

A briefing on the Report on the Status of Pastoralism

Challenges of Pastoral Information?



Speaking pastoral realities

Elder in discussion in Somaliland
PHOTO Geoff Sayer/Oxfam

Interest in pastoralism has increased over the past decade as a response to the growing recognition that it is an appropriate, specialised and productive livelihood system.

Despite this attention however, information on pastoralist livelihoods and how they are changing continues to be poor. The weakness of this evidence base often results in inappropriate planning, policies, and projects, which lack a common

vision for pastoral development.

Data challenges include:

- Data are often outdated, inconsistent, and not well disaggregated.
- Methodologies used are often not relevant to pastoral societies.
- Data collection is not co-ordinated or data shared.
- Much research is one-off and time and location specific

These data weaknesses are occurring at a time when focus is shifting towards improving human development and reducing poverty, with an emphasis on measuring and monitoring progress.

The bedrock of this approach is **information**, both to track progress towards these goals and to provide a strong evidence base upon which appropriate policy and programming decisions can be made.

The Report on the Status of Pastoralism

The Report on the Status of Pastoralism (ROSP) is a project designed to improve the quality and accessibility of information on pastoralism, in four countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

By providing regular, authoritative analysis of the status of pastoralism ROSP seeks to bring about change in the way that policy, planning and resource allocation are determined in pastoral areas. In addition it will put vital tools into the hands

of pastoral advocates.

ROSP has three main objectives:

Illuminating trends and changes in pastoral lives

Presenting good quality, longitudinal data and analysis on pastoralism and pastoral populations, which captures dynamism and trends, and is digestible by a wide audience.

Building networks for information sharing

Facilitating the creation of networks between government, NGOs, and national research institutes to encourage the sharing of information and facilitate links between research, policy-making and practice.

Influencing change in data and research processes

Building the capacity of national research and data institutions to understand and analyse pastoral livelihoods and populations, information systems.

“The Maasai think they are rich because they have lots of cows. We think they are poor because they don’t develop their houses”. Tanzanian civil servant interviewed April 2006

Approaches

ROSP seeks to be more than just another research initiative, and has adopted certain approaches to achieve its aims

Long-term analysis

ROSP will capture, analyse and communicate trends, and monitor selected indicators over time. Much current research provides only a 'snapshot' of a situation affecting a certain group at a certain time, rather than exploring how pastoral systems are changing as a whole.

Collaboration

ROSP will be a collaborative venture between a range of

organisations that demand generate and use data. Through the development of national and regional networks, ROSP seeks to produce widely owned research and analysis which is responding to real needs, and is generated in ways which bridge the gaps between research, policy and practice.

Sustainability

Although an Oxfam-initiated project the vision is that ROSP will become institutionalised into existing national and regional systems. In this way ROSP does not seek to create new structures of research but to build upon

current processes; mainstreaming new approached and practices and supporting the uptake of pastoral friendly methodologies.

Capacity Building

ROSP forms part of Oxfam's Right To Be Heard work, supporting local organisations' abilities to voice their own concerns and issues and strengthening government understanding and response to this demand.

The strengthening of collaborative networks will help to improve the capacity of all concerned to understand and analyse pastoralists' priorities



The importance of information

Mobile education in Turkana.
PHOTO: Geoff Sayer/Oxfam

Partnerships

ROSP is led by Oxfam GB's Regional Pastoral Programme in the Horn and Eastern Africa.

ROSP will bring together key institutions working on pastoral development and data collection, and analysis within Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

It will work to create partnerships between statistics bureaus, national research institutes, key government ministries and civil society organisations.

Immediate Objectives and Activities

Within the coming year ROSP has a number of immediate objectives:

Building partnerships and supporting networks for information sharing and analysis on pastoralism

Producing high-quality data on pastoralism, illuminating both the status of pastoralism and pastoral data.

Identifying the main gaps in pastoral data and developing research projects to fill them.

In order to achieve these aims ROSP has various activities planned:

Online surveys and discussions:

These surveys and debates will enable the collation and analysis of information on data needs and availability across the region, which will inform decisions on ROSP's focus and frameworks

Regional Partners Meeting:

This meeting will bring

together key partners from across the region to agree the analytical frameworks for the ROSP and discuss institutional structures and responsibilities

Production of initial 'status' report:

This report will provide an initial analysis of the status of pastoralism, covering key from across the region. It will also highlight the gaps and challenges in pastoral data, thus providing a vital advocacy tool for the continuation of ROSP's work.

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

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