

GLOBAL RESEARCH STRATEGY

2023-2028



Our values guide our work worldwide.

We are proud to be Brooke. We are resourceful, share new ideas and help each other succeed.

Together we make change happen.

OUR VISION IS:

**TO ENGAGE IN FAIR AND EQUITABLE COLLABORATIONS
TO DELIVER QUALITY, ETHICAL RESEARCH THAT
CONTRIBUTES TO LASTING POSITIVE CHANGE TO THE
LIVES OF WORKING HORSES, DONKEYS AND MULES
AND THE COMMUNITIES THAT DEPEND ON THEM.**

■ ■ We use evidence, including our respected research programme, to create the case for change and drive impact. Evidence underpins all we do and informs decision-making, learning and adaptive management¹, accountability to beneficiaries, and supports our advocacy work and supporter engagement. Our research is internationally recognised and will continue to add to the wealth of academic discourse which guides our work and the work of others. **■ ■**

A Life Worth Living 2025 Global Strategy

¹ Adaptive management – Using evidence and lessons learnt to make decisions and, where necessary, adjust our approaches to successfully achieve our goals.

Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
OUR RESEARCH VISION	6
Rethinking 'research'	7
Our definition of research	7
OUR PRIORITY RESEARCH THEMES	9
DELIVERING OUR GLOBAL RESEARCH PROGRAMME	10
Undertaking cross-cutting and context-specific research	10
Research roles and responsibilities	11
The Global Research Team	11
Research Focal Points	11
The International Research Group	11
Accountability	12
RESEARCH IMPACT AND COMMUNICATION	13
Planning for impact and strategic communication	13
Ensuring our research is accessible	13
RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS	14
Engaging with the external research community	14
Ensuring fair and equitable collaborations	15
Identifying external funding	15
ETHICAL RESEARCH	16
Our vision for success	16

Introduction

Brooke is an international animal welfare charity dedicated to improving the lives of working horses, donkeys and mules and the people who rely on them. In early 2022, Brooke launched a new 2025 Global Strategy: A Life Worth Living. Evidence is key to achieving our global aims, and our Global Research Programme is a vital and dynamic part of this.

Brooke has a long history of conducting credible and internationally recognised research, enabling us to better understand barriers in our programmatic work and find solutions to challenges. Research topics have primarily been identified by teams on the ground delivering Brooke's work or through opportunities arising from areas of shared concern with colleagues from a range of organisations. Over the years, our research portfolio has grown in volume, and the breadth of topics and operational approaches have become more diverse. In 2023, our research spans in-house studies to address context-specific issues (such as understanding the use of the whip by Kenyan donkey handlers) to collaborations with academic institutions to tackle broader questions about working equid health and economics (such as funding a PhD within the Global Burden of Animal Diseases programme).

OVER TIME WE HAVE RECOGNISED THE NEED TO USE RESEARCH TO ASK BIG QUESTIONS TO INFORM OUR APPROACHES AND UNDERSTAND ISSUES THAT CUT ACROSS ALL OF OUR PROGRAMMES, SUCH AS HOW WORKING EQUIDS CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY RESILIENCE OR ACCESS TO FOOD AND WATER.

The onset of a new organisational strategy provided an opportunity to pause new research activities and re-evaluate Brooke's research function. This included deciding where to focus research to achieve our goals and priorities and ensuring that research activities are appropriately resourced, planned and communicated to leverage the greatest impact.

This research strategy was developed consultatively. We learnt from other organisations' approaches to conducting research and developing research strategies and consulted with Brooke staff from all parts of the organisation to explore three broad areas:

- **The purpose and scope of Brooke research**
- **How our research is governed, resourced, and funded**
- **How to facilitate research into use**

This strategy sets out our vision for research at Brooke and our approach to achieving that ambition. Over the next five years, it will position Brooke to effectively plan and deliver targeted, quality and ethical research that has impact.



Our Research Vision

Our aim is that Brooke research contributes to an evidence base that will support the organisation to succeed in three of its organisational goals:



Transforming equine welfare in communities – supporting equine-owning communities to thrive and become more resilient.



Increasing the visibility and inclusion of working equids – making sure their needs are covered in policy and practice at all levels.



Developing sustainable animal health systems – meeting both the immediate and future needs of working horses, donkeys and mules.

This means that our research will guide evidence-based practice and adaptive management – and be the bridge between theory and practice. It will help us to understand problems and new areas of work and test our approaches, enabling us to make effective decisions on what action to take. It will support the legitimacy and influence of arguments in Brooke's advocacy and campaigning work. We also pledge to continue leveraging Brooke research beyond its immediate objectives and contribute to widening knowledge within related fields, such as animal welfare, animal health, human behaviour change, One Health and One Welfare and international development.

We recognise that we can only achieve this aim with credible research findings, so Brooke remains committed to quality and ethical research. We also recognise that achieving impact requires dedicated planning for impact. For these reasons, our research programme will be scaled down with an ambition to do less but with a stronger focus on using our research to make lasting, positive change for animals and their communities.

RETHINKING 'RESEARCH'

Research is just one type of evidence that Brooke uses. For example, we regularly monitor and evaluate our programmes through a dedicated Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Team, to be more accountable and learn from our successes and challenges. Our definition of 'research' needs to distinguish it from the other types of evidence we generate, and there is also a need to channel limited research resources. This means that our definition of research may be narrower in scope than 'traditional' definitions or those used by other organisations – it is also specific to this strategy and may change in the future.



OUR DEFINITION OF RESEARCH

We define research as a one-off study that generates new knowledge for improved programme, campaigning, and advocacy delivery (for example, to support adaptive management, evidence-based practice and policy briefs):

It supports Brooke's Strategic Goals 1-3:

- 1. Transforming equine welfare in communities**
 - 2. Increasing the visibility and inclusion of working equids**
 - 3. Developing sustainable animal health systems.**
- It is hypothesis-led and engages in genuine enquiry, meaning it addresses testable questions and does not set out to prove established positions.
 - It aims to deliver conclusions from verifiable quantitative, qualitative and/or secondary data gathered using established guidelines and a clear methodological framework.
 - It adheres to Brooke's Animal Welfare Global Policy and Animal Welfare Ethical Review Board guidelines.
 - It always strives for impact, contributing to change for animals and the communities that rely on them.





Our Priority Research Themes

Brooke has identified priority themes where we need improved understanding. During this strategic period, we will conduct research that explores the role of working equids and the impact of their welfare on:

THEIR SOCIOECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION TO THEIR COMMUNITIES AND THE VALUE CHAINS THEY PARTICIPATE IN.

THE RESILIENCE AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS OF THEIR COMMUNITIES.

While our themes will help us to prioritise, our research topics may not be limited to them. They may explore other aspects of our work to transform equine welfare in communities, increase the visibility and inclusion of working equids, and develop sustainable animal health systems.

Delivering our Global Research Programme

UNDERTAKING CROSS-CUTTING AND CONTEXT-SPECIFIC RESEARCH

Historically, Brooke has conducted and commissioned both cross-cutting and context-specific research. We define cross-cutting research as addressing themes that span multiple countries. It is proactive, long term and aligned with organisational priorities.

WE SEE CROSS-CUTTING RESEARCH AS ESSENTIAL FOR ANSWERING THE 'BIG' QUESTIONS CONCERNING BROOKE'S ORGANISATIONAL GOALS.

It is also an opportunity for our in-country teams to combine efforts for greater impact in programmatic work and their potential to influence policy-makers and decision-makers such as governments and high-profile external stakeholders.

Context-specific research occurs in one country, it is generally small-scale, is sometimes reactive and is often time-sensitive. It is equally as important to address local priorities as cross-cutting issues. Context-specific research can be a tool to support a specific programmatic activity with a relevant evidence base.

We will continue to engage in both approaches. However, to avoid duplication and pool resources for increased rigour, Brooke's organisational planning process will ensure that where local research needs overlap, it transforms into cross-cutting research. All research will be planned and budgeted for as a multi-year activity.

Cross-cutting research projects will largely be conducted with external collaborators to meet the resource requirements of larger-scale research, increase rigour, and leverage opportunities for maximum visibility and impact. Context-specific research projects have historically been conducted in-house using Brooke's internal research expertise – this will continue where appropriate technical and research capacity exists internally. However, we will seek out collaborations where necessary to support technical and research expertise or visibility. Find out more about our collaboration principles below.



RESEARCH ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE GLOBAL RESEARCH TEAM

Brooke has a small Global Research Team based in the UK. They focus on the strategic direction of our Global Research Programme, the delivery of cross-cutting research projects, maintaining an effective research process and research communication and accessibility.

RESEARCH FOCAL POINTS

Each of Brooke's in-country teams has a Research Focal Point. Previously, the UK-based team supported the design of all Brooke studies. Small-scale studies that fall outside the scope of research (as defined in this strategy) will now be devolved to in-country research focal points, allowing them to be more responsive and agile. Delivery of context-specific research will also be largely devolved, including (but not limited to) research design, data collection and analysis, and consultation with internal and external stakeholders on research use. However, light touch support for context-specific research from the UK-based team will continue on a case-by-case basis.

In-country research focal points will continue to build relationships with external collaborators in their countries and regions. They will contribute to Brooke's International Research Group (described below) and work closely with the Global Research Team.

THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH GROUP

The International Research Group is a community hub for research activities at Brooke. It promotes a common vision for research throughout the organisation. The Group includes research focal points from the country teams, the Global Research Team and relevant internal and external stakeholders. It acts as a community of practice and will:

- **Provide peer-to-peer support on all aspects of our research.**
- **Work to embed a culture of research within the organisation.**
- **Lead on capacity-building opportunities.**
- **Co-develop and maintain research process and guidance.**

ACCOUNTABILITY

Brooke's annual planning process will bring together senior decision-makers from across the organisation to discuss the organisation's evidence needs and coordinate evidence-gathering activities across team plans. The process will agree on the most appropriate type of evidence to address a project's need, taking into account the intended audience and end users, the required level of robustness, and the timescale and available resources.

Where research is the most appropriate action, the following applies:



Research can be included in any team's budget as appropriate. The associated budget holder has ultimate accountability for decisions and delivery.



The Global Research Team will project manage cross-cutting research (including technical advice as appropriate), ensuring Brooke's research processes are followed.



Research focal points will project manage context-specific research with light touch support from the Global Research Team. Research focal points will ensure our research processes are followed.





Research Impact and Communication

PLANNING FOR IMPACT AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

All our research strives to have a practical application and support Brooke in achieving its organisational goals. Ensuring that our research leads to impact is the responsibility of all staff involved in its design and end-use.

WHILE IMPLEMENTING THIS STRATEGY, WE WILL DEVELOP A 'DOING RESEARCH FOR IMPACT' APPROACH TAILORED TO OUR ORGANISATION. IT WILL GO BEYOND TRADITIONAL VIEWS OF RESEARCH IMPACT, SUCH AS THE NUMBER OF CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND/OR PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS. IT WILL CONSIDER HOW THE RESEARCH HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE DESIRED CHANGE.

To achieve this, we will build internal capacities to develop a process that will allow our research to be co-generated with internal and external stakeholders. The process will involve engaging with stakeholders early on to increase research legitimacy, relevance, and uptake. We will develop an approach to track research impact throughout the project cycle.

Our research for impact approach will include a strategic communication plan designed from the onset of each research project. The strategic communication plan will target the internal and external stakeholders who are key actors in the desired change. Audience-specific factors such as communication frequency, format and channel will be planned from the start. Our UK

Communications Team and colleagues in our in-country teams will be key contributors to developing and delivering the plan.

When collaborating with universities and other organisations, roles, and responsibilities for developing and executing the research for impact plan, including the strategic communication plan, will be identified.

Changing how we plan for and do research at Brooke will involve investing more time and resources into each project. The Global Research Team will develop methods for bringing staff on the journey of our new processes to ensure that all staff understand and value planning and doing impactful research.





ENSURING OUR RESEARCH IS ACCESSIBLE

We will share all Brooke research internally, including findings, methodology, lessons learnt and impact. Throughout this strategy, we will trial and test different methods for making our research internally accessible. Our communication channels will include research reports, brief internal updates and presentations. Reports shared internally and externally will also be translated into multiple languages to increase accessibility.

Where appropriate, our research findings will be shared externally with a broader audience beyond the primary stakeholders identified in the research for impact plan. This audience will include Brooke's supporters and donors through channels such as newsletters, blogs and our website. We will bring these audiences on a journey and provide regular updates on our cross-cutting research projects.

Where possible, we will aim to continue to publish our research in academic journals to support dissemination to the research community. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis regarding the pros and cons of investing resources into writing papers for peer-reviewed journals. We will explore ways to maximise knowledge sharing across audiences and reach additional audiences beyond the animal welfare and veterinary sector, including publishing in journals with a broad reach. All journal articles will continue to be published open access.



Research Collaborations

Brooke has a long history of working with academics, research institutes and other INGOs to deliver quality and credible research. The benefits of collaborating to share knowledge and expertise are widely recognised, and its value to all parties cannot be underestimated.

We will continue to work with existing collaborators and form new relationships with universities, research institutes and other organisations. Historically, we have engaged in research collaborations when approached; we now aim to lead our research agenda by seeking collaborations that can help us to deliver on our priority research themes, this will allow our limited resources to be managed effectively. Our approach to collaboration will include working with early career and established researchers, including PhD and Masters students.

ENGAGING WITH THE EXTERNAL RESEARCH COMMUNITY

We will continue to network and increase our engagement with relevant external communities by attending conferences and seminars and joining networks. The Global Research Team is responsible for being aware of and contributing to the external research environment. We do this to learn from existing evidence, avoid duplication of efforts and for Brooke's research to be relevant and achieve the desired impact.

We will establish a Brooke Research Advisory Board consisting of external critical friends from academia, research institutes and INGOs. Our critical friends will provide support, advice and technical input on various aspects of our research design and delivery (with a focus on our context-specific-projects). This will have mutual benefits, including knowledge and resource sharing and continued professional development for all parties.

ENSURING FAIR AND EQUITABLE COLLABORATIONS

Brooke works with organisations and individuals who respect our values, including the importance of centring local expertise. We will ensure that all research collaborations are equitable, acknowledging the different skills and knowledge each collaborator brings to the research process.

Collaborators will be selected based on their ability to provide appropriate expertise and/or influence. Roles and responsibilities will be agreed upon from the start and outlined in legal documentation such as a contract or a memorandum of understanding.

The following principles inform relationships with our collaborators:

- **Complementary purpose and added value**
- **Mutual respect and commitment**
- **Clarity about roles, responsibilities, and decision-making**
- **Transparency and accountability**
- **Adaptability and flexibility**

We particularly welcome collaborators who:

- **Have complementary technical and/or geographical expertise to our own.**
- **Use innovative research methods and are open to new ways of working.**
- **Share Brooke's vision to conduct research that has a practical application.**

IDENTIFYING EXTERNAL FUNDING

The Global Research Team will work with the UK Fundraising Team to identify research funding opportunities. We envisage that research funding is most likely achievable through exploring opportunities with philanthropic donors. However, we will also explore options to submit joint grant applications to funding bodies with academic institutions and other INGOs, particularly for our cross-cutting research projects. Future research strategies may shift focus towards answering larger issues of more global concern rather than questions that primarily address Brooke's internal decision-making. To support this, we may begin to build towards positioning ourselves for broader funding sources.

Ethical Research

Considering ethics when working with animals and people and promoting a culture of care is a Brooke core value. All research proposals collecting primary data will continue to be reviewed by Brooke's Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body (AWERB) before the start of data collection.

Our AWERB aims to ensure that:



The overall aims of the research are clearly articulated.



The benefits of the research are clearly stated (considering animals/people/environment).



Any potential or actual harm to people or animals is considered and mitigated where possible.



Informed consent is obtained, and appropriate information is disclosed to participants.



The involvement of animals or people is ethically justified.



The number of animals or people involved is appropriate to provide meaningful results.

A proportionate process will be applied to each project. If an external ethical review body reviews a collaborative project, for instance, one maintained by a university, then Brooke's AWERB may provide a 'light touch' review focused on where it can add value. The Global Research Team, including its supervising Head of Department and AWERB chair, will agree on this case-by-case.

OUR VISION FOR SUCCESS

This strategy sets out a vision and direction for quality, ethical and impactful research that responds to Brooke's goals to transform equine welfare in communities, increase the visibility and inclusion of working equids and develop sustainable animal health systems. Successful delivery will see Brooke engaging in fair and equitable collaborations to deliver research that contributes to positive change for working horses, donkeys and mules and the communities that depend on them.



