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Basic Steps for Developing a VAW Social Marketing Campaign

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AUTHORS

Marcie Campbell, M.Ed., Learning Network, Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, Faculty of Education, Western University.

Linda Baker, Ph.D., Learning Network, Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, Faculty of Education, Western University.

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Basic Steps for Developing a VAW Social Marketing Campaign

The prevention of violence against women (VAW) requires an intentional and comprehensive approach that includes addressing its key determinants. Social marketing is one strategy to change social norms by providing key messages of gender equality, inclusiveness, appropriate behavior and respectful relationships, and by modeling how sexist attitudes and abusive behavior towards women can be challenged.

The following 11 steps serve as a guide for developing and implementing a social marketing campaign. These steps are based on the work of Lee and Kotler, (2008; 2011) and Castelino, Colla and Boulet (2013).

1) Identify and describe the issue being addressed and the intended focus of the campaign.

The first step to developing a social marketing campaign is to identify and understand the social issue that the campaign will be addressing (i.e., violence against women). Some questions that will need to be answered in order to understand the overall issue and focus of the campaign include: What is the problem? How bad is it? What is contributing to the problem? This step will require formative research that includes literature reviews and population-survey data. Once the overall issue is identified and described, the intended focus of the campaign needs to be clarified. The focus of the campaign is the behaviour or attitude that will be promoted to address or impact the overarching issue.

2) Ensure the organization has the capacity to develop and implement a campaign.

It is important to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the organization responsible for the campaign in order to determine its ability and competency in developing and implementing a social marketing campaign. Certain factors help determine an organization's capacity to deliver a successful social marketing campaign: past performance; resources; current partners; service delivery; issue priority; and management support.

3) Identify potential opportunities and threats in the community that may influence the campaign.

Certain factors within the community can positively or negatively influence the success of the campaign. It is important to prepare for factors that may threaten campaign success and to take advantage of the opportunities that can positively influence the campaign. Some examples include political and legal factors; cultural factors; new technologies; and community demographics.

4) Identify and describe the target audience(s).

There are three steps to identifying and describing the target audience(s).

First, the population is divided into groups based on commonalities. Some examples of variables that are used to segment the population include sociodemographic (e.g., age, gender, marital status, income); geographic (e.g., cities, countries, neighbourhoods); and behavioural

(e.g., readiness to change, at-risk for using violent behaviour). The target audience(s) may be 'upstream' such as politicians, media, and school boards.

Second, each of the grouped audiences needs to be evaluated in order to assist in prioritizing certain groups. Nine factors to consider when determining the audience(s) include: 1) size; 2) problem incidence (# of people engaged in problem behaviour or not engaged in desired behaviour; 3) problem severity; 4) the extent to which on-the-ground resources are required to support change; 5) reachability; 6) general responsiveness level (how ready and able to respond); 7) costs in reaching the audience; 8) responsiveness to proposed messages and objectives of campaign (how responsive will the audience be to the campaign strategies); and 9) the organization's capacity to implement.

After prioritizing the potential audiences, the final step is choosing one or more audiences to target. It is possible for the campaign to use the same messages/strategies for all the audiences by focusing on their common needs. This strategy is called 'undifferentiated marketing' and reaches the most people at one time. A campaign can also use different messages/strategies for different audiences. This approach is called 'differentiated marketing' and allows for more resources to be allocated to priority audiences. 'Differentiated marketing' allows concentrated efforts to develop ideal messages/strategies for one (or a few) audiences (e.g., focus on men who use abusive behaviours).

5) Outline campaign objectives

Campaign objectives must be relevant, achievable, and measurable. They may be behaviour-focused, knowledge-focused, and/or belief-focused. It is important to choose the objective with the greatest potential for meaningful change (e.g., to increase likelihood that men who use abusive behaviours will call a domestic violence hotline).

6) Identify the perceived or real barriers, benefits, and competing attitudes/behaviours as seen by the target audience that may influence the campaign objectives.

Barriers to attitude/behaviour change can be internal or external and based on the target audience's perspective. Examples of internal barriers include lack of knowledge or skills to carry out the promoted attitude/behaviour. Examples of external barriers include structural changes that are needed in order to make the attitude/behaviour change more convenient.

Benefits from attitude/behaviour change are important to highlight in order to motivate the target audience. The benefits must be something that the target audience needs or wants. The audience needs to believe and experience the promoted benefits.

Competing attitudes/behaviours fall into a number of categories: those that the target audience would prefer over the attitudes/behaviours that the campaign is promoting; those that the target audience has been engaged in for a long time and oppose the messages and behaviours of the campaign (opposing habitual attitudes/behaviours). Competing messages may be promoted by media or other organizations.

The perceived or real barriers, benefits, and competition of the campaign objectives should be reflected in the development of the campaign in order to increase its success.

7) Create a positioning statement.

A positioning statement assists the developers of the campaign. They use it to describe the unique benefits of the campaign's promoted attitudes/behaviours to the target audience in relation to the competing attitudes/behaviours. The positioning statement is the foundation for the messages/strategies developed for the campaign. The following is a template for a position statement:

"We want [Target Audience] to see [Desired Behaviour] as [Set of Benefits] and as more important and beneficial than [Competition]"

"We want [men who use violence in their intimate relationships] to see [calling a hotline and reaching out for help] as [an important step in ending their use of abuse] and as more important and beneficial than [ignoring or hiding their abusive behaviour].

8) Make campaign messages and objectives relevant, accessible, relatable, and motivational.

The next step is to apply the 'marketing mix' known as the four P's: *Product, Price, Place, and Promotion*. These terms can be challenging for someone who does not have a marketing background. A basic description of the four P's follows.

Product: There are three dimensions to the produce: the core product; the actual product; and the augmented product.

The core product is the benefit to the target audience for adopting the promoted attitudes/behaviours (e.g., men who use abusive behaviours *being seen as a caring father by their children*).

The actual product is the campaign objective (e.g., men who use abusive behaviours *reaching out for help* regarding their abusive behaviour).

The augmented product is any tangible objects and services that are promoted with the campaign objectives (e.g., *a hotline* that will connect men who use abusive behaviours with counsellors/supports).

Price: It is important to determine the costs to the campaign objectives both monetary (paying for service) and nonmonetary (costs associated with time, effort, energy, psychological risks).

Place: The where and when the target audience will perform the campaign objectives need to be identified (e.g., in home, at work, in community).

Promotion: Outline your message and messenger strategy. This includes the communication channels that will be used to reach the audience and the frequency that the message will be delivered. Examples of communication strategies include television, social media, and posters. The promotional strategy is chosen according to what is needed to motivate change within the target audience(s).

9) Consult with VAW stakeholders

VAW stakeholders can provide invaluable insight into the appropriateness, achievability, and potential effectiveness of the campaign. Consultations are conducted during all phases of the social marketing efforts (i.e., research, development, implementation, and evaluation of the campaign).

10) Test proposed messages and objectives with a range of groups in the population, including women and children experiencing violence, the target audience(s), and VAW stakeholders.

It is important to test the campaign messages and objectives with multiple population groups in order to determine whether or not the campaign will be effective in promoting awareness and change. Testing the proposed messages and objectives with various population groups, not just the target audience(s), will help to prevent any unintended negative consequences that may stem from the campaign (e.g., messages that blame the victim/survivor, messages that trigger abusive behaviour, messages that increase risk to women and/or children).

11) Monitor the progress of the campaign and evaluate.

The progress of the campaign needs to be monitored so that midcourse corrections can be made if necessary. The campaign needs to be evaluated to determine its efficacy in reaching the target audience, motivating attitude/behaviour changes, and influencing the overarching social issue being addressed. To learn more about monitoring and evaluating a social marketing campaign, see [Learning Brief #17](#).

Note: When developing the campaign budget, consider the work involved in the above steps, as well as the implementation plan. Learning at a given step may lead to revisiting and adjusting work at earlier steps (i.e., not a linear process).

References

[Social Marketing for Preventing Violence Against Women: Making Every Action Matter \(2013\)](#)

Castelino, Colla & Boulet, 2013

[Social Marketing: Influencing Behaviors for Good](#)

Kotler & Lee, 2008 & 2011