A Front-End Assessment of Communication Needs for Avian Influenza Preparedness and Response within the Latin American and Caribbean Region

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ACRONYMS used in this document

AI	Avian Influenza
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
EWIDS	Early Warning Infections Disease Surveillance Project
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICA	International Co-operative Alliance
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IICA	International Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MOH	Ministry of Health of Bolivia
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PPP	Pandemic Preparedness Plan
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

Approach

In June 2006, Links Media was awarded a contract to provide expertise to promote effective risk reduction practices among affected populations through strategic communication activities during pre-outbreak, outbreak, and post-outbreak phases. The initial task was to contribute towards: a) increased awareness among key target audiences (particularly back-yard farmers, consumers of poultry, health care and veterinary staff) of high risk behaviors for contracting AI; and b) increased knowledge of how to recognize and respond to cases of AI in animals and humans.

Links Media needed to learn rapidly

1) what the current avian influenza (AI) preparedness situation is in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and to simultaneously assess
2) what resources already exist to help the countries of LAC prepare for a potential AI pandemic.

A two-pronged approach was undertaken:

1) Using a rapid assessment instrument, telephone interviews were conducted with the AI contacts at 12 USAID missions in the LAC region.
2) Simultaneously, a literature search was conducted to assess the existence of relevant AI communication resources that have utility for health communicators in the LAC region.

This report summarizes the process for accomplishing the two tasks described above and the findings that were derived. The report also includes recommendations for next steps based on findings from the interviews, the materials/resources review, and additional dialog with other organizations that are working on AI preparedness.

Task 1—Interviews with USAID AI Contacts for the Latin American and Caribbean Missions

Links Media held telephone discussions with 12 USAID Missions from the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Bureau regarding their avian influenza (AI) communication plans and materials. The discussions were held with AI Mission contacts from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru. Each interview lasted an average of 30 minutes. Interviews with the contacts from Jamaica, Dominican Republic and the representative from USAID Caribbean Regional were not possible at this time due to scheduling conflicts. Links Media will continue to contact these Missions and will include their comments in a later report.

To guide our discussions, a rapid appraisal tool was developed and applied during the interviews. After the interviews were conducted, the interviewees were each emailed notes taken during the dialogue and asked to review them for accuracy and to include additional comments. The interviewees were also asked to email their most current national communication plans and materials back to Links Media. Only one interviewee, Nancy Alvey, the U.S. Mission in Mexico's AI contact, sent materials, a document entitled "Leaders' Joint Statement, March 31, 2006, Cancun, Mexico." The document summarizes progress on the security and prosperity partnership of North America. Other interviewees indicated that they would follow up with the country's AI committee contact to identify materials and provide us with the most updated national communication plans as they become available. Interviewees were encouraged to request materials from their country's AI communication liaisons, which could be shared with Links Media for inclusion in the database currently in development. In response to this request, Dr. Jaime Rojas, the AI contact for he U.S. Mission in Brazil, requested that only materials authorized by the Government of Brazil and verified by the USAID Mission be included in the database.

Summary of Interview Findings

This report includes three sets of findings pertinent to

1) Country-specific communication plans and each country's materials and technical assistance needs;
2) The internal communication function within the community of U.S. Government and Foreign Service Nationals;
3) Regional communication needs.

1) Country-Specific Communication

The majority of the countries from the LAC region have developed a national communication plan. The plans are in various stages of development and implementation ranging from fully developed and currently under implementation to have been discussed as a priority but have not been formally developed. Many of the plans were developed with technical and financial assistance from national governmental organizations such as ministries, PAHO and other organizations including the poultry industry. Within the context of what resources exist and the competing needs of the countries, AI is currently an important but not critical issue.

- Assistance in accessing reproducible materials was identified as a priority. Identification of materials developed for other cultures—which could be adapted for Latin American and Caribbean settings—would also be valuable.
- No specific target audience or message was identified, in part due to the varying stages of the plans.
- Interviewees raised the need for further clarification regarding funding for communication activities for FY07, particularly in regard to reproduction of materials.

The USAID Mission AI contacts from Brazil, El Salvador, Guyana, Mexico and Peru reported that the countries have developed national communication plans and have subcommittees dedicated to the implementation of communication activities. It was reported that much progress has been achieved in this regard. Bolivia and Nicaragua have national communication plans in draft form and technical assistance is needed to further define them and create operational plans. In addition, access to reproducible materials was requested to support the creation of information and education materials. Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras and Paraguay have not yet developed communication plans, but they are currently in the process of establishing subcommittees for communication to identify a strategy and to elaborate the corresponding plans. In anticipation of these activities, they mentioned that access to materials from credible sources, preferably materials that have been tested with the audience, can be reproduced by the country, and can be easily downloaded from the Internet or from a CD were needed and valuable resources for their countries' future communication activities.

Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Paraguay requested technical assistance for communication planning from Links Media.

1) Bolivia

Bolivia began the development of a National Response Plan in August 2005, which is co-lead by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Rural and Agricultural Development. Initially there were a number of individual plans, but currently they are coming together in a coordinated manner. Bolivia's national plan was developed during the change in government, which resulted in delays. In May 2006, by request from FAO and PAHO, the Government of Bolivia re-initiated the work and began to link strategies as part of an integrated plan. The draft national plan brings together both animal and human health; and it includes stationary, avian and pandemic influenza. Further, the plan includes some strategies for communication and social mobilization. A meeting with ministers from Agriculture and Health was scheduled at the end of August to get their approval of the national plan. Once the plan is approved, there will be a need for the development of operational plans including for communication. The approach will be multidisciplinary and will involve various networks such as UNICEF, USAID, and PAHO. A budget has been created to support these activities, with $15,000 to $20,000 assigned for communication activities, which is targeted for printing and production of audiovisual materials.

In terms of materials, currently five technical documents have been developed:

- "Manejo clínico,"
- "Vigilancia centinela,"
- "Vigilancia epidemiológica,"
- "Comunicación," and
- "Toma de muestras."

Other technical documents include: two plans (health and agriculture) and the draft national plan, which integrates health and agriculture. Messages and materials will most likely focus on hygiene and good food practices.

Bolivia requested technical support for the development of a national communication plan as well as access to downloadable materials for general audiences and the media. Furthermore, they requested access to a communication's validation instrument created by the CDC for Vietnam and Indonesia.

Bolivia requires support for the NGOs working in country to help them create an action plan and a communications plan, and to provide trainings on certain AI issues. In addition, Bolivia needs technical assistance to review its national communications plan and to assure that all involved know what is expected of them.

2) Brazil

Brazil has developed a national communication plan in collaboration with PAHO, and USAID/Brazil has been in close proximity during this process. AI activities are being coordinated with Cristina Toscano, key contact for science at the U.S. Embassy. On the PAHO/Brazil Website, http://www.opas.org.br/influenza, there are a number of materials, a calendar of activities, and links to additional resources. The Ministry of Agriculture guides the focus of the AI response in Brazil. With that emphasis, various actions at the regional and municipal levels are taking place. Health at the moment plays a secondary supportive

role. For now USAID/Brazil's role has been limited. Links Media will add these materials to the AI database as they are authorized by the Government of Brazil and crossed reference by USAID/Brazil.

3) Colombia

Colombia has a national AI preparedness and response plan as well as a task force comprised of various actors including the Ministry of Health, USAID/APHIS, PAHO, and the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA). The Government of Colombia has hired a consultant to redefine the plan. As far as USAID/Colombia is concerned, the plan does not have a communications component. Though AI is a concern of the Colombian government, they do not have money set aside to fund health AI activities and very little exists in terms of materials. This does not mean that the Government will not have some funding. Good work has been done in agriculture laboratory testing. There are plans to meet in regard to various development projects. On the human health side of AI, Colombia wants to replicate what the agricultural sector accomplished. They are interested in the portal at PAHO and the Links Media database resource that will connect them to materials from other countries.

4) Ecuador

The National AI response plan is in development. Development of a Webpage was discussed as a channel for dissemination of official information. The private sector has expressed a lot of interest in funding AI preparedness activities, including communication. USAID/Ecuador would like to support the Ministry of Health but has no technical or financial resources. Therefore, access to reproducible and downloadable materials would be of tremendous value to the country and a good contribution from USAID. They would like to see the materials Links Media has included in the database, including the AED materials, and select items which the country could adapt.

5) El Salvador

El Salvador has a Presidential Commission comprised of various governmental and private industry organizations such as the *Asociación Avicultores de El Salvador*. The Presidential Commission has a subcommittee for communication that has designed a strategy and is receiving funding from the private sector (poultry industry) for the development and production of materials, which include radio spots, press materials, posters, transit/outdoor advertising, and signs to be placed strategically throughout the Capital City. An advertising agency, funded by the private sector, developed these materials and advertisements. In addition, with financial support from the Government of Taiwan, a number of elements of the plan have been produced. A Webpage is currently in development and will soon be launched. The Webpage is targeted to the public and will contain educational resources that reinforce their unified message, all of which will be promoted in a coordinated fashion in the community and through the mass media. Additional financial and technical assistance has been identified to support communication activities. The specific needs will be communicated to Links Media within the next few weeks.

A number of communication activities are planned including capacity building workshops. Organizations in the country have participated in a number of other communication and information activities including teleconferences sponsored by IDB, PAHO and USDA.

6) Guyana

Guyana formed a multi-sectorial committee to address AI preparedness and response. Represented in this committee are members of the private sector (poultry industry), Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Education, and the University of Guyana. A subcommittee for communication was formed, mainly of communicators from the Ministries. They developed a number of materials, which were adapted from existing resources downloaded from PAHO's Website. Co-produced with assistance from Guyana's Red Cross, the materials produced include leaflets and a poster. Having access to a market place where materials can be downloaded for later adaptation would be ideal for Guyana, as no financial resources exist from USAID/Guyana to support these activities.

7) Haiti

Haiti has a national committee for AI comprised of members from USAID, the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, and the WHO. Haiti is looking at having FAO and CDC join in. There is no subcommittee for communications, but the need for a person dedicated to communications will be discussed in the next committee meeting in two weeks. No communications activities have been implemented in a formal way, yet they have been considered. USAID is funding the Interamerican Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) to support AI preparedness and response activities, including communications. Once this contract is implemented, communications and technical needs can be identified and shared with Links Media. There are no campaigns or materials on hygienic practices or any preparedness messages on AI, but the Ministry of Agriculture may have some materials on hygiene, which will be sent to Links Media. Because of the low literacy rates, radio announcements are valued highly. Also useful would be materials in Creole with messages clarifying the issue of chicken consumption.

Changes in government have created some delays in AI planning activities, as they are waiting to see what the new government will do in terms of AI.

8) Honduras

Last year a plan for AI was developed with support from PAHO and some support from USAID/Honduras. USAID representatives, Ministries (health and agriculture) and other stakeholders later revised the Plan and discussed adding new guidelines. The national plan mentions the need for a communications plan and some of the specific elements that need to be included in it, yet a communications plan does not exist. The national committee recognizes the need to develop a communications plan that includes all fundamental channels and messages about AI. The Agriculture authorities and the chicken association know what to do in terms of sanitation and management of avian diseases. People are very conscious of the economic risks that AI poses for them. However, a communications plan and messages are needed for other audiences such as the general public, decision makers,

and public health officials. AI is not a priority issue in Honduras as very little money is available and there are other competing health priorities.

9) Mexico

Mexico, as part of the Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance (EWIDS) Project has been working closely with the CDC in the development of a North America AI preparedness and response plan. The USAID/Mexico Mission is on the periphery of these activities, but they are aware of the progress. In regard to communication, a multisectorial committee for communication has developed and validated a national communication plan, currently posted on the Secretariat of Health Website at http://www.dgepi.salud.gob.mx/pandemia/planpp.htm . A number of materials have been developed to support the national communication plan and are currently undergoing validation. Dr. Marilú Acosta Méndez, Special Projects Coordinator from the Secretariat of Health shared these materials with Links Media and requested revision of them, which was provided. To date no other technical assistance for communication has been requested by the USAID/Mexico Mission. However, the USAID/Mexico Mission is staying abreast of progress, and needs. The Mission indicated to the Secretariat of Health its willingness to assist should they request support including in communications. The Mission has contacts with Mexico's Secretariat of Health Division of Epidemiology and has met with the coordinator from Mexico, Miguel Betancourt. In addition, Kelly R. Preston, DVM, Veterinary Medical Officer with USDA-APHIS, is working closely with his Mexican counterparts on the animal health side.

10) Paraguay

There is a national preparedness and response plan but it lacks an operational plan that defines roles and individual responsibilities for a response. The National Committee has assigned the Ministries of Agriculture and of Health to take action if either an animal AI or a human AI case occurs. If a pandemic occurs, then the National Emergency Secretariat will take action. Two months ago, a simulation exercise revealed a lack of defined roles for a response. A budget request for $9 million for AI was made, but the budget was not founded on specifics. Dr. Maria Almirón of PAHO is a good contact for the process and systems of the national plan.

Communications is considered crucial for the Nation and the Region, yet neither possesses a well-defined workplan. Paraguay needs an operational plan for communications that includes responsibilities and specific actions at various levels. In addition, a communications committee is required to develop and implement a response plan in an emergency; to provide a spokesperson to proactively and regularly communicate the AI situation to the country; and to promote preventive measures (i.e. hand washing) before a pandemic occurs. Non-written material and audio-visual education are important for the indigenous groups, namely in El Chaco region. By the end of 2006, Paraguay hopes to have its communications plan revised, and the roles and responsibilities of key actors set.

11) Peru

In Peru, the Ministry of Health has developed communication strategies and brought various stakeholders and representatives from USAID to develop and share their strategies including their communication component. Currently, the Ministry is looking at developing and refining their communication strategy. The Ministry of Health submitted a proposal to the CDC for $825,000 to support the country's AI preparedness and response plan and part of the funds will encompass communication activities to inform the public in a comprehensive and efficient way about the right actions for people to adapt. The plan may also include activities around educating journalists and setting up response systems throughout the country. PAHO has been working in Peru to support activities in surveillance. A meeting on this topic is scheduled for September 11, 2006 in Lima.

The country just held elections and the new change in government has put the focus on other issues; AI is not as prominent an issue at the moment.

2) Internal Communication

Some, but not all USAID Missions mentioned internal AI communications as an area of need. For example, USAID/Guyana indicated concern with the lack of an internal AI communications plan that details how to communicate the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). USAID/El Salvador also manifested a concern regarding the need for clear internal communications plans. USAID/Mexico and USAID/Peru indicated that they have internal AI preparedness activities.

USAID/El Salvador

Karen Azucena is the communications coordinator for USAID/El Salvador and the liaison for internal communication activities. The Mission is working together with the public relations office of the U.S. Embassy, but no funds are available for internal AI communications and AI preparedness material development. A brochure with basic information would be beneficial, as many people in the U.S. Embassy do not know much about AI. Knowing who the AI spokespersons are and how to respond to the media were identified as key needs.

USAID/Ecuador

There are severe deficiencies related to internal AI communication. A structure with clear and identified channels of information should be identified. It would be useful to gain an understanding of AI communication expectations and share this information within the U.S. Government agencies in Ecuador.

USAID/Guyana

Conversations have been held regarding the need for internal AI communication about the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for sample collection, training, and other activities. These discussions have resulted from debriefings of simulation exercises held in the

country. During these talks, Guyana identified the lack of an internal communication plan that maps out how to communicate the SOP as a major deficiency. Julia Rehwinkel, AI Contact for USAID/Guyana, indicated a need for the development of a plan and materials to inform and ensure that veterinarians and other professionals know how to operate and communicate during an emergency situation.

USAID/Mexico

Nancy Alvey, USAID/Mexico Health Team Leader and AI Contact, indicated that she coordinates with the U.S. State Department Science Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, Miguel Rodrigues, who is also the official contact for HHS/CDC at the Embassy. The Embassy has an internal AI preparedness plan that details triggers and appropriate actions on the part of each agency represented in the Embassy in the event of an outbreak in Mexico. The Embassy plan includes the nine U.S. Consulates in Mexico, several of which are on the border with the United States.

USAID/Peru

The USAID/Peru Mission is involved with the U.S. Embassy in the planning of an AI response. AI activities in the U.S. community in Peru are led by Dr. Brooks Taylor, USAID/Peru Chief Medical Officer, in collaboration with other parts of the U.S. Embassy. (Dr. Taylor has just left his position in Mexico.) A basic communication plan was developed and shared at a town hall meeting last January. The AI internal communication plan and materials will be sent to Links Media.

3) Regional Communication

Most countries in the LAC region are aware of the importance of a regional AI preparedness and response plan. Bolivia, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, El Salvador, and Hati all expressed their belief that a regional communications plan would be essential for an AI response.

Bolivia

Bolivia would like to confirm PAHO's role in supporting the development of a regional AI preparedness plan. Bolivia considers it very valuable to have a plan in place.

Brazil

Brazil suggested that a follow up regional conference be organized to discuss each country's AI preparedness situation and to devote resources to work on regional communication plans.

Ecuador

There are a number of diplomatic meetings that should be leveraged in order to raise awareness about the agreements between countries regarding communication on outbreaks and health crisis. The influential positions of ministers and other diplomats, enables them to raise the level of commitment placed on creating regional communication plans. Regional communication plans are pivotal.

El Salvador

USAID/El Salvador is unaware of any regional AI communications activities. USAID/El Salvador suggested collaboration with PAHO and the Ministries of Health and Agriculture of the LAC region to create a regional communication plan. USAID/El Salvador believes they should lead the coordinating efforts for this effort.

Guyana

USAID/Guyana is aware of an AI action plan at the U.S. Embassy level, and the Government of Guyana has a regional plan, which is in tune with a CARICOM agreement. The regional plan includes communications. Angela Davis from USAID/Barbados is a good contact for obtaining information on efforts and on the status of Caribbean Regional activities and needs. The Caribbean Epidemiology Center in Trinidad is also involved along with the CDC office in Trinidad in addressing this issue.

Haiti

USAID/Haiti reports that there is no regional plan, but this will be discussed with IICA in September 2006. At the regional level, the Dominican Republic and Barbados need to be taken into consideration, and Haiti requests to be included in all meetings regarding communication at regional meetings.

Honduras

A regional workshop, which focuses on AI communication between and among countries, would be useful. This is needed to have adequate understanding of the diplomatic agreements made between countries and borders in case a problem arises. There are efforts that are not appropriate nationally, but are appropriate for a region. In the meantime, generic messages could be developed for use in different situations. When the cholera epidemic occurred in the region, the disease had minimal affect in Honduras, because communication messages reached the whole population in a timely and consistent manner. The anti-cholera group has disintegrated and much of that effort was lost, but there are still people in the Ministry of Health that have regional and national experience. If any of the anti-cholera group members are reached, the information and material used will be sent to Links Media.

Mexico

A North American response agreement exists between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. Mexico is in a unique position compared to other countries in the region, as it is part of the North American Partnership for Security and Prosperity. The Leaders' Joint Statement from Cancun in March 2006 pledged cooperation on avian and human pandemic influenza as one of the priority initiatives. Should there be a major outbreak, the Government of Mexico has acknowledged that its health system will be overwhelmed. This worst-case scenario is also shared by the U.S. and Canada as well. The Government of Mexico needs to work with its States [31 States and one Federal District] to address what their local level plans would be in the case of a real emergency. The National Plan for Mexico has been completed, but each of the States needs to develop its own plans, and some States have advanced more in this task than others. Communication activities are in progress.

Paraguay

Paraguay greatly depends on neighboring countries for many components, such as surveillance, and thus a regional AI communications plan should exist. Paraguay considers communications a critical part within a regional preparedness and response plan.

Peru

USAID/Peru reported that the region will benefit from a good regional surveillance, diagnosis, and response plan. Contact: Luis Seminario (USAID Senior staff) who worked on regional communications strategies for cholera 10 years ago.

Task 2--AI Literature Search

In July Links Media initiated a search for existing AI preparedness communication materials. This search included the identification of printed, audiovisual, and electronic resources that could be useful to health communicators in the Latin America and Caribbean region as they undertake the effort to develop AI materials that are appropriate for and will be effective with their populations.

Several assumptions guided the search. The materials gathered should:

- Come from an authoritative source to ensure scientific accuracy.
- Come from both the human and animal health sectors.
- Tap into the materials and expertise of countries that have already experienced AI outbreaks, especially Asia.
- Be accessible for review and use by others, preferably via the Internet.

The search was primarily conducted online, using familiar search engines and following leads from prominent AI Websites. Additional items were picked up from the Task 1 interviews.

As the materials were identified, they were classified into five different categories:

1) Community, Workplace, and School Resources
2) Communications Planning Resources
3) Communications Capacity Building Resources
4) Website Resources
5) Resources for Creating Materials

Descriptors of the materials were entered into an Access database, which holds the following information for each item:

- Organization of origin and its contact information
- A bibliographic citation
- A descriptive annotation of the material
- The language(s) in which the material is available
- The classification for the item (from the list of 5 classifications above)
- The type of item(s) (booklet, kit, poster, Website, Film, PSA, etc.)
- The audience(s) for which the material was developed (or seems most appropriate)
- The copyright status (including any specific "permissions" information)

Findings from the Literature/Communication Resources

More than 130 items have entered into an AI materials database. Each item has been classified into one of five categories. A full listing of these communication resources, by citation and annotation, is presented as Annex III to this report.

A brief summary description of each category or section is presented below:

I. Community, Workplace, and School Resources.

This section provides more than 50 examples of avian influenza prevention materials that are drawn from both the human and animal health sectors. The resources (posters, fact sheets, kits, brochures and leaflets, broadcast radio and television PSAs, and Websites) are tools that a health communicator use as references or can promote for use in community settings such as workplaces, schools, markets, libraries, religious and other public gathering places, as well as through radio and television outlets. A single bibliographic entry may describe a poster, a kit that contains six or more different elements, or a full-scale prevention initiative.

Many of the materials in this section originated in the Asian Pacific region, which is currently experiencing outbreaks of avian influenza. Even though some items may not be directly applicable for Latin American and Caribbean region, they can inspire culturally appropriate adaptations. More than a third of the entries in this category are already available in Spanish.

II. Communications Planning Resources

This section describes more than a dozen Latin American national pandemic preparedness plans—in draft or final version—that incorporate communications planning. Most of these plans are in Spanish. Some are not yet available online. In addition, this section presents four separate national avian influenza *communications* plans (Brazil, Guatemala, Peru) that provide more communications strategy detail than the overall national pandemic plans, which they accompany. Planning resources from the World Health Organization, Pan American Health Organization, and CARE USA are included, which provide tools (checklists, tips, and assessments), guidance, and recommendations for creating communications strategies and plans, as well as comprehensive national preparedness plans.

III. Communications Capacity Building Resources

Communications capacity building resources include primers, PowerPoint slide presentations, a training video, training manuals, guides, and handbooks, which can be used as self-instructional materials or for training others. Every item listed in this section is instantly accessible online—for preview or to download as one's own file. Some items in this section are available in Spanish, French, and Portuguese.

IV. Website Resources

Two dozen Websites were chosen for this section, each of which contains substantial sections devoted to avian influenza. Many of these Websites are virtual libraries (e.g., the National Library of Medicine that can be searched from a computer in any part of the Globe). A number of these Websites (for example the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization) are updated almost daily to maintain the most current outbreak information. Many of these Websites include Spanish language materials; some have a Spanish language version of the entire Website.

V. Resources for Creating Materials

Resources to help health communicators create avian influenza prevention materials include prevention message points, photograph sources, clipart, and other image sources. All listed items are accessible online. Most of the resources are free-of-charge.

Summary of Findings related to the Literature/Communication Resources

- There is a substantial body of AI information and downloadable AI preparedness material, from highly reputable Website sources, available via the Internet. Much of the material is Spanish as well as English; Portuguese and French information and translations are also available for a number of the same items.
- Access (i.e. via computer) to existing AI material remains a major obstacle for many educators and community leaders in the LAC region.
- A few countries in Latin America are taking the lead and have initiated development of avian flu materials. Because the materials are currently in developmental testing (and therefore not ready for release), they could not be included in the current listing.
- Some of the most easy-to-disseminate items (posters, flyers, PSAs) that were found describe—either graphically or verbally—a desired behavior, but in and of themselves, the items do not provide a compelling reason for why this behavior is desirable. Effectiveness data and lessons learned from the dissemination process were not found, but they could provide very useful insights.
- Few if any materials were found that would be ideal for communicating with persons who are not literate and/or persons who are living in remote regions of their countries. This is seen as a serious void.
- Evaluation data, case studies, or lessons learned from the Asian experience to date were not identified. This kind of information would be most useful to Latin American and Caribbean countries that are embarking on communication materials development efforts.

Front-End Assessment:
Summary recommendations from tasks 1 and 2, interviews and communication resources

1) Country-Specific Communication

- Provide access to materials from credible sources that have been tested with the audience, which can be reproduced by the country, and are easily downloadable.
- Offer access to downloadable materials for general audiences and the media.
- Share with the countries training and planning materials, namely a communication's validation instrument.
- Provide information to the LAC countries regarding the effectiveness of materials developed and implemented in South East Asia.
- Communicate to the Missions what resources will be provided in FY 07 for communication activities, including reproduction of materials.

2) USAID Internal AI Communication

- Develop a communication flow chart or quick reference guide with instructions about how to communicate the SOP and what to do in case of an emergency. Include this communication guide as part of simulation exercises.

3) Regional Communication

- Incorporate communication activities and leverage the existing work of the USAID Caribbean Regional to inform the efforts and status of Caribbean regional activities including that of the Caribbean Epidemiology Center and the CDC office in Trinidad.
- Provide clarity about the role of the various international organizations in supporting the development of Regional communication plans; and support regional and sub regional meetings to discuss and work on the design of Communication Plans.

4) Communication Resources

- Translate English edition of Communication Resources into Spanish.
- Distribute the initial edition of *Communication Resources for Avian Influenza Preparedness and Response* as a pdf document electronically to its intended audience (health communicators in LAC) and other appropriate ministry personnel in LAC as well as to the AI contacts at the USAID Missions in LAC. Consider a print or CD edition to reach those who are not email accessible.

- Consider quarterly updates of the "feedback" obtained from the first edition of Communication Resources (see feedback form on the last page of the first edition) to determine utility and how to make it more helpful to its users.
- Place a portal to the database of AI communication resources on one of the frequently visited AI Websites to provide the broadest reach, the greatest flexibility for the user, and the greatest currency of information.
- Provide technical assistance; since most, if not all, of the existing materials were prepared for environments and cultures quite different from those in Latin America and the Caribbean region, technical assistance on how to adapt materials developed by others to increase the likelihood that maximum reach could be achieved.
- Use several forms of technical assistance; technical assistance in adaptation of materials could be provided through a range of mechanisms; e.g. regional workshops, tip sheets, remote training such as teleconferences, and peer-to-peer networking.
- Determine the need for technical assistance in developing low literacy materials for isolated indigenous populations.
- Commission the compilation of "lessons learned" to date by those who have developed and implemented AI prevention materials (primarily in Asia). A concerted effort should be made to identify organizations and individuals that could provide "lessons learned" from the Asian AI efforts that would inform the LAC region efforts and top disseminate those "learnings" to the LAC region.

ANNEXES

I. Documents Consulted

II. Diagnostic instrument for identification of technical needs

III. Communications resources for avian influenza preparedness and response

Annex 1. Documents Consulted

Weinberg M, Waterman S, Lucas CA, Falcon VC, Morales PK, Lopez LA, et al. "The U.S.-Mexico Border Infectious Disease Surveillance Project: establishing binational border surveillance." *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 9, no. 1 (Jan 2003). Available at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol9no1/02-0047.htm (Accessed September 1, 2006).

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Annex 2. Diagnostic instrument for identification of technical needs

First and Last Name	
USAID Mission	
Title at Organization	
Email	
Telephone	
Address	
Role in national plan development/ communications plan	

At what stage of development is the national communications strategy plan for avian influenza and pandemic influenza?					
1 = Nothing exists at the moment 2 = A document exists but not a working plan 3 = A working plan exists but requires validation and approval 4 = A valid working plan exists, materials are in development 5 = The plan is implemented	1	2	3	4	5

How would you characterize the development of the plan?

To which of the six phases developed by the WHO does your communications plan correspond with?

How do you implement, monitor and update the plan?

What resources have you used to monitor and update the plan, for example the communications section of the WHO checklist for influenza pandemic preparedness planning?

Does the plan have evaluation strategies and methods to determine effectiveness? What is the structure and organization of the plan? How are resources organized in terms of planning, material development, and plan implementation?
Does an intra- or interorganizational communications team or committee exist?
How often does the communications team or committee meet? Did this group develop the plan?
Who provides technical assistance? Specifically, what technical assistance is received?
Does a communications center of command and control exist? Where is it?
What financial and technical resources have been identified to support the development and implementation of the communications plan?
What audiences do you consider priority for the dissemination of materials and messages?
What materials have been developed or are in the planning stages?

Has a strategy been created that rapidly alerts the country via the media?
Has a Website been established for informational and educational activities of the communications plan?
Have key communicators and information sources been identified and trained?
How would you characterize the existing communication between health professionals and communications professionals in terms of developing and implementing communications activities?

Technical Assistance

In order of priority, what technical assistance is of most interest or needed?					
1 = no interest / 5 = most interest	1	2	3	4	5
Training for key actors in risk communications					
Training for official key communicators and information sources					
Training for the media on avian flu and risk communications					
Training on evaluation methods					
Relationships with means of communications					
Prevention, education, awareness strategies					
Development TV and radio announcements					
Strategies to reach specialized audiences					
Material development, adapted to special audiences					
Website development					
Others					
What other priority needs of technical assistance are required to speed up the process? (Suggestions, questions, requests….)					

How do you characterize Regional communication activities?

What priority needs of technical assistance are required to speed up the process? (Suggestions, questions, requests….)

Insert the 57 page document:

Communication Resources for
Avian Influenza Preparedness and Response.