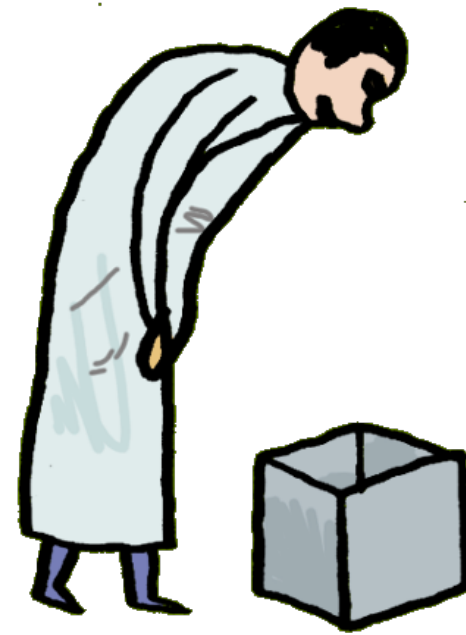


Celebrity Advocacy

Exploring the role of celebrity advocacy in the context of engaging the public in international development



Summary of Findings



The appeal of celebrity

Famous people continue to be intriguing to the general public

Important to differentiate between individual celebrities & celebrity culture ...

Everyone in this research could talk about individuals they were interested in

Media focus on 'personality' makes emotional connections virtually unavoidable

Perceived value & qualities of different personalities varies across audiences

Some strongly resistant to 'celebrity culture' - its connotations & ubiquity

And these associations are particularly incongruous in a charity context

Role of celebrity advocacy: the benefits

Celebrity advocacy an effective tool for charities looking for brand cut-through
(objectives demanding deeper engagement are more challenging – see next page)

Raises the profile of endorsed organisation / issue & can stimulate support

An individual's brand equity is often more powerful than a charity or cause

Celebrity endorsement enables circumnavigation of a busy charity landscape

Identification with a famous person shortcuts issue analysis & decision-making

Celebrity connections shifts charity engagement from a 'work' to 'leisure' mindset
(rebalancing the transactional nature of giving & delivering more enjoyment)

Success is dependent on the selection of the specific individual

Celebrities should fit the strategic objectives of a charity

And be recruited to appeal to target audiences

Role of celebrity advocacy: the challenges

Celebrity endorsement works both ways & the celebrity can benefit more than the charity they're supporting

'Charity work' can reinforce or refresh celebrity brand associations & appeal

May deliver long-term benefits that the charity is unlikely to see

(David Walliams' post Sport Relief popularity the most current example)

Charity connections made through famous individuals often fleeting & short-term

Charities & causes rarely interrogated & can remain anonymous (donate to celeb)

Issue-engagement rare (celebrity benefit is that they cut-through complex issues)

Little evidence of long-term engagement/support triggered by celebrity advocacy

Celebrity advocacy & international development

Celebrity advocacy appears more important the more challenging the cause

Its benefits can cut through barriers to supporting development charities

(such as lack of personal connection, compassion fatigue, static associations)

However

Sector's historic & high profile use of celebrity can compromise advocacy success

Seen as an obvious bandwagon for celebrities to further or refresh careers

Higher pressure on individuals to demonstrate integrity in this context

Key implications for the development sector

Short-term impact: do charities have realistic expectations of celeb advocacy?

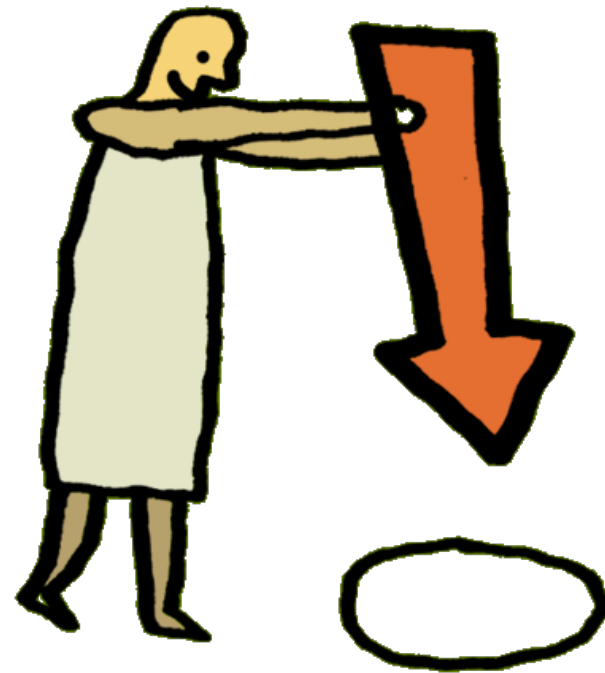
Celebrities benefit: can charities better leverage this to their advantage?

Authenticity matters: do celebs give enough of their own voice (tweet etc.)?

Longevity is important: are charity / celebrity relationships too transient?

Celebrity selection key: do charities sufficiently consider brand & audience fit?

Research background, objectives & approach



Research objectives

To explore

- Awareness of celebrity advocacy specifically in relation to international development
- Attitudes towards celebrity advocacy, including likes & dislikes
- Role of celebrity advocacy in terms of ...
 - directly influencing opinions & actions
 - enabling conversations about social & political issues

Research approach and sample

4 group discussions, 1.5 hours, 8 respondents
Conducted with British citizens in London in May 2012

Very concerned about poverty in poor countries
50-65, older families & emptying nesters, BC1C2, mixed gender

Fairly concerned about poverty in poor countries
30-49, with families, C2DE, mixed gender

Fairly concerned about poverty in poor countries
18-30, settling down / young families, C2DE, male

Ambivalent about poverty in poor countries
18-29, pre family, C1C2, female, recruited to be interested in celebrities

All pre tasked to consider heavens & hells of celebrity-backed charities, causes & campaigns

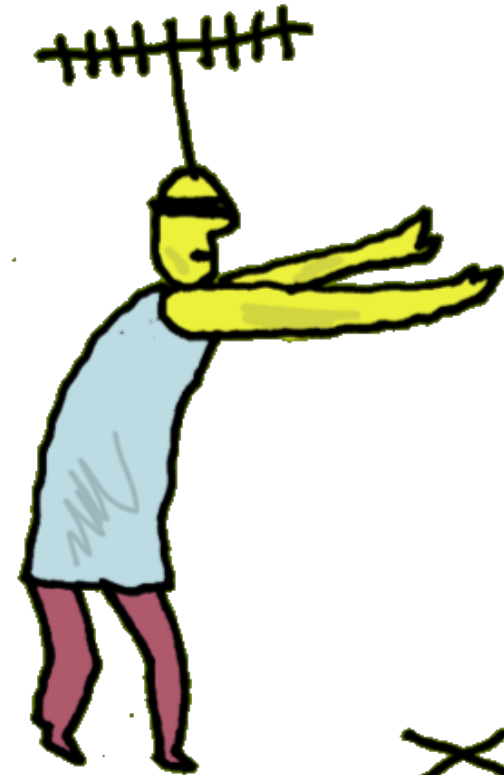
A note on the research

TWRResearch have a history of experience across both media & charity sectors.

This research has drawn on our existing understanding of the role **celebrity** plays in people's lives developed over years working for TV (BBC, C4, ITV) and women's magazines (Vogue, Easy Living, Glamour etc.).

Public attitudes to **global poverty & development** were not directly examined in this research. However, our contextual understanding in this area has been drawn from extensive work for clients in the development sector (Comic Relief, Save the Children, Christian Aid, the British Red Cross and the International Broadcasting Trust)

Main findings



TWRResearch

What is celebrity?

Positive associations

Entertainment
Aspiration
Escapism
Social fabric

Celebrity as a concept

Shallow & superficial
Sensational & salacious
Culturally invasive
Ubiquitous

Negative associations

Celebrity as an individual

Range of people famous for different reasons, with differing qualities & appeal

Likeability
Lifestyle

Appearance & style
Accessibility & ubiquity
Backstory & background
Personal beliefs & values
Professional skill & status

Concept of celebrity uncomfortable for some but everyone engages with individual celebrities

What is celebrity?

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Celebrity as a concept

Shallow & superficial
Sensational & salacious
Culturally invasive
Ubiquitous

Negative associations

Associations more likely to be
younger, female, lower SEG

Those with negative associations
may still be engaged with aspects of
celebrity culture - but as guilty
pleasure

More likely to warm to famous
individuals who appear distanced
from the culture of celebrity

Associations more likely to be
older, male, higher SEG

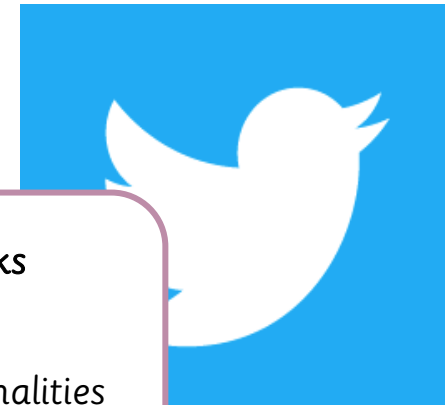
'Celebrity' an inescapable presence across the media landscape



TV personalities shift across genres
Programmes built around stars
Relationship with the person as well as the professional



Greater accessibility via social networks
Build celebrity repertoires
Stronger connections with favourite personalities
Higher awareness of charity work



FEMAIL TODAY

- ▶ 'Lunch done, me however still in nightie': Make-up free Holly Willoughby tweets candid morning photo Admitted she needed make-up
- ▶ Everything you think you know about healthy eating is wrong! Fat makes you fat and you can't eat enough fruit, right? Wrong, say researchers
- ▶ 'I feel pretty. I've had everything lasered!' Kim Kardashian tells Oprah of hair removal as she says Kanye romance is 'not a stunt'

Internet frees audiences from news allegiances
Online news repertoires more extensive than print
Trad. Guardian reader may go Daily Mail online

LOSTINSHOWBIZ
BLOG



TWRResearch

High awareness & acceptance of celebrity advocacy of causes & charities

High awareness that charities use celebrities to raise their profile

Broad acceptance of use of celebrities as part of marketing strategy

Belief that overall their use is beneficial – raise awareness & profile

Personal celebrity preferences set aside for the ‘greater good’

(forgive charity choosing an unappealing celebrity if have broader relevance)

However, belief in the effectiveness of celebrity advocacy can also undermine its purpose – audiences may engage but be ambivalent about taking action as ‘other people’ will respond positively

I don't think you can knock anyone really, I mean even if a little bit of them is doing it for themselves if they're helping someone else it balances it

Fairly Concerned,
18-30, Male

TWRResearch

Charity framework dominates perceptions of the role of celebrity endorsement

Charities using celebrities believed to desire a **financial outcome**

Raising awareness connected to giving-potential more than political pressure

Influence of well-known people at a political level rarely acknowledged

Unless a campaign emanating directly from an individual interest

(Jamie Oliver & school dinners, Joanna Lumley & Gurkhas)

Awareness of celebrity advocacy dominated by TV shows & media reporting

COMIC RELIEF



theguardian

News Sport Comment Culture Business Money London

News World news Sudan

George Clooney arrested in planned protest at Sudanese embassy



Long-term charity support rarely prompted by celebrity advocates
Low awareness of celebrity endorsers of specific charities
UNICEF the key exception – but endorsers more ‘A list’
Ubiquity & cross-fertilisation of celebrity support dilutes charity ‘ownership’

Across TV & media reporting it is the celebrity & not the charity or issue that is the story focus

Role of celebrity as advocate

Primarily

Draws attention

A beacon that cuts through charity marketplace
Highlights & draws into focus issues or causes
Easy to reference in social discourse & recommendation



Assuming chosen celebrity well-targeted & communicated

Acts as 'identifier'

Allows public to relate to potential causes / orgs
Helps to distinguish between different charities
Positions organisations in terms of desired audience

Trusted filter

Advocate acts as 'our representative'
Brings us closer to an issue / the 'victims'
Shortcuts the need to research & understand

Giving the most frequent action
Issue-interest rarely stimulated
No evidence of campaigning

A well-targeted celebrity can cut through charity 'noise' & establish an immediate connection

One man interested in biking & Ewan McGregor is an appealing personality – decides to watch the show

They are ambassadors for UNICEF and I got to see that actually the money has built schools, teaches children and that made me think that's a charity I would like to do something for

Fairly Concerned, 30-49, Mixed Gender



Engages with Ewan & Charlie as people – goes on their emotional journey through UNICEF camps



Celebrity as...
audience representative
issue explainer
charity endorser

NB. Media as important as celebrity here – TV series

Signs up to monthly donations with UNICEF

At its most effective, celebrity advocacy can stimulate issue engagement & charity support



British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection
↗

One participant supports BUAV but pays it little attention
Gervais endorsement prompted issue re-engagement & giving

Small charity, big celebrity (he must believe in it)

Feels unique - Gervais lacks ubiquity on charity circuit

Celeb brand credentials: intelligent & knowledgeable

A commentator on celebritisation of charity

I got a newsletter from them last week and he was on the front of it. I normally just recycle that newsletter, I've never read it. But I saw him on the front and that's so cool. And then I read the letter and gave them some money

Ambivalent, Celebrity interested,
18-29, Female

TWRResearch

However, more frequent examples are of superficial or short-term impact



Watch the show & warm to John Bishop
Emotionally involved in achievement & some donated money
Vague awareness of Sport Relief, but little idea of cause



Joanna Lumley & Ghurka campaign popular & admired
Raised awareness & tacit support for cause
But no one investigated further / signed petition



Ian Botham started doing these walks for leukaemia & lymphoma, he does them every year – I don't look too deeply into it, I know what he's doing – I appreciate how far he's taken it (but no, I haven't necessarily given money)

Fairly Concerned, 18-30, Male

The greatest beneficiary of endorsement is often the celebrity themselves



I wasn't a David Walliams fan at first but I am now. How can you do something like that and not be liked? His personality shone through and now he is one of my favourite people.

Aren't they marvellous!

Fairly concerned, 30-49,
Mixed Gender

Conversations about celebrity advocacy dominated by thoughts on *the celebrity*

Sponsored celebrities (cf. Sports Relief) become a cause of their own

(some gave to John Bishop without knowing where the money would go)

Celebrity involvement in charity delivers a lot of value to celeb brands

In negotiating with celebrities - do charities use this trade-off to their advantage?

Indications that celebrities particularly important for more challenging issues



Low profile causes

Famous people capture public attention
 Big star / small cause relationship interesting
 Scale of cause or organisation means integrity assumed

Not personally relevant

international development

Enables easily-avoided issues to be highlighted
 Makes a cause or charity more salient
 Delivers a personal benefit: getting closer to a famous person
 Enables stories to be told in an accessible way
 Tempers dominance of negative imagery with human voice



Did anyone see the one where celebrities went and lived with people from the local community? You could see they were desperately moved. It was real. You could see proper emotion

Ambivalent, Celebrity Interested, 18-29. Female

However, international development sector needs to take particular care in its use of celebrity endorsement



Heritage

COMIC
RELIEF

Profile



Ubiquity

International development intimately & thoroughly linked to celebrity advocacy
Plethora of celebrity advocates can dilute sense of their authentic issue-interest
Underlying perception that this sector the first port of call for publicity-hungry celebrities
Higher expectations of famous individuals to demonstrate their integrity in this arena

Clear themes differentiate the potential of celebrities as advocates (partic. relevant to international development)

NB. Factors are inter-related & the hierarchy of importance for each example (celebrity & cause) will change

Perceptions of



Demonstrable generosity

History of personal giving
Actively promotes generosity



Extravagant lifestyle
Self-interested attitude
Publicised tax avoidance



Longevity of commitment



No prior charity connections
Career needs resurrecting
UNICEF/RND celebrity indulgent

Personal connection



Demonstration of integrity
Can stretch beyond initial cause





Put themselves out



Effort demands attention
Sacrifice evidence of integrity

Charity 'face' an easy action
More publicity than commitment

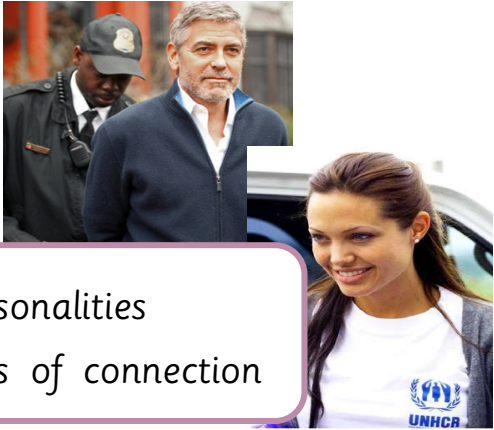


British (or not American)



Familiar & easier to relate to

Inaccessible personalities
Figureheads not points of connection



Emotional vulnerability



Celebrity our emotional conduit
We experience 'their journey'



Personally contentious

Personal lifestyles & integrity important
Particularly for less 'likeable' figures
Jolie & Madonna adoptions debated
Bono's tax affairs raised





Put themselves out

Charity 'face' an easy action
More visibility than commitment



'Likeability' is a thread that runs across all factors AND can trump longevity of commitment to a cause – Bono, Jolie, Halliwell are people it can be difficult to warm to

British (or not American)

Familiar & easier to relate to

Inaccessible personalities
Figureheads no points of connection



Emotional vulnerability

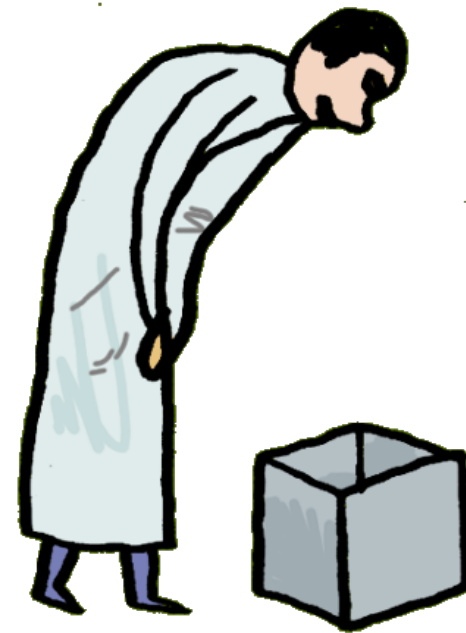
Appeal is highly subjective & often unpredictable – but who the public don't like tends to be more consistent than who they do

Celebrity our emotional...
We experience 'their journey'

...style...ity important
Partially for less 'likeable' figures
Jolie & Madonna adoptions debated
Bono's tax affairs raised



Conclusions



Conclusions

Celebrity advocacy effective in maintaining the profile of international development

Works best when celebrity acts as emotional conduit or story-teller

But short-term impact: rarely stimulates ongoing engagement or giving

Plethora of celebrity advocates in development sector can undermine perceived authenticity

Celebrities often the biggest winners of charity advocacy

Key implications for the development sector

Short-term impact: do charities have realistic expectations of celeb advocacy?

Celebrities benefit: can charities better leverage this to their advantage?

Authenticity matters: do celebs give enough of their own voice (tweet etc.)?

Longevity is important: are charity / celebrity relationships too transient?

Celebrity selection key: do charities sufficiently consider brand & audience fit?