



ABANDONMENT OF DOGS AND CATS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION OF ANIMALS ON THE STREETS AND COPING ACTIONS BY PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS IN GAMA CITY, (DISTRITO FEDERAL, DF) – BRAZIL

ABANDONO DE CÃES E GATOS: UM PANORAMA DA SITUAÇÃO DE ANIMAIS NAS RUAS E AÇÕES DE ENFRENTAMENTO POR INSTITUIÇÕES FILANTRÓPICAS NO GAMA, CIDADE DO DISTRITO FEDERAL (DF) – BRASIL

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Abstract

Context - The presence of stray animals in public places, in addition to being an act of cruelty, is also a public health problem. In the streets of Gama, II Administrative Region of the Federal District, it is possible to frequently observe the presence of stray and semi-domiciled dogs and cats. These animals are found on the streets due to probable abandonment and/or non-responsible guardianship. Such acts generate serious damage to animal life and collective health due to the risk of mistreatment, dissemination of zoonoses, soil contamination by waste, among others. **Objective** - This research aims to map the reality of the abandonment of animals and the actions of confrontation by philanthropic institutions in the city of Gama - DF. **Method** - exploratory field study with intensive direct observation, through interviews with institutions and photographic records of stray animals. **Results** - point to stray, abandoned and/or animals that have access to the street, without supervision; also presenting the reality, the overload, the difficulties, the ways of acting and the work experienced daily by “Abrigo Flora e Fauna” and “Projeto Reciclapet”, non-profit institutions located in the region. **Conclusion** - It is necessary to hold the Public Power accountable for carrying out the appropriate punishments and the community's co-responsibility through awareness and education.

Keywords: Animals; Rights; Responsible guardianship.

Resumo

Contexto - A presença de animais errantes em locais públicos, além de ser um ato de crueldade é também um problema de saúde pública. Nas ruas do Gama, II Região Administrativa do Distrito Federal, é possível observar frequentemente a presença de cães e gatos errantes e sem domiciliados. Esses animais se encontram nas ruas por provável abandono e/ou tutela não responsável. Tais atos geram sérios prejuízos à vida animal e a saúde coletiva devido ao risco de maus-tratos, disseminação de zoonoses, contaminação do solo por dejetos, dentre outros. **Objetivo** - Esta pesquisa visa mapear a realidade do abandono de animais e as ações de enfrentamento por instituições filantrópicas na cidade do Gama – DF. **Método** - estudo de campo exploratório com observação direta intensiva, por meio de entrevista com as instituições e registros fotográficos dos animais em situação de rua. **Resultados** - apontam para animais errantes, abandonados e/ou que possuem acesso à rua, sem supervisão; apresentando também a realidade, a sobrecarga, as dificuldades, as formas de atuação e o trabalho vivenciados diariamente pelo Abrigo Flora e Fauna e pelo Projeto Reciclapet, instituições sem fins lucrativos localizadas na região. **Conclusão** - Torna-se necessária

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a responsabilização do Poder Público na concretização das punições cabíveis, assim como a corresponsabilização da comunidade mediante a conscientização e a educação.

Palavras-chave: Animais; Direitos; Tutela responsável.

INTRODUCTION

The abandonment of domestic animals, unfortunately, is not new, because it is an action that has been committed, mainly by urban populations in large cities – permeated by a cruel and irresponsible aspect – this situation requires emphasis for possible solutions just because the presence of stray animals is directly related to collective health (Azevedo, 2020).

Collective health is concerned with the care of people, the environment and health surveillance, it is interdisciplinary research that searches for collective well-being related to the practices of humans, animals, and the environment at the same time. (Brandespim, 2019). The abandonment of animals is a problem not only of the state, but of the integral population, resulting in social, moral and environmental responsibility to the community. (Veloso, 2020).

The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Animals (Declaração Universal dos Direitos Animais), promulgated by UNESCO in Brussels – Belgium on January 27, 1978, considers in its preamble that "the ignorance and contempt of these type of rights have been led and will be leading man to commit crimes against animals and nature", stating in his (Art. 6), that "the abandonment of an animal is a cruel and degrading act".

Decades later, these rights remain unsecured for many of animals. There are still a significant number of animals on the streets of the cities, not even enjoying the five freedoms (free of hunger and thirst; free of discomfort; free from pain, injuries and diseases; free to express their natural behavior; free of fear and stress). These freedoms were established in 1967 by the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWAC), in England (CFMV) (2018).

Although restricted, the number of intellectual works available on the abandonment of domestic animals approaches different ways to dialogue about the subject, correlating animal rights and public health. The area of veterinary medicine is insufficient to study focusing on collective and multispecies families,



requiring the re-examination of ethical responsibilities. A new research may "favor more and more a healthier and fairer society, in which animal lives also matter" (Passion, 2019, p. 18). It is important to understand the epidemiology of abandonment for the elaboration of possible public policies to combat this act, also its causes and risks (Oliveira, 2019).

In this context, it is evident that the situation of animal abandonment is recurrent in Brazil and often neglected.

Abandonment is caused by several reasons, such as cost; work and daily care; diseases; pregnancy; or, also due to a weak emotional relationship that can occur due to an impulsive purchase of animals, pets received as donations, or in the form of gifts; aging, among others (Osório, 2017; Rocha et al., 2018 & Silva et al., 2021).

Azevedo (2020) presents disturbing analyzed data in its research on the high number of abandonments during the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the tutors' justifications are related to unemployment, socioeconomic issues and the fear that animals could infect family members with coronavirus.

The act of abandoning has a high impact on human health, due to the risks of scratches or bites, contamination by feces and urine, dissemination of zoonoses (rabies, leptospirosis, giardia, scabies, etc.), as well as, for animals, who are subjected to suffering by cold, hunger, diseases, pain, running over and mistreatments in the street (Queiroz et al., 2020 & Silva et al., 2021). Many homeless animals can become aggressive because of the process of counter-domestication, such as a "non-domestication" animal, which is caused by a distant relationship with humans, or even by aggression suffered. (Queiroz et al., 2020).

Public policies and population education actions need to be prioritized by animal well-being and public health. From this perspective, basic education has an essential role in society to occur. Despite of the majority of public and private schools already carries out projects on the environment, they lack studies focused on the animal cause. Thus, pedagogical discussions can contribute to the awareness, since childhood, about animal rights (Bonin, Makiolki & Hulse, 2020). Population management is also necessary and indispensable, as it reduces abandonment and favors animal health (Garcia, 2019b).



In this meaning, this research suggests a reflection on the theme: 'Abandonment of dogs and cats: an overview of the situation of animals on the streets and coping actions by philanthropic institutions in Gama (DF), Administrative Region of (Distrito Federal- Brazil)', with the general objective of mapping the reality of animal abandonment in the city; and specific objectives of record the presence of abandoned and/or semi-domiciled animals in all sectors of the city; describe the work and reality experienced by the Flora and Fauna Shelter and the Pet Recycling Project.

METHODOLOGY

This field research with exploratory character and intensive observation was approved by the Ethics and Research Committee – (ERC) (CAAE) number 56660022.9.0000.5058.

The city selected was Gama, II Administrative Region of the (Distrito Federal – Brazil). According to the District Research by Sample Residence (DRSR), in 2018 the city had 132,466 inhabitants (Companhia de Planejamento do Distrito Federal, [CODEPLAN] 2018). In a survey conducted by Silva (2021), the Distrito Federal in 2017 contained an estimated population of 552,626 dogs and 133,309 cats, one dog per 5.5 inhabitants and one cat per 22.8 inhabitants. Animal population-specific data by Administrative Region were not found.

For data collection, an interview was conducted with the deputy director of the Flora and Fauna Shelter and an interview was done with the president of the Pet Recycling Project, with open questions, allowing dialogue and general information. The institutions in charge of it were selected, not only for their location in Gama region but also for the frequent appeals made by them, on social networks (Facebook and Instagram) searching for help and awareness of the population.

For the promotion of participants' safety, the interviews were conducted through audio and text messages, with the use of the WhatsApp app, promoting social distance to the prevention of COVID-19.



Photographic records were made, in order to prove the presence of dogs and cats in the streets, through an effective search, only by the researcher, during the months of February, March and April 2022, along with her locomotion through a lot of sectors in Gama city, it did not require much effort because the animals were easily seen. Some residents of the east sector provided photographs and case reports about abandoned animals in the region and checked with the veterinary clinic where the care had been realized.

The photographs were grouped by item - city sector and work carried out by these institutions for the described data compilation - and the other information was converted into tables to facilitate comprehension.

RESULTADOS

It was possible to verify in the interviews that none of the institutions received financial assistance from the government, so the survival of their work is in charge of donations from the community and actions such as bazaars, promoted by volunteers. Such institutions have in common the mission of easing animal suffering.

Requests for canine and street cat help such as rescues, treatments, food, castrations, among others, are received daily by both. In addition to these requests, both the vice president of the Flora and Fauna Shelter and the president of the Pet Recycling Project report frequently witnessing of the abandonment reality. Many animals are left in the vicinity of the shelter and volunteers of the project have witnessed deaths of dogs and cats due to hunger and cold, trampling and infectious diseases, after being thrown in that places.

The Flora and Fauna Shelter is a non-profit Animal Protection Association, founded on May 26, 2005, by Orcileni Arruda de Carvalho, is a place for the reception and recovery of animals, located in (Ponte Alta Sul do Gama – Distrito Federal), whose mission is the rescue, reception, treatment and promotion of adoption for dogs and cats. The animals have particularities that can be measured in numbers and presented in Chart 1.



Table 1. Data about animals collected/kept in the Flora and Fauna Shelter of Gama city – Distrito Federal (DF)

FLORA AND FAUNA SHELTER	
Animals in shelter	800 dogs/cats
New coming animals	30 to 40/month
Supported animals (shelter + community)	1300/month
Adoption of puppies	15 to 20/month
Adoption of adults	3 to 4/month
Volunteers	7 to 8 people
Copartner clinic	2 clinics
Current debt	R\$ 100,000.00
Average monthly feed consumption for dogs	7 tons
Average monthly feed consumption for cats	2 tons

Source: The author, 2022.

The Pet Recycling Project has a different approach to the Flora and Fauna Shelter, being a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), that does not have its place to develop its activities, being in charge of the availability of the residences of volunteers to make the animal houses and prepare the materials such as feeding, drinking fountains and rations. It promotes the practice of incentive actions to the 'common dog' by the local community. It does not have copartner clinics, there are only five volunteers that have difficulties in getting recyclable materials, funds for castration, the acquisition of non-recyclable materials, and clinic daily rate post-surgical of wandering dogs and cats. The number of houses made per month is on average five to six, the production is intensified in periods before cold and rain and depends on the amount of material collected.

Therefore, Table 2 presents a description of the actions promoted by each of these institutions.

Table 2. Actions developed by the Flora and Fauna Shelter and Pet Recycling Project related to the care of wandering animals in Gama (DF)

	FLORA AND FAUNA SHELTER	PET RECYCLING PROJECT
DEVELOPED ACTIONS	Rescue and reception of abandoned animals	Feeding and building animal shelters on the streets
	Treatment of sick animals	Confection of houses with recycled material
	Assistance to the basic needs of dogs and cats residing in the place	Assistance to the basic needs of wandering dogs and cats (feeding, shelter and where possible, castrations)
	Adoption fairs	Adoption fairs
	Castration population control	Castration population control
	Bazaar for collection of funds	Exceptional redemptions and actions to collect funds
	Community awareness campaigns	Community awareness campaigns

Source: The author, 2022.

Table 3 shows the similarities and differences between the actions performed by volunteers from the institutions interviewed.

Table 3. Similarities and differences between the Flora and Fauna Shelter and the Pet Recycling Project

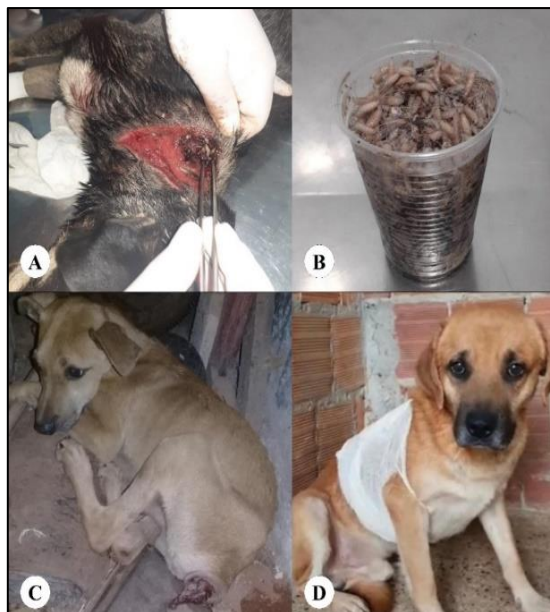
	FLORA AND FAUNA SHELTER	PET RECYCLING PROJECT
It has its location	YES	NO
Receives financial aid from the government	NO	NO
Rescue's animals	YES*	YES**
Partnerships with clinics	YES	NO
Promotes adoption fairs	YES	YES
Use social networks as a tool	YES	YES
Performs castrations	YES	YES***

Source: The author, 2022.

*Currently the shelter only performs rescue in extreme cases of animal suffering, due to overcrowding. **The project only carries out rescues in exceptional cases, because it does not have its place for the reception. ***The animals after castration, when not adopted, return to the street and gain access to houses, feeding, and community drinking fountains.

The actions described by the interviewers are represented in the following figures.

Figure 1 - Flora and Fauna Shelter Rescues



Source: Flora and Fauna Shelter
A – Animal rescued with myiasis.
B - Number of larvae removed.
C - Rescued animal.
D - Rescued animal.

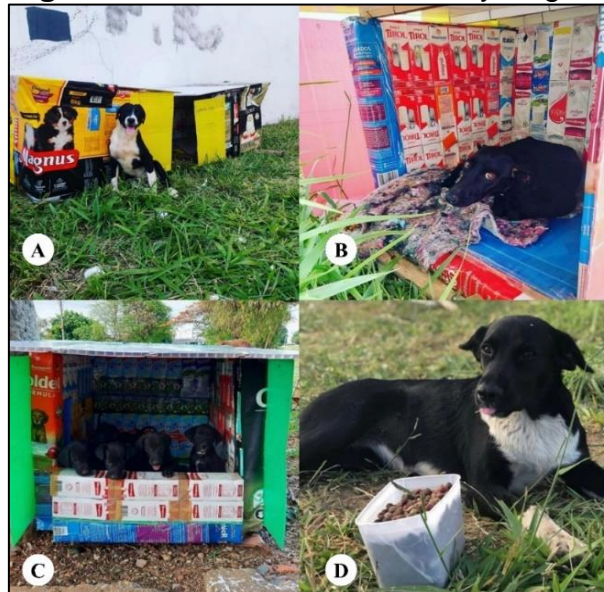
Figure 2 - Actions of the Flora and Fauna Shelter



Source: @abrigofloraefauna
A – Puppies for adoption.
B - Before and after the rescue.
C - Campaign for a bath task force.
D - Cat puppies for adoption.



Figure 3 - Actions of the Pet Recycling Project



Source: @recicla.pet

A – Animals housed in small houses made with ration bags.

B - Street dog housed in a small house made by volunteers.

C - Puppies in a house made with milk boxes.

D - Community dog receiving food.

Figure 4 – Recycling Pet Flyer



Source: Recycling Pet Project

The flyer is attached and distributed to small houses to promote participation and awareness of the local community.

Locating wandering animals - as reported by representatives of the Flora and Fauna Shelter and the Pet Recycling Project - required no effort, it was enough to walk on the streets of the city with a watchful eye to see them and witness the inadequate conditions that cause the suffering life animals. The recorded images show that dogs and cats in a street situation do not even enjoy the five freedoms advocated by the Council for the Welfare of Farm Animals in 1967 (Conselho de Bem-Estar de Animais de Produção - CFMV, 2018), even if they are pet animals and after more than five decades.

Figure 5 - Dogs photographed in the Industry Sector of Gama city – Distrito Federal – (DF)



Source: Author, 2022.

A – Dog found in worse health than others localized animals, with a high marked degree of cachexia, periocular lesions, hyper keratinized snout and onychogryphosis.

B – The animal walks in a pack of four dogs, the others are smaller and usually take refuge under vehicles, so it is difficult to photograph them; They are often seen in other sectors of the city.

C – A couple of dogs, the female is apparently pregnant and angrier, the male is very docile and friendly, both with several knots and dirt visible in their hair.

D – The same couple of dogs registered days later, in a very close place, with the cutted hair and the presence of ectoparasites and revolving the garbage.

Figure 6 - Community bitch in the East Sector of the Range – (DF)



Source: Disposed of local people, 2022.

The – Abandoned bitch received food from some locals, and when people attended to the animal's skin problems, she was taken to veterinary medical care and received temporary care during treatment for scab and for post-surgical recovery to castration. Then, she returned to the street and after a few days was found in the vicinity of the trade, with paralysis in the pelvic limbs, myiasis and deep lesions in various parts of the body.

B - Radiography is taken in veterinary care, indicating severe spinal injury and displacement of the right femur.

C – Moments before being referred to veterinary care, due to the condition presented, the veterinary suspected a hit-and-run or physical aggression.

Unfortunately, she died.

Figure 7 - Bitch photographed more than once in the East Sector of Gama (DF)



Source: Author, 2022.

A – Bitch revolving garbage, with cachexia, hairy rarefaction and possible puerperium.

B – The same dog was seen days later, in a nearby place, this time accompanied by another dog that had a better physical condition.

Figure 8 - Wandering dog and cat possibly semi-domiciled in the Northern Sector of Gama (DF)



Source: Author, 2022.

A – Dog too dirty and with knotted hair, whining.

B – Visually well-cared cat, however on the street climbing walls.

Figure 9 - Dogs photographed in the West Sector of Gama (DF)



Source: Author, 2022.

A – Puppies playing in a green area.

B – The animal is in front of a shop of barbecue, it is dirty and prostrate.

C – Scared dog in the street, barking for all who approach.

D – Pair of dogs running all over the street with no anger. The bicolor animal was dirty and the skin was soft, while the animal with caramel hair was thin, with a body score below the necessary.

Figure 10 - Dogs and cats photographed in the Southern Sector of Gama (DF)



Source: Author, 2022.

A – Bitches revolving the garbage.

B – Docile and quiet cat not reacting /fleeing with people's approach.

C – Dog was often seen on the same street; it looks at the other people and animals with a captivating look.

D – Angry animal running after humans' approach in an avenue with an intense movement of vehicles.



Figure 11 - Dogs were photographed at Ponte Alta Norte do Gama (DF).



Source: Author, 2022.

A – Dog revolving the garbage; it received a handful of food from a resident and ate with distress.

B – Bitch is always in the same place and is being fed by traders, it offers the belly to be stroked when someone approaches.

C – Animals were photographed immediately after copulation.

D - Dog eating scraps of meat removed from the trash. It is commonly seen on the same street, with and without supervision.

E – Community animal, neutered, fed by local merchants.

F - Pregnant bitch, it is frequently seen in the vicinity.

Figure 12 - Dogs were photographed at Ponte Alta Sul do Gama (DF)



Source: Author, 2022.

A - Dogs wandering in a green area; They stay fear of human approximation.

B - Animal seconds after defecating on a public road.

C – Dogs near a restaurant, applying for food.

D - Dog defecating in a public area, near the track.



Figure 13 - Dogs were photographed in the Central Sector of Gama (DF)



Source: Author, 2022.

A – Dog near a group of workers having lunch.

B – Animal with a nameplate, barking and running after cars, motorcycles, bicycles and people approaching.

The number of animals observed in Gama's city sectors -Distrito Federal (DF) is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Quantitative of animals observed by each sector.

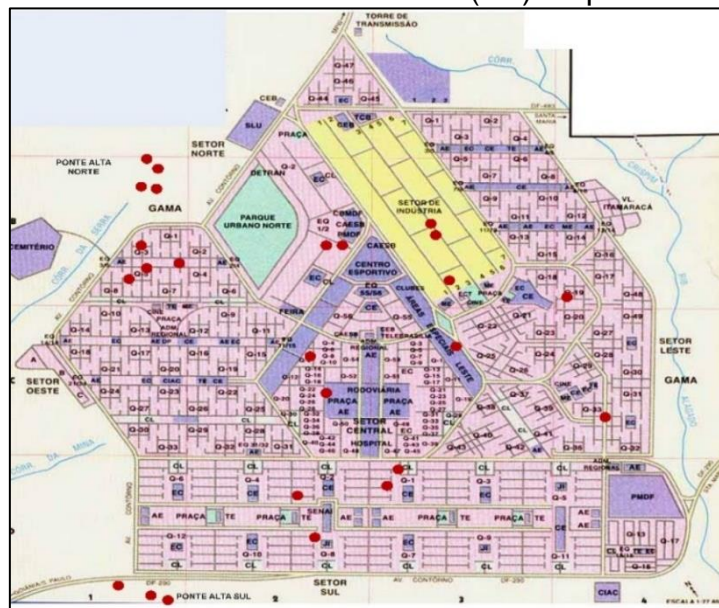
GAMMA-DF SECTOR	NUMBER OF ANIMALS
Industry Sector	4
East Sector	2
North Sector	2
West Sector	6
South Sector	5
Central Sector	2
Upper North Bridge (Ponte Alta Norte)	7
Upper South Bridge (Ponte Alta Sul)	6
TOTAL	34

Source: Author, 2022.

The areas where the animals were seen are marked in red on the Map of Gama city -DF (Figure 14). The Ponte Alta Sul and Ponte Alta Norte sectors are not delimited on the map because they are areas without legalization.

The following image 15 corresponds to the veterinary care of a wandering dog in a clinic of a university named Centro Universitário do Planalto Central Aparecido dos Santos, the dog was rescued by the military police after fighting with other street dogs because of a dog in heat, according to a report by the police. Even receiving assistance for his recovery, after a few days, the animal died.

Figure 14 - Areas of occurrence of wandering and/or semi-domiciled animals on the Gama (DF) map.



Source: <https://parqueurbanodogama.wordpress.com/mapa/>

Figure 15 - Dog attended at Uniceplac – University’s clinic in Gama (DF), after fighting with other street dogs



Source: Author, 2022.

A – The animal was rescued and taken for medical veterinary attention.

B - Trichotomy for evaluation of lesions.

DISCUSSÃO

It is visible that there are domestic animals, living on the borders of society in Gama city (DF) applying for food and revolving the garbage. These would not survive for a long time if they were far from human life, just because domestication destroyed their hunting skills and their competition skills with other predators (Bradshaw, 2021).



The animals abandoned in the vicinity of the Flora and Fauna Shelter are lost, run over, sick, mutilated and even with the umbilical cord. These animals have already died when they are found. The institution is currently overcrowded, this place continues accumulating debts to ensure basic care for dogs and cats even receiving donations from the community.

These initial rescue and basic care actions usually occur through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and independent protectors, which collaborate with population and health management. However, if the process is not finalized with the responsible custody, the reception locals stay overloaded and go through numerous difficulties: fights between animals, diseases and financial problems (Bastos, Gomes & Nunes, 2019). The vice president of the Flora and Fauna Shelter approved that.

Even with the campaigns and adoption fairs carried out, the rates of dogs and cats receiving a home are considerably low compared to the arrival of new animals in the interviewed shelter, it is observed the preference for adoptions for puppies, some adult animals may remain for the rest of their lives protected by the institution, or also sick, with disabilities and are not chosen therefore. Bastos, Gomes and Nunes (2019) establish that the care these institutions have at the time of giving up adoption to a family did not guarantee the success of the action because many animals are again mistreated or, still returned to the shelter.

Garcia (2019b) points out that the passage of animals through these sites should be brief, considering the 4 R's of the dog and cat population management program: "Selective Rescue, Recuperation, Resocialization, and Reintroduction into society".

It is necessary physical structure, capable people, voluntary or not, preventive actions and adoption campaigns by the most diverse media. Most shelters work with a greater number than their capacity, and it is a challenge to "maintain a high standard of animal welfare" (Garcia, 2019b, p. 275).

In these circumstances, the adoption of dogs and cats is not only an effective way of population control of these species but also an act of compassion, respect and empathy, beyond contributing to the eviction of reception places (Bastos, Gomes & Nunes, 2019).



Protectors and non-governmental organizations find themselves in a commonplace that is love and zeal for animals, with moral responsibility and often conceiving it as a mission. The work carried out by these people undoubtedly corroborates the resocialization of wandering animals, but this work is done by a few people when the responsibility is of the entire population (Osório, 2017, p.253).

With equal devotion and zeal, the Pet Recycling Project directs its actions to make houses, feeders and drinking fountains for street animals, encouraging care to community dogs, beyond enabling recycling. However, they also face many difficulties, including the acquisition of materials - tapes, hot glue guns, hot glue sticks, overcooked wire, scissors - and funds and/or donations to purchase ration, post-castration medicines, surgical procedures, and postoperative daily, due to financial shortage.

This initiative, which refers to the "community dog", consists of the care of free animals by several people in a community, providing food, shelter and health care, establishing an affective bond between the animal and its caregivers, resulting, sometimes, in access to reproductive control by castration. Community animals, when vaccinated, well-fed, neutered and well-assisted, represent an epidemiological barrier in that place, favoring collective health and being an alternative to the problem of wandering animals when rescue and adoption do not occur (Constantino & Almeida, 2019).

Lei no. 6.612, of June 2nd, 2020 was an important advance in Distrito Federal, (Brazil) in relation to the community of dogs and cats, it was disseminated by the Pet Recycling Project, which discusses in its Art. 3: "It is authorized the placement of shelters, feeders and drinking fountains for the animals in public areas; public and private schools; public bodies and public and private companies to the animals which this Law is treated." Still in the same law, Art. 5 states that:

The public authorities shall develop actions complementary to the Community adoption of this Law, such as:

- I – To encourage courses and public awareness campaigns on the concept of community animals and animal rights;
- II – To enable strategies and actions to improve the welfare, respect and protection of community animals;



- III - Encouraging campaigns that make the public aware of the need for sterilization, periodic vaccination and raise population awareness about treatment and abandonment, cause the suffering inflicted on the animal configures environmental crime practices;
- IV - Promoting technical guidance to adopters and the general public about the principles of responsible animal protection, aiming to answer physical, psychological and environmental needs;
- V - Keeping register of community animals, with name and species of each animal, name and contact of guardians and geographical location;
- VI - Establishing cooperation mechanisms with animal protection entities, universities, professionals, public or private companies, aiming at achieving the objectives of this Law;
- VII - Prioritize actions and public policies of population management and animal health.

The commitment made by the government in the declared law has not been observed in practice through the photographs captured and the work carried out by the volunteers of the Flora and Fauna Shelter and the Pet Recycling Project.

The Environmental Crimes Act (Lei de Crimes Ambientais- 2020), after amendments in 2020 (Law No. 14.064), provides for imprisonment of two to five years, fine and prohibition of custody, in cases of non-compliance with the conduct provided for responsible guardianship (Brazil, 2020).

This paradox between theory and practice in face of Brazilian constitutional law brings disbelief in the face of justice in Brazil. As recommended by Fiorillo and Ferreira (2019) the evident relations between animals and humans configure 'multispecies families' and entail legal responsibility to the guardian and even rights guaranteed to the guardian, and the non-compliance is punishable. However, in face of the results, it is impossible not to question: Where is the punishment?

However, it is indispensable to eradicate irresponsible protection, either by abandonment or by subjecting the animal to semi-domicile, giving it access to the street without supervision. These dogs and cats face daily challenges of hunger, thirsty, discomfort, cold, pain, risk of contamination by various pathologies, risk of trampling, and exposure to abuse of all kinds like fear, sadness and helplessness, with the aggravation of not being able to communicate through words, as described by Scherer et al. (2021) and ratified by photographic records.

The cruelty and suffering evidenced in the images and interviews serve as a warning, since, through research, science has proven that the mistreatment of animals is not only linked to the risk of zoonosis, but also to interpersonal



violence, which is a type of family and community violence. Many serial killers have a history of involvement in the torture and death of domestic animals. However, even in the face of so much evidence, the mistreatment of animals is often ignored, configuring an evil that can return with intensity to humans (Monsalve et al., 2019).

It is also important to highlight that in Brazil there is a duality between zoonosis control, and the population management of dogs and cats, for the effectiveness of collective health due to the lack of inclusion of this management in the (Sistema Único de Saúde – SUS) “Unified Health System”. “There are, however, no effective national policies with a definition of responsibility for the financing of actions for the population management of dogs and cats, and it is up to the states and municipalities to create their policies”, disregarding the “strong link between public health and animal health” (Soares et al., 2019, p. 266-267).

The Gama city, in turn, as the Administrative Region of the Distrito Federal – Brazil, is assisted by campaigns, projects, programs and district laws, with regard to animal rights and welfare. Although still insufficient, actions focused on the animal cause have grown in recent years. Among these actions, Brasília Ambiental (IBRAM) is responsible for the “Dog and Cat Castration Program”, which in 2021 reached 10,330 castrations (IBRAM, 2022a). The same body is executor of the public veterinary service - Public Veterinary Hospital (Hospital Veterinário Público / HVEP) - which, after the start of activities in 2018 until December 2021, **received 57,315 tutors, attended 59,532 animals (dogs and cats) and performed 409,686 procedures such as:** imaging exams, drug administration and surgeries (IBRAM, 2022b).

Nevertheless, the results show the neglect of the government with the conditions of these animals, because it is connected to the impunity of aggressors/abandoners. However, the neglect of the sanitary conditions of cities exists, due to the lack of garbage bins and supervision to prevent zoonoses.

Studies conducted by: Silva et al. (2021) in the Northeast (Região Nordeste do Brasil), Veloso (2020) in Bahia, and Rocha et al. (2018) in Minas Gerais, presented similar results, evidencing that the conditions found in Gama city in Distrito Federal (DF) is corresponding to that of other locations in the country.



The consistent data regarding the supervision/control of wandering animals and the population of dogs and cats per household in Gama (DF) is limited, even documents and records by public agencies. It causes a limitation in studies that, like this one, aim at the epidemiological understanding of the abandonment problem for the development of public policies. It can also affect the results in terms of data that favor a quantitative of this reality's dimension.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Flora and Fauna Shelter, as well as the Pet Recycling Project, collaborate significantly in the reproductive control and population management of dogs and cats in street situation, but despite all efforts to minimize the suffering of these animals, the measures are only palliative, since there is no effective action of the public authorities in relation to legislation's compliance and that the advances observed in animal rights in the Distrito Federal (DF), contemplating the city of Gama, are still insufficient to ensure transformations.

The dissemination of knowledge about awareness of abandonment and the damage inherent to it, is an arduous struggle that requires the participation of the health system, protectors, government and community, using campaigns for responsible guardianship and adoption. Actions in partnership with the educational system can also contribute significantly in reducing this sad reality, because basic education encompasses citizen education, from Early Childhood Education to High School.

The dissemination of the work carried out by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and independent protectors, the realization of complaints and the collection for the implementation of public policies for domestic animals, can be an investment for change.

In view of the above, it is concluded that the impacts of the abandonment of domestic animals in Gama (DF) is serious, converging for an urgent and humanized reflection. The animals deserve and need the respect, affection and care of those who domesticated them and left them devoid of wild instinct that guaranteed their survival, dignity and quality of life.



Consequently, new studies, research and projects should follow initiatives such as this, to enable a better understanding of all factors and disseminate the social, sanitary and moral responsibility of the entire population.

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