Policy Brief #1

ENABLING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

For greater health, equity and sustainability

WHY 'BEHAVIOUR CHANGE'?

Our unsustainable behaviours impact our health and the health of our planet. Changes in how people choose to live, move and consume is a **key aspect** of transitioning to more sustainable societies. But behaviour, and its underlying mechanisms, is **insufficiently considered** by policies seeking to mitigate the climate crisis and address ill-health.

"Understanding and changing patterns of behaviour is key to: promoting health and well-being, social cohesion and equity, a sustainable environment, efficient and equitable delivery of services, a productive economy, ...and pretty much everything!" [1]

– Prof. Susan Michie, Director of the Centre for Behaviour Change, University College London

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

> **CONSIDER AND INCLUDE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE FROM THE BEGINNING OF POLICYMAKING PROCESSES.**

Above all, 'changing' behaviours should not be about blaming people for their current behaviours and telling them what to do differently. Instead, it should be about:

› **Understanding behaviours** and their underlying mechanisms across contexts and population groups, taking into account the influences of social, cultural and physical environments;

› **Assessing** what needs to change;

› **Building a social and physical environment** that facilitates these changes;

› **Encouraging and enabling people** – as individuals and as professionals – to make sustainable, positive changes, by implementing effective policies and identifying and tackling barriers.

INHERIT

INHERIT is a Horizon 2020 research project (2016-2019), based on the premise that environmental and societal challenges are interlinked and relate to unsustainable 'take, make, consume, dispose' economies. Addressing these challenges through integrated solutions is an opportunity to simultaneously improve the environment, health and health equity (the INHERIT 'triple-win').

BUT HOW?

The following recommendations emerged from INHERIT's work. They should not be considered a comprehensive guide on behaviour change, but provide indications of what can be done.

## IDENTIFY THE BEST APPROACHES TO ENABLE AND ENCOURAGE CHANGE

WHY?

○ Behaviour change is driven by a person's capability, opportunity and motivation. These, in turn, can be influenced by policies.

HOW?

○ The Behaviour Change Wheel helps to understand how policies influence people's behaviour, and which policies can be used to foster a triple-win (improving the environment, health, and equity) in the areas of living, moving and consuming.

○ INHERIT case studies highlighting the application of the Behaviour Change Wheel are included in this brief.

THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE WHEEL[2]

■ Components of Behaviour

■ Interventions functions

■ Policy categories
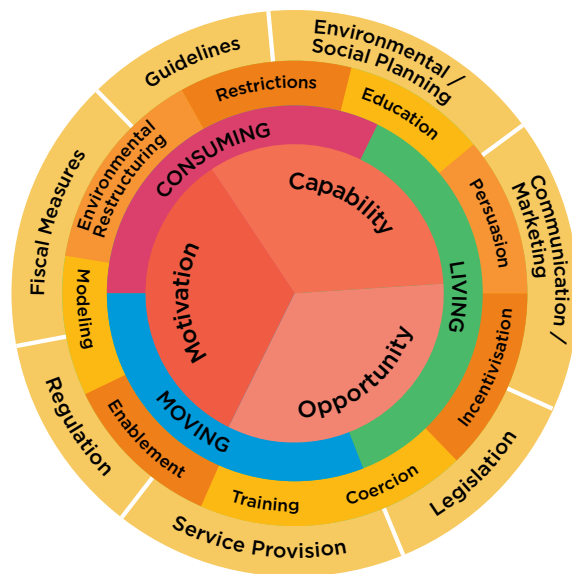
MAKE IT AS EASY AND AFFORDABLE AS POSSIBLE

WHY?

○ Cost is a key factor of change, while initiatives that require a high level of personal agency are less likely to be adopted at scale.

HOW?

○ Invest in urban infrastructures that make it easy for people to engage in active travel.

○ Subsidise fruits and vegetables.

○ Be careful not to stigmatise or stereotype.

MAKE IT FUN AND POSITIVE

WHY?

○ People are more likely to be motivated to change if it is enjoyable.

HOW?

○ Get people outdoors to engage with nature.

○ Use food to bring people together.

○ Invest in technologies that make physical activity fun (e.g. through motivational features, user community).

BE BOLD AND LEGISLATE FOR CHANGE AS NEEDED

WHY?

○ Laws to protect the environment and quality of life lead to fast and widespread changes in behaviour, even if they are not always easily accepted.

HOW?

○ Assess the urgency and how to respond in an effective and proportionate manner within ethical frameworks.

○ Design laws to help achieve difficult changes (e.g. taxes or prohibitions on products which are damaging to health and/or the environment, or on carbon emissions).

THE EVIDENCE – INHERIT TRIPLE-WIN CASE STUDIES[3]

CONSUMING | LIVING: SUSTAINABLE FOOD IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MADRID (SPAIN) AND *GEMÜSEACKERDEMIE* – VEGETABLE ACADEMY (GERMANY)

In the context of Madrid's adherence to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, **56 public nursery schools** in socioeconomically diverse neighbourhoods are providing children with healthier, more sustainably produced food, and raising awareness of the importance of healthy diets amongst parents.

GemüseAckerdemie supports teachers to educate children about the theory and practice of growing food. Launched as a pilot in 2013, by 2019 it has expanded to over 400 schools and kindergartens across Germany, Austria and Switzerland, including in underprivileged areas.

Both initiatives **train** and **educate** teachers, school staff, volunteers and parents, who in turn provide children with **opportunities** to consume healthier more sustainable foods, and, in the case of GemüseAckerdemie, to engage with nature. In Madrid, the increasing **capability** of kitchen staff to provide healthy sustainable meals has increased their job satisfaction, despite heavier work-loads, since they are **motivated** by the desire to include new skills in their work and the knowledge that they are benefiting children. In Germany, evaluation reports reflect that strengthening children's **capabilities** has impacted their ways of thinking and acting; they feel more involved with nature and value their food more after they have had the **opportunity** to experience how much work it takes to grow crops.

Recommendation: Ensure the sustainability of such policies by embedding them in school curricula through legislative and regulatory measures and guidelines. Ensure that these policies build the capacities of the adults involved through education and training.

MOVING: E-COACHING (NETHERLANDS AND GREECE), AND URBAN CYCLERS, PRAGUE (CZECH REPUBLIC)

Two INHERIT case studies evaluated technological devices that encourage behaviour change, notably:

- **An e-coaching device:** aims to increase levels of physical activity amongst more disadvantaged populations

- **The 'UrbanCyclers' app:** aims to promote regular cycling, through a combination of cycling maps, route planner, turn-by-turn navigation, and smart gamification features.

The devices **enable** and **incentivise** people to engage in more physical **activity** and improve their **motivation** and **capability** to do so. The evaluations suggest that people **across socio-economic groups** can be effectively motivated to walk, cycle, and exercise more frequently with the help of technological innovations, at least in the short-term. The UrbanCyclers app also provides the Prague municipality with data that reflects how 'cyclable' different parts of the city are, which can be used to improve cycling infrastructure and promote cycling.[4]

> **Recommendation:** Incentivise the development of lifestyle technologies that motivate physical activity to ensure they are accessible across socio-economic groups. Pair this with the environmental/social planning, legislation and regulation needed for environmental restructuring and enablement, so that people also have the opportunity and capability to be physically active.

FIND OUT MORE!

Discover more policy-relevant insights from INHERIT in **two parallel policy briefs:** "Shifting to integrated governance" and "Putting health equity at the heart of sustainable transitions".

All INHERIT outcomes, including the three Policy Briefs and a related Policy Toolkit, four Future Scenarios of what Europe could look like in 2040, a Policy Roadmap of how to get there, a database of over 100 good practices, qualitative, quantitative and cost-benefit analyses of INHERIT case studies and a report pulling results together to set out "Elements of good practice", can be found here: www.inherit.eu.

REFERENCES

1   Michie, S. (2018) 'Behaviour change in the context of sustainability, health & social inclusion'. The INHERIT your Future Forum. Vienna, 21 November 2018.

2   The Behaviour Change Wheel was developed by Susan Michie (Michie, S. Atkins, L., & West R. (2014) The Behaviour Change Wheel: A Guide to Designing Interventions. 1st edn. UK). It is part of the INHERIT model, a broader tool to foster triple-win policymaking. More information on the INHERIT model in: van der Vliet N., et al. (2018) The INHERIT model: A tool to jointly improve health, environmental sustainability and health equity through behaviour and lifestyle change. Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6068874/; and this video: https://inherit.eu/project/inherit-model/.

3   For evidence on all INHERIT case studies: Bell, R. et al. (2019) Ten lessons for good practice for the INHERIT triple-win: Health, Equity, and Environmental Sustainability. Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/16/22/4546; Bell, R. et al. (forthcoming) Creating triple-wins for health, equity and environmental sustainability: Elements of good practice based on learning from the INHERIT case studies, https://www.inherit.eu/resources/reports/; and Anthun K.S., et al. (2019) INHERIT: Implementing triple-win case studies for living, moving and consuming that encourage behavioural change, protect the environment, and promote health and health equity, https://www.inherit.eu/INHERIT-d4-1-implementation-report.pdf..

4   Zvěřinová, I., Máca, V. & Ščasný, M. (2019) Note-taking from INHERIT Focus Group conducted by Charles University on UrbanCyclers case study, which took place in the context of: van der Vliet N., et al. (forthcoming) Success Factors, Barriers and Future of Intersectoral Cooperation. A Qualitative Evaluation of Twelve INHERIT Case Studies, https://www.inherit.eu/resources/reports/.

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