

# **DISPELLING THE MYTH: PROTECTING RHINOS AND PEOPLE**

**FINAL REPORT**

October 2015 – May 2016

**WILDACT VIETNAM**

F: [facebook.com/WildActvn](https://facebook.com/WildActvn)

T: [@WildAct\\_vn](https://twitter.com/WildAct_vn)

[www.wildact-vn.org](http://www.wildact-vn.org)

[info@wildact-vn.org](mailto:info@wildact-vn.org)

# ABOUT WILDACT

WildAct is a local conservation charity and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) based in Hanoi, Viet Nam. Our work involves raising awareness of the Vietnamese people on conservation issues by providing information and education programs for the younger generation. Despite having a small team, we are fiercely dedicated to changing the minds of Vietnamese citizens through scientific evidence, and also the needs of the local people. In addition, WildAct attempts to cooperate with other international and local conservation NGOs to tackle the issue of threatened species and ecosystems. One of the main aims of WildAct is to reduce the demand for wildlife products in Viet Nam, which is noted to have a heavy consumption of rhino horns, ivory and bear bile. Finally, WildAct maintains strong connections with other conservation organisations including United For Wildlife (UFW), Kingsley Holgate Foundation, Humane Society International (HSI), Helping Rhinos and Breaking The Brand – Nia’s Friend.

WildAct is a part of the Rhino Alliance, a group of independent rhino conservation NGO's who have joined force to share resources, practices and work together to save the rhino.

[www.wildact-vn.org](http://www.wildact-vn.org)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

WILDACT

26, TT26, Khu Do Thi Van Phu

Ha Dong, Hanoi,

Vietnam.

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## PARTNERS

This project was supported by:



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*"This project aims to raise awareness on the rhinos crisis amongst hospital staff, patients and their families through medical workshop program at several hospitals in Vietnam"*

Despite extensive conservation efforts over the last decade, the population of rhinos in Africa continues to decline. Africa's western black rhino went extinct in 2013 and the rest of Africa's rhino population is only in the low thousands. Their survival is not guaranteed. The demand for rhino horn in Vietnam has been recognised as one of the main driving force for the poaching of rhinos in Africa. This country has an ancient history of using rhino horn as a traditional medicine to cure a range of illnesses. Between 2002 and 2007, five comprehensive Vietnamese-language pharmacopoeias have specific sections on rhino horn as medicine have been published. Recent popular belief in Viet Nam promotes rhino horn usage as treatment and a cure, for life-threatening cancer.

The project team visited hospitals and traditional medicine clinics in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city to give a short talk on the rhinos, fail advertising and illegal consumption of rhino horn as well as the rhino poaching crisis in Africa. Doctors, nurses and hospital staff were then supported by the team to organise a small workshop with their patients and patients family to openly discuss about illness treatment and the consumption of rhino horns, as well as other wildlife products (i.e. bear bile, tiger balm ect) in medicines.

In total, 133 pharmacies, 59 hospitals and clinics were reached in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city (**45 in Hanoi and 14 in Ho Chi Minh city**) were reached through this project.

## Hospital/clinic outreach

### HANOI (NOVEMBER 2015 – MAY 2016)

WildAct officially started the project on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015 in Hanoi. Our team went to 45 pharmacies, TAM clinics and hospitals to build workshops with doctors and hospital staff and distributed almost 5000 education materials (leaflets, posters and tote bags) to patients and patients relatives.

430 doctors participated in the workshop committed to discourage their patients from consuming wildlife products for medicinal purposes.

	Hospital/Clinic	Doctors received training	Material distributed	Notes
1	Hanoi obstetrics and gynecology hospital	45	200	Video is projected in the hallway
2	Duc Hanh Traditional Medicine (TM) clinic	5	50	
3	Military institute of Traditional Medicine	30	200	Video is displayed on every screens in the hospital
4	108 Hospital (military hospital)	45	200	
5	Thanh Tri Hospital	30	100	
6	Tung Lam general clinic (GC)	2	100	
7	Tuan Trang general clinic	6	100	
8	Thu Trang pharmacy	1	100	
9	Doan Nhan pharmacy	2	100	
10	Thao Oanh GC	5	100	
11	Hoang Nam TM clinic	5	100	
12	Phuong Thanh GC	2	100	
13	Thu Cuc GC	10	100	Video is displayed on patient waiting lounge
14	Acupuncture clinic Lang Ha	1	100	
15	An Viet TM	2	10	
16	My An Pharmacy	3	100	



17	Truong Sinh GC	4	20	
18	TM institute	5	100	
19	Tho Xuong TM	2	10	
20	Hoang Mai TM	3	50	
21	Trang An general hospital	5	50	
22	Viet- Phap hospital	10	100	Video displayed on screen at VIP rooms
23	Viet – Nhat hospital	10	100	Video displayed on screen at VIP rooms
24	Viet – Duc hospital	7	50	
25	Hi vong hospital	3	50	
26	Kim Lan GC	3	20	
27	Pham Ngoc TM	2	20	
28	Hong Ha Hospital	5	30	
29	Hong Van Pharmacy	2	20	
30	Tri Duc pharmacy	3	20	
31	Thang Long Hospital	5	20	
32	Bach Mai Hospital	30	200	
33	Vietnam - CuBa hospital	22	200	
34	Acupuncture hospital	15	200	
35	Thanh Nhan Hospital	20	200	
36	Xanh Pon Hospital	15	200	
37	Dong Da hospital	21	200	
38	Bac Thang Long hospital	15	200	
39	Dong Anh hospital	25	200	
40	Soc Son hospital	20	200	
41	Bao Long hospital	10	200	
42	Lan Anh GC	2	50	
43	Ngoc Anh pharmacy	2	50	
44	Lien Minh pharmacy	2	50	
45	Thieu Thuoc Pharmacy	3	40	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>4700</b>	Video displayed at 5 hospitals & clinics



*A pharmacist is advising her patient on zoonotic diseases that can be transmitted from wildlife products to human, at Tung Lam general clinic, Thanh Tri, Hanoi.*

## Strength

- Taking advantages of networking and relationship with doctors, nurses, hospitals staff to reach out to as many hospital/clinic as possible.
- Materials printed based on advised and preferences of each hospitals/clinics; therefore doctors were happy to distribute our materials to their patient.
- Flexible and was able to combine activities with hospitals/clinic events to reduce the cost.
- Working directly with doctors/nurses to find out their needs to support and delivers information about health care and wildlife products accordingly.

## Weaknesses

- Does not have enough educational materials to distribute to some of the hospitals/clinics.
- Does not have enough funding to pay for video to be displayed at participated hospital.
- Funding for future activities was not secured causing some difficulties to start a partnership with some hospitals/clinics.
- Could not survey patients behaviours and attitudes due to short term relationship with hospitals/clinics.

## Hospital/clinic outreach

### HO CHI MINH CITY (OCTORBER 2015 – APRIL 2016)

WildAct officially started the project on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015 in Ho Chi Minh city with support from a group of 20 local volunteers. Our team went to 14 TAM clinics and hospitals to build workshops with doctors and hospital staff and distributed almost 5000 education materials (leaflets, posters and tote bags) to patients and patients relatives.

22 doctors participated in the workshop committed to discourage their patients from consuming wildlife products for medicinal purposes.

	Hospital/Clinic	Doctors received training	Material distributed	Notes
1	Breast cancer event		200	Medicinal herbs distributed to the public
2	Tra On Clinic	1	404	
3	Huynh Luong Clinic	2	1000	
4	Tâm Thư Clinic	1	2	
5	Thien Clinic	1	100	
6	Lan Ha Clinic	2	200	
7	Khang Duc Clinic	2	350	
8	560 Clinic	1	150	
9	Sai Gon clinic	2	300	
10	Hoang Lan Clinic	1	200	
11	Tan Qui Clinic	1	300	
12	Thien Phuoc Clinic	2	300	
13	Thien Phuc Clinic	2	300	
14	Hong Lac Clinic	2	800	
15	Lam Minh Anh Clinic	2	250	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4656</b>	



A total of 133 pharmacies were reached in Southern Vietnam (108 in Ho Chi Minh city, 16 in Can Tho, 4 in Long An and 5 in Binh Duong), with another 3,244 posters and leaflets were delivered to the public in these areas.

In addition, in October 2015, we collaborated with Vietnam Breast Cancer network to created an event called "Non Hong event", sending a strong message "Your mind is your medicine, not wildlife products". The event were held at Le Thi Rieng Park, Ho Chi Minh city and attracted 200 citizens in the areas. More than 200 educational materials and 100 medicinal herbs were distributed to the public, in the call for sustainable use of natural resources in Traditional Medicine.



*At "Non Hong" event, distributing educational materials and traditional medicine herbs to the public, Ho Chi Minh city.*



*Doctor at Tan Qui Clinic receiving educational materials to distribute to patients at his clinic.*

### Strength

- Educational materials such as tote bags, leaflets and posters were designed according to Southern Vietnamese preference and local languages.
- Working directly with doctors/nurses to find out their needs to support and deliver information about health care and wildlife products accordingly.

### Weaknesses

- Small network in HCMC and therefore was difficult to collaborate with hospitals.
- Do not have enough funding to pay for video to be displayed in participated hospital.
- Funding for future activities was not secured causing some difficulties to start a partnership with some hospitals/clinics.
- Could not survey patients behaviours and attitudes due to short term relationship with hospitals/clinics.



## SOCIAL NETWORKS OUTREACH



Twitter: **293** Retwitts and **149** Likes



Facebook WildAct: **349** Likes and **142** Shares

Facebook Tôi Yêu Động Vật: **7335** Likes and **30** Shares



Website [www.wildact-vn.org](http://www.wildact-vn.org) reached **2450** hits!



*"I have been working as Traditional Medicine doctors for more than 30 years. I can see how wildlife reduced over my life time: when I started, there were many TM practitioners use wildlife products, such as pangolin scales or bear bile. But they are become rarer and rarer, harder to find and more expensive. There are also many other alternative medicinal herbs can be used instead wild animal parts. I myself prefer to prescribe medicinal herbs to my patients. Medicinal herbs have been used in TM for very long time and many were proven by scientists on their effectiveness, and even used in Western medicine.*

*...I think it is important to maintain our traditional and culture, but at the same time not destruct our living environment. I'm fully supporting this project.*

*...Rhino horn is not magical medicine, and the rhinos are going to be extinct if we keep consuming their horns. It is for sure cannot cure cancer, that is a bad rumor and need to be dispelled".*

*Thuan – Vietnamese Traditional Medicine doctor.*



## CONCLUSION

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Thanks to financial supports from the Lush Foundation and RhiNORemedy, we were able to deliver more than 11,000 educational materials and almost 500 doctors throughout Vietnam.

There were still much to improve, for example, we need to have a long term plan to take advantages of the relationship and partnership that we were able to established with many of the clinics and hospitals who were participated in this project. The designing of posters, leaflets, tote bags and handheld fans based on regional preference can cause complication, un-uniform, different slogans to be used in northern and southern Vietnam also cause confusion between participated doctors and hospital staff.

The small networks in Southern Vietnam caused difficulties in organising events and restricted activities in many hospitals and clinics. The most important activity of the project, which is giving workshop and training to doctors, hospital staff and pharmacists were not feasible in Southern Vietnam, hence a small number of doctors were reached. The team were then changed the target to private pharmacists and clinics, which proved to be easier to reach.

Surveying patients knowledge, attitudes and behaviours towards wildlife products were difficult, due to the short-term planning project. Most hospitals refused to disturb their patients, and required a permission from the Ministry of Health for this particular survey. Some also suggested that it might be feasible in a long term project, where hospitals can benefit directly from the project activities.

## RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Create a long term plan with several main hospitals to get full support (especially to conduct social surveys).
- 2) Provide immediate pay-off, or direct benefit to participated hospitals to encouraging them to join future activities.
- 3) Choose one clear, simple and easy to remember slogan and educational materials to be used throughout the project.
- 4) Be flexible and combining the workshops (if possible) to the hospital event to reduce costs and attract more doctors to join.
- 5) Take advantages of doctors support to send out message to patients.
- 6) Using the doctors/hospitals network to reach out to more clinics, if possible.
- 7) Sometimes it is good to hide conservation logo and message! It is important to make the public see that those messages come from the doctors themselves, in advice for their well-being.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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WildAct Vietnam  
26, TT 26, Van Phu, Ha Dong, Hanoi, Vietnam  
[www.wildact-vn.org](http://www.wildact-vn.org)  
T: @WildAct\_vn  
F: /WildActvn

This report was prepared by: Ngan Bui.

For further information, please contact: [info@wildact-vn.org](mailto:info@wildact-vn.org)