UNITED NATIONS

Behavioural Science Report

UN INNOVATION NETWORK

Acknowledgements

The development of this document was a truly collaborative effort, informed by the experiences of 25 UN Entities collaborating under the umbrella of the UN Innovation Network's Behavioural Science Group.

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and those contributing to the report and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

The UN Innovation Network (UNIN) is an informal, collaborative community of UN innovators interested in sharing their expertise and experience with others to promote and advance innovation within the UN System. UNIN hosts the UN Behavioural Science Group, which promotes awareness, provides learning opportunities, and connects colleagues working on behavioural science at the UN and beyond.

Learn more about the UN Innovation Network at www.uninnovation.network or follow at @UN_Innovation.

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1. The Role of Behavioural Science in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

The UN cannot proceed with business as usual if it desires to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and deliver on its mandates across the four pillars of peace and security, human rights, development and the rule of law.

For the organisation to maintain the role of a trusted global leader in the 21st century and to carry out its functions effectively, it needs to look toward innovative ways of working with respect to its operations and administration.

In many areas, successful outcomes in the UN's work depend on changes in human behaviour - for instance, making healthy choices, taking medicine, allowing a child to go to school, finding decent work and saving money. Behavioural science[1] can improve outcomes through facilitating understanding of:

- the barriers that prevent people from engaging in or following through with their intended actions,
- the enablers that assist people in in establishing and achieving their goals, and
- the impact of interventions based on an understanding of those barriers and enablers - all premised on commitments to human dignity, transparency and respect for ethical requirements.

Behavioural science is part of a UN-wide methodological and practical transformation process that also involves data, digital transformation, innovation, and strategic foresight. This process enables the UN to leverage the best tools and methods to address contemporary and future challenges.

WHAT IS BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE?

Behavioural science refers to the evidence-based study of how people behave, make decisions and respond to programmes, policies and incentives. It applies rigorous methods to better understand which interventions work and in particular, the degree of impact they have. Common examples of its application include
(1) presenting information in a way that improves clarity, awareness, and action;
(2) simplifying processes to help people have a better understanding of their options; and
(3) automatic enrollment in certain programs, with easy opt-out, so as to help people achieve their aims. Behavioural science can also be applied to reduce friction, such as paperwork requirements and administrative burdens, which separates people from something they want to obtain or achieve.

Behavioural science places a focus on how people interact with their environment and is grounded in empirical work from a variety of disciplines, including psychology and economics. It applies rigorous scientific methods to derive insights, some of them surprising, on the common patterns and drivers of human behaviour. It can help promote behaviour change; which may be the desired outcome of many interventions that are inspired by behavioural science. Efforts to promote behaviour change (such as organisational change programmes, training and communication campaigns) may leverage some mechanisms from behavioural science, but are often not scientifically informed by it. For example, a communications campaign to encourage more recycling may use messaging about good practices and their importance, but these efforts may not be grounded in the principles and rigorous methods of behavioural science. Applying behavioural science can thus help improve efforts to promote behaviour change.

Although relatively new as a discipline, behavioural science has already been integrated into public policy and is increasingly being applied by governments, which are using it to address issues ranging from poverty reduction to climate change to public health emergencies. Governments are also realising behavioural science as an often relatively cost effective means to enhancing the impact of policies and programmes.

[1] There is no single agreed upon term for behavioural science in the UN and Entities have adopted terms such as Behavioural Science, Behavioural Insights, and Brain and Behavioural Science. For ease of reference, this report uses the term behavioural science.

BOX 1: BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

- **Behavioural Science:** The evidence-based study of how people behave, make decisions and respond to programmes, policies and incentives.
- **Behavioural Insights:** Knowledge obtained from practical efforts to gain accurate and evidence-based understanding of how people behave and make decisions.
- **Behavioural Economics:** The method of analysis that applies psychological insights into human behaviour to explain economic decision-making. Standard economics claims that human beings are fully rational; that their preferences are stable and fixed; and that they are motivated by self-interest. Behavioral economists emphasise that people's choices are influenced by bounded rationality, limited self-control, and social preferences.
- **Heuristics:** Mental shortcuts that allow individuals to make decisions, pass judgment or solve problems quickly, to minimise effort. For instance, the status quo bias can deter people from making an active choice or from changing a current practice and all things equal, they tend to prefer the status quo over alternatives.
- **Cognitive Bias:** Systematic mistakes that derive from people's inherent limited capacity to process information. While heuristics are necessary cognitive shortcuts and often work well, their misuse or misapplication can result in a cognitive bias. Examples include availability bias (i.e. people tend to overestimate the likelihood of memorable events and underestimate the probability of less memorable ones); loss aversion (i.e. people weigh losses more than equivalent gains); and present bias (i.e. the tendency to give insufficient weight to future gains or losses).
- **Nudge:** A behaviourally-informed intervention, usually made by changing the presentation of choices (i.e. the choice architecture) to an individual, that alters people's behaviour in a predictable way. Nudges include warnings, reminders, information disclosure, simplification, and automatic enrollment. Nudges preserve freedom of choice; they do not forbid any options or significantly change economic incentives.
- **Sludge:** Frictions that make it harder for people to achieve their desired outcomes. Common examples include complicated forms, opaque organisational processes or long waiting times.
- **Randomised control trial (RCT):** A type of scientific experiment, often used to evaluate the impact of an intervention. A group is randomly chosen from the eligible population to receive an intervention ('the treatment group'), while another group is randomly chosen to not receive it (the 'control group'). The impact of the intervention is then derived by comparing the difference in outcomes between the two groups. RCTs generally provide more robust results than non-randomised trials as they can limit the impact of uncontrolled variables or biases.

A HISTORY OF BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE AT THE UNITED NATIONS

While still relatively nascent, awareness, interest and application of behavioural science has been steadily growing across the United Nations over the past decade.

In the early 2010s, UN Entities began experimenting with and applying behavioural science to deliver on their mandates. This included efforts to stabilise livelihoods through skills exchanges and employment opportunities, improve tax compliance, and encourage more recycling of e-waste. Some of these early behavioural science experiences are reflected in a 2016 report on Behavioural Insights at the UN, which helped to further increase awareness about the potential of behavioural science to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the last five years, the growth of behavioural science across parts of the UN system has been significant. In Moldova, UNDP successfully trialed virtual doctor visits to increase treatment adherence by tuberculosis patients. UN Women has worked to understand behavioural barriers of "bystanders" to report violence against women and girls and ensyre they feel more able and comfortable to report violence. And UNFCCC made it easier for people to reduce their carbon emissions by offering practical alternatives, and promoting goal setting and pledges to facilitate climate actions; this has led to a reduction in millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide.

Most of these efforts, however, have occurred in silos, with little systematic exchange between the individuals and Entities who were driving them and a heavy reliance on expertise from outside the UN system.

The more recent efforts to apply behavioural science have been documented in a World Bank report, which describes the application of behavioural science in 17 development organisations. It highlights more than 150 cases of insights, research, lessons and programs.

With the recent growth of behavioural science application to the Sustainable Development Goals, there has been a significant increased appetite for sharing and collaboration across UN Entities. Driven by the growing interest, the UN Behavioural Science Group of the UN Innovation Network fosters the application of behavioural science across the UN system by promoting awareness, providing learning opportunities, and encouraging exchange and collaboration among UN Entities.

Building on this momentum and in an effort to further support the adoption and mainstreaming of behavioural science across the UN, the Secretary-General published a Guidance on Behavioural Science in 2021. The Guidance, co-developed with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and members of the UN Behavioural Science Group of the UN Innovation Network, draws on lessons learnt from across the UN and experiences presented in this report.

"Behavioural science is a critical tool for the UN to progress on its mandate. It can contribute to combating poverty, improving public health and safety, preventing and managing crisis, promoting gender and economic equality, tackling corruption, strengthening peacebuilding and all the SDGs. At the same time, it is being used to make the public sector more efficient and holds potential in this area for the UN.

UN entities are strongly encouraged to invest in behavioural science and work in a connected and collaborative interagency community to realise its tremendous potential to achieve impact. "

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General,
UN Guidance on Behavioural Science

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report represents an effort of the UN Behavioural Science Group to document the use of behavioural science across the UN. The report presents findings based on the experiences of 25 UN Entities, as well as emerging good practices from twelve governments and international organisations with significant experience in both behavioural science and mainstreaming it. The report explores:

- Areas of (potential) application of behavioural science in the UN;
- Existing capabilities and areas of focus for behavioural science in the UN; and
- Opportunities and challenges for applying behavioural science at the UN.

The insights shared are based on quantitative and qualitative information collected by the UN Behavioural Science Group; all UN Entities were invited to contribute.

This Report is intended to be a high-level review of behavioural science work and lessons learnt to date. It does not provide an exhaustive understanding of all behavioural science work (past and present) at the United Nations. This living library includes further projects using behavioural science; all UN Entities are invited to contribute to it.

2. Application of Behavioural Science in the UN: Trends and Capabilities

UN Entities are increasingly exploring the use of behavioural science. To date, they have applied behavioural science to a number of focus areas, using a variety of approaches and across the Sustainable Development Goals.

AREAS OF APPLICATION

The achievement of many of the Sustainable Development Goals hinges on changing human behaviour. This inherent focus and reliance on changing behaviours provides ample opportunities for applying behavioural science to support the work of the UN.

UN Entities have applied or are exploring the application of behavioural science to all of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to internal administrative or bureaucratic processes. Box 2 illustrates behavioural science applications to each of the Sustainable Goals from within the UN or beyond. The most numerous and advanced applications of behavioural science have occurred in the programmatic areas of gender, education, health, preventing violence and crime, labour, and environment in which several UN Entities have run pilots or randomised control trials. Gender, education, environment and climate change also present significant opportunities in the near-term with some projects already in planning.

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UN Entities are also starting to use behavioural science to reduce "sludge", i.e to improve administrative and organisational processes. This could include increasing the completion rates of mandatory training, encouraging better knowledge sharing and collaboration, simplifying processes and reducing administrative burdens and paperwork. However, this application of behavioural science to administrative areas is relatively new (not only in the UN, but in general too) and while opportunities are ample, few Entities have to date systematically applied behavioural science to their internal operations.

BOX 3: SLUDGE

Sludge refers to excessive frictions that make it harder for people to achieve their desired outcomes. It is a common feature of everyday life, and often manifests itself in the form of complicated and confusing processes, unnecessarily long application forms, in-person interview requirements or lengthy waiting times. The effect of these administrative barriers is amplified by people's natural tendencies towards procrastination and inertia. While some sludge might be warranted to fulfill important objectives (e.g. legal compliance), the total amount of barriers is often excessive and imposes real costs on people and society. Excessive sludge can greatly lower the uptake of public benefit programmes, such as food-assistance or financial aid, increase frustration, create feelings of indignity and humiliation, and negatively affect employee, customer or beneficiary satisfaction.

PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS | STRENGTHEN GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS BY MAKING IT EASY TO COLLABORATE

Global goals require global partnerships and collaborations. Creating easy and convenient ways of bringing communities together, removing barriers to and incentivising collaboration can help to spark dialogue and new collaboration.

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS | LOWER THE RISK OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM WITH AFFIRMATIONS OF VALUES AND COMMITMENTS TO COHESION

Violent extremism threatens tolerant societies and can lead to conflict and war. Using values affirmation and commitment mechanisms to strengthen the impact of preventative measures can reduce the likelihood of individuals resorting to violent extremism.

LIFE ON LAND | ANALYSE THE DECISION MAKING OF ANIMAL POACHING TO REDUCE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

Animal poaching creates serious threats to biodiversity. Contextualising the decision-making of illegal poachers can help to diagnose the factors that contribute to it and design policies to better protect wildlife.

LIFE BELOW WATER | CURTAIL OVERFISHING THROUGH IMMEDIATE UPFRONT PAYMENTS

The value of catching fish today often overrides the long-term cost of fewer fish in the future, leading to overfishing. Transfer payments to make the benefits of sustainable fishing available immediately can help to reduce the present bias and encourage more sustainable practices.

CLIMATE ACTION | ADVANCE CLIMATE ACTION THROUGH PLEDGES

Inspiring climate action is challenging because many changes feel like sacrifices without tangible results. Helping people estimate their emissions, offering practical alternatives and promoting goal setting and pledges can be successful in helping people carry out a behaviour.

RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION | KICKSTART RECYCLING THROUGH PERSONAL CONNECTIONS AND TARGETED DIGITAL NUDGES

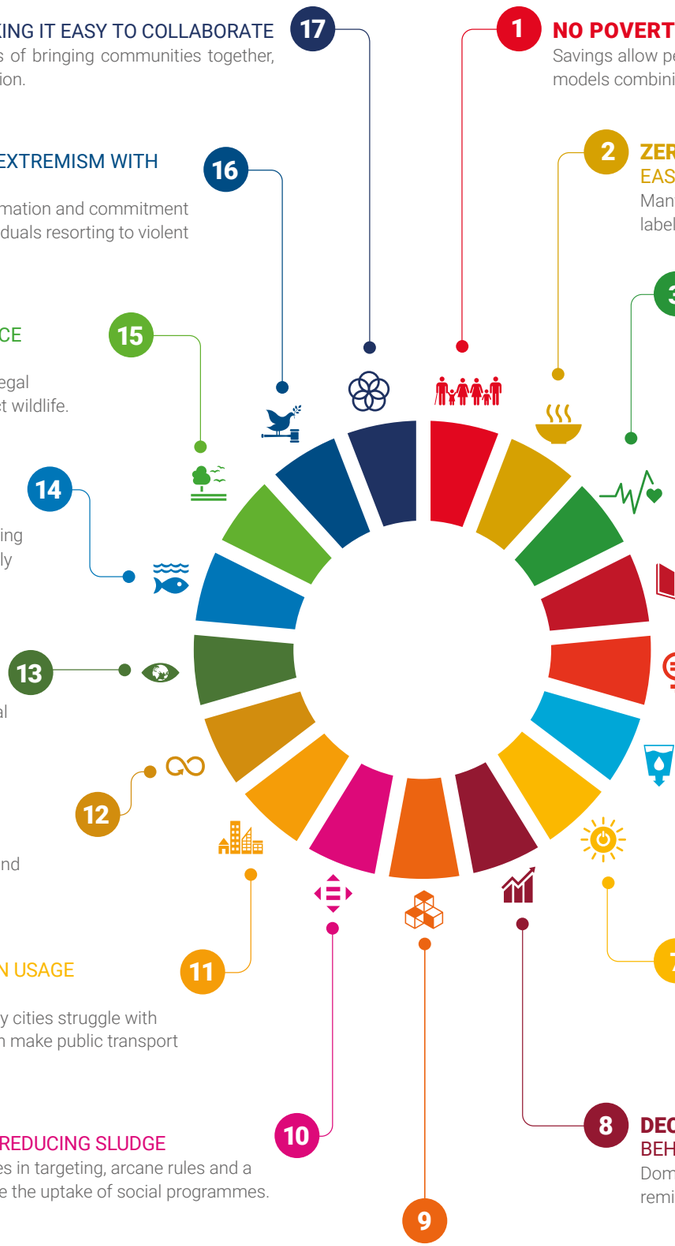
Many people do not recycle as the benefits are not clear. Connecting citizens with waste pickers and sending personalised messages leveraging behavioural science concepts can increase recycling.

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | BROADEN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION USAGE THROUGH LIVE SCHEDULES

Public transportation can help reduce traffic congestion, pollution and carbon emissions, but many cities struggle with promoting its usage. Making live tracking of buses and trains available at opportune moments can make public transport more attractive to use.

REDUCED INEQUALITIES | PROMOTE THE UPTAKE OF WELFARE PROGRAMMES BY REDUCING SLUDGE

Social welfare programmes often fail to reach some of their target populations due to inefficiencies in targeting, arcane rules and a public lack of awareness. Simplifying and eliminating complex or no-value processes, can increase the uptake of social programmes.



NO POVERTY | PROMOTE SAVING WITH REMINDERS AND COMMITMENT MECHANISMS

Savings allow people to absorb potential shocks and make investments in their future, yet many people struggle to save money. Saving models combining reminders, goal setting and commitment mechanisms can make saving easier, more convenient and salient.

ZERO HUNGER | HELP PEOPLE MAKE NUTRITIOUS FOOD CHOICES BY MAKING HEALTHY OPTIONS EASILY IDENTIFIABLE

Many people do not have access to sufficient and nutritious food. Convenient access to healthy food and clear nutrition labelling can help people make healthy food choices and improve their nutrition.

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | BOOST VACCINE UPTAKE WITH EASY ACCESS, INCENTIVES AND TRUSTED MESSENGERS

The uptake of vaccinations is often too low due to scheduling challenges and misinformation. Introducing vaccination without appointments, providing rewards for vaccinations, and working with trusted messengers can significantly increase vaccination uptake.

QUALITY EDUCATION | INCREASE ATTENDANCE BY USING REMINDERS EMPHASISING SOCIAL NORMS

School principal absenteeism negatively affects student educational outcomes. Sending principals weekly messages reminding them of the importance of attending school while emphasising social norms can increase attendance.

GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BY UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING BEHAVIOURAL BARRIERS

Violence against women and girls is often visible but rarely reported. Understanding behavioural barriers of "bystanders", who observe but do not report violence, can help to identify levers for interventions and ensure bystanders feel more mandated and comfortable to report violence.

CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION | PROMOTE WATER PURIFICATION BY MAKING CHLORINE DIRECTLY AVAILABLE AT WATER SOURCES

Unclean water causes waterborne diseases, yet many people do not use free chlorine solutions. Installing containers at water sources and thus incorporating it into existing routines can significantly increase uptake.

AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY | ENCOURAGE SAVING ENERGY WITH REGULAR FEEDBACK ON USAGE AND COMPARISONS TO PEERS

People tend to have little understanding of whether their energy consumption is high or low. Notifying them of how their usage compares to that of their neighbours and providing clear, regular feedback can promote efficient energy use and savings.

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | INCREASE SOCIAL SECURITY REGISTRATION THROUGH BEHAVIOURALLY-INFORMED REMINDERS

Domestic workers often work informally without social security protection. Sending employers behaviourally-informed letters reminding them of their obligation to register their domestic workers can significantly increase registration rates.

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE | USING PEER COMPARISON TO PROMOTE GROWTH AMONG SMES

Promoting small and medium enterprises (SME) is critical for sustainable industrial development. A dashboard displaying SME performance can help policy-makers compare their progress against other countries and inspire efforts to achieve higher SME indicators.

BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE CAPACITIES IN THE UN SYSTEM

UN Entities are at very different stages in their journey toward mainstreaming behavioural science. Few UN Entities have significant capacities or dedicated resources to implement behavioural science projects. Currently, most are exploring the application of behavioural science, including for example by hosting introductory sessions, identifying existing projects, having initial scoping discussions, and running pilot projects. Some UN Entities are at an intermediate stage and have completed initial projects and/or are considering how to increase their internal capacity to apply behavioural science. Very few UN Entities are comparatively advanced on their journey and have a long track record of dedicated behavioural science application and have embedded behavioural science systematically in their organisation

Many UN Entities work with and/or rely on expertise from external partners, particularly from the private sector and academia. While this has helped to produce first successes and highlight the opportunities and value presented by behavioural science in the UN context, it has not systematically contributed to strengthening capacities within UN Entities and created a relative dependence on external partners. It has also led to adhoc experimentation, rather than the development and implementation of a strategy that would enable the design of more effective behavioural interventions in the long term.

IMPACT ACROSS UN ENTITIES

Impact achieved thus far through the application of behavioural science in the UN includes improved adherence to medical treatment, increased immunisation uptake, better financial inclusion, improved uptake of social protection, reduced carbon footprint, women's empowerment to take action in their communities, improved student test scores, informed migration decisions, increased behavioural science knowledge shared, cost savings for the UN and member states in addition to others. More use cases are provided in Section 5.

For instance, in countries such as Armenia, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Kosovo and Poland the World Bank has tested the impact of messages to increase tax compliance leading to large increases in revenue for governments. In a randomised control trial conducted by the ILO, letters informed by behavioural science increased registration rates of domestic workers in Argentina by almost ten percent.

3. Opportunities for Systematic Behavioural Science Application at the UN

Progress in the application of behavioural science across the UN has been made in spite of limited resources and capacities. Adequate investment and capacity building in behavioural science, and the creation of a culture that supports the development of behavioural science, can open up opportunities to increase impact across programmatic and administrative areas.

CREATING A CULTURE THAT SUPPORTS BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

As with all novel approaches, an openness to new ideas is a critical ingredient to introduce and mainstream behavioural science into an organisation. To promote behavioural science, a basic understanding of the approach, its key concepts and potential for impact are critical at all layers of the organisation, especially among senior leadership. To encourage teams, departments and entire organisations to leverage it, senior leaders should understand and highlight the potential value add of behavioural science, demonstrate their support and act as champions for its application. In addition, managers should allocate time and resources to pilot projects and create a culture that encourages experimentation and provides appropriate flexibility in procedures.

To gain a better understanding of behavioural science and its potential benefits, UN colleagues could read available literature, explore relevant use cases, organise or participate in introductory talks, and join webinars or events, including those organised by the UN Innovation Network's Behavioural Science Group. An organisation-wide fact-finding exercise could also help to obtain an overview of existing behavioural science capacities, ways of application and pilots in headquarters or at country office level and identify early adopters as well as success stories. With time, UN Entities may be able to link behavioural science practices to ongoing institutional efforts and work toward mainstreaming the approach.

Once there is a basic awareness of behavioural science, UN Entities need to work towards creating a culture that allows behavioural science to flourish. Behavioural science - like many innovative approaches - requires a culture centred on users and a commitment to experimentation as well as learning from failures. The use of scientific methods to better understand human behaviours and contexts can be complex; the application of behavioural science may require more time to set up and show results than more traditional approaches. This complexity must be recognised at all levels and factored into planning decisions.

Clearly demonstrating the impact of behavioural science projects, and doing so in non-technical terms, is important to ensure buy-in by senior level leaders and the allocation of resources based on merit. Sharing findings broadly can also help to introduce more colleagues to the approach and inspire projects in new parts of the organisation. Finally, behavioural science projects should be aligned with the goals and strategic priorities of the organisation to secure further buy-in and support. When applied rigorously, behavioural science can accelerate progress towards achieving these priorities, as well as the SDGs, in a way that is measurable and often cost-effective (see Box 2).

STRENGTHENING UN BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE CAPACITY

To date, most UN Entities do not have dedicated technical behavioural science expertise available in-house. Many (pilot) projects are run by or in collaboration with external consultants - often without a substantial commitment to internal skills building or long-term support.

To strengthen internal capacities and leverage opportunities offered by behavioural science, the UN should invest in tailored training, create opportunities for "learning by doing" and hire trained behavioural scientists. The UN could define key competencies and develop sample terms of references for behavioural science roles to simplify the hiring process for UN Entities and ensure that new UN behavioural science practitioners have the required skills and competencies (i.e. a mix of academic methods, practical applied behavioural science understanding and some knowledge of how the UN works).

Strengthened capacities and broad awareness of behavioural science will allow UN Entities to identify potential opportunities for behavioural science across the organisation; while more technical expertise can help ensure that potential projects can be adequately scoped and project proposals assessed in-house.

In addition, UN Entities should strengthen their capacities by fostering partnerships within the UN system and beyond. External partners can offer new perspectives, particularly on new or niche topics, and thereby complement existing technical capacities. Academic partnerships can also be leveraged to temporarily augment capacities, for example through fellowship programmes embedding behavioural scientists in UN Entities on a short-term basis. Behavioural science fellowship programmes are typically open to academics, researchers or practitioners that have knowledge in running and analysing experimental research. Fellows usually conceptualise, run and analyse experiments (or support them), train colleagues, and transfer knowledge by communicating findings - thereby providing an attractive mechanism for short term capacity bridging and strengthening.

SUPPORTING THE APPLICATION OF BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

Efforts to strengthen staff capacity must be combined with adequate guidance building upon UN experience - and incorporating rigor and ethics - to ensure a coherent and effective approach.

The Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Behavioural Science will be complemented by UN/practitioner relevant briefs, a 'living library' of behavioural science projects and dedicated implementation guidance providing further insight into mainstreaming and a better understanding behavioural science particularly in the UN context. Building upon these resources published by the UN Behavioural Science Group, additional material will be needed including guidance on how to incorporate behavioural science into project management cycles and monitoring and evaluation frameworks and other ways to help harmonize efforts and promote knowledge-sharing. There is strong demand and need for documenting and sharing lessons learnt in applying and mainstreaming behavioural science, within the UN system and beyond.

As few UN Entities have dedicated behavioural science expertise, supporting them with project conceptualisation, design and implementation, would significantly contribute to progressing and mainstreaming behavioural science application. For instance, this could be done in a centralisd way targeting the large demand for introductory expertise, through for example a fellowship programme and leveraging specific learnings from the UN and beyond in discussions and publications.

BOX 4: A NOTE ABOUT ETHICS

The application of behavioural science entails several ethical questions, which need to be addressed to produce reliable results, maintain respect and ensure public trust. Improving individual and collective welfare must remain a core tenet of behavioural science. Transparency of methods and objectives in the research process, as well as the assurance of data privacy, ensures that participants are not harmed. Rigorous and transparent research methods ensure that results are trustworthy. UN Entities would benefit from guidance and support to ensure the ethical application of behavioural science, including through training on rigorous and ethical research methods and data privacy, and the establishment of an ethical review support mechanism.

FOSTERING EXCHANGE AND COLLABORATION

To maximise learning, build on existing experiences and avoid duplication of efforts, UN Entities should proactively encourage knowledge exchange and actively seek collaborations beyond individual teams, across the UN family and beyond.

Many UN Entities working on similar topics (such as gender, health and environment), which creates ample opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and collaboration. Awareness of ongoing projects across the entire UN system and regular exchange can help to leverage lessons learnt, identify synergies, and inspire joint projects and new partnerships.

The UN Behavioural Science Group offers an easy entry point to engage with behavioural science practitioners from across the UN system and beyond. The efforts of the Group have already brought the UN behavioural science community closer together, helped to raise awareness for the approach and made it easier to identify synergies. The UN Group will work to further assist UN Entities, for example, by offering training opportunities, providing advice along their behavioural science journey and bringing in knowledge from outside the UN.

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4.Summary and Key takeaways

Behavioural science is a critical tool for the UN to progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and its mandate. Although it is still relatively new in the UN, behavioural science is advancing in key programmatic areas including gender, health, peace and security, environment, education as well as in management and administration.

To mainstream behavioural science and unlock its full potential for the Sustainable Development Goals and to help the UN deliver on its mandates, the UN should:

Create a culture that supports behavioural science through:

- Promoting awareness and an overall understanding of behavioural science across the organisation,
- Encouraging senior leaders to champion the approach
- Fostering openness to new ideas and experimentation/ testing; and
- Linking behavioural science practices to ongoing institutional efforts.

Strengthen UN behavioural science capacity through:

- Delivering tailored behavioural science training;
- Fostering partnerships with internal and external actors to better leverage existing knowledge in applying behavioural science;
- Establishing fellowships to bridge short-term capacity gaps across the UN; and
- Developing behaviourally-informed monitoring and evaluation tools, indicators and indexes.

Support the application of behavioural science through:

- Creating and strengthening strategies for applying behavioural science, incorporating an understanding of ethics, and using rigorous testing and evaluating impact;
- Producing reports on the application of behavioural science in the UN and an "living library" of use cases;
- Providing advice and guidance to help UN Entities apply behavioural science to policy, programming, administration, and other areas of need;

- Assisting UN Entities with mainstreaming behavioural science, including through developing strategies and identifying projects; and
- Developing behaviourally-informed monitoring and evaluation tools, indicators and indexes.

Foster exchange and collaboration through:

- Raising awareness of ongoing projects and facilitating regular exchange to identify synergies, leverage lessons learnt and inspire collaborations;
- Encouraging peer-to-peer learning and support, discussing strategies for applying behavioural science and promoting awareness about the UN's work on behavioural science; and
- Working through the UN Behavioural Science Group to share lessons learnt and connect with other behavioural science practitioners.

Application of behavioural science in 25 UN Entities

UN Entities are working to apply behavioural science domains and contexts. This section is a discussion of behavioural science in 25 UN Entities1, including description of behavioural science application, projects and achievements. As behavioural science is relatively nascent at the UN, the use cases demonstrate elements of behavioural science application through to rigorous application in randomised controlled trials.

1. 25 UN Entities provided input to inform this report, 24 submitted an Entity profile

Development Coordination Office (DCO)

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION OFFICE

DCO manages the Resident Coordinator (RC) system and acts as a conduit for supporting the UN's activities for sustainable development, which inform policy, programme and operations on the ground.

While the application of BeSci is currently still in the exploration stage, DCO sees potential to use it to better understand and reduce excessive barriers and bureaucratic "sludge" (i.e. excessive friction that makes it harder for people to achieve their desired outcomes) of interagency coordination in policy, programming and operational processes.

With its leading role in implementing UN reform, DCO is keen to explore how BeSci can be used to support a change away from working in silos to more collaborative, efficient and agile ways of working. In addition, DCO is also eager to explore how BeSci can inform learning and knowledge management strategies.

AREAS OF EXPLORATION

SLUDGE AUDIT

DCO is exploring how BeSci can be applied to reduce "sludge" in coordination processes to minimise transaction costs and reduce parallel demands.

IMPROVING CHANGE MANAGEMENT

DCO is exploring how a BeSci approach could help understand ways to improve change management as the UN moves from old to new ways of interagency cooperation and operations under UN reform. For instance, shifting the culture of programming in entity silos to one of working collaboratively and openly.

IMPROVING LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

DCO is investigating how applying BeSci can build engagement in knowledge communities and improve learning and other targeted interventions.

The focus of UNDCO is the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs through system coherence and bringing the UN system together for delivery of all the SDGs

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FAO supports the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

Current activities at FAO involve the application of behavioural science principles to antimicrobial resistance training programmes (AMR), gender equality, climate change and corporate environmental responsibility climate (CER). Recognising the potential for BeSci to contribute to FAO's mandate, the organisation is developing plans for the rigorous application of BeSci via Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs).

KEY PROJECTS

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE (2019-PRESENT)

The AMR programme is using BeSci to promote the appropriate use of antimicrobials and improve food production. Examples of this work include:

- The AMR Behaviour Change Community of Practice, which links behavioural scientists with governments, civil society and private stakeholders to create RCTs to test crowdsourced insights;
- Communication campaigns, which are incorporating affect, loss aversion and salience into messaging; and
- Farmer field schools that leverage experiential learning, social norms, messenger effects and implementation intentions to encourage target behaviours.

DIMITRA CLUBS FOR GENDER EQUALITY (2007-PRESENT)

This programme facilitates positive changes in gender-related behaviours and social norms through community engagement, women's leadership and collective action. Dimitra Clubs are informal groups of rural women and men (including youth) that discuss shared problems and find solutions. Dimitra leverages three BeSci principles: firstly, the messenger effect by working with community influencers; secondly role models by promoting gender counterstereotypical roles and behaviours; and thirdly, debiasing via gender-sensitive communication (e.g. portraying positive masculinities). Results of behavioural diagnostics and qualitative impact evaluations show uptake of non-traditional behaviours (e.g. childcare by men, women fishing, women speaking up in meetings).

© FAO

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY (CER) (2016-PRESENT)

The CER team is pursuing behavioural change - including by leveraging BeSci principles - towards a more environmentally responsible organisation. These include changing context to remove personal desk bins to discourage excess personal waste generation; the use of conspicuous colours, designs and visual cues to encourage recycling; the promotion of environmentally sustainable food choices via messaging that highlights benefits while avoiding reproach; and triggering group identity, belonging and intrinsic goals to increase employee pride and satisfaction via internal communication campaigns. While behaviours were not measured, proxy indicators (e.g. energy efficiency, water consumption, waste generation and other key performance indicators), suggest that pro-environmental behaviour has increased.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

RAISING THE VISIBILITY OF AND CREATING A LAUNCHPAD FOR BESCI APPLICATION

FAO has explicitly included BeSci activities and methods in its upcoming Action Plan 2021-2025 and enabled a dynamic community to innovate on AMR behaviour change methods and develop potential RCTs (in AMR as well as other sectors, such as aquaculture, crop production, food safety, sanitation, governance).

CONTRIBUTING TO OVERCOME GENDER-BASED BIASES

Research has shown that reducing biases has triggered new behaviours (e.g. men are more engaged in household chores), attitudes (e.g. more women viewing themselves as leaders) and social norms (e.g. dismantling discriminatory norms that prevented women from eating certain foods or carrying out tasks traditionally assigned to men). Based on Dimitra outputs, FAO has created plans to engage in mixed-methods analyses to explore the effects of existing and new messengers; and encourage behaviours in role models (e.g. fathers) that promote gender equality via counter stereotypical messages. These results then have the potential to inform future RCTs.

PROMOTING PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOUR

Measures optimising choice architecture for energy efficiency and waste management, increasing salience of sustainable food choices and avoiding guilt-based environmental messaging all showed potential correlations with positive changes to environmental key performance indicators. Future plans include conducting surveys to indicate which factors may contribute to pro-environmental behaviours; developing RCTs to test these hypotheses; rolling-out larger interventions to promote pro-environmental behaviours; and evaluating results via rigorous monitoring and evaluation to demonstrate impact.

The Youth and United Nations Global Alliance (YUNGA) children and youth initiative is empowering 45,000 young women and girls in Africa to address climate change.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

ARTICLE
Dimitra Clubs, what is the impact? (2019)

ARTICLE
Pathways to achieving food security, sustainable peace and gender equality: Evidence from three FAO interventions (2018)

REPORT
Gender transformative approaches for food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture – A compendium of fifteen good practices (FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020)

REPORT
Risk communication and community engagement: COVID-19 pandemic, including methodologies to promote AMR behaviour change and gender equality via Dimitra clubs (2020)

REPORT
Making it count - increasing the impact of climate change and food security education programmes (FAO 2020)

CHALLENGE BADGES
Youth and United Nations Global Alliance (YUNGA) children and youth initiative

UN Global Pulse

UN Global Pulse, the UN Secretary-General's digital innovation initiative, and its network of innovation labs responsibly harnesses data analytics and artificial intelligence for humanitarian and development purposes

UN Global Pulse's Pulse Lab in Jakarta (PLJ) compliments its work on big data and artificial intelligence with theories and methods to encourage positive changes in behaviours, norms and attitudes.

PLJ started applying BeSci in 2019 to improve financial inclusion in Indonesia. The project uses methods from design and behavioural science in an early-stage intervention to improve agent-based banking. It was implemented in collaboration with a number of partners.

KEY PROJECTS

ENCOURAGING THE USE OF BANK ACCOUNTS TO IMPROVE FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN INDONESIA (2019 - 2020)

While 56 percent of Indonesian adults owned a bank account in 2018, 30 percent of them had not used it in the previous year. Pulse Lab Jakarta's Banking on Fintech research revealed that bank agents who encourage smaller, more frequent deposits are more successful in getting their customers to use their bank accounts. This finding formed the basis of the Lab's research question: since agents are mostly neighbourhood shop owners, would sending a message urging them to encourage their customers to save the change from purchases at their shop help in forming a new habit of bank account usage?

Pulse Lab Jakarta ran a behavioural experiment in the form of an 8-week WhatsApp campaign aimed at disseminating a set of key messages to bank agents. The messages (i.e. graphics, comics, written text) were sent to shop owners (who were also bank agents), urging them to encourage their customers to save the change from purchases made at their shops in their bank accounts. The messages shared as part of the #TabunginAja ("#JustSaveIt") campaign, were informed by BeSci and included setting specific goals and applying rules of thumb to prompt the target behaviour (e.g. to encourage agents to ask their customers to

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SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

save their shopping change if the amount is less than USD0.35).

The intervention was evaluated through a randomised controlled trial and semi-structured interviews with agents and customers in treatment areas. The quantitative evaluation did not find a large impact on agent and customer behaviour, possibly due to a large variety between treatment and control areas. However, the qualitative evaluation suggested that agents found the messages helpful in guiding their interaction with customers, while customers who saved their small change found it beneficial to accumulate money for future expenses. Pulse Lab Jakarta recommended including the #JustSaveIt campaign in onboarding new agents.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

- **REPORT**
  #JustSaveIt: Encouraging Usage of Agent-Based Bank Accounts to Improve Financial Inclusion (2020)

- **BLOG**
  Key Lessons from Trialling Our #TabunginAja (#JustSaveIt) Behavioural Intervention Campaign for Improving Financial Inclusion (2020)

- **BLOG**
  Fusing Behavioural Science and Human Centred Design to Accelerate Financial Inclusion Efforts (2019)

International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)

ICAO serves as the global forum of States for international civil aviation, developing aviation policies and standards and supporting their implementation.

ICAO's Assembly has stressed the need to keep pace with innovations that affect the sustainable development of civil aviation. Increasingly, the organisation is recognising the potential of behavioural science as one innovative approach to research new air transport policy, even though efforts to apply BeSci are only beginning. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased ICAO's attention on BeSci given that there is potential for behavioural science to support States' efforts to stimulate the aviation sector as an engine of global economic recovery.

AREAS OF EXPLORATION

IMPROVING MESSAGING TO DETER UNRULY PASSENGER BEHAVIOUR

ICAO's international standards require States to deter and prevent unruly behaviour and to promote passenger awareness of the unacceptability and possible legal consequences of disruptive behaviour in aviation facilities and on board aircraft. Such actions have taken on a renewed importance in light of the COVID-19 pandemic given the potential for disruption associated with violations of essential public health and safety measures. ICAO is considering how BeSci, in particular research on the impacts of various messages to passengers, can help facilitate safe, responsible behaviours.

BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE TO RESTORE PASSENGER CONFIDENCE

BeSci could provide insight into how best to restore passenger in-flight sense of security post COVID-19. Passengers will have to trust that flying is safe from a public health perspective as well as comfortable in the age of heightened restrictions. BeSci may be applied to improve communication and generate insights into reducing passenger anxiety as health risks diminish through recovery.

VIRTUAL REALITY INFLUENCING TRAVEL INTENTIONS

The organisation is also aware of behavioural research examining how virtual travel experiences might affect travel planning and decision making in a post-COVID-19 era. ICAO is considering whether virtual reality experiences may increase positivity towards and increased trust in aviation through the "mere exposure effect", particularly in the context of increased health and safety protocols that may be in place in the coming years. Insights obtained from following this on-going research could inform future work in the domain of BeSci, together with partners and stakeholders.

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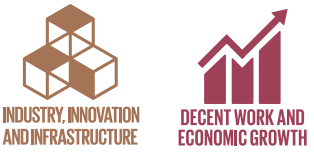

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

IFAD Investing in rural people

IFAD invests in rural people, empowering them to increase their food security, improve the nutrition of their families and increase their incomes.

BeSci is a relatively new concept for IFAD. While there have not been any formal efforts to promote its wide application in IFAD's operations to date, a number of projects have started to explore the application of BeSci principles. IFAD's projects typically take a people-centred approach to development (often focused on training, capacity building and working with grassroots organisations), which offers significant opportunities to leverage BeSci, particularly concepts such as social norms.

KEY PROJECTS

The following projects leverage elements of behavioural science application.

PROMOTING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN ECUADOR (2020–PRESENT)

This project addresses behavioural barriers to women's economic empowerment by identifying key behaviours, lowering barriers (e.g. gender-specific constraints) and amplifying benefits to influence the beneficiaries' decision-making process.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHLANDS AND RAINFOREST AREAS IN PERU (2013-2019)

To reduce barriers to participate in agricultural producer associations, this project used different promotion modalities such as reminders involving radio, written media, visits by promoters, facilitators and information from neighbours.

ACCESS TO MICROFINANCE IN MALI (2010-2018)

This project adopted various strategies to improve access to and use of financial services and credit markets for low-income rural Malians. Strategies included social influence and prompts, such as through establishing a community network and new credit and insurance products.

EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN IN INDIA (2007-2018)

The programme aimed to empower women to challenge social norms related to domestic violence. It promoted self-financing, self-help groups and community-managed resource centres

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to give poor women access to a range of training activities along with social and economic support. One of the overarching objectives was to encourage women to participate more actively in society by redefining cultural customs and norms.

IMPROVING GENDER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE GAMBIA (2019-PRESENT)

This project is implementing the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology to improve gender relationships at household, group, and community levels. It helps in overcoming communication barriers and building community networks, thereby supporting a shift in social norms, attitudes and behaviours. In addition, farmer field schools aim to promote nutritional behaviour change by demonstrating the importance of consuming nutritious food.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO CHALLENGE SOCIAL NORMS IN INDIA

The informal village-setup "Courage Brigades" or Shaurya Dals showed how targeted societal intervention can lead to significant changes in women's empowerment: 41 percent of women attributed the resolution of their domestic violence issues to these Shaurya Dals, and 82 percent believed that Shaurya Dals increased their awareness about issues of violence against women.

IMPROVING THE IMPACT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES IN MALI

By using commitment devices and group norms in financial services interventions, several projects leveraging BeSci were able to significantly exceed their targets. For example, over 1.2 million people obtained access to financial services (against the target set of 250,600 people), with 54 percent of beneficiaries being women. Women in households receiving credit also achieved a statistically higher empowerment score than women in control households.

INCREASING FINANCIAL CAPITAL IN PERU

Addressing constraints in access to financial innovations through social influence and providing easier access to information can have a significant positive impact on project outcomes. By adopting these approaches in Peru, an IFAD project was able to achieve notable increments in income, significant improvements in financial inclusion, and higher asset ownership rates. For instance, 5,000 women reported having access to at least one financial service (savings/insurance), and over 4,674 micro life insurance schemes were facilitated. Spillover communities also benefited from increased financial inclusion, indicated by their increased probability of taking out a loan, similar to treated households.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

- **REPORT**
  Household methodologies: Gender, targeting and social inclusion (2014)
- **GUIDE**
  How to do: Mainstreaming nutrition into Country Strategic Opportunity Programmes and investment projects (2019)
- **GUIDE**
  How to do: Design of gender transformative smallholder agriculture adaptation programmes (2018)
- **REPORT**
  Community-driven development in IFAD-supported projects evaluation synthesis (2020)
- **GUIDE**
  Nutrition-sensitive value chains: A guide for project design (Volume I) (2019)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

The ILO promotes social justice and internationally recognised human and labour rights.

International Labour Organization

ILO is in its early stages of exploring the application of BeSci to advancing its Decent Work Agenda, and to its administrative processes. To date, the ILO has completed two behavioural interventions as randomised controlled trials in field settings to promote more decent work for domestic workers. An additional three experiments are currently being designed or implemented. The ILO has also conducted one intervention related to the administrative work of the organisation.

In 2020, senior leadership was sensitised to its potential, and an ILO-wide webinar and follow-up meetings were held with leading behavioural science practitioners.

Areas of potential application of BeSci to the ILO's work are vast, ranging from social security, gender equality and non-discrimination, to addressing violence and harassment in the world of work and formalising the informal economy. Several departments are exploring the use of behavioural science to add to the range of intervention methods that are considered when supporting ILO's constituents.

KEY PROJECTS

INCREASING SOCIAL SECURITY REGISTRATION OF DOMESTIC WORKERS IN BUENOS AIRES (2017-18)

In Argentina, the ILO encouraged its constituents to increase the registration of domestic workers with the social security administration. A behaviourally-informed letter was written and sent to households above a certain income, reminding them of their obligation to register, and providing them with the necessary instructions to do so. 180,000 households were randomised into a control and treatment group. The letter had a statistically significant impact of 0.22 percent: an average of two more households per thousand registered their domestic workers, representing an increase in registration rate of 8.9 percent, as compared with the control group.

PROMOTING FAIR RECRUITMENT OF DOMESTIC WORKERS IN HONG KONG (2017-PRESENT)

A behavioural intervention in Hong Kong encouraged employers to ask their domestic workers if agencies had ever charged them illegal fees, and to report such cases. The ILO ran a randomised control trial with 7,700 participants, testing two message frames/types, a hedonic/pleasant one and one that appealed to self-interest, against a neutral message. Employers who were exposed to the hedonic frame were almost twice as likely to open the email as those in the control group. Those exposed to the self-interest frame were 0.7 times less likely to open the email.

Also, in Hong Kong, the ILO is working to better understand the factors that influence a household's choice of employment agency when looking to recruit a domestic worker. The

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project will include a behavioural diagnosis and randomised controlled trial to test various message frames to motivate employers to choose a fair employment agency.

PROMOTING DECENT WORK FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS IN KUWAIT (2020-PRESENT)

In Kuwait, the ILO is developing an intervention designed to motivate employers to ensure decent working conditions (e.g. rest periods, wages and occupational safety and health standards) for domestic workers in the wake of COVID-19. An online experiment was conducted to test the effect of different message frames, including loss aversion, social norms and warm glow to motivate employers to commit to improving the working conditions of their domestic workers. The results will be used to inform the design of an awareness-raising campaign.

INCREASING UPTAKE OF THE WORKFARE PROGRAMME IN MAURITIUS (2019-PRESENT)

The ILO designed a behavioural experiment in Mauritius, a country with a social protection scheme that is open to both formal and informal sector workers. The experimental design consisted of sending information letters to programme participants with randomly differentiated information about the programme requirements and potential repercussions for not complying with these requirements. In early 2020, the ILO created the infrastructure to implement the experiment, but the project was put on standby due to the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine measures.

REDUCING MOVING COSTS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE (ILC) (2019)

A diagnostic test revealed that ILO staff under-packed boxes with content for the ILC. An intervention designated coordinators tasked with coordinating the request for and sharing of boxes; changed the default on moving furniture; and informed staff about the impact of moves on the environment and use of public funds. The intervention reduced working hours by 45 percent and truckloads by 15 percent.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

INCREASING SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS IN ARGENTINA

The informal village-setup "Courage Brigades" or Shaurya Dals showed how targeted societal intervention can lead to significant changes in women's empowerment: 41 percent of women attributed the resolution of their domestic violence issues to these Shaurya Dals, and 82 percent believed that Shaurya Dals increased their awareness about issues of violence against women.

FIGHTING ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT PRACTICES IN HONG KONG

An intervention to encourage employers to take action against illegal recruitment of domestic workers in Hong Kong identified effective messaging frames to motivate employers to act. Employers were twice as likely to open messages using a hedonic/pleasant frame.

REALISING EFFICIENCIES IN REDUCING INTERNAL MOVING COSTS RELATED TO THE ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

An intervention aimed to reduce the environmental footprint and cost of moving office supplies for the International Labour Conference reduced working hours by 45 percent and truckloads by 15 percent.

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

The IMF promotes international financial stability and monetary cooperation, facilitates trade, promotes employment and sustainable economic growth, and helps reduce global poverty.

In order to introduce design-thinking methodologies and behavioural science to the IMF, the organisation's in-house creative agency founded the Creative Lab – a hub for human-centred design and behaviour-driven decision making. The Lab's methods place a heavy focus on behavioural research to define and understand the IMF's target groups and gauge the impact of our work. Though still relatively new, the Creative Lab is already making strides in using the field's best practices in applied psychology and behavioural economics to design bespoke products that leverage digital technologies, improve engagement, and contribute to the Fund's ultimate mission of expanding and developing our member countries' capacities to foster economic stability and growth. The Lab has streamlined processes for multiple departments by ideating, designing, and building products and workflows that have reduced error rates and increased ease of access to essential services. The IMF has tapped the Creative Lab to guide over 80 projects and hold more than 300 design sessions, 20 training seminars, and more than 15 events promoting human-centred design and the application of cutting-edge design principles.*

KEY PROJECTS

REDUCING THE IMF'S CARBON FOOTPRINT (2020-PRESENT)

The Creative Lab was tasked with devising a carbon footprint reduction plan for the IMF – complete with a governance framework and executable policies – that could also serve as a model for member countries and other agencies. To better understand staff behaviours, the Creative Lab designed a comprehensive, large-scale survey to plot staff data points, such as commuting routines, pastimes, dietary habits, work motivations, and incentives. The survey was deployed initially to a small group of subjects to map information propagation and cascading effects as well as identify linchpins and gatekeepers. Based on a larger survey rollout, the Creative Lab devised a four-step plan designed to ease IMF staff into self-perpetuating behaviours and organically engender a series of bottom-up actions and policy changes that will reduce our institutional carbon footprint.

POST-COVID-19 NUDGE PLAYBOOK (2020-2021)

To help IMF staff return to work safely and adjust to the new normal of the pandemic, the Creative Lab set about authoring a nudge playbook that would reward behaviours that protected staff health. At the outset, the Lab reviewed the available literature on Covid-related behaviours and habits and conducted a comparative analysis on the unique characteristics of IMF staff and culture. The

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* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the IMF, its Executive Board, or IMF management.

Lab leveraged social norms and behavioural modelling, used messaging to generate certainty, and identified and capitalised on formal and informal information networks for dissemination models. The final nudge playbook and communications guidelines include proposed campaigns, physical installations, digital tools, and an overall strategy that the Lab expect will foster a sense of safety, and allow staff to return to work armed with protective habits to keep themselves and their colleagues safe and healthy.

NEW DEBT SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES (2018-2019)

The rise in debt among low-income countries is a pressing concern, which is why the IMF and World Bank Group offer those countries a proprietary tool to calculate sustainable debt rates and create effective policies to counter the trend: The Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF). The Fund tasked the Creative Lab with updating the tool using behavioural science and robust design thinking methodologies to increase ease of use and outline a step-by-step approach for policy implementation. While updating the tool proved infeasible, the Lab decided to focus our efforts on a companion guide that would be used in tandem with the tool and direct the users through the ins and outs of the DSF. The new guide incorporates an interactive suite of tools and audiovisual elements. It uses the analogy of train stations to blend a simplified approach and instructional design methods to take economists on an immersive user journey. The end result is a simplified, more engaging, sludge-less guide that's used side-by-side with the DSF to identify debt levels and target and implement policy solutions in all of our member countries.

PROMOTING FINANCIAL INCLUSION FOR SMALL-MEDIUM SIZE ENTERPRISES (SMES) (2019-2021)

The IMF has identified small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as an important driver for increasing opportunity and equality in the Middle East and Central Asia. But many governments in the regions aren't taking advantage of policy frameworks that could promote growth among SMEs. The Creative Lab was commissioned by the department overseeing these regions to study the different assumptions and underlying reasons hindering the advancement of SME-related policies. Based on our findings, the Lab set out to design a platform that helps officials and IMF economists benchmark SME performance indicators and prioritize policies accordingly. The design makes use of a sleek dashboard interface that displays a country's SME performance relative to those of its neighbours in order to engender a sense of accomplishment when achieving higher SME indicators. The resulting tool gives policymakers around the world a nudged-based platform utilizing behavioural drivers of influence to improve policy. This provides incentive to the policymakers to take data-based decisions that the Lab expect will improve the state of SMEs in the regions.

REMOVING BARRIERS TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION (2019-PRESENT)

The IMF wanted to digitise its internal workflows and processes – a transformational proposition. To identify behavioural patterns, motivations, and concerns that could affect slow adoption of digitisation, the Lab conducted a deep behavioural study of staff work habits with dozens of interviews, contextual inquiries, and fly-on-the-wall observations. Personas were identified and grouped not by their job function or role at the IMF but rather by work styles and habits. These personas became the baseline around which the Lab will design future workflows and systems design including the digitisation plan. These groupings will streamline processes and create a modern workplace with an emphasis on efficiency through heightened engagement.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

Because of the sensitivity of the IMF's work, many of Creative Lab's successes are not available to share with the public. However, below are some examples of how the IMF has shared its process with the world.

▶ **ARTICLE**

"They Did What?" In-House Agency Forum: The Inside Scoop, The presentation lays out why the IMF has come to value design thinking and interdisciplinary development with a simple thesis: "Design thinking and user experience is everywhere."

▶ **PRESENTATION**

Law + Design Summit 2018: Prototyping for Policy | "Making Policy Intuitive and Accessible"
The Creative Lab discusses "hacking policy with design" – a step-by-step journey of how the Creative Lab applied an interdisciplinary approach involving behavioural models, visual storytelling, and practical application of digital tools to transform an overwhelming complex process into a streamlined, visually rich, and intuitive workflow.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and is committed to the principle that humane, orderly migration benefits migrants and society.

Several projects within IOM leverage insights from behavioural science, particularly in its awareness-raising initiatives, which focus on empowering potential migrants to make informed migration-related decisions.

KEY PROJECTS

MIGRANTS AS MESSENGERS IN WEST AFRICA (2017-PRESENT)

This peer-to-peer campaign empowers young people in West Africa to make informed migration-related decisions. The campaign is led by returning migrant volunteers who share honest accounts of their migration experiences with their communities and families through a variety of online, on-air and on-the-ground channels. Scientifically rigorous impact evaluations are used to assess the impact of the campaign. They consist of randomised controlled trials in which engagement activity effects are assessed in an experimental approach. The evaluations measure shifts in knowledge about the risks associated with irregular migration, intentions, attitudes and perceptions towards irregular migration. In addition to four impact evaluations that will be conducted in 2021-2022, a pilot study conducted by phone/WhatsApp is currently attempting to measure the effect of the interventions on actual migration behaviour.

COMMUNITY-LED CAMPAIGNS TO ENCOURAGE INFORMED MIGRATION-RELATED DECISION MAKING (2014-PRESENT)

IOM X seeks to move beyond raising awareness to affecting behaviour change. It does so by applying Communication for Development (C4D) and BeSci principles such as social influence and implementation prompts to encourage young people to make informed migration decisions. The IOM X model has been applied internationally, including most recently in West Africa where it is called WAKA Well. The model facilitates a process where a tailored multi-media campaign targeting a specified community is led by its youth and other community members, who direct audiences to informational material available in their communities. In order to approximately assess the impact of the campaigns on behaviour change, surveys measuring the knowledge, attitudes and practices among the target audience were conducted before and after the campaign.

ENGAGING YOUTH TO PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN BELARUS (2017-PRESENT)

Leveraging a network of activists, the LEARN.ACT.SHARE. camp in Belarus engages young people in the prevention of human trafficking presenting information in a way to promote clarity, awareness and action. As of January 2021, the camp alumni had reached out to 4,380 peers

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with their campaigns and received positive feedback, which demonstrates young people's behavioural change stemming from their participation in the project. Alumni of the programme also contribute to community discussions and debates about human trafficking which serves as a testimony to the project's sustainability.

A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY FOR MIGRANTS IN LATIN AMERICA (2016-PRESENT)

"Somos Colmena" is a C4D campaign which leverages behavioural science working with communities to develop campaigns that help fellow community members make more informed decisions about their life plans, recognise fake information, and identify opportunities for local development and regular migration. The virtual community "Somos Colmena" is part of a strategy that informs and facilitates behaviour change. For example, in a campaign conducted in 2020 in Costa Rica, "Somos Colmena" referred irregular migrants to an Information Hub that assisted them in their regularisation process.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The below examples provide evidence of impact in terms of awareness, intent, attitudes and knowledge. Given the challenges associated with measuring actual migration behaviour, these are the best available indicators.

★ PEER-TO-PEER COMMUNICATION IS KEY TO RAISING AWARENESS IN WEST AFRICA

An impact evaluation conducted for the Migrants as Messengers project found that young people exposed to the campaign in 2018 were 19 percent more informed about the risks and opportunities associated with migration, 25 percent more aware of the multiple risks associated with irregular migration, and 20 percent less likely to report intentions to migrate irregularly within the next two years.

★ INCREASE IN POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND INTENTIONS TO PRACTICE SAFE MIGRATION

Surveyed respondents, who were exposed to the WAKA Well campaign in Guinea, demonstrated an eight percent increase in positive attitudes towards safe migration. Surveyed respondents in Nigeria who were exposed to the same campaign demonstrated an increase in behavioural intent of 13 percent regarding making informed migration-related decisions.

★ INCREASED KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MIGRATION

An evaluation of the Somos Colmena campaign in Latin America with 2,000 potential migrants showed that the campaign contributed to increased knowledge of the risks of irregular migration and increased positive attitudes towards regular migration. In 2020-2021, the C4D processes in Central America were successfully adapted to the "new reality" of COVID-19 and continued to involve communities and local stakeholders in activities and messaging for positive behaviour change.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

- **REPORT**
  The Impact of Peer-to-Peer Communication on Potential Migrants in Senegal (2019)
- **TOOLKIT**
  IOM X Communication for Development (C4D) Toolkit (2019)
- **RESOURCE**
  IOM's C4D e-learning course (2019)
- **RESOURCE**
  Backway Theater e-learning, pedagogical tool to promote safe migration among young students (2019)
- **GUIDE**
  Information Hubs on Migration Handbook, guide to starting an Information Hub on Migration (2019)

International Training Center of the International Labour Organisation

ITC-ILO aims to be the global centre of excellence for digitally enhanced capacity development services for ILO constituents, ILO partners and the UN System.

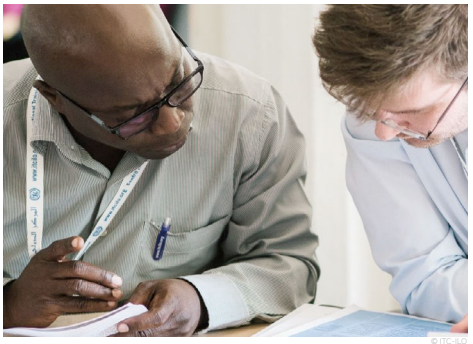
Human psychology and behaviour are key elements of any learning process. ITC-ILO is using a human-centred approach towards learning and integrating insights from BeSci into this process. These insights aim to inform adapted learning and knowledge sharing methods focusing on three questions:

1. What could make learning more effective?
2. How could we encourage learners to respond more easily and better towards (in)formal learning initiatives?
3. How could BeSci tools improve learning and training more generally?

More specifically, ITC-ILO's Learning Innovation Programme Unit organises capacity building initiatives to make BeSci more accessible to colleagues from across the organisation, including through inviting behavioural science experts to join learning and training interventions across the entire training curriculum of the ITC-ILO.

KEY PROJECTS

EMBEDDING BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE INTO THE LEARNING INNOVATION ACTION PLAN (2017-PRESENT)



Through the Learning Innovation Action Plan, ITC-ILO promotes BeSci across its training curriculum. Dedicated sessions are also integrated in the Executive Leadership Programme (jointly executed with the UN System Staff College). The curriculum consists of an introduction to behavioural science and how it can be applied, and encourages colleagues to apply BeSci to a certain challenge. The programme has increased ITC-ILO's awareness and understanding of the use of behavioural frameworks in different policy areas (e.g. green jobs, domestic work, unemployment and productivity).

NUDGING FOR A MORE GENDER-AWARE LABOUR FORCE (2017)

The Nudging toolkit supports colleagues in integrating and leveraging BeSci to address gender inequality challenges identified in employment policies. The toolkit provides practical cases and is used in workshops in which the Centre explores BeSci in employment-related contexts. It has also helped to make the theoretical frameworks of nudging more accessible to colleagues.

INNOVATIVE LEARNING INTERVENTIONS (2014-PRESENT)

The Centre supports colleagues in designing training programmes in a behaviourally-informed manner by creating a structure which helps learners pursue their desired paths. The approach

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has been piloted in two Train-the-Trainer fora and is now offered as a tailor-made event for organisations or institutions. One event has led to the publication of Learnscapes (2015), which explores how the Training Centre can apply BeSci to encourage more meaningful interactions. The project works closely together with architects and explores how physical and digital spaces can nudge towards specific knowledge sharing behaviours. This project will inform the creation of a Learning Innovation Lab, which will focus on nudges for learning and behavioural change.

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DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES AND PRODUCTS (2019)

In addition to human-centred design tools, the Design Toolkit also includes behavioural change strategies, cognitive and activity modelling and choice architecture design. These templates and exercises build upon behavioural science principles and were created by an interdisciplinary group of colleagues. Although the toolkit is aimed toward early stage products and services in the area of learning and communication, it is adaptable to a diverse set of topics and themes.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

- **BLOG POST**
  Nudges: The Design of Your Choice (2017)
- **TOOLKIT**
  Nudging for a gender aware labor force (2017)
- **TOOLKIT**
  ITC-ILO Design Kit (2019)

UN Secretariat: Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)

DPPA leads the UN's efforts in preventing and resolving deadly conflict around the world.

In the peace and security context, BeSci provides a promising new approach to compliment and advance conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. Evidence suggests that such BeSci can be used to diversify conflict analysis methods, enhance early warning systems, improve measurement, evaluation and outcomes, and drive novel peacemaking and peacebuilding interventions.

UN peacemakers working in conflict situations are intuitively applying techniques from psychology and behavioural economics in conducting conflict analysis, mediation and preventive diplomacy engagements. These situations may include, for example, addressing behaviours of conflict parties, including their perceptions, thought patterns, fears, trauma, identities, affinities and biases. However, while there have been experiences in community-based mediation and peacebuilding, dedicated attention to and rigorous application of BeSci-based evidence and methods is still limited in high-level diplomacy under the UN banner.

AREAS OF EXPLORATION

CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY-BUILDING

In 2019, the DPPA E-Analytics Training included a first pilot module applying behavioural science. In addition, the DPPA Innovation Cell has been running a series of capacity-building initiatives to bring attention to the opportunities and challenges of behavioural science in the peace and security context.

BESCI TOOLS FOR PEACE

Together with academic and practitioner partners, DPPA is exploring the development of BeSci tools for practitioners in the peace and conflict resolution fields. This involves a more systematic approach to the wider application of BeSci with a view to better understand aspects of conflict dynamics and conflict transformation, including issues related to culturally diverse social settings, the spontaneous eruption of violence, intergroup tensions and power imbalances in peace negotiations. BeSci will help UN DPPA to better understand motivations, attitudes, behaviours and perceptions that promote violence and peace and craft interventions and messaging that reduces intergroup hostility. The aim is to deconstruct and address how human behaviour and unique contextual factors can create obstacles to the effective implementation of political and peace processes.

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

KEY PUBLICATIONS

ARTICLE

- Can Behavioral Science Help in the Crafting of Lasting Peace Agreements? (2021)

UN Secretariat: The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)

UNOCT leads the UN's counter-terrorism mandates; enhance coordination and coherence across the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities.

UNOCT is currently at an early stage of integrating and expanding a behavioural science approach to the delivery of its counter-terrorism mandate. UNOCT recognises that interventions to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism should be context-specific and tested for effectiveness by incorporating behavioural science. BeSci enhances UNOCT's understanding of the drivers of violent extremism and helps to identify risk and resilience factors, thereby enabling the development of informed and effective counter-terrorism responses.

In this regard, UNOCT has established behavioural science as one of its priority programmes, and seeks to harness its potential in designing and delivering technical and capacity-building assistance across the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

In particular, the organisation sees opportunities to leverage BeSci in a range of areas to prevent, disrupt and reduce terrorism, including, inter alia, understanding and influencing behaviour of violent extremist offenders and victims, countering terrorist narratives, recruitment, travel and financing, conducting terrorism investigations, and understanding terrorism-organised crime linkages.

AREAS OF EXPLORATION

HUB ON BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TO COUNTER TERRORISM

In December 2019, UNOCT established the International Hub on Behavioural Insights to Counter Terrorism as a UNOCT Programme Office in Doha, the State of Qatar. The Doha Hub was formally launched in December 2020 and will become fully operational in 2021. The Hub will perform three core functions:

1. Conduct and advance research in BeSci to better understand the drivers and factors contributing to radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism;
2. Provide capacity-building assistance to Member States, regional organisations and civil society partners to develop and implement programmes, projects and initiatives that integrate behavioural insights to counter terrorism; and
3. Promote communication, outreach and partnerships to share knowledge, expertise, experiences and lessons learned on behaviourally informed counter-terrorism interventions. The Hub will leverage the expertise of local, regional and international counter-terrorism actors, and coordinate with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities operating in the field for impactful and 'all-of-UN' programme delivery.

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

RESOURCE

▶ **WEBSITE**
https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/behavioural-insights

UN Secretariat: Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The mission of UNODC is to contribute to global peace and security, human rights and development by making the world safer from drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism by working for and with Member States to promote justice and the rule of law and build resilient societies.

UNOV/UNODC is in the early stages of applying behavioural science to support Member States as well as to improve internal processes. The organisation has already leveraged behavioural science in areas related to ethics, judicial integrity, and crime prevention. Going forward, the UNOV/UNODC is considering additional projects related to its mandate areas as well as solutions involving internal workplace initiatives.

AREAS OF EXPLORATION

EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE (2018-PRESENT)

The E4J initiative leverages an understanding of behavioural science in seeking to prevent crime and promote a culture of lawfulness through education activities. Behavioural interventions are at the core of the initiative as children and youth are empowered to facilitate change and to stand up when seeing crime, including corruption. This initiative includes for example discussion of behaviour change at the individual level and explores "rationalisation" of unethical behaviour and dishonesty to limit bad behaviour.

93 academics in 50 countries have used these resources to teach approximately 15,000 students and support behavioural change by showcasing how individual actions can make a difference. E4J has also contributed to a behavioural change and impact study to assess how learning about ethics and integrity in the classroom has contributed to behavioural change in students.

LINE UP, LIVE UP (2018-PRESENT)

This sport-based life skills training aims to prevent violence and crime among youth. Each session of the curriculum, which combines sports activities with a guided discussion, aims to strengthen specific cognitive, social and emotional skills, increase understanding of risks related to violence and crime, and address harmful normative stereotypes to increase pro-social behaviour. An external assessment of the programme concluded that in the short and medium term youth had strengthened key life skills, improved some attitudes towards crime, violence and drug use. While long-term behavioural change was challenging to measure so far, additional impact assessments are currently ongoing.

THE GLOBAL JUDICIAL INTEGRITY NETWORK (2018-PRESENT)

The Network, which aims to strengthen judicial integrity and prevent corruption, uses methods aimed at connecting judges, exposing existing and emerging challenges, and fostering a sense of belonging to be part of a global movement. The key example of the Network providing

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

behavioural support is its practical package of the Judicial Ethics Training Tools, which sensitises judges to the wide spectrum of situations that may arise and aims to improve the behaviour of judges in the future, including through education on cognitive biases. To date, judges in over 60 jurisdictions have committed to using the initiative's Judicial Ethics Training tools, with more than 6,800 members of judiciaries involved.

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS WEEK 2019

In collaboration with IAEA and UNIDO, UNOV/UNODC participated in the inaugural UN Behavioural Insights Week by hosting an introduction to Behavioural Science in Vienna for more than 130 staff members. The session led to increased awareness and new ideas for applying behavioural science in the partner organisations.

AREAS OF EXPLORATION

UNOV/UNODC is also exploring how behavioural science could be used to positively change the actions of persons in power and key decision-makers (especially corruption and fraud prevention), to enhance the resilience of programmatic interventions (especially in crime prevention and criminal justice), to facilitate negotiations in a multilateral context, and to improve internal workplace initiatives (e.g. increasing compliance with mandatory training, encouraging environmentally friendly behaviours, utilising insights in communication to inspire action).

KEY PUBLICATIONS

- **UNIVERSITY MODULE SERIES**
  Integrity and ethics, particularly module 6 on Challenges to Ethical Living, module 7 on Strategies for Ethical Action and module 8 on Behavioural Ethics (originally published in 2018)

The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF advocates for the protection of children's rights and helps to meet their basic needs and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.

UNICEF is applying evidence and insights from behavioural sciences, particularly through its Communications for Development (C4D) function. Since 2017, UNICEF has stepped up internal efforts to socialise the understanding and application of behavioural science through webinars, blended learning sessions, workshops, and seminars involving country-level training and field work. In 2020, concerted activities and investments have been undertaken to strengthen C4D's capacity to apply behavioural science as a tool for social and behavioural change to advance programme objectives.

UNICEF's Office of Research, Innocenti, is positioning the organisation to lead in the generation and application of behavioural science research to policy and programmatic challenges. In 2020, Innocenti established the first staff position in the organisation formally dedicated to utilising research in BeSci to generate Behavioural Insights approaches and applications to UNICEF's mission. The long-term vision for UNICEF Innocenti's emerging Behavioural Science and Insights agenda includes three primary pillars:

1. Building an evidence base for applying BeSci and insights for results for children;
2. Strengthening capacity internally, with Member States and humanitarian and development partners to ethically harness BeSci for good; and
3. Establishing strategic research partnerships with global centres of excellence in BeSci and related fields, with an emphasis on cultivating capacity and connections with and between institutions in Lower and Middle Income Countries.

KEY PROJECTS

INCREASING VACCINATION UPDATE IN LEBANON (2017-2018)

UNICEF facilitated a behavioural mapping that led to the design of BeSci-informed interventions to increase vaccination uptake and completion of the childhood immunisation schedule in Lebanon. A behaviourally informed calendar that contained several "nudges" (including the use of social norms, a commitment device, implementation plans, a salient reminder/prompt, and a carefully-thought-out messenger) was distributed to households in a random subset of administrative regions. When evaluated, the calendar showed a significant effect size in vaccination uptake in the areas where it was offered relative to the control group.

EXPLORING BESCI FOR POLIO ERADICATION AND IMMUNISATION IN PAKISTAN (2020-PRESENT)

After running an initial orientation and learning session with UNICEF polio staff, a BeSci webinar was delivered worldwide. Building on this, UNICEF is now scoping two studies. The first tests which messengers are most effective at encouraging positive engagement on social media in

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

support of polio eradication. The second uses BeSci to support and encourage frontline polio workers' engagement with the community.

REDUCING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 MISINFORMATION IN INDIA, INDONESIA AND KYRGYZSTAN (2020-PRESENT)

UNICEF is working to reduce the spread of misinformation related to COVID-19. In India and Indonesia, UNICEF is applying the BeSci-informed concept of "inoculation" or "pre-bunking" (which exposes participants to tactics used by purveyors of misinformation to reduce the likelihood that they will believe it) to mitigate the spread of misinformation on digital channels. In Kyrgyzstan, two ongoing BeSci studies also focus on COVID-19. One tests whether introducing "cognitive speedbumps" encouraging people to reflect on information accuracy reduces the probability of sharing inaccurate information on social media. The second uses behavioural science and data analytics to identify the attitudes and perceptions driving compliance with public health recommendations, such as wearing a mask and maintaining social distance.

ENCOURAGING POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS ALIGNED WITH UNICEF'S VALUES (2021)

UNICEF is currently embedding BeSci into the rollout and evaluation of its "Living Our Values" campaign, which is part of a broader internal communication and staff engagement strategy to discourage counterproductive and encourage positive behaviours aligned with UNICEF's values. This is in line with the Joint Inspection Unit's report on change management at the UN, which highlighted the need to apply BeSci to internal organisational functioning.

NAVIGATING ETHICAL CHALLENGES RELATED TO BESCI APPLICATION (2021)

UNICEF's Office of Research, Innocenti, is working to develop practical resources to navigate ethical questions related to the application of BeSci approaches to policies or projects that implicate children.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

★ INCREASED IMMUNISATION UPTAKE

Vaccination data collected from sixteen Primary Healthcare Centres and dispensaries in Lebanon revealed an increase of 6.6 percentage points in the uptake of vaccination among households that received a behaviourally informed calendar - this is equivalent to a 60 percent increase in the likelihood of vaccination.

★ EXPANDED BESCI PORTFOLIO

UNICEF's Office of Research is working with the C4D team to expand UNICEF's BeSci portfolio to include early childhood development and positive parenting; education; gender-responsive programming and efforts to reduce gender-based violence; child protection; and social protection.

A systematic mapping to take stock of all BeSci-informed projects across UNICEF is currently ongoing.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

BLOGPOST
Bringing behavioural insights to scale in the United Nations: Designing people-centered policies and programmes (2018)

RESOURCES
UNICEF's Human-Centred Design (HCD) Toolkit (2018)

CONCEPT NOTE
Behavioural Science in Polio: Concept Note (2020)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP works in more than 170 countries and territories, helping to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and exclusion, and build resilience so countries can sustain progress.

UNDP has long recognised the potential of BeSci to complement traditional policy measures and enhance the impact of its projects and programmes. The organisation has documented at least 55 BeSci projects and initiatives since 2014, spanning issues such as waste management, energy, agriculture, universal basic income, public administration, taxation, prevention of violent extremism, gender-based violence, health, entrepreneurship, employment and UN integration.

Most recently, UNDP's network of Accelerator Labs has embraced BeSci as a tool for experimentation and learning, including in response to COVID-19. Going forward, UNDP plans to increasingly explore the potential for BeSci to be applied to complex, systemic challenges that favour portfolios of longer-term interventions over single-point nudges.

KEY PROJECTS

ENCOURAGING ACTION OF BYSTANDERS TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN GEORGIA (2019-2020)

In Georgia, a study revealed that 14 percent of ever-partnered women have been abused by their partners. UNDP investigated what keeps bystanders from reporting violence. The results have shaped a behaviourally-informed campaign that is being rolled out across the country to change the perception that intimate partner violence is a private matter and increase bystanders' and survivors' confidence and motivation to take action. A randomised controlled trial is being conducted to assess the impact on reporting rates.

DISRUPTING RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM (2018-2019)

UNDP Country Offices in Sudan and Yemen piloted the use of BeSci to increase the effectiveness of interventions designed to disrupt the process of radicalisation and violent extremism, with Sudan focusing on increasing the effectiveness of education programmes targeting prison populations and Yemen on increasing attendance in psychosocial support meetings. The pilots used BeSci tools, including values affirmation and commitment devices. The application of BeSci in this area has since expanded to Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan. Practical tools and lessons learned from these experiences have been compiled in a knowledge product.

BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE FOR YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ARAB STATES (2021)

A project involving 10 UNDP Country Offices and national partners in the Arab States is exploring the potential of BeSci to "pave the path" to successful entrepreneurship for young people, particularly women. Findings will feed into a series of knowledge products.

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

PARTICIPATION OF GIRLS IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH (STEM) IN THE MALDIVES (2019-2021)

UNDP in the Maldives is leveraging BeSci tools to address social and cultural barriers that limit girls' career aspirations in STEM, increase their knowledge and build confidence to undertake STEM-related education and jobs. UNDP is working to pilot nudges to understand what behavioural change campaign can spark the intended change.

RECYCLING BEHAVIOUR IN GHANA (2019-2020)

UNDP Ghana used personas, such as Eco-Conscious Ama, to understand recycling behaviours. Information-based interventions using localised nudges appealing to social norms and cognitive dissonance resulted in increased plastics collection.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

IMPROVING ADHERENCE TO TUBERCULOSIS TREATMENT

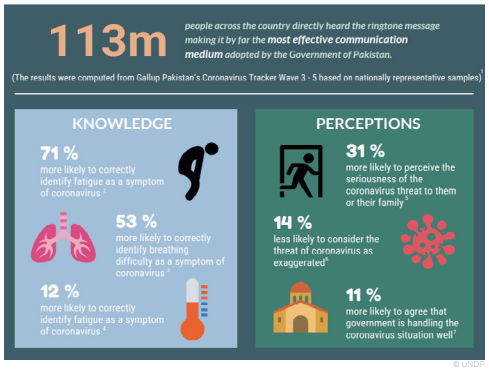
In Moldova, a project seeking to improve patients' adherence to tuberculosis treatment protocol found that patients whose treatment was observed remotely via video were twice as likely to take their medication (87 percent) compared to patients who were legally required to make daily in-person visits to the clinic (43 percent) – the latter being a costly and time-consuming process. One key success factor was the "social" connection between patients and observers, which is correlated with higher adherence.

INCREASING UPTAKE OF CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

An RCT in Armenia, implemented by UNDP's SDG Innovation Lab, tested the impact of low-cost interventions of letters and reminders on the uptake of a national cervical cancer screening programme. Overall, 20,800 letters and 13,000 reminders were sent to a population of 36,508 women. The letters increased participation in the programme by about 350 percent compared to the control group. Letters were especially effective when reinforced by reminders, increasing participation by about 460 percent compared to the control group that received no letters.

COVID-19 MESSAGING

An intervention in Pakistan replaced the mobile phone dial tone you hear when calling someone with a recorded behaviourally-informed health message on COVID-19, which appealed among other factors to people's sense of responsibility towards their loved ones. Over 113 million people heard the message, making it the most effective communication medium adopted by the Government. Coronavirus Attitude Tracker Surveys indicate that the messages positively



KEY PUBLICATIONS

GUIDANCE
Applying Behavioural Science to Support the Prevention of Violent Extremism: Experiences and Lessons Learned (2021)

BLOG POST
From single point solution to systems change — how behavioural science can nudge us forward. The latest from UNDP (2020)

REPORT
Cancer screening invitations in low and middle income countries (2021)

BLOG POST
Using behavioural insights to respond to COVID-19 (2020)

REPORT
UNDP Georgia Study on domestic violence bystanders' behavior (2019)

BLOG POST
8 Accelerator Labs - 5 Regions - Countless Behavioural Insights (2019)

REPORT
UNDP China Universal Basic Income in China and blog post (2019)

impacted knowledge, perceptions and most important behaviours related to COVID – for instance, people reported being 43 percent more likely to wear masks.

★ IMPROVING WASTE COLLECTION

An intervention seeking to improve waste collection at the Gorkhi-Terelj National Park in Mongolia distributed bags and installed waste containers that were printed with messages informed by behavioural science. Waste collection increased by 86 percent.

★ IMPROVING RECYCLING

In Ecuador, UNDP worked on BeSci experiments on waste management with a local recycling initiative. The ReciApp was used to connect citizens to their local waste picker to facilitate direct delivery of recyclable materials, without intermediaries. Personalised messages were sent to app users to test the effect of different cognitive biases such as loss aversion, social pressure, and environmental vs. social incentives to recycle. The tests achieved a 700 percent increase in the number of reported material delivered to waste pickers.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

UNEP considers behavioural science as a key tool to help address the triple planetary crisis of climate instability, nature loss and rising toxicity and pollution. BeSci has strong potential for application in core areas of UNEP's work, including sustainable consumption and production, education, environmental awareness/behaviour change campaigns (e.g. climate change, illegal wildlife trade) and legal frameworks. Initial steps are being taken to apply BeSci across a range of programmes.

BeSci and behaviour change are currently featured in the organisation's new Medium-Term Strategy, which was adopted by Member States in 2021. In particular, the approved strategy speaks to supporting, accelerating and scaling up a shift to more sustainable consumption and production patterns, through, inter alia, increased information sharing on behavioural and educational tools and curricula, and mechanisms to inform and influence consumer choices through raised awareness of the chemical, greenhouse gas, environmental, resource and waste footprint of goods and services.

KEY PROJECTS

GREEN NUDGES ON CAMPUS (2020)

The Little Book of Green Nudges, UNEP's first publication focusing on the application of BeSci, is a quick guide to reducing the environmental impact of university campuses through behavioural change. The publication contains 40 ready-made suggested nudges and summarises the evidence around what nudges work best while seeking to encourage more sustainable practices among students and staff across several behavioural categories (incl. reducing waste, promoting green transport, encouraging recycling and sustainable food choices). The book provides simple guidance on how to implement and evaluate behavioural interventions, centred around techniques such as resetting default options, changing the framing of choices, and harnessing social influence.

WILD FOR LIFE (2016-PRESENT)

The Wild for Life Campaign aims to motivate citizens worldwide to support an end to the illegal wildlife trade. Leveraging BeSci principles such as social proof, normative feedback and precommitment, the campaign seeks to encourage individual pledges to advocate against the illegal wildlife trade and to make

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

LIFE ON LAND

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

consumption choices that do not threaten species (e.g. not buying products made from protected wildlife, supporting companies that demonstrate sustainable supply chains). The campaign is supported by an influencer-driven, social-first strategy, seeking to leverage UNEP's online strengths and network of celebrity champions, who have helped Wild for Life reach over a billion people and engage at least ten million as measured through likes, shares and follows.

CLEAN SEAS (2017-PRESENT)

This campaign aims to reduce single-use plastics and phase out avoidable plastics, such as microbeads, within a five-year period. It works with governments to support urgent action, with the private sector to transform their business practices, and with citizens to call for action on this issue. The campaign seeks to galvanise action on marine litter and associated issues through demonstrating social proof of momentum for change through public commitments and demonstrations of action from individuals, government and the private sector. Individuals are encouraged to publicly commit to changing their plastic use behaviour in an effort to shift social norms.

A range of UNEP products have been created to motivate and enable behaviour change by providing information on individual consumption choices and their environmental impacts. While these products have not followed particular BeSci approaches, they have sought to translate evidence on the environmental impact of individual choices and behaviours into actionable information on what choices can be most effective in reducing one's environmental footprint. The focus of these products has therefore been on increasing the availability of information on consumption behaviours. Projects include:

FOSTERING AND COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES: PRINCIPLES AND EMERGING PRACTICES (2016)

This guidebook sets out a four-step strategic roadmap for fostering and communicating sustainable lifestyles, illustrated by 16 initiatives and campaigns from around the world.

THE ANATOMY OF ACTION (2018-PRESENT)

This social media toolkit (targeting SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production) provides evidence-based, carbon impactful actions that people can take. The toolkit includes videos and social media assets that can be used to make and communicate change. A 15-day pilot social media challenge at the launch of the toolkit was shared by over 5 million people.

THE GOOD LIFE GOALS (2018)

This toolkit aims to provide a clear link between the SDGs and sustainable lifestyles, helping communicate how simple daily individual actions and choices can contribute to the SDGs.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

As UNEP projects have generally not been designed to report measures of specific behaviour change, it is not possible to attribute achievements to BeSci interventions alone. Instead, UNEP projects have historically focused on indicators such as measurable environmental and policy impacts (e.g. land restored, emissions avoided, policies enacted, etc), or in the case of public campaigns, on indicators of engagement, such as national and individual pledges of support.

UNEP projects that recognise behavioural science as part of their broader successes include:

- Clean Seas: To date more than 60 nations have joined the campaign, making commitments to reduce single-use plastics.
- Wild for Life: The campaign has successfully contributed to strengthen protections and the expansion of wildlife trade bans globally since 2016.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KEY PUBLICATIONS

PUBLICATION
The Little Book of Green Nudges: 40 options to spark behavioural change on campus (2020)

CAMPAIGN/TOOLKIT
Anatomy of Action (2019)

CAMPAIGN/TOOLKIT
Good Life Goals (2018)

PUBLICATION
Sustainable Lifestyles: Options and Opportunities (2018)

REPORT
Fostering and Communicating Sustainable Lifestyles: Principles and Emerging Practices (2016)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO contributes to peace and security by promoting cooperation between nations in the fields of education, science, culture and communication.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Behavioural science is in relatively early days at UNESCO and the approach is being tested and applied in areas such as policy guidelines, advocacy, capacity building support and technical assistance offered to Member States. BeSci applications range from deconstructing divisive stereotypes, racism and discrimination; to transformative education to equip learners with the skills, values and attitudes for a peaceful, healthy and sustainable world and how social media can affect social behaviour.

KEY PROJECTS

PROMOTING MEDIA LITERACY (2019-PRESENT)

Media and information literacy (MIL) promotes citizens' engagement and interaction with information, media and technology in an informed and ethical manner. The quality of information people receive, largely determines their perceptions, beliefs and attitudes. UNESCO has developed MIL CLICKS – an initiative which leverages social media to raise awareness about and enhance people's media and information literacy, particularly targeting youth. This initiative leverages commitment through the use of a pledge.

USING BESCI TO COMBAT RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION (2019-PRESENT)

The Master Class Series Against Racism and Discriminations seeks to empower young champions to spread awareness on how to deconstruct the mechanisms underlying racism and discriminations, including scientific evidence related to divisive stereotypes and racist attitudes and behaviour. The programme uses commitment mechanisms to promote action after the Class.

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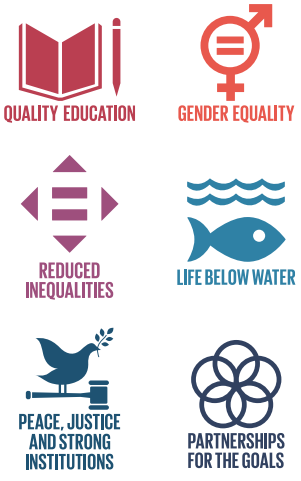
CREATING AWARENESS AND INSPIRING ACTION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

UNESCO's water education and science programmes promote behaviour change by expanding public awareness, working towards consensus for sustainable production and encouraging direct action for the environment. The UNESCO-led Intergovernmental Oceanographic commission promotes ocean literacy initiatives and uses social and behavioural research methods to assess changes in attitude - a factor of behaviour change.

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI



INCREASING RESILIENCE THROUGH INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES (2018-PRESENT)

The programme provides in-person and online training of the innovative Story Circles methodology to consolidate a network of facilitators towards building tolerance, empathy, critical thinking and listening for understanding in contexts where intercultural dialogue is especially needed (e.g. promoting social inclusion of migrants or the dialogue among indigenous peoples).

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

UNESCO has not directly measured behavioural outcomes, but credits behavioural science with a degree of contribution to the following successes:

- **THE GLOBAL ACTION PROGRAMME (2015-2019)** scaled up action on ESD, covering some 152 countries and reaching around 140,000 schools and 40,000 teacher-training institutions, training 3.5 million youth leaders, 2.1 million educators and 37 million learners in formal and non-formal settings, and the development of 5,517 ESD programmes and activities with local authorities.

- **GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION (GCED) COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK** translated the aspiration of GCED into concrete learning objectives and topics, complemented with numerous tools, innovative pedagogies and publications on SEL. UNESCO supported 50 countries through locally relevant training on topics including hate speech, violent extremism, holocaust education, justice and the rule of law, global citizenship as well as tools, innovative pedagogies. UNESCO's framing of GCED has inspired innovation in education in countries around the world and helped to shape the global indicator for Target 4.7.

- **DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES AND COPING WITH SOCIAL NORMS:** More than 400 participants (Civil society representatives, educators, young leaders, UN staff, social and health care workers) have benefited from Story Circles training sessions since 2018.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

- **REPORT** Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (ESD for 2030)
- **REPORT** UN International technical guidance on sexuality education; Behind the numbers
- **TOOLKIT** World Heritage in Young Hands Kit (2012)
- **REPORT** Journalism, 'Fake News' & Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education & Training (2018)
- **REPORT** Biosphere Reserves share their solutions for people and nature to thrive together (2018)
- **MANUAL** Manual for Developing Intercultural Competencies (2019)
- **TOOLKIT** IOC: Ocean Literacy for all: a toolkit (2020)
- **REPORT** Policité: From confrontation to trust (2019)

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

United Nations Climate Change

The UNFCCC secretariat supports the global response to climate change and empowers all stakeholders to build a climate-neutral, climate-resilient world.

The UNFCCC secretariat is in its early stages of applying BeSci. So far, BeSci approaches have been used mostly internally, with the aim of encouraging staff and supervisors to prioritise the setting and implementation of performance targets. Further projects apply elements of BeSci to allow members of the secretariat to proactively create a work environment that benefits their wellbeing. These approaches are currently in the phase of data collection, building the foundation for tailored interventions fitting the needs in the organisation and identifying areas for future interventions.

Likewise in early stages of embracing evidence-based operations, external projects have used BeSci approaches with the aim of helping organisations and individuals to achieve carbon neutrality.

Looking ahead, the secretariat will strengthen its capacity in the use of BeSci in both internal and external processes and projects, by using existing UNFCCC-wide networks to develop and disseminate a consistent BeSci strategy and screen for additional opportunities to make use of BeSci and reporting on its outcomes.

KEY PROJECTS

CLIMATE NEUTRAL NOW (2015-PRESENT)

The initiative aims to enable individuals, civil society and organisations to estimate their climate footprint, encourages them to reduce it and offset non-avoided emissions using certified carbon credits. It identifies current emission behaviours and prompts change by offering alternative behaviours and promoting structured goal-setting. Inviting people to take a pledge fosters the setting of implementation intentions, which is found to be successful in helping individuals to actually carry out a behaviour. People are invited to take a pledge and agree to measure emission sources, identify reduction strategies, set goals on how to implement them, and share their progress publicly.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM HORSE RACE (2019)

UNFCCC's analysis revealed that positive behaviours need to be modelled and incentivised to change norms around performance appraisal compliance and increase completion rates. A campaign was developed, including an innovative gamification tool in which Programmes competed against each other, and dedicated "PAS mornings", which were actively

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

CLIMATE ACTION

scheduled by Directors for their teams. The campaign was supported by emails and social posts by senior management and champions with concrete suggestions on how to complete the work plan on time.

NETWORK4CHANGE (N4C) (2019-PRESENT)

Dedicated full-time staff and a community of over 100 cross-functional change agents are working on embracing change in the organisation. The project tackles organisationally induced psychological helplessness (e.g. passivity towards innovation, rejection of innovative proposals due to a perceived lack of control when trying to implement them) by engaging change makers at all levels and empowering them to shape their work environment. To measure the impact of activities on cultural and behavioural change within UNFCCC, the network has collected data on the organisation's culture and culture of recognition. The results will be used to identify recommendations for possible behavioural interventions going forward.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

BeSci has contributed to some of UNFCCC's broader successes including:

SHIFTING GEARS TOWARDS CLIMATE NEUTRALITY IN THE UN SYSTEM AND BEYOND

In collaboration with UN Environment, 97 percent of the UN System's reported 2019 greenhouse gas emissions are offset. Approximately 400 organisations, mainly private companies, participate in Climate Neutral Now. A total of 20 million tons of carbon dioxide in the form of carbon credits have been used for voluntary purposes by Climate Neutral Now participants and related initiatives.

CHANGING THE CULTURE AROUND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMPLETION

The Performance Appraisal System Horse Race campaign achieved its goal of 80 percent on-time completion for performance appraisals and was praised for adding a fun, team-building element to this administrative task.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

UNFPA works to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

UNFPA is exploring and piloting the use of BeSci to utilise evidence-based research on how women, girls and youth respond to practices, reforms, incentives and initiatives. For instance, BeSci can be leveraged at UNFPA in "last mile" interventions and projects that support individuals in making informed choices. This could include saving money for sexual, reproductive or maternal health needs, utilising family planning services or commodities that match their personal sexual and reproductive intentions, or attending a training on preventing gender-based violence. UNFPA also sees opportunities to integrate BeSci to better understand community social norms or challenges individuals such as youth might face in negotiating their personal relationships.

KEY PROJECTS

RICH BABY, HEALTHY FAMILY IN UGANDA (2020)

In Uganda, pregnant women and girls may delay seeking healthcare due to ill-preparedness and failure to save enough money to cover the costs. This delay can lead to poor maternal health outcomes and even maternal deaths. Through the Rich Baby, Healthy Family app and punch card, the Uganda Country Office is developing an innovative financing model that combines BeSci and gamification to encourage family savings for maternal health costs with behaviourally informed reminders, goal-setting, and commitment to make the action of saving more salient. BeSci will be used when conducting user research to uncover specific needs, enablers or barriers to savings, such as how families currently save or plan for the pregnancy, and during the prototyping stage to enable behavioural changes that result in savings impact.

© UNFPA

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

AREAS OF EXPLORATION

UNFPA sees strong potential to apply BeSci in thematic areas that have often used social behavioural change models to more fully yield the expected results. This includes nudging toward positive health-seeking behaviours, mobilising family members and communities for gender issues and working with men and boys to promote positive masculinities.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

BLOGPOST

Rich Baby, Healthy Family (2020)

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

UNHCR is dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.

While in its early stages, UNHCR's Innovation Service is incorporating research and academic understanding from behavioural and cognitive science to support projects focused on driving innovation more quickly within the organisation. It is also experimenting with how BeSci can be used to work toward a culture of innovation within the UN Refugee Agency.

KEY PROJECTS

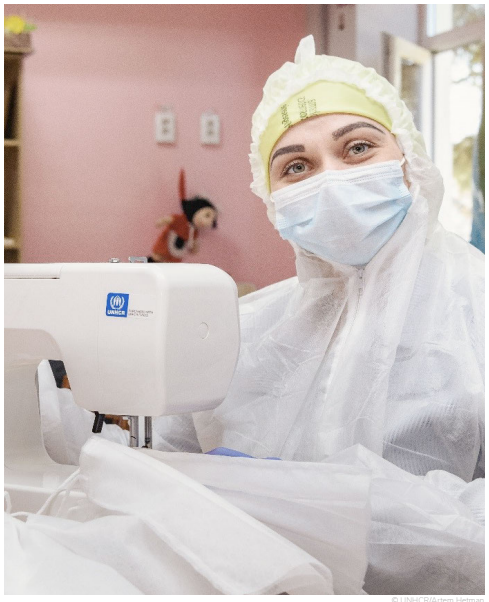
USING BESCI TO CHANGE WAYS OF WORKING (2018-PRESENT)

UNHCR's Innovation Service is testing a new communications framework to understand and shift behaviours within the organisation and to better align with innovation competencies. This framework is helping UNHCR move beyond thinking about innovation from the Innovation Service's point of view and to dig into some of the beliefs and behaviours the organisation desires to change. UNHCR focused on using social, behavioural, and cognitive science to gain insight to:

- Ensure work aligns with the science behind how people form beliefs and adopt new behaviours;
- Build support for innovation within the organisation;
- More quickly transmit promising practices and "bright spots" to those who will benefit the most from them; and
- Embed skills and qualities associated with innovation throughout UNHCR and the humanitarian sector.

DRIVING ELEMENTS OF CULTURE CHANGE (2020-PRESENT)

UNHCR's Innovation Service is undertaking an experiment studying norms change that will test new approaches to how innovation is talked about in the organisation. These approaches are rooted in grassroots tactics and social science research on norms change, storytelling and influencing. The Innovation Service is experimenting to see how it can better influence and build a culture for innovation. This approach works with identified influencers and leaders within the organisation to model desired behaviours. The Innovation Service has identified core competencies of innovators and will work with team leads to model specific competencies and disseminate messages to influence norms and behaviours that support



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SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

GENDER EQUALITY

REDUCED INEQUALITIES

CLIMATE ACTION

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

new ways of working and innovating. The competency model developed will be used to identify gaps between current behaviour and desired behaviour for a specific group. The project experiments with novel ways of conducting evaluation through measuring shifts in perception with qualitative and anecdotal evidence and attempting to measure behaviour change over an extended period of time. It is expected to fully launch in 2021 with a view of scaling across UNHCR operations to build new innovation norms into UNHCR's culture over the coming years.

USING BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE TO INFORM RESEARCH, PROJECTS AND INNOVATION FRAMEWORKS (2018-PRESENT)

UNHCR's Innovation Service has undertaken research into how behavioural science can be used to encourage creativity and innovation, changes in culture, worldviews, and behaviours, and paradigm shifts within the organisation. Each research project includes robust empirical and theoretical findings and a framework for individuals to include insights into their own work. This research has included but is not limited to:

- The Science of Belief: How to Use Values and Worldviews to Build Bridges
- Communicating the Complexity of Displacement in a Changing Climate
- How to Design for Diverse and Gender Inclusive Humanitarian Organisations

RISK COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (2020-PRESENT)

UNHCR's Risk Communications and Community Engagement Working Group pulls together resources from across UNHCR to develop guidance and share learning on how to communicate risks. In light of social distancing, there has been a focus on the adoption and adaptation of digital platforms to ensure that displaced communities have access to key information about COVID-19. BeSci has a critical role to play in risk communication, as UNHCR and partners develop communication interventions to support behaviour change along recommended guidelines (e.g. physical distancing, mask wearing). UNHCR also draws on research from the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network to better understand behavioural drivers and barriers to support public health outcomes.

FUTURE LITERACY AND BESCI IN NORTH MACEDONIA (2019-PRESENT)

UNHCR is piloting anticipatory governance in policy making for the development of a new National Migration Policy. By developing capabilities and mechanisms within government and civil society, the aim is to transition to more forward looking planning and policy making. This includes changing worldviews and norms on planning for the future of the UN, government and work at the operational level. The approach focuses on how human (in) action influences different possible futures and what needs to be done to reach a desired future.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

- **BLOGPOST** Changing Culture by Changing Norms (2020)
- **BLOGPOST** How science can improve communications about refugees and humanitarian innovation (2018)
- **BLOGPOST** Why UNHCR is experimenting with communications (2018)
- **ARTICLE** Communicating Complexity in the Humanitarian Sector (Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2019)

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

UNITAR empowers individuals, governments and organisations through knowledge and learning to effectively overcome contemporary global challenges.

UNITAR is committed to facilitating broader education and understanding of human behaviour and the role human behaviour plays in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. UNITAR regularly organises or contributes to seminars and events on BeSci, which typically centre around one key theme and how BeSci can be applied to it. Past themes include climate change and preventing violent extremism.

KEY PROJECTS

BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDG13: CLIMATE ACTION (2017)

This session focused on raising awareness of BeSci and its applications toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, building an understanding of BeSci tools, and practical applications of BeSci specific to SDG 13: Climate Action. The event emphasised the importance of BeSci in an interdisciplinary context to address complex issues and included discussion on the implementation of behaviourally-informed policies like encouraging water conservation.

UN BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS DAY (2018)

Hosted in collaboration with UNDP, UN Women, and UNICEF, this session focused on how to strategically implement BeSci into UN policies and programmes and acknowledged the social and behavioural changes needed globally to achieve the SDGs. This session featured a discussion with Professor Dan Ariely and raised awareness of key concepts of human decision making, the importance of taking risks and experimenting and fostering growing BeSci momentum at the UN.

BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE AND SPORTS - PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (2019)

UNITAR's third session focused on the role sports can play in BeSci application, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the prevention of violent extremism. This session specifically acknowledged the communities, practical skills, and human values that are built by sports and outlined how these assist in the maintenance of peace. This session was part of the inaugural UN Behavioural Insights Week in 2019.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

ESTABLISHMENT OF DIVERSE COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The annual behavioural science events have attracted interest and collaboration from within the UN and beyond.

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

KEY PUBLICATIONS

ARTICLE

UNITAR's Workshop on Behavioural Insights Towards Implementation of SDG 13 on Climate Action (2017)

BLOGPOST

Behavioural Insights and Sports - Preventing Violent Extremism event (2019), including programme, speaker and press coverage.

UN Women

UN Women is dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and works to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

Behaviour change is at the core of UN Women's work and the application of BeSci has recently started to gain momentum across the organisation. UN Women became involved institutionally in BeSci when it co-organised the first UN Behavioural Insights Day in 2018 and took a lead role in the first UN Behavioural Insights Week in 2019. Since then, there has been a strong interest in and support for BeSci across the organisation, including from leadership. However, expertise in this area is still relatively scarce with only a few offices using BeSci principles and methods (especially in Europe and Central Asia, and the Americas and the Caribbean).

Being at an early stage, UN Women has not developed a comprehensive approach towards BeSci yet. However, numerous initiatives are challenging social norms that perpetuate negative gender stereotypes and gender-related discriminatory practices from a behavioural perspective (e.g. norms that normalise violence against women or assign women roles as unpaid household workers). The area of ending violence against women and girls in particular appears to have high potential for using BeSci, specifically around prevention efforts such as making it easier for bystanders to take action.

KEY PROJECTS

TEACHERS TAKING A STANCE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (VAW/DV) IN GEORGIA (2019-PRESENT)

UN Women and the Government of Georgia conducted a study to explore the behavioural barriers behind low rates of reporting of VAW/DV by teachers (who are often 'bystanders' to violence against school-aged girls and women) and identify levers for intervention. The survey generated insights into teachers' attitudes about VAW/DV and social norms revealing that one of the most effective strategies to influence teachers' behaviour was via school principals' authority. Based on this, a pilot intervention trained principals to modify their instructions so that teachers feel mandated and comfortable to report violence. Data on the results will be available by 2021.

NUDGING TOWARD THE USE OF PARENTAL LEAVE FOR SHARED CARE WORK RESPONSIBILITIES (2020-PRESENT)

UN Women, the World Bank and the Government of Uruguay partnered to encourage men to make use of their legislated entitlement to paid paternity leave, with the goal of reducing the gender gap in professional growth while enhancing babies' wellbeing. The project will apply BeSci principles such as availability bias, loss aversion, uncertainty aversion and social norms to address the identified needs for men's access to information about their entitlements and related costs. The project also aims to address gender stereotypes about maternity care, which are preventing men from sharing parental responsibilities. Preliminary research has been completed but implementation is on hold due to COVID-19.

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

FOSTERING WOMEN AND GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN ICT AND STEM IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (2020-2021)

A joint UN Women, UNDP and UNICEF initiative is utilising BeSci to help reduce the digital gender gap in Bosnia and Herzegovina by increasing the participation of girls and women in the ICT sector. The project researched young women and men's choice architecture around education and career paths in ICT/STEM fields (science, technology, engineering & math), identifying motivational and socio-cultural factors and self-efficacy beliefs as influencing drivers. Building on this, the project plans to produce interventions based on identified behavioural patterns and serve as a knowledge base for further programming in the fields of women's education and economic empowerment. The interventions will focus on addressing key behavioural constraints of community members who are influential (e.g. peers, parents and teachers) and exposing children to alternative behaviours and social norms. They will also stimulate women and girls' interest in and self-efficacy on ICT via positive emotional experiences.

UNDERSTANDING 'POSITIVE DEVIANT' POLICE OFFICERS TO PROTECT MORE WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IN MOLDOVA (2017-2021)

In Moldova, UN Women conducted a study about police officers' use of emergency restrictions orders in cases of violence against women. Police officers' decisions are critical as they are often among the first with whom a victim of violence interacts if she decides to report the incident, and thus the officers' decisions can have a great impact on women's safety. Applying a 'positive deviant' approach, the project identified the officers who did apply these orders and analysed the individual, environmental and social factors influencing their behaviour. The findings of the study will be used to inform upcoming curricula for law enforcement personnel, which will be conducted in collaboration with identified "positive deviant" officers.

REDUCING VIOLENCE THROUGH VIRTUAL REALITY (2019-PRESENT)

In Moldova, a series of co-creation workshops have identified behaviours that are critical for preventing harassment and violence against women by promoting healthier relationships and higher levels of bystanders' intervention. A virtual reality movie (based in a 'positive deviant' approach) has been developed to help young men and women unpack the gendered identity and social norms that influence their attitudes and behaviours, differentiate harassment from flirting and encourage bystanders to act. The hypothesis to be tested is whether certain knowledge about harassment and more empathy can lead to a change in behaviours.

BEHAVIOURAL MAP TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN (2020-PRESENT)

UN Women is conducting a review of the BeSci literature on how to engage men to take action to prevent violence against women and girls in the Americas and the Caribbean. Based on this, a behavioural map will be developed to guide the design of future interventions.


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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Most of UN Women's BeSci initiatives are ongoing and require more time to yield results. Current achievements are mostly related to the findings of initial research and studies, on which interventions are based. In addition, many are on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

World Bank Group

The five institutions of the World Bank Group are among the world's largest sources of funding and knowledge for developing countries and committed to reducing poverty, increasing shared prosperity, and promoting sustainable development.

The Mind, Behavior, and Development Unit (eMBeD) is the World Bank's BeSci team and seeks to embed BeSci in the Bank's development interventions to increase their effectiveness and efficiency, expand the policy design toolkit, and identify and remove barriers to the achievement of programmes and policies goals.

Formed in 2017, eMBeD works closely with World Bank project teams, governments, and other partners to diagnose, design, and evaluate behaviourally informed interventions across all areas of the World Bank. The team integrated BeSci at multiple stages of Bank operations, providing full-scale integration of BeSci via randomised controlled trials, advisory services, training and more.

Staff at the World Bank have been incorporating BeSci – in the form of designing projects that incorporate an understanding of how programme design might impact human behaviour – since the focus on anthropology appeared at the Bank in the 1990s. The publication of the 2015 World Development Report on Mind, Society, and Behaviour solidified the Bank's view of BeSci value to development policies by both including BeSci into policy design and implementation. Along with eMBeD, other teams are also applying BeSci in their work. eMBeD plans to continue expanding on existing partnership agreements and engagements, exploring new project opportunities, and improving the effectiveness of World Bank efforts through a behavioural lens.

Opportunities include building the capacity of government partners to embed BeSci in policy; piloting innovative policy tools to reduce biases and improve outcomes for citizens; improving social stability and social cohesion, as well as expanding our public goods on results and processes. One of the team's core new areas for development is the integration of BeSci to improve policy maker decisions, through a variety of tools, games, and training.

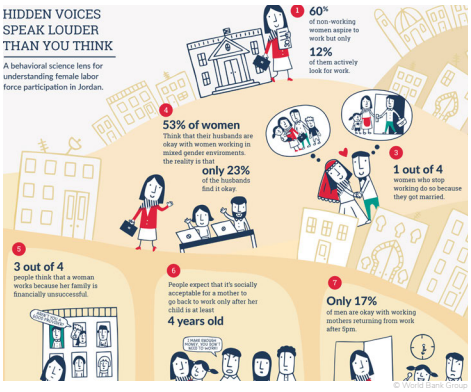
KEY PROJECTS

IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO MATERNAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH ACCESS (2019-PRESENT)

In Haiti, low rates of prenatal and postnatal care, and institutional births, are contributing factors to high maternal and neonatal mortality rates. In an effort to provide actionable ideas to reduce mortality rates, eMBeD sought to identify structural and behavioural barriers preventing women from attending prenatal care visits, and from delivering at a health institution. The next phase of the project will encourage pregnant women to be screened and monitored with behaviourally informed pregnancy risk messages.

USING ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION TO IMPROVE LITERACY (2016-PRESENT)

In 2016, the World Bank's Development Impact and Evaluation (DIME) launched this programme to explore the use of entertainment media designed to change perceptions of social norms, achieve adoption, and sustain healthier behaviours at scale. The DIME programme is launching a series of experimental evaluations of games, apps and digital books aimed at improving self-efficacy and literacy outcomes among vulnerable populations in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.



IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AMONG REFUGEES AND JORDANIAN NATIONALS (2018-2020)

Female labour market participation is low in Jordan and has recently dropped to 13 percent. The project systematically measured social norms and cultural beliefs to better identify barriers to increased participation. eMBeD is supporting the Government of Jordan to incorporate the findings and recommendations in upcoming communication campaigns promoting women's economic empowerment.

IMPROVING NUTRITION OUTCOMES IN INDIA, BANGLADESH, AND RWANDA (2018-PRESENT)

eMBeD is working in India, Bangladesh, and Rwanda to improve complementary feeding and dietary diversity for small children, maternal and lactating women and improve delivery by front-line workers of nutrition tracking, advice and monitoring. This work focuses on male engagement (i.e. involving fathers in nutrition decisions), and the use of food tracking and growth monitoring tools to improve understanding and identification of stunting.

INCREASING TAX COMPLIANCE IN MULTIPLE COUNTRY CONTEXTS (2016-PRESENT)

BeSci has long informed tax policy by employing social norms cues to increase payment compliance (e.g. for example, by telling people that others have paid, leading to them to increase tax compliance by way of such comparison). The World Bank partnered with the tax authorities of Poland, Latvia, Kosovo and Indonesia to test how behaviourally-driven solutions can improve tax declaration and payment rates, enhance a tax authority's processes, and ultimately increase government revenues. Similar efforts were carried out in Guatemala and Costa Rica.

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

IMPROVING TAX COMPLIANCE

In Poland, a World Bank trial found that using punitive language increased tax compliance by 210.8 percent and peer comparisons measures increased tax compliance by 20.8 percent more than the control. If the best-performing communication had been sent to all taxpayers covered by the trial, the Polish Tax Authority would have generated 56 percent more in revenues. To date, this work has been carried out in Guatemala, Costa Rica, Kosovo, and Latvia.

GROWTH MINDSET INTERVENTIONS HAVE DEMONSTRATED IMPACT ON INCREASING STUDENT EFFORT AND TEST SCORES

In Peru, an intervention led to a 0.14 standard deviation increase in math test scores, equivalent to four months of schooling, at a cost of less than $0.20 per student. eMBeD reached 50,000 students in an initial phase, and an additional 250,000 subsequently. Replicated interventions in South Africa and Indonesia have had similarly promising results.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

REPORT
World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior (2015)

BRIEF
Behavioral Sciences to Protect Human Capital Investments During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic (2020)

BRIEF AND REPORT
Improving Student Outcomes for Only Twenty Cents; The Power of Believing You Can Get Smarter: The Impact of a Growth-Mindset Intervention on Academic Achievement in Peru (2020)

RESOURCE
Behavioral Science Around the World: A Profile of 10 Countries (2018)

RESOURCE
Behavioral Insights for Tax Compliance (2019)

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World Food Programme (WFP)

WFP is the leading humanitarian organisation saving lives and changing lives, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.

WFP is exploring how behavioural science tools can be used to increase the organisation's impact across the globe. WFP is using behavioural science in the development of behaviour change programmes to, for example, lower rates of diarrheal disease, improve nutrition outcomes and to promote the adoption of improved farming methods among smallholder farmers. Further areas of application for BeSci could include projects focusing on preventing stunting (such as by promoting the adoption of new behaviours like adding micronutrient powder into foods during home fortification) and encouraging breastfeeding.

To date, WFP has considered employing elements in its Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) programming. Healthy and nutrition education training motivates individuals to change behaviour and lead healthier lives.

KEY PROJECTS

APPLYING BESCI TO INCREASE HAND-WASHING IN TAJIKISTAN (2019-ONGOING)

Handwashing is critical to reduce the spread of diseases, including COVID-19 and diarrheal disease. Family interviews in Tajikistan found that all family members knew that they should wash their hands with soap and water, but household observations showed that most adults and children only used water and yet believed themselves to be excellent hand washers. WFP Tajikistan, supported by the WFP Regional Bureau Cairo, developed a series of behavioural interventions in early 2020 to support good hand hygiene within households, create new habit cues, and encourage social commitment.

- Making germs visible: The interventions focused on re-programming the existing habit (to wash hands with water only) by making germs visible using UV scanners.
- Encouraging social commitments: Family pledges were used to encourage social commitments, with an emphasis on altruism as family members promised to protect each other.

© WFP

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

ZERO HUNGER

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- Nudges: Mirrors were placed above wash basins and signs were displayed on the back of toilet doors and by cooking areas, reminding people to wash their hands with soap. In some places, footprints were painted for children to follow to the sink.

ENCOURAGING HEALTHY EATING IN PALESTINE (2019-ONGOING)

50% of families have extremely low levels of essential minerals and vitamins, resulting in high rates anaemia and other micro-nutrient deficiencies. To tackle the issue and encourage women to eat healthier, iron-rich diets, past efforts have focused mainly on health education. WFP has developed interventions with a greater focus on social norms, cognitive biases, and decision-making environments to explore how they impact dietary behaviours and choices. Based on insights from formative research, an Action Plan was developed with interventions at individual, household, community, institutional and government/policy level. The bold and humorous campaign challenges social norms, creates a sense of urgency to change, and aims to increase self-efficacy and depict good nutrition as a way to help children achieve their 'firsts' (e.g. first word, first step). Working with local comics, the campaign uses fun spoofs to challenge myths and misunderstandings around certain foods.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

INCREASING HANDWASHING

A quasi-experimental pilot study was conducted to compare the different behavioural interventions to encourage more handwashing. Significant positive changes were observed in the villages where the full intervention mix was implemented compared to the control group: before 30 percent of respondents always washed their hands with soap before eating, afterwards the intervention, 80 percent did.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

BLOG
Healthy diets for healthy lives (2021)

World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO seeks to achieve better health for everyone, everywhere, and works to direct and coordinate international health within the UN system.

In 2020, the WHO created a Behavioural Insights and Sciences unit to harmonise and mainstream the use of behavioural and social sciences and insights into the organisation's work. The overarching objective is to improve the way in which policies and programmes are planned and designed through the systematic use of social and behavioural sciences. It is guided by the principle that behavioural evidence should complement biomedical and epidemiological evidence to inform health policies and programmes.

Behavioural and social sciences are being piloted and applied across a variety of topics and teams mainly by social scientists embedded in topic-specific teams across the organisation. The approaches include capacity building, project design and implementation, research, development of tools and normative work. Among others, behavioural and social sciences are being applied to emergencies (incl. COVID-19), management of infodemics, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, antimicrobial resistance, immunisation and digital health.

The WHO has established a Technical Advisory Group (TAG), which provides expert advice on mainstreaming BeSci through the organisation's operations and supports technical teams on specific health topics. In addition, the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Western Pacific Office established a dedicated stream of work in behavioural and cultural insights for health and health communication, respectively.

KEY PROJECTS

REFRAMING HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOTHERS (2016)

The WHO reframed antenatal care and childbirth recommendations in a positive way (rather than clinically and with technical language) to increase acceptance and uptake of recommended maternal care and childbirth interventions. It is based on women's perceptions, attitudes, and values, and designed to address challenges such as anxiety and fears, a lack of clarity on information provided by health professionals, social norms around childbirth, and the perceptions of over-medicalisation.

SHAPING POSITIVE IMMUNISATION EXPERIENCES TO INCREASE ACCEPTANCE AND DEMAND FOR VACCINATION (2020)

The WHO uses BeSci to restructure conversations between health workers and parents hesitant to vaccinate their children. To guide national policy, planning, and tracking of trends, a globally standardised survey is being developed to help member states measure the behavioural and social drivers of childhood vaccination uptake.

SDGS WITH MOST POTENTIAL FOR APPLYING BESCI

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Related efforts include implementing quality and people-centred vaccination services, strengthening pro-vaccine social norms, and building resilience against misinformation.

USING BESCI TO IMPROVE LIFELONG LEARNING (2020)

WHO's Academy has been exploring how to integrate behavioural concepts into the design of its operations and piloted the use of BeSci concepts into selected course prototypes. Based on a review of findings, eight BeSci principles were identified, which will be included into the academy's strategy and work.

COVID-19 RELATED WORK (2020-PRESENT)

COVID-19 related work (2020-present): WHO has applied BeSci to a variety of initiatives to support the COVID-19 response:

- The WHO Regional Office for Europe developed a Behavioural Insights Survey tool which has been used for regular collection of behavioural data in 25 Member States within the region and beyond since March 2020. This tool was adapted to the African region and tested and piloted in two countries, Nigeria and Zambia where it allowed to identify key barriers to be addressed with behaviourally informed interventions.
- Through the Collective Service, WHO, UNICEF and IFRC are collaborating to review behavioural and social data from various publicly available sources. The data are aggregated and interpreted based on UNICEF's behavioural drivers model framework. The objective is to ensure that communications and operational approaches of the three organisations are closely aligned with people's perceptions, capacities and needs.
- WHO's Western Pacific Office is focusing on capacity building for the creation of social listening systems (i.e. the monitoring of publicly available social media channels). Behavioural and perception data are used to inform communication strategies and support decision-making of the COVID-19 response. Behavioural design is also being integrated in the design of COVID-19 campaigns.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

★ LAUNCHING THE TAILORING IMMUNISATION PROGRAMMES APPROACH

WHO's Regional Office in Europe developed the Tailoring Immunisation Programmes (TIP) approach and is supporting its global implementation. In Kyrgyzstan, TIP research identified an overlooked legislative barrier that prevents internal migrants from accessing vaccinations: internal migrants needed a residence permit to register at health facilities, but permits were not always easy to obtain. To resolve this, a new Ministerial Order was adopted clarifying the right to vaccination of all citizens regardless of residence. Early indications of an increase in vaccination uptake among the most vulnerable migrants have now been noted.

★ COMBATTING HEARING LOSS

WHO and ITU developed the global standard for safe listening devices to reduce the risk of noise-induced hearing loss through personal devices. Insights gathered via a survey and focus groups assessed users' response towards the proposed messaging. Based on this, WHO recommended the inclusion of default features (e.g. volume limit) on audio devices. Leveraging a data sharing agreement with the private sector, WHO will analyse data to improve its understanding of people's listening behaviours and the feasibility of safe listening recommendations, policies and practice.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

REPORT
Behavioural considerations for acceptance and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines (2020)

RESOURCES
Guidance document on Tailoring Immunisation Programmes (2019)

RESOURCE
WHO tool for behavioural insights on COVID-19 (2020)

UN INNOVATION NETWORK

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