

# **The Policy and Practice of Educational Service Provision for Pastoralists in Tanzania**

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## **Introduction**

Since the 1990s, international organisations and funding bodies have become increasingly interested in the plight of pastoralists. Donors have compelled recipient countries with large numbers of pastoralists to take on board this agenda, pressuring governments to focus more on pastoralist issues in their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Increasing donor support for the pastoralist agenda has also led to an increase in the civil society organizations championing pastoralist issues. These factors have led governments with significant pastoralist populations to display, to varying degrees, an increasing concern for the plight of pastoralists. Moreover, if countries are to make progress on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is recognised that attention will have to be paid to pastoralist areas, which have both a high incidence of ‘poverty’ (as defined in the MDGs), and low levels of educational participation and attainment.

The research summarized in this brief explores the context within which policies concerning education in the pastoralist regions of Tanzania have been formulated and implemented. The study examines the practice of educational provision in these areas and assesses the impact these policies are likely to have on pastoralist poverty.

## **Pastoral Policy in Tanzania**

The initial PRSP from Tanzania had very few references to livestock, and none to pastoralism as a livelihood. This neglect was also evident in other earlier policy documents. Where pastoralism or livestock was mentioned, this tended to paint a negative picture and was generally in the context of improving the livestock industry, rather than concern over the situation of pastoralists. More recently, as a reflection of the heightened international focus on pastoralists, and solicited pastoralist input in the 2004 PRSP Review, pastoralism has begun to be seen, at least in policy documents, as a significant issue. For example, the Tanzanian National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty 2005 states that:

*“Achievement of sustainable and broad-based growth will incorporate the following strategic actions ...: Promoting efficient utilization of rangeland, empowering pastoralists to improve livestock productivity through improved access to veterinary services, reliable water supply, **recognizing pastoralism as sustainable livelihood...**”*

## **Educational Policy in Pastoralist Areas**

The extent to which the rhetoric concerning pastoralists mirrors a genuine commitment among Tanzanian policy makers to support the sustainability of pastoralist livelihoods is suggested by the manner in which they tackle the challenges for educational service provision in pastoral areas. Providing educational opportunities for the children of pastoralists poses several unique challenges. Low population densities and the relatively harsh and isolated environments that pastoralists inhabit mean schools are few and distant and qualified teachers are difficult to source. Furthermore, pastoralist mobility and a household economy that is

traditionally quite dependent on child labour increases the opportunity costs of schooling for pastoral children. This explains the relatively low rates of educational enrolment in two of the study sample villages: 49% and 52% compared to a national average of 95%.

While the Kenyan government has explicitly document a commitment to affirmative action to bridge the education gap between pastoralist children and the rest of the nation's youth, this is not the case in Tanzania. No formal government statement, either in the realm of education policy or a national development strategy, documents any recognition of the unique challenges of providing education in pastoralist areas. While a couple of education programs exist that recognize the specific challenges of educating children from 'disadvantaged' communities, they do not respond to the particular obstacles pastoralists face, nor are they sufficiently operational.

The Basic Education Master Plan (BEMP), drafted in 2001, seeks to target and identify the needs of children from communities of hunters, fishermen, pastoralists and gatherers, in order to afford them with specially designed programs aimed at improving their enrolment. However, the BEMP did not progress beyond the planning stage. Another initiative, the Complimentary Basic Education and Training (COBET) program to provide non-formal education to cater for out-of school youth, including "nomadic Communities, street children, disabled, and orphans", was initiated in 2003. While the COBET program did indeed get implemented, it was plagued with insufficient funding, ill-equipped and trained instructors, and was never distributed widely across the nation.

### **Conclusions and Policy Implications**

This research explored the ways in which international and national agendas concerning pastoralism and education are manifested in the policy and practice of educational service provision in pastoralist areas in Tanzania. Pastoralists in Tanzania lack a voice in the policy process, and are ill-equipped to advocate for change in terms of policies or the implementation of policies. The relative unwillingness apparent in Tanzanian policy and practice to address the specific challenges of educational service provision for pastoralists is also related to Tanzania's past and current national ethos of de-emphasising difference and promoting conformity.

Current education policies in Tanzania have little to offer in terms of policy changes specifically formulated for Tanzania's pastoral communities. It is insufficiently recognised in Tanzanian education policies that these areas have distinct and chronic problems, over and above those faced by the sector as a whole. This neglect of pastoralist areas in terms of educational service provision in both policy and practice are at odds with the international and (to a limited degree) national rhetoric which aims to support pastoralism as a sustainable livelihood.

Changes in policy and practice are essential if education is to reduce poverty and support pastoralism as a sustainable livelihood. Those formulating educational policies in Tanzania need to re-evaluate their agendas concerning pastoralism in order to put into action the Tanzanian government's commitment to recognize pastoralism as a sustainable livelihood. Acknowledging and facing up to the special challenges of providing educational provision to pastoralist areas is an important first step.

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