

VETERINARIANS WITHOUT BORDERS

Member of VSF International



VÉTÉRINAIRES SANS FRONTIÈRES

Membre de VSF international



Program Report 2016-2017

Healthy Animals. Healthy People. Healthy Planet.

A message from the the Board Chair and the Executive Director

We are fortunate indeed to be part of an organization that continues to achieve so much, in Canada and overseas, thanks to the energy and talents of a remarkable group of people – the board, the staff, our partners in Canada and overseas, and the many volunteers who share their skills around the world. For all of us, the motivation is the vision we share of healthy, well cared-for animals that contribute to the health and welfare of people, and to the health of our planet.

A great deal has happened here at VWB/VSF since our last program report was published. Our volunteer program – Volunteers for Healthy Animals and Healthy Communities– is hitting its stride as it approaches the mid-way point. We are seeing an increase in the number of qualified applicants for international posts, a sign perhaps that the word is getting around about the opportunities we have on offer.

Our two-year food security project in South Sudan is wrapping up. The conflict in that country has made our work there difficult but thanks to our dedicated staff and the excellent partnerships we share with VSF Germany and VSF Suisse we have managed to complete the project and make life better for a great many people. The need is still great. Millions of people are facing food shortages, and we will continue to search for funding that will allow us to continue our work there.

A generous gift from Vetoquinol, combined with the on-going support we receive from the Aero-plan Donation Program, allowed us to increase our support in 2016 for the Canadian veterinary colleges that provide animal care in underserved communities in the north. In 2017 we are building on that success by exploring a new level of collaboration and coordination among the organizations that are providing volunteer veterinary care in the north.

We are grateful to the many people across Canada whose generous support allows us to continue our work. Every gift, large or small, matters to us. The response to our 2016 campaign was particularly gratifying, nearly double what we raised the year before. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

The work we do can be difficult, and the environment is often challenging, but we are inspired to carry on by the ample evidence that shows our work makes a difference in the lives of poor people around the world. We are also encouraged by the backing of our Canadian supporters, through our solid partnerships in the field, and by the courage and determination of the small holder farmers that we work with every day.



John VanLeeuwen, Board Chair



Chris Braeuel, Executive Director

Volunteers — Providing support and training around the world

Volunteers for Healthy Animals and Healthy Communities (V4H2), the VWB/VSF program that deploys Canadian volunteers to support small holder farmers in Asia and Africa, hit its stride during 2016-17. This program receives generous funding from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada. This was the second year of a five year program and with the basic organizational and logistics work completed in year one VWB/VSF was able to devote its full attention to the important work of identifying, preparing, and deploying the best people for the assignments available.

A total of 31 individuals worked with partners in six countries – Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Laos PDR, Vietnam—improving the wellbeing of animals and the livelihoods of animal owners. Those volunteers worked 1901 days, offering direct benefits to nearly 9,000 farm families as well as training and skills development to 191 local people involved in supporting farmers and animal owners.



Volunteers Veronica Pickens (left) and Kyla Kotchea (right) help Jane, a Ugandan Community Animal Health worker vaccinate a goat while young Moses looks on



Dr. Laura Kutryk (right) showing Extension officer Purity how to do a mastitis test.

ers. Among those who received professional training were community animal health workers (paravets), agricultural extension workers, and staff of local partners. That training helps to create local capacity to ensure that the gains made by farmers are sustainable. While volunteer assignments include hands-on field work, sharing skills and experiences with local animal health people is an important part of virtually every assignment.

An important development in 2016-2017 was the incorporation of the VWB/VSF student program into V4H2. The program, which has been funded by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and through contributions by the participating students, will now receive the bulk of its funding from GAC and will be run on the same principles as the professional program. That will ease the financial burden on participating students and will allow VWB/VSF to recruit more students each year. In the summer of 2016, two veterinary students worked with dairy co-operatives in Kenya, and four others worked with goat producers in Uganda. The

student volunteers did an excellent job of documenting their experiences on the VWB/VSF Blog. To read about their adventures go to <https://blog.vetswithoutborders.ca>.

Turning the page in South Sudan

At the end of March 2017, VWB/VSF completed programming on its two-year food security program in South Sudan and, for the time-being at least, began the process of wrapping up its work in that country. VWB/VSF has been working in South Sudan since April of 2013 when it arrived in Maban County to help refugees, and their animals, who had fled violence in the north.

That was a time of great optimism. South Sudan was the newest nation on earth, independent for just two years, and its citizens were looking forward to a better life. Sadly, the optimism was short lived with South Sudan descending into a new civil conflict just nine months after VWB/VSF's arrival. Conflict has escalated in certain parts of the country to the present day, making South Sudan a difficult environment in which to work. That along with hyper-inflation has resulted in food being out of reach for many and has deepened the food security crisis to the point that famine was declared in some areas early in 2017.



Milk is an important source of nutrition, especially during the dry season.

In spite of these difficult circumstances, VWB/VSF and its partners VSF Germany and VSF Suisse have maintained their efforts to improve food security among smallholder farmers in two regions of South Sudan -- Warrap and Northern Bahr el Ghazal. The project, funded by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada has achieved remarkable success. 150 community animal health workers have been trained and have received supply kits to allow them to perform basic animal health services. In turn they have vaccinated and treated the animals of some 2,000 smallholder livestock owners.

An intensive three week animal traction program has been delivered to more than 400 farmers, both men and women. Farmers learned to work effectively with draught animals – both donkeys and oxen – and also gained the skills to teach other farmers. Trainees learned how to select the animals for training, how to safely and humanely harness and train them, effective cultivation techniques, including spacing and weeding, and how to integrate animal ploughs into conservation agriculture practices on the farm. Animal traction is an important strategy in increasing food production

South Sudan (cont.)

in South Sudan. There are vast areas of uncultivated land in the country. Animals allow farmers to cultivate considerably larger plots of land.

More than a dozen farmer field schools have been initiated through the project, training farmers to produce more and better food, and providing an avenue for the distribution of seeds and tools. That includes 3,000 mango seedlings that have been distributed to 900 individuals. As well, 11 women's vegetable production groups have been formed and five of them have been equipped with treadle pumps to allow them to irrigate their crops during the long dry season. A number of wells have also been dug for that purpose. Several hundred people, mostly girls and women, have been training in the hygienic handling of milk and milk products and in marketing milk and vegetables.

One clear objective of the project was to reduce barriers to women's participation in agriculture. Through specific training to help people re-think gender roles, and through the active inclusion of women in all training activities including vegetable production, Farmer Field Schools, Community Animal Health Worker training, and animal traction training. VWB/VSF and its partners have provided nearly 20,000 women and girls with the skills and resources to actively engage in food production.



Akot, a community animal health worker with VSF Germany, prepares to vaccinate a calf.

This project was a complex and multi-faceted one, but the goal was simple – help farmers produce as much food as possible to feed themselves, and their families and help them make a modest living. And while that project may be over, VWB/VSF will continue to explore opportunities to capitalize on the partnerships it has developed and the unique experience that it has gained in South Sudan.

Coordinating animal-care efforts in Canada's North

VWB/VSF's efforts to support veterinary services in under-served northern communities entered a new phase over the past year. With generous funding from Vetoquinol, and ongoing travel support provided by Aeroplan, VWB/VSF was able to provide assistance to the four Canadian veterinary schools that offer volunteer veterinary support in remote communities.

VWB/VSF is supporting the University of Calgary in its work in the Sahtu region of the Northwest Territories, a program that has been running for the past decade. The University of Saskatchewan has an ongoing program with the Lac La Ronge Indian Band in northern Saskatchewan. The Université de Montréal is continuing its work in Nunavik (Northern Quebec), and the University of Prince Edward Island has an established program in Labrador. All four of these programs are carried out with the involvement and support of the local community. The initiatives all focus on the health of dogs, providing vaccinations and treatment for illness and injury. Spaying and neutering services are also available and treatment is also offered to animals as needed.

As part of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association annual conference in Charlottetown, PEI VWB/VSF is convening a workshop with key players in the effort to bring veterinary services to the



A husky pup with a frozen teddy bear, Colville Lake NWT.

north including Canada's five vet schools, northern community leaders, as well as government officials responsible for both public and animal health. This is the first national workshop on northern animal health programming in more than a decade. The goal is to begin a process to bring funding, structure, and coordination to this important work in the North. Results will be communicated through the VWB/VSF web site www.vetswithoutborders.ca, through e-mail, and other channels.

Raising the money to pursue our mission

After a period of declining revenues from donations, 2016-17 saw a much-needed increase in donations due, in part, to a renewed focus on fundraising from VWB/VSF leadership. That included commissioning a consultant's report on corporate fundraising with a specific focus on the program in Canada's north, and the fall fundraising campaign was extended by more than a month. The campaign included an on-line auction and a live auction was also held during the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association's annual conference. Donated funds are essential to fund self-initiated work, including the Northern Program, and to provide required matching funds for large donor programs such as the volunteer program and the South Sudan project.

We offer many ways to contribute, including easy monthly donations. We are grateful for any and all donations. Please visit our web site at <https://www.vetswithoutborders.ca/support-us/donate>.

Raising crickets for food in Laos

In mid-2016, VWB/VSF completed a successful pilot project training farmers in Laos to raise crickets for food. Funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre, the Insects for Nutrition Research Project worked with 20 farmers — mostly women—in two villages to determine if cricket production could improve nutrition in those villages and become a sustainable enterprise for the farmers. The results are promising. After two years, 18 of the 20 participants were still actively raising crickets, and the other two have handed off their cricket equipment to new families. In fact, 18 new families had taken up cricket farming in the project area and another 19 have started in a nearby region.



A farmers removes a fat and happy lizard from her cricket box..

The project is significant because 30 per cent of the people in Laos are malnourished, with a shortage of dietary protein and fat as a particular problem. Crickets are a good source of both elements, as well as essential vitamins and minerals.

Improving livelihoods and nutrition in Laos and Cambodia

A three-year project in Laos and Cambodia, two of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia, has created significant improvements in nutrition and livelihoods for participating smallholder farmers. In partnership with the Faculty of Agriculture, National University of Laos (NUOL), Agronomes et Vétérinaires sans Frontières (AVSF), and ADA (Agriculture Development Action), VWB/VSF worked intensively in 11 villages in Laos and 8 villages in Cambodia to improve the health of livestock by training local animal health workers, by offering training to farmers, and by vaccinating livestock. Twenty five new animal health workers are actively caring for animals in the two project areas, and animal illness and death is significantly reduced in all of the villages.

As well, project staff worked with villagers to improve their diets through other means including the introduction of simple greenhouse technology and the production of crickets as a source of protein and fat. Community Health Days offered education on health and nutrition while providing free rabies vaccinations for dogs and cats. Rabies has been a serious problem in this region in the past, but by the end of the project, these villages were essentially rabies-free. More than 3,000 people attended and hundreds of dogs and cats were vaccinated.



Vaccinating Poultry.



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Financial Statements

Audited financial statements will be available <https://www.vetswithoutborders.ca/library/audited-financial-statements> after mid June.

Thank You

Veterinarians without Borders/Vétérinaires sans frontières Canada is grateful for all of the individuals and organizations that support our work including those below.



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Front Cover — Cattle Camp Children, South Sudan

John Julian Photo

Veterinarians without Borders/Vétérinaires sans frontières Canada

1 Nicholas, Suite 710, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 7B7

Tel. 613.857.0521 | info@vetswithoutborders.ca

www.vetswithoutborders.ca | facebook.com/VetswithoutBorders