From awareness to action for sustainable development in Latin America: learning from obesity, climate change and population ageing

As an in-house 'think-tank', the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life is inspired by Sodexo's deeply held conviction that improving Quality of Life leads to the progress of individuals and contributes to the performance of organisations. Its role is to gather and develop insight to help Sodexo understand better the levers of Quality of Life.

This report is inspired by the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life round-table 'Dialogue' that took place in São Paulo, Brazil, on 29 November 2017 and whose participants were:

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Obesity trends in Latin
America continue to justify
the label 'epidemic'

Introduction

In November 2016, the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life convened experts from Mexico, Brazil and Chile to a Dialogue held near Santiago de Chile to understand better the social and economic costs of obesity in Latin America. The ensuing **report** was based on the expert participants' responses to the questions:

- what is 'obesity'?
- what are the social and economic costs of obesity and where are they seen?
- what does 'obesity' mean in Latin America?
- what is the difference between adult obesity and child obesity?
- what are the responsibilities and successes of the public, private and NGO sectors?
- what are the most significant risks and opportunities?

The report concluded that obesity trends in Latin America continue to justify the label 'epidemic' and the hurdles to tackling it can be summarised as:

1. a lack of perception and awareness of overweight and obesity (though Brazil is considered by some to be an exception)

2. widespread access to highly processed food and drink combined with targeted marketing

3. inadequate access to nutritious food and drink among the less educated and lower income population

4. inadequate governance and a lack of cross-sector collaboration

5. growing risks concerning transparency and the perceived integrity of stakeholders

At a high level of abstraction, the hurdles set out above are not specific to obesity. They are shared with other sustainable development challenges such as climate change and population ageing, all of which:

- require a combination of planning for the long term and immediate action
- present population level risks and require individual, community and population level engagement
- are highly political and include significant resource allocation trade-offs though not one of them is a majority vote winner
- involve a wealth of data and empirical evidence but face great difficulty in shaping a narrative discourse that is capable of serving them adequately

In their discussions, the experts brought together in November 2016 began to consider whether one of the best ways to tackle obesity in Latin America may in fact be to look beyond it, to other sustainable development challenges – in particular to climate change and population ageing – to work across sectors, to draw from successful initiatives and achieve the popular support necessary to inspire new forms of governance that will feel empowered to address these pressing 21st century challenges to quality of life.

With this in mind, the expert participants gathered at the November 2017 Dialogue in São Paulo on which this report is based considered the following questions:

- what are the pre-requisites for successful behaviour change intervention?
- drawing on examples, what are the keys to successful communications campaigns to support behaviour change?
- what are the factors that can inspire and empower public policy-makers to be bold in driving behaviour change?
- what is governance and is it important?
- what lessons can be drawn from different sectors (nutrition/obesity, ageing populations, climate change) regarding smart governance?
- are these lessons relevant to the local, national and regional levels?

One of the best ways to tackle obesity in Latin America may be to look beyond it, to other challenges, to draw from successful initiatives and achieve the popular support necessary to inspire new forms of governance

A blueprint for use by organisations across Latin America that tackle sustainable development challenges

The purpose of this report is to set out the responses to these questions in the form of a blueprint for use by organisations across Latin America (and beyond) that tackle obesity, climate change, population ageing and similar sustainable development challenges. To illustrate the pressing nature of these challenges in the region:

- 58% of adults in Latin America and the Caribbean are estimated to be overweight[1] (compared to a global average of 34%[2]) and 23% are obese[3]
- in Latin America and the Caribbean, the proportion of the population aged 60 and over is expected to increase by over a quarter from under 12% in 2015 to 16% in 2030 and over 25% by 2050[4]
- in a 2^{0}C warming scenario without climate change adaptation, soya bean yields in Brazil could decrease by 30-70% and wheat yields by 50%[5]

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[1] UN Food and Agriculture Organization and Panamerican Health Organization, *Panorama of Food and Nutrition Security in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Santiago de Chile, at p. 97, available at: **http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6747s.pdf** (accessed on 1 February 2018).

[2] G Stevens et al., 'National, regional, and global trends in adult overweight and obesity prevalences', *Population Health Metrics*, 10:22 at p.4 of 16 available at: **http://pophealthmetrics.biomedcentral.com/ articles/10.1186/1478-7954-10-22** (accessed on 1 February 2018).

[3] *Ibid*. 1 above

[4] UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, World Population Ageing Highlights, 2017 *available* at: **https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2017/05/WPA-2017-Launch-to-the-IDOP-5-October-2017.pdf** (accessed on 1 February 2018).

[5] World Bank Group, *Turn Down the Heat: Confronting the New Climate Normal*, 2014, available at: **http://documents. worldbank.org/curated/en/645381468230663987/pdf/927040v30WP0Bo0010English05th0proof.pdf** (accessed on 1 February 2018).

What are the pre-requisites for successful behaviour change intervention?

As the research around sustainable development challenges continues to mature, behaviour change is becoming an increasingly important area of research and action. Fortunately, there is already a broad base to draw on as theories and models of human behaviour can be found across all disciplines of the social sciences, especially in social psychology and sociology. In these disciplines, the largest number of studies in which behaviour is conceptualised and defined focuses squarely on the individual as the locus of behaviour. Other behaviour theories move away from the individual to focus either on behaviour itself, or relationships between behaviour, individuals and the social and physical environments in which they situate[6]. In many ways, the analysis of behaviour is profoundly political[7] and research often reflects the structures and complexities of the behaviour it seeks to investigate[8].

It is broadly accepted that behaviour is related to two elements: cognition and feelings. To increase individuals' propensity to change, we need to develop a better shared understanding of the neurosciences, the mechanisms and practicalities behind behaviour change. Indeed, most campaigns around obesity in the past have involved experts from the health sciences who have treated the condition without taking into account the role of the behavioural sciences. A better understanding of individuals' extrinsic[9] and intrinsic[10] motivation, particularly the triggers of the latter which is more effective in inducing a change in behaviour, would help to inform effective communications campaigns around obesity, climate change and population ageing.

To increase individuals' propensity to change, we need to develop a better understanding of the neurosciences, the mechanisms and practicalities behind behaviour change

[6] J Morris, et al., 'Forestry, sustainable behaviours and behaviour change: Interventions', *Forest Research*, 2012, available at: **https://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/behaviour_review_interventions.pdf/$FILE/behaviour_review_interventions.pdf** (accessed on 1 February 2018).

[7] T Goodwin, 'Why we should reject 'nudge'', *Politics*, 32, 85-92, 2012.

[8] E Shove, 'Beyond the ABC: climate change policy and theories of social change', Environment & Planning A 42, 1273-1285, 2010.

[9] Extrinsic motivation refers to taking some action in order to obtain a reward or outcome.

[10] Intrinsic motivation occurs when we act without any obvious external rewards. We simply enjoy an activity or see it as an opportunity to explore, learn and actualise our potentials.

It is important to understand the nature of the challenge at hand and the types of behaviour change required to design effective interventions

The quotation below from Nisbet and Gick (2008, p.297) illustrates the complexity and number of factors involved for behaviour to change:

" *...in order for behaviour to change, people must feel personally vulnerable to a health threat, view the possible consequences as severe, and see that taking action is likely to either prevent or reduce the risk at an acceptable cost with few barriers. In addition, a person must feel competent (have self-efficacy) to execute and maintain the new behaviour. Some trigger, either internal ... or external ..., is required to ensure actual behaviour ensues*.[11] "

Although obesity, climate change and population ageing share similar characteristics, they can require different types of behaviour change. For instance, an individual who chooses to buy a hybrid or electric car to reduce use-phase atmospheric emissions need only make that purchasing decision once. In this instance, the individual's driving behaviour does not need to change on a daily basis (although to help tackle climate change, even at the level of the individual, can also involve a series of changes across multiple aspects of daily life from transport to diet, leisure to housekeeping). In relation to population ageing, to change the way we think about and treat older people requires a strong education campaign, a certain 're-wiring' of our brains to inform the mental processes that underpin behaviour. Addressing obesity through behaviour change requires a different type of sustained effort: avoiding the excessive consumption of fatty, sugary foods and undertaking more physical activity on a daily basis. For this, individuals need much more than information. They also need access to healthier food at low cost (subsidised if necessary) and positive interventions to help them reduce consumption of fatty and sugary products (including taxation, marketing and advertising regulation). To increase physical activity, individuals need free access to clean and safe places, such as street pavements and parks. It is important to understand the nature of the challenge at hand and the types of behaviour change required to design effective interventions. At the same time, it is difficult to see how individuals can be responsible for changing their behaviour unless the enabling conditions are present.[12]

[11] EKL Nisbet and ML Gick, 'Can health psychology help the planet? Applying theory and models of health behaviours to environmental actions', *Canadian Psychology*, 49, 296-303, 2008.

[12] R Puhl and C Heuer, 'Obesity stigma: important considerations for public health', *American Journal of Public Health*, June 100(6), 1019-1028, 2010.

As we explore the need to change different types of behaviour to address pressing issues of contemporary society, it helps to understand that our ideas or mind-sets have a natural tendency to develop within a relatively narrow system. As Ralph Waldo Emerson[13] described:

> *Every nation and every man instantly surround themselves with a material apparatus which exactly corresponds to their state of thought. Observe how every truth and every error, each a thought of some man's mind, clothes itself with societies, houses, cities, language, ceremonies, newspapers... It follows, of course, that the least enlargement of ideas would cause the most striking changes of external things.[14]*

Today, our state of thought and material apparatus are conditioned by marketing and advertising into a 'consumer mind-set', a way of thinking that says the role of individuals is to consume and the only action available to us is to choose between the products and services that are offered by the market. Taken to extremes, this can be deeply damaging to our innate ability as social creatures to work together and help one another. Despite wondrous human progress, we still need to nurture a system which fosters our motivation to participate in our local community, which ensures our concern for others and the environment develops into concrete actions of care. This requires a shift from a 'consumer' to a 'citizen' mind-set i.e. a way of thinking guided by the belief that people are best understood as citizens: when given meaningful opportunities, we can and want to shape what choices we are presented, not just choose between them, and seek the best outcome for all, not just for ourselves. By changing our starting point in this way we can tap into the fundamental resources identified by scholars of human nature: our natural desire to learn and progress, our inherent capacity to be creative, and our outstanding ability to collaborate and act collectively that has driven our evolutionary success as a species so far.

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[13] Ralph Waldo Emerson was an American essayist, lecturer, and poet who led the transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century. He was seen as a champion of individualism and a prescient critic of the countervailing pressures of society.

[14] RW Emerson (1803-1882). The Complete Works. 1904. Vol. XI. Miscellanies.

Part of the complexity in addressing sustainable development challenges such as obesity, climate change and population ageing lies in the need to change multiple overlapping behaviours

Drawing on examples, what are the keys to successful communications campaigns to support behaviour change?

While it is interesting to look at successful communications campaigns that aim to support behaviour change such as quitting smoking, driving more safely, drinking less etc., these campaigns often seek to influence a single behaviour. As highlighted above, part of the complexity in addressing sustainable development challenges such as obesity, climate change and population ageing lies in the need to change multiple overlapping behaviours. Set out below are a set of key considerations for developing successful communications campaigns to support behaviour change.

❯ **Frame the challenge correctly**: there is a risk with complex issues such as obesity, climate change and population ageing of misinterpreting the problem or addressing it in the wrong way. To guarantee the communications campaign is developed to target the right behaviour changes, it is critical to understand what must be achieved by framing the challenge correctly. In relation to sustainable development challenges, this is not just about communicating doomsday scenarios. For example, in relation to obesity, it is possible to emphasise the pleasurable and possible: cooking more together, trying new foods and recipes, getting to know local products and producers, visiting street markets. In relation to population ageing, it is possible to emphasise the shared benefits of inter-generational family gatherings or neighbourliness.

❯ **Identify the behaviours to change**: this initial consideration involves researching the characteristics of the target audience and the different behaviours that need to change. For each behaviour, it is important to understand the current behaviour, how it came about, the desired behaviour and how it can come about. As we address multiple behaviours, it is also important to map how they relate or group together. Furthermore, while many changes may be required, we must accept that people will not manage all at once.

> **Simplify complex issues**: sustainable development challenges are characterised by their complexity. It is important to break down each issue into components for which a set of practical actions that understand the meaning of the situation can be promoted. While complex issues should be simplified to make sure the target audience understands what is at stake and what behaviour change is expected, these should not be over-simplified to lose the education element of the campaign.

> **Craft the right message**: the target audience should be studied to develop a detailed understanding of the factors most likely to influence individuals at the personal, social, also local and wider community levels. In crafting an effective message, it is important to convert risks into opportunities and present the behaviour change sought as a way to satisfy the search for a better life. A human story will often be more effective in conveying a message than the presentation of facts.

> **The power of the network**: from the start of communications campaign development, different stakeholders should be involved to cross different perspectives and areas of expertise. As mentioned above, experts in the behavioural sciences should add their viewpoints to those of experts on the issue at hand. As we often tend to trust our peers more easily than those more distant, the success of a communications campaign may lie in establishing new social norms among peers, rather than in 'top-down' government/authority directive.[15] Within organisations, it is interesting to look at the role of so-called 'brand ambassadors' in establishing a dynamic of trust with the members of the target group.

While social media's mobilising power is undeniable, there is a risk that the voices of engagement for sustainable development are drowned in the noise that can be created. Also, while there is much to be said for civil society's role in leading change at the local level, many distrust liberal, expert, 'elite' voices; new, more inclusive, forms of governance are needed. Indeed, until very recently, only the voice of public authority (or significant funding) could publish or broadcast widely. The internet and social media have turned this on its head leading to intense competition in the attention economy as they become ever more accessible to the majority of the population.

[13] An example of an impactful health and safety communication in this vein produced by Sodexo in Brazil is available online at **https://youtu.be/r4OxU1e7jbY**

The success of a communications campaign may lie in establishing new social norms among peers, rather than in 'top-down' government/authority directive

As a result, more than ever it seems, communication for behaviour change must consider how it appeals to its audience. Elements of a decision-making / message-crafting framework can include weighing-up:

- appeals to individuals' extrinsic or intrinsic motivation
- appeals to the individual or the group
- use of information or appeal to emotion
- use of threats or the promise of new possibilities
- forbidding or enabling
- directing or engaging
- immediate appeal or delayed gratification
- the voice of authority, the voice of a peer or a trusted, popular person

Figure 1. Keys to successful behaviour change campaigns

Keys	Questions	Outcomes
Frame the challenge correctly	■ What is the issue at large? ■ What are the issue's components? How do they relate with one another? ■ What group of components are we looking to address?	Agree on the angle to address the challenge at hand
Identify the behaviours to change	■ Are we addressing single or multiple behaviours? ■ How do we break down the problem into its component behaviours? ■ How do multiple behaviours relate or group? ■ Who do we want to undertake the behaviour? ■ What is the desired and current behaviour? ■ Does the behaviour involve people starting, stopping, maintaining or preventing?	Understanding of behaviour(s) to be targeted for change
Simplify complex issues	■ Who is the target audience made up of? ■ How can the consequences of the issue at hand be made more relatable to the target audience?	Complex issues made more accessible
Craft the right message	■ How can the message be kept simple and made more human to resonate with targeted individuals on an emotional level?	An impactful, relatable message that also fulfils an educational purpose
The power of the network	■ How to involve multidisciplinary experts in the network? ■ How to establish new social norms among peers? ■ How to form strong brand ambassadors to embody the message of change?	A strong, agile network of multidisciplinary experts that inspires trust

The keys to successful behaviour change campaigns outlined in Figure 1 are essentially derived from a 'theory of change', a logical set of activities understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts.[16] A theory of change is based on a number of assumptions related to the issue at hand. For example, an assumption that appears to underpin a large part of the work presented in this report is that human beings behave rationally. However, increasing evidence points to the fact that, depending on the situation, rational decision-making does not always occur naturally.[17] Our frequent and unconscious tendency to behave or make decisions irrationally, often based on emotions, sometimes prejudices, and the impact of context need to be considered in detail in the development of successful behaviour change campaigns.

Inspiring policy makers

In our report on the social and economic costs of obesity in Latin America, we noted that the public sector's first responsibility is to deliver policies and regulation in favour of *sustained* healthy nutrition environments and behaviour change. This view is echoed in relation to sustained healthy environments and behaviour change concerning climate change and population ageing. Like obesity, these challenges are not considered vote-winners by most mainstream political parties. By their very nature, they are subject to an ebb and flow of public policy attention and resources as governments change. Before considering governance in the next section, here we consider what is needed to inspire policy makers.

Our starting point is that policy makers must feel convinced of popular demand for sustainable development challenges to be addressed; how does this popular demand arise? Education from early childhood to university provides the best opportunity to develop habits for the life course, whether related to nutrition, the diverse range of entry points concerning climate change, or the different stages of life and ageing. Children whose views, knowledge and behaviours are sensitive

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[16] P Rogers, 'Theory of Change', *Methodological Briefs: Impact Evaluation 2*, UNICEF Office of Research, Florence, 2014.

[17] World Bank. World Development Report 2015: *Mind, Society, and Behaviour.* Washington, DC: World Bank, 2015.

Children whose views, knowledge and behaviours are sensitive to sustainable development issues are more likely to engage with them as adult citizens

to sustainable development issues and include some grasp of their importance and complexity, are more likely to engage with them as adult citizens. For this potential to be translated into popular demand of policy makers requires:

- *organisation and mobilisation* of people e.g. by civil society around a shared purpose, over time, with a degree of consistency
- *individuals engaged in **doing** something*. When we take action or give of our time, we are more likely to tell others - including policy makers - about it convincingly and advocate progress. At the individual level, this engagement can be modest: many small-scale, local community actors – even geographically dispersed – can constitute a 'bottom-up' groundswell that can attract attention and influence public policy
- *understanding* of the public policy decision-making progress; where are the pressure points?
- *knowledge* of who influences public policy decision-making; who can carry the message effectively to those who need to hear it for action to be taken?

When the points set out *above* are met, citizens are more likely to understand the role of popular demand in policy-making and be more effective in building it.

An increasingly important factor in calls to action by popular demand is the use of social media networks. Economic, readily accessible and unprecedented for the speed with which they allow people and organisations to broadcast and receive feedback, social media continue to change the course of public policy in the attention economy.[18] While this report is not the place to set out in detail the key to social media impact, we acknowledge its undisputed potential and the skill involved in curating social media.

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[18] *Attention economy*: the notion that human attention is a scarce resource or commodity for which there is intense competition between people seeking to e.g. influence views and voting, sell goods or services.

Smart governance for sustainable development

It is tempting to see climate change as the single biggest sustainability challenge, one that touches on everything from our food to our transport infrastructure, from the extremes of our weather to patterns of human and animal migration, and to underwriting risk. However, our ability to address climate change or any other sustainable development challenge depends on governance. In essence, we need to find better ways of organising ourselves locally, regionally, nationally and beyond borders, also cross-sector, cross-generation, across values, cultures and languages. Governance is about creating the possibility of having an impact. How can we reach better decisions to effect change and hold ourselves accountable for progress? There is a feeling that, in relation to sustainable development challenges at national level, no-one is taking responsibility and being held accountable for policy-based action or accountable for progress / failure over time.

In this vein, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal No. 17 seeks '*to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development*' and the UN recognises this will require "*an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors*". This 'enabling environment' depends on good governance: a system that follows the rule of law and natural justice, that is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, responsive to present and future needs. In this section, we consider how this translates in practice in a world in which we so often perceive seemingly irreconcilable trade-offs and competing interests.

The starting point for this discussion of governance for sustainable development is 'high level' and inspired by an account of how the UN 2015 climate change conference in Paris produced an acclaimed agreement between 195 parties. The way we reach decisions and their content is informed by our values, the principles that are important to us. In reaching decisions, the greater the number of interests or parties and the more complex the issues involved, the greater the likelihood of a divergence of values and so difficulty in reaching agreement. This received wisdom is born of experience but exceptional breakthroughs are possible for smart governance; how can they come about?

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In the face of complex sustainability challenges, parties may need to accept contradictions in their values and their diagnosis, also inconsistencies in the common goal and diverse roadmaps

Faced with a sustainability challenge such as obesity, climate change or population ageing, different parties bring a range of values to diagnose or understand it. They may look to historic responsibility for their interpretation of the status quo or point to where the future burden is expected to lie. In relation to climate change, industrialised economies are held responsible for historic emissions and the least developed parts of the world are expected to bear the greatest burden into the future. In relation to obesity (with a growing emphasis on processed foods), food advertising and marketing are often held responsible for the rise in overweight and obese people while those with fewer socio-economic resources are more likely to be impacted. Parties may also seek to evaluate the costs and benefits of action or inaction. These calculations may include discounting the value of future benefit to derive net present value, a methodology that is fraught with potential for clashes.

Where values diverge it is difficult to share a common diagnostic of the problem and potential solutions. In the face of complex sustainability challenges, parties may therefore need to accept contradictions in their values and their diagnosis, also inconsistencies in the common goal and diverse roadmaps. For example, while low-lying nations may believe that global climate change must be limited to no more than 1.5ºC above pre-industrial levels for them to withstand sea-level rises, they may also be well served to agree with other nations to a 2.0ºC target. Why is this?

With so many factors at play in complex challenges, the parties' perceptions of the diagnosis is dynamic i.e. it changes over time. The means at their disposal to diagnose and their ability to take action may also evolve with technological progress. So long as the parties can agree what the common shared challenge is i.e. the direction of travel, and commit to revisiting the diagnosis and roadmaps on a periodic basis, there can be progress towards bold objectives punctuated by more modest, attainable milestones. Such progress is all the more likely when there is good, effective communication between the parties, when they share common 'rituals' in the form of regular gatherings, meetings and habitual behaviours including in written language e.g. how parties address and refer to each other. This also requires a particular form of leadership, one that is less overtly directive and far better attuned to what is needed to facilitate the navigation of complex issues that draw as much on fact and rationality as on culture and emotion.

Assuming that a common goal and differentiated roadmaps are possible, the transversal adoption of a challenge is necessary to avoid 'leaks'. For example, in relation to obesity, at least health, education and social welfare perspectives are needed but today, ministries of health still tend to focus on providing treatment rather than awareness-raising education for prevention, ministries of education focus on the acquisition of knowledge across academic disciplines rather than the development of positive life habits from an early age, social welfare ministries focus on tackling poverty and the protection of vulnerable groups while considering obesity to be irrelevant or a low priority. To illustrate the point, a Dialogue participant commented as follows:

...it seems to me that everything revolves around diagnostics, treatment and pharmaceuticals. When one asks advanced [medical] students how to prevent obesity, they have no idea. They only know how to reduce it, usually with pharmaceuticals or through surgery.

The same participant noted the more holistic approach of Japan's combined Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare whose strapline '*For people, for life, for the future*' is intended to encourage Ministry staff to be "*unified in their resolve to realise the ideal of health, labour, and welfare administration supported by the public*".[19] While the need for *individuals* to change behaviour in relation to sustainable development challenges is often emphasised, here we see an example of behaviour change in *governance*, away from siloed towards more integrated behaviour.

The legitimacy of more progressive, joined-up perspectives needs to be informed by popular support resulting from the active participation of people. As with communication and marketing for behaviour change, the ongoing engagement of people in governance depends on its perceived relevance or proximity to their lives, also the ease and efficiency with which they can engage. The means of engagement, the articulation of the challenge and the language used are all factors of success for governance informed by popular support. It needs to involve elements of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' with horizontal engagement e.g. of a trustworthy and legitimate civil society acting as a catalyst.

[19] Japan Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare website: **http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/org/ourlogo/** (accessed on 1 February 2018).

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Smart governance for sustainable development challenges has to look at them from inside the system - which is defined as that of people's daily lives: what we do, how we rest, how we come together and have fun. The 'big picture' of real people's lives mobilises commitment, for example from women who still play the most important role in relation to food in the household or from parents and school teachers who shape views on ageing and the old. Where social movements can be mobilised, they will do better to address wide-reaching harm prevention measures rather than focus on still relatively narrow interests such as access to bariatric surgery in cases of obesity. An example from the field of obesity is 'Ensemble prévenons l'obésité des enfants' (together let's prevent childhood obesity) (EPODE[20]), a community initiative first launched in ten French towns as a five year pilot in 2004 for children aged 5 – 12 years old. National ministries, health groups, private partners and local level political leaders, health professionals, families, teachers, NGOs, and the business community are engaged in a collaborative approach and the results are striking. For example, a 34% reduction in obesity in the first year was achieved in a sample of 820 children in a French Pyrenees town and this initiative's approach has since been followed by 300 instances worldwide. While the EPODE model includes links between local community stakeholders and national level counterparts, the larger part of its success appears to stem from the proximate collaboration between local community stakeholders who may not need to be subject to the same formalised responsibility and accountability of national public authorities that are necessarily more distant from citizens.

[20] EPODE International Network **http://epodeinternationalnetwork.com/**

Conclusion

The gap between 'awareness' and 'action' for more sustainable development is succinctly called 'behaviour change'. This is a neat term that can involve very different levels of commitment and engagement depending on ambition and the nature and portion of the challenge at hand. Behaviour change can be embodied in something transactional, like a purchasing decision, or require significant alterations to daily habits and routines over time. Either way, sustained behaviour change requires us to understand better what motivates us. In this quest, we can helpfully start to think of ourselves less as welfare maximising individuals and more as citizens who share in the benefits and burdens of achieving more sustainable development. For us to realign ourselves along these lines requires a change of language and tone in communications and marketing to a register that speaks to the individual, certainly, but as a member of a larger community or organisation; it is scale, a sense of public demand, that inspires policy makers.

To achieve scale, civil society finds itself on a highly competitive playing field that is increasingly flattened by social media. To attract and retain attention, to mobilise action, civil society must grasp the essence of the attention economy and master it with exceptional levels of skill while navigating the new dynamics of trust.

Supported by public demand, at a high level, the great governance paradox of complex sustainable development challenges is the need to make progress without necessarily agreeing on its form or its pace, but with an underlying sense of direction. More locally, governance that is informed by and rooted in the reality of people's daily lives stands a greater chance of providing and sustaining an enabling environment for behaviour change to bridge the gap from awareness to action.
In the absence of population level authorities with responsibility for sustainable development challenges over the long term including the obligation to provide periodic accounts of progress, it is difficult to see how public policy can be sustained for medium to long term impact. Responsible authorities are needed at the highest level with long term plans, the power to implement and evaluate corresponding policies, and the obligation to account for what is achieved.

The great governance paradox of complex sustainable development challenges is the need to make progress without necessarily agreeing on its form or its pace, but with an underlying sense of direction

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