The first ever WVS surgical course for African vets, held in Blantyre, Malawi

Tuesday 3 May, 2016

In April a two weeklong veterinary surgical training course was held at the new premises of the Blantyre SPCA in Nyambadwe. The course was offered by the UK based animal welfare charity Worldwide Veterinary Service (WVS) in partnership with the Blantyre SPCA.

Seven vets from Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania took part in this sponsored course, learning the best surgical techniques from an international team of vets and vet nurses from India, America, Germany, Sri Lanka, the UK and Ireland. Every day the veterinarians attended lectures about important veterinary subjects like anesthesia, rabies and wound management, followed by practical sessions in which best surgical techniques for spay and neuter surgeries were taught.

Dr Dagmar Mayer, International Veterinary Manager who has driven this new initiative in Malawi, says "We are teaching African vets the very best surgical techniques in spaying and neutering surgeries. We are also giving lectures every day, teaching students about responsible use of antibiotics (to avoid antibiotic resistances), analgesia and anaesthesia as well as about trauma wound management and amputations. We are also teaching them how to organise mass vaccination and dog population control programs."

To sterilise dogs doesn't only mean that less unwanted puppies are born but directly results in an improvement of the health and welfare of the dogs. Sterilised dogs are not suffering of tumours of the mammary glands or the reproductive organs and are less likely to be underweight compared to dogs that have to raise two litters of puppies every year. Every dog also gets a complete health check and receives treatment against parasites and worms.

Limiting the population turnover is also an important aspect of controlling rabies. A vaccination coverage of 70% of the dog population has been proven to eliminate rabies, by sterilising dogs this percentage of vaccinated dogs can then be maintained for longer, as less unvaccinated puppies are added during the year. During the month of May, WVS will sterilise as many dogs as possible all over Blantyre City. The sterilisations will be offered free of charge at primary schools on each weekend and on the new premises of the Blantyre SPCA every Monday to Wednesday in May.

This sterilisation campaign is running alongside the mass rabies vaccination drive of WVS's sister charity, Mission Rabies, who will vaccinate dogs against rabies all over Blantyre City in May.

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