



United Nations Behavioural Science Week

Behavioural approaches for development and climate programmes: Optimizing results and enhancing the nexus among gender equality, climate resilience and nutrition

Opening remarks

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Wednesday 23 June 2021, 13:30-15:00 (CEST)

Dear UN Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I am pleased to join this event exploring how behavioral science can address the gender, climate change and nutrition nexus.
2. Our agri-food systems are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – and the interplay between agriculture, food, nutrition, gender and climate resilience must be part of an integrated and multi-sectoral approach to ensure such transformation.
3. Acts and decisions of billions of people, millions of communities, governments and other stakeholders CAN influence a transition to sustainable lifestyles and a circular economy.
4. But increasing knowledge and awareness without addressing human behavior does not translate into long-term impact.
5. We should reexamine our development efforts to ensure that our interventions and projects truly consider how children, youth, women and men make decisions, and then build enabling conditions for health- and sustainability enhancing behaviors.
6. When thinking how to re-shape our diets for greener and climate-smart options, we must ensure healthy nutrition for all, including the most vulnerable and poor – and vice versa, looking at gender aspects and food security for sustainable and innovative solutions to tackle the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.
7. Our personal consumer choices matter too!
8. For instance, considerable work has gone into food loss and waste measures and the adoption of sustainable and healthy food choices. And while a large percentage of consumers indicate their intention to adopt good practices, only a fraction do.
9. The cost to adopt behavioral science to our programmes is low compared to the impacts they can have.
10. Inaction will cost us even more.
11. Recognizing this, FAO is embracing behavioral science to support the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems.
12. Here are a few examples:
13. FAO is incorporating behavioral science in food and nutrition education models, with toolkits for designing, implementing and evaluating school-based food education programmes.
14. To address climate change challenges, we are launching behavior action packs through the YUNGA collaboration with UN agencies and youth organizations such as Scouts and Guides, empowering, for example, 45,000 young women and girls in Africa.

15. Behavioral science also has enormous potential to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls.
16. FAO, together with our sister agencies, IFAD and the World Food Programme, is implementing “Gender Transformative Approaches for Food Security and Nutrition” to change our policy dialogue, programmes, institutional culture and work modalities.
17. FAO’s flagship “Dimitra Clubs” – 6000 across SubSaharan Africa - facilitate collective action and change in gender-related behaviors and norms.
18. We promote the appropriate use of antimicrobials and improve food production through our AMR Behavior Change Community of Practice, linking behavioral scientists with governments, civil society and private sector.
19. We are integrating behavior science principles in our Corporate Environmental Responsibility too.
20. But we need a more systematic application of behavioral science.
21. FAO and partners of the Tropical Agriculture Platform work to boost national agricultural innovation systems and farmer organizations to improve their “soft skills” to engage in the complexities of political processes to realize the potential of innovation.
22. In this regard, our recently created Office of Innovation will coordinate and strengthen behavioral science work internally and with other United Nations entities and organizations.
23. Achieving effective behavioral science requires active engagement from all stakeholders.
24. In this context, FAO recognizes the Secretary-General's Guidance on Behavioural Science, and the UN Behavioural Science Week as an opportunity to enhance collaboration, inter-agency knowledge sharing and development in this area.
25. Thanks to our colleagues at IFAD for organizing today’s event. We look forward to continuing our strong collaboration.
26. Wishing you a fruitful discussion!
27. Thank you.