Solving Complex Development Challenges using PDIA

Salimah Samji,
Director, Building State Capability
Center for International Development at Harvard University
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Development is Complex
Management Methods

- Uncertainty
- Plan and Control
- Adapted Management
- Facilitated Emergence
- Learning
Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA), a process of *facilitated emergence* which focuses on problems (not solutions) and follows a step by step process (not a rigid plan) that allows for flexible learning and adaptation.

It rests on four principles:

- Local Solutions for Local **Problems**
- Pushing Problem **Driven** Positive Deviance
- Learn, **Iterate**, **Adapt**
- Scaling through Diffusion
The PDIA Process

1. **Initial problem analysis**
   Constructing, deconstructing, and sequencing your problem.

2. **Identify action steps**
   What can we do first to start solving the problem?

3. **Take action**
   Local agents take action and are held accountable.

4. **Check-in**
   Reflect on action taken. What results were achieved? Lessons learned? Challenges encountered? How were they overcome?

5. **Sustain authority and legitimacy**
   Communicate quick wins and lessons to sustain and expand existing support.

6. **Adapt and iterate**
   Based on lessons learned adapt potential solution designs and iterate.

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YES

Is the problem solved?

EXIT process and think about diffusion/scaling

NO
Sri Lanka: 9 teams, 103 officials

Nafla Niyas
Member of the "C team" - BOI

Ganga Palakatiya
Member of the "I team" - BOI

Renuka Weerakone
Member of the "C team" - BOI

Upul Jayasinghe
Member of the "P team" and "R Team" - BOI

Champika Malalgoda
Member of the "I team" - BOI
Albania: 21 teams, 162 officials
Africa PFM: 13 teams, 9 countries, 76 officials
Our Online Course

BUILDING STATE CAPABILITY
ONLINE COURSES

OVERVIEW:

9 ON-LINE COURSES
102 WEEKS
5-8 AVERAGE HOURS OF WEEKLY EFFORT

IMPACT:

970 PEOPLE COMPLETED COURSES
83 COUNTRIES

42% PUBLIC SECTOR
22% NGOs

COURSE EVALUATION:

"I ENJOYED THE COURSE BECAUSE EVERYTHING WAS SO PRACTICAL, SO REAL." 
97% RATED THE COURSE AS EXCELLENT/VERY GOOD

"PDIA IS AN AMAZING TOOL FOR DESIGNING SOLUTIONS TO COMPLEX PROBLEMS."

Alumni as of June 2018
- 430 in Africa (24 countries)
- 213 in Asia (27 countries)
- 139 in Europe (18 countries)
- 80 in South America (10 countries)
- 61 in North America (2 countries)
- 15 in Australia/New Zealand
Sustainable change requires collective and synchronous learning

• “For our organization, the engagement has just begun and the knowledge we harnessed in this course would indeed be very helpful as we navigate on the epicenter of complex challenges on our daily lives as a people, community and nation at large.”
• “My team is now empowered to contribute more meaningfully to the policy formulation and design process in our region.”
• “This course has helped develop a working strategy for an existing real time problem and taught us how can we continuously improve our proposed solutions. Making the whole process sustainable and self improving.”
• “I learnt that teamwork is the bedrock of achieving and solving complex challenges when applying the PDIA concept.”
“The PDIA in practice 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.”

“I enjoyed the course because everything was so practical, and so real.”

“it showed me how much time can be spared when people must fulfil tasks that are much smaller and doable within shorter period of time, instead giving them a huge tasks and wait months before they will start to work on them.”

“My team is now empowered to contribute more meaningfully to the policy formulation and design process in our region.”
Learn more ...

Resources:
• Website: https://bsc.cid.harvard.edu
• Blog: https://buildingstatecapability.com
• Short video introduction: https://vimeo.com/262046965
• Podcast: https://tinyurl.com/ycbpjpod
• BSC Book: downloadable pdf https://tinyurl.com/yautusdl
• PDIAtoolkit: available at https://bsc.cid.harvard.edu/PDIAtoolkit

Courses:
• Free PDIA online course: February 3 – May 19 (follow blog for registration)
• Executive Education: May – December 2019 (https://tinyurl.com/y9xmopuj)