

Guatemala

Companion Animals & Community Health

In Todos Santos, a remote village in the Cuchumatán Mountains of Guatemala, VWB/VSF is working with local partners to develop a sustainable and culturally-appropriate canine population control and rabies prevention program. Dogs are the primary reservoir of rabies in the community and many people live in daily fear of these free-roaming animals. Previous population control programs, like mass dog extermination campaigns, have proved unsuccessful and community members are eager to develop a more humane and sustainable solution.



In January of 2009, VWB/VSF began the first implementation phase of this project, which involved sending a team of eight Canadian veterinarians and animal health technicians to Todos Santos, Guatemala. The team started off by conducting extensive home surveys to determine the community's position on sterilization and to gain further insight into the size and nature of the dog population. By the end of their three week stay, the team had examined and chemically sterilized approximately 50% of owned male dogs in Todos Santos. Phase II of this project begins in late November, 2009 when a second team will go to Todos Santos to examine, vaccinate and sterilize the remaining male dog population. During Phase II, the team will also begin sterilizing female dogs.

At this time, the team will also set into motion a few long-term goals. By working with local partners, the team will create a follow-up dog population study and participate in city meetings and educational workshops focused on responsible pet ownership and the link between slaughterhouses, waste management and dog overpopulation.

By establishing this multi-faceted program that controls the canine population and prevents disease, VWB/VSF and Todos Santos are working together to improve the health and wellbeing of both people and animals.

About VWB/VSF

Founded in Guelph, Ontario four years ago, Veterinarians without Borders / Vétérinaires sans Frontières - Canada's (VWB/VSF) mission is to work for, and with, those in need to foster the health of animals, people, and the environments that sustain us. We are committed to engaging people where they live and working with them to build on their existing strengths to adapt and prosper in the rapidly changing world. From developing a canine population control program in Guatemala, to improving goat production for women and children in HIV/AIDS – affected households in Uganda, to assisting in the development of veterinary curricula in Senegal, VWB/VSF is continually working to help communities develop locally-defined strategies to promote and maintain public and animal health.



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VETERINARIANS
WITHOUT BORDERS

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