

Contemporary Issues in Social Marketing

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Edited by

Krzysztof Kubacki and Sharyn Rundle-Thiele

CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS

P U B L I S H I N G

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CONTRIBUTORS

Denni Arli, PhD is currently a Lecturer at the Department of Marketing, Griffith Business School, Griffith University, Australia. His research interests include corporate social responsibility, consumer ethics, social marketing and the impact of religiosity on consumption. He has co-authored articles (published or forthcoming) in *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Asia-Pacific Business*, *Social Responsibility Journal* and *International Journal of Consumer Studies*.

Julia Carins is part of the Nutrition and Food Group within the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO); and is a PhD Candidate at Griffith University, Queensland, Australia. She has been involved in many Defence nutrition projects, including investigation of the behavioural aspects of ration pack eating, development of prototype ration packs and determination of food acceptability. Her research interests are the behavioural aspects of eating, food preferences, food attitudes and eating patterns. Julia's PhD research is investigating the application of social marketing principles to encourage healthy eating by Australian Defence Force personnel.

Peter Case, Professor of Management and Organization Studies, James Cook University, Townsville. His research interests encompass corporate social and environmental responsibility, leadership ethics and behaviour change in organizations. He served as general editor of *Culture & Organization* (2007-10) and is currently a member of the editorial boards of *Leadership*, *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal*, *Business & Society Review* and the *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion*. Publications include *The Speed of Organization* (2006: CBS & Liber), *John Adair: the Fundamentals of Leadership* (2007: Palgrave) and *Worldly Leadership* (2012: Palgrave). *Belief and Organization* is due to appear later this year under the Palgrave Macmillan imprint.

Damian Cox, (B.A.(Hons), Ph.D.) is an Associate Professor, Philosophy at Bond University. He studied science and philosophy at the Australian National University before taking a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Melbourne. He has held positions in philosophy at Edith

Cowan University and University of Queensland, before joining Bond University in 2006. Damian Cox has published widely in philosophy, including in the areas of metaphysics, epistemology, philosophical theories of truth, moral philosophy, philosophical psychology, environmental ethics and professional ethics.

Sameer Deshpande, PhD is an Associate Professor of Marketing in the Faculty of Management and a member of the Centre for Socially Responsible Marketing at the University of Lethbridge, Canada. Over the past 15 years Sameer has worked on numerous social marketing research projects. These have included understanding application of marketing principles to promote a variety of behaviours including responsible alcohol use among college students, alternative rides to reduce driving after drinking among young adult men, alcohol abstinence among pregnant women, hand hygiene among healthcare workers, and condom use among men of reproductive age. In addition to conducting research and publishing its findings in academic journals, Sameer has also conducted training programmes and offered consultancy on social marketing topics to nonprofit, government, and corporate sector in India, Canada, Australia, U.S., and U.K.

Timo Dietrich is a PhD candidate with Griffith University and lectures Social Marketing at Southern Cross University. His doctoral research focuses on how to change binge drinking behaviours of Australian teenagers and his general research interests center on behaviour change. In his home country of Germany, Timo achieved a Bachelor degree in Business Administration, and worked as a Corporate Relationship Manager. After 5 years of sharpening his skills in business development, marketing, and relationship management, Timo moved to Australia and completed a Master degree in International Business, graduating with a first class honours.

Mayo Djakaria, MPH serves as Behaviour Change Officer at Rescue Social Change Group, a behaviour change agency headquartered in San Diego, CA. She received her B.A. at Brown University with a double major in Sociology as well as Public and Private Sector Organizations. Pursuing her passion in health communications, she earned a Masters in Public Health from Columbia University. Mayo currently leads various social marketing interventions focused on tobacco use and/or obesity prevention among youth and young adults. She leads a passionate and dedicated team of social change professionals with a strong strategic

vision and solid evidence-based approach, developing award-winning programs that truly cause impact.

Christine Domegan, B. Comm, MBS, PhD is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing at the National University of Ireland, Galway. As Research Cluster Leader for Social Innovation and Policy within the Whitaker Institute, Christine researches Behavioural Change and Social Innovation through Social Marketing and associated concepts of value co-creation, stakeholder and systems theory, partnerships and a capacity to act at population, community and individual levels. Taking a multi-disciplinary lens with partners in the UK, Europe, and the USA, she combines Social Marketing with service learning research and teaching, bringing a civic engagement dimension to her work. Her current EU and national research work embraces recycling, health (e.g. positive aging; health literacy and diabetes), Sea for Society and science in society. Christine teaches Social Marketing at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Ireland and the UK, including extensive PhD supervision, as well as topics such as Marketing Research and Marketing Analytics.

Lynne Eagle, Professor of Marketing at James Cook University. Research interests include marketing communication effects and effectiveness, including: trans-disciplinary approaches to sustained behaviour change, the impact of persuasive communication on children, and the impact of new, emerging and hybrid media forms and preferences for / use of formal and informal communications channels. She has published in a wide range of academic journals, including the *Journal of Advertising* and *European Journal of Marketing*, led the development of both Marketing Communications and Social Marketing texts and contributed several book chapters for other texts as well writing commissioned social marketing expert papers and presenting numerous research papers at international conferences. She is on the editorial board of several journals.

Jeff French, PhD is a recognised global leader in the theory and application of health promotion and social marketing having published over 90 chapters, articles and books. Jeff is a visiting professor at Brighton University and a Fellow at Kings College University London. Jeff was the Director of Communication and Policy at the Health Development Agency for five years. In 2005 Jeff led the national review of social marketing and set up the National Social Marketing Centre in England. In 2009 Jeff became the CEO of Strategic Social Marketing Ltd. Jeff is a Board member of CREDOS the advertising industry think-tank and a member of

the Editorial Board of five professional Journals. Jeff is the organiser of the World Social Marketing Conference and a member of the International Social Marketing Association Executive Committee and an Executive Member of the European Social Marketing Association. Jeff has worked on behaviour change and social policy programmes in over thirty countries.

Danielle Gallegos, PhD is an Associate Professor in Nutrition and Dietetics in the School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences at Queensland University of Technology Australia with a PhD in the sociology of food. She is an Advanced Accredited Practicing Dietician. Danielle is involved in teaching public and community nutrition and undertaking research in areas of social justice. Her research interests are broad, encompassing the intersection of food, identity and ethnicity, and the socio-cultural aspects of food choice generally. Her special areas of interest are working to improve access to nutrition information, improving access and availability to food across the whole community and supporting breastfeeding through the use of innovative technologies. Danielle has published in the areas of breastfeeding, food security, social marketing and the sociology of food in a wide range of formats. She is an experienced evaluator and undertakes consultancies for government and non-government organisations.

Robyn Hamilton is a national director of the Australian Breastfeeding Association, and was the state president of Queensland Branch from 2007-2009. She has been a community educator since 2000, breastfeeding counsellor since 2002, and has worked with mothers through a variety of roles at local group level. She was a writer for the Association's accredited Certificate IV in Breastfeeding Education, and a steering committee member for its reaccreditation. Robyn is a librarian by profession and has worked in the public sector for over 20 years. As a director she is responsible for the ICT portfolio and brings her information management background to her volunteer role. She is also a director on the board of the Australian Breastfeeding Association's retail subsidiary Mothers Direct.

Tim Harries, a Senior Research Fellow at Kingston University, UK, has a background in social psychology, human geography and social research methods. Tim has degrees from York University and London School of Economics, a PhD from Middlesex University and before coming to Kingston University in 2011, completed research fellowships at King's College London and the UK's Department for Environment (Defra). He has experience of IT R&D (British Petroleum Research Centre and

Trustees Savings Bank), policy design and applied public policy research. Currently, Tim runs CHARM, a suite of experiments that use digital technologies to investigate ways of influencing sustainability and health behaviours. He is also Co-Investigator on a project that is developing digital means to encourage business continuity planning in the face of flood risk, and is Chief Investigator on a study into the potential roles of smart-phone technologies in the self-management of type-1 diabetes.

Charmine E.J. Härtel, PhD is Head of the Management Cluster and Chair of Human Resource Management and Organisational Development at UQ Business School. She is recognised internationally as a leading expert in industrial and organisational psychology with particular expertise in wellbeing, workplace design, diversity and social inclusion and the leadership and management strategies underpinning positive work environments. She has won numerous awards internationally for her research, including five awards for innovation in organisational practice, and is President of the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management.

Stephen S. Holden, (B.Sc.(Hons), MBA, Ph.D.) is an educator/researcher currently holding adjunct positions with Bond University and Southern Cross University. He has published a wide range of social marketing research projects (anti-smoking, drink-driving, over-eating, public health, road safety) both for government agencies and in academic journals around the world. He has also completed a large number of marketing research projects in health including vaccinations for pharmaceutical companies. His current research interests include portion-size effects, meta-analysis, social marketing and ethics.

Jeffrey W. Jordan is President and Founder of Rescue Social Change Group, a behavior change marketing company. His passion for social change began in high school when he volunteered for an anti-tobacco group. Observing the lack of effective social marketing services, he started Rescue Social Change Group when he was 17 years old. While growing Rescue SCG, Jeff studied Marketing for his undergraduate degree and received a Master's in Experimental Psychology from the University of California, San Diego. Today, Jeff has led Rescue SCG's growth to four offices in the US and managing over a dozen behavior change programs around the country, tackling issues such as tobacco, obesity and violence.

Krzysztof Kubacki, PhD is a Social Marketing Research Practice Fellow (VicHealth) and a Senior Lecturer in Marketing at Griffith University. He has been involved in academic and market research for over 10 years, he has published over 35 journal articles and book chapters. The broad area of his research interests could be defined as “cultural consumption” and includes projects exploring areas such as relationship between marketing and cultural industries, influence of national culture on national brand, and cross-national comparisons between consumers in the European Union. Weaved throughout his research is an interest in the relationship between social marketing and consumer culture, with his most recent work focussing on alcohol consumption among young people.

Katherine C. Lafreniere is Marketing Director at Firestone Restaurant and Bar and is responsible for the lead generation and revenue for the franchise. Prior to Firestone, she was a Research Associate in the multidisciplinary research project titled, *Water: Making do with what we have*, on behalf of the University of Lethbridge and Alberta Innovates. She obtained her Bachelor of Management Degree in 2009 and Master of Science (Management) Degree in 2011 from the University of Lethbridge. Her research interests in the marketing area include decision making and consumer choice models; and applying social marketing thought to a variety of environmental issues.

Cheryl Leo, PhD is a marketing lecturer with Murdoch University. Her research interests are in the areas of social marketing and services marketing, specific to service employee and deviant behaviours. Cheryl’s work has been published in *Journal of Marketing Management*, *Journal of Business Research* and *Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing*.

David R. Low, Head of School and Professor of Business at James Cook University. He has a wide variety of both industry and academic senior management and boardroom experience. His research interests include Cross Cultural Issues; Country of Origin Studies; Ethnicity, Social Media, Social Marketing, Market Orientation, Firm Performance, E-Marketing; Innovation, SME’s and the use of technology in business value chains. David has recently co-edited a book on E-Novation and Web 2.0. He has supervised to completion a number of HDR students and teaching interests include E-Marketing, International Marketing as well as Marketing Management.

Roy Lowry, a qualified doctor and dentist completed formal training in public health and became an NHS consultant in 1990. He was senior lecturer in dental public health at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. He was on the specialist registers for medical and dental public health and is a Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health. He has published over 50 articles in the learned press. He was the training director for public health in the Northern Region an examiner for the Faculty of Public Health. Now retired, he now devotes most of his working time to social marketing with his own dedicated website. <http://www.drlowrysocialmarketing.co.uk/>

Patricia McHugh, B.Comm, MBS has just completed a doctoral research fellowship with the Marketing Discipline at the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics at the National University of Ireland, Galway. Patricia is part of an academic group where social marketing is a key component of research and teaching. Her doctoral research focused on the development and measurement of process indicators for science communication using social marketing and innovation theory. Although her indicator research has been applied to science, it is relevant and applicable to marketing systems, macro management, value networks, and collaborative partnerships across health, education and environmental conservation. Patricia's doctoral research was made possible due to the generous support of the Whitaker Institute and PRTL14 funding in Ireland.

Julia Meaton, PhD is interested in the development of resilient and sustainable communities. She has researched this from planning, land use and transport angles as well as from organisational perspectives. She has researched environmental management in the corporate and community sectors and has also explored resource management issues in Africa, most notably regarding forest management in Ethiopia. She is particularly interested in drivers and barriers to sustainable environmental management, and the role of institutions and individuals in facilitating or barring change.

Janet Palmer is a Research Assistant with Social Marketing @ Griffith and a PhD Candidate at Griffith University. Her research explores pro-environmental behaviour at the workplace and social marketing's ability to create sustained behaviour change in an occupational setting. She was awarded the Griffith Business School Postgraduate Research Scholarship (GBSPRS) and the DVC (Research) International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (DVRIPRS). Janet holds a BBA from the University of New

Brunswick, Canada and an International MBA (Honours) from Griffith Business School.

Josephine Previte, PhD is a lecturer in the UQ Business School at The University of Queensland. Her research focuses on social marketing and a critical marketing analysis of gender, technology, and marketplace behaviours. Her research has appeared in journals such as *Journal of Marketing Management*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing* and *Journal of Macromarketing*. Josephine has also been involved in conducting a range of consultancy projects with non-profit organisations and government departments implementing social marketing campaigns, as well as being involved in evaluating the impact of digital technologies on regional and rural communities.

Ruth Rettie is a professor of Social Marketing at Kingston University in the UK. Her background is interdisciplinary and includes philosophy, an MBA and a PhD in sociology. She joined Kingston University after ten years as a brand manager for Cadbury, Kraft and Unilever. Her research includes social theory, ecommerce, user interaction in new media, the influence of technological design on social interaction, and sustainable development. Ruth is director of the Behaviour and Practice Research Group at Kingston Business School, and Principal Investigator on CHARM, a sustainability project that investigates the impact of feedback on performance and Smart Communities, a community based action research project on energy demand reduction. She is a Co-ordinator on the Digital Economy Sustainable Society Network+.

Audrey Robinson-Maynard is a former Divisional Manager in Local Government, Social Services Children Assessment Services and budget holder for that service. She holds various qualifications in Social Work and Management. Audrey gained a BA from the University of Huddersfield and her MSc from London Guildhall University, London. She is at present completing a PhD in Social Marketing at the University of Huddersfield. Audrey has been, and still is, actively involved in setting up and the progressing of Community Organizations, from hostels for homeless young people to after school clubs. She has been involved in many community research projects and has published work relating to Child Care and the law.

Associate Professor **Sharyn Rundle-Thiele** leads a talented team of researchers at Social Marketing @ Griffith (<http://www.griffith.edu.au/business-government/social-marketing-griffith>). Sharyn's research interests centre on behaviour change and social marketing. She currently works with SA Health, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, Defence Science and Technology Organisation and VicHealth. Sharyn is President of the Australia and New Zealand Marketing Academy and co-editor of the *Journal of Social Marketing*.

Rebekah Russell-Bennett, PhD is Professor in Marketing in the school of Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations at Queensland University of Technology, Australia with a PhD in marketing. She researches in the field of services marketing in both the commercial, nonprofit and government sector. Rebekah has published in journals such as *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Marketing Management*, *Journal of Services Marketing*, *Health Marketing Quarterly*, *Journal of Brand Management* and *Industrial Marketing Management*. Rebekah is president of the Australian Association of Social Marketing and has extensive industry collaborations with organisations such as Queensland Department of Health, Australian Breastfeeding Association, Australian Red Cross Blood Service, Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Queensland Department of Transport.

Lisa Schuster is currently undertaking her PhD within the QUT Business School at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Australia. Her research focus is in the area of services in social marketing and consumer behaviour. Her qualifications include a Bachelor of Business (Honours) degree (First Class) from QUT, from which she published in the area of consumer responses to mobile phone services. She has also presented and published her research in several peer-reviewed international and national conferences, where she has received two 'Best Paper' awards.

Geoff Smith, PhD is Senior Research Fellow in Donor and Community Research, within the Research and Development Division of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service. Donor and Community Research at the Blood Service is a targeted research program examining donor retention, recruitment, motivation, and community attitudes toward blood and plasma donation. Geoff directs a team who run an array of projects in partnership with a number of Australian and overseas University research teams including Queensland University of Technology, University of Melbourne and Ohio University, USA. A major focus for Geoff is to

develop research findings into cost effective operational change to support the Blood Service in better understanding and retaining existing donors, and to inform strategies used to recruit new donors. Geoff has previously worked in other organisations in the non-profit sector including the Cancer Council Victoria and Australians Donate (Organ and Tissue Donation).

Matt Studley's PhD research at the University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE) investigated the use of Genetic Based Machine Learning to learn the optimal control of physical robots in problems with multiple objectives, a technique that was later applied in the area of Chemical Computing. He has worked in research and development in the telecommunications, e-business, investment and finance sectors in many European countries, the USA, and Australia, and currently leads the undergraduate Robotics Programme at UWE. Dr Studley has run several high-profile public engagement projects bringing robotics issues to the attention of the public, including the internationally-recognised 'Heart Robot' project. He is currently involved in applying distributed sensing to change domestic electricity consumption using approaches from social psychology and sociology, and working with industrial partners on ways to use distributed energy storage to improve UK energy security.

Natalia Szablewska, PhD is a Lecturer in Law at the School of Law and Justice, Southern Cross University. Her professional experience includes working in a Human Rights NGO in Moscow (Russian Justice Initiative), the Solicitors Regulation Authority, the Welsh Assembly Government, the British House of Commons, the Welsh Centre for International Affairs and the David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies (UK). Her main research interests are in public international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Scott Turner, PhD is Research Director at Rescue Social Change Group a behaviour change marketing company. His work has focused on the social, personal, and policy influences of behaviour in many contexts. Specifically, he has designed and executed studies that investigate occupational choice, perceptions of advertising, advertising awareness, drug choice, purchase decision, quality of life, and tobacco consumption. His work in public opinion polling and survey methods has influenced several large-scale studies in the United States as well as public policy regarding military recruiting.

Lisa Weir is currently with the South Australian Government as joint Social Marketing Manager for OPAL (job share with Jo Williams). Lisa has an Applied Science (Sports Science) degree and a degree in Public Health together with over 20 years' experience in health promotion. Lisa has worked in Australia and overseas in the government and non-profit sector addressing issues such as injury prevention, alcohol, cancer prevention and early detection and healthy weight. She has worked across a broad number of settings including workplaces, community sports clubs, schools and local government. In her current role Lisa's main interests are in ensuring social marketing best practice is applied to OPAL and that social marketing principles can be applied at the local community level to assist with behaviour change.

Jo Williams is currently with the South Australian Government as joint Social Marketing Manager for OPAL (job share with Lisa Weir). OPAL is South Australia's largest single investment in childhood obesity prevention. Jo has an Applied Science degree and fifteen years' experience working across a wide range of health campaigns within the charity, not for profit and government sectors. Six years were spent in London managing Cancer Research UK's "SunSmart" campaign and the National Asthma Campaign's "Be In Control" diagnosis campaign. Jo's current interest is in workforce development around social marketing, working to integrate a social marketing approach across the frameworks of community development and socio-ecological theory of OPAL.

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INTRODUCTION

KRZYSZTOF KUBACKI
AND SHARYN RUNDLE-THIELE

The 2012 International Social Marketing conference was hosted by the Griffith Business School's Department of Marketing from June 27-29 2012 at the beautifully located Southbank campus of Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. The conference attracted 68 submissions from 17 countries, exploring a very broad range of social marketing issues, theoretical perspectives and practical case studies. For many of the social marketing researchers and practitioners who met, some for the first time, in Brisbane, the conference became the starting point for another journey – the journey to deliver their work to a much wider social marketing audience. While organizing the International Social Marketing Conference, the idea to develop a book including some of the most exciting work presented in Brisbane in June 2012 was born.

We are writing this introduction almost one year later. Among many other activities, the past year has allowed the group of authors presented in this book to further develop the ideas presented at the International Social Marketing 2012 conference into a full paper for inclusion in this book. The process has included a full review process following submission of the first chapter for review in late 2012. As editors, we are excited to reach the final point where the work of some of the leading social marketing scholars and practitioners will see the daylight. We see this book not only as tangible evidence of all the stimulating conversations which happened in Brisbane a year ago, but above all as a contribution to a rapidly growing discussion about the role of social marketing and its contribution to the contemporary societies.

Contemporary Issues in Social Marketing aims to capture the complexity of the field by offering an eclectic range of studies, from theoretical contributions, through critical reflections, to practical applications. Much of the work presented in this book is set in the context of some of

our most challenging social issues, including (but not limited to) sustainability and climate change, electricity consumption, mental health, cancer screening, blood donation, breastfeeding, the global obesity epidemic, and tobacco use. While some of the empirical research is set in a fixed range of contexts, the ideas extend to the field of social marketing and we encourage the concepts that are presented in this book to be applied to the full suite of behavioural problems that our societies are currently facing. The book is divided into three main sections: section one outlines some of the challenges facing social marketing, section two explores new approaches to social marketing, and the final section showcases three examples of social marketing interventions.

In the opening chapter, Jeff French explores how to embed social marketing as one of the key elements of social policy development. Social marketing has the potential to contribute to the process at several levels, from gathering and facilitating citizens' insights, through developing behavioural objectives and the selection of interventions, to impact evaluation and the assessment of social initiatives. The chapter by Eagle, Case and Low provides an example of how the complexity of social issues and the messages and discussions surrounding them can represent one of the challenges facing social marketers. Taking sustainability and climate change as an example, they offer a discussion of the main factors which need to be taken into account when designing social marketing communications. In the following chapter, based on the analysis of 12 social marketing case studies, Robinson-Maynard, Meaton and Lowry provide an evaluation of 19 social marketing benchmark criteria and their contribution towards the success of social marketing interventions. In the final chapter of the first part of the book, Holden and Cox provide a highly critical perspective on some of the unique ethical challenges facing social marketing practitioners. Their discussion, located within the case of immunizations, offers a deep reflection on the meaning of one of the key social marketing constructs – the social good.

The chapter by McHugh and Domegan explores the relationship between reductionistic linear systems and dynamic holistic systems in identifying solutions to complex social problems, while in the next chapter Lafraniere and Deshpande extend our understanding of the individual decision-making process for social issues by proposing a social behaviour model. In the following chapter, Russell-Bennett and colleagues focus on the role of the services mix for achieving behavioural change. Using three social marketing projects – which target behaviours in the areas of

breastfeeding, blood donation and breast cancer screening – they show the potential of service theories to inform social marketing thinking. Continuing in the same vein, in the final chapter of this part the drivers behind maintaining behavioural change in social marketing are explored by Schuster in the context of mental health. Her research points towards the importance of service experience, relevance, ease of use and location in influencing repeat behaviour.

The chapter by Rettie, Harries and Studley presents a discussion of the role of the social norms approach in influencing behaviours in domestic electricity consumption. Social norms marketing seeks to influence behaviours by challenging perceptions of ‘normal’ behaviour. The Rettie, Harries and Studley experiment shows that an inclusion of social norms information in feedback to consumers has the potential to increase their engagement, yet does not significantly influence their electricity consumption. The chapter by Weir and Williams presents South Australia’s OPAL (Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle) initiative, which promotes healthy eating and physical activity in communities; the initiative is now in its fourth year, and is being trialled in 20 intervention communities. The Weir and Williams case study takes us through the background, planning and execution stages of the first phase of the intervention, which successfully reduced the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages among children in intervention communities. The final example of a successful social marketing campaign is presented by Jordan, Turner and Djakaria, who detail the power of branding to facilitate culture change. Using experiential marketing, brand ambassadors, endorsements, traditional and social media and direct mail the Syke campaign achieved a significant reduction in tobacco use among alternative rock youth.

In the final chapter of the book, we invited a group of colleagues who were involved in the 2012 International Social Marketing conference to share their reflections on social marketing and the work presented in this book. The outcomes cover a list of six issues which we feel will be critical in the future development of our discipline.

We hope that this book will offer a contemporary understanding of social marketing based on the insights of social marketing experts from across the globe, and that the ideas presented will inspire a new generation of social marketing academics and practitioners to contribute to both practical and theoretical developments within the discipline. Finally, we

wish to thank the many authors who worked to achieve deadlines set throughout the book development process, and the reviewers who so willingly gave us their time and expertise to assist with the double-blind peer review process for the book. Your time, energy and insights have greatly enhanced the quality of the work presented.

PART I:
SOCIAL MARKETING CHALLENGES

CHAPTER ONE

FROM THE PERIPHERY TO THE CORE: EMBEDDING SOCIAL MARKETING IN THE STRATEGIC DNA OF ALL SOCIAL PROGRAMMES

JEFF FRENCH

The need for citizen-centric social policy development

We have seen significant changes in the human condition over the last 20 years. There are at least seven billion people in the world now, but in every region, with the exception of Africa, populations are starting to age¹. We know that human-driven global warming² is an issue, and we will continue to experience a major global economic downturn and an increased threat from nuclear purification. On the positive side, however, we have experienced an unprecedented period of economic growth and wealth creation, and we continue to witness an ongoing technological communications revolution leading to ‘always on, always connected’ citizens and a general positive improvement in global health (UNICEF, 2011) and literacy (UNESCO, 2012). The rise of citizen empowerment driven by economic development, improved health literacy and technology is leading to the development of what Sandel³ describes as not only new forms of government, but also new kinds of citizenship. The relationship between the governed and governments is changing rapidly to one that is characterized by more dialogue, more joint responsibility and the co-production of solutions to social challenges. Clarke et al. (2007) argue that this new relationship is informed by the increasing expectation for more

¹ <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/worldageing19502050/>

² <http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nclimate1783.html>

³ 4th July 2009 A new politics of the common good. M Sandel.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b001b6bt>

literate and wealthy citizens to be treated with respect and attention. People want governments and their agencies to emulate many of the customer-centric approaches that are now routine in the commercial sector. People's consumer and market experience leads to sets of expectations about higher levels of service quality from public institutions. People, especially those living in advanced liberal democracies, want governments to inform them, consult with them, incentivize good behaviour, and do less disincentivizing and banning when it comes to social policy interventions (IPSOS Morri, 2010).

Beyond information and compulsion, towards social value

Rothschild's (1999) famous social marketing article entitled 'Sticks and Promises' made the case for governments to go beyond just using the law and information as the default options to bring about desired changes in behaviour for social good. Rothschild advocated the use of marketing thinking to assist the development of more value-based propositions to citizens, in order to persuade them to adopt positive social behaviours. The creation of value (Bagozzi, 1975) the importance of service (Grönroos, 2007) and the relationship-building function and process of marketing (Gummesson, 1987) are all now well established in commercial sector marketing, but much less so in social policy, social programme delivery, and, to some extent, in social marketing. Social marketing must now apply all of these three key concepts, but especially value creation, through what French (2011) calls 'forms' and 'types' of interventions in order to influence and enhance both social policy formulation, social strategy development, and the delivery of social programmes.

One of the central pieces of added value that social marketing can bring to the social policy development and implementation arena is the concept of value creation. Value creation can be stimulated through the use of both rational offers, such as conditional cash payments for socially responsible behaviour, and offers that appeal to more intuitive rapid cognition, such as the design of road systems that slow traffic. Value can also be developed via socially sanctioned and supported disincentives, including fines or exclusions such as not allowing unvaccinated children to attend school. What is key in relation to the selection and implementation of such approaches is that insight and understanding about what citizens feel, say and do is taken into account when selecting individual interventions, or any mix of interventions. If social development programmes are not supported and valued by citizens they

will ultimately, and sometimes very rapidly, fail to deliver the desired social improvement and may even cause unintended social backlash (for example, the riots witnessed in Turkey during June 2013 in response to the demolition of a civic park to be replaced by retail outlets).

One of the biggest hurdles to the application of marketing principles in social policy development and programme implementation is the misinterpretation and major under-utilization of marketing. Social marketing is often viewed as a second-order task in many public-sector policy and strategy development circles. Even when social marketing is applied, it is most often seen as a set of techniques that can be used to improve the delivery of social programmes, but not as an essential component of policy development strategy analysis. Thus, before social marketing can bring value to the policy table, we need to consider how it can best be embedded into the policy-making and strategy-developing process, as well as in the development of specific campaigns and programmes.

From the periphery to the core

One of the challenges faced by every social marketer is how to embed social marketing in the heart of the organization they work for, and to sustain its influence on the organization's strategy over time. This is true for government, state, regional and local public institutions.

Without an acceptance of the principles of social marketing and the need to build them into the DNA of social policy, the social marketer is forever playing a game of peripheral influence and disconnected social marketing project delivery. While it is not a bad thing to attempt to convince organizations on a project-by-project basis to apply a social marketing approach, it is a recipe for getting stuck in a reactive, and/or 'add-on', mode of operation. The probable impact of such an approach is that the potential of social marketing's contribution to social policy and strategy delivery will be greatly diminished.

There is a need, as a core part of social marketing practice, to advocate 'Strategic Social Marketing' (French & Blair-Stevens, 2010). Others have called this approach macro-social marketing (Wymer, 2011; Domegan 2008; Kenny & Parsons 2012), or up-stream social marketing (Stead et al., 2007). In essence, all these authors – and many others – make the case for applying a more strategic approach and moving beyond a view of social