Companion Animal Welfare Around the World: Key issues and topics

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Chairperson, International Companion Animal Management Coalition (ICAM)
Trends in international companion animal management

1. Recognizing different perspectives
   Case study 1: Dogs in tribal communities

2. Human Behavior Change
   Case study 2: Human behavior change in Bali

3. Sustainable solutions
   Case study 3: Locally-led solutions in Bosnia

4. Sterilization campaigns – helpful or not?

5. Ethics in decision making

6. ICAM’s Monitoring and Evaluation project

7. Dog meat campaigns
Different perspectives: First Nations Dogs

“In the old days, the dogs helped us to carry all our things – and people would feed them and they would move all our belongings.”

• Valued as workmates & family members
• Hunted, hauled sleds, carried packs, sounded the alarm, companions
“...surplus of dogs/puppies, most of which are left to fend for themselves at a very young age. With the very cold temperatures, this makes the chances of survival for puppies, let alone the older dogs much lower. I can't sit around and do nothing about it.”

“In just two days I have observed a young dog hit by a truck and I have discovered a young puppy frozen solid. The dog problem has been an issue up here for so long that dogs are seen as just a nuisance. There are too many dogs and too many stray dogs.”
Community Solutions to dog problems

- Tying ordinance
- “Dog shoot days”

Can’t meet their own needs
Cycle of Dog Problems

Dog issues become critical.

Tribe takes desperate measures.

People bring in new dogs. Problems resume.

Dog population decreases.
Outsider “solutions”

- Sterilization
- Microchipping
- Removal

- Unsustainable
- Disempowering
- Zoonotic disease
  - Rabies
  - Leishmaniasis
  - Hydatid disease (echinococcus spp.)

- Safety: Dog bites

- Nuisance

- Welfare
  - Poor owned condition
  - Inhumane management (culling, inadequate shelters)
  - Inhumane practices (dog fighting, dog meat trade)
Standard tools for dog & cat population management (DPM)

- Vet clinics
- Rabies vaccination
- Sheltering
- Removal/transport
- Adoption and fostering
- Sterilization (TNR)

- Capacity building
- Rescue and rehabilitation
- Campaigning/legislation
- Education and outreach
- Behavior Change campaigns
Companion animal problems are people problems.

We need to understand the source(s) of animal problems before we can identify solutions.

Human behavior change is the root of every successful intervention.

Sustainable solutions:
- Reside in the community.
- Are run by the community.
- Are institutionalized in that community.
How do dog problems affect human communities?

- Review of published dog population management projects for human impacts
- Interviews with 41 field experts globally
- Review of social literature to identify socially important issues identified in dog management projects
How do dog problems affect human communities?

- Public health
- Security
- Quality of life
- Confidence in governance
- Social capital
- Economy
The cycle of intolerance
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- Problems caused by dogs
- Intolerance for dogs
- Ambivalence or cruelty to dogs
- Lack of guardianship
The cycle of intolerance

1. Problems caused by dogs
2. Intolerance for dogs
3. Ambivalence or cruelty to dogs
4. Lack of guardianship
PROBLEMS CAUSED BY DOGS

LACK OF GUARDIANSHIP

INTOLERANCE FOR DOGS

AMBIVALENCE OR CRUELTY TO DOGS

- Annoyance
- Fear
- Sadness/frustration
- Health risk
- Individual economic well-being
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INTOLERANCE FOR DOGS

AMBIVALENCE OR CRUELTY TO DOGS

Annoyance
Fear
Sadness/frustration
Health risk
Individual economic well-being

Discord amongst neighbors
Inhumane management practices

Trauma and anger
Inhibited empathy development
What do people need in a community?
What do dogs need in a community?
¿Qué hace su comunidad ser buena para la gente/perros?
Key points

✓ Companion animal problems are people problems.

✓ We need to understand the source(s) of animal problems before we can identify solutions.

✓ Human behavior change is the root of every successful intervention.

✓ Sustainable solutions:
  – Reside in the community.
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Stray dogs?
"Overpopulation"
Where are they coming from (and what should we do about it)?
Where are they coming from?

Dogs "on the street"
Where are they coming from?

Dogs "on the street"

Dogs born on the street
Where are they coming from?

Owned Dogs

abandoned
lost
owned
roaming

Dogs "on the street"

Dogs born on the street
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Case study 2: Human Behavior Change in the Bali Community Project

“Balinese don’t notice dogs suffering – they walk right past them.”

“People find it easier and cheaper to abandon sick or aggressive dogs and will not invest effort in them.”

- 3% unowned “stray” dogs
- 40-70% households own at least 1 dog
- Sex ratio 75:25 male:female
- Approx. 25% “Bali dogs”
- Regulation against moving dogs across region borders
From solving to listening
From action to engagement

- Community agreement to participate in program
- Communication and listening, not judgment and action
- Basic veterinary service available on request only
Team “in action”
Sanur Kaja: Intervention impacts

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Sanur Kaja, Bali
SABU: First Official Bali Dog Club
“Most Balinese prefer breed dogs and will not adopt abandoned dogs.”

“Balinese don’t notice dogs suffering – they walk right past them.”

“People find it easier and cheaper to abandon sick or aggressive dogs and will not invest effort in them.”

“I’m annoyed and frustrated that my community is too poor to fix this problem.”

“People in this community can’t do the right thing, so I prefer their dogs go away.”

“I might not like it, but it’s normal for animals to be sick and dying so I shouldn’t bother about it.”
Changing Human Behavior

Knowledge + Attitude + Interpersonal Communication + Barrier Reduction =
“We don’t want culling here. Our dogs keep us safe from rabies.”
“Before, we had to sell our dogs for dog meat when they got sick, but we don’t have to do that anymore.”
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Case study 3: Sustainable, local solutions through Humane Community Development, Bosnia
Why can’t we agree on the problem?

- Emotional disagreement
- Simple answers to complex issues
- Mistrust between NGOs and local authorities
- Lack of funding and dependence on external aid

Your shelter isn’t the answer, my sterilization campaign is!

We want to be self-sufficient, but what are you going to give us?

If you’re working with that group, we can’t trust you.
Humane Community Development

✔ Can we agree on the problem?
✔ Can we decide what to do about it?
✔ Are we addressing the source of the problem as well as symptoms?
✔ Do we know if we are being effective?
Humane Community Development

- Stakeholder engagement
- Workshop 1: Building a Humane Community
- Data Collection
- Workshop 2: Humane Community Action Planning

- Build consensus amongst stakeholders
- Focus common efforts using accessible data
- Create a sustainable, local management plan
Building A Humane Community Workshop

- Being heard, sharing perspectives
- Root cause exploration
- Test assumptions and dispel myths
Planning workshop: Data use in decision-making made simple

% of dogs tethered for either 12+ or 24 hours
Local humane community strategies

- Local creativity and energy
- Utilizing what is already there
Has your perspective on what should be done about dogs changed compared to before the Humane Community Development workshop?

Number of workshop 1 participants

- Not at all: 0
- Changed a little: 10
- Some change: 29
- Changed a lot: 45
- I have a whole new perspective: 37

$n = 121$
How active were you in addressing the problems with dogs before this workshop 1?
How active do you believe you will be in the future?
After workshop 1 and 2, do you think the community will be able to improve the situation with dogs?
Humane Community Development

• Community engaged with locally-tailored plan
• Local resources accessed
• Data collection for future decision-making
Bosnia: Response to “Humane Community Development”

• All communities selected sterilization as a priority intervention
• Sterilization clinics serve as source of motivation and community energy (sometimes)
• Emergence of local leadership around priority activities
• New attitude = new practices BEFORE statistical changes occurred
“That’s neat. So when do you start sterilizing the dogs?”
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X Stakeholder meetings to present our own views and solutions
“That’s neat. So when do you start sterilizing the dogs?”

- Stakeholder meetings to present our own views and solutions
- Capacity building of skills we identified in advance
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✗ A really complicated granting scheme
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✓ A framework that builds the understanding, interpersonal relationships and commitment in the community necessary to maintain a humane dog management strategy
Success lies in the energy and relationships between people. Relationships within the community, not with an outside group, are the ones that matter most for long-term success.
So what about sterilization?

Key Questions to assess sterilization targets and impacts

- Where are the dogs coming from?
- Why are the dogs there?
- Where do the dogs go?

Potential impacts?
- Dog density: “overpopulation”
- Population turnover
- Reduced breeding / behaviors
Norway

“It’s not the dog’s need”

“Neutering can never be a substitute for the proper training of the dog”

• Low dog:human ratio
• Virtually no shelter euthanasia
• More dog-dog aggression?
# Bali: Response to “Program Dharma” intervention

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Sanur Kaja, Bali
India: Mixed success with ABC-R

- Reduced dog density in locations of consistent effort over long period
- Improved skin and body condition of street dogs
- Anecdotal reports of improved human-dog interaction
- Safety/Quality concerns
- Impact of sterilization effort in rabies control still unclear
What issues might be impacted by sterilization activities?

- Human attitudes toward roaming/problem dogs
- Community engagement
- Improve population stability
- Interbreeding with wildlife
- Disease control
- Improving human-animal relationship
The cycle of intolerance
Impacts
✓ Does the planned intervention address the community’s key concerns?
✓ WHAT additional measures are needed to ensure the efficacy of the investment?

Targets
✓ WHICH dogs are targeted and why?
✓ WHO can give consent and provide follow-up?

Safety & Feasibility
✓ Is it safe?

Unintended consequences
✓ Are there concerns about limiting supply of puppies?
✓ Will intervention lead to disease transfer?

Sustainability and community engagement
✓ Who will sustain the effort?
✓ How will you know if you’re successful?
Expanding the toolbox for fertility control
Ethical decision-making when trialing innovations in the “field”

- Moral (di)stress workshop for animal agencies
- Guidelines for veterinarians and others conducting field work
- Interactive ethical decision-making tool
International Companion Animal Management (ICAM) Coalition

- Formed in 2006
- **Discuss** current research, **share** experiences, **learn** from successes and failures
- **Guide** best practice in humane dog and cat management programs
HUMANE DOG POPULATION MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE
International Companion Animal Management Coalition

Humane cat population management guidance
International Companion Animal Management Coalition

ARE WE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?
ICAM COALITION
Are we making a difference?

1. Improve dog welfare
2. Improve care provided to dogs
3. Stabilize dog turnover or reduce dog density
4. Reduce risks to public health
5. Improve public perception of dogs
6. Improve rehoming center performance
7. Reduce negative impacts of dogs on wildlife
8. Reduce negative impacts of dogs on livestock
From monitoring to evaluation
Dog meat trade

• Stolen dogs and farmed dogs
• Transport and slaughter
• Divisions in changing cultures

• Growing pet dog ownership
• Local activism
• Market pressure
Summary

✓ Companion animal problems are people problems. We can address what matters to the community.

✓ We need to understand the problem to choose the best set of tools as our “solution”.

✓ Human behavior change is the root of every successful intervention.

✓ Sustainable solutions:
  – Are designed and managed by the community (even if they request assistance from outside).
  – Are based on positive relationships and trust within the community.
Thank you