

The Lithuanian Kennel Club, or Lietuvos Kinology Draugija (LKD), held their second international workshop: A Dog Loving Society: Best Practices and Perspectives in their historic capital, Vilnius, on the 6th and 7th March 2017. The turnout of local dog people and kennel club members, and representatives of other European kennel clubs was inspiring. There is great pride and strong feeling for kennel clubs' role in society, not just to promote the pedigree dog, but to promote good practices for promoting dog welfare. A kennel club is not a dog rescue or rehoming organisation, but it can certainly put its resources into education, to raise awareness of good breeding, care and puppy socialisation amongst its members, and of good dog care, training and behaviour amongst the general public. Factors that will encourage responsible sourcing of the family puppy, as well as good care, socialisation and training of that puppy, to safeguard their future and keep them within their new human family, thus playing an important promotional and prophylactic role in dog welfare.

My role was to introduce tools for monitoring and evaluating human behaviour change in the context of canine welfare; recording baseline data, asking the right questions, most significant change, and of course, before and after data. I included examples of community education, and how they could be improved upon by using such techniques, thereby also introducing the British Coffee Morning. The talk was well received and I understood quite quickly that performing monitoring and evaluation activities was a fairly new idea in the kennel club context. One comment that came back was that by doing so one could be more professional and organised by carrying out such activities, so I provided plenty of food for thought, as I learned by discussing my presentation afterwards with some of the participants who sought me out in the coffee break.

Another key theme that came out from the event was the concept of ideas sharing. Marie Luna Durán, Marketing and Public Relations Manager for Fédération Cynologique Internationale (FCI), the umbrella organisation for many kennel clubs worldwide, really underlined this in her opening address. Repeats of this call to action were repeated by the other speakers, in their presentations on their national 'dog days' (24th April in Finland and now also in Lithuania), and in their dog bite prevention work with children: Lithuania, Ireland who openly and unashamedly used the Lithuanian material as the basis of their educational work, Germany and Italy. Denmark and Sweden shared examples of their printed educational materials.

It was quite a pull to leave the inspirational and friendly collective on Wednesday morning for my flight home. Since ideas sharing is part of HBCA and core to the work initiated by LKD, and supported by FCI, I made clear that future collaboration is always welcome and expressed our hopes that our organisations would continue to be able to support each other.

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