



# SPAY IT FORWARD PROGRAM

## End of Year Report 2025

Presented by  
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# Program Overview

Spay It Forward is a structured mentorship and training initiative integrated into Animal Balance's sterilization campaigns in the Galápagos Islands.

Participants join experienced veterinary teams during real clinic settings, where learning occurs through direct practice, observation, and continuous feedback from senior surgeons and mentors.



The program emphasizes knowledge exchange, teamwork, and exposure to field realities, including logistics, community engagement, and working within sensitive conservation contexts. Designed to honor the legacy of Dr. Diego Barrera, the program reflects his commitment to excellence, education, and service, ensuring that each generation of veterinarians is better prepared to lead ethical and effective spay/neuter initiatives.

# Program Objectives

The Spay It Forward Program was created to strengthen long-term animal welfare impact by investing in people

The primary objective is to train and mentor veterinary students and early-career professionals in high-quality, ethical spay/neuter practices, ensuring that knowledge and skills extend beyond a single intervention

By empowering participants to replicate these standards in their own communities, Spay It Forward multiplies impact and supports sustainable population management efforts.

Through supervised, hands-on experience, the program aims to improve surgical competence, clinical decision-making, anesthesia safety, and post-operative care, while fostering a strong sense of responsibility toward animal welfare, public health, and conservation.

# Participant Selection Criteria



These criteria ensure that selected participants demonstrate strong academic performance, prior hands-on experience, and the commitment required to uphold the clinical and ethical standards of the program.

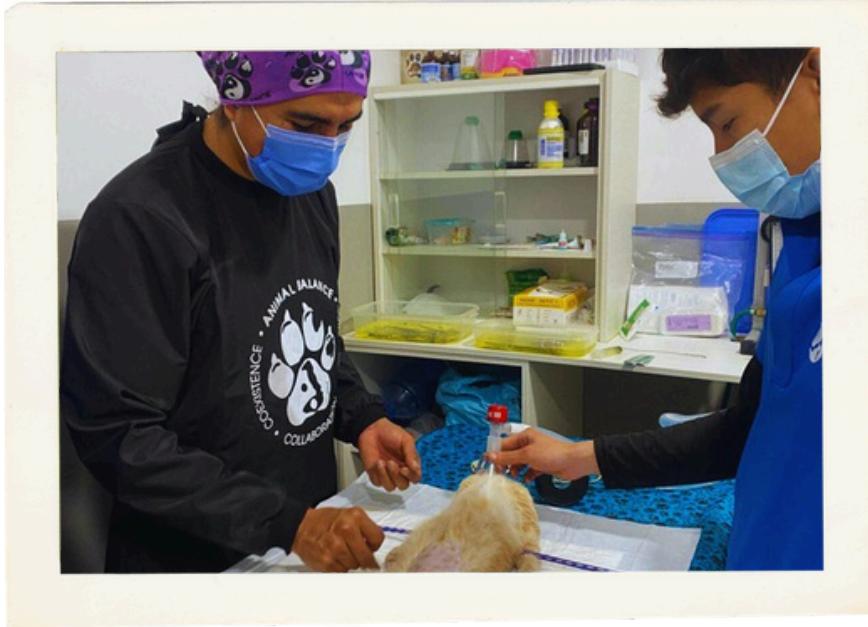
**Enrollment in the final year of veterinary school**

**Cumulative academic average of 8.5/10 or higher**

**Active participation in local spay/neuter clinics and relevant surgical training workshops**

**Successful completion of a personal interview with Dr. Edisson Llambo, Medical Director**

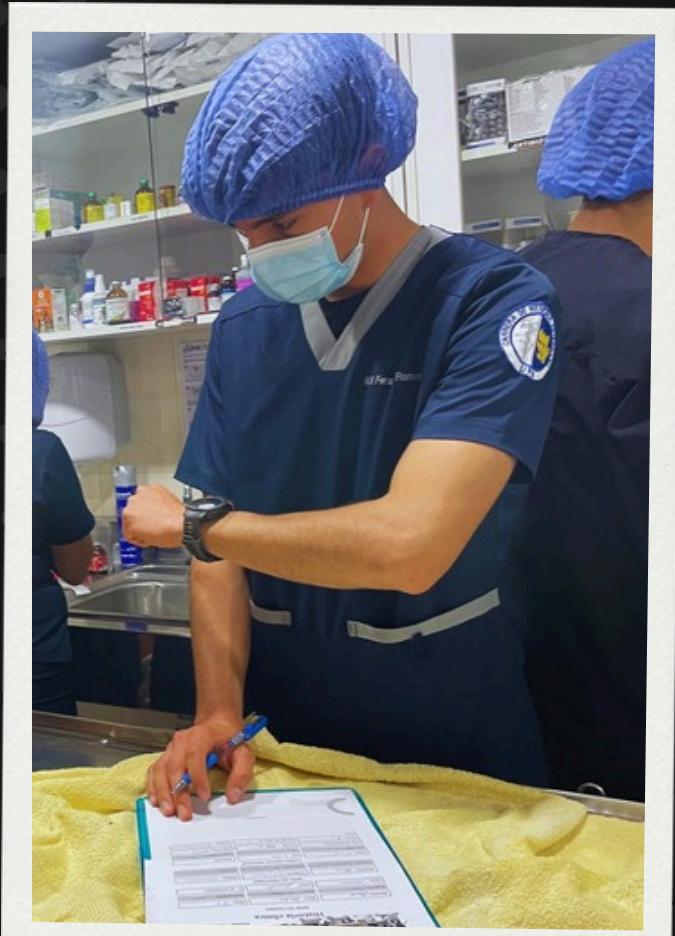
Spay/neuter clinics led by Dr. Edisson Llambo in Ambato and surroundings to train vet students previous the trip to the Galapagos Islands



Workshop about surgery techniques, anaesthesia, and emergency response for vet students of the Polytechnic of Cuenca. Lectured by Dr. Edisson Llambo



# Results to Date



## 7 vet students

participated in the Spay It Forward Program, joining Animal Balance clinics in the Galápagos Islands



## 4 Universities

Polytechnic University of Cuenca, UniAnde, UTE Ambato, and Polytechnic University of Chimborazo



## 4 cities

Students come from Ambato, Cuenca, Coca, and Zaruma. These towns are located in the Coast, Andean, and Amazon regions.



## 240 hours

of training in real context spay/neuter clinics that strengthen their technical skills and professional confidence.

# In their own words



The following testimonials reflect the personal and professional experiences of the participants in the Spay It Forward Program. Through hands-on training, close mentorship, and real-world clinical practice, each participant gained skills, confidence, and a deeper understanding of humane population control—insights they will carry forward into their future work

# Daniela Barrera

UniAndes University,  
Ambato



... "Programs like Spay It Forward not only shape more competent veterinarians, but also more conscious and committed professionals"...



... "On a personal level, carrying out this work was also a tribute to my uncle, who was a key figure in my life and in my decision to pursue this career."...

... "I learned not only surgical and preventive techniques, but also the importance of empathy, teamwork, and community education"...



# Alex LLambo

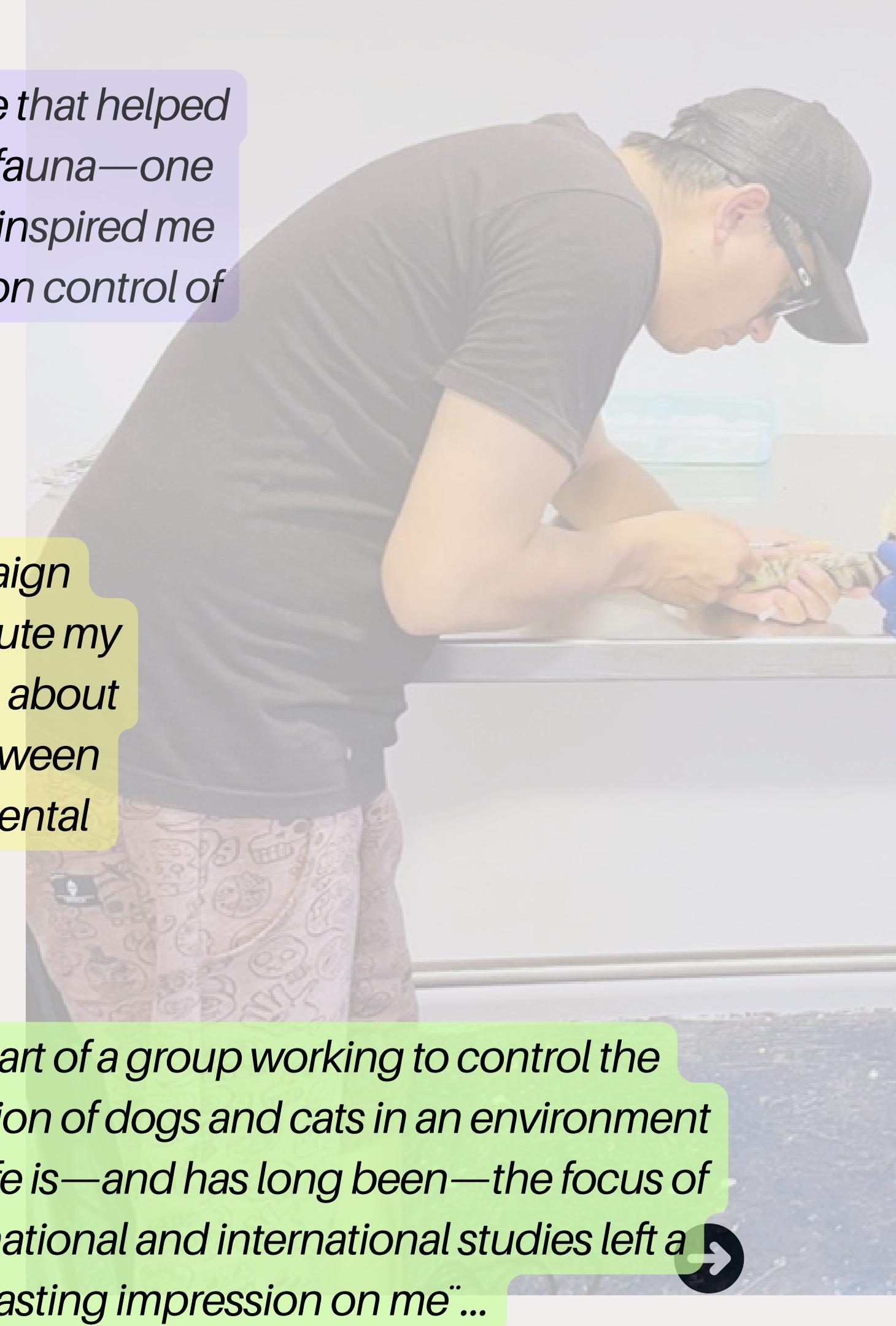
Polytechnic of Chimborazo,  
Ambato



*...“It was a truly rewarding experience that helped me connect with a different kind of fauna—one that exists only in Galápagos—and inspired me to guide my career toward population control of dogs and cats.”...*

*...“Participating in this campaign allowed me not only to contribute my time and effort but also to learn about the important connection between animal welfare and environmental conservation.”...*

*...“being part of a group working to control the overpopulation of dogs and cats in an environment where wildlife is—and has long been—the focus of important national and international studies left a lasting impression on me”...*



# Mauro Barrera

UniAndes University,  
Ambato



... "I learned a great deal about surgical techniques for population control, guided by foreign veterinarians with extensive experience and a strong willingness to teach"...



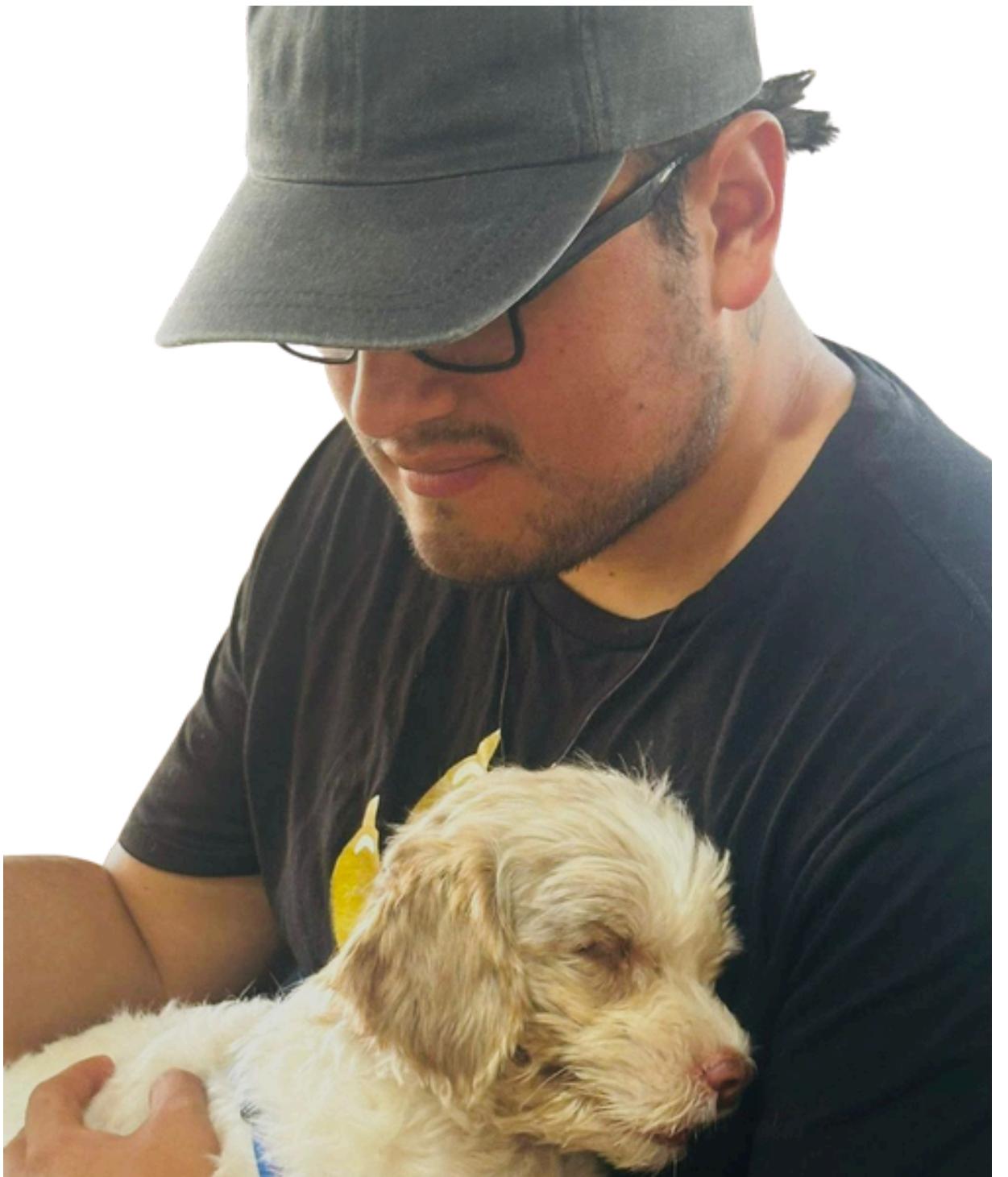
... "beyond the technical aspects, what impacted me the most was seeing how each sterilization truly made a difference."...

... "In every animal and in every person who came with their pet, the impact of our work was evident. It was very meaningful to feel that, from my position, I could contribute something real and significant"...



# Matías Jaramillo

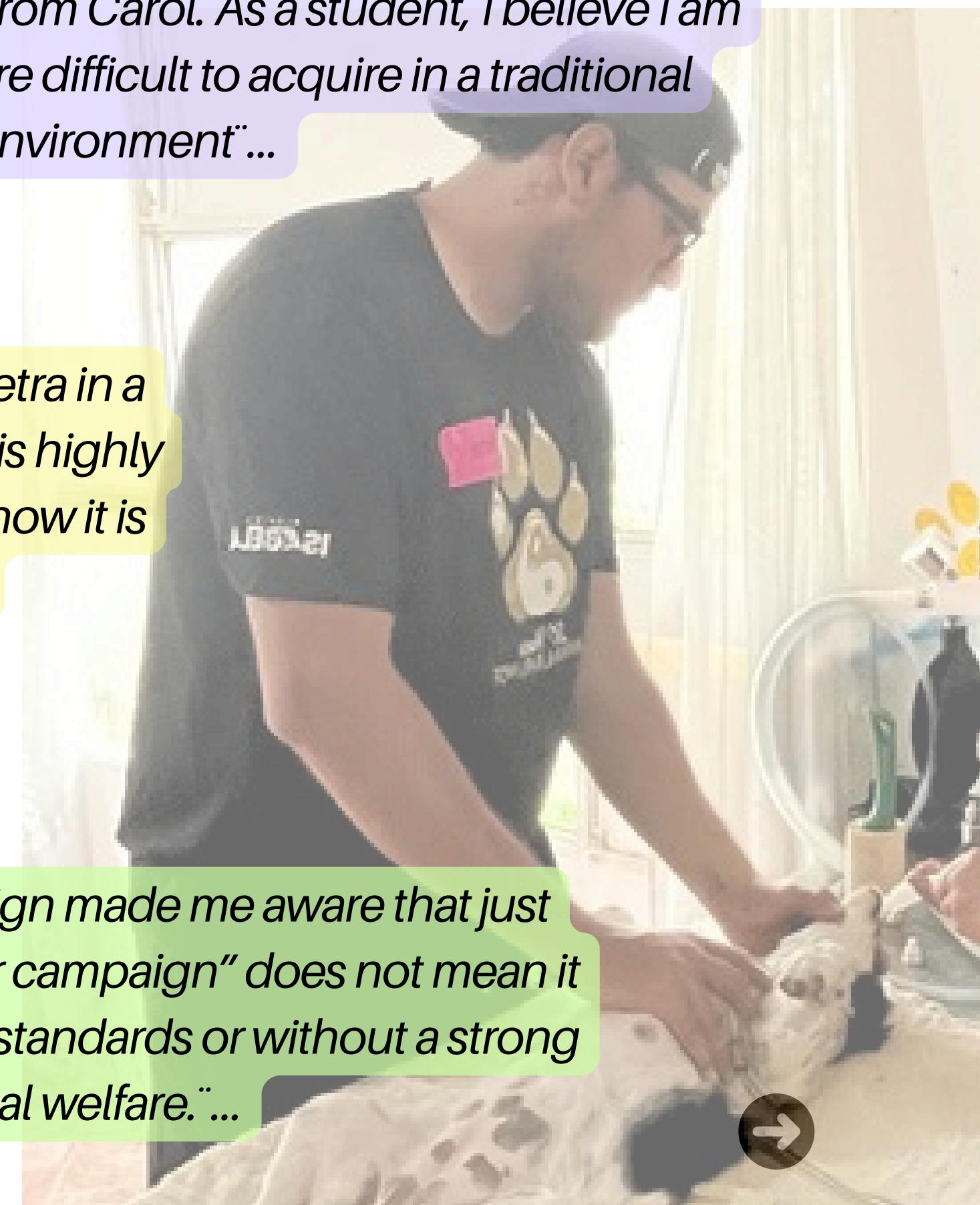
UniAndes University,  
Ambato



... "I learned about canine ethology thanks to Jorge. I learned surgical approaches for dogs with cryptorchidism thanks to Christie. I also learned a lot about pre-surgical procedures from Carol. As a student, I believe I am taking away many lessons that are difficult to acquire in a traditional academic environment"...

... "I observed a case of hydrometra in a three-month-old puppy, which is highly unusual, and I was able to see how it is managed surgically"...

... "the Animal Balance campaign made me aware that just because it is a "spay and neuter campaign" does not mean it should be carried out with low standards or without a strong focus on animal welfare."...



# Camilo Zambrano

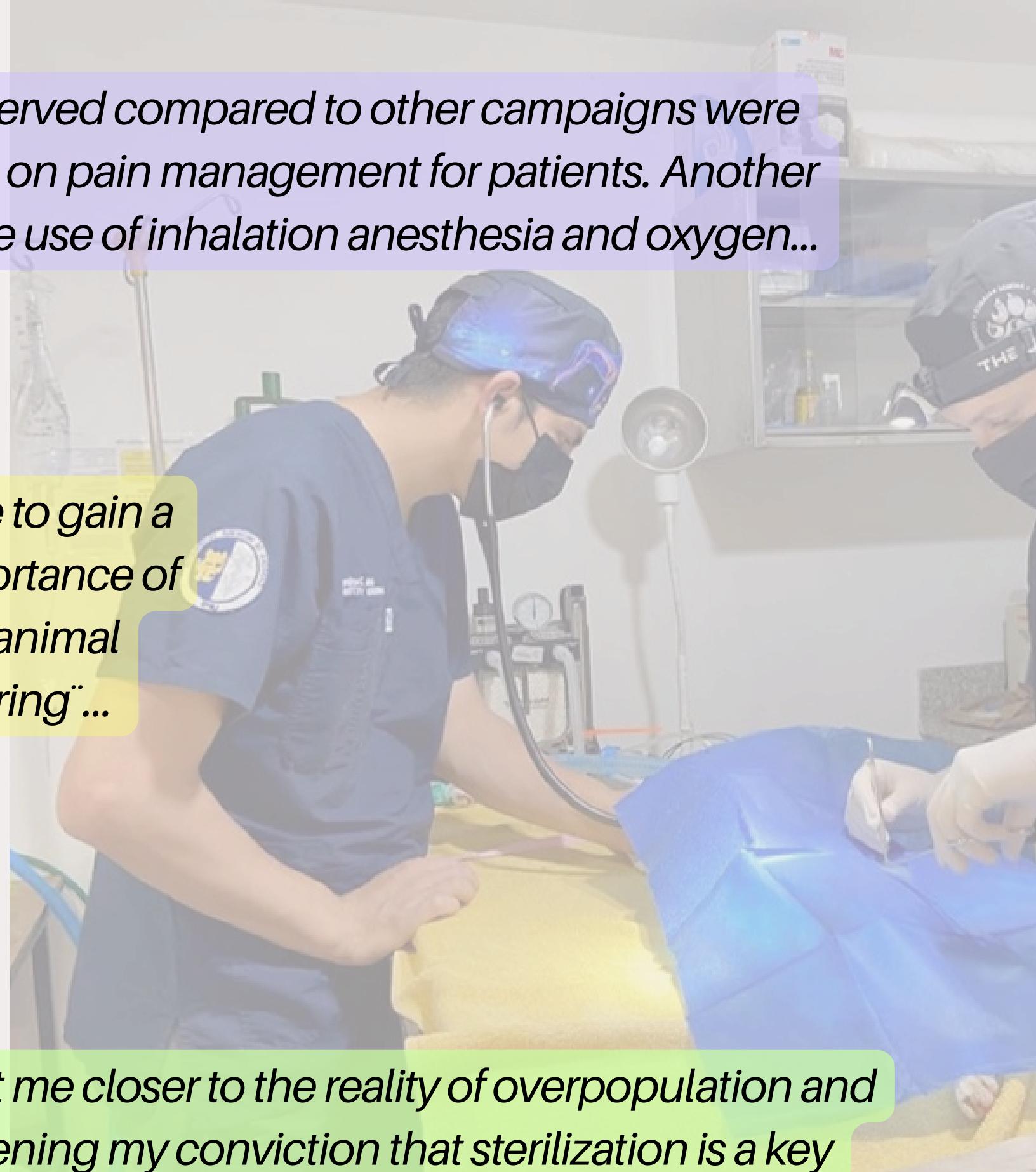
Polytechnic of Cuenca,  
Cuenca



... "The main differences I observed compared to other campaigns were primarily the strong emphasis on pain management for patients. Another new aspect I observed was the use of inhalation anesthesia and oxygen..."

... "What I experienced allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of sterilization as a tool to control animal populations and prevent suffering"...

... "Each procedure brought me closer to the reality of overpopulation and abandonment, strengthening my conviction that sterilization is a key component of animal welfare. This experience reinforces my commitment to offering this service as an essential part of my future veterinary practice."...



# Fernanda Nuñez

UTE Ambato,  
Ambato



... “the way cats are humanely trapped while always prioritizing animal welfare, the thorough post-surgical preparation, and the surgeries themselves, each performed using the highest anesthetic and surgical protocols, as well as the care provided afterward”...

... “It was new for me to witness the level of commitment that every member of the team shows toward each animal”...



... “Each procedure brought me closer to the reality of overpopulation and abandonment, strengthening my conviction that sterilization is a key component of animal welfare. This experience reinforces my commitment to offering this service as an essential part of my future veterinary practice.”...



# Melany Angulo

Polytechnic of Cuenca,  
Cuenca



... "One of the aspects that impacted me the most was collaborating with people dedicated to reducing the population of feral animals and promoting responsible sterilization"...



... "This experience reaffirmed my desire to continue contributing to initiatives of this kind in my future as a veterinarian"...

... "I hope to remain involved in and promote spay and neuter campaigns and community-based projects that benefit both animals and the ecological and social balance of communities." ... 



# Thank You

*We extend our sincere gratitude to the donors who made the Spay It Forward Program possible. Your support is not only advancing veterinary education but also strengthening long-term animal welfare through knowledge, mentorship, and shared commitment. Together, you are helping shape a new generation of professionals dedicated to compassionate and sustainable impact*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
**CONTACT US**



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