

# 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 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](http://www.comminit.com) for more information.



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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](mailto: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](mailto:avianflu@comminit.com)

## INITIATIVES WITH A NATIONAL SCOPE

### **BULGARIA: Response to Avian Influenza in Bulgaria**

This initiative was designed to provide a sustainable mechanism for surveillance, crisis management, and increase of public awareness regarding avian influenza in Bulgaria. The program involved some non communication related components, such as procurement of laboratory and non laboratory equipment (computerized systems, refrigerators, egg incubators, respiratory masks, personal protective equipment kits), but also included interpersonal efforts to strengthen human response capacity and risk management systems to prepare for a potential outbreak. In addition, a public awareness campaign was carried out that drew upon both information and communication technologies (ICTs) and mass media.

More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/267842/293>

### **INDONESIA: The Avian Influenza Roundup Newsletter Initiative**

Launched in 2008, this initiative is designed to share information about avian influenza through a quarterly newsletter. Published in English and Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), the objective of this newsletter is to provide readers with an understanding of the threat of avian influenza in Indonesia, the current country situation, and a glimpse into efforts to prevent and control the spread of the disease in animals and humans. The publication features reports from the field, activity and training updates, success

stories, and updates on the most pressing issues.

More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/267473/293>

## ENTERTAINMENT INITIATIVES

### INDIA: Play on Bird Flu Takes Wing Manipur Vet Department Falls Back on Entertainment to Raise Awareness

by Khelen Thokchom

Beginning in February 2008, the medium of Shumang Lila (courtyard plays) is being used in India to spread awareness about avian influenza. The State of Manipur's veterinary department is using theatre as an awareness tool, in the form of the play Aruba Echel, which revolves around a veterinary doctor working in a village in the interiors of Manipur. Aruba Echel is the result of collaboration between the veterinary department and the Peace Maker Artistes' Association. The play will be staged across the state.

More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/267491/293>

### INDONESIA: Communication for Avian and Pandemic Influenza in Indonesia: School Program

In November 2007, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched a school based campaign designed to raise awareness among children as to the dangers of coming into contact with poultry/birds and the importance of reporting to authorities. UNICEF is working in 50,000 schools that are part of the organization's Creative Learning Communities for Children (CLCC) program. The focus of the program is in Java, S. Sulawesi and Bali, and four high risk provinces in Sumatra. A smaller scale program will

be conducted in districts in Papua, Maluku, Aceh, and East Nusatenggara provinces. This campaign relies on the idea that entertainment education can be a powerful tool to raise the awareness of children about how to prevent avian influenza and that they can then become the "messengers", bringing life saving messages to their families. In short, mass media (such as video and television) are being used here to spark interpersonal communication between and amongst generations.

More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/267866/293>

## EDUCATING FARMERS

### EGYPT: Agricultural Exports and Rural Incomes (AERI) Avian Influenza Campaign

This public awareness campaign was designed to strengthen Egypt's response to avian influenza by disseminating risk prevention messages through printed materials. As part of this effort, ACDI/VOCA distributed 24,500 informational brochures to smallholder livestock farmers and association members that had received assistance from the Agricultural Exports and Rural Incomes (AERI) Dairy and Livestock project. In addition, organizers distributed the materials to the public at large, drawing on their connection to a

network of non governmental organizations (NGOs), government agencies, and community groups and forums, such as mosques and newspaper stands. Using colorful illustrations and simple language, the brochures explain the nature of avian flu and associated risks for poultry and humans, and demonstrate how to practice good prevention measures to mitigate risk of infection for both poultry and humans.

More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/267488/293>

#### Please VOTE in an Avian Influenza POLL:

Which communication tool and/or strategy is most effective in addressing Avian Influenza? And Why?

- Public information campaigns (printed materials and mass media).
- Personal contact with farmers and agricultural extension workers.
- School based education.
- Public debate on best responses.
- Other

Vote at <http://www.comminit.com/en/avianinfluenza.html>

## **LAOS/INDONESIA: What Is AI? Film Based Avian Influenza Initiative Indonesia, Laos**

What Is AI?" draws on the medium of film as part of a strategy for raising awareness about avian influenza. Specifically, organizers originally prepared 4 short film modules as public service announcements (PSAs) for audiences in Indonesia. These modules were then linked together to create a 12 minute video/film called "What is AI?", which features animated graphics in an effort to clearly illustrate how the virus can transmit not only from bird to bird directly, but also how it can live in the environment and be transmitted indirectly as well. Subsequently, Lao adapted the original to meet that country's specific needs related to avian influenza. Interpersonal communication and print materials are also central to this effort, complementing the film as part of a training program designed to build the capacity of local leaders to communicate with villages about avian influenza.

More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/268088/293>

## **BANGLADESH: More Needs to Be Done to Tackle Bird Flu**

Citing lack of knowledge on how to safely handle poultry, particularly among backyard poultry farmers, officials in Dhaka, Bangladesh, state that efforts to cleanse commercial poultry farms and maintain hygiene standards, including large scale culling resulting from avian flu, have not prevented the spread of the virus to 41 of the country's 64 districts. Officials want to focus on educating small scale poultry farmers. Small farmers explained in interviews that they were unaware that the H5N1 virus could kill their flocks overnight, confused about its origin, and concerned that they are economically unable to buy feed for flocks that are shut inside coops as a preventative measure.

More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/267496/293>

## **NEED FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH MEDIA**

### **Officials Being Pressurized to Hide Information about Virus**

This online news article from Karachi, Pakistan, reports

dissatisfaction among officials of the Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA) with international media coverage of the impact of the presence of avian influenza in Pakistan and India. An official of the poultry industry states that since avian flu was reported in 1997, fears about it being a pandemic have decreased because, according to the official, there is a belief that when the virus is mutated, it may die or become weak. As a result of this perception, the lack of focus from the news media, and daily industry losses of around Rs300 million per day, officials of the poultry industry report facing hostility from farm owners.

More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/267813/293>

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Seasonal and Pandemic Influenza 2008 (May 18-20, 2008) Arlington, VA, United States**

Organized by the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), this meeting will discuss: the international impact of pandemic and seasonal influenza; new pandemic and seasonal influenza planning strategies including the role of state and public health officials; and the improvement of public private sector coordination efforts, particularly related to vaccine developments.

More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/267733/293>

### **BirdFlu 2008: Avian Influenza and Human Health (Sep 10 | 2008) Oxford, United Kingdom**

Marking the first annual Oxford international conference and exhibition on avian influenza, BirdFlu 2008 will consider most aspects of basic and applied research on avian influenza viruses and their potential health and socio economic impact on humans. Bringing together leading experts in the field from both academia and industry this conference will provide an international forum to discover the latest research directions and thinking in this field, to exchange data and ideas, and to develop new collaborative links.

More at: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/266599/293>

## RECENT NEWS

EGYPT: New human bird flu case raises fears [IRIN, March 10]

<http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=77193>

Swans hit by avian flu [icWales.co.uk (Wales), March 10]

[http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/news/health news/2008/03/10/swans hit by avian flu 91466 20593855/](http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/news/health%20news/2008/03/10/swans%20hit%20by%20avian%20flu%2091466%2020593855/)

Bird flu update: Strikes new districts: More than 12 lakh birds culled so far [The New Nation (Bangladesh), March 9]

<http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://nation.ittefaq.com/issues/2008/03/10/news0757.htm>

Hong Kong holds avian flu drill [People's Daily Online (China), March 7]

<http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90782/90880/6368755.html>

Bird flu and food [the star online (Malaysia), March 2]

<http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://thestar.com.my/health/story.asp?file=/2008/3/2/health/20080302100431&sec=health>

## 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](mailto:dheimann@comminit.com)

You can review the media coverage highlighted on The CI site at <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/147340>

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