


 Working for Pets and Fauna Welfare

The Animal Protection Foundation*


 Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Elizabeth Daut Story

Elizabeth Daut was assigned as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the city of Loja. In the early days of her volunteering she observed that there was no awareness or sensitivity towards animals. Stray dogs roamed the streets while owners neglected, mistreated and abused domestic animals. Wild animals were caught and sold freely on the streets. She realized she needed to do something. One day she expressed to the members of the community the benefit of creating a foundation for the care of the animals. Most people in the community told her that it was not possible, but Elizabeth persisted with her project.

By coincidence in a conversation with one of her students at the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences of the National University of Loja, one of them referenced the mistreatment of many pets. That conversation impelled many ideas towards helping pets in Ecuador.

At that time, by a fortunate coincidence, Elizabeth met Byron Alvarez who was interested in organizing a foundation for animals. So they began to look for local involvement.

In March 1999, after a short time of five months, the Animal Protection Foundation (FPA) was legally instituted.



Elizabeth with a sick stray dog Úrsula, which she adopted and healed.

It was the only organization established in Loja for the protection and welfare of animals in the southern sector of the country, with the objective of educating people about the proper care and treatment of domestic animals.

Volunteer Elizabeth and Byron Alvarez began to familiarize locals with the foundation and its goals. The first project was aimed for stray dogs. Elizabeth, with the support of the students of the Veterinary Faculty in the Foundation, initiated a sterilization campaign for pets as well as stray animals.

Another of the objectives of the foundation was to establish a domestic animal ordinance for the city that required all owners to register, vaccinate, and leash their dogs to avoid abandonment and mistreatment.

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In 199 the Animal Protection Foundation (FPA) was the only organization established in Loja for the protection and welfare of animals in the Ecuadorian southern region.

The FPA was successful in attracting many donations, but the founders wanted to increase the funds. The FPA promoted and marketed a product called "Huesitos," a healthy snack for dogs. Elizabeth hoped that this cookie would be a constant source of income and reduce the constant search for funding.

The Animal Protection Foundation has grown, from what was just an idea of a Peace Corps Volunteer into an indelible mark in the community.

Elizabeth said "We started with a vague idea and now we are at the point where people come to us with their pets to talk about their problems." The simplest but most significant indicator of the foundation's impact can be seen on the streets. People are walking with their dogs - that was something that have never been seen before in the city of Loja.

** Taken and adapted from the Magazine "40 years of Peace Corps Ecuador" of John Zorovich.*