Animal Welfare capacity building and education for veterinary professionals and paraprofessionals through practical focused training materials

WTS Welttierschutz-stiftung

María Victoria Larrateguy [1]; Carolin Breitenbach [2]; Wendy Phillips [3].

[1;2;3] Wellttierschutzstiftung, Berlin - Germany

Introduction

"Animal welfare means the physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies" (OIE). The basis of humane interaction with animals is a recognition of their sentience and their ability to experience negative and positive emotions as a result of our actions.
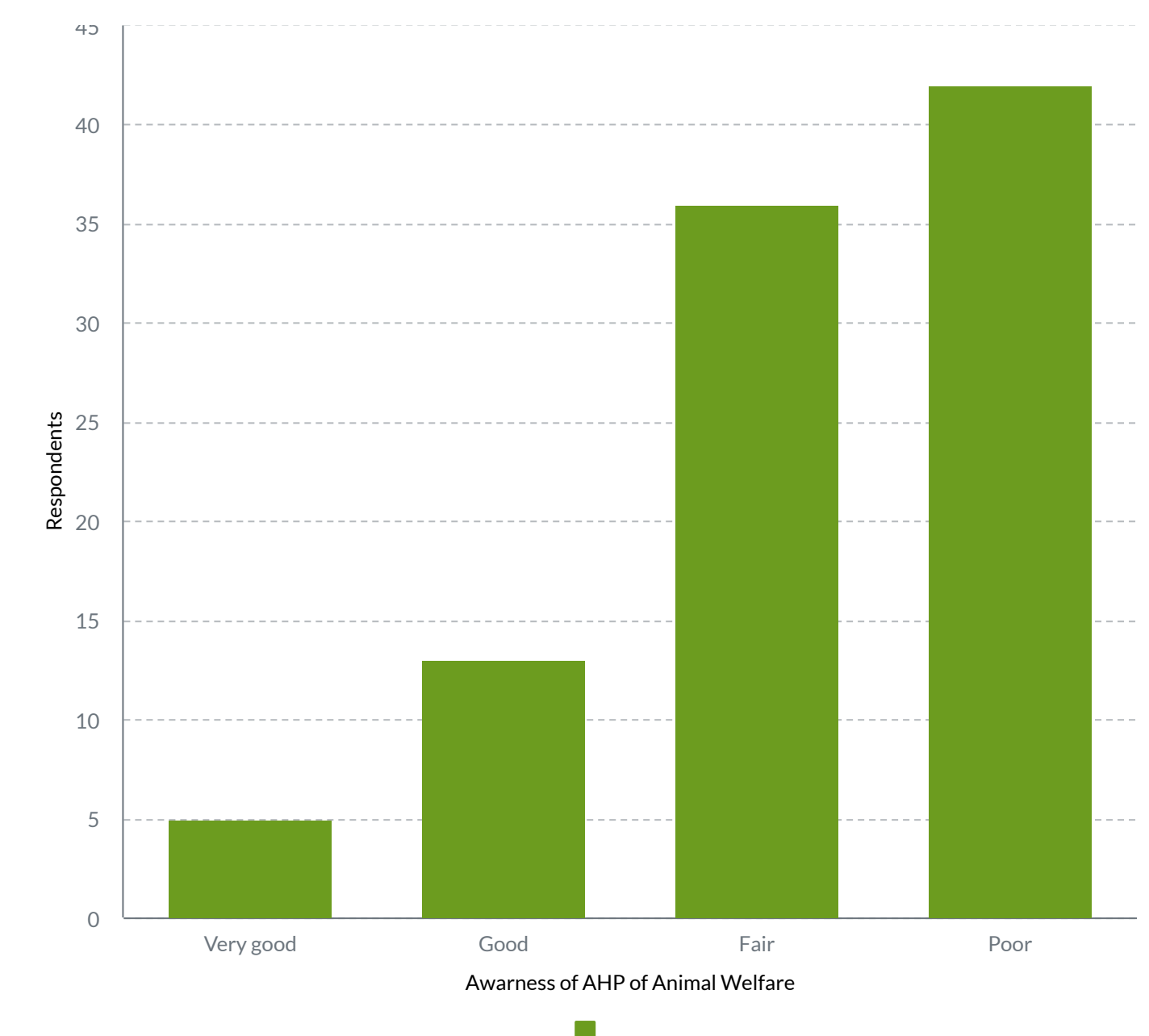
<u>The Role of Animal Health Professionals (AHP)</u>
Veterinarians, paraveterinarians and other animal related professionals have a leading role to play in the promotion and advocacy of animal welfare. (OIE)

<u>Animal Welfare in Academic Education</u>
However, animal welfare is still a neglected topic in formal and informal veterinary education. According to a survey conducted by WTS among animal welfare organisations and veterinary educational institutions in 44 global south countries:

- Over 90% of the respondents stated that there are deficits in veterinary training
- 42% stated that the veterinary curriculum does not include animal welfare at all
- Over 40% stated that animal welfare awareness among veterinarians is poor. (WTS, 2014)

WTS developed the programme VETS UNITED to support the integration of animal welfare into academic education

Methods

HOW TO RUN A VETS UNITED ANIMAL WELFARE TRAINING

VETS UNITED is the main programme of WTS and aims to promote improvements to animal welfare by

- <u>Supporting the integration of animal welfare into academic curricula related to animal health:</u>
1. Analysis of the animal welfare situation ⟶ through a baseline survey
2. Identification of deficits in animal welfare education ⟶ through a gaps and needs survey
3. Review of existing curricula regarding animal welfare ⟶ comparing curricula with surveys and a list of topics related to animal welfare
4. Development of recommendations for aapting curricula ⟶ VETS UNITED Animal Welfare Teaching Modules (open-access teaching materials: presentations, videos, guidelines)
5. Accreditation ⟶ following official approval process
- <u>Training lecturers to teach animal welfare:</u> based on VETS UNITED open-access teaching modules
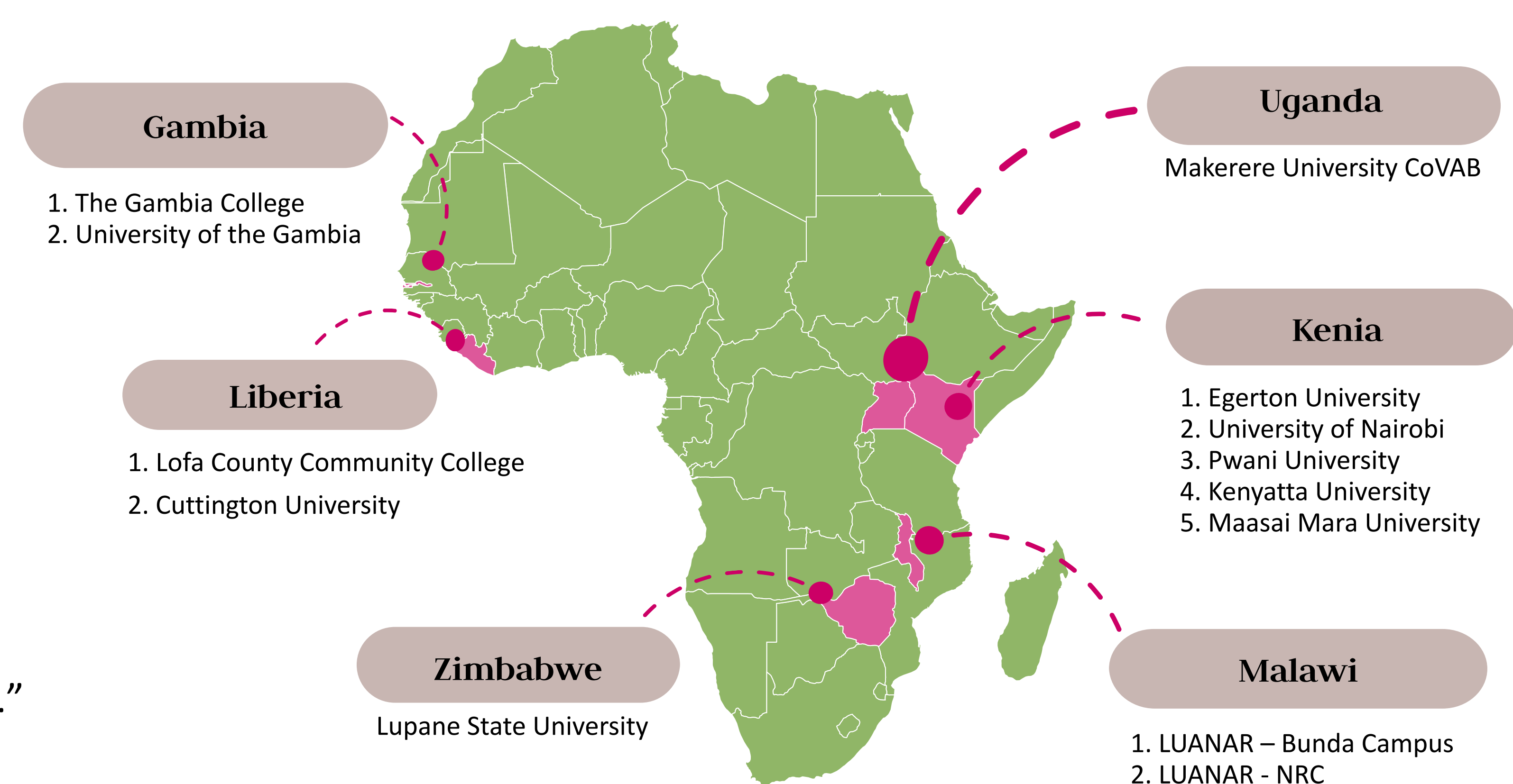- <u>Follow-up, monitoring and evaluation:</u> feedback from trainers, lecturers and students

VETS UNITED

FREE ACCESS TO TRAINING MATERIALS

Results

The project has been running for seven years in 13 institutions across six African countries. Results include:

Teaching Staff trained		13/13
Curriculum revised and adapted		8/13
Official Accreditation of animal welfare		3/13

"…Today animal welfare is an integral part of the curriculum, with over 1000 students trained in animal welfare. The graduates are stationed around the country, promoting animal welfare in different levels including ministries, departments, schools and rural communities." (Dr. Kebba Daffeh, Project Manager, The Gambia)

Gambia
1. The Gambia College
2. University of the Gambia

Liberia
1. Lofa County Community College
2. Cuttington University

Zimbabwe
Lupane State University

Uganda
Makerere University CoVAB

Kenia
1. Egerton University
2. University of Nairobi
3. Pwani University
4. Kenyatta University
5. Maasai Mara University

Malawi
1. LUANAR – Bunda Campus
2. LUANAR - NRC

Conclusions

- Education of animal health professionals is an important factor in improving animal welfare awareness
- Dedicated and skilled lecturers at institutions are key to integrating and improving animal welfare in formal education
- Teaching materials are key to the inclusion of animal welfare when resources are scarce
- Animal welfare should be taught as a transversal topic

Bibliography

OIE - World Organisation for Animal Health. (n.d.). Capacity Building and Education. [online] Available at: https://www.oie.int/en/what-we-do/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-welfare/capacity-building-and-education/ [Accessed 1 May 2022].

Tierärzte Weltweit - ein tierärztliches Ausbildungsprogramm der Welttierschutzgesellschaft (WTG) in Schwellen-und Entwicklungsländern Inhaltsverzeichnis. (2014). [online] Available at: https://welttierschutz.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/TIERAERZTE-WELTWEIT_Umfrage_International.pdf [Accessed 1 May 2022].