



# GLOBAL EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

## WHAT WE DO

The livelihoods and wellbeing of an estimated 600 million people, mainly from rural communities, depend on working livestock, including horses, donkeys and mules<sup>1</sup>. Brooke's External Affairs work is dedicated to raising the visibility of working equids as livestock within sustainable development and wider agendas, emphasizing their crucial role in agriculture, food security and resilient livelihoods to highlight the importance of their positive health and welfare.

We tackle root causes where possible, collaborating with key stakeholders and using technical insights from our work in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

## WHY WE DO IT

Following lobbying efforts, working equids were recognised as 'working livestock' in 2016 by the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS). Yet these animals are often overlooked in national and regional livestock planning and policy framing. In addition, animal health systems around the world have significant weaknesses, in veterinary workforces, essential medicine supply chains, diagnostics and early warning systems. Animal owners with insufficient knowledge and resources to care for their animals compound these weaknesses and put the lives of thousands of animals – and subsequently people – at risk.

Brooke contribute to the One Health and One Welfare agendas, recognising the critical links between human, animal and environmental welfare to improve the health and welfare of all.

## WHAT WE FOCUS ON AND WHO WE WORK WITH

### Brick kilns.

The traditional brick making industry in South Asia employs millions of people and hundreds of thousands of animals, all working in hazardous and challenging conditions<sup>2</sup>. It is the backbone of urban development throughout South Asia but receives little political attention and is not held to account for its use and treatment of workers and animals, nor its impact on the environment. Brooke works through a brick kiln consortium of key stakeholders such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) and The Donkey Sanctuary. This allows us to highlight the linkages between the human, animal and environmental sectors and collectively identify sustainable step changes through a One Health approach. This taskforce enables us to tackle the various challenges in these kilns holistically, including bonded and child labour, climate change, animal welfare, health and inequality.

### The donkey skin trade.

Demands from China for eijiao, a gelatin made from donkey skins, is a global issue which has reached crisis levels in Africa where thousands of donkeys are being stolen, smuggled and slaughtered to meet the demand for their skin<sup>3</sup>. This is impoverishing families who rely on the labour of their donkeys to survive, as well as creating unacceptable welfare conditions for these animals. Brooke is calling for national bans on the slaughter of donkeys for the trade in their skin to be introduced and enforced by local governments.

<sup>1</sup> The Brooke (2018) Invisible Livestock; Challenges, Threats and Solutions

<sup>2</sup> The Brooke (2017) Brick by Brick. Environment, Human Labour & Animal Welfare; unveiling the full picture of South Asia's brick kiln industry and building the blocks for change.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thebrooke.org/our-work/we-work-animals/donkeys-being-stolen-their-skins>



We are working with national governments and donkey owning communities to protect these animals through policy and grassroots level protection initiatives, expanding our advocacy across Africa and at all levels, local and national. We recognise the global nature of this issue and are keeping our finger on the pulse of this rapidly evolving situation across low and middle income countries.

### **Working animals as a sustainable development issue.**

Working animals are essential to the livelihoods of millions of families in low and middle income countries. They provide draught, traction and transport for selling goods at market and give people access to other essentials. Their inherent value to families and their direct and indirect contribution to both household and national economies makes them a significant facet in the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); most notably, reducing poverty, food security, access to water, lessening the burden of household work on women and climate change. We are lobbying for the recognition of working livestock under global policy frameworks such as the SDGs, specifically calling for SDG 15 to be broadened to include working livestock.

Brooke was awarded specialized Consultative Status by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN FAO) which we are using to raise awareness of the contributions of working equids to the SDGs within these spheres.

At the OIE (Organization for World Animal Health), which brings together 182 member states from countries all around the world, we work as part of the International Coalition on Working Equids (ICWE) and the International Coalition for Animal Welfare (ICFAW) to bring about change to global animal welfare, including stopping the spread of zoonotic disease and better livestock management. We jointly lobbied for international standards on working equids, and are now supporting OIE with training, bringing these standards to life.

### **WHO TO CONTACT**

**If you are interested in working in partnership with Brooke, have any questions about our work or want to talk further, you can contact our Global External Affairs team at [external.affairs@thebrooke.org](mailto:external.affairs@thebrooke.org)**



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