

## Taking the Avian Influenza Show on the Road



Performers from the Menofiya Cultural Center and "Arrayis" (puppets) backstage at the premiere of the Avian Influenza play in Menofiya.

**"Chickens and the Neighbors" will be showing in villages throughout Egypt as part of the national Avian Influenza communication campaign.**

*Menofiya Governorate, March 24, 2008*

Puppets took center stage at the Menofiya premiere of the Avian Influenza theater show. A puppet family squabbling over the fate of their chickens was shown the error of their ways by their helpful—and informed—human neighbors. Clear messages on safe behaviors for households keeping poultry were delivered through the traditional entertainment vehicle of puppet shows, complete with a soundtrack of popular music with lyrics on "Bird Flu."

The show was produced as part of the national multi-sector Avian Influenza communication campaign, implemented with the support of USAID through the Community for Healthy Living (CHL) project, a program of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health - Center for Communication Programs. CHL coordinates with partners from the veterinary department of Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, the Ministry of Health and Population, and the Ministry of Information, as well with CDC, WHO, and USAID projects involved in AI prevention. While the campaign includes mass media activities such as TV spots and TV and press coverage, community-level activities are at the heart of the campaign.

Outreach workers from the Ministry of Health and Population and the Ministry of Information join volunteers from village Community Development Association in leading door-to-door campaigns and leading community meetings to spread the word about the danger of AI, and how to protect themselves and their poultry—a vital source of income and nutrition for many families in rural Egypt.



Actors demonstrate proper disposal of a dead bird to their puppet friends who had not yet adopted behaviors which would keep their families and birds safe from AI.



The General Secretary of Menofiya Governorate endorsing the AI Theater Play.

"Chickens are the feathers in the farmer's cap," commented one participant at a village meeting, referring to the pride that locals take in their household poultry stocks. Community level AI activities facilitated by CHL aim to support rural families to raise healthy birds. Said one volunteer with the AI team, "We don't want you to kill your birds. We want to help you keep them safe." The play *Chickens and the Neighbors* is being performed in villages throughout upper Egypt in cooperation with governorate cultural centers.