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**SOCIAL MARKETING AND APPLICATION POSSIBILITIES IN
HEALTH PROMOTION**

521.04 MARKETING AND LOGISTICS

Summary of the doctoral thesis in economics

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CONCEPTUAL GUIDELINES OF THE RESEARCH

The actuality and importance of the topic addressed. At present, people should be encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle, to benefit from health services and prevent various diseases or infections. In support of this idea comes the data on the morbidity of the population in the Republic of Moldova, which shows that in 2017 there were 33 237,3 new cases of disease per 100 000 inhabitants [5]. The incidence of diseases of the circulatory system, malignant tumours and diabetes, diseases from the category of non-communicable diseases on which behavioural factors have a major impact, is increasing. Behavioural change programs play a decisive role in preventing these diseases. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic that we are facing during this period reiterates the importance of social marketing in health promotion. By integrating the four basic elements of the marketing mix (product, price, placement, promotion) and the additional one (personnel/staff), programs capable of generating and maintaining the behaviour change of individuals in terms of health can be developed. If we refer to the field of public health in our country, social marketing techniques are insufficiently known and applied. At present, national public health programs do not necessarily aim at behaviour change, being mainly focused on informing the population. In this way, the 4Ps are limited to only one – Promotion, ignoring the other equally important elements. There are used some aspects of social marketing in health promotion programs, but they are more fragmented and do not present a clear and unified concept that will generate long-term results.

Description of the situation in the field of research. For the present research, the works describing *the historical evolution of social marketing* were relevant: Ph. Kotler and G. Zaltman (1971) introduce the notion of social marketing and provide a first definition of the field [15], updated in 1989 by Ph. Kotler and E. L. Roberto [1]. R. C. Lefebvre and J. A. Flora make a synthesis of the definitions proposed between 1975-1985 (Ph. Kotler, W. D. Novelli, S. H. Fine, R. K. Manoff) and identify distinctive aspects between them [16]. A. R. Andreasen (1994) [2] comes up with his own vision, and a more modern version is presented by Ph. Kotler, N. Lee and M. Rothschild (2006) [7]. J. C. Ling et al. analyses the historical stages of the evolution of social marketing [17]. In the Republic of Moldova the subject is insufficiently researched, brief references (mainly to social-ethical marketing) being made in the works signed by: S. Petrovici and Gr. Belostecinic [21], C. Eto et al. [9], S. Petrovici and S. Mustuc [22]. Tangential

elements, which are also attributed more to societal marketing, can be found in the doctoral theses elaborated by L. Apetri [3] and M. Grigoras [13]. A clearer differentiation of the notion of social marketing is found in the Romanian literature, for example: T. Gherasim and E. Maxim [11], G. Zanoschi [30]. *The application of social marketing in public health* is extensively researched abroad: R. C. Lefebvre and J. A. Flora (1988), J. C. Ling et al. (1992), D. C. Walsh et al. (1993), M. J. Baker (2002), B. L. Neiger et al. (2003), S. Grier and C. A. Bryant (2005), R. Gordon et al. (2006), H. A. Иорданская et al. (2008), K. M. Гаджиалиев (2010), J. French et al. (2010), H. Cheng, Ph. Kotler and N. Lee (2011), R. Aras (2011), R. K. Thomas (2015) et al. *Tools and practical examples of social marketing* have been presented by several authors, including: H. Bellamy et al. (1997), M. L. Rothschild (1999), M. Fishbein, and M. C. Yzer (2003), B. L. Neiger et al. (2003), M. Huhman et al. (2004), M. Siegel and L. Doner (2004), F. Wong et al. (2004), R. Nathan et al. (2005), B. A. Primack et al. (2007), T. Long et al. (2008), J. Griffiths et al. (2009), R. Donovan and N. Henley (2003, 2010), N. Lee and Ph. Kotler (2011), P. Diehr et al. (2011), M. Whatnall et al. (2019), as well as by institutions: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the USA, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Public Health England, the World Health Organisation, the National School of Public Health and Management (Romania), etc.

The study of the specialised literature in the field (some being mentioned above) led to **the identification of the scientific problem**: insufficient knowledge and application of social marketing techniques in health promotion in the Republic of Moldova, which generated the formulation of **the research question**: Which are the most effective social marketing techniques that could be applied in health promotion?

The aim of the paper is to develop a model for adapting the most effective social marketing techniques in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova.

Research objectives:

1. Delimiting the conceptual approaches of social marketing.
2. Identifying the particularities in establishing the social marketing mix.
3. Examination of national projects and programs for health promotion in the Republic of Moldova.
4. Identifying good international practices in applying the concept of social marketing in the field of public health.

5. Examining the possibilities of using the support provided by international bodies for the development of social marketing in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova.
6. Investigating the level of knowledge in the field of social marketing of *Nicolae Testemitanu* State University of Medicine and Pharmacy (SUMPh) students.
7. Research on the level of understanding, knowledge and practice of social marketing by public health specialists in the country.
8. Elaboration of the set of measures necessary for the application of social marketing techniques in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova (conceptual model, practical tools).

Research hypothesis. *Providing tools to the actors involved could contribute to the application of social marketing in the field of public health.*

The tools include study programs and guidelines capable of providing some additional knowledge and a clear picture of the application of marketing by actors, represented by: students, medical and public health specialists, heads of institutions and policy makers.

Research methodology. The research is interdisciplinary, applicative, descriptive, with a qualitative, logical-deductive and constructivist approach. A complex of methods was used to conduct the research: scientific documentation, analysis, synthesis, comparison, observation, interview, questioning, simulation, data collection, statistical methods of data processing and analysis, qualitative and quantitative interpretation. A brief presentation of the methods is given in the table below.

Table 1. Synthesis of the research methods

	Qualitative methods	Quantitative methods
Indirect methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scientific documentation - Analysis of study programs at <i>Nicolae Testemitanu</i> SUMPh 	
Direct methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expert interviews - Focus group with AMSR members - In-depth interviews with specialists from public health centres - Simulation exercise with MPH students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 245 student questionnaires - 95 tests for MPH students
	Data processing, analysis and interpretation	

The scientific novelty and originality lies in the research of social marketing in terms of health (in the health promotion segment), applied in the Republic of Moldova, starting from the level of knowledge of the concept held by the main potential implementers and conferring an academic status to the social marketing discipline applied in public health.

The important scientific problem solved in the research lies in the elaboration of the set of measures (the *T Model*, the *Implementation Guide*, the Curriculum for the *Social Marketing in Health Promotion* course, a sketch of the implementation team), which allowed highlighting the most effective social marketing techniques for the field of public health in our country, in order to apply social marketing in health promotion.

The approval of scientific results includes both theoretical and practical investigations. These were reflected in publications: 3 articles (2019-2020) in the international journals *Marketing – from Information to Decision Journal*, indexed DOI and *World Science*, indexed DOI; 2 articles (2019-2020) in the accredited national journals (category B) *Economica* and *Akademios*; 3 materials in the proceedings of international scientific conferences (2016-2019); a chapter on social marketing in the manual *Promovarea sanatatii (Health Promotion)* (2017). The practical application of the results was made within the School of Public Health Management of *Nicolae Testemitanu* SUMPh and within the National Agency for Public Health.

Summary of thesis chapters. The content of the doctoral thesis includes: annotations in Romanian, Russian and English, introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography (134 sources), 13 annexes. In total, the thesis contains 142 pages of basic text (up to Bibliography), 35 figures and 18 tables. The obtained results were published in 9 scientific papers.

Keywords: social marketing, public health, health promotion, Republic of Moldova, physicians, public health specialists, curriculum development, implementation guide, team members, strategies.

THESIS CONTENT

Chapter I – Analysis of the concept of social marketing and its implementation in public health — presents the theoretical study of social marketing in historical context, as well as the conceptual delimitation of the field from commercial marketing with the description of the most important elements: consumer orientation, theory exchange, segmentation and competition. The idea of applying commercial marketing techniques in the social sphere appeared as early as 1952, when G. D. Wiebe asked the question "Why can't we sell the fraternity as soap?" [15, p. 3]. Almost two decades later, Ph. Kotler and G. Zaltman introduce the notion of *social marketing* and propose the following definition: "Social marketing is the design, implementation and control of programs designed to influence the acceptability of social ideas and includes considerations on product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research" [15, p. 5]. Thus, the year 1971 marks the moment of founding a new discipline, which is based on the principles of traditional marketing, but which managed to build a separate identity. The similarities and differences between social and commercial marketing are presented in the following table.

Table 2. Similarities and differences between social and commercial marketing [24, p. 218]

Social marketing	Similarities	Commercial marketing
Intangible products	Consumer orientation. Obtaining as many benefits as possible in exchange for investments. The need to identify and position the offer better than competitors. The use of "exchange theory" as a basis. Audiences are segmented. The 4 basic P's are used: product, price, promotion, placement, and the additional one — personnel (staff). The results are measurable and are used for improvement.	More tangible products
Greater complexity of products		Lower product complexity
More varied demand		Less varied demand
Hard-to-reach target groups		Alignment with consumer preferences
Greater consumer involvement		Greater involvement of the provider
The competition is more subtle and varied		Open competition, market or product / service oriented
The main goal: to influence behavior		The main goal: to make a profit
Selection of segments according to complex criteria		Selecting the most profitable consumer segments

We came up with our own definition of social marketing, which in our opinion includes the main characteristic aspects: *Social marketing is an activity of creating and managing social change programs using traditional marketing principles, which aims to (voluntarily) influence the behaviour of the target audience in a positive way, in order to bring (as a result) benefits to the whole community.*

In the Republic of Moldova the subject is insufficiently researched. In general, social marketing is mentioned in certain passages or chapters of some scientific works on general marketing and is usually presented only as a concept of modern marketing, a notion encountered in foreign literature more frequently as *societal marketing*. A more focused article on the concept studied in this thesis is entitled "The benefits of the social marketing program *Lose weight healthy*, through the online environment", signed by G. Tomas, C. Etco and L. Goma. The described program aims to "change the negative behaviour related to improper diet and lack of exercise, providing solutions to counteract their effects through a balanced diet and the practice of shaping training" [27, p. 143]. At the same time, it should be emphasised that the project has some financial objectives.

Because it is a relatively new science and insignificantly applied in the Republic of Moldova, we have delimited social marketing from other similar notions (including as semantics) with which it is often confused, namely: societal marketing, social media, corporate social responsibility, nonprofit marketing, communication and public relations. However, there are substantial tangents between social marketing and the notions listed above.

As it has an extended scope, four major areas of social marketing have been identified: *health promotion* (tobacco use, alcohol consumption and abuse, obesity, etc.), *damage prevention* (seat belt fastening, drunk driving avoidance, suicide, gun storage, etc.), *environmental protection* (waste reduction, protection of wild habitat, destruction of forests, etc.) and *community mobilisation* (blood and organ donation, voting, literacy, etc.) [7, p. 3]. Given the complexity of the activities involved in applying social marketing in public health, we limited their study to *health promotion* (as a field of public health) — "the process that gives individuals and communities the opportunity to increase control over the determinants of health and thereby — the possibility of improving their health" [28, p. 84]. Thus, health promotion is presented as a multidisciplinary concept, which involves three distinct spheres of activity but which, at the same time, overlap: health education, health protection and disease prevention. Health promotion

is not limited to supporting the adoption of a healthy lifestyle, it has the ambition of ensuring the total well-being of the individual. Specialists in the field of health promotion and health education will aim to prevent disease, premature death and improve the quality of life [18, p. 12-13]. It is important not to confuse health promotion (as a field of public health) with promotion as a component of the marketing mix (which requires a narrower view). In health promotion it is used the entire marketing mix: product, price, placement, promotion.

We have identified and analysed the conditions of influence on the development of social marketing in public health, favourable and unfavourable factors for the application of social marketing in public health, as well as the ways to capitalise/remove them. Although social marketing is growing in popularity among public health professionals, a number of challenges need to be overcome in order to continue this development, namely: (a) misconceptions and other barriers, (b) formative research and evaluation methodologies, (c) theoretical aspects and (d) ethical considerations [12, p. 329].

In the present study we have analysed eight social marketing models from the specialised literature, that have had been proposed in the period 1984-2008, in order to further develop a model adapted for the Republic of Moldova. By synthesising the ideas, we established a series of particularities of social marketing. At the same time, we came up with some additions to the traditional version of the social marketing mix proposed by MacFadyen et al. (Table 3).

Table 3. Elements of social marketing mix

Instrument	Essence	Types
Product	The offer made to target consumers who need to adopt a behaviour	Adopting an idea (conception, attitude, values) Adopting a behaviour (singular or maintained over time) Giving up current behaviour Non-adoption of a behaviour in the future Maintaining a behaviour
Price	Costs they (consumers) have to bear, related to benefits	Psychological, emotional, cultural, social, behavioural, temporal, practical, physical, financial
Placement	The channels through which change is promoted and the places where change is supported and encouraged. Positioning in the mind of the consumer.	Media channels Distribution channels Interpersonal channels Physical places Non-physical places (eg. social and cultural climate) Partnerships/intermediaries

(...) Placement	The place where the behaviour can be applied	Online tools (web portals, applications, online programming, etc.)
Promotion	The means by which change is promoted to the target group	Advertising Public relations Media advocacy Direct mail Interpersonal promotion Online marketing Social media
Personnel	The implementation team of a social marketing program	Team composition Areas and level of training

Source: Completed and adjusted by the author after L. MacFadyen,
M. Stead and G. Hastings [4, p. 714]

Thus, we consider it important to include in the product policy the maintenance of a behaviour, in addition to adopting a behaviour, an idea or giving up an unwanted behaviour. In terms of pricing policy, this involves not only estimating prices but also relating them to benefits. To the placement we added partnerships and the development of relationships with intermediaries, as well as the development of online tools. Here were also included the level of quality expressed by positioning in the mind of the consumer, as well as the place where the behaviour can be applied. When promoting, it is essential to take into account modern tools, such as: online marketing and social media. An additional element of the mix, the personnel policy refers to the implementation team of the social marketing program and it involves establishing the members of the team — specialists from different fields with an appropriate level of training.

Chapter II – Elements of social marketing used at national and international level in health promotion focuses on the overall analysis of health promotion activities in the Republic of Moldova, especially in terms of strategic documents in the field, such as: National Health Policy [32], National Public Health Strategy [33], National Health Promotion Program [34], National Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases [31]. At the national level, social marketing elements are used, but they have a fragmented, random and inconsistent character. It is welcome that there are documents governing the directions of health development, including health promotion activity, but the lack of a clear connection and concordance between them is a major impediment to long-term results.

In addition to the strategic documents mentioned above, in order to identify the use of social marketing concept, we also studied 12 national programs in the field of public health, which include the following topics: alcohol and tobacco consumption, food and nutrition, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, mental health, sexual and reproductive rights, immunisations, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, viral hepatitis. Only one national program (on alcohol control) explicitly mentions social marketing. We believe that the use of social marketing as a tool in these programs would contribute to achieving the goals of behavioural change.

In order to identify the most acute public health problems (to the solution of which social marketing could contribute) we studied statistical data regarding the mortality and morbidity of the population. By analysing the mortality of the population by main classes of causes of death (Figure 1) in the period 1990-2018, we note that the priority is held by the diseases of the circulatory system, which account for an average of 53 % of deaths, followed by tumours, with an average of 13 %, and diseases of the digestive tract — 9,3 %. Due to accidents, intoxications and traumas suffered an average of about 8,6 % of people who died between 1990 and 2018.

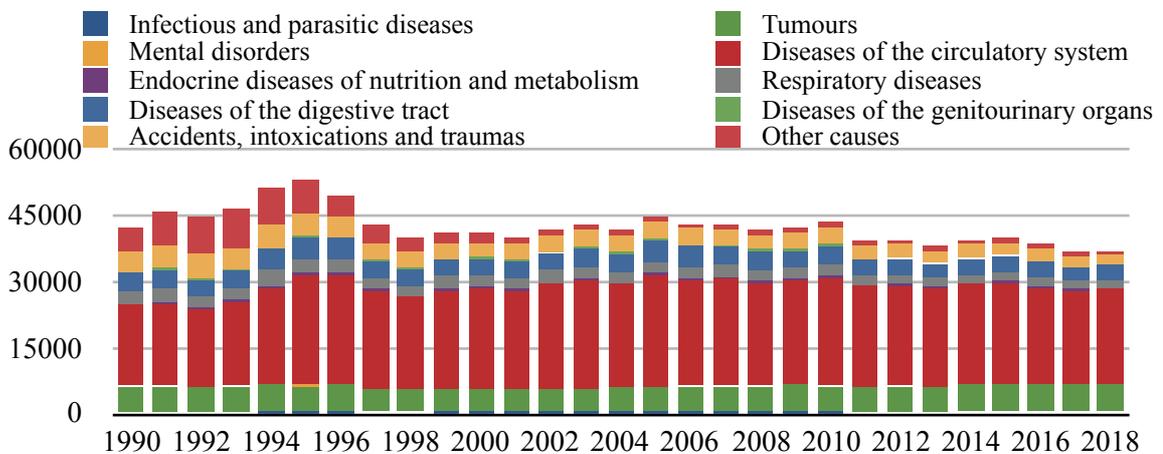


Fig. 1. Population mortality in the Republic of Moldova by main classes of causes of death in the period 1990-2018

(number of diseases per 100,000 inhabitants)

Source: Developed by the author based on data from the National Bureau of Statistics [5]

Regarding the general morbidity, it decreased considerably compared to 2009, when it reached the maximum level of the analysed period (36 128 cases of disease), the minimum level being registered in 2014 (31 688,1 cases). However, since 2015 there is an increasing tendency

of general morbidity, the incidence of diseases of the circulatory system, malignant tumours and diabetes are increasing, while the frequency of new mental illnesses decreases.

An important aspect that was reflected in this chapter of the thesis is health expenditures, especially those related to health promotion. The sub-programs in the health sector are financed mainly from: the state budget, the funds of the compulsory health insurance, the budgets of the territorial administrative authorities, the official development assistance provided by the external development partners. In the period 2009-2018, health care expenditures in the consolidated budget decreased if we analyse the share of total expenditures and the share of GDP, respectively, from 6,4 % in 2009 to 5,0 % in 2018 [5]. In 2018, expenditures for the *National and Special Programs in Health Care Sub-program* accounted for 5 % of total expenditure in the health sector [19]. Most of the public expenditures intended for health care are administered by the National Company of Medical Assurance (NCMA). In the period 2009-2018, the average degree of realisation for the expenditures for the Fund for Prophylaxis Measures (FPM) was about 43 %. Regarding promoting the healthy lifestyle, the expenses were relatively constant between 2016-2018, the last year registering the lowest share of the total expenditures made from FPM, with a total of 820,4 thousands lei [8].

A special role in the implementation of national health programs, including those for health promotion, belongs to the Territorial Public Health Councils (TPHC). We presented a quantitative study carried out by the School of Public Health Management, regarding the problems related to the activity of the TPHC and the solutions for a better inter-sectorial activity in the territory, in the field of public health. According to the presented study, the transposition of the principle of "health in all policies" at territorial level is still limited, being attested: deficiencies in providing TPHC members with the necessary information and materials to do their job properly, lack of theoretical and practical knowledge, lack of competent human resources, as well as lack of financial resources. At the same time, the current members do not represent all the authorities responsible for public health in the territory, which makes it necessary to complete the TPHC with representatives of: Ministry of Internal Affairs, National Agency for Food Safety, local non-governmental organisations, ecological service, religious cults, local media, district social assistance. By building capacity, TPHC can become an important implementer of social marketing programs in health promotion.

In order to form a clearer vision on public health issues in the Republic of Moldova that require health promotion interventions, details on the coordination of activities at national level, allocated funds and the importance of additional tools, such as social marketing, we used the interview with experts method. Following the investigation, we formulated the following conclusions: the field of health promotion is a priority and should be promoted intensively among decision-makers and medical specialists; cooperation must be established between the various institutions to ensure the coordination of health promotion activities at national level; more effective tools are needed to manage health promotion activity, such as social marketing (able to influence the behaviours of the target audience in order to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases); in order to ensure the proper funding of health promotion programs, it is necessary to train the NCMA staff on social marketing, in order to be able to evaluate the health promotion programs to be funded. The interview with experts method allowed us to highlight the role of social marketing in health promotion, namely — the tool in creating behavioural change programs capable of ensuring continuity of activities and include a broader approach than that used so far (limited to communication or health education).

In order to examine the possibilities of using the support provided by international bodies for the development of social marketing in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova, it was essential to analyse the types of support, namely: financial and methodological (specialised guides). According to the latest available report on monitoring the official development assistance of the health sector in our country made by the Ministry of Health and WHO, the Republic of Moldova received in 2013 official development assistance (ODA) for the health sector from 21 partners, which reported participation in 54 projects (51 grants and 3 preferential credits) [20]. In addition to funding specific programs (eg *Viata Sanatoasa/Healthy Living*, *O casa fara pericole pentru copilul tau/A safe home for your child*), international partners provide support through: tools provided, sponsorship of training activities, creating and strengthening the communities of specialists and dissemination of good practices. As examples in this regard are the social marketing guides developed by international organisations, which can serve as a benchmark in designing effective campaigns. Three such tools were analysed in the thesis: *Communication for Behavioural Impact (COMBI)* used by the World Health Organisation [29]; *CDCynergy Lite: Social marketing made simple* launched by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [6]; *Social marketing guide for managers and*

practitioners of public health programs proposed by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) [10].

In order to identify good international practices in the application of the social marketing concept in the field of public health, the international experience on the effectiveness of social marketing programs in health promotion was studied. The article entitled *The effectiveness of social marketing interventions for health improvement: What's the evidence?* signed by R. Gordon et al., analyses the effectiveness of social marketing interventions in improving health, grouped into three categories: nutrition, physical activity, substance abuse. Finally, researchers classify social marketing as a promising approach to intervention in health behaviour [14].

A notable example of the application of social marketing at the government level is the United Kingdom, which has a fairly broad and well-organised framework through Public Health England — an executive agency, sponsored by the UK Government's Department of Health and Social Care. A proof in this regard is the Social Marketing Strategy 2017-2020 [23] which is implemented. Depending on the targeting of the audience, in order to address the stages that each person goes through throughout life, the campaigns are grouped into three main areas: *Starting Well, Living Well, Ageing Well*. These in turn include a series of specific programs, which use a brand concept adapted to the target group with well-defined messages. From the example of Great Britain we see how important is the existence of a national vision on the implementation of social marketing in public health. At the same time, branding must be present in all initiatives and be in accordance with the profile of the audience identified through thorough and constant research.

Chapter III – Strategic alternatives for applying social marketing in health promotion in the Republic of Moldova includes studying the role of undergraduate training and continuing education in the application of social marketing. In this sense, the level of social marketing knowledge of *Nicolae Testemitanu* SUMPh students, as well as the level of social marketing knowledge, understanding and application by public health specialists were analysed. Also here was described the set of measures proposed for the development of social marketing in the field of public health in our country. In order to identify strategic alternatives for applying social marketing in health promotion and achieving the research goal, it was necessary to divide the research process into several stages. Thus, in addition to the interviews with the experts described in the previous chapter, it was necessary to carry out a series of investigations:

- focus group discussions with active members of the Association of Medical Students and Residents (AMSR);
- questioning 245 sixth year medical students of *Nicolae Testemitanu* SUMPh;
- interviewing specialists from public health centres in the country;
- testing the knowledge of master students from the School of Public Health Management (SPHM) of *Nicolae Testemitanu* SUMPh, before and after the *Marketing Healthcare Services* course (95 completed tests);
- simulating the development of a social marketing program with the master students of SPHM, in order to test the instruments developed within the present research.

From the research we have noticed that both students and public health specialists have minimal knowledge in the field of social marketing (and some do not have at all), which is based more on a logical interpretation than on well-founded knowledge. However, they are aware of the importance of the field and the need to be trained in this regard.

Following discussions with the members of the Association of Medical Students and Residents (AMSR) in a focused group, it was found that none of the participants were trained in social marketing. Opinions were divided on the need for medical students to be trained in social marketing: those who opposed were in the minority and took this position because they consider marketing to be manipulative or to be applied only by specialists in the field. Regarding the components of a possible course, the following areas of interest were mentioned: social marketing techniques, introductory level, application of social marketing in public health, evaluation of campaigns and interventions.

Among the health promotion programs they have participated in during the last three years, mostly organised by AMSR, were mentioned: *Donate blood — be a hero! Give a drop of life!*; *We stop tuberculosis during our generation*; *ABC - the basics of emergency medical aid taught to high school students*; *The World Health Day*; *The World Heart Day*; *Cheerful starts*; *Sports competitions*. The young people took part both in the organisation of the actions and in their actual conduct. Most focus group participants mentioned that it is very important and important for students to participate in such initiatives. From the focus group made with some of the most active young people within AMSR we can conclude that they represent a group of medical students with potential in the development and implementation of health promotion programs.

According to the results of the questioning of *Nicolae Testemitanu* SUMPh students, they are tangentially informed about social marketing in some courses, such as *Management and marketing*. Most of the medical students (60,4 %) managed to correctly identify the essence of social marketing, defining it as *a process of creating and conducting social change programs*. However, the values recorded for the other answers that illustrate a narrower view of social marketing are quite high, namely: *a process of informing consumers* (53,5 %), *social advertising* (42,9 %), *a charity action carried out by an organisation* (15,9 %). These data (illustrated in Figure 2) show that, although they claim to have been trained in social marketing, students have shortcomings in understanding of the concept.

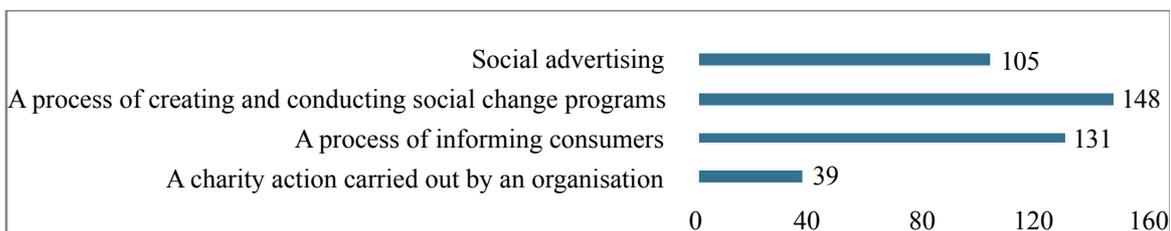


Fig. 2. The essence of social marketing determined by the respondents

Similarly, when identifying the main purpose of social marketing (Figure 3), the majority (63,7 %) indicated correctly — *influencing the behaviour of target audiences*. However, 31,8 % mentioned that the main goal would be *conducting sociological research*, 45,3 % opted for *stimulating the employees*, and 34,7 % mentioned *making a profit*.

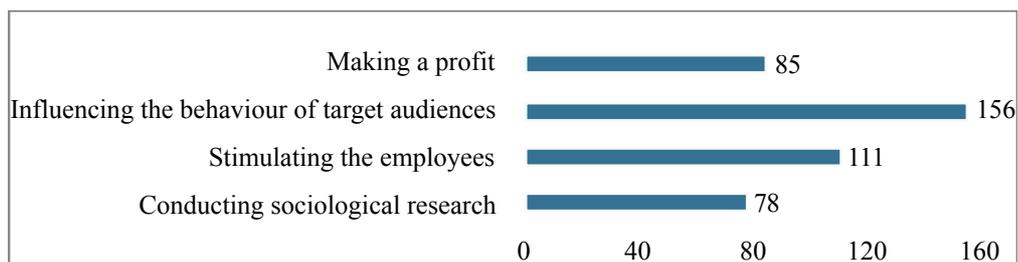


Fig. 3. The purpose of social marketing identified by medical students

These results highlight the misperception that respondents have about social marketing and the need to form a correct view of the concept.

The training necessity at different levels is underlined by the results recorded. More than half of the students participating in the study showed up for the introduction of a course in this regard, at least an optional one (Figure 4).

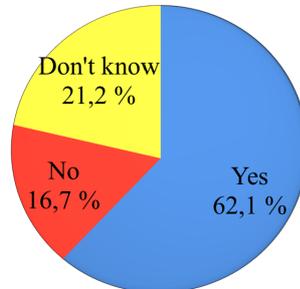


Fig. 4. The need for training of medical students in the field of social marketing

At the School of Public Health Management, master students follow the course *Marketing Healthcare Services*, which also includes a section on social marketing (where the tools described and proposed in this paper are applied). They were tested before and after attending the course. A total of 95 tests were processed, comprising 8 marketing questions, completed by two groups of master students in 2018 (01 and 02), for which an average was calculated, and one group in 2019 (Figure 5).

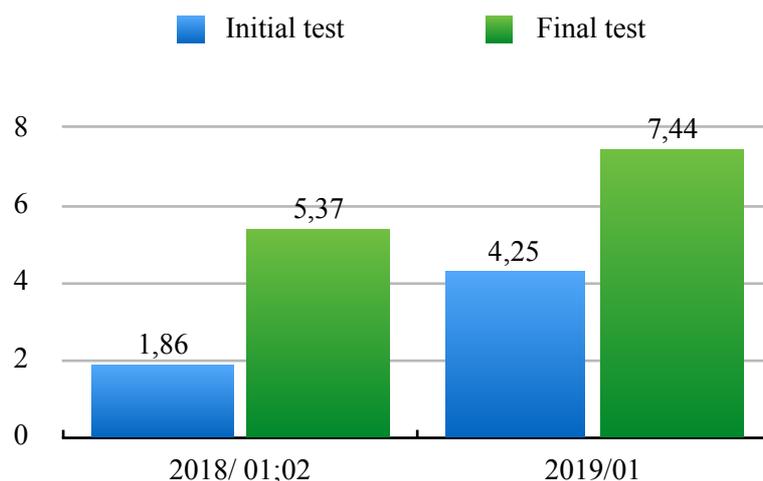


Fig. 5. Average of the results registered at the docimological tests (2018-2019) regarding the evaluation of the marketing knowledge of the SPHM master students

There is an increase in the level of knowledge gained from the marketing course (including social marketing), both in 2018 and in 2019. However, in 2019 the average recorded is higher, which is largely due to the implementation of the tools described subsequently.

In another stage of the research process, public health specialists have identified *the lack of skills/competences* as the main barrier to implementing social marketing in their institutions, as well as *the lack of awareness/education/training*. At the same time, in order to eliminate/diminish the identified barriers, most stated that trainings are needed, and a large part of the interviewees were of the opinion that a mechanism for sharing and learning best practices would be useful in this regard. The interviewees have identified the strengths and weaknesses of social marketing, their vision being integrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Strengths and weaknesses of social marketing identified by the public health specialists participating in the interview

Strengths	Weaknesses
It generally contributes to the health of the population, to the environment Use of research Rational use of natural resources Aim for social change Knowledge and skills It applies to organisations, people, ideas	Long time to solve a problem Not solving a problem by 100% It implies willingness There is no intercalation (collaboration) between the medical and the social field We have no staff We don't always help financially

As we can see, some important advantages of social marketing were highlighted (use of research, proper allocation of resources, complex approach, wide applicability, etc.), while at the disadvantages — the more general aspects were indicated, which are not necessarily related to the implementation of social marketing. For example, a social change program requires a long period of time, whether or not social marketing techniques are used. Likewise, solving a problem by 100% is debatable, the efficiency of social marketing in various contexts is scientifically proven, but no technique taken separately can assume an absolute purpose. Unwillingness and lack of the staff is a problem, however, financial support is not even a goal of the social marketing.

In order to facilitate the implementation of social marketing in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova, especially in the health promotion segment, in this paper we have proposed a simplified tool for applying social marketing in the healthcare field — the T Model.

This model integrates the main elements of social marketing and structures them in a staged process according to the steps to be taken by a team involved in the development of a health promotion program. In order to be understood by all team members, regardless of specialisation, the model is described according to: basic principles, conceptual scheme and implementation stages. For the application of the T Model, it is included in the Triad Training-Collaboration-Application (Figure 6), which illustrates a systemic vision regarding the need to train actors in social marketing, collaboration between specialists in various fields and implementation of programs on different levels.

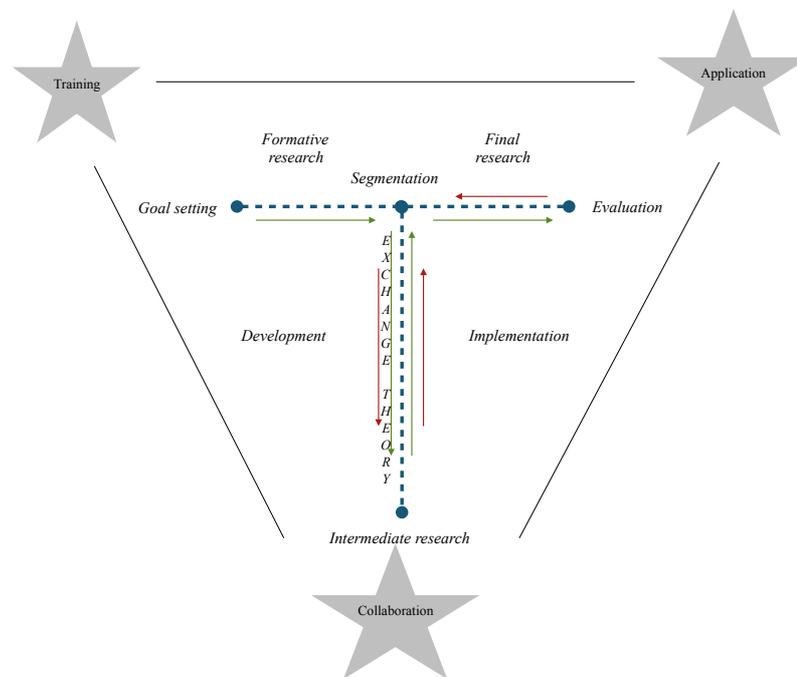


Fig. 6. Model T integrated in the Training - Collaboration - Application triad [26]

This paper proposes three useful tools for the application of social marketing in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova, namely: the Implementation guide (to strengthen the political dimension), a curriculum for the course *Social marketing in health promotion* (training dimension) and a sketch of the implementation team (the dimension of collaboration). The total framework for implementing social marketing in the field of public health is illustrated in Figure 7 (page 21).

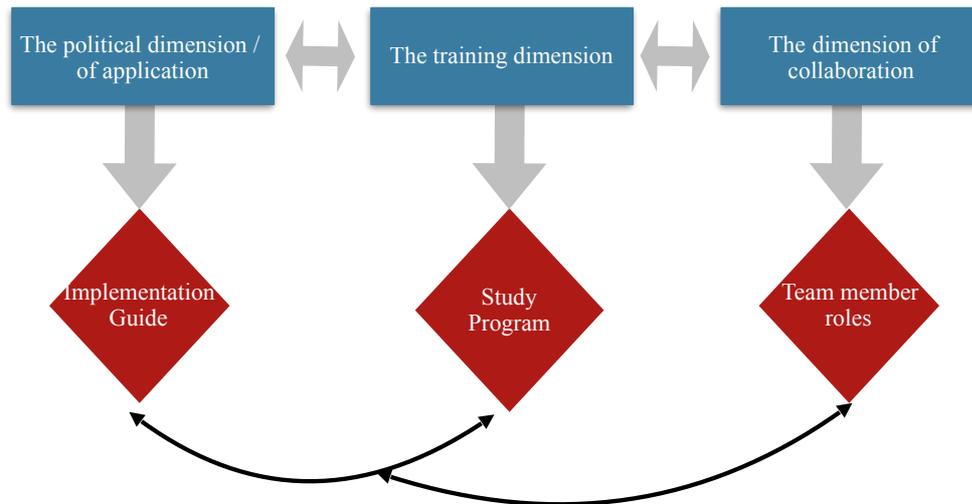


Fig. 7. The total framework for implementing social marketing in the field of public health [25]

The Study Program

For teaching-learning the concept of social marketing, it is recommended to establish a separate course, with an optimal duration of 25 academic hours (or a minimum of 8 hours). The course was designed for students at *Nicolae Testemitanu* SUMPh, for master students at the School of Public Health Management, but also for continuing training of doctors. Given the small number of hours involved, but also the potential difficulties of allocating space in the general curriculum, the course can be integrated with other disciplines related as a topic. The study program includes the following subjects: (1) The concept of social marketing and its components. Peculiarities compared to commercial marketing; (2) Historical landmarks for the development of social marketing; (3) Areas of application; (4) Analysis of the current situation and selection of the target group; (5) Behaviour change; (6) Development of mixed marketing strategy in health promotion; (7) The T Model for social marketing development; (8) Implementation and evaluation of social marketing campaigns.

In addition to the structuring of the proposed study program, we came up with some recommendations on its application: having a flexible approach by adjusting examples and exercises according to specific conditions in order to adapt to the needs of the students, focusing on the practical side and less on theoretical aspects, using diverse and interactive teaching-learning methods, highlighting the advantages of social marketing compared to other techniques for influencing behaviour.

Guide for the implementation of social marketing in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova

Based on the international guidelines described in Chapter 2, we have developed a guide for the implementation of social marketing in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova. Its main advantages are: has a brief presentation of the material (not much effort is required from users), it is the first tool of this kind available in Romanian, it is adapted to the national specific (through the examples used), it includes a model for implementing social marketing (the *T Model*).

The document was structured as follows:

- I. Introduction to social marketing (definition of main notions and concepts)
- II. The T Model for the implementation of social marketing in public health
- III. Support sheets (sketches that can serve as a basis for using the guide).

The team for implementing a social marketing program

In the specialised literature is mentioned the importance of a multidisciplinary team in achieving social marketing objectives, but does not clearly describe the responsibilities of each member and the necessary knowledge they must have. We further present in Table 5 a sketch of a team for implementing a social marketing program, to each role being assigned a single unit (the number can be adjusted as needed).

Table 5. Roles, responsibilities and knowledge of team members implementing a social marketing program [25]

Role	Responsibilities	Knowledge
Health promotion specialist	Development and coordination of health promotion activities in accordance with the social marketing plan	Public health, health promotion
Health education specialist	Elaboration and implementation of health education programs in the context of the 4 Ps	Public health, health education
Physician	Support in setting product policy. Offering specialised recommendations	Depending on the type of the program: cardiology, endocrinology, nutrition, etc.

Continuation of the Table

Social marketing specialist	Development of the social marketing plan (in collaboration with the other team members) and coordination of social marketing activities	Social marketing and behavioural sciences
Marketing research specialist (service that can be outsourced)	Carrying out quantitative and qualitative marketing research to perform consumer analysis	Marketing research
Communication specialist	Development and implementation of the communication strategy (in accordance with the promotion policy within the social marketing plan)	Communication, promotion and social marketing
Psychologist	Identify behaviours and attitudes that may be subject to change/influence	Behavioural psychology
Administrative and technical staff	Program management and implementation support	Managerial and technical (as appropriate: accounting, finance, IT, logistics, etc.)

Both the *T Model* and the proposed tools were tested in a simulation exercise (Figure 8), which demonstrated their consistency and usefulness to be implemented in a real situation, when developing a social marketing program.

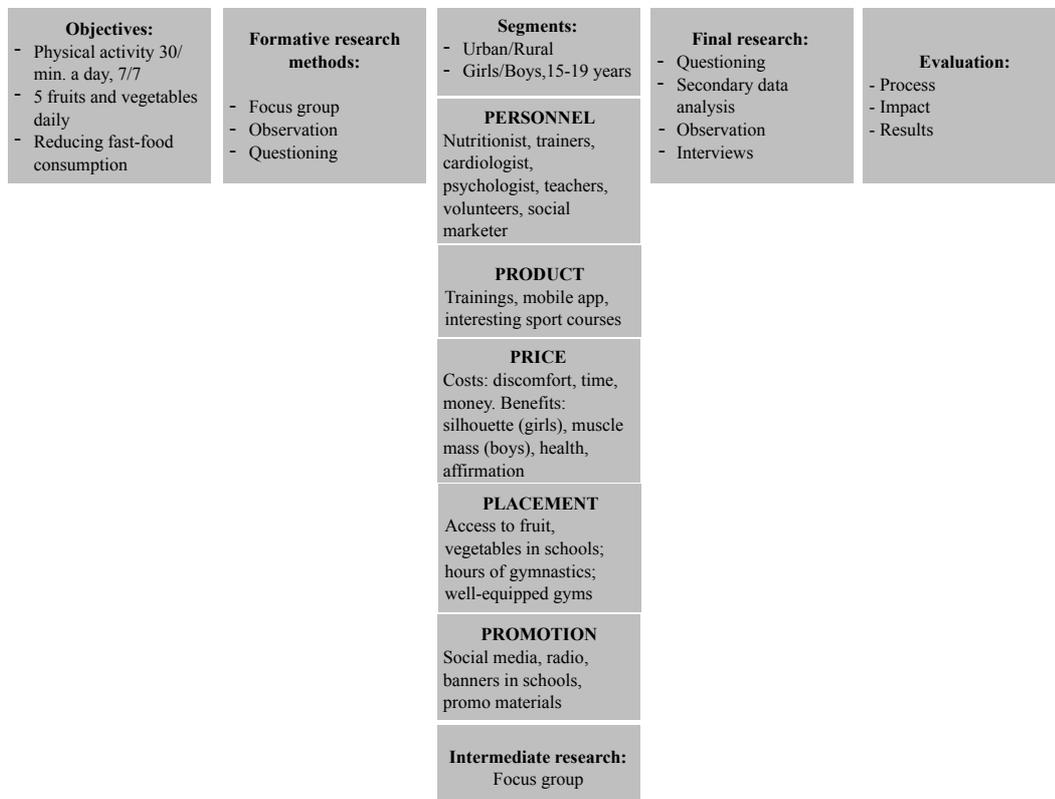


Fig. 8. The T Model Form completed in the simulation exercise [26]

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation on the application of social marketing in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova, emphasises the importance and timeliness of using social marketing as a tool for health promotion. The result of the research shows that the proposed goal has been achieved, so **the important scientific problem solved in research** lies in developing a set of measures that have adapted the most effective social marketing techniques to public health in the Republic of Moldova, which contributes to the application of social marketing in health promotion, thanks to the achievement of the objectives initially set, namely:

1. The conceptual approaches of social marketing have been identified and the delimitation of a series of notions with which it is confused has been made. At the same time, we proposed our own definition, which in our opinion includes the main characteristic aspects.
2. Determining the particularities in establishing the social marketing mix allowed us to complete the social marketing mix and to reveal the specific attributes of the implementation and the conditions of influence on the development of social marketing in public health.
3. By examining a series of strategic documents we found that social marketing elements are used only sporadically. We have studied the health indicators in the Republic of Moldova, as well as the expenditures allocated for this field. We have analysed the role of the Territorial Public Health Councils. By using the method of interviewing experts, we reiterated the importance of the field of health promotion and the need to implement effective tools, such as social marketing.
4. We have identified international best practices in the application of the social marketing concept in the field of public health, an example being the Social Marketing Strategy in Public Health applied by the United Kingdom.
5. We have examined the possibilities of using the support provided by international bodies for the development of social marketing in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova, including: financing programs or projects, providing tools, sponsoring training activities, creating and consolidating communities of specialists (specialised associations) and the dissemination of good practices.
6. Investigating the level of knowledge in the field of social marketing of *Nicolae Testemitanu* SUMPh students allowed us to identify that medical students have shortcomings in the level

of understanding of the notion. Most consider it very important the participation of current and future doctors in health promotion actions and find that marketing techniques can be implemented in this regard, and also that students need training in the field.

7. Researching the level of understanding, knowledge and practice of social marketing by public health specialists in the country allowed us to find out that the notion of social marketing is poorly known and insufficiently understood by them, but they appreciate its importance. The main barrier to implementing social marketing within the institutions they represent has been identified by most as the lack of skills/competencies, and in order to eliminate it, trainings are needed. At the same time, the testing of SPHM master students before and after the *Marketing Healthcare Services* course showed that the trainings help to complete their knowledge, including in the field of social marketing.
8. As a result of the research, by completing the three essential steps: substantiation, testing and adjustment — a set of measures necessary for the application of social marketing techniques in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova was developed, which includes:
 - *The T Model for implementing social marketing in health promotion*, designed for the Republic of Moldova, but which can be taken over, adapted and used by other countries where the concept of social marketing is not sufficiently promoted.
 - The Training-Collaboration-Application triad for the integration of the *T Model*, which illustrates a systemic vision regarding the need to train actors in social marketing, the collaboration between specialists in various fields and implementation at different levels.
 - The three tools created for the development of social marketing in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova: the implementation guide, the curriculum for the *Social marketing in health promotion* course and an outline of the implementation team.

In accordance with the results of the investigation, we propose the following practical recommendations to the:

1. *Government of the Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection, National Agency for Public Health, National Health Insurance Company*: creating a national vision on social marketing (inclusion in policies and strategies), and encouraging the use of social marketing as a planning tool in conducting and evaluating health promotion programs. We emphasise that at regional or local level the main potential implementer becomes the

Territorial Public Health Council, which can initiate behavioural change programs regarding health, with the application of T Model proposed in this paper.

2. *Developers of health promotion programs (governmental and non-governmental institutions)*: social marketing includes a series of techniques, which involve practical actions to be undertaken in a certain sequence. To streamline processes, developers of health promotion programs are encouraged to use the set of measures proposed in this paper to implement social marketing techniques (which includes the T Model, the implementation guide, the sketch of the implementation team). It is important to mention here that social marketing can be used as an exclusive tool or in addition to other techniques already applied.
3. *“Nicolae Testemitanu” State University of Medicine and Pharmacy*: it is important to carry out the training of healthcare specialists in the field of social marketing starting from the undergraduate period, that is why it is appropriate to introduce a social marketing course for medical students or complete some courses related as a topic with a separate section on social marketing.
4. *School of Public Health Management*:
 - Increasing the hours for the *Marketing Healthcare Services* course, taught within the Master's Program in Public Health Management, from 25 academic hours to 35, in order to allocate more time to the topic of social marketing.
 - Inclusion of the *Social marketing in health promotion* course in the program of continuing training of doctors.
 - Creating an optional course *Social marketing in health promotion* for: public health specialists, teams implementing health promotion programs, doctors, etc.
5. *Specialists of the Public Health Centres and TPHC members*: the use of the social marketing concept in the health promotion activity carried out at local/regional level.

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ANNOTATION

Timotin Alina

Social marketing and application possibilities in health promotion

PhD thesis in economics,
Chisinau, 2020

The volume and structure of the thesis. The thesis includes: introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography of 134 titles, 13 annexes, 142 pages of basic text (up to Bibliography), 35 figures and 18 tables. The obtained results are published in 9 scientific papers.

Keywords: social marketing, public health, health promotion, Republic of Moldova, medical students, public health specialists, curriculum development, implementation guide, team members, strategies.

Field of study: Economics.

The object of the research is presented by social marketing, applied in health promotion (as a field of public health).

The purpose of the research is to develop a model for adapting the most effective social marketing techniques in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova.

Research objectives: delimiting the conceptual approaches of social marketing; identifying the particularities in establishing the social marketing mix; examination of national projects and health promotion programs in the Republic of Moldova; identifying good international practices in applying the social marketing concept in the field of public health; examining the possibilities of using the support provided by international bodies for the development of social marketing in the field of public health in the Republic of Moldova; investigating the level of knowledge of social marketing of the students of *Nicolae Testemitanu* State University of Medicine and Pharmacy; researching the level of understanding, knowledge and practice of social marketing of public health specialists in the country; elaboration of the set of measures necessary for the application of social marketing techniques in public health in the Republic of Moldova (conceptual model, practical tools).

The scientific novelty and originality: lies in researching the field of social marketing in the context of public health, implemented in the Republic of Moldova, starting from the level of knowledge of the concept by potential implementers and conferring an academic status to the social marketing discipline applied in health promotion.

The important scientific problem solved in the research: *Problem:* Insufficient knowledge and application of social marketing techniques in health promotion. *Research question:* What are the most efficient social marketing techniques that could be applied in health promotion? Were identified and structured in a set of measures (including an application model) the most effective techniques of social marketing that can be applied in public health in the Republic of Moldova in order to implement social marketing in health promotion, by also contributing to broadening the horizon of knowledge and use of them by the representatives of the health sector.

The theoretical significance of the research: it is revealed through the examination of social marketing techniques, the conceptual delimitation from other notions, the completion of the mix and the proposal of a synthesising definition.

The applicative value of the paper: is represented by the development and testing the set of measures for the application of social marketing in health promotion, which includes: the *T Model* for applying social marketing in the Republic of Moldova, the practical guide, the study program and the sketch of an implementation team for a social marketing program.

The implementation of the scientific results: was carried out at the School of Public Health Management of *Nicolae Testemitanu* SUMPh, within the *Marketing healthcare services* discipline taught to master students and doctors who follow continuing education courses, by theoretical-applied capitalisation of the *T Model* of implementing social marketing in the Republic of Moldova, as well as the tools that form the set of measures for the application of social marketing in public health. The results were also implemented by the National Agency for Public Health. Another aspect is presented by the promotion of the scientific results through presentations at national and international scientific conferences, as well as by scientific publications in specialised journals.

ADNOTARE

Timotin Alina

Marketingul social și posibilități de aplicare în promovarea sănătății

Teză de doctor în științe economice,
Chișinău, 2020

Volumul și structura tezei. Teza include: introducere, trei capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie din 134 de titluri, 13 anexe, 142 de pagini text de bază (până la Bibliografie), 35 de figuri și 18 tabele. Rezultatele obținute sunt publicate în 9 lucrări științifice.

Cuvinte-cheie: marketing social, sănătate publică, promovarea sănătății, Republica Moldova, medicii, specialiști sănătate publică, dezvoltare curriculum, ghid de implementare, componența echipei, strategii.

Domeniu de studiu: Științe economice.

Obiectul cercetării: este prezentat de marketingul social, aplicat în promovarea sănătății (ca domeniu al sănătății publice).

Scopul cercetării: constă în elaborarea unui model de adaptare a celor mai eficiente tehnici de marketing social la domeniul sănătății publice din Republica Moldova.

Obiectivele cercetării: delimitarea abordărilor conceptuale ale marketingului social; identificarea particularităților în stabilirea mixului de marketing social; examinarea proiectelor și programelor naționale de promovare a sănătății în Republica Moldova; identificarea bunelor practici internaționale în aplicarea conceptului de marketing social în domeniul sănătății publice; examinarea posibilităților de utilizare a suportului acordat de organismele internaționale pentru dezvoltarea marketingului social în sănătatea publică din Republica Moldova; investigarea nivelului de cunoștințe în domeniul marketingului social a studenților din cadrul USMF *Nicolae Testemițanu*; cercetarea nivelului de înțelegere, cunoștințe și practica marketingului social de către specialiștii de sănătate publică din țară; elaborarea setului de măsuri necesare aplicării tehnicilor de marketing social în domeniul sănătății publice din Republica Moldova (model conceptual, instrumente practice).

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică: rezidă în cercetarea domeniului marketingului social prin prisma sănătății, implementat în Republica Moldova, pornind de la nivelul de cunoaștere a conceptului de către principalii potențiali implementatori și conferirea unui statut academic disciplinei de marketing social aplicat în promovarea sănătății.

Problema științifică importantă soluționată în cercetare: *Problema:* Cunoașterea și aplicarea insuficientă a tehnicilor de marketing social în promovarea sănătății. *Întrebarea de cercetare:* Care sunt cele mai eficiente tehnici de marketing social care ar putea fi aplicate în promovarea sănătății? Au fost identificate și structurate într-un set de măsuri (care cuprinde și un model aplicativ) cele mai eficiente tehnici de marketing social care pot fi aplicate în domeniul sănătății publice din Republica Moldova în vederea aplicării marketingului social în promovarea sănătății, care contribuie inclusiv la lărgirea orizontului de cunoaștere și utilizare a acestora de către reprezentanții sectorului de sănătate.

Semnificația teoretică a cercetării: este relevantă prin studiul tehnicilor de marketing social, delimitarea conceptuală de alte noțiuni, completarea mixului și propunerea unei definiții sintetizatoare.

Valoarea aplicativă a lucrării: este reprezentată de elaborarea și testarea setului de măsuri pentru aplicarea marketingului social în promovarea sănătății, care cuprinde: *Modelul T de implementare a marketingului social în Republica Moldova*, ghidul practic, programul de studii și schița echipei de implementare a unui program de marketing social.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice: s-a realizat în cadrul Școlii de Management în Sănătate Publică a USMF *Nicolae Testemițanu*, în cadrul disciplinei *Marketingul serviciilor de sănătate* predat masteranzilor și medicilor în cadrul cursurilor de instruire continuă, prin valorificarea teoretico-aplicativă a *Modelului T de implementare a marketingului social în Republica Moldova*, precum și a instrumentelor care formează setul de măsuri pentru aplicarea marketingului social în sănătate publică. Rezultatele au fost implementate și de Agenția Națională pentru Sănătate Publică. Un alt aspect este reprezentat de promovarea rezultatelor investigațiilor prin intermediul comunicărilor la conferințe științifice naționale și internaționale, precum și a publicațiilor științifice în reviste de specialitate.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Тимотин Алина

Социальный маркетинг и возможности применения в укреплении здоровья

Кандидатская диссертация по экономике,

Кишинэу, 2020

Объем и структура диссертации. Диссертация включает: введение, три главы, общие выводы и рекомендации, библиографию из 134 наименований, 13 приложений, 142 страницы основного текста (до библиографии), 35 рисунков и 18 таблиц. Полученные результаты опубликованы в 9 научных статьях.

Ключевые слова: социальный маркетинг, общественное здоровье, укрепление здоровья, Республика Молдова, студенты-медики, специалисты здравоохранения, развитие, учебная программа, руководство по внедрению, состав группы/команды, стратегии.

Область изучения: Экономика.

Объект исследования: соц. маркетинг, применяемый в сфере укрепления здоровья (как область общественного здравоохранения).

Цель исследования: разработка модели для адаптации наиболее эффективных методов социального маркетинга в области здравоохранения Республики Молдова (РМ).

Задачи исследования: определение концептуальных подходов социального маркетинга; выявление особенностей создания комплекса соц. маркетинга; экспертиза национальных проектов и программ по укреплению здоровья в РМ; выявление лучших международных практик применения концепции соц. маркетинга в сфере здравоохранения; изучение возможностей использования поддержки, оказываемой международными организациями для развития соц. маркетинга в области общественного здоровья в РМ; исследование уровня подготовки (знаний) в области соц. маркетинга студентов Государственного медицинского и фармацевтического университета им. Н. Тестемицану; исследование уровня понимания, знаний и практики социального маркетинга специалистов здравоохранения в стране; разработка комплекса мер, необходимых для развития методов соц. маркетинга в области здравоохранения в РМ (концептуальная модель, практические инструменты).

Новизна и научная оригинальность: исследование области социального маркетинга в контексте здравоохранения, применяемом в РМ, начиная с уровня знания концепции основных потенциальных разработчиков и присвоения академического статуса дисциплине социального маркетинга, применяемой в укреплении здоровья.

Важная научная проблема, решенная в процессе исследования: *Проблема:* Недостаточное знание и применение методов социального маркетинга в укреплении здоровья. *Вопрос исследования:* Каковы наиболее эффективные методы социального маркетинга, для возможного применения в укреплении здоровья? Наиболее эффективные методы социального маркетинга, которые могут быть применены в области здравоохранения РМ, были определены и структурированы в виде комплекса мер (который включает модель применения). Это также способствует расширению горизонта знаний и лучшему применению методов соц. маркетинга представителями сектора общественного здравоохранения.

Теоретическая значимость исследования: изучение методов соц. маркетинга, концептуальное разграничение от других понятий, усовершенствование данного комплекса и разработка обобщающего определения.

Практическая значимость диссертации: заключается в разработке и апробации комплекса мер по применению соц. маркетинга в сфере общественного здоровья, который включает: *Модель Т* для внедрения соц. маркетинга в РМ, практическое руководство, учебную программу и список специалистов для включения в команду, реализующая программу социального маркетинга.

Внедрение научных результатов: проводилось в рамках Школы менеджмента здравоохранения ГМФУ им. Н. Тестемицану, в рамках курса «Маркетинг медицинских услуг», который преподавали магистрантам и докторам на курсах повышения квалификации, путем научно-прикладной капитализации *Модели Т* внедрения соц. маркетинга в РМ, а также через инструменты, составляющие комплекс мер по развитию социального маркетинга в здравоохранении. Результаты также были внедрены Национальным агентством общественного здравоохранения. Другой путь продвижения результатов исследований - это выступление с докладами на национальных и международных научных конференциях, а также научные статьи в специализированных журналах.

TIMOTIN ALINA

**SOCIAL MARKETING AND APPLICATION POSSIBILITIES IN
HEALTH PROMOTION**

521.04 MARKETING AND LOGISTICS

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