



ETCOR

INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

Securing the Future for Stray Animals: Funding Strategies for Animal Rescue and Adoption in the Bicol Region

Regine Eina E. Calisin*¹, Dr. Manny B. Macabeo²

^{1,2} Bicol College Graduate School, Daraga, Albay, Philippines

*Corresponding Author email: regineeinacalisin@gmail.com

Received: 01 April 2025

Revised: 03 May 2025

Accepted: 05 May 2025

Available Online: 06 May 2025

Volume IV (2025), Issue 2, P-ISSN – 2984-7567; E-ISSN - 2945-3577

<https://doi.org/10.63498/etcor305>

Abstract

Aim: In addressing financial gaps and operational constraints, this study investigated the status of three (3) animal shelters, namely: Albay Animal Rescue and Adoption (AARA), Tabaco Animal Rescue and Adoption (TAARA), and Sorsogon Animal Rescue and Adoption (SARA). The objectives are as follows: (1) to determine the status of animal shelters in the provinces of Albay and Sorsogon, along with their Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives (VMGO), manpower capability, facilities, budget, activities, and accomplishments; (2) to analyze the funding strategies of the local animal shelters in terms of alignment to VMGO, Compensation, MOOE (maintenance and other operating expenses), stakeholder support, and risk management; (3) to identify the challenges encountered by the participants in the animal shelters along with the above-mentioned variables; and (4) to propose a Funding Strategy Framework to sustain animal rescue and adoption in the Bicol region.

Methodology: Data were collected following a qualitative study design that included semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis involving key participants from the three (3) animal welfare organizations, such as heads, volunteers, and rescuers.

Results: The findings show the status of animal shelters as non-profit organizations with clear vision, mission, goals and objectives (VMGO); that there is no compensation for their volunteers; they do not have a stable budget for their operations; no proper facilities for the rescues; and they have organized activities such as fundraising events, rescue operation, and adoption drives. The findings likewise show that while there was alignment with their VMGO and the shelter's funding strategies, and they were able to organize marketing and creative fundraising activities, these have been insufficient to render operations sustainable; Financial constraints, Veterinary care and food supply were found to be the most significant expenses, reliance on volunteers, lack of institutional support, and risk management are among the challenges.

Conclusion: Despite their commitment to animal welfare, AARA, TAARA, and SARA struggle with financial instability, reliance on inconsistent donations, lack of structured support, and risk management strategy, culminating in AARA's closure due to high veterinary debts and insufficient manpower.

Keywords: *sustainable funding strategies, animal shelters, animal rescue and adoption, non-profit organization*

INTRODUCTION

The vision of a world where humans and animals coexist harmoniously is grounded in respect for life and social responsibility. In such a world, animals like dogs and cats are seen not as nuisances or "strays" but as important members of the community or "community animals" deserving care and compassion. This perspective aligns with the understanding that animals, particularly companion animals, are integral to human societies and should be treated with dignity and respect. (Humane Society International, 2025).

Globally, countries like Turkey and the Netherlands have adopted humane and systematic approaches, such as mandatory pet registration, spay and neuter programs, and strong animal protection laws, to address stray animal populations and promote community (Republic of Turkey, 2004; Elnaggar, 2024; Schukken et al., 2019). International



ETCOR

INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

organizations like the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) support these efforts by working with local groups to rescue, rehabilitate, and advocate for animal welfare (IFAW, 2024; PETA, 2025)

In the Philippines, despite national laws like the Animal Welfare Act (RA 8485 as amended by RA 10631), enforcement remains weak due to limited funding, lack of public awareness, and insufficient implementation by local government units (Rodriguez Ferrere, 2022) Rabies continues to be a public health concern, with 250–300 deaths annually, primarily affecting children and the economically disadvantaged (Strategic Plan 2020-2025 under the National Rabies Prevention and Control Program of the DOH and Department of Agriculture Bureau of Animal Industry, 2019).

Nonprofit organizations such as PAWS, AKF, PAWSsion Project, and SWS have stepped in to provide essential services, rescue, rehabilitation, and public education, yet face growing challenges due to the increasing stray population and limited funding (PAWS, 2025; AKF, 2025; PAWSsion Project, 2025; SWS, 2025).

At the local level, shelters in the Bicol Region like AARA, TAARA, and SARA play a critical role in addressing regional animal welfare needs. However, they struggle with inadequate resources, volunteer burnout, and the absence of strong partnerships with government agencies. Despite these hurdles, their work highlights the power of community-driven initiatives.

There is no comprehensive local research that has examined how nonprofit animal shelters operate, sustain themselves financially, or collaborate with government stakeholders. This study fills the gap by offering a sustainable funding strategy framework that is evidence-based and tailored to local realities.

Objectives

The study aimed to determine the status of local animal shelters and the challenges they face in managing and sustaining them.

Specifically, it aimed to:

1. determine the status of animal shelters in the provinces of Albay and Sorsogon, along with:
 - a. Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives;
 - b. Manpower capability;
 - c. Budget;
 - d. Facilities;
 - e. Activities; and
 - f. Accomplishments.
2. analyze the funding strategies of the local animal shelters in terms of:
 - a. Alignment with the VMGO;
 - b. Compensation;
 - c. MOOE or Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses;
 - d. Stakeholder Support; and
 - e. Risk Management.
3. identify the challenges encountered by the participants in the animal shelters along with the above-mentioned variables.
4. propose a Funding Strategy Framework to sustain animal rescue and adoption in the Bicol region.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative design to determine the status of animal shelters, explore funding strategies, and examine operational challenges that nonprofit animal shelters face. The case study approach enabled an in-depth



ETCOR Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines

INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

examination of real-world practices within three local shelters: Albay Animal Rescue and Adoption (AARA), Tabaco Albay Animal Rescue and Adoption (TAARA), and Sorsogon Animal Rescue and Adoption (SARA).

Population and Sampling

Using purposive sampling, the study selected three (3) animal shelters: AARA, TAARA, and SARA. The interviews included ten (10) participants classified into three (3) roles: organizational heads/chairpersons, volunteers, and on-call rescuers. Selection was based on their role in management, daily shelter activities, and rescue operations. This ensured a range of perspectives across strategic and operational levels.

Instrument

The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended responses to balance structure with participant flexibility. This approach allowed key topics aligned with the study's objectives to be addressed while allowing participants to share their in-depth perspectives. The interview guide focused on the (a) present status of animal shelters, (b) funding strategies currently employed by them, and (c) operational challenges encountered by them. The first part of the interview guide was answered only by organization heads and addressed strategies for securing and sustaining funding sources. The second part engaged all participants, heads, volunteers, and rescuers, examining operational challenges such as maintenance costs, stakeholder engagement, volunteer retention, and resource availability.

Data Collection

Data gathering involved individual interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with representatives from three (3) major animal welfare organizations: AARA, TAARA, and SARA. The researcher has initiated contact through Facebook Messenger, requesting interviews and seeking recommendations for active volunteers and rescuers from each organization. After scheduling arrangements, the following sessions occurred: AARA conducted an online FGD, while TAARA had individual online interviews followed by an in-person FGD. SARA's interviews were conducted individually online due to a smaller participant pool. All interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and later validated by participants. Transcriptions were first done in the original language and then translated into English for uniform analysis.

Data Analysis

Two (2) complementary methods were employed: Documentary Analysis, wherein the financial reports, fundraising records, and organizational documents were reviewed; and Thematic Analysis, wherein interview and FGD transcripts were coded and categorized to identify recurring themes.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were rigorously followed. Participants received an informed consent form detailing their rights, the purpose of the study, and the voluntary nature of participation. Under the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173), all personal data were anonymized, securely stored, and used solely for research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of this study, organized into conceptual themes that correspond to the objectives of the study, namely, to determine the operational status of the animal shelters in terms of VMGO, compensation, budget, facilities, activities and accomplishments, and analyze the fundraising strategies and challenges in the operation of the animal shelters in terms of alignment with their VMGO, workforce capability, MOOE, stakeholder support, and risk management. This study made recommendations based on the findings. Interview responses support the results, documentary analysis, and implications connected to existing literature.

1. Status of Animal Shelters in Albay and Sorsogon

This subsection corresponds to the first objective, which involved the documentary analysis of the three (3) organizations' organizational structure, resources, and outreach activities. These are summarized by key operational areas.

On VMGO, despite being informal structures, these three organizations remain consistent with their values. A unified view on rescues, rehabilitation, and rehoming of animals with simultaneous public awareness and local government support is observable. However, manpower, budget, and facilities remain their limitations.

645



ETCOR
INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00
Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

2. Funding Strategies for Animal Shelters

This subsection corresponds to the second objective, which explores the actual strategies the shelters use to fund their operations and how they align with their advocacy. The analysis of funding strategies followed five (5) variables and themes: alignment with VMGO, compensation, Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE), stakeholder support, and risk management.

The findings show that the shelters rely heavily on community goodwill. Their strategies show commitments to ethics but limited capacity for long-term planning. Volunteer support is critical, but there is no consistent compensation system, which leads to volunteer burnout. Veterinary expenses are the most significant financial burden. LGU support is limited to free anti-rabies vaccinations, and stakeholder donations are unpredictable. Emergency funds or structured risk management do not exist.

3. Challenges in Funding Strategies

The findings demonstrate that operational challenges mostly mirror funding issues. The data revealed how funding directly affects the shelters' ability to rescue and care for animals. Logistical issues like transport or unpaid veterinary bills often force difficult choices like prioritizing food over medical treatment.

One of the biggest challenges under MOOE is veterinary care. Emergency cases or surgeries, and medicines can cost thousands, and shelters often cannot delay these treatments. They rely on the generosity of vet clinics or fundraising campaigns to cover expenses, but these solutions are short-term. Transport for rescue operations and basic needs also depend on donations.

These expenses are recurring and unpredictable. Shelters do not have regular income streams to cover these costs. Bills with partner vet clinics often accumulate, as animals are treated on credit and shelters pay later. This cycle keeps shelter in survival mode, with little opportunity for financial stability. MOOE needs are prioritized over long-term planning, leaving no budget for compensation, staff development, and risk management.

Conclusions

This study examined the status, funding strategies, and challenges faced by three local animal shelters: Albay Animal Rescue and Adoption (AARA), The Albay Animal Rescue Alliance (formerly Tabaco Albay Animal Rescue and Adoption, TAARA), and Sorsogon Animal Rescue and Adoption (SARA). On the status of animal shelters, their VMGOs are rooted in human values and consistently reflect ethical and community-centered goals. However, they suffer from limited manpower. Operations are largely volunteer-driven with no formal staffing, making them highly vulnerable to burnout. Budget-wise, there is no stable financial support; they rely heavily on unpredictable donations or the use of personal resources of shelter heads and volunteers. Facilities are basic and stretched beyond capacity, and although the shelters have managed several activities and accomplishments such as adoption drives, vaccinations, and educational efforts, these are mostly unsustainable.

On funding strategies, it was concluded that: first, there is a clear alignment with the shelters' VMGOs. They uphold integrity, reject politically motivated findings, and design fundraising around their core mission. Second, the absence of compensation, even modest allowances, limits volunteer retention and adds pressure on existing volunteers. Third, MOOE, especially on food and medical care, is a constant burden. Shelters often delay treatments or ration meals when donations run short. Fourth, stakeholder support is largely dependent on social media. LGUs and corporate sectors are not fully tapped, and unfulfilled pledges create operational risks. Fifth, risk management is weak. There are no structured emergency funds or preparation systems. Crises like disease outbreaks or emergency rescue operations expose these weaknesses.

Operational challenges show how the animal welfare ecosystem is without structured funding and institutional support. The shelters are mission-driven but under-resourced, ethically strong but structurally fragile. Their current model of fundraising is reactive, relying on social media calls and volunteers' personal resources, rather than sustained institutional support. Unless they receive strategic and systemic assistance, more closures like that of AARA will follow.



ETCOR

INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

Recommendations

The following recommendations significantly enhance the potential for improved animal welfare in the Bicol region, ensuring a sustainable future for shelters and the animals they serve.

Generally, the study recommends the following: (a) on VMGO, strengthen the alignment of funding strategies with VMGO; (b) on compensation, introduce volunteer stipends, salary, and formal recognition programs; (c) for MOOE, tap into the Animal Welfare Trust Fund (AWTF), and barangay development annual allocations; (d) on stakeholder support, develop partnerships with LGUs and private companies; and (5) on risk management, formalize risk management and emergency funds.

Firstly, existing shelters TAARA and SARA may establish volunteer programs with regular training, non-monetary incentives, and partnerships with universities for academic credit or internships, thereby enhancing long-term engagement. Diversifying revenue through social enterprises such as pet care services and forming corporate sponsorships will bolster financial resilience. Implementing proactive risk management strategies, including emergency funds and agreements with veterinary clinics, can help shelters navigate financial constraints.

Secondly, stakeholders in the animal welfare ecosystem may adopt a multisectoral approach to support shelters and reduce the stray animal population. Pet owners can promote responsible ownership, while public awareness campaigns can encourage consistent donor support. Businesses may integrate animal welfare into their CSR or corporate social responsibility efforts, and veterinary clinics, including the Philippine Veterinary Medical Association (PVMA) chapters, may assist with discounted services. Educational institutions may foster community engagement through relevant curricula and service-learning programs.

Thirdly, policy-makers are essential in establishing structured support for animal welfare. Local government units (LGUs) may create formal partnerships with nonprofit shelters and allocate resources for food, veterinary care, and spay/neuter programs. At the national level, Congress may advocate for legal reforms of the Animal Welfare Act, provide access to the AWTF, tax incentives for donors, and regulate pet abandonment, abuse, and cruelty, such as the dog meat trade.

Institutionalize public-private partnerships (PPP) to formalize support across sectors.

Finally, emerging organizations like the Albay Animal Welfare Coalition (AAWC) offer opportunities for innovation and collaboration. They may explore diverse funding strategies and maintain transparency to build donor confidence. These groups may optimize digital fundraising, partner with larger organizations like the PAWS< AKF, etc., and implement predictive budgeting and financial transparency. The AAWC may act as regional coordinators for collective advocacy and resource sharing.

Proposed Action Plan to Ensure the Financial Sustainability of Nonprofit Animal Shelters in the Bicol Region

To ensure the long-term sustainability of nonprofit animal shelters, a comprehensive funding strategy must align with their Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO) and operational needs. This action plan is based on five key funding strategy variables: VMGO alignment, compensation, MOOE (maintenance and other operating expenses), stakeholder support, and risk management. It aims to establish a multi-faceted funding model that enhances financial stability, donor engagement, and operational resilience.

1. **VMGO Alignment:** Ethical, mission-driven fundraising, such as adoption drives, free vet services, educational programs, and digital campaigns, strengthens donor confidence and transparency. These activities, led by shelter heads, volunteers, and marketing teams, are implemented continuously to build donor trust and secure sustainable funding aligned with shelter goals.
2. **Compensation and Volunteer Support:** Volunteer retention is supported through stipends, transport allowances, recognition programs, business-sponsored meals, and partnerships with universities for internships. Led by shelter leaders and partners, these ongoing activities improve morale, engagement, and operational efficiency.



ETCOR

INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

3. **MOOE Funding:** To cover daily operational costs like food, medical care, and maintenance, shelters must secure sponsorships, apply for grants, negotiate bulk deals, and use predictive budgeting. Finance teams, donors, and community partners carry out these continuous and long-term activities to reduce costs and stabilize funding.
4. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Strengthening ties with government, corporate, and private partners involves transparency, impact reporting, donor programs, social media outreach, and advocacy for public funding, including the Animal Welfare Trust Fund (AWTF). Continuous engagement by shelter leaders and LGU partners increases public support, awareness, and funding.
5. **Risk Management:** To handle emergencies and financial shocks, shelters should build emergency funds, diversify income (e.g., merchandise, paid adoptions), form veterinary partnerships, and launch rapid-response campaigns. These immediate and ongoing strategies, involving shelter leaders, vets, and advocates, improve preparedness and reduce reliance on unstable donations.

REFERENCES

- Animal Kingdom Foundation. (2025). *Mission and vision*. <https://akf.org.ph/>
- Elnaggar, A. (2024, August 1). Turkey's new animal protection law: A step forward or a step back? *The Jurist*. <https://www.the-jurist.com/article/turkeys-new-animal-protection-law>
- Humane Society International. (2025). *Companion animal welfare*. <https://www.hsi.org/issues/companion-animal-welfare/>
- International Fund for Animal Welfare. (2024). *Guiding principles*. <https://www.ifaw.org/about/guiding-principles>
- PAWS. (2025). *People helping animals. Animals helping people*. Philippine Animal Welfare Society. <https://paws.org.ph/>
- PAWSSion Project. (2025). *Spay & neuter initiative*. <https://pawssionproject.org.ph/spay-neuter-initiative/>
- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. (2025). *About PETA*. <https://www.peta.org/about-peta/>
- Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS). (2025). *Volunteer information and guidelines*. <https://www.paws.org.ph>
- Republic Act No. 10631. (2013). An act amending the animal welfare act of 1998. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/>
- Republic of Turkey. (2004, July 1). Animal protection law No. 5199. *Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey, Issue No. 25509*. <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr>
- Rodriguez Ferrere, M. B. (2022). Animal welfare underenforcement as a rule of law problem. *Animals (Basel)*, 12(11), 1411. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani12111411>
- Schukken, Y. H., van Trijp, J. C. M., van Alphen, J. J. M., & Hopster, H. (Eds.). (2019). *Staat van het dier: Beschouwingen en opinies over de verschuivende relatie tussen mens en dier in Nederland*. Raad voor Dierenangelegenheden. https://www.rda.nl/binaries/raad-voor-dierenangelegenheden/documenten/publicaties/2019/10/04/de-staat-van-het-dier/De_staat_van_het_dier_DEF.pdf
- Strategic Plan 2020-2025 under the National Rabies Prevention and Control Program of the DOH and Department of Agriculture Bureau of Animal Industry. (2019). *Executive summary*. https://rr-asia.woah.org/app/uploads/2020/03/final-mtp-rabies_philippines.pdf
- Strays Worth Saving. (2025). Our mission and programs. <https://straysworthsaving.org/>