

COMMUNITY

Inuktitut, Luganda, and beyond: LAFS puts the 'Paw' in polyglot animal education

By Priyanka Ketkar

"Adapting to local languages for animal education"

the 'Paw' in polyglot ani

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The Lakes Animal Friendship Society (LAFS) has recently achieved a significant milestone in its mission to promote animal welfare and education by adapting its materials to Inuktitut and Luganda languages. In collaboration with Veterinarians Without Borders and Animal-Kind International, LAFS translated their "basic kindness and care" colouring books, originally designed for young learners, into these languages.

Alistair Schroff, Director of LAFS said, "We took a lot of care and attention to make the materials universal, useful, relevant, and easily reproducible. We have always encouraged others to use them and make them available for free download on lakesanimalfriendship.ca/resources. In these recent projects, our partners have helped to adapt the materials (both the language and the artwork in some instances) to fit the local community. Adapting the materials is much more cost-effective than starting from scratch. Animal welfare groups are not well-funded, so every little bit of savings helps."

Marieke van der Velden of Veterinarians Without Borders and Karen Menczer of Animal-Kind International, who were already familiar with LAFS and their accessible materials, approached the organization to explore the possibility of adapting their resources into the languages used by the communities they serve. Dr. Kassim of the Uganda SPCA translated the materials into Luganda.

In the Arctic, the translated materials cater to Inuit communities where Veterinarians Without Borders is actively involved. In Central Uganda, Animal Kind International partners are utilizing the Luganda version to benefit local communities. This inclusive approach enables these organizations to provide comprehensive services, including veterinary health care while supporting younger learners and promoting a sense of responsibility towards animals.

"Adapting to local languages fits a number of objectives, in terms of making the materials accessible to more learners and their families –and also to help with language learning. For example, this year we also adapted the same materials into Lheidli T'enneh Dakelh (Carrier) in cooperation with School District 57, and they are using them in Indigenous Education programs. They meet a number of curriculum objectives including literacy, personal responsibility and kindness to all (including ourselves), with the benefit of helping to reduce all sorts of violence including bullying," added Schroff.

Today, LAFS' material has been translated into Babine Dakelh/Carrier, Lheidli T'enneh Dakelh/Carrier, Baffin Inuktitut, Luganda, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Slovak, Romanian, Polish, Hungarian.

LAFS is expecting more of their materials to be used and adapted by some of the same groups, and also new groups to catch on to the concept. Apart from Veterinarians Without Borders and Animal-Kind International, LAFS has also partnered with a variety of other animal welfare groups all over the world, and some of their partners are located in Canada, the USA, Mexico, Honduras, Portugal, Slovakia, Hungary, Uganda, and Ghana.

"Our first goal has always been to serve the needs of animals and families in our home community of the Lakes District. That is why we created the materials and have used them locally to meet this goal very well," said Schroff, adding, "Knowing that thousands of copies of our materials have now been distributed internationally is a thrill –and tells us that our town and our group may be small, but our materials and programs can still be world-class."

Next up for LAFS is a new basic animal care picture book in progress and they hope to have that finished by the new school year.

"And we are starting to work on a new picture book that will be a bit of a new direction for us so stay tuned!" concluded Schroff.



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