



**EMWOSE**  
Women from ethnic minorities in social enterprise

Interview form

# Overview

Name: Aliona Liachovič

Company: Animal Shelter “Help me”

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## Shortly about yourself...

My name is Aliona, surname - Liachovič. I live in Visaginas, Lithuania. I live in Visaginas for 25 years. Earlier I lived in Vilnius. We came here with mother and kids. It turned out this way, that we had to think and do something good. And it turned out this way, that, as I am saying, it pushed me a little bit, there were a couple cases. As always, when there are a lot of dogs and cats in the city, which are stray. And I couldn't look at these things calmly. And later I had to open that shelter. In 2012, December 12th, we got the documents. We already opened shelter 8 and a half years ago. This is our second shelter. During those years we gathered around 1,5 k. animals. Yes, and we picked not only in Visaginas, we picked also in Zarasai and in the region. You know, later when you see that stray animal, you already don't think how will you feed him and how will you heal him, and where is he from, or where you need to take him from. They leave to live abroad and our animals live in Germany, lots of animals and in England, Finland, Latvia... A lot of them are in Lithuania, in Vilnius, further than Vilnius and everywhere.

And so, now we are engaging in, as I am saying, now it became the work of my life, mine with our assistants. And I am very happy, that I am not crying at home somewhere by the window, but I can help, really help those animals.

## Cooperation

We cooperate with all institutions in Visaginas. We have friendly relationship with the municipality. Our Children's Creative House is huge. We have a lot of children and adult friends. We are friends with... Near us there is a Boarding House for Disabled Persons. We are very good friends with them. Yes, they help us. We survive, until this year we have survived only with the help of all those Visaginas citizens. Because there is not enough money. A lot of money is needed. I am not even speaking about building. I am speaking about food, service, treatment. A lot of money is needed here. Because here live about 150 animals at a time. We live further from the city, as you can see. We have a very beautiful place, a kingdom, as I say, it is a kingdom of dogs here.

# Interview transcript

## Keywords:

Animal Shelter "Help me", Visaginas city, stray animals, cooperation, Children's Creative House, Boarding House for Disabled Persons, Probation, charity shops, campaigns, team, municipality.

## The team

We have very few volunteers. Because they, strangers come and go, it is a very hard work. But for now, these are holding up.

We have a friendly relationship with our Probation. We have been working with them for many years. They come and now one boy is working. Quite a few of them come to us. They come - serious men or women, they help and they work very well. That's the thing - there are such ill people. Here we have maybe half of them. But they work, they come, they work with animals. They later get a job for at least three months they then pay those debts, they don't lose their apartment and come to work. Because they, as I say, sacrifice so much for those animals, that much, as I say, and there are very few of them, and we are trying to keep until the end a man, who can support himself, so that not to lose employees, as I say, and to help a person. And it turns out, as I say, while working with animals we help people.

## Charity shops and campaigns

I was in Ireland, at my daughter's and they have charity shops, people donate clothes there, they sell everything and for someone, children, there - for children. I thought - why not for the dogs, animals? And we have opened a shop, five years already, we have already moved to another place. You know, people bring us clothes, and it is a very good support. We try to earn money everywhere by ourselves. We run a campaign every month, until quarantine, we run a campaign, we stand at the shops, we don't ask for anything, whoever wants - they help us. And they give us food, give us a little bit of money, very little money, of course, but at least, we are very happy that people understand, that we are doing a good job that is why they support us.



Children participate, work social hours, participate in actions. Almost the whole city is drawn to our work. And it turns out this way, as I say, it is hard, I say, obviously, I lost my job, I had to quit my job, because I couldn't keep up. I worked there for almost 20 years, I had a good job, I say, and I had to lose it. But there is nothing wrong here, I am already used to it, everything is alright, But, as I say, when you can see that your work brings such benefits, you know, then life is a bit more peaceful.

### **What motivates you?**

And there I stood and cried, I don't know, I had about 80 animals at that time and I had nowhere to keep them, either to let them go to the streets, and they are all healed, they are all loved, they are all ours, and how do you throw them out and later see them lying and dying on the streets? Can you imagine? And that's it, I am thinking "I will die myself". As I remember now, I want to cry. And it was so scary, as I say, how to manage without money, without anything. Can you imagine? Without anything! And where will you go? Where will you go? Either they will die, or you will be like a tank. And I had to go like a tank. And everything is fine, very well, but, as I say, it does not depend on me, but it depends on God, either there is a character or no.

### **Advice for women, who want to start a social activity**

I started everything from emotion. My heart jumped - I want it, I will try, I will do it, later it will be too late.

First of all, don't be afraid. If you have decided that you want to help somewhere, it doesn't matter, if it is animals, humans, someone somewhere, you will not achieve anything alone. You have to form a team, good or bad, but a team. And you have to form a team with your municipality. If this activity is useful for your municipality, you have to do it together.

Full video [here](#)

