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Program Dharma is a program of Udayana University Public Health Faculty, supported by Bali Animal Welfare Association and the International Fund for Animal Welfare. It is based on a successful community-based pilot program by IFAW and BAWA 2012-2015, in which door to door outreach and community events supported an improvement in overall animal health, guardianship, and rabies vaccination status. As a result, positive attitudes about dogs have led these communities to support vaccination and good dog welfare as a way to keep their communities safe from the continuing rabies epidemic on Bali. Experience in earlier village-based programs indicates that dogs with better guardianship will remain at, or near, home. Early Program Dharma data indicate that the majority of dogs in targeted villages are owned, making owned dogs and their owners the most effective target for intervention.

This primary objective of Program Dharma is to develop a community-supported, sustained effort that mitigates the threat of rabies in humans and dogs in Bali. This pilot project in three Sanur villages aims to demonstrate project viability for scale-up to Bali's 700 villages.

The project establishes an education and training program for villagers, empowering local trainees with the knowledge to act as a point-person for dog-related concerns in Balinese banjars. Village point persons will liaise with village dog owners as well as village leadership and local veterinary authorities to monitor the dog population, and ensure basic resources including vaccination, veterinary care and basic dog welfare education are reaching dog guardians in the community. In urban areas, village point persons will also be able to engage local businesses in supporting village efforts to maintain a safe and healthy dog population.

The project consists of Village Mentors, or T1 trainers, from the Udayana University. These mentors will be trained to teach and empower village teams. Village teams, or T2, will ultimately be responsible for supporting local-level activities, ensuring communication regarding dog issues, connecting resources, and monitoring the health and welfare of the dog population. The endpoint of the project will be T1 assisting Village (Desa) leadership to source Village Development Funds toward their Program Dharma projects. Scale up will be dependent on outcomes of this three-village pilot.

Lessons Learned

- Future dissemination would benefit from engagement with local Dinas Peternakan from the outset. Their support in Sanur is now significant and they have welcomed the collaboration with Program Dhrama, but this was slow to establish initially.
- The engagement and motivation of T2s is key to success and has been variable between banjars; Klians and those with village leadership experience have proven to be particularly effective T2s.
- Desa leaders have been very supportive of the Program and are exploring options for incorporating T2s into their budgets to ensure sustainability.
- Epi Info has not been robust enough for data collection. The monitoring system is currently being moved to a Device Magic app in combination with Wise Monkey web-based database.
- Owners are willing to increase confinement of their dogs to their compounds; this humane confinement appears to be sustainable as compared to caging or chaining which causes welfare issues and is a less preferred method by dogs and owners.
- Improving care provided to dogs and dog owner relationship appears to decrease roaming, as seen by a significant trend towards less roaming dogs on the streets.
- 97% of dogs in Sanur have owners, thus targeting owners for intervention remains the most efficient course of intervention.
- The vast majority of the vaccinations have been done via hand catching by owners or T1s/T2s, yet vaccination coverage exceeds 70%. These are majority handle-able dogs.

Monitoring Strategy

Data continues to be collected on dog welfare and vaccination status using tablet apps; from revisits to dogs already part of the Program and new dogs arriving into the area. This ongoing data collection is conducted by the T2s.

Street surveys are being conducted in each banjar every 6-9months using OSM tracker app, also tablet-enabled.

Bi-annual attitude surveys of banjar residents will allow monitoring of social attitudes toward dogs which may shift as knowledge, and dog conditions, improve.