



**THE DONKEY
SANCTUARY**



OUR ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY 2023 TO 2027



OUR GLOBAL STRATEGY 2023 TO 2027

For over 50 years The Donkey Sanctuary has had a single focus: what would happen if we put all our effort and ingenuity into improving the welfare of as many donkeys as possible?

In doing this, we have discovered something remarkable.

Not only a deep understanding of these special animals and their extraordinary qualities, but of their unique relationship with humans and the environments they share – a relationship that spans generations, cultures, and continents. In that relationship could lie the roots of a more sustainable future for donkeys and humans together.

Over the next 50 years we plan to deploy that knowledge and understanding to change the world for donkeys, and through



them, the lives of those who depend on them.

Our mission remains to help improve the lives of donkeys and mules. We will continue to support and share world-leading veterinary, behavioural and environmental science and the wisdom of people who live and work alongside donkeys all over the world.

We are also determined to share the rich benefits of our single-species focus. Side by side with partner organisations, NGOs, supporters and governments, we will demonstrate how seeing the world from a donkey's perspective can help people, communities and the environment to heal and flourish, even in the most challenging of circumstances.

OUR VISION:

A WORLD WHERE EVERY DONKEY HAS A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE



IMAGINE A WORLD...

Imagine a world where every donkey and mule, wherever they are, has access to the right food and water and lives in an environment that gives them the shade and shelter they need.

Imagine a world where their individual health needs are understood, and they have access to optimal care.

Imagine a world where they have the chance to be a donkey. Where they can express natural donkey behaviour and can experience the kindness and respect they deserve. Living a life of joy and pleasure. Free from fear and distress.

At The Donkey Sanctuary that's the world we envisage.

OUR MISSION:

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF DONKEYS EVERY DAY

We will do this by working with the people who matter most to donkeys. Providing the means and the motivation to make a difference to donkey welfare by demonstrating the benefits to donkeys, humans and the environment of working together in harmony.

Wherever we can we will never turn away from a donkey in need, offering sanctuary or support in the community.

We will continue to speak up for donkeys by challenging poor welfare and advocating for better – championing a balance in the relationship between donkeys and people so that donkeys and mules are valued for their own sake, and their welfare needs are met.

We will work to deepen the understanding and respect humanity has for donkeys: whether a person has never met a donkey before or comes from generations of donkey owners. By doing this, we will improve the respect we all have for donkeys, along with the world's understanding of them as powerful agents for change.

We will encourage individuals, communities and nations to help us deliver positive and sustainable change to the everyday lives of donkeys.



World leaders in donkey welfare

At The Donkey Sanctuary we have over 50 years of experience caring for our own herd in sanctuary while working closely with donkey owners around the world who have their own deep cultural history of living and working alongside donkeys.

This puts us in the unique position of being able to translate and share a comprehensive depth of knowledge and understanding of all things donkey, be it excellence in science, husbandry or veterinary care, and use those insights to improve the lives of donkeys everywhere.

FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS

No obstacle too great.

The Donkey Sanctuary was founded in 1969 by Dr Elisabeth Svendsen MBE (or Dr S as many of us knew her). Not long after this, Dr S famously inherited over 200 donkeys overnight from Miss Violet Philpin, who had founded an animal charity in Reading.

Dr S went on to dedicate her life to championing donkeys. She created an evolution in our understanding of these unique animals by creating a world-class centre of veterinary excellence and an irresistible tide of compassion over the last five decades, which has resulted in the charity supporting projects in 40 countries across the world. Dr S was also an early advocate for the benefits of animal-assisted activities to support the physical and mental wellbeing of vulnerable children and adults. An activity in which The Donkey Sanctuary continues to be a world leader, providing services throughout the United Kingdom.

It is through our founder's extraordinary dynamism and devotion that the sanctuary grew from one small farm on a Devon hillside, to an international charity spanning continents.



Though Dr S died in 2011, her memory lives on both in the millions of donkeys' lives that we have touched and in the way we work now – where no obstacle is too great, no new insight too small and no animal undeserving of help. We strive relentlessly towards a better world for donkeys.

Donkeys remain in peril.

As we contemplate the next 50 years pursuing our mission **to improve the lives of donkeys every day**, it becomes clear the need for our work continues to be stark.

It is likely that, over the coming years, pressures of climate change, conflict, drought and communities on the verge of starvation will continue to force

a people and livestock migration in some of the most challenging environments on earth; often in precisely those places where the relationship between donkeys and humans is most vital.

Meanwhile, ongoing economic and political instability will mean that only the most essential needs of people are considered by governments, where links between animal and human outcomes are not well understood.

Indiscriminate breeding, unstable financial markets, political conflict and inadequate government support and neglect within some donkey-owning communities will continue to impact the welfare of many donkeys across the globe. Finally, the trade in donkey skins



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Donkeys remain in peril. A world without donkeys is a far poorer world. Even a broken world for many.

to produce gelatine for the traditional Chinese medicine ejiao continues to be the biggest single global danger donkeys have yet faced. The vast, unscrupulous web of skin traders is an existential threat to donkey populations, crossing country borders across multiple continents. This is an ongoing disaster for communities that rely on donkeys to survive – not to mention the biosecurity risk of an unregulated, unsanitary international trade in animals and animal products.

A world of connection.

The welfare of donkeys, humans and their shared environments is intrinsically linked. Each relies on the other.

We cannot help donkeys across the world if we do not recognise the inescapable link between animals, the natural world and people. The Covid-19 global pandemic has highlighted just how much our world is interconnected – whether challenged by climate events,

infectious diseases or conflict. But what remains clear is the unbreakable role animals play in people's lives, and the powerful meaning our love for those animals can bring to our lives.

Our 50 years of exploration into and learning about donkeys and their lived experience means we are well placed to show how, by helping and improving the lives of one species – in our case the donkey – we can reduce the suffering of that animal. And in doing so, we can amplify help in our interconnected world to deliver for people and the environment.

We have singular and compelling insights to share with the world, which make The Donkey Sanctuary more acutely relevant than ever to the debate around the interconnectedness of animal, human and environmental outcomes.

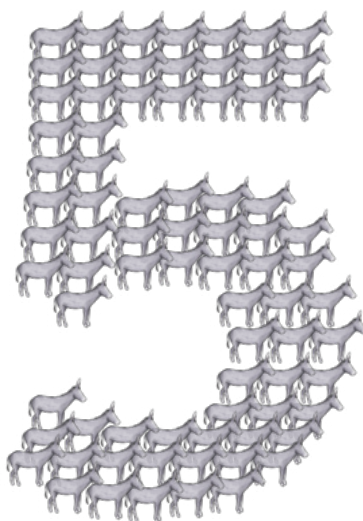
Donkeys remain in peril. And a world without donkeys is a far poorer world. Even a broken world for many.

Our donkey-assisted activities are designed from the donkeys' perspective. Recent peer-reviewed scientific studies on our unique approach to animal assisted activities has shone a light on the positive impact this work can have on donkeys and humans. We will continue with our research and will champion change for the best.

WHAT WE WILL ACHIEVE

Over the next five years:

WE WILL IMPROVE
THE LIVES OF
**5 MILLION
DONKEYS**



WE WILL INSPIRE
A GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF
A MILLION
TO HELP US IN OUR MISSION

WE WILL MAKE
THE DONKEY
SANCTUARY
GREAT PLACE
TO WORK



WE WILL ESTABLISH
**OPERATIONAL
EXCELLENCE**
THAT MAKES THE MOST
OF OUR RESOURCES

WE WILL INCREASE
OUR INCOME
TO DELIVER OUR GOALS



WE WILL **BE**
LEADERS IN
A **GLOBAL PLAN**
FOR DONKEYS



To help us achieve these goals we will improve in four key areas:

- **Agility:** The world is in a state of constant change, and with it so are the challenges facing donkeys. We will develop active and responsive support systems that help us to make evidence-based decisions swiftly and well. We will create space in our work to experiment and learn, to deliver a rapid response to insights and change, and to deploy intelligent and innovative solutions for donkey welfare.
- **Accountability:** With clarity and confidence in our strategy, we will be fully accountable. We will hold ourselves to a high standard of ethics and performance. We will lead by example, and we will keep our promises by being clear and transparent in our objectives and responsibilities.
- **Sustainability:** Short-term decisions must be informed by a long-term vision. Sustainability in its broadest sense will inform our strategies, approach and decision making.
- **Inclusivity:** The most diverse communities are the most robust. We will seek out a broad range of lived experience to inform our decisions and improve our thinking.





OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

To deliver our core purpose (our vision and mission) we have organised the work we do under the four strategic pillars of Welfare, Knowledge, Voice and Community.

These pillars help ensure our day-to-day work is guided by our strategy in a simpler, more focused way and helps us track progress more easily. Each pillar is dependent on the others and important to consider together.



Welfare

Make positive and sustainable change to the everyday lives of donkeys by improving their environment, nutrition, behaviour and health.

- Focus attention on where it's needed most by measuring donkey welfare issues in a more consistent and objective way.
- Evidence improvement in care and/or welfare support provided to donkeys in our programmes and projects.
- Deliver sustainable international work to reach more donkeys.

Community

Demonstrate the benefits of donkeys and people living and working in harmony together.

- People with the power to help donkeys – whether they're staff, volunteers, supporters, Guardians or donkey owners – are supported, valued and empowered by The Donkey Sanctuary.
- Donkey-owning communities understand the needs of donkeys and can better care for them at every stage of their lives.
- Owners who strive to provide good welfare for their donkeys are supported.

Voice

Speak up for donkeys by challenging poor welfare and advocating for better.

- Increase awareness of issues affecting donkeys worldwide.
- Enforce legislation.
- Reduce harm to, and suffering of, donkeys and improved welfare.
- More donkeys reached because of effective influence.
- Create a demand for better welfare reducing harm to, and suffering of, donkeys.

Knowledge

Develop and share expertise, knowledge and understanding to improve donkey welfare.

- Donkey welfare improved through the transfer and exchange of knowledge with people working with and caring for donkeys.
- Research outcomes developed into learning resources and practical action for donkeys.
- The Donkey Sanctuary is viewed as the centre of excellence for donkey knowledge and wisdom.
- Our own knowledge is evolved through learning and listening.







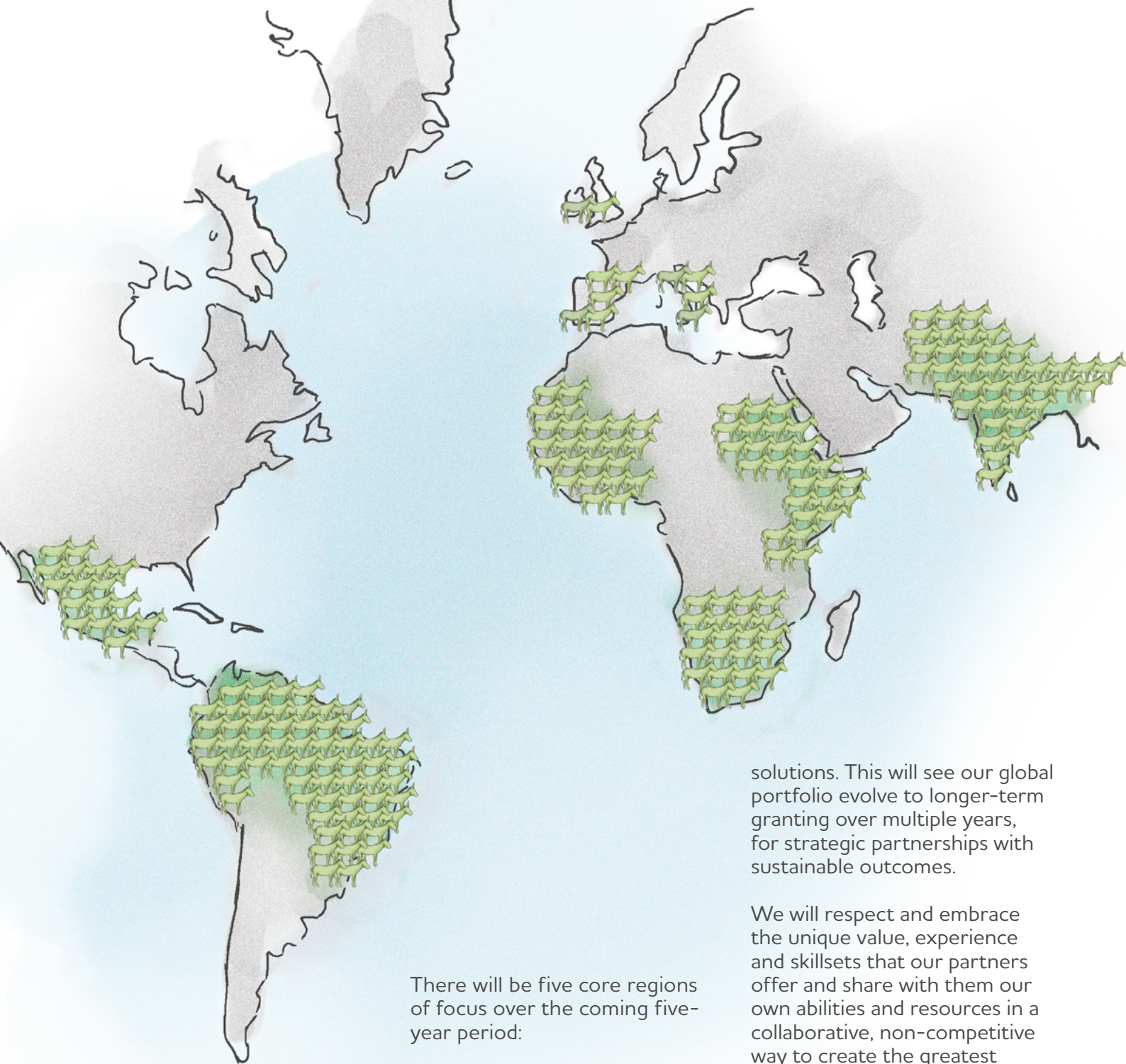
IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Our vision is of a world where every donkey has a good quality of life.

Our mission is to improve the lives of donkeys every day.

To truly deliver our ambition we know we need to inspire support. Experience tells us we work most effectively for donkeys when we work with partners, using collective knowledge and passion to drive change.

If we are to meet our goal to improve the lives of at least five million donkeys over the next five years, it will be essential that we become a partner of choice – an essential and trusted friend to those whose goals we share around the world.



There will be five core regions of focus over the coming five-year period:

- 1. East Africa**
- 2. Southern Africa**
- 3. West Africa**
- 4. South Asia**
- 5. Latin America and Caribbean**

We will seek to partner with organisations who have credibility and organisational resilience in their own countries and situations, whether they're larger, national and international entities or smaller, local partners.

We will commit to longer-term projects that are designed to address underlying welfare challenges with sustainable

solutions. This will see our global portfolio evolve to longer-term granting over multiple years, for strategic partnerships with sustainable outcomes.

We will respect and embrace the unique value, experience and skillsets that our partners offer and share with them our own abilities and resources in a collaborative, non-competitive way to create the greatest possible collective benefit for donkey welfare.

Ultimately, we recognise that to create a world where every donkey has a good quality of life, we must use our unique position to work with like-minded people to create a global network of partners and relationships that allow us to act quickly and effectively wherever we can do the best for donkeys.

We remain undaunted by the challenge and excited at the prospect of what we can do for donkeys – together.

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

We have already seen our international partnerships reap rewards for donkeys, mules and the communities that rely on them.



CASE STUDY: GHANA

Prioritising welfare and wellbeing

In Ghana, we are partnering with ActionAid on a project to directly benefit the welfare and wellbeing of hundreds of donkeys, which we hope will result in long-term improvements to their future care.

In many of the world's poorest places, donkeys are essential to millions of families. Women and children, in particular, often look after the family donkey.

The project in the Sissala district of Ghana's Upper West Region, seeks to improve the lives of impoverished women who are responsible for donkeys' day-to-day care.

Donkeys support women across the region, helping to boost income and enabling girls to focus on their education instead of carrying water and firewood.

By providing them with the tools, knowledge and skills to sustainably improve their own lives, we can, in turn, benefit their donkeys' lives too.

Over the next five years, we are planning to invest more than £1.3 million in programmes to support donkeys and their communities in West Africa.

In many rural communities, the quality of the relationship between donkeys and humans is vital. This project demonstrates how, by representing the donkeys' point of view in partnership projects with other international agencies and local communities, we can help to improve the quality of life all round.

CASE STUDY: NEPAL

The fight against glanders

Working alongside our partner Animal Nepal, we are co-funding a trailblazing survey with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, helping develop protocols to guide the control and management of glanders.

This infectious zoonotic disease, which spreads between equines but can also infect humans, can cause severe problems in the airways of donkeys, and abscesses in the skin, which can persist for many years.

Glanders has no cure, so we have worked closely with our partner Animal Nepal to assist communities trying to control the spread of the disease.

With our support, Animal Nepal advocated for the Nepalese government to carry out critical testing, officially notifying the World Organisation for Animal Health of the presence of glanders in their country in May 2021.

Our work on glanders and the impact it has had on animals and communities has helped demonstrate the benefits of approaching strategic challenges from a different perspective: that of the animal.

This has led the country's Ministry of Agriculture to draft Nepal's first Animal Welfare Act. Animal Nepal is assisting with the drafting process for the Act, with support from The Donkey Sanctuary.

Through changes in legislation, we can help improve the lives of many more donkeys at scale. It is examples like this that show how outcomes for humans and animals are so closely interlinked. In other words, by helping donkeys we can help humans too, and vice versa.



CASE STUDY: WALES

Collaboration comes to the fore

A huge multi-agency operation saw more than 70 donkeys rescued from poor conditions at a Wales-based farm in February 2021. Our welfare team assisted World Horse Welfare, the British Horse Society, Bransby Horse Rescue and Welfare, Dyfed-Powys Police and two veterinary surgeons from Redwings in the RSPCA-led operation – one of the largest and most complex we have ever been involved in.

There were around 100 donkeys and horses on site, with 71 donkeys placed into our care.

Our teams worked closely to identify the individual needs of each donkey, many of whom needed extra support, treatment and specific management.

Trusted partnerships are key to enabling swift, largescale interventions like this. Our focus on the donkey, unique depth of scientific knowledge and logistical capability has helped The Donkey Sanctuary build effective relationships with partner organisations, with whom we can mobilise in a common cause.







STAND WITH THEM.


STAND WITH US.


LET'S SHOW THE WORLD A DIFFERENT WAY.


thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/our-organisational-strategy

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Linked charities: The Elisabeth Svendsen Trust for Children and Donkeys (EST); The International Donkey Protection Trust (IDPT).