

Using social marketing for prevention: insights from expert practitioners

A report from good business
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good business

About Good Business

Good Business is a London based consultancy focused on driving social change for organisations and the societies of which they are a part. We use behaviour change, social marketing and sustainability techniques to create interventions, campaigns and services that are good for our clients and good for society. In 2013, Good Business was awarded a grant by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to run interventions in Botswana and Uganda aimed at stopping young people from starting to use tobacco, and in 2015 we received a further grant to continue and extend our work.

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1. Introduction

In September 2015, Good Business hosted a series of think tank sessions in London, Washington DC and Johannesburg around using social marketing for prevention, with a particular focus on tobacco control in Africa. These sessions were funded by a grant from the New Venture Foundation. Good Business is currently running interventions for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, aimed at stopping teens from taking up smoking in Botswana and Uganda, which formed the background context to the sessions.

Stopping young people from starting to smoke has many clear personal, social and financial advantages over trying to help them quit once they've started. Given its addictive nature, those who try smoking are likely to become adult smokers. And social marketing is one of the primary ways to achieve prevention goals, particularly in a teen audience.

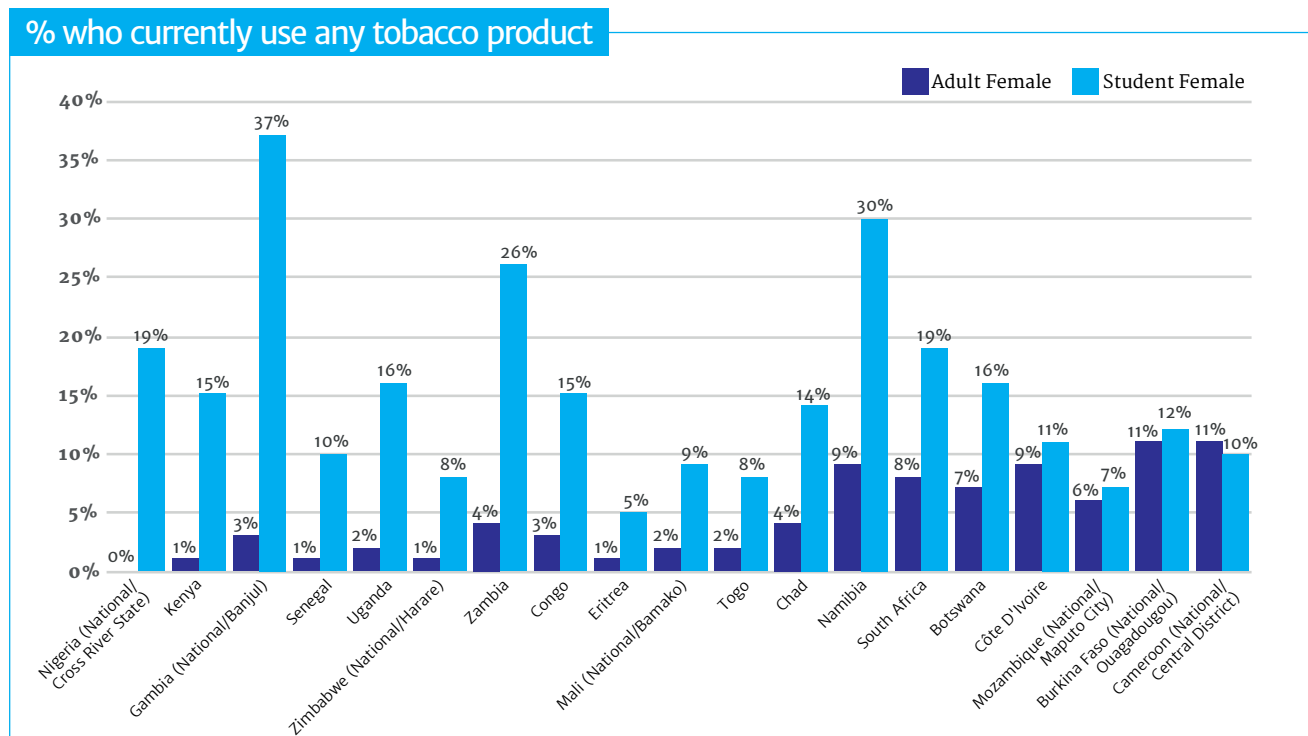
But as with early intervention in many other areas, in practice, the amount of resource invested in prevention is still a small amount of that invested in tobacco control globally. Other tobacco control measures such as cessation interventions clearly have enormous value – and there is no suggestion that social marketing for prevention should replace them – but rather that it is currently an under-used addition to the mix.

In addition, most existing preventative activity directed at young people focuses primarily on the communication of the negative health impacts of smoking. This fills an important need, but it alone does

not adequately address the multiple reasons why young people start smoking – many of which are complex, and socially embedded, and very much in the here-and-now, rather than in what seems like the long term future.

This is a particularly pressing problem in Africa, where there is a real fear that unless preventative action is taken there is a tobacco epidemic in the making.

In many African markets, particularly sub-Saharan markets, current smoking rates are low, particularly amongst women. But this is changing fast, in no small part because tobacco companies are placing increasing focus on advertising and promotion in many African markets, as the numbers of smokers in other countries begins to plateau or decline. And this has led to the striking fact that the numbers of adolescents who smoke tobacco now vastly exceeds their adult counterparts in the majority of African countries in which data is collected, particularly for women.



Sources: All student data is from the latest Global Youth Tobacco Survey available for the country. All adult data is from the WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2011 with the following exceptions: Nigeria – Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2012; Uganda – GATS 2013; Burkina Faso – WHO Country Profile, 2003; Mozambique – WHO Country Profile, 2005; Cameroon – WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2008

Addressing this issue and trying to halt the progress of this epidemic requires action on multiple fronts, and the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the implementation of the associated legislation in different countries represents a hugely important part of these efforts.

But we believe that additional preventative activity aimed at young people, which goes beyond health messaging, and uses social marketing and behaviour change techniques to address the many complex reasons why young people take up smoking is an important addition, which complements and reinforces much of the other activity in place.

Our ambition: to unlock the potential power of prevention

With the many inherent advantages of dedicated preventative tobacco control activity for young people as our start point, the obvious next step is to explore what is holding prevention back, so that it can begin to play a role proportionate to its potential power.

As prevention is a relatively new area, there are few established standards around how to do it well, and to ensure it has real and lasting impact. The complexity of the context in which young people start smoking means that preventative social marketing and behaviour change activity has to be sophisticated and multi-faceted. It is not a simple problem and there are no simple solutions. This means that designing effective interventions is challenging and demands creativity and innovation: effective smoking prevention campaigns may not always fit in an obvious tobacco control mould, which can complicate stakeholder understanding and buy-in.

We believe international best practice guidance on using social marketing for prevention could therefore play a pivotal role in building the confidence of enablers, funders, supporters and practitioners of social marketing for prevention; creating a smoother part to, and mandate for, action.

This leads us to the first focus for the sessions:

Best practice in social marketing for prevention, with a particular focus on tobacco control.

We explored a series of questions in the sessions which we hoped would help us collectively begin to define what best practice in this arena might look like.

A significant obstacle to the acceptance and use of preventative social marketing activity is that, particularly in contrast to something like a smoking cessation intervention with a fixed audience of heavy smokers, it's very hard to evaluate exactly the impact prevention has had – to state with certainty what would have happened had the intervention not taken place, and to isolate the intervention as the cause of the difference. This is something that we have really grappled with in the context of our prevention work in Botswana and Uganda – and while the existing methodology feels flawed, and not perfectly suited to the task in hand, the worry is that alternatives lack robustness.

It is clearly something that is enormously relevant to the greater acceptance and use of social marketing for prevention, in tobacco control, and also beyond. Being able to provide robust evidence that the activity has impact, and is playing a valuable role in actively preventing teens from taking up smoking, is imperative for funders and legislators.

This therefore leads us to the second focus for the sessions:

The evaluation of social marketing for prevention, with a particular focus on tobacco control.

We collectively explored both core principles and standards that the evaluation of social marketing should meet, as well as practical ways to deliver against these.

The sessions brought together some of the best global thinkers from the worlds of prevention and early intervention; social marketing and behaviour change; measurement and evaluation; and tobacco control. Each session was relatively small, comprising six to eight people, and was set up to foster a spirit

of complete collaboration and openness and to facilitate genuinely productive discussions, which made the most of everyone's individual strengths and generated outputs that are of real value for everyone.

The ultimate objective of the sessions was to identify insights which can help unlock the potential power of prevention, and enable it to become an increasing part of the public health arsenal when tackling complex behaviours and issues – of which tobacco use in young people is just one example. Tobacco prevention, and our work in Africa, provided the stimulus and material for our discussions, and is the focus of what follows, but throughout the process all participants drew upon their own experiences in other areas of social marketing and were keen to think beyond the field of tobacco control when exploring the implications of what was discussed.

This report brings together the key insights from these sessions, and explores the context and background behind them. The discussions were informative, provocative and wide ranging. We began each session with a series of questions, but with very few answers. The insights we gleaned from the conversations have been illuminating and will be extremely helpful in shaping the way in which we, in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, develop and shape our work in Africa in the future. In some instances, there was no resolution or clear consensus around the ideas and challenges that were discussed, but even in these cases we recognise the enormous value of the nuanced and thoughtful comments that were put forward by those taking part.

We hope that the insights generated will help us to grow and evolve our work in tobacco prevention in Africa, and that they will be of use to other practitioners looking to develop social marketing initiatives whose success is sustainable and measurable.

More details about our work so far in Botswana and Uganda are included in Appendix one. Details of everyone who participated in the sessions are included in Appendix two.

2. Executive summary

The sessions were wide ranging and the discussions were lively, and at times heated. Over the course of the discussions, consensus emerged around a number of areas in the spheres of prevention best practice and evaluation. These discussions are explored in more detail in section three, and summarised in this section.

Best practice: What does good look like, and how can we achieve the greatest possible social impact?

› **Insight one: be willing to make hard choices about your target audience to obtain scale**

There is a tension between maximising cost effective scale, and reaching everyone within a society. Be honest about this and make the best decisions you can. When scaling up, it's near impossible to reach everyone in your target market with a limited budget, but try to balance reach, objectives and resources when doing so.

› **Insight two: know your true audience**

To effectively create change we have to reach a) those that are 'at risk' and b) those that influence others (and there's often a high crossover). These groups should become the focal point of activity to create change within them, but any activity needs to be balanced to remain inclusive and not alienate the rest of the target audience.

› **Insight three: balance purity with pragmatism**

Having a clear and single-minded sense of purpose is incredibly important – you need to give your target audience a clear rallying call. The challenge is to maintain the integrity of the initiative and balance this sense of purpose with a pragmatic approach that recognises that a broader focus might attract additional funding.

› **Insight four: deliver absolute clarity on both the why and the what**

In contrast to many conventional marketing programmes, it can be harder for social marketing interventions to communicate the explicit 'why' and the 'what' that sits behind the activity to its target audience. Clarity around both of these points is really important if the intervention is going to achieve its objectives.

› **Insight five: plan for tech futures**

Assume that increasing internet penetration is inevitable. Use technology to maximise peer networks and deliver reach in a cost-effective way, and take the early mover advantage to maximise its potential as it happens.

Evaluation:

How do we measure and assess what we are doing, and how do we know it is working?

› **Insight six: prevention is very difficult to evaluate and it's important to be open about this**

It is far harder to show that you have stopped someone from starting to do something than it is to show that you have stopped them once they've started. And it is near impossible to measure smoking behaviour directly; proxy behaviours and attitudes are often used to build a picture of smoking behaviour.

› **Insight seven: there is no single 'gold standard' in terms of research methodology**

Matching the methodology and approach to the context and goals is far more important than anything else. Traditional social research methods may be less applicable to social marketing interventions. The most important thing is to provide the appropriate data to each stakeholder, which will most likely require a mixed methodology approach.

› **Insight eight: make the most of emerging possibilities to 'quantify' qualitative data**

Data that has been spontaneously generated without prompts or questions has an inherent authenticity which increases its value. These data should be harnessed to complement more traditional data to inform stakeholders of success and inform strategy.

› **Insight nine: accept that it is hard to collect data to optimise and evaluate simultaneously**

Using research in an ongoing way to fuel continuous programme optimisation, and using it to evaluate impact robustly and appropriately are both really important, but it is hard to use the same process to do both. If both objectives need to be fulfilled, applying appropriate methodologies, despite the increased cost, is the only way to have confidence in the outcomes.

› **Insight ten: employ as many mechanics as you can to help demonstrate your impact**

Ultimately, showing a shift in total population attitude is the goal of social marketing. Where this isn't the case, showing that you have created demonstrable change in the people you have reached, in comparison to those that you haven't is a viable alternative.

3. Detailed exploration of the conclusions

3.1 Best Practice

① **Insight one: be willing to make hard choices about your target audience to obtain scale**

There is a tension between maximising cost effective scale, and reaching everyone within a society. Be honest about this and make the best decisions you can. When scaling up, it's near impossible to reach everyone in your target market with a limited budget, but try to balance reach, objectives and resources when doing so.

Key Points

- Most programmes tend to be set up and run on a country basis, and there is a deep rooted assumption that while it may make sense to select a target on the basis of age or gender or risk factors, the aim should be to reach this target on a country-wide basis, very much including those that are hardest to reach (e.g. in rural areas).
 - While this may well be the most appropriate course of action in some contexts, it should not go unchallenged. Reaching everyone can run counter to the desire to maximise the extent of the impact the intervention can have, and deliver scale in a cost-effective way – there can be stark choice between the nature of the people you reach and the total number of people you can reach.
 - Using an alternate frame of reference to the 'country' – for example focusing on connected youth in major urban conurbations across markets – is always worth considering, particularly given the way influence spreads. This sort of focus gives you real scale. It may come at the cost of bringing everyone with you, and there is the risk of leaving certain segments behind, but it may enable you to have an impact on a significantly greater number of individual lives.
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In all of the sessions we hosted, there was considerable debate and discussion around how best to define, identify and reach the target audience for a social marketing intervention.

Participants in the sessions in London, Johannesburg and Washington DC all agreed that there is a strong historic tendency with interventions of this nature to think in terms of market and develop a plan for a country-by-country approach, with the objective being to reach everyone within the broad socio-demographic target in the country in question.

This approach is often the only way to ensure that the intervention reaches as many people as possible, irrespective of their location, or relative socio-economic status, or ethno-cultural background. And it has also been seen as vital given the many differences between geographic markets in terms of culture, language, social norms, and much else besides. The assumption is that, particularly when the intervention aims to forge a deep connection with people and work within their social worlds, it has to be embedded into the local social and cultural context and feel completely immediate and natural to them. The 'hard to reach' audiences in that market, whether they are hard to reach because of their geographic location, their socio-economic status or their access to technology (or indeed, all three), become the focus of intensive efforts to reach them, however resource intensive this may be.

All participants also agreed however that this tendency to automatically think in country-by-country terms is worthy at least of being reviewed critically, if not necessarily challenged, given the changes that have taken place in recent years, primarily around technology and communications, and the implications these changes have. Many argued strongly that it was important to apply this critical thinking and focus on shared characteristics such as higher levels of digital connectivity rather than geography, given the considerable cost and efficiency savings that could come from redefining the target in a way that crosses borders.

The relevance and suitability of this approach will, of course, depend in part on the issue being tackled. All young people are vulnerable to starting smoking, and the health impacts are no different if the young person lives in a rural or urban area. In this regard, all teens are equally important and valid targets for a tobacco prevention campaign. In social marketing interventions focused on other areas, such as crime prevention, or maternal health, the impacts and consequences may vary considerably across different geographic areas. However, when thinking about tobacco control, the upshot might be that an intervention would focus on tech-connected youth in a series of major urban conurbations across a region or continent, rather than all youth in a particular country or series of countries.



The soda and tobacco companies are marketers who have worked globally for a long time. They have this down to a science. They think globally. They launch global campaigns, but these campaigns are applied locally. And they are very careful to adjust to the local culture, this is probably because of mistakes in the past.
Peter Mitchell, Washington DC



There were several arguments put forward in support of this approach. This route enables programme designers to maximise the enormous, and growing, power of social media for the delivery of programmes of this nature, and to reach the maximum number of people for the amount of budget invested. Social media, and supporting digital content, can be the 'answer' to the challenge of delivering a depth of engagement with young people in a cost-efficient way, and at scale.



In the US, media penetration is lower in rural areas. The urban areas are where the population is the densest and where we can get the highest media efficiency [best cost per unit].

Donna Vallone, Washington DC



Connected urban centres tend to be the hub of social trends and attitudes. Social norms for young people often originate in these areas and ripple out to young people in peri-rural and rural areas. So by focusing on urban areas, connected youth can influence their peers and have an exponential impact. Increasingly, young people in urban areas across regions have almost as much in common with each other as they do with their counterparts in other areas of their country, or with other generations and cohorts, reflecting their shared digital culture and experiences. They all see the music video where Rihanna smokes a cigar, or watch the movie where the aspirational female lead smokes a cigarette. Much that is important and relevant to young people crosses borders; many of the high level insights around identity, expression and belonging that define the structure and approach of good social marketing interventions work as 'universal truths' that are relevant to young people of a particular gender and age wherever they live. Content will of course in all cases have to be localised for relevance, but the basic programme construct, approach and messaging framework can often stay the same.



Teenagers globally have more in common with each other than older generations within their country.

Jess Majekodunmi, Johannesburg



In Nigeria, the gender norming programme has a really interesting strategy where it targets college students in rural areas but who go to college in semi-urban areas. They go home, with their new perspective, and take different messages, and new ways of thinking, with them.

Saul Parker, London



And finally, the amount of time and money that needs to be invested to effectively reach those living in more isolated, rural areas is exponentially high in comparison to those in urban areas, so the cost per person for delivering change skyrockets. And this has significant implications for the total number of people that can be reached on an overall basis.



To reach that extra person across the country, in Botswana, you have to fly there or drive 1300 km to get there and do the exact same as something that may take 10 minutes in the city. Particularly in our country, the geography and demographics of how and where people are settled make it extremely difficult - costs exponentially explode reaching that 5-10%.

Tonderai Tsara, Johannesburg



Participants also discussed and debated the fact that despite the logic of many of these arguments, reaching a decision to redefine the target in this way is never easy and that discussions around this will often, and rightly, result in a decision to prioritise those who are hard to reach, despite the cost and efficiency arguments. The approach outlined above means making hard choices around the need to reach all areas and social groups directly. It runs counter to much established and respected concepts of best practice in development, which puts democracy and universality as a central part of its approach. Thinking differently about target audiences, and reaching the many rather than the few, does offer multiple advantages from a scale and efficiency perspective. However, these can be undermined by the need to operate multiple local delivery hubs in different countries across a region, which needs to be managed very carefully in order to deliver the localisation that will help the interventions succeed while still enjoying the cost and efficiency benefits that the intervention sets out to achieve.

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At BBC Media Action, we've had to make decisions from time to time to focus on urban areas rather than rural areas – in Tanzania, for example, one of our projects targets primarily youth in urban and peri-urban areas. This wasn't decided lightly and only after a lot of debate. In the end, we decided that focusing on urban areas from a cost and scale perspective would outweigh the disadvantages of not reaching absolutely everyone in the country.

Carole Chapellier, London

So, while there was emphatic agreement amongst nearly all participants that the traditional country-by-country approach to the development and roll out of social marketing interventions should be questioned and challenged, there was also near consensus that the alternative was not a given either. Rather, there was a prevailing view that this whole question should be given careful and considered thought, in the light of the particular context, issue and region in question in any particular instance.

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The opportunity is to look for the first and the easiest person to reach for the lowest cost because that's where you're going to have the most impact and really shift the numbers. But let's also think about it from the point of view of the way that trends spread out – it makes sense to crowd your limited resources around the most influential girls and try to create a new paradigm of not smoking among young teenage girls that will ripple out.

Saul Parker, London

2 Insight two: know your true audience

To effectively create change we have to reach a) those that are 'at risk' and b) those that influence others (and there's often a high crossover). These groups should become the focal point of activity to create change within them, but any activity needs to be balanced to remain inclusive and not alienate the rest of the target audience.

Key Points

- **It is all too easy to end up preaching to the converted – primarily influencing young people who already have a propensity towards the behaviour you are trying to encourage. And while the reinforcement role that this can play is valuable, particularly if the trend is running counter to the behaviour, it alone is not enough.**
- **You need to be able to explore your target audience psychographically as well as demographically, to understand the characteristics of those who are most at risk of taking up the behaviour and to identify core influencers in the peer group.**
- **This group should become the focal point of your activity, which should be designed to target these people and create change amongst them. That said, it is important to acknowledge that any targeting needs to be balanced with the need to remain inclusive and 'broad church.'**

Another recurrent theme in the sessions, which links to the discussion outlined above about how to frame the most appropriate audiences to target, was the importance of the reaching the 'right' people, thinking in terms of attitudes, mind-set and behaviour, and the extent to which they influence, or are able to influence, their peers.

There was a universal acknowledgement of the fact that, particularly when thinking about groups such as 'teenagers', audiences defined by shared socio-demographic characteristics are often far from homogenous. They are not all created equal in terms of their relation to the behaviour that the social market intervention is seeking to change. Some are more at risk of adopting the behaviour in question, and some have a greater ability to effect change amongst their peers than others. This means being selective in terms of defining exactly who the intervention is trying to reach, having the tools in place to ensure they can be reached effectively, and that it is then possible to evaluate the success and efficacy of the interventions.

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Our biggest failures were campaigns that challenged agency versus community, urban versus rural, but much less country to country.
Jesse Danzig, Washington DC

This was a subject of particular debate at the Washington DC session, with the experiences of the Truth® Campaign in the foreground. Participants stressed the importance of being able to identify the young people that are most at risk of taking up smoking with some precision, using attitudinal and psychographic profiling to help with the task, and then designing activity that is absolutely tailored to this group, even if it risks alienating others who do not match this profile. The risk otherwise is that the intervention ends up attracting those who are unlikely to smoke anyway.

It also runs the risk of ‘preaching to the converted’, and achieving little in the way of real and lasting change. Talking to people who already have a propensity towards the behaviour that is being encouraged can play a valuable reinforcing role with them, particularly if the trend amongst their peer group is in opposite direction, but it can never be enough.

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Social media is great, but it’s also awful because you can see who all the people are, and often they’re the “golden girls”.”
Giles Gibbons, Washington DC

Although it can be argued that it is never possible reach everyone in a particular group in any given geographical region or country, in countries where rural and urban lifestyles differ greatly, it is inevitable that some teenagers will not connect with – either physically or emotionally – the interventions. However, with a brief to prevent the maximum possible number of teenagers from taking up smoking – or an equivalent social goal – the intervention has to be delivered in a way that will appeal most universally. However, how an intervention sets out to achieve this universal appeal is critical.

In several sessions, the discussions focused on the fact that, as a minority behaviour, smoking is inherently cool and will most likely attract the more popular teenagers who adopt it to maintain their popularity. In an ideal world, if the universal trend of not smoking was the “cool” thing to do, then it would be enough to simply reach and influence a critical mass of teenagers so that the majority end up not smoking. But in reality, when those who are most at-risk of taking up smoking tend to be the popular teenagers with the most influence over their peers, all participants were in agreement that these teens are the group that represent the most important target audience, even if they do not represent the majority, and even if they are harder to reach than other groups.

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Most of the time we don’t want to be in a minority but there’s something interesting in these situations – the idea of smoking being aspirational and cool means being in a minority is integral to what makes it attractive; saying “only 1 in 10 people smoke” might have a negative effect by highlighting that.”
Elsbeth Kirkman, Washington DC

The Washington DC session provided some valuable insight into how other anti-tobacco campaigns reach at-risk teenagers in non-traditional venues. Donna Vallone described how, by aligning their anti-smoking message with popular teen brands such as Vans Shoes, they select youth ambassadors – teens who are similar to their target audience – to deliver tobacco-related facts at the Vans Warped Music Tour. These “truth marketers” are typically tattooed, their clothes reflect the urban sports image, and appeal to the target audience – those who were at the highest risk of taking up smoking as part of the “cool scene”.

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Our goal was to consistently feature edgy, rebellious teens as the personality and voice of the campaign. Although a large proportion of the teen population was influenced by the campaign, our primary goal was to appeal to a smaller, influential segment of at-risk teens.”
Donna Vallone, Washington DC

At the same time, by recruiting people who are “influencers” within their peer groups, we can also reach those who are open to smoking. The influencers themselves may not be at high-risk of smoking, but in the age of social media, teens are looking to social media celebrities to determine what’s cool through various platforms such as Vine and Instagram. The Truth[®] campaign then looks to target those who are open-to-smoking with high-sensation-seeking tendencies; by recruiting them as Truth[®] Marketers the programme reaches the most high-risk teenagers.



Social media has democratised a generation to be able to influence their peer group. Traditional media was people in authority telling us what they felt was interesting, and now you’ve got a generation on social media who tell their peer group what’s interesting and they listen to them. They are now the new role models.

Rob Forshaw, London



On the other hand, defining who is most at risk of taking up smoking is highly dependent on whether campaigns focus largely on urbanised or rural areas. As was debated at both the Johannesburg and Washington DC meetings, the teenagers who are most at-risk in rural areas are those where exposure to smoking is high because members of their families smoke, whereas in urbanised areas, those with friends who smoke are at higher risk. Deciding who to target is largely dependent a budget-defined strategy as discussed above, but it needs to be considered that the target audience of at-risk, open-to-smoking or influential young people will come with different styles and tastes, and with different reasons for being attracted to smoking so an intervention needs to be balanced to remain inclusive. The same principles of course hold true for any other social issue that a social marketing intervention seeks to address.

3 Insight three: balance purity with pragmatism

Having a clear and single-minded sense of purpose is incredibly important – you need to give your target audience a clear rallying call. The challenge is to maintain the integrity of the initiative and balance this sense of purpose with a pragmatic approach that recognises that a broader focus might attract additional funding.

Key Points

- **Particularly if you have a successful social marketing programme that is built around the creation of a 'brand' that is aspirational to your target, the likelihood is that questions will arise over whether to include other social issues or work with companies and brands that are keen to reach the target audience.**
- **This has obvious advantages – willingness to include other social issues will often open doors to other sources of funds (e.g. from additional donors), and willingness to include brands can open up alternate revenue streams and sometimes work to add further aspiration and credibility if the brand is deemed 'cool'. To rule this out, in a funding squeezed world, is short-sighted.**
- **However it is also not a decision that should be taken lightly. Including additional donors and social issues risks 'diluting' the impact of the original issue, and including brands can also create complicating factors.**
- **The upshot can be to undermine the clarity of the programme and muddy the target's understanding of what it is all about. This is really important, as this sense of a clear clarion call is a vital enabler of decentralisation, without it true local target-led activation is difficult.**
- **Managing the demands of the different stakeholders that then have a right to impose their views on the activity can also create difficulties.**

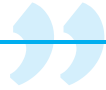
A running theme throughout all the discussions was the need to project a clear sense of purpose from social marketing interventions. Our programme in Botswana, SKY Girls, encourages girls aged between 13 to 15 years old to take the SKY pledge, where they promise remain true to themselves, and to say "no" to tobacco as a symbol of this lifestyle. The social media community surrounding SKY Girls has grown into a "sistahood" where girls can ask for advice on how to deal with saying "no" in various social situations, including but not limited to rejecting tobacco. The "be true to yourself" pledge has inherently incorporated, largely organically and at

the instigation of the girls, other social issues that girls in Botswana deal with, and Facebook posts often seek advice on a variety of situations, from saying "no" to alcohol to relationship advice and even how to deal with friends who are grieving. Several of the meetings considered whether using SKY as platform for girl empowerment in general was a viable next step, which could attract more funding and broader support, or whether this task would be biting off more than we can chew and result in little impact in all social issues, whilst irreparably diluting the anti-smoking message at its core.



There is also that nagging danger that by incorporating too many social issues, you flip the switch from being cool and aspirational to a “goody-two-shoes” campaign.

Owain Service, London



Girl Effect, an independent organisation working to unleash the potential of adolescent girls living in poverty set up by the NIKE Foundation and other partners, has taken a private sector brand approach to empowerment and applied it to a range of social issues – health, education, visibility and participation, economic empowerment, and safety – with the creation of Yegna (yen-ya) in Ethiopia. Yegna is a multimedia platform designed to inspire positive change for girls. Through their radio drama, music and talk show the Yegna girls tackle issues such as child marriage, taking control of personal finances and continuing education all by interacting with their fans while spreading the Girl Effect message of empowerment for girls. This has proved extremely successful with seven million followers of the girls’ stories in Ethiopia, and has managed to appeal to both men and women of all ages in order to instigate real change.



A core part of what we do is reframing how girls are seen in society: they are not valued and they are not visible. ... it’s about behaviour change, building confidence and resilience, but also about friendship, creating a group and overcoming challenges.

**Jess Majekodunmi,
Johannesburg**



There was some debate in the session in Johannesburg as to whether incorporating other social issues will dilute the anti-tobacco message of SKY, and because SKY is largely left in the hands of our SKY Girl ambassadors – our “diSKYples” – there is the potential for empowerment messages to shift away from anti-smoking if it is not strong or clear enough. But some participants felt that empowerment for girls comes as a whole package, and that in order to be successful in one area, girls need to also feel empowered with other social issues. Resilience in one area may engender resilience in other areas, and girls who are able to say no to smoking, or other pressures, are perhaps more likely to be successful in other areas of their lives such as education. Much like Girl Effect, SKY is about building resilience. Even though saying “no” may not be accepted in society or by their peers, building confidence in these girls to keep going is key to building a successful campaign.

A counterargument that was put forward is that by structuring SKY as an empowerment program, girls are inherently given the right, and indeed encouraged, to make their own decisions in life that are right for them. One of these could, of course, be to take up smoking, as it is their right to. In the USA during the 1970s, the tobacco industry pushed tobacco use as a symbol of the liberation of women which, due to the lack of regulation, could plausibly occur in African markets. The presence of conflicting messages surrounding empowerment and tobacco use could be seriously detrimental to prevention campaigns, particularly if the campaigns are largely driven by the girls themselves. There is a real risk of a “boomerang effect”, causing girls to change their attitudes and participate in precisely the behaviours we are trying to prevent. Monitoring industry messages and keeping these in mind when deciding the direction of prevention campaigns is vital to ensuring young people know that anti-tobacco is the more powerful option.



There's a real dichotomy between the idea on one hand that smoking has formerly been seen in most African countries as something loose women do ... and the fact that increasingly young women, especially urbanised young women, are breaking free from many of the gender norms and stereotypes around them. By smoking, they are re-claiming that space saying "we are not loose, we are empowered".

Nicola Harford, London



Encapsulating different social issues into one campaign, would require partnerships with various specialist organisations on each separate topic. Budgets do not provide for the comprehensive and extensive research required to develop appropriate messages for other social issues, or to risk spending on campaigns that will not engage the target audience. A multi-issue campaign with many causes gathered together on one platform risks becoming muddled, and bringing in too many conflicting agendas. The phrase "too many cooks spoils the broth" seems an important one to consider here, as are the very real risks associated with mission creep. However attracting other organisations, specifically well-known brands, has the advantage of attracting additional funding and further improving the brand's reputation.



Bringing in other social issues starts to become very muddy, the brand becomes very social and moves away from being an aspirational brand to a brand with all these issues in it and it becomes a bit dry. The chance of girls becoming cynical and rejecting it becomes much greater.

Saul Parker, London



With SKY specifically in mind, perhaps there is scope to accommodate a happy medium somewhere in the middle. Through the campaign, SKY can remain focused on anti-smoking behaviour by asking girls to pledge and say "no" to tobacco. Meanwhile, through social media and peer-to-peer communication, it can continue to encourage girls to help each other and pass on advice on other issues to girls within the SKY community. Having built a community of girls who support each other with the confidence to be true to themselves, they can translate these messages into resilient behaviours to other social issues like safe sex, alcohol and the like. The campaign can almost act as a toolkit to build up girls' confidence in their own voices and use it to deal with difficult situations or conversations in other aspects of their lives, without SKY specifically getting involved. From a campaign cost/benefit perspective, SKY will have equipped girls to use their voice for several social challenges by only investing in one, therefore offering huge value-for-money if it can have a measurable impact on other behaviours too.



It's about decision making in different parts of their lives as they move into adulthood with their relationships.

Amy Gregowski, Washington DC



4 Insight four: deliver absolute clarity on both the why and the what

In contrast to many conventional marketing programmes, it can be harder for social marketing interventions to communicate the explicit ‘why’ and the ‘what’ that sits behind the activity to its target audience. Clarity around both of these points is really important if the intervention is going to achieve its objectives.

Key Points

- **Particularly in cases where the social marketing intervention ladders up to a broad ‘empowerment’ platform, both practitioners and participants tend to have a very clear view of why they are doing what they’re doing – building confidence and resilience, helping the audience make better choices about things, helping create more positive behaviours in specific contexts.**
- **What can be less clear sometimes is what exactly the intervention is – is it a brand? A campaign? A movement? Even if this is clear in the practitioners’ heads, these concepts often mean little to those on the ground.**
- **There is a real need for a really simple answer to questions around the ‘what’, as it helps both the target audience and other stakeholders put their hands around it and can also help prevent any misinterpretations taking hold in the marketplace.**

Just as pragmatism when designing and implementing the campaign is important, being clear about the intentions and transparency behind the campaigns, particularly to the target audiences, is very important. When SKY and Ambition Mission launched, the anti-smoking message was, initially at least, intentionally and deliberately not put front and centre of the campaign, in order to make sure that teenagers were not put off by the perception that they were joining an anti-smoking movement. In Botswana, the SKY slogan “be true to yourself” sat more naturally with anti-tobacco messaging, because research indicates that most girls do not in fact want to smoke, even though they may find themselves pressurised into doing so. However, in Uganda, our message of “be ambitious, say no to tobacco” has not always been well understood.

When talking about the interventions to relevant health ministers in Botswana and Uganda, in the early stages of developing the campaigns, we were often met with confusion because the interventions do not contain the conventional overt and direct health education messaging, meaning that

the purpose and concept can seem quite opaque, particularly when looked at by adults, who are not the target audience.

“ We set out to deliberately not be close to or understood by adults, because we are shaped by kids...They [the parents] can now see from the kids the impact the programme is having. The parents and stakeholders might not necessarily see the anti-smoking part of what we’re doing, but what they do see is their child is much more articulate, their child can talk publically, go on radio, express themselves a lot better than what they used to.

Tonderai Tsara, Johannesburg

Programmes like Yegna have also faced similar feedback, particularly within the UK media. Yegna is part-funded by the Department for International Development, and has been described by British media simplistically as “Ethiopia’s Spice Girls”, without understanding the broader discriminatory gender norms the programme seeks to tackle. In contrast, the Truth® campaign is very open about its objectives being about both empowerment and anti-smoking, and it has become integrated as a “social norm” into US society without needing to use traditional health messaging. The notion of being able to immediately “see through” a campaign is being challenged by these programmes, and there are many lessons to learn from them.

Of course, when designing an intervention the opinions that carry the most weight should be those of the target audiences, as these are the people the intervention is seeking to influence, and it is their views and perceptions that matter most. But this poses problems when reaching out to stakeholders for approval, particularly in the context of tobacco control, where campaigns have been focused almost exclusively on explicit health-centric messaging since smoking was first found to be detrimental to human health. Campaigns not obviously portraying this message, such as SKY and Ambition Mission, are initially met with tentative reactions from parents and authority figures who struggle to understand the concept.



There’s some ambiguity around what SKY or Ambition Mission is. It’s important to pin it down to one tangible thing... so that to the people, they are talking about a product instead of a movement, the product then has a value and people will buy into it.

**Aditya Krishnadas,
Johannesburg**



Ambiguity, whether real or perceived, around the purpose and focus of the interventions has also been shown to affect public opinion, and the ability of the intervention to achieve its objectives. In the absence of explicit guidance on the purpose and objectives, both adults and teenagers alike can be left wondering what the real purpose of these kinds of interventions are. Sometimes imaginations can, and indeed have, run wild. This has been the case in Uganda, where Ambition Mission was the target of a blogger who suggested that Ambition Mission was run by an American-based Illuminati group and was focused on recruiting young people into homosexuality. This was picked up by the media in Uganda, and although the story has been de-bunked, every day we come across young people in Uganda who leave messages on the Ambition Mission Facebook page saying they do not agree with homosexuality and do not want to be converted by the Illuminati.

The discussions highlighted a real and very relevant truth. By leaving the message of the campaign implicit, rather than placing it front and centre of our communications from the outset, we leave ourselves open to misinterpretation and rumour, as people can fill the gaps that exist in whatever way they see fit, either deliberately and maliciously or because of a lack of understanding.

Over time, and with a view to addressing this problem, we have dialled up the intensity of the anti-tobacco messages in both SKY and Ambition Mission. Furthermore, providing clarity around the agencies, partners and funders who support and develop the intervention has also helped with clearing up some of the misunderstandings and aiding transparency. Although the issue has not been addressed completely, this approach appears to be working.

The “what” of a social marketing intervention is perhaps equally problematic. How do the target audience describe and understand what it is they are participating in? Is it a brand, an advertising campaign, a series of activities, or something else entirely? For social marketing interventions, which tend in many cases to be somewhat experimental and to attempt to work in ways that may not have been tried before, it can be hard to explain what exactly it is that the intervention is trying to do. They will, understandably, look to find similar points of comparison, and where none exist, confusion can arise. In the case of tobacco control, people tend to have a fairly clear idea of what a smoking prevention campaign should look like, in their minds at least, and something that deviates from this can be harder to understand. This then, of course, links back to the “why”. If confusion exists around the “what” then it will be even harder to understand or explain the “why”.

In the main, young people in both Botswana and Uganda have been willing to accept the idea of SKY and Ambition Mission as a loose movement (although few would perhaps use that term to describe it to their peers), and in Botswana the term “sistahood” has gained considerable currency. It is clear that more work needs to be done to be explicit about the ambitions of the campaign in Uganda, and that there are more general insights that can be gleaned about the importance of balancing clarity of purpose against the wish to make something aspirational and effective.

5 Insight five: plan for tech futures

Assume that increasing internet penetration is inevitable. Use technology to maximise peer networks and deliver reach in a cost-effective way, and take the early mover advantage to maximise its potential as it happens.

Key Points

- **We know that tech enabled social media is a game changer. It gives us the ability to maximise peer networks, deliver reach in a cost effective way, create and share user-generated content that puts our activity in the hands of the target audience, and deliver an “always-on” presence that enables us to stay with our target as they move through their lives, encountering our issue as they go.**
 - **We know that at the moment, in many African markets, the proportion of our target that are genuinely connected is often limited, particularly when we’re focusing on rural areas, on lower income groups, and younger audiences.**
 - **We know that this is changing fast – one expert predicts 100% smart phone penetration across Africa within five years – or sooner.**
 - **Rather than simply waiting for this to happen, we should act with it in mind. This gives us the early mover advantage, and we can help ensure we are best placed to maximise on all the potential opportunities it offers as it happens. One example is to recruit and train the ‘vloggers’ of the future – video bloggers who act as key conduit of information for teens in a connected world, interpreting trends and providing advice and guidance which is followed by a mass audience. They only reach those able to stream video and data at the moment, but this audience will grow rapidly, and so will their influence and impact.**
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The use of technology when developing social marketing strategies was a common theme throughout all sessions. Africa is at the cusp of a technology upsurge. The immediate situation is that there are currently still many people unconnected to technology, particularly in rural areas (four in ten people in sub-Saharan Africa owned a mobile at the end of 2014). But the near future paints a very different picture where even the poorest of communities will be using data-connected mobile phones.

This phenomenon makes setting up long-lasting campaigns difficult to strategise as ideally, we need to reach people both now and in five years’ time without completely changing our approach in the interim. During the sessions, people highlighted

many advantages of using technology for social marketing, including the low cost of interaction and the rising popularity of social media platforms as a way of linking large numbers of people. That said, it is also important to take account of specific audiences, rather than looking purely at whole population data. For SKY and Ambition Mission, the target audiences are younger teenagers. They are likely to be the owners of second-hand, less up-to-date phones passed down from parents or older siblings, and therefore the likelihood of all of the young people within our target audience having data-connected phones may be less than the global penetration data suggests.



Every single person I want to reach will have a phone with a data connection in five years' time ... I'm not saying every single person will have a smartphone, but they will have a data-collecting phone...and you will have platforms like WhatsApp [to work with].

**Gustav Praekelt,
Johannesburg**



These points outline the need to create cross-platform campaigns that will develop and evolve in tandem with emerging technologies, but which start from an acceptance of the current state of technology as it stands. Mobile penetration in rural areas is much lower than within urban areas, primarily due to access and affordability, but the gap looks set to narrow drastically over the next few years. By focusing on urban areas, campaigns can become established and reach the target group of at-risk and influential teenagers, and as rural communities become more and more connected over time, these groups can be reached at minimal marginal cost in the future.

A counterpoint to this argument is that for many social marketing initiatives, the people that are identified as influencers share many of the same characteristics, particularly in terms of their ability to influence their peers, whether they are currently connected and digitally aware or not. So perhaps there is a need to identify these unconnected people and make the best use of them as they are, unconnected, so that when they do become connected they are set up for success in the soon-to-come virtual world.



What Facebook does is provide an elegant organisation that people then cluster around and people who are influential are just provided with a better way of communicating. ... You might recruit a network of girls across the country, especially in rural communities who are really into SKY ... You create SKY Clubs in areas where there are a couple of linchpin girls who are really socially active, and they get people to pledge and they become [their] social network.

Saul Parker, London



But is this worth the additional cost? SKY is targeted at younger teenage girls who will inevitably “grow out of it” in terms of design and content as they get older, although the key message of “be true to yourself” will continue to apply as they grow older. So if we were to target girls in rural communities now, by the time they get connected, they will most likely be too old for the SKY campaign. This highlights the importance of ensuring the campaign is sustainable for the future, instead of just focusing on the “now”.



... So for Girl Effect in Indonesia, we are currently only planning to do smartphones, we know right now [smartphone penetration is] about 50% but when we hit scale it'll be about 75%.

**Gustav Praekelt,
Johannesburg**



By designing strategies that take account of this rapidly changing landscape, social marketing initiatives can be designed in a way that means they are best placed to maximise on all the potential opportunities that technology offers as it happens. One example that was highlighted in the discussions is the recruitment and training of the 'vloggers' of the future. Video bloggers act as key conduit of information for teens in a connected world, interpreting trends and providing advice and guidance which is followed by a mass audience. They only reach those able to stream video and data at the moment, but this audience will grow rapidly, and so will the influence and impact that vloggers have.

3.2 Evaluation

⑥ Insight six: prevention is very difficult to evaluate and it's important to be open about this

It is far harder to show that you have stopped someone from starting to do something than it is to show that you have stopped them once they've started. And it is near impossible to measure smoking behaviour directly; proxy behaviours and attitudes are often used to build a picture of smoking behaviour.

Key Points

- In an ideal world you would be able to show two lines on a graph – the line that shows the actual trend over the period of your activity, and the line that shows what would have happened if you hadn't intervened. If you have detailed trend data and a control area that has no exposure to your activity you might be able to get close, but even then there will still be unknowns, and in most cases you won't have either.
- You'll also almost always be measuring a proxy for the behaviour change rather than measuring the actual behaviour – attitudes to smoking rather than whether people actually smoke – and that further clouds the extent to which you can 'prove' anything definitively.
- This raises questions about whether it's realistic to even try to create a model that puts a 'return on investment' around social marketing for prevention which makes it comparable to other interventions such as cessation, or whether stakeholders should agree that such interventions need to be held to account in different ways.

The thorny problem of evaluation was discussed at all of the sessions, with the same thoughts recurring throughout, predominantly through the lens of how to evaluate a social marketing intervention focused on prevention. As was mentioned in the Washington DC session, ideally it would be possible to produce a graph with only two trend lines, one showing smoking behaviour of those exposed to the intervention, and one showing smoking behaviour in those who haven't been exposed to the intervention. Although this represents the ideal, all participants came to the conclusion this is probably too simplistic for many reasons.

“The first step in demonstrating impact is to associate campaign exposure to changes in attitudes. If you can demonstrate at a population level that you are changing teen attitudes, beliefs and intentions, the next step is behaviour.

Donna Vallone, Washington DC

First, as social marketing practitioners, it is important to determine what it is that we are trying to achieve. What does a positive outcome look like? Is it that, for the duration of their involvement with the intervention, no one in the target audience

takes up smoking, or that they are still not smoking several years later? What would make a negative outcome? Are we happy with just changing attitudes – for example, by assessing attitudes around smoking or asking about people’s propensity to smoke – or do we need to be able to show changes in behaviour, which is much harder to measure? These questions need to be answered clearly if we are going to know how to evaluate the impact of the interventions, and be confident that we are basing future decisions about the development and optimisation of the interventions on the right information.

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Changing attitudes can be the first step but behaviour change is the tougher one. These don’t work in isolation
Mike Joubert, Johannesburg

Second, we need to consider the confidence level we are willing to accept when evaluating data. This comes in part from knowing how best to measure the impact of the interventions. By using social research methodologies of surveys and qualitative research, we are not measuring smoking behaviour itself (that is, whether people are actually smoking, or not smoking), but proxy behaviours (people’s attitudes towards smoking and whether they think they may take up smoking in the future). Many of the survey questions that we use when evaluating the impact of SKY and Ambition Mission may explore the respondents’ attitudes towards smoking, but it was suggested that perhaps the most useful proxy behaviour to measure is that of willingness to smoke in the future.

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In generating confidence, you establish what is achievable and how you can best achieve what is achievable.
Robert West, London

Measuring willingness with a scale of decisiveness puts respondents into one of two categories: “I definitely won’t smoke in the next five years” and all other responses into “I may well smoke”. This is an interesting concept to explore for future evaluation, as by distinguishing between these two, very clear, categories rather than presenting multiples categories with varying degrees of certainty or uncertainty, the data is likely to give a clearer insight into attitudes.

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Willingness taps into the kinds of things you’re dealing with like identity, resilience, what they know about themselves and whether they’ve got enough sustained motivation in themselves to be able to say to other people “I’m not going to do that”.

Robert West, London

Finally, several participants asked whether it is necessary to show large scale data sets that can conclusively show a “return-on-investment” which would make it comparable to other interventions, such as those which have a focus on cessation, for example. Although this is still very important to some stakeholders, particularly funders, given the challenges inherent in measuring the impact of prevention activities, is a social marketing intervention actually useful or possible? The discussions concluded that perhaps there are other, better, ways to convince other stakeholders of the impact of these interventions, for instance through a greater reliance on ethnography and qualitative research.

7 Insight seven: there is no 'gold standard' in terms of research methodology

Matching the methodology and approach to the context and goals is far more important than anything else. Traditional social research methods may be less applicable to social marketing interventions. The most important thing is to provide the appropriate data to each stakeholder, which will most likely require a mixed methodology approach.

Key Points

- **There is a widely held belief that the Randomised Control Trial represents the optimum methodology to employ, should time, resources and circumstances allow, but this should be challenged. It's appropriate in a bio-medical setting, but not always appropriate in, or suited to, more complex, socio-cultural challenges.**
- **It's also important to be aware of the issues that can come with quantitative research – from survey bias, to inadequate training of researchers, to cultural misinterpretation or even cultural inappropriateness. The approach has many advantages irrespective of these issues, but they should not be ignored.**
- **The best approach is to adapt the methodology to the nature of the specific challenge and to the stakeholders involved – and accept that a mix of methodologies is usually needed to cover all objectives and audiences. For example, if you are dealing with an inherently social issue, running solely individualised research may not be the best approach. And if you have funders that need to make hard decisions about where to channel resources, running qualitative research alone might not enable them to progress with confidence. The research needs to be designed with the end point in mind.**

The major focus of the London session which focused on evaluation was how to prove that the interventions have met their objectives and reduced the number of girls taking up smoking. This is an important question for all stakeholders: for us, as we plan and implement the interventions to know whether this unusual approach is working, for our funders to determine whether social marketing is good value for money in tackling smoking.

Although the benefits of doing a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) were discussed at some length, the intervention design and the time frame given do not allow for a comprehensive RCT, which is in any case always hard to implement outside the field of medical research. Although an

RCT is often held up as the gold standard of research methodology, and something to be implemented if resource, time and circumstances permit, many felt that this was not appropriate or desirable in assessing the impact of complex, socio-cultural challenges. Moreover, several participants made the point that the tobacco prevention work was conceived as a piece of social marketing, not a piece of social science research, and to that end, traditional social research evaluation techniques may not provide a complete and satisfactory solution when looking to evaluate success. An RCT would necessarily restrict the impact that the intervention could have on the population as a whole if a large control group needed to be kept

unaware of the intervention. Leaving aside the challenges of doing this when the campaign is largely structured around digital channels which are inherently “leaky”, an RCT goes against the mandate of trying to prevent as many teenagers as possible from taking up smoking. It also doesn’t allow for development and improvement of the interventions for fear of skewing results, and with limited funding this strategy wouldn’t benefit our target audience.

We’re trying to assess this as if it was a properly designed piece of social science intervention, but it’s not and you shouldn’t fold yourself into that.

Dan O’Connor, London

The issue of whether quantitative research is always appropriate came up several times. There was a feeling that quantitative evaluation approaches may not reflect the scale of impact the interventions actually have, despite producing large data sets which typically engender confidence in people. In the field of social research, quantitative data has several pitfalls: detail is lost from narratives, data may not be representative of the population and it may not reflect how people really think, particularly in the case of attitudes and behaviour change. Survey bias, inadequate training of researchers, cultural misinterpretation and even cultural inappropriateness are all relevant considerations which should be taken into account when designing an evaluation methodology. Moreover, the relative lack of rich detail may mean that the impact of the intervention is lost when talking to stakeholders, begging the question of how useful quantitative evaluation methods are if they are not convincing or helpful to stakeholders.

It’s important to reflect the depth of the message – whether it’s reached your audience by social media, the magazine or the radio – in your evaluation.

Lara Clements, London

Stories win hearts and minds, and our London session on evaluation put forward the idea of taking a more socio-anthropological approach to evaluation. SKY and Ambition Mission set out to change smoking behaviours in the target audiences, and yet all the measured, and measurable, outcomes have been focused on individuals’ behaviours and attitudes. A more appropriate method of evaluation of success may be to measure cultural changes around smoking as a whole, which is more appropriate to social marketing than an RCT is.

What struck me about this... is that one photo on Facebook of the girl was utterly more convincing to me than any of your survey data.

Dan O’Connor, London

In our London session on evaluation, the data that produced the most excitement within the group was a series of photos from a girl who had taken the SKY pledge, and who had posted images on Facebook showing SKY messages on her pin board in her room with “SKY Rocks!” as the title. It was suggested that this kind of qualitative data speaks of a culture in which girls are enabled to make their own decisions as well as the impact of SKY within that girl’s life, which is much richer and more detailed than any quantitative survey could ever

convey. If stakeholders need convincing, perhaps incorporating qualitative data to support and illuminate quantitative data will be much more effective as a way of putting impact of the interventions into context.



This is what we want to happen, we want people to get excited about powerful data shown on slides – even though we are on top of the largest stack of evaluation of any social marketing issue that’s ever been evaluated in the history of social media, we want them to get excited!

Cyndi Lewis, Washington DC



All participants agreed that the most important thing is to know what question it is that the evaluation is setting out to answer. For example, when dealing with an issue that is inherently a product of deeply entrenched social norms and pressures, such as smoking, evaluation research that focuses solely on what an individual thinks, through a one-to-one discussion or survey, may achieve less robust results than interviewing people in a group context. And if you have funders that need to make hard decisions about where to channel resources, running qualitative research alone might not enable them to progress with confidence. The research needs to be designed with the end point in mind.

8 Insight eight: make the most of emerging possibilities to 'quantify' qualitative data

Data that has been spontaneously generated without prompts or questions has an inherent authenticity which increases its value. These data should be harnessed to complement more traditional data to inform stakeholders of success and inform strategy.

Key Points

- **Social marketing interventions, particularly those that position themselves as facilitators of peer-to-peer interaction, often generate really significant amounts of spontaneous qualitative data – the myriad comments and conversations and posts and messages that the target audience share with each other. These have enormous value – as they are completely spontaneous, and therefore relatively free from the inevitable survey effect that comes into play as soon as you ask a question, particularly of a teen audience.**
- **There are increasingly sophisticated and reputable methodologies and interventions which can analyse large quantities of this sort of data, and in effect 'quantify' what it shows. These methodologies can be used to demonstrate that certain issues and topics have been put onto the radar of debate – that the number of times they are mentioned increases over time. However, the methodologies can also be used to demonstrate shifts in sentiment around issues over time, and how opinions around a behaviour have shifted. This means that they can, in some instances, generate evidence around the fact that social norms are changing, which is often one of the ultimate objectives of social marketing for prevention.**
- **So, while this type of spontaneous qualitative data should not replace quantitative methodologies which remain fundamentally different, it shouldn't be overlooked as a potential part of the complete research arsenal – and potentially a very powerful one.**

A hugely positive aspect of social marketing initiatives that make extensive use of social media is the opportunity to collect qualitative data that is generated via channels like Facebook. This type of qualitative narrative was described by some participants as like "gold dust", because of its spontaneous nature, it shows directly the impact of the campaigns on these girls' lives. Technologies are emerging that are able to take advantage of these spontaneous narratives and working out how to incorporate the findings into evaluation is important.

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You can't ignore the creation by the audience. They were creating something before we had social media, they just didn't have the means to express it the way they do now via various social media platforms.
Doug Evans, Washington DC

Software such as SenseMaker® takes advantage of people's desire to tell their own stories, and uses these to draw out common themes or trends to highlight issues or slight nuances in attitudes. The software uses an open-ended question to prompt a story on a given topic. An example of how it can be used is given by Girl Effect who piloted its use in Rwanda. Girls were asked to describe a true story of a girl's experience in Rwanda. A question like this is very open and the story can be positive or negative, it can touch on one issue or many issues, but it will almost always reflect the culture in which the girls are living in. The storyteller is then given a series of pre-determined scales and asked to apply them to their story (for example, does the story show girls conforming to tradition, or confronting and overturning tradition, or something in between?) so that they are analysing their own stories and creating outputs which can be easily compared to other stories by other girls. This tool proved invaluable in Rwanda to identify violence as an issue that girls commonly used for their stories, and also migration as an emerging topic. The downside of this technology in particular is its relatively high cost, but also that stories need to be entered directly into the software program, meaning it is less well-suited to the retrospective analysis of data.

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What seems compelling about [SenseMaker] is that it doesn't use computers or academics to interpret the data, it uses the people that give you the narrative to interpret it in their own terms. It gets rid of cultural bias completely, and it put power back in their hands. I like the idea about giving the data back to the communities and getting them to give you a commentary on what you're finding out is really powerful.
Juliette Seibold, London

Another piece of software within this space is NVivo® which works with all types of data: social media posts, articles, stories, focus group discussions, one-to-one conversations. Qualitative data can be uploaded into the software, and it can draw out themes and sentiments within and across the data. Simple searches for text or word frequencies, including synonymous or related words, can uncover topics and themes within qualitative data which can then be communicated using word clouds or data charts.

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You've got all of that rich data of what young women are posting on Facebook. Looking at this through qualitative software NVivo® and finding out what the data is telling you could be really powerful.
Juliette Seibold, London

Both SKY and Ambition Mission encourage communication on a variety of social media platforms, either in response to questions or in support of other members of the community who are asking for advice. Software solutions like those described above could be invaluable as a way of understanding what people think of the interventions, the common topics young people are asking for advice on, and providing an insight into their lives which gives more information and insight than answers to a closed-question survey. At a stretch, it may even identify posts and stories from the at-risk, influencer target audience and help to identify common themes and sentiments from that specific group. A large barrier to these software solutions is primarily the significant price tag associated with them, but also the fact they don't reach those who are not, as yet, digitally connected, and who engage with the interventions through offline methods and channels.



I think that these qualitative analysis solutions can be really useful to look at the culture changes that come about, particularly when it comes to girls where you have a whole gender equality issue in relation to their ability to make choices and the way they see themselves.

Juliette Seibold, London



However, as was discussed in the London session, using a mixed methodology approach may lead to conflicting results. An illustration, given by one of the participants, provides a good insight into this. When assessing smoking behaviour, within adults, qualitative research concludes that women find it harder to stop smoking than men. But quantitative research shows there's no difference between men and women who try to stop smoking – which of these two methodologies has provided the most reliable data and which will then be used for future decision making? The idea of using qualitative data without it coming across as simply anecdotal is likely to be much more appealing and informative to all stakeholders, and will provide a much more meaningful metric than solely quantitative survey data or qualitative narrative.



You'd be very hard pressed to convince many people, including yourself, that you were getting “mechanism of action” findings if you didn't undertake the more traditional methods that we use.

Robert West, London



The use of these technologies can be as extensive and wide ranging as it needs to be. In the simplest analysis, they can be used to demonstrate that certain issues and topics are emerging, by tracking the frequency with which they are mentioned. However, they can also be used to demonstrate shifts in sentiment around issues over time, and how opinions around a particular behaviour have shifted. This means that these technologies can, in some instances, generate evidence around the fact that social norms are changing, which is often one of the ultimate objectives of social marketing for prevention.

9 Insight nine: accept that it is hard to collect data to optimise and evaluate simultaneously

Using research in an ongoing way to fuel continuous programme optimisation, and using it to evaluate impact robustly and appropriately are both really important, but it is hard to use the same process to do both. If both objectives need to be fulfilled, applying appropriate methodologies, despite the increased cost, is the only way to have confidence in the outcomes.

Key Points

- **There are two core reasons to conduct research into the impact of an intervention. The first is to build practitioners' understanding of how it is working – which elements are having a real impact and which are working less well, who you are reaching most effectively, and whether your Theory of Change is working in practice and specific interventions are having the desired effect. This enables you to optimise the intervention on a continual basis, adapting it as you go to ensure that you maximise its strengths, minimise its weaknesses and address issues with alacrity. It requires a regular stream of data, from among those that are exposed to the intervention, collected in a way that enables quick fire analysis and is immediately useful.**
 - **The second core reason to conduct research is to evaluate its impact. This is often primarily for other stakeholders – funders being an important example. Evaluation data needs to be designed to enable you to build a compelling case for the fact that the intervention has made a difference to the target audience. This is obviously important for funders making hard decisions, but there is also a bigger context to consider, as good evaluation data can also play a part in making the broader case for social marketing for prevention in a public health context. There is currently a lack of strong and robust data that demonstrates the value of such interventions, which places the onus on practitioners to do what they can to contribute to the body of evidence available.**
 - **Both of these objectives are very important – but they are also very different, and require different sorts of data and analysis. The inputs you use to optimise an intervention cannot necessarily be used to demonstrate its impact at the end as well – and indeed it is unlikely that this will be the case.**
 - **So, despite the obvious appeal of trying to cover both objectives with the same research, given the efficiency savings that are generated, it is important to be realistic about the extent to which this is possible, and be open to using different methodologies and approaches for each.**
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There are two core reasons to conduct research into the impact of a social marketing intervention. The first is to build practitioners' understanding of how it is working – which elements are having a real impact and which are working less well, who is being reached, and whether they are being reached effectively, and whether the Theory of Change is working in practice and specific interventions are having the desired effect. This allows optimisation of the intervention on a continual basis, adapting it along the way to ensure that strengths are maximised, and weaknesses minimised, and that problems are addressed as they arise. This optimisation requires a regular stream of data, from among those that are exposed to the intervention, collected in a way that enables quick fire analysis and is immediately useful.

“
What would be more valuable and achievable, would be to focus on the Theory of Change ... and on an on-going basis see whether those little changes are happening. It's much easier to measure your Theory of Change in steps than it is to measure your endpoint. Leave that to the social scientists. Plus it allows you to improve your performance as you go along.
Kai Hopkins, London”

The second core reason to conduct research is to evaluate its impact. This is often primarily for other stakeholders, funders being an important example. Evaluation data needs to be designed to enable the people in charge of delivering the intervention to understand the extent to which the intervention has made

a difference to the target audience. This is obviously important for funders making hard decisions, but there is also a bigger context to consider, as good evaluation data can also play a part in making the broader case for social marketing for prevention in the public health context. There is currently a lack of strong and robust data that demonstrates the value of such interventions, which places the onus on practitioners to do what they can to contribute to the body of evidence available.

“
I think your idea of tracking on a more frequent basis what's going on has a lot of merits in the context of something where you don't have a good baseline to start with – you don't know how things were doing before.
Robert West, London”

In developing SKY and Ambition Mission, we initially hoped that we could address both of these objectives through the same set of data, as this is the most efficient way of collecting data. But when we look in more detail at the specific requirements of optimisation and evaluation, it is clear that they actually require very different data to inform strategy and impact. It may be the case that understanding how the interventions are working requires more qualitative research or focus groups to see in more detail which elements of the interventions are having more of an impact on attitude, and to understand sentiments towards the interventions. And if we were to go down the socio-anthropological route in order to determine whether the interventions have been successful, this will of course need a whole different method of data collection entirely.

Recognising the limits to which the same data can be used to address very different objectives is important in making sure that outcomes are reliably reported. If not, making claims about impact and changing strategy where the methodologies are full of holes will lead to either questionable or perhaps even entirely wrong conclusions. In taking a novel approach to social marketing as our interventions have, we will need to be open to new methodologies and approaches to evaluation in order to assess the true value of our interventions in these markets.



What is the purpose of your evaluation? Is it for particular stakeholders or is it for your board to understand these figures? Is it to publish in a high impact journal? These have very different bars, and different evidence is needed for each.

Doug Evans, Washington DC



10 Insight ten: employ as many mechanics as you can to help demonstrate your impact

Ultimately, showing a shift in total population attitude is the goal of social marketing. Where this isn't the case, showing that you have created demonstrable change in the people you have reached, in comparison to those that you haven't is a viable alternative.

Key Points

- **Despite the difficulties that are inherent in evaluating preventative social marketing interventions, everyone involved with them has a responsibility to do all they can to generate the best data about their impact that is possible, within the time and resource frame available**
 - **Demonstrating impact at a total population level is in many ways the ultimate goal, particularly if the intervention in question has achieved a saturation level with the target audience in terms of scale and reach – as this suggests the creation of real change in a social group.**
 - **However where the intervention has not reached this sort of scale – and this scale is relatively rare – being able to demonstrate a difference in those exposed to the intervention in comparison to those that have not is key. Indeed, it is one of the only routes open to practitioners to demonstrate that the change would not have happened without them.**
- And even in cases of total population change, demonstrating different impact effects in groups with differing levels of engagement is an important part of the overall picture.**

With a smoking prevention campaign, the ultimate goal is to reduce the number of young people taking up smoking within the markets in which the campaign is running. However, there will always be a difficulty when it comes to showing the direct impact of the intervention on a social or cultural trend. So there is a real need to consider how best to identify cause and effect to show the impact of the initiative.

Demonstrating impact at a total population level is often the goal, especially if an initiative has reached the target audiences through a range of different channels and media. By expanding research to include those who haven't engaged with the initiative and collecting their views, it is possible to determine whether the initiative has made a real social change – or whether the change has been marginal, or indeed whether there has been no change at all.

“
Could you breakdown the big objective into smaller behaviours, like: how many times someone says no; how comfortable they are saying no; how many times they've told a friend about the program. You can see a scenario in which for those small sub-behaviours you could run something that is more akin to an RCT within your cohort.

**Elsbeth Kirkman,
Washington DC**

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But this is not always possible. There may be instances where it is clear, from anecdotal or qualitative research that the intervention is having an effect on attitudes, but that this is not reflected in the large scale quantitative data. This may be because of a problem with the survey design, or more fundamentally because changes in attitudes are impossible to measure through quantitative research because the contributing factors are too subtle and interconnected. Alternatively, it may be problematic because we are always measuring a proxy for the behaviour that we are attempting to change (e.g. reported willingness to not start smoking), rather than the behaviour (smoking) itself. An alternative approach in these instances may be to look at more small-scale attitudinal measures, which taken together can provide evidence of a broader shift in behaviour.

Another way of showing impact, even if the initiative hasn't reached the total population yet, is to directly compare the attitudes of those who have been exposed to the campaign to the attitudes of those who haven't seen the campaign. This is important for practitioners to show that without exposure to the interventions, the change would not have happened. If comparisons about attitudes can be made based on different levels of exposure to the campaign, then this would further strengthen the impact of the interventions.



If you can correlate behaviour and attitudes to exposure to your programme you can prove you're having an impact. If you can do that for the different elements, you can see which one is most effective.

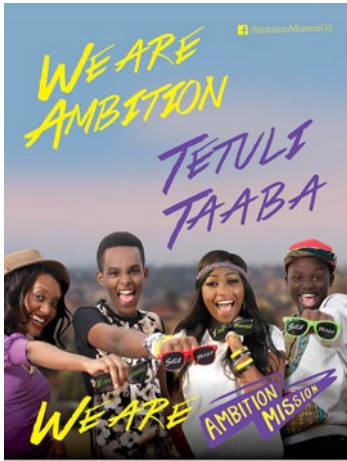
Scott Billy, London



Appendix one: Our work in Botswana and Uganda

Overview of our interventions

Our aim is to help prevent teenagers from taking up smoking, by building empowerment and resilience within them and connecting the choice not to smoke with other aspirational and desirable choices. We believe that once the ground for change has been laid by policy change, legislation and regulation in a particular country, social marketing can play an important additional role in changing people's attitudes around smoking.



Our approach

- We start with the person not the issue – fitting our messaging around teens’ existing aspirations and desires
- We focus on connecting the act of not smoking to positive things, rather than focusing on negatives around smoking
- We put the campaign in the hands of the teenagers as much as possible so it feels as though it is ‘theirs’

Our first pilot intervention, SKY, launched in Botswana in February 2014, targeting girls, particularly those aged 13–15. Our second, Ambition Mission, launched in Uganda in December 2014, targeting all teens aged 15–19.

Both of our interventions have been built in the same way: we create a movement and make it a cool and aspirational brand that people walk towards, then we embed the issue, and then we encourage teens to express their choice.

Ambition Mission in Uganda

Ambition Mission is all about championing young people’s ambitions. Our research showed us that young people in Uganda are hugely ambitious, with big dreams to match. We used this theme and we built in messages around staying clear of tobacco into this framework in a direct way – forging a clear link between staying clear of tobacco (in all its forms, notably including shisha) and showing yourself and the world that you’re serious about your future.

We’ve been using a multi-channel approach to embed Ambition Mission within the teen marketplace, combining celebrity appeal,

radio, TV and outdoor advertising with an active Facebook page and mobile website which play host to the community of young people who have coalesced around Ambition Mission and made it theirs.

We’ve seen a significant decline in the number of teens who say they feel under pressure to try cigarettes, shisha or kuber, suggesting our efforts to attach aspiration and success to not using tobacco, rather than using it, may be having the desired impact.

Sky girls in Botswana

SKY is a movement which girls join by taking the SKY pledge, it helps them be true to themselves and express themselves through the choices they make about things. Girls say Sure Ka Yona (“I’m good with that” in Setswana) to the things they like. They say Shapo Ka Yona (“I’m good without that”) to the things they don’t like. We encourage SKY girls to use these phrases when making their decision not to smoke.



In recent months we’ve made SKY an integral part of the teen girl scene in Botswana, and a really important part of the girls’ lives on a day-to-day basis, while also embedding the anti-tobacco message.

Our Facebook page is the third most popular page for teen girls in Botswana, and girls interact with SKY through multiple channels in an ongoing way, all of which helps us feel like a genuine part of their lives. And we’ve seen that the number of girls who spontaneously list smoking as one of their three shapos (things they are good without) has been rising continuously since we launched back in February 2014.

Appendix two: Session participants



London, September 8th 2015, Focus on best practice

Attendee	Position	Further information
Carole Chapelier	Senior Projects Manager for Africa, BBC Media Action	BBC Media Action is the BBC's international development charity. It uses media and communications to help reduce poverty and support people in understanding their rights. For over a decade it has been working to help transform lives in some of the poorest, hardest-to-reach parts of the world. Its aim is to inform, connect and empower people around the world.
Rob Forshaw	Director, Anthology	Rob set up a digital communications agency, Grand Union Communication, with Matt Nicholls in 2010, which bridged a gap between brands and new emerging media by helping a wide range of businesses and organisations to meet the challenges presented by a rapidly changing media environment.
Nicola Harford	Director, iMedia Associates	Nicola is the Director of iMedia Associates, a UK-based international media development and communications company that promotes innovative ways of working with rapidly converging media to tackle communications challenges presented by conflict, fragile governance and poverty. A development communications specialist, she has 20 years' experience of planning, managing and evaluating media and communications initiatives in support of HIV/AIDS, health, gender, agriculture and rural development sector goals.
Saul Parker	Insight and Strategy Director, Livity	Livity is a multi-disciplined youth marketing agency focused on social good, brand engagement, and empowerment of youth audiences. All Livity's projects and campaigns entail collaboration with young people, and are designed to improve their lives.
Owain Service	Managing Director, the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT)	BIT started life inside 10 Downing Street as the world's first government institution dedicated to the application of behavioural sciences and is now a social purpose company. Its objectives are to make public services more cost-effective and easier for citizens to use; to improve outcomes by introducing a more realistic model of human behaviour to policy; and, wherever possible, to enable people to make 'better choices for themselves'.

London, September 15th 2015, Focus on measurement

Attendee	Position	Further information
Lara Clements	Planning Director, Public Health England	Public Health England's mission is to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. Lara focuses on strategy development, planning and evaluating campaigns across the Children, Young People and Family life course.
Kai Hopkins	Senior Consultant, Keystone Accountability	Keystone Accountability helps organizations develop new ways of planning, measuring and reporting on their results by focusing on incorporating the voices of beneficiaries and other constituents. Kai works with a range of clients including the World Bank, NGOs such as Save the Children and Oxfam and social investors and for-profit companies.
Dan O'Connor	Head of Medical Humanities, the Wellcome Trust	The Wellcome Trust is a global charitable foundation dedicated to improving health by supporting bright minds in science, the humanities and social sciences, and public engagement. Dan directs the trust's funding of bioethics research.
Juliette Seibold	Head of Social & Economic Empowerment, Triple Bottom Line	Triple Bottom Line is a professional services company specialising in international development. It helps governments, major charities, foundations and businesses and other donors ensure that funding to alleviate poverty and develop communities and their economies is effective and well spent.
Robert West	Professor of Health Psychology, University College London	Robert's research focuses on addiction and behaviour change, primarily on smoking. Professor West is also co-director of the National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training and is Editor-in-Chief of the journal Addiction. He is a co-author of the English National Smoking Cessation Guidelines that provided the blueprint for the UK-wide network of stop-smoking services that are now an established part of the UK National Health Service. He is also the author of The SmokeFree Formula and Theory of Addiction.

Johannesburg, September 23rd 2015, Joint focus

Attendee	Position	Further information
Scott Billy	Country Director, PSI South Africa	Population Services International makes it easier for people in the developing world to lead healthier lives and plan their families by marketing affordable products and services.
Mike Joubert	Chief Inspiration Officer, Saatchi & Saatchi Brandsrock	Saatchi & Saatchi BrandsRock is a collaboration which brings together a local start-up with its roots in experiential marketing, Africa's fastest growing agency network, and South Africa's leading digital search and conversion agency. It services a portfolio of blue chip clients including Telkom, P&G and Harley-Davidson.
Aditya Krishnades	Strategic Planning Partner, Scan Group	Scan Group Uganda offers a comprehensive and integrated range of advertising and communication services in traditional advertising and integrated digital marketing.
Jess Majekodunmi	Strategy Manager, Girl Effect Ethiopia	Girl Effect's mission is to empower the 250 million adolescent girls living in poverty to reach their full potential. Jess' work surrounds starting a national conversation about the challenges girls face, and working with them to create solutions. Her previous roles include Member of the Board of Directors of Empowering People in Care (EPIC), an independent association that advocates for the rights of young people living in care, and Communications and Research Manager for Drinkaware in Ireland which develops social marketing campaigns to change attitudes towards excessive drinking.
Gustav Praekelt	Founder, Praekelt Foundation	The Praekelt Foundation was set up to use open source technologies to deliver essential information and inclusive services to millions of people around the world, particularly in Africa. Since 2007 it has worked with governments, NGOs and social enterprises to provide people living in poverty with inspiration, education, financial services and health information.
Tonderai Tsara	Director/ Partner, the Dialogue Group	The Dialogue Group is Botswana's leading integrated marketing agencies specialising in a range of services from advertising, brand strategy, digital marketing, CRM, content creation, events and search engine marketing.

Washington DC, September 29th 2015, Best Practice and Evaluation

Attendee	Position	Further information
Jesse Danzig	Director of Africa Programs, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids	The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is a leading force in the fight to reduce tobacco use and its deadly toll in the United States and around the world. Its vision is a future free of the death and disease caused by tobacco.
Doug Evans	Professor of Prevention and Community Health & Global Health, George Washington University	Dr. Evans' research interests include prevention intervention research and evaluating behaviour change and public education intervention programs using communication and marketing strategies. He has worked extensively on public health subject areas of tobacco and cancer control; nutrition, physical activity, and obesity; diabetes; asthma; HIV/STDs; and reproductive health.
Amy Gregowski	Senior Research and Evaluation Specialist, The International Center for Research on Women	ICRW's mission is to empower women, advance gender equality and fight poverty in the developing world. To accomplish this, ICRW works with partners to conduct empirical research, build capacity and advocate for evidence-based, practical ways to change policies and programs.
Elsbeth Kirkman	Head, Behavioural Insights Team North America	The Behavioural Insights Team's North America office provides services across the US and Canada. Their foundational piece of work is with Bloomberg's What Works Cities initiative, deploying high quality, low cost, evaluation methods and behavioural design expertise to help cities across the US get the best for their citizens.

Attendee	Position	Further information
Cyndi Lewis	Deputy Director of Global Policy and Advocacy, Gates Foundation	The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Policy & Advocacy Division seeks to build strategic relationships and promote policies that will help advance the Foundation's work. The Foundation's goal in tobacco control is to reduce tobacco-related death and disease in low and middle-income countries by preventing the initiation of new smokers, decreasing overall tobacco use, and reducing exposure to secondhand smoke.
Peter Mitchell	Chairman and Chief Creative Officer, SalterMitchell	Salter Mitchell is a marketing and communication agency focused on change – behaviour change, culture change and changing public opinion.
Donna Vallone	Chief Evaluation Science and Research officer, Truth® Initiative	Truth® Initiative is America's largest non-profit public health organization dedicated to making tobacco use a thing of the past. We speak, seek and spread the truth® about tobacco through education, tobacco-control research and policy studies, and community activism and engagement.

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