

## **Eastern Cape, South Africa, Working Donkeys**

### **Improved donkey traction in South Africa can lead to achieving Sustainable Development Goals**

32% of the South African population live in rural areas (World Bank, 2022) and consists of predominantly the elderly and unemployed, since people from rural areas move to urban areas to find work. Those that move away still have strong connections with rural homes, but do not contribute to the social or economic health of the village.

Rural areas in the Eastern Cape are characterised by poor or no public services such as water supply and sanitation. Roads are inferior and in a poor degraded state and there is poor access to health facilities, with some people having to travel to neighbouring villages (up to 10kms away). Very few people own vehicles and there is no public transport, only private taxis.

The impact of amaTrac uluntu's Entrepreneurial Skills training programme for owners of working donkeys contributes to achieving 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Our training and long-term mentoring of owners allows donkey owners to realise that they are business owners, their donkeys are their key assets and they provide valuable services for their communities.

For the majority of the rural poor in the Eastern Cape Province donkey traction provides a sustainable green carbon neutral transport option.



Feni Village

Working donkeys that are valued, well cared for and worked comfortably, are an asset to their communities and their work can contribute to Sustainable Development Goals.



## End extreme poverty in all forms by 2030



Celetyuma donkeys earn their owners and their families a regular income by fetching and delivering water and wood to the village people.

Donkey traction provides a sustainable income for donkey owners and their families, income generation opportunities for the people they serve and people save money using donkey traction for transport as it is a less expensive option of transport.

amaTrac uluntu's work empowers owners of working donkeys to manage their services as a small business, to manage their income and expenditure and to value their assets – their working donkeys and equipment.

When donkey owners improve the way they manage their business, community people gain confidence and use their services. Our work also helps people to dispel the myth that using donkey traction is only for "poor people". They realise donkey traction can assist them to reduce poverty.



Mankone donkeys waiting for groceries for the elderly.



Runlettes donkeys transporting wood.





## End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



Rini donkeys transporting organic fresh vegetables around the township.



Sustainable agriculture improves food security: Nutritious organic vegetables grown all year round

Apart from donkey traction being valuable to transport food from taxi stops to houses, it is very valuable in improving local food security and nutrition.

amaTrac uluntu educates and supports donkey owners to use their donkey traction to grow organic food using permaculture techniques and to transport locally grown organic food to houses and markets.

Our work promotes sustainable agriculture, which also uses donkey manure as organic fertilizer and as mulch, and supports local small farmers.



Melani donkeys preparing the land for sustainable nutritious organic food production





### Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



Sompondo donkeys delivering wood to build a kraal



Khayaletu donkeys transporting children to visit friends.

The impact of amaTrac uluntu’s work contributes to the health and well-being of people, animals and the environment and contributes to making medicines and vaccines more accessible. Donkeys transport people to clinics, benefitting particularly old or disabled people and young children who otherwise would not be able to access clinics in neighbouring villages.

Donkey traction helps to keep cultural activities alive, which greatly improves the well-being of rural communities, and helps people to get to and from friends and family in neighbouring villages, which improves their enjoyment of life.

Through our humane education, amaTrac uluntu also educates owners and village people to understand the welfare needs of animals and the interconnection between animal and people health. This empowers them to pay more attention to the welfare needs of their animals, thus improving their health and well-being, which also contributes to the prevention of zoonotic diseases.

There are no veterinary services available in the Tyume Valley, where we are currently based. We have been fortunate to host health clinics with Eastern Cape CCS<sup>1</sup> veterinarians this year and two SPCA<sup>2</sup>'s.



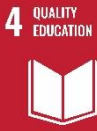
Eastern Cape CCS vets treating equines in upper Tyume Valley.



Amahlathi SPCA deworming Ndakana donkeys

<sup>1</sup> Compulsory Community Service veterinarians

<sup>2</sup> Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals



## Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



Nyalutsi donkeys transporting children from school to a day care centre.

In our areas poverty and lack of transport are key causes keeping children out of school.

The South African Government provides transport for learners to and from school from Grade R, but Early Childhood Development and after school care learners benefit from donkey-driven transport to transport them to and from school.

The income parents derive from their donkey transport businesses, allows them to afford to send their children to school and to post-school institutions. amaTrac uluntu's basic money management training empowers parents to budget and to ensure they have money for their children's education.



Young Rini boy now understands the feelings and needs of the families' working donkeys

amaTrac uluntu includes humane education in our training programme which educates communities on the sentience of donkeys and their welfare needs. This helps people to understand the One Health One Welfare concept, where the health of humans is linked to the health of their working donkeys.

It also allows people to develop compassion and respect for animals, people and the environment.





## Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



Female Glenmore donkey owner provides much needed transport and agricultural services for Glenmore people in.

20% of the donkey owners we work with are women. Working with donkeys allows these women to be financially independent and to contribute to a family's income.

amaTrac uluntu's Entrepreneurial Skills training allows these donkey owning women to realise they are business women and are equal in their abilities to the men donkey owners. They form donkey owner groups where they share experiences, challenges and resources.

These women are thus in a position to realise the importance of their girls receiving a good education and to ensure they attend school regularly and are not kept away to help with household chores.



Female Gcinisa and Hala donkey owners provides much needed transport and agricultural services for people in their surrounding villages.



**Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**



Runlettes donkeys taking water back to the village after collecting it over 10kms away in Woodlands.

At least 60% of villages in the Eastern Cape do not have access to clean water. There is either no Government reticulation, it has become defective or water quantity in streams they used to collect from, has decreased.

South Africa is already a semi-arid country due to its average annual rainfall, but due to climate change and development, such as commercial plantations and extensive agriculture, the quantity and quality of water in many of the rivers and springs have reduced substantially, making the water unsafe for human consumption.

Donkey owners use their donkeys and carts to collect water for their communities from villages that do have a water supply. Sometimes they have to travel to villages up to 10kms away to collect clean water.



Staff of SANBI<sup>3</sup> and CREW<sup>4</sup> educating Nothenga village people about the importance of plant diversity and protection.

amaTrac uluntu's One Health One Welfare work enables people to understand the value of protecting wetlands and forests from development and over grazing and rivers from pollution and alien invasive vegetation to protect the water supply and quality and biodiversity.

<sup>3</sup> South African National Biodiversity Institute

<sup>4</sup> Custodians for Rare and Endangered Wildflowers (Botanical Society of South Africa)





**Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

**Reduce inequality within and among countries**



Nobumba donkey owner proud to manage a successful donkey traction business.

amaTrac uluntu's Entrepreneurial Skills programme allows donkey owners to be proud of the work they do. They realise their value, manage their services and donkeys as small businesses and earn an income.

When owners of working donkeys realise, they are an important asset to their communities they improve the way they manage their business. They take better care of their donkeys and are more reliable to their customers. As a result, they create more job opportunities by encouraging people to use their services.

Improved donkey traction may not reduce inequalities, but it does reduce the inequality of what work is important. Donkey driven transport is valuable to the communities that benefit from it.





## Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



Ndwyana donkeys transport excess produce to neighbouring villages to sell on pension pay-out days.

Due to the distance to towns, lack of vehicles and machinery, the village people we work with produce what they can consume and what can be transported by donkeys to other villages.



Fresh organic vegetables bought from the Khayaletu Agricultural Resource Hub.

Due to their cultural and historical reliance on natural resources, they are aware of the dangers of over extraction, thus extract what they need.

Working donkeys are critical in these villages to help people to survive, let alone to practice sustainable consumption and production.

Food bought in villages reduces the amount of packaging used and thus reduces plastic waste. In addition, the whole plant is either consumed by people or parts used for compost or animal feed.

Our work with donkey owners empowers them to understand this balance and the need to maintain it. This has also empowered the owners and their communities to stop illegal donkey slaughtering operations in 2 villages. These donkeys are slaughtered for the supply of skins to China.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



**Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**



Khayaletu donkeys providing sustainable green transport for the village people.

Climate shocks in villages amaTrac uluntu works in include unusual weather patterns of heatwaves, higher temperatures, drought, torrential rains, change in rain reason and strong wind. These shocks have occurred rapidly over the past few years and local people are struggling to predict the weather and to adapt to these changes.

The impact of amaTrac uluntu's work allows donkey owners and their donkeys to absorb some of these climate shocks and develop resilience to impacts of climate change and recover from disasters.



Khayaletu residents learn how organic gardening protects the soil and it's biodiversity. such as this earthworm.

Donkey traction allows village people to practice resilient sustainable agriculture that is largely weather independent and helps the people to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Food gardens are designed to nurture soil, capture and store water when available and to attenuate flooding. Natural fertilizers are used such as donkey, cattle and goat manure as well as dry plant material as mulch.

Donkey traction is also carbon neutral transport and donkeys do not contribute to the production of greenhouse gases.





**Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss**



Melani donkeys grazing in the yard of one of the residents.

As income generating working animals, donkeys are gentler on the earth than other working animals. They are efficient feeders (thus do not overgraze/browse) and drinkers (thus do not consume great amounts of water, a scarce resource in Eastern Cape villages), don't cause land degradation and have a gentle footfall thus do not compact the soil when working in food gardens.



In the Eastern Cape villages, donkey traction assists communities to produce food in an environmentally sound way that protects the soil, increases biodiversity and provides people with a sustainable food source throughout the year.

Left: With the help of Khayaletu donkeys, village people have established an organic food garden.



In addition, amaTrac uluntu's One Health One Welfare education empowers village people to protect and restore the Amathole Mistbelt forests around them. Indigenous forests are critical to help keep the Earth's climate in balance.

Left: Nothenga children learning how deliberate burning for cattle grazing has caused deforestation on the surrounding mountains.

**amaTrac uluntu would like to thank our funders for their ongoing support, advice and encouragement to uplift the status of donkey traction and improve donkey welfare in Eastern Cape rural villages, South Africa.**

