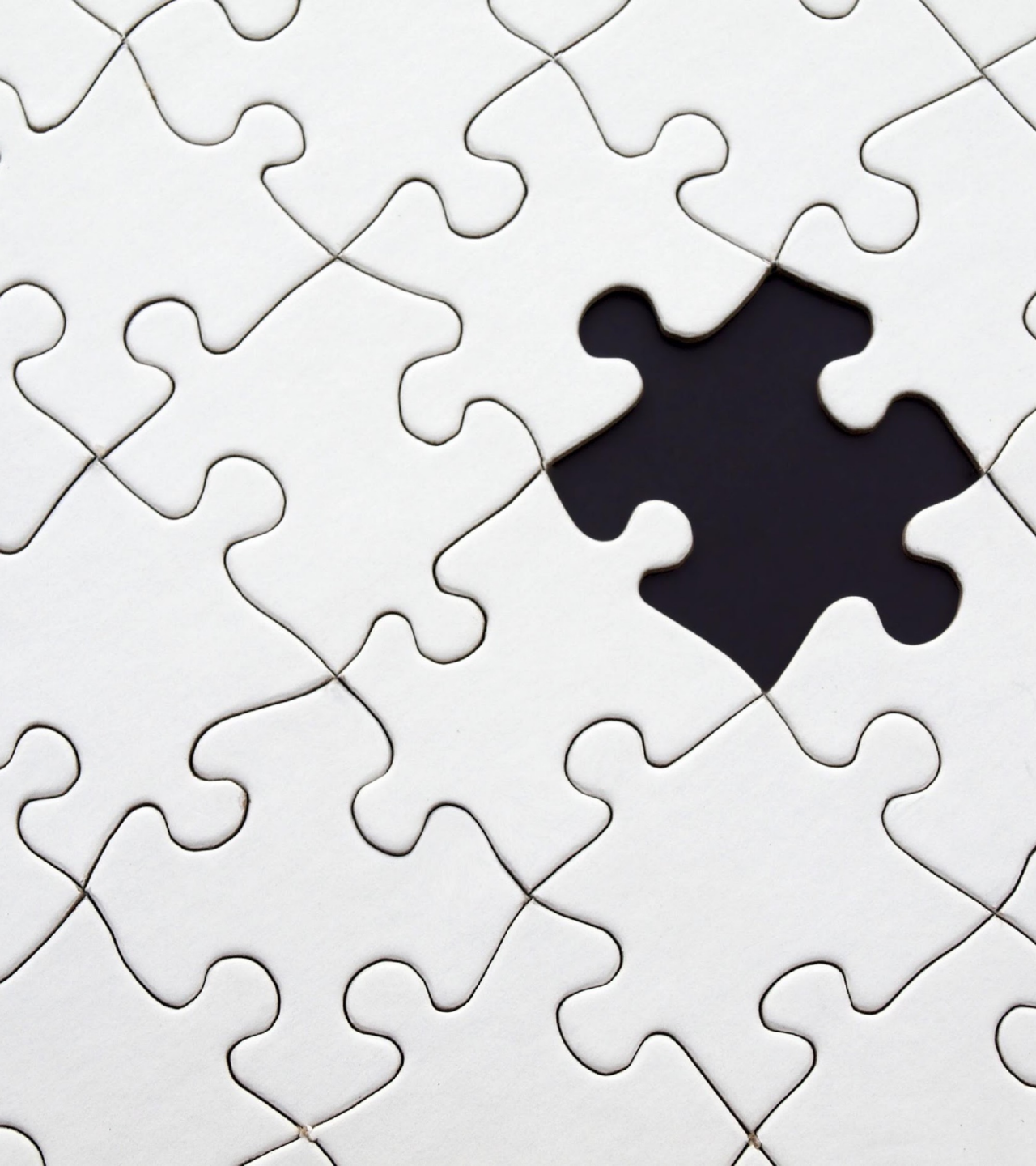# Innovation

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# The Importance of an Innovation/Experimental Mindset

What is Innovation?

The generation and implementation of **valuable new ideas**.

Innovation can be directed to products, services, processes, technology, strategy and entire models of operation.

Today innovation in many different areas is greatly facilitated by digital technologies.

Digital transformation requires new skills and new mindsets.
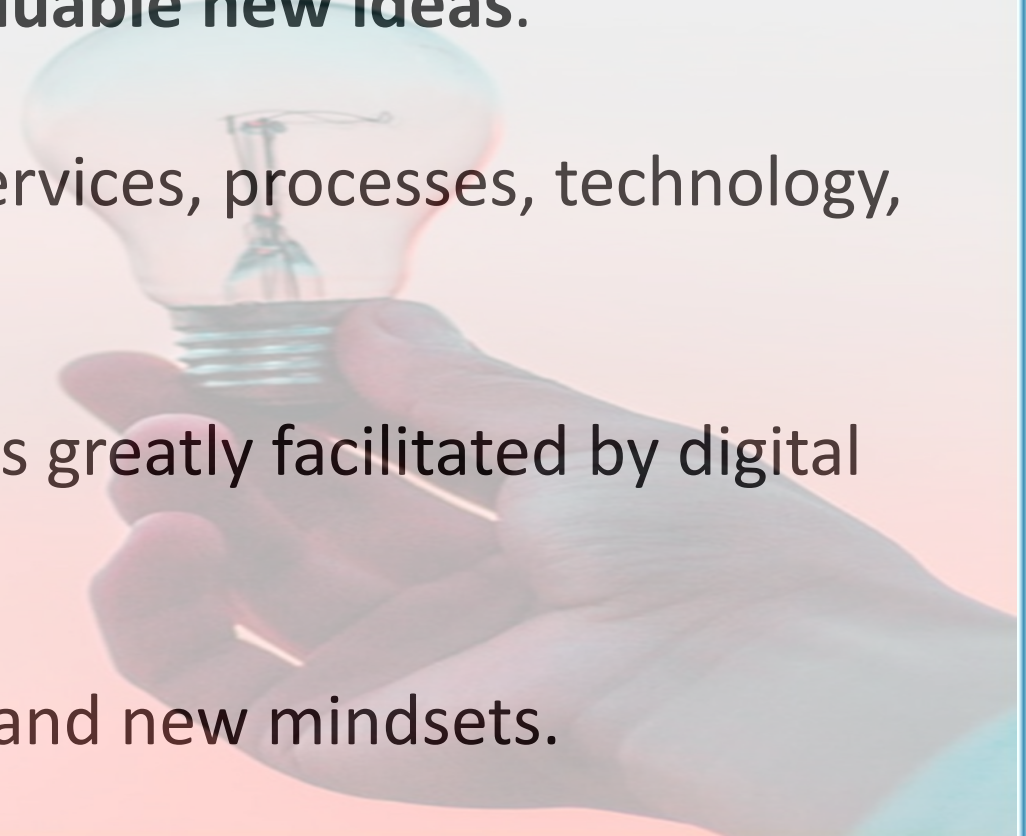
What is an Innovation/Experimental Mindset?

Institutional Effectiveness
Innovative/ Problem-solving Experimental Mindset
BELIEFS: Human capacities are not fixed; it is possible to continuously improve through efforts and learning
ATTITUDES: Is a risk-taker, eager to experiment, problem-solver, creative, resilient, driven and motivated to achieve excellence, thinking outside of the box
COMPETENCIES: An experimental problem-solving/experimental mindset is characterized by **strategic problem-solving** to develop and break down problem scenarios to ensure solutions that can be presented in a stepwise approach towards the achievement of a target; **creativity** to actively seek to improve programmes or services, offering new and different options to solve problems and meet client/citizen needs **and innovation** to value the improvement of process and new solutions in work situations, while perceiving different and novel ways to deal with public challenges and opportunities.

Teamwork

Meeting the users, yourself

Co-creation

Prototyping solutions

Failing frequently,
learning & moving on

The Growth Mindset is essential for Innovation

Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck juxtaposed

The **Fixed mindset**: "I can't do it"
   vs
The **Growth mindset**: "I can't do it - yet".

MINDSET
= SET OF ATTITUDES WHICH INFORM = HOW YOU PERCEIVE, UNDERSTAND AND ACT IN SITUATIONS

FIRST OF ALL... EACH OF US CAN HAVE BOTH MINDSETS
THAT CAN APPEAR AT DIFFERENT TIMES, DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION AND OUR EMOTIONAL STATE

HOW TO RECOGNISE?
- GIVES UP AT FIRST SIGN OF FAILURE
- BLAMES OTHERS (OR TOOLS, ENVIRONMENT...) WHEN THINGS GO WRONG
- THREATENED BY AND JEALOUS OF THE SUCCESS OF OTHERS
- CHOOSES TO IGNORE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

FIXED FACT SHEET
- FEARS - FAILURE, LOOKING DUMB
- LOVES - VALIDATION & PRAISE
- SUCCESS = PROVING YOU'RE SMART
- SEES ABILITY AS A 'GOD' GIVEN GIFT
- GOOD OUTCOMES ARE A CONFIRMATION OF OWN BRILLIANCE

EFFORT IS FOR THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE ABILITY.

ORIGINS (THEORY)
YOU DID GREAT... BECAUSE YOU ARE SPECIAL AND GIFTED
MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM INFLUENTIAL ADULTS WHEN YOUNG

TALENT & GENIUS
LIGHTBULB — SYNONYMOUS WITH INNOVATION: THE AH-HA MOMENT WHEN BRILLIANCE STRIKES A GENIUS INDIVIDUAL
I.E. T. EDISON "THE SOLO INVENTOR..."

HIRES FOR

FIXED M.S. LEADERS
CONSIDER SELVES AS 'GENIUS-WITH 1000 HELPERS'
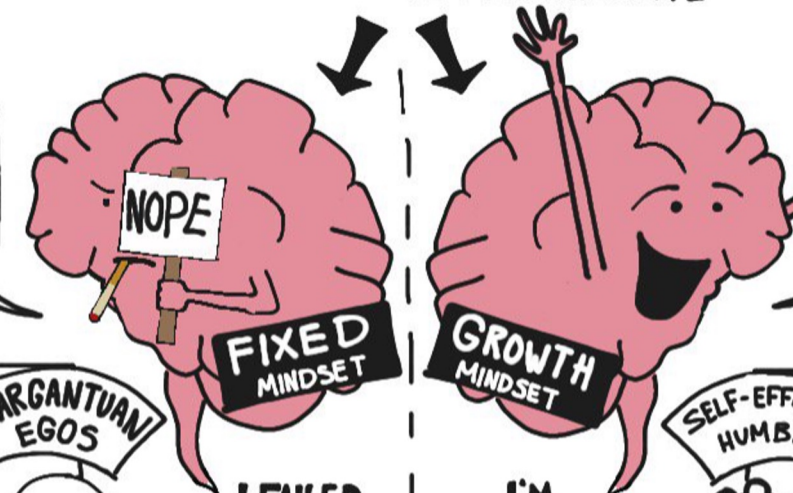"If you disagree with me, you're just not smart enough to understand"

GARGANTUAN EGOS

...WHEN IN REALITY IT TOOK TEAMS OF ENINEERS, CHEMISTS, LAB STAFF — TRIALLING & TESTING IDEAS, UNTIL THEY LEARNT WHAT WORKED.

LEGACY & SELF
EVERYTHING ELSE

NOPE

FIXED MINDSET

I FAILED THEREFORE I'M A FAILURE

GROWTH MINDSET

I'M A WORK IN PROGRESS

HOW TO RECOGNISE?
- PERSEVERES IN THE FACE OF SETBACKS
- SEES EFFORT AS THE PATH TO MASTERY
- LEARNS FROM CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM
- FINDS LESSONS & INSPIRATION IN THE SUCCESS OF OTHERS

GROWTH FACT SHEET
- FEARS - GIVING UP AND NOT LEARNING
- LOVES - CHALLENGES
- SUCCESS - SELF DEVELOPMENT
- SEES - POTENTIAL AS UNKNOWN
- GOOD OUTCOMES ARE THE RESULT OF HARD WORK AND EFFORT

INTELLIGENCE CAN BE DEVELOPED!

ORIGINS (THEORY)
YOU COULD DO BETTER WITH MORE PRACTICE
YOU DID GREAT BECAUSE YOU WORKED SO HARD

GROWTH M.S. LEADERS
- PASSION: TO GET THINGS DONE
- NURTURES EMPLOYEES
- NEVER STOPS TRYING TO BECOME QUALIFIED FOR JOB

SELF-EFFACING HUMBLE

VALUE IMPUT FROM OTHERS (EVEN CRITICISM)

WE THINK NOT GROUP THINK

HIRES FOR

ATTITUDE & MINDSET
- CURIOSITY - EMPATHY
- HUMILITY - COURAGE - AGILE
- IMAGINATION - RESILIENCE
- POSITIVITY - CAN-DO

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PSI?

FAILURE
NEED TO CHANGE THE MEANING OF 'FAILURE' - IF SOMETHING IS LEARNT FROM IT, ITS MOVED KNOWLEDGE ON.
BLAMEWORTHY → PRAISEWORTHY
I.E. AMY EDMONSON'S GOOD & BAD FAILURE

EXPERIMENTATION
"WE DON'T KNOW IF THIS WILL WORK...BUT WE KNOW HOW WE CAN FIND OUT!"
PEOPLE CAN ONLY DO THIS IF ABLE TO FAIL

LEADERSHIP & CULTURE
IF YOU ONLY HIRE FOR TALENT, PEOPLE ARE FORCED TO PROVE THIS TALENT AT ALL TIMES.
THEY'LL:
- HIDE WEAKNESS
- AVOID RISK
- FEAR FAILURE

'Everything is Fine'

IF YOU REWARD & INCENTIVISE HARD WORK, PESEVERANCE, GOOD QUESTIONS & PEOPLE TAKING INICIATIVE TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY- AND HIRE FOR
- YOU MAY HAVE A BETTER PROBLEM SOLVING CULTURE

THESE THINGS

REFLECTION
PEOPLE ARE GENERALLY BAD AT ASSESSING THEIR OWN ABILITIES ALL NEED A SAFE SPACE TO REFLECT → TO IDENTIFY WHERE AND HOW TO IMPROVE / DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

Key Features of the Growth Mindset

- The view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life.

- The fixed mindset encompasses the belief that your qualities are fixed, and this creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over.

- People in a growth mindset thrive on challenges. They find success in doing learning and improving.

- *"Everyone is actually a mixture of fixed and growth mindsets, and that mixture continually evolves with experience. A "pure" growth mindset doesn't exist, which we have to acknowledge in order to attain the benefits we seek."*

  -Carol Dweck

An Innovation Mindset requires Experimentation

- An experiment is a structured process that helps us learn what works and what doesn't.

- It is not the only form of learning, but it is essential when seeking solutions to wicked problems.

- Experimentation reduces risk by failing fast and early, allowing for detailed improvements and fine tuning and it is relatively cheap.

An experiment always has these characteristics:

- **Learning** is the priority: creating better intelligence by testing ideas in reality

- **Testing or trialing** a defined idea or hypothesis

- A **structure**: a systematic process that allows learning to happen

- **Timelines**: there are limits or checkpoints set from the start at which results are assessed and decisions made

The capability to innovate varies tremendously between countries

- Governments around the world are using digital technologies to innovate how they operate, share information, make decisions, deliver services, engage and partner with others to solve policy challenges.

- Many countries still face challenges to effectively leverage digital technologies and provide accessible, reliable, fast, personalized, secure and inclusive services to empower people in participatory ways.

- Cross Sector collaboration: allows for partnerships in the design and implementation.

- Public-Private innovation partnerships (PPIs) are increasingly used to innovate public services through new technology.

- NB of partnership design (small and centralized, homogeneous vs large groups –dilemma bet more participatory and ability to make decisions)

- NB high levels of TRUST among participants (Koen Verhoest et al, PAR 2024).

Five Main Principles for Innovation in Public Service Delivery

1. Access

2. Quality

3. Inclusion and Responsiveness

4. People-driven and personalized services

5. Transparency and accountability of service delivery

The innovation process is inherently risky, which requires commitment among partners and willingness to invest time and resources with no guarantee of a successful outcome (Brogaard, 2021 in Verhoest).

Challenges to an Innovative Mindset

- Resistance to Change
- Aversion to Failure
- Challenges to adopting user-centric approaches
- Working collaboratively in a multidisciplinary approach
- Thinking outside the box

Resistance to Change/Thinking outside the box
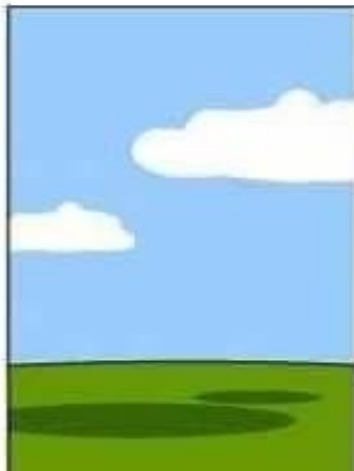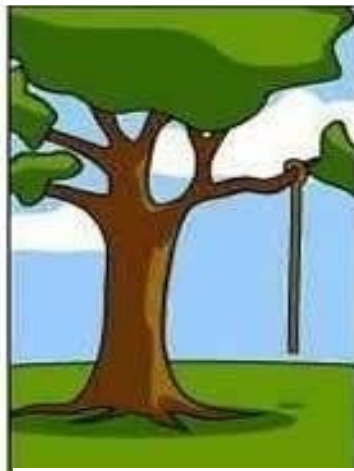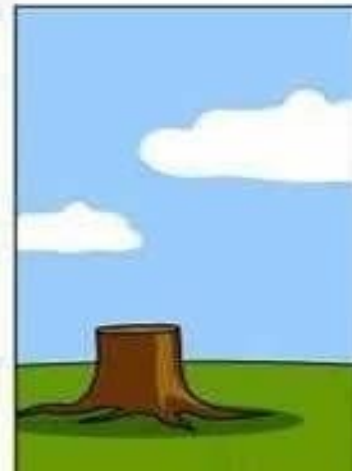
Six Key Steps in Designing a Roadmap for Innovation and Digital Transformation

1. A holistic approach

2. Systems thinking

3. A strategic framework

4. Stakeholder analysis

5. Strategy

6. Action

Enablers for promoting digital skills, innovation and changing mindsets

- Political commitment - **Leadership**

- Support a culture of transformational leadership, investing in HR and changing the mindset of the public sector that allows for continuing training.

- Systemic thinking and synergies that allow complementarity in training policies and their implementation.

- Organizational structures and processes that allow intersectoral, intergovernmental and interdepartmental coordination.

- **Appropriate funding.**

- Appropriate legislation/regulations that support training and promote innovation.

- Involvement and empowerment of all stakeholders.

- Monitoring, reporting and evaluation of processes.

- **Promote a skills-based approach to hiring and promotion**.

A few points on contemporary thinking on leadership

- Good leadership makes a difference.

- Leadership (doing the right things) is different from management (doing things right).

- Leadership is not just about personal charisma or about one person on top of a pyramid - everybody can be a leader.

- Leadership is more about making change happen than it is about managing the status quo.

- Leaders should have a good understanding of their own selves.

Transformational Leadership

" … a leadership approach that **causes change in individuals and social systems**. In its ideal form, **it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders**."

MacGregor Burns (1978) [emphasis & punctuation added]

Transformational Leadership is particularly important for leaders engaging in the implementation of the SDGs.

Transformational Leadership in Public Management

The 2030 Agenda requires **public leaders that embrace values** like collaboration, integration, inclusion, leaving no one behind, partnerships, respect for people and planet, transparency and accountability.

Spearheading the SDGs demands **a transformational leadership mindset** at local, national, regional and global level.

Transformational leaders today must **understand new concepts** – i.e. social innovation, networking, crowdsourcing, big data, disruptive innovation in the public sector, effective communication, the science of persuasion and more.

In addition to strategic vision and planning they need resilience, people-skills, **leading by example and the courage to make a difference**.
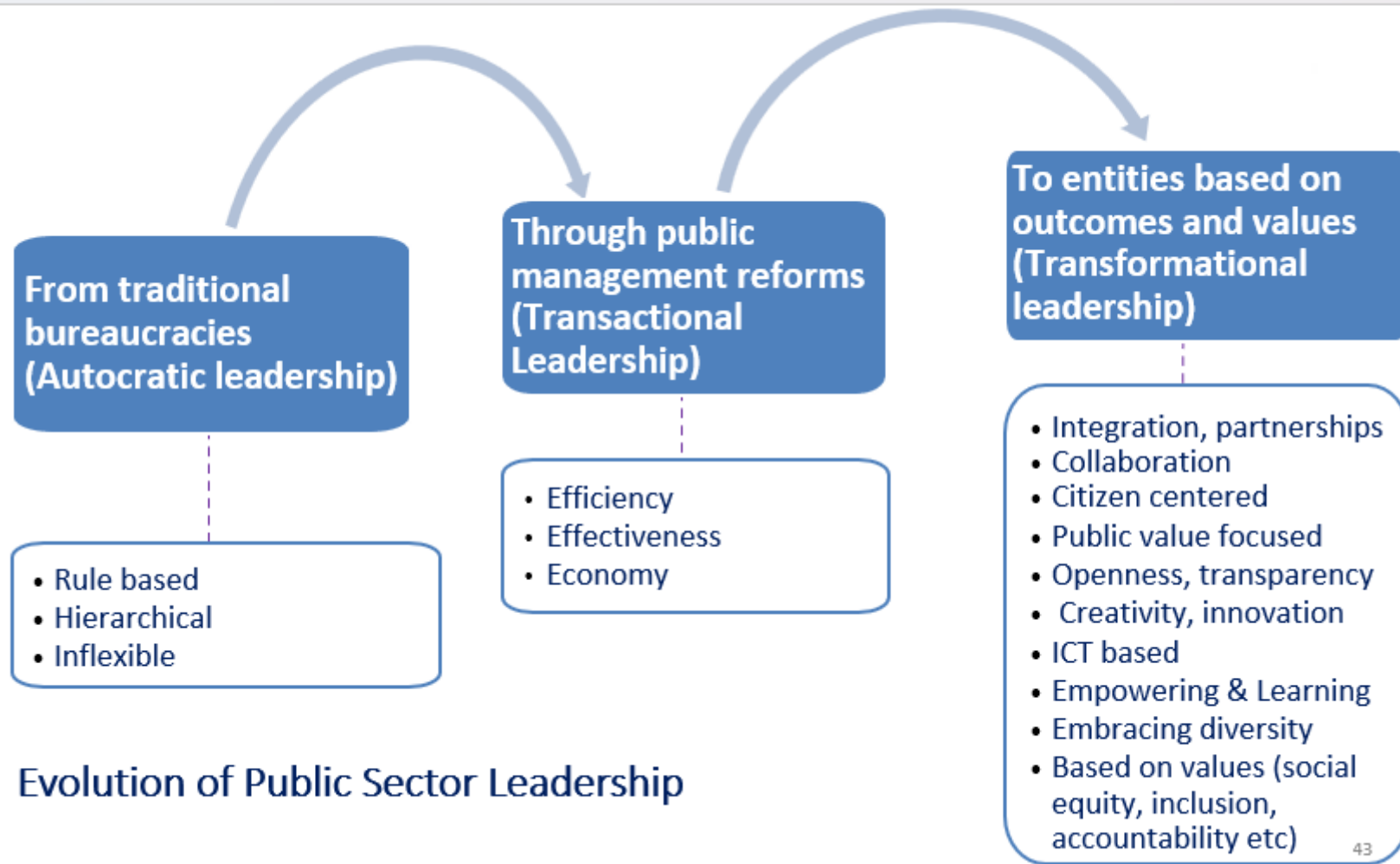
What does Transformational Leadership transform?

Organizations

Institutions

Society

Individuals (mindsets and competencies)

From traditional bureaucracies (Autocratic leadership)

- Rule based
- Hierarchical
- Inflexible

Through public management reforms (Transactional Leadership)

- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Economy

To entities based on outcomes and values (Transformational leadership)

- Integration, partnerships
- Collaboration
- Citizen centered
- Public value focused
- Openness, transparency
- Creativity, innovation
- ICT based
- Empowering & Learning
- Embracing diversity
- Based on values (social equity, inclusion, accountability etc)

Evolution of Public Sector Leadership

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How to encourage learning in your organization

Supportive learning environment	Concrete learning processes and practices	Reinforcing leadership behaviour
Psychological safety: To learn, people cannot fear being belittled or marginalized if they disagree or ask naive questions. They need to feel comfortable.	Learning environment arises from a series of concrete steps and widely distributed activities.	When leaders actively question and listen to employees—prompting dialogue and debate—people feel encouraged to learn.
Appreciation of differences: learning occurs when people become aware of opposing ideas.	It requires the generation, collection, interpretation and dissemination of information. I.e. experiments, intelligence gathering, technological trends, education and training.	If leaders signal the importance of spending time on problem identification, knowledge transfer, and reflective post-audits, these activities are likely to flourish.
Openness to new ideas: Employees should be encouraged to take risks and explore the untested.	Knowledge must be shared across individuals, groups or the whole organization - moving laterally or vertically.	When leaders demonstrate through their own behavior a willingness to entertain alternative points of view, employees feel emboldened to offer new ideas and options.
Time for reflection: when people are overstressed their ability to think analytically and creatively is compromised. They need protected time to do this.		

DESA | Innovation and Digital Government for Public Service Delivery

What are the **top three challenges** in promoting an **innovative mindset** in support of transformational change in public administration?

- Please turn to a person next to you at your table and share in 2 minutes (each).
- Reporting back (5 minutes).