



IYRP Working Group: Pastoralism & Gender

Towards IYRP 2026

Concept Note

Background

“Pastoralism & Gender” is more than “Women in Pastoralism” or “Women Pastoralists”. According to the World Development Report (WDR 2012), gender is defined as socially constructed norms and ideologies which determine the behaviour and actions of men and women. *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.*¹

Pastoralism and gender is an under-researched and under-explored area and, even today, 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 gender perspectives are often overlooked or ignored. The subject of gender itself is constantly evolving.

Objectives

The Working Group (WG) “Pastoralism & Gender” – targeting the IYRP 2026 – would like to focus on and bring attention to gender in pastoralism. The WG sets itself the following objectives:

- To highlight the advantages of bringing a gender lens to pastoralist policy and development issues
- To disseminate key information around gender and pastoralism and generate discussions on this topic with a view to raise/increase awareness
- To identify gaps in research on gender and pastoralism
- 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

Gender is a crosscutting theme that has 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.

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
- 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
- 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

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

- 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 policies influence pastoralist women and youth—directly or indirectly
- Understanding pastoralist societies, their social organisation, kinship structures: how they differ from sedentary communities – and gender issues within this
- Transitions in pastoralist societies: how do they impact men, women and children differently?
- Contemporary pastoralist society: examples from different continents
- Sedentarisation and its impact on pastoralist society
- Conflict and its impacts on women and children
- Gender-based violence in pastoralist communities: its impact on pastoralist women and how it can be minimised.

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

How do we engage with these different groups? By doing research with the communities through lived-experience narratives across different generations of men and women pastoralists, sharing experiences and ideas, providing spaces for these exchanges.

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, policy and advocacy work.

Composition

- Any individual within the IYRP International Support Group (ISG) who is keen to collaborate on this theme
- One representative from each of the other WGs can be a member of this WG
- Network with WeCan and WAMIP
- Other networks with a similar focus

Some possible outputs

- Voices of pastoralist women and men: their beliefs, hopes and aspirations.... a film or a publication (possible participatory video? pastoralist women's own photo-stories?)
- 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)
- Recipes from pastoral families – an open-access collection
- Research studies and papers, policy briefs, strategy and action plans
- Special issue of Perspectives of Pastoralism Film Festival devoted to women & youth
- Pastoralist women's gatherings to complement other gatherings

Expected outcomes

- Greater visibility of pastoralist women
- Amplified voices of pastoralist women and girls
- Better understanding of gender issues in all aspects related to rangelands and pastoralism

Meetings

Meetings will be organised every month or as suitable.

Resources

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