BIRDLAB
BEHAVIORAL INSIGHTS RESEARCH AND DESIGN

Understanding how humans think and act is essential to improve people's lives. Insights from the social and behavioral sciences help identify and encourage decisions and habits that will secure a better future for all children. That's why we created the **Behavioral Insights Research and Design Laboratory: the BIRD Lab.**

The BIRD Lab is **an inclusive and collaborative space for UNICEF staff and partners** to share experiences, connect with colleagues and inspire others using experimentation and innovation in the application of behavioral science. In this community, we work to build evidence and scale methodology to achieve meaningful and measurable results for children.

The BIRD Lab at UNICEF

The BIRD Lab comprises a network of UNICEF Headquarters, Regional and Country Offices, with support staff in seven regions and members in over 20 country offices. The BIRD Lab currently supports 18 active country projects, with new projects coming online every month. Examples of work can be seen on this map.

Current work

Nutrition
Burkina Faso, Fiji, Mozambique

Early childhood development
Cambodia, Montenegro

Adolescent empowerment
Jordan

Sexual and reproductive health and rights
Ghana

Social protection
Montenegro

Gender equality
Georgia, Nigeria

Immunization
Fiji, Georgia, India, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Mali, Montenegro, Nepal, Nigeria, North Macedonia

Heath
Ethiopia (Primary health), Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, South Sudan (Polio eradication)

Visit The BIRD Lab website to learn more about what we do.

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for every child

What we do
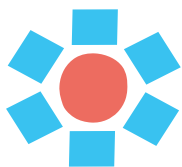
Convening **policy makers**, **academics** and **learners** to bring evidence to bear on the most pressing challenges facing children.

Sharing **trainings** and **tools** for ethically integrating behavioral insights into UNICEF programming.

Providing **technical assistance** and **building capacity** to support the co-creation and scale-up of contextualized, people-centered and evidence-informed approaches to social and behavioral change.

Why behavioral science?

Behavioral science explores how people think, decide, and act. It is grounded in evidence and uses experimental methods that contribute to innovative and people-centric approaches to understand, design, and implement practices to improve lives. Behavioral science draws from multiple disciplines—such as psychology, cognitive science, social science, and economics—to understand how our innate human traits and the context we live in shape behaviours.

Why do we reach for unhealthy snacks when on a diet, put off HIV or STI testing, or fail to save for unexpected needs? Those are examples of the mysteries that the field of behavioral science seeks to observe, understand, and influence.

Among other tools, the BIRD Lab draws on the methodological steps outlined in the **DEPTHS approach:**

Define: We carefully define the overall problem and specific behaviours we are working to address.

Explore: We use research and data to understand the sociocultural, environmental, and psychological factors at play.

Prototype: We use human-centered design methods to co-create potential solutions directly with the people who will use them.

Test Hypotheses: We use implementation research and experimental methods to iteratively trial and adapt interventions in context.

Scale: We solve with a systems lens, scaling by learning and learning by scaling.

What does behavioral science tell us?

System 1/ System 2 thinking: Humans have two ways of thinking: System 1 thinking is essential to our survival, wired by millenia of evolution to allow us to make decisions quickly. System 2 thinking drives our more slower, more deliberate, and conscious thinking[1]. To achieve behaviour change in the real world, we need to understand where our System 1 is leading us, and how we can make environments conducive to better decisions.

[1] (Kahneman 2011)

System 1	System 2
Fast	Slow
Unconscious	Conscious
Automatic	Effortful
Everday Decisions	Complex Decisions
Error Prone	Reliable

The EAST model: There are many models and frameworks we can use when designing for behaviour change. For example, some of the most impactful interventions attempt to make the desired behaviour[2]:

Easy: decreasing effort involved in behavior change makes action more likely.

Attractive: making information or messaging distinct, attention grabbing, or rewarding.

Social: understanding that people care a great deal what others are doing and look to people in their social network for cues about how to behave.

Timely: timing interventions or calls to action to take place when people will be most receptive and able to act on the prompt.

[2] EAST- Four simple ways to apply behavioral insights, behavioral Insights Team

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