Mindsets (Behavioural Science)

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What's a mindset and why is it important?

At each table, please write on a sticky note:

one word you associate with what a mindset is, as well as your **first name**.

(5 minutes)

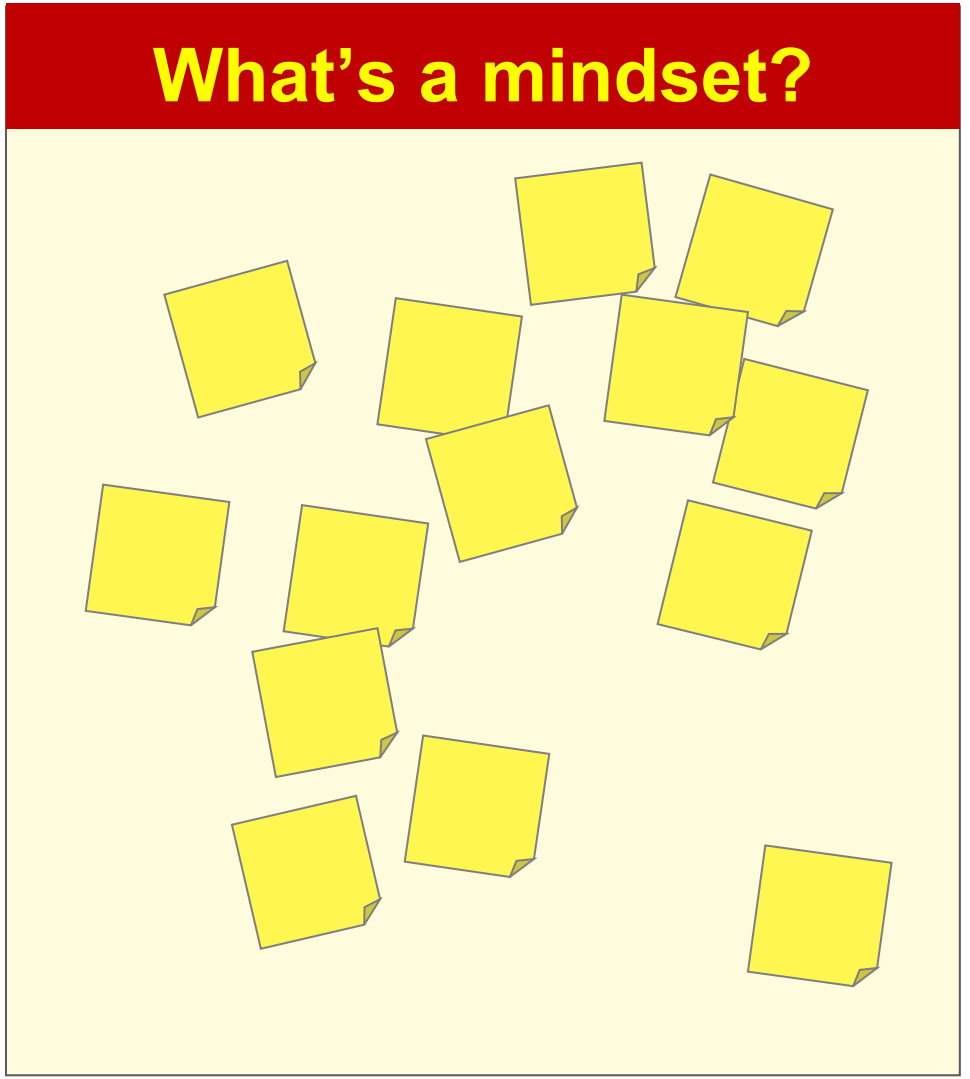

Table 1.1: Definitions of mindsets

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

What is mindset?

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.

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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
Belief	What we hold to be true
Attitudes	A way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior

Personal values (internal)
Institutional values (external)

- How we see the world

- How we interact with the world

Source: Elaboration by the authors

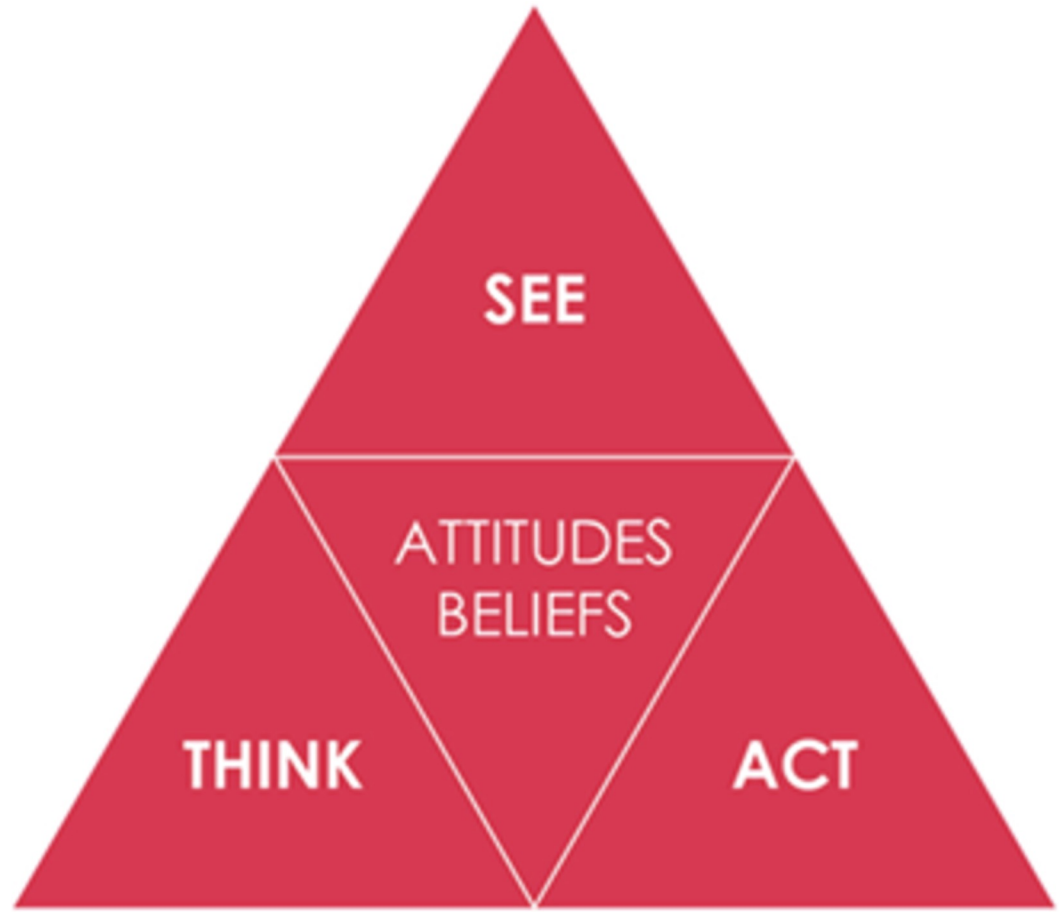
Beliefs and attitudes are influenced by values

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.



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

① 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

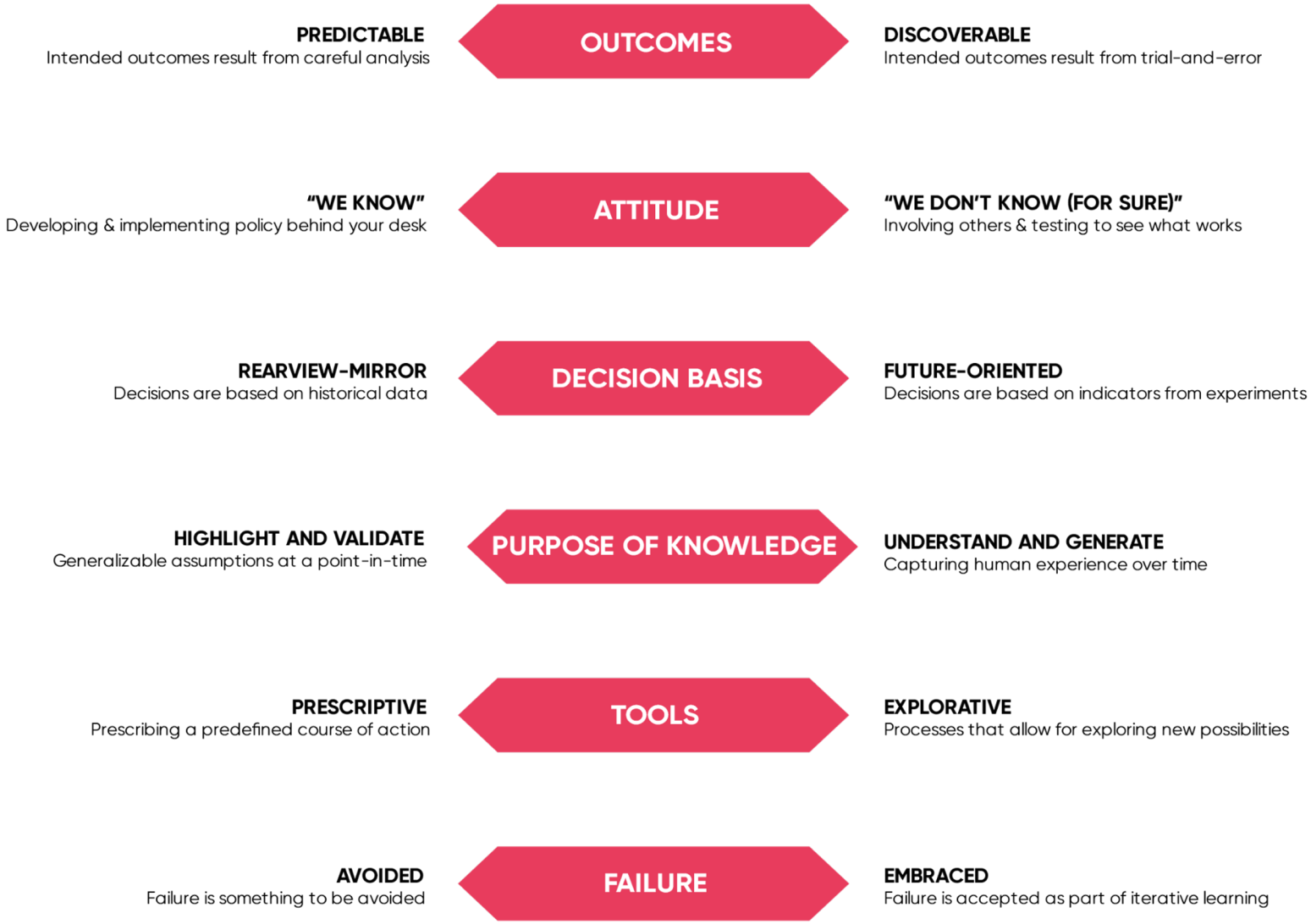
Procedures to solve the problem are unclear, not known, requires trials & error to see what works

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.

Towards culture change in government and public institutions and organisations



New Competencies

aligned to SGD 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.

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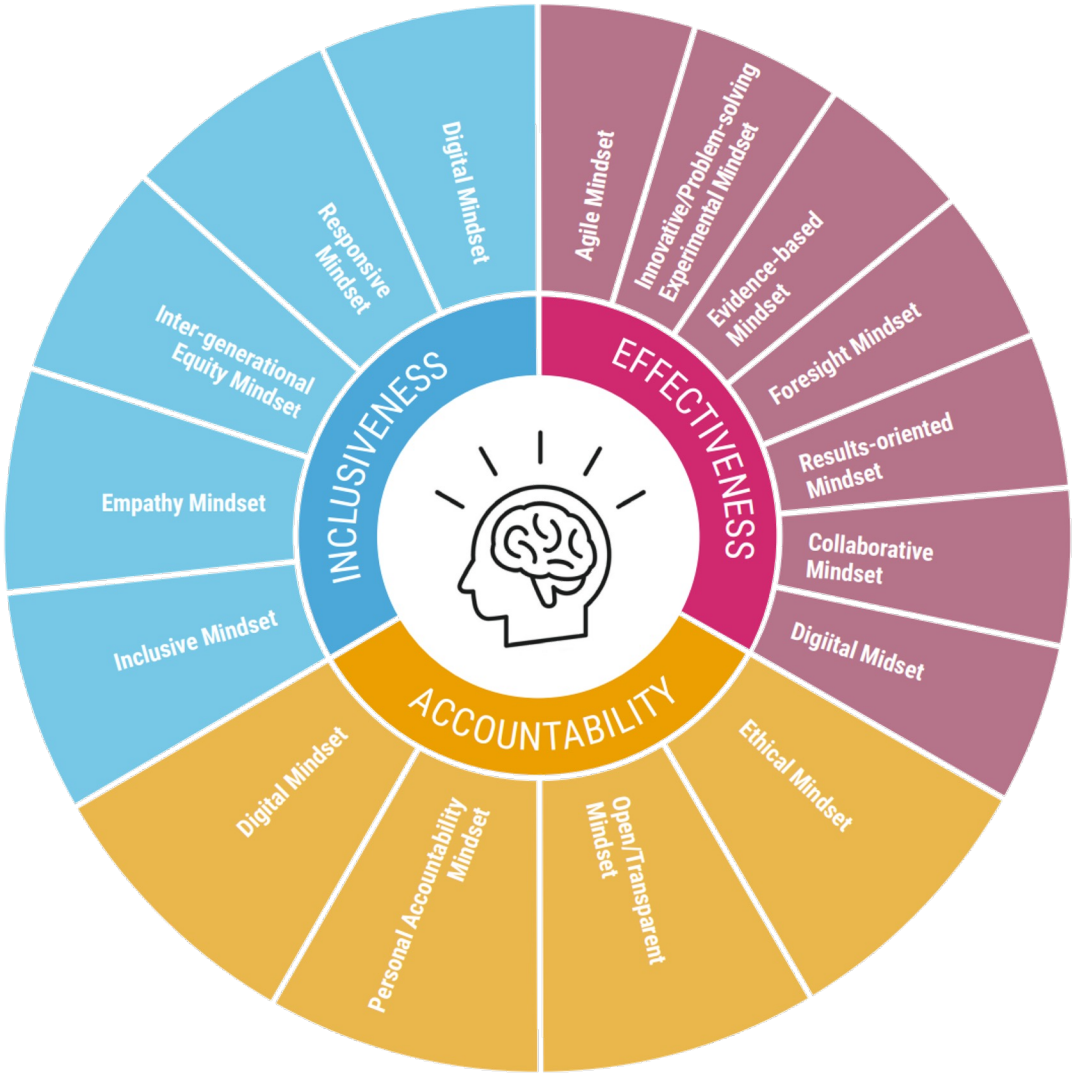
What new capacities, mindsets, and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs?

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 Mindsets 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 MINDSETS IN SUPPORT OF INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY DIALOGUE

PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY MINDSETS IN SUPPORT OF AN ACCOUNTABILITY CULTURE

DIGITAL MINDSETS 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 MINDSETS FOR EMPATHIC AND RESPONSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN SUPPORT OF LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND, NON-DISCRIMINATION, PARTICIPATION, SUBSIDIARITY, AND INTER-GENERATIONAL EQUITY

EMPATHY/RELATIONAL MINDSETS IN SUPPORT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP TO SAFEGUARD PEOPLE, PLANET, AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL

RESPONSIVE MINDSETS FOR PEOPLE-CENTRIC SERVICES WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON VULNERABLE GROUPS

INTER-GENERATIONAL EQUITY MINDSET

DIGITAL MINDSETS FOR A DIGITAL CHANGE

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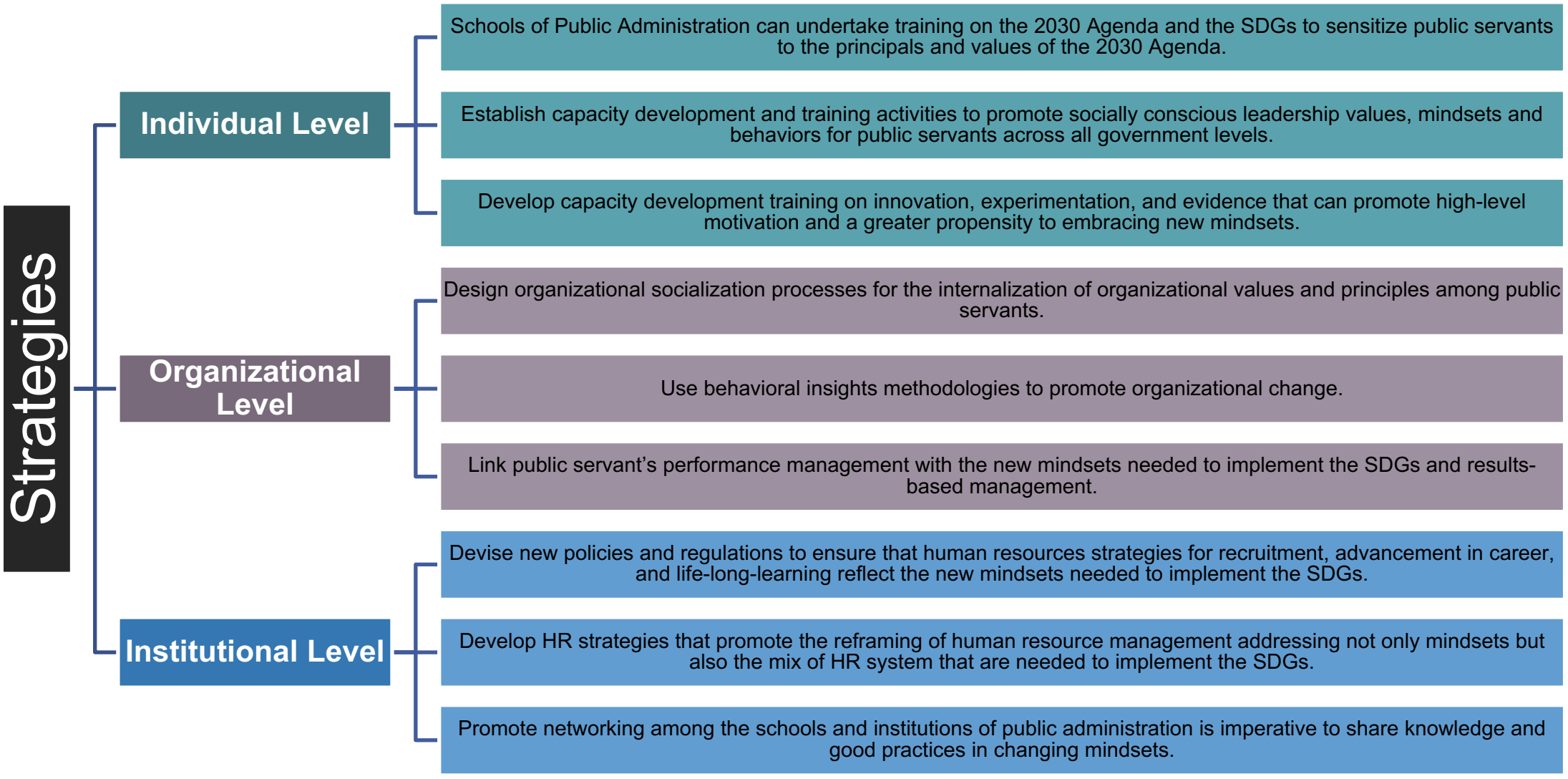
Strategies at the Individual, Organizational and Institutional Levels to Promote a Change in Mindsets



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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

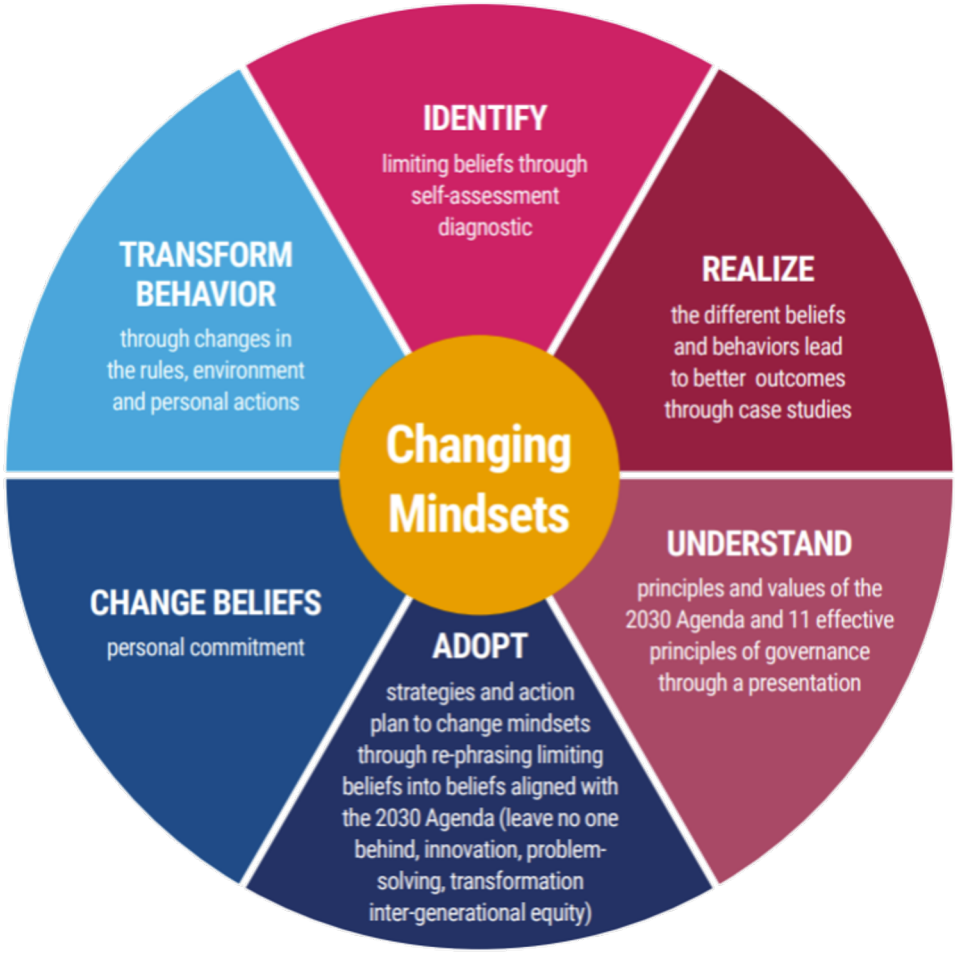
STEP 4: Adopt strategies

STEP 5: Change beliefs

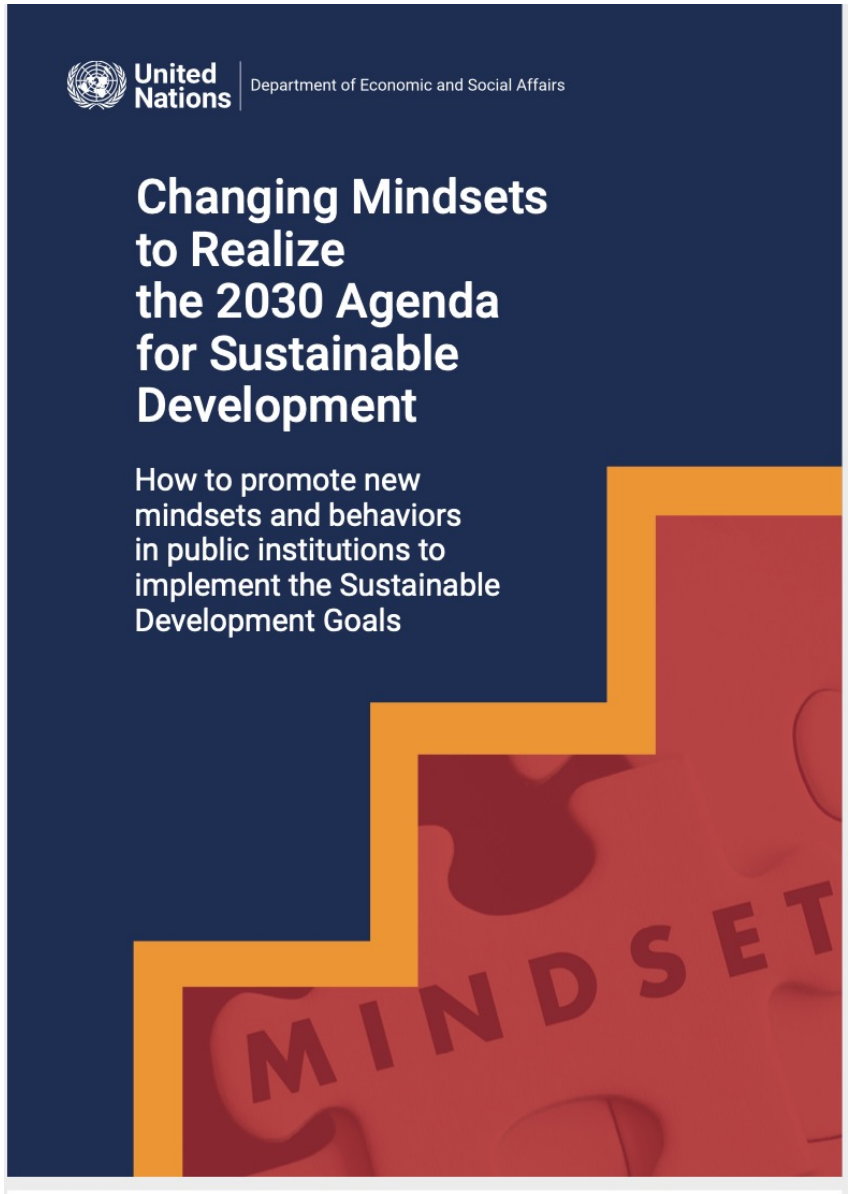
STEP 6: Transforming behaviors

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Pakistan
Bolivia
Guatemala
Ecuador



Changing Mindsets in Public Institutions to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



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