Capacity Development and Workplace Learning: An Analysis of Factors Influencing Workplace Learning at Afghan Ministry of Education, Department of Planning

Mohammad Javad Ahmadi

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CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND WORKPLACE LEARNING:
AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING WORKPLACE LEARNING AT
AFGHAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

A Dissertation Presented
by
MOHAMMAD JAVAD AHMADI

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2017

College of Education
Educational Policy, Research and Administration (EPRA)
International Education
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND WORKPLACE LEARNING:
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Joseph B. Berger, Senior Associate Dean
College of Education
DEDICATION

To my parent, who taught me the value of education, and gave me the opportunity to pursue my education despite the struggles of their refugee life.
EPIGRAPH

“Given a rich environment, learning becomes like the air—it's in and around.”

Sandra Dodd
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my special appreciation and thanks to my advisor Dr. David R. Evans, for providing me an opportunity to join the CIE community and for his great advices and encouragements throughout my doctoral program. Without his guidance and encouragements this dissertation would not have been possible.

In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Sharon Rallis, who has been an inspiration for me, and who instilled in me the passion for qualitative inquiry. I would also like to thank Dr. Joe Berger, for his invaluable advices and very helpful discussions during his trips to Kabul.

I thank my friends at Afghan Ministry of Education, Department of Planning and Evaluation for their excellent cooperation and for all opportunities they have given me to conduct my research. I am very grateful to the participants of this research who, despite their busy schedules, generously gave their time for the interviews and shared their learning stories.

Last but not least, I would also like to thank my mother and wife who have been extremely supportive throughout the whole process, and have made many sacrifices to help me finish this journey.
ABSTRACT

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND WORKPLACE LEARNING:
AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING WORKPLACE LEARNING AT
AFGHAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
MAY 2017

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Directed by: Professor David R. Evans

Capacity development (CD) is a popular strategy in international development, but studies show that many CD programs fail to develop the expected results. There is no agreed-upon body of theories to guide CD practice either. To address this issue, this research drew upon the workplace learning literature to explore the dynamics of capacity development in the context of Afghan Ministry of Education (MoE), Department of Planning (DoP). The purpose was to understand the perceptions of the MoE-DoP staff on how different factors influenced their workplace learning and how the CD project led by the UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP) utilized those factors for developing their capacities.

The conceptual framework—developed using major theories of learning, especially Lave and Wegner (1991) and Billet’s (1990, 2004)—was used to frame the research and analyze the participants’ experiences. The main data collection method was
in-depth interviewing. The sample included eight employees with diverse backgrounds, each of whom were interviewed at least three times.

The findings include a list of learning incidents reported by the participants and a list of influencing factors classified into three categories: personal (gender, education, language skills, personal vision, and confidence in learning), task-related (cognitive demand, access to information, professional interactions, and combination of theory and practice), and contextual (guidance, a culture of openness and information sharing, incentive structure, organizational structure, and internal politics). The IIEP project was found to have utilized many of the factors to facilitate the participants’ workplace learning such as engaging them in technical tasks like strategic planning and developing projection models, mentoring through technical assistants, creating incentives, and offering opportunities for formal training and education. The project, however, has not conducted a systematic assessment of the influence of personal, task-related, and contextual factors on each individual participant and has not developed individualized learning plans to guide their informal workplace learning.

This research provides a framework for analyzing the complexities of CD process and designing effective interventions, and an example of how such a framework can be used for evaluating CD programs.
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALSE</td>
<td>Assessment of Learning Outcomes and Social Effects of Community-based Education</td>
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<td>AREU</td>
<td>American Research and Evaluation Unit</td>
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<td>ATP</td>
<td>Advanced Training Program</td>
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<td>BESST</td>
<td>Building Education Support Systems</td>
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<td>CD</td>
<td>Capacity Development</td>
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<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<td>CIT</td>
<td>Critical Incident Technique</td>
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<td>CTAP</td>
<td>Civilian Technical Assistance Program</td>
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<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>DANIDA</td>
<td>Danish International Development Agency</td>
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<td>DED</td>
<td>District Education Department</td>
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<td>DoP</td>
<td>Department of Planning</td>
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<td>DoPE</td>
<td>General Department of Planning and Evaluation</td>
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<td>EJSR</td>
<td>Education Joint Sector Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>EQUIP</td>
<td>Education Quality Improvement Program</td>
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<td>GTZ</td>
<td>German Technical Cooperation Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEP</td>
<td>Higher Education Project</td>
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<td>HRDB</td>
<td>Human Resource Development Board</td>
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<td>IIEP</td>
<td>International Institute for Education Planning</td>
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<td>IRB</td>
<td>Institutional Review Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISESCO</td>
<td>Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MoHE</td>
<td>Ministry of Higher Education</td>
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<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organization</td>
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<td>NYU</td>
<td>New York University</td>
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<td>NTP</td>
<td>National Training Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>PED</td>
<td>Provincial Education Department</td>
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<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>Technical Assistant</td>
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<td>TEP</td>
<td>Teacher Education Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical and Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale for the Research

Since 2005 when I began working with development projects in Afghanistan, I have been thinking about the concept of capacity development (CD) and been wondering how CD programs/projects can help government organizations like the Afghan Ministry of Education (MoE) and their employees develop their capacities in an effective manner. Capacity development was a key mission of the projects that I worked with, and I felt that my knowledge of how to effectively help target beneficiaries to develop their capacities was limited. I also felt that these projects, despite spending millions of dollars and employing high level experts, were not as effective as they should have been.

When I reviewed the literature on capacity development, I found that similar to my personal experience, many evaluation studies indicated that the results of CD programs were often disappointing (Smithers, 2011; Fukuda-Parr, 2002). This was despite the fact that capacity development had become very popular in international development to the extent that some even called it “the overall goal of development” (Morgan, 2006, p. 3).

Capacity development is an integral part of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is considered as the vehicle for achieving the SDGs (Vallejo & Wehn, 2016, p.1). The United Nations General Assembly Resolution refers to capacity development as “an essential part of the operational activities of the UN” (UN, A/RES/50/120 Art.22). Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) also stresses the importance of capacity
development for aid effectiveness and suggests that CD should be an explicit objective of national development and poverty reduction programs. This made it clear to me that a research study aiming at increasing the effectiveness of capacity development programs is significant.

I, as an educator and later as a doctoral student in education, was clearly seeing a connection between capacity development and learning/teaching concepts and theories. Capacity development programs can be considered as interventions aiming at facilitating individual or organizational learning (Pearson, 2011). I believed that exploring learning theories and acquiring an in-depth understanding of how people learn through work can provide important insights for improving capacity development interventions. The workplace is the venue for most CD interventions in the developing world, so I decided to learn more about workplace learning concepts and theories and explore how they can be utilized to improve capacity development programs. For this dissertation, I decided to explore workplace learning of the employees of an organization who had participated in several capacity development activities. I believe that understanding what factors influence employees’ workplace learning, and how they do so, will help the CD practitioners to develop and implement more effective interventions that build upon the target beneficiaries’ experiential learning at workplace.

Discussing the concepts of capacity development and learning and how they are related to each other would help understand the focus of this study. Capacity development, as discussed in the literature review chapter, is a contested concept, and several different definitions of this concept have been proposed. A widely cited one is UNDP (2007) definition that CD is the process of obtaining, strengthening, adapting, and
maintaining abilities to "perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner” (p.3). According to this definition (as well as several other definitions), the expected outcome of capacity development (at least at the individual level) is some sort of change and improvement in people’s abilities.

Learning is defined as “enduring change in behavior, or in the capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience” (Schunk, 2012, p.3). Any lasting change in abilities of people (capacity development), therefore, at least at the individual level implies some sort of learning a new knowledge, skill or attitude. In other words, learning is a necessary part of, and a prerequisite for capacity development. Thus, the success of CD program depends on how much its beneficiaries learn and bring changes in their practices.

The workplace is an important context for adult learning and a rich source of learning. Employees learn constantly through engaging in every-day work activities (Billet, 2001, p. 21). The study by Eichinger and Lombardo (1996) on how managers learn to lead shows that most learning occurs through learning by doing, based on the 70:20:10 rule proposed by Jennings and Wargnier (2015). The so-called 70:20:10 rule indicates that 70 percent of learning occurs via on-the-job learning, 20 percent through coaching and mentoring, and only 10 percent through formal training and education (Vallejo & Wehn, 2016).

There are different kinds of factors that influence the employees’ workplace learning; an effective CD intervention, thus, should study these factors and bring changes in the contextual factors to enhance informal learning of the employees. Therefore, I

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1There are several definitions of learning too, depending on the underlying theories. However, enduring change is a component of almost all definitions of learning.
decided to explore how workplace learning takes place in a specific department (Afghan Ministry of Education, the Department of Planning) and how the capacity development project implemented by UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP) influenced the employees’ workplace learning. Later I will introduce the Department of Planning and the IIEP capacity development project in detail and explain why I chose this setting for this research.

**Research Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the learning experiences of the MoE Department of Planning employees who participated in the IIEP Capacity Development project in order to find out what factors participants report as influential in their workplace learning, how the participants perceive that these factors influence their workplace learning, and how the participants perceive the effects of the MoE-IIEP capacity development project on their learning experiences. I will explore, document, and analyze the participants’ critical incidents of learning during the past couple of years, each individual participant’s biographies, their perceptions of how the MoE-IIEP project influenced their critical learning incidents, and the consequences of their learning on their work practices.

The concept of capacity can be studied at different levels: individual, organizational, and institutional levels. The levels of capacity development are discussed further in the literature review section. In this study, I will focus on capacity development at the individual level, but will explore the organizational and institutional factors that influence an individual-level capacity development.
Research questions

The specific research questions are as follows:

1) What factors do participants report as influential in the workplace learning of the MoE-IIEP Capacity Development participants?

2) How do participants perceive that these factors influence their workplace learning?

3) How do participants perceive the effects of the MoE-IIEP capacity development project on their learning experiences?

Research Context

This dissertation will focus on the workplace learning of the employees of the central Department of Planning of the Afghan Ministry of Education (MoE), and investigate how a major capacity development project called “Afghanistan Sustainable Capacity Development in Education Sector Planning” (2006-2018) has influenced the participants’ workplace learning.

I have selected the Department of Planning and the IIEP project for several reasons. Firstly, the IIEP project is a major capacity development project in the education sector of Afghanistan, and about six millions of dollars have been spent solely on capacity development during a decade of implementation. This research can provide information about the project’s beneficiaries’ learning experiences and impact of this project, which can help to improve this important project.

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2 For more information about the Department of Planning and the IIEP capacity development project, please see chapter V pages….
Secondly, the IIEP project has used several different strategies for developing the capacity of the MoE, including establishing a two year training program in educational planning for district and provincial level employees, training more than ten employees in the IIEP master's degree program in educational planning in Paris, deploying about eight national technical assistants to work closely with the MoE planning officers, and recruiting short-term international consultants to provide technical assistance, training, "on-the job mentoring and coaching – and not least learning planning by doing it" (MoE & IIEP, 2014, p. 3). The project’s focus on learning by doing makes it an interesting case for exploring the influence of the project on workplace learning.

Thirdly, the IIEP project has a unique partnership with the MoE that makes it interesting to study. While the IIEP receive the budget from the donor and directly executes it, the project is designed and being implemented jointly by the MoE and the IIEP (MoE-IIEP, 2014, p.7). The project has given significant decision making authority to the general-director of planning who is the IIEP counterpart at the MoE. The decisions are made jointly by the MoE-DoP and the IIEP. The project’s design has been flexible, as described in the project proposal for 2014-2016: "the donor agencies funding the 2006-2010 and the 2010-2013 projects have been highly flexible, permitting IIEP and MoE to adapt the project design to emerging needs" (p. 6).

I will provide a brief description of the Department of Planning and the IIEP capacity development project in the following sections.
Introduction to the Department of Planning

The Department of Planning is a key department of the Afghan Ministry of Education (MoE), so I begin with a brief overview of the MoE structure and then describe the department’s functions and organizational structure.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for overseeing all educational centers (primary, lower and upper secondary schools, Islamic Madrasas, TVET schools, literacy courses and schools, and two-year teacher training colleges) except higher education institutes that are managed by the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). According to the official MoE reports, about 9.2 million students were enrolled in 16,400 schools in

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3 All information in this section is based on my conversation with the research participants, except the MoE organizational chart that was an excel sheet shared with me by the director of planning.

4 I have used “General Directorate” to refer to “Reyasat Omomi”, and “Department” to refer to “Reysat”. Each general directorate consists of two or more departments. I think this is the common way to refer to these Afghan organizational entities in English language, but I have seen different terminologies too.
2015 (MoE, 2016, p. 8). With over two hundred thousands employees in 2015, the MoE is the largest ministry in Afghan government (MoE, 2013, p. 12).

The MoE has six divisions that are called deputy ministries: General Education, Islamic Education, TVET, Literacy, Finance, and Administration. Each division is led by a deputy minister who supervise several general directorates and departments. The divisions are in line with the five programs in the MoE as defined by NESP II (2010-2014). For example, the General Education Deputy Ministry is in charge of NESP II general education program. In fact the MoE structure was revised in 2010 in order to match the NESP II program structure. In addition to these six deputy ministries, there are several directorates and departments who report directly to the Minister that include General Direcotriate of Planning and Evaluation (DoPE). In time of writing this report, the MoE overall structure is under revision, but it is not finalized yet. Fig 1 is the current MoE organizational chart.

The General Directorate of Planning and Evaluation led by a general director consists of three departments: Department of Policy and Strategic Planning, Department of Monitoring and Project Coordination, and Department of Education Management Information System (EMIS). Every department is led by a director. In addition to the three directors, two managers, one for administration and another one for planning and reporting work directly under supervision of the general director.
The focus of this study is on the Department of Policy and Strategic Planning, and all participants of this research are employed in this department. For the sake of simplicity, I have referred to this department as the Department of Planning (DoP) in this report. Below is the organizational chart of the General Directorate of Planning and Evaluation.

The mission of the Department of Policy and Strategic Planning is to facilitate and coordinate the process of strategic and operational planning, research, and evaluation in the MoE at different levels. The department is responsible for preparing planning guidelines and templates, providing technical support to other departments at the center and provinces in planning and evaluation, reviewing plans prepared by other departments, coordinating the MoE plans with external stakeholders such as other relevant government agencies, donors, and civil societies, and finalizing five-year strategic plans and annual operational plans. The department also conducts annual reviews of the MoE activities to make sure the plans are being implemented by all departments and results are achieved. The department also coordinates the evaluation of major programs or projects of the MoE, and supervises any evaluation of the MoE programs done by third parties.

The Department of Policy and Strategic Planning has two sub-units itself: Planning Unit, and Research and Evaluation Unit. The Planning Unit coordinates and facilitates the process of operational and strategic planning including annual operational planning, interim three year plans, school construction plans, and developing MoUs with

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5 The term unit in this report refers to each section of a department. Two or more units consists a department. Two or more departments consists a general directorate. These terms might be confusing for the reader, but they reflect the
implementing organizations. The Research and Evaluation Unit is responsible for coordinating and facilitating research and evaluation projects on education, conducting annual Education Joint Sector Reviews, conducting evaluations of MoE programs/projects, and providing inputs for the planning processes.

The DoP is one of the oldest departments in the ministry’s structure. The department had a more powerful role during the communist regimes between 1979-1992 when the government (including the MoE) was highly centralized structure and all activities were planned in the center. I have no information about the MoE during Mujahedin and Taliban period (1992-2001), but I was informed that there was a major transformation in the department responsibilities after 2001. The department was transformed from a decision-making entity to a coordinating and technical support department. This shift was in line with the new strategy of the Afghan government to move away from highly centralized administration to a decentralized system. Almost all employees of the department were, and still are, relatively young men who were recent graduates of university or high school. The general director of planning from 2005 to 2011 was a relatively young man with a master’s degree in Educational Planning.

The Department of Planning is located at third floor of the MoE central building. The MoE building itself is located in a very crowded part Kabul City downtown, and has five floors. The Minister Office and several other departments who work directly with the Minister are hosted in this building, and the rest of departments are scattered in multiple buildings in different parts of the city. The DoP has only two rooms, one small office for the director and a larger one for the rest of the team (about twenty employees). The main
office is very crowded that has been reported as a challenge for learning, and will be
discussed later.

**IIEP Capacity Development Project**

An objective of this study is to explore how the IIEP capacity development
project has influenced the participants’ workplace learning. Therefore, I will describe the
project and its components in this section, and later in the next section I will discuss how
each participant has benefitted from the project either directly or indirectly.

The title of the project is “Afghanistan Sustainable Capacity Development in
Education Sector Planning” and was implemented by UNESCO Institute of Educational
Planning (IIEP). The first phase of the project started in 2006 and ended in 2009 and was
funded by Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The second phase started in 2010 and
ended in 2015 and the donor was DANIDA. The third phase started in 2015 and will end
in 2018 and is funded by SIDA. The project aims to develop the capacity of the MoE in
policy development, planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. The intended
outcome of the project is as follows:

The necessary technical skills in evidence-based strategic planning, program
implementation and monitoring are available at central and decentralized levels of
the education system. Consequently, the MoE formulates, implements, and
monitors/reviews its education sector plans (strategic and operational) in an
effective manner (MoE & IIEP, 2014, p.6).

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6 The source of information for this section is my conversations with the project coordinator,
unless otherwise mentioned.

7 The fact that the project has been extended three times and lasted over a decade has raised
some questions and discussions within the ministry. I briefly explain my personal views about this issue
here. First, the IIEP has developed a very good working relationship with the DoP and the donors. This
has been due to their decades of experience in working in this area in many developing countries.
Second, the areas of support are seen as important by the ministry and donors, so they continue their
support.
**Project Components**

The initial purpose of the project was formulation of Afghanistan’s First National Education Strategic Plan (NESP-I), and later expanded to more components and activities. The components of the current phase of the project are:

1. MoE National Training Program (NTP)
2. MoE central-level planning capacity development
3. Technical support
4. Support services

**Component 1) MoE National Training Program (NTP)**

The DoP and IIEP established a national training program in 2012 to provide a two-year education in

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8 The IIEP project coordinator informed me on Dec 28, 2016 that the current project components are a bit different from the proposal. Here is the latest components:

Component 1: MoE National Training Program in Educational Planning
Sub-component 1.1: Diversification of NTP training offer and delivery of programme
1.1.1: Deliver NTP (280 trainees, total 16 residential semesters)
1.1.2: Deliver ENTP (120 trainees, total 8 semesters)
1.1.3: Deliver FNTP (120 trainees, total 12 semesters)
Sub-component 1.2: Quality assurance of NTP programmes
1.2.1: Revision of NTP curriculum framework with IIEP technical advice
1.2.2: Revision of NTP training materials with IIEP technical advice
1.2.3: Revision of NTP assessment system of student achievements with IIEP technical advice
1.2.4: Turning curriculum and training material to interactive audiovisual material
1.2.5: Training course on education for safety, resilience and social cohesion for NTP trainers
Sub-component 1.3: Institutionalization of NTP
1.3.1: Strategic reflection on NTP’s future development incl. NTP strategic devt. seminar
1.3.2: Regional institutional linkages incl. participation in ANTRIEP annual meetings
1.3.3: NTP website and database development
Component 2: Production and review of MoE policy and plan documents
2.1.1: Production of strategic and operational plans with IIEP technical advice
2.1.2: Develop National Education Policy document, incl. national consultations
2.1.3: Annual Education Joint Sector Reviews
Component 3. Consolidation of MoE technical capacity

9 It is important to note that the focus of this research is on the IIEP influence on the central MoE-DoP staff capacity development. Therefore, NTP component impact will not be discussed in this study in details. However, as explained later, three participants teach at NTP and one participant studied there. Those teaching at NTP found the opportunity very useful for their own capacity development.
Educational Planning and Management for the MoE employees. Since the DoP, as non-academic organization, could not award educational degrees itself, the program was launched under the structure of the Institute of Administration and Accounting. The institute is under supervision of the TVET deputy ministry. The NTP is thus a collaboration between IIEP, DoP, TVET, and the donor.

The learning outcomes of this component are: (1) “the NTP meets the training needs of MoE planners and managers at all levels of the education system, (2) MoE Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) and District Education Departments (DEDs) are able to prepare provincial/district education plans adapted to their local contexts” (MoE and IIEP, 2014, p. 2).

The MoE employees who participate in this program attend three phases of in-person training courses in Kabul with a nine-month break between each phase. The first and second phase lasts for three months. The third phase is only for one week to defend their thesis and attend the graduation ceremony. During the breaks, the participants return to their job stations in provinces. They work on their project assignments under the supervision and guidance of one of the department’s instructors. The instructors communicate with the trainees through emails and phone calls. The participants develop a three-year development plan for one district as their final project. The program is designed to provide a mix of theoretical and practical education to the practitioners, and is taught by the IIEP national assistants who have both the theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge as they worked in the DoP and have developed actual plans for the

They could integrate theoretical knowledge with their practice and learn some concepts with more depth.
MoE. In addition to the IIEP technical assistants, some instructors hired by TVET teach in this program. They usually teach general courses such as the foundations of education, math, English, etc.

The program’s curriculum was developed by the DoP technical assistants, especially those who had studied in IIEP Advanced Training Program (ATP) in educational planning in Paris. ATP is a part of the second component and will be discussed in the next page. Many ideas were taken from the APT curriculum and materials with permission from the IIEP. The IIEP international consultants and IIEP staff in Paris had very little involvement in developing the NTP curriculum. One technical assistant who had a key role in designing the curriculum believed that the IIEP should have provided more technical support in the process.

So far over 500 of MoE officials have graduated from this program. The institute has also launched its pre-service program since 2014 admitting high school female graduates who are not MoE employees. The pre-service program will prepare qualified female candidates for the planning and M&E positions. A few talented pre-service students have been recruited as interns within the Department of Planning.

Component 2) MoE central-level planning capacity development. The purpose of this component is to strengthen the overall capacity of the General Directorate of Planning and Evaluation in order to be able to deliver its mandate (MoE-IIEP, 2014). The project has hired one national coordinator and nine national technical assistants (TAs) to work closely with the civil servants. They were hired for two purposes: first, to fill the immediate capacity gaps in order to help the DoP to perform its tasks such as developing
plans and regular reports, designing EMIS survey, etc. Second, to help the DoP civil service employees develop their capacities through mentoring, coaching, and joint tasks.

There are some concerns about the sustainability of hiring and deploying technical assistants. Although approximately eight technical assistants have been supporting the DoP for over a decade, the department is still heavily dependent on the TAs for performing their tasks. The TAs have filled all critical positions within the department; the director and both unit managers are filled by IIEP TAs. They have two identities; MoE identity because they work in official positions within the MoE structure with full administrative powers and IIEP technical assistant identity. This has increased the DoP’s dependency on the project which might be a reason for the project’s being extended three times. Some people, both within and outside of the DoP, believe this arrangement has created a conflict of interest. The technical assistants who work in official positions naturally advocate for the project’s interests within the ministry. For example, the technical assistants working in official positions pushed for the project extension. This arrangement has had some positive influences on the employees’ workplace learning that will be discussed in the next chapter.

In addition to deploying technical assistants, the project offers scholarships to the MoE employees, especially the DoP staff, to study in the IIEP Advanced Training Program in Educational Planning and Management. The program consists of a three-month online phase from Kabul, six month residential phase in Paris, and another three-month online phase in Kabul to write final project. The participants need to complete a final project after they return to their home countries. The graduates will receive a
master’s level certificate or a postgraduate certificate depending on their performances (UNESCO-IIEP, n.d.).

In total, 15 MoE employees have participated in this program, and eight of them were from the DoP. Three out of eight participants of this study have completed ATP program. All the DoP employees who completed ATP, except one, still work with the department but have been hired as IIEP technical assistants. Initially only civil servants were eligible to apply for this program, but later technical assistants and development employees were also admitted to this program. It was almost impossible to find civil servants who met all requirements for admission to this program, especially the necessary level of English.

**Component 3) Technical support.** The purpose of this component is to support the DoP in delivering specialized planning tasks (mostly related to strategic planning) through on-the-job coaching. In addition, the component supports the process of Education Joint Sector Review (EJSR) by sponsoring the DoP staff trips to the provinces for data collection. The specific activities of this component are:

1. IIEP technical experts missions to Kabul or elsewhere in the region
2. Back-office technical support by distance, depending on emerging needs
3. Department of Planning and Evaluation mission to provinces and districts as part of Education Joint Sector Review and/or National Education Strategic Plan-III (MoE-IIEP, 2014, p. 2).

According to the director of planning, the DoP’s dependence on international consultants has been reduced during the last five years because several employees of the department are trained in the APT program and now are able to support the department in conducting technical tasks such as EJSR. In addition, more Afghans have now completed their degrees abroad in education and returned to Afghanistan and have been hired as
consultants. He referred to me as an example of an Afghan consultant who could support the department in strategic planning and reduce their dependence on the IIEP international consultants.

Component 4) Support services. The IIEP project provides office supplies and equipment for the DoP as well as the NTP office that include laptop computers, printers, furniture, and stationery. The project has also supported the printing of strategic plans and reports. One of the participants said that:

The IIEP project provides office supplies to the DoP, so we are in a better situation compared to other MoE departments. The project provides stationery, computers, printers, cartridges, etc. The MoE itself provides a box of pens and pencils, and two bundles of paper for the whole year. That's all. The IIEP project is the reason we don't have any issue with regard to equipment and office supplies.

IIEP Capacity Development Approach

IIEP approach to capacity development, as explained by Sigsgaard (2011), is mentoring or coaching, in which they focus mainly on providing guidance, counseling, and technical support rather than providing training workshops or imposing ideas or plans. IIEP believes that there are no fixed formulas for educational planning; and the process needs to be “rediscovered empirically almost every time” (p.77). MoE-IIEP (2014) describes the project’s approach as follows:

The Project will be based on a comprehensive capacity development approach aiming at strengthening the MoE not only at the level of individuals, but also institutionally, in order to foster the MoE’s long-term technical autonomy. Learning by doing is a key principle, which means that the staff involved work in groups and learn planning, in part through daily planning work, and through participating as resource persons in training workshops.
This approach requires the capacity development project beneficiaries to participate in the actual process of planning under the guidance of IIEP experts in order to learn the process. In other words, for the IIEP “learning by doing” is the way to learn educational planning. Sigsgaard (2011) stated that the participants develop self-confidence through engaging in the process of learning by doing. This approach has been implemented in the MoE-IIEP CD project and the MoE staff has gone through the strategic planning process three times by now and also learned by participating in several other planning or evaluation processes such as annual reviews.

Sigsgaard (2011) has discussed the challenges of this approach that include: (a) Expensive: technical support is done partly by international consultants who are very expensive and also their international travel and accommodation are costly. (b) Time-consuming: mentoring is a relatively slow process because it requires understanding the situation of target departments and the challenges they face and provide coaching and advice in a personalized way, (c) Language issues: international consultants rarely speak local languages, so it is very challenging for them engage with the local participants in meaningful individualized discussions, and (d) Short-time frame: the short-term nature of missions that limited the interactions of the international consultants with the DoP employees (Sigsgaard, 2011, p.77).

Other characteristics of the IIEP approach include: pragmatic problem solving (focusing on finding solutions for the setbacks and obstacles along the way), holistic process (considering different modalities and focus on the whole organization), inspiring hope and confidence in beneficiaries, creating a critical mass of educational planners, and
focusing on CD of the ministry to take leadership of the education system (Sigsgaard, 2011, p. 59-60).

It is important to note that the IIEP project was not limited to mentoring, even though that was the main strategy. According to Sigsgaard (2011), IIEP has used different modalities for developing the capacity of DoP that include: training workshops, in-depth training in Advanced Training Program (ATP) in educational planning and management at IIEP in Paris, “tailor-made technical mentoring” (p. 71) in the MoE during IIEP missions; continuous distance support through providing guidance and comments on documents; technical support on issues not directly related to planning (for example, IIEP provided advice on the structure for the General Directorate of Planning and Evaluation(DoPE)); permanent technical support based at the MoE's DoPE: a coordinator supported by IIEP, working alongside a team of eight TAs, whose recruitment was requested by the MoE; training in English and computer skills as these two generic skills are widely recognized as essential for MoE staff; tailoring training materials for training workshops; and assisting with simulation model development during the NESP-II formulation (Sigsgaard, 2011, p. 71).

**Research significance**

What would be this research’s potential contributions? The primary contribution would be providing insights for improving the practices of those involved in leading capacity development programs. The disappointing results of many capacity development programs (Smithers, 2011; Fukuda-Parr, 2002) indicate an urgent need for advancing the knowledge and practice of capacity development. Morgan (2006) states that there is no agreed upon body of theories to guide capacity development practice
This research is conducted to build on workplace learning literature in order to make a contribution to the knowledge and practice of capacity development.

The findings provides some insights for development practitioners (both international donors and implementing partners) and aid-recipient governments, especially the Afghan Ministry of Education on how to enhance the effectiveness of capacity development programs by gaining a better understanding of how a CD program can positively or negatively influence workplace learning. The findings are relevant to enhancing professional development practices in general. For instance, the findings can provide insights for school leaders on how to enhance teachers’ learning in school as their workplace.

This study could also motivate the participants to reflect on their experiences at work and capacity development processes they have participated. These reflections could lead them to take more informed actions aimed at improving their workplace learning. The critical incident technique (CIT)—that is used for data collection and analysis—could also help the participants to reflect on their learning experiences and help them to undertake actions to improve their learning experience.

The next chapter will provide a summary of literature on this research problem and the conceptual framework that will be used for analyzing the data.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a brief review of the existing research and theories on capacity development and relevant concepts such as learning (especially adult learning theories focused on workplace learning). The purpose is to present what we already know about how adult employees learn in workplace setting, the factors influencing their learning, how capacity development programs influence learning, and to develop a conceptual framework for this research. I begin with the definitions of capacity and capacity development.

Definition of Capacity and Capacity Development

Capacity development has become a popular term in international development since 1990, and many development programs have a CD component (Morgan, 2006). Yet there is no broadly accepted definition of capacity or capacity development. These concepts are still puzzling and confusing especially in international development and there are no agreed upon body of theories to guide capacity development practice (Morgan, 2006, p.3).

Table 1 contains a list of definitions for these concepts. Among many existing definitions, I found the UNDP (2007) definition to be frequently cited in capacity development literature, and I will use this definition in this research report. It defines capacity as:

the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner. Capacity development (CD) is thereby defined as the process through which the abilities to do so are obtained, strengthened, adapted and maintained over time (p.3).
Table 1 - Definitions of capacity and capacity development

- World Bank Institute defines capacity development as “a locally driven process of transformational learning by leaders, coalitions and other agents that leads to actions that support changes in institutional capacity areas—ownership, policy, and organizational—to advance development goals.” (World Bank, 2016p. 1)
- “Capacity is understood as the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully. … 'Capacity development' is understood as the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time” (OECD/DAC, 2006, p. 12)
- "Process of strengthening the abilities of individuals, organizations and societies to make effective use of the resources, in order to achieve their own goals on a sustainable basis" (GTZ Handbook).
- “Capacity building is a process by which individuals, groups, institutions, organizations and societies enhance their abilities to identify and meet development challenges in a sustainable manner” (CIDA, 1996).
- Capacity is “the ability to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives” and capacity development takes place “not just in individuals, but also between them, in the institutions and the networks they create”, (Fukuda-Parr et al., 2002, pp. 9-10)
- Morgan (1998) defines capacity as” the organizational and technical abilities, relationships and values that enable countries, organizations, groups and individuals at any level of society to carry out functions and achieve their development objectives over time…Capacity development refers to the approaches, strategies and methodologies which are used by national participants and/or outside interveners to help organizations and/or systems to improve their performance” (p. 2).

The definitions of capacity and capacity development are often broad, and according to Morgan (1998) capacity development has become an umbrella concept which covers several other concepts such as organizational development, technical assistance, institutional development, knowledge management, learning, participation, empowerment etc… (p. 2). As Lusthaus, Adrien, and Perstinger (1999) point out, considering CD as an umbrella concept has both positive and negative sides. On the
positive side, the concept can bring together different stakeholders from different disciplines to accept CD as the main mission of development. On the negative side, the concept has become too broad and “is used as a slogan rather than as a term for rigorous development work” (p.3).

Some definitions of capacity development reflect specific principles underlying the approach of the exponents. The World Bank Institute, for example, defines capacity development as a locally driven process and a transformational learning and highlights the importance of ownership, and points out that capacity development leads to actions that bring changes in institutional areas.

**Capacity Development versus Capacity Building**

Capacity development and capacity building are often used interchangeably, but according to OECD/DAC (2006) and UNDP (2008), these two have different connotations. Capacity development is based on the assumption that some capacities already exist in target individuals or organizations, and capacity development is a process of transformation from within based on local priorities. This term indicates the values of country ownership, commitment, and leadership. While capacity building "suggests a process that starts with a context of little or no capacity and involves building new structures, often based a pre-defined designs” (OECD/DAC, 2006). Most recent documents use "capacity development" over "capacity building" to highlight the importance of considering already existing capacities, local ownership, and building a better relationship or partnership between donors and the recipients. I therefore have used “capacity development” rather than “capacity building” in this research report. My research is designed based on the assumption that the beneficiaries of capacity
development programs learn informally through their work and the programs should enhance and expedite their workplace learning.

**Capacity versus performance**

UNDP (2008) differentiates between capacity and performance: lack of capacity leads to underperformance because capacity is a necessary condition for performance. However, capacity is not a sufficient condition, and developing capacity does not necessarily lead to improved performance. Individuals and even organizations may decide not to utilize their capacities for different reasons.

Fukuda-Parr (2002) also differentiates between capacity and performance and defines capacity as individuals’ and organizations’ potential to perform and their ability to apply resources and skills to achieve goals. Not all capacity development necessarily improves performance; therefore, it would be insufficient to measure an individual’s or organization’s performance to evaluate a capacity development intervention.

I have asked the participants of this research to report any changes that have brought in their practice and any changes in their knowledge and skills. Therefore, they cover both changes in performance as well as other changes that are not translated into performance improvements.

**Levels of Capacity**

The concept of capacity can be studied at different levels from individual level to national level. Morgan (1998) used the metaphor of onion to describe several different levels of capacity ranging from macro (context and environment) to micro (individual) levels.
However, in general, capacity development can take place at three levels (Baser & Morgan, 2008, p. 13). First, the micro level, where capacity is a characteristic of individuals and capacity development is defined as developing knowledge, skills, and attitude of individuals. Second, capacity can be defined at a meso level referring to organizations and small systems. For this level of capacity, Simister and Smith (2010) use the following definition: “the capability of an organization to achieve effectively what it sets out to do” (p.3). The focus of capacity development at this level is on organizational policies, procedures, structure, etc. The third level, the macro level, refers to the level of state and/or public sector, also called the enabling environment or the institutional level.

![Figure 3-Level of Capacity Development](image)

North (1990) definitions of institution and organization will help better understand the difference between the meso and macro levels (organizational and
institutional levels). He posits that “institutions are the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction. In consequence they structure incentives in human exchange whether political, social, or economic" (p. 3). He defined organizations as “groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives” (p. 5). Institutions are the rules of the game and organizations are the way humans structure themselves to play. Therefore capacity development at institutional level include improving the rules of the game such as improving legislative documents such as constitution, laws, and bylaws, and/or cultural norms. These institutional rules of the game define patterns of incentives, sanctions, and pressures that influence the process of capacity development.

This study focuses on individual capacity but explorers all factors (personal, organizational, and institutional) that influence the capacity of individuals. The learning experiences of participants rather than organizational and institutional learning or changes will be analyzed.

**Characteristics of Capacity Development Process**

*Capacity development is a long-term process.* Yet, capacity development projects are often required to produce short-term measurable results. This pressure on short-term results can jeopardize the whole process, and may cause the CD projects to fail in developing capacities (Lopes and Theisohn, 2003, p. 1). One of the positive features of the IIEP capacity development project that led me choose it for this study is its long duration. The project begun in 2006 and still is being implemented.

*Capacity development is driven by incentive systems.* Capacity development interventions “work well where incentives— monetary and non-monetary — are
conducive, and fail where they are not "(Lopes and Theisohn, 2003, p. 1). This indicates that incentives are influencing the success of CD interventions, so incentive systems are part of institutional factors influencing the results of CD interventions. Incentive systems not only determine employees’ motivation to use their capacities to perform better, but also govern their motivation to engage in the process of informal and formal workplace learning.

CD programs usually provide some incentives that are intended to produce positive results, but some of these externally introduced incentives distort the already existing incentives and in fact discourage local initiative, cause brain drain, and ignore sustainability (Lopes and Theisohn, 2003, p. 102). This research has particularly focused on the available incentive systems at the DoP for improving performance and developing capacity, and explored how the IIEP project has created or modified the incentive structures.

*The process of capacity development is inherently unpredictable.* The process of capacity development is a change process, and it is therefore messy, unpredictable, and emerging (Morgan, 1998). Yet most CD projects devote considerable effort to developing clear objectives, accountability, long-term planning, and meeting contractual requirements in capacity development projects (p.5). Social change is impossible to predict or control because the link between causes and effects are non-linear and difficult to trace, and a small change or action can lead to big changes in the system through feedback loops (Reeler, 2008, p. 6). The process of social change is more like a discovery process. Ongoing learning and adaptation is the key for success in social change interventions including capacity development projects. The same is true for the learning
process too. Therefore, evaluating capacity development merely based on the pre-determined objectives and indicators is misleading. This research explored the intended and unintended influences of the IIEP project on the participants’ workplace learning.

*Capacity development is not power neutral.* For any capacity development project, questions of capacity “for what?” and “for whom?” arise, which requires making political decisions (Lopes and Theisohn, 2003, p. 1). The project's beneficiaries, as well as other people or organization engaged in the project, have often different values, interests, and powers, and the decisions such as capacity “for what” and “for whom”, are often influenced by the values and interests of high-power, dominated groups. Fukuda-Parr (2002) asserts that donors and other development organizations have higher power than other stakeholders in development projects (notably beneficiaries), and exert power and domination in development processes (p. 10). Since the financing of development interventions comes from donors, and they have control of the purse strings, they usually dominate the design, implementation, and evaluation of development programs (p. 11). Under aid dependency, “relationships and bargaining power between agents are highly unequal, and social, political and economic development interests and priorities may differ substantially between them” (Castel-Branco, 2008, p. 15). Morgan (2006) also believes that capacity development ideas are influenced by western ways of thinking including performance management, organizational development, political economy, institutional economy and sociology that have less resonance in many cultures.

According to Lopes and Theisohn (2003) many experts working with donor agencies have a superiority mindset, which can lead to imposing their own interests and values. This superiority mindset is often reflected in the language of development. "The
language of development is full of metaphors of hierarchy and inequality: aid, assistance, developed, developing world, donor, recipients, etc." (p. 5). This superiority mindset, value-laden ideas, and the dominance of donors and international organization in decision making are some of the other factors influencing the effectiveness of CD programs.

Ownership is a pre-condition for capacity development. Despite this asymmetric relationship between stakeholders of development projects, the literature stresses the importance of local ownership and empowering the local beneficiaries, and the research has shown that projects "commanding a sense of ownership by target beneficiaries and stakeholders have clearly performed better than those that did not" (Fukuda-Parr, 2002, p. 14). Smithers (2011) refers to several major cross-country studies that provide supporting evidence that stakeholder ownership is critical to the success of development programs. The studies include Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) evaluation of Public Sector Reform (World Bank 2008), the Capacity, Change and Performance 16 country-case study (Baser and Morgan 2008), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) 2007 Annual Evaluation Review.

According to Lavergne (2003) there are at least two arguments for the importance of local ownership: first enhancing local ownership improves local people's commitment and therefore increases program effectiveness. Second, ownership is a right held by local people who will benefit from programs or implement them; people have a right to “determine their own destinies and to be governed by their own governments” (p. 3). In this view, local ownership is a key determinant of appropriateness and legitimacy of policy choices (Castel-Branco, 2008).
Pretty (1995) discusses the concept of participation in development projects and propose that two schools of thought and practice have evolved in regard to participation: (1) One views participation as a means to increase efficiency—if people are involved in planning and implementing development programs, they are more likely to support the program and help to achieve the results. (2) The other school sees participation as a fundamental right of the beneficiaries and the purposes of involving them are collective thinking and action, empowerment, institution building (p. 1247). He proposes a typology of participation (see Table 2).

Table 2-Typology of participation in development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Characteristics of each type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Manipulative Participation</td>
<td>Participation is simply a presence, with &quot;people's&quot; representatives on official boards but who are unelected and have no power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Passive Participation</td>
<td>People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. In involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Participation by Consultation</td>
<td>People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes, and so control analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Participation for Material Incentives</td>
<td>People participate by contributing resources. They may provide the fields and labor, but are involved in neither experimentation nor the process of learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Functional Participation</td>
<td>Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Interactive Participation</td>
<td>People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Self-Mobilization</td>
<td>People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This typology indicates that participation is vague concept and can mean different things. Therefore, participation should not be accepted without appropriate clarification (Pretty, 1995). Participation is particularly important in the case of capacity development programs, considering the self-directed nature of adult learning (Merriam, 2010, p. 13).

**Evaluation of Capacity Development Programs**

Capacity development literature shows that the impact of capacity development programs, especially those financed by aid agencies, is questionable and often disappointing (Smithers, 2011; Fukuda-Parr, 2002; Saldanha, 2006). I think there are at least two explanations for this issue: (1) simplistic designs of CD programs and (2) result-based evaluation strategies.

The design of many capacity development programs are simplistic and does not take into account the complexities of capacity development processes. Training is the most frequently used, and often the only, modality for capacity development. Training is easier to implement compared to other modalities like mentoring or cultural change, and it is easier to report using quantitative indicators such as the number of workshops, the number of trainees, etc. (Vallejo & Wehn, 2016, p.4). Capacity development is a complex process, and the capacity development interventions should be designed considering the complexities. For example, the low performance of an organization may be due to its cultural norms that do not support changes in the individual employees’ practices. Training employees on specific skills and practices will not be enough, and a cultural change intervention (or a combination of several modalities) could be more effective.
Here I will discuss an example from my own experiences. The World Bank and the Teacher Education Department’s strategy for improving the quality of teaching (or teacher capacity development) has been conducting training using a cascade model. My own evaluation of the program showed that the program had very little impact on teachers’ quality of teaching. There were many challenges, for example, Afghan school environments were not open to the new ideas promoted in the training workshops. The program design was based on a simplistic understanding of capacity development process that if teachers learn new ideas, they will be able to apply them into their teaching practice, and the change will improve the teachers’ performance.

In addition to the simplistic assumptions behind capacity development process, the common approach used for evaluating capacity development programs can be a reason for the unsatisfactory results of capacity development programs. The common approach is using performance as a proxy indicator of capacity (Morgan et al., 2005). Vallejo and Wehn (2016) have called this as the technocratic approach. This approach assumes a linear cause-effects relationship between intervention inputs/activities and performance (described in project logframes). In this approach, the projects are evaluated based on a set of per-determined results and quantified indicators (Vallejo & Wehn, 2016). Measuring the impact of capacity development programs using performance indicators are criticized as misleading because of the long time involved for capacity changes to translate into performance improvement (Wehn de Montalvo & Alaerts, 2013). As mentioned before, the capacity development process, similar to other social change processes, is unpredictable. Capacity development programs can have both
positive and negative unintended outcomes that cannot be discovered easily by evaluation studies and often takes a long time to appear.

Vallejo and When (2016) propose an alternative approach for evaluating capacity development programs: Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) approach. This approach focuses on the changes in behaviors and relationships of the capacity development project participants, rather than on specific per-determined indicators. This approach is open to recognize unintended changes, both positive and negative. This method is not as common as the technocratic approach.

I have so far reviewed the capacity development literature, and found out that there are few systematic frameworks or theories to guide the practice of capacity development. I also found that although learning is a key component of capacity development, there are no explicit references to theories of learning in the capacity development literature. So I will briefly review the theories of learning and discuss how they can be applied to capacity development, and finally develop a conceptual framework based on both capacity development and learning literatures.

**Learning Theories**

Capacity development at the individual level requires some sort of learning to take place, thus capacity development programs need to help their beneficiaries to enhance their workplace learning. Therefore, a review of learning theories can provide insights for the problem under study. I will first review the general learning theories, then focus on adult learning theories because the beneficiaries of CD programs are mostly adults, and finally discuss workplace learning theories.
**Behaviorist views of learning**

Behaviorist theories, the dominant approach in the first half of twentieth century, defined learning as a change in behavior brought about by experience (Halpern & Donaghey, 2004, p. 1459). Behaviorist theories identified processes of learning in terms of the relationships between the stimuli influencing organisms and the response from the organisms that is often referred as S-R relationships (p. 1459). According to this perspective of learning, internal mental states (thoughts and processes of thinking) cannot be studied through scientific inquiry, so the study of learning should be limited to observable behaviors (p. 1459).

There are two types of behavioral learning in this tradition: Ivan Pavlov’s classical conditioning and Thorndike and Skinner’s operant or instrumental conditioning. In classical conditioning, we initially have an unconditioned stimulus which elicits an unconditioned response. Then we pair a neutral stimulus with an unconditioned one that changes the neutral stimulus to a conditioned one which produces a conditioned response (Halpern & Donaghey, 2004, p. 1459). In instrumental conditioning proposed by Thorndike and Skinner, organisms learn behaviors as a result of their consequences that come after behaviors. If a behavior has a positive consequence, it will be strengthened or reinforced, and in opposite, if a behavior has a negative consequence, it will be weakened. The instrumental conditioning has been used extensively in education to change student’s behaviors, especially in classroom management and in decisions regarding grades and incentives for learning (p. 679).

What can we learn from the behavioristic views of learning for factors influencing learning at workplace? These theories highlight the importance of analyzing how
reinforcers, rewards, and punishments influence the beneficiaries’ behaviors, and how we can utilize them as tools for increasing their engagement in building their capacities. This shows the importance of analyzing how monetary and non-monetary incentives (salary increase, stipends, opportunities for promotion or higher education, workload, recognition, etc.) influence the participation’s engagement. The consequences of workplace learning for the beneficiaries (or even their perceived consequences) can be a factor influencing their learning and capacity development.

**Cognitive theories of learning**

Behavioristic theories of learning were criticized for not differentiating between learning and performance. Humans and animals can learn something but can decide not to exhibit it in their performance. Learning scientists also recognized that humans are capable of active processing of information, relating new experiences to past ones, and organizing information for storage and retrieval, and that all these cognitive functions influence humans’ behaviors and actions (Halpern & Donaghey, 2004, p. 1461). This theory of learning considers humans as active learners who “initiates experiences, seek out information to solve problems, and reorganize what they already know to achieve new insights” (p. 679). According to this theory, learning results from solving problems, and the new learning influence the organization of individual’s knowledge rather than adding to the existing knowledge (Billet, 2001, p. 31). Educational theories of Bruner and Ausubel are consistent with this view of learning, and teaching learning strategies, such as summarizing, organizing, planning, and note taking are consistent with this view.
Social Theory of Learning

Social theory of learning proposes that people learn from their social environment through actual performances or vicariously by observing models, listening to instructions, and by engaging with print or electronic materials. Social learning theories have built upon the behavioristic principles of reinforcement, but also included cognitive processing components such as attention, remembering, the processing information about the environment, and the consequences of behavior (p. 1462).

Here are a few points that we learn from the cognitive theories of learning which may have relevance for capacity development:

- An employee’s performance is different from his or her capacity. Employee might participate in CD programs and learn from it, but decide not to utilize his or her learning in practice.

- The cognitive theories highlight the influence of prior knowledge (including educational background) and past experience in learning new things. So this can be a factor influencing the employee’s learning experiences. I will explore how this actually affected my research participants’ learning.

- Social cognitive theory implies the influence of role models (leaders) on each employee’s engagement in workplace learning. So I will explore how the employees of DoP (especially formal managers and informal leaders) influenced each other’s engagement in workplace learning.
Constructivist theories of learning

The constructivist theories of learning reject the idea of learning as a passive process of absorbing new information, and suggest that humans are active in making sense of their world, and actively construct their own knowledge through experience, reflection, and dialogue. Knowledge is not a passive reflection of external objective reality, but a subjective construction. The role of the teacher is to facilitate the construction of knowledge by learners (Tishman et al, 1993, p.149). In constructivist approach, problem solving is “at the heart of learning, thinking, and development” (Halpern & Donaghey, 2004, p.1463). People construct their own knowledge during a problem-solving process through reflecting on past and immediate experiences. Prior knowledge and experiences influence human’s construction of reality.

Constructivist views are rooted in research and ideas of Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Fredric Bartlett, Bruner, and Dewey (Halpern & Donaghey, 2004, p. 679). Piaget, for example, asserted that “learning is a transformative rather than a cumulative process” (Halpern & Donaghey, 2004, 1463), which is still central idea in human development. Piaget’s assimilation and accommodation concepts are also important to note. He asserts that humans strive to maintain equilibrium in their encounters with everyday tasks and activities. When faced with a problem or confusion, humans experience disequilibrium and attempt to overcome it. Humans need to integrate the new information/experience with what they already know. Maintaining equilibrium can be done either through assimilation or accommodation. Assimilation involves incorporating new information into the existing knowledge. Accommodation involves the process of developing new
knowledge (categories or subsystems) when faced with a new information (Billet, 2001, p. 30).

The constructivist approach to learning highlights the importance of promoting reflection and dialogue in CD beneficiaries, and also the importance of providing authentic problem solving as a tool for capacity development. This view of learning shows that humans learn through engaging with problem in their everyday activities that might require assimilation or accommodation. Humans’ prior knowledge and experiences have a critical role in their new construction of knowledge.

**Knowles’ Theory of Adult Learning**

Knowles (1970) argues that adults learn in fundamentally different ways from children. He used andragogy as “the art and science of helping adults learn” to distinguish from pedagogy, which is “the art and science of teaching children”. Knowles presented the following characteristics or assumptions about adult learners:

1. “As a person matures his or her self-concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward one of a self-directing human being.
2. An adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience, which is a rich resource for learning.
3. The readiness of an adult to learn is closely related to the developmental tasks of his or her social role.
4. There is a change in time perspective as people mature – from future application of knowledge to immediacy of application. Thus, an adult is more problem centered than subject centered in learning.
5. The most potent motivations are internal rather than external,
6. Adults need to know why they need to learn something” (Merriam, 2010, p.13).

The first characteristic of Knowles’s theory stresses on the self-directing nature of adult learning, which was further confirmed by Tough’s research in 1971 with Canadian adult learners (Jarvis, 2004, p. 42). He found that 90% of the participants had engaged in an average of 100 hours of self-directed learning in the previous year. Self-directed
learning, a part of everyday life of adults, is systematic but does not depend on teachers or classrooms or any other educational institutions; the adult learner makes decisions about his or her needs and learning objective, strategies, resources, and etc. (Merriam, 2010, p. 13). The more a learning project is self-directed, the greater the likelihood that the project responds to the learners’ needs and leads to self-actualization (Jarvis, 2004, p. 42). This can also apply to capacity development projects. Projects that engage participants in directing the capacity development activities and provide mentoring and coaching rather than direct training are more consistent with the principles of adult learning. The sixth characteristic, “Adults need to know why they need to learn something” also points to the importance of engaging the beneficiaries in the design of capacity development activities.

The second characteristic, “An adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience, which is a rich resource for learning” implies that capacity development projects should build on the beneficiaries’ pervious experiences and help them reflect on their own experiences and improve them.

**Experiential Learning**

Experiential learning theory, influenced by Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget, maintains that learning that begins with experience, especially a problematic experience, is more likely to bring change and is more effective (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 2). Kolb (1984) suggests that experiential learning is a dialectic and cyclical process consisting of four stages: (1) experience, (2) observation and reflection, (3) abstract reconceptualization, and (4) experimentation (see figure 1 for the experimental learning
cycle). This theory asserts that learning takes place through cycles of thinking (reflection and reconceptualization) and doing (experience and experimentations).

![Experiential Learning Cycle](image)

Figure 4- Experiential Learning Cycle (Osterman & Kotkamp, 1993, p. 2)

The implications of the experiential learning theory for CD interventions are that the interventions should help the beneficiaries to go through the phases of the experiential learning, help them to reflect on their assumptions and reconceptualize their theories of action, and take new actions. The interventions should help to improve the work environment to become more conducive of reflection and experimentations.

**Argyris and Schön Theory of Learning**

Argyris and Schön (1974) argue that individual behavior is guided by personal theories of action that are the underlying assumptions about how an action leads to results. They distinguish between two kinds of theories of action: espoused theories and theories-in-use. Espoused theories are what people associate with their actions and
theories-in-use are the implicit theories that actually control actions. They suggest that theories-in-use may or may not be compatible with the espoused theories.

Argyris and Schön (1996) assert that organizational learning occurs when individuals within the organization engage in inquiries. The process of inquiry begins with a surprise, a mismatch between the expected results of action and the results actually achieved. The mismatch between the actual and expected results will trigger an inquiry process, and makes people to “see, think, and act in new ways” (P. xxiii).

Argyris and Schön (1996) differentiate between two kinds of learning: single-loop and double-loop learning. Single-loop learning is an “instrumental learning that changes strategies of action or assumptions underlying strategies in ways that leave the values of a theory of action unchanged” (p.20). Double-loop learning is a “learning that results in a change in the values of theory-in-use, as well as in its strategies and assumptions” (p.21).

Double-loop learning requires questioning and examining the values governing theories-in-use. Each individual theories-in-use develop over time and account for his or her identity. That is why people are not comfortable with challenging the underlying values of their theories-in-use and resist double-loop learning. The same is true for organizations. The shared theories-in-use account for the culture of organization and therefore, organizations also resist double-loop learning. Argyris and Schön (1974) say that organizational double-loop learning will result in restructuring organizational norms (p.18), which is a kind of cultural change.

The implication of this theory to capacity development programs is that these programs should aim at facilitating double-loop learning experiences in the project
beneficiaries rather than just single-loop learning. During the analysis of data, I will look for any signs of double-loop learning in the participants of this research.

**Situated learning**

Theory of situated learning is based on the research done by Lave (1988) and Lave and Wegner (1991), which posits that learning is a natural part of human activity, and it is situated and happens through processes of participation in communities of practice (i.e. a family, a work team, a club member). Lave and Wenger’s (1991) theory of situated learning suggests that learning is learner’s legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice. In other words, learning is a process of enculturation as the new-comer moves toward becoming a fully-fledged member of the communities of practice.

The term “community of practice” is defined as “a set of relations among persons, activity, and the world over time and in relation to other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.98). Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or passion for their common practice, share insights and ideas about it, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wenger, 2006, p. 1). Communities of practice are everywhere, and we belong to several communities of practice—at home, at work, at school, in our hobbies—at any given time.

The situated theories of learning asserts that "the context in which learning takes place is crucial to the nature of learning, as are the tools in that setting, and the social interaction with others" (Merriam, 2010, P. 15). Learning, therefore, is not simply an individual, internal cognitive process, rather, learning is what constructed by the
interaction of people in a particular tools or artifacts (including language, signs, and symbols).

According to the situated theories of learning, learning is most effective when (1) learners are actively involved in the learning process; (2) learning happens as a collaborative rather than isolated activity; and (3) when it takes place in a context relevant to the learner, or in an authentic context (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p.3).

This theory highlights the particular contributions to learning from the settings in which practice occurred. Engaging in actual practice, apprenticeships, internships, and practicums provide opportunities for situated learning. What we learn from the situated theory of learning for enhancing beneficiaries’ engagement is that capacity development activities that take place in actual practice settings is more effective than those happening in artificial settings, that establishing or strengthening already existing communities of practice in workplace can enhance employees’ learning and capacity development.

**Billet Theory of Workplace Learning**

Billett (2001, 2004) theory of workplace learning focuses on how the interaction between the affordances and constrains of the work setting and the biography and agency of the individual employee regulates workplace learning. He uses the concept of “co-participation at work” to refer to the reciprocal process of learning shaped by the interactions between the setting affordances and constrains and how individuals decide to engage with what is afforded.

Billet’s workplace learning theory considers learning as the consequence of participating in social practices (following the situated theory of learning) rather than limited to participation in educational activities in educational institutions. Participation
in social activities includes personal interactions with others as well as engagement in the physical and social environment that constitutes the workplace. Billet (2001) proposes a model of workplace curriculum that proposes a “pathway of guided participation in workplace activities, taking the learner from being a novice to an expert, supported by the direct guidance of more experienced others, the indirect guidance of other workers and the contributions of the physical environment” (p. 9). The guidance (direct, indirect, and environmental) helps the new-comers to move toward fuller and more critical participation in workplace communities of practice (Fenwick, 2001, p. 7).

Billet (2001) posits that learning is ubiquitous in ongoing work activities. We learn as we think and act. The quality of this workplace learning, however, depends on: “(a) the kinds of activities that individuals engage in; (b) their access to the contribution of situational factors, including support and guidance; and (c) how individuals engage, interact and interpretatively construct knowledge from these situations” (Billet, 2001, p. 21).

It is important to note that in addition to the opportunities and tasks that individuals are allowed or invited to engage in work, the guidance provided to them influence the individuals’ learning. Guidance can be necessary for learning something that would be difficult to learn without the assistance of a more knowledgeable partner; this joint-problem solving is based on Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (Billet, 2001, p. 35). Guidance can be direct or indirect. Direct guidance includes collaborative learning through which more experienced others aid learners through joint problem-solving and pressing the learners into thinking and acting, rather than teaching them didactically (Billet, 2001, P. xv). Indirect guidance includes “interactions with other
workers, observing and listening to other workers, objects and artifacts” (Billet, 2001, p. 35). The physical environment of the workplace provides tools and clues that assist our thinking (Billet, 2001, p. 35-36), and this is called environmental guidance.

Billet (2001) acknowledges that workplace learning is not a process of socialization determined by the workplace situation. Individual workers still determine how and what they learn. They are those who construct knowledge and determine "what they appropriate, what they ignore and what they merely learn in a superficial way" (Billet, 2001, p. 36).

He highlights the political nature of workplace learning and suggest that individuals engage in learning in ways that best serve their interests and purposes such "assisting their career trajectory, securing opportunities, or even locating easy work options" (p. 1). The workplace setting also regulates individuals’ participation in workplace activities (thereby workplace learning) in the interest of the organization’s continuity and survival and in the interest of certain individuals and groups through certain “social norms, workplace affiliations, cliques and demarcations” (p. 1). He also points out to the politics of getting access to opportunities to participate in the workplace due to competing groups such as owners/management and workers, different affiliations of workers, newcomers and old-timers, full-time and part-time or contract workers, males and females, ethnicity, and so on (Billett, 2001, p. 138). The conceptual framework that I have developed for this study is heavily influenced by Billet’s theory of workplace learning. The framework will be discussed in the next section.
Conceptual Framework

In this section, I would like to summarize the literature review on workplace learning, and propose a conceptual framework for workplace learning, which will be used as an analytical framework for making sense of data. This is largely based on Billet (2001, 2004) theory of workplace learning, but includes some elements from other theories discussed in this chapter.

Each individual worker’s personal agency influences how he or she engages in work practice. The personal agency is determined by the worker’s frames of reference (such as beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, habits of mind, etc.) that are the results of the person’s prior life experiences and his or her personal characteristics. Using Argyris and Schön terminology, individuals’ theories-in-use (such as Model I or Model II) influence how the individual learns in workplace. The learner’s theories-in-use or frames of reference can also transform if a transformative learning or a double-loop learning occurs.

The kind of activities that an employee is engaged also influences workplace learning. Engaging in non-routine activities can provide rich opportunities for experiential learning and problem solving. Engaging in this kind of activities can help the worker to initiate an experiential or transformative learning cycle. People will also learn by engaging in routine activities too, but the nature and quality of learning differ. The guidance that the employee receives also influences the learning. Co-workers, especially experienced ones, can enhance the employee’s learning by becoming directly involved in solving problems and performing non-routine activities (direct guidance). The co-workers can provide necessary information, share their knowledge, and help the employee reflect
on his or her experience. Technical assistance provided by capacity development project staff can be considered as direct guidance.

Figure 5- Workplace Learning Conceptual Framework, Created by the Author

The employees, especially new-comers, also learn through socialization process, observing how more experienced employees perform the job (indirect guidance). Several theories such as Lave and Wenger (1990), Billet (2001), and classic social cognitive theories of learning highlight how observing and interacting with others influence learning. The physical setting and the tools and technologies available for the worker also influence learning (environmental guidance).

Providing training opportunities also can influence workplace learning. The workers can gain new knowledge and skills to apply to their workplace setting. This can
be considered as formal workplace learning. The capacity development projects usually provide training workshops to help the participants perform their tasks more effectively.

There are some other factors that influence workplace learning indirectly by regulating employees' access to tasks, guidance, and formal training opportunities. These factors are called contextual factors. These factors include the politics between different groups within the organizations (such as newcomers vs. old-timers, male vs. female, part-time and full-time workers), the organization’s incentive structure (salary, stipends, opportunities for promotion or higher education, workload, recognition, etc.), organizational culture (norms and values defining guide-learner relationships, learning-conducive norms, etc.), organization’s leadership (commitment to learning, information sharing, shared decision making, etc.), and the organization's structure and arrangement (such as organizational chart, physical arrangement of workplace, unit size, work shift, etc.).

The conceptual framework provides a list of factors that I identified in the literature and illustrates how the factors relate to each other. The framework is a summary of my understanding of the literature related to my research problem. The framework is used as a theoretical lens to understand the research participants’ experiences and as a guide for coding the interview transcripts and presenting the findings. I have considered the framework as a working qualitative hypothesis, so a secondary purpose of this research was to examine the applicability of this framework on the specific context of the Department of Planning. I will come back to this conceptual framework in the conclusion chapter and compare my research findings with this
framework. I will describe the research approach, methods, and sampling in the next chapter.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overall approach and rationale

The purpose of this research was to explore the experience of the MoE employees who participated in the IIEP capacity development activities in order to better understand the factors influencing the participants’ learning experiences. I therefore decided to adopt a qualitative approach as Creswell (2012, p. 16) and others like Marshall and Rossman (2011) recommend for studies seeking to explore and understand phenomena. I decided to do a qualitative research for another specific reason: during my coursework at UMass, Amherst, I developed a passion and a keen interest in qualitative research. I found out that a rigorous qualitative research can be very powerful.

Research Design

There are several designs or genres of qualitative research (as well as several classifications of these designs) that a researcher can choose from (see Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Creswell, 2006; Patton, 2002). This research explored individuals’ lived experiences of engaging in capacity development and learning, so using Marshall and Rossman (2011) typology, the design is close to “Individual lived experiences” (p. 93). Therefore, in-depth interviewing was selected as the main strategy for data collection and the focus of inquiry was individuals.

I have used a specific qualitative research technique called Critical Incident Technique (CIT) to collect data on the participants’ learning experiences. CIT was developed by Flanagan (1954) over sixty years ago. Since then, CIT has been widely used as “an effective exploratory and investigative tool” (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson,
& Maglio, 2005, p. 475), and its application has gone beyond industrial and organizational psychology to include many different disciplines such as communication, nursing, job analysis, counseling, education, medicine, marketing, organizational learning, job appraisal, psychology, and social work (p. 475-476).

According to Butterfield et al. (2005), the focus of a CIT can be exploring effective and ineffective ways of doing something, identifying helping and hindering factors, examining successes and failures, describing events or problems, or determining critical characteristics of an activity or event (p. 476). A critical incident, as defined by Flanagan (1954), is “extreme behavior, either outstandingly effective or ineffective with respect to attaining the general aims of the activity” (p. 338). The advantage of critical incident is its emphasis on specific situations, events, and people, instead of focusing on abstract concepts (Brookfield, 2005).

I chose this specific qualitative research technique because I thought it would help the participants talk about specific learning experiences rather than sharing their abstract views and opinions. It definitely helped me to collect more concrete and useful data. As mentioned above, this technique is specifically suitable for exploring factors facilitating or hindering a process, and the purpose of my research is primarily to identify the factors influencing workplace learning.

I collected and reported any learning incident that was perceived as important by the participants themselves. Some of the incidents that will be reported in the findings chapter did not look critical to me as the researcher, and might not look critical for you, as a reader either. However, since I want to explore the participants’ perceptions of reality, I have included them in this research.
Butterfield (2005) cited Flanagan (1954) who had proposed the following five major steps for the CIT: (1) ascertaining the general aims of the activity being studied; (2) making plans and setting specifications; (3) collecting the data; (4) analyzing the data; and (5) interpreting the data and reporting the results (p. 477). However, he emphasizes that the procedure is not rigid, and CIT provides "a flexible set of principles which must be modified and adapted to meet the specific situation at hand” (p. 335).

The first step is ascertaining the general aims of the activity being studied. In other words, this step involves defining research purpose and questions, and determining the focus of the research. This research purpose and questions already discussed in the introduction section ascertain the general aims.

The second step is developing plans and setting specifications. This step involves designing the research and involves making decisions about types of situations to be reported or observed, determining the situation’s or experience’s relevance to the general aims/research purpose, deciding who should collect data, etc. The methodology chapter of this dissertation explains the research design and the methodological decisions I have made throughout conducting this research.

The third step is data collection that can be done either by having an expert observe people who perform the task in question, or having individuals report about the extreme incidents that they have experienced (Butterfield, 2005, p. 478). Since 1954, there has been a shift in CIT technique from positivist orientation - a focus on observable behaviors and quantifying incidences- to a more constructivist approach with a focus on collecting participant narratives of incidents (p. 485). I have employed the second method, and relied on the participants' construction and self-report of the incidents.
The fourth step is analyzing data. The purpose at this step is "to create a categorization scheme that summarizes and describes the data in a useful manner, while at the same time ‘sacrificing as little as possible of their comprehensiveness, specificity, and validity’" (Butterfield et al., 2005, p. 478). Three primary stages are needed for analyzing data: (1) determining the frame of reference, (2) formulating the categories, and (3) determining the level of specificity or generality to be used in reporting the data (p. 478). The conceptual framework described at the end of literature review chapter has provided the frame of reference and categories for data analysis, but I was open to new categories and themes that emerged from data too. I have discussed the data analysis process later in this chapter.

In the final step—interpreting and reporting the data—the research should examine the previous steps to determine what biases might have been introduced by the procedures and the decisions made by the researcher. The researcher also should discuss the limitation and emphasize the values of the results in the final report. I have been reflective of possible ways that my personal background, interests, and values might have influenced the process, data collected, and my interpretations. I will discuss these biases and limitations in the conclusion chapter.

**Data Collection Methods**

I have used in-depth individual interviewing as the primary method of data collection in this research to elicit the participants’ critical incidents of learning. In-depth interviewing is one of four data collection methods used in qualitative research. The other three methods are: (a) participation in the setting, (b) direct observation, (c) document analysis (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 137). Document analysis was also used for
collecting information about the DoP, the IIEP project, and other capacity development interventions.

There are different approaches to interviewing, for example, Patton (2002) proposes three categories of interviews: (1) the informal, conversational interviews, (2) the interview guide or topical approach, and (3) the standardized, open-ended interviews (p. 342). I have used the interview guide approach, which “involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before the interview begins” (p. 342). I developed the interview guide in light of the research questions and the research conceptual framework. I decided to have the interview guide as a helpful tool especially when the time was limited.

Unlike quantitative research, the process of data collection and data analysis in qualitative research (and perhaps writing the report) are simultaneous activities (Creswell, 2012, p. 238). This allows flexibility that is a hallmark of qualitative research (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 73). The process of data collection and analysis will continue until the researcher senses that he or she has “categories well described and fitting with data” (p. 221) and has reached to “theoretical sufficiency”, a term proposed by Dey (1999) instead of theoretical saturation. The latter term implies that the researcher knows everything which seems possible. Following this principle, immediately after the first interview, I started transcribing audio-tapes, coding the data, thinking about the participants’ experiences, and writing down my initial insights. This process helped me prepare for subsequent interviews and revise interview guides. The analytic memos that I wrote during data collection period helped me in writing up the research report.
**Sampling Strategy**

Since the purpose of qualitative research is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth understanding of a central phenomenon, the qualitative researchers purposefully selects individuals and sites (Creswell, 2012, p. 206), or as Patton (2002) states, qualitative researchers look for “information-rich cases” (p. 581)—individuals or sites that provide useful manifestation of the phenomenon. Considering the qualitative nature of this research, I used the purposeful sampling strategy for selecting the participants. I purposefully selected those employees of the DoP who could better contribute to the research’s purpose by providing information about their learning experiences. Therefore, I selected those employees who were relatively successful in developing their capacities.

My focus on successful learners was based on the appreciative assumption that exploring what worked in the past can provide useful knowledge to apply in the future. As Bushe (2007) explains a focus on the positive experiences can support generativity and facilitate change in general. It can disseminate positive energy, while focusing on negative experiences and failures can spread negative feelings and engage people in the blame game.

The problem was how to objectively identify successful cases. I selected successful cases by consulting with the project key stakeholders: Director of Planning, IIEP project national coordinator, and a couple of IIEP technical assistants. During a meeting, I asked them to name those employees who had been relatively successful in developing their capacities. Then we agreed on a list of eight participants considering the
following considerations: equal participants from each unit and from each type of employees (civil service and technical assistants).

My plan was to select equal number of participants from each unit (the DoP has two units: Planning Unit and Research and Evaluation Unit), to be able to make some comparisons between the two. Finally I ended up with three participants from the Planning Unit and four from the Research and Evaluation Unit. The eighth participant is the director of planning who supervises both units.

I also selected equal number of participants from both civil service employees and technical assistants who work as official employees of the MoE/DoP. The technical assistants who are not in official positions within the department were not however considered as potential participants\(^\text{10}\). Four participants were selected from each group of civil servants and technical assistants. There are of course major differences in the capacity of the civil service and TA participants. TAs are in general more successful in developing their capacities than the civil service participants. This difference has given me an opportunity to compare their learning experiences.

My plan was to include participants from both genders in my cases because I believed that gender-related norms could influence the process of workplace learning and capacity development. There were only four female employees working with the DoP.

\(^{10}\) As mentioned before, the IIEP project and a few other development projects have hired relatively more qualified people as “technical assistants” and deployed them at the MoE to fill the capacity gaps and help the civil service employees develop their capacities. There are not usually employees of the ministry and report to the development agencies. However, some TAs in the DoP are both technical assistants and official employees. They report both to their supervisors at the MoE and their supervisors at the development agency, but receive their salaries from the development agency.
but only one of them was reported to be relatively successful in developing her capacity. Therefore, out of eight participants, only one was female.

In summary, I have selected eight employees of the DoP who were reported as relatively successful in their capacity development. The participants include the director and three employees of the Planning Unit and four employees of the Research and Evaluation Unit. Half of the participants are technical assistants who work as official employees and the half are civil service employees. Out of eight participants, one is female and the rest are male. I have provided brief portraits of the participants in the Appendix C. The following table summarizes their demographic information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Civil Servant or TA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>BA + Postgraduate degree in Educational Planning</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>TA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>BA in Computer Science</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Civil Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>BA in Arabic Literature</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Civil Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>BA in Computer Science</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>TA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Completing an Associate Degree in Educational Planning</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Civil Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>MA in Educational Planning</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>TA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>MA in Educational Planning</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>TA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>BA in Psychology</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Civil Servant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection Procedure

The main method of data collection was in-depth interviewing. I conducted three interviews with each participant, a total of 24 interviews. The first round of interviews was focused on the participants’ background and life stories. The purpose was to help explore how each participant’s personal characteristics and background might have
influenced their learning experiences, and also to use this opportunity to develop rapport with them. The second round of interviews was focused on their learning incidents and their interpretation of how those incidents took place. The third round of interviews was to discuss those incidents more in-depth and ask any follow-up questions based on an initial analysis of the first two interviews.

I developed interview guides before interviews (see Annex B for samples of interview guides). The guides were customized to each participant especially during the second and third interviews. I did not conduct more interviews with a participant until the previous interviews were transcribed and reviewed. The preliminary analysis of each interview was used to guide the succeeding interviews.

Finding a proper place for interview was a real challenge. The DoP does not have any meeting room. Only the general director has a private office, and the office of the director of the DoP is even shared with the IIEP project coordinator. One option was to schedule the interviews in a time that the general director or both the director and IIEP coordinator were out. This option worked for only two interviews. The second option was to use the mosque that was located in the MoE building. I conducted about half of interviews there. The mosque was quiet before noon, so it was a proper place for interviewing. The third option was the dining hall that I used for several interviews scheduled in the afternoon. The fourth option that I used for interviewing the female participant was the building library. I was not comfortable using the library because it was a quiet area and privacy was very difficult to observe. I agreed to use the library because it was the only place that I could have a conversation with a woman, without any cultural considerations.
I was able to audio-tape all interviews. My prior connections with the participants helped me to obtain their permissions to audio-tape the interviews without any problem. I borrowed a professional voice recorder from the DoP to use for recording the interviews\textsuperscript{11}. I had an extra set of batteries for the recorder in my bag all the time, in case batteries die in the middle of an interview.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Marshall and Rossman (2011) emphasize that the process of data analysis and interpretation is complex and mysterious (p. 210), and they quote Patton (2002) who notes: “Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. No Formula exists for the transformation. Guidance, yes. But no recipe,…[the] final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when—and if—arrived at” (p.432). With that said, my plan was to adopt the following procedure recommended by Creswell (2012). Here I will discuss the procedure and how I implemented each step in this research.

**Step 1: Prepare and organize the data for analysis**

This step includes transcribing interviews, translating the raw data, typing field notes, and if necessary entering data into computer. My plan was to audio-tape all interviews and to transcribe them myself. I wanted to do the transcription myself so that I could pay attention to “paralinguistic clues about meaning” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p.164) and to have an opportunity to immerse myself in the data. I knew that transcription (and also translations) are not merely technical tasks, but involve interpretive judgments.

As Marshall and Rossman (2011) cite Wengraf (2011), transcribed and/or translated data

\textsuperscript{11} I used my smartphone for recording the very first interview with the first participant, but only the first half of the interview was actually recorded. I had clicked a button to resume the recording after a pause in the middle but apparently that had not worked.
are not raw data anymore; they are processed data (p. 164). Therefore, I wanted to reflect on the interpretative judgments that I make during the process.

After transcribing the first interview, I came up with an idea. I thought it would be better (and data will be more reliable) if I asked the participants to transcribe their own interviews. If transcription involves interpretive judgments, why not allow the participants to involve their judgments rather than the researcher’s judgments. And as I will discuss in the reciprocity section, by asking them to transcribe their interviews, I was able to pay for their time and effort. I thought it could be a good strategy to thank the participants, especially those who were civil servants, and were receiving very low salaries.

I developed a guideline for transcription, shared it with all participants, and invited them to do the job. Only four participants agreed to do the job. I personally reviewed the transcripts and compared them with the audio. There were many issues in their first transcripts like summarizing what they had said instead of word-by-word typing, deleting sections they felt irrelevant, and many typo errors and punctuations problems. I shared my feedback with them, and the quality of their work improved in the second and third interviews. The good thing was that in some cases, the participants added extra information and comments to the interview during transcription. For example, some of them were able to recall more training workshops they had attended, so they completed the list. It is difficult to recall this sort of factual information on the spot during interviews, and transcription can provide enough time for the participants to provide more accurate and comprehensive information.
A disadvantage of this process was the delay that it imposed on the process. Although I had asked them to complete transcribing each interview in a week, it usually took much longer, usually three weeks or more, to complete one transcript. According to what they told me, the reasons behind the delay were lack of time, typing skills, lack of electric power at home (there was frequent power outage in Kabul for several months), etc. I transcribed the last four interviews myself and it took me about 10 hours to transcribe one hour of audio.

My raw data are in Farsi/Dari language, so I translated excerpts from the raw data into English in order to add to the report. We know that translation involves interpretation, as the translator needs to consider the vocabulary and grammatical structures, the individual situation of the interviewee, and the cultural context (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 165). I paid attention to the complexities of translation, and added the original quotations in Farsi language as Appendix D. This allows those readers familiar with Farsi to review the quotes in the original language.

I did not use any software application for data analysis because my data was mostly in Farsi and I did not know of any qualitative analysis software that supported this language. However, I used a note taking software, Evernote, to organize raw data chunks. I added each piece of data, in both English and Farsi, in one note. Data included direct quotes from interviews, field notes, and my analytical memos. Evernote has a feature that you can add tags to each note, so I used this feature for coding data. This helped me to quickly retrieve data associated with each code.
**Step 2: Explore and code the data**

This step includes reading through the notes to get a general sense of the data (exploration) and assigning codes to data (coding data). Codes are labels used to describe a segment of text or an image (Creswell, 2012, p. 244), and for coding data, one needs to examine the texts line by line and ask oneself what the participant is saying.

Marshall and Rossman (2011) consider immersion in the data as a separate analytic step highlighting the importance of exploring and becoming intimate to data. They also differentiate between theory-generated codes—that are derived from the literature review—and vivo codes that “emerge in the real-life data” and the “creative insight of the researcher” (p. 211). The conceptual framework, discussed at the end of literature review chapter, provided a list of possible codes/themes. I used these theory-generated codes to do the initial coding, but I was open to new emerging codes. It was a real challenge to think beyond the conceptual framework and come up with new codes and insights. I had to review the transcripts several times to be able to identify new codes and themes.

In addition to the immersion in the data, I developed an analytic framework based on the conceptual framework presented on page 47 to guide the process of coding. The analytic framework is a table with two dimensions: the category of factors (derived from the conceptual framework) and the research participants. The table was an effective tool for organizing the codes and findings themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4- Analytic Framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Factors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind of Activities Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate level of cognitive demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combinatio n of Theory and Practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I will provide two examples of how I used this analytic framework for coding the data: 1) Three participants of this research provided different stories of how teaching at National Training Program helped them learn more about planning and evaluation, and consequently improve their practice. I labeled them as “combing theory and practice” and placed them under the first column “kind of activities” and in appropriate rows depending on the participants who shared the stories. 2) Several participants talked about the importance of the activities they were engaged in, and how this feeling motivated them to work hard to perform the activities well. I coded them as “feeling of importance” and put them under the contextual factor, incentive structure.

**Step 3: Use codes to build description and themes**

In this step, codes are used for developing descriptions of people, events, places, or processes, or for developing themes that present broader abstraction than codes. The
emerged themes are used for providing answers to the research question, and telling the story. I used the codes to develop descriptions of the setting, each participant, the critical learning incidents, and the processes or events relevant to the incidents. I also used them for identifying the factors influencing the participants’ learning incidents, and describing how the factors affected the learning.

**Step 4: Represent and report qualitative findings**

The qualitative researchers usually report their findings in narrative discussions, but can represent their findings in visual displays such as figures, diagrams, comparison tables, and demographic tables (Creswell, 2012, p. 262). I have presented the findings in narrative discussions in two chapters. Chapter VI is allocated to descriptions of the learning incidents. The purpose of the descriptions is to provide the context for the second part of findings that are presented in Chapter VII where I have discussed the factors influencing their learning experiences. The first part of findings is mostly organized by critical incidents and the second part is organized by categories of factors. The conceptual framework presented in the literature review was used for organizing the factors.

**Step 5: Interpret the findings**

After presenting and reporting findings, the researcher interprets or looks for the meaning of the findings. Interpretation, according to Patton (2002), means attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings, and otherwise imposing order” (p. 480). Interpretation includes evaluating data for their usefulness and centrality to the story that is unfolding (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 262).
219), making comparisons between the findings and the literature, and suggesting limitations and future research” (Creswell, 2012, p. 262). The conclusion chapter will present my interpretation of the data.

**Step 6: Validate the accuracy of the findings**

Qualitative researchers usually employ different procedures for checking the accuracy of their research. In this section, I will explain the procedures I used to make sure the research was trustworthy and ethical. Trustworthiness is defined as “that quality of an investigation (and its findings) that made it note-worthy to audiences” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 209). This term was coined by Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba (1985) in their book *Naturalistic Inquiry*, where they put forward four criteria for judging the trustworthiness of a naturalistic inquiry (including qualitative research): credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability (Schwandt, 2007, p. 209). These four criteria were put forward in parallel to the four criteria of goodness of quantitative research: internal validity, reliability, objectivity, and generalizability (or external validity).

*Credibility* (parallel to internal validity) is achieved when the participants’ views of their experiences fit with the researcher’s reconstruction and representation of their views. Dependability (parallel to reliability) is related to the process of research and is achieved when the research process is “logical, traceable, and documented” (p. 209). *Confirmability* (parallel to objectivity) is achieved when the data are real and the interpretations are grounded in the real data. In other words, confirmability is achieved when the data and interpretations “are not merely figments of the inquirer's imagination” (p. 209). Transferability (parallel to external validity) is achieved when the researcher
provides sufficient information on the cases, so that readers can “establish the degree of similarity between the case studied and the case to which findings might be transferred” (p. 209). In qualitative research, the burden of justifying applicability of a research’s findings to another setting or context rests with the researcher who wants to make the transfer rather than the original researcher (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 252).

Here are a few procedures to help ensure the trustworthiness of a qualitative research and how I utilized them in this research:

- **Member-checking**: Member checking is a “process in which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account” (Creswell, 2012, p. 259). I used this strategy by sharing my writings (like participant portraits, descriptions of learning incidents, findings, and conclusions) to the participants and asking them to make sure the reports were accurate, the descriptions were complete and realistic, and the interpretations were fair. This strategy is also called participant cross-checking—used in researches that employ critical incident technique—in which the researcher gives “the participants a chance to confirm that the categories make sense, that their experiences are adequately represented by the categories, and to review the critical incidents they provided in the initial interview and either add, delete, or amend them as needed” (Butterfield et al., 2005, p. 478).

- **Peer debriefing**: Peer debriefing means discussing research process decisions, ethical dilemmas, and emergent findings with trusted and knowledgeable colleagues who play the role of critical friend (Marshall
and Rossman, 2011; Schwandt, 2007). I have joined a study circle on educational research, in which each member shares his or her research journey during our weekly meetings. I have shared my codes, coding samples, my draft findings, etc. with my critical friends to help me to increase the trustworthiness of research.

- **Engaging in reflexivity:** Reflexivity refers to “the process of critical self-reflection on one's biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences, and so forth” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 260). I have kept a field journal throughout the research process and reflect on how my biography and dispositions influence my decisions, relationships with the participants, and my interpretations of data.

- **Prolonged engagement in the field:** The qualitative researcher is urged to be in the field for a sufficiently long period of time (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 40). Due to time limitations, I was not able to be in the setting (Department of Planning) for a long time. However, my experience of working in this department for over two years can remedy this limitation.

**Researcher Personal Biography (Role of Researcher)**

Qualitative researchers must “scrutinize the complex interplay of our own personal biography, power and status, interactions with participants, and [the] written word” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 22). I here discuss how my own personal biography and power might affect this research.
I am a male Afghan and my native language is Farsi-Dari. I belong to a small ethnic group (Bayat) that has close ties with the Hazara ethnic group. With regard to religion, I am a Shia Muslim which is a minority religion. Since Afghan society is fragmented by language, religion, and more importantly by ethnicity, communicating and developing rapport with and obtaining trust of participants belonging to different social groups can be and often is a challenge.

I worked with the IIEP/DoP project for about two years in 2007-2008 as the coordinator of the project, and one year in 2013 as a consultant. I had a very close friendship with the Directors of the Planning during both terms. The General Director of Planning who headed the department during my first term was (and still is) an old friend who had invited me to join the project. In 2012, he left the Department of Planning and was promoted to the Deputy Minister for Adult Literacy. Some of my best friends still work with the IIEP project and the DoP. The DoP employees were aware of my personal connections with the directors, the IIEP project staff, and a few other key staff of the department. This might have facilitated their participation in the research. They might have accepted to participate in the research to please their bosses. This also may have influenced the way they responded to my questions. For example, the participants may have expressed positive views about the IIEP capacity development program in order to please me.

I have also worked as an evaluator of capacity development projects during 2005-2007, and for a short-term in 2010. The projects that I have evaluated include Teacher Education Project (TEP) led by MoE Teacher Education Department and World Bank, USAID Building Education Support Systems (BESST), and a component of USAID
funded Higher Education Project (HEP). I was not involved in the evaluation of the IIEP capacity development, but worked as the national coordinator of the project for one and half year. My findings during those evaluations—although the findings were different—have led me to be doubtful about capacity development interventions in Afghanistan. My experience can influence this research, and one of the reasons behind my decision to study successful cases is to neutralize the impact of my own feelings towards CD programs.

After completing the process, I found out that my background has influenced the process in the following ways:

- First, my previous work with the DoP facilitated the process of data collection. All participants were very cooperative with me. Despite their busy schedules, they agreed to allocate time to meet with me for the interviews and even transcription.

- Second, my previous friendship with some of the participants led them to be very open during the interview. For example, in one interview, the participant continued talking about his achievements and challenges for one extra hour after my questions were completed. The extra information provided by him was very helpful in understanding his experiences.

- Third, at least one of the participants tried to use the interview as an opportunity to prove his abilities and indirectly asked me to use my friendship with the directors to secure him a better position. He was aware of my friendship with the director.
• Fourth, since the participants were aware of my religious/ethnic identity, which is shared with the director of planning, they might not have been comfortable talking about the ethnic conflicts and how those conflicts influenced their workplace learning. The participants were reluctant to talk about the topic of ethnic division with the department.

• Fifth, although I did my best to stay neutral during interviews and do not make any signals indicating approval or disapproval, the participants’ prior knowledge about my background and interests may have led them to provide answers in order to please me, instead of expressing their candid views.
Ethical Issues

Social research, similar to other social activities, must be ethical, and as Marshall and Rossman (2011) maintain, ethical considerations are part of a rigorous research. The researcher should have clear ethical principles, develop well-thought-out procedures to ensure the ethical principles are observed, participants are protected, and more importantly the researcher should be reflective throughout the research journey and carefully examine ethical dilemmas that might emerge.

The Belmont Report (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1978) proposes the following three basic ethical principles: respect for persons, Beneficence, and justice. Respect for persons includes respecting participants’ privacy, anonymity, and their right to participate voluntarily as well as not using research participants as means to our own ends. In order to observe this principle, I assigned the participants pseudonyms randomly and remove anything from written documents that identify them. As I mentioned in the informed consent form, Afghan DoP is not a large office and it might be possible for readers to identify the participants by reading their stories. Although I have provided brief introductions of the participants (with their pseudonyms), I have not associated any comment to any specific participants. Therefore, I do not anticipate any major risks to them.

Informed consent is a strategy for observing the rights of research participants to participate voluntarily. This strategy receives the most attention in Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). However, as stated in Marshall and Rossman (2011), this strategy might not work in collective societies or societies with authoritarian governments. This strategy assumes that an individual freely gives his or her assent to participate in a research study.
(48), which might not be true in collective societies where “the concept of individual is blurred” and these kinds of decisions are made in groups. Moreover, informed consent form might not work with illiterate participants, and may even cause harm in authoritarian societies by producing a record of an individual participation in the research. Furthermore, this might not work in case of a civil servant who feels obliged to participate in research if it is approved by a supervisor, which is likely to be the case in this study.

I understand that the director of planning, as the setting gate keeper, might ask them to participate in the research and the participants may feel obliged to do so. To avoid this, I discussed this issue with the director before the process began and advised him to stress on the voluntary nature of participation. Also, in addition to asking participants to read and sign the informed consent form, I verbally explained to them that they could withdraw from the research at any point and there would not any negative consequences for their withdrawal. I talked with each participant informally about their reasons for participating in this research before data collection to check if they are under any sort of pressure for doing so.

Beneficence is the second moral principle, which is based on the principle of “primum non oncere” (first, do no harm) (p. 47). Following the beneficence principle, the researcher must make sure that participants are protected from any possible harm their participation in the study might cause them. For example, my research participants might get penalized if they criticized the Ministry’s senior officials and I disclosed their positions to the officials or failed to observe their anonymity and confidentiality. I,
therefore, did not associate any specific comments or quotations with a specific participant.

According to the *Justice* principle, the researcher must think about who benefits from the research and who does not, and make sure the research is contributing to the achievement of social justice. The researcher should consider past social injustices in his justice considerations too (p. 47). My intention to study beneficiaries’ points of view rather than donors and other powerful stakeholders is consistent with this principle. In addition, I included female participants to make sure their views were reflected in this study.

One of the questions related to ethics was whether or not to include the participants’ portraits in the report. Including the portraits would increase the probability that readers recognize the participants’ identity, and those familiar with the department could recognize them easily. After much deliberation, I decided to include the portraits with the following precautions: (1) using random pseudonyms, (2) sharing draft portraits with the participants themselves for accuracy, (3) obtaining their consent one more time specifically for including their portraits/biographies, and (4) not associating any specific comment to any specific participant.

**Reciprocity Strategies**

Reciprocity is an ethical principle in research. The research participants must adjust their priorities and routines in order to allocate some time to interviews, so the researcher should plan to reciprocate. My initial plan to reciprocate their time was to conduct interviews in a restaurant that is located right in front of the MoE building and treat them to lunch. After consulting with a couple of participants, I discovered that the
restaurant was very crowded and the level of noise was too high to conduct interviews. Besides, the participants were not happy to leave the MoE building at noon time; mostly due to the fact that all employees and guests must pass through three security checkpoints to enter the building—an annoying and time-consuming process. I, therefore, decided to conduct interviews inside the MoE building and find another way to reciprocate.

I therefore decided to ask the participants to transcribe the interviews themselves in return for money. Only four of them agreed to do so. I paid a good amount of money for their work that I believe was a decent reciprocity strategy. The other four participants did not have time to transcribe their interviews. They were technical assistants who had relatively high salaries, and I thought financial incentive would not motivate them.

I think the interviewee can also benefit from a well-done interview. In general, I felt that the participants enjoyed talking about their learning experiences. I did my best to design the questions in a way that interested the participants and stimulated them to reflect on their experience of learning and capacity development. At least two participants expressed their satisfactions with participating in interviews, and one of the participants continued talking about his experiences and ideas for one hour even after I was done with my questions.

Another reciprocity strategy that I utilized was presenting my research proposal (conceptual framework and methods) to the DoP employees at the beginning of data collection and presenting the findings at the end of the process. The purpose was to brief them about the project and also present them a research proposal and report. I had a presentation on my proposal and about 10 employees of the department attended the
session. Considering the busy schedules of the department staff, arranging the session was very difficult.

I had to reschedule it two times because of unexpected meetings or events that were happening at the department. The key people of the department like the directors and unit managers were not able to attend the presentation. Nonetheless, those who attended actively participated in the discussions and I received good comments from them.

I am planning to have another presentation after completing the first draft of the report in order to share my findings. This will help validate my findings with the participants and their colleagues and get their feedback, which can increase the trustworthiness of my research. This can also work as my exit strategy, and give me an opportunity to thank the whole department and especially the research participants.
Limitations

This study was situated in a specific context, the Department of Planning of Afghan Ministry of Education and the sample size was small, eight participants. It is therefore, the reader’s decision whether the findings would be applicable to other contexts.

Considering my limited time and resources, I conducted only three interviews with eight participants, which might not be enough to obtain an in-depth understanding of the workplace learning experiences of the participants. Further interviews and a long period of observation could enhance the research’s trustworthiness.

This research was based on the respondents’ self-description of their experiences. This is itself a limitation in my view because what participants say does not necessary reflects the reality of their experiences. This can happen due to the participants’ lack of ability to express their experience in words, or they may wish to portrait a more positive image of their experiences in order to avoid embarrassment. This is also related to Argyris and Schö n (1974) point about the difference between espoused theories of action and theories-in-use. They suggest that theories-in-use may or may not be compatible with the espoused theories. We can only make some hypotheses about the theories-in-use by observing behaviors and we can test out the hypotheses by further observations.

Observation was not adopted in this research. The reader of this report should keep this point in mind when reading the findings.

The participants were asked to describe their learning incidents or experiences that occurred in the past. Therefore, the findings can be subject to "recall bias or inconsistencies of memory" (Gremler, 2004).
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS: DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING INCIDENTS

This chapter presents the first part of the research findings, which includes the descriptions of the critical learning incidents reported by the participants along with the relevant processes or events. These descriptions provide background information necessary for understanding the analysis of factors influencing the participants’ workplace learning that will come in the next chapter.

Critical Learning Incidents

I will describe the critical learning incidents that were reported by the participants in this section. The learning incidents associated with a major process or event are grouped together under one heading, and the process or event has been described in detail in addition to describing the learning incidents. The description of the events or processes will provide background information necessary for understanding the analysis of factors presented in the next chapter.

I found out that many of these incidents were reported by two or more participants. This is not surprising because groups, not individuals, perform major tasks in organizations like the DoP, so the group members are likely to share the same or similar learning experiences. Although I have asked follow-up questions to explore each participant’s specific role and his or her learning experience, it was not possible to clearly define each individual participant’s contribution to the collective learning. It is very challenging to differentiate between organizational learning and individual learning because they influence one another and there is no clear-cut border between them.
Learning and change are interrelated concepts, and we can differentiate between the two types of learning: (1) learning that has been translated into changes in practice, and (2) conceptual learning that for whatever reason has not led to any changes in practice. The barriers include the lack of power to bring changes in learner’s practice, resistance from others, etc. There are, of course, changes in practice (as well as policies, procedures, structures, programs) that are not due to the learning of the executors, but imposed on staff by higher authorities. I have not included those changes here in this report.

I also noticed that some participants had difficulty in reporting their critical incidents of learning. They could not think of any major learning, so I had to ask many follow-up questions to help them to come up with some ideas. What they reported was not specific either and often they were not able to provide details. The difficulties might be due to problems with the participants’ metacognition skills. I observed that those with higher education and stronger education backgrounds were able to provide more critical incidents with more details.

I asked the participants to describe not only what they learned and what changes they brought in their practices, but how they learned and what factors were behind their learning. Most of what they described about how they learned was general, not specific to a learning incident. For example, training at IIEP Advanced Training Program (ATP) was perceived as a key factor for learning new ideas that initiated changes in the participant’s practices. Therefore, I allocated this section to the description of learning incidents only, and the next chapter for the analysis of factors influencing the participants learning incidents.
Annual Operational Planning

The DoP, specifically the Planning Unit, is responsible for coordinating the process of developing the MoE annual operational plans, reviewing and finalizing central and provincial plans, and submitting the consolidated versions to the Ministries of Economy (MoEC) and Finance (MoF). Four of the participants, who were directly involved in this process, reported the following changes in the process of operational planning:12

(1) Decentralizing the annual operational planning process: In the past, the operational planning process was highly centralized, and DoP used to draft the plans for all MoE programs (General Education, Islamic Education, TVET, Literacy, and Administration) and all provincial education departments. Then the DoP used to share the drafts with the relevant departments and just get their comments and suggestions before finalizing them. The MoE departments were passive in the process, and their expectation was that the DoP should develop all annual operational plans. The DoP learned gradually that a centralized planning process was not effective; the implementing departments either did not understand the content of plans or did not take the plan seriously. The unique situation of each department, province, or district was not considered properly in the plan due to DoP staff’s superficial knowledge of the local situation and the lack of meaningful engagement of the implementers in the planning process. The key officials of the DoP reached this understanding a few years ago, but the MoE senior leadership team was not supportive. Last year, the DoP was able to convince the new Minister of

12 I have described my understanding of the changes based on what the participants reported. These are not my opinions, but the participants’ views.
Education to ask the deputy ministers to lead the operational planning process for their own programs and work directly with the provincial and district departments. As one of the participants described:

With regard to the process of operational planning, we moved one step further towards decentralization last year. We increased the engagement of the MoE programs [deputy ministers] in the process and they took the responsibility of preparing their plans. It went well. For the first time, the deputy ministries worked with the provincial education offices directly and set targets for each province and district. In the past, we used to do this task ourselves and only consult with the programs [deputy ministers].

This was a major shift in the planning process, and the MoE deputy ministries became more involved in the operational planning process, developed and finalized the plans through consultations with the provincial departments, and submitted the final versions to the DoP. The planning templates and technical support and mentoring were provided by the DoP but the deputy ministries took responsibility for the content of the plans.

Before 2013, the MoE annual planning was limited to national and provincial levels and there were no defined activities and targets for districts. Following the principle of decentralization recommended by IIEP, the DoP started developing district plans. The planning process is still top-down; the DoP sets national targets first, breaks them down into provincial targets, and later breaks them down further into district targets. The activities are the same; the only difference is in the process for setting the targets for each activity. The DoP (or the relevant deputy ministries), provincial planning officials, and the district education officials sit together to decide on targets, and they consider the school age population, student population, security and economic situations of the province or district, and a few other criteria in deciding targets.
2) Adding descriptions of activities: In the past, the operational plans consisted only of tables without any descriptions of goals and activities. The tables included activities, indicators, and targets. The assumption was that the activities were described in the MoE strategic plan and the provincial and district officials were already familiar with the goal of activities. The operational plans were supposed to be the implementation plans for the MoE five-year strategic plan. According to one of the participants, the DoP learned that provincial staff could not make the link between the operational plan activities and the strategic plan goals and activities. Therefore, they have decided to add activity descriptions to the operational plans since last year. He said:

[We did not have activity descriptions in the operational plans in the past] because we thought the activity are already described in the strategic plan. The operation plan is just an implementation plan of the strategic plan. Later we noticed people are not able to link the operational plan activities to the strategic plan. So we decided to add activity descriptions.

The participants hope that this change will help the provincial/district officials better understand the purpose and nature of each activity and will increase the officials’ motivation to implement the operational plans. The participants stated that they had reached this decision during their meetings with the provincial and district officials during the past several years.

3) Reducing number of activities. The operational plans included activities that seemed unclear and incomprehensible for the implementers at provincial and district levels. Nevertheless, they were considered responsible for implementing the activities. Thus, last year, in 2015, the DoP decided to remove vague activities from the operational plans in order to make sure the plans are well understood and hopefully implemented.

One of the participants said:
Since the activities were clear for us, we thought they were clear for the provincial officials too. Later we found out that this was not the case, especially when we started developing district plans. There were activities in the operational plans that did not make any sense for the district officials.

Another participant from the Research and Evaluation Unit reported this issue, but he was not happy with removing those activities. He believed that those activities are necessary for achieving the strategic plan goals, so the activities should not be removed. Instead the district officials should be trained and helped to understand those activities and implement them. He stated that:

I seriously doubt that we can reach to the strategic plan goals by our current operational plans. This is our evaluation conclusion. We asked the Planning Unit to improve the operational plans. Many activities necessary for achieving the strategic goals are not included in the operational plans, and still they are cutting more activities.

One of the participants who has a key position within the department believes that further changes are still needed in the process of operational planning. He thinks that the central MoE should decide on the overall expected results from provinces and districts (like increasing enrollment) and leave the design of activities to the provincial and district officials. The sub-national offices must be kept accountable for results and have discretion on activities. He said:

I don't think the current operational planning process is effective. The plans remain on paper. It might not be logical to break the activities to sub-activities and even sub-sub activities here in the center. We don't allow the provincial and district officials to have creativity in reaching the MoE goals. Therefore they lose their interests in implementing the plan.

He also emphasized the importance of considering operational goals during performance appraisals of the provincial and district directors, otherwise the plans will not be implemented: “the implementation of the operational plans has not been the
criteria for evaluating the performance of provincial and district officials. So the plans are not taken seriously at the MoE.” However, he believes that the MoE leadership team is not yet ready for this change. He is a graduate of IIEP Advanced Training Program (ATP) in Paris and decentralizing planning process is a key principle promoted by IIEP.

**Education Joint Sector Review (EJSR)**

The MoE and other ministries in the human development sector (Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, and Ministry of Women Affairs) and the development partners (International donors, NGOs, and Civil Society Organizations) have been conducting annual joint review of the education sector since 2012. The purpose of the review is to “objectively consult with the education sector stakeholders about their joint performance and achievement of the goals and targets set out in the education sub-sector strategic plans” (MoE, 2012, p. 1). This is an initiative of the Human Resource Development Board (HRDB)— a board jointly led by the MoE and one of the MoE major donors, in which all other sector ministries and major donors and international organizations are members.

The first EJSR was conducted in 2012, and the process was led by a team of international consultants financed by donors. The MoE/DoP had a limited role in the process, and mostly facilitated the consultants’ meetings with the MoE officials and stakeholders. The sources of data for EJSR 2012 were previously developed reports and interviews, so it was more like a desk review rather than primary data collection.

The second EJSR was conducted in 2013, and the DoP had a greater role in the whole process, from data collection in the field to preparing the final report. This time, the MoE officials visited several provinces and collected data from the field. Still the
The final report was prepared by a national consultant hired by the DoP. This time, in addition to the national report, seven provincial reports were developed. The findings were presented to the provincial officials, program officials, and finally to all stakeholders in a national conference. In addition, the DoP developed Action Matrix to follow up EJSR recommendations. The matrix includes challenges, recommendation, in-charge departments, and due dates.

The EJSR in 2014 was done in the form of Education for All (EFA) review. The process was similar to the previous year, but all draft reports developed by the DoP staff in local languages, and they were translated into English by the local technical assistants and edited by an international consultant later. A difference was that UNESCO got more engaged in the process that time because they were sponsoring the process of EFA review, and the UNESCO Bangkok office reviewed the draft reports and provided comments. More development partners and NGOs were involved in the consultation process, and as the result, they could get more information and data about the projects implemented by them, such as Community Based Education (CBE), Early Childhood Development, etc. The final report was developed by an international consultant provided by UNESCO.

Last year (2015), EJSR was designed and implemented by the DoP and the report was solely developed by the department’s employees. There has been a gradual increase in the role of the DoP in the process and several participants of this research have associated this increased ownership with their informal learning. For example, one of the key staff of Research and Evaluation Unit proudly said:
A key improvement in this year's EJSR was that we [the Research and Evaluation Unit] have become more engaged in the review process. The first EJSR was done totally by external consultants … but this year we are leading the process and have brought several major changes in the process.

As I will discuss in the next chapter, the IIEP capacity development project has clearly contributed to this change. Several DoP employees have studied in the IIEP Advanced Training Program (ATP) and participated in the IIEP short-term training program in Paris. They have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills for taking more responsibilities in the EJSR process.

There have been a few other improvements in the process of conducting EJSR such as increased number of consultations with key stakeholders, increasing the number of provinces visited, better guidelines and instruments for data collection, better planning for data collection in the field, and developing provincial reports as well as national report. One of the participants involved in this process said:

This year, it was very clear what we needed to do in the provinces, what information to collect, and what forms to fill, and how to prepare our reports. I believe we went to provinces more prepared and technical.

The focus of last year’s EJSR was on support processes. Therefore, the DoP has decided to develop provincial reports and also a report on support processes. One of the participants said:

These reports are new things that we have initiated. We noticed that provinces can't execute their budget, have slow progress in operational planning, so we decided to develop reports on support processes such as planning, finance, procurement, monitoring and evaluation.
**EQUIP Evaluation**

A few participants were involved in the evaluation of EQUIP program. They all thought that the evaluation process had provided them with an excellent learning opportunity. EQUIP, funded by the World Bank, has been the main development project in Afghan education sector since 2004. The program goal is to improve “the quality of educational inputs and processes as a foundation for a long-term strategy to improve the quality of educational outcomes” (source). The first phase (EQUIP I) ended in 2009, the second phase (EQUIP II) ended in 2014, and the third phase (EQUIP III) supposed to end in 2020.

The evaluation of EQUIP I was managed by the World Bank and conducted by international consultancy organizations. The MoE did not have any role in the process. Nothing was shared with the MOE, except a few hard copies of the final report. For the EQUIP II, the DoP proposed to the World Bank that the DoP should lead the process of evaluation. WB agreed, and considered it as a practical strategy for capacity development of the DoP. However, it was also decided that the project should not be limited to capacity development, and the DoP should really manage the process. The DoP managed the process, but the actual evaluation was conducted by three international companies. The DoP developed terms of reference (ToR), announced the consultancy opportunities, selected the companies, facilitated the companies’ data collection field trips, reviewed the inception reports and provided feedback for revision (four rounds), compiled comments from World Bank and relevant MoE departments and shared them with the implementing companies, and reviewed and approved the final reports.
After the DoP started the evaluation process, World Bank decided to fund the DoP to hire five national consultants and to provide computer laptops and office supplies to strengthen the capacity of the department. The World Bank’s had a significant role at the beginning, but they lessened their role gradually as the evaluation project proceeded and the DoP team acquired the confidence and skills to lead.

A participant who was involved in this evaluation believed that this experience promoted his confidence in his abilities and developed a sense of ownership over the MoE activities at the DoP. He said: “we were in a position to tell them [international organizations] what to do and inform them of their shortcomings. We were sending them comments and asking them to revise their reports accordingly.” The participants reported that he had learned a lot about the evaluation process and how to manage evaluation projects conducted by external organizations. They reported that the EQUIP II Evaluation helped him bring changes in the DoP internal processes. For example, they learned that developing a ToR is the first step in any evaluation projects. After ToR is finalized, guidelines should be developed based on the ToR. Guidelines should include all details. Then, specific formats should be developed based on the guidelines. They have learned even the procurement and finance procedures too. One of the participants said:

after approving a company's report, we had to send the approval letter to the procurement department, and keep following up with the procurement and finance departments to make sure the company receives their payments. We learned about financial forms, such as M16, and how long each step takes to process, and so on.
School Mapping Process

One of the participants who participated in a 17-day workshop on school mapping in IIEP in Paris, France, was asked by the DoP directors to apply what he learned to improve the process of planning at the DoP. He first developed a school mapping module in Farsi for the National Training Program (NTP) to help him and other instructors to teach this new concept to MoE planning officers. He also developed school mapping guidelines, procedure, and forms adapted to specific situation of Afghanistan.

He included the following steps for the school mapping in the guideline: identifying school geographical locations on a map, collecting data on student age population, out of school children, school enrollment, and adult literacy rate from each village or neighborhood through standard questionnaires, and identifying the desired location of new schools. The DoP has implemented this process in several districts with the support of local EMIS officers. The participant reported the following challenges he and his team faced in implementing this process: (1) the survey questionnaire was too confusing for the local officers that had influenced the quality of data collected, (2) local education officials and households were not willing to provide information; the education official, for example, believed that gathering data on school age population should be done by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), not the MoE, (3) due to a lack of effective supervision system, the local EMIS officers had filled the questionnaires themselves at their offices without visiting the field.

Internal Planning and Evaluation

Since 2014, the General Director of Planning and Evaluation has asked each unit under his supervision to develop annual work-plans for the unit and conduct regular
evaluations to assess their effectiveness. Before this, the DoP, a department that coordinates planning processes for the whole ministry did not have any official work-plan. The general director has formed an internal committee to assess the performance of each unit based on their work-plans near the end of each fiscal year. According to the Planning Unit manager, the purpose of this process was to make sure “all employees are aware of what they should do, and all should report according to a plan. The evaluation of each unit's performance and staff appraisal should be done according to this plan too.”

The participants have found it very difficult to work according to a plan. There are always so many unpredictable events that change everything. For example, the Minister usually assigns extra tasks to the DoP that are not part of the department plan. They believe this is a reason why they cannot implement their plan properly and miss deadlines. This has also helped them to appreciate other departments’ challenges of plan implementation.

**Guideline Development - Institutional Memory**

The department has developed guidelines for major activities of the department such as operational planning, EJSR, program evaluation etc. The purpose, as explained by a key staff of the department, was to develop standard procedures for performing these tasks, to reflect on and discuss the procedures in order to improve them, and retain their experiential learning as part of the department’s institutional memory so new employees can do the tasks by following the guidelines. For example, one of the participants said, “we had some guidelines in the past, but they were not detailed enough so a less experienced employee could do the job by following them… for example, we have developed a detailed guideline for conducting EJSR last year.”
As part of the process for developing the guidelines, the DoP employees have reviewed IIEP technical documents as well as other relevant documents from the web, reflected on their own experiences, and consulted with national and international experts collaborating with the DoP on the guidelines. The participants believe that they learned the benefit of developing and having guidelines. I believe that the process of developing guidelines itself could have been a great opportunity for the participants to learn collectively about planning and evaluation.

**Filing system for the department**

Two participants, who are at managerial levels, reported that they have created a new electronic filing system to archive official documents and reports. This electronic filing system has helped them to retrieve needed documents much quicker and easier. The participants had faced serious challenges in locating documents when he had tight deadlines, especially from the Minister.

The DoP has decided to include all documents in their electronic archive. They even scan all letters and documents and store them in the filing system. The participants believe that this also helps to expand the department’s institutional memory and facilitates the reporting processes and performance assessments.

A change that we made is developing a filing system for the unit. A purpose is to better supervise and evaluate the employees’ work. We make color copies of each document or report developed by the unit, and store a soft copy in CDs and a hard copy in the shelf. This helps us to have supporting documents during performance evaluations.

**Research into Existing MoE Policy documents**

The DoP decided to conduct research to identify the existing policy documents at the MoE and identify policy gaps and policies that require revision and updating. Three
civil service employees of the Research and Evaluation Unit were assigned to conduct the research under the unit manager’s overall guidance. The team designed the research on their own, developed instruments and data collection plan, and conducted the research. Everything was done by the team. One of the participants said: “By conducting this research, I learned more about the research process, and specifically about the concept of conceptual framework and its role in research process. I did not know anything about it before.” He had looked at the American Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) website and found several examples of conceptual frameworks used in research. He reviewed AREU research reports, and finally developed a framework for the policy documents research. This review of samples was itself a learning opportunity for him. He believed that his supervisor’s high expectation from the team and his guidance was very helpful.

**Increased efficiency**

A few participants reported that due to several years of experience in the DoP, they have been able to perform tasks with higher efficiency, with less effort and time. This is how one of the participants put it:

At the beginning, I had difficulty in understanding how to perform tasks I was assigned. It used to take a lot of time to apprehend the tasks and perform them. I used to get frustrated. Now after years of working, I am familiar with all activities and tasks of the department. Now it is easy for me to perform tasks, analyze and understand problems and find quality solutions quickly. I don't know if this change is due to my own studies or my hard work, but I have experienced a big difference in this regard.

As explicitly mentioned by the participant, he attributed this improvement to his own hard work or studies. He does not mention IIEP training or TA guidance as influencing his improved efficiency.
Afghan Education Glossary

Three participants of this research were involved in preparing a booklet describing key educational terms used in Afghan Ministry of Education. They called the booklet “Afghan Education Glossary”, and it was one of the initiatives of the Research and Evaluation Unit. The purpose was to enhance communication among the MoE employees and with the MoE stakeholders by developing standard terminology. The participants believed that they had learned many new concepts and ideas by working on this booklet. In preparing this glossary, they interviewed key MoE officials, reviewed educational documents, consulted with their colleagues, and reviewed other available resources on the web.

More Delegation

One of the participants who is a DoP senior manager reported that after years of management experience he had learned the importance of task delegation. As he said during the interview, he used to perform many tasks by himself—even drafting plans and reports—but now he delegates tasks to his staff. He just focuses on managing the planning, evaluation, and reporting processes. He believes that this change in his management style has enhanced his performance significantly, and also had a positive impact on the overall department’s performance.

He believed that the increased volume of work made delegation inevitable, the increased capacity of his staff made it possible, and the delegation of tasks has helped his team to develop their capacities even further. He has gradually improved his skills in mobilizing human resources and in using them more effectively. He said that “I learned by experience that if I trust my staff, they will do their best to do the job with a high
quality.” He believes that by delegating more tasks to others not only the quality of works has improved, but also it has enabled him to focus on the processes and concentrate on highly important tasks of the department.

**MoUs with Implementing Partners**

Two participants reported that working on Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between MoE and implementing partners has been a great learning experience for them. All organizations working on education sector are required to sign a MoU with the MoE before launching their projects. The MoUs include project’s goals, scope of work, project activities description, timeline, and budget. In the past, another MoE department (International Relations Department) was responsible for developing the MoUs between MoE and NGOs implementing educational projects. Due to the low capacity of the International Relations Department, many MoUs were not processed on time and some had been under process for over two years. The Minister asked the DoP to take over this responsibility and prepare the MoUs. During one month before the interview, the MoUs with over ten NGOs (worth than 4 million USD) were prepared by the DoP and were signed during a ceremony by the Minister and the head of NGOs. One of the participants said:

[Preparing MoUs] was a new thing for us, and I believe that one naturally learns from doing a new task. It helped us get to know different people who work with non-government organizations. There are important things in MoUs like budgeting. [By working on these MoUs] I learned that what steps are needed to complete a project. Now If I want to manage a project, I know what activities are needed and how much budget I should assign to each activity. This was helpful.

This participant explicitly mentioned the “learning by doing” term that is a key strategy of IIEP for capacity development, but he did not link it to the IIEP project. The term has become popular in the DoP, which could be an impact of the project.
Deeper Knowledge of the Afghan Education System

Working on the MoE strategic and operational plans and conducting evaluations of the MoE plans and programs are perceived by the participants to have helped them to obtain a deeper understanding of the Afghan education system, better knowledge of programs being implemented by the MoE and its development partners, and the challenges facing the education sector. The work of the DoP requires policy discussions with internal and external stakeholders, field trips to provinces outside Kabul, and conducting evaluation and research studies, which all helped the participants to learn more about the education system. For example, a participant working with the Planning Unit stated:

[After working here for years], I have come to know the MoE structure, the responsibilities of each division, and their activities. Now I know the subtle differences among the general education, Islamic Education, Literacy and TVET programs, and how these differences influence planning for establishing schools for those type of students.

In addition, their travels to foreign countries (such as France, Japan, India, Malaysia, and Argentina), observing how schools in those countries operate, and getting information on those educational systems have encouraged at least some of the participants to think critically about the Afghan education system.

This chapter provided background information about the Department of Planning, the IIEP capacity development project and described the learning incidents reported by the participants. The incident descriptions were my understanding of the participants’ experiences. The next chapter will present the factors that were perceived to influence the participants learning incidents. I pushed the participants to link factors to the specific
incidents but it was not possible for all factors. The role of the IIEP project will be discussed later.
CHAPTER V

FINDINGS: FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNING

This chapter will present major factors that have influenced the participants’ workplace learning and discuss the influence of each factor. The factors are classified into four categories: personal, tasks-related, official training programs, and contextual factors. This is based on the conceptual framework that I developed and discussed at the end of the literature review chapter. The participants reported that they have learned through participating in training programs (formal workplace learning) and also through performing their daily tasks (informal workplace learning). However, there were differences in how each individual participant made use of these opportunities. Finally, the context in which the tasks were performed had influences on the participants’ learning.

Task-related Factors

The first category of factors includes those factors related to tasks being performed by the employees. Almost all participants reported that they had learned by doing\textsuperscript{13}, and that their work in the DoP was conducive for learning. Task-related factors include the cognitive level of tasks, level of access to information necessary for performing tasks, perceived importance of tasks, and the load of tasks.

\textsuperscript{13} Learning by doing has become like a slogan in the DoP. Everyone repeats it. It is mostly due to the IIEP project’s emphasis on this approach. \textsuperscript{14} - The IIEP project coordinator confirmed the decline and provided the following reasons:
**Task Cognitive Demand**

The participants believed that they had learned many things just by performing the DoP tasks because the tasks were complex and required high level of knowledge and skills. Planning, EJSR, EQUIP evaluation, and many other activities of the department are highly cognitive tasks, and performers must have many cognitive skills such as analytical thinking, problem solving, and research skills to perform them. One of the participants compared his learning before and after joining the DoP. He used to work with the EMIS department as data entry clerk. His tasks were routine at the EMIS department and did not require high cognitive skills. He believed that the amount and quality of his learning has significantly increased after joining the DoP as a research and evaluation officer.

The DoP activities are perceived by the participants to be challenging and as such encourage the employees to learn more and develop their capacities. Almost all participants of this research believed that their current knowledge and skills were not enough for fulfilling their responsibilities.

The level of challenge of the tasks should be appropriate to the capacity of the employee in order to optimize the potential for learning, and the right amount of support and guidance should be available too. This is based on Sanford’s (1962) theory of student development that can be applied here in this context. The theory proposes that a balanced amount of challenge and support will result in optimal growth and learning. If the task is too easy and/or too much support is available, it does not push the employee to expand his or her capacity. If the task is too challenging and/or enough support is not available, the employee will get frustrated and growth does not occur. For example, one of the
participants and three of his colleagues were assigned to conduct a research on the policy documents at the MoE. They were all civil servants, and did not have enough research experience and self-confidence. He believed that the tasks were too difficult for them and it was not accompanied by enough support and guidance, so he was frustrated and it did not result in a rich learning experience. He said:

The topic of the research, policy documents at MoE, was vague for us, and determining the scope of research was difficult too. Therefore the research design was really difficult. Whatever we designed got rejected by our supervisor. It took two or three weeks that he was rejecting our design, to the extent that we really get frustrated and did not want to do the job. He neither told us how to design it nor accepted our work. That was a real problem.

Another member of this team had a different experience and believed that the policy document research was an excellent learning opportunity that boosted his self-confidence in research. This confirms that different individuals can experience the same process very differently. The difficulty level of tasks should be appropriate for the person performing them in order to lead to learning.

**Access to Information**

The tasks performed by the DoP, such as planning and evaluation, require access to data and information. The DoP is in many ways the information center of the ministry and the staff has access to EMIS data and reports of all MoE departments. The DoP staff visit schools and departments to collect data for situation analysis, EJSR, and evaluation purposes. IIEP and other international partners also provide many resources and reports to the DoP. The participants believe that their high level of access to information has facilitated their learning, and helped them obtain a better understanding of the Afghan education system and the challenges facing the education system.
Professional Contact

The DoP tasks such as coordinating the process of annual operational planning, EJSR, and program evaluations, etc. entail frequent interactions with many people within the MoE as well as with the MoE stakeholders such as other ministries, donors, and other development partners. These numerous interactions facilitate their access to information, and as discussed above, it also can facilitate workplace learning. Moreover, the interactions with people with different backgrounds and capacities provide opportunities for the DoP staff to observe how other people think, talk, and act and learn from them. In particular, the DoP technical staff has the opportunity to meet with the MoE leadership team such as the Minister, deputy ministers, and directors. The participants believed that the interactions with the senior officials—who have been relatively successful people—give them a motivation to grow and provides a source of learning. This makes them feel important and inspires them to become like them. One of the participants put it this way:

There are employees in other departments who often cannot meet with the director of their own department, but the DoP employees sit in meetings with the directors to discuss their plans and activities. This has had a major influence on their minds, and is itself a source of capacity development. We call the directors on phone directly and have become like friends.

The DoP technical employees often attend external meetings as the MoE representatives, which again gives them a sense of importance and inspires them to develop their capacities. A research participant who is a civil service employee and has attended several high level meetings on behalf of the MoE believes that attending this type of meetings gives him a sense of importance and motivates him to enhance his knowledge and skills. He proudly told me about his experience:
I attended a workshop in the Central Statistics Office about their plans. I had a very good role in the meeting and provided comments and suggestions. The meeting was at director level and I, an ordinary employee, attended on behalf of the ministry of education. They well received my comments. Another meeting that I attended was at ministerial level ... I talked on behalf of the MoE, and again it was a very good experience.

**Workload**

The DoP is often overloaded with tasks, both regular tasks and extra tasks not directly related to the DoP mission. The DoP employees are often under pressure to complete their tasks on time. The participants had different views about this situation. Some of them believed that the workload they experience has facilitated their workplace learning. For example, I asked one of the research participants about the load of work he had at the department. He said that he was overloaded. "We not only lead the process of annual operational planning for the center, provinces, and districts, we perform many other tasks that are not directly related to our department." I asked him how he felt about it and his answer was: "I like it, because it helps develop my capacities.”

Some other participants believe that the workload of the department is too much and they do not have time to spend on their own professional development and system development. They have to compromise quality in order to be able to meet the tight deadlines.

**A Combination of Theory and Practice by Teaching in NTP**

Four participants of this research teach at the National Training Program (NTP)—a program already described in the previous chapter. The participants who teach in NTP believe that teaching has helped them to improve their theoretical knowledge in the field of planning and evaluation and has provided them with an excellent opportunity to reflect
on their practice and has led to some improvements in their work. Teaching at NTP has motivated them to learn more about planning and evaluation by reviewing relevant theories, models, and principles in order to be able to teach the courses and answer students’ questions. One of the participants stated: “as a senior manager of planning department who oversee the planning process at MoE, it would be a shame not to be able to teach the concept of planning or answer student questions.”

In addition, the NTP in-service students were planning officers working at provincial and district education departments, who were very familiar with realities on the ground. They have a lot of valuable information about current situation of education system and the unique challenges of each province and district. According to one of participants, he has learned a lot from class discussions.

One of the participants who has taught in NTP for two semesters and trained NTP instructors provided an example of learning that happened as a result of teaching a planning concept – the logframe. He had an initial understanding of the concept and the use of it in the planning process. The concept however became clearer for him and he gained a higher level of understanding of the concept as a result of his teaching. He was sure that the trainees were very satisfied with the training too. This new understanding has helped him to improve his practice of developing logframes for the MoE programs and projects. This is an example of how teaching at NTP has facilitated participants’ learning that in turn led to improvement in their professional practice.

Another example of learning through teaching that has influenced their work is about educational indicators. One of the participants has taught the indicators in NTP for several semesters, and teaching them has helped him memorize and better understand the
indicators. He did not need to look the manuals for calculating indicators, and this has increased his efficiency and accuracy in preparing reports.
**Personal Factors**

The following personal factors have been identified influential in the workplace learning of the participants: gender, educational background, English language skills, personal vision, and self-confidence in learning. It is important to note that I did not explore how different demographic variables affected their workplace learning, but just focused on those factors that were raised during the interviews or I could conclude from the data myself. For example, age is a personal demographic factor that could affect their workplace learning, but it was not raised in the discussions. The reason might be the fact that the age difference between the participants was not large.

**Personal Motivation**

The participants varied with regard to their motivation for learning and career progress. The four technical assistants who participated in this research seemed to have stronger sense of motivation than the civil service employees. They had clearer and more ambitious visions for their future. One of the participants who was very successful in developing his capacity, especially in research and evaluation said:

I’m personally very interested in building my capacity in evaluation and to be known as an evaluation expert, at least to those who work inside or outside the MoE. I want them to know that I have the evaluation expertise. I was looking for opportunities such as EQUIP Evaluation and could not afford to lose it.

This participant had an ambitious vision for his professional life. He wanted to become a well-known evaluation expert who works as an international consultant outside of Afghanistan. His strong motivation led him to push to take responsibility for managing EQUIP evaluation discussed in the previous chapter. He was a successful student during his higher education and an active member of a book and social club. He was also
successful in his previous jobs before joining the MoE-DoP, but deliberately chose to join the Department of Planning to have a professional career.

A few participants perceived that their work was very important and could bring major changes in the education system of Afghanistan and consequently to the overall situation of the country. This perception gave them strong motivation to work hard as well as a sense of satisfaction from their work. For example, one of the participants said that “I always have a view that if we bring reform in education, many other things will improve. This view has helped me a lot. I see education as an essential solution for the development of my country”.

The participants’ hard lives as refugees in Iran and Pakistan could be a reason for their comparably higher personal motivation for learning and growth. Six out of eight participants fled to the neighboring countries during the civil war. They often had tough jobs such as construction laborer that could have increased their resilience.

**Self-confidence in Learning**

Another factor related to personal motivation is individual self-confidence in learning. Again the technical assistants participating in this research seemed to have a higher self-confidence in their ability to learn. They had more successful experiences in school, university, and their previous jobs.

It seems that those who have the habit and experience of independent study are more successful at workplace learning. They are better at self-directed learning, which is the way that adults learn best. However, those who think a formal training or course is necessary for learning, seem to be less successful. One of the participants who has not
been as successful believed that he could not improve his skills because he did not have a good mentor.

**Gender**

As mentioned before, one of the participants of this research was female. She and one male participant raised gender as a factor influencing her engagement in workplace learning. She did not get engaged in some critical tasks because of her gender—tasks that could develop her skills significantly. For example, she rejected the opportunity to travel abroad to participate in professional development programs like the IIEP short-term training programs and a training program in India. Many Afghan families including hers do not approve a young lady to travel without a close relative accompanying her.

She was also asked to travel to provinces outside Kabul for field visits to collect data for the EJSR, but again she refused the opportunities for the same reasons. As the director of the DoP said the field trips to provinces were critical for learning and capacity development of a planning officer because the trips help them better understand the realities on the ground and how the plans were perceived and implemented in the districts. The security situation in many provinces is not good, which causes many people, particularly women, strongly prefer not to travel to provinces especially outside of major cities by themselves.

It is worth noting that not all Afghan women are alike in this regard. There are Afghan women who are willing to travel abroad and even to provinces. However, based on my own personal experience, the majority of Afghan women are similar to the participant of this research and are not willing to travel, especially to provinces, because of the cultural sensitivities. Many international organizations pay for a male relative to
accompany the female employee during trips to provinces, but the MoE does not do so and cannot afford it.

The female participant in this study lives with her husband’s family and is mother of a young child. So she has many daily chores that literally do not leave her any time outside of official work hours to spend on her capacity development. Every day she wakes up early to clean the house, prepares breakfast for her family (including her husband’s family), then takes her daughter to her mother’s house so her mother can take care of the child during the day. Then she leaves for the office around 6:30 am. After work she first goes to her mother’s house to pick up her child and they return home. She then prepares dinner for the family. This daily routine does not leave any time for her to work on personal capacity development, and she cannot attend any programs after work.

Gender influence is not all negative. Based on my experience of working with the MoE, there are a few female employees in administrative positions. They have more opportunities for promotion and capacity development than male employees because of the MoE gender equality policy that is promoted by the international partners.

**Educational Background**

The educational background, especially whether or not an employee held a Bachelor’s degree when he or she joined the DoP, seems to have influenced the participants’ opportunities for professional development and promotion within the department. According to the MoE policy, only those with a bachelor’s degree are eligible for management positions, and it is a requirement for participating in the IIEP Advanced Training Program as a graduate program. On the other hand, those without a
BA degree have had a hard time getting promotion in the MoE/DoP and have missed many capacity development opportunities.

Three participants did not have a bachelor’s degree at the time of joining the DoP. One still does not have a degree and is studying in the IIEP NTP program to obtain an associate degree. Although the DoP provided them with opportunities to continue their education, they believe that their low education held them back from promotion and participating in capacity development opportunities including ATP program.

**English Language Skill**

English language skill is perceived by almost all participants to be very critical for participating in capacity development programs abroad, self-study, and performing technical tasks of the department. Three participants reported that they have lost capacity development opportunities because of not meeting the English language requirements. As one of them said, they were in dire need of capacity development but they cannot participate in many CD program. On the other side, they believed that few people at the department take benefit of CD opportunities only because of their language, but also because they already have a greater level of capacity.

The participants with strong language skills are able to download and review many materials from the web about their areas of work. This has helped them tremendously in doing their jobs. Others are restricted to materials written in local languages that are limited. For example, one of the participants who led the EQUIP evaluation process told me that he had looked up many samples of evaluation TORs, inception reports, and final reports from the web to learn more about the evaluation process.
Those who could not communicate in English were not be able to interact with the international IIEP staff and consultants and therefore could not learn from them.

**Contextual Factors**

Several contextual factors were identified to be influencing the participants’ workplace learning. These factors are distinct from the factors related to the characteristics of tasks or the personal characteristics of the employees performing them. The factors include short-term and long-term educational programs, guidance, organizational culture (senior managers’ support for learning, friendship, information sharing, and openness), incentive structure, internal politics, organizational structure, and office space and transportation facilities.

**Official Short-term and Long-term Educational Programs**

Participating in short-term and long-term educational programs was reported as a factor facilitating the participants’ workplace learning. Although the impact of the programs was perceived to be different, the participants believed that the training programs offered to them were relevant to their needs and effective in developing their capacity. Here I list a few major training programs in which they participated and report their perceptions about the impact of the programs on their learning.

**IIEP Advanced Training Program**

As discussed before, the IIEP project provided scholarships for a master’s level program in Paris, the Advanced Training Program (ATP) in Educational Planning and Management. Three participants of this study have participated in ATP, and they believe that the program was very effective in building their capacities. One of them said that “[the ATP program] changed my view about planning. Planning was my job even before..."
going to ATP and I had many questions in my mind. I learned many tools that helped me to improve my work. I was able to use it after return.”

**IIEP Short-term Training Workshops**

The IIEP project has also sponsored the DoP staff to participate in the Specialized Courses Programme (SCP), offered by IIEP in Paris. The participants who have attended in training programs on school mapping, projection and simulation, etc. believed that these training programs were very relevant to their jobs and very effective. For example, one of them said that “A good thing about IIEP training on school mapping was that we had past background about it. We had discussions about it with our colleagues in the department before I participated in the training, and we had learned the basics of school mapping. However, we had not learned it academically.”

According to the participants, a major advantage of IIEP training programs was their relevance to the participant’s work. The IIEP has been involved in the DoP capacity development and activities, so they knew the department needs very well and could make the program relevant to this context.

**Scholarship for Bachelor’s Program**

The MoE provided scholarships for some of the employees to study in private universities in Bachelor’s programs. Two participants of this study have received such scholarships. In addition, the project has provided scholarships for those with associate degrees (14th grade) to study two more years in one of the private universities to receive their BA degrees. These scholarship opportunities have been provided for professional development of the department employees.
International Consultant Research Training

In 2012, an international consultant was hired through Civilian Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) for developing the capacity of the Department of Planning. She worked with the department for about nine months. She had a PhD in education and extensive experience in the field of international education especially education in emergencies. She designed and led a capacity development process for the Research and Evaluation Unit staff, in which all training participants were involved in designing and implementing a research project. They were trained both in theory and in practice. The topic of the research was coordination among research departments within the MoE. The main research question was how to improve coordination among the departments in research. She explained each step of research process and then helped the employees to go through the steps. She was like a mentor or coach for a team, but they themselves came up with the research problem and questions, conducted interviews and document reviews, analyzed the data, and prepared the final report.

The participants that I interviewed believed that the training had been effective, and one of them said that "the process was very effective. It gave us confidence that we can conduct a research from the beginning to the end. It gave us confidence to interview important people at the MoE...this helped me in conducting following researches such as the research on policy gaps at the MoE."

NYU Intervention

New York University is implementing a research project called “Assessment of Learning Outcomes and Social Effects of Community-based Education” (ALSE) in Afghanistan. One of the project objectives is to develop capacities of the DoP Research

As per request of the DoP, the project developed and conducted an individual-based assessment of the unit employees’ research capacities. The objectives of the assessment were to determine the existing capacity gaps among the unit staff, develop tools and indicators for assessing staff’s skills, and provide baseline for enhancing the skills of the staff later (draft assessment report, 2016). According to the research and evaluation unit manager, a draft version of the assessment report was shared with the department for their comments and feedback.

A couple of key employees of the unit, including one of the participants, were involved in the design of this assessment. He pointed to this assessment as a learning experience and is very helpful.

**Other Training Workshops**

The participants have had opportunities to attend several other short-term training workshops both in Kabul (such as Development Assistance Facility for Afghanistan (DAFA) training workshop) and abroad (such as “Impact Evaluation” and “Globalization and Education” workshops in India). In addition, several short-term training workshops were conducted by the DoP technical assistants on different topics.
English language was reported as a major challenge for taking advantage of training workshops offered abroad, especially for the civil service employees. One of the participants told me that he had attended two workshops in India, but since the workshops were in English, he could not benefit from them. He said:

The training workshops in India were not effective at all. The workshops conducted here inside Afghanistan were more effective. Most of them were short-term, and provided by our colleagues on evaluation… they were in our own language and we could at least engage in discussions and solve our problems and learn something.

**Guidance**

The guidance provided by the senior staff and national and international technical assistants were reported as a key factor facilitating the DoP staff workplace learning. Here I provide a few examples of how the guidance has facilitated learning for the participants.

The Research and Evaluation Unit created a new arrangement for enhancing the capacity of its employees. The unit paired each civil servant with one technical assistant to work together as a team. One of the unit civil servants described the arrangement:

Tasks are assigned to me and my colleague [who is a TA]. It is the recommendation of the department, and my colleagues, that I take the lead in performing the tasks. It is an educational process in addition to [a procedure for fulfilling] our office responsibilities. I prepare the first draft of documents; he improves it; and then he submits it as our final product.

According to the unit manager, this arrangement has helped improve the capacity of the employees and also the relationship between civil servants and technical assistants.
He believes that when they work closely together, the civil servant will appreciate the knowledge and skills of the TA, so hopefully there will be fewer complaints about the salary gap. In addition, according to the manager, one source of frustration for the civil servants was that all important tasks were given to the technical assistants, and the civil servants were out of the loop. This new arrangement can potentially solve this problem too.

The participants believed that this arrangement was useful, but there are challenges as well. For example, I describe one of the civil servants’ experiences of being paired with a TA. They have formed a group, and one of the tasks assigned to them was to evaluate Islamic Education Program as a part of last year EJSR (2015). So they collected data from provinces, analyzed data, and prepared the report. The civil servant was asked to draft the report, but he was not able to complete the report, and just submitted an incomplete report to his mentor and the manager of the unit. He said, “

I was frustrated and tired of working on the report that I was glad it was over. The major problem was unreliable and inconsistent data. The task should have been clearer for a person like me who just started analyzing data. The difference between data was not minor to be able to justify it. For example, [number of female students in Islamic schools] was zero in one source and 10,000 in the other one, or it was 10,000 in one source and 50,000 in another source. I did not know how to resolve the discrepancies [and there was not clear guidance].

He had a similar experience with another task. He, and a few colleagues, were assigned to conduct research on policy documents at the MoE in order to find policy gaps. He believes that their supervisor did not provide clear and enough guidance for the task, which wasted their time and led to frustration. He said:
The topic of the research, policy documents at MoE, was vague for us, and determining the scope of research was difficult too. Therefore it was really difficult for us to design the research. Whatever we designed got rejected by our supervisor. It took two or three weeks that he kept rejecting our design, to the extent that we really get frustrated and did not want to do the job. He neither told us how to design it nor accepted our work. That was a real problem.

The arrangement was only in the Research and Evaluation Unit, not in the Planning Unit. The Planning Unit technical assistants, except the manager, did not spend time in building the capacity of government employees. For example, one of the unit employees said that

There are technical assistants in our department, but they do their own tasks or they are in meetings and they don’t have time to spend on the civil servants capacity…. So they don't have such a role in capacity development. I think a major purpose of TAs is to work closely with the civil servants to help them to improve their capacities and fill their skill gaps. However, this is not happening here.”

The guidance provided by the unit managers and directors were also reported to be very effective in the employees’ learning. They are technical assistants working in official management positions, and have the skills necessary for mentoring and guiding staff. As one of the participants said “I did not know much about my work when I joined this unit, but my supervisor helped me a lot, which I am thankful to him, and his pressures made me learn something.”

The IIEP project technical support was perceived as a major source of guidance for the participants. The IIEP has provided technical support through international consultants in different areas such as strategic planning, projection models, developing
reports for Education Joint Sector Review (EJSR), etc. According to the participants, the amount of technical support provided by the IIEP international consultant decreased during the last three years\(^\text{14}\). However, a team of IIEP consultants were invited recently to help the MoE develop a new strategic plan.

One of the department’s managers believed that IIEP team approach was to provide guidance upon request of the employees. The approach was focused on learning by doing, and he believed that the approach worked very well for him. He could take the lead in many important tasks and learn from those experiences. The IIEP international consultants provided backup support, and left all decisions to the DoP managers.

There are different views on the effectiveness of international consultants. Another participant, for example, acknowledges the contributions of IIEP international consultants at early stages of the project, but believes that “international consultants were not helpful in developing their capacities, but it was good in preparing some documents.” According to him, language was a major barrier: “I had an international consultant who could speak the local language. She was really helpful, and helped a lot improve our capacity.”

**Organizational Culture**

The participants believed that the department environment was conducive for learning and capacity development: the senior managers strongly support staff capacity development.

\(^{14}\) The IIEP project coordinator confirmed the decline and provided the following reasons:
1. IIEP’s perception that DoPE was fairly capable/technically autonomous in its own right for many of the tasks that IIEP would perhaps tend to support in the past.
2. There were fewer direct requests from MoE/DOPE to IIEP.
3. The security in Kabul deteriorated, making it more difficult for IIEP to identify international staff or consultants actually willing to travel to Kabul.
development and provide CD opportunities, and a culture of friendship, information sharing, and openness exist within the department that have facilitated their workplace learning. I will discuss each briefly here.

**Senior Managers support for learning**

The participants believed that capacity development was a priority for the department senior managers [the General Director, DoP Director, and Unit Managers]. The participants reported that the senior managers usually included the department's capacity development in major external projects working with the MoE. For example, the New York University wanted to conduct research in Afghanistan about community based education and the General Director asked the university to add a capacity development component to the project. As another example, one of the key purposes of engaging the DoP in the process of EQUIP evaluation was developing the employee’s capacity. Finally, the department provided scholarships for the employees to continue their higher education both at BA and MA levels. Furthermore, almost all participants considered the senior managers as role models; who were passionate about learning, knowledgeable, hardworking, and honest.

The senior managers encouraged the staff to take more responsibilities to learn more. For example, one of the participants who took the responsibility of leading EQUIP evaluation that led the participants to learn more about program evaluation and the process of project management explained how his supervisor’s support and encouragement were helpful for him:

My supervisors, the general director and the director, and even IIIEP project managers supported me in this process. [They have told us] that is important to
understand the quality of program being implemented, whether or not they are effective, and etc. The general director was always giving me the idea that the work that we were doing was important. He told us it might be a little higher than our current level, but we will learn by doing it. Their encouragements were effective on me.

**Friendship, information sharing, and openness**

From my discussions with the participants I found that the DoP’s organizational culture has elements that could facilitate workplace learning. For example, as the participants reported, the DoP staff are very friendly with each other. They play futsal\(^{15}\) together once per week in a private gymnasium during the weekend. They had played futsal together for three years or so. They believed that these futsal sessions had made them more close to each other. In addition, the employees had gone outside of Kabul to locations like Stalef and Paghman for retreats several times that increased a sense of friendship among the DoP staff.

Another positive element of the DoP organizational culture is a culture of information sharing that has facilitated employee’s learning and growth. This is truer for the Research and Evaluation Unit. They share any information and documents with all staff. One of the participants said that:

> The DoP has a very good environment [for learning and growth]. I have not heard of any other organization that can make the employee develop like this department. One good thing about the DoP is that no one withholds information and his or her capacity and everyone helps everyone else. It is interesting that one of NTP students came to me and asked for help in his monograph. He was working on planning process, and he was struggling to complete it. Someone has introduced me to him. Although I was very busy, I accepted to help him and I did.

\(^{15}\) Futsal is a variant of soccer game that is played on small fields and mainly indoor. Each team consists of five players. This game has become very popular in Kabul.
This is the way people are in this department. He defended his monograph and got a top grade. Our manager is the same, the director too.

They also believed that the department employees were given opportunities to openly critique one another’s points of view even for their supervisors. The directors and managers were perceived to be tolerable of critiques and encouraged others to be open. One of the participants believed that this culture of open criticism had facilitated individual learning. The director said that his team members were good critical thinkers and knowledgeable, and whenever he shared any idea or document they provided constructive comments and helped enrich the documents.

**Incentive and reward structure**

The participants believed that an effective incentive system was in place in the department of planning—at least in the Research and Evaluation Unit. They believed that if a person worked hard, he or she would get recognition and promotion. One respondent expressed his satisfaction with the incentive structure as follows:

Our unit manager considers those who really work hard for professional development opportunities. For example, he introduced those who worked hard for a couple of scholarship opportunities. I think the reward process is very good at our department. How much they can provide such opportunities is another story, but our colleagues are happy with how it is distributed. They invest on someone who deserves the investment.

For example, the civil service employees who conducted the policy document research were recognized and praised by the unit manager and director. However, the participants working with the Planning Unit had a different experience. For example, one participant believed that he had worked very hard and had major achievements, but he
was not recognized or rewarded. “I worked hard and collected the school construction plans from all provinces through many phone calls and emails, but no one appreciated my hard work.” Here is my conversation with him about this topic:

**Question:** Have you been rewarded for your work here?

**Answer:** No. I know that no one appreciates and rewards me even if I have any major achievement?

**Question:** Have you had any major achievement?

**Answer:** Yes, I prepared the MoE school construction plan in softcopy and hardcopy, and I had to contact many people and it took a long time. That was one. The other one was completing the three-year plan for four provinces.

One of the department managers also believed that despite his outstanding achievements and hard work, the MoE leadership team did not recognize and appreciate his efforts and has not received any certificate of appreciation yet. While other people with less achievements had received many certificates and were recognized and rewarded in official ceremonies. He said:

I have been working here for eight years. Except one certificate that I was awarded during my first year, I have not received any certificate of appreciation during the last seven years. No one has even told me a good job. However, employees of other departments who I believe don't do their job properly receive several such certificates. I see their posts in Facebook. Secretaries of deputy ministers and director get certificates, even from the Parliament. This is really disappointing for me.

The participant blamed the department directors, especially the general director, for the lack of appreciation. He believed that the director did not understand the
importance of such appreciations for encouraging staff. He had shared his concern with the director and his response was that such official appreciations would put the staff in a fragile situation. People may perceive that the staff has a connection with the MoE leadership, so the appreciated employee may lose his or her job when the leadership changes. The participants did not accept the director’s argument. My observation is that such certificates are not distributed fairly and personal connection to the Minister is a key determinant of who receive the certificates of appreciation.

*Promotion Opportunities*

The DoP has provided some attractive promotion opportunities for its employees that motivated them to develop their capacities. One of the opportunities was being hired as a technical assistant for the IIEP project. The director of the DoP, and the unit managers, all three, were initially hired as civil servants and worked in the lower positions for years, and later they were promoted to those positions and were hired as IIEP technical assistants. Several other civil service employees of the department were hired as IIEP technical assistants. As mentioned before, the salary of an IIEP TA is more than 10 times that of a government employee on average, so this opportunity is very attractive for the DoP employees. This has provided a great incentive for the DoP employees to work hard and develop their capacities. For example, one of the participants who is currently a civil service employee has stayed with the DoP for years waiting for such an opportunity.

In addition, the opportunity to study in IIEP ATP was also a motivation for the employees to improve their English language skills and technical skills. Two of the
participants have completed their bachelor’s degrees and are working hard on improving their language skills to be eligible for this prestigious program.

**Staff Termination and Transfer Policy**

There are some policies that influence workplace learning, most importantly the government regulation for staff termination and transfer. According to the regulation, the official positions within the MoE are permanent and it is a very tedious process to fire or transfer an employee from one department to another. If a director is unhappy with the performance of an employee, he or she should send the employee for professional development courses. After three years of poor performance, the director can fire the employee. The employee has the right to appeal the decision. The director of the DoP told me that it is almost impossible to fire an employee, and he never thinks of this option. Transferring employees is a complicated process too. There should be a vacancy in the target department, the positions should be similar, and the director of target department should agree with the transfer. Therefore, similar to firing staff, transferring them is almost impossible. According to managers who were interviewed, this part of the Afghan government regulation has created a comfort zone for some employees and demotivated them from learning and capacity development.

The government salary scale was also mentioned as a hindering factor. The civil service employees believed that their income is not enough to make a decent living in Kabul, and there will not be a major increase in salary if they improve their skills or are promoted to higher positions. The average salary is about 150 USD per month.
Internal Politics

Internal politics within an organization influences how tasks, guidance, capacity development opportunities, and incentives are distributed among the staff. The coalitions within an organization are not easy to observe and people are not comfortable talking about them, especially with an outsider. The participants of my research touched upon two informal divisions very briefly: ethnic divisions and TA versus civil service. I will briefly discuss each one here.

Ethnic Coalitions

Ethnicity is a sensitive topic in Afghan society, and is the main definer of the political divisions in the country. The groups involving the civil war that lasted for decades were formed based on different ethnicities. Considering the sensitivity of this topic, most participants believed that no one at the department acted based on ethnic preferences. One of the participants believed that ethnicity has a role in the department. People belonging to the same ethnicity share the same culture and feel close to each other. He said that one of the unit managers and the director are from the same ethnic group, so they have become very close friends. Therefore, the manager has received favors from the director, for example, he has been selected for several capacity development workshops outside Afghanistan. The other participant addressed this in an indirect way. He told me that others accuse him of being favored by the director because of their ethnic connection. He rejected any suggestion that he had received favors, but this indicates that the DoP employees are aware of these ethnic divisions and some believe that ethnicity has played a role in distributing opportunities.
**Tension between TAs/Civil Servants**

As mentioned before, both civil service and development employees work for the Department of Planning. The development employees who are called technical assistants (TA) are paid by international donors (IIEP and World Bank). There is a huge salary gap between these two groups, which causes tensions between them and also frustration for the civil service employees. This is a general issue for the whole ministry, even the whole government of Afghanistan. The civil service employee participants believed that this huge salary gap was unfair. As one of them said:

> I think this is a wrong policy that TAs who work for the government get very different salary and benefits. The government should have designed a system to acknowledge their skills by providing higher salaries, but not ten, twenty, or even thirty times of civil servants. This is unfair.

The participants’ reactions to this issue were different. For some, this was a source of frustration and demotivation. For others it is a source of motivation. One of them said: “[the possibility of becoming a TA] encourages us to improve our skills in order to get hired as TA sometimes. There were such opportunities in this department and some civil service employees were promoted for those positions.” He believed that the current TAs have significantly higher qualifications, so the salary gap was not a big issue. However, he remembered a TA who was hired through a connection that did not deserve the position: “we had one TA in the past, three years ago, who even could not type in computer and did not know anything about the MoE and I had to help him and prepare his reports. He was receiving 2500 USD per month and was here for two years.”
**Organizational Structure**

One of the participants pointed to the department’s structure as a challenge that negatively influenced his work and learning. As explained in the section introducing the Department of Planning, the General Director of Planning and Evaluation supervises the Director of Planning who in turn supervises two unit managers. The managers supervise both civil service and development employees. This hierarchal structure has limited the employees’ interactions with the directors. One of the participants who work as a civil service employee was not even sure if the general director actually knew him personally. The respondent believed that the directors did not follow the hierarchal reporting lines all the time. The directors assign tasks directly to the employees and bypass the unit managers. Sometimes, the general director bypasses the director and assigns tasks directly to the unit managers or the employees. The participants believed that this issue had created many problems and tensions within the department. The unit managers who were bypassed and ignored do not cooperate with the employee and do not provide enough support. The employees also face a dilemma on how to deal with the tension between the unit manager, their direct supervisor, and the directors. I think this is due to the hierarchical structure of the department structure that creates tension and limits potentially useful interactions between the staff and the department directors.

**TAs working in official positions**

There is a specific structural arrangement within the DoP that does not exist in other MoE departments. The director and the two unit managers are both government employees and IIEP contract employees are technical assistants. They are accountable to their supervisors in the MoE as well as IIEP. As discussed before, this has created a sort
of conflict of interest because the IIEP TAs working as MoE senior officials promote IIEP interests, especially for the continuation of the project. On the other side, the participants believed that this specific arrangement had facilitated their learning by placing people with high qualifications and skills as their supervisors. Without this arrangement, their supervisors would be some civil service employees who could not provide technical support.

**Office Space**

Almost all employees of both Planning and Research and Evaluation Units work in the same office (about 20 people). The office is less than 60 square meters. They all believe that office space is a barrier to learning at the department of planning. One of them described the issue as follows:

The office space is a serious problem. [Our office is very crowded and noisy], when a person passes next to you, it hits you and distracts you. Everyone is making noise from the manager to a simple employee. This is not acceptable. This is a very improper work environment. [Our work] requires a quiet and decent environment. The noise from the street is also a problem. These all influence our motivation, energy, and etc.

The DoP does not have any proper space for meetings. The only place for holding meeting is the director’s office, which is not always available. The unit managers cannot hold staff meetings because of a lack of office. According to one of the participants, the lack of space for meetings has limited the information and knowledge sharing between the employees’ that hinders workplace learning.

**Concluding remarks**

The following table summarized the factors that are perceived as having influence on the participants’ workplace learning. The supporting evidences are already provided in
this chapter. The next chapter will discuss how these factors are related to the conceptual framework developed based on the literature review, and how the IIEP project made use of these factors to facilitate the participants’ workplace learning.

Table 5- Factors Influencing the Employee’s Workplace Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Factors</th>
<th>Factors</th>
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| **Task-related Factors**   | • Level of Cognitive Demand  
 |                           | • Level of Access to Information  
 |                           | • Level of Professional Contact  
 |                           | • Level of Workload  
 |                           | • Combining Theory and Practice                                        |
| **Personal Factors**       | • Personal Vision and motivation  
 |                           | • Personal Self-confidence in learning  
 |                           | • Gender  
 |                           | • Educational Background  
 |                           | • English Language Skill                                                |
| **Contextual Factors**     | • Guidance and joint work  
 |                           | • senior manager’s support for learning (cultural)  
 |                           | • Openness (culture)  
 |                           | • Information sharing culture (culture)  
 |                           | • Incentive and reward structure  
 |                           | • Organizational Structure (arrangement)  
 |                           | • Internal Politics  
 |                           | • Office Space and facilities                                           |
As discussed in the Introduction Chapter, many evaluation studies show that the results of capacity development programs are often disappointing (Smithers, 2011; Fukuda-Parr, 2002). My argument was that the workplace learning theories and research findings could provide invaluable insights on how to enhance the effectiveness of capacity development programs. I developed a conceptual framework, illustrating the factors influencing workplace learning and capacity development, based on the existing literature. The framework was used as a theoretical lens to understand the learning experiences of the employees of Afghan Ministry of Education, Department of Planning (DoP). The purpose of this qualitative research was to examine factors influencing workplace learning in the DoP and investigate how the IIEP capacity development project had affected the participant’s workplace learning. The sample included eight employees of the DoP who had participated in the IIEP project activities.

Discussion

I will discuss how the findings fit the conceptual framework (see the diagram in below) that was already discussed in the literature review chapter and how the findings are different from the framework. Each box in this diagram refers to a group of factors, so I focus on each box (a group of factors) one by one and explain how, and if, those factors have influenced this research participants’ learning experiences.
Personal Characteristics

The findings indicate that gender, educational background, and English language skill are some personal characteristics that have influenced the participants’ workplace learning. The findings, therefore, confirm the importance of personal characteristics in the process of workplace learning and capacity development. Highlighting these three personal factors does not imply that other characteristics did not have any role in facilitating or hindering the workplace learning. It rather means that these three personal characteristics were derived from the analysis of the participants’ learning experiences or somehow were emphasized by these specific participants during interviews.

Gender: The experiences of the only female participant of this research indicate that being a woman restricted her participation in some work activities that were crucial for learning (such as field trips to provinces) and also limited her participation in capacity development programs (such as participating in training workshops held after work or abroad). This is not surprising because of many gender-based norms that exist in Afghan society.

It is important for capacity development programs to consider how female participants will experience the programs and more importantly how the organizational norms of the workplace will influence the female participants’ informal learning processes and their abilities to apply their learning in practice. The CD programs should adopt creative strategies to increase the female participants’ involvement in learning-rich activities at their workplace and their engagement in CD activities. Understanding how gender influences the process of capacity development and learning in the context of developing countries such as Afghanistan requires further research.
All DoP employees who participated in the IIEP Advanced Training Program (ATP) in Paris were male, and none of the eight IIEP Technical Assistants at the time of writing this report were female. However, the project has specific gender-based targets for NTP participants, and in fact has a specific per-service program for female graduates of high schools.

**Educational Background:** The educational background was another personal characteristic that was found influencing the participants’ workplace learning experiences. The participants with bachelor’s degrees had more chances to take part in important work activities, to be promoted to higher positions, and to participate in capacity development programs such as the ATP master’s program. The IIEP CD project has tackled the issue by providing scholarships for the DoP employees without bachelors’ degrees to study in private universities in the evenings.

**English Language Skill:** The findings highlight the importance of English Language skill in the process of informal workplace learning and in participating in formal CD activities. The participants who could communicate in English were able to interact with international consultants provided by the IIEP and other projects and to read the planning and evaluation materials in English. In addition, their English language skill qualified them to be hired as the IIEP technical assistants, to perform more technical tasks, and to attend important meetings with stakeholders. Furthermore, proficiency in English language was a requirement for attending ATP and other training workshops held abroad.

The IIEP project has organized several English training programs for the DoP employees and also sponsored their registration to external English courses such as
American University of Afghanistan. The project has also provided incentives for the DoP staff to improve their English by giving preference to the DoP staff in hiring technical assistants.

**Personal Agency**

“Personal vision” and “personal confidence in learning” are two factors that were identified in this research as influential, which can be put under the category of personal agency. Comparing the experiences of two groups of participants, Technical Assistants and Civil Service employees, shows that TAs had higher senses of personal vision and confidence in learning and were more successful in developing their capacities too. This stresses the importance of understanding capacity development beneficiaries’ personal vision and self-confidence in their learning abilities, and developing programs to strengthen their personal motivation and self-confidence learning. This is related to Peter Senge (1990) theory of learning organization, and specifically the discipline of personal mastery. According to this theory, the difference between the current situation and the personal vision will provide a tension that will lead to increased capacity of the individual to achieve his or her results. The tension provides an intrinsic motivation for growth.

A key strategy of the IIEP project, as described in Sigsgaard (2011), was to develop the MoE’s, particularly the DoP’s confidence in planning through mentoring and coaching the DoP staff rather than prescribing some specific methods or tools. The fact that the participants had a chance to lead large activities, such as EQUIP evaluation and annual Education Joint Sector Review, helped them to develop their confidence in their abilities and learning skills.
Kind of Activities Engaged

The nature of activities and tasks was found to be very influential in facilitating the participants’ workplace learning. The participants were often engaged in coordinating planning processes, conducting or managing research and evaluation, writing progress or research reports, and teaching. All these activities require a high level of cognitive and analytical skills that challenge the employees to develop their skills. The activities facilitate the performers’ access to information and provide opportunities to interact with many people including high level officials and professionals within and outside the department.

The IIEP project has helped the DoP to initiate some new technical activities such as developing the MoE strategic plans, designing educational simulation and projection models, and conducting Education Joint Sector Review (EJSR). Although the IIEP project had a critical role in initiating the activities, the DoP staff gradually took more responsibilities and now they lead these activities themselves. This is another way in which the project has contributed in facilitating the participants’ workplace learning and capacity development.

There was a clear difference between the complexity level of tasks performed by the Planning Unit and the Research and Evaluation Unit. The Planning Unit coordinates the annual operational planning and three-year provincial planning. The planning process has been simplified considerably and become routine to a large extent. The planning templates and activities have not been changed significantly for years. The most challenging task of the unit is projecting the number of students, teachers, and schools. Other tasks done by the unit are relatively simple. The other highly technical task of the
department is strategic planning, but the staff of the unit, except the unit manager, has not been engaged in strategic planning. On the other side, the tasks performed by the Research and Evaluation Unit, such as EJSR, are relatively challenging. It seems that the level and type of learning between the employees of these two units is also different. The Planning Unit employees seem to have improved in operational activities, while the Research and Evaluation Unit employees have improved in research and analytical skills.

**Guidance**

The findings show that guidance in the forms of providing advice and feedback by supervisors, technical assistants, and even experts working with the MoE international partners has facilitated the participants’ workplace learning. One specific arrangement was in place in the Research and Evaluation Unit in order to increase the amount and quality of guidance provision and receiving: they paired each TA with one civil service employee to work closely with each other.

The IIEP project had a major role in this regard by hiring and deploying eight national technical assistants to work full-time with the DoP civil service employees and also by hiring international consultants to provide technical support and guidance on a short-term basis upon the request of the DoP. The IIEP national coordinator and also the IIEP staff in Paris supervise the technical assistants to make sure they are fulfilling their responsibilities.

**Contextual factors: Politics of Affiliations**

The findings indicate that some sort of affiliations and divisions based on ethnicity and the type of contract (technical assistant versus civil service) existed in the
DoP. There were no explicit references to the divisions in the interviews, but a few participants touched upon them indirectly. It would be difficult to make any conclusions on how the internal politics influenced the participants’ workplace learning and capacity development. Politics is a sensitive issue and people try to avoid talking about it with outsiders. The internal politics could have been a strong factor influencing the workplace learning of the participants, but my research was not able to capture the political dynamics of the department and its influence on the participants learning experiences. Further research is required to investigate the influence of internal politics on the process of workplace learning, especially in the context of developing countries.

It would be difficult, but very helpful, for the international organizations implementing capacity development programs to understand the target organization’s internal politics and manage its influence on the program results. The IIEP project has been supporting the DoP for more than a decade and had the opportunity at least to acquire a good understanding of the DoP internal politics.

**Contextual factors: Incentive Structure**

The incentive structure was also found to have influence on the participants’ workplace learning in both positive and negative ways. The availability of TA positions within the department – positions with very high salaries compared to civil service salary — provided a strong incentive for the participants to develop their capacities, especially in consideration of the DoP and IIEP policy of giving preferences to the existing DoP civil service employees in the selection processes. This incentive worked well for those who knew English, but did not work for others. For a couple of participants, the opportunities of studying in the ATP program and getting hired as a TA
seemed unreachable and did not motivate them to work on their skills. ATP is graduate program in Paris and relatively high level of English language is a requirement for admission. These incentives are provided by the IIEP project. The MoE itself did not provide any incentive for the employees to develop their capacities. The government salary is very low and the employee’s improved performance does not lead to a significant increase in his or her salary.

**Contextual factors: Workplace Culture**

The findings show that a culture of information sharing, friendship, and openness were perceived to exist in the department and to have facilitated the process of workplace learning and capacity development. The participants believed that capacity development has been a priority for the department, which might be to a large extent due to the IIEP capacity development project. The long-term collaboration of IIEP and DoP seemed to have positive influences on the organizational culture of the department.

**Contextual factors: Workplace Leadership**

Workplace leadership and workplace culture are two sides of the same coin (Schein, 2004, p. 1); leaders have a key role in shaping the organizational culture. Thus I have placed the leadership support to learning as a factor within the workplace culture category of factors. The participants believed that the DoP leaders were very supportive of learning and capacity development and they were positive role models for others. According to the participants, the leaders encouraged learning and pushed the department international partners to allocate resources for the DoP capacity development. I have provided examples in the previous chapter. The IIEP project provides the salaries of the DoP directors and senior managers. Without the project’s support, the DoP would have
not been able to afford the current leaders. This is, therefore, another way in which the IIEP project has facilitated the workplace learning and capacity development of the DoP employees.

**Contextual factors: Workplace Structure and Arrangements**

The following factors, related to workplace structure and arrangements, were identified as having influenced the participants’ workplace learning in both positive and negative ways: the DoP organizational structure, TAs filling official government positions, and the office space.

The IIEP project sponsored a few TAs to work in official positions at the DoP which was perceived to have a positive impact on the participants’ workplace learning (see Chapter V Findings: Factors Influencing Learning for more details). As mentioned before, lack of proper space was reported hindering the participants learning. The project could not solve this issue and provide any office space to the department. Providing office space was obviously beyond their means.

**Formal Training**

In the Findings Chapter, I have provided a list of training workshops in which the participants of this research had attended. The training workshops, especially those offered by the IIEP project, were perceived to be relevant to the participants’ needs, and they were able to apply their learning in their work. It is important to note that offering training workshops was one of several modalities utilized by the IIEP project.
Reflection on the Conceptual Framework

I developed a conceptual framework, illustrated in page 47, based on my understanding of the existing literature on workplace learning and capacity development. Now after the research is done, I would like to reflect on the framework and discuss how this research’s findings changed my thinking and what changes are needed in the framework to reflect my enhanced understanding of the workplace learning.

- First, the conceptual framework is a diagram that maps the static relationship between the factors and workplace learning. However, the findings show that the factors relate to each other and to workplace learning in dynamic and complex ways. For example, personal characteristics influence the person’s interpretations of the contextual factors, and both personal characteristics and the person’s interpretations of the contextual factors affect how he or she engages in activities and receives guidance by interacting with others. All factors have mutual relations that a diagram cannot illustrate.

- The balance between challenge and support: Data from this research highlighted the importance of a balance between challenge (imposed by the kind of tasks involved and the person is personal characteristics and agency) and support (guidance provided by mentors, supervisors, or peers) in the process of workplace learning. Participants reported several incidents in which they received appropriate level of challenge and support (such as EJSR and EQUIP evaluation) that led to learning, and also reported incidents (such as policy document research) that the balance
did not exist and led to frustration. This important notion that was first proposed by Sanford’s (1966) theory of challenge and support in the context of student development theories. However, the conceptual framework does not properly represent this idea because it is a function of interaction between at least three different factors.

- “Kind of Activities Engaged” is a key factor in the conceptual framework, but the focus was merely on the degree of routineness. This research’s findings also confirm the importance of this factor, but suggest that more factors related to the nature of tasks influence workplace learning. It is not only the degree of routines (or what I called the level of cognitive demand), but also the level of access to information and the amount of professional interactions required for completing the tasks, and the amount of reflections and reading required for completing the tasks are important too.

- Simplicity: The conceptual framework differentiated between guidance and contextual factors in order to make guidance to stand out. However, the findings of this research show that distinguishing between guidance and context is difficult and guidance is in fact a key component of the context. Therefore, I categorized the factors in three major categories: personal, task-related, and contextual factors. This new classification is easier to remember and hopefully consider in designing the capacity development interventions.
Lessons Learned

There is a classic question asked by dissertation committees “if you were doing this research all over again, is there anything that you would do differently?” (Silverman, 2013, p. 10). Here in this section, I reflect on my experience of conducting this research and provide my answers to the question and share some lessons learned:

If I were to do this research all over again, I would focus on only one factor and explore the influence of that specific factor on the process of workplace learning. The factor could be selected from the list of factors already identified in the workplace learning literature. The research would provide a more in-depth knowledge and make a more significant contribution to the literature.

I had asked the participants to transcribe the interviews themselves with the purpose of giving them more time to reflect on their experiences and hopefully add more information and insights. The other reason was to find a proper way to pay for their time spent during interviews and transcription. However, asking participants to transcribe interview delayed the process considerably. The participants were not trained at typing and transcription and they were very slow. One of them did not have a personal computer at home and still accepted to do the transcription. Transcribing one interview took him more than a month. There was also power outage in Kabul for a couple of months, which delayed their work. If I do the research again, I would do all transcriptions myself.

Implications for Capacity Development Practice

This research proposes a framework or a theory of change for designing and evaluating capacity development interventions aiming at enhancing the workplace learning. This framework can be useful for the managers of any organization who intend
to facilitate their employees’ learning, thereby improve the organization’s performance. For example, a slightly modified version of this framework can be used by schools for enhancing teacher learning.

This research also recommends that CD programs should go beyond a reliance on training beneficiaries on specific knowledge or skills, but concentrate on enhancing the beneficiaries’ “learning by doing”. The project should consider how different factors—personal, tasks-related, and contextual factors—fluence the beneficiaries’ workplace learning. The CD programs should adopt specific strategies for handling and using the factors to increase the effectiveness of their interventions.

This research indicates that personal characteristics and personal agency of the beneficiaries are important factors that affect the results of the capacity development programs. The programs, therefore, should conduct initial readiness assessment to ensure the beneficiaries have necessary motivation and self-confidence in learning, and also develop interventions to strengthen the beneficiaries’ motivations and confidence in learning.

This research has specifically highlighted the importance of engaging employees in tasks that provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support or guidance to the employees in order to make sure they overcome the challenges, learn something meaningful, and do not get overwhelmed and frustrated. The capacity development programs should work closely with the leadership of the target organizations to develop and monitor individualized work and guidance plans for each employee. This individualized work and guidance plan should be customized for each participant considering their personal characteristics, motivation, and confidence in learning.
The capacity development programs should assess the contextual factors within the workplace in order to understand how the context facilitate or hinder the informal workplace learning of the beneficiaries and to understand the challenges that the beneficiaries might face in applying what they learn from participating in formal training workshops. Improving the workplace environment and making it more learning conducive is crucial for enhancing workplace learning and increasing the effectiveness of the capacity development interventions. However, bringing any lasting change in the workplace context—such as organizational culture or structure—is time consuming and requires long-term interventions. The ten-year partnership between IIEP and MoE/DoP helped them the project have considerable impact on the DoP’s environment.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The purpose of this study was to explore major factors influencing the participants’ learning experiences, and due to time and resource limitations, I could not explore and present the influence of each factor in detail. Further research is needed to focus exclusively on specific factors or categories of factors to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the dynamics of workplace learning. Considering the context of Afghanistan, I specifically recommend further research to investigate the impact of the following factors on capacity development and workplace learning: gender, high power distance culture, and the politics of capacity development.

**Gender:** As I mentioned before, there are cultural norms that affect women’s participation in capacity development activities and their informal workplace learning. The experiences of the female participant of this research show that gender-related norms mostly hindered her workplace learning. Given the importance of women empowerment
and equity in Afghanistan, I recommend a study to investigate women’s experience of participating in CD activities and workplace learning.

**High Power-distance Culture:** I also recommend further research on the influence of apparently high power distance culture on capacity development and learning. Power distance is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 61). According to my experience and studies done in neighboring countries, Afghanistan is a high power distance society. In high power societies subordinates are highly dependent on bosses, and there is no preference on consultation and shared decision making. The experience of this research participants show an extraordinary situation in which the director and managers are tolerant to the critiques of their subordinates. It would be interesting to examine how the power distance culture influences the process of workplace learning and capacity development.

**Politics:** Capacity development involves political decision making such as what capacity and for whom. Different actors such as donors, implementers, and different groups of beneficiaries are involved in this process. The participants of this research pointed out to a specific partnership between the donors, IIEP, and the MoE that has influenced the decisions related to capacity development process. It would be insightful to study to the influence of politics on the process of workplace learning and capacity development in this project or similar projects in Afghanistan in more detail.

In addition to examining the influence of each factor in more depth, I recommend this research framework to be used for engaging the capacity development practitioners...
in some sort of action research. The theories of change behind capacity development programs, including the IIEP project, are often implicit and are not fully discussed in the program documents. The conceptual framework of this research can provide a useful framework for exploring and challenging the capacity development practitioners’ beliefs and assumptions about how their activities would lead to changes in the ways in which beneficiaries perform in their workplace. I recommend further study to understand and challenge the capacity development practitioners’ beliefs or theories-in-use.

The focus of this research was individual employees’ learning, not organizational or collective learning. As discussed before, it was very challenging to differentiate between the participants’ individual and collective learning. The social and contextual nature of learning, acknowledged in recent theories of learning, makes the differentiation even more challenging. Focusing on organizational factors influencing the process of organizational learning and capacity development would be interesting and insightful.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Title: “Capacity Development for Workplace Learning: Exploring Critical Learning Incidents of a Capacity Development Project’s Participants”

The following information is provided to help you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw from part or all of this study at any time without affecting your relationship with the Department of Planning, UNESCO-IIEP, or myself.

Introduction: This research is Mohammad Javad Ahmadi’s dissertation for completing his doctoral program in Educational Policy and Leadership at University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Research Purpose: The purpose of this research is to investigate the learning experiences of the MoE-IIEP Capacity Development project’s participants in order to find out what factors participants report as influential in their workplace learning, how the participants perceive that these factors influence their workplace learning, and how the participants perceive the effects of the MoE-IIEP capacity development project on their learning experiences.

Data Collection Procedure: Data will be collected through in-depth qualitative interviews with a number of the Department of Planning’s employees who participated in the MoE-IIEP capacity development project activities. Each participant will be interviewed three times and each interview will take about 40-60 minutes. The interview will be tape recorded to facilitate analysis of the data. The tapes will only be heard by the researcher for the purpose of this study. If you feel uncomfortable with the recorder, you may ask to turn it off at any time.

The results of this study will be included in the researcher’s doctoral dissertation and may also be included in manuscripts submitted to professional journals for
publication. You have the right to review materials prior to the oral exam or other publication.

**Confidentiality:** Your name will not be used, nor will you be identified personally, in any way or at any time. I will give the participants pseudonyms and remove anything from written documents that identify them. However, because of the small number of participants, all from the Department of Planning, there is some risk that you may be identified as a participant of this study.

**Risks and Benefits:** There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. The expected benefits associated with your participation are obtaining an opportunity to reflect on your own learning experiences and the factors influencing your learning and capacity development, and getting experience of an academic research. There is no compensation for participating in this study.

**Contacts and Questions:** Please do not hesitate to ask questions or share comments regarding the study before participating or during the study. You can contact the researcher, Mohammad Javad Ahmadi at 0770005334 or mjahmadi@gmail.com. You may also contact his dissertation committee chairperson, Dr. David Evans at +1413-545-4175 or dre@educ.umass.edu or the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Dr. Linda Griffin at +1413-545-6985 or lgriffin@educ.umass.edu.

**Statement of Consent:** I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I am agreeing to the terms described above. A copy of this form will be given to you to keep.

Signature  
Date
APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW GUIDE

First Interview: The focus of this interview is to explore each participant’s background such as (education, previous job experiences, family background, and close friends) and how they feel these factors influenced their personal motivation and capacity to learn. In addition, I will ask participants about their career vision that can give insights on their personal motivation too. Here are some sample questions (The wordings of the questions will differ based on how each conversation unfolds).

- What are your responsibilities at the DoP?
- Please tell me about your education?
  - How was your performance at school?
  - How was your performance at university?
- Please tell me about your family?
  - Your parents’ job and education?
  - Your siblings?
  - How do you think your family influenced your personality?
- Please tell me about your previous job experiences?
  - Your positions?
  - How successful do you consider yourself in those experiences?
  - How those experiences influenced your motivation and expectations from yourself?
- What were the reasons that you joined the DoP? (And when did you join the DoP?)
In what capacity development programs have you participated so far? What IIEP CD activities have you participated in?

What is your career vision? Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Second interview: The focus on this interview is to explore and analyze significant changes that participants report that they have brought in their work as results of learning. Then each examples of change will be discussed, how it happened, factors behind it, etc. If the participant cannot bring examples of changes, I will ask him or her about the critical incidents of success or failure in their work, and then analyze the learning behind the incidents.

What specific tasks do you do in your current position at the DoP? How challenging do you think they are?

What changes have you made in your work that are due to learning during the last year? [If needed I would ask: what are your major successes of failures during the last year].

Let’s focus on one of the changes that you just mentioned,

- Could you please explain how this change happened?
- When did it happen and who were involved in the process?
- What were your motivations for bringing this change?
- How supportive have been the DoP leaders in this process?

Third interview: This interview will be mostly for asking follow up questions in order to go deeper on the ideas discussed on the first two interviews, and will explore the participants interpretations on the factors facilitating or hindering their workplace
learning and how the IIEP CD project has influenced their workplace learning based on the specific examples of change or critical incidents.
APPENDIX C

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PORTRAITS

This appendix will introduce the participants of this research very briefly. I believe this will help you, as the reader, to better understand the dissertation analysis and discussion. Here are a few points that you need to consider while reading the participant’s portraits:

- The source of information for these portraits is my first interview with each participant. I have also shared the draft versions with the participants to make sure my narrations are correct and do not include anything sensitive that the participants are not comfortable sharing.

- The portraits include some of the participants’ basic demographic information, their current positions within the department, their level of education, the capacity development programs they have participated recently, and some other relevant background information.

- For the sake of anonymity, I have chosen pseudonyms for the participants. I have discussed anonymity and relevant ethical considerations in the methodology chapter.

- The portraits are sorted alphabetically by the participants’ pseudo last names.

**Shams Amiri**

Mr. Amiri works with DoP as a research and evaluation officer. He has been working with the department for the past four years. Before this, he had worked with the EMIS department for four years. He was born in a district near Kabul City in 1974 and
studied there until grade eight. He and his family fled to Pakistan where he resumed his education and completed high school. Since he had lost his father during his childhood, he, as the eldest son, had to work in order to support his mother and younger siblings while studying at school. During this period, he worked at different occupations such as carpet weaving, construction, and even street vending. After his return to Afghanistan, he worked with the Afghan Red Crescent Society as a volunteer for a few months until he joined the MoE as a full time civil service employee.

He studied in a private health institute for an associate degree, but due to financial problems, he could not continue. Later in 2014, the DoP offered him an opportunity to study in National Training Program for an associate degree in educational planning. Currently Mr. Amiri is working on his capstone project, which is developing a three-year education plan for a district, and will graduate from the program upon completion of his project.

He has participated in several training workshops, such as impact evaluation training in India, “Best Practices in Evaluation” training workshop organized by New York University (NYU) in Kabul, research methods courses offered by one of the DoP international consultants, and several other English and Computer Training programs. He is very interested in developing his English language skills, and his goal is to develop his skills to a level that he can be employed as technical assistant and possibly continue his higher education abroad.

I have known Mr. Amiri since 2013 when I returned from the US to resume my job with the DoP-IIEP, but I have not had a chance to work directly with him.
Omar Azizi

Mr. Azizi works as the Research and Evaluation Unit Manager, under the supervision of the Director of Planning. He has a Bachelor’s degree in Educational Psychology from Kabul University and a Master’s Degree in Educational Planning from the UNESCO-IIEP Paris. He was born in Kabul, and fled to Iran during the Taliban era, where he studied up to grade 4. After return to Kabul, Mr. Azizi resumed his school and also worked in his father’s workshop after school. He was in charge of managing his father’s workshop while he was in high school—an experience that he believes helped to develop his managerial skills.

During his bachelor’s program, he became an active member of a study group. The club members read and discussed many books together. The books were on different subjects including educational psychology as well as general books on social, political, and religious topics. Mr. Azizi believes that this study group was influential in his life, and one of his friends who urged him to join the MoE, was in fact a member of the group.

After graduation in 2005, he worked with a couple of private companies for a few years, and was able to make a good salary. He later decided to join the DoP because he wanted to have a career relevant to his higher education. He climbed the career ladder quickly, was promoted to the unit manager, was selected to study in IIEP Advanced Training Program in Paris in 2010, and he was hired as an IIEP TA after his return.

He is confident of his technical and leadership capabilities, and has a key role in the department. As the Research and Evaluation Unit manager, he leads the annul EJSR process and has led the EQUIP evaluation—two major activities of the department.
He has participated in several training programs and had a key role in designing the NTP curriculum, taught several courses, and also was involved in training the NTP instructors.

I have known Mr. Azizi from 2008 when I began working with the MoE-IIEP project. He then was a new employee in the department. I liked his passion for learning and supported him whenever and however I could. I worked with him during the process of developing NESP II and also during the time I was managing the MoE Grants Management Unit. I was on the hiring panel that selected him for the IIEP technical assistant position. I also worked closely with him in 2013 on developing NESP III and EJSR 2013 report.

**Omid Hashimi**

Mr. Omid Hashimi works with the Planning Unit as a planning officer under the supervision of the Planning Unit manager. He was born in 1990 (?) in Kabul City. He completed high school in 2010 (?) at one of the Kabul high schools. His education was done partially during the civil war and Taliban era, so he was not very engaged in his studies. He was admitted in a government university in the field of veterinary science. After one semester, he decided to quit university because of the unclear career prospect of the field of veterinary science. Instead he joined the Department of Planning, when he was only 17 as an intern with the goal of learning to work with computers. His father also works with the DoP. He then was hired as a temporary employee (Ajeer) with a six-month contract.

After completing his first contract, he became a full time staff member of the department. Right then he started his BA in the field of computer science in a private
university with the MoE scholarship in the night shift. The language of instruction in the university was English. He experienced difficulties during the first semesters; then he gradually improved his English and was graduated from the university in 2013 with a top ranking. Since his BA degree is not directly relevant to his current job, he decided to study in the National Training Program (NTP) that is being managed by the DoP to get his associate degree in Educational Planning. He has completed his coursework and currently is working on his final project, and hopes to finish it soon. He is the deputy head of the Planning Unit.

Since he is a civil servant, his salary is very low, which is a source of dissatisfaction for him. He has high self-confidence and is planning to improve his English even more in order to be able to find a higher paid job. I have known him since 2013 but did not work with him while I was with the MoE-IIEP project.

**Sina Kakar**

Mr. Sina Kakar works with the Research and Evaluation Unit as a researcher under the supervision of the unit manager. He was born in 1983 in Kabul City. He was a successful student at school and his family was very supportive of his education. He graduated from the high school in 2002. He also studies English language in a private institute, and has also taught there for about two years. He and his family stayed in Kabul during the civil war, which had some negative effects on his education during upper secondary grades. He was admitted to Kabul Education University in English Language field. In addition to studying at university, he also managed a small business. He graduated from the university in 2006. He has a high confidence in his intelligence and also in his ability to explain things to others.
After graduation, he was hired in Kabul TTC as an instructor, but quit the job after a few months because of the low salary and the environment. Then he worked with a NGO for a year with a much higher salary, and subsequently went to work with his father in selling cars. His friend had already joined the DoP, who invited him to join the department too.

He attended a 20-day training in South Korea on Technical and Vocational Training and Education. He also attended another short-term training on projection and simulation in IIEP in Paris, France. Late in 2011, he was selected for ATP to pursue his MA degree in educational planning from IIEP.

I have known Mr. Kakar since 2013, and I worked with him in drafting NESP III and also conducting the EJSR 2013. He had just returned from IIEP APT program and was playing a key role in the Research and Evaluation Unit.

**Fatima Misaq**

Fatima Misaq works with the Planning Unit as a planning officer under the supervision of the unit manager. She was born in 1990 in Kabul city. She moved to Iran during the civil war and completed her elementary and middle school there. Her father had a very bad accident in 2004, which led her to quit school. After her father recovered and was released from the hospital, he sent her back to school. Fatima also used to work after school at home weaving carpets.

In 2006, Ms. Misaq was admitted to university in the field of Arabic literature. This was not her choice. She wanted to study English Language, so reluctantly accepted to study this subject. The quality of education in the university was very low. Although
she completed her BA degree, she is not happy with what she learned. After a few months of unemployment and searching for jobs especially teaching jobs in private schools, she was hired as an intern by Civil Service Commission and was deployed in the Ministry of Transportation. After seven months, she was asked to work with the DoP because of the need for female employees there. Two of her supervisors in the Ministry of Transportation had already joined the MoE and facilitated her employment with the DoP. Ms. Misaq was hired by the MoE in 2012, and her main tasks were school data entry and developing operational plans. Now she prepares the MoUs between the MoE and external organizations, and also prepares three-year plans for four provinces. She is married and has year-old child, and lives with her husband's family. She has to take care of house chores and cooking after work.

During the last few years that she has worked with the DoP, she has not been given any opportunity to attend professional development or capacity development workshops except for one English Training workshop that was held inside the DoP office. She was also invited to participate in NTP, but she did not attend because the program was during the evening shift and she had to take care of her family. I did not know Ms. Misaq before interviewing her for this research.

Ahmad Naseri

Mr. Naseri works with the Research and Evaluation Unit as a researcher, and works under the supervision of the unit manager. He was born in Iraq, while his parents were there for a religious pilgrimage. He studied in Kabul until grade six, and then he moved to Iran alone to live with a relative during the civil war. He worked there as a construction laborer for a few years, continued his education at evenings. He returned to
Kabul in 2002, and was admitted in Kabul University in the field of Educational Psychology. He was graduated in 2006. Despite his difficulties during his school years, he was a relatively successful student at the university.

He joined a private electric company as a technician, and worked there for three years until his arm was broken during the job, and had to leave the job. Then he joined the DoP where several of his classmates were working too. He has been working as a research and evaluation officer for about seven years.

Although he was provided an opportunity to study in NTP, he did not accept it because he was already a college graduate, but he participated in several training workshops, such as impact evaluation in India, a Randomized Control Trial training workshop organized by New York University, research methods courses offered by one of the DoP international consultants, and several other English and Computer Training programs. He is also very interested in developing his English language skills to open doors for progress in his job. He believes English Language is necessary for learning research and evaluation methods, and to get engaged in critical tasks of the department. I did not know Mr. Naseri before interviewing him for this research.

Mohammad Rahmani

Mr. Rahmani works as the Planning Unit manager, and works under the supervision of the Director of Planning. He was born in Kabul in 1978 and graduated from one of Kabul high schools in 1996. He was relatively successful student, especially during the upper secondary classes. After completing high school, he was admitted in Kabul University, but due to difficulties of Taliban era, he quitted the university and moved to Iran as a refugee. He worked as laborer and later as the head worker in Iran for
four years. He returned to Kabul in 2000. He experienced some financial crises after the
return that did not allow him to resume his education. He started working in vegetable
and fruit market, and gradually became a successful trader in the market. However, his
father did not like his job, so he pushed him to get hired in the government. He joined
the DoP in 2005, and has about 11 years of experience working with this department.

His experience of managing workers in Iran and working in the vegetable and
fruit market helped develop his managerial skills, and soon after joining the DoP he was
selected as the manager of the Coordination Unit and continued to be a manager at the
DoP from then. He has confidence in his abilities as a good learner and strong problem
solver.

The DoP awarded him a scholarship to study his bachelor degree in one of private
universities in Kabul. He decided to study in computer science in Bakhtar University.
The language of education in the university was English, which helped him improve his
language skills. He was an active student in his classes, and successfully completed the
program in 2015. Mr. Rahmani was hired as an IIEP technical assistant in 2012, and since
then he has had two positions (Planning Unit manager and IIEP TA), but receives salary
from IIEP only. He intends to apply for the IIEP Advanced Training Program for his
master’s degree.

I have known him since 2008 when I started working with the MoE-IIEP project
as the national coordinator. He is known as a hardworking and committed employee. I
worked with him closely in drafting NESP III and EJSR report in 2013.
Ali Safi

Mr. Safi is the current Director of Planning (or more accurately Director of the Policy and Strategic Planning) who works under the supervision of the General Director of Planning and Evaluation. He was born in 1977 in Samagan province, and at age of five, he moved to Iran with his family as refugees. During his school years, he had to work after school to help his family make a living in Iran. Despite all their life challenges, he was able to complete his school with success, and was admitted in a well-known public university in Tehran, in the field of business economics. He attended evening courses, and worked during the day to pay his tuition. During his time at university, he was an active member of Afghan Student Association, and a couple of other social groups. He earned his bachelor degree in 2006, and returned to Afghanistan to join the DoP. The former General Director of Planning, an old friend of Mr. Safi, had invited him to work with the DoP and support him.

Mr. Safi was hired as a temporary employee (Ajeer), but due to his skills and the trust with the former general director, he acquired a key role in the department and placed in-charge of preparing and coordinating the MoE annual operational planning. After two years, he was selected to study in the IIEP Advanced Training Program (ATP) in Paris in 2008. He successfully completed the program, and after his return he took on even more responsibilities and became an official civil service employee. Later Mr. Safi was hired by UNESCO-IIEP project as a technical assistant. In 2010, he was promoted to the deputy director position—a position that changed to the director of Policy and Strategic Planning in 2012. Since then, he is both the director of Policy and Strategic Planning
Department and a TA hired by the UNESCO-IIEP, but he receives salary only from IIEP, not the MoE.

Mr. Safi has participated in several training workshops inside and outside Afghanistan, such as an exposure visit to Japan and workshop School Quality Improvement (10 days), Educational Planning in India (three weeks), Coordination among different divisions of education in Sri Lanka (one week), Sustainable Development Goals in Bangkok Thailand (one week), and an exposure visit to Argentina.

As part of his responsibilities as IIEP technical assistant, he was involved in the design of National Training Program (NTP), taught courses in NTP, and has trained the program instructors.

I have known Mr. Safi since 1998 when we were both university students in Iran. We studied in different universities, but as Afghan students we got to know each other. We were members of Afghan Student Association in Iran and had collaborations in conducting several events. I worked very closely with him while I worked with the IIEP project in 2008 and 2013, especially in the process of drafting NESP III and developing EJSR report in 2013.
APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANTS’ QUOTES IN Farsi-Dari

This appendix includes the participants’ quotations in the original language of Farsi/Dari. This will help those who speak Farsi/Dari to have their own translation and interpretation. The quotes are sorted by the page number in which they appeared in this report.

Page 16

از نگاه امکانات بسیار خوب است نسبت به دیگران چون یک کمک آی آی ای پی است که بر ما قرطاسیه، لوازم که کار می‌داشته باشم، قلمیه، پرنتر، قلمیه نسبت به دفاتر دیگر که ورش و کمپیوتری‌های برخی را می‌دهد اما خلاصه اما دفتر چون داریم ومن این آی آی ای پی است که در نگاه قرطاسیه و دیگر چیزها هیچ کمی‌هیچی نداریم.

Page 79

از نظر پروسه، برنامه را نسبت به سال گذشته یک مقدار زیادتر غیرمرکزی ساختیم کوشش کردیم که خود برنامه را به این شکل داشته باشیم یک راهبردی که بی‌پروفسوره، از طرف ریاست پلان سالانه که یک قطعه قلمیه یک چندانه پنسلی که یک دو کده ورق همین چیزها را می‌دهد اما برای ریاست پلان ارسال کردند.

Page 80

تصور قبلی ما این بود که یک پلان استراتژیک داریم که توضیحات فعالیت‌ها واضح است. این پلان عملیاتهایی را با توجه به سیستمی که خودمان بازی می‌کنیم… پلان عملیاتهایی را اصلاح کنیم. فعالیت‌های پلان استراتژیک در پلان عملیاتهایی نیست.

Page 81 (Q#1)

چون فعالیت‌ها برای ما خیلی واضح و بود فکر می‌کردیم برای نسخه‌های نیم‌سالنی و ولایتی‌های خودمان قابل قبول هستند. این مشکلات کلی نیسته که تا به این حد موضوع را راهلاند کنیم… پلان عملیاتهایی را باید یک کل به سطح ولایتی همواره در کل کارشان بپردازد.
Page 84 (Q#1)
یکی از اخوی هایی که اساس شده اینه که ما زیاد دخیل شدیم. سال های قبل، مثالی سال اول توسط یکی کمکهای اجرا شده که هیچ میزای دخیل نبودیم. ولی اساس از شروع تا آن خروج ما بسیار تغییرات کلین را در پروсе دخل داشتیم.

Page 84 (Q#2)
دبیگ اساس می جذبی زرگار جور کردم که یک زرگار به سطح ولایت بود، یک زرگار از پروسه های حمايوی جور کرده این چیزی جذب بود که ما داخل کردم در این پروسه خو بچو سال قبل ما دیدیم که مثال با علمیتی را ولایات دارند، مثال مصرف بودجه و آنی توانند، مثل پیشرفت شان خیلی کم است در قسمت پیشرفت های پلان های عملیاتی، بار اساس، سال که گذشته ما ارزیابی پروسه های حمايوی را شروع کردم. با زرگار ولایی در قسمت پروسه های حمايوی، همین پلان، بودجه، تدارکات، ایالتی، نظرات تعیینی و مانیتوریگ، زرگار دهی جور کردم.

Page 86 (Q#1)
این چیزی جذب بود که ما هیچ وقت ارزیابی و در مورد نکردیم. میتی جذبی که بگویم همان کار را یک بکن و خلا های شان را گویم که زرگار را روان میکنیمیک، دو سه چهار این رقم باند. یعنی تا آخرین کار ما هموار خیلی می گذرده را میزایی که بگویم چیزی که زرگار واقعاً نظر اصلی بود در زرگار میگاشتیم، برای انا روان میکنیم.

Page 86 (Q#4)
حتی در این پروسه بسیار موارد را در قسمت پروسه های تدارکات و مالی هم یاد گرفته. خون که کمیتی وقتی به پروسه پیش میرفتراورها مسوده راورماها از نظر ما تأئین میشد. باید این را روس مکتوبی به تدارکات روانی میکنیم باز تعقیب می کردم چون که منتجت از ما بود باید تا آخر مرحله که پول اش رضوه ایستد. چک می کردنیمیک16 در کجا رسد، مالیه چند روز مبود مه میل کل گپ ها به رابطه تدارکات چه میکنیم، پروسه می گیرد، قرار داد میگیرد چه میکنیم.

Page 88 (Q#1)
تام همکاران پلان کاری داردند و پلان کاری شان برای هفته و روز واضح است و کار ما کنند و ما بر اساس آن از خون پرسان می کنیم. ارزیابی کارکد هر آمریت و کارمند نیز بر اساس این پلان کاری انجام می شود.

Page 88 (Q#4)
فعلً مثلای یکی از نمونه های این همین در سالانه بود مثلاً سال های قبل که مرور سالانه را تطبیق میکردیم، نهفه داشتمی، با یا سطح که اساسی کاریم و به یا سطح که فارم شخص داریم، فکر نمی کنم که سال های قبل داشته باشیم.

Page 89
کاری دیگر در این قسمت انجام شده است تهیه سیستم فایلینگ است که این پروسه را برای خود ایجاد کرده و این سیستم با خاطر نظرات و ارزیابی از کارکرد های همکاران ما میباشد مثلای سیستم را که همین امروز میخواهیم یاپاگداری کم هر بزگی به کار کرده که از آمریت پلان استراتژیک در سطح ریاضی خارج از رسیس پرور میشود اول و ترتیب سیستم فایلینگ ان در الماری، غیر اینکه با CD کمی ترگانن آن وسایل است بعداً تذکری از در مواردی، غیر اینکه بیشترین رسمی از الحاق دادری ما دارم یک سیستم دیگر هم داشتیم باشما تا زمانها به جلسات به ارزیابی اسناد موجود باشند.
چیزی که از این تحقیق آمده این بود که یک تحقیق چهار طرح می‌گیرد و چطور یک تحقیق انجام می‌شود و مراحل تحقیق که در یک تحقیق کدام مراحل را در نظر داشته باشیم و در ضمن چیزی که در این تحقیق آمده‌می‌باشد و ساختار و بهبود مفهومیک تحقیق بود که روی چارچوب زیاد کار کرد و در ابتدا نمیدانست که در یک چارچوب چه چیزی ها را در نظر بگیریم.

Page 90 (Q#2)
در اولی از این موضوعات که در این تحقیق خیلی سنگین و مبهم و حتی این خاطر دیزاین این برای ما مشکل بود و ما هرچه کردیم او رد می‌کرد. هرچه کردیم یکی

Page 92
یک چیز نو برجای ماند. هر کار نوی که انجام می‌دهیم خود به خود تحقیق یک تجربه است. این هم حضور است که با افراد مختلف آشنا می‌شوند و موضوعات کارشناسی را می‌پیوند. جوهر آن یک ارگان خصوصی هستند دولتی نیستند.

Page 93
هر برنامه یک ممکن است هر معیانی و طراحی اش طرف میکند به طور مثال اسلامی، سواد آموزی هدف هفیش می‌شود. فرق میکنند و این کار در روز های اول بسیار مشکل بود می‌فهمید، حالی می‌فهمیده‌که تحقیق‌های‌های برنامه تحقیقات عمومی با تحقیقات ممکن، سواد آموزی، اسلامی چه تفاوت دارد. چون ناقص تحقیقاتی دارد در بین شاگردان، این مکتب اش، تاسیس اش ارتقای طرف میکند از یک‌دیگر که در کمی بهتر شد. این‌ها به شکل بهتر، در اولی ها نمی‌شود که در ابتدا نمیدانست که در نظر بگیریم.

Page 97
موضوع پالیسی کلاً برای ما خیلی سنگین و مبهم و حتی این خاطر دیزاین این برای ما مشکل بود و ما هرچه کردیم او رد می‌کرد. هرچه کردیم یکی

Page 98 (Q#1)
کارمندی‌های است که همین حالا در وزارت کار میکند شاید روی رئیس را هم ندیده باشد. مخصوصاً برنامه‌ها هیچ نام اش را هم نه فهمند کارمندانی می‌روند مهربانی می‌شنند کار می‌کنند، همراهی شان به‌نظر می‌کند سر فعالیت هایی شان، سپر و پژوه هیاکانی این کار کار ها بسیار بالایی داشت تا کار باشد هم نمی‌توان نشان داد تا یک منابع ریاضی دیده بماند. یک کارمندی‌که به سال‌ها روبی در بانک ضم بلوک بلوک هستی، هستی همراهی رفیق واری کمی‌زی.

Page 98 (Q#3)
یک ورکشاپ در احیانه‌ای مرکزی دبیرگاه تربیتیک پلان بود و ارقام خود را مشابه می‌دانست و روش یک میکند و بود به رفت شرایط داده که به این درآمده‌ما از دیگر وزارت خانه‌ها به سطح رئیس‌ها هم آمدیم و هم یک کارمند عادی رهت به دادن نظریات میا یک بسیار خوب گرفت و انه‌اها را این جلسه‌ها دیگر در یک هون بود در آنها تام وزیر یک به‌ود، در آنها را به درگیری کرد، هم‌همایش کارمند ریاست مالی ... و در آنها هم بسیار خوب بود نظریات که می‌دانست واقعاً بسیار خوب بود.
تدریس بالاتری شخص خودم و یادگیری بسیار تاثیرات داشته است با خاطر اینکه مه منحلیه امر پاس و از طرف دیگر منحلیه استاد در استنباط مبیان از سوالات شاید مربوط به هم شوید و اگر هم آمده گی خوب داشته باشم، یا دانش و مهارت های مسلکی خود را مرتبط به پلانگاری، خوب نتیجه بز شریم خواهید بود.

خودم شخصا به عنوانی کسیکه در این مرحله خیلی علاقه داشته که در بخش ارزیابی ظرفیت من باال برود و در ارزیابی مطرح باشم، حداقل با کسانیکه کار میکنی. چه در داخل وزارت چه بیرون به عنوان یک نقده مثبت خودم برخودم ظرفیتی بساخت. که دیگران ندانند که در این ارزیابی توانانی داراد من خیلی دانش آورده ایم فرصت ها بودم یعنی هر مورد پیش میامد من نمی خواستم بنظر این فرصت را از دست بدهم ... مثلی از این نباهت، که مثال مسول یک بخش باشی و یک بنام باشی، توفانی اش را ندانسته باشی.

یک ذهنیت دیگر هم داشتیم که دایما به ذهن بوده و کمک کرده. این بود که آگر نظام تعلیم و تربیه اصلاح شود خیلی چیزهای دیگر اصلاح می شود، ما به نظام تعلیم و تربیه به عنوان یک راه حل اساسی برای انشاکاف افغانستان نگاه کنیم.

بنظرم یکی از خویش های ما در این پروسه این بوده است که ما قبل در قسمت تعیین موقعیت مکاتب پیش از اینکه که در فرآیند این بزرگ تکنیکی چه را هموزش بیبیم، در کلی بحث های مقدامی این را توسط همکاران ما، مثل شخص شما حداکثر این کار ها را یاد گرفته بودم. اما از الحاق تحقیکی و اکادمیک به راه ما هنوز یک چاش و یاگب بوده.

بلی بسیار موتر بود. این تحقیق برای ما جزئی بخشند که می توانیم تحقیق را کامل انجام دهیم... این هموزش کمک کرده تا ما بتوانیم تحقیق درباره اسناد پالیسی وژارت را انجام دهیم.

من یک برای یک سفر کوشته نداشتیم در هندوستان در ارتباط مدیریت جهانی و ارزیابی های سازمانی در قسمت ارزیابی در پلال ولی چون دو اولین بود و درکردم، سیاه هر صورت تقیمی تو انستیت که از انجا یاد نمی یادم وی از آنجا استفاده زیاد نمیبردم. یا اشکاب تدارکی در و ایز پیشبرد برانه باه که در داخل برگزار شده میگرند تر بوده همین کوشته مدت، به دراز و یک روز و مهار روز که در انجا از طریق خود به چه به گیریار شده در قسمت ارتباطی تحقیق عمیق یکه انجام دادم، به زبان خودمان بوده حداقل بر به بحث تو انتیم، توانستیم مشکل خود را داشته و یک چیزی بهفهم.

مسولیت ها انجا انداخته شده که یک مسئول همکار تحقیکی است و یک مسئول خود من هستم. از من خواستند که فعالیت های خود را دراین جا مشخص کنم. از وکالت کردم و توصیه خود امیریت هم همین طور بود و همکار مسئولیت هم همین طوری گرفت که بیشترین مسئولیت را کوشش کنیم بگیرید. چون این برنامه ببر مانند که یک مسئولیت دفتری و کاری است، یک برنامه اموزشی است. یعنی در قسمت اول کار از شما می خواهیم، در مرحله دوم کار شما را اصلاح می کنیم و نهایی می کنیم و تسلیم برنامه می دهیم.

Page 112 (Q#1)
مواد پالسی کلا برای ما خستن سه گنگی و میں و حتی (تیغیه) خود و دامن و وسعت این برای ما مشکل بود.

با پدیده (چیزی خاص) حل اقدا و واضح تر باشده یک اختلافات جزئی داشته که این را با روش مهم با گروه که از این قدر تفاوت این قدر وضعیت است این را میگویم. در یکجا صور است در یکجا به هزار تا است در یکجا مشابه پنهان تا است در یکجا گچ بگذاره بود، این نمی توانان مانند و میانمان و واقعاً چه کار کنیم.

Page 112 (Q#2)

بیان خاطر دیوان این برای ما مشکل بود و ما هرچه که جور می‌کردیم این را می‌کرد. هرچه همکاری یکی دو، سه هفته این طول کشید و این چگونه به روت آورد که بچه‌ها به یکی سیروی‌های ویکی نموسته را انجام بده. چون چه می‌گفت که باید چه کار کنیم؟ و هن چه چیزی را که ما گور می‌کردیم قبول می‌کرد؟ هدایت اقلیته که است، و لی چیزی را که توقع داشت ما گفت با یک نه و آن را چه خواندان با یک جور کنند. این مشکل بود.

Page 112 (Q#3)

بیان خاطر ارتقای طرفیت فعلاً قسمییه ما خود ما همکاری اکتشافی دارد. برای این چیز لایحه و ظاهر نی چه بگویم کار تعین شده با یک نه یکی را به یکی معنی کا پی راشان نمی مانند. دی‌ایام در جلسه‌های هستند کارها را خیاطه و خیاطه نمی‌مانند. با یکی هاله کار را انجام می‌دهند. اگر این راشان شماره مناسب است و هم از راهنما و در پرسه ارتقای طرفیت ثبت شده است. تفاوت دامنی چه کسی چه همان استفاده بمی‌توانید با یکی آنها که در بهره‌های شیکی می‌رساند دوئلی هم‌ارضی ارتقای طرفیت این را به‌سابقه. همین شناسی‌های که کم‌کم استفاده این با یکی اکتشافی کننده هزینه‌های این می‌بایست که این نمادی این پروسیجر نفرت قسم است.

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البته که در ابتدا که در این بخش امید واقف ده مورد کارا هم می‌بایست ام آمر نه همراه خیلی همکاری کرده که زیاد از یک راضی هستند و همان فشار های کاری امر بوده که مه و مجبور ساخته یک جزیی بی‌پایه.

Page 115

یک عمل دیگر اینست که تو کاری را که میکنی اگر ارزشش را به تشمل و نظرهای از خیلی انتقای مشوری که پیوست و ماده‌ای تالار کنی که به این کار بررسی از این زمینه امریکا و یوگمی بی‌پایه. ریزه‌پروری، ریزه مارتن و دویون خیاطه، حمایت می‌کنند. که محل با رابط‌کنی خیاطه مهم است. شما با یکی پی تکنیک کاره را که انجام می‌شود. و مصویت‌های اینها را که اصلاً متمرکز استند نسبت این بحث به‌این به یکی ره‌ایزه‌کریک که کار می‌بایست را به‌این راهکاری که مجموعی با پیشرفت است، عمیق از این که ما ارزیابی انجام می‌گیریم. یا به یکی می‌کنی که یک کاری است مسولیت شما بالاتر است. است و لی ارزش دارد با شروع کردن ممکن است با یکی بکرد. بی‌پایه تعییه های ام خیلی بالایی ما تأثیر داشت.

Page 116 (Q#1)

از لحاظ خودم صد اسفند فضای خیلی خوب است، یعنی هیچ اداره انتقال تجربه نکردم و نه شنیدم که به این قسم طرفیت یکدنباله راه می‌کرد. یکی از راهگاه‌های ویکی نموسته گسترش که رایگان بر هر کسی شکست یکی یکی از فشارگذاری است، فرا به‌اینطور که این کار ایجاد می‌کرد. باز روز این اصل این یک یکی از معرفی کردم که این ایمنی است. باز روز این اصل ایمنی است همان قدر نمی‌توان لغو باشد. باز یکی روز ایمنی است، باز روز ایمنی است، باز روز ایمنی است، باز روز ایمنی است. همین را بخوانید، همه می‌کنند با یک جنگی بسیار مصرفی‌هایی داشتنی، نمی فهمه خاصاً همین خصوصیات ریاست همین رقم است، مه شیبانی به‌این یک همکاری کردم یعنی نمونه‌گرفتن این را تکمیل کردم به‌این.
دادم با همکار کنیم خودش دادم رفت مردمی دفاع کرد بهترین نمره گرفت، یعنی وجود خود مام همین رقم است و هیچ چیزی را مه تا خالی نشده که امر دیپلمتمنت از مه نهان کرده باشد. باذاش نهایت تایین از مه نهان کرده باشد، (Q#2)

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در آمیت ما مثل امر دیپلمتمنت، به کسی که کار میکند خیلی توجه میکند، مثل یکی دو بار بپرس های آمیز کسی که خوب کاردکه بود همان ها را ترجیح داد که برود. دیگر فکر میکنم مکافات خوب است، یعنی پروسه مکافات یعنی در ریاست پلان خیلی خوب است. خوب اینکه تا چه حد می توانند از دست شان میشود ایک بحث جدا است ولی همکاران تا حدودی راضی هستند از همین بخش یعنی یک تالش میکنند مثل کسیکه می فهمد که همین آدم بدرد بخور است بالایی سرمایه گذاری میکنند این واضح است.

Page 118
مثل اهنت سال است که در اینجا هستم. غیر از این که سال اول و دوم که رئیس قبلی بود یک تقدیر نامه دریافت کرده و در این هفت سال دیگریک تقدیر نشتم که گفته باشد آفرین که کار می کنی. در حالی که روزانه مه بینی دیگر بخش هایی که جن단 کار نمی کنند و وظیفه اش سرکردر کدام میان آن سرکردر در فبس بوك می بینی که وزیریا معین براش تقدیرنامه داد، پارلمان براش تقدیرنامه داد. این برای من و امثال من متاثر کننده است که هیچ تقدیر نمی شود.

Page 121
من هم فکر کرده می کنم که یک مقدار قانون نادرستی است اکتشافی در قالب دولت کار دولت را هم می کنی وی بسیار، بسیار بسیار زیاد متفاوت از دیگر کارمندان تو امتیازات دارد دوندلون یک طرحی میاد که درست است اگر وهمراهی را دارد توونانی های را دارد یک چیزی اضافه ی معاشق برایش در نظر بگیرد ولی انجاه داش تا است، تا سی براابر نباشد وجود دارد. اینه ک مقدار غير منصفانه و عادلانه است.

Page 123
فضای کاری بسیار مشکل دارد. ... انجا هیچی که نباید، یک نفره از پهلیوت بیش شود یک تنگر خود را مده و البته حواست برت می شود. یک داد بیدادی هست انجا که از آمر دیپلمت. این طوری نمی شود مشکل است انجا. فضای کاری بسیار نامناسب است. یعنی ما ریاست پلان واحد بخش تحقیق و ارزیابی به یک فضا کاملا آرام و واقعا مناسب ضرورت دارد. باز هم خصوص این سرکی که در انجا است. محیط کاری خیلی تأثیر می کند سری انجیزه، انرژی، شوق و تمام چیز.
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