

Animal Welfare Education for Australian Indigenous and Papua New Guinean School Children

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Introduction

Educating children regarding the welfare of animals is a grass roots way of changing the entire cultural view of the treatment of animals. This group of lessons is based on the theory of Humane Education, which can be defined as: a process that encourages an understanding of the need for compassion and respect for people, animals and the environment and recognizes the interdependence of all living things.

Because of its long-term effectiveness, formal Humane Education in schools is especially important since this is the way to develop caring attitudes for the next generation of citizens. It teaches children how to accept and fulfill their responsibilities to their pets and understand the consequences of irresponsible behavior. It emphasizes the value of all living things.

As today's society has come to recognize the connecting link between child abuse, animal abuse and violence against people, the need for effective humane education in schools is greater than ever.

Animal cruelty encompasses a range of behaviors harmful to animals, from neglect to malicious killing. Most of the cruelty cases in Papua New Guinean and Aboriginal communities would be caused by unintentional neglect. This can change through education.

Children trained to extend justice, kindness, and mercy to animals become more just, kind and considerate in their relations to one another. Character training along these lines in youths will result in men and women of broader sympathies, more humane. Humane education is the teaching in schools and colleges of the nations the principles of justice, goodwill, and humanity towards all life. The cultivation of the spirit of kindness to animals is but the starting point toward that larger humanity that includes one's fellow of every race. A generation of people trained in these principles will solve their internal and international difficulties as neighbours and not as enemies.



The practice and reinforcement of kindness, of care and compassion towards animals, through formal and non-formal educational processes is, thus, viewed as having a range of positive spin-offs in terms of pro-social attitudes towards people of a different gender, ethnic group, race, culture or nation.

Papua New Guinea – Education and Animal Welfare

Papua New Guinea (PNG) occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea situated immediately to the north of Australia. It is divided into four regions: Southern (or Papuan), Highlands, Momase, and New Guinea Islands, which are further divided into 19 provinces. Port Moresby is the capital located in the National Capital District in Central Province on the southern side of the island. PNG is a unique country in that an estimated 860 languages are spoken by its 4.5 million inhabitants. It is a country with a strong subsistence economy and an emerging modern economy with an estimated 90% of Papua New Guineans living in rural areas or maintaining rural lifestyles.

Education in PNG is both of a 'traditional' and a 'modern' nature. 'Traditional' education is a product of participation in the day-to-day activities of family and community. 'Modern' education is a product of participation in formal western-styled schooling through the national education system. About 70% of children get some formal education, and this figure varies widely between the provinces. Only 1% of those who start school go on to tertiary education.

Quoting Phillip Wilmott-Sharp of the RSPCA PNG committee, 'Animal welfare is unheard of in PNG.' Most households own dogs, which are valued as companions and guard animals. Other common pets are cats and birds such as wild captured rainbow lorikeets and ecclectus parrots. Only 6% of people are formally employed in PNG. Most people subsist by growing produce or making food and other items to sell at the markets. As such, veterinary care is not affordable by most of the population. The average weekly wage would only just pay for a veterinary consultation.

Education regarding nutrition and simple





medical care such as worming and removal of ectoparasites will go a long way to improving the welfare of companion animals in PNG.

My PNG Experience

The public education system in PNG is broken into Community Schools, High Schools and Vocational Schools. Community schools teach students from years one to eight. Children start school at any age between 6 and 10 years old. This means that year eight students can be up to 18 years old. Students in the provinces start school later in general than their Port Moresby counterparts.

As the younger students were the focus of my project, I visited community schools in the National Capital District (NCD), which consisted of Port Moresby and the surrounding villages. These schools included Coronation, Bavaroko, Baruni, Eki Vaki, St Therese and Ted Diro Community Schools (see Appendix 1 for the calendar of school visits). The visits were organised in conjunction with the NCD Division of Education Executive Officer and the principals of the schools. The schools were enthusiastic to have a visitor to talk about the care of animals.

I generally gave the presentations to one class, or two classes combined - up to 60 students. The smaller groups were better, as more children could participate in the visit by answering questions, patting the visiting animal and joining in on the demonstrations. Presentations were done for years one to eight, depending on the time allotted by the school and which teachers had signed up for the visit. The lesson plans I developed and followed can be found in Appendix 2.

At some schools I spent the whole school day going from class to class, and at some only one or two presentations were made. The presentations at the community schools were generally 30 minutes in length. When the students really participated it was hard to get through all of the material I had planned.

The highlight of most of the visits was Amethyst, the Amethystine Python that came into the classes with me. She was a vital tool in teaching about the value of all living creatures and encouraging the children to imagine how animals feel in different situations. Snakes are greatly feared in suburban PNG, and many children had stories of family

Year 4 student and Amethyst the Amethystine Python, Coronation Community School.



Year 3 enjoying animal stories, Bavaroko Community School.



Snake charming, Year 3, Ted Diro Community School



and friends being bitten. The reaction in the community to snakes is to kill any that you see. PNG has many very poisonous snakes and so the fear is wise in many situations.

After year 8, only the very talented students gain admission to high school, which takes them to Year 12 level. There are only a few of these government high schools, and the competition to gain a place is fierce. I visited one government high school, Gerehu, or Port Moresby National High School. I gave a presentation to the Yr 11 Biology classes on animal welfare and the more scientific side of looking after animals. The reaction of the students was very encouraging, with questions about volunteering at the RSPCA and how to become a vet.

Keen to be the first female PNG national vet, biology student, Gerehu High School

The other form of formal schooling run by the government and charity organisations are vocational schools, which teach year 9 and 10 level. Along with english and maths, they teach practical subjects such as secretarial studies, mechanics, hospitality and sewing.

The 40 minute presentations to these students included the role of the RSPCA and animal welfare and basics of caring for dogs, cats and birds as pets.

Although my focus was on the community schools, I also visited a range of private schools, and a farm for homeless youths. The schools included the prestigious Ela Murray

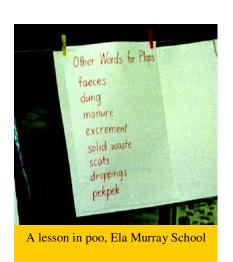
School, popular with expatriates, Port Moresby Grammar School (POM Grammar), a private school for national children, and St Josephs catholic school.



At POM Grammar in addition to visiting classes I was asked to do a short presentation on assembly for the 1 200 students of the school. Animal welfare presentations were tailored to each age group.

How it all went

Most students enthusiastically received the animal welfare presentations. Smaller group sizes were the best, allowing for greater student participation. On the suggestion of one of the teachers, I modified the chapter of one of the animal



stories I read to the students to make it set in PNG. The 'Just like You and Me book was very well accepted. It contains a bird of paradise, local to PNG, and many children that look like Papua New Guineans. The presentations to the high school and vocational school students also went well. Students asked many questions.

The RSPCA committee organised the local television station EMTV to do a story on my visit, for their program Insight PNG. The film crew came and filmed me at several schools, and we did an interview in the studio. It was shown after I left, but reports from friends who saw it said they learned a lot about caring for their dogs.

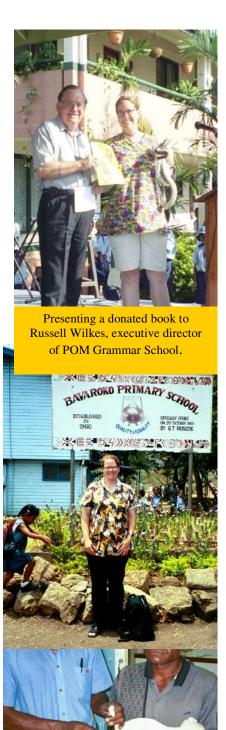
Recommendations for further animal welfare educational programs in PNG

My visit was a success, however, in order to make a lasting impact on animal welfare in the country, there needs to be ongoing education. This may be achieved through training community school teachers in animal welfare, perhaps at inservices run by the RSPCA and Department of Education. The Kindness Club format developed by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) may be useful in PNG, if teachers can be encouraged to start them.

The first Kindness Clubs were formed in South America in the early 1970s, a few years later Kindness Clubs appeared in Africa, and more recently clubs have been introduced to Indonesia and Korea. The goal of the clubs is to educate children to understand the need to protect the environment and to develop a genuine respect for all forms of life. This begins with the animals most familiar to them, such as pets and farm animals.

The clubs are run through schools, so that the expertise of the teachers can be utilised in order to disseminate the information contained in the quarterly Kindness Club Newsletters. The members are encouraged to write articles and poems for the Newsletters, and to draw pictures related to the theme of kindness to animals. If their submissions are selected, they are given Kindness Club T-shirts, caps, or pens as prizes. They are also encouraged to enter the quarterly competitions.

Most of the clubs meet once a week after school for 1 hour. The teacher leads the club meeting and the content



Community School, Port Moresby,

of the meeting varies. It may include the writing of poems and articles, and drawing pictures for the next Newsletter, or it may revolve around articles or action points raised within the latest Newsletter. Teachers Resource Packs have been written, giving teachers background information on Wildlife, Domestic and Conservation issues. The packs also include cross-curricular themes, suggestions for activities, in-house quizzes etc. and are designed to make the meetings fun and not just an extension of school.

Applications to Animal Welfare Education in Aboriginal Communities

Parallels exist between Papua New Guinean and Australian aboriginal children and their knowledge of animal welfare. The key to changing attitudes towards animals in the community is culturally specific, ongoing education of school children. These lesson plans can be used in aboriginal community schools with modifications to make them relevant to each environment and people. Kindness clubs may also be useful in aboriginal community schools.

Vet nurse, Mirou hard at work.
RSPCA PNG

Appendix 1. Calendar of School Visits

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1 1 st -5 th September 2003	Clinic	Clinic	City Mission Farm 50 youths (12-25 yr old) ~ Ela Murray International School Year 1 2 classes	Ela Murray International School. Yrs 3,4,5,7 9 classes	Limana Vocational College Yr 9 & 10 2 classes
Week 2 8 th -12 th September 2003	Hohola Youth Development Centre Yr 9 & 10 6 classes	Hohola Youth Development Centre Yr 9 & 10 4 classes	Clinic	Maino Heduru Vocational School Yr 9 & 10 2 classes Ted Diro Community School Year 3 4 classes	INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS
Week 3 15 th -19 th September 2003	Port Moresby National High School Yr 11 Biology, 2 classes	INDEPENDENCE DAY	Baruni Community School Yr 3, 5 & 6, 4 classes	Coronation Community School Yr 3, 4 & 5 9 classes	Port Moresby Grammar School Assembly, Yr 4 & 5, 4 classes
Week 4 22 nd -26 th September 2003	Clinic	Bavoroko Community School Yr 3 & 4 4 classes - St Therese Community School Yr 7 & 8, 4 classes	Eki Vaki Community School Yr 4, 5 & 6, 6 classes	Ted Diro Community School Yr 5 & 6, 2 classes	

Appendix 2: Lesson Plans

CLASS: Years ONE to THREE

TOPIC: *Just Like You and Me*



OUTCOME: For the children to.. understand that animals have needs and

emotions just like they do.

RESOURCES:

- An animal for the children to pat choose one that is used to large crowds and loves children
- Photos of pets or pictures from magazines, posters or journals
- "Just Like You and Me" by David Miller (HodderHeadline Australia, 1998)
- Animal Puppet (choose an animal that is familiar to the children) he can be used to talk to the children, or answer questions to get things going.

ROOM ARRANGEMENT:

Children are best sitting on the floor so they are not distracted by other things. If the group is small enough and the space can accommodate it, sitting in a circle works best. All children can see without obstruction; it is easier to pass materials or objects around – if an animal is used they can all have a turn at patting him as you walk around.

LESSON TIME: 30 minutes

TIME	ACTIVITIES	
10 mins	Introduce yourself by name, and a brief outline of what you do.	
(Introduction)	Explain cruelty to animals and the role of the RSPCA.	
	What is the special name for an animal doctor? Vet, veterinarian. What do vets do? Introduce some of the tools vets use to help animals – stethoscope, thermometer. Ask a student to come up and listen to their heart with the stethoscope. What does it sound like? Introduce the animal(s) that will help you with any demonstrations	
	Questions: Put up your hand if you have a dog/cat/bird as a pet? Does anyone have another kind of pet? – turtle, crocodile Introduce your topic: Today we'll find out how animals are Just Like You and Me	

20 min (Body of Lesson)

Read the book "Just Like You and Me" – ensure all students can see the pictures. As you go through, talk about each picture – animals and children.

For example, on the first page of the book is a bird of paradise. Ask: What sort of animal is this? What is he doing? Have you ever seen an animal showing off? This bird of paradise lives in the jungles of PNG. The male bird shows his beautiful feathers and calls out to find a mate. When do you show off? - dress ups, when you learn a new skill, to get help, dancing

The cheetah lives in Africa. He can run as fast as a speeding car to catch food to eat. Do you like to run fast? How does the cheetah feel when he is speeding through the grass?

These penguins live in the ice and snow, it is very cold. If they don't huddle together they will freeze. They like to swim and feed together, and lay their eggs all together. When do you like being with your friends or family?

- eating, playing sport,
- How do you feel when you're left all alone?
- How do the penguins feel when they're all alone on the ice?

The chameleon is an incredible lizard. He can change his colour to be the same as his environment. Why would he do this?

- to hide from birds that would like to eat him
- to hide from insects that are his food. When he sees an insect buzzing about, he can flick out his tongue which is as log as his body and stick the insect on it to catch it!

When do you like to hide? – games, maybe when you're in trouble (but you have to show up some time!). How does the iguana feel when he is well hidden? – safe, and he has a full belly (that always makes every living thing happy!)

The Lion lives in Africa, where it is hot – just like here. He is busy hunting and looking after his cubs in the morning and evening when it is cool, but in the middle of the day when it is hot, he sleeps unde a shady tree. What do you do when it is hot? – go into the shade, lie down and relax

The willy wagtail is a small bird, but is very brave. It can be very scary when you're in danger. How do you feel in scary situations? When was a time when you had to be brave? How do you think the willy wagtail feels so close to this eagle, that has huge, sharp claws?

Question: What are the things you need every day to keep you

happy and healthy? Food, water, a home (shelter – somewhere to sleep), a family to look after you, friends, teachers to help you learn, games, doctors and hospitals when you're sick. Animals need all of these things too to keep them happy and healthy:
If time, allow some or all of the children to pat your animal in an orderly manner. In my classes I had a snake for the children to see. They had turns touching and holding the snake, and I told them about snakes in PNG. Time for questions

CLASS: Year Four

TOPIC: How do animals communicate?

OUTCOME: For the children to.. understand that animals can

communicate and how to work out what they are saying

RESOURCES:

• An animal to pat –chose one that is used to children

- Photos of pets or pictures from magazines, posters or journals
- "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" JK Rowling (Bloomsbury)

ROOM ARRANGEMENT:

Children at desks, facing the front of the room

LESSON TIME: 30 minutes

CHIMPIEC		
ACTIVITIES		
Introduce yourself by name, and a brief outline of what you do.		
Explain what the RSPCA is and what it does in PNG.		
roduce the animal(s) that will help you with any demonstrations		
nestions: Put up your hand if you have a dog/cat/bird as a pet? hat's your favourite animal and why?		
roduce your topic: Today we'll find out how animals mmunicate and how to work out what they're saying		
troduce the Harry Potter Story		
ad Harry Potter pg 258 – Animagi		
ad Harry Potter pg 236 – Allimagi		
hat did the friends of the Warewolf Lupin do to help him? Turn		
o animal to keep him company.		
ey were able to transform themselves by magic into animals.		
you could turn yourself into an animal, What would it be and hy?		
nimals have complex feelings and needs. They communicate in any ways		
hat are same of these views?		
hat are some of these ways?		
hy do animals communicate? Warning, social interaction,		
minance and subordination		

Show posters of animals communicating – with other animals and with people. Explain the different types of communication:

Noise – grunts, barking, hissing
Startle response when scared eg rabbits
Mating dances of birds

How can your pet tell you he is unhappy?
Whining, curling up, being sick, unable to run around like he used to,

If time, talk about the animal you have brought for them to meet.
Allow the children to pat your animal in an orderly manner.

Time for questions

Conclusion: Animals have feelings and need to express them just like we do – but they can't use words. You need to watch and listen carefully to work out how animals around you are feeling. When

them happy again.

you know they are unhappy then you can do something to make

CLASS: Years Five and Six

TOPIC: Animals in trouble – how can we help?

OUTCOME: For the children to.. find ways to help animals they come into

contact with

RESOURCES: Suggestions

• An animal

- Photos of pets or pictures from magazines, posters or journals
- "Annie" Leonore Fleischer (Severn House, London)

• Animal Helper Certificates

ROOM ARRANGEMENT:

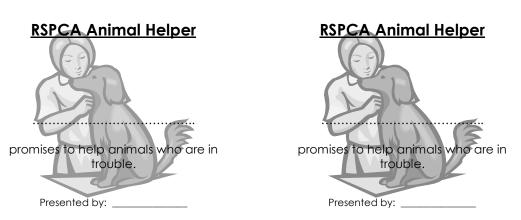
Children at desks facing the front of the room. This lesson can also be done outside, with children sitting on the ground.

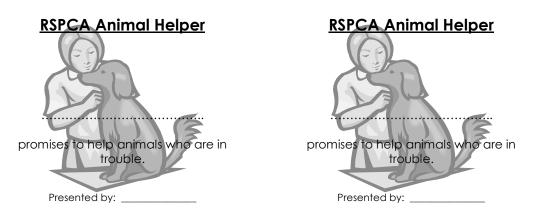
LESSON TIME: 30 minutes

TIME	ACTIVITIES
5 minutes (Introduction)	Introduce yourself by name, and a brief outline of what you do. Introduce the animal(s) that you have brought for them to meet.
	Introduce your topic: Today we'll find how animals are treated around the world and what you can do to help right here in PNG
20 minutes	
(Body of	Explain cruelty to animals and the role of the RSPCA.
Lesson)	How animals be abused by people?
	Tell some animal abuse stories of animals from around the world,
	for example the force-feeding of geese to make pate de foi gras.
	Some can be found on the World Society for the Protection of
	Animals (WSPA) website: <u>www.wspa-international.org</u>
	What are other ways animals are treated cruelly? Neglect, malnutrition, throwing out puppies once they're not cute anymore, lack of medical attention when sick or injured.
	Read "Annie" – one of the teachers in PNG recommended to make this story more relatable to PNG children. The story is attached at the end of this lesson
	Discuss the story
	Ask the children if they would like to become animal helpers, and have the pledge ceremony. The pledge should be culturally adapted to each group of children. Each child will receive an 'Animal Helper Certificate' with its name on it. (see a template attached to this lesson plan)

5 minutes (Conclusion)	Reinforce: No matter how big or small they are, the children can make a difference to stop cruelty to animals.
	If time, allow the children to pat your animal in an orderly manner.
	Time for questions.

promises to help animals who are in trouble. Presented by: ______ Presented by: ______





References

www.aspca.org The website of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

www.hennet.org The website of the Humane Education Network, based in California, USA

<u>www.nhes.org</u> The National Humane Education Society website. The NHES provides humane education and rescue and relief assistance for animals.

<u>www.iihed.org</u> The website of the International Institute for Humane Education. The IIHE is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to creating a humane world through humane education, base in Surrey, USA.

<u>www.theanimalspirit.com</u> The website of The Animal Spirit Project, a grassroots, volunteer-based project dedicated to furthering animal rights and animal rescue through education, based in the USA.

<u>www.wspa.org.uk</u> The website of the World Society for the Protection of Animals. The WSPA works with more than 400 member organisations to raise the standards of animal welfare throughout the world.

<u>www.worldanimal.net</u> World Animal Net is the world's largest network of animal protection societies with over 2,000 affiliates in more than 100 countries working to improve the status and welfare of animals.

<u>www.sharetheworld.com</u> This website contains a free educational program designed to help students better understand and appreciate the animals with whom they share their world.

Hely, D. 2001 Caring For Animals. NSW Department of Education and Training, Curriculum Support Directorate and the RSPCA NSW.

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