

INVISIBLE LIVESTOCK



BENEFITS, THREATS AND SOLUTIONS

Recognised by the UN Committee of Food Security in 2016¹ as 'working livestock', equids – donkeys, horses and mules – are critical to the livelihoods and resilience of millions of families throughout the developing world.²

Their contributions enhance resilience through:

- **Poverty reduction and income security**
- **Better access to nutrition and water**
- **Continuity of agricultural supply chains**

Despite their critical value, these animals are often overlooked in national and regional livestock planning and policy framing. This brief provides a fuller picture of the contribution of working livestock, identifies the challenges and threats of poor welfare, and makes the urgent case for their protection and support in line with guidelines such as OIE standards.

By recognising the critical role of working equids as livestock in programming, and supporting them through policy, regulators can better support their own national economies.

Brooke works within the 'One Welfare'³ framework which sees human and animal welfare as inextricably linked: in a development context, working animals are central to supporting the livelihoods, well-being, and resilience of communities who depend on them.

"Livestock are an engine for the development of the agricultural sector as a whole."⁴

¹ The Brooke, United Nations Recognises Role of Working Animals in Food Security, [online], 16 October 2016, <https://www.thebrooke.org/news/un-recognises-working-animals-role> accessed 17/10/2018

² IFAD, Livestock Services: Tending to a poverty-free future, (2004)

³ One Welfare, One Welfare Framework, [online], 2018, <https://www.onewelfareworld.org/book.html> accessed on 14/08/2018

⁴ High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, HLPE Report on Sustainable Agricultural Development for Food Security and Nutrition: What Roles for Livestock? Extract from the Report: Summary and Recommendations, [online], 23 June 2016, http://www.chaireunesco-adm.com/IMG/pdf/hlpe_2016_sust-agr-dev-fsn-livestock_s-r_en.pdf accessed on 14/08/2018



ROLE OF WOMEN

Research across Ethiopia, Kenya, India and Pakistan shows that women depend on working livestock to support their households. Our programmes in India for example, enable women's voices to be heard at government level through community savings groups. In Africa, working livestock are homestead animals, women are often their primary, traditional care givers, and their opinions on the importance of their working animals need to be taken seriously by policy makers. An example of this can be seen in our research findings from women in Mahavan, India where a participant from Brooke's study 'Voices from Women' said; **"Even though donkeys are smaller they make more money for us."**⁷

Working animals also provide women with relief from time-consuming domestic tasks such as fetching water and fire wood. Having a working animal further enables women to participate in, and contribute to social events. This can result in increased status and recognition for women within their communities.

The income from working animals helps women pay for essentials. Lucy a participant in Brooke's HEA from Kenya said **"If my baby could speak, she would tell her life as a child of a donkey. The maternity fees I paid while I was pregnant came from income brought by my donkey. When I delivered my daughter, I was able to pay for the Statutory National Health Insurance Fund through money earned by my donkey, which catered for all the delivery fees. My child eats, dresses and lives off income from my donkey."**⁸

As Lucy makes clear, working equids contribute significantly to **Sustainable Development Goal 5**.



ACCESS TO WATER

Working equids are critical to providing access to water for communities and to all food producing animals, agriculture accounts for 70% of world water usage.⁹ Management of this critical resource must take into account the contribution of equids. Lucy further expands on how owners of equids benefit from easier access to water for crucial tasks. **"The donkey affects each and every aspect of my life as a woman. On a typical day the donkey fetches water, which I use to do the laundry, to do the dishes, to clean the house and for bathing."**¹⁰



REDUCING POVERTY: INCOME SECURITY

Working livestock are a critical asset to their owners because they directly and indirectly support income generation. They provide direct income across a wide range of sectors including agriculture, construction, brick kilns, tourism, mining and public transport. They also enable economic savings in the transportation of people and goods. This has been shown in Brooke's Household Economy Analysis (HEA) on the contribution of working equids to Senegal's national economy, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was on the panel of experts for this study. An example of indirect income generation can be seen in Pakistan where through draught power, working equine animals in some cases support **100% of the annual income of households** who rely on crop and milk sales.⁵ In Kenya, our HEA has shown that donkey owners and users earn up to **87% of their annual gross income** from commercial transport by donkey.⁶ They help to keep those that benefit from their labour out of poverty, thereby contributing to **Sustainable Development Goal 1**.



NUTRITION: FARMING & FOOD PRODUCTION

Given the importance of smallholders in supplying the market with provisions, increased productivity and production is essential to meet the growing demand for food. This will require policy and infrastructure integration to help smallholders' access critical inputs and services, for example drought resilient fodder and healthcare services.

Working livestock play a central role in agriculture and food production, including in soil tillage, producing manure fertilizer, transport of feed and water for livestock and households, transporting goods to market and transporting livestock to health providers. They also support the transport of perishable farm produce from inaccessible areas, thereby saving on post-harvest losses. This contributes to **Sustainable Development Goal 2** as working equines support enhanced food security, nutrition and sustainable agricultural development.

Equines also act as water service providers for communities where government water services have yet to reach. Studies of water use must take into account the impact that equids have in enabling communities to have access to water. This contributes to **Sustainable Development Goal 6**.



THREATS TO LIVELIHOOD: DONKEY HIDE TRADE

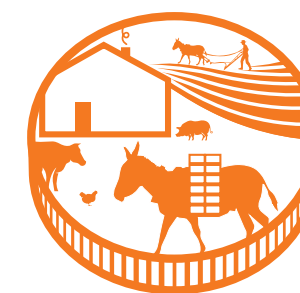
Millions of people depend on the labour and income their working animals provide. However, the increasing demand for donkey-hide products puts the long-term income of millions of families at risk.

Fuelled by traditional belief in the medicinal properties of ejiao (donkey-hide gelatin), especially in Asia, the price of donkeys has more than tripled¹¹ as the market struggles to supply the growing demand. Theft of donkeys from communities that depend on them is rising, pushing many families into poverty. Particularly across Africa, and especially Kenya, where legal donkey slaughterhouses have been opened, and donkey populations have plummeted rapidly.¹² Countries such as Burkina Faso saw their donkey populations nearly halve and have become one of 9 countries banning the export of donkey skins, others that have banned this trade include Botswana, Mali, Niger and Senegal. Brooke is working to further understand this issue and develop evidence based research on how this increase in demand will affect working animals and the livelihoods of those who depend on them.

Brooke is also concerned this issue is a growing **biodiversity** threat in terms of the decrease in their numbers threatening the ecosystem in which they exist, thereby undermining **Sustainable Development Goal 15**.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES ROLES OF WORKING LIVESTOCK

LIVELIHOOD



IMPROVED INCOME EARNINGS



ACCESS TO WATER



IMPROVED WATER SECURITY



NUTRITION



IMPROVED FOOD SECURITY & HEALTH



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO MAKE THE BEST DECISIONS FOR THEIR FAMILIES AND FOR THEIR ANIMALS' WELFARE

⁵ The Brooke, (October 2015), Invisible Workers, pg26, available at: <https://www.thebrooke.org/sites/default/files/Advocacy-and-policy/Invisible-workers-report.pdf> accessed on 14/08/2018.

⁶ Brooke EA and KENDAT (2014), The Contribution of Working Donkeys to Household Livelihoods in Kenya

⁷ The Brooke, (May 2014), Invisible Helpers: Voices from Women, pg11, available at <https://www.thebrooke.org/sites/default/files/Advocacy-and-policy/Invisible-helpers-voices-from-women.pdf>, accessed on 14/08/2018

⁸ Ibid., pg41

⁹ World Bank, Water in Agriculture, [online], 12 July 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water-in-agriculture> accessed on 29/08/2018



PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION

Working livestock represent an important social protection mechanism, boosting community resilience in the face of disasters and climate shocks by enabling communities to collect water or food from greater distances, helping families to relocate when needed, even helping to rebuild infrastructure. With our Special Consultative Status at UN ECOSOC and UN FAO, our work with AUIBAR and the EU, Brooke has an active presence in regional and national spaces that promote initiatives and public policies. Brooke contributes to **Sustainable Development Goal 13** by inputting to governmental talks on climate change and resilience, especially in the Central America region.

For example, Brooke Senegal's partner Union des Groupements Paysans de Meckhé (UGPM) – a farmer's union group, has worked with rural communities to create an animal welfare assessment tool which helps them identify issues early on using a traffic light system, increasing resilience through supporting these livestock.¹⁰ The same system is used in Brooke India, this innovative approach is sustainable and has empowered the community to be able to assess their animals together and find a mutually acceptable solution to improve welfare in the long term. Furthermore, the communities we work with face multiple, often interrelated challenges to their lives which impact their capacity to ensure the welfare and associated long-term productivity of their working equines. This provides the basis for Brooke to adopt a holistic approach to community development, partnering with other stakeholders, including farming cooperatives, in line with **Sustainable Development Goal 17**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WE ADVOCATE FOR:

- **Recognition of working livestock within livestock policy definitions, censuses, databases and their inclusion in animal health strategies and services**
- **Technical capacity building to ensure national level implementation of the OIE Standards for the Welfare of Working Equids**
- **Consideration of draught power within livelihoods and development programming, sectoral value chain analysis and livelihoods baselines**
- **Inclusion of working livestock considerations in disaster risk reduction and emergency response planning, including in the roll out of Livestock Emergency Guidelines**
- **Protection of citizens from the theft of their donkeys in response to the unregulated and growing demand for their hides. Brooke specifically calls for;**
- **Evidence based research on the impact of donkey theft on community resilience, that is shared, publicised and reflected in policy and programming decision making**
- **A coordinated multi-disciplinary network combining efforts to tackle the growing threats to livelihoods of this trade**

¹⁰ The Brooke, (May 2014), Invisible Helpers: Voices from Women, pg33, available at:

<https://www.thebrooke.org/sites/default/files/Advocacy-and-policy/Invisible-helpers-voices-from-women.pdf> accessed on 14/08/2018

¹¹ The Star, Why thousands of donkeys are stolen, slaughtered and skinned in Africa, 16th June 2018, https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/06/16/why-thousands-of-donkeys-are-stolen-slaughtered-and-skinned-in-africa_c1773776, accessed on 18/10/2018

¹² All Africa.com, Kenya: Donkey slaughterhouses blamed for drop in numbers, [online], 11 September 2017 <https://allafrica.com/stories/201709110474.html> accessed on 14/08/18

¹³ The Brooke, Visitors Evaluate Animal Welfare, [online], 2018 available at <https://www.thebrooke.org/our-work/senegal/villagers-evaluate-animal-welfare> accessed on 14/08/18



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