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### **Coverage problems of children with special needs by social advertising**

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**Теодорська Л. І. Висвітлення проблеми дітей із особливими потребами в соціальній рекламі.** Стаття присвячена проблемі формування соціальною рекламою суспільної думки щодо дітей із особливими потребами. У результаті дослідження було виявлено, що українська соціальна реклама створює зразки повідомлень, формуючи і закріплюючи стереотипи щодо дітей із особливими потребами, дещо іншої думки дотримується зарубіжний ринок у сфері соціальної реклами.

**Ключові слова:** діти з особливими потребами, соціальна реклама, формування суспільної думки.

**Теодорская Л. И. Освещение проблемы детей с особыми потребностями в социальной рекламе.** Статья посвящена проблеме формирования социальной рекламой общественного мнения в отношении детей с особыми потребностями. В результате исследования было выявлено, что украинская социальная реклама создает образцы сообщений, формируя и закрепляя стереотипы в отношении детей с особыми потребностями, несколько иного мнения придерживается зарубежный рынок в сфере социальной рекламы.

**Ключевые слова:** дети с особыми потребностями, социальная реклама, формирование общественного мнения.

**Teodorska L. Coverage problems of children with special needs by social advertising.** The article deals with the problem of formation of public opinion about children with disabilities in social advertising. The research proves that Ukrainian social advertising provides examples of messages, creating and perpetuating stereotypes of children with special needs, while the foreign market of social advertising follows a different policy.

**Keywords:** children with special needs, formation of public opinion. social advertising.

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Images of children are very often used in modern advertising to raise emotional impact and attract audience's attention to the advertising message and increase its credibility. For children

and teen-agers advertising in particular is a socially significant part of informational space that essentially influences their psychological development and behavior, that is why ethical

demands to social advertising employing images of children should be very high [3].

The theorists who study psychology of advertising claim that the image of a child always draws attention of recipients being a powerful irritant of their psyche. In advertising the image of a child is one of the most popular messages. Besides smiles and joy images of kids arouse the feeling of compassion. This technique is especially frequently used in social advertising. A child's image in social advertising evokes greater involvement than any other [4].

Social advertising is of much value for society and for each member of it only when perceived consciously and deliberately. Otherwise it becomes socially dangerous, it can adversely affect the human mind and behavior in society [1].

Among the problems raised by social advertising adaptation of people with disabilities in society and formation of public opinion regarding them takes a special place. And within that perspective images of children are not only effective and commonly used, but also fully justified. We suggest considering significant examples of social advertising applying to problems of children with special needs.

The social advertisement "Let's Unite for Children of Ukraine" highlights the problems of children with special needs. At the beginning of the video, a close-up shows a sad boy aged 10–12, then the camera pulls away and we see a wheelchair he sits in. The character turns and we can see that wheelchair is opposite a sports ground where the boy's peers play football. The child carefully watches the players. The color-scheme of the social advertisement is dull and gray (houses, sky, trees, road, and clothes). Next there emerges a man drawn in color (in the run of the advertisement it changes its color for the whole range of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink) symbolizing in this way the child's soul. It separates from the boy's body and runs to the children, starts playing with them, neatly kicks the ball and scores the first goal. A colorfully drawn soccer goal appears on the screen. All children are happy, they jump and the colored man jumps higher than others. The social advertisement is accompanied by off-screen narration: "More than half a million children in our country need special attention. What is common and ordinary for us is an unattainable dream for them. Your indifference is their despair, your help it is their salvation. Let's help our children together. For the sake of the good, for the future".

Social advertising directly reflects the problems of children, it is clear that they (children with disabilities) become characters which in this case are absolutely reasonable. Advertising partially touches upon recreation of children with special needs among peers. However, the commercial does not emphasize any problems of education, development or children's socialization, but reports statistics for this stratum of population.

The social advertisement under analysis urges not to remain indifferent to the problem, but it does not suggest any options to solve it (in the advertisement it is emphasized that a child with disabilities cannot fully participate in play with other children, and can only dream about it). The advertisement focuses on the contraposition of healthy and sick children reinforcing emotionality of the reel (the ability to walk, run, play that is to do things children commonly do, and on the contrary, a wheelchair-bound boy). Children in advertising always cause certain emotions, and children with health problems increase emotional impact.

According to a survey, the commercial arouses ambiguous feelings in recipients – from compassion to irritation. The advertisement draws a line between "normal" children and children with special needs, although it was possible to show that they do not differ internally and can easily play together. In the ads colors are emphasized, the drawn man is represented with all colors of the rainbow. By definition of K. Korolev, the rainbow symbolizes a bridge between heaven and earth, combines top and bottom, natural and supernatural, sacred and secular. The rainbow is often associated with the news of future wealth or with finding a treasure (it is where the rainbow touches the ground) [2]. So, we can say that the colorful man depicted in the social advertisement is the bridge that unites healthy children and children with special needs.

The social advertisement "Inclusion: School for Everyone" can be opposed to the previous video. Children with special needs are not separated here, but on the contrary are depicted surrounded by other children. At the beginning of commercial, we can see a classroom where children listen to the teacher, a girl writes on the board sitting, next all children communicate together at a break. These frames are accompanied by the following comment: "Each of us perceives the world by in our own way. We get knowledge and learn how to live. We have friends and want to be together, to get similar attention and believe in

ourselves". The next frame shows the girl pulling out of the desk in a wheelchair (up to this moment the wheelchair has not been shown), she goes down outside using a special ramp, talks and takes pictures with other girls in the yard. The reel ends with featuring children hugging the girl in the wheelchair and waving their hands. During these frames the text is pronounced: "School of the Future is a school without stress. Relationships with adults are an understanding and help. Children should learn together".

This social advertisement emphasizes that children with special needs and other children are not different. Provided appropriate conditions are created, mixed education will not burden anyone, but rather unite. At the beginning of the video the wheelchair was not to be seen. It showed an ordinary classroom and ordinary school children without restrictions and difficulties communicating with each other, and it was not clear which of them was a girl with special needs. Children are portrayed cheerful, friendly and inquisitive. The social advertisement focuses on the fact that children better adapt in society when they study together and experience environment. The video claims that there is no need to segregate children into certain groups, to create a barrier between them because in the future it will be hard to adjust to life in society both for children with special needs and for other children.

The social advertisement by the Vinnitsa non-profit organization "Harmony" "Look at me, not at my wheelchair" also addresses the problems of children with special needs. It starts with a video image of a busy street. Among this turmoil an empty wheelchair is rolling, passers by walk by and look at the wheelchair. Next appears a boy playing a ball, he raises his head, smiles and throws the ball toward the wheelchair, and we see that it is a boy sitting in a wheelchair. The video ends with frames of a boy in a wheelchair, holding a ball, and at the side of it there is a phrase written in white: "Look at me," and below there are smaller red letters: "But not at my wheelchair".

This social video is not accompanied by narration, the recipient understands the whole advertising content through the slogan. The advertisement is intended to show the society attitude to children with special needs, notably that first of all people pay attention to the problem (wheelchair – physical disabilities) staying unaware of the most important issue children themselves, their emotions, aspirations, dreams. For most people these children are inferior, they

single them out as a separate category of people and treat them either with indifference or with pity, and hardly anyone looks upon them first of all as ordinary normal children. A notable feature of this social advertisement is that the boy (and not the cart) was noticed by another boy (assumably his peer). Only the boy could see not a disabled person but teenager just like he is while, adults were just passing by and saw a wheelchair.

As an example of social advertising somehow opposite to Ukrainian samples, we will consider foreign advertisements on similar topics. To celebrate the 61st anniversary of their state, the Indian film companies "Mudra Group" and "BIG Cinema" released a video "Patriotism does not need hype" with a record of the national anthem performed by pupils of a boarding school for children with hearing defects. The advertisement shows how children of different age perform the anthem in front of the school in sign language to the appropriate tune. Pupils are portrayed happy and joyful. The reel is shot in black and white colors. This is a good example of social advertising which combines propaganda of patriotism and tolerance towards people with disabilities. In this social video children are portrayed not as ones arousing pity, but rather as children arousing a warm smile, pride and respect.

The Russian social advertisement "Violin" is dedicated to education of adolescents with disabilities. The main slogan of the social message is "Education of disabled people is a way to independent life". Throughout the advertisement we see a teenage girl who plays the violin. We can assume that she has physical disabilities such as vision problems because of her sunglasses, and totally blind usually wear sunglasses to protect their eyes. The advertisement starts with off-screen narration: "Each child is talented in his own way", the girl is shown playing the violin on stage. Next we see that a string of musical instrument breaks, and the girl puts the violin down on the floor. This part of advertisement is based on contrast. If frames at the beginning of the video have bright colors and are accompanied by a rhythmic melody of the violin, the critical part is gray and accompanied by loud bass sounds. Advertisers use this move to attract the viewer's attention and focus on the problems that may be an obstacle to successful development of children. In the following part of the advertisement we see a woman who approaches the girl and gives her another violin, and then the young musician continues her performance and successfully

finishes it. These frames are followed by text: "This in our power to help a talent reveal itself".

The social advertisement "Violin" emphasizes the fact that every child has abilities and talent. The task of adults (teachers, parents and older people) is to help a child to find his/her way and favorite occupation. It does not matter whether the child has certain disabilities because everyone needs support in their undertaking. A characteristic feature of this advertisement is that it focuses on the girl not as a child with special needs, but as an ordinary teenager who is trying to succeed. Advertisers did not aim at causing feelings of pity and compassion, but called for understanding and moral and psychological support of children with special needs.

Analyzing social advertising, we can make a conclusion that most domestic advertisers create typified videos that form and perpetuate in society stereotypes about children with special needs. These advertisements contain a concept that such

children need affection and compassion on the part of society, that they are a separate and special segment of the population. Actualizing the issue, social advertising does not actually suggest ways to solve it, sometimes confirming harmful stereotypes in society. A somewhat different view is shared by foreign advertisers, creating examples of social advertising messages that have no place for frustration and negativity, but rather emphasize unity and strength of children who have certain problems. Children in these commercials are independent, productive members of society who do not need pity, but like all other children expect support and understanding. There is not doubt that in any country we can witness examples of low-quality or tactless advertisement, but currently the foreign social advertising market is much more developed than its counterpart in Ukraine. Thus domestic advertising approaches and models of social advertising require further study and revision.

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