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BEHAVIOR CHANGE APPROACHES FOR CLEAN COOKING

BRIEF 1: BEHAVIOR CHANGE AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO SUCCESSFULLY PROMOTE CLEAN COOKING TECHNOLOGIES

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

- ▶ Modifying behavior is a process, not one single event. It involves progression through a series of steps, which involve complex influencing, motivating, and enabling factors. These factors vary at individual, community, and cultural level.
- ▶ Cooking and its associated behaviors have their own set of cultural, spiritual, and social influences. These need to be recognized, understood, and respected for any clean cooking behavior change program to be successful. This means that a 'one size fits all' approach to stove promotion is unlikely to succeed.
- ▶ A low level of trust—in the product and the promoters—can inhibit demand. This is a particular challenge in situations where people from outside the community are promoting a relatively expensive and new technology.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Social marketing, which is a fundamental part of any self-sustaining health and/or social program, can facilitate the uptake and use of clean energy in poor populations. Social marketing techniques are key for instilling trust and communicating how clean cooking technologies align with local traditions, beliefs and practices.

Three USAID|TRAction-funded research projects tested a range of behavior change approaches, with the ultimate goal of increasing the acquisition and correct use of clean cookstoves and fuels [see Introductory Brief in this series]. Results from the projects provided several lessons for successfully implementing social marketing techniques in the cookstove sector. This brief presents lessons on message content, delivery channel, and mechanisms to promote trust, with recommendations and examples from the TRAction-funded projects.

1. Message Content

OVERVIEW	RECOMMENDATIONS	PROJECT EXAMPLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Many programs focus on increasing knowledge with the assumption that just knowing about the stove will motivate people to purchase and use it. That is often not the case. ▶ To motivate change, the content of the promotional message must reflect local beliefs, influences, practices, and priorities that resonate with the target audience. 	<p>Undertake extensive market research to identify clear, meaningful pertinent messages that will be understood and resonate widely.</p> <p>Consider all characteristics of the intended consumer base.</p> <p>Do not assume the consumer's priorities.</p>	<p>Through focus group discussions and interviews with cooks, the PATH team found that uptake of stoves was driven more by savings in fuel and time, whereas health benefits from reduced smoke were motivators for continued use.</p> <p>Focus group discussions carried out by the team from Duke University revealed that rural households with higher socioeconomic status, younger members and more mobile adult relatives had greater interest in alternative and modern cooking technologies. Other households were less certain about the technology. These different consumer characteristics required different marketing messages and approaches.</p> <p>The Duke University team identified the most appropriate messages by drawing on lessons from extensive preparations in the communities. These revealed that on average, the consumers valued smoke reduction more than fuel economy or increased convenience.</p> <p>Research led by Impact Carbon found that neither of their market messages ('stove improves health' and 'stove can save time and money') consistently increased the willingness to pay for the stove.</p>

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2. Delivery Channel

OVERVIEW	RECOMMENDATIONS	PROJECT EXAMPLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ As with the message content, the most effective channels of delivery require consideration. ▶ Social marketing that incorporates a mix of carefully selected socially and culturally relevant channels can effectively increase adoption of improved stoves. ▶ The correct channel can inform the target audience at the same time as instilling excitement about and trust in a product. 	Use respected members of the community to promote trust and inform consumers on unproven products.	The PATH team successfully used the established network of village health teams (VHTs) to increase awareness of the detrimental effects of household air pollution, promote the Top-Lit UpDraft (TLUD) gasifier cookstove and provide guidance on purchasing information and correct use. Because many of these VHTs had also bought the stove, they could share personal experiences to encourage consumers to purchase the stove.
	Engage local government and other well-established organizations to increase perceived legitimacy and foster a trusting relationship with the consumers.	Impact Carbon used local governments to support messaging and education initiatives. Schools and health centers were also engaged to disseminate marketing and educational materials.
	Leverage the support and involvement of people who have successfully adopted the product to increase the level of trust and motivation to purchase.	PATH found that local informal networks of learning such as women's self-help groups are very powerful conduits of information. Peer-led promotion (inviting current users of TLUD stoves to speak about their perceptions and experiences with the stove at promotional events) was an effective strategy to increase stove uptake.
	Use live cooking demonstrations to exhibit the ability of the new technology to cook important local foods and increase trust in the stove performance.	Impact Carbon cooked millet bread during demonstrations of the stove, to dispel the belief that the stove was not sturdy enough to hold a large pot and withstand heavy stirring. The PATH team found that demonstrating the cookstoves' benefits generated excitement and motivation to purchase.
	Do not assume the traditional marketing channels will be effective mechanisms in all situations.	PATH conducted focus group discussions and interviews with cooks and key informants, who revealed that printed sales materials distributed during cooking demonstrations were not effective at motivating people to purchase stoves.

3. Mechanisms to Promote Trust

OVERVIEW	RECOMMENDATIONS	PROJECT EXAMPLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Removing the sense of risk is essential to gain consumer confidence when selling a new technology. ▶ There are several mechanisms that can be used to gain and maintain consumer trust in a product, in addition to those associated with the marketing channel described previously. 	Consider using a rent-to-own sales strategy.	The rent-to-own model, used by Impact Carbon, allowed consumers a trial period before completing payments on the stove. This reduced commitment to buy until the product had been tried and concerns (such as those regarding durability and ability to function) had been addressed. Over 90% of participants who accepted a free trial successfully completed time payments in both studies.
	Consider consumer preferences for purchasing products.	A focus group discussion conducted by PATH revealed that consumers preferred to purchase new stoves through a reputable local hardware store, rather than a door-to-door sales person, as this provided them with a means to ask questions and a location to return to if the stoves became damaged.

FUTURE STUDY PRIORITIES

Further study is required to explore the following questions across different market segments:

- ▶ What messages and mediums are most effective for promoting stove adoption?
- ▶ What determines the effectiveness of social marketing in the cookstove sector?
- ▶ What can be learned from early stove adopters? What messaging and sales strategies convinced them to adopt?
- ▶ Can cookstoves take advantage of other health products to gain entry into households? Would marketing cookstoves as a package with other health products increase the consumer's trust in the product?

Social marketing seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with other approaches to influence behaviors that benefit individuals and communities for the greater social good.

The International Social Marketing Association, <http://www.i-socialmarketing.org>

TRACTION PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Translating Research Into Action (TRAction) Project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, focuses on implementation science—which seeks to develop, test, and compare approaches to more effectively deliver health interventions, increase utilization, achieve coverage, and scale-up evidence-based interventions. TRAction supports implementation research to provide critically-needed evidence to program implementers and policy-makers addressing maternal and child health issues.

For more information on the TRAction Project:
www.tractionproject.org ▶ tracinfo@urc-chs.com