



# Stray dogs

Around the world, economic hardship has prompted many families to get rid of their beloved pets. Stray dogs have become a serious concern, especially in urban areas. Their presence significantly increases social tensions, affects transportation and endangers human health. The longer we ignore the problem, the more expensive the solution will be.

Read the following case study and discuss the issues it raises.



## Case study: Best friend or urban hazard?

Environmental experts claim that, to cope with the rising numbers of stray dogs, the average city needs two or three dog shelters, each able to house 50 dogs. Animal protection laws must also be taken more seriously and enforced appropriately.

Opponents argue that our priority should rather be the many people who do not have enough to eat. They also argue that stray dogs can harm children, that dogs cause a disturbance by barking all night, and that strays are responsible for many traffic accidents.



Despite such opinions, environmental experts are keen to protect stray animals. The problem cannot be avoided, but someone needs to take responsibility and find a solution:

- Should stray dogs be put to sleep?
- Should we be angry with them or take pity on them?
- Should we feed stray dogs or leave them to fend for themselves and possibly die of starvation?

The issue of stray dogs raises dilemmas for society, and the problem will become more and more expensive if the search for a solution is delayed. Dog owners, environmentalists and decision makers around the world are in general agreement that sterilisation is the most humane and ethical response to the problem of stray dogs.

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Discuss the following:

- Why are stray dogs a growing problem? What has led to their increased numbers?
- Who is responsible for the problem?
- What can be done about the situation? (Should the dogs be destroyed? Should animal shelters be built? Should the dogs be sterilised?)
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each suggested solution?