Exploring barriers to welfare improvement - learnings from the working equid context

RSPCA Animal Welfare Seminar 2023

Ashleigh F. Brown

Global Animal Welfare Advisor, Brooke UK

ashleigh@thebrooke.org

Introduction

- Animal behaviour & welfare science

- Adult education

- International development

- Equine science (behaviour, handling, training, equitation, harnessing)
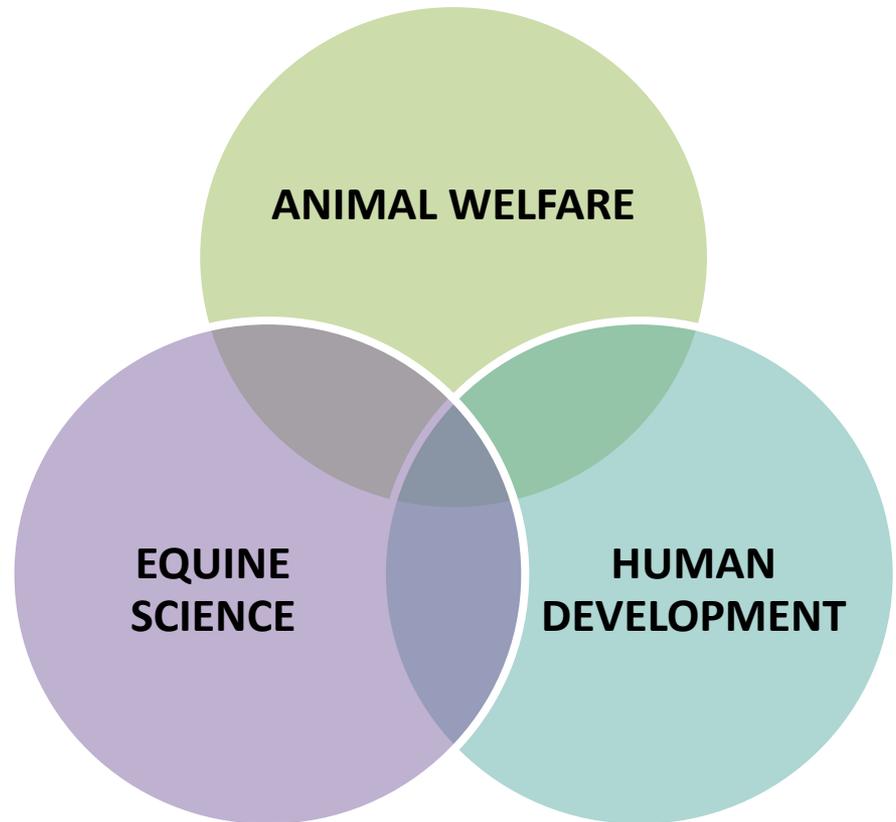
Welfare issues

WORKING EQUID WELFARE ISSUES

- Nutrition & hydration
- Harness-related injury
- Harmful traditional practices
- Endemic disease
- Hoof abnormality
- Parasites
- Pain & discomfort
- Fear & distress
- Stress
- End of life

BROOKE
ACTION FOR WORKING HORSES AND DONKEYS

Intersectionality

ANIMAL WELFARE

EQUINE SCIENCE

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Barriers

- Limited **knowledge** of welfare needs
- Inadequate **equipment** and **husbandry** provisions
- Minimal access to professional animal health and welfare **services**
- Harsh living and working **environments**
- High **work-loads**

Potentially harmful practices

© Eurodressage.com

© Rex Features

	Examples
Husbandry	- Single stabling & stallion isolation - Low roughage, high concentrate diet - Abrupt & early weaning - Recurrent transportation
Equipment	- Nose-bands - Bits - Spurs - Whips
Interventions	- Wind operations & tubing - Repeated AI & Caslick procedures - Recurrent farriery - Intra-articular injections

Image top left: Eurodressage
Image bottom left: Rex Features

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ACTION FOR WORKING
HORSES AND DONKEYS

K — KNOWLEDGE ✓

A — ATTITUDE ?

P — PRACTICE ?

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Approach to welfare improvement

1. Welfare problem

2. Causative factors (proximal & distal)

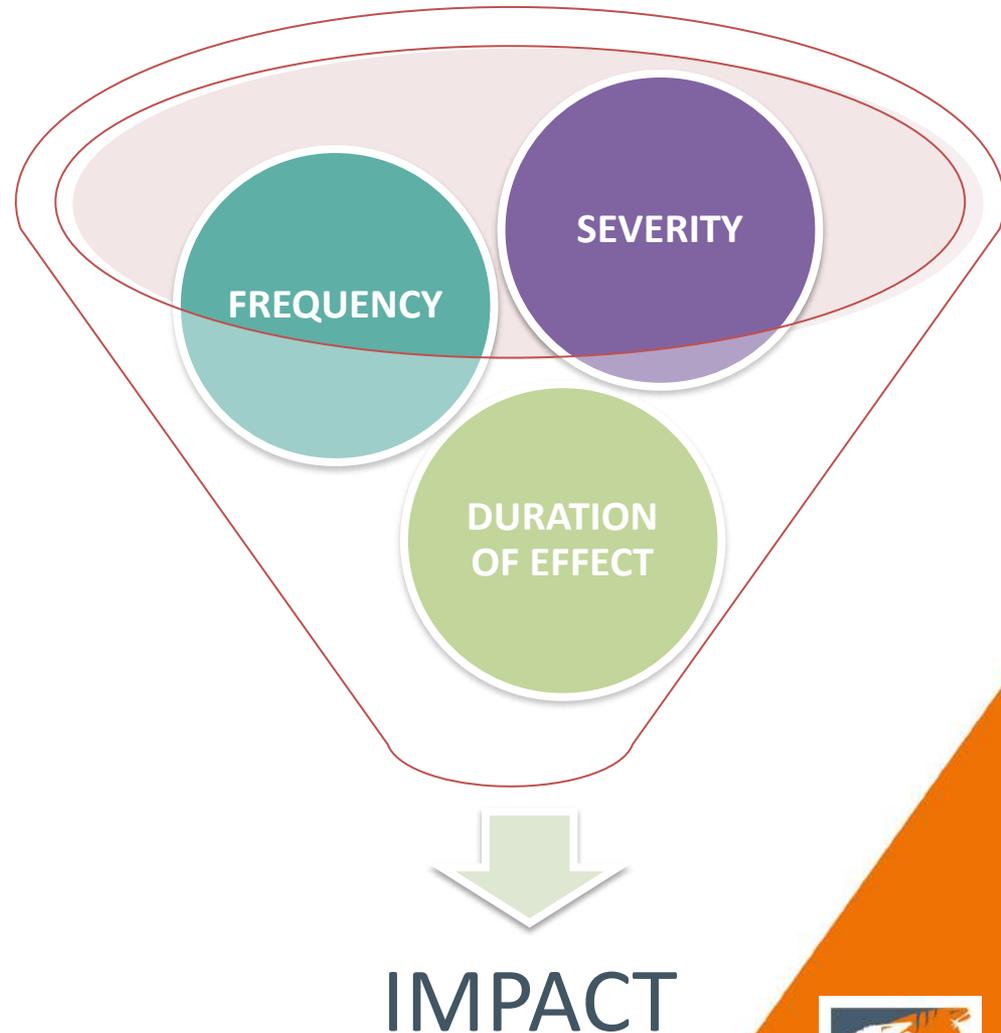3. External influencing factors (APESTLES)

4. Key stakeholders & dependencies

5. Theory of change

6. Implementation & monitoring

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1. Welfare problem

- Prioritise from animal's perspective
- Ask the animal
- Interrogate norms and assumptions

FREQUENCY

SEVERITY

DURATION OF EFFECT

IMPACT

2. Causative factors

- Work and rest
- Proximal and distal
- Use the evidence base
- 'Find the woman who knows'

3. Influencing factors

ANIMAL
- What is the equids' ability to cope with demands? How is human-animal interaction?

TECHNICAL & SCIENTIFIC
- What does evidence say about welfare needs and status? What is stakeholders' comprehension?

POLITICAL
- What are current govt. issues, priorities, positions and public opinion on equine welfare?

LEGAL
- How does the current legislative framework pertain to equine welfare?

ECONOMIC
- What costs are associated with current practice or making a change?

ENVIRON-MENTAL
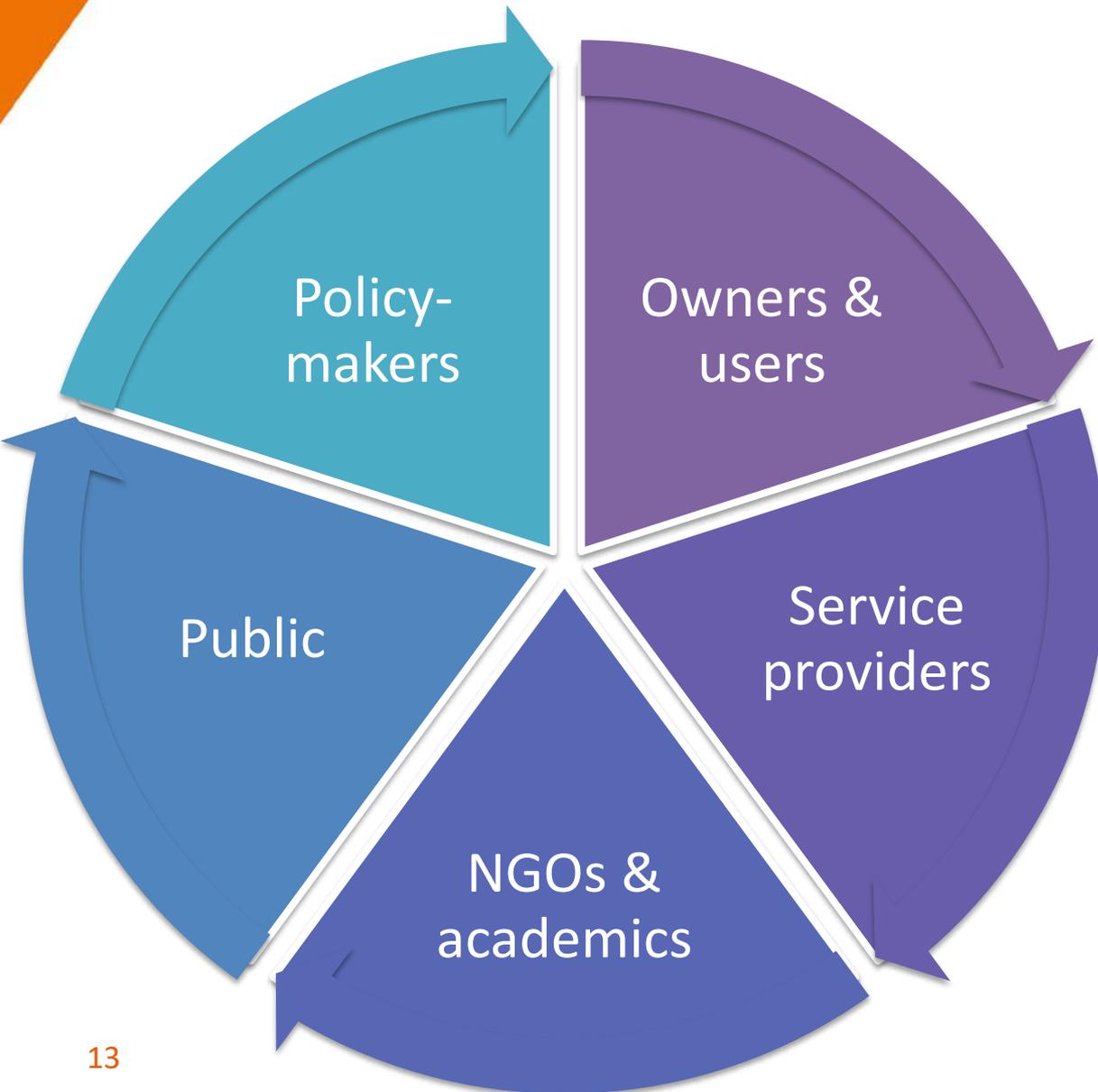- How is the equid's living and working environment affecting welfare?

SOCIAL
- What are the relevant cultural norms and social pressures around equids?

SUSTAIN-ABLE
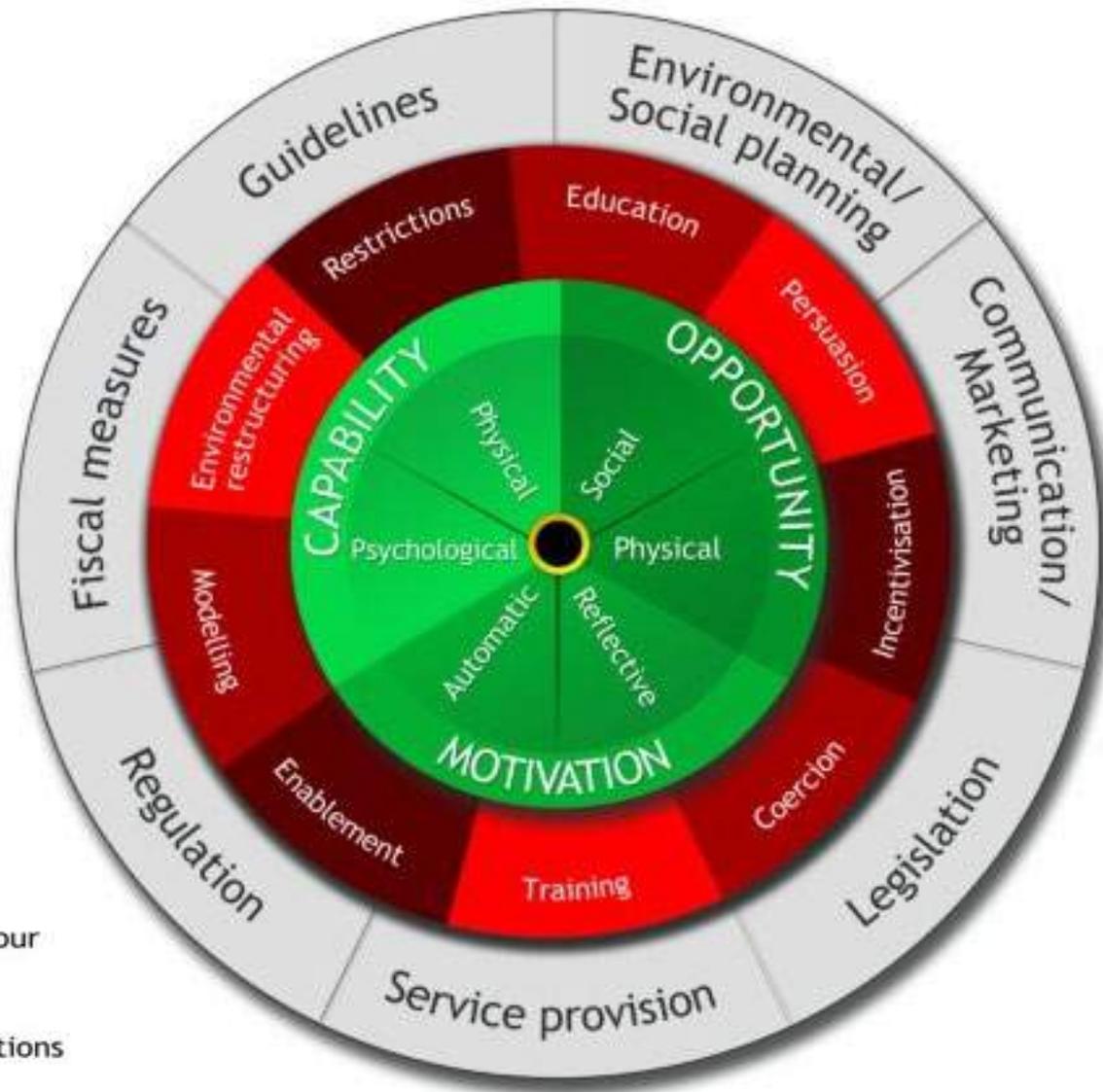- How can positive welfare change be maintained long term?

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4. Key stakeholders

Policy-makers

Owners & users

Public

Service providers

NGOs & academics

How might they influence:

- Knowledge

- Attitude

- Practice

on the **welfare issue**?

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Human behaviour change

Extracted from Michie, Atkins & West (2014)
The Behaviour Change Wheel.

Human behaviour change

BEHAVIOUR		
Capacity	Opportunity	Motivation

- COM-B model of behaviour change

5. Theory of Change
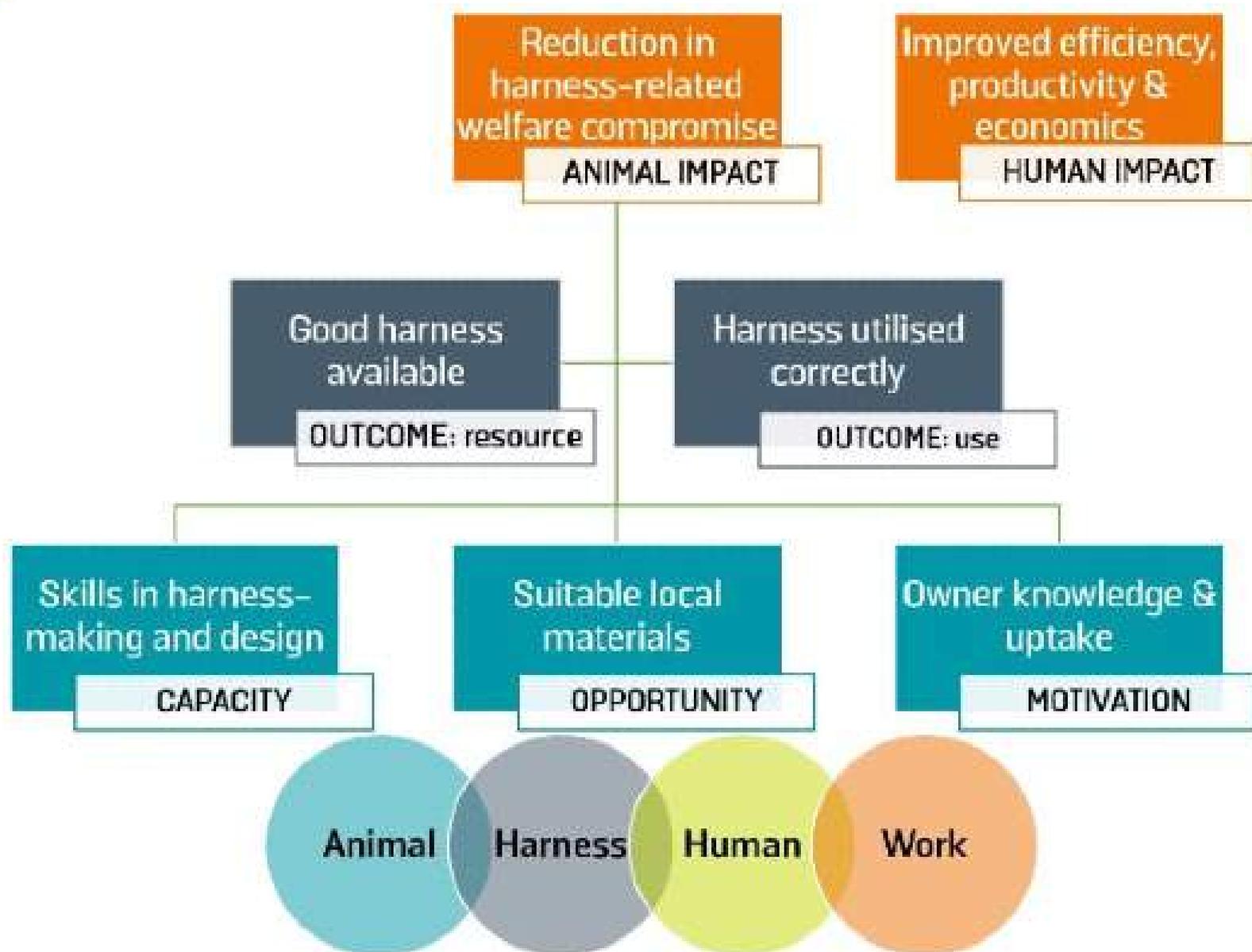
6. Implementation & monitoring

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Key findings

1. Utilise **inter-disciplinary learning**.
2. Consider welfare issues from the **animal's perspective**.
3. **Situational analysis** is key - systematic and holistic.
4. Understand **stake-holder perspectives**.
5. Follow the **evidence**.

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For Love of Horses

Diaries of Dorothy Brooke

The story behind the founding of the Brooke,
the leading international animal welfare charity

We have:

- ***Such privilege*** *of access to knowledge and resources.*

- ***Such scope*** *to do better.*

- ***No insurmountable barriers*** *if will is there*

- ***No excuses.***

***For the love of horses –
let's do better…***

Thank you

- Brooke UK, country programmes & partners
- Tim Holmes (equestrian sports)
- Peter Muckle (harnessing)
- All the working horses, donkeys, mules & communities

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Any questions?

ashleigh@thebrooke.org
www.thebrooke.org