

WHITE PAPER

IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL LONG-TERM NATIONAL MAINTENANCE STRATEGY IN AFGHANISTAN

MCM/COMPLETE JOINT VENTURES

WARREN, MICHIGAN

Dr. William L. Solomonson,
Learning Strategies Advisor, MCM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A key outcome of the United States' policy in Afghanistan is to develop long-term capacity and generate near-term readiness of the country to be self-sufficient. Since 2012, the focus has become sustainment, a vital component of which is self-sufficiency in terms of logistics. Multiple assessments have determined that Afghanistan logistics are not mature, leading to the development of a National Maintenance Strategy to bridge the gap between dependence on U.S. logistics support and transition of all responsibility for maintenance, sustainment, and supply to the ANSF. Higher-level skills (maintenance management, supply management) need further support to mature. Targeted management, leadership, and technical training is critical to mission success, but both historical nation-building interventions as well as modern organizational learning suggest that creating an on-going performance infrastructure is more effective than a one-time solution. A sustainable Afghan-led learning solution focuses not on the traditional one-time 'train the person/train the trainer' model, but rather the development of a learning system with a throughput of Afghan Local Nationals. For success, awareness and tactics based on cultural considerations is paramount. Costs can be contained by leveraging existing infrastructure. The approach outlined in this paper aligns in multiple ways to the Afghanistan government's vision for realizing self-reliance.



BACKGROUND

The decade following the Afghanistan military intervention in 2001 saw the United States focus on the build-up of warfighting capability within Afghanistan. During this period the number of trained Afghan National Army (ANA) active military personnel grew from approximately 1,750 in March of 2003¹ to over 200,000 in 2014². Similarly, the Afghan National Police (ANP) force had grown to approximately 151,000 by 2013³. This ramp up of the combined Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) supports an international goal of an autonomous Islamic State of Afghanistan. In support of this goal, the focus from 2012 onward has changed to one of sustainment, with the development of long-term internal capacity and the generation of near-term readiness for Afghanistan-led national security.

Experience has taught us that a critical component to success toward Afghan autonomy is a mature level of operational logistics. Although important during the warfighting build-up period, aspects of operational logistics such as training and mentoring, workforce, contractor logistics support (CLS), density, and life support (Section “H”) were not developed to a point to support sustainment. In fact, triangulated assessment data from the DoD IG, Staff Assistant visits, and OSD studies conclude not only that logistics are not mature in Afghanistan, but also higher-level human skills such as maintenance management and supply chain management “need further support to mature”⁴. The United States has participated in past interventions and learned first-hand the impact of strategic and tactical transitions: Libya, Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Lebanon all lend credence to the importance of effective transitions of responsibility. Hence, it cannot be overstated the vital role of transitional support for logistics responsibility of maintenance, sustainment, and supply to the ANSF.

¹ ISW (2009). Afghanistan National Army. Retrieved from www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-national-army-ana

² Globalfirepower.com (2015). Active Military Manpower by Country. Retrieved from <http://www.globalfirepower.com/active-military-manpower.asp>

³ NATO (2013). Afghan National Security Forces. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2013_10/20131018_131022-MediaBackgrounder_ANSF_en.pdf

⁴ Combat Support and Combat Service Support (2015). *National Maintenance Strategy Industry Day*. Washington, DC: U.S. Army.

The United States faces a challenging environment in Afghanistan. Since 2001, the US has seen reconstruction missteps, internal and external misgovernance, and on-going conflict in a region with “insurgency, Islamic extremism and geostrategic rivalry.”⁵ Further, the fear of a hurried U.S. withdrawal led to the threat of additional challenges, which has contributed to the extension of U.S. troop presence until at least 2017. One policy expert noted:

“According to one senior US ambassador, ‘We are still beguiled by our victories over Germany and Japan. We forget that they were long hard slogs; and that each had significant experience of modern governance ... dealing with tribal society is a qualitatively different problem .. In Afghanistan there are so many variables, and so many variables affecting those variables—it’s kaleidoscopic’; in other words, there’s ‘ambiguity constantly changing’⁵

Additional to the challenges unique to a transition to Afghanistan self-sufficiency are the concerns of on-going costs to the U.S. taxpayer. Overall, estimates for total dollars spent or obligated to the conflicts in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq—including estimates of future veterans’ assistance and interest payments—is \$4.4 trillion⁶. One estimate of costs of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan since 2003 are \$765B⁷. These costs have decreased annually since hitting a peak of over \$120B in 2011, and continue to decrease in parallel to the drawdown. The expectation is that on-going costs for the short-term from 2016 and beyond will be at least \$4B annually⁸.

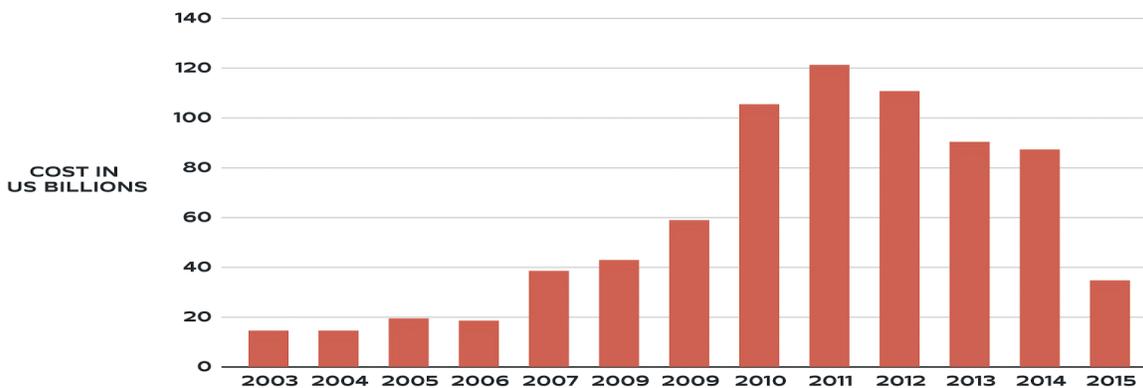


Figure 1. US War Costs in Afghanistan, 2003-2015⁷

⁵ Waldman, M. (2013). *System Failure: the underlying causes of US Policy-makings errors in Afghanistan*. International Affairs, 89: 4, 2013, p. 835-836.

⁶ Watson Institute, International and Public Affairs (2015). Retrieved from <http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/economic>.

⁷ Statista.com (2015). U.S. war costs in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2003 to 2015 (in billion U.S. dollars). Retrieved from <http://www.statista.com/statistics/271526/us-war-costs-in-iraq-and-afghanistan/>

⁸ Rueters (2015). U.S. pledges to keep funding Afghans amid calls for slower pullout. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-usa-ghani-idUSKBN0MJ21J20150324>

In addition to the costs of potential redeployment of troops in Afghanistan, a grave concern is hidden or unforeseen costs that would be resultant of an unsuccessful transition to autonomy. The costs of failed Afghanistan self-sufficiency, including a recommitment of significant funding at or near warfighting buildup levels, could prove not only financially unsustainable, but likely would be unsupported by frustrated American taxpayers over decades of costs with little face value of improvements. Thus the importance of an effective transition, including vital operational logistics, becomes paramount.

Training the workforce to perform logistical tasks has followed the typical pattern of training within the military. This pattern is one of placing the person through focused, generally well-designed and well-delivered instruction. The outcome is commonly a well-prepared individual to complete many immediate required tasks. This approach has many potential failings however. A primary failing is based on these training interventions being viewed as a one-time instance of learning. The thought is that “if we have person x who need to know procedure y, then a training course on that subject will meet the need.” But what if that procedure isn’t used commonly, or even within several weeks? What if personnel are commonly redeployed on 3-month schedules? What if a person simply hasn’t had an opportunity to reinforce what has been learned through practice and feedback? Is there measurement and assessment on an on-going basis to ascertain whether the knowledge and skills are retained? Secondly, often the training is not designed to be customized and specific to the appropriate learner. For example, if service technicians are taking a course on general service tasks for the one LTV that they see in theater, but the course content combines information for all LTVs currently used in theater across regions, then the learner is set-up for potential cognitive overload by being taught unnecessary, redundant, or conflicting information. Third, a “one-size fits all” training approach typically struggles in complex environments. Culture is not only something that occurs at the nation level, or the linguistic level, or the regional level, but also at an office-level. In training the workforce in Afghanistan, culture has typically only been addressed through a focus on translating English content into Dari and Pashto. Though of course this is a requirement, a simple and mechanical software-based translation does not bridge the chasm of cultural awareness that includes the relationship to superiors and subordinates, the role of gender, the use of linguistic colloquialisms, regional dialects, and many more.

The Afghanistan Environment: Workforce and Education

The workforce in Afghanistan is currently comprised of Afghan Local Nationals (LNs), Other Country Nationals (OCNs), and Ex Patriots (Expats). In concurrence with the drawdown and build toward self-sufficiency, the percentage of Expats and OCNs of the total workforce will reduce greatly while the LNs will increase and comprise the vast majority of workers. This points to two things. First, training and support to the LNs is critical to achieving self-sufficiency. OCNs and Expats are currently playing key roles in management, supervisory, and training positions in logistics support in Afghanistan. These positions must be replaced with LNs who have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform them effectively and

efficiently. Second, during the drawdown focus must remain steadfast on the security of OCNs and Expats, as well as other administrative concerns such as travel and Visas, so that the transition is as seamless as possible.

The current state of education in Afghanistan presents a challenge. Adult literacy has held steady at just 30% over the past many years⁹. This impacts the numbers of LNs prepared to undertake education at the college or university level, creating a limited talent pool from which Afghanistan’s future government and business leadership is drawn from. In 2012 just over 18,000 LNs were enrolled in engineering, computer science, geology and mining, and agriculture programs⁹, which represented less than 1% of Afghanistan’s 2012 population. In the country’s 600 public and private technical and vocational schools, over half of the 350,000 trainees were in technical fields of study – computers, service technicians, electronics, and construction. A further challenge is the lack of a unified strategic vision for education, which leads to inconsistencies in standards from curricula to buildings and infrastructure. Dr. Saif Samady, former Deputy Minister of Education of Afghanistan, has pointed to this lack of alignment and called for “coordination and a comprehensive national strategy for the training of engineers and technicians”⁹. A final factor to be considered in the current educational system is the lack of academic materials available in Dari and Pashto, the primary languages of LNs. This compounds the issue of becoming an educated Afghan by either having to rely on very limited and outdated resources in Dari or Pashto, or having to learn a second language—and learn it well— to access academic materials.

As mentioned, cultural factors also play a large role in any intervention in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has four primary ethnic groups (though there are many smaller groups): Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, and Uzbek¹⁰. Despite historical tensions between groups, recruitment and daily activities in the ANDSF have focused on an “Afghanistan-first” approach, which promotes a dedication to the national good ahead of any specific ethnic group. We know from developing learning materials for LNs that integrating cultural awareness into the design and development of materials leads to the successful implementation of those materials. As an example, translations have historically been done from English using software which completes literal word-by-word translation. This “right word wrong meaning” approach has met with confusion and dissatisfaction from LNs. Similarly, training manuals have been developed using a Western right-to-left page turning format, which is opposite of the Dari/Pashto Arabic left-to-right page turning norm. Oversight of these and similar cultural aspects lead to failed learning objectives and do not support overall mission objectives.

⁹ Bujtaba, B.G. (2014). Education Status and Development Strategies in Afghanistan. *The Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship*. Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 113.

¹⁰ ISW (2009). Afghanistan National Army. Retrieved from http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-national-army-ana#Training_Structure

Underlying the discussion on education is the impact of the overall economic health of Afghanistan. Though outside the scope of this paper, it would be short-sighted not to acknowledge the role of economic health on self-sufficiency. The Afghanistan government acknowledges economic growth as a “critical anchor” for stability¹¹. It has also been suggested that a key component of economic growth is the transition of Afghanistan’s economy from an “informal” to “formal” model. This formal model reflects investment, registered businesses, the paying of taxes, and the benefit from the rule of law and availability of services¹². A sustainable learning and education solution could help support this move to a “formal” economic model by increasing educational opportunities and creating skilled workers.

A further non-exclusive list of challenges that exist within the Afghanistan environment and impact logistical support are¹³:

- Stability of the Government
- Security
- US ability to understand Afghan Cultural dynamics
- Corruption
- Immature Supply System
- Class IX (Repair Parts) Accountability
- Estimated Cost of Damage (ECOD)
- Maintenance and Supply Quality Control
- Maintenance (Repair of Equipment)
- Repairable Items (Engines, Transmissions, Axle Assemblies, etc.)
- Intra-Theater Transportation (EVAC of Equipment for Repair and Supply Support)

Each of these challenges is a significant factor and requires the best specific approach to contribute toward achieving mission objectives of transition. Any potential solution that incorporates elements of learning support must offer details that address these challenges.

¹¹ Islamic Government of Afghanistan (2014). *Realizing Self-Reliance: Commitments to Reforms and Renewed Partnership*. London Conference on Afghanistan, 2014.

¹² World, Bank. *Afghanistan--State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Publications, 2005. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*. Web. 28 Oct. 2015.

¹³ Combat Support and Combat Service Support (2015). *National Maintenance Strategy Industry Day*. Washington, DC: U.S. Army.

Sustainable Learning Model

With a basic understanding in terms of logistics of the background and environment in Afghanistan, we can move forward with an approach to transitioning to a sustainable learning model that contributes to a LN workforce with the knowledge and skills to support self-sufficiency.

The scope of logistics support in Afghanistan (and the training and mentoring required to facilitate transition to self-sufficiency) span the following categories¹²:

- Logistics Leadership Training and Mentoring (LLTM)
- Maintenance Management Training and Mentoring (MMTM)
- Maintenance Training (MT)
- Quality Control (QC)
- Supply Chain Management Training and Mentoring (SCMTM)
- Maintenance Supply Support (MSS)
- Warehouse Supply Chain Management Training and Mentoring (WSCMTM)
- Warehouse Supply Support (WSS)

We know that the current state of the necessary human higher-level skills, such as maintenance management and leadership, need further support to mature. We also know that these types of skills are critical to mission success. Additionally, technical skills are required to maintain equipment, perform quality control, warehouse inventory, and the like. Thus, a complete solution needs to focus on both the higher-level skills as well as the technical skills, and in a manner that yields the most retention with a focus on actual performance.

LOGISTICS SUPPORT	HIGHER-LEVEL SKILLS	TECHNICAL SKILLS
Logistics Leadership Training and Mentoring (LLTM)	✓	
Maintenance Management Training and Mentoring (MMTM)	✓	✓
Maintenance Training (MT)		✓
Quality Control (QC)	✓	✓
Supply Chain Management Training and Mentoring (SCMTM)	✓	
Maintenance Supply Support (MSS)		✓
Warehouse Supply Chain Management Training and Mentoring (WSCMTM)	✓	
Warehouse Supply Support (WSS)		✓

Table 1. Logistics Support Categories and Skill Types

The traditional model of training that is used most commonly in practice today focuses on training the person by providing as much information in as short a period of time as possible followed by hands-on application. At face value this seems sensible, but in practice works only in certain and very specific situations; for example, in technical skills-based training where a procedure is taught then utilized immediately with instant feedback provided either by a mentor/supervisor or by some other means. Additionally, some form of on-going support is provided through back-up materials/job aids such as a wall chart, training manual, and the like (however, typically this type of on-going support is minimal or non-existent¹⁴).

In most performance situations this is not the norm, and when it is it typically makes up only a small part of the overall set of human job tasks. This approach views learning/training as a ‘one-time event’, with the supposition that once a person is ‘trained’ they are always trained. This view of learning/training as an event has been identified as a primary reason for the failure of training to impact performance outcomes. This view also overlooks changes in behaviors that result from any kind of decision-making process (in other

¹⁴ Silverman, R.E. (2012). So Much Training, So Little to Show for It. Wall Street Journal, Oct. 26, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970204425904578072950518558328>

words higher-level skills). These are precisely the kind of higher-level skills that drive the behaviors involved in logistics leadership, maintenance management, supply chain management, warehouse supply chain management, and mentoring. As noted by a training expert, “Without behavior change, training fails to generate business results”¹⁵.

Modern practice and research have shown repeatedly that a learning infrastructure that focuses on on-going performance is more effective than one that focuses on a one-time solution. Thus, a sustainable Afghan-led learning solution that is set up best to succeed focuses not on the traditional one-time ‘train the person/train the trainer’ model, but rather the development of a learning system with on-going learning support. The transition needs to then focus not only on the best means to have LNs learn skills, but also set up for LNs leading the solution. Research suggests that this is one way to contribute toward reducing the likelihood of costly foreign policy errors¹⁶. How could this system and infrastructure of learning work?

1. Performance Focus

First, it would have at its core a focus on performance. This focus considers foremost what people actually accomplish, driven by meaningful objectives that support overall mission goals, not simply what they can demonstrate they know through a test.



Figure 2. Performance-focus: Goals/Objectives/Behaviors

This focus is paramount because its concerns are achievements of mission objectives, not simply performance on a knowledge test. Thus, it looks primarily at the ends, not at the means to getting there, which only serve to meet the ends. A performance focus means that results are measurable and that evaluation is built-in as a required milestone to determine success. This focus also empowers all contributors and team members to have an eye for continuous improvement. It does not lose sight of the goals by being locked-in to any specific or accustomed learning delivery formats. Importantly, this means not solely looking at training as a means to solve all problems. Rather, that the identified gap in results should drive the decision-making process for the best intervention to bridge the identified gap. Sometimes a

¹⁵ Phillips, J.J. & P.P. (2002). Eleven Reasons Why Training and Development Fails. Retrieved from <http://www.roiinstitute.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Eleven-Reasons-Why-Training-and-Development-Fails.pdf>

¹⁶ Waldman, M. (2013). *System Failure: the underlying causes of US Policy-makings errors in Afghanistan*. International Affairs, 89: 4, p. 835-836.

training solution would be appropriate (for example, in situations of a lack of skills or knowledge). However, many, indeed most, interventions are associated with issues in process, procedures, motivation, resources, incentives, and the like, all of which would see little if any change in results due to a stand-alone training solution. A performance focus must have the built-in flexibility to allow for non-training interventions that can be implemented on an on-going basis as determined by formative evaluation that occurs during a project's lifecycle. A final key benefit to a performance focus is that it provides data to key decision-makers of the status on attainment of mission objectives.

2. **On-going Performance Support**

If we shift the paradigm from 'training as a one-time event' to 'learning as an on-going process', then we can proactively support and ensure improved performance. On-going performance support are the pieces within a human performance system that lie outside of an individual's repertoire of behavior (knowledge, skills, abilities, and other) and consist of any asset that is accessible at the moment of need¹⁷. This could include training manuals, help desk, wall placards, advising center, online videos, wikis, online technical support peer groups, and many more. The role that these performance support resources and tools play is varied. Performance support resources can act to bridge gaps in not effectively recalling content previously learned from training, and in helping to perform tasks that occur infrequently.

3. **Infrastructure**

Significant infrastructure already exists in Afghanistan to support a sustainable learning model. These are primary educational and military/police (ANSF).

Afghanistan has approximately 600 public and private technical and vocational schools. For a civilian workforce these schools can potentially offer the physical classroom space for all but perhaps a small part of the hands-on mechanical training activities. Potentially, mechanical service bays, tools, machines, and parts can be integrated into structures to create true simulated training similar to US vocational schools. Integrating a curriculum into existing technical and vocational schools would also potentially allow for a leveraging of these schools' existing processes and technology in terms of enrollments, registration, libraries, advising, and other key administrative aspects.

Although university capacity is extremely limited in Afghanistan at this time, it is possible that leadership and management education for operations logistics could occur at this level. A

¹⁷ Massie, E. (2016). Performance-Support-Lab. Retrieved from <http://masie.com/Performer-Support-Lab/what-is-performer-support.html>

review of existing curriculum would be required, but could possibly show that university programs, courses, or certificates already exist that would contribute to the higher-level skills and knowledge required for leadership and management roles in topics such as supply chain, inventory control, and similar.

The infrastructure that exists with the ANA also offers a potential national geographical solution to physical locations for education. One option is to piggy-back the ANA's recruitment and training process as is outlined in section g., below. In sum, it would mean potentially using the Military High School in Kabul and/or the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC). Additionally the National Military Academy of Afghanistan (NMAA) or Command and General Staff College (CGSC) could offer alternative locations. For a decentralized approach, locations could be housed at the bases of the five combat Corps: Kabul, Gardez, Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar-e-Sharif. Of key importance with using a military site is whether technicians, leadership, or management personnel have civilian or military status, which will strongly impact security concerns.

4. **Mentoring**

The importance of mentoring has been widely supported in recent decades in both government and civilian settings. One perspective on the benefits of mentoring is that it provides¹⁸:

- Professional Development (how to do things)
- Emotional Support
- Intellectual Community
- Role Models
- A Safe Space
- Accountability
- Sponsorship
- Access to Opportunities
- Substantive feedback

Mentoring, as opposed to more informal coaching, refers to “just-in-time help, insight into issues, and the sharing of expertise, values, skills, and perspectives”¹⁹. Mentoring is a formal engagement that helps less experienced personnel navigate complex situations through meaningful and thoughtful assistance from a mentor. It is especially powerful as a performance tool in situations that require higher-level skills, such as Logistics Leadership Training, Maintenance Management Training, Supply Chain Management Training, and Warehouse Supply Chain Management. Mentoring has been credited with being successful as a contributor to the

¹⁸ Rockquomore, K.A. (2016). Why Mentor Matches Fail. *Inside Higher Ed*, retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/02/03/most-mentoring-today-based-outdated-model-essay>

¹⁹ Educause (2016). Mentoring. Retrieved from <http://www.educause.edu/careers/special-topic-programs/mentoring>

improved performance of the ANA over the past decade²⁰. Finally, due to the demands of time and energy of acting as a mentor, it is important that mentors are aware of, and accept prior to the formal mentor-mentee engagement, the role of mentorship to help ensure its success.

5. Curriculum

Curriculum represents the hierarchy of courses, modules, lessons, and topics. As vital as the curriculum is to a sustainable learning system in Afghanistan, its success measures will be directly impacted by how well it aligns to mission goals. Thus there is great significance to the quality of curriculum design and architecture. A meaningful curriculum begins at its end, in other words it incorporates the content relevant to the objectives that support mission goals and drive outcomes — the behaviors, competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities that lead to goal achievement. It is outside the scope of this white paper to discuss the specific details of curriculum, but it is apparent the curriculum must support the learning needs of both a management/leadership audience as well as technical audience. Further, the curriculum must meet all of the requirements and cultural factors as identified in Section III. In conjunction with a curriculum built around the Logistic Support categories in Table 1, a LN could be able to choose an educational track aligned to a specific category. For example, a student could choose a path as a technician, and then take the required coursework to complete that path. Similarly, a student could choose paths in management, leadership, or supply chain, as applicable. Finally, a newly created path could exist in implementing the sustainable learning model itself; one that creates teachers, trainers, and mentors.

6. Career Development

One challenge that exists in the current training system is the often short-term employment nature of the trained technician in Afghanistan. Many trained civilian technicians receive their training and soon leave their jobs for other opportunities, a situation that unfortunately sees the US paying for highly skilled training but not receiving the benefits of the labor. Although individual circumstances vary, there are likely two overarching reasons for this. First, other opportunities might provide better circumstances; pay, benefits, leave, location, and similar. Second, there is a lack of focus on the individual's career path and career development for a mid- to long-term view of growth and advancement. Though pay and benefits may currently be outside the US government's ability of influence, career development sits well within the framework of a performance-focused sustainable learning system.

Globally, dissatisfaction with pay is the number one reason why an employee leaves an

²⁰ Radin, C.J. (2009). Afghan National Army: February 2009 Update. *The Long War Journal*. Retrieved from http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/02/afghan_national_army.php

organization²¹. Lack of career development is the second. In addition to retention, the benefits of career development include increased workplace motivation. Further, a focus on career development often leads to better leveraging of technology, improved training (especially of managers), and better communication²².

A concise 5-stage career development model developed by the University of California-Berkeley consists of the following stages: self-assessment, career awareness, goal-setting, skill development, and career management²³. The implementation and support of a concise model such as this can lead to the benefits listed above, as well as providing a road map for leaders and managers to use in both their own personal careers and in supporting the careers of the technicians they supervise.



Figure 3. 5-Step Career Development Model

7. **Recruitment**

Despite the career opportunity that these positions can offer LNs, recruitment can be a challenge to fill the pipeline of trained technicians and managers. As a baseline, it may be helpful to review the recruitment model of the ANA. The ANA tries to recruit an ethnically proportional army that represents the four dominant ethnic groups in Afghanistan, with the small balance being made up of the remaining smaller ethnic groups²⁴. ANA recruits are then processed at the recruitment station and assigned to a kandak (battalion). Prior to joining their kandak recruits must be properly trained, and start by spending a week in Kabul at the Military High School for initial orientation. After this orientation recruits spend seven weeks in basic

²¹ Towers Watson (2014). 2014 Global Talent Management and Rewards Study. Retrieved from <https://www.towerswatson.com/en/Insights/IC-Types/Survey-Research-Results/2014/08/2014-global-talent-management-and-rewards-study-making-the-most-of-employment-deal>

²² SHRM (2016). Why Career Programs Miss the Mark. Retrieved from <http://www.shrm.org/hrdisciplines/benefits/articles/pages/career-management-benefits.aspx>

²³ University of California (2016). Career Development at UC Berkeley. Retrieved from <http://hrweb.berkeley.edu/learning/career-development>

²⁴ ISW (2009). Afghanistan National Army. Retrieved from <http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-national-army-ana>

training at the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC). At the KMTC supervisors identify potential leaders during the first week, who are then transferred to an NCO course. Once this initial training is completed all recruits can go on to further advanced training, such as infantry or other specialty, or join their kandak. Sixty more days of individual and group training typically follow prior to any combat operations. In the field mentoring occurs from Coalition forces; both Embedded Training Teams (ETT) and Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLT) work with recruits to support on-going learning and meeting of standards.

Though a civilian workforce would be recruited very differently than the ANA, the strengths of this model are in the way that personnel are systematically oriented and trained, identified for leadership, mentored, and trained on-site in the respective area of operations. These four components could reasonably be incorporated into a sustainable learning model for operational logistics. Further, though ETT and OMLT personnel are currently OCNs and Expats, in a sustainable model these would be Local Nationals serving these roles.

8. **Cost effectiveness**

There are multiple ways that a sustainable learning model can be cost effective:

8.1. **Utilization of existing infrastructure**

Since a sustainable learning model requires an on-going throughput of Local Nationals, a physical location is fundamental to success. By leveraging existing public or private vocational/technical schools, or ANSF locations, the expense of building new facilities can be avoided. Also, using existing administrative technology avoids “recreating the wheel” by using extant enrollment, registration, advising, and other tools.

8.2. **Minimize attrition of personnel**

Attrition can be minimized by both addressing career development and reducing non-essential job rotations. Both of these cause a loss of labor which carry a monetary cost due to lowered productivity, training costs, under-performance while training a new person, and others; estimates range from hard costs of 20% of annual salary for lower level positions²⁵ to 150% of annual salary for leadership and management²⁶.

8.3. **Loss of initial investment**

As part of the overall long-term self-sufficiency of Afghanistan solution, the cost of failure means that the costs of the initial investment were spent without outcomes being attained. In terms of operational logistics this would represent an estimated

²⁵ Cbsnews.com (2012). How much does it cost companies to lose employees? Retrieved from <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-much-does-it-cost-companies-to-lose-employees>

²⁶ inc.com (2013) How Much Employee Turnover Really Costs You. Retrieved from <http://www.inc.com/suzanne-lucas/why-employee-turnover-is-so-costly.html>

\$5-10M US loss of investment. A well designed and implemented sustained learning model would help to contribute toward the likelihood of success.

8.4. **Costs of re-deployment**

To re-design and re-implement additional operational logistics strategies in the future due to initial failure of a less-than-effective solution adds to the total expenses and losses of the overall Afghanistan self-sufficiency goal.

Alignment of Strategies to Afghanistan’s Vision for Realizing Self-Reliance

In December of 2014 the Government of Afghanistan published a 24-page document for the London Conference on Afghanistan titled “Realizing Self-Reliance: Commitments to Reforms and Renewed Partnership”. This document outlines the vision and strategies moving forward “to make Afghanistan’s transition a success and realize self-reliance in the transformation decade”²⁷. It is important for US decision-makers as well as US citizens to realize that self-reliance is a priority for the Afghanistan government and people, and not an externally ‘pushed’ imperative upon Afghanistan by donor countries. If self-reliance is recognized as an internal Afghan imperative, then programs that contribute and support the transition to self-reliance can be recognized for becoming ‘pull’ programs—programs that Afghans need and want, and in which they become stakeholders and leaders. These types of programs benefit in the short-term and long-term from the support and drive of Afghan decision-makers precisely because they help to achieve Afghanistan’s self-reliance.

The strategies for implementing a successful long-term National Maintenance Strategy in Afghanistan as outlined in this white paper align directly to the vision and strategies of Afghanistan in multiple ways:

- Economic growth support. The training and education of LNs for logistics support jobs helps to spur economic growth through job creation. Additionally, as logistics supports extractives industries, it will contribute to promoting growth in this economic key sector.
- Citizen Development Rights. Economic growth has a direct impact on Afghanistan’s poor through education and job creation (36% of Afghans live below the poverty line). An additional benefit of job creation is curbing malnutrition which affects 50% of the Afghan population, mostly women and children.
- One of the 7 Identified “Critical Areas”. The sustainable learning model can contribute to addressing the challenge of bolstering private sector confidence and creating jobs.

²⁷ Islamic Government of Afghanistan (2014). Realizing Self-Reliance: Commitments to Reforms and Renewed Partnership. London Conference on Afghanistan, 2014, p.5.

- Improving Security and Political Stability. By transitioning to complete LN management and implementation of logistics support, a sustainable learning model will contribute to “civilian systems of procurement, human resource management, and financial transparency and accountability”²⁸ being brought in to ANSF normal operating procedures.
- Making Cities the Economic Drivers for Development. Vocational schools and universities can work in parallel with “establishing metropolitan development authorities and funds (that) will allow for coordinated development planning and professionalized management.”²⁹ This would apply, for example, in areas of supply chain management and inventory control/management.
- Continuing expanding services but through new delivery models for greater sustainability. Education of LNs supports the “sustained investments in human capital and skills development (which) are paramount to ensure that Afghanistan will have the human resources necessary for social and economic growth.”³⁰
- National Economic Empowerment plan for Women. In a sustainable learning model women LN students will learn business-related skills in areas of study such as logistics, maintenance, quality control, supply chain, and warehousing.
- Adjusting technical assistance. “As Afghanistan moves into transition, technical assistance that builds up effective, sustainable systems is more useful than technical assistance that offers one-time solutions.”³¹ The sustainable learning model exists specifically to create an effective, sustainable system. Further, Afghanistan is looking explicitly for assistance that draws “upon the world’s collective knowledge of what meets state of the art standards so that donor aid can eventually move entirely to programmatic, on-budget approaches with confidence that their funds will be used well.”³¹
- Increasing local content. Afghanistan is looking for programs that involve LNs to support its “Afghan First Policy”. The sustainable learning model which focuses on LNs leading, managing, and completing the learning program as students represents an investment in Afghan skills and suppliers as “a critical element of enabling a transition to self-reliance.”³²

²⁸ Ibid, p.8.

²⁹ Ibid, p.12.

³⁰ Ibid, p.18.

³¹ Ibid, p.22.

³² Ibid, p.23.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this whitepaper set out to propose how a sustainable learning model would best support the mission goals of creating a self-sufficient Afghanistan in terms of operational logistics as part of a long-term National Maintenance Strategy. The US and Coalition forces have spent considerable time and treasure on helping to create an autonomous Afghanistan, which represents a complex set of variables and cultural challenges that must be addressed for the mission outcome of self-sufficiency to occur. Part of a self-sufficient Afghanistan is its ability to have effective and efficient operational logistics. This is best accomplished by creating a sustainable learning model that is focused not on the traditional one-time ‘train the person/train the trainer’ model, but rather the development of a learning system that is Afghan-run and with a throughput of Afghan Local Nationals. This sustainable learning model features: a) performance-focus, b) on-going performance support, c) infrastructure, d) mentoring, e) curriculum, f) career development, g) recruitment, and h) cost-effectiveness. Finally, this sustainable learning model aligns to many of the strategies that the Government of Afghanistan has outlined as being part of its vision and strategy for realized self-reliance.

For More Information Contact:

Ned. R. Piccinini

President, MCM, Inc., Complete MFT Solutions, LLC, Complete Services, LLC

Email: ned@mcmlearning.com

Phone: (586) 393-0000

Dr. Bill Solomonson

Learning Strategies Advisor, MCM, Inc.

Email: bill@mcmlearning.com

References

1. ISW (2009). Afghanistan National Army. Retrieved from http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-national-army-ana#Training_Structure.
2. Globalfirepower.com (2015). Active Military Manpower by Country. Retrieved from <http://www.globalfirepower.com/active-military-manpower.asp>.
3. NATO (2013). Afghan National Security Forces. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2013_10/20131018_131022-MediaBackgrounder_ANSF_en.pdf.
4. Combat Support and Combat Service Support (2015). National Maintenance Strategy Industry Day. Washington, DC: U.S. Army.
5. Waldman, M. (2013). System Failure: the underlying causes of US Policy-makings errors in Afghanistan. *International Affairs*, 89: 4, 2013, p. 835-836.
6. Watson Institute, International and Public Affairs (2015). Retrieved from <http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/economic>.
7. Statista.com (2015). U.S. war costs in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2003 to 2015 (in billion U.S. dollars). Retrieved from <http://www.statista.com/statistics/271526/us-war-costs-in-iraq-and-afghanistan/>.
8. Reuters (2015). U.S. pledges to keep funding Afghans amid calls for slower pullout. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-usa-ghani-idUSKBN0MJ21J20150324>
9. Bujtaba, B.G. (2014). Education Status and Development Strategies in Afghanistan. *The Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship*. Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 113.
10. ISW (2009). Afghanistan National Army. Retrieved from http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-national-army-ana#Training_Structure.
11. Islamic Government of Afghanistan (2014). Realizing Self-Reliance: Commitments to Reforms and Renewed Partnership. London Conference on Afghanistan, 2014.
12. World Bank. Afghanistan--State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Publications, 2005. eBook Collection (EBSCOhost). Web. 28 Oct. 2015.
13. Combat Support and Combat Service Support (2015). National Maintenance Strategy Industry Day. Washington, DC: U.S. Army.
14. Silverman, R.E. (2012). So Much Training, So Little to Show for It. *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 26, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970204425904578072950518558328>
15. Phillips, J.J. & P.P. (2002). Eleven Reasons Why Training and Development Fails. Retrieved from <http://www.roiinstitute.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Eleven-Reasons-Why-Training-and-Development-Fails.pdf>
16. Waldman, M. (2013). System Failure: the underlying causes of US Policy-makings errors in Afghanistan. *International Affairs*, 89: 4, p. 835-836.
17. Massie, E. (2016). Performance-Support-Lab. Retrieved from <http://masie.com/Performer-Support-Lab/what-is-performer-support.html>
18. Rockquemoore, K.A. (2016). Why Mentor Matches Fail. *Inside Higher Ed*, retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/02/03/most-mentoring-today-based-outdated-model-essay>
19. Educause (2016). Mentoring. Retrieved from <http://www.educause.edu/careers/special-topic-programs/mentoring>
20. Radin, C.J. (2009). Afghan National Army: February 2009 Update. *The Long War Journal*. Retrieved from http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/02/afghan_national_army.php
21. Towers Watson (2014). 2014 Global Talent Management and Rewards Study. Retrieved from: <https://www.towerswatson.com/en/Insights/IC-Types/Survey-Research-Results/2014/08/2014-global-talent-management-and-rewards-study-making-the-most-of-employment-deal>
22. SHRM (2016). Why Career Programs Miss the Mark. Retrieved from <http://www.shrm.org/hrdisciplines/benefits/articles/pages/career-management-benefits.aspx>
23. University of California (2016). Career Development at UC Berkeley. Retrieved from <http://hrweb.berkeley.edu/learning/career-development>
24. ISW (2009). Afghanistan National Army. Retrieved from <http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-national-army-ana>
25. Cbsnews.com (2012). How much does it cost companies to lose employees? Retrieved from <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-much-does-it-cost-companies-to-lose-employees/>
26. inc.com (2013) How Much Employee Turnover Really Costs You. Retrieved from <http://www.inc.com/suzanne-lucas/why-employee-turnover-is-so-costly.html>
27. Islamic Government of Afghanistan (2014). Realizing Self-Reliance: Commitments to Reforms and Renewed Partnership. London Conference on Afghanistan, 2014, p.5.
28. Ibid, p.8.
29. Ibid, p.12.
30. Ibid, p.18.
31. Ibid, p.22.
32. Ibid, p.23.