

Kathmandu Animal Treatment Centre



Facts for journalists

The Kathmandu Animal Treatment Centre (KAT) was registered as a non-profit, charitable animal welfare organisation in June 2003 and was formally opened on 9th May 2004.

It is, unusually, registered as a charity in Nepal (994/059-060 social welfare council no 14998) and the UK (charity number 115822).

The Centre's mission is to create within the Kathmandu Valley a rabies-free, non-breeding street/community dog population through an Animal Birth Control (ABC) program which operates along the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines for the management of stray dog populations.

KAT's work is vital to deal with the estimated 20,500 stray dogs (figures from a survey carried out by KAT and the Veterinary Public health and District Livestock Offices, 2006) that live within the ring road area of Kathmandu - over 35,000 in the entire Kathmandu area.

Every year 200 people die of rabies and 16,000 people are treated for dog bites.

KAT was first conceived after founder Jan Salter went to visit 'Help in Suffering' (HIS) in Jaipur, India. Impressed with the way HIS had managed the problem in Jaipur by implementing Animal Birth Control and anti-rabies programmes Jan came back to Nepal convinced that what had been achieved in Jaipur could also be done in Kathmandu.

The Centre's Patron is Dr Charlotte Uhlenbroek, BBC presenter of animal programmes, a contact of Jan's. Board members in Nepal include two well known local TV personalities Hari Bamsha Acharya and Madn Krishna Shrestha.

KAT employs two vets, four dog handlers, three admin staff and four miscellaneous staff. The Centre has two ambulances (sponsored by WSPA and HSI), an operating room and a prep room, 18 recovery kennels, seven treatment kennels, a cat pen, staff quarters, offices and a shelter for the in-house dogs.

All collected female street dogs are sterilized, vaccinated against rabies, treated for any skin disease, worms, fleas and ticks, illness, wounds or injuries. Male dogs are only collected if injured or sick, and are then also neutered and given rabies vaccinations.

As well as a tattoo and a visible ear notch they are given a red disposable collar which helps communities recognise safe dogs in the short term. They are sent back out after around three days to the exact spot where they were collected.

The Municipality's old way of dealing with the issue was to poison around 10,000 dogs per year with strychnine. This takes around nine hours to kill a dog which experiences violent seizures. This cost Rs 400,000 per year and studies have shown was a complete failure, leaving piles of rotting carcasses in the street which are then thrown into the river, creating a human health hazard, a risk to pets and animal suffering. The urban environment, with so much street garbage, encourages street dogs to breed and no matter how many dogs were killed they were replaced by more.

The ABC programme has been so successful that the Municipality no longer poisons within the ring road area where KAT works. The Municipality also donated Rupees 1 lakh and allocated a member of staff to work for KAT.

The sterilized and vaccinated dogs protect their territory from other incoming roaming dogs. This helps to control and discourage rabies from breaking out, as well as reducing injuries to dogs and bites to humans during mating season fights.

Since it began, KAT has neutered and vaccinated over 4,800 dogs. On a breeding cycle of four to seven puppies twice a year, this means the charity has prevented a further 45,000 puppies being born. KAT's aim is to treat 70% of the dogs in one area.

KAT has also dealt with 781 emergency cases.

KAT is grateful to be working together with the Municipality and communities to reduce dog control and health care costs.

KAT's vital work reduces the danger and disease risk to communities and encourages compassion and responsibility to animals.

Animal Birth Control (ABC) is the ONLY effective way to ensure a rabies-free non-breeding community dog population.

KAT receives very little government funding and is almost totally reliant on donations.