



*The Rhino Reality Campaign is a collaboration between international wildlife NGOs, SA conservation NGOs, conservation projects, private foundations and individuals.*

*The Rhino Reality Campaign is a not-for-gain multi-media campaign. Its aim is to raise awareness in Asian countries regarding the plight Africa's rhino.*

## **ENDING THE DEMAND FOR RHINO HORN IN ASIA**

### **HOW TO SHIFT THE MIND-SET OF CONSUMERS**

There are two battle grounds where the future of rhino will be decided. One on the ground where the poaching is occurring in Africa and the other in the mind of the consumer where the demand is highest in China and Vietnam. The ultimate battle to save rhinos from extinction will not be won on the ground alone, but will depend on a corresponding mind-shift that ends demand in Asia. The effectiveness of anti-poaching methods will only be as effective as a corresponding effort to reduce demand.

Innovative strategies and a substantial and multi-pronged approach to address the demand may include the following:

- Targeting the youth in Asia to entrench the mind-set that consumption of wildlife products is uncool - through social media and celebrity endorsement.
- Influencing high profile politicians (in Africa and Asia) on the social and economic impact poaching has - through serious political engagement and business economic pressure.
- Promoting alternatives to rhino horn (there are numerous officially sanctioned alternatives suggested by the TCM councils), - through education and incentives.
- Smuggling in China is viewed seriously and creating further awareness about rhino horn specifically, and in particular to Asian visitors or contractors in Africa.
- A focus on strategic niche markets and understanding the driving motives in the mind of the consumer will help shape and effective campaign.

Without a dynamic, focused and well researched awareness and incentive campaign in Asia, the market for horn will continue to exist and will continue to be fueled by unscrupulous crime syndicates, both organized and opportunistic, and possibly even by elements within Asian and African governments. Political is a major force that still needs to be employed more effectively to curb the current exponential poaching crisis. The criminal element will not disappear through legalization of trade, but will find a cover to legitimize their actions.

The success of the ivory trade ban and its corresponding drop in demand in China since then was a combination of economic pressure, political pressure and awareness.

Asian communities and cultural practice is fast changing and modernizing across many sectors. There is growing awareness of animal welfare in China. The reality is in time the traditional Chinese Medicine demand for rhino horn itself will shift, either through extinction or through a shift to modernization in cultural practice.

Successful non-consumptive campaigns for wildlife trade in China have employed the following:

1. Celebrity endorsement
2. Political pressure through business and communication
3. A well researched campaign concept (currently research is underway in Vietnam and China).
4. Delivery via targeted and appropriate media placement.
5. A strategic message that aligns to the Asian mind-set and results in real changes in behaviour.

6. Trying to combat climate change, or the HIV pandemic without education or creating awareness for a change in values and belief systems within the public mind-set is unheard of. Why is education and awareness not foremost on the conservation agenda relating to rhino horn and the poaching crisis? Why is it taking so long to get a collaborative and united conservation message communicated across Asia?
7. Effective communication campaigns have been shown to work, but require a long-term investment and a coordinated and strategic approach.

It is time to employ awareness, education and **collaboration** in the end user markets as essential strategic levers to any long-term solution. The proliferation of rhino related conservation groups with divergent views needs to end. A strong united and collaboratively strategic front needs to be formed to end this on-going war for rhino.

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