Understand

Learn the fundamental SBC principles and approaches.

The Fundamentals of SBC

SBC programmatic approaches

Understand
The Fundamentals of SBC

Why Do People Do What they Do?

Understanding human behaviours and
social phenomena

Introduction

Consider a community with near-universal open
defecation rates. The issue is not a lack of toilets–after
researching locations, many were recently built and
placed in high-traffic areas. Men, women and children
pass these well-lit, centrally-located toilets on their way
to work and school, and en route to fetch water. Many
would rather walk 35 minutes to a well-known, isolated
open defecation location to relieve themselves.

This daily decision, made by a vast majority of
community members for generations, has contributed
to countless deaths from diarrhoea, cholera, intestinal
worms, trachoma and many other diseases. This decision
also increases the risk of sexual assault for women
travelling to these isolated sites. In the following section
we'll explore how an SBC approach can help us uncover
some of the hidden drivers of this behaviour, enabling us
to support and stimulate positive change.

Studies estimate that people make over 35,000
decisions a day. Each individual decision has ripple
effects on others, from loved ones – children, spouses,
family members, friends – to community members –
neighbours, teachers, friends and peers – to society
at large. Environmental, social and political dynamics
influence the decisions we make and these dynamics are
influenced by those decisions. By understanding what
informs individual and collective decision-making, we
can support people to make healthy, positive choices
for themselves and for broader society. When we
understand the drivers of behaviour, we can support
policymakers and development practitioners to design
strategies that enable positive decision-making.

Why SBC?

Let's return to our open defecation challenge. Social
and behavioural analyses would reveal that for this
community, the practice of open-defecation is a habit

carried out over generations. Habits are hard to break, especially when attached to long-held cultural norms. Before toilets were available, the practice of travelling to an open defecation site was paired with the task of fetching water. It was not only convenient to combine tasks, but it also offered a chance for neighbours, friends and family members to spend time together. Traditional beliefs also considered this a healthy choice– walking before relieving oneself was positively perceived.[1] As such, successive generations were raised thinking that this was the right thing to do. Building toilets alone could never disrupt a social tradition built over generations. Open defecation was never going to be solved with toilets alone. It was an individual behavioural challenge supported by generations of community practice and social norms.

Social and Behavioural Science is the study of human behaviour– the investigation of why people– both as individuals and as part of groups– perceive, think and act in particular ways. It seeks to explain some of the seemingly strange and irrational things we do, while generating ideas to help people make more positive choices. It underpins each one of UNICEF's strategic priorities. Children are affected by the 35,000 daily decisions of the adults who shape their lives. Mastering the science of human behaviour is essential to supporting environments where children can thrive.

UNICEF's models to understand social and behavioural change

People are diverse and unpredictable. How can we better understand them and even predict what they'll do?

While we are all different, a growing body of research is revealing there are consistencies in human decision-making and behaviour. This research has challenged classical, 'rational' models of behaviour used in economics. Social, historical and cultural contexts, the environment and how mental shortcuts shape everyday decision-making are increasingly informing work in this space. Behavioural Science employs evidence and data from people all over the world to design theories that explain – and ideally predict – how and why people make decisions.

Behavioural theories and models can provide an evidence-based framework, to analyse, design and evaluate work in SBC.

The Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) is UNICEF's foundational model for social and behaviour change.

It highlights the factors that influence both individual and collective human behaviour. These factors are:

- *Policy, society and environment:* the laws, norms and conditions that govern our lives

- *Institutions and services:* the organizations we interact with, the services available to us and our experience of them

- *Community:* our social groups, those who live in a similar geographic area or share some characteristics or interests with us

- *Family and friends:* the people who we interact with on a regular basis

- *Individual:* our own cognitive experience and perceptions

Policy, society and environment
The laws, norms and conditions that govern our lives

Institutions and services
The organizations we interact with, the services available to us and our experience of them

Community
Our social groups, those who live in a similar geographic area or share some characteristics or interests with us

Family and friends
The people who we interact with on a regular basis

Individual
Our own cognitive experience and perceptions

Socio-ecological model (SEM)

1   https://tci.cornell.edu/?blog=ending-open-defecation-my-sanitation-story
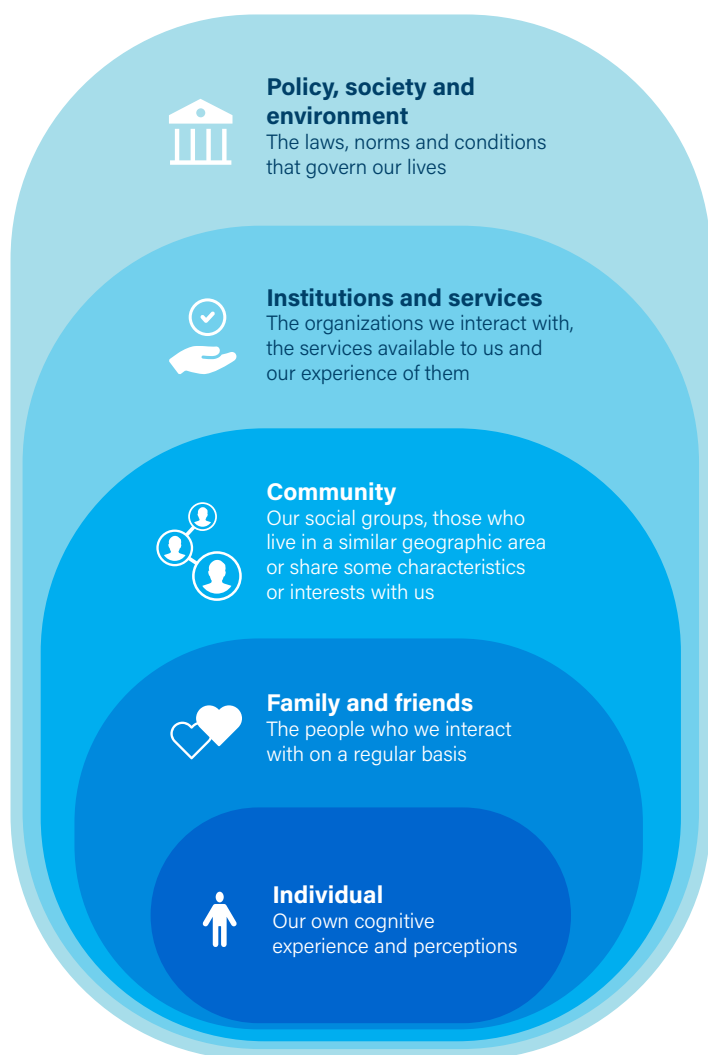
The SEM provides an individual, social and systemic lens through which to ensure that all research, strategies and programmes account for these key levels of influence.

Behavioural drivers model (BDM)

While the SEM outlines the broader structures that influence behaviour change, it doesn't articulate the specific dynamics at each level. The model does not include the cognitive and social mechanisms that influence us and the specific theories that can be used to drive change. However, there are a number of behavioural models that do. One study identifies over 82 models of behaviour change, focusing solely on the individual.[2] Other behavioural models and theories unpack community-level dynamics, examining the role of social norms and social networks. Behavioural Economics offers various models, heuristics and biases to explain psychological and environmental levers of change. Sectoral disciplines like healthcare draw on models of risk and cost benefit.

The Behavioural Drivers Model aggregates many of these different models to group three important levers of change:

- Psychological

- Social

- Environmental

What drives a behaviour?

PSYCHOLOGY   SOCIOLOGY   ENVIRONMENT
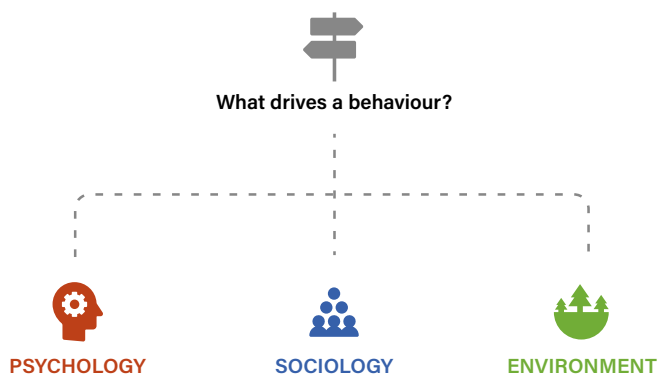
Psychological: this category examines the demographic and social characteristics that make people unique. This includes the beliefs, intentions, perceptions and biases that influence decision-making.

PSYCHOLOGY		
COGNITIVE BIASES	This information on my brain is willing to consider.	
INTEREST	What I want; how appealing change is.	
ATTITUDE	My opinion about a behaviour; how I feel about it.	
SELF-EFFICACY	What I think I can do.	
INTENT	What I plan on doing; what I am ready for.	
LIMITED RATIONALITY	The reason why I don't do what I should	
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS	Who I am.	

Social: this category explores the notion that people are never fully autonomous, by unpacking the effects of social influence and norms. People are heavily influenced by and concerned about the opinions and actions of others. Positive and negative social norms can play a huge role in personal decision-making.

SOCIOLOGY		
SOCIAL INFLUENCE	How others affect what I think, feel and do.	
COMMUNITY DYNAMIC	The group's collective capacity to change.	
META-NORMS	What defines and maintains the stratification, roles and power a society.	

Environmental: this category unpacks the wide range of influences that exist in the space around us. What people hear in public and private discourse can reinforce or challenge what they think. New and emerging viewpoints can be catalysts for alternative ideas. Governments, policies and services can also encourage or discourage certain choices. All of these elements make up the context in which people live and form behaviours.

ENVIRONMENT		
COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT	The information and opinions I can be exposed to.	
SOCIAL INFLUENCE	Those who don't think or behave like the majority; new things out there.	
COMMUNITY DYNAMIC	How institutions influence what I do.	
META-NORMS	Concrete things that prevent me from acting.	
CONTEXT	The context in which I live.	

2   Davis R, Campbell R, Hildon Z, Hobbs L, Michie S. Theories of behaviour and behaviour change across the social and behavioural sciences: a scoping review. Health Psychol Rev. 2015;9(3):323-44. doi: 10.1080/17437199.2014.941722. Epub 2014 Aug 8. PMID: 25104107; PMCID: PMC4566873. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25104107/

It is important to emphasize that the Behavioural Drivers
Model and its components are ecological in nature. The
factors depicted in the BDM can be spread across the
various levels of the SEM.

Policy and systems

Institutional
and societal

Community

Family

Individual

Understanding human behaviour

Behavioural models like the SEM and the BDM explained above are helpful tools for structuring your research. They can help you identify missing gaps in your data landscape, organize your behavioural analysis and pinpoint where investments can have the most impact.

While there are hundreds of models to choose from, many have been generalized to apply to most topics and challenges (for example, the COM-B model mentioned below). Because of this, models need to be adapted to suit your situation. With whatever model you choose for the challenge you face it is vital to test it with real evidence from your context to adjust your assumptions. By doing so, you can ensure the strongest outcome for your unique scenario.

Human behaviour is complicated. To effectively address behavioural challenges, you need to combine tools and insights from an array of disciplines. Collaborating with people and communities throughout the change process is one of many core principles that are critical to ensuring that SBC is as effective as possible.

Below is a list of disciplines you can draw upon to help you understand – and solve – complex behavioural challenges. This list is not exhaustive and should be expanded to suit your need and the evolving nature of the discipline.

Discipline	What it can bring to SBC	Limitations
Psychology	An understanding of the mind and our mental and cognitive processes (referred to as individual drivers of behaviours above).	May not consider the broader environmental or social context.
Social Psychology	An understanding of how human cognitive processes, decisions and behaviour are influenced by social interactions.	Specific to local context.
Anthropology	An approach to research from the perspective of someone within the social group, also known as emic research (its compliment, etic research, considers the perspective of the observer). This approach focuses on holistic life experience, offering social, cultural, and linguistic insights.	Can be time consuming and researchers bring their own particular viewpoints and interpretations.

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Discipline	What it can bring to SBC	Limitations
Sociology	A way to analyse human societies, including social groups, social relations, social organizations and institutions. Although sociologists study what are commonly regarded as social problems such as violence, drug addiction and poverty, they also examine fundamental social processes present in any society: social hierarchy, social networks, social change, conflicts and inequality.	Deals with phenomena which are observed but often cannot be tested through experimentation.
Political Science	An understanding of institutions, policies, practices and relations that govern public life. Political science can also bring important insights about power: how it is acquired and retained in society, and how it can achieve or erode equity and trust.	Focuses primarily on structures, not necessarily people. It can sometimes be overly theoretical unless combined with contemporary history, political analysis and real-world application of policies.
Communications	Key insights into the patterns of interpersonal relationships and how people interact. It also explains the existence, use and effects of different forms of communications (including media) in different social and cultural contexts.	Often mistaken as a tactic to influence people rather than as a field of science.
Behavioural Economics	Theories that shed light on actual human behaviour, which has been proven to be less rational, consistent and selfish than what traditional normative theory suggests. It places a large emphasis on shifting behaviour through structural and contextual changes, as well as small changes that target psychological levers.	The field is undergoing a replication crisis. Many of the experiments that lay the foundation for its theories have recently been called into question for either failing to replicate or for being overly-reliant on samples from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic (WEIRD) countries. This panel discussion from the UK's Behavioural Insights Team can provide further context.
Public Health	A unique tradition of frameworks and models to SBC that can be adapted to other sectors: frameworks like the Health Belief Model and COM-B that explain risk and risk perception, cost-benefit calculations, severity and susceptibility, motivation, etc. Public health brings an important approach to all technical areas that UNICEF works within (Education, WASH, Child Protection, Social Policy, Health and Nutrition, etc.) that each have their own body of knowledge.	The Health Belief Model (HBM), one of the foundational and most commonly cited models in Public Health, is critiqued for being overly simplistic and theoretical, as it assumes people make calculated, rational decisions based on facts presented to them. Behavioural Economics theories can complement the HBM to better integrate and predict real-world behaviour.
Gender Studies	An understanding of gender as a significant factor in familial, social, and economic roles. It helps us identify gender-specific norms and power imbalances that affect decision-making. It also helps us understand the ways gender intersects with other identity markers such as ethnicity, sexuality and class.	Using scientific insights about gender might require careful framing to avoid being dismissed or challenged in conservative and patriarchal contexts.

Core SBC Principles

A systems-oriented, human rights-based, people-centred approach

This Programme Guidance explains the various approaches and provides the necessary tools to help you design SBC initiatives for complex development and humanitarian challenges.

However, creating effective, sustainable, and equitable SBC programming requires much more than a simple understanding of these tools and approaches. To deliver quality SBC, we need to adopt a fundamental mindset. Here, we outline the core principles of UNICEF's mindset for designing SBC programmes that are human rights-based, people-centred and systems-oriented.

Core principles

Our approach is **human rights-based**. The core goal of all UNICEF programmes is to uphold the rights of all children. Strategies should aim to realize the rights of those who are most marginalized, excluded or discriminated against.

Our approach is **people-centred**. People's rights, desires and needs should be placed at the centre of all policies and programmes. People should have a say in their own development. All UNICEF initiatives should be community-led and geared towards enhancing community self-reliance, social justice and participatory decision-making. Community-led development is how we respect and support communities in the process and outcomes of our work.

Our approach is **systems-oriented**. SBC programmes must tackle each challenge holistically. When designing policies and programmes, we must consider the complex relationships between people, services, norms and institutions within a broader community structure, and how each element within the larger system might support or hinder the achievement of our objectives.

Realizing the rights of all people:
A human rights-based approach to SBC

For over two decades, UN agencies have been working towards a human rights-based approach to programming that focuses on realizing the rights of those who are most underserved and marginalized, and seeking to restore and recognize the dignity of these individuals. This approach often requires a detailed analysis of societal and gender norms, discrimination and power imbalances, as well as a reinforcement of the capacities of duty-bearers (usually governments) to respect, protect and guarantee rights.

The core principles of a human rights-based approach include:

Rights fulfilment: Programmes uphold the realization of human rights as the fundamental goal of development and focus primarily on restoring the rights of marginalized and excluded groups.

Local participation and ownership: The development process is owned by communities through participation in the development process, and community ownership is both a means and an explicit goal.

Empowerment: People are recognized as key actors in their own development. Strategies actively seek to empower them.

Evidence: Rigorous research is used to both understand challenges and to monitor and evaluate outcomes. All measurable goals, targets, and indicators throughout the programming are formulated based on human rights standards.
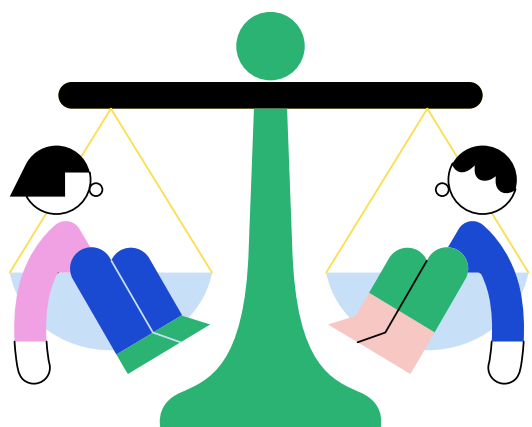
Putting people at the centre:
A people-centred approach to SBC

It seems obvious that people's needs and desires should be central to programme design. However, development initiatives are too often conceived far away from the communities they aim to serve.

The fundamental principles of a people-centred approach include:

Participation: When people get to be agents and leaders in their own development, policies and programmes better reflect the needs and values of the societies they intend to serve. Participatory processes promote self-sufficiency and seek justice by focusing on community perspectives over Western perspectives that could further perpetuate inequitable systems. By collaborating with target groups, we can get a better sense of how one's experiences, priorities, hopes, fears and motivations are shaped by their social, structural and cultural context. Participatory processes, when carried out properly, can also help to prioritize underserved populations, challenge systems of dominance and contribute to intersectional social justice.

Sustainability: Shortsighted development initiatives can lead to natural resource depletion and unsustainable economic practices. Ensuring that communities have a say in their development leads to economic self-reliance and more sustainable communities and ecosystems.

Proper techniques: Principles mean nothing without action. The human-centred design methodology provides an efficient and effective way to place people at the heart

of the design process. Feedback and accountability mechanisms and community engagement processes are also essential to a people-centred practice.

They fail to meaningfully involve individuals as agents of change in their own communities. Thus, the programmes we try to 'create demand' for are often programmes that have not been designed to meet the needs of community members. By taking a people-centred approach, we can work with communities to ensure that policies align with their lived realities. This eliminates the additional steps to "ensure compliance" with interventions and "build trust" with communities because these elements are inherent to a people-centred process. By partnering with civil society institutions, we can make communities feel included in the decisions that impact their lives.
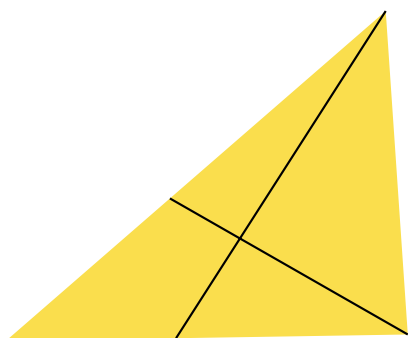
Considering the system as a whole:
A systems thinking approach to SBC

A systems approach encourages programme designers to focus on the interconnectedness of elements within a system. Systems, in our case, could refer to a health system, an education system, or even an entire society. Within these systems there are people, processes, services, institutions, norms and laws. A systems thinking approach is especially critical when tackling complex or wicked problems like climate change, health equity and persistent poverty.

A systems thinking approach forces us to think about the impact of our actions. If we introduce a new service or influence an element of the systems, how will it affect the people we intend to serve? How will it affect others within the community? What are the unintended consequences of our actions? How might each element of the system (laws, social norms, services, relationships) support or limit our objectives and intended impact?
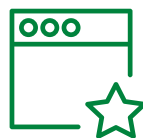
The key principles of systems thinking include:

Interconnectedness: All elements within a system — people, institutions, services — are connected to one another. To carry out large-scale Social and Behaviour Change, we must consider the impact of our programmes on every actor within the system.

Synthesis: We must seek to understand all of the elements that create and further complicate social and development challenges as dynamic, interdependent factors. Understanding these factors as deeply intertwined rather than isolated and discrete may require them to be tackled together.
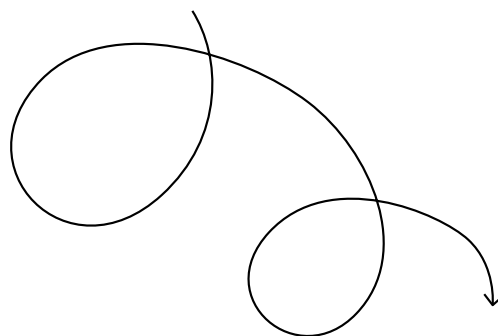
Emergence: A systems thinking approach requires us to understand and describe development outcomes as a cumulative result of changing relationships, systems strengthening, and social and environmental change.

Feedback loops: Elements within a system are interconnected in ways that may reinforce one another. This creates feedback loops that we can observe, learn from and ultimately influence.

Causality: A systems thinking approach sheds light on the causes and effects within a dynamic and evolving system. For each action we take as development practitioners, we must consider not only the immediate, proximal results of that action, but also the future actions it will inspire — otherwise, we risk a plethora of unintended consequences.

Putting it all together

Distinct but overlapping, these three approaches form the basis of UNICEF's mindset for Social and Behaviour Change. In all programmes, we seek to dignify people by placing their rights and needs above all else. We involve people as agents of change rather than passive recipients of services or commodities. We consider the complex, interconnected and dynamic socio-ecological

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When conceptualizing policies and programmes …	When designing activities …	When evaluating impact …
• Involve communities in the identification and prioritization of social and behavioural challenges • Design all aspects of the implementation to be community-led, inclusive and participatory • Ensure that government actors and agencies are positioned as duty-bearers, who exist to support community needs, rather than as the sole decision-makers. Allocate sufficient time and resources to understanding the broader system of contextual drivers and barriers to Social and Behavioural Change • Incorporate monitoring and accountability systems to ensure that policies and programmes do not reinforce inequitable power structures	• Ensure that all activities empower and give agency to the communities and individuals involved • Co-design solutions with communities; ask for input early and often from a diverse range of voices • Prioritize the needs of the most marginalized voices within society • Consider participation and agency as valid outcomes of activities • Aim to build the capacity of local actors to lead the design and implementation process, when possible	• Include agency and empowerment as key outcomes, focusing on underserved populations • Measure systemic and downstream changes as a result of programmes • Seek to capture and report any unintended or negative consequences in a transparent manner • Ensure widespread dissemination of results to all stakeholders (both governments and community structures) • Use qualitative research and storytelling methods to build a deep understanding of the 'why' behind any results

contexts in which people live, including the relationships between people and systems of power or influence. By upholding these principles, we can design programmes that effectively address challenges and build upon existing opportunities holistically.

Putting it into practice

The table above outlines a few actions to keep in mind when conceptualizing policies and programmes, designing activities and evaluating impact, to ensure that all UNICEF SBC initiatives are rights-based, people-centred and systems-oriented.

Development (Aspalter, 2006)

• IDEO Design Thinking

• Human-Centred Design: Accelerating results for every child by design (UNICEF, 2016)

Systems thinking

• A Definition of Systems Thinking: A Systems Approach (Arnold & Wade, 2015)

• Tools for Systems Thinkers: The 6 Fundamental Concepts of Systems Thinking (Acaroglu, 2016)
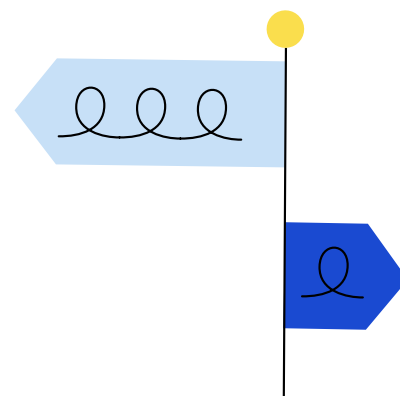
Sources:

Human rights-based approach

• The Human-Rights Based Approach (UNFPA)

• Minimum quality standards and indicators in community engagement (UNICEF)

People-centred approach

• Towards a More People-Centred Paradigm in Social

Understand
SBC programmatic approaches

Supportive Public Policies

Changing the rules to enable positive change

What are Supportive Public Policies, and why are they important?

Any positive results produced by programmes at the individual and community level are difficult to scale and sustain without supportive local, regional or national laws and policies. Sometimes these results are only possible when certain policies are in place. For example, in the education sector, policy regulations set standards to guide schools in terms of human resources, infrastructure, curricula and available technologies, as well as the way children are treated.

Through the use of regulation, legislation, incentives, penalties and public policy, we can achieve programmatic goals, including positive Social and Behaviour Change outcomes. Development stakeholders can play a huge role in creating policies that facilitate positive change, bridging local conditions with national priorities through evidence generation, advocacy, and by empowering citizen and community participation in local governance.

The basics of Supportive Public Policies

Public policies can be thought of as guidelines made by the government or other national or local decision-makers that drive public action. We refer to these policies as 'supportive' when they create an enabling environment for SBC objectives. Supportive policies can be national laws that reduce harmful practices like domestic violence or those that direct more resources to help children, like parenting programmes. Laws that criminalize child labour and support breastfeeding in the workplace also work to protect the dignity, safety and well-being of women, men and children. Supportive policies can reinforce social safety nets for under-

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served families, enforce local governance to empower communities through decision-making roles and establish frameworks to generate data and evidence in support of action planning. Such policies can also keep public officials and departments accountable to the people through laws that regulate public expenditure and key sectors like water and sanitation, environmental health, road safety, tobacco control and food safety.

How can Supportive Public Policies be achieved?

In practice, supportive public policies can be achieved by:

Directly engaging policy-makers. Institutional advocacy can lead to political commitment to change laws, systems and policies that align with the child and human rights agenda, as well as the allocation of resources and support to implement and monitor these changes.

Facilitating citizen and community participation. By implementing tools like public hearings and debates, radio forums, online interactive platforms, citizen engagement and community consultation mechanisms, community members (including children and young people) can be meaningfully involved in the decisions that affect their lives. Engagement at the local, subnational and national level will help to ensure that the needs, interests and concerns of community members influence the development, implementation and evaluation of public policies.

Ensuring accountability of authorities (duty-bearers) to citizens (right-holders) at all levels of the system. Examples of accountability mechanisms include transparent information systems, contractual and partnership arrangements, community feedback processes, and media, influential networks or coalitions. These mechanisms can foster feedback loops and ensure decision-makers are transparent about the reasons behind their decisions and held accountable for delivering on them.

Improving equity of local governance. More equitable governance can be achieved by generating geographically and socially disaggregated data on how children in various communities are faring in terms of health, education, social protection and other key areas. Governments can use that data to allocate funding to benefit the children most in need.

Developing behaviourally-informed public policies. By developing information systems that collect and analyse social and behavioural data, we can advocate for the use of social and behavioural insights to inform policies, programmes and services.

Social and behavioural objectives

Influencing the regulatory environment to support social and individual behaviour change can help attain various objectives:

- The adjustment of government priorities

- Changes to national processes, administrative procedures and systems, guidelines, policies, strategies and programmes

- The re-allocation of resources and funding to priority areas and activities

- Increased public awareness and advocacy for programme priorities and initiatives

- Increased social accountability

- Increased citizen participation in local governance decisions

- Increased social cohesion

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The limits of Supportive Public Policies

The development and implementation of Supportive Public Policies is fully dependent on the authorities in place. Depending on the government(s) in power, national and subnational priorities and views may shift to be less supportive of policies that facilitate positive change. Similarly, such policies may be difficult to achieve in countries where leadership is not clearly defined (e.g., in periods of internal conflict or after a political coup).

Supportive Public Policies cannot drive Social and Behaviour Change alone. Regulations need to align with ongoing work driving Social and Behaviour Change. Without this alignment, a change in public policy can have adverse effects, such as driving harmful practices underground. For example, passing a law that criminalizes a certain behaviour, such as marital rape or child marriage, may not reduce the practice but rather, cause it to disappear from sight. Without engaging communities to incite change at the local level, punitive policies can make certain behaviours even more difficult to detect or to provide relevant care and services.

Case studies and examples

UKRAINE: UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities Initiative resulted in participating municipalities budgeting 50 million USD for child-related activities.

MONGOLIA: UNICEF's Child Friendly Community strategy resulted in priority issues for children being integrated in Khuvsgul province's mid-term development plan. This plan included the creation of children's councils in 18 out of 24 soums in Khuvsgul province to enable the prioritization of children's issues in decision-making.

GHANA: A comparative assessment index developed through a partnership between UNICEF Ghana, the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development, the University of Ghana, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Office of the Head of Local Government Service informed both district-level and national policy dialogue and decision-making.

NEPAL: The Nepalese government declared public hearings mandatory for all local bodies and included public hearings in the government's service guidelines.

THE DRC: The use of social accountability community scorecards in Tuungane resulted in better government service delivery due to increased involvement of health and education user committees in the management of services, improvements in staff attendance and technical capacities and a reduction in barriers to accessing services.

BURKINA FASO: UNICEF supported the development of a Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) in the education sector, which resulted in the strengthening of local authority capacities and citizen participation, showing positive effects on the quality of public financial management and supplies, materials and infrastructure for the primary education sector.

VIET NAM: A multisectoral National Traffic Safety Committee established in 1997 led the development, implementation and monitoring of a motorcycle helmet law in 2007, resulting in a significant increase in helmet usage and decrease in road traffic deaths.

FIJI: As part of its commitment to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, Fiji amended its tobacco control laws in 2010 and 2012, establishing a tobacco control enforcement unit. This unit has helped to eliminate the illicit trade of tobacco and increase the capacity of nurses and other health staff to implement tobacco cessation interventions in primary health-care centres.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: After ratifying the Beijing Platform for Action, the government was obliged to normalize gender perspectives through its policies and programmes, resulting in the adoption of a health sector gender policy in 2013.

Key principles

1. **Advocate for public policies that protect the rights of children**. UNICEF and other key stakeholders must advocate for national and local laws to be passed that support children in reaching their full potential. This starts with making sure their basic needs are being met. Policies should support Social and Behaviour Change interventions on the ground that will service these goals, such as policies around inclusion of girls in the classroom as well as the promotion of maternity and paternity leave.

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2. **Shape Supportive Public Policies by understanding how national decisions are made**. UNICEF and other key stakeholders that undertake activities with the goal of influencing policy decisions must have an adequate understanding of how these decisions are made. Being knowledgeable about the national government, its regulatory processes, and what existing policies are effectively supporting SBC objectives is vital to advocating for more Supportive Public Policies.

3. **Empower civil society and communities to influence decision-making and hold governments accountable**. UNICEF and other key stakeholders can generate interest and build capacity of governments to solicit community perspectives in their decision-making processes. Providing tools and mechanisms for communities to contribute can empower individuals to partake in local governance and hold public entities accountable.

4. **Provide local governments with the resources to generate local data and advocate for local priorities with the central government**. UNICEF and other key stakeholders can provide training support to local governments on data collection methodologies and tools. Collecting local data makes it easier to identify local priorities and advocate for them at the national level.

More information

- UNICEF Local Governance Programming Guidance

- UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities Initiative

- The ASK Approach to advocacy

- Child-focused Public Expenditure Measurement: A Compendium of Country Initiatives

- Child Participation in Local Governance: A UNICEF Guidance Note

- Getting Started with Policy Co-Design by The British Council

- Policy briefs on local governance and public finance:
  - Cover Note
  - Improving Budget Performance
  - Putting Data to Work for Children
  - Budget Transparency
  - Upgrading Public Finance Management Capacity
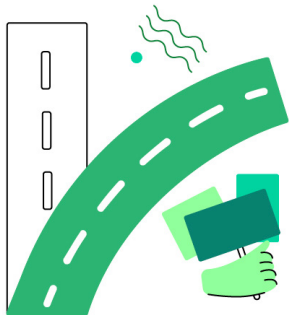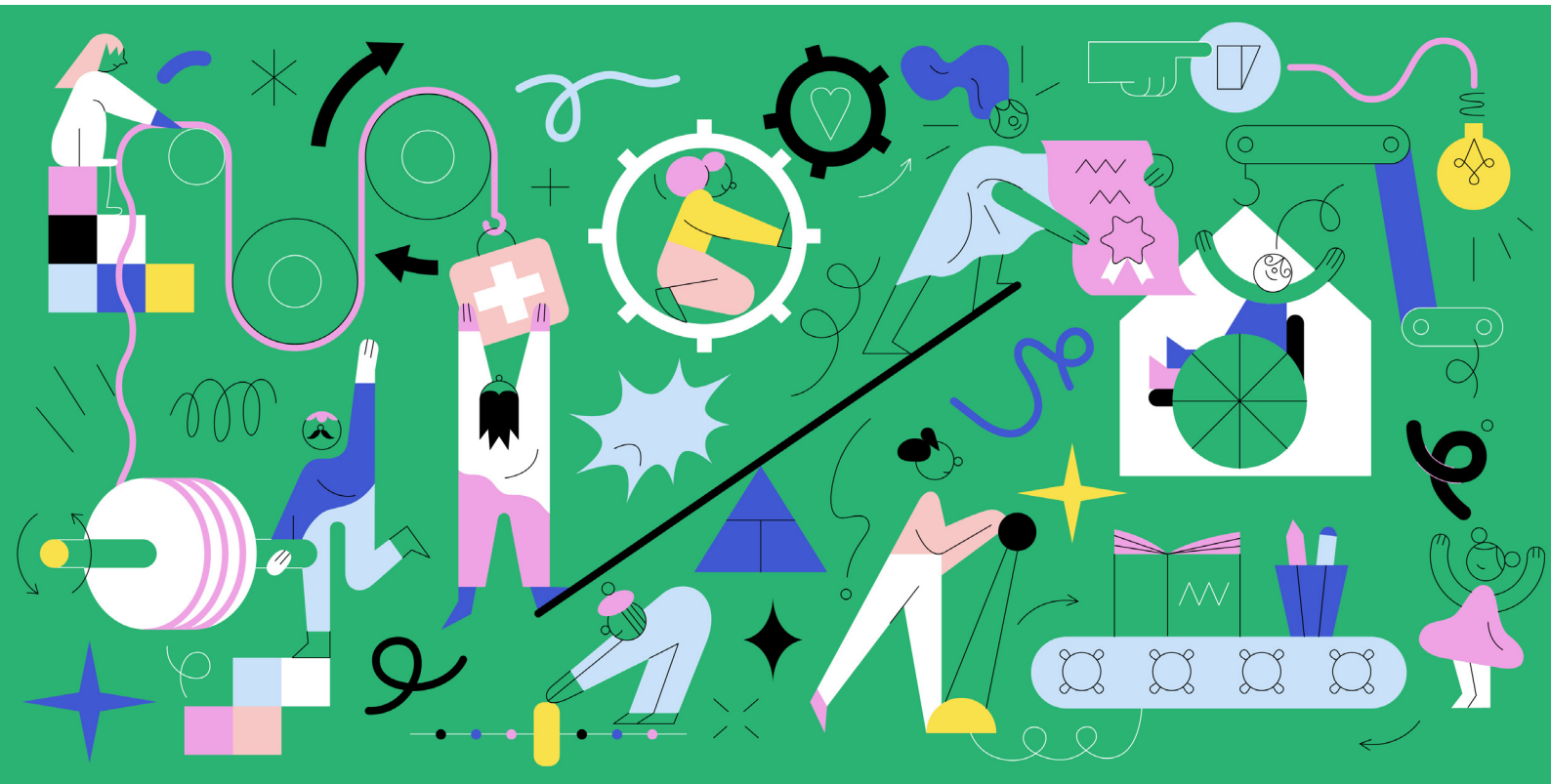
Social Movements

Supporting and nurturing social change processes

What are social movements, and why are they important?

Social movements are joint efforts by citizens, groups and communities bound by similar goals who organize themselves to act and overcome their condition, tackle social issues together or resist domination. Social movements represent more intense and visible moments in a continuous social change process: the pace accelerates and the scale increases as the initial group generates more debates and rallies more people, in a snowball effect nurtured by activism, dialogue, networking, mobilization, media engagement and action.

Social movements are the core of social change. Famous historical efforts include the US civil rights movement, the women's suffrage movement, the anti-apartheid movement, gay rights and broader LGBTQ movements, decolonization movements, the Arab Spring, Black Lives Matter, Global Citizen and the MeToo movement. And beyond these global and national processes, subnational and local movements form and evolve constantly.

In the cooperation industry, Community Engagement is frequently conceived as a deliberate effort which originates from duty bearers. It often relates to specific initiatives put in place and led by development organizations and public governance bodies. Social movements, in contrast, emerge and grow organically from people's experiences and principles. They often start from shifts in belief systems, unnoticed until a tipping point is reached or an event triggers the movement. They are fundamentally grassroots and aim at systemic change, embodying self-determination, empowerment and people being agents of their own change.

The way our institutions react and respond to these forms of collective action affects their success. It is critical to understand these social phenomena and find ways to work alongside and nurture them, without misrepresenting or co-opting them. This is a thin line to walk. UNICEF, for example, needs to support spontaneous youth activism on climate change, as this movement is critical to creating an environment in which change becomes possible; but the process should remain youth-led.

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Social movements 101

Driving forces and voice

The underlying causes of social movements are often grievances linked to inequalities, injustice and power differentials. The mobilization aims to challenge institutions, systems or social rules.

At the heart of social movements is the idea of expression of those who are disenfranchised. Participation and engagement are ways for people to make their voices heard and bring their own positions in society and experience of life to the forefront of public debate.

Trigger and take-off

The driving forces might be at play for years, but there is often an event which precipitates the action and the change. The so-called Arab Spring started with a Tunisian street vendor who set himself on fire. #MeToo began with the revelations about Harvey Weinstein and Alyssa Milano popularizing the hashtag and subsequent movement. Rosa Parks helped initiate the civil rights movement when she refused a white man her seat on a bus. Shootings at Sharpeville were a turning point of the anti-apartheid movement.

To get off the ground, social movements also need a set of early actions to rally people, inspire and spread the vision (for example, see this report from the Nesta foundation on social movements for health). This includes effective messaging; early collective action; and leveraging initial leaders, members and resources to grow.

Leaders

Social movements can be driven by key actors, both existing figures (such as Mahatma Gandhi) and previously anonymous people who become influential (such as Greta Thunberg and Malala Yousafzai). They usually carry personal stories that connect them to the movement and rise to the moment, building on their actions, skills and capacity to persuade others to join. Their role can take several forms, and as identifiable members of the movements they often act as spokespeople, formulating meaning ('sense-making'), telling stories, articulating demands, representing, advocating and negotiating on behalf of many. This type of leadership usually emerges organically, given the voluntary, dynamic and self-governing nature of these efforts.

Networks and spill-over

Social networks are the architecture and the grid on which social movements are built. Action emerges in groups where people are interconnected and share similar characteristics, activities and world views. Information and engagement spread when these clusters manage to connect through a bridge to other clusters (communities, social groups, etc) where ties are also close. Through these mechanisms, the existing organized movements can drive mass mobilization and grow larger and stronger – the spill-over effect. Communication is at the core of this process (see this issue of the Journal of Communication dedicated to communicative dimensions of social movements).

The network of influences in and around social movements is complex and not limited to direct participants, often involving formal and informal relationships and interactions with institutions and various segments of society.

Social media

The nature of social movements has evolved as the proliferation of the Internet has provided the possibility to overcome gatekeepers and censorship from those controlling the traditional media and communication space. The Internet is used to both mobilize movement members and reach out to new activists. In recent years, movements in various countries (such as Iran's Green Movement) have used Facebook and Twitter to organize and disseminate information on protests, bypass state regulations and restrictions, coordinate meetings and petitions and even mobilize resources. Social media has also been used to bring international attention to local issues, such as repression and imprisonment of political opponents or journalists.

This capacity to communicate quickly with digital tools and overcome geographical and institutional boundaries can help social change efforts spread rapidly with less control from elites, creating online movements with higher spill-over potential. Technology also allows every equipped citizen to become an active creator of communication content, rather than simply a consumer.

Local versus global

These global and national examples help us quickly understand what social movements are, but similar social change processes are happening at neighbourhood, community and subnational levels all across the world. The people most affected by specific issues are gathering, organizing and acting for change; seeking to correct inequities in local governance and investments; working for gender and ethnic diversity among elected officials; halting the destruction of fragile

local habitats; seeking improvements in local schools, transit systems, housing and living conditions; seeking to reverse the local manifestations of discrimination; seeking higher healthcare provisions and standards; and so much more. These local efforts are essential to making progress towards local, national and global development goals.

Key principles

Social movements:

- **Emerge and grow organically from people** – their experiences and principles
- **Focus on challenging and changing the existing norms**, beliefs, institutions or systems that people perceive as working against their collective interests
- **Nurture**, coalesce and grow a diverse set of voices and experiences through dialogue and networking
- **Nurture**, coalesce and grow a diverse set of linked collective actions
- **Seek to create and expand a set of collective actions** focused on the social and policy changes that the people engaged in the movement regard as a priority

What is the role of development institutions?

Social movements are one of the many ways in which social change can happen. Zooming into downstream levels, the line between a local social movement and other community change processes gets blurry. In both cases, success relies on people being collective actors for the change they identify, agree on and want.

Social change is a long-term process, and development institutions can't create social movements. But we can work with partners to understand and nurture the movements that exist and to strengthen the role people themselves can and do play in the creation of a better society, to increase the potential for more endogenous action to emerge.

- Development organizations can nurture social change and social movements by strengthening community and civil society systems, empowering local stakeholders and building capacity to respond at local level to the needs of change: see these tools on community networks, capacity building of CSOs, accountability systems and the broader principles and tools of community engagement.

- Development organizations can also help expand the network of those who can join the movement, rallying more people and supporting coalitions towards the common goal. Additional voices, experiences, skills and supporters can enrich the effort and increase its potential. For help in engaging the right people, see the social mobilization tool.

- Institutions can also leverage a large set of strategies to create conspicuous and purposeful alignment between their actions and the objectives of social actors, while leaving the movement towards change to be activist-led. This includes opening spaces for dialogue and sparking public debate and conversations in order to place issues in the public domain for consideration and action, and eventually policy change. It also includes influencing the communication environment, marketing and entertainment industries so that they don't reinforce negative stereotypes and systems of domination. See the campaigning, partnering with media, partnering with the private sector and edutainment tools, as well as the public policy advocacy approach.

- Without stealing the spotlight from grassroots movements, organizations can support the crafting of engaging narratives and messages that speak to the interests and motivations of specific audiences, to create a sense of urgency and reach beyond the existing scope of a movement. See the storytelling tool for technical guidance.

Objectives

- Facilitate a process of engagement of citizens, communities and organizations in social change
- Facilitate conversation, dialogue and debate on key development issues, from the local to the national level
- Amplify the voices, analysis and ideas of those most affected
- Play a support and enhancement role for emerging social movements
- Help to build networks of people with shared concerns, including by connecting groups and clusters to increase collective power
- Offer accurate information on the development and rights issues in question
- Support policy and systems change

When social movements are not the best approach

Even though supporting people in claiming their rights is a clear objective for development and humanitarian organizations like UNICEF, it remains fundamental to not endanger them. In many contexts across the world, activism can lead to dramatic and, at times, deadly repression. It is the duty of institutions like UNICEF to pursue the fulfilment of rights while ensuring the safety of people and communities. Organizations also need to ask themselves how much their support for certain social movements can reinforce lines of tension within society and across groups, bringing people closer to danger. The best way to anticipate and avoid these pitfalls is by investing in deep analysis, understanding and critical reflection around societies and their power dynamics.

The grassroots nature of a social movement doesn't make it positive by default. The White Power movement, the anti-vax movement, anti-gay movements across the world and the many efforts opposing migrants and other minorities share all the characteristics of social movements but go against the achievement of rights and pursuit of social justice. These can strongly test institutions, requiring them to clarify their position and take a stand.

Finally, even though the Internet and social media have enabled more movements to originate online, the absence of cooperation and collective action in real life or the lack of trusted leaders able to represent and negotiate on a group's behalf can mean that efforts hit a wall and dissolve without achieving tangible change.

Case studies and examples

KENYA Social Movements and SBCC: Tapping into the Strengths of Movements to End FGM: Donors, organizations, and activists in Kenya helped pass the Prohibition of FGM ActAnti FGM Act in 2011, which criminalized FGM and created an oversight and coordination board engaging and amplifying the voices of survivors of FGM in the anti FGM movement

UNITED STATES How ACT-UP changed America: A brief history of the HIV-AIDS grassroots mobilization and fight for rights and equal access to treatment for all in the US

GLOBAL Scaling social movements through social media: The case of Black Lives Matter

SPAIN Communication Activism as a School of Politics: Lessons from Spain's Indignados Movement: Ethnographic research examining some key communication activism practices

UNITED STATES No Fracking Way!: The role played by the documentary *Gasland* in rallying opposition to fracking

US The Social-Psychological Origins of the Montgomery Bus Boycott: Social Interaction and Humiliation in the Emergence of Social Movements: On triggering factors and causes behind movements and momentum

CHINA Wild Public Networks and Affective Movements in China: Environmental Activism, Social Media, and Protest in Maoming: Contemporary environmental protests in Maoming, China

GLOBAL Activist Strategic Communication for Social Change: A Transnational Case Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Activism: A demonstration of how activists function as cultural intermediaries to (re) produce and challenge cultural meaning

More information

- We change the world
- The 3.5% rule: How a small minority can change the world
- How 'Good' Social Movements Can Triumph over 'Bad' Ones
- Social Movement Studies journal
- The psychology of online activism and social movements: Relations between online and offline collective action
- Culture, Power and Institutions: A Multi-Institutional Politics Approach to Social Movements
- Assessing the Explanatory Power of Social Movement Theories across the Life Course of the Civil Rights Movement

Systems Strengthening

Strengthening sectoral systems to achieve SBC objectives

What is Sectoral Systems Strengthening, and why is it important?

Imagine if Apple developed a new product without understanding the capacity of hardware manufacturers, the technological capabilities and limitations facing its target clientele, the needs of software developers, the necessary supply chains and logistics to ship the product efficiently, and the timing of their retail launch. Even if Apple were to develop a game-changing product, it would not be successful if the broader *system* did not support its delivery and uptake.

Similarly, we cannot achieve SBC objectives without equipping the health, education, and child protection systems. We must strengthen these systems to support achievable and sustainable Social and Behavioural Change.

Strong sectoral systems have appropriately selected, trained and engaged human resources, functioning financial systems, transparent and accountable information systems, supportive public policies, and empowered, sustainable community structures to work with. A strong sectoral system offers high-quality services, and strong leadership and governance. They enable programs to reach underserved and high-priority groups, working toward greater equity, dignity, participation and protection from stigma.

Sectoral Systems Strengthening 101

The table below outlines example actions you can take to strengthen for sectoral systems at the policy, service, and community levels.

View the Sectoral Systems Strengthening tool for an overview of how to apply a Systems Strengthening approach to the health sector.

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System component	Example actions		
	Policy	**Service**	**Community**
Build the capacity of human resources	• Improve, implement and maintain HR competency frameworks and capacity development mechanisms • Develop performance monitoring systems for core SBC skills	• Update recruitment practices, such as job TORs, to include core SBC skills • Develop training plans, manuals and tools to build SBC capacity in HR	• Build a social service workforce and hire community workers who reflect community diversity and culture • Provide supervision and incentives to empower community workers, such as opportunities for recognition • Tailor capacity-building programmes for civil society partners
Ensure high-quality, people-centred service delivery	• Strengthen or build partnerships that can mobilize a broad range of civil society stakeholders • Develop public policies that work to engage people and communities in service design, management and improvement	• Create feedback and social accountability mechanisms for sub-regional, district, community, and village services • Increase community participation in decision-making • Develop coordination mechanisms across and between sectors	• Improve the skills of frontline workers to support better supply of social services, increasing the demand for such services • Empower Individuals, families and communities to engage with service design and delivery mechanisms
Build or maintain transparent information systems and technologies	• Develop and maintain publicly accessible and transparent information systems to hold decision-makers accountable • Develop motivations and incentives for transparent Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) • Ensure information flows are interoperable • Advocate for the collection and use of social and behavioural data in information systems	• Improve capacity of HR to collect and use social and behavioural data • Ensure human resource capacity for evidence-based planning, budgeting, supervision and monitoring of priority interventions • Integrate data collection, analysis and utilization approaches / systems into project design, planning and implementation	• Develop community monitoring mechanisms • Ensure that feedback loops benefit communities
Strengthen supportive institutions, governance and leadership	• Hire SBC specialists to join central-level teams • Implement 'Leadership for SBC' into regular training for policy-makers and programme managers • Develop budget lines for SBC • Create behavioural insights units to support and guide the government	• Hire SBC specialists (sociologists, anthropologists) to join sub-regional-level teams • Create multidisciplinary teams • Establish alliances of SBC professionals to serve as advisory bodies, to support the core team	

System component	Example actions		
	Policy	Service	Community
Support system financing	▪ Enhance operational guidance for planning, costing and expenditure tracking in public sector systems ▪ Increase public and private domestic resources towards humanitarian and development goals ▪ Catalyse and incentivize investment in sectors through shared value creation / public-private partnerships ▪ Promote equity-based financing instead of using a blanket approach (e.g., focusing on districts or provinces with poor child survival indicators)	▪ Provide, where relevant, financial incentives for appropriate behaviours ▪ Issue timely, clear and practical operational guidelines with budget allocations	
Strengthen community structures	▪ Align community engagement approaches with government frameworks, policies, strategies and operational guidance ▪ Advocate for the development of strategies that enforce community-level voices in government decision-making ▪ Support the development of a partners coordination platform to optimize community engagement interventions	▪ Implement processes that ensure meaningful participation and representation of community diversity in design, implementation and tracking of progress ▪ Map and engage local partner organizations, traditional leaders and influencers during the planning and preparation of interventions	▪ Ensure that marginalized groups are identified and mechanisms for inclusion are implemented, such as two-way communication and broader feedback ▪ Foster new leadership and diverse voices in decision-making to reduce community power inequalities ▪ Help communities know and claim their rights ▪ Foster integration of siloed engagement projects
Enhance public policies	▪ Advocate for political commitment, resource allocation, laws, regulations and systems to achieve SBC objectives	▪ Ensure local government budgets are equitable and allocate funds to benefit the children and communities most in need ▪ Enhance service delivery and coordination by partnering with the private sector and civil society	▪ Develop capacity, knowledge and platforms for underserved communities to influence public policy design

View the Health Systems Strengthening tool for an overview of how to apply a Systems Strengthening approach to the health sector.

Objectives

- **Improving sectoral capacity to diagnose problems and make effective decisions:** by strengthening information systems to collect, analyse and interpret social and behavioural data from community to central levels.

- **Increasing uptake of protective/preventive services and practices:** by implementing high-quality services that incentivizes good behavioural practices (such as healthy lifestyles, positive discipline, handwashing) and motivates people to visit and return (in schools and health clinics, for example).

- **Strengthening accountability and governance:** by encouraging transparent information systems and community feedback processes, and involving the media and influential networks or coalitions to hold decision-makers accountable.

- **Focusing on equity:** through pro-poor service provision, identifying underserved communities, and monitoring and evaluating programmes for equitable practices.

- **Building resilient and sustainable communities:** by strengthening traditional community systems to play crucial roles in the prevention and detection of threats, the design and implementation of effective response strategies and sustainable recovery.

- **Strengthening the interactions between duty-bearers and rights-holders:** by improving the quality at the point of service, the capacity of frontline workers and how we empower community committees to be effective partners. After all, the sector is only as strong as the link between the community and wider system. Learn more about Community Systems Strengthening below.

Community Systems Strengthening

Sectoral Systems Strengthening will always be critical to ensuring effective Social and Behaviour Change. This includes Community Systems Strengthening, which can either be part of the overall system or a separate system that interacts with and supports it. For example, increasing social accountability of sectoral systems can improve when community-based organizations and leaders are empowered to represent the most deprived. Community Systems can also be strengthened by facilitating community participation in policy formation, allocating budgets and implementing programmes. Strengthening community systems through investments in community resilience and preparedness, and the capacity of community health workers can greatly improve service quality and emergency response. When

sectoral systems improve, so does the likelihood of Social and Behaviour Change.

Community systems are often wrongly excluded from Sectoral Systems Strengthening. Therefore, it's important that your approach facilitates change from within communities.

Case studies and examples

Just as Apple would be unable to develop a product without the support of the broader system, development and humanitarian programmes cannot achieve SBC objectives without bolstering human resources, people-centred services, technology infrastructure, governance, leadership and financial systems for change. Below are some examples of how this has been done around the world.

- **Building the capacity of human resources and institutions**

  ○ **INDIA** Health system strengthening interventions resulted in a pool of 3,500 master trainers building the IPC capacity of 400,000 frontline workers for the Measles Rubella (MR) campaign, including routine immunization and an $18 million budget.

  ○ **INDIA** Systems strengthening activities have built institutional capacity to support Social and Behaviour Change, enabling the most deprived to access and use WASH services in selected states

  ○ **EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA:** UNICEF and partners developed a training package to incorporate country-specific recommendations regarding social service workforce competencies

  ○ **UZBEKISTAN:** The USWEEP Project systematically explored the strengths, challenges, and way forward for the social service workforce

  ○ **CANADA:** Implementing the Tools of the Mind curriculum, which emphasises play and hands-on learning improved both student executive function and reduced teacher burnout.

- **Community Systems Strengthening**

  ○ **SRI LANKA** The country's community health system, which uses public health midwives to bring health and health education to people's front doors, has enabled 99.1% of children to receive their vaccinations in a timely, people-centred manner, with high quality standards.

  ○ **UGANDA** Strengthening vocational training programmes increased empowerment of adolescent girls.

- **Building/maintaining transparent information systems and technologies**

  ○ **BANGLADESH** Strengthening the routine health information system has connected central, divisional and district levels with sub-district health facilities with over 13,000 community clinics, enabling timely and responsive evidence-based decision-making.

- **Other practical examples**

  ○ **INDIA:** Political commitment, redesigned cash transfer programmes, access to education, and engagement with communities and adolescent girls and boys as change agents led to momentum towards ending child marriage

  ○ **UZBEKISTAN:** UNICEF and Columbia School of Social Work's Social Intervention Group (CSSW) partnered to create the Uzbekistan Social Work Education for Excellence Project (USWEEP) to improve the well-being of vulnerable children and families served by trained social workers and social service professionals conducting social work functions.

Key principles

- Sustainable Social and Behavioural Change is possible when we build the capacity of sectoral systems – such as education, health, child protection and emergency response – to support its achievement.

- Prioritizing the needs of community members strengthens sectoral systems. A strong system either interacts with robust community structures and systems for engagement, or is well integrated with these structures.

- Beyond community structures, other key components to consider for Strengthening Sectoral Systems include financing, institutions and governance, quality service delivery, human resources, information and technology, and supportive public policies.

- Effective SBC interventions must consider the needs and capacity of the people it seeks to serve as well as other actors in the system, including governments, institutions, non-governmental organizations and other entities within the sector.

- Measures to prepare and mitigate risk should be instituted across all social sector systems. This encourages community resilience, continuity of services and early recovery in the most vulnerable, at-risk and affected populations.

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More information

- HC3's THE SBCC CAPACITY ECOSYSTEM: A Model for Social and Behaviour Change Communication Capacity Strengthening
- Breakthrough ACTION's Eight Principles for Strengthening Public Sector Social and Behaviour Change Capacity
- ESARO C4D/SBCC Capacity Development Framework
- The World Bank's Improving Public Sector Performance: Through Innovation and Inter-Agency Coordination
- USAID's Health Systems Strengthening
- OECD's Public Sector Governance and Institutions
- UNICEF's Child Protection Systems Strengthening

Service Improvements

Designing services that are accessible, usable and valuable

What is Service Design, and why is it important?

The same process of designing the look, feel, and function of a product, can also be applied to services. Service design is critical to ensuring that people, especially the most disadvantaged and marginalized, actually value the service and use it. The health, education, and social services that are the most critical to our well-being are too often designed to suit the needs of service providers rather than the needs of the people for whom the service is intended.

Service Design turns that equation on its head. It's a method that focuses on designing services for people, not institutions. The principles of Service Design can help you improve the demand for, impact, and use of services, by making the experience better for those who need it most.

Service Design 101

Like product design, Service Design is an interdisciplinary process that uses design thinking[1]. It approaches the design of services from the perspective of the users, not by guessing what they might want, but by utilizing collaborative co-creation to uncover what would make services relevant, accessible and useful to them. Creating services that respond to people's needs and motivations, suit their social and cultural norms, fit within their daily realities, and are user-friendly and desired by their intended clients are all the basic principles of service design.

There are many ways that services discourage uptake in their design. Health services that only offer male nurses

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1   Design thinking is a method of problem-solving that borrows strategic steps from a design process that can be applied to other domains, such as management, services or health. It originated at the Stanford School of Design, which defined the steps as: empathize (with your users), define (the real problem), ideate (a number of solutions), prototype (your best ideas) and test (with the intended users). See HCD Tool for more information.

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and doctors to women in conservative societies, fixed vaccination services for nomadic communities, and parent-teacher conferences scheduled during parents' working hours are all examples of Service Design flaws. These service elements create barriers, or friction, that actively works against the behaviours we seek to promote.

Service Design is a tool to increase and sustain positive behaviours. In particular, it is used to:

- Make an existing service more accessible, in particular to underserved populations

- Improve equity

- Improve the quality of the service and make it more appealing to its target users

- Simplify the number of steps or tasks required to use a service

- Digitize components that can be made more efficient online (feedback, reminders, etc.) when suitable

- Transfer initiative and ownership to citizens

Key Terms

User journey: This is the route a user takes to access a service. This includes all the steps they take before arriving at the point of service, as well as the experience following the service interaction, especially if it's a service intended for repeated use. Designers must consider all the elements before and after uptake of the service as part of the user journey.

Touchpoint: Each moment at which a user comes into contact with the service or the organization providing the service, is a touchpoint. A touchpoint also describes the moments where the user is expected to do something. The Board of a school offering vaccination and a sign-up sheet for vaccination are both examples of touchpoints.

User experience (UX): Everything the end user encounters during the service. Service Design uses UX to understand interactions between users and the service and/or sectoral system. A child meeting a vaccinator, a parent speaking to a teacher, and a social worker visiting a family are all examples of interactions that make up the user experience. By gathering insights on UX, designers can help make a product or service more usable, enjoyable and accessible to underserved, vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups.

Stakeholder map: A stakeholder map analyses a service from a systems point of view, with the user in the middle. It usually looks like a bullseye target and allows you to visualise all the touchpoints and supporting mechanisms that support the delivery of a service. The first ring around the user contains the touchpoints directly associated with accessing the service. The next ring shows what those touchpoints need in order to function properly. This is a useful analytical tool for identifying barriers to high-quality service delivery that may be hiding behind the user's primary touchpoints.

Behavioural objectives

Service Design is a useful tool for increasing the likelihood of social outcomes and the uptake of desired behaviours. The list below provides a selection of priorities that service design can support. However, nearly every strategic priority involves service design in some way.

- Educational enrolment and retention, particularly for girls

- Use of vaccination services, maternal and child health services or other health services

- Registration process for birth and vital events registration

- Use of sanitation facilities in schools, communities and health settings

- Breastfeeding support towards achieving exclusive breastfeeding

- Nutrition screening and counselling services

- Registration/uptake of social safety net programmes

The limits of Service Design

Although Service Design is an important component of Social and Behaviour Change, it is not a miracle cure for all demand-related issues. Now that we have outlined what Service Design is good for, let's be clear about some challenges for which a Service Design approach is **not** always sufficient;

Solving complex social problems: Issues like child abuse, low demand for health services, and educational disparities are complex and cannot be fully addressed by redesigning one service or intervention. Make sure you investigate the root causes of the problem, and use Service Design in conjunction with other tools to address the issue holistically.

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Communication with communities: A Service Design process involves target users and local stakeholders but is entirely different from setting up a structured dialogue for communication or engagement purposes. Participatory Service Design in itself doesn't offer a complete method for getting buy-in from communities. To support the design of better services, structures and systems like local management committees, feedback and social accountability mechanisms and stronger local governance and development committees are needed to properly engage with communities.

Designing to reach the most vulnerable: Service Design can help create more equitable societies by making services more culturally, physically and financially accessible. Co-creative Service Design can be one of the tools used to give vulnerable groups a voice in the design process, but it can never be the only instrument. Consider how wider sectoral systems strengthening interventions can promote more equitable societies, and how services can be designed to support them.

Case studies and examples

You may have seen UNICEF's Caregiver Journey to Immunization. This is an example of a user journey with multiple touchpoints. This helps public health professionals understand the journey to vaccination as something much larger than simply moving a caregiver from point A to point B (usually the health clinic or vaccination site). There are a number of practical and emotional steps that must be taken before a caregiver decides to go to a clinic. There are also a number of touchpoints at the vaccination site and after the vaccination service. These are all crucial parts of the journey that should be seen as opportunities to improve Service Design.

Below is a list of touchpoints that exist before, during, and after vaccine uptake with resources to help you reduce any friction around these key moments.

Additional examples of service improvements:

ZIMBABWE Providing peer-led community-based support for adolescents undergoing antiretroviral therapy for HIV led to improved treatment adherence and reduced viral load

ZAMBIA Strengthening community-based action groups led to improvements in maternal and neonatal health outcomes, including through increased skilled birth attendance at delivery

GHANA Use of a simple, objective checklist improved teacher training outcomes

GLOBAL The use of home-based records improves maternal and child health outcomes, including increased immunisation completion and ANC attendance and reduced likelihood of pregnancy complications

MEXICO Increasing access to electronic payments increases savings and reduces reliance on loans

Key principles

There are a number of Service Design principles[2], but the four below are fundamentals you should keep in mind. Make sure your service is:

1. **Easy to access**. For example, a caregiver who wants to send their child to school must be able to identify and access a school within a reasonable distance of their home.
   - ○ **Designed to accommodate multiple populations, especially underserved groups**. The service should fit within its users' reality. No user should be excluded from a service on account of their ability, identity, or lack of

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2   15 Principles of Good Service Design

Pre-vaccination	Vaccination	Post-vaccination
Making an appointment at the clinic (if applicable)	Interaction between the caregiver and the medical staff	Positive reinforcement for the child and caregiver
Transportation to the clinic	Interaction between the child and the medical staff	Explanation of what to expect
Experience in the waiting room (queue, paperwork, cleanliness, child-friendly, interaction with staff)	Pain management	Payment and follow-up
Check-in to the clinic		Reminders for the next appointment

resources. For example, services that are overly digitized, while more efficient, may exclude those with lower technological literacy or access.

2. **Encouraging the right behaviours from users and service providers**. The service should encourage safe, productive, and mutually beneficial behaviours from users and providers. The user should never be exposed to harm. For example, users should never be asked to provide data without knowing how it will be used. Staff should never be incentivized to provide poor service - for example, provider evaluations that consider the volume of patients seen each day could potentially erode the quality of each interaction.

3. **Actionable for all users**. A service should always direct users to a clear outcome, regardless of whether they are eligible for the service. No user should be left behind or stranded without knowing how to continue or where to get support. In other words, the service should have no dead ends.

Service design is already beginning to take hold in sectors like public health and engineering. It has contributed to innovations in new products and improved the design of spaces, processes and systems. However, it remains an untapped resource across all development sectors despite the tremendous opportunities it offers to improve the lives of children. Consider how you can use service design to improve services, processes or systems in your work.

More information

Organizations

- Nairobi Design Institute
- IDEO.ORG
- Frog
- GRID IMPACT

Books

- John Thakara, 2017: How to Thrive in the Next Economy: Designing Tomorrow's World Today
- This is Service Design Doing
- Good Services: 15 Principles of Good Service Design

Online resources

- UNDP's Design Thinking for Public Service Excellence
- Service Design Tools: Resources
- Design methods for developing services
- Blog: Practical Service Design
- McKinsey's perspective on the value of design in global public health

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Community Engagement

Partnering with communities so they can lead the change process

What is Community Engagement and why is it an important approach?

Nothing about us, without us. This is the spirit of Community Engagement. Definitions differ across organizations and programmes, but at the heart of each one is a focus on increasing the participation, collaboration, and voice of communities for more effective results. Community Engagement can be transformational. Beyond including the people we serve and creating space for dialogue, effective Community Engagement ultimately builds a relationship of trust in which communities are empowered to take action and use the systems in place to identify and address their most pressing issues.

Community Engagement 101

Empowering community members to explore, plan and act together on their priority issues can be a powerful way to strengthen collective capacity and improve programme equity and effectiveness. This requires community members, leaders and organizations to play a central role in the development of humanitarian initiatives that affect them.

Community Engagement also seeks to strengthen the link between people and the systems, structures and services—both formal and informal—that have been designed to meet their needs. This means strengthening governance, quality of service delivery and systems, and improving accountability mechanisms. Through Community Engagement, UNICEF aims to support countries in establishing lasting mechanisms for participatory ideation, planning, implementation and monitoring. By collaborating with external partners, especially governmental and community-led organizations, UNICEF strives to enhance social accountability.

Effective Community Engagement requires systematic commitment. This means prioritizing community participation in design and implementation, integrating Community Engagement into wider systems strengthening approaches, and mobilizing resources for meaningful, long-term relationship building. For more information on how this can be done, check out the 'Strengthen local systems and ownership, leverage trusted partners' tool.

Social and behavioural objectives

Community Engagement lies at the heart of humanitarian and development work. Its a powerful process that can be particularly valuable when seeking to work with local knowledge, systems, structures, and groups that are historically hard to reach. Community Engagement is fundamental to the human rights-based approach. When done effectively, Community Engagement can improve the quality and utilisation of services by making decisions more accountable and transparent to the communities they concern, increasing the diversity and representation of communities in policy and practice design, and ensuring that communities have a voice in decisions that directly affect their lives. It is difficult to imagine any community-oriented project that would not benefit from sincere and long-term engagement. The key social and behavioural objectives of Community Engagement include strengthening relationships, building trust and promoting sincere collaboration, and increasing collective self-efficacy and resilience.

Community Engagement is often seen as a discrete intervention serving specific SBC outcomes such as changing awareness, knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and norms, as projects require. When used in such a narrow manner, Community Engagement initiatives are likely to be less effective. But when used as a more explicit intervention to create lasting dialogue and collaboration mechanisms, Community Engagement can be invaluable in designing programmes that cater to the needs of the people they aim to support, and are therefore more likely to be implemented and create lasting behaviour change. Community Engagement also establishes platforms to rapidly interpret and influence community behaviour, greatly improving emergency response in times of crisis.

Community Engagement levels and potential challenges

Community Engagement is a necessary approach in both development and humanitarian contexts; however, how it is applied will vary. Communities can be engaged at a range of levels: from providing advice and co-designing the process to undertaking aspects of the engagement and delivering projects to meet the outcomes. No matter what level of engagement you decide on, systems should always be designed for long-term sustainability, ensuring they can reliably meet current and future needs of the population. This is especially important in humanitarian contexts, where we need to support community capacity to prepare and respond to disasters, emerging diseases and economic volatility, in order to increase resilience and recovery.

Engagement can be considered at four different levels:

1. Inform and mobilize the community to participate in addressing immediate short-term concerns, with strong external support

2. Consult and involve the community to improve the delivery of services and programmes, with some external support

3. Collaborate with the community to enable priority settings and decisions from the community, with or without external support

4. Empower the community to develop systems for self-governance, establish and set priorities, implement interventions, and develop sustainable mechanisms for development with partners, as part of a support network

It is important therefore to determine the level of Community Engagement based on the context.

There are challenges to implementing Community Engagement to keep in mind to minimize the risks to the programme:

- **Limiting participation to leaders or influential actors leaves out the needs of the most marginalized**. Community Engagement approaches that don't consider existing power dynamics will fail to reach their intended results. According to the Time to Listen report, communities feel that international aid benefits the local elites. Remember that communities are never uniform—not everybody shares the same needs, opinions, and vulnerabilities. To ensure equity in consultations and decision-making forums, various engagement techniques should be employed so that all needs are taken into account.

- **Community Engagement is often not institutionalized and therefore not adequately funded or staffed**. This can lead to ad hoc implementation. For Community Engagement and community-led initiatives to become a standard and sustained practice, they need to be embedded in governance structures. Otherwise, Community Engagement is likely to rest upon personal relationships built between particular professionals and certain community members—connections that are easily lost if the people involved change.

- **Community members can become disillusioned with the process if they don't see their input being taken forward**. If the community believes their consultation was just a 'tick-box exercise' and their feedback wasn't considered or acted upon, they are likely to feel anger and to not re-engage again or favourably. Managing expectations around how much of a say the community has in the final decisions is paramount. Engagement that is superficial and gives rise to feelings of tokenism should be avoided at all costs.

- **Taking shortcuts with discrete and surgical interventions instead of long-term meaningful engagement works against community ownership and sustainability**. Community Engagement works best when done over time, not on a project-by-project basis. Communities should be engaged before solutions have been decided, with a sincere willingness to give communities a systematic role in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes that affect them.

- **The routine collection and use of data for action continues to be a challenge in Social and Behaviour Change programming**. Standardized and timely evidence collection should be conducted regularly to ensure that programming and decision-making reflects the current needs of the community. Data collection should focus on equity and representativeness, opinions, perceptions and needs.

- **Balancing digital outreach with in-person engagement. Digital technologies are increasingly used for engagement interventions in order to reach as many people as possible**. However, digital outreach fails to reach those in vulnerable positions who lack reliable access to technology. This includes women, poor families, people with disabilities, people who live in conflict-affected or remote, rural settings, and people who lack stable housing. Thus, relying on a solely digital Community Engagement strategy will exacerbate inequities and leave the most vulnerable out of the decision-making process. In low-technology settings, increased investment in safe interpersonal and collective interactions (home visits, community meetings, facility-based counselling, etc.) can ensure that people without access to technology are not left out of the equation.

Community Engagement can be very challenging to resource, measure and undertake, but being cognizant of these barriers and identifying ways to overcome them will help empower communities to contribute to the creation of more sustainable programmes.

Case studies

- **ERITREA** Ongoing community dialogue and sensitization reduces female genital mutilation (FGM).

- **NAMIBIA** Community Engagement initiatives that strengthen relationships between schools and communities increases school attendance and decreases bullying.

- **KENYA** Ongoing dialogue around contraception misconceptions and family planning shifts social norms and increases reports of modern contraception use among targeted married women and men.

- **INDIA** Participatory women's groups and counselling improved minimum dietary diversity for women and children, more mothers washed their hands before feeding children, fewer children were underweight at 18 months and fewer infants died.

- **MALI** Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach significantly decreases open defecation rates among adults, increases access to private latrines, and improves child growth.

- **SIERRA LEONE** The Community-Led Ebola Action (CLEA) approach significantly increases safe burial practices and referrals to medical care within 24 hours of symptom onset.

- **CAMEROON, NIGERIA, AND UGANDA** The application of the Community Directed Intervention (CDI) approach was shown to be significantly more effective than existing delivery approaches for vitamin A supplementation, use of insecticide-treated nets and home management of malaria.

- **PAKISTAN** A targeted community engagement approach utilising immunisation camps effectively increased oral polio vaccine coverage in conflict affected areas.

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Key principles

1. **System building**

Community Engagement should be systematic in order to have sustainable impact. Community Engagement should be integrated in policy design, planning, budgeting and financing, execution, and monitoring of interventions.

2. **Two-way communication**

An open line of communication should be maintained to allow communities to give and receive clear, appropriate and accurate information on a regular and predictable basis. Two-way communication gives communities a way to reach out, request information, and keep stakeholders accountable to them.

3. **Participation**

Create participatory spaces that bridge barriers, foster two-way dialogue and build trust—which is central to development and humanitarian programmes.

4. **Inclusion**

The power imbalance among stakeholders and community groups will make it challenging to reach members of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Create space for these groups to have their voices heard.

5. **Empowerment and ownership**

Empowering communities requires acknowledgement of the value within the communities, such as resources, assets, structures and networks. Maximizing the strength and potential of these existing facets will help foster autonomy and ownership.

6. **Adaptability and localization**

Community Engagement approaches should be developed around local contexts, and should be flexible and responsive to the evolving needs, conditions and concerns of local populations.

7. **Building on local capacity**

Community Engagement should build upon existing skills and resources within communities, and work with local groups and organizations that already serve them.

More information

- Minimum Quality Standards and Indicators for Community Engagement

- Guidance for achieving multi-sectoral results through working with local governments

- Community Engagement and Accountability toolkit – International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

- Principles of Community Engagement for Empowerment

- The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability

- Community-Driven Development Overview – World Bank

- The Communication & Community Engagement Initiative

- Community Engagement: A health promotion guide for universal health coverage in the hands of the people – WHO

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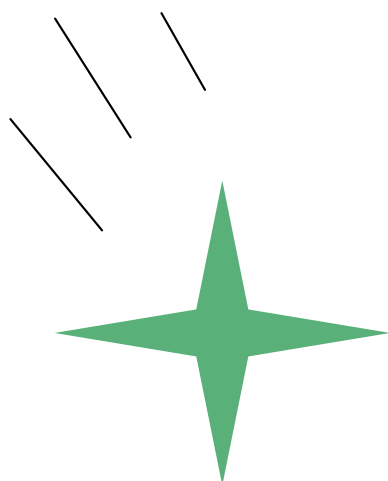
Key definitions

Community Engagement:

A way of working with traditional, community, civil society, government, and opinion groups and leaders that facilitates their active participation in addressing the issues that affect their lives. Community Engagement empowers social groups and social networks, builds upon local strengths and capacities, and increases local participation in finding solutions that they can adapt and have ownership over. Through Community Engagement principles and strategies, all stakeholders gain access to processes for assessing, analysing, planning, leading, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the actions, programmes and policies that will promote the survival, development, and protection of community members.

Institutional Community Engagement mechanisms can be categorized as follows:

Governmental: led by governments with the mandate to deliver services universally. This includes mechanisms led by quasi-governmental organisations (e.g., community-led cooperatives with formal linkages to institutions) as well as community oversight on services delivered by the government and community participation in the planning and design of policies and services.

Community-led: mechanisms owned and operated by communities through which community members and civil society organizations and community-based groups coordinate and respond to challenges that affect them. These can be small-scale and informal or can involve several organizations and various subsystems. For example, a large care system may have distinct subsystems for comprehensive home-based care, providing nutritional support, counselling, advocacy, legal support and referrals for access to services and follow-up.

Social accountability to affected populations: an approach in which ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations demand accountability from their governing bodies. Mechanisms for accountability can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both. However, they are often demand-driven and operate from the bottom up. Accountability initiatives aim to improve the quality of governance by enhancing transparency and exposing corruption, for example. Such initiatives work to increase the effectiveness of development strategies, particularly by improving delivery of public services, and ensuring that crisis response is appropriate and equitable. Having mechanisms for accountability empowers marginalized and under-served groups by arming them with information about their rights and amplifying their voice in the management of public affairs. All accountability measures have good Community Engagement at their core, particularly in terms of information provision, participation and feedback and complaint processes. However, accountability also relies on data management and decision-making –ensuring that feedback from communities informs the actions that are fed back to communities.

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Social and Behaviour Change Communication

Designing holistic and data-driven communications to enable change

What is Social and Behaviour Change Communication, and why is it important?

Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) seeks to apply tactics from marketing, social and community mobilization, mass media, entertainment, advocacy, interpersonal communication, social media and other communication approaches to support positive social and individual change. As part of a multi-pronged SBC strategy, these strategic communication tactics are critical tools to promote action and create an environment that supports it.

Social and Behaviour Change Communication 101

SBCC is one approach to social and behavioural change that many may feel needs no explanation. Most of us are familiar with marketing, communication and public information campaigns that attempt to raise awareness, advocate for change and influence public opinion. When part of a multi-pronged SBC strategy, strategic communications can also stimulate positive and measurable social and behaviour change. Whether it be interpersonal engagement, targeted advocacy or larger-scale mobilization, communication tactics should be informed by a solid foundation of data and community dialogue. Communication tactics like this are most effective when closely integrated with other SBC approaches.

Everybody responds to communication differently. You must consider all aspects of the geographic, social, and

economic context when deciding your communication strategy. Demographics, literacy levels, digital access, media consumption, and trust will determine the combination of communication tactics you employ and how you segment them. The more evidence you have to work from, the more effective your strategic communication efforts will be.

Common steps for developing communication plans:

1. **Understand the programme and where communications can add value:** Collecting primary and secondary data and using participatory processes will help you develop a better understanding of the people, contexts and barriers that the SBCC strategy will address.

2. **Define your communication objectives:** What role can communication play in the SBC strategy? What do you want to achieve through communication? By identifying the goal of your communication efforts, you can design ways to measure their impact.

3. **Identify your audiences:** Having a deep understanding of who you are trying to reach will make your communications more effective. Communication tactics that consider the local context will be more targeted, appropriate and effective.

4. **Develop and test your key messages:** Develop clear and concise messaging that will resonate with your audience. By testing these messages with the intended audience, you can identify concrete ways to improve your messaging in the next iteration.

5. **Select your communication tactics and materials:** Your audience and your communication objectives should determine what communication channels you use. Consider how your audiences receive information, whose opinions they value, and what forms those valued communications come in. Tactics can be broadly grouped into mass media, interpersonal, social and community channels. It is often necessary to combine tactics across these groups to increase their chances of success. Every tactic should be developed using a two-way process so that audiences can provide information and feedback and influence decisions.

6. **Finalize your strategy:** The communication arm of your work should support and reinforce your overall SBC strategy. A finalized strategy should include your message, how you will communicate it and measure its impact based on the context, objectives, and target audiences. Your strategy should always include how to measure the impact of your communications.

7. **Measure your results:** Your communication objectives should be measurable and linked to your programme and social and behavioural results. Consider intermediate measures, to allow regular adjustments and introduction of new strategic phases based on the evidence you collect.

Social and behavioural objectives

We often consider communication as the primary way to raise awareness and share information. However, strategic communications can support SBC strategies in many more ways. It can encourage community engagement, influence social norms , support policy advocacy, promote service uptake, reach underserved populations, foster a media environment that resonates with downstream engagement, and much, much more. Consider a mix of SBC tactics that complement each other and support the social and behavioural objectives you are working towards.
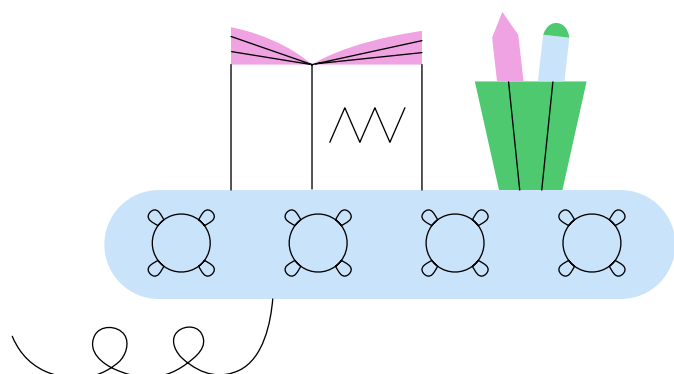
The limits of Social and Behaviour Change Communication

On its own, SBCC is rarely enough to achieve social and behaviour change results. It is too often reduced to messaging, or used to share information and encourage policy compliance without addressing the structural and social barriers that stand in the way. Often, such communications have failed to meaningfully involve communities and users in the initial decision and design processes. But when programmes carefully consider the people they affect and the determinants of change, SBCC can be a powerful way to engage, inspire, and empower people to make healthier decisions. However, exhaustive research and community engagement don't always result in effective communication campaigns. Complex challenges such as preventing the sexual abuse of children and adolescents, child marriage and female genital mutilation all have deep roots. Even the most robust communication campaign cannot overpower deeply ingrained social norms and belief systems. Such norms are pervasive and are reflected in the legal system, job markets, and socialization processes. These colossal challenges can only be approached through holistic programmes. Communication efforts alone often fall short of addressing the underlying structural and social elements that allow these major challenges to continue.

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Case studies and examples

- **SOUTH AFRICA** The *Soul City* TV series, which depicted community responses to GBV, increased attention to and action against intimate partner violence.

- **VIET NAM** Combining nationwide mass media strategies with interpersonal counselling on infant and young child feeding led to increases in both Minimum Acceptable Diet and Minimum Dietary Diversity, resulting in reductions in stunting.

- **INDIA** The Saloni Project used an ancient Indian communication method to build compassion, self efficacy, emotional well being, peer and parental support for adolescents.

- **BANGLADESH** Sustained behavioural change communication, coupled with cash transfers, led to improvements in knowledge of infant and young child feeding amongst mothers.

- **INDIA** Providing face-to-face information to mothers about the DPT vaccine increased measles immunisation rates by 22 percentage points and complete immunisation rates by 14 percentage points.

- **HONG KONG** A comprehensive package combining information about influenza risks and a vaccine subsidy scheme increased childhood immunisation rates by 25%.

- **JAPAN** A participatory education approach delivered during late pregnancy and postpartum improved both intentions to vaccinate and self-reported vaccination rates.

- **GLOBAL** Community-based behaviour change communication efforts have been shown to reduce neonatal mortality across multiple developing countries.

- **SENEGAL** A peer-to-peer informational campaign conducted by returning migrants improved knowledge on the risks of migration and reduced intentions to migrate irregularly

Key principles

SBCC employs a variety of tools and methods to communicate with each target group and receive information, contributions and feedback in return. Effective SBCC relies on:

1. **Social and Behaviour Change Objectives.** The goal of SBCC is to change knowledge, attitudes and practices of target groups and stimulate social change at the local and national level.

2. **Tailored messaging.** All creative messages and products disseminated through interpersonal, group and mass-media channels should be informed by in-depth knowledge of the intended audience.

3. **Two-way communication.** High quality SBCC requires two-way communication flows for feedback and improvement from the intended audience.

4. **Measurement systems.** Monitoring changes in attitudes and behaviours helps to measure the impact of communications outlined by the programme objectives.

More information

Strategic communication initiatives ensure that communication products and activities are synchronized and coordinated to achieve agreed goals and objectives. The following resources provide examples and models of this:

- Campaigning – How to design impactful, multi-channel communication efforts

- Working with the media – How to partner with media for SBC

- Social listening – How to take the social pulse, capture local insights, and track misinformation

- Digital engagement – How to harness technology to mobilize and motivate for change

- Education entertainment – How to leverage popular edutainment for a cause

- Strategic communication for behaviour and social change in South Asia

- A global communication strategy development guide for maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition programmes

- Strategic communication for Zika prevention: A guide to adapting locally

Applied Behavioural Science

Shaping contexts and designing processes and products to enable behaviour change

What is Applied Behavioural Science, and why is it important?

We all want to be happy and healthy. We want to see ourselves and our families thrive. Yet we often make decisions that seem to work against these goals. Why is that?

The field of Behavioural Science seeks to understand the mysteries of human behaviour – why we reach for unhealthy snacks when on a diet, forget to make appointments for routine immunizations, put off HIV or STI testing indefinitely, skip doses of hypertension medication, leave the mosquito net folded up in the corner, or fail to save for everyday needs. Behavioural Science leverages insights and evidence from psychology, cognitive science, social science and economics to understand the relationship between our innate human traits and the context we live within, in order to encourage and inhibit behaviour.

Governments, multilateral institutions, and public and private sector organizations use insights from Behavioural Science to uncover how elements of everyday life influence people to behave in ways that do not align with their goals and intentions.

Key principles

1. **Context matters.** People's decisions and behaviours are shaped by the context in which they operate: the cues they receive, the options that are available and most visible, the actions that seem easiest, the choices they see others making, and the ways people try to influence their choices. .

2. **Changing knowledge and attitudes is often not sufficient to change behaviour.** People's intentions do not always match their behaviours.

3. People often fail to predict how they will behave in a given situation. Behavioural Science can help predict how elements of a situation either enable or deter people from making decisions that align with their values. Asking people directly why they do or don't behave in a certain way will not fully illustrate the range of factors that subconsciously drive decision-making. When self-reporting, people also tend to respond in ways that will be viewed favourably by others (desirability bias).

4. Small changes to the context can lead to significant changes in behaviour.

Key terms

→ **Cognitive biases** (mental heuristics) are natural distortions in thinking that affect the decisions and judgements people make. One of the objectives of Behavioural Science is to understand how these innate cognitive biases shape behaviour.

→ **Intention-action gaps** describe the discrepancy between what people say they want to do and what they actually do. Applied Behavioural Science seeks to shape the context to help people follow through on their intentions, eliminating that gap

→ **Friction** is another word for the inconveniences or hassles that can prevent people from following through on their intentions. Applied Behavioural Science seeks to minimize the friction that inhibits healthy or desired behaviours.

→ **Choice architecture** is the design of how (and what) choices are presented to people whose behaviour you want to influence – the number of choices presented, how each is framed, the proximity or ease of one choice over another.

Social and behavioural objectives

Applied Behavioural Science combines thorough qualitative research and evidence from cognitive science and psychology to formulate a deep understanding of a particular context and how features of it may drive or prevent specific behaviours. Using an evidence-based approach can dramatically improve the acceptability, relevance and impact of programmes and policies.

Specifically, Behavioural Science allows programme designers and policymakers to:

- Better understand the drivers of and barriers to uptake of specific behaviours that align with people's goals and intentions

- Design behaviourally-informed communications, interventions, technologies, policies and programmes, including messages and strategies that effectively address specific behavioural drivers in unique contexts.

- Focus on the experiences of the people impacted by policies and programmes, instead of the preferences and perspectives of experts and policymakers

- Address the underlying determinants of behaviours and motivations, beyond knowledge and attitudes, by understanding how behaviours result from the interaction between cognitive, social and environmental influences

- Use an evidence-based approach to develop and test hypotheses around the contextual drivers of specific behaviours followed by an iterative, experimentation-based approach to design solutions.
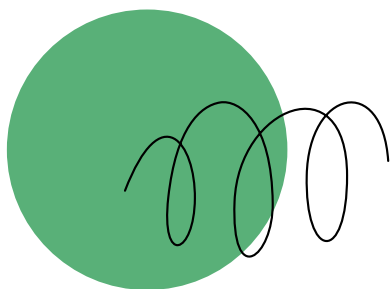
The limits and opportunities associated with an Applied Behavioural Science approach

Behavioural Science (understanding human behaviours) is a critical part of policy and programme development. But Applied Behavioural Science interventions alone (e.g., choice architecture design, nudges) are unlikely to effectively address complex and deeply-rooted challenges like gender-based violence, child labour, and discrimination. These issues require changes to larger structural elements such as social relations, economic opportunities, policies and governance, which may still be informed by behavioural insights.

In other words, Applied Behavioural Science is such a powerful approach because not only does it help us understand the structural context driving decision-making, it may even generate structural solutions and renewed policy recommendations.

However, Behavioural Science approaches may not directly address all structural, social and policy barriers to behaviour change. For example, if you are designing a programme to encourage uptake of timely counselling for survivors of domestic violence, you will likely want to address individual barriers (perceived need, mental models of counselling), social barriers (taboos around discussing abuse and lack of a social norm around counselling) and structural barriers (overworked health workers, limited human resources, lack of clear policies around counselling referrals).

Behavioural Science insights may help you uncover, contextualize and address such structural barriers by, for example, informing the design of easy-to-use referral systems and heuristics that help overworked health workers connect survivors with counselling.. approach needs to be complemented by structurally oriented solutions, such as providing more convenient or accessible counselling centres in low-income communities and working within civil societies to change negative social influences.
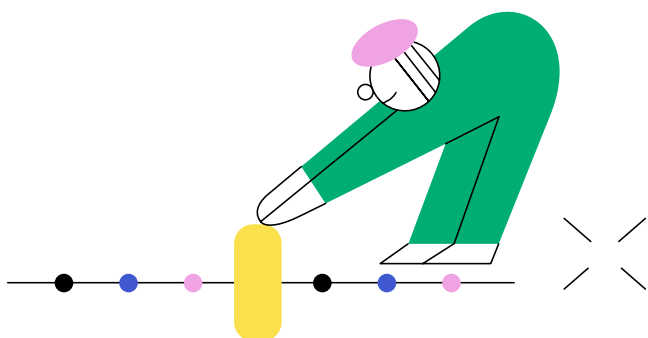
Case studies and examples

The field of Applied Behavioural Science is often associated with the 'nudge theory' popularized in Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler's book Nudge (2008). The insights that underpin nudge theory are critical features of the field of Behavioural Science.

- People do not make decisions or take actions in a vacuum. Their choices are deeply affected by features of the broader context.
- It is often insufficient to change knowledge and attitudes, as people's behaviours rarely align with their intentions.
- Simple economic models that weigh cost and benefit often fail to predict human behaviour.

However, while these insights may be used to design small changes in the context, known as "nudges, These tweaks can also be essential to informing policies and larger-scale changes in systems and protocols. The range of case studies below exemplifies the diversity in scope of behaviourally-informed interventions.

Nudges

- **NEPAL** A peer comparison intervention in clinics increases Long Acting Reversible Contraceptive (LARC) uptake in post-abortion settings by nearly 7 percentage points
- **URUGUAY** Sending behaviourally-informed text messages increases preschool attendance
- **SIERRA LEONE** A cost-effective social signalling intervention increases childhood vaccination rates by 14 percentage points in Sierra Leone
- **UKRAINE** The Effect of Behavioural Science Tools on Vaccination Uptake: A Randomised Controlled Trial
- **NIGERIA** Pairing automated calls with text immunisation reminders significantly improved the proportion of infants who completed all routine immunisations by 12 months of age and the timeliness of vaccines administered late in the immunisation schedule
- **MADAGASCAR** Adding behavioural enhancements to cash transfers improves early childhood development outcomes including long-term food security and children's social skills

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Systemic approaches

- **JORDAN** Stabilizing livelihoods of Syrian refugees in host communities and vulnerable Jordanians through skill exchanges and employment opportunities
- **MOLDOVA** Shifting tuberculosis treatment to an at-home approach increases adherence among TB patients
- **SENEGAL** Using behavioural insights to design a system for integration of family planning and immunization
- **SOUTH AFRICA** Coupling behaviourally-informed feedback with infrastructure improvements improves water conservation

- **MALAWI** Shifting how providers approach family planning counselling and integrating tools for improved referrals expands the family planning choice set and improves client satisfaction

Behaviourally-informed policies

- **SOUTH AFRICA** Embedding growth mindset tools into education policy improves learner outcomes
- **HAITI** Strengthening disaster preparedness policies and protocols using behavioural insights
- Creating policies to reduce youth unemployment around the globe

More information

To learn more about how to apply Behavioural Science, check-out this how-to guide.

Moving from theory to application

- The Behavioural Insights Research and Design (BIRD) Laboratory
- The New Science of Designing for Humans
- United Nations Behavioural Science Report 2021
- Applying Behavioural Science to Support the Prevention of Violent Extremism: Experiences and Lessons Learned
- World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behaviour

Frameworks and Approaches

- Michie et al.'s COM-B: Capability, Opportunity, Motivation
- The Behavioural Insights Team's MINDSPACE
- The Behavioural Insights Team's EAST Framework
- UNICEF's Behavioural Drivers Model

How-to guides

- BEAR's Practitioner's Guide to Nudging
- The Little Jab Book for COVID-19 Vaccination
- The OECD's BASIC Toolkit
- The Surgo Foundation's CUBES Toolkit

Ethical considerations

- Ethical considerations when applying Behavioural Science in projects focused on children
- FORGOOD Framework for ethical considerations when nudging behaviour

Courses

- Behavioural Science Programmes (ABSA)
- Behavioural Insights for Public Policy (BETA)
- Behavioural Science for Practitioners (ideas42)
- Behavioural Economics in Action (University of Toronto/edx)
- SPANISH: Behavioural Economics for Better Policies (IADB)
- Applied Behavioural Science (Ogilvy x 42Courses)

Other resources

- The Behavioural Scientist Magazine
- The Behavioural Evidence Hub (b-hub)
- The Decision Lab Biases Index
- UNICEF's Behavioural Insights Research and Design Lab (BIRD Lab)

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