

CHAPTER 2

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

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 development³¹. 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) values³² 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.

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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".³³ 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 Report³⁴ 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 Partner³⁵. 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.

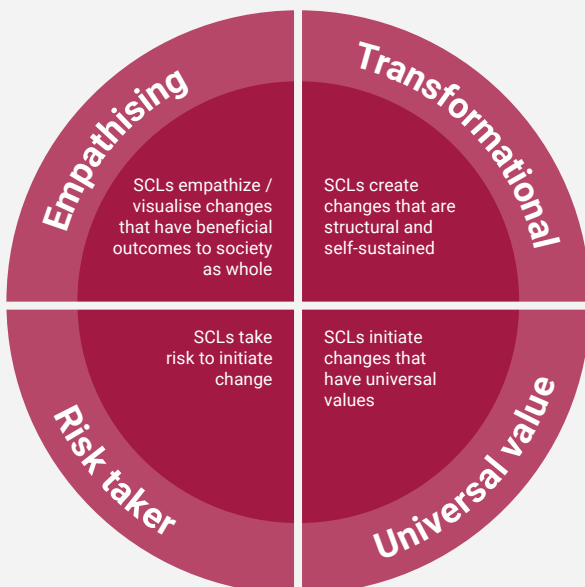
Research into selected socially conscious leaders and findings

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”³⁶ (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.”³⁷

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.

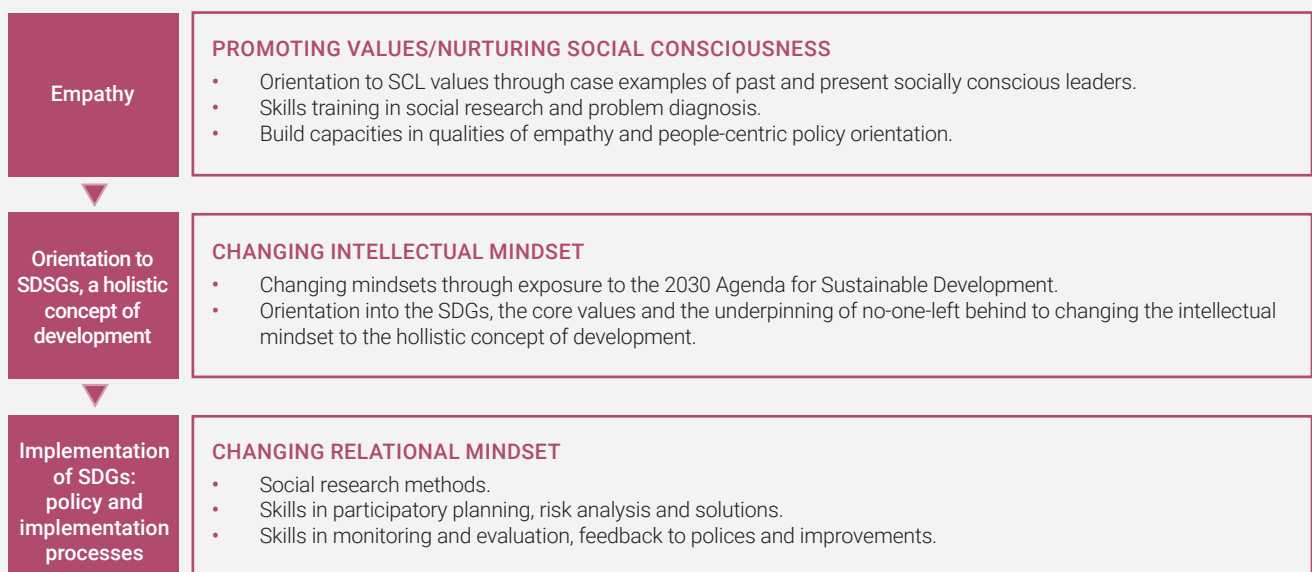
- Intellectual mindset: orientation to the SDGs, the core values and key underpinnings and skills for development in social research and planning relevant to the SDGs.
- Relational mindset: participatory methods in research and planning relevant to changing relational mindsets; and finally, tools and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

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
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.