Cross-border coordination of livestock movements and sharing of natural resources among pastoralist communities in the Greater Karamoja Cluster

Operationalising the humanitarian-development-peace nexus through the promotion of intercommunity coexistence

Context

The Greater Karamoja Cluster (GKC) encompasses the southwestern parts of Ethiopia, northwestern Kenya, the southeastern parts of South Sudan and northeastern Uganda. Pastoralism is the principal source of livelihood in the GKC. Pastoralists in the GKC largely depend on natural seasonal pastures and water resources for their survival. Livestock mobility remains the prime strategy employed by pastoralists and agropastoralists to cope with the seasonality and changing distribution of these resources. While the human population is estimated at 4.5 million, the livestock population amounts to approximately 9 million cattle, over 11 million sheep, close to 16 million goats and 100,000 donkeys and camels.

Pastoralist groups traditionally rely on interdependent relationships and the symbiotic sharing of knowledge and resources. However, changing state borders have contributed to tensions and restricted their mobility. Climate change has since worsened intercommunal conflicts and disputes over natural resources, straining the pastoralists’ ability to move their herds beyond their communities’ own lands. Located at the periphery of each country’s capital, the drought-prone, cross-border region has the lowest social development indicators (e.g. education and health) and the worst access to services (e.g. agricultural extension services). Though livestock is a crucial livelihood asset, the region is poorly integrated into national livestock marketing systems and conspicuously absent from the vibrant business of livestock exports from the Horn of Africa.

Key facts

Geographic coverage
Border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda.

Target group
Pastoralist communities, and local, national and regional authorities.

Gender
Empowering women as members of resource-sharing committees allows them to advocate that grazing areas close to settlements be reserved for milking herds, to reduce pastoralist women’s workloads.

Nutrition
The holistic livestock management concept links livestock and human health, which is very relevant in pastoralist resilience strategies, including those linked to resource sharing. Keeping herds alive contributes towards food security.
**Challenges**

Frequent and persistent droughts are a recurrent feature of the cluster. The impacts of these droughts are exacerbated by climate change, advancing desertification and the environmental degradation of rangelands. The resulting persistent food insecurity of pastoralist communities is worsened by the occurrence of transboundary animal diseases (TADs) and the eruption of conflicts over natural resources within countries and across borders.

The Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO) decade-long work in the GKC shows that interventions focusing on livestock mobility and natural resource management play an important role towards strengthening livelihoods, sustaining peace and indirectly preventing conflict. More specifically, the sustainable cross-border sharing of natural resources and the coordination of animal movements (and the services associated with it, such as vaccination and health inspection) have been used effectively by FAO and its partners to prevent and mitigate conflicts. Interventions combining a focus on livestock mobility and the preservation of natural resources with the goals of sustainable social transformation, innovation and conflict prevention have proved most cost-effective at increasing resilience.

FAO and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development’s (IGAD) Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) have been the main facilitators of efforts to promote intercommunity, cross-border coordination of livestock mobility and sharing of natural resources in IGAD cross-border areas. This document presents FAO’s experience in this respect, gained over the past decade in different cross-border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan.
What does cross-border collaboration entail, and how does it contribute to building resilient livelihoods?

Harmonized initiatives by FAO, IGAD and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that promote the sharing of pastoral natural resources and the coordination of cross-border livestock movements build on a tradition of resource sharing between neighbouring clans. The coordination of decisions regarding the use of pastures and water for livestock rearing requires information on livestock movements to be shared between the different groups that use the same resources. Decisions must be documented (for example, by maps and written agreements regarding the crossing of borders) and based on knowledge to provide opportunities for learning and innovation.

The promotion of cross-border collaboration takes places at three interdependent levels:
- the community level,
- the level of the national government (policymaking and the provision of technical assistance), and
- the regional level (IGAD).

Regular cross-border dialogue to share pastoral resources and coordinate livestock movements can be a very cost-efficient way to strengthen the livelihoods of pastoral communities and boost their conflict management capacities, and thus to promote greater stability and peace. The sharing of pastoral resources (and services) promotes the resilience of resource-poor communities; it may also create new opportunities for cross-border trade and open up new markets. In addition, the sharing of resources and the coordination of livestock movements may create opportunities for coordinated and harmonized investments in cross-border areas by national and regional authorities, and vice versa. For example, the Kenyan National Veterinary Services implemented a campaign to vaccinate the livestock of communities in Kenya and Uganda; the campaign resulted in a greater coordination of livestock movements and improved access to grazing land and marketing services for pastoralists in border areas.

The sharing and coordinated use of natural resources promotes the peaceful coexistence of pastoral communities by protecting their key livelihood assets and boosting their resilience. FAO strongly believes that the modest costs involved in bringing together communities across borders to discuss the management of resources and resolve potential conflicts are more than offset by the benefits: improved resilience and strengthened livelihoods, better natural resource management, more trade and peace.
Methodological approach

Diagnosing the territory

The successful cross-border sharing of pastoral resources and coordination of livestock movements requires a correct initial territorial diagnosis. This diagnosis must include the identification of traditional institutions and territorial stakeholders, as well as an analysis of the roles and responsibilities of local authorities and power imbalances. Although often overlooked, access to land plays a key role in protracted crises. **FAO promotes a people-centred, negotiation-based approach**, rather than just a technical solution, to address issues related to the access to and use of land and reduce power imbalances.

Building on existing approaches

The process of the cross-border sharing of pastoral resources and coordination of livestock movements draws upon several bottom-up approaches, including:

- **Community-managed disaster risk reduction (CMDRR):** this is a participatory process bringing together people within the same community to collectively formulate common disaster risk reduction measures. The methodology targets a group of people in a systematic way, to build a safe and resilient community. The nature of the risks and hazards that communities in cross-border areas are exposed to is analyzed in order to develop lasting solutions.

- **Participatory natural resource management (PNRM):** this is a spectrum of approaches ranging from the consultation of local people in decisions about government-owned natural resources, to local people being the key decision makers regarding resources over which they have full ownership. PNRM is used to identify shared resources and find an agreement on their use between different cross-border communities.

- **Community animal health workers (CAHWs):** CAHWs are persons who are trained to provide basic animal health services and give advice on husbandry to livestock keepers. They promote farming techniques that optimize animal production and play an important role in epidemiological surveillance.

- **Livestock and pastoral field school (PFS):** PFSs are “schools without walls” where capacities are built based on existing local knowledge. PFS are guided by the following key principles:
  i. learning is done by doing, and problem-based,
  ii. the herd and the landscape are the main learning grounds,
  iii. discovery-based learning tools trigger a spirit of curiosity and innovation, and
  iv. trained facilitators guide the learning process, not by teaching but by facilitating.

Livestock and pastoral field school (PFS) play a role in the facilitation of cross-border resource sharing.
Impartial and independent facilitation of a high standard is essential to the success of efforts to coordinate cross-border livestock movements and share resources. Both local and national governments have a crucial role to play in this respect.

Any organization capable of acting as a neutral broker can perform the role of facilitator. Facilitation may involve the strengthening of the parties’ negotiation capacities. The duration of facilitation processes varies; some processes run for three to five years. External factors influence the speed of the process. Disarmament, for example, can speed up a facilitation process, while the incidence of droughts may slow the process down. Pre-existing relationships may help during the initial stages, as it takes time to build trust among the parties involved. Speed is not a success factor; the ownership of the process by the key stakeholders at all levels is.

- **Community level**
  This level is the most critical to the success of efforts towards cross-border coordination and sharing. Indeed, the involvement of traditional institutions, community leaders, religious leaders and the wider community in the process is essential. Sensibilization, intercommunity dialogue and the involvement of local (and possibly national) leaders in the discussion help ensure that the process becomes part of the local, national and regional agenda. Community-based organizations and (inter)national NGOs are responsible for this component.

- **Local government level**
  Local government authorities in the cross-border area must liaise to form cross-border managerial and technical bodies to coordinate and implement efforts towards resource sharing and coordination. The executive members of these bodies must be chosen in such a way as to represent the geographic composition of the area involved. In addition, local governments should send out technical teams to assist the communities involved in the prioritization and implementation of actions.

- **National government level**
  The role of national governments is to formulate policy guidelines and guide and facilitate the implementation of prioritized actions at the local level; they must ensure that the necessary resources are made available at the local level. As signatories to the MoU, national governments are accountable for the implementation of the agreements. The role of national ministries is to formulate policy positions and guidelines and supervise the implementation of the agreements; they also report on progress against the actions agreed upon in the MoU at the regional level. While it is the ministries of agriculture that sign the MoU, coordination with other ministries is essential, as the issues involved transcend the domain of agriculture. Issues are often bilateral or multilateral in nature; this warrants the strong involvement of ministries of foreign affairs.

- **Regional government level**
  Regional governments are the overall custodians of agreements to share pastoral resources and coordinate livestock movements. Their main role is to involve regional stakeholders and mobilize resources to enable the implementation of the agreed actions; they also implement regional cross-border interventions. Regional authorities formulate guidelines for policymaking and investment towards regional socio-economic integration. In the GKC, this role is played by IGAD, with support from FAO’s Resilience Team for Eastern Africa (part of FAO’s subregional office for Eastern Africa).
Impacts

The implementation of this promising practice has had positive impacts at the regional, national and local levels, including:

**Impact on cross-border coordination, policymaking and investment**

- The signature of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2013 prompted the setting up by IGAD of its first coordination office for the GKC in Moroto, Uganda. This office coordinates all cross-border interventions aimed at building resilience in the cluster; a joint cross-border coordination committee meets regularly to discuss and coordinate cross-border activities.

- Building on the Kenya-Uganda MoU, a number of cross-border and regional meetings on animal health and resources sharing have been held to discuss disease control, notably between Ethiopia and Kenya, and Tanzania and Kenya.

- The original, bilateral MoU, signed in April 2013 between Kenya and Uganda, was upgraded to a multilateral draft MoU for the GKC in 2015. The final MoU on cross-border animal health and sanitary measures for the GKC was signed on 5 July 2019 in Entebbe, Uganda.

**Impact on pastoral communities**

- The reduction of conflicts along the border has enabled traders to cross the border between Kenya and Uganda more frequently, and safely. As a result, cross-border trade in livestock, grains and other commodities, especially between Moroto and Nakiloro in Uganda and Lokiríama in Turkana County, Kenya, has increased.
• The improved cross-border collaboration and coordination has enabled the governments of Turkana County in Kenya and those of the Moroto and Kotido districts in Uganda to develop a joint drought response. This response included inter alia the vaccination and mass veterinary treatment of livestock, as well as the vaccination of infants. These interventions promoted the peaceful coexistence between the Turkana and Karamojong peoples.

• The agreements for the sharing of natural resources between communities have created new grazing opportunities and reduced the vulnerability of livelihoods to droughts; they have improved both livestock and human health.

• The cross-border collaboration has improved links between (local) governments and communities; this has facilitated the integration of community plans into local government planning, thereby improving local disaster preparedness.

Impact on conflict prevention and mitigation

• The recurrent tensions and violent conflicts in the cross-border areas of Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda have weakened the resilience of community institutions and livelihood systems in many areas. The cross-border sharing of pastoral resources can contribute towards conflict prevention and mitigation. Indeed, the sharing of resources fosters the creation of platforms where communities can mediate disputes, conclude peace agreements and formulate joint grazing policies to avoid future conflicts. For example, work undertaken by FAO and IGAD allowed pastoralists from Turkana in Kenya to escape the 2017 drought and move into Uganda to access grazing lands without causing conflicts with the local Karamojong people. The Governments of South Sudan and Ethiopia both joined the agreement later.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cross-border cooperation on animal health in the IGAD region

Building on earlier initiatives by national governments, the Interafrican Bureau of the African Union (AU-IBAR), the East African Community (EAC), NGOs and local communities, FAO and IGAD worked to strengthen cross-border collaboration between veterinary officers from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda. AU-IBAR and EAC were solicited for policy guidance and technical support. The coordination work by FAO and IGAD resulted in the signing of the very first MoU on cross-border collaboration on animal health in the IGAD region in 2013. The MoU is modelled on the provisions of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community and the agreement creating IGAD, and operationalizes the livestock policies of the countries involved, as well as of AU-IBAR, IGAD and EAC.

Read more.
IGAD has recently set up its first office for the promotion of cross-border cooperation in the GKC, in Moroto, Uganda: The Cross-border Development Facilitation Unit. The office facilitates the dialogue between communities and local authorities in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda; it also coordinates and harmonizes investments towards resilience in the cluster.

**Sustainability**

The cross-border sharing of pastoral resources and coordination of livestock movements reinforces traditional pastoralist institutions and boosts the resilience of pastoral communities to disasters and droughts. It is based on the acknowledgment that local communities have always used mobility as an instrument to manage natural resources such as land and water.

FAO works to anchor the practice of cross-border resource sharing into regional and national strategies and policies; it does so in close collaboration with IGAD and its specialized institutions, such as the IGAD Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) and the IGAD Centre for Pastoral Area and Livestock Development (ICPALD). The upscaling of the original, bilateral MoU to a multilateral MoU is testimony to the success of this work.

IGAD enjoys the support of its Member States, and has formidable political clout through high-level policy organs that work to tackle complex regional issues. Initiatives to promote the practice of cross-border resource sharing therefore benefit greatly from collaboration with IGAD (in addition to that with local and national governments) and from the strengthening of IGAD’s capacities.
Replicability and upscaling

The most important requisite to diffuse and upscale the practice of cross-border resource sharing is political: the conclusion of successful cross-border resource sharing agreements requires long-term political commitment, as evidenced by the provision of supportive measures including:

- sensibilization and the sharing of lessons learned from successful cases between border communities, local authorities and political leaders;
- the provision of trained human resources to ensure adequate facilitation;
- the provision of adequate financial resources;
- the formulation and enforcement of legislation underpinning community governance of natural resources;
- the improvement of communication between ministries;
- the creation or strengthening of structures that enable cross-border collaboration;
- the formulation of a methodology to enable the sharing of pastoral resources across not only national, but also subnational (administrative) and ethnic boundaries.

IGAD is committed to diffusing and upscaling the practice of cross-border resource sharing. It has expanded its initial bilateral agreement between Kenya and Uganda to a multilateral agreement between Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda, and has been the driving force behind the signing of cross-border agreements between Ethiopia and Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti, and Ethiopia and Sudan. An agreement between South Sudan and Sudan has been drafted and endorsed, and is currently awaiting signature by the countries’ ministers.
Bibliography


This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union through the partnership agreement contributing to strengthen the Global Network Against Food Crises. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of FAO and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

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