



## PEOPLE-CENTRED PROGRAMMING: ENGAGING THE STATE AND ITS INSTITUTIONS

This part focuses on how to support institutional change from within. It begins by exploring what makes justice and security institutions trusted and legitimate, and how institutional leadership, incentives and culture influence behaviour and outcomes.

Lessons from UNDP's long-standing experience in institutional support highlight what enables or hinders meaningful transformation. Based on these insights, Part B introduces the People-Centred Capacity and Integrity Framework (PCCIF), a practical tool for identifying strategic entry points and diagnosing where change is needed in justice and security institutions.

With the PCCIF as a foundation, Part B sets out four interrelated dimensions of change that underpin people-centred institutional transformation:

1. **Shifting institutional mindsets and behaviour**
2. **Strengthening service orientation**
3. **Embedding people-oriented practices in systems**
4. **Accountability and oversight**

Each section offers programming insights, examples and a checklist to support people-centred, impactful and sustainable interventions.

### B.1 Laying the foundation for institutional transformation

State institutions play a critical role in delivering justice and security services. Yet for institutions to be effective and legitimate, they must also be responsive, trustworthy and accountable.

In the people-centred approach, institutional reform is shaped not only by formal mandates or institutional perspectives but also by how people actually experience justice and security institutions. Programming is guided by practical questions: When, how and why (or why not) do people seek help from institutions? What is their experience when they do? What is the quality and fairness of the service and the outcome they receive?

The goal is to support institutions to become more accessible, responsive, legitimate and accountable, delivering quality justice and security services that protect the rights of all people, especially those who are vulnerable, marginalized or at risk of being left behind. The approach is grounded in understanding how institutional actions can strengthen (or undermine) the relationship of trust between the State and society, and how that trust can be built through changes in institutional behaviour and in the actions of individuals within them.

#### **Building trusted and legitimate institutions**

The perceived and actual legitimacy of justice and security institutions does not rest solely on legal mandates. It is also shaped by how these institutions operate in practice—whether they uphold people's rights, deliver services fairly and effectively, and are accountable to the people they serve. Institutions earn trust and legitimacy when they act with integrity, operate transparently, and treat all people with dignity and respect. This depends not only on laws but also on how institutions behave and how people experience their actions.

Legal frameworks are essential for ensuring accountability and consistency in institutional actions. As outlined in UNDP's [Guidance Note for Assessing Rule of Law in Public Administration](#), decisions by public authorities must have a legal basis, and agencies must act in accordance with the law. Yet, legal frameworks alone do not ensure legitimacy. What matters is how laws are implemented and whether institutions are seen as trustworthy by communities.



## Example | Iraq

In Iraq, UNDP’s approach to people-centred policing combines national-level legal and policy reform with changes in policing management and practice, and community engagement. By strengthening the Ministry of Interior’s capacity to guide reforms, piloting new people-centred practices through the model police station initiative, and linking national strategy with local implementation, policing has become more service-oriented and aligned with the needs of communities.

Public perceptions of justice and security institutions are shaped by daily interactions (see Box 28). Trust is influenced by whether people feel their rights are protected, they are treated fairly, they are given a voice, and decisions are made transparently and fairly. These perceptions affect whether people cooperate with institutions, accept their authority and engage with the State more broadly.

Box 28: **Building trust by embedding procedural justice in policing** 

Procedural justice refers to the fairness of the processes through which decisions are made and authority is exercised. Research shows that people are more likely to comply with the law and cooperate with police when they perceive police procedures as fair, respectful and impartial. Embedding procedural justice in daily policing practices and culture is essential for building public trust and strengthening police-community relations. This can include integrating procedural justice principles into training, performance evaluation and supervision systems—for example, assessing whether officers use respectful communication, explain decisions clearly and provide people with an opportunity to be heard.

Source: Tom Tyler, Jeffrey Fagan and Amanda Geller, “*Street Stops and Police Legitimacy: Teachable Moments in Young Urban Men’s Legal Socialization*”, *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* vol. 11 (2014).

**Institutional change comes from within**

Effective people-centred justice and security programming invests in building public trust, strengthening accountability, and promoting a service-oriented approach. Institutions must be not only technically capable but also inclusive, fair and trusted. Building this trust and legitimacy requires institutional change that goes beyond technical performance. It requires engaging personnel within institutions in a process of behaviour, mindset and organizational change. This means more than technical training. It calls for attention to motivations, values, relationships and the internal dynamics that shape institutional behaviour (see Box 29). Sustainable change must be led by those within institutions.



**“To bring justice to people we have to change ourselves.”**

Milorad Markovic, Supreme State Prosecutor for Montenegro,  
UNDP Rule of Law Annual Meeting 10 June 2025.



See **Section B.2** for more on shifting institutional mindsets and behaviour.



John P. Kotter, “*Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail*,” *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 73 (January 2007).

UNDP, *Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer* (2006).

UNDP, *Capacity Diagnostics Methodology: User’s Guide* (2006).

UNDP, *Institutional Reform and Change Management: Managing Change in Public Sector Organisations* (2006).



### Box 29: **Supporting institutional change in the people-centred approach**

Supporting justice and security institutions is fundamentally about managing change within complex organizations. UNDP's capacity development approach provides the foundation, focusing on strengthening both organizational and individual integrity and capacity, and supporting personnel at all levels to lead and sustain institutional transformation. People-centred programming builds on this by emphasizing how institutions relate to the people they serve—how behaviour, incentives and internal culture shape trust, inclusion and public confidence.

Institutional change is a long-term process. It is not only technical but also adaptive. It involves shifts in leadership, incentives, organizational culture, internal dynamics and informal norms. It also requires attention to how laws, systems and processes are structured, how knowledge is created and shared, and how accountability to people is ensured. These shifts need to be actively managed through change management strategies that combine technical reforms with behavioural and cultural change, enabling institutions to perform more effectively, adapt to change and deliver quality services to people.

Practical strategies for people-centred institutional change include:

- **Institutional arrangements:** Clarify mandates, align incentives with service orientation, streamline procedures, strengthen partnerships, and embed monitoring and evaluation that reflects people's needs and feedback.
- **Leadership:** Build leadership capacity at all levels, cultivate reform-minded champions, manage resistance and support coalitions for change. Coaching and mentoring help leaders and personnel adapt to new ways of working and sustain momentum.
- **Knowledge and learning:** Invest in continuous learning, mentoring and peer exchange; support reflective practice and knowledge sharing within and across institutions; and create safe spaces for personnel to discuss challenges and adapt approaches.
- **Accountability and integrity:** Reinforce oversight and internal integrity systems, promote transparency, and establish mechanisms for community feedback and participation in institutional performance.

Together, these strategies foster internal ownership and accountability, and help shift institutional culture and behaviour in ways that improve public trust and service quality



#### **Programming tips for managing resistance in institutional change:**

Resistance is a normal and often predictable part of institutional change. It often reflects concerns about losing control, competence or status within an institution. Change may threaten familiar ways of working, expose gaps in skills or capacity, or disrupt informal power dynamics. Effective programming identifies potential sources of resistance early and engages them constructively. This means:

- Understanding institutional dynamics through readiness assessments, stakeholder analysis and political economy insights.
- Working with reform-minded staff to design practical, achievable changes and support internal leadership for reform.
- Investing in skills, tools and mentoring to help personnel adapt and feel equipped to succeed in a new way of working.
- Framing change in terms of institutional purpose and public service, linking reform to professional integrity, trust and improved outcomes for the people institutions serve.

Managing resistance is part of managing change. People-centred reform requires attention not only to technical systems but also to the incentives, relationships and motivations that shape institutional behaviour.

#### **Lessons from UNDP's experience with institutional change**

UNDP's experience shows that the relationship between State and society is shaped as much by how institutions behave as by how they are designed. Through long-term, trust-based partnerships, UNDP has supported institutional change that improves justice and security service delivery. Evaluations since the mid-2000s highlight important progress in this area:



- **Long-term engagement produces results.** The most visible improvements in capacity and performance occur where UNDP has maintained sustained engagement and been adaptive. In Timor-Leste, years of support enabled a shift from institution-specific projects to sector-wide assistance. Support to the Public Defender's Office led to its legal recognition and government funding for free legal services, laying a foundation for sustainability. In Tajikistan, UNDP's sustained support to the legal aid system began in 2015. By 2024, the government had assumed full responsibility for funding the system.
- **Integrated approaches support systems change.** UNDP has evolved from infrastructure-heavy, siloed interventions to more integrated, people-centred approaches. In Nigeria and Mozambique, area-based stabilization approaches integrate justice, security and human rights with peacebuilding and reconstruction.
- **From ad hoc to institutionalized legal aid.** UNDP's legal aid support places support to individual providers within broader efforts to institutionalize legal aid systems that address everyday justice needs. In Kyrgyzstan, legal aid was expanded to cover family, land and inheritance issues, and integrated within national systems through the leadership of the Ministry of Justice.

Despite this progress, some challenges persist. See Box 30 for a summary of common obstacles to institutional change. The people-centred approach responds to these challenges by promoting participatory and sustained multistakeholder engagement, evidence-based adaptation, and politically informed support.



See **Section 5.2** for tips on co-creation and participatory design.  
 See **Section 5.7** for building an MEL system.  
 See **Section 4.6** for guidance on guidance on power and political economy analysis.

### Box 30: Common challenges in supporting institutional change



UNDP's experience highlights several factors that can undermine sustainability or impact:

- **Local ownership.** In fragile contexts or where national ownership is weak, reforms often falter. Sustainability requires early and continuous engagement with government, civil society and communities; alignment with national development plans and sector strategies; and upfront planning for financial sustainability (including securing national budget allocations) and capacity transfer (skills, systems and leadership).
- **Results measurement.** People-centred metrics such as case resolution times, user satisfaction and dispute outcomes remain underused. Strengthened measurement involves embedding monitoring in national strategies and sector plans; undertaking regular user surveys and justice needs assessments; and investing in institutional capacity for data collection, analysis and use, including leveraging digital tools (such as electronic case management systems) and adopting people-centred outcome indicators.
- **Adaptation to changing political realities.** Shifting political priorities, leadership turnover and inconsistent government commitment can disrupt reform processes. Regular political economy analysis is essential for adaptive and politically aware programming that grounds technical solutions in political realities.

These insights point to the need for strategic support that strengthens both the internal workings of institutions and their relationship with the people they serve. The People-Centred Capacity and Integrity Framework (PCCIF) provides a practical tool for assessing institutions and identifying priority areas for people-centred change.



### The People-Centred Capacity and Integrity Framework: A tool for supporting people-centred institutional change

Supporting institutions to become more people-centred requires a structured way to assess what needs to change, both internally and in how they serve the public. The PCCIF provides this structure. It helps teams to identify strengths; pinpoint gaps across skills, systems, behaviours and cultures; and find entry points for strategic, people-centred support.



See **Annex 6** for a detailed description of the PCCIF.

The tool was developed by Leanne McKay and builds on the original Capacity and Integrity Framework in UNDP’s Vetting Public Employees in Post-Conflict Settings: Operational Guidelines (2006). It adapts that tool to focus on strengthening institutions in ways that are inclusive, accountable and grounded in people’s rights, needs and expectations.

The framework considers two core dimensions:

- The individuals who work within an institution
- The organization as a whole.

It also considers two qualities that are essential across both dimensions:

- Capacity: the ability to do the job well
- Integrity: the ability to do the job fairly and in line with human rights and rule of law

As shown in Diagram 6, the framework creates four fields.

Diagram 6: **The People-Centred Capacity and Integrity Framework**





The PCCIF is designed to support strategic, people-centred interventions. It helps teams to:

- Diagnose institutional strengths and weaknesses, and critical areas for change
- Facilitate dialogue with stakeholders—such as institutional personnel, government actors, civil society, community members/end-users and development partners—around opportunities for change
- Identify entry points and design practical, people-centred interventions
- Measure progress in implementation

It promotes a holistic view of institutional transformation by addressing both the technical and public-facing sides of justice and security systems, so they work better for the people they serve.

The PCCIF also supports sequencing by helping teams identify what to prioritise first—whether that is securing leadership support, strengthening internal systems or building frontline capabilities. By revealing where gaps are most acute or where momentum already exists, it helps teams sequence interventions realistically and strategically.



See **Box 31** for tips on sequencing institutional support.

The tool can be applied during institutional assessments, strategy development or stakeholder dialogue to guide reflection on capacity and integrity. It complements the Six Dimensions Tool and participatory co-design methods.



See **Section 5.3.1** for the Six Dimensions Tool.

### Box 31: Tips for sequencing institutional support

Practitioners often ask, “Where do we begin?” The PCCIF provides a structured starting point. It helps teams identify critical gaps in capacity and integrity before jumping to solutions. But sequencing still matters.

Some practical tips include:

- **Start with a shared diagnosis.** Use tools such as the PCCIF to jointly assess strengths, challenges and entry points with institutional counterparts. A shared understanding builds support and ensures interventions are relevant and aligned with institutional priorities.
- **Secure leadership and ownership early.** Change is more likely to take root when it is supported by senior leaders who can authorize adjustments to structures, roles or behaviours.
- **Start where there is momentum.** Identify and build around areas with existing interest or pressure for change. Early, visible improvements (e.g., court user information desks or professional development opportunities for staff) can generate early wins, demonstrate practical value and build momentum for deeper reform.
- **Sequence support over time.** Prioritize what is feasible and meaningful in the short term while laying the foundation for longer-term shifts in policy, systems or behaviour. Focus on trust-building and strengthening internal champions for sustained change.
- **Do not assume linear progress.** Be prepared to revisit earlier steps as conditions shift or resistance emerges.

The PCCIF encourages teams to think beyond technical fixes and approach institutional transformation as a long-term, relational process. It supports the design of institutional support that is politically aware, behaviourally informed, and centred on relationships of trust between institutions and people. The following four sections build on this foundation by examining the key dimensions of people-centred institutional transformation.



## B.2 Shifting institutional mindsets and behaviour

Changing mindsets and behaviour is generally understood as essential for institutional transformation, yet it remains difficult to define and support in programming. This section explores how practical strategies—such as reforming training systems, mentoring, leadership engagement, change management, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and performance feedback—can come together to shift institutional culture and behaviour. A summary checklist at the end highlights what makes mindset-change interventions impactful and people-centred in practice.

Shifting mindsets and behaviour is a foundational step in people-centred institutional change. It means moving beyond technical skills to reshape the values, beliefs and attitudes that guide how people within institutions think and act. It emphasizes that institutional transformation must start with individuals and how they understand their roles, their relationship with the public, and their own attitudes towards service, rights, and accountability. While structural reforms are important, they rarely succeed without corresponding changes in individual mindsets and internal incentives.

UNDP supports mindset-driven change by equipping people in institutions with the skills, motivation and enabling conditions to work in more inclusive, accountable and service-oriented ways. For example, experience shows that support to reforming training architectures can be a powerful and strategic entry point for mindset and behavioural change within the police.

Training and study tours are widely used in institutional reform. Yet without a clear link to people's justice or security outcomes, they risk reinforcing institution-centred approaches. See Box 32 to test whether an initiative is truly people-centred.

Shifting mindsets and behaviours can also be catalysed through relational experiences, such as joint problem-solving, shared initiatives or changes in how institutions interact with users. These experiences can help reframe institutional roles, build trust and embed people-centred principles and practices within institutional culture. For example, UNDP's support to prison reform in several contexts demonstrates how engaging both staff and inmates can help shift institutional culture from punishment to rehabilitation. Initiatives such as hydroponic farming show how practical livelihood and food security interventions can serve as entry points for cultural transformation. Involving prison officers in training and the joint management of activities alongside

detainees helps foster trust and mutual respect. In this way, rehabilitation becomes embedded not just in programming but also in institutional values and practices.

UNDP is increasingly integrating MHPSS into people-centred justice and security programming to enhance institutional resilience and strengthen the delivery of empathetic and responsive services. Trauma exposure is widespread among police officers, judges and civil servants, and moral injury can be significant (see Box 33). Without specialized support, this can lead to burnout, absenteeism and behaviours that undermine public trust. Through skills development, peer support and safe spaces, MHPSS interventions help identify and refer individuals with mental health conditions, reduce stress and fatigue, and foster greater empathy, which in turn strengthens professionalism and trust in service delivery.



### Example | Nigeria

In Nigeria, a holistic approach to police training support has contributed to visible changes in individual attitudes and institutional culture. UNDP worked with the Nigeria Police Force to introduce modern, adult-oriented and experiential learning methods for recruit training. Police academy commandants and senior officials were sensitized to the new approach to secure leadership support; selected academies received infrastructure upgrades to improve the learning environment; and a cadre of over one thousand police trainer “change champions” were equipped to support the roll-out of this new training approach nationwide. Trainers reported a fundamental mindset shift about their role—from simply delivering information to actively supporting and coaching recruits to understand, apply and internalize what they learn. Recruits trained under the new model described how it reshaped their understanding of the role of police and directly improved their ability to deliver service-oriented policing.

**Box 32: Is this training intervention people-centred?**

If a training programme considers only what a judge or police officer wants to learn, without linking it to how it improves access to justice or security for communities, it is institution-centred, not people-centred.

A judicial training or study tour, for example, can be people-centred if:

- It responds to clear justice challenges experienced by users (e.g., case delay, lack of sensitivity to GBV survivors, barriers faced by people with disabilities).
- It is informed by data from legal needs assessments, court user surveys or community consultations.
- It is part of a broader effort to change both knowledge and practice within the courts.
- It focuses not only on technical skills but also on shifting mindsets and values through participatory methods such as roleplay, case studies and simulations that mirror real ethical or operational dilemmas, facilitated reflection, and site visits or community engagement.
- It includes mentoring and follow-up to support practical application and sustained change.
- Its success is measured by improvements in accessibility, fairness or trust in the justice process.

**Not people-centred:** A study tour for judges is organized at the request of the partner or donor, without evidence of why and how it will improve people’s experience of justice. There is no follow-up after the tour and success is measured solely by participation numbers.

**People-centred:** A study tour is designed to help judges implement a new sexual offences bench book. The design of the tour is informed by consultations with justice users, lawyers and court staff and by data on courtroom practices. Follow-up support is provided to the judiciary to integrate learning into court procedures and monitor results in terms of improved justice outcomes for people.

Examples | **Ethiopia** | **Fiji** | **Ukraine** | **Tajjikistan** | **Nigeria**

In Ethiopia, MHPSS training for judiciary, police and local administration staff in conflict-affected regions has been integrated into UNDP’s stabilization programming. The training increased awareness of how conflict and trauma affect communities, while helping officials recognize and manage the impact on their own well-being. It strengthened their capacity to deliver trauma-informed services, especially for survivors of GBV. In some locations, it led to post-training action plans agreed between police and communities that included establishing community security coordination mechanisms, promoting peace education in schools, strengthening community policing and establishing local early warning systems. Local officials described the support as a “gamechanger” for enabling the return of basic services to communities.

From Fiji to Ukraine, UNDP has supported MHPSS trainings for police officers covering topics such as stress and trauma management, post-traumatic stress disorder, vicarious trauma, burnout prevention, and self-regulation techniques. Participants gained practical tools to support their own well-being, assist colleagues and families, and provide sensitive and effective support to communities.

In Tajjikistan, Supreme Court judges and Ministry of Justice staff received, for the first time, training on trauma-informed service delivery for GBV survivors. By deepening their understanding of trauma and its effects, judges were able to strengthen the quality and responsiveness of judicial services—ensuring they were not only legally sound but also compassionate and informed by the experiences of survivors.

In Nigeria, community engagement training for police and security personnel included modules on mental health, trauma response and conflict de-escalation. The training helped them to better understand not only the effect of the Boko Haram insurgency on local communities but also their own personal experiences of trauma so they could better serve those communities with empathy and professionalism.

Example | **Angola**

In Angola, UNDP supports the Ombudsperson's Office to improve justice service delivery by combining digital and MHPSS support. The installation of digital hearing rooms in 12 provinces expanded access to the only public office where citizens can report complaints about public services, from a corrupt official to the absence of a local school. Recognizing the emotional toll on staff, who often share the same conflict-affected experiences as the communities they serve, the programme also provided trauma resilience training. A group of Ombudsperson staff and trainers from the National School of Administration and Public Policy certified as community-led trauma resilience facilitators deliver cascade trainings to municipal and Ombudsperson's staff across the provinces.

Box 33: **MHPSS for people-centred justice and security**

For UNDP, MHPSS is a comprehensive approach that aims to protect and promote the psychosocial well-being of individuals and communities, and to prevent or treat mental health conditions, particularly in the context of development and peacebuilding efforts. It recognizes that conflict and crisis can cause not only trauma but also moral injury—the deep psychological distress that arises when individuals witness, participate in or fail to prevent actions that violate their moral or ethical values. This may lead to guilt, shame, and a compromised sense of integrity.

MHPSS includes trauma-informed programming, which ensures that policies, services and systems are designed and delivered in ways that acknowledge the effects of both trauma and moral injury, promote healing, and prevent re-traumatization.

Source: UNDP, *Integrating Mental Health and Psychosocial Support into Peacebuilding: Guidance Note* (2022).

**Programming tips for effective MHPSS engagement:**

- **Strengthen internal resilience.** Supporting the psychosocial well-being of frontline personnel helps reduce burnout, absenteeism and retraumatizing behaviours. It also enhances empathy, professionalism and institutional trustworthiness.
- **Normalize open dialogue.** Create safe, supportive spaces for personnel—especially frontline and first responders—to speak openly about trauma, survivor guilt, and moral injury. Normalizing these conversations reduces stigma, encourages help-seeking and strengthens peer support networks.
- **Institutionalize trauma-informed practices.** Embed MHPSS into the design and delivery of justice and security services through policies, standard operating procedures, staff supervision and accountability frameworks. This includes adapting how cases are handled, how staff are supported, and how institutions respond to trauma and moral injury in communities and among their personnel.
- **Connect to wider support systems.** Effective trauma-informed programming links institutional efforts to broader MHPSS services for survivors, staff and communities. This layered approach recognizes that healing and resilience require coordinated, system-wide support.
- **Localize delivery.** Where possible, support national institutions, local trainers or peer-led networks to deliver MHPSS interventions. Locally anchored approaches are often more sustainable, context-sensitive and better trusted by those affected.

**What makes mindset-change interventions people-centred and impactful?**

- Interventions are based on evidence and understanding of the broader context, institutional culture, dynamics and behavioural norms that shape how justice and security actors behave.
- Training is integrated into broader strategies for institutional transformation. Mindset shifts are more likely to be sustained when reinforced by policies, standard operating procedures, infrastructure, leadership, supervision and accountability mechanisms such as regular performance assessments that promote and incentivize new ways of working.



- Change agents within institutions are supported to model new behaviours, influence peers and shift organizational norms from the inside out. Refresher training, peer networks, mentoring and ongoing leadership engagement are critical for reinforcing change over time.
- Monitoring and evaluation systems track changes in attitudes and behaviours over time, while feedback mechanisms (e.g., user surveys and interviews) help programmes adapt and reinforce progress. Interventions monitor for unintended consequences and adjust strategies to ensure that positive changes are sustained and risks of backsliding are addressed.

### B.3 Strengthening service orientation

Service orientation reframes justice and security institutions not merely as rule enforcers, but as providers of fair, accessible and responsive services that meet people’s everyday needs. It is grounded in the idea that justice and security are public goods and that institutions must be designed and resourced to serve all people, especially those traditionally excluded or underserved. Service orientation focuses on trust and legitimacy, which grow when people see that institutions are responsive to their everyday needs, treat them with dignity, and deliver outcomes that are fair, just, and timely. It is not just about what institutions do, but how they do it: with respect, accountability, and attention to the experience of those seeking justice and security services.

This shift requires more than technical reform. It calls for a transformation in how justice and security institutions function. As emphasized in the UNDP people-centred policy framework, service orientation demands moving beyond institutional *form* (laws, structures, procedures) to focus on their *function*, that is whether institutions are actually solving people’s problems. It entails a shift away from elite-serving systems and towards inclusive, legitimate institutions embedded in communities. Service orientation is closely linked to the mindsets and behaviours of those working within institutions, as explored in the previous section, and often requires new capabilities and ways of working to sustain change.



See **Section B.2** for more on shifting mindsets and behaviour.

Service orientation is a core pillar of people-centred justice and security, central to building trust and ensuring institutions work for everyone. UNDP supports justice and security institutions to move beyond conventional models of service delivery by designing services that respond to how people actually experience and seek help to resolve their problems. Innovations that extend the reach of services to underserved areas and integrate services are essential for vulnerable and marginalized people navigating often intersecting legal and socio-economic challenges.



#### Examples | **Kazakhstan** | **Guinea-Bissau** | **Kyrgyz Republic**

In Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population and UNDP piloted an integrated service model based on the “one-stop shop” principle, bringing together multiple departmental services in a single location. Vulnerable families are supported by an interdepartmental team that works collaboratively to assess and respond to their needs across social assistance, education, health care and other essential services. The team includes specialists from housing, education, health, law enforcement and social protection sectors, and can involve justice actors when required.

In Guinea-Bissau, UNDP partnered with the Ministry of Justice to test mobile delivery of integrated civil registry and legal awareness services in remote areas. The services reached an average of 65 civil registration users per day, compared with just 6 at fixed points, and 488 legal aid seekers in one week, versus just 2 at the fixed legal aid desk. The success led the Ministry of Justice to commit to a nationwide roll-out of the mobile services, attracted new partners, and set the foundation for adaptation and improvements through digitalisation.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, the Ministry of Justice’s Bus of Solidarity is a mobile service that provides free legal aid, raises legal awareness, and strengthens trust between government and remote communities.

Examples | **Argentina** | **Rwanda** | **Türkiye**

In Argentina, multidisciplinary teams of lawyers, social workers, doctors and psychologists travel to underserved communities to provide coordinated mobile legal and health services.

In Rwanda, through the One UN initiative and in partnership with the Rwanda National Police, UNDP supported the Isange One Stop Centre model. Attached to hospitals, the centres offer survivors of GBV and child abuse medical care, psychosocial support, legal aid and forensic services in one location. The model has led to increased reporting and improved coordination among service providers.

In Türkiye, the Ministry of Justice, the Turkish Bar Associations and UNDP are expanding Victims of Violence Support Centres across six provinces, offering women integrated access to legal and social services tailored to their needs.

UNDP supports the institutionalization of people-centred justice services by linking frontline service delivery with national policies, legal frameworks, and strategies for capacity development and financing to ensure sustainability and long-term impact.

UNDP supports investments in frontline police capacity and improved coordination across the justice sector as a foundation for more effective and people-centred policing. Reconfigured police spaces, such as model police stations, can transform how people experience safety and justice, and help embed cultural and behavioural shifts within police institutions, reinforcing a more responsive and accountable policing ethos. People-centred policing cannot be achieved by the police alone. It requires coordinated action across the entire justice chain to address systemic bottlenecks, protect people's rights and deliver fair outcomes.

Examples | **Colombia** | **Georgia** | **Mozambique**  
| **Sierra Leone** | **Somalia**

In Colombia, Justice Houses (Casas de Justicia) are one-stop centres for responding to people's justice needs, combining services such as legal aid, police, social workers and community development officers under one roof. They support access to justice and peaceful conflict resolution, and are a key part of Colombia's national strategy to transform the justice system by focusing on the needs of individuals, communities and territories.

In Georgia, UNDP partnered with the State Legal Aid Service to launch a mobile legal clinic delivering legal aid to conflict-affected and remote communities. Initially supported under a grant agreement, the initiative has continued independently since the partnership ended. The State Legal Aid Service fully operates and maintains the clinic without external donor support, providing legal consultations and awareness sessions to people in underserved areas.

From Mozambique and Sierra Leone to Somalia (Somaliland and Puntland) and beyond, UNDP's support to mobile courts has evolved through decades of experience. Evaluations show that where mobile court initiatives are judiciary-led or have strong institutional support, grounded in legal frameworks, and complemented by legal aid and capacity development, they can sustainably expand access to justice, increase trust, and strengthen links between formal and traditional justice systems to better protect vulnerable groups.



UNDP supports model police station initiatives in a range of contexts, including [Pakistan](#), [Iraq](#), [Guinea-Bissau](#) and [Somalia](#). These models go beyond physical infrastructure support to embed new professional practices, community policing principles and inclusive service delivery.

- In [Pakistan](#), 67 model police stations have supported significant improvements in management, accountability and gender responsiveness, including gender desks staffed by trained women officers, and facilities for women police personnel such as women's dormitories and day-care centres. These changes have strengthened community trust, improved access to services for women and vulnerable groups, and enhanced overall policing quality.
- In [Iraq](#), model police stations demonstrated the feasibility of the government's commitment to transform the police into a service-oriented institution. UNDP, the Ministry of Interior, and the police co-designed an evidence-based blueprint for the model stations that addressed operational, structural and systemic barriers to people-centred policing. By establishing a policy–practice feedback loop that engaged the police, government and communities, the initiative catalysed organizational culture change and the reforms essential for people-centred policing.
- In [Fiji](#), UNDP supported the establishment of the National Justice Coordination Committee, a unique platform that brings together police, prosecutors, legal aid, judiciary, corrections and the Ministry of Justice to collectively address justice system bottlenecks. The committee has tackled issues such as arbitrary detention and streamlining police charging processes, with a particular focus on protecting vulnerable groups. It championed the roll-out of video-recorded interviews to improve due process and enhance accountability across justice institutions. By fostering joint evidence-based problem-solving and shared responsibility, the initiative marked a significant shift towards a more coordinated, rights-based justice system rooted in people's experiences.

### What makes service-oriented interventions people-centred and impactful?

- Initiatives are designed around people's needs and experiences, not institutional convenience. Location, staffing and physical space are planned to promote safety, dignity and accessibility, especially for women and marginalized groups.
- Initiatives are embedded in national strategies, legal frameworks and sector-wide reforms. This ensures they are not stand-alone pilots, but part of a coherent, long-term effort to strengthen people-centred justice and security institutions.
- National and subnational ownership, through leadership, budget allocations and cost-sharing, and institutional mandates, is essential for sustaining service delivery once donor support ends.
- People-centred service delivery is supported by coordinated action across justice, policing, prosecution, corrections and legal aid systems. Whole-of-system approaches help resolve bottlenecks, improve accountability, and deliver more consistent and just outcomes for people.
- Service improvements are accompanied by ongoing capacity-building, professional standards, and investment in infrastructure, staffing and management systems that reinforce quality and responsiveness.

### **B.4** Embedding people-centred practices in systems

People-centred practices are more impactful and sustainable when they are intentionally embedded within institutions and the broader justice and security system. Embedding means making people-centred practices the standard operating logic of justice and security institutions. This involves codifying them in strategies, laws, policies and procedures; aligning budgets, staffing and performance systems; supporting them through leadership and peer learning; and sustaining them through capacity-building, and feedback loops that support continuous improvement, such as monitoring data, community scorecards, user surveys and complaints mechanisms.

**Box 34: How data can drive people-centred institutional change**

Data is essential for designing people-centred institutional support that responds to people's needs and strengthens accountability. Across contexts, UNDP supports justice and security institutions to collect, analyse and use data to improve performance and service delivery.

In the [Caribbean](#), a regional needs assessment used a rights-based and intersectional framework to identify system-wide bottlenecks and map the main barriers to access to justice. The analysis informed targeted recommendations for government and development partners for enhancing effective and people-centred administration of justice across nine countries.

In Sri Lanka, UNDP worked with justice institutions and civil society to improve the sector's ability to gather and use data. This included mapping the data systems of police, courts, prisons and other actors, and supporting the Ministry of Justice to use the findings to inform legislative and policy reform and evidence-driven resource allocation, strengthen SDG 16 monitoring, assist in sector performance measurement, and improve case management, coordination and oversight by parliament and justice institutions.

Tools such as UNDP's [Judicial Integrity Self-Assessment Checklist](#) also help courts identify weaknesses in integrity, transparency, and accountability, and guide institutional reform from within.

When embedded in institutional processes, data can enable better decision-making, support internal accountability, and strengthen the link between institutions and the people they serve.

While embedding can strengthen the resilience of people-centred practices, it is not a guaranteed solution. Contexts evolve, government capacity may be limited and political commitment can shift. But where efforts align with national people-centred visions or sector-wide strategies—such as Iraq's commitment to [people-centred policing](#), Nepal's [Integrated Legal Aid System](#), Colombia's [national development plan \(2022–2026\)](#) that incorporates human security and social justice, and the Kenyan judiciary's [Blueprint for Social](#)

[Transformation through Access to Justice 2023–2033](#)—there is often stronger traction, ownership and potential for scale.

Embedding also requires attention to the broader ecosystem. People-centred justice is reinforced when formal and informal systems are integrated in ways that expand access and coherence, as seen in countries such as [Bangladesh](#), and [Somalia](#). Harmonizing processes and clarifying roles between State and community-based actors strengthens both institutional legitimacy and people's ability to navigate the system.

UNDP's experience shows that embedding people-centred change requires deliberate effort in five areas:

- ➔ **Translate promising practices into policy and law** Initiatives such as [community policing](#) or victim support centres are more likely to endure when integrated into national strategies, sector plans and legal frameworks that give them long-term mandates and legitimacy.
- ➔ **Align roles, budgets, and structures.** Practices must be reflected in job descriptions, staffing and operational budgets, and supported through supervision and performance management systems.
- ➔ **Institutionalize through standard operating procedures and tools.** Approaches such as trauma-informed services or gender-sensitive investigations should be incorporated into standard operating procedures, case management systems and digital tools to shape daily operations.
- ➔ **Build institutional memory.** Monitoring and capturing lessons learned and regular training helps sustain reforms across leadership transitions and staff turnover.
- ➔ **Create loops for continuous improvement.** Embedding is a constant process. User surveys, oversight mechanisms and community dialogues create feedback loops that support institutions to adapt and continuously learn how best to deliver people-centred services.



See **Section 5.7**: Building a monitoring, evaluation and learning system.



This systemic perspective reinforces a central tenet of the people-centred approach: **meaningful change comes not just from new ideas and innovations, but from how they are sustained, scaled and embedded across institutions over time.**

### B.5 Ensuring accountability and oversight

People-centred justice and security require a strong rule of law culture in which officials and the public hold themselves and one another accountable. This requires a legitimate legal framework that is grounded in shared values and upholds, protects and fulfils the rights of all people.

UNDP's support for legislative frameworks is often embedded within broader governance and rule of law strategies and aligned with national development plans, constitutional mandates and international human rights standards. It includes direct assistance to constitution-making processes, drafting and revising laws, and supporting the creation of policies that underpin justice and security for all.



See **Section 4.5:** Understanding people's justice and security needs.

This involves engaging a range of institutions, including justice and security institutions, parliament, civil society and public administration entities in participatory, inclusive and rights-based processes.



UNDP, *Protecting Human Rights in Constitutions* (2023).  
 UNDP, *Guidance Note on Constitution-Making Support* (2016).  
 UNDP, *Global Good Practices in Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Constitutions* (2017).  
 UNDP, *Parliamentary Development, UNDP Strategy Note* (2019).



#### Examples | **The Gambia** | **Nepal**

In The Gambia, UNDP supported the Constitutional Review Committee, National Assembly members, civil society and other stakeholders in their respective roles in the post-Jammeh constitutional reform process. The support included capacity building, expert advice in formulating drafts constitutional provisions, and a nationwide civic education campaign to inform the public on the draft constitution and referendum process.

In Nepal, UNDP supported women's engagement in intensive discussions on the integration of gender issues in Nepal's constitution. More than 41,000 women participated in the process and voiced their perspectives. The active inclusion of women in radio debates was also an important means of amplifying the voices and views of women.

A holistic approach combining legislative reform, the empowerment of individuals and communities to understand and exercise their rights, and the strengthening of institutional capacities (including training, infrastructure, coordination mechanisms and oversight functions) is important to sustainably advancing access to justice and strengthening the rule of law.



#### Example | **Sierra Leone**

In Sierra Leone, support to legislative and policy reforms related to bail and sentencing, combined with community legal education and capacity building for the judiciary and legal aid services, supported reduced congestion in prisons, reduced backlog of court cases, increased confidence in the police and promoted greater rights awareness.



The people-centred approach also requires ensuring accountable, high-quality service delivery across public institutions beyond justice and security actors (e.g., courts or police). Denial of access to basic services is both a justice and security concern. Understanding how weaknesses in public administration undermine justice and security outcomes, especially for the vulnerable and marginalized, is a key element of the approach. It supports more integrated programming that links justice and security with wider development interventions.



See **Section 5.6** for details on integrated programming and the portfolio approach.

For example, maladministration in the application of housing, land and property rights perpetuates inequality and discrimination and can prevent generations of poor families from lifting themselves out of poverty. Deficiencies in civil registration, or in the issuance of birth, death, marriage and citizenship certificates, can have a direct impact on people's right to vote or to other entitlements such as access to health care and education. Conflicts often erupt because of perceptions of corruption, unfairness and discrimination in the way services and utilities are delivered.



#### Example | Tajikistan

In Tajikistan, UNDP integrated access to justice, gender equality, inclusive governance and digital transformation to expand access to civil registration services for marginalized populations, including rural communities and women. In partnership with the Civil Registration Services, the Ministry of Justice launched mobile legal aid services that brought critical legal aid and civil registration to remote mountain villages. Through comprehensive support to legal reforms, capacity building, infrastructure, public awareness, legal aid and digitalization, the project measurably improved the quality and accessibility of civil registration services that are essential for access to healthcare, education and other public services.



UNDP, *UNDP Guidance Note for Assessing Rule of Law in Public Administration* (2015).

While the people-centred approach emphasizes accountability of the State (the duty bearer) to the public (rights holders), this cannot be achieved without strengthening how State institutions take responsibility for their own performance and conduct. Internal accountability and oversight are a critical entry point for ensuring justice and security systems are fair, transparent and responsive to people's needs.

Building effective and people-centred institutions requires embedding accountability into their internal architecture through laws, policies, procedures, disciplinary systems and performance monitoring. These internal mechanisms help institutions uphold professional standards, detect and address misconduct, and ensure that justice and security personnel act in accordance with rights-based principles. UNDP supports justice and security institutions to develop and implement internal accountability systems that improve integrity, performance and public trust. Tools such as UNDP's Judicial Integrity Self-Assessment Checklist help courts identify weaknesses in integrity, transparency and accountability, and guide institutional reform from within.

Technological and procedural innovations can improve the fairness of justice processes and enable stronger oversight of institutional conduct. UNDP supports the adoption of tools such as video-recorded interviews (VRIs) and procedural protections that safeguard human rights and enable more effective monitoring by judicial or independent bodies. When embedded in law and practice, such tools enhance both internal accountability and external trust in justice and security systems, as evidenced by UNDP's support to implementation of VRI systems in Iraq and Fiji.

Examples | **Armenia** | **Palestine** | **Timor Leste** | **Asia-Pacific**

In Armenia, UNDP supported the introduction of a merit-based selection mechanism for judges, implemented by the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Judicial Council. This mechanism included a psychological testing platform to assess candidates' characteristics, traits and behaviours—representing a shift from traditional appointment processes towards more objective criteria. The reform encouraged the selection of judges with appropriate competencies for judicial decision-making.

In Palestine, the UNDP-supported Mizan digital court case management system has strengthened both internal and external oversight of the justice system. By enabling real-time case tracking, it allows supervisors to identify delays, monitor individual performance, and conduct follow-up, creating clear incentives for civil servants to move cases forward and fulfil their responsibilities. Users can also track the progress of their own cases and follow up with institutions, lawyers, or civil society actors. This dual functionality makes Mizan a built-in, accessible feedback and complaint mechanism that supports efficiency and transparency, improves service quality and builds trust in the justice system.

In Timor Leste, the introduction of an inspectoral system within the Office of the Prosecutor General strengthened internal disciplinary processes and improved operational efficiency. It contributed to a 27 percent reduction of the office's case backlog between 2015 and 2016, demonstrating the practical benefits of internal oversight for institutional performance and public service delivery.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the Judicial Integrity Network in ASEAN has become a platform for strengthening judicial integrity, peer learning, and regional collaboration on accountability and integrity measures across member judiciaries.

Ombudspersons, parliaments, NHRIs, judicial councils, and inter-agency coordination mechanisms also play a key role in strengthening justice and security system accountability. These bodies help monitor institutional performance and reform processes, investigate complaints and ensure remedies for rights violations, and promote shared standards for service delivery across the justice and security chain. They also represent people's concerns in local and national dialogues and within justice and security policymaking. These institutions can serve as critical bridges between people and institutions, reinforcing transparency, accountability and the rule of law.

Examples | **Somaliland** | **Philippines**

In Somaliland, the Human Rights Commission has provided legal aid for hundreds of individuals, monitored prisons and police stations, trained police officers on community policing, and created space for dialogues between law enforcement institutions and the media for increased collaboration. It systematically presents evidence-based findings from these activities to government, triggering institutional responses such as the release of unlawfully detained individuals and changes in police practice.

In the Philippines, the Bangsamoro Human Rights Commission, with field offices and human rights monitoring centres in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, provided access to human rights and legal services to remote communities and marginalised groups.



For details of UNDP's support to NHRIs and other available resources, see the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions' [UNDP webpage](#).



### What makes accountability-focused interventions people-centred and impactful?

- Interventions are embedded within national strategies, institutional mandates, or established legal and policy frameworks and are supported by government or local regulatory structures for sustainability.
- Internal accountability is strengthened through clear procedures and performance monitoring, such as standard operating procedures, disciplinary systems, and tools such as case tracking and peer review to reinforce professional conduct and rights-based service delivery.
- Interventions enable public oversight by linking institutional accountability to community feedback and participation. Structured mechanisms such as complaint systems and community scorecards make it possible for people to raise concerns, monitor performance, and shape how justice and security are delivered.
- Effective accountability is supported by inter-agency mechanisms and strategic partnerships within government (across justice, security and oversight bodies) and with external actors (donors, NGOs, community groups) to encourage transparency, foster collective learning and support impactful reforms.
- Interventions build institutional readiness for greater accountability through assessments, training, mentoring and phased roll-outs of reforms to ensure justice and security institutions have the capacity and confidence to adopt and sustain accountability practices.

### Parts A and B explored the core dimensions of people-centred change.

**A** focused on empowering people and communities through five interconnected dimensions of change: participation, inclusion, agency, access and accountability.

**B** examined how justice and security institutions can transform to better serve people through four key dimensions: shifting mindsets and behaviour, strengthening service orientation, embedding people-centred practices in systems, and ensuring accountability and oversight.

Together, these nine dimensions offer a comprehensive lens for designing and delivering people-centred programming.

**The next section explores how these dimensions can be integrated into broader UNDP programming, ensuring that people-centred justice and security are pursued not in isolation, but as part of a coherent response to complex, interconnected development challenges.**