



SUCCESS STORY

Community Spurred to Action by Mass Media Campaign

Struck by bird flu, quick response neutralizes an outbreak



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Mr. Sunar acted quickly, and within 48 hours, a deadly bird flu outbreak was stopped in its tracks.

When a local man's chickens died suddenly, he was concerned because he had learned that it could be an outbreak of deadly bird flu. Thankfully, he also learned how to respond: by reporting the suspected bird flu outbreak to the local authorities.

On June 16, 2008, Mr. Sunar's backyard poultry were wiped out by a silent killer. Alarmed, he reported the deaths to his neighborhood representative. They had learned that sudden death in poultry could signal an outbreak of deadly bird flu from a television announcement. From their sleepy neighborhood outside Medan, North Sumatra – Indonesia's third largest city – they could have felt panicked and alone. Instead, they stayed calm because the TV message had also taught them what to do: *Report the suspected outbreak to local authorities.*

They reported the case to the subdistrict chief, who contacted the volunteer village avian influenza coordinator (VAIC). The VAIC reported the case to the participatory disease surveillance and response officer (PDSR) of the municipal animal health service. The PDSR arrived to conduct rapid testing of the carcasses and confirmed that the poultry were killed by the deadly H5N1 avian influenza (AI) virus. The public health disease surveillance officer (DSO) was notified of the confirmed outbreak. The VAIC, PDSR, and Indonesian Red Cross, who have received U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) support for AI activities, oversaw intensive culling and disinfection in and around the outbreak area, followed by outreach to inform the community. The DSO checked for cases of AI in the community. Fortunately, there were none.

This example highlights an effective community-based AI surveillance and response network in action and also the importance of communication initiatives, which disseminate information that enables the network to protect communities. In this case, a key component was the USAID-supported Community-Based Avian Influenza Control Project (CBAIC), which had informed people about AI risks through a mass media campaign. CBAIC also helps build community-based surveillance and response networks by training VAICs, who report suspected cases to PDSRs. This links the surveillance and response elements that are crucial to a network's success.

With USAID support, CBAIC has enabled thousands of communities in Indonesia to protect themselves from AI. CBAIC has trained 27,000 village and subdistrict coordinators and has reached 159 million viewers with its media campaign. These interventions have increased Indonesia's surveillance and response capacity, providing communities with the knowledge and tools to prevent and control AI.