

The Barcelona community cats program

Agnès Dufau

Plataforma Gatera is an Animal Welfare Organisation based in Barcelona. It was created in 2005 and it coordinates 19 associations. We are working to improve cats' welfare and protection in Barcelona through several types of actions: cat colonies management program; rescue and re-homing of abandoned cats; promotion of responsible ownership and education of all cat lovers.

We are working with the Barcelona City Council to promote the humane management of community cats since 2007. The cat program is based on TNR and a comprehensive management of the colonies: veterinary follow-up; protected areas for the cats; colony monitoring; training and registration of volunteers.

The city council commitment to the TNR program allows the NGOs to develop their work in two different ways. The first one is a grant which is allowed to each district on a yearly basis and can be spent in private veterinary clinics (neutering surgeries only). The associations have to follow a strict procedure and can use the clinic of their choice. The second way is using the municipal neutering centre, which has opened in June 2009 and is managed by a veterinarian. It is dedicated to neutering healthy animals only; no other medical treatment or surgeries can be undertaken in the installation. Centre users are authorized volunteers from recognized and registered associations.

The 2013 numbers are: 2713 cats neutered through the City Council program; 672 registered colonies; 8.549 controlled cats.

Our last important achievements have been the introduction of an official identification for all volunteers who have been trained by the city council (2013) and the publication of the new animals' protection ordinance which now includes a proper definition of the un-owned cats, and the consolidation of the colonies program as the only way to manage the stray/feral population in the city (2014).

Apart from the cat program, Plataforma Gatera also organizes workshops and feline conferences every year since 2009. And we are also working on the promotion of cat responsible ownership with the "Gato Paco" campaign which was launched in 2012.

More info: www.plataformagatera.org