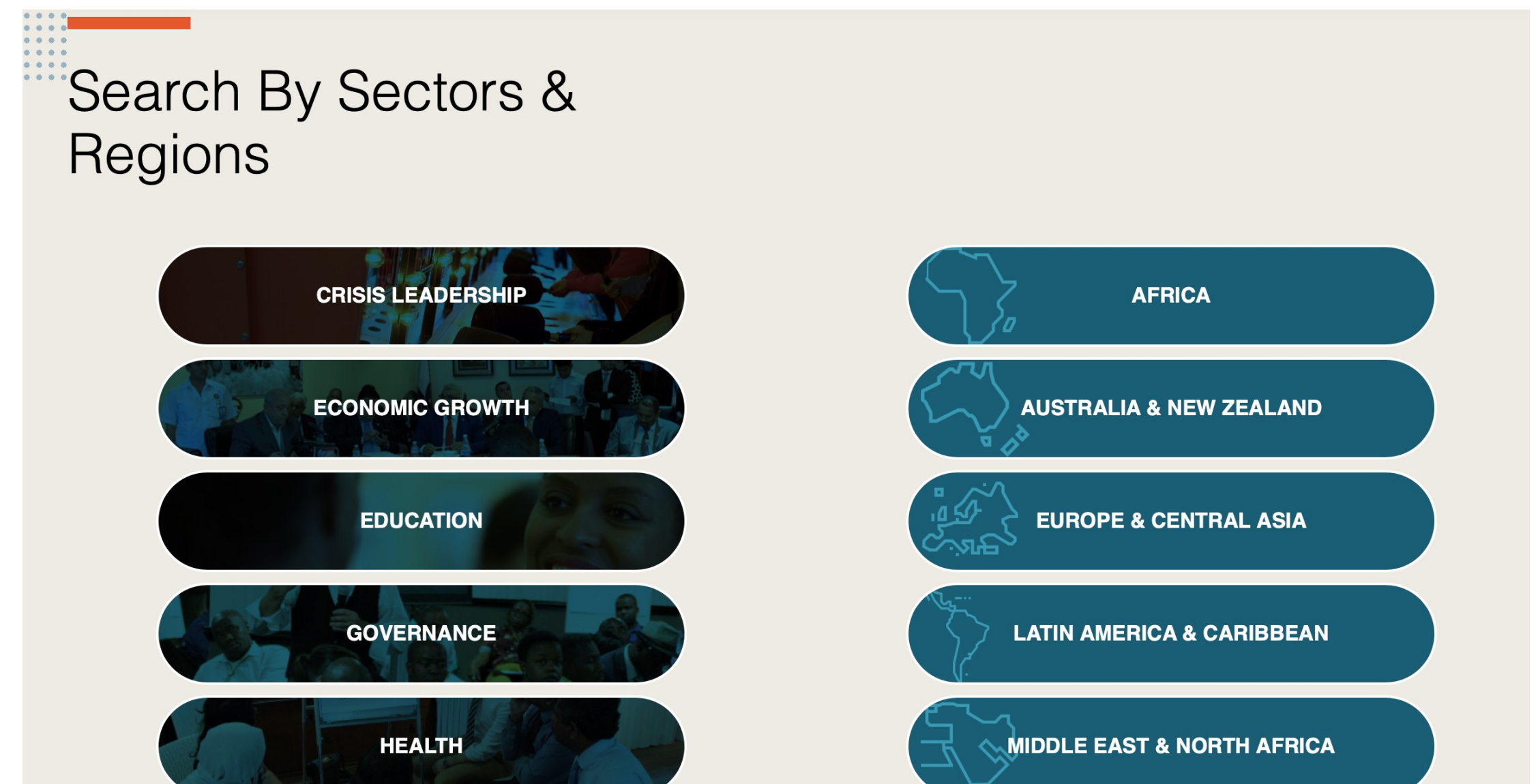
Hirschman told us that implementation involves a journey

written by **Matt Andrews**

I ran across the following quote from Hirschman today. A reminder that implementation is neither easy nor prone to scientific certainty. Rather, it requires journeys, of finding, fitting, and discovering. Do we promote such journeys in development? Are we open to the destinations we might end up reaching?



We now have 650 blogs.



Year 2_2014: Mozambique

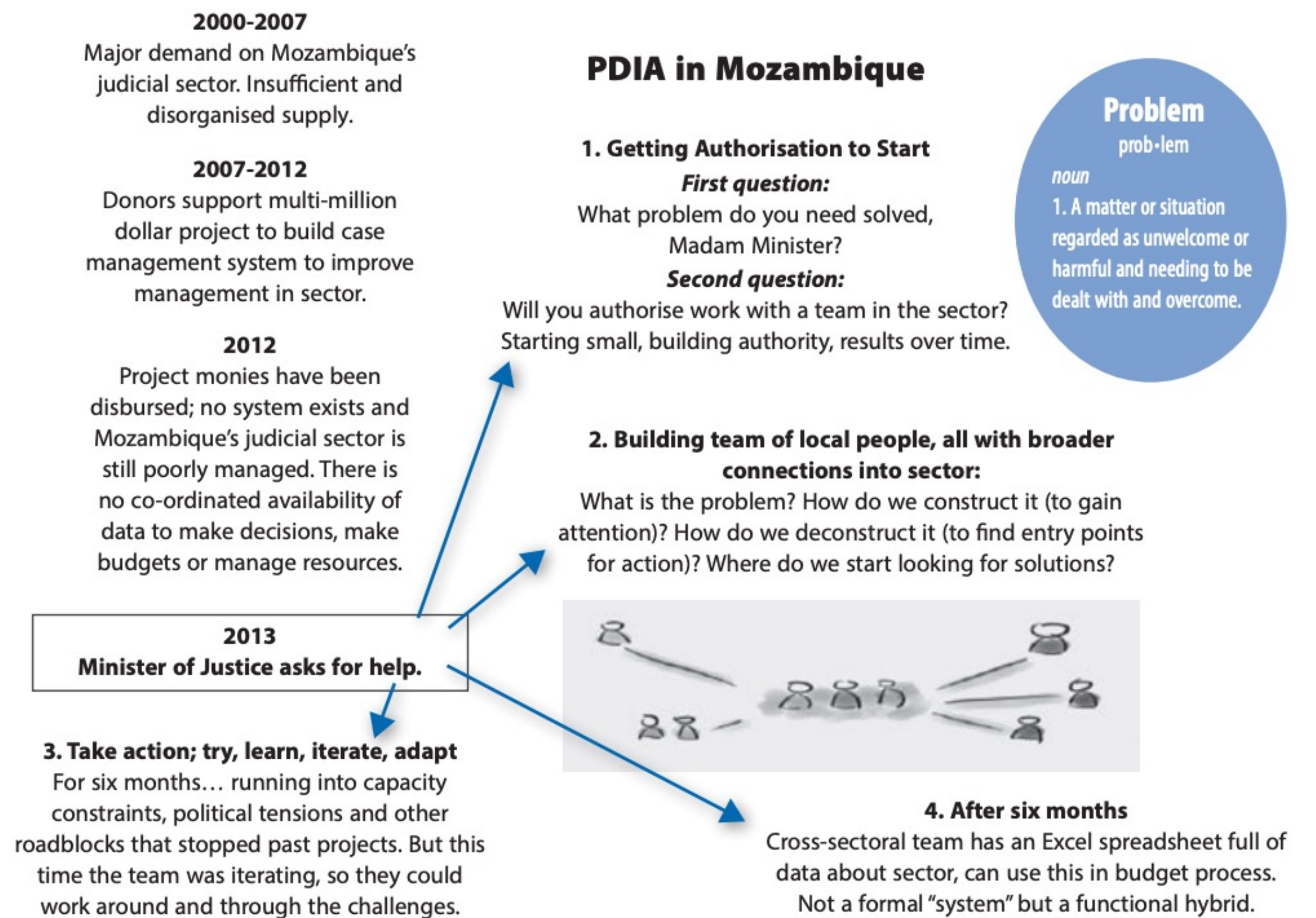


WIDER Working Paper 2014/094

Can one retell a Mozambican reform story through problem-driven iterative adaptation?

Matt Andrews*

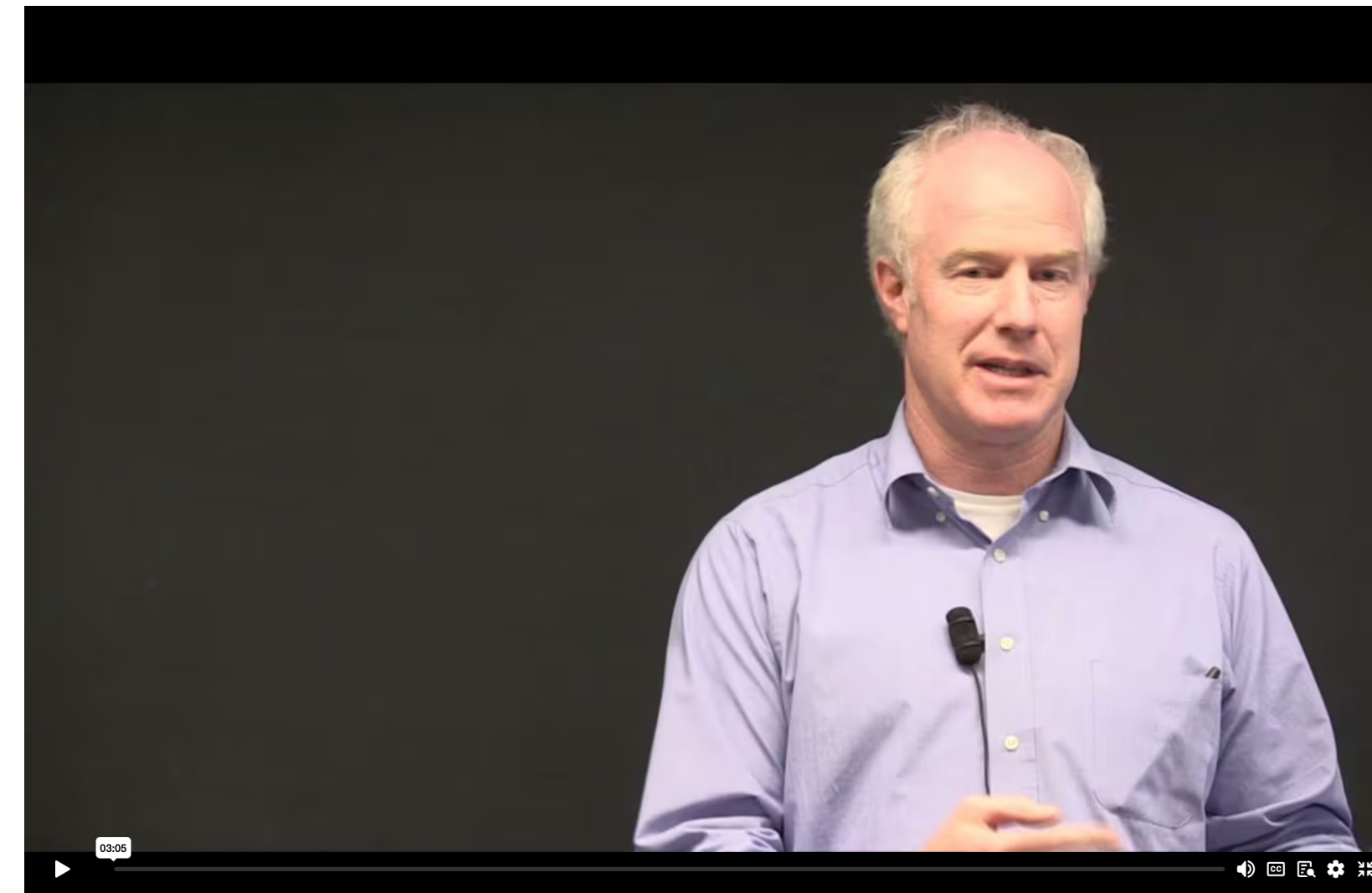
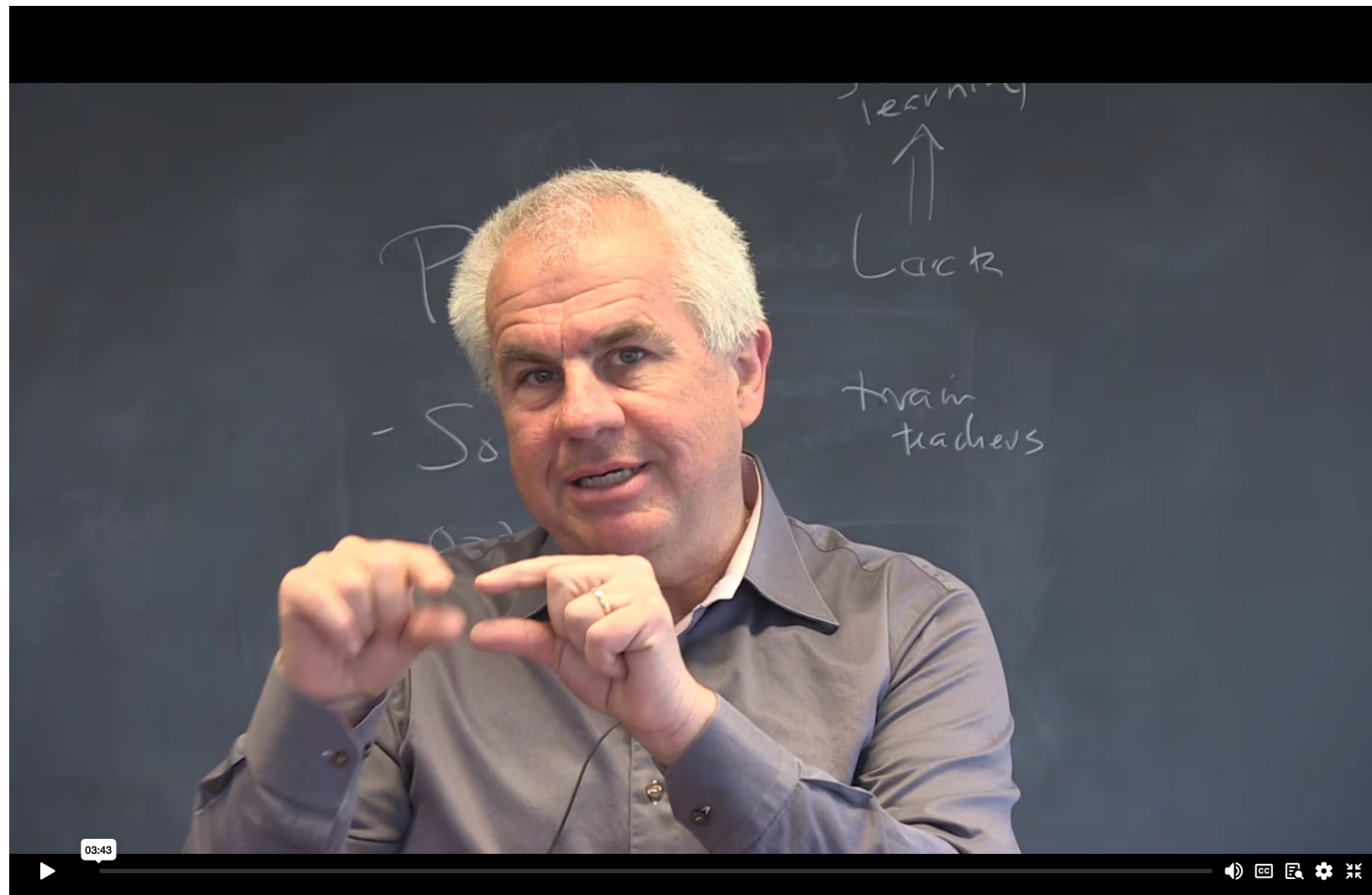
Figure 3. Putting PDIA to work in Mozambique



Year 2_2014: BSC Video Series

“Books are dead.”

We recorded 35 short videos capturing key PDIA concepts.



We now have 236 videos and over 100K views.

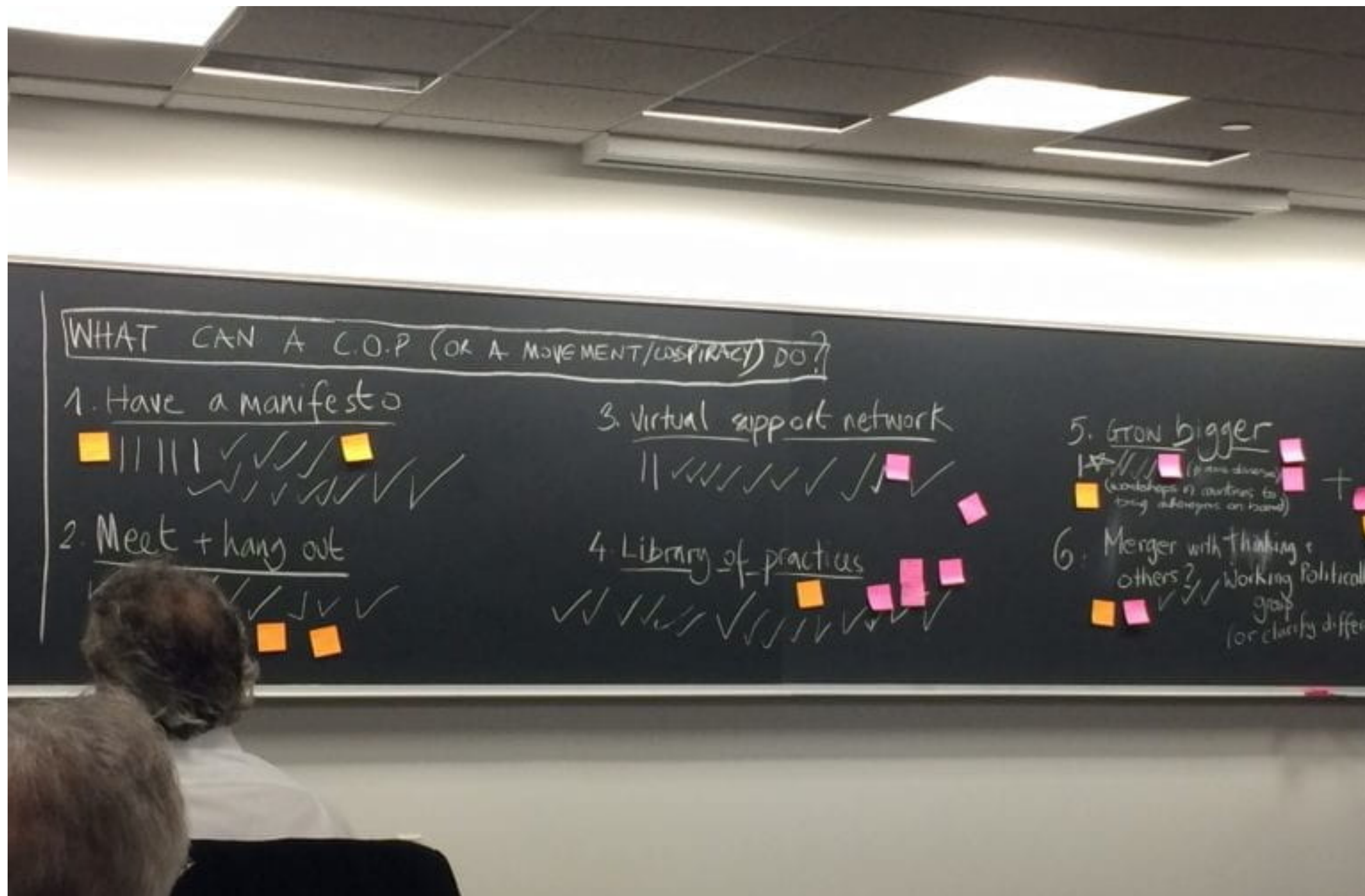
Year 2_2014: Albania

Over the period of 3 years, we trained and supported a total of 131 government officials, in 10 ministries and agencies, working across 20 teams—allowing cross fertilization of ideas and the emergence of new solutions, relationships and capabilities.



Year 2_2014: Doing Development Differently

We co-hosted a two-day workshop with Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to share practical lessons and insights gained to crystallize our learning, and to build a shared community of practice.



THE DDD MANIFESTO

ON DOING DEVELOPMENT DIFFERENTLY

Too many development initiatives have limited impact. Schools are built but children do not learn. Clinics are built but sickness persists. Governments adopt reforms but too little changes for their citizens.

This is because genuine development progress is complex: solutions are not simple or obvious, those who would benefit most lack power, those who can make a difference are disengaged and political barriers are too often overlooked. Many development initiatives fail to address this complexity, promoting irrelevant interventions that will have little impact.

Some development initiatives, however, have real results. Some are driven domestically while others receive external support. They usually involve many players – governments, civil society, international agencies and the private sector – working together to deliver real progress in complex situations and despite strong resistance. In practice, successful initiatives reflect common principles.

- They focus on solving local problems that are debated, defined and refined by local people in an ongoing process.
- They are legitimised at all levels (political, managerial and social), building ownership and momentum throughout the process to be 'locally owned' in reality (not just on paper).
- They work through local convenors who mobilise all those with a stake in progress (in both formal and informal conditions and teams) to tackle common problems and introduce relevant change.

- They blend design and implementation through rapid cycles of planning, action, reflection and revision (drawing on local knowledge, feedback and energy) to foster learning from both success and failure.
- They manage risks by making 'small bets': pursuing activities with promise and dropping others.
- They foster real results – real solutions to real problems that have real impact: they build trust, empower people and promote sustainability.

As an emerging community of development practitioners and observers, we believe that development initiatives can – and must – have greater impact.

We pledge to apply these principles in our own efforts to pursue, promote and facilitate development progress, to document new approaches, to spell out their practical implications and to foster their refinement and wider adoption.

We want to expand our community to include those already working in this way.

We call on international development organisations of all kinds to embrace these principles as the best way to address complex challenges and foster impact. We recognise the difficulties, but believe that more effective strategies and approaches can generate higher and lasting impact.

Visit <http://buildingsforlocalcapacity.com/the-ddd-manifesto/> to see signatories and sign up

The DDD Manifesto by Doing Development Differently Workshop 2014. It is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Year 3_2015: Free PDIA Online Courses

We offered 11 free online courses between 2015 - 2019.

OVERVIEW:

11 
ONLINE COURSES

132 
WEEKS

5-8 
AVERAGE HOURS OF WEEKLY EFFORT

IMPACT:

1,264 
PEOPLE COMPLETED COURSES



87 
COUNTRIES

47% **23%**
PUBLIC SECTOR NGOS

“The course has sought to intentionally take the classroom to the field and the field to the classroom.”

The PDIA course was rigorous and it was very useful to be able to apply skills learned in the course to real-life problems in real time.”

Year 4_2016: Sri Lanka

Over the period 9 months, we trained and supported 64 Sri Lankan government officials, from 7 different ministries/agencies, working across 8 cross-sector PDIA teams. We also trained 39 economic attaches/diplomats.



Year 4_2016: DDD in London (2 years later)

ODI, in collaboration with BSC, convened a second workshop to draw out some lessons learned, and chart a way forward for both actors already working in this space, and for actors new to and interested in how to do development differently.



Matt Andrews and Neil Cole from Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative (CABRI) announce upcoming collaboration in Africa.

Year 5_2017: PFM in Africa

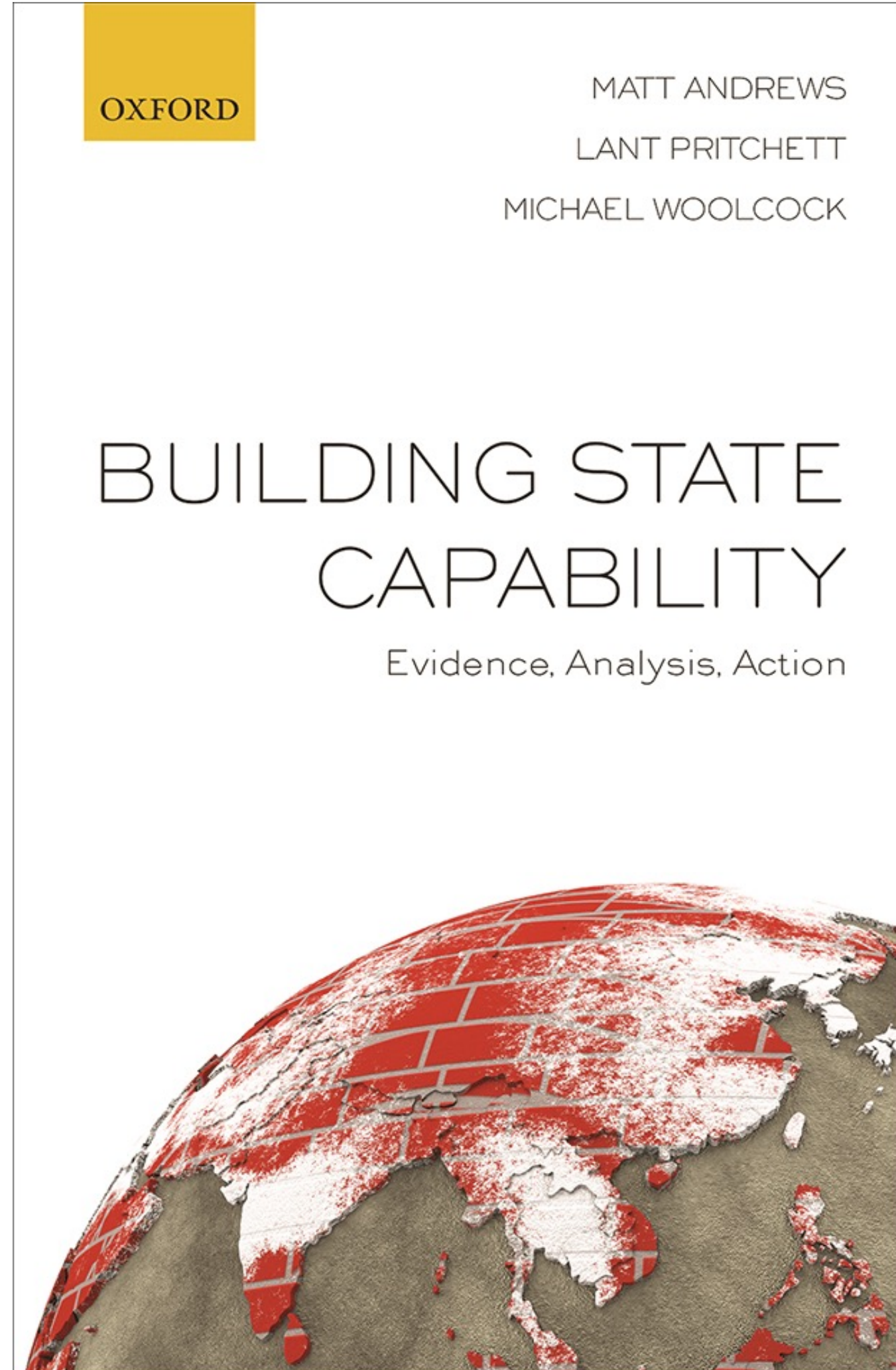
We developed a 7-month Building PFM Capabilities Program for CABRI and coached them on how to conduct PDIA trainings. Over the 2-year period we worked with 15 teams in 9 countries.



CABRI continues to run the successful BPFC Program, funded by the Gates Foundation.

An independent evaluation conducted in 2018 was recently published in the World Development Perspectives (July 2023).

Year 5_2017: BSC Book



Featured Book

Building State Capability: Evidence, Analysis, Action

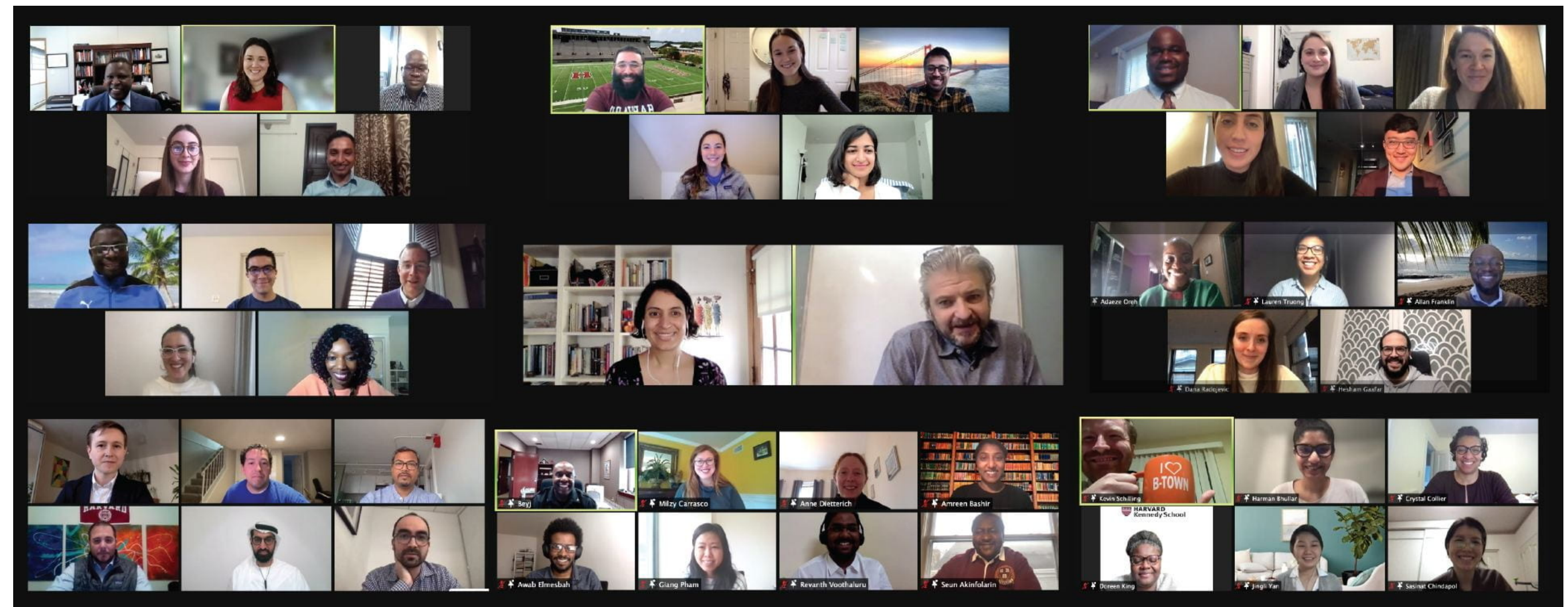
Matt Andrews, Lant Pritchett and Michael Woolcock
Oxford University Press, 2017

This book provides evidence of the capability shortfalls that currently exist in many countries, identifies capability traps that hold many governments back, and describes a process that can be used to escape these traps called PDIA (Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation).

[DOWNLOAD BOOK \(PDF\)](#)

Year 6_2018: PDIA in Action (MLD103)

We began to teach a field-lab class at HKS where students learn a research-oriented version of PDIA by working with an authorizer/client on real public problems.



Year 6_2018: PDIA Toolkit

The Toolkit is now available in 6 Languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, Khmer, German, and Indonesian).



Designed to guide you through the process of solving complex problems while building capability.

[DOWNLOAD PDIA TOOLKIT](#)

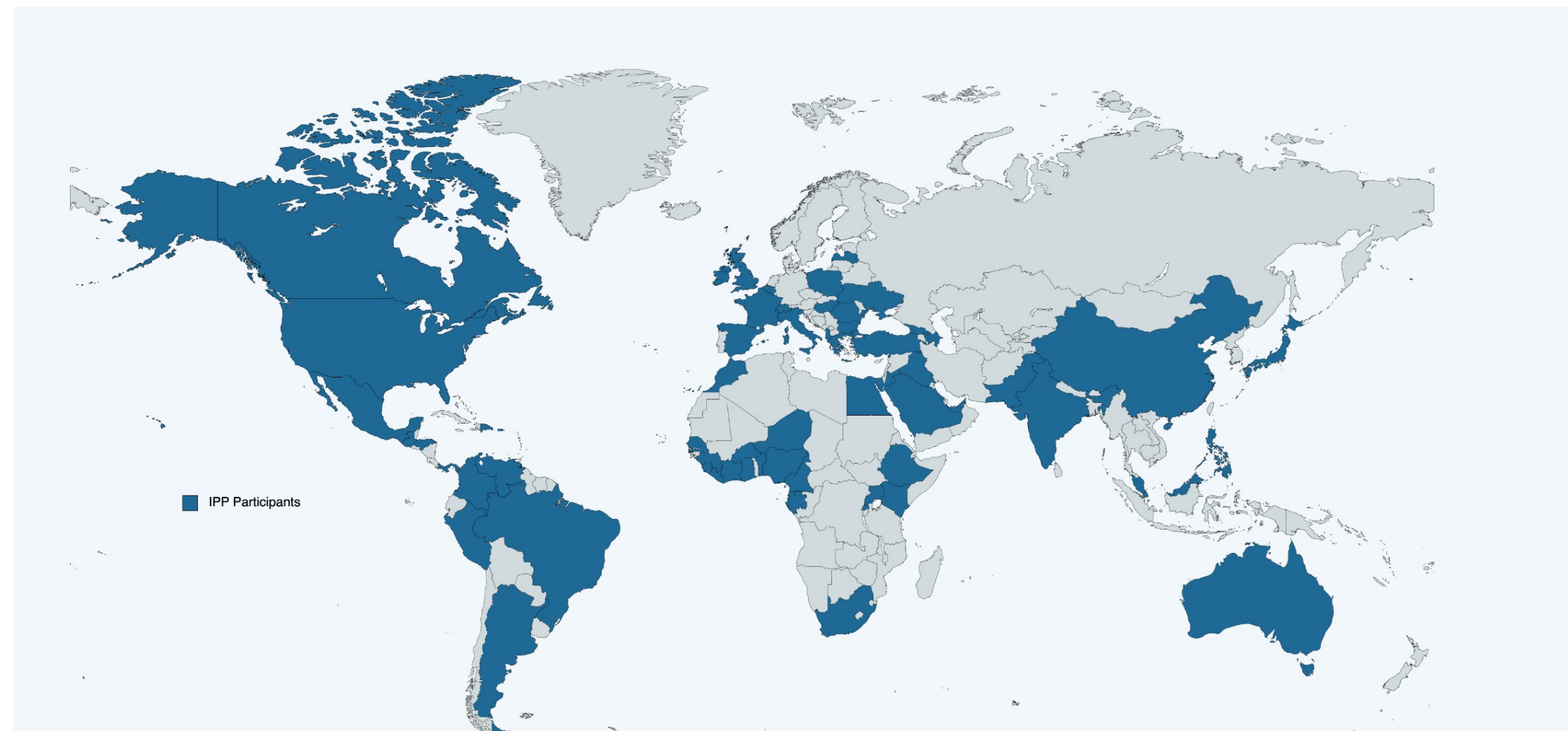
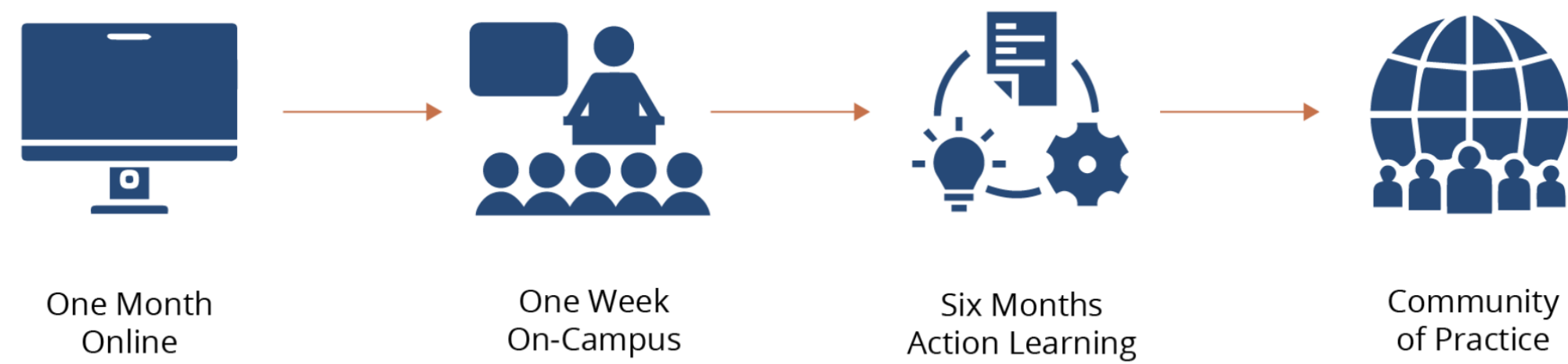
Year 6_2018: Honduras

We worked with 7 government teams on key problems identified by the delivery facilitation unit.



Year 7_2019: Implementing Public Policy

We've trained 342 practitioners in 5 years.



Year 8_2020: Leading Through Crisis

We launched an 18-part blog series exploring leadership in times of public crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic. This included a series of virtual discussions as well as podcasts.



MARCH 15, 2020

Blog 1: Can Public Leaders Navigate High Winds and Big Waves in Little Boats?

Public officials can struggle to know how to rise to the occasion of a crisis, especially if they have lost sight of their mission to serve the public interest. In the first post of the series, Matt Andrews addresses how public leaders might think of themselves in the face of a crisis.



MARCH 16, 2020

Blog 2: Know Your Motivation, Put Communications and Key People First

Public leaders are in a position to help people move beyond avoiding a frightening situation to facing it. This post outlines how leaders can use thoughtful communication and key people to spur action during a crisis.



MARCH 16, 2020

Blog 3: Be Brave, Calm, Adaptive; There is No Perfect Crisis Response

Driven by tendencies to point fingers or wait for perfection, public officials can freeze or act too slowly during a crisis. Alternatively, the drive to act quickly can lead to rash decision-making. This post outlines the need for leaders to adopt a balanced, adaptive mentality when addressing a crisis.

Year 9_2021: Brazil

We offered a virtual action learning program in Portuguese to 60 public servants working across 11 teams, working in secretariats of education in the states of Maranhão and Paraíba.



Year 10_2022: Education Systems

We developed a custom 12-week PDIA for Education systems program and 56 education practitioners across 9 country team (Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Zambia) completed this program.



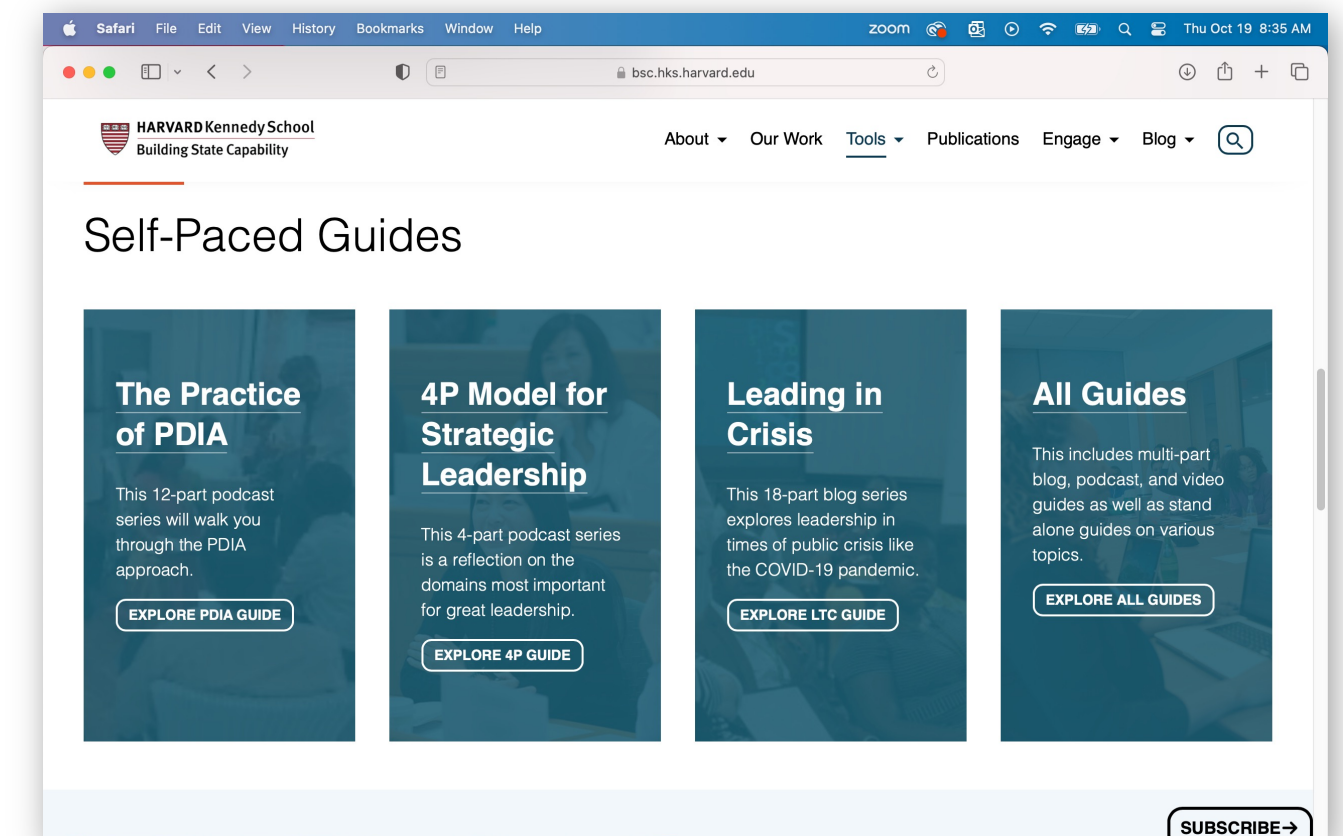
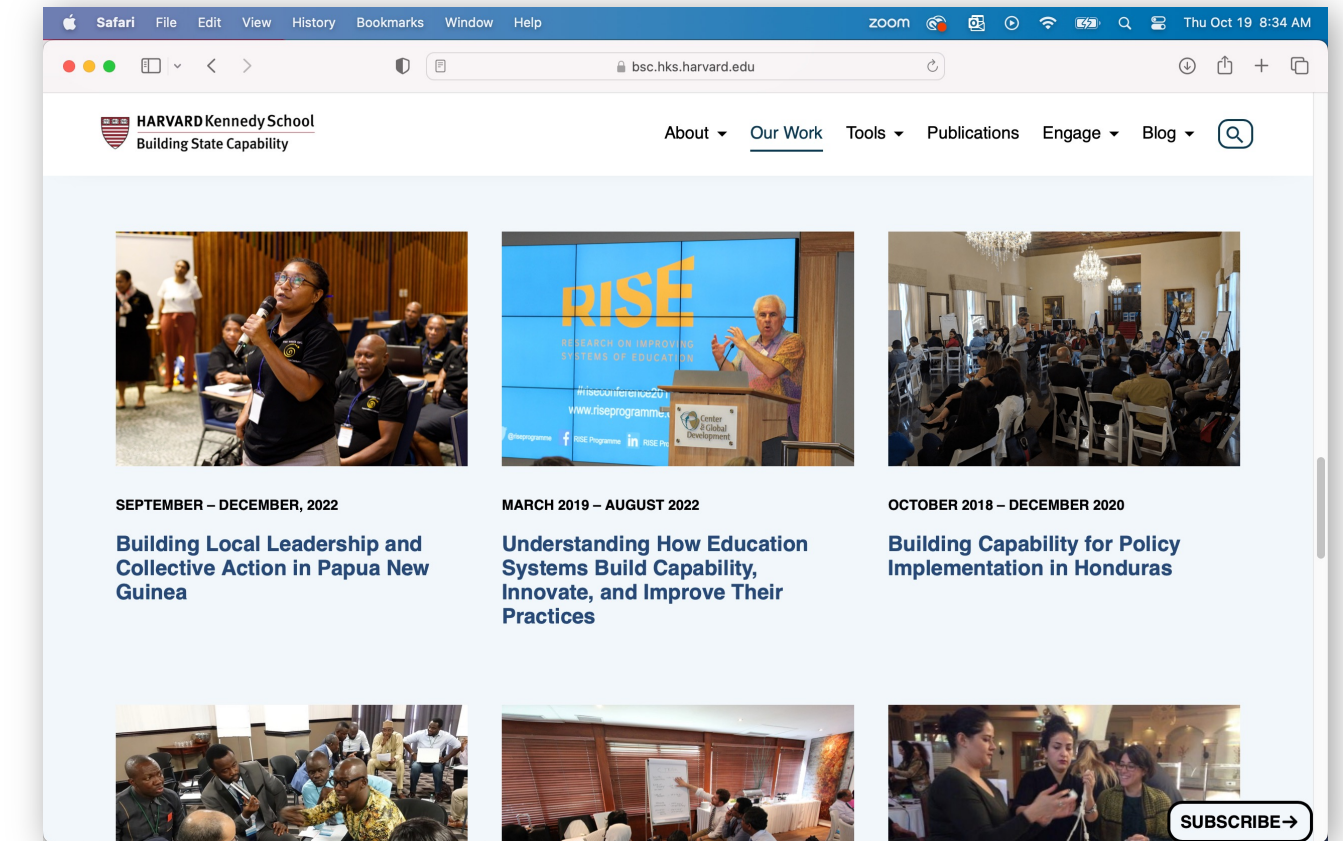
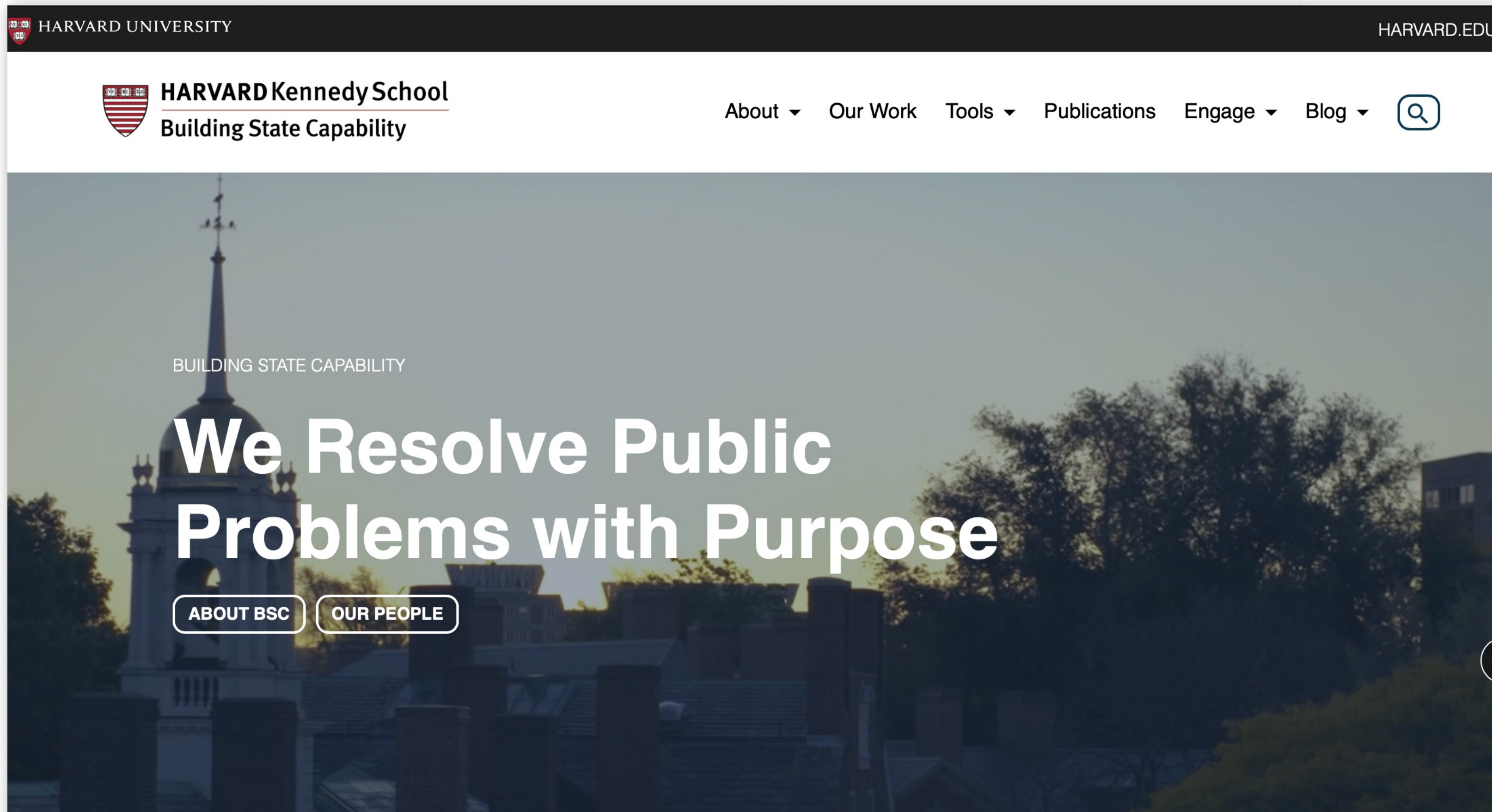
Year 10_2022: Papua New Guinea

31 developmental leaders across 6 teams participated in the PDIA program as part of the Local Leadership and Collective Action Program (LLCAP). A cohort of 38 leaders began the second year of the program in August 2023.



Year 11_2023: New Website!

Want to learn more about anything you heard today? Find it on our website (bsc.hks.harvard.edu)



Year 12_2024: Sneak Peak

Why?

Do we have a clear policy purpose and vision for success?

With what decisions?

Are the decisions needed to undertake the proposed work likely to happen as needed?

Policymaking as mountain climbing ...

What?



Thank You!



Daniel Barjum

Research Fellow



Kriti Chopra

Teaching Assistant



Kathryn Lang

Program Assistant



Anisha Poobalan

Research/Teaching Assistant



Marla Spivack

Former Research Fellow



Tim McNaught

Former Research Fellow



Peter Harrington

Associate



Gauri Nagpal

Former
Communications/Design
Assistant



Dana Radojevic

Former Teaching Assistant



Akshay Marathe

Former Communications
Assistant



Keri DiBattista

Former Teaching Assistant



Awab Elmesbah

Former Teaching Assistant



**Ana Rocío
Castillo Romero**

Former Teaching Assistant



Lauren Truong

Former Research Assistant



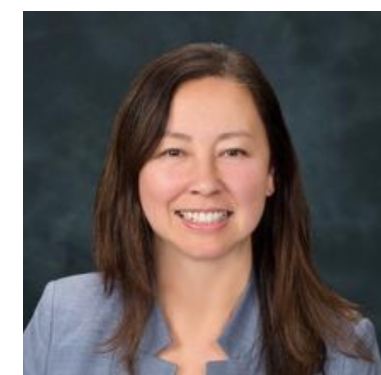
**Nathalie
Gazzaneo**

Former Teaching Assistant



Mayra Hoyos

Former Teaching Assistant



ANDREA NEILAN CARRANZA
Executive Director



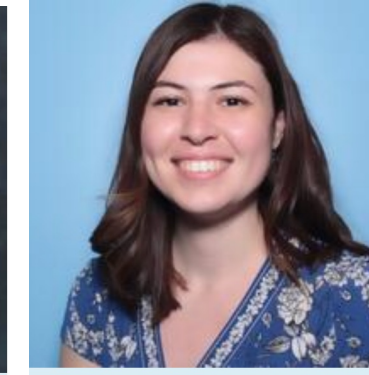
ALICIA GALINSKY
Senior Program Coordinator



ANDREA HAYES
Director of Programs



CHUCK MCKENNEY
Director of Communications and
Outreach



KATELYN MERRIGAN
Communications and Outreach
Specialist



KIM TABLANTE
Senior Sponsored Research
Administrator