



About Team, work, society and change

Introduction

We are approaching the end of the four-year existence of our shelter/clinic.

Although we have not reached total maturity, we have had experiences in all areas: customs, sociological effects, politics, administrative bodies and the stories of animals and people. So many emotions. So many smiles and so many tears and some anger.

It may be the approach of the end-of-year festivities or the arrival of the fifth year of activity, but it is precisely this theme that we would like to discuss in this report at the end of 2021. There will be no shortage of figures to support the quantity of our interventions.

It is appropriate to make an endless series of premises. Ours is neither a criticism nor a universal judgement. Nor is this text a whimper.

Far from criticizing one or the other, we would like to try to outline what we experience in our daily lives. The ultimate aim is to inform and balance. It is an exposition of several cases we have experienced, trying to pursue an objectivity as sincere as possible.

Let's start with the premises. We live on an island that lives mainly on tourism. So the variety of cultures that populate it and those who come here as guests should make you realise that we are faced with many different cultures, ways of living and thinking. Those who live here have a totally different perception of the animal world than those who come for the first time. Like everywhere else, there are those who love cats and dogs and those who do not. There are those who are afraid and those who are not. There are those who are competent and those who are not. There are those who have an animal for exhibitionism and those who do not. There are those who want to trade in pets and those who do not. There are those who have an imaginative vision and those who are realistic. There are those who are omnivores and those who are vegetarians. Perhaps there are no vegans among the residents.

The Team

Yes, the 'T' is not a typing error.

It all started almost naturally. Ibrahima was our first employee. Already acting as a guard during construction, he stayed on to work for us. We remember him crying when Spartacus made his bed in his new flat. "You give me back my dignity as a man," he said. Whenever we arrived, even at night for an emergency, he was there, ready to receive us. Or to assist us in difficult cases such as verbally aggressive people. Life meant that he decided to return to Senegal to stay with his wife.



The second person to join the team was Domingua. In this case too, the course was natural. With no regular job, he was already working occasionally for the now defunct Associação Amigos dos Animais Bubista. Skilled with animals and used to working in hotels, she still works assiduously in maintaining cleanliness and hygiene in the clinic.

The third person to join the team was Laura, our veterinarian. We knew her superficially because she had been a volunteer with several associations active in the protection and conservation of sea turtles. She brought with her two values of experience that were very important to us. The first, knowledge of life in Boa Vista and the second, her veterinary expertise. With her, our life and life in the facility changed radically. Finally, we no longer had to resort to outsiders for veterinary care.



The fourth element was Demba. He was recommended to us by a friend. A night watchman, he started working for us on a part-time basis. Over time, and leaving aside the interludes with other collaborators, he fully replaced Ibrahima. He is our contact person for the animals in the shelter. Always ready to smile or give a caress to the animals that come to him, available, responsible and of few words, he works hard and lovingly for the well-being of our retired animals.



The fifth, not in order of importance but in order of arrival, is Ignazia. Her arrival is the fruit or result of the effect on the local economy that COVID has had on the island. A responsible and hardworking person, working in the restaurant industry, she found herself first without pay and then without work. Thanks to her and her love of animals, we can now devote ourselves fully to writing the texts you read, finding new sponsors and, last but not least, to our private life.

We also have some external collaborators, such as Jaime who helps us with the maintenance of the shelter and running the cattery in the

northern village of Cabeça dos Tarafes. Or Carlos, who as far as possible combines construction work with catching stray animals to be sterilised.

No one is a volunteer, they are all paid for their work.



To sum up, today we work with five different gears (read cultures/origins): Guinean, Spanish, Italian, Cape Verdean and Swiss. A nice mixture. The goals we set ourselves help to avoid any particular problems in living together. Sometimes someone needs to be encouraged or restrained. But it's all part of the personal management of a classic company. We have found an asset between skills and functions that works perfectly well and is hopefully stable over time.

The passion, love, imagination, precision and dedication of our staff are the most important characteristics that make up our Association.

Yes, the capital "T" is more than necessary and indisputable. Thank you all, from the bottom of my heart.

The work

Those who claim to plan our day have not understood what will actually happen. The organisation of a typical day is based on the schedule of vaccines, pesticides, planned operations and possible visits. These activities relate to animals outside or inside the shelter. Like everyone else, we set a timetable for external animal visits in order to be able to afford other activities, whether professional or private.

We have to disappoint you, we do not live around the clock at the shelter. Yes, the workload is great. With averages of 65 dogs and 30 cats being boarded, 2 puppies a month being nursed, 32 sterilisations a month, 5 surgeries a month following accidents and 70 animals a month being visited by vets, we have no shortage of activities to fill our day. Often, we work longer than the scheduled hours. It is done from the heart. Nobody complains. Our association works professionally and not occasionally. The Nerina Association is not a club of busybodies who want to fill their day by doing random charity work here and there. There is a programme and objectives to be achieved which concern the dog and cat population on the island of Boa Vista. After four years of activity, this reflection should be made and also made public.

Although we have a clear idea of what we are trying to achieve, you will hardly ever see us involved in animal-related controversies. The reasons are legal, political and time-related.

Let's start with the legal side. It is not for us to judge, there are laws and ordinances that must be respected or enforced. We do not fall into the category of a control body and the judgement is made by a judge. We are not. If anything, thanks to our veterinary expertise, we can be authoritative witnesses. We can help whistle-blowers by drawing up a report or an autopsy text. We did this long before the current animal protection law came into force, we still do it and we will do it as long as there is abuse.

We are interested in politics, but it is not our business. The fact that there is a party or movement that wants to fight for animal rights is unquestionably good for Cape Verde. It is a young republic. There is a strong will to become a modern country, equipped with all the tools of innovation. Remember the five gears above? It is certainly not up to us to lobby for change. That would be arrogant, rude and inconsistent with our ethical philosophy.

On the contrary, we are open to dialogue and collaboration. National or local public administrations can ask us for services or advice where others fail to provide answers. On the other hand, we have experienced two terms of office of the government, of the camera municipal and the change of director of the local delegation of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment. They have been replaced/changed. The Team is still here, more active than ever. And our work continues without changing pace and without losing the passion that brought us here. In the meantime, we have not yet understood whether this free service to the country is appreciated or not, since, officially, we are not told by the government whether we are useful to the island. We will see...

We do not want to repeat that we are always short of time because of the focus of our attention: the animals. We would just add that discussion or controversy brings relatively little in comparison to action. And we like action, our action.

Society

Although the Nerina association was founded to care for street animals, interaction with the society around us cannot be omitted. Who comes for their animal, who comes to adopt, who comes for the neighbour's animal and who comes for the community dog, the relationship with the human being who comes into contact with us is very important.

But let's start by looking at the residents' side. Among them it would be incorrect and superficial to think that the effects of the culture of origin in relation to the animal world are noticeable. Everyone, including Europeans, adapts to the local orientation in their relationship with their pet. Although none of us would think of questioning the love for our pet, we must note that needs are met to the limit of sustenance. The food is more or less regular and usually based on the leftovers from the household table. This is due to the costs of specific food or to a different orientation of financial priorities. In the same way and for the vast majority, veterinary care is relegated to reaction and not prevention. Unfortunately, sometimes the reaction is delayed. We have already written a great deal about the diseases affecting dogs and cats on the island. They are mainly virus-, parasite- or parasite-related diseases and nobody is safe from them. So good prevention, such as vaccines and regular internal and external deparasitation, would (we use the conditional on purpose) be the basis for a healthy life for the pet. It seems to us to be saying a platitude since this rule applies all over the world.

In the cases of events, apart from the observed pathologies, that we can certify, we see road or domestic accidents, poisoning and mistreatment. While in the case of poisoning we can speak of intentionality, the last case is sporadic and limited to two per year and is attributable to fear of the dog or a form of revenge (action - reaction) on the part of the perpetrator. The new Animal Welfare Act, which came into force on 1 May 2021, is supposed to put an end to such acts, but the lack of knowledge of the legislation in force means that the police take little notice of these acts and they virtually go unpunished at present.

Tourists, on the other hand, arrive with preconceptions dictated by the customs of the country they come from. Interestingly, many are unable to relax and enjoy their holiday because of the sight of wandering animals. In the event of an encounter with an animal in conditions that do not match the image brought from Europe, the emotional reaction becomes almost unmanageable. I invite everyone to read the research carried out in the Americas entitled 'Impact of Wandering Animals on Tourism'¹.



Let's take the example of Ugo. Ugo is a donkey who suffered a rear leg injury in 2018 caused by a road accident. Rescued and cared for in the wild, he has recovered more than well. Unfortunately, he has a limp. We count between 5 and 10 phone calls or messages a month from as many tourists describing his condition in imaginative ways.

¹ <https://faanalytics.org/the-impact-of-stray-cats-and-dogs-on-tourism/#>

Another episode with an unnamed donkey who, thanks to misdirection, made us run up and down the island for hours. Once found, he had wounds caused by a fight with another donkey over a female. Let's open a medical-veterinary parenthesis. They are wild animals and virtually impossible to catch or treat. Today you start treating it and tomorrow it's gone and you can't finish the minimum cycle of three antibiotic injections. Useless and harmful!



Or we can tell about the dogs on hotel beaches, where tourists worry about who will feed them after their departure. Here too, the perception of before and after dissolves into a self-centredness of presence that is disconcerting. Blessed tourists, remember that there was COVID and the hotels were closed? There were no tourists feeding your beloved dogs. They had all migrated to the city from their original owners or wandered between one privately run eatery and another with food from our association.

We are sometimes astonished that, when invited to visit us and follow our work, so many tourists who come into contact with us refuse to visit our shelter and clinic. They take refuge in bizarre excuses. They talk about animal suffering and how they cannot bear it. Those who have animals know the infinite resources they have. They don't allow themselves to be knocked down by one leg missing or to feel sorry for themselves. If they are really ill, they let us know in a clear and unequivocal way, unfortunately. We, we say with bitterness in our mouths and immeasurable sorrow, have never let anyone suffer. That would not be acceptable. Always in the interest of the animal's quality of life, a mathematical calculation must be made between tolerability, benefit and outcome. The discussions within the clinic about the direction to take are technical and ethical. Not many people would understand and accept them. For those who do not actively follow us, let us mention three positive examples from this year: Dustin, Carlota and Donny.

Dustin was recovered on the neighbouring island of Sal and cared for in our facility. He was literally shredded. He now lives happily and peacefully with the other dogs at the shelter awaiting adoption.



Carlota arrived at the age of 2-3 months with an open fracture of the femur. There were not many alternatives: amputation or euthanasia. We took the surgical route. Adopted, she now lives happily in the company of three other dogs in Europe.

Donny is what is known as a community dog. Abandoned by his owner, he suffered a road accident. He was taken there by one of his human friends. He has many. Nothing broken, fortunately, and despite weeks of hospitalization, no improvement was observed. What to do? Give him positive stimuli. In fact, on the arrival of two of his friends, one human and the other canine, he got up as if nothing had happened, ready to set off on new adventures.



Going back to Donny's case and accident, even though the perception of an image creates a sort of mechanism that differentiates one from the other, we sometimes ask ourselves who among the humans we meet has the most correct and balanced emotionality. In the search for answers, we have asked ourselves what emotional reaction we all have in common? Well, the sight of blood. Yes, in front of blood, everyone is equal. If it bleeds, the animal is sick and is serious, urgent or dying. Well, even here there are those who are wrong and those who are right. Unfortunately, however, an internal haemorrhage kills more than a visible wound.

As time goes by, we realise that we need to take an anamnesis more from those who bring us into contact with the animal than from the animal itself.

Change

As you can understand, perception changes between individuals, in cultures and over time. In Europe it has changed in the last 40 to 50 years and in some parts, it still holds.

Here in Cape Verde it has changed in the understanding of protected species, for example for sea turtles. Why shouldn't it change with pets? Obviously, the path to safeguarding turtles has been long and tortuous. Even today, poaching cannot be ruled out. This is why there are Ranger and Coastal Police patrols monitoring the situation. Just today we read that the record number of nests on the beaches has been broken. This has been happening for two consecutive years thanks to the efforts of associations active on the island.

The ratification and entry into force of the law on the protection of animals is a tangible sign of the political will, and consequently of the Cape Verdean people, to change their attitude towards pets. Now it is a question of implementing it. With time, with open-mindedness, with collaboration, with patience and with perseverance, things can change.

2021 in numbers

Thanks to the more controlled pandemic situation, we were able to achieve important targets in figures.

For example, the average number of sterilisations per month is 32 animals. At this rate, we have ensured constant and effective work. to this day. At the time of writing, we have now exceeded 1900



since the start of our activities. This gives us an average of more than 475 sterilisations per year. We calculate that half of them would have been mothers and would have given birth to an average of at least 10 puppies per litter, of which 6 would have survived. The average births are 2 per year. So, we have avoided the birth of 2850 animals annually ($475/2 \times 6 \times 2$ births) including cats and dogs. These, if there were any, would have further fed the dog and cat population in a similar way: $2850/2 = 1425$

females x year => another 17,100 animal births in 12 months... The 17,100 obtained must be added to the 2850 births from their own parents. That would give a total of 19,950 in just 24 months. We could go on calculating for several years, but perhaps that would give our readers a hypothetical and fanciful representation. In any case, the mathematical results the results of these results are chilling. Another example is completed adoptions. We have finalised 18 of them. We would like to remind you that adoptions abroad are not among our main objectives, but they do help to reduce our workload on several fronts. The first is the limited places in our shelter and the second, no less important, is the delegation of veterinary care outside the island. To sum up, one less dog or cat in Boa Vista guarantees the care of another animal on the island. Let's add that adoptions in Europe take place in a responsible manner and guarantee a quality of life far superior to what is offered locally.

We would like to conclude by thanking all those who help us achieve these high-quality goals. You are the most important part of this action, without you there would be no Nerina Association.

Have a pleasant end-of-year holiday.

Thank you.



www.associazionenerina.ch
www.associazionenerina.ch/come-aiutare/
associazione.nerina@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/associazionenerina/
<https://www.instagram.com/associazionenerina/>



Swiss Bank Account

Associazione Nerina – Boavista
Nathalie Weiner Zeli
Via Scimiana Lago 2
CH-6576 Gerra Gambarogno
Banca Raiffeisen Piano di Magadino
CH-6594 Cadenazzo

Swiss Francs: CH89 8080 8007 8745 6879 1
Euros: CH90 8080 8002 7464 6870 6
SWIFT / BIC: RAIFCH22324
Paypal: associazione.nerina@gmail.com