



# Theory and practise of communications in O.I.E. laboratory twinning projects

Reference laboratories for avian influenza,  
NLQP (Egypt) and FLI (Germany), and rabies virus, Konya (Turkey) and FLI

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1910 – 2010



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# Steps of a Twinning project

- Finding a twin partner
- Writing a proposal
- Working
- Finalizing

# All you need is...

# talk!

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# Finding a lab twinning partner

- A twinning project must be based on specific mutual interest of the two partners
- The project should not be felt as an additional burden but as an opportunity
- Strictly define, clearly structure and mutually agree on what you want to do
- Expect deviations from the original planning
- Moderate your expectations!

# Writing the project

- Finding common baselines of interest for the laboratories and the O.I.E.
- Do these baselines fit the present capacities and capabilities of the to-be-twinning institutions?
- Defining putative goals of the twinning
- Convincing O.I.E.

**Winning the grant – and then...**

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# Overcoming prejudices and clichés



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**„Promising“ fog in the northern forests...**



# Overcoming prejudices and clichés



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**Relax, if you have a „professional“ mediator!**

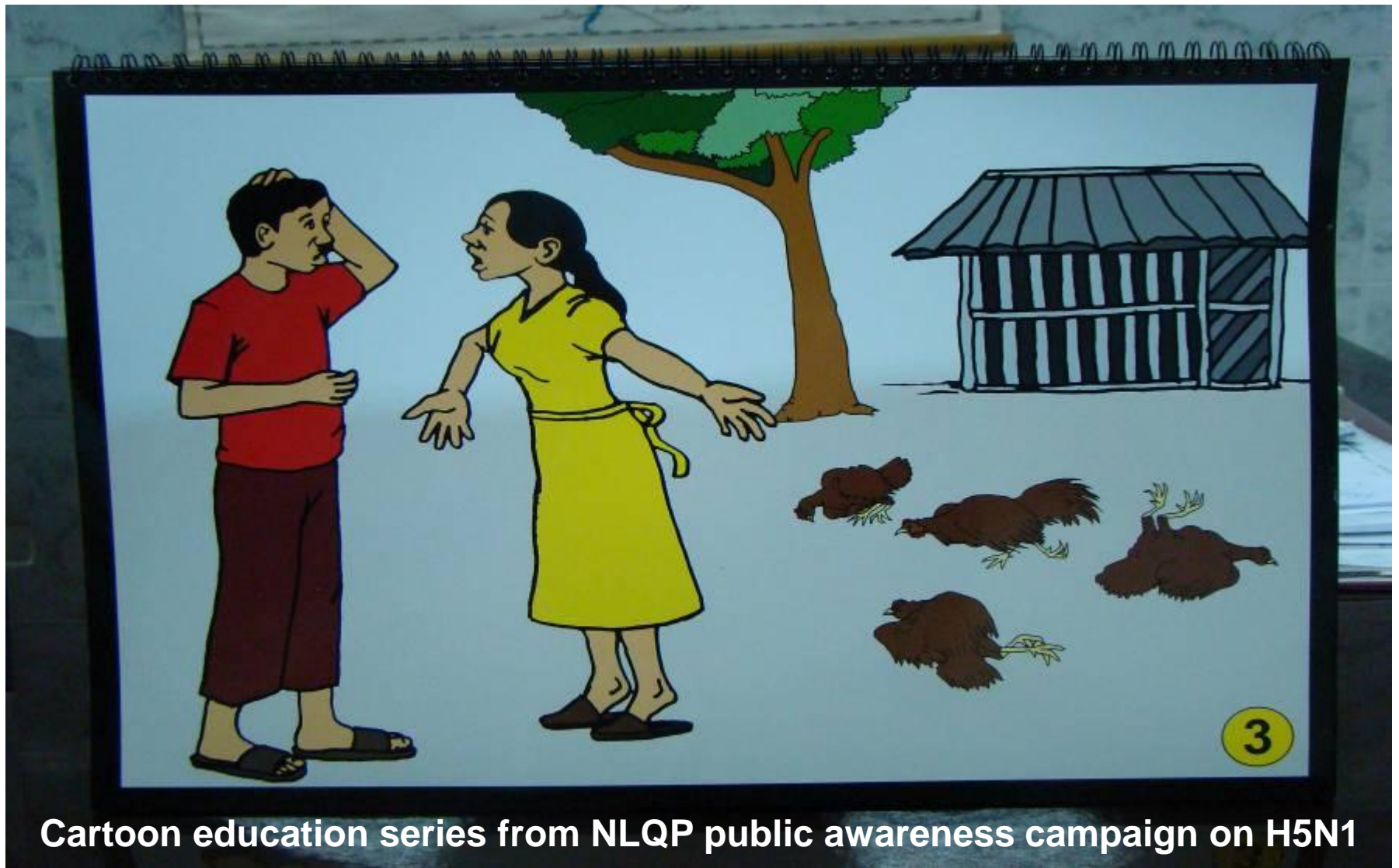


**Prof. Hafez,  
Director, Poultry Clinics  
Free University, Berlin**

# The mediator

- Is at home in both cultures
- Speaks the language of both partners + english
- Has at least peripheral knowledge of your field of interest/expertise
- Is trusted by the partners
- Should be present during all physical meetings of partners but at least during the kick-off meeting

# Misunderstandings may lead to disaster



Cartoon education series from NLQP public awareness campaign on H5N1

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# Physical meetings

- Have the kick-off meeting at the non-reflab partner's institute
- Arrange at least 1-2 meetings/year, include, if possible, other regional or satellite laboratories
- At least one meeting during the project should take place at the parent lab
- Meetings might also be organized as a satellite of larger international congresses

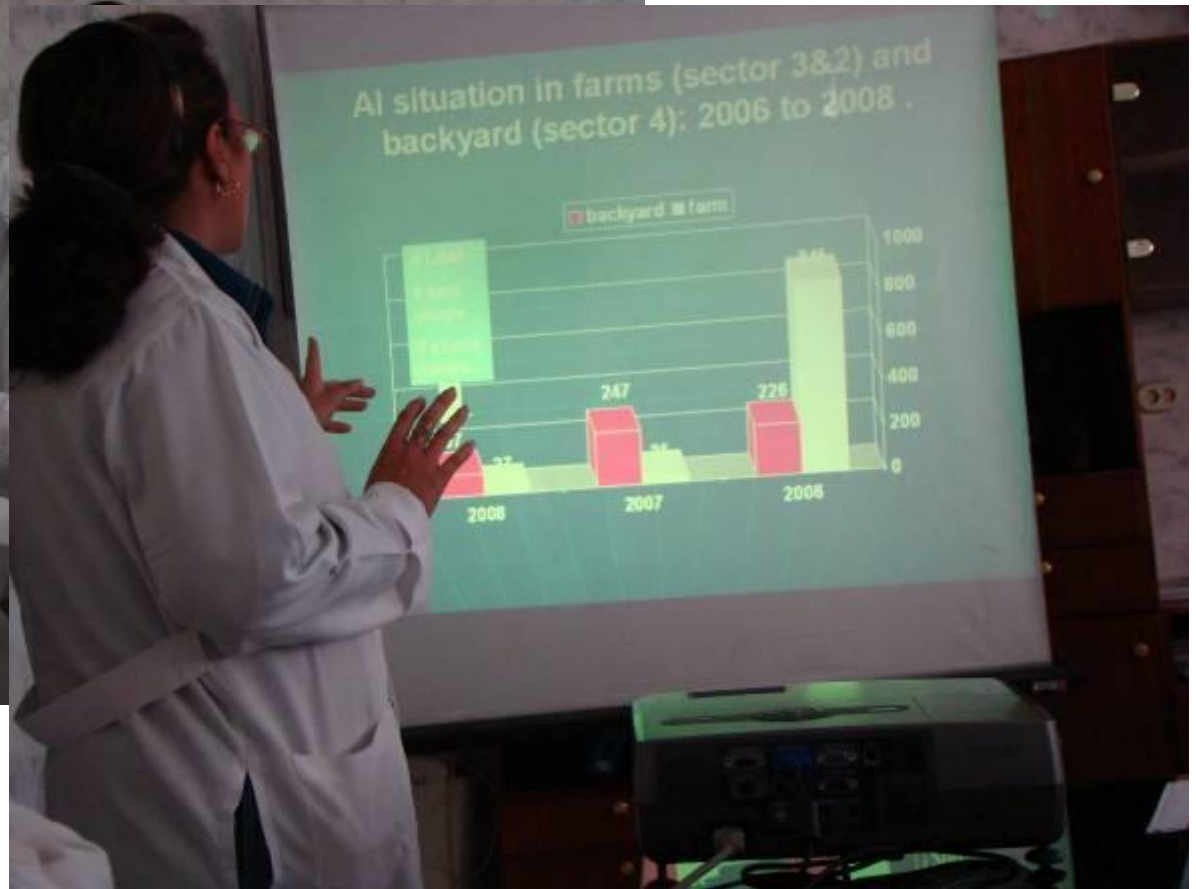
**Kick-off meeting:**

**Will this really work?**

**Prof. M.M. Aly,  
Director, AHRI,  
Giza, Egypt**



# Kick-off meeting: Eye opening talks and presentations...



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# Kick-off meeting: An official tour through the lab

**Dr. M.K. Hassan,  
AHRI, NLQP,  
Giza, Egypt**



# Physical meetings

- Visits of Drs Aylan & Ün from Konya in Germany
- Initiation of bat rabies surveillance in Turkey 2010





# Physical meetings

- Annual meeting with provincial veterinary laboratories, Ankara; March 2010





# Barriers and obstacles

- Personal background  
Ethnic, social, religious, gender, education
- Language
- Specific local situations (lab security measures; isolated lab location, ...)
- Politics



**A warm welcome from  
our lab security guards:**

**Enjoy your  
training visit!**

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# If training plays an important role

- Discuss possibilities to have a PhD student from the partner lab working in your lab for a prolonged time.
- The PhD student can serve as an „anchor“ for new trainees from the partner institute.





# Beyond the project's subjects



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# Plan your communication

- Agree on regular contacts (e.g., monthly), e-mail seems most suitable
- Identify „contact keepers“ (and their deputies) on both sides
- Always cc all contact keepers and the mediator
- Send out the right signals (counter check your mail with your colleagues)
- Sensitive issues, especially financial ones, should be discussed between project leaders of the partners only.

# Pre-final assessment

- Kick-off meeting is of utmost importance to
  - establish personal contacts
  - become familiar with the local situations
  - jointly convert ideas into a clearly defined agenda
- Mediator/facilitator bridging cultural and linguistic gaps
- Mutual visits of staff
  - to be used as a central tool in realizing agenda
- Twinning as an offer to exchange ideas and experiences between two «siblings of one family» with mutual interests in improving quality and building capacity in animal disease diagnostics and management





A relaxed atmosphere  
(and a „historic“ picture... !)