



Social Marketing for Social Innovation: The Employment Plan of the Spanish Red Cross as a Case Study

Marta Rey-García and Vanessa Mato-Santiso

Abstract

Social innovation consists of developing and implementing new ideas to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. Social marketing can contribute to achieving socially desirable outcomes or impacts, including those originating from new solutions to social problems. The goal of this chapter is to understand how the application of commercial marketing to influence the ideas and voluntary behavior of target audiences can contribute to the development and implementation of innovative solutions to social problems. Our case study focuses on work integration as a relevant social challenge globally and analyzes the social marketing campaign undertaken by the Spanish Red Cross to promote equal opportunities and treatment in the labor market for the most vulnerable citizens. Findings suggest social marketing may not only be a key strategy to promote socially innovative initiatives for work integration but also become a social innovation of the marketing type in its own right.

M. Rey-García · V. Mato-Santiso (✉)
School of Economics and Business, University of A Coruña, A Coruña, Spain
e-mail: martarey@udc.es; vanessa.mato@udc.es

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Learning Objectives

1. To examine the conceptual relationship between social marketing and social innovation
2. To understand how social marketing can contribute in practice to the development and implementation of innovative solutions to social problems through a case study on work integration
3. To analyze a social marketing campaign that innovatively addresses the challenge of promoting the equality of opportunities and treatment of the most vulnerable groups in the labor market, with the ultimate goal of integrating them into work

Introduction

Social innovation is defined as the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services, and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. Social innovation as an impact can be attributed to a great extent to the nonprofit or third sector (Anheier et al. 2014) and includes those products, processes, and initiatives that profoundly challenge the system which created the problem they seek to address (Westley and Antadze 2010). The Oslo Manual (OECD and Eurostat 2005) distinguishes between four types of innovation that can be easily transposed to the realm of social challenges and goals: (1) product innovations, i.e., new or significantly improved products, services, activities, projects, or programs with respect to their characteristics or intended uses; (2) process innovations, that is, new or significantly improved planning, implementation and delivery, and evaluation methods; (3) marketing innovations, or new forms of communicating and managing the relationships with customers, beneficiaries, funders, partners, and other relevant stakeholders; and (4) organizational innovations, particularly the implementation of new organizational structures, the emergence of new types of actors, and the configuration of new institutional settings.

Social innovation thus entails new responses to pressing social demands, which in turn affect the process of social interactions. Furthermore, social innovations are innovations “that are not only good for society but also enhance individuals’ capacity to act” (European Commission 2013: 6). Therefore, for social innovation to be fruitful, new ideas and behaviors must take root at both an individual and a collective level. This is precisely where social marketing comes into the picture. Its goal is to influence ideas or voluntary behaviors of a particular target or group through the application of marketing tools and strategies in order to increase individual, group, and overall well-being (Andreasen 2011; Lee and Kotler 2011). On the one hand, social marketing can be used as a tool to support socially innovative goals, processes, outputs, outcomes, or impacts, facilitating the development and implementation of new ways of tackling social challenges and improving

the well-being of communities. On the other hand, social marketing strategies and campaigns can become themselves social innovations of the marketing type.

Coming up next, we will analyze the concrete social marketing strategies used and actions undertaken by a large nonprofit organization in Spain in order to achieve a social innovation impact in the field of work integration. We use a case study design (Yin 1994) based on documentary analysis from multiple sources, including one in-depth interview with a key decision-maker about his/her expert knowledge, experiences, attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, and routine actions (Dana and Dana 2005). The use of these different methods and sources, or triangulation, is a strategy that “reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (Denzin 2012: 82). Thus, it is possible to achieve coherent conclusions obtained with similar information from several independent sources (Dana and Dana 2005). Finally, we summarize the main conclusions and suggest three questions for discussion.

Case Development

The Global Challenge of Work Integration

The social challenge of work integration refers to the need to enhance the (re)employment and (re)incorporation of individuals to the regular labor market, particularly those belonging to population groups with compounding situations of unemployment, poverty, and/or social exclusion. These groups are considered vulnerable toward employment, as they present additional difficulties to access the standard labor market due to their low qualification and skills, disabilities, family constraints, or lack of cultural or social capital. Some examples would be low-skilled jobseekers, young people with difficulties in finding a first job, long-term unemployed, female victims of domestic violence, immigrants, refugees, minorities, former convicts and drug addicts, and disabled or chronically ill people, among others (Spanish Red Cross 2016). The problem of work integration of the most vulnerable citizens has a global dimension and demands innovative solutions from public agencies, nonprofit organizations, or work integration social enterprises (WISEs) (Rey-García and Mato-Santiso 2017).

Vulnerability Toward Employment in Spain

In the case of Spain, the recent economic crisis increased the challenge of work integration, as it contributed to increased unemployment, reduced income levels in real terms, raised inequality, and ultimately broadened the population segments in situation of vulnerability toward employment (Rey-García et al. 2018). According to a recent study quantifying and characterizing these segments, 1,800,000 Spaniards have a high probability of remaining jobless in the short term, and 2,400,000 have a high probability of living in poverty despite having a job. 31.9% of people who are

vulnerable toward employment are young (between 25 and 34 years old), 60% only have primary or secondary education, 58% are women, and 40.4% do not receive any benefits and are not formally registered as jobseekers (FEDEA 2017).

The scale and scope of this challenge clearly exceed the capacity of WISEs—the traditional tool to address work integration in Spain. In 2014, the 204 WISEs existing in Spain employed a total of 2750 vulnerable people. Among the 714 vulnerable employees who ended their customized work integration itineraries during that year, only 50.42% were inserted in the regular labor market (FAEDEI 2015).

The Spanish Red Cross and its Employment Plan as a Social Innovation

In this context, the Spanish Red Cross carries out different social marketing actions in order to offer new responses to the pressing but as yet unresolved problem of work integration. The Spanish Red Cross is a humanitarian nonprofit organization that relies on 202,490 specialized volunteers, 10,700 paid professionals, and over 1,300,000 members to fulfil its mission of providing comprehensive responses to the needs of vulnerable people with a human development perspective. Its goal is to be closer to the vulnerable groups at national and international levels through integrated actions, carried out by volunteers and with broad social support. In 2016, over 35% of its total income (575 million euros) came from private sources: members contributed over 134 million euros, 56 million came from the sale of lotteries—of which 33 million through the Gold Grand Prize Lottery—and 32 million euros came from private donations. Additionally, more than 155 million euros were obtained from public subsidies (Spanish Red Cross 2016).

The evolution of the Spanish Red Cross has always been constantly adapting to changing social needs and problems. In 2000, it launched its employment plan, aimed at promoting the employment of the most vulnerable segments of population, in order to achieve their inclusion in society through labor opportunities. This employment plan is designed so that vulnerable people can improve, through orientation and training services, their opportunities of getting a job. It involves public entities, universities, other nonprofit organizations, and businesses. In 2016, it assisted 89,013 vulnerable people: 43,620 people improved their employability through basic, transversal, and technical competencies, and 17,983 found a job (Spanish Red Cross 2016). In addition, the employment plan provides services for the shelter and work orientation of these groups and the design of a customized path of work integration for each individual. This path integrates a training plan, an individualized accompaniment to socio-professional work integration, access strategies for employment and entrepreneurship, and finally, strategies to keep one's job.

The number of participants in the Spanish Red Cross employment plan has doubled since the beginning of the crisis, from 45,000 people assisted in 2008 (45,665) to nearly 90,000 in 2016 (89,013) (see Fig. 1). Red Cross has assisted more than 650,000 vulnerable people between 2008 and 2016. During this period,

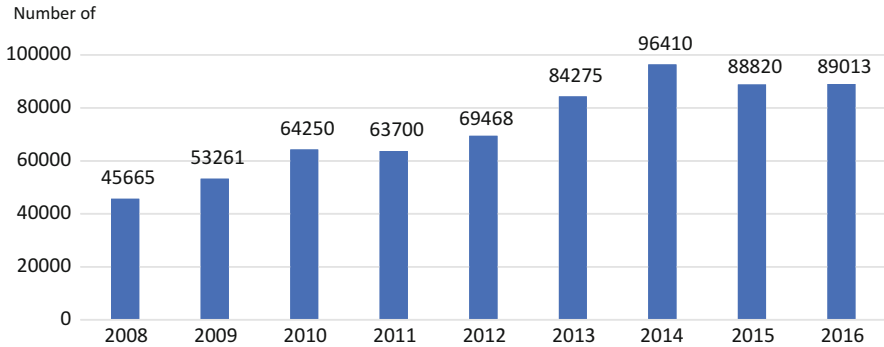


Fig. 1 People assisted by the employment plan of Spanish Red Cross (2008–2016). Source: Author’s own elaboration with information retrieved from Spanish Red Cross (2018)

not only the employment needs of vulnerable segments of population expanded and deepened, but also the risk of social exclusion increased, particularly among the long-term unemployed.

The “En realidad no tiene gracia” [It Really Is Not Funny] Social Marketing Campaign

The Spanish Red Cross launched the “En realidad no tiene gracia” [It really is not funny] campaign in 2010 with the goal of supporting the development of the service delivery dimension of its employment plan. The main objective of this social marketing campaign is to mobilize society as a whole (it was labelled as a 360° campaign, aimed toward all types of target audiences), and especially companies, in favor of the equality of opportunities and treatment of people who are vulnerable toward employment, and to support the management of the resulting diversity in the workplace. This campaign uses humor, irony, and celebrity endorsements to structure multichannel contents (both online and offline) that contribute to the visibility of inequality and vulnerability toward employment, advocate the need of work integration, and ultimately improve the impact of the employment plan. It has been endorsed by famous people such as the actor Mariano Peña (Mauricio Colmenero in the TV series “Aida”) and Pepe Rodríguez (Spanish renowned chef and judge in the program “MasterChef Spain”), among other celebrities. It includes a wide range of social marketing actions, including social media, audios and online series, interviews, publications, events, and workshops. In Table 1, we describe some illustrative examples of actions carried out within the framework of this social marketing campaign.

Table 1 Social marketing actions of the “En realidad no tiene gracia” [It really is not funny] campaign

Type of social marketing actions	Examples	Description
Initiatives through social media	“Caras raras por la igualdad” Project	The aim is to identify and eliminate some inappropriate situations involving jobseekers—such as when an employer asks a woman candidate if she plans to become pregnant—using humor and irony. For this initiative it is only necessary to post a tweet with one photo of a surprised face, with the hashtag #EstaCaraSeMeQueda and the phrase that represents that inadequate situation
	Concurso de fotografía Social “Mundo Diverso” [Social photography Competition “Diverse World”]	This project consists of people posting photos on twitter and sharing their vision of a more diverse and rich society, in order to give greater visibility to cultural diversity
Short audios and online series	Short audios with famous comedians and actors	Short audios with a joke about immigration, diversity, and work integration, lasting between 30 and 40 s, then saying the following sentence, “It really is not funny”, and then seriously explaining the importance of the work integration challenge
	“Recetas para la integración laboral” [“Recipes for work integration”]	Web series of seven chapters starred by Pepe Rodriguez, judge of the TV show MasterChef. In each of these videos, important issues such as gender equality, cultural diversity, the influence of age, and motivation and talent management are discussed, among others (each of these issues is an “ingredient”)
Interviews with opinion leaders and publications	Interviews with recognized professionals and celebrities	Telling personal stories and reflection over different themes, such as the benefits of diversity management, how diversity can enrich the company and society; how to eliminate employment barriers with enthusiasm, energy, and commitment; and how to overcome prejudice and stereotypes that persist in the workplace
	Publication of articles	For instance, the publication entitled “Without words there are no facts” approaches the challenges of the labor market in terms of diversity, integration, and equality of opportunities and treatment
Events and workshops	Dialogue roundtables	An area of joint work and co-creation, based on collaborative work and exchange. From these round tables, reflections and other contributions emerge that seek to promote the employment and work integration of vulnerable people and to assess how diversity should be managed in practice
	Cartoons and caricatures	Based on real cases, they raise interesting reflections about the role played by the prejudice that many people face in the labor market. The purpose of this activity is to eliminate the stereotypes and prejudice in the labor market and to remove barriers such as gender, age, and belonging to a different culture, among others

Source: Author’s own elaboration with information retrieved from En realidad no tiene gracia (2018)

Social Marketing Strategies used in the “En realidad no tiene gracia” Campaign

Unlike traditional commercial marketing, social marketing highlights two main paradoxes: (1) in general, goods or a service are not sold in a social marketing campaign; and (2) the objectives of this type of campaign are long-term, and the benefits are of a social nature (Santesmases Mestre 1999). This campaign aims at changing the negative attitudes and behavior of business employers and of society in general toward vulnerable citizens, so that they become more supportive of the equality of opportunities and treatment in the employment field. Therefore this campaign uses a *confrontational strategy*, which consists of conducting awareness actions and advocacy to attempt to change the attitude and behavior of people, because they are contrary to socially desirable behavior (Santesmases Mestre 1999: 948).

It should be noted that abundant coercive regulatory measures are already in place in Spain to prevent or sanction undesirable behavior regarding discrimination in the labor market due to gender, age, nationality, disabilities, etc. or to promote diversity in the workplace, e.g., Royal Decree 364/2005, of April 8, which regulates the exceptional measures alternative to complying with the reserve quota in favor of employees with disabilities that has been compulsory for all Spanish organizations with over 50 employees since 1982; the recent Royal Decree-law 18/2017, of November 24, modifying the Commercial Code, the consolidated text of the Capital Companies Law approved by Royal Legislative Decree 1/2010, of July 2; and the Law 22/2015, of July 20, on Audit of Accounts, regarding nonfinancial information and diversity in large corporations, to name just a few.

However, the “It really is not funny” campaign goes beyond advocating corporate compliance and is rather focused on creating awareness about individual attitudes and day-to-day behaviors and routines in the workplace. It is based on an innovative mix of celebrity-based persuasion, a corrosive sense of humor and information and communication technology. It uses a direct and even aggressive style to put target audiences in front of a mirror, so that they are confronted their own prejudice and misbehavior toward vulnerable jobseekers. It also identifies positive practices that remove barriers against their work integration or promote diversity in the workplace and leverages the awareness effects through online interactive channels, particularly social media. The goal is to cause a voluntary change of attitude and behavior among potential business employers (the main source of mainstream jobs in the country) and society in general.

This type of social marketing strategy is essential to complement service delivery by WISEs and TSOs and supportive legislation on the side of regulators, because these alone are necessary but not sufficient conditions to achieve a socially desirable change. Apart from delivering services to vulnerable jobseekers and coercively preventing or sanctioning uncompliant behavior by (potential) employers, it is also indispensable to broadly stimulate social adoption of positive attitudes and behavior consistent with the socially desirable goal, i.e., finding solutions to the problem of unequal opportunities and treatment in the labor market.

Additionally, it is important to underline the pivotal role played by Spanish Red Cross as promoter of this social campaign, based on its volunteer nature, strength at

service delivery, and broad social support. The messages originating from a legitimate advocate generate more empathy toward those affected and increased annoyance toward the perceived injustice, motivating intent to take action (Summers and Summers 2017).

Conclusions

In order to reach its goal of promoting equality and diversity for vulnerable jobseekers in the regular labor market, the employment plan of the Spanish Red Cross combines service provision—customized orientation and training for beneficiaries—with advocacy through its “It really is not funny” campaign. This campaign develops a wide range of innovative social marketing actions to raise awareness (change attitudes) and to stimulate actions (change behavior) among mainstream employers and society in general. The campaign aims at identifying and eliminating the practical barriers suffered by vulnerable people in the labor market in an innovative way. This campaign adopts a realistic approach to the human aspects and daily practice of corporate compliance with work integration and diversity regulations. It uses a direct language based on humor, irony, and critique as a vehicle for companies and citizens to confront their own stereotypes and prejudices regarding vulnerable people and to reflect on the role that they play as barriers to equality of access and treatment in the labor market. Diffusion of the effects of this confrontational strategy on people and organization is leveraged by digital communication technologies.

Thus, this social marketing campaign not only supports the implementation of the employment plan of the Spanish Red Cross as an innovative solution to the problem of work integration in Spain, but it is also a social marketing innovation per se. Little societal awareness exists about traditional work integration mechanisms prevailing in the country (e.g., WISEs) that rather rely upon ad hoc regulations and organizational formulas outside the standard labor market. By contrast, this campaign mainly targets mainstream companies and their employees, as they are the main source of jobs in the regular labor market, but may also become the main barrier when it comes to integrating vulnerable citizens.

This case study suggests a fruitful scenario to discuss the twofold relevance of social marketing in the realm of social innovation. On the one hand, it may be an effective tool to support the implementation of social innovation, contributing to initiatives mitigating or solving global social challenges at a local level in new, creative ways. On the other hand, the new ways in which the Spanish Red Cross’ campaign confronts target audiences in order to change their attitudes and behavior toward vulnerable jobseekers suggest that innovative social marketing strategies may help joint redefinition of social problems with relevant stakeholders, bring into existence new forms of communicating and managing the relationships with them, or co-create new social relationships, becoming a social innovation in their own right. This twofold potential of social marketing is especially relevant in a context of economic strains and pressing problems, where effective service delivery and regulatory frameworks fall short on achieving sustainable social change by themselves.

Discussion Questions

Once the case study was analyzed, and after presenting the main conclusions, we suggest some questions for discussion.

1. The main objective of “It really is not funny” campaign, within the employment plan of Spanish Red Cross, is to promote the equality of opportunities and treatment for the most vulnerable citizens in the labor market and to better manage the resulting diversity. Which indicators should be used to measure its success as a social marketing campaign from the perspective of its socially innovative impact?
2. What are the main reasons why social marketing can become a key strategy to encourage social innovation? Illustrate with examples from your own country context.
3. The Spanish Red Cross is the largest volunteer organization in Spain. How can this feature of being a volunteer-based organization influence the effects of social marketing campaigns on the development of the employment plan as a social innovation?

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