



# The QATO Foundation 2024 Annual

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Cover photo: © Animals Asia Foundation

# Preface

In 2024, once again, we take pride in having supported a number of important projects designed to enhance animal welfare across the globe.

The year has brought both new partnerships and extended collaborations with organisations whose valuable work we have funded in the past. Working alongside such capable and passionate advocates, who day after day tirelessly devote themselves to improving animal welfare, is truly a privilege.

Here at the QATO Foundation, we like to say that we are keenly focused on animals living in human custody. Our concern spans both domesticated animals, selectively bred over time to live harmoniously with humans who treat them well, and wild species that should ideally remain in their natural habitats but have, for whatever reason, come into human possession. Naturally, another crucial focus of our work involves animals intended for protected human companionship, but which are forced to survive as street animals or strays, both in Denmark and abroad.

This annual showcases a selection of projects supported by the QATO Foundation over the past year. Though varied in scope, these projects collectively enhance the welfare of our target animal populations, while demonstrating the approaches and values the foundation seeks in the projects we support.

Among other projects, the annual features Animals Asia Foundation's work to end bear bile farming, which continues to supply traditional Asian medicinal markets. At the QATO Foundation, we are very keen to support projects that work to create lasting positive change, and that is precisely the ambition of Animals Asia's education and outreach efforts, which aim to help stop the demand for bear bile.

The annual also highlights the Fair Dog Association, which distributes free dog food and warm blankets to the dog owners they encounter at soup kitchens and homeless shelters in Denmark. And you can read about Brooke's new veterinary clinic in Ethiopia, which will ensure working animals such as donkeys have vital access to veterinary care. At the veterinary clinic, the animals' owners also learn how to take good care of their donkeys. This approach not only markedly improves the welfare of the donkeys but also helps the families whose daily routines would collapse without these

working animals. While the QATO Foundation's primary mission centres on animal welfare, we find additional value in projects that create positive ripple effects for the animal's owners.

At the QATO Foundation, we believe that strong projects and documented successes motivate others to implement animal-friendly approaches. In this way, support for a single project can, over time, create positive change for a great many animals. This is precisely the effect the organisation Four Paws expects their project for sustainable and humane management of stray dogs in the Romanian city of Constanta to have on other cities in the same situation. Read more about this and several other projects from Denmark and abroad in this annual.

Happy reading!

Best regards

**Signe Kirk Kristiansen**  
Chair of the QATO Foundation

**Christina Fevejle Nielsen**  
Grants and Administration Manager



# We work to safeguard and promote animal welfare


We believe that all animals deserve to live a good life and experience good animal welfare. And we pay special attention to animals not thriving in human custody.

We strive to ensure that animals can lead better lives, are treated with respect and are given the opportunity to exhibit their natural behaviour.


The QATO Foundation is a non-profit and charitable organisation founded by Signe Kirk Kristiansen and Thomas Kirk Kristiansen in 2012.

We support projects big and small that safeguard and promote animal welfare in Denmark and abroad. We also award study grants to students working in the same area as we do.

## Statistics for 2024



Total funds allocated, 2024:  
**DKK 18.346.436**



No. of projects supported in 2024:  
**30 grants**



No. of countries reached by the foundation's support in 2024:  
**14 different countries**



No. of grants awarded in 2024:  
**38 grants awarded**

# Selected projects supported by the QATO Foundation in 2024



The Fair Dog Association

## Our best friend comes at a cost

It is often said that dogs are man's best friend – and the Fair Dog Association experiences this first-hand as they travel around Denmark, meeting dog owners at soup kitchens and shelters around the country. While the love for dogs runs deep here, the financial responsibilities of dog ownership are significant.

With a van packed full of dog food and supplies, the Fair Dog Association travels the country to meet dog owners at local soup kitchens and shelters. Here, people can pick up high-quality dog food, equipment such as harnesses, and a warm blanket for

the winter – all free of charge. When vaccinations, deworming, flea treatments or even a visit to the vet are needed, Fair Dog is also ready to help.

Over the years, Fair Dog has built strong and trusting relationships with dog owners, making it possible to work together to ensure the dogs are healthy and thriving. These dogs lack neither love nor attention, and with a little help covering the more expensive aspects of dog ownership, a good life can be maintained – for dog and owner alike.

As Charlotte Andersson, Chair of the Fair Dog Association, often says:

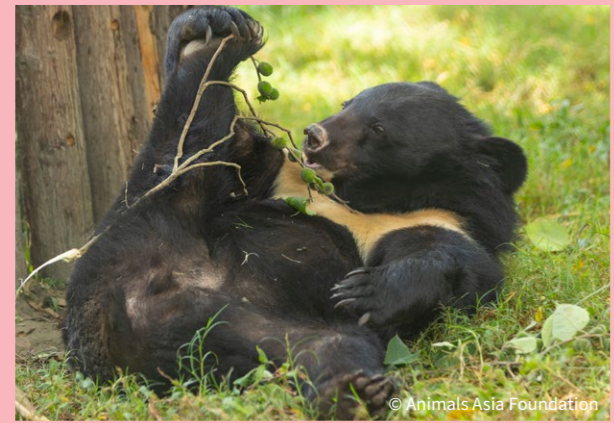
*“ Together we are strong – and together we can make a difference for so many wonderful furry friends and their owners.”*

Fair Dog also goes a step further by offering free legal assistance to dog owners and helping them comply with the legal requirements that come with owning a dog.

With support from the QATO Foundation, Fair Dog has been able to extend their reach even further, benefitting dogs and owners alike.

### ABOUT THE FAIR DOG ASSOCIATION

Since its establishment in 2011, the Fair Dog Association has served Danish dogs and their owners as an independent, non-profit advocate with no political affiliations.



**ABOUT ANIMALS ASIA FOUNDATION**

Animals Asia Foundation is dedicated to ending the bear bile industry in Asia, rescuing all bile bears from captivity and providing them with a home at one of its award-winning sanctuaries in China and Vietnam.

The organisation was founded in 1998 by veterinarian Dr Jill Robinson, who continues to lead as CEO. While bile bears are the foundation’s primary focus, Animals Asia Foundation also works to promote compassion and respect for all animals and to drive long-term change in Asia. This is achieved through programmes supporting cat and dog welfare as well as initiatives for animals in the tourism and entertainment industries.

*approach so powerful is that it is led by Vietnamese educators, ensuring that our programmes are culturally relevant and deeply rooted in local wisdom, including the use of herbal alternatives in traditional Vietnamese medicine.”*

Heidi Quine, Vietnam Director for Animals Asia Foundation

Students and other visitors will be able to visit the education centre while also witnessing the rescued bears enjoying their newfound semi-freedom at the sanctuary. As part of the awareness efforts, local school children– will, under the guidance of Animals Asia Foundation, plant and maintain herbal gardens featuring alternatives to bear bile. This hands-on education initiative not only teaches sustainable medical alternatives but also fosters empathy for all animals among the younger generation.

Bear bile has been used in traditional Asian medicine for its anti-inflammatory properties. However, the same benefits can be obtained from various herbal alternatives. Raising awareness of this is crucial to eliminating the demand for bear bile. The goal is to prevent illegal production while promoting the use of herbal substitutes. To advance this effort, the QATO Foundation is supporting the construction of a dedicated education centre, which is being established as an integral part of Animals Asia’s new bear sanctuary. Here, both on-site and community-based activities will help spread the message.

” *In our holistic and sustainable approach to ending bear bile farming in Vietnam, education has always been – and will always be – a vital pillar. It is through education that we reach the hearts and minds of the next generation, fostering empathy for bears and equipping people with the knowledge and understanding to make kinder, more ethical choices. What makes our*

Animals Asia Foundation – Education building at Bach Ma Bear Sanctuary

# Communication for lasting change

Confining bears in small cages and systematically draining their bile is no longer legal in Vietnam. Education and awareness are key to ensuring that the demand for bear bile ends for good.

Since its founding in 1998, Animals Asia Foundation has been dedicated to ending the bear bile industry in Vietnam and China. In Vietnam, extracting bear bile and capturing new bears is now illegal. However around 200 bears remain caged throughout the country, serving as a final reminder of a practice that, fortunately, now belongs to the past. Animals Asia is now working tirelessly to build a new sanctuary that will provide these last 200 bears with a safe home, where they will receive much-needed veterinary care and once again feel grass beneath their paws.

This is a success story, but the mission to protect bears is far from over.



# Kattens Værn and Dyreværnet Helping cats in large feline populations

A collaboration between Kattens Værn and Dyreværnet aims to ensure that cats living in large groups receive the care they need.

In their daily work, Kattens Værn and Dyreværnet regularly encounter large groups of cats — sometimes numbering 15 to 100 cats in a single location. When so many cats are kept within a limited space, their welfare can easily be compromised, as their physiological and behavioural needs are not always met. This can result in stress, the spread of feline diseases and uncontrolled breeding. An unspayed female cat can, on average, give birth to four to six kittens per litter and up to four litters a year.

It is crucial that these cats are offered help, and both organisations work every day to tackle these large and complex cases. However, they often face challenges, as this work is both time-consuming and costly. Kattens Værn and Dyreværnet have therefore joined forces – with support from the QATO Foundation – in a project aimed at helping cats in large populations. The collaboration allows the two organisations to handle these large cases more efficiently by combining their expertise and resources.

For example, Kattens Værn specialises in capturing unsocialised cats, while Dyreværnet operates mobile veterinary clinics that can travel directly to where help is needed, thereby sparing the cats from a stressful trip to a veterinary clinic.

Both organisations are excited about the new partnership.

” *Every week, we encounter large cat populations in private homes, where the owners have lost control and can no longer manage the situation. When there are more than ten cats in one home, we typically see many more diseases and clear signs of stress among the cats. In such situations, we treat them for illnesses and neuter them, so that the cat population doesn’t spiral out of control again. We usually agree with the owner that four to five cats can stay in the home, and we find new homes for the rest.”*

Henrik Knaack, CEO of Dyreværnet

Therese Wilbert, CEO of Kattens Værn, says: “This collaboration essentially means that cases involving many cats, which might have been rejected in the past due to the workload involved, can now be addressed

much more often. We have previously seen that many municipalities reject these cases for financial reasons, but now we’re better equipped to help the cats — and that is fantastic.”

The project will run through 2025, after which the collaboration will be evaluated.

**ABOUT KATTENS VÆRN AND DYREVÆRNET**

Since 1933, the animal welfare organisation Kattens Værn has been working to trap stray cats and neuter, mark and register them, with a view to rehoming them or releasing them back into the wild with a designated caregiver. Kattens Værn operates four shelters in Denmark, each with its own veterinary clinic, where they help approximately 6,500 cats annually.

Dyreværnet has been working since 1898 to rescue stray and homeless animals from abuse and euthanasia, ensuring that all pets in Denmark have a good home. Dyreværnet runs two shelters and three veterinary clinics, helping around 6,500 animals each year.



## The association *nyt Hesteliv* New chance in life for broodmares

Thirty broodmares were given a new chance at life when they were rescued from a bankrupt stud farm by the Danish organisation *nyt Hesteliv*. The association now cares for and trains the mares before finding loving new homes for them.

When a major Danish stud farm was declared bankrupt in the autumn of 2023, hundreds of horses had to be rehomed as part of the estate settlement. The association *nyt Hesteliv* stepped in and rescued 30 of the broodmares with the poorest chance of finding good new homes.

The plan was to rehabilitate the mares and prepare them for adoption by experienced horse owners during the spring of 2024. However, it soon became clear that the mares required more care and training than initially expected. Many of the mares were so difficult to approach that it was an

undertaking to even get a halter on them. At *nyt Hesteliv*, the mares are given the time and peace they need to adjust to their new surroundings.

” It has been a major project to restore the mares’ wellbeing, as they were quite unhandleable. Our staff and volunteers have invested extra time in training them, and private donors and foundations have supported us financially. There has been a widespread wish that these horses should have the chance to live a life full of love moving forward.”

Janne Juncker, Founder and Chair of the Board, *nyt Hesteliv*

Three of the 30 mares turned out to be pregnant, which added to the complexity of the rescue, especially as the foals were born with various health issues.

With support from, among others, the QATO Foundation, 2024 has been dedicated to improving the horses’ physical condition, providing dental care, vaccinations, other

necessary veterinary treatments and hoof care. In addition, *nyt Hesteliv* has invested a great deal of energy into gentle training to help the mares thrive when interacting with humans.

The work is paying off: while a few of the mares still need more time, the first ones are now ready to move on to their own foster families.

### ABOUT “NYT HESTELIV”

The association *nyt Hesteliv* is a nationwide Danish equine welfare organisation that helps neglected horses. Founded in 2005 and based in Morud on the island of Funen, the organisation operates its own horse sanctuary, with capacity for up to 100 horses, ponies and donkeys – many of which come from animal welfare cases or horse markets. In addition to rescue efforts, *nyt Hesteliv* works to educate riders and horse owners about good equine welfare practices.

## FOUR PAWS

# Humane management of stray dogs in Romania

Romania has one of the largest populations of stray animals in Europe, with an estimated 500,000 stray dogs and even more stray cats. In the city of Constanta, between 8,000 and 10,000 dogs live on the streets.

FOUR PAWS helps manage the city’s population through neutering and adoption, ensuring the dogs are treated humanely.

FOUR PAWS has, in collaboration with its local NGO partner Animal Society and the city government of Constanta, launched an effort to manage Constanta’s population of stray dogs in a humane manner. For years, the dogs were either caught and taken to overcrowded shelters with little hope of ever being adopted, or killed, as it is not illegal to carry out mass culling of stray dogs in Romania. However, these methods are neither sustainable nor humane. It is therefore positive that the city of Constanta has banned the killing practices and wants to help their stray dogs using humane methods.

With support from the QATO Foundation, FOUR PAWS is implementing its programme in Constanta, which contains several elements that, combined, will contribute to humanely stabilising and eventually reducing the number of stray dogs in the city. The main focus is on the systematic neutering of free-roaming dogs. Furthermore, the programme focuses on improving the community’s attitude towards stray dogs, informing residents about responsible pet ownership and encouraging local adoptions.

” Since February 2021, significant progress has been made for the dogs and the community of Constanta. While solving the problem of overpopulation in a humane way is a gradual process that does not happen overnight, we are proud to have achieved a 78% sterilisation rate of dogs in the industrial areas of the city – where dog densities are the highest – in 2024. Furthermore, our latest research shows that only a very small percentage of the population are puppies. This indicates that

*the population is slowly stabilising. Transformation is underway in Constanta, and we hope this model will be replicated by other cities in Romania.”*

Manuela Rowlings,  
Head of Stray Animal Care Europe and Community Engagement at FOUR PAWS International

### ABOUT FOUR PAWS

FOUR PAWS is a global animal welfare organisation founded in Austria in 1988. Today, Four Paws has offices all over the world from where they work to achieve their vision of a world where all animals are treated with respect, empathy and understanding. Four Paws pays special attention to animals under direct human influence such as pets, farm animals, wild animals under human care and animals in disaster and conflict zones.





# GRACE Sanctuary for Eastern Lowland Gorillas

In the forests of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Eastern Lowland Gorilla, also known as Grauer's gorilla, faces immense challenges due to the destruction of its habitat and poaching.

GRACE is dedicated to giving these gentle giants a second chance by providing a safe sanctuary where they can heal, thrive and, if possible, return to the wild.

The Eastern Lowland Gorilla population has declined by 60% in recent decades due to habitat destruction, poaching and illegal pet trade. GRACE operates a sanctuary that houses and rehabilitates rescued Eastern Lowland Gorillas confiscated from illegal trade. Thirteen gorillas currently live at the sanctuary, but it has capacity for up to thirty. The gorillas reside in large, semi-natural enclosures where they can engage in natural behaviours such as foraging and climbing. Whenever possible, rehabilitated

gorillas are reintroduced into protected forest areas.

“Every gorilla matters. At GRACE, we prioritise each individual's welfare and rehabilitation. Thank you to the QATO Foundation for your vital support in caring for these critically endangered animals.”

Katie Fawcett, Ph.D.,  
Executive Director, GRACE

Beyond providing direct care for rescued gorillas, the sanctuary also serves as a key deterrent against wildlife crime. Having a designated rehabilitation centre strengthens law enforcement efforts by providing a place to house confiscated animals, thereby discouraging illegal wildlife trafficking.

GRACE works on multiple fronts to protect the Eastern Lowland Gorilla. In addition to running the sanctuary, they engage in local, community-led habitat conservation efforts, creating forest corridors to safeguard critical habitats. They also collaborate with local communities to promote sustainable

land use and provide educational programmes for children and adults on the importance of gorilla conservation.

The QATO Foundation has supported GRACE to maintain and upgrade gorilla facilities and provide medical care and food for the rescued gorillas at the sanctuary. With this support, GRACE can continue its essential mission of protecting and rehabilitating these endangered animals.

### ABOUT GRACE

GRACE is an American NGO founded in 2008. Its mission is to protect the Eastern Lowland Gorilla population, endemic to eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. GRACE runs a sanctuary where gorillas live in a semi-wild environment. The organisation also works on forest conservation and community education programmes and collaborates with Congolese authorities to strengthen anti-poaching efforts and combat illegal wildlife trade.

## Humane World for Animals Improving animal welfare in India



Animal welfare in India has shown promising growth over the past few years. This positive transformation has given Humane World for Animals an important starting point to initiate a more structured and targeted effort to improve animal welfare.

Since 2018, Humane World for Animals India has invested its expertise and resources to develop two model districts, Dharwad and Gadag, in the state of Karnataka. The extensive programme in the model districts aims to help Karnataka state establish systems and protocols that provide residents, community groups, law enforcement and lawmakers with the tools needed to improve animal welfare.

The programme has among other things focused on strengthening local animal protection systems by establishing SPCAs (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty

to Animals). Essential services such as sterilisation programmes and monitoring of illegal breeding and trade have been implemented through these institutions.

Training and education in animal welfare and protection practices as well as relevant legislation to government representatives, law enforcement officials and community members have also been key components. And a mobile veterinary clinic has been launched to provide emergency medical assistance to animals in need.

“It has been so encouraging for us to receive the phenomenal support that we have received from the QATO Foundation on such an important initiative. They understand our work, and it makes a huge difference to have them on our side.”

Alokparna Sengupta,  
Managing Director, India Campaigns

With support from the QATO Foundation, Humane World for Animals India will build on the major achievements from the two

model districts over the next three years. Here, the project will focus on expanding its model district programme to two new districts, Belagavi and Uttara Kannada. It will also continue its focus on making the programmes in the two districts, Dharwad and Gadag, fully sustainable, ensuring continued success beyond HSI/India's direct involvement.

### ABOUT HUMANE WORLD FOR ANIMALS

With millions of supporters and work taking place in more than 50 countries, Humane World for Animals (formerly Humane Society International) addresses the most deeply entrenched forms of animal cruelty and suffering, by working on the biggest problems and creating long-term solutions for lasting change. We tackle the root causes of animal cruelty by shifting human behaviour and advocating for policy change, implementing change at scale.

# Brooke New veterinary clinic in rural Ethiopia



### ABOUT BROOKE

Brooke is a British equine welfare organisation founded 90 years ago by Dorothy Brooke. After years of helping former warhorses in Cairo, Dorothy expanded her efforts and opened an animal hospital for working animals. Since then, the organisation has grown significantly. In its mission to aid working horses, donkeys and mules in need, Brooke is now active in 13 countries across Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Central America. In 2023, the organisation reached 1.4 million working equines with its support.

Ethiopia has the second largest population of working donkeys in the world. Brooke is constructing a new animal health infrastructure in the Shashemene district of Ethiopia, which will provide them with access to veterinary care.

In Ethiopia, working animals such as donkeys, horses and mules are essential to the livelihoods of millions of people. These equines transport water, food, fuel and construction materials for their owners in impoverished rural areas. In districts such as Shashemene, where small-scale farming is the primary livelihood, livestock owners face a critical absence of veterinary infrastructure, leaving animals without access to essential vaccinations or medical care when illness or exhaustion strikes.

It is not a lack of willingness from animal owners that prevents these animals from receiving the care they desperately need, but rather the absence of a local veterinarian in the region. Without access to veterinary expertise, locals resort to traditional remedies for their animals – approaches that sadly often intensify rather than alleviate the animal’s suffering.

With support from the QATO Foundation, Brooke is constructing a new Animal Health Post in Shashemene, Ethiopia. An Animal Health Post is a small veterinary clinic with an operating room, a laboratory and a pharmacy. In the Shashemene district, this clinic will serve a core group of rural villages with around 20,000 residents, 4,000 working equines and 37,000 livestock animals, as well as benefiting the region more broadly. A total of 20,000 working equines and 80,000 livestock animals will benefit from this clinic annually. Animal owners visiting the Health Post will also receive

education in how to care for their animals – including compassionate handling practices and the importance of vaccinations.

In Ethiopia, around 75% of veterinary services are provided by the government and most vets are employees of the state. As part of a long-standing working relationship with both the federal and regional governments, Brooke is responsible for constructing the Health Post and installing the necessary equipment. They will then hand over the site to the government and local community. Brooke will provide training for the staff and continue to monitor the site. The clinic is run by government vets and funded by the state.

Brooke has been involved in the construction of animal infrastructure such as this for many years. Similar clinics in other regions show clear improvement in animal health and welfare.

” Working equines play a hugely important role in Ethiopia. As veterinary care, and in particular, knowledge of how to properly care for working equine animals, is severely lacking it often has devastating consequences both for the animals themselves and their owners. The Health Post will be a lifeline to rural villages it will serve, as well as the region more broadly. It is expected to provide benefit over 20,000 working horses, donkeys, and mules every year. We are very grateful for the support of partners like the QATO foundation that make this possible”

Nicola Chevis, Global Director of Programmes, Brooke



### Other selected projects that received funding in 2024

Grant recipient	Projects
<b>Børnebondegården Dortheasminde (children’s visiting farm)</b>	<b>Renovation of stables</b> Renovation of old stable building for horses, ponies, and donkeys.
<b>Ørsted Rideklub (riding club)</b>	<b>Shelter for the riding school horses’ summer paddock</b> Construction of shelter on summer paddock used by the riding school’s horses.
<b>Friends of Bonobos</b>	<b>Help for monkeys at sanctuary</b> Food and medicine for bonobos at sanctuary in DRC.
<b>Nordsjællands Kattehjælp (North Zealand’s cat assistance)</b>	<b>Feral cats find permanent homes or dedicated feeders</b> Feral cats are neutered and offered a loving home or returned to monitored sites with regular feeding arrangements.
<b>Sea Life Trust</b>	<b>Improvement of outdoor facilities for beluga whales</b> Reconstruction of outdoor facilities at Icelandic beluga whale sanctuary to improve the whales’ welfare.
<b>The Long-Tailed Macaque Project</b>	<b>Coexistence between macaques and coconut farmers</b> New income opportunities for farmers eliminate incentives for monkey trapping and culling.
<b>Globalteer</b>	<b>Help for dogs and cats in Cusco, Peru</b> Operational support for mobile veterinary clinic that treats animals and teaches animal owners how to care for their dogs and cats.
<b>Odder Katte (Odder cat association)</b>	<b>Help for feral cats</b> Feral cats are neutered and offered a loving home or returned to monitored sites with regular feeding arrangements.
<b>LAWCS</b>	<b>Promoting the welfare of dogs in Liberia</b> Combined outreach and veterinary initiative to promote the welfare of dogs in Liberia.
<b>StrayCoCo Foundation</b>	<b>Help for street dogs in Kosovo</b> Street dogs are neutered, vaccinated and given veterinary care as needed. Initiative to combat dog abandonment.
<b>Det Kattens Liv (cat association)</b>	<b>Feral cats find permanent homes or dedicated feeders</b> Feral cats are neutered and offered a loving home or returned to monitored sites with regular feeding arrangements.
<b>Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage Trust</b>	<b>Better buildings at chimpanzee sanctuary</b> Improvement of buildings to heighten the welfare of chimpanzees at sanctuary in Zambia.

# Around the world with the QATO Foundation

The QATO Foundation supports the efforts of organizations both in Denmark and abroad to improve conditions for animals worldwide. While our assistance reaches widely, we continue to support many projects within our home country of Denmark.

The map highlights selected projects abroad over the years. In 2024, we supported projects in countries such as India, Peru, Romania, and Ethiopia.







# QATO Fonden

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