SPEAKER: Hello, and welcome to the Harvard Center for International Development's weekly podcast. On today's podcast, Salimah Samji, director of the Building State Capability program at CID, has a conversation with Professor Matt Andrews, senior lecturer in public policy and faculty director of the Building State Capability program, to discuss public policy implementation failures.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Welcome, Matt. It's always a pleasure to be able to do a podcast together with you. Today, I wanted to talk about implementation failure. We hear that there are so many amazing policies that are out there, but there is a large percentage of them that just fail. Why? Why do we have so much failure in public policy implementation?

MATT ANDREWS: Yeah, you know, it's kind of an interesting question, because on the one hand, if you come to a school like our school, people are going to talk a lot about the successes, and we teach case studies about everything that goes right. If you're out on the street, people are often talking about everything that's going wrong.

So you know, it's almost these two narratives that you hear. On the one hand, here we celebrate government and we celebrate public policy. And out there, people complain about it a lot. And you just have to read the newspapers and you can see that second narrative, that second narrative about things don't work very well. And I think when you put the two together, you realize we have a lot of very good ideas that we want to be successful policies, but somehow they don't get there often.

And the question is, how often, right? And we've been thinking about this very seriously over the last couple of years, as you know, partly inspired by people like Frank Fukuyama in Stanford and others who've been identifying that we don't necessarily teach well about taking the ideas and executing the ideas. And I think that this is an important gap, thinking about failure.

So the first thing that I've been asking myself is, well, how often do we not succeed? And that's an interesting question. And when you start to ask that question, you say, well, how often do we succeed? Which side is right here, you know? And the first thing to observe is it's actually very hard to see that, because there are very few governments that actually evaluate, do we do well? Do we succeed? There are very few agencies or entities across the world that actually look at this question and say--

SALIMAH SAMJI: Why do you think that is?

MATT ANDREWS: Well, you know, I think that for one thing, it's very hard to do. And the first thing to think about public policy is if you want to do public policy, it's the hardest thing in the world to do that. I have a lot of--

SALIMAH SAMJI: That is true.

MATT ANDREWS: --friends who are entrepreneurs and they work in the private sector, and they would be shocked that I said that. But it's hard, right? You know, I came to this stuff through economics, and in economics you learn, why do you need government? Well, you need government because of market failure, right?

So the very idea that you need government is, well, there's some things that the private sector can't do. There's some things that the private sector fails at doing. It under provides, right? Now

you're saying, well, OK, the government is the right place to do it. But what you're doing is you're saying, let's take the things that the market can't do and is given to the government, and then we're surprised that the government can't do it, either.

So I think the first thing is these things are wicked hard problems. Oftentimes they involve doing things that we don't really know how to do, bringing people together in ways that we don't know how to bring them together, and engaging in political spaces that are fraught with complexity, that are often very adversarial, and developing mechanisms that allow us to do things that we don't know how to do and that may be impossible.

So in one sense, I think that's one of the reasons why we don't always assess success, because we are not really sure how to do what we're doing and worse than that, we're not really sure how to evaluate if we're being successful in what we're doing, either.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Mm-hmm.

MATT ANDREWS: What does success look like?

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right. So you have this paper that you've written on implementation failure, and you've kind of looked at the World Bank and some of its projects. Can you share with us some of the findings that you had from looking at, at least, an organization that's looking at failure and success and evaluation?

MATT ANDREWS: Sure. So the World Bank is interesting. I used to work in the World Bank, and we're interested in development. But it is one of those organizations, to give it a lot of credit, that actually evaluates every project that they do. And people would say, well, this isn't a government. Yes, but it's a public policy organization that works with governments all over the world.

And if you look at the composition of the World Bank, it kind of looks like a government. There's the people working on health, the people who work in education. There's almost every department you could imagine the government, the World Bank does that, right? Now, they support these projects and they fund them, like you would through a government budget, and then they evaluate them.

And the first thing to say is some people read the article and think I'm being nasty to the World Bank. Unfortunately, I'm looking at them and I'm asking the question, how often do you fail? It's not being nasty at all. I can't find any other organization that evaluates every project that it does and that actually puts that information out so we can look at it. So from a researcher's perspective, it's just a wonderful thing. It's a gold mine.

The interesting thing is that when they do the evaluation, the evaluations department actually asks a whole lot of interesting questions. And they have been filled with people who are very serious in thinking about this, what does failure looks like. They ask questions about, are we satisfied with how the project is going? Is it going on time? Is it on budget? Is it addressing the objectives that we had at the beginning?

They also ask questions like, is it meeting the broader development impact objective that we were thinking of? For instance, you might say, we are doing a project to build schools, right? And the immediate objective is to build 5,000 schools in five years. And so they would ask, did

we satisfactorily do that within the budget that we have, et cetera? Which are questions that we would call project management questions or product questions-- did we produce the product?

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right.

MATT ANDREWS: But the reason why you're building the schools is so that people can learn, right? And that's the development impact, right? And every government has these kind of things, where on one hand, we're allocating money and we're doing it in a period of time and we're producing a specific product, and we want to know, did we do those things? But we're doing that for the reason, and that's a second question.

And the World Bank asks those questions, or at least the evaluators do. They also ask, is it sustainable? Great question. They ask a bunch of other things. And on the evaluation side, they really have thought about this stuff. You know, with sustainable, they ask questions like, is this politically sustainable? Important question.

When the World Bank as an organization, not the evaluators, report on these findings, they only report on the satisfaction. They only report on did we do it on budget, did we do it on time, and did we reach the objectives? And on that, for every project, they assess on different criteria. And this one, they report on the percentage of projects that are considered moderately satisfactory or better. And on that, there are 75% are ticked off with successful.

SALIMAH SAMJI: That's a large percentage.

MATT ANDREWS: That's a large percentage. It's good. I mean, any organization, that's good. And basically, what they're saying is, we committed to do this project, and what we can control is how the money was spent and if it was spent as we promised that it would be spent, as in any good project management organization.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right.

MATT ANDREWS: And they saying 75% of the time, we do that. The second question, you won't find the managing director reporting on every year of, do we think that what we produced is going to improve the development impact?

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right. Is it going to solve the problem that you wanted to--

MATT ANDREWS: Is it going to solve the problem?

SALIMAH SAMJI: Yeah.

MATT ANDREWS: Now the evaluators are evaluating that. They're asking that question. Well, turns out 75% moderately satisfactory, above. Only 49% of the time are they saying--

SALIMAH SAMJI: Wow.

MATT ANDREWS: --we think that we're actually going to impact things. They're asking the question, but they're not speaking about it. Now, it's a really interesting thing, because you could

say, well it's kind of obvious. The 75% sounds better, the 49% doesn't sound that good. I think there's something else going on.

Our organizations have become project management organizations. And if you're a project manager in an organization, you're focused on the project and the product success. Did we do it on budget, did we do it on time, and did we produce what we said we'd produce? Because that's what we're accountable for, and that's what we can plan for, and that's what we can control for.

The thing of then saying, is it going to be sustainable? Is it going to impact things? There's a lot of uncertainty there. There's a lot of stuff that we as the organization, in this case, the bank or the government, whichever entity, doesn't control. We can't control those things, because there's politics that comes in. Maybe there's surprises. Maybe there's shocks, right? And those are things that we say, well, we can't really be held accountable for those things in the scope of our project, because that's unfair to us.

Now, the difficulty with public policy is that that's kind of where the rubber meets the road.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Yeah.

MATT ANDREWS: Because it's not about building the schools. It's about having the kids learn. And the difficult thing that we have is when we evaluate like this, I think we end up with a lot of schools, but with a big question mark about learning. And it's not-- this is just one example, right? We could give a lot of examples. We could say, well, in Flint, Michigan, we end up with water treatment plants, but we still have dirty water.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Yep.

MATT ANDREWS: We could talk about youth unemployment in certain parts of the United Kingdom and say we end up with a lot of programs and projects where we spend the money as we promised to, but the thing that we did didn't actually solve the problem. And because of the project that we had, we didn't have the scope to adapt and change and do something different.

So it's almost kind of an interesting thing that the way that we are evaluating, trying to be accountable to the taxpayers, trying to be accountable to our bosses, may be the thing that actually precludes us from implementing the thing that actually solves the problem. And that's kind of one of the messages of the paper.

And then the paper's kind of saying, we need to be evaluating these things, but we need to be incorporating this other question of, do we actually think we're going to solve the problem more as well? And that's kind of a big question mark as to how you do that.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Yeah. So do you want to share some thoughts you may have on, how does one get out of this? Like, what can be done differently? Because the examples that you give are exactly what we see. And we work in so many countries and we teach here at the Kennedy School, and there are so many students here who said, this is a recurring story that you hear.

Probably every country, every city has examples where they're doing lots. So if you ask them, are you doing something about this problem, the answer is almost always yes. Is it working? Probably not, or not as well as it could. How do you get out of this trap?

MATT ANDREWS: It actually-- where we started off and said, we live in this world where half of the people are saying we're doing well and then the citizens are saying you're not, I think this explains it. Because what we're doing is we're saying, but of course we're building the schools! And they're saying, yes, but we're not learning. Right?

Well, but we have this kind of youth unemployment program and we've been moving the money and we've hired people and we're doing a good job and we're excited. And people are saying, the youth are still unemployed, right? And so we're evaluating ourselves in a way that says legitimately, we're doing a good job, but we're not solving the problem because of the gap.

Now, it is an interesting thing. How do you get out of this? Because this leads to lack of confidence in the state, even while the state thinks it's doing a good job. We think--

SALIMAH SAMJI: It's like a spiral down.

MATT ANDREWS: It is!

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right? A self-fulfilling prophecy that just continues over and over again.

MATT ANDREWS: Yeah. You know, the easy way out of a spiral is to spiral the other way, right?

SALIMAH SAMJI: [LAUGHS]

MATT ANDREWS: No, and it's that simple.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Yeah, no, I like that.

MATT ANDREWS: To kind of say if you want to change a negative feedback loop, throw some positive feedback into it. Here's the thing that's really tricky. If we look at these projects and you say, well, just do better on the project, we're already being 75% successful in this project in the way we're being successful.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right.

MATT ANDREWS: Now, when you look at these documents, these assessment documents, and they say, well, how do you do better, they would say plan better. They'd say execute on the plan better. Move the money better. Now, what they're doing is they're telling you how to be more successful on the 75% measure.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Hmm.

MATT ANDREWS: That's what they're doing.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right.

MATT ANDREWS: They're not telling you how to do better on the 49%. So it's saying, yes, we didn't build some of the schools, so let's make sure we finish all of those next time around. Let's do the things we can control. And usually, that's where the advice on doing better comes from.

And we teach that here. We say to the students here, be even smarter with your plan. That's what we say to them, right? Control even better.

What we need to be recognizing is that the issue with failure is on the things that we can't plan for.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Which is pretty much-- if you're working with complex problems, which are almost all of these things, you have no control.

MATT ANDREWS: That's exactly what it is. So we're delivering on the complicated stuff that you can plan and control, and we're struggling on the stuff that requires you to be dealing with complexity, where you're adapting and learning. And actually, the way in which we are advising people to do better on the project makes it harder for them to adapt to [? then, ?] because--

So an example would be in many organizations, if I look at the World Bank assessments, one of the things that you'll see very commonly is they'll say, if things didn't go well, it's often there was a political surprise. Something happened. And then they'll say, how do you deal with that next time around, because the evaluators-- and again, the evaluators do a very good job, as they'll say, you need to do a better political economy analysis at the beginning.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Mm-hmm.

MATT ANDREWS: And so I'm like, OK, what you're telling us is that we need to have done a better evaluation of what was going to happen now four years ago, but we don't know what's going to happen now, right?

SALIMAH SAMJI: Yeah.

MATT ANDREWS: And when you do that evaluation, you do the better political economy analysis, it gives you more confidence in your plan, which means that when the surprise happens, you're actually going to make a bigger mistake because you can't adapt. The issue is not do better plan, do better control. The issue is we need to build in more scope for adaptation. We need to have an approach where we recognize the things that are complex, that are not easily planned for, and we need to have a better way of doing those things.

SALIMAH SAMJI: So more flexibility.

MATT ANDREWS: More flexibility. So our approach in that sense needs to say, OK, what is it that we don't know? What parts of the project do we need to learn about, and how do we develop a project management methodology that allows us to learn as we go and to adapt? It doesn't have to be your whole project, but it needs to be part of your project. Where you can't plan, don't plan.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right.

MATT ANDREWS: Right? Now, it doesn't mean you just do nothing. And this is where we come into our problem-driven iterative adaptation. We say, develop a methodology that allows the facilitated emergence of the solution in a structured, responsible, accountable way, but that actually builds in the mechanism for learning and adapting [INAUDIBLE].

SALIMAH SAMJI: Because the truth is, you don't know what's going to emerge. You don't know what the solution is, and you want to allow the space for this to just emerge, as we've seen they do.

MATT ANDREWS: And that's exactly what it is, is saying this gap between 49% and 75% is all about stuff that surprised us.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Yes.

MATT ANDREWS: And to say, well, plan better for the stuff that surprises you, it's like, well, that's silly. You know? I mean, it's not totally silly, because there are some cases where people had bad plans. But again, to give credit to the World Bank, most of the projects are well planned.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Mm-hmm.

MATT ANDREWS: Yeah, I mean, they have very good experts. They're planning things well. They're doing it with the government. This is not a silly organization. And I would say this-- most governments I work with, they have good planners. They have people who do this. The thing where things fall apart is all these surprises.

And one of the things that we teach here is when you are thinking about your project, you need to ask how much uncertainty is there. And if you find that there's a lot of uncertainty, you're saying there's complexity here that we can't plan for. Because if it's uncertain, how do you plan for it?

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right.

MATT ANDREWS: And you know, we'll say to people, how much is it that you know that you know? How much is it that you know that you don't know? And then how much is it that you don't know that you don't know?

SALIMAH SAMJI: Unknown unknowns.

MATT ANDREWS: And the reality is there are many, many unknown unknowns.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right.

MATT ANDREWS: And so if you have unknown unknowns, you can't plan for those things. So even asking those questions at the beginning allows you to work out, is my project one where I should really be more adaptive as I move on, where I should really think carefully? Now, the beautiful thing about management is that management gives us many ways to deal with many different problems. We have a plan and control methodology that we can use when we know a lot of things.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right.

MATT ANDREWS: And even if we know what we don't know, we can use plan and control, because there's risk mitigation that we can bring into it and that's what a good project does. The

second thing we could do is we could use agile or adaptive methods, where we know what we want to do but there's unknowns about how to fit it to the context.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right.

MATT ANDREWS: Right? There's things that-- we know that we want to use a new IT system in the health sector, but we're not exactly sure what the users in the health sector can or can't do. So we can use an agile method to kind of build that solution as we go.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right.

MATT ANDREWS: Then there's other methods that are actually really good if we don't know anything and if we don't really understand the problem well, we don't understand what we want to do, we don't understand the context. Well, this is where facilitated emergence comes in, where we can start with the problem. And we can build our way towards a solution as we move along.

All of these are management mechanisms. Problem that we see in many governments is that you have a lot of problems with lots of unknowns that require facilitated emergence, or with significant unknowns that require agile and adaptive. But everyone is using plan and control.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Why do you think that is? Because I'm sure some of them know, right? And we run into people like this all the time that they know that their plan and control method is probably not going to work as well, but they do it anyways. Why?

MATT ANDREWS: I think a few things. I think one thing is that public organizations have to be accountable. And so we think in order to be accountable, we need to be telling people everything we're doing and we need to spend two years planning it out in advance, and we're not going to get it done. And I think there's some truth to that.

I think another thing is that we have false confidence in our abilities. I mean, I've worked in government, I worked in the World Bank, and in all those times, sometimes I think I'd say, my solution is so good that I'm pretty sure everyone's just going to get on board, right?

SALIMAH SAMJI: [LAUGHS]

MATT ANDREWS: And it didn't happen that way, but I really kind of believed that, well meaning as it may be. I think the kinds of people we train and the way we train, I don't think we train people to learn that there are other options out there. So people look at something and they say, really, there's a lot of uncertainty. I don't think the plan is really going to work. But they haven't been taught any other way.

So if you go to the World Bank and you say to people, how do you do a project, they're going to all sit down and they're going to say, you need to have a pre-identification phase, an identification phase, an appraisal phase. It's the same for everything. That's how the organization works. That's how people are trained.

Many of the people who work in public policy, whether they're in the World Bank, whether they're in a government, it doesn't matter, they haven't necessarily been trained in alternative

ways of implementation. They've been trained in doing policy analysis, right? And then they think that's going to be the answer for everything, even if they've seen that it's not the case.

I think people sometimes just don't know. It's one of the reasons why we're trying to say to people, the first thing you need to do is identify what your problem is. And often when we teach people about that, they say, wow, there's a method for doing that? Yes, there really is. And then we say to them, the beautiful thing about management is that there's different options to match the different problems. And they say, wow, is that really the case? It really is.

So sometimes, I think it's that simple. It's just giving people new options, saying to them there's things that you can try. And we have found that that really helps people in addressing these things in better ways.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right. And you could even think about it as one problem having different management methods you use for different parts, right?

MATT ANDREWS: Exactly.

SALIMAH SAMJI: It's not that one or the other. You can have a project with some plan and control, some facilitated emergence or some adaptive management. It's a combination of the-- it's not thinking about, oh, my project has to fit into one of the buckets.

MATT ANDREWS: Exactly. If you think about an education project, you could have an education project where you're building schools, and then in each school, you want to have some kind of IT-based system where the teachers use an IT-based system to engage with the students. And then you want to introduce some method to ensure that the students are learning.

You could say the building of the schools is a construction project. We all know how to do that. We need experts to do that, we need a very good plan, we need a way in which we can bring those experts in in a very methodical way, and that's plan and control.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Absolutely.

MATT ANDREWS: The IT system is going to be a little bit-- it looks like plan and control, but with IT systems, there's always the question about who's going to use them. And because there's a question about who's going to use them, we know the general solution we need. We need an IT system that they'll use in the school, but we don't really know exactly what those teachers are going to be able to do with it. So let's use an agile method. And that agile method is going to allow us to say we need an IT system, but let's build it as we move along.

But then the issue of, well, how are the kids going to learn-- well, that one, we just-- there are more unknowns about that. So why don't we come in at the beginning and mobilize the teachers together and say to them, what do you understand as the problems of learning, and then put them to work in trying to solve the problem and trying to find their own solutions?

So that would be more like facilitated emergence, and you could do all three in the same project. And that, I think is the key, is ensuring that you're using the right method for the challenge that you're facing. And then at the end of the day, evaluating it in the right way, too, right?

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right.

MATT ANDREWS: On the first one, we could ask the question, did you build the schools? And the second one, we can ask the question, is the IT system useful?

SALIMAH SAMJI: Right.

MATT ANDREWS: Right? And the third question, we can say, are we learning how to help kids learn? So different questions for evaluation. And if we ask those, I think it becomes less threatening, too. You don't necessarily end up with this gap of 50% to 75% because you get information in that gap to say, here's how we're progressing in that direction.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Absolutely. And for accountability, too, you can imagine the building of the schools is the largest cost, right? And you have all the metrics in the plan and control requires to be able to say, I did not pocket that money. It actually went-- there are schools that got built. But there is also that area where you really don't know when you need to learn, and that doesn't often necessarily take money. It's a lot more other things, right?

MATT ANDREWS: Absolutely. And at the end of the day, also, you know, what we're finding is that getting back to the evaluations we were looking at, the World Bank evaluation department, they ask, is it sustainable?

SALIMAH SAMJI: Mm-hmm.

MATT ANDREWS: And they ask, will it have a development impact? The interesting thing there is that those things happen after the project.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Yeah.

MATT ANDREWS: They happen after the building teams have gone, after the contractors have left, and that's about the people who are there, right? And really, the question you're asking is, do they have the capability to take it the next mile? And that's where-- we never ask that question.

Now, if you're doing facilitated emergence because you're saying, we don't really know how to do that, we don't know how to facilitate sustainability. How do you get teachers to inhabit a school building in a way that makes it a school, a community of learning? Well, we want to build those capabilities.

Now, you can, in a very accountable way, say, in that period of time, do we see the teachers more involved? Are they engaged? Are they learning? Are they spending more time with their kids? Now, those are things that happen when those capabilities are being built, and that's where we would have a different set of questions about what success looks like, where we don't see those being asked in pretty much anywhere at the moment.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Great. That's really, really helpful. My last question is, you mentioned we don't teach this. What should we be teaching in schools? Because I do agree that there is a failure on all of our parts, right, to kind of teach people that oh yeah, this is easy. All you need is

a good technocratic solution and bingo, you're going to make change happen. And we all know that's not true. That's not how change happens.

MATT ANDREWS: Well, I mean, the first thing is that even teaching people how to do good plan and control implementation would be a good start. Right? You know, we have too many policy students who frankly leave our school without knowing how to write a budget. And you know, that's a scary thing.

So even doing a good plan-- we have a really great idea, we put a plan. I say to my students, if you really believe your plan is that good, then you need to invest in the time to understand how to get it implemented. And there, you need to understand how do I mobilize finances? How do I mobilize people? How do I organize people? How do I manage politics, right?

SALIMAH SAMJI: Yeah.

MATT ANDREWS: You can't complain at the end of the day, I had a great idea but the politicians let me down.

SALIMAH SAMJI: No, you should expect it!

MATT ANDREWS: You're an-- you should expect it and you should have a strategy to deal with it.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Absolutely.

MATT ANDREWS: And we should be helping people to learn how to do that. There are ways of doing that, right? And then we need to teach people that there are different ways of doing this. I think we should teach people standard project management. We should teach people how to use agile tools. We should teach people how to do facilitated emergence.

And in our experience, we find that when students learn these things, they are much more adept to engage with the real world. These are practical, practical tools. They're tools that they can take with them when they finish. They are tools we can teach people in degree programs, we can teach people in executive programs, we can teach people in the field.

Now, when we don't teach this, what we are hoping for or assuming is that people are just so smart that they even know it.

SALIMAH SAMJI: [LAUGHS]

MATT ANDREWS: Or--

SALIMAH SAMJI: Which we know is not true.

MATT ANDREWS: Or that people, when they get into their jobs, are given the space on the job to learn it. And I think we also know that that doesn't happen.

SALIMAH SAMJI: That doesn't happen.

MATT ANDREWS: Because one of the things that is peculiar about public policy organizations is that they're quite stressful environments, and the scope for learning on the job can be less than we think because failure is not always rewarded. So I think that we need to take upon ourselves the opportunity to bring people out of that environment, and teach them some of the tools that can help them to be more successful in doing this when they get into their work environment in the public policy space.

SALIMAH SAMJI: I would totally agree, because even in my own experience, a lot of the things that I've learned have been high stakes, right? When you're already on a project, it's $500 million. That's $500 million that's already been signed, and there's not much leeway to be able to change things. And it would be really nice to be able to have those tools before, so you don't get to figuring out, at $500 million, that this isn't working.

MATT ANDREWS: Even if it's not $500 million but it's $50,000, if you are doing something as a public servant, you're doing them for people who need you to do it for them.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Yup.

MATT ANDREWS: And in that situation, it's always high stakes.

SALIMAH SAMJI: It is.

MATT ANDREWS: If you care for your job and if you came to this work of public policy because you actually care for the mission, it's always high stakes because you're working on behalf of people to solve problems that they need to have solved. I think, even personally, things are always high stakes when you're working on behalf of others. But when you're working on--

SALIMAH SAMJI: That's very true.

MATT ANDREWS: --behalf of myself, I'm happy to take a risk on because I can manage that risk. But when you're working on behalf of others, it gets a little bit more scary.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Yup.

MATT ANDREWS: And so I think people get a lot more risk averse. And we have a long literature, a very big literature that tells us that people who work in this area are more risk averse than entrepreneurs. So I think we need to equip them so that they can engage in risky areas with more confidence.

SALIMAH SAMJI: That's right. And compartmentalize the risky, right?

MATT ANDREWS: Absolutely.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Do what you know how to do in areas what we know how to do, and then the areas where we don't know, you use these tools that will really help you learn and adapt.

MATT ANDREWS: And I'll say the other thing that we're hoping to do in some of the work, especially in the executive programs that are in places, we're trying to build communities of

practice as well. Because I think you can teach people, but if you can also have people who are trying to implement things better--

SALIMAH SAMJI: Absolutely.

MATT ANDREWS: Work with each other, talk to each other across the world, across boundaries, learn from each other, I think that it will help people to manage this risk as well. I'm part of a community. I don't need to know all the answers. I can learn as I go. I can click onto my community of practice and send a message and say, you know what? I'm on a project where we're building school buildings, but I really want the kids to learn.

Does anyone have any experience? And people will come back and they'll say, this is what we're doing. One of our goals is to build over time, and we're right at the beginning. So if anyone sends a message and says, how are you doing that? I'll say, we don't know. We're going to facilitate its emergence.

We want to build the biggest community of implementation practitioners in the world so that we can create this environment for learning. Ask us in five years how it's going. Or better than that, join the community in five years. Hopefully, you would be communicating with community members all over the world about implementation in ways that you can't do right now.

SALIMAH SAMJI: Great. Thank you so much, Matt.

MATT ANDREWS: Thanks, Salimah.

SALIMAH SAMJI: It's always a pleasure having a podcast with you.

MATT ANDREWS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: If you want to learn more about CID's research and events, please visit cid.harvard.edu. See you next week.

[MUSIC PLAYING]