

ACHIEVING AGENDA 2030:

HOW THE WELFARE OF
WORKING ANIMALS DELIVERS
FOR DEVELOPMENT



Photo credit: SPANA

ICWE

INTERNATIONAL COALITION FOR WORKING EQUIDS

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH WORKING ANIMAL WELFARE



Many of the world's most urgent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be achieved by cost-effective and simple solutions that benefit some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in society. The most striking example is the welfare of working animals.

An estimated 200 million working animals are essential to the livelihoods of some of the poorest communities worldwide. The traditional beasts of burden, their socioeconomic value and hardworking traits are often taken for granted, without realising the long-term benefits of ensuring better health and welfare for these animals.

In rural areas, working animals facilitate farming and transportation: they pull ploughs and carts, deliver goods to market, herd livestock and collect water from wells. Urban uses include construction, the transport of people and goods, and refuse collection. By enabling their owners to participate in work, they boost economic capacity and further benefit communities by enabling education, access to basic services and supporting gender equality.

Simple interventions can empower owners to keep their working animals healthy and ensure their continued productive benefit. Community development programmes offer improved access to good, affordable harnessing, hoof care and veterinary interventions, while increasing overall awareness of animal health and welfare. Strengthening animal health systems through training and capacity building of government employed veterinarians can also support the animals on which so many communities around the world depend. Expansion of current policy and legislation and implementing welfare standards would serve to enhance the recognition and protection of this valuable workforce.

Therefore, in this review year of the SDGs, we ask that member states advocate on how working animals contribute to the livelihoods of some of the poorest people around the world. We ask for member states' support to ensure integration of these considerations into targets supporting education, climate change mitigation and adaptation, zero poverty, tackling inequalities, access to water and interlinkages between the SDGs.

HOW THE WORKING ANIMAL SECTOR RELATES TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In 2015, the adoption of 17 SDGs by the United Nations created a broader scope than the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with more detailed targets and indicators across three key areas: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. The SDGs look to build on the considerable success of the previous development agenda but also make good on its shortcomings; the role of working animals can and should play a significant role here.

STRENGTHENING LIVELIHOODS

1 NO POVERTY



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Achieving sustainable change where development needs are greatest and resources most scarce, involves complex partnerships and variable approaches. As an important part of this process, animal welfare supports strong and resilient livelihoods.

- In Mali, research¹ found that the income of two thirds of donkey owners was more than three times the average monthly income per capita of US\$55.
- In Mexico, income generated just through working animals in the farms studied was equivalent to 30% of the minimum daily wage², plus an additional saving from their use for daily chores and transport that would normally incur a cost.
- In Ethiopia, rural households studied demonstrated a significant reliance on working equids for income and employment, with related earnings contributing on average 14% of total family income³.
- In India, a study⁴ of the construction industry showed that equid-based income opportunities generated 80% of income.
- In India, Pakistan, Kenya and Ethiopia, research⁴ highlighted that rural communities ranked working equids as their most important livestock, due to their capacity to provide and support regular income generation.



ACCESS TO VITAL RESOURCES

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Across the world, millions of people, mainly women and girls, spend up to 200 million hours per day collecting clean water⁵. Livestock production is also dependent on ready-to-access water. The simple act of animals carrying water reduces the time required to access it.

- In Tunisia, 80% of respondents to a survey in remote and mountainous regions relied on their donkeys or mules to access and carry fresh water⁶.
- In Mauritania, access to clean piped water is scarce. In the city of Nouakchott, water carriers use donkeys to carry 400 litres of water at a time supplying the majority of households and businesses⁷.

Healthy animals also support healthy lives, promoting wellbeing at all ages by enabling access to medicines and healthcare facilities. One Tunisian survey reported that 90% of respondents use income generated by working animals to afford medical treatments⁶. Where distance or terrain are barriers to healthcare, in particular for the sick, elderly or pregnant, working animals are often the only source of transport to access appropriate services.

Where human and animal populations live in close proximity, increased veterinary standards and consideration for animal health and welfare represent significant mutual benefits and can contribute to reducing the incidence of direct or vector driven zoonotic disease transmission.



Photo credit: SPANA

BUILDING RESILIENCE

2 ZERO HUNGER



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



13 CLIMATE ACTION



Strong working animals build resilience. The extra income generated through working animals allows people to save money, reinvest in growth and fund access to education⁸. As an alternative to agricultural vehicles, where such items are expensive or impractical for terrain, their ability to transport goods increases potential for wider community access to quality nutrition through local food markets.

- 93% of the income of Ethiopian farmers and 100% of the income of Mexican farmers who sold milk and crops, depended on the presence of working animals⁸.

Working animals are often the most valuable asset that people own and therefore require the largest expense to replace. Climate change and extreme weather events pose a considerable threat to marginalised communities as the loss of working animals can contribute to reductions in agricultural productivity and food security. The impact on by-products, such as manure for fertilizer, and decreased draught power can also increase financial pressures, where alternatives require additional expenditure.

- In India, extreme weather events such as flooding and cyclones have left communities vulnerable as the loss of working animals restricts their access to resources and therefore the capacity to rebuild their livelihoods⁹.

Many working animal species are well suited to arid zones, supporting livelihoods and increasing the ability of agricultural-dependent communities to adapt to climate change. As an energy source, working animals also offer a mitigating contribution when compared to engine power¹⁰. Protection and consideration of this valuable workforce within national disaster risk reduction strategies helps ensure community resilience and sustainability in the face of climate change.



Photo credit: FDowson / Brooke

PRODUCTIVE FARMING

2 ZERO HUNGER



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



Photo credit: The Donkey Sanctuary

As well as increasing productivity by reducing time and labour in farming, working animals enable farmers to reach markets from otherwise inaccessible areas. This ensures farmers can turn their crops to cash, while allowing the community to access diverse food sources. Without these animals, transporting goods from small-scale production directly to point of sale or nearest collection point for traders would be extremely difficult. By promoting local infrastructure, resource efficiency and access to services, working animals support sustainable production.

- One study¹¹ of Mexican farms, reported that working animal power was valued at US\$500 per farm annually.

In some countries, many working animals such as equids are also farmed for meat or milk. Ensuring good practices for rearing, transporting and slaughtering animals can help create a better quality product for human consumption and contribute to a more responsible production process.

EMPOWERING WOMEN

5 GENDER EQUALITY



Healthy animals empower women. Evidence shows women often rely on working animals to do tasks they would otherwise have to perform themselves. By enabling women to be economically active, they also increase their community status and personal resilience. This economic capability can prevent the worst forms of destitution for lone women⁸, whether working in rural or urban settings. In some of the world's most marginalised, women-headed households, working animals offer the most affordable source of draught power, providing livelihood support and opportunities to explore otherwise restricted economic, natural and social resources.

- In Senegal, young women are being trained in what were traditionally roles designated for men, e.g. farriery, and are able to earn a living with their new skill set¹².
- In India, training women to act as change agents for communities has led to female-led equine welfare groups being set up¹².

Women's participation in animal health and welfare training sustains knowledge transfer and improves community attitudes towards equids, while also creating a social support structure.



Photo credit: SPANA

ENABLING EDUCATION

4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



Photo credit: SPANA

Caring for animals enables education for children. By providing additional income and undertaking labour tasks otherwise done by people, working animals release children from household work to attend school and help parents care for them at home. They can also be the only available mode of transport in some of the world's most remote and rural communities⁸. In Costa Rica, outlying communities rely on working animals to access primary and secondary education; transport would be impossible without the use of their horses¹³. Improved access to education has far-reaching benefits, including improved literacy rates, gender rights and equality alongside greater economic mobility.

Where agriculture is the main means of livelihood, access to education can provide theoretical and practical skills within this growing sector. Relevant skills-based learning and training, such as veterinary care and welfare science, can also help improve awareness and productivity. The member led advocacy and regional initiatives of the International Coalition for Working Equids (ICWE) has resulted in curricular inclusion of animal health and welfare by government and education systems in different parts of the world.

- In Kenya, basic equine welfare is now taught at primary level in many schools and in Senegal, there are an increasing number of apprenticeships in equine health focussed subjects such as farriery¹⁴.
- Humane education programmes to promote prosocial behaviours including compassion for animals, environmental protection and social justice are also accessible, meaning that education professionals with an International Certificate in Humane Education (ICHE) can transfer knowledge to mainstream settings¹⁵.

Education can also empower owners and sustain productive benefits. Once trained, people can share welfare-friendly practices within their communities and generate income with newly acquired skills. Practical programmes offer solutions such as properly fitting packsaddles for animals, made using cheap, locally-available materials or foot care to prevent animal lameness. In turn, these generate ongoing training opportunities and the development of sustained knowledge transfer, spanning age and gender.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE WELFARE OF PEOPLE AND WORKING ANIMALS

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



To improve the lives of people, it is essential to improve the lives of working animals; they boost the income and resilience of many of the most vulnerable communities. However, poor health and welfare, and overwork can compromise their positive impact. An Ethiopian study⁹ showed that 54% of equids were thin, 93% had body lesions from poor handling, and 60% were lame. Collaborative and mutually beneficial interventions for human and animal wellbeing are key to supporting sustainable change. Capacity-building projects conducted in partnership across developmental sectors, such as solar-powered borehole construction to benefit nomadic pastoralist communities in drought-prone Turkana, Kenya¹⁶ demonstrate how action to ensure reliable resource provision not only supports a human need, but also enables healthy animals to maintain their contribution to sustainable livelihoods.

ICWE members (Brooke, SPANA, The Donkey Sanctuary and World Horse Welfare) are working on the ground in these areas, operating as valuable and reliable partners at both local and national level. Global programmes, academic research and advocacy staff support professional expertise, leading to effective policy frameworks and language. Cost-effective practical intervention models can transform animal welfare, with primary health care and owner training programmes able to reach tens of thousands of animals and support their invaluable contribution to resilient and sustainable livelihoods.

Photo credit: F.Dowson/Brooke

ICWE

INTERNATIONAL COALITION FOR WORKING EQUIDS

THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION FOR WORKING EQUIDS (ICWE)

ICWE, the International Coalition for Working Equids, is comprised of leading working animal NGO's Brooke, The Donkey Sanctuary, SPANA and World Horse Welfare. ICWE was established to work with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and its members to implement the OIE Terrestrial Code Chapter 7.12 on the Welfare of Working Equids.

www.icweworkingequids.org



Photo credit: World Horse Welfare

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Brooke is a global organisation that protects and improves the lives of the working horses, donkeys and mules which give people in low and middle income countries the opportunity to work their way out of poverty. Around 600 million people rely on these animals to put food on their tables, send their children to school and build better futures for themselves and their families. Brooke works in more than 15 countries, supporting communities, service providers, animal health systems, governments and international organisations to make long lasting improvements to the lives of animals and their owners.

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THE DONKEY SANCTUARY

The Donkey Sanctuary is a global organisation that works in almost 40 countries, collaborating with intergovernmental organisations, international institutions, governments and like-minded parties to advance welfare standards for working donkeys and mules through legislation, policy and good practices. Our work aims to improve the welfare of millions of donkeys and mules, and the people who rely on them, through programmes in Africa, Asia, Europe, Australasia and the Americas.

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Established in 1923, **SPANNA's** vision is a world where every working animal lives a life free from suffering and is treated with compassion. Our mission is to improve the welfare of working animals in the world's poorest communities. We do this through treatment, training and teaching. We treat by providing free veterinary care when animals suffer or when emergencies strike. We train by building expertise among vets and promoting humane care by animal owners. We teach children to develop positive beliefs, respect and compassion towards animals.

Contact: hello@spana.org



WorldHorseWelfare

World Horse Welfare is an international charity that has been improving the health and welfare of equines around the globe for 90 years. Our whole approach is practical, based on scientific evidence and our extensive experience, and focused on delivering lasting change, primarily through education and sharing of best practice. By working in partnership with equine owners, governments, universities and other organisations, the charity successfully improves equine care knowledge, skills and policies affecting equids of all kinds.

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Photo credit: World Horse Welfare

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