Proposal of a Social Marketing Framework
to Influence Greek Undergraduates to
Adopt Healthy Eating Habits

An Overview…

- Objective
- Methodology
- What we have learned
- What we suggest
- What we can do in the future
Literature Review

Focus Groups

Interviews

- a social marketing programme
- effectively target Greek undergraduate students to adopt healthy nutritional habits
- by understanding their motives, barriers and beliefs towards healthy eating
Methodology

STAGE 1:

Review of academic and grey literature

• Reveal the problem
• Design the research
• Select target audience

STAGE 2:

• 9 mixed focus groups
• 5-8 undergraduate students 18-23 years old
• Use of a topic guide
Methodology

STAGE 3:

- Semi-structured Interviews with 33 key stakeholders:
  - State: 8
  - Education Institutes: 6
  - Food Supply Chain: 10
  - Civil Society: 8

- Use of social marketing in Greece
- Way that food services in Education Institutes operates
- Formation of the Situation Analysis (SWOT Analysis)

Methodology

WHERE

- Athens, Greece

WHEN

- September-November 2009 (focus groups)
- March-October 2010 (interviews)
What we have learned...

• Views about healthy eating.
• Reported eating habits.
• Sources of information about food and nutritional issues.
• Motives, barriers & influences.
• Impact of the external environment.
• Views about current initiatives towards healthy eating.
• Views about the role of the key sectors towards nutrition.

What we have learned...

Change of their nutritional habits since entering higher education:
• High fast food, take-away & ready-to-eat food consumption.
• Low fruit consumption.

Need of Immediate Action
Findings
1. Spend a lot of time inside the Institutes & the environment there is not supportive

Suggestions
- Initiatives inside the Education Institutes

Findings
2. They trust information from
- The internet
- Scientists
- Only TV shows from State channels were there is a scientist

Suggestions
- Design of healthy eating website
- Advising from scientists
- No advertisements on TV & radio

Findings
3. Important others:
- Friends
- Scientists

Suggestions
- included in the messages
- present the messages

Findings
4. Believe that the environment in Greece and at the Education Institutes they attend is not supportive of healthy eating.

Suggestions
- “upstream” social marketing to
  - support initiatives
  - create supportive environments

Findings
5. They expect the State to take measures.
### Altering false beliefs
### Repositioning healthy eating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduates' False Beliefs about Healthy Eating</th>
<th>Positive Messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Healthy food is not tasty and reduces the pleasure from a meal.”</td>
<td>Healthy food is tasty and can include all types of food categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am still very young and healthy to care about healthy eating.”</td>
<td>Refocus the current negative consequences to include short term consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Following a healthy diet can stress me.”</td>
<td>It is easy to prepare a healthy meal- tips to prepare “fast” and tasty healthy meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It is boring to prepare a meal.”</td>
<td>It can be easy and funny if you do it with friends and people you love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It is hard to adopt a healthy diet.”</td>
<td>There are easy tips to prepare healthy snacks and meals for you, your family and your friends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Increase the benefits...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported Benefits (motives)</th>
<th>Strategies to Increase Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy diet is strongly linked to good health.</td>
<td>Show evidences that a healthy diet can help avoid cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and obesity (in the short and in the long term).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better performance on everyday activities.</td>
<td>Messages that show people who eat healthy meals, to perform well in sports, studies, partying and other everyday activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance improvement.</td>
<td>Messages that show people who eat healthy, to have better socialisation, be fit and look good.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reduce the costs...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported Costs (barriers)</th>
<th>Strategies to Reduce Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lot of time to prepare a healthy meal and lack of knowledge.</td>
<td>Provide tips to prepare healthy and tasty foods fast and easy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable module hours- no time for a proper meal.</td>
<td>Upstream social marketing to create proper conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is not easy to find healthy alternatives.</td>
<td>Upstream social marketing to provide healthy alternatives inside the Education Institute and close to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological factors like stress and mood make undergraduates eat without limits.</td>
<td>Psychologists and nutritionists inside the Education Institutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I don’t eat fast-food I will be against company’s habits (I don’t want to be unfitted).</td>
<td>Show pictures where friends eat together healthy foodstuffs, enjoy fruits and cooked food and they feel ‘cool’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ways forward...

- Develop specific actions
- Pre-test the messages
- Create upstream social marketing initiatives
- Implement in the environment of the “financial crisis”.  

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!!!

The Context of the Research

• Nutrition transition in Greece
• Main causes of mortality are chronic diseases like cancer and cardiovascular diseases (OECD e-database)
• High rates of overweight and obese children and adults
  ▪ 13-17 years old → 22% overweight and obese (OECD 2003)
  ▪ Adults → 59% overweight, 18% obese (OECD 2008)
Data Analysis

• Content analysis
• Data coded based on the questionnaire and the research questions.
• Triangulation for validity
• Use of two coders for reliability
• Estimation of inter-coder reliability with the use of Cohen’s Kappa coefficient (SPSS)
  ➢ 0.92 (focus groups)
  ➢ 0.78 (interviews)

Target audience

• Lack of studies and interventions for the undergraduates
• Adoption of a new student lifestyle
  ➢ Start being independent
  ➢ Lack of knowledge to prepare their own food
  ➢ Eat out of home more often
• Peer-pressure that could promote unhealthy eating habits
• Start taking care of their appearance