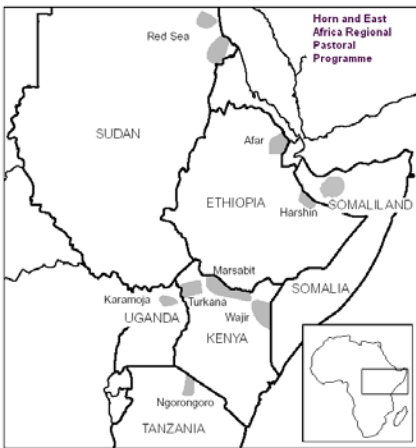


Supporting pastoralists' voices for better livelihoods

A briefing on Oxfam GB's Horn and East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme

Who are pastoralists?



Pastoralists live in the arid and semi-arid areas in many parts of the world. In the Horn and East Africa, pastoralists depend on cattle, camels, goats and sheep for their livelihoods. There are estimated to be more than 20 million pastoralists in the Horn and East Africa.

Astute managers and custodians of some of the harshest environments on earth, pastoralists have

traditionally moved seasonally to make best use of the erratic rainfall.

Pastoralism has always been a highly dynamic system, adapting to local and wider challenges and changes.

In this region, Oxfam and partners are working with Afar, Beja, Borana, Karimojong, Somali, Turkana, and Maasai communities in six

countries.

This community-level work is linked to national policy and advocacy work to spread the impact much more widely.

These initiatives are linked through a regional learning, policy and advocacy project with the whole forming the Regional Pastoral Programme.

Current challenges

In many parts of Africa pastoralists seem to be becoming poorer. They seem to be losing their land, settling in villages, suffering food insecurity and be prone to violent conflict.

It is important to respond to these livelihood challenges. For example, working with livestock keepers, those diversifying their livelihoods and destitute pastoralists to improve their livelihoods and their ability to cope with drought.

Oxfam's programmes are also underpinned by the view that for the most part these challenges are symptoms of a bigger problem, namely the marginalization of pastoralists from mainstream policy making and the national economy.

Our analysis finds that until pastoralists have a greater say in the issues and decisions affecting them, their lives are unlikely to improve significantly.

Oxfam's view is that

pastoralists themselves should be at the centre of decisions about their livelihood. It follows that every effort should be made by development actors to understand pastoralism and how it is changing, and to support interventions that address both symptoms and causes of the challenges it faces.

Working with pastoralists

“Once the road is there, trade will come. Even a school can be built. The road can bring us peace.”
Akadae, Turkana leader

Oxfam’s work with pastoralists works in two main ways:

First, we help pastoralists build or develop their own organisations through which they can represent themselves and their values, and come to understand, articulate, and claim their rights.

Second, we work with others to influence those in power to become more responsive to pastoralists’ needs and concerns.

At the same time these kinds of fundamental changes in capacity and attitudes cannot be

achieved without also addressing the more immediate priorities of people’s lives. Some of the practical issues being tackled are:

Peacebuilding

Supporting communities to find ways to reduce violent conflict

Livelihoods

Improving incomes and the availability of food, for example by encouraging small business activities and working for better access to markets

Education

Helping widen access to education for excluded groups, particularly girls,

women, and the more nomadic herders;

Water

Working with pastoral organisations to improve the management of precious water sources

Women’s rights

Helping to strengthen women’s position within and outside their communities, for example through programmes that provide livestock (restocking), credit and business training, and adult education, or by supporting their public role within pastoral organisations.

The road to peace



Opening up the road from Kamion, in Uganda, to Oropoi in Kenya. Simon Nangiro/Oxfam

Oxfam GB is always looking for innovative ways to strengthen people’s livelihoods.

We work with pastoralist communities at both ‘ends’ of a road which runs down the rift valley between Kaabong, in Uganda, and Oropoi, in Kenya. Over many years, the road had fallen into disrepair until it became impassable.

The Turkana people in Kenya often cross to Uganda to water their cattle. Similarly, Karimojong herders on the

Ugandan side cross into Turkana areas in the wet season to find grazing. But these movements depend upon peace agreements between the Turkana and Karimojong communities, both of which have long traditions of cattle raiding.

Most of the road, including the roughest 13km section, lies within Uganda, and its rehabilitation has been taken forward as a district-wide Community Action Plan (CAP). This also gave an opportunity to the area’s small hunter-

gatherer community, the Ik, to earn money in the cash-for-work programme which the CAP introduced.

The re-opening of the road is seen as a way of improving communications and so resolving tensions along the border. “We have been suggesting that the road should be connected,” explained Akadae, one of the Turkana leaders.

“The most important thing they [Oxfam] have done is to give us knowledge, and we value that more than anything. They also helped us to realise that we have knowledge of our own. Since the Pastoral Association started, there have been real changes in our lives. We have better water supplies, our animals are healthier, and the standards in our schools have improved. People appreciate the importance of sharing the cost of all this, and they feel that they own the Association.”

Local organisations taking the lead

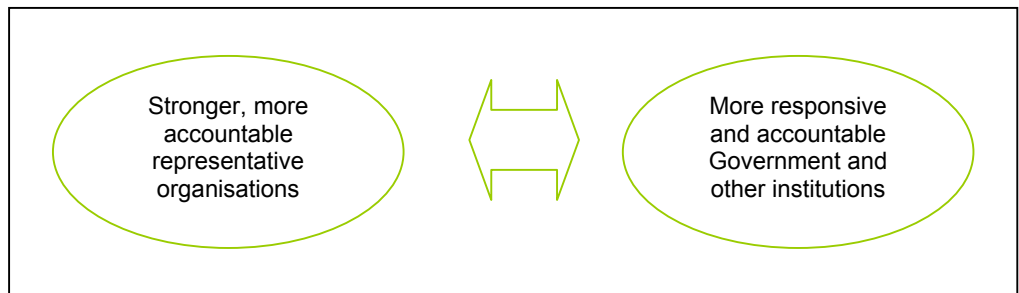
“Most of us are nomadic pastoralists. Our livestock give us meat, milk, and hides, and we sell live animals when we need cash. Wajir has vast pastures that provide food for our livestock, but there are problems. There are sometimes disputes over grazing and water. Government support has declined: our boreholes are left unserviced and broken, watering points are not well distributed, and the land is becoming degraded. Health and education standards have fallen. Very few people have a formal education

and the few schools are understaffed and poorly equipped.

“Our Pastoralist Association was started in response to these problems. The elders met and discussed the situation and suggested setting up an organisation that would address our community’s needs. We opened membership to men and women pastoralists. At this crucial moment we met Oxfam. The Oxfam people sat down and discussed our ideas with us and agreed to support our work.

Oxfam helped us to prepare proper plans and budgets, to raise funds, and to assess and evaluate what we do. They also helped us to manage our livestock better and to monitor drought and make appropriate plans.”

See our website below for more information on our work with Pastoral Associations.



Model of institutional influence in Oxfam GB’s Pastoral Programming

Linking up learning

There are no easy answers for pastoralist communities. To support them effectively, Oxfam has linked up its programmes and partners into a Regional Pastoral Programme (RPP).

This ensures lessons are learned from our experiences. The Programme as a whole is supported and complemented by a

Regional Learning, Policy, and Advocacy Project, which began in April 2003. The RPP also links with our sister programme working in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in West Africa, and with other likeminded organisations.

Underpinning all of this is a long-term approach to our work with

pastoralists, planning to provide support over a 15 year period. This level of commitment is essential for the depth of changes that Oxfam hopes to help bring about.

Regional co-ordination aims to:

- Provide leadership and strategic direction for the

- Add value to the other components, for example by providing support in research/analysis, by encouraging cross-regional learning and coherence

- Manage a small learning and advocacy component

Current initiatives



Women loading their camels with water containers filled from one of the twenty underground tanks built by Oxfam partner PISP at the foot of Forolle mountain. Geoff Sayer/Oxfam

Day to day management and decision-making is carried out in-country.

Initiatives are only taken forward by the Regional Learning Policy and Advocacy Project when they support all of the programmes, and can only efficiently be carried out at regional level..

Current initiatives lead by the Regional Project include:

Drought Management Project

The projects aims to improve the way that the droughts are managed by pastoral programmes

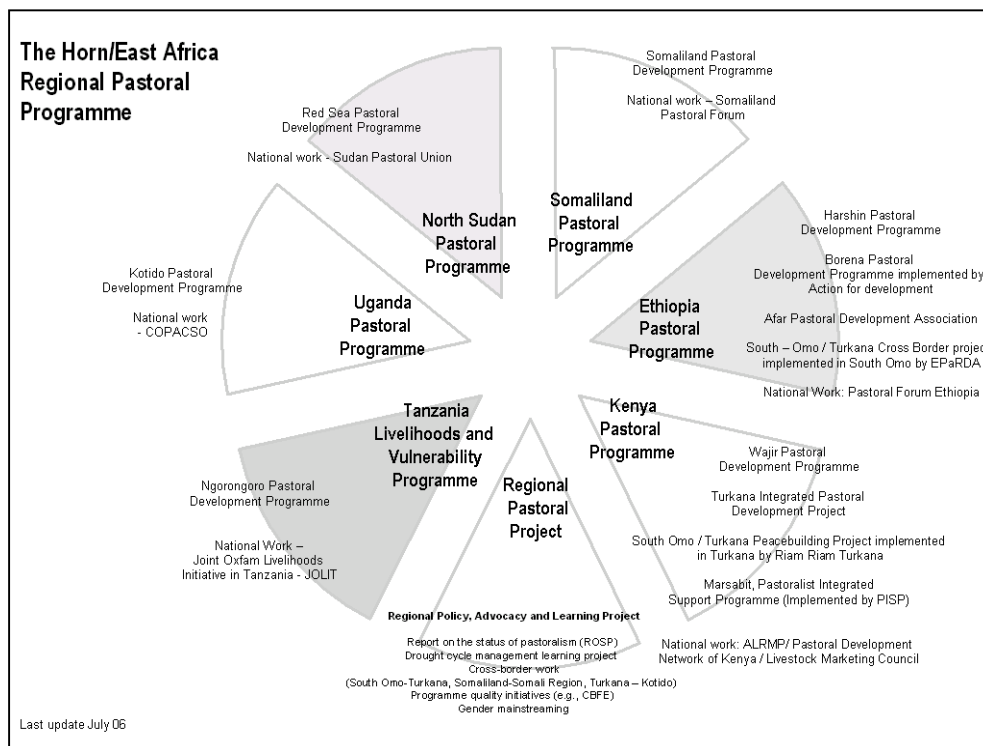
Report on the Status of Pastoralism

The project aims to improve the visibility of pastoralists in national policy processes through the production of regular

'Human Development' type reports.

Further priorities for collaboration in the 2006-2009 phase of work are:

1. Women's empowerment
2. Risk management (primarily Drought Cycle management)
3. Cross border work



Contact details

Richard Grahn, Regional Pastoral Programme Co-ordinator, rgrahn@oxfam.org.uk
 PO Box 40680, 00100, Nairobi, Kenya, +254 (0) 20 2820000

Oxfam GB's Pastoralism Website and published resources on pastoralism:

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/pastoralism/index.htm