

# DOG SYMPOSIUM 2020

*March 2020, 7-8th*



## The Last Dog Symposium

Part 2 of the report will include :

Jean Dodds: «Vaccinations and Titer testing» and « New approaches in dog nutrition »,  
Cristina and Aurelien Budzinski: «What can we learn from the pulse of our dogs? A different view to understand how they feel and what we can do to help them cope» and  
Chantal Deboel: «The effect of temperatures on dogs».

This seventh symposium was as usual fantastic, with a warm atmosphere and plenty of nice people during the weekend. This year the talks were on a wide range of subjects, from dogs – obviously – to wildlife conservation, and everything a dog owner and/or trainer would like to know about: health, wellbeing, helping them cope and giving them what they really need!

# Past, present and future of dog training

*Turid Rugaas*



Turid started her talk by announcing that this was the last dog symposium. We now have to turn the page and look forward.

We need to know what we are going to do in the future, and we need to learn from the past and not repeat the same mistakes. We need to be more ethical and more knowledgeable than we have been in past generations, and we must be prepared to learn all the time in order to create a better future.

## *The past*

A long, long time ago, when dogs started coming into people's lives, they worked together as teams. When men hunted, dogs hunted with them, and they realized very quickly that dogs were quicker and very good at hunting. They made use of the skills they saw in the dogs: guarding, hunting, herding, body warmth on cold nights, and even as food resources in really bad times.

From the very beginning they were not only doing jobs for us but also working together with us, as our partners.

As human lives became more complex, dogs were increasingly selected for specialized skills. There seemed to be no end to what kind of jobs dogs could do. The training they got was usually just from watching an older

dog, or simply from instinct (for example, a collie that has never seen sheep in her life will herd if he is put in a field with sheep), because it is in the genes. People started to pick and choose what they wanted in dogs and to breed them accordingly.

Then later, in the 19th century, came the "science boom" (Darwin, Pavlov, etc.). We learned about association from Pavlov, how fast a reward should come, and classical conditioning. All this has been useful and we shouldn't forget it, but it feels strange that people stick so much to it even though we know so much more about neuroscience and other things today.

Dogs started to be trained for laboratories, law enforcement and the military. The first training manual Turid came across was from 1884. When she read it she nearly collapsed from laughing, because it was just like reading a training manual from the next door training club...that's how far they have come in 140 years!

Of course there has been development, but people are not very good at picking it up. For example, enriched environment started in zoological gardens; then they did it for horses, and only some 40-50 years later did dog trainers "come up" with the idea.

With the second world war, something changed. Dogs were now used, for example, to carry explosives behind enemy lines.

After the war, when people saw all they could do by training dogs, clubs started popping up offering obedience training straight from the military recipe. Next, they had to see who was *best* in obedience, and that's how all these competitions came onto the human agenda. In the meantime, the film industry started training all kinds of animals for commercials and films, of course to make money.

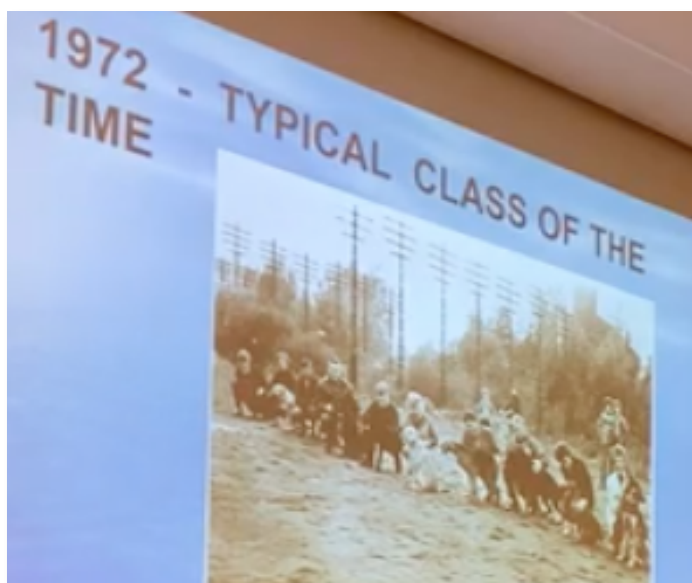
The 1940s and 1950s were really the boom time for dog clubs, still based on military obedience training. It was horrible to see what people did to their dogs, and they still do it nowadays. Understandably, dogs were not that keen on military training, and it was not really interesting for regular dog owners either, but they never realized that so it went on and on. Then they taught the next generation more or less the same things. When people had problems with their dogs like barking or chasing, they had no option at that time than learning obedience. Turid showed us a picture she took in 1972 in a typical dog training class : all 20-25 dogs sat

in a row while people pushed down on their backs so they would sit and stay still. The other thing they were doing at the time was walking in a circle in a single file, then doing it in the other direction, again and again.

Then in Switzerland, they started using dogs for avalanche rescue. People from all over Europe came to learn how to do it, because at that time nobody knew how to do tracking and searching; it was a new field.

1972 was the last year of innocence. Before that we made mistakes but we didn't know any better, no one ever intended to harm their dogs. In 1972, the monks of New Skete published a book telling people they needed to have complete control over their dogs. Unfortunately, a new fashion was born... and years later, it was quite normal for people to make their dogs quiet by grabbing the scruff of the neck. Fortunately, at the same time, a better understanding of learning psychology led to gentle training. This confirmed to Turid that she was thinking right!

We have been influenced by trends and fashions. Some still believe in total control, while others have a more psychological insight. This confuses people a lot. It's hard for them to believe in anything, because they have heard so many different things and feel that everyone, every class, every instructor, and everybody else working with dogs has their own agenda and are very firm about it. No wonder people get confused!



## *The present*

When people get confused, they confuse their dogs as well. There are myriads of techniques and beliefs, but everyone seems to be fighting to make people think like they do. They want to convince everyone they are "right". The problem is that dog owners try a behavioural trainer, or two or three, and everything and anything and finally give up. Turid told us about a client who had been to puppy classes, obedience, advanced obedience, agility, rally obedience, social walks, tricks classes, therapy dog classes and much more. After all these classes, the dog still could not walk on a leash, he could not behave with other dogs, jumped on people, etc. So what did they learn? Instructors love to teach exercises, but the dog certainly doesn't learn to cope with life

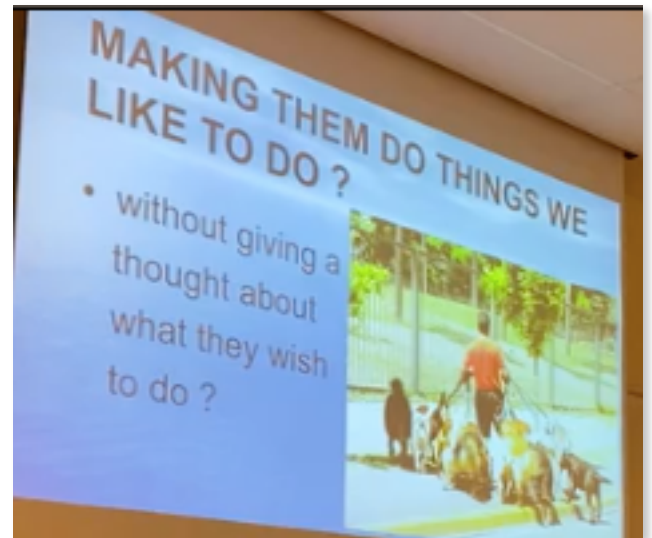
**What's the point in teaching them all this if they do not cope with everyday life and cannot live in harmony as the family dogs they are?**

Turid thinks at that point we have missed the target. We now have to think about what the target should be, and make an agenda. Turid has travelled a lot and it's the same everywhere. We need something to work towards, and then plan how we can reach it. It's time to take a step back and look at what we have done, where we are, and try to focus on a totally different future.

So what do we want?

- Do we want total control? Having dogs with learned helplessness and no brain?

- Or maybe doing « fun » things? Making clowns out of them?



After all, you don't teach your grandma funny tricks to entertain the neighbours!

Turid thinks such tricks are humiliating for an adult dog. In the wild they are carers; they take care of their offspring – often much better than we do! They are smart, and intelligent, but we teach them tricks to show off.

Or do we just wish to have a dog because we need someone to cuddle and feel important to?

Or all of it?

We need to think about what the dog really is, we have to respect that they are what they are in nature. We have to keep that in mind when drawing our target plan.

## *The future*

Turid is still working on finding the perfect target. She gave up running classes more than 20 years ago and has never looked back. Most dogs have behavioural problems, and most adult dogs are in pain because of wrong physical use. That's why we try to learn as much as possible about locomotion,

and it may be one of the most important things that dog trainers or people working with dogs should learn. We need to be much better at observing and seeing what's going on.

We have failed with exercises and training, endless repetitions, lack of compassion and insight into our dogs' needs and wishes.

Turid said that once in a classic obedience class, in the space of one hour she saw dogs being made to sit 74 times! None of us would like to stand up and sit down 74 times in an hour. We wouldn't be able to listen or learn anything, and we wouldn't see any happy faces either!

So what do dogs want? Regardless of breed and personality, they want to take part in family life as respected members, and as individuals who have meaningful tasks according to their personality.

Herding dogs love to look after their family; they have it in them to be carers.

Hunters definitely need to use their senses; all dogs do, but hunters even more. All dogs should have tasks related to their nose.

Turid is pretty sure that dogs do not want to take part in competitions, go to dog shows, make endless repetitions, have to be obedient, and be under constant control. Just look at how they live in the wild: they make decisions, live a family life, and take care of each other. But in training class, do we ever see a content, happy dog? Or for that matter a happy and relaxed owner?

We should also think of that when we are teaching. We should be smiling and enjoying this time with our dogs!

Training classes do not teach anyone much of anything; dogs do not learn anything about life skills or coping, and dog owners do not learn proper handling or how to manage situations.

For the last 25 years, Turid has asked people what they want, and the statistics are very clear:

85% want the dog to walk nicely on the leash; 65% want the dog to be able to stay home alone; and 12% want the dog to stop barking.

No one has mentioned "heel", "stay", "sit" or any other obedience exercise. So why on earth are people still teaching it?

We should focus on a more individual education based on the dog's natural skills. We should get rid of all the common words we know about and start thinking anew.

First step : instructors and trainers need to learn different skills than they have today.

## **1. Observation skills**



We need to be good at seeing things, the signals the dog gives, the small signs of physical discomfort and

imbalance and understand how they feel.

## **2. Anatomy and physiology**

We need to know enough to avoid overusing or misusing dogs when exercising and training and thus causing pain, and to understand what it really means to build a healthy body.

### 3. Senses, brain and stress

Understanding the magic of being curious, how important the use of the senses are, and keeping a balance in stress levels.

Turid said she was happy to hear her former students talk this weekend, as they understood all that, and that is what the future should be.

This means a totally different education for trainers and instructors compared to what most offer today :

#### One to one session

Observe the dog, how he is he moving, sitting (naturally, not on command), and standing. This is done by observing the dog so you can develop a plan for him in particular. Also look at his curiosity; a curious brain is a healthy brain, so he will learn new things better and learn to cope with life faster. The more curiosity, the better. These are the things we need to know before we plan what to do with a dog.

The next steps can be some practice alone or together with another dog, depending on what is planned for the dog. Then you can join a social group, which should be the aim for every dog.

Social walks and private lessons are the best, and learning new things should begin in quiet surroundings so they can concentrate and learn quickly. Dogs cannot be looking at others dogs, following what is going on and at the same time concentrate. The same goes for dog owners.

We then have to teach in the most simple way; most of the training today is way too complicated. We have to make it more and more simple, and we need to use methods the dogs understand.

**Dogs understand faster what they see - movements and signals. Verbal commands are often contradictory to what we do, and it confuses the dog.**

For example, use of the **hand signal** that was talked by the Budzinskis in the morning. If you don't teach your dog anything else, teach him the hand signal. It is so efficient, simple, quiet and pleasant! Since she started using it 25 years ago, Turid has never had to say « no » to a dog.

Also **splitting up**, which was also talked about during the week-end, is very efficient. It means that you take the responsibility.

**Curving**, which was also talked about, is a natural thing to do for a dog.



If you can do those three simple things, you may not have to do anything else at all to give your dig a good and peaceful life. Dogs use these things and understand them, and we have to go back to what they do naturally. Those are the basics of what we should work on with dogs

We must let dogs do what they are meant to do, what they enjoy doing, and what is good for them mentally and physically.

What they want is :

1. To be a **family member**, they want to be a part of a group

2. To **be allowed to explore**. They should be able to use their senses all the time. Everywhere you go, never forget to let the dog explore, unless of course there is something dangerous, in which case as good parent we can tell them « not today ».
3. To **be with other dogs**. On walks, two and two or maybe more, but not many, otherwise it's overwhelming and the dogs cannot concentrate on being social. Being together is very important for dogs.
4. To **have freedom**. This means being able to walk off-leash as much as possible. We are limited in modern times by traffic etc., but with some effort we can always find a place where they can be off leash. It can even be inside, and we can create areas for them where they can be free. Dogs can also be walked on very long leashes so they have freedom to move around. It is possible; we just have to be inventive.
5. And last but not least, to **be allowed to grow up**. Adult dogs must be allowed to be adults. They are not babies; they are natural carers. To take that away from them is humiliating for them.

These five simple guidelines are what education, classes, training should be about in the future.

**You should always remember to walk on a smiling leash and that smiling leash will also remind you to smile!**



It's not difficult; it just takes another way of being with your dog. And none of it can be done in traditional class situations, so they have to change first for a better future!

As a start :

- Stop using crates (that is taking away the freedom from dogs).
- Stop asking dogs to sit (dogs very rarely sit of their own accord, and some never do).
- Use the hand signal and movements to make the dog change direction or come to you.
- Control your own need to control.
- Teach yourself dog language to understand them better.
- Don't do big, overwhelming groups, because the dogs won't get anything from it; they will just try to survive.
- And try to see how many choices you can give your dog daily – count them!

This is Turid's challenge for us all!

And if you don't dare do it alone, there are many of us who want a change. Let's cooperate and do it together!  
**TOGETHER WE CAN BE A FORCE!!!**

### **To achieve that we need to start trusting our dogs, and conquer our own needs for control.**

We might need to compensate a bit: get long leashes for maximum freedom to move, take the trouble to look around to find places where the dog can be unleashed, and find friends or family who have fenced-in gardens. It also means freedom of choice (where to sleep, what to explore, when and where to walk, who to be with and a lot of things in daily life that we control), choices being the only way to conquer fears, to learn permanently and for life, and to learn to be self-confident and cope with life.

# Snuffle Garden Projects in Australia

*Jennie Harvey*



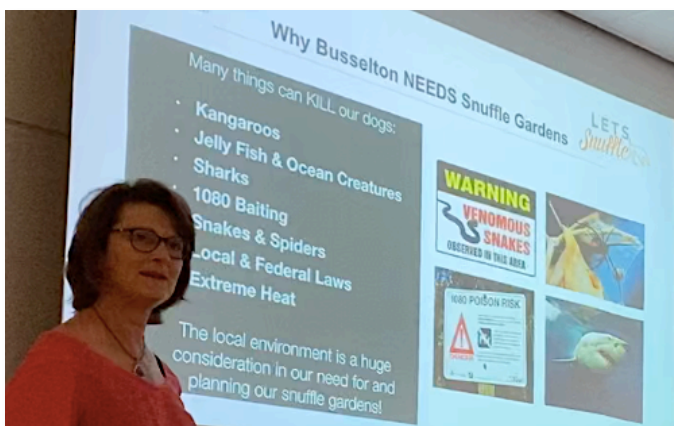
Jennie and her colleague Elizabeth have run their snuffle gardens for the past eight years. It started with treasures for dogs to sniff, but it has become much more than just sniffing.

Her sensory garden is located on the south west coast of Australia, in Busselton.



By looking at all the amazing nature and environment in Australia, we might ask why would a snuffle garden be useful?

Well there are a lot of things that can kill our dogs... and us!



There are also very few off-leash places for dogs and they are not fenced. Kangaroos seem irresistible to dogs because they bounce

around, but in Jennie's district alone they kill several dogs every year.

Jennie conceived the idea for these garden when attending Turid's IDTE in 2012, when Turid spoke about one of her students, Caroline Regar, and the benefits of having a safe space for dogs to be themselves.

All the treasures in the Busselton Snuffle Gardens come from the local recycling centre. Elizabeth works there part time, collecting valuable treasures.

## *What makes a Snuffle Garden great?*

- Provokes curiosity
- A safe environment (feeling safe to be free is one of the most important aspects for the dog, but also for the owner, especially when you have a dog with a bite history)
- Creates opportunities for the dog to make **Good personal choices & build confidence**
- Provides a place for uninterrupted sniffing
- Promotes natural movement
- An environment that supports learning

Muddy Waters is the name of Elizabeth's garden. The secret garden is a little pathway that is optimal when the dogs first get there, because if they get into a big open space they race, whereas in the secret garden they just wander around.

Parking is very important, because dogs will hurry to get from the car to the interesting area, so instead the sniffing experience starts right where the car is parked. The garden only has a one-metre wire fence so that's one reason to keep the dogs on a long leash. Jennie and Elizabeth's dogs have their own areas. It is really important, because they don't want to have dogs in their face all day. Jersey Alley is the name of Jennie's garden. It is fenced in, so the dogs can be off leash.

### *Features to consider for the layout*

- Areas must flow. There is no point in having an object here then another one over there, otherwise the dog might run from point A to point B. It has to be a flowing sniffing experience.
- Safety
- Different surfaces (dogs have the choice to walk on it or maybe not)
- Choices of directions
- Encourage natural movement
- Different heights



The humans must feel safe as well, so be sure that the gates are closed.

Arranging objects to encourage a range of movements :

Some objects are made for the human to be interested in, like this basket of glass fruit, but then dogs get interested and have to stand up to sniff the fruit.



### *Who uses the Busselton Snuffle gardens?*

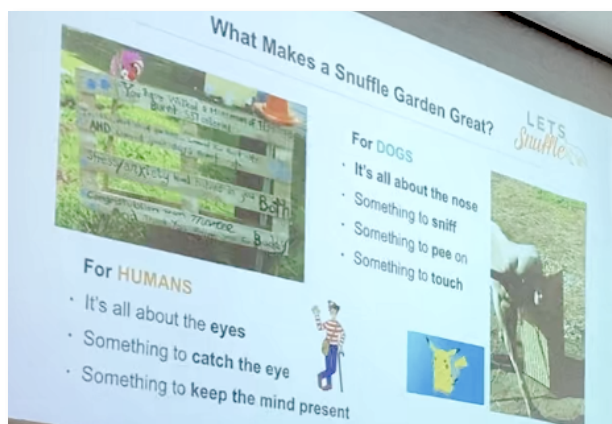
- Dog rescue groups
- Socially isolated people and their dogs. They have an arrangement where they go and pickup the dog and owner if desired and bring them to the gardens.
- Dogs undertaking rehabilitation work with the owner and needing a quiet space to relax
- Education seminars and workshop groups

- Individual owners and dogs for harness fittings and long lead education
- Injured or impaired owners, or dogs, after surgery or during their stay at the hospital . During this period, they help them take care of the dog.
- Senior owners and dogs
- Owners needing assistance for a variety of reasons (arrival of a baby, past walking traumas etc.)
- Any dog that would just like to sniff in this setting

Thanks to the Snuffle Garden, people also learn some pieces of education for their daily life. For example Rusty, a three-legged dog, needed swimming lessons but at the beach he refused to get out of the car, so the people who cared for him took the principles of the garden to the beach : they worked with his curiosity, went at his pace, gave him lots of choices and didn't rush.

What makes a Snuffle Garden great?

Eight years ago, Jennie would have answered it is all about the dogs and their noses. But the human part was missing. They started to notice that when people looked at some funny pieces of art, they relaxed and walked more slowly. Using our own seeking behaviour releases endorphins, so they



started to make the garden more interesting for humans as well to get them to slow down.



The Peekaboo Pallet Wall :

Just by angling the pallets instead of lining them, dogs have the choice to pass by or peep through it.

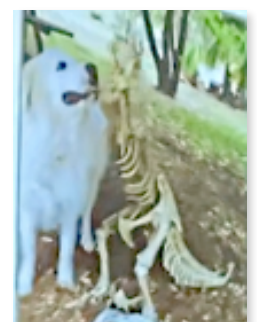


The carpet garden :

Every carpet is from a different family and tells a different story. No matter what dog, whenever he hits the carpet he slows down. They noticed that dogs were more interested if there were no objects on the carpets, and that carpets were better when linked together.



Jennie told us several stories of dogs or owners with a complicated past, and it was lovely to see dogs enjoy rolling on the fleece, their curiosity increase and them being more self confident (even facing a Sheepasaurus skeleton!).



## *What are the rules?*

- Correctly fitted harness
- Long lead
- Follow the dog
- Let the dog make choices
- Encourage curiosity
- Observe the dog
- Maintain a sense of fun

## *What is not permitted?*

- Balls
- Clickers
- Leads attached to collars
- Head halties
- Commands
- « Free for all » play (this is not a dog park, it's a Snuffle Garden)

They do allow on a limited basis food ( for a treat search for example, but it will be in a special part of the garden, and treasures have a higher value than treats have). Leading the dog (only if needed) and chatting to the dog (some people really need to chat, so Jennie usually distracts them by making them talk to her and not the dog).

## *Things to consider*

- Lead handling - who takes the dog on the first visit?
- Parking
- The resident dogs and the resident family
- Insurance
- Life/Garden balance (by booking only)
- Privacy
- Poo (read book Pet Poo Pocket Guide by Rose Seeman)

- Spacing of seating



## *Consulting for commercial places*

A veterinary hospital asked them what they could do for their clients.

Giving the dog a box filled with shredded paper and treats is an easy thing to do while the staff ask the owners some questions, and there is no cross-contamination between animals, as they can change the paper each

time. Dogs can also come earlier to enjoy the Snuffle Garden before their treatment. Vets can even treat dogs in the



Snuffle Garden as the dogs will be more relaxed.

A Snuffle Garden was also set up for a boarding kennel to change the way dogs arrived at the kennel. Wellness centres can also arrange their corridors so that dogs pass through the Snuffle Garden.

**Sensory garden are spreading all over the globe, and the world is falling in love with them!**

« This should be our gift to dogs in our area » said Turid.

# Presentation of FIAA

## Foundation for International Aid to Animals

*Mindy Camponeschi -  
Cristian M. Von Reitze*



FIAA is a private non-profit foundation dedicated to helping people help animals, both wild and domestic.

Mindy started their talk with this big question : Can dogs save the planet? Humans are the most invasive species that has evolved on earth, and where we go, dogs go. More than half the world population lives in urban areas which means a shrinking environment for wildlife. It also means that humans are losing contact with nature.

We make dogs adapt to our lives, and they love us despite what we do. They are more than that; they are our nexus to nature, they are our closest species that we live with. They help us relate to the natural world through their instincts and special senses ... as long as we pay attention.

Dogs are not only our best friends, they are ambassadors of the natural world. And we (all the people working with dogs) are the ambassadors of the dog world. Mindy asked us why we became dog trainers. Can we feel alone when we're with a dog? How many life lessons have we learned from dogs? How many difficult times did our dog help us get through?

Don't we feel we would like to give something back to animals? This was the inspiration for the FIAA.

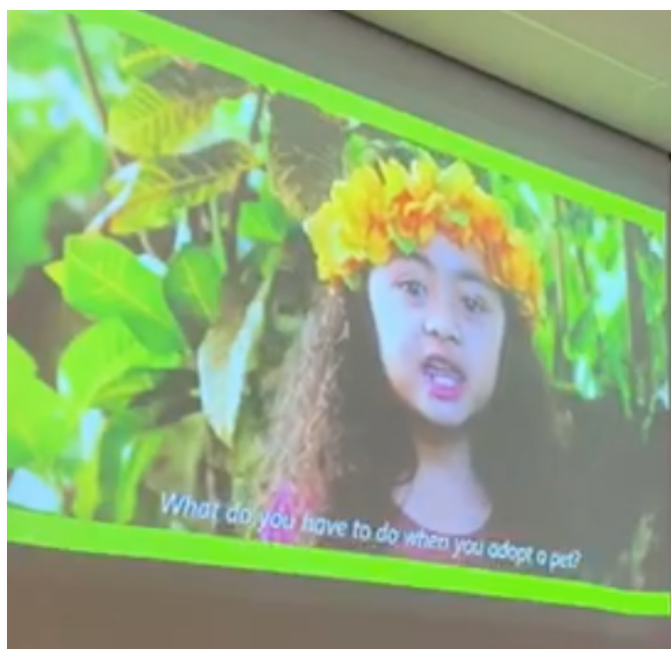
Once you start observing dogs and animals, you just can't stop, it becomes obsessive. Back from a workshop with Turid in 2001, Mindy realized that people thought street dogs were part of the landscape in Chile. From her house, Mindy started to watch free roaming dogs. Each day at the same hour, one came to pick up another one, and so on, until they all met at the beach, played for half an hour, then went home, every dog went to his own house. Free roaming dogs have the choice to live how they want. On



the other hand, they have a higher risk of accidents, and there is also overpopulation

resulting from the interaction of all these intact dogs. If a female is in heat, 15 dogs will follow her for days, and she will end up having puppies that will probably die.

FIAA decided to make a short film to show what the life of free roaming dogs is really like. This film was aired on public television. In order to educate the population, they also made a local TV program for children, with children, to explain how to take care of their pets. Children learn, go home and tell their parents what they are supposed to do. Educating children is the first step.



Then they started mass sterilization campaigns, and it was such a success that the local government started to do it annually, where everyone who cannot afford it can sterilize their pet for free.

They also managed to work with other groups to change the government culture about dogs. Previously, whenever there was a parade, they would either kill the dogs or take them to another place. Within 10 years, laws were created against animal cruelty, and humane solutions to the overpopulation problem were found.



**Compassion**, it all starts with compassion

**Communication** is education

**Collaboration** with local groups, with government and local communities is the key to create teamwork towards progress.

**Conservation** : while they started with domestic animals, they extended it to wildlife. Conservation is the key to the future

### *Different projects all over the world*

FIAA helped create a sterilization campaign on Easter Island, going there every six months to organize sterilization of the free dogs. Thanks to these actions and the difference it made for everyone on the island, the Municipality of Rapa Nui joined the project.

In Sri Lanka, it started with a lady helping cats, creating Cat

Protection Trust, then people started bringing her dogs, so she started helping dogs as well. FIAA's support helped her connect to



the community, the local government, military camps etc. She had several campaigns and even managed to help re-home and sterilize dogs guarding military camps.

In Brazil, FIAA is a crucial partner with Mata Ciliar, a wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and release center that teaches conservation of wildlife and environment. Education is the key to creating more awareness. Humans are very close to domestic animals, but sometimes we tend to forget the wildlife. In several places all around the world, FIAA has helped local associations develop by giving them support and helping them spread their animal protection work.

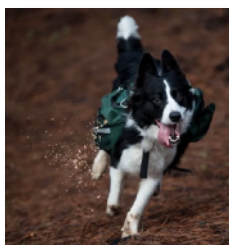


Their mission also includes creating hospitals for wildlife and helping animals return to nature. By involving carers for domestic animals, they have managed to get

dog and cat lovers involved in wildlife conservation.

In Kenya, people are really aware of the importance of wildlife. There, FIAA supports Grevy's Zebra Trust, Reteti Elephant Sanctuary, Action for Cheetahs and Ewaso Lions. These groups have even changed some old tribal traditions, such as killing a lion as a rite of passage to manhood. Instead they care for and protect them. In South Africa, people used to kill cheetahs to protect their goats. Now, Cheetah Outreach trains Anatolian shepherd dogs to protect the livestock and keep wildlife alive.

Once again, dogs helped after a big fire in Chile by



spreading seeds to rebuild the forest.

Education and visits in schools are very important, and Cristian encouraged us dog trainers to do the same. We have to transmit all our knowledge to the next generation. We need kids for the future, and we also have to give them a better future than what we have right now.

We also have to encourage anyone who is interested in helping and learning, whatever age they may be.

Their final message to us is:

Be inventive, use your imagination, and communicate.

We have the knowledge, the connections, and we need to spread it to everyone who is interested in getting involved.

The talk ended with a very funny game. Can you guess what animal they are imitating?



(answers : 1 - dog, 2 - maned wolf, 3 - cat, 4 - elephant)

Thank you FIAA for your amazing work all around the world!