



TOLFA
Tree Of Life For Animals

Rescue & Care Project

Who are we?

TOLFA (Tree of Life for Animals) is a UK registered charity (No: 1120789) established in 2005 by veterinary nurse Rachel Wright, recipient of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' *International Award for Animal Welfare* in 2018, and our Project Coordinator in India.

TOLFA's Mission is to provide vital and preventative healthcare to India's ownerless animals and educate communities in their welfare and value.

TOLFA operates four main projects:

- Rescue & Care of sick and injured animals through our free emergency ambulance service
- Anti-Rabies & Sterilisation to control a healthy street dog population
- Rural Animal Health to provide veterinary care to the animals of the rural poor
- Education to teach children about animal welfare and rabies prevention

These services were previously lacking in the area and people, as well as animals, were suffering as a result.



What is the problem?

There are an estimated 30 million street dogs in India and 40,000 free-roaming cows in the capital of Delhi alone. These, plus other animals such as horses, donkeys and cats are susceptible to disease, injury and abuse as they try to survive alongside India's burgeoning human population. In the area of Rajasthan in which TOLFA is based animals with injuries were left to fester and die in the street; rabies was rife - killing both animals and humans; dogs with diseases like distemper and mange became pariahs, while the dog population grew uncontrolled bringing suffering to female dogs and the pups they struggled to raise.

Before TOLFA began, the local Ajmer Municipality's answer to dog control was to collect dogs from the street, tie their legs together and leave them in the desert to die from starvation. During her first visit to Ajmer, Rachel Wright persuaded them to allow her to collect dogs herself, spay/neuter and vaccinate them, then return them before unknown dogs from other territories moved in. This is the only humane and effective method of population control and was the first step in improving animal welfare in the region.

What do we do?

After the success of the first sterilisation and rabies vaccination drive in Ajmer, and due to the amount of animal suffering that still prevailed, TOLFA Animal Hospital was set up to provide free veterinary services to the street animals of Pushkar, Ajmer and the surrounding villages. One of our four core projects - Rescue & Care now employs 38 of our 60 Indian staff providing emergency rescue, hospital admission and street treatments to animals in need within a 35km radius.

The project costs **£9,970** per month to run and is mostly funded through grants from trusts & foundations, with some funding also from individual donors. The cost of the project includes the staff salaries (vets, vet assistants, drivers etc), fuel and maintenance for the vehicles, cleaning supplies, medicines and feed for the animals, as many as 600 in hospital care at one time.



How does the project work?

We receive 40-50 calls every day from people reporting animals that need our help, and our two animal ambulances work seven days a week to respond to these calls. If the ailment is minor, we will treat it on the spot, but if the case is more serious the animal will be transported to our hospital for assessment by our vets. They will stay with us for treatment, surgery, or nursing support until they are well enough to be returned to their area. If for any reason an animal cannot be returned, they will stay at our shelter to receive lifelong care or be adopted by a local family. Every dog who is admitted via the Rescue & Care Project is rabies-vaccinated and sterilised before they are released.

We employ 38 local staff for the Rescue & Care project, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds (Dalit caste or 'untouchable') and are the main breadwinner for their extended families.

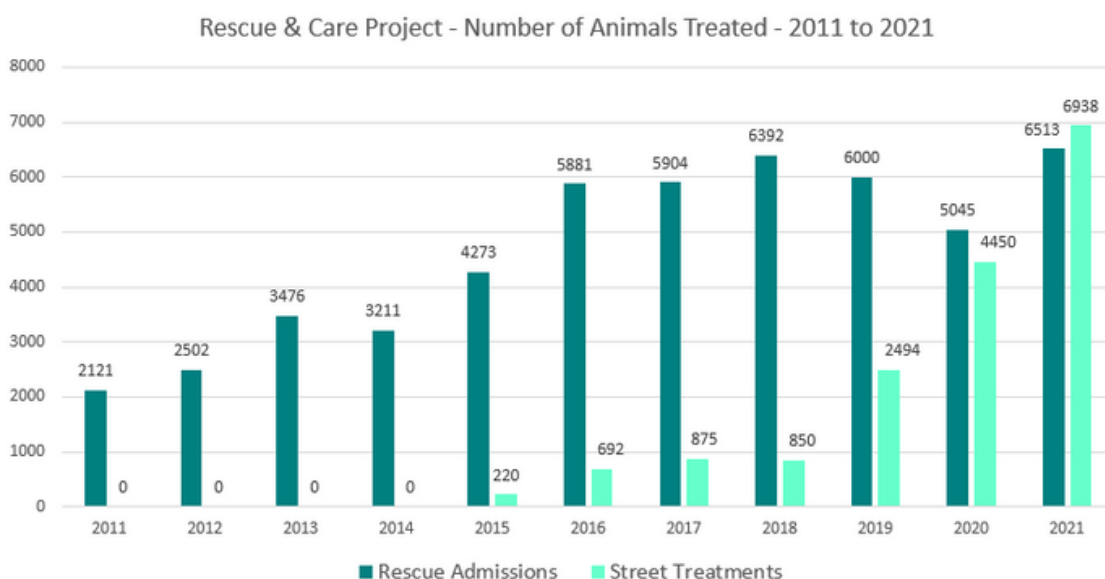


What is the impact?

The Rescue & Care project is ongoing and has been running since TOLFA began in 2005. The number of animals we treat increases every year, though our other projects of Anti-Rabies & Sterilisation and Education work synchronously to control the street dog population and promote animal welfare understanding and compassion within the community. In 2021 we helped 13,496 animals – 6,513 of whom were brought to the hospital for admission and 6,983 were treated on the street.

The outcomes from the project each month are:

- The rescue and professional veterinary treatment of approximately 1,125 street animals, who previously would have no access to this type of care
- The employment of 38 Indian staff who would struggle to find employment elsewhere due to caste prejudice and discrimination
- The sterilisation and rabies-vaccination of all dogs rescued and released back into the community (meaning less fighting and aggression from dogs, fewer puppies being born on the street and a reduction in the risk of rabies to the human population)
- The example of kindness and care shown to animals has a positive impact on the community (we have seen an increase in the number of 'caregivers' who look out for street animals since our work began)



TOLFA's Rescue & Care Project has made a positive difference to the lives of tens of thousands of animals to date. By improving the lives of the animals we are in turn helping people by preventing disease and reducing the suffering in their communities.



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Case Studies

Dog with burns on his back

This dog came into TOLFA with classic scalding wounds from either acid or hot water. You can see the streaks where the liquid had run from his back and down the side of his body. We think the act of cruelty had recently happened as fortunately there was no infection or maggot infestation. Infections from burns can be extremely painful, damaging, and lengthy to treat and so we are glad he came to us quickly. We put him on a course of antibiotics and pain relief and used aloe vera wound gel to cool and heal his burns. His treatment was successful, but unfortunately no information was found about the person who did this to him. After speaking with people in his community he was returned under the careful watch of the concerned person who brought him for help



Puppy with front leg amputation

We rescued this tan female puppy after she was hit by a fast vehicle on a busy road. The accident sheared her right front leg off, leaving a gaping wound and the puppy in agony. She was rushed to our hospital in Kharekheri Village and immediately treated for shock. She had lost a lot of blood and so received several litres of fluids to support her circulation. The puppy was only a few months old and so it took her little body a while to stabilise. We couldn't risk an anaesthetic for her and as her wound was actually very clean and fresh our treatment team bandaged the entire wound, including her neck, and provided strong pain relief to relieve her suffering.

After only a couple of days of antiseptic wound bathing and fresh bandages the wound was closing itself at a remarkable rate. In just a couple more weeks her young body had healed itself and she has adapted to walking on three legs very well, with help and support from our dedicated nurturing team.

