

**More than climate change:  
pressures leading to innovation by pastoralists in Ethiopia and Niger**

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An exploratory study was made in Ethiopia and Niger into pastoralists' responses to climate change. It examined technical and institutional innovations developed by pastoralists to adapt to new conditions. It identified a wide range of technical and institutional innovations that pastoralists developed to adapt to new conditions, while seeking food security, sustainable resource management and improved governance within their socio-political units. Many of these innovations are related to maintaining mobility, an important basis for pastoralist resilience. Some innovations are location-specific and cannot be scaled up easily to other areas. However, they offer starting points for joint action by pastoralists, researchers, development agents and government authorities to support pastoralists' efforts to deal with changing conditions.

The study revealed that pastoralists have considerable knowledge and experience in dealing with climatic variability, which can be expected to increase with climate change. However, various other factors, such as their marginalisation in decision-making about resource use, exert pressure on pastoralists and increase their vulnerability to climate change, as these pressures restrict their room to adapt. Local innovation in adaptation to climate change needs to be assessed also in the light of these other economic and socio-political pressures.

The focus in pastoralist development should be not so much on specific innovations, but rather on recognising local innovation as a process and stimulating its continuation, in interaction with other stakeholders. Local adaptive capacities can be strengthened through joint experimentation, investigation and action led by the pastoralists themselves, including action to address the pressures coming before climate change.