

Working together
to transform the
brick kiln industry



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Asia’s traditional brick making industry is home to some of the most hazardous and exploitative workplaces. Bonded labour and precarious living conditions enable a culture of poverty and increased pressure to thrive, which exacerbates the demand placed upon humans and the animals they depend on for their livelihoods. In addition, extraction of raw materials and harmful emissions from the brick kilns contribute to environmental degradation and affects the health of workers and wider communities.

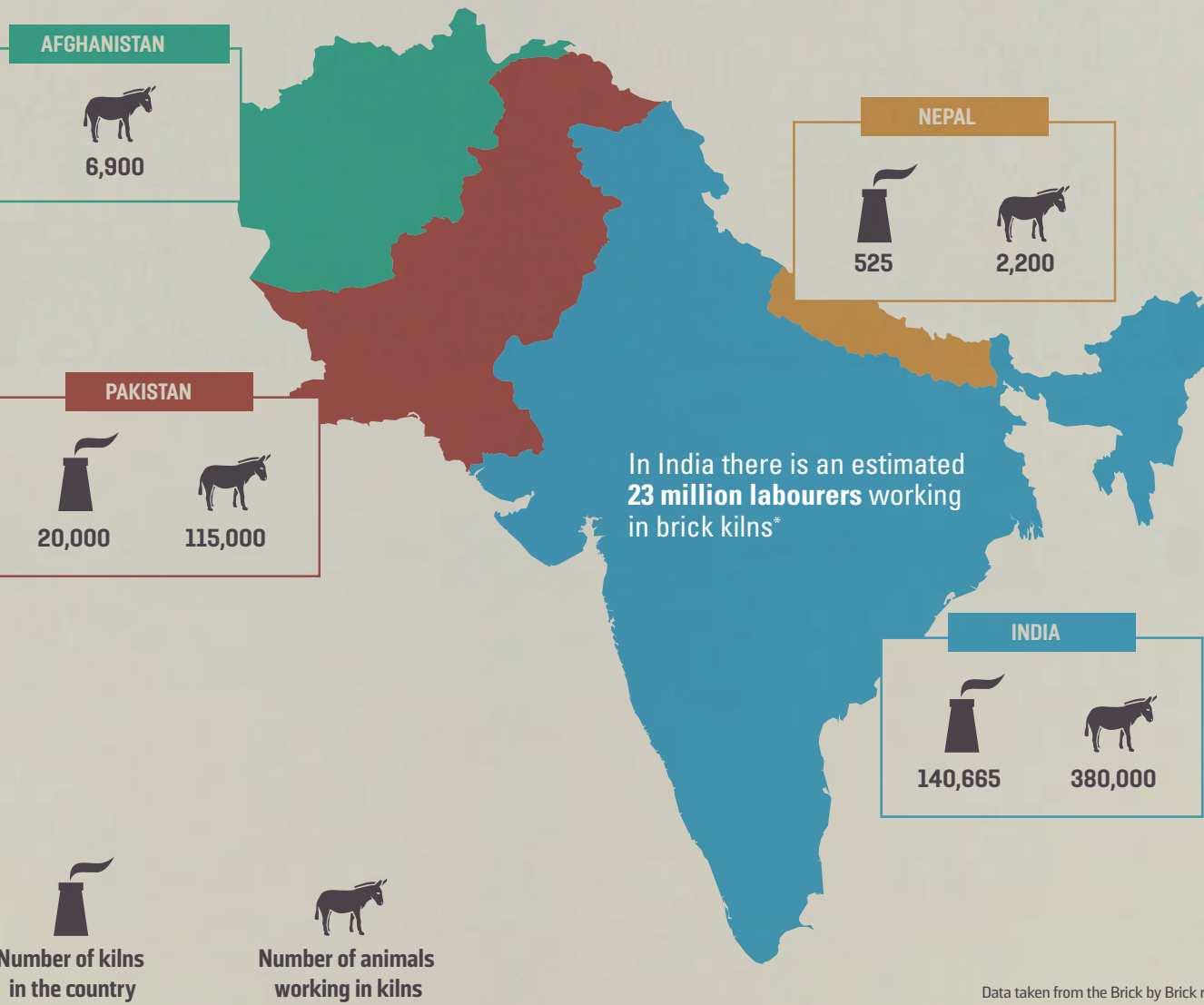
Millions of economically and socially vulnerable people have found employment in the industry. With the South Asian urban population expected to meet 250 million by 2030¹ and a likelihood of corresponding rapid industrial growth, the impact of the brick kiln industry is expected to worsen.

Human labour, animal welfare and the environment interlink in this industry. Tackling the complex brick kiln issues provides an opportunity for action on a range of United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals² (SDGs). These include SDG 1 - eradicating poverty, SDG 3 - ensuring good health and wellbeing, SDG 5 - promoting gender equality, SDG 8 - supporting decent work and economic growth SDG 12 - tackling climate change and SDG 15 – supporting life on land. A collaborative approach of consortium working collaboration supports SDG 17; partnership for the goals.

This policy brief advocates for a holistic, multi-pronged approach, to confront the issues within this often-unregulated industry. International development, animal welfare and environmental organisations should work collaboratively, as part of a multi-sector consortium, to drive change at local and national levels and improve brick kiln conditions through collective advocacy and joined up programming that leads to sustainable change.

¹ Brick by Brick/Environment,Human Labour & Animal Welfare 2017 pg 6
² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

THE BRICK KILN INDUSTRY IN SOUTH ASIA



Data taken from the Brick by Brick report.
* <https://www.antislavery.org/report-slavery-india-brick-kilns>

List of Acronyms

- AHTCS Animal Health Training and Consultancy Service
- DCA Dutch Committee for Afghanistan
- ICIMOD International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
- IUCN International Union for Conservation of Nature
- NGO Non-Governmental organization
- SAARC The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
- SAIEVAC South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children
- SDGs Sustainable Development Goals
- UN United Nations
- UNICEF The United Nations Children’s Fund



THE BRICK KILN INDUSTRY IN SOUTH ASIA



RATIONALE FOR ACTION:

Why do something different?

Historically, the issues faced in South Asian brick kilns have received siloed responses and low levels of prioritisation, engagement, donor funding and awareness amongst multi-level stakeholders and decision makers. Recognition of the connection between environmental, human and animal welfare through the One Health⁸ and One Welfare⁹ concepts provides a strong grounding for integrated action. Collaboration between governments, civil society and donor organisations is key for cooperative programming, as well as informing and developing policy frameworks.

The journey so far: Pokhara, 2017

- Government of Nepal (supported by SAIEVAC) hosted the first dedicated high-level regional policy conference on South Asia's brick kilns; bringing together key stakeholders in the environmental sector, bonded labour, child labour and animal welfare sectors.
- Attendees included representatives from national governments, UN agencies, trade unions, employer organisations, donor agencies and brick kiln owners from Nepal.
- The key outcome of this conference was the Pokhara Joint Outcome Statement, which pledged to increase research and collaboration across sectors.
- The conference aimed to tackle human development, animal welfare and environmental issues within South Asia's brick kilns. It also recognised the need to foster coordination across relevant government ministries and agencies to initiate the collection, compilation and reporting of official reliable and robust data on brick kilns.

National Progress since Pokhara:

- **Pakistan:** National, regional and provincial consultations with the government. Brooke and ICIMOD launched a 10 billion tree planting initiative with the government to counteract the environmental impact of the brick kilns.
- **Nepal:** Government of Nepal has implemented an animal welfare directive with support from Animal Nepal, ICIMOD emissions monitoring of brick kilns and GFI's Bricks are Alive Campaign. The Central Bureau of Statistics is conducting an Employment Relationship Survey in brick kilns, supported by ILO and UNICEF. The report will be published in late 2019.
- **India:** Enforcement of emissions levels and a mandate to move to cleaner technology, enforced by the government. Interested Indian NGOs have met twice since Pokhara and are now planning a national level conference.
- **Afghanistan:** Contacts made with the Kabul municipality, which has the largest number of brick kilns in the country.

³ Hisam, Z., Qureshi, S., Hara, N., Ercelawn, A., Ali, K., Wizarat, S., Ali, B., & Shaukat, Z. (2010). Labour Rights in Pakistan, Declining Decent Work and Emerging Struggles. Pg. 93 SDPI (2009). Social Analysis of Brick Production Units in Pakistan. Sustainable Development Policy Institute. (ii)

⁴ World Bank. (2011) Introducing Energy-Efficient Clean Technologies in the Brick Sector of Bangladesh. Washington, DC: The World Bank Group. As reported in Schmidt, C. W. (2013). Modernizing artisanal brick kilns: A global need. Environmental health perspectives, 121(8), a242.

⁵ Brick by Brick/Environment, Human Labour & Animal Welfare 2017 (pg 45)

⁶ Carbon War Room (2012). Pathways to efficiency in South Asia Brickmaking Industry's Carbon War Room. Market: Asia.

⁷ World Health Organization (WHO), 'One Health' (September 2017), <https://www.who.int/features/qa/one-health/en/> viewed on 20/06/19.

⁸ R. Garcia Pinillos, 'One Welfare: A Framework to Improve Animal Welfare and Human Wellbeing' (2018).

South Asia Regional Workshop on Environment, Child and Bonded Labour and Animal Welfare in Brick Kilns, Nepal, November 2018

- Brooke and The Donkey Sanctuary, in collaboration with SAIEVAC, organised a One Health – One Welfare workshop, to ‘progress the commitment to increase regional cooperation and cross sector collaboration’. Human labour, animal welfare and environmental organisations gathered to plan how to change the brick kiln industry through a multi–sector consortium.
- Attendees also included representatives from the Brick Kiln Owners Associations of Pakistan, Federations of Nepal Brick Industries and All Indian Brick and Tiles Manufacturers Federation.



Workshop Outputs:

- Commitment to contract a Regional Coordinator to drive and catalyse joint change and steer consortium efforts.
- Joint vision statement for the brick kiln industry.
- Agreement of an initial plan of action to develop the organisations engaged in the meeting into a full consortium.
- Outline of joint activities, including an exposure visit to Nepal of the All Indian Brick and Tile Manufacturers Federation to showcase human and animal labour kilns with significant welfare improvements.
- Agreement that for brick kilns to become a truly safe working environment for all, it is imperative that brick kiln federations are included in the consortium and help to drive this change forward.

We call for the creation of a multi-sector consortium that will:

- Collaborate through NGO, UN and Brick Kiln Federation partnering and donor engagement, in order to develop and implement joint programming to improve brick kilns as a working environmen.
- Collaborate to lobby national and regional governments by engaging with relevant ministries and dedicated bodies and institutions to achieve effective policy change in the brick kiln industry.

CONSORTIUM VISION

“A sustainable, dynamic, safe and just brick kiln industry for workers, families, animals and the environment.”

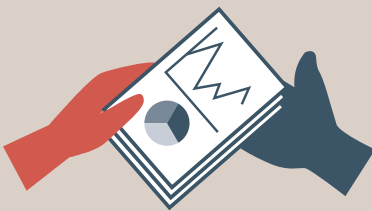
This vision statement, generated at the end of the 2018 workshop, summarises the aims of its participants to work collectively and embody the One Health⁸ and One Welfare⁹ approaches, which outline the dependencies between human development, animal welfare and the environment. It incorporates the aspiration to enable, implement and enforce a policy environment within the brick kiln industry, which in turn facilitates sustainable socio-economic benefits and meets internationally recognised standards related to human labour, animal welfare and the environment.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:



1) Policy analysis, creation and implementation

- Policy analysis is needed for all sectors at provincial/state and national level to identify gaps in existing policies relating to the human development, environmental impact and animal welfare within the brick kiln industry to inform evidence-based recommendations for new ones.
- Implementation of existing minimum standards in kilns is required, for example, Chapter 7 of the OIE Terrestrial Code on working equid welfare. This will provide support for the working animals of the brick kiln workers.



2) Data sharing and capacity building

- NGOs need to engage in capacity building within the sector to build knowledge on how to tackle the issues surrounding brick kilns.
- Local and regional platforms should be developed to share technical expertise and data that can support political engagement and encourage improvement to the brick kiln industry across all three sectors.



3) Engagement

- Civil society organisations must engage relevant ministries collaboratively (Ministry for Human Rights, Ministry for Labour, Ministry for Climate Change/Environment Protection, Ministry of Livestock etc.) to catalyse joint decision making and resource allocations that can measurably improve conditions in kilns.
- The OIE regional representative should join the consortium and link national representation with country working groups.



4) Collaborative Projects

- Regional organisations must programme together to address the inter-related issues of the brick kiln industry, for example:
 - Labour and environment organisations should jointly lobby government to introduce emissions limits, working towards the goal of net zero emissions by 2050 as supported by SDG13;
 - Animal welfare organisations and human development organisations must work together to increase awareness and support implementation of labour standards in communities working on the kilns; and
 - International development organisations should work with animal welfare organisations to encourage efforts to enrol children into schools and consequently eliminate child labour.

5) Funding

- Donors should financially support regional and national cross-sectoral integrated initiatives to encourage change in South Asia’s brick kiln industry, recognising the multiplier effect of funding multi-sector consortium programming and its impact on SDGs.





Photo: © 2017 The Donkey Sanctuary

In November 2018, a joint workshop was organised by Brooke and The Donkey Sanctuary, in collaboration with SAIEVAC in follow up of previous efforts. The purpose of this workshop was to bring already interested organisations together to review progress made since the Pokhara conference in the areas of labour, environment and animal welfare in the South Asia brick kiln industry, including a consideration of barriers to, and enablers of progress, and to identify next steps to creating lasting change via a multi-sectoral approach.

The aspirations for the workshop were to:

- Agree a collective vision for the future (with tangible outcomes covering issues of environment, labour and animal welfare)
- Develop a theory of change for the region
- Develop a shared position statement
- Agree immediate actions and collaborations
- Create a cross sector regional leadership steering group
- Conduct national level workshops and create national support networks as a follow-up to the workshop commitments
- Create a funded coordination role to support the regional progress

