

Institution: University of Exeter
Unit of Assessment: Business and Management Studies
Title of case study: Social Marketing for Sustainability: influencing policy and practice for consumer engagement
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Interdisciplinary research undertaken by Shaw, Barr and Coles at Exeter has examined the use of social marketing to influence pro-environmental behaviour policy and behaviour change for environmental sustainability. This body of research has resulted in three main types of impact: it has influenced public policy making, it has promoted product development for SMEs and it has informed public debate on the issue of sustainability. These impacts have been achieved through: reports for Defra that relate to UK behaviour change policy; collaboration with social marketing businesses that has resulted in mobile application development for UK and European travellers; and informed public debate around issues of behavioural change and flying. The latter has been achieved through coverage by journalists and the instigation of debate in national (UK) and international media outlets.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>This impact case is based on the application of social marketing to behaviour change in the context of sustainable travel. In terms of background it links to a range of national policy agendas associated with Defra's 2008 Framework for Pro-Environmental Behaviour and the 2012 Sustainable Lifestyles Framework. These are focussed on promoting behaviour change as a means of reducing CO² emissions, largely at the individual level. However, methodologies used to understand the complexities of environmentally related behaviour and more importantly the means of changing behaviour have only very recently emerged as critical political concern. The research and impacts discussed here relate to work that has used innovative techniques related to social marketing and been influential in helping re-frame government policy and business practices.</p> <p>The research on sustainable lifestyles and notions of behavioural change that underpins these impacts has been undertaken within the Tourism Group located in the Business and Management Unit along with Geography, and directly supported by funding from a British Academy grant (2007-08, Shaw, Barr and Coles), an ESRC Capacity grant (£1.5M, 2008-2013 Coles, Shaw, Barr, et al.) a Defra research project (2005-06, Barr, Gilg and Shaw) and an ESRC award (2011-2012, Barr and Shaw). The research aimed to explore and critique current Neo-liberal framings of 'pro-environmental behaviour' and notions of behavioural change that underlie contemporary policy making on the environment. Specifically, the research sought to develop a social marketing approach as a means of promoting behavioural solutions to tackle climate change amongst 'citizen-consumers' (i).</p> <p>Based on empirical studies particularly on holidays and holiday travel initially based on surveys conducted in the South-West of England and later in London the research employed questionnaires as well as focus group discussions, on-street survey research and in-depth interviewing. The study provided a critical appraisal of a number of dominant academic and policy aspects surrounding pro-environmental behaviour change (ii). First, the research de-constructed the notion of information-deficit models as the most effective means of predicting behavioural change, illustrating the complexity of environmental practices. Second, the research identified the ways in which environmental practices are contingent on a range of influences reflecting behavioural settings and consumption contexts, in particular the role that sites of practice play in shaping practices especially in terms of holidays (iii and iv). A major part of the research deployed social marketing techniques to understand and promote behaviour change. These comprised of identifying market segments, developing co-creation workshops with consumers and applying learned solutions within a community of practice consisting of social marketing SMEs and related stakeholders (i, ii and v).</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

The following **publications** describe the underpinning intellectual framework and empirical material used in the impact case study:

- (i) Barr, S., Gilg, A., Shaw, G. 2011a. Citizens, consumers and sustainability: (re)framing environmental practice in an age of climate change. *Global Environmental Change* 21,1224-1233
- (ii) Barr, S., Gilg, A., Shaw, G. 2011b. 'Helping People Make Better Choices': exploring the behaviour change agenda for environmental sustainability. *Applied Geography* 31, 712-720 .
- (iii) Barr, S., Shaw, G., Coles, T. 2011a. Times for (Un)sustainability? Challenges and opportunities for developing behaviour change policy. *Global Environmental Change* 21, 1234-1244
- (iv) Barr, S., Shaw, G., Coles, T. 2011b. Sustainable Lifestyles: sites, practices and policy. *Environment and Planning A* 43, 3011-3029.
- (v) Shaw, G., Barr,S. and Wooler, J. 2013 *The Application of Social Marketing to Tourism in S. McCabe (ed) The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*, 54-65 (Taylor and Francis)

Research grants (in ascending chronological order):

- Barr, S. and Shaw, G. Social Marketing for Sustainability: developing a community of practice for co-creating behavioural change campaigns. ESRC Follow-on Fund Grant. November 2011 – October 2012. £79,123.84.
- Shaw, G. and Barr, S. Using new technologies for promoting sustainable behavioural changes. Higher Education Innovation Fund Business Voucher to work with CAG Consultants. February 2011 – July 2012. £3,000.
- Coles,T., Shaw, G., Barr, S. et al. ESRC Capacity Building Cluster on Sport Leisure and Tourism 2008-2013 £1.5m.
- Shaw, G., Barr, S. and Coles, T. Low Cost Airlines and Climate Change: a behavioural perspective. British Academy Small Research Grant. November 2007 – April 2008. £6,247.
- Barr, S., Gilg, A. and Shaw, G. Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles: a social marketing approach. DEFRA Research Grant. September 2005 – August 2006. £21,000.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The underpinning research described here has resulted in three types of impact, relating to changes in **government policy**, **product development for SMEs** and **informed public debate**. Clear relationships are demonstrated between the underpinning research and impact at a range of scales, from engagement with and influence on UK Government and co-creating new sustainable related products for the collaborating SMEs, to influences on the knowledge and modes and public debates.

Impact from this research commenced prior to the current REF assessment period in 2005 (6), but the most significant impacts (cited here) have arisen since 2008. In particular, major contributions to two key reports by the Social Marketing Practice (**2 and 3**) formed the basis for Defra's 2008 Framework for Environmental Behaviours, in which the segmentation research developed at Exeter was used as evidence for the development of Defra's social marketing approach to behavioural change (**5**). The Framework for Environmental Behaviours is the key strategic document that governs UK behaviour change policy for the environment, and research by Barr, Gilg and **Shaw** formed a significant part of the evidence base for shifting away from 'information-deficit' models of behavioural change towards more socially-sophisticated frameworks for behavioural shifts (**4**). This research has thus been instrumental in **shaping and influencing policy** made by government, and the continuity of impact resulting from this contribution has been confirmed through the cited written correspondence from **Defra**. Specifically, this identifies the main impacts of the research being the adoption of a segmentation-based approach to understanding behavioural change and the communication of behavioural change theories to policy makers within Defra, as noted by a Senior Social Researcher '**the case study on Social**

Marketing and Behavioural Change [undertaken] at the University of Exeter has been very significant in shaping pro-environmental behaviour policy and strategy within Defra.’ (4).

The research has also been used to promote innovation in social marketing business practices through developing an innovative community of practice (consisting of major social marketing businesses, including, **Strategic Social Marketing, Hyder Consulting, CAG Consultants** and **Uscreates (1)**) to discuss the use of new social media and **ICT** for the development of behavioural change products. Working with one of these businesses (Uscreates) and key stakeholders from the UK travel industry (including **Virgin Trains, Snowcarbon, Loco2, Seat 61, Travel Foundation** and **Green Traveller**), Barr, **Shaw** and Gilg **co-designed a new mobile application** to promote and inform consumers about the availability of low-carbon travel options (**8 and 9**), with the aim of discouraging and reducing the number of short-haul flights taken within the EU. In so doing, this innovation has demonstrated the influence of the research in the **development of a new product**, an impact that has been corroborated by written correspondence from **Uscreates (9)**. This **App** was developed in conjunction with **Loco2**, an online travel agent, under the name ‘**TrainAway**’. The co-creation of this also impacted on their development as indicated by their co-founder; ‘**working with Exeter meant that Loco2 has started developing apps sooner than would occurred otherwise and bringing an academic approach to the challenges being tackled by Loco2 has been enormously helpful**’ (**10**). These activities have been supported by funding from the **ESRC’s Business Voucher Scheme** made available via the ESRC Capacity Cluster in Sport, Leisure and Tourism and an **ESRC Follow-On** grant for Barr and **Shaw (2011-12)**. This co-creative work with **Uscreates**, as their leading research associate explains, ‘**resulted in both a broadening of our knowledge about our client base and has provided an appropriate platform to establish a viable behaviour change network for the future**’.

Finally, research funded by **Defra** and the **British Academy** has been cited in many popular media outlets within the UK and internationally, including, The Telegraph, The Age (Australian newspaper) and Phys.org, a popular US science website. Additionally, three articles in very significant media outlets (2008-2010) have **stimulated public debate** through challenging modes of thought (**7 a,b,c**). This is demonstrated through **online debate** resulting from articles in **The Guardian (7b)** (‘**Green idealists fail to make grade, say study**’ – 132 comments).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Barr, S. and Shaw, G. 2011. Social Marketing and its application for encouraging increased household waste recycling in the Middle East. Business Voucher Report for Strategic Social Marketing. University of Exeter, Exeter.
2. Darnton, A. and Sharp, V. 2006a. Segmenting for Sustainability Report 1: Commentary (Andrew Darnton Associates for The Social Marketing Practice).
3. Darnton, A. and Sharp, V. 2006b. Segmenting for Sustainability Report 1: Supporting Evidence (Andrew Darnton Associates for The Social Marketing Practice).
4. **Senior Research Officer, Defra.** 2012. *Letter corroborating the continuing impact of the research on Defra policy.*
5. **Defra**, 2008. *A Framework for Environmental Behaviours* (DEFRA, London). See Appendix K. Available at: <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/evidence/social/behaviour/documents/behaviours-jan08-annexes.pdf>
6. **Defra**, 2006. Targeting Specific Lifestyle Groups. Behaviour Change: a series of practical guides for policy makers and practitioners. Number 2 (DEFRA, London). [Report co-authored by Barr, S. Gilg, A. W. and Shaw, G.]
7. (a) Mother Jones. 31st May 2010. ‘*Jet Blues – Flying’s moral dilemma: your family or your climate?*’ <http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2010/04/flying-airplane-carbon-footprint> (b)The

Impact case study (REF3b)

Guardian. 24th September 2008. '*Green idealists fail to make grade, says study*'. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2008/sep/24/ethicaliving.recycling> (c)The New York Times (Tierney Lab Blog). 29th September 2008. '*Jet-Setting Greens*'. http://tierneylab.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/09/29/a-study-of-eco-hypocrites/?_r=0

8. Uscreates, 2012. Co-design Workshop: reducing short-haul air travel. Summary slides of a workshop held with UK travel industry representatives, July 2012 (Uscreates, London).

9. Lead Research Associate, Uscreates, 2012. Letter corroborating impact relating to design of a mobile application for travel.

10. Co-Founder of Loco2, 2013. Letter corroborating impact of mobile application to product development strategies of company.