

Case Study 8

Increasing use of reproduction control services using painted murals in Lilongwe, Malawi



Summary:

Painted murals on the outer walls of shops as an affordable and long-lasting method of communicating with local owners about where to access reproduction control and rabies vaccination for their dogs.

Lilongwe Society for the Protection and Care of Animals (LSPCA) in Malawi provides spay and neuter services to owners of dogs and cats in communities where even paying for basic medical care for people can be challenging. Animal health and welfare are often overlooked in the day-to-day lives of people struggling to make ends meet.

Running spay and neuter clinics in communities presents an opportunity to promote awareness and encourage responsible pet ownership. However, the owners who bring their dogs and cats to these clinics are 'easy-to-reach owners' who already understand the importance of reproduction control. To reach a wider group of pet owners, raise awareness and create a demand for these services, LSPCA now advertises messages about the importance of spay and neuter around the local community.

We approach shop owners along busy roads and near market places to rent space on the outside of their shop walls to advertise spay and neuter services using murals. The painted murals are bright and colourful, relatively cheap and longer lasting than posters. Shop owners welcome the idea as it beautifies their building and generates a small amount of income. Several shop owners have commented that they are also happy their shop wall has a positive animal welfare message. In the painting, the dog and cat are asking for neutering services to help lower their population and ensure long and healthy lives. The message also connects rabies and dog population messaging – lower the risk of rabies through responsible pet ownership.

People call us to arrange for their animal to be neutered at the next community 'pop-up' clinic. After seeing the messages on the shop walls, several groups of children have also brought their pets to the LSPCA's veterinary hospital to ask for neutering and treatment of TVTs.

The murals are proving to be an excellent way to reach a wider group of people to raise awareness of spay and neuter and to start to create a demand for the service to encourage responsible pet ownership.

