Maastricht Graduate School of Governance

The Role of the Diaspora in Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Building in Post-Conflict Settings: The Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals to Afghanistan

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Katie Kuschminder
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Executive Summary

It is well established that diaspora members are able to make diaspora-specific contributions to their countries of origin. Evidence generally focuses on economic contributions of remittances and investments, but there is increasing evidence of non-economic contributions to human rights, good governance, and capacity building. One mechanism commonly hailed in the policy arena for harnessing these contributions is temporary return. Temporary return has been referred to as the new 'win-win-win' for brain gain in countries of origin. The objective of this report is to understand if and how temporary return programmes contribute to knowledge transfer and capacity building in countries of origin through a case study of the International Organization for Migration the Netherlands Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals Project (TRQN) to Afghanistan.

This policy report uses the term capacity building to refer to a focus on training, learning, and skills enhancement for individuals, institutions, and society at large. Knowledge transfer is referred to as explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is that which is written and formally recorded, whereas tacit knowledge is the informal knowledge transferred through interpersonal methods such as learning by doing, mentoring, problem solving, and teamwork. Diasporas have historically contributed to knowledge transfer and capacity building through diaspora knowledge networks (self-organized diaspora groups in the country of migration), state-led initiatives that fund diaspora members to temporarily return (common in China and India), and international organization- funded temporary return programmes.

The decades of conflict in Afghanistan have led to an enduring skill drain characterized by the following factors:
• Continued emigration of the highly skilled;
• A thirty-year-old education system;
• High levels of urbanization and inflation in Kabul (inflation rate: 30.5% in 2010);
• Low public-sector wages;
• A distorted labour market (best salaries are paid by international organizations); and
• Low levels of permanent highly skilled return.

This situation has led to a lasting need for skills in Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan and international organizations have openly promoted temporary return since 2001. Several temporary return programmes have been implemented including the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals Program (TOKTEN) from the UNDP, the Afghanistan Expatriates Programme by the World Bank, seven different programmes by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and other temporary return programmes offered by other non-governmental organizations. The TRQN project of the IOM the Netherlands has placed 59 people in positions in Afghanistan on assignments for TRQN 1 and TRQN 2. Participants return to Afghanistan for a maximum of 3-6 months. The project is demand driven and is coordinated by the IOM in Kabul and The Hague. The programme's focus is on the training of trainers and the priority sectors of education, health, and infrastructure development. For this work, a total of 42 interviews were conducted with project participants, host institutions, colleagues of participants, and key stakeholders. The interviews covered information on a total of 38 assignments.

The majority of the participants in the TRQN project were male, and all had come to the Netherlands as refugees. All of the participants were highly skilled and had demonstrated skill sets that were in demand in Afghanistan. The assignments were senior level positions such as advisors, project managers, and instructors. The primary motivations of the participants to be involved in the project were altruism and a desire to contribute to their country.

The results of the research have been divided into five sections: Work Environment, Knowledge Transfer, Capacity Building, Life After Participation, and Benefits of the Programme.
All participants discussed that the most significant challenges of the work environment in Afghanistan are a lack of resources and capacity. This includes a lack of equipment to perform tasks, such as computers and office supplies, and a lack of capacity of local staff that lack education and experience.

Explicit knowledge transfer was primarily transferred through the writing of course curricula, course materials, and textbooks for the Afghan education system. This form of knowledge transfer generally occurred at the end of an assignment. Tacit knowledge transfer was more commonly transferred during assignments and occurred in the following ways:
• Learning by Example
• Informal Teaching and Problem Solving
• Mentoring
• Team Work
• Discussions

Three examples of capacity building are highlighted in the report that illustrates the lasting ways that participants influenced others in Afghanistan. In one case, a participant created the first girl's dormitory in the province, which allows girls from rural parts of the province to attend University. He also brought satellite Internet to the University so that he can now teach online classes from the Netherlands. This example shows the lasting impacts that can occur from the participant's assignments.

The majority of the participants continued to engage in activities in Afghanistan after their participation in the first stage of the project had ended. This engagement was continued in one of three ways: by a repeated participation in TRQN, by another

temporary or permanent return, and/or by maintaining communications with the host institution in Afghanistan.

The benefits of the programme for the participants were primarily positive contributions to participants' mental health and personal satisfaction. In addition, the majority of participants felt that they contributed to reconstruction and development in Afghanistan through their participation.

The TRQN project has made many contributions in Afghanistan and was highly regarded by participants, host institutions, and the colleagues of TRQN participants. All interviewees felt that the project provided positive benefits for Afghanistan, and the majority of participants felt that they made a positive contribution to Afghanistan. The severe underdevelopment in Afghanistan has made the country a prime case for such a knowledge transfer and capacity-building programme. As one participant stated: *"You can make a lot of impact there with just a small effort"*.

The research conducted on the TRQN project indicates that the project is successful in achieving its goals of knowledge transfer and capacity building. Key elements that appear to contribute to this success is that the project is demand driven, recruits and provides assignments to highly-qualified participants, inspires strong commitment and motivation from the participants, and focuses on a training component in the terms of reference.

A key constraint of the project that was indicated by all participants, host institutions, and colleagues was that the duration of the assignment is too short and inflexible for the desires of the institutions. In the case of Afghanistan, it is not easy for an individual to get acquainted with the position and its requirements, understand the organization, gain the trust of the colleagues, and implement knowledge-transfer activities within a three-month period.

The long-term effects of the project are not clear at this time and further research is required in order to understand the lasting impact of the project in Afghanistan. In addition, it appears that the TRQN project is more successful than other temporary return projects to Afghanistan, but further research needs to be conducted from a comparative approach in cooperation with other programmes to further understand the mechanisms that lead to a successful temporary return project.

Based on these observations, the following recommendations can be formulated:

1. The continuation of the project would provide demonstrated benefits to Afghanistan.
2. The project should allow for flexible assignment durations wherein the length of the stay in Afghanistan is determined by the needs of the project and can range from 3-12 months.
3. The IOM should continue to encourage previous participants who were successful to complete another assignment as a repeat performer.
4. The funding should allow for the IOM and the participant to provide material support to employers, allowing participants to bring the necessary equipment to their position (up to a maximum of USD 1000) and ensuring that the equipment stays with the employer after the participant returns to the Netherlands.
5. The IOM should require a written end-of-assignment memo that is written by the participant for the host institution. This should increase the explicit knowledge transfer and provide the host institutions with a lasting record of the participant's tasks and recommendations to the host institution.

1 Introduction

Three decades of conflict and displacement have led to the emergence of the Afghan diaspora. The Afghan diaspora is a highly transnational group with money, goods, information, and people circulating between and among members in different continents around the world (Braakman, 2005). It is widely recognized that diasporas have the capacity to contribute to development in their countries of origin, and the Afghan diaspora has been actively engaged in development in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

The Government of Afghanistan, international governments, and non-governmental organizations involved in the reconstruction effort have actively encouraged skilled Afghans to return to assist in rebuilding the country. The Afghan diaspora has played an important role in the Petersburg talks and the Bonn process, acting as interlocutors between Afghanistan and the international community (Zunzer, 2004). The flow of skilled Afghans permanently returning to Afghanistan has been low, however, and research indicates that the majority of skilled Afghans in the diaspora do not intend to permanently return in the near future (Oeppen, 2009). The low levels of return have contributed to tremendous skills gaps in Afghanistan and have exacerbated the need for highly skilled professionals and capacity-building activities.

The International Organization for Migration the Netherlands started the Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN) project in 2006 to address these shortages. The project provides support for skilled diaspora members to return to Afghanistan to work for an average period of 3 months.

The project matches the needs of institutions and employers in Afghanistan with skills held by diaspora members in the Netherlands and other EU countries. The purpose of the project is to enable diaspora members to provide knowledge transfer and capacity-building activities to institutions in Afghanistan.

The objective of this study was to understand the impact of temporary return on knowledge transfer and capacity building in Afghanistan. The impact of the project was assessed through the two key areas of knowledge transfer and capacity building. The research was conducted through qualitative interviews conducted with TRQN participants, host institutions, participant's colleagues, and key TRQN stakeholders.

The first section of this report provides an overview of capacity building, knowledge transfer, and diaspora-specific contributions to capacity building and knowledge transfer. The second section provides an overview of the case of Afghanistan, including an understanding of the current Afghan diaspora and Afghans in the Netherlands. The third section explores different types of knowledge transfer programmes that have been implemented in Afghanistan since 2001, the details of TRQN, and the study methodology. The fourth section provides an overview of the participants involved in the project. The fifth section explores the results of the research and the impact of the temporary returnees on knowledge transfer and capacity building, and discusses the benefits of the project. The final section provides a conclusion and recommendations.

2 Diaspora Capacity Building and Knowledge Transfer

A diaspora can be broadly defined as a population "which has originated in a land other than which it currently resides, and whose social, economic and political networks cross the borders of nation-states or, indeed, span the globe" (Vertovec, 1999). It is recognized that members of the diaspora are able to make "diaspora-specific contributions deriving from the absence of language and cultural barriers, and more specifically, their ability to better understand, and thus, more effectively adapt foreign approaches and technology to the homeland context" (Brinkerhoff, 2006). Diasporas are increasingly seen as a resource for countries of origin and an opportunity for effective knowledge transfer and capacity building in countries of origin. This section will first define the use of capacity building and knowledge transfer within this study and then move to discuss the different ways diasporas have contributed to capacity building and knowledge transfer.

2.1 Capacity Building: Definitions and Approach

Capacity building is a buzz term that has been commonly used in development initiatives since the 1990s, but the term lacks universal definition and use. In academics the term arose out of the community development field and has been refined and explored since the 1990s. International organizations and non-governmental organizations have since adopted the term; however, definitions are unique to each organization, and there is consequently a lack of a collective approach to capacity building. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines capacity building as:

"Means by which skills, experience, technical and management capacity are developed within an organizational structure (contractors, consultants or contracting agencies) - often through the provision of technical assistance, short/long-term training, and specialist inputs (e.g., computer systems). The process may involve the development of human, material and financial resources." (2002)

Such a definition is rooted in organizational behaviour and reflects change management processes and systems. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has moved to a new approach of capacity development, which they define as:

"The process through which the abilities of individuals, institutions, and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner are strengthened, adapted and maintained over time." (2010: 32)

This definition reflects more of a community and country focus as it stresses the importance of societies. The World Bank has also moved to an approach of capacity development over capacity building. The World Bank 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." (2011)

This final definition by the World Bank provides both a focus on societies and organizations and also stresses the importance of changes on advancing development goals. These definitions illustrate that capacity development and capacity building are complex, multifaceted terms. All of the definitions focus on the importance of training or learning and enhancing the skills of individuals, institutions, and societies. This common framework of a focus on training, learning, and skills enhancement is the basis of the use of the term capacity building in this report.

2.2 Knowledge Transfer: Definitions and Approach

The UNDP states that one critical area for capacity development is knowledge: "Knowledge, or literally what people know, underpins their capacities and hence capacity development" (2010). Knowledge is one of the four pillars that the UNDP utilizes to measure capacity development[1]. The term knowledge transfer emerged from the organizational development field in the 1960s and has since been further developed.

Knowledge can be divided into two types: tacit and explicit knowledge. Goh (2002) explains tacit knowledge as follows:

"Tacit knowledge is personal; it is hard to formalize and communicate to others. It is also generally more complex, existing in the mental models and expertise gained over time and through personal insights. This suggests that tacit knowledge may be best transferred through more interpersonal means and using processes that are less structured. Some examples are mentoring, teamwork, chat rooms, personal intranets, and opportunities for face-to-face conversations such as group dialogue or personal reflections on experiences and lessons learned." (27)

Furthermore, Liyanange et. al. (2009) suggest that although tacit knowledge is difficult to capture, measure, and diffuse, it often adds more value to an organization than explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is more tangible: it includes what is written, recorded in manuals, reports, documents, and databases (Goh, 2002: 27). It has been described as 'the stuff of books" (Pederson, 2003 in Liyange et. al., 2009). Both tacit and explicit knowledge are recognized as important and critical in the knowledge-transfer process.

Measuring knowledge transfer, particularly tacit knowledge transfer, poses challenges. A verified methodology to measure knowledge transfer has yet to be established. In the context of this study, knowledge transfer will first be divided into tacit and explicit knowledge transfer and will be discussed based on the experiences of TRQN participants, colleagues, and host institutions.

2.3 The Contributions of the Diaspora to Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Building

Within knowledge transfer it is recognized that trust and culture are critical elements. In discussing the importance of culture in knowledge transfer, Narteh (2008) states "differences in beliefs, values and practices between the transferors and transferees could create barriers to knowledge transfer unless they are identified and harmonized" (83). This supports the argument that the diaspora can play a special role in knowledge transfer and capacity building in their countries of origin, where they are knowledgeable about local contexts and subsequently trusted more quickly by their colleagues.

Diaspora contributions to capacity building have primarily occurred in three ways: 1) through diaspora organizations in the host state, 2) through state-level diaspora engagement policies and programmes, or 3) through a programme established by an international organization. Each of these means of contribution will be examined in turn.

2.3.1 Diaspora Organizations and Diaspora Knowledge Networks

There is ample evidence that diaspora organizations contribute to development in their countries of origin (Levitt, 2001). Increased categorizations of diaspora organizations focusing on skills have led to the terms expatriate knowledge networks (Brown, 2000), scientific diaspora (Barre et al., 2003) and diaspora knowledge networks (Turner, 2005). Brown (2000) categorized expatriate knowledge networks into five categories: student/scholarly networks, local associations of skilled expatriates, expert assistance such as the UNDP's program for expatriate nationals (TOKTEN), developing intellectual/scientific diaspora networks, and intellectual/scientific diaspora networks. These categories are not mutually exclusive and may be overlapping (Lowell and Gerova, 2004). This categorization led to the further refinement of the term 'scientific diaspora', which has been defined as: "self-organized communities of expatriate scientists and engineers working to develop their home country or region, mainly in science, technology, and education" (Barre et al., 2003). This definition highlights the objective of the scientific diaspora to focus on capacity building in science and technology in the

country of origin. Finally, the discourse on diaspora contributions via knowledge mobilization has moved to the concept of the diaspora knowledge network. Turner (2005) describes the diaspora knowledge network as "an expression that suggests a direct relationship between knowledge and development and a role for the civil society in building that relationship". Meyer and Wattiaux (2006) argue that the diaspora knowledge network has led to the emergence of the "brain gain' skills circulation by converting the loss of human resources into a remote although accessible asset of expanded networks".

In addition to diaspora knowledge networks, diaspora organizations have also established their own temporary return programmes. An example of such an organization is Stichting Dir Foundation, a Dutch-based, Ethiopian-focused NGO. Stichting Dir has established a diaspora return programme wherein Dutch Ethiopians return to Ethiopia to work for an organization for 6-12 months providing knowledge transfer and capacity-building services. This type of programme functions similarly to those run by international organizations but is instead run by a diaspora organization.

2.3.2 Country of Origin Diaspora Knowledge Initiatives
States have also started to directly engage the diaspora in the area of knowledge transfer. State-level engagement differs from the type of engagement practiced within diaspora knowledge networks in the sense that it is developed and operationalized on a top-down rather than bottom-up basis. Unlike in diaspora knowledge networks where engagement is sought and encouraged from members of the diaspora to other members of the diaspora in a bottom-up manner, state-level engagement is initiated from the national government level. The leaders of this approach have been China and India, the two nations with the largest highly skilled diasporas in the world.

China began encouraging the short-term temporary return of overseas Chinese professionals in 1985 with the introduction of postdoctoral programmes (Biao, 2005). Following this the Government began an official approach of "flexible mobility" by encouraging overseas Chinese professionals to come and go, contributing as they do so to both the People's Republic of China and their host states.

The approach has included policies and incentives to attract overseas professionals via funded programmes, activity programmes, and launching official websites for knowledge exchange. Within each of these categories, multiple activities have been developed. The government also initiated four funded programmes to actively encourage knowledge exchange with the diaspora. These programmes included sponsoring short-term visits, conducting collaborative research projects, supporting overseas Chinese Professional Research Projects, and creating special research chairs for overseas Chinese Professionals (Xiao, 2005).

The engagement of the diaspora in China has been a contributing factor to the development of the Chinese knowledge economy. China has also encouraged on-line networking to promote further knowledge exchange and engagement (Grossmann, 2010). The combination of successful policies and engagement has led to robust knowledge transfer flows from the Chinese diaspora.

India has more recently sought to engage its diaspora for knowledge transfer. In 2002 India established the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) dedicated to diaspora engagement. One initiative of MOIA was the establishment of the Global Indian Network of Knowledge (Global INK). The objective of this initiative is to draw upon the knowledge base of the Indian diaspora to create innovation in India (Global Ink, 2011). The initiative was launched in 2009 and includes an ICT platform to connect knowledge seekers in India with knowledge experts. The site includes sections that help Indians ask an expert, access expert networks, and gain project-specific advice. This new initiative illustrates another way that states are seeking to engage the diaspora for knowledge transfer.

Both India and China rely heavily on information technology and the Internet for knowledge-transfer activities. This presents a challenge in the Afghan case, as Internet in most parts of Afghanistan has very slow connectivity, whereas both China and India have strong internet access. In addition, both of these states are far more developed than Afghanistan and have the finances to initiate and provide their own diaspora programmes.

2.3.3 International Organizations Diaspora Knowledge Transfer Programmes
The final forms of diaspora knowledge transfer programmes are those that are administered by international organizations. For countries that do not have the finances, expertise, and organizational capacity to establish their own programmes, these programmes present an opportunity for diaspora knowledge transfer. Two programmes are most notable in this area. The first is UNDP's Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals Programme (TOKTEN), and the second is the International Organization for Migration (IOM's) Migration and Development in Africa Programme (MIDA). It is important to note that host state governments generally fund these programmes.

The TOKTEN programme was launched by the UNDP in 1977 in Turkey. It was the first programme of its kind, and its focus was on bringing 'brain gain' back to countries of origin. In its initial conception the programme had four key objectives: "1) to lower the cost of technical advice; 2) to allow developing countries to gain access to consultants who would be more effective than other consultants due to their linguistic or cultural competencies; 3) to seed potential return of skilled expatriates or their long-term engagement with their country of origin; and 4) to depoliticize development-oriented volunteer work as

the aegis of UNDP allows political autonomy" (Terrazas, 2010). TOKTEN is run as a volunteer programme through United Nations Volunteers (UNV). It is administered in cooperation among UNDP, UNV, the governments of participating countries, and in some cases third-party donors. The result of the mixed administration is that the programme can vary from country to country (Terrazas, 2010). According to a list compiled by Terrazas (2010) TOKTEN programmes have been implemented in 49 countries, including Egypt, China, Brazil, and the Philippines. The programme appeared most popular in the 1980s but has recently experienced a second wave. Recent TOKTEN programmes include Afghanistan, Mali, Palestine, Rwanda, and Sudan. According to Murphy (2006) the success of TOKTEN is due to the fact that it focuses on people who were global leaders in their field. The programme has been recognized as highly important by origin-country governments, as TOKTEN participants contributed to developing hospitals and changing practices (Murphy, 2006). Strong coordination and country of origin support were important to its success.

The second major diaspora knowledge transfer programme is the IOM's Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) initiative, which was started in 2001. It emerged from the IOM's Return of Qualified African Nationals (RQAN) programme, which began in the 1980s and aimed to assist expatriate nationals in permanent return. The purpose of the MIDA framework is to facilitate temporary return to Africa by African nationals abroad for capacity building in their countries of origin. An independent evaluation of the MIDA Great Lakes programme was conducted in 2008 at the request of the 2007 Global Forum on Migration and Development. The evaluation results were positive in regard to the skilled-diaspora temporary return aspect, but recommendations were made to increase the term of the return and to improve coordination with development priorities (Terrazas, 2010).

3 Temporary Return to Afghanistan

Multiple temporary return programmes to Afghanistan have been implemented since 2001 in an effort to create capacity building and knowledge transfer from the diaspora. This section will provide an overview of the different programmes and will then discuss the Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals Project in more depth.

3.1 Skills Drain in Afghanistan
The skills drain from Afghanistan has been enduring. In the 1980s and 1990s, the majority of Afghans who were able to migrate to Europe, North America, or Australia were the urban elite, and were often educated and highly skilled (Monsutti, 2008). This group had the financial means to migrate further abroad and the skills to seek opportunities in the West. The continued conflict in Afghanistan has led to the continued emigration of the highly skilled. In 2000, the World Bank cited the emigration rate of the tertiary education population to be 23.3 percent (2011).

Nearly thirty years of skills drain from Afghanistan has led to a severe skill deficiency in the country. Today Afghanistan faces great challenges in skills attraction and retention. After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, some highly skilled Afghans returned but then re-emigrated when the security situation failed to stabilize and the economy did not rebound as much as hoped. Oeppen (2009) found that many highly skilled Afghans considering returning to Afghanistan first returned for a visit to see the conditions but then decided that they did not want to return permanently. Overall there has been a low level of highly skilled Afghans returning and staying in Afghanistan in comparison to the many years of skills drain.

The second challenge is a thirty-year-old education system. Due to the lack of skilled individuals in the country the quality of institutions today is worse than it was in the 1970s. The educational standards in universities have not been updated since the 1970s, and as such university curricula are out of date. New private universities are emerging to offer new programmes and skills training in Kabul, but the standards are not yet established, and a lag exists for training a new generation of skilled personnel.

Thirdly, Kabul has experienced rapid urbanization and inflation since 2001. Prior to the US invasion in 2001, the population of Kabul was estimated to be 500,000 people. By 2004, the population had reached 1.5 million, and today it is estimated at three million people (CSO, 2010). The relative stability in Kabul and the pervasive poverty in rural areas have attracted people in search of work, and the city's population has also exploded with the majority of people returning from abroad settling in Kabul and not rural areas.

The rapid urbanization of Kabul combined with the large presence of international organizations, NGOs, and the military in the capitol has led to sharp increases in land prices and rents (Ittig, 2004). The inflation rate in Afghanistan was 30.5% in 2010, a sharp increase from 10.3% in 2005 and 13.0% in 2009 (Ittig, 2004). The rapid urbanization, inflation, and increased land prices and rents have led many of the highly skilled to seek jobs with international organizations rather than public institutions. This leads to a fourth factor inhibiting skill retention: that the labour market has become distorted in Kabul, as local and public wages are very low compared to wages from international

organizations. This has resulted in skilled individuals in Kabul favouring to work for international organizations over local institutions that are experiencing significant skill deficiencies but can only offer wages at less than half of an international organization. In the public sector, wages are even less.

Finally, the low levels of permanent return from the highly skilled have further perpetuated the skills deficiency. The continuing security challenges, poverty, low salaries, and lack of infrastructure have deterred the Afghan diaspora from permanently returning to Afghanistan.

All of these elements have perpetuated a skills deficiency in Afghanistan. According to the World Health Organization, in 2005 there were a total of 5,970 physicians in Afghanistan, meaning that there was roughly one physician per 5,000 people (2009). In addition, the skills drain is continuing, as many of the highly skilled still seek to emigrate. The skills deficiency thus provides an on-going challenge to development and reconstruction in Afghanistan.

3.2 Overview of Temporary Return Programmes to Afghanistan
In the context of a severe skill deficiency in Afghanistan, temporary return programmes for knowledge transfer have been implemented in an effort to increase local capacity. As previously stated, temporary return programmes for knowledge transfer are not a new phenomenon, but new programmes were implemented in Afghanistan in an effort to meet the large demand.

In 2001 after the Bonn process, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) under UNDP launched TOKTEN Afghanistan (UNV, 2010). The objective of this specific TOKTEN programme was to support the capacity building of the Afghan Interim Government and the successor government administration. The programme was administered by an UNV Website to promote the programme and encourage Afghans to register their skills. A programme administrator in Kabul with UNDP then sought to match the registered skills to needs in Afghanistan. By March 2006 29 volunteers had participated in the programme. Their positions included roles in civil engineering, education and curriculum development, health, and financial management assistance.

The World Bank has also developed temporary return programmes to support capacity building in Afghanistan. The World Bank administers the multi-donor Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) that allocated five million US dollars to the Afghanistan Expatriate Services Programme (AEP) in 2002. The AEP was created to support the Afghan government by bringing highly-qualified Afghans to work in the government for a period of 6 months to one year in senior-level positions. It was established in partnership with the government of Afghanistan and signed by presidential decree in 2004.

A website was established in cooperation with the Afghan government for expatriates to register their skills (**www.artfexpat.gov.af**) and by the World Bank (**www.worldbank.org/afghandirectory**). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was brought on as an implementing partner to assist the expatriates. The original goal for the programme was to place 60 expatriates within government positions.

In 2006 the programme was re-financed with an additional five million dollars. By the end of 2006, 76 participants had been involved in the programme across 20 different ministries. An Executive Committee of five Afghan expatriates administered this programme. The expatriates decided upon the suitability of positions and compensation for each position. In this programme salary was dependent upon the position and the candidate's experience. Salaries in this programme were as high as $7,000 US per month and positions also included benefit packages.
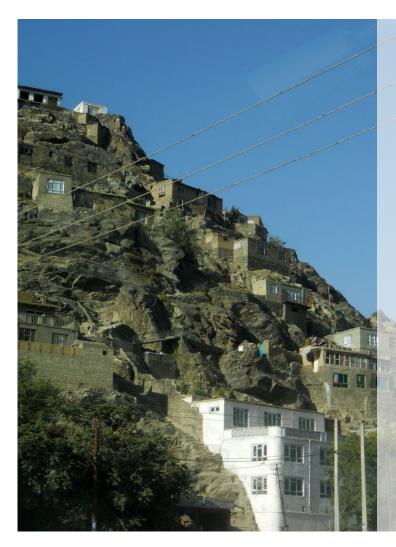
Table 2: Summary of IOM Temporary Return to Afghanistan Programmes

Program Name	Countries	Start Date	End Date	Priority Sectors	Objective	Number of Participants (Total)	No. Of Applications	Duration of Assignment (Planned)	Duration of Assignment (Actual)
Reconstruction, Capacity Building and Development of Afghanistan Through the Transfer of Qualified and Highly Qualified Afghan Nationals from European Union Member States (RQA- EU/Global)	UK, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, France, Finland, Denmark, Austria, Belgium	2002	2005	Health, Education, Public Administration, Public Infrastructure	To contribute to the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.	150	715	6-12 Months	
Reform Implementation Management Unit – Technical Assistance Project (RIMU-TAP)	Northern America, Europe, Australia, Africa, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Iran, Afghanistan	2007	2009	Ministry of Education- Reform Information Management Unit	To provide assistance to develop the Ministry of Education into an effective, accountable, fully funded and functioning public institution that facilitates education for all.	5		12 Months	6-24 Months
Return of Qualified Afghans from Neighbouring Countries (RQN-NC)	Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Europe, North America, Australia	Nov-05	Oct-08	Education and health, construction and transport, rural development and agriculture, and commercial development	To contribute to the reconstruction of Afghanistan through capacity building in the country's administration, restoration and development of essential social services, such as education and health, construction and transport, rural development and agriculture, and commercial development.	210 (and 750 family members)		12 Months	
Placement of Afghan Expatriate Professionals from EU Countries into the Public Administration of Afghanistan (PAEP-EU)	EU	Mar-05	Sep-08	Public Administration	To enhance the contribution of Afghan expatriate professionals residing in Member States of the European Union (EU) in the reconstruction efforts of Afghanistan by enhancing policy and institutional capacities within the public administration.	14	156	12 Months	12-18 months
Temporary Return Of Qualified Nationals Project 1 (TRQN 1)	Netherlands	Apr-06	Jun-08	Education, health, infrastructure		37	309	6 months	6 months
Temporary Return Of Qualified Nationals Project 2 (TRQN 2)	Netherlands	Jul-08	Jun-11	Education, Health, Infrastructure		68 to date		3 months	3-6 months
Return and Reintegration of Qualified and Skilled Afghans from Iran	Iran	Mar-10	Dec-10	industrial skills, mechanical qualifications, construction and renovation skills	To contribute to the reconstruction of Afghanistan through capacity building.	300 (target)		7 months	

In addition to aiding the World Bank in administration of its programmes, IOM has also implemented several temporary return programmes to Afghanistan. Each project is dependent on donor funding and agreements, and each project is thus slightly different, as illustrated in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, there is significant variation in the projects offered by IOM in terms of target countries, employment sectors, and project duration. The shortest project duration is the Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals 2 Project with a duration of three months, whereas the majority of projects lasted 12 months. The majority of projects focused on the temporary return of the wider diaspora, whereas two projects (Return of Qualified Nationals-Near Countries and Return and Reintegration of Qualified and Skilled Afghans from Iran) focused on the nearer diaspora. In addition, unlike the TOKTEN and the AEP programmes, these projects do not only support the government but also support public and private organizations such as universities and local engineering firms.

Finally, various non-governmental organizations have established programmes to support Afghans to return temporarily. One such initiative is the Global Initiative of Volunteer Expatriates for Afghanistan programme, which was established by Afghans in the US. The objective of the programme is to make use of available development funds to recruit Afghans worldwide to participate in the programme for a short period of 2 weeks to 6 months. The volunteers are not paid but are provided with travel and lodging costs.

3.3 Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals

The focus of this study was the IOM the Netherlands Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals[2] (TRQN 2) project, but information was also collected on the Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals[1] (TRQN 1) project. TRQN 2 was the successor of TRQN 1, and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs funds both. Afghanistan is one of six countries within the TRQN project[2]. The objectives of TRQN 2 as stated by IOM is:

"To contribute to the reconstruction and development policies and strategies of a number of selected countries (Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Georgia, Sierra Leone and Sudan) by facilitating the transfer of relevant skills and knowledge of qualified diaspora professionals to identified priority sectors."

The specific purposes of TRQN 2 includes:

1. To respond to identified needs for sustainable capacity strengthening in key sectors by facilitating temporary return and virtual return assignments.
2. To strengthen the institutional capacity of the involved governments and help them to develop and maintain a long-term viable temporary return programme for qualified nationals residing abroad.

3. To ensure that the project activities are fully embedded in the overall development policies and strategies of the target countries government.
4. To stimulate sustainable cooperation between diaspora networks in the Netherlands and other EU countries and institutions in the target countries.
5. To further assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of TRQN II and provide input and stimulation for the international discourse on migration and development.
6. To explore further European cooperation with regard to temporary return programmes.

Differences between TRQN 1 and TRQN 2 include that TRQN[2] had a specific focus on a "train the trainer" component in the Terms of Reference. TRQN 1 positions lasted a maximum of 6 months, and TRQN 2 positions lasted a maximum of 3 months, which reflected the refined focus on the 'train the trainer' approach.

TRQN 2 in Afghanistan is managed by IOM The Netherlands in the Hague. The Hague office advertises the project amongst the Afghan diaspora in the Netherlands and keeps a database of all applicants to the project. IOM Afghanistan office in Kabul advertises the project to potential host institutions in Afghanistan who then submit a Terms of Reference (TOR) for a position, and IOM Afghanistan then assesses the needs of Afghan organizations. Once a submitted TOR is approved, a list of qualified CVs from IOM the Netherlands is sent to the host institution. The host institution is then able to select their preferred candidate, and the logistics are arranged for the participant to commence his/her position.

Officially all TRQN 2 participants are volunteers. They do not receive any official salary from IOM for their work in Afghanistan. They do receive living, accommodation, and travel allowances within Afghanistan that combined total 1600 Euros (USD 2000) per month. If the participant received social assistance in the Netherlands prior to participation in the project, this assistance is discontinued when they leave the country. The IOM also covers participants' travel insurance for the duration of the assignment.

From both TRQN 1 and 2, 59 people have been placed in Afghanistan, of which 27 were from TRQN 2. In TRQN1 there were a total of 37 assignments to Afghanistan and this was increased to 60 assignments to Afghanistan in TRQN 2. The number of assignments to each country is pre-determined by the funding for the project. There are less participants than the number of assignments as some participants complete more than one assignment. IOM has received over 500 applications alone for the Afghanistan positions, resulting in less than one in eight applicants being chosen to participate. The vast majority of participants in the projects are male (56 participants).

3.4 Study Methodology

The methodology for this study was an in-depth review of all available IOM documents on Temporary Return to Afghanistan, qualitative interviews and field observations. A total of 42 interviews were conducted for this study with participants (19), host institutions (6), colleagues of participants (13), and key stakeholders in the project (4). The interviews provided information on a total of 26 different TRQN 2 assignments (6 participants have participated in the project twice and one person three times) and 12 different TRQN1 assignments, to provide information on a total of 38 assignments. The interviews were conducted both in the Netherlands (10) and in Afghanistan (32) from September to December 2010. Due to security concerns in Afghanistan, interviews in Afghanistan were coordinated by IOM and translation was done through an IOM employee. Interviews in the Netherlands were arranged by the researcher and translation was done through an independent third party. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for analysis.

4 Participants Overview[3]

All of the participants arrived in the Netherlands from 1993-2000, with the majority coming in 1997 and 1998. This is consistent with the overall flows of Afghans to the Netherlands. The majority of participants were in their fifties, with only two participants under the age of 30. Both participants under the age of 30 had come to the Netherlands with their families as minors and had received a Master's degree in the Netherlands. Of the 17 participants who had been educated in Afghanistan, 11 had also been educated outside of Afghanistan. The majority of those educated outside of Afghanistan had gone to Russia for Master's or Doctoral studies. Some of the other countries attended for education included the Ukraine, India, Bulgaria, Iran, and the United States. All of the participants had held senior positions in Afghanistan prior to their departures. Some had senior governmental positions, were Deans at a university, or were engineers who were accountable for projects in several provinces. All of these participants can thus be viewed as a part of the brain and skills drain from Afghanistan.

All of the participants had taken Dutch language and integration courses in the Netherlands. Seven of the seventeen participants who had migrated as adults to the Netherlands had been able to receive employment in the Netherlands. Four of these participants were engineers, one participant had opened his own business in his field of expertise, and one received a Master's degree in the Netherlands and then found work. The remaining ten participants who migrated to the Netherlands as adults had not been able to find employment in the Netherlands and received social benefits. The majority of the participants were involved in the Afghan community in the Netherlands. Participants were involved in professional associations, Afghan community associations, and Afghan NGOs dedicated to providing development for Afghanistan.

4.1 Assignments

Information was provided on a total of 38 assignments across TRQN 1 and TRQN 2. Table 3 shows the professions and host institutions of participants in TRQN 1, and Table 4 show the same for TRQN 2 placements. Participant numbers have been included to illustrate the multiple assignments conducted by some of the participants.

Although the project was open to both public and private institutions, the majority of host institutions were public (30). This is representative of the overall placements as in TRQN 2 40 of the 50 assignments to date were in public institutions. TRQN 1 assignments were for a period of six months, and TRQN 2 assignments were for a period of three months. Of the 26 assignments discussed in the interviews for TRQN 2, ten of the assignments had their contracts extended for a period of between one and three months.

Table 3: TRQN 1 Assignments

Assignment No.	Participant No.	Profession/Expertise	Host institution
1	1	Civil Engineer	Ministry of Public Services
2	2	General director of PR	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3	3	Sociologist	Province of Balkh
4	3	Sociologist	Afghan Parliament
5	4	Civil Engineer	Private Construction Company
6	5	Civil Engineer	Kabul Municipality
7	5	Civil Engineer	Kabul Municipality
8	6	Civil Engineer	Private Construction Company
9	7	Civil Engineer	Municipality of Bamyan
10	7	Civil Engineer	Municipality of Bamyan
11	8	Medical Doctor	Afghan Hospital
12	9	Writer, publicist	Ministry of Higher Education

Table 4: TRQN 2 Assignments

Assignment No.	Participant No.	Profession/Expertise	Host institution
1	10	Engineer	Ministry of Agriculture
2	10	Engineer	Ministry of Agriculture
3	1	Civil Engineer	Ministry of Public Works
4	8	Doctor	Private Hospital
5	11	Teacher	Kabul University
6	11	Teacher	Kabul University
7	12	Advisor and Eng	Kabul Municipality
8	12	Advisor and Eng	Kabul Municipality
9	2	Trainer	Ministry of Education
10	2	Editor	Ministry of Education
11	13	IT Trainer	Private University
12	14	Advisor	Kabul Municipality
13	15	Trainer	Private University
14	16	Teacher	Private University
15	16	Teacher	Communication Technology
16	16	Teacher	Communication Technology
17	17	Advisor	Panjsher province
18	17	Advisor	Panjsher province
19	18	Teacher	Herat University
20	18	Teacher	Herat University
22	6	Engineer	Private Company
21	19	IT Trainer	Abraq University
23	19	IT Trainer	Badkhshan Province
24	7	Engineer	Bamyan Province
25	5	Engineer	Ministry of Urban Development
26	9	Advisor	Ministry of Education

4.2 Motivations for Participating

The primary motivation of participants to join the project was a desire to contribute to Afghanistan. As one participant stated:

"I am feeling myself [a] little bit responsible for rebuilding, construction and the rehabilitation [of Afghanistan] as a human being and also as an Afghan native. So, if so many people go to Afghanistan to help the people, why shouldn't I go? I have to do my obligations."

This quote reflects the strong desire of participants to contribute to Afghanistan. Participants also stated that as Afghanistan had provided for them in their education, they now wanted to give back to the country. Until the 1970s Afghanistan had free higher education. This motivation to contribute has also been found in Oeppen's (2009) work with the elite Afghan diaspora.

Other motivations included a desire to work again, especially for those who were not able to work in their professions in the Netherlands. All of the participants were highly skilled and the ability to return to work in a senior position, where they knew how to work and their experience and education were respected, was very meaningful:

"I want to go to Afghanistan. Always I want a new life, also I want to [go to] Afghanistan. Also because I learn there and I

know very well, the people of Afghanistan and seventeen year works is long...A long time. I can work there, I know about the material in Afghanistan. I know about the weather, agriculture, culture, everything from Afghanistan. I was an architect and I knew about everything. I don't know everything about the Netherlands."

Many of the participants still had family in Afghanistan who were able to assist participants in their temporary return with accommodation and adjustment. Two of the participants had migrated without their wives who were still in Afghanistan, and this clearly added motivation to participate in the project. The project is demand driven, however, and a fair number of participants who had no familial ties in Afghanistan also took assignments. One participant, for instance, chose to participate in this project because the Governor of Bamyan province came to the Netherlands a few years ago and spoke to the diaspora in a meeting, where she asked for more support for Bamyan province. This led this participant to request from the IOM an assignment in Bamyan province to work with the provincial team, even though this participant had never been to Bamyan province before and had no network there. Social networks could, thus, provide support to participants and in some cases were most likely an additional reason for wanting to participate, but for the majority this was not a primary motivation.

5 Results

The results of this research focus on the ability of the project to contribute to knowledge transfer and capacity building in Afghanistan. The results have been divided into five sections. The first section examines the work environment of assignments including the roles of the participants and the challenges of work in Afghanistan for both the host institutions and the participants. The objective of this section is to provide the context for the work environment wherein participants are expected to contribute to knowledge transfer and capacity building. The second section details the knowledge transfer activities of the participants by examining the various ways the participants transferred knowledge. The third section provides case examples of how the knowledge transfer led to capacity building in both individuals and the host institutions. The fourth section examines participants engagement in Afghanistan post their assignments. The objective of this section is to illustrate how the assignments can lead to continued engagement, knowledge transfer and capacity building after the conclusion of the assignment. The final section discusses the benefits of the project from the perspective of the interviewees.

5.1 Work Environment
In order to assess the impact of knowledge transfer, it is important to first understand the work environment participants faced. This section will describe the roles of the participants and the challenges experienced in work in Afghanistan.

5.1.1 Roles
All participants were placed in senior level roles in their assignments. Roles were primarily as teachers, trainers, advisers, and project managers. The tasks involved in such positions included training, developing curriculum, teaching, managing projects and staff, problem solving, mentoring, and providing expert advice. Some participants had a focused position in that they had one particular task for the duration of their assignment, whereas other participants were involved in multiple projects and tasks during their assignments.

5.1.2 Challenges of Work in Afghanistan
All interviewees were asked about the challenges that they experienced in their roles in Afghanistan. There was agreement among the participants, host institutions, and colleagues that

the greatest challenges were a lack of resources and capacity. This included a lack of equipment to perform the tasks. Some of the TRQN participants did not have a computer to work on at their host institutions. Some utilized the training materials support from IOM (maximum of 200-500 Euros) to purchase a laptop that they could use in their positions. Others brought their own personal laptops from the Netherlands to Afghanistan. In some of these cases the participants would use their personal computers at the host institution, but in other cases they only used them in their personal homes, perhaps for fear of the laptop being stolen at the office. It was common to find that many of the host institutions did not have computers for local staff to work on.

Other examples of lacking resources were experienced in the case of speciality equipment required for positions. The Fine Arts Faculty at Kabul University, for instance, did not have the supplies for teaching modern art such as wood and sculpting materials. The limited teaching resources led the participant that came to the Fine Arts Faculty to utilize his own money to bring resources for the students. This situation also occurred with engineers who needed specific computer programmes to teach. A few of the engineers utilized their own funds to purchase the necessary computer programmes, which they then left with the host institutions upon their return to the Netherlands. This highlights the commitment of the participants towards the project. IOM The Hague also encourages participants to look for additional funding sources in the Netherlands in order to acquire equipment or to organize workshops.

The lack of training and capacity of the local staff was also a challenge for the participants in their roles. Some of the participants stated that their colleagues were illiterate, and it was difficult for them to train people with such a low level of education. The lack of capacity was attributed to the challenges of recovering from the wars. One of the representatives of the host institutions stated:

"You know after three decades of war, we [are] now recovering. How can I say? There are a lot of challenges we have. As you see the destruction of war in Afghanistan, [and] you see only, you cannot imagine. [We] can feel that all our education [system was] destroyed [and the war] damaged our system. You can't imagine. You can't feel that we lost everything in Afghanistan

due to this civil war… Unfortunately [the] continuing of the war is our great challenge in Afghanistan.

Another challenge in Afghanistan was the low salaries of local staff. The low salaries meant that it was difficult to retain qualified staff in the public sector positions. One colleague stated the following:

"I have two challenges and two problem[s] here. One is lack of budget, our salaries [are] less and our income is less. And the second is the lack of expert[s] that work with us. And also we haven't here [any expert]. And now we have to take care of all the programs or projects that we are running…And without textbook you know it is difficult to launch [in] a professional way and also we need professionals and experts to work together with us. It is our main challenge that we have…but unfortunately we have less wage and salary, there is no equipment. That is our problem, if you could support and mention this is [our] feeling, our problem for other people of the world, we have everything here, but a very very simple life here. Daily we have an income of around 20 Afghani."

Further challenges were experienced by the participants themselves in their roles. It is common in Afghanistan that returnees experience resentment from those who have stayed upon their return to Afghanistan. Oeppen (2009), for instance, found that returnees were referred to as 'dog-washers', meaning people who did low-status jobs in America and returned to claim high status jobs from locals (p.157). The majority of participants did not have this challenge and were welcomed by the host institutions and their colleagues. Five of the participants reported having challenges with resentment in their positions. One participant stated:

"In the beginning I got..the reaction from the people that they are not good with me in the beginning, because in Afghanistan it is common that when expert is coming, they are very worried that he will take my place and my power. So…after some time everything [is] normal, that they will believe that he is not taking our place and then they change their [behaviour].

In addition to challenges with colleagues, some of the participants experienced difficulties in working with religious leaders and members of the community. There were clashes between ideologies, and the religious leaders were intimidated by the work of the participants. Over time these differences with regard to religious ideologies were overcome.

Other challenges participants experienced related to living in Afghanistan and lacking access to the necessary facilities. Some participants, for instance, found transportation in Kabul to be a challenge while other participants reported facing challenges in finding a place to live. One participant stated that as he was a single man, in Afghanistan people did not trust him enough to rent to him because they preferred to rent to married couples or families. Participants also experienced challenges in being away

from their families for the duration of their position. Several participants stated their families had not wanted them to go to Afghanistan and feared for their safety. IOM takes multiple precautions to ensure the safety of participants by providing on-going monitoring of the participants and the regions they are working within. Participants are not supported to be sent to unsafe areas of the country, such as the south (Kandahar). In addition, IOM provides an updated list of all participants to the Dutch Embassy in Kabul to ensure that they are registered and will be informed of any evacuation plans. At the same time participants noted that knowing that their families were not in Afghanistan and were safe enabled them to focus on their jobs.

Overall, the key challenges experienced were endemic to the current conditions in Afghanistan as the country seeks to recover from thirty years of war, or as some would argue, the continuing state of conflict. A lack of resources and capacity creates a difficult work environment to achieve success. For these reasons the expertise of the participants was highly valued by the host institutions and the colleagues with whom the participants worked.

5.2 Knowledge Transfer
Knowledge Transfer will be explored in terms of explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge, as described in the first section of the report.

5.2.1 Explicit Knowledge Transfer
Explicit knowledge transfer in this study occurred primarily from the end result of assignments. A key role of participants in their assignments was often in designing new curriculum for university courses. These curricula were left with the university for future use when the participants departed. As an example, one of the participants developed a new IT course on web-page design for a private university. A course at the level and depth of the curriculum developed had not previously been offered in Afghanistan. The course curriculum was sent to the Ministry of Education by the host institution to request approval as an official new curriculum. The curriculum was approved and the host institution is now offering the new course. This form of explicit knowledge transfer has the potential to be sustainable. It is important to note that this form of explicit knowledge transfer was accompanied by formal teaching as participants taught the courses that they developed.

Another example of explicit knowledge transfer was from the position of participants who worked for the Ministry of Education editing the curriculum for Afghan schools. The participant was re-writing/editing the books because the books were not understandable for the teachers and students. Most books are translated from other languages into Dari, and when a book writer does not have strong enough Dari skills the books are poorly written and difficult for teachers and students to understand. This participant had a Master's degree in the Dari language and was able to re-write books so that they could easily be understood by teachers and students. The books were presented to teachers at a seminar held to teach the teachers the new books and curriculum. During this session the books were very well received and praised by the teachers. This provides an example of a piece of explicit knowledge transfer in which the edited books will provide lasting knowledge for teachers and students.

5.2.2 Tacit Knowledge Transfer
Tacit knowledge transfer occurred more commonly in the assignments through learning by example, informal teaching, mentoring, team work and discussions.

5.2.2.1 Learning by Example
Learning by example can be defined as "perceiving, reflecting and imitating existing procedures" (Von Krogh, Roos, and Kleine, 1998: 236 in Bajracharya and Masdeu, 2006). Learning by example can act as a form of knowledge transfer by "passing on implicit routines, standardizing procedures and socialization effects" (Von Krogh, Roos, and Kleine, 1998: 236 in Bajracharya and Masdeu, 2006).

This form of knowledge transfer was most commonly noted by comments regarding 'professionalism'. The majority of colleagues interviewed noted that the participant was very professional. When asked what they meant by professionalism, interviewees were unable to offer further detail. A further understanding of the work environment in Afghanistan made this comment clear, however. A few examples of Afghan work environments described in participants' interviews included the following: employees frequently come and go as they please from the work place, and some days they do not show up and do not need to provide a reason. Teachers will miss teaching classes, teachers will come to classes late, and students' grades may be determined by nepotism or bribery. Due to these conditions, many of the participants stated that they sought to establish professionalism within their work environments by acting as an example to other staff. Some examples of this include maintaining regular work hours, arriving on time to all meetings and lectures, being prepared for the work tasks, and behaving in an appropriate manner for the work place.

Through the interviews it was clear that the participants act as a positive example for appropriate workplace behavior for colleagues, and providing a positive example was thus a simple way that participants could contribute to tacit knowledge transfer.

5.2.2.2 Informal Teaching and Problem Solving
Informal teaching refers to teaching that occurs outside of the formal classroom of learning institutions (ie: Universities and schools). That is, informal teaching can include work-place seminars and other hands-on learning that occurs in the work environment. This form of teaching is quite significant, as it

does not occur in formal university education in Afghanistan. Many of the engineers stressed that the newly trained engineers in Afghanistan would know some of the technical aspects but not the actual implementation of how to do the job. The informal teaching of engineers on how to actually perform tasks was thus highly valued. In other contexts the informal teaching was more institutionalized with the participant providing seminars at the workplace. This occurred with a physician who provided seminars on new technologies and techniques that he had learned in the Netherlands.

Informal teaching also occurred through problem solving. It was common to hear that the TRQN participants were able to solve problems. A colleague stated:

"He is doing a lot to advise us how to work, how to manage, and he is also, his main responsibility is also doing work as well. Before nobody can solve the problem which we faced, but when Mister [participant] came here, it was him that helped and supported us. He has solved the problem that we had."

The quotes illustrate that the problem-solving capacities of the TRQN participants are highly valued in Afghanistan.

5.2.2.3 Mentoring
In the majority of positions, the participants acted as mentors to their staff or students. As most participants were placed in senior-level roles they generally had people they either trained directly or other staff that they worked with to increase their capacity. One participant described how he approached the mentoring of teachers:

"I have worked with them to [address] their problems. How to solve these problems, I gave them advice and I helped them to find out the solution for this problem. That is exactly nice work, they worked with me...and later I began to go to the class to hear how they are teaching, how it is, give the results, my individuals and grouping works with them. So I saw that there is a development, is bettering, and also I have seen that there was some problem with teaching lectures and the material was not so up to date, they were not ready, or the discipline was law or there was problem with the curriculum or they came a little bit late or they stopped a little bit soon. And first of all also I have seen that there was a little bit overload of teaching. There was many subjects, little teachers. The young teacher had three to four subjects to teach same semester, same time and the faculty – I got in touch with the administration and told them about the young, they cannot do this, there is not enough materials, they cannot – they do not know enough in four language, English, French or others and there is problem. They should diminish the load."

This quote shows that the participant engaged with the teachers on a one-on-one basis to address the challenges in

their roles, and participants also supported the overburdened teachers with senior management. The workloads of the teachers were diminished so that they could manage their roles better.

5.2.2.4 Team Work
The use of teamwork is uncommon in Afghan professional work environments. Teamwork is documented to be a key way for people to learn from one another, share experiences, and create common visions.

The participants often worked with their mentees in groups. One participant who worked as a senior employee in a ministry in Afghanistan worked hard to bring teamwork to the daily work environment of the civil service:

"The teamwork, really now they appreciate, even now in this ministry. We are quite busy still how to teach the teamwork. Some of them they accept it, some of them still they would like to do it individually. And me as a member of the leading team of this ministry [am] trying my best, me and minister and deputy minister. How to show them the benefit of this one – what is better? Teamwork or individually? Now fortunately day by day they are accepting that teamwork [is] better, because we can just share our information, we can share our techniques and technologies and updated programs amongst each other and really this is good for them. Now they know that is better. Day by day they are understanding that teamwork is better than individual work."

This quote highlights that new concepts such as team work that require trusting colleagues and cooperating as a group can be challenging in the Afghan work environments. The success of teamwork, which this participant put deliberate effort into creating and maintaining, was a key achievement noted by this participant. This form of knowledge transfer has led to a form of a behavioural change as the team becomes accustomed to teamwork.

5.2.2.5 Discussions
Discussions are another way in which people can transfer ideas and implicitly share knowledge. Some of the participants discussed how they deliberately tried to give new ideas to their students, colleagues, and the general people they interacted with in Afghanistan. One participant stated the following:

"And of course I talk about democracy because it's very important for Afghan people and engineers, because the time of Taliban was very dark in Afghanistan, nobody did nothing, and what is a problem that we have now is better. The people knows about that, for example election has been very good. You know we have some problem of course, but the people enjoy for democracy, because they know all the things that happen in Afghanistan..."

Another participant focused his discussions not on democracy but on women's right and good governance. He stated:

"I [work] to establish the school– to fight for the woman...Rights and also help sometimes participate in the human rights commission– and also I give more or less advice for – how to build modern society. How to...how to accept the governor. Some new...idea, new perception and so to bring – how to bring change and how to introduce this change by the ruler of this place and this province."

As the beginning of the quote suggests, with "I work" participants saw these discussions as being parts of their roles in bringing new ideas and knowledge to Afghanistan. Many participants expressed concern with the 'backwardness' or 'lack of good culture' in Afghanistan and sought to teach people about other forms of society and ways of being.

Although these discussions cannot be measured in terms of retention, absorption, or change in the receiver, there is evidence that they have occurred. It is a unique opportunity for Afghans to learn about such issues from fellow Afghans.

5.3 Capacity Building

As previously stated, the transfer and development of knowledge is one step that contributes to the capacity-building process. Capacity building occurs once a person has absorbed knowledge, learned new skills, and developed new capacities. In addition, capacity building can occur at the individual level, institutional level, or community level. Several examples of capacity building were found across these three levels in the research, and three cases are detailed below.

Case 1: Information Technology in Badakshan

Badakshan Province is located in North-East Afghanistan along the Tajikistan border. It is one of the most remote and poorest provinces in Afghanistan. The provincial authorities requested a TRQN participant to assist with information technology (IT) in the province. The TRQN participant arrived to find four computers that were not working for the entire teaching staff of the province. One of the teachers was interviewed and stated that the computers had been there for five years, but nobody knew how to turn them on. The participant was able to repair the computers and proceeded to train 30 male teachers and 30 female teachers (in separate classes) on how to use the computers. The participant taught them how to use the internet, email, word processing, and calculation programmes. Some of these teachers were then sent out into the districts to train other teachers on how to use a computer in an effort to spread knowledge throughout the province. The remaining teachers began to teach the computer to 1500 students. The teacher who was interviewed stated the following regarding the experience of learning from the TRQN participant:

"We learn a lot from Mister [participant]...First learning of the computer, using of the computer, before we were typing by hand writing, but now we are able to write, to read everything with [the] computer...He brought new technology from abroad for us. Yeah it's very different we can say... He brought a lot of new things. We started computer learning; we learn more things and new technology, new view, new thought of the people of Europe... I can say around 60 percent something, I progressed my state of knowledge. I changed 60 percent. It changed my state, my education, my experience, everything for me...Now what should I say. That is a full impact on my life, on my current job I can do."

Case 2: Electrical Engineer Training

Engineers are in great demand in Afghanistan, and people who do not have the full skill sets for the position are often still hired to do the work. A private education institute in Kabul recognized the need for a practical course on electrical engineering. A TRQN participant was brought in to teach the speciality class. The class was taught in the evenings from 17:00-19:00 after the working day, as it was aimed at people who were already employed. The participant utilized his own money to bring computer engineering software from The Netherlands. The course started with theory and moved to practice to show the students how to complete engineering tasks. This was the first time a course of this kind has been offered in Afghanistan.

One American construction company operating in Kabul paid to have their entire technician staff of seven employees attend the course. None of these technicians had been formally trained as electricians; they had received on-the-job training in Pakistan or taken video courses while in refugee camps in Pakistan. They were responsible for developing the electricity in several buildings in Kabul. One participant described his experience as follows:

"You know in Afghanistan we have all technician, and all the market and bazaar that they want to make fast, so they learn basically. They make it and damage it; they make it, then fix it, then learn it. So this [course] is good, like university, like school. This is from basic mathematic formula...So now...I think we are different...So we are different, that now with some effort, some equipment, [if] something gets bad, so we can help our supervisor. Also ...we can give him some suggestion. So if it's right or wrong, that [does] not matter, but we can say something, that is the difference we learned from there."

Furthermore, when the colleagues of the TRQN participant at the institution were interviewed, they stated that one of the participants from the course had been a watchmaker in Kabul and earned approximately US $100 per month. After the course, the student was able to get a job as a technician and now earns US $800 per month. The TRQN participant stated that his

greatest achievement in this role was that all of the students were employed after the course. The course was continued at the institute and taught by one of the previous students.

Case 3: The Case of Bamyan Province
The Governor of Bamyan province, one of the only female governors in Afghanistan, came to the Netherlands and asked the diaspora to support construction projects in Bamyan province. This TRQN participant quit his job working as an engineer in the Netherlands and went to IOM to request a position in Bamyan province. Although he was Afghan, his family was from another region, and he had never before been to Bamyan and had no connections there beyond the request of the province's governor. Over the course of the next two years, this participant travelled three times to Bamyan Province with TRQN 1 and 2 positions. On his first assignment he worked with the provincial authorities and created a master plan for the province and Bamyan city. On his second assignment he worked with both the province and Bamyan University. For the University he designed new buildings, including a girl's and boy's dormitory. The girl's dormitory was built and became the first female dormitory in Bamyan province, which provided the first opportunity for females from the district to receive higher education. The building of the dormitory enabled 20 percent of high school girls in Bamyan province to attend University for the first time.

The TRQN participant also resolved the Internet problems of the University by establishing a satellite Internet system, and he went on to design the master plan of Bamyan University. In the long term the system is more cost efficient and works much faster. The Internet is now fast enough to offer virtual learning. Although the TRQN participant has now returned to the Netherlands and found a new position, he teaches an engineering course for Bamyan University through virtual learning twice a week. Most institutions in Afghanistan do not have fast enough Internet for virtual learning, and it is only because this participant established the satellite Internet that he is able to continue teaching in Afghanistan.

5.4 Participants Engagement in Afghanistan Post-Assignment
One of the objectives of temporary return programmes is to establish an on-going engagement between the diaspora and the country of origin via the return programme. This section will briefly discuss the situation of participants and host institutions after participation in the project.

The majority of the TRQN participants continued to be engaged in activities in Afghanistan after their participation. This engagement was continued in one of three ways: first, by a repeated participation in TRQN, second, by another temporary or permanent return, and third by maintaining communications with the host institution.

As demonstrated in the assignments section of this report, the majority of participants have participated in more than one TRQN assignment. Of the 19 participants, 18 stated that if provided the opportunity they would like to participate in TRQN again. Unfortunately, the majority of the participants had already participated more than twice and could not be sponsored by IOM again due to limitations in the number of people and assignments that the TRQN project can support.

Six of the nineteen participants continued to stay in Afghanistan to work for host institutions after their IOM contract ended. At the time of interview, three of these participants were still working in Kabul. One of the participants was planning to return to the Netherlands within a few months, as working in Kabul did not provide enough support for his family in the Netherlands. One of the participants planned to stay in Kabul, as his family was in Kabul, unless the security situation deteriorated. The final participant was unsure of his plans. In addition, two other participants were currently in Kabul not on TRQN assignments and were looking for positions. The primary challenge of working in Kabul was the low salaries.

Three of the participants also continued to assist host institutions after their return to the Netherlands The first case is where virtual learning is now occurring to Bamyan University, as described in the case study of the previous section. The second case is a participant who had worked at Herat University and continued to assist the University by connecting them with universities in France for learning exchanges. The final case was in Kabul University, where the participant continued to have engagement and advise the dean of the department for which he had worked.

Only two host institutions were interviewed after participants had fully completed their assignment. In both of these cases the assignment had been completed more than six months prior to the interview, and the project that had been implemented by the participants were ongoing. This is one area where further research is required to fully understand the lasting impacts of the participants.

5.5 Benefits of the Project
There were several benefits of the TRQN project overall. First, participants were pleased with their accomplishments, and participation contributed positively to their mental health. One participant stated (through translation):

"it's a very good program actually it's just more I mean about the people that it actually gives people a sense of, a sense of purpose as I should say...it's his personal feeling, whenever somebody talks with him about his profession that is one of the

happiest moments of his life. So it's like – I mean ever since 1997 he actually didn't work on his profession"

Furthermore, the majority of participants felt that they had contributed to the reconstruction and development efforts in Afghanistan. Participants were eager to return to do more and felt that the project facilitated their ability to contribute to their country.

In addition to the participants themselves, participants' colleagues in the host institutions expressed gratitude toward the IOM for supporting the positions. For many of the colleagues, the IOM assignments presented the first opportunity for them to have a personal experience with the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan:

"many many organization promised and brought some project in Afghanistan and Kabul municipality and all Afghanistan, but we can say only the project that we saw full of benefits, useful project, I can say that is IOM, because it is bringing expert here, without expert we cannot build our country. I think it is the first time we can say IOM is the best project."

In addition, in some cases the host institutions provided an official ceremony and certificate of appreciation to show their appreciation to the participant for their work. Finally, it can be argued that the greatest benefits of the project were the resulting impacts of the participants' work in Afghanistan that led to the training of thousands of people, the building of new infrastructure, and the transfer of knowledge.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

This report has sought to illustrate the various ways that knowledge is transferred through the TRQN participants to create capacity building and effective change in Afghanistan. Effective change is difficult to measure with concrete evidence, and thus case examples have been provided to show the medium and long-term effects of the participants on their host institutions and colleagues. The case examples have illustrated that through the TRQN participants, thousands of people have utilized a computer for the first time, technicians have been taught the rights skills to do their jobs, female students have been able to receive higher education, and virtual learning has been established for on-going training from diaspora expertise. These cases are only a few examples of the ways that individuals and institutions have been provided with lasting changes that develop capacities over the long term.

The TRQN project has made many contributions in Afghanistan and is highly regarded by participants, host institutions, and colleagues. All interviewees felt that the project provided positive benefits for Afghanistan, and the majority of participants felt that they made a positive contribution to Afghanistan. The severe underdevelopment in Afghanistan made the country a prime case for such a knowledge transfer and capacity-building programme. As one participant stated, *"you can make a lot of impact there with just a small effort".*

In Kabul it was suggested that the TRQN project was one of the most successful temporary return programmes offered by IOM. IOM staff in Kabul stated that they never receive complaints from employers, as does happen in other programmes. One of the host institution interviewees stated that their organization had received temporary returnees from a variety of programmes, but that the Dutch participants were the hardest working and had the best affect on their organizations. The research did not include enough comparative elements to other programmes to draw conclusions regarding the other programmes, but it should be recognized that the TRQN project was highly regarded in Kabul.
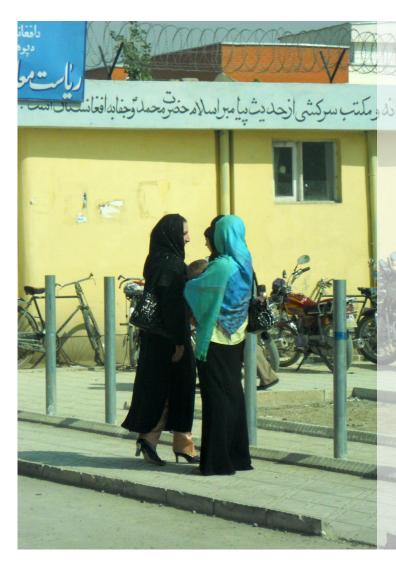
The research conducted on the TRQN 2 project indicates that the project is successful in achieving its goals of knowledge transfer and capacity building. Key elements that appear to contribute to this success is the fact that the project is demand driven, recruits and provides assignments to highly qualified participants, inspires strong commitment and motivation from the participants, and focuses on a training component in the terms of reference. A key constraint of the project indicated by all participants, host institutions, and colleagues was that the duration of assignments is too short. In the case of Afghanistan, it is not easy for an individual to get acquainted with the position and its requirements, to understand the organization, to gain the trust of colleagues, and to implement knowledge transfer activities within a three months period.

Further research is required to understand the effectiveness of the TRQN project and different temporary return programmes in different countries and contexts. The Afghan case is quite specific and the results of the research should not be generalized to the entire TRQN project, nor to all temporary return programmes. In addition, further research is required to understand the long term effectiveness and sustainability of the TRQN project in Afghanistan over the long term.

Recommendations:

1. **Project Continuation**- The research has indicated that the TRQN Project has led to many positive contributions in Afghanistan. The project should be continued so as to support further host institutions and provide further skill gain and knowledge transfer in Afghanistan. Practicalities currently included in the project that are important to continue in order to ensure its success are: financial compensation to the volunteers that provides enough funding for their expenses in Afghanistan, assistance with finding adequate housing in Afghanistan, and the provision of insurance for their stay in Afghanistan.

2. **Flexible Assignment Durations**- The duration of the assignment should not be fixed at three months; it should be flexible to better meet the needs of the assignment position. Upon the initial review of the Terms of Reference provided by the host institution to IOM, the participant should be given the opportunity to provide input as to the feasible duration required to accomplish the tasks of the Terms of Reference. In the event that the tasks are lengthier than the planned project period, the option should exist for a longer placement. Placements of up to one year in duration would arguably allow the opportunity for greater knowledge transfer, capacity building, and institutional learning. It must be noted that some participants may not want to engage in such a lengthy assignment, so allowing for flexibility to meet both the host institutions' and participants' needs is crucial.

3. **Repeat Performers**- There is evidence that repeat performers have the capacity to be more effective in their roles. That is, the same individual returning to the same position already knows the organization, has the ability to prepare for the assignment prior to departure, and is then able to implement more activities while in Afghanistan. Repeat performers should thus be encouraged in order to maximize benefits for the host institution. This must, however, be within the available parameters of spreading the limited resources of the project to as many host institutions as possible.

4. **Employer Support**-The TRQN 2 project does not have a specific mechanism to provide employer supports to every assignment. Other temporary return programmes have budgets of up to US $2000 per assignment for employer supports. Employer supports include the purchasing of equipment or furniture required to perform the tasks outlined in the TORs . Many of the TRQN 2 participants did not have a computer in their assignment, as it was not provided by their employer. The supports offered in the project currently allow for 200-500 euros to be provided for training materials, such as a computer. Generally the participant will pay the remaining costs for the computer and then keep it after the assignment, or, in some cases, the participant will donate the computer to the host institution. It is recommended that the allocation for employer supports be increased to a minimum of US $1000 for every assignment and that all training materials brought by the participant remain with the host institution. In certain cases, employer support may not be necessary where the employer already has the required equipment to do the job. In cases where there is not sufficient equipment and resources, the provision of employer supports will enable participants to have the resources required to perform their tasks more efficiently and sustainably.

5. **Completion of Assignment**- None of the participants stated that they provided a written end-of-assignment memo to their host institution or that they assigned someone within the host institution to follow up on the assignment after they left their position. To ensure proper handover of participants' work, it is recommended that the participants leave behind a written end-of-assignment memo in addition to an oral debriefing. The host institution, participant, and IOM can work together to ensure that this information is also left with the host institution. The status report/memo should include the details of tasks performed, tasks completed, outstanding tasks, key learnings for the organization, and recommendations. Such a report will contribute to providing institutional legacy, explicit knowledge transfer, and learnings that can be referred to by members of the organization after the departure of the participant.

Endnotes

[1] The other three are institutional arrangements, leadership, and accountability. See "Measuring Capacity" UNDP, 2010.

[2] The other five countries in TRQN 1 were: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Sierra Leone, and Sudan. In TRQN 2 the project to Kosovo and Serbia was discontinued and TRQN 2 was implemented in Ethiopia and Georgia along with the other four countries.

[3] This section refers to the participants interviewed, not all of the TRQN participants.

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Authors

Katie Kuschminder
PhD Candidate and Research Fellow at Maastricht Graduate School of Governance working on return migration to Ethiopia.