



INITIATIVE ON  
Livestock and Climate

# Hidden pathways:

approaches to understand intra-household gender relations and climate adaptation in Kenya dairy systems

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Tanaya DuttaGupta, Renee Bullock, Philip Miriti

*International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), CGIAR, Sustainable Livestock Systems*

## Introduction

- Transformation to climate smart livestock systems can generate multiple trade-offs and synergies between environmental and social domains.
- In Kenyan dairy farming systems gender norms and practices influence ownership and decision-making about information, innovations and labor.
- Positive deviance is used to identify common practices and deviations from those practices in dairy households. The approach provides the opportunity to learn about 'hidden', less socially acceptable behaviors.

## Materials and methods

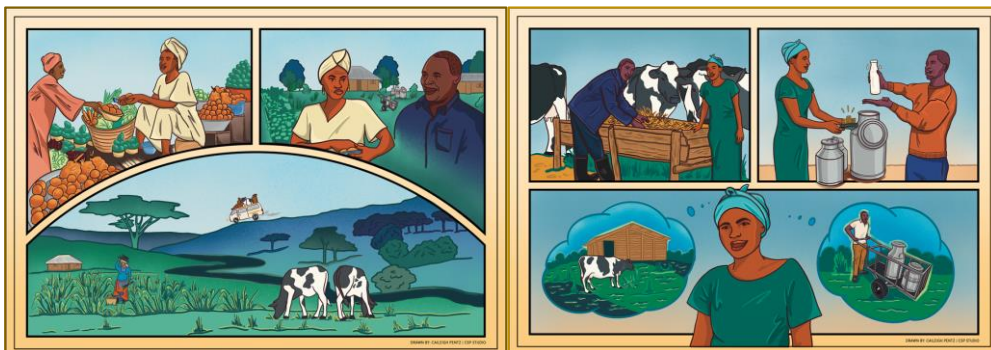
### Data collection and analysis

- 20 sex disaggregated group discussions in Nandi and Bomet counties
- Vignettes and illustrations that describe 3 different sets of relations related to dairy innovation were read to each group
- Participants described which relations were common or not and why
- Iterative processes of deductive and inductive coding were performed in NVivo.
- Thematic areas were identified, and coder agreement was established.

## Hierarchical relations within married households are common.

- Men manage and control uptake of dairy innovation and labor.
- Women's access to information is limited by time and mobility constraints while carrying out most of the tasks associated with dairy, e.g., feeding, watering and milking.

*"It is common...men are the decision makers"* (Men, Nandi)



*Illustrations of vignettes  
about intrahousehold  
relations to understand  
decision-making*

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## Equitable gender relations are hidden from the community.

- Women's participation in decision making or leadership undermines masculine headship identities and may affect both women's and men's reputation.

*"It is not common here"* (Women, Bomet)

## Dairy activities are gender specific but norms about dairy farmers are not.

- Men often decide about breeding and fodder practices.
- Women monitor animal health and milk production.
- Good dairy farmers, whether women or men, often share similar characteristics, such as good time management, record keeping, planning.

## Conclusion: Putting findings into action

- Dairy practices serve as a technological entry point to create and facilitate social change where restrictive norms and practices exist.
- Scaling climate smart innovations requires approaches that build upon existing positive, or equitable, norms and practices within households.
- The project is currently codeveloping strategies with household members to increase access to information and women's leadership in farmer-led field day activities.



*Leading field day activities, September 2023*

Photo credit: Tanaya DuttaGupta

