



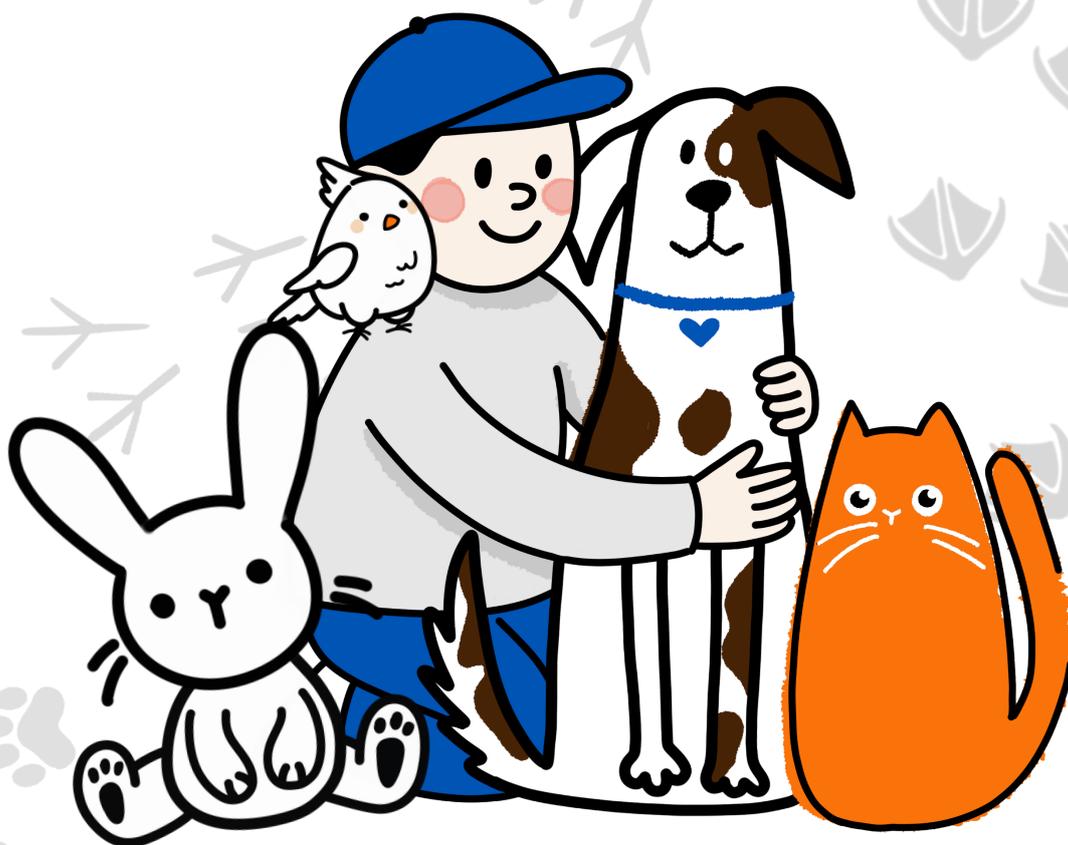
ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫ
МӘДЕНИЕТ ЖӘНЕ АҚПАРАТ
МИНИСТРЛІГІ



БІРЫҢҒАЙ
ГРАНТ
ОПЕРАТОРЫ



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A World Where Animals Are Loved

2025



This compendium of best practices was developed as part of the social project "Kazakhstan for Animals," focusing on the priority area of "Animal Volunteerism Development." The project is implemented with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The state grant operator is the "Civil Initiatives Support Center" (CISC).

The initiative to collect and analyze these best practices was carried out by the "National Volunteer Network" (NVN) in partnership with animal shelters, initiative groups, and public foundations for animal welfare across all regions of the country.

This collection is intended for coordinators of animal volunteer movements, shelter managers, government representatives, the general public, and the volunteer community interested in establishing humane and sustainable animal aid projects.

The objective of this compendium is to inspire and replicate successful animal volunteerism programs currently operating in 20 regions of Kazakhstan (17 regions and 3 cities of republican significance).

Project Team:

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- National Coordinator: G. Futman
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- T.-T. Koreshkova (Sholudko): Expert analyst, trainer for the "National Volunteer Network," author, and researcher.
- E. Shaikova: Methodologist, SAQ trainer, and author-compiler of training courses and manuals for volunteers and teachers within "National Volunteer Network" projects (including BeSafe Kazakhstan, SAQ, etc.).

Design:

- Designer-Illustrator: E. Krylova

WHEN CARE BECOMES A SYSTEM

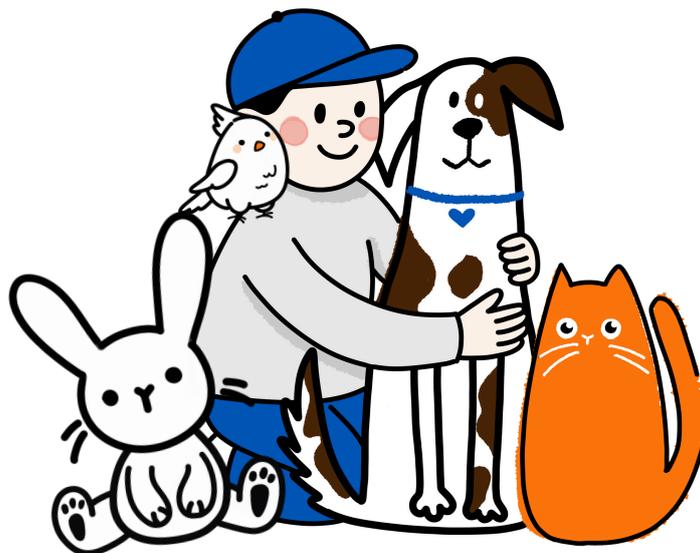
When a kitten on an empty street cries out for help in the night, or a dog with a broken paw desperately needs rescue, there is no time for bureaucracy. Before you is a compendium of the 21 best animal volunteering practices in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Each was born from a simple realization: animals cannot speak, but they can feel kindness.

From the large-scale "Kis-kis, find your way home!" project, which leverages digital technology across Kazakhstan, to local initiatives in small towns—these practices share a common thread: the will to act, the ability to organize despite a lack of resources, and the capacity to protect the most vulnerable.

The geography spans from the western steppes of Mangystau to the eastern mountains of Almaty, from the youth centers of Astana to the industrial zones of Stepnogorsk. Notably, 67% of these projects work with youth, shaping a generation for whom humanity is the norm. Furthermore, 71% focus on prevention through sterilization and education, understanding that animals must be saved before tragedy strikes, not after.

These practices are forged in reality. Each project faced a specific challenge: overcrowded shelters, illegal wildlife trade, the isolation of seniors for whom pets are the only source of warmth, and the digital fragmentation of society. Their creators are people who saw suffering and decided, "I can help." Behind every project stand dozens of lives saved, hundreds of citizens educated, and a burgeoning culture of responsibility.

The analysis of these best practices has identified universal mechanisms that transform emotion into action and compassion into a system.



STERILIZATION AS STRATEGY, NOT TACTICS

14 out of 21 projects prioritize TNVR (Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return) programs. This is not just the emotional rescue of a single animal, but a science-based approach to population control. The "UMIT MANGISTAU" Foundation has proven that one professional team is more effective than cumbersome administrative structures.

PREVENTION IS MORE AFFORDABLE THAN RESCUE

Seven projects work with socially vulnerable groups, helping low-income owners prevent the growth of the stray population. "Give a Paw, Friend" demonstrated that funds spent on sterilizing a pet for an at-risk family save the city the future costs of capturing and sheltering its offspring..

YOUTH AS A MULTIPLIER OF CHANGE

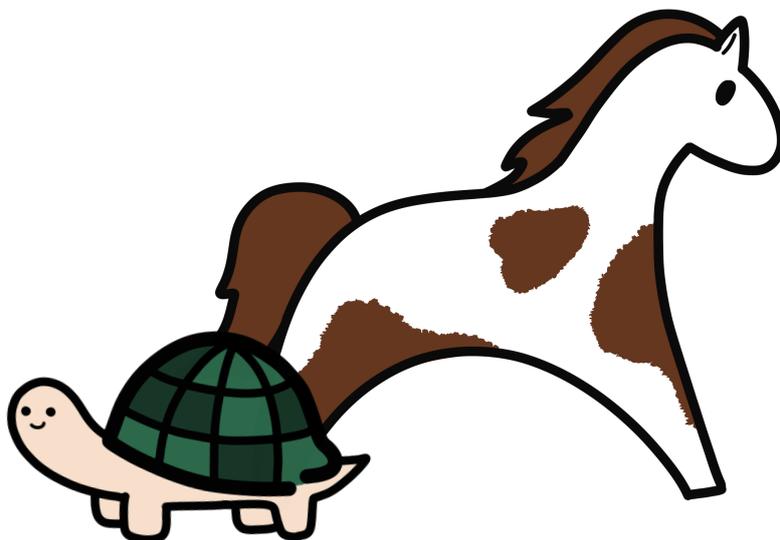
14 projects actively involve young people, from university volunteers to schoolchildren. They provide more than just helping hands; they foster new social ethics. When a young person saves an animal for the first time, they carry that compassion back to their family and into society.

TECHNOLOGY PROTECTING LIFE

Three projects utilize IT solutions - ranging from AI for finding lost pets to digital adoption platforms. "Kis-kis, find your way home!" and "Adoptly" have shown that 21st-century volunteering involves code, design, and marketing just as much as physical labor.

INNOVATIVE EDUCATION

Nine projects focus on awareness, using everything from storytelling and art projects to academic research. The "I Love Animals" charity coloring book proved that people are ready to invest in kindness when shown the way.



LOCAL COMMUNITIES ACT MORE EFFECTIVELY

The "Save Me" shelter in Stepnogorsk and "Cat's House" in Lisakovsk have shown that a small team of local activists can achieve more in a crisis than existing formal mechanisms. Horizontal networks have proven more effective than vertical hierarchies.

CHARITY AS A LIFESTYLE

Projects like "ÖmirFest" and the "Kotobusiki" (Cat-Bus) photo studios prove that helping animals is shifting from a "sacrifice" to a source of joy and meaning. This rebrands animal advocacy from something grim and heavy to something creative and inspiring.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The primary hurdle in Kazakhstan is the fragmentation of efforts. Dozens of initiatives work in parallel, unaware of one another. However, these best practices show that the solution lies not in centralization, but in networked interaction. The "Adoptly" platform and Polina Sultanova's research have already begun connecting these scattered fragments into a single ecosystem. Funding remains a constant struggle, but projects are finding creative solutions: social entrepreneurship ("I Love Animals"), utilizing business spaces ("Kotobusiki"), and partnering with major corporations (the "Kis-kis" collaboration with Whiskas and 2GIS). Volunteers have proven their efficacy through action, and businesses have begun to see them as partners rather than supplicants.

Professional burnout is a hidden threat to project leaders. The best practices involve distributing responsibility, building teams instead of relying on individual heroism, and ensuring volunteer rotation. Elena Mukanova, who implemented four different projects in one city, demonstrated that scaling is only possible through delegation.

THE KEY REVELATION

The paradox of animal advocacy volunteering is this: the more effective we are, the less we are needed. The ultimate victory is a tragedy averted - an animal saved before it ever hits the street.

These 21 practices demonstrate an evolution: from saving individuals to systemic prevention, from self-sacrifice to sustainable models, and from lone enthusiasts to professional teams. Volunteers are no longer just providing emergency aid; they are building a culture of responsibility where an animal is recognized not as an object or entertainment, but as a life worthy of respect.

The future lies in integrating animal volunteering into the broader system of civil protection and public policy - not as a competitor to the state, but as an equal partner in creating a humane society.

Every practice in this compendium began with one person who witnessed suffering and said, "This should not be." They didn't wait for a miracle; they became the miracle.

As you read these stories, you may feel that same impulse. Perhaps you will want to start a shelter, develop an app, or simply begin helping the cats in your own yard. Do not ignore that call. In a world where animals remain the most vulnerable, every trained volunteer and every life saved is a contribution to a future where humanity is the natural norm.



VETERINARY SERVICE

"Biz Birgemiz" Volunteer Organization

Region: Zhambyl Region (Taraz)

Focus Areas: Veterinary care, public awareness

Project Lead: Ernar Nurbolovich Zhylysbayev

"I help because I can"

An initiative to establish accessible veterinary services for homeless animals. This project engages aspiring veterinary specialists in volunteering, focusing on the diagnosis and treatment of animals without owners.

"HUMANE CARE", Infrastructure Support Project

Region: East Kazakhstan Region (Oskemen/Ust-Kamenogorsk)

Focus Areas: Humane population control (sterilization), social assistance, public awareness

Project Lead: Elena Leonidovna Mukanova

"Pet sterilization as a measure of social support"

A project providing free sterilization for female cats and dogs from four private shelters in Oskemen, as well as those owned by socially vulnerable groups. The initiative aims to reduce the stray animal population in accordance with the Law "On the Responsible Treatment of Animals."

"GIVE A PAW, FRIEND", Social Project

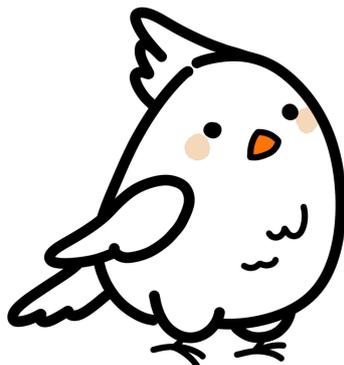
Region: East Kazakhstan Region (Oskemen/Ust-Kamenogorsk)

Focus Areas: Social support through animal volunteering, population control

Project Lead: Elena Leonidovna Mukanova

"Protecting animal lives alongside their beloved owners"

A proactive initiative addressing the stray animal problem by providing free sterilization for pets living in socially vulnerable families.



"KINDNESS IN EVERY PAW!"

School Charity Campaign – Neotech Digital School

Region: Astana

Focus Area: Support for homeless animal shelters

Project Lead/Coordinator: Ainash Toleubekovna Isaseitova

"First steps into animal volunteering"

A school-wide campaign to collect humanitarian aid for a local animal shelter, designed to foster empathy in children. What began as a collaborative effort between administration, teachers, students, and parents has evolved into a systematic volunteer movement within the school.

"KIND HEARTS", Volunteer Movement

Initiative Group of Students from Rudny College of Construction and Transport

Region: Kostanay Region (Rudny)* Focus Area: Manual labor and physical support for animal shelters

Project Lead: Tamara Andreevna Gorshkova

"Doing good here and now"

A student-led movement uniting 35 active participants under the Latin motto Carpe Diem. The group addresses a vital human mission: bringing joy and warmth to those in need. They organize creative programs for children and the elderly while providing essential physical labor and maintenance support for the local city animal shelter.

"KIS-KIS, FIND YOUR WAY HOME!"

Digital Service (Telegram Bot: @GdeKotBot)

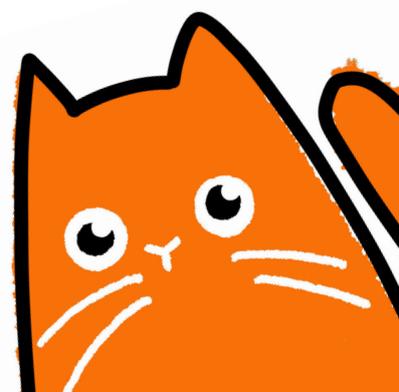
Kare.kz Animal Welfare Foundation, Ogency and JAM Agency, supported by Whiskas, 2GIS, CITIX, and Magnum

Region: National (Almaty, Astana, etc.)

Focus Areas: IT Solutions, Smart City, recovery of lost pets

"Smart City technology helping pets find their way home"

An innovative ecosystem for locating lost cats that utilizes neural networks, a Telegram bot, and urban digital infrastructure. The service broadcasts "missing pet" alerts across online maps and street-side smartboards specifically within the neighborhood where the animal was last seen.



"KOTOBUSIKI"

Lighthub Photo and Video Studio (Founder's personal initiative)

Region: Almaty

Focus Area: Support for homeless cats

Initiator: Valentina Golovina

"How personal empathy became a chance for 500 cats"

A project dedicated to the rescue, medical treatment, and rehoming of stray cats, based within a rented photo studio. To expand the audience and fund operations, the project utilizes a blog and the sale of handmade jewelry.

"KOSHKIN DOM" (Cat House) Shelter

"Right to Life" Volunteer Initiative Group

Region: Kostanay Region (Lisakovsk)

Focus Areas: Shelter reorganization, volunteer management, crisis management

"How citizens saved a shelter"

An initiative that emerged as a crisis management plan to save a local shelter from closure. The project successfully reorganized the facility through community efforts, established a systematic care routine, and transitioned from sole leadership to an effective volunteer management model.

TNVR PROGRAM (Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return)

"UMIT MANGISTAU" Public Foundation

Region: Mangystau Region

Focus Areas: Systemic population control (TNVR), medical treatment, and rehabilitation

Project Lead: Meruert Amanzholovna Lytkina

"Kindness is contagious"

Established in 2022, this foundation implements a systemic approach to managing the stray animal population through the TNVR program. The primary focus is the rescue and treatment of animals with severe injuries and illnesses, alongside educational outreach aimed at building a humane society.





"I LOVE ANIMALS" Charity Coloring Book

Aliya Vedelikh

Region: Nationwide (Partners in 15 cities)

Focus Areas: Social entrepreneurship, fundraising, public awareness

"Creativity that saves lives"

A project focused on the creation and sale of children's coloring books, with all proceeds directed to animal shelters and veterinary clinics. The initiative combines artistic expression and the development of empathy in children with financial support for the sterilization and medical treatment of animals across the country.

"SENIOR FRIEND" Social Project

Region: East Kazakhstan Region (Oskemen/Ust-Kamenogorsk)

Focus Areas: Social support through animal volunteering, population control

Project Lead: Elena Leonidovna Mukanova

"Pet sterilization as a form of social support"

An initiative aimed at the humane reduction of the stray animal population by providing free sterilization for pets belonging to senior citizens (aged 60 and over). The project addresses the difficult choice many retirees face: prioritizing their own essential needs or the veterinary care of their beloved companions.

"HEART TO PAW: Educating Children in the Humane Treatment of Pets"

"Sergali-Turkestan" Regional Public Association

Region: Shymkent

Focus Areas: Education, animal welfare

Project Lead: Sholpan Abdyfaritovna Usmanova

"Kindness is not an accident, but a daily choice"

An educational project for primary school children designed to foster a humane attitude toward pets. Through interactive quests and practical sessions with professional dog trainers (cynologists), children learn safe interaction techniques, helping to prevent the growth of the homeless animal population in the future.



"SAVE ME"

Region: Akmola Region (Stepnogorsk)

Focus Areas: Support for homeless dog shelters, promotion of responsible pet ownership, sterilization

Coordination: Shared responsibility (Tatyana Martynova, Sergey and Svetlana Zubov, and others)

"United by desperation and faith"

A project dedicated to supporting a private shelter located in the city's industrial and warehouse zone, which houses over 120 former domestic and stray dogs. A volunteer initiative group provides food, medical care, and shelter using their own funds and donations, effectively performing the functions of humane population control in the absence of a state-led alternative.

"STOP HOMELESS CATS"

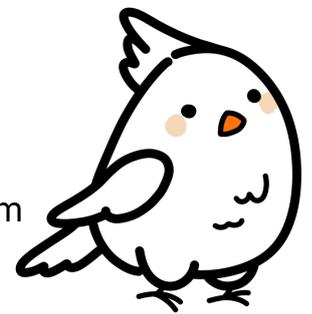
Region: Almaty

Focus Area: Stray animal population control via the TNVR system

Project Lead: Shyngyskhan Serikuly Sagynbek

"A humane way to reduce the number of homeless cats"

A volunteer initiative aimed at the humane reduction of the stray cat population through sterilization. The project operates under the TNVR(Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return) system and provides assistance to low-income pet owners, preventing the addition of unwanted litters to the streets.



Research: "ASSESSMENT OF THE HOMELESS ANIMAL PROBLEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN"

Polina Flyorovna Sultanova, independent volunteer

Region: Republic of Kazakhstan (Surveying residents across various cities)

Focus Areas: Public opinion analysis, development of recommendations for systemic solutions

"Treatment of animals as an indicator of societal maturity"

An analytical study (conducted from August 2024 to February 2025) fueled by personal enthusiasm. The objective was to collect and systematize the opinions of 539 respondents across Kazakhstan to create the necessary foundation for transitioning from fragmented initiatives to a long-term national strategy for the humane treatment of animals.

"TAILED DESTINIES", Literary and Educational Project

VolteQ Volunteer Organization

(Individual initiative by Zhanel Ayipova)

Region: Republic of Kazakhstan

Focus Areas: Fostering humanity, informational animal volunteering

Project Lead: Zhanel Amanzholovna Ayipova

"The power of a kind word"

A project aimed at combating indifference and fostering a humane attitude toward animals through the creation of a book featuring real-life stories of rescued and homeless dogs and cats. The initiative is implemented with the support of the National Volunteer Network as part of a state grant.

"ÖMIR FEST", Eco-Festival

Region: Almaty

Focus Areas: Event volunteering, promotion of animal welfare and ethical living

Coordinator: Alfiya Rashidovna Khasanova

"A city festival changing consumer culture"

A large-scale urban event that merges ecology and animal welfare into a family-friendly holiday format. The festival provides shelters with a free platform to raise funds and shifts the perception of animal volunteering from "asking for help" to a positive, creative, and constructive movement.

«ADOPTLY»

Digital Platform

Region: Republic of Kazakhstan (Digital Space)

Focus Areas: IT volunteering, digitalization of animal welfare

"An IT marketplace for pets"

A specialized online aggregator that centralizes profiles of animals from shelters and private curators across Kazakhstan. As a dedicated IT solution for animal welfare, the platform utilizes smart filters and an intuitive interface to streamline the search and adoption process for pets.



"ANIMAL LAW" Center

A branch of the Research School of Administrative and German Law at Maqsut Narikbayev University

Region: Astana (National impact)

Focus Areas: Intellectual volunteering (Pro bono), scientific research, legal education in animal welfare

"Intellectual volunteering guarding animal rights"

A unique legal research center established within the university to conduct fundamental studies and provide Pro bono expertise. The center works on improving national legislation and training legal professionals specializing in animal rights protection.

"TASBAQA" Nature Protection Foundation

Region: Southern and Western regions of Kazakhstan (Educational outreach – National)

Focus Areas: Biodiversity conservation, wildlife rehabilitation, environmental education

"A mission to save the Central Asian tortoise"

A project dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of Central Asian tortoises affected by illegal poaching and improper domestic care. The foundation focuses on medical treatment, returning animals to their natural habitats, and educating the public to preserve biodiversity.

TIME TO HEAR THOSE WHO CANNOT SPEAK

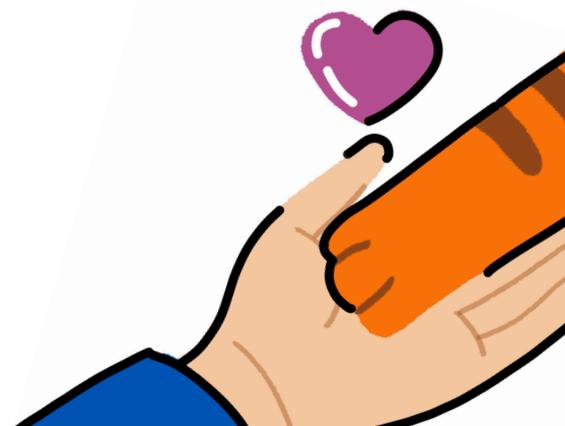
"AmanZhol & K" Public Foundation

Focus Areas: Animal-assisted therapy (pet therapy), social support, animal volunteering

Project Leads: Dilnaz Sakenovna Dzhekebayeva (Head of the Foundation) and Gulzada Amantayevna Dzhekebayeva (Social work specialist, UN volunteer)

"Animal therapy against loneliness"

An initiative aimed at providing psychological support to the elderly and persons with disabilities through therapeutic interaction with animals. A unique feature of the project is the involvement of rescued and abandoned animals, which, after professional adaptation, become "four-legged therapists."



IF I CAN, I WILL HELP VETERINARY SERVICE

"Biz Birgemiz" Volunteer Organization

Region: Zhambyl Region (Taraz)

Focus Areas: Veterinary care, public awareness

Project Lead: Ernar Nurbolovich Zhylysbayev

E-mail: madeshova64@bk.ru



An initiative to establish accessible veterinary services for stray animals. By engaging aspiring specialists in volunteering, the project focuses on the professional diagnosis and treatment of ownerless animals.

The city of Taraz is witnessing a surge in youth volunteer movements, with Ernar Nurbolovich Zhylysbayev standing out as a prominent leader. Born in 1999, he heads the "Veterinary Service" project under the "Biz Birgemiz" volunteer organization, which unites approximately 100 dedicated activists. Drawing on two years of project management experience, Ernar and his team chose to focus on a systemic approach to the stray animal crisis. They recognized that compassion alone is not enough; professional medical intervention is essential.

The project's primary mission is to improve the quality of life for four-legged inhabitants and foster a humane societal attitude toward them. The team strives to organize accessible, high-quality veterinary diagnostic and treatment services for animals living on the streets. Furthermore, the project serves a vital educational role, strengthening the culture of responsible pet ownership among youth and expanding the regional volunteer network.

Currently, the team possesses the necessary resources, including personnel, facilities, and medical equipment, to provide aid. Ernar notes that while he initially expected challenges in direct animal interaction, the process proved intuitive and manageable in practice. In executing project tasks, he relies on his personal experience and the resources at hand.

To further develop the "Veterinary Service" and scale its impact, the team is looking to expand its partner network. Ernar is convinced that similar initiatives can succeed in any region, provided there is a thorough analysis of the local veterinary landscape. His primary advice to aspiring volunteers is simple yet firm: never give up and fight for your idea until the very end. This resilient mindset is what drives the young activists of "Biz Birgemiz" forward.

PET STERILIZATION AS A MEASURE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

"HUMANE CARE", Infrastructure Support Project

Region: East Kazakhstan Region (Oskemen/Ust-Kamenogorsk)

Focus Areas: Humane population control (sterilization), social assistance, public awareness

Project Lead: Elena Leonidovna Mukanova

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Instagram: @pravo_na_ghizn, @543_lena_milena

A project providing free sterilization for female cats and dogs from four private shelters in Oskemen, as well as those owned by socially vulnerable groups. This initiative aims to reduce the stray animal population in alignment with the Law "On the Responsible Treatment of Animals."

Elena Leonidovna Mukanova, based in Oskemen, exemplifies the understanding of animal volunteering as a mission of profound social significance. As a public inspector for the responsible treatment of animals with over a decade of volunteering experience, she has successfully spearheaded projects for three consecutive years to address the stray animal crisis humanely. In 2025, her efforts continued under the "Humane Care" initiative.

The primary objective of the project is to reduce the stray population by sterilizing pets currently in shelters or under human care. Elena is convinced that all homeless animals are either former pets or their offspring; therefore, the solution must begin with the owners. The project specifically supports socially vulnerable groups whose limited income cannot cover the cost of expensive veterinary surgery. People in these categories often face a difficult choice between purchasing essential household needs and pet sterilization - a choice that, unfortunately, rarely favors the animal.

"Humane Care" offers a comprehensive solution. On one hand, it relieves vulnerable owners of financial burdens and prevents unwanted litters. On the other, it provides critical support to four local private shelters, for whom sterilization is one of the most significant expenses. Upon completion, the project aims to sterilize 22 dogs (including 8 from shelters) and 30 cats, assisting 44 vulnerable owners and four shelters. All procedures are performed in the city's most advanced veterinary clinic, ensuring the highest standards of care.



While Elena manages the creation and implementation of the project independently - investing her own time, expertise, and personal finances - she is supported by a dedicated team of approximately 30 people who rescue, treat, vaccinate, and rehome animals daily. Elena actively engages with local executive authorities, advocates for animals subjected to cruelty, and conducts educational outreach via social media. She firmly believes that an animal welfare volunteer will always be the first to help a person in need, as their capacity for empathy is exceptionally high.

Education is another cornerstone of Elena's work. Her team believes that children are like "a blank sheet of paper," and it is the responsibility of adults to determine whether they become "compassionate or indifferent, kind or cruel, responsible or thoughtless."

Sustaining such socially vital work requires stable financing, as the public's demand for assistance often exceeds the project's budget. Nevertheless, Elena continues her mission through grant support and collaborations with volunteers and the media to shift public consciousness toward humanity and responsibility. Her advice to newcomers is to seek guidance from experienced mentors, engage with local authorities, and remember that aid begins with a kind heart. She remains steadfast in her belief that even a single act of kindness can change a life.



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👤👤 Нравится dvoryaninuk и другим
543_lena_milena Ребята из Павлодара ❤️

Те, кто делает историю семимильными шагами 🚗🚗

В командировке по ВКО 🚗🚗
по приглашению Елены @dosym_oscemen 🙌

Выйдя из зоны комфорта
за 8 рабочих дней
простерилизовали 2 5 6 животных 🐾🐾🐾



PRESERVING THE BOND: ANIMALS AND THEIR BELOVED OWNERS

"GIVE A PAW, FRIEND", Social Project

Region: East Kazakhstan Region (Oskemen/Ust-Kamenogorsk)

Focus Areas: Social support through animal volunteering, population control

Project Lead: Elena Leonidovna Mukanova

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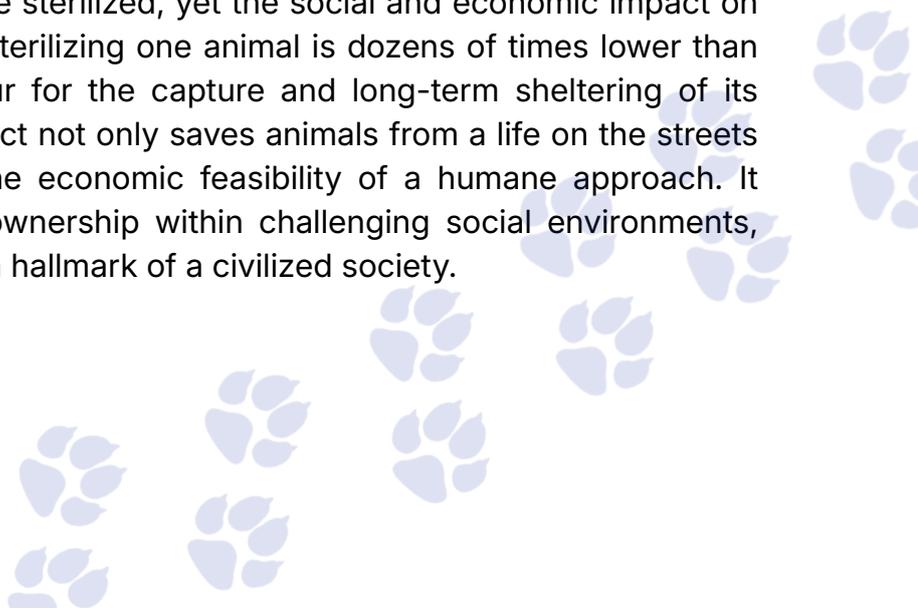
A project focused on a proactive solution to the stray animal crisis by providing free sterilization for pets living in socially vulnerable families.

Elena Leonidovna Mukanova, a veteran volunteer and public inspector for the responsible treatment of animals, asserts that the stray population is primarily replenished by unwanted litters from domestic pets. Based on this conviction and her extensive experience, Elena launched the "Give a Paw, Friend" project. The initiative aims to tackle the root cause of the problem by working directly with socially vulnerable groups.

Families in this category often deeply care for their animals but lack the financial means for professional veterinary services. Faced with the choice between purchasing basic necessities and paying for a vet visit, sterilization is frequently neglected, leading to unwanted litters that end up on the streets. "Give a Paw, Friend" acts preemptively: Elena and her team identify at-risk families and offer free sterilization for their pets. The ultimate goal is the humane reduction of the stray animal population in strict accordance with the Law "On the Responsible Treatment of Animals."

The work of these activists often extends far beyond financial aid. It involves complex communication, where the team must not only cover all expenses - including transportation - also persuade owners of the surgery's necessity. Volunteers must patiently debunk myths regarding the "harm to health" caused by sterilization and counter the romanticized misconceptions of "animal motherhood." This comprehensive coverage of costs and information support are the key factors that secure owners' consent.

Under the project, 20 animals were sterilized, yet the social and economic impact on the city is immense. The cost of sterilizing one animal is dozens of times lower than the expenses the city would incur for the capture and long-term sheltering of its potential offspring. Thus, the project not only saves animals from a life on the streets but also serves as a model of the economic feasibility of a humane approach. It fosters a culture of responsible ownership within challenging social environments, demonstrating that sterilization is a hallmark of a civilized society.



"I want every animal - every cat and dog - to have an owner," says Elena. "I want our streets to be free of homeless animals suffering from hunger, cold, cruelty, and injury. I want our society to be humane, empathetic, compassionate, fair, civilized, and enlightened." These sincere aspirations are not merely dreams; they are the solid foundation for long-term impact.

Elena Mukanova's experience confirms the high efficiency of targeted efforts. However, for sustainable development and scaling, such initiatives require systemic state support, such as the inclusion of subsidized sterilization into mandatory municipal veterinary programs.



Хотим сказать больше спасибо за ваш проект . Благодаря таким проектам будет меньше бездомных животных.



1



Благодарю за помощь в стерилизации! Очень необходимая программа для нашего города, многие хотели бы стерилизовать животных, у кого-то их более 5-10, но не у каждого есть на это финансовые возможности! Программа помогает, как людям, так и городу контролировать численность бездомных животных гуманным способом!

FIRST STEPS IN ANIMAL VOLUNTEERING

"KINDNESS IN EVERY PAW!", Neotech Digital School Charity Campaign

Region: Astana

Focus Area: Humanitarian aid for homeless animal shelters

Project Lead: Ainash Toleubekovna Isaseitova

Coordinator: Ainash Toleubekovna Isaseitova

E-mail: aisaseitova@mail.ru

Instagram: [@neotech_digital_school](https://www.instagram.com/neotech_digital_school)

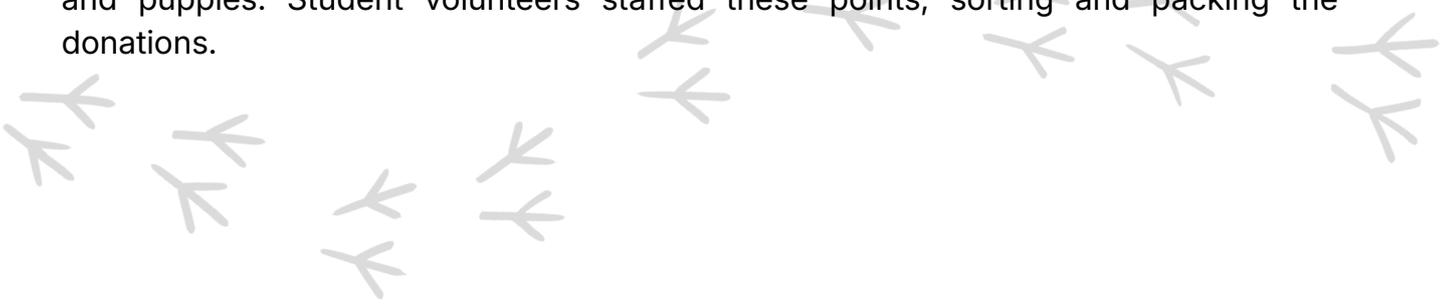


A school-wide campaign to collect aid for a local animal shelter, designed to foster empathy in children. The project, which united the efforts of administration, teachers, students, and parents, has evolved into a systematic volunteer movement within the school.

The city of Astana faces a severe stray animal crisis, with animals suffering from freezing temperatures, hunger, and lack of medical care. While many children sympathize with them, they often do not know how to help in a safe and meaningful way. The Neotech Digital School project was established to provide students with a concrete, organized, and secure platform for charity, while supporting the [@zverohelp_astana](https://www.instagram.com/zverohelp_astana) shelter, which frequently faces shortages of food and supplies. The initiative was spearheaded by School Director Dana Kazakbaevna Tokkozhina and Deputy Director for Educational Work Ainash Toleubekovna Isaseitova, who coordinated all operations.

The implementation was large-scale, involving the school administration, student parliament, parents, and faculty. Zarina Erezhepovna Sheryazdanova, mentor of the school's event club, facilitated communication with the shelter and conducted volunteer training. The core team consisted of 40 active students, with a total of 25 teachers and over 400 students from grades 1 to 11 participating. Including parents, the total outreach exceeded 500 people. The primary goal was to cultivate empathy, responsibility, and a culture of mercy through tangible assistance to animals.

The project followed a structured, phased approach, beginning with an information campaign. Organizers distributed flyers, shared announcements in group chats, and held meetings with students to show footage from the shelter and discuss the plight of homeless animals. It was crucial to clearly demonstrate the specific needs of the animals to both children and parents. The campaign itself took place from March 13 to 15, 2025. To mark the launch, a formal event featuring student performances was held in the school lobby. Collection bins were placed on the first floor for students to donate food, litter boxes, blankets, bowls, toys, and specialized formula for kittens and puppies. Student volunteers staffed these points, sorting and packing the donations.



Logistics posed a challenge due to the sheer volume of goods collected. Thanks to the generosity of teachers who provided their own vehicles, the aid was delivered to the shelter free of charge. As a result, over 120 dogs and cats received support. However, the impact reached far beyond material aid; the project increased student engagement in social initiatives and strengthened the school's partnership with animal welfare advocates. Students began to show more conscious care for animals in their daily lives.

Following this success, the school's environmental club has joined the initiative. Plans are now in place to repeat the "Kindness in Every Paw" campaign, culminating in a shelter visit to deliver "treats" in person.

This successful experience has provided a powerful impetus for the school's volunteer movement. New members have joined the event club, and in November 2025, over 30 students joined the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Volunteers, completing specialized training in animal volunteering. Within a month, these students conducted thematic lessons across all grade levels, reaching over 1,000 students with their educational outreach.

"Starting out might feel daunting," the project initiators say, "but once you see the spark in the children's eyes and feel that you've done something truly good, you will always find the strength to continue. The most important thing is simply to begin!"



DOING GOOD HERE AND NOW

"KIND HEARTS" Student Volunteer Movement Initiative Group of Students from Rudny College of Construction and Transport



Region: Kostanay Region (Rudny)

Focus Area: Physical assistance to animal shelters

Project Lead: Tamara Andreevna Gorshkova

TikTok: @tomka160393

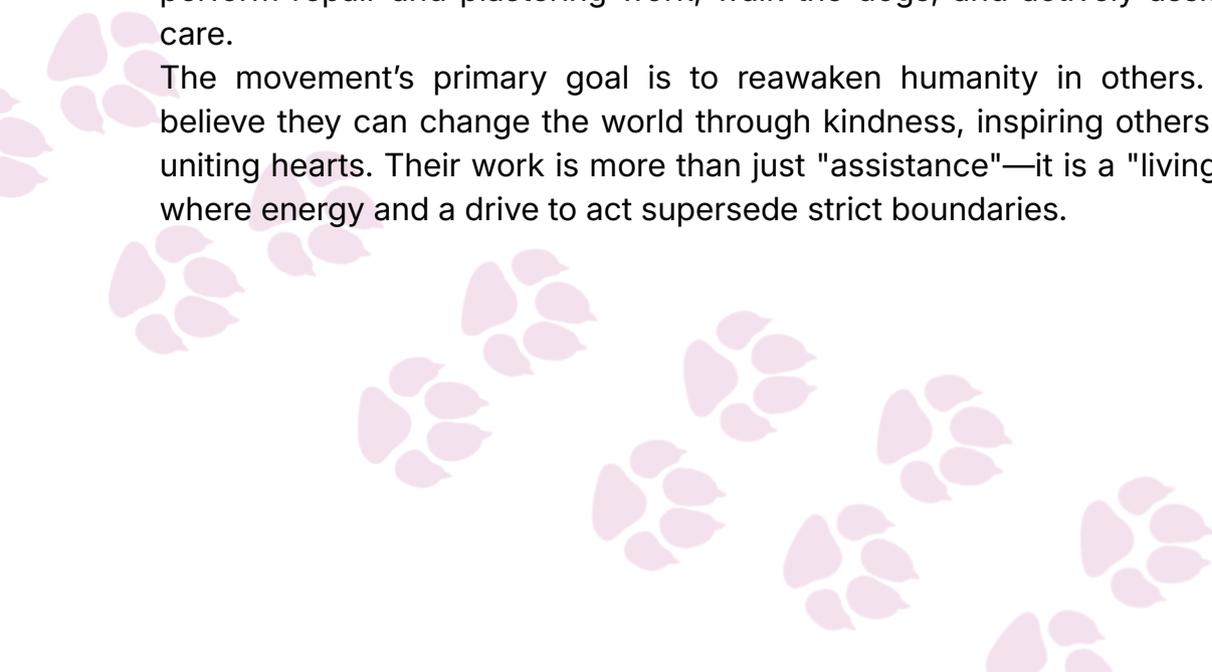
A student-led movement uniting 35 active participants under the Latin motto Carpe Diem. The group addresses a vital human mission: bringing joy and warmth to those in need by organizing creative programs for children and the elderly, while providing essential physical labor for the city's animal shelter.

At the Rudny College of Construction and Transport, the "Kind Hearts" initiative group brings together 35 students convinced that kindness must be practiced here and now. Their motto - Carpe Diem (Seize the Day) - serves as a constant reminder that every hour is an opportunity to offer support and a smile. The movement is led by educational psychologist Tamara Andreevna Gorshkova, who, according to her students, inspires through her composure and an extraordinary instinct for kindness, giving profound meaning to even the smallest ideas. Under her wise mentorship, the team continues to grow, drawing more students into its ranks.

The activities of "Kind Hearts" focus on two equally vital pillars. The first is social and recreational volunteering. Students regularly visit orphanages and nursing homes, bringing concerts, games, and creative programs. Their goal is to ensure that every individual feels cared for; they understand that emotional warmth is an invaluable resource.

The second pillar is animal volunteering, which has become a way to shift societal attitudes toward homeless animals. At the city's temporary detention shelter, these students are not afraid to get their hands dirty. They participate in cleanup events, perform repair and plastering work, walk the dogs, and actively assist staff in animal care.

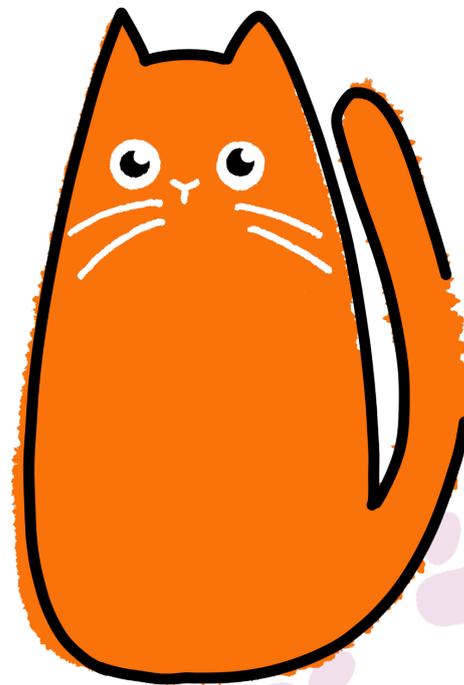
The movement's primary goal is to reawaken humanity in others. These students believe they can change the world through kindness, inspiring others by example and uniting hearts. Their work is more than just "assistance"—it is a "living creative family" where energy and a drive to act supersede strict boundaries.



While "Kind Hearts" intentionally avoids tracking beneficiary statistics - believing the strength of the warmth they leave behind is more important than numbers—their impact is undeniable. After their visits to social institutions, people smile more often and become more open. The local shelter has become more organized, and several dogs regularly walked by the volunteers have finally found their forever homes. The most significant change, however, occurred within the students themselves: they have learned to value human connection, notice beauty in simple things, and understand that helping is a natural necessity of the heart.

The team faces challenges such as limited time, transportation, and funding, as well as the emotional weight of their work. They overcome these hurdles through mutual support, creative problem-solving, and by keeping their inner spark alive. To continue their growth, they seek like-minded partners, media visibility, and material resources (such as transportation and event equipment).

The experience of "Kind Hearts" proves that starting out doesn't require vast resources - only a dedicated team, a sincere desire to help, and the belief that kindness can, and will, become a tradition.



SMART CITY TECHNOLOGY HELPING PETS FIND THEIR WAY HOME

"KIS-KIS, FIND YOUR WAY HOME!", Digital Service (Telegram Bot: @GdeKotBot)



Animal Welfare Foundation, Ogency and JAM Agency, supported by Whiskas, 2GIS, CITIX, and Magnum

Region: Nationwide (Almaty, Astana, etc.)

Focus Areas: IT Solutions, Smart City, recovery of lost pets

An innovative ecosystem for locating lost cats that utilizes neural networks, a Telegram bot, and urban digital infrastructure. The service broadcasts missing pet alerts across online maps and street-side smartboards specifically within the neighborhood where the animal was last seen.

The problem of lost pets in Kazakhstan is critical: in 2024 alone, over 60,000 missing cat reports were recorded. Despite this, recovery statistics remain low, with only about 41% of pets successfully reunited with their owners. This is due to the specific behavior of cats, which tend to hide and remain silent under stress, and the inefficiency of traditional paper flyers, which are quickly removed by municipal services. Consequently, every lost animal that isn't found in time risks permanently joining the stray population.

To address this challenge, the "Kis-kis, Find Your Way Home!" project was developed. This ecosystem transforms "Smart City" elements into a rescue tool. The mechanism is built on a Telegram bot integrated with Artificial Intelligence. An owner uploads a photo of their pet, and the bot automatically generates an alert. A built-in neural network compares photos of lost and found animals within a unified database, streamlining identification.

The project's standout feature is its hyper-local targeting. A missing pet alert isn't just posted online; it instantly appears on 2GIS interactive maps and - in an innovation for Kazakhstan - is broadcast on CITIX digital smartboards located specifically in the area where the cat went missing. Additional reach is provided through the information resources of the Magnum supermarket chain. This approach alerts a vast number of residents and engages neighbors in the search during the most critical time - the first 24 hours after disappearance.

The project offers more than just a technological solution; it fosters a culture of digital volunteering. Now, any passerby who notices a lost animal on the street can help save it simply by taking a photo with their smartphone. Utilizing outdoor advertising and IT solutions for social needs has proven highly effective in actively reducing the number of homeless animals. The support of major businesses ensures the project's technological sustainability and positions the service as a ready-to-use module for further integration into the broader Smart City concept.

HOW PERSONAL EMPATHY BECAME A SECOND CHANCE FOR 500 CATS

"KOTOBUSIKI"

Lighthub Photo and Video Studio (Founder's Personal Initiative)

Focus Areas: Temporary fostering, adoption (rehoming), creative entrepreneurship

Region: Almaty

Initiator: Valentina Golovina

Instagram: @kotobussiki

A rescue and rehabilitation project for homeless cats based in a rented photo studio. The initiative utilizes a blog and jewelry sales to expand its audience and fund its operations.



Valentina Golovina, founder of the Lighthub photo and video studio in Almaty, has been dedicated to helping homeless animals for nearly 15 years. What began as a private initiative has become an integral part of both her family life and her business. Since the studio opened in 2020, its premises have served as a constant sanctuary for cats seeking forever homes. The core work is handled by Valentina and her husband: they rescue cats in distress, transport them to clinics, and manage their medical treatment and recovery. Studio administrators assist with the daily care of the wards temporarily living on-site.

The project is widely known as "Kotobusiki." In the summer of 2024, Valentina launched dedicated social media pages, including an online jewelry store, to broaden the project's outreach. Selling accessories helps attract new followers, which in turn increases the chances of successful pet adoptions. The workflow is streamlined: the team rescues kittens, sick, or abandoned cats from the streets, provides necessary medical care, and - once the animals are recovered - uses professional studio photography to find them new owners via Instagram. This process leverages the potential of a growing blog and the community built around it.

Valentina is candid about her motivations, stating she has no global mission to "save the entire world." Her actions are driven by a personal need to alleviate the discomfort caused by witnessing the suffering of others. Help is provided on a case-by-case basis whenever resources allow. Notably, the family does not own their own facilities; both their apartment and the photo studio are rented. Despite this lack of a permanent material base, approximately 500 cats have passed through Valentina's care and found homes.

One of the primary challenges remains the prevailing public mentality; many still do not view animals as beings deserving of responsible treatment. Furthermore, the impact of the economic crisis is deeply felt. The project's creators understand that dedication alone is not enough for long-term success. Therefore, they focus on structured operations, marketing expertise, and social media growth, striving to serve as an example of how to successfully integrate a career with effective charitable work.



HOW CITIZENS SAVED A SHELTER "KOSHKIN DOM" (Cat House) Shelter



"Right to Life" Volunteer Initiative Group

Region: Kostanay Region (Lisakovsk)

Focus Areas: Shelter reorganization, volunteer management, crisis management

Instagram: @koshkin_dom_lisakovsk

An initiative that emerged as a crisis management plan to save a local shelter from closure. The project successfully implemented a total reorganization through community efforts, established a systematic care routine, and transitioned from sole leadership to an effective volunteer management model.

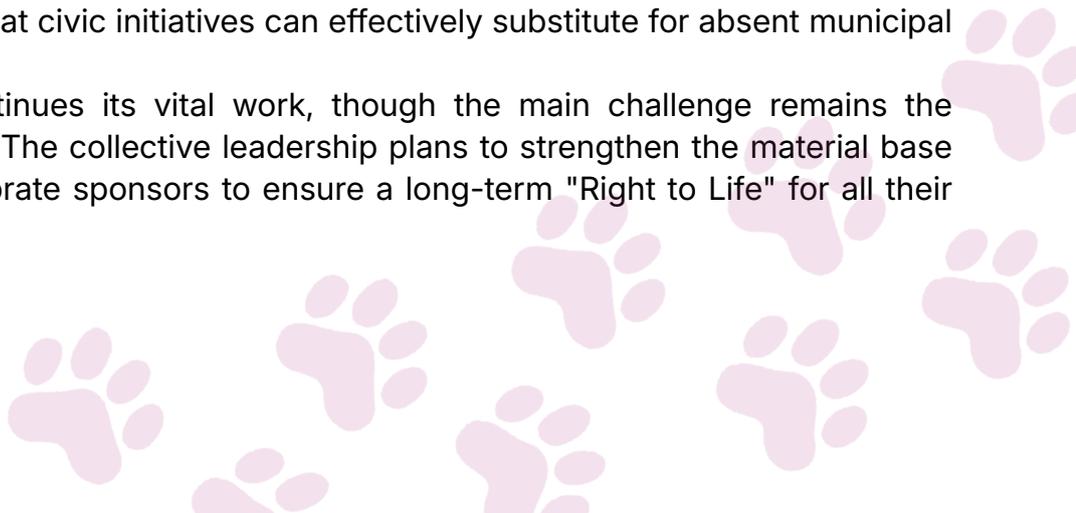
In small mono-cities where large charitable foundations are absent, the fate of homeless animals often depends entirely on the enthusiasm of individual citizens. This was precisely the situation faced by the residents of Lisakovsk when the local "Koshkin Dom" shelter, maintained for years by an elderly woman using her own resources, stood on the brink of collapse. Unsanitary conditions, acute shortages of food and labor, and the threat of eviction put the lives of dozens of animals at risk.

Instead of filing complaints, a group of concerned citizens took responsibility for saving the shelter. Their actions became a prime example of classic crisis management driven by public initiative. They abandoned the traditional "sole leader" model in favor of horizontal networking, which helped prevent burnout and ensured the long-term sustainability of operations.

The initiative group conducted a thorough audit and clearly delineated areas of responsibility: some took charge of food procurement, others managed financial reporting and social media, while a third group coordinated medical treatments. Next, they focused on infrastructure modernization. Using their own labor and private donations, they equipped mobile units, implemented necessary zoning (creating quarantine areas and a kitchen), and constructed an outdoor enclosure. A final and crucial step was securing funds to pay four staff members, ensuring regular and professional daily care for the animals. The group's work is characterized by transparent and regular financial reporting, which has fostered high levels of public trust.

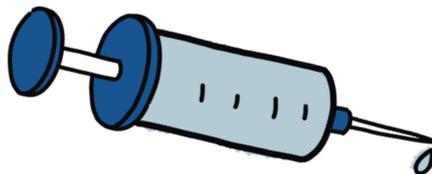
The project's results are impressive: the shelter has transformed from a "place of sorrow" and a potential catastrophe into a systematically functioning organization. The animals are well-fed and receive necessary medical care. Many are successfully finding new homes. However, the most significant success is the social impact. The project has united the townspeople, forming a stable circle of 20–30 recurring donors. Residents have seen that even small, regular contributions - as little as 100–200 tenge - can truly change their city, and that civic initiatives can effectively substitute for absent municipal services.

Today, the shelter continues its vital work, though the main challenge remains the instability of donations. The collective leadership plans to strengthen the material base and actively seek corporate sponsors to ensure a long-term "Right to Life" for all their wards.



KINDNESS IS CONTAGIOUS

TNVR PROGRAM



"UMIT MANGISTAU" Public Foundation

Region: Mangystau Region

Focus Areas: Systemic population control (TNVR), medical treatment, and rehabilitation

Project Lead: Meruert Amanzholovna Lytkina

E-mail: m_kulumbaeva@mail.ru

Established in 2022, the foundation implements a systemic approach to managing the stray animal population through TNVR. Its primary focus is the rescue and treatment of animals with severe injuries and illnesses, alongside educational outreach aimed at building a humane society.

Following the enactment of the Law "On the Responsible Treatment of Animals" and the abolition of culling practices, the population of stray animals in urban areas increased, leading to noticeable social tension. The "UMIT MANGISTAU" Public Foundation, founded by a group of volunteers in November 2022, proposed a sustainable solution. The foundation believes that housing vast numbers of animals in shelters is inefficient, requires enormous resources, and often leads to disease outbreaks. Instead, they prioritize a systemic approach: the TNVR program (Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return). This method humanely regulates the population, prevents human-animal conflicts, and is supported by public awareness campaigns.

Foundation Director Meruert Lytkina, who has dedicated over a decade to animal volunteering, leads a core team of six activists who balance this mission with their full-time careers. They strive to shift the public perception of stray animals "from being a 'problem' to being 'neighbors' worthy of care, love, and compassion." The team's primary goal is to protect animal rights and foster a humane, responsible attitude within society.

The foundation's core operations rely on collaboration with veterinary clinics and volunteers. The team handles the capture and transport of animals for treatment and sterilization, returning them to their habitats after recovery. In its two years of operation, the foundation has assisted over 150 animals. Special attention is given to the critically injured and severely ill: the team organizes temporary fostering, medical care, and subsequent adoption. In 2023, the foundation successfully implemented a grant-funded TNVR project, effectively reducing the number of aggressive and sick animals within city limits.

Beyond direct animal care, the foundation addresses systemic infrastructure challenges by installing feeders, water stations, and outdoor cat shelters. They also conduct educational outreach, primarily targeting children through schools and other institutions.



Despite these successes, the team faces challenges such as limited funding and the constraints of balancing volunteer work with professional employment. For long-term sustainability, "UMIT MANGISTAU" envisions the creation of an Emergency Veterinary Center for stray animals to provide primary diagnostics, treatment, and temporary housing, as well as the expansion of TNVR programs to suburban areas. Based on their experience, the volunteers also advocate for a Rehabilitation Center for Birds of Prey, which frequently suffer from injuries, habitat loss, or poisoning in the region. Their philosophy is that such work can begin on a small scale - with a single rescued life. Once people see the results, they will inevitably join the cause.



CREATIVITY THAT SAVES LIVES

"I LOVE ANIMALS" Charity Coloring Book

Aliya Vedelikh

Region: Nationwide (Partners in 15 cities)

Focus Areas: Social entrepreneurship, fundraising, public awareness

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Instagram: [@ecostan_news](https://www.instagram.com/ecostan_news)

Website: ecostan.rocks

A project focused on the creation and sale of a children's coloring book, with all proceeds directed to animal shelters and veterinary clinics. This initiative merges artistic expression and the development of empathy in children with financial support for the sterilization and medical treatment of animals across the country.

In Kazakhstan, the stray animal crisis is severe: thousands of dogs and cats suffer from hunger and disease, while their survival depends on the enthusiasm of animal advocates facing chronic funding shortages. Aliya Vedelikh - an ecologist by training and an activist with 20 years of experience, who was also a pioneer of the first animal welfare foundation, KARE - decided to address this challenge through social entrepreneurship. This led to the creation of a sustainable and accessible support tool: the "I Love Animals" charity coloring book.

In collaboration with Pavlodar-based illustrator Nurgul Nurganbekova, a coloring book featuring a vibrant cover and thematic illustrations was developed. Logistic support is provided on a volunteer basis by the Karaganda "EcoMuseum" team (specifically Irina Ignatovich) and the Limpopo store chain. The mechanics of the initiative are simple and transparent: an initial run of 10,000 copies was released and distributed through a network of 20 shelters and clinics in 15 cities across Kazakhstan. The price of a coloring book is comparable to a cup of coffee, making it accessible to any family. Notably, 100% of the proceeds remain with the local partners to fund medical treatments, surgeries, and sterilizations.

The project addresses two global objectives simultaneously. First, it provides tangible financial aid that will eventually enable the sterilization and rescue of hundreds of animals. Second, it serves as a powerful educational tool. By coloring the pages, children learn empathy and a respectful attitude toward all living beings - whether they are dogs, cats, or tortoises. Aliya aims to foster a generation for whom cruelty toward animals is unacceptable and care is a natural norm.

Although the project only launched recently, in May 2025, and financial results are still growing, a vital psychological impact has already been achieved. Shelter managers and volunteers in the regions have felt a sense of solidarity and support, realizing they are not alone in their struggle.

Naturally, challenges exist. For coloring books to compete successfully with digital gadgets, the influence of proactive adults is required to properly convey the message behind a charitable purchase. Furthermore, finding sponsors to fund a Kazakh-language version of the book has proven difficult.

However, a solid foundation has been laid, and Aliya remains confident: as long as people continue to buy the coloring book, the project will thrive, proving that small steps and products created with love can truly change the world for the better.



EVEN A SINGLE ACT OF KINDNESS CAN CHANGE A LIFE

"SENIOR FRIEND" Social Project

Region: East Kazakhstan Region (Oskemen/Ust-Kamenogorsk)

Focus Areas: Social support through animal volunteering, population control

Project Lead: Elena Leonidovna Mukanova

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Instagram: @pravo_na_ghizn, @543_lena_milena

An initiative aimed at the humane reduction of the stray animal population by providing free sterilization for pets owned by senior citizens (aged 60 and over). The project addresses a critical dilemma often faced by retirees: choosing between their own essential needs and their pet's veterinary care.

In Oskemen, the stray animal crisis is exacerbated by the uncontrolled growth of litters from domestic pets, including those allowed to roam freely outdoors. Elena Leonidovna Mukanova - a public inspector for the responsible treatment of animals and a volunteer with over a decade of experience - developed a solution that merges animal welfare with social support. Drawing from her daily work, she created a framework to assist those who wish to be responsible owners but are financially constrained.

In 2023, this vision came to life through the "Senior Friend" project, specifically designed for the elderly. Retirees living on modest fixed incomes are frequently forced to sacrifice a pet's surgery to afford basic necessities for themselves. Elena and her team, secured by grant support, set a goal to alleviate this burden and prevent the birth of unwanted puppies and kittens. As a result of the project, free sterilization was successfully organized for 10 cats and 10 dogs belonging to senior owners.

Elena Leonidovna is firmly convinced that animal welfare volunteering is inextricably linked to helping people, as high levels of empathy are naturally directed toward anyone in need. Beyond coordinating projects, she personally participates in the rescue, medical treatment, and rehoming of animals, investing her own funds and expertise. A vital part of her work involves establishing a dialogue with local authorities; she actively engages with the Akimat (city administration), proving that every problem requires both a voice and a solution.

The "Senior Friend" project has demonstrated high efficiency: it provided elderly owners with the peace of mind to keep their pets without complications, while the city was spared the potential emergence of dozens of homeless animals. According to the initiative's author, scaling this experience to other regions requires only determination, diligent effort, and a readiness to build a dialogue with both the authorities and the general public.

"KINDNESS IS NOT AN ACCIDENT, BUT A DAILY CHOICE"

"HEART TO PAW: Educating Children in the Humane Treatment of Pets", Educational Program

"Sergali-Turkestan" Regional Public Association

Region: Shymkent

Focus Areas: Public awareness, animal welfare

Project Lead: Sholpan Abdyfaritovna Usmanova

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Instagram: @sergaliturkestan



An educational project for primary school children designed to foster a humane attitude toward pets. Through interactive quests and practical sessions with professional dog trainers (cynologists), children learn safe interaction techniques, helping to prevent the growth of the homeless animal population in the future.

The city of Shymkent faces a distressing stray animal situation, with municipal services capturing over 160 dogs and cats from the streets daily. While the city spends significant resources addressing the consequences, the number of abandoned animals remains high. The root of the problem often lies within the family: children plead for a pet, but once faced with the reality of care, they lose interest, and the "living toy" ends up on the street. The "Sergali-Turkestan" Regional Public Association, which has implemented over 40 social and environmental initiatives since 2019, decided to break this cycle with the "Heart to Paw" project.

Project Lead Sholpan Usmanova and her team recognize that traditional lectures are ineffective for primary school students. Therefore, they developed a program for grades 1–4 where knowledge is conveyed through play and emotion. The curriculum is built on interactive quests, team-based tasks, and the use of multimedia equipment. A particular highlight for the students is the practical sessions with professional cynologists. Here, children learn to interpret animal body language, interact safely, and understand that a pet is not entertainment, but a living being with its own feelings and needs.

Behind the project stands a robust professional foundation. The team includes over 20 active volunteers from the youth reserve and five specialists overseeing project management, psychology, and communications. Together, they overcome primary challenges, such as the initial inertia of some parents and limited interest from schools. The organizers work persistently to involve the public, educational institutions, and government structures in a collective effort to solve social and environmental problems. The impact of this approach is already measurable. Approximately 200 students have completed the direct training and now possess the skills to care for animals responsibly. An information campaign across social media and the press reached over 12,000 regional residents, gradually shifting public opinion. By doing so, the project aids animals by reducing the risk of cruelty and preventing the growth of the stray population. This sustainable educational system fosters a culture of empathy, humane treatment, and social responsibility within the city and region.



"We want to transform the culture of animal treatment: moving from indifference and cruelty toward mindfulness and kindness. If children learn to respect the life of an animal today, they will respect human life tomorrow," the project initiators assert. "We do this to create a society where everyone understands: kindness is not an accident, but a daily choice."

The "Heart to Paw" model has proven its effectiveness and can be easily adapted for schools and centers in any region. This requires a motivated volunteer team, consistent media presence, collaboration with schools and state structures, and financial support for equipment and the development of new educational games and materials.



UNITED BY DESPERATION AND FAITH

"SAVE ME"



Region: Akmola Region (Stepnogorsk)

Focus Areas: Support for homeless dog shelters, promotion of responsible pet ownership, sterilization

Coordination: Shared Responsibility (Tatyana Martynova, Sergey and Svetlana Zubov, et al.)

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TikTok: @spasi_menya_step

Instagram: @spasi_menya_step, @zubovasvetlana165

A project supporting a private shelter in the city's industrial and warehouse zone, currently housing over 120 former domestic and stray dogs. A volunteer initiative group provides food, medical care, and shelter using their own funds and donations, effectively performing the functions of humane population control in the absence of a state-led alternative.

In the industrial and warehouse zone of Stepnogorsk, on private land, a story unfolded that came to be known as "Save Me." It began in 2021 with an initiative by the site's caretaker, Mikhail Kuzminov, who intended to create a small "pet hotel" and shelter for 20 dogs - a place where people unable to keep a dog at home could interact with animals. However, reality made harsh adjustments: the lack of a culture of responsible pet ownership in the city and an endless stream of abandoned pets have resulted in over 120 dogs now living under the care of Mikhail and a group of volunteers. The team describes their mission as "Refusing to abandon the abandoned," as they rescue those forsaken by both their owners and the state. "What keeps us together is not just a love for dogs, but the desperation that these animals are defenseless, and the faith that together we are a force that can keep the shelter alive for another month or another year," the volunteers share.

The project has no formal leader, as no single person could physically bear the responsibility for work of this scale. The initiative group operates on a peer-to-peer basis, with everyone contributing according to their expertise and resources. Tatyana Martynova oversees public relations and government liaison, while managing the TikTok account and visual archives. Sergey Zubov is responsible for site infrastructure, and Svetlana Zubova handles feeding, fundraising, and daily care. The team consists of deeply committed individuals: Ekaterina Kozhemyakina and Natalya Shevchenko manage Instagram and photo documentation; Maria Martynenko documents the dogs' lives on her personal blog; Svetlana Korostyleva assists with welding work; and Irina Leonova organizes the supply of meat scraps. All are professionals with full-time jobs who invest their own money and free time into the shelter.

Local journalists Elena and Maksim Ponomarev (StepNews), the editorial staff of the Prestige newspaper, and local historian Natalya Telezhinskaya provide significant media support. Special mention goes to the staff of the "Erketai" kindergarten, who donated construction materials and, more importantly, lead by example in teaching kindness to children.

The volunteers essentially fulfill the functions of state animal control and temporary detention centers, but with one fundamental difference: here, life is never artificially terminated. Dogs rescued from the streets, cottage communities, and nearby villages are given a chance at a dignified old age. In 2025, thanks to grant support from the Kazakhstan for Animals foundation and personal funds, over 20 animals were sterilized, and complex post-accident surgeries were performed in Astana clinics. The shelter's 6,000-square-meter territory is gradually being improved: fencing and winter cabins have been installed, and new kennels and enclosures are under construction. Nevertheless, the team faces immense challenges. The primary obstacle is the mentality of a portion of the population that finds it easier to drown or abandon an animal than to sterilize it. Any publicity regarding the shelter's location leads to boxes of puppies being dumped at the gates. Funding is unstable, relying on voluntary donations and the salaries of the volunteers themselves. In a mono-city, finding sponsors is difficult, and there is a constant shortage of transport, veterinarians, and canine specialists willing to work pro bono. Volunteers admit that many cannot withstand the stress and leave; saving everyone is impossible, and witnessing animal suffering takes a heavy psychological toll. Despite the uncertainty of the shelter's long-term future, the group continues the fight. Their philosophy is simple: they vote for life. They strive to be transparent with society and demonstrate by example that responsibility begins with the owner. To continue their work, the shelter desperately needs regular food supplies, veterinary assistance, a cargo van, and more helping hands. The volunteers urge the public not to look away, for success depends not on perfect conditions, but on the willingness to act here and now. The fact that 120 dogs are alive, fed, and safe is already a massive victory for humanity over indifference.



A HUMANE WAY TO REDUCE THE STRAY CAT POPULATION

"STOP HOMELESS CATS"

Region: Almaty

Focus Area: Stray animal population control via the TNVR system

Project Lead: Shyngyskhan Serikuly Sagynbek

E-mail: ssg.chika@gmail.com

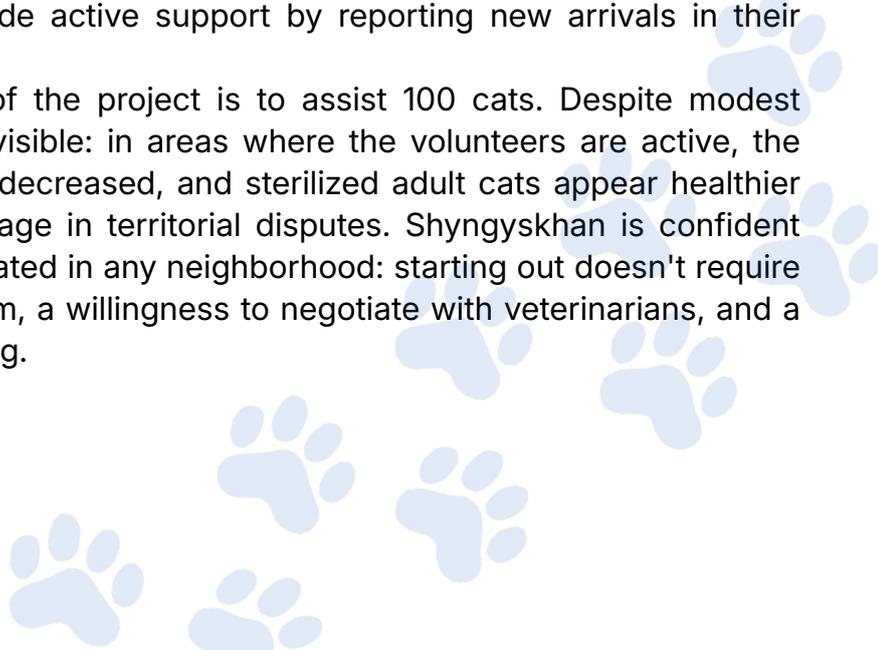
A volunteer initiative aimed at the humane reduction of the street cat population through sterilization. The project operates under the "Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return" system and assists low-income pet owners, preventing unwanted litters from domestic pets from ending up on the streets.

The uncontrolled reproduction of stray animals remains one of the most pressing issues in the urban environment. Cats living in courtyards and basements suffer from cold, hunger, and disease, while their numbers grow exponentially. Shyngyskhan Sagynbek, drawing on his experience volunteering at shelters and participating in municipal programs, decided not to wait for large-scale changes but to act locally. Together with like-minded partners, he launched the "Stop Homeless Cats" initiative, based on the conviction that sterilization is the most humane and effective method to combat urban overpopulation of stray animals.

The project team is small, consisting of the coordinator and two dedicated volunteers. Their work follows the international TNVR standard: Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return. The volunteers personally capture the animals, transport them to partner veterinary clinics, cover the costs of the surgeries, and - following a recovery period - return the cats to their original habitats. A key feature of the project is its social dimension: assistance is provided not only to strays but also to pets from low-income families. Often, owners cannot afford the surgery yet allow their cats to roam freely, which inevitably leads to unwanted litters. By covering these costs, the activists eliminate the root of the problem. Additionally, volunteers conduct outreach among residents regarding the importance of sterilization, fostering the understanding that it is a fundamental element of responsible pet ownership.

The volunteers' arsenal includes a personal vehicle, transport crates, and established contacts with veterinarians. However, their primary tools are patience and strategy: to capture cautious street cats, the team uses high-quality wet food to lure animals into the carriers. Local residents also provide active support by reporting new arrivals in their yards and assisting with logistics.

The target for the current phase of the project is to assist 100 cats. Despite modest resources, the results are already visible: in areas where the volunteers are active, the number of kittens has significantly decreased, and sterilized adult cats appear healthier and calmer, as they no longer engage in territorial disputes. Shyngyskhan is confident that this simple model can be replicated in any neighborhood: starting out doesn't require a massive budget - just a small team, a willingness to negotiate with veterinarians, and a sincere desire to end animal suffering.



TREATMENT OF ANIMALS AS AN INDICATOR OF SOCIETAL MATURITY

"ASSESSMENT OF THE STRAY ANIMAL PROBLEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN", Research Study

Polina Flyorovna Sultanova, Independent Volunteer

Region: Republic of Kazakhstan (Survey of residents across multiple cities)

Focus Areas: Public opinion analysis, development of recommendations for systemic solutions

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An analytical study conducted between August 2024 and February 2025, driven by personal initiative. The goal was to collect and systematize the opinions of 539 respondents across Kazakhstan to create the evidence base necessary for transitioning from fragmented initiatives to a long-term national strategy for the humane treatment of animals.

The issue of stray animals in Kazakhstan is often addressed through the isolated efforts of individual shelters and volunteers, lacking centralized government coordination and consistent methodology. Polina Sultanova, a legal firm manager and independent volunteer, realized that developing a humane solution requires a clear understanding of how the public perceives the problem. This led to the large-scale analytical study, "Assessment of the Stray Animal Problem in the Republic of Kazakhstan," conducted solely on Polina's personal enthusiasm from August 2024 to February 2025.

The primary objective of the project was to emphasize the need for systemic and responsible solutions, viewing animal welfare as a component of a sustainable future. Polina is convinced that a society's attitude toward stray animals serves as a key indicator of the maturity of its social processes as a whole.

The research pursued several specific objectives:

- Evaluate public awareness levels based on demographic indicators.
- Identify information sources and existing information gaps.
- Analyze public opinion and assess the readiness of citizens to participate in solutions.
- Determine the most effective measures for improving the current situation.
- Identify factors that motivate people to take action.
- Formulate evidence-based recommendations for the state, NGOs, and civil society.

The data collection methodology involved a survey distributed via social media and volunteer networks. However, the most intensive work began after gathering over 500 responses from residents of various Kazakhstani cities. Polina meticulously transferred open-ended responses from Excel to Word by hand, carefully systematizing them. This scrupulous analysis allowed her to structure diverse opinions into key thematic blocks: legislation, public information, funding, and infrastructure.

While Polina conducted the research independently, she received consulting support from Gulzhan Alimbekova, Director of the Center for Public Opinion Research (CIOM) in Almaty. Furthermore, animal shelters in Almaty, Astana, and East Kazakhstan assisted in distributing the survey and provided moral support.

The project resulted in the creation of a research database that reflects real public demand and current levels of awareness. Experts involved in legislative development have confirmed the value of the collected data: public opinion reveals a demand for systemic dialogue and education, even when some individual suggestions may seem impractical. By utilizing this database, government agencies and NGOs have the opportunity to transform fragmented opinions into a long-term, data-driven strategy, contributing to the formation of a sustainable and humane future.



THE POWER OF A KIND WORD

"TAILED DESTINIES", Literary and Educational Project

VolteQ Volunteer Organization (Individual initiative by Zhanel Ayipova)

Region: Republic of Kazakhstan
Focus Areas: Fostering humanity, informational animal volunteering
Project Lead: Zhanel Amanzholovna Ayipova
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A project aimed at combating indifference and fostering a humane attitude toward animals through the creation of a book dedicated to real-life stories of rescued and homeless dogs and cats. The initiative is implemented with the support of the National Volunteer Network under a state grant.

For Zhanel Ayipova, a volunteer with the VolteQ organization, a love for animals became a call to action. Unable to remain a silent witness to the suffering of homeless dogs and cats, she decided to channel her creative energy into a unique educational tool: the "Tailed Destinies" project. This initiative, developed and implemented by Zhanel with the support of her colleagues at VolteQ, has an ambitious goal: to transform societal attitudes toward our "younger brothers" and provide aid to animals left without homes.

Zhanel's project is a direct response to human indifference, which leaves countless stray animals living in urban areas without essential resources or care. Her primary mission is to demonstrate that every animal deserves love and the chance for a happy life alongside a human companion. To achieve this, she is currently working on a book that compiles real stories of animals that have endured pain and loss yet have not lost their faith in humanity. Creating "Tailed Destinies" is a meticulous and emotionally taxing process. Zhanel carefully researches each life story, interviews those who performed the rescues, and transforms these memories into vivid narratives. The project stands out for its sincerity; the author conveys not just the facts, but powerful emotions: pain, hope, and an incredible will to live. This approach is already yielding results: readers are beginning to view homeless animals through a different lens, contemplating acts of kindness, and some have even been inspired to adopt pets from shelters. Thus, the project's impact extends beyond the dozens of animals featured in the collection to the hundreds of people whose perspectives are being shifted.

The project received funding and official support through the "Kazakhstan for Animals" small grants competition organized by the National Volunteer Network. Despite the emotional difficulty of working with stories of loss and trauma, Zhanel continues to write, driven by a desire to share the truth and inspire others. To grow further, the project requires media support and assistance with the final publication of the book. Zhanel dreams of seeing "Tailed Destinies" in print in schools, libraries, and shelters across the country. She believes her experience is universal: any compassionate individual can become the voice for the "tailed destinies" of their own city, provided they act from the heart and with a firm belief in the power of kindness.

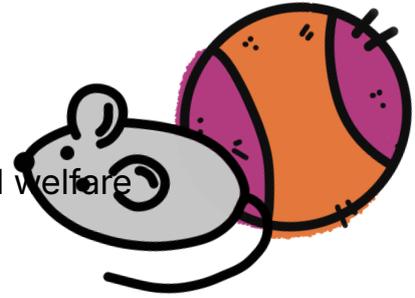
A CITY FESTIVAL TRANSFORMING CONSUMPTION CULTURE

"ÖMIR FEST", Eco-Festival

Region: Almaty

Focus Areas: Event volunteering, promotion of animal welfare and ethical living

Coordinator: Alfiya Rashidovna Khasanova



A large-scale urban event that merges ecology and animal welfare into a family-friendly holiday format. The festival provides shelters with a free platform to raise funds and shifts the perception of animal volunteering from "asking for help" to a positive, creative, and constructive movement.

In Kazakhstan, the themes of animal protection and ecology are often highlighted through the lens of acute crises: the suffering of stray dogs and cats, environmental pollution, and overflowing landfills. While truthful, this approach frequently triggers a defensive reaction in people, leading to a desire to shut out the negativity or feel a sense of guilt. Project coordinator Alfiya Khasanova and her team recognized the need for a fundamentally different format - one that is positive, family-oriented, and inspiring. "We needed to create a space where an ethical lifestyle would be associated not with deprivation or guilt, but with joy, health, and creativity," the project initiators explain. This led to the birth of "Ömir Fest" (Festival of Life).

"Ömir Fest" is a major outdoor event that serves as a community-building platform. The program is centered on guest engagement, featuring yoga sessions on the grass, upcycling workshops, and interactive children's zones where animators use games to explain the importance of kindness toward animals. The heart of the festival is the charity zone, dedicated to supporting animal welfare initiatives. Organizers provide shelters and foundations with free booth space for markets. This allows volunteers to sell merchandise or handmade crafts to raise funds for their animals' medical care. More importantly, it enables them to reach a new, broad audience that might never have visited a physical shelter.

The organizers curate a holistic ethical environment by setting high standards for the event. The site operates on Zero Waste principles, featuring separate waste collection and a ban on single-use plastics. The food court is strictly Cruelty-Free, offering only plant-based food to demonstrate that abstaining from animal products can be delicious. This approach reinforces the festival's core message: a life without violence.

The festival model has proven highly effective, attracting over 1,000 attendees per event. This moves animal advocacy beyond a narrow circle of activists into the wider urban discourse. This format effectively rebrands animal volunteers: guests see them not as "complainers," but as creators of high-quality content and a celebratory atmosphere, which significantly boosts public trust in foundations. A combination of grant support and partner contributions makes the project sustainable. The team plans to make the festival a traditional annual event in Almaty and to scale the experience by franchising it to other major Kazakhstani cities, such as Astana and Shymkent.

AN IT MARKETPLACE FOR PETS

"ADOPTLY", Digital Platform

Region: Republic of Kazakhstan (Digital Space)

Focus Areas: IT volunteering, digitalization of animal welfare

Website: <https://adoptly.kz/>



A specialized online aggregator that centralizes pet profiles from shelters and private curators across Kazakhstan. As a dedicated IT solution for animal welfare, the platform utilizes smart filters and an intuitive interface to streamline the search and adoption process.

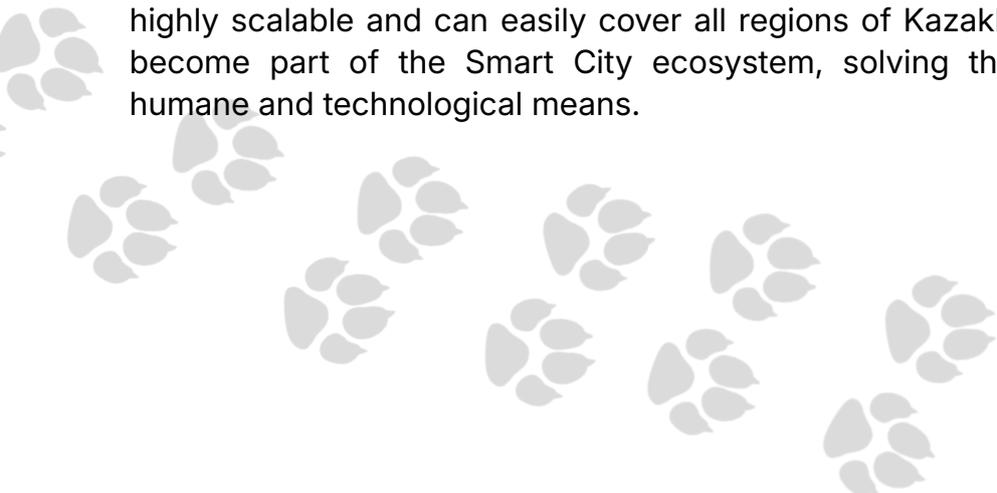
Every year, thousands of animals in Kazakhstan are left homeless, while traditional rehoming methods - such as paper flyers and chaotic social media posts - are losing their effectiveness. Social media feeds are overloaded, algorithms often suppress animal-related content, and finding a pet based on specific parameters (e.g., "small dog in Astana") has become nearly impossible. The lack of a unified, user-friendly database created a significant barrier between potential owners and animals in need of a home.

To solve this problem, the Adoptly team created a specialized digital aggregator platform that applies the principles of modern marketplaces and dating apps to a social mission. The service's primary advantage is the centralization of data: the platform consolidates pet profiles from numerous curators, shelters, and foundations into a single hub. This allows users to view all animals available for adoption without having to follow dozens of fragmented social media pages.

The platform's mechanism is built on a high-tech approach. A "Smart Search" feature with flexible filters allows users to make informed choices based on city, species, gender, age, and size. This significantly improves the compatibility between the owner and the pet, leading to more sustainable adoptions. The interface was developed with a focus on User Experience (UX): the "adoption" process is intuitive, and the platform provides direct contact information for curators, eliminating unnecessary intermediaries.

The social impact of Adoptly is reflected in increased adoption efficiency: structured information and high-quality photography increase an animal's chances of finding a home several times over compared to random posts. Furthermore, this modern IT product attracts a new audience - particularly youth and the "digital native" generation - for whom service convenience is a decisive factor.

The project vividly demonstrates a shift in the image of animal advocacy. It proves that helping animals involves more than just demanding physical labor in shelters; it also requires the application of high technology, design, and marketing. This digital model is highly scalable and can easily cover all regions of Kazakhstan. In the long term, it aims to become part of the Smart City ecosystem, solving the stray animal problem through humane and technological means.



INTELLECTUAL VOLUNTEERING PROTECTING ANIMAL RIGHTS "ANIMAL LAW" Center

**A Division of the Research School of Administrative and German Law
at Maqсут Narikbayev University**

Region: Astana (National impact)

Focus Areas: Intellectual volunteering (Pro bono),
scientific research, legal education in animal
welfare

Website: <https://cal.mnu.kz/>



A unique regional research and legal center established within a university to conduct fundamental research and provide pro bono expertise. The center works on improving legislation and training lawyers specialized in animal rights protection.

The adoption of the Law "On the Responsible Treatment of Animals" in Kazakhstan was a significant breakthrough, yet it revealed a critical shortage of qualified professionals and in-depth scientific research in this field. Law enforcement practices in animal protection often stall because the animal world remains a "blind spot" for classical jurisprudence. There was an urgent need to unite the efforts of scholars and practitioners to create functional legal mechanisms that are not just declared on paper but effectively protect animals in reality. The creation of the Animal Law Center at Maqсут Narikbayev University (MNU) was the response to this challenge. It serves as a unique platform for the region and a prime example of the academic community taking on social responsibility. The center bridges the gap between scholars, practicing lawyers, and animal rights activists, allowing for a comprehensive approach to problems from the perspectives of science, law, and practical field work.

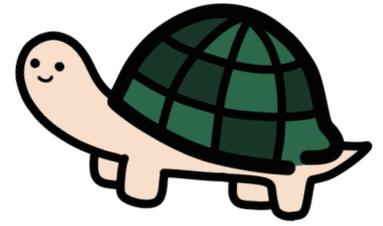
The center's operations are built around two key pillars. First, conducting fundamental research on legal issues regarding the animal world to develop specific recommendations for improving national legislation. Second, implementing educational projects aimed at humanizing society by educating students and law enforcement officials. Furthermore, the center's faculty and experts contribute to the development of civil society by providing expertise on a pro bono basis - a stellar example of intellectual volunteering.

The center's activities contribute to the formation of a new legal culture where animal cruelty is no longer considered the norm, and animal advocacy becomes a recognized field of law. The new generation of "Animal Law" specialists possesses both empathy and deep legal knowledge, ensuring a positive impact on the future.

As a structural division of a leading university's research school, the Animal Law Center possesses high institutional sustainability. The team's future plans include expanding the scope of their research and strengthening their influence on legislative processes in Kazakhstan.

A MISSION TO SAVE THE CENTRAL ASIAN TORTOISE

"TASBAQA" Nature Protection Foundation



"Tasbaqa" Public Foundation

Region: Southern and Western regions of Kazakhstan (Educational outreach – Nationwide)

Focus Areas: Biodiversity conservation, wildlife rehabilitation, environmental education

Instagram: @tasbaqa_kz

A project dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of Central Asian tortoises affected by illegal poaching and improper domestic care. The foundation focuses on medical treatment, returning animals to their natural habitats, and educating the public to preserve biodiversity.

The Central Asian tortoise is a vulnerable species suffering severely from anthropogenic impact. Every spring, hundreds of these reptiles are illegally removed from their natural habitats by people who perceive them as "living toys." However, in domestic environments - on the floors of city apartments, without proper temperature control or specialized nutrition - these wild animals slowly succumb to various diseases. Officially registered in the summer of 2023, the "Tasbaqa" Foundation (named after the Kazakh word for tortoise) emerged as a direct civil society response to the threat of this species' extinction.

The foundation's activities are aimed at creating conditions for the sustainable recovery of the population. The work is comprehensive and involves several stages. The first priority is treatment and rehabilitation: the foundation takes in tortoises suffering from improper care. Volunteers provide necessary medical treatment, establish correct dietary regimes, and prepare the animals for independent life. The ultimate goal of these efforts is the release into the wild within the original habitat; every released individual represents a restored unit of the steppe ecosystem, supporting the biodiversity of this natural zone.

In parallel, large-scale educational outreach is conducted to minimize human interference. Activists explain to the public why tortoises must not be taken from the wild and consistently debunk myths suggesting that a tortoise is "better off at home." The foundation fosters a societal understanding that the tortoise is a wild animal, not a pet. The organization has become a specialized resource center where people can turn if they find an injured reptile or wish to surrender a previously captive animal for rehabilitation.

In 2024, thanks to the combined efforts of volunteers and donors, dozens of individuals were rescued, treated, and returned to nature. This project is unique in that it shifts the focus of animal volunteering from common cats and dogs toward the protection of Kazakhstan's wild fauna, contributing to the preservation of the national natural heritage. The foundation continues its operations thanks to the financial support of concerned citizens who raise funds for medicine and food, as well as the informational support of volunteers.

ANIMAL THERAPY AGAINST LONELINESS

"A TIME TO HEAR THOSE WHO CANNOT SPEAK"

"AmanZhol & K" Public Foundation

Focus Areas: Animal-assisted therapy, social support, animal volunteering

Project Leads: Dilnaz Sakenovna Dzhekebayeva (Head of the Foundation) and Gulzada Amantayevna Dzhekebayeva (Social Work Specialist, UN Volunteer)

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An initiative providing psychological support to the elderly and persons with disabilities through therapeutic interaction with animals. A unique feature of the project is the involvement of rescued and abandoned animals, which, after professional adaptation, become "four-legged therapists."

The "AmanZhol & K" Public Foundation has a long history of supporting vulnerable populations, including senior citizens and persons with disabilities. The foundation was established by Gulzada Amantayevna Dzhekebayeva, a specialist with over 25 years of experience in the social sector and a UN volunteer. Its projects are managed by Dilnaz Sakenovna Dzhekebayeva, an expert in social programming and NGO training. The team includes 10 staff specialists - social workers, psychologists, and educators - alongside over 20 active volunteers. The drive to fill the emotional void experienced by residents of social care centers led to the creation of the project "A Time to Hear Those Who Cannot Speak."

The foundation team observed that many elderly individuals and persons with disabilities suffer from loneliness and anxiety that standard social services cannot fully address. This led them to harness the potential of Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT). Animals offer unconditional love and serve as a "bridge" to overcome stress and rediscover an interest in life. The project's primary goal is to improve the emotional well-being and quality of life for these individuals while fostering a culture of kindness and responsibility in society. The core activity involves organizing regular mobile animal therapy sessions featuring trained dogs and cats.

The project's hallmark is its unique cycle of mutual aid. Homeless animals are often abandoned at the gates of the "House of Mercy," and the foundation refuses to look away. These animals are rescued, treated, and socialized. After adaptation, they become full-fledged assistants, participating in therapy sessions and bringing joy to those they visit.

Since its inception in 2022, the project has provided over 100 people with the opportunity to interact with animals, while more than 30 cats and dogs have successfully undergone adaptation. In the period from September to November 2025 alone, 26 seniors and 10 animals were involved in the program.

Operations are based on the principle: "Through care, trust is born." Both the participants and the animals are meticulously prepared before each meeting. Animals undergo veterinary checkups and are selected individually for each resident: a calm cat might be chosen for bedridden patients, while an active dog is used for group activities. Direct interaction with animals is integrated into a comprehensive support package alongside play and art therapy. This approach helps residents become more open and proactive.

For example, "Grandma Raya," who was previously withdrawn, began actively participating in center life after interacting with kittens. In turn, the rescued animals regain their trust and find a new purpose as "four-legged therapists."

Despite the emotional fulfillment, the project faces challenges regarding the care of abandoned animals, including the constant search for funds for food and veterinary services. Ensuring the safety and comfort of both the humans and animals is a vital component of the project. Nevertheless, the team perseveres through faith and mutual support.

For long-term development, the project requires stable financial assistance and an expanded team of animal volunteers. The foundation's leaders are convinced that their model is easily replicable in other regions. It only requires a love for animals, a dedicated team, and a willingness to build partnerships between social institutions, veterinarians, and volunteers. As the team believes: "Miracles happen where there is kindness and persistence. If you truly hear those who cannot speak, you are already making the world a better place."

