



Special Session 02

Behavioural Science as a Pathway to Development Impact in the Arab Countries

Monday, 14 April 2025, 3.15–4.45 p.m. Beirut time

Background and objectives

Behavioural science, the science of human decision-making and action-taking, was recognized as a pillar of the UN 2.0 “Quintet of Change” in 2021 following its rapid spread from university laboratories to the heart of government in the preceding decade.

Over the past five years in particular, behavioural science has gained significant traction in the Arab region, with a number of private sector, academic and governmental “nudge units”—hubs for behavioural science-based interventions—emerging across the region and rigorous deployments taking place in nearly every country.

By understanding behavioural drivers, development efforts can become more effective and lead to greater impact. This session, co-hosted by UNICEF and UNDP, will explore the potential for applied behavioural science to address complex development challenges across the Arab region. Drawing on case studies from UNICEF’s Social and Behaviour Change portfolio and UNDP’s regional and country-level programming, it will highlight successful applications of behavioural science to critical development issues in the Arab region and provide actionable recommendations for national partners looking to take ownership of behavioural science as a pathbreaking tool for advancing development impact in support of the SDGs.

Questions to be addressed

- What is behavioural science and how can it be used to increase development impact?
- How has behavioural science spread in the Arab Region and what can we learn from this?
- How has behavioural science already produced progress on the SDGs in the region? (Case studies from Sudan and Lebanon)
- What can and should governments do to expand their use of behavioural science?

Chair

- **Marc Rubin**, Deputy Regional Director—Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, UNICEF (Jordan)

Moderator

- **Josh Martin**, Applied Behavioural Scientist—Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, UNICEF (Jordan)

Panelists

- **H.E. Dr. Fadi Makki**, Minister of State for Administrative Reform, Lebanon
- **Lilian Abou Zeki**, Head of Solutions Mapping, UNDP (Lebanon)
- **Dennis Chimanya**, Chief, Social and Behaviour Change Section, UNICEF (Sudan) (virtual)

This Special Session will be organized as a hybrid event. To participate over Zoom, please register [here](#). Those physically present at the UN House can attend the session in Mezzanine Meeting Room (MZ floor).