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## COMMUNITY SPURRED TO ACTION BY USAID/CBAIC-FUNDED EDUCATIONAL MASS MEDIA CAMPAIGN

### *STRUCK BY BIRD FLU, COMMUNITY'S QUICK RESPONSE NEUTRALIZES AN OUTBREAK*

*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 16 June 2008, Mr. Sunar's backyard poultry were wiped out by a silent killer. Alarmed, he reported what had happened to Mr. Soyfan, his neighborhood representative. The men were concerned because they had learned from a television public service announcement that sudden death in poultry could signal an outbreak of deadly bird flu. From where they sat in their sleepy suburban neighborhood on the outskirts of Medan, North Sumatra – the third largest city in Indonesia, they could have felt panicked and alone. Instead they remained calm because the mass media message also taught them what to do: **Report the suspected bird flu outbreak to local authorities.**

And that is what they did; they reported the case to their subdistrict chief, who next contacted their local volunteer village avian influenza coordinator (VAIC). The VAIC then promptly reported the case to the participatory disease surveillance and response officer (PDSR) of the Medan municipal animal health service. PDSR was quickly on the scene and, through rapid testing of the carcasses, confirmed that Mr. Sunar's poultry were indeed killed by the deadly H5N1 avian influenza (AI) virus. At this point the public health disease surveillance officer (DSO) was notified of the confirmed AI outbreak. The VAIC, PDSR, and members of Indonesian Red Cross carried out intensive culling and disinfection activities in and surrounding the outbreak area, followed by door-to-door canvassing to inform the community about what had happened. Simultaneously, the DSO canvassed for any suspected human cases. Fortunately, there were none.

This case well illustrates an effective community-based AI surveillance and response network in action. It also exemplifies the importance of strategic behavior change communication initiatives in "getting the word out" to ensure that the network is utilized to protect people at the community level. In this case the key communication initiative was the CBAIC mass media campaign that alerted people to the dangers of bird flu, and informed them how to respond. CBAIC also contributes to the formation of community-based surveillance and response networks through training of VAICs, who are taught to report suspected AI cases directly to PDSRs, which strongly links the surveillance and response elements crucial to the success of the network.

This story details successful AI surveillance and response in just one village; CBAIC has worked to insure that tens of thousands of villages across Indonesia have the same ability to protect themselves from deadly bird flu. The project has trained over 27,000 VAICs and subdistrict coordinators across nine provinces. And the CBAIC mass media campaign reached an estimated 159 million viewers. Combined, these interventions have increased the AI surveillance and response capacity of the country, providing many thousands of communities with the knowledge and tools necessary to prevent and control AI, ultimately reducing the risk of pandemic influenza developing from the H5N1 strain of AI.



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