



... linking the health and welfare of animals, people and the environment

## **HISTORY 4: OTHER VETWORK UK WRITTEN RESOURCES (PRE 2023)**

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**HISTORY 4: OTHER VETWORK UK WRITTEN RESOURCES (PRE 2023)**

HISTORY 5: 1997 PUNE EVK CONFERENCE VOLUME 1

HISTORY 6: 1997 PUNE EVK CONFERENCE VOLUME 2: ABSTRACTS

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### **Animals, People and the Environment**

Global warming, deforestation and desertification, air and water pollution, loss of biodiversity are just some of the issues of environmental degradation which concern us today. Animal keeping in all its forms has an impact on all these issues.

Animals have a footprint on our planet and interact with it in various ways. Domestic and wild animals have different impacts, and all of these are now influenced by humans in some way. There is little pristine wilderness left on the planet.

There is increasing global awareness that the Earth's ecosystem is being altered and degraded by human activity and that intelligent solutions need to be put in place to redress this and sustain the health of our environment.

### **Scale of livestock production**

One area of Vetwork activity and interests is supporting small scale sustainable livestock production systems e.g. traditional pastoralism and mixed livestock cropping systems of resource poor farmers. Vetwork is interested to ensure that small farmers and pastoralists are allowed to develop and access markets in an equitable way, and that traditional rights and mechanisms are respected and allowed to evolve in ways that support people to either improve their livestock dependant livelihoods or to transition to alternative livelihoods. Achievement of this objective is complicated by [research](#) suggesting that livestock production systems are planet unfriendly in terms of greenhouse gas production. Much of the [analysis](#) around the environmental damage caused by livestock is centred on developed countries.

Vetwork recognises that for many indigenous communities, livestock is more than production - it is culture, identity and livelihood. Acknowledging and balancing the importance of these issues is a large

part of what Vetwork stands for. This is just one example of the complexity of balancing the contradictory issues which abound in addressing environmental concerns.

We are at a point in time where we are increasingly recognising the environmental impact of livestock but have not yet developed a clear strategy of how to counteract it, even if the funds and political will to do so were available. We recognise that in dryland areas such as the Horn of Africa and the Sahel there is renewed interest in building the resilience of communities so that they can withstand increasingly frequent droughts and at the same time improve their livelihoods. A large part of resilience building is the sustainable and productive management of rangelands. Mechanisms for how to do this vary by area and community and needs significant debate and research. For example, (NB TED talk now removed from TED site) Allan Savory looks at one controversial practice to manage the important challenges of desertification and carbon sequestration. Whether his suggestions are the correct way to address these issues is contentious, but it highlights the fact that we do not yet have a magic bullet solution for this vital issue.

Forward thinking organisations with the research capacity and hard science available to find solutions are essential. One such key player in the field linking environment and development is [IIED](#) with a massive resource of publications and research.

## **Pet ownership**

Pet ownership is an area where vets clearly have an interest. The global impact of pet ownership and its associated consumption, as well as predation by pets on wildlife, mean that the impact of the planet's 432 million dogs and 272 million cats [source: WSPA] needs to be considered. This is a resource hungry sector.

## **Conservation of species**

The current sixth mass extinction event our planet is undergoing has relevance and urgency for all of us. Both animate and inanimate species (and obviously their unique gene pools) are disappearing at an alarming rate. Due to the co-dependence (symbiosis) of many species, extinctions lead to co-extinctions. One striking example can be taken from India where the Indo-Gangetic plain (an area parallel and to the south of the Himalayas) was once a forest area teeming with wildlife. This is now largely cleared for the establishment of agricultural fields, villages and towns. [Legislation has been put in place](#) by the government to restrict human activity in areas of remaining habitat but there appears to be a lack of resources to implement the legislation. The extinction of charismatic mega-fauna such as lion, rhino, tiger and elephant in the region is now inevitable.

Sometimes wildlife is specifically compromised by veterinary related activity e.g. poorly regulated pharmaceuticals. The destruction of the vulture population in India and Pakistan due to poisoning from carcasses containing diclofenac is a [well documented phenomenon](#).

## **Human impact on the environment**

Our planet is a finite resource. Unfortunately current dominant political thinking is short term (the weakness of democracy is that it rewards and therefore pursues short term gain not long term sustainability). Human activity has already produced incremental change in the homeostatic mechanisms of the planet and its ecosystems with climate change and mass extinctions being some of the key evidence for this.

The welfare of the planet is an issue of fundamental concern to every living organism and communities need to use their collective intelligence to put in place sustainable and creative solutions to environmental problems. Reflecting on the environmental philosophy spectrum may help one position oneself:

- 1) Deep ecology is a movement founded by Arne Naess. The living environment as a whole should be respected and regarded as having certain legal rights to live and flourish.
- 2) Anthropocentric environmentalism is concerned with conservation of the environment only for exploitation by and for human purposes.
- 3) And of the status quo of a capitalist society that encourages expanding markets, faster consumption and bigger production.

## **Community Animal Health and Welfare**

### **Examples of different types of Animal Health and Welfare services, projects & institutions**

- Local specialists working with existing local knowledge (ELK) from whatever source; in some places supported by specific projects aimed at preserving or developing this ELK [also known as ethno-veterinary knowledge (EVK)]
- Farmer/herder education and extension projects, including veterinary extension models such as farmer-field schools;
- Community animal health projects
- Private veterinary clinics and services (including community-based animal health workers of various sorts from community vaccinators to community livestock development workers)
- Public animal health clinics and services
- Draft animal / working equine projects
- Welfare organisations, charity clinics & animal birth control (ABC) projects
- Community wildlife management projects
- Wild animal research & rescue projects
- Assistance animal & Animal therapy projects
- Veterinary research institutes
- Veterinary and paravet training schools & universities

### **Introduction**

Much of Vetwork's early experience was with projects in which community animal health workers were trained to serve their communities. However, these are not the only projects working within communities to improve animal health and welfare. People live and work with animals in many different ways, with animals playing a variety of roles. Reflecting this, animal health services have tended to limit their focus to specific groups of animals. However useful lessons emerge from comparing approaches. Even similar projects have differences, reflecting how each place is unique. Successful projects will draw on existing experience and local resources.

The following illustrate the range of approaches to animal healthcare provision at community level.

### **Local specialists with local knowledge (ethnoveterinary knowledge - EVK)**

In many places, people still rely almost exclusively on local knowledge and local specialists, with no outside inputs at all. Local knowledge may include use of some drugs, vaccines and other external husbandry practices as well as traditional practices or treatments. New projects need to ensure they do

not undermine this existing local knowledge, however there needs to be an awareness that not all local treatments are beneficial. Sometimes, people who have a limited experience of owning animals use harmful practices through lack of knowledge or bad advice.

Some projects have been set up specifically to support the continuation, propagation and verification of local 'traditional' veterinary treatments and knowledge. This system is often referred to as Ethnoveterinary Knowledge (EVK). While EVK includes husbandry, spiritual and surgical practices as well as remedies, specific projects often focus on plant-based treatments. There are many EVK-based projects in India, some aiming to make the plant remedies commercially available, others giving greater emphasis to social factors affecting their use within the community. There are also examples from Africa. Heifer Project International was involved in establishing gardens of veterinary medicinal plants in Cameroon. IT-Kenya has a project in Samburu District investigating local treatments which are used with confidence and returning knowledge to the community with 'added value'. In addition, many individuals and small community projects are collecting and dealing with their own local knowledge either informally or as part of their other work. Increasingly, it is being recognized that EVK should provide the starting point for all CAHW projects.

## **Farmer/herder knowledge and education**

Projects which aim to increase farmer or herder knowledge labour under the name of extension projects and have a long and chequered history. When done well, direct work with farmers and herders can address problems identified by the farmers and herders themselves, possibly in response to changing demands from the market, and can help develop practical solutions. When done badly, messages from a centrally planned agriculture policy are broadcast unasked and unwanted to farmers who remain unreceptive to the advice they are being given.

Farmer/herder education is useful for things which farmers or herders do for themselves. What is appropriate for pastoralists who do most things to their animals themselves may not be appropriate for a settled farmer who pays someone else to do specialized tasks.

Successful examples of direct farmer training often involve an investigative phase (which may come from the working experience of a local vet or animal healthcare worker); an understanding of why things are being done the way they are, including time and financial constraints for the farmer/herder; and timing of interventions at appropriate and convenient times of the day, season and year. They will usually have simple, specific aims such as teaching good birthing practices and neo-natal care, or teaching the correct and timely use of wormers.

Examples of less useful projects include those which aim to teach donkey owners better harnessing practices using harnesses too expensive for owners to afford.

In East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea in the late 1980s, the Provincial Livestock Officer saw that the existing veterinary services (town-based, with a ruminant bias, and designed around the operational needs of veterinary service staff) had fallen out of line with the needs of village livestock owners who mostly keep pigs and poultry. During informal meetings, villagers identified internal parasites as the health problem of greatest concern, so simple in-village training was given on parasite control.

## **Private animal health service**

- **Private veterinarians and veterinary technicians**

In many countries private vets and vet technicians provide services for both livestock and companion animals. The extent to which these services are developed usually depends on economic factors,

principally the wealth of the local population and their ability to pay for professional fees. For this reason, private vets and technicians are more commonly found in higher income countries, whilst in lower income countries, they tend to be restricted to urban centres where they provide services for companion animals or to high production/intensive livestock rearing areas. In these countries, they frequently operate from their own pharmacy, from where much of their income is derived, and where other private service providers such as Community-based animal health workers (CAHWs) buy their drugs and equipment.

- **Community-based animal health workers / Community vaccinators**

Most of this website is about community-based animal health workers (CAHWs). These people tend to operate as private business men and women, selling their services and drugs within their own communities after a short, locally appropriate training course. Some CAHW projects have started as Community vaccinator projects with various structures but with the CAHW only using vaccines.

## **Public animal health services**

- **Government animal health services**

Government animal health services tend to be subsidized. Donors such as the World Bank and the IMF are trying to restrict the range of subsidized services to reduce costs. Services which primarily benefit the animal owner (private good services) are supposed to be handed over to the private sector, while government can continue to pay for services which will benefit the country (public good services). Payment by government to the private sector for performing public good services, can to a certain extent, continue to subsidize private good work.

Directly subsidized veterinary services remain in place in some parts of Western Europe, for example, in the Highlands and Islands Scheme in Scotland, and for the same political reasons that many aid recipient countries are trying to resist having to privatise all their veterinary services. These reasons include maintaining the viability of rural communities, or levelling the costs across the country to make services equally accessible to the whole population.

- **People's committees animal health workers (PCAHWs)**

Under communist regimes, for example in Vietnam up to the present, PCAHWs have been part of the local administration infrastructure throughout the country. In some ways PCAHWs are similar to CAHWs. At this scale, it is more difficult to ensure that communities have a say in choosing the person who is to become the PCAHW, a central tenet of effective community animal health projects. It is also difficult to ensure consistent quality from so numerous a group of service providers. It is unclear whether local communities have any influence on whether ineffective PCAHWs can be replaced and deprived of their licences to work. It is unclear what formal relationship exists between PCAHWs and other levels of animal health workers such as AHAs and vets.

## **Working animal projects**

A number of charitable projects target horses, donkeys and mules used for transport, because they often suffer due to poor handling and care. This suffering is particularly prevalent in rapidly changing urban and peri-urban areas where there is little tradition of their use and care, and where both animals and owners survive on increasingly insecure short-term livelihoods. In various places, charities are providing support to veterinary, foot care and harnessing services. The approaches used vary and include training and capacity building for public and private animal health service providers and animal owners, static hospitals, mobile clinics, training of local farriers and other specialists. Some services are entirely free; others operate some recovery of costs by charging for the service; some work within the national or local service provision system to support full cost recovery. TDS, SPANA, The Brooke, World Horse Welfare and ATNESA (Animal Traction Network for South Africa) are charities which work almost

exclusively in this sector. Some of these are now investigating the same participative approaches used by CAHW projects.

[see also: 'The Welfare of Donkeys'](#)

## **Animal birth control (ABC) projects**

Town councils and similar local authorities often consider all cats and dogs that are not obviously owned to be strays. Strays are considered to be a health risk especially when rabies is endemic, a hygiene risk because of faeces, and a danger because they can bite and scratch. In the past it was often thought that the best way to deal with strays was by mass killing.

Recent studies have shown a number of errors in the above views. Even if cats and dogs are not obviously owned, they may have a place in the affections of the local community, and they may be fed and cared for by local people. Local cat and dog populations are often quite settled and static and their numbers are at the level they are because of human support (which implies a responsibility to control them humanely). Mass killing alone does little to control numbers in the long term because other animals soon move into an area that has been cleared. And, by destabilizing populations and encouraging the movement of animals, control by slaughter has been found to increase the chances of dog bites and the spread of rabies. Surprisingly, bites from pet dogs have been found to be generally more serious than those from strays. Also mass killing has become less acceptable for humanitarian reasons.

As a result of these findings, guidelines for the control of urban cat and dog populations have been drawn up by WHO (World Health Organization), involved primarily because of rabies control. By advocating control by surgical neutering, these guidelines throw ABC programmes into the veterinary arena.

There is still much scope for improvement to these programmes based on behavioural studies of the animals themselves and social studies among the communities in which the animals are living. Many programmes are already appreciating the value of community involvement, in much the same way that CAHW programmes have learnt the value of community involvement, and are considering the role of community education in taking their work forward.

Town councils often have the statutory duty to deal with 'stray' animals but local animal welfare charities may also become involved, usually attempting to raise welfare standards by doing so. These animal welfare charities can be numerous and are good models of local self-organization offering opportunities for direct collaboration with western charities and funding agencies. Some western welfare charities such as World Society for the Protection of Animals already operate at least partly through collaborations of this sort. In the UK Cats Protection promotes the benefits of neutering, amongst other objectives, and has a neutering initiative for feral and multi-cat households.

## **Charity companion animal clinics & services**

In some places, charities provide free or heavily subsidized veterinary services to certain sections of society. These services may be provided through existing private veterinary clinics, for example using vouchers, or the charity may operate its own static or mobile clinics. Equine clinics, as mentioned above, are one example of this. In the UK, several charities provide these services for companion animals owned by people on government means-tested benefits. The National Canine Defence League (now the Dog's Trust) has programmes for helping with neutering, vaccination and parasite control of dogs. They also have specific programmes to assist homeless people with dogs. Cats Protection offer similar services for cats. The Blue Cross, People's Dispensary for Sick Animals and Royal Society for the

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals all have their own clinics. There are many other, smaller local charities offering similar assistance, usually through sympathetic private veterinary clinics.

Some of the charities running these clinics have been operating for 100 years or more. Within their own frame of reference, these services are proving quite sustainable.

## **Community and public dialogue or education projects**

Community education projects are appropriate where improved understanding or changes in attitudes and behaviour patterns across a community can lead to improvements in human and animal health and welfare. Community education, through school teaching, leaflets, newsletters, radio, television or whatever, works primarily by raising awareness about issues and encouraging public debate. Many projects come to realize the usefulness of including some community education activities, even though it can be difficult both to do and to evaluate. Draft donkey health and welfare projects in Ethiopia have circulated books around many of the primary schools in the country which illustrate in story form the ways that community-identified 'good donkey owners' look after their animals. Animal birth control projects in India have learnt that involving and informing communities increases the effectiveness and acceptability of their work.

Some sort of dialogue with a community is necessary if community education is to be successful. This is not easy because communities are complex, and community leaders often feel they speak for their communities even when there are distinct groups within the community who are clearly un- or under-represented. These processes require time and willingness to learn from the community, things which projects on tight funding schedules do not always have much of. Yet without them, 'community dialogue' can too easily become 'community monologue'.

## **Community wildlife management projects**

Views on wildlife vary between those who believe that it has a value independent from human interest and that it should be left alone, and those who believe that its survival now will depend on how valuable it is to human society. In the latter camp, there is increasing interest in projects that involve local communities in the care and management of local wildlife. This interest is based on a view that such involvement provides the most realistic hope of ensuring survival of wildlife. Such projects now often include some facility for the care and rehabilitation of sick, injured or orphaned wild animals and the development of health services for domestic animals. This is partly because of the risk of disease spread between wild and domestic animal populations, but also because such an approach seems balanced and sensible.

# Work Opportunities

## Preamble

Vetnetwork UK is a small English charity established by a group of vets with experience in community animal health and welfare projects in Britain and abroad. One of our aims is to explore and highlight the roles animals play in people's lives, and by doing so to help identify ways of improving the lives of both people and animals.

From time to time, Vetnetwork UK is asked by students or new graduates requesting advice on working overseas or for assistance in designing holiday projects.

Vetnetwork UK does not have projects to visit. Many other organisations do (see later), although there are various reasons why projects may not be easy or suitable to visit: some are remote and difficult to get to (eg any project in a war zone); some may find it logistically difficult to deal with outsiders (eg if the project involves remote travel where space in vehicles is limited); others may have little to see on the ground (eg because it is a small, low key community project, or because the work is seasonal); and some may just be wary about entertaining an unknown foreigner who happens to have the time and money to travel the world.

Joining a project or practice will help you to structure your visit, may provide you with a specific piece of research to do, may help give you a feeling of legitimacy when talking to local people, and may make it easier for you to report back to your college or supervisor. However, it is quite possible to explore the world quite productively without being part of a project, and being independent can be an asset when talking to local people and following up the things that you hear about.

The following notes are intended to be applicable whether you join a project or travel independently.

## Introduction

Student years are an opportunity to challenge assumptions and investigate the world. The veterinary course is so full that there may not be the time during term to think beyond the technical aspects of veterinary science. However visits to farms, practices or projects, or just travelling around, whether at home or abroad, all provide opportunities to find out more about how animals and people inter-relate, and to think about the role of veterinary medicine in society. The following notes are intended to provide assistance, ideas and guidance in doing this.

- 'Mapping the territory' provides a framework to thinking across the whole spectrum of animals and to exploring how they fit within the local community.
- 'What to do' suggests some specific foci of investigation.
- 'How' gives simple methodological guidelines.
- 'What now' considers possible outputs and outcomes from your travels.
- 'Some different types of projects' lists a few from the range of animal related projects that are out there.
- 'A final word' has a few words of caution about travel.

## Mapping the territory

Human-animal interactions work on two levels:

- spiritual or conceptual – 'what people think or feel about animals';
- and physical – 'what people do with animals'.



It is easiest in a short time, especially if there are language problems, to concentrate on what people do with animals. However, it is likely that people will allude to their feelings about animals in some way.

Try to get a feel for how people interact across the whole spectrum of 'groupings' of animals:

- wild animals – do they watch birds, visit game parks, enjoy wild animals in any way; do they hunt them (for food or pleasure); do they eat bush meat; do they consider them to be pests?
- zoo animals – do they visit zoos; are zoos places for keeping gift animals; what do they think of zoos?
- domestic – what purposes do domestic animals serve?
- productive animals – what products do they get from animals (meat, milk, blood, hair, honey); do they still have contact with farm animals in any way; have there been changes in farming or herding practices in their lifetime or experience; what do they think of changes in husbandry practice?
- work animals – what work animals; what work do they do, eg pulling or carrying?
- guards – do they keep animals for guarding?
- assistance – are animals kept to assist people, for example guide dogs, hearing dogs, pat dogs?
- companion – do they keep animals purely for companionship (which species); do they value the companionship of any of their working, productive, guard, or hunting animals?
- experimental animals?
- recreational animals – do they keep homing pigeons; do they show animals; do they race dogs or horses etc?
- anything else?

Investigate what research is being done around animals. What aspect of animals is being researched – production, draft, health? Who will benefit – people, pets, production or wild animals, etc? Whose priority is this research?

Look at animal health and welfare services. Traditional and/or new? What structure? How does it work? Who pays? What animals? Who designed the service? Who controls the service? Who decides who can use what or do what? What training? What local involvement? If there are any expatriate staff, what are their roles?

Look also at what organisations are working with animals in any way. Are there international or national voluntary organisations (or non-governmental organisations, NGOs)? If there are local ones, try to visit them and find out about them as these can be tremendous resource.

## **What to do?**

During a short visit it is not going to be possible to cover very much in any great detail. The above section suggests something of the extent of the territory of human-animal interactions, but it will not be possible to explore all of it in a short time.

To enjoy your visit and have it feel useful and satisfying, it is best to set yourself an achievable goal. It may be best to choose one strand that can act as a pathway for exploration. The following are some possible strands. They are all to some extent inter-linked, but it may be that focussing on one will help you to define a short area of study. The most valuable thing you will come away with will be the changes in your perception of the world and the little things you will have learnt from talking to local people, so do not feel your trip needs to be information rich. Try to resist the urge to always do something active.

### **1. Attitudes.**

Attitudes touch on the spiritual and conceptual part of our interactions with animals but also have a concrete dimension. An example would be to explore attitudes to wildlife. There are all sorts of angles on this, particularly if travelling in a place where game parks are a politically sensitive subject. Try to find out what people actually do – do they watch birds or visit special places etc. Remember that people may not be prepared to talk honestly about their feelings, particularly if they live next to a game park and you are seen to be involved with it in some way. Most interesting might be to get a feel for how people in towns, or in rural areas away from game parks, think about wildlife.

### **2. Changes over time.**

Find out how local people perceive change. This may be to farming in general, to the diversity of local bird-life, or with respect to a specific project. Ask old people how things have changed in their lifetimes, ask young people what they learn from the old and how they think things will change in the future.

### **3. Root causes.**

Try to explore root causes of change. If problems (eg disease patterns) have changed try to understand what has led to this. As well as technical solutions, are there 'public education' solutions and how are these being addressed?

### **4. Financial considerations.**

Who is paying for the projects, services or research that you see? How economically sustainable are services or projects? Are there intangible benefits (eg 'strengthening rural communities') that justify subsidies? What do these mean and how can they be measured? Who has decided how money should be spent? Ask project or research people if funding considerations have affected the content or the methodology of the work that they are doing?

### **5. Local specialists.**

Find out if there are any local people who are considered to be particularly good at anything related to animals, who are particularly respected, or who are considered to be specialists or healers. If so, try to spend time with them learning from them. Find out which farmers are thought to keep the healthiest animals and try to talk to them.

### **6. Animal welfare.**

Are there things that local people do to protect the health and welfare of their animals. As examples, the Samburu in Kenya will only make droving sticks from flexible woods as they know that hard woods could damage the animals; Turkana have resisted using their cattle for plowing because they say it would be dis-respectful; Maasai traditionally limit the amount of water they will load onto a donkey. While the concept of animal welfare may be scoffed at, most traditional animal keepers have welfare related husbandry practices, and these give an insight into their attitudes to animal welfare.

### **7. Behaviour.**

The only guide we have to how an animal feels is through the way it behaves. This aspect of animals is relatively neglected in western veterinary medicine yet is likely to be fundamental to local knowledge about animal health and welfare, particularly by herders who spend so much time with their animals. Local knowledge of animal behaviour and how it is interpreted is an area of knowledge that has not been widely explored. It would make an interesting area for study, perhaps alongside 'animal welfare' above.

### **How?**

These guidelines do not pretend to be an introduction to social science research methodologies. Be aware of the following and find out more.

### **1. Be modest in your aims.**

Choose only a small area of 'study' though obviously explore as much else as you want in passing.

### **2. Learn by listening to local people.**

Be aware of who you are talking to. Age, gender, social position, education, language bias, occupation, ethnicity will all affect point of view. Try to talk to a representative cross section. If you cannot, do not worry, but note and record this so that you know whose views and knowledge you are drawing from.

### **3. Learn some 'participatory' skills.**

'Participatory' skills act like kindling. They keep conversation alive until it catches fire. The most obvious is to do something with someone. Ask if you can spend a morning herding with someone, if you can have a go at something they are doing, or if you can help in any way. There are also more structured things, like mapping and ranking, that, when used most effectively, will appear in a discussion quite naturally because they will help everyone to clarify and explain whatever it is they are talking about.

Participative skills and exercises are best learnt practically but 'RRA Notes 20: 'Livestock' April 1994 (Order No 6089) (produced by IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development), 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, UK; fax +44 (0) 171 388 2826; <http://www.iied.org>) gives a good introduction to some of the ideas and methods. If your college library does not have a copy, ask it to get one.

## **What now?**

It is a useful exercise to write up your experiences when you return, and possibly try to get them published. If you have done a particular, supervised study, you may have the information necessary to write something for a reviewed journal. However, equally valuable would be to write a more reflective piece describing what you had learnt from your travels and how your preconceptions had been changed. In order to do this, try to write something before you go away so that you can refer back to it when you return, as it can be difficult to notice subtle changes in yourself. Some of the veterinary magazines and newspapers may be interested to publish an article.

If you visit local organisations, write something about them so that others know of them. If they are doing good work, find out if they would mind if other students visited them in the future, and make sure you have their contact details as it can be very difficult to contact local organisations from back in the UK.

Don't forget it is not just about reporting on your experiences to your UK colleagues and supervisor on your return. Whilst overseas think about how you will feedback on your experiences to the community with which you are working; consider how best you might do that.

## **Resources**

NB both links in this section are now defunct but have been left in place for historical interest.

For practical information on working overseas we recommend visiting the Overseas Group section of the British Veterinary Association (BVA) website:

[http://www.bva.co.uk/overseas/Working\\_volunteering\\_overseas.aspx](http://www.bva.co.uk/overseas/Working_volunteering_overseas.aspx)

This has guidance and detail on: logistics; legal issues around veterinary registration overseas and transporting medicines; some country or regional specific information; a list of charities or organisations who sometimes take volunteers as well as information on BVA Student Travel Grants.

A further useful source of information for Veterinary Students planning overseas extra mural studies (ems) can be found on the Royal Veterinary College website:

<http://www.rvc.ac.uk/Global/docs/Guidance-for-overseas-EMS.pdf>

## **A final word**

The world is changing. People are more aware of the huge distances between the rich and the poor. Tourists and travellers are for good reason usually considered to be rich. Remember how lucky we are to be able to make these fascinating journeys (even when you are sweating it out alone with malaria in some remote hotel). Accept it when people seem less than pleased to see you – a local vet perhaps who after 5 years training is stuck in a remote outpost with no transport, drugs, equipment or access to training in participative rural appraisal, training techniques or how to set up a community animal health programme. Try to offer something back in conversation, practical help, or entertainment – brush up on your juggling or origami - interact with children.

Network UK takes no responsibility for those who choose to travel with the ideas from these notes in mind. We suggest you take out a decent insurance policy, while thinking perhaps how we can work to provide a basic level of health care to all people and animals, whether they can afford an insurance policy or not. The problems are mainly not technical.