



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.

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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

