

The Importance of Changing Mindsets for Innovative and Inclusive Public Service Delivery



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Innovation in Service Delivery is Critical to Prosperity and Development

Complex domestic and international challenges and opportunities require that the public sector continually adapts to changing circumstances.

Governments are faced with 3 main domestic challenges:

- More far-reaching and higher quality services with less resources and increased holistic capacities
- More accountable, responsive and effective
- Responsive to an increased demand from citizens for enhanced participation

Although government is still central to society, it is now widely recognized that governance is not the sole prerogative of governments.

Effective and Inclusive Service Delivery: Heartbeat of Prosperous Societies



*Efficient and inclusive
healthcare*



Access to quality education



Access to water



Justice – Equality



Happiness



Public transportation



Security



*Appropriate framework for
private sector development*



Environmental Protection

Principles of Effective Innovation in Service Delivery

1. Quality

The availability of government services in ways that are more convenient to the public, speedy processing of applications or claims, and a reduction in the amount of paperwork and other activities citizens must perform to demonstrate compliance.

2. Access

Such as the expansion of the coverage or enhancement of quality service delivery to vulnerable groups is critical to inclusive development.

3. Cost-effectiveness

Utilizing the most economic models for delivering quality services to the citizens and ensuring effective delivery is essential.

4. Citizen-centric

Utilize mechanisms that have proven to succeed in engaging citizens in the delivery of services.



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Enabling Factors for Effective Innovation in Service Delivery based on UNPSA Winners



Visionary and committed leadership



Collaborative institutional frameworks



Promoting a culture of innovation and transforming mindsets



Engaging citizens



Building partnerships



Utilizing ICTs



UN Public Service Award
Winners





ROAD MAP TO INNOVATION IN SERVICE DELIVERY

What is mindset? Why are mindsets important?

Table 1.1: Definitions of mindsets

Definitions of mindsets	Source
Mindsets form the “core” of people's meaning systems, bringing together goals, beliefs, and behaviors to shape people's thoughts and actions	Dweck & Yeager, 2019
Mindsets refers to people’s beliefs about the nature of personal attributes, such as intelligence	Alexander P. Burgoyne, 1 David Z. Hambrick, & 2 Brooke N. Macnamara, 2020
In cognitive psychology, a mindset represents the cognitive processes activated in response to a given task.	French, 2016
In system thinking, mindset is associated with cultural and social values	Magoroh Maruyama, 1980
Mindsets can be formed and shaped by different factors, including culture, socialization processes, spirituality and religion, and media exposure	Crum & Zuckerman, 2017
“In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort. They’re wrong”. “In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all great people have had these qualities.”	Carol Dweck, 2015

Source: Elaboration by the author: Stefania Senese

A mindset consists of beliefs and attitudes that a person has assimilated throughout a lifetime about themselves and the world around them.

Beliefs are what we hold to be true, convictions that may or may not correspond to reality. Beliefs influence our interpretation of, and response to, events.

While **beliefs** are about how we interpret the world, **attitudes** are about how we interact with the world.

Mindsets affect behaviors and decision-making, thus results.

What influences our mindsets?

External & Universal

Table 1.2: Definitions of principles, values, belief and attitudes

Principles	Propositions that are a guide for behaviors	
Values	Prescriptions for being ¹⁵ which contain an ethical dimension	<div>Personal values (internal)</div> <div>Institutional values (external)</div>
Belief	What we hold to be true - How we see the world	
Attitudes	A way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior	<div>- How we interact with the world</div>

Source: Elaboration by the authors

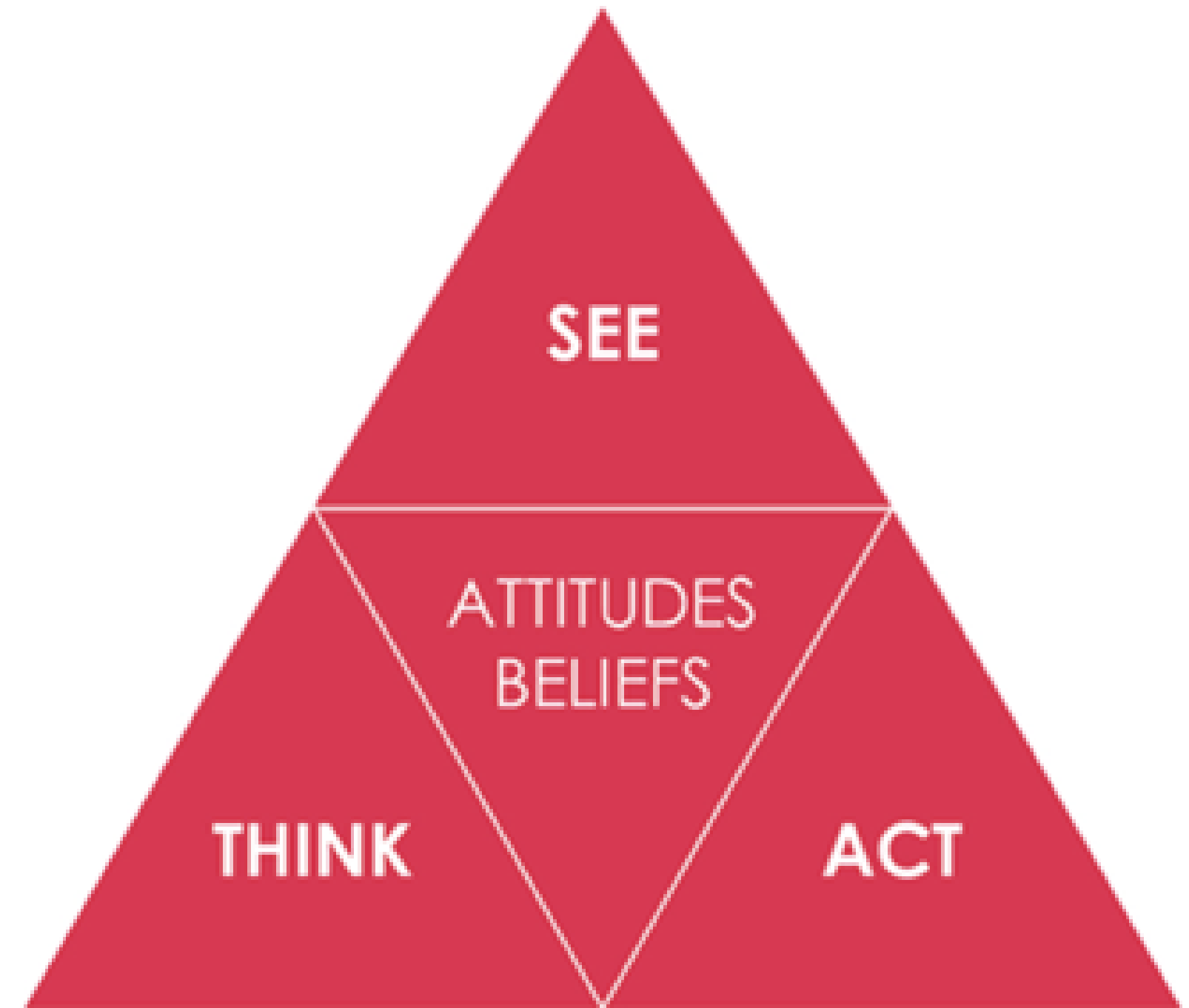
Beliefs and attitudes are influenced by values

Why are mindsets important?

See. Our perception - what we see and hear, in the physical world, and socially, culturally, politically. How we 'see' things is determined by the 'frames' we use to make sense of reality.

Think. How we make sense of situations, consciously or subconsciously. The mental models we develop to anticipate causes and effects. These affect the way we interpret information, create patterns and ask questions.

Act. How we use what we see and think to inform the behaviours and actions we deem possible and appropriate.





Why is it important to change mindsets to promote effective institutions for sustainable development?

Understanding the nature of institutions and institutional change

Visible part
↑
Dual nature
↓
Hidden part

Figure 1.1. The nature of institutions



Source: Elaboration by the author: Adriana Alberti, 2017

Institutional change does not mean a change of rules and goals per se. It also implies changing the beliefs and attitudes (mindsets), and values of public servants to reorient behavior to attain those goals. Above all, it means **behavioral changes** that enact the new prescriptions for action which are implied by the new rules.



Biases that often influence policy development

Bias	Description	Implications for policy development
Fixation (functional fixedness)	Being blind to alternatives	Elaborating on one solution at an early stage. Focusing on one method only.
Confirmation bias	A tendency to cherry-pick information that confirms existing beliefs or ideas	Missing disconfirming information, ignoring “red flags” end up with failure at a later stage
Group think (bandwagon effect)	Individuals in a group strive for harmony and consensus and avoid raising controversial issues or alternative solutions	Ideas or misconceptions are not challenged, there is loss of individual creativity, uniqueness and independent thinking
Not invented here	Internally-developed solutions are considered better than externally-developed solutions	May incur inflated development costs, while tested and proven solutions already are available
Spotlight effect	Search for information where it is easiest	Explore what is already known, or explore a predictable subset of solutions, while innovation happens in the adjacent possible



SIMPLE



It involves a few components
and actors

Clear end state: we can tell
when the problem is solved

Procedures to solve the
problem involve a few simple
and clear steps

COMPLICATED



It involves a many
components and experts

Clear end state: we can tell
when the problem is solved

Procedures to solve the
problem involve many steps
and a specific order

COMPLEX



It involves many actors with
conflicting interests

No clear end state: new problems
may occur

Procedures to solve the problem
are unclear, not known, requires
trials & error to see what works

Public servants need to:

- Make decisions in the face of uncertainty while being able to legitimize these decisions
- Set out a bold course of action while adapting to and improvising for unforeseen situations
- Explore new possible futures while focusing on outcomes and committing to real-world effects
- Keep the big picture in mind while also considering citizens' needs at an individual level
- Be reflective and critical while having a strong bias towards action



Managing such dynamics calls for the right mindsets to lead the change.



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Towards culture change in government and public institutions and organisations





New Competencies

aligned to SDG implementation
mindsets are required in the
public sector

New mindsets must go in hand in hand with new **competencies**, which call for specific know-how and skills.

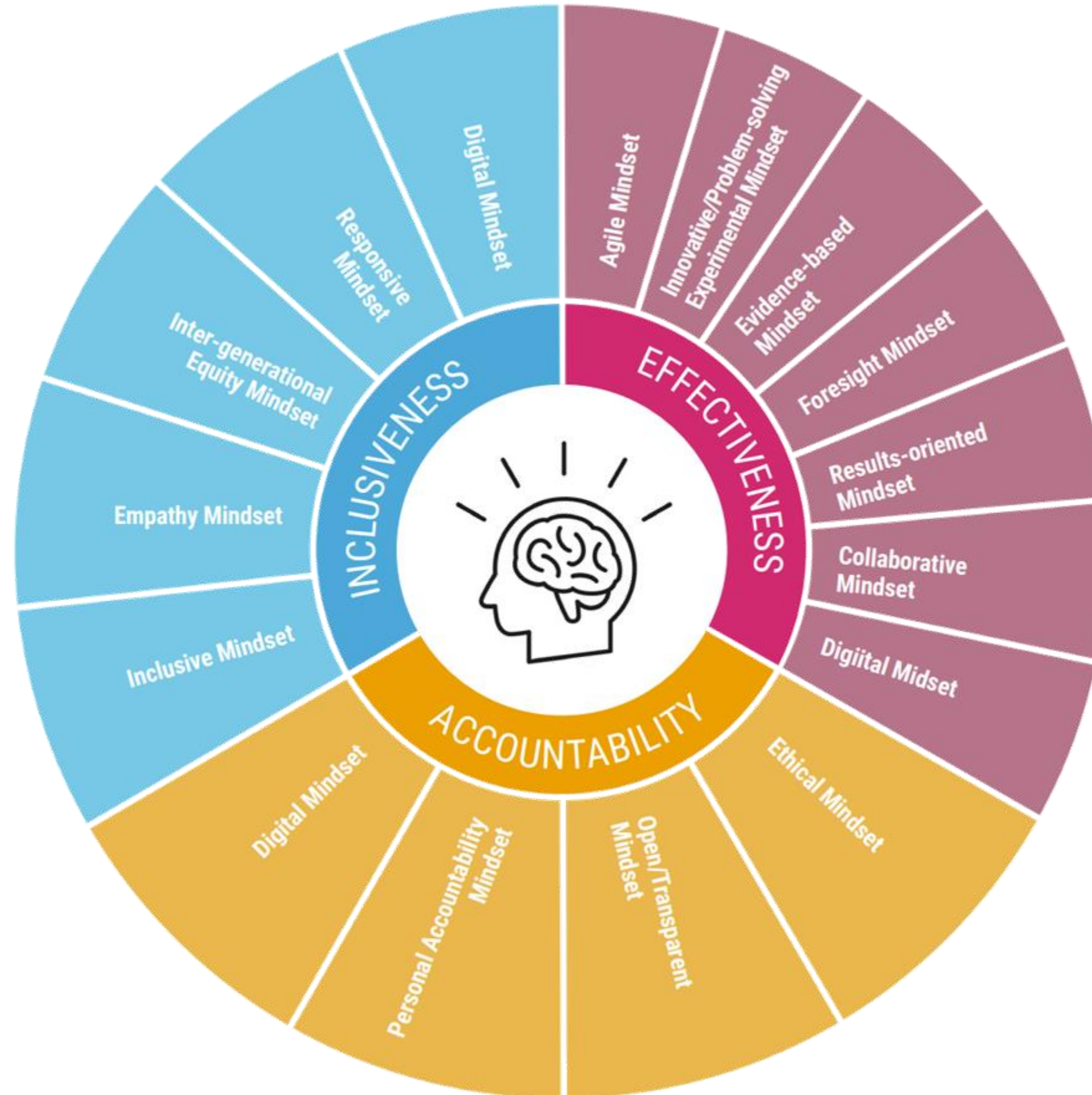
Governments may need to invest in retooling public services and reskilling public servants.

A new competency should bring with it new behaviors from the application of new knowledge, technical, practical and human skills.



What new capacities, mindsets, and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs?

Figure 1.3: Mindsets for SDGs implementation

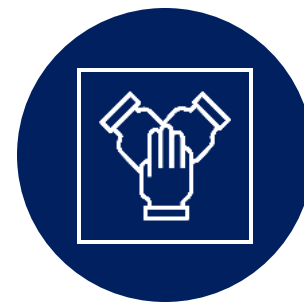


What new capacities, mindsets, and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs?

Institutional effectiveness is based on the principles of sound policymaking, competence, collaboration and systemic robustness. Mindsets that can promote institutional effectiveness include:



Agile Mindset for systems-thinking and strategic intelligence in support of integration



Collaborative Mindset for better coordination, integration, and dialogue



Innovative/Experimental Mindset for innovation and critical thinking in support of transformation and competence



Evidence-based Mindset in support of sound policymaking



Results-oriented Mindset for action in support of results-oriented actions



Foresight Mindset for long-term planning and sound policymaking



Digital Mindset for transformative digital change

What new capacities, mindsets, and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs?

Institutional accountability is based on the principles of **integrity, transparency and independent oversight**. Ensuring an accountability driven culture and capacities means that public institutions invest in promoting. Mindsets that can promote institutional accountability include:



Ethical Mindset in support of values and beliefs based on sound moral principles



Open/Transparent Mindset in support of integrity and transparency dialogue



Personal Accountability Mindset in support of an accountability culture



Digital Mindset for a digital change

What new capacities, mindsets, and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs?

Institutional inclusiveness is based on the principles of leaving no one behind, non-discrimination, participation, subsidiarity, and inter-generational equity. Investing in capacities to promote institutional inclusiveness means investing in creating



Inclusive Mindset for empathic and responsive service delivery in support of leaving no one behind, non-discrimination, participation, subsidiarity, and inter-generational equity



Empathy/relational Mindset in support of emotional intelligence and socially conscious leadership to safeguard people, planet, and prosperity for all



Responsive Mindset for people-centric services with a special focus on vulnerable groups

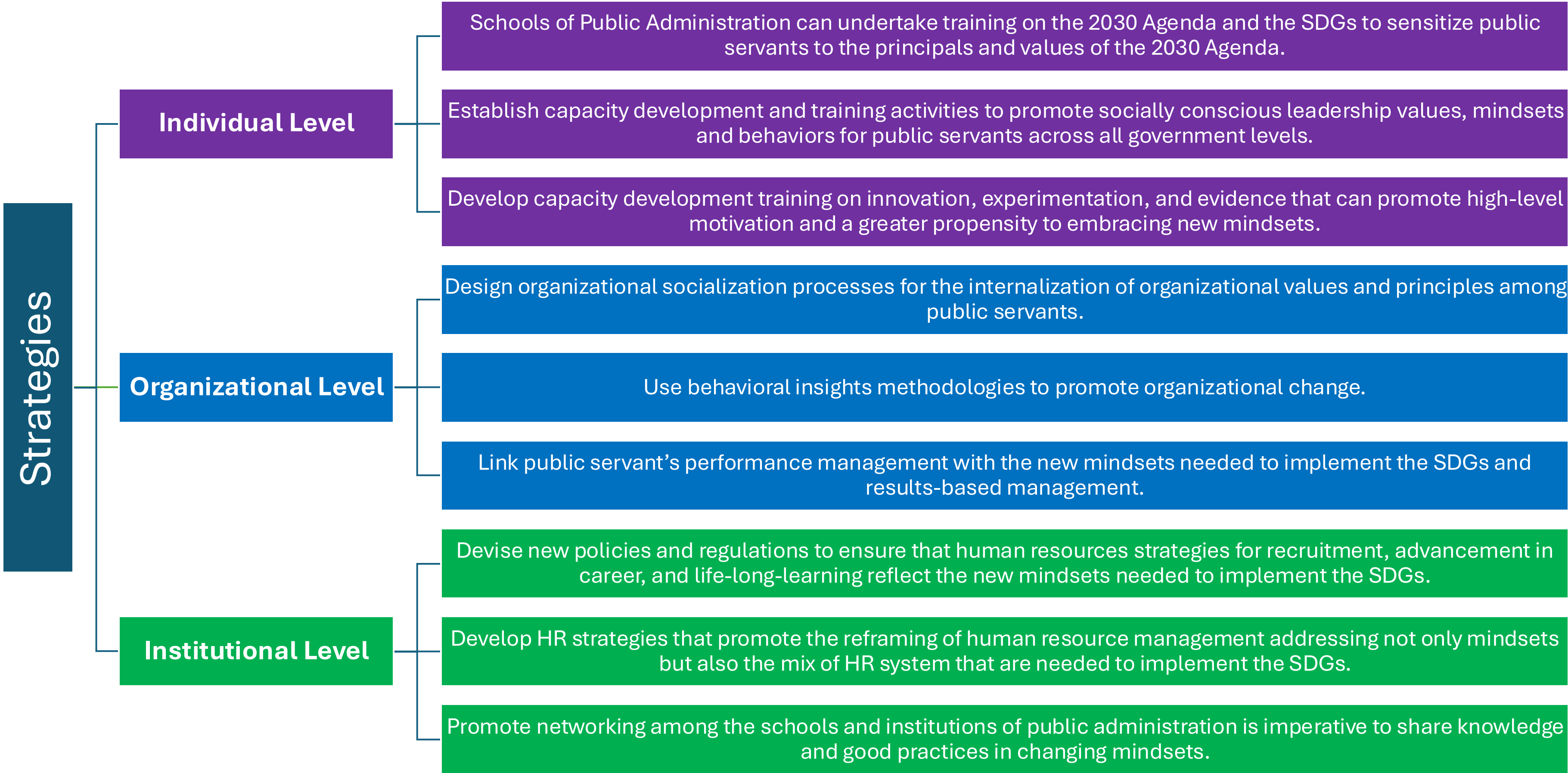


Inter-generational equity Mindset



Digital Mindset for a digital change

Strategies at the Individual, Organizational and Institutional Levels to Promote a Change in Mindsets



Strategies at the Individual, Organizational and Institutional Levels to Promote a Change in Mindsets

Steps to changing mindsets:

STEP 1: Identify

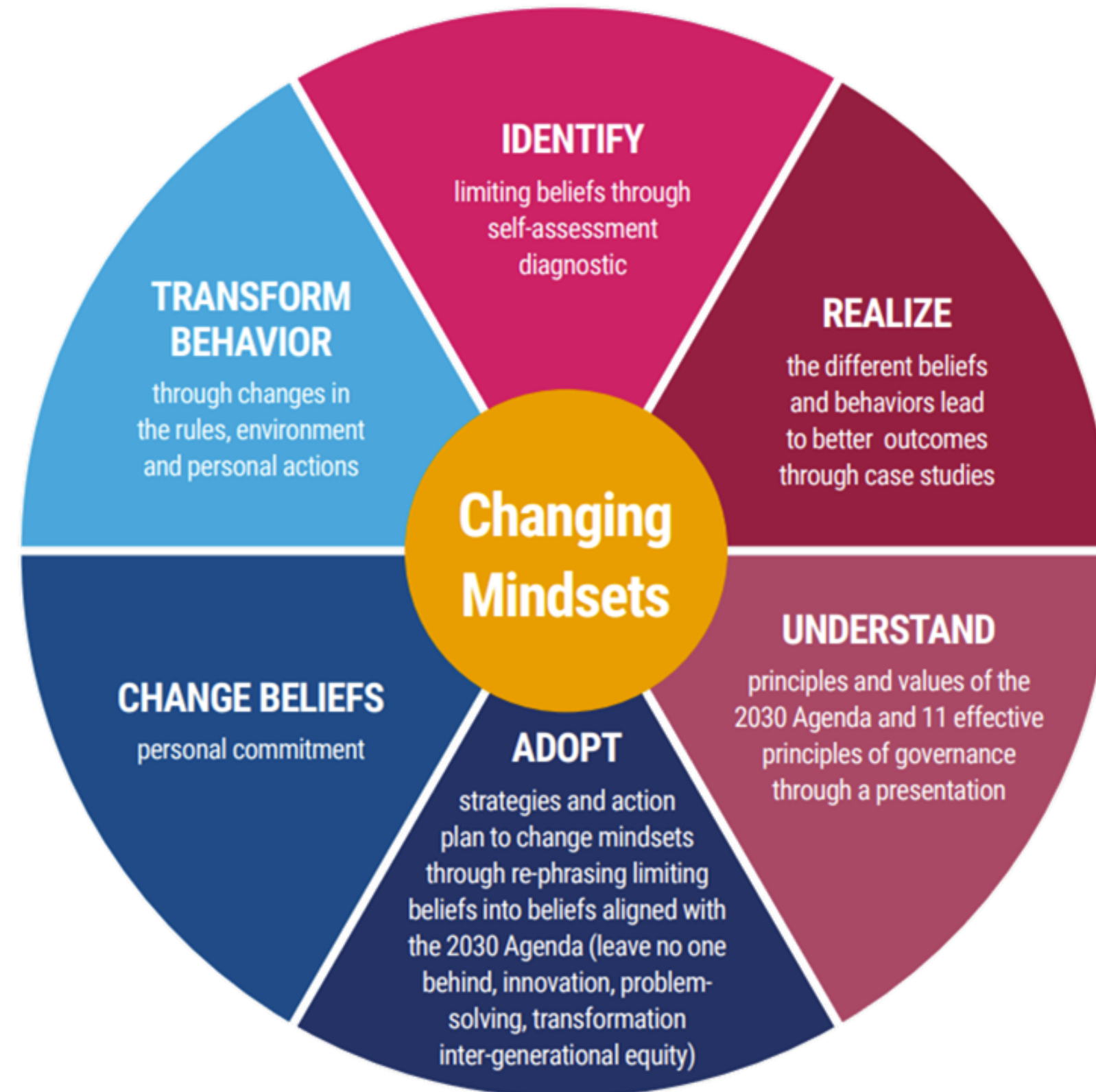
STEP 2: Realize

STEP 3: Understand

STEP 4: Adopt strategies





STEP 5: Change beliefs

STEP 6: Transforming behaviors




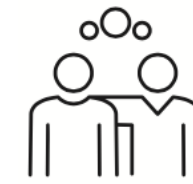


Mindsets for Effective Public Service Delivery

These mindsets help ensure that services are results-oriented, data-driven, and adaptive.

Mindset		Description	Example
Results-Oriented		Focused on outcomes, not just processes.	A municipal planner prioritizes improving commute times over just increasing road budgets.
Adaptive/Flexible		Able to adjust plans when circumstances change.	A health worker adapts vaccination outreach methods during a flood to reach displaced families.
Evidence-Based		Uses data and analytics to guide decisions.	A ministry uses real-time school attendance data to adjust education funding formulas.
Innovation Mindset		Embraces experimentation and creative problem-solving.	A government agency pilots a mobile app for birth registration in rural areas.




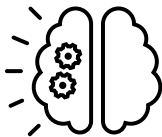
Mindsets for Inclusive Public Service Delivery

These foster equity, participation, and responsiveness to diverse needs.

Mindset		Description	Example
Equity-Oriented		Recognizes and addresses structural inequalities.	A social protection program prioritizes benefits for female-headed households.
Empathy-Based		Understands and values citizen experiences.	A public servant adjusts service hours to accommodate working mothers.
Participatory		Encourages stakeholder engagement in policy design.	A mayor holds regular community forums before budget approval.
Intercultural Sensitivity		Respects cultural and linguistic diversity.	Officials translate services into minority languages to ensure access.

Mindsets for Accountable Public Service Delivery

These promote transparency, integrity, and answerability.

Mindset		Description	Example
Integrity-Driven		Acts ethically and resists corruption.	A procurement officer rejects an overpriced bid from a politically connected vendor.
Transparency-Oriented		Makes decisions and processes visible to the public.	A department publishes open data on budget execution and delays.
Service-Oriented		Views citizens as clients to serve, not burdens.	A front-desk clerk follows up with citizens who experienced delays.
Reflective/Critical		Questions norms and learns from feedback.	A department conducts a citizen satisfaction survey and updates procedures accordingly.

“A transformed mindset is the foundation for a transformed public service. Each of us is both a carrier and a catalyst of change.”



**At your Tables, please turn to the person next to you and discuss (10 minutes)
Then share with the Table (5 minutes)**



Key Questions:

- What are the dominant mindsets in your institution?
- Which ones help or hinder innovation and effective delivery?