

AI.COMMunique

Issue three | September 2007

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.cominit.com for more information.



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AI.COMMunique is a new 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@cominit.com

Please see The Communication Initiative's Avian Influenza section at <http://www.cominit.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@cominit.com

Country-specific Strategies

CARE-Vietnam: Avian and Pandemic Influenza Briefing July 2007

This PowerPoint presentation explores CARE-Vietnam's strategy related to addressing avian influenza. It provides a background on influenza pandemics and the risk of avian flu, outlines staff safety and security issues, and explores CARE's communication-focused response to the issue—both in terms of specific program activities, and as related to advocacy. CARE's response to the avian flu situation in Vietnam is characterized by the following approaches: planning for preparedness; taking action on informing the public; and advocating for preparedness. As part of this response, they have developed a number of slides which provide basic information and could potentially be incorporated into programming or messaging. <http://www.cominit.com/strategicthinking/st2007/thinking-2398.html>

UNICEF-Egypt: Communication Strategy and Workplan for Avian Influenza, July 2007–December 2008

This report outlines the communication plan developed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to prepare for and address avian influenza in Egypt. The report begins by providing a brief description of the pilot phase (2006) as well as the lessons learned. These include:

- Liaising with the media (especially highly viewed programmes and channels) is key to enhancing the impact of the community message.

- A tight system for monitoring and supervising community activities must be developed.
- A strong social marketing and awareness campaign in the areas of intervention increases and supports the community intervention programme.
- Intensive social mobilization campaigning to support community education is indispensable.
- The school program should be followed up at the central and governorate level.
- Stronger linkages should be made with Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) extension workers at the village level.

Building on these insights, this report outlines the specific communication objectives for the 2007–2008 UNICEF-Egypt intervention in the 22 infected governorates. <http://www.comminit.com/strategicthinking/st2007/thinking-2397.html>

UNICEF-Bangladesh: National Communication Strategy and Action Plan for Avian Influenza and Human Pandemic Influenza 2007–2008

This document describes the UNICEF-Bangladesh strategy for management of the threat of avian influenza and human pandemic influenza. The introduction includes background on avian flu in Bangladesh and developing the strategy, and an overview of risk communication. The sections that follow are on coordination, strategy, and implementation, with appendices including tables, a toolbox, audience profiles, terms of reference, a summary of each session of the National Workshop on Avian and Human Influenza Communication of September 2006, and a list of participants and technical workers. <http://www.comminit.com/strategicthinking/st2007/thinking-2403.html>

Global and Regional Strategies

Creating a Communication Strategy for Avian/Pandemic Influenza

This document presents a strategy to communicate with the public and stakeholders within health systems during a public health emergency. The document uses the scenario of avian influenza communication

management as a model for other disaster or public health emergencies. It states that using communication which builds, maintains, and restores public trust is fundamental in an emergency because public confidence gives stability and viability to economic, political, and health systems. It suggests objectives, audiences for messages, key messages, tools, channels for delivery, and action plans for communication on avian flu. <http://www.comminit.com/materials/ma2007/materials-3405.html>

Avian and Human Pandemic Influenza: Addressing the Need for Integration between Health and Agriculture in the Preparedness Plans in Latin America

The objective of this paper is to evaluate the integration between the health and agriculture sectors in preparedness plans in Latin American countries, and to provide recommendations on how to fill in the potential gaps. The study highlights the importance of intersectoral action in preventing and controlling avian influenza. Intersectoral action calls for an integrated approach that incorporates all sectors involved, including the veterinary, agriculture, and human health sectors. According to the study, addressing complex health issues in an integrated way allows each sector to pool resources, knowledge, and expertise so that the interests of all sectors are brought together into one common set of interests. <http://www.comminit.com/strategicthinking/st2007/thinking-2360.html>

Research

Participatory Action Research on Avian Flu Communication

This summary report and recommendations reflects the findings of participatory action research conducted by UNICEF and AED on avian flu in six communities—one urban/periurban community and one rural community in three locations: Burkina Faso, Lagos State Nigeria, and Kano State Nigeria. Five key findings emerged from the research:

- Chickens are more important for food security than they are for food. For example, in Burkina Faso families use income from selling chickens to purchase foodstuffs, especially grain, and to purchase seed and agricultural implements at the beginning of the planting season.

- Chickens play a critical role in rituals and social ceremonies. People do not identify possible alternatives to poultry in religious and other cultural practices. Reminding people that avian flu can threaten their ceremonies may motivate them to engage in preventive behaviors.
- Community knowledge about how avian flu is transmitted is low. Community members have many different ideas about the source of avian flu infection.
- Some of the recommended behavioral interventions—“Report, Separate, Wash, and Cook”—are not feasible in communities where enabling factors are absent. This research confirmed the difficulty of changing practices to prevent and control avian flu in poultry. Reducing human exposure to infection will also be challenging, especially if people are unaware of the risks.
- Strategic use of a mix of mass media and interpersonal channels will be most successful in reaching people and persuading them to change behaviors. Mass media messages can quickly reach large numbers of people but must be realistic and practicable in the local context. They also need to be complemented by interpersonal communication from trusted sources in the community.
- Several key recommendations, based on the above findings, are noted in the report.
<http://www.comminit.com/strategicthinking/st2007/thinking-2417.html>

Recommendations

Global Animal Health Communication Strategy to Support Prevention and Control of H5N1 HPAI

This is a summary of the results of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) International Animal Health Communicators’ Roundtable, April 16–19 2007, in Rome, Italy. It provides the following: key recommendations, issues, challenges, and strategic options; a focus on main communication challenges; and emerging lessons on avian flu prevention. It concludes with the roundtable’s “Communication Framework for Action.” <http://www.comminit.com/strategicthinking/st2007/thinking-2401.html>

Upcoming Relevant Events

Lessons From the Field: First-Hand Experience Managing Outbreaks and Emerging Infections in Medical Centers

October 24, 2007, Vancouver, BC, Canada. The purpose of this one-day course is for physicians and other medical professionals who have managed outbreaks or emerging infectious diseases to share those experiences, to examine errors in responses, successful interventions, unanticipated obstacles, and to dissect out a core of salient advice for the benefit of course participants. Faculty will discuss first-hand experiences managing severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreaks in Singapore and Toronto and address containment strategies as well as psychosocial impacts on healthcare workers. http://www.comminit.com/events_calendar/2007-events/events-4816.html

Recent News

La Union heightens bird-flu watch [Philippine Information Agency—The Philippines—September 7]
<http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://www.pia.gov.ph/default.asp?m=12&fi=p070907.htm&no=42&r=&y=&mo=>

Gambia: Country Free of Avian Influenza [AllAfrica.com—Africa—September 6]
<http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://allafrica.com/stories/200709060750.html>

Indonesian man infected by bird flu [China View—China—September 6]
http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-09/06/content_6673510.htm

HK [Hong Kong] maintains live chicken import ceiling to guard against avian influenza [People’s Daily Online—China—September 4]
<http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90778/6254853.html>

Avian Influenza: Highly pathogenic H5N1 virus confirmed in Bavaria [Travel Daily News—Greece—August 28]
http://www.comminit.com/redirect.cgi?cimo=1&r=http://www.traveldailynews.com/new.asp?newid=39231&subcategory_id=95

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>

This e-newsletter is made possible by the support of the American people through United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s AI.COMM avian influenza communication project. The contents of this newsletter are the sole responsibility of the Communication Initiative and AED and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

AI.COMMunique
AI.COMM
AED
1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009 USA
Telephone: (202) 884-8000
Fax: (202) 884-8400
Email: avianflu@aed.org
www.aed.org/avianflu