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“Solidarity in a competing world —
fair use of resources”

Multiple Scale Consultation in Pastoral Development Depicts Deficient Knowledge Management as Impediment to Decentralisation

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Abstract

Crisis and increased marginalisation has led international institutions to put pastoralism on the political agenda. Government decentralisation processes, changed development narratives and supportive advocacy are among the first signs of progress towards supporting policies for pastoralism. But is it enough and what must change? A multiple-scale consultation process to evaluate the level of political integration and the effectiveness of services provided to pastoralists was carried out in 26 countries and 8 selected pastoralist hotspots. In each country, a minimum of 3 interlocutors from central government, public and private service delivery, local decision makers were interviewed, whereas in the hotspots 315 pastoralists have been surveyed in respect to their practices. Many pastoralists were found to be associated to social networks, such as market-, religious-, and rangeland groups. However, in order to link with local government authorities (LGA), pastoralists showed their preference for leaders' councils (35 % of respondents) and animal health networks (31 % of respondents). Government extension workers were the principal source of information for 49 % of the respondents, followed by nearby pastoralists (37 %). Traditional group meetings were seen by 45 % to be the most appropriate information technology, together with local radio (31 %) and mobile phone (31 %). Throughout our survey, pastoralist demanded improved knowledge access and communication with public bodies, but stressing the importance of LGA for being main motor for basic services, education, veterinary, information and knowledge exchange. Local capacities for inclusive territorial development are required and must be built, in order to assume responsibilities, act autonomously and take decentralised decisions. However, the perceptions on the transparency of decision making and publicly available procedures of agencies and ministries illustrates a comparative low level character. On the contrary, pastoral civil society organisations are seen by the vast majority of the pastoralists as transparent organisations. Working with 'change agents' i.e. topics such as veterinary service, that connect multiple scales along pastoralist households, community leaders, civil society groups, LGA and national authorities could constitute an important learning process when building territorial capacities. Pastoral development is then possible when territorial decisions are taken jointly.

Keywords: Multiple-scale consultation, pastoralism, territories