



DARE

Depolarisation Activism for
Resilient Europe

DARE to Care: Animal Welfare

Author: Lina Jurjević



Croatian Education and Development
Network for the Evolution of
Communication - HERMES
Croatia



Kreisau-Initiative
Kreisau Initiative e.V.
Germany



Open Communication
Serbia



TRANSFORM
Sweden



Western Balkans
Network
Bosnia-Herzegovina



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

This project was co-funded by the European Commission. The views and content of this lesson plan are the sole responsibility of its authors and do not reflect the views of the European Commission or the implementing organisations. The European Commission is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication.

DARE to Care: Animal Welfare

Background (about the DARE project)

The 'DARE - Depolarization Activism for Resilient Europe' initiative was created to inspire a critical learning space and youth-led and action-oriented dialogue about various contemporary challenges such as polarisation, radicalisation, mental health, human rights violations. The DARE educational materials seek to strengthen active citizenship and European values and promote and amplify youth voices and civic engagement.

For more information, please visit the project website: www.depolarisation.eu

Lesson Themes

- DARE to Care theme - an insight into a young person's motivation and commitment to volunteering for a particular cause and through doing so, serving one's community;
- Animal welfare, in particular stray dogs and the care for them in an animal shelter in Osijek, Croatia.

Context

The number of abandoned and homeless dogs and cats in Europe is estimated to be over 100 million animals. (For a breakdown estimate per country, see: www.esdaw.eu/stray-animals-by-country.html.) The mistreatment of animals, irresponsible ownership, and in the worst cases, cruelty, is something that unfortunately happens everywhere. The relevance of this topic for students is to raise awareness about different ways in which the situation and lives of many dogs can be improved through supporting the work of local animal shelters. Through volunteering their time, everyone can contribute to making the world a better place by helping abandoned and mistreated animals.

Goals

- To raise awareness about the problem of abandoned and mistreated animals;
- To build empathy;
- To evoke a sense of agency and community service when it comes to animal welfare.

Learning Outcomes

It is expected that as a result of the class, the students will be able to:

- Understand the problem of stray animals and their mistreatment;
- Identify and discuss different animal welfare principles;
- Analyse and articulate what type of action(s) could be done in a given challenging animal welfare situation.

Material and Equipment Needed

Laptop; beamer/projector; speakers; internet/wi-fi; flip-chart papers and markers for group work activity

Duration

45 minutes (one standard lesson)

Overview of Lesson Activities (Process)

Introduction (5 minutes)

The instructor starts the lesson by asking students to raise their hands if they have a pet at home. Several students from those who raised their hands are asked to share how their pet got to become a part of their household - did they find them in the street, did they receive one as a gift for their birthday, etc.

The instructor then announces that the class today will be about animals who are not so lucky to have a home. Students are asked to pay attention to the following short video, as the class will have a discussion immediately after watching it.

Short DARE to Care video clip viewing (5 minutes)

Play the video clip for the students: depolarisation.eu/animalwelfare

A brief discussion about the video clip (10 minutes)

Useful exploratory and follow-up reflection questions, for example:

- What kind of volunteering work does Dunja do for the dog shelter and the association 'Victories' in Osijek? (Note: she helps with upkeeping the shelter's infrastructure, with walking the dogs, with fundraising activities - selling items in regular auctions, through which the shelter is largely funded.)
- Why do you think she decides to volunteer her time for this particular cause? (What does she get out of it?)
- What are some of the reasons why dogs end up in shelters? (Note: irresponsible owners, mistreatment and abandonment, people not sterilizing their dogs which leads to many unwanted puppies on the streets, etc.)
- Feel free to open the floor for student questions - do they have any questions about the video they just watched?

"Fast-Paced Research" - Group Work Activity (15 minutes)

Randomly assign the students into four or five groups (ideally, 4 - 5 students per group though more or fewer also works). Each group should have one piece of flipchart paper and markers, to prepare their presentation.

Each group receives a different assignment to explore - they need to do research and prepare a quick presentation. They have 10-15 minutes for this group work. The presentations should be 1-2 minutes long. (Posters they create should speak for themselves.)

"Fast Paced Research" - Group Work Activity - continued

GROUP 1 - Philosophy Discussion

Task: study these three quotes, and on the poster do a brainstorm or a mindmap, analysing what the authors of the quotes meant to say with them.

- Quote 1: "Humanity's true moral test, its fundamental test, consists of its attitude towards those who are at its mercy: animals. And in this respect humankind has suffered a fundamental debacle, a debacle so fundamental that all others stem from it." (Milan Kundera)
- Quote 2: "From animal murder to human murder is only one step, and so is from animal cruelty to human cruelty." (Leo Tolstoy)
- Quote 3: "The better I get to know men, the more I find myself loving dogs." (Charles De Gaulle)

GROUP 2 - Principles of Animal Welfare

Task: quickly research on the internet what are some of the main principles and actions of animal welfare. (Why should we protect the animals?)

GROUP 3 - Responsible Pet Ownership

Task: quickly research and discuss key elements that constitute responsible pet ownership. (How are we supposed to treat and take care of our pets?)

GROUP 4 - Animal Welfare in our country

Task: quickly research on the internet the main animal welfare advocacy organisations in our country. List them on the poster, their missions and focus areas of work.

GROUP 5 - Animal Welfare in our town

Task: quickly research what animal welfare organisations or initiatives exist in our town. Are there any animal shelters? How do they operate? If there is no shelter, are there initiatives or petitions to create one?

Presentations and Lesson Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

Facilitate the presentation of each group's results (maximum 2 min per group). If possible, assign homework activities. (see next page)

Sources

- DARE project, documentation and videos can be found on the project website: www.depolarisation.eu or www.resilienteurope.eu
- Website of the association 'Victories' (that runs the dog shelter whose volunteer is featured in the short DARE to Care video): www.pobjede.hr and their Facebook community page: www.facebook.com/azil.osijekvolonteri

Activity Adaption for Online Implementation

This activity can be implemented fully as a class-based discussion, without the group work, by simply addressing some of the current group work 'tasks' or questions, in a plenary discussion with the whole class.

This lesson easily transfers to online education, as much of it focuses on student reflection and conversation. The group activity should be carried out in online breakout rooms, while all other activities are to take place in the online plenary (everyone together).

Assessment and Evaluation Options

While some elements of this lesson relate to understanding and knowledge of information that can be tested, the core of this activity revolves around fostering empathy for other living beings - and this should not be subject to grading or other standard evaluation practices. Ideally, the evaluation should focus on student action that might follow the implemented class activity - for example, carrying out one of the homework ideas.

Homework Ideas

Individual assignment:

Engage in some form of animal welfare volunteering activity (donate items to a shelter, walk dogs in a shelter, photograph quality photos of animals waiting for adoption, etc.) and then write a short reflection essay about your experience.

Group assignment:

Organise a collective action for supporting a local animal shelter (e.g. going there to walk the dogs, donate old blankets or towels, etc.), or a school auction and fundraiser for an animal shelter (collect donations of clothes, books, toys, etc. that people no longer want or need, and sell them off auction style - online or offline - to collect funds that you will donate directly to a shelter).