



Las Palmas - Torino, 26.09.2015





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It may seem strange, but today I would like to thank you for being there to share another time the IWEEE meeting, but unfortunately I have just to thank the audience for listening to me from afar. Anyway, I'll tell you a short story and then I'll leave you with a video clip.

Have you ever thought about what you do, what do you think, waiting in a veterinary clinic ... Usually you look around, you look at the other animals passing through, logically you wait your turn, but you also have the opportunity to deep in your thoughts, to read a book, or have the occasion to fall your eyes on a leaflet. And that's what happened to me, quite casually. I found the SI MA BÔ leaflet project. I went further, I found that the project is done, in certain conditions of necessity in tele-veterinary. I then asked for information and in this way a scientific collaboration was born to disseminate and share this project.

So this is what I want you to listen briefly the story of a tele-veterinary practice, introducing you the SI MA BÔ Association.

Overview

SI MA BÔ, in Creole, means “like you”. It is an organization for the care and protection of the local animal population based in the town of Mindelo, on the land of Sao Vicente, Cape Verde, situated off the West Coast of Africa.

Goals

1. The objective of SI MA BÔ is inclusive of, but not limited to, helping the cats and dogs living on the streets, especially in the poor quarters, that are often found to be hurt, traumatized or held in appalling conditions.

SI MA BÔ also offers treatment to, and recovery time for those animals in need of intensive care, possible victims of street accidents or from the systematic poisoning authorized by the City Council to control the canine population growth on the island.



A voluntary veterinarian taking a sample from a puppy with a very severe skin condition

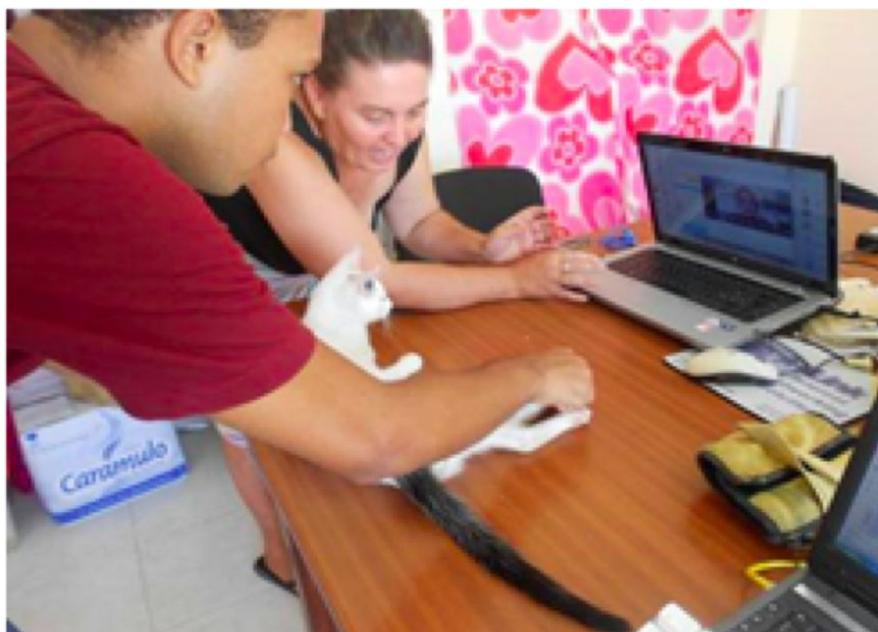
2. In addition to the direct care of animals, SI MA BÔ, also helps the local population of Mindelo, via educational classes, to address issues of neglect due to misunderstanding, through simple programmes on the need for anti parasite prophylaxis, adoption and sterilization, thus

reducing and ultimately **preventing the transmission of disease to human beings** – a high cause of which results is the abandonment of animals.

And that's what I want to highlight: **the health and social role of this association and the conditions in which it operates.**

A vet nurse with no specific education, takes care of the spayed/neutered animals with the support of protocols prepared by the staff of the chief veterinary surgeon in Italy and the staff themselves, when needed for difficult cases. **Telemedicine and eHealth enables lay staff to take care of spayed/neutered and microchipped dogs with remote support in three main areas: post-operative care, deworming and emergency care.**

This activity is part of the project "Fighting stray dogs on Sao Vicente – A pilot project for the Capeverdean Islands" co-financed by the European Union **as a way to contribute to public health.** The project provides for the castration, microchipping, deworming and aftercare of 10,000 dogs with the aim to control the canine population on the island, to make them more adoptable by local residents, specifically families, and to make them safer as playing companions for the children of Sao Vicente, who live mainly in the streets.



A local surgeon, Dr. Guilherme Oliveira, during a neurological consultation of a paralyzed cat with Dr. Raineri via Skype

Tele-consultations with the chief surgeon or her staff are normally performed for difficult cases. A standard form containing all the animal data and vital parameters is filled in by the lay staff and sent via email to the central clinic in Italy together with pictures, if required. Two cases per

week are handled on average, including eye conditions, skin problems, systemic diseases and lesions caused by traumas.



Since the inception of the pilot project, even with a very limited list of drugs that allow treatment of the most common conditions, there has been a remarkable improvement in the health conditions of the canine and feline population on the island, together with an increase in the awareness about the importance of animal health.

Due to the very low mortality rate of the operated animals and the very high recovery rate of the patients treated, most of whom arrive at the clinic in very bad conditions, the **free treatment offered** by the pilot project in conjunction with the neutering/spaying is in high demand.

This allows the Association to keep alive and in good health the spayed/neutered animals as a way to control canine population on the island and **to ensure a higher level of public health.**

3. SI MA BÔ is also giving awareness education in respect of animal rights to the local population, and offering advice on the protection and preservation of endangered species in threat of extinction.

Specifications

Whilst the central aim of SI MA BÔ is the direct care of animals in need we also focus on the promotion and involvement of the local population in activities, offer informative meetings at schools, in operative centers or throughout cultural and scientific initiatives.



SI MA BÔ has been accredited directly to specific projects through the involvement of Veterinary students from the University of Torino who can undertake their required 100 hours of rural internship at SI MA BÔ. Furthermore, SI MA BÔ is participating in the University of Camerino leishmania project and in the University of Torino's scab project.

Conclusions

SI MA BÔ is always looking and talent hunting for **veterinarians and volunteers** that would like to participate in the projects.

SI MA BÔ welcomes everyone who is interested to visit our new shelter, and to help with a donation in the form of field working, financial aid, and/or by the donation of materials (collars, leashes, anti fleas, holding cages for cats, etc).

Thank you all!!!
Alberto