

# Animal welfare education changes children's hearts and minds



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# Agenda:

1. Conceptual framework
2. WSPA IN AWE programme
3. AWE guidelines



# Animal Welfare

## **WSPA Animal Welfare Principles:**

- Each individual animal has an intrinsic value, and should be respected and protected.
- Animals have the right to live their lives free from avoidable suffering at the hands of humans.
- All animals kept by, or under the control of, humans must be kept in circumstances appropriate to the species.
- Where the physiological and behavioural needs of a species cannot be met, the species must not be kept by man.

## **Animal Welfare Education (AWE):**

- A process, which promotes knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes related to our involvement in the lives of animals, the effects this has on animals' ability to satisfy their needs, and the responsibility this places on us.

# Why AWE matters

## BECAUSE IT:

- Links animal welfare with social justice, citizenship and environmental issues
- Recognises interdependence of all living things
- Contributes to the development of a sense of **awe** and responsibility for the natural world and for the animals which share it
- Helps develop children's attitudes and critical thinking skills in order to become more compassionate and respectful
- Empowers children to make decisions and take action as responsible world citizens, helping the planet, animals and people in an appropriate and sustainable manner

# AWE is about values

## Best qualities of human beings

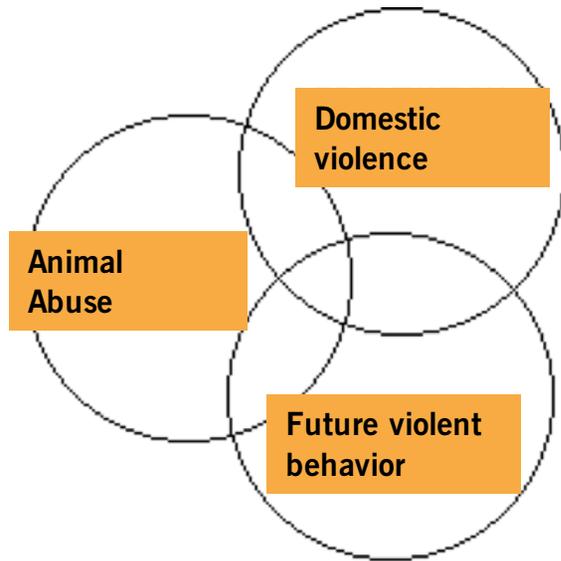
- Kindness
- Compassion
- Honesty & trustworthiness
- Generosity
- Courage
- Perseverance, self-discipline & restraint
- Humour and playfulness
- Wisdom
- Integrity
- Willingness to choose and change



Value-based education empowers children to make decisions and take action as responsible world citizens to help the planet, animals and people in an appropriate and sustainable manner. It develops sensitivity to all life, appreciation of diversity and tolerance of difference.

From: The Power and Promise of Humane Education (Zoe Weil, 2004)

# The Violence Link



Research done by Stephen Kellert, Phdylan Felthous, MD, about “child cruelty against animals in convicted criminals” in Kansas and Connecticut prisons, suggests that aggressive behavior in adults can be strongly linked with domestic violence and animal abuse during childhood.

Child cruel behavior towards animals can be a potential indicator of dysfunctional family relationships and of future aggressive and antisocial behavior.



# Evaluation studies of AW Education

- ↑ in humane attitudes
- “Generalisation effect” from animal-related attitudes to human-directed empathy
- ↑ in self-esteem
- Appreciation & respect for nature in city children
- Care, respect and justice guide moral thoughts & actions
- Interaction with pets has a + influence on empathy



Looking after and caring for animals helps develop empathy; not only towards all animals, but also towards human beings

# WSPA International Animal Welfare Education (*IN AWE*) Programme

**WSPA focus:** Animal Welfare

**Target audience:** 5-16 age range worldwide

**Aim:** to embed humane education in the curriculum

**Approach:** variable, but using the same 4 principles:

1. Partners and Networking
2. Research and Development
3. Content
4. Professional Support

[www.animal-education.org](http://www.animal-education.org)

# 1. Partnerships and networking

In order to implement AWE into the curriculum we need to work with partners, including:

1. National or local governments
2. UNESCO (picture)
3. Education institutes/ teacher training providers
4. Curriculum developers
5. WSPA member societies
6. Other NGO's
7. Other Partners



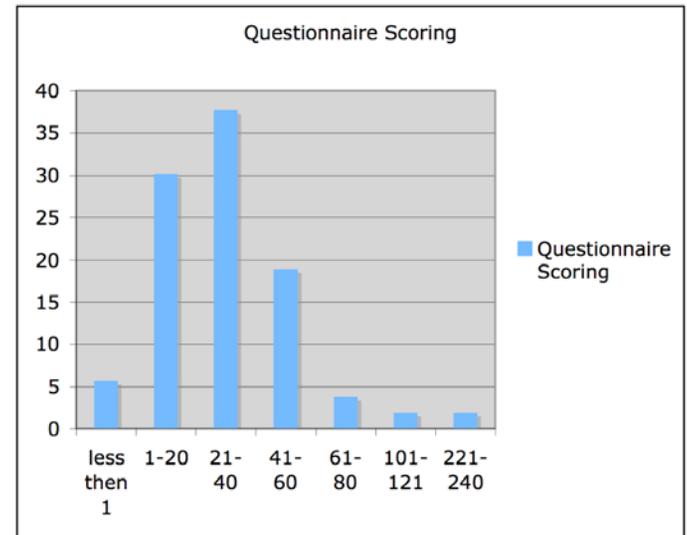
UNESCO endorses WSPA AWE Programme, April 2007



Chile (Ministry of Education) - WSPA  
MOU

## 2. Research and Development

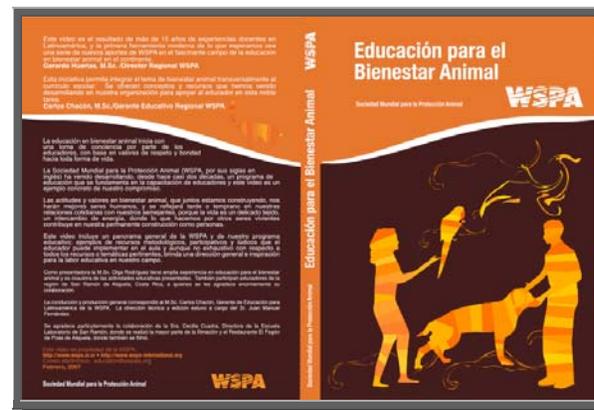
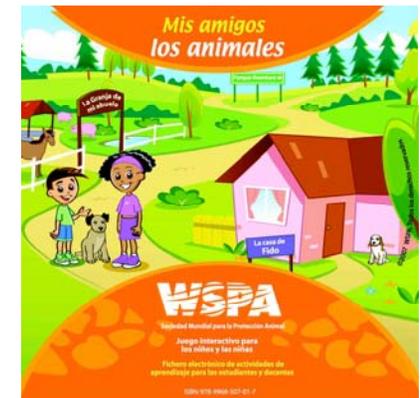
- Research education systems in different countries so as to facilitate implementation of AWE into school curricula.
- Contributing to existing academic research and encouraging further research in the field of animal welfare education.
- The development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of pilot projects and of fully implemented animal welfare programmes.



95% of the population shown an increase in AW concepts, attitudes, and values, between pre-test & post-test.

# 3. Content

- The IN AWE programme is a framework, not a syllabus.
- The animal welfare movement has already produced a diverse range of educational materials, methodologies, and initiatives.
- Where there is a need for new resource material in a particular country or region this could be sourced and/or adapted from existing materials produced by Partners in the Programme.
- We will share good practice materials rather than re-invent the wheel.



# 4. Professional Support

## 1) Teacher-training through targeted workshops + follow-up strategy

- 30 teachers (15 schools) per workshop
- Participants invited through official Ministry of Education channels
- Methodology (“constructivism”): 10% lecture / 90% active learning
- Post workshop: peer-to-peer training (1:2/4 ratio, 1 level)
- Follow-up: Coaching, assessment (teachers and students), community projects.

## 2) AWE embedded in initial teacher-training university-level institutes



# Animal welfare education can be integrated in:



Life Sciences



Language curriculum



Personal and Social Education



Arts/drama

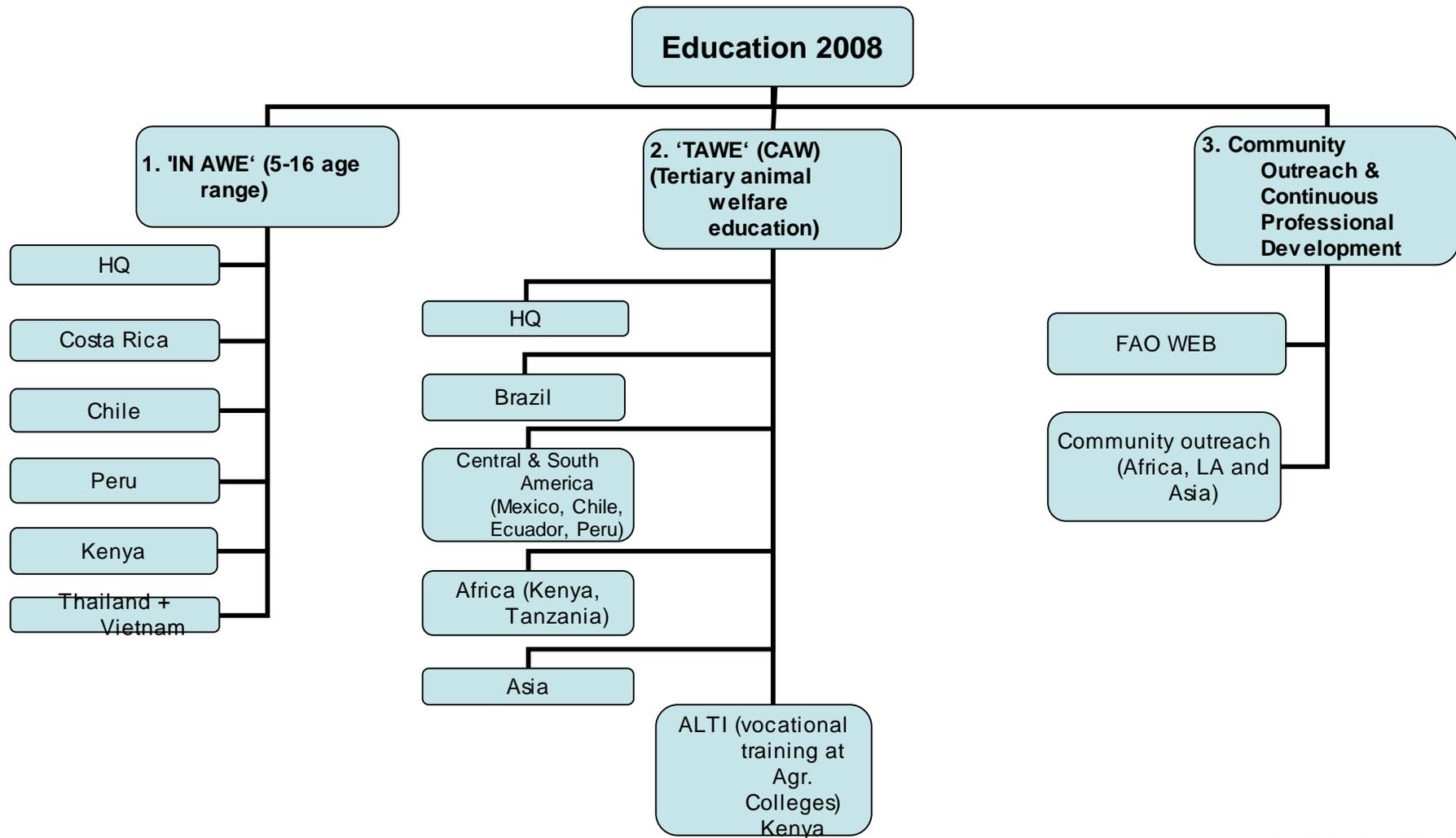


IT education



**Across-curriculum strategy**

# WSPA Education Programme Scope

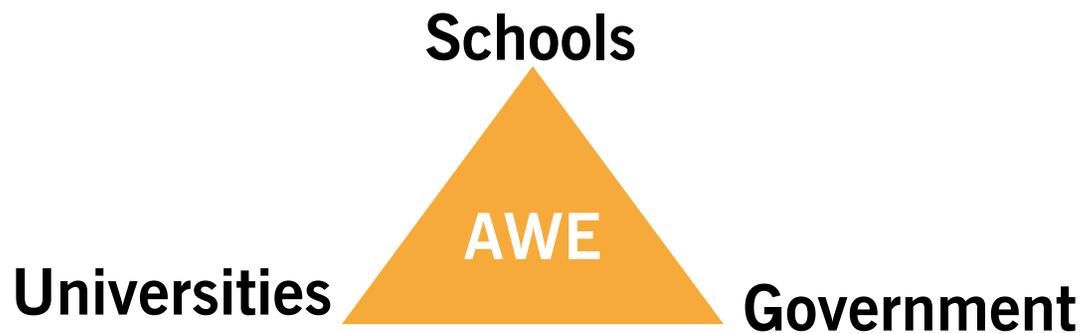


# How to get started...

- Secure support/approval from educational authorities:
  1. Identify a liaison (educational authority-Ministry of Education) with summoning powers within schools.
  2. Meet Ministry-level or school district decision makers, and present the Education Animal Welfare project to them. The argumentation can focus on the formation of values of respect towards life, the circle of violence, interdependence, and sustainable development, among other aspects.
  3. Deliver a project proposal (objectives, scope & sequence, methodology, materials & resources, monitoring & evaluation plans).
  4. Define a working agenda between the parties in order to reach at least two specific objectives in the short term: a) Signature of an agreement or MOU. b) Implementation of an AW teacher-training workshop (pilot project)

## How to get started... (cont.)

- Identify possible strategic allies, such as: University-level Education Schools, NGOs tied to environmental and animal welfare issues, other public and private organisations that can support the effort logistically and financially, in such a way that the project can become a permanent and sustainable programme.
- Define a communication strategy to stakeholders and to the general public (means, contents, scope and target audiences):  
Involves capture of results on benefits and achievements, getting support from media, participation on national and regional conferences, and other local and international events, etc.
- AW legislation: Corrective/formative / punishment



# Lesson Planning

1. Consider the animal welfare content: topic – issue you want to cover.
  - Are you wanting to address a specific animal welfare problem such as stray dogs,
  - or wider issue such as food and farming
  - or are you wanting to address an underlying AWE concept/theme such as ‘responsibility’, animals’ needs, etc.
2. Consider the curricular link: Is your lesson(s) referring to:
  - a specific requirement, a teaching/learning point expressly described in a subject curriculum (eg science, personal/social education, citizenship)
  - a subject area that is less prescribed (eg often ‘environmental education’ is not a specific subject with content as detailed as other subject areas)
  - a specific syllabus (eg a training syllabus or examination syllabus)
3. Once you have identified content and curricular relevance decide whether your lesson is to:
  - Satisfy a specific curriculum point
  - Complement an existing requirement
  - Supplement a curriculum area

# Lesson Planning (cont.)

## 4. Consider

- what you want the learners to learn (learning objectives)
- why you are teaching it (teaching objectives) (eg to satisfy a curriculum requirement)
- what content you will select to form the lesson
- how you will teach it (methodology)
- how you will evaluate what the learners have learned

## 5. In terms of the animal welfare content and learning objectives it is vital to demonstrate professional rigour by specifying precise:

- Knowledge and understanding (eg to know that animals have needs and be able to list those basic needs and understand that when we keep animals in captivity we have the responsibility to ensure animals can meet their needs)
- Skills (eg practical skills of being able to carry out a daily health check on your pet dog, intellectual/communication skills of identifying and selecting information to create a balanced argument, interpersonal skills of listening to and respecting another's point of view, intrapersonal skills such as empathising)
- Attitudes and values such as kindness, compassion, respect, responsibility

# Lesson Planning (cont.)

6. When planning a lesson consider that for many people animals have a special emotional significance. Seemingly 'mild' animal-related issues can be emotive. For example, think of a lesson for young children on responsible pet ownership RPO. Imagine if several children talk about their pets, what about the child whose family (for good reasons) have decided not to have a pet, how could they be feeling? Imagine also the child whose pet cat coincidentally died (or was euthanased) the day you happen to be teaching about RPO.

How will you deal with sensitive issues arising from animal-related lessons?

7. How will you deal with the issue of cruelty within AWE? You should consider the:

- Age range of children
- Their levels of maturity and sensitivity
- Whether any child has significant special educational needs (eg regarding their emotional development)

8. Dependent on the above always consider emphasizing the positive welfare messages/learning points rather than the negative cruelty aspects

# AWE Challenges

- A long-lasting journey
- Sustainable effort in a continuously changing world
- Team building endeavour
- Changing of cultural & psychological patterns
- Teachers and school systems' increasing agenda

*'The greatness of a nation and its moral progress  
can be judged by the way its animals are treated'*

Mahatma Gandhi



**WSPA**

World Society for the Protection of Animals

# Thank you!



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