



THE 8<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION  
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

## Social Enterprise Compliance with Social Marketing Peculiarity

Cristina Sandu<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** A challenging approach for social enterprise is considered the marketing approach. The profile of social enterprise raises the question *whether or not this type of organization can comply with social marketing peculiarity*. The reason for making this question is that a proper definition of marketing for social enterprises is needed for both managerial and marketing functions of the (social) organizations. Thus, starting from a previous research of defining social enterprise, the aim of the paper is to adopt a theoretical position for connecting social enterprise to the social marketing peculiarity. The research is based on literature analysis and comparing the social marketing definitions, fitting to social enterprise's profile.

**Keywords:** social enterprise; social marketing; compliance

### 1. Mapping the Specific Definitions of Social Marketing

Social enterprise is defined in literature in various manners, through different approaches, through different characteristics, by the diversity of target groups, etc.

The multiple definitions found in literature determined a research with the aim of “mediating” a common-definition of social enterprise, namely *social enterprise represents a type of business or private activity with social purpose based on producing and providing public goods and services and on the reinvestments of surpluses in this activity; it is characterized by a high level of social responsibility and a certain participation level of stakeholders*, considered by the author as a result-definition validated through the reference definition at European level of EMES European Research Network (Sandu, 2012, p. 213).

The current research interest is focused on adopting a specific marketing approach for social enterprise (Matei, Sandu, 2013), particularly the compliance of social enterprise to social marketing peculiarity.

The relevance of social marketing for social enterprise derives from the characteristics of this type of organization, which combines economic activity with satisfying social needs.

In the last three years, the attention of the public sector agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector is increasingly drawn to the potential of social marketing (Serrat, 2010, p. 1).

Social enterprise can represent an innovation for the social marketing, through the social innovation definition given by Phills, Deiglmeier, and Miller in 2008 - *A novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient and sustainable than existing solutions and for which the value created*

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD Student, National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Faculty of Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania. Address: 6 Povernei St., sector 1, 010643 Bucharest, Romania. Tel: +402 131 808 94, fax: +402 131 465 07. Corresponding author: cristinasandu@snsapa.ro.

Beneficiary of the „Doctoral Scholarships for a Sustainable Society” project, project co-financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund, Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources and Development 2007-2013.

accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals (Phills, Deiglmeier, Miller, 2008, p. 36 in Holweg, Lienbacher, 2011, p. 308).

Following the literature, the question is *which definition of social marketing is appropriate to social enterprise?* Thus, a brief selection of social marketing definition relevant for the social enterprise profile is represented in the Table 1.

**Table 1. Relevant Definitions of Social Marketing**

	Source	Definition
1.	Ph. Kotler, G. Zaltman, (Kotler, Zaltman, 1971, p. 5)	Social marketing is the design, implementation and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research
2.	W. Lazer, E. Kelley, (Lazer, Kelley, 1973 in Doherty, Foster, Mason, Meehan, Meehan, Rotheroe, Royce, 2009, p. 141 )	Social marketing is concerned with the application of marketing knowledge, concepts and techniques to enhance social as well as economic ends. It is also concerned with analysis of the social consequence of marketing policies, decisions and activities.
3.	A. Andreasen (Andreasen, 1994, p. 110)	Social marketing is the adaptation of commercial marketing technologies to programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior to target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part.
4.	J. French, C. Blair - Stevens, (French, Blair-Stevens, 2005, p. 33)	Social marketing is the systematic application of marketing concepts and techniques to achieve specific behavioral goals relevant to a social good

*Source: Author by Adaptation of Literature*

## 2. Adopting a Social Marketing Definition

Kotler and Levy in 1969 were anticipating the „broadening concept of marketing” beyond the selling of „traditional” goods (such as toothpaste, soap and steel) to transferring marketing principles to marketing organizations, persons and ideas (Kotler, Levy, 1969, p. 10).

Starting from these premises, in 1971 Kotler and Zaltman describe the social marketing as an approach of „planning and implementing social change”. The definition of social marketing they provide is a result of the authors’ debate on the possibilities of applying marketing concepts and techniques in promoting social objectives as brotherhood, safe driving and family planning (Kotler, Zaltman, 1971, p. 3).

Key elements of Definition 1 are acceptance of social ideas, planning the product, pricing, communication, distribution, marketing research.

This definition has produced some controversial reactions (Rangun, Karim, 1991; Hirschman, 1992 in Andreasen, 1994, p. 109) by the facts that 1) the term of social marketing tend to lead individuals to confuse social marketing with societal marketing, 2) social marketing can create confusion whether its practice was limited to public and nonprofit marketers, 3) this definition limits its objective to influence „the acceptability” of social ideas.

These controversial reactions led to an advanced definition of Kotler and Roberto (1989), by equating social marketing with a social change campaign, which they define as „an organized effort conducted by one group (the change agent), which intends to persuade others (the target adopters) to accept, modify or abandon certain ideas, attitudes, practices and behaviors” (Kotler, Roberto, 1989, p. 6 in Andreasen, 1994, p. 110).

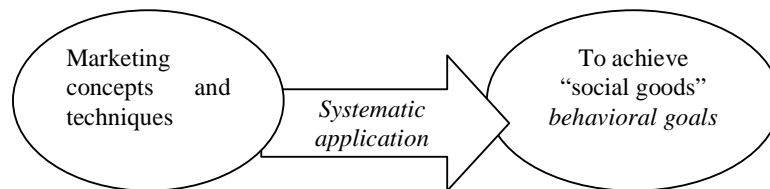
Even so, Andreasen considered of providing his own definition, Definition 3.

The reasons that determined Andreasen to propose this definition are highlighted on the facts that a social marketing definition is necessary to 1) keep practicing social marketers focused on the outcomes they are best suited to influence, 2) keep the discipline of social marketing distinguishable from its academic “competitors,” and 3) keep social marketing programs out of areas in which their likelihood of failure is high (Andreasen, 1994, p. 110).

Key elements for Definition 3 are commercial marketing technologies, programs, target audiences, adaptation, influencing, improving.

Ph. Kotler and N. Lee (Kotler, Lee, 2007, pp.7-8), besides the proposed definition – “Social marketing is a process that applies marketing principles and techniques to create, communicate, and deliver value in order to influence target audience behaviors that benefit society (public health, safety, the environment, and communities) as well as the target audience”, refer to Jeff French and Clive Blair-Stevens definition 2005, Definition 4.

This is argued by the fact that the definition includes elements of *influencing behaviors* relevant for *social goods* and describes social marketing as a *systematic planning process*.



**Figure 1. Defining Social Marketing (French, Blair-Stevens, 2005, p. 34)**

The authors of “*Management for Social Enterprise*”- 2009 (Doherty, Foster, Mason, Meehan, Meehan, Rotheroe, Royce, 2009, p. 141) consider the definition 2 of social marketing as being representative for social enterprises, due the fact it enhance social as well as economic goals.

By analyzing the literature from McCharty – 4Ps Model (1960), Kotler, Zaltman (1971), Booms, Bitner –7Ps Model (1981), Andreasen (1994, 2002), French, Blair-Stevens (2006), the publication’ s authors observe that the majority of “modern” definitions adopted the vision of enhancing social and economic objectives, by using traditional methods/knowledge of marketing. Thus, they argue that social marketing is more than a communication campaign or advertising and consider important elements price determination and distribution (Doherty, Foster, Mason, Meehan, Meehan, Rotheroe, Royce, 2009, p. 141).

Taking into consideration the analyzed definitions, this paper takes the position of adopting Definition 2 “**Social marketing is concerned with the application of marketing knowledge, concepts and techniques to enhance social as well as economic ends. It is also concerned with analysis of the social consequence of marketing policies, decisions and activities**” Lazer, Kelley (1973).

This position is in the line with the result-definition of social enterprise, as the following statements:

1. *social marketing is concerned with the application of marketing knowledge, concepts and techniques in the line with the business type or private activity of producing and providing goods and services of social enterprise*
2. *enhancing social as well as economic ends in the line with reinvesting surpluses in reaching social aims*
3. *analysis social consequences of marketing policies, decisions and activities in the line with a high level of social responsibility and a certain participation level of stakeholders.*

### 3. Conclusions

The paper achieved its aim, the one of answering the question *whether or not this type of organization can comply with social marketing peculiarity*. It was confirmed that **social enterprise can comply with social marketing peculiarity**. The limitations of the statements are related to the “subjective” position of the author regarding the result-definition of social enterprise. This demonstrates that a marketing approach for social enterprise **is** a challenging topic and this paper is the begging of future research in the domain of marketing for social enterprises.

### 4. References

- Andreasen, A. (1994). Social Marketing: Its Definition and Domain. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, Vol. 13(1), pp. 108-114.
- Doherty, B., Foster, G., Mason, Ch., Meehan, J., Meehan, K., Rotheroe, N. & Royce, M. (2009). *Management for Social Enterprise*. UK: SAGE Publications Ltd. chapter 6.
- French, J. & Blair-Stevens, C. (2005). *Social Marketing Pocket Guide, First Edition*. UK: National Social Marketing Centre for Excellence.
- Holweg, Ch. & Lienbacher, E. (2011). Social Marketing Innovation: New Thinking in Retailing. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 23:4, pp. 307-326.
- Kotler, Ph. & Lee, N. (2007). *Social Marketing. Influencing Behaviors and Goods, chapter 1*. SUA: SAGE Publications.
- Kotler, Ph. & Levy, S. (1969). Broadening Concept of Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 33, pp. 10-15.
- Kotler, Ph. & Zaltman, G. (1971). Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 35, pp. 3-12.
- Matei, L. & Sandu, C. (2013). *Social Enterprise towards a Marketing Approach*. The 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Public and Nonprofit Marketing. Spain.
- Sandu, C. (2012). Social Enterprise Models for Sustainable Development in Central and Eastern Europe. *Collection of papers from the 6<sup>th</sup> Forum of PhD Students International Seminar European Parliament*. Brussels, pp. 209-231.
- Serrat, O. (2010). The Future of Social Marketing. *Knowledge Solutions*, Vol. 73.