The iSMA, ESMA and AASM[1]

Consensus Definition of Social Marketing

The following definition has been endorsed by the Boards of iSMA, ESMA and AASM:

Social Marketing seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with other approaches to influence behaviours that benefit individuals and communities for the greater social good.

Social Marketing practice is guided by ethical principles. It seeks to integrate research, best practice, theory, audience and partnership insight, to inform the delivery of competition sensitive and segmented social change programmes that are effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable.

The Process of Developing the Consensus Definition

In developing a consensus definition of Social Marketing iSMA, ESMA and AASM working group acknowledged the dynamic and contested nature of elements of Social Marketing theory and practice as a strength and manifestation of the sophisticated nature of the Social Marketing field. In developing a consensus definition the intention was not to close down the helpful and inevitable on-going debate about the nature and focus of Social Marketing. The aim was to help build a common narrative that could be used by the supporting associations to promote Social Marketing as a valuable core component of social programmes aimed at improving the human condition.

In February 2012 iSMA and ESMA began an iterative and inclusive process to develop a consensus definition of Social Marketing. A working group was formed to lead this work on behalf of iSMA and ESMA[2]. In April 2013 the AASM agreed to participate and contribute to this process.

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[1] iSMA: International Social Marketing Association. ESMA : European Social Marketing Association. AASM: Australian Association of Social Marketing.

[2] See annexe one for a list of the members of the group.

The process consisted of a membership trawl to develop a set of agreed principles of Social Marketing to underpin the definition. The process also included an online members vote on these principles; a summary of the survey results is set out in annex two. All members of the participating associations were given opportunities to see the developing definition, comment and make suggestions for improvements. The definition was further refined through an iterative process of drafting and comment by the working group and input from the Boards of the supporting associations. Five considerations were taken into account when developing the definition:

1. It was recognised that the definition would be a consensus statement; it would not seek to limit or curtail debate about the nature of Social Marketing. The consensus definitions purpose would be to enable the supporting associations to develop a common narrative about the nature of Social Marketing that would assist in furthering their collective aim of capturing and spreading good practice.

2. The definition should focus on both the purpose and nature of Social Marketing practice.

3. It should be as short and succinct as possible.

4. The definition should be as unambiguous as possible and it should be capable of translation into languages other than English without loss of its substantive meaning.

5. The definition should be subject to on-going refinement to reflect the dynamic and developing nature of Social Marketing theory and practice.

Endorsement

Following Board meetings of the three associations over the summer of 2013 the consensus definition was endorsed by the governing Boards of the iSMA, ESMA and AASM. The Boards have also approved additional work to refine and further develop supporting guidance linked to the consensus definition. This work will include:

1. Further work to refine the key principles agreed by members and set these out as an accompanying document to the consensus definition.

2. Subsequent to the development of an agreed set of key principles work will begin to develop a code of conduct to guide effective and ethical practice in Social Marketing.

3. A review, refinement and updating exercise of the definition and supporting principles will be undertaken in 2017 among members of all the current supporting associations and any new national or regional Social Marketing associations that are in existence at that time. This exercise should aim to test the definition against member's opinion of good practice at that time and make any necessary changes.

Annexe 1: Working Group Members:

A Tapp, R Brophy , M Carausan, J Carruthers, S Peattie, S Revill, M Chamberlain , N Lee, S Sherif , T Beall, W Morgan , C Lellig, S Suggs, J French.

Annexe 2: Summary of Social Marketing principles rated as 'essential' or 'important' by 167 respondents to the iSMA and ESMA Key Principles & Definitions Survey

KP ID	Description	Essential + Important (% total responses)	Rank
KP 2	Set and measure behavioural objectives	83	1
KP 3	Uses audience insight and research	81	2
KP 1	Focus on the production of social good	79	3
KP 5	Use audience segmentation to understand and target interventions	76	4
KP 13	Apply data, research, evidence and behavioural theory in developing programmes	73	5
KP 22	Rigorous evaluation and reporting of short-term impacts, ROI and longer-term outcomes	73	6
KP 6	Use systematic planning and marketing management methodology	68	7
KP 4	Undertake competition analysis and develop competitor intervention strategies	67	8
KP 20	Apply and be guided by an ethical analysis and standards	66	9
KP 21	Apply commercial marketing theory and practice to social challenges	61	10
KP 7	Focus on up-stream, mid-stream and down-stream audiences	58	11
KP 17	Analyse communication channels & other forms of influence	57	12
KP 8	Inform and shape the total social policy intervention mix	54	13
KP 11	Focus on creating value for citizens and civil society through valued negative exchanges	51	14
KP 10	Focus on creating value for citizens and civil society through valued voluntary exchange	50	15
KP 12	Undertake stakeholder analysis and apply relationship management strategies	49	16
KP 16	Consider applying the 4Cs tool box (Lauterborne)	43	17
KP 9	Understand and use forms of influences that draw on rational choice & rapid cognition	42	18
KP 14	Design programmes that aim to increase social equity	42	19
KP 19	Analyse the potential costs and benefits of supporting and/or partnering with private sector organisations	42	20
KP 15	Consider applying the 4P&rsquo tool box (McCarthy) in the intervention	41	21
KP 18	Understand and make known the social consequences of commercial sector marketing	37	22