

# Daily Briefing May 28, 2008

Living better where humans, animals, and the environment are connected

[www.LocalActionGlobalHealth.org](http://www.LocalActionGlobalHealth.org)

**PROGRAM:**  
Wednesday, 28 / 5

## ONE

- Analysis & reflection
- Groups:  
Assimilation activity

## TWO

- Groups:  
Assimilation activities  
(continued)
- Sharing of key issues

## THREE

- Assimilation activities

## FOUR

- Interest Groups:  
Convergence  
activities

**Questions:**  
Wednesday, 28 / 5

- How did we get where we are?
- What have I done in relation to the development of the situation?
- What should I have done that I did not?
- What criteria are we using in planning for change?
- What criteria would be best?
- How do we imagine our ideal world in the future?
- How do we get there?

## Setting a course for prepared communities

Singing frogs and the sound of crickets added to the welcome extended to the 43 attendees at the Local Action Global Health workshop.

From throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, participants set course for developing strategies to enable communities to prepare for and prevent local and global disease threats.

"Prepared Communities: Assuming Leadership and Acting in Innovative Ways to Prevent Disease Transmission between Animals and Humans" was the workshop title.

It brought together representatives from different sectors and activities related to human, animal and environmental health, producers, civil society and academics.

"There is no doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Of course, the only thing that every has," said Dr. Kevin Walker, a professor at Michi-



*During the assimilation activity, Claudia García of Honduras and Cristina López of Uruguay teamed up to create a dialogue map to demonstrate shared and common health concerns*

gan State University, quoting the American anthropologist Margaret Mead in his opening presentation.

Michigan State University, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and EARTH University were the workshop hosts, creating an environment to foster

interaction and dialogue.

Participants' opening comments on day one highlighted key issues increasing risk of diseases in animal and human populations. These include globalization, trade, human trafficking and products, environment, climate change and  
*Continued on page 2*

## Preventing disease in an era of exponential impact

"Our vision of world depends on where we are and where we are located. There are many visions, but one world," said Kevin Walker, a professor at Michigan State University, delivering opening comments on day one of the Prepared Communities workshop. He went on to emphasize the connection between humans, animals and the environment.

In order to face this situation, said Walker, we must raise awareness about changes in the world, provide tools to drive change, and empower others to generate

changes.

"We live in an era of exponential impact," stated Walker, pointing out economic realities. These include recognizing that of the top 100 major economies, 49 countries and 51 are companies such as Exxon, Toyota, Nokia, Google or General Electric.

An analysis of global trends in many areas is important in facing health challenges. These include technological advances that are enabling the spread of diseases faster and farther than every before. "We live in a world where at any one time, upwards of 2



*Kevin Walker (center), with Freddy Madrigal and Alline Botrel of CARGILL.*

million people are traveling on airplanes. In 2007, there were more 900 million international travelers," said Walker.

On issues related to agricultural health, Walker pointed  
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## An era of exponential impact, from page 1

60 percent of the 1,400 known pathogens, can be transmitted from animals to humans.

"Despite our recognition that 13 of the last 14 human disease outbreaks originated in the animal kingdom, and acknowledging the interrelationship between animal health, public health and environment, the majority of citizens still do not recognize these links," said Walker.

During his presentation, he also emphasized the importance of having tools like the Internet, information technology and education to promote change. The opportunities, said Walker, can allow us to create communities, discuss dilemma management at the commons, and create local and global change.

Lastly, he stressed following in the footsteps of other who have made strides in empowering rural communities. These include Nobel Prize winner Muhammad Yunus and the Bollywood actress and activist Shabana Azmi.

Walker closed by highlighting the work of gathered participants including Allin Botrel, Paulo Pelissaro, Freddy Madrigal, and Julio April, all of Cargill Inc., and their efforts to promote the purchase of products from suppliers dedicated to environmental protection.

## Preparing communities, from page 1

technological innovation.

Opening the event, presenter Kevin Walker told the group, "We live in a world where the level of economic interdependence among countries is higher than ever. What happens on a farm in Vietnam may have a major impact on a community in Brazil."

Understanding the interconnectivity between humans, animals and the environment, noted Walker, is essential for generating tools to bring about global change.

The workshop facilitator was Dr. Richard Bawden, an Adjunct Professor at Michigan State University and member of the Strategic Development Institute, an organization based in Australia.

Bawden has extensive experience in the development of rural communities and now develops learning methodologies to promote innovative approaches to thinking. "The cycle of learning is absolutely existential," commented Bawden.

One participant, Jorge Nunez of Ecuador, noted his broad expectations for the workshop.

"The many different angles of social action and the many professions shows that we all have a variety of ideas to contribute and the expectation

that this can lead to international work makes this event very satisfying," said Nunez, an attorney and business manager for the Ambato Development Corporation.

The first session of the workshop sought to set the stage for interaction by posing questions such as "Why are we here?," "What's going on in my world and what's happening in yours?," and "What concerns are shared among all?"

"I see this as an opportunity to establish a movement that can create change. Agriculture, for instance, is not an end — It is part of a process. Our aim is rural development," said Bawden.

"I came here with the desire and a conviction that we shall be changed and improved, and I find this to be a fantastic atmosphere. I will seek ways to replicate this experience in Paraguay," said Arsenio Vasconcellos, a representative of the Paraguay's rural associations.

Magali Costa, a representative from the Network of Rural Women of Mexico, expressed satisfaction at the end of day one. "I thought about a lot of questions and how I can use the things I've learned to help the rural women with whom I work," she said.

## Working to affect minds and hearts for global change

Strengthening our local and global agricultural capabilities is important. The goal, however, is improving human lives.

This constituted opening comments from Jose Zaglul, President, EARTH University, in welcoming workshop attendees to Costa Rica.

"We are educated citizens, trained human beings and responsible people. Focusing our efforts on agriculture is really just an excuse, because what we really want to do is affect the minds and hearts of people," said Zaglul.

"This is a mainly Latin American project, but essentially, simultaneously global," Zaglul told participants. "We have an emphasis on learning rather than teaching. It

matters to us what people learn, we care about their experience, we care to listen," he said.

Zaglul heads up EARTH University, a private, nonprofit university, dedicated to education in agricultural sciences and natural resources that aims to contribute to the development of the tropics. Focal points include agricultural production and environmental preservation.

"We want to train ethical people who will go and transform their countries, and honest people, whose work will positively impact the communities."

EARTH University is home to 420 students, graduates nearly 100 professionals a year, and has an 86 percent graduation rate.



*EARTH University President, José Zaglul hosted the Local Action Global Health workshop in Costa Rica, and was a participant in Local Action Global Health's workshop in Salzburg, Austria, in 2007.*