

## Water-security in Ethiopia and the Emotional Response of Pastoralists

Ethiopia has over 12 million pastoralists that raise livestock, and move their herds in search of fresh pasture and water supplies. These populations are vulnerable to environmental pressures that threaten their livelihoods and can increase the risk of conflict over resources. Water security is a particularly acute challenge and, as such, pastoralists have developed complex water use patterns so to support both human and animal welfare. In this context, there are fundamental questions over the appropriateness of conventional water access indicators used by government and multilateral agencies to adequately capture such complex practices. In short, conventional indicators are considered to poorly reflect actual patterns of pastoralist water use which leads to a misunderstanding of pastoralists' water-related resilience strategies and vulnerabilities to risks such as climate change, conflict and poverty. This results in water programmes and policies that too often exacerbate rather than improve the resilience of pastoralists to deal with such water security risks.



Figure 1 - Cattle trough in Afar used by both people and animals

This new [ESRC-DFID](#) research project called "Water-security in Ethiopia and the Emotional Response of Pastoralists (WEEP)" intends to shift thinking about how to monitor and evaluate

the success of water programmes for these groups. Instead of trying to capture complex water use patterns through an infrastructure or service based approach, the research will explore the role of water in shaping emotional wellbeing. This will feed into the development a novel experience-based indicator of pastoralists' water-related emotional wellbeing, which will help sharpen focus on actual water-use experiences. It also represents the start of a new research agenda that will look within the household unit to understand the services experienced by different household members including men and women, and those away from home tending livestock. As indicators tend to drive water sector strategy, developing improved indicators is one of the best ways to ensure research impact.



The research is led by Dr Paul Hutchings at [Cranfield University](#), with partners [IRC Ethiopia](#), the [International Water Management Institute](#), and [Oxfam Ethiopia](#). It will run from September 2017 to March 2018 with the primary fieldwork to be conducted in Afar state.

For more information on the project, please see the project website at: [\[insert hyperlink\]](#)

Figure 2 - Women using an informal "scoop hole" dug in a seasonal river bed

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