USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUCCESS STORY
Community Combats Avian Influenza with Homework, Ingenuity

Indonesian students and farmers practice methods to prevent avian influenza with help from a community-based organization.

CBAIC

Teachers in Bantul receive training on AI prevention methods. After learning these methods, the teachers incorporate similar lessons learned into school curricula and encourage students to share this information and practice at home.

USAID is preventing the spread of AI in Indonesia by mobilizing communities. Students can earn school credit if they take the AI prevention practices they learn at school and implement them at home. Farmers are motivated to lower the risk of disease transmission within their flocks by protecting poultry in low-cost cages made using sustainable methods. These efforts help prevent illness in both people and poultry and reduce the risk of related economic losses.

In Indonesia, H5N1 avian influenza (AI) is continuously present in poultry and has killed more than 80 people, making it the country with the most human AI deaths worldwide. Residents of Indonesia's Bantul District in Yogyakarta Province have experienced the devastating results of such outbreaks, as the disease has infected thousands of birds and subsequently affected livelihoods in the area. Now, members of a community group empowered by USAID-supported trainings to serve as village AI coordinators (VAICs) have mobilized to bring prevention messages home – literally.

The group, Muhammadiyah, is a grass-roots Islamic organization in Indonesia with nearly 30 million members. It has chapters across the country, including in Yogyakarta. In Bantul, Muhammadiyah is working with teachers and students and is also helping "backyard" farmers to improve safe poultry practices in order to reduce the AI threat.

The prevalence of AI in Bantul has increased the need for public awareness, as it has been recorded in each of Bantul's 13 sub-districts since the Government of Indonesia intensified AI surveillance in 2006 with USAID support and cooperation with groups like Muhammadiyah. Through a grant from USAID's Community-Based AI Control (CBAIC) project, Muhammadiyah mobilized its VAICs in Bantul to provide training for school teachers on AI risks, prevention methods, and the role of communities in preventing disease transmission and monitoring for potential outbreaks. With the support of district and community leaders, 121 high school teachers were recruited for this training, and the teachers are now incorporating the lessons they learned into their courses.

Mr. Budi Santosa, a Muhammadiyah AI response team coordinator in Bantul, said a goal of the activity is to help the teachers comprehend the AI threat and communicate it to their students. "We hope this initiative will give teachers an understanding

about AI dangers," he said. "[They can] create an AI control strategy through education and build public awareness by involving the students."

Many of the teachers report their students are eager to learn about ways to prevent the disease. As an incentive to share information and practice prevention measures, students are eligible to receive school credit for applying prevention methods at home. "My students are very enthusiastic about the subject and ask a lot of questions," said Mr. Yuliantoro, one of the teachers who received training. "I instruct them to pass the message about AI to their households and conduct biosecurity measures at home," he said. Students can help improve biosecurity by promoting regular cleaning of poultry cages and encouraging thorough handwashing after handling poultry. It is expected these efforts to encourage prevention practices will reach over 5,000 households per academic year.

In addition to encouraging teachers and students to share AI messages at home, Muhammadiyah is promoting more outreach to small-scale "backyard" farmers in Indonesia. Up to 56 percent of Indonesians raise poultry, and there are nearly 287 million free-roaming chickens in the country. These birds are particularly vulnerable to contracting the disease from infected birds and then spreading the disease to other birds. To safeguard "backyard" farmers, Muhammadiyah is promoting poultry cages to help farmers limit the possibility for their flocks to mingle with potentially infected birds. The cages are made from readily available wood, making them low cost and sustainable. Poultry farmers who have suffered from and reported AI outbreaks to local officials have been given cages in efforts to promote reporting and encourage improved biosecurity measures.

Muhammadiyah's community-level AI activities encourage prevention measures, including monitoring for and reporting of potential outbreaks, and preparedness through practice. These activities energize communities to take action and share information about AI with others, and the application of methods has great potential to reach participants' family members, neighbors, and other areas of Indonesia.

USAID provides AI support to more than 57 countries. More information:
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/home/News/news_items/avian_influenza.html