

October 2009 – September 2012

Rationale

In Lao PDR, most people live in remote mountainous areas, making them hard to reach for interventions. An outbreak is more likely to happen around urban cities, where densities of humans and poultry are high and movements of people and poultry are frequent. However, poor people are often among those most vulnerable and bear the most severe consequences of an outbreak.

FHI 360 provided support to Lao Women's Union to test the usefulness of mobile telephone technology in sharing information, discussing health issues, and reducing the risk of potential infectious disease outbreaks if information is relayed and shared in real time.

Objective

The primary purpose of using this mobile technology was to determine – in real time - how well the trained LWU members could quickly share information among their members in the communities. Real-time response means an opportunity for immediate solutions to problems and follow-up.



Materials and Methods

Panel participants were recruited following carefully prepared screening criteria, including having a GPRS-enabled mobile phone. A total of 17 panel participants were recruited and trained initially to become Master Trainers.

After provincial trainings, a total of 71 participants were recruited and successfully registered on the panel.



The program set up a WAP-based system where panel participants could report directly via a GPRS internet connection using their own mobile phones. When the participants' mobile phones had been successfully connected to the internet, they had to register for the panel online and complete a test survey. A scheduled SMS link was sent to every panel member on a weekly basis for four to six weeks. The link led users to a WAP-hosted survey that included 1-6 questions in Lao language.

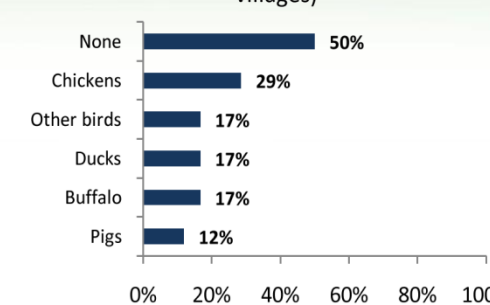
Results

MID-BCC – Mekong Infectious Diseases – Behavior Change and Communication

MID-BCC Flash Report

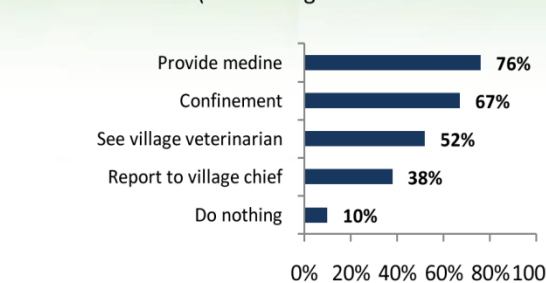
Influenza-like Illnesses SMS Reporting – Wave 2 (Animal Health)

Q1. Which animals have you observed DEAD in your village this past week, if any? (base: n=42 villages)



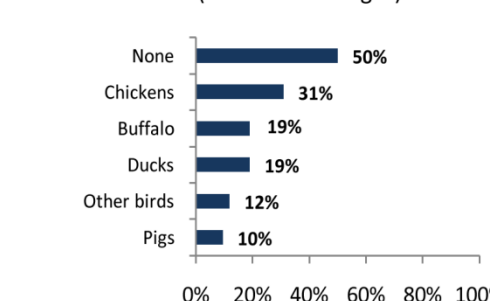
Comment: Dead animals have been observed in 50% of the villages and the most common observation is dead chickens followed by other dead birds and ducks. Larger animals such as buffalo and pigs have also been seen dead in quite a few villages.

Q3. What did the owners do regarding their animals that were sick? (base: villages with sick animals n=21)



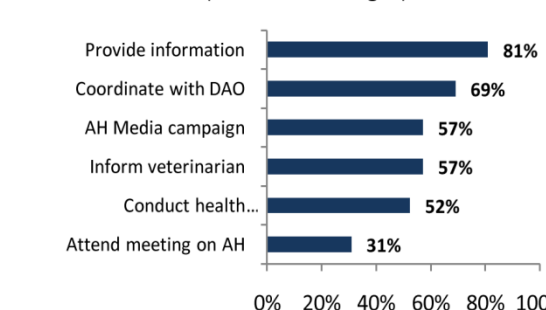
Comment: If animals are sick the most common remedy is to provide some kind of medicine or keep the animals in confinement. However, only 38% are expected to report it to the village chief.

Q2. Which animals have you observed SICK in your village this past week, if any? (base: n=42 villages)



Comment: Sick animals have also been observed in 50% of the villages and again, the most common observation is sick chickens. Sick buffalos and ducks have been observed in one out of five villages.

Q4. What does the Lao Women's Union currently do to help in the event of animal disease? (base: n=42 villages)



Comment: The LWU currently do a range of activities and the most common one is to provide information on where to seek treatment for animals followed by coordinate with the District Agricultural Office. In over half of the villages, the LWU engage in media campaigns on animal health as well as helping to inform the village veterinarian.



Conclusions

The LWU's support on animal health issues is similar to human health. The most common activities involve providing information to the local community, coordinating with the District Agriculture & Forestry Office (DAFO), and conducting local media campaigns.

There is some evidence to suggest that many cases of disease are not reported through formal channels, potentially leading to outbreaks going unnoticed.

The LWU could potentially assist in monitoring and reporting activities.

The experience implied that the best way to support the LWU in their work would be to provide communication materials and talking points. LWU opined that provision of mobile phones with similar features could have also lessen the problem during participation in the panel.

In another project, in partnership with FAO Bangkok office, trained LWU members in Svannakhet participated in price monitoring of poultry and swine. Such monitoring was envisioned to establish trends of animal death when prices go very low.

Acknowledgment

The Lao Women's Union, NEIDCO, and FHI 360 would like to express their sincerest gratitude for the overwhelming support extended by provincial and district representatives of LWU from Vientiane Capital, Bokeo, Luang Namtha and Savannakhet in making the mPanel a success.

This poster was printed only to serve the purpose of the MID-BCC Lessons Learned Meeting on Sept 5-6, 2012.