



Tropentag, September 11-13, 2024, hybrid conference

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## Participatory rangeland management: Understanding women’s engagement and implications for social change

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### Abstract

Climate change impacts severely affect livestock production systems in East Africa and elsewhere. Efforts to enhance resilience and capacities to anticipate, cope with, and recover from climate impacts will be essential to sustain livestock dependent communities. Gender roles in pastoral systems across East Africa are changing. Such shifts require more attention to understanding emerging opportunities for women to engage in rangeland governance institutions. Our purpose is to better understand women’s engagement in participatory rangeland management (PRM) processes and implications for broader social change, that refers to changes in women’s agency in rangeland institutions and the wider community. We drew upon qualitative data collected through key informant interviews, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, in Baringo County, Kenya. We adapted and used a participation framework to analyse women’s participation in rangeland activities, institutions and the household, to better understand implications for transformative agency. Overall, we found that women meaningfully participated in different aspects of PRM processes while changes in intra-household decision-making were fewer. PRM has increased women’s voice and agency in governance of rangeland resources and potential to benefit from rangeland resources. Participation in multiple PRM activities reinforced women’s agency in pastoral rangeland institutions in diverse contexts. Women’s inclusion in rangeland management institutions has the potential for strategic and measurable impacts upon women’s time and labour allocation. Multiple challenges however persist and include social norms and practices that hinder women’s opportunities to leave their homes. Intersectional analyses into understanding adaptation to climate change and opportunities for socially inclusive efforts to enhance resilience are recommended.

**Keywords:** Adaptation, community, Kenya, pastoralist