

PET LEGAL PROJECT: ETHICAL-LEGAL TRAINING OF MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY OF THE VETERINARY AND EXTERNAL MEDICINE COURSE ON ANIMAL RIGHTS TO COMBAT ABUSE

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INTRODUCTION

Formal and informal debates around the issue of animal abuse and rights have been gaining increasing space in Brazil and other regions of the world, causing organized civil society groups, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to struggle on a daily basis. a long road in search of public policies aimed at animal welfare and protection. These actions range from immediate assistance to victims of abuse to the proposal to the legislative branch of normative diplomas that propose legislation that is more protective of animals and more punitive to those who abuse them.

Although according to data from Instituto Pet Brasil (2022), the Brazilian territory holds around 185 thousand animals abandoned or rescued after mistreatment, which are under the protection of NGOs and protectors, discussions on these topics are still in their infancy in Veterinary Medicine courses, rarely having subjects that discuss law or animal welfare in their major curriculum. As the legal issue involving animals is one of the most urgent in the current social context in which veterinarians are increasingly called upon to play a fundamental role in tackling problems of violence against animals, this academic debate is essential.

Considering that in recent years there has been an excessive increase in abandoned and stray animals in the municipality of Patos – PB, including the terminations of the UFCG-CSTR Campus (SILVA FILHO; SILVA, 2020) and that the Veterinary Medicine course lacks subjects and discussions regarding animal law and other satellite themes, this project is of crucial relevance, which will be carried out at the Patos Campus of the CSTR-UFCG, with the objective of professional training for veterinarians, adding essential knowledge to the quality of practice of this professional that will be encountered in the day-to-day

with this regrettable phenomenon of animal abuse. Besides, for other segments of the university community and representatives of civil society, bringing universities and society closer together to tackle the issue.

METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

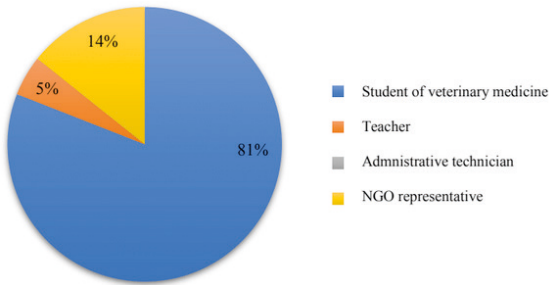
This project held meetings of varying frequency (adapting to the academic calendar, holidays and festivities and availability of listeners) with participants ranging from students on the Veterinary Medicine course to representatives of NGOs, taking place in classrooms at the Central de Aulas I of the Rural Health and Technology Center (CSTR) located in the Santa Cecília neighborhood, in the municipality of Patos-PB. The size of the audience was heterogeneous, with an average of 10 members per meeting, with greater participation of students.

The debates and lectures were mostly given and managed by the scholarship holders and/or the project coordinator, always starting at 7pm and generally lasting 90 minutes. to 120 min., but there was flexibility for both less and more, depending on the need to develop the activity and/or the listeners' interest in continuing it or in answering questions and making interventions. The activities were carried out biweekly with publicity on social networks (Instagram and Whatsapp), flyers on bulletin boards distributed around the UFCG Patos Campus and through invitations transmitted orally in the classes of veterinary medicine students.

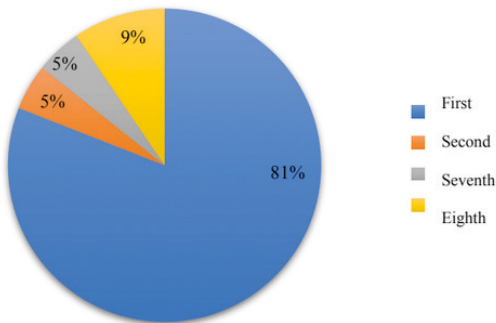
Before the start of the first two meetings, a questionnaire was distributed to participants containing five open questions that sought to understand the profile of each of them, as well as their expectations regarding the project and their knowledge about animal law and abuse. The same questionnaire was applied in the last meeting with the aim of analyzing the evolution of the project members, their

analysis of the topics discussed so far and their perception of them. The graphic results of the questionnaire can be seen below:

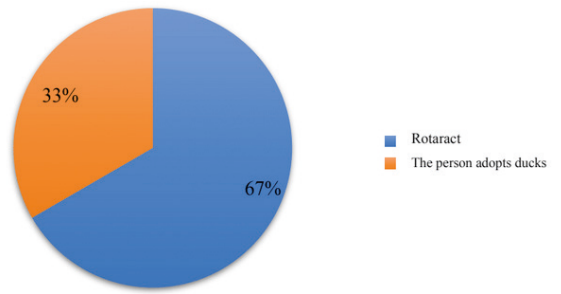
FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE



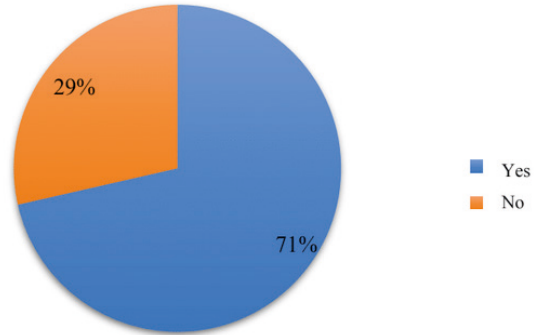
1- What is your profile?



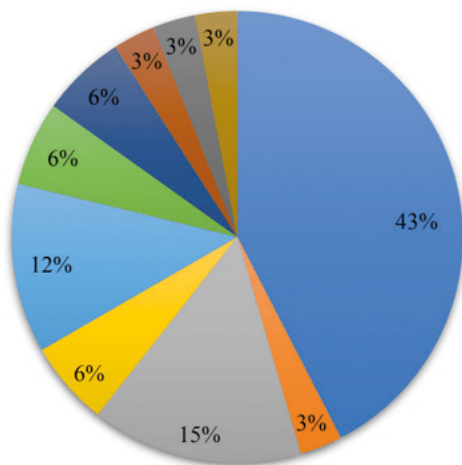
2 -If you are a student, what is your period?



3 -If you are part of an NGO, what is the name of the NGO?

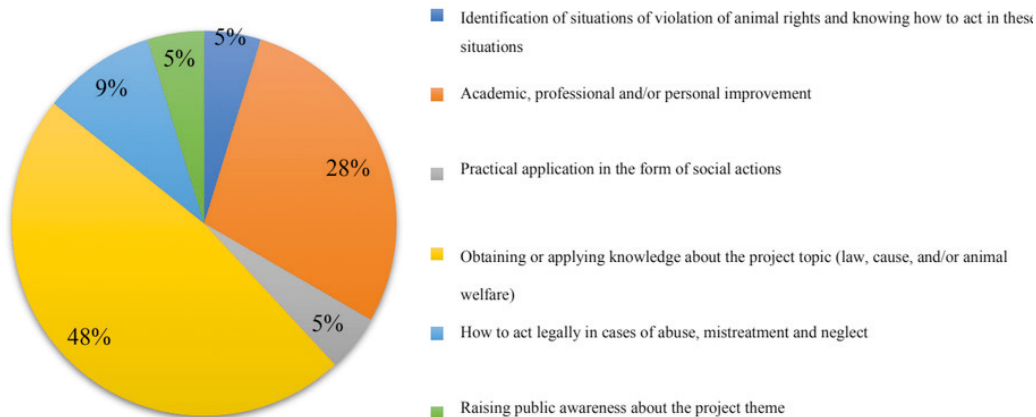


5 -How important is the project theme for your activities as a student, teacher, administrative technician or representative of an institution?



- Interest in the Project's theme (law, cause, and/or animal welfare)
- Reliability in project members.
- Academic, professional and/or personal complement
- Interest in environmental issues
- Importance of debating topics for society and academia
- Construction or expansion of knowledge on the project topic
- Dissemination of what was learned and the application in the form of action for society
- Due to society's deficit on the project's theme
- To get the certificate
- Scarcity of topics in veterinary medicine courses

4 -Why were you interested in participating in the project activities?

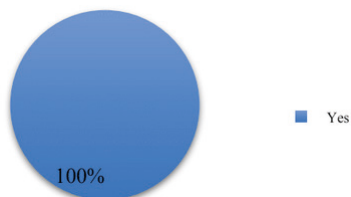


7- What topics would you like to see covered in our activities?

SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE



4-Does the person already have knowledge about animal law?



6- Were the topics you would like to see covered in our activities carried out?

Next, the steps of the practices will be demonstrated in the sequence in which they were carried out in detail and with due observations.

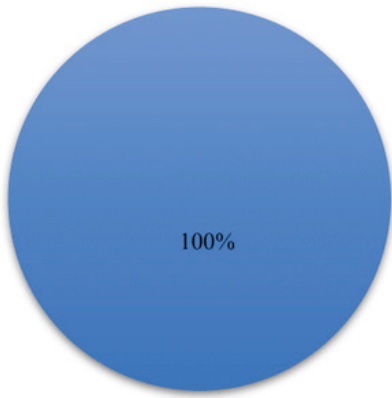
DEVELOPED ACTIVITIES

The first stage of the project consisted of a meeting between extension workers and the project coordinator, which presented an overview of the project, its aims and goals and the steps to be carried out in the initial phase. The members' general knowledge of the topics that would be worked on throughout

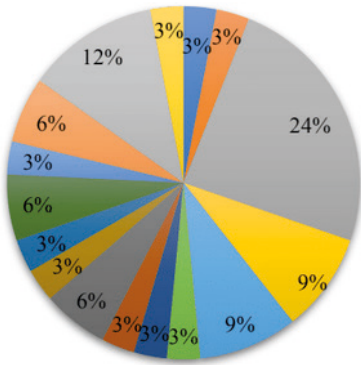
the project was also discussed, as well as additional ideas that could enrich the debate and discussion process. These meetings have become frequent, usually taking place one or two days before the event is held for the public, in person or online, with an exhibition of the material(s) to be exhibited and a brief discussion on the topic.

An account on the social network Instagram representing the PET-Legal project was also created, in which the dates and themes were announced in the form of virtual pamphlets, of the meetings in advance to the general public. In this same network, posts were made available that explained the aim and purpose of the project, as well as virtual arts that presented the project members and their current positions, to make the interrelationship with the target audience closer.

The meetings with listeners were held according to plan, covering topics ranging from social representations of animals, animal rights, mistreatment, well-being to philosophical and legislative themes such as animals as subjects of law, the table below shows the topic discussed in summary and the date on which it was presented to listeners. Most of these events took place in the form of a lecture/debate in which the speakers presented the subject matter in



■ Student of veterinary medicine



■ Hoarder syndrome

■ Rights and Duties of the Veterinarian

■ Legislation about animals' rights

■ Forensic Veterinary Medicine

■ Professions that work in Animal Law

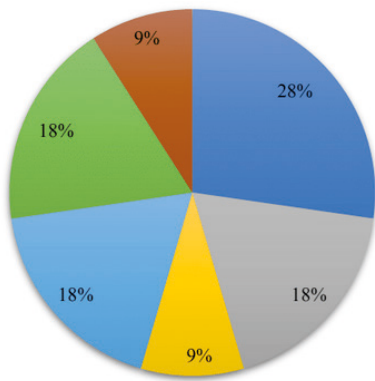
■ Raising public awareness about the project's theme

■ How to act legally in flagrant cases that go against animal law

■ Sentience

■ Social function of animals and/or speciesism

1- What is your profile?



■ Interest in the theme of the Project (Law, cause and/or animal welfare)

■ Academic, professional and/or personal complement

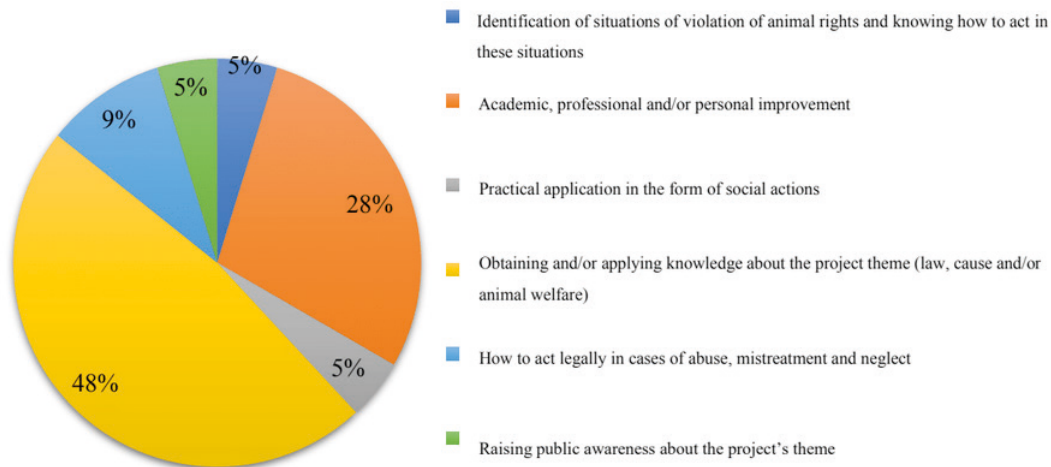
■ Interest in the environmental issues

■ Importance of debate on topics for society and academia

■ Construction or expansion of knowledge about the project theme

■ Due to society's deficit on the Project's theme (law, cause and/or animal welfare)

3- Why were you interested in participating in project activities?



5- How important is the project theme for your activities as a student, teacher, administrative technician or representative of an institution?

the form of an oral discussion with the help of slide presentations explaining concepts and breaking down examples, however, always opening up for public interventions, thus generating greater dynamism. Certain meetings also included reflections on the role of the Veterinarian in the topic discussed as an exercise beyond the meetings. There were also general questions with examples to instigate and check the listeners' knowledge, as well as to discuss certain topics of an interpersonal nature. And finally, a round table was held with an external speaker to discuss the topic of animals as a subject of rights, where a brief essay was also gathered and a brief essay on what the project had already shown so far.



Figure 1: Discussion among listeners during a lecture on Animal Abuse



Figure 2: Presentation of Certificate to Prof. Dr. Karoline Araújo, speaker of the round table – animals as subjects of law

Theme
Origin of Social Representations About Animals
Theory of Law: Foundation of Animal Law
Animal welfare concept; Concept of mistreatment; Stress in animals
Relations between humans and animals; Similarities between humans and other animals
Difference between animal protection currents: welfare and abolitionism
Animal protection standards; Relationship between fundamental rights and duties to protect non-human animals
Animals as subjects of rights

Table 1: Dates and themes discussed during the PET-Legal project in 2022

The PET-Legal extension project was also present in one of the actions of the “UFCG na Praça project”, both of which sought to reach society and explain, in a didactic way, the work developed by the UFCG Rural Health and Technology Center for the population of Patos-PB. This event took place on November 25th, 2022, at Praça Getúlio Vargas, starting

at 8am and attended by extensionists from all the projects that were being presented, who explained to around 30 people of different age groups about the objectives, their components and, briefly, about the themes that had already been worked on up to that point so that society was aware of the actions developed at UFCG/ Campus Patos.

During the project, a banner was displayed (ANNEX B) – a summary of all the work designed – and a booklet was distributed (ANNEX C) that summarized in a didactic and visual way about animal abuse and well-being, explaining how the population could act in cases who witnessed fatalities like these.



Figure 3: Extensionists presenting PET-legal at UFCG in Praça

PROPOSED GOALS AND TARGETS ACHIEVED

The goals proposed by the project:

- Discuss the ethical-legal meaning of animal protection standards;
- Promote the training and professional training of veterinarians;
- Collaborate with the interpersonal development of students participating in the project;
- Have diversity of participants from the external community;
- Collaborate with the animal cause;
- Promote reflection on the origins of

animal representations;

- Analyze the concepts of animal welfare, mistreatment and stress provided for in legislation;
- Debate about animals as subjects of rights;
- Reflect on the relationships between humans and animals;
- Understand the ethical-legal foundations contained in welfare and abolitionist animal protection currents;
- Analyze animal protection bills being processed in the National Congress;
- Demonstrate the role of the veterinarian in identifying abuse based on current concepts of animal welfare;
- Know the procedures for reporting animal abuse contained in animal protection standards in Brazil.

All proposed goals were achieved during the execution of the project. The objectives were completed with quality, mainly due to the diversity of participants in each debate, so that it became possible to debate the topics mentioned from different points of view, such as teachers from 3 different courses: veterinary medicine, biological sciences and law, activist's animal causes, vegans, vegetarians, members of NGOs (non-governmental organizations), veterinary medicine graduates in the initial and final years of the course.

Furthermore, the goals were achieved thanks to the assistance of the project coordinator, who actively participated in directing the research carried out by the fellows, always emphasizing the importance of good scientific research, always based on a concise, well-founded and substantiated bibliographical reference.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is noticeable that today's society has been changing and improving its concepts vehemently year after year. This way, the active participation of animals in different social contexts can be seen, thus highlighting the significant importance of studies, research, and extension activities that encompass issues related to the scenario in question. At the end of the legal PET Project in 2022, we realized that the animal rights agenda, in addition to being ignored by the majority of students on the Veterinary Medicine course, also does not have much participation in the students' curricular components throughout their degree, which contributes to the lack of encouragement and motivation, justifying the students' lack of interest.

It is noted with the legal PET project that there are several aspects related to animal law that must be of interest to the veterinary professional, because they directly address the fundamental issues of veterinary medicine. Clear examples of this are issues of environmental preservation, attention to public health and the promotion of quality animal health. It can then be said that the students who participated in the debates promoted by the project are steps ahead of their colleagues, because after the legal PET they have enough intellectual background to become professionals with greater differences, a very important interest in the current

job market, which requires every day more interdisciplinarity.

With each debate that followed the theme proposed in the previous meeting, the evolution of the participants, both from the internal and external community of the university, became notable. It became evident that the students who constantly participate in the debates were increasingly developing arguments with greater foundations and more tangible about the legal aspects that involve the professional practice of veterinarians, as well as the roles that can be played by other members of society with the aim of promoting a reduction in animal abuse practices.

Furthermore, the active participation of listeners in the lectures prepared by the project contributed to the comfort of the environment among the participants, promoting the participation of more embarrassed students, improving their oratory and social interactions with other undergraduate colleagues. Promoting knowledge about the legislation that protects animals, and about the protection chains that encompass the entire scenario of interpersonal relationships between humans and animals, was undoubtedly extremely relevant for the university, and a great achievement for the animal cause, which at the same time few with adequate incentives promoted by projects like this, can become increasingly relevant in the lives of professionals in the field of animal health.

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