

Empowerment of Women in Pastoralism and Agriculture in Nigeria's Sahel Region

Pastoralism and mixed farming production, largely managed by pastoral communities in Nigeria's Sahel region is a key component of Nigeria's economy. Pastoralists make use of scarce vegetation and water resources available in hostile and marginal arid and semi-arid lands, to produce meat, milk and other animal products. Women are heavily engaged in the sector, and they share responsibility with men for the care of animals, and particular species and types of pastoral activities are more associated with women than men. Despite these roles, women have limited access to land, credit, farm inputs and skills. These constraints limit their inclusion in agriculture. Across the Sahel region, women's time and their work are devalued, even as they constitute the great engine of invisible labour that drives the pastoral economy. Policies directed at pastoral development often emphasize technical issues but overlook crucial social and political measures which could empower women to manage their resources better for their own benefit and those of their communities. Consequently, actions are required to eliminate barriers to women's access to resources; engage men/boys to change gender relations and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequalities; and promote community and women-led interventions that have potential to generate concrete and scalable solutions. It is in this context that the **Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED)** got a grant from Canada's **International Development Research Centre (IDRC)**, awarded in partnership with the **Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crisis (SPARC)** Programme, a new research initiative to advance gender equality in fragile food systems, which is

funded by the **United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)**.

The CPED action research programme is conceived to identify barriers and find effective women empowerment strategies that focus on changing the prevailing norms that promotes perpetual gender inequality in pastoral communities.

Mobilisation visits to raise the awareness of the stakeholders on the project at the state, local and community levels

Mobilisation visits were designed to raise the awareness of various stakeholders on the project so as to ensure their active collaboration and participation considering the security situation in the two target states. After the selection of the six (6) target Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Gombe and Bauchi States i.e., Akko, Kaltungo and Billiri LGAs (Gombe State) and Dass, Tafawa Balewa and Kirfi LGAs (Bauchi state), the mobilisation of key stakeholders and beneficiaries followed. Relevant government ministries and agencies including their respective policy and decision makers, local government authorities, community leaders, leaders of women groups in pastoralist/agro-pastoralist communities, youth leaders in pastoralist/agro-pastoralist communities and other social groups in the target LGAs were mobilised for participation. The mobilisation exercise was quite successful as virtually all the target local government areas and the selected communities within them were enthusiastic about the implementation of the project. In order to sustain the cooperation of the key stakeholders in the project,

particularly those involved in responding to the survey instruments, there were regular visits by project partners, team members and mentees to different parts of the six target LGAs to intimate them on the progress in the project. These visits were designed to raise the awareness of the stakeholders on the project so as to ensure their active collaboration and participation.



Photo: Project team members in group photographs with community Leaders in Tafawa Balewa LGA

Recruitment and training of field staff for the administration of survey instruments

The recruitment of field staff for primary data collection was done, precisely in September 2022. Efforts were made to get more women and girls to apply for the position of enumerators. Over 80 percent of the 250 applications received were from women and girls. Thereafter, 120 candidates who met the criterion were invited for oral interview in Gombe and Bauchi out of which 30 candidates comprising about 85 percent females were selected for training in data collection. The recruited field staff were trained for a period of five days each in Gombe and Bauchi States in October and early November 2022 on various aspects of data collection methods and protocols such as community entry strategies, survey administration, responding to irate respondents and security management skills. The testing of the research protocol through pilot surveys with

respondents in two LGAs in Bauchi and Gombe States which were not part of the six target LGAs was carried out successfully as part of the training of the field staff. The results of the pilot survey did not lead to any change in the survey instruments, rather they enhanced the need for further training of the field assistants which was carried out. The field survey staff were further trained following the experience in the administration of the pilot surveys.



Photo: Project Team Member, Job Eronmhonsele, Educating Recruited Field staff on Community Entry

Administration of Field Survey by Field Staffs

Survey administration took place in all the target local government areas in Bauchi (Dass, Kirfi, and Tafawa Balewa LGA's) and Gombe states (Akko, Billiri and Kaltungo LGA's). The field staff grouped into teams worked together following the training guide garnered from the training workshop as they move into the communities for data collection in the target LGAs. The field work went well, and community householders and key informants were very cooperative with the field assistants in gathering the relevant information. Community leaders and women leaders were also instrumental and very helpful in educating their people on behalf of the project team in soliciting their cooperation to excuse their time and give audience to the field staff as they visit the

community instead of disappearing to their farms or engaging in other pastoral activities.



Photo: Ongoing FGD with Women Group in Kirfi LGA, Bauchi State.



Photo: Participants Excited During an Ongoing FGD Conducted among Male Group in Purmai Community, Kaltungo LGA, Gombe State

Other Project Activities

Formation and inauguration of the Steering Committees in Gombe and Bauchi States

The ultimate aim of knowledge translation and knowledge brokerage in the women empowerment study and interventions in Bauchi and Gombe States is to influence policy with its outcomes. It was, therefore, necessary to reach key policy and decision makers in relevant State Government Ministries in Bauchi and Gombe States right from the project's conception and implementation. This was done through the constitution of Project Steering Committees. At least two representatives of target ministries and agencies at the level of directors and permanent secretaries (representing the commissioners) were

present at the meetings. The Steering Committee in Bauchi State is composed of representatives of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Development; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs; Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning; and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). In Gombe State the Steering Committee is composed of representatives of the Ministry of Women Affairs; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs; Ministry of Rural, Community Development and Cooperative; the Budget Planning and Development Partners Coordination Office; and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). Other members of the steering committees include members of the project research team and other relevant stakeholders. The purpose of the Steering Committee is to promote the ownership of the project by policy makers. In this way, policy makers are part of the findings and policy recommendations and are in a position to articulate and implement such policies. The Steering Committee initiative is expected to be a permanent, dedicated, professional mechanism operating in the two states regarding women empowerment in pastoral communities.



Photo: A Section of an ongoing meeting of Steering Committee Members in Gombe State

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About CPED

The Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED) is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit and non-governmental research and development organisation based in Benin City, Nigeria. CPED is committed to promoting sustainable development, reducing poverty and inequality, and strengthening evidence-based decision-making through policy-oriented research, advocacy, capacity building, stakeholder engagement and community-level intervention programmes.

Vision

The vision of Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED) is to be a key non-state actor in the promotion of grassroots development among the inhabitants of various communities in Nigeria.

Mission

The overall mission of Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED) is to promote action-based research programmes and undertake intervention programmes on sustainable population and environmental issues in Nigeria in general and the Niger Delta in particular.

Core Values

In order to achieve the vision and mission, CPED staff will be guided by a set of core values designed to motivate staff towards professional excellence, intellectual competitiveness, innovation and productivity. The core values include the following:

- **Intellectual Freedom:** The universal ideals of intellectual and academic freedom are promoted and respected by CPED. In this respect CPED will remain an independent, professional and non-membership organization.
- **Non-partisanship:** CPED is a non-partisan organization which is not associated with any political party or organization. However, when the need arises, CPED in its research, advocacy and outreach activities will address key political issues that have considerable impact on development, especially at the local level.
- **Quality of service delivery:** CPED is committed to excellence in research, advocacy and outreach programmes. This is essential to put CPED on the highest pedestal of policy research think tank in Nigeria. Consequently, quality service delivery is a non-negotiable feature of all the key organs and units of CPED.
- **Integrity:** CPED staff are committed to the highest ethical standards in all official obligations and personal responsibilities to society and the organization. Integrity shall be manifested through honesty, trustworthiness, honouring commitments and taking full responsibility for our actions, both success and failures.
- **Teamwork:** CPED emphasizes teamwork, networking and partnership without frontiers. It defeats any tendency towards hero-worshiping, pigeon-holing and stonewalling which make development a mirage.

- Participatory decision-making: This bottom-up and horizontal approach to development planning makes feasible the collective ownership of programmes and all the processes of governance. It makes CPED, policy makers and beneficiaries of development to share a common vision of the public good work mutually for its realization.
- Non-discrimination: CPED is committed to a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, colour, religion, creed, gender identity or disability. CPED respects all applicable laws regarding non-discrimination.