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INTERNATIONAL COALITION FOR WORKING EQUIDS



The contribution of working equids towards sustainable development

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International Coalition for Working Equids

- Formed by four leading working animal NGOs: Brooke, The Donkey Sanctuary, SPANA & World Horse Welfare, under the umbrella of the International Coalition for Animal Welfare.
- The Coalition supported the development of the WOAHS Terrestrial Animal Code Chapter 7.12. on the welfare of working equids.
- Supports the implementation of the Chapter standards by providing information & evidence to the WOAHS and other stakeholders.

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The role of working equids in today's society

Estimated 112 million working equids (horses, donkeys & mules) globally supporting the livelihoods of around 600 million people.

Equids play an essential role in human lives in low- and middle-income countries:

- They support farming, transport goods & people, herd livestock, collect water from wells, etc.

More importantly, they contribute to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.



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Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are a global call for action to end poverty, improve education and health, reduce inequality and spur economic growth.

Some of the most urgent SDGs can be achieved by cost-effective & simple solutions → and the welfare of working equids is an example of this¹.

Working animals contribute hugely towards reducing poverty & hunger, improving access to food and water, empowering women, and enhancing climate resilience, amongst others. Yet their pivotal role is not recognised.



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¹ Achieving agenda 2030: How the welfare of working animals delivers for development (2015)
<https://www.icweworkingequids.org/wp-content/themes/icwe/pdf/sdg-brochure.pdf>

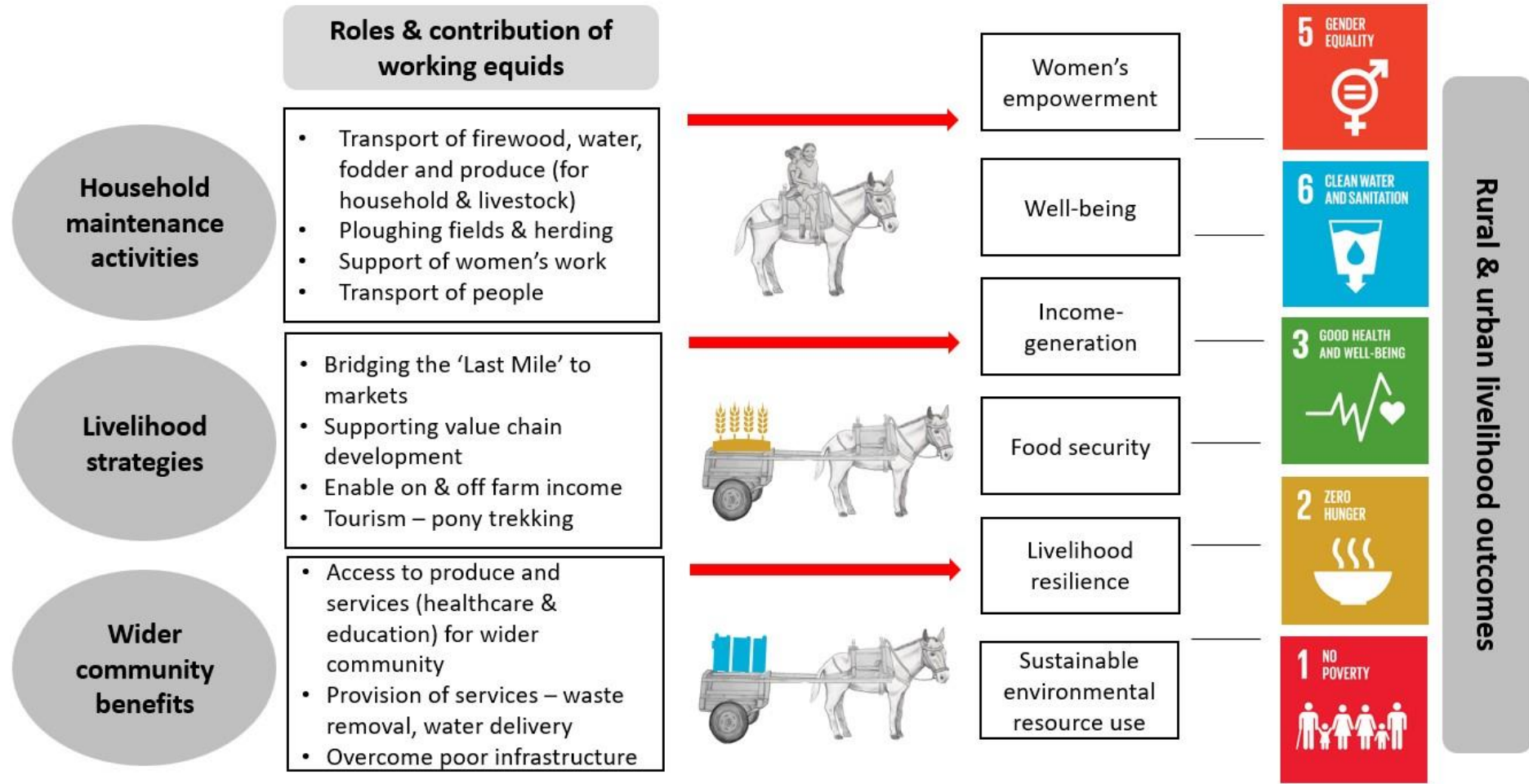


Figure 1: Grace, D. & Diall, O. & Saville, K. & Warboys, D. & Ward, P. & Wild, Isabella & Perry, Brian. (2022). The Global Contributions of Working Equids to Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihoods in Agenda 2030. EcoHealth. 19. 10.1007/s10393-022-01613-8.



Working equids as income generators



Contribution to earnings and extra income directly (earning money from the animals) or indirectly (serving as transport or labour).

A recent survey² found the most frequent roles of WE in LMICs were in transport of goods (25%), crops (24%) & people (18%). These activities generate income or substitute for expenditure, helping the household make ends meet.



Enable their owners to participate in work, boosting economic capacity in some of the most vulnerable regions of the world.

² Wild I, Gedge A, Burrige J, Burford J. The Impact of COVID-19 on the Working Equid Community: Responses from 1530 Individuals Accessing NGO Support in 14 Low- and Middle-Income Countries. *Animals*. 2021; 11(5):1363. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11051363>

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Equids as a valuable asset

Equids may be the most valuable asset owned by people: expensive to replace, can serve as a loan guarantee or be liquidated for emergency expenses.

In a study conducted in 2021,

- 76% of equid owners responded that their equids contributed to some of their income.
- 49% of owners reported that if they lose their equid they couldn't afford to replace them.
- And most equid owners consider themselves to be in a similar or better financial situation than those who don't own an equid in their communities.



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Working equids in agriculture

Small-scale farmers produce around 80% of the developing world's food³. Many of these small farmers rely on working equids.

The use of horses in agriculture is common as a means of rural traction or transport. Especially when motorised vehicles are expensive or impractical for the shape of the terrain.

Working equids pull ploughs and carts, herd livestock, collect water to use in farming.

They deliver goods to local markets, in particular in remote areas, enhancing quality nutrition.



³ Ricciardi V, Ramankutty N, Mehrabi Z, Jarvis L, Chookolingo B (2018) How much of the world's food do smallholders produce? Global Food Security 17:64–72. <https://doi.org/10.1016/>





Working equids and water security



Millions of people around the world, mainly women & girls, spend up to 200 hours per day collecting clean water.

Equids play a crucial role in water security, especially in remote areas, where access to water is particularly challenging due to inaccessible terrain. Their support reduces the time spent collecting & transporting the clean water to be used by humans, livestock & working animals.



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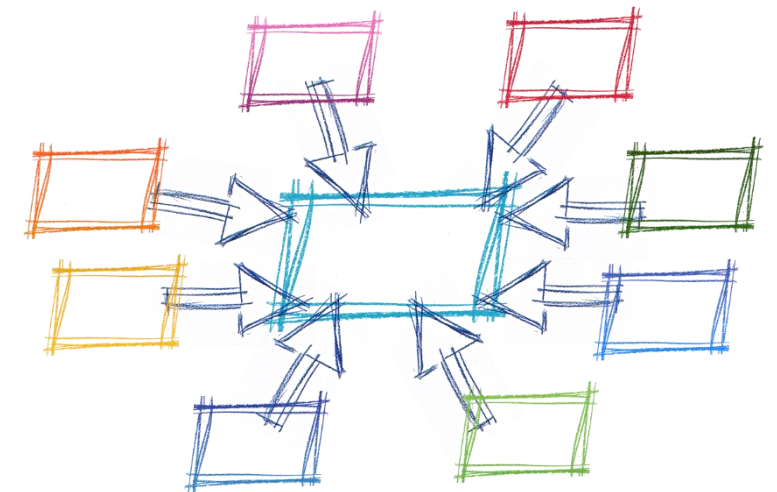


Partnering for the goals

Strengthen the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by collaborative & mutually beneficial interventions that improve animal & human wellbeing.

Establish dialogue between a variety of stakeholders to implement changes that produce a positive impact on working equids & their owners is key.

Human & animal welfare need to be addressed together in collaboration with humanitarian NGOs, governments & other animal-NGOs



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Equine welfare at the centre of policies



The socioeconomic value and contribution of working animals are often taken for granted, without realising the benefits of ensuring their health & welfare.

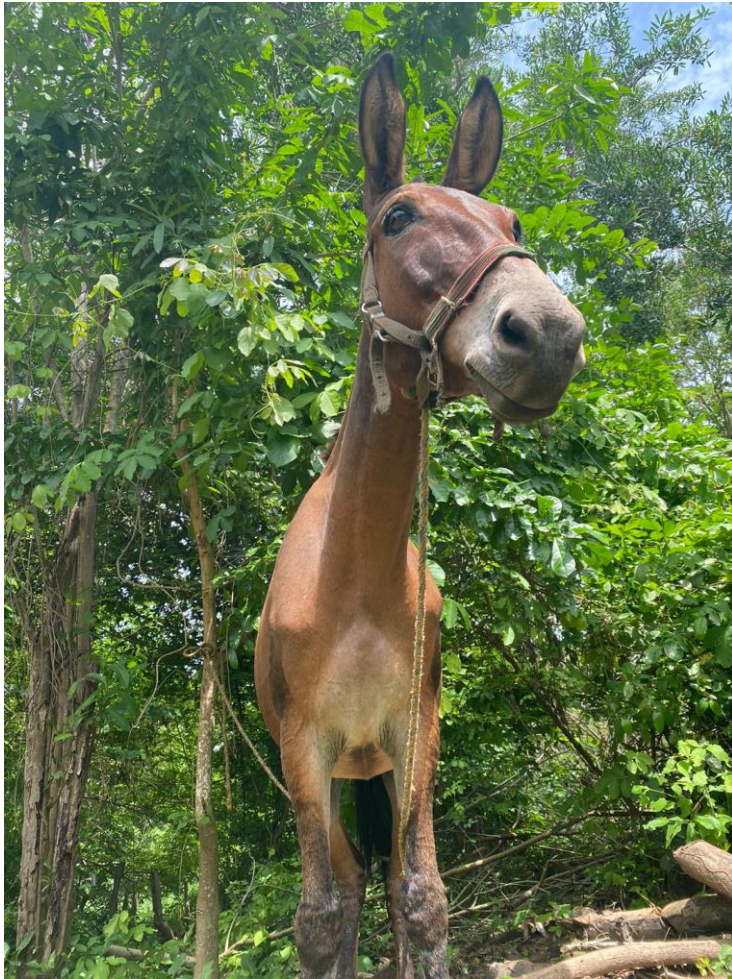
Simple interventions can improve owners', vets' & other professionals' knowledge about health & welfare, ensuring the continued productive benefit of the use of working equids.



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Thank you!

Any questions?

Contact me at sandrap.zafra@worldhorsewelfare.org

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