

Social Marketing Campaigns to Address Social Problems

Mitchell R. Campbell and Markus Brauer

Abstract

Social marketing aims to address social problems by changing human behaviour, either by increasing the incidence of pro-social behaviours or decreasing the incidence of anti-social behaviours. In pursuit of these goals, social marketers use an established step-by-step process for developing, implementing, and evaluating behaviour change campaigns. They aim to change specific behaviours among specific individuals within a specific setting at a specific time. Social marketing campaigns draw on and, in turn, contribute to our understanding of human behaviour because they often utilise relevant psychological theories to achieve their goals. Social marketers begin by defining the goal of their campaign, as well as the setting in which it will be applied, the individuals it will target, and the specific behaviour it will aim to change. Then, additional background research provides information about what makes behavioural change more or less likely, and this information is used to craft the framing and content of the campaign. Finally, campaigns are implemented and evaluated, using a combination of behavioural and attitudinal outcomes. More than simply providing a proof of concept indicating whether and how psychological theories can be applied to address real-world problems, social marketing also extends psychological theory by highlighting how features of the situation and population affect psychological phenomena.

Keywords: Marketing; Behaviour change; Intervention; Field experiment; Social problems

Social marketing is a method for developing, implementing, and evaluating initiatives intended to change human behaviour. The goal of most social marketing campaigns is to increase the incidence of positive, pro-social behaviours (e.g., eating a healthy diet, recycling, adopting shelter animals) or decrease the incidence of negative, anti-social behaviours (e.g., littering, harassment, drunk driving). Social marketers frequently think of the desired behaviour they want people to engage in as the product they are trying to sell, and their task is to make this behaviour look more appealing than people's current behaviour, the competition. To do so, they employ traditional marketing techniques and incorporate psychological principles of behaviour change.

Social marketers aim to change specific behaviours among specific individuals within a specific setting at a specific time. This goal differs from the goal of psychology or behavioural economics, which involves identifying general principles about human behaviour and cognition (Lee & Kotler, 2019; Oyserman, 2016; Rad et al., 2018; Thaler, 2016). For social marketers, behaviour change is of seminal importance, and is the primary metric by which the success of campaigns is measured: for example, an initiative intended to decrease electricity usage that did not affect this specific outcome would ultimately be deemed unsuccessful, even if it changed attitudes about the climate crisis.

There are eight core steps involved in developing a social marketing behaviour change campaign (Lee & Kotler, 2019; McKenzie-Mohr, 2011), beginning with identifying the issue to be solved. Throughout the rest of this article, we will describe these steps and apply them to a running example.

1 Identify the problem, specify a purpose, select a focus

Social marketers start by stating, in the broadest terms possible, the *problem* they are trying to solve. The statement might be something like ‘Decrease the obesity rate’, ‘Reduce intergroup tensions’, or ‘Promote environmentalism’. Such a broad statement of the problem is useful for orienting the campaign, but it is too abstract to be of any real utility. To translate the problem into something more actionable, it must be distilled into a more concrete *purpose*. The purpose describes the difference a campaign will make in pursuit of the overarching problem. For example, someone who is trying to decrease the obesity rate might choose a purpose like ‘Increase how much people exercise’ or ‘Improve people’s diets’. Purpose statements invoke some behaviour that can be objectively measured: this behaviour will likely become the key indicator of campaign effectiveness.

Even the purpose statement, though, is too broad. To address this problem, social marketers select a *focus* of the campaign, which more clearly specifies the situation to which the purpose will be applied. This situation should provide an opportunity to adopt the desirable behaviour sought, fill gaps in coverage of other programmes or organisations, and, most importantly, contribute to solving the problem originally identified. For example, to increase how much people exercise, public health officials may focus on recreation on a university campus; to improve diets, they may focus on local school lunches.

Identifying the overarching problem to be solved and crafting a campaign purpose and focus provides actionable direction for a social marketing campaign. The latter components facilitate campaign development, whereas the former can serve as a guideline, ensuring those crafting the campaign bear in mind the ultimate motivation for their work.

1.1 Example

A social marketer is hired to get people to buy more local produce, helping to reduce carbon footprints and improve the local economy. The overarching problem the campaign hopes to address is the negative environmental impact of factory farms, which are outcompeting local farms. To address this problem, she chooses a campaign purpose of increasing the proportion of produce bought from local farms in area grocery stores. Based on background research, she learns that many local markets have a high proportion of local produce, but one area chain grocer sells these foods at a relatively low rate. Individuals at this grocer say they are

open to promoting local produce more. Thus, she selects this local chain grocer as the focus of her campaign.

2 Conduct a situation analysis

Now that the social marketing campaign has some direction, social marketers get to work acquiring additional information. The information obtained in this step, referred to as conducting a situation analysis, helps the campaign by identifying factors outside of the social marketers' control that could affect its success. Two broad categories of these factors are those that originate from the *immediate environment* and those that originate from the *broader context*.

Factors originating from the immediate environment principally concern the opportunities afforded and limitations imposed by the specific setting in which the social marketing campaign will be implemented. Examples include what resources are available, whether the campaign is supported by management, how high of a priority the issue is to individuals in that setting, and what kind of outside partners could provide additional support. These factors should be thought of in terms of whether they will strengthen or weaken the campaign. Categorising the factors makes them actionable: strengths must be maximised, whereas weaknesses must be minimised. For example, a supportive member of upper management should be made even more involved in the campaign and asked to talk about it with other top management, whereas a lack of monetary resources should be addressed by applying for grants or finding other outside funding.

Aside from the immediate situation, the campaign also occurs within a broader context: social forces, demographics, cultural phenomena, technological changes, and a variety of other factors affect whether a given campaign is successful. As immediate environment factors were thought of in terms of strengths and weaknesses, these broader context factors should be thought of in terms of opportunities and threats. Again, this categorisation makes these factors actionable. For example, an opportunity for a campaign to reduce social inequality could be that people are increasingly attuned to the issue of diversity, but a threat may be concerns that some people have about how diversity could affect American identity.

Finally, a situation analysis involves looking into prior efforts to change behaviour in the selected situation. What was done in the past, and were these efforts successful or not? If they were successful, what elements of these efforts seemed to be key to success? If they were not successful, what factors of the campaign, the immediate environment, or the broader context prevented them from being successful? Learning from past efforts is key to increasing the effectiveness of future efforts.

Assembling this background information through conducting a situation analysis allows social marketers to anticipate factors that could influence the success of their campaign, which in turn will affect how they develop campaign materials. These factors might be thought of as lenses through which the people a social marketer is trying to reach will view the campaign: in order to create something effective, one must be able to anticipate how these lenses might skew the information being provided.

2.1 Example

The social marketer asks management at the grocery chain how they feel about encouraging local produce sales and whether they have done anything in the past. She learns they are

open to the idea, though not extremely enthusiastic, and have few resources to devote to the cause. She applies for grant funding through an advocacy group for family farmers in the US. Managers tell her they stocked more local produce in the past, but they did not sell at the same rate as foods produced by factory farms. She learns that in the past, local produce was not prominently labelled as such. The social marketer does additional research and learns that there is a growing movement to buy more local food, largely stemming from increasing concerns about the climate crisis. A possible threat, though, is that people do not want to spend too much money on groceries.

3 Select a target audience

Few commercial marketers would expect that their advertising campaigns will affect all people similarly. Instead, they design campaigns to be maximally effective for a specific group of people. This group may be defined in terms of demographics, psychological characteristics, or some combination of traits. Social marketers adopt the same approach: rather than crafting the campaign broadly, they aim to appeal primarily to a specific subset of the population. How do they choose this subset? They first segment the population, then evaluate these segments along a number of relevant dimensions, and finally select the segment to target in their campaign.

A variety of factors affect human behaviour, including personality, personal identities like age or race, values and beliefs, geographic location, and social class. Segmenting the market involves breaking the population into groups based on some number of these factors. For example, a campaign might target high school teachers (occupation) in suburban New York (geography) who began teaching within the last five years (age/career stage), whereas another might target men who have sex with men (demographic) living in rural areas (geography) with negative attitudes toward condoms (beliefs). The factors that are used to define relevant segments should be based on the purpose and focus of the campaign: for example, if a social marketer wants to encourage uptake of a novel behaviour, they might consider an individual's 'openness to new experiences'.

Once these segments are defined, they must be evaluated. This process allows social marketers to determine which segment is the optimal target of the campaign. To conduct the evaluation, segments are rated along a number of dimensions, including the size of the segment, how widespread the behaviour to be changed is within the segment, how reachable members of the segment are, whether they are responsive to messaging, and the costs associated with marketing to this segment. These ratings are often made on the same scale and averaged, so the segment with the highest score is relatively strong on all dimensions and thus is selected as the target audience.

Sometimes the optimal segment will score highly on all dimensions, but often it is necessary to make trade-offs: one segment might be particularly large, but another is particularly reachable. One way to help resolve this conundrum is to look back at the campaign's focus as well as the situation analysis. It could be that this information helps social marketers identify the segment that more clearly advances the goal of the campaign or that situational constraints make one segment the clear choice over another. Once the target audience is selected, the rest of the campaign will be designed to appeal to members of this target audience. Many individuals from different segments will be exposed to the campaign, but the target audience represents the individuals for whom the campaign should be maximally effective.

3.1 Example

Because her campaign focus is one grocery store chain, the social marketer's potential target audiences are limited to people who shop at that chain. She conducts focus groups with customers and learns that few of them regularly buy local or organic foods in general. She learns that a substantial proportion have never considered buying local produce, but that an equally large proportion have considered it but do not know much about it. She also learns that the store mainly caters to individuals who are middle or lower middle class, and these individuals are highly concerned about the cost of groceries. Finally, she observes that adults shopping for their families buy the most groceries. She decides to target middle income adults who purchase groceries for their entire family and are open to the idea of buying more local produce.

4 Select a target behaviour

Even a social marketing campaign with a well-defined purpose could still target a variety of different behaviours. For example, a campaign with the purpose 'Decrease car commutes to work' may seem specific, but could target any of a number of potential behaviours: riding the local bus, walking or biking to work, using park and ride or other ride-sharing opportunities, getting businesses to allow employees to work from home one day per week, and so on. This step involves selecting a specific behaviour from the array of behaviours that could fit the purpose of the campaign. As with selecting a target audience, these potential behaviours vary along a number of dimensions that help social marketers assess their relative strength as target behaviours.

Specifically, social marketers tend to consider the impact of a given behaviour on the overarching problem the campaign seeks to address, people's willingness to engage in the behaviour, whether the behaviour can be measured objectively, and proportion of the target population already engaging in the behaviour. For example, though eating insects instead of red meat would have a large positive impact on the environment and very few people currently do it, people are also unlikely to take up this behaviour. Installing LED and CFL lightbulbs is simple and therefore substantially more likely, but it has a smaller impact and many people already do it. As with target audience selection, social marketers often assign each of these dimensions a numeric weight on the same scale and then calculate the average; the behaviour with the highest average should have the optimal combination of these characteristics.

Though behaviour change is the primary goal of any social marketing campaign, social marketers often have ideas about what people should know and believe as a result of their campaign. This step provides an opportunity to specify goals related to knowledge and belief outcomes. Changes in these outcomes are not as meaningful as shifts in the target behaviour, but can provide some insight into how the campaign worked and could indicate some area of campaign success even absent behaviour change. For example, a campaign to reduce obesity might not see changes in average body mass index over a short time scale, but survey results showing that people know more about how diet affects weight could suggest some degree of campaign success.

Once they select a target behaviour, social marketers set a goal that represents the magnitude of the effect the campaign will have on this behaviour, e.g., 'Increase rate of adoption from animal shelters by 30%', or 'Persuade 250 high school students to quit

smoking'. These goals provide an objective criterion against which the campaign can be measured. This approach is substantially different from traditional psychology research: by relying on hypothesis testing, psychologists are usually asking whether any difference exists, whereas the social marketing approach asks whether the observed difference has met a meaningful criterion.

Steps 3 and 4 of the social marketing method occur iteratively. Sometimes a target behaviour is chosen, but in the process of evaluating different potential target audiences it becomes apparent that it makes more sense to focus on a different target behaviour. Thus, the decision of target audience informs the decision of target behaviour, and vice versa.

4.1 Example

Based on her objective, the social marketer decides her target behaviour will be increased purchases of produce from local farms. In addition, she would like people to know that there are many local farms that sell produce in this chain of grocery stores and believe that buying from these farms has a more positive impact on the community than buying from factory farms. Specifically, she sets the goal of increasing purchases of locally grown produce by 25%.

5 Learn about barriers, benefits, and features of the competition

For unknown reasons, many members of the target audience do not currently engage in the target behaviour. The purpose of this step is to obtain information about what those reasons are so they can be addressed in the social marketing campaign. There are several methods social marketers use to obtain this information, including individual interviews, focus groups, and surveys. One particularly effective method involves assembling a list of possible reasons through qualitative methods (e.g., interviews and focus groups), then asking members of the target audience to rate the relevance of these reasons quantitatively (e.g., through a survey using a numeric scale). This method provides information not only about what the relevant reasons are, but also their relative importance. These reasons are broken down into the categories of barriers, benefits, and features of the competition.

Barriers prevent an individual from engaging in a given behaviour. They can be concrete (e.g., not enough time, no access to the required services) or abstract (e.g., not thinking the behaviour is worthwhile, not believing one could successfully perform the behaviour). To obtain relevant barriers, a social marketer would ask individuals why they are currently not performing the target behaviour, why they might hesitate to do it in the future, or what they think they would have to sacrifice to engage in the behaviour.

Benefits are the positive outcomes an individual anticipates as a consequence of engaging in the desired behaviour. Like barriers, benefits can be concrete (e.g., financial rewards, access to a desired resource) or abstract (e.g., feeling social connection with others, satisfying life goals). Many benefits are based on fundamental human motivators, including having a sense of meaning, experiencing positive emotions, or feeling competent. Members of the target audience might be asked what they expect to gain as a result of engaging the target behaviour or why they think people who already engage in the target behaviour do so. Social marketers sometimes ask individuals who already engage in the target behaviour what benefits they derive from it.

Finally, members of the target audience who are not engaging in the target behaviour are, necessarily, choosing some alternative behaviour instead. Social marketers refer to this alternative behaviour as the *competition*. It is useful to think about the competition through the lens of commercial marketing: if a marketer wants consumers to buy a particular brand of dish soap rather than the brand they are currently buying, they need to know what consumers think about their current brand. This same logic applies to social marketers: they need to know what makes the competing behaviour particularly appealing. Just like the target behaviour, the competition comes with certain barriers and benefits: for example, it might be particularly easy (e.g., throwing out recyclables instead of sorting them) or time efficient (e.g., driving instead of biking). The same process and questions presented earlier can be used to identify the barriers and benefits associated with the competition.

For a campaign to be maximally effective, the barriers of the target behaviour must be minimised and its benefits highlighted. Exactly the opposite should be done for the competing behaviour: its barriers should be highlighted and its benefits minimised. The ultimate goal is to make the target behaviour more appealing than the competition. The information obtained in this step helps to ensure that the messages used in a campaign are relevant to people's actual concerns and beliefs rather than the social marketers' perceptions.

5.1 Example

The social marketer sits down with groups of shoppers who self-report that they currently do not make an effort to buy local produce. She asks the individuals in these groups what keeps them from buying more local produce, as well as what could encourage them to do so. She also asks about their general thoughts and feelings about local farms. People in these groups report the most salient barriers are simply not knowing which foods are local, the comparatively high cost of these foods, and not thinking their choices in the store make that much of a difference. Their potential benefits include feeling like they are supporting the local community, improving the environment, and having higher quality food to eat. They say buying factory-farmed produce is usually easier and cheaper, and they also say they are more confident in the quality they will get compared to a product from a local farm.

6 Compose positioning statement(s)

At this point in the process, social marketers synthesise the information they have obtained about their target audience, target behaviour, and relevant barriers, benefits, and features of the competition. This synthesis is made manifest in a positioning statement, which essentially summarises the uniting goal of the campaign. In its simplest form, it describes who is being targeted, what behaviour is sought, and how the social marketer wants members of the target audience to view this behaviour, e.g., 'We aim to get recreational boaters to see ridding their hulls of mussels as a normal step in boating, an opportunity to be a good sportsman and nature steward, and easy to do because of infrastructure made available at many boat landings'. As can be seen in this example, those elements summarising the goals of the campaign directly correspond to relevant barriers, benefits, and features of the competition. This statement is primarily intended to provide direction internally to a social marketing team: when crafting components of the campaign, they can refer to this statement for guidance about what material should or should not be included.

6.1 Example

At this point, the social marketer has accumulated a substantial amount of information about her target audience and what members of this audience think about her target behaviour: buying more local produce. She crafts the following positioning statement for her campaign: ‘The goal is to get middle income adults purchasing groceries for their whole family to see buying produce grown by local farmers as a way to support the local community, simpler and more inexpensive than they expect, and a reliable way to obtain tasty, high-quality foods.’

7 Develop campaign materials

Finally, after obtaining all this background information and developing a blueprint of the campaign, social marketers get to work crafting the actual meat of the campaign. There are four core elements, referred to as the four Ps: product, price, place, and promotion.

The *product* refers to what is actually being offered by the campaign. It has three key levels. The first, the core product, refers to the benefit(s) of the target behaviour the campaign seeks to highlight. These benefits are usually those stated explicitly in the positioning statement. The next level is the actual product, which refers to the goods and services the target audience will consume as part of the campaign. Social marketers must concretely describe these products, e.g., what type of bike helmet to distribute or what home gardening skills to cover in a seminar. Information about barriers and benefits can inform these decisions: if a relevant barrier is that traditional bike helmets are seen as being unappealing, a different type of helmet should be chosen. Finally, the last level is the augmented product level, which captures what other goods and services could facilitate the behaviour change. These products are optional, but they can affect the success of the campaign. For example, an effort to reduce consumption of single use plastic bottles by providing refillable water bottles is likely to be improved by installing water bottle refill stations in the setting where the campaign is administered.

The *price* associated with a social marketing campaign captures both the concrete (e.g., monetary) and abstract (e.g., psychological) costs the target audience associates with the target behaviour. Positioning the target behaviour such that its benefits outweigh its costs can be done on three levels. First, social marketers can increase the concrete and abstract benefits associated with the target behaviour. A group trying to promote regular screenings for sexually transmitted infections among a high-risk group could give members of the group a financial reward if they are screened every three months and adopt messaging that emphasises how people who are screened regularly are showing their commitment to protecting their community. Next, social marketers can decrease the concrete and abstract costs associated with the target behaviour. A campaign aiming to increase purchases of organic produce could send out a coupon book for a local food co-op and reinforce the idea that the co-op and the organic products it sells are for everyone, not just the stereotypical co-op shopper. Finally, social marketers can increase the concrete and abstract costs of the existing behaviour. A company trying to reduce car commuting could increase the cost of parking in the lot adjacent to the building or locate parking farther away from the building.

Where will members of the target audience engage in the target behaviour and obtain the goods and services offered by the campaign? This central question underlies decisions about *place*. The ultimate goal is to make it as easy and enjoyable as possible for members of the target audience to engage in the target behaviour. Social marketers might address availability

of the place (e.g., by extending hours, having a more accessible location, or being in a place where members of the target audience often are) or psychological factors associated with the place (e.g., by making the location more pleasant or addressing barriers). Consider a university that aims to increase contraceptive use among students. The nearest family planning clinic could be miles away, so one element of place would be adding family planning to the services offered by the university health clinic and changing the hours for this clinic so they are more convenient for students. There is also some stigma about being at the doctor in general, but particularly for family planning services, so the university might consider making the waiting area especially comfortable and relaxing, and sharing the space with different parts of the clinic so the reasons for students' visits are not obvious based on where they are sitting.

Finally, the *promotion* element involves thinking through the who, what, when, and how of the campaign. *Who* will deliver the campaign messages to members of the target audience? This decision can be informed by background research: members of the target audience might be especially enthusiastic about a local leader or celebrity rather than a scientific expert. *What* will be communicated to the target audience, and how will it be said? Social marketers craft the specific messages of the campaign, which ideally are memorable while communicating information relevant to the goals in the positioning statement. *When* will the messages be provided? Possibilities include an advertising campaign that lasts months or even years, a single large weekend event, or anything in between. *How* will the message be administered? Possible channels for distributing campaign messages include social media, traditional media, interpersonal contact, mail, and many others. Social marketers select a channel for the message that is most likely to reach members of the target audience close to when they have the opportunity to engage in the target behaviour, both in time and space. Some of the questions laid out here can be answered using information obtained from prior steps, but the answers can be improved to the extent that social marketers consult the psychological literature. Volumes of psychological research have considered factors that affect human behaviour and identified effective behaviour change strategies, so social marketing campaigns that incorporate lessons from psychology are most likely to be effective.

Together, working through relevant questions about these four elements – product, price, place, and promotion – allows social marketers to develop the actual substance of a social marketing campaign. At this point, they have everything they need to implement the campaign.

7.1 Example

The actual product the social marketer is offering is produce grown by local farmers. Because people in focus groups said it was not always clear to them what foods are local, she decides to introduce a new label for locally grown products. To ensure that people understand this label, she creates a placard to put in the front of the store informing people of the new label and adds a slogan: 'When you see this label, it means a local farmer has grown something great just for you!' To address price concerns, she decides to feature one item in the store's advertisement each week as the 'local special', a heavily discounted local product that will allow people to try the product and encourage them to try other local produce as well. To reinforce the benefit of supporting the community, she creates a sticker for people who spend more than \$10 on local produce on a given trip with the local food label and the slogan 'I support my community by buying local!' In addition to adding the label to local foods around the store, she also creates a new 'Made nearby' display near the front of the store displaying a variety of local produce, making these foods more prominent. Finally, she introduces a new

mascot for the campaign, Farmer Frank, which she uses to communicate other important facts of pieces of information about the advantages of buying local food (e.g., ‘Local farms are a huge benefit to our local economy’) and highlighting some of the negative aspects of factory farms (e.g., ‘Factory farms use 5–20 times more pesticides than local farmers’). Together, she expects all these campaign elements to increase the proportion of local produce bought by consumers.

8 Evaluate campaign success

Though social marketers might personally find the content of their campaign very inspiring and likely to be effective, that feeling alone is not evidence that the campaign actually works. To prove campaign effectiveness, social marketers measure relevant outcomes, ideally by incorporating scientific research principles. The choice of target behaviour is informed at least in part based on its ability to be measured objectively, making evaluation somewhat straightforward in many situations. A variety of research designs are possible to demonstrate campaign effects, but the most compelling is the randomised controlled trial.

In a randomised controlled trial design, different ‘units’ are randomly assigned to different experimental groups. The units might be individuals, but could also be different clinics, store locations, university departments, and so on. The effectiveness of the campaign can be evaluated by comparing units in the intervention group (i.e., they are exposed to the social marketing campaign) to units in a no-exposure control group (i.e., ‘business as usual’) or, in rare cases, to units that have been exposed to only part of the social marketing campaign (e.g., by removing messaging around one key benefit). The advantage of randomised controlled trial designs is that they provide relatively unambiguous evidence concerning the campaign’s effectiveness. That is, if an effect is observed, it is often difficult to think of alternative explanations for the effect, assuming the number of units was sufficiently large.

One common method in field research is a ‘randomised rollout’ design: here, all units are eventually exposed to the social marketing campaign, but the campaign is administered to some randomly chosen units (first group) before others (second group). Outcomes are measured in all units before the campaign is implemented in the second group. This procedure allows social marketers to evaluate the campaign while avoiding possible ethical concerns of withholding the campaign from some units. More concretely, social marketers might administer a campaign designed to keep female students in scientific fields to half of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and maths) departments at the beginning of year 1, collect data about the proportion of female students who drop out at the end of year 1 in all STEM departments, and then administer the campaign in the other half of STEM departments at the beginning of year 2. Such a design is also amenable to the possible limited resources available to a social marketing team, as they may not have the capacity to administer the campaign to all units at once even if they so desired.

Though randomised designs provide the strongest, most unambiguous evidence of campaign success, they are not the only designs that can provide interesting insights. Another common design is the pretest-posttest design: here, social marketers measure relevant outcomes both before and after they implement a social marketing campaign. Rather than comparing results between separate groups, as they would be with a randomised design, social marketers utilising this design are examining the same group at two different time points. For example, they could monitor electricity use in a residential area the six months before implementing a campaign and then again six months after the end of

the campaign. Though being able to compare behaviours among the same group of people is a relative strength of this approach, a weakness is its inability to rule out other possible extraneous causes of behaviour change. Perhaps there was an influential documentary showing the detrimental impacts of the climate crisis and fossil fuels around the same time the campaign was implemented: it would be impossible to determine what proportion of the behaviour change was driven by the campaign relative to other potential causes. The pretest-posttest and randomised controlled trial designs can also be fruitfully combined, allowing researchers to examine changes in behaviour among the same individuals over time while also comparing effects between individuals who were or were not exposed to a campaign. This is one of multiple examples of ways to combine methods in ways that strengthen the empirical evidence of a campaign's effects.

Once social marketers select a design, they also must decide how they will measure relevant behaviours. One meaningful set of behaviours capture a campaign's *output*, indicating whether the campaign accomplished what it set out to do, e.g., how many reusable water bottles were distributed, how many times an informational video was viewed online, or how many calls the campaign hotline received. Another set of behaviours capture a campaign's *outcome*, which illustrate whether the campaign actually impacted the behaviour it aimed to change. Many behaviours, both output and outcome, can be measured objectively, using existing sources of data (e.g., water utility usage) or observations of behaviour (e.g., number of bikers taking a given bike path). When choosing behaviours to measure, social marketers often try to combine these types of behaviour to provide the most information possible about the campaign's effects: a needle exchange programme aiming to reduce the HIV rate among drug users could measure both the number of needles given out (output) and the HIV rate (outcome).

Self-reported outcomes can supplement behavioural observations and allow indirect measurement of behaviour when objective measurement is not possible (e.g., asking people what proportion of their waste goes to landfill, compost, and recycling). Furthermore, self-reports are key to assessing knowledge and belief outcomes; individuals can be asked what they think and believe about different behaviours. Finally, qualitative approaches, such as interviews, focus groups, and open-ended questions, can enrich the information about the campaign. For example, responses to open-ended questions could reveal that a social marketing campaign that reduces internet browsing behaviour at work also increases employees' fear of retribution if they are caught engaging in this behaviour, which could have unintended negative impacts on company climate. This example illustrates how qualitative information can meaningfully supplement information about any effects a campaign has on behaviour. Together, these unique sources of data can provide a complete picture of the effects of a social marketing campaign.

Evaluation is a key element of a social marketing campaign, as it is required to determine whether a campaign is successful as well as providing an opportunity to advance behaviour change science more generally. Though the last step according to the order presented here, it could be argued to be the key step in terms of importance.

8.1 Example

The social marketer decides to run an experiment that combines elements of the pretest-posttest and randomised control trial designs. In addition to measuring the amount of local produce purchased in the month leading up to implementing the campaign, she also randomly

assigns each of the 30 different stores to either receive the campaign or not (this sample is smaller than is desirable, but is limited by the existing number of stores). She then records the amount of local produce bought after the campaign was implemented using the stores' purchasing databases. In addition to this objective measurement, she holds additional focus groups with customers who shopped in stores that received the campaign at least two weeks after implementation. She asks individuals their thoughts about the campaign, and learns people generally have very positive impressions of the campaign, though some mention finding Farmer Frank a little corny. The social marketer runs relevant analyses and observes there was a 28% increase in local produce purchases in stores where the campaign was implemented compared to those where it was not, meeting her goal of a 25% increase and suggesting the campaign was effective.

9 Conclusion

Social marketing provides a method and mindset for designing, implementing, and evaluating campaigns aiming to increase the incidence of positive, pro-social behaviours or decrease the incidence of negative, anti-social behaviours. Campaigns developed using this approach draw on relevant psychological principles, especially surrounding persuasion and behaviour change, as well as experimental designs for evaluation. More broadly, social marketing provides a blueprint for how people can translate the interesting, valuable insights about human behaviour generated by psychologists and behavioural economists into effective behaviour change strategies in the real world. Rather than simply relying on what has been done before to address a given social problem, social marketers can design solutions to the problem based on cutting-edge research, increasing the likelihood that the campaign they develop will affect their outcome of interest. This article provides a basic outline of the steps involved in the social marketing process, so individuals from a broad range of backgrounds can create their own initiatives to address the social problems they care about, all the while drawing on and extending our knowledge of the factors that influence human behaviour.

References and further reading

- Aschkenase, T., & Chenoweth, R. (2010) 'Stopping the spread of aquatic invasive species: A CBSM approach', *Environmental Communication and Social Marketing* 3: 1–4.
- Bowen, A. M., Horvath, K., & Williams, M. L. (2007) 'A randomized control trial of Internet-delivered HIV prevention targeting rural MSM', *Health Education Research* 22: 120–127.
- Hull, S. J., Davis, C. R., Hollander, G., Gasiorowicz, M., Jeffries, W. L., Gray, S., Bertolli, J., & Mohr, A. (2017) 'Evaluation of the Acceptance Journeys social marketing campaign to reduce homophobia', *American Journal of Public Health* 107: 173–179.
- Hull, S. J., Gasiorowicz, M., Hollander, G., & Short, K. (2013) 'Using theory to inform practice: The role of formative research in the construction and implementation of the Acceptance Journeys social marketing campaign to reduce homophobia', *Social Marketing Quarterly* 19: 139–155.
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2001) *Principles of marketing*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kotler, P., & Lee, N. (2006) *Marketing in the public sector: A roadmap for improved performance*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Wharton School.
- Kotler, P., & Zaltman, G. (1971) 'Social marketing: An approach to planned social change', *Journal of Marketing* 35: 3–12.
- Lee, N. R., & Kotler, P. (2019) *Social marketing: Behavior change for social good* (6th ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

- McKenzie-Mohr, D. (2011) *Fostering sustainable behavior: An introduction to community-based social marketing* (3rd ed.), Gabriola, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers.
- Oyserman, D. (2016) 'Culture three ways: Culture and subcultures within countries', *Annual Review of Psychology* 68: 435–463.
- Peattie, S., & Peattie, K. (2003) 'Ready to fly solo? Reducing social marketing's dependence on commercial marketing theory', *Marketing Theory Articles* 3: 365–385.
- Rad, M. S., Martingano, A. J., & Ginges, J. (2018) 'Toward a psychology of *Homo sapiens*: Making psychological science more representative of the human population', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115: 11401–11405.
- Ro, M., Brauer, M., Kuntz, K., Shukla, R., & Bensch, I. (2017) 'Making cool choices for sustainability: Testing the effectiveness of a game-based approach to promoting pro-environmental behaviors', *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 53: 20–30.
- Smith, B. (2003) 'Beyond 'health' as a benefit', *Social Marketing Quarterly* 9(4): 22–28.
- Smith, W. (2002) 'Social marketing and its potential contribution to a modern synthesis of social change', *Social Marketing Quarterly* 8: 46–48.
- Thaler, R. H. (2016) *Misbehaving: The making of behavioral economics*, New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company.