



**United  
Nations**

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

# Changing Mindsets to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

How to promote new  
mindsets and behaviors  
in public institutions to  
implement the Sustainable  
Development Goals

**MINDSET**



Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government

# Changing Mindsets to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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UNITED NATIONS  
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# Executive Summary

## Background

The idea of producing a publication on Changing Mindsets to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was conceived in 2019 as a follow-up to the workshop on “Mobilizing and Equipping Public Servants to Realize the 2030 Agenda”. The workshop brought together worldwide experts on the subject matter of changing mindsets and allowed for insightful discussions with many schools of public administration. It was organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) during the United Nations Public Service Forum in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan.

The publication is intended as a companion document to the Curriculum on Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals and its Toolkit on Changing Mindsets in Public Institutions to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development developed by UN DESA, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG). UN DESA/DPIDG’s mission is to support governments in strengthening their capacities to translate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other internationally agreed goals into institutional arrangements, strategies, and programmes for effective service delivery and participatory, accountable, and inclusive decision-making processes.

To facilitate the mainstreaming of the SDGs in the curricula of the schools of public administration, and promote knowledge sharing among these schools, DPIDG has established in 2017 the Global Initiative on Governance for the SDGs to equip public servants with the capacities to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Global Initiative was officially launched during the 2018 UN Public Service Forum in Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco. It aims to bring into collaboration the directors and trainers from schools, civil service colleges, and similar training institutions to set the foundation for a holistic, participatory and action-oriented learning system, which is essential for generating positive change in the public service and for promoting sustainable development. The Global Initiative also aims at developing the capacities of governments and public servants (in terms of mindsets, knowledge, skills, and leadership competences) to support the implementation of the SDGs, provide data and information about development of national and local governments’ capacities across the world; and support institutional capacity development for improved public service delivery. Finally, the Initiative facilitates North-South and South-South exchange of policy ideas, methodologies and effective governance practices to ensure cross-fertilization and mutual learning.

## Scope of the publication

This publication aims to support countries in building their capacities to realize Agenda 2030. It does so by providing key recommendations on how to promote public servants’ mindsets, competencies, and behaviors to foster effectiveness, accountability, and inclusiveness in the public sector.

## Structure

The publication is divided into two parts. Part I (Chapters 1 to 10) examines key concepts related to changing mindsets. It offers strategies, approaches and tools that can facilitate a change in public servants’ mindsets and behaviors. Part II (Chapters 11 to 15) of the publication provides a regional perspective of what schools of public administration are doing to promote new mindsets and behaviors to achieve the SDGs. It features opportunities, approaches, and accelerators for developing capacities and promoting change in public service.

## Overview of the Chapters

One of the most critical issues related to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is how to translate its principles and aspirations into practice. Raising awareness and building the capacity of public servants is of paramount importance to close this gap. However, while much attention in capacity development efforts has been given to changes in rules, structures, processes, and how to leverage technologies, less attention is given to the issue of changing public servants’ mindsets and behaviors. Yet, realizing the SDGs in a holistic manner, meeting the demands of highly interconnected and fast evolving global challenges, and ensuring the well-being of all, particularly those furthest left behind, requires that public servants have a new set not only of capacities but also mindsets and competencies that allow public administration systems to be fit for purpose.

With nine years remaining to achieve the 2030 Agenda and faced with the challenge to effectively recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, governments need to work with a sense of urgency and rethink their policies and institutions to deliver quality services for all and create the conditions for more prosperous and equitable societies. As highlighted by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) in 2021, it is essential that governments give high priority to developing the right mindsets, capacities, and skills for mainstreaming and implementing the SDGs. Indeed, no meaningful government

transformation can happen without a change in public servants' mindsets, competencies, and behaviors, as illustrated throughout this publication.

Chapters 1 to 6 provide an overview of why changing mindsets in the public sector is critical to advancing the implementation of Agenda 2030 and how it can be accomplished. The Chapters also shed light on the critical role of internalization of principles and values by public servants. They underscore some of the key mindsets needed to advance the SDGs. In particular, Chapter 1 examines what new capacities, mindsets, and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs. It also highlights strategies that can help to change public servants' mindsets for institutional effectiveness. Chapter 2 examines in detail the imperatives of an SDGs-oriented mindset. It introduces the concept of Socially Conscious Leadership (SCL) values and explains how building the capacities of change-agents in SCL values is central to the realization of the SDGs. Chapter 3 argues that strategic intelligence is a critical component of agile governance and mindsets. An agile mindset in public service is needed to effectively address current socio-economic and environmental challenges, which are characterized by accelerating interdependence, velocity, and complexity. Chapter 4 examines why problem-solving learning is critical for changing public servants' mindsets to implement the SDGs. It highlights the need for an experimental mindset in the public service and an enabling environment that allows for risk-taking and innovation. Chapter 5 examines what an "evidence-based mindset" of public servants is and why it is essential to ensuring that rigorous evidence is applied to the policy design process. It also offers effective strategies on how to promote an evidence-based mindset within a bureaucracy. Chapter 6 highlights the importance of having an inclusive mindset to implement the SDGs to ensure that no one is left behind. It underlines challenges in cultivating values and behaviors of inclusiveness in the public sector and introduces key strategies and approaches to developing an inclusive mindset.

Chapters 7 to 10 provide an overview of what changes can be implemented at the organizational level to trigger change in the public sector. In particular, Chapter 7 underscores how behavioral science can and should be leveraged by public sector organizations to change and design environments that enable employees to follow through with their good intentions and to be their "best selves" at work. It offers several examples and strategies that can be used to accomplish this goal. Chapter 8 highlights the importance of institutional culture in orienting and transforming organizations. It explains why behavioral

insights can be applied to changing organizational culture, and how public sector organizations can use behavioral insights to advance the SDGs. Chapter 9 underlines the importance of shifting human resources practices from being transactional to being more strategic. It also examines how to attract the best talent in the public sector, and how to motivate them once they join the public service. Chapter 10 outlines how the mindsets of public servants are linked to the performance of public sector organizations, and how performance appraisals can contribute to that. Creating a higher-performing public sector is essential in attaining the 2030 Agenda. Performance appraisals can play an essential role in changing the mindsets of public officials, identifying, and strengthening weaknesses in their capabilities, and increasing the performance of public sector organizations.

Chapter 11 outlines the strategies that governments in Africa have deliberately designed regarding capacity development approaches to transform their public services. Chapter 12 reflects on how the Arab region is promoting new competencies and skills required to achieve Agenda 2030. Chapter 13 highlights why schools of public administration in Asia and the Pacific play a major role in developing the capacities of public servants and are helping to change their mindsets for SDGs implementation. Chapter 14 presents challenges and ways forward to integrate the SDGs into public administration curricula in Europe. Chapter 15 underlines the work that the Latin American Center for Development Administration (CLAD) is doing to formulate specific proposals around the 2030 Agenda, including an Ibero-American Charter on Innovation in Public Management, the Ibero-American Governance Index, and training courses related to transformational leadership, changing in mindsets and behaviors, and digital transformation.



# **PART I**

## **Strategies and Approaches at the Individual, Organizational and Institutional Levels to Change Mindsets and Behaviors**

## CHAPTER 1

# **New Mindsets, Capacities and Competencies in the Public Sector to Promote Effective Governance for Sustainable Development**

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No progress can be made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) without good governance and effective, inclusive, and accountable institutions at all levels since most of the goals are related to public services. However, promoting effective institutions involves more than formal changes to rules and structures. It requires, above all, new mindsets, capacities and competencies to ensure that the 2030 Agenda's principles<sup>1</sup> and values guide public servants' behaviors and actions in delivering services and spearheading programmes to improve the quality of life of all people. A holistic strategy that triggers public servants' new mindsets and behaviors is thus essential to ensure government transformation and innovation in service delivery, leaving no one behind and promoting inter-generational equity.

This chapter examines the critical role of effective governance for sustainable development and the need for new mindsets, capacities and competencies in the public sector. It highlights what a mindset is and why it is essential to change mindsets to ensure institutional effectiveness. The chapter then analyzes what new mindsets, capacities and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs; and what strategies can promote a change in public servants' mindsets and behaviors for institutional effectiveness. It concludes with a set of key recommendations.

## 1

## The critical role of effective governance for sustainable development and the need for new mindsets

Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the need for effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions, which are critical to delivering on all the 17 SDGs and the commitments made by United Nations Member States in the 2030 Agenda. The latter is an "aspirational plan of action for people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership—the "five Ps" that shifts the world onto a sustainable and resilient path for global development"<sup>2</sup> over the next nine years. Safeguarding the environment for present and future generations and ensuring that no one is left behind requires a strong role of the State in regulating public goods, such as the environment, and in redistributing opportunities and resources, working together with other stakeholders. The 2030 Agenda also calls for enhanced peace and partnerships, which require innovative approaches in the way societal actors cooperate.

The centrality of effective institutions in delivering services and promoting social protection programmes has strongly come to light during the COVID-19 pandemic when citizens have turned to the state and its institutions for leadership and unified action<sup>3</sup>.

Indeed, a strong emphasis is needed on leadership by example as a means of setting both the tone and the standards of behaviour. A demonstrated genuine and authentic leadership is critical to guide a mindset change (See Chapter 2). Political and administrative leadership plays a critical role in advocating and putting in practice the values underpinning the new/revamped institutions to implement the SDGs. The mindsets and behaviours of leaders are a major factor in affecting the quality of institutions. Leaders must behave in line with impersonal rules that have been legally established and act according to the public interest. Also, creating and maintaining an organizational climate and culture based on ethics and values is essential to the principle of transparency<sup>4</sup> which promotes people's trust in government.

The current pandemic has challenged "government as usual" and calls for a governance paradigm shift based on a new social contract that values solidarity, social inclusion, and respect for the environment. Government transformation and effective institutions entail rethinking the principles and values upon which our societies are built in line with the 2030 Agenda.

To help the United Nations Member States build effective institutions, the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration has elaborated 11 Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development (see Chapter 14). The United Nations Economic and Social Council adopted these principles in 2018.<sup>5</sup> The 11 Principles are clustered around three main areas: effectiveness, accountability, and inclusiveness, in line with Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda. The principles are accompanied by a selection of commonly used strategies and related practices. In particular, Principle 1 underscores the importance of competence and the need for institutions to have sufficient expertise, resources, and tools to deal adequately with the mandates under their authority. Commonly used strategies associated with the principle of competence include promoting a professional public sector workforce, strategic human resources management, leadership development and training of civil servants, performance management, results-based management, financial management and control, efficient and fair revenue administration, and investment in e-government. Many of these issues are covered in this publication.

Implementing the SDGs and turning the 11 Principles of Effective Governance from concept into practice present countries with new governance challenges. Transforming governance in support of the SDGs involves a human component and intangible elements, i.e., principles and values, beliefs and attitudes, capacities and behaviors. However, "many countries might not be prepared to implement the Goals at the desired scale and speed because of a general undervaluing of the public sector in economic theories of past decades and a disregard for the contribution the sector can make to society when equipped with adequate capacity and the appropriate skills and mindsets" (CEPA, 2020).

New mindsets and a holistic approach to capacity development, encompassing changes at the individual, organizational, institutional, and societal levels, are needed to guide behaviors, as highlighted throughout this publication. Before examining why a change in mindset is required for the public sector to realize Agenda 2030, it is crucial to understand what a mindset is.

## 2

## What is a mindset?

The definition of mindset finds its roots in different disciplines ranging from anthropology to psychology, sociology, and statistics (see Table 1.1). Generally, **a mindset consists of beliefs and attitudes that a person has assimilated throughout a lifetime about themselves and the world around them** (worldview). Mindsets affect the way we think, see (frame reality) and act.<sup>6</sup> Mindsets are important because they shape the way people behave, i.e., how they act or conduct themselves, especially towards others. According to Dweck (1986), our mindsets play a massive role in the way we think something is possible and, in the actions, we believe are available and purposeful to take. In other words, mindsets comprise the attitudes and beliefs, worldview, and self-perception that matter for individuals as psychological factors governing how choices are made and habits are formed. These include value-based, motivational, or non-cognitive factors that can matter even more than cognitive factors for day-to-day decision-making.<sup>7</sup>

A key question then is: what are beliefs and attitudes? **A belief is what we hold to be true**<sup>8</sup>. It is a conviction that not necessarily corresponds to reality that, however, influences a person's interpretation of and response to events. It refers to "the attitude we have, roughly, whenever we take something to be the case or regard it as true"<sup>9</sup>. Beliefs come from several sources and life experiences, as outlined in Chapter 2. For example, a belief can be: "we live in a friendly world" or "we live in a hostile world." Likewise, a belief can be that "anything is possible versus everything is

difficult" (Dweck, 2007). Attitudes are "a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior"<sup>10</sup>.

*Attitudes shape how we interact with the world based on how we see the world. So, while beliefs are in essence about how we see the world, attitudes are about how we interact with the world.<sup>11</sup>*

Beliefs and attitudes, in turn, are influenced by values. Values are prescriptions for being<sup>12</sup> and contain an ethical dimension. Values are what we deem to be important, for example loyalty, commitment, honesty, social justice, among others. They guide beliefs and attitudes, which shape the way we behave. It is important to distinguish between personal values (internal) and institutional ones (external) since their alignment is essential for institutional effectiveness, as highlighted in section 3 of this chapter.<sup>13</sup> Finally, we should distinguish values from principles. Principles are external, and universal. They are a "fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning"<sup>14</sup> (See table 1.2).



**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

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

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Principles</b> | Propositions that are a guide for behaviors   |
| <b>Values</b>     | Prescriptions for being <sup>15</sup> which contain an ethical dimension  |
| <b>Belief</b>     | What we hold to be true   |
| <b>Attitudes</b>  | A way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person’s behavior |

Source: Elaboration by the authors

## 3

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

Public servants are the key drivers of change in public sector organizations. Public institutions or organizations do not bring about change. Public servants do. One of the most significant challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda is to ensure that the new/revamped institutions established to implement the SDGs are effective, i.e., that they achieve the goals for which they were set up, such as poverty eradication, food security, and climate change. The latter requires an understanding of what institutions are, how institutional change occurs and what its key dimensions are.

### Understanding the nature of institutions and institutional change

Much debate and ample literature exist on what needs to be done to strengthen institutions for sustainable development. However, little attention is given to how it can be achieved in practice. Understanding what institutions are and how institutional change occurs is essential to considering why changing mindsets is critical for institutional effectiveness. Institutions are "regularized patterns of interaction that are known, practiced, and regularly accepted (if not necessarily normatively approved) by given social agents who, by virtue of those characteristics, expect to continue interacting under the rules and norms formally or informally embodied in those patterns" (O'Donnell, 1995: page 5). Institutions are both social constructs aimed at solving problems and performing specific functions and the arenas within which human behavior is given meaning, and social identities are forged (Douglas, 1986). Institutions create order and reduce uncertainty in society. Not only do institutions provide the framework for political, economic, and social interaction - i.e., the rules of the game that define how different actors should behave in pursuing their interests (North, 1990), they also underlie the values and beliefs that shape behavior. By supporting and restraining individual decisions and actions and socializing values, they mold patterns of behavior and give meaning to individuals' lives. It is important to note that institutions are different from organizations, which are groups of people unified by the pursuit of a common goal<sup>16</sup>.

An essential characteristic of institutions is that they have a dual nature. That is to say, an institution is composed of a visible part constituted by its formal rules and structures and a hidden part that is constituted by the underlying value-system that informs behaviors and is consolidated through time. In other words, institutions are formed by formal rules that prescribe specific behaviors and underlying values and belief systems. In this

respect, institutions are the carriers of history in that they inherit the past's institutional legacy. The latter refers not to its formal rules but rather to the value-system, which underlies behavior. Effective institutions are strong institutions that depend on the degree to which actors internalize institutional beliefs and values and can deliver on results<sup>17</sup>. Only when public servants are able to translate formal prescriptions into actual behavior can an institution be considered immune from undue external influences and able to achieve its results.<sup>18</sup>

*Thus, 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.*

Change is possible, but past behaviors and beliefs cannot be ignored and should always be taken into consideration when embarking on institutional reforms.

Whether institutions are effective in advancing the SDGs depends, in large part, on whether the underlying principles and values of the 2030 Agenda are embedded in the new/updated institutional arrangements adopted by countries and whether public servants internalize them. In other words, aligning the 2030 Agenda principles of integration, inter-generational equity, and leaving no one behind with the personal values, belief systems, and behaviors of public servants is crucial to promote effective governance for sustainable development. A holistic approach to strengthening institutions is necessary for effective mindset change to occur (i.e., policies, systems, structures, strategies, dynamic processes, staffing capacity/capability, leadership style, among others).

### Why a change in mindsets and behaviors is critical to promoting effective institutions

Changing the visible part of an institution, i.e., its formal rules, is relatively easy, whereas changing the hidden part of an

**Figure 1.1. The nature of institutions**

Source: Elaboration by the author: Adriana Alberti, 2017

institution, i.e., its underlying beliefs, consolidated behaviors and codes of conduct, and informal constraints, is much more difficult. The latter explains, in part, why so many attempts at steering institutions in a specific direction do not always produce the expected results. Changing mindsets and behaviors is a complex matter. "It is easiest to amend the law, it is more difficult to transform institutions, and it is most difficult to change people's mentality and habits" (Regulski, J., 2003). Also, what people say they believe in and how they behave is not always congruent (see Chapter 7). According to Argyris, "people have a propensity to hold inconsistent thoughts and actions" (Argyris, p. 10, 2008). Change is also made difficult because of confirmation bias, i.e., searching for information that confirms our pre-existing beliefs (see Chapters 6 and 7). Another challenge is related to the fact that people are not always aware of how their

beliefs influence their behavior. As a result, the traditional form of training, aimed at imparting knowledge and skills, has often not produced the expected change in public servants' behavior. The latter can be explained, in part, because the type of change needed is at a much deeper level, including personal values, thoughts, and emotions.

Institutional change includes changes in mindsets, behaviors, organizational culture and rules and normative frameworks, which are articulated across two levels: individual/ internal (invisible) vs. collective/ external (visible) (see Table 1.3). These dimensions of change relate to a comprehensive, systemic, and integral approach to institutional change which helps generate a comprehensive understanding of how each dimension is deeply related to and influenced by the others.

**Table 1.3: Dimensions of effective institutional change**

|            | Internal   | External   |
|------------|--|--|
| Individual | <p><b>Mindset</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beliefs</li> <li>Worldviews</li> <li>Attitudes</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Behavior</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions and Habits</li> <li>Skills</li> <li>Communication</li> <li>Relational</li> </ul> |
| Collective | <p><b>Organizational Culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared Values</li> <li>Shared Purpose</li> <li>Social Norms</li> <li>Symbols</li> <li>History</li> </ul> | <p><b>Rules and Normative Frameworks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structures</li> <li>Processes</li> <li>Strategies</li> </ul>       |

Source: Authors' adaptation from Ken Wilber, 2021

**Mindsets** – The upper left quadrant is related to the dimension of mindsets, which includes beliefs and attitudes, which are influenced by values. This dimension is subjective and individual. Mindsets shape behavior, including habits, communication and the way people relate to one another, as shown in the upper right quadrant.

**Organizational culture** – The lower left quadrant is related to collective and organizational cultural aspects. Organizational culture is a set of values, and methods of interaction that contribute to the creation of the typical environment of an organization. Schein defines organizational culture "(a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." Organizations do not adopt a culture in a single day and in fact learn from past experiences and start practicing it every day thus forming the culture of the workplace<sup>19</sup>. Organizational culture change and change management are critical aspects of institutional transformation. Chapters 7 and 8 provide examples of how changes in the environment and organizational culture can promote changes in public servants' behaviors.

**Behaviors** – The right upper quadrant refers to people's behaviors, which is extremely important for any meaningful change and

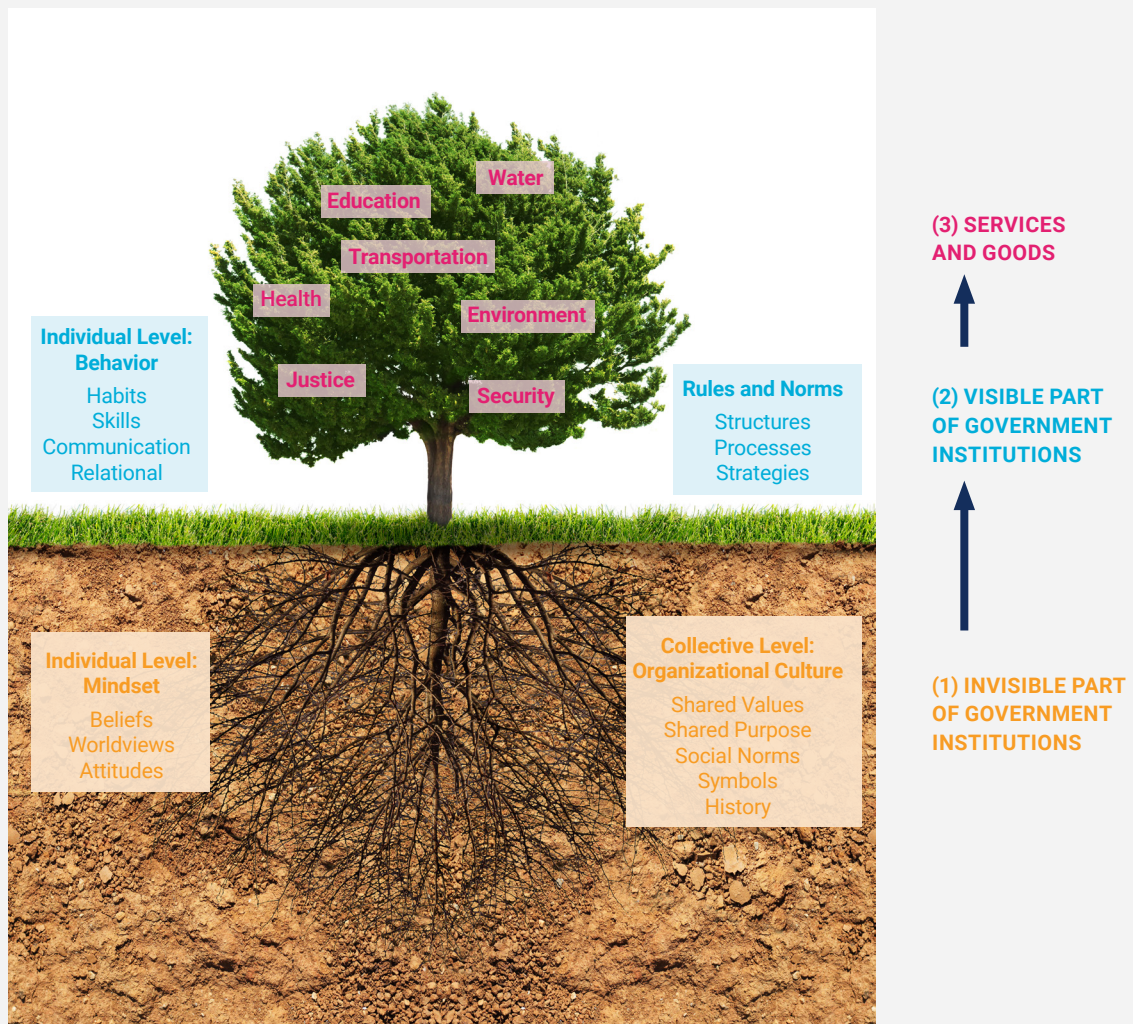
impact. Behavior refers to the way in which a person acts or conducts him/herself, especially towards others. Behavioral attributes (competencies) are made up of knowledge, motives, habits, and skills. "What most organizations typically overlook is the internal shift – what people think and feel – which has to occur to bring any strategy to life. This is where resistance tends to arise – cognitively in the form of fixed beliefs, deeply held assumptions and blind spots; and emotionally, in the form of the fear and insecurity that change engenders" (Schwarz, 2018). Behaviors in an organization are the result of individual mindsets and the impact of its culture and rules and systems, which define how different actors should behave in pursuing their interests.

**Rules and normative frameworks** – The lower right quadrant refers to rules and norms, which covers the external and collective institutional aspects. It refers to rules and norms that define structures, processes, and agreements (the visible part of institutional transformation), which are the building blocks of any bureaucratic organization. Rules and normative frameworks should be designed following the prescriptions of values. They structure choices and direct behavior. They also formalize public institutions' organizational structures and actions. "Organizational structures are an extrinsic factor which influence people's behavior from the outside" (Janićijević, 2013). For example, parliaments as an institution are based on rules regarding its organization and procedures and serve to represent the preferences of citizens through the design and enactment of legislation for their realization.

In synthesis, it is crucial to promote strategies and approaches that address all four dimensions to ensure effective institutional change, i.e., both individual and collective dimensions of change. Strategic communication in public sector organizations is essential to take account of previous failed change attempts and promote effective change. Strategies are also needed to align individual values and mindsets (beliefs, worldviews, and attitudes) and

organizational culture with institutional values and normative frameworks to ensure desired behavior. Based on the above, and as shown in Figure 1.2., realizing the 2030 Agenda and promoting effective public services requires public institutions' transformation in terms of a change in both invisible (internal) and visible dimensions of institutions, i.e., rules, structures, systems, public servants' mindsets, and behaviors, and organizational culture and environment.

**Figure 1.2: Aligning internal with external dimensions of institutional change**



## 4

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

The 2030 Agenda global commitment to poverty eradication, inter-generational equity, and leaving no one behind as well as the interdependencies among the SDGs and targets require transformative approaches in public administration. Given the broad scope of the SDGs, it is clear that to achieve results and promote effectiveness, inclusiveness, and accountability, public servants will need to acquire new mindsets, capacities, and competencies.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)<sup>20</sup> defines **capacity** as “the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole **to manage their affairs successfully**,” and capacity development as “the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt, and maintain capacity over time.”<sup>21</sup> Capacities at these three levels relate to, inter alia: **Individual**—improving individual skills, knowledge and performance through training, experiences, motivation and incentives; **Organizational**—improving organizational performance through strategies, plans, rules and regulations, partnerships, leadership, organizational politics and power structures, and; **Institutional and Enabling Environment**— designing and or strengthening governance rules, systems, processes, and roles and responsibilities, improving policy frameworks to address economic, political, environmental and social factors, among others<sup>22</sup>. At its essence, capacity is the ability to achieve intended development results through desired change.

Governments need the capacity to promote policy coherence, innovation, transparency and accountability, risk informed policies and digital government, among others. Capacities to enhance institutional coherence are indeed needed to create a whole of government and whole of society approach. Transparency and accountability in government are critical to enable people and civil society to hold governments to account. Moreover,

transforming mindsets to adopt ethical standards for public servants is essential to upholding good governance and anti-corruption behaviors. Innovation in government and availability of new, digital technologies can help public organizations achieve significant improvement in the delivery of public services as well as to solve “wicked” problems and deliver new services. Also, building capacities to spearhead innovations and utilize Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and key frontier technologies in government are critical to drive disaster risk reduction and resilience<sup>23</sup>.

**New mindsets** among politicians and public servants, i.e., beliefs and attitudes, are required to turn into action the key principles of the 2030 Agenda and the 11 Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development.<sup>24</sup> For example, to translate the 2030 Agenda principle of protecting the “planet” into action, a mindset change is required among public servants and society to manage natural resources. Suppose we want to revert or prevent further environmental degradation. People’s beliefs and attitudes towards the environment must then change from seeing the environment as an infinite resource to be overexploited to a limited resource to be protected and safeguarded.

Mindsets must go in hand in hand with **new competencies**, which call for specific knowledge, skills, and attributes. In this respect, governments may need to make urgent investments in retooling public services and equipping civil servants with new knowledge, skills, and competencies (CEPA, 2018). A **competency** should result in essential behaviors from the application of a set of theoretical knowledge and of technical and practical skills expected from those working for an organization”. The new competencies in the public sector should be aligned with the mindsets required to implement the SDGs.

### Box 1.1: UN DESA’s Competency framework for public servants to achieve the SDGs

*In its work of developing a competency framework for public servants to achieve the SDGs, UN DESA, in collaboration with schools of public administration (Table 1.4), has identified key mindsets and associated competencies as critical to moving forward with the realization of the SDGs. They are forward-looking and describe officials’ skills and attributes to build a new organizational culture and meet future challenges.*

*The competencies proposed in the UN DESA competency framework are designed to advance the achievement of all 17 Goals and 169 Targets of the 2030 Agenda. The framework helps to identify competencies that entail specific behaviors. Supporting mindset change calls for a practical focus on concrete behaviors associated with specific competencies that can function as vehicles for in-practice learning. Changing mindsets by doing and solving complex problems is a valuable approach. Playing out scenarios to do things differently and rehearsing what new behaviors would be like can bring about change in mindsets (see Chapter 4). UN DESA’s competency framework is framed around the principles of the 2030 Agenda and the Principles of Effective Governance.*

## Mindsets, and competencies for institutional effectiveness

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 (see Chapter 3)
- **Collaborative Mindset** for better coordination, integration, and dialogue
- **Innovative/Problem-Solving or Experimental Mindset** for innovation and critical thinking in support of transformation and competence (see Chapter 4)
- **Evidence-based Mindset** in support of sound policymaking (see Chapter 5)
- **Results-oriented Mindset** for transformative action in support of competence
- **Foresight Mindset** for long-term planning and sound policymaking

An **agile mindset** is essential for promoting **systems-thinking** and **strategic intelligence** in support of the principle of integration and collaboration. This mindset is also vital to understanding the context in which an issue emerges, to respond to unexpected circumstances and to unlearn and relearn quickly. An agile mindset is also needed for integrated planning to ensure that inter-linkages and trade-offs underlying the SDGs are properly addressed and development results are achieved.

A **collaborative mindset** allows public servants to understand and work together towards resolving problems of public interest. Institutions at all levels of government and in all sectors should work together towards the same end, purpose and effect. By developing a collaborative mindset, public servants are better prepared to develop a skillset that focuses on **coordination, integration, and dialogue** across teams, levels of government, and functional areas. Public servants will be able to build **multi-stakeholder partnerships** by bringing together a range of partners with the opportunity to interact, learn from others, and collectively help strive to achieve the same goals.

An innovative/ problem-solving **experimental mindset** is critical to learn through experience. Given the complexity and uncertainty surrounding many public challenges related to the implementation of the SDGs, institutions will need to work in a more experimental way. This will require larger number of structural, learning-oriented and institutional interventions over time. This approach involves managing intricate tensions and dynamics between opposing mindsets, competencies and behaviors. This complex scenario requires ongoing judgment and the ability to combine multiple different mindsets and competencies at the same time<sup>25</sup>.

An **evidence-based mindset** is needed to perceive the importance of grounding decision-making on proven evidence. In addition, governments' capacity to track progress in the implementation of the SDGs and collect, analyse, and use disaggregated data, particularly for vulnerable groups, will also be essential.

A **results-oriented mindset** for transformative action in support of competence is critical for transformative action in support of a competent public administration. With a results-oriented mindset, public servants will be able to perceive and manage outputs and outcomes towards agreed results that bring value to people.

A **foresight mindset** for long-term planning will help identify strategic issues, foreseeing opportunities, and risks. A foresight mindset includes short and long-term planning, proactivity and risk-management competencies. Foresight requires that public servants are able to envisage various policy scenarios, adopt medium and long-term plans, and have the capacity to anticipate challenges before they arise. Indeed, public servants need to be able to develop clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies such as the 2030 Agenda and specific SDG targets as they relate to current national and institutional plans and procedures. They need to ensure anticipatory, flexible and action-oriented behaviors to implement potential solutions and address challenges. Finally, they need to identify and assess issues and risks and create a plan that allows to contain or control those identified and their consequences.

A **digital mindset** is needed to embrace change by leveraging new technologies. A digital mindset is not just the ability to use technology, but it is a set of behaviors and attitudes; it is a change of public institutions' capacities needed to keep abreast of technological developments and understand the applicability (benefits and risks) of digital technologies to solve complex problems. Digital government transformation requires new competencies, reorganization of work, and continuous training<sup>26</sup>. Likewise, it will be essential to integrate online and offline communication, so public servants will need to be conversant with different communication channels. Digital skills and access to infrastructure and Internet connection are indispensable to close the digital divide.

## Mindsets, and competencies to promote institutional accountability

Institutional accountability is based on the principles of integrity, transparency and independent oversight. Strengthened accountability mechanisms are essential to ensure that the new global commitments are credible and honoured in practice and that they improve the lives of all people. Ensuring an accountability-driven culture and capacities means that public institutions invest in promoting:

- **Ethical Mindsets** in support of values and beliefs based on sound moral principles
- **Open/Transparent Mindsets** in support of integrity and transparency

- **Personal Accountability Mindsets** in support of an accountability culture
- **Digital Mindsets** for a digital change (see the description in the paragraph of institutional effectiveness)

An **ethical mindset** is needed to perceive the importance of ethics, and orient values, and beliefs upon sound moral principles. The implementation of the SDGs requires high standards of ethical behavior among politicians and public servants to promote transparency and prevent corruption.

An **open mindset** is needed to ensure free access to public information through opening up government data, which requires new skillsets in data mining and analytics. Having an open mindset will also help build trust, engagement, commitment and a collective ownership of institutional goals. It will help to increase accountability. Public servants must change how they communicate and interact among themselves and with the public. Public communication is essential in delivering public services. Communication needs to be built around the needs of citizens, and this requires new skills and talents.

A **personal accountability mindset** aims at creating a culture of accountability where public servants are fully responsible for their actions and consequences. They feel ownership over their actions and results, increasing integrity and supporting performance. They must be able to effectively respond to the many demands and expectations for fast, sustained, and personalized information that can arise with the use of new technologies.

## Mindsets, and competencies to promote institutional inclusiveness

Mindsets, and competencies to promote institutional inclusiveness are based on the principles of leaving no one behind, non-discrimination, participation, subsidiarity, and inter-generational equity. The 2030 Agenda calls for responsive, inclusive, and participatory decision-making at all levels. Investing in capacities to promote institutional inclusiveness means investing in creating:

- **Inclusive/ Leave no one behind Mindsets** for empathic and responsive service delivery in support of leaving no one behind, non-discrimination, participation, subsidiarity, and inter-generational equity (see Chapter 6)

- **Empathy/Relational Mindsets** in support of emotional intelligence and socially conscious leadership to safeguard people, planet, and prosperity for all (see Chapter 2)
- **Responsive Mindsets** for people-centric services with a special focus on vulnerable groups (see Chapter 6)
- **Inter-generational Equity Mindset**
- **Digital Mindsets** for a digital change (see the description in the paragraph of institutional effectiveness)

An **inclusive mindset** is critical for empathic and responsive service delivery in support of leaving no one behind, non-discrimination, participation, subsidiarity, and inter-generational equity. Public servants need new capacities to ensure that no one is left behind and foster inclusive societies, and that decision-making at all levels will need to include all voices and perspectives. Governments need to promote a diversified workforce in the public sector, including people from different backgrounds. Besides, local government officials need to have the capacity to better interact with all groups in society, particularly vulnerable groups. Encouraging public servants to spend time with the poor and in the natural world could strengthen people-centered and planet-centered mindsets.

An **empathic mindset** is critical to support emotional intelligence and socially conscious leadership to safeguard people, the planet, and prosperity for all. Building capacities in values of 'Socially Conscious Leadership' is also essential to ensure inclusiveness. As highlighted in Chapter 2, socially conscious leaders reveal qualities of strong social consciousness contributing more positively to people-centric development.





A **responsive mindset** is needed to create people-centric services with a special focus on vulnerable groups, and to co-create services.




An **inter-generational equity mindset** will help promote prosperity and quality of life for present and future generations, which rests on a planet-centered mindset. Instilling and internalizing people-centered and planet-centered mindsets is an essential component of an inter-generational equity mindset.





Each mindset and related competencies is described in Table 1.4.







**Table 1.4: Mindsets and Competency Framework for SDGs Implementation<sup>27</sup>**

| INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| MINDSETS   | BELIEFS  | ATTITUDES  | COMPETENCIES   |
| <b>Agile Mindset</b><br>                                      | Change is possible and necessary to address multiple possibilities before quickly reaching a solution; failure is momentary, and any obstacles can be quickly overcome.                    | Is proactive, comfortable with the uncomfortable and complexity, uses inquisitive thinking and critical reasoning, adopts a holistic view of challenges, eager to learn and improve, willing to fail, and embrace constant change and encourage collaboration and trust. | To have an agile mindset, public servants need to develop <b>competencies in systems-thinking</b> to perceive the links, cause-effect relations, and dynamics affecting sustainable development; <b>risk-informed adaptation</b> to maintain effectiveness when experiencing change and continue delivering results within new structures or despite external shocks; <b>and collaboration</b> to perceive problems of common interest and positively conceive that dialogue, coordination, partnerships, and networks can address problems.   |
| <b>Innovative/ Problem-solving Experimental Mindset</b><br> | Human capacities are not fixed; it is possible to continuously improve through efforts and learning. <sup>28</sup>   | Is a risk-taker, eager to experiment, problem-solver, creative, resilient, driven and motivated to achieve excellence, thinking outside of the box.  | An experimental problem-solving/experimental mindset is characterized by <b>strategic problem-solving</b> to develop and break down problem scenarios to ensure solutions that can be presented in a stepwise approach towards the achievement of a target; <b>creativity</b> to actively seek to improve programmes or services, offering new and different options to solve problems and meet client/citizen needs and <b>innovation</b> 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. |
| <b>Evidence-based Mindset</b><br>                           | Data is critical to make good decisions.   | Is driven and motivated to using, validating, and documenting data.  | A competency associated with the evidence-based mindset is <b>data and information literacy</b> to recognize the need to locate, retrieve, analyze, and utilize data and information for problem solving as well as to promote transparency for better public policy and service design and delivery. <b>Public Financial Management (PFM)</b> competency is also needed for effective public administration and service delivery, especially in fragile and post conflict environments (see chapter 12).  |
| <b>Foresight Mindset</b><br>                                | Present and future transformation in support of the SDG is possible. The future can be influenced, and trends anticipated if we ask the right questions, plan, and prepare for the future. | Is open to using techniques and methodologies for discovering and designing future trends to anticipate challenges and solutions.  | A foresight mindset includes short and <b>long-term planning</b> to develop clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies such as the 2030 Agenda and specific SDG targets; <b>forward looking and proactivity</b> to ensure anticipatory, flexible and action-oriented behaviors to implement potential solutions and address challenges. as well as <b>risk-management</b> competencies to identify and assess issues and risks and create a plan that allows to contain or control those identified and their consequences.  |

| INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| MINDSETS   | BELIEFS   | ATTITUDES  | COMPETENCIES   |
| <p><b>Results-oriented Mindset</b></p>  | <p>Good decisions are those that are focused on results.</p>                                    | <p>Is focused on taking actions and achieving results.</p>   | <p>To develop a results-oriented mindset, public servants need to possess <b>results-based management</b> competencies to manage for results. Also, public servants need to have a <b>life-long learning</b> competency to share and apply knowledge learned across the organization to advance the realization of the SDGs. Finally, public servants need to <b>manage performance</b>, ensure that a set of outputs meet the goals effectively and efficiently, define strategic and operational objectives, and link them to resources.</p>   |
| <p><b>Collaborative Mindset</b></p>    | <p>Working with others results in higher impact.</p>  | <p>Is willing to learn, co-create, share experiences, and have a dialogue with others.</p>                                       | <p>By developing a collaborative mindset, public servants are better prepared to develop a skillset that focuses on <b>coordination, integration, and dialogue</b> across teams, levels of government, and functional areas. Public servants will be able to build <b>multi-stakeholder partnerships</b> by bringing together a range of partners with the opportunity to interact, learn from others, and collectively help strive to achieve the same goals.</p>   |
| <p><b>Digital Mindset</b></p>         | <p>If properly leveraged, digital technology can help address a multiplicity of challenges.</p> | <p>Is focused on leveraging the advantages of technology in support of governance transformation while addressing its risks.</p> | <p>A digital mindset is not just the ability to use technology, but it is a set of behaviors and attitudes; it is a change of public institutions' capacities needed to <b>keep abreast of technological developments and understand the applicability (benefits and risks)</b> of digital technologies to solve complex problems (digital literacy). Digital transformation requires abilities to apply technology to appropriate tasks within government, seeking effectiveness, and transparency of government processes, reorganization of work, and continuous training. It also requires the ability to secure sensitive data.</p> |

| MINDSETS FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| MINDSETS  | BELIEFS   | ATTITUDES   | COMPETENCIES   |
| <b>Ethical Mindset</b><br>                   | The implementation of the principles of the 2030 Agenda will lead to sustainable development.                         | Doing the right for the right reason; is respectful of the views of others, and observes the ethical and legal standards of one's organization. | To develop an ethical mindset, public servants need to strengthen competencies in <b>professionalism, results-based management, lifelong learning and managing performance</b> . Public servants should be able to demonstrate professional competence and mastery of sustainable development both as a concept and value and understand its national application and relevance.   |
| <b>Open/Transparent Mindset</b><br>          | Trust, communication, and openness are essential for better decisions.  | Is open to new ideas, readily shares non-classified information. Public servants should have the ability to combat misinformation.              | Competencies of a transparent mindset include <b>ability to collect, manage, and share information</b> and data to increase budget transparency, promote disclosure and access to information.   |
| <b>Personal Accountability Mindset</b><br> | Personal commitment, ownership, and responsibility for own actions and consequences are key to excellent performance. | Is committed to proactive actions and taking responsibilities to achieve results.   | Competencies linked to this mindset include adaptability to respond to changing circumstances, learn new skills, and perform well <b>communication</b> to successfully work with new colleagues and new environments, to communicate effectively, listen attentively to others, and share information in a timely manner, <b>and managing resources</b> by allocating time and resources efficiently and effectively, translating strategies into plans for action; and <b>monitor</b> the progress of their work. Skills in collecting disaggregated data and statistical capacity, risk management, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes for poverty eradication, among others, are critical for greater transparency and accountability. |
| <b>Digital Mindset</b><br>                 | If properly leveraged, digital technology can help address a multiplicity of challenges.                              | Is focused on leveraging the advantages of technology in support of governance transformation while addressing its risks.                       | A digital mindset is not just the ability to use technology, but it is a set of behaviors and attitudes; it is a change of public institutions' capacities needed <b>to keep abreast of technological developments and understand the applicability (benefits and risks)</b> of digital technologies to solve complex problems (digital literacy). Digital transformation requires abilities to apply technology to appropriate tasks within government, seeking effectiveness, and transparency of government processes, reorganization of work, and continuous training. It also requires the ability to secure sensitive data.  |

## MINDSETS FOR INSTITUTIONAL INCLUSIVENESS

| MINDSETS  | BELIEFS  | ATTITUDES  | COMPETENCIES  |
|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Inclusive Mindset</b><br>                   | All people are equal in dignity and rights and deserve equal opportunities for a better life.                      | Is committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect; empathy, tolerance, solidarity, and no discrimination.   | <b>Competencies</b> that are linked to this mindset are: <b>respect for diversity, and non-discrimination</b> to promote public sector workforce diversity, and in line with SDG 16.7, ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels; <b>inter-generational equity</b> to ensure prosperity and quality of life for all, noting especially the needs of today's children and how current actions may jeopardize the basic needs of future generations; <b>empowerment and participation</b> and develop awareness of own and communities' beliefs, values and expectations and ensure a culture of caring; <b>and negotiation and facilitation</b> to find solutions to a shared problem. Successful negotiators will analyze a problem, identify the interested parties, and reach a consensus. Communication, persuasion, planning, strategizing, and cooperating are essential skills of negotiation and facilitation. |
| <b>Empathy Mindset</b><br>                   | Understanding the experience and feelings of others is crucial to make decisions that leave no one behind.         | Is attentive and focused on understanding the feelings and needs of others, particularly vulnerable groups and those that are left behind, and takes actions to address their needs. | Competencies of an empathy/relation mindset include emotional intelligence, socially conscious awareness, responsibility, and collaboration. <b>Emotional intelligence</b> is the ability to recognize, manage and communicate with emotional regulation, and respond appropriately to the emotions of other people. With <b>socially conscious awareness, responsibility, and collaboration competencies</b> , public servants will be able to develop an awareness of their own and communities' beliefs, values, and expectations and ensure a culture of caring, being flexible to recognize the different needs of employees, and the people. Finally, they will be able to collaborate with stakeholders from different backgrounds.  |
| <b>Responsive Mindset</b><br>                | Public Institutions exist to respond to people's needs and protect human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all. | Putting people first by effectively anticipating and responding to their needs and creating an enabling environment for sustainable development.                                     | Very important competencies linked to this mindset are the abilities to <b>respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and ensure equitable access to public service delivery</b> provided on general terms of equality (without distinction of any kind, as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status).   |
| <b>Inter-generational Equity Mindset</b><br> | Young and old generations deserve to live in a sustainable planet and have their needs met.                        | Is compliant with the principle of environmental, social, and economic equity.   | Competencies that are linked to an intergenerational equity mindset include the abilities to <b>construct administrative acts</b> that balance the short-term needs of today's generation with the longer-term needs of future generations. Also, <b>skills in management and planning</b> are critical for long-term public debt management, long-term territorial planning, and spatial development, and ecosystem management. Finally, skills in <b>assessing the impact</b> of the SDGs are critical for the decision-making process.   |


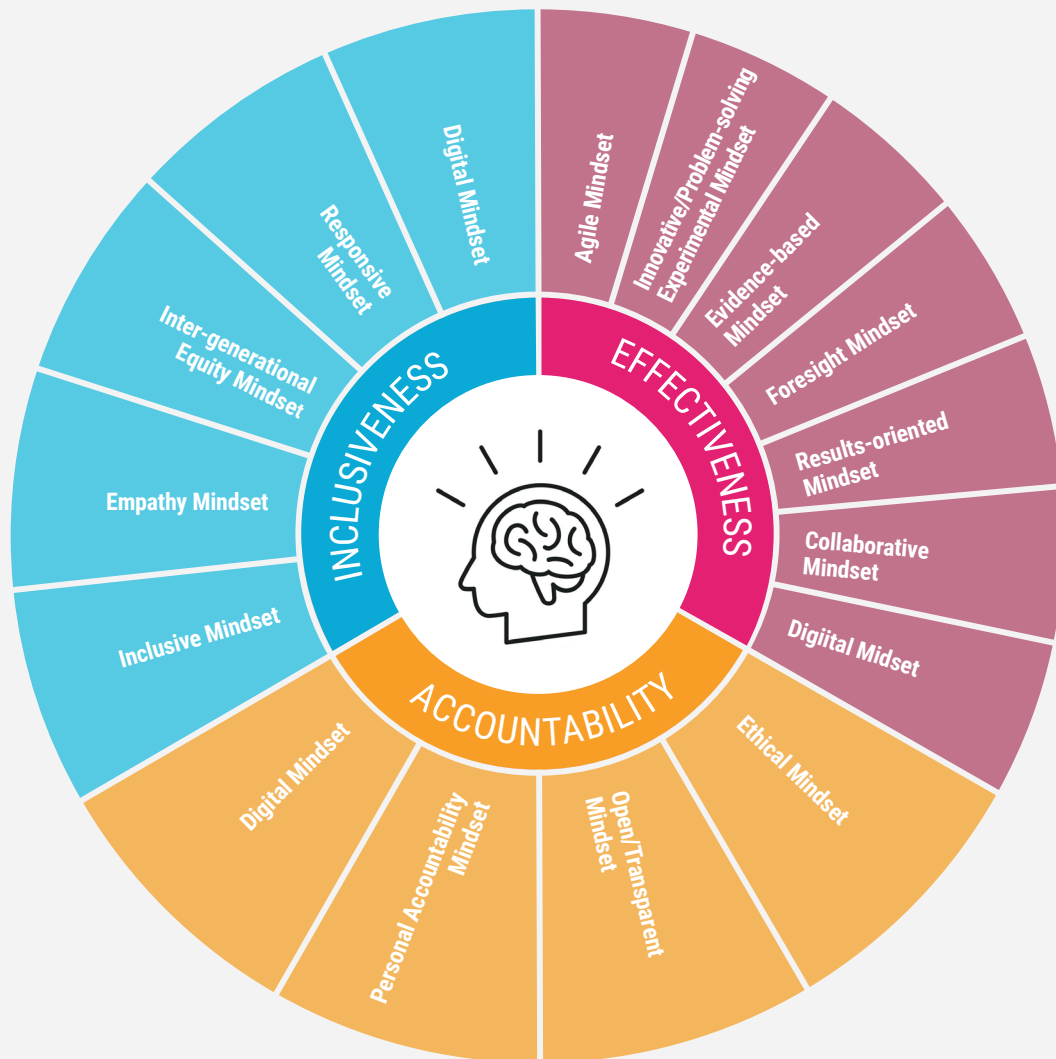
| MINDSETS FOR INSTITUTIONAL INCLUSIVENESS  |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| MINDSETS  | BELIEFS  | ATTITUDES   | COMPETENCIES  |
| <b>Digital Mindset</b><br> | If properly leveraged, digital technology can help address a multiplicity of challenges. | Is focused on leveraging the advantages of technology in support of governance transformation while addressing its risks. | A digital mindset is not just the ability to use technology, but it is a set of behaviors and attitudes; it is a change of public institutions' capacities needed to <b>keep abreast of technological developments and understand the applicability (benefits and risks)</b> of digital technologies to solve complex problems (digital literacy). Digital transformation requires abilities to apply technology to appropriate tasks within government, seeking effectiveness, and transparency of government processes, reorganization of work, and continuous training. It also requires the ability to secure sensitive data. |

Figure 1.3: Mindsets for SDGs implementation



— 5 —

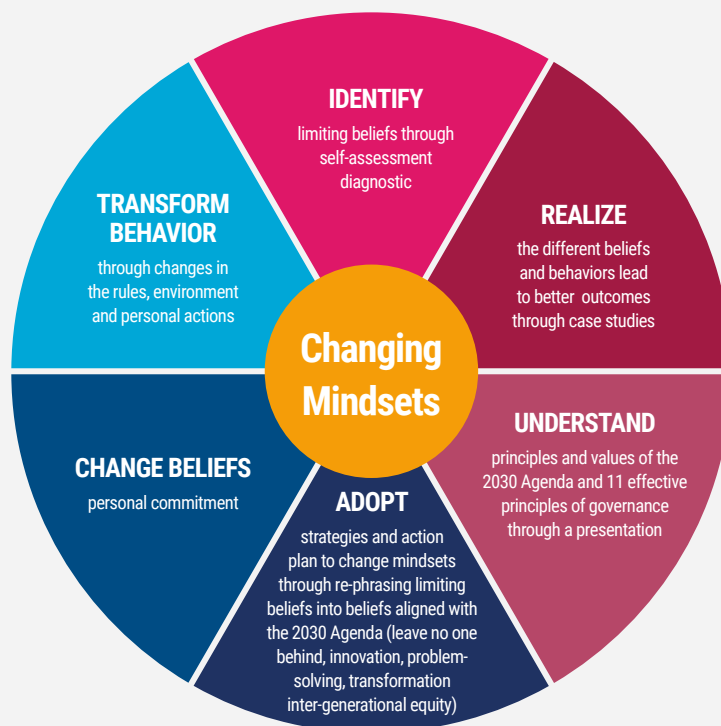
# Strategies at the individual, organizational and institutional levels to promote a change in mindsets

While changing mindsets is an individual responsibility and journey that takes time and practice, it is necessary to adopt a whole-of-government approach, encompassing behavioral changes at the individual, organizational and institutional levels. Schools of public administration can work together with human resources management departments to devise a holistic approach to change mindsets which are aligned with the principles and values of the 2030 Agenda and the 11 Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development.

The first step to changing mindsets is to **identify** and be aware of one’s own limiting beliefs. It requires recognizing that mindsets and worldviews shape actions. Personal beliefs, assumptions and biases about the world need to be uncovered through diagnostic self-assessment methodologies. It is important to understand what barriers/beliefs are holding back public servants in pursuing the institutional goals related to the 2030 Agenda. A values analysis can be conducted along

a situation analysis to understand the specific problems of a country’s own context. It is then important to **realize** that different beliefs lead to better outcomes. A full **understanding** of the 2030 Agenda values and the principles of effective governance for sustainable development is critical. For example, to transform behavior from silo-based approaches into collaborative action, it is necessary to identify the beliefs and behaviors that hold back collaboration. Through diagnostic tools, it is possible to identify the inconsistencies between values and beliefs on the one hand, and actions that may be unconsciously implemented. **Adopting strategies** to let go of and re-phrase limiting beliefs into **new beliefs** aligned with the 2030 Agenda should take center stage. Moving from a non-collaborative mindset to a collaborative one requires changes in underlying values, beliefs and actions to achieve those values. **Transforming behaviors**, in turn, reinforces the new beliefs and assumptions.

Figure 1.4: Steps to changing mindsets



Several key strategies to foster a change in public servants' mindsets, which are highlighted throughout this publication, are summarized here below.

**Table 1.5: Key strategies to foster a change in public servants' mindsets**

| (1) STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHANGE AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL – MINDSETS  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>1.1 Raise awareness of the principles and values of the 2030 Agenda and of the 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development</b> and their underlying beliefs and enhance the understanding of how to align public servants' mindsets with those principles.</p>   | <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Update public service codes of conduct and public service charters to include reference to the principles and values of the 2030 Agenda and to the principles of effective governance for sustainable development.</li> <li>b. The set of guidance notes to implement the principles of effective governance could be mainstreamed in the capacity development training courses of schools of public administration and development agencies.</li> <li>c. Schools of public administration<sup>29</sup> can undertake training on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to sensitize public servants to the principles and values of the 2030 Agenda. In this respect, the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs developed by UN DESA provides training material that can be adapted to the regional/national context and can be used to help promote effective change in public institutions.<sup>30</sup> In particular, the toolkit on Changing Mindsets in Public Institutions can be a reference for institutes of training to gain insights on new values, mindsets and competencies needed to implement the 2030 Agenda.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>1.2 Promote socially conscious and transformational leadership values and mindsets with a focus on building inclusive societies.</b> Socially conscious leaders have a significant role to play in the survival and long-term development of institutions that promote the principle of equity and inclusiveness. Building capacities in socially conscious leadership values and enhancing skills in empathy, social research, systems thinking, participatory planning, and team building can promote and transform the mindsets of change-agents to implement the SDGs, both within and across nations (see chapter 2).</p> | <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establish capacity development and training activities to promote socially conscious leadership values, mindsets, and behaviors for public servants across all government levels.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>1.3 Define new mindsets to implement the SDGs in the public sector through a new competency framework for the SDGs.</b></p>  | <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. See below 2.1</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>1.4 Adopt an innovation/ problem-solving, agile and evidence-based mindset in the public sector as well as continuous learning.</b> Shifting mindsets involves a dynamic process – not necessarily a linear path – of constant practice and renewal (see Chapters 4 and 5). Training, both for long- and short-term change, could be more effective when focusing on problem-solving.</p>  | <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Design and adopt a Public Service Charter for Innovation in Public Management.</li> <li>b. Develop capacity development training on innovation, experimentation, and evidence that can promote high-level motivation and a greater propensity to embracing new mindsets.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>1.5 Governments need to be able to attract, develop, and retain a dedicated workforce.</b> Public sector human resource professionals are a key component in attracting and motivating the best talent in the public sector and hiring people with the right mindsets.</p>   | <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Human resource practice should move from being transactional to being more strategic. Human resources departments should have a more strategic role in recruiting and attracting the best talent in the public sector (see Chapter 9).</li> <li>b. Mechanisms to promote employee engagement is key to having a motivated, engaged workforce that embraces new mindsets and performs the critical work of government (see Chapter 9).</li> </ul>  |

**(2) STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHANGE AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL – BEHAVIORS**

**2.1 Define new mindsets through a new competency framework to implement the SDGs and describe what new behaviors are needed to implement Goal 16.** Public administration systems must define new mindsets and competencies that can advance the principles of the 2030 Agenda across public service and ensure that they are put into practice. UN DESA's competency framework (see page 25) could serve as a reference for countries that would like to focus on new competencies, mindsets, and behaviors.

**Recommendation:**

- a. Develop a new competency framework to guide public servants' recruitment, behavior, and performance.

**2.2 Instill meaning and an understanding among public servants of the required mindsets and related behaviors needed to advance the SDGs.** Public servants first need to understand why a change in mindsets and behavior is needed. Second, they need to understand what change (in terms of values, beliefs and attitudes, and capacities and competencies) is required to advance the realization of the 2030 Agenda. Third, they need to understand how these changes can be triggered. (see Chapters 10 to 15).

**Recommendations:**

- a. Schools of Public Administration and Management Institutes and Public Service Training Institutions/Units" should mainstream the SDGs and new mindsets required to realize the 2030 Agenda in their curricula (see Chapter 9).
- b. Schools of public administration can promote acculturation, investment in personal socialization, and individual's ethical education to foster a change in public servant's previous patterns of beliefs and behaviors. Understanding how people behave is critical to fostering a change in mindsets.
- c. Promote effective communication campaigns regarding the new competency framework within the public sector to highlight the changes needed to encourage a change in mindsets and behaviors.

**2.3 Nurture champions of change in the public sector for the successful implementation of the SDGs.** Organizations need to identify champions of change that can serve as role models for new mindsets and behaviors that will support change (see Chapter 9).

**Recommendation:**

- a. Government can establish or submit initiatives to Award programmes at the national and local levels to help uncover champions of change. For example, the UN Public Service Awards, which is the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service, can help discover champions of change and disseminate national initiatives worldwide.



**(3) STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHANGE AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL – CULTURE**

**3.1 Ensure that there is coherence between public servants' values and those of an organization and the SDGs**, and that those principles are translated into tangible behaviors.

**Recommendations:**

- a. Assess, by using diagnostic tools, public servants' mindsets – their values, inspiration, and their behaviors – to inform the design of structures and processes and, ultimately, change organizational culture to advance the implementation of the SDGs (Chapter 1 and 4).
- b. Design organizational socialization processes for the internalization of organizational values and principles among public servants.

**3.2 Use Behavioral insights methodologies to promote organizational change.** Guidelines can help drive public institutions' performance, and, ultimately, design management processes that will determine the institutional goals' success. Behavioral science initiatives in various parts of the world have shown to help change organizational performance by making slight changes to their environment (see Chapters 7 and 8).

**Recommendation:**

- a. Design and implement changes in the public sector's organizational culture, environment, and choice architecture. Changes in the public sector's environment and choice architecture can help to foster changes in the mindsets of public servants. It is possible to influence behavior through small changes to the environment (see Chapters 7 and 8). It can be helpful to identify the desired behavior as well as the barriers to such behaviors and add or remove obstacles to promote desired behavior.

**3.3 Link public servants' performance management with the new mindsets needed to implement the SDGs and results-based management.** A public sector with strengthened capacity and increased performance has a higher likelihood of reaching the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Performance appraisals play an essential role in management practices to increase performance. Creating a performance and results-based culture is also critical to providing a clear direction in the public sector.

**Recommendations:**

- a. Create a link between personal performance goals and appraisal indicators to organizational goals. The latter can make individual mindsets coherent with others in the organization. Managers can adjust performance appraisals to measurable objectives and use digital tools for sharing information and monitoring information at the micro-level (see Chapter 10). Measurement drives behavior, so managers need a clear view of human nature and behavior in organizations. (See Chapter 9).
- b. Public sector organisations can redesign performance management systems taking into account new mindsets and behaviors.
- c. Develop a caring culture in the public sector and increase the engagement of public servants to promote inclusive and empathic mindsets, which can help provide better services to citizens (see Chapter 8).

**(4) STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHANGE AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL**

**4.1 Promote policies and regulations for strategic human resources management and training that focus on the new mindsets required to implement the SDGs.** A shift from traditional, often siloed, and cumbersome policy development is needed to embrace more agile and responsive governance policies and regulations that focus on new tools, processes, and mindsets to inform more systemic responses to the challenges in implementing the SDGs (see Chapter 3).

**Recommendations:**

- a. Devise new policies and regulations to ensure that human resources strategies for recruitment, advancement in career, and life-long-learning reflect the new mindsets needed to implement the SDGs. Policies should promote design-thinking methods, such as co-creation, prototyping, testing, iteration, and an inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach, ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented and reflected.
- b. Develop HR strategies that promote the reframing of human resource management addressing not only mindsets but also the mix of HR systems that are needed to implement the SDGs.
- c. Promote networking among the schools and institutes of public administration is imperative to share knowledge and good practices in changing mindsets.

## 6

# Conclusion

There are four main messages that emerge from this chapter. First, the chapter argues that changing beliefs and attitudes, i.e., mindsets, of public servants is critical to ensuring institutional effectiveness for SDG implementation. It is people both in government and in society who are central to any change and who will translate the principles of the 2030 Agenda into meaningful actions.

Second, the chapter examines why changing mindsets is essential to promoting institutional effectiveness by analyzing the nature of institutions and institutional change. The chapter highlights that institutions are complex entities, which are constituted by a visible and hidden part. The visible structure is composed of formal rules and norms and is relatively easy to change. The hidden structure is defined as the complex set of values and informal norms of conduct that produce a culture by which an institution's identity is determined. Understanding the nature of institutions is critical in understanding how they develop and how they can be purposefully changed.

The third argument is that implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires a change in public servants' behavior, which, in turn, is shaped by their mindsets. New mindsets should reflect the 2030 Agenda principles and the principles of effective governance. In this respect, public institutions need to identify competencies that entail specific mindsets and behaviors. Supporting mindset change calls for a practical focus on concrete behaviors associated with specific competencies that can function as vehicles for in-practice learning. Changing mindsets and competencies by doing can help governments become more effective in generating solutions and learning to address current and future problems. Cultural change and change management are critical aspects of public institutions' transformation to realize the SDGs, especially by developing a culture of innovation and problem-solving. Doing things differently and focusing on expected new behaviors can bring about a change in mindsets.

The fourth message is that strategies and capacity development activities aimed at changing public servants' mindsets are essential to promote institutional transformation, helping to address the SDGs. Changing mindsets requires a holistic approach that takes into account strategies at the individual, organizational and institutional levels.

## Endnotes

1. For example, principles of leaving no one behind and inter-generational equity.
2. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/08/transforming-our-world-document-adoption/>
3. UN/DESA Policy Brief #75: COVID-19: Reaffirming State-People Governance Relationships, available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-75-covid-19-reaffirming-state-people-governance-relationships/>
4. This is aligned to the 11 Principles of Effective Governance, the CARICAD and CLAD Charters. Note 6: 6 Report on the nineteenth session (13–28 May 2020), <https://undocs.org/e/2020/44>
5. E/2018/44-E/C.16/2018/8, para. 31.
6. See Chapter 4.
7. Dweck, Carol S. et al. (2014) Academic Tenacity Mindsets and Skills that Promote Long-Term Learning. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved from: <https://ed.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/manual/dweck-walton-cohen-2014.pdf>
8. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/belief/>
9. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/belief>
10. Oxford Dictionary.
11. The word was first used in 1930 to mean habits of the mind formed by previous experiences and mind was defined as deeply held beliefs, attitudes and assumptions about who we are and the world around us, The nature of mindsets, Ash Buchanan, 2017 available at: <https://medium.com/benefit-mindset/the-nature-of-mindsets-18afba2ac890>
12. See Talcott Parsons, 1983.
13. It is also important to distinguish between instrumental and intrinsic values. "Intrinsic value has traditionally been thought to lie at the heart of ethics. Philosophers use a number of terms to refer to such value. The intrinsic value of something is said to be the value that that thing has "in itself," or "for its own sake," or "as such," or "in its own right." Extrinsic value is value that is not intrinsic". See: "Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Value" First published Tue Oct 22, 2002; substantive revision Wed Jan 9, 2019, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
14. See Oxford Dictionary: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principle#:~:text=A%20principle%20is%20a%20proposition,that%20a%20system%20is%20constructed>
15. See Talcott Parsons, 1983.
16. According to Douglas North organizations are "groups of individuals bound together by some common purpose to achieve objectives", and organizations are influenced by the institutional framework they are placed in (North, 1990: page 5).
17. According to Huntington (1968), an institution that, over time, acquires the capacity to exist independent of the social forces that gave it birth, may be defined as effective/strong or "institutionalized". Institutionalization occurs when the expected values that are aligned with the rules being set up are internalized by all actors and produce expected behaviors. For example, "the division of powers in government is institutionalized both as an organizational framework that results from and influences the competitions of political actors and as an attempt to safeguard a certain conception of liberty".
18. Alberti and Balogun, Challenges and perspectives in reforming governance institutions, 2005, UN DESA Discussion Paper
19. <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/edgar-schein-model.htm>
20. Common Principles for Measuring Capacity, UNDG, 18 March 2016, Draft
21. <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-8-Capacity-Development.pdf>
22. Capacity Development UNDAF Companion.
23. For more information on governance capacities for the SDGs please visit: <https://unpan.un.org/capacity-development/curriculum-on-governance-for-the-SDGs>
24. United Nations, 2015. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development A/RES/70/1. Accessed at: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)
25. See Toolkit on Changing Mindsets in Public Institutions to implement the SDGs: [www.unpan.un.org](http://www.unpan.un.org)
26. See Chapter 7, 2020 UN E-Government Survey, United Nations.
27. The initial Competency Framework was developed with Schools of Public Administration around the world and this is a modified version which reflects the three dimension of Goal 16 and the Principles of Effective Governance. This framework is a living document which can be adapted to different local contexts
28. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6594552/>
29. Schools of Public Administration and Management Institutes vary in size, capability and maturity, so there is no one size fits all solution.
30. The Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs is available on the UN Public Administration Network website at [unpan.un.org](http://unpan.un.org)

## CHAPTER 2

# Changing Mindsets to Realize Agenda 2030: The Critical Role of Socially Conscious Leadership

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Nearly four decades of the centrality of economic growth over environmental and social concerns in development has “come to regulate all we practise and believe”. In the process, it has promoted a mindset that regards “competition [as] the only legitimate organising principle for human activity” (Metcalf, 2017). In 2015, the adoption by the United Nations Member States of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has defined development more holistically. SDGs-based development has gone beyond the notion of economic growth as the supreme end goal of development, and instead, embraces equity and sustainability as core parameters of development<sup>31</sup>. The SDGs warrant a change in the mindset of public servants and people towards how development is conceptualized and implemented. This chapter examines in detail the imperatives of an SDGs-oriented mindset. It provides a definition of mindset and highlights its various dimensions and the factors that contribute to the formation of a mindset. The chapter also introduces the concept of Socially Conscious Leadership (SCL) values<sup>32</sup> and explains how building the capacities of change-agents to embrace Socially Conscious Leadership values is central to the realization of the SDGs. Finally, the chapter proposes a framework for training in capacity building in SCL values at multiple levels, both within and across nations.

## 1

# The Sustainable Development Goals and New Mindset Imperatives

Among other things, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the principles of inclusion ('leave no one behind'), prosperity (economic growth), environmental sustainability and social justice as fundamental pillars of development, where economic growth is expected to play a complementary but not overriding role. In other words, the SDG-oriented notion of development implies the following:

- Economic growth is important, but economic growth alone is not 'development'.
- 'Development' is a more holistic concept than economic growth and defines the advancement of societies in economic, social, and environmental aspects in an interconnected, and balanced manner.
- Sustainable development requires governments to take an active role and implement policies and strategies that contribute to the realization of the SDGs.
- The implementation of the SDGs warrants mindsets that reflect Socially Conscious Leadership (SCL) values.
- Capacity building in qualities of Socially Conscious Leadership values at multiple levels, both within and across nations, is key to the realization of the SDGs.
- The State should play a key role in driving development that is inclusive, responsive, and sustainable. Indeed, if COVID 19 has taught one lesson, it would be the dispelling of the market mantra that "government is the problem and not the solution". The COVID period has revealed that countries that have had strong, people-centric public institutions, have been far more successful in containing the spread of the virus than those that relied predominantly on the market to deliver services.

It is evident from the above that the implementation of the SDGs would require actions to ensure that: (i) policies

are people-centric, socially-oriented and environmentally sensitive; (ii) political leaders and public servants are equipped with mindsets geared towards socially conscious leadership values; and (iii) policy-making processes are participatory and empowering. Here the key issue is what comes first: policies, processes, or leadership values? The quick answer is all three.

Firstly, at the policy level, it is important to change the traditional development framework from economics-driven to one that is more inclusive and supportive of notions of sustainable development. Secondly, this shift in vision would require, among other things, a change in the mindsets of the change-agents (i.e., political leaders and public servants) so that they embrace a more holistic notion of development and move from top-down to a more bottom-up process of planning. Thirdly, the processes of policymaking must be made participatory and citizen-based.

To promote an SDGs-oriented mindset among change-agents, capacity building is required at two levels:

- First, at the 'intellectual' level – this involves changing the mindset from the current GDP-oriented consumerist, materialist, exploitative and extractive notion of development to SDG-oriented inclusive, equitable and sustainable notions of development; and
- Second, at the 'relational' level– this involves changes in planning, from top-down elitist to bottom-up, participatory processes.

In sum, the successful implementation of the SDGs will require a change in the mindsets of political leaders and public servants. This, in turn, calls for building capacities of change agents in social consciousness values, and in attitudes towards participatory planning, implementation, and monitoring of policies and programmes.

— 2 —

# Mindsets: definitions, dimensions and contributing factors

Fostering a change in mindsets would involve, among other things, having a clear understanding of the following key concepts and issues:

- Definition of mindset
- Dimensions of mindset
- Factors that contribute to the formation of mindsets

### Definitions

As highlighted in Chapter 1, in decision theory and in general systems theory, mindsets are defined as a set of beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes held by one or more people or groups of people in a society at a certain point in time (Hong, Chiu, Dweck, Lin and Wan 1999). A mindset can also be a person's worldview or philosophy of life, attitudes, norms, and values that influence his/her actions and ways of relating to and behaving with others (Dweck and Leggett 2000).

Therefore, depending on the kind of mindset that public servants possess, sustainable development can be promoted or halted. In this regard, the Micro-credit famed Nobel Laureate Professor Mohammed Yunus once said: "My greatest challenge has been to change the mindsets of people. Mindsets play strange tricks on us. We see things the way our minds have instructed our eyes

to see".<sup>33</sup> Mindsets are both dynamic, and multidimensional and many factors contribute to the formation of mindsets in people.

As mentioned earlier, mindsets are multidimensional and change over time and are constructed, de-constructed, and re-constructed through multiple processes at various stages of our life. For example, values taught by parents at home and learned at schools often contribute to the shaping of norms and attitudes at the early stages of life, and some of these may change over time in adulthood through exposure to higher education, information exchange, and work environment. Mindsets that are formed during adulthood are the intellectual mindsets that shape our worldviews.

*The 'relational mindset' refers to the manner in which people relate to and treat other people, which is influenced by several factors.*

In adulthood, it is influenced by the social, cultural, and political frameworks within which people live and function. Table 2.1 below summarizes the mindset dimensions and factors that contribute to the formation of these multiple sets of mindsets.

**Table 2.1: Dimensions of and factors that contribute to the formation of mindsets**

| Mindset dimensions       | Factors influencing formation of mindsets                                   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Values, attitudes, norms | Parenting, early education, culture, religion, tradition, etc.              |
| World views/intellectual | Higher education/external exposure, interactions and knowledge orientations |
| Relational/Operating     | Societal Norms/Operating/Governing Frameworks                               |

Source: Author

## Values, Attitudes, Norms

Societies, including through parenting and early education, contribute greatly to the formation of values, beliefs, norms, and attitudes of individuals at the early stage of life. However, mindsets formed during childhood through parental guidance and/or early education may change over time. In adulthood, the intellectual mindset that shapes our world views and influences how we act and treat others is formed through higher education and/or through the exchange of ideas and thoughts generated at work and/or through socio-cultural and political settings within which people live and function.

## Intellectual

Intellectual mindsets shape our worldviews in adulthood through higher education and information exchange, both within and across nations. For example, in recent times, the rise of neoliberalism as a global economic phenomenon has greatly influenced the mindsets of government leaders who subscribe to the view that "... democratic choices are best exercised by buying and selling a process that rewards merit and punishes inefficiency.... market ensures that everyone gets what they deserve" (Monbiot 2016 in *The Guardian*). Neoliberalism as a policy choice has been entrenched in our intellectual mindset such that economic growth is treated as synonymous with development. In policy terms, this translates into the provision of biased incentives for corporate-led economic growth, meaning massive tax cuts for the wealthy, cost minimization and profit maximization for the investors, suppression of trade unions, trampling of contrary views, deregulation, privatization and the outsourcing of public utility functions—and furthermore, the minimization of public services, which, all taken together, constitutes the 'more market and less government' ideology (Khan and Milne, 2018). At one end, this approach has contributed to economic growth and, on the other, this strategy has also resulted in rising inequality and numerous climate change challenges (Khan, 2015). Furthermore, in recent times, market-dominant development - the GDP-based-corporate -dominated economic growth - has also witnessed denting of democratic values in many parts of the world (Monbiot, 2016).

While a GDP-based orientation of development has deeply affected our mindsets at the intellectual level, its operational arrangements have shaped our mindsets at the behavioral or 'relational' level, meaning how we relate to, deal with and treat people (Merino, Mayper, & Tolleson, 2010).

## Relational

A relational mindset i.e., the manner of relating to and the treatment of people, depends on values and norms learned during childhood and, more importantly, during adulthood. The intellectual mindset that we acquire through higher education

that forms our worldviews also affects our relational mindset. From the development point of view, our intellectual mindset influences our policy choices, and this in turn influences policy processes or how policies are formulated. Furthermore, the relational mindset that influences policy processes and government frameworks is often shaped by past legacies such as colonial administration and by present-day market-based policy regimes that inhibit participation and inclusiveness in policymaking.

Indeed, legacies of colonialism and the rise in the dominance of the market in policy formulation have promoted growth in the political/governing arrangements that are hierarchical, controlling, less engaging, and least accountable. Post-colonial legacies and their influences on governing frameworks, which are relevant mostly to developing nations, have had significant ramifications in defining the relational mindsets of the ruling elites and their agents, i.e., the public servants. For example, in many developing countries, public governance systems and institutions that continue to function as throwbacks from the past colonial administration are elitist, and the ruling elites treat people either contemptuously or, at best, patronisingly and as recipients of, and not as partners in development. International financial institutions/aid agencies that channel resources through these post-colonial hierarchical institutional frameworks have simply deepened their exclusionary practices.

Similarly, the current market-dominant ideology has had a much wider predatory influence on governing arrangements and practices in most countries, developed and developing. Indeed, the embrace of market-mainly economic policies as strategies for growth has empowered corporations who, through the formation of 'coalition of vested interests' within governments, have often made governing arrangements and policy processes less participatory and more controlling, and policies more pro-business, sometimes at the cost of the distributive and sustainability aspects of development (Hobbs, 2016). As a result, the gap between policy expectations and policies has widened in many countries (Bourdieu, 1999). At the same time, market-dominant political arrangements seem to have also promoted the rise of a new form of majoritarian populist democracy in which the majority stymie the minority voices and in the process, deepen further the spectre of exclusion and inequity (Gudavarty, 2019).

Notwithstanding these challenges, it is nevertheless true that market-based globalization and liberalisation initiatives have also facilitated an increased flow of cross-border resources, stimulated economic growth, and reduced poverty in many countries. Furthermore, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), a post-globalization technological revolution, has opened opportunities for greater connectivity and deeper citizen engagement in public governance. However, in some countries, governments have enacted laws to regulate and stifle critical dialoguing on policies (Rabbee, 2018).

## The role of policy frameworks in mindset change

Although overreliance on economic growth compromises sustainable and equitable development, shunning the market economy altogether is not desirable. What is needed is to make the market work for the people, and this would require establishing generic policy frameworks that would promote worldviews and relational, people-centric mindsets. Such frameworks would also have the potential to promote participatory policy processes. For example, Japan's guiding policy frameworks that foster, among other things, inclusion, equity, and the promotion of the values of humility and empathy among its citizens as inalienable aspects of its advancement, help, irrespective of government changes, its public officials to nurture an 'intellectual mindset' which is people-centric and a 'relational mindset' which is engaging (See Box 2.1).

By setting their vision of development in terms of 'Advancing the Whole Nation', all Japanese governments, irrespective of their party affiliations, commit themselves to a development path that is inclusive and equitable. Most importantly, the vision of inclusive development is pursued through market-economic arrangements and policies that ensure that its change-agents follow a set of mindsets that are people-centric and sustainable and regard these policy aspects as non-negotiable. The Japanese example has also revealed that values of humility and sensitivity are best nurtured at the school level through school curriculum.

### Box 2.1: An Example of Japan's Enabling policy framework and People-Centric Mindset

#### VISION OF DEVELOPMENT

Advancing the whole nation together

#### POLICY PARAMETERS

##### Inclusive development

- Education for all
- Lifelong employment for all
- Lifelong job security for all
- Industrialization on decentralized locations – jobs going to people and not people coming to jobs; and
- Equal access to affordable and quality basic services

##### Equitable development/economic wellbeing

- Average wealth of the richest 25% not to exceed over 5 times that of the bottom 25% - fiscal policies including taxation policies are aligned accordingly

##### Mindset development

- Capacity building in humility, empathy starting in school; and
- Arrogance is resented and admonished while humility is prized.

Source: Khan, 2019

Similarly, New Zealand's Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, who sees herself as an 'empathising' leader, formulated her government's 2019 budget as 'the Wellbeing Budget', which is a clear shift from the traditional notion of countries' budgets that stress economic growth as the key goal (Box 2.2). Clearly, New Zealand's 'Wellbeing budget' – a tool for development – has shifted the traditional notion of a budget from an economic perspective to one having the wellbeing of the people as its key purpose. The shift also implies that policy-makers would have to set their minds to policies – in terms of both outcomes and processes – that are conducive to achieving wellbeing goals.

### Box 2.2: New Zealand's wellbeing approach and its five government priorities

- Improving mental health
- Reducing child poverty
- Addressing the inequalities faced by indigenous Māori and Pacific island people
- Thriving in a digital age; and
- Transitioning to a low-emission, sustainable economy

Source: <https://treasury.govt.nz/publications/wellbeing-budget/wellbeing-budget-2019-html>

In sum, both the Japanese and New Zealand examples demonstrate that universally agreed inalienable people-centric policy and development frameworks have the potential to orient the mindsets of change-agents at both the intellectual and the relational level – to produce outcomes that are people-centric. Such frameworks also change the notion of development from one predominantly focused on economic gains to one of wellbeing and from top-down to inclusive planning, and in the process, they promote leadership values that are socially conscious.

While it is true that enabling policy frameworks have the potential to change the mindsets of change agents to become socially conscious, there is also scope to change their mindsets through capacity building in what this chapter calls the values of socially conscious leadership.



## 3

# Building capacities in values of ‘Socially Conscious Leadership’ (SCL): lessons from a research project

The Capstone Project of the School of Social Science at the University of Queensland (Australia) entitled “Building Human Capacity in Socially Conscious Leadership Values: Towards the Development of a New Leadership Framework for Social Change” was inspired by the 2008 UN World Public Sector Report<sup>34</sup> that, among other things, demonstrated that leadership values are key in promoting social change. The Report highlighted that a kind of leadership that revealed qualities of strong social consciousness contributed more positively to people-centric development. The Report also revealed that the leaders that demonstrate SCL values conceptualize issues and promote solutions from a more humane and inclusive perspective and empower citizens to bring about their own change. In other words, socially conscious leaders integrate values with outcomes, empathy with empowerment, and guide societies to initiate changes that are transformational, equitable and sustainable, from within (Caldwell and Floyd, 2012).

### **The ‘Socially Conscious Leadership Project’: aims, methodology, and lessons**

As a follow up to the findings of the 2008 UN World Public Sector Report, the Capstone Project examined and deepened the research on SCL on a cross-cultural basis, mainly to understand better the dynamics of leadership values and development in a more concrete manner. The project involved a Geneva-based UN office as its Industry Partner<sup>35</sup>. More specifically, the SCL project endeavoured to examine how socially conscious leaders visualize societies, articulate opportunities and challenges, initiate solutions, and more importantly, how they overcome barriers they encounter and bring about change. A secondary objective of the SCL project was to examine whether the project itself made any change to the mindset and values of the students that worked on it. Finally, the project also intended to identify training and research tools relevant to building capacities in SCL values among current change-agents (public servants), and future change-agents (students).

Presented below are the aims, research questions, and methodology of the University of Queensland (UQ), Australia’s SCL project:

#### Aims:

- Systematically study the works of selected leaders that demonstrate Socially Conscious Leadership values and articulate the mindsets that motivated the leaders to initiate socially conscious changes
- Study the SCL values, norms, and approaches with the aim of providing inputs to the development of guidelines for building capacities in SCL values, and
- Articulate generic capacity building aspects for building capacities in SCL values in the future.

#### Research questions and methodology:

- What is the definition of ‘Socially Conscious Leadership’?
- Who are socially conscious leaders, what did they achieve, and how?
- What were their motivations and the socio-political-economic contexts that lead to the emergence of such leaders?
- What are the generic qualities of socially conscious leaders that can be generalized to develop training modules in building capacities in SCL values in other settings?
- Given the limitations of time and resources, what would be the best way to undertake the study to make its findings credible and replicable?

## Defining SCL values

The idea of Socially Conscious Leadership has been built on the concept of ‘Transformational Leadership’ that, according to Burns (2003), is a trait where an individual’s vision and empowerment of followers leads to moral outcomes that are often permanent and structurally transformative. According to Burns (2003), most transformational leaders demonstrate the following generic qualities:

- Strong personal empathy and commitment to a cause.
- Ability to motivate and empower others to commit to and work for change.
- Willingness to take risks, and
- Ability to produce changes that are permanent and of universal value.

Built on Burns’ theory of transformational leadership, a conceptual framework of Socially Conscious Leadership is presented in Figure 2.1.

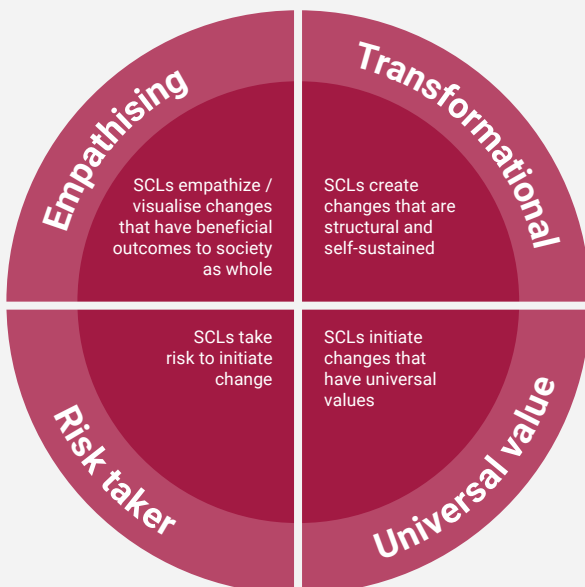
## Research into selected socially conscious leaders and findings

Based on the SCL Conceptual framework presented in Figure 2.1, the Capstone Project employed qualitative methods and selected the following leaders as case examples who, the students agreed, met the SCL criteria and represented all parts of the world:

- **Nelson Mandela** for his role in fighting against the unjust apartheid system at the cost of personal suffering and, more importantly, for promoting policies of inclusion, desegregation, equality, and democracy in post-apartheid South Africa.
- **Martin Luther King Jr.** for his role in the Civil Rights Movement and his contributions in clearing the path for breaking down the racial barriers in America.
- **Wangari Maathai** of Kenya for her role in defending and enriching the biodiversity of her country.
- **Muhammad Yunus** for his microcredit initiative in poverty eradication.
- **Jose Mujica**, former President of Uruguay, for his down-to-earth progressive policies and his exemplary lifestyle as the “peoples’ president”.
- **His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck**, 4th King of Bhutan for replacing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with the idea of Gross National Happiness, that combines economic progress with environmental protection and spirituality, as a measure as well as a goal of development.

Research into these selected leaders, their works, and their leadership attributes also included an examination of their personal history, missions, motivations, accomplishments, the challenges they faced, and the way they overcame obstacles and produced results. The section below summarizes the key values and attributes that the sample of socially conscious leaders demonstrated.

**Figure 2.1: A conceptual Framework of Socially Conscious Leadership Markers**



Source: Capstone Report, 2016

## Socially Conscious Leadership (SCL): values and attributes

The SCL project has highlighted the following key qualities that mark the leaders/change-agents as socially conscious:

- **Empathy/social consciousness:** a strong sense of empathy to social injustices followed by visualization and conceptualization of pathways for change and concrete actions to help bring about change.
- **Out-of-the-box thinking and innovation:** out of the box thinking promotes transformational and, at times, innovative changes.
- **Risk-taking:** risk-taking is key to overcoming hurdles and bringing about social change.
- **Exemplars/Universality:** changes are often exemplars for others to follow and thus are universally replicable.
- **Empowering the community:** leadership that empowers the community through engagement helps bring change from within; and
- **Engaging relevant skills:** engagement of relevant technical skills to convert vision into policies and policies into solutions is critical.

An important aspect of the SCL attributes is 'empathy, which triggers other attributes such as "out-of-the-box thinking," "empowering the community," "social mobilisation for change," "exemplar actions," and "risk-taking".

Now the key question is, how do we promote these values among the public servants/change agents? Is it possible to design training programmes that would help in promoting these qualities among the change-agents?

**Figure 2.2: Socially Conscious Leadership Qualities/ Attributes**



Source: Author, 2021

By drawing upon the lessons learned from the above transformational leaders, and by examining the generic qualities that enabled them to make changes, a training framework for mindset change through building capacities in SCL values is presented in the next section of this chapter.

## 4

## A training framework for mindset change through building capacities in ‘Socially Conscious Leadership’ values

The internalization and entrenchment of the core values of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the existing institutional settings warrants, among other things, mindset changes through capacity building in SCL values.

Although SCL values are more easily internalized in the early stages of life, starting from primary education, efforts can still be made to promote these values at multiple stages of life, including at the tertiary education level and among public servants.

SCL values need to be developed at two levels: the intellectual and the relational levels. This means that leaders or change agents must not only possess the intellectual mindsets that are steeped in values of social consciousness, but also have the empathising qualities that prepare them to engage with and empower communities to define their own agendas of change.

### Qualities of empathy and changing intellectual mindset

One of the key attributes of leaders with SCL values is that they demonstrate a high sense of empathy to social issues and bring change by challenging injustices and mobilising people. They translate values of social consciousness into problem diagnosis, empathise and then engage communities to formulate policies and strategies that address their needs in a participatory and empowering way. Therefore, building empathising qualities among current and future leaders is key, and the starting point ought to be promoting qualities of empathy among the change agents. The SCL project of the University of Queensland (Australia) has revealed that an important way to do this is by exposing change-agents to the work of socially conscious leaders, past and present, and by demonstrating how connecting and engaging with people and articulating injustices in real terms, helps promote socially conscious changes. Such exposure and research can also help with the sensitization to and internalization of SCL values among researchers. For example, the students of UQ’s SCL Capstone Project reported that the project had a profound impact on them in changing their mindset, helping them to “grow as...socially conscious members of society”<sup>36</sup> (See Box 2.3 for more feedback).

#### Box 2.3: Feedback of students on impact of the SCL Capstone Project on them

“Socially conscious leaders empathise and take risks to initiate transformational changes which are structural and self-sustaining, have beneficial outcomes to society as a whole, and have universal values.”

“There is a call for new ethical leadership that integrates socially conscious values to address the overshadowed prioritisation of social justice and morality.”

“[the project] has allowed us to grow as researchers, students and socially conscious members of society.”

Source: Capstone Project, 2016

Indeed, the quality of empathy is key to social change. In recent times, Jacinda Ardern, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, who introduced the “wellbeing” budget for her country, stressed the importance of empathy in public policy, reminding all that “it takes strength to be an empathetic leader.”<sup>37</sup>

Thus, curricula for capacity building in mindset change at the intellectual level must include, among other things, training materials and tools that enhance qualities of empathy among the change agents, current and future and in the process, change the intellectual mindset of the change-agents towards one of social consciousness (the qualities of empathy) or in other words, towards the values of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

While the intellectual mindset influences how we conceptualize development, the relational mindset determines our ways of doing business or, in other words, the relational mindset influences our manner of policymaking. Therefore, mindset change at the ‘relational level’ is as important as changes at the intellectual level.

## Changing the relational mindset

Several reports, including a recent UN 2008 report, reveal that socially conscious policymaking warrants a relational mindset that makes citizen engagement a key element in the policy formulation process.

It is evident that the legacies of colonialism that have promoted institutions that are controlling, and elitist persist in many developing countries even today; and these, combined with the worldwide rise of market domination in development, have contributed to the capture of the policy domain by a nexus of vested interests that have distanced citizens from their governments, and in the process have reduced the space for multi-stakeholder engagement in policymaking. This is common in both developing and developed countries and as a result, the gap between policy expectations and actual policies has widened worldwide (Banks, 2018).

## 'Socially Conscious Leadership' (SCL) training framework

The proposed curriculum in SCL capacity building that would have the potential to change mindsets at intellectual and relational levels may include the following key components:

- Empathetic qualities: interventions relevant to promoting qualities of empathy.

- Intellectual mindset: orientation to the SDGs, the core values and key underpinnings and skills for development in social research and planning relevant to the SDGs.
- Relational mindset: participatory methods in research and planning relevant to changing relational mindsets; and finally, tools and techniques of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes relevant to the SDGs.

Figure 2.3 indicates three broad components for capacity building in SCL values, namely (i) empathy; (ii) orientation towards the SDGs; and (iii) change in public servants' relational mindset for effective implementation of the SDGs by using training tools relevant to the above three areas.

Policy processes that are relevant to the implementation of the SDGs must radically shift from a top-down to a bottom-up process and to "deliberative processes" so that policies are inclusive and accountable (Head, 2019). Therefore, a training curriculum for changing the relational mindset relating to policy processes must include concepts and practices that help build capacities in participatory planning and social research.

In sum, training curricula for SCL capacity building must include, among other things, components that promote qualities of empathy that are also key to changing intellectual mindsets towards a notion of development which is equitable and sustainable.

**Figure 2.3: A framework for curriculum development in Socially Conscious Leadership capacity building for mindset change**



## Conclusion and recommendations

In recent times, overemphasis on economic growth over social and environmental sustainability aspects in development processes has affected the mindsets of change-agents at multiple levels, entailing costly consequences. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, based on a more holistic framework of development and on specific goals for the promotion of just and sustainable societies, implies new ways of thinking about development.

The chapter has argued that building capacities in socially conscious leadership values and enhancing skills in qualities of empathy, social research, and participatory planning, are key to promoting and transforming the mindsets of change-agents in ways that are conducive to the planning and implementation of the SDGs, both within and across nations.

The chapter has also highlighted that mindsets are formed at various levels and most importantly, at very early stages of our lives. It has also shown that values and norms learned in early childhood may undergo changes, especially at intellectual and relational levels during adulthood, through education and the socio-political arrangements within which people live and function. The examples of Japan and New Zealand have demonstrated that enabling policy frameworks such as inclusive development has the potential to orient policymakers and change agents to a notion of development which is just and sustainable. The adoption of the SDGs in 2015 has paved the way for such wellbeing-oriented policy frameworks and shifts in the intellectual and relational mindsets of change-makers.

Finally, building capacities of change agents in socially conscious leadership values is key to promoting mindsets that are supportive of the SDGs and especially to the core principle of “Leaving No One Behind.” Thus, training in SCL, which should also include skills development in participatory research and policymaking, should be made compulsory in all public administration training institutions, especially at the entry level. Similar efforts could also be made to introduce SCL courses/research at the university level.

## Endnotes

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31. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030.html>
32. The SCL concept and its theoretical underpinnings have been derived initially from a UN (2008) study and later, refined further from a Capstone study (Group Research Project) of the graduate students of the School of Social Science, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia, entitled, "Building Human Capacity in Socially Conscious Leadership Values: Towards the Development of a New Leadership Framework for Social Change" was undertaken by Dane de Leon, Demi Reichardt, Reem Al-Qahtani, Kurtis Strangman and Sarah-Jane McCutcheon with Industry Partner: United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction, Geneva, Switzerland; and with Professor M. Adil Khan, as the Academic Adviser.
33. [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/muhammad\\_yunus\\_228663](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/muhammad_yunus_228663)
34. The author of this paper is the Principal Author of the 2008 UN World Public Sector Report.
35. The UN agency, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) in Geneva, Switzerland participated in the SCL project as the Industry Partner.
36. One student was so inspired by the project that she sacrificed her lunch for a month and donated the money saved to the education of Syrian refugee children.
37. She has also shown herself to be a compassionate leader during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

## CHAPTER 3

# **From Reactive Policy to Agile Governance: Building an Agile Mindset and Strategic Intelligence in Public Administration**

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Even before the COVID-19 pandemic sent shockwaves around the world, governments faced an intensifying conundrum: how to move from the governance tools, processes, and mindsets of the linear industrial age to those needed to face the complex and interdependent challenges of the digital age. Relying on public bodies organized to deal with contained technical domains, governments are too often slow, reactive, and ineffective in responding to emerging policy challenges which span the entire public policy realm. If the world is increasingly multidimensional and complex, governments cannot effectively deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with fragmented and reactive policy responses. This chapter lays out how strategic intelligence can support the fundamental elements of agile governance and mindsets in order to face the challenges posed by accelerating interdependence, velocity, and complexity.



## 1

## The need for more agile governance

One of the lessons that stands out from the dramatic events of 2020 is that we urgently need to build the capacity in public administration around the world to better anticipate strategic trends and developments before they cause large-scale disruptions, as well as respond more effectively in cases where solutions have yet to be found and constant adaptive learning is the only effective way forward.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development clearly recognizes the interdependencies among the challenges facing the planet and humanity. However, global disruption has only accelerated since its adoption at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in 2015. In the intervening years, three prevailing secular forces have increasingly shaped our world – interdependence, velocity, and complexity:

*This trio exerts its force, to a lesser or greater degree, on us all, whoever or wherever we may be...*

**Interdependence** – has an important conceptual effect: it invalidates “silo thinking”. Since conflation and systemic connectivity are what ultimately matter, addressing a problem or assessing an issue or a risk in isolation from the others is senseless and futile...

**Velocity** – decision-makers have more information and more analysis than ever before, but less time to decide. For politicians and business leaders, the need to gain a

*strategic perspective collides ever-more frequently with the day-to-day pressures of immediate decisions, particularly obvious in the context of the pandemic, and reinforced by complexity...*

**Complexity** – creates limits to our knowledge and understanding of things; it might thus be that today’s increasing complexity literally overwhelms the capabilities of politicians in particular – and decision-makers in general – to make well informed decisions.

COVID-19: The Great Reset by Klaus Schwab and Thierry Malleret, 2020<sup>38</sup>

*What is needed to boost public institutions’ ability to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda is a shift from traditional, often siloed and cumbersome, policy development to more agile and responsive governance approaches<sup>39</sup> that draw on new tools, processes and mindsets to inform more systemic responses.*

## 2

## Core elements of agile governance

According to the 2018 World Economic Forum White Paper "Reimagining Policymaking in the Fourth Industrial Revolution", agile governance is:

*'adaptive, human-centred, inclusive and sustainable policy-making, which acknowledges that policy development is no longer limited to governments but rather is an increasingly multi-stakeholder effort. It is the continual readiness to rapidly navigate change, proactively or reactively embrace change and learn from change, while contributing to actual or perceived end-user value.'*<sup>40</sup>

*To build a solid foundation for agile governance in public institutions, policymakers and civil servants need to take three key steps: integrate technology; take a multi-stakeholder approach; and develop an agile mindset across public administration.*

The shared values related to inclusive growth, resource and energy efficiency, circular economy practices, decarbonization, and nature-based solutions that guided the development of the 2030 Agenda should inform all three of these.

### Technology

Public servants are being challenged to move beyond simply understanding major technological advances, to mitigating, shaping, and harnessing them in order to govern better, and to become more accessible, transparent, and trustworthy.

The backdrop for this is the emergence of technologies<sup>41</sup> that are shifting power and influence away from governments, and towards companies and non-state actors. Technology pioneers are dramatically affecting societal norms and have the potential to play a key role in supporting the values and activities that are critical to delivering the positive change

envisaged in the 2030 Agenda. However, while these companies may be able to enable positive societal change, they do not have a political mandate. This presents a challenge to policymakers who will need to find ways to effectively collaborate with these actors in a manner that safeguards fundamental human rights<sup>42</sup> and is accepted as legitimate by the wider society.

The potential benefits of greater technological integration for the 2030 Agenda are manifold and go beyond using big data to more effectively track SDG implementation, for example: creating a policy environment favourable to Fintech to enable growth of non-cash disbursements – especially useful during a pandemic<sup>43</sup>; tracking health indicators in populations through mining social media data; and, offering digital health services to low- and middle-income countries. A specific example of the benefits of government cooperating with technology partners took place in India, where the government enrolled more than a billion people into its biometric identification program, directly achieving SDG 16.9 and indirectly supporting the ability of women to enjoy greater gender equality and individuals to access public services and open bank accounts.<sup>44</sup>

Digital media and influential social media users have key roles to play when it comes to accurately and responsibly communicating risks, opportunities, and concerns to the citizenry. Citizens, in turn, can use social media to spread their views and mobilise like-minded people to affect positive political change.

*Agile governance requires state actors to adopt relevant technologies and to make them work in the national interest.*

Governments that are agile will be able to find ways to better exploit technology – co-opt it and regulate it. Close collaboration with businesses and civil society organizations will be necessary to make that happen.

## Multi-stakeholder collaboration

In seeking to be increasingly agile and responsive, public servants will have to find new ways to work with a more diverse array of people and organizations<sup>45</sup>. Collaboration, co-creation, and co-production will have to become more permanent fixtures of government operations and service delivery.

The Open Government Partnership<sup>46</sup>, launched in 2011, already convenes public sector reformers and civil society leaders to try to make governments more inclusive and accountable. The partnership now includes nearly 80 countries and 20 sub-national governments. Meanwhile the US, Australia, and Singapore have all recently experimented with more consultative and deliberative policymaking, including through people juries and deliberative polling, in order to feed a wider range of perspectives into policy decisions and implementation.<sup>47</sup>

As part of this, public administration will need to increasingly incorporate design thinking that includes other experimental approaches and aims to develop socially meaningful and targeted ideas relying on co-creation. Prototyping, testing, and iterating are important tools for policymakers to pilot low-cost, low-risk versions of policies, to test hypotheses on their impacts, and then make improvements based on those learnings before launching them on a broader scale.

An example of this is the Asian Development Bank pilot project Graduation Approach for Poverty Reduction in the Philippines<sup>48</sup> targeting SDG 1, which assigns training assets to families based on need and local context. The combination of systems and design thinking provides an iterative and cumulative learning process that enables exploration of complex and fast-moving ecosystems, makes sense of observed variables, and shapes possible outcomes, while analysing the influence of those outcomes on the status quo.

As multi-stakeholder approaches become increasingly necessary, leaders in every sector will need to learn how to operate more effectively across complex networks and build trust with one another in the process. The daunting challenges facing humanity cannot be solved by any single sector alone; governance must become a multi-stakeholder endeavour – as recognised in SDG 17.

## Developing an agile mindset

These shifts should be accompanied by fostering agile mindsets in public institutions. In 2015, the World Economic

Forum's Global Agenda Council on the Future of Software and Society<sup>49</sup> published its paper "A Call for Agile Governance Principles" that recommended how governance systems could learn from successful practices in the area of software development (based on the original Manifesto for Agile Software Development<sup>50</sup>). In the paper, the council stated:

*'We believe in governance systems that are robust, adaptable and responsive. Agile software development is a proven means to achieve rapid results which meet the goals of users efficiently. These methods are readily adaptable to governance. Through this we value:*

1. Outcomes over rules
2. Responding to change over following a plan
3. Participation over control
4. Self-organization over centralization.<sup>51</sup>

While specific contexts will differ, these provide a useful guide to the changes needed in mindsets to promote more agile public governance. The council elaborated:

*'Delivering timely solutions is a more important measure of success than meeting a static checklist of rules. We believe the same principles should hold true for government actors. Governance should shift from the traditional focus on rules-based compliance to an outcome-oriented approach that can respond to changing dynamics. Implementing policy and executing on goals should evolve through incremental changes that are tested and measured for effectiveness as they are developed.'<sup>52</sup>*

Developing and nurturing trust is also a key component in new mindsets to support more agile governance, especially where multi-stakeholder approaches are involved. In their White Paper "Poly-Governance Models to Address Global Challenges", in 2016 the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Global Governance and the Future of Regional Organizations highlighted the importance of trust in multi-stakeholder endeavours, especially in the context of the 2030 Agenda, stating in its recommendations:

*'Building and maintaining trust are critical to the success of Poly-Governance Models (PGMs). Those developing and leading PGMs should plan to invest time and energy into building trust, from the earliest opportunity and through the project's lifetime, to help establish and develop robust relationships that can weather crises or difficult times.'<sup>53</sup>*

## 3

## Strategic intelligence

The Preamble of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states:

*'All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan....The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets....demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda.'*<sup>54</sup>

This is even more challenging in a world of accelerating global complexity and interconnectivity, where it is difficult to keep pace with the latest trends or make sense of the countless transformations that are taking place. How can government leaders and public servants decipher the potential impact of rapidly unfolding changes and apply this to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda when they are flooded with information, some of it misleading or unreliable? How can they effectively adapt their strategies to meet the Agenda's vision within such an evolving context?

Traditional notions of state bureaucracy are not sufficiently flexible to respond to the interdependence, velocity, and complexity of issues before them. The answer lies in more agile approaches to governance that incorporate new tools to navigate an increasingly uncertain environment.

In a world of accelerating complexity, embracing technology, promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration and an agile mindset and putting them at the core of public institutions is, however, easier said than done. The relationships between issues are in constant flux, with evolving interdependencies quickly undermining policy prescriptions. Simultaneously, the explosion of online content, and its accessibility, has multiple benefits but can also serve to overwhelm public servants seeking to understand complex issues in a limited time and with limited resources.

This calls for creating a framework to understand the shifting influences between issues and stakeholders, informed by the best knowledge available, augmented by technology, and agile enough to track developments across a web of dynamic interrelationships. Doing this requires building internal capacities, tapping into the best sources of research and analysis, and leveraging the benefits of machine intelligence.

The World Economic Forum has developed its [Strategic Intelligence platform](#)<sup>55</sup> to support agile governance, following

a systems-thinking approach, incorporating expert knowledge, and using technology to augment and scale capabilities.

Thanks to a set of cutting-edge digital tools, users can explore, understand, and anticipate the forces driving transformations around the world. At the heart of the platform are its transformation maps which depict the interdependencies between a wide range of topics, illustrating how developments in one area could impact others in the future. By drawing on the collective intelligence of the Forum's global network, transformation maps identify the factors across industries, economies and global issues from which change is driven.

It is a public resource available in ten (10) languages: English, Portuguese, Chinese, Spanish, Japanese, Arabic, French, German, Korean, Hindi. For civil servants, especially those in developing countries, this could be a valuable tool in terms of research, benchmarking, and accessing and understanding international and expert approaches to global challenges, providing clear insight as to how they should be interpreted and resolved.

While there are currently vast quantities of knowledge and information available to guide public administration, what is lacking are ways to filter the most relevant information necessary to make informed and effective decisions, especially on the interlinked and interdependent challenges found in the 2030 Agenda. This is the gap the World Economic Forum's Strategic Intelligence platform seeks to fill.

### Strategic systems-thinking

The ability to apply systems thinking – to understand the context in which an issue exists – is invaluable in determining the approaches and means to address it. For example, to understand a global rise in populism, it is helpful to look at the concomitant rise in inequality (SDG 10) and to develop a response that tackles the underlying causes rather than the symptom. Systems thinking takes account of the constellation of interconnected topics in which an issue operates and illuminates the parameters of complex and dynamic ecosystems and the associated consequences – both intended and unintended – of related policies. Effective systems thinking accounts for both core and periphery issues, in recognition of the fact that change is often driven by the periphery and scaled to be accepted by the core.

To develop a system-wide understanding of an issue requires multi-stakeholder collaboration in public administration. This means building cross-functional policy teams around key missions to produce comprehensive solutions. At the heart of such efforts should be a shared understanding of the components of a system and the shifting inter-relationships at play between them. But, as Geoff Mulgan, professor at University College London and former CEO of Nesta states in his 2018 book "Big Mind: How Collective Intelligence Can Change Our World", calibrating approaches and creating effective mechanisms to achieve this presents a challenge:

*'Every organization has to find the right position between the silence and the noise: the silence of the old hierarchies in which no one dared to challenge or warn, and the noisy cacophony of a world of networks flooded by an infinity of voices. That space in-between becomes meaningful only when organizations learn how to select and cluster with the right levels of granularity – simple enough but not simplistic; clear but not crude; focused but not to the extent of myopia. Few of our dominant institutions are adept at thinking in these ways.'*<sup>56</sup>

### Leveraging technology for augmenting and scaling capabilities

The amount of information and data available to guide government activity is enormous and growing. But this overabundance poses obvious challenges as it is quickly overwhelming - no one knows exactly how many scientific

journals there are, but several estimates point to the tens of thousands with up to two million scientific papers published each year. In addition, this research tends to confine itself to existing, relatively isolated spheres of study that do not necessarily place it in terms of its relationships within a broader system.

In this context, technology can play a valuable role in identifying and organizing knowledge in a way that enables users to navigate through and profit from the richness on offer without being overwhelmed. For example, machine intelligence in the form of concept recognition and natural language processing can quickly analyse and sort huge volumes of content to categorize it according to an established taxonomy. Choosing respected and trusted sources of that content, whether universities, research institutions or international organizations, allows you to focus on high-quality knowledge and insight.

Technology can also provide the means to place issues within their systems and enable monitoring of the fluid interrelationships mapped to real world developments as they happen, rather than reflected after the fact in periodic reports or white papers.

As the Global Agenda Council on the Future of Software and Society noted in their 2015 paper:

*'Today's new technologies allow knowledge and power to be distributed more widely than ever before. They allow the collection and dissemination of experience, the collective assessment of problems, and the design and application of solutions and improvements.'*<sup>57</sup>

## 4

# Conclusion and recommendations

The following key recommendations are critical to promote agile governance among public servants:

1. Think and act in terms of systems and not silos.
2. Ensure that the fundamental values that guided the development of the 2030 Agenda shape public service delivery.
3. Integrate technology into projects and initiatives to expand their scope and scale.
4. Take an inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach, ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented and reflected.
5. Incorporate design thinking methods, such as co-creation, prototyping, testing and iteration.
6. Develop agile mindsets to support a model of governance that is robust, adaptable, and responsive.
7. Invest the time and energy in nurturing trust among multi-stakeholder groups.
8. Seek out the best sources of knowledge and insight to inform your work.
9. Integrate readily available technologies and tools that support integration of strategic intelligence into agile governance approaches.
10. Seek continuous adjustment and improvement.

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## CHAPTER 4

# Promoting an Experimental Problem-Solving Mindset among Public Servants

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As highlighted in Chapter 3, governments are struggling to effectively meet the Sustainable Development Goals and solve public problems that involve high levels of interconnectedness, uncertainty, and instability. The pace of change and the challenge of addressing holistically the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development compound these issues. Governments often lack the agility to respond to this acceleration of change accordingly. At the same time, there is a budgetary pressure to do more with less, particularly in the global pandemic context. This chapter examines why problem-solving learning is critical for changing mindsets of public servants to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, what is meant by a problem-solving mindset, why it is important in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, and what learning strategies and approaches are needed to develop and support it. It concludes with key recommendations for governments to strategically prioritize bringing it about at scale.



## 1

## Why is problem-solving learning important for changing mindsets?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires governments to innovate and transform the way they make decisions, operate, and engage with other stakeholders. However, it is a great challenge for bureaucratic organizations to change their operational models and performance structures. Although this challenge is often recognised by public leaders, they underestimate what is actually required to overcome these obstacles. Consequently, there is a widening skills gap due to the lack of an appropriate learning approach.

The supply of learning methods to upskill the public workforce follows a fragmented pattern of one-off training sessions concentrating on analytical and technical skills. The mode of instruction often focuses on cognitive learning, the acquisition of knowledge or the development of a specific ability. Just as there is a tendency in government to mainly focus on teaching new methods when it comes to shifting to new practices. Methods and tools (and the training sessions they come with) are valuable, but on their own they are not enough.

*To use any method effectively, we need to go beyond methods and tools to focus on the core set of mindsets as well as the attitudes and skills that underpin them.*

So, to deal effectively with the SDGs and foster a culture of innovation that is open to the experimental way of working that is required to address complex challenges, it is crucial to look beyond cognitive learning or basic skills training.

*The very nature of innovation learning should be transformative: it should inspire and enable learners to shift their mindsets and change their behaviors.*

It should improve their performance – as an individual and a team – and increase the effectiveness of their organizations. Cultural and practical instruction that strategically changes both operations and mindsets is needed to help public servants navigate the complexity and uncertainty of our times through problem-solving learning.

## 2

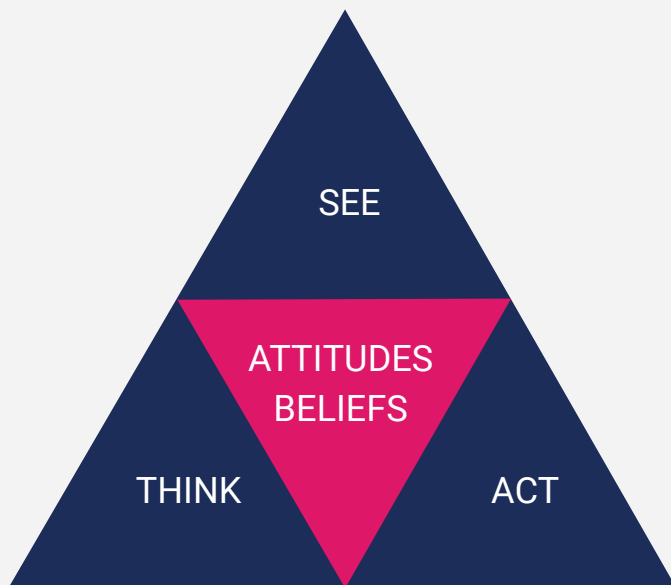
## Why an experimental problem-solving mindset and approach?

Problem solving is at the heart of how governments operate yet public servants struggle to effectively solve public problems that involve high levels of complexity. Learning needs to focus on improving how governments work and how they solve problems. The process of solving complex problems is typically permeated with uncertainty, ambiguity, lack of information, conflicting interests, opposing ideas of the problem or solution space, and issues that are constantly evolving with no clear end state. In that light, decision-making happens in unique situations where there may be no wrong or right decisions.

Managing such dynamics effectively requires – first and foremost – that change is led by the right mindsets. This requires judgment with the right set of mindsets, and attitudes. What is a better or worse decision, for the short and long term and for whom? Actions are often situated in unprecedented circumstances where pre-defined plans or success formulas are unsuitable. This new context frames the nature of competence in a new way. Competencies are not just a set of technical skills but are grounded in diversity, agility, and complexity.

### Box 4.1: What do we mean by mindsets?

If mindsets inform how you perceive situations and how you decide to act, then essentially, they are a set of beliefs and attitudes which shape how you see, think, and act.



Source: Authors

**See** refers to our perception system: what we see and hear, not just in the physical world, but socially, culturally, politically. How we 'see' things is largely determined by the 'frames' we use to make sense of reality. These are often shaped by our education, professional experience, and cultural background. For example, when an urban planner looks at traffic congestion, they may see infrastructure as the main issue; when a psychologist looks at it, they may think about human behavior.

**Think** refers to the way we make sense of situations (consciously or subconsciously). We develop mental models of how the world works and anticipate how causes and effects may lead to certain situations. This also affects the way we interpret information, create patterns, and ask critical questions.

**Act** refers to the ways we use the data and signals we see and think about to inform the behaviors and activities we deem possible and appropriate, and the manner in which we will carry them out.

Shifting to new mindsets is difficult enough in its own right. However, what is required of public servants dealing with the complex nature of public problems and the SDGs, accordingly, is managing the intricate tensions and dynamics between opposing mindsets, skill sets and ways of acting. This means that public servants need to (i) make decisions in the face of uncertainty while being able to legitimize these decisions; (ii) set out a bold course of action while adapting to and improvising for unforeseen situations; (iii) explore new possible futures while focusing on outcomes and committing to real-world effects; (iv) keep the big picture in mind while also considering citizens' needs at an individual level; and (v) be reflective and critical while having a strong bias towards action.

Mindsets are usually tacit and very difficult to codify into teachable content. Developing them requires learning modes that expose learners to the real-life situations' dynamics and messiness and mastering them involves practice and rehearsal. To jolt the status quo, learners must be challenged to look more closely at the way they currently approach, cogitate, and behave in their roles. To establish new ways to change practice for the benefit of their citizens and themselves, there must be space for learners to question the existing and explore the new. Integrating new ideas, skills, and knowledge into our sense of self and what we care about is crucial for real learning. It is crucial to link new knowledge to values and outcomes, showing how a new method will solve a deep and significant problem and why it is necessary.

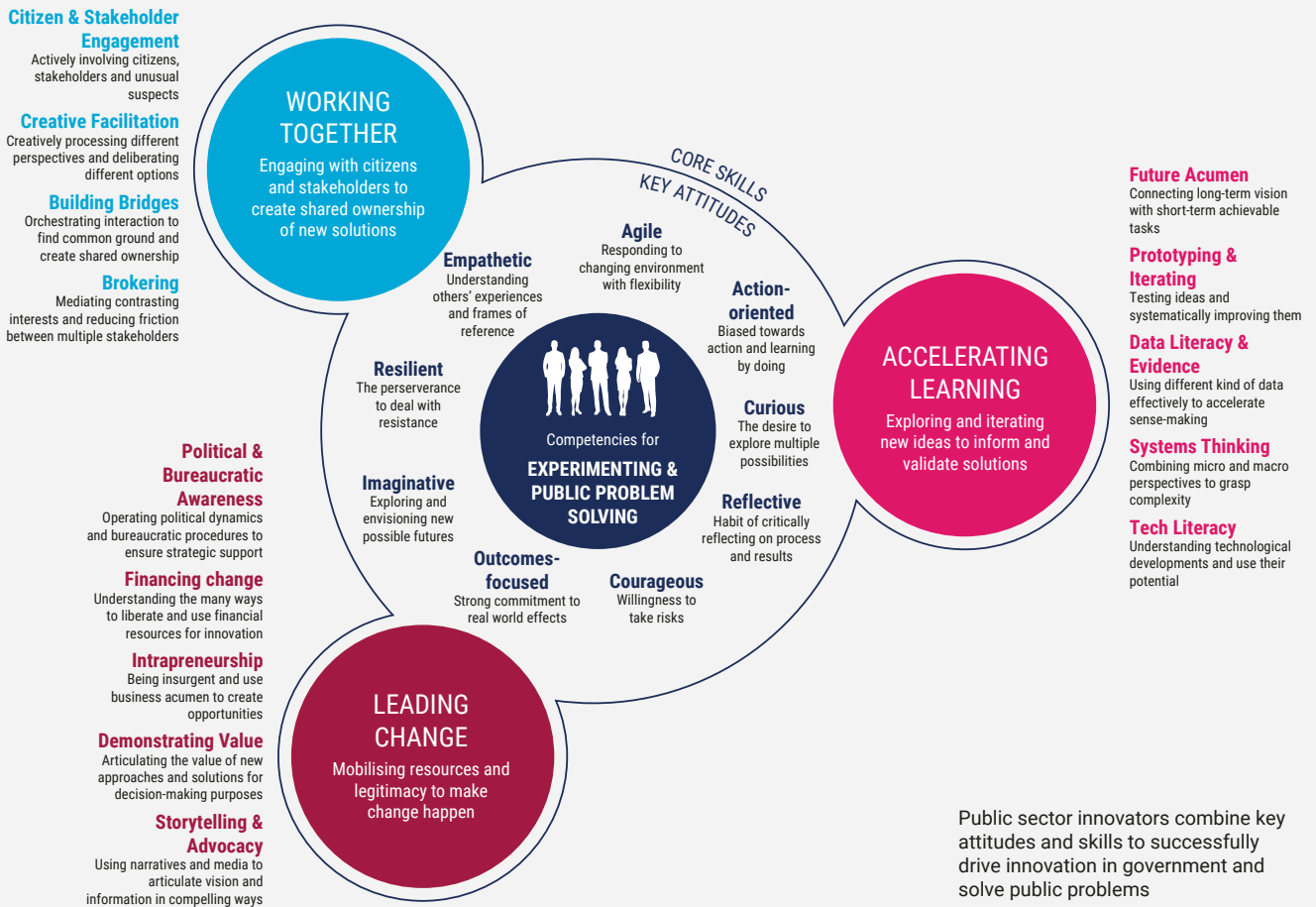
All this requires ongoing judgement and the ability to combine multiple different mindsets, attitudes, and skills at the same time. It requires a complex mind-and skillset, to say the least. Recognizing this and that said, it is also important to start somewhere useful. The research going into and experiences generated by the Nesta Competency Framework for

Experimental Problem-Solving (see Figure 4.1 below) delves into the key skills, attitudes, and behaviors that public sector innovators combine to successfully tackle problems.

*Experimental problem-solving means focusing on three 'skill areas' to shape the three core mindsets: The Collaborative Mindset, the Learning Mindset and the Leading Mindset.*

- **Collaborative: Driven by the “we” rather than the “me”.** This mindset seeks to understand situations from multiple perspectives. It is concerned with demonstrating empathy and humility to better connect, engage, understand and help build ideas with, rather than for, people.
- **Learning: Led by curiosity and the desire to experiment.** This mindset focuses on learning - through lived experiences, learning from others or just trying new things in a different way. Using these lessons to create solutions that best fit the challenge being tackled.
- **Leading: The optimistic driver pushing for change.** This mindset requires the energy and belief that things can be done to alter and improve the status quo, and that there are opportunities within the environment which can be seized upon. It is concerned with helping create the conditions for change and action, either through gaining support, mobilising people, resources or spreading knowledge and examples of success.

Figure 4.1: The Nesta Competency Framework for Experimental Problem Solving



Source: Nesta

## 3

## Learning strategies to promote an experimental problem-solving mindset

To activate and rehearse how these mindsets can generate useful actions and behaviors in public servants' work context requires learning modes that expose learners to the dynamics and messiness of real-life situations. It is therefore a useful strategic learning priority to adopt a challenge-based approach where concrete real-life challenges become vehicles for learning, enabling a "learning by doing" approach. The authenticity of practice (simulated or real-life) as a learning environment enhances the richness and depth of learning experiences. Challenge-based learning adds urgency, increases relevancy, and allows learners to directly demonstrate the value of the new mindsets to themselves and their organisation.

### Embedding learning in and around the practice

Learning in practice – rather than just learning about practice – exposes learners to real challenges when solving complex problems. In responding to these situations, learners develop and embody their skills through doing. Serious change-makers thrive on the prospect of creating impact, not just understanding how new approaches work. Successful change-makers have a strong bias towards action, and they create change by turning ideas and visions into a course of action. "Doing" is, therefore, a vital element because it allows learners to experience the effects of their actions and learn from them.

This also unlocks experiential learning in which learners have to be willing to pass through discomfort, and vulnerability. Novel locations, experiences and tasks help people shed their comfortable outer shells and become more willing to learn. The same effect is achieved by thrusting the learner into uncomfortable real-world situations where they can be exposed and challenged. Similarly, simulations and role playing can also generate the kind of emotionally compelling experiences that assist learning.

*Learning by doing becomes even more effective when it is supported with a reflection on doing.*

Reflection helps learners understand how they perceive and process information, assess their decisions' outcomes, identify skills, and knowledge gaps and diagnose patterns of effective and ineffective behavior. Reflection should precede planning activities for future directions, actions, and development. It can be supported or stimulated by reflection tools, exercises, mentoring, and peer support systems. This combination of doing and reflecting on doing is key to developing complex skills.

### Learning cycles and modalities

We generally only learn things when they have been repeated, ideally many times. Learning tends to work best when:

1. It is clear what is to be learned;
2. The learner has adopted an active learning intent; and
3. There is an opportunity to reflect on what has been learned, ideally applying it quickly.

In fact, effective learning follows a cycle of experimenting, experiencing, reflecting, and conceptualizing. This learning approach intends to include a variety of learning activities in a learning journey to reinforce this cycle.

A problem-solving mindset-oriented learning journey should include more learning modes than just learning from practice. For example, conceptual learning may complement "learning by doing" and "reflection on doing" by providing learners with quick introductions or knowledge about key concepts. This helps learners to conceptualize practice and understand the value of a specific approach. Instruction, demonstration, and simulation of a specific method or tool may help learners to develop a basic skill level and build confidence before applying them in real practice.

Specific skills and knowledge still matter. However, what is required changes over time. Public servants need to embrace a new problem-solving mindset alongside an evolving skillset. They still need the classic management skills of good diagnosis, planning, and implementation, as well as contextual legal and political knowledge.

## Behaviors as learning outcomes

While mindsets are the grounding element, these can feel a bit abstract. So, it is important to explore, define, and rehearse what mindsets look like in terms of behaviors that are likely to support desired outcomes of public servants' work; tangible actions or habits that they can see. They should be able to observe them, in themselves, their team or their organisation and recognise where they are and where they are missing.

It is crucial to let learners experience the dynamics of making decisions in the face of uncertainty and to help them develop the mindsets and embodied knowledge that enables them to manage these dynamics effectively in future situations. When defining learning outcomes, this means they need to be formulated as actionable behaviors that can be observed: effective actions that public servants take to get a specific job done.

As well as being explicit about these effective behaviors, it is equally important to consider the ineffective behaviors and define

the habits that need to be forgotten. Having clarity on these outcomes and being specific about them helps to map out the learning activities to develop these behaviors, reflect on actual behaviors, assess attainment levels, and measure impact.

It is essential to highlight that learning should not end on completing a programme. Instead, continuous learning should be encouraged. Learners should be helped to continue rehearsing and refining the mindsets obtained and behaviors adopted.

The learning principles for experimental problem solving are highlighted in Box 4.2. here below.

*Shifting mindsets involves a dynamic process – not necessarily a linear path – of constant practice and renewal.*

## Box 4.2: Nine learning principles for experimental problem solving

### 1. Focus on problem solving.

Learning efforts should help government officials become more effective at solving public problems and focus on a comprehensive palette of experimental approaches that help them explore and test new ideas to inform and validate solutions, engage with citizens and stakeholders to create shared ownership, and mobilise resources and build legitimacy to make change happen.

### 2. Embed learning in practice.

Learning in practice – rather than just learning about practice – exposes learners to the messiness and dilemmas of real-life challenges when solving complex problems. In responding to these situations, learners develop and embody their skills through doing. The authenticity of real-life practice as a learning environment enhances the richness and depth of learning experiences.

### 3. Define actionable learning outcomes.

Problem solving is about more than just having a good idea; it is about testing, improving, successfully implementing and scaling ideas that ultimately create public value. “Doing” is therefore a vital element because it allows learners to experience the effects of their actions and learn from them. When defining learning outcomes, this means they need to be formulated as actionable behaviors that can be observed; effective actions that innovators take to get a certain job done.

### 4. Prioritise learning by doing – and reflection on doing.

Learning by doing becomes even more effective when it is supported with reflection on doing. Reflection helps learners to understand how they perceive and process information, assess the outcomes of their decisions, identify skills and knowledge gaps, and diagnose patterns of effective and ineffective behavior. Reflection should precede planning activities for future directions, actions, and development.

### 5. Provide safety and support.

Learning happens when learners are outside their comfort zone and when they experience the right degree of friction. It is crucial to foster a safe and supportive learning environment and programme to pitch this friction at the right level. Learning is less effective when learners experience insecurity or anxiety. Learning needs to be orchestrated in a way that “makes the discomfort comfortable” and supports the learners with the right content, tools, and guidance at the right time.

### 6. Take the team as the unit of learning.

Solving complex problems requires a diverse and wide set of competencies – which are not usually found in one single person. In practice, teams are the unit of action and should serve as the vehicle of learning in order to reflect actual practice. Team learning enables social learning, so we should therefore facilitate and stimulate peer-to-peer learning, enabling learners to learn with and from others, and help them to share practices and experiences. The team also provides a safe space for participative learning through new relationships and shared reflection, and it provides a structure for emotional and professional peer-support.

### 7. Learn with peers and from experts.

The interaction between learners, their peers and experts is what matters most. By learning in a social context, new patterns of behaviors can be acquired by observing and imitating others. In particular, the role of experienced practitioners as a “role model” is important to inspire, motivate and demonstrate what’s possible using their own practical experience. As a “more knowledgeable other” they may serve as a mentor, giving support and guidance, or they may play the role of a critic, stimulating reflection and challenging thinking.

### 8. Enable continuous learning and sharing.

Shifting mindsets requires a continuous learning process, and the support of an active community of practice. We should therefore consider the wider learning journey – and look beyond single learning programmes – supporting learners to embed the shifts in mindset in their daily work and helping them achieve mastery in their new craft.

### 9. Promote ownership of learning.

Learning is a co-production of all actors involved (i.e., both learners and faculty) and happens best when learners are the owner of their learning. A consideration for curriculum design must be how open-ended or close-ended some elements are and to what purpose. It is important to let learners plan their own learning journey around pressing issues, as well as helping them to fulfil their learning needs and advance their career.

## 4

## Conclusion and recommendations

While we have seen an increasing number of interesting project pilots and inspiring innovation initiatives showcasing how to think and work differently with the 2030 Agenda, the larger-scale impact that could come from applying these promising new approaches strategically in government rarely happens. Governments are still struggling to embed new mindsets at institutional, organizational, and individual levels in a collective strategic effort. The big question is how best to apply and spread the mindsets, approaches, skills, and culture that increase the ability of governments to deal with the SDGs.

To achieve a strategic, government-wide focus on shifting mindsets to deal more effectively with the SDGs, governments should create a strategic agenda around supporting mindset change. As a conclusion of the chapter, here are six sets of recommendations for governments to alter their efforts and increase the likelihood of creating better capacity to deal effectively with the SDGs through shifts in mindsets and ways of working.

### Key recommendations and priorities for governments looking to support mindset changes in their organizations

1. **Narrative & language.** Governments should make clear why shifts in mindsets are important and develop a common narrative to shape a shared direction and purpose in how these shifts are connected to what the government is trying to achieve and how this relates to the specific roles, functions and activity areas prioritised in this light.

**Key priority:** Developing a shared language around the link between the SDGs and mindset changes that connects directly to practice. The challenge when dealing with mindsets as a focus area is often that it remains too abstract and is not broken down into what the specific implications are on a practical and behavioral level.

2. **Engagement & mobilization.** To achieve impact at scale, we suggest that governments take an inclusive approach to build the legitimacy and effectiveness of the 2030 Agenda. Engaging and learning from the dilemmas and challenges of public servants within their work contexts on all levels as well as mobilising relevant executives to be involved and take proactive ownership for supporting and championing initiatives and interventions will be essential to ensure successful implementation.

**Key priority:** Using the focus on mindsets to establish an active community of practice that through experimentation and peer-learning explores and illustrates future practices. A connected and established community of practice is essential for the consolidation of new ways of thinking and working within the public sector and the development of contextually appropriate methods and approaches.

3. **Conditions & structures.** To create the conditions for an enabling environment, public policy needs to enhance supply of and demand for shifts in mindsets. It is advisable that governments commit to developing new sets of policy and managerial instruments that structurally can enable, create the space for and support experimental problem-solving processes where new mindsets can be applied.

**Key priority:** An organizational strategy that can create and maintain the mandate for embedding the changes needed within the organization. New mindsets and ways of



working cannot flourish in a hostile environment. Because the effort required to create the space and legitimacy for shifts in mindsets in government is often significantly underestimated, strategic focus should continuously be on how we might practically and effectively navigate, apply, embed, and organise for the desired mindset change enabled by the appropriate authorising mechanisms.

4. **Culture & incentives.** To enable strategic and effective application of new mindsets, governments need to focus systematically on creating a culture that supports activities, sense-making processes, and learning for trying out and learning about new behaviors and ideas - that in time can foster a more experimental culture in all levels of departments and agencies.

**Key priority:** Developing a new organizational learning culture. When developing new mindsets, the end product is not only impossible to define in advance but will also continue to change over time because it needs constant rediscovery. Consequently, it is important to manage expectations and create the right demand for what can be achieved both in the process of developing and establishing new mindsets. This process requires that organizations adopt an organizational learning culture that allows for constant experimentation, reflection, and adaptation that enables public servants to try out new behaviors while (re)connecting these to their responsibility area and sense of purpose.

5. **Processes & approaches.** Policy and programme processes can be innovative and support new ways of thinking and doing by leveraging new principles, logics, and methods of experimental innovation. It is suggested that governments deal with the SDGs through a shift in policy logic and cycles that are in synergy with creating a new organizational learning culture.

**Key priority:** Experimenting with new approaches & developing new policy instruments. New mindsets are usefully supported by policy interventions and vice versa. SDG problem-solving challenges call for new ways of operating in diverse and complex environments. The Design for Policy agenda has much to offer where governments are expected to create a better dynamic between policy and practice and take the role of stewardship of change coalitions in exploring new ways of dealing with the SDG challenges.

6. **Capacity & skills.** Governments need to invest in systematic capacity building and skills development, which incorporate a central focus on developing and/or changing mindsets with a behavioral outcome focus. This entails more than learning new techniques and methods and requires a holistic focus on both individual learning journeys and organizational cultural transformation. In this light, we would recommend that investments go into dedicated capacity-building programs with a multitude of learning experiences, peer networks, and in-practice support mechanisms to embed “mindset change” learning into core tasks and responsibility areas.

**Key priority:** Strategically linking up human resource development with policy and problem-solving activities. Governments can increasingly use competency management approaches to set up standards for professional behavior and performance management, and to gain a competitive advantage by integrating HR policies with business strategies. However, this development often happens within traditional bureaucratic logics without a strategic awareness of what is required from civil servants dealing with complex issues and agendas, such as the SDGs. How good performance is understood, valued, and authorized needs to reflect the kinds of behaviors needed to act productively and effectively when dealing with the SDGs.

## Endnote

This chapter cites, incorporates and builds on resources developed by The Nesta Innovation Skills Team and the States of Change initiative – both of which Jesper Christiansen and Kelly Duggan have been part of for several years. A special thanks to the team for its dedicated and inspiring work in the space of learning for experimental problem solving. It was a great honour to be a part of the journey.

## CHAPTER 5

# Developing an Evidence-Based Mindset: Fostering a Culture of Evidence-Based Policymaking through Research, Training, and Policy Engagements

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Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond requires governments to identify, implement, and scale the most effective social policies and programs. Ensuring that social policies and programs are truly effective, and parsing out approaches that do not work, requires rigorous, policy-oriented research. Most importantly, it also requires public servants who are willing to invest in generating such evidence and genuinely apply lessons from research. What we term the “evidence-based mindset” for public servants is one in which they are both willing to learn and act upon rigorous evidence in the policy design process. In this chapter, practical questions faced by public servants are discussed as follows: How can rigorous evidence contribute to effective policymaking? What obstacles do public servants face in ensuring that evidence informs government policies? What are some effective strategies to promote an evidence-based mindset within a bureaucracy? The chapter concludes with key recommendations on how to develop an evidence-based mindset.

## 1

## How does rigorous evidence fit into policymaking?

Governments will need to identify the most effective programs to meet the SDGs. Grounding their policies in rigorous evidence can help drive this agenda. This involves conducting needs assessments, descriptive surveys, qualitative studies, obtaining feedback from citizens, monitoring data on program implementation, and carrying out high-quality impact evaluations that provide causal evidence on the impact of programs and policies on people's lives.

When the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)<sup>58</sup> works with government partners to engage with and use evidence in decision-making, its focus and expertise lie in conducting and increasing the use of evidence from randomized evaluations, a type of impact evaluation that provides a rigorous and unbiased estimate of a program's causal impact. In this chapter, when we mention evidence, we will primarily refer to evidence from randomized evaluations.

A randomized evaluation, also known as a randomized controlled trial or RCT, is one type of impact evaluation method. When designed and implemented well, randomized evaluations produce a rigorous and unbiased estimate of a program's causal impact. They can also be designed to investigate important questions about why a program works and for whom.

In a randomized evaluation, a large number of eligible program participants are randomly assigned to one of two or more groups before a program begins. One group receives the program (the "intervention treatment group"), and the other does not receive the program during the study period (the "comparison group"). Researchers measure the outcomes of interest in the intervention and comparison groups before and after the program is implemented. An important advantage of this type of evaluation is that random assignment, when appropriately executed, helps ensure that systematic differences between groups do not drive differences in outcomes. In other words, we can more confidently attribute the difference in outcomes to the intervention rather than to other factors.

When appropriately designed and implemented, randomized evaluations are powerful tools for measuring impact in policy

research. The [2019 Nobel Prize in Economics](#)<sup>59</sup>, awarded to J-PAL co-founders Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo and longtime J-PAL affiliate Michael Kremer, recognized this experimental approach as transformative to the field of international development.

Randomized evaluations generate rigorous answers to specific questions that a government or other organization seeks to address. They allow the organization to identify the impact of the tested program on outcomes of interest and adapt its policy and program accordingly. Learnings from randomized controlled trial evidence have informed government policies through a variety of pathways, including by:

- **Shifting global thinking:** Knowledge generated by randomized evaluations have fundamentally shaped our understanding of social policies.
- **Institutionalizing evidence use:** Governments have institutionalized processes for rigorously evaluating innovations and incorporating evidence into their decision-making.
- **Applying research insights:** Lessons from RCTs have informed the design of government programs.
- **Adapting and scaling a program:** Programs originally evaluated in one context have been adapted and scaled in others.
- **Scaling up an evaluated pilot:** Governments have replicated and expanded a successful evaluated pilot to similar contexts.
- **Scaling back an evaluated program:** Governments have scaled down, redesigned, or decided not to move forward with programs that were evaluated and found to be ineffective.

Learnings from randomized evaluations can enable governments to adapt their existing policies in favour of more effective and innovative interventions. The approach stands in contrast to one where decision-making is based on anecdotes, ideology, inertia, or private interests, which tends to be the norm in many bureaucracies.

## 2

## Bridging the evidence-policy gap

### Generating demand for rigorous evidence

The use of policy relevant RCTs has expanded across the world over the past decades. As of July 2020, J-PAL affiliated researchers had conducted more than 1,000 RCTs in nearly 90 countries, an increase from fewer [than 200 in 2004](#)<sup>60</sup>. Many of these evaluations have been conducted with government partners. Of the 400 million people reached by scale-ups of programs found to be effective after being evaluated by J-PAL affiliates, 85% were reached by government-led scale-ups.

In addition to J-PAL, a number of J-PAL's partner organizations, such as Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), have built research infrastructure to generate rigorous causal evidence, contributing to the rise of policy-relevant RCTs. As shown in Figure 5.1, RCT registrations in the American Economic Association's RCT Registry increased from 112 registered RCTs in 2013 to a cumulative total of 3,550 in 2020. While this research is often published in academic journals, J-PAL and our partners have worked to make evidence from randomized evaluations accessible to broader audiences, including government partners, by writing [hundreds of jargon-free summaries](#)<sup>61</sup>, analyzing [policy insights from evaluations](#)<sup>62</sup>, and sharing them widely with high-level decision-makers.

Despite this rapid and significant expansion in the supply of RCT evidence, key questions remain: Are civil servants (1) open to learning from rigorous evidence and (2) willing to act upon the evidence and incorporate it in their decision making?

*Recent randomized evaluations conducted by J-PAL affiliated researchers found that policymakers do value findings from rigorous research and that those findings influenced their mindsets, i.e., beliefs, and, ultimately, the policies they implemented.*

Through two related randomized evaluations conducted in collaboration with the National Confederation of Municipalities in Brazil, [Hjort et al. \(2019\)](#)<sup>63</sup> found that policymakers were indeed interested in research findings and were willing to

review their prior beliefs and act based on evidence. More specifically, policymakers were willing to invest in learning from evidence: 98 percent of the 900 public officials involved in the study were willing to pay to know the findings of a study, especially when the study had a large sample size and when the official was involved in implementing a similar policy in their municipality.

In addition, policymakers were willing to change policies based on evidence: mayors invited to participate in an information session about research that demonstrated the effectiveness of tax reminders letters were 10 percentage points more likely to implement tax reminder letters in their own municipality 15-24 months later, a 33 percent increase relative to the comparison group. Results from this study demonstrate that lack of access to research information can be a constraint to policymaking and that public officials can be sophisticated consumers of accessible and policy-relevant research.

J-PAL has found this to be true in many countries and contexts, not just Brazil. We have partnered on research projects and policy analysis with dozens of different governments, from municipalities in the United States to state governments in India to national ministries in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia.

While robust demand for evidence-based policymaking is certainly not the case for every government body at every point in time, there is broad scope for rigorous research and evidence-informed policymaking to become the norm for governments seeking to enhance the effectiveness of their actions.

### Barriers to evidence use

Given that the supply of evidence has significantly improved over the past years, and that many policymakers are open to incorporating evidence into their policy choices, we should not expect to see such a large 'evidence-policy gap', defined as the difference between current policies and research findings on the most effective approaches. Evidence-informed decision-making is still the exception rather than the rule for many governments around the world. Why is this the case?

In an ideal world, policymakers would identify a problem, understand its roots, consider several options for solving it, identify the most effective solution, and implement it well. Data and evidence are crucial inputs in this process. However,

polymaking is neither a linear nor a simple process. In a 2019 report, “[Creating a Culture of Evidence Use](#)”<sup>64</sup>, J-PAL conducted dozens of qualitative interviews in Latin America and identified a number of specific challenges contributing to the ‘evidence-policy’ gap:

- Low prioritization of and limited capacity for evidence-informed policymaking, especially when civil servants have limited time or are under the pressure of competing demands.
- Limited infrastructure for evidence-informed policymaking, including the capacity to understand and synthesize evidence.
- Financial constraints that prevent allocating resources to evaluations.
- Political uncertainty, whether at the institutional or administrative levels.
- Difficulty finding the right evidence and applying it to a new context as it requires spending resources to understand the nuances of existing evidence.

In addition to these challenges, recent literature has also sought to identify some of the behavioral biases at play that can prevent the emergence of an evidence-based mindset among policymakers. The policymaking process is not straightforward and involves many people bargaining over policy decisions under the pressure of time and competing demands. As a result, a policy can often rely on bounded

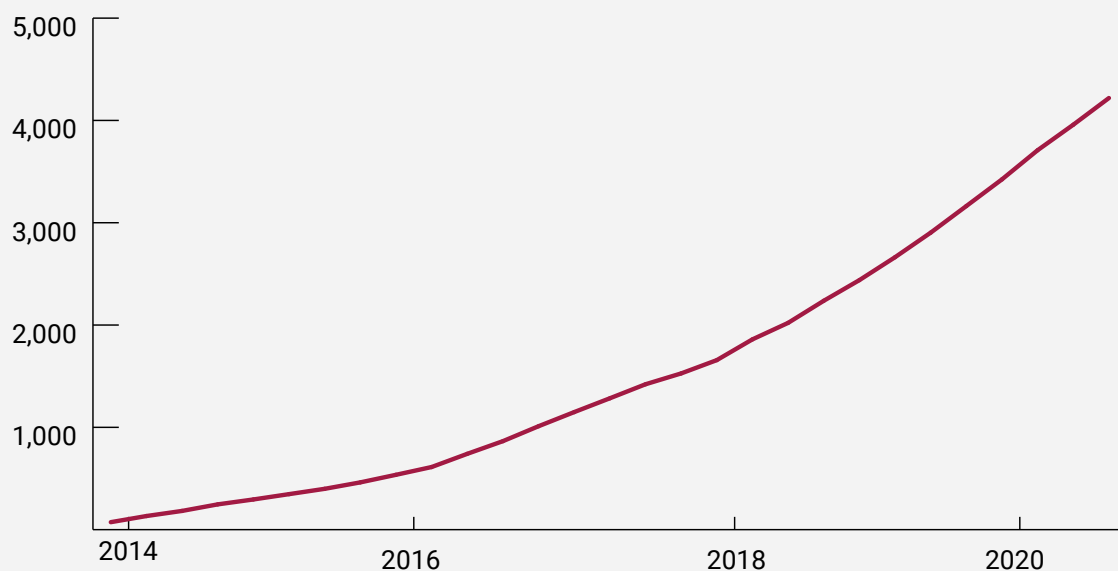
rationality, where decision-making is limited by available information, cognitive limitations, and the limited amount of time available, which can lead to suboptimal policy choices.

[Banuri et al. \(2019\)](#)<sup>65</sup> have studied the existence of such cognitive biases in interpreting data for the purpose of providing advice to decision-makers. The researchers used two survey experiments conducted with civil servants in the United Kingdom and international civil servants working for the World Bank. Their findings suggest that civil servants may suffer from significant biases in their decision-making, including confirmation bias (when evidence is selectively used to support pre-existing views), and framing bias (when riskier decisions are taken based on whether options are presented with positive or negative connotations). Researchers found that deliberations, by subjecting a policy choice to a decision made by consensus, can mitigate some of these biases’ effects.

Beyond those considerations, the system in which civil servants are embedded in needs to offer them an incentive to develop such an evidence-based mindset. As such, they need to be supported and authorized by their bureaucratic administration and have space to actually incorporate evidence in their policy recommendations. This can be achieved by administrative reforms where evidence is systematically considered a prerequisite or at least an asset to policy decisions.

Some of the strategies discussed in the next part could help lift some of the barriers mentioned and open the space for an evidence-based mindset to prevail in public decision-making.

**Figure 5.1: Cumulative Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) Registrations in the American Economic Association (AEA) Registry, 2013-2020**



## 3

## Strategies to develop an evidence-based mindset

While many of the ingredients required to develop an evidence-based mindset exist—such as the availability of evidence itself and policymakers’ responsiveness to evidence—bringing these ingredients together to breach the evidence-policy gap requires active and concerted efforts by policymakers and organizations alike.

Since J-PAL was founded, our experience with more than 40 long-term partnerships with government agencies around the world has produced key insights on effective strategies to promote an evidence-based mindset within governments.

### Strategy 1: Generating tailored evidence to solve specific problems identified by policymakers

In this case, researchers and policymakers work together to identify key policy issues and potential interventions to address them, and rigorously evaluate their impact to determine whether they should be implemented at scale.

An example of this strategy in practice comes from Gujarat, India, where J-PAL affiliated researchers partnered with the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) to identify an effective method to curb excessive pollution, which was having damaging effects on air quality and people’s health. While the state had been using auditors to monitor plants’ emissions, the existing auditing system was thought to produce unreliable data. Through a [randomized evaluation](#)<sup>66</sup>, researchers and the GPCB found that making auditors more independent from the companies they audited improved the accuracy of auditors’ pollution reports, and lowered plants’ emissions. Based on the results of this evaluation, the GPCB reformed its auditing system in 2015 to adopt new evidence-informed guidelines and practices. Members of the research team continue to work closely with officials in Gujarat and other Indian states on environmental policy design and evaluation, further strengthening the organization’s evidence-based mindset.

### Strategy 2: Leveraging existing evidence from around the world to inform local decision-making

Ensuring policy is informed by rigorous evidence does not always require conducting new randomized evaluations. An alternative strategy is to leverage RCT evidence generated in other contexts to inform local decision-making. In this regard, creating an evidence-based mindset also requires nurturing good consumers of rigorous evidence who are able to carefully apply existing findings to their local context.

It is unlikely that an existing impact evaluation will precisely answer a question that a policymaker is facing in precisely the location in which they are facing it. To help determine whether a particular approach tested elsewhere might make sense in their local context, we have used a [generalizability framework](#)<sup>67</sup> which breaks down the question “will this program work here?” into a series of questions based on the theory and existing evidence base behind a program, and identifies how these can be applied to solve a local problem. This approach can lower key barriers to evidence-informed policymaking, including time and cost.

For example, [over the last three years](#)<sup>68</sup>, J-PAL Africa, Pratham, Innovations for Poverty Action, UNICEF Zambia, VVOB (a local education NGO), and USAID have supported the Zambian Ministry of General Education to pilot and scale up a remedial education program modelled off of Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), an educational approach [evaluated by RCTs and found to be extraordinarily effective](#)<sup>69</sup> in India. Applying the program in Zambia has required careful thinking and analysis about the drivers behind Zambia’s education challenges, whether local conditions in classrooms in Zambia—for example, variation among learning levels of children—were similar enough to those in India for the intervention to be similarly effective, and whether education stakeholders were open to funding and implementing a program adapted from another country.

Ultimately, with support from J-PAL and our partners, the Ministry adapted a set of evidence-based implementation models based on TaRL to pilot in the country and is now planning to scale up the pilot based on its success.

### Strategy 3: Institutionalizing a holistic culture of evidence use

J-PAL’s work with public servants has demonstrated that going beyond standalone instances of evidence use and nurturing and sustaining an evidence-informed mindset requires:

1. Prolonged, continuous interactions with governments to both generate and adapt evidence to the local context.
2. Strengthening the use and availability of administrative data.
3. Building a government’s technical capacity around evidence use; and
4. Developing and reforming institutional processes that promote the use of evidence in decision-making.

Policymakers can work together with researchers and evidence-to-policy organizations to establish a continuous evidence-to-policy *learning cycle*. This cycle (Figure 5.2) involves continuously assessing the local context to identify priority problems and opportunities; reviewing existing evidence; applying the related findings and generating new evidence as needed; implementing, scaling, and evaluating programs; and in parallel building the capacity of public officials to be thoughtful producers and consumers of rigorous evidence.

Whether the partnerships focus on establishing an Evaluation Lab to systematically pilot, test, and scale new policy innovations, improving administrative data systems and analytics, or reviewing existing evidence to inform a new policy strategy, these multifaceted evidence-to-policy partnerships are designed to help governments use data and evidence more frequently and systematically.

Such partnerships often require reforms that can include creating systems and processes that encourage the use of data and evidence. While committed individuals can make evidence-informed decisions, creating an institutional culture requires formal systems, guidelines, and incentives for evidence use. These systems and processes can take many forms, from prescriptive and resource-intensive, on the one hand, to lighter-touch and more directional on the other. For example, the Department of Planning in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu created a dedicated fund for program evaluation of US\$1.5 million per year in 2017. Alongside the creation of this fund, the Department also issued evaluation guidelines for impact evaluations of government programs. A less intensive example is the application criteria developed by the Chilean Ministry of Economy's Innovation Fund. Applicants to this competitive fund must include a theory of change and a review of existing evidence when seeking funding<sup>70</sup>.

**Figure 5.2: The Learning Cycle**



- Phase 1: Diagnosis
- Phase 2: Evaluation
- Phase 3: Evidence use and learning

## 4

## Building, designing, and sustaining evidence-to-policy partnerships

While the above strategies require policymakers to collaborate with researchers and evidence-to-policy organizations, building, designing, and sustaining these partnerships is a challenge in itself. Grounded on its experiences with government partners

in Latin America, J-PAL has drawn the following key lessons for governments seeking to adopt an evidence-based mindset as highlighted in Table 5.1 here below.

**Table 5.1: Key insights for governments looking to adopt an evidence-based mindset**

### 1. It is important to allocate resources to evidence use and make it someone's job to apply evidence in policy design.

While many governments and donors fund evaluation, few hire personnel or allocate personnel time to focus on evidence use, which takes time, resources, and specialized knowledge. In some cases, evaluation departments have no formal mechanism for feeding results in program design. Allocating even a small amount of resources and personnel to apply the lessons from data and impact evaluations in policy design and implementation, and setting up systems that facilitate this institutional learning, is a crucial part of building a culture of data-driven and evidence-informed decision-making.

### 2. Similarly, creating dedicated spaces where evidence use is encouraged and rewarded can help build a culture of evidence-informed innovation.

It can be challenging for policymakers to propose new policy ideas or processes. Day-to-day responsibilities can crowd out innovation and experimentation, and evaluation is often seen only as a tool for accountability. Where it is possible to go beyond reserving a small amount of staff time and resources to evidence use, innovation labs and other institutions dedicated to identifying and testing new policy solutions create incentives and safe spaces to propose and evaluate new ideas. These dedicated spaces help build an understanding of data and evidence as tools for learning and improvement, rather than only for accountability.

### 3. Greater investment in administrative data collection, management, and inter-agency data sharing can go a long way in helping advance the evidence use agenda.

Developing more user-friendly administrative data systems can enable government employees to use data and evidence more regularly in program management and implementation. Good administrative data also significantly reduce the costs of impact evaluation, including evaluating at scale, making it easier to embed evaluation in the policy cycle.

### 4. Collaborating with evidence-to-policy organizations and researchers can help establish a culture of data and evidence use.

Organizations and researchers with expertise in generating, synthesizing, and applying data and evidence can be valuable partners in governments' efforts to use data and evidence more systematically. While some governments have the resources to build this expertise internally, many do not, and in these cases collaborating with others can help augment government capacity.

Source: Authors' elaboration



## 5

## Conclusion and recommendations

Well-designed and implemented randomized controlled trials are a particularly rigorous way of establishing causal links between a program and its results. RCT evidence can play a key role in informing the policies aimed at achieving the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the rapid increase in the supply of rigorous evidence and despite civil servants' willingness to learn from the evidence and apply its findings, an evidence-based mindset is still far from the norm for governments around the world.

But embracing this mindset is essential to unlocking government innovation and impact. This approach to governance can lead to the most promising policies and programs being implemented at scale, reaching millions of people with effective government services. This, in turn, helps build people's trust and confidence in their government.

Nonetheless, there remains a number of barriers in bureaucracies for the evidence-based mindset to prevail among civil servants. Existing strategies consisted in generating tailored evidence to solve specific problems identified by policymakers; leveraging

existing evidence to inform local decision-making; and institutionalizing a holistic culture of evidence use between evidence-to-policy organizations and governments.

An evidence-based mindset in policymaking can be furthered through institutional partnerships that prioritize (1) the adoption of a continuous learning cycle of creating and adapting evidence to the local context, (2) leveraging the use of high-quality administrative data in decision-making, (3) parallel capacity-building efforts to generate good consumers and producers of evidence within government, and (4) further institutional reforms that promote the use of evidence in decision-making.

Much work remains to make an evidence-based mindset the norm for public servants, rather than the exception. J-PAL's rapidly growing network of affiliated researchers and government partners is indicative, however, of rising demand for policy-relevant evidence at all levels of government. Adopting this mindset has vast potential for wide-scale impact not only in government systems, but also in the lives of the citizens governments are seeking to serve.

### Endnotes

58. The mission at the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) is to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence. J-PAL's work for the past 17 years has involved training and partnering with to precisely foster this "evidence-based mindset," creating and institutionalizing an openness to learn and act based on research findings.
59. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2019/press-release/>
60. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/blog/6-25-20/celebrating-milestone-1000-randomized-evaluations-j-pal-affiliates>
61. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluations>
62. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/policy-insights>
63. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/informing-policy-research-brazil>
64. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/page/creating-culture-evidence-use>
65. <https://academic.oup.com/wber/article/33/2/310/5530388>
66. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/case-study/strengthening-third-party-audits-reduce-pollution>
67. [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the\\_generalizability\\_puzzle](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_generalizability_puzzle)
68. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/blog/8-31-18/applying-generalizability-framework-adopting-teaching-right-level-zambia>
69. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/case-study/teaching-right-level-improve-learning>
70. Carter, Samantha, et al. "Forging Collaborations for Scale: Catalyzing Partnerships among Policy Makers, Practitioners, Researchers, Funders, and Evidence-to-Policy Organizations." *The Scale-Up Effect in Early Childhood and Public Policy: Why Interventions Lose Impact at Scale and What We Can Do About It*, edited by Lauren H Supplee et al., Routledge, 2021.

## CHAPTER 6

# Promoting an Inclusive Mindset in the Public Sector to Leave No One Behind

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Ensuring that no one is left behind is the overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda specifically calls for inclusion and empowerment of those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations, by stating *“People who are vulnerable must be empowered. Those whose needs are reflected in the Agenda include all children, youth, persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80 percent live in poverty), people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants”*.<sup>71,72</sup> Furthermore, the Principles for Effective Governance for Sustainable Development, finalized by the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration and endorsed in 2018 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), highlight the importance of “inclusiveness” through five principles: leaving no one behind, non-discrimination, participation, subsidiarity, and intergenerational equity.<sup>73</sup>

In an effort to implement these principles, policymakers in several countries are moving towards universal policies and targeted approaches, especially in relation to effective and inclusive COVID-19 responses and recovery. Such policies are also complemented by targeted measures to address the specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups. To foster inclusiveness and leave no one behind, it is essential that public servants be equipped with an inclusive mindset supported by policies and strategies for inclusion. To the extent possible, the latter should reflect the views and rights of all people, including those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations, while continuously correcting individual, organizational, and societal blind spots. This chapter examines what an inclusive mindset is; it highlights the challenges of developing an inclusive mindset and illustrates the competencies required to develop an inclusive mindset in the public sector. It concludes by offering a set of strategies to foster an inclusive mindset in public institutions to implement the principle of leaving no one behind.

## 1

## What is an inclusive mindset: concept and key features

In general, mindsets provide the basis for decisions, where humans cognitively make choices based on habits, beliefs, values, and behavioral biases.<sup>74</sup> Among a variety of mindsets, building an inclusive mindset in the public sector has become a priority for ensuring inclusiveness and leaving no one behind due to the increased social inequality between different social groups and even within the same social group.<sup>75</sup> An inclusive mindset embraces assumptions, perspectives, and behaviors that are based on and promote inclusiveness.

*The primary feature of an inclusive mindset is openness to diversity, participation, and collaboration.*

Having an inclusive mindset requires understanding, admitting, and accepting differences among various groups and individuals and rectifying the biases, prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination against certain groups and communities, such as slum dwellers, persons living in poverty, the homeless, and poor rural communities, among others. The bias and discrimination against targeted groups of people that are based on ethnic, religious, cultural, and other social factors should be condemned and uprooted through interventions by public institutions.

To be more specific, public servants who have an inclusive mindset exhibit a cluster of six signature traits<sup>76,77</sup>:

- **Commitment to inclusiveness:** being committed to diversity and inclusion through the alignment of public servants' values to the principle of inclusiveness.
- **Awareness of possible biases towards vulnerable groups or people in vulnerable situations:** being mindful of personal/individual blind spots as well as flaws in the system/organization and making efforts to promote meritocracy and ensure "fair play".
- **Courage to correct actions that promote exclusion:** being courageous by accepting personal biases towards certain social groups and weaknesses in dealing with them, admitting mistakes when made, challenging the status quo, and creating the space for personal corrective actions and for others to contribute.
- **Cultural inclusiveness:** being effective in cross-cultural interactions and adapting as required.
- **Emotional intelligence, including empathy:** demonstrating an open mindset and exhibiting a desire to understand others' views and experiences, listening without judgment, and showing empathy to put oneself in the shoes of other people.
- **Collaboration:** empowering others, leveraging the diversity of views and perspectives within and outside the public sector, and focusing on collaboration with an array of stakeholders, especially those furthest left behind.

## 2

## Challenges of developing an inclusive mindset in the public sector

Ensuring that no one is left behind is very challenging considering the multi-faceted vulnerabilities and specific needs of those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations. The latter is made more complex by the fact that people's vulnerabilities and needs are changing or continuously evolving over time and are heterogeneous within one group.

Such vulnerabilities are compounded by a number of newly emerging challenges arising from climate change, urbanization, public health emergencies, such as COVID-19, as well as the 4th Industrial Revolution and the accelerated pace of digital transformation. The latter risks further exacerbating existing digital divides between rural and urban, youth and older persons, and men and women, which in return will further widen socio-economic inequalities. This situation has led many countries to step up their efforts to implement a national strategy for building an inclusive society. This includes possible actions to unlock the full potential of all people by leveraging society's collective intelligence and by mobilizing whole-of-society efforts, including by empowering vulnerable groups as agents of change and promoting the well-being of all. There is a wide range of challenges in the public sector towards developing an inclusive mindset, namely lack of commitment to inclusion; implicit biases, prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination; lack of capacities to address the challenges of vulnerable groups; and lack of capacity for collaboration with other stakeholders and empowerment of those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations.

### 1. Lack of commitment to inclusion

Just understanding diversity is not enough for building an inclusive mindset. Public sector leaders must also be committed to inclusion, in line with SDG 16.7, and ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels. To implement the principle of inclusion, public servants should fully understand the meaning of respect for diversity of vulnerable groups and people in vulnerable situations by: i) working effectively with people from all backgrounds and not discriminating against any individual or group; ii) treating all people equally with dignity and respect without bias, including gender bias; iii) encouraging participatory and gender-responsive and pro-poor budgeting; iv) showing respect for and understanding of diverse points

of view and demonstrating this understanding in daily public service delivery and decision-making; and v) conducting a periodic review of own biases and behaviors to avoid stereotypical responses.<sup>78</sup>

### 2. Implicit biases, prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination

To transform the public sector, it is necessary that public servants acknowledge and understand their biases and prejudices, which are usually the result of stereotypes emanating from cultural, ethnic, religious, and other values and beliefs. A stereotype has traditionally been defined as "overgeneralized attributes associated with the members of a social group, with the implication that it applies to all group members".<sup>79</sup> The UN Report on the World Social Situation 2016 found that discriminatory norms and behaviors remain widespread and continue to drive social exclusion.<sup>80</sup>

*It is important to note that while formal institutional barriers which disadvantaged and marginalized groups confront are easy to detect, informal barriers are often more subtle, therefore making it difficult to measure discrimination.<sup>81</sup>*

To promote the social inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalized groups, the public sector should raise awareness of existing stereotypes, and the values, beliefs, and implicit biases towards certain groups of people. To address the unique vulnerabilities and special needs of vulnerable groups, the public sector should develop new capacities and skills through training and leadership dialogues to build an inclusive mindset. The trainings can focus on how to listen to different voices of people from different backgrounds and how to work together with vulnerable groups through, for example, co-designing and co-creating public services.

### 3. Lack of capacities to address the challenges of vulnerable groups

Those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations often have the lowest share of development gains and are most at risk from any social, economic, or environmental shocks. To provide more inclusive public services and ensure better engagement of disadvantaged and marginalized groups and communities, public servants need to be equipped with the necessary capacities to deliver last-mile public services. In addition to a lack of commitment to inclusion and diversity in the public sector of some countries, another major barrier is the intention-action gap, which leads to behaviors and actions that reinforce social exclusion even if public servants have good intentions. Another common challenge in addressing and understanding the needs of vulnerable populations is the lack of timely, reliable, and disaggregated data.<sup>82</sup> Generating disaggregated data by gender, age, disability, location, etc. is required for an accurate assessment of the specific vulnerabilities of vulnerable groups

and their special needs. In this regard, government should strengthen capacities in civil registration and vital statistics, such as ID management systems, to ensure that all people are included in the official statistics from the beginning of their lives. Digital technologies can facilitate this process.

With spiraling demands for services, rising expectations, and significantly diminished budgets, the public sector is expected to deliver more and better with less resources for the whole society. The public sector is also expected to deliver services that meet the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups. Public institutions are increasingly leveraging digital technologies to improve the efficiency and coverage of social services. Thus, the public sector should invest in developing new capacities, in particular digital mindsets, skills, and literacy, and extending access to the Internet to remote and rural areas, improving its accessibility and affordability, and enhancing the relevance of the content, especially for disadvantaged and marginal groups and communities.

Figure 6.1: Key drivers for innovation from a systematic perspective



Source: <https://oecd-opsi.org/projects/country-studies/>

#### 4. Lack of capacity for collaboration with other stakeholders and empowering those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations

To address the specific challenges faced by disadvantaged and marginalized groups and communities, the public sector should work with other relevant stakeholders. The public sector may lack the political will and human and financial capacities to collaborate with other stakeholders, especially in institutionalizing stakeholder engagement and mobilizing resources.

Engaging disadvantaged, marginalized, and other relevant stakeholders requires that public sector organizations have the competence to initiate or lead a participatory process. This process calls for: i) an organizational culture that is open to people and non-governmental stakeholders to participate in public affairs; ii) a clear mandate and resources to engage in stakeholder participation; and iii) an organization that is flexible to engage in consultation processes to learn and, if needed, revise their own policies and strategies. Meaningful stakeholder engagement needs careful planning of a just and transparent process, a skilled facilitation, and a robust evaluation of results. One important component of engagement with multiple stakeholders is mobilizing resources for facilitating the participation of disadvantaged and marginalized groups and communities, including through exploring innovative financing mechanisms such as crowdfunding, social impact bonds, blended financing, and commercial insurance, among others.

Meanwhile, the public sector may also lack the capacity to empower disadvantaged and marginalized groups as proactive agents of change, which requires: i) establishing an enabling environment (see Figure 6.2); ii) addressing the digital divide by investing in ICT infrastructure to improve accessibility and

affordability; and iii) building the capacity of vulnerable groups, including through awareness-raising campaigning, knowledge sharing, and promoting digital capacities. The capacity development process of empowering vulnerable groups could include identifying and engaging stakeholders, undertaking capacity needs assessment, defining interventions through a participatory strategy, building partnerships, as well as ensuring timely implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

**Figure 6.2: Establishing an Enabling Environment**



Source: Damon P. Coppola, 2020

3

## Required competencies for building an inclusive mindset in the public sector

A number of competencies are required to promote an inclusive mindset among public servants. Major competencies for an inclusive mindset generally include: i) emotional intelligence, ii) communication, iii) respect for diversity, including flexibility and adaptability; iv) negotiation and facilitation, and vi) engagement and collaboration with other stakeholders.

**Emotional intelligence**, which refers to “the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, as well as recognize and influence the emotions of those around you”<sup>83</sup>, is critical for an inclusive mindset. The four main domains of emotional intelligence are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, and there are 12 competencies which include empathy, organizational awareness, emotional self-control, and adaptability (see Figure 6.3).<sup>84</sup> One of these competencies is empathy, which is generally defined as “the ability to sense other people’s emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling”.<sup>85</sup> Individuals with the competency of empathy would be attentive to

emotional cues and listen well; show sensitivity and understand others’ perspectives; and help out based on understanding other people’s needs and feelings.<sup>86</sup>

Several governments around the world have been spearheading innovative practices to enhance empathy of public servants so they can better understand and respond to the needs of citizens, including the marginalized and vulnerable groups. For example, in Bangladesh, the Access to Information (a2i) initiative includes empathy training which aims at empowering public servants to place themselves in citizens’ shoes and motivate them with a sense of purpose for driving improvements in public service delivery, particularly by re-designing public services in a citizen-centric manner.<sup>87</sup> Another case is the Accessibility Empathy Lab in the United Kingdom which was set up at the Government Digital Service (GDS) to help raise awareness of government or public sector employees on the barriers citizens face and the ways that assistive technology and good design may contribute to overcoming them.<sup>88</sup>

**Figure 6.3: Emotional Intelligence Domains and Competencies**

| SELF-AWARENESS           | SELF-MANAGEMENT         | SOCIAL AWARENESS         | RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT  |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Emotional self-awareness | Emotional self-control  | Empathy                  | Influence                |
|                          | Adaptability            |                          | Coach and mentor         |
|                          | Achievement orientation | Organizational awareness | Conflict management      |
|                          | Positive outlook        |                          | Teamwork                 |
|                          |                         |                          | Inspirational leadership |

Source: Goleman, D. and Boyatzis, R.E. (2017). *Emotional Intelligence Has 12 Elements. Which Do You Need to Work On?* Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2017/02/emotional-intelligence-has-12-elements-which-do-you-need-to-work-on>

**Communication skills** are critical for public servants to be able to listen to the voices of citizens, especially those of the marginalized and vulnerable groups, and understand their vulnerabilities and needs. An inclusive mindset requires strategic communication skills for systemic understanding and interaction with people from all sectors of society.

**Respect for diversity, including flexibility and adaptability**, is necessary for personalized public services that are customized to address the special needs of each citizen, especially those of the marginalized and vulnerable groups which are indeed heterogeneous even within the same group and dynamic and evolving based on various factors and circumstances. This is an integral part of an inclusive mindset in policy designing and public service delivery.

**Negotiation and facilitation** are required skills for public servants to settle disputes among different stakeholders and reach agreements in the process of addressing the unique vulnerabilities of those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations. Public servants should be the upholders of the interests of vulnerable groups. Due to the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities of the poorest and vulnerable groups, public servants may need to negotiate or facilitate the process for arriving at optimal solutions through direct or facilitated discussions with different government departments and other relevant stakeholders, which may have different understandings, priorities, or strategies and approaches.

Leadership, attentive listening, building trust, and showing flexibility are all important negotiation skills. Facilitation is “the

act of helping other people to deal with a process or reach an agreement or solution without getting directly involved in the process or discussion yourself”.<sup>89</sup> Public servants as facilitators could lead the process and engage relevant stakeholders in the discussion to solve disputes and move through problem-solving processes, as well as to address specific challenges and multi-dimensional vulnerabilities confronted by the poorest and vulnerable groups. Public servants as a neutral party could facilitate the flow of right information to minimize information asymmetry and ensure fair treatment for the poorest and vulnerable groups and other relevant stakeholders.

**Engagement and collaboration with other stakeholders** are very important to ensure that public servants not only hear the voices of vulnerable groups but also engage them and other stakeholders in the process of policymaking and in the implementation process, for example, through effective consultation with the targeted groups for co-designing and co-creation. For effective engagement and collaboration, different stakeholders should agree and recognize common leadership responsibilities and commit resources for the sake of achieving a shared goal. According to the [Stakeholder Engagement Planning and Assessment Tool](#) for the 2030 Agenda developed by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and International Association for Public Participation (IAP2),<sup>90</sup> inclusive engagement, which is one of the four dimensions of meaningful engagement, requires: i) stakeholder and context analysis; ii) diversity of perspectives; iii) reducing barriers to participation; iv) inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups; v) appropriateness from cultural perspectives; and vi) provision of safe spaces.<sup>91</sup>



4

## Strategies and approaches to cultivating an inclusive mindset in the public sector

Developing an inclusive mindset in the public sector requires strategies and approaches to enhance capacities at individual, organizational, and institutional levels.

**Strategy 1: Raising awareness of why an inclusive mindset is a core driver for building effective, accountable, and inclusive public institutions.** Developing an inclusive mindset could start with sensitization campaigns among public servants on the importance of the principle of non-discrimination with an aim to: i) respect, protect, and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all; ii) ensure equitable access to public services provided on general terms of equality; iii) prohibit discrimination in public service delivery; iv) promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development in line with SDG Target 16.b; v) ensure equitable accessibility standards among public service standards, including at local level; vi) support cultural sensitivity audit of public institutions;

and vii) advance universal birth registration and legal identity for all in line with SDG 16.9.<sup>92</sup>

**Strategy 2: Promoting leadership development for inclusiveness.** Developing an inclusive mindset should start with political commitment from top leaders. Political leaders should aim to build an inclusive society and make it an integral part of a national strategy to pursue inclusive growth and social equality and justice. Public sector leaders at all levels should raise awareness in the society and among public servants about the detrimental impact of social injustice, and inequality on long-term economic development and social stability. Meanwhile, public sector leaders should continuously upgrade their skills and enhance their capacities to engage other stakeholders and empower vulnerable groups. According to UNESCAP, there are four dimensions of quality engagement: purposeful, proactive, inclusive, and transformative<sup>93</sup> (see Figure 6.4).

**Figure 6.4: Four dimensions of quality engagement**



Source: UNESCAP & IAP2 (2018). Stakeholder Engagement Planning and Assessment Tool for the 2030 Agenda.

**Strategy 3: Instituting a legal and regulatory framework to promote an inclusive mindset.** It is essential to institute a legal and regulatory framework for building an inclusive mindset, which would make inclusion mandatory, not optional for public servants. First, the public sector itself should be required to be committed to a diverse workforce. A workforce in the public sector should duly reflect the diversity of the society they serve.

**Box 6.1: France: ‘Balanced appointments in senior management of the public service’ law (January 2013)<sup>94</sup>**

*This legislation seeks to ensure more equal opportunities of women among senior public servants by prioritizing women in the recruitment of senior government officials, municipalities, healthcare facilities as well as social institutions. The target is to reach an annual average of 40 per cent in first-time recruitment of women. If the numerical criterion is not fulfilled, the legislation mandates that the company make a financial compensation proportionate to the number of incomplete units. The feminization estimate for “management” positions was 34 per cent for first-time employment in 2014.*

The diversity of the workforce could help ensure a good range of perspectives and expertise to promote innovation and creativity with better solutions and enhance decision-making for effective interactions with people. Second, the political representation by people of different backgrounds in legislative bodies should be safeguarded by legislation. Third, the public sector should promote fair employment for all people, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, or gender, and provide incentives to create more job opportunities for vulnerable groups through collaboration with the private sector and civil society organizations.

**Box 6.2: Singapore: The WorkRight Initiative of the Ministry of Manpower and CPF Board (Launched in 2012)<sup>95</sup>**

*The Employment Act of Singapore was optimized to empower particularly low-paid Singaporean workers who are commonly senior, less qualified, and mainly employed in sectors, such as cleaning, protection, retail, foodservice by micro-entities. Despite unfair employment conditions, concerns of losing workplace and unawareness of their rights discouraged these marginalized groups from reporting violations. The key goal was to increase knowledge of low-wage workers and secure their pension protection by informing employers and employees via a public promotion strategy about their responsibilities and rights.*

**Strategy 4: Promoting an inclusive mindset by fostering values of inclusiveness at the organizational and institutional levels.** The public sector should feature inclusiveness as its core value through its recruitment policy, codes of conduct and other instruments, which would lead to greater awareness and potentially to changes in the behavior of public servants. Practicing the principles of respecting diversity and non-discrimination during the selection process of new recruits could help develop an inclusive mindset of public servants in the long run.

**Strategy 5: Setting up a new competency management framework that focuses on inclusiveness.** The competency framework of the public sector should be under periodic review to incorporate the principle of inclusiveness and related competencies so as to promote an inclusive mindset. To achieve the SDGs and the principle of leaving no one behind, public servants need to broaden their perspectives, challenge the predominant social norms and stereotypes, change attitudes, and embrace new competencies and related behaviors that promote inclusion. They should align their personal values, attitudes, and behaviors with the core values and competencies related to equity, inclusion, and dignity for all.

**Strategy 6: Adopting a whole-of-government approach to developing an inclusive mindset.** Building an inclusive mindset should be fostered at all levels of governments, including among local governments. As local governments are more proxy to citizens and deliver all essential services at a local level, it is important that local officials develop an inclusive mindset to ensure inclusive services and the engagement of vulnerable groups. More importantly, with an inclusive mindset, local government officials can co-create and co-design customized public services together with vulnerable groups.

**Strategy 7: Promoting effective monitoring and evaluation.** Developing an inclusive mindset in the public sector can only be effectively materialized by linking Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to inclusive behaviors and diversity and inclusion outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation play a key role in helping governments and other stakeholders address the needs of the most vulnerable by ensuring continuous appraisal of the needs of the most vulnerable and of the outcomes of public administration programmes. This process is critical to determine whether measures taken on behalf of vulnerable populations must be revised to better serve the heterogeneous needs of groups and how to do so. Without data, inclusive policies and programs cannot be developed to address vulnerable groups’ needs.

**Strategy 8: Developing incentives and reward mechanisms.**

An effective mechanism should be established to recognize and reward those leaders who are champions of inclusiveness and are role models in displaying inclusive behaviors and in nurturing a culture that fosters an inclusive mindset among public servants. This rewards system could acknowledge the contribution of highly inclusive leaders across public institutions as well as showcase the benefits derived from their inclusive

behaviors. For example, the United Nations Public Service Awards recognizes innovative practices spearheaded by public institutions which deliver inclusive and equitable services for all, including through digital transformation.<sup>96</sup>

Challenges, required competencies and strategies needed to promote an inclusive mindset in the public sector to leave no one behind are summarized in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1 Promoting an Inclusive Mindset in the Public Sector to Leave No One Behind**

| CHALLENGES   | REQUIRED COMPETENCIES  | STRATEGIES  |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of commitment to inclusion</li> <li>• Implicit biases, prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination</li> <li>• Lack of capacities to address the challenges of vulnerable groups</li> <li>• Lack of capacity for collaboration with other stakeholders and empowering those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional intelligence</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Respect for diversity, including flexibility and adaptability</li> <li>• Negotiation and facilitation</li> <li>• Engagement and collaboration with other stakeholders</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy 1: Raising awareness of why an inclusive mindset is a core driver for building effective, accountable, and inclusive public institutions</li> <li>• Strategy 2: Promoting leadership development for inclusiveness</li> <li>• Strategy 3: Instituting a legal and regulatory framework to promote an inclusive mindset</li> <li>• Strategy 4: Promoting an inclusive mindset by fostering values of inclusiveness at the organizational and institutional levels</li> <li>• Strategy 5: Setting up a new competency management framework that focuses on inclusiveness</li> <li>• Strategy 6: Adopting a whole-of-government approach to developing an inclusive mindset</li> <li>• Strategy 7: Promoting effective monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• Strategy 8: Developing incentives and reward mechanisms</li> </ul> |

## Conclusion and recommendations

Developing an inclusive mindset in the public sector is key to leaving no one behind and building an inclusive society, particularly considering the multi-dimensional and dynamically evolving vulnerability of different groups. Moreover, vulnerable groups, especially people living in poverty, the working poor, women and children, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups, have been disproportionately hit by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups will have not only immediate consequences but also indirect and long-term consequences. In this context, building an inclusive mindset in the public sector has become an even more urgent task than in the past. Changes in public servants' values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors towards inclusion are critical for a public sector that effectively addresses the needs of those furthest left behind.

Developing an inclusive mindset in the public sector requires a systematic approach to building capacities at individual, organizational, and institutional levels. Achieving the principle of "inclusiveness" of effective governance for sustainable development also hinges on building an inclusive mindset in the public sector.

The journey to transform the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of public servants is a long one. Yet, it is important to start the process. An inclusive mindset in the public sector can be promoted, firstly, by raising the awareness of the urgency and necessity of developing an inclusive mindset in the public sector, especially with a view to the ongoing scourge of the pandemic. Secondly, political leaders should be committed to promoting inclusiveness in both the public sector and the whole society as well. Thirdly, the public sector should review its existing laws and regulations related to "inclusiveness" and ensure establishing legal and regulatory frameworks which are conducive to promoting an inclusive mindset as well as social inclusion of vulnerable groups in general. Fourthly, the competency framework of public servants should be reviewed and upgraded to give a prominent role to inclusiveness. Fifthly, due to the evolutionary process of building an inclusive mindset at all levels of public institutions, there should be an effective and dynamic mechanism to monitor and evaluate the performance of public servants on inclusive behaviors, diversity, and inclusion outcomes. Finally, it is critical to nurture a culture for respecting diversity and inclusiveness at all levels of government and in the whole society.

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## CHAPTER 7

# Fit for Purpose: Using Behavioral Insights to Equip Public Servants for Agenda 2030

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This chapter will cover three distinct topics. First, it briefly reviews the basics of behavioral science through a public service workforce lens and lays out a framework for thinking about behavioral science in terms of *friction* and *fuel*. Second, it looks specifically at *friction* and explores how it can be added and removed to create more effective hiring practices. Third, the chapter will examine *fuel* and how a workplace can be designed to stimulate motivation. It concludes by arguing that behavioral science points to the importance of not only *changing the mindsets* of public servants – which will only go so far – but also *changing the context* in which public servants make decisions.

## 1

## Behavioral science: the basics

In his discussion of organizational behavior, psychologist Benjamin Schneider (1987) famously asserted, “the people make the place.” This assertion is true of organizations worldwide of all sizes and types, from the private sector to public institutions. Every day, the decisions workers make and the actions they take affect their own well-being and productivity, the wellbeing and productivity of co-workers, customer satisfaction, and the effectiveness of the institutions where they work.

In 2015, the United Nations Member States established the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) meant to transform our world. The sixteenth SDG focuses on peace, justice, and strong institutions, indicating that peaceful and inclusive societies, sustainable development, and access to justice require “effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” (United Nations General Assembly, 2015, p. 25).

Given that strengthening institutions is key to transforming our world, as highlighted in Chapter 1, and that “the people make the place,” we must use what is known about human behavior to equip workers worldwide to thrive and flourish. Public servants, in particular, are in a key position to undermine or improve transparency, inclusiveness, and the strength of institutions. What can be done to enable, motivate, and support the development of a strong public service workforce? Behavioral science offers evidence and insight to help answer this question.

At their core, behavioral science insights are interdisciplinary and diverse. Behavioral science consists of psychology, behavioral economics, economics, data science, sociology, and other fields that shed light on the factors influencing behavior.

Behavioral scientists commonly reference a dual processing view of the brain made famous by Nobel prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman (2011), wherein humans have, broadly, two ways of processing information:

1. **System One** – fast and frugal processing, which works on instinct and allows people to navigate the world using limited psychological resources.
2. **System Two** – slow and logical processing, which works deliberately and allows people to work out complicated situations to make optimal decisions.

Far too often, public policies and workplace policies are based on an implicit assumption that human beings will operate with their System Two. Yet time, experience, and research studies

have repeatedly shown that this is not always true. System Two requires a great deal of time and cognitive effort, which are precious resources given the many demands facing public servants throughout the day. Rather than always making optimal or perfectly rational decisions, people operate with bounded rationality: they leverage both System One and System Two to make a sufficiently satisfactory decision while using the fewest cognitive resources, even if the end decision is not technically the most optimal choice possible (Simon, 1956, 1982).

As a result of overreliance on fast, automatic thinking, our decision-making and behavior are strongly influenced by the environment in which we make decisions. When it comes to equipping public servants for the SDGs, implementing measures to promote a change of mindsets at the individual level is not enough. Herein lies the problem: all of us (you, we, and public servants) intend to do things that we do not actually do. This is called the intention–behavior gap (for review, see Sheeran and Webb, 2016). Influencing mindsets often serves only to increase a worker’s intention. In many ways, this adds motivational fuel. However, if there are barriers – psychological or practical friction – that prevent workers from engaging in the behavior, changing mindsets will not lead to the desired outcome. A foundational tenet of behavioral economics is that humans cannot always be counted on to carry out their intentions, do what is in their best interest, or choose the most rational course of action. With this irrationality comes a predisposition for decisions to be affected by the context in which people make choices.

This insight enables policymakers, employers, and any designer of decision contexts to influence behavior through small, sometimes imperceptible changes to environments in ways that do not remove people’s freedom to choose the course of action they prefer. Behavioral science approaches offer an opportunity for policymakers and practitioners to influence behavior by adjusting the environment. For example, Beshears, Choi, Laibson, and Madrian (2009) show that when it comes to designing a pension program, opting people into saving for retirement leads more people to save for the future than when people are opted-out by default and have to take extra steps to sign up. This small example has big implications.

Given the effectiveness of behavioral science approaches in addressing challenges in different domains worldwide, the field needs to develop simple yet effective tools to enable this work to spread. While several frameworks do exist<sup>97</sup>, in this chapter we will leverage the friction and fuel analogy and use it as a framework to think about how to improve workplace settings in the public sector.

## 2

## Headed to the moon?

Imagine you were trying to get to the moon. To take off, the ship you have built will need some help. It will need to blast off and successfully navigate out of the atmosphere fighting off gravity. How are you going to accomplish this? The answer is to reduce friction and add fuel. Too much friction, and it won't take off smoothly. Not enough fuel, and it won't take off at all. Behavior change is the same, and we use this analogy to help us design effective solutions and interventions to change behavior.

### Reducing friction

Humans are cognitive misers. We go through life trying to make optimal decisions while expending as little energy as we can – we are boundedly rational. As such, our actions are highly affected by what is easy and hard. The first tool in the arsenal of anyone trying to change behavior is to reduce the frictions (obstacles) in the way.

### Adding fuel

After reducing friction, the next step is to add fuel or motivating forces. Humans are motivated by a range of things: everything from social pressures and the maintenance of our identity to avoiding punishment and achieving economic gain. The second tool is to find the right incentive, or a mix of incentives, to motivate the desired change. To apply this analogy in practice, we often leverage three important steps, as highlighted in Table 7.1.

With this practical approach, there are many ways in which behavioral science can be applied to governments and public service institutions worldwide – far too many to cover in one short chapter. Rather than providing an exhaustive list, we offer examples of both friction and fuel.

**Table 7.1: Steps to Changing Behavior**

#### 1. Identify the Key Behavior

The first question is to identify what we are trying to change. The key is to be as specific as possible about the particular behavior a person is engaging in or not engaging in. The problem at hand may involve multiple behaviors, by multiple people, but for each, we should be able to identify what it is that they are doing, where, when, and with whom.

#### 2. Identify the Behavioral Barriers

Next, we need to establish what is preventing this behavior from naturally occurring. Barriers can be both psychological and practical, for example:

- **Psychological** – being “myopic” and therefore not motivated to do actions that would benefit one’s future self, such as saving money;
- **Practical** – for example, having to go into a bank branch to save and having to travel across town to get there.

Both types of barriers are important and often necessitate different solutions.

#### 3. Add Fuel, Remove Friction

Once we have identified the key behavior and the barriers preventing that behavior, we look to remove friction (i.e., implement ways to reduce barriers) and add fuel (i.e., adopt a mix of incentives) to create behavior change.



## 3

## Thinking about friction – getting people right

Friction is perhaps the biggest barrier to behavior change. And it is rarely given the consideration it deserves when behavior change programmes are attempted. Consider, for example, the problem of sedentary behavior at work, including among public servants. One way to counter this is to install sit-stand desks that public servants can adjust so that they spend part of their workday standing. Through the lens of System Two, employees would carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of sitting down and standing up and choose in appropriate measure the healthier option that maximizes their long-term wellbeing. More often, however, people will set the desk to sit and maintain this status quo without mental deliberation – which likely explains why the installation of sit-stand desks has led to disappointingly low levels of habit change (Venema, Kroese & De Ridder, 2018). By changing the default setting from sitting to standing height, Venema et al. (2018) show how “a default nudge” can significantly increase stand-up working rates. Reducing friction, in this way, can prompt desirable behaviors at work without changing mindsets per se.

Another area where friction needs to be considered is when building an effective public service workforce. This requires careful consideration of the processes that decision-makers use to select and place people into their roles. In the workplace context, the person-environment fit is a broad term encompassing more specific types of fit, such as person-job fit and person-organization fit (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Research has shown that the fit between people and their environment affects not only employees’ wellbeing but also their commitment and productivity (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Unfortunately, bias can all too easily creep into hiring and promotion processes in ways that prevent fit. The resume review is one such area where this happens. Research has examined resumes submitted in response to job openings, which are identical with respect to qualifications and differ only in terms of job-irrelevant details like the applicant’s name (which often signifies characteristics like gender and ethnicity). Results show that job-irrelevant information such as an applicant’s demographic characteristics influence call-back rates (e.g., Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Derous, Nguyen, Ryan, 2009). Given that resumes are one of the most common tools for screening candidates for an open position, this poses a substantial problem.

In this way, it is well acknowledged that employment discrimination is not only the result of overtly prejudiced attitudes but also stems from implicit, unintentional biases that are beyond the decision maker’s conscious awareness. One might reason that a diversity and bias training program is in order to address such problems – we need to change people’s mindsets. However, Harvard scholar Iris Bohnet argues otherwise. Implicit biases, she maintains, are difficult, if not impossible, to train decision-makers’ brains out of. Instead of debiasing our brains, we need to work on debiasing our organizational systems and processes (Bohnet, 2016; Morse, 2016). In short, then, we need to think carefully about the context surrounding sound, unbiased decision making – adding and removing friction where necessary. This argument is consistent with Naru, Papa, and Nakagawa’s (Chapter 8) assertion that behavioral science should be used to build organizational processes with a behavioral foundation.

Platforms such as *pymetrics* and *Applied* illustrate how behavioral science can be used to design recruitment, assessment, selection, and placement systems. *Pymetrics* uses neuroscience games and artificial intelligence (AI), audited for bias, as an alternative or addition to resumes to quickly calculate people’s fit to different roles (Foster & Viale, 2020). Hiring outcomes are improved by focusing decision-makers on job-relevant attributes. For the hiring manager, this approach reduces friction by offering a quick, easy, data-driven decision aid designed for System One thinking. *Applied* offers a tool that removes names from job applications while both chunking and randomizing application details prior to presenting information to decision-makers who evaluate candidates’ qualifications (Babbage, 2020). Chunking<sup>98</sup> in this context means that elements such as education are extracted from each candidate’s job application and presented in a way that allows decision-makers to compare each section of the application for all candidates, side by side. Chunking promotes objectivity by encouraging “apples to apples” comparisons among candidates. Randomizing means that candidates’ information is presented in a random order each time information from a new section of the application is presented. This prevents confirmation biases and halo effects, which lead to biased decisions. In a sense, *Applied* adds cleverly designed friction to prevent implicit System One biases from influencing hiring practices.

## 4

## Thinking about Fuel – Motivating the Workforce

Getting public servants into roles that fit is important, but it is not the end of the story. Once they are in the role, there needs to be an environment that brings out the best in them. What prompts public servants to perform better than necessary, to go above and beyond the call of duty, and approach the maximum performance they are capable of? In large part, motivation. Work motivation is the metaphorical fuel that helps drive high-quality public service. Work policies and environments have the capacity to deplete motivation or to leverage and boost it. Workers are motivated in productive ways that simultaneously contribute to their own wellness and organizational performance when employers operate in a manner that contributes to – rather than stifles – the fulfilment of certain fundamental human needs (see Table 7.2).

Even a small amount of reflection suggests how powerful such motivators can be. Let us consider competence, for example. It is probably easy to call to mind ordinary people working very hard to master a sport, a musical instrument, a craft, or a foreign language – to name but a few examples. People pursuing such aims often practice and persist, even in the face of discomfort and adversity. In many cases, such hard work is not a response to a requirement or external enticement. Rather, people work hard on a wide variety of things because they are motivated to gain competence – to meet a challenge or goal and experience the satisfaction that comes with growth, development, and mastery. If managed well, this kind of drive can be leveraged in public organizations.

As noted, competence is not the only ingredient for self-determined, autonomous motivation. Relatedness and autonomy matter too. Bareket-Bojmel, Hochman, and Ariely (2017) studied the motivation and productivity of Intel employees working in 12-hour shifts to assemble computer chips. These employees worked for four days in a row, followed by four days off. Bareket-

Bojmel et al. (2017) tested different ways of improving workers' motivation and productivity upon coming back to work after four days off. Employees were randomly assigned to receive one of several different kinds of incentives for reaching a challenging manufacturing goal on their first day back at work. Some were told they would receive the equivalent of a \$25 bonus. Others were incentivized by a family meal pizza voucher. Still, others were informed they would receive a verbal reward from their senior manager, praising them for a job well done.

The question was: would these incentives work in the short run? And, perhaps more importantly, would their effects persist over time even after the incentives were removed? Results showed that compared to baseline performance, productivity increased on the first day back for employees in each of the incentive conditions. However, the monetary incentive backfired over time. The authors looked at employees' performance on the second, third, and fourth day back after the incentive was removed. The productivity of those who had received a monetary incentive dropped below the baseline level of performance demonstrated before the incentive program was put into place. In contrast, the positive effect of the verbal praise from the boss persisted. Verbal praise is a way of supporting employees' relatedness needs<sup>100</sup>. Those who had received a verbal reward from their senior manager continued to perform above baseline levels even after the incentive was removed. Interestingly, the performance of those who received a pizza voucher was somewhere in between. It was a little lower than the performance of those who received verbal praise but significantly better than those who had received a cash incentive on the first day. We think the pizza incentive would have worked better if an actual pizza (rather than a voucher) had been delivered to employees' homes at the end of their first day back at work, thus supporting relatedness by allowing employees to receive salient, immediate recognition in the eyes of their families.

**Table 7.2: Basic Psychological Needs**

Self-Determination Theory holds that each of us has three basic psychological needs—for autonomy (freedom to choose), competence (effectance or mastery), and relatedness (belonging) (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017). Work environments that satisfy rather than thwart these needs are where we see more organizational citizenship behaviors<sup>99</sup>, more autonomous motivation, higher quality performance, better customer service, and greater employee wellbeing.

**1. Autonomy:** freedom to choose

**2. Competence:** mastery

**3. Relatedness:** belonging

Self-Determination Theory holds that motivation varies not only in terms of quantity but also in quality. Not all motivation is created equal. In particular, there is a difference between autonomous and controlled motivation. Autonomous motivation is characterized by people working with a full sense of willingness, volition, and choice. As Deci et al. (2017) have pointed out, “When individuals understand the worth and purpose of their jobs, feel ownership and autonomy in carrying them out, and receive clear feedback and support, they are likely to become more autonomously motivated and reliably perform better, learn better, and be better adjusted” (p. 20).

This means that helping people find meaning in what they do creates higher levels of high-quality motivation. Unfortunately, the reverse is also true – when the work environment is constructed such that public servants cannot see the meaning of their work activities, motivation suffers.

The above is illustrated by a simple example. Participants in an experiment were offered \$2.00 to use Lego pieces to assemble figures (Ariely, Kamenica & Prelec, 2008). They were given instructions on how to build the figure from the Legos. After assembling the Lego figure, they were given the option of assembling another one for less money. It was up to them whether to proceed or quit. This continued for as long as they wished; participants could work as long and hard as they wanted. Half of the participants were randomly assigned to a more meaningful condition where each Lego figure, upon completion, was placed on the desk in front of them. They could see their progress through the accumulation of assembled Lego figures. This progress gave some meaning or purpose to their work – a sense of accomplishment. The other half of the participants were randomly assigned to a condition where each Lego figure they built was disassembled in front of them as they were working on the next one. It was clear that their work was pointless; if they chose to continue beyond the second round, they were simply re-assembling pieces they had already assembled before. The task requirements and wage schedules were identical in the two conditions. In purely rational economic terms, the costs and benefits were the same. Yet, the participants in the first, more meaningful condition demonstrated far more motivation. They chose to work longer and produce more. Stripping even the small amount of meaning from this relatively trivial task had a demotivating effect such that participants in the second condition quit sooner.

*Meaning, purpose, and a sense of accomplishment are fundamental to work motivation.*

An understanding of autonomous motivation is especially important in today’s work environment, which is marked by an increasing need for lifelong learning due to the rapidly changing nature of work. The opposite of autonomous motivation is a motivation that feels controlled by someone else. Deci et al. (2017) note, “when motivation is controlled, either through contingent rewards or power dynamics, the extrinsic focus that results can narrow the range of employees’ efforts, produce short-term gains on targeted outcomes, and have negative spillover effects on subsequent performance and work engagement” (p. 20). This explains why extrinsic rewards sometimes backfire, as in the Intel example above, leading to reduced motivation and lower performance in the long run. Under certain circumstances, rewards can crowd out autonomous motivation. Extrinsic rewards such as bonuses can undermine performance when they change public servants’ perceived locus of causality, thereby diminishing their sense of autonomy (Deci et al., 2017). In other words, when public servants begin to interpret their own hard work as a response to someone else’s demands or enticements rather than their own self-determined interest or desire, the quality of their motivation and performance will ultimately deteriorate.

While high quality, autonomous motivation has always been vital, many employers acutely realize its importance when circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic force people to work from home. Counting the number of emails remote employees send, for example, is unlikely to fuel feelings of autonomy and runs the risk of backfiring – raising anxieties, rewarding unnecessary emails in lieu of mission-critical behaviors, and extinguishing autonomous motivation. Organizations with employees who feel engaged and have self-determined motivation are more likely to see a high level of performance, even when work suddenly shifts to a home office.

*In sum, public institutions that operate in ways that support autonomous motivation and allow public servants to develop, grow and meet their inherent needs will not only contribute to aims pertaining to equity and decent work. They will also fuel productivity.*

They will see employees flourish in ways that approach maximal performance – what they are truly capable of – and which can promote effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

## 5

## Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter focused on behavioral thinking and laid out a framework for applying it: friction and fuel. It then discussed how to think about friction, for example, by institutionalizing hiring procedures that minimize bias, and fuel, by constructing work environments that foster high-quality autonomous motivation and develop stronger institutions. While applying behavioral science to these two areas will go a long way toward shaping the future we want, these are not the only opportunities to apply behavioral insights to organizational wellbeing. Other opportunities abound, including at the workgroup and team level of analysis, such as behaviorally informed interventions designed to promote positive relational dynamics at work (e.g., Lee, Mazmanian, & Perlow, 2020).

*To effectively equip public servants for Agenda 2030, behavioral science can and should be leveraged by public sector organizations not only to change mindsets but to design environments that enable employees to follow through with their good intentions and to be their “best selves” at work, even when engaged in fast and frugal, System One modes of thinking.*

Such an approach stands to benefit not only employees but also their co-workers, managers, and the institutions and members of the public they serve.

To close, we have consolidated four recommendations for public sector organizations wishing to use Behavioral Insights to equip public servants for Agenda 2030:

1. When it comes to work organizations, “The people make the place.” As we outline in the chapter, recruitment decisions are open to unconscious bias and so designing the recruitment process carefully to mitigate this bias is essential.
2. Carefully and strategically calibrate friction and fuel to encourage wellbeing and productivity at work. Sometimes, this means inserting friction to slow down or stop unwanted behaviors, such as biased decision making or overworking.
3. Autonomous motivation fuels performance. Public sector organizations can foster high quality autonomous motivation by helping people find meaning in their work and by getting the incentive system right.
4. Do not just focus on changing mindsets. Behavior is largely a product of the context in which it takes place. To change behavior, design the environment for System One thinking. This will make it easier for workers to follow through on their good intentions.

## Endnotes

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97. For example, see Mindspace (Dolan et al., 2010)
98. In [cognitive psychology](#), chunking is a process by which our brains group individual pieces of information together to form a meaningful unit (Gobet, 2005).
99. In [industrial and organizational psychology](#), organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) refer to helpful things employees do, which are not part of their official job duties. OCBs contribute to organizational performance and include actions such as volunteering for tasks that are not required, helping coworkers with their assigned duties, and speaking favorably about the employing organization to outsiders (Dalal, 2017).
100. Relatedness needs are an innate desire to experience connections with others. This includes caring for other people, as well as being cared for. Relatedness is considered a fundamental human need and requires interaction with others (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

## CHAPTER 8

# Change in Organisational Culture in the Public Sector: Lessons from Behavioral Science<sup>101</sup>

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Robust institutions are essential to drive progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is reflected in the Goals themselves since a key difference between the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) and the SDGs is the inclusion of “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions” (SDG 16) with a target that includes “developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions.” The full realisation of the 2030 Agenda requires particular efforts to improve and innovate public sector organisations. This chapter examines the need to address the organizational culture in orientating and transforming organisations. It highlights why behavioral insights can be applied to changing organisational culture, and how public sector organisations can use behavioral insights to advance the SDGs.

## 1

## Organisational culture fit for the Sustainable Development Goals

Developing effective institutions is challenging for many countries because they face a variety of unique complexities due to the multi-stakeholder, multi-organisational nature of the work environment. For complex and wicked problems, merely changing the formal rules of institutions, as highlighted in Chapter 1, is rarely sufficient to cause sustainable organisational change (Schneider et al., 1996; Schwartz, 2018).

Investing resources to shape mindsets is a key component in building stronger institutions and addressing complex goals such as the SDGs. This involves understanding the public servants' mindsets – their values, inspiration, and behaviors – to inform the design of structures and processes and, ultimately, change organisational culture to advance the SDGs.

Public servants are indispensable partners to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Organisational culture is the oil in the engine of well-functioning institutions. It derives from and drives the institutional values, norms, and performance (see Chapters 1 and 10). Therefore, refining or changing the organisational context is critical for both private and public organisations to improve employees' well-being, outputs, efficiency, effectiveness, and motivation and enable productivity. While the goal of optimising organisational culture has long been a priority in private companies, public and international organisations have not focused on or invested in the importance of shaping culture inside institutions to deliver better outcomes – scientifically.

The need to leverage organisational culture as a tool for transforming organisations is nonetheless strong and relies on twofold grounds.

### *Mens sana in corpore sano*

*In the same way that only a healthy body can produce or sustain a healthy mind, a healthy organisational environment is a necessary condition for producing and disseminating high-quality work and tackling the complex issues that surround the SDGs.*

Various studies have tried to identify and measure the drivers of organisational performance in public organisations, finding strong effects of both endogenous elements (such as organisational culture) and exogenous elements (such as a political mandate) (Jong et al., 2018). Importantly, while the factors contributing to performance are numerous, throughout organisations, research has identified the pivot role of management excellence in most instances of output excellence.

Indeed, the case-study and academic literature both indicate that public management can ultimately make the difference between success and failure in the delivery of public policy results (Boyne, 2003; Ingraham, Joyce, & Donahue, 2003; Moynihan & Pandey, 2005; Andrew, Boyne, & Walker, 2006). For example, in the field of public education, quality management has been shown to contribute positively to public program performance across eleven measures of performance (Meier & Toole, 2002). Therefore, investing in shaping organisational culture means enabling a wide range of positive spillovers.

These spillovers, if managed well, can create the mechanisms and opportunities for multi-disciplinary approaches towards addressing complex (and multi-disciplinary) problems, such as the SDGs. However, because the channels of managerial influence can be siloed, multiple and complex, management excellence calls for an experimental methodology aimed at clarifying what works and what does not for delivering organisational performance.

### **Organisational Integrity: Practicing what we preach**

Public organisations are often the promoters of a “higher societal vision”. For this reason, shaping organisational culture in line with these ambitions can set a powerful example and create coherence between what public organisations promote externally and what they practice internally. For instance, recommendations to implement public policies for gender equality (SDG 5) should come from institutions whose corporate policies are gender-inclusive in the first place. Equally, it is worth reflecting how each of the values promoted by the SDGs can be translated into internal organisational values and, most importantly, into internal organisational practices.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents an overarching and widely endorsed set of transformative pathways towards global change. Realizing the objectives of the Agenda will entail a paradigm shift at all levels of public governance, including the way governmental institutions operate internally. The accountability system in the public

sector, which has traditionally concentrated on legal and political accountability of public organisations, is now expanding (Behn, 2001). Today, public institutions must also be accountable for ensuring internal coherence between the values they advertise externally and the expectations of their employees, partners, and the general public.

*By aligning their internal practices with the SDGs (for example, by integrating sustainability goals into the criteria for recruitment and remuneration of executive management), public institutions can communicate more effectively their commitment to sustainable and inclusive development.*

In particular, the SDGs that appear most relevant to managerial practices in the public sector are those concerning environmental sustainability (SDG 11, 12, and 13) and decent work, and inclusive economic growth (SDG 8). In line with these, institutions can strengthen internal strategies to minimise their environmental footprint and raise the quality of the employment they provide, including through corporate policies that promote employees’ well-being. In this way, public bodies and international organisations can function as both promoters and actual implementers of the SDGs.



## 2

## Why Behavioral Insights for the Sustainable Development Goals?

Once public servants have committed to advancing the SDGs as part of their corporate objectives, how can they best shape institutional change to achieve and sustain these goals?

*In the last few decades, Behavioral Insights (BI) – lessons derived from behavioral, cognitive, and social sciences – have greatly expanded our understanding of how context, biases and other influences affect the behavior of individuals and therefore organisations.*

BI is now widely recognised by governments and international organisations (e.g., OECD, World Bank, European Commission, UN agencies including UNESCO, UNDP, and IDB) as key for understanding the actual behavior of the beneficiaries of policies and for making implementation effective by testing possible solutions before scaling them up. Currently, there are over 200 behavioral initiatives that have been institutionalized globally that are applying BI to public policy (OECD, 2017).

While BI has been applied extensively to solve policy problems at the individual level, including those related to the SDGs, the behavioral methodology for understanding judgement and decision-making has rarely been applied to shape mindsets and behaviors within public organisations. BI can provide a

useful analytical lens for understanding how to best motivate the integration of the SDGs for the following reasons.

First, through its inductive and experimental approach, BI can provide “actual” or observed evidence, often with greater rigour, for decision-makers (Naru, 2019). For example, behavioral studies can provide real evidence on effective strategies to adjust workplace pensions schemes and promote retirement saving. In a natural experiment, one study found that a change in choice architecture generated an increase of 37 percentage points in the likelihood of participation in a workplace pension scheme (Cribb & Emmerson, 2016).

Second, behavioral interventions are generally not intrusive, easily scalable, and do not alter employees’ working habits in fundamental ways. For instance, a randomised controlled trial conducted inside an office building in Cape Town resulted up to a 14% reduction in electricity consumption when the organisation simply nominated an “energy champion” (assigned responsibility) and compared energy use between floors (social competition), without introducing any substantial variation to the work environment (Klege et al., 2018).

Lastly, BI can optimise “fast thinking” and the unconscious behavior of employees in line with the organisation’s objectives. In the case of Virgin Atlantic Airways, it was found that by exposing pilots to a set of simple measures including performance information, personal targets, and prosocial incentives, the company significantly saved on fuel and reduced carbon dioxide emissions by about 20,000 tons. The emissions study also contributed to a rise in pilot satisfaction, which proved the potential of incorporating BI into managerial practices (Gosnell et al., 2016).

## 3

## How can organisations use behavioral insights to advance the SDGs? – The 4 Ms

People make up organisations. By leveraging BI to change the behavior of public servants there is potential for organisation-wide changes. Understanding the biases that are unique to the workplace can help organisations achieve their corporate objectives. For example, if an organisation aims to ensure sustainable consumption (SDG 12), the same interventions that lower residential energy consumption may not be effective in a workplace because employees typically do not directly face financial consequences for their own consumption. What can we learn from BI to enable an organisational culture that aligns with the SDGs? Although an exhaustive list is beyond the scope of this chapter, the remaining sections highlight relevant insights and lessons on how to think about applying BI to shape institutional change in the context of promoting the SDGs.

### Motivation

Gaining a better understanding of motivation in the workplace is instrumental in transforming public servant mindsets. Traditional economic theory has shown that financial incentives encourage better performance in the workplace (Gibbons, 1997). However, behavioral science research has demonstrated that this view may be too simplistic. Non-monetary incentives such as providing positive reinforcement and showing the impact of one's work can lead to better results, productivity, and well-being (Grant & Gino, 2010; Ariely et al., 2008). In an experiment for a fundraising call centre, Grant found that when callers spoke to the students who benefited from the fundraising efforts beforehand, revenues increased by 171% (Grant et al., 2007). Although none of the callers explicitly identified the students' visits as the direct cause, the study revealed that understanding how our work helps others can unconsciously motivate us to do better (prosocial behavior).

These findings are directly applicable to the context of public institutions where there is limited flexibility in providing monetary rewards and public servants may be more responsive to prosocial behavior due to the nature of their work. Management may find value in communicating the impact of one's work on broader organisational objectives and how it contributes to society as a whole such as realising the SDGs. When communicating, organisations should consider who should deliver the message. Deciding who communicates a message is constantly considered but often intuitively. Understanding the messenger effect can help organisations (Naru, 2019).

What happens when employees are motivated to act but struggle to follow through? Behavioral strategies help close the gap between individual intentions and actions. For example, management can consider "planning fallacy" a tendency to underestimate the time needed to complete a future task and streamline productivity flow (Gollwitzer, 1999). Goal setting at the individual, team or organisational level can help overcome this bias. For example, the Western Cape government set team-based goals to lose weight among government workers through a "Walk4Health" initiative using personal pedometers and public leader boards to promote good health and well-being (SDG 3) among staff (OECD, 2017).

### Modesty

Another consideration for organisations is the ability to remain modest – acknowledging that we, especially the longer our tenure in an organisation, do not always know what works best. Indeed, the complex or wicked problems that are increasingly appearing for public bodies to solve have no precedent.

When questioned about current practices, public employees may be tempted to answer, "We've always done it this way." Management may fall prey to status quo bias where they prefer things to stay the same by doing nothing or stick with a decision made previously (Samuelson and Zeckhauser, 1988). Alternatively, availability heuristic may occur where decisions are based on the most recent or vivid information instead of the most rigorous evidence (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973).

A key pillar of BI is using a scientific approach to continuously challenge assumptions by testing not only which solution but also why and by how much a solution is effective within a specific context. In 2013, OECD researchers leveraged defaults to test whether a decrease in the default temperature could affect the change in chosen settings in people's offices. Although the study found that a 1°C decrease in the default caused a significant reduction in the average setting, when the default setting was decreased by 2°C, employees returned the setting to their preferred temperature – a setting that was even higher than the control to overcompensate for being uncomfortably cold (Brown, Johnstone, et al., 2013). Testing allowed the researchers to learn the default "sweet spot" for the OECD context instead of assuming any default setting would be effective.

In general, organisations should be wary of assuming that all organisational problems are behavioral. Foster (2017)

points to fundamental attribution error, which occurs when management discounts situational factors, such as lack of resources and existing structures and tools, that prevent even the most “rational” and skilled employees from contributing to an organisation’s well-meaning goals. Furthermore, when a decision maker views a problem as behavioral, they may fall prey to confirmation bias and continue to ignore situational factors for other challenges even when presented with contradictory information (Foster, 2017). Being aware of the larger systemic barriers in place can help identify areas where behavioral solutions can or cannot be effective.

## Measurement

Having a systematic and ethical way to measure meaningful outcomes is crucial to applying BI in an organisational context. This is particularly relevant for organisations when conducting training for capacity building. Research has found that organisations that regularly measure the effectiveness of their training programs tend to have more effective training programs (Saks & Burke, 2012). However, how can organisations put in place metrics that actually reflect a training’s effectiveness?

The OECD is revisiting its corporate ethics-training programme to build a stronger organisational culture that promotes a safe and inclusive working environment for all staff. Previous trainings have been more informative with limited evaluation. First, they focused on raising awareness of corporate policies, then having group discussions through hypothetical case studies, and finally collecting subjective feedback such as perceived usefulness of the training and the likelihood of recommending it to a colleague. Now, we are testing the efficacy of a more active training using virtual reality technology and commitment devices that encourage employees to become “active bystanders” (Scully & Rowe, 2009). Throughout this training, we are implementing a rigorous evaluation process to measure the actual change in employee behavior and impact of the training by conducting a randomised controlled trial and measuring through reported and self-reported behaviors.

More broadly, when applying BI, good ethical practices have been one of the hallmarks of successful behavioral initiatives (Naru, 2019). When analysing or collecting individual or group-level data, ethics should be a priority from the outset and the design of experimentation should be ethically appropriate and implementable in the organisation. Although public institutions often operate within a transparent and accountable setting already, additional steps such as partnering with an academic institution that has an ethics review board or setting up an internal ethics panel can help mitigate potential risks associated.

## Mainstreaming

Initial experiments provide a powerful testament to the potential of BI to transform public servants’ mindsets. For more sustainable behavior change, institutions should aspire to systematically incorporate BI into the DNA of organisations and consistently design organisational environments in a way

that is user-centric, unbiased, and evidence-based (Naru, 2019). This has the potential to allow public institutions to effectively promote sustainability “inside and out” by disseminating high-quality work on the SDGs while also incorporating commitment to the SDGs in their own internal practices.

To this end, it is crucial to build organisational processes and procedures with a behavioral foundation and go beyond the use of BI as simple tweaks to already-built structures. Cognitive biases, social norms, and context influence employees at each step of their working day and, therefore, considerations on their influence need to be accounted for in all organisational activities. Some examples of common corporate functions which could benefit from a behavioral approach are (i) recruitment, (ii) artificial intelligence (AI) integration, (iii) internal communication and (iv) key performance indicators (KPIs).

(i) Recruitment serves as the primary channel for bringing talented professionals into an organisation. However, conscious, and unconscious biases might stand in the way of ensuring diversity in the hiring process, thereby undermining the key value of inclusiveness that also underlies the SDGs’ vision. In particular, studies have shown that the process of screening resumes can be particularly prone to biases. Bertrand & Mullainathan (2004) famously showed that CVs with African American sounding names, e.g., Jamal and Lakisha, had 50% lower call back rates for interviews than equivalent CVs associated with more Caucasian names, such as Emily and Greg. A 2013 OECD report corroborated these findings at a larger international scale by showing that, in all 17 countries analysed, having a foreign name led to a more difficult employment search (OECD, 2013). By offering a methodology to identify such biases as well as testable solutions to address them, BI can help debias recruitment processes and set the initial conditions for long-term organisational success.

(ii) Public institutions are increasingly integrating cutting-edge AI technologies to 1) boost efficiency by automating administrative and process-driven tasks; and 2) improve accuracy and drive objectivity in decision-making. However, cutting-edge implies that a product has yet to be deemed as “tried and true.” Without testing for potential algorithmic biases, AI technologies may perpetuate inequities and lead to biased decision-making. For example, the algorithms that made up a popular decision support tool used by US court judges were discovered to have a built-in racial bias when used to predict whether defendants should be detained or released (Brennan et al., 2009). At the OECD, when piloting new AI-powered recruitment software, it was found that, compared to the usual people-led recruitment process, the software removed some biases but at the same time introduced new ones. The beauty of testing is that one can adjust algorithmic discrimination because “changing algorithms is easier than changing people” (Mullainathan, 2019). However, we cannot correct discrimination without first uncovering them through rigorous evaluation.

(iii) Effective internal communication keeps public servants informed, helps cultivate a cohesive organisational culture and, ultimately, builds a stronger institution by maintaining

transparency and accountability at all levels. Organisations can benefit from integrating behavioral principles when establishing and implementing an internal communication framework. Several studies have demonstrated that the use of plain language can increase comprehension, improve compliance, and reduce errors in organisations (Byrne, 2008; Wolf et al., 2014). When the Plain Writing Act (2010) was implemented, then Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Cass Sunstein, created guidelines for agencies, which resulted in simple checklists to develop clear communications that the public could understand (Shephard, 2017). Although a general framework can enable effective communications, organisations should avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. At the OECD, a small pilot using plain language coupled with risk communication was discovered to be more effective in increasing staff reporting rates of malicious emails than plain “corporate” language alone. In a recent study, researchers found that when laying out expectations and ethical standards in codes of conduct, using “we” language fostered feelings of communal warmth, but it also created the perception that dishonesty would go unpunished, which increased the instances of unethical behavior (Kouchaki et al., 2019). By embracing the BI approach that calls for continuous testing and evaluation, organisations can learn which principles work best in different contexts.

(iv) KPIs are also an area with great potential for embedding behavioral principles. Institutions increasingly rely on KPIs to evaluate their success at reaching targets but often underestimate the importance of the specific choices they make regarding “the selection, standardization, weighting, and aggregation” of indicators that should represent their systems

(Barnett, 2008). Examples of unintended consequences due to a lack of understanding of behavioral aspects of measurement include: unbalanced metrics (e.g. always focusing on quantitative measures can compromise quality performance); rewarding wrong behavior; artificial deadlines (e.g. not in line with real needs); and conflicting objectives (Buytendijk, 2007). Measurement drives behavior (Hawthorne effect) so, to successfully influence the behavior of their teams, managers need a clear view of human nature and behavior in organisations. They need a behavioral approach to goal setting (Zairi and Jarrar, 2000). Performance management for the implementation of the SDGs would not only require including the SDGs in performance metrics (e.g., inclusiveness, intergenerational equity, etc), but there would need to be:

1. Better understanding of the cultural context of the metrics (What is driving the behaviors in the organisation?); and
2. Better understanding of what metrics are to define progress (How do we drive the right behaviors through measurement?).

Overall, BI has the potential to help shape organisational culture from the moment public servants start their journey in an institution (recruitment) to the behavior driven by the long-term vision that drives this journey (KPIs) and many of the activities in between. Systematically integrating the behavioral methodology into the internal functions of public institutions can therefore be a powerful way to understand and create the attitudes and behaviors needed for institutions to both sustain, and practice, SDG values in the long run.

## 4

## Conclusion and recommendations

In this chapter, we have provided ideas and examples of how BI can be applied to shape organisational culture and mindsets that can be used to promote sustainability inside and out. Public institutions can build up their capacity for a behaviorally-informed management that will make public administrations more fit for the purpose of implementing the SDGs. Through this chapter, we hope to have contributed to the discussion of how, by leveraging lessons from the behavioral sciences, public institutions can devise strategies to enhance their internal functioning and set the enabling conditions for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Building on academic case studies and experiences, we seek to provide an answer to the question of whether BI can give rise to a new organisational model and help shape organisational culture. Using methodologies from the applied behavioral sciences to build a clearer picture of the values and behaviors of public servants, we can better understand what drives the performance of public institutions and, ultimately, how to design management that will determine the success or failure of institutional goals.

Recommendations for applying behavioral insights in organisations to advance the SDGs:

1. **Understand the MOTIVATIONS of people inside public sector bodies**, for instance, their intentions and how they could differ from their actions. Invest resources to design organisational environments accordingly, so as to promote mindsets and behaviors that will advance SDGs “inside and out”.
2. **Remain systemically MODEST as an institution**, by building processes and checks that test assumptions and eliminate bias in decisions. Begin with assessing the true issue, regardless of whether it is a behavioral problem or not, and avoid jumping to the solution.
3. **Keep MEASUREMENT at the heart of activities** in an ethical and more scientific manner. This includes building systems that have evaluation built in from the start, which can assist to not only determine what works, but also help drive behaviors; and
4. **Avoid the “silo-effect” by MAINSTREAMING behavioral insights** as a tool in the broader change management toolkit to address and inform institutional culture in key corporate functions - such as recruitment, AI integration, internal communications and KPIs.

### Endnotes

101. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of the member countries of the OECD. The authors would like to acknowledge the cutting-edge work and valuable inputs that have contributed to some of the ideas and examples in this chapter: Ingrid Barnsley, María José Cuesta, Leonie Decrinis, Audrey Depeige, Junyang Guo, Nick Johnstone, Katrina Koser, Makoto Miyasako, Guillermo Morales, Sandra Ragg, Dan Roulstone, Dimitra Staikou, Victoria Romero Tejedor, and Josée Touchette.

## CHAPTER 9

# How to Attract the Best Talent and Motivate Public Servants to be Champions of Change and Embrace Mindsets for Sustainable Development

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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is more valid today than ever before. And the importance of the role of government and public servants has never been more apparent than it is now. During the COVID-19, governments have been on the front lines in combating the pandemic with public employees risking their health to assist people. The pandemic has resulted in large scale job loss in many countries, putting strains on government resources and disrupting civil society. Governments have been implementing innovative solutions to limit the impact of the pandemic, underling the importance of investing in public sector human resource professionals who are motivated and well prepared. However, attracting and motivating the best talents for the public sector, and creating a culture of leadership, which could lead to a transformational change require strategic Human Resource and Talent Management. To produce a sustained competitive advantage, government organizations should invest in human resource and management practices and ensure that they shift from being transactional to being more strategic. This chapter examines how to attract the best talent in the public sector, and how to motivate them once they join the public service. Governments have complex missions making it crucial for them to be employers of choice able to attract, retain, and motivate top talents to implement the 2030 Agenda effectively.

## 1

## Attracting the best talent

A framework for transformative human resources was established by the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR) in its *HR 20/20 Report: [The IPMA-HR Guide to Transformative HR](#)*<sup>102</sup>. The report recommends that all public sector human resource programs be viewed through the following lenses: strategic orientation, business acumen, innovation, and equity/inclusion. The report also includes five key focus areas that will help to meet the strategic and tactical needs of organizations: leadership, culture, talent management, technology, and communications.

The HR 20/20 report states: “the desired outcome of government is to protect and enhance the quality of life of its citizens. The services provided to respective constituents, at every level of government, are largely driven by the people employed by public sector organizations.

*Employees who are skilled at what they do, who are committed to the public good, and who act in an innovative, ethical, and responsible manner, create an efficient, effective, and responsible government.*

Because the business of HR revolves around human capital resource management, HR professionals can help fundamentally influence and shape organizational outcomes by identifying future trends and assisting in navigating successfully through them” (International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR), 2020.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported that many countries have developed job retention programs to keep people employed<sup>103</sup>. Measures have included subsidizing hours not worked and increasing the earnings of workers who have had their hours reduced.

In its sectoral brief “COVID-19 and the Public Service”, the International Labour Organization states that “As custodians of public goods, public servants are indispensable conduits for the recovery. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the crucial importance of disaster preparedness and that private-sector partners cannot manage alone the scope of interventions needed now.... Governments should coordinate the recovery from the crisis among the different levels of public administration-- including local governments-- and with

the private sector. They should do so in ways that reduce inequalities that aggravate the effects of the crisis and mobilize citizens to energize the long-term recovery”<sup>104</sup>.

The OECD has issued a report titled *Public Servants and the Coronavirus Pandemic: Emerging Responses and Initial Recommendations* (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2020, Page 7) that states:

*“The pandemic response has shone a spotlight on the work and worth of public servants. The crisis thus presents a new opportunity to reinforce the attractiveness of the public service as a career of choice for a new generation of skilled workers who are motivated by public values. Governments can emphasize the impact and value of a public service career through communication and outreach strategies, helped by streamlined tools and ways of working, such as online assessment and video screening. Senior civil servants, increasingly in the public eye through the management of the crisis, can amplify the message.*

*The pandemic has also highlighted the duty of care of the government to its employees. In many countries, leave and pay arrangements have been adapted to enable staff to recover from illness or care for others. Governments are also taking special measures to protect the mental health of employees, tracked through employee surveys, and addressed through access to counselling and peer support. Engaging and motivating healthy public sector employees’ post-pandemic will be a fundamental success factor for longer-term change and innovation.”*

The Center for State and Local Government Excellence<sup>105</sup> in the United States released the results of a survey conducted in May 2020, which found that despite being deeply worried about their personal safety, family finances, potential job loss/furlough and compensation reductions, public sector employees remain committed to serving their communities during the pandemic. Over 60% of the survey respondents who are state and local government employees in the United States indicated that they value serving their community while almost half believe the public has a greater appreciation of the important work they are performing.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, governments are facing additional recruitment challenges. Many countries have shortages of people with the critical skills needed to fight the pandemic in the medical field, such as epidemiologists, nurses, and quarantine staff. During the Annual Conference of the Astana Civil Service Hub (ACSH), held virtually in June 2020, the Director of the HR Policy Division at the Ministry of Personnel

Management of the Republic of Korea highlighted that in the Republic of Korea, the job-posting period was reduced, and recruitments were conducted swiftly in three to four weeks, which is quicker than before<sup>106</sup>.

Previously, those who were newly recruited were required to complete training before being assigned, but this was modified so that they could start work and take mandatory online training later. It was also highlighted that the Government of the Republic of Korea is investigating and implementing ways to facilitate “no contact” recruitment and deliver more frequent recruitment of smaller numbers of applicants. As the Republic of Korea resumed written exams for jobs, they put in place measures designed to prevent infection and protect the health and safety of both applicants and staff. These measures included: checking to see if any applicants were infected or under self-quarantine; reviewing immigration history to see if applicants had travelled to other countries; requiring applicants who were under quarantine to take the exams in separate places; and ensuring that applicants entered test venues through specific entrances and underwent a fever check and hand sanitization. Masks were required to be worn by applicants, and the number of people in the testing room was reduced significantly to allow for the doubling of the distance between applicants. The windows in the examination rooms were opened frequently to allow for ventilation, and test venues were disinfected both before and after the exams were administered.

When recruiting new public servants, the mission of the government should serve as a competitive advantage. Governments can emphasize how employees can make a difference in their communities, region, and country by working for the government. Surveys have shown that younger people especially are looking to work for organizations that support their values and serve the greater good. Governments need to ensure that their cultures are supportive of employees and can emphasize the opportunity for greater job security, work-life balance, and opportunities for professional development. Additionally, governments need to do a better job of informing

applicants and employees of the myriad opportunities in a public sector career. At a time when research shows that people will have multiple careers during their working life, governments should promote the opportunities that enable individuals to gain experience in different sectors while working for the same governmental organization. There are many recruiting initiatives that governments might wish to consider adopting, as highlighted in Table 9.1.

With the expectation that there will continue to be an increased amount of remote work, governments can expand their geographic recruitment efforts giving them access to talent that will help them fill mission critical positions.

**Table 9.1: Possible Government Recruiting Initiatives**

**Use of social media, digital platforms, and on-line job boards:** in a digital age, these tools will enable governments to reach greater numbers of employees and to target talent in specific fields, especially those for which they are experiencing recruitment challenges.

**Use of employee videos:** this can be an effective tool highlighting current employees that will inform applicants as to why they enjoy working for the government. It can also be a good way to spotlight the different career opportunities that are available.

**Streamlined online applications:** to compete for talent, governments need to provide for online applications and to shorten applications so that they only ask for essential information.

**Faster hiring:** governments have been criticized for decades for the length of time it takes for them to hire applicants. The private sector makes hiring decisions much quicker, and governments lose talented applicants due to the slowness of the hiring process. While faster hiring is encouraged, it is equally important that governments hire high-quality talent. They should develop metrics demonstrating the quality of new hires. Additionally, it needs to be acknowledged that there are public sector positions such as public safety that require more extensive background checks or psychological assessments, which will inevitably result in a prolonged hiring period.

**Reviewing job requirements:** it is important for governmental employers to review their job requirements to eliminate those that may be an artificial barrier to diversifying the public service. For example, for some positions, years of experience could be considered as a substitute for a college education.

**Reviewing job descriptions:** government job descriptions should be reviewed and updated to make them more appealing and descriptive of the work by eliminating overly bureaucratic, jargon-filled language.

**Remote interviews:** due to the coronavirus, governments may need to conduct interviews remotely with software such as Zoom.

**Internships:** this is a way for governments to bring on students to experience government employment. It also provides both the government and the interns an opportunity to see if they are a good fit for a permanent position.

**Partnering with Schools:** governments should consider establishing partnerships with secondary schools as well as colleges and universities. This is a way to promote public sector careers and develop connections with students who may not be aware of the myriad employment opportunities offered by governments.

**Employee Referral Programs:** employees can be great ambassadors for governments. Some governments have established employee referral programs that provide incentives for employees to refer family and friends for jobs. The incentives can be distributed over time to ensure that the new employees remain part of the organization.

**Job Fairs:** these events provide an opportunity for governments to meet either in-person or during the current pandemic virtually with potential candidates. The private sector participates in job fairs, and government presence ensures that it remains competitive in its recruitment.

**Mentoring programs:** mentors have been utilized effectively in organizations to assist new employees and guide them in their careers. It is important to ensure that the mentors are trained.



## 2

## Motivating government employees

Organizations that want to have a motivated and engaged workforce and be able to hire and retain top talent need to examine and improve the employee experience. Employee experience is the sum of the interactions that employees have with their employers throughout their employment lifecycle from recruitment through to departure. Jacob Morgan, author of *The Future of Work: Attract New Talent, Build Better Leaders and Create a Competitive Culture*, defines employee experience as the combination of the cultural environment, the physical environment, and the technological environment of the workplace.

Surveys, such as [Deloitte 2019 Human Capital Trends survey](#)<sup>107</sup>, recognize the need to improve the employee experience, with 84% of respondents rating this issue as important and 28% saying it is one of the three most urgent issues facing their organizations. However, only 9% believed their organizations were ready to address this issue. The Workforce Institute at Kronos conducted a [Working Your Way survey](#) that polled employees from eight countries and found that outdated beliefs about time off, productivity, and workload negatively impact the experience of employees. Fewer than half of the survey respondents believe that preventing employee burnout is a top priority of their organization.

Employee engagement is one way in which to measure the employee experience. Gallup, which has been a leader in employee engagement, reported that, across 155 countries, only 15% of employees are engaged, 67% are not engaged, and the remaining 18% are actively disengaged<sup>108</sup>. This data is from all sectors and not just the public sector. All employers want to increase the percentage of engaged employees since they are likely to be top performers who expend maximum effort to get the job done. They are more satisfied, less likely to leave, and will be brand ambassadors. Many employers conduct employee engagement surveys, and it is important that they follow-up to address the issues that are surfaced by the surveys. Failure to do so will drive down engagement.

Professor James Perry in a 1996 article titled *Measuring Public Service Motivation: An Assessment of Construct Reliability and Validity*, published in the *Journal of Public Administration Theory*, established the following four dimensions of public sector motivation:

1. Attraction to public policymaking.
2. Commitment to the public interest.
3. Compassion; and
4. Self-sacrifice, which is defined as the willingness to substitute service to others for tangible personal rewards.

The greater the public service motivation of individuals, the more likely they are to seek employment in a governmental organization.

*Research has shown that public service motivation is positively related to employee performance as well as a greater commitment to the organization, higher job satisfaction, lower rates of turnover, and better relationships with other employees.*

The Partnership for Public Service, which focuses on the United States federal government, did a survey that found the number one motivation for federal employees is the desire to give back.

There are also extrinsic motivations that need to be considered since they will influence applicant choices and employee behavior. These could include compensation (in the form of both salary and benefits), job security, challenging work, good work-life balance, advancement opportunities, professional development, and wellness programs.

During this time of a global pandemic, employee wellbeing is significantly reduced with employees showing increased levels of stress and anxiety. This will negatively impact their motivation and ability to perform at a high level. Gallup has identified five elements of wellbeing:

- **Career:** liking what you do and being motivated to achieve goals.
- **Social:** having supportive relationships.
- **Physical:** having good health and the energy necessary to accomplish goals.
- **Financial:** managing economic life to reduce stress and increase security.
- **Community:** enjoying where you live and being engaged in the community.

Gallup research<sup>109</sup> has found that those employees who are doing well on all five are: more than twice as likely to say they adapt well to change, much less likely to want to leave their jobs, 40% less likely to miss work for health reasons, and almost 30% less likely to have changed jobs in the past year.

*In these stressful times, governmental leaders should make employee wellbeing a top priority.*

They can do so by ensuring a culture of caring, being flexible to recognize the different needs of employees, whether they be on the front lines or working remotely, being transparent, communicating frequently, and providing any necessary employee assistance programs. Organizations that do these things are more likely to have a motivated, engaged workforce that performs the critical work of government.

This is a time for governments to emphasize and publicize the value of public service. The Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Zhenmin Liu<sup>110</sup>, has underscored that:

*This year, more than ever, as we fight the COVID-19 pandemic, we are reminded of the vitality of public service to every aspect of our lives. The response to the crisis has seen innovative and adaptive action by institutions at all levels of government. And by frontline public servants, such as our healthcare workers, teachers, sanitation workers, transit*

*workers and many others. At the same time, we have watched the incredible strain the pandemic has put on our healthcare systems and on frontline public servants.*

*The pandemic has provided us with an important moment to reflect on two key issues:*

1. *how to better support public servants in their work, and*
2. *how to build institutional resilience in the public sector so that we can better meet such challenges in the future.*

The OECD stated<sup>111</sup>:

*Public employees are heroes in this crisis. They are keeping medical systems functioning, families safe, finding novel ways to address the unprecedented economic and social impacts, keeping businesses afloat, and dealing with incredible spikes in unemployment. This is a unique opportunity to renew the image of public service as an attractive workplace that has an impact. Post-crisis, public managers should consider how to showcase the values of a job or career with public service.*

Governments have a unique opportunity to leverage the value of government service to attract and motivate the top talent needed to be champions of change who will contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

3

# Strategies to change mindsets and nurture champions of change for the SDGs in public institutions

Changing mindsets and nurturing change champions will be important for the successful implementation of the sustainable development goals. This may require both cultural and organizational transformations. These can be challenging to accomplish, and many transformation efforts ultimately fail. McKinsey identified the following elements that are important in any effort at changing mindsets: leadership, engagement, and effective communication. Please see Figure 9.1.

It is important for organizations to identify change champions that will serve as role models for new mindsets and behaviors that will support change. Change may require people getting out of their comfort zones and as a result, change efforts may experience resistance.

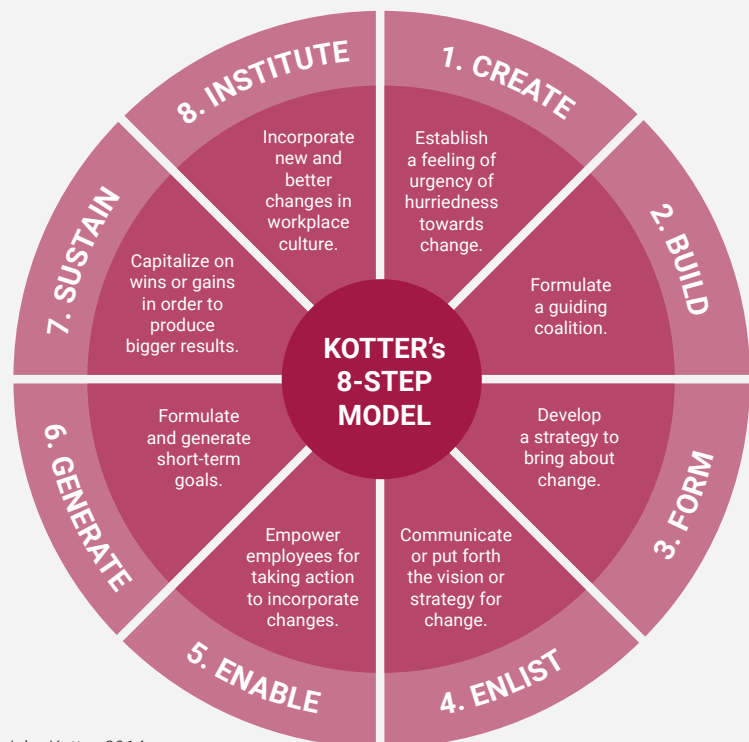
Dr. John Kotter (2014) has developed a change model that has been adopted by many organizations and among the steps he includes is creating a sense of urgency as to why the change is needed, forming a strategic vision, engaging employees, and identifying champions, removing barriers to change, and looking for successes.<sup>112</sup> Organizations also need to measure the success of change efforts and be willing to adjust if change initiatives are not progressing as anticipated.

**Figure 9.1: Elements that are important in any effort at changing mindsets**



Source: McKinsey

**Figure 9.2: Kotter's 8-step change model**



Author: John Kotter, 2014

## 4

# Conclusion and recommendations

Governments play an essential role in the lives of citizens and need to be able to attract, develop, and retain a dedicated workforce. COVID-19 has magnified the critical and complex role of governments in dealing with crises such as a global pandemic. As citizens recognize that governments have been on the front lines in combating this pandemic, there may be renewed respect for public servants and heightened interest in public service careers. The pandemic can constitute an opportunity for governments to pay further attention to and rethink career guidance provision from a systemic perspective. This might include actions to develop career guidance that moves from information delivery to more collaborative approaches, enhanced using technology, integrated in the services, and underpinned by appropriate/effective strategies for career management skills development” (ILO, 2020)<sup>113</sup>.

Some recommendations about how governments can attract top talent and motivate public servants include:

- Having human resource departments continue to perform necessary transactional work but shift to a more transformative role by viewing human resource initiatives through the lenses of innovation, business acumen, strategic orientation and equity and inclusion.
- Leveraging the important missions of governments to create a competitive advantage when recruiting new staff.
- Implementing flexible policies that provide enhanced remote work opportunities while ensuring that managers have the skills needed to manage remote workers.
- Focusing on the employees’ well-being – physical, mental, and financial through enhanced employee assistance programs.
- Adopting innovative recruitment strategies that utilize social media, online applications, employee videos, faster hiring, employee referral programs, internships, and mentoring programs.
- Improving the employee experience, developing a caring culture, and increasing the engagement/satisfaction of employees through employee surveys that result in communicating the results and implementing the recommendations of employees.

## Endnotes

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102. [https://www.ipma-hr.org/docs/default-source/public-docs/ipmahr-files-nov28/node-documents/30655-hr-2020-report-final.pdf?sfvrsn=4d6f5aee\\_2](https://www.ipma-hr.org/docs/default-source/public-docs/ipmahr-files-nov28/node-documents/30655-hr-2020-report-final.pdf?sfvrsn=4d6f5aee_2)
103. <http://www.oecd.org/employment-outlook/2020/>
104. [https://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS\\_748213/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS_748213/lang-en/index.htm)
105. <https://www.slge.org/resources/survey-results-public-sector-employee-views-on-finance-and-employment-outlook-due-to-covid-19>
106. A paper titled Human Resources Management and the Recruitment of Civil Servants Amid COVID-19 was presented by Mr. In-chul Shin, Director, HR Policy Division at the Ministry of Personnel Management, the Republic of Korea, [https://www.astanacivilservicehub.org/uploads/news/2020/1\\_Mr.SHIN\\_recruitment%28ENG%29.pdf](https://www.astanacivilservicehub.org/uploads/news/2020/1_Mr.SHIN_recruitment%28ENG%29.pdf)
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113. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed\\_emp/--ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_766324.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/--ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_766324.pdf)

## CHAPTER 10

# Rethinking Performance Management to Support Changing Mindsets for Sustainable Development

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Performance management can contribute to the overall capacity and performance of the public sector. A public sector with strengthened capacity and increased performance, in turn, has a higher likelihood of reaching the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Although performance management tools come in many shapes and forms, this chapter focuses on individual performance appraisals (goal setting for staff and their performance monitoring). The World Bank has a long history of supporting the development of performance management systems in client countries' governments across the globe.<sup>114</sup> Such systems are, at least in theory, vital in increasing the performance and productivity of public service. This chapter outlines how the mindsets of public servants are linked to the performance of public sector organizations, and how performance appraisals can contribute to that. It looks at several important factors that determine the success of performance appraisal schemes: i) creating clear and measurable performance objectives, ii) psychological factors, iii) making sure that good and bad appraisals have consequences attached, and iv) designing performance appraisal systems that are culturally and context appropriate.

## 1

## Critical role of performance management for motivation and productivity

While the *potential* impact that individual performance appraisals (goal setting for staff and their performance monitoring) can have on public service<sup>115</sup> motivation and productivity could be relatively high, international experience shows that successful application is extremely challenging. In a review of the public administration literature on this topic, Heinrich and Marschke (2010) find limited evidence of the effectiveness of performance management systems.<sup>116</sup> Mixed evidence for developing countries has been found in recent surveys of public officials. On the one hand, there are successful cases, such as the Liberian Forestry Development Authority (FDA), where the World Bank Bureaucracy Lab survey, elaborated upon below, showed a positive link between performance and performance appraisals. On the other hand, there are less successful cases, such as a World Bank survey of public servants in the Ministry of Public Administration of Montenegro, which showed that only half of the respondents found the performance appraisal process to be a meaningful one.<sup>117</sup>

There are many reasons why performance appraisals do not often reach their potential. First, performance at the agency level is often considered much more difficult to measure in the public sector than in the private sector; objectives are often unclear or pulling in multiple directions at once (introducing high-speed road infrastructure and reducing deaths by road traffic accidents for example); organizational structures are typically large and complex and, in some cases, staffing is based on political or clientelist choices. As a consequence, the public sector often lacks a clearly measurable link between performance and pay or career progression, with a steady progression up the hierarchy only loosely based on performance.

Nonetheless, given these barriers, performance appraisals can do a lot for overall public sector performance. They can, for example, motivate staff to reach higher targets than the previous year, show to management whom among their teams are under- and over-performing, or it can show high performing units within an organization, as well as units that need assistance in reaching their goals.

## 2

## Why are mindsets important for performance?

Why do public servant mindsets play an important role in impacting the performance of the public sector? In short, because public servants have power. Of course, politicians define the legal framework that gives public servants their marching orders. But the latter have considerable wiggle room in deciding exactly how to implement political decisions. Street-level bureaucrats are the most famous example: a police officer deciding to give someone a ticket or not, or a social worker deciding to grant a welfare benefit or not. But discretionary power, and overall influence in the policy-making process, goes all the way through the bureaucracy. Since the 'let managers manage' adage has become more and more en vogue since the late 1980s, greater autonomy afforded to public servants has made their impact on public sector performance more powerful.<sup>118</sup> Public servants also have room to shape political decisions through their inputs to the political process. For example, by providing information to politicians that supports a particular view of an issue.

The above exposition implies that merely giving a public servant an order does not necessarily translate directly into the work he or she will complete, nor how well he or she will perform. How motivated or self-confident public servants are, how they interpret their role within a team or an organization, and the quality of their relationships with their managers and peers, will all have an important role in shaping their morale and, in turn, determining the quality of their work (see Table 10.1). Years of research on the effect of motivation on performance has shown a strong and consistently positive link between the two.<sup>119</sup> Hence, in order to boost the performance and productivity of the public sector as a whole, it is important to analyze how organizations function by first better understanding the motivation of the individual public servants they comprise.

### Box 10.1: Impact of improving public sector performance

State capacity is recognized as a fundamental pillar of economic development, as public institutions construct the legal and fiscal structures that determine the allocation of resources in an economy.<sup>1</sup> Recent empirical studies have found that individual public officials and organizations are of primary importance for the productivity of the state. Best et al. (2017) find that moving from the worst-performing quartile of bureaucracies to the 75th percentile reduces procurement expenditures by around 11 percent (USD13 billion/year or "roughly one fifth of the total amount spent on health care by the Russian government at federal, regional, and municipal level combined").<sup>2</sup> Rasul et al (2018)<sup>3</sup> find that moving from the 25th to 75th percentile of bureaucratic quality in Ghana increases project completion rates by almost 20 percentage points.

<sup>1</sup> Besley, T., & Persson, T. (2011). *Pillars of prosperity: The political economics of development clusters*. Princeton University Press; Acemoglu, D. & Robinson, J. (2012). *Why nations fail: the origins of power, prosperity, and poverty*. New York: Crown Business; Page, L., & Pande, R. (2018). *Ending global poverty: why money isn't enough*. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 32(4), 173-200.

<sup>2</sup> Best, M. C., Hjort, J., & Szakonyi, D. (2017). *Individuals and organizations as sources of state effectiveness* (No. w23350). National Bureau of Economic Research.

<sup>3</sup> Rasul, I., Rogger, D., & Williams, M. J. (2018). *Management and bureaucratic effectiveness: Evidence from the Ghanaian civil service*. The World Bank.



3

## The role of performance management and performance appraisals

The performance of public servants is dependent on many different factors, some of which are outside of the organization's power, such as their home situation or overall health. Others, however, are very much within the grasp of management and can be addressed. The World Bank's Bureaucracy Lab summarizes government capability in a production function in which inputs and a variety of exogenous factors determine bureaucrats' attitudes and behaviors, outputs, and eventually outcomes and performance, shown in Figure 10.1.

Performance appraisals would be located under 'management practices' in this production function, with a direct link to

beliefs, attitudes (in other words: mindsets) and behaviors of bureaucrats. Performance appraisals play an important role as management practices to increase performance. For the purposes of this chapter, we define this tool as follows:

*"The process of identifying, evaluating and developing the work performance of employees in the organisation, so that the organisational goals and objectives are more effectively achieved, while at the same time benefiting employees in terms of recognition, receiving feedback, catering for work needs and offering career guidance."<sup>121</sup>*

**Figure 10.1: A production function for government capability<sup>120</sup>**

|                    |     | Observable outcomes  |   |
|--------------------|-----|--|---|
|                    |     | Yes  | No  |
| Observable outputs | Yes | <p><b>Production activities:</b> the actions of officials and their impacts can be observed</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> mail services, tax collection, sanitation, vehicle registration.</p>                                 | <p><b>Procedural activities:</b> activities are observed, but their impacts are diffuse</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> mental health services, counseling, military (peacetime), youth penitentiary.</p> |
|                    | No  | <p><b>Craft activities:</b> it is difficult to characterize the necessary outputs, but there is a clearly observable outcome</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> field inspections, military (wartime), doctors, forest rangers.</p> | <p><b>Coping activities:</b> neither the activity nor the outcome can be clearly measured</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> diplomacy, intelligence, research.</p>  |

Before diving into the success factors of performance appraisal, it is necessary to look at variations in performance appraisals:

1. Formal, or informal.
2. Focused on improving the public servant's performance, or on identifying potential for advancement.
3. Performed by an immediate supervisor, a committee, subordinates, the public servant or a combination of these.
4. Linked to performance pay, raises, promotions, or other incentives; and to possible penalties such as demotions, pay cuts, or exits.
5. Conducted every six months, annually, biannually, or ad hoc.

Contextual considerations largely determine the type of performance appraisal that is adopted in any given country. Countries with more advanced human resource information systems for example, are more likely to adopt more complex performance management systems as the information can be captured and stored digitally, which takes up less space and can be more safely stored confidentially over time.

Despite the wide variation in form, there are some examples that show performance appraisals can be a contributing factor in increasing the performance and productivity of public servants,

and the public sector at large. For example, Vu (2019) shows that in 29 Vietnamese agencies and departments "broadly designed and well implemented employee [performance management] systems are associated with improved job experiences and perceived organizational performance"<sup>122</sup>. Additionally, a 2019 World Bank Bureaucracy Lab survey of public sector staff in the Liberian Forestry Development Authority (FDA) also showed a perception of positive effects of performance appraisals. Seventy-five percent of staff agreed that performance evaluations improved employee performance, and staff who reported a regular evaluation of their individual performance by the manager reported a 13- point increase in motivation in comparison with staff whose managers did not evaluate performance.<sup>123</sup>

Often, however, performance appraisal systems have not delivered as expected with only a modest impact on performance. A 2016 analysis of 49 studies on performance management tools in public administrations shows a limited effect on performance.<sup>124</sup> Besides the mere existence of performance appraisals, we conclude that it matters a great deal how they are implemented. A World Bank 2019 Bureaucracy Lab survey of public sector staff in seven Romanian ministries, showed that only 9 percent of respondents agreed that the results of the performance appraisal are used for promotion. Moreover, only 28 percent of respondents stated that the performance appraisal results motivated them to work harder.<sup>125</sup> In short: having performance appraisals is not enough. We need to know what factors increase the likelihood that performance appraisals lead to a positive effect on individual and organizational performance.

4

## Designing performance appraisal systems to change mindsets

### Create clear and measurable objectives beforehand

For performance appraisals to improve individual level performance, it is important that employees know how and on what objectives they will be evaluated in order to ensure that performance expectations of both employees and managers are aligned. A UCSB/UNDP 2018 survey in Myanmar showed that this is not always the case:

*"[O]nly 26 percent of survey respondents said that they were adequately informed about the performance appraisal system, and 63 percent were not aware that the performance appraisal took place annually."<sup>126</sup>*

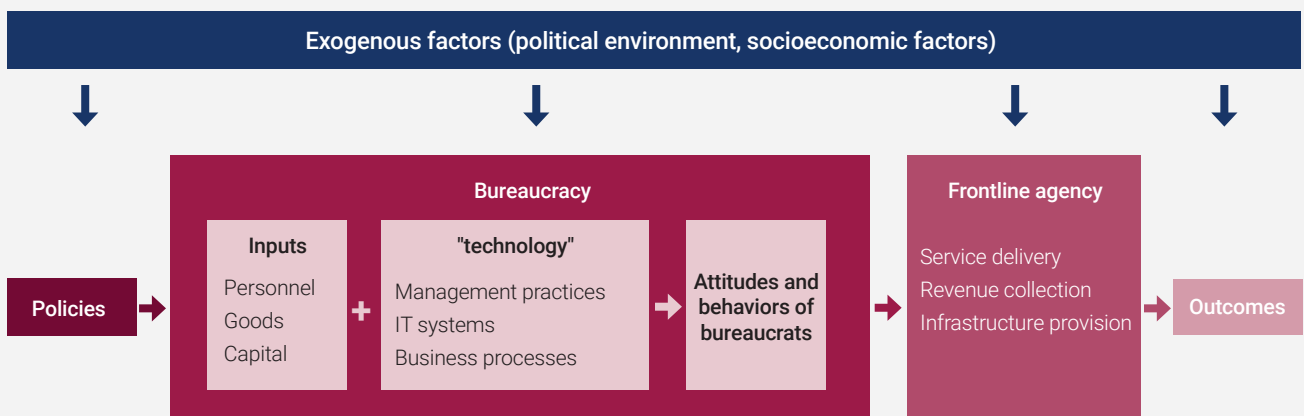
This is not simply a technical requirement that makes officials clear as to what they are reporting on. It also ensures that officials can relate to the appraisal process. A generic performance process does little to bolster an official's mindset towards her or his own role in the public service machine.

*To increase the likelihood of clarity on both the employee's and manager's part as to where the official fits within the public service, the system's objectives should be specific to each particular job and measurable in ways the appraisal can relate to.*

The earlier mentioned Romania survey showed a high preference among staff for quantitative performance indicators. Public servants can then be clear on how their appraisal links to their work programme. In Botswana, as one example, an explicit link is made between a person's appraisal form and the programme/project indicators and targets on which they are working to ensure its relevancy.<sup>127</sup>

Defining measurable indicators is not easy for every public service job. Table 10.1 shows how the measurability of outcomes and outputs can differ strongly within and between public sector organizations.

**Table 10.1: Typology of public activities based on measurability<sup>128</sup>**



Source: Based on Fiszbein, Ringold, and Rogers 2011.

However, through the lens of shaping mindsets, engaging each public servant in a discussion about what their role is and what they can provide as evidence of their achievements is part of the process of shaping the way they see their role. Thus, spending considerable time to come up with applicable, measurable, and fair objectives for employees is not simply a way to make performance appraisals work, but a means of shaping mindsets.

*Forging a link between personal performance goals and appraisal indicators to organizational goals is a way of making individual mindsets coherent with others in the organization.*

Creating a clear ‘line of sight’ between individual and organizational goals can help inculcate a ‘performance culture’ throughout the organization by providing clear direction and a common sense of purpose to staff members.<sup>129</sup>

A sole focus on quantitative indicators will not be able to capture less quantifiable aspects of performance such as whether the employee is a team player, or whether he or she has innovative and creative ideas. The more successful approaches tend to be those that include a combination of both, but this makes the process vulnerable to an inability to quantitatively assess individuals in a common way. Many practitioners and researchers are now downplaying this concern by emphasizing that the appraisal process is a means of generating a conversation about roles and mindsets between employees and managers. It is the dialogue rather than the score that seems to matter most within the appraisal process.

### Psychological factors in performance evaluation

That appraisals are in large part about generating a productive dialogue within the public service hierarchy leads to the concern that individual bias may hamper the efficacy of the appraisal process. Although appraisal methods at the level of an organization can and should be standardized to diminish individual interference, performance appraisals are sometimes subject to different appraiser biases that impact evaluation methods or their results. These biases can (involuntarily and unconsciously) influence how someone is rated during a performance appraisal. Table 10.2 summarises some common biases<sup>130</sup>

As such, the appraisal process is vulnerable to the biases of the implementing manager. Employee perception of managerial bias can discredit the whole appraisal process. Checks and balances ought to be in place to check if the appraisal is carried out properly, and if the verdict is made objectively. Both a higher-level review or audit check of the appraisals should be in place, as well as the opportunity for the reviewee to see the appraisal and voice disagreement or appeal the conclusion. In order to constitute such a mechanism, a World Bank project in Tajikistan explicitly included “exercises in quality control and oversight functions with regard to the implementation of the guidelines on performance appraisal.”<sup>131</sup>

Means of counteracting these biases, such as having independent oversight of the performance management system, can be weak given the relatively large amount of information the manager has on her or his employee. A peer review system that empowers individual officials to support one another, such as Ethiopia’s ‘Change Army’ (see Box 10.2) may be one means of confronting such vulnerabilities. To change mindsets effectively, the appraisal process must be seen as having credibility amongst unit staff.

**Table 10.2: Psychological biases common in performance appraisals**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Halo Error:</b> One element from the performance favorably determines the overall perception of the performance.  | <b>Horn error:</b> The opposite of the halo error. Downgrading an evaluation based on the poor performance in only one dimension   |
| <b>First Impression Error:</b> Developing a negative/positive opinion of an employee early in the review period, allowing to influence later perceptions of performance. | <b>Recency Error:</b> Opposite of first impression error. Allowing performance at the end of the review period to play too large a role in determining the overall period. |
| <b>Leniency Error:</b> Consistently rating someone higher than is deserved.  | <b>Severity Error:</b> The opposite of lenience error. Rating someone consistently lower than is deserved.   |
| <b>Central Tendency Error:</b> Avoiding extremes in ratings across employees.  |  |
| <b>Clone Error:</b> Giving better ratings to an individual who is like the rater in behavior and/or personality.   |  |
| <b>Spillover Error:</b> Continuing to downgrade an employee for performance errors in prior rating periods.  |  |

**Box 10.2: An innovative approach to appraising cultural change: The Ethiopian ‘Change Army’**

The Change Army is a core part of the Government of Ethiopia’s recent efforts to reform the civil service. In addition to a series of reforms that draw from the classic theories of New Public Management, the government has also developed and introduced the Change Army as a homegrown and ‘Ethiopia-specific’ approach (Araya et al., 2019)<sup>1</sup>. Following the success of similar initiatives in other parts of the economy and society, the Change Army was introduced into the civil service with the objective to mobilize and align the state, party and citizens towards the country’s common development goals. The Change Army also functions to ensure that civil servants accord to the values and missions of the public sector.

The ‘state wing’ of the Change Army consists of five levels: individual civil servants; model civil servants; lower-level leadership; middle-level leadership; and top leadership. Individual civil servants are grouped into 5 and led by a model civil servant – a civil servant that is identified as an effective performer by superiors. The model civil servants regularly liaise with superiors and conduct daily and weekly meetings and peer-review sessions with their groups, evaluating the each member’s performance, the performance of the group as a whole, providing feedback, and identifying areas for growth. A similar structure is introduced at each layer of the hierarchy, ensuring a strong peer-monitoring and feedback mechanism throughout the bureaucracy. Moreover, the regularly interaction of group representatives with superiors enhances the integration across the layers of the formal organizational hierarchy, ensuring that daily activities are well aligned with the broader organizational objectives.

The higher layers of the ‘state wing’ of the Change Army regularly interact with higher layers of the ‘public wing’, a form of the Change Army across community and neighbourhood organizations. These regular discussions allow for citizens’ demands and concerns to feed into the broader work plans of public organizations, i.e. a manner through which citizens’ concerns can directly impact the daily activities and functions of the state.

**Create a performance appraisal system that is culturally and context-specific**

Although performance appraisals date back to the third century CE in China, the modern version of it is a Western invention.<sup>132</sup> An analysis of the literature shows a clear skewness of performance appraisal research to Western contexts. While we might assume that in Western administrative cultures, similar logics might apply, this assumption is particularly weak in other contexts.<sup>133</sup> A study comparing appraisal schemes in the public sectors of Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines showed how national cultures can influence how performance appraisals will be carried out and how they can be most effective.<sup>134</sup> Whether a country has a culture of ‘saving face’, or one based more on directness and confrontation can have a significant influence. Giangreco and colleagues (2010) point out that in the Middle East,

*“a well-known phenomenon affecting business life is ‘wasta’. [This] refers to a reciprocal use of favours instead of merit to get things done. [...] Wasta would affect the hiring or promotion processes so that positions would be given according to friendship and family connections instead of being distributed according to qualifications.”*

Performance appraisals will have to take a different form in countries with such a culture. Furthermore, Peretz and Fried, in a study comparing 21 countries, show that:

*“societal, cultural practices were related to organizational [performance appraisal] practices, and that congruence between societal cultures and [performance appraisal] characteristics tended to reduce turnover and/or absenteeism, whereas incongruence between these societal cultures and [performance appraisal] characteristics tended to increase the level of these two behavioral outcomes.”<sup>135</sup>*

Adapting performance appraisals to a national context goes beyond culture, however. Giangreco and colleagues show that

in organizations that operate within a fragile or conflict-ridden context, adaptation and endurance are more appropriate goals and objectives. These are difficult to quantify and are often lacking in Western-style performance appraisals, where the context is (most often) stable and peaceful.

**Both good and bad appraisals should have consequences attached to them**

Finally, performance appraisals can also be implemented for primarily symbolic reasons. It could be an empty gesture to seemingly increase the accountability of the government towards its people. The World Bank survey in Montenegro’s Ministry of Public Administration mentioned at the start of this chapter, showed that only 30% of respondents saw that the results of their performance appraisals were directly linked with their promotion possibilities and salary. In some countries, public employment might be based on clientelist or otherwise non-merit-based reasons. In such circumstances, a performance appraisal will be of little consequence as it will not lead to a useful dialogue with officials about their mindset as they navigate their role in the service.

*An effective appraisal might identify individuals with the right mindsets but insufficient capacities to take a task forward. In this case, appraisals become a platform for building capacities in the public service.*

Managers can discuss with officials how to build the capacities they need through training, mentoring, or experience.

Further, for a performance appraisal scheme to work as an accountability tool, consequences should be attached to bad and good evaluations. In the absence of consequences, the system becomes little more than a procedural obligation and nothing more than a ticking-box exercise. The World Bank study in Romania found that 94% of the respondents had been reviewed as performing ‘very good’, and 5% as performing ‘good’.

It is important to note that positive incentives for a good appraisal can be both monetary and non-monetary. Research has shown that both can improve public sector performance.<sup>136</sup> Whether employees are driven by monetary or non-monetary incentives can differ from person to person, however. For instance, an employee’s age, income, and family status all influence the impact of the incentive.<sup>137</sup> Managers will need to know the drivers of performance amongst their teams and staff members before deciding what form their incentives will take. Non-monetary incentives can come in many shapes and forms: awards, public recognition in documents or during meetings, granting the employee more autonomy in the future, offering further learning and development opportunities, a better work-life balance, etc. Once again, the manager’s role in effective implementation of any performance scheme is paramount.

The possibilities of attaching rewards and punishments to a performance appraisal underlines that it should be the start of a

conversation, not a stand-alone activity. A World Bank study in Myanmar showed that:

*“[s]upervisors seldom discuss performance appraisals with their staff. In the civil service survey, 67 percent of gazetted officers and 68 percent of non-gazetted officers reported that their supervisors discussed their performance appraisal report and gave them feedback about their job performance.”<sup>138</sup>*

*Without regular conversations, it is not possible to use appraisals to improve an official’s mindset, to find opportunities for further training (personal development), or analyze who in the team is ready for more autonomy or responsibilities (career development).*

An appraisal should not lead to a single, final punishment, but rather such consequences be part of an ongoing effort to get the best out of all service members.

## 5

## How can we better understand what determines effective performance appraisals?

National governments, researchers, and international organizations have found out quite a bit about what works and what does not work in performance appraisals. A key finding is that the success of performance systems is contingent on the quality of the individual manager's appraisal process, their associated levels of bias, and the culture in which they are embedded. A service's broad performance framework provides a structure for a manager's decisions, but how the performance appraisal functions within a unit is still determined by a single manager's decisions. Thus, the efficacy of performance appraisal can vary within a single ministry or agency.

A centralized monitoring system that collects good quality data on the perceptions of individual officials with regards to the performance system and its relationship to their mindset and capabilities is thus vital to understanding the implementation of performance management. The extent to which a manager has crafted a performance management system to the specific needs of her or his staff is an empirical question. Similarly, whether a manager is truly holding their staff to account, or recognizing them when they deserve it, requires data on appraisal scores and individual productivity. Large-scale data

on these topics can allow analysts across the service to assess what determines an effective performance appraisal.

Governments rarely collect this data, or when they do have it, they tend not to use it. The World Bank's Bureaucracy Lab is based on the idea that government should be far more empirical in its approach to personnel management. The Bureaucracy Lab is focused on analysis that assesses what determines the performance of public servants and public organizations. Through surveys and micro-data analysis, it is possible to find out the impact particular management practices and organizational policies have on performance. The survey in the Liberian FDA is a good example of that, showing that staff that had a regular evaluation of their performance reported a 13- point increase in motivation. Another opportunity is conducting impact evaluations (also known as randomized control trials, or RCTs), where one organization or unit undergoes a certain policy whilst the other does not. The difference between the two organizations at the end of the trial can then be attributed to the policy, all else being equal. At the time of writing, such an impact evaluation is being conducted in the Liberian public administration, looking precisely at the impact of performance appraisals.

## 6

# Conclusion and recommendations

Creating a higher-performing public sector is essential in attaining the SDGs. Performance appraisals can play an essential role in changing the mindsets of public officials, identifying, and strengthening weaknesses in their capabilities, and increasing the performance of public sector organizations. It is clear that appraisal systems are often implemented imperfectly, limiting their ability to support the required strengthening of government. In order to get the most out of this management tool, managers should:

1. **Make them something the individual can relate to:** Create clear and measurable objectives, differentiated between jobs, and linking personal objectives to organizational goals.
2. **Ensure they are seen as credible:** Take into account the biases that can affect and undermine appraisal processes and try their hardest to avoid the pitfalls that come with it.
3. **Build them fit for purpose:** Make sure that the appraisal system is adjusted to the culture and context of the country and organizations and not just copy pasted from another setting.
4. **Give them the weight they deserve:** Ensure that both good and bad appraisals have significant consequences attached to them.
5. **Monitor at the micro-level:** Build survey-based reviews of the appraisal process in each division of the service, ensuring the possibility of interviewees to voice their dissent.

Fundamentally, performance appraisal and management are structured starting points for a dialogue surrounding the performance of individual employees and their place within the public service team. Dialogue has long been the most effective means for change, and the public sector is no exception.



## Endnotes

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## **PART II**

# **Regional Perspectives on Changing Mindsets in Public Institutions to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

## CHAPTER 11

# Capacity Development to Transform Mindsets of Public Servants – the Case of the African Association of Public Administration and Management (AAPAM)

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As the world draws closer to the timeline of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the role of each actor in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is becoming more crucial. In the spirit of leaving no one behind, every actor individually and collectively should play his/her part. To this effect, the African continent should not be left behind in capacity development for the achievement of the SDGs.

Stakeholders including the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), schools of public administration and institutes of public management have continued championing for the implementation of Agenda 2030 through capacity development on the continent. As envisioned in its mission, AAPAM spearheads best practices, excellence and professionalism in public administration and management in Africa.

SDG 16 focuses on governance. This is because governance is at the heart of development. It covers aspects like accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, and observance to the rule of law.<sup>139</sup> Central to good governance is transformation through capacity development. Capacity development is instrumental in changing mindsets. Therefore, governments in Africa have deliberately designed capacity development approaches to transform their public services. This is evidenced by the massive investments in their human capital and institutional infrastructure. African states, like their counterparts, have continued to create awareness, promote advocacy, spearhead research and develop the capacity of their governments to implement the SDGs.

## 1

## Approaches by Africa to accelerate the achievement of sustainable development

Africa has adopted a multi-faceted approach in implementing the SDGs, which is contextualized within the realities of each nation. Capacity development is one of the core approaches adopted by the continent. Recognizing that change begins from the mind, such approaches aim to transform the mindsets of governments, the people, and other actors in Africa. Specifically, actors in the continent have adopted the following approaches:

1. **Localization of the SDGs** by adapting and contextualizing them within their existing national frameworks. In such instances, the goals are mainstreamed into policy and national frameworks.
2. **Institutionalization of the processes needed for the achievement of the SDGs:** in some countries multi-sectoral committees have been instituted to oversee the implementation of Agenda 2030.
3. **Prioritizing areas of focus:** since governments have competing interests, besides being at different development levels, some governments have opted to prioritize services of immediate concern to their people and accelerate their delivery. For example, the Kenyan government has been accelerating 'the Big 4 Agenda' of food security and nutrition, manufacturing, affordable universal health care and affordable housing, which are all still founded on the SDGs.
4. **Capacity development:** some of the critical ways that African countries have acted on this point is by integrating aspects of the SDGs into the existing curricula of Management Development Institutes (MDIs) and schools of public administration, promoting awareness and advocacy through the media, conducting national stakeholder participation forums and participating in international stakeholder forums, among others. Capacity development for the SDGs empowers stakeholders to implement the SDGs themselves. For instance, the Rwanda Association for Local Government Authorities (RALGA) has created an e-learning platform for the SDGs.
5. **Multi-sector/stakeholder collaboration:** resonating with SDG 17, African countries continue to participate in national, regional, continental, and global forums on sustainable development with the aim of upskilling their members' capacities. A number of African countries are part of the UN DESA Task Force of the Global Initiative on Equipping Public Servants with the Capacities to Implement the SDGs,<sup>140</sup> which has been championing capacity development for the implementation of Agenda 2030 in the continent.
6. **Promotion of innovation and creativity:** creativity is the key to accelerating the implementation of the global Agenda 2030. For example, the award winning Huduma Kenya<sup>141</sup> Programme has eased service delivery in Kenya, and
7. **Enhancement of governance:** transformation in governance is fundamental to the achievement of the SDGs. Goal 16 guides the efforts of a number of governments in Africa who are embracing good governance by harnessing technology and adopting e-governance to deal with challenges such as corruption.

## 2

## The role of AAPAM in promoting capacity development to change mindsets of public servants in Africa

To transform the mindsets of the public servants in the continent, AAPAM focuses on capacity development with the aim of enhancing public servants' skills, attitudes, and knowledge. First and foremost, the Association realigned its policy direction, ensuring that all its post-2015 programmes and activities were founded on the SDGs and the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063. For example, AAPAM's three-year arch-theme for 2016-2018 was on the transformation of public administration and management. From 2019-2021, the Association is working on building sustainable institutions toward the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Likewise, most African countries and institutions have strategically realigned their policies and operations to the global and continental development goals.

Secondly, in line with Goal 17, the Association collaborated with like-minded institutions in Africa and across the globe with the aim of empowering stakeholders to implement the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Partnerships are pivotal in harnessing external expertise and resources. For example, in 2018, AAPAM collaborated with the National Institute of Public Administration of Lusaka in Zambia and conducted a course on Promoting Peaceful and Inclusive Societies: The Role of Public Administration and Management. This program empowered participants to develop capacities in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies as envisioned in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the AU Agenda (2063). In the same year, together with the Uganda Management Institute, AAPAM delivered a course on Transforming Performance Management Competency to Ensure Inclusive Service Delivery. This course equipped participants with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to harness the "diversity dividend" in service delivery. Notably, aspects like inclusivity, diversity management, and promotion of peace were placed at the core of the course design.

Thirdly, AAPAM recognizes the importance of SDG 16. As a cross-cutting goal, it is important to the achievement of all the goals. Governance challenges in Africa have been identified as one of the causes of its underdevelopment. Therefore, AAPAM, in partnership with other stakeholders, continues to place emphasis on improving governance in the continent. AAPAM capacity development programmes continue to centre on aspects like transparency, accountability, ethics, and citizen participation. Some of the Association's Programmes

in this category include the Seminar on Citizen Participation: Inclusivity and Integration within the context of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs) held on 17-19 September 2018 in South Africa. The seminar was premised on the fact that citizen participation, inclusivity, and integration not only enhance accountability but also foster support for the implementation of sustainable development plans. Equally, the Executive Course on Enhancing Public Financial Governance and Management in Africa, held in June 2016 in Gaborone, Botswana, reinforced the leadership competencies in the continent to establish a culture of stewardship for public funds. This course focused on governance in the public sector. It dealt with practical realities in public administration and management and highlighted anti-corruption strategies. The course also focused on transformed leadership, which is foundational to change in any institution.

*Transformational leadership begins with possessing the right mindsets, including attitudes, for propelling growth and wellbeing.*

Fourthly, through recognition and the promotion of excellence and innovation in the public sector, AAPAM champions enhanced service delivery in the continent. The AAPAM Innovative Management Award (IMA) Programme recognizes and celebrates innovations that create effectiveness in the performance of organizations in the public sector through the introduction of new ideas and new operational and management methods. Award-winning projects are shared with stakeholders during the annual roundtable conferences to enable them to replicate such innovations.

In the same vein, African countries have continued to innovate, as attested by their numerous submissions to the All Africa Public Service Innovation Awards managed by the AU and to the United Nations Public Service Award Programme. The Awards Programme provides practical case studies for nations to harness creativity in dealing with the challenges impeding the achievement of the SDGs.

The 2019 AAPAM IMA Gold winning project “Ending Child Marriage” by the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs’ (MOCTA) of Zambia provides a practical case study of how to end child marriages and the perpetuation of harmful traditional practices, which result in a high number of teenage pregnancies and school dropouts. The high point of the submission was illustrating MOCTA’s effort to ‘do more with less’ in terms of resources from the national treasury. Such an initiative has immense benefit to the society as it contributed to poverty eradication, improved children welfare, reduced health challenges, promotion of gender equity, and enhanced education for girls, amongst other aspects that are central to the SDGs and AU Agenda 2063.

Likewise, the AAPAM Gold Medal award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to public administration and management. It is the highest and most prestigious honour conferred by AAPAM to an individual in celebration of achievement and excellence. It marks the exceptional achievements of a person who has shown distinctive leadership or made significant contributions to the advancement of excellence in public administration and management in Africa. This award is key in promoting individual excellence in service delivery, hence a model for public servants to emulate.

Further, mentorship is one of the other strategies needed to transform the mindsets of public servants. Through its mentorship platforms like the Young Professional Network (YPN), AAPAM is assisting young people to become better mantle bearers for the posterity of our nations. This initiative allows new and young public servants to be skilled and empowered through activities like training, networking, and exposure to best practices, among others. The Association thus designs specific programmes to change the mindsets and attitudes of the young professionals in the continent.

For instance, in June 2018, AAPAM conducted a Young Professional Network International Forum in Kisumu, Kenya. The forum focused on “Building Accountable and Inclusive Institutions: Challenges and Opportunities for the African Youth”. One representative of the YPN was also sponsored by UN DESA to attend the 2019 United Nations Public Service Forum (UNPSF). Indeed, most African Countries have invested in inducting new entrants into the public service to imbibe them with the pre-requisite skills, competencies, and attitudes. In such inductions, they are sensitized not only to their government’s development agendas but also the continental and global development agendas.

Besides, the Association has re-aligned its premier annual event, the roundtable conference, to build the capacity of public servants on the SDGs and Agenda 2063. 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 themes were: Transforming Public Administration and Management in order to Contribute Towards the Agenda 2063 within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals; A Transformed Leadership: Managing Natural Resources to achieve the Objectives of African Union Agenda 2063 within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals; Innovation, Resourcefulness, Integration and Inclusivity; Fundamentals for the Transformation of Governance and Public Administration in Africa to achieve the Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals; and, Transforming Institutions in Africa for Sustainable Development, respectively.

The conferences aim at sharing knowledge, networking, and fostering a common agenda towards development in Africa. The themes of the conferences are identified based on prevailing challenges affecting public administration and management in Africa. The roundtable conference brings together senior African government officials to enhance their knowledge of international best practices and awareness of global socio-economic successes, challenges, and lessons learned; find common solutions to public sector problems; enhance the profile of the public service within governments and the public and develop public sector networks and public service delivery. African governments and other stakeholders actively participate in the conferences and thereby utilize the acquired skills and knowledge to better their governments and institutions.

Additionally, the AAPAM continues to enhance knowledge sharing through diverse publications and robust electronic platforms. Advocacy and sensitization of the SDGs in Africa is an ongoing process. The approach is multi-sectoral and inclusive. For instance, the Ghana Parliamentary Institute has conducted sessions on the SDGs for their parliamentary staff. In Kenya, Kenyatta University encouraged its students to form SDG clubs in 2018. Furthermore, AAPAM and most African countries continue to participate in the Global meetings on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development like the United Nations Public Service Forum (UNPSF) and other regional capacity development initiatives.

Indeed, the continent’s capacity development programmes, in recent years, have deliberately focused on leadership skills and mindset change as soft skills. They are key in the achievement of the 2030 Global Agenda. The continent has created diverse platforms for civil servants to network and learn about best practices.

## 3

## Lessons learnt on capacity development for changing mindsets in Africa

- Efforts to change mindsets should be embraced by the whole society.
- It is important to teach ethics to children at home and lower/elementary school level.
- Open dialogue and discussions are also critical to enhancing the attitudes of public servants in Africa.
- Transformational leadership is key at both the political and technocrat level.
- Cultural orientation has a bearing on one's attitudes. Thus, harmful traditional and cultural practices must be realigned to embrace the principles of sustainable development.
- The harmonization of approaches through collaborative measures across various stakeholders is paramount to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.
- Innovation and case studies are powerful tools for research, and for accelerating change. An enhanced policy framework is essential for the practical implementation of the SDGs.
- Stakeholders should similarly institute strategic resource mobilization to fast-track the implementation of the SDGs.

### Endnotes

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## CHAPTER 12

# Capacity Development for Changing Mindsets in the Arab Region – Governance Institutes Forum for Training in the Middle East and North Africa (GIFT-MENA)

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The conclusion of the 2019 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, which aimed to review the status of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda across the Arab world, underlined that the achievement of the Goals by 2030 is improbable, particularly given the chronic and deeply rooted development challenges, institutional deficiencies, lack of policy coherence and widespread conflicts that the region is facing. Empowering people and working towards more inclusiveness and equality were ascertained as pathways to peace, development, and the achievement of the SDGs.<sup>142</sup>

In light of these challenges, realizing the SDGs in the Arab region was largely made dependent on the readiness and capacity of governments to keep pace with the changes ahead and reap the benefits of opportunities arising from the changing nature of work and firms, from the potential for economic and trade integration, from climate action and, most importantly for fragile and conflict-affected settings, from the renegotiation of social contracts during peace agreements or following unrest.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put further pressure on governments to address unforeseen challenges and an overhauled global working environment. Government were called upon to shift their immediate attention to overarching structural and governance deficiencies and poor citizen-centric frameworks while providing national responses to a global threat. With the pandemic, States are now further expected to frame their policy action within broader and overarching policy considerations, more particularly social protection, economic resilience and recovery, as well as the development of institutional response structures that are able to break existing silos and drive simultaneous actions on several policy tracks. For that, the Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development can chart the way.

The present chapter draws on the challenges specific to the Arab region, and in line with the recommendations outlined at the 18th and 19th sessions of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, reflects on the region's way forward, particularly in what relates to the competencies and skills required to overcome the old and emerging challenges, and to progress towards achieving Agenda 2030.

— 1 —

## Setting the Scene: why what works in some regions may not work in the Arab region

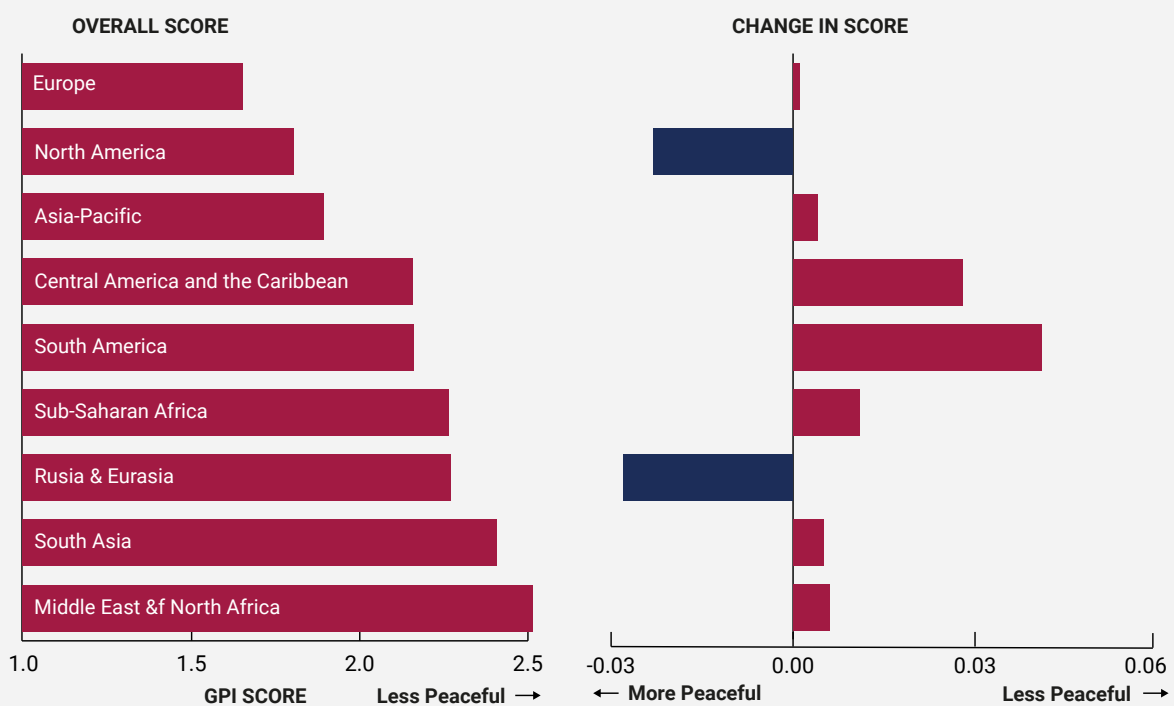
### The peace gap: how can the world’s least peaceful region achieve sustainable development?

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is most exposed and prone to conflicts. It has experienced, since World War II, more frequent and intense conflicts than any other part of the world. Between 1946 and 2015, 12 out of 59 conflicts in MENA have lasted more than 8 years, and, in about half of these episodes, the ensuing peace lasted less than 10 years.<sup>143</sup> The intensity and recurrence of the region’s conflicts have rendered them particularly challenging to overcome, which has led to massive economic and social losses, ranging from deep recessions to rising inflation, fiscal deficits, strong

economic inequalities and weak financial, public and regulatory institutions. Conflicts in the MENA region cost much more than the average of all types of conflicts worldwide, thereby leading to crippled state capacities and to a vicious cycle of instability and unrest. This renders the advancement of the 2030 Agenda much more complex.

Today, the MENA region remains the least peaceful region in the world (figure 12.1) on the Global Peace Index, despite some marginal improvements since 2018 related to reductions in population displacement, political terror, terrorism, deaths resulting from internal and external armed conflicts, military spending, and armed services personnel.<sup>144</sup>

Figure.12.1: Regional Global Peace Index (GPI) Results, 2019



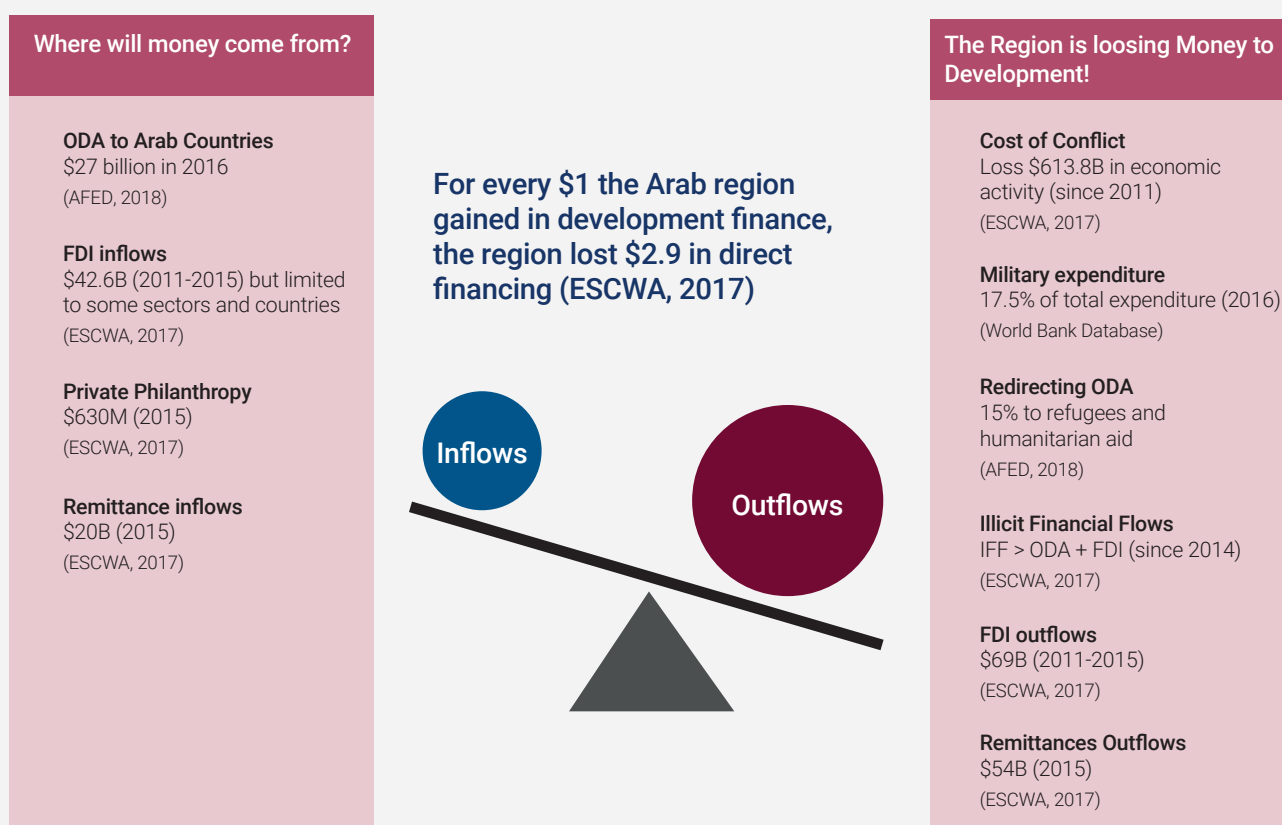
Source: Institute for Economic and Peace (IEP)

## The financing gap

Besides the direct and indirect impact of conflicts, sustaining development funding is another major challenge weighting upon the achievement of Agenda 2030 in the Arab world (figure 12.2). In 2017 and well before the outbreak of the pandemic, it was already estimated that for every US\$1 gained in development financing, US\$2.9 are lost in direct financing that could have been directed towards financing the region's

development priorities.<sup>145</sup> Consequently, while the economic and social toll of persistent and recurrent instability and conflict continues to rise, the financing gap for the achievement of Agenda 2030 in the region keeps widening. Billions of dollars are lost every year to conflicts, illicit financial flows, corruption, money laundering and tax evasion. These resources have and continue to be invested in funding wars, crimes, and lavish lifestyles rather than socioeconomic well-being.

**Figure 12.2: Financing Development in the Arab World, 2018**



Source: Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan, Lebanon

### The public finance gap

As the United Nations Secretary-General Guterres has reiterated, efforts should “continue to support developing countries in creating conditions for mobilizing domestic resources, including tax reform and other good governance measures”.<sup>146</sup> Nevertheless, Arab countries’ capacity to mobilize domestic resources towards such levers continues to be crippled. Fiscal and financial frameworks continue to be, in many cases, regressive and unable to generate a sufficient pool of revenue to finance the resumption of public services or local development. Moreover, national financial resources continue to be drained by military spending and regressive fuel subsidies.

The principle of allocation of maximum available resources to development is challenged by high military spending: 25% of central government expenditures (2015) are allocated to security and military spending compared to a global average of around 8%. Along the same lines, about half of total energy subsidies belong to the MENA region. Pre-tax energy subsidies are equivalent to 8.6% of regional GDP or 22% of government revenues (IMF, 2011) (figure 12.3), and most of these subsidies tend to be regressive or captured by an economically entrenched elite.<sup>147</sup> The IMF estimated in 2018 that for each 1% point of GDP in spending on energy subsidies that is redirected to infrastructure spending, the region has the potential to increase its GDP by 2% points and create ½ million new jobs.<sup>148</sup>

**Figure 12.3: Pre-Tax Energy Subsidies as % of GDP in 2011**



Source: IMF, 2013

Despite tremendous efforts, public procurement regulations and practices in the region require modernization and reform, particularly in light of three overarching objectives: (1) value-for-money optimization; (2) the promotion of equitable socioeconomic development and innovation through Medium and Small Enterprises (MSEs); and (3) the inclusion of sustainable and environmental criteria in line with the UNEP One Planet framework. The potential of public procurement, a lever to achieve progress towards the achievement of Agenda 2030, continues to be untapped.

*External foreign financing, such as Official Development Assistance (ODA), continues to shift towards humanitarian interventions, security-related expenditures, and refugee costs in host countries, often at the expense of development.*

Arab development co-operation activities are concentrated in the economic infrastructure sectors, such as transport and storage, energy, industry, mining and construction, which accounted for 43% of their ODA between 2011 and 2015; the OECD’s DAC members place greater emphasis on social infrastructure and services (57% of their ODA).<sup>149</sup>

When it comes to private financing, the region has gradually become a “net exporter of capital”. For every dollar received in 2017, US\$1.8 are reinvested abroad.<sup>150</sup> Even oil-rich countries, which are usually the recipients of high levels of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), are suffering from a decrease in the levels of FDI attracted of around 1.2% of GDP, compared with 2.3% worldwide.<sup>151</sup> And when available, the vast majority of investment is short-term oriented. Most FDIs are directed towards low technology sectors that generate few new jobs. Finally, complex financing mechanisms such as Green Financing still represent only a small fraction of overall financial activity in private markets and are yet to be mainstreamed into the business models of the financial industry.

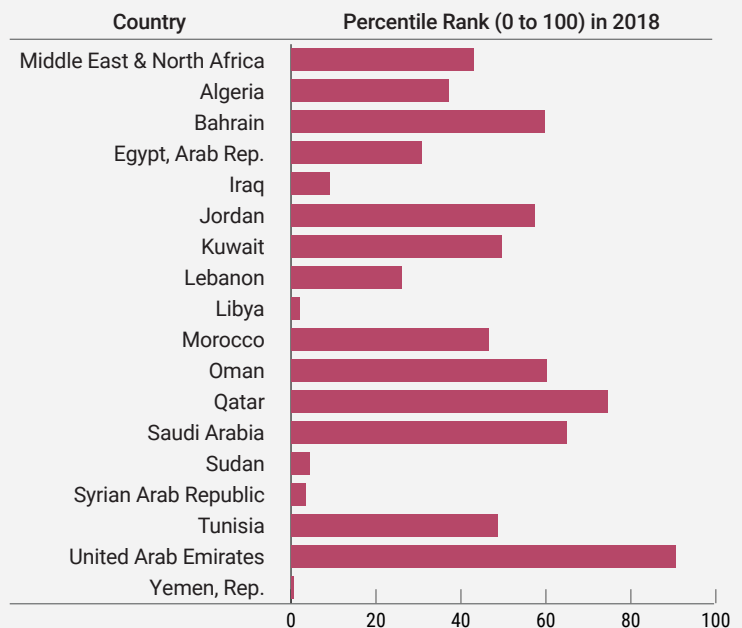
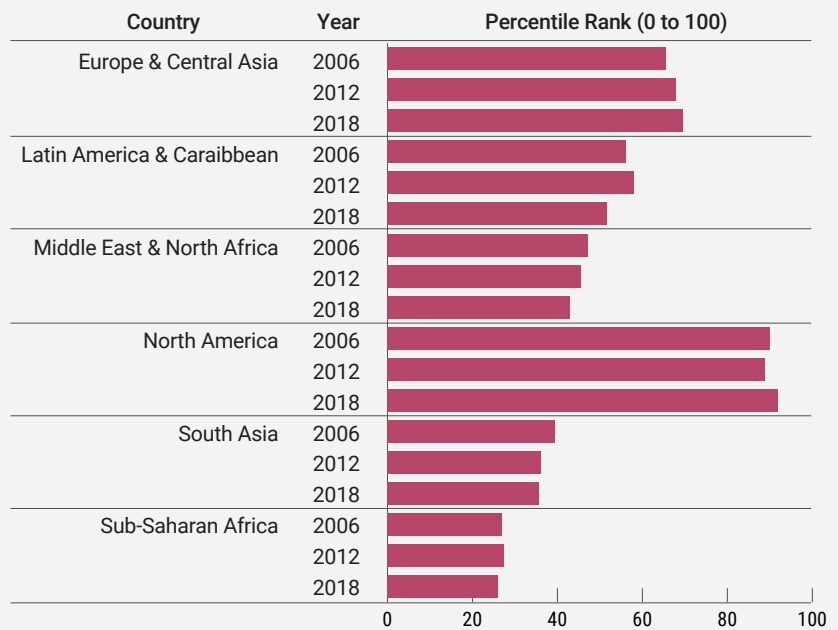
### The social services gap

Today, the MENA region is tagged for its inability to generate growth and a persistent tendency to disappoint. Although most Arab governments commit a significant share of their budgets to education and health, public services are still of low quality across the MENA region (figure 12.4).

When public services are failing everyone, the rich usually opt out of the system, instead of striving to enhance it. Such situations often lead to increased flight of capital, tax evasion and the proliferation of illicit financial flows. These shortfalls persist for two reasons: first, because there is no major political gain from pursuing sustainable policies; second, because the public administration may lack the capacity, incentives, or competencies to convert policy plans into effective actions.

As a consequence, governments across the MENA region are continuing to favour spending on infrastructure and subsidies, notably in countries coming out of conflict or facing high levels of fragility. History and experience have taught us, however, that rebuilding public administration is one of the “most complex and difficult aspects of restoring governance and rebuilding war-torn societies”<sup>153</sup> and that the transition process can take 15 to 30 years. In this context, the hope, brought by Agenda 2030, may dwindle before the stark contrast between the transformative vision and aspirations set forth by this Agenda, and the current state of conflict, violent political forces, occupation and exclusion across the Arab world.

Figure 12.4: Government Effectiveness in MENA, 2019.<sup>152</sup>



## 2

## The COVID-19 pandemic: revealing and amplifying structural deficiencies

Across the developing world and in the Arab world in particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has both revealed and drastically amplified structural deficiencies as well as the SDG financing gap. With IMF estimating the global downturn as the worst since the great depression, between 400-700 million more people would be living below the poverty line (both extreme and middle-income poverty line).<sup>154</sup> The pandemic is currently undoing decades of progress on the MDGs and the SDGs, fueling further socioeconomic resentment, and destabilizing already-fragile States. With an original US\$ 2 trillion financing gap, developing economies have just lost approximately US\$ 90 billion in retracted investments due to the crisis.<sup>155</sup> In the Arab region, protracted conflicts are expected to worsen as the forces of exclusion (discrimination, geography, governance, socioeconomic and fragility) remain unaddressed.<sup>156</sup>

GDP is expected to contract by 5.7%, with the worst economic forecast of the past 50 years. Poverty is estimated to swell by 12.4%, affecting more than 115 million people in total. The situation is particularly desperate for migrants and people who need humanitarian assistance, with a 1.7 billion USD financing gap to address the impact and risks of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable alone.<sup>157</sup> This situation risks amplifying conflicts, as resources dwindle and the capacity of governments to respond to the crisis remains crippled by inefficiency and the inability to mobilize domestic resources.<sup>158</sup> Nevertheless, the crisis also offers the opportunity to “build back better”, achieve political consensus, leverage State legitimacy, and boost economic recovery.<sup>159</sup>

### A land of opportunities despite all

Despite this grim outlook, the MENA region still holds considerable potential for a successful transition towards sustainable governance. It enjoys a privileged geographic location with access to large markets, a young and increasingly educated population (half are under 30 years) and comparative advantages in several sectors including manufacturing, renewable energies, and tourism. Financing opportunities are also abundant. The region is the largest provider of ODA outside of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Arab ODA represented 47% of what non-DAC providers reported disbursing between 2011 and 2015. ODA provided by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar in 2015 surpassed the United Nations target of 0.7% for the ratio of ODA to gross national income.<sup>160</sup>

When it comes to official commitments to the SDGs, the MENA region is on board with Agenda 2030 since more than half of the Arab countries (16 countries) have fully engaged in the realization of the Agenda and presented, by 2020, multiple Voluntary National Reviews. This collaborative exercise has helped to bring about

change in planning practices, in institutional coordination and in the identification of data gaps. It is also a promising tool to start integrating SDGs implementation in national budgets. Arab countries also provided swift and early responses to the COVID-19 outbreak, keeping a relatively low number of Covid-related deaths to population, far below the rates experienced in some European and Asian countries.

However, as highlighted during the 2019 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, progress made in the Arab region after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda is still far, both qualitatively and quantitatively, from reaching the desired objectives and targets. Even if all conflicts and wars were to end immediately, the region would struggle with achieving the SDGs by 2030. Indeed, “a change in the mindset and culture of designing development strategies, policies, and plans, and their monitoring and assessment is essential if Arab countries are to achieve the SDGs and address climate change concerns”<sup>161</sup>.

Previous research has underlined that the promotion of inclusiveness will be central in closing the political governance gap and establishing sustainable peace, and that it would be a key pulling factor for the lever pertaining to political stability and consensus building.<sup>162</sup> Nevertheless, such efforts need to be accompanied by efforts to change the perception that governance reform is a mere tool to reduce expenditures rather than a means to solve complex policy challenges.<sup>163</sup> To do so, new social contracts and the curtailment of political exclusiveness can be achieved through public sector recruitment reform.

In contexts where public sector leaders struggle with competing priorities and are challenged by security threats and at a time when policy decisions are more than ever driven by performance and value for money, transforming the civil service into a catalyst for the achievement of a balanced, equitable and sustainable society founded on the principles of social justice has become a necessity. Questioning the status-quo would require addressing a series of questions around which competencies are most relevant to contexts so disparate, changing and challenging. These competencies include the needed skill sets that would allow the countries to navigate uncertainty and the public administration’s ability to attract and retain needed talents and competencies, particularly in the context of the global pandemic. Focusing on skills is an incremental approach that is anchored in a medium-term vision for reform, rather than in a “quick fix” approach. This prospective exercise around skills needed in government must also cater for the fact that, by 2030, 65% of graduates will have jobs that don’t currently exist.<sup>164</sup>

## 3

## The demand for skills in public service

At its 2019 session, the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration underlined that new sets of capacities and skills are required to effectively implement the SDGs,<sup>165</sup> albeit the fact that traditional competencies remain relevant. The Committee pointed in particular to the enabling role that critical, complexity, futures and design thinking will play in addition to deliberative skills and emotional intelligence. The Committee also highlighted the appropriate use of frontier technologies in delivering innovative public services and achieving the SDGs. It acknowledged that core human values remain the backbone for competencies to deliver an Agenda that leaves no one behind. These skills were derived from the 11 principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development developed by the UN CEPA (figure 12.5) as a novel framework to help institutions think critically about the strategies that can help them best achieve the SDGs, taking into account different governance structures, national realities, capacities and levels of development.

The demand for advanced cognitive and socio-behavioral skills is therefore increasing but so too is the demand for compassion, respect of diversity, respect of human dignity and the right to choose. Most of all, there is strong demand for agility, which is defined as the ability to respond to unexpected circumstances and to unlearn and relearn quickly. Along the same line, the COVID-19 pandemic has reasserted the need for empathy, solidarity, respect for human dignity, and the ability to generate and analyze high-quality disaggregated data for decision-making and rapid policy action.

Such skill set would indirectly contribute to conflict prevention particularly since, where preventive action is successful, the average net savings are close to US\$5 billion per year. In the most optimistic scenario, the net savings would be of almost US\$70 billion per year (Mueller 2017).

The foundational skill set that would undoubtedly need to be promoted is **socio-behavioral** as it would contribute to transforming public administrations into hubs of consensus building. The second skill set, deriving from **design thinking**, is related to the capacity of civil servants to promote transparency through policy-design and particularly through the analysis of high-quality disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data that can then be used for evidence-based policy-making. This gains further importance, as statistical bodies in conflict-affected states require particular attention and urgent capacity development given the destruction of documentation and the means of gathering information. This is especially relevant since promoting data transparency is expected to reduce sovereign risk premia in MENA by about 15%<sup>166</sup>.

As for the mobilization of domestic resources, **Public Financial Management (PFM) skills** are also seen as catalysts for the resumption of public administration governance and service delivery, especially in fragile and post conflict environments. The rift created by the COVID-19 pandemic has brought further to the forefront the importance of careful financial policy planning, the mobilization of domestic resources, the reduction of dependency relations, and the centrality of tax reform towards more progressivity and redistribution. They are a fundamental component in the achievement of the SDGs, particularly Goals 16 and 17. Indeed, PFM training, particularly on issues such as tax auditing, revenue management, combatting tax evasion, public procurement, etc. will enhance the core skills needed to increase revenues, optimize expenditures, and fund and resume social services that are often discontinued or missing in conflict-ridden environments.

Rounding out these skills is **training in prevention work**, which is expected to interact with security, diplomacy, and mediation, among others. This type of training needs to foster collective approaches to risk assessment and management and build local capacities and commitment to collectively understand and closely monitor the conditions that could contribute to fragility. It is expected to mainstream citizen engagement and empower women and youth to enhance their participation in policymaking.<sup>167</sup>

### As the nature of work is changing and the competencies are evolving, what can governments do?

Human Resources frameworks pertaining to the staffing, training, and career plans of civil servants in line with the competencies outlined for the achievement of the Principles of Effective Governance are central to the streamlining of the SDGs. In conflict and fragile contexts, a particular set of reforms can act as “entry points” for all the others: (1) recruitment reform; (2) training for transparency-oriented design thinking and (3) PFM-related competencies.

Indeed, HR frameworks can simultaneously address many, if not all of the above, levers. Several overarching recommendations have come to reinforce these assertions. The 2019 World Development Report that looks at how the nature of work is changing, points out important skills readjustments happening increasingly outside of compulsory education and formal employment. Skills development is therefore becoming a matter of lifelong learning. The report acknowledges that “adult learning is an important channel for readjusting skills to fit in the future of work, but it would benefit from a serious design rethink”<sup>168</sup>.

**Figure 12.5: Principles and Strategies of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development, adapted from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, E/2018/44-E/C.16/2018/8**

| EFFECTIVENESS  |   |   |  |   |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| COMPETENCE   |   | SOUND POLICY-MAKING   |  | COLLABORATION   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of a professional public sector workforce</li> <li>Strategic human resources management</li> <li>Leadership development, training of civil servants</li> <li>Performance management</li> <li>Results-based management</li> <li>Financial management and control</li> <li>Efficient and fair revenue administration</li> <li>Investment in e-government</li> </ul>         |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic planning and foresight</li> <li>Regulatory impact analysis</li> <li>Promotion of coherent policymaking</li> <li>Strengthening national statistical systems</li> <li>Monitoring &amp; evaluation systems</li> <li>Science-policy interface</li> <li>Risk management frameworks</li> <li>Data sharing</li> </ul> |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centre of government coordination under Head of State / Government</li> <li>Collaboration, coordination, integration, dialogue across levels of government, functional areas</li> <li>Raising awareness on SDGs</li> <li>Network-based governance</li> <li>Multi-stakeholder partnerships</li> </ul> |
| ACCOUNTABILITY   |   |   |  |   |
| ACCOUNTABILITY   |   | TRANSPARENCY  |  | INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of anti-corruption policies, practices and bodies</li> <li>Codes of conduct for public officials</li> <li>Competitive public procurement</li> <li>Elimination of bribery, including trading</li> <li>Conflict of interest policies</li> <li>Whistle-blower protection</li> <li>Provision of adequate remuneration and equitable pay scales for public servants</li> </ul> |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactive disclosure of information</li> <li>Budget transparency</li> <li>Open government data</li> <li>Registries of beneficial ownership</li> <li>Lobby registries</li> </ul>  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of the independence of regulatory agencies</li> <li>Arrangements for review of administrative decisions by courts or other bodies</li> <li>Independent audit</li> <li>Respect for legality</li> </ul>  |
| INCLUSIVENESS  |   |   |  |   |
| LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND  | NON-DISCRIMINATION  | PARTICIPATION   | SUBSIDIARY   | INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of equitable fiscal and monetary policy</li> <li>Promotion of social equity</li> <li>Data disaggregation</li> <li>Systematic follow-up and review</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of public sector workforce diversity</li> <li>Prohibition of discrimination in public service delivery</li> <li>Multilingual service delivery</li> <li>Accessibility standards</li> <li>Cultural audit of institutions</li> <li>Universal birth registration</li> <li>Gender-responsive budgeting</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free and fair elections</li> <li>Regulatory process of public consultations</li> <li>Multi-stakeholder forums</li> <li>Participatory budgeting</li> <li>Community-driven development</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fiscal federalism</li> <li>Strengthening urban governance</li> <li>Strengthening municipal finance and local finance systems</li> <li>Enhancement of local capacity for prevention, adaptation and mitigation of external shocks</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multilevel governance</li> <li>Sustainable development impact assessment</li> <li>Long-term territorial planning and spatial development</li> <li>Ecosystem management</li> </ul>  |

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, E/2018/44-E/C.16/2018/8



In order to streamline capacity building and lifelong learning in line with these recommendations, it is essential to rework education curricula for the public sector workforce around the emerging skillsets (critical, design, complexity and futures thinking and emotional intelligence) and to make the SDGs part of the curricula of national schools of public administration. Civil service schools (also known as Schools of Government) are partners for change in this endeavour. However, they need to be empowered, particularly those operating in conflict-affected areas where resources are increasingly restrained and in line with the above framework pertaining to the exit from conflict and fragility. The case of the GIFT-MENA network, in this regard, is quite indicative.

### The GIFT-MENA Network

The Arab region has witnessed the establishment of a key initiative for the development of capacities across the region in public governance and financial management. The Governance Institutes Forum for Training in the Middle East and North Africa (GIFT-MENA) network has worked in this direction with the various countries of the region (see Table 12.1). The survey conducted in 2018 by the network among its members aimed to gauge their understanding of and implication in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The results were appealing. In 87% of the cases surveyed, institutions had already integrated the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs into their existing training programs, such as a focus on SDGs topics like poverty, gender, environment, and accountability.

Still, in around 70% of the cases, training on the SDGs is delivered by international organizations, because these schools

lacked enough capacities to design training on concepts and standards. They were not exposed enough to experiences and best practices and especially lacked technical knowledge on how to integrate the SDGs. Financial resources to adapt their curricula to the new paradigm or to develop new material were scarce and expertise, particularly the availability of Arab-speaking expert trainers was found to be a limiting factor.

When asked about ways in which they were planning or would like to integrate the SDGs into training provided to civil servants, 56% of institutions answered they would integrate the SDGs into only some of the existing training programs on related topics and for specific target audiences while 38% expressed their preference for integrating the SDGs into all existing training programs for civil servants. Half of them said they would privilege training-of-trainers' programs. Around 44% pointed to a preference for developing new training programs for specific target audiences (in specific parts or units of public administration), while 44% opted for the development of a standalone program for all entry-level, mid-career and/or senior officials.

Finally, when asked about the priority themes to include in any SDG related training, schools of government prioritized human resources management; public policy and the SDGs; governance and conflicts; gender equality; ethics in public policy; and public budgeting and financial management. In the survey, schools also expressed a high preference and demand for curricula in the Arabic language.

**Table 12.1: About the GIFT-MENA network**

Created in 2006, GIFT-MENA is a voluntary network that convenes more than 60 civil service training schools and institutes in the MENA region from 20 countries.

It worked to empower schools of government by:

1. Bringing them to the front lines of State transformation.
2. Enhancing their strategic, institutional, and operational capacities to become active contributors to the agenda of reforms.
3. Promoting the co-production of knowledge to shape policies and especially policies affecting public money management and HR policies influencing meritocratic and inclusive recruitment; and
4. Finally, by creating opportunities to network among peers and to build partnerships at the local, intra-Arab and international levels.

The Marrakech Call:

In 2018, on the occasion of the UN Public Service Forum in Marrakech, members of the GIFT-MENA network launched a call to:

- Design a roadmap to support willing institutions in the region with methodologies, and advice, to help them embrace the SDGs and redesign their practices; and
- Consolidate a network of practitioners and resources managers for the implementation of the various components of the 2030 Agenda.

Based on the survey results, member schools proposed national initiatives to integrate the SDGs into training programs and learning activities, including the programs aimed at building the capacities of trainers and experts to enhance their abilities to handle issues related to Agenda 2030. They proposed actions aimed at fostering coordination and collaboration between training schools to exchange practices and experiences in the field of sustainable development. In this regard, they pointed to the need to reinforce the capacities of networks such as the GIFT-MENA to serve as platforms of dialogue.

The survey also highlighted the importance of providing technical assistance to training schools on existing modalities for integrating the SDGs in training curricula; and the need to develop social media strategies that aim to improve access to information on the 2030 Agenda. Today, the challenge resides in the capacities of the State to make and sustain the case of Schools of Government at the policy level so that schools and institutes are in the driving seats of this transformation and granted needed resources to perform, bringing people together from central and local authorities.

Answers will need to be provided to the main questions that will shape the road ahead. Namely whether schools of government are willing to integrate in their curricula training programs that seek the development of the competencies needed to achieve the SDGs. And in doing so whether they would embrace co-construction and co-design as well as new models of partnerships. How will impact be measured and linked to the progress of the SDGs and from where will the guidance come from are essential questions. Other questions relate to the institutional dimensions of governance namely to prevailing outdated recruitment legislations, cronyism, and bloating. Questions arise to where will positive triggers for workforce development come from, and whether schools of governance may have a more strategic policy role in the development of new recruitment frameworks that are designed to cater for particular contexts, notably in conflict-ridden and fragile settings. Issues related to allocation of budgets would also need to be addressed.

## 4

## Conclusion and recommendations

The 2030 Agenda requires governments to foster an environment where meritocracy is the rule and growth is inclusive and equal. It would mean governments achieving far-reaching transformation in the way societies produce, spend and distribute their resources and in their ability to listen to the voice of the Arab youth, to prioritize their needs and to offer them opportunities to stay or to return to their home countries. Simultaneously, a professional, capable, and responsive public service is seen as a fundamental driver of citizens' trust in public institutions.

Therefore, achieving substantive progress towards the SDGs across the Arab world has to start by addressing the political gap, the socio-economic gap and the institutional gap by tapping into the region's financial, economic and human capital. This requires creating mechanisms to (1) end wars and conflicts; (2) accelerate inclusive models of growth aimed at reducing inequalities and thus preventing future cycles of violence; and (3) restore the legitimacy of the state on the basis of new skills sets and of a renewed social contract based on trust and respect of human rights, thereby creating a virtual cycle that can pave the way for seeing the promises of the 2030 Agenda materialize.

In light of the above, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Addressing the emergency relief deficit particularly in relation to healthcare and the need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.** This would entail nationwide needs assessments for the recruitment of trained essential and healthcare workers into the public workforce on either contractual or permanent bases. Such recruitment would be accompanied by integrated health services, prevention measures, and mechanisms to address displaced people and migrants. This would also require investment in capacities for coordination, prioritization, and agility.
2. **Promoting inclusiveness and diversity at all levels as a key lever for both emergency response and the building of strong and resilient institutions.** Greater investments in education and training could serve as an entry point. Indeed, increasing funding for education and seeking to reform and modernize the educational systems in the Arab world could act as a lever for social cohesion, particularly in light of both the plea of the refugees and migrants as well as in light of the poverty that has ensued due to the pandemic.
3. **Designing and implementing a competencies-building framework for women,** in order for them to be "equal contributors in society through bridging the gender divide,"<sup>169</sup> in particular after the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the major role and potential of women in MENA societies and across the globe. The COVID-19 crisis has shown that nations led by women (Germany, New Zealand, etc.) fared significantly better than those led by men and that over 70% of frontline healthcare workers are women.
4. **Implementing incremental political reform for resilience-building in fragile and conflict affected settings.** This will include addressing inequalities, shifting resources towards critical areas for achieving the SDGs, including structural transformation, economic diversification, social protection and tapping into the potential of the youth. This consequently includes promoting competencies particularly in policy design and design thinking, data, and datasets analysis for policymaking, as well as cognitive and behavioral skills pertaining to tolerance and empathy.

5. **Pulling, through training on Public Financial Management, the levers of economic and financial recovery**, particularly in the following action areas: Public-Private Partnerships, the green and innovative economy, economic diversification, public procurement, budgeting for the SDGs, tax collection, and revenues management. This will inevitably be highly contingent on the will of States to proceed in related reforms.
6. **Consolidating underlying structural issues, such as the importance of transparency in the use of public funds, digitization, and open data.**
7. **Investing in technology**, smart automation and digitization to effectively transform public administration work, drive transparent and informed decision-making and reduce malpractice in government payments and tax receipts, e-procurement, fraudulent payments, tax evasion and monitoring international and domestic markets for price comparisons and timely actions that ensure efficiency, transparency, and accountability.
8. **Harnessing the potential offered by tech lies with people and their skills, more than in the technology itself.** Schools of public administration have a key role to play in accompanying the digital transformation, anticipating the adjustment needed in competencies, skills and working practices. The investment in technology will require a commensurate investment in people. But this shall also come with training on the ethical and privacy aspects of technology so that individuals can understand and correct errors and bias coming from artificial intelligence.
9. **Emphasizing the need to pursue lifelong learning:** As we are faced with accelerated change and risk, such as the ones brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic, schools of public administration will need to find ways and approaches to keep civil servants motivated to learn throughout their careers and always be prepared and open to change and adaptation.
10. **Preserving the lifeline provided by Schools of Government in remaining knowledge and learning hubs, guardians of “institutional memory”, protectors of existing human talent**, and tap into their potential across the region as mobilizers of momentum for the creation of long-term training and capacity building frameworks that are anchored in the SDGs and that would nonetheless take the region's overarching considerations into account.
11. These **schools are increasingly recognized as “privileged” counterparts of development partners and technical assistance providers** as they offer spaces and platforms where international expertise can be adapted to national contexts, transferred, and sustained.
12. **Existing schools of governments and related networks can play a key role as conduits for skills and competencies' upscales as long as their already-existing needs are met.** Key insight from the Global South and from fragile and conflict-affected settings referred to in this chapter points to priority requirements such as: 1. Training on new concepts and standards, 2. Exposure to experiences and best practices, 3. Technical knowledge on how to integrate the SDGs, 4. Financial resources for the development of such curricula, and 5. The establishment of a local and national pool of trainers and of language-sensitive training programs, in order for them to be able to integrate the SDGs in their training programs. In such contexts, the following training programs are of particular importance: human resources management, public policy and the SDGs, governance and conflicts, gender equality, ethics in public policy, and public budgeting and financial management.
13. **Creating a new framework of HR management and capacity development in HR management based on the above recommendations**, one that is able to accompany the transformation of work organization and the move towards more remote working and contingent forms of employment.

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## CHAPTER 13

# Strengthening the Role of Schools of Public Administration in Asia and the Pacific to Promote Mindsets for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

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Schools and Institutes of Public Administration play a key role not only in disseminating clear and accurate information on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but, perhaps more importantly, as advocates for the attainment of the SDGs by 2030.

Schools of public administration play a major role in developing capacities of public servants and eventually helping to change their mindsets for SDGs implementation.

Therefore, it is critical that these schools and institutes of public administration develop strategies and mechanisms to collectively move in that direction.

## 1

## The crucial role of the School and Institutes of Public Administration to Change Mindsets and Achieve the SDGs

Schools and Institutes of Public Administration (PA) play a crucial role in molding – and changing, when necessary – attitudes and mindsets to enable the achievement of humanity's shared aspirations, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ultimately, the SDGs embody the targets that articulate collective human desires and long-term vision for a prosperous future.

Even before conscious efforts to change mindsets for a certain goal have become mainstream in the discourse of public administration, there have been references to changing mindsets as a strategy for reform. For instance, during the development administration phase of public administration in the fifties, references to behavioral change among bureaucrats for good administration have been made for meaningful development for the wider society. Emphasis was given to the need of creating a strong sense of commitment through public servants' training. Within this context, as time went on, continuous training and capacity-building efforts were emphasized as strategies to change the mindsets of public servants. Schools and institutes of public administration were set up as part of the core strategy for nation-building.

Aside from schools and institutes, gentle pushes to promote new desired behaviour, called nudges, are highly relevant in changing mindsets. Changes should be made in a gradual approach in any polity. This is desirable because it is easy and inexpensive to accomplish (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008). A key aspect of

a behavioral modification strategy is influencing a person's actions predictably without restricting their options or largely changing financial incentives. Investments and experiments in psychologically-informed nudges should be made and a central database can help document successes and failures to facilitate knowledge creation and sharing for behavioral change (Benartzi et al., 2017).

Hence, it is imperative that we root out limiting beliefs and those that settle for mediocrity by changing mindsets, institutions and its incentive structure. After all, our environment shapes our thoughts. Thoughts become our language. Then, language becomes experience. Experiences mold values. Values shape institutions and the world we live in.

Over the years, public administration education was intended to augment the civil service programs and initiatives that would not only help develop suitable policies, procedures, and institutions but also facilitate the implementation of needed reforms (Brillantes and Fernandez, 2013; Glassie, 2018). Changing public servants' mindset and values in the crusade against corruption is central. Hence, there are institutes of public administration that offer capacity development courses and ethics-related educational programs to assist the efforts of the civil service. These efforts are geared towards the creation and institutionalization of a more responsive and proactive public administration.

## 2

## Global Perspectives to Changing Mindsets in the Public Sector

Taking off from the experience of the [Asian Association for Public Administration \(AAPA\)](#), networking among the schools is a core strategy. In Asia and the Pacific today, there are several public administration networks at the country, institutional, and individual levels. These include the Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA), the Asian Group of Public Administration (AGPA) - a network of public administration institutions that is an affiliate of the International Institutes of Public Administration (IAPA), and the Asian Association of Public Administration (AAPA). The AAPA is made up of individual members, including academics and practitioners (“pracademics”) in the field of public administration<sup>170</sup>. There are interlocking memberships and representatives in these various public administration networks in the region. Thus, it is not uncommon to see the same representatives in differing capacities in the various international conferences and meetings of these associations.

The UN DESA workshop entitled “Mobilizing and Equipping Public Servants to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” held in 2019 demonstrated that schools, institutes, and regional networks of public administration could indeed be powerful change agents in developing capacities and influencing the mindsets of public servants, and, equally importantly, in equipping and mobilizing them for the realization of the 2030 Agenda. Based on the experience of the AAPA and its partner institutions, public administration schools can equip public servants with the capacities to implement the SDGs and help them develop SDG-oriented mindsets and even make them advocates of the SDGs, being core concerns of the Theory and Practice (“praxis”) of public administration. A few recommendations include the following:

### At the National Level:

1. Identification of a specific unit in the school of public administration that would serve as the focal point for research and training for the SDGs.
2. The SDG focal unit would be responsible for leading and coordinating the efforts of the institution’s various SDG-related efforts. This would include curriculum development, research, and documentation of good and best practices on the implementation of the SDGs, based on the country’s own experiences.
3. The various schools of public administration have as their natural partners students of public administration, professors of public administration from other institutions, and equally important, practitioners of public administration, i.e., public servants, including bureaucrats, local officials such as mayors and local legislators.



4. The various schools of public administration develop a national network where they come together and share their experiences in governance and public administration in general and the SDGs in particular.
5. Depending on the capacities of the schools of public administration and considering that all have varying levels of capacities, local institutes could be designated as SDG hubs for capacity development of public servants. As hubs, they would play a key role in further localizing the capacity building efforts for public servants.
6. It is important that in the above, the National Planning Agency – the partner institution responsible for the incorporation of the SDGs into the national plan – be a constant part of the process.
7. In developing local capacities of public servants and institutions, cross visits and “benchmarking” to agencies and local governments that have been successful in the SDG implementation can be incorporated in the capacity building strategies.
8. Knowledge sharing of national cases at the regional / international levels.
9. Public administration institutes and schools can act as SDG Hubs – critical thinker, researcher, knowledge creator, information disseminator, advocate, capacity builder.
10. Performance indicators of public servants and the various units at the national and local levels can be framed and aligned to the 17 SDGs.

#### **At the Regional/ International Level:**

11. Networking among the schools and institutes of public administration is imperative.
12. Embedding the networking efforts and aligning appropriate activities – whether they be research, international conferences, workshops, or exchange visits – to the 2030 Agenda.
13. Areas of knowledge sharing can include curriculum design and development, sharing of good and best practices, monitoring of implementation, and designing performance indicators.
14. Based on the experience of some members of AAPA, consortia arrangements have been established by its members; these include the conduct of long-term cooperation arrangements among the members on specific themes (e.g., leadership) with regular meetings among the members of the consortia.

## 3

## Public Sector Reform Framework

This section discusses a Public Sector Reform (PSR) framework that AAPA has developed over the past decade (since 2008). The PSR framework underscore the various handles for reform which includes the imperative to change the mindsets and behavior of public servants (Figure 13.1).

### Reform Institutions and Processes for PSR

Public administration has seen the imperative for structural and institutional reform with massive reorganization at the center of structural reforms. These have been variously referred to as “reinventing,” “reengineering,” “rationalizing” or “rightsizing.” Simply put, structures and processes need to be streamlined for improved public service delivery.

Administrative history has shown the limited success of such reorganization interventions. Challenges ranging from maldistribution of the bureaucracy, to perceived bloating, to graft and corruption and centralization, among others persist. Structural reforms are not sufficient.

### Reform Mindsets and Behavior for PSR

Reforms to be successful must be accompanied by changes in behavior and values. Mindsets must be renewed. Rafael M. Alunan, a former Minister of Interior and Local Government in the Philippines called this the “mindshift.” Others call this a “paradigm shift.”

At the end of the day, reforming mindsets redound to a reorientation of the values of the people in the bureaucracy. Civil service commissions have launched programs to reorient the values, mindsets and behavior of public servants within the context of continuous capacity building.

### Leadership Enables PSR

Leadership matters. This is a fundamental principle to bring about reform. This is true not only in the private sector but especially true in the public sector. This may also be variously referred to this also as “political will.”

Leaders<sup>171</sup> play a key role to the successful implementation of reforms in the public sector.

### Citizen Engagement Sustains PSR

The final handle for reform is citizens’ engagement<sup>172</sup>. Reforms, through well meaning, well designed and even sometimes even well implemented will not be sustainable unless the people are involved and own the process. Ownership is a fundamental principle of good governance. They have to be consulted – and involved – in the process of reform. Lao Tsu once said “A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.”

### The context of reform implementation

Apart from the major reform, handles of reform (institutions and processes; mindsets, values, and behavior; leadership and citizen engagement) must be recognized. Reforms must be communicated to the people. The use of modern information technology in communicating the reforms to the people must be maximized. Various communication platforms, including social media in addition the traditional forms, must be utilized, and maximized. This will not only foster engagement of the citizens in the process, but will also inform them and enhance ownership.

Finally, the reform framework emphasizes the hackneyed principle of the need to “think global” yet “act local” hence “glocalization”. Reforms must not only be inward looking. They must be placed within the context of the regional and global framework. In the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for instance, a partnership among ASEAN neighbors has been built on the fundamental principles of “gotong royong” (mutual assistance and solidarity) and “*mushawarah*” (consensus building). However, ASEAN countries also must recognize the undercurrent of a constructive competition with each other. Hence, “coopetition” – cooperation and competition – is important in the regional context of the reform framework.

Figure 13.1: Public Sector Reform Framework



Source: Source: (Brillantes and Fernandez, 2010; Brillantes and Perante-Calina, 2018)

## 4

# Conclusion and recommendations

Public sector reforms are never easy. It is difficult, but not impossible. Thus, administration schools play an important role in equipping public servants with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values. When reforms lead to strong institutions, their ranks are gradually influenced by their culture and process. To ensure strong institutions, it is necessary that public servants internalize, absorb and practice agreed upon formal values and rules. Hence, it is vital that there is a change in mindsets, an incorruptible, transformational leadership in place, strong citizen engagement to continuously build a high-quality, clean public administration until it becomes self-correcting and enforcing.

## Endnotes

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170. The AAPA has been granted UN Consultative Status by the UN Committee on Non-Government Organizations of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is also a partner of the UN Public Administration Network and has been invited to the meetings of the UN Committee of Experts of Public Administration (CEPA). Two of its former presidents have actually been members of the CEPA.
171. Leaders have been referred to as “duty bearers” by the UNDP.
172. The UNDP refers to them as the “claim holders.”

## CHAPTER 14

# Europe and Central Asia – Sustainable Development Goals in European Public Administration Institutes: Mainstreaming or Decoupling?

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The SDGs present a challenging and ambitious outcome-oriented framework for all countries, regardless of their level of development, which requires close collaboration across policy areas, levels of government, and internationally. Furthermore, the goals present a need to understand complex interactions and trade-offs among policy areas. This kind of complexity must be matched by the skills of civil servants, developed by institutions such as the members of the OECD's Network of Schools of Government (NSG). Mainstream Public Administration theories and practice offer an overarching understanding of the institutional, structural, and contextual components of this issue. However, what remains insufficiently addressed are questions about what capabilities, knowledge and attitudes are expected from civil servants to successfully engage in the attainment of the SDGs? The latter is crucial, as the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration noted in its 17th meeting (Risse, 2018): "Civil servants should not be left behind (...) since they are the core of governments' actions on the Goals".

The institutes of public administration are no strangers to this objective. In fact, they are instrumental in building public value by shaping the expertise of civil servants (i.e., competencies, awareness, and skills) (UN, 2018). Amid the 2030 Agenda, this chapter examines the overarching challenges institutes of public administration face in integrating the SDGs into their programs. More specifically, it focuses on the European Schools of Governments affiliated with the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) Group (IIAS, International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA), and the European Group for Public Administration (EGPA) to add hindsight on the SDGs in European public administration curricula. Data is obtained through desk research and a questionnaire for top-level managers. The questions draw from the criteria indicated in the 10 Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA et al., 2015). Section 1 presents the theoretical streams for our research, while section 2 reviews the empirical findings on the training practices in European Public Administration. Finally, in section 3, we develop two arguments corresponding to the challenges and ways forward to integrate the SDGs into public administration.

## 1

## Mainstreaming and decoupling literature

Meyer and Rowan (1977) offer a typology to answer our research question, how do European Institutes of Administration deal with the Sustainable Development Goals framework, by Decoupling and Mainstreaming? Organizations are surrounded by prescribed practices and procedures, so-called “institutional myths”, that are in this case the SDGs framework. In the decoupling line of research, compliance with institutional myths is assumed to positively impact organizational legitimacy and survival prospects, while negatively impacting organizations’ performance. In such cases, Meyer & Rowan (1977) argue, organizations, willing to secure legitimacy while maintaining performance, ceremonially incorporate institutional myths while leaving organizational life fundamentally unaffected.

The mainstreaming concept emerges from the Equal Treatment approach introduced by Rees’ (2002) research on gender policies. It focuses on the effective realization of institutional myths through

their “systemic incorporation [...] throughout all governmental institutions and policies” (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2011, p. 434). Scholten & Van Breugel (2018) argue that this approach has been extended to most ‘cross-cutting policy challenges’, including the contemporary debate on the SDGs.

When multiple channels consistently diffuse the same institutional myths to the organization, the shift from decoupling to mainstreaming can occur: it ceases to be a technical specialty and permeates the entire organization, which starts to use the discourse and diffuse it to the external world on its own (Scholten and Van Breugel, 2018). The literature on policy evaluation suggests a general bias of organizations for stability over change. This means that, in the absence of any evidence of mainstreaming, a given institutional setting is expected to remain unaffected, i.e.: the decoupling hypothesis should be preferred by default.

## 2

## Training practices in European public administration

This section provides an overview of the practices, trends, and models regarding training and development within European public administration. Such insight permits an understanding of types of training from a comparative perspective and facilitates critical assessment of existing opportunities for public service training. This overview does not aim to be exhaustive but to provide a helicopter view of the wide diversity of learning possibilities, training approaches and programs offered. The focus is set on five aspects: 1) models and systems of individual and organizational development; 2) training for specific target groups; 3) training for high potential civil servants; 4) leadership and top civil servant training; and 5) learning approaches.

### Models and systems of individuals and organizational development

In general, it seems that models of training and development in European administrations are quite diverse. Roughly stated, they range from centralized competency frameworks with central training institutions to decentralized training policies with a large role for the private sector. Within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, when a central training institute (i.e. a school of government) is involved, three models can be discerned: 1) models with a central school of government; 2) models with cooperation between institutions across the government; and 3) models with a cooperation between public institutions and non-governmental stakeholders (OECD, 2017).

The way training institutes are organized is important as it might affect how training is provided and to whom it is offered. Based on the above models, three streams of action are highlighted: whether the approach is centralized, whether it is linked to a specified competency framework and whether the market plays a role in the provision of training. It goes without saying that different combinations might occur. Ireland, for instance, developed the 'Learning and Development Framework for the Civil Service 2011-14', which was assumed to be a period of change for the public sector overall (OECD, 2017). Another example of a framework where individual development is linked to organizational goals is the development circles in the Belgian federal administration (Op de Beeck & Hondelghem, 2010). A kind of comparative system can be found in Hungary where, via a mapping of competencies and skills, specific training programs have been developed (OECD, 2017). It is

the Hungarian National University of Public Service that has provided the training programs, and that has stimulated a learning culture within the public service.

In Croatia, it is a central body for the civil service training (the Civil Service Training Centre) that is responsible for public service training. This body operates autonomously, though it is accountable to the Minister of Public Administration (Meyer-Sahling, 2012). In Latvia, the training offered by the School of Public Administration was developed to fit the needs of the governmental agenda. In other words, by building a training system that is close to the policy agenda, the government ensures that civil servant learning is relevant to the context in which it operates. The training provided by the school focuses principally on competency development and is merely offered by practitioners (OECD, 2017).

### Training and development for specific target groups

Next to the link between general competency models and training programs, it is important to note that throughout Europe certain public administrations develop training initiatives for very specific target groups such as public servants and top-level public managers. It is not surprising that training is tailored to the needs of certain groups of employees as different groups have different educational needs linked to their responsibilities and scope of action. However, what is interesting is that in those training programs a learning trajectory is often used as an HR-tool with other than strictly educational purposes, like recruitment or promotion. In other words, training is in some cases primarily used for competitive purposes between (future) civil servants and is in those cases not always linked to larger competency framework.

Italy has a relatively competitive system where government executives' skills are developed before official appointment (Angioli & Bianchi, 2015). This process has different periods for applicants (twelve months) and ministries departments (six months), and it is managed by the National School of Administration (SNA). According to Angioli and Bianchi (2015), the mission of SNA can be compared to the mission of the National School of Administration (École Nationale d'Administration -ENA) in France and the Federal Academy for Public Administration's (Bundesakademie für öffentliche Verwaltung) mission in Germany. In Ireland, the "Civil Service

Graduate Development Programme” was designed to support new recruits at the Administrative Officer and Junior Diplomat levels. A comparable system exists in Croatia where all new civil servants in managing positions below the level of the director are required to pass a certified course of three semesters (Meyer-Sahling, 2012). The programme was developed in collaboration with the Danish School of Public Administration where a similar approach is in place.

### Training for high potential civil servants

The overall objective of this type of training programme is to provide career opportunities for those who are found to be talented to grow within the administration. Herewith the risk of drop-out of qualified personnel is also expected to be reduced. Kuperus & Rode’s (2016) research highlights the variety of programs offered to the group of civil servants that are identified as potential managers. In Italy, the National School of Administration (SNA) provides a 10-month internship for young managers and public officials preceded by a three-month intensive language course in the host country. In the Netherlands, there has been a system of training for young potentials for quite some time already (Op de Beeck & Hondeghem, 2010). The ministries select their young potentials for director-level positions in advance and provide them with the opportunity to enter the so-called Candidates Program, a 1.5 years development programme that includes access to a development centre, coaching and international orientation (Kuperus & Rode, 2016).

In Belgium, the “Public Management Programme” was established in 2001 to train young talents for two purposes: to increase their chances to take up managerial roles in their future career and to support the large reform project of the federal administration that had been launched in that period. The programme consisted of a series of lectures and internships. It was organized by the National School of Public Administration (Broucker, 2009). In Finland, it is the Ministry of Finance that organizes training for future leaders, though they already need to have a management position and are therefore not really considered as young potential. In general, the “new Future Leaders programme” aims to 1) strengthen professional management and strategic competencies, 2) develop value-base and common starting points among civil servants, and 3) to promote courageous leadership and sensitivity for the future (Kuperus & Rode, 2016).

In Estonia, the potential civil servants are centrally selected and are offered a talent management program: the Newton Leadership Offspring programme. The program has been targeted at mid-level managers and top specialists with the necessary skills and qualifications to work as top-level executives in the Estonian civil service. Recently the target group has been expanded to include the mid-level managers, regional managers and deputy director generals working in the agencies (Kuperus & Rode, 2016). In France, the Directorate General of Administration, and the Civil Service (DGAFFP) carries out a special training program for potential public servants focused on management and leadership development. In Hungary, training for talent pool members is organized ad

hoc and focuses on skills for a high performing civil service (Kuperus & Rode, 2016).

### Leadership and top-level civil servant training

The importance of top-level civil servants has long been recognized by numerous countries and treated as a distinct cluster within the administration (Van Wart, Hondeghem & Schwella, 2014). Thus, it comes as no surprise that countries develop a wide variety of training and development practices. In some of these practices we can distinguish:

- The presence or absence of competency frameworks and the way they develop over time, as it is the case in the UK or in some of the countries described above. In Bulgaria, topics of training are usually tailored to the competencies' management, teamwork, and organizational skills (Kuperus and Rode, 2016).
- The central or decentralized position of a training institute within the administration. For instance, in Croatia, the training is centrally managed via a database of all training programs and participants.
- The level of private sector involvement in the training.
- The presence or absence of pre-entry training, such as the Mandatory Specialized Training Program for Romanian top-level civil servants. In Portugal, top-level managers are required to attend long-term training courses and refresher training in order to stay up to date with their competencies or competency profile, and
- The role of universities, such as the Copenhagen Business School or the Hungarian National University of Public Services, which collaborate with national administration, police, or military education.

Interesting is also that in some countries the training course for top civil servants is mandatory. For example, Croatia and Italy have a compulsory training system with the aim to ensure a certain level of expertise in civil service management.

### Learning approaches

In general terms, the collection of learning methods has only grown over the years, and administrations are aware of that diversity. When scanning the existing literature, we see a whole range of learning approaches in Europe: classroom education, e-modules, interactive courses, informal learning trajectories, teamwork, peer learning, experience sharing and many others. On the one hand, there is a tendency to use the more traditional instruments first, which is not surprising, as those methods are common and ample experience exists in their use. On the other hand, some organizations try to diversify their methods. As the younger generation joins the administration, it is likely that more innovative methods will be adopted. However, it is also possible that public administrations need to develop their own expertise in modern learning methods. Of course, learning methods need to be instruments to achieve certain educational goals and not become a goal on their own.



## 3

## Challenges and ways forward

The European Union's impact on the attainment of the SDGs has faced a considerable challenge, namely strongly institutionalized fields. A myriad of multi-level governance arrangements complicates every goal and target (Litzo-Monnet, 2010), resulting in complex relations of labour division, incentive structures and interdependence between the public sector, the industry, NGOs, among others. Thus, our argument here is that such arrangements can derive from conflicting vested interests and strong bias towards 'inertia and conservatism'.

As one respondent institution of the survey on European Schools of Governments affiliated to IIAS state: "The implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires flexible organizations and decentralized [incentives] (...) for civil servants with the aim of aligning organizations with the SDGs" (INAP, 05 December 2019).

This phenomenon is very well-known in the public governance domain. It refers to the existence of organizational silos pursuing own objectives, insufficiently contributing to the overarching policy goal. Thus, restoring coherence in governmental actions has become an urgent priority.

*In the European landscape there is still much action and enterprise needed for the attainment of the SDGs in public administration curricula.*

Yet, Europe is going in the right direction: stakeholders commonly work in network settings to achieve mutual understanding, generate a shared agenda, and achieve overarching policy goals. Furthermore, government portfolios show breakthroughs in establishing workable transversal approaches. As we see in Box 14.1, intergovernmental initiatives and innovation in training programs are continuously sought to integrate governmental responsibilities and training options. Following the 'Decoupling and Mainstreaming' thinking and the empirical findings presented above, we develop two arguments reflecting the challenges of SDGs integration into public administration programmes in Europe. First, we argue that the SDGs encounter a less favourable context. Developed countries do not benefit from development assistance, and the SDGs framework is deprived of the financial incentive provided by aid

conditionality. Moreover, the SDGs framework being a non-binding policy agenda, the only steering mechanism remaining is networks. More specifically, the SDGs are supposed to be mainstreamed through 'governmentality': by the successive translation and reinterpretation of the SDGs framework, by overlapping networks operating at various levels, providing consistent isomorphic pressures (Miller & Rose, 1990).

Second, the collaborative governance approach is widespread in Western European countries, so-called 'soft power'. This type of governance has replaced traditional hierarchical schemes where the market incentives are insufficient to transform the nature of public service. Here we argue that the European Union countries rely on soft power strategies to generate policy-convergence among member states in matters related to integrating the SDGs into public administration curricula in the Schools of Government. This means that public administration institutes that have effective intergovernmental coordination mechanisms are likely to be at the forefront in successfully integrating the SDGs, driving change through the transformative processes of their training programs.

### Box 14.1: Recent developments and outlook for Italy and Spain

European training actions vary among governmental agencies. In 2018 the Italian government launched a Training Department devoted to developing training plans on the SDGs and the attainment of the 2030 Agenda. In Spain, training services continue to accelerate, reflected in the strategic planning 2017-2020 of the National Institute of Public Administration. The latter emphasizes the need for a strong and secure institutional framework, with capabilities more in line with the new challenges that arise, that legitimizes public action and facilitates citizen confidence in public institutions.

#### Novel ways of doing

The National School of Public Administration (SNA) in Italy created a dedicated Unit (*Benessere Italia*) to support the Prime Minister in coordinating the government policies on well-being, sustainable development and integration of local needs. As a result, the 2017 Italian National Strategy for Sustainable Development is being updated and strengthened. In Spain in 2019, the training plans for public employees of the General State Administration have already included content related to the 2030 Agenda (e.g. open government, transparency, public ethics, gender equality). In November 2019, the National Institute of Public Administration (INAP) organized a module of the "Certified Public Manager" program in Madrid whose work theme will be "SDGs - Agenda for change". More recently, in 2020, the selective processes for access to the public service, managed by the INAP incorporate contents related to the 2030 Agenda.

## CHAPTER 15

# Capacity Development for Changing Mindsets in Latin America

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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development entails a different way of approaching the social, economic, and environmental challenges that our societies face today. Realizing the 2030 Agenda requires adopting a holistic view of the multi-dimensional nature of sustainable development that takes into account the synergies and trade-offs among the SDGs. It requires governments to be innovative in the way they tackle these challenges.

Against this backdrop, the Latin American Center for Development Administration (CLAD), as an organization dedicated to working on issues related to state reform and public administration, has developed a set of fundamental principles that can guide public administrations in the region to be more open to change and innovation, and thus achieve better results in the delivery of public services. More specifically, the Ibero-American Charter on Innovation in Public Management<sup>171</sup>, approved by all CLAD's member countries in 2020, defines the key concepts and practices that can facilitate innovation in government in the Ibero-Latin American region. It also outlines a set of pillars, principles, criteria, and fundamental components that are needed to promote innovation. It includes recommendations on how to enact the above principles and promote innovation at all levels of government.

The Charter highlights that: “innovation in management involves rethinking, adapting and transforming policies, services, institutional architectures and plans for training of public servants, as well as promoting an entrepreneurial and innovation culture based on the needs of citizens”<sup>172</sup>. For this reason, training and training capacities of public institutions must be strengthened, creating the conditions for training institutes, such as public management schools, to be renewed in each country to update public servants’ mindsets. Indeed, public servants for the most part have been working according to certain governance paradigms for years. These yielded good results in the past. However, as people’s expectations towards their governments have grown and countries are faced with increasingly complex challenges, new mindsets and behaviors are required. Education and lifelong training are critical in promoting new mindsets. Otherwise, the critical challenges of the 21st century and the SDGs will be tackled by public servants who have mindsets of the 20th century anchored in paradigms of the 19th century. The development of new mindsets and capacities not only affects the way public administration works, but also generates a climate of greater trust of people in their governments, which in turn can lead to more engagement and co-creation of public services for the benefit of all.

The Charter also underscores the critical role of fostering an organizational culture of innovation in the public sector by introducing incentives for collaboration and experimentation and by promoting exploration and interaction among officials within the public sector and with outside stakeholders, including academia, think tanks and the private sector.

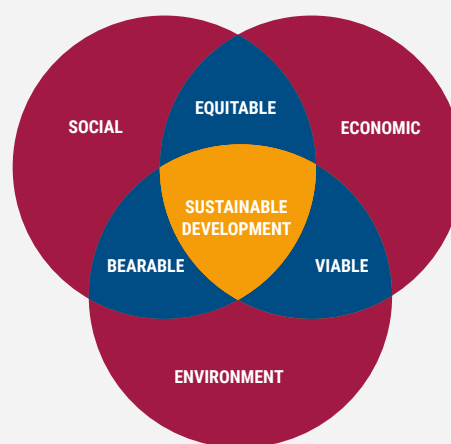
The Ibero-American Charter on Innovation in Public Management is guided by the [Ibero-American Charter for Public Service](#)<sup>173</sup>, which was developed together with UN DESA and approved in 2003 by the V Ibero-American Conference of Ministers of Public Administration and State Reform. It establishes the need for public administrations to work in different ways and promote a change in mindsets among public servants. The Charter highlights the critical role of public servants for the effective delivery of services and the need to put in place policies that can ensure and develop the needed capacities of public servants.

In its work to formulate specific proposals around the 2030 Agenda, CLAD is also reviewing strategic plans and guidelines for education and training to help implement and monitor the SDGs in Latin America. This is done in partnership with countries from the region and international organizations that are specialized in capacity building. Transformational leadership, including changing mindsets and behaviors, and digital transformation, will be part of the training and education programs offered by the Ibero-

American Schools of Administration and Public Policies. Ensuring that the administrative culture of Latin American countries is aligned with those of the 2030 Agenda is essential to achieving the SDGs. Thus, CLAD will guide the design and implementation of specific training plans regarding the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs for the region. To do so, training programs should apply a model certification and homologation of professional competencies and refer to the critical experience of some country members.

CLAD is also working on redesigning and implementing a governance system for the achievement of the SDGs. It is guiding a team of 11 academics and experts from Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Spain, El Salvador, Portugal, Venezuela, and Colombia, who are working on the definition of the essential pillars of an Ibero-American Governance Index (IGI) that can help countries formulate the necessary policies for the realization of the SDGs.

**Figure 15.1: Scheme of sustainable development: at the confluence of three constituent parts**



Source: Johann Dréo, 2006

The Ibero-American Governance Index will contain two types of analysis, based on the one hand on the data of the countries in the region (number and types of public employees, institutional diversity, selection procedures, disciplinary regime ...) and, on the other hand, on the qualitative assessment formulated by experts of how public administration operates in different countries as well as their challenges and strengths. Ultimately, the objective is to contribute to measuring specific parameters so that governments have new instruments for evaluating and improving their public administrations and, consequently, their public policies<sup>174</sup>.

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173. <https://clad.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Carta-Iberoamericana-de-Innovacion-10-2020.pdf>

174. Ibidem, pg. 5

175. <https://clad.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Carta-Iberoamericana-de-la-Funcion-Publica-06-2003.pdf>

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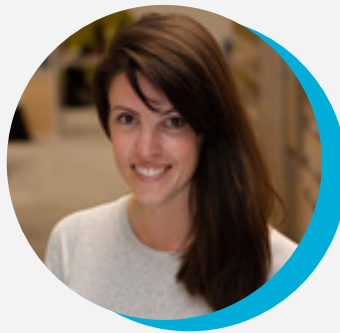


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