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Child and Family in the Perspective of Social Marketing

Social campaigns (as well as social advertising) play a very important role in media and public space. This phenomenon is particularly visible while the public space, due its numerous advantages, is protected from “ubiquitous” and aggressive advertising. Meanwhile, constructive actions oriented towards promoting socially desirable ideas and attitudes like communication within a family, tolerance, social integration, support of defavorized groups are not only legitimate here but they often are given a privileged status.

How is social marketing defined, what is its place in the public and media communication system, how can social advertising support activities for the benefit of child and family in the further perspective? An important – to start with – matter is to discern the terminology, as social marketing is often wrongly identified with non-profit organizations’ marketing, cause related marketing or with one of the tools like social advertising.

Social marketing, in the simplest approach, is using marketing techniques and concepts to evoke socially desirable attitudes and behaviors¹. According to the definition, the aim will be to induce social changes, on one hand promoting ideas and attitudes considered as the right ones that express the commonly accepted interest of the community² (in certain cases it will be e.g. prevention of family violence, social dialogue, encouraging to bring aid, supporting education), on the other hand they play a significant informative role: about the scale, occurrence of the phenomena, e.g. social problems and issues, persons and families threatened by social exclusion, local communities, about the needs of children/pupils, their problems, support and help possibilities. It is an important added value, along with persuasive side of social advertising we can talk about informative roles which is important especially in our reality, in the context of stereotypization and lack of knowledge about children’s and teenagers’ problems. The classic understanding and

¹ D. Maison, N. Maliszewski, *Co to jest reklama społeczna?*, in: D. Maison, P. Wasilewski (ed.), *Propaganda dobrych serc, czyli rzecz o reklamie społecznej*, Kraków 2002, p. 14.

² B. Dobek-Ostrowska, R. Wiszniowski, *Teoria komunikowania publicznego i politycznego. Wprowadzenie*, Wrocław 2002, p. 77.

definitions of social marketing (which consists of both, social advertising and other forms of influence) point to the aspects of its functioning in social space, relations with traditional marketing and its instruments, role, significance and rules of creating tools, including marketing, communication and media concepts and strategies³. Social marketing is defined within the categories of effective causing changes in attitudes and systems of values, influence on the target groups; the quoted authors point to concurrence of social and commerce marketing, adaptation of techniques and tools used for research, programs planning, implementation and evaluation⁴.

The basis of marketing strategy is called marketing mix which consists of four elements: product, price, distribution (place) and promotion. The main factor distinguishing between those two areas are the aims of actions: inducing socially desirable changes: promoting ideas, attitudes serving the common good – not products or services, causing positive changes in people's behaviors, attitudes and opinions. The social marketing product is a postulated attitude or behavior and in consequence the set of benefits for the target audience (e.g. daily 20-minute reading of books by parents to their children promoted in the *All of Poland Reads to Kids* campaign). The price are financial or non-financial "costs" connected with changing promoted behavior (in this case spending time with children, giving up some habits like watching TV, purchase of books). Effective marketing planning assumes such construction of a campaign which allows to maximize the benefits and reduce the costs, in order to do that appropriate marketing tools, channels and communication styles are chosen. Distribution in marketing is delivering the product to target market; in social marketing it means actions aimed at making the acceptance of promoted attitudes/behaviors/ideas easier. In the *All of Poland...* campaign it will include distribution of books for children and youth and guidebooks for parents, a series of press and media publications supporting the campaign and activities in the families' environment: kindergartens, schools, libraries. Promotion is the last element of marketing mix assumes effective reaching to the audience; to put is short, this will be a complex communication process (including persuasive communication): passing on information and making social impact according to the goals set, through certain means of communication. Promotion includes such tools

³ M.E. Goldberg, M. Fishbein, S.E. Middlestadt (eds.), *Social Marketing: Theoretical & Practical Perspectives*, Mahwah, NJ – London 1997; P. Kotler, N. Roberto, N. Lee, *Social Marketing. Improving the Quality of Life*, Thousand Oaks, CA 2002; P. Kotler, N. Lee, *Social Marketing. Influencing Behaviors for Good*, Thousand Oaks, CA 2008; P. Kotler, G. Armstrong, J. Saunders, V. Wong, *Marketing. Podręcznik Europejski*, transl. L. Adamus, Warszawa 2002.

⁴ N.K. Weinreich, *What is Social Marketing?*, <http://www.social-marketing.com/Whatis.html> (August 11, 2013).

like social advertising and advertising campaigns, website, direct marketing, events and other stimulating actions (e.g. contests, exhibitions, reviews, joint activities), also unconventional, press and media publication, public relations, etc.

Already mentioned social advertising is one of the important tools in professionalized social marketing and is – due to its function – the most visible in almost all spheres of public and media space: the Internet, press, radio, television, commercial spaces, public institutions, city space, mobile advertising, open galleries, billboards, etc. Social advertising can be described – by analogy to classic definitions of advertising – as a persuasive communication process whose aim is to induce the attitudes and behaviors considered as proper, and specifically, to convince to the change of convictions (e.g. about adoption), to persuade to stop certain behaviors (e.g. violence) or to encourage to take positive actions (e.g. financial support of scholarship funds)⁵. The analogy between social and commerce advertising needs no reasoning⁶. Yet, while the aims of commerce advertising campaigns focus on the area of superficial level of change (change of consumer habits or creating new ones), social advertising assumes deep, often even very deep level of change, concentrating on the areas determined psychologically, socially and even generationally: world views, habits, addictions, stereotypes, models and patterns of behavior.

Totally separate categories need to be used to describe cause related marketing (CRM), which is an indirect category between commerce and social marketing. CRM, used mainly by business subjects assumes actions towards certain and important social causes (e.g. supporting talented pupils, poor families, scholarship funds, purchase of computers or school books) which corresponds with the positive image of a company, strengthening its position in the market. The initiatives of cause related marketing align with the ideas of corporate social responsibility (CSR), they often include cooperation between the institutions of first and third sector (NGOs).

As for the social marketing, we need to notice that the matters of communication within family, prevention of family violence, safe childhood, support of education and widely understood children and mothers rights are a very large group. Those matters, similarly to disability or road safety belong to the most typical and the most recognized topics within social marketing⁷.

Using the typology of social marketing by the Foundation for Social Communication, the campaigns for children and family fit into the following categories: activ-

⁵ D. Maison, R. Maliszewski, *Co to jest reklama społeczna?*, p. 12.

⁶ M. Izdebski, *Reklama społeczna. Kreacja a skuteczność*, http://www.kampaniespoleczne.pl/pliki/plik_20100827151429_910.pdf (September 1, 2013).

⁷ *Campaign Categories*, <http://www.osocio.org> (September 1, 2013); B. Dobek-Ostrowska, R. Wiszniowski, *Teoria komunikowania publicznego i politycznego...*, p. 79 and the next.

ization and civil society, education, image campaigns of organizations and institutions, 1 percent of tax, communication in the family, social care, human rights, promotion of health, equality of rights and tolerance, violence prevention and fight with social exclusion⁸. It is a significant part of all thematic categories of social advertising⁹. The topics focused around support of a child and family present the most typical goals, means of expression and mechanisms of functioning social advertising. Here the matter of so-called shock advertising.

Due to previously mentioned correlations (deep level of change, requiring strong impulses) social advertising creations were often characterized by sharpness, strong influence, often aggressive message, are therefore perceived as controversial. Social advertising – in traditional approach – often uses surprise, contrast, shock, the messages are usually supposed to stimulate impulses on high emotional level. The most representative are, in this context, campaigns against smoking or AIDS awareness. From the area of child and family support we can point to a very suggestive campaign of the *Blue Line* (so called *Because the soup was too salty*), *Idiot. Nice name for a kid?* and other condemning domestic violence, numerous campaigns against child trafficking, illegal employment of adolescents (slavery) or child prostitution¹⁰. Theoretically, it is easy to grasp the legitimacy of using strong messages and controversial content in those campaigns: shocking is justified in the name of higher values assumed by the message authors, is required for the communicate to be effective (the desired deep level of change forces the necessity of using certain techniques). On the other hand, ethical dilemmas and questions have showed up: what will be further consequences of showing aversive message and where is the border line for “useful shock” – is it determined (according to the marketing theory) by the message effectiveness? A rule needs to be pointed out since a negative, shocking message is often blocked on the perception level or it activates the defense mechanisms that unable proper decoding (receiving) of the message, which questions the effectiveness of shock advertising.

In this place it is necessary to accent that social advertising is an important and the most visible but only one of many instruments in social marketing. The range of possibilities is much wider, even though until recently social marketing has been associated exclusively with social advertising. We have watched the tendency of the

⁸ See: *Kampanie społeczne*, <http://www.kampaniespoleczne.pl/kampanie> (September 1, 2013).

⁹ B. Dyczewski, *Kampanie społeczne jako szansa w przeciwdziałaniu społecznej defaworyzacji*, in: K. Hirszel, R. Szczepanik, A. Zbonikowski, D. Modrzejewska (eds.), *Psychospołeczne uwarunkowania defaworyzacji dzieci i młodzieży*, Warszawa 2010, p. 146, 149.

¹⁰ See topic: *Komunikacja w rodzinie*: http://www.kampaniespoleczne.pl/kampanie,sekcja,19,komunikacja_w_rodzinie (September 1, 2013).

domination of advertising in social campaigns, the creators often worked with conviction that the essence of marketing is promotion and especially mass persuasive communication¹¹.

It is fortunate that formula of shock advertising has come to an end. Recently, in Poland we witness significant changes taking place in social marketing in the aspect of popularizing it: its tools became available, in the organizational aspect: marketing ceased to be the domain of big professionalized institutions, and in the areas of communication strategies: choosing media type, means and techniques of expression.

Social marketing is even more often connected with other activities from the area of animation, integration, family support and help, complementing them, supporting or promoting¹². Examples can be taken mainly from numerous events, information campaigns, social projects as well as project prepared and undertaken locally, not by specialized agencies but by NGOs or care, education or cultural institutions¹³. The tendency to shift organizations' initiatives from external agencies to the ones settled in the local communities corresponds in a large degree with the principle of subsidiarity and the ideas of civil society and is nowadays strongly supported by EU funds.

An excellent example is the above-mentioned *All of Poland Reads to Kids* campaign led since 2001¹⁴. The organizers use not only public and commercial media but also initiate all range of support activities (publishing, partnership and patronage net, action "in the field", contests for different age groups, banks of ideas, promoted in various media). The campaign is "open" for external initiatives: within numerous programs it allows participation of different cultural and educational institutions (libraries, schools, kindergartens, theatres) which, due to mutual benefits and campaign's prestige, are often undertaken. The campaign uses the authority of leaders: national and local celebrities.

Looping at the above campaign, as well as at the other programs for children and families, we can put forward the thesis of convergence, pluralisation and "decentralization" of activities and of mutual adaptation: the elements of social marketing, non-profit marketing, social, educational and information projects are combined,

¹¹ E. Lipska, *Nowy wymiar marketingu społecznego i jego rola w kształtowaniu zmian społecznych*, in: J. Olędzki (ed.), *Public relations w komunikowaniu społecznym i marketingu*, Warszawa 2010, p. 316.

¹² A. Andreasen, *Intersector Transfer of Marketing Knowledge*, <http://www.social-marketing.org/papers/intersectortransfer.html> (August 11, 2013).

¹³ E.g. A. Sawicka, *Przykłady współpracy organizacji z firmami* and A. Sawicka, *Wyniki badania ilościowego małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw nt. współpracy z organizacjami pozarządowymi*, in: M. Baranowska, M. Lewicki (eds.), *Marketing społeczny dla NGO*, Warszawa 2005, p. 38-49.

¹⁴ See: *Kampania czytania CPCD*, <http://www.calapolskaczytadzieciom.pl>. The campaign has been introduced in other countries, i.e. the Czech Republic: *Cele Česko čte dětem*, Slovakia: *Celé Slovensko číta detiom*, Lithuania: *Visa Lietuva skaito vaikams*; there is also international version: *All of Europe Reads to Kids*.

and coordination and cooperation of different subjects dealing with the same problem becomes one of the key issues¹⁵.

Contemporary campaigns, as well as social and information projects, picture the direction of aesthetic evolution of the instruments used in social marketing. For several years, a change of accents can be observed: on one hand it is "smoothing" the aesthetic and means of expression: controversial messages are replaced by the pleasant ones, causing reflection – a good example would be a very "warm" campaign aimed at grandparents promoting contacts with grandchildren. The role of new media and electronic media is also increasing. Of course, all the time new impulses and techniques are being sought as on the condition for the effectiveness of social advertising is keeping its "identity" in the social and media space. It is observed that unconventional and stimulating actions are the most recognized, for example along with the actions within *All of Poland...* campaign we can see different variants of information actions, social projects, local social, charity, information and educational initiatives using different techniques and other forms of interactions – not only media but first of all the direct ones. It is a significant change as – within the traditional understanding – social marketing has been professionalized, functions in the area of public communication, is usually ordered by government agencies, public institutions or other social organizations, and campaigns are realized also by social institutions, e.g. civic ones serving local communities (including the ones supporting families and children).

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¹⁵ E. Lipska, *Nowy wymiar marketingu społecznego...*, p. 15.

Goldberg M.E., Fishbein M., Middlestadt S.E. (eds.), *Social Marketing: Theoretical & Practical Perspectives*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ – London 1997.

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STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł opisuje w syntetycznym ujęciu, kwestie i możliwości wykorzystywania marketingu społecznego na rzecz wsparcia dzieci i rodzin przede wszystkim w płaszczyźnie komunikacji masowej i medialnej. Omówione zostało klasyczne rozumienie marketingu społecznego, reklamy społecznej, podstawowych zasad ich funkcjonowania, a także zarysowane zostały kwestie ewolucji marketingu społecznego oraz obecnych zmian w aspektach wykorzystywanych jego instrumentów, organizacji kampanii oraz stylów komunikacji. W artykule wskazano na możliwości i praktykę wykorzystywania marketingu społecznego przez instytucje wsparcia dzieci i rodziny, w tym jednostki pomocowe oraz organizacje obywatelskie.

Słowa klucze: kampanie społeczne – reklama społeczna – marketing społeczny – komunikacja masowa i medialna

SUMMARY

The article describes synthetically the issues and possibilities of social marketing use for the support of children and families mainly in the area of mass and media communication. It describes classical understanding of social marketing, social advertising, the basics of their functioning and outlines the process of evolution of social marketing together with present changes within the aspects of using its tools, campaign organization and styles of communication. The article points to the possibilities and practices in using social marketing by institutions supporting children and families, also civic organizations and care units.

Key words: social campaigns – social advertising – social marketing – mass and media communication