

**Strengthening pastoralists' voice in shaping policies for sustainable
poverty reduction in ASAL regions of East Africa**

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1. Introduction

The absence of a representative and effective pastoral civil society movement capable of articulating its members' vision of their development is one of the key factors explaining why policies for pastoral development continue to fail, and poverty and conflict still characterise many pastoral communities in East Africa. Development experience in pastoral regions, particularly since independence, has clearly shown that pastoral people tend to lack the knowledge, political clout and resources with which to fight their own cause, and thus remain vulnerable to other people's interpretation of what is best for them. In particular, policy makers continue to impose on pastoralists what they perceive to be good for them with little or no reference to the communities themselves. That these perceptions are for the most part founded on stereotypes of what pastoralism and pastoral land use is, only serves to compound the problem.

An important starting point in improving policy design for the development of pastoral areas has thus to include improving policy makers' understanding of the rationale behind pastoralism. However, this on its own is unlikely to bring substantial changes since policy formulation is essentially a State-driven political process that tends to favour dominant groups. In the eyes of the State, pastoralists represent a "minority vote", occupy large areas of land of low economic potential and practice a livelihood system many consider to be economically inefficient and environmentally destructive. Pastoralists and their interests are thus not very high on national policy agendas.

Since 1998, the Drylands programme of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) has been supporting a process to build the capacity of pastoral groups in East and West Africa to understand, engage with and ultimately influence the overall policy framework regulating their livelihood systems. This process has focused on the design and implementation of a training course on pastoralism and policy in French, English

and local languages. The course, initially designed in the Sahel,¹ has subsequently been adapted for East Africa within the context of the regional programme on *Reinforcement of pastoral civil society in East Africa* (PCS-EA), jointly implemented by IIED and Resources Conflict Institute (RECONCILE).² The English version, targeted at leaders of pastoral civil society, NGO and government staff, and senior policy makers including Members of Parliament, ministry and local government staff and donors, is delivered at the MS/Training Centre for Development Cooperation in Arusha, Tanzania.³

This paper presents the training programme as one important mechanism for addressing the challenges of poverty and marginalisation among pastoralists of East Africa. It discusses the core hypotheses underpinning the design and implementation of the training course, describes the training content and its pedagogic approach, and analyses the practical relevance of the training to on-going policy debates and reform processes in East Africa, which have a direct bearing on pastoralism and poverty reduction. The content of the training and its pedagogic approach are key to its success in equipping pastoral leaders in particular with skills to engage with policy processes in an informed and confident manner. The paper concludes with an analysis of the challenges and opportunities of using research to influence policy.

1 Dr. Brigitte Thébaud, a rural economist and leading expert of pastoralism in the Sahel, designed the original course in French within the context of a regional programme entitled *Shared Management of Common Property Resources in the Sahel* (1998-2001), implemented by SOS Sahel-GB and IIED with financial support from Comic Relief, Dfid and NORAD. Associates in Research and Education for Development (an NGO specialising in adult education in African languages based in Dakar, Senegal) subsequently designed a Pulaar version of the course for with support from Dr. Thébaud. This training targeted local communities in the Sahel within the context of the regional programme entitled *Making Decentralisation Work* funded by Sida and DANIDA (2000-2004) and implemented by IIED in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal.

² Funded by DFID's Civil Society Challenge Fund; SDC Division for Environment and Natural resources in Berne, Switzerland; the ERETO II project of DANIDA in Tanzania; and DCI Tanzania.

³ In 2007, a Kiswahili version will be designed targeted at local pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in East Africa.

2. The paradox of pastoral marginalisation

Pastoralists are one of the most researched yet least understood groups in the world. Despite decades of empirical research, many policy makers, government staff, NGO personnel, and the broader public do not fully understand or appreciate the rationale underpinning the dynamics of pastoralism. It is considered an inefficient use of land that does not contribute to national growth, poverty reduction or sustainable environmental management. Many governments see it as backward and environmentally destructive, and as preventing their country from developing a modern livestock sector - see box 1 (emphases added).

This poor understanding has resulted in inappropriate policies and development interventions, which have systematically undermined pastoral institutions and their strategies for responding to environmental adversity. Policies have focused on either “modernising” pastoralism through technical interventions or alienating pastoral resources for non-pastoral purposes. The core premises underpinning these policies have consistently been that pastoral systems are environmentally

Box 1: Policy statements on pastoralism

-although there are valid driving forces towards their movements, **pastoralists do more harm to overall economy than better due to continuous mobility** haphazard mobility fuels conflicts with agro pastoralists (particularly farmers) and makes diseases control difficult (TZ RDS 2001).
 - The growth of the livestock population has raised demand for grazing land, and has created serious soil erosion problems in some areas due to **overgrazing...**this has led to increased movement of large herds of livestock to areas which traditionally had few livestock, such as Mbeya, Iringa, Morogoro, Rukwa and Coast Regions, creating serious land use conflicts. (URT, National Land Policy, 1995).
 - We are producing little milk, export very little beef, and **our livestock keepers roam throughout the country with their animals in search for grazing grounds. We have to do away with archaic ways of livestock farming.** I therefore create a separate ministry for livestock (Hon Jakaya M. Kikwete, President, URT in a press conference announcing his Cabinet, 4th Jan. 2006).
- Source: MacGregor, J. and Hesse, C. (2006) in press.

destructive and are of low economic potential. In many cases, the annexation of pastoral land has been justified on the basis that it is “empty” or under-utilised.

The paradox is that such misunderstanding persists in the face of so much research providing sound scientific evidence of the value of pastoralism as a livelihood system,

particularly well adapted to the unstable environmental conditions of much of East Africa.⁴ The reasons for the persistence of such deep-rooted prejudice are highly complex. They are rooted in history, culture and past and present socio-economic and political processes, which differ from one country to the next. However, two broad explanations seem to underpin this paradox, at least in part: a knowledge gap and an imbalance of power.

The knowledge gap among policy makers and development workers

Several interrelated factors contribute to the persistent lack of knowledge about the dynamics of pastoralism, among them:

- Little of the research on pastoralism filters down to those who most need it. Research results are typically published in books and articles that are not readily available or accessible in East Africa. In addition, most universities and technical colleges in the region have not systematically incorporated the research findings into the courses taught to future policy makers and development workers.⁵
- Northern cultural values and ideologies, which are widely shared by Southern policy makers, continue to shape environmental policy in dryland Africa. Within this analysis, pastoralists are singled out as the main culprits of environmental degradation. Key theories underpinning these beliefs are the *Tragedy of the Commons* (Hardin, G. 1968); *Vegetation Change and Succession* (Clements, F.E 1916); and the *Cattle Complex* (Herscovits, M.J. 1926).
- Pastoralists themselves lack the knowledge, capacity and resources with which to fight their own cause. They are frequently unaware of the stakes at play in the policy arena, and are unable to challenge the perceptions that the rest of the world has of them and their way of life. This is partly because they lack the skills to

⁴ Some of the key publications include Behnke, R.H & Scoones, I (1993); Lane, C. & Moorehead, R. (1994); Leach, M. & Mearns, R. (1996); Sandford, S. (1983); Scoones, I. (1994).

⁵ Pastoralism is increasingly taught at a number of universities with in the region (e.g. University of Nairobi and Egerton in Kenya) as a sub-component of a degree in range ecology or rural development.

articulate the rationale underpinning their livelihood system, and partly because they are poorly organised politically.

The imbalance of power between pastoral communities, the State and other interest groups

Although information is key to the policy making process, it is not the only variable and will not alone induce policy makers to change their policies. Policy design is essentially a State-driven political process aimed at reconciling the divergent needs of multiple stakeholders. As with all processes involving conflicting and diverging interests, it is those that are backed by political and/or economic power that prevail. In East Africa, pastoralists generally lack the political or economic “weight” required to influence policy decisions. Among the many reasons for this, two elements stand out:

First, governments see little economic or political interest in promoting pastoral interests *per se* as they are considered to be a “minority vote”. Pastoral populations are generally low as a proportion of the national population, they are dispersed across different parts of the country, often living on the fringes of these countries far from the seat of power, and their use of the land is generally considered to be of marginal economic potential.⁶ The absence of an appropriate conceptual framework and monitoring system to track the true contribution of pastoralism to national economies and livelihoods contributes to the view held by many policy makers that pastoralism does not have a role in modern African society. Substitutes appear more attractive, particularly those considered to deliver higher economic returns such as export-oriented commercial farming, ranching or private hunting blocks, and which are relatively simple to monitor to assess their direct economic contribution (MacGregor and Hesse, 2006). Yet, such policies, by dispossessing pastoralists of their land and restricting their access to critical resources, are perpetuating a vicious circle of increasing poverty, resource conflict and environmental degradation that

⁶The situation is not much better in countries where pastoralists are the majority, such as Mauritania, Somalia and Somaliland. Here political power is concentrated in the hands of the few, who tend to use it to pursue their own short-term political agendas rather than for the common good.

reinforces the very myths and misunderstandings surrounding pastoralism as a livelihood system.

Second, although pastoral civil society groups are beginning to occupy a prominent place in the East Africa development scene, and are commanding an increasing proportion of development aid, they remain relatively weak. They lack the skills to articulate and defend the interests of their members, have difficulty in establishing a common front with each other or forging strong institutional links with other groups, and have limited financial resources and management skills. Almost exclusively established by an educated elite, many organisations do not have a strong rural constituency and have weak links with customary pastoral authorities. Well-meaning northern donors and NGOs by using many of these organisations as conduits for the implementation of rural service delivery have diverted, to a certain extent, the attention of pastoral associations away from the need to address their internal institutional weaknesses (e.g. accountability, representation) and strengthen their lobbying and advocacy skills.⁷

Notwithstanding these problems, an effective pastoral civil society movement is gradually emerging, particularly in Kenya and Tanzania, as community-based groups and national level associations are coming together often under umbrella grouping in response to assaults on pastoral land by commercial agricultural, tourism, conservation and increasingly private investment. Many of these groups are a product of an endogenous process of self-determination and as such do represent the beginnings of a civil society movement and the means by which local people can participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives, particularly in the context of the on-going institutional reforms in East Africa (see below).

⁷ Structural adjustment and the withdrawal of the State from the provision of basic services provided some justification for such an approach.

Challenges of self-determination and empowerment

Supporting these organisations to develop the political leverage necessary to effect policy change is a complex and long-term process that has to be driven internally by their constituents. Yet initiating and sustaining such processes for pastoral civil society groups raise a number of challenges due to the context of pastoral marginalisation in East Africa. Widespread ignorance and often prejudice held by many policy makers, government staff and development workers with respect to pastoralism as a livelihood and land use system is a major hurdle. Until there is broader understanding and acceptance of the rationale behind pastoralism, and pastoralists are sufficiently organised to constitute a veritable political force at the national level, it is unlikely that policy makers will see the need to provide an enabling environment in which pastoralists are able to define their development pathways according to their values and priorities.

A second challenge is the fact that pastoralists are not a homogenous group. High levels of differentiation according to ethnicity, gender, wealth or political affiliation affect their readiness and capacity to act in solidarity with each other and create the kind of political leverage needed to influence policy effectively. There is no broad consensus on what constitutes the “interests of pastoralists”, let alone what needs to be done to protect those interests and this has a significant impact on whose interests and priorities are heard and addressed.

Poverty, conflict and periodic droughts endemic in many pastoral areas severely limit the capacities of pastoral communities to invest time and resources on what are perceived by them often to be long-term and intangible processes of empowerment. An essential prerequisite for self-determination thus is ensuring that local people are able to guarantee a minimum level of food and personal security for themselves and their families, to weather the effects of periodic droughts and fluctuating markets without losing their capital base.

Finally, few tools exist to support internal processes of empowerment, particularly in a pastoral context. Most participatory tools (e.g. PRA, PLA) are designed and used by external agents to solicit greater local participation and are not specifically developed to enable local people to analyse their own situation outside the context of a pre-determined project. Relatively little attention is paid to the political and social dimensions of pastoral institutional development. Attention has focused more on improving pastoralists' ability to manage rural service delivery programmes (e.g. decentralised animal health) or to understand the institutional context in which they find themselves (e.g. civic education programmes). Less attention is given to helping pastoral groups themselves articulate the rationale of their livelihood and land use systems, and understand, analyse and ultimately contest the dominant paradigm driving development policy for pastoral areas that is keeping them in poverty and on the margins of society.

3. Policy education for self-determination

Building the capacity of pastoral people better to understand the dynamics of their own livelihood system in relation to the broader natural and policy environment is an essential pre-requisite for self-determination. The improved knowledge will enable pastoral groups to identify their own solutions to current problems according to their values and priorities, and to speak in an informed and authoritative manner on policy issues of concern to them. The ability to use the "language" of policy makers will give them a more equal footing in discussions with government and the development community as well as the confidence to challenge outsiders' perceptions of pastoralism. Extending this understanding to the grass roots membership will trigger internal processes of accountability as local people start to understand the issues and demand greater democratic control over the management of their associations. These are the hypotheses underpinning the design and implementation of a training course on *Pastoralism and Policy in East Africa*.

The training course

The course consists of two modules.⁸ **Module 1** presents and analyses the **dynamics of pastoral systems in East Africa**. It demonstrates how pastoralism is a “system” regulated by ecology and complex modes of social, political and economic organisation with livelihood and risk-spreading strategies well adapted to dryland environments (Thébaud, B. 2004). Since the outside perception of pastoralism is often that it is unstructured, random and irrational, the objective of this module is to help participants discover the dynamics and internal logic underpinning the key components of different pastoral and agro-pastoral systems in East Africa. The module specifically challenges and provides arguments backed by evidence to challenge many of the negative assumptions held by “outsiders” of pastoralism.

Module 2 analyses the **policy challenges and options for pastoralism in East Africa**. The module focuses on how successive policies have sought to either alienate pastoral land for other uses and/or to modernise pastoral systems, nearly all with disastrous effects. The module looks specifically at current reforms with respect to land and natural resource management (e.g. wildlife, water, range management) within the context of national poverty reduction strategies, decentralisation and increasing privatisation and foreign investment particularly in land and natural resources, and the constraints and opportunities these present for pastoral communities. The module enables participants to identify and analyse the key premises underpinning these policies and to generate arguments and alternative policy options based on what they have learnt in Module 1. As such, this module builds on Module 1 in a practical way by equipping participants to participate in policy dialogue in an informed and “positive” manner.

⁸ A third module on advocating for change is in preparation and will be completed in 2007.

The current training is delivered in English at the Danish Training Centre for Development Cooperation (MS/TCDC) based in Arusha, northern Tanzania on a cost-recovery basis. It runs for three weeks with a six to eight week break between the modules.⁹ It targets pastoral civil society leaders, policy decision-makers particularly at district and national level including government personnel from key line ministries, project staff of development organisations, sector specific donor advisors, and university students. The course will be adapted in a number of ways to reach other key stakeholders including local communities, senior policy makers such as Members of Parliament and future policy makers attending universities and technical colleges within the region.

The design process

The training course in East Africa is adapted from a similar course designed in the Sahel initially in French and subsequently in Pulaar (Thébaud, B. 2004).¹⁰ A highly participatory design process was adopted consisting of a number of key steps:

(i) *Establishing the relevance of a pastoral training course for East Africa.* This involved running the Sahel training to a core group of partners in East Africa to establish the relevance and pertinence of the approach, designed in West Africa, for East Africa, and to see whether some of the more generic information in the Sahel training could be used for East Africa.¹¹ Participants strongly endorsed the pertinence and applicability of an adapted version of the Sahel training to East Africa. Although much of the content needed to be changed to reflect the nature and challenges facing pastoral communities in East Africa, the internal structure and innovative pedagogic approach characteristic of the Sahel training was considered to be highly relevant.

⁹ Module 1 last two weeks including a 1-day field trip while Module 1 covers 1 week.

¹⁰ Pulaar or Fulfulde is an African language widely spoken in West Africa, particularly though not exclusively by the Fulani.

¹¹ Dr. Brigitte Thébaud delivered this training and facilitated a process of discussion to establish the course's relevance for East Africa.

(ii) *Designing the training template.* In collaboration with leading pastoral experts from within the region, a detailed template for the training course was subsequently developed.¹² The training is designed to empower participants to engage with on-going policy processes in an informed and authoritative manner rather than teach them about pastoralism per se. As such, it is essential that course material be structured around a set of logical arguments each building on each other, which specifically target key policy challenges with respect to the development of dryland areas in East Africa. Getting the template “right” was thus a critical aspect of the design process that took nearly a year to complete. Annexe one provides a summary template of the overall structure of Module 1.

(iii) *Developing the trainer’s manual.* On the basis of the template, pastoral and other experts were commissioned to provide the most pertinent data and scientific evidence in their specific disciplines to support the arguments developed within the training. Drawing on their own knowledge and fieldwork as well as the wealth of research that has been carried out over the past fifty years or more, a huge amount of data backed up with photographs and case studies was produced. The training makes use of over a hundred photographs, twenty plus case studies and specific data (presented as pie charts, maps, graphs) on range ecology and climatic dynamics, livestock management, production and marketing, pastoral labour dynamics, and policy and legal statements. This data is drawn from published and unpublished research findings over the past 20-30 years in East Africa.

This was a major task given the wealth of data, and the complexity and diversity of pastoral systems in East Africa and the national policy processes within which they operate. Yet, capturing the essence of the very diverse pastoral systems to illustrate their internal logic is essential if the training is to convince policy makers and others that

¹² Key partners include: University of Nairobi (Dept. of Land Resource Management and Agricultural Technology, Range Management Section); Sokoine University of Agriculture (Dept. of Animal Science and Production); University of Dar es Salaam (Dept. of Geography); Associates for Development, Uganda; International Livestock Research Institute.

as a system pastoralism is a rational response to the difficult environment in which it operates and which, if supported with the right policies, offers great economic potential.

(iv) *Testing the material.* Given the diversity of pastoral and agro-pastoral systems in East Africa and the innovative pedagogic approach in which the training is delivered (see below), it was necessary to test the materials. A series of tests were thus conducted over eighteen months with representatives of the training's different target groups to evaluate the logic of the arguments presented in the training, the pertinence and accessibility of the evidence provided in support of the arguments and the effectiveness of the pedagogic approach.¹³

Key characteristics of the training

The training course delivered at MS/TCDC is designed to be accessible to a broad range of actors and seeks actively to change their perceptions and understanding of pastoralism and build their capacity to make the case for pastoralism as a viable land use system. It is not a conventional training where participants are the passive recipients of knowledge delivered by an "expert". Rather it is a highly participatory awareness raising and training process that uses participants' existing knowledge base as its starting point. The **principal of self-discovery guides** the training. Although new scientific and legal information is introduced throughout the course whenever pertinent, this is only done after the participants have analysed and presented their own vision or interpretation. New information is therefore added onto a structure which is fully understood, rather than being the basis of the training itself. This approach plays a critical role in validating the indigenous knowledge base and experience of those participants from pastoral backgrounds. For example, when the training addresses fire as one of the key determinants of savannah ecosystem management specific attention is given to a case study on how pastoralists have traditionally used fire as tool. The case study demonstrates how they have a sophisticated

¹³ A full report on the results of the training is available.

understanding of the influence of season (moisture, fuel load) on fire characteristics (e.g. its intensity) as well as its differentiated effects on grasses, shrubs and trees. This knowledge is subsequently validated by the presentation of scientific data collected by range scientists in Kruger National Park and south-western Uganda. Through this process not only do participants from pastoral communities develop skills and confidence to articulate their knowledge in the language of policy makers and government technical staff, but critically all participants begin to understand pastoralism in a new light.

The **multi-disciplinary** nature of the training is another of its key features. Module 1 for example explicitly brings together information on ecosystem biology and the social sciences. It demonstrates the close links between dryland ecosystem resilience and livelihood resilience and how pastoral livelihood strategies (e.g. mobility) directly contribute to not only good environmental management, but also improved pastoral production and productivity. Another example is how in Module 2 a political economic analysis from an historical perspective is brought to bear on land and natural resource management policy in East Africa. This enables participants to appreciate how land and control over its use has dominated colonial and independent government relations with local people, and how an analysis of the dispossession of pastoral land has to include a sound understanding of wider national and increasingly international economic and political interests. The training also ensures a gender analysis not only of the dynamics of pastoral systems but also the policy environment in relation to land.¹⁴

The training specifically **challenges the enduring preconceptions** held by many decision-makers in Africa of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists and their way of life, which have a direct impact on policy with **evidence-based arguments**. For example, the commonly held perception that mobility is inherently backward, unnecessary, chaotic and disruptive (see box 1 above) is challenged through an analysis of detailed case studies demonstrating the

¹⁴ There is however relatively little research on the gender dimensions of the changing dynamics of pastoral land tenure.

Careful planning of different forms of mobility as well as its benefits on livestock productivity. Specific data is presented and analysed demonstrating how cattle raised under mobile systems are more fertile, have a lower rate of calf mortality and produce more milk and for longer periods than cattle raised under sedentary systems (Colin de Verdière P. 1995). Through such analysis, participants are able to conclude and argue how maximising livestock fertility and milk production rather than live-animal weight are key production objectives of pastoralists seeking to balance their immediate and future needs of their family. And how livestock mobility, by allowing animals to benefit from the best and most abundant pastures, not only ensures the optimal use of scarce resources, but also allows pastoralists to achieve their livelihood objectives.

Visual aids, particularly photos but also maps and data presented in a variety of ways (pie charts, graphs, tables) are a major feature of the training and are used to open discussion on a particular topic, to present evidence of common preconceptions and to reinforce key messages. Photos 1 and 2, for example, are used to stimulate debate on the notion of rangeland degradation and when and how it may occur as well as the key positive contributions livestock make to the environment. The photos show two contrasting situations at the end of the dry season - photo 1 is a situation when there is relatively little standing biomass whereas photo 2 shows the opposite. Participants are asked to comment and analyse which of the two situations they think is a sign of good environmental management. They invariably say photo 2. Through discussion and the presentation of further data, participants develop a more sophisticated understanding of how standing biomass after the rains represents a supply of feed for livestock for the dry season, and how its careful management before the arrival of the next rains is important for livestock nutrition and the environment. The exercise allows participants to conclude that by the end of the dry season, it is normal indeed preferable that most of it is eaten (i.e. photo 1) to permit unimpeded new growth with the arrival of the rains. Photo 1 thus is not an

example of environmental degradation but demonstrates the normal cyclical cycle of grasses, particularly annuals, in dryland environments.

[Insert photos 1 and 2]

The training specifically challenges participants to review and reconstruct their understanding of pastoralism as a livelihood system on the basis of a complete and multidisciplinary understanding of its dynamics in East Africa. By the end of the course, participants are not only more knowledgeable about pastoral systems in East Africa, they are crucially equipped to argue the case for pastoralism within current policy debates and reform processes on land, natural resources, decentralisation and private investment. Through these arguments, they are also able directly to challenge many of the deep-seated misunderstandings and prejudices widely held by policy makers on pastoralism. It is in this sense that the course is “empowering”.

4. Challenging the policy environment for pastoral development in East Africa

Many hopes and fears are riding on the successive waves of policy reform sweeping East Africa over the past 5-10 years. Poverty Reduction Strategy processes (PRSP) and decentralisation reforms in Tanzania and Uganda are introducing a radical new agenda involving civil society and the private sector in areas traditionally controlled by central State authorities. Decentralisation in particular offers real opportunities for local people to participate in decision-making processes, which have a direct impact on their lives and livelihoods.

PRSP processes with their emphasis on participatory policy-making provide an opportunity for pastoralists to make meaningful inputs into the process (Odhiambo, 2006). In all three countries of East Africa, pastoral communities have taken advantage of these provisions to assert their rights and articulate their specific needs in poverty reduction. In Kenya these efforts have led, for the first time, to the government devoting an entire chapter in its

Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation to strategies for the development of arid and semi-arid lands. In Tanzania, active advocacy and engagement by pastoral NGOs resulted in the *National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty* (NSGRP) recognising pastoralism as a livelihood system. In Uganda, the 2004 *Poverty Eradication Action Plan* articulates the interests of pastoralists for the first time with a commitment that “pastoralists and their farming systems will be a key component in the new (livestock) policy.”¹⁵

In practice, however, there are many challenges. The technical nature of the reforms is a major constraint to their appropriation and use by citizens to effect governance changes at the local level. Most people, particularly in rural areas, have little awareness of the policy and legislative framework governing access to resources and the management of local government. They are generally unaware of the provisions specifying the duties and obligations of government and their technical staff, particularly with respect to consultation with local citizens. Indeed, even local government leaders and many technical staff at this level do not have sufficient understanding of the framework and the changes that it introduces in how local government is implemented. In the absence of citizen awareness and vigilance, local leaders and technical staff, many of whom have occupied these positions for many years, continue with a “business as usual” approach. Such accountability as does exist in the system is upwards to the Ministry and development partners who provide the money and resources.

Within central government, there continues to be a gap between policy and legislative stipulations on the one hand and practice on the other. Governments, even while emphasising their commitment to decentralisation, have shown little willingness to trust the control of land and key natural resources to local governments, particularly because such control is critical for attracting foreign direct investment. All governments in East

¹⁵ Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, 2004: *Poverty Eradication Action Plan 2004/5 - 2007/8*.

Africa have embarked on a radical agenda of institutional reform centred on the modernisation of the agricultural sector as the motor of economic development for poverty reduction.¹⁶ Modernisation of agricultural production is perceived as critical to the profitable use of the abundant land resources in the region. A number of policy interventions have been implemented in the land sector in order to make it attractive to foreign investors. Among these are the establishment of the Land Bank within the Tanzania Investment Centre to facilitate allocation of supposed "empty" or under-utilised land, and formalisation of land tenure arrangements, especially registration and individual titling.

These interventions raise critical questions and concerns for rural livelihoods and citizen ownership and participation in development processes. Not only is the pace of policy reform too fast for most citizens to follow, but the focus on the "modernisation" and commercialisation of the economy based on investment, particularly foreign investment, will further marginalise rural resource dependent communities. Serious questions about equity arise when pastoral areas, classified as empty or under-utilised, are targeted to be included in the Land Bank.

There is an apparent disconnect between the promise of citizen empowerment and participatory democracy implicit in decentralisation and other reforms, and the alienation of citizens from their natural resource base that often comes with the promotion of privatisation, formalisation and foreign direct investment in the natural resources sector. While decentralisation articulates the spirit of devolution of authority and decision making over resources to local governments, the 'modernisation' approach tends to institutionalise the reverse.

For pastoralists, the key problem arises from the lack of understanding of the dynamics of pastoralism as an appropriate land use and livelihood system, particularly in the dry areas

¹⁶ Programme for modernisation of agriculture (Uganda); the Strategy for revitalisation of agriculture (Kenya); and the Agricultural sector development programme (Tanzania).

of East Africa. Despite its recognition in PRSPs, many sectoral policies retain strong negative perceptions of its impact on the environment or contribution to national economies (Shem and Mattee, 2006).¹⁷ Equally disturbing is the formalisation agenda being pushed by Hernando de Soto, and which the government of Tanzania has enthusiastically embraced. This inappropriate policy framework is reinforced by the underdevelopment that characterises the livestock sector, thus undermining opportunities for the sector to make its rightful contribution to the economy.

National policy environments in East Africa are still not conducive to supporting sustainable pastoral livelihoods. This is partly a function of a lack of understanding by key policy actors of the rationale and pertinence of pastoral land use. In particular, they do not appreciate the importance of mobility, local breeds of livestock, and a hierarchy of negotiated rights of control and access to pastures, water and other key resources as key features of sustainable pastoral land use in drylands areas. However, it is also a function of the absence of a well-organised, informed and effective pastoral civil society with both strong political legitimacy and capacity to articulate the value of pastoralism as a land use and livelihood system. Pastoral communities and their leaders have to develop the capacities for effective engagement with policy processes and in this regard a thorough understanding of how they operate coupled with the establishment of accountable framework for representation are essential.

The training course on pastoralism and policy provides pastoral organisations with a foundation for putting in place these conditions. Specifically, it builds the capacity of participants to engage in an informed and positive manner with the above policy reforms in three key areas.

- First, by enabling them to articulate the rationale of pastoralism and agro-pastoralism, and argue the case for its recognition as an economically viable and

¹⁷ See box 1 above.

environmentally sound form of land use well adapted to dryland areas. This is particularly relevant for pastoral and agro-pastoral leaders and community groups.

- Second, in facilitating a critical analysis of the pertinence and value of past and current policies and legislation governing resource management in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas, participants are able to use the knowledge they have gained from Module 1 to explore alternative institutional, legal and policy “models” better adapted to local realities.
- Finally, the training by adopting a “teaching” style based on self-discovery rather than lecturing allows participants to assess and analyse their perceptions of, and attitudes towards, pastoral and agro-pastoral people and their way of life. This pedagogic approach is a powerful tool contributing to changing the negative perceptions of pastoralism and agro-pastoralism currently held by many actors within East Africa.

5. Conclusion

There is a growing body of literature exploring the linkages between research and policy processes, particularly how the former can influence the latter. Earlier assumptions about “benevolent” policy makers waiting for research findings and ensuing policy recommendations to orient their strategic choices have given way to a more sophisticated understanding of the policy process and of the different factors affecting it. Central to this debate is the issue of the legitimacy of “experts” seeking to influence policy, particularly northern-based researchers participating in national policy processes in African countries versus that of citizens of the countries who have voting rights and who bear the consequences of policy implementation.

This paper broadens the research-policy equation debate by introducing a practical tool to allow ordinary citizens, in this case pastoralists, to make good use of research to inform and influence decision-making processes at both local and national levels, which have a

direct impact on their lives. Empowering local people in this respect raises further issues about the legitimacy of their own institutions and the degree to which the State is willing to accept genuine participation from their citizens in the policy formulation and implementation process.

Policy making in East Africa has always been an elitist, urban-based process, with rural people being merely the objects and the recipients of policy stipulations from above. Although great strides have been made in getting citizens to be involved in these processes, particularly within the framework of Poverty Reduction Strategies and in the context of increased democratisation, the global dimension introduced by the imperatives of foreign direct investment and the integration of the economies of the region into the global economy threaten to reverse these gains. To the extent that policy imperatives are now increasingly externally generated and propelled by the interests of the 'foreign investor', the opportunities for citizen interests to inform policy are undermined. The power that foreign investors exercise on local political elites, coupled with inadequate capacity, poor, unaccountable and non-transparent institutional frameworks, and corruption, pose a serious threat to the interests of local people.

The danger and threat is more ominous for pastoralists in view of their capacity constraints. To counter this danger, pastoralists and those who support them must not only generate data through research and seek to feed these into the policy-making framework. They must also appreciate the intricate dynamics that now inform policy processes in the region, the diversity of players and stakes involved, and the need for leverage to influence policies in favour of pastoralists or at the minimum to contain the threat to pastoral livelihoods arising from these policies. In this connection, policy research and analysis must be coupled with strategic advocacy that involves strategic alliance building with other rural smallholders and producers whose livelihoods and interests are under equal threat from the same forces. Indeed, such advocacy cannot any longer be directed only at

national governments, who are in some cases as much victims as perpetrators of bad policies.

Fortunately, there is scope for more effective engagement with ongoing policy processes. Both governments and donors are increasingly voicing the rhetoric of participation and downward accountability of development processes to the citizens. The failure of development processes in the region since independence has brought into sharp focus the limits of top-down approaches to development. Key policy actors are increasingly willing to listen to evidence-based analyses of the reality of rural people, and to take these into account in seeking solutions to the persistent poverty and vulnerability that pervades the region. As long as citizens understand and are able to anticipate the complexities in which these policy actors operate, it is possible for targeted and well thought out policy research and advocacy grounded on the reality of pastoralists and other rural smallholders to influence the course of rural development in East Africa in favour of these groups.

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Appendix 1: Overall structure of Module 1

Module 1: The Pastoral System		
Pillar 1: Natural Resources	Pillar 2: The Herd	Pillar 3: The Family
<p>KQ1: What are the main natural resources in EA? A1: Natural pastures are the major source of feed.</p>	<p>KQ1: What is meant by a herd?</p>	<p>KQ1: What is a pastoral family?</p>
<p>KQ2: What are the dynamics of natural pastures in EA? A1: Seasonal variations in rainfall have an important influence on grasses. A2: Total seasonal rainfall has an important influence on grasses. A3: Inter-annual rainfall variations have an important influence on pastures A4: Soil type has an important influence on natural pastures. A5: Grazing rhythm during the dry & rainy seasons has an important influence on natural pastures & livestock A6: Livestock are important for rangeland ecology. A7: Wildlife have an important influence on natural pastures & water. A8: Fire has an important influence on natural pastures. A9: Moisture, soil nutrients, grazing and fire are the determinants of savannah structure.</p>	<p>KQ2: How is a herd composed? A1: A herd is usually made up of several species of livestock. A2: A herd is composed of animals of different sex and ages. A3: A herd is composed of animals over which the family has different rights of use and ownership.</p>	<p>KQ2: What is the relationship between the family and the herd? A1: The family cannot live off meat and milk alone. A2: Pastoral work is hard and there is a strong division of labour. A3: Pastoralists are constantly seeking the right balance between the size of their herd and the number of people it has to support.</p>
<p>KQ3: What are the dynamics of other livestock feeds? A1: In some pastoral systems other feeds can contribute to livestock nutrition.</p>	<p>KQ3: How does a herd evolve over time? A1: A herd is affected by seasonal variations in natural resources. A2: Wildlife-livestock interactions have an effect on the herd. A3: In the long-term, the natural growth rate of livestock is relatively slow and fluctuates.</p>	<p>What strategies are used by families to respond to changing herd size?</p>
<p>KQ4: What are the dynamics of water resources? A1: Depending on season & location livestock use different types of water point. A2: The relationship between water & pasture is most critical in the dry season. A3: The technical characteristics and legal status of water points are crucial for sustainable range management.</p>	<p>KQ4: What strategies do pastoralists use to manage their herds?</p>	
<p>KQ5: What strategies do pastoralists use to manage pastoral resources? A1: Mobility is a fundamental strategy for the good management of rangelands.</p>		