

#IFADiNNovationTalk no. 2



Behavioural approaches to measuring and delivering impact: What are we learning?

Q&A REPORT

Question	Answer
Dear Team: Is there an overview document about IFAD - Interventions that are currently using Behavioural approaches?	Answered live during the Q&A session. See recording https://youtu.be/NbmtiDrPR9A mins 35.34 -52.07
Thank you Dr Puri for the excellent presentation. I am curious to know in the age of Big data, where do we draw the balance between being aware of bias and eliminating selected ones and completely removing Human bias/Human error as AI/Big data claims to do so. Because trial and error and bias even unconscious serendipitous bias is how innovations were born. Would you agree that total de-biasing in decision-making, eradicating errors, or ceding strategy to bias free AI tools will not improve strategizing or help us achieve desirable outcomes - Val Gandhi	Answered live during the Q&A session. See recording https://youtu.be/NbmtiDrPR9A mins 35.34 -52.07
With presumably a plethora of different organizations with different client-facing products and services, I am interested in hearing about challenges all organizations most likely face - requirement for increase in internal operational efficiency. Are there any experiences among the panellists on initiatives aimed at increasing internal operational efficiency?	Answered live during the Q&A session. See recording https://youtu.be/NbmtiDrPR9A mins 35.34 -52.07
Dr Datta, could you please share the full report regarding your study on UN system Integration and collaboration? The Rome-based agencies are currently undertaking a joint evaluation on collaboration among the UN Rome-based agencies. Therefore, I am interested in your definitions and findings.	Answered live during the Q&A session. See recording https://youtu.be/NbmtiDrPR9A mins 35.34 -52.07
Behavioural Approach, what is the relationship in Fisheries sector?	The question is unclear. But a behavioural science could be used to enforce quotas for example or change consumption. –Jo Puri, IFAD (mail to: innovation@ifad.org)

Question	Answer
<p>For all the panellists:</p> <p>In your work, in which occasions would you recommend NOT to use behavioural science strategies and rather go for more "traditional" strategies, as command & control or explicit economic incentives?</p>	<p>Answered live during the Q&A session.</p> <p>See recording https://youtu.be/NbmtiDrPR9A mins 35.34 -52.07</p>
<p>Thank you for sharing insights on integrating BI/BS in programming. Could you share any best practices or lessons from trying to apply behavioural science into Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks? Particularly in measuring change in attitudes and behavioural shift of programme beneficiaries. Thank you.</p>	<p>Answered live during the Q&A session.</p> <p>See recording https://youtu.be/NbmtiDrPR9A mins 35.34 -52.07</p>
<p>Dear colleagues, thank you for these insights. If there is any work currently ongoing on behavioural economics interventions with respect to climate change and agriculture, I would be interested to hear more about it/connect with you to discuss further. Currently exploring entry points for FAO's work. Thank you!</p>	<p>Please feel free to get in touch with me and I can direct you to some of the ideas42 team working on these issues. There is a lot of scope to look at the nexus between climate change and agricultural practices. IFAD I think also has some projects in this area. NP: Sent a LinkedIn note. –Saugato Datta, ideas42 (mail to: saugato@ideas42.org)</p>
<p>How behavioural approaches are tested to convince policy makers? Are RCTs the gold standard here? how much lab experiment and lan-in field experiment is helping in testing them? Are they limited to understand theories or also used to test them in various context?</p>	<p>Testing Behavioural approaches does require exploration, understanding context and then testing different interventions. –Jo Puri, IFAD (mail to: innovation@ifad.org)</p> <p>RCTs and experiments generally are always the scientific gold standard, but there are many ways to conduct smaller versions with simpler and cheaper to measure indicators than the true outcome measure, especially when outcomes are years away. Policy makers with scientific backgrounds often like RCTs, but others who are more implementation focused or time crunched may prefer quicker A/B testing (no control) in which interventions are compared to each other with small-scale launches between the better one is launched more fully. Busara really made its name in conducting 'light' RCTs - rigor in design, but on smaller budgets and shorter timeframes. –Nathaniel Peterson, Busara Centre for Behavioural Economics (mail to: nathaniel.peterson@busaracenter.org)</p>
<p>Could the panellists please comment on the willingness of donors to actually fund behavioural interventions that go beyond BCC and actually allows for design and testing?</p>	<p>Most donors do need to be taken along the journey. –Jo Puri, IFAD (mail to: innovation@ifad.org)</p> <p>Busara has had incredible luck convincing donors to fund qualitative research, behavioural design and field testing of interventions. Some, like BMGF are particularly sophisticated and have directly funded such work. More often, large scale philanthropies and multilaterals contract a program like MercyCorps Agrifin Accelerate or one of the Financial Sector Deepening network who then spends part of their budget on design and testing. This has been Busara's most successful funding avenue. –Nathaniel Peterson, Busara Centre for Behavioural Economics (mail to: nathaniel.peterson@busaracenter.org)</p>
<p>What is the appropriate timing for embedding a u science experiment within our projects to increase intervention uptake? Would it be a pilot before design? Or right after design as part of the interventions roll out?</p>	<p>We talked a lot about the importance of formative research in figuring out which interventions and how to embed etc., so I would say (without knowing the details of IFAD's project cycles) that pilot phase is a good time to do the formative work, in preparation for launching a test of the intervention when the project is fully implemented. –Saugato Datta, ideas42 (mail to: saugato@ideas42.org)</p>
<p>I wanted to understand how do you view human agency and behaviour science in public policy. Is there a line where nudges could become manipulative.</p>	<p>Answered live during the Q&A session.</p> <p>See recording https://youtu.be/NbmtiDrPR9A mins 35.34 -52.07</p>

Question	Answer
<p>How well equipped is social science to tackling complex systems questions like those we often face in development contexts?</p>	<p>A precise question would help but a lot of examples that I know, and that were discussed in the webinar were all in development contexts. – Jo Puri, IFAD (mail to: innovation@ifad.org)</p> <p>Behavioural science alone is ill equipped to cover entire complex systems, but it is critical for understand engagement of individuals with specific parts of systems and also determining where true structural gaps lie that can't be addressed with behaviour change at all. Behavioural science is never the full answer, but it can never be left out either. –Nathanial Peterson, Busara Centre for Behavioural Economics (mail to: nathanial.peterson@busaracenter.org)</p>
<p>Nathan, could you please expand on the details you mentioned on the methodology of contextualizing human behaviour to have a better understanding and design better interventions?</p>	<p>Alejandra - reached out directly. Answer is rather large. –Nathanial Peterson, Busara Centre for Behavioural Economics (mail to: nathanial.peterson@busaracenter.org)</p>
<p>Applying behavioural science in a UN institution represents a major shift that will probably face resistance, as most of relevant changes in big institutions. In your experiences Saugato/Nathanial, which incentives can be put in place to foster this transformation? Is the incentive of more results/achievements enough? Or we need something specific and more short-term?</p>	<p>I think with any organization, mainstreaming behavioural science is itself a case for applying behavioural science principles. In our experience, starting with internal projects that show how people within the organization respond to nudges on something that is important generally speaking but not organizationally critical. (ie low-stakes) can be useful in building up comfort. So for example, running BSci projects to influence the diet/exercise behaviour of folks within an organization can be a useful way to get buy-in. Evidence by itself is rarely enough, it need champions, influential voices, etc.- all depends a lot on how the organization in question works, what counts as influence, what is visible, etc. –Saugato Datta, ideas42 (mail to: saugato@ideas42.org)</p> <p>Great Answer! – Nathanial Peterson, Busara Centre for Behavioural Economics (mail to: nathanial.peterson@busaracenter.org)</p>
<p>Then how can we avoid ourselves bias confirmation? how can fix the models for be better?</p>	<p>Confirmation bias is most easily avoided by approaching questions opening rather than with hypotheses, which can seem lazy to those of with scientific backgrounds. In fact, confirmation bias is most common among subject matter experts and cemented by experience. At Busara, we try to overcome these sorts of issues by engaging a wide array of perspectives and through brainstorming session with 'no wrong answers' and then attempt to identify plausible solutions through 'equal voice' debates which can really stress subject matter experts. In the end, subject matter experts ma have the most knowledge on constraints and plausibility, thus overriding the creative consensus answer, but we rarely regret such exercises. –Nathanial Peterson, Busara Centre for Behavioural Economics (mail to: nathanial.peterson@busaracenter.org)</p>
<p>Has IFAD identified any ethical concern related with the use of behavioural science based strategies? If yes, which ones and how is IFAD addressing these concerns?</p>	<p>We haven't started testing these for internal changes. If we do, consent and information will be important. But in all cases, you also have to consider the dangers of other biases creeping in. –Jo Puri, IFAD (mail to: innovation@ifad.org)</p>
<p>Can you share any data /examples on the application of behavioural science in violence /crime prevention and or promoting pro-social behaviour?</p>	<p>Please feel free to get in touch with me and I can both point you to some resources on work on this issue, as well as connect you both with ideas42 folks and researchers at places like the Chicago Crime Labs, which we collaborate with, on this. As a starting point, Anuj Shah and Sendhil Mullainathan both have interesting work on using behavioural science to tackle recidivism, reduce youth violence, etc. –Saugato Datta, ideas42 (mail to: saugato@ideas42.org)</p>
<p>@Nathanial - thanks to highlighting the importance of processes / understanding local contexts, which makes many solutions unfortunately not scalable. What are major the challenges / options to institutionalize BS processes in the decision-making process? To what extent are organizations / governments</p>	<p>Sent a note. –Nathanial Peterson, Busara Centre for Behavioural Economics (mail to: nathanial.peterson@busaracenter.org)</p>

Question	Answer
willing to experiment with new interventions (also fail) and move away from the "usual" planning approach?	
Question for the speakers in general: are your institutions and organizations using Behavioural Science to promote gender equality?	We definitely have projects that focus on the gender dimension. For example, a lot of work in using Bsci in financial inclusion focuses on increasing female participation in the formal financial system, encouraging women to take up beneficial financial products, etc. The health space is another with a strong gender component to most projects. –Saugato Datta, ideas42 (mail to: saugato@ideas42.org)
Do these tools and methods tell us anything about what we SHOULD prioritize? How should we think about values as we design and implement social science?	Big questions. No BS does not tell us about what our values should be and also nothing on what we should prioritize. This is why policy makers and values of organizations play a role. –Jo Puri, IFAD (mail to: innovation@ifad.org)
What I have noticed many times is we treat our subjects as homogenous (which might not be the case), and broadly slice them into test and control group. Do you think that segmentation can help us improve the impacts of BE interventions?	The idea behind dividing into Treatment and Control is to have homogeneity across groups, and is in fact a way of trying to ensure all sub-populations are represented proportionately. That said, stratifying on observable features is often a way to improve comparability, and in practice most RCTs use stratification. –Saugato Datta, ideas42 (mail to: saugato@ideas42.org)
To Saugato, please elaborate what you meant by observing potential behavioural insights present in administrative data. What are examples of behaviour you would be looking for?	For example, we may be interested in children's cognitive skills (expensive to measure directly) but administrative data might have attendance and test scores, an imperfect but nonetheless useful proxy. Or we may be interested in farmer's use of fertilizer or other inputs - but we could get a reasonable proxy by looking at purchase data, which may be available via retailers. Obviously, this will depend on the problem you're addressing, but for many problems, there's at least a reasonable approximation of what you're looking for that is in an existing "administrative" data-set. Of course one has to be careful, especially when there's chronic under-reporting, etc. (think of VAW crime stats - notoriously undercounted - but even here, trends may be revealing even if the absolute numbers are not). –Saugato Datta, ideas42 (mail to: saugato@ideas42.org)
What are the limits of this approach of behavioural change when we are able to change behaviour but not as a result of a better understanding of the problems, for example, regarding distribution of domestic workload? We would like to avoid artificial changes but long lasting and conscious changes?	I think it depends. The evidence from a lot of the health literature is that behaviour change even for the 'wrong reasons' can be quite sticky if you can transform it into a habit - most habits after all are unconscious. Of course, this won't always be the case. Every problem and context is different. But as an example, there are interesting findings on large cash transfers reducing domestic violence even though no explicit effort was made to address such violence - rather, the receipt of the cash seems to have prompted more cooperative decision-making within the household, which led to lower rates of violence. – Saugato Datta, ideas42 (mail to: saugato@ideas42.org)
Will you be sharing the recording of the session?	Yes, please watch the recording here: https://youtu.be/NbmtiDrPR9A
Thank you. Could you please share the emails (or other ways to contact) the panellists?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jo Puri, IFAD (mail to: innovation@ifad.org) • Juan Jose Leguía (mail to: innovation@ifad.org) • Saugato Datta, ideas42 (mail to: saugato@ideas42.org) • Nathaniel Peterson, Busara Centre for Behavioural Economics (mail to: nathaniel.peterson@busaracenter.org)
Good behavioural diagnostics are often needed. Aside the one of ideas 42 are there other tools to conduct such diagnostics? Thanks!	There are a number of frameworks out there, and they are all quite similar in flavour/spirit. The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) has one, and the OECD has the BASIC framework (https://www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/BASIC-Toolkit-web.pdf) - Saugato Datta, ideas42 (mail to: saugato@ideas42.org)