

It all depends on our attitude

Much animal suffering is caused by humans doing, or *not* doing, something. To help animals we should change the way people think. This means we need to understand the attitudes and beliefs that motivate people in animal interactions.

Changing Human Behaviour was the theme of the Asia for Animals conference held in Kathmandu, Nepal, late in 2017.

Changing human behaviour is not as simple as telling or showing people that animals suffer. To really change human behaviour, we need to understand the attitudes and beliefs that motivate people to do what they do. Then we can try to find the best ways to coax human individuals, communities and populations towards a more compassionate lifestyle.

The presentations covered a wide spectrum of species. Donkeys were included mainly in the respect of being draught animals. The talks illustrated various problems that are common throughout the world and the focus was on how to address these by treating the human element.

Keynote speaker

“An example of how donkeys accommodate humans can be found in the fact that they will match the heartbeat of the people they are with” said Alex Mayers, Head of Programmes at The Donkey Sanctuary, in his keynote address titled “Everyone Cares, Just Not About the Same Things: Joined Up Approaches to Tackling Donkey Welfare”.

We asked Alex about his feelings after the conference. “Like many people who care about animal welfare, I sometimes catch myself in a frustrated moment thinking that “animals aren’t the problem; PEOPLE are the problem!” While that may often

All of us who are concerned with donkey welfare will agree that the answer lies in building compassion for donkeys through working with people.



Rra Disaro and Mma Makena with Spoko, Samochima Village in Botswana.
Picture: A. Gildenhuys

be the case, people are also the solution. The Asia for Animals conference brought together over a hundred organisations from over 40 countries to share, reflect and learn from each other under the theme of human behaviour change. New doors for collaboration were opened” he concluded.

Animals for Work

Dr Amy McLean from University of California Davis also attended and remarks that the “Animals for work” sessions were very enlightening – a few that come to mind include “Transforming Attitude towards responsible donkey ownership in Ethiopia” by Dr. Bojiya Ended Dugum, Donkey Sanctuary Ethiopia; “Addressing causes and beliefs towards euthanasia of donkeys in Egypt” by Dr. Mohaded Aly Tawfik; and “Changing Attitudes of Brick Kiln Owners towards farrier services in El Sad Brick Kilns” by Dr. Shaban Farhat.

Humanity needs to consider the way it thinks about - and interacts with animals. This is an important criterion for lasting improvement in animal welfare.



What is Human Behaviour Change for Animals?

A common response from people upon hearing the phrase ‘human behaviour change for animal welfare’ is “Great, sounds interesting. What does that mean?”

Visit the link below to explore the different elements of human behaviour change and why many of us working in animal welfare believe that we can benefit from learning about human, as well as animal behaviour.

<http://www.hbcforanimals.com>

CLICK

For more details, visit <http://afakathmandu.com/>

Share your achievements,
obstacles and thoughts
with us.
editor@donkeysforafrica.org

The year ahead

Last year we asked you about your hopes and plans for 2018.
Thank you for sharing these – may they all be realised!

Education

- “To teach a new generation of animal owners to respect and care for their working animals, to develop longstanding good relationships and trust with local communities relative to the donkeys and their owners, and to enable the Bui children to develop attitudes and critical thinking skills to become more compassionate and respectful to their working animals.”

FAWCAM, Cameroon

- “To continue educating people in SA about how incredible donkeys really are, which will hopefully result in less cruelty.”

Donkey Dairy, South Africa

Agriculture

- “To continue spreading the message that equine power is not just something out of history, to be dismissed. With the right investment, the right tools, and the right training it is a viable power source, and an organic one for the future. The heavy horses, the mules and the donkeys are an amazing resource that has fallen out of fashion, but they will be back!”

Chris Garrett, The Donkey Sanctuary, UK



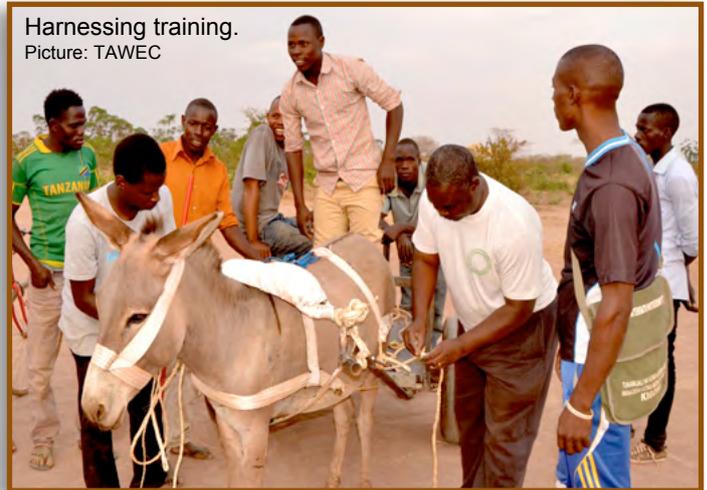
Equine power in action.

Outreach and awareness

- “To be a leading animal protection organization seeking a humane Tanzania for people and animals alike.”

TAWEC, Tanzania

- “To extend our work to the South of Tanzania, put donkey welfare as the main agenda in most platforms, provide humane



Harnessing training.

Picture: TAWEC

education to schools and communities, perform donkey veterinary outreaches in the rural areas, track underground donkey trade as donkeys are still being stolen in some areas, and practise strong local and regional networking with other organizations.”

TAWESO, Tanzania

- “To establish a sustainable donkey welfare awareness programme in Malawi.”

All Creatures Trust

- “To reach out far into more villages, expanding the scope and touching more lives through donkey health and welfare.”

Emmanuel Idoko, Nigeria

- “To ensure the implementation of OIE standards together with the monitoring and evaluation of the Africa Animal Welfare strategy by the African Union.”

Tozie Zokufa, AAW

And the bottom line:

- “To keep enough funds coming in to keep it all going!”

The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Shared moments – images of donkey care from Tanzania



Treating donkeys in the field.



Pro-active field work is important, especially in remote areas. Here we are treating a herd with antiseptic for wounds. Images: TAWESO



Engaging people about donkey welfare

Dr. Philip Mshelia of the Ahmadu Bello University reports on some initiatives conducted in Nigeria.

An outreach project by the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Hope Interactive and the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine in Ithaca, New York, recently took place in Zaria City.

Dr. Philip Mshelia was the team leader, assisted by Jocelyn Stedman and several veterinarians and students. The Equestrian Academy and Fifth Chukker Polo and Country Club provided additional support. Donkeys in this area are mainly used for carrying loads and are usually supervised by children.

Goals

The goals were to engender humane attitudes towards equines, to provide basic veterinary care free of charge to demonstrate the importance of such care, to instruct simple safety precautions and skills, and finally to collect information for research purposes and planning.

Actions

The team advised the owners about equine care, especially on proper feeding and appropriate uses of ethnoveterinary medicine. Various veterinary services were provided including diagnosis and treatment of conditions such as thrush, pigeon fever, squamous cell carcinoma, and equine piroplasmosis. Wound treatments, deworming and tetanus vaccinations were administered. A farrier provided hoof care and instructed owners and local farriers on the management of hooves and proper trimming and shoeing techniques.

Findings:

Some of the major health and welfare concerns were:

- Poor body condition, incorrect feeding practices, intestinal parasites and ticks.
- Lack of cleanliness, poor wound care, infectious diseases, lack of vaccination.
- Poor hoof care and lameness.
- Unacceptable methods and implementation of handling, restraint and stabling as well as poor harnessing practices.
- Lack of recognition of pain experienced by horses and donkeys.

- Detrimental ethnoveterinary practices such as acupuncture with knives, bloodletting, firing and inappropriate injections.

Recommendations:

Actions that could be taken by the Emirate (the traditional Council) to improve the health and welfare of the horses and

donkeys of Zaria include:

- A statement from the Emir indicating that the Emirate wishes to improve health and welfare of horses and donkeys and suggesting that improper treatment of these animals is not supported by His Highness the Emir. This would promote a shift in behavior and attitudes within the population.
- Pressuring religious and other community leaders to vocally support animal health and welfare, teaching that valuing these animals is morally correct.
- Providing high quality veterinary care for horses and donkeys in Zaria through establishing a small equine clinic in Zaria or through hosting and funding twice yearly veterinary weeks.
- Creating a forum for discussion of welfare issues in horses and donkeys in Zaria, in collaboration with local veterinarians, community leaders, and animal owners and users.
- Supporting education of groups such as farriers, harness makers or owners, to discuss welfare issues and to devise solutions.
- Supporting local farriers through funding for equipment and training. Farriers should be encouraged to take on apprentices and to pass on their knowledge so that improved standards can be maintained.

“Once the community sees the benefits of proper care for their animals this work can become self-sustaining and will continue to progress” said Philip.

Lesions on the spine and rope burns under the tail due to poor harnessing practices.



Creating a place where animals are valued and treated with kindness can only improve the community and its status in Nigeria and the world.

Gratitude is expressed towards His Royal Highness the Emir of Zazzau for his support throughout this project.



The Gambia hospital and training centre

The Makasutu training centre which includes the Derek Knottenbelt Veterinary Hospital, has celebrated its first anniversary. Best wishes for a long and effective future in improving animal welfare, including the care for donkeys.

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/gambiahorseanddonkey/>



Conference in Beijing

The 15th World Equine Veterinary Association conference takes place in Beijing from 21st to 23rd April this year.

We hope that donkeys will get a fair mention.

Visit <http://chinawevea.org/>

Erroneous beliefs

Peta Jones has worked for many years with donkeys in remote rural African communities. She observes that donkeys suffer as a result of many false beliefs. Some African cultures believe that a donkey needs to get hurt by owners - to prepare it for work. This is not true. Observation shows that donkeys work very happily in an environment where the owner respects, and cares for them. The best incentives to get donkeys to work are comfortable, sustainable and caring working conditions.

The Welttierschutzgesellschaft is not just a mouthful but is actively involved in Tanzania assisting the Meru Animal Welfare Organization (MAWO) to protect donkeys under threat of theft and slaughter for the skins trade.

Visit them at <https://welttierschutz.org/>



Youth initiative in Zimbabwe

In 2017 Alfred Sihwa and members of the women's group from the Lupane Youth for Development Trust challenged themselves to build welfare compliant donkey carts. After meeting many obstacles - and with some guidance from Aron of MWAMFUMBO from Zambia, a well-balanced cart was ready to be shown to the important rural chief and elders meeting. It found much enthusiasm and support. More of these carts have been ordered and production has ensued. A positive example about how the youth is stepping up.

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/lyud.co.zw/>



Ear us

Apart from the importance of good hearing, donkeys' ears are a primary medium of communication. Restraining donkeys by grabbing their ears is wrong. This leads to damage to structures, nerves and blood supply.

Think before you tug...



A lighter moment...

These two clearly have the best friendship you could ask for and shows how loving donkeys are.



<http://jiggypet.com/a-donkey-and-his-girl-this-is-true-love/>

From the editor

The recurring theme of every item in this newsletter is the importance of human attitudes and beliefs. Animal welfare may deal with animals' problems, but effective results will always depend on the commitment of a team of people. Compassion for animals can enrich us as humans. Louis J. Camuti, veterinarian, said: "By loving and understanding animals, perhaps we humans shall come to understand each other."

Interest in DfA has been expressed from all over the world, via social media and emails. We can all learn from each other. Thank you all, for your feedback, contributions and suggestions.

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