



FOOD SAFETY CHAMPIONS

Mr. Nguyen Dai Ngoc is a committed food safety champion. As an officer of the Food Safety Management Authority in Ho Chi Minh City, he has effectively led campaigns to help government officials, business owners, street vendors, and even students contribute to protecting Vietnam's food industry and public health.

Since completing two PROSAFE trainings at MI, he has extended food safety activities by working with other MI alumni in sharing networks and resources to reach more people in his country's communities. These efforts helped elevate public discussions and commitments not only in supporting food safety policies, but in enforcing safe and hygienic practices.

Get to know how by reading Mr. Nguyen's interview below.

Why do you think food safety is important?

Food safety is important because it is the path to food security and a better quality of life for people in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

This is why we must work together in widening access to information and encouraging disciplined adherence to food safety practices so we can collectively help local food businesses thrive, safeguard health, and assure peace of mind.

How do you think MI is helping build a food safety culture in Vietnam?

MI goes beyond sloganeering. It sets the foundation of building a strong food safety consciousness by involving everyone to the



guided action plans, food safety is better explained, understood, shared, and practiced to a growing number of people across sectors not only in Vietnam but in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar, as well.

By empowering us, MI is building a network of effective food safety champions who are slowly making a difference not only in the policy level but on the ground, as well.

What did you learn about food safety from MI?

After completing two PROSAFE courses on risk analysis and food safety promotion, I learned that effective food safety campaigns rests on collaboration and communication. As such, we deployed city-wide food safety information drives on food contamination hazards by tapping city and local leaders who can influence their communities to be responsible food safety practitioners.

What are effective communication tools and practices to best impart food safety in Vietnam?

Our communication campaigns were designed according to the target audience. For government officials, business owners, and community leaders, we applied the training-on-trainer approach. By enhancing their knowledge and skills as food safety communicators, they were able to effectively disseminate important information to wider networks.

For the general public, we launched a multi-media campaign. Through TV, radio and print ads, as well as poster placements in densely populated city areas, we were able to inform a multitude of people from private sector employees, students, and street vendors, and many others on the value of safe food.

Why do you think it is important to get everyone involved in food safety?

Food safety is a shared responsibility because it involves all actors in the food and supply chain. This covers stakeholders from production to processing and packaging, storage and handling to distribution.

What do you think are still needed to instill a food safety culture across all sectors?

We need to get more people involved. By capacitating everyone in the value and supply chains, and including non-traditional actors such as students in communication campaigns, we increase food safety consciousness until it becomes instilled in our everyday lives.

Also, we need to jointly work towards advancing science and technology facilities, as well as monitoring and evaluation systems on food safety behavior. These will allow us to continuously assess the link between policies and implementation, which can help all of us make more informed and timely decisions to keep Vietnam safe from foodborne illnesses and outbreaks.

