

# Every animal deserves a Safe Haven



**Safe Haven  
for Donkeys**



There are millions of equids – donkeys, mules and horses – used as working animals in the Middle East and North Africa today. A ubiquitous part of the region’s working life for centuries, these animals are still at the heart of most farming, construction and transport work, carrying what seem to be impossibly heavy loads or providing non-mechanical traction, often in treacherous environments.

Due to many owners’ lack of knowledge, understanding and access to resources such as rural farriers and vets, their hard-working animals all too often endure horrific – but entirely preventable – conditions. It is common to see them suffering:

- injuries from ill-fitting harnesses
- severe lameness from overgrown or neglected hooves
- poor bodily condition from inappropriate food or neglected teeth
- exhaustion from overwork
- abandonment when they are unable to do the work required of them.

### So what can be done?

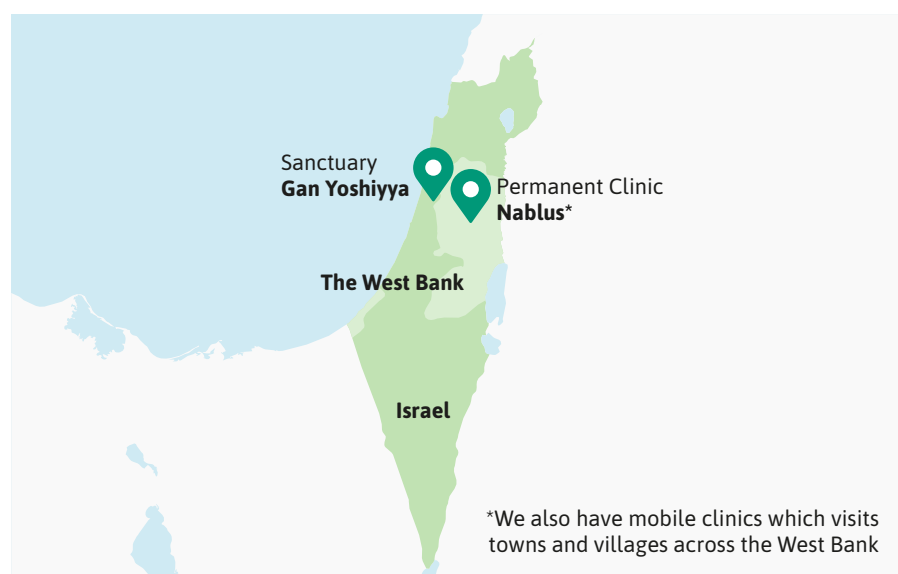
Safe Haven for Donkeys is committed to changing this situation and improving the welfare of working equids in the Middle East by:

- providing veterinary and farriery treatments
- helping owners, handlers and professionals in specific equine care to develop the skills to prevent injuries from occurring in the first place
- caring for and finding homes for unwanted or abandoned donkeys, mules and horses.

### Where we work

Our practical work currently takes place in Israel and Palestine, but our administrative base, trustees, chief executive officer and key admin staff are based in the UK. Most of our funding comes from UK supporters.

We work not just with donkeys, but with all working equines, including horses and mules. The following pages outline the difficulties they face and what we are doing to ease their burden.



\*We also have mobile clinics which visits towns and villages across the West Bank

Our key locations in Israel and Palestine

WE LOOK AFTER  
180 DONKEYS  
THAT HAVE BEEN  
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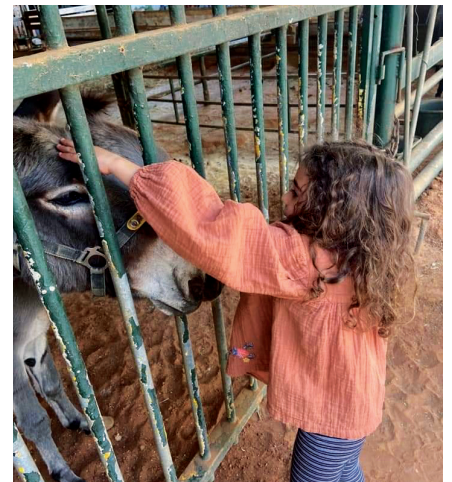
## Safe Haven to the rescue

Safe Haven for Donkeys has a clear mission to change the lives of working donkeys and horses for the better.

At our sanctuary in Israel we look after 180 donkeys that have been abandoned, rescued or handed over by their owners. From here we sometimes rehome donkeys and support their use in managing land in environmentally and welfare-friendly ways.



We raise funds to support our activities and have a strong social media presence where we engage with our supporters.



We have developed the sanctuary as a visitor attraction and educational facility.



Our community projects in the West Bank seek to embed practical knowledge and promote compassion, in order to change the way donkeys are treated.



Safe Haven is a charity, which has been operating since 2000.

*You can see our vision, mission and values in detail on pages 7 and 8.*



**WE RESPOND TO REPORTS OF SICK OR ABANDONED DONKEYS AND REMOVE THEM FROM IMMEDIATE DANGER.**

### **How we make a difference**

Communities in Palestine depend on donkeys for a wide range of tasks, from ploughing fields and harvesting crops to providing traction on construction sites, standing in for mechanical lifts and cranes, which are just not available. Unsurprisingly, they often suffer from overwork or injury.

### **On-the-spot help**

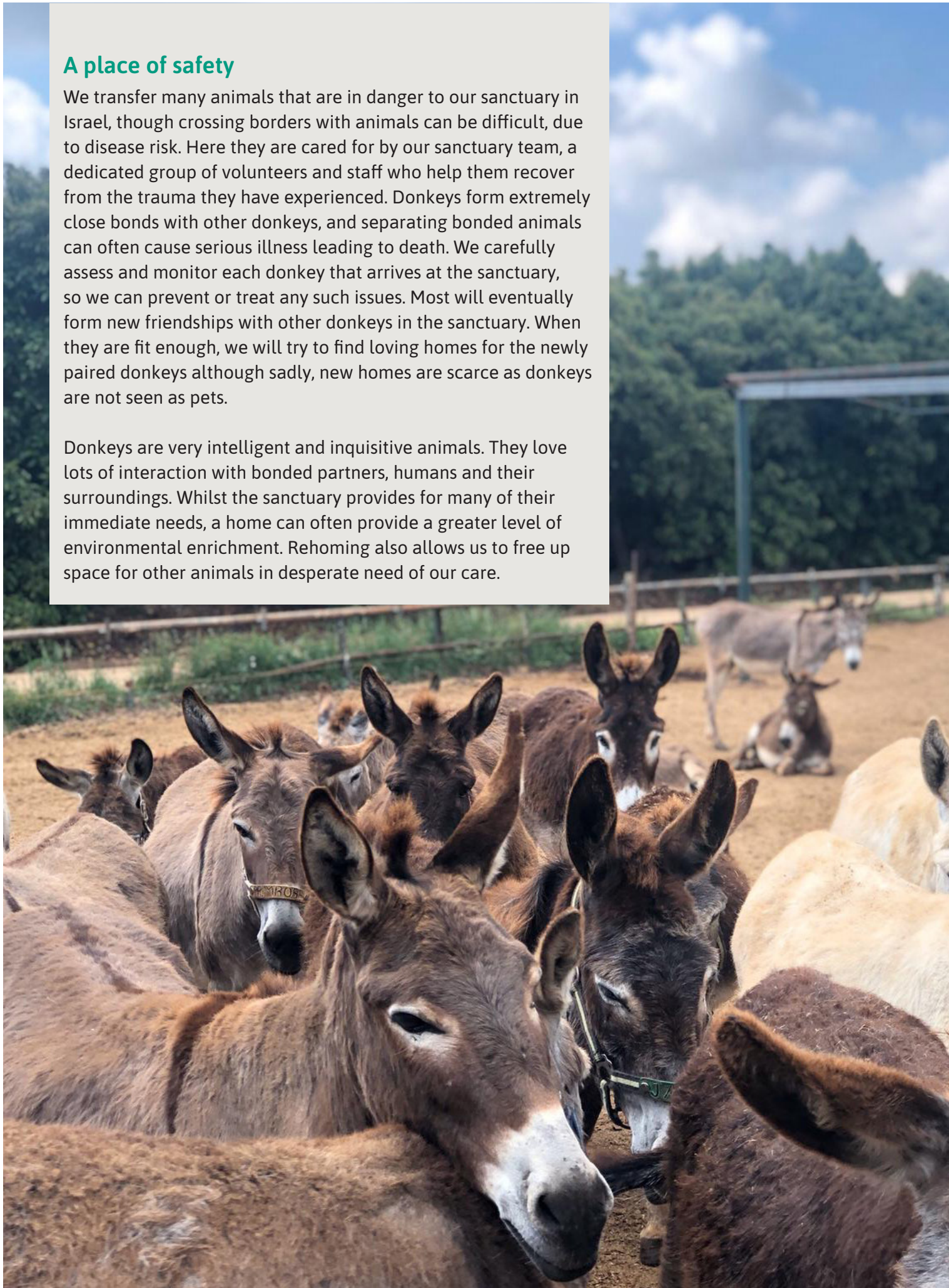
We have dedicated veterinary teams working out of Nablus and Hebron, who treat donkeys and horses where the animals work.

- We treat long-standing wounds caused by ill-fitting and unsuitable harnesses. Sometimes these wounds are so severe the animals' bones are visible, yet they still have to work.
- Our teams will often give the animals they come into contact with a complete health check, which fills the void left by the lack of vets (particularly vital in carrying out dental work) and farriers in rural areas. The animals' feet and teeth especially are checked and treated.
- The lifespans of working donkeys and horses in these conditions are much shorter than for companion animals. They are often abandoned when they can no longer work. We respond to reports of sick or abandoned donkeys and remove them from immediate danger.

## A place of safety

We transfer many animals that are in danger to our sanctuary in Israel, though crossing borders with animals can be difficult, due to disease risk. Here they are cared for by our sanctuary team, a dedicated group of volunteers and staff who help them recover from the trauma they have experienced. Donkeys form extremely close bonds with other donkeys, and separating bonded animals can often cause serious illness leading to death. We carefully assess and monitor each donkey that arrives at the sanctuary, so we can prevent or treat any such issues. Most will eventually form new friendships with other donkeys in the sanctuary. When they are fit enough, we will try to find loving homes for the newly paired donkeys although sadly, new homes are scarce as donkeys are not seen as pets.

Donkeys are very intelligent and inquisitive animals. They love lots of interaction with bonded partners, humans and their surroundings. Whilst the sanctuary provides for many of their immediate needs, a home can often provide a greater level of environmental enrichment. Rehoming also allows us to free up space for other animals in desperate need of our care.

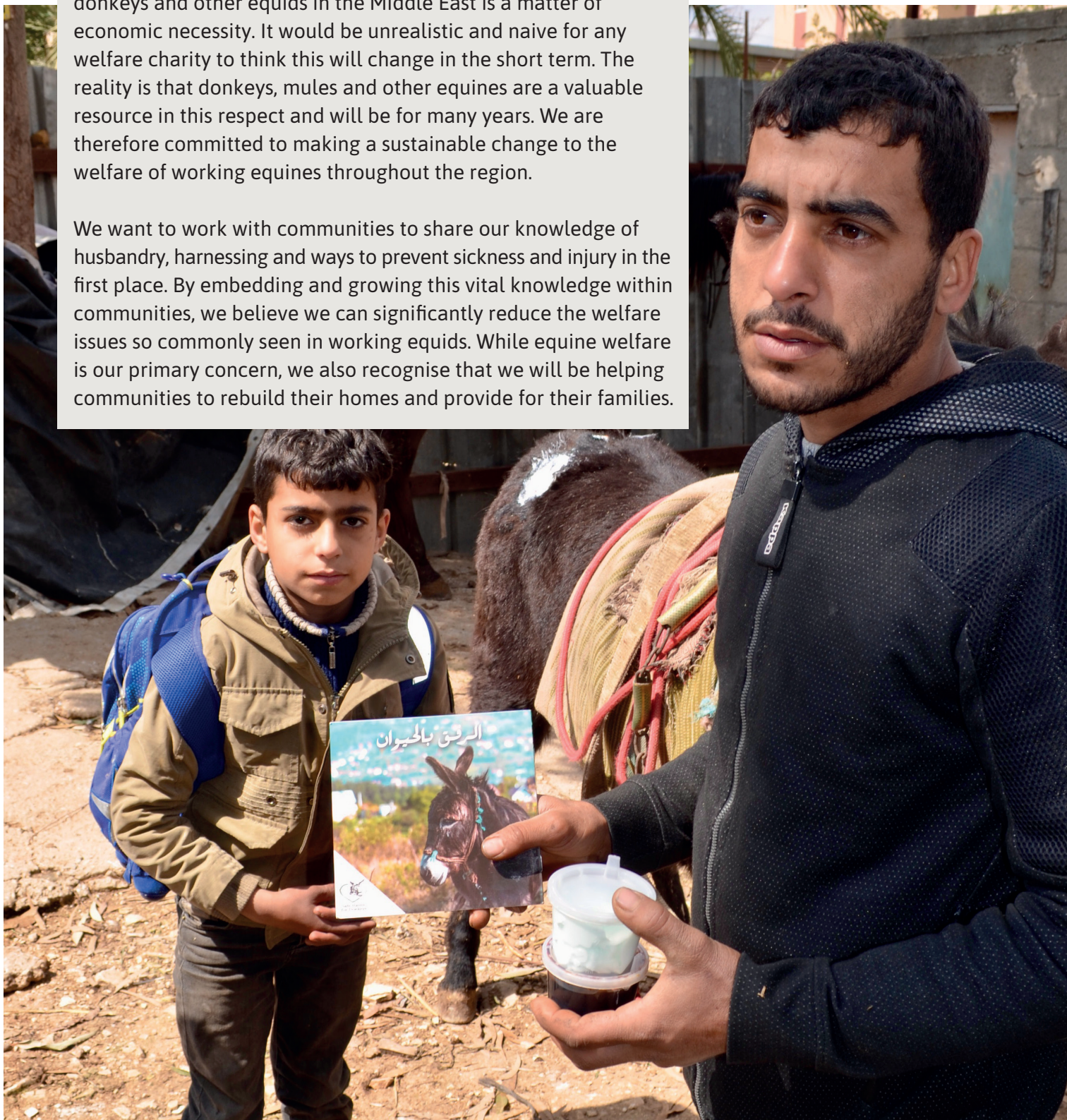


## What we want to do

We know we have a mountain to climb in order to bring about sustainable change for working donkeys in the Middle East. In the countries which have seen conflict, the construction industry is under huge pressure to rebuild areas that have been devastated. Providing shelter for communities that have been left homeless is therefore a priority.

Given this political and environmental backdrop, the use of donkeys and other equids in the Middle East is a matter of economic necessity. It would be unrealistic and naive for any welfare charity to think this will change in the short term. The reality is that donkeys, mules and other equines are a valuable resource in this respect and will be for many years. We are therefore committed to making a sustainable change to the welfare of working equines throughout the region.

We want to work with communities to share our knowledge of husbandry, harnessing and ways to prevent sickness and injury in the first place. By embedding and growing this vital knowledge within communities, we believe we can significantly reduce the welfare issues so commonly seen in working equids. While equine welfare is our primary concern, we also recognise that we will be helping communities to rebuild their homes and provide for their families.



## OUR VISION

**The Vision of Safe Haven for Donkeys:** a world where all working donkeys, horses and other equids are healthy, without injury and well cared for.

## OUR GOALS

**Over the next 5 – 10 years** we want to:

- Expand our field operations so that we can help more working horses and donkeys in more countries
- Develop programmes that enable us to share our knowledge and experience of working equids with owners, professionals and authorities
- Complete research to help us better understand the benefits our work provides to both animals and their owners; and how we record and report this
- Develop a programme of donkey interaction for communities in the West Bank focussed on supporting children and adults who have additional needs or may be suffering from trauma
- Provide the donkeys we have in our sanctuary with the best possible care and environmental enrichment

## OUR MISSION

**Our Mission is:** to use our resources, expertise, and experience to ensure all animals we come into contact with are provided with suitable care and treatment so they can live and work without pain or discomfort. We will also pass our knowledge on to owners and communities to bring about long-term and sustainable improvements to animal welfare.



## OUR VALUES

- We are **Compassionate**. Wherever we see animals suffering or in need of our help, we will act.
- We are **Professional**. Our staff are experts in their field and everything we do is led by veterinary science.
- We act as **Partners**. Our job is not to lecture owners, but to work together and empower them to better care for their animals.
- We are **Grateful**. Every single penny donated to our charity is precious and we use our resources wisely.

## OUR OUTCOMES

**As a result,** we will see:

- that we will have reached more donkeys in need in more places in the Middle East and improved the welfare of thousands of working donkeys and horses through direct intervention
- owners and carers having a greater awareness of their animal's needs and feeling a sense of achievement and personal benefit from the positive change this creates
- how our precious resources can be used to best effect, and we will be able to demonstrate what impact we are having on the welfare of working equids and their owners
- children and adults engaging with our donkeys to develop mutually beneficial relationships that can influence the health and wellbeing of both
- a happy and healthy herd of donkeys at the sanctuary in Israel with plenty of engagement with our visitors





## How we will do this

- Everything we do is guided by the highest welfare principles and veterinary science. Using the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Standards for Working Equines as the basis for our work, we will identify new communities where basic animal welfare standards are not being met. Taking an initial baseline measure of animal welfare will be a critical factor in understanding the impact we have achieved. Using a suitably recognised equine welfare assessment model, we will assess what welfare issues are affecting working animals in the chosen area. This will help us to better understand the resources we need to deploy and for how long. We will engage with local universities to help us scope and measure the results of our work. We envisage that the resources needed will include veterinary, farriery and educational expertise.
- During and after the delivery of our services, we will measure the impact we have achieved in improving the welfare of working equids. Because the skills will be embedded within the community – owners, local vets, farriers and other animal technicians – the change will be lasting. Periodic checks and contact will help us to monitor this beyond the life of our initial work.
- Highlighting the impact of our work in relation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will help us to move into new communities to further our goal to improve animal welfare.
- We will also engage with local animal welfare charities, where they exist, and veterinary and technical skills schools to ensure working equine health and welfare are featured within their curricula.

# So, every animal deserves a Safe Haven



We know the scale of the task we have ahead of us but we have the expertise and the will to make a difference to these hard working animals and to the communities they serve. This strategy document sets out our plans and within just a few years we are confident that we will be able to highlight the dramatic changes we have made to the long-term welfare of donkeys, horses and mules working in the Middle East.





**Safe Haven  
for Donkeys**

**[www.safehaven4donkeys.org](http://www.safehaven4donkeys.org)**

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