

Behaviour change in Hong Kong

When I was growing up I always wanted to save animals, whether as a vet or a ranger. I imagined myself being like Tarzan living in the jungle surrounded by animals. The reality is somewhat different: I work in an office in a busy city in England, but the goal is the same: to save animals, specifically rhinos.

Susie Offord-Woolley | Managing Director

I wouldn't have it any other way, because the more I learn about the complexity of the threats facing animals like rhinos, the more I realise that the best way to make conservation successful is to work with people. This can involve raising awareness around the world about the threats against rhinos. It can also take me to the people living alongside rhinos, to ensure that we understand their needs and hopes for their children, and work together to create

anywhere from \$10-30 billion. People involved in the illegal wildlife trade have different motivations. Whether due to a need to pay debts, a desire to get rich, or to cure an illness, the reasons are myriad and complex.

Undoubtedly, to tackle the trade, enforcement efforts against wildlife crimes need to be increased with tougher sentencing. But equally as important is the need to stop the demand for an illegal product in the first place. Behaviour change – through social-marketing campaigns – has been successfully conducted all over the world; primarily in the health sector (think about drink-drive or anti-smoking campaigns). Changing behaviour, however, is no easy feat and, as we all know, even changing your own behaviour is difficult, and does not come about just by the knowledge that you should. I know I should exercise more, for example, but I still struggle to motivate myself.

To stop the global trade in rhino horn, it seems obvious that we need to change the behaviour of consumers, yet this type of social-marketing campaign is still relatively new to the conservation sector. Most conservationists probably grew up wanting to be Tarzan in the jungle, too, and not social marketers, but lessons learned from the sector are proving vital.

Over the last few years, work has been done by a number of conservation organisations to promote the use of evidence-based behaviour-change methodologies which put in robust monitoring methods, which can accurately evaluate the campaign's success. This type of work is far afield from the "awareness raising" campaigns commonly carried out

by many NGOs and governments. This year in particular, a ground-breaking three-day Behaviour Change Conference was held in Hong Kong in March 2016, aimed at bringing diverse expertise together to share lessons covering what has – and what hasn't – worked in this field, and to discuss how we can collectively strengthen approaches and build the conservation sector's ability to reduce demand for illegal wildlife products.

The conference was attended by 100 people from 60 organisations from all around the world and I was lucky



Top, right: The workshop pushed participants to work and think in creative ways and to collaborate with each other

Below: Successful social marketing campaigns target a clear audience using data and insight

a symbiotic relationship with mutual benefits for wildlife and communities.

Or my work can involve changing the minds and behaviour of the people who are driving rhino poaching; the people buying and consuming rhino horn. In my opinion, the latter is the most complex aspect of working with people.

The illegal wildlife trade is now the fourth-biggest illegal trade in the world. There are different estimates of its total value, with illegal fishing and logging alone touted at



TWIN TRACK APPROACH
LAW ENFORCEMENT &
MESSAGES TO INFLUENCE
BEHAVIOUR...



OFFER ALTERNATIVES BUT BEWARE OF
THE POTENTIAL OF CREATING NEW
PROBLEMS VIA THE ALTERNATIVE...



CLEARLY UNDERSTAND AND SEGMENT OUR AUDIENCES...



The Strength of Chi

On World Rhino Day 2014, the **Strength of Chi** campaign was launched by TRAFFIC in Viet Nam and Save the Rhino International, tackling the demand for illegal rhino horn in Viet Nam.

Susie Offord-Woolley | Managing Director

Funded by the British Government's Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, the Chi campaign is an evidence-based social marketing campaign aimed at changing the behaviour of the country's main users of rhino horn.

In 2013 TRAFFIC in Viet Nam carried out consumer research, identifying that the main users of rhino horn were wealthy businessmen aged between 35 to 50 living in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Using data and insight from this research,

TRAFFIC in Viet Nam profiled an archetypal rhino horn consumer: "Mr L."



Above, right: Chi messaging has been placed on billboards and at events that would reach Mr L.

To reach Mr L., Chi billboards were placed in prominent places near where Mr L. would live, and at tennis courts he would frequent. Chi messaging featured in the magazines he likes to read, and postcards were placed in Viet Nam Airlines' business lounges. A website was launched to engage Mr L. in more in-depth discussions about Chi and the misperceptions about rhino horn use. Advertising banners were placed on online newspapers popular with businessmen.

The campaign has gained high-profile support from many influential Vietnamese people and organisations. A short film featured three famous Vietnamese business leaders publicly pledging zero-tolerance for rhino horn consumption. Other important partners include government departments such as the Ministry of Health and the Central Committee of Propaganda and Education, which controls all media messaging in Viet Nam.

The campaign has now reached a large section of our target audience, with initial research showing there is some success in changing rhino horn consumers' attitudes and behaviour.

Grants

Since November 2015, we have sent £71,972 from the IWT Challenge Fund and £30,000 from SRI's supporters and miscellaneous donations to TRAFFIC in Viet Nam for the Strength of Chi campaign.

enough to be one of them. It brought together NGOs, academics, social marketers, funders, and government officials from demand countries and many more.

The first step in any behaviour-change campaign is to start with reliable information to understand demand: who is doing what, where, how and why, what are their motivations, and what are the barriers that prevent them from changing their behaviour? Unfortunately, collecting data is expensive. Even for species such as rhinos and elephants, on which a relatively large number of social marketing campaigns have been conducted, there are many gaps in knowledge about the root causes of demand; for other, less emblematic species, even less is known.

At the conference it was agreed that organisations need to pool data, and make findings publicly available. There was also support for the development of a 'best practice' toolkit for practitioners. Case studies of behaviour change campaigns along with the methodologies used were discussed, which included looking at the use of positive vs negative messaging, for example: encouraging businessmen not to buy rhino horn because their natural strength comes from within, vs encouraging people not to buy rhino horn because it means they are damaging the environment. We learned more about tailoring campaigns for different audiences and how best to communicate messages based on your audience's motivations and aspirations.

The conference pushed us to think creatively, taking part in exercises looking at how we would approach three common consumer motivations for buying illegal wildlife products, such as buying as an investment, buying to increase social status and buying for medicinal purposes. Thinking creatively is essential, for example: can other products such as art become a substitute for rhino horn or ivory as a means of displaying wealth?

One evening, after a day of workshops, our group of 100 conservationists were let loose onto Hollywood Road in central Hong Kong. We visited dozens of traditional medicine and antiques shops selling ivory, saiga horn and many other wildlife products. It was a stark reminder of the immense challenge we all face.

At its close, the conference saw new collaborations established, funding announced, research planned, actions and next steps being agreed. One conference will not stop the illegal wildlife trade by itself. If the 60 organisations in attendance can change the behaviour of illegal wildlife consumers more effectively, and share their knowledge with even more conservationists, I believe it will have an important impact in contributing to winning this battle – a battle that we can't afford to lose.

A website www.changewildlifeconsumers.org has been created to support organisations working on changing behaviour to reduce consumer demand for illegal wildlife products

