



Social Marketing Statement of Ethics (February 2020)

The International Social Marketing Association (iSMA)ⁱ adopted this Social Marketing Statement of Ethics to support the ethical conduct of social marketing professionals, including practitioners, scholars and students, in all areas of their professional activities.

The statement is intended to promote conscious engagement with diverse ethical issues arising in social marketing work.

As social marketers we have a duty to observe the highest standards of personal and professional conduct. Behaviour change programmes and projects that seek to influence individuals and communities ideally should be developed and delivered in a way that demonstrates that any potential ethical concerns have been identified, considered and addressed.

We recognise that social marketers working across different social issues and contexts face a diverse range of ethical issues, therefore the principles set out in this paper have been developed to be succinct but also generic enough to be capable of creating a common ethical narrative and shared foundation for all social marketers, identifying potential areas of ethical concern and consider what mitigating actions are necessary.

The Principles

As social marketers we are committed to the highest standard of personal and professional ethics, guided by the following six social marketing ethical principles:

Respect and sensitivity: Respect for people's privacy, autonomy, diversity, free and informed choice and rights to participation and non-participation, inclusion and exclusion, and control over their lives.

Social justice and fairness: Promotion of social justice and avoidance of unfair distribution of benefits and burdens.

Openness and transparency: Transparency of goals, methods, intended and achieved outcomes, data ownership, and potential or apparent benefits and risks to target group(s) and society.

Avoidance of conflicts of interest: Avoidance of potential or apparent conflicts of interest, including opportunity for personal and reputational gain or avoidance of loss; promote public trust in social marketing.

Duty of care and nonmaleficence: Endeavour to do no physical, psychological or environmental harm and exercise a duty of care, integrity and professional and scientific responsibility.

Serve public interest: Fulfil social and political mandate and identify responsibilities and accountabilities for all stakeholders.

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ⁱ In November 2018 a working group was established to lead this work on behalf of iSMA, including Krzysztof Kubacki (chair), Diogo Verissimo (International Social Marketing Association representative), Jim Mintz (Social Marketing Association of North America representative), Dave Ward (Pacific Northwest Social Marketing Association representative), Lynne Eagle (Australia Association of Social Marketing representative), Jeff French (European Social Marketing Association representative), Inés Besada Paullier (Latin American Social Marketing Association representative) and Duncan Musumba (African Social Marketing Association representative).