

ANIMAL NEPAL

EQUINE OUTREACH PROGRAMME

Supported by The DSUK



**THE DONKEY
SANCTUARY**
WORKING WORLDWIDE



animalNEPAL.org

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BACKGROUND

Kathmandu valley counts some 125 brick factories and some 1000 equines (donkeys, mules and horses) are employed in brick kilns in the Kathmandu Valley.

Besides being the number one polluters in terms of Sulphur dioxide emissions they also employ an estimated 60,000 child workers and 1500 donkeys and mules. The working equines are generally underfed, overloaded and overworked. 85% of donkeys outside our working area have open wounds. Most donkeys suffer from dehydration and malnutrition. Pregnant donkeys work up to the day of delivery and are given only a few days to recover. Every year around 25 donkeys die from exhaustion in Nepal's brick kilns that have been called a 'medieval hellhole'. The conditions of these working donkeys are as dark as those of the human labourers who

work there. Horses, mules and donkeys, brought in all the way from Nepalgunj, increasingly become the backbone of brick production, hauling bricks to and from the kiln. There are no laws that govern their treatment, and no government department represents their needs.

The equines fail to receive basic care such as nutritious food, water, rest, shelter, and are continuously overloaded and overworked. Injuries go untreated; severely ill donkeys are left to die. The animals are beaten relentlessly by their handlers, mostly children, some as young as six years old. This project addresses the needs of these animals. Shocked to see their conditions, Animal Nepal in 2008 launched a Working Equine Outreach Programme where we conduct regular mobile clinics, provide first aid boxes and improved harnesses, and

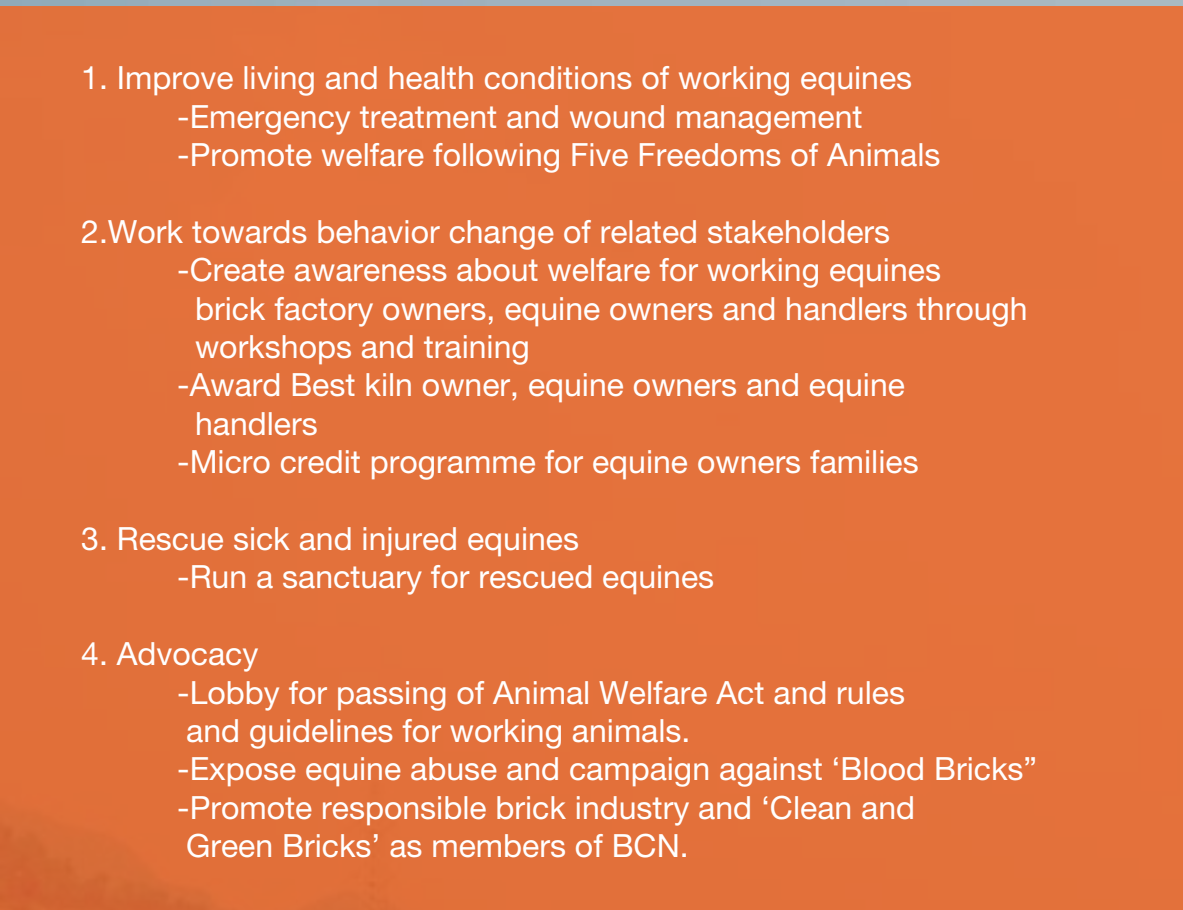
educate factory and equine handlers and owners. Weak and handicapped donkeys are rescued and taken to the Godavari Donkey Sanctuary. By now, the conditions of the 500 or so working equines in Lalitpur have improved considerably. We also reach out to sick and injured equines in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur district whenever we are called.

Major objective of our Working Equines Outreach Programme is:

- To improve the conditions of working donkeys
- To educate donkey owners, handlers and kiln owners
- To lobby for better conditions for working animals across the nation.

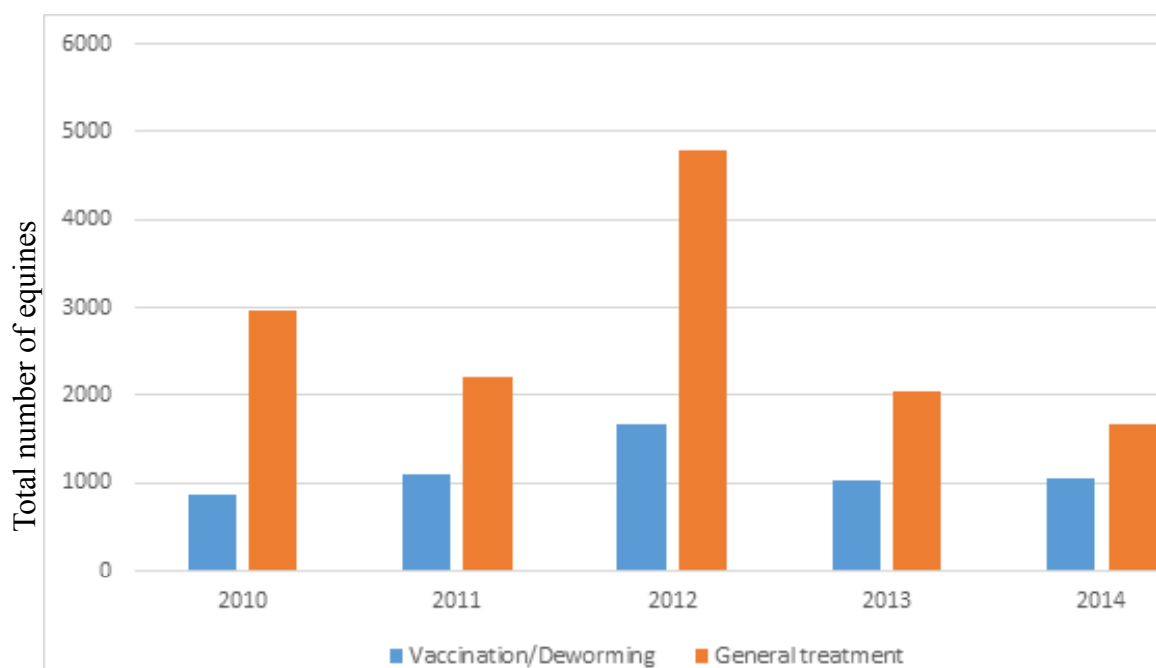
OBJECTIVE OF THE PROGRAMME

1. Improve living and health conditions of working equines
 - Emergency treatment and wound management
 - Promote welfare following Five Freedoms of Animals
2. Work towards behavior change of related stakeholders
 - Create awareness about welfare for working equines brick factory owners, equine owners and handlers through workshops and training
 - Award Best kiln owner, equine owners and equine handlers
 - Micro credit programme for equine owners families
3. Rescue sick and injured equines
 - Run a sanctuary for rescued equines
4. Advocacy
 - Lobby for passing of Animal Welfare Act and rules and guidelines for working animals.
 - Expose equine abuse and campaign against 'Blood Bricks'
 - Promote responsible brick industry and 'Clean and Green Bricks' as members of BCN.



FACTS AND FIGURES

Treatments	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Vaccinations/ Deworming	857	1088	1677	1038	1046	5706
General Treatments	2967	2203	4800	2042	1677	13689



By launching equine outreach programme and building rehabilitation centers for equines, 2009 became the year in which we managed to make a visible difference in the suffering animals of Nepal.

In 2010, we focused on preventive treatment and education, and improved our treatment strategies to provide long term solutions to the suffering of working animals.

We continued our outreach program and treated no less than 3,000 equines in 2011. The result really motivated us to work even more on animal welfare.

In 2013 we took the leap of building a new ecofriendly donkey sanctuary featuring a farm-like resort and education center. A place where animals are treated with kindness and compassion and where visitors can learn about the abuse that takes place against equines in Nepal. Another achievement of the year was improvement in the general health conditions of equines in brick factories in Lalitpur.

In Nepalgunj we further empowered the Equine User Groups by providing them business skills training and seed money for micro credit funds. The intense education programmes for donkey owners and handlers were conducted. As a resesult, by 2014 the death rate of equines in brick factories in Lalitpur decreased with 50 percent.

FUNDING SUPPORT

The Donkey Sanctuary UK (DSUK) as a collaborating partner of Animal Nepal has been supporting Animal Nepal's working equines outreach programme since 2009. Animal Nepal, with the support of DSUK, became the first organization to work over fifteen brick factories, organising regular health camps and educating the owners and handlers. Recently, we were overwhelmed with the DSUK's interest in working with us through Brick Clean

Network to improve living condition of working animals through standards and legislation.

The Donkey Sanctuary UK not only helps us through funding but also provides valuable training to Animal Nepal staff. How to make saddles that do not create wounds on donkeys? How to educate equine owners in a participatory manner? These and many other questions were

addressed in a recent Donkey Sanctuary India training programme. Animal Nepal has been supported with technical inputs by the Donkey Sanctuary India since many years. The regular visits by equine vet Dr Ramesh Kumar to Nepal and the monitoring visits of the DS India team at equine bazaars have benefited our outreach activities tremendously.



OUR FIELD OF WORK

OUT REACH PROGRAMME

Animal Nepal established its Equine Outreach Programme to improve the living and health conditions of equines working in the brick factories. Since then, the organization with some expert team of veterinarians has been providing emergency treatment and wound management to the equines of brick factories.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

The main vision of Animal Nepal is to change the behaviour of related stakeholders in how they see and treat an animal. Hence, we have been continuously working on creating awareness about welfare for working equines brick factory owners, equine owners and handlers (through workshops and trainings). Award for the best brick factory owner, equine owners and equine handlers and micro credit programme for equine owners families are organised to motivate them.

RESCUE SICK AND INJURED

Weak and handicapped donkeys who cannot work anymore are rescued and taken to the Godavari Donkey Sanctuary where they enjoy their retirement life in the mid of happy and healthy environment. Our only motive is to provide some happy moment at the end of their life.

ADVOCACY

Animal Nepal has been advocating since its establishment for the animal welfare in Nepal. We lobby for passing of Animal Welfare Act and rules and guidelines for working animals.

We have also worked on exposing equine abuse and campaigned against 'Blood Bricks' in Nepal. In 2012, Donkey abuse petition was handed over to Federation of Brick Industries Nepal. 125,000 signatures were collected in just two weeks to stop equine abuse in Nepal's brick factories. The petition was posted by Animal Nepal on Care2.com to raise awareness about the grave abuse by some owners.

The petition was handed over to Mr Mahendra Bahadur Chitrakar, President of the Federation of Nepal Brick Industries, on May 12, 2013. The Federation of Brick Industries is committed to promoting a responsible industry, and has taken a strong stance against child labour. Animal Nepal developed a Memorandum of Understanding for the entrepreneurs involved, in which they commit to reject sick, pregnant or handicapped equines and support improved management in terms of shelter, feeding, no beating, no overloading, first aid kit, 8-hour working

hours, and providing one holiday per week. As a long term solution to the equine abuse Animal Nepal promoted responsible brick industry and 'Clean and Green Bricks' as members of BCN.

Animal Nepal in 2011 organised a large scale donkey convoy from Nepalgunj in western Nepal, to Kathmandu. Due to the great interest among equine owners and brokers, the convoy was joined by 10 trucks with 280 working equines where we managed to reduce the travelling hours by 50%, the fees and bribes by 500%. No equine fell sick or injured. Although the convoy can be considered a great success, a number of problems was notable. The child handlers that year were recruited in India. Contrary to the Nepalese handlers, they have not received any education in animal welfare. The handlers did not appear to have any compassion for the animals, which was a great source of frustration for our staff. One of our main focus areas then became the education of equine handlers.

COVERAGE

Animal Nepal with the support of DSUK has been working over 15 brick factories of Lalitpur district including few of them of Kathmandu and Bhaktapur.

Over 1000 equines work in brick factories in Kathmandu Valley, hauling bricks under tough conditions. All the equines are brought from Nepalgunj, which is where many

donkey and mules arrive from India, and are bred, bought and sold. These animals carry goods up the mountains as well as work at brick kilns across the country. Brick donkeys travel with their owners by truck across the country to Kathmandu brick kilns, where they work during the dry season (December – May). After the season ends, they return to Nepalgunj,

where they are either sold or kept until the next season starts. Hence, by extending its outreach programme in Nepalgunj, Nepal's main equine bazaar, Animal Nepal wants to address the root causes of the abuse and make a lasting change in the lives of Nepal's working equines.

ANIMAL NEPAL WORKING AREA FOR WORKING EQUINE OUTREACH PROGRAM



OUR WORKING MODEL

EDUCATING EQUINE OWNERS AND HANDLERS

Animal Nepal has been organising regular education sessions for donkey owners, child handlers and factory owners.

Animal Nepal uses various games and workshops to teach donkey owners inviting equine owners of numerous brick factories of the Lalitpur district. The motivational workshop took place at the Godavari Donkey Sanctuary.

The objective of the workshop was to talk about animal welfare, its need, and for a general orientation regarding effective management of their working equines. Animal Nepal organizes regular educational workshops for equine owners and handlers, of whom around 25% are children. Animal Nepal uses games involving creativity, group participation and communication to motivate and train equine owners and handlers for improved animal welfare.

One activity was to be blindfolded and instructed to walk according to guidance provided by a trainer. This was to enable equine owners to understand how difficult it is for blind equines to walk carrying heavy loads. We also held an award ceremony for the equine owners of Lalitpur's brick factories. The awards encourage the owners of horses, mules and donkeys to take better care of their animals. The top 3 equine owners were chosen based on our vets' and vet-technicians' observations over the last few months and a detailed ranking system based on Animal Nepal's good practices document.

The prizes are items that the equine owners use in their daily life including water filters, pressure cookers and electric lights. After the award ceremony the equine owners vowed to treat their animals humanely.



LOBBYING

Animal Nepal has been lobbying the authorities for the proper animal welfare act in Nepal. We lobby for passing of Animal Welfare Act and rules and guidelines for working animals.

We have also worked on exposing equine abuse and campaigned against ‘Blood Bricks’ in Nepal. Animal Nepal also developed a Memorandum of Understanding for the entrepreneurs involved, in which they commit to reject sick, pregnant or handicapped equines and support improved management in terms of shelter, feeding, no beating, no overloading, first aid kit, 8-hour working hours, and providing one holiday per week.

As a long term solution to the equine abuse Animal Nepal promoted responsible brick industry and ‘Clean and Green Bricks’ as members of BCN.



WHAT IS BCN?

BCN (Brick Clean Network) is a group of "concerned citizens" and non-governmental workers forming a community of practice for a socially responsible brick industry in Nepal, both within and outside of the Kathmandu valley.

Objectives of BCN are to:

- Eradicate child labour, forced labor and bonded labor
- Improve living and working conditions of workers
- Reduce air pollution and environmental impact
- Eradicate animal abuse

Bricks in Nepal are both a central part of the architectural character for with the country is loved, and a vital product around which Nepal's growth is based, it also one of the most challenging social and environmentally sectors in the country.

The Better Brick Nepal initiative (BBN) is working to positively transform the brick sector throughout Nepal one kiln at a time. In partnership with kiln owners and workers BBN is creating socially and environmentally sustainable bricks that are responsibly produced and of top quality so that consumers have a real choice when selecting a brick for their building project. By combining fundamental decent work, social protections and environmental standards on the kilns, BCN is ensuring that the enrichment of “Better Brick” production becomes the norm for Nepal's brick producers and consumers.

It will pave a new path for bricks in Nepal, one that ensures the social, economic, and environmental protection of workers and their children so that Nepalese will finally have access to a sustainable, quality product that they can be proud to use.



ROLE OF ANIMAL NEPAL IN THE FORMATION OF THE (BCN) BRICK CLEAN NETWORK

- Animal Nepal initiated its Working Equine Outreach Programme (supported by Donkey Sanctuary UK) in December 2008.
- During visits to the brick kilns we found that conditions for workers and animals were substandard and forced/child labour and environmental pollution was rampant.
- Animal Nepal initiated a (social) media campaign called Stop Blood Bricks to encourage kiln owners to improve conditions.
- Together with Terre des Hommes we encouraged NGOs working on these issues to come together and BCN was thus formed.



LESSON LEARNT

1. Equines suffer as much as humans do from exploitative and forced labour situation
2. Take a softer approach while dealing with brick kiln owners
3. Reducing Dependency
4. 'Fun' workshop approach works well for illiterate adults and with children
5. Behavioral change takes time
6. More emphasis on encouraging kiln owners and animal owners to work together is needed
7. Focus work in source districts during off season- treatment, education, skill development, micro credit
8. Cooperation between animal welfare groups and government needed; need for a stakeholders' working committee
9. Animal issues need to be taken more serious, also within BCN.



MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

2009

- Launched a Working Equine Outreach Programme
- Introduced mobile clinics, first aid boxes and improved harnesses
- Educated factory and equine handlers and owners.

2010

- Establishment of an outreach programme in Nepalgunj
- Organised regular clinics for working equines in 12 brick factories
- Treated more than 3000 working equines

2011

- Piloted a convoy programme to bring equines safely back home
- Brought child donkey handlers together in fun, workshops
- Campaigned against 'Blood Bricks' as founder member of BCN
- Organised regular clinics for working equines in 12 brick factories
- Treated almost 3000 working equines

2012

- Expanded our outreach programme by hiring four paravets
- Conducted 4800 treatments among working equines
- Rescued over ten.

2013

- Conducted a total of 3080 treatments
- Build a new eco-friendly Donkey Sanctuary

2014

- Build a new eco-friendly Donkey Sanctuary
- Introduced World Donkey Day to Nepal
- Improved our visibility in the media
- Treated almost 3000 equines.

IMPACT/CHANGES IN OUR WORKING AREA

- Number and intensity of wounds has sharply decreased.
- Mortality rates of working equines has been significantly reduced (50%in the first quarter of 2014)
- Perception of brick kiln owners towards working equine has improved
- The use of harmful traditional methods has reduced
- Some of the equine owners are following minimum animal welfare standards
- About 4000 equines benefited from treatment so far
- Draft animal welfare act has presented to related ministry.
- Media coverage of various animal cruelty and activities has significantly gone up.
- Public awareness about conditions of working equines in brick kilns has increased
- Best Practice and standard documents for equines working in brick factories developed
- Death rate among 'brick donkeys' down with 50%

While equines continue to suffer as beasts of burden in brick factories across the country, some good news came from our working area recently. The death rate among 'brick donkeys' working in 16 brick factories decreased with 50% in the first quarter of 2014 compared to 2013.

Other positive developments are the increase in the use of horses and mules compared to donkeys (respectively 35%, 42% and 20%; 3% of equines are foals). As horses and mules are at least eight times more expensive than donkeys, they are better cared for.

Equine owners have started introducing carts or buggies, pulled by strong horses and mules in brick factories with a flat terrain. As a result of these developments, the presence of saddle wounds has decreased and the equines' general condition improved. Animal

Nepal in 2008 introduced an outreach programme after witnessing the grave abuse of equines in brick factories. With the support of Donkey Sanctuary UK, Animal Nepal now work in 15 brick factories in Lalitpur district and occasionally provides treatment and rescue services to equines in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur district.

During the mobile clinics preventive measures are introduced, including vaccinations (Tetanus and Rabies) and worming. Ongoing treatment includes wound management, hoof care and eye infections but also more serious conditions such as dystocia and anal prolapse.

Equine owners and handlers are given incentives through the awarding of 'Best Equine Owner' and "Best Equine Handler'. Fun based educational workshops introduce basic welfare and management messages. Lobbying activities at the national level help to put increased pressure on the industry to



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase outreach to brick kilns in other parts of the country
- Open a shelter/training center in Nepalgunj, Nepal's equine bazaar
- Encourage permanent kilns to have permanent shelters
- Initiate micro credit/ savings programmes for equine owners for financial stability during the off-season

CHALLENGES

- Lack of animal welfare laws
- Attitudes of some brick kiln owners
- Traditional mindsets of equine owners
- Lack of investment by brick kiln owners in/for animals
- Lack of involvement of related government bodies such as Department of Livestock and the District Livestock Offices



CONCLUSIONS

We would like to thank The Donkey Sanctuary UK for their immense support in our equine outreach program. The program has made a huge difference in the suffering of these working animals as they rarely receive basic care such as nutritious food, water, rest, shelter, and are continuously overloaded and overworked.

We have seen a significant improvement in the overall condition of working animals in our area. Not only the condition of equine but we have also seen a major change in the behaviour of equine owners and handlers. They have now began to realize the importance of their animals and how hard they work for them. The situation still needs some improvements for which Animal Nepal will continue to work till animal abuse is eradicated from these brick factories.

For that we will be focusing on their regular treatment, work on awareness of the equine owners and handlers and last but not the least advocate on national and international level for their betterment.

