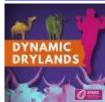
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# **SPARC podcast: Dynamic Drylands**

Dynamic Drylands is SPARC's podcast which explores new ways of thinking about aid, development and resilience in the drylands of Africa and the Middle East.

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"https://www.sparc-knowledge.org/about-us/contributors/authors/sparc" } <u>SPARC</u>
<u>Promoting innovative solutions Reframing aid and resilience Supporting livelihoods and markets Understanding land and conflict Working in a changing climate Gender equality and social inclusion Global</u>



Credit Graphic by SPARC

Dynamic Drylands is a podcast which explores new ways of thinking about aid, development and resilience in the drylands of Africa and the Middle East. You can listen on <a href="Spotify">Spotify</a>, <a href="Acast">Acast</a>, <a href="Apple Podcasts">Apple Podcasts</a>, <a href="Amazon Music">Amazon Music</a> and <a href="YouTube">YouTube</a>.

Farmers and herders living in the drylands of Africa and the Middle East are used to dealing with uncertainty. But their resilience is being tested by new and complex challenges.

In this podcast series, produced by SPARC, broadcaster Bola Mosuro talks to researchers, aid workers and herders about some of the new crises facing the drylands, and the dynamic ways in which people are responding to meet them. She asks: what does long-term resilience look like in these fast-changing places? How are pastoralists and farmers adapting and innovating? And what can governments, development organisations and businesses do to more effectively support them?

One thing is clear: the drylands are more dynamic than you might think.

This podcast is aimed at development practitioners or people with an interest in pastoralism, farming, drylands development, and what effective aid and investment looks like in areas affected by conflict and protracted crises.

More information about each episode is provided below. For more show notes, including additional resources, visit

www.sparc-knowledge.org/dynamic-drylands-podcast

# **Series 2**

# Episode 1: What place do pastoralists have in a fast-changing Africa?

Listen the podcast on Acast here, or wherever you get your podcasts.

Pastoralism is increasingly seen as a problem in the drylands: perceived as old-fashioned, unproductive and fundamentally incompatible with modern-day developments. This episode of Dynamic Drylands shows that this is far from true: pastoralists are adaptable, resilient and innovative.

Ken Otieno, executive director of the Resource Conflict Institute (RECONCILE), discusses how pastoralists' way of managing natural resources is increasingly competing with new developments in the drylands—and how governments can work with them. And Mark Kaigwa, founder and CEO of research and creative agency Nendo discusses pastoralists' social media and phone use.

With the UN's International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists beginning in 2026, and increasing threats to pastoralists' ways of life, the role of pastoralism in modern-day Africa is more timely than ever.

Host: Bola Mosuro. Contributors: Ken Otieno and Mark Kaigwa.

# Episode 2: Aid (in)effectiveness: what really happens when an NGO packs their bags and leaves?

Listen to the podcast on Acast here, or wherever you get your podcasts.

Boreholes may sound like a commonsensical solution to water scarcity in the drylands—so why do they not always make people more resilient?

This episode explores where aid projects have unintended results—and why development organisations are so rarely going back to check.

Dorice Agol, a visiting fellow at the London School of Economics, talks about what she found when she went to check on a water development project in Turkana, northern Kenya, several years after it ended. Nancy Balfour, a founding trustee at the Centre for Humanitarian Change, shares her experiences of a different project in Ethiopia, where politics, preconceptions, and a lack of willingness to learn led to facilities which few people use.

The lesson: building resilience in the drylands isn't a technical fix, and people need to put down their bag of solutions and start asking the right questions.

Host: Bola Mosuro. Contributors: Dorice Agol and Nancy Balfour.

## Episode 3: Facing floods and surviving civil wars in Sudan and South Sudan

Listen to the podcast on Acast here or wherever you get your podcasts.

In this episode of Dynamic Drylands, experts share two very different examples of how

people in Sudan and South Sudan are coping with and adapting to huge changes. It's a far cry from aid narratives which depict people living in the drylands as helpless, and the places where they live as beyond help.

Pacificah Okemwa, a lecturer at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, describes how the Dinka in Bor, South Sudan, are turning increasingly frequent floods into a new livelihood opportunity—one that is changing gender roles. And Margie Buchanan-Smith, a policy and humanitarian researcher, shares how even in Sudan's civil war, Darfur trade and markets continue to survive.

Host: Bola Mosuro. Contributors: Pacificah Okemwa and Margie Buchanan-Smith.

Dynamic Drylands is produced by the research-to-action programme Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises (SPARC). SPARC is managed by Cowater International in partnership with the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Mercy Corps, and ODI Global. This material has been funded by UK aid from the UK government; however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official

# **Episode 4: Development on the margins: how to build resilience in fragile settings**

Listen to the episode on Acast here or wherever you get your podcasts.

There is a conflict blind spot in development and climate action. While many of the world's poorest people live in fragile or conflict-affected places, they receive very little support to build their long-term resilience.

Yet while working in fragile and conflict-affected places is tricky, ignoring them is no longer possible. This episode of Dynamics Drylands features two experts who are working to close the conflict blind spot.

Musaed Aklan, a specialist in water and climate change with Yemen's Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, shares how climate change and conflict are creating a vicious cycle of vulnerability to shocks in Yemen. And Amir Khouzam, a research associate at ODI Global, explains why the international community finds it so hard to fund and work in conflict-affected places – and how they can do so anyway.

Host: Bola Mosuro. Contributors: Amir Khouzam and Musaed Aklan.

## **Episode 5: Farming after fighting: how farmers recover when war ends**

Listen to the episode on Acast here or wherever you get your podcasts.

When wars end, peace brings its own challenges: how to restart economic growth and social progress after so much destruction. How do you get farming—and with it, development—back on its feet?

In this final episode of Dynamic Drylands, agricultural economist Steve Wiggins talks about his research into how farmers are recovering from crises on their own—and what

governments and donors could be doing to better support them.

His conclusions mirror some of the central themes that have come up over the course of the series. Margie Buchanan-Smith, Dorice Agol and Mark Kaigwa offer some final reflections on what donors, governments and NGOs could be doing differently to build resilience in the drylands.

Host: Bola Mosuro. Contributors: Steve Wiggins, Margie Buchanan-Smith, Mark Kaigwa, Dorice Agol.

# Series 1

Produced in 2024, the first series of Dynamic Drylands interviewed SPARC experts about the surprising - often untapped - dynamism and resilience of people living in the drylands, and the robust, often informal systems on which they rely.

# Episode 1: Do we need to rethink aid in the drylands?

Farmers and herders in the drylands are used to dealing with uncertainty and environmental unpredictability. So why are these millennia-old livelihood systems increasingly struggling to adapt to new shocks and crises? Bola Mosuro speaks with SPARC experts Dorice Agol, Colette Benoudhi, Muzzamil Abdi Sheikh and Simon Levine.

Listen to this episode on: Acast | Spotify | Amazon Music | Apple Podcasts | YouTube

## **Episode 2: Untangling land tenure and conflict in the drylands**

The drylands of Africa and the Middle East are home to millions of nomadic pastoralists, who make a living from livestock that move between water sources and seasonal grazing areas. It's a way of life that has not just survived but thrived for thousands of years. But pastoralists' access to land and natural resources is changing – and increasingly coming into contact with other people and new plans for drylands development. In this episode of Dynamic Drylands, Bola Mosuro speaks to SPARC researchers Fiona Flintan, Sarli Sardou Nana and Emmanuel Seck about how pastoralists access and manage land and natural resources, and how to resolve the knotty issue of farmer-herder conflicts.

Listen to this episode on: <u>Acast | Spotify | Amazon Music | Apple Podcasts | YouTube</u>

## **Episode 3: Livestock: Inside the economic engine of the drylands**

The livelihoods of pastoralists in the drylands of Africa and the Middle East centre around livestock: raising, milking and selling camels, cattle, goats and sheep. Far from being small and unprofitable, livestock keeping supplies millions of people in the region with meat and milk, as well as a source of income and exports. In this episode, Bola Mosuro talks with SPARC experts Rupsha Banerjee, Carmen Jacquez and Kelvin Shikuku about the relationship

herders have to their livestock, and how markets and financial measures are being adapted to support people through new shocks and challenges.

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# **Episode 4: Pastoralism 4.0: Inventiveness and innovation in the drylands**

How can a smartphone app improve the way pastoralists and farmers interpret weather and climate patterns? How does AI help with cattle sales? And how are new forms of social support transforming women's lives and livelihoods?

In this fourth and final episode of Dynamic Drylands, Bola Mosuro speaks to SPARC researchers Diba Wako, Tahira Mohamed, Alexis Teyie and Joshua Laizer about the innovative systems and strategies that herders and farmers are adopting to navigate new uncertainties.

Listen to this episode on: <u>Acast | Spotify | Amazon Music | Apple Podcasts | YouTube</u>

# Bonus episode 5 : "Invisible, yet indispensable": Fulani pastoralist women - in their own words

The life of a pastoralist isn't easy – and for pastoralist women, who often have little control over resources or decision making, it's even harder.

In this bonus edition episode of Dynamic Drylands, Fulani pastoralist women in northern Nigeria provide their own perspectives on how a locally led research exercise has improved their lives and livelihoods. Through training pastoralist women to be researchers, Nigerian NGO FUDECO (the Fulbe Development and Cultural Organization) has provided women with new skills and income – but also an expanded vision of themselves as valuable and active community members.

Listen to this episode on: Acast | Spotify | Amazon Music

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