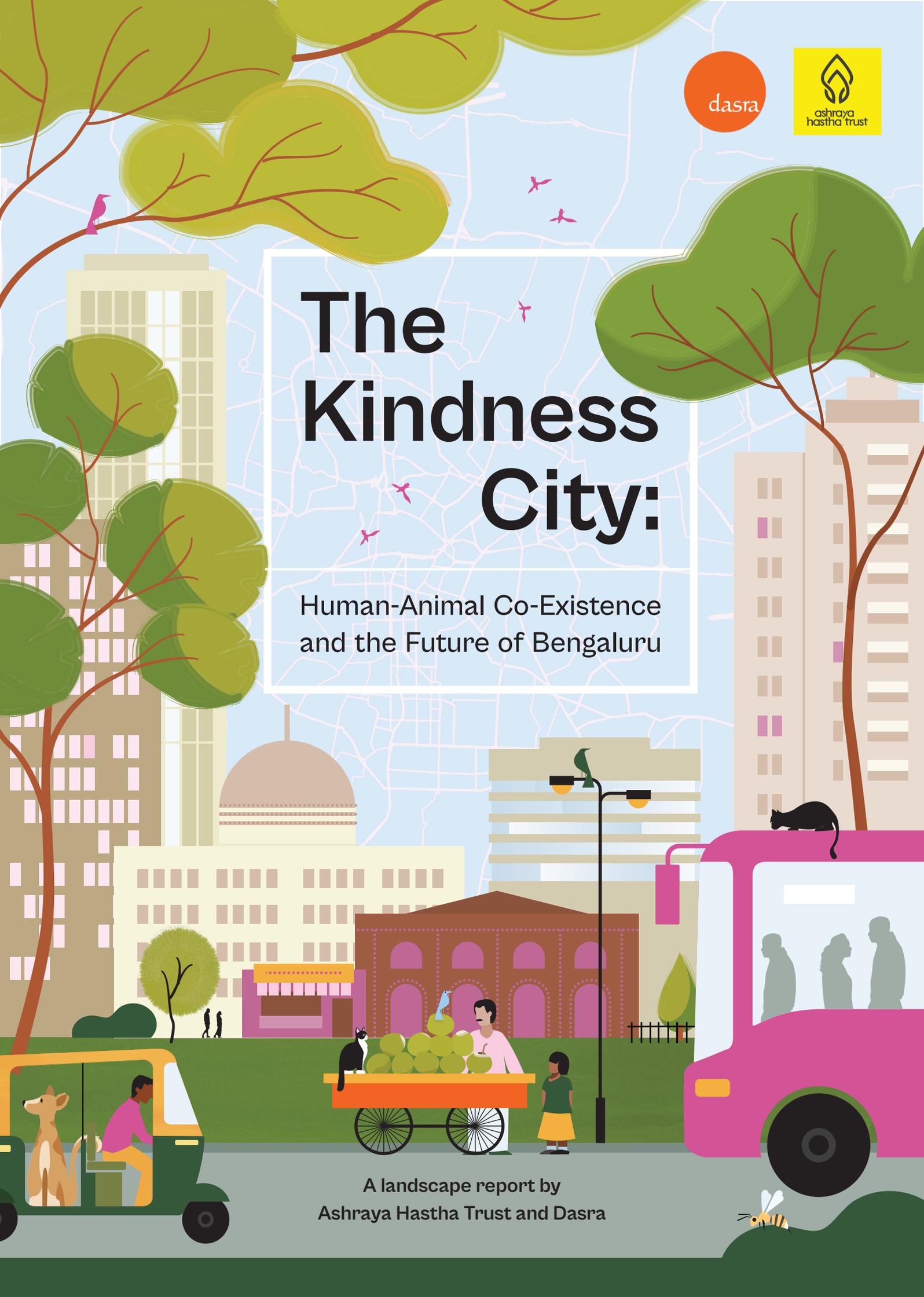




The Kindness City:

Human-Animal Co-Existence and the Future of Bengaluru



A landscape report by
Ashraya Hashta Trust and Dasra

Ashraya Hastha Trust is a non-profit organization established in 2000 by Major S. Nanjundiah and his family, K. Dinesh, one of the founders of Infosys, his wife Asha Dinesh and their two daughters, Divya Dinesh and Deeksha Dinesh. The Trust was founded with the vision of being a catalyst for change and a partner in building an inclusive, equitable and sustainable world for people, animals and nature. Over the past 25+ years, the organization has expanded its work across multiple sectors, supporting initiatives in healthcare, education, environmental conservation, livelihoods, disaster relief, and animal welfare. Ashraya Hastha Trust follows a collaborative approach to philanthropy, working closely with non-profit organizations to enable meaningful and sustainable impact.

Dasra plays the role of a systems orchestrator in India's social sector, bringing together funders, nonprofits, governments, and communities to amplify grassroots voices and enable community-led change. It builds organizational capacity, nurtures leadership, and strengthens philanthropy's infrastructure to unlock knowledge, resources, and capital. Through collaborative action, Dasra co-creates solutions that shift systems and move India toward an equitable future.

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MARCH 2026

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	04
Foreword	06
Executive Summary	09
Key Findings.....	10
The Healthcare Landscape for Small Animals in Bengaluru.....	12
The NGO Landscape.....	13
Bengaluru’s Community Animal Welfare Ecosystem: Barriers and Opportunities.....	16
Way Forward.....	17
Limitations.....	17
CHAPTER 1	
A Guide to Small Community Animals in Urban India	18
CHAPTER 2	
Small Community Animals in Bengaluru	25
What Facts and Figures about Bengaluru’s Community Animals Tell Us.....	25
What Practical Observations from the Ground Tell Us.....	27
Where, Why and How Community Animals Inhabit the City.....	28
Zooming into Dasarahalli: The Zone with Highest Stray Dog Density.....	30

CHAPTER 3

NGOs for Community Animal Welfare in Bengaluru	36
Survey Findings.....	38
Cost and Operational Metrics for Community Animal NGOs.....	42
Action Landscape in Stories and Interventions.....	45
CJ Memorial Trust Institution Building, Empowered Neighbourhood Networks, Strategic Policymaking.....	46
Avian and Reptile Rehabilitation Centre (ARRC) Community Stewardship for Bengaluru’s Wildlife.....	49
Pranaa Animal Foundation A pioneer in cat welfare in the city.....	51
Stray Love A Tested Model for Structured Volunteerism.....	54
Birds of Paradise A Petting Zoo that focuses on responsible interaction with Wildlife.....	56
Animal Lives are Important (ALAI) A fully equipped shelter at Bengaluru’s Outskirts.....	58
A Day in the Life: Shadowing Bengaluru’s Best Dog Catcher.....	62

CHAPTER 4

Theory of Change and The Kindness City Blueprint	65
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CHAPTER 5

The Way Forward	72
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Foreword

A walk back in time: In 1976, the Calcutta administration announced a ban on hand-pulled rickshaws. Many believed this removal of an inhumane mode of transport to be a compassionate, progressive decision. Yet it affected the livelihoods of nearly 60,000 of the city's poorest migrants from rural Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Bangladesh who had come to the city in search of work, and built routines, plans, and life around the pull-cart. *Where would they go?*

Writing about this, architect and housing rights scholar Jai Sen coined the term “unintended city”, describing it as a society that has grown within and beside the intended city.¹ This was the city of the poor: makeshift tenements and bonfires under flyovers, along sidewalks, and settlements formed in spaces left over by the master plan. Moving back and forth between the intended and unintended city, its inhabitants lived with an all-pervasive powerlessness. Yet, as Sen observed, they were indispensable. “The urban city is totally dependent on them,” he wrote.

This perspective paves the way to understand the inhabitants of any city – especially those that don't hold economic equity. A city's non-human, non-wild beings without human companions – street dogs, cats, cows – exemplify the unintended city today. But like the rickshaw-pullers, they too have a lineage of indispensable service. Prehistoric cave paintings from India, dating back 30,000 years, depict hunting dogs alongside humans – leashed, running, or resting by their side.² Cats were central to keeping granaries and food reserves rodent-free in the Indus Valley Civilization.³ Historical accounts describe Indian hounds sent in the hundreds to Persia between 465–425 BCE, where entire villages were dedicated to their care and breeding because of the protection they offered against

wild animals.⁴ Later, Mughal and Rajasthani paintings showed dogs as symbols of prestige, adorned in jewelled collars.⁵ In mythology and folklore too, dogs and cats are ever-present, as guardians, guides, or metaphors.

Over centuries, their practical roles diminished. Unlike livestock or working animals, that continued to serve human economies, dogs and cats became redundant. Yet, they did not disappear. They made the streets their home, unfortunately unable to detach themselves from human habitats they were so used to. Today, their very presence has been called into question, seen as a “problem” to be removed in one sweeping motion.

We invite you to reconsider their place in India’s cities, and in our social and moral fabric. To see community animals as reminders of what we tend to do when something no longer serves us. And, therefore, as opportunities for us to broaden our boundaries of compassion, especially for those with no explicit economic value.

Observing an animal navigating a busy street may help us see what is inhumane in our cities – spikes, speeding vehicles, open sewers, unshaded roads, loud noises, pollution, dysfunctional water taps – and register that it isn’t only animals but also homeless people, children, elders who manoeuvre these sharp edges for lifetimes.

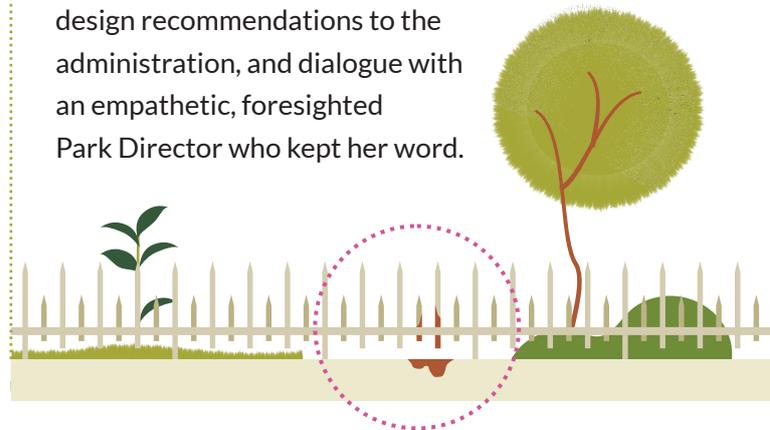
This report spotlights efforts towards enduring care for these beings from Bengaluru (Karnataka), a city arguably at the forefront of community animal welfare interventions in India.

Over the past few years, quiet yet far-reaching acts of kindness have been afoot in Bengaluru.

One June afternoon at Cubbon Park, under the supervision of the park’s Executive Director Ms. Kusuma G, contractors welded out spikes all along the park’s perimeter fence. These sharp, 3-tiered metal spikes would routinely, brutally and even fatally injure dogs and cats climbing in and out of the park.⁶ Not many survived, but one dog that did had spent an entire night lodged in a spike before being rescued. In addition to the agonizing pain of it all, it had cost rescuers INR 130,000 in medical bills and over 3 months to nurse the dog back to health. Welding a fence costs a few thousand rupees and a few hours. With every spike made blunt, comes a little more safety for all the beings inhabiting the city’s public spaces – like Cubbon Park.

What did it take to make this happen?

A walkⁱ through the park by the NGO CJ Memorial Trust and concerned park regulars, a thorough documentation of the park’s sharp spikes and their other locations through the city⁷, alternate design recommendations to the administration, and dialogue with an empathetic, foresighted Park Director who kept her word.



ⁱ A village walk, or transect walk, is a practical research method wherein there is a systematic walk along a pre-defined path either in the community or the study area with local people to identify important infrastructures, resources, welfare measures, or services. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11521128/>

Further inside by the park's lotus pond is an "insect cafe" – a wooden igloo-like structure with hundreds of crevices for bees, wasps and other winged insects to burrow in. Around 20 types of critters now reside within the cafe, which is handmade from foraged natural materials by tribal women from the Heggadadevanakote Taluka. Each structure takes only 15 days to build.⁸ Distributed between Cubbon Park and Lal Bagh are 11 insect cafes, planted by the Vibhinna India Foundation this year.

"Imagine all the bees disappearing from Bengaluru one day – it would cease to be a garden city," said Vinod Muthanna, an IT professional and beekeeper, in a YouTube video on urban beekeeping. By 2022, the city's native bees had nearly vanished, building hives on high-rises they mistook for rock cliffs and trees – only to be exterminated. To help restore them, the Muthanna family began beekeeping on their terrace with a bee-box from the University of Bengaluru. Their garden soon flourished with flowers, fruits and vegetables. Each INR 4,000 box can house up to 6,000 bees and yield 2–5 kg of honey per flowering season. Placed on balconies, terraces or in parks, these boxes offer refuge to nature's most critical pollinators. "Why did we do this despite full-time jobs and busy schedules? Simply to learn how to co-exist. Honeybees showed us how," says Muthanna.

This is kindness hard at work – systematic, habitual, and enduring.

This report spotlights Bengaluru's various kindness arcs between humans and the city's smallest "neither wild, nor owned" beings: its community animals. It goes beyond the city's

green spaces, to its most under-resourced habitats. Beyond the occasional act of kindness to routine co-existence: from feeding the street dog to ensuring it is vaccinated and neutered; from nursing abandoned kittens to finding them forever homes; from rescuing the bird caught in a *manja*ⁱⁱ to ensuring fatal objects are removed from the city's architecture and culture.

These arcs, nested between the city administration, nonprofit and non-governmental organisations (or NGOs), and citizen volunteers, uphold a vital cue: there is heart in India's engineering hub. Nurtured, scaled, and operationalised at every level, it can transform Bengaluru into India's first Kindness City.

ⁱⁱ the string used for flying kites, made by coating a strong thread (often cotton) with a mixture of abrasive materials like powdered glass and a binding agent like glue

Executive Summary



Photo: Anipixels.com

LANDSCAPE STUDY

The Kindness City is a landscape study that maps the current state of small community animal welfare in Bengaluru, identifies key stakeholders, and highlights the challenges and opportunities that shape human-animal coexistence in the city. Grounded in a systems-thinking approach, the study draws on secondary research, 27 expert interviews, surveys with 8 NGOs, and two practitioner validation circles. It concludes with a philanthropy- and NGO-led Theory of Change and a set of actionable recommendations that link animal welfare with public safety, public health, waste management, food security, and urban planning.

Key Findings

01 Most community animals in Bengaluru, like in other Indian cities, have deep ties to their neighbourhoods and caregivers; wherever proximate humans have taken on the onus of regularly feeding them and ensuring they are neutered, human-animal conflict is significantly reduced

Ground practitioners who have observed human-animal interactions on the streets have attested how neutering and sustained, habitual feeding are the two strongest ways to manage populations of community animals. Ensuring this at the hyperlocal levels ensures that animals going into the healthcare and shelter systems are those that need critical care (victims of accidents, disease and cruelty) - this also unburdens these systems and helps them run efficiently.

02 While humane population control is something all key stakeholders are aligned on, it requires more consistent implementation and city-wide scaling

The city administration has delegated animal birth control (ABC) to select institutions and piloted population monitoring initiatives, particularly for dogs. Budget allocations, however, remain unclear and relatively small, limiting continuity and long-term planning. With many competing civic responsibilities and working over-capacity, community animal welfare often becomes deprioritised. Moreover, the population management of feral cats is not an official mandate for the city administration. In this domain, partnerships between NGOs and philanthropies are moving the needle. The Maitri (Murty Trust)-CUPA Spay & Neuter Centre for community cats is a specialised facility committed to the humane management of Bengaluru's community cat population through their Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR) services as well as vaccination drives. The program has specifically begun with cat populations on the outskirts and is systematically progressing from there to the city centre - this reflects an efficient strategy, considering the influx of animals from the outskirts.

03 Bengaluru has some of the country's most mature and scalable NGO models for community animal welfare, however, they are working well over capacity, geared towards constant crisis-response

Bengaluru has a mature NGO ecosystem for community animal welfare, with strong public empathy and active civic mobilisation, but it is operating above capacity. NGOs deliver essential rescue, caregiving, rehabilitation, and shelter services for both community animals and urban wildlife, yet many are stretched and functioning at their limits. Ground practitioners focus heavily on emergency response, while root-cause solutions and collaboration remain limited. Structural issues linked to rapid urbanisation, littering, unregulated waste zones, low public awareness, and hazardous infrastructure remain unaddressed. Empirical data beyond dogs is minimal, creating large visibility gaps; the city lacks any dataset for feral cats despite their high numbers and fast reproduction. With organisations absorbed in day-to-day service delivery, connection, cross-learning, and coordinated action receive little attention.



A small group of NGOs

working on urban wildlife rescue and rehabilitation has created a precedent for coordination. Although few, they have established clear internal jurisdictions and use communication platforms to coordinate rapid rescue responses. They avoid programmatic overlap and run entirely free rescues, which encourages citizens to report injured or distressed wildlife and supports a relatively systematic care system.

04 There are abundant private veterinary clinics, but public healthcare infrastructure and workforce for community animals is limited – reducing the scope for the public to freely participate

Karnataka's public veterinary system is overstretched, with half of government posts vacant and 23 hospitals closing in recent years.⁹ In Bengaluru, public veterinary hospitals are primarily designed for livestock, leaving community animals dependent on an already fragile and insufficient care ecosystem. Despite a sizeable and decentralised presence of private veterinary clinics and hospitals for domestic pets, most community animals who require free healthcare have nowhere to be taken.

05 Backyard breeding and unlicensed pet trade contribute significantly to free-roaming and abandoned community animal populations

Bengaluru has only 24 licensed breeders on the official directory – an inaccurate number which ground practitioners say is significantly higher.¹⁰ Unchecked sales, impulse purchases, and lack of breeder accountability lead to high rates of relinquishment and neglect.



Photo: Anipixels.com

The Healthcare Landscape for Small Animals in Bengaluru

When it comes to community animals, who are officially wards of the state and do not have human guardians, there are very few spaces where they can receive specialized medical care. In addition to the shortages in government-run clinics and hospitals for community animals, there is also an issue of their location; many peripheral areas between Bengaluru urban and rural do not have public hospitals or NGOs. This severely diminishes the ability and willingness of common citizens to take an injured or sick animal to the vet.

In terms of Animal Birth Control (ABC), the city is dependent on a total of 8 canine ABC centres across Bengaluru – which are not enough for the current population. If one zooms out to look at the healthcare ecosystem available to animals in general, there are over 100 Animal Husbandry hospitals across Bengaluru – which can be equipped and retrofitted with trauma units for community animals. With philanthropic support, they can be supplied with the right medicines and equipment. The following data shows the public and private distribution of Bengaluru’s healthcare infrastructure for community animals:

P Private	G Government	NGO Non-Governmental Organisation
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Zone	Primary Care	Secondary Care		Primary Care (NGO)	Total Clinics	Total Hospitals	Stray Dogs
	Vet Clinic (P)	Vet Hospital (P)	Vet Hospital (G)	Shelter			
Yelahanka	16	5	1	3	17	6	36,343
Dasarahalli	9	1	0	0	9	1	21,221
RR Nagar	17	1	2	3	19	3	41,266
Bommanahalli	14	8	2	3	16	10	39,183
West	13	3	5	5	18	8	22,025
East	22	16	3	3	25	19	37,685
South	22	11	1	5	23	12	23,241
Mahadevapura	15	13	5	3	20	18	58,371
Total	128	58	19	25	147	77	279,335

Source: Stray Dog Census 2023, Primary Research

P Private	G Government	NGO Non-Governmental Organisation
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Area	Vet Clinic (P)	Vet Hospital (P)	Vet Hospital (G)	Shelter (NGOs)	Vet University (G)
Bengaluru	128	58	19	25	1
Outskirts	6	3	1	12	1
Total	134	61	20	37*	2

*this includes branches of the same NGO, to reflect the spread and availability of critical healthcare infrastructure for community animals in Bengaluru

The NGO Landscape

Bengaluru has an estimated 37 NGO organisations operating across the city, carrying out a range of functions: rescue and rehabilitation, specialised and primary veterinary care, trauma and distemper units, geriatric care, adoption and fostering support, public awareness campaigns, and collaboration with the BBMPⁱⁱⁱ on population management. Alongside them are committed citizen collectives that shoulder hyperlocal caregiving within their neighbourhoods, often relying on their own resources to feed, foster, fundraise, and mediate with the community. Supporting this ecosystem are independent animal catchers – highly skilled individuals whose work requires locating, identifying, building trust with, and humanely capturing frightened, injured, or elusive animals. Together, these actors form the backbone of community animal welfare in Bengaluru.

ⁱⁱⁱ This report refers to the BBMP as the city administration because the act to change the BBMP into the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) came into effect after the research was conducted

Photo: Anipixels.com



Our research reveals the following:

- NGOs are started and run by people who are deeply passionate about animals, are experienced in looking after them, and are often financially sustained through personal or crowdsourced funding
- Organisations have developed clear processes for rescue, treatment, rehabilitation, and shelter management, with steady frontline execution
- Many NGOs run shelters, rehabilitation centres, and treatment units, but rely heavily on rented spaces
- Daily caseloads of rescues and medical care absorb most organisational bandwidth
- Few organisations have the capacity to invest in research, policy engagement, data systems, or cross-organisational coordination
- Most NGOs operate with tight annual budgets, inconsistent funding streams, and small teams
- The sector is supported mainly by individual giving, with limited interest from CSR or institutional philanthropies
- Reliable population data, species-specific datasets, and shared technology platforms are scarce – and the ground intelligence NGOs can collect over time is not always shared across organisations to strengthen ecosystem knowledge

Based on primary research conducted in April 2025, the following is an estimate of the costs required to run a shelter for dogs. It considers a typical, full stack shelter for community dogs with the following features:



Cost Category	Deployment Details
Acreage of a typical, fully stacked shelter with an in-house clinic and trauma centre	The main shelter is 4 acres, and it took two years to build. An additional 18 acres are rented for other shelter facilities.
Average rent costs	INR 300,000 per month
Number of cages available (dimensions: Height 183 cms; Width 122 cms; Depth 70 cms)	250
Number of staff typically employed	40
Investment towards staff salaries	INR 1,000,000 per month
Average costs of running an ambulance service	INR 25,000 per month (kilometres covered: 3500 kms per month)
Food costs	INR 500,000 per month
Medicine costs	INR 300,000 per month
Average electricity and water supply costs	INR 100,000 per month

*It is also worth noting that it takes an additional INR 200,000 per month in Overheads.

^{iv} Often, dogs who have faced severe cruelty or brutality in their native location are brought in for treatment – but it is impossible to return them to the same location post care because the perpetrator is still there; furthermore, it is ethically wrong and dangerous to both the animal and humans to displace dogs and leave them at a new location.

Bengaluru’s Community Animal Welfare Ecosystem: Barriers and Opportunities

<p>Actors</p>	<p>Government Actors <i>The State Animal Welfare Board, Animal Husbandry Department, city administration (BBMP, Parks Authorities), Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), law enforcement, government hospitals, urban planners</i></p>	<p>Non-Profit Actors & Specialists <i>NGOs, volunteer groups, community rescuers, feeders & caregivers, animal catchers, animal behaviourists, medical providers, lawyers, philanthropists and CSR donors</i></p>	<p>Commercial Actors <i>Breeders, pet sale platforms, architects & builders</i></p>
<p>Challenges</p>	<p>Limited empirical data: Data beyond Stray Dog Census is limited; does not account for other species or animals in-migrating from border villages</p> <p>Funding shortfalls: Within the BBMP, budget for community animal welfare is unclear, but known to receive smallest quantum; for bordering village Panchayats, ABC is expensive and deprioritised</p> <p>Lack of continuity and consistency: Frequent officer transfers result in short-lived pilot programs, especially without a thorough handover; work is restarted after delays or discontinued entirely; popular programs like birth control take precedence over long-term rescue and rehab</p> <p>Capacity and infrastructure limits: Robust animal husbandry infrastructure across city is lacking in expertise, equipment, and medicines for community animals; lack of trained vets, catchers, and overall capacity building for Animal Birth Control (ABC) also a critical gap</p>	<p>Service delivery barriers: Despite promising NGO models, rich ground experience and expertise, frequent changes in government priorities, directives and orders disrupt efforts; NGOs with ABC programmes are often perceived as “money-minded” despite legitimate work; certain vigilante groups frame NGOs on grounds of wrongful rescue, treatment and rehabilitation, disrupting their day-to-day programming</p> <p>Isolation: NGO work is often fragmented, hyper-local, and founder-driven – with limited coordination and collaboration; burnout is common among volunteers and citizens due to the scale of effort required and limited support available</p> <p>Donor challenges: Difficult to show measurable impact of community programmes; smaller NGOs often collapse without steady BBMP or contract funding</p> <p>Community engagement: Welfare efforts frequently rest on a few individuals; most citizens only report problems rather than contribute</p>	<p>Unregulated pet trade: Many pet shops operate without mandatory licences or registration; enforcement is weak, and previous large-scale raids often fail due to legal loopholes, with seized animals eventually returned to sellers</p> <p>Shelter burden: Shutdown attempts left hundreds of birds and puppies needing urgent care, overwhelming already limited shelter capacity</p> <p>Illegal imports/exports: Exotic pets and dogs continue to be imported and exported illegally</p> <p>Urban design & habitat loss: Rapid construction and infrastructure growth rarely account for community animals; shrinking green spaces, unsafe building designs, and light pollution are disrupting street animal survival and urban wildlife habitats</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Strengthening accountability and continuity in community animal welfare by leveraging existing veterinary infrastructure, dedicated budgets, and consistent policies</p>	<p>Building sustainability and scale by developing leadership pipelines, structured volunteer systems to tap into passionate and competent citizens, and stronger donor and corporate engagement</p>	<p>Regulating the pet trade with welfare in mind, and promoting animal-inclusive, co-existence focused urban planning</p>



Photo: Anipixels.com

Way Forward

By 2030, Bengaluru's NGO and philanthropy ecosystem can pilot a *Kindness City Model* that advances human-animal coexistence. The Theory of Change envisions that the following additions to the existing ecosystem will help catalyze human-animal co-existence in Bengaluru:

- ✓ An expert-led intermediary body coordinating policy, monitoring, and collaborations
- ✓ A regional ABC Training Centre in Bengaluru
- ✓ Current 100+ government veterinary units retrofitted and staffed for community animal care
- ✓ A trained pool of vets, para-vets, catchers, and volunteers deployed across wards
- ✓ Enforced licensing and regulatory systems for pet shops and breeders
- ✓ Compassion and coexistence modules integrated into school curricula

Limitations

The study is shaped by constraints such as limited government and funder participation, significant data gaps (including the absence of a cat census), and a single field visit in April 2025. Despite this, the insights provide a foundational understanding of Bengaluru's community animal welfare ecosystem and pathways to strengthen it.

Chapter 1

A Guide to Small Community Animals in Urban India

Who are small community animals?

Community Animals live in public spaces where resources for their survival are available. Some are collectively cared for by locals – resident individuals, families, guards, shopkeepers, or workers who are in proximity to these animals – while many fend for themselves by scavenging. They are usually ownerless and legally wards of the state. The term also includes abandoned, lost, or homeless pets.

In contexts like Bengaluru’s, this mix includes species of small urban wildlife like birds, amphibians, reptiles, small mammals, insects and invertebrates that adapt to and navigate the built human environment, coming into regular interaction with human communities.

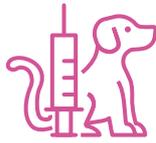
“Small animals” is a veterinary classification referring to species such as dogs, cats, birds, and rodents.

These animals are small in size – distinct from larger ones like bovines and equines.





As wards of the state, what welfare do small community animals in cities receive?



Animal Birth Control (ABC):

A program designed to manage community dog populations through sterilisation and anti-rabies vaccination.



Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Release (TNVR):

A population management strategy for free-roaming cats, involving humane trapping, sterilisation, vaccination, and return to their habitat.



Anti-Rabies Vaccination (ARV):

A preventive rabies vaccine administered to community animals.



Ear Notching:

A small, permanent notch made in a dog or cat's ear to indicate that the animal has been sterilised and vaccinated.



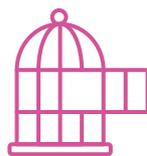
Rescue:

Locating and retrieving an animal that is in immediate danger or distress.



Rehabilitation:

Helping a rescued animal recover physically and behaviourally, in preparation for release into its original/ native habitat or adoption.



Release:

Returning a rehabilitated animal to its appropriate environment, either its original location or a more suitable habitat.

Who is mandated their care and protection in Bengaluru?



Karnataka Animal Welfare Board

Established under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1960), this statutory body is mandated regulatory oversight for all animal welfare entities within Karnataka state. At a city-level, this includes the registration and monitoring of dog breeders under the Breeding of Dogs Rules, and pet shops under the Pet Shop Rules, 2018. The body is also empowered to conduct inspections and raids.



The Solid Waste Management Department

Responsible for managing animal carcasses and maintaining sanitary conditions across the city. As of April 2025, the BBMP has been in a transition phase, to be split into multiple corporations; waste collection and management is being handed over to Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) - a government company.¹¹



GBA (Greater Bengaluru Authority)

Previously the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagar Palike (BBMP)
The GBA is Bengaluru's municipal corporation responsible for civic administration. It operates under the state government and carries out community animal welfare through its Animal Husbandry department.



The Horticulture Department

All of Bengaluru's parks fall under the BBMP Horticulture Department, which is responsible for day-to-day upkeep, hiring gardeners, pruning trees, maintaining lawns and flowerbeds, etc. The Park Preservation Committee, which includes members from the horticulture department, Forest Department, police, and citizen bodies, advises on significant decisions like events, infrastructure, or wildlife management.



The Animal Husbandry Department

The Department is responsible for budgeting and implementing Animal Birth Control (ABC) programs. It has issued Community Animal Welfare Guidelines, delineating the roles and responsibilities of feeders, Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), and other stakeholders. While the Department does not have regulatory authority over animal welfare NGOs, it engages with them through formal collaborations – such as for ABC centres.



Karnataka Fire Department

A statutory body established under the Karnataka Fire Force Act, 1964. It plays a supportive role in emergency situations involving animals (such as rescuing animals from wells, trees, or other hazardous locations, and evacuating them during disasters).



Karnataka Police

A statutory body operating under the jurisdiction of the state government's Home Department. In the context of animal welfare for community animals and urban wildlife, it can register and investigate complaints under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960; the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972; and Sections 428 and 429 of the Indian Penal Code (relating to mischief by killing or maiming animals).



Karnataka Forest Department

A statutory body established under the Karnataka Forest Act, 1963. It is mandated to enforce laws related to forest conservation and wildlife protection under various national and state regulations. The department has the authority to conduct raids, issue permits, and take legal action to ensure compliance. Wildlife rescue entities in Bengaluru city fall under the regulatory purview of this Department.

Which state and municipal laws govern the management and welfare of community animals?

As per Article 246(3) of the Constitution of India, Animal Husbandry is a state subject. Article 243(W) of the Constitution of India allows State legislatures to empower local bodies to perform functions and implement schemes. For instance, the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023, require local bodies to manage stray dog populations through sterilisation and anti-rabies vaccination programs. As per the Rule 10 of the "The Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023", the local authority is also responsible for providing facilities (such as sufficient kennels, and veterinary hospital facilities) for the implementation of the ABC program. In Bengaluru, municipal legislation such as BBMP Act and the Karnataka Police Act also provide regulatory authority relevant to community animal management. Solid Waste Management laws may apply in instances of improper waste disposal, which can impact the behaviour, safety, and welfare of community animals. In addition, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) and the Karnataka Department of Animal Husbandry have issued various guidelines, circulars, and administrative orders that govern specific aspects of animal welfare, population management, and public health.



What roles do Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) play in community animal welfare?

Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), as constitutionally mandated institutions of local self-governance, carry the primary responsibility for managing and safeguarding diverse animal populations within their territorial limits. This mandate spans the welfare and regulation of domesticated animals, livestock, and urban wildlife, and demands a balanced approach that integrates public health imperatives, community safety, and humane animal welfare practices. This includes:

- ✔ **Animal Birth Control and population management**, including implementation of ABC programs and provision of necessary infrastructure
- ✔ **Regulation of animal slaughter and slaughterhouse operations**, including licensing, species restrictions, protections for pregnant animals and young offspring, and enforcement of hygiene and veterinary standards
- ✔ **Regulation and management of animal markets** to prevent illegal trade
- ✔ **Oversight of pet trade**, serving as secondary licensing authorities
- ✔ **Supervision of animal facilities** such as pounds, dairy establishments, farrier services, and cattle premises, ensuring welfare and public health compliance through registration and monitoring
- ✔ **Disease control and prevention** for both owned and stray animals, supporting veterinary authorities, implementing preventive measures, and managing costs for ownerless animal

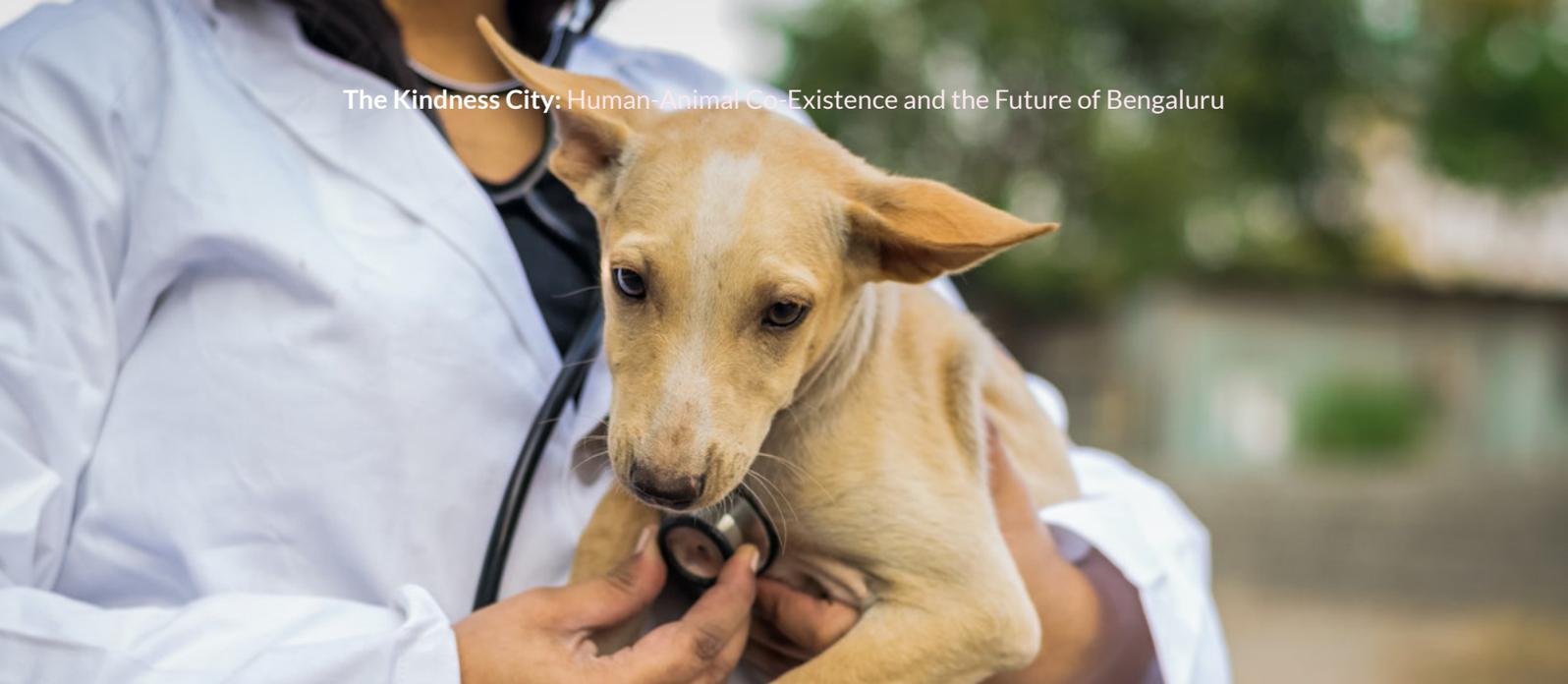


Photo: Anipixels.com

What common issues do community animals face?

Hunger and malnutrition

Canine Distemper

A serious, highly contagious (non-transmissible to humans) viral disease among dogs affecting the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems; often fatal if untreated.¹²

Canine Parvovirus (Parvo):

A life-threatening, contagious (non-transmissible to humans) virus causing severe vomiting and diarrhoea, particularly in puppies.¹³

Mange / Scabies:

Mite-caused skin conditions leading to itching, scabbing, and hair loss among dogs.¹⁴

Upper Respiratory Infections (URIs):

Commonly known as "cat flu"; affects the nose, throat, and sinuses; highly contagious in shelter or community settings (non-transmissible to humans).¹⁵

Conflict, accidents and intentional cruelty

Rabies:

A fatal viral disease that attacks the central nervous system and is transmissible to humans; preventable with timely vaccination.¹⁶

Feline Panleukopenia (FPL) / Feline Distemper:

A severe, often fatal viral infection (non-transmissible to humans) causing fever, vomiting, and immune suppression among cats.¹⁷

Tick and Flea Infestations:

Cause skin discomfort, anaemia in severe cases, and disease transmission among dogs and cats.¹⁸

Worm Infestations (Internal Parasites):

Intestinal parasites among dogs and cats.¹⁹

Urban wildlife in Bengaluru — especially pigeons, monkeys, bats, and rodents—also carry growing zoonotic risks. Pigeon populations have been linked to cryptococcal meningitis and hypersensitivity pneumonitis ("pigeon breeder's lung") in humans. Meanwhile, bats and rodents can carry pathogens like the Nipah virus and leptospirosis.²⁰

How is the One Health approach being implemented in India, and what positive outcomes have emerged from its initiatives?

There is a growing push toward a One Health approach in India to address the interconnected health of humans, animals, and the environment, particularly in the prevention and control of zoonotic diseases.

The Centre for One Health has been at the forefront of these efforts, implementing four national programs:

- 1 The National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP)
- 2 The National One Health Programme for Prevention and Control of Zoonoses (NOHP-PCZ)
- 3 The Programme for Prevention and Control of Leptospirosis (PPCL)
- 4 The National Programme for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming (NPSE).

These initiatives include the capacity building of healthcare professionals through specialized training on animal bite management and post-exposure prophylaxis, as well as the strengthening of laboratories for rabies diagnosis and management. Monthly monitoring of clinically suspected and laboratory-confirmed rabies cases is now conducted across all states, enabling timely surveillance and response. States such as Sikkim and Goa, which have achieved high coverage of dog vaccination, have shared their successful practices with other states, facilitating the wider adoption of effective strategies and contributing to improved outcomes in community animal health.²²

Chapter 2

Small Community Animals in Bengaluru



Photo: Anipixels.com

What Facts and Figures about Bengaluru's Community Animals Tell Us

The story of Bengaluru's community animals is emotionally loaded, but for long has been missing a key piece: species-specific empirical data. Understanding the scale and diversity of Bengaluru's community animal population begins with piecing together fragments of available data. The 2023 Stray Dog Census estimates about 279,335 stray dogs^v across Bengaluru.²¹ Yet, there is no comparable study for feral cats, who are an equally visible part of the city's streets and colonies. What little we know underscores the pace at which their numbers can

multiply: one unspayed female cat can produce a lineage of nearly 50 cats within three years. Beyond dogs and cats, the picture grows even more complex. Bengaluru's urban wildlife is vast but largely undocumented. Current records note 244 species of birds, 33 types of snakes, 9 types of lizards, around 20 species of bats, 7 small non-flying mammals like rodents and shrews, and 706 morpho-types of insects.

^v Although "Stray Dogs" is the legal term for homeless, ownerless dogs, practitioners in the space prefer to use the term "community dogs", as they are considered as vital members of the community.

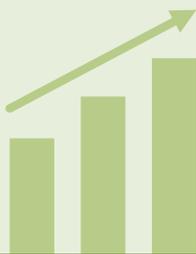
The documentation of community dogs^{vi} through the nation-wide Stray Dog Census over the past 1.5 decades is starting to fill data gaps. The BBMP has periodically recorded this figure as follows:



2007	183,000 ²³
2012	185,000 ²⁴
2019	309,975 ²⁵
2023	279,335 ²⁶ vii

This periodic documentation alone has significantly moved the needle in community animal management in Bengaluru. Today, 71.85% of the counted dog population is reportedly covered by the city's Animal Birth Control (ABC) and vaccination programs.²⁷ Notably, the BBMP is India's first municipal administration to deploy the 5-in-1 vaccine^{viii} for street dogs, and to pilot micro-chipping and geo-tagged collars to monitor them more effectively.²⁸ The Stray Dog Census also enabled further research on the population spread.

According to **OPEN CITY** a civic tech project that analyses public data through open-source research, these are the key trends for Bengaluru's stray dog population²⁹



- 1 The average number of stray dogs per square-kilometre of BBMP jurisdiction is 392
- 2 Not surprisingly, dogs don't go by human-made boundaries. Even though Dasarahalli is the city's smallest zone, it houses 762 dogs per square-kilometre, as opposed to the largest zone – Mahadevpura which has 344 dogs per square-kilometre
- 3 Since 2019, South Zone has made appreciable progress, from having the 2nd largest stray dog population density to now having lower than average density
- 4 While in 2019 the westernmost RR Nagara Zone had recorded the highest dog population, as of 2023, the easternmost Mahadevpura Zone records the highest dog population

^{vi} Although "Stray Dogs" is the legal term for homeless, ownerless dogs, practitioners in the space prefer to use the term "community dogs", as they are considered as vital members of the community

^{vii} This latest figure was the outcome of a rigorous process. Using a stratified random sample, the BBMP and the World Wide Veterinary Services Centre (WVSC) chalked out representative micro-zones and deployed a sight-resight methodology, wherein 20 enumerators would each spend 10 days across 10 zones counting and documenting dogs, followed by re-sight surveyors who'd verify the count.

^{viii} The 5-in-1 vaccination offers protection against the Canine Distemper Virus, Canine Adenovirus 1 and 2, Canine Parainfluenza, and Canine Parvovirus



Photo: Anipixels.com

What Practical Observations from the Ground Tell Us

Although the steady documentation of stray dogs has supported community animal management, it does not represent the full on-ground picture yet. Leading NGOs, who have been working on community animal welfare for over a decade, estimate Bengaluru's stray dog population to be more than double – at around 600,000.

Who doesn't get counted:

- **Transient populations:** Dog populations are transient, moving in and out of city boundaries, especially in the city's outskirts. This number, though not counted in the official number, adds significantly on the ground and continues to multiply. Any reduction in numbers due to city-wide ABC, is offset by packs just outside the ward boundaries.
- **Abutting areas:** Dog population hinges not only upon effective population management, but also regular waste management. This is evident in an emerging connection on the ground: there are corresponding increases in the human and stray dog population along BBMP peripheries - especially just beyond the eastern and southern city limits.³⁰ These peripheral areas, not covered by BBMP, are characterised by irregular solid waste management. Waste piles offer community animals a steady source of food, attracting large packs.
- **Abandoned animals:** A steady stream of street dogs originates from illegal backyard breeding, with unfit and unsold dogs often ending up on the street. These numbers are dynamic, but add to the population, multiplying quickly if not caught and neutered in time.

Where, Why and How Community Animals Inhabit the City

The behaviours and survival patterns of the entire population of small community animals is deeply shaped by the city's built environment, particularly spaces of food access, temporary shelter, and movement. Through field observations and interviews across the city, three spatial typologies have emerged as critical to understanding the human-animal interface: construction sites, food markets, and waste dumping yards. These sites, while distinct, are part of a connected urban web that significantly impacts animal welfare, public safety, and health outcomes.

Construction Sites



Construction sites across Bengaluru often serve as short-term food and shelter ecosystems for community animals, especially dogs. These sites frequently house labour colonies, where workers and their families cook on-site in makeshift kitchens and discard food scraps. This reliable food source – in addition to the fleeting companionship of the humans – draws dogs into the area, where they may form territorial packs.

However, the transitory nature of these sites creates a cycle of instability:

- **Due to limited financial resources and access**, and despite occasional attachment to the dogs, the labourers are unable to get the dogs neutered or vaccinated
- When construction is completed, **the labour population moves away**; they are unable to take along the dogs they fed
- **Dogs who are left behind**, become momentarily disoriented and vulnerable, until their hunger drives them to search for new food sources and shelter.

- **This migration and resource scarcity** increases incidences of pack conflict, dog aggression, human-animal conflict, and unmanaged reproduction
- **The lack of awareness among labour colonies**, especially young children, about zoonotic diseases such as rabies or canine distemper presents a serious public health risk. These groups often do not (and cannot) access civic information or veterinary support services, leaving dogs unvaccinated and untreated in densely populated settings

Eateries and Market Zones



Bengaluru's meat shops, fish markets, eateries, and food waste zones are regular hubs for community animals. The food waste generated in and around these venues draws them in in large numbers, especially during off-hours when clean-up is limited or delayed. While these sites provide a semblance of food security, they also introduce a series of hazards:

- **High human footfall** combined with the presence of animals leads to frequent conflict, including bite cases, feeding-related aggression, and fear-based reactions from the public

- Business owners and street vendors often respond to the animal presence with **harsh deterrence measures**—including beatings, scalding water, or poison
- **Animals, especially dogs, learn to associate these locations with food** and return repeatedly, escalating the cycle of cruelty and injury
- **For animals, these venues also pose physical risks.** The crowded streets and vehicular density in commercial areas such as Shivajinagar, KR Market, and Russell Market increase the likelihood of accidents and traumatic injuries as dogs attempt to crossroads or scavenge from moving vehicles

Waste Dumping Yards and Edge Ecologies



On the city's periphery, large and informal dumping yards (e.g., in Mavallipura, Kumbalgodu, and Doddaballapur Road) operate as semi-permanent ecosystems for community animals. Here, free-ranging dogs, pigs, cattle, and scavenging birds subsist on discarded food and organic waste. Key concerns observed at these sites include:

- **Exposure to toxic waste**, including plastics, meat refuse, and decomposing matter, which leads to disease outbreaks and chronic illness
- **High risk of zoonotic transmission**, with no veterinary oversight or animal health monitoring
- **Conflict with waste workers**; sometimes, even if the workers get along with the animals, they are unable to provide the animals with long-term food or care

- Despite being on the margins of the city, these zones are not isolated. Animals often migrate between waste yards and dense, low-income settlements, **spreading potential diseases and amplifying urban sanitation issues**

Roads, Metro Lines and Highways



Across these three site types, construction zones, food markets, and dumping yards, one common denominator is the movement of animals between them. In the absence of secure feeding locations or protected green spaces, urban animals are forced to navigate busy roads, highways, and construction corridors. This exposes them to several critical risks:

- **High incidence of road accidents**, especially near junctions, flyovers, and arterial roads like Outer Ring Road, NICE Road, and Tumkur Road
- **Injuries from vehicle impact**, including fractures, spinal damage, and death—often going unreported or unaided
- **Psychological trauma** and behavioural changes in dogs, including increased fearfulness, aggression, and territoriality
- From a human safety perspective, this increases the chance of **animal-related accidents**, particularly for two-wheeler riders and night-time drivers. The lack of cross-sector coordination between traffic planning, public health, and animal welfare agencies exacerbates the issue

Zooming into Dasarahalli: The Zone with Highest Stray Dog Density

This section visualises how community animals use space within a small cluster of wards in Bengaluru by mapping the places where they gather and the infrastructure that shapes their daily movement. To visualize the behaviour and survival patterns of small animals, key spots were mapped across three wards in the Dasarahalli zone. The rationale for choosing this study area is that Dasarahalli has the highest recorded dog population per square kilometre - 762 dogs per square kilometre, nearly double the city's average of 392.³¹ Therefore, the three wards of Bagalakunte, Mallasandra, and T Dasarahalli were chosen to show where this population migrates and where the conflict between small community animals and humans is the most intense.



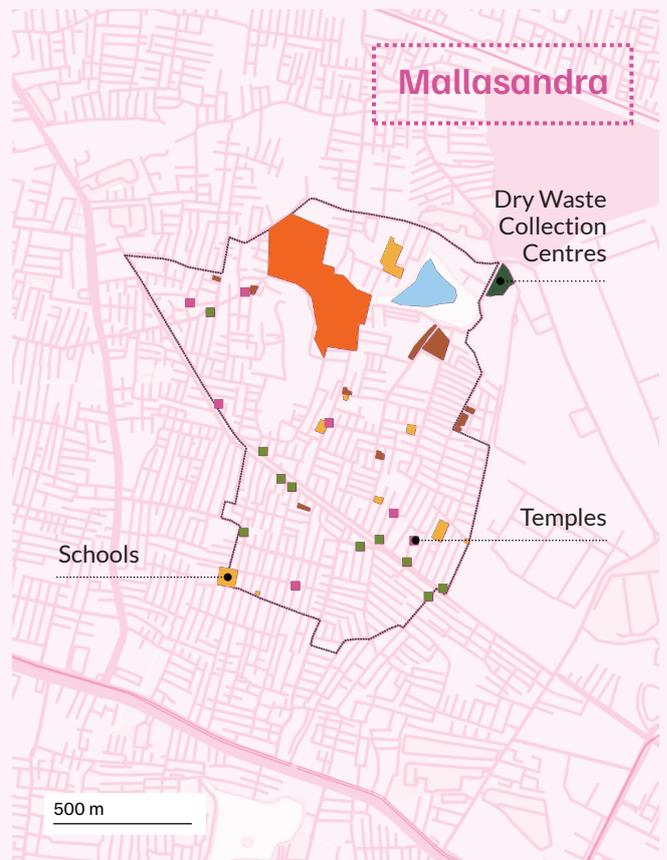
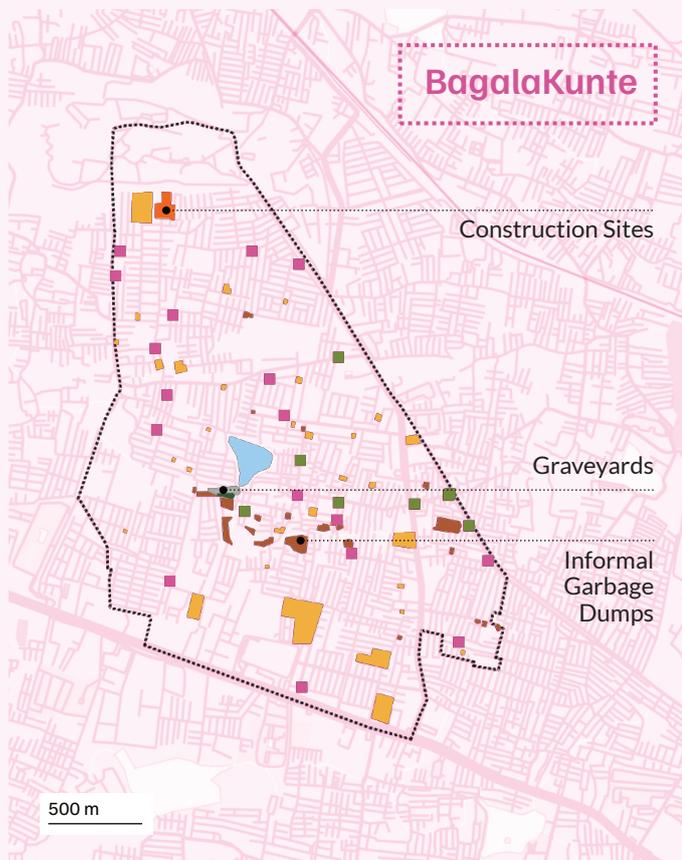
Ward Selection and Environmental Mapping Methodology

- 1 First, an initial analysis using Google Maps satellite view was conducted to identify land-use patterns for construction sites, informal garbage dumps, and Dry Waste Collection Centres.
- 2 Each potential site was then verified using Google Maps 360-degree Street View, a "virtual ground-truthing" process. This step also involved a temporal comparison of Street View imagery from circa 2022 and 2024-2025 to establish the persistence of informal dumps.
- 3 Public and commercial amenities known to attract animals, such as meat shops, temples, and schools, were located using the "search this area" feature and subsequently confirmed with Street View. Finally, all verified, geolocated data points were imported into QGIS, where each category was assigned a distinct symbol and colour.

Mapping key spots for small animal gatherings

LEGEND

- Construction Sites
- Informal Garbage Dumps
- Temples
- Schools
- Water Bodies (Lake)
- Graveyards
- Meat Shops
- Dry Waste Collection Centres



1. Food and Waste Hubs

These locations, which include eateries, small meat shops, and informal dumping points, tend to become natural gathering spots for community animals because food waste is often available there. The mapping reflects this clearly; for example, clusters of meat shops in T Dasarahalli and the concentration of informal garbage sites in Bagalakunte emerge as visible anchors for animal activity. However, this pattern reflects broader gaps in waste management rather than the practices of individual workers or residents. Many butchers and meat shop owners themselves live in difficult conditions and often share mutual familiarity and companionship with the dogs around them.

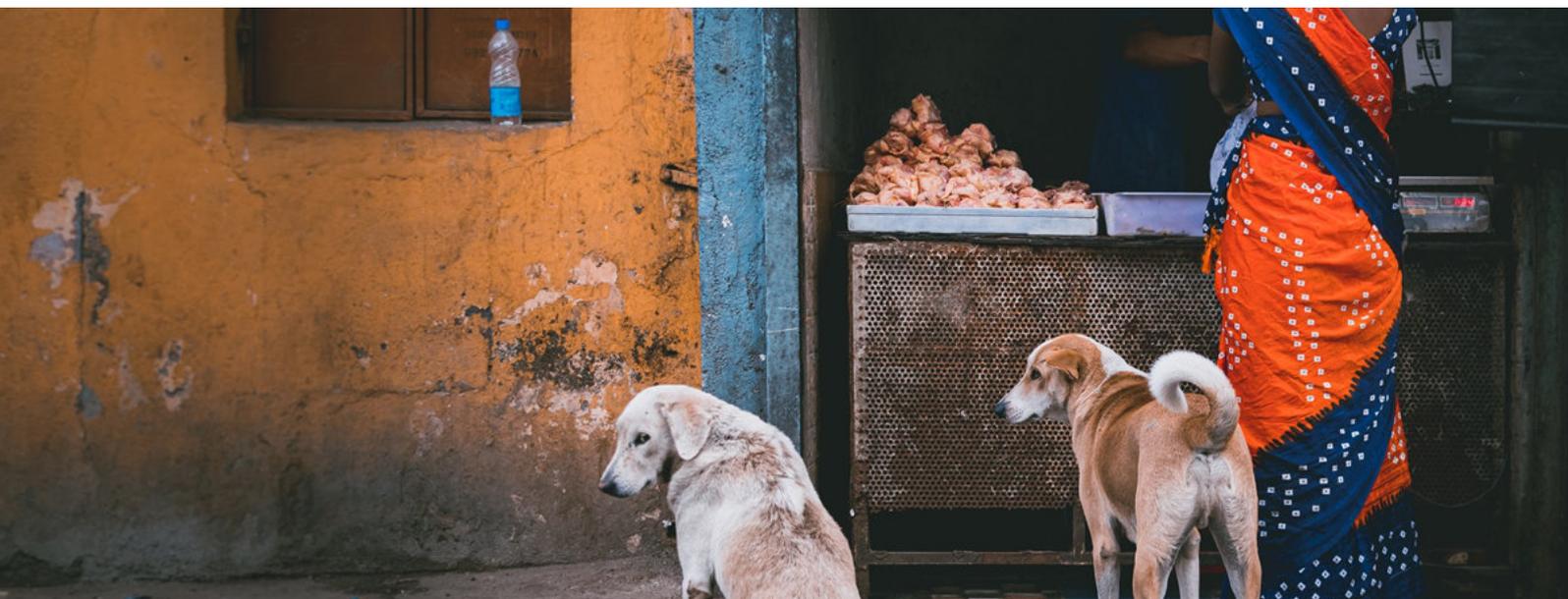
The reliance on these sites for food creates risks for both animals and people. Frontline veterinarians and NGO leaders described how unmanaged waste can draw large groups of animals, increasing the chances of conflict, fear-driven responses, and occasional injury. Animals foraging in these spaces are also exposed to contaminated waste, untreated illness, and potential disease transmission, especially when access to veterinary care is limited.

2. Shelter and Transient Spaces

Construction sites across the city serve as short-term ecosystems, offering both food and temporary refuge. This reality is illustrated across the study area, from the large, dominant construction site mapped in Mallasandra to the numerous smaller sites scattered throughout Bagalakunte. Dogs are attracted to construction sites by food scraps from labour colonies and companionship from transient workers. The workers cannot afford vet care like neutering or vaccinations. When the construction is finished and the workers leave, the dogs they fed are abandoned, leaving them disoriented and vulnerable. This abandonment triggers a cascade of negative outcomes, including increased pack conflict, dog aggression, and unmanaged reproduction. Additionally, it poses a serious public health risk, as unvaccinated dogs are left behind in densely populated areas.³²

Some animals find shelter in graveyards, a reality reflected in the mapping of Bagalakunte,. These spaces serve as pockets of relative silence with low human traffic, and graveyards allow vulnerable or fearful animals to exist without the immediate threat of conflict or cruelty that is common in more active urban areas.

Photo: Anipixels.com



3. Community and Resource Points

This category includes public spaces such as temples, schools, and water bodies, which function as critical points of convergence where animals navigate community life to access essential resources. The map of Mallasandra, for example, highlights a significant presence of both schools and temples, at temples, for instance, the human presence can be a source of sustenance. Animals are often drawn to food offered as religious alms or to the leftovers from community feasts. This interaction, however, is a double-edged sword; the same spaces that offer charity can quickly become points of conflict, where animals are violently chased away by some, even as they are fed by others.

A similar duality exists near schools. These areas often see positive interactions, where children form bonds with dogs and cats, offering them food and affection. Yet, this compassion from children can trigger fear in adults, who, concerned for the safety of their children, may respond with aggression, abusing the animals and driving them away.

Beyond these social interactions, the search for a simple resource like water reveals a constant challenge. The struggle to find clean drinking water is a daily reality, forcing animals to resort to contaminated sources like gutters or stagnant potholes, which can lead to illness and poisoning. While larger water bodies like lakes might offer a cleaner alternative, they are often rendered inaccessible by fences. The large, open water body mapped in T Dasarahalli underscores the critical importance of such resources, marking the area as a vital survival point and likely explaining its high animal population density.

Animal Healthcare Infrastructure Mapping Methodology

To understand how community animal healthcare is distributed and accessed in urban Bengaluru, we conducted a spatial analysis of veterinary infrastructure across the zone. This map forms the basis for assessing whether community animals and their caregivers can realistically reach timely and reliable care.

- **It began with a compilation of an initial dataset** of veterinary clinics, hospitals (government and private), NGOs, and shelters from diverse online sources, including business directories like JustDial, news publications such as the Bangalore Mirror and The Times of India, and data platforms like OpenCity Urban Data.
- **Each listed entity was then geolocated** using Google Maps.
- **A verification process was implemented** to confirm the operational status of each facility through a temporal analysis of user-generated reviews on Google Maps. A facility was considered operational if it had reviews within the last five months, while it was presumed non-operational if its most recent reviews were one to two years old. Any facilities marked "temporarily/ permanently closed" by Google, or described as such in user comments, were excluded. For Veterinary Universities, verification involved confirming a veterinary sciences department on their official websites.
- **The resulting figures are an estimate**, as the dataset may not capture all unregistered private clinics. Following verification, the finalized data was imported into QGIS to create the spatial representation of healthcare facilities.

Animal Healthcare Facilities in Dasarahalli

The spatial analysis of the Dasarahalli zone maps *where* community animals gather and the significant, daily risks they face. The congregation of animals at food hubs, construction sites, and waste dumps creates predictable epicentres of conflict, illness, and injury. This finding, however, begs a critical question: When these animals are harmed in these high-risk zones, where do they go for help?

The map "**Animal Healthcare Facilities in Bengaluru**" attempts to answer this question.

This gap is immediately apparent when we re-examine our high-need study area. The Dasarahalli zone, chosen specifically for its highest-in-the-city density of dogs and intense human-animal conflict, is a "care desert." The map confirms a startling absence: there are no government veterinary hospitals, NGOs, or animal shelters located within these three wards. The animals are, in effect, trapped in a high-risk environment with no accessible support system. Zooming out to the entire city, the map illustrates why this local deficit exists and how it is part of a city-wide systemic imbalance. The map's legend can be understood as three distinct systems of care, each with a different purpose and accessibility.

Veterinary University **2**

Veterinary Hospitals (Govt.) **20**

NGOs and Shelters **37**

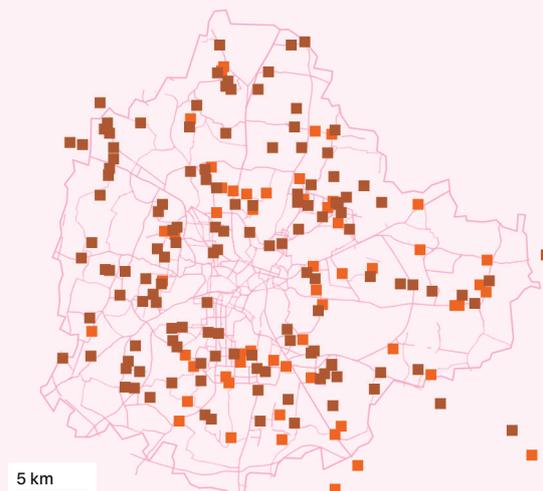
Veterinary Hospitals (Private) **61**

Veterinary Clinics (Private) **134**

Animal Healthcare Facilities in Bengaluru

The Private, For-Profit System

76.77%



Veterinary Clinics (Private) 134

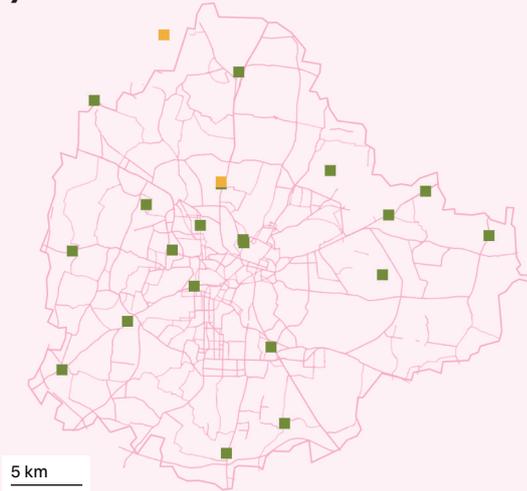
The **brown dots** on the map are private clinics. These are outpatient offices for routine wellness, like vaccinations, not for 24/7 emergency care. For community animals, these clinics are inaccessible barriers because they require payment and their services do not meet the high-trauma needs of street animals.

Veterinary Hospitals (Private) 61

The **orange dots** represent the system's critical care capacity. Unlike a clinic, a hospital is equipped for advanced, inpatient care. This is where 24/7 emergency services, major surgeries (like those needed after a road accident), and intensive care units (ICUs) are found. This is precisely the level of care an injured community animal often needs, but it is financially prohibitive. The cost of emergency surgery and a multi-day hospital stay can run into tens of thousands of rupees, an impossible sum for the average citizen or rescuer.

The Public, Under-Resourced System

7.87%



Veterinary Hospitals (Govt.) ————— **20**

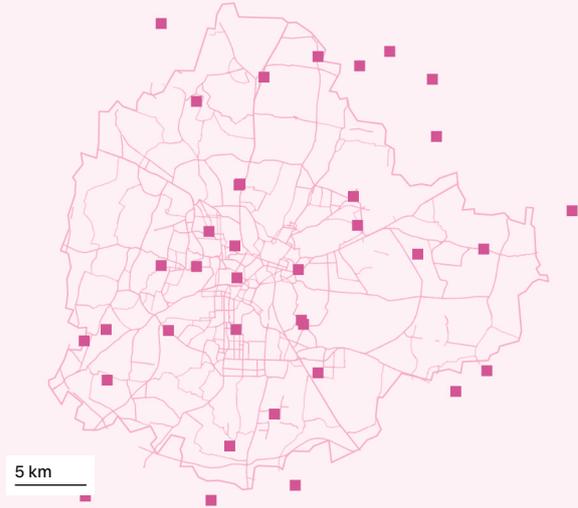
These sparse **green dots** represent the only low-cost, state-mandated option for the public. However, as the map shows, their scarcity makes them geographically inaccessible to most of the city. Furthermore, these facilities are under-resourced. A 2023 government order to shut down 28 urban clinics further limited affordable care, citing a need for vets in rural areas.³³ The remaining hospitals are often not open 24/7, lack specialized medicines, and do not have the capacity to handle the sheer volume of cases, leaving citizens with few, if any, viable options.

Veterinary University ————— **2**

The two **yellow dots** are specialized teaching hospitals, like the one at Hebbal. They are vital referral centres for advanced diagnostics and complex surgeries, but they are not and cannot be the city's first responders for emergency street trauma.

The Welfare System

14.57%



NGOs and Shelters ————— **37**

This brings us to the **pink dots**. This small group, representing just 14.57% of the city's facilities, is the *only* system functionally dedicated to rescuing, treating, and sheltering community animals. They are the de facto first responders, providing everything from emergency rescue and trauma care to sterilisation and long-term sanctuary.

This map, therefore, shows a private system built for a paying clientele, though many individual veterinarians and private hospitals offer pro-bono services or discounts to known rescuers and citizens bringing in stray animals. However, this depends on personal relationships and individual goodwill. It cannot be scaled to meet the city-wide demand. The central crisis of animal welfare in Bengaluru is visually clear: the 37 NGOs and shelters are shouldering the burden of the entire community animal population, a task the other 217 facilities are not designed to handle.

Chapter 3

NGOs for Community Animal Welfare in Bengaluru





Bengaluru's NGO community animal welfare ecosystem is diverse, active, and largely under-recognised. While an estimated 37 NGOs operate across the city, we were able to visit and verify 8 of them in depth. These groups span a wide spectrum of functions: rescue and rehabilitation, specialised and primary veterinary care, trauma and distemper units, geriatric care, adoption and fostering support, public awareness campaigns, and collaboration with the BBMP on population management. Alongside them are committed citizen collectives that shoulder hyperlocal caregiving within their neighbourhoods, often relying on their own resources to feed, foster, fundraise, and mediate with the community. Supporting this ecosystem are independent animal catchers – highly skilled individuals whose work requires long and patient hours of locating, identifying, building trust with, and humanely capturing frightened, injured, or elusive animals. Together, these actors form the backbone of community animal welfare in Bengaluru, filling critical gaps and enabling care where it is most needed.

SURVEY

- ✓ In April 2025, we conducted a survey to understand the challenges and resource needs of Bengaluru based NGOs working in small community animal welfare. The analysis below draws from the responses of 8 organisations. While the sample is not exhaustive, it offers a preliminary snapshot of how NGOs are responding on the ground.
- ✗
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

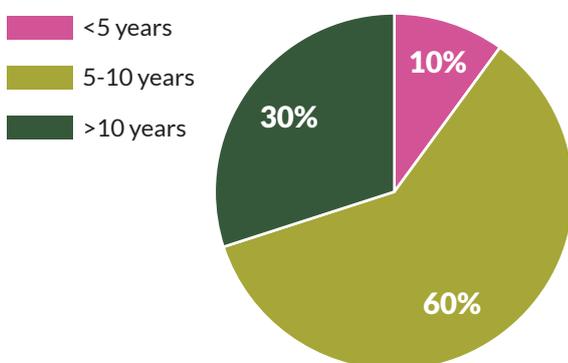
Survey Findings

Strong professional commitment in the sector:

Among organisations surveyed, 88% or of respondents work in animal welfare full-time and 100% employ full-time staff. None of the organisations rely exclusively on volunteers, however, 83% actively engage volunteers in their work. This blend of professional staffing and volunteer engagement reflects a hybrid workforce model that retains professional oversight and expertise, while tapping into community support for outreach, rescue, and care efforts.

Strong operational maturity: The animal welfare landscape in Bengaluru is marked by a cohort of experienced and resilient organisations. Most organisations (60%) have been active for 5 to 10 years, and 30% of the organisations have been operational for over a decade. This strong operational maturity signals a stable and knowledgeable ecosystem. These NGOs bring with them institutional memory, established partnerships, and proven models that are critical ingredients for sustained, scalable impact.

FIGURE 1 Operational Maturity



Dedicated physical infrastructure, but heavy reliance on rentals: All NGOs surveyed operate from a dedicated facility (offices, shelters, or clinics) highlighting the infrastructure-intensive nature of animal welfare work. However, 75% rely on rented spaces, which may limit long-term planning or the ability to customize facilities to meet evolving needs. This reliance on rentals could also reflect funding constraints, particularly around capital expenses, and may contribute to operational instability in the face of rising real estate costs or lease uncertainties.

Core Operations

FIGURE 2 Core Activities



Service delivery is the core focus:

50% of NGOs working in animal welfare in Bengaluru focus on service delivery, covering areas such as emergency medical services, mobile clinics, rescue and rehabilitation, neutering/spaying programs, feeding, and disease control. 88% of these organisations also rank service delivery as their core priority. This focus reflects an emphasis on filling gaps in essential services and addressing immediate health and welfare needs.

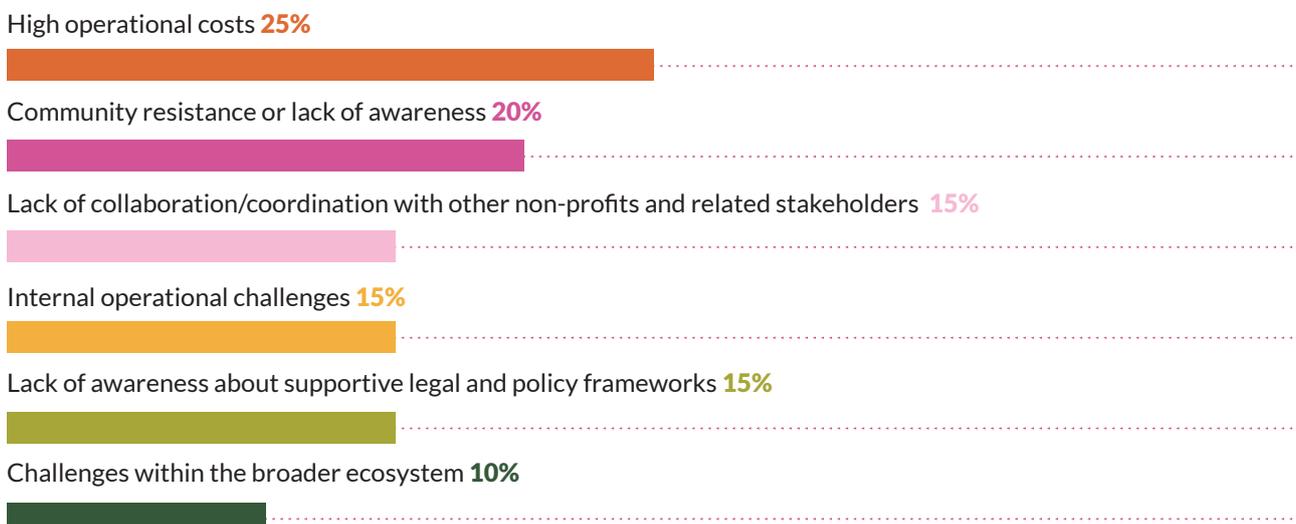
Limited engagement in ecosystem development:

Only 21% of NGOs reported involvement in ecosystem development activities, such as sector-wide knowledge sharing, policy engagement, joint capacity building, or research and evidence-building. This limited engagement may stem from the pressing and immediate nature of frontline animal welfare work. Most organisations are stretched thin delivering services, leaving little time, resources, or bandwidth for long-term sector-building efforts.

Key Challenges

While no single issue emerged as a dominant challenge, the survey revealed a spectrum of operational and structural hurdles faced by NGOs.

FIGURE 3 Key Challenges



25% of NGOs reported high operational costs as their biggest challenge: Most NGOs also struggle with a lack of core funding, since grants and donations are often tied to specific programs. This leaves recurring operational expenses uncovered, forcing founders to bear these costs personally. This lack of core support contributes to burnout among rescuers and staff, hampering the sector's ability to build retain experienced personnel.

"While CSR funding has helped us build a state-of-the-art surgical theatre and acquire advanced diagnostic equipment, it rarely covers operational expenses. It costs ₹15 lakhs per month to run the shelter, including ₹15,000 daily just for feeding."

- Colonel Dr. Navaz Shariff, Ex-DIG of Police, Chief Wildlife Veterinarian, and GM at People for Animals Wildlife Hospital

Lack of community awareness hinders timely response: 20% of NGOs identified low public awareness as a key challenge. This could stem from limited exposure to administering care, absence of clear reporting channels, or general indifference within communities. As a result, timely intervention by NGOs and rescuers becomes difficult, reducing the chances of effective care and recovery.

"There is a need to shift focus from passive reporting to empowering individuals to actively participate in rescue efforts. Many volunteers lack the knowledge or experience to handle situations, but through education and hands-on experience, they can be equipped to make a real difference."

- Debleena Das, Volunteer

Limited collaboration weakens sector effectiveness: Collaboration and coordination with other NGOs and stakeholders was reported as a challenge by 15% of respondents. This suggests that Bengaluru's animal welfare ecosystem may be functioning through a fragmented network of NGOs, independent rescuers, and foster homes. This perceived lack of coordination could be contributing to overlaps in effort and suboptimal use of limited resources.

Photo: Anipixels.com



Funding Landscape

Most animal welfare organisations in Bengaluru operate with modest budgets:

Half of the NGOs surveyed operate on modest annual budgets of ₹10-50 lakhs, and only a quarter cross the ₹2 crore mark. Notably, no organisation reported a budget above ₹10 crores. With 63% of NGOs facing funding shortfalls in 2023–24, most remain stretched for resources, limiting their ability to scale or sustain services amid rising demand.

Limited engagement from institutional donors: The sector remains heavily reliant on individual donations (42%) and CSR (21%), with only 6% of NGOs reporting support from international donors or family foundations. This reliance on short-term and often fragmented funding streams may hinder long-term strategic planning. Social media and crowdfunding contribute a mere 4%, suggesting that digital fundraising remains untapped or underutilized within the sector.

FIGURE 4 Annual Budget

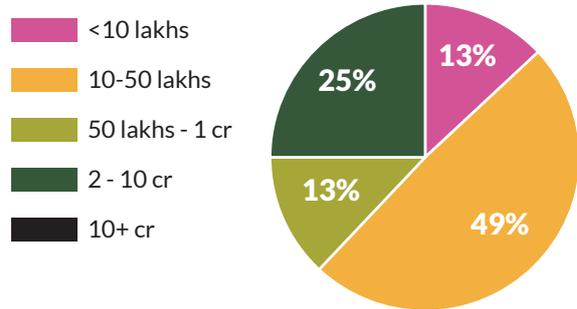


FIGURE 5 Sources of Funding

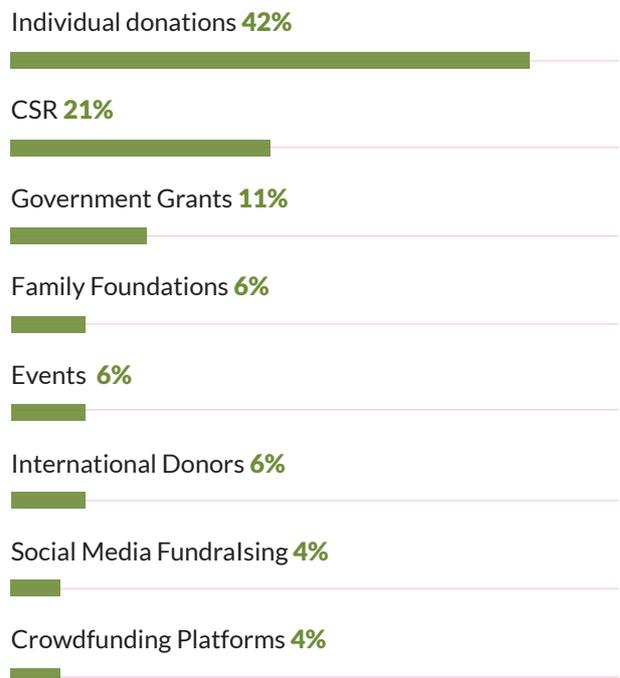


Photo: Anipixels.com





Photo: Anipixels.com

Cost and Operational Metrics for Community Animal NGOs

Running a community animal NGO is like managing a small, emergency city. Just as a city requires land for infrastructure (shelters and facilities), regular staff (caretakers, doctors, and rescuers), constant utilities (electricity and water), and huge volumes of provisions (food and medicine), an NGO must continuously manage these high fixed costs to keep its mission operational and serve its 'citizens' (the animals under its care):

Key Findings:

- 1 Animal welfare operations require massive scale, and high investment and fixed costs
- 2 Land and shelter are major commitments
- 3 The largest recurring expenses are directly tied to the animals' daily needs and medical care, reflecting a high level of dependency on consistent supplies
- 4 Medical care is critically expensive
- 5 Staffing requires large teams, both specialized and non-specialized
- 6 Rescue and mobility are key, high-cost functions

To protect the privacy of the organisations that participated in this study, all names have been anonymised. The following section presents an indicative picture of the scale, staffing, and operational costs associated with running community animal shelters and rescue services in Bengaluru. These figures are not meant to be exhaustive; rather, they illustrate the kinds of resources required to sustain essential care for community animals.

Size of land needed to run a shelter

Shelters often require significant land, sometimes measured in acres. For instance, Shelter A operates on 4 acres of land and rents an additional 18 acres for expanded and specialised healthcare facilities for community animals.

Average animal inmates

Large shelters may house several hundred animals. Shelter A reports caring for approximately 800 dogs across its facilities. Its geriatric care unit (set up for aged community dogs) houses 106 dogs, while the Central Care Unit houses 95. The organisation also maintains around 250 cages. Another organisation, Rescue Organisation B, reported rescuing, treating, and releasing approximately 2,500 wild animals in a single year – including birds, squirrels, and reptiles.

Average rental cost

Rental or lease-related costs can represent major commitments, often reaching several million rupees. Shelter A lists an annual rent expenditure of INR 3,000,000, while Shelter D reports a similar lease amount. Shelter A also pays rent on an additional 18 acres for shelter operations.

Average staff members

Staffing varies significantly depending on organisational scale and model, ranging from volunteer-run operations to large professional teams. Shelter A employs around 40 staff members, including:

- **Pet Hospital:** 3 doctors and 5 support staff
- **Geriatric Unit:** 5 staff for 106 dogs
- **Central Care Unit:** 4 staff for 95 dogs
- **Rescue Operations:** 25 caretakers, 20 catchers, and 1 full-time doctor
- **Rescue Organisation B** employs 10 rescuers.
- **Other roles** commonly found across organisations include rescue coordinators, drivers, wildlife rehabilitation specialists, catchers, communications staff, veterinarians, ground personnel, and outsourced auditing/finance teams.
- **A smaller citizen-led collective**, Neighbourhood Care C, has 30 volunteer members.

Average salaries:

For larger organisations, salaries form a major monthly expenditure. Shelter A reports monthly salary expenses of INR 1,000,000. For Shelter D, salaries are grouped with electricity, water, food, medication, and ambulance costs into a combined monthly expenditure of INR 40,000.

Electricity and water supply costs

These are essential operating expenses. Shelter A lists electricity and water supply clearly as recurring costs. Shelter D includes these utilities in a combined monthly expenditure of INR 40,000 alongside salaries, food, medicines, and ambulance operations.

Food costs

Food is a major, continuous expense. Shelter A reports monthly food costs of INR 500,000. In some funding allocations, approximately 20% of total funds go toward food. Typical monthly quantities include 6,500 kg of rice and 4,500 kg of chicken. Neighbourhood Care C also identifies food as a basic recurring need.

Medicine costs

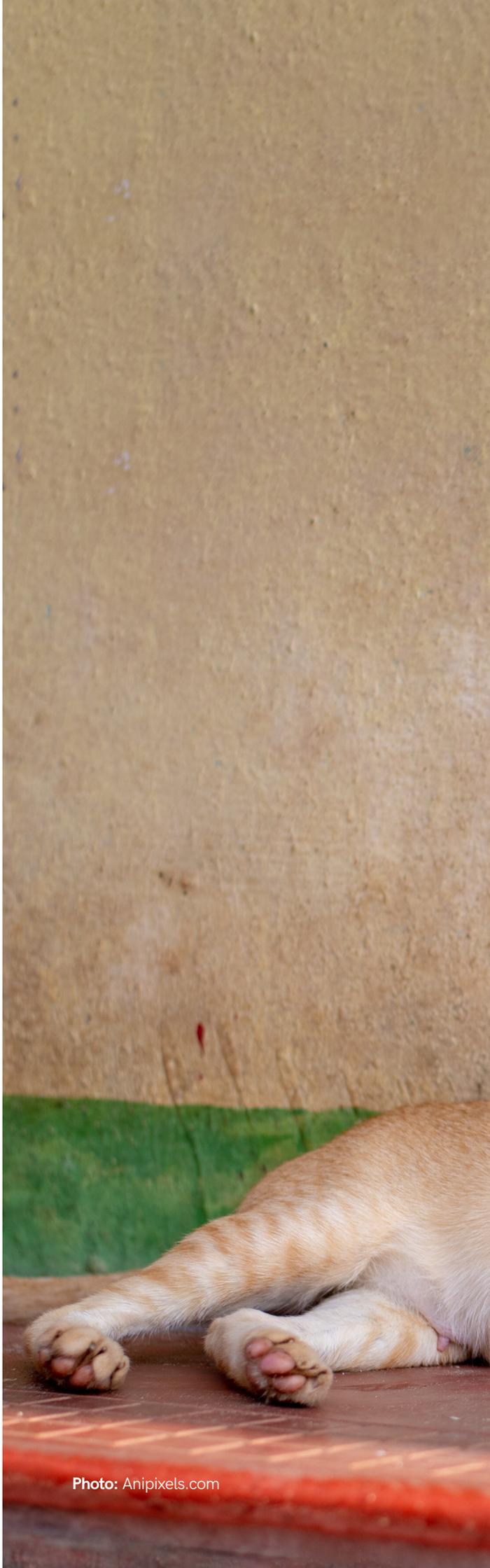
Medical supplies and treatment form another substantial monthly cost. Shelter A reports medicine expenses of INR 300,000 per month. In some operating budgets, around 25 percent of funds are allocated to basic medicines.

Average distance covered per month by a rescue ambulance

Based on 12 months of compiled ambulance logs from Shelter E, vehicles travelled an average of 3,621 km per month (43,453 km annually). Monthly distances ranged from 2,658 km to 4,849 km.

Average fuel cost

Fuel expenses for rescue ambulances averaged approximately INR 25,324 per month over the year. Monthly fuel costs varied between INR 14,492 and INR 37,000.



Action Landscape in Stories and Interventions



This chapter presents case profiles of NGO organisations and community-led groups that form the backbone of Bengaluru's community animal welfare ecosystem. The profiles that follow highlight how these NGOs and collectives carry out core functions such as rescue, rehabilitation, primary and specialised healthcare, adoption support, population management, and community engagement. They also illustrate the often-unseen labour of citizen volunteers, foster networks, and independent animal catchers whose skills and commitment enable humane care for injured, abandoned, or vulnerable community animals. Together, these cases offer a grounded view of how welfare work is organised on the ground, the challenges these actors navigate, and the critical role they play in shaping a more compassionate urban environment.





CJ Memorial Trust

Institution Building, Empowered Neighbourhood Networks, Strategic Policymaking

CJ Memorial Trust exemplifies a holistic model for community animal welfare by combining systemic reform, infrastructure development, and community-driven action. Its work demonstrates how strong institution-building, empowered neighbourhood networks, and strategic policymaking can collectively support humane, sustainable human-animal co-existence in a rapidly evolving urban environment. Serving as a bridge between citizens and the state, the Trust provides authorities with grounded insights that strengthen institutions, processes, and public programmes.

The Trust's operational strategy is anchored in three interconnected pillars:

1) Government Collaboration

Providing authorities with field-level knowledge and practical recommendations to establish, refine, and manage animal welfare systems, institutions, and policies. This includes:

Drafting practical policy proposals:

- ✔ **Revitalized the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)**, which had been defunct for a decade, and drafted key by-laws for the body
- ✔ **Provided the Karnataka Animal Welfare Board with insights** from the ground to implement systemic processes for community animal issues
- ✔ **Supported the Karnataka State Government to declare rabies as a Notified Disease**, establish a Rabies Helpline and a chain of command for monitoring and addressing rabies cases
- ✔ **Promote responsible pet adoption** through the idea of implementing a generalized standard tax (GST) for dog breeders - ensuring greater transparency in dog breeding and sales, curbing illegal backyard breeding, preventing animal health complications, and encouraging the adoption of homeless indies

Supporting infrastructure development:

- ✔ **Supported BBMP in building 3 animal crematoria** in the city, enabling dignity in death for deceased companion and community animals
- ✔ **Supported the Cubbon Park Authority in promoting awareness about resident snakes**, setting protocols for snake-bite cases and getting nearby clinics and hospitals to stock anti-venom

- ✔ Supported the Cubbon Park Authority in removing fatal metal spikes all along the perimeter fence, where community animals often got impaled while trying to venture in and out of the park

2) Community Mobilisation

Building organised neighbourhood-level networks of caregivers who undertake everyday welfare functions—from feeding and first response to monitoring, fundraising, and strengthening community-animal relationships. This includes:

Collectivizing proximate caregivers:

- ✔ Organised and trained 1500 volunteers into 63 self-sustaining, hyperlocal "Canine Squads" across neighbourhoods in Bengaluru (and 3 more in rural Bengaluru), who act as local caregivers and guardians for community animals, support BBMP with neutering and vaccination drives, and rescue, foster and rehabilitate indies. These squads also foster trust and collaboration with proximate law enforcement officials and ward committees, collaborating with them on a case-by-case basis
- ✔ Draft letters for/enabling pro-bono legal aid to rescuers and feeders who run into conflict with neighbours/ others over issues of community animal care
- ✔ Built trust and inroads for the BBMP into unreached, private or marginal areas like military quarters - where several canine packs reside - for neutering and vaccination

Building public awareness:

- ✔ Launched public campaigns like "Not Without My Dog" and #IndieProud, pushing back against measures placing curbs on pet ownership, and promoting the adoption of indies (especially three-legged dogs)
- ✔ Started Cubbon Park Canines - an initiative to utilize Cubbon Park as a space for companion animals and their humans to come together and socialize, and a way to promote responsible pet ownership, and indie adoption

3) Animal Care

Enhancing local veterinary infrastructure and fostering a rapid-response ecosystem of experts capable of delivering accessible and affordable care. This includes:

Enabling access to veterinary healthcare:

- ✔ Revitalized a government-run veterinary hospital at Queen's Road into a 24/7 rapid-response, fully stocked and staffed hospital for low-cost veterinary care

Building service delivery networks:

- ✔ Building a network of animal care service providers: visiting vets, groomers, trainers, behaviourists, fosters, pet-sitters - with the vision that readily available services such as this will encourage more people to care for, adopt and house companion animals

Milestone Achievements:

➤ Transforming Queen's Road Veterinary Hospital

CJ Memorial Trust played a central role in transforming the government veterinary hospital on Queens Road from a limited daytime facility into a full-service, 24/7 hospital. Previously open only from 10 AM to 5 PM and often staffed by a single doctor, the hospital was largely inaccessible during emergencies. Over four months, the Trust undertook an intensive effort to implement night shifts for government vets, bring in private veterinarians, upgrade equipment, and improve standards of care. Daily attendance was monitored, and systemic reforms such as CD vaccinations and microchipping were introduced. The Trust also partnered with BBMP to establish spay facilities for CD-affected dogs. Today, the hospital operates around the clock with 24 doctors and offers essential services like X-rays and blood tests at subsidised rates (₹10–₹50), making care accessible for underserved communities. While the transformation has had a significant impact, sustaining improvements remains a challenge due to administrative changes, with some initiatives, like the CD spay program, already rolled back – underscoring the need for continued engagement and oversight.

➤ Project Gravities: Bringing ABC to the Margins

During a walk initiated by Priya Chetty-Rajagopal, volunteers discovered over 100 unneutered dogs living across four cemeteries (Indian Christian, Western Christian, Muslim, and Hindu), many of them malnourished, abandoned, or breeding. In the first cemetery alone, 40 dogs were found, including lactating mothers and pups, with some already dead from starvation. The Trust named the initiative “Project Gravities”, with the cemetery dogs affectionately referred to as “gravities.” A feeding programme was established to manage the population humanely, reduce conflict with cemetery visitors, and improve the dogs' well-being. This programme, while critical, is resource-intensive and requires ongoing internal fundraising. To address the population more sustainably, the Trust worked with BBMP to introduce humane catching methods using feeding cages—a method previously piloted successfully in Cubbon Park. After initial hesitation, BBMP adopted the approach, manufacturing and deploying cages in the cemetery and three other graveyards. In Richmond Town alone, 14 dogs have already been caught and neutered this way, with a long-term goal to sterilise the entire population.

₹ Funding and Sustainability

The Trust currently relies on membership contributions, fundraising efforts, and internally mobilised resources. It has leveraged its networks to secure significant benefits, such as discounted services (including a 35% discount for supported Indie dogs at select hospitals). However, the team recognises the need for a more structured and sustainable funding approach. Priya Chetty-Rajagopal, founder, notes that fundraising has largely been a “one-person exercise,” underscoring the importance of securing steady institutional funding to scale operations and hire essential staff. Sustaining major gains—such as the Queen's Road Hospital transformation—also requires continued oversight, especially in the context of administrative turnover.



Avian and Reptile Rehabilitation Centre (ARRC) Community Stewardship for Bengaluru's Wildlife

For a rapidly urbanising metropolis like Bengaluru, where non-domestic animals (birds, reptiles, urban wildlife) increasingly share space with humans, organisations like ARRC play a critical function. They demonstrate that humane coexistence is possible, provided there is will, expertise, infrastructure, and sensitivity. By offering free-of-cost rescue, rehabilitation, and release services along with public education, ARRC embodies a model of professional wildlife care in an urban setting. Its founder, Jayanti Kallam, used to work as a computer engineer in New York City, where she first got interested in urban wildlife. "Birds would keep colliding with the city's skyscrapers," she recalled. In 2012, she quit her job to become a certified rehabilitator. Wildlife rehabilitation centres were well established in the USA, but not back in India. Jayanti decided to start building the infrastructure in India, and while considering options – Bengaluru, with its parks and lakes, felt like the right place. Along with Saleem Hameed, a pioneer in wildlife conservation, she set up ARRC here.

"It became very clear that many people in India care about wildlife, but the formal, scientific part of taking care of them, the finances in particular make it a little bit difficult to provide the highest standards of rehabilitation. So, that looked like an opportunity for me because I was exposed in the USA to different wildlife rehabilitation centres that had existed for years. So, I wanted to get some of that knowledge and evidenced based rehabilitation process back to India."

-Jayanti Kallam, Co-Founder, ARRC

Intervention Model: Minimum Resources, Efficiency, Maximum Impact

1) The ARRC Model is based on key tenets:

- 1 People who find urban wildlife in need cannot afford to bring them to a centre
- 2 Wildlife in need must be approached with discretion and transported extremely delicately
- 3 Animals carry zoonotic diseases, and therefore knowledge, expertise and awareness are key

2) Team constitution:

Based on this, ARRC is a team of professionals comprising the following rescuers, wildlife rehabilitators, animal caretakers, communications and outreach team, veterinarians, ground personnel (cleaners). The induction of the staff into ARRC is highly systematic and sympathetic. They are not necessarily trained in wildlife rescue/ rehabilitation – but if they are passionate about animals, the rest is taken care of through training. Initially, when someone joins, they shadow a senior rescuer and learn by watching them on the job and through one-on-one coaching.

3) Emphasis on process:

ARRC adopts a highly systematic approach to responding to calls for rescue.

- **Helpline:** ARRC has an emergency helpline through which they receive calls for rescue. At the other end is Rescue Coordinator, who begins by assessing the situation, gathering essential details from the caller, and determining the kind of help the animal needs. Based on this assessment, they decide the safest approach and assign the rescue team best equipped to handle the case.
- **Inter-organisational coordination:** ARRC is connected with the 2 other wildlife rescue NGOs in Bengaluru on a WhatsApp group, through which they coordinate on addressing calls for rescue. This helps each NGO optimize their vicinity, and for all 3 to efficiently cover ground. They do so without interfering on programmatic decisions.
- **Rescue:** the team obtains as much information as possible, plans the rescue approach in advance, aligns with the team, and executes it with minimal stress to the animal. Every rescued animal is brought back to the rehabilitation centre immediately so treatment can begin without delay. This disciplined approach allows the team to work efficiently, respond to more cases, and ensure timely care. Each rescue is documented, and this documentation is, in turn, used to provide feedback on technique.
- **Rehabilitation:** ARRC has two centres – one in Bengaluru city, and the other on the outskirts. The shelters are equipped with centres to rehabilitate all wild birds, small mammals - squirrels, hares and all species of bats, and all reptiles.



Operations and Rescue Work Milestones

- **Rescue volume and species diversity:** According to recent reports, ARRC rescued over 7,880 animals in 2024 alone, covering 123 species, including birds (over 6,800 rescues), reptiles (528), and mammals (487).
- **Rescue frequency and coverage:** On average, ARRC carries out around 90 rescues per week. Their rescuers operate across multiple zones of Bengaluru – often beginning early and working late – to bring injured or distressed wildlife back to the centre, administer treatment, and release them back into appropriate habitats once they recover.



Funding

ARRC is 50% self-funded, 40% through Corporate Social Responsibility funds, and 10% through word-of-mouth one-time funds. ARRC does not charge the public for any rescues undertaken.



Pranaa Animal Foundation

A pioneer in cat welfare in the city

Pranaa Animal Foundation's cat rehabilitation centre at Yelachenahalli is India's first post-care unit for cats and Bengaluru's first dedicated cat rehabilitation and adoption centre. Founded by actress Samyukta Hornad and animal rights activist Aniruddha Ravindra, the centre offers comprehensive services for both stray and pet cats, which include emergency care, post-operative treatment, rehabilitation, and adoption support. Pranaa also operates their own dedicated ambulance service and helpline since 2023 which works throughout the city to rescue and transport animals in distress. Samyukta has volunteered with CUPA in the past and is also the ambassador for People for Animals as well as Wildlife SOS.

Pranaa offers a range of services such as emergency care, post-operative treatment, rehabilitation, and adoption support for cats.

- ✔ **Cat-Affirming Centre Infrastructure:** Pranaa takes in various types of cases, including abandoned kittens and animal cruelty cases. Post vaccination of the cats and treatment, they take the cats under their care until the cats are rehomed. The facility is constructed using eco-friendly materials and features sunlit areas, proper ventilation, and noise-reducing tin roofs to cater to the behavioural needs of cats. The centre's design also includes features like vertical spaces for climbing, hiding spots for security, and quiet areas to minimize stress, all of which are essential for cats. Providing these elements allow cats to express natural behaviours, such as perching and retreating, which are crucial for their development. Additionally, the facility maintains an optimal population density to prevent overcrowding, which can exacerbate the spread of infections. Implementing protocols such as isolation/quarantine rooms that help in disease control and reducing stress of infected cats. While cat facilities may not require as much space as those for larger animals, efficient use of available space is critical, which can be seen in Pranaa's case. The centre has designed multi-functional areas and has ensured proper ventilation and lighting and meeting all these specific requirements are essential for meeting the specific needs of cats, which is what makes a cat dedicated centre so unique and different from any other animal centre.
- ✔ **Ambulance Service:** Pranaa operates a fleet of four ambulances that respond to a wide range of animal distress calls across Bengaluru. While primarily focused on cats and dogs, these ambulances also assist with larger animals such as stray horses, cows, and donkeys. The service covers up to 80 kilometres within the city, providing free transportation for stray and abandoned animals. However, pet owners are required to pay for the service. It's important to note that the ambulance service is limited to transportation; it does not include medical treatment

Milestone Achievements

➤ In 2023, Pranaa Animal Foundation launched a 24/7 animal ambulance service in Bengaluru, partnering with Tekion, a technology company, under its CSR initiative. This was a response born from founders Samyukta and Aniruddha's extensive experience in animal rescue. Through their hands-on work, they recognized a critical gap in the rescue process: the lack of reliable transportation for injured animals requiring urgent veterinary care. This break in the chain often led to delays in treatment, exacerbating the animals' suffering and reducing their chances of recovery. Acknowledging that many rescuers faced similar challenges, Pranaa prioritised establishing this ambulance service to bridge the transportation gap.

➤ Building upon this success, Pranaa identified another significant gap in the city's animal care infrastructure: the absence of dedicated facilities for cats. In 2025, Pranaa Animal Foundation, in collaboration with Tekion, inaugurated Bengaluru's first dedicated cat rehabilitation and adoption centre in Yelachenahalli. This facility was established to fill a significant void in the city's animal care infrastructure, as there were numerous shelters for dogs but none specifically for cats. The centre offers comprehensive services, including emergency care, rehabilitation, and adoption support, thereby addressing the needs of abandoned and injured stray cats. The centre also is known to be India's first centre for post-operative care for cats.



Staffing:

The organisation comprises a team of 9 members who manage daily operations, all staff members are trained in paramedics. Including the two founders, the team includes caretakers who remain on-site 24/7, drivers responsible for transporting animals, and managers who primarily address distress calls. Beyond the core team, Pranaa benefits from the active involvement of its founders. Samyukta Hornad leverages her social media presence to raise awareness and promote responsible pet ownership. There is a strong support system that includes Samyukta's social media following as well as her own connections. She credits the centre's adoption success—averaging 6 to 7 adoptions per month—to her large following and engagement on platforms like Instagram.



Funding:

Pranaa operates through a collaboration with Tekion, a cloud-native automotive retail platform provider. This partnership, part of Tekion's corporate social responsibility initiatives, supports the centre's operations and infrastructure. Other than this they rely on retail funding, donations and their personal reserves.



Needs and Future Outlook

- **Closing the gap in feline population management:** The ABC programs in Bengaluru focus predominantly on dogs, leaving a significant gap in feline population management. This lack of infrastructure for cats results in unchecked breeding, leading to more cats suffering from neglect, disease, and abuse. The founders aim is to establish a specialized centre that would enable Pranaa to conduct high-volume and low-cost sterilisations or free of cost sterilisations for stray cats.
- **Expanding rescue to overlooked species:** At present, Pranaa has one physical centre which is dedicated to cats and it runs on full capacity. They want to expand the kinds of animals they rescue and rehabilitate and include more animals, specifically the overlooked and “unappealing” ones, like insects and reptiles. The founders noted that there are efforts by other NGOs like People for Animals and Avian and Reptile Rehabilitation Centre, that are doing this work but there is still a long way to go in terms of sensitizing people about the role such species play in the urban ecosystem. They mainly want to focus on the awareness and education aspect of it along with rescue.
- **Driving behaviour change through education and awareness:** Pranaa wants to work with the state Department of Education and enter the education space and specifically work towards influencing the curriculum of public policy at the college and university level. The founders are of the belief that public policy and administration play a key role on how animal welfare is implemented however, current academic curricula lack dedicated content on animal welfare, leading to a gap in prioritisation when it comes to policymaking.



Stray Love

A Tested Model for Structured Volunteerism

Stray Love is a volunteer-driven animal welfare initiative based in the Good Earth Malhar community in Kengeri, Bengaluru. The group focuses on the welfare of stray dogs in the area, coordinating efforts in feeding, sterilisation, and rehabilitation. Formed by residents of Good Earth Malhar, the group initiated its activities to address the increasing population of stray dogs in their locality. Initially, volunteers faced challenges in garnering support from the community, with some residents and property owners expressing reservations about their efforts. Over time, however, the tangible impact of the group's initiatives became evident, leading to a shift in perception. What began as resistance transformed into active support, with residents now contributing through donations and other means.

Building on this momentum, the group's efforts have expanded to include partnerships with local institutions and broader community engagement initiatives, further enhancing their impact in the area. The core team of the group comprises Rupaparna, Vydehi, and Arundhati, each bringing distinct strengths to the volunteer group. Rupaparna's home serves as an infirmary for rescued animals; she manages multiple pets and receives support from her mother in handling household responsibilities. Professionally, Rupaparna works as an independent HR consultant and focuses on strategic planning for the group. Vydehi, who relocated from the U.S., holds a full-time job in documentary filmmaking – focused mainly on biodiversity and conservation. She leverages her creative expertise to enhance the group's outreach and publicity efforts. Arundhati, employed in the development sector, is deeply involved in animal rescue operations alongside her husband. She also oversees the group's financial matters, ensuring effective resource management.

Programs and infrastructure:

- ✔ **Operational scope:** The group operates across 10 designated zones in Kengeri, focusing on feeding, sterilisation, and vaccination of stray dogs.

Key partnerships and community engagement:

- **Hydration stations for all community animals:** Stray Love partners with Water for Voiceless to ensure stray dogs have access to water, especially during the harsh Bengaluru summer. The group leverages relationships with local guards who regularly ensure water bowls for dogs are kept full.
- **Pilot on mutual caregiving:** Stray Love has partnered with a local orphanage to provide shelter for their rescued dogs, covering all maintenance costs. The orphanage staff ensures timely feeding, basic treatment, and grooming, with children assigned these tasks under the supervision of the warden. This collaboration brings together two vulnerable groups – rescued animals and orphaned children – fostering mutual care and understanding. For the children, caring for the animals instils responsibility and empathy, and some have been inspired to consider careers in animal welfare. For the dogs, this partnership ensures they receive consistent care



Staffing

Stray Love is primarily composed of volunteers from the Good Earth Malhar community. The group coordinates over WhatsApp and follows a structured roster system. Specific roles like fund raising, finance management, public relations management are taken up voluntarily by the members and each member typically gives 10-12 hours per week as most are full time employees.



Funding

The group has established a consistent system through membership fees, and monthly donations from the residents of the Good Earth community. They also engage in various fundraising activities, such as selling calendars featuring illustrations created by an artist in their network, to support their initiatives. Most of their funding is through personal contacts and members are largely dependent on their personal reserves to fund rescue efforts and for treatment of rescue cases.



Support system

Volunteers attribute their ability to balance full-time jobs with volunteer commitments to the support they receive from their families and friends. Many volunteers are employed full-time and some have pets to care for. Household and caregiving responsibilities are primarily managed by their families, allowing volunteers to dedicate time and energy to both their professional and volunteer roles.



Current Challenges

Due to its informal structure, the group faces limited access to consistent funding sources.

Operating entirely through volunteers, the group heavily relies on their passion and motivation. This informal setup has led to challenges in structuring efforts and aligning on the degree of organisation and transparency required to function effectively.



Needs and Future Outlook

The group is seeking to formalise itself to improve access to institutional funding that can further increase its reach and impact.

The group also envisions developing an open-access digital platform to centralize critical animal rescue information across India. This platform would compile region-specific rescue protocols, standard treatment rates, and essential helpline numbers, addressing the current fragmentation of information that hampers timely and effective animal welfare responses. The purpose of the platform would be to facilitate better coordination among various stakeholders, including NGOs, veterinary services, and government agencies, leading to more cohesive and impactful interventions.



Birds of Paradise

A Petting Zoo that focuses on responsible interaction with Wildlife

Founded by zoologist Karthik Prabhu, Birds of Paradise Foundation (BOP) is an animal sanctuary dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, and care of exotic animals. It was established nearly 1.5 years ago and is situated on the outskirts of Bengaluru Urban. BOP offers an immersive educational experience, allowing visitors to interact closely with animals in a guided setting. The foundation emphasizes responsible petting and aims to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of wildlife among visitors. Karthik's journey began with hands-on work at a Malaysian zoo, which significantly influenced his understanding of animal behaviour and care. His commitment to tackling deep-rooted challenges in animal welfare also led him to work closely with poachers, giving him critical insights to design effective anti-poaching strategies and tracking methods. Additionally, he has also worked at People for Animals in Bengaluru and continues to collaborate with them for various rescue efforts. Along with running BOP, Karthik consults for zoos, assisting them in enhancing their training programs and animal care guidelines. What sets BOP apart is its unique approach as a supervised petting zoo, where trained coordinators facilitate safe interactions between visitors—both adults and children—and a diverse array of animals. This hands-on experience aims to dismantle common fears and misconceptions about animals, such as snakes and reptiles, by fostering direct, educational encounters- they do so by creating a touchable environment where in the visitors are encouraged to touch, observe, feed and learn the animals.

Programs and Infrastructure

- ✔ **Shelter for exotic animals:** Home to approximately 700–800 animals, including a diverse range of exotic species with 50% being rescues, 30% donations, and the remaining initially sourced from acquaintances. The facility now receives 10–15 weekly inquiries from individuals wishing to surrender birds and rabbits. They also further give animals for adoption and passive adoption, they have earlier donated ostriches to zoos.
- ✔ **Educational facility:** Offers guided tours in batches of 20 visitors, focusing on animal behaviour, habitats, and responsible interaction.
- ✔ **Recreation:** Provides additional experiences such as horse walks. Visitor access is limited to 200 people per day, organised in batches, with mandatory online booking.
- ✔ **Infrastructure:** The facility's infrastructure is tailored to facilitate safe, hands-on interactions, featuring open enclosures and shaded areas that allow visitors to engage closely with the animals under the guidance of trained coordinators.



Staffing

The team comprises around 20 local staff members and 7 volunteers. This includes professionally trained coordinators, animal educators, caretakers, and administrative personnel.



Needs and Future Outlook

To address this, Karthik envisions establishing an institute dedicated to comprehensive training in animal care and facility management.



Funding

Through a strategic and self-sustaining revenue model, BOP has successfully operated its facility entirely on funds generated from the public. BOP charges an entry fee of INR 250 per person for ages 3 and above for guided educational tours allowing visitors to engage with over 700-800 animals. These interactive experiences provide valuable learning opportunities and also serve as the primary source of funding for the organisation's operations. Additional revenue streams include the founder's independent consultation at other zoos, further contributing to the financial sustainability of the facility.



Support System

A strong support system for Karthik has been his own family members, his brother being part of the facility's board. He also started this facility with the help of his friend Subash who continues to work with him at BOP.



Challenges

Overstretched Founder: Karthik manages strategic planning, leadership tasks, and daily operations, leading to an overextension that can hinder organisational growth.



Animal Lives are Important (ALAI)

A fully equipped shelter at Bengaluru's Outskirts

Animal Lives Are Important (ALAI), established in May 2017, is an animal rescue and rehabilitation shelter located in Bagalur, Bengaluru. The organisation's primary mission is to work towards the well-being of street animals through rescue, rehabilitation, and re-homing. ALAI specializes in serving sick, injured, elderly, and street animals with disabilities, including dogs, cows, horses, sheep, pigs, goats, ducks, and guinea fowls. Founded by Sajesh and his wife Skyla, ALAI operates on the principle that every treatable animal deserves a chance at life, aiming to ease suffering and make animal mistreatment socially unacceptable.

Sajesh, an MBA graduate who previously ran a meat shop, unexpectedly entered animal welfare in August 2016 while attempting to neuter a dog outside his house in Bagalur, an area not covered by the BBMP's ABC programs. Being added to a rescue WhatsApp group introduced him to the broader world of animal welfare, including veterinary infrastructure previously unknown in his vicinity. The pivotal moment for ALAI's establishment came in January 2017 when he rescued a one-month-old puppy with severe acid burns. After being turned away by existing shelters and hospitals, Sajesh cared for the pup (named Blacky, now considered a founding member) at home, eventually renting a small piece of land for recovery—this space marked ALAI's humble beginnings. Recognizing the immense need for specialized, long-term care for difficult cases, Sajesh and Skyla left their corporate careers to fully dedicate themselves to animal welfare.

Since then, their facility has expanded from an initial small area to nearly 4 acres of rented space. A standout feature of ALAI is their commitment to providing permanent residency for over 800 animals. Since 2017, they have rescued 15,000 dogs.

ALAI operates across three main physical locations in Bengaluru, strategically chosen on the outskirts for ample space and undisturbed operations:

- 1 The Main Centre:** This is their largest unit, housing around 600 animals including large animals like cows, goats, pigs, ducks, and buffalo. It serves as the hub for various specialized units.
- 2 ALAI Wrinkle Hub:** Dedicated to senior dogs, this centre currently houses 106 dogs and has five resident staff members. Its construction was supported entirely through donations, while the operating costs are met through continuous fundraising.
- 3 ALAI Old Centre:** The original small centre (1,200 sq ft with 20 cages), kept for sentimental reasons, now specifically houses 19-95 dogs who are extremely afraid of humans, cared for by four caretakers.

In addition to these shelters, ALAI operates the ALAI Pet Hospital (also known as a trauma unit), which provides t pro-bono treatment to injured dogs if the owner cannot pay.

Within their centres, ALAI has established specialized units to provide focused care for different needs:

- ✔ **ALAI Canine Distemper Unit:** Spanning 20,000 sq ft, it's one of India's largest distemper units, housing over 70 dogs with neurological issues.
- ✔ **ALAI Large Animals Unit:** Dedicated to animals rescued from cruelty or slaughter, including cows, buffalo, sheep, goats, pigs, ducks, and guinea fowls.
- ✔ **ALAI Trauma Unit:** An inpatient facility for rescued trauma dogs under constant veterinary supervision, equipped with essential tools like X-ray machines and operating theatres.
- ✔ **ALAI Happy Home Resident Unit:** A permanent home for animals that cannot be released due to abandonment, long-term treatment needs, or disabilities.
- ✔ **Parvo Section/Unit:** A dedicated small unit for parvovirus cases.
- ✔ **Spine-Care Unit:** For dogs suffering from severe spinal trauma and immobility caused by accidents
Palliative Care Unit: Focused on improving the wellness and easing the suffering of dogs with serious or chronic illnesses.

Their rescue process and animal care follow a strict protocol:

- **24/7 Rescue & Transport:** ALAI operates two rescue ambulances, responding around the clock to public calls. Experienced teams with catchers are dispatched, and rescued animals are transported to their trauma unit with detailed records kept. Skyla often personally handles rescue calls.
- **Comprehensive Medical Care:** Animals receive tailored medical attention, including emergency interventions, surgeries, and therapies, all under constant veterinary supervision.
- **Mandatory Sterilisation and Vaccination:** Every rescued dog undergoes neutering/spaying (ABC) and receives crucial vaccinations, including anti-rabies and a 9-in-1 vaccine.
- **Thoughtful Restoration:** Animals are either rehabilitated for release back to their territories (with community guidance), become permanent residents in the "Happy Home" if un-releasable, or are offered for adoption through their "Adopt-Don't Shop" initiative.
- **Strict "No-Kill" Philosophy:** Euthanasia is a last resort, considered only for immense, irrecoverable suffering after all treatment options are exhausted. It is never performed solely due to age or chronic illness if the animal retains basic bodily functions.



Staffing

ALAI boasts a dedicated team of nearly 40 individuals, including doctors and caretakers, and maintains a remarkably low attrition rate. This stability is due to a robust HR policy offering benefits like weekly offs, covered food and stay, government insurance (ESI, PF), and a generous 35-day paid annual holiday. Founders Sajesh and Skyla personally handle rescue calls, ensuring immediate response, while fixed catchers and collaboration with local villagers for animal containment further strengthen their operational efficiency. Detailed records of every rescued animal's history are meticulously maintained.



Funding

Operating with substantial monthly overheads of approximately ₹20 lakhs, ALAI primarily covers staff salaries, medical treatments, and food expenses. The organisation relies heavily on individual donors, who contribute about 95% of its funding, often reaching out directly after witnessing ALAI's transparent operations and the founders' personal involvement. While they receive some CSR support (around 5% from companies like Pleo and MCX) since 2023, individual contributions remain paramount. ALAI is registered as a trust and is actively pursuing FCRA registration to access foreign funds, though this process has faced delays due to legal challenges.



Support System

ALAI's robust support system is intrinsically linked to the profound dedication of its founders, who personally manage operations and even answer rescue calls. This hands-on commitment, coupled with the transparency of their work, has organically attracted a strong base of individual donors. Their efforts are further bolstered by active collaboration with local communities for animal containment and rescue, forming a vital network.



Current Challenges

- **Overwhelming rescue demand:** ALAI is operating beyond capacity, managing to rescue only about 4 out of 60-70 daily calls for injured or sick street animals, given its limited intake capacity.
- **Lack of NGO Cooperation:** Significant challenges arise from poor coordination among Bengaluru's animal welfare organisations, hindering effective rescue and Animal Birth Control (ABC) programs. Some NGOs allegedly prioritise "photogenic" cases or those attracting fame/funding, and ALAI has faced fabricated FIRs, which stalled their crucial FCRA registration.
- **Public Reception and Space Issues:** Releasing recovered dogs back to their territories is difficult due to negative public reception. Many animals, if abandoned, chronically ill, or disabled, become permanent residents, exacerbating the severe lack of space.
- **Community and Systemic Gaps:** There's a widespread lack of public awareness regarding animal laws, high private veterinary costs deterring public rescue, and doctors promoting breeding (leading to more abandoned animals). ALAI also receives no financial support from local government bodies.



Needs and Future Outlook

- **Crucial Funding:** ALAI's most critical need is substantial and continuous funding to cover its high monthly overheads of approximately ₹20 lakhs (₹10L for salaries, ₹5L for food, ₹3L for medicine). They heavily rely on individual donors (95%), needing sustained support beyond the 5% from CSR.
- **Community and Veterinary Support:** They require greater cooperation and coordination within the animal welfare community, increased community education on animal laws, and empathetic, reduced treatment rates from private veterinary hospitals. A collective solution for the care of chronically ill or permanently disabled animals is also needed.
- **Expansion and Advocacy:** ALAI is committed to continuing its core mission of rescue, rehabilitation, and rehoming ("Adopt-Don't Shop"). They are actively pursuing FCRA registration (despite delays from fabricated FIRs) to secure foreign funds.
- **Awareness and Policy Goals:** ALAI desires to expand knowledge about animal cruelty laws, specifically targeting non-BBMP areas and villages for ABC programs and rescue awareness. Sajesh envisions a coordinated effort among NGOs to neuter 60-70% of Bengaluru's dog population in about a year if organisations focused on local radii, ultimately aiming for a future where no animal in Bengaluru lacks care.

A Day in the Life Shadowing Bengaluru's Best Dog Catcher

Across the somewhat 800 square kilometres of Bengaluru's urban limits, beyond the familiar hustle of everyday life, there's a quieter ecosystem at work; one that plays out in alleyways, construction sites, parks, and empty plots. According to Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) data, there are approximately 2.79 lakh stray dogs³⁴ across these scattered spaces, known well by the people who care for or fear them occupying the same. And when one of those animals is in distress, hard to reach, or just deemed "too aggressive" for the municipal corporation handlers to take on, the call often goes to one man.

The Man Behind the Catch

Syed Noor is not who you would expect in this line of work. Born and raised in Bengaluru itself, he once held a job in the city's fast-paced IT sector. He wasn't particularly fond of animals growing up, until a small, persistent cat – regularly fed by his father – began to change that. Later, he adopted a German Shepherd named

Roxy, and that relationship transformed him. Despite familial discouragement, Syed was determined to train both Roxy, and himself to reflect his own idea of model man-animal relationship.

Roxy's companionship taught Syed patience, empathy, and connection. When she passed away, the grief left him reclusive and withdrawn. But it also ignited a deeper commitment to animals. He spent countless months bumping between friends' couches looking for odd jobs and favours. It was during this time that Syed met Sandeep, an animal welfare and rights advocate and a senior catcher himself. He began learning the ropes of dog catching, earning just ₹8,000 a month at the time. But what he remembers just as clearly is Sandeep opening his home to him - offering a place to stay, meals to share, and a sense of belonging.

He also began shadowing Dr. Akshay, picking up basic medical knowledge about animal injuries, vaccinations, and post-capture care. Slowly, Syed carved his own path in the city's fragmented animal welfare ecosystem.

Photo: Anipixels.com



A Day on the Job

There is no such thing as a 'typical' day for Syed, but most follow a similar rhythm. He operates out of a second-hand Maruti Swift; bought with the help of a community fundraiser, and keeps his tools packed tightly in the back: gloves, a heavy-duty flashlight, nets, ropes, a cage, raw chicken, a small first-aid kit, and sanitizer.



The day begins when he receives reports from citizens, many of them community dog feeders, or, occasionally, from BBMP officials when they can't manage a case. The animals in question might be injured, suspected of rabies, or in need of sterilisation. First comes reconnaissance. He visits the location, watches the dog from a distance, notes escape routes and behaviours. Is the animal limping? Is it aggressive? Does it trust people? These details matter.



Next, he gathers local intelligence. Syed talks to security guards, street vendors, and garbage collectors — people who often know the animal's routine better than anyone else. He listens, builds trust, then decides the approach: a baited cage if the dog is timid, a net if it's quick and defensive, or simply gloves and patience if it's calm enough to handle gently.



Sometimes, a catch takes ten minutes. Other times, it takes hours; waiting quietly in the car, in the rain, or in the sun. His record is 16 dogs in a single day. Some days, it's none. The work is physical, unpredictable, and rarely appreciated.

The Cost to Compassion

COSTS

Fuel

Variable, depending on the location of the rescue and return

Food for Bait

Ongoing expense, typically several hundred rupees per week

Nets

INR 1,500–2,500 each

lasts for about 10–12 dog captures

Cages

INR 7,000 each

usually need replacing every 6 months.

Vehicle Cleaning

INR 1000-1500

for weekly professional deep cleaning to remove waste, fluids, and other residues from dog rescues

No insurance coverage

CHARGES

Dog Pick-Up:

INR 1,500

for the first one, INR 500 for the second animal onwards, plus fuel costs (based on distance).

Dog Return

(post-treatment or sterilisation):

INR 1,000

per trip, plus fuel.

In cases where the reportee is unable to attend to the costs, Syed bears the expenses himself. Syed was once bitten by a rabid dog, where not only did he have to seek out treatment on his own dime, but lost weeks of work over the course of recovering.

His current gear does the job, but just barely. Following the increasing outgrowth of callouses from regular handling of nets and cages, he has finally picked up gloves. The flashlight works, but he could do with a better, heavier duty one. He has a ready wish list - a drone camera, to spot skittish animals from above without startling them, a bodycam, to record interactions for both safety and accountability, better nets and cages. Safety gear like bite guards or tranquilizer kits would make both his work less risky, and less traumatic for the animals.

Syed's interactions with law enforcement and municipal staff are mixed. Sometimes, police obstruct him; suspicious of a lone man with a net and a cage. At other times, they call him for help. Residents too can be unpredictable. Some thank him; others accuse him of "stealing" community dogs. Still, Syed relies heavily on local networks — volunteers, feeders, and other independent catchers. Together, they form an informal system. What's missing, he says, is a city-wide coordination mechanism. A helpline that works, a department that understands, and a policy framework that doesn't leave catchers to fend for themselves.

The Way Ahead

For Syed, animal catching isn't just a job, it's an essential public service. And through years of quiet, persistent work, he has developed a grounded and practical understanding of what Bengaluru needs to become more compassionate toward its stray animals, and those who care for them. For one, the city's physical infrastructure poses real challenges. Many animal clinics and hospitals are located on the first or second floors of buildings without elevators. He believes ground-floor facilities or better ambulatory setups would make a real difference.

He also emphasizes the need for policy changes, such as permitting the use of darting in certain cases. At present, sedation using a darting gun is not allowed in Bengaluru, even when dealing with aggressive or severely injured animals. Another major issue is the lack of training among municipal workers and the police. Encounters with officials can often be difficult, ranging from uncooperative to outright hostile. He recommends sensitization workshops and basic training in animal handling for all relevant public sector staff.

Most importantly, Syed believes lasting change begins with education. He wants animal welfare and compassion to be introduced in early childhood education, helping to build a city where care for all life is second nature.

Chapter 4

Theory of Change and The Kindness City Blueprint



Inspired by Bengaluru's kindness arcs, this blueprint is conceived as a practical roadmap, a "city-builder's manual", for integrating community animal welfare into urban governance, infrastructure, and culture in Bengaluru. It sets out the ingredients, structures, and replicable steps needed to build safe, compassionate, and sustainable systems for small community animal care. At its core, the blueprint is an invitation: for governments to anchor policy and continuity; for NGOs to bring their on-ground expertise; for funders to fuel innovation and scale; for citizens to nurture compassion in everyday life. Together, these actors can shape a Bengaluru that works for every life – human and animal alike.



The Skyline

What Are We Building?

Every city builder begins with a vision of the skyline - the long-term shape of what is to come. For Bengaluru, this vision translates into a "Kindness City Model" by 2030. This will be piloted by Bengaluru's NGOs and philanthropy ecosystem, focused on human-animal co-existence in the city's shared spaces.



1 Why 2030?

Practitioners estimate that it takes at least five years of consistent, collaborative work for change to manifest. The year 2030 also aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). Further, it coincides with the World Health Organisation's target year for Zero Rabies Deaths worldwide.

2 Who Builds This Model?

A blueprint is only as strong as the people who bring it to reality. In this city, the "builders" are:

- City administration provides leadership, enforcement, and resources
- NGOs, who bring on ground expertise and networks
- Funders and corporations mobilise financial and technological resources
- Citizens who practice compassion and take initiative in civic responsibilities
- Commercial actors comply with ethical regulations and contribute to safer ecosystems

3 What Are Shared Spaces?

The ethos of "shared spaces" acknowledges that community animals are not trespassers but valid inhabitants of the city commons. Instead of erasing their presence, the model advocates for long-term care through sterilisation, vaccination, food security, rescue, and ethical rehabilitation. This approach aligns with the principles of One Health, which recognise the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental well-being.



Photo: Anipixels.com

The Foundations Assumptions and Inputs

Like any strong structure, the Kindness City Model rests on foundations that must be laid with care. These assumptions and inputs form the bedrock:

- **Active engagement from the GBA, Animal Welfare Board (AWB), and Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services (AHVS)** ensures alignment of policies, coordination of efforts, and accountability in implementation
- **The ABC program remains a sustained civic priority**, safeguarded from disruptions caused by frequent officer transfers or changes in administration
- **Citizens, schools, and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) actively participate** in compassion education initiatives, helping to gradually shift public attitudes toward empathy and responsible coexistence.
- **NGOs, volunteers, and intermediary organisations expand their reach** effectively through structured training, institutional support, and strengthened data systems that enable coordinated action.
- **Funders, corporates, and enforcement agencies contribute financial resources**, monitoring mechanisms, and regulatory oversight to ensure responsible breeding practices and ethical pet shop operations

Every foundation also
requires resources
to hold it steady:



Financial capital to sustain programs



Policy support to enable enforcement and continuity



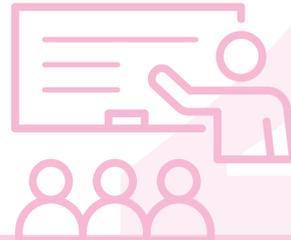
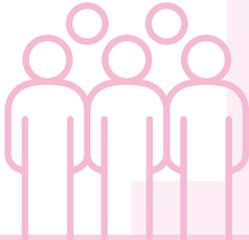
Infrastructure and technology to strengthen veterinary care and data systems



Human scaffolding including skilled vets, para-vets, NGOs, educators, and citizen volunteers who become the city's everyday builders

Raising the Structures Activities That Shape the City

The real construction begins with activities that translate vision into visible structures:



Set up an Intermediary Expert Body:

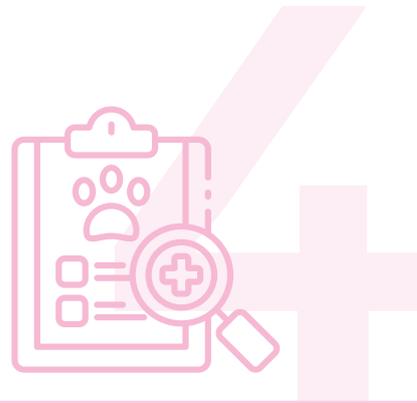
A dedicated intermediary body, comprising domain experts from BBMP, NGOs, and the philanthropic sector, anchors policy, ensures continuity, and convenes key stakeholders. Beyond acting as a bridge, it provides strategic guidance, monitors implementation, and sets standards for best practices in community animal welfare. By maintaining institutional memory and documenting lessons learned, the body buffers against disruptions caused by administrative turnover, ensuring that Bengaluru's animal welfare initiatives remain consistent and effective.

Sandeep, an NGO representative on the intermediary expert body, convenes regular strategy sessions with BBMP officials, veterinarians, fellow NGOs, and funders to plan long-term rescue and rehabilitation initiatives. He facilitates discussions on expanding mobile rescue units, improving post-rescue care, and developing standardized protocols for chronic or injured animals. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, Sandeep ensures that short-term interventions evolve into sustainable, city-wide systems.

Establish an ABC Training Centre:

A state-level ABC Training Centre, developed in partnership with the Urban Development Department and the AWB, builds a skilled workforce to implement compassionate and effective population management. By training and certifying veterinarians, para-vets, catchers, and volunteers, the centre ensures standardized, high-quality ABC practices. Strengthened BBMP and AWB facilities serve as training and demonstration sites, creating a coordinated system for sustainable animal welfare delivery.

Kasturi, a resident of South Bengaluru, has always cared for stray cats in her neighbourhood. Wanting to make a greater impact, she enrolls in the newly established ABC Training Centre. She now has the opportunity to learn about humane sterilisation techniques, safe animal handling, and community engagement strategies. Equipped with this training, Kasturi can join a mobile BBMP team, helping conduct sterilisation drives and rescue operations in her ward, while also training fellow volunteers.



Upgrade Veterinary Infrastructure:

Animal husbandry centres and BBMP hospitals are retrofitted with small-animal equipment. Private funders provide resources for supplies, diagnostic tools, essential medicines, vaccines, ensuring timely treatment for infections, injuries, and chronic conditions, alongside technology such as mobile surgical vans.

*At a BBMP hospital in East Bengaluru, **Dr. Akshay** now has regular access to essential medicines and vaccines that were previously scarce. With these supplies, he can treat infections, administer timely vaccinations, and provide consistent post-operative care.*

Implement and monitor licensing of pet shops and breeders:

To ensure regulated practices, enforcement officers conduct regular inspections of pet shops, breeders, and animal facilities. A digital dashboard enables real-time tracking and transparent reporting of compliance data, helping identify gaps and ensure accountability. Training and capacity-building initiatives equip officers with the knowledge and tools to implement animal welfare regulations effectively.

***Aditya**, an enforcement officer, conducts weekly inspections across three pet shops. By uploading compliance data to the city's digital dashboard, he helps create greater transparency and accountability within the pet trade. Shops that once operated with little oversight are now required to meet ethical and welfare standards.*



Build a culture of coexistence through education and community engagement:

Co-developed school curricula and experiential workshops nurture empathy and responsibility among children, embedding coexistence into early learning. Beyond classrooms, partnerships with RWAs and civic groups promote feeding, care, and volunteering as shared community duties, shifting citizens from passive reporters to active participants in animal welfare.

In South Bengaluru, Grade 6 students design posters on adopting Indies and saying no to commercial breeding. The activity sparks conversations at home, influencing families to rethink how they view and treat community dogs.

Landmarks Visible Outputs Along the Way

As the structures rise, the city begins to take shape. Landmarks demonstrate progress:

- ✓ **An intermediary body** with 2–3 domain experts steering governance and collaboration
- ✓ An operational **ABC Training Centre** recognized at the state level
- ✓ **Over 100 government veterinary units** equipped for community animal care
- ✓ **Trained vets, para-vets, catchers,** and **volunteers** deployed across wards
- ✓ **Licensing and regulation** enforced across pet shops and breeders
- ✓ **Compassion education** piloted in BBMP schools and scaled across city boards

These outputs serve as markers that Bengaluru is on the path toward becoming a Kindness City.

Photo: Anipixels.com



The Blueprint Realized Long-Term Outcomes

In the long run, Bengaluru evolves into an ecosystem where community animal welfare is an embedded principle of governance and culture. This vision comes alive in everyday stories:

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

The intermediary expert body bridges government, NGOs, and citizens, ensuring continuity, accountability, and coordinated action for animal welfare

CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

State-of-the-art training centres and upgraded BBMP facilities provide skilled professionals and accessible care, raising the standard of community animal treatment city-wide

EVERY WARD, EVERY ANIMAL

A growing network of trained vets, para-vets, and volunteers ensures consistent delivery of animal welfare services across Bengaluru

ACCOUNTABLE MARKETS

Pet breeding and sales are closely monitored, curbing illegal trade and exploitation while promoting ethical practices

EMPATHY AS CIVIC DUTY

Schools embed coexistence curricula and experiential learning, shaping a generation that treats animals and communities with care and responsibility

Everyday lives begin to reflect these changes

Saleha, a RWA secretary, now includes “animal welfare updates” in monthly society meetings, tracking sterilisation drives and stray feeding zones

Aanshi, a city planner, consults the intermediary body before finalizing new park designs, ensuring animal-safe green spaces

Garima, a para-vet, joins a mobile unit that covers three wards weekly, delivering timely care to injured animals

Together, these stories form the living evidence of a city where kindness is operationalized. By 2030, Bengaluru’s skyline expands beyond high-rises and flyovers, to include the essential structures of compassion and coexistence that bind human and animal lives together.

Chapter 5

The Way Forward

The Way Forward: A Roadmap for Key Stakeholders

"I use the metaphor "light switch moment." I'm not interested in lighting a candle, but in finding the light switch, finding systemic solutions that get more done with less."

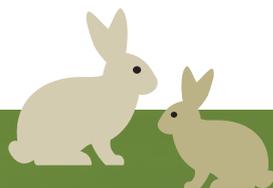
- Priya Chetty-Rajagopal, Founder & Managing Trustee, CJ Memorial Trust

In this section, we outline action-oriented recommendations for NGOs, philanthropy, the BBMP, and citizens to further progress towards community animal welfare in Bengaluru.

Philanthropy

- **Build enabling structures for collaboration:** Philanthropy can play a catalytic role in building a resilient ecosystem for animal welfare by investing in structures that enable coordination and accountability across the sector. This could involve constituting a neutral coordination platform that brings together stakeholders from the BBMP, NGOs, veterinarians, community volunteers, and donors to align priorities, share information, and ensure consistent implementation. This body can be tasked with:
- **Institutionalizing knowledge-sharing systems** by creating living repositories, regular convenings, and training modules to document and exchange learnings across organisations
- **Enabling pooled funding mechanisms** that bring together philanthropists, CSR donors, and citizen contributors to supplement BBMP allocations and secure predictable, long-term resources
- **Supporting NGO sustainability through longer-term contracting and capacity-building assistance**, reducing overreliance on founder-led models, and preventing fragmentation of services. This could also include grants and initiatives focused on reducing burnout faced by practitioners through counseling services, peer support networks, or structured rest periods

- **Serving as a grievance redressal and mediation forum** to build trust between citizens, NGOs, and government authorities, thereby minimizing conflict and operational disruptions
- **Developing leadership pipelines and training opportunities** for animal welfare workers, veterinarians, para-vets, catchers, and volunteers, to professionalize roles and create sustainable career pathways. For instance, a critical component of this platform could include a dedicated leadership position responsible for overseeing operations, monitoring progress, and addressing grievances. Having a dedicated resource can help ensure continuity, strengthen follow-through, and bridge gaps between field implementation and strategic oversight
- **Promote innovation and research:** Philanthropy can play a catalytic role in advancing breakthroughs in areas such as non-surgical sterilisation methods, community engagement models, and technology for animal health monitoring, positioning Bengaluru as a leader in progressive welfare practices. Specialized veterinary treatments such as ivermectin for maggot wounds or antibiotics for joint pain remain difficult for smaller clinics to obtain. Philanthropists can fund partnerships with pharmacies and distributors to ensure a steady supply of essential medicines, while also supporting the upgrade of clinic infrastructure, including surgical tables, IV fluids, gauze, and other essential tools.



BBMP

- **Expand and professionalize the ABC program:** There is a real opportunity in scaling the ABC program through stronger infrastructure, skilled capacity, and predictable funding. The BBMP could leverage the 100+ Animal Husbandry units across Bengaluru as a ready network for expanding reach and efficiency. With private or philanthropic support, these centres can be equipped with medicines, surgical tools, and consumables to ensure uniform service delivery. This could include a dedicated ABC training hub to build skilled veterinary and para-veterinary capacity, standardize humane practices, and reduce waiting periods for sterilisations. Further, financial support mechanisms (such as subsidies, pooled funds, or CSR partnerships) can enable Panchayats and peri-urban areas to implement sterilisation programs effectively, making them viable beyond city limits and preventing population rebound. To sustain these efforts, BBMP and Panchayats could establish ring-fenced budgets for ABC and related initiatives, ensuring funds remain protected from annual reallocations. Finally, ABC programs must be integrated within the broader ecosystem of rescue, treatment, and adoption services, so that sterilisation operates not as a standalone intervention but as part of a continuum of long-term rehabilitation and community-based animal care.

- **Promote responsible breeding and sales practice:** The BBMP can mandate commercial actors to share information materials with prospective pet owners about responsible ownership, including awareness on vaccination, sterilisation, and the long-term care of animals. Educated buyers are less likely to abandon pets or encourage unsustainable breeding practices, creating a market incentive for responsible breeders and platforms. Similarly, schools, RWAs, and civic groups can be leveraged to conduct sensitization workshops around co-existence with animals and urban wildlife.

"For stakeholders with a commercial role, we need clear standards that prioritise compassion in how we work with animals, rather than commercializing everything or focusing solely on profit."

- Ajay Arjun, Head- Projects & Resources, CUPA

- **Mobilise everyday first responders:** Those employed in the transport industry, especially auto drivers, play a critical role as first responders in urban neighborhoods, often encountering injured or distressed animals before anyone else. By partnering with auto unions to run short awareness sessions, spotlight drivers who step in to help, and offer small incentives, the BBMP can strengthen a natural first-responder network that already exists on the ground.

Similarly, citizens can also be empowered to move from passive reporting to active participation. Simple measures such as offering short community trainings on basic first aid, helping transport animals safely to clinics or rescue centres, and coordinating volunteering opportunities with local NGO can make it easier for residents to participate more actively.

- **Incorporate animal sensitive design in urban infrastructure:** Bengaluru's urban development and infrastructure can be more intentionally designed to integrate the ecological and welfare needs of community animals and urban wildlife. This can involve preserving and connecting green corridors to facilitate safe movement, implementing wildlife-friendly crossings and buffer zones to reduce road mortality, and minimizing artificial light and noise pollution in critical habitats. Public spaces can incorporate purpose-built shelters, shaded resting areas, and water access points to support community animals.

- **Set city-wide targets and transparent monitoring systems:** Establishing clear, measurable goals for sterilisation, rescue, vaccination, and adoption can help track the city's progress over time. Making such data publicly available through ward-level dashboards or reports can strengthen transparency and continuity across changing administrations. A consistent data system will also make it easier to align Bengaluru's efforts with national rabies' elimination and animal welfare goals.



NGOs

- **Build sustainability by developing leadership pipelines:** Many NGOs still rely on founder-led models, which lead to burnout and raise concerns about continuity. To strengthen long-term sustainability, NGOs must intentionally grow the next line of leaders. This means investing in capacity-building and creating pathways to nurture talent, making them better positioned to sustain and scale their work over time.
- **Develop structured volunteering systems:** Many NGOs depend on informal volunteer networks, leading to inconsistency in outreach and service delivery. By creating volunteer models with defined roles, induction training, and accountability structures, NGOs can convert compassion into sustained participation. Partnerships with schools, colleges, and corporate CSR programs can help mobilise youth and professionals, integrating animal welfare into mainstream civic engagement.

“Structured volunteering programs are key. We encourage volunteers to come regularly, rather than on an ad-hoc basis, to build a sense of responsibility. We also assign volunteers to specific tasks such as feeding, monitoring enclosures, or caring for injured animals to ensure efficiency. A strong volunteer network significantly eases the workload for shelters.”

- Damini Kulkarni, Education Officer & Enrichment Head Coordinator, Bannerghatta Bear Rescue Centre, Bangalore for Wildlife SOS

Citizens

- **Prioritise adoption to reduce shelter overcrowding and curb commercial overbreeding:** This can include attending or promoting adoption drives, sponsoring the sterilisation or vaccination of adopted animals, and encouraging friends and family to adopt rescued animals rather than purchasing from breeders or online platforms. Individuals can also support foster networks by volunteering as short-term fosters, helping animals transition out of stressful shelter environments.
- **Foster shared responsibility within housing societies and neighborhoods:** Societies and residential communities can play a proactive role in creating safer, more supportive environments for community animals. This includes developing simple guidelines for feeding, maintaining clean and designated feeding spots, and coordinating with local NGOs for sterilisation and vaccination drives. Building associations can also promote active citizenship by encouraging residents to volunteer, organizing awareness sessions, and educating children on co-existence, compassion, and safe behaviour around animals.

Residential communities are beginning to turn toward the animal welfare ecosystem with a new kind of attention—one that makes room for humane, lawful coexistence to take root. Our early collaborations with residential communities have been encouraging, revealing untapped potential for stronger, more enduring partnerships rooted in shared responsibility and compassion.

As the animal welfare ecosystem evolves, so does the opportunity for sustainable funding. Organizations like ours are ready to absorb structured grants and long-term partnerships, yet such pathways remain limited—underscoring the need to strengthen the financial architecture that sustains this work.

At the same time, Bangalore has developed a dense, increasingly specialized veterinary network—especially in small-animal trauma—enabling us to strengthen our capacity to respond to more complex rescue cases.

Perhaps most heartening is the visible rise in public engagement with animal welfare. Moments such as adoption drives and community campaigns reflect a growing openness and empathy. We see this not as episodic interest, but as fertile ground—an opportunity to build awareness, gently shift cultural perceptions, and create pathways for sustained involvement, especially in the adoption and care of small animals.

Fifteen years into this journey, we are at an inflection point where, with the right donors and partners, we can not only scale our rescue work but also help shape a more compassionate and sustainable ecosystem.

- Sanjana Govindan & Vijaya Sitaram Co founders Bangalore Cat Squad



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