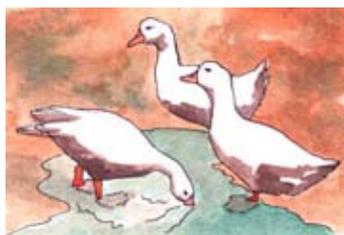


AI.COMMunique

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Communication Action, Thinking, and Resources on Avian Influenza



AI.COMMunique is published by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s AI.COMM avian influenza communication project, operated by the AED and The Communication Initiative.

The Communication Initiative (The CI) network is an online space for sharing the experiences of, and building bridges between, the people and organizations engaged in or supporting communication as a fundamental strategy for economic and social development and change. Please visit www.comminit.com for more information.



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AI.COMMunique is a monthly series of notes on avian influenza communication and the unique challenges and issues it presents. The series is intended to serve as a reliable source on avian influenza (AI) communication issues, as well as to spark discussion and thinking for people who are actively involved or interested in avian influenza work. To subscribe, please contact avianflu@comminit.com

Please see The Communication Initiative's Avian Influenza section at <http://www.comminit.com/avianinfluenza.html> for a full listing of avian influenza communication knowledge summaries in support of your work.

AI.COMMunique is very interested in your knowledge and experience in avian influenza communication—your projects and programs, strategic thinking, support materials, and any other relevant documentation. Please contact avianflu@comminit.com

Action

AED Joins International Effort to Fight Avian Flu

AED has joined more than 20 other international non-governmental organizations in signing a historic declaration to prepare for a possible human influenza pandemic.

At a ceremony held in late October at the headquarters of the International Federation of the Red Cross in Geneva, Margaret Burns Parlato, senior vice president and director of the AED Global Health, Population, and Nutrition Group, signed the document and pledged that AED would continue its efforts to prepare communities for a possible pandemic.

The event kicked off a global effort that includes the Red Cross, United Nations agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and USAID.

"AED was invited to sign the declaration because of our work on avian influenza," said Parlato. "This alliance of United Nations agencies and NGOs creates a partnership that brings together technical knowledge, community presence, and outreach expertise."

Under the new global partnership, AED will support communication activities in large countries considered to be the most likely places for a pandemic to start because they have had high rates of avian flu outbreaks, such as Vietnam, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Indonesia. For the past two years AED has worked in more than 15

countries reaching communities with best practices in case of an outbreak.

“Within communities, there are many different audiences that need to know how to prepare for a pandemic,” said Parlato. “Workplaces will need policies to protect their employees, schools may need to close, public events will likely be limited, and families will need to know how to properly quarantine and care for those who are sick. Behavior change communication is a vital part of getting this done.” More at: <http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://avianflu.aed.org/>

Nigeria: Community Dialogue Sessions Advance Bird Flu Education in Nigeria

This brief article explores the strategy of using open community dialogue sessions to raise awareness about avian influenza. This strategy, which also draws on the use of printed posters and community mobilization, is a response to a perceived lack of accurate information about how to prevent the infection, and what to do if there is an outbreak in this country. Working in partnership with Nigeria’s Federal Ministry of Information and Communications (and with funding from the Japanese government), UNICEF consultants are visiting places like the slum of Mowe in Ogun, Nigeria. Armed with photographs and other informational posters on the prevention of the disease, Dr. Tajudeen Akerele encouraged the 30 community members in attendance at this particular session to share their questions, concerns, and experiences with avian influenza. At the conclusion of the two-hour dialogue, Dr. Akerele distributed printed materials and encouraged participants to share their newly acquired knowledge with others. More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/265476>

Ghana: Community Theater Efforts in Priority Regions Reach Thousands

In April 2007, Ghana experienced an outbreak of avian influenza in one region, and it quickly spread to two other regions. USAID’s behavior change and

communication project, AI.COMM, managed by AED, developed and implemented an emergency, short-term communications response to these outbreaks. As part of the rapid response, AI.COMM worked

with EXP Momentum to stage community road show performances. The community theater events were conducted in regions where an avian influenza outbreak had occurred as well as in key transportation regions. The activities reached the general public, consumers of poultry, poultry vendors, and backyard and commercial farmers with key avian influenza prevention and reporting messages. AI.COMM also conducted research at the activations to

measure recall and retention of key messages. The final research results are expected in December 2007. More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/265783>

Please VOTE in an Avian Influenza POLL:

Which is the most difficult AI communication challenge?

- Human-to-Human Transmission
- Bird-to-Human Transmission
- Bird-to-Bird Transmission

VOTE at:
http://www.comminit.com/en/poll_discussion/293

Planning

United States: Interim Pre-pandemic Planning Guidance: Community Strategy for Pandemic Influenza Mitigation

Written as an interdepartmental United States government effort on interim planning guidance for the public, this document presents a group of non-pharmaceutical (e.g., social distancing, quarantine, etc.) interventions focused on harm reduction in the event of an influenza pandemic. The document introduces a “Pandemic Severity Index” in which the case fatality ratio (the proportion of deaths among clinically ill persons) serves as the critical driver for categorizing the severity of a pandemic. It then gives a pandemic mitigation framework that is “based upon an early, targeted, layered application of multiple partially effective non-pharmaceutical measures.”

These measures include:

- Isolation and treatment with influenza antiviral medications;
- Voluntary home quarantine of members of households with confirmed or probable influenza cases;

- Dismissal of students from school and social activities; and
- Use of social distancing measures to reduce contact between adults in the community and workplace.
More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/265484>

Research

India: Knowledge Attitude and Practices (KAP) Study on Backyard Poultry Handling: Key Findings

The UNICEF India Country Office, in collaboration with the Indian Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the Department of Animal Husbandry, commissioned a formative study to understand bird-handling practices of backyard poultry farmers and their families. The study was conducted to gather data about the vulnerable communities at risk of avian and human pandemic influenza, and to provide an evidence-base for a communication strategy to prevent the spread of avian influenza. The study was conducted in two districts of India where bird-handling is prevalent: the Badwani and Indore districts of Madhya Pradesh; and Thane district of Maharashtra. The findings from this study have been used to develop an effective, all-inclusive set of communication materials in preparedness for and response to avian influenza, based on an understanding of barriers to behavior change, social practices and norms, and community systems around poultry. More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/265206>

Strategic Thinking

Vietnam: Four Years On Questions Hover on Avian Flu

This article discusses key questions surrounding the transmission of the H5N1 virus between birds and humans, which arose at a cross-border journalism workshop in the Mekong Region of Southeast Asia. According to one of the speakers at this workshop, Richard Brown (public health specialist from the World Health Organization, or WHO), there “are no breaking developments in the research of the virus.” In addition, unresolved questions remain, including the stage of poultry handling or consumption at which humans can be infected, whether there are variations in the

likelihood of infection based on the season or location, and the incubation period of the virus in humans, which WHO officials estimate at between two and ten days. Brown argued that with such uncertainty, and despite statistics showing little occurrence in humans, the media emphasis on the possibility of the virus mutating into a freely transmittable pandemic virus in humans provides ground for rumors and speculation.

Brown contrasted this pattern of media coverage with the case of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002-03, in which risk factor information became available early. He emphasized the importance of reliable information, likening the spread of rumors in itself to a pandemic. “The truth becomes distorted and, like a virus, becomes mutated,” he said. More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/265481>

Tanzania: Avian Flu Stalking Tanzanian Communities, Government

The Tanzanian government is urging the general public to protect themselves against avian flu by adopting preventative measures such as basic hygiene practices and increased awareness about the disease. The Tanzanian Avian Influenza plan has six main components including: capacity for early warning detection, capacity to contain avian flu at the source, reduction of opportunity for human infection, improvement of awareness and information, research, and coordination. A lack of funding has meant that the plan is currently only focused on surveillance, detection and diagnosis of the disease, public education, and awareness. However, according to the Livestock Development Deputy Minister, this is not enough; in addition, livestock farmers and poultry keepers need to change their behavior regarding the safe handling of birds as they have the greatest risk of contracting avian influenza. More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/265228>

Indonesia: Holidaymakers Told to Disseminate Avian Flu Information in Hometowns

This article details local efforts to help prevent the spread of avian influenza in Indonesia. At the Primajasa bus terminal in East Jakarta, when people were traveling to their hometowns during Idul Fitri (a Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan - the month of fasting) campaigners urged people to inform their families and community members about avian influenza. According to the article, the USAID-funded Community-Based Avian

Influenza Control (CBAIC) project provided 21,000 seat covers that featured quizzes about avian influenza to the bus operator, Primajasa. More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/265392>

Norway: Digital Norway Sweeps Away Barriers to Information Sharing

This article details the Digital Norway plan, an arrangement through which different Norwegian government agencies give each other free access to geographical, environmental, and administrative databases. According to the article, the Digital Norway plan could play a key role in Norway's avian influenza contingency plan, in that information about a possible outbreak could be quickly communicated by an automated phone call or a text message informing those at risk about what is going on and what precautions they need to take. More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/265367>

PLEASE SEND US examples of media coverage on avian influenza...

The CI collects examples of media coverage, primarily from media outlets in developing countries. We attempt to add to this list, in chronological order, on a monthly basis. This is not a comprehensive listing. Please send media coverage on avian influenza that you find valuable to Deborah Heimann dheimann@comminit.com

You can review the media coverage highlighted on The CI site at <http://www.comminit.com/avianinfluenza/avianflu/general-15.html>

Recent News

Africa: Projected Supply of Pandemic Influenza Vaccine Increases Sharply [AllAfrica.com - Africa - November 6] <http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://allafrica.com/stories/200711051259.html>

FAO warns bird flu virus in Europe as hidden danger [China View - China - October 26] http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/26/content_6948750.htm

UN Expert Says World Unprepared for Avian Flu Pandemic [Voice of America - Geneva - October 24] <http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://www.voanews.com/english/2007-10-24-voa50.cfm>

Government chalks out plan to combat avian influenza in future [Daily Times - Pakistan - October 14] http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C10%5C14%5Cstory_14-10-2007_pg5_2

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