

A close-up photograph of a fluffy, light-colored dog, possibly a terrier mix, lying on the ground. The dog has long, wiry fur in shades of cream and light brown. It is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a calm expression. The ground is composed of dirt and small, light-colored rocks. The background shows a concrete ledge or wall. The overall lighting is natural and soft.

# **A Template for Change**

**An adaptable guide to setting up  
a Trap Neuter Return programme**

# A Template for Change

The template is colour coded to help you find your way around it. Look for the coloured bands at the sides of each page to let you know which section is which or click on the colour names below.

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# Introduction

Welcome to this – a template for change.... A manual to help you make a difference to the lives of the street dogs in your area.

This manual combines the expertise and experiences of two of the world's leading organisations in the field of animal welfare:



...and is based on their experiences planning, setting up, building and running the SOS Oradea project in Romania – a successful trap, neuter and return programme that has transformed the lives of the city's 3,500 street dogs.

We hope this will be a tool you can use and adapt to your own circumstances to assist dogs around the world.

# An Introduction to the Template

## from Dogs Trust and Battersea Dogs & Cats Home

Every year, millions of dogs from around the world are poisoned, or shot in an effort by municipalities to rid their streets of the 'menace' of stray dogs. These dogs are treated as nothing more than vermin to be exterminated.

Dogs and humans have enjoyed a bond, a dependency even, since almost time began. No decent human being would want to see the unnecessary suffering of dogs yet through ignorance it is often condoned.

Dogs follow their basic instincts and breed to propagate their species. Humans can make the decision to control their own population, and they have also been given the gift of taking responsibility for dogs.

Sadly some people see that responsibility as a power to kill unwanted dogs sometimes in the most inhumane of ways. This has been proved ineffective as a method of population control because the vacuum left is soon filled by other dogs from surrounding areas who move in to utilise the resources available, or by the existing dogs using these resources to raise more puppies.

In order to try and address this situation, we came together in a unique project in a bid to show that the only way to humanely reduce the number of street dogs is through a trap neuter return (TNR) programme.

While we know that TNR works, we also recognise that municipalities needed proof that this works.

Thankfully this has been proven in Oradea, where we were lucky to become involved with a dog-loving and compassionate Mayor with very progressive ideas. The Mayor was both happy to enter into a contract with us – and also knew and understood that for the project to succeed he needed to have patience and look at the long-term not just the immediate.

Thanks to his commitment, the Mayor of Oradea has seen huge improvements in the street dog population of Oradea. Seldom do

you see a dog on the streets that isn't ear tipped to show it has been neutered. The status of dogs is rising in Oradea, and dog-ownership is becoming more common. Almost everyone in Oradea knows about the SOS Dogs project – and school children are leading the way. Perhaps more importantly to the community, dog bite incidents are down 50%.

This template draws on our experiences in Oradea, and so is 'tried and tested'. We did not do everything right, and we acknowledge this, but sometimes the errors can be as important as the elements that went right both for us in the future, and for others who aim to make a difference in their own areas.

This template has been designed to help anyone who wants to help their local street dog population – and can be adapted as necessary for your own area. Whoever you are, and whatever knowledge you have, we hope to show that you can do it – if you have the determination, drive, and passion.

And if you do decide to do it – all of us in the animal welfare world will be behind you every step of the way.

We hope that this template will help and inspire you. We all recognise that there is no easy solution, however those of us who work in animal welfare know that without the dogs, who do so much for us, the world would be a much poorer place.

This is without doubt what keeps us going.





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**Can I do it, should I do it?**

# Is There a Street Dog Problem?

Just by looking out of your window or by walking around your local area, you will have a pretty good idea if there is a street dog problem. If you are regularly seeing numbers of dogs on the streets you can be sure everybody else is too – and that is a problem.

Having large numbers of street dogs in your area is a problem for a variety of reasons.

1. It is not good for the dogs. These dogs are prone to disease because they are not being looked after, can be involved in accidents and sustain terrible injuries, and will live short and difficult lives.
2. It is not good for the local community or for public health. Street dogs are seen as a public nuisance and give rise to public concern - they often hassle the locals, raid rubbish bins, leave faeces, and, on some occasions cause injury. Street dogs can bite – but not only that, they can also spread disease including rabies, toxocara, ringworm and other zoonotic diseases (diseases that can spread from animals to humans). They can also cause road accidents with drivers trying to avoid them while driving.
3. Visitors and tourists do not like to see street dogs – and especially don't like to see suffering, injured, dying or dead street dogs.

So if you have a large number of street dogs, you have a street dog problem.

**DEFINITION:** There is a difference between street dogs and stray dogs. Street dogs are the canine equivalent of feral cats. They are born, live and will probably die on the streets. Stray dogs are dogs who are either owned and allowed to wander the streets, or else they are previously owned dogs who have been dumped on the streets.

In some areas there are also 'community dogs' – street dogs who are fed and given shelter (although not homes) by the dog lovers in the local community. Often these dogs would not survive harsh winters without this community input.



# Should anything be done about the street dog problem?

It is easy to get used to the street dogs – and it is easy not to care - but we already know that street dogs live short, unhealthy lives (which is bad for them), and cause public nuisance and disease (which is bad for the community).

What we also need to know is that the numbers of street dogs in an area depends on the resources available to them.

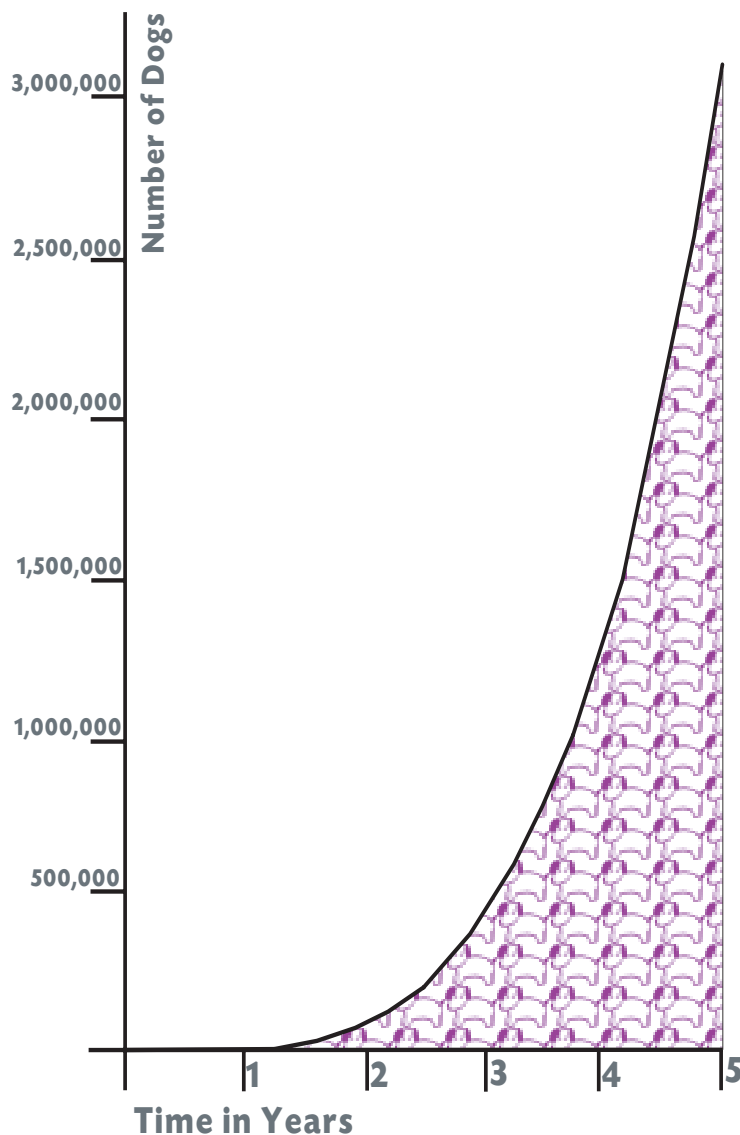
These resources include:

- Food
- Water
- Shelter
- Safe areas to raise their puppies.

Other influences that will affect the numbers of street dogs are endemic diseases, and the 'safety' of the area, which will impact on the life expectancy of the dogs.

What we maybe don't know however is just how fast the street dog problem can grow if we just sit back and ignore it.

One street dog bitch in her lifetime can produce up to eight puppies a year. So if she is lucky enough to live for five years, she could have produced around 40 more street dogs. If you have 500 bitches on the street, in five years they could produce 20,000 puppies. And then they will start having puppies!



These numbers, scary as they are, only serve as an indication of how quickly a dog population could increase. They are however largely academic. The number of street dogs you have will depend on the resources available to them. In other words, if there isn't enough food, water and shelter they won't survive, and your area can only support a limited number depending on those resources. Once that optimum number is reached, the population of street dogs will stay, more or less, stable.

While that may sound like good news – it isn't.

The larger the numbers of dogs competing for the available resources, the harder, more desperate and ultimately shorter their lives will be.

The more puppies that are born into an area of limited resources, the higher the puppy mortality rate will be, the lower the life expectancy of the street dogs will be, and the higher the likelihood of them dying from hunger, thirst or any one of the other causes that are due to lack of those essential resources.

This is the situation most street dog populations are in, and unless someone does something to stop the number of puppies being born, this miserable situation will continue.

# What can be done about it?

Every country in the world has or has had a street dog problem, and each has a different way of dealing with it.

Any solution has to fulfil certain criteria:

- First it has to be cheap. Very few municipalities are willing to spend a lot of money on dealing with street dogs.
- It has to be effective – if it doesn't work, it is pointless.
- It has to have public support. This is especially important in areas where there are large numbers of 'community dogs'
- It has to be acceptable to visitors and/or tourists – bad publicity or reduced tourism income could be disastrous

All the solutions, while they vary in their methodology, come down to three choices.

- 1 Kill the street dogs
- 2 Capture all the street dogs and put them into shelters
- 3 Control or eliminate the street dogs' ability to breed and so gradually reduce their numbers

## 1 Kill the street dogs

This sounds like a valid – albeit unpleasant – method of dealing with the problem - until we think about it a little more. First of all there are no cheap ways of killing dogs that are also humane. To catch the dogs and put them to sleep humanely is both expensive and labour-intensive and so not an option. The choices left therefore are generally poisoning - which is both indiscriminate (owned dogs, cats, birds, other wild animals, and in the past even children, have been killed from eating the poisoned meat) and leads to an agonising death - or shooting - which is potentially dangerous for the public, and, as it is generally carried out by untrained public health officers, it is inaccurate often leaving dogs to die in agony of terrible wounds or of hunger. Some areas that use this method have a strict 'one dog, one



bullet' policy to make it even cheaper – which makes the chance of injury rather than death far higher.

Even if there was a way of doing the killing humanely however, it still wouldn't work. As long as the resources to support the street dogs are still there, outside dogs will come in to take advantage of them, or else the remaining dogs will just breed more prolifically.

So – killing doesn't work in the long term.

## **2 Capture all the street dogs and put them in shelters**

Once again, on first glance this seems like a good idea and far more humane than killing the dogs. This way the dogs can be looked after, be fed and be safe. The problem is that all shelters do is help the dogs that are in them – and very soon they will be full. The dogs who haven't been captured will continue to breed to utilise the available resources, and others will come in from outside. More and more shelters will have to be built – while more and more dogs will be out there breeding. It is an endless – and so expensive task – plus overcrowded shelters lead to their own problems of poor health and welfare standards.

All a shelter does is help a limited number of dogs.

## **3 Control or eliminate the street dogs' ability to breed and so gradually reduce their numbers**

While this may seem like a slow way to control the population numbers and the least likely to show immediate effects, this is the only method of street dog control that actually works.

The way these projects work is simple. Dogs are caught and taken from the area where they are living. They are then castrated or spayed (their sexual organs removed so they can't reproduce), treated for zoonotic diseases (and vaccinated against rabies where appropriate as per the law), marked in some way so they can be identified at a distance (so they are not re-caught) and then put back where they were found. This (along with education and a rubbish control programme) is the basis



of a trap neuter return programme (TNR). The returned dogs are then healthy (and so can't pass disease onto humans) – but are unable to contribute to the rising street dog population.

There are also additional benefits to this scheme both for the public and the dogs themselves. Neutering male dogs reduces potentially aggressive incidents both to other dogs (which could result in fatal injuries) and to humans, as it has a marked effect on behaviour – plus neutering and spaying eliminates the incidences of reproductive system diseases and certain cancers in the street dogs.

It is only this method of TNR population control, coupled with an education programme, that will show any effects on the street dog numbers and health, and that will work to benefit the dogs and the local community.



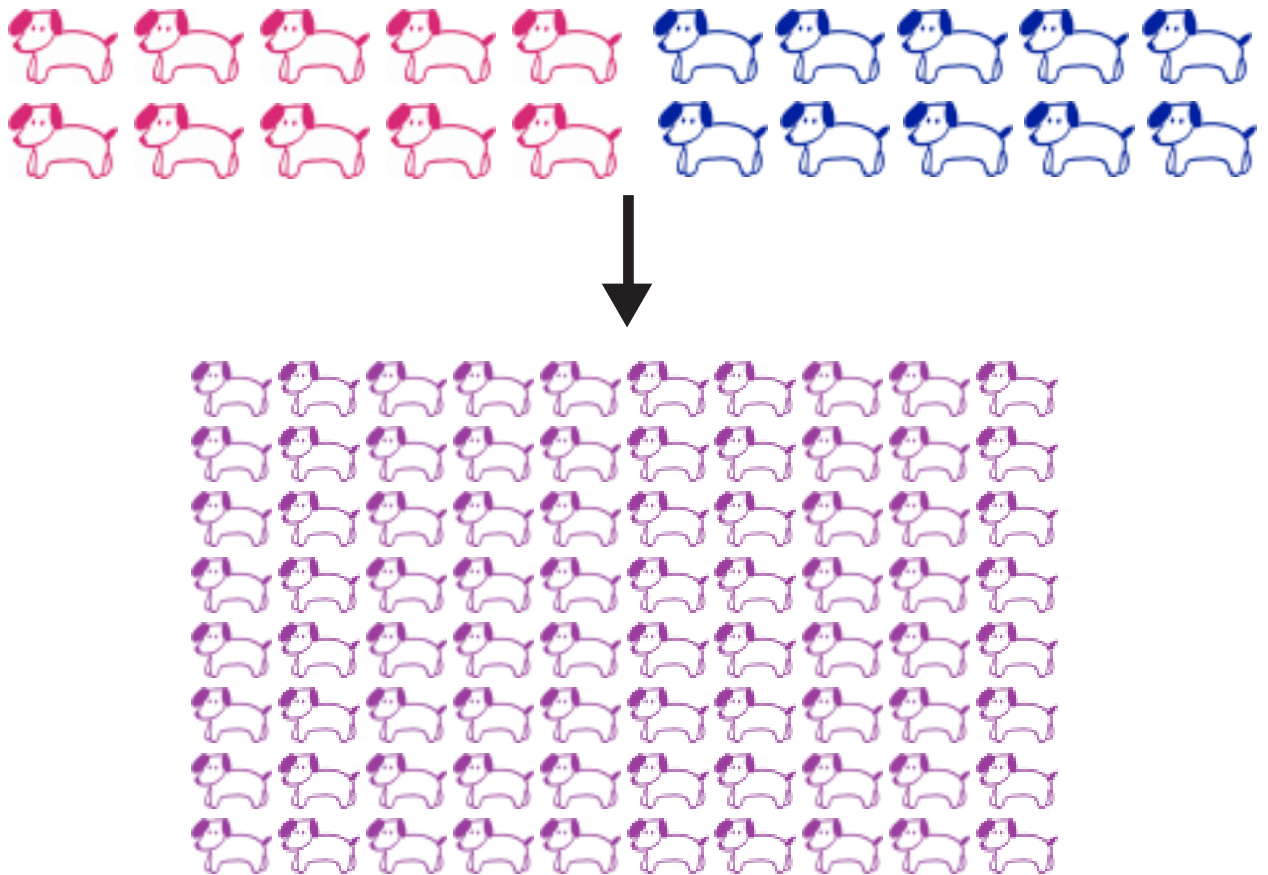
# TNR Considerations

One of the considerations facing anyone thinking about implementing a TNR programme is do we neuter the male dogs or spay the female dogs – or do we do both?

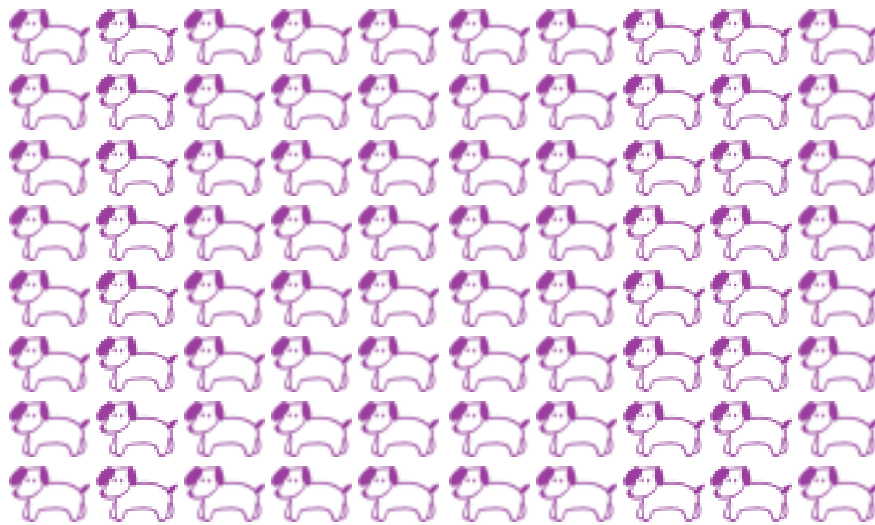
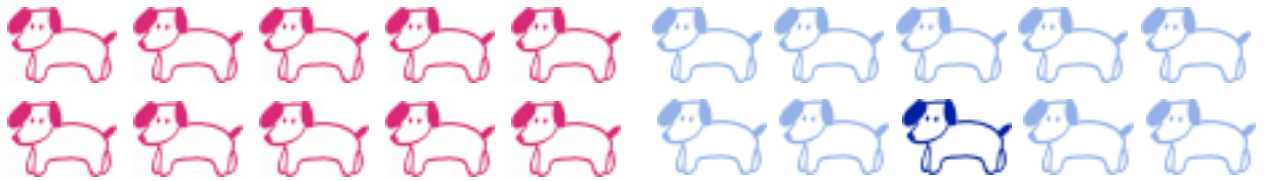
There is no doubt that neutering male dogs is quicker, easier and cheaper than spaying female dogs. Male dogs' sexual organs are external and so easily accessible whereas spaying bitches is a major invasive operation with a longer recovery time.

So it is sometimes thought that only neutering the males is a good idea...

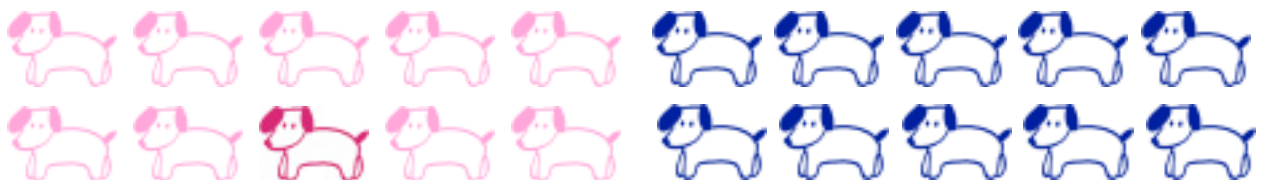
Imagine a population where there are 10 male dogs and 10 females. These dogs will breed, and each of the 10 females will have up to eight puppies a year. So at the end of the first year, there will be around 100 dogs (the 80 puppies and the original 20 adults).



If you manage to catch 90% of the male dogs and neuter them, in the following year each of the 10 females will still have up to eight puppies (this time with the same father!) – and so you still have 100 dogs – including one very exhausted but happy male!



If however you catch 90% of the females instead and spay them, only one of the 10 bitches will be left able to breed, and so at the end of the year instead of having 100 dogs, you only have 28 (your original 20 and the still breeding bitch's eight puppies).



So there is no doubt that the priority should be to spay the bitches and not just the dogs – this is what is going to make a difference to the population.

That doesn't mean however that you don't bother catching the males – in fact they should also be neutered. This is useful to do for several reasons. Neutering males reduces aggression and territorial behaviours, it reduces certain cancers, and it also serves as a visible reminder to the local community that you are dealing with the population problem.

Catching the males as well as the females also means you can vaccinate them against rabies and treat them for other zoonotic diseases (diseases that can pass to humans) and so improve public health and reduce concern over the street dogs.

So not only is your aim to control the population but also to reduce the public nuisance caused by the street dogs – and get the public on your side. This is going to be vital when you come to raise funds and get positive publicity.





# How big is the local street dog problem?

Before you can consider doing anything to help the street dogs and the local community by starting a trap, neuter and return project (TNR), you need to know how big the problem really is. Every single plan you make from now on will depend on how many dogs are actually out there. This means counting the street dogs. This isn't as easy as it sounds as they may be roaming over a wide area! How do you know you have found them all – and haven't counted any twice?

## Calculating the number of street dogs

First of all make a rough estimate of how many street dogs you think there are. Have a good look yourself, but also talk to local vets, animal health or pest control officers or any animal welfare organisations that are working in the area, and then make an educated guess.

Then go out and catch 10% of that number at a variety of sites. This in itself may be a problem depending on how much human contact the street dogs in your area have. If they have a lot of human contact, your job is easier. If they have little to no contact, you may well have to enlist outside help from either local or international animal welfare organisations (see [Resources](#)).

When you have caught them, mark them with non-toxic paint and release them.

Once you have done that, go out to the same sites, at the same time of day, a week later and count the dogs you see (as many as possible but at least 75% of the total you caught originally). Make a note of how many you count and how many of those are marked.

You can then calculate roughly how many street dogs there are by using the following calculation.

Total population = 
$$\frac{\text{number marked} \times \text{number counted}}{\text{marked counted}}$$

Confused? Take a look at this example.

You have estimated the population to be 2000

Catch and mark 200 (10%) at several sites

Then count 150 random animals at the same sites

You find that you have marked 14

So the calculation is

$$\text{Total population} = \frac{200 \times 150}{14}$$

Which means the total population is 2142

Once you have found out just how many street dogs need to be controlled with your TNR programme you can start to make your plans.



# Planning

## The Municipality

Now that you know there is a need for you to do something to help the street dog population, and that a trap neuter return scheme is the best option, you can begin to plan how to make this work.

The first thing to consider is that TNR alone will not reduce the street dog numbers – there needs to be more to your scheme. Without an education programme, you will be fighting a losing battle – and for this to work, and indeed for your whole project to work, it is absolutely vital that you have the local municipality on your side.

Once they are prepared to work with you, you can also educate them in the importance of reducing the street dogs' resources to aid in controlling the numbers. As long as there are the resources (food, shelter and water) to support a large street dog population, the breeding dogs will fill those resources. There will be as many street dogs as the area, and the resources available, can support. Reduce the resources and you reduce the dogs – while at the same time, your TNR programme is reducing the numbers of breeding dogs. This way you are attacking the problem from both sides and increasing your chances of success.

This means that in order to reduce the number of street dogs effectively, the municipality must make a serious attempt to clear up food refuse from the streets, and implement the use of secure dog-proof bins for use by both home owners but also for restaurants and any food related businesses.

This will have a major impact on the success of your project, and its importance must not be under-estimated.

You also need the municipality to agree to letting you take over the street dog problem – without them you will not be able to make changes that you know are needed, or stop the poisonings or shootings. Even better, a supportive municipality can give you much more tangible support as you will see later.

So your first step has to be to get the municipality on your side.



## Approaching the Municipality

The first thing to remember when you approach the municipality or local authority is that you are there to help them solve a problem – and in the long run save them money and the potential for bad publicity. You are not going there to beg or plead, but to put forward your vision for the street dogs and to make sure they understand why the street dogs need to be controlled, why a TNR scheme is better than poisoning, shooting or ignoring the problem, and how you are going to do it.

By listening to you and supporting your project, they are committing to:

- 1 Controlling and dramatically reducing the number of street dogs
- 2 Making the streets safer for the public by reducing the number of street dogs and controlling the population
- 3 Reducing disease within the street dog population, and so reducing the possibility of zoonotic diseases (diseases that can be passed from dog to human)
- 4 Improving life for their community's street dog population
- 5 Dealing with the street dog problem in a humane way – which will reflect well on them and their policies with the public, local businesses and tourists – and could be a selling point for them in future elections!
- 6 Being a positive force for humane change and showing their voters that they are dealing with this problem – without having to do anything themselves – a huge plus for them!

At this stage you also need them to give you formal authority to return the dogs to the place where you are going to catch them. This is very important as without this authority (in writing from the Mayor) you could be seen to be illegally abandoning the dogs. In addition, if the public start to complain about you putting the dogs back – because they do not understand the TNR process - this authority will stand you in good stead.

All three parts of TNR need to be fully implemented in order for the programme to work. If you are only able to trap and neuter, and are not able to return, all you will be doing is contributing to the overflowing dog pounds – and will end up running one yourself!

You are going to them to provide a service, and to work together to solve the street dog problem. Remember this when you approach them.

See [Appendix 4](#) at the end of the template to read about how others convinced their municipalities.



# The Centre

Now you have got the municipality's general agreement, you can begin to make the project a reality.

Much of that reality will depend on what practical help the municipality is prepared to give you. It is unlikely (but not impossible) that they will give you funding – but they may well be able to help with premises, utilities, or even building work.

You need a centre where your neutering will be done, and where dogs will recover before being returned to the areas they came from. This is where the municipality may be able to offer help.

For example, in Oradea, the Mayor donated the land to build the SOS Oradea base, and also covers the utility bills. This was, and still is, a huge help to the project. You may well be able to negotiate something similar – or even get use of a building rather than starting from scratch (even an old factory could be converted into a base for your project). This will cut your costs – but may mean you have to compromise on your design.

Once again, remember in your negotiations with the municipality that you are helping them, and that it is in their interests to help you as much as possible.

If you are unable to get land from the municipality, try talking to local businesses and landowners to find space to house your project before resorting to buying or renting.

The ideal site is one that has easy access to utilities (water, electricity, sewage system, access to communication (phone lines, or at least mobile phone reception), is well drained, is fairly central to the area you are operating in, and is accessible to bring dogs in and out and for staff to get in and out – no matter what the weather or the time of year.

Do you need accommodation on site? Even if you don't think you need it, you may have to have it to comply with local licensing which may require someone on site 24 hours a day if there are dogs there. This is something that must be considered.

You also need to be careful of having close neighbours who could complain of the noise from barking dogs, which will not endear you to the local community.

Also make sure any former industrial or military land is safe from contamination or other hazards.

Make sure the land is big enough for your project – and for any expansion you may envisage in the future. Perhaps most importantly, make sure you will be able to get planning permission to build on the land. Check with the municipality what laws, regulations and licences are going to be needed in order to obtain the land, build on it, and run your project. This is another area where municipality support can help you.

Having a site in a highly visible spot (and decorating it accordingly) can be useful as a free advertising tool. If you brand the site well, people can see where you are, and what you are doing.

Once you have your site, you can then begin to build. Before that however you need to consider that you can't do this project on your own.



# Staff

In order to run a TNR facility, you need staff.

## Veterinary Staff

Perhaps most importantly, you need a vet to carry out the neutering, and to oversee the care of dogs on intake and in recovery. Your local area may also require you to have a vet working for you before you can get a license to run your project.

There are two ways to do this. Either you enter into a contract with local private vets to do the neutering for you, and to visit daily, or you employ your own vet.

Using local vets does mean that they will not feel you are competing with them for clients, and so are more likely to be supportive of the project. Employing your own vet is more expensive, but does mean that you have a vet working exclusively on your project and always at hand.

Which you choose depends on the area you are working in. In countries where pet owning is not the norm, vets do not have very much experience with companion animals, as their work is largely agricultural. They hardly do any neutering as part of their practice, and do not rely on companion animals for their income. Also as they do not see many companion animals, and only spay or neuter in an emergency, they may not have developed the skills in canine neutering that you would need in a vet who would be doing this many times every single day as the main focus of your project.

In other areas where companion animals are more plentiful, you may find that making contact with local vets and using their skills may be the best way forward to avoid professional conflict.

It also depends on how big your street dog population is. If you only have a small number of street dogs, employing a full time vet may not be necessary. In these cases, having a local vet coming in to neuter a couple of half days a week, and visiting recovering dogs once daily may be enough. In an area like Oradea however where the street dog population was estimated at 3500, a full time vet was certainly needed



to make any impact at all on the numbers and to give the dogs the care they needed.

Pay your vet well (comparatively) as you will find that a good vet is worth their weight in gold.

Do be aware that veterinary training differs from country to country, and some put no emphasis on companion animal work as their work is agriculturally based. As such, your vet will wish to brush up their neutering skills and get some additional companion animal experience before starting work. Several of the UK charities will be able to arrange this – including Dogs Trust. This will ensure that your vet is up-to-date with canine neutering techniques, and is also working to a high standard of hygiene.

Your vet will need an assistant – ideally a veterinary nurse but in the majority of countries these do not exist, and so you may end up having to employ two vets, or find a veterinary assistant who has some skills or interest, and train them accordingly.

If you have a large street dog population, you will also need to ensure holiday cover – although there are international organisations (such as WVS – see [Appendix 5](#)) that may well be able to fill in here – and even suggest other ways of doing things during their visit.

Dependent on numbers, the vet and the assistant between them can carry out all the neutering operations, and look after the health of all the dogs being held in the centre – whether in preparation for neutering, during the operation or in recovery.

## **Dog catching staff**

You also need additional members of staff who can catch the dogs and bring them to the vet for neutering.

If you have a full time vet, the number of dogs you can neuter in a day will most likely be limited by the numbers you can catch (and your recovery facilities) rather than the number the vet can operate on – so to make the most of your vet's time, you need good catchers!

Not only do the catchers have to be effective, they have to be humane, personable and present a good image. These are the members of your

project that the public are going to see out and about working on the streets, and will be their first point of contact with your project – so they have to represent you well, and wear an identifiable uniform however simple.

Any catching trip should have at least two catchers – both to make catching the dogs easier, but also because one will need to keep records of the dogs caught and precisely where each dog came from.

These catchers should be trained in how to catch street dogs humanely and with the least possible stress. The easiest way of catching a dog is always the most effective. Most street dogs and community dogs will be friendly enough that they can be lured with food, and so can be caught easily. Staff should however be trained how to catch more troublesome dogs safely and humanely.

A vital part of your responsibility is to keep you and your staff safe. You can't help any animal if you are injured, and so in any dealings with an animal, human safety has to be paramount. It is your catchers who will have first contact with an animal, and so are most at risk. This means making sure your staff are properly trained in handling and catching dogs, and are given all the training, skills and equipment to keep them safe. Sometimes it is easy to get so concerned about helping the dogs, that the humans get forgotten.

## **Additional staff**

It is useful if possible to have a handyman, or someone who will be able to keep the site tidy and safe, and to repair things when necessary – and if you do not have staff resident on site, you may need a security guard.

Treat all your staff well, as if any link in your staffing chain is weak, not supported or overlooked, the team is weakened.

Find reliable staff who come well recommended – and no matter how desperate you are for help, always insist on, and take up, references.

## Networking

Make contact with any other organisations working in animal welfare in the area close to you. Having a good relationship with all those around you can be invaluable. They may be able to advise you on good staff, share experiences, advise on suppliers and give you moral and practical support – and help you with dogs that you may need to rehome (more on that later).

Visit the International Companion Animal Welfare Conference held every year at a different venue in Europe, as this is an invaluable networking opportunity – as well as a knowledge-giving one.

So now you have begun to think about your staff it is time to make it all real – and build your neutering centre.

## Legislation

Every country has its own legislation, and you are going to have to know what applies to you and what laws and regulations you are going to have to abide by.

These can include (and are not limited to):

- Building licenses and regulations
- Planning and design of buildings
- Construction licenses
- Animal housing licenses
- Land ownership
- Revenue requirements
- Charity regulations
- Employment law and safe working regulations
- Fire regulations
- Health and safety regulations
- Animal laws and breed specific laws
- Fundraising
- Licenses to teach in schools
- Licenses for your vet

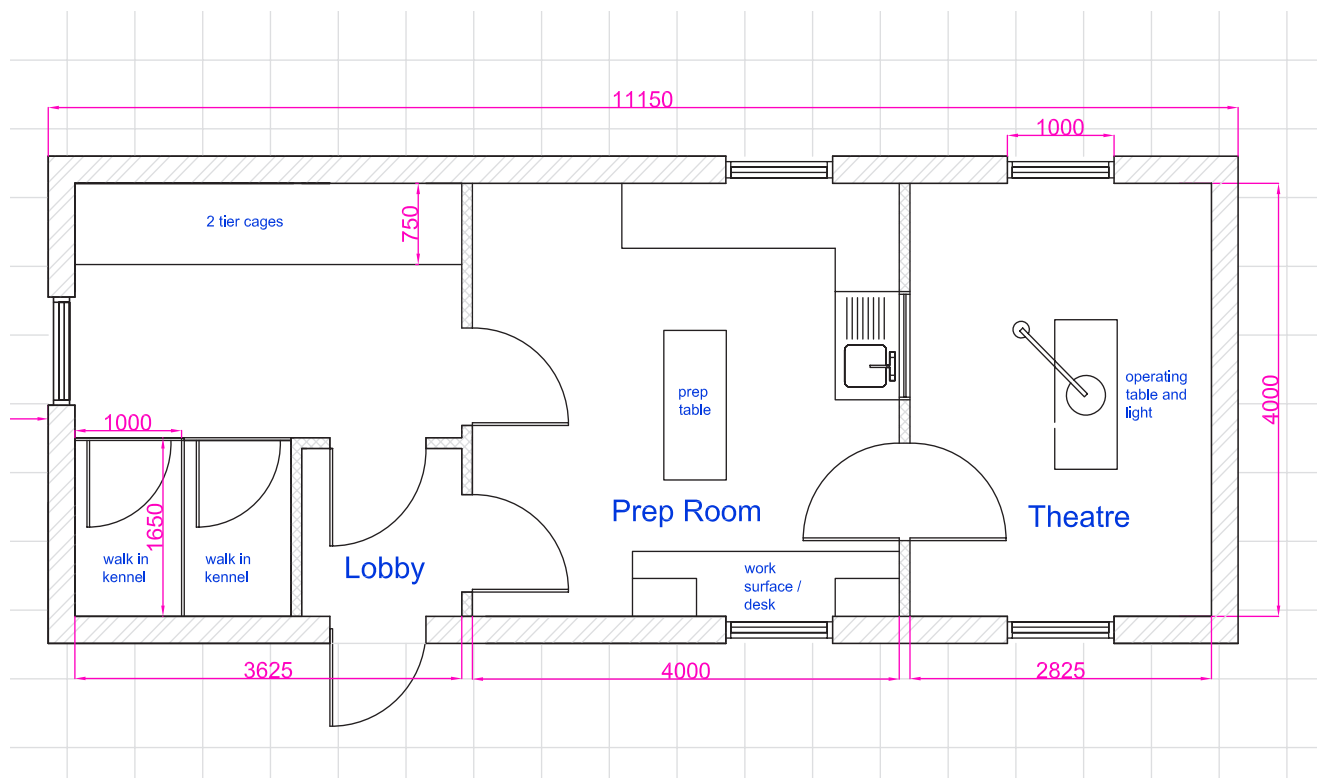
Make sure before you start the project that you find out what is going to affect you by talking to other professionals working in the area, and also the relevant areas within the municipality.







# Building Your TNR Centre



The size of your centre depends on the size of your street dog problem, and as such, the number of dogs you would be aiming to neuter.

If you are neutering dogs all day every day in order to control the numbers, you need a far bigger centre than if you only have a local vet coming in a couple of times a week to neuter. Don't build bigger than you are going to need (either to do the job now, or in the foreseeable future) – but also don't ignore the possibilities for expansion if it is finances and not need that is limiting your initial building plans.

It is easy to think that neutering is a simple procedure - whereas this couldn't be further from the truth. For your project to succeed you must recognise that neutering dogs is a complex procedure requiring a surgically clean area, suitable recovery facilities, a skilled vet, and appropriate drugs and other supplies.

Failure to provide any one of these factors is likely to result in complications or even the death of dogs. As such, you need to make sure you are building an appropriate and adequate centre that allows you to fulfil these criteria.

The centre requires four designated areas (this is a lot more basic than it sounds!):

## Operating Room

This must be a surgically clean room with a single entrance/exit adjacent to your Preparation Room. There should be minimal furniture (the less you have in there, the easier it is to keep clean and sterile) but there must be good lighting and power. An operating table at a comfortable height for your vet is a must if they are spending the majority of their day working here.



Floors should be easily cleaned, preferably with coved margins. This room is to be used for surgical procedures only.



## Preparation Room

This should be a clean room used for preparation of surgical patients. It requires good lighting (although it doesn't need to be as good as in theatre), power and hand washing facilities. Floors should be easily cleaned, preferably with coved margins. The Preparation Room may also double as an Examination Room. There ideally should be easy access to the Recovery Area.

## Recovery Area

This is a room containing cages for dogs that have either received the pre-medication before surgery, or dogs recovering from surgery. As you are keeping all dogs for three days after neutering, you need to be able to hold four days neutering capacity. In other words, at any one time, you will be holding four days worth of dogs!

Cages should be easily cleaned, and also strong and durable (ideally good quality stainless steel) as street dogs may make vigorous attempts to escape.



An exercise area is not necessary as long as dogs can be let out to urinate and defecate. The Recovery Room requires washing facilities and also adequate heating as this area must be kept between 10–26°C. Floors should be easily cleaned, preferably with coved margins.

It is also useful, if you have the space and finances, to have a Holding Area – especially if you plan to deal with a large number of dogs. The size of this depends on how many dogs you are going to be neutering. This is an area where dogs may be held in individual kennels before and after surgery before being returned. Kennels may be brick blocks with a concrete base and an attached exercise run is an advantage and will save labour costs (as the dogs can have access to outdoors without staff having to take them out). All should be easily cleaned by hosing down. Attention should be given to maintaining an adequate ambient temperature so dogs neither get too cold or too hot. Bedding should be provided.

In addition to these areas, provision must be made for food preparation and a vermin-proof store. Portakabins may be useful here or even old truck containers, which you can often buy quite cheaply (but these can suffer extreme temperatures depending on your climate).

Then you need to make provisions for you and your staff. Your staff room must contain heating, running water and toilets – and you need an office for record keeping with power, phone lines, a safe or lockable cabinet etc

If you are planning on welcoming the public to the centre, the office may also have to double up as a reception area.

## **Materials**

The choice of materials is going to depend largely on availability and cost in your area, and also on the recommendations of your builder. Whatever materials are chosen, they need to be long lasting, suitable to the purpose, safe, and easily cleaned and disinfected. This includes floors, walls and ceilings.

Avoid using wood on surface of structures of any kennel or holding interiors due to possibility of damage to it caused by dogs scratching. Worn and splintered wood is difficult to clean, harbours bacteria or viruses and can cause injury from splinters.

All internal surfaces used in construction of walls, floors, partitions, door and door frames need to be durable and smooth. There must be no projections or rough edges in areas where dogs are likely to be which are liable to cause injury. Where concrete or other blocks or brick are

used they must be treated so as to be smooth (so they can be cleaned) – possibly by painting or by lining with a suitable material.

Any joints in floors must be covered so they can't harbour infection.

The ceiling must be capable of being easily cleansed and even disinfected.

Doors must be secure – ideally lockable to prevent dogs escaping, and also theft. If it is possible (and if you have them), consider making any kennel doors able to open both in and out – this can assist in handling of difficult dogs and also allows rapid staff escape if necessary.

## **Heating**

Heating is vital for animals recovering from surgery – which will make up the majority of animals in your care. This also means that your Recovery Room must be well insulated as to prevent extremes of temperature, and be economical for you to heat.

Heating facilities must be available to keep a temperature of ideally of 18 – 21C (65 – 70F).

There are many options, but the easiest for you may be infra-red heaters (pig lamps). This is a direct form of heating, is fairly cheap to buy and run, and is very effective if general or central heating of your buildings is not an option.

If you have very hot summers or if the indoor temperature is likely to exceed 26C, you may also have to consider some kind of air-conditioning to prevent the dogs over-heating.

## **Ventilation**

Ventilation is important to help with disease control, and to protect against smell accumulation. It will also prevent excessive humidity of the atmosphere. High humidity increases the likelihood of any diseases spreading. This is going to be important in your Recovery Room where dogs will be staying for several days.

Ventilation should be provided to all your indoor areas but you must be careful not to produce draughts – especially in operating or recovery areas.



It can be hard to balance heating and ventilation! The ventilation can counteract your heating so a balance is necessary between adequate ventilation and the unnecessary removal of warm air in cold conditions. Therefore having control of your ventilation really helps. Even something as simple as manually controlled vents will make a difference.

More complicated systems are available if you eventually have the finances – including systems that will remove and refresh the air in your kennelling/holding area. This is very effective at controlling airborne diseases.

Don't forget that your staff areas also need heat and ventilation.

## **Lighting**

As it is free, natural light is best for dogs (and for staff) where possible – so try and get as much natural light into all areas as possible. Your designer or builder should be able to advise you how to do this, and this must be thought about at the initial planning stage.

Good artificial light is also important for all parts of your centre too. You will be working with animals both before and after daylight so don't underestimate your need for light.

While you are thinking about power, make sure there are enough power supplies/sockets to all areas (be careful in potentially wet areas where you must make sure the sockets are waterproof and in a safe location).

You may need to consider a back up generator if the main supply in your area isn't always reliable.

You will also need somewhere to store clinical waste ready for collection.

# Equipment needed before you start

As well as building and equipping your centre that will allow you to neuter and care for the dogs once they arrive, you also need to have the equipment needed to catch them in the first place.

The most important, or at least the most expensive, part is a van in order to transport the dogs that have been caught.



This must be reliable, large enough to do the job, and be equipped with good quality secure cages to allow the dogs to be transported safely. Rubber matting inside is also helpful to prevent dogs slipping. The van should be sign written with your project's details, as it will be a mobile advertisement for your project. The area in which the dogs will be held must be well ventilated so dogs do not overheat.

You will also need catching equipment. This will include good quality gloves (to protect from possible bite injuries (both puncturing and crushing), grasper poles, and portable cages. For troublesome dogs, you may need to also have a blow-pipe or anaesthetic gun (both of these will probably need licenses). All catching staff must be trained how to use all equipment safely and humanely.

Never forget, your vet will only be able to neuter as many dogs as your catchers can catch. This isn't an area where you should make savings.

## **Veterinary equipment**

Discuss with your vet what equipment and drugs etc will be needed. This may well depend on local availability. Talk to local veterinary practises to find suppliers. Dogs Trust can help and advise.

## **Cleaning equipment**

You will need a supply of cleaning equipment. This will include mops, brushes, buckets, squeegees etc. You will also need a suitable veterinary approved cleaning fluid. It is vitally important to ensure that there is a basic and regular cleaning routine in place to maintain hygiene and avoid spread of disease.

## **Staff equipment**

Don't forget to look after your staff too! A kettle and perhaps a cooker (or microwave), a fridge and chairs will make their breaks far more comfortable – and send them back to work refreshed.

Don't forget a First Aid Kit too (and someone who can use it!)



# Business plan and Budgeting

Running a successful TNR project isn't only about helping animals in the best way possible – it is also about running a successful business. You might not like the terminology – but it is a reality that unless it is run in a business-like way, there is every likelihood your project will fail.

## Prepare Business Plan

The Business Plan will be your best tool to show to municipalities, potential sponsors etc that you can do what you say – both operationally and financially.

The Business Plan should state the objective (what you plan to do), the steps required to achieve the objective (how you are going to do it), the resources needed (the budget) and how progress is to be measured (your monthly accounts).

**Objective:** to control and ultimately reduce the stray dog population in a defined location.

**Means:** Trap stray dogs in the location, take them to a purpose built neutering centre and, after recovery, return them to the streets where they were caught. A detailed action plan should be drawn up detailing how this is to be achieved and setting time scales.

**Resources:** List of land, buildings, staff, vans, neutering suite, recovery cages in form of a budget.

**Reporting/measuring success:** Report drawn up detailing numbers of dogs neutered per month with periodic measures of stray dog population (6 monthly) to show progress. This will also be a valuable tool for encouraging fundraising. People like to support a success!

## Financial set-up

Register with municipalities (the local equivalents to Companies House, Inland Revenue, and Charities Commission – and any other required in your area). Talk to local businesses/charities or the Municipality to find out what there are.

Open bank accounts. There should be at least two bank accounts – one for the day to day running costs, and one high interest account which should ideally contain at least three months operating costs – just in case!

If you are likely to get donations in any other currency due to overseas connections (£s, \$s, etc), then also open an account in this currency.

Decide who the signatories for the accounts should be. Your manager will need to be a signatory for the day-to-day account.

Set up simple financial operating procedures known to all staff to make sure there is a system to record and file all statements, receipts, invoices etc

## **Budget**

To prepare your budget, you can use the template from [Appendix 3](#) and fill in the figures as appropriate for your project.

Keeping accurate financial records will be a vital part of your success. If, however, all this totally confuses you, try approaching local accountancy companies and ask them to consider donating a small amount of their time to the project, to keep your accounts in order, process payrolls etc. Even if you choose to do this, you will still have to keep accurate records of your outgoings. Every single thing you buy must have a receipt, and each receipt must be dated and numbered. Any money being taken from petty cash must also be signed out, and either put back in, or else a receipt (numbered and dated) must go back in its place.

Any incomings should also be similarly noted.

All receipts and record of incomings, can then be given to your accounts person at the end of every month, and they will be able to keep your financial records up to date.

Employ a local accountant to prepare your annual accounts, assess your tax liability, and to make sure accounts are kept in line with local laws and requirements.





# Veterinary Protocols

This is possibly the most important part of your project – or at least is what it all leads up to. This is the N in the TNR scheme. This is the bit that you must get right – and this is the bit that all the rest of your work will support.

A good vet will be the most important member of your staff and so it is worthwhile spending time to find your ideal person (see [staff](#)). Once you have employed your vet, you can, between you, draft your veterinary protocols and procedures. These should include the following:

## What you will do besides neutering

The most obvious things to consider are vaccination, treating against parasites, and treating minor ailments and injuries.

With regard to vaccination, talk to local vets to find out about endemic diseases (the diseases vets see occurring locally) so you can tailor your vaccination regime to suit the area. In the case of healthy street dogs, many are immune to the majority of endemic diseases (having caught them and recovered from them as juveniles) so it is worth studying local trends and talking to local vets to decide your vaccination policy. In an area where rabies is endemic however, all dogs (and your staff) should be routinely vaccinated against rabies.

As far as parasites are concerned, re-infection is inevitable – as soon as they are back on the streets, the parasites will return, but tapeworm can cause clinical disease and so should be treated.

## Method of neutering

This will be the method your vet feels the most confident with (or is trained in – see [staff](#)).

Absorbable suture material must be used, as the dogs will be released after three days (unless you have a small enough number of street dogs that you can hold them for longer until stitches can be removed – but this may not be possible or cost-effective). Holding dogs longer may however be your only option if absorbable suture material can't be found.

## Hygiene

This is an area that you can't be too strict about! Make sure all staff know and adhere to the hygiene protocols and implement the following measures:

The Veterinary Room must be maintained to a high standard of hygiene at all times. Movement of people through the room should be kept to a minimum. Only veterinary staff should be permitted to enter the area. Dogs must not be permitted into the area except for treatment.

After each operation the work surfaces of the operating room and the preparation room should be cleansed. In addition, at the end of each working day that operations are conducted the floor and walls of the operating room should be cleansed. This should be the responsibility of the veterinary staff.

At the end of the working week both the preparation room and the operation room should be thoroughly cleansed with an appropriate disinfectant. This includes the cleansing of all surfaces, and the movement of all moveable items for cleansing of the items, and the adjacent area.

## Daily Dog Inspections

Every dog that is to be neutered should be examined as soon as possible after arrival. During his stay, the dog should then be examined on a daily basis at approximately the same time each day.

A period should be set aside each day by the vet as the examination period.

A record of the examination must be kept (the most likely place to record this would be on the reverse of the dog's record sheet). The vet who conducts the examination is to initial the sheet against the date so it is clear that daily checks have been done.

Should the examination reveal signs that could indicate a state of health that could endanger the dog during the neutering procedure or recovery, the neutering procedure should be delayed until the dog is healthy.

All dogs must be examined as 'fit to be released' by the vet before being returned. No dog should be returned until this has been done.



## **Veterinary Responsibility**

Having found yourself a good vet, and having made sure they are trained and up-to-date, you must trust them to run the neutering clinic, maintain hygiene, make their own decisions, maintain stock, manage other veterinary staff (if appropriate) and have overall responsibility for the health of the dogs from the moment they arrive at the centre till the moment they leave.

## **Difficult Situations**

No matter how much you want to help every dog in every circumstance, the sad reality is that you can't. You are doing a wonderful job helping the dog population as a whole, but sometimes you are going to have to make difficult decisions with regard to individuals, and it is necessary that you set up fixed protocols that everyone can refer to in these times.

In order to deal with these situations it is vital you set up agreed guidelines to cover these areas.

There are no right answers here but you need to make the decisions that are most in keeping with the facilities you have.

## **Bitches in Pup**

It is inevitable that some of the dogs you catch will be females in pup. You need to decide what you will do in these circumstances, as obviously you can't put newly born pups onto the street.

In Oradea, all bitches in pup are neutered – unless the female is already lactating. The neutering of a female that is lactating is not to proceed because she is very close to giving birth. After the start of the lactating period, the female is to be allowed to give birth to her pups. After the birth of the pups the mother is to be allowed to feed and nurture the pups until they are weaned.

The problem is then what to do with the pups. Your best course of action, if possible, is to find a local animal welfare organisation who will take these pups and put them up for adoption. The mother should be neutered at the appropriate, safest and earliest opportunity.

Whatever you decide, be aware that if you start keeping puppies, everyone in the area will start dumping their pregnant bitches, or litters of puppies on your doorstep - and ending up running a sanctuary by default is both expensive, and unfair on the puppies you are condemning to a life in kennels.

## **Euthanasia**

There are going to be dogs you catch that can't be let back out onto the streets for a variety of reasons. While you may ideally like to have a total non-destruction policy, this is unlikely to be possible, and so protocols should be set down for the reasons you will euthanase dogs. These should be:

If the dog is suffering and there is no practical way of easing the suffering to allow the dog to live a normal life free from pain or distress. Although money is a factor, the main thing should be the likelihood of that dog being able to live a normal life back on the streets. This is a decision that should be made by your vet, but wherever possible (ie if not a veterinary emergency) your staff should also be consulted.

A dog that is a serious danger to staff, or to the public should the dog be returned to the community, should also be considered for euthanasia. Part of what you are doing with your whole project is to raise the public tolerance for the street dogs, and putting a dangerous dog back onto the streets is irresponsible. This decision should be made by the manager but in consultation with the vet to ensure there is no treatable clinical cause for the aggression.

If there is a possibility that a dog has rabies, the dog should be isolated immediately and advice sought from the appropriate authority of the municipality. In this situation the vet and the person in charge must be informed as soon as possible.

## **Taking in sick, injured or dumped dogs**

If you start taking in dogs, they will keep coming. If people think you are running a clinic for dogs, or a sanctuary, you will be inundated. If you do a good job with your publicity and marketing, people will know about you and know where you are.



Have a policy for dogs that are dumped at your gates. If possible, make contact with local shelters or animal welfare organisations who take dogs, and work out an arrangement – perhaps your vet does their neutering and they take your dumped dogs.

Stay firm on this (no matter how hard it may be) unless you have unlimited finance, unlimited space, and unlimited veterinary facilities!

Taking in all the dogs in need will lead to overcrowding and result in its own welfare problem – as we saw in the existing animal welfare shelter in Oradea before the TNR project was started.

Dumping dogs on the doorstep is sadly a problem in Oradea. As there are facilities at the SOS Oradea base to house dogs, people will travel sometimes hundreds of miles to dump dogs or litters of puppies on the doorstep because they know they will be looked after.

Be aware this will happen – and work out your own policy that you will enforce, before you open your doors....





s DOGS  
DEA



# TNR in Action

## Preparation

Using a detailed map of the area you plan to work in, divide it into areas using natural boundaries (rivers, main roads etc). For ease you might want to give each area a colour code.

Make sure everybody has access to the map so all know what is going on and how the project will work.

Before you start catching dogs, make sure you have a record book set up. The record book should keep a detailed account of how many dogs are brought in from each of the areas, and how many were returned to the same area. Dates should be kept for each collection and return and whether the dog was male or female.

If you plan to microchip or tattoo the dogs, these numbers should also be recorded in the record book (this makes record keeping far easier as dog identification becomes simpler).

This record book can be cross-referenced to the veterinary records that should keep account of each dogs' condition, veterinary health record, neutering procedure and recovery.

These record books allow you to assess the number of dogs taken from each area and the number returned against the number of dogs estimated to be in that area at any given time. This will allow you to estimate the number of dogs you have still to neuter, and also to assess the reduction in numbers of dogs due to the drop of birth rate in the area.

In addition the veterinary record book should give you an indication of the general health of dogs in the town, and because of the area colour coding allow you to see any migratory issues.

**IMPORTANT:** No matter how tempting it is to get started straight away, do not start trapping and neutering until your Operating Room is fully prepared so that adequate hygiene precautions can be taken. No surgery should be undertaken until hot and cold water, and a constant supply of electricity can be guaranteed.

## Catching

Once you have your centre established, record keeping procedures in place, your vehicle/s equipped, and your catching staff trained, you are ready to put everything into action.

The manager should decide what areas are to be targeted each day. This decision would be made dependant on reports of roaming dogs, or complaints from the public or the Municipality. Priority should be given to areas of most public concern and to those areas where there are more dogs and therefore more opportunity to breed, and also where there is the largest population of humans affected by the street dogs.

Your catching team can then go out to the designated area, in marked vehicles and with branded clothing to catch the dogs and bring them to the centre. This branding allows the public to see the work you are doing but not think the dogs are being rounded up to be killed.

The team must be trained to talk to the public so they can explain what they are doing and what will happen to the dogs. Some people feed and 'look after' a number of dogs and so will need reassurance that they will be brought back. This is especially important in areas where you have 'community dogs'.

The catching team will probably find that most of the dogs are sociable and so will be relatively straightforward to lure and catch. This is by far the most preferable way as it is the most stress free for the dogs. Other dogs are less social and may have to be caught using a grasper pole. Some particular dogs have to be targeted as trouble makers, or because they are too elusive to be caught in the normal way. These can be caught using a fast action blow-pipe and drug that is also fast recovery. (Note: We suggest that the use of the dog grasper or the pipe are only used as a last resort, and in the best interests of the dog and the community).

If you have areas of private land in your area (factories, schools, universities, cemeteries etc) you should give these a different area colour code and target them specifically with the permission of the landowners. These may be best done in the winter when, due to bad weather, usual street collections may be harder.

Also arrange regular public neutering days where local residents who own dogs can come and bring them along for free neutering. Often, if left to roam, the owned dogs can be contributing to the numbers of puppies being born on the streets as much as the street dogs themselves.

## **Dog Intake**

The dogs that are caught should be brought to the centre and allowed a day or so to settle in the intake kennels. The veterinary examination should be conducted and the dog's details recorded in full. The record should include: details of the dog (sex, colour, ID number, age); any signs of disease and diagnosis; vital signs; drugs used; date of capture and release (or other outcome). The location of the collection should also be recorded.

The dog's details are to be recorded on the kennel board on the front of his kennel and should be updated regularly and should include any treatment and date neutered (note: whenever the dog is moved around the site (ie to Preparation Room, Operating Room and Recovery, these details must be recorded, and the record go with the dog - to ensure that the correct information moves with the dog).

If the dogs are found to be fit and healthy, and safe to be released back into the community, the dog can then be vaccinated, treated for worms and fleas, and of course, neutered.

You need to decide on a way to identify the dogs that have been neutered so that your catching teams do not continue to catch the same dogs over and over. In Oradea, the best way has been discovered to be ear tipping (removing a piece from the ear while under sedation during neutering). This means the catching team can see from a distance whether they need to catch a dog or not. Other methods did not prove to be as useful (collars can either grow too small, be pulled off, or cause injury for the dog, and ear tags can be torn off).

You should ideally also use some method of permanent identification – either microchipping or tattooing. This means that you can identify each record to a particular dog.



Once neutered, the dog should be moved to the Recovery Area, and checked regularly as the post-operative care is almost as important as the surgery itself – with the first two days being the most critical to ensure good recovery.

Dogs should stay in the centre in recovery for three days (under vet assessment) before being returned to the exact area where the dog was originally caught. All staff should be aware that this is an important aspect of any TNR programme, and one of the reasons for keeping accurate and detailed records.

Once the dog is released, his record sheet should be completed and filed in a region colour coded file as a permanent record.

## **Record keeping**

These records can easily be kept (by even the most computer wary!) on an Excel spreadsheet, which enables them to be emailed, printed or transferred easily. Weekly (at least) back-ups are essential with all computerised records.

At any point, these records will allow you to assess your progress, give accurate information to the local authority, the media or the public, and you will also be able to tie these details into your budget.

A monthly report should be prepared at the end of each month recording the number of dogs taken from each area, the number neutered and the number returned.

Regular assessments of your progress can also be displayed at the centre to boost staff morale and make them (and you) feel you are making progress.

## **Emergency procedures**

Make sure you are prepared for any emergency and ensure all staff know what to do in case of fire, flood, serious (or even minor) dog bites.

Assess your site for safety on a weekly basis and do all possible to reduce any risks, and advise staff how to avoid the ones that can't be eliminated.

Make sure you have good insurance to cover you in any eventuality/liability.



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**What else we need to do...**

# Public Relations (PR)

Whether you like it or not, PR is going to have to form part of your project. People need to know who you are and what you are doing in order to be able to support your project.

The very first thing to do is to create a brand – a clear and memorable logo - that is going to be easily recognised. Put this on everything – from stationary to staff uniforms to vehicles....



This will raise awareness of your project – and any time your staff are out and about they will be spreading the word just by wearing the branding. This in itself will begin to create a buzz and an awareness.

Even before you set up your TNR project, good PR is going to help you explain to the local community what you are going to be doing, why you are doing it, and even how they can help. Getting the community on your side and having local goodwill towards the project is important to what you, and the municipality are trying to do. In areas where you have community dogs, this is vital to your success.

In addition, it is through positive PR that you may well reach people who would support you – through giving services, equipment or volunteering their time – or perhaps even with financial support. You may get volunteers from the people who are feeding the community dogs.

In order to get good PR without spending a lot of money, you need to do some research. If the area you are working in has a dynamic, growing media industry, they will be keen to cover local stories. Try and find individuals within the media who are known to be animal lovers or have been happy in the past to cover animal stories. If you can get them on board right at the beginning – perhaps with a press reception for friendly journalists, radio and TV people to make them feel important and get



them on your side - and then give them regular good local news stories, you should find that you have a good source of positive PR. Try to give them all something different so they all feel they are getting something unique!

You may find that from within the media you find one or two people with a special interest in the project. Cultivate these people and give them your very best stories so they keep supporting you.

Every time you do anything with your project, try and think of an interesting way to sell it to the media. Never miss the opportunity for a press release.

Examples could be:

- 1000th dog neutered
- Local TNR project attracts major sponsor
- Celebrity visits TNR project
- Schools visit TNR project
- School children create poster to support TNR project

Almost any event can be turned into a news story!

Remember that journalists are always looking for an easy story. If you give them a well-written interesting press release, which has a good 300dpi minimum photograph to go with it (preferably cute!), they are far more likely to publish your story, as they don't have to do any work.

If you are not doing anything media-worthy, you may well have to do something special to create a story. Don't let the media have a chance to forget about you. You are doing something unique in the community, and they should be glad of the chance to show off something positive that is going on locally.

If you manage to cultivate good media contacts, try and get them to mention your business sponsors. Once potential sponsors realise that by supporting you they may get media coverage, you will find getting sponsors far easier! If anyone donates anything big, send out a press release – and once they realise there is PR to be had, your donors will start to be more frequent.

The media can be one of your greatest friends – well managed, they will bring in public support, sponsors, volunteers, donations, goodwill, awareness and interest – they can even run appeals for you!

Try and get a local celebrity interested in supporting your project. By doing this, and asking them to attend any major event or milestone, means that the media are going to be even more likely to turn up and feature your story.

If you have a local media training college in your area you can approach them about making a short film about your project as part of their course work. They get the benefit of working on a real promotional production – and you will get a film that you can use to take to potential sponsors or investors. This will be a great resource for you – don't underestimate the power of television and the visual media! If people can see immediately what you are doing on film, they are more likely to see it in a positive way, and as something worth getting involved in.

There are other kinds of PR as well as the media however. Get posters and flyers printed and put these up in key social venues, give them out to schools, colleges, vets etc, make sure all your staff wear uniforms with the name of the project with a website link and do all you can to get your message out there.

Give talks to the local community – especially in areas where there are community dogs. This will help people see that you are working for the benefit of the dogs.

Remember – the more people who know about the project, the more people can help you.



## The downside to good PR

All this public awareness can have one very big downside – and it is one you have to be prepared for, and have a policy to deal with. If people know you are caring for dogs, and know where you are, they may well dump dogs at your gates. If you do not have a policy to cope with this, you will soon end up over-run and unable to continue your TNR programme because all your money is going to look after the dogs that have been left with you.

If you build your centre purely as a TNR facility (which is what this template is about) you will not have room to keep dogs and so do try and make sure that all your PR only mentions you as a veterinary facility and not as a shelter.

# Fundraising

Establish what money you need to run the project so that you have a target and know what you have to achieve. Before you start, you need to make sure that you have sufficient funds to build and set up the project, and to cover running costs once you are operational.

To keep the project going however, you need money. Somebody has to take responsibility for raising funds. It's preferable that this person will have some fundraising experience but this may not be easy. If you can't find someone with experience, then you (or whoever is going to do this job) need to learn about the basics of fundraising. For more information about training, go to [www.resource-alliance.org](http://www.resource-alliance.org). You can also find various publications online which will help you to develop knowledge of the subject.

Know the law! Fundraising legislation differs widely throughout the world. Make sure that you are aware of the legal situation in your country.

Network! Go to conferences and seminars to learn about fundraising. Try [www.icawc.org](http://www.icawc.org) or [www.resource-alliance.org](http://www.resource-alliance.org) for networking opportunities.

There are thousands of different ways of raising money. Search the internet to see what other charities are doing and adapt their ideas to your local situation. The most important point to remember is that you should not be afraid to ask for money – if you don't ask, you don't get! Remember, you are providing a valuable service.

## Individuals

You can raise money from individuals in a number of ways. Create a mailing list from anyone who shows an interest in your project, and then write to these people on a regular basis updating them on what you are doing (perhaps with a newsletter) and at the same time, ask for donations. Sign people up at events, use direct mail or distribute leaflets in the street. Send a press release to local newspapers appealing for funds. If your banking system allows for automatic transfers of funds (often known as standing orders or direct debits), then encourage this form of giving as much as possible as it will keep down your costs and encourage regular giving.

Consider the longer term - ask supporters to consider leaving you a legacy in their wills. Take collecting tins onto the street (contact your local authority first to check it is legal).

## **Major Donors**

Research wealthy individuals/business leaders/celebrities etc with an interest in animal welfare, and approach them to see if they will support your project. Ask them if they will use their network of contacts to find others who are willing to give.

## **Companies**

Approach businesses to support your cause. Start with businesses that have an interest in pets – pet food manufacturers, vaccine suppliers, pet shops etc. Local businesses may also be supportive of the work you are doing in the community. Companies will usually want to know what's in it for them, so try and give something back – involve companies in PR opportunities, put their logos on your literature, recommend their service to your supporters.

Companies may also donate 'gifts in kind' in preference to money. This could range from lending you employees to donating their old office furniture or equipment.

## **Grant Making Institutions**

Grant making trusts and foundations are a good source of larger donations. Will your national or local government give you a grant? Do companies operating in your country have charitable foundations? If there are only a few grant making bodies in your country, go overseas. Most countries with a history of charitable giving will have directories of grant making foundations – you can find these on the internet – the Charities Aid Foundation (UK) publishes 'the Directory of Grant making Trusts' which can be found online.

## **Reclaiming Tax**

Governments are increasingly encouraging the voluntary sector by allowing individuals to give some of their income tax to charities – check out the situation in your country.

## Events

Can you host an Open Day at your facility where people can find out more about your work? Organise sideshows – games, face painting, refreshments, dog shows etc will allow you to make money. Sponsored events are very popular in some countries. Do you know any talented people who could put on a show for you?

## Trading

Selling products can be a minefield, so treat with caution – you don't want to lose money. Could you open a charity shop that sells donated items? Maybe you could sell crafts or branded items at local markets. Will other companies sell their products with a percentage being donated to you?

## Lotteries

It is important that you are aware of any legislation relating to lotteries. It may be possible to sell lottery/raffle tickets to the public in exchange for a chance to win a prize. Ask companies to donate prizes.

Finally, don't be afraid to seek help. If you have questions, don't be afraid to speak to larger animal welfare organisations for advice – wherever they are in the world.

No matter how much you may not like it, fundraising is vital to the success of your project.

# Education

## Why educate?

Without education, your project is doomed to failure – because while you are neutering the street dog population and cutting down the dogs able to breed, the un-neutered ones will just produce more and more puppies because the resources have not reduced. There is still as much food, water and shelter on the streets to support a large street dog population – and so a large street dog population is what you will have!

To be effective, education has to be a two-pronged attack – you need to educate the municipality, and you have to educate the children and local community. The municipality are ultimately the ones who can reduce the resources available to the street dogs, while the children are the ones who will control the fate of the street dogs in the future.

In areas where there are community dogs, educating the people who feed and look after them is vitally important. These people can tell you where the dogs are, report to you if new, un-neutered dogs come into their area, help you catch them, and will look after them when they return. These people could also make excellent volunteers, and you will need them on your side if you are to succeed.





## Municipality Education

Your TNR project has to be a co-operation between you as the service provider, the municipality and the community. Without some input from them, you will be fighting a losing battle – and what you need from them are measures that are going to benefit all, not just the street dogs.

You need them to reduce the resources available to the street dogs. An area will have as many street dogs as its resources can support.

The main resource that needs to be reduced in order to reduce dog numbers is food that can be scavenged from the streets. The municipality (and the local community) must do all it can to prevent food being left out on the street, or in places where the dogs can easily find it.

There are several ways this can be done. One of the most effective is introduction of wheelie bins/secure rubbish containers. These encourage the community to ensure their rubbish is not left on the streets either loose or in black bags that are easily torn by the dogs. By using these secure rubbish containers, and by encouraging the municipality to collect them frequently (so they do not become full to overflowing and defeating the purpose), the food available to the street dogs reduces – as will the dog population the area can support.

These secure bins are especially important for restaurants, markets, and any food suppliers.

Start an education campaign within the community so everyone knows why the secure bins are so important in helping to reduce street dog numbers. Put up posters, distribute fliers, and even ask the municipality if you can put a notice on all the bins encouraging people to dispose of their food waste sensibly.

If you find that the municipality are unwilling or unable to provide secure bins, at least encourage them to have more frequent rubbish collections to try to reduce the food from the streets.

There are areas where this policy will be far more restricted. Some residential areas may not have the space or facilities to have secure bins outside. Some may need better communal rubbish areas with incentives to use them, while in other areas the best you can hope for is more frequent rubbish collections and an awareness that food rubbish

attracts street dogs. Work with the local authority to try and find the best way to reduce the food resources in each individual area.

This part of your project has far greater hygiene benefits than just reducing the street dogs and for many local authorities, this is a very positive thing that they can be seen to be doing which they can spin in a variety of ways!

By getting this commitment from the municipality, and by educating the community, you will be able to achieve far more in reducing the street dog numbers than you could ever hope for by doing TNR alone.



## In School Education

Education in schools fulfils several purposes.

First of all, it raises awareness of your project. Children will talk to their parents about what they are doing in school and the message will spread. The children will learn about how TNR works and will learn how they can help make a difference to the street dog population. This will spread through their peer group and family.

Education in schools also helps to dispel myths and traditionally-held views of street dogs, and teaches children to be safe around dogs. It also gives children a way to help – as they know what to do and who to talk to if they see an un-ear-tipped street dog.

It is a valuable long term way to change the community's attitudes to the street dogs and promote community involvement – plus it will not be long before these children are running their local community and having influence in local policies. In addition, they are the potential dog owners of the future – or at least can be educated to be dog friendly.

It is also an excellent PR exercise – if you want everyone in a community to know about something that is going on – tell the children!

Many schools like to teach the children about what is going on in their area – and if this can be incorporated into English language lessons, as has been done in Oradea, teachers are more inclined to use the resources you can make available to them.

See [Appendix 2](#) for details of the Oradea education project, how it was established and implemented, and how to get a copy of the education booklet. You may find this to be a good model to base your own education programme on – and it can be adapted as required for your own area.



## Community Education

In areas where there are community dogs being fed and looked after by well-meaning animal lovers, it is important to spend time educating these people about what you are doing and how it will benefit the dogs.

Often they feel as if they are the only ones who care about the dogs, and so when they realise you are going to help, it may be a relief. They can also become valuable allies for you. Without them on your side, your scheme will not be anywhere near as effective – as the resources available to the dogs will not decrease. In some areas it is estimated that these animal lovers provide up to 80% of the street dogs' resources.

It is vital to talk to them about what you are doing and how you are going to do it - even ask them to visit the centre, watch what you do, and let them see that the dogs are returned back to them.

Then you can talk to them about how they can aim to feed the dogs in their care, without attracting outside dogs. They can also be encouraged to report any un-neutered dogs that have entered their area or dogs with signs of disease or injury to you. Together you can work to improve the health of the dogs. It is worth making this commitment to the community in order to gain their trust and their help.

If you get these local animal lovers on side from the beginning, you have taken a huge step forward. These people may also be useful spreading the word of the project around the community and even as volunteers.









# Success

You will know when you are beginning to make a difference to the numbers of street dogs, and to their lives.

You will begin to see less and less dogs on the street – and the dogs you do see will look healthier. People in your area will know about your project because of the PR and education work, and will be supportive, or at least understanding, of your work. Hopefully tolerance of the street dogs will also have increased due to your work in the community – and the municipality should also be happy as you are dealing with one of their problems in a humane way.

Due to your record-keeping, you will know how many dogs you have neutered, and be able to make a good estimate of the numbers of dogs now on the streets.

An estimate isn't good enough though. Every year you should re-count the dogs as you did before you even started the project (see [Calculating the number of street dogs](#)).

Once you start to see reduced numbers of dogs, you know that you are making a difference and your project is succeeding.

Celebrate your success (and don't forget to send a press release out at the same time so that you share your success!).

While you are celebrating however, remember that this is a never-ending job. Having started the project, it must continue. If you stop neutering the street dogs, the numbers will slowly increase back to where they were before you started.

For you, life will never be the same again – but thanks to you it will never be the same again for the street dogs either.

**GOOD LUCK**





# Appendices

## Appendix One

### SOS Oradea – A Brief History

SOS Dogs Oradea is a joint project set up by Dogs Trust, Battersea Dogs & Cats Home and North Shore Animal League International, with the support of the local Mayor.

The 'trap, neuter and return' project aims to reduce Oradea's large stray dog population through humane methods.

In 2003 the roads in and around Oradea were littered with live and dead dogs. It was impossible to drive from the Hungarian border to Oradea city centre without seeing scores of stray dogs foraging for food, and several dead bodies on the road.

We estimated there were 3,500 dogs living in the town and surrounding areas in 2003, Oradea and its people were in need of a fast, effective stray population control.

### The Background

The idea for the neutering project originally came from a British businessman. Robert Smith is an animal lover who has already spent a substantial amount of his own money helping stray dogs in Istanbul, Turkey and in Campina, Romania. After being contacted by Noah's Ark, an animal rescue organisation who was desperate to improve the lives of the Oradea street dogs, Mr Smith decided to help the dogs of Oradea and called on the three charities to help.

After some research and a meeting with the mayor, Mr Petru Filip, the municipality of Oradea agreed to donate 15000sqm land to the west of the city on which to build a neutering and adoption centre. He also agreed to pay for all the utilities in return for the project collecting all the street dogs as prescribed by the municipality.

## **The Story So Far**

By the end of Jan 2008, the dedicated team at SOS Oradea have neutered 6137 dogs since the start of the TNR programme. They have also rehomed 2200 dogs from the centre into homes around the area, including one to the Mayor of the city.

Staff from the charities have visited regularly to help train the SOS team to operate the project from day to day. The centre now has nine staff including two veterinary surgeons.

The centre is based in three Portkabins that were completed just before the opening in September 2003. Improvements such as better cages for post-operative recovery and isolation compounds to prevent cross-infection have been made over the years to improve conditions for the care of sick, recovering and injured dogs. A fourth building has now been built which provides maternity care and puppy accommodation.

## **Education**

A local school education programme was launched at the same time as SOS Dogs Oradea, with a schools pack promoting dogs and their welfare to assist in English lessons for children aged 7 to 11. Over 800 of these packs have been distributed to 20 schools in the area and have become a valuable teaching tool. The enthusiasm of local teachers has allowed the programme to make a real difference to the mindset of the local community towards street dogs. A programme of teaching and school talks by a dedicated member of staff has also been developed as well as materials for younger children. The children are very involved with the project, and have played a key part in the annual Open Day

## **The Future**

SOS Dogs Oradea is still in its infancy. However, it is proving successful even at this early stage. So successful in fact, that as of January 2008, we were able to officially pull out of the project, leaving it in the capable hands of Robert Smith and the local population who have worked so hard to make it a success. This was always our intention, and we are pleased that we have achieved that goal.

Now if you visit Oradea, you are unlikely to see either a dead dog or more than a couple of live dogs on the road from Hungary to the city centre. Often not a single unsupervised dog is visible.

For the stray dog population in Oradea, Romania.... the future is looking a lot brighter!

# Appendix Two

## Further Education

### Background

The basis of the SOS Dogs Oradea's education programme was to cultivate a better understanding of street dogs and to promote responsible animal ownership, by encouraging open discussion and the sharing of experiences and information.

The schools education programme was launched at the same time as SOS Dogs Oradea, the schools pack promotes dogs and their welfare to assist in English lessons for children aged 7 to 11. Nearly 8,000 booklets have been printed and distributed to the local schools. The enthusiasm of local teachers has allowed the programme to take off and start to make a real difference to the mindset of the local community towards street dogs. A programme of teaching and school talks by a dedicated member of staff has also been developed.



Education is highly valued in Romania and all children are compulsorily educated until 15 years of age, although most do continue to High School. Nearly everyone tries to go on to higher education. In Romania, no education programme will succeed unless it has sanction from the Ministry of Education and the local Schools Inspectorate.



## **How can an education programme be established?**

Contact the municipals/councils. They provide a 'passport' to let you go in to schools. They will give you details of schools to contact and can help ensure your materials are used

Run focus groups with teachers and find out what they want and what subjects are under resourced so you can fit into this.

## **Research the curriculum**

Find out where 'caring for animals' might fit in, this could be Citizen classes or perhaps use the subject for teaching English.

Find out about any legal requirements you will need in order to work in schools. These may include a criminal record check and a permission letter from the municipality

The SOS Oradea Education booklet is freely available on request. Email [Hollie at educ@dogstrust.org.uk](mailto:educ@dogstrust.org.uk) for a copy.

# Appendix Three

## Blank Accounting Template

OPERATING COSTS (per annum)

STAFF

	Number	SALARY
Manager	1	£0,000
Veterinary surgeon	1	£0,000
Assistant vet	1	£0,000
Van drivers and dog trappers	2	£0,000
Assistant dog trappers	2	£0,000
PR, fundraising, education manager	1	£0,000
	-----	-----
	8	£0,000
	====	====
Local payroll taxes		000
Pensions		000
Vans running cost – petrol		000
insurance		000
repairs		000
Dog food		000
Medicines		000
Cleaning/waste disposal		000
Telephone		000
Stationery		000
Marketing		000
Bank charges		000
Accountancy		000
		-----
Total operating costs		£0,000
		=====

## CAPITAL COSTS

	Number	Cost
Vans	2	£0,000
Veterinary room		£0,000
Recovery cages		£0,000
		-----
Total capital costs		£0,000

## MONTHLY REPORTING

### OPERATING COSTS

	Monthly Actual	Budget	Cumulatively Actual	Budget
Number of dogs neutered				
Number of bitches spayed				
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total	=====	=====	=====	=====
Staff salaries	000	000	000	000
Local payroll taxes	000	000	000	000
Pensions	000	000	000	000
Vans running cost – petrol	000	000	000	000
– insurance	000	000	000	000
– repairs	000	000	000	000
Dog food	000	000	000	000
Medicines	000	000	000	000
Cleaning/waste disposal	000	000	000	000
Telephone	000	000	000	000
Stationery	000	000	000	000
Marketing	000	000	000	000
Bank charges	000	000	000	000
Accountancy	000	000	000	000
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total costs	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
	=====	=====	=====	=====

CAPITAL COSTS

	Month Actual	Budget	Cumulatively Actual	Budget
Vans	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Veterinary room	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Recovery cages	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total capital costs	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
	=====	=====	=====	=====

MONTHLY REPORTING

BALANCE SHEET as at 01.01.01

	Actual	Budget
Vans	000	000
Veterinary suite	000	000
Recovery cages	000	000
Debtors	000	000
Cash	000	000
Creditors	000	000
	-----	-----
Total	000	000
	=====	=====

## Appendix Four

### **“How We Did It” – words from people who have succeeded in setting up their own projects.**

*“Our work for animals wouldn’t have the results we have had without the support of the Town Hall, and especially of the Mayor. At the beginning, they didn’t believe in us but after one year they realised that we can do something useful for the community, and decided to be on our side.*

*We convinced the Mayor about a TNR programme, and even though we weren’t financially capable of sterilising at a high level, we continue with the programme. This increased our credibility in the community that we will do what we promise. The Mayor asked us to mark the dogs sterilised to have proof of the programme. So we began marking returned dogs with a pink ear tag.*

*We now have an agreement approved by the Mayor and the councilors. The town hall gave us the support letting us continue TNR programme and making advertisements in the community for sterilisation of animals as a way to control overpopulation of dogs (for example the priest during his service advised people to contact us for sterilisation of their dogs, there have been articles in local paper on our activity, about benefits of sterilisation, and about legal penalties for cases of cruelty against animals).*

*Another issue where the Mayor gave his support was/is to extend the education programme launched last year in one school of our suburb in to all schools and kindergartens. He himself had the initiative to speak with all the managers of the schools and he did it.*

*Recently we ask the Mayor to help us in the matter of dogs’ food because we have no money support since January 2008. Thanks to his calls, we have food for four days per month assured.*

*We are now working to convince the councilors and the Mayor to give their financial support for TNR programme, and for this they have to create a new position in the budget.*

Roxana Macoviciuc  
The Nature A Heritage for the Future Association  
Romania



*“The agreement and support of the municipality is a vital element if your programme is to be successful. Treat them with respect. Be brief but firm, be positive in your talks about dogs, reminding the Mayor that dogs are important in our lives. Show him a well thought out project, with budget, and make sure he understands that you are trying to solve the problem of dogs on the streets in an humane way but that he too will gain from not having dogs on the streets. Have all the arguments ready but remember work with him rather than against him.”*

Mr sc Slaven Grbic, DVM  
Slaven Veterinary Hospital, Banjaluka, BiH  
Dogs’ Shelter – Banjaluka, Municipality Babjaluka, BiH

*“How did I manage to convince authorities to do something for animals?”*

*Good question.*

*When I came to Italy I found hundreds of animal protectionists, full of emotions and heartbreaking stories about mistreatment of animals. And authorities did not like them at all. They felt threatened by them and very often they found themselves in the newspaper accused to have killed an animal or something else bad done to it. Would you like to see your name in the newspaper with something negative? Naturally not! Especially if you are a politician dependent on votes during the next election.*

*Attending several workshops, even with ICAWC, I learned about the “win-win-situation”. You need to offer a solution to a politician which gives him positive feed back. On any projects we started together with authorities we took over the responsibility in case it did not work out. If it had been a success, I always told everybody “thanks to Mr. X. or Mrs. Y. the project had been successful...”. It sounds so easy today, but certainly it needed lots of diplomacy and strength. But I managed to introduced spaying/neutering in Italy (free of charge for stray animals!), an identification/registration scheme for all dogs and now I am working on offering free s/n to private dogs and cats paid by the government and identification/registration for cats too. We’ll see if I will be successful again.....”*

Dorothea Fritz  
Lega Pro Animale, Italy

This is all excellent and proven advice on how to approach municipalities and your local Mayor – but it is by no means the only way, and you have to find the way that works best for you – and with what you know about your municipality. Some want science, others want numbers, and others want to know that they are working with people who fill them with confidence. Others want all three!

Always be respectful towards your Municipality – you are going to have to work with these people in the future. Do not resort to accusations or get into a conflict situation with them with regard to past policies. This is a new start for them – and their street dogs.

Treat them with respect – and possibly as you will read from Elizabeth’s proposal to her Mayor, sometimes flattery works too! While we don’t necessarily recommend purely using this approach, it was highly successful for Elizabeth who had judged her Mayor – and his desire for public recognition - well, and so here is her proposal and comments.

*“Mr. Mayor,*

*We need to make some major changes in order to improve life conditions of dogs in our country. Why don’t we make them happen in our municipality and let a good example spread out? ... People always need a leader to follow.*

*You are a born leader, Mr. Mayor. That is why, I am positive that, with some assistance from our foundation, you can be fully successful in transforming dogs’ misery into their happiness*

*There is a perfect spot for a facility where we could carry out a complex program to reduce to nothing homelessness, neglect and mistreatment of dogs.*

*We wish that you could grant it to us.*

*Can you picture yourself, making an opening speech in front of TV cameras; showing beautiful kennels and lots of happy dogs around?*

*Mr. Mayor, it is not just a dream it is a well-grounded plan.”*

*This is the authentic address I made to our Mayor.*

*I presented him with a detailed program. He was pleased with it, and with an idea of journalistic fame; so he signed an agreement of*

*cooperation with our foundation. He presented to the press lots of our ideas as his own. This is acceptable as long as it is to the dogs' advantage.*

Elizabeth Smigielski, President of Foundation for Animal Rights Protection and Preservation of Polish Wildlife Heritage (MRUNIO)



# Appendix Five

## Resources and Links

### **Dogs Trust**

[www.dogstrust.org.uk](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk)

### **Battersea Dogs & Cats Home**

[www.battersea.org.uk](http://www.battersea.org.uk)

### **Wood Green Animal Shelters**

[www.woodgreen.org.uk](http://www.woodgreen.org.uk)

### **The Blue Cross**

[www.bluecross.org.uk](http://www.bluecross.org.uk)

### **Royal Veterinary College (RVC)**

[www.rvc.ac.uk](http://www.rvc.ac.uk)

### **British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA)**

[www.bsava.com](http://www.bsava.com)

### **Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associates (FECAVA)**

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

### **Worldwide Veterinary Service**

[www.wvs.org.uk](http://www.wvs.org.uk)

## **International Companion Animal Welfare Conference**

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

Conference for all working in animal welfare with excellent networking opportunities

## **Agora Management**

[www.agoramanagement.com](http://www.agoramanagement.com)

The building experts

## **MDC**

[www.mdcexports.co.uk](http://www.mdcexports.co.uk)

For catching equipment

## **The Resource Alliance**

[www.resource-alliance.org](http://www.resource-alliance.org)

For fundraising advice



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