

Protecting Working Animals in Morocco

SPANA: A Wonderful Charity

Today SPANA has 16 education centres across six countries including Morocco, with mobile exhibition units taking their work to more remote communities. Over 50,000 children took part in SPANA's programme last year, and they reached many more through outreach projects.

SPANA has earned the trust of working animal owners. They are changing the way that people see working animals: as sentient creatures to be cared for and valued.



Why is their Work So Important?

Many of us have a general concern for animal welfare: particularly, we are shocked to see donkeys, mules and horses which suffer due to lack of care. But do we really understand the significance of keeping these animals healthy and happy?

More than one billion people rely on 200 million working animals around the world, so better care for animals means better economic stability. In other words, if animals contribute to their efforts to earn a living, people can avoid searching for alternative income by migrating to cities or even abroad. Welfare of the working animal is central to sustainable development: if communities can support themselves, they are stronger and wealthier, enabling them to take better care of their working animals. It is critical that people are encouraged to make the connection between the wellbeing of their working animal and the wellbeing of their families.

A Summary of SPANA's work in Morocco



Founders Kate and Nina Hosali started working in Morocco in 1925 and since then, SPANA's clinics and activities have flourished, helping the estimated working animal population of two million working donkeys, mules and horses. In the late 1980s when SPANA's former director, Jeremy Hulme, first saw the streets of Morocco's cities they were full of donkeys, mules and horses, limping, wounded and in desperate need of help. He knew that veterinary care alone could never be enough: there were attitudes to change too; his wife, Diana, has been instrumental in instigating an educational programme.

1) Education

SPANA believes the most effective way to ensure a better future for working animals is to educate children about animal welfare at an early age. **Humane education** helps children to develop positive attitudes, empathy and respect towards animals. It's an approach that works; research led by SPANA's Education Director has proved this. An extensive education programme in Morocco will teach more than 28,000 children this year.

Children visit:

a) **all SPANA's centres** (see 2) below) where they take part in animal welfare classroom activities and tour the clinics to see working animals being treated & get the chance to handle rabbits and guinea pigs - helping to develop positive attitudes and empathy towards animals.

b) **the nature reserve** at Sidi Bou Ghaba **to learn about animals in their natural environment**

c) **an educational bus** which will tour schools in rural areas from late 2017. Teaching children in poor farming communities the importance of being kind to animals is especially important, as they are often responsible for feeding and tending their family's animals.

2) Veterinary Care

5 SPANA centres in Casablanca, Chemaia, Had Ouled Frej, Khemisset and Marrakech; 9 mobile clinics reaching animals in remote communities from the edges of the Sahara to the Atlas Mountains.

3) Projects

One of SPANA's notable successes in Morocco has been the "MOT" scheme in Marrakech for horse-drawn taxis (caleches), much used by tourists: it deservedly received a sustainable tourism award from **the Moroccan Ministry of Tourism in Spring 2017**. www.spana.org/news/caleche-award

This licensing scheme is overseen by SPANA in association with local authorities with the aim of ensuring that all calèche horses are regularly inspected and passed as fit and healthy before they can work. For example, harness wounds must be treated, hooves and teeth cared for and they must be well fed. To combat dehydration, SPANA has also built a network of water troughs across the city, making a huge difference to the animals' lives.

HOW YOU CAN HELP – OUR CONTRIBUTION

Make a donation in memory of Su Hirst, who passed away in March 2017, having visited us the previous year. She had a passionate concern for the animals in Taroudant and hoped that work like that done by SPANA might start in our town. SPANA don't have the resources to do this at present but we have been able to gain permission to provide a **second water trough for working animals in Taroudant**, close to the souks where there is a lot of animal traffic. This is so important in hot weather.



Su Hirst in Morocco March 2016

Please say thank you to the hardworking animals of Taroudant by making a donation in cash to our office in Morocco or via our UK bank account with Triodos account **Holidays with Heart 16-58-10 20754876** marked **water trough**