

The role of *promotoras* in community-based social marketing: anti-littering interventions

Role of
promotoras

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to explore the role of community health workers (*promotoras*) as a vehicle to identify and involve stakeholders in cleaning the environment in two community-based social marketing (CBSM) interventions.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper evaluates two CBSM interventions that used a *promotora* model to address city cleaning efforts; one in Puebla, Mexico and the other in San Luis, Arizona, USA. The qualitative methods included as follows: 25 in-depth and short interviews with managers, residents and *promotoras* and observational data on the sites with the cleanliness issues which were the focus of the interventions. Open-ended qualitative responses were analyzed for recurring themes.

Findings – This research advances in the area of CBSM by presenting the figure of the “promotora” as a key element that helped to involve diverse groups of stakeholders as active members in two CBSM interventions, and who also facilitated socialization, penetration and co-responsibility in the community in two cleaning interventions. *Promotoras* have the knowledge of community conditions and the skills necessary to engage community stakeholders in the objectives of a program with community level benefits.

Originality/value – This comparative analysis identifies that CBSM interventions that include *promotoras* can engage a diverse group of stakeholders achieving participation and co-responsibility in cleaning their environment.

Keywords Public health, Community-based social marketing, Stakeholder theory, Anti-littering, *Promotoras*

Paper type Research paper

Anti-littering: a challenge to achieve

In any city, overall cleanliness and garbage removal present a public health challenge. Improving the behavior of residents to create and maintain a clean environment is a priority for the physical and emotional well-being of residents. Garbage not only reduces the appeal



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and urban image of public places such as streets, parks and avenues but also it can endanger the environment and contribute to flooding by blocking drainage systems (Huffman *et al.*, 1995; Chitotombe, 2014; Almosa *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, a neglected neighborhood attracts crime (Lorenc *et al.*, 2014) and discourages family activities due to the quality of the environment including visiting and walking in public parks. Littering also has a negative impact in sectors such as tourism with financial implications for urban settings (Sunlu, 2003). On the other hand, clean urban environments can influence public health and well-being (Semenza, 2003) contributing to the better mental health of individuals.

A variety of approaches have been used to reduce litter including increased infrastructure for garbage collection and dumping (Hoppe *et al.*, 2013), technology, educational and communication programs with persuasive messages (De Kort *et al.*, 2008) and community development (Sibley and Liu, 2004). Anti-littering interventions require multifaceted approaches to achieve behavior change which can include a variety of disciplines (Parkinson *et al.*, 2016).

Social marketing has a stake in the ethical standards and social welfare of a community and the society as a whole, as by definition social marketing is “the application of commercial marketing technologies to [...] influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part” (Andreasen, 1994, p. 110 as cited in Saunders *et al.*, 2015, p. 162). The techniques and principles of social marketing are used to benefit society at large and in various ways to achieve social change. Some of the major arenas that these efforts have focused on are public health, environmental care and community mobility (Kotler and Lee, 2008 as cited in Cheng *et al.*, 2011).

A social marketing program has the potential to improve public and environmental health by promoting neighborhood sanitation and cleanliness. However, there is an absence of social marketing interventions in the literature focused on litter (Almosa *et al.*, 2017). Given the role of individual behavior in maintaining a clean urban environment (Ong and Sovacool, 2012; Spacek, 2004), it is important to intervene in the management of garbage from a social perspective (Ma and Hipel, 2016). To adapt and innovate theories on effective social change strategies in particular, more information is needed on the impact of community-based approaches that integrate both community members (Farmer *et al.*, 2002) and stakeholders (McHugh *et al.*, 2018) as active participants in the work process.

In this article, two community interventions are described that use *promotoras* to encourage the involvement of members of their community in cleaning their environment.

Community-based social marketing

Community-based social marketing (CBSM) was designed in the 90s as a specific tool for fomenting environmentally sustainable and responsible behavior. CBSM highlights specific strategies that emphasize a personal-community level connection to encourage the adoption of a new behavior while discouraging competing negative behaviors (Lynes *et al.*, 2014).

CBSM seeks to increase the visibility of a desired behavior in the community by exposing its members to the behavior or through campaign messages encouraging the expected social norm. The principle of CBSM is a process of behavior change based on empowering community members with a leading role in social change. The main advantage of this method is that community members become partners in defining the local situation or circumstances and identifying the needs and priorities of the process (Schuster *et al.*, 2016). These interventions can facilitate community development by ensuring that community members have a central role, as well as providing a process that expands their capacity and resources (Farmer *et al.*, 2002).

To carry out a CBSM intervention, the merging of psychology and social marketing principles is crucial to develop and deliver an environmentally successful program designed

to promote behavior change (Lynes *et al.*, 2014; McKenzie-Mohr, 2000). This model embraces a five-step approach for the intervention (Table 1).

Stakeholders theory

Freeman (1984) stated that “[a]ny group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of a corporation’s purpose” (p. iv) is a stakeholder. The stakeholder’s theory shifts design, planning and implementation efforts beyond the active participants to other actors who influence complex problems such as maintaining clean community environments. According to Buyacek *et al.* (2016), there is a positive relation between the success of the program and the number and type of stakeholders that are involved in the planning and decision-making processes. There is evidence that the inclusion of stakeholders in interventions not only improves the co-design and creation of value in the initial stages of goal setting (Carins *et al.*, 2016) and planning (Domegan *et al.*, 2013) but also their involvement is important in the stages of implementation and evaluation (Buyacek *et al.*, 2016) of the changes in behavior and their sustainability over time (Lefebvre, 2012). However, input from multiple stakeholders can be difficult to manage and maintain due to different goals and expectations (Lasker and Weiss, 2003 cited in Hodgkins *et al.*, 2019). The literature to date acknowledges the presence and interrelationship of multiple stakeholders but is limited in its approach on how to identify and encourage stakeholder engagement (McHugh *et al.*, 2018; Bryson, 2004) in CBSM interventions.

Likewise, information on stakeholder involvement in social marketing interventions is limited to reports on the number and strength of partnerships (Gregson *et al.*, 2001), as there is a gap in applying CBSM and Stakeholder theories in social marketing interventions. In this article, interventions are described that seek to identify, add and coordinate a network of connected intermediate and upperlevel stakeholders. In this case, representatives of organizations and neighborhoods, store owners, teachers, parents, community leaders and volunteers are included to achieve (May and Previte, 2016) clean environments.

CBSM steps	Criteria
1. Selecting the behavior to promote and target audience	Identifies target audience and selected behaviors
2. Identifying barriers and benefits	Assesses barriers and benefits of the targeted behavior Identifies internal/external barriers and benefits of the target audience
3. Designing a program (strategies)	Creates strategies that are appropriate for the barriers of the behavior(s) being promoted Integrates components Engages well-known and well-respected community people to be part of the campaign Encourages the use of norms and reinforces the objectives through personal contact, integrates effective communication tools Establishes appropriate incentives/disincentives and initiates convenience strategies to address external and internal barriers
4. Piloting the strategies	Focuses only on the strategies that can be implemented on a broad scale and evaluates strategy effectiveness rather than using reports
5. Evaluating it in a broad-scale implementation	Measures activity before and after implementation and uses evaluation data to retool strategy and/or provide feedback

Source: Compiled based on Lynes *et al.* (2014), McKenzie-Mohr (2000)

Table 1.
CBSM benchmark
criteria

Promotoras engaging stakeholders

As facilitators of social change programs, community health workers (CHWs) or *promotoras de salud*, have a long history of working both in Mexico and the US-Mexican border region to address public health issues on a community level (Balcazar *et al.*, 2016; Rosenthal *et al.*, 2011). In the US *promotoras*, are defined as front-line public health workers who both represent and engage community members to improve the health in their community (American Public Health Association, 2009). *Promotoras* are members of the communities they serve and understand the culture, language, values, socioeconomics and traditional practices that affect life experiences in their geographic areas.

The first US national study of CHWs helped to establish core competencies that provide a basis for the effectiveness of CHWs to reduce health disparities (Rosenthal *et al.*, 2011). CHWs play an important role in health promotion, particularly in marginalized communities that may not have access to health information and services (Ingram *et al.*, 2012). In the context of a city level anti-littering intervention, *promotoras* have the knowledge of community conditions and the skills necessary to engage community stakeholders in program objectives with a community level benefit. As such, *promotoras* have engaged stakeholders and the community to adopt anti-littering practices in their daily lives (Barry, 2008). *Promotoras* were key drivers in both community-based anti-littering interventions described in this paper.

There is significant evidence that *promotoras* are effective in helping the community improve health behaviors (Ingram *et al.*, 2014), however, little is known about the encouragement of *promotoras* in the socialization and engagement of the stakeholders to clean up their community. Furthermore, the use of social marketing principles and approaches has not yet been examined as an approach to engage *promotoras* in interventions to improve neighborhood environments. Specifically, strategies on how engaging *promotoras* can involve stakeholders and communities in interlocking co-creation participation for a clean environment. In this article, how the participation of *promotoras* is relevant to identify barriers and find motivators for the engagement and involvement of stakeholders in two CBSM anti-littering interventions in Puebla, Mexico and Arizona USA is studied. In addition, the role of *promotoras* in adopting co-responsible communities in the context of anti-littering is investigated. In other words, what is the role of *promotoras* in the identification and involvement of stakeholders in city cleaning interventions? This is an area that has previously been little explored.

Setting

The two CBSM interventions used *promotoras* to engage communities in a participatory effort: the city of Puebla, Mexico: *Puebla Limpia* and Southern Yuma County, AZ, USA: *Don't Trash the Border Campaign*. We use these two interventions to analyze efforts related to achieving clean environments. Through this analysis, we seek to identify key drivers for engaging community members in sustainable efforts being co-responsible for clean environments (Schuster *et al.*, 2016).

While the Puebla intervention is decidedly urban (with an estimated overall population of 6,183,320 according INEGI, 2015), the South Yuma intervention is more suburban (the combined population estimated at 132,856 according United States Census Bureau, 2010). Similarities in these cases include the basic structure of CBSM and the use of *promotoras*. Both cases address a local culture permissive of littering in conjunction with variations in approach to community participation.

The first intervention took place in the urban environment of Puebla, Mexico, with a program carried out by the Puebla city government. The municipality of Puebla, Mexico offered a relatively effective mechanized garbage collection service for its population of approximately 2 million. Nevertheless, another 360 manual garbage collectors were hired to

respond to the city's litter problem. In this city, pedestrians were discarding garbage on the streets and causing a crisis in the tourism sector; tourists were leaving Puebla with the perception that it was a dirty city. The number of tourists was dropping. In response, the city created *Puebla Limpia*, the first CBSM program directed at this social problem initiated by city officials [Organismo Operador del Servicio de Limpia (OOSL), 2018]. A key component of the intervention was to organize the participation of the community residents as a social development strategy to make a clean environment more relevant to city inhabitants, and thus more sustainable (Bryant *et al.*, 2007).

In Puebla Limpia, a network of 50 *promotoras* made contact through visits or house-to-house co-responsibility workshops (called "Talleres de Corresponsabilidad") reaching 10,000 homes encouraging residents about the desirability of a clean city and its benefits. *Promotoras* were female residents who were contacted by representatives of each area. The city recruited proactive women, some of them with experience in sales, who wanted to serve their community in a clean-up project as a temporary job with flexible hours. The municipality hired the *promotoras* for a temporary position, trained them in the importance of a clean environment, verbal and non-verbal communication, negotiation and how to promote the program's co-responsibility, and then gave them teaching materials to disperse. The *promotoras* held 1 h co-responsibility workshops in the houses of hostesses or community informal leaders called "anfitrionas" who recruited the attendance of friends, neighbors and relatives (approximately 8 to 12 people). At the meeting, the *promotora* facilitated interactive games and activities that were designed (Puebla Limpia lottery game, snakes and ladders and pin the litter on the dump among others) to build awareness about the problem of a dirty city and encourage the group to generate practical solutions. For each game or activity there were prizes which incentivized the participants. At the end of a 1-h workshop, the *promotoras* gave a gift to the *anfitriona* for her hospitality and the attendees were encouraged to organize a future co-responsibility workshop. This created a multilevel network of penetration across the dirty communities of the city and motivated them to clean common areas around their houses. The marathon organizers, who were city anti-littering staff, noted that after participating in the *promotora* meetings, attendees were more motivated to participate in organizing a cleaning marathon in their area. As a follow-up to the meetings, the *promotoras* organized community-wide cleaning events called "Cleaning Marathons" with the stakeholder *anfitrionas*. These marathons served as a motivating activity and social norm for the community to follow.

The second intervention "Don't Trash the Border" is distinct in having been initiated by a non-governmental organization (NGO) in a semi-urban community located on the US-Mexican border. Border communities face significant problems with the pollution because residents accumulate trash and junk in the backyards of their homes and tend to dispose of their trash illegally on vacant land parcels, resulting in areas strewn with trash. The objective of the program was to clean the dirtiest residential areas in the county, seeking to serve as an example to encourage residents to clean around their homes and remove their accumulated garbage through legal means. A collaborative approach to cleaning public spaces was meant to serve as a unifying and pride inducing effort. The *promotoras* working for the NGO were both male and female and helped to initiate a variety of community-based health promotion programs such as vaccination campaigns and community walking groups.

Promotoras also played a key role in Don't Trash the Border. As the full-time staff of a local NGO, the *promotoras* engaged in pedagogical action involving dialogue, reflection, communication and the creation of a critical consciousness designed to lead representatives and community leaders to take action and accept the responsibility needed for change (Wiggins *et al.*, 2009). The *promotoras* knocked on doors house-to-house to create awareness

in the community about the negative impact of accumulating garbage on public health and invited them to participate in Don't Trash the Border clean-up events in their area. They left brochures at each house with information about the problem and an invitation to join a cleaning event in their community. *Promotoras* also conducted classes on recycling in the public-school setting, encouraging youth to take the message home to their parents. During the program period, six major clean-up events on each side of the border were carried out with the help of 474 community volunteers (stakeholders) and 20 *promotoras*.

In both projects, *promotoras* organized meetings, classes, community activities and events to inform and persuade residents to join in volunteer cleanup activities. Table 2 provides a comparison of the CBSM steps, in each community (Table 2).

Method

An exploratory-descriptive type research was conducted, with a qualitative method. The qualitative study sought to document the *promotoras* roles in two distinct environments. Secondary data for the study of the two programs were compiled from a combination of results from reports, photographs and videos. Primary data collection techniques included observations, in-depth interviews and short interviews.

Sampling

Theoretical sampling is used in qualitative research. It is a flexible type of sampling because it adds samples as the data collection progresses and concludes under the principle of saturation. Saturation in qualitative research is commonly taken to indicate that any additional information obtained would not provide further insight (Creswell, 2007). The authors conducted 25 interviews, 16 of which were in-depth interviews with managers, operative personnel and *promotoras* in both interventions with an average duration of 60–90 min and guided by a semi-structured protocol. These interviewees provided unique and valuable insights on the implementation of the program. In addition to receiving overall details of the programs, their barriers, and motivators, it was decided to conduct further interviews to learn about the perceptions of the willingness of people to participate in cleaning. Consequently, participants were invited to discuss their impressions, personal experiences and engagement, as well as the role of the *promotoras* and program outcomes. Nine short interviews were also conducted with residents of target areas contacted through meetings or visits to identify sustained knowledge and interest in the topic. Interviewees were asked if they had heard about the program, and if so, by what means. They were also asked what they thought the program was about, how it was developed, and how well the integration of stakeholders into the program was carried out. Due to time constraints for residents to schedule the interviews, they lasted approximately 30–40 min. The interviewers were part of both programs and the data collection took place at the Arizona border and in the city of Puebla. Interviews took place in varied settings to suit participants (offices, meeting rooms or in the community) and were conducted with a diverse sampling. Table 3 contains details of the characteristics of the participants.

The observations of the intervention locations were made at the same time as the interviews were carried out. The observed sites were places with the largest littering problems that were cleaned during the intervention. Observations were designed to understand the environment of both interventions and note the areas cleaned by the interventions over the course of three years.

Measures

To explore participants' perceptions fully, three in-depth question guides with varied questioning approaches beginning with general introductory questions followed by probing

CBSM steps	Puebla Limpia	Don't Trash the Border
1. Selecting behaviors and target audience	<p>Behaviors selected were: to create an awareness in the population to have a clean city, take out the trash in closed bags only on the day of garbage collection and clean public spaces around the home</p> <p>Target audience: Urban environment of Puebla, Mexico (communities with the largest trash problems)</p> <p>Barriers</p> <p>Lack of garbage cans on the street</p> <p>Physical effort of looking for a trash receptacle</p> <p>Lack of perception of living in a dirty environment</p> <p>Lack of motivation</p> <p>Lack of time</p> <p>Imitation of negative behavior</p> <p>Resistance to change</p> <p>Frustration that others dirty public spaces</p> <p>Benefits/motivators</p> <p>Live in a clean environment</p> <p>Making pleasant spaces and having a better income as a result of tourism</p> <p>Live in a healthy and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Message</p> <p>"I Love Puebla Limpia" focused on conscientiousness and pride in having a clean city and appealed to people's participation using children as spokespersons</p> <p>The second intervention announced fines and penalties</p> <p>Incentives and disincentives</p> <p>Participation incentives were established at the cleaning marathons: financial prizes were provided to community members to invest in their communities</p> <p>As individual disincentives there were fines and</p>	<p>Behaviors selected were: to properly remove their accumulated backyard garbage, participate in cleaning the common areas and not throw garbage in empty lots</p> <p>Target audience: Semi-urban community located on the US-Mexico border-Yuma County, Arizona, USA and Sonora, Mexico (high visibility communities prone to illegal dumping)</p> <p>Barriers</p> <p>Lack of coverage by the garbage collection service</p> <p>Imitation of negative behavior</p> <p>Physical effort of transporting trash to legal receptacles</p> <p>Accumulating junk due to considered personal value</p> <p>Cost of disposing of trash legally</p> <p>Lack of time</p> <p>Benefits/motivators</p> <p>Live in a clean and pleasant environment</p> <p>Making pleasant spaces in the environment and meeting places for the community</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Community pride</p> <p>Message</p> <p>The message from the start was strict and aggressive "FIGHT CLEAN, Clean borders start with you" and focused to call people to participate</p> <p>Incentives and disincentives</p> <p>Considering the difficulty of adopting new behaviors, public recognition was given to motivate people to get out to clean the community</p> <p>Media</p> <p>The campaign was promoted in mass media and direct media</p> <p>Messages were distributed through <i>promotoras</i> door-to-door and at house and community meetings</p>
2. Identifying barriers-benefits		
3. Designing a strategy		

(continued)

Table 2.
CBSM interventions

Role of
promotoras

Table 2.

CBSM steps	Puebla Limpia	Don't Trash the Border
penalties		
Media	<p>The promotion was developed through both mass media and direct media: displays about the Social Impact for co-responsibility Yo quiero Puebla Limpia was signed and co-responsibility workshops were held by <i>promotoras</i></p>	<p><i>Promotoras</i></p> <p>A <i>promotoras</i> network was created, to knock on doors house-to-house creating awareness about the problem and explained the Don't Trash the Border program, the negative impact of accumulating garbage on public health and inviting them to participate in clean-up events in their area</p>
<i>Promotoras</i>	<p>A multilevel network of <i>promotoras</i> was created to make contact through visits or house-to-house co-responsibility workshops with didactic activities and incentivizing prizes</p> <p>Launched from these meetings, the <i>promotoras</i> organized community-wide cleaning events called "Maratones de Limpieza"</p> <p>Partners (Stakeholders)</p> <p>Alliances were established with mass media, businesses, schools, civic organizations and religious organizations. For the second intervention community leaders were added</p> <p>New rules</p> <p>An operational committee representing all sectors of city government established new city sanitation rules, fines and penalties</p> <p>No pilot was conducted</p> <p>Used evaluation data to retrofit strategy for the second intervention</p>	<p>They also conducted classes on recycling in the public school setting, encouraging the youth to take the message home to their parents</p> <p>Partners (Stakeholders)</p> <p>The Regional Center developed a partnership with the City Council and societal entities, but no mass media</p> <p>New rules</p> <p>The intervention relied upon the enforcement of existing laws regarding dumping</p>
4. Piloting the strategy		
5. Evaluating it in a broad-scale implementation		<p>No measurement was conducted</p>

Role of
promotoras

Intervention	Interviewed	Role
Puebla Limpia	10 In-depth interviews: key experts	Six Managers and three <i>Promotoras</i> : Mayor of Puebla General coordinator of marathons Operations director, garbage collection service General coordinator for co-responsibility workshops Marathon coordinator for northern communities Marathon coordinator for southern communities Marathon coordinator for public areas <i>Promotora 1</i> <i>Promotora 2</i> <i>Promotora 3</i>
	6 Short interviews: residents	Resident (Male, 50 years) Resident (Male, 45 years) Resident (Female, 53 years) Resident (Female, 35 years) Resident (Female, 33 years) Resident (Female, 28 years)
Don't Trash the Border	6 In-depth interviews: Key experts	Three Managers and three <i>Promotoras</i> : President and CEO Program Coordinator Executive Assistant <i>Promotora 1</i> <i>Promotora 2</i> <i>Promotora 3</i>
	3 Short interviews: residents	Resident (Female, 50 years) Resident (Female, 31 years) Resident (Male, 45 years)

Table 3.
Characteristics of the participants

and indirect questions that clarified participants' responses were used. One of the guides was used for the in-depth interviews with managers and operative personnel, another for the *promotoras* and the third for residents. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. With respect to observations, an open notebook method was used to register the impressions obtained from the two intervention contexts.

Data analysis

Information from the observations and secondary data (reports, photographs and videos) were synthesized into a general summary written as a narrative to explain the type of intervention (Bush and Ortinau, 2003) and identify the commonalities and differences across the two environments. Both are reported in the setting section. The results of in-depth interviews and short interviews were recorded, transcribed and classified for prominent themes aligned to the research questions to ensure the study goals had been addressed. Atlas.ti was used for this data analysis, selecting segments of texts grouping them into prominent themes (thematic codes).

To verify the validity and reliability, data triangulation was performed and the text of the participants' verbalizations were verified, which were presented to provide greater credibility and focus to the interpretations (Hoek and Robertson, 2015). As the study progressed, a constant validity check was made in the results coming from the primary data collection techniques used, identifying the most consistent themes (Bernard and Ryan, 2010).

Results

Stakeholder identifiers

Promotoras began their work in the community by identifying leaders or *anfitriónas* who could join the program and who, in turn, wanted to support their community. This approach facilitated the penetration of the community by encouraging its members to convince each other of the importance of living in a clean environment.

“First, we went to convince the positive leaders that we knew could join our program, because they help us to positively influence the rest of the people” (Promotora, Don’t Trash the Border).

“If we identify an ally, it is important to provide all the information and make that person a volunteer to help us enter their street or their community [...] where optimistic leadership exists the exercise of cleaning spontaneously is fostered” (Promotora, Puebla Limpia).

“It is very important to talk with the mother of the family, and convince her to do it, or to have a meeting of Puebla Limpia at home so [...] she can help us convince her children and husband and her social network” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

Once convinced by the *promotoras*, the community leaders were very supportive influencing and promoting the program as members of a community with a genuine interest in achieving participation in favor of the common well-being.

“The cleaning project works best where there is good leadership” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

“Many areas where there is constructive leadership, cleaning continues [...] Collectively, communities began to aspire to cleanliness and defined the responsibilities needed to achieve it” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

In the case of Puebla Limpia, the communities participated in meetings (co-responsibility workshops) and subsequently the stakeholder community leaders organized Cleaning Marathons facilitated by the *promotoras*’ direct contact connecting other stakeholders, *anfitriónas* and the community.

“The awareness raised in small groups really makes people pay attention to the Puebla Limpia program” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

“Puebla Limpia marathons were organized by contacting people face-to-face in different places of the city” (Promotora, Puebla Limpia).

Proactive listeners

Promotoras identified that increasing awareness of the social problem was crucial for the initial stage as community contact with a problem must occur to understand how engagement is necessary to subsequently achieve its implementation. To influence others about the benefits of a clean environment and convince their community to participate in achieving a common goal, the *promotoras* needed to be good listeners.

“To raise awareness, first we must listen [...] and after talk about issues that can affected the lives of people because these can be reasons for being part of it” (Promotora, Don’t Trash the Border).

“The promoters were trained through courses prior to the intervention to have convincing information and be convincing in her work” (Manager, Don’t Trash the Border).

Initiators of the intervention

Promotoras helped to clarify the perception of and attitude toward the dirty environment. By establishing an elevated awareness of this important topic, the community's motivation increased to participate in the cleaning event.

"Promotoras were informing the community about the problem, listening, and coming to agreement on how to help [. . .] It was very important" (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

"Promotoras achieved an interest for everyone, that's why they got involved on the day of the event" (Promotora, Don't Trash the Border).

Barriers

Customs, false beliefs, misconceptions, lack of education or believing there were no consequences for littering were identified as barriers for the community.

"People throw garbage because it has always been done and nobody says anything" (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

"Perception problems as: the gullies are for throwing the garbage or believing that I should throw my litter on the street, after all, that's why I pay my taxes, so the municipal government should take care of it" (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

"Announcing the new policy was good, because it was reassuring to know that those who do not behave well, in the end, are going to be fined or sanctioned" (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

Other identified barriers were money, time and lack of service. Even though the *promotoras* had a great influence in the community, the issue of barriers is an element that must be addressed and decreased to be able to ultimately engage the participation of the community.

"The garbage collection service does not pass through here [. . .] the people would have to pay a fee for the service [. . .] that's why they store things" (Manager, Don't Trash the Border).

"The communities where there is no collection service by the government [. . .] to pay a private service is expensive for them [. . .] people prefer to stow their old things in their backyards or in vacant lots" (Promotora, Don't Trash the Border).

"To fix my store front yes, if only to clean my windows, but to paint is difficult because it is expensive" (Female resident, Puebla Limpia).

"It was a very good action, but I did not have much time, I work, and I couldn't" (Female resident, Don't Trash the Border).

Motivators

The key motivators between community leaders and neighbors were aspects related to the improvement of the quality of life, thus living in a clean environment conveyed a feeling of personal and social well-being.

"The perception was that a clean environment generates happiness, security, and community health" (Manager, Don't Trash the Border).

“If we live in a clean place, we can live better together because you feel good when you see everything orderly and in good condition. . .” (Male resident, Puebla Limpia).

“We must be jointly responsible with the City Government so that we can improve our place” (Female resident, Puebla Limpia).

“One of the reasons to contribute, in my opinion, is the perceived benefit [. . .] to see a nice place was more pleasant, so that had to be emphasized” (Promotora, Don’t Trash the Border).

To motivate people to participate in the programs’ cleaning marathons, incentives like competitions and prizes were incorporated with very positive and significant results. Though difficult to establish, this motivation was useful to initiate participation. Thus, providing material resources to carry out the cleaning was a great motivator for the community.

“The Municipal Government gives the materials: brooms, dustpans, trash bags, buckets, and paint and the citizens gave their labor and the promotoras communicated with all” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

“It was great to have a garbage truck come, before we did not to know where to throw it [. . .] besides, we would need a truck to throw away this waste [. . .] the promotora managed it” (Female resident Don’t Trash the Border).

“In the case of the children, there was a drawing competition on cleaning and caring for the environment [. . .] [with] public recognition through mass media broadcast. The recognition was definitely a factor in participation” (Manager, Don’t Trash the Border).

“Bringing incentives helped us a lot to work with these communities” (Promotora, Puebla Limpia).

Being part of a clean environment was another important motivator.

“Puebla Limpia was a cause with a social benefit that allowed neighbors to reunite, and that is what pleased everyone and why they joined voluntarily” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

Social pressure was another motivator of the intervention as a direct influence due to shame or exclusion. Therefore, citizens participated in designing and organizing their own cleaning marathons in an attempt to follow the model of their neighbors’ and community leaders’ positive manners or actions and avoid shame or exclusion.

“Some neighbors are a little unwilling to cooperate and at times one must pressure them [. . .] therefore, we organize the neighbors and go from house to house to motivate them to help us clean [as a] social pressure (Promotora, Don’t Trash the Border).

“The others felt uncomfortable if they did not participate, so they had to join” (Promotora, Puebla Limpia).

“They knew that this was already organized, and they would feel out of place if they did not cooperate” (Promotora, Puebla Limpia).

“[. . .] then, gradually, neighbors began telling other neighbors to take out the trash in the new schedule, because some neighbors left their trash cans out all day and it looked bad [. . .]” (Promotora, Puebla Limpia).

People began imitating what others were doing. Therefore, imitation among stakeholders was important as a trigger.

“The cleaner places are harder to get dirty, and the dirty places are easier to get dirty [...] activities are imitated” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

“The family is the first group of influence and where children learn” (Promotora, Don’t Trash the Border).

“[...] Promotoras motivated neighbors and then [the neighbors] imitated each other” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

Cohesion drivers

Social cohesion was awakened by involvement in the interventions promoted by the *promotoras*. This cohesion can heighten people’s motivation and trigger participation in an intervention. In the studied interventions people began imitating what others were doing in the clean-up events. Neighbors managed to overcome differences and unite for a cause in districts that were divided or in conflict. This cohesion heightened community motivation and triggered participation.

“Before the campaign, seniors had no enthusiasm to go out and clean their homes; many of them were depressed but cleaning together became a socializing activity” (Promotora, Don’t Trash the Border).

“At the end, adults and the elderly were the most enthusiastic in organizing their cleaning marathons as a socializing activity” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

“When neighbors define what their needs are and how to address them, when someone motivates others, and when we develop networks for motivation and work, this is when there is a better outcome, when we finally attain social cohesion” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

“Cleaning the environment became an inclusive exercise” (Manager, Don’t Trash the Border).

“The neighbors motivated each other, and then they continue with their own initiative” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

The activity of cleaning brought the neighbors of a community together and united them.

“Cleaning was an issue of union between neighbors” (Promotora, Don’t Trash the Border).

Engagement facilitators

Promotoras played a vital role in both interventions. Bringing the residents together with a common objective to create a clean environment, the *promotoras* were fundamental in the execution of both interventions as they came into direct contact with the target population and were responsible for transmitting the message and engaging the communities.

“Promotoras developed networks for motivation and work [creating] a better outcome in the process of change” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

“The role of promotoras during interventions is always vital in engaging communities” (Manager, Don’t Trash the Border).

“The meetings (co-responsibility workshops) became a very enriching and highly motivating activity, not only educating, but also bringing members of the community to work for a common goal” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

“We noted that after workshops, attendees were motivated to participate much more quickly in organizing a cleaning marathon in their area” (Promotora, Puebla Limpia).

These interventions were based on the principle of community participation, clearly highlighting its relevance, operation and structure. The process started by defining the needs and method of collaboration and organization as a community participating in resolving the problem in question.

“There was a procedure to invite and commit them and they organized themselves, the responsibilities were shared, and they developed their projects together” (Manager, Puebla Limpia).

“It became an inclusive exercise” (Manager, Don’t TrashThe Border).

Discussion

The literature to date acknowledges the presence and interrelationship of multiple stakeholders, but its focus on how to identify and encourage stakeholder participation is limited (McHugh *et al.*, 2018; Bryson, 2004). This study contributes to the literature in three main ways. The first finding from this study was the identification of the *promotoras* as a figure that helped to involve diverse groups of stakeholders as active members in two CBSM interventions, and who also facilitated penetration into the community in two cleaning interventions. The *promotoras* were relevant in both CBSM interventions to achieve community involvement and participation because they made it possible to include and bring together the community members (Shuster *et al.*, 2016).

Promotoras were the front-line public workers who both represented and engaged community members in two cleaning interventions in their community, by socializing the importance of the issue and involving the participation of its members as decision-makers and active participants in the intervention. *Promotoras* were members of the communities they served and had the knowledge of community conditions and the skills necessary to identify barriers and motivators for the engagement of stakeholders in the two CBSM anti-littering interventions.

There is a positive relationship between the success of the program and the number and type of stakeholders that are involved in the planning and decision-making processes (Buyacek *et al.*, 2016). The second contribution of this study is to confirm that the interventions described here had a greater reach in the community as stakeholders were added. For the initial stage, the *promotora* began with the socialization of the problem between community leaders, neighbors, representatives or hosts of co-responsibility workshops to awaken awareness and motivation to participate, creating a commitment to a clean environment. These stakeholders, called “hosts,” added allies in the community by entering into the social environment who also became stakeholders of the program. In the Don’t Trash the Border intervention, *promotoras* also encouraged the youth to take the message home to their parents and organized six major Clean-Up events on each side of the border which were carried out with the help of volunteers. In both projects, *promotoras* organized within their communities becoming the initiators; their efforts proved to ensure the community’s self-determination. In this stage the *promotora* was a key driver in both efforts described in this paper.

CBSM is an approach that fosters environmentally sustainable and responsible behavior (Lynes *et al.*, 2014) and when people begin to recognize the problem, they start participating (McKenzie-Mohr, 2000). As such, the third contribution was that the *promotoras* played a key role in helping the communities adopt co-responsibility. The motivators that most aroused the stakeholders to participate and work in the design and planning of their

interventions was when they were able to define their needs in the area of cleaning and visualized living in a clean community environment. This then brought the feeling of personal and social well-being to the community. Regarding the barriers manifested by certain community leaders who did not agree to participate in the initial stages, they were identified as customs, erroneous beliefs or misconceptions. However, the act of being listened to and attended by the *promotoras*, as well as being involved in managing incentives for their community, were the keys to finally gain their participation.

On the other hand, social cohesion, imitation and social pressure among the stakeholders involved helped create a synergy for participation which even extended to the design and organization of their own cleaning marathons and eagerness to be included in positive behaviors like their neighbors and community leaders and thus avoid embarrassment or exclusion.

The co-responsibility workshops resulted in very enriching and highly motivating activities, not only educating but also bringing members of the community to work for a common goal. It was a more valuable approach when compared to the door-to-door campaign initiated in the border community.

This finding corroborates that inclusive interventions based on the community and with the participation of stakeholders not only improves the co-design and creation of value in the initial stages of goal setting (Carins *et al.*, 2016) and planning (Domegan *et al.*, 2013) but also their involvement is important in the stages of implementation (Buyacek *et al.*, 2016).

In conclusion, information on stakeholder involvement in social marketing interventions is limited to reports on the number and strength of partnerships (Gregson *et al.*, 2001). This paper is contributing to CBSM knowledge by presenting the figure of the *promotora* as a key element in program delivery, describing how to seek, identify, add and coordinate a network of connected stakeholders in the community including representatives of neighborhoods, community leaders and volunteers. The *promotora* is a key figure to consider for the socialization, involvement and co-responsibility of stakeholders to clean up their community.

Implications

Social marketers have an important role to play in supporting and transforming society to be capable, equitable and sustainable. This transformation is the definitive challenge facing social marketers today because the problem is not usually the ability of the people in the community, but an ability of organizations to work with them in a co-responsible and sustainable manner (Narayan, 1993; Saunders *et al.*, 2015). The role of the expert in traditional marketing becomes that of a facilitator and participant rather than an external agent. Therefore, the application of marketing principles occurs through a genuine participatory commitment that can be enriched by the role of *promotoras* to achieve community engagement acting as agents to attain a co-responsible social transformation in a CBSM intervention.

Through these two interventions, we were also able to identify that *promotoras* can play an important role in bringing stakeholders together for having cleaner environments. Clearly, this finding has implications for health on the neighborhood level beyond the immediate public health benefits, which should be explored through future research efforts.

Limitations

Even though these interventions demonstrated the accomplishment of people participating and stakeholders being involved over the time period in which they were operated, this study possesses limitations that provide important direction for future research. First, this study did not randomly allocate participants, they were chosen according to the researchers' judgment and availability of access to them. A second limitation of the study is its sample

size, which depended on the active participants in both cases. Several participants dropped out and were no longer included in those interviewed. Therefore, there was no possibility to contact them.

Third, the labor issues and organizational costs are challenges that an intervention faces when implementing programs with *promotoras*. *Promotoras* must be well-qualified workers with credible knowledge and cultural sensitivity (Twombly *et al.*, 2012), however, not all of them can be equally competent in their work with the community. This is a process that can be very expensive and time consuming. On the other hand, there are direct costs of materials, supervisory labor and the cost of time and effort to train and manage *promotoras* (Medina *et al.*, 2007). The cost of these issues taken together can generate challenges to being able to maintain the interventions with *promotoras*.

Fourth, the lack of information on social marketing interventions with *promotoras* is a key issue to examine to determine their relationship to the positive results in these types of interventions. The current study sought to examine the perception of *promotoras* and managers in two CBSM programs providing an initial understanding. Future studies should attempt to attract larger samples at baseline (community), through which it would be interesting to examine the effectiveness of interventions on the perception of the community. Measuring behavioral change attributed to the role of the promotora in the involvement of stakeholders in CBSM interventions would be important to truly prove their effectiveness.

It is recommended in this type of intervention to include a longitudinal study that observes the phenomenon and reviews the sustainability of the effort over time. It would measure the interventions before and after implementation and use evaluation data to retool the strategy and/or provide feedback and identify the need for further programmatic support. This further investigation is necessary to maximize the relationship between CBSM, *promotoras* and stakeholders, and their contribution to the outcome in the long-term.

In conclusion, traditional media helped to inform the community of both interventions, however, the *promotoras* were the key community influencers who involved and motivated stakeholders to be part of it. This article encourages the inclusion of *promotoras* in attracting stakeholders for CBSM initiatives by social marketing practitioners in the design of interventions – to go “beyond brochures” as McKenzie-Mohr says (Lynes *et al.*, 2014) to incorporate inclusive and participatory practices.

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