

## **SAVE, a model for comprehensive evaluation in social marketing**

### **Abstract**

Evaluating a social marketing intervention is necessary because it allows to capitalize on both successes and failures. This evaluation has to question and demonstrate the efficiency of the intervention in achieving its goals, which in return can be used to find new interested parties and funding for future interventions. The SAVE model (Systems, Actors, Value, Empowerment) is proposed to build a dynamic and comprehensive evaluation plan throughout an intervention for behavioural changes.

### **Introduction and background / rationale**

Social Marketing was introduced in marketing research and practices by Kotler and Zaltman (1971). Its current definition has been proposed by the Boards of the International Social Marketing Association, European Social Marketing Association, and Australian Association of Social Marketing in 2013: *Social Marketing seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with other approaches to influence behaviour that benefits individuals and communities for the greater social good.*

Many social marketing programs have been developed all around the world (Basil, Diaz-Meneses and Basil, 2019). Since the first publications and reflections on social marketing goals and methods, practitioners and researchers have pinpointed the importance of the evaluation stage of an intervention (Andreasen, 2002; Balch and Sutton, 1997; Grier and Bryant, 2005; Hornik, 2002; Kotler, Roberto and Hugo, 1991). Its conception and implementation are indeed paramount for the funding public organizations or NGO, foundations or firms which have to link their investments to a measured and collective better good. Providing evidence of the efficiency of the tools and methods carried out can also lead to the commitment of new stakeholders. Therefore, evaluation must be a concern from the early conception of a social marketing plan for its promoters.

Traditionally, the prime objective of the evaluation stage is focused on results regarding the expected behavioural changes. Nevertheless, other criteria could be of significance in evaluating the impact of a programme, such as an improvement in individual or collective daily life, environment, biodiversity, a reduction of risky or discriminatory behaviours and so on. Social marketing addresses wicked problems. Finding a proper way to measure its efficiency often becomes a challenge. Although the ideal would be semi-experimental or quasi-experimental, most field programmes cannot meet their criteria of evidence studies (Gordon,

Russell-Bennett and Craig Lefebvre, 2016). Alternative designs can be used, including the continuous evaluation of interventions, pragmatic trials and a stepped approach (Bonell, et al 2012; Kumar et al., 2013; West et al., 2008). Some researchers have alleged that it is short-sighted to focus too much on a behavioral change which could be difficult to measure in complex social situations. Developing a continuous monitoring system for more agile interventions could be more efficient (Parkinson, 2018). The aim of our article is to present a comprehensive and continuous evaluation model based on our crossed expertise and research.

### **Theoretical backgrounds and methodology**

Our proposed model has been built following the numerous works of research which called for an evaluation not only focused on behavioral changes but taking into account a more reflective vision (Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014; Stead et al., 2007). Mixed methods can allow to measure both behavioural changes and the views of participants and stakeholders whose engagement is necessary for success according to the exchange theory (David et al., 2019; McHugh and Domegan, 2017; Tapp and Rundle-Thiele, 2016). Consequently, our evaluation model integrates 4 stages:

- The process, which includes all the aspects of the implementation of a programme. This leads to the understanding of why and how a programme has achieved or missed its goals. At what extent has it reached the target population and program stakeholders? Engaged them in a change? Has it proceeded as scheduled? Implementing a continuous monitoring of the target population and project stakeholders month by month, for example, allows to understand barriers and motivations, and to improve the programme if it has failed to surpass reluctance.
- The outcomes in terms of expected behaviours. Has the programme been efficient in making the target change their behaviour? In what measure can an observed change be attributed to the programme? Designing indicators to measure changes regarding knowledges, attitude and belief from the very beginning of an intervention makes it possible to follow the evolution of these variables. It is very rare to achieve 100% of the set of goals. Defining specific milestones or targets, before the actual implementation, makes it easier and allows encouragement to the promoters of the program and the network of stakeholders/partners.
- The impact on context modification. Upstream programmes specifically intend to change the economic and legal contexts (macro system), midstream programs intend to bring change at a community level (meso system), downstream programs address only individual responses –

micro system- (Gordon 2013). These kinds of changes are often crucial for obtaining lasting impacts on collective behavioural changes. How can they be continuously measured?

- The evaluation of ethics. Social marketing can be (and has been) questioned on its legitimacy in bringing social behaviour changes, even regarding its claim for a “greater good”. A reflection must be provided about the inclusive capacity of a programme. Have all the eventual limitations been anticipated – financial, cultural, geographic, social...? It is of paramount importance to compare the continuous efficiency and ethics of a programme.

### **Our proposal of a comprehensive evaluation model**

Based on research and field expertise, we therefore proposed the **SAVE model**, for **Systems, Actors, Value and Empowerment** (Table 1).

SAVE brings an integrative and multi-criteria approach to continuously monitor and assess a programme (Figure 1). It synthesizes current benchmarks in social marketing; it can be used to check that targets and stakeholders have been correctly analysed regarding their power and interest (McHugh, Domegan and Duane, 2018) in order to design the proper tools for gaining their engagement.

Our model focuses on the interactions between micro, meso and macro **systems** which influence positively or negatively individual behaviours. It deals with the **actors** to be targeted in order to increase social and behavioural changes for a greater good, through a socio-ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner and Evans, 2000).

**Value** refers to the exchange theory and the importance of co-creation with targets and stakeholders. It emphasizes the creation of a proposition value of change superior to the one expected from the current situation. **Empowerment** ensures a continuous concern on ethics regarding exchanges with targets and stakeholders. How to provide them more power and more literacy in decision-making over their lifetime through the implementation of a social marketing programme?

### **Figures and tables**

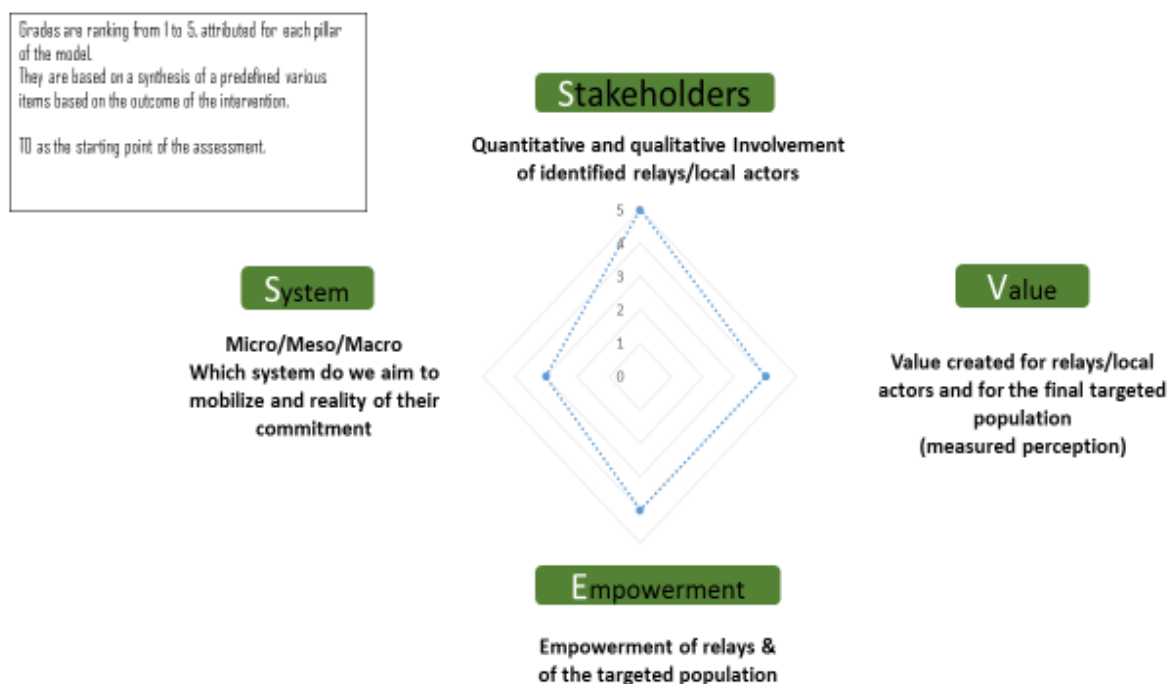
**Table 1 – SAVE assessment framework**

S for System	At which level do we work? Macro system, Meso system or Micro system. Are they properly impacted?  Is the impact perceived as positive? Negative?
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	<p>Is the program meeting some unanticipated backlashes?</p> <p>Which level should be involved in the future for a more efficient implementation?</p>
A for Actors	<p>Which key players were sought to be involved: target groups, stakeholders, local authorities, companies, local influencers, ...</p> <p>What were the motivations and obstacles of the different actors that had been identified?</p> <p>How were they mobilized or neutralized?</p> <p>What changes could be observed and quantified: representations, interests, practices?</p> <p>How many stakeholders were successfully involved?</p> <p>What are the reasons for the programme's dropout by the different stakeholders?</p> <p>What are the solutions to overcome them?</p>
V for Value	<p>What exchange values have been proposed to the various stakeholders? With what success?</p> <p>Was this value easy to communicate, to adopt?</p> <p>Were its benefits easily perceived? Valued? Convincing compared to the competition?</p> <p>Did this value lead to a change in attitudes, beliefs, behavior?</p> <p>Were the target groups and stakeholders satisfied?</p> <p>What improvements could be developed?</p>
E for Empowerment	<p>Did the target groups feel valued by their involvement? Will their commitment continue after the intervention?</p> <p>Has their responsiveness and that of the stakeholders involved been increased?</p> <p>Are participation and co-evolution techniques sufficiently used?</p>

	Has a momentum of ambassadors capable of carrying the approach and enriching it been created?
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**Figure 1 – The 4 dimensions of SAVE monitoring**



## Discussion and conclusion

Some models have already been proposed to social marketers, such as RE-AIM, mostly used in medical programmes (Lam et al, 2017; Rogers et al, 2017) or the modified ROI (Kotler and Lee, 2016). The SAVE model intends to help social marketers and researchers, from the beginning, to incorporate continuous monitoring of the key aspects for successful programmes. It is dynamic, agile and can be adapted to various contexts and designs. It is also especially efficient when dealing with community based interventions, involving multiple stakeholders and looking for a long lasting effect.

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