



THE
BEHAVIOURAL
INSIGHTS
TEAM

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

BIT Review
2021-22



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Smart Peace Nigeria

The conflict with Boko Haram has led to extreme violence and devastation in North East Nigeria. Over the last decade, 39,000 people have lost their lives, over 2.5 million have been displaced, \$9 billion of physical infrastructure has been destroyed. Deep social and psychological wounds remain.

As part of the Smartpeace Consortium, BIT partnered with Swiss public research university ETH-Zürich and the International Organisation for Migration to design and evaluate audio interventions aimed at improving attitudes towards reintegration of former militants.

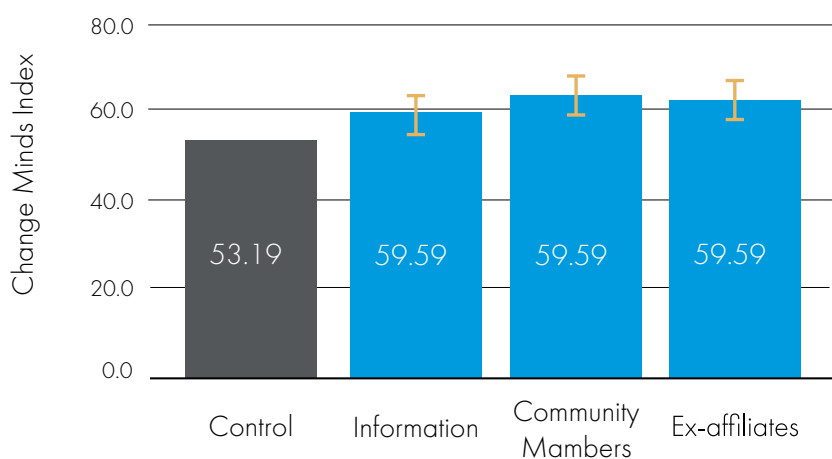
The three short audio interventions brought together behavioural insights such as social norms, self-disclosure and highlighting similarities with authentic local voices of ex-combatants and community members. In 2021, we ran a randomised control trial in Nigeria in which nearly 2,500 participants were prompted to listen to one of three audio interventions outlined below or a control audio unrelated to re-integration.

1. **Information** about the reintegration process to increase transparency is presented.
2. **Community Members** with relatable experiences talk about how they have forgiven and support the reintegration of former combatants.
3. **Ex-affiliates** talk about their experience highlighting their repentance and the positive contribution they are now able to make.

To understand the impact of the audio clips on attitudes towards people formerly associated with Boko Haram, BIT asked participants to complete a 20-minute face-to-face survey after listening to one of the three interventions or a control audio.

We found that all three audio interventions significantly improved the support for reintegration, including reported willingness to live nearby or trade with people formerly associated with Boko Haram, with the community members clip having an 18% improvement willingness to engage with ex-affiliates. The effective audio interventions were then broadcast on community radio stations in Northern Nigeria. This intervention is cost-effective and has potential to scale in other areas experiencing similar conflict.

Support for re-integration



N = 2,498
 **p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1
 adjusted for multiple comparisons.
 Primary analysis.

Change Minds Index - Composite score of willingness to decide to allow Ali to stay in community, agree to letting Ali stay in community, trade with Ali, allow Ali to come to their wedding or child's naming ceremony, allow daughter to marry Ali, allow Ali to attend community meetings, and vote for Ali for a councilorship position. This score can take on values from 0 to 100.

“ We found that all three audio interventions significantly improved the support for reintegration. ”



Active bystanding in Bangladesh

According to [recent research by BRAC](#), the world's largest non governmental organisation, close to 95% of women in Bangladesh have been sexually harassed while commuting. Active bystanding – where onlookers intervene in support of victims – offers a way to reduce the impact of sexual harassment on victims. The expectation of active bystanding might also encourage victims to speak out and deter would-be perpetrators from harassing in the first place.

In 2019 BIT partnered with BRAC to design and test a scalable intervention to reduce sexual harassment on buses running in Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital and most populous city. This project was conducted in collaboration with the state-owned Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation, BRTC.V

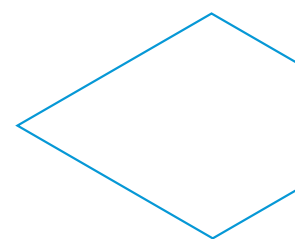
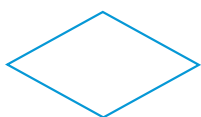
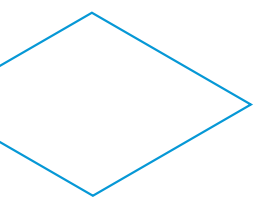
To better understand the lived experience of commuters in Dhaka, BIT and BRAC conducted interviews during which people expressed a willingness and readiness to intervene. However, several behavioural barriers appeared to prevent them from following through, including not knowing how to intervene and the fear of consequences. After several rounds of interviews, observations and user-testing, we developed posters to be stuck inside buses, targeted at overcoming these barriers. The posters relied on simple infographics to encourage people to intervene and provided them with easy steps to take so that they could do so safely and effectively.

The posters were evaluated by installing them on over 50 buses run by BRTC. In total more than 790 bus trips were observed during which close to 950 incidents of sexual harassment were recorded, and 3,518 passengers were asked survey questions.

This novel data collection technique allowed the collection of important new facts about sexual harassment on public transport, and confirmed the scale of the problem. Sixty percent of bus trips observed had at least one incident, and almost 1 in 10 women reported experiencing harassment on the bus trip they had just taken.

BIT's pre-post evaluation showed that the posters seemed to positively impact awareness of sexual harassment and attitudes towards victims, but not to affect active bystanding behaviour.

It provides a cautionary tale for many interventions which have been said to be effective based on proven changes in attitudes, but also demonstrates the promise in the approach and the value of further testing and applying behavioural insights and an adaptive, user-oriented approach to tackle the challenge of sexual harassment in a difficult setting.





Reducing single use plastics in the Pacific

With 240kg of plastic waste entering the ocean every second according to recent studies, the need to radically reduce single-use plastics has never been more urgent. Developing countries, and small island nations in particular, face challenges in addressing plastic pollution due to limited recycling and waste management infrastructure. This issue was compounded globally by the breakdown of recycling industries all over the world after China restricted the import of recyclable materials in 2017.

To address this challenge, BIT partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Solomon Islands Government to try and reduce use of single-use plastics in the capital city of Honiara.

In January 2019, a BIT team visited the Solomon Islands and saw first-hand the shocking scale of the plastic crisis, with plastic waste piled up on roadways and beaches. Particularly striking was the generation of plastic waste by Honiara's local schools with thousands of single-use containers being discarded during lunchtime each day. BIT applied a behavioural lens to this challenge in five Honiara schools, focusing on shifting the default away from single-use plastics and toward reusable containers.



BIT's trial introduced two different initiatives to encourage the use of reusable lunch containers and reduce single-use plastics. Firstly a deposit return initiative where students would be refunded a dollar if they returned their reusable containers at the end of lunch, and secondly a discount initiative where students who brought reusable containers would get a dollar off their meal.

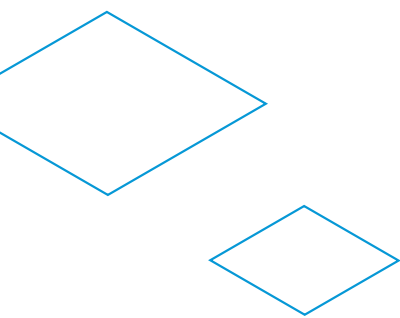
Overall, the deposit return scheme worked best and was well-received by students and staff. Three schools chose to implement this scheme, as they (correctly) believed it would be easier to change the behaviour of the food sellers rather than the behaviour of individual students. Students in these schools returned practically all containers after the lunch service to receive their deposit back and the schools continued to implement the initiative after the trial finished.

The results for the discount scheme were more mixed. In the primary school where this scheme was implemented alongside student engagement it successfully led to reductions in single-use containers. However, the secondary school participating did not really engage students or vendors. Compounded with the small price hike students may have actually been encouraged to buy their lunch from food sellers outside the school. These findings highlight the importance of additional school engagement alongside behavioural interventions.

During co-design workshops and consultations with local government officials, the team frequently encountered the attitude that it would be impossible to get people in the Solomon Islands to switch from single-use plastics. This study fundamentally challenged this popular belief, and the schools involved have been helping to spread the message that change is possible through the local media.

It also demonstrated some of BIT's key principles – make it easy and attractive for people to perform the desired behaviour. In this case, reusable containers became the default and their return was incentivised through a small financial incentive.

This small scale trial directly contributed to the Solomon Island government's proposal to ban five types of single-use plastic in 2020. This clearly demonstrates how relatively small nudges and trials can galvanise wider systemic action on the most urgent issues facing our planet today.





Tiger-proof fences

In this project BIT looked at how to encourage smallholder livestock farmers living on the edges of Gunung Leuser National Park on the island of Sumatra in Indonesia to build tiger-proof enclosures (TPEs) for their animals.

The Sumatran tiger is considered critically endangered with only a few hundred individuals surviving on the island. However these individuals can still cause considerable damage to the livestock and livelihoods of these local farmers.

BIT developed an intervention that could be tested to see if it would make it easier for smallholder farmers to build TPEs, could improve farmers' knowledge of the issues and benefits, and be scalable.

To do this BIT ran a process evaluation and randomly assigned 20 villages to receive a treatment. Both groups were offered free barbed wire for TPEs during a training on advanced livestock farming techniques. Treatment groups additionally had barbed wire delivered directly to their farms, which would be taken back in two months if TPEs were not built.



The study found that only farmers in the treatment group built any TPEs. Although those in the control group were also offered free barbed wire, none actually built TPEs. Threatening to take back the barbed wire was most effective at prompting immediate TPE-building action.



Example of a well-built tiger-proof enclosure

The main drawback was that because the TPEs built were not done so directly under the supervision of NGOs, they tended to be of slightly lower quality than TPEs that typically are (eg suboptimal gate construction quality or barbed wire placement).

Q *The study found that only farmers in the treatment group built any TPEs*



Handwashing in Bangladesh

According to UNICEF figures, In 2020, over a quarter of the world did not have access to safe drinking water and/or lacked the resources to safely manage sanitation.

To ensure that people around the world have access to safe and hygienic hand washing facilities, in 2020 the UK government partnered with global consumer goods multinational Unilever to launch the Hygiene Behaviour Change coalition to improve awareness and education around the importance of hygiene.

As part of this coalition, BRAC, the world's largest non governmental organisation and a long time partner of BIT, made a commitment to improve access by building 1,000 public handwashing stations in Bangladesh. From July to September 2021, BIT joined BRAC to answer the following question — what would it take to increase usage of these stations?

Our behaviour is largely influenced by our perception of how others behave. As such, we tend to over report our adherence to hygiene behaviours, making it very difficult to collect accurate data on handwashing habits via self-reports. To improve accuracy of data collection, BIT worked with BRAC's engineers to develop a new low-cost source of behavioural data: We attached clicker counters to the station foot pedals for soap. Our data showed that only 15% of passersby stopped to use the new handwashing stations.

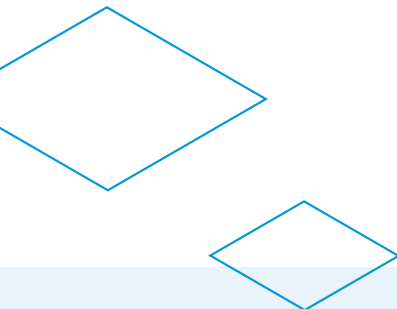
With such low rates of uptake, our next challenge was to understand what was contributing to these rates and how we could increase uptake through the use of behavioural science.


Our solution was to design a large scale randomised controlled trial (RCT) to assess various approaches to increase handwashing. We randomised 855 stations at 540 villages to receive either '**low-intensity**' (mirrors on station and signposts that directed people to the stations) or '**high-intensity**' interventions (in-person promotion, community boards and free soap and facemasks), or **no additional** interventions. The stations were randomised so that they were evenly divided between the two treatment and control groups.

BIT collected data for six weeks after the implementation of the interventions, and found that the high-intensity interventions were more effective at increasing handwashing than the low-intensity interventions. There was a statistically significant increase of around 15% in the average number of soap pedal presses in those stations that received high-intensity interventions over the 3 weeks of implementation, leading to an estimated roughly 100,000 additional handwashes with soap.

In the three weeks following the end of the promoters' visits (eg 'high-intensity interventions'), station usage decreased to the equivalent of the control condition. While promising in the short-term, these high-intensity interventions requiring in-person communications may not be sustainable in changing long-term behaviours.

Despite the drop-off in results, this work with BRAC demonstrated that even during a crisis (this trial took place during the COVID-19 pandemic) rigorous interventions and evaluation are possible and effects on behaviour can and should be measured.



 ***While promising in the short-term, these high-intensity interventions requiring in-person communications may not be sustainable in changing long-term behaviours.***



Eid safety during a pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, Mudik - the homecoming tradition for Indonesian Muslims to celebrate Eid al-Fitr - raised public health concerns given the transmission risks from groups of people gathering together.

To encourage people to celebrate in isolation and prevent the spread of COVID-19, BIT partnered with the West Java Digital Service (JDS) to test posters aimed at discouraging Mudik for Eid al-Fitr in 2020. An online experiment was run in May 2020 with a sample of 2,550 adults living in Java.



Three posters were tested:

“Don’t Mudik” An information-based poster that prompted people to stay at home.

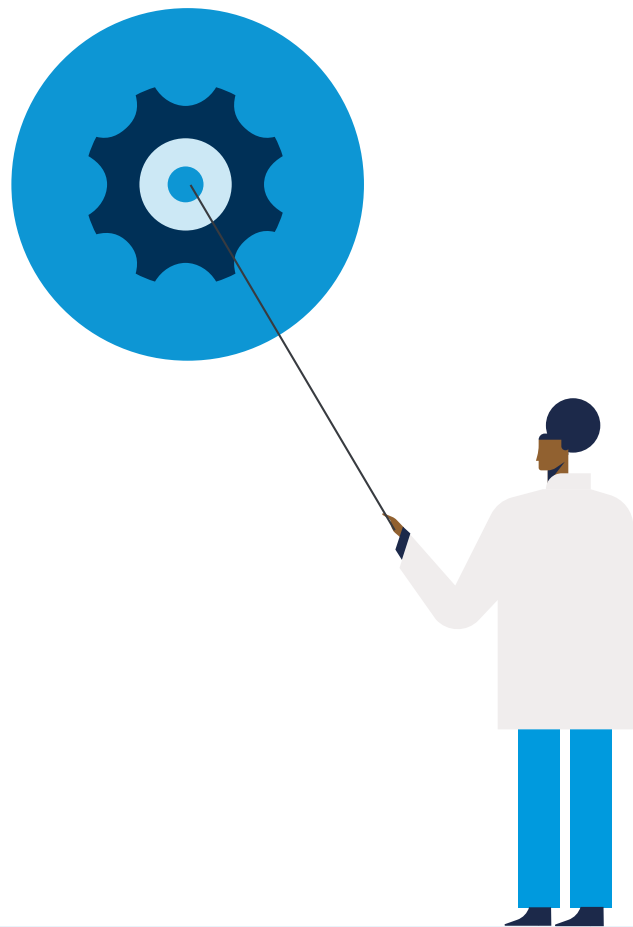
“Virtual Eid” A poster that encouraged people to celebrate “Virtual Eid”. This poster leveraged social norms through the use of fun infographics.


“Silent Spreader” This poster used images and language to hone in on different motivations. We used infographics and images to encourage people to think about their community’s health.



Each poster performed strongly on different outcomes. All posters performed similarly on an overall score that weighted each outcome according to its importance, as judged by the BIT and JDS teams.

The 'Don't Mudik' poster performed best on the main call to action but was weakest on sentiment and knowledge about coronavirus. The 'Virtual Eid' poster was strongest in discouraging risky Eid activities but weakest on ease of understanding and the main call to action.



 ***We found that each poster performed strongly on different outcomes***



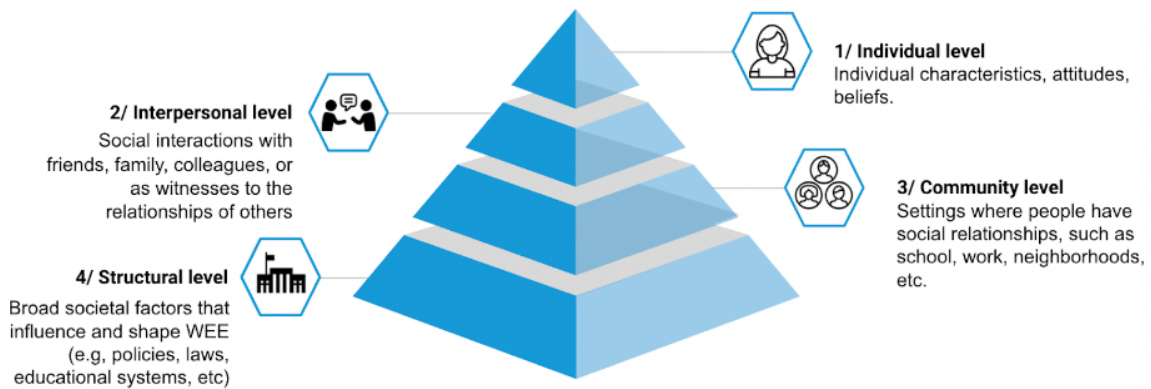
Women's economic empowerment in Japan

Despite recent progress towards improving women's economic empowerment, gender differences in wages and career prospects continue to exist in Japan. The wage gap between men and women is approximately 74%, which is largely attributed by the Japanese Government to differences in advancement, occupation and length of tenure.

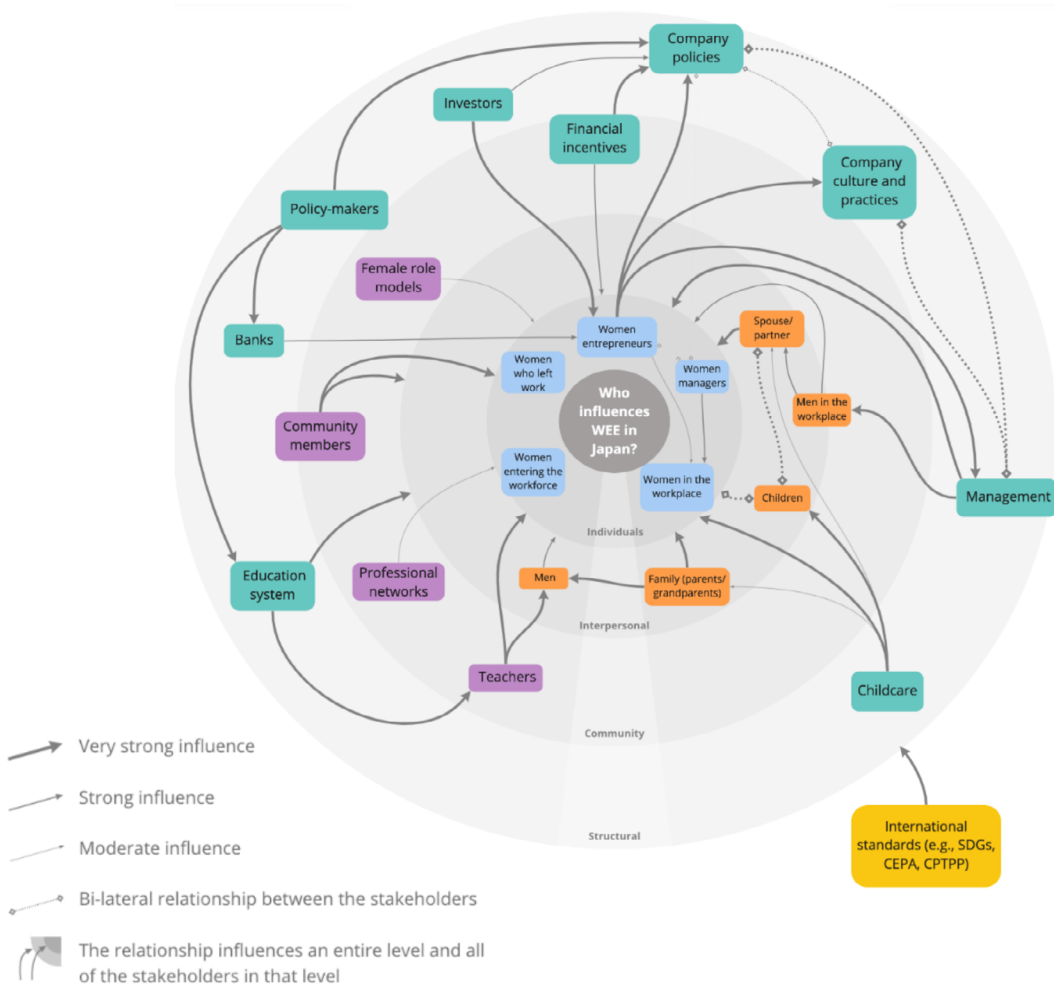
To address this, the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth, & Development Office (FCDO) commissioned BIT to provide recommendations to advance women's economic empowerment (women's economic empowerment). This project aimed to contribute towards greater equity by understanding the barriers and factors inhibiting the advancement of women's economic empowerment in Japan.

In early 2022, our team of behavioural science experts used a socio-ecological lens to explore women's economic empowerment across four different levels: individual, interpersonal, community, and structural. Socio-ecological models and research recognise that humans both create their specific environments and are shaped by them. Each level influences the other, which highlights the need to address each in order to sustainably advance women's economic empowerment in Japan.





Stakeholder map: a tool to visually represent the relationships between key stakeholders who influence women’s economic empowerment in Japan



Japanese, alongside stakeholder interviews and interviews with individuals currently or previously employed in Japan. Lastly, we conducted two focus groups with previous interviewees and new participants. One group consisted of male respondents and the other consisted of female respondents.

Our research resulted in a final report of findings that provided concrete recommendations and behaviourally-informed implementation considerations. Both English and Japanese versions of the report were available in hard print and digital formats. We presented the key findings and recommendations by their socio-ecological level of analysis:

Socio-ecological level	Recommendations
Individual Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 1: Use role models to provide women and men with concrete examples of work-life balance.
Interpersonal level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 2: Encourage more men to take longer parental leave by correcting misconceptions about social norms. • Recommendation 3: Encourage active partner participation in household tasks and child-rearing through influential peers, reminders, planning prompts, and reframing.
Community level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 4: Create, sustain, & make it easy for women to network. • Recommendation 5: Frame women's advancement as beneficial to everyone.
Structural level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 6: Reframe job postings to be more inclusive and highlight flexible working arrangements. • Recommendation 7: Develop timely messages to help women plan their return to work. • Recommendation 8: Standardise advancement rubrics and other tools to reduce subjectivity. • Recommendation 9: Provide incentives to smaller companies to make it easier to support women's economic empowerment.

This research helped develop an understanding of the barriers to women's economic empowerment in Japan and provide high-level behaviourally-informed recommendations for policy-makers to take forward in Japan.

 Americas

Tackling intimate partner and gender-based violence

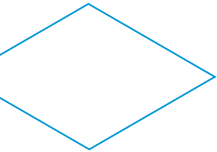
[One out of three women](#) experience physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lives, the majority at the hands of an intimate partner.

Since 2018, BIT has worked with partners including the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to leverage behavioural insights to reduce intimate partner violence (IPV) and gender-based violence (GBV) in Latin America. Below are five case studies from this work:

Case Study 1 - Reducing victim drop outs in Chile

In 2019, one in four women in Chile experienced Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Few women pursue legal action, and most women who do so have suffered violence for long periods of time.

Even after filing a complaint, the process can be time consuming and invasive. Of those who file, a third drop out before the case has concluded. This can be risky for victims (we use “victim” instead of “survivor” because it is the legal term for people who file an intimate partner violence case). When a victim drops the case, court-ordered protections are no longer enforced, which can expose them to retaliation and other forms of abuse.



After identifying this challenge, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Chile developed a theory that closer support to victims—through additional phone support in the process—could reduce dropout rates. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) partnered with BIT and the Prosecutor’s Office for Gender and Intra-Family Violence, part of the Regional Metropolitan Center North Prosecutor’s Office in Santiago to apply behavioural insights into the design of this new protocol to ensure it would be effectively implemented.

UNDP laid the groundwork for the project by interviewing victims to understand their experiences in the court system. They identified the following barriers in the process, including the time it takes to complete an IPV case (proceedings can last for months), isolation (victims may not receive an update for extended periods), and uncertainty about what to expect.

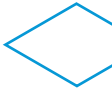
Next, BIT and UNDP staff interviewed prosecutors as well to take stock of the current criminal proceedings process in Santiago. This work culminated in a multi-day workshop with our UNDP partners and staff members from the Prosecutor’s Office, where we co-created a behavioural intervention to address these barriers.

The result was a randomised controlled trial to evaluate whether reminder phone calls and text messages sent to victims at key moments throughout their criminal proceedings would reduce dropout rates.

Between October 2019 and November 2020, women who filed an IPV complaint in Santiago were randomly assigned to either a treatment or a control group for comparison. The treatment group received a call and/or text at critical touch-points in the process: including after filing the complaint; before each hearing; before the trial; and after the verdict.

Included in these prompts were important reminders and information, for example, details about protection orders and services available through Centro de la Mujer, a local program for survivors. UNDP contracted two victim advocates to send the text messages and make the calls during the implementation period from the Prosecutor’s Office.

Behavioural insights informed the timing and flow of the messages, as well as the content, which aimed to address the barriers identified in the interviews and literature review. The control group experienced the typical criminal proceedings process, with the exception of an additional phone call to get their consent to participate in the study.



We found that phone calls and SMS text messages reduced the victim dropout rate by about 12 percentage points or 30%. Not only did more women follow through on their cases, we also found that the Prosecutor’s Office pressed charges in 16% more cases in the treatment group and the proportion of cases provisionally archived decreased by 43%. From this project, we learned about the complexities between intimate partner violence and the criminal legal response to it. Prosecuting these cases fairly and efficiently while minimising re-victimization is a challenge not only in Chile, but around the world. In addition to our work with UNDP in Chile, BIT teams have developed interventions in the UK and

[New Zealand](#) to increase court attendance and better engage victims and defendants.

More research must be done to conclude if reminder phone calls and texts reduce victim dropout at scale. We hope to evaluate the intervention with a larger sample size—ideally at the national level in Chile. We are also exploring opportunities to replicate this trial in other countries facing similar challenges.

Case Study 2 - Honduras: Increasing help seeking behaviours through social media

During the COVID-19 pandemic, [rates of violence increased with lockdown restrictions](#). In 2020, Honduras's emergency hotline (Ciudad Mujer Conect) received over [100,000 domestic violence calls](#).

To combat this issue and behavioural barriers that may be preventing women accessing help services, BIT designed a randomised control trial (RCT) to test four Facebook advertisements, each addressing a behavioural barrier we had identified: uncertainty aversion, availability bias, sunk costs, and lack of safety plans.

With a sample of 829,445 female Facebook users in Honduras, the study found that the ads that addressed sunk costs bias and uncertainty aversion were significantly effective in promoting help-seeking behaviour compared to a control ad.

Building off the success of these findings, in February 2021 the research was extended to explore which service types and channels should be emphasised in mass media messages to maximise interest in services and initial contacts.

An RCT on Facebook tested four treatment arms:

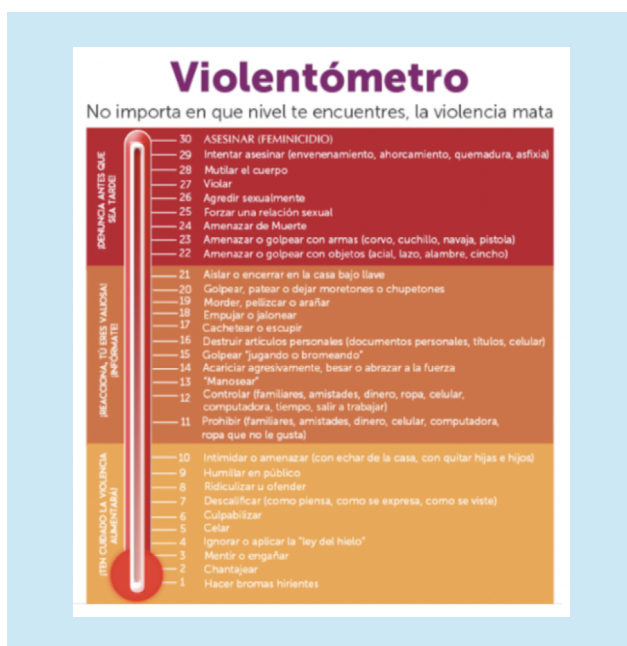
1. An ad portraying a woman receiving help through phone service
2. A woman seen receiving help through WhatsApp
3. A woman shown receiving help in-person
4. An ad portraying a woman receiving help through a web site (this was the control)

The ad showing the in-person visit performed better than the control at getting users to enter the Ciudad Mujer Conect landing page (a 6.1% difference). If the whole sample had seen the in-person visit ad this would have meant about 813 more women would have entered the Ciudad Mujer Conect landing page.



Case study 3 - El Salvador: Using simple graphic images to promote uptake of existing services

In El Salvador, BIT ran a three-arm RCT to test the effects of the [Violentómetro](#) infographic (below), which explains what different types of violence can look like against a thermometer visual device.



The *Violentómetro* explains what is considered violence and when you should seek help.

This thermometer visual device is used in this way across five countries in Latin America. The purpose of this project was to see if an infographic informed by behavioural science might have a greater impact on help-seeking behaviours.

A new behaviourally-informed image was created, the *Rueda de la Violencia* (Wheel of Violence) which depicted violence as a cyclical rather than linear process that can escalate at any point in time. It also showed all forms of violence (eg physical, psychological, sexual) as equally severe, instead of classifying some types as less harmful than others.

The sample included 716,279 women Facebook users, and the study measured their likelihood to view the content on Ciudad Mujer's web page based on the image they saw in their feeds.

Both intervention images significantly increased help-seeking behaviour. Women who saw *Violentómetro* were 137% more likely to access resources on the Ciudad Mujer website than those in the control group. Those exposed to the *Rueda de la Violencia* were 56% more likely to visit Ciudad Mujer online. The success of both of these images on help-seeking behaviours highlights the importance of using simple graphics to engage users.

Case study 4 - Colombia: Understanding barriers to reporting gender-based violence

In Colombia, the Comisarías de Familia are local police departments mandated to address civil disputes. In rural areas, they are often the only law enforcement authority. It is often the case that women survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) report their cases to the Comisarías de Familia but the authorities do not pursue them any further.

Together with UNDP, BIT ran a trial from June 2021 to June 2022 to identify behavioural solutions that improve services provided by Comisarías de Familia and ensure appropriate responses to reports of GBV. To understand how the reporting process and follow-up services actually function, we collected qualitative data in 27 rural municipalities in Colombia, conducting over 60 interviews with survivors, Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and police staff.¹ This compared the process described in the interviews (ie the process as experienced) to the legal framework of the Ministry of Justice (ie the process as designed and mandated by law).

The study found that several actors face behavioural barriers along the process of reporting that prevent follow-through. For the next stage the following barriers and proposed behavioural solutions for each were explored:

Barrier 1: Police staff regularly stick to the status quo of promoting conciliation of GBV cases, despite that current regulations dictate the provision of protective measures and forbid conciliation.

Solution: Reframing conciliation as a deliberate and incorrect choice to reduce its occurrence. A two-part strategy was proposed to discourage police staff from promoting conciliation. The first part involves sending individualised SMS or letters to police staff to emphasise that conciliation is forbidden by the law and frame it as a deliberate choice. For example, 'In the last quarter, you addressed 40% of the GBV.'

Barrier 2: Police staff experience cognitive overload because of long and complex legal procedures.

Solution: Simplification of materials and training to increase adherence to the official process. Simplify existing material by distilling the main points and using behavioural science to communicate the material in a more actionable way. This could include checklists, rules of thumb, and guides for creating safety plans. This intervention would be aimed at police staff, to be used with survivors, and would help overcome cognitive scarcity biases in the reporting process.

¹ Staff of Comisarías de Familia include police officers, social workers, lawyers, psychologists, doctors, etc.

Barrier 3: Police staff are burned out due to staff shortages and insufficient resources to provide to survivors.

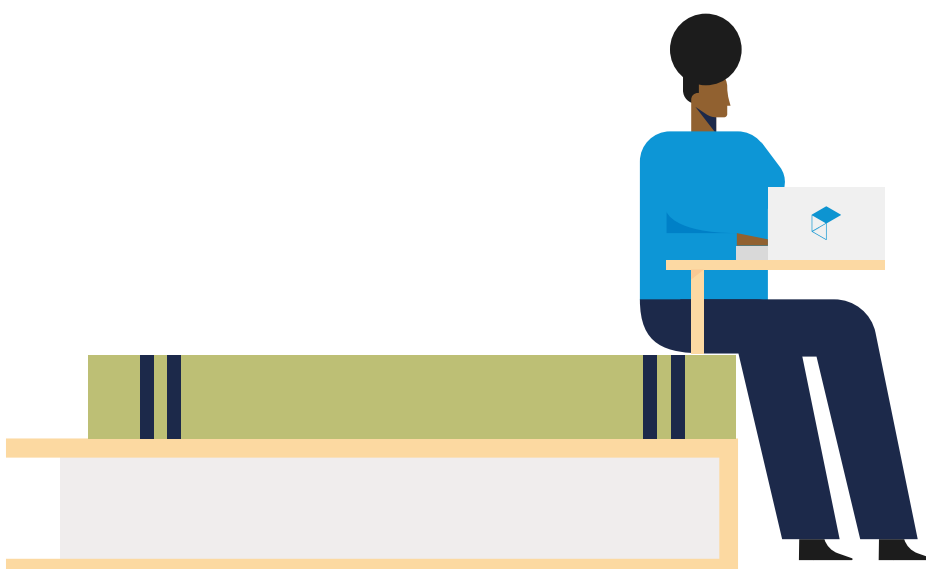
Solution: Messages to reduce professional burnout among police staff. Send messages via WhatsApp or SMS to police staff that affirm the value and impact of their work. Messages would include anonymous testimonies from survivors who have benefited from services provided by Comisarías de Familia, testimonies from other police staff to build a sense of community, and self-affirmation exercises.

Barrier 4: At the community level, there are negative social norms that reduce victims' likelihood of help-seeking as GBV is considered a 'private' issue.

Solution: Radio soap opera to promote positive social norms around help-seeking. Create an edutainment intervention to promote positive social norms about reporting GBV, build awareness within communities about violence against women and girls, and show survivors what the process should look like in practice. The soap opera would include depictions of survivors who report to dispel uncertainty about the process, survivors who do not report to present a counterfactual, role modelling of positive social norms and community support, and calls to action.

Barrier 5: At the CSO level, there is a planning fallacy that prevents them from coordinating and joining efforts (even though they want to!).

Solution: Reminders and coordination committees of CSOs to promote accountability. Each Comisaria de Familia should create an organisational map identifying all local organisations that provide support (eg temporary housing, employment, transportation) to survivors and establishing a coordination committee among the organisations. Police staff would receive weekly reminders to refer survivors to appropriate services then follow up at the end of the week with CSOs to confirm if survivors have reached out for support. The coordination committees would also collaborate to design local strategies for prevention and mitigation of GBV.



Case study 5 - Bolivia and Guatemala: Encouraging men to be allies in gender-based violence

In collaboration with UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean, BIT explored how to leverage behavioural science to engage men as allies in preventing violence against women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The first phase assessed programmes that organisations in the region are currently implementing to work with men on preventing violence. This was to understand what types of programmes these were, what barriers they navigate, and what has worked well. We also interviewed experts and men who had taken part in the programmes.

For the second phase, four behaviourally-informed messages were developed and tested that encouraged men to intervene when they witness violence against women and girls online. An online RCT tested these messages with over 5,000 men from Bolivia and Guatemala. Intention to intervene was measured by showing each respondent one of the following behaviourally-informed messages and asking how they would react to three scenarios illustrating varying forms of digital violence:

- Rules of thumb
- Digital violence types
- Dynamic social norms
- Deliberate choice

Three out of four messages—Rules of thumb, Digital violence types and Deliberate choice—significantly increased men’s intention to intervene. The Rules of thumb message performed best, increasing the proportion of respondents who reported they would stop perpetrators by 26%.

The messages also had a positive impact on knowledge and attitudes. Respondents seeing the intervention messages reported higher awareness, were less likely to believe their friends would be accepting of digital violence, were less likely to blame the victims, and reported higher levels of self-efficacy in acting against digital violence than those who did not see any message.

These trials illustrate how leveraging behavioural insights can have a large impact on addressing IPV and GBV.





Training schools leaders in Guatemala

In 2018, BIT visited high schools across Guatemala in partnership with the Guatemalan Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to try and understand why only 32% of high-school students pass the national standardised exam in reading comprehension and only 10% pass the exam in Maths.

In talking to principals, teachers and students, the team found that school principals receive very little training and in turn often fail to provide management and support to their teachers. This results in large differences in management and teaching quality between schools.

From these early interactions, it appeared that improving the quality of school management could improve the quality of education in those schools. BIT took inspiration from a blog written by Dave Evans, Senior Fellow at the Center for Global Development, which outlined compelling evidence on the impact of having a good school principal towards student outcomes.



While this blog highlighted the impact of a US trial including a 300-hour training programme for principals, due to MINEDUC budget constraints BIT tested a lighter-touch, lower-cost version of school management training interventions originally evaluated by Roland Fryer. The idea was to take the main components of Fryer's intervention and turn them into simple 'rules of thumb' for principals - making it easier for principals to recall best practices and avoid cognitive overload. The guidance included recommendations on how often principals should conduct lesson planning meetings with teachers, with six specific suggestions of what to do in them and how often principals should observe teachers in classrooms.

Together with the MINEDUC, BIT developed a half-day training session for principals, a poster with the rules of thumb, an implementation checklist to help them plan their new management practices, and a letter of support from Oscar Hugo López, the Minister of Education, to formalise and give gravitas to the guidance.

After some prototyping and piloting of the intervention, a trial was conducted involving almost all of the high-school principals in Guatemala. In total 4,124 high schools and 2,892 principals (some of whom oversee multiple schools) participated in the trial, and about half of the principals were randomly assigned to receive the new training and materials we developed with MINEDUC.

To measure school management practices, we surveyed teachers from each school at the end of the school year about the practices in their school and the behaviour of their principals.

The 'rules of thumb' training intervention increased the frequency and quality of school management practices by principals across a broad range of indicators. Teachers who were in schools in the treatment group reported more planning sessions and class observations conducted by their principals. These teachers were also more likely to be spoken to about teaching, be helped to set class objectives, adapt their teaching to the level of students, and provide support to students with difficulties. The job satisfaction of teachers involved in the intervention also increased throughout the trial period. However, while the intervention measurably changed the behaviour of thousands of principals, it did not translate into an impact on student attainment in maths or reading.

Overall, the results are promising. This light-touch intervention, which is easy to scale, had a range of positive outcomes on management by principals. However, they also point to the drawbacks in such a 'light-touch' approach, given that student attainment remained unaffected in the year evaluated.

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