

PDIA IN ACTION



BUILDING STATE CAPABILITY

Center for International Development
at Harvard University

MATT ANDREWS

Edward S. Mason Senior Lecturer in
International Development, HKS

Matt Andrews has been teaching management and implementation methods at the Harvard Kennedy school for over 15 years. His research focuses on public sector reform, particularly the institutional context as well as leadership structures needed for successful reform, and participatory governance in developing and transitional governments. He has worked in the provincial government of South Africa and as a public sector specialist at the World Bank.



SALIMAH SAMJI

Director, Building State Capability

Salimah Samji has more than 15 years of experience working in international development on the delivery of public services, governance, implementation of policies, strategic planning, monitoring, evaluation, and learning. She is responsible for providing vision, strategic leadership, oversight and managing research and training projects. She has worked as a senior program manager at Google.org, a social/rural development specialist at the World Bank, and at Focus Humanitarian Assistance.



PDIA IN ACTION

Matt Andrews and I have been coteaching PDIA in Action: Development through Facilitated Emergence (MLD103) at the Harvard Kennedy School since 2018. This is a field-lab class where students learn a research-oriented version of PDIA by working on real-world public problems – they learn by doing. The students work together in teams with an authorizer/client who gives them a problem to work on.

This year we had to teach this class virtually with students, as well as authorizers, based all around the world. We converted a 3-hour class on Monday evenings into two 75- minute classes on Tuesday and Thursday. Each week, students were required to complete a self-study module as well as a related individual assignment before class on Tuesday. We would review the assignments and use them in our class session to provide feedback, clarify concepts and answer any burning questions on the content. The student teams would then

meet on Thursday to complete their group assignment. Essentially, they went through the weekly content three times – on their own, in class with us, and in their teams – allowing for deeper engagement and learning.

Learning from our experience in 2020, we asked the alumni of our HKS Implementing Public Policy (IPP) Executive Education program, if they wanted to work with our students on their nominated problems. Eight IPP alumni, William Keith Young, Adaeze Oreh, Milzy Carrasco, Kevin Schilling, Artem Shaipov, George Imbenzi, David Wuyep, and Raphael Kenigsberg, who had been trained on PDIA and implementation, signed up to work with our students.

Thirty-seven students signed up to take the course beginning January 26th, 2021. The students worked across eight teams and adopted a problem driven approach to foster learning that could help their authorizers develop an action learning strategy to their nominated challenge.

In the second week of class, one student noted how it was hard to build bonds/relationships with groups on zoom – he noted how he was missing the lingering conversations after an in-person group meeting that would take place if we were on campus. How could we help them build a sense of community in their group? We gave them some tips, then Matt had an idea he wanted to try. He asked them to pair up with one person in their group and to offer them an act of kindness before the next class. They were willing to try it out. We asked them to share their acts of kindness in class the following week. The students had written poems, shared readings and songs, delivered tacos, baked cookies, provided a recommendation on linked in – they chose things that were meaningful for the other person. We repeated the exercise for another week and then for the third week we asked them to offer an act of kindness to themselves. We learned that kindness can be a simple, yet powerful tool to build trust in teams.

Over the period of seven weeks, students learned how to work together as a team, drew fishbone diagrams, conducted the triple-A change space analysis, identified entry points, spoke to stakeholders, undertook two iterations, and presented their lessons learned to the authorizers in class on March 11th, 2021. Each team also wrote a blog about their learning journey. We were humbled by how much they learned about (i) the problem they were assigned, (ii) effective teamwork, (iii) the value of engaging with people, and (iv) most importantly, themselves – all while working remotely! We were so inspired by their work that we hosted a PDIA in Action event series, from April to June 2021, featuring the student teams.

This book highlights the students' work drawing from their blogs as well as the event series. There are 8 sections, one for each of the teams and the problems they worked on during the course. We hope you enjoy reading their stories! Scan the QR Code at the end of each section to learn more.

Salimah Samji
May 14, 2021



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Scan the QR code at the end of each section to access additional information about the projects.



CHIEF BEY



MILZY CARRASCO



Amreen Bashir
HGSE



Anne Dietterich
HKS



Awab Elmesbah
HKS



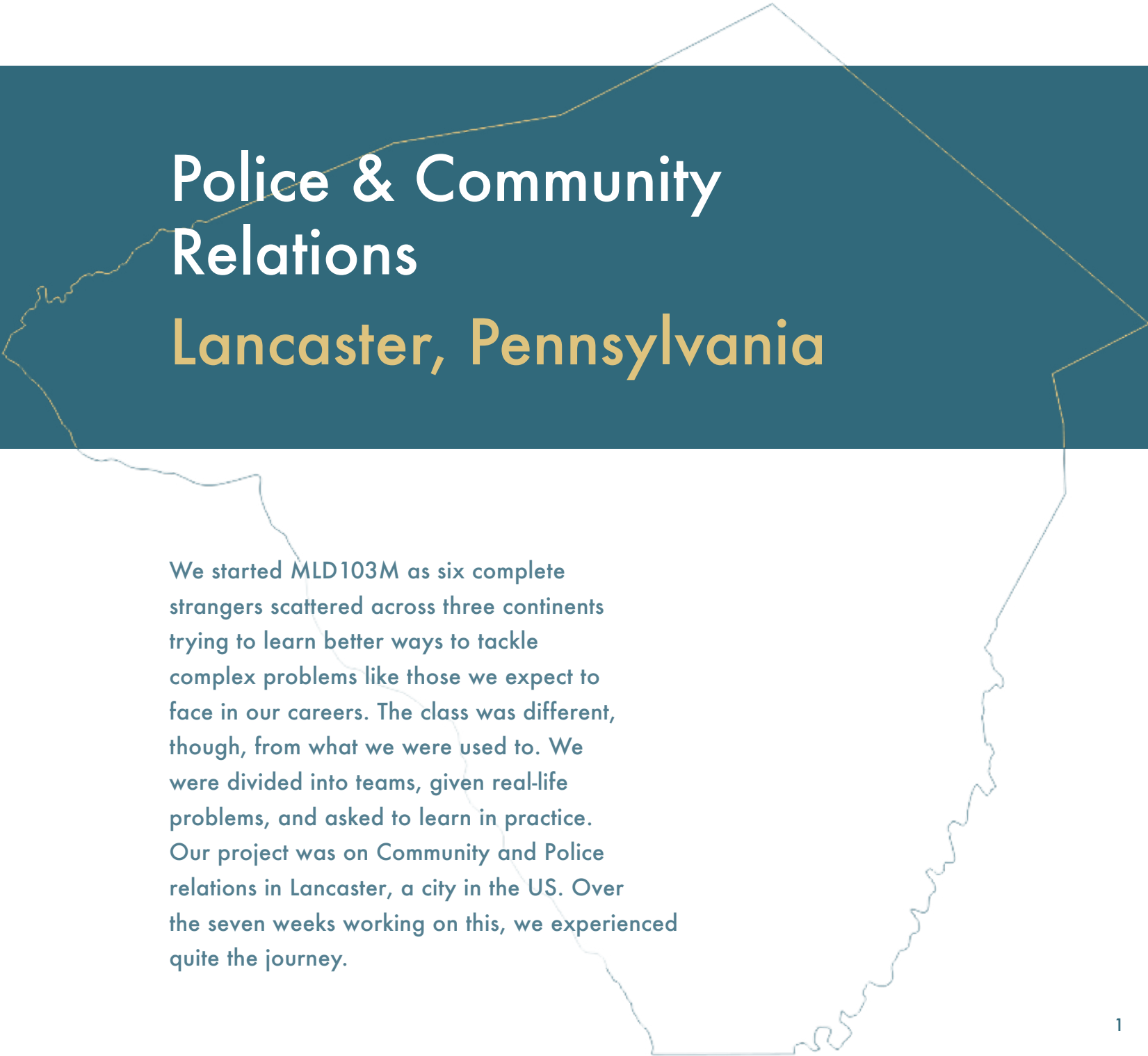
Giang Pham
HGSE



Revanth Voothaluru
HGSE



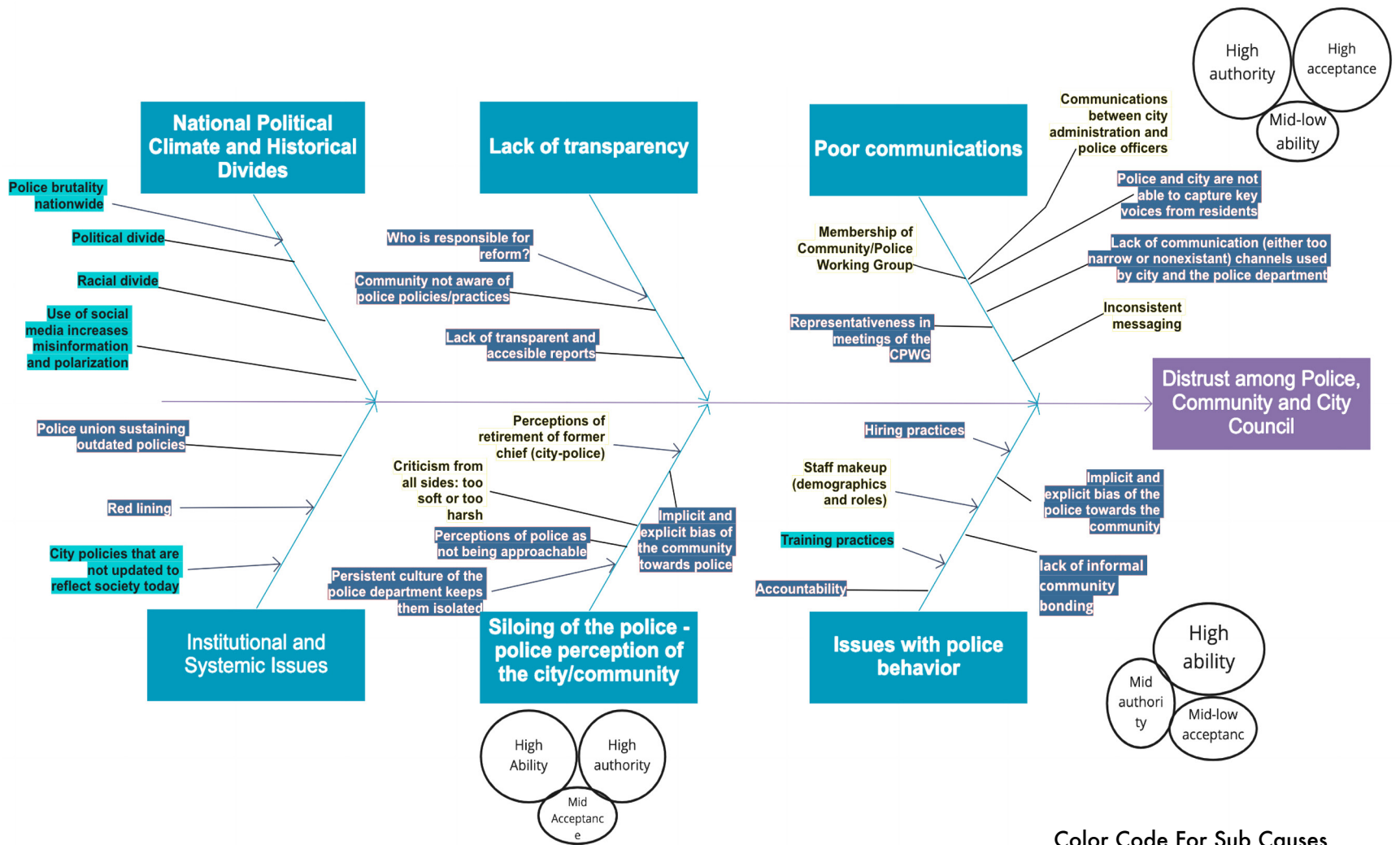
Seun Akinfolarin
HGSE



Police & Community Relations

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

We started MLD103M as six complete strangers scattered across three continents trying to learn better ways to tackle complex problems like those we expect to face in our careers. The class was different, though, from what we were used to. We were divided into teams, given real-life problems, and asked to learn in practice. Our project was on Community and Police relations in Lancaster, a city in the US. Over the seven weeks working on this, we experienced quite the journey.



The magnitude of the problem felt the biggest in the first week. When we had just learned about the topic and hadn't started the process of learning about and understanding the problem, it was difficult for us to imagine what contributions we could make over seven weeks. We had a difficult time figuring out where to start. But it was also difficult not to understand the problem in simple terms: a mistrust between the police and the community that was the result of last summer events, including the police-involved shooting and killing of a resident in the city. At the beginning, the problem seemed as if it started last summer.

After receiving our brief and the initial set of meetings we buried our heads in desk research in the second week. We were trying to construct the problem: what is the problem, why does it matter, and how would it look if it were solved. We also had conversations with the authorizers on what they thought the "solved problem" would look like. **"We want to build a bridge of communication back and forth with our community ... it is truly a concerted effort between community/police to improve our community."** The authorizers' investment in solving the problem was a great motivation for the team.

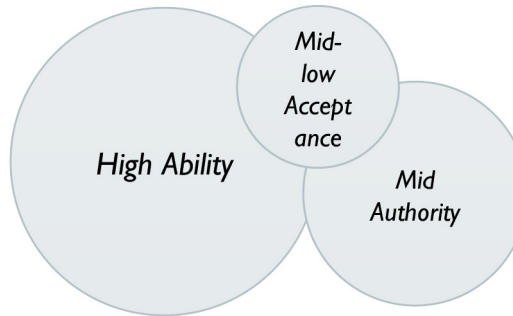
During the third week, we were still relying on what we read from public documents and the media on what the problem is. We started deconstructing the problem and thinking about possible causes. We started developing a fishbone diagram for what we thought the causes and sub-causes might be. We were clear that these were hypotheses to test and that this was an early draft of breaking down the problem, but it was an important starting point. During this week we started reaching out to people and getting out of our team's bubble.

Armed with our fishbone diagram, we started the fourth week by interviewing stakeholders in the community to test our earlier assumptions and further explore the problem. We started speaking with city residents, civil society leaders, city officials, police officers. We saw two things immediately.

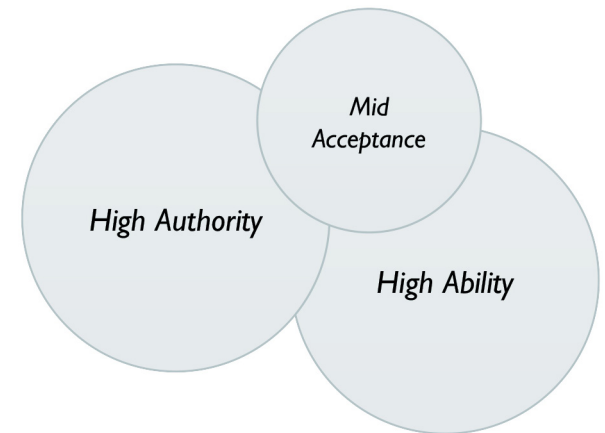
First, it became clear that the problem was deeper than the fishbone showed. The historical dimensions of the problem in the city and some of the deeply held grievances started to emerge.

Second, the multiplicity of the views on what the problem is or what caused it was challenging. We saw how some aspects of the problem can be blind spots, even to the most invested actors.

Issues with Police Behaviour



Isolation of Police



These interviews weren't just the first step to engage with the problem but were extremely motivational as we observed how critical the problem is for the community we were working with. It was hard not to jump to solutions once the fishbone started to feel clear. It took a lot of discipline on our part and a lot of patience from our authorizers to keep us from getting ahead of ourselves. The fishbone grew to be effective in capturing different views, allowing us to visualize each person's perception of the problem. We added and eliminated causes and sub-causes as we tested our hypotheses and assumptions through the interviewing process. **The fishbone diagram we ended up with is not the same as the one we started with.**

We continued to have these conversations with different stakeholders during the fifth week and after.

The fishbone we developed also proved helpful in guiding the conversations. We updated it with

more insights as we continued the interviews. We started focusing more on what perspectives and voices are missing, who should be listening more, and how difficult conversations could be approached rather than avoided. During this week, we started thinking about potential entry points. Having interviewed different stakeholders, we had a better understanding of the levels of acceptance, authority, and ability regarding addressing each of the sub-causes of the fishbone.

The sixth week was a rewarding one. It felt like the work we were doing helped open up a productive conversation with our authorizers and helped expand their thinking about the problem. Part of this came from lessons from our conversations with stakeholders, but part of this was also just an authentic conversation between our two authorizers about different barriers that don't allow genuine conversations among the community and the police around the tense relationship in the city. During this week, we also started to come up with potential ideas for some of the sub-causes we identified. Most of the ideas were centered in areas where there's acceptance, authority and ability, and where the needle can get moving to address other sub-causes. We focused on communication, transparency, and community engagement.

One great source of ideas to address the entry points we identified came from the interviews with the stakeholders. These conversations brought a lot of innovative ideas, helped us make our suggestions relevant to the community, and kept us grounded in the community's perception of what the problem solved looks like. We also looked at past experiences in the city, and successful initiatives nationwide. As we continued the conversations with stakeholders, we were gathering and testing some of these ideas. Then we had conversations with the authorizers on the possibility of experimenting with these ideas.

The seventh week was strategizing for the future. We worked with our authorizers to develop what the way forward would look like. We focused on how to iterate on the ideas we suggested, what might foster a culture of learning/adapting, what structures might hold this learning, and what aspects still require more learning. It is bittersweet to be ending the project when it feels like more progress is within reach, but we learned so much about the problem in the last seven weeks. Throughout this time, we learned lessons not only about our problem of police-community relations, but also about using PDIA.



Key Takeaways

With complex problems, there are multiple perspectives. Openly engaging in conversations, being empathetic, and staying flexible allows for key components to be identified deliberately.

Conversations with authorizers and with stakeholders are an opportunity to get people engaged with the problem and to help them recognize their own part of the work. Some of these conversations will feel small or short but still have value in making sure that all voices are heard.

Working with a team, especially a team of diverse professional and cultural backgrounds, helped us listen to the variety of perspectives on the problem. This, along with carefully collecting evidence, helps with avoiding misunderstandings.

It is important to remain conscious of confirmation bias when addressing the problem. Staying open to different perspectives and asking many open-ended questions helps resist this bias.

Complex problems are dynamic, and they manifest themselves differently to different stakeholders. It takes work to get to a place where the problem definition can speak to multiple groups and gain broad acceptance and support.

Patience with oneself, one's team, one's stakeholders, and one's problem is critical. There is a natural tendency to be action-oriented and to want to start fixing things from the beginning. It is worth taking the time to step back, be deliberate in understanding the problem, ask questions, and examine unknowns.

There probably isn't an easy solution, especially when you are dealing with a complex problem, so avoid premature or cookie-cutter solutions.

It is possible to do a lot in seven weeks, especially when you dive straight into the work!





DR. ADAEZE OREH

The problem is that **safe blood is still largely unavailable** in hospitals and health facilities leading to infections, disease, and death.



Allan Franklin
HKS



Dana Radojevic
HKS



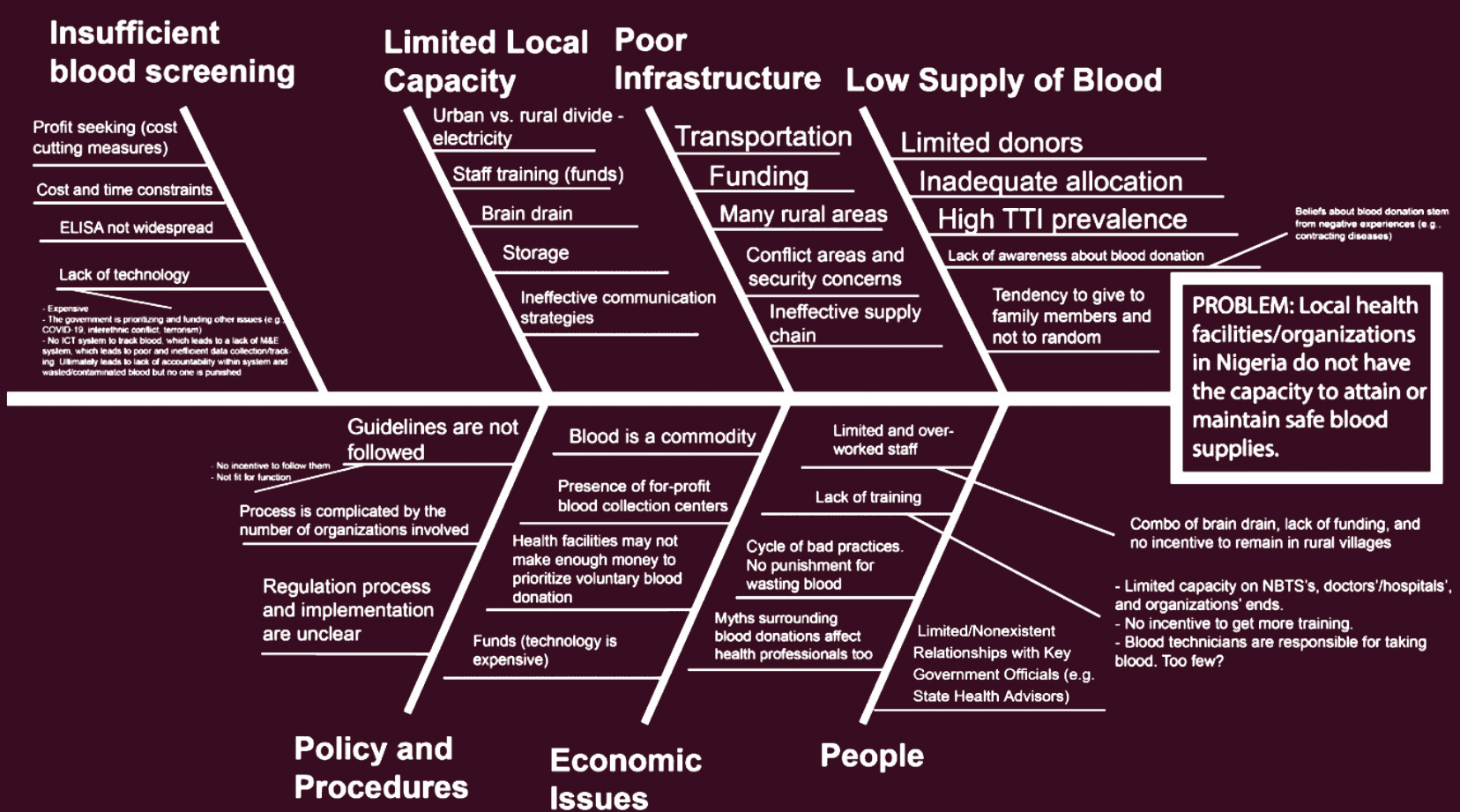
Hesham Gaafar
HSPH



Lauren Truong
HKS

Tackling Blood Safety Nigeria

It is our nature as humans to be solution-oriented and not problem focused. Is the lack of safe blood in Nigeria due to the low number of voluntary donors? Or is it a combination of supply-side and demand-side factors? Instead of assuming what the possible solutions could be, **the PDIA process slowed us down and forced us to get uncomfortable and ask hard questions.** This helped us identify the problem at hand and construct our fishbone diagram.



Focus on the Problem, not the Solution

Over the past 7 weeks, we had the opportunity to work with the National Blood Transfusion Service (NBTS) on the lack of safe blood in Nigeria. The lack of safe blood during emergencies such as car accidents or postpartum hemorrhages has led to high numbers of preventable deaths. Upon learning about our project, we were afraid that our lack of knowledge and experience in public health would limit our progress, but the Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) process showed us how addressing major problems such as the lack of safe blood in Nigeria requires learning on the fly, using the diverse perspectives and contributions of our teammates, and constantly reflecting and improving on our work.

“Safe blood is still largely unavailable in hospitals and health facilities leading to infections, disease, and death.”

What precisely is **safe blood**?

Is it an issue of **supply, demand, or both**?

People Contacted



AAA Analysis

#	Entry Point	Authority	Acceptance	Ability	Change Space
1	Staff Training and Capacity	Large	Large	Medium	Large
2	Communications Strategy	Large	Large	Low	Medium
3	Relationships with Key Stakeholders	Medium	Low, Medium, or Large*	Low, Medium, or Large*	Medium* <i>*Varies by Region</i>
4	Policy and Procedures	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium





Dig Deep – Always Ask Why

Once we construct our problem statement, it's human nature to immediately jump to solutions. By repeatedly asking why this problem exists, we were able to break down the complex problem into smaller, more manageable pieces. This ultimately helped us identify areas that NBTS could act on strategically and creatively. This process taught us an important lesson: We can make progress on seemingly complex and difficult issues by digging deep and identifying the causal factors contributing to the overall problem. Small strategic actions lead to progress and change over time.

Teaming!

Most importantly, this class taught us about teaming. Teaming is the idea of bringing together a group of people who have never worked together around an urgent and common issue. This accelerated approach to teamwork was new to all of us. By writing a team constitution, we stayed focused on our common cause, built on each other's strengths, had open and honest conversations about the directions we were going in, and learned collectively through our successes and failures.

Relationships are important; People are full of Surprises!

As a part of our assignments, we were required to reach out to at least one new person each week. What surprised us was the sheer number of people who were familiar with the issue or knew someone who was working on this very issue. Our conversations with friends led us to discussions with health professionals and ordinary people in Nigeria. This helped us learn so much more about the complexity of the problem as well as identify possible entry points for action.

Progress and Insights

Applying the AAA analysis was an interesting and useful step in the PDIA process. Probing the elements of the NBTS' authority, acceptance, and ability allowed our "No Bad Blood" team to bridge the gap between the problem deconstruction and crafting solutions stages.

In practice, there is a strong temptation to place too little emphasis on deconstructing the problem. Similarly, there is also a tendency to rush headlong into prescribing solutions. There is pressure to get moving, to come up with "the answer," but here lies the strength of the AAA; it gives you pause. It allows you to take a breath and regroup. To refocus.

This happens for several reasons. First, examining the entire fishbone through the lenses of authority, acceptance, and ability was a novel process. It was challenging. It was uncomfortable. And it worked! By consistently asking ourselves questions such as:

- > Who or what is giving the power to move forward with ideas? (Did the NBTS have authority to act?)
- > Was the full array of authorizers, partners, and clients confident that issues of bad blood in Nigeria was problematic enough that action needed to be taken? (Did NBTS have acceptance across the range of stakeholders?) and
- > What were the NBTS' strengths? Did they excel in terms of capacity? Maybe they were excellent at public relations? Perhaps their advantage lay in access to infrastructure?

It is only when we were able to visualize where, if at all, the intersection of these three spheres occurred that we could even begin to prioritize our entry points for action. Why did this work? Simply because we found that the change spaces we encountered through the AAA differed significantly in terms of the size and focus of their intersections. For example, our team ranked staff training and capacity as the first identified entry point as its analysis indicated a large change space. In comparison, the next best change spaces we identified were scored as medium. As a result, these were assessed as secondary entry

points or places where our team felt confident in making recommendations to facilitate change at the NBTS.

However, as our team realized, the composition of the change space also provides valuable insight in terms of developing a viable strategy. So, using the example of the AAA analysis of the NBTS' staff training and capacity once again, we see that the authority and acceptance scores were both large but ability was assessed to be medium only. From results such as this, we learn that the NBTS could invest significantly more in raising particular aspects of its ability.



Words of Wisdom

All of this goes to say, the process is intensive and iterative – but it’s also rewarding! At the start of the semester, our team was overwhelmed by just how complex the issue of safe blood in Nigeria was. We knew we only had a few weeks to address the problem, and it felt almost impossible to do given the massive scope and narrow time constraint. But by the end of the course, we managed to identify three concrete solutions for the NBTS to pursue.

Our advice to other students and practitioners working through the PDIA process is to mindfully compartmentalize your work. It’s important to focus on each individual step of the process, otherwise it becomes too easy to get caught up by the daunting challenge at hand. By compartmentalizing your work to each individual step, the challenge becomes much more manageable. This also includes working through the highs and lows.

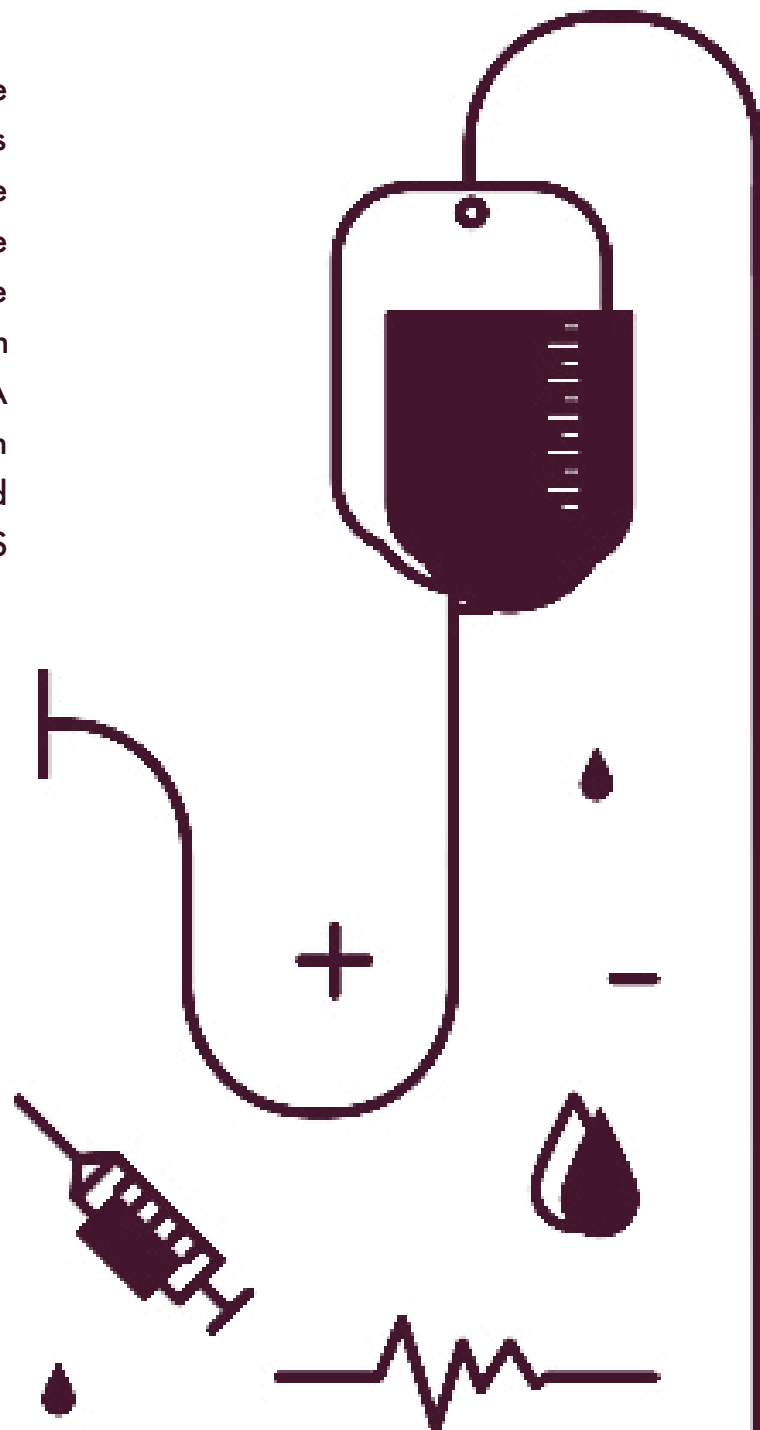
There will be weeks when you may feel discouraged because you can’t find the statistics you need or none of the people who you contacted have responded to your emails. That’s okay! In

fact, it’s normal. It’s imperative to not get bogged down by the minor setbacks and instead to keep the process moving. At the same time, there may be weeks when everything is making sense and moving along just as you expected. That’s great! Ride that wave of momentum into the next step of the process.

Perhaps the most invaluable component of the PDIA process is teamwork. The PDIA process often moves fast and has lots of moving parts; it would simply be too much for one person to handle effectively. In fact, your end product won’t be as good or comprehensive if you work alone. We recommend that you lean strongly on the diversity of your team’s background to come up with a broad range of questions and ideas throughout the process. The breadth of our discussions with our authorizer and our final ideas would not have been possible had we not had such diversity among our team (and managed to utilize it effectively!). Don’t ever be afraid to offer up your opinions – especially on topics that you have prior experience with. And make sure to listen in on and take advantage of your team members’ thoughts and work. Your final product will be better because of it.

Lastly, we highly recommend this course to any HKS or cross-enrolled student who is eligible or considering it. From this course we learned invaluable tools that will undoubtedly be applicable in our professional lives. This course is unique in that it is much more “hands-on” than “theory-based.” Each week, we learned the PDIA tools and immediately put them into practice with our authorizer. It was an excellent experience and one that we consider a highlight of our HKS and HSPH experiences thus far.

“There is an element of fear with PDIA that ultimately galvanizes us into action.”





RAPHAËL KENIGSBURG

to **detect**,
react to,
and **prevent radicalization**
within private companies



Imara Salas
HKS



Katie Wesdyk
HKS



Kishan Shah
HKS



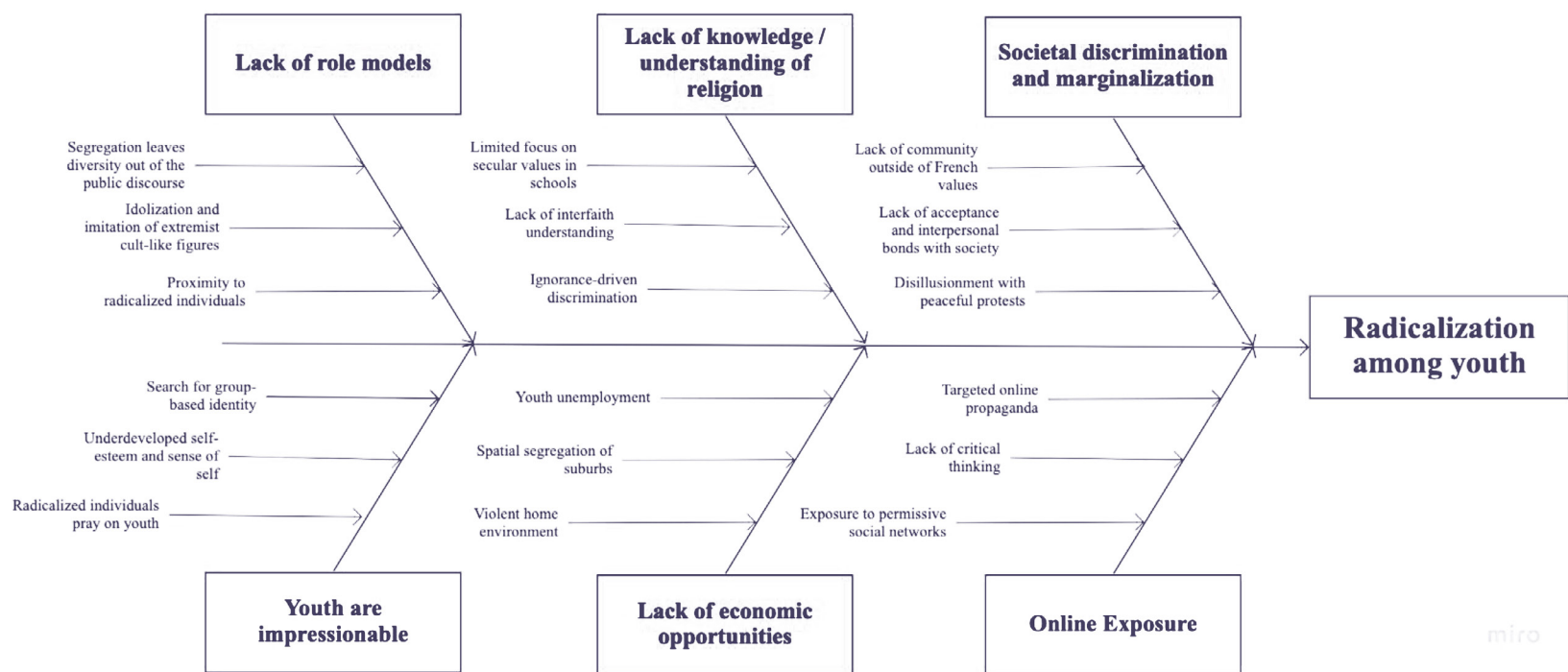
Sasha Mathew
HKS

A faint, light gray outline map of France serves as a background for the slide. The map includes the mainland and the overseas territories of Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, and Réunion. The top portion of the map is covered by a dark blue horizontal band.

Countering Radicalization France

The PDIA process taught us how to turn a ‘wicked problem’—a highly complex tangle of many problems with **high uncertainty—into manageable components** that we can begin to address. We learned a strategy for how to deconstruct an abstract problem with the fishbone framework. Most importantly, we learned that complex problems in unfamiliar contexts can be addressed through a structured approach. We had the chance to put theory into practice by working on radicalization in France.

There is a **growing perception** that radicalization is expanding in France. Radicalization is a complex and dynamic process where members of society advocate for extreme reform that can result in violence and the **fracturing of society** itself. This phenomenon covers every range of the spectrum from extremist religious groups to right-wing radicals, with vulnerability amongst youth. In France, there is a national impetus to face the issue, but there is **no consensus** on how to approach it.



Problem Reconstruction

We made progress around refocusing and re-scoping the full perspective around the problem. When we first started this project, our authorizer wanted to focus on the role that private companies can engage within cyber spaces to combat radicalization. However, when we delved into the root causes of radicalization in France further, we found that this approach may not be as effective. Our research consistently highlighted that an emphasis on surveillance, detection, and punishment fails to solve the circumstances leading to radicalization, serving more as a band-aid to help mitigate the impact of those already radicalized. In some cases, measures focused on punishment have instead increased the lure of radicalization by exacerbating the ostracization of vulnerable populations. While preventing acts of extremism is very important to keep potential targets safe, it will ultimately not mitigate the root causes of extremism. We wanted to prevent it.

Many of the root causes had less to do with online access to content, and more so with motivators pushing vulnerable populations towards radicalization to begin

with. The root causes emphasize structural issues of identity, history, and the ways the current expression of French Republican values come into conflict with the realities of people's lives everyday. One theme that came up repeatedly was the lack of language and dialogue to even engage through meaningful discussions around these issues.

Partly through a shift in focus, and partly also through a serendipitous turn of events, our authorizer also changed his focus from cyber to youth education. At first, this change seemed abrupt, but it also opened up more possibilities to engage with the root causes of radicalization.

As we researched efforts of youth education and engagement further, we found interesting examples of best practice elsewhere and positive deviance in France itself. Abroad, there were already interesting online and offline educational modules for combating misinformation and having greater conversations around diversity. In France, we came across an interesting NGO that was engaging with youth in French minority communities. Rather than taking a punitive approach, their main method was just to talk and listen to youth.

1

Developing educational curricula and toolkits for working with youth to promote common values as an alternative against radical ideologies

2

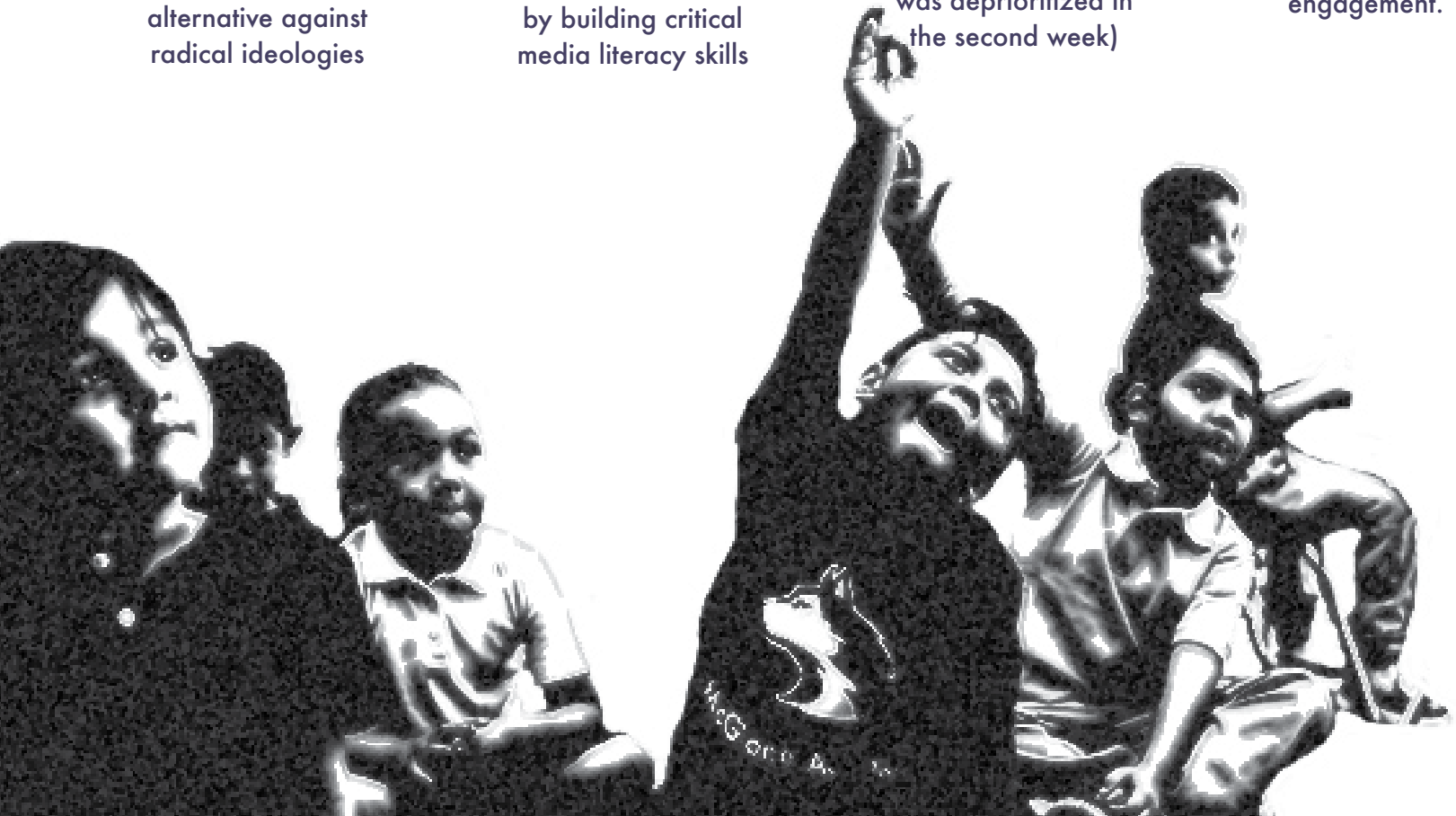
Inoculating the youth against misinformation on the internet (especially the type of misinformation that drives religious and political radicalization) by building critical media literacy skills

3

Developing a voluntary code of responsible conduct for private companies' surveillance of their internet networks (this was deprioritized in the second week)

4

Rolling out CSR initiatives to encourage inclusion and community development through private sector engagement.



Narrowness of National Identity

French identity and civic values are informed by a long and complex history and contribute to a lack of inclusion of minorities and the marginalization of religious groups



Structural Factors

Socio-economic exclusion, insufficient community dialogue, counter-radicalization policies, and the proliferation of extremist propaganda make individuals vulnerable to radicalized ideas.



Individual Factors

Lack of belonging, domestic instability and violence, and mental health issues, among other variables, push individuals towards radicalized groups

Words of Wisdom

PDIA is hard and exhaustive work. We came together in a very short period of time to attempt to tackle an immensely large problem that many have struggled to make a dent in. It was an ambitious task with so many unknowns. We realized we had to rely extensively on each other and the unique backgrounds and expertise each of us brought to the table, leveraging the PDIA model as a means to structure our thinking. We had to learn quickly and adapt, requiring time, effort, and commitment from a group of individuals suddenly bonded over a shared dedication to helping our client. We were motivated by the importance of such work where lives are on the line.

Our first piece of advice to other students/practitioners is to **maintain open channels of communication with teammates and other stakeholders**. This will help manage expectations, anticipate setbacks, and adjust their line of work on the go. During our work, routine meetings and check-ups allowed us to pivot quickly and respond to problems in a timely manner.

Second, **establish a trusting and caring environment.** Planning small acts of kindness for each other can go a long way in building team rapport and make brainstorming and ideation much more constructive activities. This strengthens the quality of your work and your ability to adapt and iterate together. It can also help make Zoom a less forbidding environment!

Third, **expand your circle of engagement as much as possible.** You may never have a 'complete' picture, but you can come close by integrating as many perspectives as possible. In our case, having a broad network of collaborators was extremely useful when it came to shifting our line of work and engaging new stakeholders.

Fourth, **construct your fishbone as rigorously as possible – and be exhaustive,** because this will form the canvas of the change space. Building a comprehensive fishbone will also help you adjust your work based on challenges you encounter and have a systemic outlook of the problem. This will be critical when analyzing the implications of the ideas you propose on other actors in the system.

Fifth, **don't be shy about revisiting the problem.** Your understanding of the problem may never be perfect or complete, so be comfortable with revisiting and expanding on or modifying fishbone diagrams, as you continue to engage stakeholders and deploy iterations.



Always **keep the broader perspective of what your goals are and be compassionate towards yourself and team with respect to the constraints you are operating under.** As students, it can be overwhelming to try and make headway on a wicked problem in 7 weeks. But the goal of PDIA is not to try and solve all the world's problems right away. It is about recognizing that too often nothing gets done and something, no matter how small, is better than nothing. You will be surprised by how far small steps can take you.

PROBLEM

It is difficult for private companies to play a constructive role in the radicalization debate because of how sensitive the issue is and because there is a lack of dialogue even at a community level.

Many of the causes are intertwined at a more fundamental level of the nature of the French social contract, the geographic structure of suburban/urban France, and the lack of dialogue on these issues.

CAUSES

IDEAS

We tried ideas related to getting into contact with community and civic education experts. Logistics and meetings, especially in Covid, were often what created roadblocks that could sink an idea

Psychological safety and investments in getting to know each other were important for being nimble and flexible without getting stressed out.

WORKING AS A TEAM

PDIA

Getting feedback from the interaction of ideas and the real world is crucial. The sooner you can get feedback, the faster you can learn and move forward. The roadblock is often in moving from the theoretical to the actual.



KEVIN SCHILLING

The need for a **wider recognition** that **childcare is not an individual problem** but, in fact, one that **weighs upon the community as a whole.**



Crystal Collier
HKS



Doreen King
HKS



Harman Bhullar
HKS



Jingli Yan
HKS



Sasinat Chindapol
HKS

Access to Affordable & Quality Childcare

Burien, Washington

When the **'problem'** came to us, it was really a **solution in the guise** of a problem, for the original task was to make childcare in Burien a portable benefit that families could take with them. Even as we transformed it into a problem statement of families in Burien not having access to affordable and quality childcare, our problem construction work did not end there – we had painstakingly **asked ourselves over and over again why this mattered and why it was a problem, not just a condition.**



Reason 1:
Awareness:
regarding programs
and options
available

Access to affordable and quality childcare in Burien

In *Burien*, current child-care benefits are limited and restrictive (e.g., financially, geographically, etc.). The people who most need the benefit are not able to access *because of systemic barriers*. The issue is about providing affordable, high-quality childcare to individual families *and* addressing the broader social and economic impacts (reduced labor force participation and productivity, limitations to better job opportunities, unequal access to services) to the community, as a result of the lack of accessible, affordable, high-quality childcare.

knowing where to find and access
information is hard

People unaware of available
programs

limited promotion and outreach
across regions

- quality of facilities
- not enough space (available facilities can only accommodate ~ 45% children in the state)
- not enough incentives to start facilities
- quality of staff at facilities
 - > high and consistent staff turnover
 - > not enough adequate training and support
 - > wages and benefits for childcare staff not competitive
 - > unionization of workers at childcare facilities

Reason 4:
Inadequate
facilities/options

Reason 2: Affordability

Program Funding

- subsidies are inadequate
- covers only 45% of childcare market
- parents can't afford co-payments
- diff levels of poverty level should be applied
- subsidies do not take into account regional differences

Parental Resources

- cost of childcare can take up to 30% of HH income, 90% of those on minimum wage
- coverage of subsidies available is not apt (parents who are not eligible/ those who don't get enough)
- high cost for childcare provision (labor, space rentals etc.)
- no subsidy for providers to make childcare affordable for parents (applying federal standards)
- cost of living high in Washington
- household makeup (single parent households versus two-parent households)
- lack of community support for childcare (advocacy for childcare provision)
- Parental employment
- Mobile nature of employment
- part time versus full time employment to accommodate childcare duties

- requirement of being US citizen/new resident to access state subsidized child-care
- >Burien has high number of immigrants (not limited to legal residents)
- > subset that are not eligible since they are undocumented
- disparate childcare provision across neighborhoods basis racial makeup

Reason 5: Eligibility

Reason 3: Accessibility

- difficulty in the application process (assistance to apply for aid)
- Location/proximity
- urban design?

Reason 7: Variety of childcare options

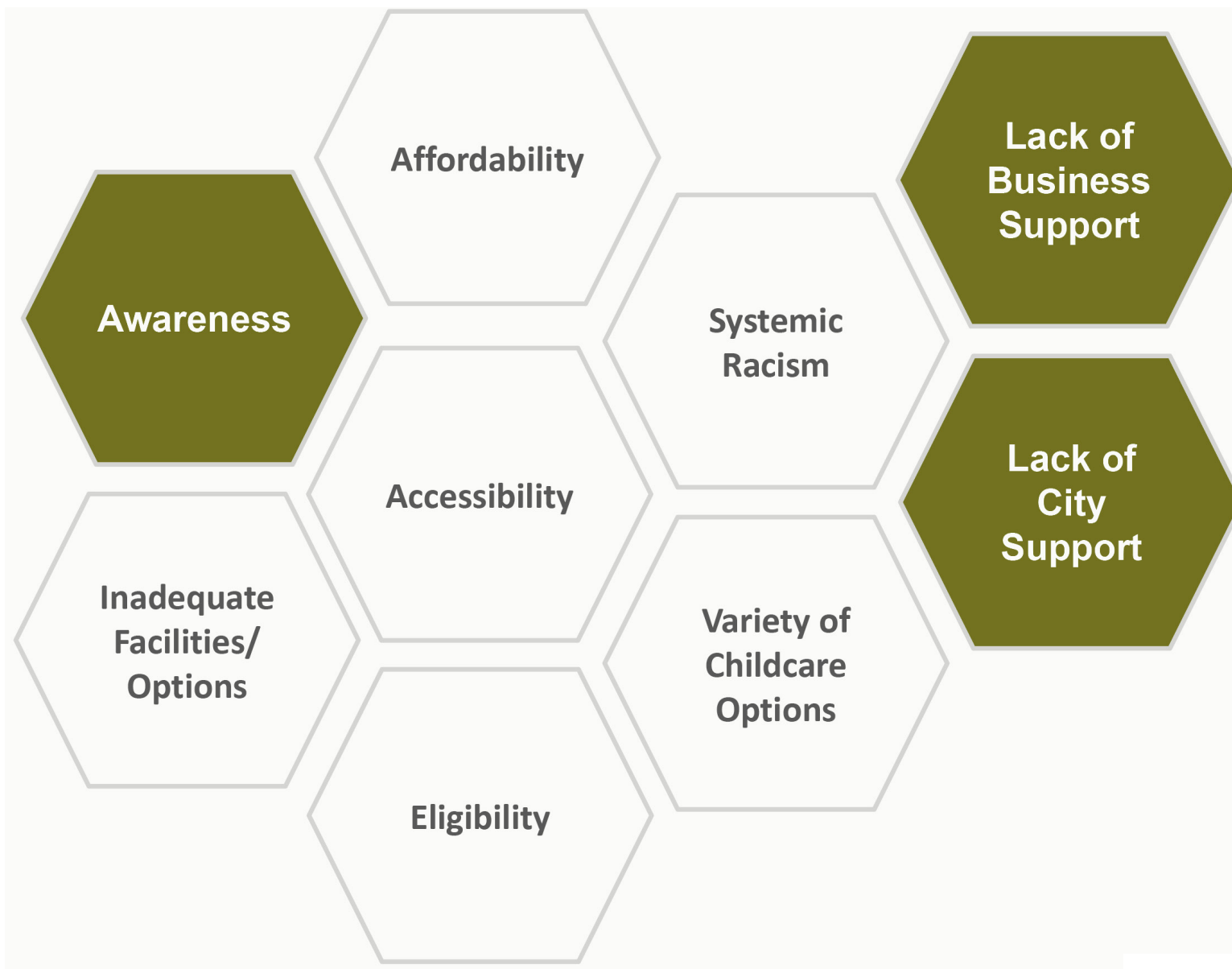
- lack of community support for childcare
- insufficient registered/regulated childcare facilities to accommodate demand
- > compliance standards for regulation high
- > cost to start up and maintain facility acts as high barrier to entry

Reason 8: Lack of city support

- only \$350,000 in human service budget
- the city leadership want to make sure it is an equal share and they spread out among services.
- > they never come together about different priorities.
- > they never have conversations about childcare.

- does not allow system to optimally function
- creates a system of have and have-nots
- have-nots put additional drain on system and city resources
- People cannot make living wage
- maintains status quo,
- city gov didn't reflect the makeup of new demographic of Burien.
- not aware of the issues of low-income working class, not in their priority.

Reason 6: Systemic racism



Replicating this thought process with our authorizer Councilmember Kevin Schilling, we found that naming the distinction between the two created a pause and an opportunity for deeper contemplation to give shape to the initially undefined problem.

Following the PDIA approach, we proceeded to problem deconstruction, which shed light on a number of insights, including underlying causes that did not seem to be obvious and inherent to the problem itself. Firstly, while stakeholders knew that affordable childcare was an issue, their understanding of its complexity was rather limited, contributing to insufficient motivation and urgency to take action. Secondly, the problem was not simply a lack of a solution, implying that no amount of expansion to Burien's currently restricted budget will solve the childcare problem permanently. Our problem deconstruction pointed to much deeper societal issues that needed to be simultaneously or first addressed, including the need for a wider recognition that childcare is not an individual problem but in fact, one that weighs upon the community as a whole.

After we finally decided on three potential

entry points to tackle first (awareness, lack of business support, and lack of city support), we began to fully appreciate the dynamicity of both the problem and the change space surrounding it. Through continually gathering information from a broad network of people and sources and updating our prior, we came face to face with the possibility that a change in one piece of information may trace back and require corrections to all of our past decisions. This realization, alongside the uncertainty that came with it, was difficult to embrace, and it also manifested in our AAA analysis. Kevin reminded us that authority, acceptance, and ability can change quickly, and so does the feasibility of every solution that has been generated as a result of this analysis. It struck us that perhaps we were too static in unpacking the problem and building the change space around the authorizer. Therefore, a dynamic mindset and an understanding of the problem as an evolving object, be it in the context of a six-week project or a five-year one, is an absolute necessity.

As much as PDIA was a fast-paced approach that required us to be proactive in making progress, it did highlight the need to dedicate time to human connection. The process was most definitely not an “individual sport.” There were too many moving parts for one person to realistically and efficiently cover alone, and it didn’t make sense to, given that the team had already brought together incredibly talented individuals with unique strengths and experiences. In order to identify these strengths and to build a cohesive team, we found it extremely important to build meaningful relationships within the team as early as possible, since we did not have a lot of time to complete the project. Aligning on our levels of commitment and responsibility before the project began also made the meetings and workflow very efficient.

Frequent communication was another essential component to successful teaming. In particular, deliberating amongst ourselves before meeting with our authorizer ensured a united front to solutioning even if we had differed in our approaches before. This built our credibility and the authorizer’s trust in the team. Even with our weekly meetings, however, we still felt that these sessions were not enough for us to fully synchronize our individual actions and see how they fit into the overall plan.

While we had a core team of five students, the nature of PDIA also required us to rely on a wider network of people who were nothing but kind, willing, and helpful to us. Therefore, the need to intentionally engage with people and develop relationships outside the project’s scope was not limited to the five of us, but to everyone who had helped us along the way. For our interactions with our authorizer, this meant embracing difficult conversations and disagreements because although positive energy helped keep the team going, we also owed it to him to manage expectations and make progress. This involved setting realistic goals about what we could achieve and coming to terms with the fact that we could not do everything. For our interactions with those we had connected with to learn more about the problem, this entailed listening. As outsiders with a possibly different mindset, we stood to lose the space to build trust by talking and assuming too much, so the best approach was to demonstrate a genuine interest in mutual development and just listen.

1

considering the broad implications of working with businesses to understand whether doing so will have intended/unintended impacts

2

multifaceted approach through townhall meetings and surveys to identify what community childcare needs/wants are, so that actions are intentioned and aligned

3

solidifying what business support “looks like” - preliminary engagement with identified businesses to establish what types and levels of support are feasible in establishing Burien CSR and PPP model

4

solidifying how ‘support’ in city council translates to actual action

5

determining whether the Area Median Income or Federal Poverty Level approach is more beneficial to Burien families relative to this issue

**MORE
OPPORTUNITIES**

**FUTURE
AGENDAS**





DR. IMBENZI GEORGE

Was the **lack of a trade agreement** was the major **cause** for **limited trade** between Kenya and Canada?



Bishal Belbase
HSPH



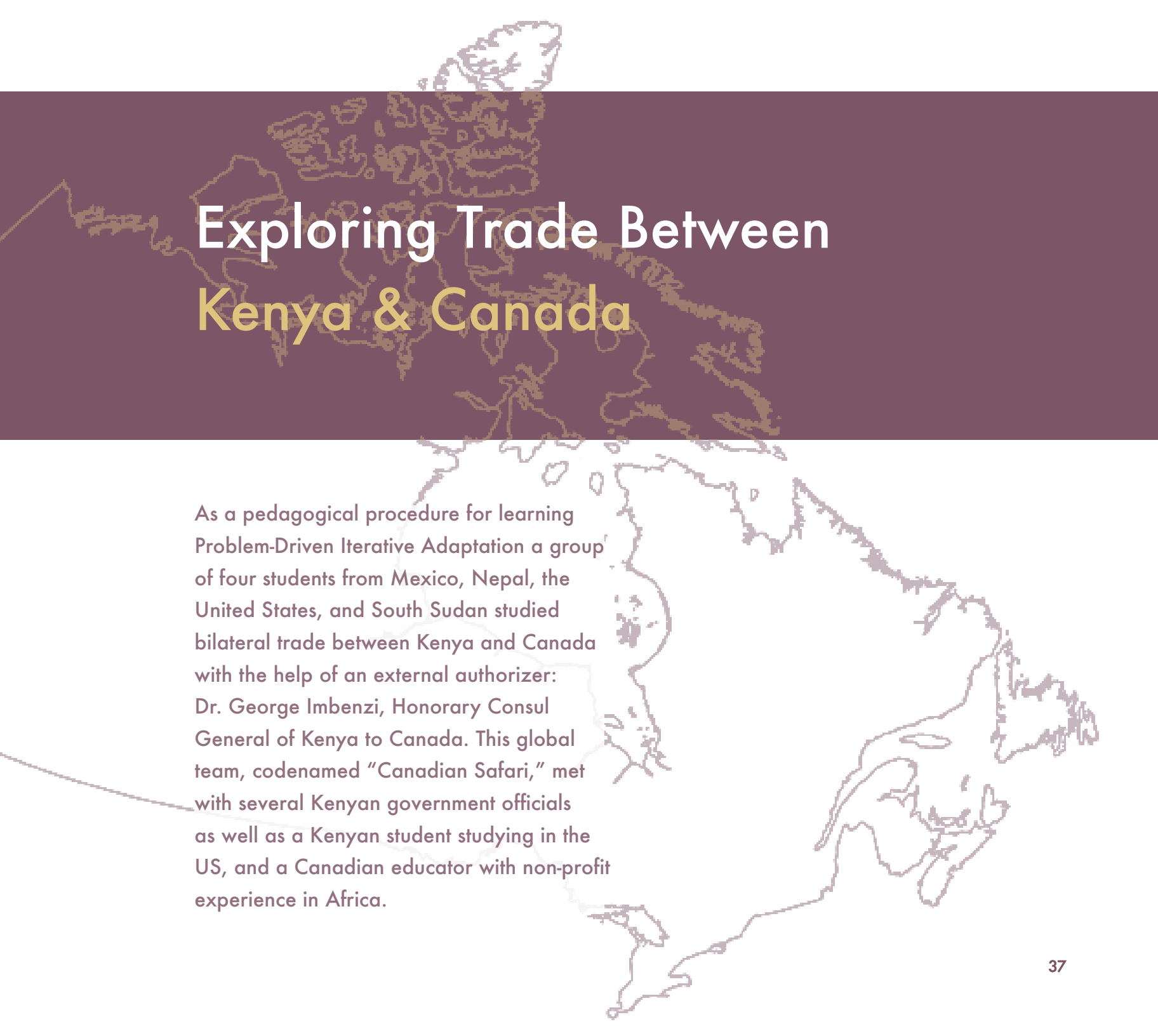
John Diing
HKS



Mayra Hoyos
HKS



Stephanie Shalkoski
HBS



Exploring Trade Between Kenya & Canada

As a pedagogical procedure for learning Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation a group of four students from Mexico, Nepal, the United States, and South Sudan studied bilateral trade between Kenya and Canada with the help of an external authorizer: Dr. George Imbenzi, Honorary Consul General of Kenya to Canada. This global team, codenamed “Canadian Safari,” met with several Kenyan government officials as well as a Kenyan student studying in the US, and a Canadian educator with non-profit experience in Africa.

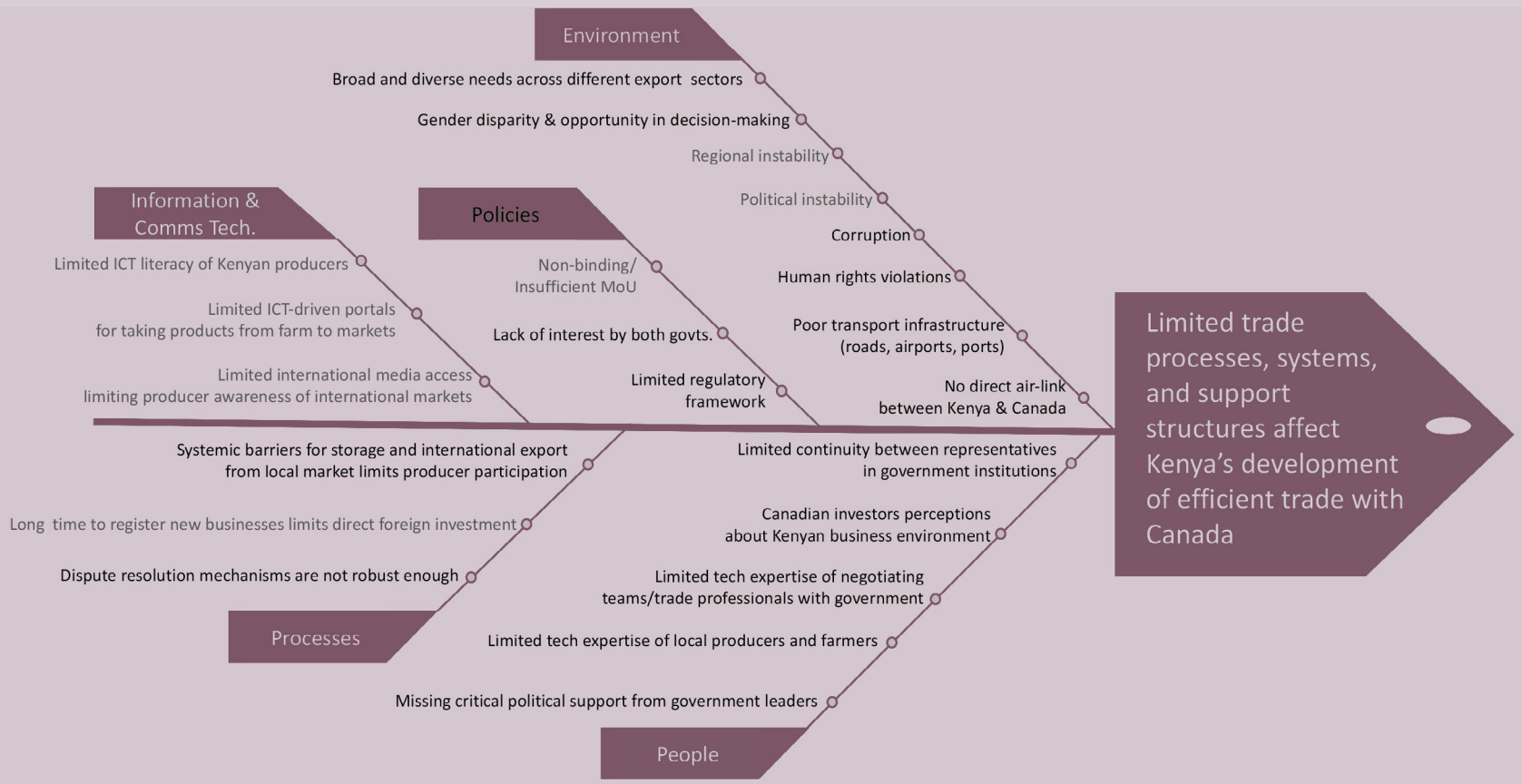
Lack of interest
by both gvts

No direct
link between
Kenya and
Canada

Canadian
investors
perceptions about
the Kenyan
business
envr

Limited
expertise of
Kenyan
negotiating
teams

Missing political
support from
govt leaders



Our first thought was that the lack of a trade agreement was the major cause for limited trade between Kenya and Canada. However, when we broke down the problem of fledgling trade between the two countries into subproblems, we ended up with some causes we didn't expect.

One cause we noticed was the lack of capacity of Kenyan diplomats – in terms of technical knowledge and negotiation skills. Also, due to the frequent turnover of Kenyan officials, there was limited institutional memory.

Another factor we identified was how the lack of direct air links between Kenya and Canada was hampering people-to-people connections and trade. For the Pyrethrum flower (one of the major exports from Kenya to Canada) and similar fresh agricultural/horticultural products, reducing transit time from Kenya to Canada is critical. The presence of direct flights would make it easier to attract potentially millions of Canadian tourists to experience Kenya's natural and cultural beauty. The increase in tourism would also help to boost Canadian investor perception.

We learned that Kenya has emerged as a strong player in the information and communication technology sector. Kenya has all the ingredients of

becoming the hub of a knowledge-based economy, however, they have not been able to promote these possibilities due to traditional perceptions. We realized that the networks, skills, and expertise of a sizable Kenyan diaspora in Canada could play a major role in cultural exchanges and promotion of narratives which can improve perception about socio-economic climate and business prospects in Kenya.

We concluded that our authorizer could gain the quickest results by strengthening the technical knowledge and negotiation skills of Kenyan diplomats and by working on greater connectivity between Kenya and Canada.

Even as we make these recommendations, we are aware that our team was assembled 7 weeks back with limited expertise and contextual information and our assumptions may be flawed. While there are unpredictable factors like the upcoming Kenyan elections, we could have been more certain about our suggestions if we had understood more about the perspectives of Canadian government officials and investors, Kenyan business owners, the state of the Kenyan knowledge economy, and global and regional market trends affecting Kenya.

Lessons Learned

Select causes to work on that aren't too large

By deconstructing the problem, we realized that there were several factors contributing to the lack of robust trade between the two countries. However, some of the causes were too big for us to intervene, such as corruption, regional instability, or human rights violations. We focused on the problems we could tackle by using the Triple A analysis and evaluating which causes we had the most authority, ability, and acceptance to work on.

Learn fast & iterate towards small solutions

We learned that aiming for small changes or interventions instead of trying to change a whole system can lead to early success. This is because small changes are quick actions that are open to adjustment, clarify contextual challenges and allow some learning about what works and what does not.

Reflect and check-in regularly

The PDIA approach taught us that it is essential to reflect every week on our progress before moving forward. We reflected on the obstacles we encountered, the lessons learned, and the next steps to avoid turning in the wrong direction.

Engage with multiple stakeholders

Talking to different stakeholders is essential to understand the problem causes and solutions better from diverse perspectives. Almost all of the stakeholders we interviewed were from the Kenyan side and even though they provided us with invaluable insights, we were not able to achieve a holistic view of the problem and its causes as we were missing the perspective from the Canadian government and key sectors from both countries.

Crawl the design space

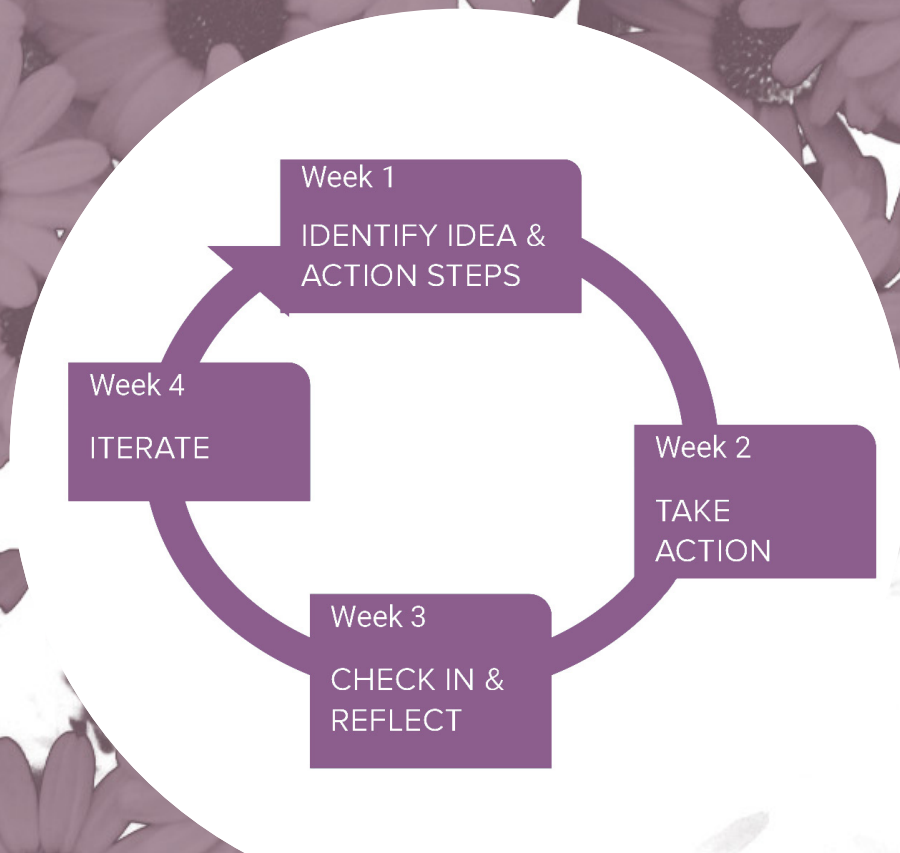
The PDIA framework helped us to think outside the box. It taught us to be flexible, creative, and exploratory about deeper layers of the problem, causes, and effects. We looked out for best

practices in other contexts that had solved similar challenges to existing practices between Kenya and Canada that could be improved and for potential ideas that could emerge with some focused attention.

Be an active participant in the teaming process

One of the main challenges as a team when navigating an unknown problem was that every member had a different perspective and definition of the problem. Throughout the process, we learned how to be flexible and cooperate to reach a consensus. The key was to strengthen our communication and team constitution; this enabled a strong team connection.

Entry Point	Authority	Acceptance	Ability
SELECTED ENTRY POINT 1: No direct link between Kenya and Canada	Medium - our authorizer could get the political support needed from both countries. But it could be hard to advocate with the private sector	Large - a direct link between the two countries would be beneficial for bilateral trade, government, citizens, and diverse interest groups, and it would also incentivize both economies. However, we are unsure of the acceptance from airlines	Medium - the government may not have the resources to create this link, but the private sector could.
SELECTED ENTRY POINT 2: Limited tech expertise of negotiating teams/trade professionals with government	Large - The authorizer can initiate training for high level government officials and the creation of permanent portfolios to focus on trade issues across different government departments	Large - There should not be any resistance by different professionals within the government department. Caveat - There is possibility of these professionals being lobbied by the "beneficiaries" of inefficient trade	Large-The authorizer has the skills, resources, and political leverage to propose and push for training of trade professionals in diplomatic and trade departments
Lack of interest by both governments	Large - Our authorizer has positional authority in both gov'ts based on his position being approved by both Kenya & Canada.	Medium - We see some concerns /pressures from lobby organizations (cartels) & corruption of some Kenya gov't officials. We do not know the Canadian gov't perception.	Large - Our authorizer has time, resources, and the skillset to affect change.
Canadian investors' perceptions about Kenyan business environment	Low - This will be affected by multiple factors, not all of them are under our authorizer's control	Medium - Canadian investors would like the opportunity to access a new market provided it comes with securing their interests. But there are things outside of the investors' control as well, e.g., regional, political instability	Large - the authorizer has the skills and know- how to sit with Canadian investors/business leaders and inform/persuade them of the Kenya's business environment
Missing critical political support from (Kenyan) government leaders	Large - Our authorizer has key contacts with multiple levels of government leaders and is well- respected to influence fellow Kenyan gov't leaders.	Medium - Corruption, and external forces may influence some politicians who may resist change, but there are likely many others who do not have education and awareness of the trade concerns and might easily accept the need for change and benefit from information.	Large - Our authorizer has the time, resources, and the skillset to affect change.



Tip #1: Immediately request a meeting with diplomats using a formal invitation

Diplomats are incredibly busy with complex schedules. They may not be able to meet with you for many weeks. With the student PDIA process lasting only 7 weeks, we recommend approaching diplomats with these requests as soon as possible.

Formal invitations to diplomats should include a brief class description, a reference to the specific challenge you're working on with the name and title of the authorizer, and a list of team member names. Identify the time commitment (e.g. 30-minutes) and the deadline for the conversation (~2-3 weeks before the end of class). Bonus points if you can ask the professor to sign the letter on your behalf, but try to send it on your own so you can manage follow-up efforts.

Tip #2: Address diplomats using their formal titles unless told otherwise

Cultures differ and while you may be introduced to diplomats who are comfortable with a more casual style, we recommend starting formally when approaching new contacts. Use their entire

given title with written correspondence. Make an effort to understand their title and how they feel comfortable being referred to based on their culture and position.

Tip #3: Encourage diplomats to speak beyond the standard talking points

Share a prepared list of "starter questions" with diplomats in advance of the meeting. These are good starting points for the conversation and help frame the conversation for advanced consideration by your diplomat.

Be courageous with your follow-up questions. You'll recognize openings to ask questions to probe deeper. Don't resist those curious urges even though you're meeting with someone very important; you're there to help uncover information and you should ask questions that demonstrate that curiosity.



"sometimes politics will move the policy forward before its ready to be passed"



WILLIAM KEITH YOUNG

Is a blended component unit the best mechanism to use for a local government to **fund reparations**?

Are there other **options**?

If so, **what**?



Bethany Dill
HGSE



Isabel Mejia Fontanot
HKS



Kent Shi
HKS



Kerianne DiBattista
HKS

Implementing Reparations in Asheville, North Carolina

Tasked with exploring viable funding mechanisms to enable the Asheville reparations process to progress, our team waded into a conceptualization of **“the problem”** that, we soon realized, **was just a tributary flowing into a larger set of circumstances and hurdles.** This early lesson served as a road sign reminding us to be ready to rethink at any time, framing our discoveries about policy and problem-solving along the way.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

- Predominantly White
- Segregation of Black and White Communities
- Loss of Trust in Government
- Lack of unity/organization
- COVID Response
- Resolution Followed Unrest in City

EXTERNAL POLITICAL CONTEXT

- Competing Priorities
- Setting a Precedent
- COVID Response
- Limited Resources for the whole city

LEGAL OBSTACLES

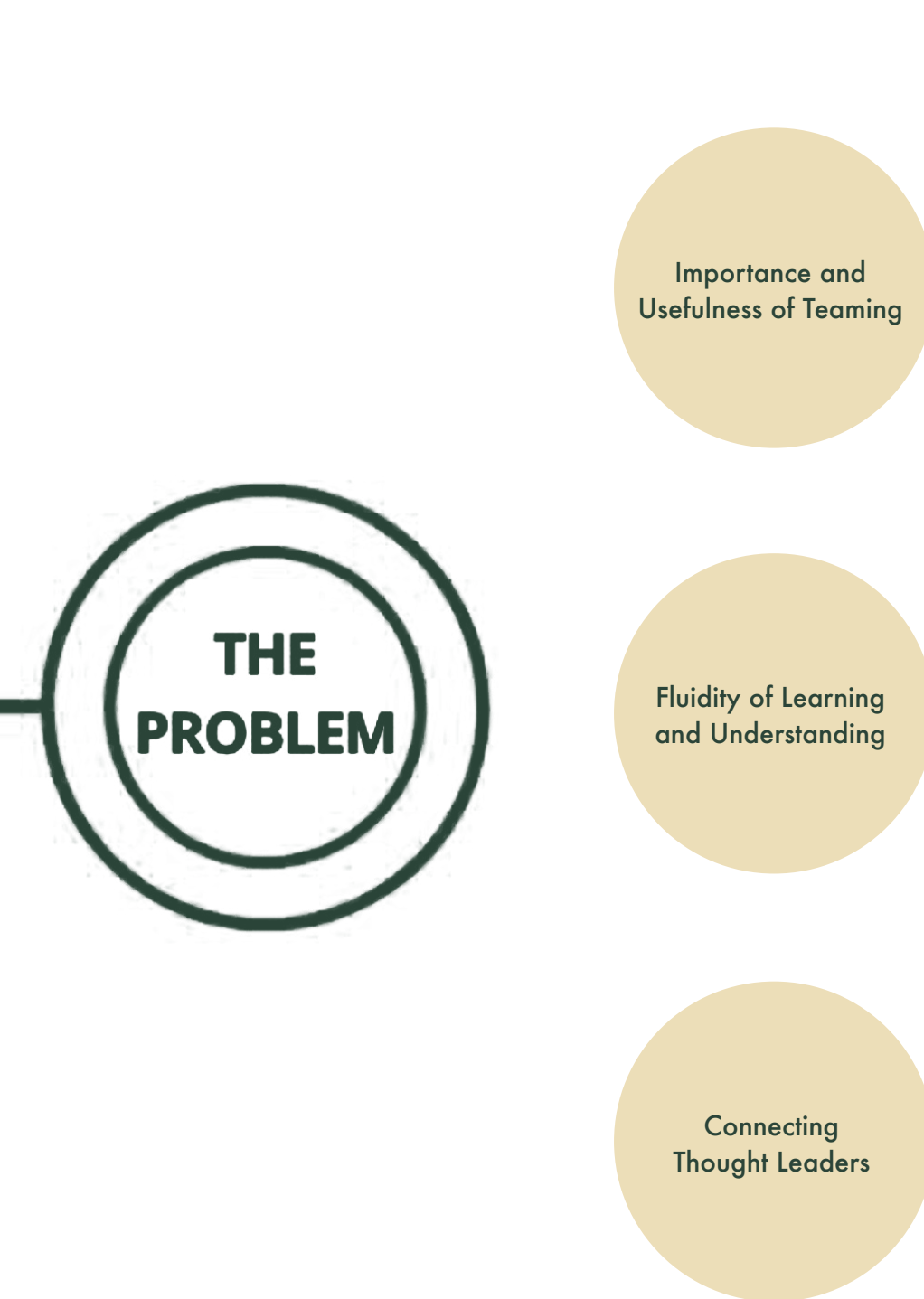
- No direct support of one race
- NC not a Home Rule State
- Limited funding and no deficit spending
- Legal and Financial Mechanism to satisfy these restrictions

INTERNAL POLITICAL CONTEXT

- Communication, Cohesion, and Trust Issues among Stakeholders
- Lack of Broad Coalition and Stakeholder Engagement
- Equity and Inclusion Dept understaffed/resourced

LOGISTICS

- Disagreement on definitions/objectives
- Efficacy
- Program Term
- Funding Source and Mechanism
- Commission
- Responsibility to Act
- Shift in Council Makeup
- No separate entity created to take responsibility for resolution
- Disagreement re: gov relationship to fund/entity
- Disagreement on communal v. individual use of funds



THE PROBLEM

Importance and
Usefulness of Teaming

Fluidity of Learning
and Understanding

Connecting
Thought Leaders

Work Inside-Out, Not Outside-In

Sometimes the desire for instantaneous, sweeping change and broader reach can lead us to overlook the importance of the work that first needs to be done internally to develop sustainable policy. Building capacity before scaling innovation is a key step, paving the way for lasting change. **Coalitions that ensure sustainability of new policy may benefit from starting small, slowing down, and iterating to reach a comprehensive understanding of the real problem.** Before turning attention to policy expansion, establishing a firm foundation comes first. Like the old saying, slow and steady wins the race, especially in complex processes. Policy development is a marathon, not a sprint, and is built through consistent focus and effort.



**BLACK LIVES
MATTER**



Momentum is not Linear

We found that stepping back before continuing forward helped us to spend time and energy wisely. Devoting time to reflection allowed for clarity in finding direction, enhanced efficiency, and closer alignment with the pulse of the problem. Strategy proved more valuable than pure speed. We have learned that it is necessary to step aside to recognize what is already being done to solve the problem and consider the constraints relevant actors are experiencing. **What appears to be a lack of movement may not be opposition, but the result of complex limitations and unanswered questions.**

Learning to discern which obstacles are part of the landscape and which might give way to change space is also critical. Stepping around a barrier, even temporarily, may be better than spending all energy and resources attempting to move what will not budge. This may look like stepping out of our own way to approach people and problems with humility, fostering flexibility and allowing room for overlooked paths and possibilities to emerge.

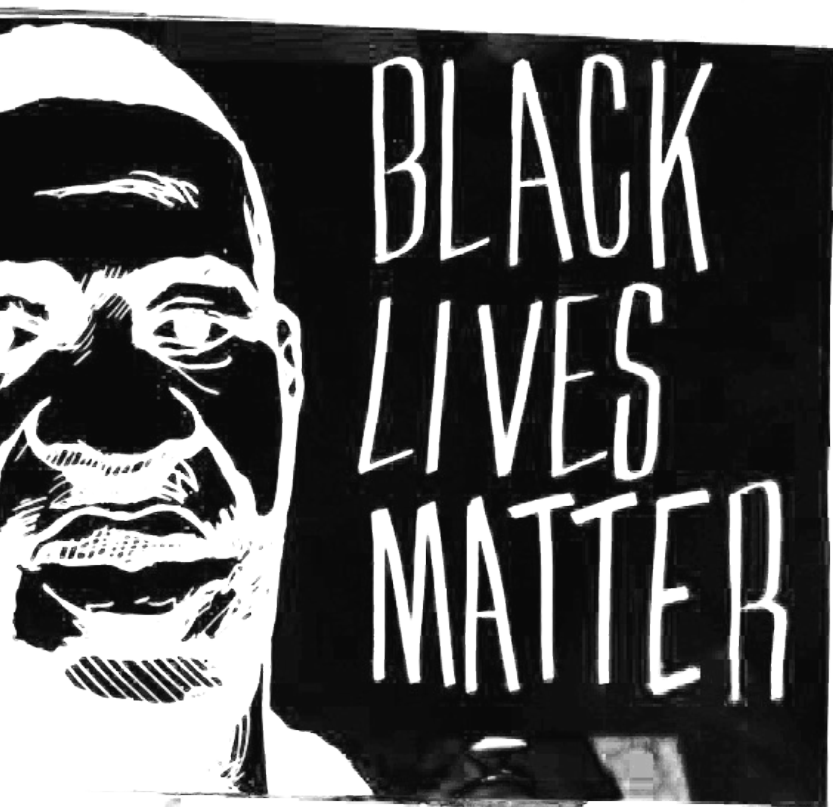
The Power of Iteration in Coping with Uncertainty

Approaching a task like implementing reparations for four centuries of harm inflicted on the Black community in the United States can be daunting to say the least. It's instinctual to want to take it slow, refining all of the details of a comprehensive plan before it goes into action in order to ensure that it is done well and done correctly. At the same time, justice delayed is often justice denied. Advocates are justifiably trying to capitalize on the momentum of the moment given the unprecedented support for reparations. But there's a reason reparations have never been implemented at such a scale before: we don't know how. Never before has a society tried to

repair numerous years and countless incidents of harm, but many of the disparities facing the Black community are centuries in the making, not the result of one isolated event.

Iteration gives us a way to cope with this very uncertainty. Accepting that we do not know the right answer can liberate us from the burden of needing to be right. We know that we're not going to get it right immediately because the problem isn't that simple. Rather, we have decomposed the problem and formulated small, incremental steps that we think could make a difference. If we're wrong, that's okay. We haven't sunk years of time and energy into any one idea. After a week or two, we can stop, reflect, and refocus. As we try new things, we'll learn more and more about what a solution could look like. Eventually, the uncertainty will disappear and a solution will be within our reach.





Problem *Reconstructed*

There has been a lack of progress and consensus in designing and implementing reparations initiatives in Asheville since the passing of the reparations resolution in July of 2020. The slow pace of government has led to small, mainly symbolic, steps have been taken to signal to the community that the process is underway, but meaningful advancement has been hindered by lack of capacity in key areas. A concern is that **justice delayed is often justice denied**, as further delay of this initiative could widen divides in the community and reinforce the existing distrust that the local black community has in the government.

“sometimes politics will move the policy forward before its ready to be passed”

Further Questions

- > How to ensure the city government and its policies are not perpetuating harm while actively trying to repair the harm that has already been done? How to ensure the Equity and Inclusion Department is able to accomplish its goals?
- > What is the role of the Black community in the city's process? How to foster healing and collaboration between the Black community and the city government?
- > How to publicize and normalize the true historical narrative established and elucidated by the stories told during Truth Telling and Information Sharing? How to foster cohesion and unity within the whole Asheville community around this issue?
- > Who has responsibility and authority to act on Commission recommendations? When is this meant to happen?
- > Legal and funding mechanism for reparations policies?



Next Steps

At PDIA's core is problem deconstruction, serving as both an exercise and a philosophy. Taking the problem apart allows teams to identify all stakeholders and the relationships among them. In our case, the deconstruction process took us a step beyond, with historical community relationships integral to reparations plans. PDIA fostered a depth and richness of analysis that helps us to imagine steps toward justice that are long overdue. We have been humbled to work with and learn from those who are courageously calling for change. Their choice to address hundreds of years of injustice is available to all of us—and reparations are in reach.



DAVID WUYEP

The Nigerian Government faces a **condition** of **abandoned public infrastructure projects** in many sectors (most importantly water, energy, and transportation) at **all government levels.**



Matt Weber
HKS



Nathalie Gazzaneo
HKS



Rodrigo Tejada
HKS



Tendai Mvuvu
HKS



Abandoned Infrastructure Projects Nigeria

On a winter's afternoon in early February of 2021, a Mexican MPP1, a Brazilian MPP2, a Zimbabwean MC-MPA and an American MC-MPA randomly **stepped up to the plate of abandoned projects in Nigeria**. We, the four students and travelers, had never crossed paths before (more accurately, we had never seen each other over Zoom). Additionally, none of us had ever worked in Nigeria. Before you think it could not get more chaotic, **we had only 7 weeks to learn and experiment as much as we could** on the assigned problem before coming up with novel and actionable ideas to expand its change space. **Ready. Steady. Go!** We weren't ready, the journey wasn't steady, but we definitely went on.

Maybe one of our first and most powerful realizations in our PDIA journey was that there was no silver bullet fix to the problem of abandoned projects in Nigeria. It took us two entire weeks to look at the problem with more curious and deconstructive eyes before we managed to draft a set of plausible causes and sub-causes that could be at its roots. We had to remain patient and above all curious and collaborative to shift from our initial planners approach to the searchers perspective required by the PDIA process.

As we deconstructed the problem through interviews and research, the Ishikawa fish diagram and the “five whys” heuristics helped us organize our insights in a meaningful fashion. At this stage, we also started to become more wary of our language usage versus our authorizer’s language usage (more on that later). And as our inquiry and knowledge deepened, so grew our ability to ask smarter questions and to find viable entry points.

An overarching realization throughout the PDIA process was that quick, iterative, practical learning opportunities are more valuable than strategizing the ultimate solution. It can be easy to overestimate our ability to identify causes of a

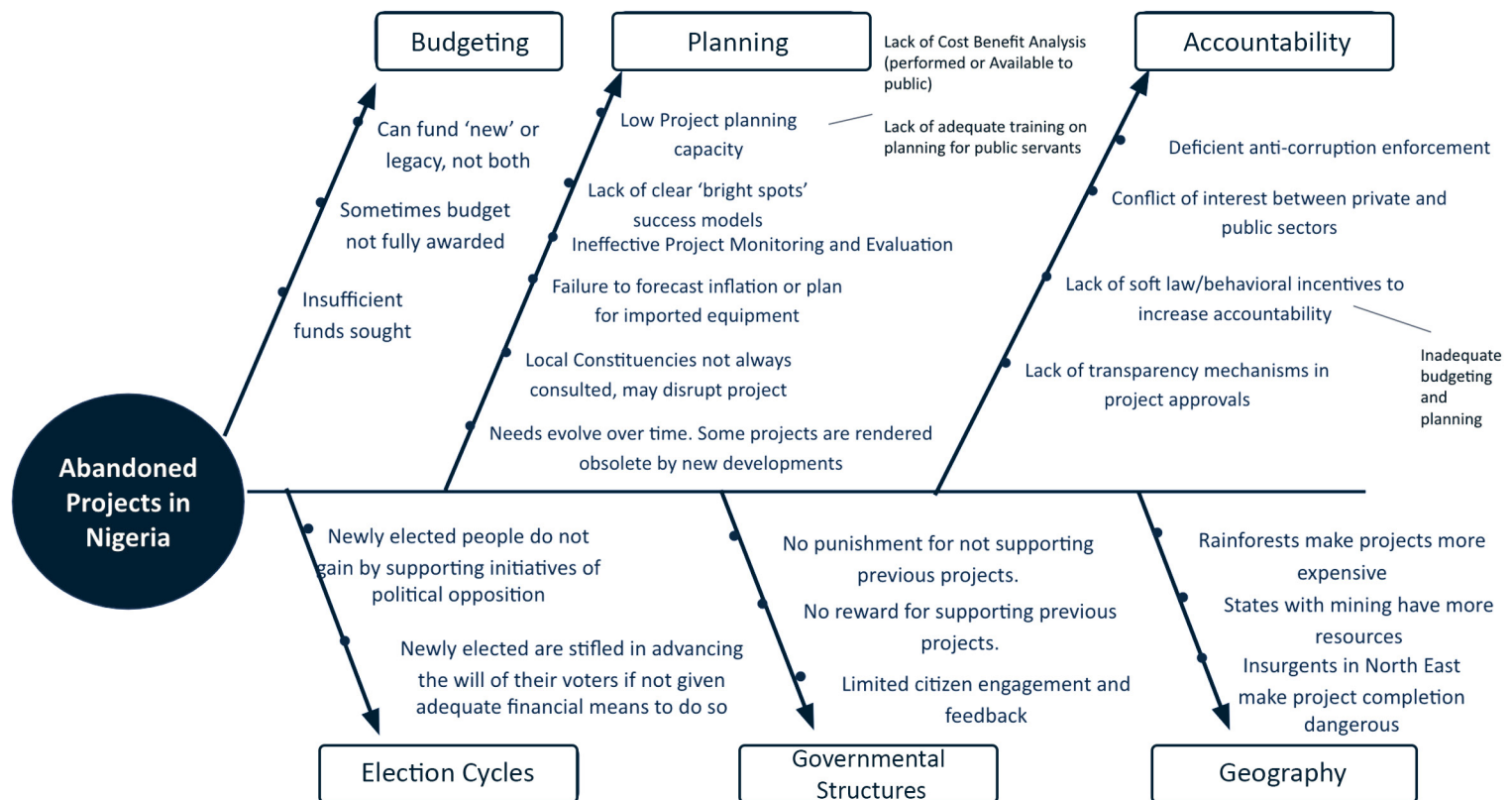
problem and to come up with solutions that look good on paper. Constant iterations of practical steps counter this urge.

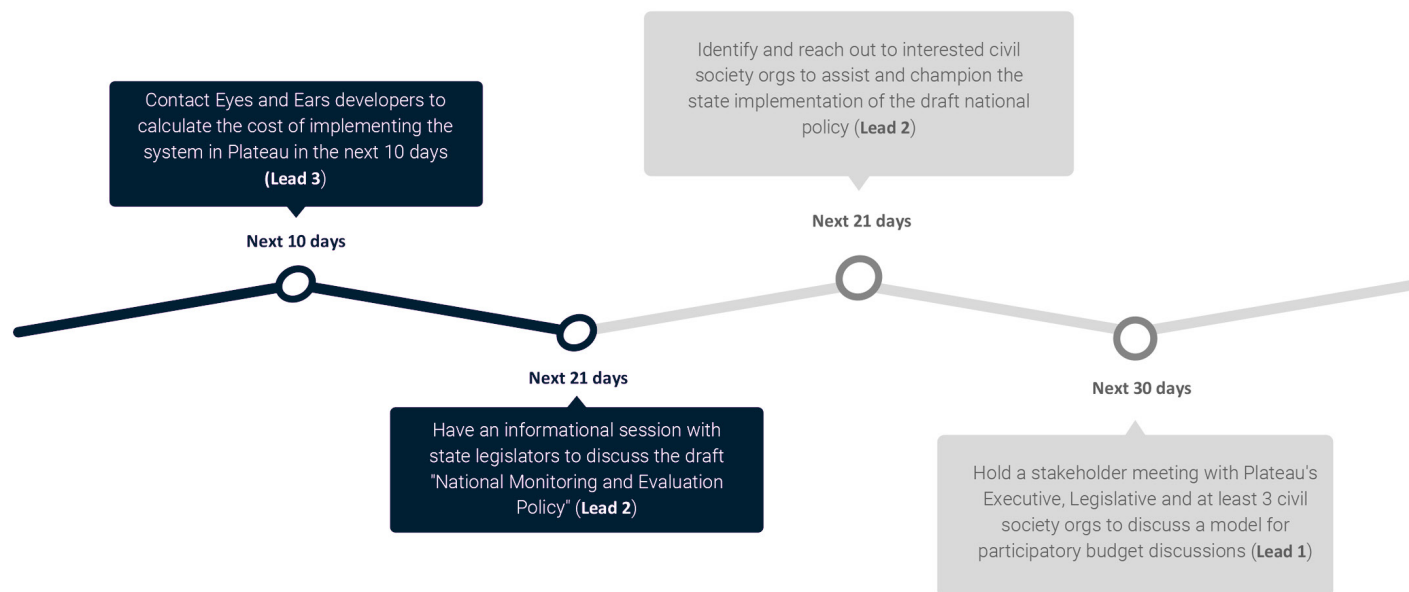
It soon became clear to us that the problem of abandoned projects in Nigeria was not monolithic. Instead it is a chronic and multifarious condition spanning 50 years. Conditions are intimidating, but as we applied the PDIA method, we developed an increasing sense of authority in considering various aspects of the condition, what could feasibly be done by our authorizer and what effects different actions could have.

The condition we confronted specifically was rooted in four main problems to which many of us can relate:

- (1) difficulty in continuing projects after government transitions;
- (2) inadequate problem-driven planning;
- (3) poor budgeting consideration; and
- (4) lack of accountability over projects’ rollout and outcomes.

Making progress in making sense of the problem

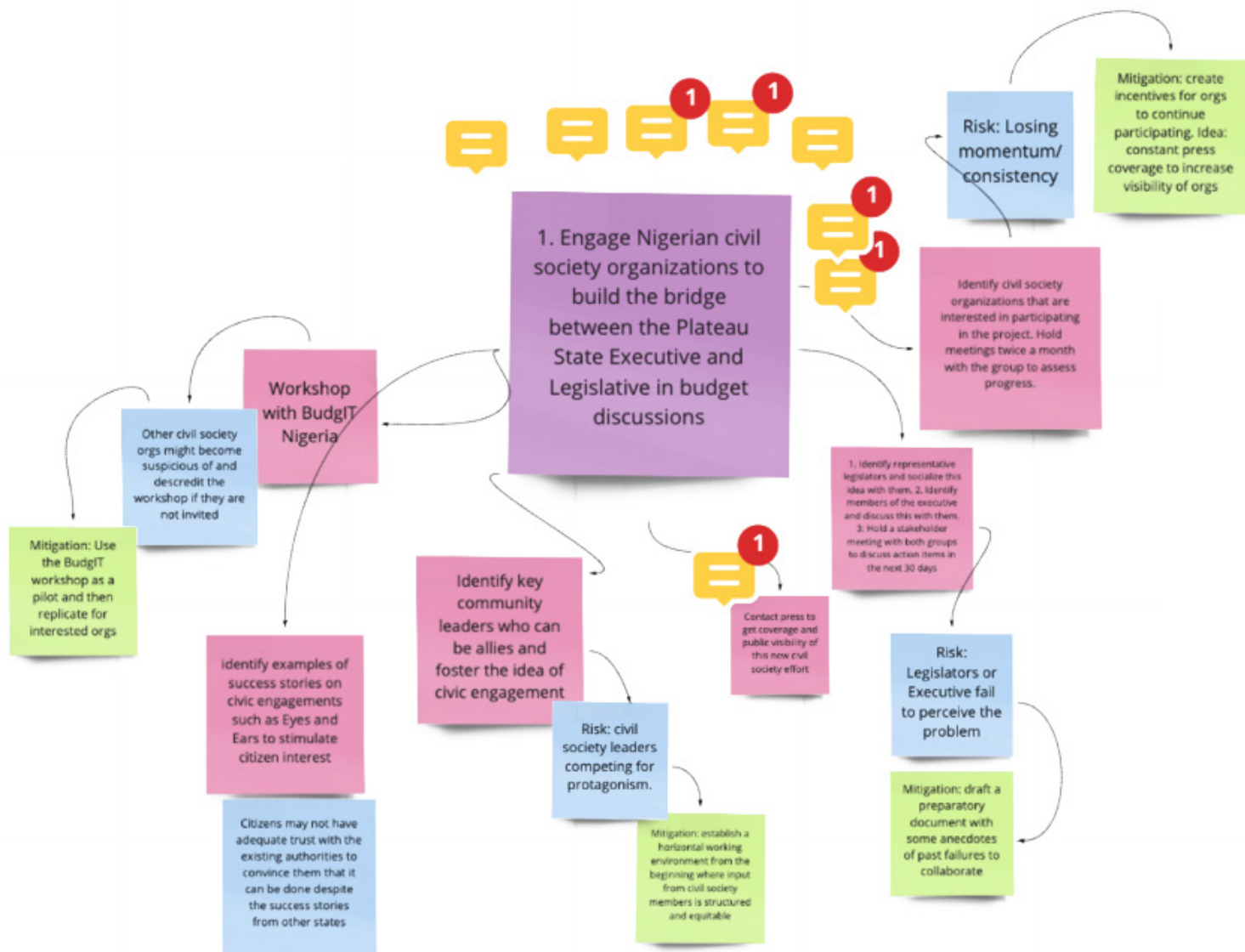


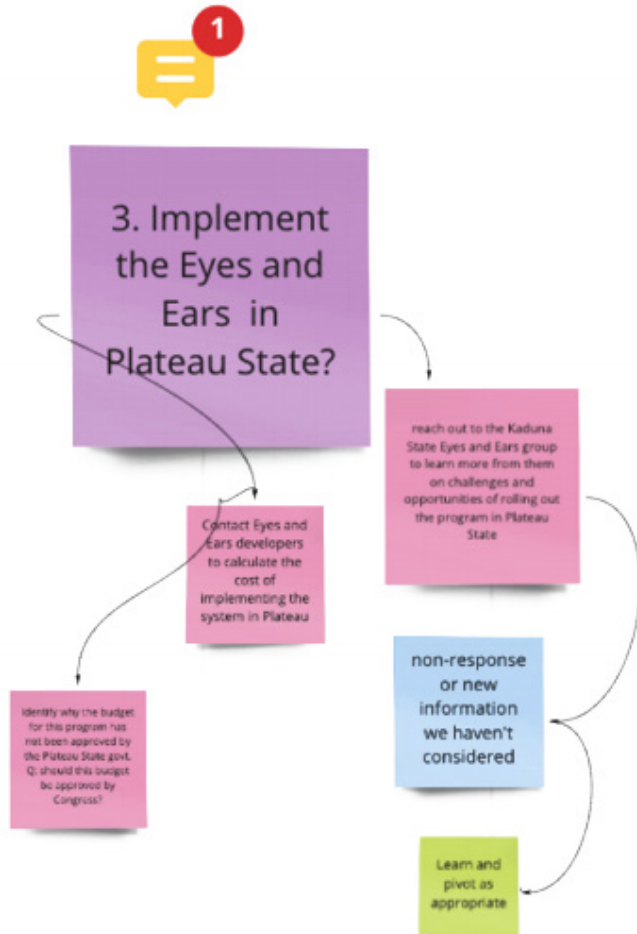
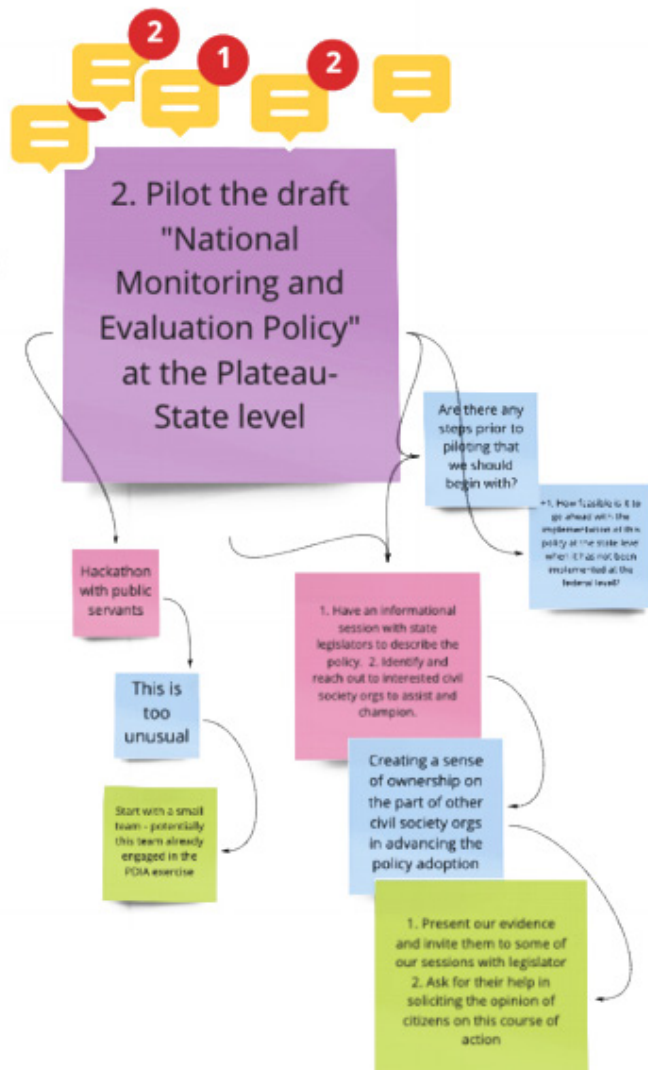


As we iterated on these problems we learned about a pending legislation, the “National Monitoring and Evaluation” policy. This legislation provides an avenue for programs to be reviewed and compared in a way that is more objective and less political than the existing ways in which projects are reviewed when new administrations take office. If this policy could be proactively adopted at the Plateau State level then abandoning or suspending a project would have to be a qualitative judgement based on objective merits rather than on political expediency.

We also came across a civil society based mobile app called “Eyes and Ears” operating in the neighboring Kaduna State which could create an important source of accessible transparency between individual citizens and governmental representatives. This is important because as it stands, neither citizens nor officials may know the exact status of each project being built.

Finally, we found that the executive branch of the state government didn’t have a way to interface with the legislative branch of the state government which was part of the reason why the legislative branch seemed to make arbitrary funding decisions that departed from submitted project budgets. Bolstering communication between the legislative and the executive branch.





Words of Wisdom

In navigating the problem of abandoned projects in Nigeria, we learned much more than our fishbone suggests. Beyond budgeting, planning, accountability, election cycles, and institutions, we learned valuable lessons about teaming, intellectual humbleness, and the power of dissecting causes and questioning our assumptions. Here are our key lessons for other students and practitioners traveling in the good company of PDIA.

1. Resist the silly urge to think you are the ultimate problem solver. Do small things to learn about the problem, to feel progress, and to have a reason to ask the next question. Each step builds personal authority and a living network of people to vet new hypotheses with. Each of these small steps taken fosters sensitivity, confidence, and a desire to share learning or test hypotheses within the larger group. The mindset of small steps engenders humility and constructive collaboration.

2. Get in the habit of honestly asking instead of telling. Be explicit when asking about

your authorizer's and stakeholder's authority, acceptance, and ability. The AAA analysis will change as you obtain more information and become more familiar with the power dynamics of actors that can influence the issue at hand. The aim of PDIA is to achieve actual progress, and that requires being able to assert challenging ideas. To do that in an inclusive manner through questions rather than proclamations means that group members, stakeholders, and authorizers have the highest probability of buying into your ideas and considering them fully.

3. Teaming is an intellectual science as much as an emotional art. Performing acts of kindness conscientiously creates an esprit de corps that created goodwill that was crucial to a highly functioning team. As we became interested and found low-effort ways to give to each other, the individual gifts and interests of each team member came through and we were able to conceive of and explore more viewpoints than we would have otherwise if we had each felt less comfortable. Each team that we had the privilege to hear from in our plenary sessions had authorizers with different styles and problems of

different dimensions. The methodology of PDIA was fruitfully applied in each case so long as the team was able to work together and stay engaged. Acts of kindness helped our group in particular to have a floor of kindness and goodwill. The iterative nature of PDIA helped us to remain humble and productive each week. The idea of a design space for mapping what works and what is possible, was germane to each problem and helped us orient and steer towards fruitful entry points.

4. You will not solve the problem in 7 weeks. Nor is that the objective of the course. The issues we work on are by nature complex and very hard to solve. The aim of the PDIA method in this course is to arrive at realistic initial action steps upon which the authorizer can build through iteration and reflection. In that sense, it is more important to focus on the feasibility of entry points and initial actions towards meaningful progress than on the expected end result of the process.





"PDIA is a powerful international development tool!"



ARTEM SHAIPOV

While legal education reform seems like a project that everyone would be in support of, some **agencies and individuals benefit** from the **status quo**.



Frederick Tarantino
HKS



Ilhom Aliyev
HKS



Manoj Kumar
HKS



Mike Ramirez
HKS

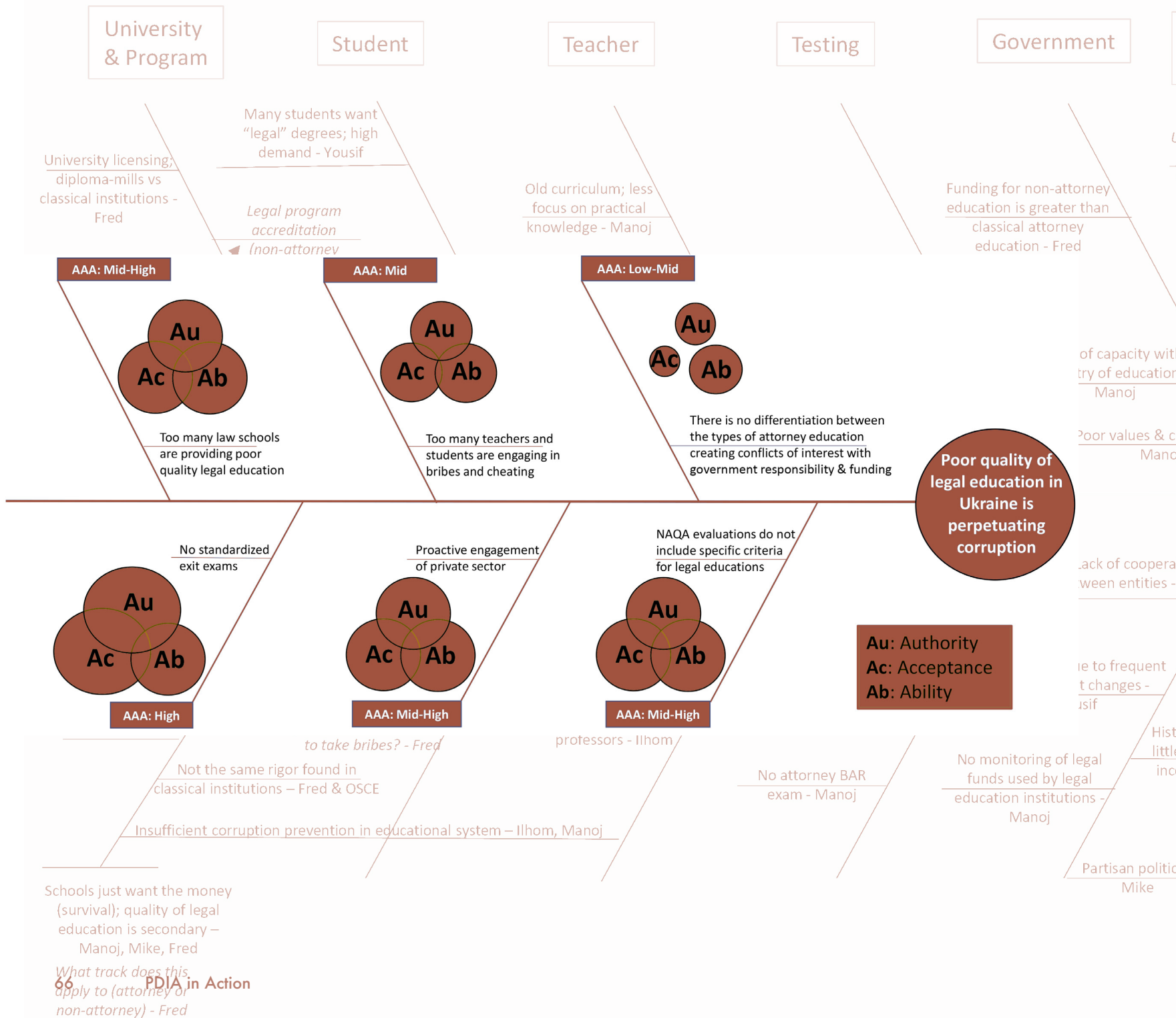


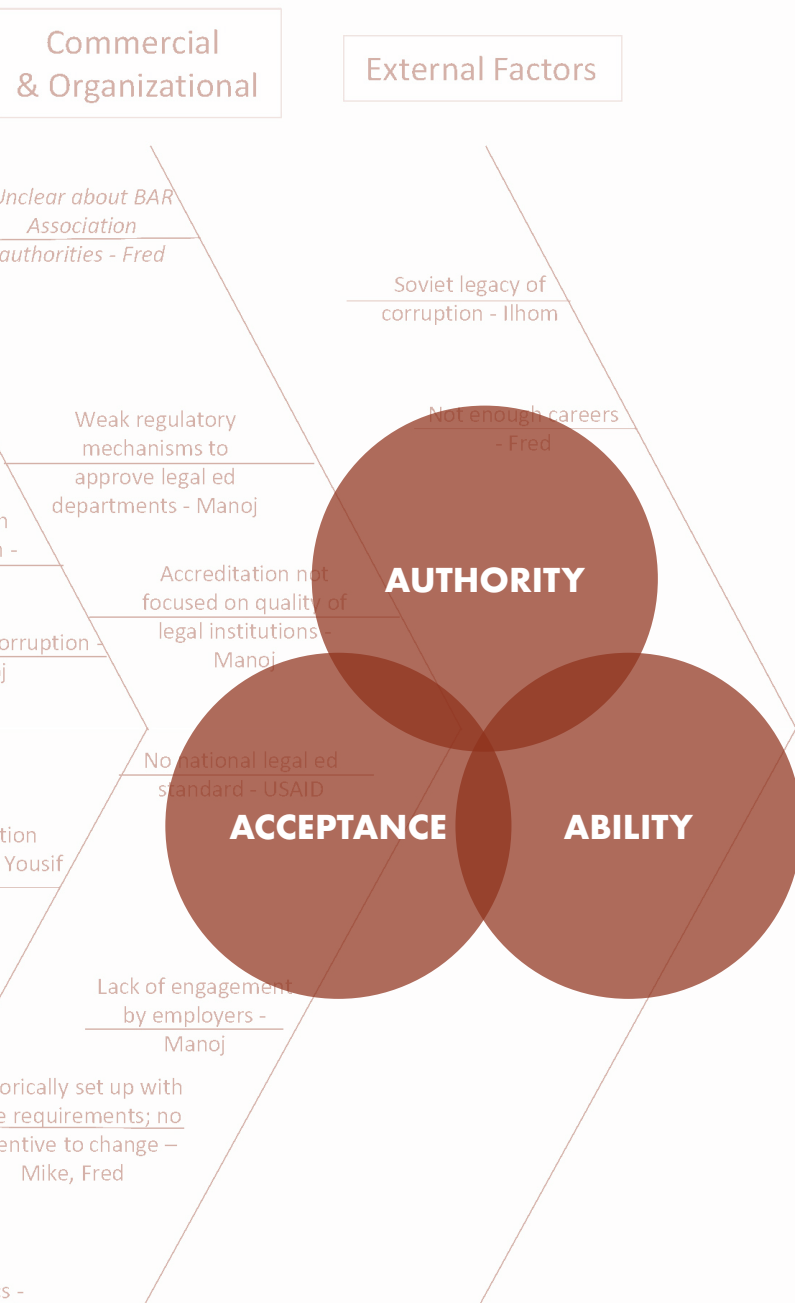
Yousuf Folathi Alkhoori
HKS

A faint, light brown outline map of Ukraine is positioned in the background, spanning across the top and bottom halves of the slide. The top half of the slide has a solid dark red background, while the bottom half is white.

Legal Education Reform Ukraine

The tried-and-true PDIA process puts a learning structure in the way we look at complexity in local contexts from multiple perspectives. From a high-level, implementation includes a **step-by-step approach of breaking down problems into its root cause**, finding entry points, searching for possible solutions, taking actions, reflecting on what you learned, adapting, and repeating until the true solution is developed.





There was an abundance of information to consume, and competing literature on what the problem actually was with legal education. To make the problem more difficult, many of us came from western legal education structures, but the Ukrainian legal education structure was very different, and in many ways still based off a Soviet Union era paradigm. Our team dived thickly into the topic with great humility and was focused on gathering as much information and learning as fast as possible. Our first fishbone diagram had nearly ~50 ribs and reflected the discoveries we obtained after the first two weeks.

It was hard to see a clear picture at the beginning. We found ourselves trying to dig past fake problems and problems that were just a lack of a specific solution. It was clear that PDIA was the correct method to use in this case because there was nothing linear about the challenges and potential solutions facing legal education in Ukraine. We had to fight the urge to try and find answers too quickly. The problem seemed to have a hundred gaps, each required individual keys and mastery.

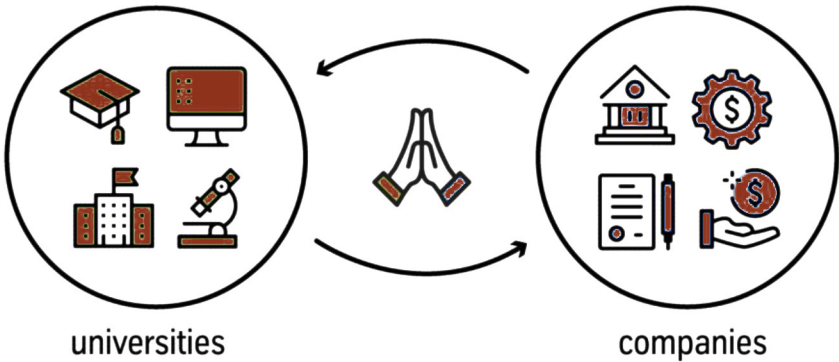
But as we began to refine our questions and highlight topics of interest, we were able to gain much clarity during our stakeholder interviews with senior members of the Ukrainian government, academia and private sector. Our team moved with a shared purpose, met new people every week, broke through comfort levels, and optimized our strengths while being cognizant of our weaknesses. Every single week we gained context and perspective and polished our products, ideas, entry points, and activities. The endless white boards and black boards behind Professor Andrews slowly started to make sense.

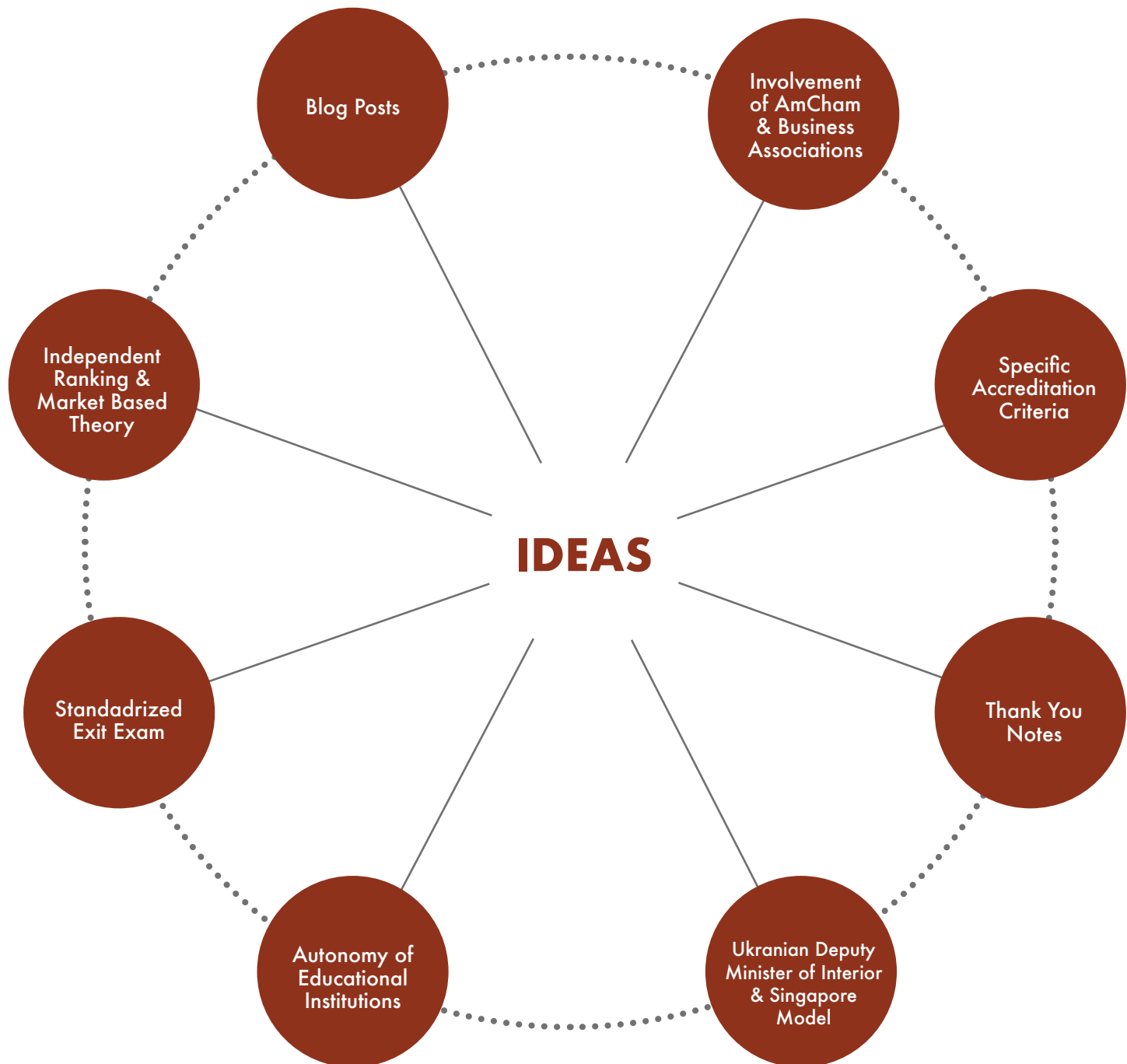
We did not ever stop asking “why” and deconstructing the problem, and meta-problems to its root causes. The fishbone diagram was not the only product that evolved on our path. Our team constitution,

change space assessment, Authority, Acceptance and Ability (AAA) analysis, entry points, design space, and ideas changed throughout the program.

Another key finding is that new doors appear the further you dive into dialogue. Two examples of this include: (1) discovering key government stakeholder interests in engaging with private sector associations more, such as AmCham, and (2) learning that the primary individual who was blocking legal education reform had a personal interest in adopting frameworks from Singapore.

When we realized this, one of our team members was able to leverage his experience in AmCham to make connections, and another teammate was able to connect our team and authorizer with the former Deputy Director of the Ministry of Education in Singapore.





Insights

The key insights we made about our problem was that there are seven main areas with different entry points and unequal AAA assessments. While legal education reform seems like a project that everyone would be in support of, we realized that there are agencies and individuals who benefit from the status quo and leaving corrupt or inefficient practices in place. People we came across feared losing assets and money and saw reform as a threat. We kept coming across suggestions that relied on waiting until there was a change in government administrations. This seemed like a risky approach, which is why we worked hard at finding different entry spaces to nudge our way into, such as discovering the relationship between an authorizer and a think-tank he started that had a strategic partnership in Singapore.

Another key insight is that a solution may be very counter-intuitive at times, but we should be open to where the data takes us. For example, usually improving efficiencies in a project involves more money, but for the solution we came across

we needed less money. Law school education reform required a market correction that needed to allow for more educational autonomy and less money being invested into law schools by the central government.

One of our most promising paths forward had to deal with creating more opportunities for government agencies to engage with private sector associations. After pressing the President of the National Agency of Higher Education Quality Assurance to consider improving criteria for accrediting law schools, we found that there was not political appetite to do so alone. Rather, he recommended that if this pursuit was led by private associations, it would be more meaningful for his agency to support at that point. This finding was made in our final week, which was a testament of needing to stay adaptive.

Our last insight was based on the common theme of breaking Soviet-era paradigms. This led to our proposal of investing in a legal education reform awareness campaign where our authorizer

could find supporters at all levels of the legal education community and reach out to new groups that were never considered prior. In this case, we recommended international donors who have interest in law enforcement because it was important to begin the narrative to change the Soviet Union paradigm that each police officer needed to go to law school; this was saturating the legal field, creating too many lawyers and decreasing the quality of education and the profession all around. It would be important to emphasize that separating law school from law enforcement would not remove state funding for police officers, but perhaps increase funding for law enforcement academies because money would be freed up by removing state spending on law school.





**BUILDING STATE
CAPABILITY**

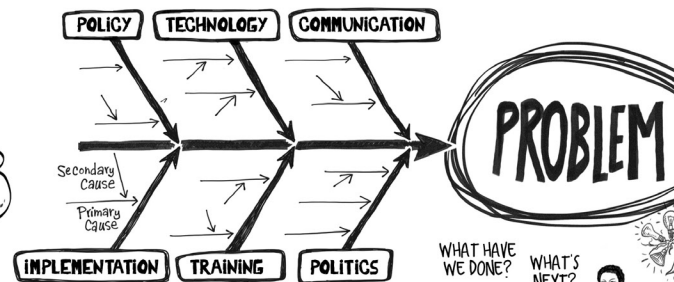
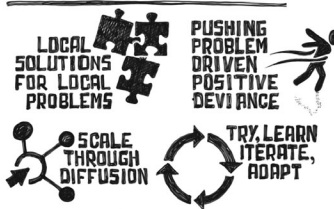
CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

at Harvard University



PROBLEM DRIVEN ITERATIVE ADAPTATION

4 PRINCIPLES OF PDIA



THE TEAM



PLAN THE NEXT
STAGE OF OUR
JOURNEY.



USE OUR
NEWFOUND
KNOWLEDGE

LEARN
ALONG
THE WAY

SHORT TRIPS
& REST

COMMUNICATE
WITH OTHERS

CHART
OUR ROUTE

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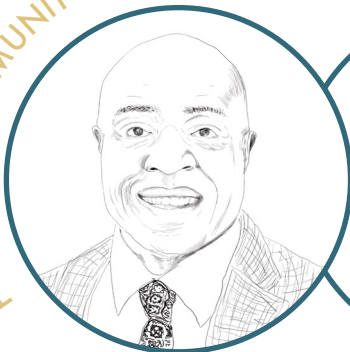
We are deeply grateful to our alumni of the Implementing Public Policy Executive Program for nominating real-world problems that our students could work on. They met with our students every week, introduced them to other stakeholders, and answered their numerous questions. Their patience, support, and commitment to our students was admirable.

We are also grateful to the 37 students across Harvard, who took our MLD103 course in 2021. They learned so much about the problem they were assigned, effective teamwork, engaging with people, and working with uncertainty. We are proud of their work.

Finally, this book would not exist without Gauri Nagpal who patiently read all the blogs and watched all the PDIA in Action event videos to create this incredibly beautiful book!



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1



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Awab
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ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE & QUALITY CHILDCARE, BURIEN, WASHINGTON



KEVIN SCHILLING

Crystal Collier



Doreen King



Harman Bhullar



Jingli Yan



Sasinat Chindapol



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EXPLORING TRADE BETWEEN KENYA & CANADA



DR. IMBENZI GEORGE

Bishal Belbase



John Diing



Mayra Hoyos



Stephanie Shalkoski



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COUNTERING RADICALIZATION, FRANCE



RAPHAËL KENIGSBERG

Imara Salas



Katie Wesdyk

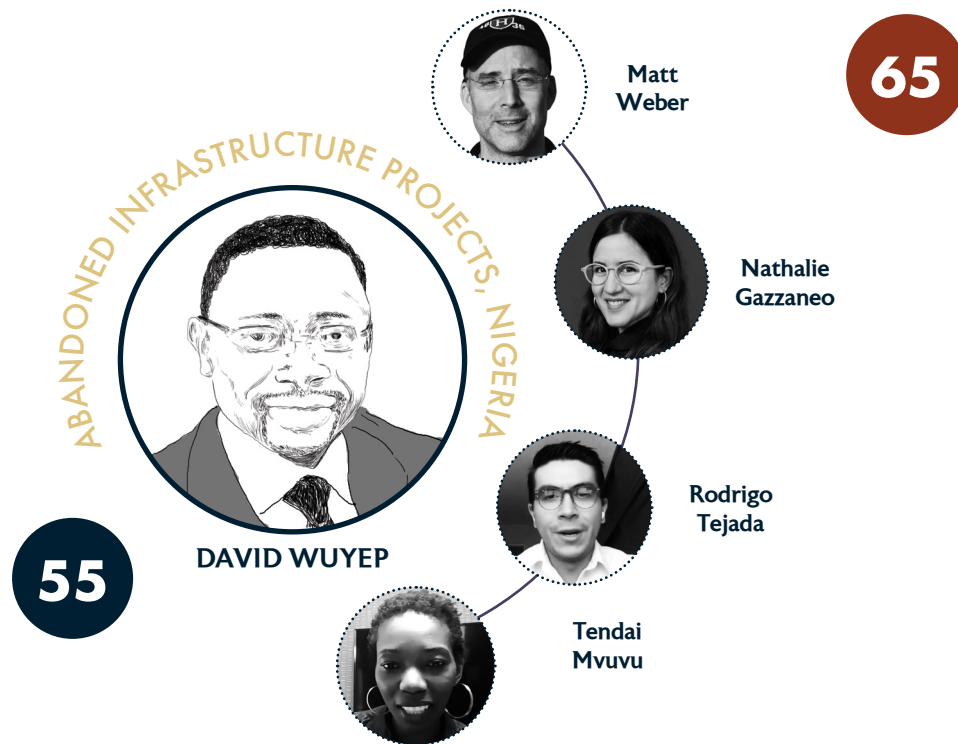


Kishan Shah



Sasha Mathew





Students in MLD103:

Amreen Bashir
Anne Dietterich
Awab Elmesbah
Giang Pham
Revanth Voothaluru
Seun Akinfolarin
Allan Franklin
Dana Radojevic
Hesham Gaafar
Lauren Truong
Imara Salas
Katie Wesdyk
Kishan Shah
Sasha Mathew
Crystal Collier
Doreen King
Harman Bhullar
Jingli Yan
Sasinat Chindapol
Bishal Belbase
John Diing
Mayra Hoyos
Stephanie Shalkoski
Bethany Dill
Isabel Mejia Fontanot
Kent Shi
Kerianne DiBattista
Matt Weber
Nathalie Gazzaneo
Rodrigo Tejada
Tendai Mvuvu
Frederick Tarantino
Ilhom Aliyev
Manoj Kumar
Mike Ramirez
Yousuf Folathi Alkhoori

Project authorizers:

Chief Bey
Milzy Carrasco
Dr. Adaeze Oreh
Raphaël Kenigsberg
Kevin Schilling
Dr. Imbenzi George
William Keith Young
David Wuyep
Artem Shaipov

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Course instructors:
Matt Andrews and
Salimah Samji

Graphic design and
content curation:
Gauri Nagpal

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CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

at Harvard University

**PROBLEM
DRIVEN
ITERATIVE
ADAPTATION**

WHO WE ARE

Many government policies and reforms fail to deliver results. Research at Building State Capability (BSC) ties such failure to the tendency of governments to adopt external 'solutions' that do not fit their context and overwhelm their capability to implement policies and programs. We find that governments can build their capabilities by employing tools and processes that allow their own people to search for context appropriate solutions to their country's problems. We believe in resolving public problems with purpose.

WHAT WE DO

We have developed Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA), a step-by-step approach which helps policy practitioners break down complex problems into root causes, identify entry points for action, search for possible solutions, take small steps, reflect upon lessons learned, adapt, and then iterate. It is a dynamic process with tight feedback loops that allows organizations to build their own solutions that fit their local context. We train teams around the world to solve complex public problems, offer online and executive courses to thousands of development practitioners, and disseminate our work in multiple formats (papers, blogs, videos, podcasts) to reach a wide and diverse audience.