

UNICEF PROGRESS REPORT: AVIAN AND HUMAN PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS



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SUBMITTED TO
THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The threat of an influenza pandemic, as possibly the most catastrophic health event since the 14th century Black Death, continues to cast its shadow on humanity. In addition, avian influenza is affecting lives and livelihoods in Asia and Africa.

To help address the influenza pandemic threat, control of avian influenza is pivotal. The Government of Japan (GoJ) has provided UNICEF a total contribution of US\$ 49,108,860 to work in priority countries on behavioural and vaccine strategies that will help to control avian influenza and to prepare for the pandemic.

This report highlights key areas of UNICEF's work since the first progress report of June 2006. As outlined in the first report, the Japan grant has had a significant impact in enabling UNICEF to support countries in their efforts to inform and mobilise communities to protect themselves from avian influenza, and thus reduce the risk of a pandemic emerging. At the time of the first report, most countries were still in the strategy development or early stage of implementation of activities. This report describes the continuing progress, including some early evaluations of the communication activities. In the following months, efforts will focus on assessing and furthering base-line knowledge in countries. In addition, monitoring and evaluation of early communication activities, carried out in strategic coordination with use and distribution of hygiene supplies, will continue to be conducted in countries where there have been H5N1 outbreaks.

The vaccine strategy has been the subject of a continuing dialogue with GoJ officials. In the most ideal of circumstance, the widespread availability and use of a vaccine to prevent a pandemic, would curtail or minimize the need for alternate approaches. The reality however, is that no pandemic vaccine is available or can be made available until the virus emerges. WHO and UNICEF have been working together over the past few months to identify and define a technically justifiable vaccination programme. The conclusion at this stage is that this is not a viable approach. As a result these funds will be used over the next 12 months to support pandemic preparedness for national immunization programmes, as has been initiated in a few countries (Mongolia, Indonesia, Vietnam & Cambodia).

Through the generous Japanese contribution, funded countries have been able to rapidly accelerate awareness building activities. UNICEF's ongoing work to develop and make available, tools and resources to other countries, agencies, government and institutions is proving invaluable and a catalyst for wider support and rapid implementation of activities at country level. The tools and resources were highlighted to an international audience at the Fourth International Conference on Avian Influenza, Bamako, Mali, 6-8 December 2006.

The key results from the first Japanese support have included:

- Advocacy with governments leading to enhanced intersectoral partnerships;
- Evidence-based planning for behaviour change communication strategies;
- Key messages defined (*Report, Separate, Wash, Cook*) and disseminated widely ;
- Range of materials (print, audio, and TV) and tools developed and shared globally through an internet resources centres [www.unicef.org/influenzaresources]; and
- National and international media sensitised on prevention.

Key Achievements with GoJ funds

- Established functioning national communication taskforces and technical committees with representation from all key govt, UN, NGO and civil society stakeholders (*ongoing*);
- Carried out research to ascertain audience knowledge, attitudes and behaviours pertaining to avian and pandemic influenza;
- Agreed (UN wide) on behavioral actions to be promoted globally, “Report, Separate, Wash and Cook” for prevention of avian influenza, and presently working with WHO to develop key messages for pandemic influenza;
- Developed CREATE – *Communication, Resources, Essentials and Tools for Emergencies* for Avian and Pandemic Influenza (*in progress*);
- Developed a TV PSA on public health messages on avian and pandemic influenza using UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Jackie Chan which has been widely broadcast in East Asia through the STAR TV Network (*ongoing*);
- Produced 8 news stories, 5 news videos, and 2 news audio (UNICEF Radio) reports at a headquarter level.
- Initiated production of a documentary film, in collaboration with British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC), on the impact of avian influenza on families in East Asia (*in progress*);
- Conducted national and international workshops to inform journalists about avian and pandemic influenza;
- Disseminated toolkits through national campaigns to kindergarten and primary schools to encourage children to become hygiene promoters at home;
- Supported innovative approaches to avian and pandemic influenza response in various countries, such as participatory learning action (PLA);
- Conducted regional participatory action research in West and Central Africa to help adapt global behavioral actions to local and context specific situations for maximizing the impact of communication interventions for avian and pandemic influenza (*ongoing*);
- Worked closely with UN Country Teams to finalize Pandemic Influenza Preparedness plans which include communication plans (*ongoing*);
- Regionally coordinated the UN joint communication action plan for prevention and control of avian influenza and pandemic preparedness;
- Organized avian and pandemic influenza training for staff and families in several UNICEF Country Offices;
- Organized high-level symposiums on ‘crisis communication and media relations during a national health emergency’ in Central Europe;
- Developed Essentials for Excellence, an easy to use research, monitoring & evaluation guide has been developed for avian and pandemic influenza;
- Developed a Global Communication Online Resources Centre for Avian and Pandemic Influenza (API), an online warehouse is hosted by UNICEF that provides users with strategic communication products, information and tools developed around the globe to prevent, contain and respond to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza virus; and
- Coordinated the development of an inter-agency communication planning toolkit for avian and pandemic influenza, Avian and Pandemic Influenza Strategic Communications Action Planner (ASAP); for advocacy, social mobilisation and behaviour change to be used across all six WHO defined pandemic alert phases (*ongoing*).

I. BACKGROUND

The Influenza A(H5N1) virus first emerged as a cause of concern in 1997, with 18 human cases (6 of whom died) in Hong Kong as a result of a large outbreak in poultry. The Government of Hong Kong stopped its circulation there through a massive control effort. Since 2003, H5N1 re-emerged as the cause of infection in birds and in humans, with an explosive increase in spread in 2006: nearly 60 countries have had bird outbreaks.

As the virus continues to spread, so does the chance that the virus will mutate and become able to pass easily between humans. If it should do so, there could be another human influenza pandemic with potentially catastrophic socio-economic consequences. Despite a decline in media coverage, the threat persists.

To prevent the influenza pandemic, it is vital to control the disease in birds and to prevent human infections. The GoJ has provided UNICEF a total of US\$ 49,108,860 for 14 recipient countries¹ in Asia and Africa to undertake preventive activities, focussing on communication strategies for social mobilisation.

Table 1 - Fund Allocation including all made up to December 2006

	Programmable Amount
Country Communication Strategy	\$18,650,225.27
Azerbaijan*	\$93,460.00
Bangladesh	\$1,052,359.60
Cambodia	\$1,550,034.10
China	\$1,000,022.00
Indonesia	\$3,200,070.00
Lao PDR	\$1,400,031.80
Mongolia	\$1,040,023.88
Myanmar	\$1,910,042.02
Niger	\$925,020.35
Nigeria	\$1,700,037.40
Philippines*	\$373,840.00
Thailand	\$1,960,043.12
Turkey*	\$140,190.00
Vietnam	\$2,305,051.00
Regional Communication Strategy	\$5,290,303.30
CEE/CIS & the Baltic States RO*	\$140,190.00
EAPRO 1	\$1,000,022.00
EAPRO 2 (Country Support Budget)	\$1,869,667.30
ESARO	\$500,011.00
ROSA	\$750,016.50
WCARO	\$1,030,396.50
Inter-regional Coordination	\$1,956,131.00
Vaccine Strategy	\$ 20,000,000.00
PROGRAM TOTAL	\$45,896,659.57
Recovery Cost*	\$3,212,200.43
Grand Total	\$49,108,860.00

¹ Three countries (Azerbaijan, Philippines, and Turkey) were allocated GoJ funding in October 2006.

Japan's continuous support and flexibility in responding to UNICEF's needs has ensured successful country, regional and interregional coordination in overall response, which has taken place within the framework defined by the UN Consolidated Action Plan and is coherent with the Global strategy agreed upon in November 2005 in Geneva. The initial activities undertaken up to June 2006 were described in the first progress report. This is the second report that describes activities up to December 2006.

II. PROGRESS

This section reports on progress and impact of UNICEF activities that were directly or indirectly supported by the GoJ funds. It provides: 1. An outline of progress made by all recipient countries, 2. A country profile that highlights overall progress made in a given country, 3. Regional and Global examples of work under-way, and 4. Advancements on Vaccine Strategy.

A. COUNTRY COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The GoJ grant has been used by UNICEF to advocate for and prepare national governments' preparedness and response plans for avian and pandemic influenza that include a strong strategic communication action plans. Substantial progress has been made since June 2006 in support of the communication strategies for **behaviour change, social and community mobilization, policy advocacy and capacity building of media personnel**. In this report, we outline strides made by all recipient country and regional offices in the areas of (1) partnership building and communication strategy development, (2) social and behavioural research, (3) development and implementation of communication interventions and (4) monitoring and evaluation of communication programs on behavioural outcomes.

While all 14 Government of Japan funded countries have been engaged in planning and implementing communication strategies in close collaboration with the governments, a few country examples are illustrated under each of the above four progress areas in this progress report.

1. Partnership Building and Communication Strategy Development

Avian influenza is a new technical area for all agencies and partners, which requires inter-ministerial collaboration for a national avian and pandemic influenza plan. UNICEF has been a catalyst in bringing together all the required ministries such as Ministry of Health, Education, Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries and Information and Communication and coordinating the involvement of UN partner agencies, bi-lateral agencies, NGOs and private sector in order to prepare officially endorsed plans. Facilitating cross-sectoral partnership is time consuming, yet it is important for countries to prepare plans to prevent and contain the possible pandemic. As a result prior to developing a communication strategy, it is necessary to have different sectors on board.

In *Vietnam*, UNICEF helped establish Information, Education & Communication Working Group constituted by members from the government and UN agencies. The working group is coordinating the development and implementation of research and communication materials for avian influenza.



Pic 1: Mongolia government AI Task Force Study Tour in Thailand.

In *Mongolia*, a Task Force on Emergency risk communication was formed, headed by the Director of the National Center for Communicable Disease. UNICEF spearheaded the preparation and launch of a nation-wide awareness and advocacy campaign. These efforts have resulted in training of health workers in technical and interpersonal skills throughout rural communities and the use of mass media to keep avian flu salient in the public's mind.

Developing a communication strategy based on social and epidemiological data and clearly outlining communication objectives helps contribute to the programme objectives. Consequently, strategies are in response to the social and cultural context within each region and specific countries. Given the complexity of reaching diverse audiences – poultry farmers, poultry handlers, women and children, caregivers, etc – and potential barriers to practising preventive behaviours, UNICEF is working closely with government partners to prepare an actionable communication strategy. While each country and region needs to promote similar behaviours and policies, their communication strategies are quite distinct.



Pic 2: Buddhist leaders in the Memot District of Cambodia's Kampong Cham Province - Cambodia

The national communications strategy for *Cambodia* is based around four key behavioural messages – report, separate, wash and cook – to prevent transmission of the H5N1 virus among birds and between birds and humans. It uses mass media and school-based programs. It also engages the Buddhist Leadership Initiative network, originally set up to communicate about HIV/AIDS. Nearly 6,000 monks, priests and imams as well as lay persons in 2,600 pagodas in 12 provinces have been mobilized as influenza advocates.

The strategic approach in *Thailand* is based on the results of participatory social research in which communities themselves learned about the avian and human influenza issues and initiated actions that would reduce the risks they face. (See Country Profile) Members of different ethnic communities, including children, have started with the four key behavioural messages – report, separate, wash and cook - and then worked with design teams to create, produce and review a range of communication materials.

2. Social and Behavioural Research

Due to the newness of avian influenza and the need to understand specific behaviours and social practices related to poultry farming and livestock rearing, UNICEF country and regional offices are advocating and conducting baseline research, particularly among the most vulnerable communities. While epidemiological evidence suggests that transmission of avian influenza between birds and humans can be prevented by practising simple

behaviours such as frequent hand washing and wearing masks when handling birds, the social, economic and cultural practices may prevent individuals and communities from practicing prescribed preventive behaviours. Since backyard poultry constitutes about 50-70% of poultry farming in most countries in Asia and Africa, understanding gender norms, household division of labour practices, access to hygiene supplies and awareness about avian influenza are some of the key areas of research that are being conducted in several countries with the use of Government of Japan funds.



Pic 3 : Myanmar 'Keep Eggs Clean Poster'

In *Bangladesh*, a National Risk Communication Taskforce, headed by UNICEF, developed a framework for communication and in collaboration and coordination with the government and UN agencies. Research is being carried out to ascertain audience knowledge, attitudes and behaviours pertaining to avian and pandemic influenza. Plans to reach farmers through NGO and government networks are underway, and existing network of volunteers would be mobilized to make house-to-house visits.

In *Myanmar*, an extensive, nation wide knowledge and behavioural research on poultry rearing and related practices amongst farming communities helped set benchmarks for the development of messages and materials. Based on the results of the research, a wide array of materials with specific messages in multiple media formats such as print, audio and audio-visual have been developed for the general public, poultry farmers and communities with backyard poultry, as well as faith based organizations among others.

3. Development and Implementation of Communication Interventions

Highly visible and easy to access communication on avian influenza brings saliency to the issue and helps in raising rapid awareness and planning a national response. As part of the strategic communication response, UNICEF has worked closely with governments and partner agencies in all countries to develop a wide range of communication products that caters to the diverse needs of the population in each country and region.

Table 2- As of December 2006 (10 out of 14 countries)

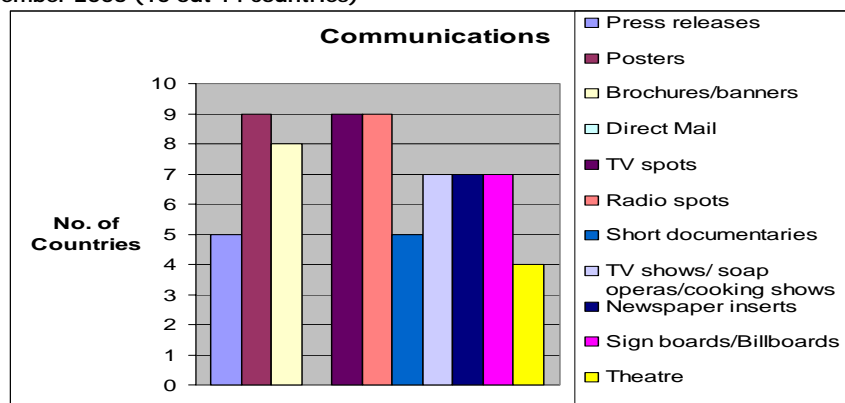


Table 1 above reflects how countries are using a mix of communication channels – print, audio, audio/visual, group - and media materials – posters, PSAs, mailers and fliers, documentaries and soap operas, etc - that have been developed in the past six months.

Depending on the socio-economic and cultural context, communication channels vary by country and audience groups. In general, messages are being disseminated through TV and radio, community theatre, school-based packages and announcements at mosques and pagodas. UNICEF is strongly advocating its partners to undertake intensive formative research in the form of pre-testing of messages and materials being produced for avian and pandemic influenza. Pre-testing messages helps determine the possible weaknesses which lead to failure of communication. It also saves costs related to mass production and dissemination. Also, pre-testing messages increases the effectiveness of communication particularly of messages distributed through one-way communication channels such as print or audio/visual format.

A key achievement in the development of communications materials is The CREATE! Toolbox, developed by UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office following the 2005 tsunami. The Toolbox is being widely used and adapted by many countries in East Asia with assistance from the regional office to develop materials for prevention of avian influenza. Countries in Eastern and Southern Africa have also adapted the CREATE! Toolbox in developing visuals and in teasing out the communication strategy matrix, often placing the information in culturally acceptable contexts and visuals.

In *Indonesia*, UNICEF is leading the UN coordination on avian influenza communication, and working with the government, UN, bilateral- partners, and NGOs on uniform messages and joint materials for public awareness and advocacy. The Government launched a national campaign on September 1, 2006 with UNICEF and Government of Japan support. Messages, materials and creative PSAs were prepared and uniquely branded by an advertising agency under the technical guidance of Government and UN partners. The national campaign is organized around the slogan 'Tanggap Flu Burung' or 'Take Action against Bird Flu'. The symbol is a hand with four extended fingers each of which promotes one of the four priority behaviours. To support unified efforts, a media center has been set up which works to coordinate information from various departments.



In *Niger* field surveys and discussions with counterparts helped identify five key behavioural outcomes for prevention of bird to human infection: keep courtyard clean from poultry faces, cover mouth and nose before slaughtering, soak carcass into water before defeathering, cook well and wash your hands with soap after contacts with poultry. However in a country where poverty is rampant and 74% of the population is illiterate, promoting these behavioural changes is a complex task. Given the state of isolation of many communities, the strategy focuses on empowering people to identify and manage their own

risk. To do so, materials characterised by richness of visual aids, questions and comprehensive explanations have been developed. Tools like the 'No Text' handout, the training flipchart, the teachers' guide for primary schools and the one for kindergartens have been thought for facilitating reflection and discussion. For the mass media campaign, similarly, the TV, Radio sketches and soap operas produced have a slow pace, provide elaborated information to help audience think through its habits towards poultry management.

In *Turkey*, three set of games for children (aged 3-6, 6-10, 10-14) containing messages on how children can protect themselves from avian and pandemic influenza and information on basic health and sanitation are being finalized by Ministry of Health, Education and Agriculture. The 3 sets of games will be produced in January /February 2007 and distributed in selected high risk provinces through schools, as newspapers supplements and chicken production firms.

Communication campaigns have been linked with the development and distribution of avian ***influenza personal hygiene materials and supplies*** in accordance to WHO and FAO guidelines respecting the national avian influenza policies. The distribution of supplies like soap, masks and eye protection is reinforcing key hygiene messages.

In *Lao PDR*, the strategy spearheaded by the UN inter-agency working group concentrated on the development of avian and human influenza materials, identification of media and then scaling up of dissemination of the materials to all provinces. These materials were disseminated by schoolteachers who have taught children about hygiene and encouraged them to become hygiene promoters with their own toolkits for use at home.

Under *Thailand's* nationwide school-based campaign aimed at helping Thai children and their families protect themselves from the threat of avian influenza, two million posters and two million pamphlets carrying avian influenza awareness and prevention messages have been distributed to all schools, along with a newly-developed curriculum on bird flu that will be used to help ensure school children understand the behaviours they need to practice to thwart the spread of the virus. As part of the campaign's hygiene promotion component, 300,000 bars of soap have also been distributed to elementary schools across the country.

In *Niger*, as part of strategy to promote "wash" after being in contact with poultry, UNICEF is providing "hygiene kits" together with the training and information package, to introduce and encourage washing with water and soap. 500,000 bars of soap, 9,500 bowls, 15,500 kettles, 6,500 jerry cans, 21,000 buckets, 1,900 funnels and 500 plastic cups are being distributed to schools and communities in during training and sensitization activities.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of programme activities determines whether or not processes needed to implement strategic communication are being followed. Monitoring is an on-going task. Evaluation of communication interventions determines whether the communication objectives were actually attained. The end of the project cycle evaluation, outcome evaluation, is used to measure short-term or immediate knowledge, attitude and behavioural changes, and it also points to the required shifts in policies and resource allocations at national and sub-national levels.

As most of the country offices began implementing communication programmes between June and August 2006, at this stage countries are mostly engaged in monitoring communication activities such as number of and outcomes of meetings and workshops with government partners to develop communication plan for action, number of media materials produced and disseminated among audience groups, number of specific audience groups such as wet market workers, backyard poultry farmers, caregivers and children reached by various preventive messages on avian influenza, and so forth. Evaluation results of the effectiveness and impact of communication for avian and pandemic influenza prevention would be available soon after March 2007.

M&E in Indonesia

Preliminary findings of mid-campaign evaluation done in Indonesia suggest that considerable gains are being made through planned communication interventions. An independent research agency was commissioned for this purpose. The research suggests that in Western Java, where there have been reported cases of avian influenza, over 90% of the people have in-depth knowledge of the threat of avian influenza to their lives, however among the sub-set of poultry farmers the level of knowledge was not as high. The analysis of TV penetration data shows that the 6 PSA'S have reached an audience of over **9 million** households in 9 major cities in Java, Bali, Sumatra and Sulawesi. Likewise, following journalist's training on avian influenza; coverage of the issue has increased considerable between August and November 2006. At least 50 news stories have appeared in the 4 major dailies whose journalists participated in the GoJ funded media training workshops. Road shows using celebrities to increase awareness and knowledge of avian flu was organized in Goa, District, South Sulawesi. Over 15,000 youth participated in the road show.



Hygiene Awareness

Radio Broadcasts

PLA Trainings

Education Tools

Community Empowerment

i. Country Profile: THAILAND

As of November 2006, 30 out of 76 provinces in Thailand have had avian influenza poultry outbreaks. In response, government bodies, UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs & local communities are working together to ensure existing national awareness campaigns and communication strategies are put into place throughout the country and, with GoJ funding support, UNICEF has become a key partner in this undertaking.

In efforts to develop of high- quality communication materials that support national communication strategies, UNICEF, in close collaboration with the Government of Thailand, is contributing to **community development and empowerment** throughout the country. Achievements in this area are facilitating the local processes and key partnerships that are necessary for establishing sustainable mechanisms for communication in the area of avian and pandemic response and preparedness.

Promoting the concept and practice of Participatory Learning Action (PLA) and community-based communications

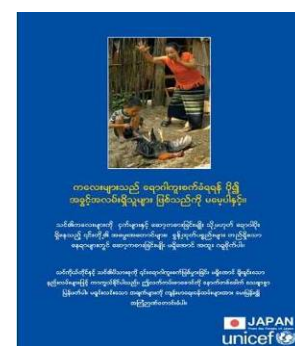
Thailand's approach to avian and pandemic influenza response is driven by the principles of participatory learning and action. The PLA process encourages communities to work together, with the support of government bodies and partners, to identify both the existing problems in their communities and the initiatives that can solve them. By engaging in such activities, communities are succeeding in incorporating local culture and knowledge into community planning for avian influenza response.

A key outcome of PLA activities in Thailand has been the growing contribution to local communication, media and protocols for avian influenza response. Ongoing work in this area is helping to create the necessary links that can ensure greater mutual re-enforcement and cross fertilization between community inputs in the production of professional media.

In efforts to mainstream the PLA approach throughout the country, UNICEF and partners have also been working together to provide training opportunities to those that play a key role in communicating with members within their communities.

To date,

- ✓ Training of migrant health workers on the participatory and learning (PLA) approach for avian influenza awareness raising and prevention has been conducted in five provinces.
- ✓ Four trainings in four different regions on the PLA approach for avian influenza awareness raising and prevention among community radio workers has been carried out, covering approximately 1,000 community radio broadcasters nationwide.
- ✓ Four trainings for the development of a customised prototype local media package designed to take into account the cultural differences in the country's four regions have been conducted in 6 provinces.



Pic 5. AI Media Poster produced by local Thai community

With the help of GoJ funds, members of Thai and Ethnic communities, including children, have worked directly with design teams to create produce and review a range of communication materials. Such as handbooks and posters that are now being held in national campaigns.

Leveraging cooperation and enabling new partnerships

To ensure innovative approaches for avian response and pandemic preparedness achieve sustainability in Thailand, UNICEF is also promoting joint initiatives that mobilize government resources and enable partner support. The following are a few of the successful collaborative efforts that have resulted from GoJ funded support in the last months:

- ✓ A teaching package, developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE) is currently being distributed to all schools nationwide. Five curriculum aligned life skills based teaching manuals (including pre-school, Kindergarten) on avian influenza have been developed to address the different learning needs of different age groups.
- ✓ A 12-page pamphlet, translated into Burmese, has been distributed (40,000 copies) in collaboration with Thailand's Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) in migrant and ethnic minority communities in the tsunami affected provinces.
- ✓ Significant work is being done by the MoPH to support local networks for disease and behavioural surveillance, prevention and control in every village /sub district/ municipality/ district (an identified target in Thailand's National Strategic Plan for Avian Flu Pandemic Preparedness, 2005-2007). To aid in this effort, UNICEF has provided support to awareness raising activities and campaigns through public announcements in villages/schools, community radio broadcasts, BFB caravan in communities and schools.
- ✓ UNICEF is also working towards designing a comprehensive standard Avian Influenza training kit that includes various types of IEC materials and guidelines for AI community communication for use by the country's 800,000 Public health volunteers (PHV) and core health groups.



BIRD FLU BUSTERS (BFB)

"Promoting Public Health Messages driven by Kids"

Four trainings of young AI leaders in schools ("Bird Flu Busters" or BFB) have been conducted in four high-risk provinces covering 800 BFB in 80 schools by MoPH during November and December.

This UNICEF supported initiative is the first joint AI response effort between the MoE and MoPH in Thailand. The training incorporates an overview of key public messages for AI prevention and the opportunity for youth leaders to plan AI communication strategies as a certified BFB.

These young AI leaders are core communicators in their schools and communities in delivering messages on AI prevention to other students and people in their communities.

By working to leverage cooperation and communication amongst Government bodies and partners, UNICEF is succeeding in contributing to the strengthening of public communication systems that facilitate avian influenza response during outbreaks, as well as ongoing measures taken for pandemic preparedness.

B. REGIONAL AND INTERREGIONAL COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

Regional and interregional communication support is critical for ensuring countries receive ample support in the development and implementation of effective communication strategies for avian influenza response. Regional support has also been vital to provide surge capacity, help accelerate progress, provide seed funding and support preparatory actions by governments in non-funded countries. Owing to funds that have been reserved for these purposes, interregional collaboration with guidance by UNICEF Headquarters is facilitating:

- Partnerships and interagency collaborations for avian influenza response.
- Advocacy and leveraging through regional partners
- Strategic planning, research and M&E through technical support and production of "ready to use" communication materials in the event of pandemic
- Knowledge Management for active sharing of best practices, resource materials and lessons learned.

This section provides Regional and Interregional examples of work under-way under each of the above four progress areas.

1. Partnerships

The East Asia and Pacific Office (EAPRO) is working closely with FAO, WHO and other bi-lateral agencies at the regional level to coordinate the UN joint communication action plan. It includes production and support for media materials and organizing joint press conferences for advocacy. The regional office is also harnessing regional communication networks, partners and channels to disseminate key messages and promote clear behavioural actions on prevention of avian influenza.

The West and Central Africa Office (WCARO) has established a partnership with the regional and global office of Academy for Educational Development (AED) to conduct a regional participatory action research in Nigeria and Burkina Faso to understand how universal avian and pandemic influenza preventive messages should be adapted within the West and Central African context which faces chronic food insecurity and multiple competing health priorities such as malaria, polio, malnutrition and so forth. Additionally, FAO and WHO have been invited to be members of the Steering Group that guides use of Japanese funds in the region.

As part of a multi-agency effort, UNICEF's *Eastern and Southern Africa Office (ESARO)* has assisted in the development and strengthening of the UN System by participating in UN agency meetings. In addition, regional partnerships have been strengthened with the African Union, CEMAC and ECOWAS by participating in multi-stakeholder meetings. They have also assisted in finalizing the UNCT Pandemic Preparedness Plans which include communication plans. All countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa region have produced UN contingency plans, each with a communication component.

ESARO has also worked with country regional partnerships, including Voice of America, USAID and country focal persons on media training activities. The work with media aimed at providing clear and empowering information to the general public and key groups of people, with a focus on communities and households; ESARO has developed a draft communication handbook for community based and frontline communicators including the media, which will be used to implement cascade trainings in 2007.

In the *Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA)*, UNICEF has helped establish an effective regional co-ordination mechanism and communication network on avian and pandemic influenza with regional governmental bodies such as South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Work with partners is being carried out through participation in meetings such as the Conference of Ministers of Health and Agriculture/Livestock on Avian Influenza Control and Pandemic Preparedness in Asia, hosted by the Government of India, FAO and WHO, July 2006.

Globally, UNICEF has initiated a collaborative partnership with UN agencies such as FAO, WHO and World Bank and partners such as CDC to determine a standardized and coordinated communication response for avian and pandemic influenza. At the *interregional level*, UNICEF is bringing together all partners to agree on a common strategic communication planning, design and implementation framework for advocacy, social mobilisation and behaviour change - across all six WHO defined pandemic alert phases.

2. Advocacy and Leveraging

EAPRO has developed a TV PSA on public health messages on avian influenza using UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Jackie Chan which has been widely broadcast in East Asia through the STAR TV Network. Separately, journalist and orientation workshops using Internews have been conducted in Indonesia, Viet Nam, Mongolia, Myanmar, Thailand and Lao PDR. This has resulted in an increased coverage of avian influenza in the regional and local press. *EAPRO* is also in the process of producing a regional documentary film using local and international communication experts on the consequences of avian and pandemic influenza for high level advocacy with government partners.



Pic 6: UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Jackie Chan and six children showing off birds made of origami paper, which are essential props in a public-service announcement on avian flu prevention.

During the later part of 2006, *ESARO* continued to support governments and partners to develop behavior change strategies and prototype communication materials designed for the household level, with a specific focus on back-yard poultry farmers, community influencers and children. They have been involved in high level meetings amongst country representatives and UN partners instilling the need to prioritize programming in avian and pandemic influenza. There has also been support for advocacy among key national decision makers for the appropriate actions to stem the spread and impact of a pandemic and to strengthen on-going hygiene promotion programs.

ROSA is producing for radio and television, to be adapted/used by the countries in the region. PSAs will provide simple information on prevention of bird to bird and bird to human transmission of avian influenza, and prevention of a pandemic by practicing safe behaviours. The PSA would be available to country offices to rapidly disseminate information in the likely event of a wide spread transmission of the H5N1 virus, with little or no time to engage in research and field testing of appropriate messages.

EAPRO and *ROSA* are jointly developing prevention materials for primary and secondary levels in health and hygiene behaviour and risk awareness to prevent avian flu transmission.

These materials will be widely disseminated to all Country Offices in South and East Asia to support their efforts in creating awareness of the risks of avian flu.

The Regional Office in Central Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) has organized high-level symposiums on 'crisis communication and media relations during a national health emergency' with specific focus on Avian and Pandemic influenza in six countries (Albania, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan).

UNICEF participated at the Fourth International Conference on Avian Influenza - Bamako, Mali, which was also attended by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs delegation of Japan, by focusing on the importance of communication strategies for avian and pandemic influenza. The work made possible through GoJ funds was showcased at this global forum and achievements by national governments were highlighted. Specifically, WCARO presented on the need to tailor health education messages to the socioeconomic situation of women and children in Africa.

3. Strategic Planning, Research and M&E

EAPRO is providing support for strategy development to country offices with weak capacity and low resources. In coordination with headquarters, they have developed an easy to use toolkit to monitor and evaluate communication interventions that are underway in the region. They also plan to develop a 'how-to' guide on using participatory methods for avian and pandemic influenza communication, incorporating communication materials and case studies.

ESARO has completed the formative research, storyline development, design and pre-testing of the multi-media Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) on avian influenza. It target's adolescents using story and comic books, posters, board games, cards and other school-based products promoting prevention of avian influenza in schools. *ESARO* has also produced five sets of posters (adapted for the AI outbreak in Juba, Sudan) that have been distributed to all country offices in the region, along with other mail-based messages supporting staff welfare and security. Country offices are being supported in the development of communication strategies in the national contingency plans and staff safety plans.



**Pics. 7, 8
SCI visuals and dialogue
boxes - ESARO**

WCARO's leadership in under-taking a region-wide Participatory Action Research with communities will lead to synchronizing proposed risk-reducing behaviours with livelihood systems and cultural practices in the region. The result of this research are being used to

refine the communication strategies already in place and allow country offices to set realistic and feasible targets for prevention and control of avian and pandemic influenza. *WCARO* is also providing technical assistance to several countries in the region in strategic communication design and delivery in support of programmes to prevent and control avian influenza. Additionally, technical guidance is being provided to strengthen UNICEF's emergency preparedness plans, including staff safety and business continuity in the event of a pandemic in the region.

ROSA is providing country offices, with limited capacity technical support in particular, inputs to National Risk Communication Strategies, advice on the analysis of field data on the behavioral practices, knowledge of target audience segments and support in the development and pre-testing of avian and pandemic influenza communication materials. In collaboration with Nepal UN Country Team and UNICEF country office, *ROSA* organizing avian and pandemic influenza training for staff and families. In India, support is being provided to develop prototype formative research instruments for adaptation and use in other countries of the region. The Afghanistan country office is being supported in their efforts to conduct rapid survey on behavioural patterns of various target groups, which would be used as the basis for developing the National Communication Strategy on avian and pandemic influenza in the first quarter of 2007.

ROSA is also in the process of designing a human influenza pandemic simulation exercise to be used by UNICEF Country Offices and their partners. Through this simulation, country offices and *ROSA* will be able to explore and further develop preparedness for national pandemic response, identifying gaps, drawing some lessons learned as well as strengthening team building for managing pandemic response. The methodology and scenario for the simulation are currently being prepared in close collaboration with the UNICEF Early Warning and Preparedness Unit in Geneva. *ROSA* will be the first region to field test the simulation exercise in January 2007 and results from the test will be shared with and benefit all others.

UNICEF *headquarters* is coordinating the development of an inter-agency communication planning toolkit for avian and pandemic influenza, "**Avian and Pandemic Influenza Strategic Communications Action Planner (ASAP)**," which will be accessible through the Internet by early 2007. Collaborating partners include CDC, FAO, WHO, World Bank and UNICEF. Pilot testing and training will begin from March 2007 at the regional level.

Essentials for Excellence, an easy to use research, monitoring & evaluation guide has been developed for avian and pandemic. A final draft version has been circulated to all regional and country avian influenza focal points. Several countries have begun planning monitoring and evaluation plans for early 2007 to demonstrate the impact of the communication interventions for avian influenza. Efforts are being made in EAPRO to adapt data gathering tools using electronic devices, which are compatible with existing UNICEF M&E resources such as DevInfo.

4. Knowledge Management and Media

UNICEF *headquarters* took the lead to consolidate the UN-wide communication response for avian and pandemic influenza. A **Global Communication Online Resources Centre for Avian and Pandemic Influenza (API)**, made possible with the funds from Government of Japan, was soft launched at the Fourth International Conference on Avian Influenza, Bamako, Mali on December 6, 2006. The online warehouse is hosted by UNICEF and it captures the UN wide response for avian and pandemic influenza. The resources centre aims to provide users with strategic communication products, information and tools

developed around the globe to prevent, contain and respond to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza virus. It can be accessed from:
<http://www.unicef.org/influenzaresources/>

In EAPRO, The CREATE! strategic framework and toolbox for emergency communication, developed with Government of Japan funds as part of the tsunami response, has become a powerful medium for sharing tools and experiences both within the region and beyond. Countries in the region are now able to collect, review and distribute the most creative and effective CREATE materials available through CD-ROMs and the web. EAPRO has also produced regional communication templates for quick local adaptation of materials such as for wet markets and created a pandemic communication package, as well as a series of short animated TV PSAs on pandemic preparedness and control that can be dubbed and used by countries in the region in case of a pandemic outbreak.

ESARO has worked closely with all countries in the region to develop communication strategies addressing avian influenza. Working in multi-agency and multi-sector partnerships all countries have produced media materials, such as print materials, radio and TV programmes and spots.

Since June 2006, *ROSA* organized a Regional Behavior Change Communication and Behavior Monitoring Capacity Building Workshops on Avian and Pandemic Influenza in Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Afghanistan for UNICEF staff and government partners.

A regional communication conference organized in October 2006, attended by all UNICEF programme communication officers in West and Central Africa, as well as by counterparts from governments and NGOs was used to share good communication practices and current knowledge about avian influenza in the region.

Inter-regional sharing of communication planning and research methods occurred at UNICEF's global meeting on avian and pandemic influenza communication in August 2006 in Bangkok. The meeting was attended by over 50 UNICEF staff from all 7 regions and over 30 countries. VIPP methodology was used to identify existing strengths, gaps and potential strategies for communication for avian and pandemic influenza. At the end of the 3-day meeting, regional communication action plans for September 2006 – March 2007 were produced and peer-reviewed by all participants.

Specific communication guidelines and standard operating procedures were developed and distributed to countries. Guidance was provided to Regions, Countries and National Committees on the development of communication strategies and media materials at UNICEF regional communication workshops. By designing an abridged version on UN pandemic preparedness guidelines for all UN Resident Coordinators, UNICEF has helped to ensure that 140 UN country teams now have communication around avian and pandemic influenza as core components of their plans.

UNICEF's global media section participated in four communication meetings (*ROSA*, *CEE/CIS*, *ESARO* and National Committees), presenting on the communication role of UNICEF and the UN on avian influenza and pandemic preparedness. The media section's focal point for avian influenza was also seconded to Panama to support the design of the Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office (*TACRO*) Interagency Communication Framework, adopted by UN/NGO partners in July 2006.

C. VACCINE STRATEGY

UNICEF has worked with WHO to develop a vaccine strategy. The aim was to provide some immediate protection to populations at-risk of avian influenza while at the same time enhancing the global capacity and ability to deliver a pandemic vaccine.

WHO and UNICEF have developed and assessed vaccination options, and UNICEF reported these to the GoJ in July and November. It has not been possible to identify a strategy that would include immediate use of vaccine. Therefore, the WHO-UNICEF consensus recommendation is that these funds should be used to prepare countries to deliver pandemic vaccine over the next 12 months. This aid is in the context of support for WHO's Global Action Plan (GAP) for pandemic influenza vaccine.

The major areas of action will be:

- Support for one or more developing country manufacturer to produce pandemic vaccine
- Assist countries in strengthening their national regulatory authority (NRA) to ensure that pandemic vaccines can be swiftly registered by countries producing them
- Mathematical modeling to determine optimal use of limited quantity of pandemic vaccine with specific technical characteristics in resource-constrained countries, in the face of a potential pandemic with various degrees of severity and transmission patterns
- Assess the capacity of national immunization programmes to deliver pandemic vaccination and address priority needs to strengthen that capacity
- Develop strategy for UNICEF procurement of influenza vaccines (both seasonal and pandemic)

(Details of these activities were submitted to the GoJ in November)

In addition to the work on developing and defining the strategy, there have been four assessments of national capacity to deliver pandemic vaccine undertaken in Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, and Viet Nam. There was also regional review undertaken by the CEE/CIS office.

These assessments have proven useful in identifying some critical needs, and resources have already been mobilised from other sources to start addressing these needs in Indonesia and Mongolia. Based on the results of these assessments, WHO and UNICEF will develop an updated protocol for use in other countries over the next 12 months

UNICEF Supply Division has commenced the work on developing an influenza procurement strategy. This will be based on the WHO global survey of seasonal influenza use and plans for pandemic vaccine. In addition, WHO (with funds from the Japan grant) has initiated the work on defining the processes for prequalification of vaccines by WHO. (Prequalification is required for purchase of vaccines by UN agencies.)

ACRONYMS

GoJ	Government of Japan
WHO	World Health Organization (UN)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
BBC	British Broadcast Corporation
PSA	Public Service Announcement
PLA	Participatory Learning Approach
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (A Regional Government Body)
AED	Academy for Educational Development (an NGO)
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (USA)

III. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. UNICEF MEDIA COVERAGE



Press centre

News note

Thailand launches national Avian Influenza awareness, prevention campaign in schools

BANGKOK, 10 October 2006 - A nationwide school-based campaign aimed at helping Thai children and their families protect themselves from the threat of Avian Influenza was launched Tuesday by the Ministry of Education (MOE).

The MOE campaign will cover all 40,000 elementary and secondary schools in the country and will focus on promoting frequent hand washing, rapid reporting of sick and dead poultry and other key behaviours needed to prevent the spread of the deadly H5N1 virus that causes Avian Influenza.

In launching the campaign at the ministry, Dr. Kasama Varavarn, the MOE Permanent Secretary, lauded the strong collaboration between the MOE, UNICEF, the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), the Government of Japan and other partners, which she said resulted in the rapid development of campaign materials.

Under the campaign, two million posters and two million pamphlets carrying Avian Influenza awareness and prevention messages are being distributed to all schools, along with a newly-developed curriculum on bird flu that will be used to help ensure school children understand the behaviours they need to practice to thwart the spread of the virus.

"This is just the beginning of integrated efforts to prevent the spread of Avian Influenza in Thailand," Dr. Kasama said. "It is now up to the teachers to make the best use of the materials and the curriculum developed for this campaign, and I am sure they will do their job well."

As part of the campaign's hygiene promotion component, 300,000 bars of soap will also be distributed to elementary schools across the country. The posters, pamphlets and curriculum were developed through UNICEF support, with funding provided by the Government of Japan.

Seventeen people – 11 of them children under the age of 18 – have died of Avian Influenza in Thailand since the first confirmed human H5N1 case was recorded here in early 2004. There have been three human fatalities so far in 2006, the latest a 60-year-old man from Nong Bua Lamphu province in northeastern Thailand who succumbed to the virus in August.

Bird flu outbreaks have occurred in domestic poultry in at least 30 provinces in Thailand, the world's fourth-largest poultry producer. Authorities have been forced to destroy millions of ducks and chickens to thwart the spread of the virus, resulting in severe economic losses for both large- and small-scale poultry farmers.

Since 2003, the H5N1 virus is known to have infected more than 250 people in 10 countries worldwide, killing 148. Health officials believe millions of people could be affected if the virus mutates and becomes easily transmissible between people, resulting in a deadly flu pandemic. Almost all cases of H5N1 infection in humans have been linked to close contact with sick or dead birds, such as children playing with them or adults butchering them or plucking feathers.

At Tuesday's launch, UNICEF Representative Inese Zalitis said the campaign is aimed at limiting opportunities for the H5N1 virus to mutate by stopping its spread from poultry to humans, especially to children.

"At the same time, the campaign will help build the life skills children need to be prepared for and to respond to any type of emergency," Zalitis said.

Japan's Ambassador to Thailand, Hideaki Kobayashi, who also took part in the launch, called the campaign an example of "significant cooperation" between Thailand, Japan and UNICEF.

The MOPH, together with the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization, provided technical support in the development of campaign materials, while Kenan Institute Asia designed the curriculum.



Cambodia

Cambodia's religious leaders enlist in the fight against avian influenza

By Maria Cecilia Dy

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, 28 November 2006 – Over the last six years, UNICEF has been collaborating closely with Cambodian monks, nuns and local elders in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Now that collaboration is being harnessed to fight avian influenza.

Since September, religious leaders from all over Cambodia have been partaking in a series of orientation sessions on bird flu, sponsored by UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Cults and Religions.

A series of 70 sessions have been held in 12 provinces throughout the country. Close to 6,000 Buddhist monks and nuns have attended along with many Muslim and Christian leaders. As influential people, they are in a unique position to help educate others about bird flu.

"These religious leaders disseminate information through their visits to communities and when people visit temples," said UNICEF Representative in Cambodia Rodney Hatfield.

'We have to be patient'

Chief Buddhist monk at Han Chey pagoda, Bo Tang Chey, said it took him more than a year to make people understand the danger posed by HIV/AIDS – and he expects a similar reaction toward avian influenza.

"Sometimes it takes a tragedy before people are convinced of the gravity of the disease," he said.

His fellow monk Ban Kok Sol said it is difficult to alter people's behaviour when they do not fully understand why they should change. "As educators, we have to be patient and try our best to inform them," he said. "When they understand the issue, they will act."

Source of livelihood

In Cambodia, raising poultry is an important source of income for many families, helping to pay school and medical fees, as well as buy food and fuel.

"We cannot stop people from raising poultry, as this is the only source of livelihood for some of them," said Ministry of Cults and Religions official Chea Sareth. "We should ask them to practice good hygiene instead."

A church official in Kampong Chhnang Province, Mok Channy, said she will use her community outreach programme to reverse misconceptions about how bird flu is transmitted. "Due to their poor living conditions, people still eat sick or dead chicken," she noted.

Intensifying the campaign

Following the bird flu-related deaths of two Cambodian children earlier this year, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Health to intensify its existing media campaign. Information about avian influenza is now reaching more and more children. Already, 10 television and radio spots have been broadcast, with four more scheduled to be aired in December.

"I don't play with chickens anymore because I heard from the radio that they are not toys to play with and can infect you with bird flu," said a nine-year-old schoolgirl in Stung Treng Province.

Mr. Hatfield explained that poultry-rearing tasks are often given to children, putting them at great risk of becoming infected with the avian influenza virus, known as H5N1. "People have to be well informed to avoid the virus," he said. "We cannot have dying children as an indicator of the presence of the disease."



At a glance: Lao People's Democratic Republic Theatre troupe raises avian influenza awareness in a Lao village

By Aiden Glendinning

VIENTIANE PROVINCE, Lao PDR, 27 September 2006 – As the sun drops behind the tall teak trees surrounding Na Sala village in central Laos, the crow of a rooster erupts from amplifiers in a forest clearing. The area rapidly fills with people while children gaze expectantly at a curtain-covered stage. The theatre has come to town.

"We've never had a real live theatre in our village before," says Thong, an excited 14-year-old. "We heard there was going to be this show on bird flu. It was announced over the village loudspeaker, but we thought it would just be another meeting."

Thong's life has already been touched by the disease. His home is in the Xaythani District, where thousands of chickens from local poultry farms were culled by government officials following an avian influenza outbreak last July.

Education and awareness

According to Na Sala's Chief Siphanavong, the show will not only teach people how serious and dangerous bird flu is but also explain to the villagers how they can protect themselves.

"We were delighted when the actors asked to come and perform here," he says. "We really appreciate the effort that UNICEF and the government are making."

The theatre performances are part of a joint programme launched by the Lao PDR Government and UNICEF to prevent the spread of avian and human influenza by providing health education and community awareness. The programme is made possible by a grant from the people of Japan.

This show is not an isolated action in the effort to control bird flu in Lao PDR. With support from the United Nations, the government has developed a National Avian Influenza Control and Pandemic Preparedness Plan, which includes increased surveillance of poultry as well as the training of workers in bird flu detection.

"We've had several visits from experts collecting information and giving us materials about regulations and poultry-handling techniques," said Mr. Siphonavong. "Tonight is different, though. Many of our people are illiterate, and I'm sure this experience will have a huge effect on them."

A familiar dilemma

A hush falls over the crowd as the curtain rises on an improvised stage. After some songs and stand-up comedy, the highlight of the evening is a boisterous play.

In the performance, an old man steals his hen's eggs and eats them raw to increase his vigour. When the authorities come to confiscate all poultry following a bird flu outbreak, the man awkwardly tries to hide the prized bird. The audience roars with laughter but falls silent as he finally realizes that he must turn over his beloved but sick hen.

For many of the inhabitants of Na Sala, the old man's dilemma is all too familiar. By giving up his chicken, he will lose an important source of extra income as well as nutrition. If he keeps it, he risks spreading a dangerous illness, not only to other fowl but potentially to family members – particularly children.

"We boys are often the ones who slaughter the family chickens," Tong remarks after the performance. "I wash my hands afterwards, of course, but I don't use soap and didn't realize I should have covered my face as well. I was lucky, I guess."

Bird flu came to Na Sala but mercifully there was no transmission from birds to humans. Now, the UN, the Lao PDR Government and other partners are working to ensure that if it happens again, the villagers will be well prepared.



At a glance: Viet Nam

Information a potent weapon in Viet Nam's fight against bird flu

By Steve Nettleton

DAI YEN COMMUNE, Viet Nam, 9 January 2006 – Nguyen Thi Tuyet takes off her straw hat and farming clothes and fills a bowl with chicken feed. She tosses handfuls of seeds to the 100 chickens inside a pen next to her house. Tuyet worries that she might lose her chicken farm if avian influenza returns to her village.

Outbreaks in 2004 and 2005 led to the culling of more than 11,000 chickens in her commune alone, and more than 2 million across the province. Recent outbreaks in three southern provinces have renewed poultry farmers' fears and concerns

Ms. Nguyen's chickens were spared in the previous outbreaks, but the effect on the poultry market was disastrous. Prices plunged and she could hardly make a living.

"We are afraid of the return of another outbreak," she said. "We think it is going to cause a lot of problems for us, especially in terms of economic loss."

Funding from Japan

Poultry is a major industry in Viet Nam, where more than 250 million ducks, geese and chickens are being raised at any given time.

The government is encouraging the development of larger farms. But most of the country's poultry farmers are like Ms. Nguyen, keeping small, backyard flocks that often roam freely through human living spaces.

Funded by a grant from the Japanese Government, UNICEF is working with the Vietnamese authorities to raise awareness in rural communities about how to prevent the spread of avian influenza among birds as well as its transmission to people.

Promoting safe hygiene

Large billboards in urban areas and on major roadways call for thorough cooking of chicken and proper hygiene. Public service announcements – broadcast on national and local radio and television – urge poultry farmers to ensure their animals are vaccinated and kept in a separate space from humans, and to wash and disinfect themselves thoroughly after contact with poultry.

“Personal hygiene is very important, not only to prevent avian flu, but also other diseases,” said the Director of the Health Education Centre at Vietnam’s Ministry of Health, Nguyen Quang Thuan. “So we’ve been raising awareness about personal hygiene – especially hand-washing, which is one of the ways avian flu can be prevented.”

It is a message many poultry farmers here have been quick to accept. They know firsthand how bird flu can devastate lives and livelihoods.