The view from the farm

Communication challenges in the time of EIDs
Chikungunya fever

La Réunion
Mayotte
Epidemic
2005-06

1. Same standards of healthcare, modern surveillance and monitoring

2. Both chikungunya and dengue are mosquito-borne arboviral fevers.

3. All populations got the same message: ‘You have to destroy mosquitoes and protect yourself from their bites.’

Dengue fever

Martinique
4 outbreaks
1995-2007

Watching an emerging infectious disease emerge.
Chikungunya fever

La Réunion
Mayotte

38% of population infected
As high as 70% in some places

Mosquitoes have been present for a long time and are perceived as harmless by the public in affected areas.

The emerging risk is hidden by the lack of a noticeable and visible change in the environment.

Dengue fever

Martinique

20% of population infected
The problem with invisible things is that you can’t see them.
EMERGENT process

EMERGENCY cycle

- ASSESSMENT
- MONITORING
- PREVENTION
- RECOVERY
- PREPAREDNESS
- RESPONSE
- STASIS
- DISRUPTION
- EMERGENCE
- AWARENESS
THE PERCEIVED DISTANCE FROM THE PATHOGEN

- Biological Distance
- Sociocultural Distance
- Geographic Distance
Perceived distance from the pathogen

- FAR
- NEAR

Priority given to livelihood

- LOW
- HIGH

- Public health professionals
- Veterinarians
- Epidemiologists
- Donors
- Government
- Commercial farmers
- Backyard farmers
- Wet market operators
- Restaurateurs
- Transporters
No concept of disease transmission through vectors.
Understanding risk, biosafety, and biosecurity, and even hand washing, calls for an understanding of invisible living things that can do harm.
They don’t experience DISEASE. They experience SYMPTOMS.
Why do certain people get sick more often than others?

Why do babies get diarrhea?

What causes fever? What kinds of fever are there?

What causes respiratory ailments?

Why do certain people get sick more often than others?

Communities have illness categories/taxonomies.
High level of risk tolerance.  Disempowerment.  Food insecurity.
Fatalism.  Hardship.
Different communities, different perceptions of risk.
BANGLADESH:

Backyard and commercial farmers correctly linked symptoms in poultry with the Gamburu virus, and used the word ‘virus’.

No one could explain what a virus was.
THINGS THAT CAN DO YOU HARM

INVISIBLE
LIVING
THINGS THAT CAN DO YOU HARM

Germs
Viruses
Bacteria
Fungi

Curses
Ghosts
Demons
Ancestral spirits

Black Magic
Building new skills, processes and tools for communication technical information to lay audiences

Shift to community-driven, dialogue-based processes to kickstart critical reflection on risk

Strategies and interventions to promote change of behavior in the Disruption stage
Shift to community-driven, dialogue-based processes to kickstart critical reflection on risk.

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Thank you.