



## IYRP Working Group: Pastoralism & Gender

Towards IYRP 2026

### *Concept Note*

#### **Background**

“Pastoralism & Gender” is more than “Women in Pastoralism” or “Women Pastoralists”. Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men or other gender identities that are socially constructed. This includes cultural, social or psychological norms, behaviours and roles. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.

Pastoralism and gender is an under-explored area; there are not many studies, publications or documents on the subject. Part of the problem perhaps has been methodological. Pastoralism and mobility require a different approach and lens. This absence is reflected in the work undertaken with pastoralists where gender concerns and perspectives are often overlooked or ignored. Addressing this gap is key. Indeed, understanding gender relations and the power dynamics behind them is a prerequisite for understanding people's access to and distribution of resources, the ability to make decisions and the way women and men, boys and girls are affected by political processes and social development.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Objectives**

The Working Group (WG) “Pastoralism & Gender” – targeting the IYRP 2026 – sets itself the following objectives:

- To give greater visibility and amplify the voices of pastoralist women and girls
- To generate better understanding of gender issues in all aspects related to rangelands and pastoralism, including recognising how gender is understood within different pastoralist societies
- To highlight the advantages of bringing a gender lens to pastoralist policy and development issues
- To disseminate key information around gender and pastoralism
- To generate discussions on this topic with a view to raising awareness
- To identify gaps in research on gender and pastoralism
- To advance gender justice/equality and contribute to equal access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making
- To support the other IYRP WGs in their efforts to incorporate a gender lens into their work
- To make sure gender issues receive adequate attention in the IYRP 2026 and other events leading up to the IYRP or working on pastoralist concerns.

Gender is a crosscutting theme that overlaps with other thematic areas. This WG would like to engage with the other IYRP WGs to bring gender perspectives into their themes as well as into the overall IYRP preparation and implementation process.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/gender/understanding-gender/>

## **Thematic issues**

Some of the issues that the WG would like to address are:

- Why is it important to give attention to gender issues – what difference does it make in pastoralist development and in the IYRP preparation and implementation process?
- Methodologies for gender studies in pastoralist societies and how to apply an intersectional lens
- Gender-responsive methodologies on social organisation, participation, management and governance in pastoralist environments
- Nature, culture and heritage, pastoralists' links to land and animals (including water and biodiversity)
- Differences in men's and women's access to rangeland resources, land rights and decision-making in pastoral management and governance issues
- Art, music and craft in pastoralist communities, specifically that practised by women
- Women's knowledge and responsibilities in pastoralist families
- Intergenerational learning and how knowledge is shared in pastoralist societies
- Food in pastoral households: production, processing, pastoral diets
- Women's rights to livestock products and the income they generate
- Impact of climate change – how does it affect women on the move?
- How do state policies influence pastoralist women and youth – directly or indirectly?
- Understanding contemporary pastoralist societies, their social organisation, kinship structures: how they differ from sedentary communities – and gender issues within this
- Sedentarisation, migration, transitions and their gender-related impacts on pastoralist society: how do they impact men, women and children differently?
- Conflict and its impacts on women and children
- Gender-based violence in pastoralist communities: its impact on pastoralist women and girls and how it can be minimised
- Mothers and daughters: how daughters in the community view their mothers, how would they like to change, what would they like to retain? (i.e. gender perspectives on pastoralist futures).

Naturally, we cannot address all these issues; some topics may be of greater interest or relevance in some regions or geographical niches than in others.

## **Activities and ways of working**

Some of the possible activities we envisage in this WG are research studies, regular reading and discussion groups, training on gendered approaches made available to different IYRP WG partners to enable different groups to build up capacity, host webinars and meetings to initiate interest and dialogue on the subject. We wish to contribute evidence-based research for policy and advocacy work to advance the rights of women and girls and of pastoralist communities as a whole.

To achieve this, we will encourage and engage in participatory research with pastoralist communities, and generate knowledge that is grounded in the lived-experience and narratives across different generations of men and women pastoralists. We will share experiences and ideas, and provide spaces for these exchanges between academics, NGOs and pastoralist actors and networks. We will also link up with networks of pastoralists such as GER (Ganaderas en Red), WAMIP (World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples) and WeCaN (FAO Nurturing Community of Knowledge Practice for Women in dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems).

## **Composition**

- This WG is open to pastoralists as well as academics, NGO representatives, and individuals of all genders within the IYRP International Support Group (ISG) who are keen to collaborate on this theme
- Ideally, at least one representative from each of the other WGs would become a member of this WG
- Other organisations or networks with an interest in gender and pastoralism, including GER, WAMIP and WeCaN, are very welcome to join.

If you wish to join, collaborate or support this WG, please get in touch with the WG coordinator Nitya Ghotge (nityaowc19@gmail.com).

## **Some possible outputs**

- Research studies and papers
- Policy briefs, strategy and action plans
- Participatory video or pastoralist women's own photo-stories (photovoice) to give voice to pastoralist women, men and children about their beliefs, hopes and aspirations (this could be compiled into films or publications)
- Open-access collection of recipes from pastoralist families
- Special issue of Perspectives of Pastoralism Film Festival devoted to women and girls
- Pastoralist women's gatherings and networking initiatives to complement other IYRP activities.

## **Meetings**

Meetings will be organised online as agreed within the WG.

## **Resources**

Organisations involved in this WG may be able to contribute resources for some activities, e.g. to make pastoralist women's and girls' voices more widely heard in international events.