

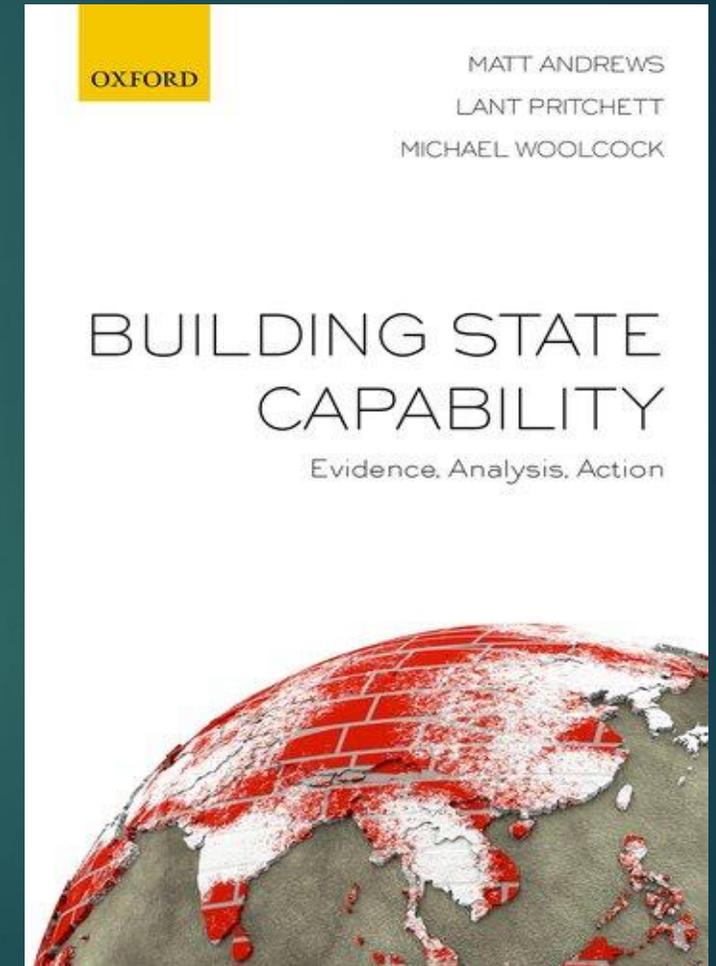
Building Implementation Capability for Effective Governance: the Role of Partnerships and New Technologies

MICHAEL WOOLCOCK

DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH GROUP, WORLD BANK
KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CONFERENCE ON PARTNERSHIPS FOR EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE
KDI & NHRI, SEOUL

31 OCTOBER 2019



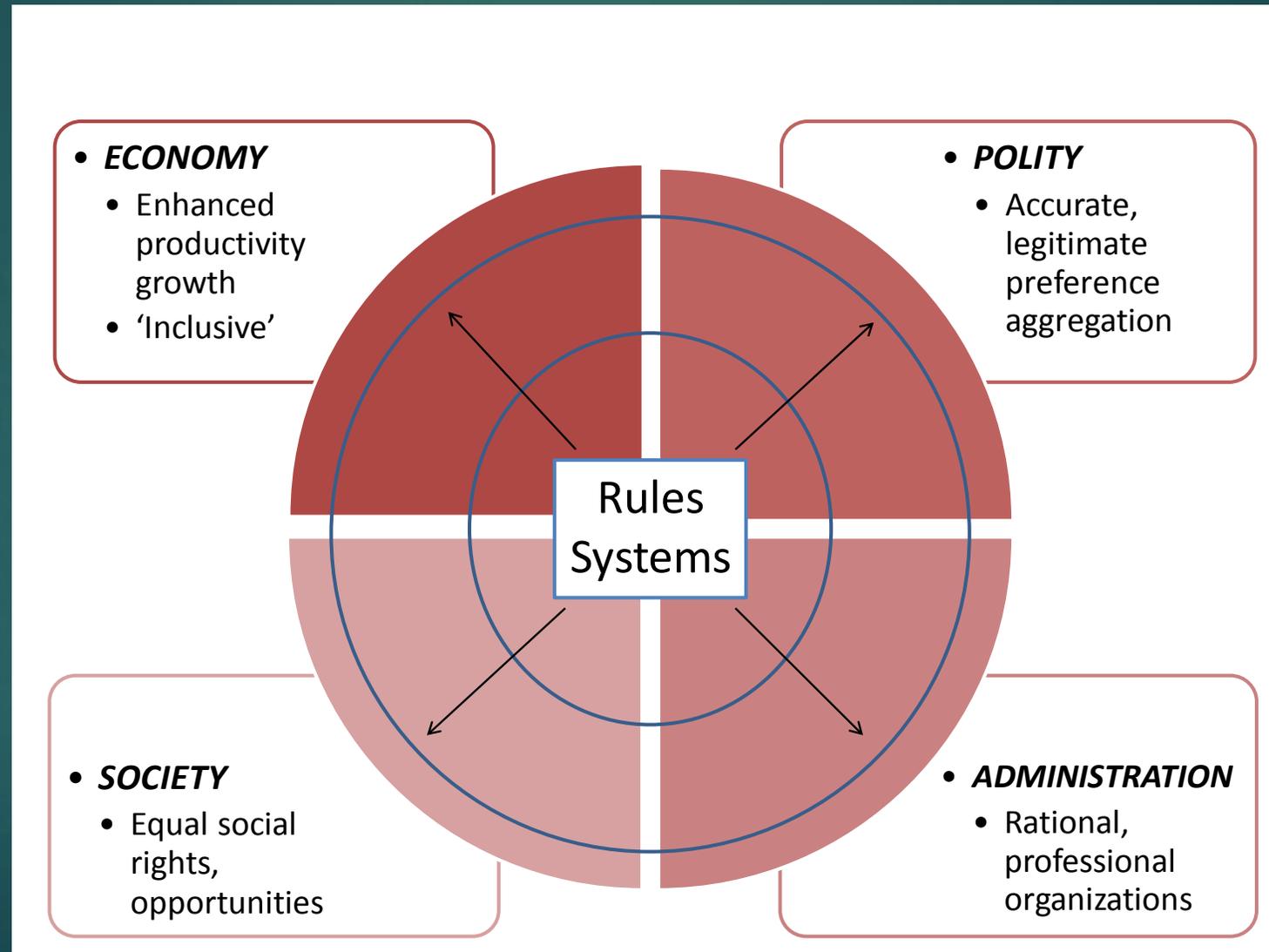
Free download available at: <http://bsc.cid.harvard.edu/building-state-capability-evidence-analysis-action>

Quick overview

- ▶ Why effective governance matters
- ▶ What effective governance requires
- ▶ Why standard approaches to 'building it' so often fail
- ▶ What an alternative looks like
 - ▶ The vital role of cross-sectoral partnerships
 - ▶ The measured role of new technologies

Why effective governance matters

- ▶ From a development perspective, one part of a four-fold transformation



Effective governance requires...

- ▶ **Lots of things: everything depends on everything else!**
 - ▶ Committed leadership, strong political support, adequate public finance, robust countervailing institutions, local legitimacy, professionalization (merit hiring, promotion, etc.)...
 - ▶ All of these are surely important. But...
- ▶ **My focus today: Implementation capability**
 - ▶ Can designated public organizations (health, justice, education etc.) actually do what is asked of them?
 - ▶ If not, what strategies might strengthen them?
 - ▶ (Beyond a focus on individuals to teams and partnerships)

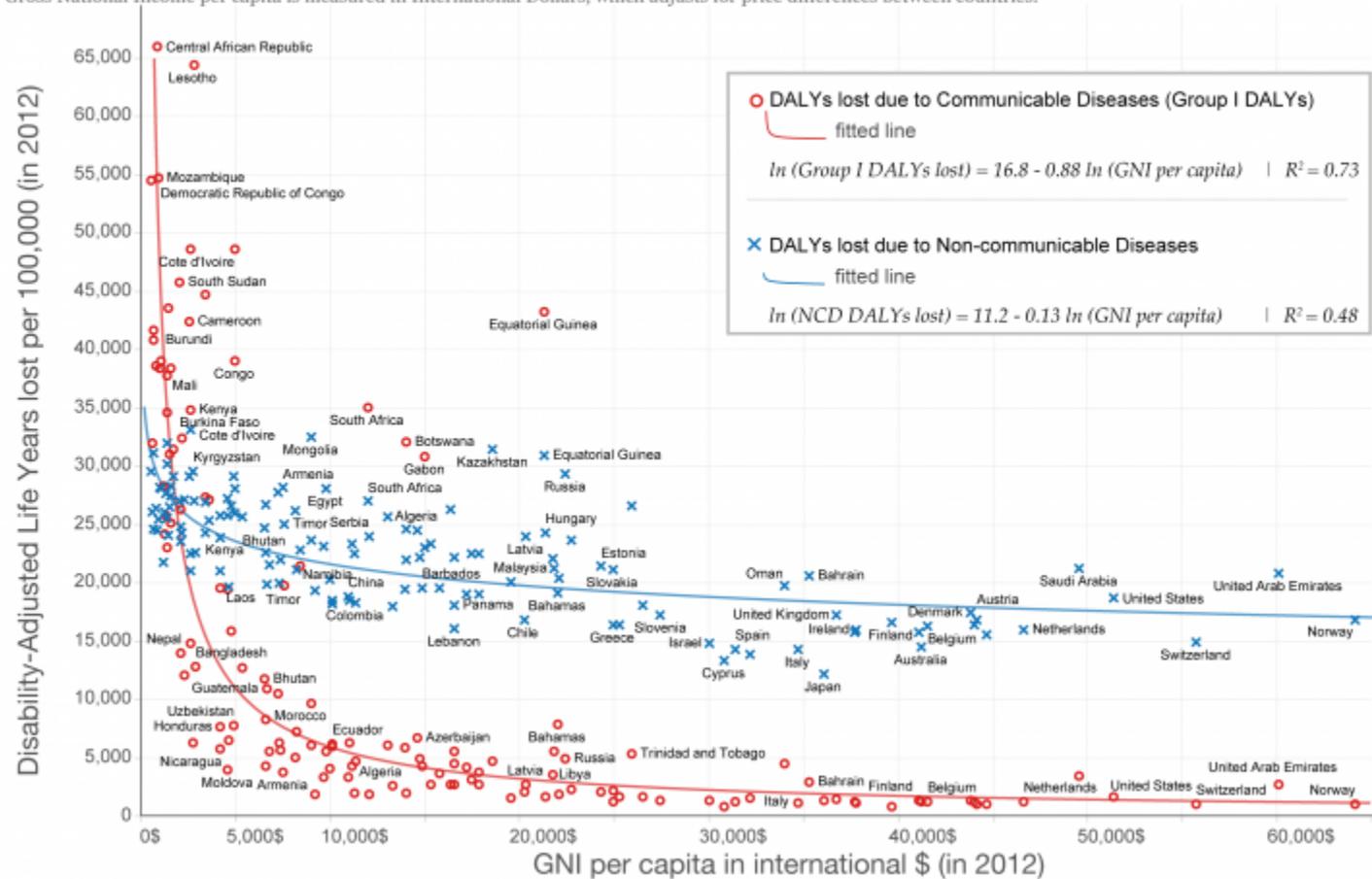
Wide variation *between* countries

In health: why do some poor countries implement so much better than others?

GNI per capita vs DALYs lost due to communicable and non-communicable diseases

Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) measure the number of years lost due to ill-health and early death. This is called the Burden of Disease.
Gross National Income per capita is measured in International Dollars, which adjusts for price differences between countries.

Our World
in Data



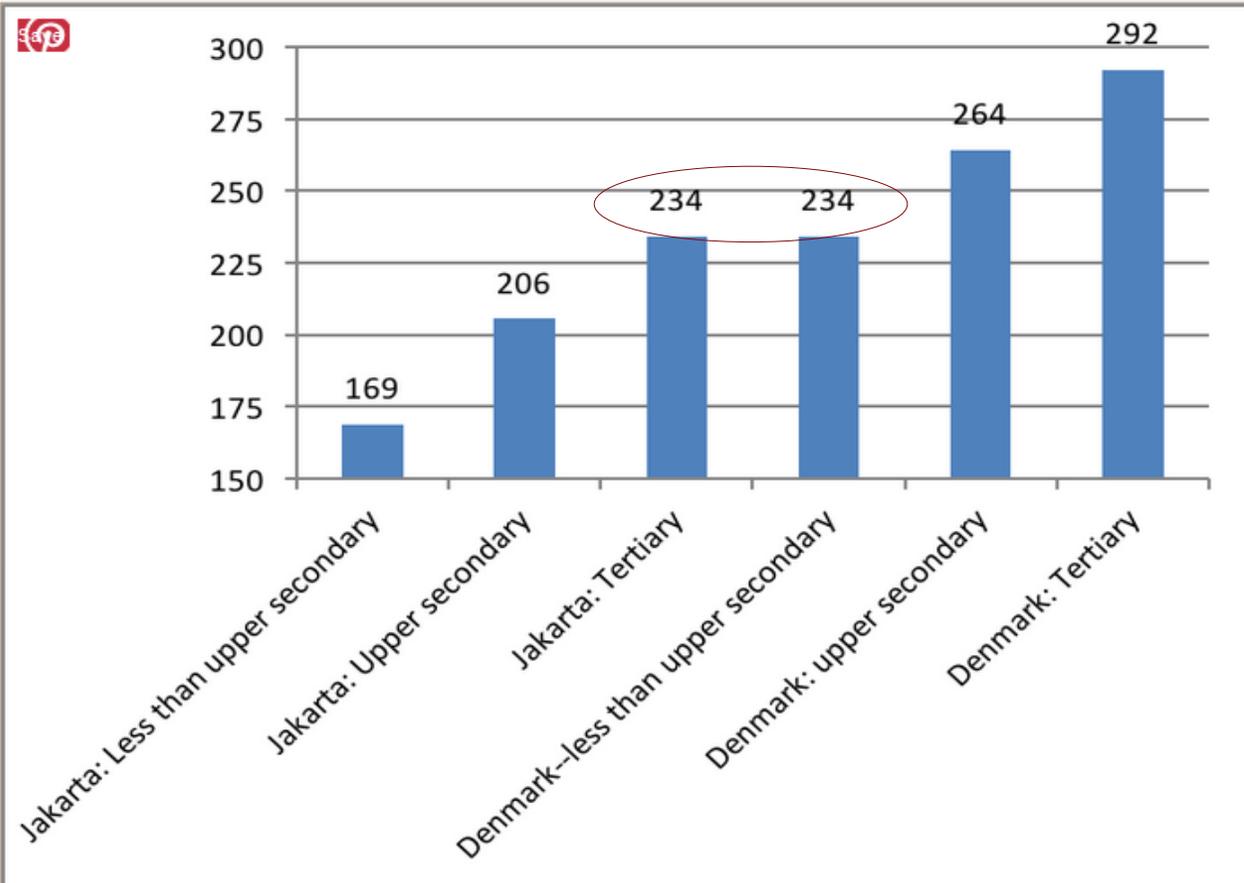
“...Sterck et al. (2017) find that GNI is not a significant predictor of health outcomes once other factors are controlled for. The first of these other factors is **individual poverty** – relative to a health poverty line of 10.89 international-\$ per day. The second factor is the **epidemiological surrounding** of a country which captures the health status of neighboring countries. And the third important factor is **institutional capacity**.”

Sterck, O., Roser, M., Ncube, M., Thewissen, S. (2018) “Allocation of development assistance for health: Is the predominance of national income justified?” *Health Policy and Planning* 33(supp 1): i14 – i23

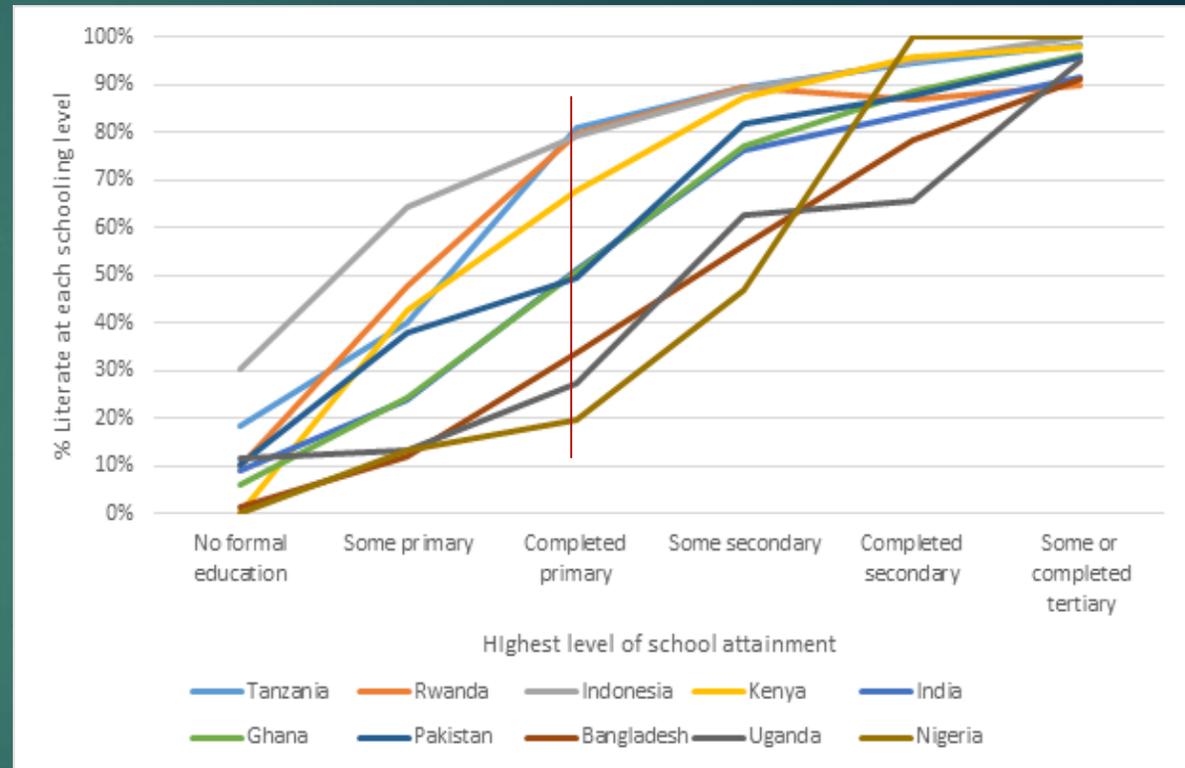
Huge variation in health outcomes within low-income countries; and **types of health concerns shift as countries ‘develop’**

and in education/learning outcomes (even for the well-off)

Figure 1: Jakartans with tertiary education have the same literacy proficiency on the OECD PIAAC assessment as Danes who have less than upper secondary schooling.



Source: OECD, Skills Matter: Further Results, Table A3.2



Source: Kaffenberger and Pritchett 2017

RISE program: <https://www.riseprogramme.org/>

Wide variation *within* countries

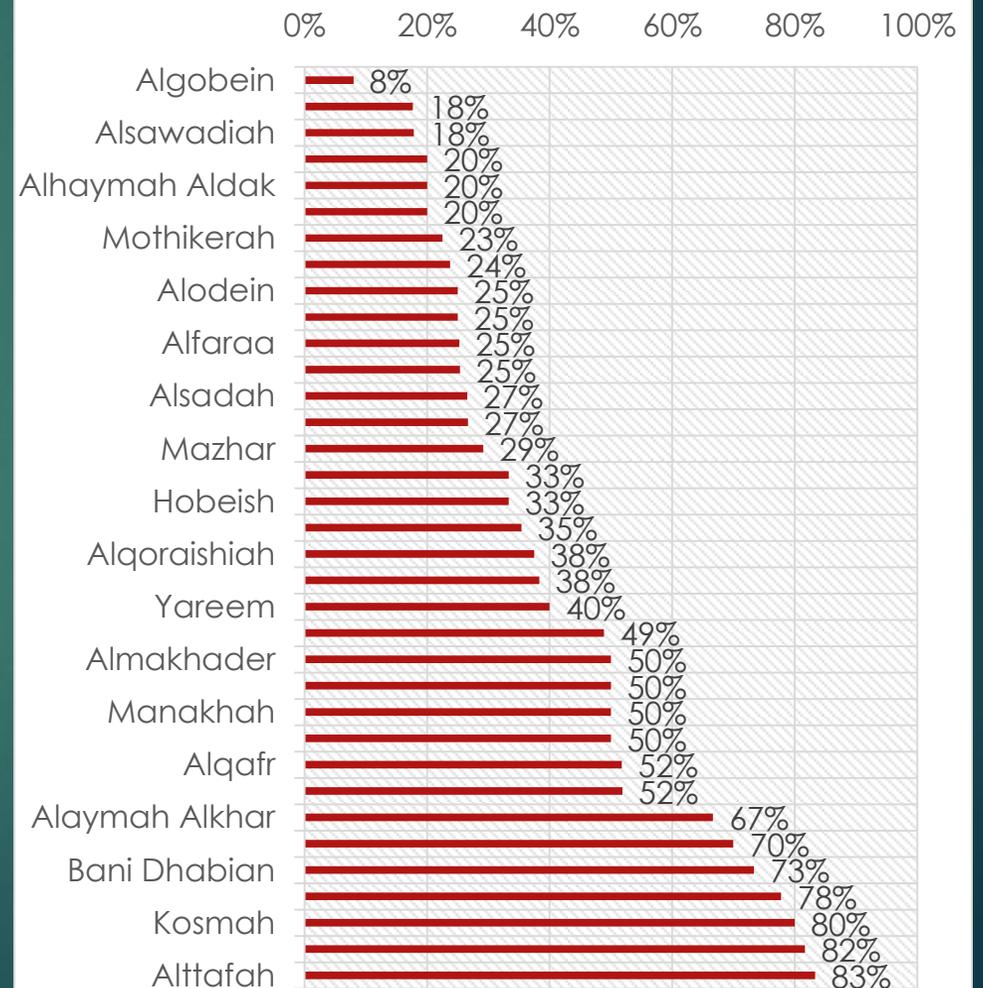
e.g., Health clinic performance. Why?

FIGURE 7.12 Absenteeism among doctors, by region:
Morocco, 2011



Sources: PETS (health), Morocco, 2011; QSDS (health), Morocco, 2011.

Absenteeism by District, Yemen



The parlous state of state capability

Only the 13 'historically developing countries' (in green) are on a plausible path to strong capability by the end of the 21st C

	Rapid negative (g<-.05)	Slow		Rapid positive (g>.05)
		Negative (-.05<g<0)	Positive (0<g<.05)	
Strong (SC>6.5)		BHR, BHS, BRN	CHL(0), SGP(0), KOR(0), QAT(0)	ARE(0)
8	0	3	4	1
Middle (4<SC<6.5)	MDA, GUY, IRN, PHL, LKA, MNG, ZAF, MAR, THA, NAM, TTO, ARG, CRI	PER, EGY, CHN, MEX, LBN, VNM, BRA, IND, JAM, SUR, PAN, CUB, TUN, JOR, OMN, MYS, KWT, ISR	KAZ(10820), GHA(4632), UKR(1216), ARM(1062), RUS(231), BWA(102), IDN(68), COL(56), TUR(55), DZA(55), ALB(42), SAU(28), URY(10), HRV(1)	
45	13	18	14	0
Weak (2.5<SC<4)	GIN, VEN, MDG, LBY, PNG, KEN, NIC, GTM, SYR, DOM, PRY, SEN, GMB, BLR	MLI, CMR, MOZ, BFA, HND, ECU, BOL, PAK, MWI, GAB, AZE, SLV	UGA(6001), AGO(2738), TZA(371), BGD(244), ETH(103), ZMB(96)	
32	14	12	6	0
Very weak (SC<2.5)	YEM, ZWE, CIV	SOM, HTI, PRK, NGA, COG, TGO, MMR	SDN(7270), SLE(333), ZAR(230), IRQ(92)	NER(66), GNB(61), LBR(33)
17	3	7	4	3
102	30	40	28	4

Source: Authors' calculations of state capability from Quality of Government, Failed State Index, and World Governance indicators

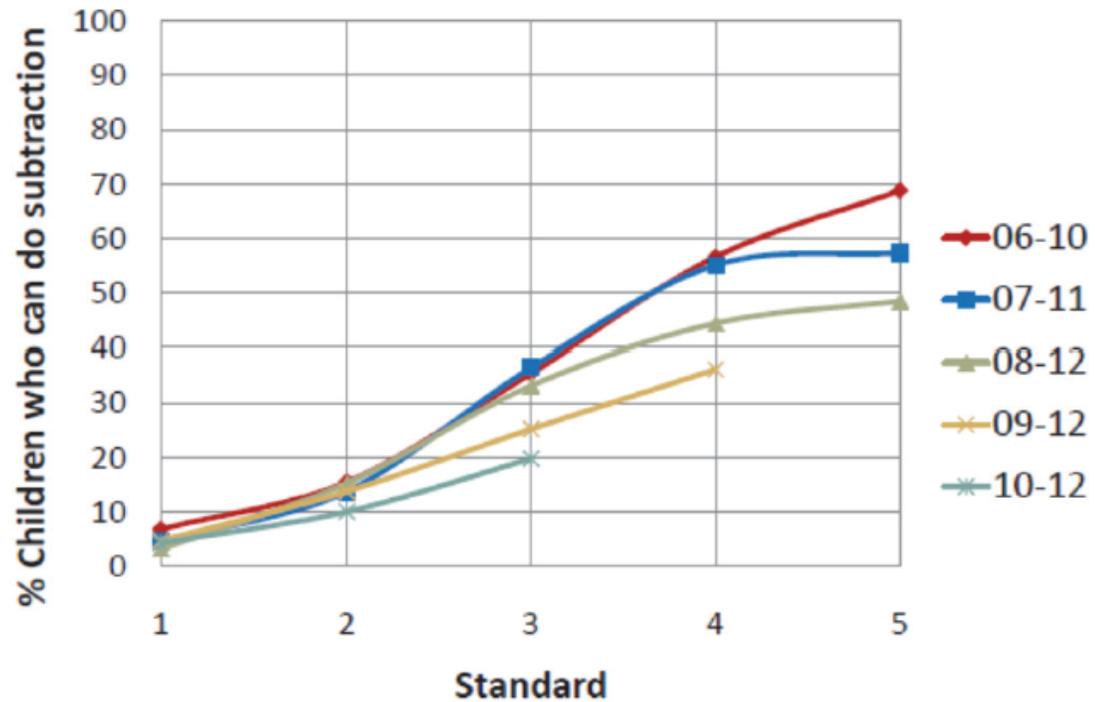
Number in brackets is years to the level of the lowest OECD country ('Portugal')

Education in India

Successive cohorts doing worse...



Figure 1: All India: % children who can do a 2 digit subtraction: successive cohorts



Note: Each successive cohort of children in India is less likely to be able to do simple subtraction at the same grade—standard 4 children are almost 20 percentage points less likely to be able to do subtraction in 2012 than standard 4 children in 2009

Source: ASER 2013 report.



Parents smuggling answers to students doing exams (Bihar, India)

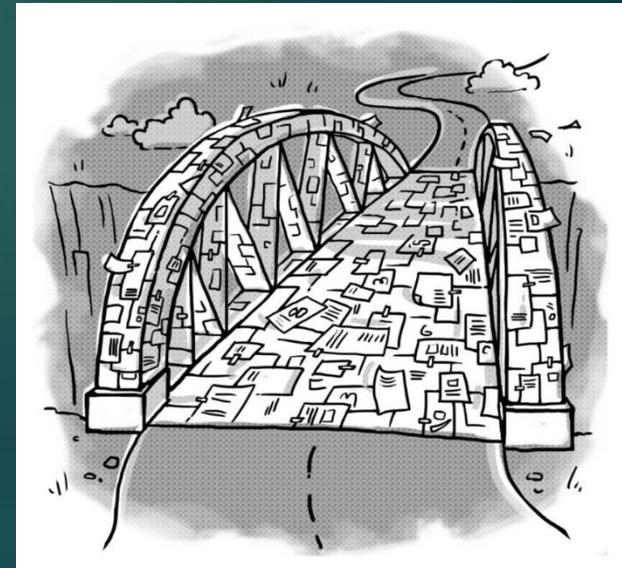
Standard Policy Response: “Capacity Building”! “Institutional Reform”!

- a) Technical advice from foreign ‘experts’
- b) Technology upgrade
- c) Training
- d) Transfer of ‘best practices’

Abetted by our prevailing administrative systems, imperatives for ‘legibility’ (e.g., counting, prioritizing provision of inputs)

When orthodoxy does “capacity building” ...

- ▶ **‘Isomorphic Mimicry’**: “Success” determined by appearances, inputs, adoption of ‘best practices’, not actual achievements
 - ▶ Transitional Justice, Corruption, Education...
- ▶ **‘Premature Load Bearing’**: Ask too much too soon of too little
 - ▶ Which inevitably leads to failure, thereby delegitimizes the *idea* of reform
- ▶ **‘Square Pegs, Round Holes’**: Prevailing administrative systems largely designed for technical problems, logistical decisions
 - ▶ i.e., for filling “object gaps” (Romer 1993): infrastructure, factories
 - ▶ and macroeconomic management (interest rates, etc)
 - ▶ ...not problems requiring tacit knowledge (mostly ‘unobservable’)
 - ▶ So, ‘seeing like a state’ (Scott 1998) meets ‘looking like a state’ (PWA, 2013)



An alternative, an agenda for action

Doing 'effective governance' differently

▶ **Building state capability by expanding local successes**

- ▶ Different *kinds* of implementation problems require different *kinds* of solutions
 - ▶ Thus need different *kinds* of evidence and strategies
- ▶ Organizations, like individuals, acquire capability through practice
 - ▶ Cf. learning languages, playing musical instruments, sports

1. **Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) (Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock 2017)**

2. **Operational Practice: Doing Development Differently 'movement', and the Global Delivery Initiative**

- ▶ A widening array of alternative 'adaptive' approaches to navigating complexity
- ▶ Carefully documented in case studies

Vital role for partnerships....

- ▶ Build collective capability of teams, work groups
 - ▶ Less concern with “capacity” of individuals
 - ▶ Teams define, prioritize problems (not external ‘experts’)
- ▶ Scaling laterally through networks, associations
 - ▶ But with focus on protecting open innovation process, not replicating outcomes
- ▶ Leadership guides, protects; doesn’t ‘micro-manage’
- ▶ Evidence used to promote team learning, not narrow compliance
- ▶ Building global social movements
 - ▶ E.g., ‘Doing development differently’
 - ▶ Climate change, Human trafficking, Gender equality

...but measured role for new technologies

- ▶ Easy to be impressed (even seduced) by the possibilities of Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, machine learning, etc...
- ▶ Can certainly help with certain technical problems
 - ▶ E.g., simulations, iterations of dangerous situations (epidemics, war)
 - ▶ Large scale poverty measurement, energy use
- ▶ But data they yield still has to be interpreted, which requires theory
 - ▶ (Harvard professors: AI voted “most likely to fail” among current development fads)
- ▶ Responding to truly complex problems, by definition, always requires teams of people making hard, consequential implementation choices
- ▶ And new technologies create new problems
 - ▶ All power needs to be constrained by countervailing power (e.g., Facebook)
 - ▶ Sound methodology required to yield high-quality data (“garbage in, garbage out”)
 - ▶ Bravery, courage, discretion, virtue... are human, not technological, traits
- ▶ Should be regarded as complements to, not substitutes for, human reasoning and deliberation