



SOUTH AFRICA – KWAZULU-NATAL EXAMPLE

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BIOGRAPHY

Mr Kevin Le Roux (Rabies Project Manager KwaZulu-Natal [KZN]) has worked for the department of Agriculture (Veterinary Services) for 25 years as an Animal Health Technician. He initiated the original Rabies Project in 2005, which led to KZN being awarded the grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation, and has managed the project to its successful conclusion.

‘Although notable progress had been made in various aspects of rabies, there is still a splintering of efforts in research and control and a great need to bring these efforts together.’

George M. Baer

‘Natural history of rabies 2nd Edition, 1991’

SUMMARY

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) project in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) has achieved this by combining the influence and support of global organisations (World Health Organization [WHO], World Organisation for Animal Health [OIE], Global Alliance for Rabies Control [GARC], etc.) with partial financial support from the BMGF, and an existing scientific relationship with the University of Pretoria. This project was able to demonstrate the value of unity of purpose. It is from this example of shared purpose that a ‘One Health’ model of disease control emerged. This model, which was both a demonstration and a challenge when applied to contiguous provinces and countries, showed that rabies in Africa ‘CAN’ be eliminated.

The KZN project achieved a 93% reduction in diagnosed animal cases, with a corresponding decline in human rabies, to only a single case in the final two years of the project. This multisectoral approach has gathered momentum in southern Africa, which, supported by a vaccine bank and stimulus packages, has initiated similar projects across the region.

KEY LESSONS

- > **Champions** – Are central to bringing all sectors together and maintaining effort.
- > **Global Support** – Global role players attached to projects bring status and create political opportunities.
- > **Strategic Vaccinations** – Vaccinating 70% of an entire dog population often scares authorities into doing nothing. Strategic vaccination of source areas works and makes the task more attractive to governments and investors.
- > **Start small and scale up** – Starting small allows for incremental growth while systems are developed. ‘Success breeds support’.
- > **Get ‘EVERYONE’ involved** – A multisectoral approach is foundational.
- > **Vaccine Banks** – Stability of supply ensures continuity of effort, and stimulates growth.
- > **Taking the vaccine to the people** – Systems must be designed to best serve resource poor communities.
- > **‘It can be done’** – A basic belief through demonstration that what seemed impossible, can be done is important.
- > **Get the basics right** – Practical innovation, support and equipping field staff, is critical.
- > **Sustainability** – There must be a plan for self-sustainability.

Keywords: Champion – Multisectoral – Strategic – Sustainability – Vaccine Bank.