

Report on the trip to Bosnia September 2009 (by Suze)



Extremes!

This trip existed out of extremes.

Huge differences, major setbacks and fortunately also some strokes of luck.

The preparations for the trip were already a challenge. The vet had to cancel because of personal circumstances, so we could not go on with the sterilization project in Bihac. For us and for Elvira a huge disappointment.

In Orasje we started a small project in collaboration with Harris, the Bosnian veterinarian that **IS** capable of doing sterilizations, and Nedim, the assistant from Tuzla. They "helped" up to 34 dogs sterilized + 1 tail amputation and some standard medical checks on dogs in the shelter where there were doubts or questions. From outside the shelter people brought 9 dogs, one of which was already 3 weeks pregnant, 4 cats, of which two were pregnant, and of course we sterilized these private pets for fee.

All dogs and cats from in and outside the shelter were treated against parasites.

One of our volunteers helped with cleaning and do all sorts of things necessary in the shelter. The staff that is working in the shelter day after day, have to struggle to care for the dogs. One week of extra hands is very welcome.



A second group of people went to Sarajevo to do construction work. What a difference. The shelter of Orasje is a paradise, and the shelter in Sarajevo is a hell, in spite of the good intentions Goga, the owner, has.

We entered the property and almost the first thing we saw was a dying dog. He lies dying in his own feces and looks awful. Everywhere sick puppies coughing and with runny noses. A cripple dog that could barely lift her head and is covered by diarrhea. Anger and frustration is what we feel.



This HAS to change. We can not support a hell like this. And that is where the dilemma starts. Help them by giving more aid, or turn up the pressure to implement changes in the daily care?

The dogs have a terrible life. The minimal basic needs are covered, food and shelter. But the kennel is dirty, they have no space, most of them lead a solitary life and don't get any one on one attention.

Goga is exhausted. She was so tired and she can't find any paid staff. We are deeply concerned about this and we have also been discussing her priorities.

She spends so much energy on a few dogs who are very sick, so 90 dogs are almost neglected. It sounds harsh, but why put so much effort in all the sick puppies that eventually will almost all die a painful death, when you could also provide better care for your healthy dogs. We have great difficulty accepting how she treats the animals in the shelter.



She has promised change, we will see. We have clearly stated where our boundaries are, and that we can not live with this way of working.

In advance we ordered all the material for the construction job, 54 meter of iron matting and 102 meter of steel posts and beams.

We have build two great new fields where the dogs can run free and play and socialize. Something we feel very strongly about. We also divided another existing big field into two parts. So now there are 4 spacious fields for the dogs. Goga will have to use them to make small groups. When this is done properly, she can remove the partitions in the old kennels to combine 2 or 3 so the dogs have more space in the old kennels too. We are extremely proud of the construction team and their tremendous result.



.....before



.....after

Two new girls went for the first time to Bosnia with us. What a baptism of fire.

It is similar to one week at the old shelter of Tuzla. These girls have worked very hard and cleaned all of the kennels where the puppies stayed. Also other dogs were provided with a clean kennel. For them it was all very emotional. Certainly the difference between the two shelters is heartbreaking.



What an intense week. The things we cannot forget are the circumstances of the dogs in Sarajevo and the future of Orasje. The fact that we found a practically empty food container, there is nothing, just some bread bags and food we had brought. How will this evolve? Whatever happens, we will continue to fight!

Suze