

Name of Fellow/Organisation: Tran Thi Kieu Thanh Ha/ HealthBridge

Name of your project (Title): Media Advocacy for Smoke-Free Policy Implementation in Vietnam

1. What is the policy objective of your project

Overall Objective: To support the implementation of smoke free policy in public areas in Vietnam by using the media to raise policy makers' awareness and to educate the public to be aware of, support, and comply with the policy. The project will ensure sustained effort is put into initiating press coverage of the issue

Specific Objectives:

1. To increase media awareness of the issues related to the implementation of the smoke free policy in public areas
2. To increase media coverage of the need for compliance to the smoking ban in public places
3. To build the capacity of HealthBridge's media officer to report on smoke free policy and to advocate for policy implementation.

2. Very briefly describe the activities you conducted during your project and when you carried them out

Developing media network

- Individual meetings were held with media persons in Hanoi, Da Nang city, Dong Thap, Thai Binh and Hai Duong provinces where anti-smoking activities assisted by HealthBridge were in need of media support.

Updating TC information for the media network

- Worked with media personnel in Hanoi on TC issues and SFA implementation in particular.
- Provided information to TV reporters in Hai Duong, Thai Binh, Thai Nguyen provinces to make TV programs about smoke free hospitals and the health hazards of smoking
- Worked with reporters in Da Nang city and Dong Thap and Thai Binh provinces to produce articles on smoke free policy implementation in the local communities.
- Provided the media personnel with information on SEATCA workshops to the media: Regional workshop "Women and Tobacco control" (3/2006); Regional workshop "Advancing pictorial health warnings" (9/2006) to the media.
- Produced 4 fact sheets with updated information about tobacco control.
- Worked with reporters to produce articles on pictorial health warnings; worked with VINACOSH to develop a television campaign to support pictorial health warnings
- Designed Journalist Notebooks with SFA information

Media surveillance:

- On a daily basis, updated the media surveillance database and classified tobacco-related articles by topic

Training and workshops:

- Met with reporters from northern provinces in March 2006
 - Met with editors in chief, newspaper managers and chiefs of news rooms on World No Tobacco Day: discussed on SFA implementation, FCTC and the introduction of pictorial health warnings
 - A media training workshop was organised in Hanoi in Oct 2006 with the aim of updating the media about TC policies and FCTC implementation in Vietnam and providing media skills on writing attractive articles. This workshop was conducted with the funding support of a small grant from the UICC/ACS.
3. What specific objectives were you able to achieve through the project? What were the key factors that enabled you to achieve these objectives
- Increased media awareness of the implementation of the smoke free policy in public areas. Local media in the provinces where HealthBridge was encouraging anti-smoking activities also gained a better understanding of benefits of the smoke free policy and showed their strong support to the policy by producing anti-smoking media coverage. This support was very crucial for the establishment of smoke free areas there.
 - Increased media coverage of compliance to the smoking ban in public places: 40 articles on smoke free areas were produced in national newspapers during the year. Among those articles, 20 supported smoke free policy in public places in the country and 20 discussed international experiences implementing smoke free areas. Some 15 articles addressed smoke free areas and anti-smoking activities in the provinces of Thai Binh, Da Nang, and Dong Thap. Three TV programs were produced about smoke-free hospitals and smoking bans in Thai Nguyen, Hai Duong and Thai Binh provinces.
 - Strengthened capacity of HealthBridge's media officer to report on smoke free policy and to advocate for policy implementation. Through activities undertaken in this project, the media officer had the opportunity to practice the advocacy skills developed through the ASEAN fellowship training sessions. She also learnt how to use research results in media advocacy as well as how to improve media relations.
4. What specific objectives were you NOT able to achieve. Why? What problems did you encounter?

The three proposed objectives were achieved as planned over the past year. However, some planned activities, such as organizing meetings with media persons in the central and southern regions of the country, could not be conducted. This was the result of personnel changes of the Press Department of the Central Commission of Culture and Ideology; therefore, the plan of networking the media in the central and southern regions was delayed until next year. In place of those activities, the media officers met with health correspondents who supported the smoke-free policy in provinces where HealthBridge was assisting local anti-smoking activities.

5. What are the valuable lessons you learnt through your fellowship program and experience.
- Media advocacy is more an art than a science. Therefore, it is best learned on the job. (Humphrey Taylor)
 - Closely working with TC researchers helps to generate useful information for media advocacy work.
 - Personal relations with media person are very helpful for advocacy work.
 - Apart from personal relations with the media, developing official relations between TC organisation and press agencies is necessary in anticipation of any personnel changes within the agencies that may affect planned activities .
6. Fellowship seed grant: Were you able to utilize all of it? What is your suggestion?

Half of the budget provided has been spent; these funds enabled the media officer to hold individual meetings with journalists, assist them to write articles, and to organize media meetings and workshops. However, efforts are still needed to further promote media support for the implementation of the smoke free policy nationwide. In the coming year, the remaining budget is expected to help the media officer to continue the focus on organizing media meetings and produce media coverage supporting SFA.

Activities	Cost in USD	Cost in VND
1. Media workshop/meeting	1,000	16,000,000
2. Media coverage supporting SFA	500	8,000,000
Total budget	1,500	24,000,000