

[Overview Paper]

Seeking Alternative Strategies: Settled Pastoralists as Farmers, Town Dwellers, Wage Earners, and Traders

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Seeking alternative livelihoods is not a new phenomenon as pastoralists have historically maintained ties with farming and urban communities, often with members of their own families and ethnic groups. But sedentarization has increased dramatically for many former pastoralists in the past half century, driven mainly by impoverishment and stock loss due to reduced mobility, drought, raiding, and political instability. Poor pastoralists have settled to seek livings as farmers, wage earners, craft producers, or traders, and also to benefit from access to health care, famine relief, formal education, and physical security. Wealthier and educated members have also settled to pursue new opportunities in agriculture, livestock marketing, and professional employment.

The transition to farming takes different forms among settled pastoralists, from traditional riverine or rainfed cultivation to large scale mechanized and irrigated agriculture. Income from agriculture ranges from lucrative grain and livestock marketing, almost always dominated by men, to less remunerative dairy and garden production (kale, tobacco, *khat*) in the hands of women. Wage labor jobs for uneducated pastoralists are few and are poorly paid, such as night watchmen or manual labor. Uneducated women face increased poverty in towns and must depend on sales of charcoal, firewood, beer brewing, or prostitution. Those with formal education have access to more lucrative and regular employment (civil service, teaching, commerce, NGO work) and education constitutes a major risk-aversion strategy for pastoral and settled households.

Settled populations face new diseases including HIV/AIDS and nutritional declines, particularly in women and children. There are also changes in traditional patterns of male and age authority, while women often face greater marginalization and impoverishment. Conflicts over land also increase, between both herder and farming groups, and within and between settled pastoral groups as ethnic groups and the new elite compete for farming, herding, and commercial resources. Benefits of settling are also apparent, as households or their members seek new livelihood alternatives, education, health care, and physical security. This paper reviews these issues of alternative strategies with examples drawn from Maasai, Samburu, Rendille, Beja, Nuer-Dinka, Fulani, and Tuareg populations.