Make Poverty History
Political Communication in Action

Nicolas Sireau
# Contents

*List of Illustrations* viii  
*List of Abbreviations* ix  
*List of Interviewees* x  
*Acknowledgements* xii  
*Foreword* xiii

## Part I Setting the Scene

1 **Introduction** 3  
   Key themes 6  
   Outline of the book 8  

2 **A Short History of *Make Poverty History*** 14  
   The origins of the idea 14  
   The coming together of the coalition 15  
   Plans accelerate as 2005 draws near 17  
   The first six months 18  
   *Live8*, the Edinburgh rally and the G8 summit 22  
   Other activism around the G8 summit 25  
   The second half of the year 26  
   Wrapping up the campaign 28  
   Conclusion 30

## Part II The Production of *Make Poverty History*  
**History's Communications**

3 **Make Poverty History as Brand** 33  
   Introduction 33  
   What is a brand? 34  
   The branding of *Make Poverty History* 39  
   *Make Poverty History* as brand name 48  
   The need for brand consistency 55  
   Conclusion 57
4 The Tension between Marketing and Campaigning
   Introduction
   No Logo and the anti-brand debate
   Conceptions of branding within Make Poverty History
   Skills imbalance in marketing and campaigning
   Simplicity versus complexity in messaging
   The problem of control of resources
   A question of strategy
   Conclusion

5 Radical Outsiders, Moderate Insiders
   Introduction
   The insider-outsider dilemma
   Insider-outsider strategies
   Political opportunity structures and movement communications
   Conclusion

Part III The Consumption of Make Poverty History's Communications

6 Collective Beliefs on Global Poverty
   Introduction
   The formation of collective beliefs
   Collective beliefs about Africa
   Collective beliefs about helplessness
   Collective beliefs about corruption and poverty
   Conclusion

7 Audiences and the Economic Justice Frame
   Introduction
   The framing of collective action
   Make Poverty History's collective action frame
   Understandings of the economic justice frame
   The difference between fair trade and trade justice
   What will it cost us?
   Blaming the West for global poverty
   Conclusion

8 Why People Attended the G8 Rally
   Introduction
   What motivates people to action?
   Make Poverty History's prognostic frame
Expectations and values about success 164
Post-event framing 167
What did Make Poverty History achieve? 172
Conclusion 174

9 Celebrities and the Construction of Communications 177
Introduction 177
Celebrity endorsements and branding 177
NGOs, Make Poverty History and celebrities 178
Choice of celebrities 183
Live8, celebrities and the problem of message control 187
Geldof, Make Poverty History and the G8 reaction 194
Conclusion 197

10 Conclusion 199
Introduction 199
Conclusions on the production of the communications 199
Conclusions on the consumption of the communications 201
Lessons from political marketing 202
Final points and further research 204

Appendix 207
A note on methods 207
The structure of Make Poverty History 212

Notes 215

Bibliography 227
Primary research material 227
References 232

Index 243
Illustrations

Figures

3.1 The naming spectrum 39
3.2 Public Perceptions of Poverty research waves 1–5 44
4.1 MPH email actions 83
7.1 The diagnostic element of the collective action frame 137
8.1 The prognostic element of the collective action frame 162
A1 Focus group degrees of involvement in campaigning 211

Table

2.1 Key Make Poverty History moments in 2005 29
Abbreviations

AMV  Abbott Mead Vickers
BOND  British Overseas NGOs for Development
Cafod  Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CIIR  Catholic Institute for International Relations (now called Progressio)
DATA  Debt AIDS Trade Africa
DFID  Department for International Development
GCAP  Global Call to Action against Poverty
MAC  Messages Actions and Communications
MPH  Make Poverty History
NGO  Non-governmental organization
SMO  Social Movement Organization
TJM  Trade Justice Movement
UN  United Nations
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
VSO  Voluntary Service Overseas
WDM  World Development Movement
WTO  World Trade Organization
Interviewees

Most interviewees agreed to be on the record. One was totally anonymous and does not appear on this list, while others have been cited anonymously.

Christine Allen, Executive Director at the Catholic Institute for International Relations and a leader of the MPH Churches Working Group. Interviewed 15 April 2005.

Richard Bennett, General Secretary of British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND) and Chair of the MPH Coordination Team. Interviewed 13 May and 9 December 2005.

Ros Boyall, intern at SPEAK. Interviewed 3 June 2005.

Lucy Cathcart, Membership Coordinator at the Catholic Institute for International Relations and member of the MPH Churches Working Group. Interviewed 14 January 2005.


Catherine Cullen, Make Poverty History Media Coordinator. Interviewed 6 September 2005.

Martin Drewry, Head of Campaigns at Christian Aid and member of the MPH Coordination Team. Interviewed 16 March 2005 and 17 January 2006.

Alison Fenney, Director of Advocacy and Communications at Cafod and member of the MPH Coordination Team. Interviewed 8 April 2005.

Sam Gurney, Trades Union Congress Policy Officer, European Union and International Relations Department, and member of the MPH Coordination Team. Interviewed 29 April 2005.

Emma Harbour, MPH Web Editor at Comic Relief and member of the MPH MAC Working Group. Interviewed 23 February 2006.

Adrian Lovett, Campaign Director at Oxfam, member of the MPH Coordination Team and leader of the MPH MAC Working Group. Interviewed 14 October 2005.

John McKie, Artist Liaison for Christian Aid and Chair of the MPH Celebrities Working Group. Interviewed 21 October 2005.

Tim Peat, Senior Campaigns Officer at War on Want and member of the MPH MAC Working Group. Interviewed 3 June 2005.


Adrian Platt, Campaigns Assistant at Christian Aid. Interviewed 25 May 2005.


Stephen Rand, Co-chair of Jubilee Debt Campaign and member of the MPH Coordination Team, the MPH Media Working Group and the MPH Policy and Lobbying Working Group. Interviewed 24 November 2005.

Glen Tarman, Coordinator of the Trade Justice Movement, member of the MPH Coordination Team and leader of the MPH New Media Working Group. Interviewed 4 March 2005 and 7 February 2006.

Beth Tegg, Communications Manager at Comic Relief and member of the MPH Coordination Team and the MPH MAC Working Group. Interviewed 18 January 2006.

Steve Tibbett, Director of Policy and Campaigns at ActionAid UK and member of the MPH Coordination Team. Interviewed 17 March 2005 and 12 January 2006.