

iTHINK

**Wildlife Conservation Global Forum and Behavior
Change Campaign Toolkit**

www.ithink-now.org



OVERVIEW

The illegal consumption of wildlife is driving many species toward extinction. The overexploitation of endangered species for food, trophies and ornaments, traditional medicine, the exotic pet trade and other uses is reducing wild populations of many species at unprecedented rates. Tiger populations have declined by more than 90%, elephants are being killed for their tusks by the thousands and rhinos are being decimated for their horns. These are just a few of the more than 1,000 species threatened by overexploitation which is driven by demand for wildlife and their products. If the world is going to stand a chance of saving wildlife and preserving crucial habitats and biodiversity, cooperative and strategic efforts are needed.

iTHINK was designed as a multipronged response to this crisis. It is both a behavior change campaign in its own right and a website that serves as a platform to boost similar campaigns, a forum to spark conversations, and a hub for issues related to wildlife conservation. Each of these different aspects is linked back to the main website and unified under the iTHINK banner.

The website and forum at www.ithink-now.org is currently available in four languages, providing locally driven content in each of these different countries. To make the website more interactive and create more conversations, users can easily upload their own photos, video and articles, which can be easily shared through social media.

The first iTHINK behavior change campaign was launched at the same time as the website in 2013. For the campaign, dozens of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) featuring Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) have been displayed on thousands of video screens and in several thousand printed display ads. At the peak of these campaigns, iTHINK reached more than 40 million people per day. And the numbers continue to grow.

This toolkit was designed to provide users with much of the practical information needed to conduct iTHINK campaigns. The information has been compiled from extensive testing and refining of the campaigns across China and Southeast Asia. Whether you're a bigger NGO or a smaller circle of friends, or somewhere in between, feel free to take these basic ideas and templates and run with them. The toolkit and supporting annexes are available at www.ithink-now.org/toolkit and <http://freeland.org/toolkits/>

iTHINK was made possible with support from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The web platform and campaigns have also benefitted from the support of other partners and stakeholders across China, Thailand, and Vietnam.

This toolkit is a work-in-progress designed to be continuously improved, refined and expanded. Should you have feedback, suggestions or comments, please write to info@freeland.org

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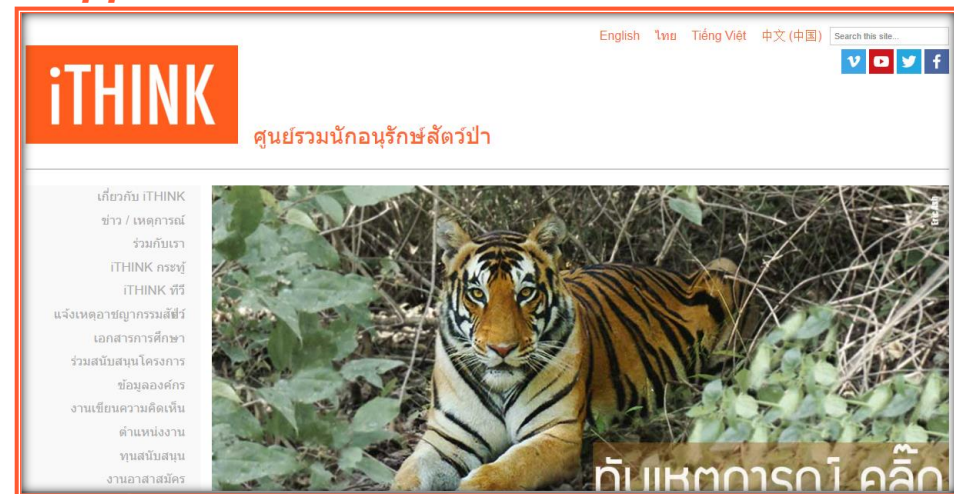
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PART 1: iTHINK Global Forum and Campaign Support Platform

The website at www.ithink-now.org was designed as a home for the iTHINK campaign that could also serve as a springboard for like-minded campaigns. Through this platform, users can publicize their campaigns to amplify their messages and reach many more people. Available in Chinese, English, Thai and Vietnamese, the website is intended to be as interactive as possible with easy-to-share content that allows users to upload their own photos, videos and reports. On the global forum, users can create conversations, brainstorm ideas, make friends, learn more about the pertinent issues surrounding conservation and connect with potential collaborators.

Website Features

The website is intended to be a hub for both the conservation community, who can post all the latest updates and research about their efforts, as well as concerned members of the public, who can educate themselves and find out how they can help. So there are specific sections for news and events from the conservation world, as well as separate pages for recent studies and opinion pieces. Organizations in search of personnel can also advertise jobs. Volunteers can look for positions, while Grant Opportunities and Projects in Need have their own separate sections. The website also serves as an archive for all the PSAs, both print and videos, from previous iTHINK campaigns. It's also a good educational tool for students and way for members of the public to report wildlife crimes.

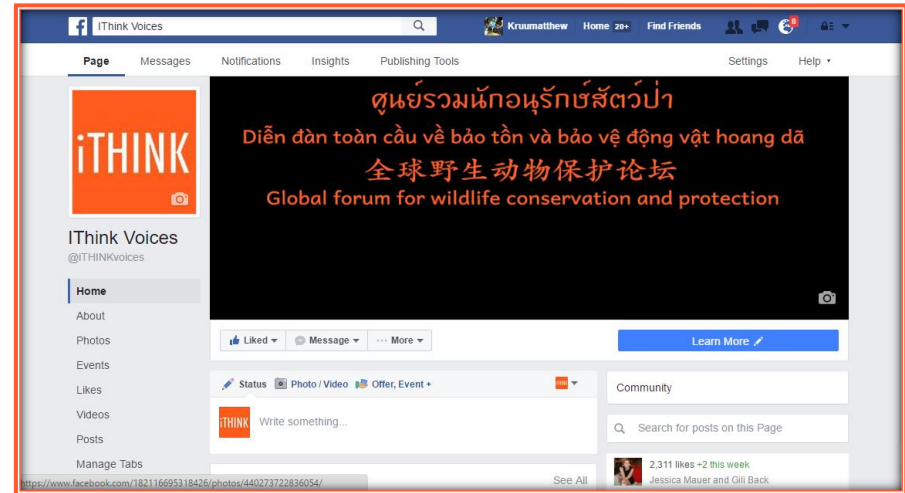


Engaging the public

One of the website's most important features is the iTHINK Forum, which is a sounding-board for the opinions of the general public to start debates and encourage discussions. Users can also upload their own photos, videos and reports to promote their own campaigns.

Social media friendly

With a few easy clicks much of the content on the website can be shared via Twitter and Facebook to bring these key issues and messages to a broader audience. This is also a way of creating more dialogue, encouraging partnerships by sharing content and linking these efforts back to the global platform and forum, which can then bring more attention to other campaigns and inspire more conversations. Follow iTHINK's facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/iTHINKvoices/> and on twitter at <https://twitter.com/ithinkvoices>



Campaign support platform

The iTHINK website is also a springboard to boost similar campaigns, linking them to broader regional efforts to make them more impactful. This means that by uploading all the details of your campaign – the messages, photos, videos, prints ads and research papers – to the website you can increase the visibility of your effort and boost the traffic to your website and social media platforms. Two initiatives that used the platform to their advantage are the Fin Free Thailand campaign to reduce the demand for shark fin soup by asking hotels, restaurants and other venues to stop selling shark fin soup, and WildAid's Ivory Free effort that seeks to reduce the demand for products made from elephant tusks.

PART 2: Deciding on Your Message, Objectives and Target Audience

The first step to decide on campaign messaging is to have a clear issue you are trying to address. There is plenty of information available online and in academic papers and reports. To start, ask yourself some basic questions.

- Which wildlife products are being sold in your area?
- Why are people buying these products?
- Who is buying and selling them?
- Are these animals endangered?
- Is the trade in such species permitted or illegal?

Use all the available information on these topics to define the main messages of your campaign. When doing your research, all these statistics, facts, laws, and public opinion will inform the core of your campaign. The other key thing is to decide what you are trying to achieve with the campaign.

Search online: By searching 'wildlife trafficking' or 'wildlife conservation' online you can find a wealth of information.

Contact other organizations: If you contact other organizations and find out what they are doing you can team up to achieve greater impacts.

Setting Strategic Objectives

Having specific objectives will form the core of your campaign. In this list you can see objectives from previous iTHINK campaigns that can be used to spark ideas. Depending on your campaign you can also think of new objectives.

- To create awareness among people about how poaching and wildlife trafficking have harmful impacts on our natural world.
- To alter people's perceptions of wildlife consumption by questioning the products' worth as trophies and status symbols.
- To inform people that the consumption of these goods could be illegal.
- To remind consumers that the claims of potions or tonics curing diseases or boosting virility have been called into question by medical experts, and there are always cheaper and more effective alternatives available.

Target Audience

The next step in deciding how to create the most effective PSA to achieve your objectives is identifying your target market. Who is buying wildlife products in your area? The young or old? Men or women? The rich, poor or middle classes? Here are some different target groups that will help you focus on a certain demographic to make sure your campaign has a clear target audience:

- The general public unaware of the trade's negative effects on the environment;
- Owners and potential buyers of exotic pets;
- Policymakers from the government;
- Consumers of traditional medicines made from wildlife products;
- Consumers unaware that these products could be illegal;
- Stakeholders of wildlife trafficking networks, including traders, poachers and law enforcement officers;
- Tourists who buy products made from endangered species;
- Airline staff and ground crews; and
- Younger people at risk of buying such products in the future.

Tip Box:

Find Ad companies with CSR projects

Do a Google search for international advertising agencies to see if they have an office in your area. Many of these companies have Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs that are dedicated to helping causes like conservation. You can also look at similar PSAs to see the name of the media company or advertising agency that helped design the ad or supplied the space.

PART 3: The iTHINK campaign

iTHINK was designed as a strategy to spark thought and encourage people to think and talk about the illegal wildlife trade and the demand for such products, which in turn would help to change the behavior of consumers and subsequently decrease the number of animals being poached. The numbers underscore the campaign's success. Across the three target countries of China, Thailand and Vietnam, a total of 43 Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) appeared in public service announcements (PSAs) in both videos displayed on almost 22,000 screens in high-traffic areas like airports subways, as well as on TV stations in China and Vietnam, combined with print ads and billboards displayed in more than 4,000 locations. The five comprehensive assessment surveys in the three countries demonstrated clear progress towards changing behavior. (See links to annexes on Page 20)


The overall approach was based on advertising, but instead of enticing consumers to buy certain products, iTHINK dissuades them from making such purchases.

Why do people buy wildlife?

In devising an effective strategy, the first question asked was:

Why do people buy wildlife products? The motivation behind these purchases is much the same as for more traditional consumer choices like fashion or beauty products. In total, there are six motivating factors: being accepted, making money, pleasing others, achieving recognition, looking good and feeling better. All six can be used to inform campaign strategies.

Consumer behavior is generally based on:

- 
- Being accepted
 - Making more money
 - Pleasing others
 - Being recognized
 - Looking or feeling better

Consumers buy illegal wildlife because they are convinced it benefits their image/ health.

The creation of iTHINK

In 2011 a series of brainstorming sessions were held in China, Thailand and Vietnam to look at previous campaigns to reduce the consumption of wildlife products and come up with a new strategy to tackle this dilemma. NGOs sat together with advertising and marketing specialists, survey firms and even former poachers and smugglers to devise a campaign that addressed the shortcomings and capitalized on the strengths of many previous efforts. In the eyes of many experts, things were not changing fast enough in Asia, and the region's growing affluence was putting increased pressure on already fragile populations of endangered species. A catalyst of the campaign was the creative director of an advertising firm, who said the conservation community was only talking to itself, not the real world. As he said, "You can't conduct a campaign to stop wildlife trade until your audience knows there is a wildlife trade, how bad it is, and why it's bad. So the first order of business: get the conversation started." Above all, iTHINK was designed to spark those conversations.

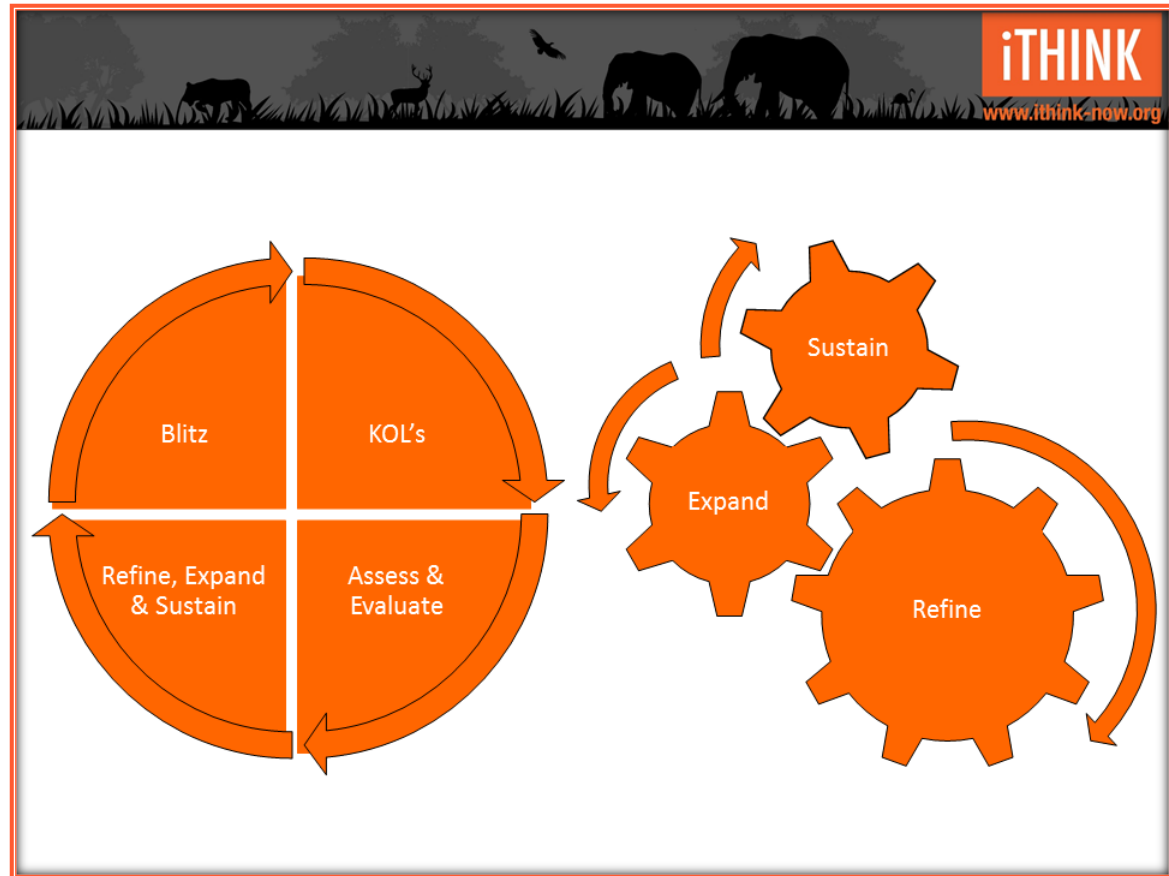


The iTHINK Campaign featured prominently at WildFest, an outdoor film and music festival promoting wildlife conservation in Hanoi, Viet Nam.

The iTHINK Cycle

iTHINK follows a traditional advertising cycle that allows the messaging to continuously evolve and improve as the campaign goes on. It is not necessary for all campaigns to follow this exact format.

Awareness blitz Modern consumers make purchases based on informed decisions. With the sheer volume of information available to the public, consumers purchase items based on their knowledge and feelings, not just on a whim. The iTHINK cycle starts with a blitz of advertisements and information, using all available media channels and online tools to ensure the target audience has the information needed to make their own decisions. Outreach events for the general public or at schools enhance awareness and can start a word-of-mouth buzz and get people talking. All these efforts need to be coordinated with the different partners and stakeholders. The information blitz is also designed to make people aware of the bigger issues surrounding wildlife trafficking and its harmful effects on people, economies and nature.



Public Service Announcements (PSAs) Once the stage has been set and the audience given enough background details and information about the big issues, it's time to start disseminating your PSAs. These are short and sharp ads that appear in print or in videos, which are designed to catch people's attention and deliver the main messages of your campaign. Many iTHINK PSAs showcase the personal opinions of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), which helps to enforce the campaign messages.

Using Key Opinion Leaders for PSAs KOLs are those influencers the public recognizes, admires and respects. Depending on your target audience, these KOLs may be famous celebrities, government officials, academics, doctors, experts from different fields or youth leaders. What matters most is their power to influence the target audience to change their mindset and behavior. It is crucial that the PSAs are real, unscripted messages showing genuine emotions and opinions, because if they appear to be sound-bytes or come off as too slick and rehearsed, the target audience will sense that they are insincere and could disregard the messaging. All of the iTHINK PSA can be found in the annex section on page 20.



Choosing Your KOL

Depending on the type of campaign you have in mind you will need to choose your KOL accordingly. Below are some examples of KOLs and why they have been used in previous efforts.

Celebrities: Actors, singers, models, TV hosts and other stars have a lot of influence over audiences, because they are constantly seen in mainstream media. Through their music or movies and TV appearances, they touch our emotions and become part of our lives. They are the physical embodiments of beauty and wealth, power and prestige. These are some of the key reasons why they are frequently used in advertisements. Many celebrities are photogenic and they are not shy about appearing on camera. They also tend to have large followings on social media that can help to spread the key messages of your campaign.

Government officials: Ministers of the environment and other officials from departments dealing with national parks and wildlife, as well as law enforcement officers, can also have considerable sway as KOLs. They are able to deliver stern messages that reinforce the illegality of the wildlife trade from a state perspective and influence policymakers as well as consumers. Many politicians are also public figures with large followings who are eager to be seen supporting a worthy cause.

Experts and academics: These professors, veterinarians, antiques dealers and traditional medicine specialists may not be so well known, but they are highly respected and influential in their fields and can have a positive impact on audiences when the right expert is matched to the right campaign. Imagine the influence that a well-known wildlife conservationist can have over a target audience when delivering a key message about his field of expertise.

To give you a range of examples to choose from here are some KOLs that have already appeared in iTHINK ads:

- Nuengthida Sophon: a famous singer who has more than 500,000 Twitter followers did a video PSA. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aG2LOyAL2I4>
- Kong Saharat: a popular actor and television presenter of the singing show *The Voice* urged the public to stop buying ivory products. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9zTTYlI9kU>
- Kristie Kenney: the former United States Ambassador to Thailand, who also has a significant social media following, appeared in a video PSA promoting awareness and education about wildlife trafficking. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75JBrljoRk8>

- Yuan Xikun: a respected Chinese artist and environmentalist delivered a powerful message on looking forward to a sustainable future by conserving endangered species. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsiL7w0vE-M&list=PLklbnplmr56iNIMIKDoaoKYTEMwPsQdXx&index=8>
- Mr. Doan Minh Quan: The Deputy Director of the Vietnam's Northern Airport Authority that manages Hanoi's Noi Bai Airport spoke for the crucial role that the private sector plays in helping to combat wildlife trafficking. <https://youtu.be/ER0R4Aub-mU>

How to Contact KOLs

For celebrities, it's best to contact their publicist or manager through their websites or social media channels. Government officials can be contacted through their respective ministry or department. For academics and student leaders try contacting them through their institutions, whereas other experts can be reached through their businesses.

Turning KOLs into KALs

Getting a KOL to appear in a one-off PSA is a good start, but you need to think long term in order to convert them into Key Action Leaders, or KALs, in order to build and sustain a campaign. This is important because behavior change takes time and sustained efforts are needed to achieve the desired results. This can be achieved by first selecting those celebrities or experts that already have a passion for wildlife issues, and by doing follow ups with them. You could invite them to attend future events about your campaign, or to post relevant social media content for their large followings, or talk about them with the press when they do interviews. Doing so will greatly extend the reach of your efforts. It will also help to create a movement that can sustain itself.

Tip Box:

Trying to get a KOL onboard could take months. They have very busy schedules. Plan accordingly.

Many celebrities are anxious to be seen as role models that support good causes. Frame your request in these kinds of terms, stressing the not-for-profit humanitarian angle.

No KOL, no problem

One of the most successful parts of the campaign, “iTHINK on the Streets,” revolves around asking members of the general public on the streets what they think about wildlife trafficking. It’s a tried and tested strategy. These kinds of PSAs work well at events too. Depending on your target audience, you can choose younger, older or middle-aged members of the general public, to deliver clear and honest answers that represent the voice of ordinary people. Many revolutions have started with a groundswell of support from the streets that mobilized the public. These videos can easily be made using a standard digital video camera or even a smartphone.

Leveraging Media Support

To achieve the maximum impact, and disseminate your key messages far and wide, you should try to leverage media support. This could be in the form of approaching media companies to get free or discounted advertising space such as billboards and TV monitors in high-traffic areas like airports and subway stations. You could also approach TV stations – especially cable stations looking for local content rather than major networks – to run your PSAs for free or discounted rates. You should also engage traditional media like newspapers, magazines and radio. By building partnerships like these you also build a stronger support base that can be used in future campaigns. By getting the media agencies to buy in, you can build and sustain a bigger movement. To engage these companies, it’s crucial that you let them know you’re not asking for anything free: you’re coming to them with free content that they can use as part of their corporate social responsibility programs.

Boosting Online Engagement

Another effective way to spread your message is through online PSAs. These can be shared through social media, the iTHINK website or other forums. When sharing a post about the iTHINK campaign, encourage others to share the messages too. It is also important to document your campaign and then post it on the iTHINK website, so others can see your work and help spread the word or build on your efforts to start other campaigns. The website is a great tool for networking and it supported by iTHINK social media platforms on both Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/iTHINKvoices/> and on twitter @iTHINKvoices

Tip Box:

Media companies that have provided discounted or free space for iTHINK

JC Decaux www.jcdecaux.com/en/

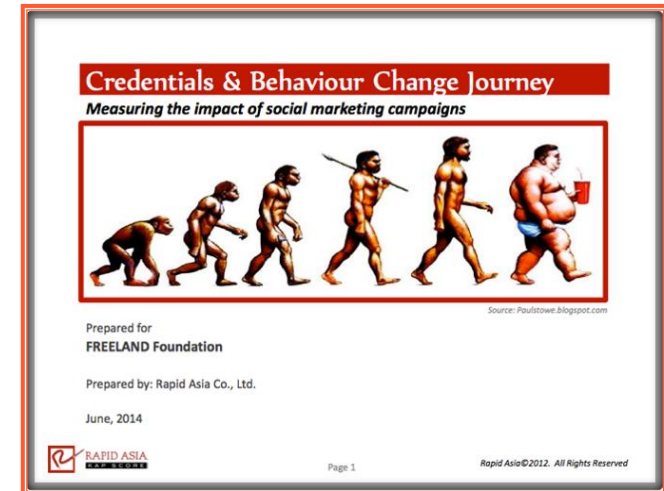
Plan B Media <http://www.planbmedia.co.th/>

Assessing campaigns

After the PSAs have been disseminated as widely as possible through different media and digital channels, it is important to assess the campaign, from the information blitz at the beginning to the reach and impact of the PSAs, to the media buy-in and online engagement. You could use a private firm or do it cheaply in-house by using one of many online survey tools available for free. The results will gauge how successfully your key messages and KOLs resonated with your target audience in curbing the demand for illegal wildlife products and more importantly, give you valuable insights on how to improve future messaging. (For more information please see assessment surveys in the Annex section on page 20)

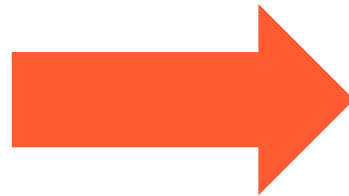
Refine and Expand

The assessments results will give pointers about refining and expanding your campaign. For example, the first surveys of the initial iTHINK campaign launched in Thailand back in 2013, revealed that the black and white PSAs could have been even more effective in color. The surveys revealed that more people respond well to color. Another lesson learned was that viewers felt some of the imagery could have been stronger in order to show the cruelty of the black market trade in animals. This feedback resulted in these changes being made to the second round of videos. It is important to evolve based on feedback because it ensures your messaging is effective and relevant to current trends.





Both the www.ithink-now.org and the iTHINK PSAs have been continuously refined based on the assessment surveys and feedback. The surveys showed that more colorful, positive messaging would resonate more with the viewers.



Keep Going

By using this cycle each campaign can be refined and recycled endlessly, building on the momentum and benefiting from all the lessons learned. Behavior change is a journey, and sustained efforts and consumer pressure is required to alter the mindset of wildlife consumers. iTHINK also uses an alliance approach so that organizations with similar interests and agendas come together to achieve greater impacts that are more durable.

PART 4: Making Your PSA

The iTHINK campaign is centered around PSAs featuring KOLs. These can be simple print ads or short videos that inform the public about the key messages of your campaign and persuade them to stop buying wildlife products. Here are some basic rules and tech specs.

Video PSAs

- High definition is great, but not required.
- Consider subtitles which is easier to view on social media.
- Sound captured through a microphone is much clearer.
- Between 30 and 60 seconds is optimum for short, sharp messages.



Print PSAs

- Use simple, provocative slogans that will stir emotions or cause people to really think.
- Use striking photos.
- Use eye-catching colors, fonts and the iTHINK logo to make the brand more recognizable.
- Place print ads in high-traffic areas such as train stations and airports to increase their reach.
- Unlike the web, it is easier to use physical advertisements for target marketing. For example, if consumers, potential or otherwise, or souvenir-hunters are the target market, it makes sense to place the ads at airports and other ports of entry where they will see them.

PART 5: Outreach

Outreach events can be one of the most effective ways to spread awareness. They can also be extremely cost effective because they do not require a lot of advance planning and you are able to reach a lot of people in a short amount of time. Schools are great for outreach events. Contact local schools or education ministries to present your campaign and your message to students. Simple presentations can teach youth about the issues of your campaign. You can also work with teachers to have students create the own messaging. This encourages youth to speak out and it will increase the reach of your message as the students will spread the word about what they have learnt to their peers and their parents.

Link to other events when possible. In 2015, WildFest was held in Hanoi Vietnam. The outdoor film and music festival provided an ideal platform to showcase the iTHINK campaign and PSAs from Vietnam.

PART 6: Funding

Funding will often determine the size of your campaign. While lots of funds are ideal, there are many ways that you can run a campaign with very little funds. Youth outreach at schools is cost effective and you can also join other events. Keep in touch with other organizations to see when they are hosting events as you should be able to join. Online social media is also another cost effective way to reach a large audience with little cost.

Funding Sources:

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund: Grant recipients range from small farming cooperatives and community associations to international organizations.
<http://www.cepf.net/grants/Pages/default.aspx>

United States International Development Agency (USAID): Many opportunities for funding including grants and partnership programs.

<https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/get-grant-or-contract/opportunities-funding>

The US Fish and Wildlife Service: Financial assistance is available to schools, non-profits, individuals, commercial organizations and state and local governments.

<https://www.fws.gov/grants/>

Many traditional grants that cover conservation are now funding behavior change efforts. The iTHINK campaign has received funding from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), local U.S. Embassies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Private companies have also supported outreach events.



Annexes

Logos



ANNEXES Continued

The following resources can be downloaded [here](#).

Resources include:

- iTHINK Toolkit
- iTHINK Logos
- iTHINK Banners
- iTHINK Templates
- iTHINK Ads, surveys and videos – CHINA
- iTHINK Ads, surveys and videos – THAILAND
- iTHINK Ads, surveys and videos – VIETNAM
- WildAid Ivory Free

External Resources

While there are many available resources, below are links to some websites the focus on behavior change efforts to reduce demand for wildlife consumption.

<http://www.changewildlifeconsumers.org/>

CONCLUSION

Working across several countries and languages, iTHINK has proven an effective means to shift the mindset of wildlife consumers. This is great news, however, there is still work to be done. iTHINK has unlimited potential for growth and it is our hope that this toolkit will make it easy for conservationists across the globe to easily work together to save wildlife. By working together and continuing to speak out about the issues surrounding illegal wildlife trade, the future is bright. We will continue to improve the iTHINK toolkit to ensure it remains relevant. If you should ever have any feedback or suggested improvements, please contact info@freeland.org