Mobilizing and Applying Evidence: Perspectives from Behavioural Science

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A bit about BIT

**Impact:** Designing and testing interventions informed by behavioural science to improve policy outcomes.

From reducing wait times, to getting people back to work.

**Finding out what works!**
Our frustration

- Strong research
- Promising intervention
- Experimental results positive and significant

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- Not taken to scale

We were missing something!
An uphill battle

Status Quo Bias
- Loss Aversion
- Limited Attention / Bandwidth
- Sunk Cost Fallacy
- Confirmation Bias

Resource Constraints
Stakeholder Interests

BIT
Impact @ Scale!
We need “switchbacks”
A brief detour EAST …
Awareness

How can we get decision-makers more aware of our evidence-based solution?

• Easy: *go to them*
• Attractive: *catch their attention*
• Social: *go to who they go to*
• Timely: *go to them when they need it*

*Awareness is necessary but not sufficient*
How can we get decision-makers to understand our evidence and be motivated to implement our ideas?

- Easy: enable comparison to clarify impact
- Attractive: frame, visualize and/or use narratives
- Social: find influencers & “small world” networks, engage end-users
- Timely: capitalize on the “fresh start effect”
Enabling comparison

Source: Deworming: A best buy for development, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (JPAL), 2012
Students, politicians and civil servants are much more likely to prefer a risky option when framed in terms of *number of deaths* instead of *lives saved*.

People are *averse to losses*.
Preparation and implementation

How can we help decision-makers effectively implement our ideas?

- Easy: **start small**
- Attractive: **co-design and co-deliver; design smart incentives**
- Social: **feedback and monitoring**
- Timely: **just-in-time training and planning support**
A case study: Jobcentres
Conclusion

• The hard work is not over with finding an effective intervention

• Scaling / spreading is a challenge, and it’s partly a *behavioural challenge*

• Behavioural science suggests concrete strategies that can build “switchbacks” to overcome barriers to adoption