



Hanganak Non-Governmental Organization

Hanganak NGO in Tackling Bird Flu

Prepared by

**Gohar Hovhannisyan, MD, MPH
Project Manager**

Stepanakert, 2006

Hanganak NGO in Tackling Bird Flu

Introduction

In January, 2006, when the first cases of bird flu among people were registered in Turkey, information spread in the West that the neighboring countries, particularly Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh were among those of the first risk group. Upon receiving alarming news from the head of Ani and Narot Memorial Foundation (ANMF) Raffi Ardhaljian, the president of Hanganak NGO Gohar Hovhannisyanyan kindly and readily joined the efforts of ANMF in the prevention of bird flu invasion into the territory of Nagorno Karabakh. Notwithstanding, that ANMF is basically engaged into the implementation of vaccination program in Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, and the main goal of Hanganak NGO is improving the quality of life of the elderly living alone in Stepanakert, taking into consideration the urgency of the problem it was decided to work out and implement a bird flu prevention project without delay. The project was developed by G.Hovhannisyanyan, which was further reviewed and edited by Doris Mugrditchian, PhD, WHO expert in Public Health. The project was funded by the New York based Armenian benefactor Zaven Ken Darian.

The project consisted of three main components: spreading the information through mass and mini media, health education and interactive trainings of different groups of population, and, according to the needs of NK Health Ministry and other institutions, procurement and distribution of the essential drugs and preventives. Prior to the implementation of the program, Hanganak NGO held a number of meetings with responsible representatives of NKR Health and Agricultural Ministries, as well as with the head of NK State Department of Emergency Situations (NK SDES), during which the endowment extent and scale of Hanganak NGO was determined.

Spreading the AI information was done through mass and mini media; ANMF reprinted 2000 copies of AI leaflets developed by the UNICEF and 500 posters specially designed for children, which were already distributed throughout RA. Additional 2000 examples of leaflets were provided to Hanganak NGO by the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS). Besides, 500 examples of posters were adapted and reprinted in Stepanakert. The mentioned materials were distributed throughout NKR during the trainings, the second essential component of the program. Hanganak NGO ordered a video spot to the Artsakh Public Television on tackling the bird flu, which was presented on March 27, 2006, the first day of trainings, and its translation on Artsakh Public TV took place at the evening of the same day. There was an agreement according to which the further translation of the video spot would be provided by the NK Government. Thus, the video spot was translated for the further two months several times daily on the Artsakh Public Television.

NK Health Minister asked for providing within the limits of resources basic hygienic means, such as disposable gloves and masks. The latter were of crucial need in Stepanakert and NKR regions, which were necessary during contact with patients and dead domestic and wild feathery. Besides, she also mentioned that it was important to have on hand the only known and the most effective medicine for bird flu treatment – Tamiflu medication, for treating at least the first ten cases.

Similar objectives were put forward by other ministries and institutions. Hanganak NGO procured and provided 2500 gloves, 1500 masks and 10 packages (one package is sufficient for treating one patient) Tamiflu. The majority of the mentioned items (namely 1500 gloves, 1000 masks and all 10 packages of Tamiflu) were provided to the NK Health Ministry. The rest of the materials were given to the regional administrations and NK SDES for further utilization.

As a consequence of long discussions, it was defined that popularization only was insufficient without an active education and training of the population. ANMF informed that similar activities were already being conducted in Yerevan. Particularly, the RA National Institute of Education developed a guideline for teachers of secondary school on how to popularly, correctly and efficaciously explain children their behavior for avoiding the bird flu. Taking into account that 80 percent of the contaminated comprised children under 16 years old, the sessions took on vital importance. Some international organizations working in Yerevan arranged and conducted several training sessions for teachers in Yerevan and RA regions. Yet, Nagorno Karabakh, having no official recognition as a republic, was not included in the mentions training courses. Taking into consideration this fact, the ANMF and Hanganak NGO jointly decided to arrange same training courses in Nagorno Karabakh. The author of the guide Mrs. Frida Yeritsyan was invited to Karabakh to personally conduct the training courses.

Thus, from March 27th, 2006 to April 1st, 2006 training courses on the prevention of bird flu were conducted by Frida Yeritsyan throughout NKR. Teachers, school and rural nurses, form-masters, heads of educational departments, and head masters were chosen as trainees. Each training session started with an opening speech of epidemiologist, veterinary, head of civil defense local headquarters, and other professionals. It was followed by the answers of visiting specialists to various questions raised by participants. Mid-afternoon sessions after coffee break were conducted by Mrs. Yeritsyan by the presentation of modern interactive methods and the most unexpected and effective ways of delivering the topic to the attendees. The total duration of one session was 4.5-5 hours, including 30-35-minute coffee break, 1-1.5 hour introduction, half an hour questions-answers, half an hour break and 2.5-3 hours topic delivery and lively discussions.

During six days from March 27th to April the 1st the team represented by 6 persons traveled to almost all regional centers of Nagorno Karabakh. Particularly, the team consisted of the president of Hanganak NGO G. Hovhannisyan, head of ANMF Yerevan office N. Hayrapetyan, the chief specialist of RA National Institute of Education F. Yeritsyan, the director of Stepanakert branch of RA National Institute of Education B. Babayan, and Hanganak NGO project coordinator, the program assistant M. Sargsyan. Overall 176 representatives from different educational institutions throughout NKR had a chance to participate at the trainings. Representatives of educational institutions who were not able to participate the trainings due to some objective or subjective reasons, will be provided trainings by the assigned specialists of public educational departments according to the instructions given by NKR Education, Science and Sports Ministry.

Taking an advantage from the visit of the best specialist of RA _____??? National Institute of Education Frida Yeritsyan, the director of Stepanakert branch of RA National Institute of Education Bela Babayan upon completion of the main trainings on the prevention of bird flu, conducted complementary trainings with form-masters on new educational model and modern interactive methods of teaching. Mrs. Babayan accompanied the team during the whole trip and tried to most effectively use availability and time of the specialist.

Stepanakert

During the first two days, March 27th and 28th, 4 training courses were arranged in Stepanakert for teachers and school nurses from Stepanakert city, as well Askeran and Shushi regions. Training venue in Stepanakert was provided by the NKR Health Ministry. It was the convenient conference hall of newly renovated Republican Maternity House.

In general 39 people from Stepanakert city participated at the training courses, including 3 school nurses and 36 teachers. The vast majority of the teachers were form-masters. The mean age of trainees was 40.5 with the mean 18.2 years work experience. Educators and teachers from all 12

secondary schools of Stepanakert, as well as Physico-mathematical, “Erudit”, Choreographic, Arts, Musical schools and “Sose” kindergarten were included in the trainings. Representatives of public educational departments of Stepanakert city administration and Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Arts were also considered. The NKR Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Arts assumed inviting participants and ensuring their attendance. The number of participants per one group should not exceed 20, yet it was often more than 25. Mrs. Eritsyanyan did not spare any efforts to most efficaciously deliver lectures to the overfull groups.

Trainings for Askeran region took place the second day of the trainings. Taking an advantage from the availability of nurses from Askeran region at the First Aid trainings at that period and considering that nurses of rural health facilities at the same time assumed responsibilities of school nurse, they were also invited to participate at the Fighting Bird Flu training courses. So, 13 nurses and 31 teachers from Askeran region attended the training. This fact was very important as the joint efforts of nurses and form-masters would make the teaching more effective. The mean age of the participants was 37.2 with the mean 14.6 year work experience. Representatives from Askeran and 31 village administrations were included in the trainings.

In general 5 teachers from Shushi region participated at the trainings, namely from Shushi city, Lisagor and Mets Shen villages.

Thus, during two days total 88 teachers and nurses participated in the trainings. The mean number of participants in each group was 22. The courses were of success with high and active attendance. At the end of training session questionnaires were distributed to the participants to collect demographic data and to get information about their opinion on the training, the instructor and organizers of the training. The data were entered and synthesized with SPSS 11 software electronic package.

All participants without exception were highly pleased with trainings. The trainees found significant both the topic as it was relevant, and the modern way of its delivery. The vast majority of participants stated that they felt somewhat alienated from civilization and did not have an opportunity to pass any training course during the last 10-15 years. They were very grateful to the organizers for the chance to be provided training by a leading specialist from Yerevan. The trainings had two-way impact, on the one hand participants were informed about bird flu, and on the other hand they became aware of the latest methods of its delivery. In this connection, the trainings arranged by the director of Stepanakert branch of RA National Institute of Education Bela Babayan should be mentioned, which as a rule were conducted upon completion of the main trainings with form-masters from regional centers.

Martuni region

Trainings for Martuni region were arranged on March 29th in the renovated conference hall of Martuni Central Regional Hospital. The morning session of the training was conducted by the president of Hanganak NGO Dr. G. Hovhannisyan, MPH. She introduced the project, the sponsors and the problem from both medical and epidemiological viewpoints. The head of Martuni regional San-Epi Station, physicians, head of the regional civil defense headquarters delivered speech in the introductory part of the training also putting emphasis on the problem from different standpoints. After completing speech the mentioned specialists answered the questions of the participants.

The participants took an active part in the discussions, solving of presented problems and games during the mid-afternoon session. There were 26 participants from Martuni city and 18 from schools of village administrations, out of which 10 head masters, 2 heads of educational department and 14 form-masters. Mean age of the participants was 44.4 with mean 22.1 years work experience.

The trainees were filled with enthusiasm about the opportunity to be acquainted with up-to-date teaching methods. The survey conducted at the end of the course revealed that they did not participate at any training course for a long time, and particularly they were not delivered any modern teaching methods and ways. All of them were impressed by professional skills and vigor of Mrs. Yeritsyan.

All the participants were given specially developed bird flu guidelines, to distribute to the form-masters of their schools, as well as examples of posters and leaflets to stick on the walls of their schools and classrooms. Depending on the scale of schools and the number of classrooms the quantity of distributed posters, leaflets and guideline was different for each school.

Upon completion of the main trainings on bird flu, the second training was arranged with the efforts of Stepanakert branch of RA National Institute of Education Bela Babayan for form-masters which was about mastering the present-day teaching system and modern teaching methods.

Hadrut Region

Trainings for Hadrut region were organized on March 30th, in the conference hall of recently renovated Hadrut secondary school. It should be mentioned that NKR Health Ministry kindly provided the team with transport to support training logistics in the regions. And in general the Health Ministry supported trainings at its best by providing training venues, corresponding specialists to make a speech in the introductory part and to give irrefragable answers to the questions of participants, and finally so necessary transportation means.

One training session was provided in Hadrut city. According to the fixed agenda, Hanganak NGO president, Dr. G.Hovahannisyan made a speech at the first part of the training, which was followed by those of epidemiologist and head of civil defense headquarters. After completing their presentations the specialists answered questions of the attendees.

Overall 25 participants from Hadrut region attended the course, including 15 from village administrations, out of which 8 were head masters, 1 head of educational department, 2 school nurses and 14 form-masters. Mean age of the participants was 41.9 with the mean 19.0 ages work experience.

As always the trainings proceeded very lively. The participants took and active part in the discussions, games and problems solving. Guidelines, posters and leaflets were handed to the trainees, and the remaining materials foreseen for Hadrut region were given to the Hadrut public educational department for their further distribution.

Martakert Region

Trainings for Martakert region were conducted on March 31st in the conference hall of Martakert Central Regional Hospital. According to the accepted agenda, organizers of the trainings, head of Martakert regional San-Epi Station, head of regional civil defence headquarters and physicians made presentations in the first part of training course. The introductory session was more vivid and with more audinece than usual. The number of participants exceeded 40. The bird flu topic was of great interest for both teachers and health providers. The specialists answered questions of participants after completing their presentations.

The number of participants during the second session of trainings was only 17, including Martakert and 11 from schools of village administrations, out of which 5 school nurses and 12 form-masters. Teachers invited beforehand from Qarvachar, as well as representatives from Getavan, Haterk, Vaghuhas and other abundantly populated villages failed to attend the trainings. The regional

public educational department was assigned to arrange training course for form-masters and school nurses from village administrations that were not able to participate the provided trainings with the efforts of already trained specialists.

Mean age of the participants was 36.2 with the mean 11.1 years work experience. As usual the trainings proceeded very lively. The participants took an active part in discussions, games and problems solving. Guidelines, posters and leaflets were handed to the trainees, and the remaining materials foreseen for Martakert region were given to the Martakert public educational department for their further distribution.

Qashatagh Region

Trainings for Qashatagh region were arranged on April 1st in the assembly hall of Berdzor No 1 secondary school after Hambardzum Galstyan. According to the accepted agenda, organizers of the trainings, head of Berdzor regional San-Epi Station, head of regional civil defence headquarters, physicians, and teachers made presentations in the first part of training course. The specialists answered questions of participants after completing their presentations.

The number of participants was 19, out of which 1 was head master, 2 school nurses, and 16 form-masters. Mean age of the participants was 44.1 with the mean 21.6 years work experience. As usual the trainings proceeded very lively. The participants took an active part in discussions, games and problems solving. Guidelines, posters and leaflets were handed to the trainees, and the remaining materials foreseen for the region were given to the Qashatagh public educational department for their further distribution.

Summary

The project had a goal to inform various strata of the society on the effective main measures to be taken during the bird flu. It had also an objective to follow-up whether the information was successfully applied or not. Taking into consideration that Artsakh community-access television is available at 80 percent of NKR territory, and that 70 percent on NKR population watches it, it can be concluded that the information was mainly delivered to the population (more that 55 percent was aware) through the television.

The leaflets purchased and distributed to the regions by state and non-governmental organizations, could be considered sufficient. The agricultural and health ministries were given three thousand leaflets, which were distributed to Stepanakert and regional health facilities and other state institutions. Hanganak NGO gave two thousand examples of leaflets provided by the ARCS (Armenian Red Cross Society) to the ESA, through which they should had been stuck at all public areas throughout NKR, as well as to the NKR health ministry and all regional administrations. Extra two thousand examples were re-printed by ANMF, which were distributed to the form-masters and schools nurses during the trainings for their further distribution at schools. Thus, popularization on the bird flu was made for more that 80 percent population.

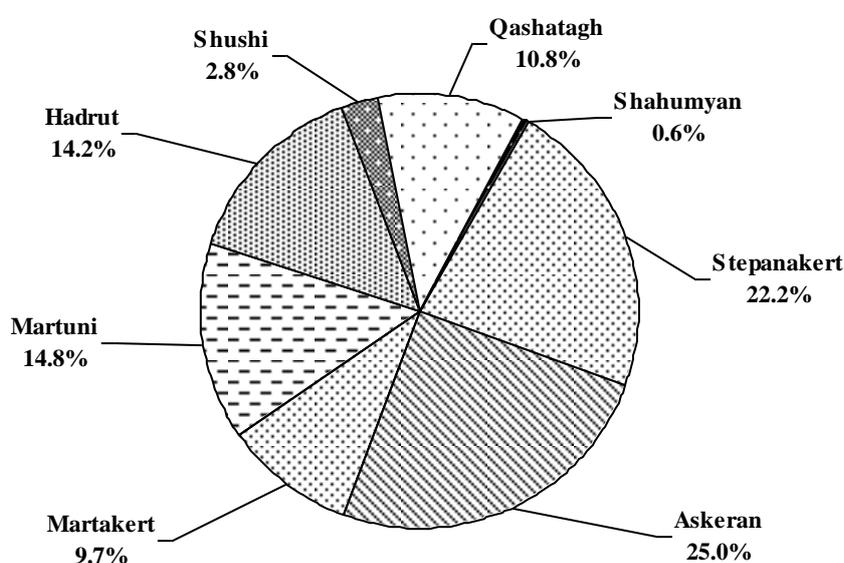
Posters for school age children were distributed in parallel to the training course. The number of examples corresponded the request. The posters were given based on the number of floors in school and elementary classrooms. The bigger posters were designed for the whole school, by one example for each floor. The smaller ones were much more convenient for classrooms; hence they were distributed to the elementary classrooms. The remaining posters and leaflets were provided to the NKR Education Ministry for their further distribution to the schools that did not participate at the trainings.

Ten doses of Tamiflu were provided to the NKR Health Ministry. Given the current situation it can be considered sufficient. The expiry date of the medication is December, 2010.

Despite 2500 gloves and 1500 masks were not supposed to be enough; however they met the primary needs of keeping hygiene norms on places.

Trainings were logical continuation of the popularization. It could not be complete without active explanatory work with the society which became possible through the mentioned trainings. Thus, 176 participants represented Stepanakert city and all seven regions of NKR. The proportion of participants from regions is presented in the Figure 1.

Figure 1. Proportion of participants from regions, NKR, March-April, 2006 (N=176)



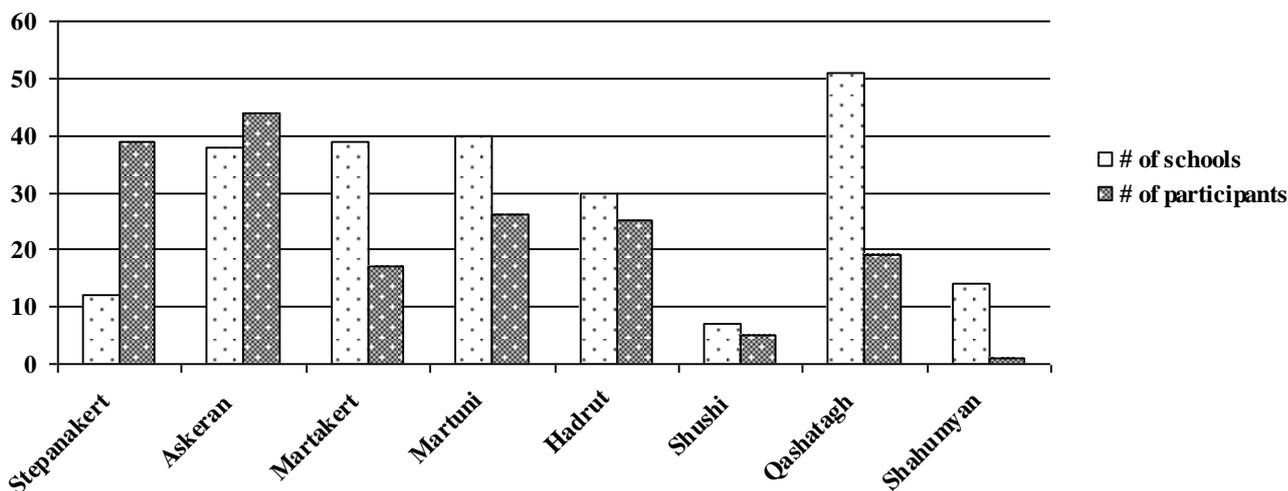
To determine the proportion of participants from regions and schoolchildren/schools, a comparative analysis was applied. A total of 231 schools with total of 20950 schoolchildren operate throughout NKR. The Table 1 presented below shows some statistical data per regions.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of the number of population, schools, schoolchildren and teachers from Stepanakert and NKR regions; NKR, March, 2006

#	Region/City	# of Schools	# of Teachers	# of Schoolchildren	Population Scale	# of Participants
1	Stepanakert	12	699	6719	58757	39
2	Askeran Region	38	637	2657	16930	44
3	Martakert Region	39	627	2669	18943	17
4	Martuni Region	40	823	4018	23009	26
5	Hadrut Region	30	487	1984	12087	25
6	Shushy Region	7	137	710	4528	5
7	Shahumyan Region	14	155	537	2493	1
8	Qashatagh Region	51	No data	1656	9887	19
	TOTAL	231	-	20950	146634	176

Taking into consideration that generally rural schools have fewer schoolchildren, it was previously decided to invite form-masters of comparatively larger schools with more schoolchildren. So, comparing number of schools and participants with the population scale, as well as geographical location, the proportion of participants can be considered sufficient (Figure 2):

Figure 2. Number of participants compared to the number of schools, NKR, March-April, 2006



The below given table shows the villages participated in the trainings per number of regions and participants (Table 2).

Table 2. Attendance of Stepanakert and NKR regions per number of villages and participants; NKR, March-April, 2006

#	Village/city	Region	# of participants
1	Stepanakert		39
2	Askeran	Askeran	2
3	Aknaghbyur	Askeran	1
4	Astghashen	Askeran	2
5	Avetaranots	Askeran	3
6	Badara	Askeran	1
7	Berqadzor	Askeran	2
8	Dashushen	Askeran	1
9	Harav	Askeran	1
10	Hilis	Askeran	1
11	Hin Shen	Askeran	1
12	Ivanyan	Askeran	1
13	Khachmach	Askeran	1
14	Khachen	Askeran	1
15	Khanabad	Askeran	2
16	Khantsk	Askeran	1
17	Khnatsakh	Askeran	1
18	Khndzristan	Askeran	2
19	Khramort	Askeran	1

20	Lusadzor	Askeran	1
21	Nerqin Szneq	Askeran	1
22	Noragyugh	Askeran	4
23	Parukh	Askeran	1
24	Qrasni	Askeran	1
25	Sardarashen	Askeran	1
26	Sarnaghbyur	Askeran	1
27	Sarushen	Askeran	2
28	Sghnakh	Askeran	1
29	Shosh	Askeran	1
30	Szneq	Askeran	1
31	Tsaghkashat	Askeran	1
32	Ukhtadzor	Askeran	2
33	Vardadzor	Askeran	1
34	Martakert	Martakert	6
35	Arajadzor	Martakert	1
36	Hovtashen	Martakert	1
37	Kusapat	Martakert	1
38	Mets Shen	Martakert	1
39	Nerqin Horatagh	Martakert	1
40	Nor Haykajyur	Martakert	1
41	Nor Maragha	Martakert	1
42	Qolatak	Martakert	1
43	Tsaghkashen	Martakert	1
44	Tsmakahogh	Martakert	1
45	Vank	Martakert	1
46	Martuni	Martuni	6
47	Berdashen	Martuni	1
48	Chartar	Martuni	3
49	Yemischan	Martuni	1
50	Ghuze Chartar	Martuni	1
51	Gishi	Martuni	1
52	Haghorti	Martuni	1
53	Hatsi	Martuni	1
54	Herher	Martuni	1
55	Kaghartsi	Martuni	1
56	Khnuhinak	Martuni	1
57	Kolkhozashen	Martuni	1
58	Machkalashen	Martuni	1
59	Mushkapat	Martuni	1
60	Nngi	Martuni	1
61	Shekher	Martuni	1
62	Sos	Martuni	1
63	Taghavart	Martuni	1
64	Hadrut	Hadrut	7

65	Aknaghbyur	Hadrut	2
66	Araqel	Hadrut	1
67	Azokh	Hadrut	1
68	Banadzor	Hadrut	1
69	Drakhtik	Hadrut	1
70	Hin Taghlar	Hadrut	1
71	Jrakus	Hadrut	1
72	Khandzadzor	Hadrut	1
73	Khtsaber	Hadrut	1
74	Qyuratagh	Hadrut	1
75	Togh	Hadrut	3
76	Tsakuri	Hadrut	1
77	Tumi	Hadrut	1
78	Ukhtadzor	Hadrut	1
79	Vank	Hadrut	1
80	Shushi	Shushi	3
81	Lisagor	Shushi	1
82	Mets Shen	Shushi	1
83	Berqadzor	Qashatagh	19
84	Nor Verin Shen	Shahumyan	1
	TOTAL		176

Conclusion

Fortunately hitherto no bird flu cases were registered in RA and NKR territories. However, it does not mean that the danger is over. As is well known the hazard is evident starting the coming winter and will arrive its culmination point the next spring. So, what should be done now and what should be undertaken for the next year? This is the question of first priority that has to be tackled without delay.

Taking into consideration that some measures were taken during the year of 2006, and they undoubtedly gave some result, before undertaking further steps it should be first revealed whether the obtained outcome corresponded our expectations.

In this connection Hanganak NGO proposes to conduct a KAP (knowledge-attitude-practice) survey, which will give an opportunity to define the impact of the implemented measures on the view, lifestyle, and behavior of the targeted population. Being aware of the serious attitude of population to the bird flu, one can determine the line of the project to be implemented in the next year. The survey rationale, form and budget will be presented by Hanganak NGO as needed.