

Title: Community-based Social Marketing & Environmental Education

TOPIC: Social Marketing and Community Engagement

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ABSTRACT

The Tbilisi Declaration (1977) defines Environmental Education (EE) as a learning process that increases people's knowledge and awareness about the environment and its associated challenges, develops the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenge and fosters attitudes, motivations and commitments to make informed decisions and take responsible actions. It is the route to developing one's environmental literacy – developing someone who both individually and together with others makes informed decisions concerning the environment, is willing to act on these decisions to improve the well-being of other individuals, societies and the global environment and participates in civic life. It has now become crucial to inform the public of the intended works or changes in the evolution of EE.

It is with this milieu in mind that the appropriate development and effective execution of a public education/awareness campaign will be presented. Here the tool of Community-based Social Marketing (CBSM) among others will be highlighted to show how environmental awareness can be increased and by extension bring about the desired Behaviour change. CBSM is an attractive alternative to information-intensive campaigns due to its pragmatic approach. It involves selecting the behaviour to be promoted, identifying the barriers and benefits associated with the selected behaviour; designing a strategy that utilizes behaviour change tools to address the barriers and benefits, piloting the strategy and evaluating the impact of

the programme. This approach argues that the hope for the resolution of environmental or “wicked” problems lies in increasing the ecological literacy of our general populace and empowering them to investigate, make clear decisions and take the necessary actions in relation climate change issues.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Environmental education by definition refers to the teaching about the natural and built environment which provides a real-world context for learning by linking the classroom to the students' community. Students are engaged in hands-on, active learning that increases their knowledge and awareness about the environment. Because environmental education encourages inquiry and investigation, students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective decision-making skills.

The goals of Environmental Education are:

- to foster clear awareness of and concern about economic, social, political, and ecological inter-dependence in urban and rural areas;
- to provide every person with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment, and skills needed to protect and improve the environment;
- to create new patterns of behaviour of individuals, groups, and society as a whole toward the environment.

Environmentally literate students become citizens who are able to weigh various sides of an environmental issue and make responsible decisions as individuals and as members of their community. Quality, standards-based environmental education

improves everyday life by protecting human health and encouraging stewardship of natural resources.¹

Environmental Education has been used to solve “wicked” problems in today’s society. Wicked problems are:

- Those which are difficult to clearly define
- Those which have many interdependencies and are often multi-causal
- Attempts to address them can lead to unforeseen circumstances
- Often not stable
- Socially complex (i.e. need many stakeholders)
- Usually a part of the responsibility of more than one organization
- Those which involve changing behaviours (this paper’s focus) and/or gaining citizen commitment
- Characterized by chronic policy failure

Behaviours are more conducive to change if the issues are widely understood, discussed and owned by the people whose behavior is being targeted for that change. People-centered i.e. Social strategies can ensure success which will include Social Marketing, capacity building, communication and advocacy.

This paper explores the role of environmental education in behaviour change and how it can be effectively used in the planning and development of campaigns which seek to bring about that required change in the citizenry of the country.

¹ Source: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: www.ascd.org

2.0 DISCUSSION

The United Nations Environmental Programme initially worked out guidelines for Environmental Education (EE) in 1975 in Belgrade (Glasgow 1993). These guidelines were ratified at the 1977 Tbilisi Intergovernmental Conference and called for objectives that would encourage acquiring environmental awareness, knowledge of the environment and its associated problems; values and feelings of concern for environmental improvement and protection; skills for identifying and solving environmental problems and opportunities to be involved in working towards resolution of environmental problems (UNESCO 1978).

More than 20 years after the historic Belgrade and Tbilisi meetings defining Environmental Education (UNESCO 1975,1977) Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) posed the question: “Why do people act environmentally, and what are the barriers to pro-environmental behaviour?” In particular they wondered why people who are environmentally knowledgeable and aware often fail to display pro-environmental behaviours. After extensive research and review of various modelling programmes and systems, they concluded that: “the question of what shapes pro-environmental behaviour is such a complex one that it cannot be visualized in one framework or diagram” Krasny (2015). Thus the need to cross-disciplinary research and work was founded where the Trans-disciplinary approach to solving problems became a major conclusion.

The social responsibility perspective in EE is succinctly expressed by Hungerford, Peyton and Wilke (1980), who, working from the Tbilisi Declaration of 1977 proposed the “subordinate goal” of EE to be: “to aid all citizens in becoming environmentally

knowledgeable and, above all, skilled and dedicated citizens who are willing to work, individually and collectively, toward achieving and/or maintaining a dynamic equilibrium between quality of life and quality of the environment (p. 43)”

Critical EE is a theory which fully incorporates the society therefore leading to its overall improvement.

An effective Environmental education programme is the single most important factor in many like projects today. Unfortunately, it is often the most neglected, overlooked and as a result, the effectiveness of the programme leaves something to be questioned.

3.0 COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING

This approach to EE is based mainly on the associated behaviour change. The assumption is that if people were educated about a particular behaviour or if they knew about the severity of a problem that they would act. We often assume that “if people knew, they would do the right thing”. Unfortunately, behavioural science suggests that this assumption is flawed as an increase in knowledge does not directly correlate to a change in behaviour. Community-based Social Marketing (CBSM) provides an alternative to information-based campaigns. The CBSM approach uses data from the target population to inform programme and outreach material development. It is a four-step data driven process and is intended to remove any barriers and enhance benefits. The four (4) steps included in this programme are:

1. Identify barriers and benefits to a specific behaviour
2. Design an intervention to address barriers
3. Pilot test the intervention

4. Evaluate the programme

The strength of using social psychological principles of behaviour change is that they take into account both personal and situational variables. CBSM is a great alternative to information campaigns as it draws heavily on social science literature, particularly social psychological literature to identify tools for overcoming internal barriers.

3.1 Identifying the Barrier

Here the specific behaviour which needs to be changed is targeted and not on the associated problem. This behaviour must be linked to the related outcome and if the change is in fact needed. Clear goals must be identified and set out. It must be determined why the required behaviour is not taking place and what types of barriers exist, whether internal (i.e. motivation) or external (i.e. structural elements of the programme). Data must also be obtained to support your findings. The use of focus groups or different methods of surveys can be very useful in identifying the barrier. The fundamental element of the barrier identification process is to focus on people who *don't* already engage in the target behaviour.

3.2 Design Intervention

In order to design an intervention, a behaviour change tool must be selected to address the identified barrier. This tool along with programme materials can be used to overcome the barriers and change behaviour. A specific target audience/group must be determined in the initial phase. One question that needs to be asked is whether the reasons for not participating in the programme itself are internal or external as external barriers can decrease the likelihood that the individual would

participate. An appropriate method of reaching the target audience must be carefully selected, the length of the intervention determined and the message content (either central or peripheral). A central route message uses parameters such as legitimacy and credibility, authority, trust, relevance and the direct contact with people. A peripheral route message uses liking, emotion, social norms, humour and memorability. Figure 1 shows the relationship between reach and behaviour change.

3.3 Pilot Testing and Evaluating the Strategy

The intervention must now be pilot tested in order to determine its usefulness and feasibility. A small portion of the community can be selected using a control group. If the pilot is not successful, the strategy should be refined, modified and then piloted again. If the strategy is successful at changing the behaviour, it can then be implemented in a broader sense. The overall programme must then be carefully evaluated by comparing baseline measures of behaviour to behaviour at several points following the intervention.

3.4 Advantages of CBSM

The strengths of CBSM take a four-fold approach. Firstly, the decisions made at each step of the programme development process, from design to implementation, are based on empirical data where there is a substantial improvement over intuition or historical precedence and it offers a solid foundation for developing an effective programme. Secondly, the programme is pilot tested on a small scale before a large scale intervention. Thirdly, the ability to evaluate the programme in that ongoing evaluation ensures that at the conclusion of the programme, there are data to substantiate the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of the programme. Finally, the CBSM

approach focuses on behaviour. Studying behaviour requires a time lag in measurement, whereas attitudes can be assessed as an immediate outcome. This means that CBSM is based more on the behavioural outcome rather than the attitudinal since attitudes or intentions can change without a corresponding change in behaviour. One main disadvantage to CBSM however, is that it cannot be applied to large communities, as the “local” context will be lost.

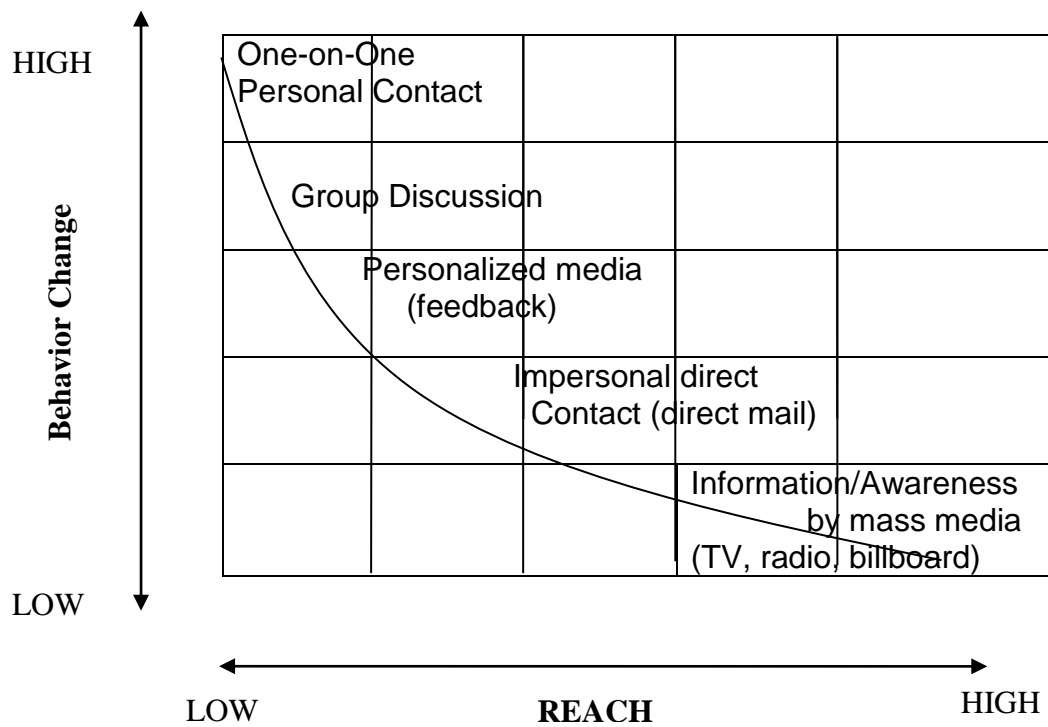


Figure 1: Reach versus Impact

3.5 Tools of Behaviour change

CBSM draws upon research in the social sciences, particularly psychology and has identified effective “tools” for promoting behaviour change. It must be noted that these tools are most effective when used in combination with one another. They are:

Commitment

Commitment comes from the basic desire of remaining consistent. It works for two (2) main reasons; first, when people go along with an initial request, it often alters the way they perceive themselves. That is, they come to see themselves for example, as the type of person who believes it is important to purchase products that have recycled content. Second, we have a strong desire to be seen as consistent by others. Indeed, our society emphasizes consistency and people who are inconsistent are often viewed negatively.

Prompts

Numerous behaviours that support sustainability are susceptible to the most human of traits: forgetting. Prompts are very effective in this regard as they remind us to perform any activity. Prompts are visual or auditory aids which remind us to carry out an activity that we might otherwise forget. The prompt must be noticeable, self-explanatory, as close in proximity to where the action is to be taken and encourage people to engage in positive or “To do” activities.

Norms

Norms guide how we should behave. If we observe others acting unsustainably, such as using water inefficiently, we are more likely to act similarly. In contrast, if we observe members of our community acting sustainably we are more likely to do the same. The norm must be visible (persons must be aware of them) and personal contact can be used to reinforce it.

Communication

All programmes to foster sustainable behaviour include a strong communication component. The impact of communications upon behaviour can vary dramatically based upon how the communication is developed. To develop effective communication, the following elements must be included: the use of captivating information, knowledge of the intended audience, the use of a credible source, proper framing of the message, care in the use of threatening messages, whether to use a one-sided versus a two-sided message, memorability of the message, the use of personal or community goals, emphasis on personal contact and the provision of feedback to members of the community on the effectiveness of the programme.

Reciprocity/Incentives

One of the most fundamental human social tendencies is the obligation to repay what another person provides for us. Reciprocating reduces the uncomfortable feeling of indebtedness, and often the person will agree to a larger request as repayment for a small favour. In social marketing this is done with the use of incentives. Incentives are particularly useful when motivation to engage in action is low or people are not doing the activity as effectively as they could. The following are some key points in the use of incentives: closely pairing the incentive and the behaviour (in terms of timing of the incentive), use of the incentive to reward positive behaviour, make the incentive visible, caution when removing an incentive especially a financial one, preparation of people's attempts to avoid the incentive, the size of the incentive and the use of non-monetary incentives.

CONCLUSION

Most initiatives to foster sustainable behaviour rely upon large-scale information campaigns that utilize education and/or advertising to encourage behaviour change. While education and advertising can be effective in creating public awareness and in changing attitudes, numerous studies show that behaviour change rarely occurs as a result of simply providing information. CBSM therefore, provides an attractive alternative to information based messages. It works by focusing on a specific behaviour, surveying the target population to establish a base rate and barriers to the behaviour, developing an intervention or making structural changes that directly address the barriers and collecting data to evaluate the efforts to promote behaviour change. People centered strategies can ensure success – It is not always about doing things better but sometimes we need to do better things!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mrs. Sian Cuffy-Young is an accomplished Fulbright Hubert Humphrey Fellow where she specialized in the areas of land reclamation, community relations, policy development, environmental planning and other related fields at Cornell University. She is the holder of a B Sc. (Hons) degree Double major in Physics, a Masters in Environmental Engineering from UWI, St Augustine, a certified Environmental Educator and Project Management Professional.. She is currently the Principal Consultant at Siel Environmental Services Limited and has been involved in the environmental field in Trinidad and Tobago for over 11 years. She has a wealth of experience in the fields of waste management, environmental management systems and environmental education.

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