



PASTORAL STEWARDSHIP OF ARID AND SEMI-ARID LANDS IN IRAN

**SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS AND COMMUNITY-
BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Nomadic pastoralists of Iran and CENESTA



Courtesy Pablo Balbontini

Who we are...

- ❖ CENESTA is the oldest NGO in Iran (since 1979)
- ❖ We have an alternative approach to development which is:
 - **Sustainable**, with the following dimensions:
 - Economic and financial
 - Social and cultural
 - Ecological and environmental
 - Institutional and policy
 - **Endogenous**
 - **Equitable and Rights based:**
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity
 - social
 - Economic

...Who we are

- ❖ For us Conservation of Nature is inseparable from Sustainable Livelihoods
- ❖ Biological and Cultural Diversity go hand in hand
- ❖ Our point of departure for Sustainable Natural Resource Management is customary institutions, world views and science systems
- ❖ One of our major missions is empowering the communities to take their destiny into their own hands via Collaborative Management approach



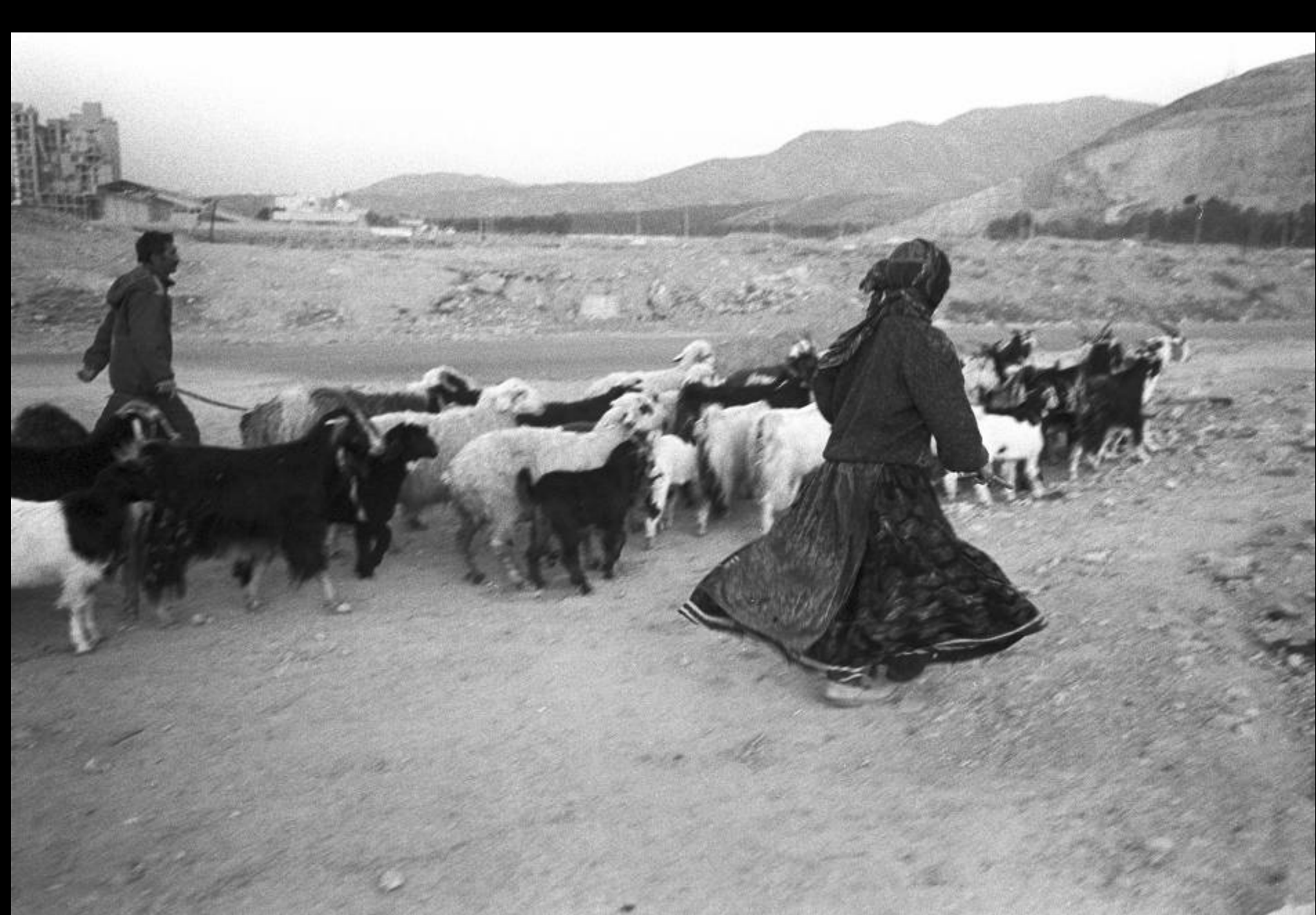
Courtesy Pablo Balbontini

Our Principles

- ❖ Communities define their own approach based on the unique needs and conditions of their environment and society;
- ❖ Outside institutions should be acting in a supportive, enabling and empowering role for community decisions;
- ❖ Externally introduced concepts will be avoided in preference to structures and mechanisms that are deeply rooted in the local culture;
- ❖ Any initiatives must respond to the needs of the local communities as defined by them through their own analytical processes;
- ❖ Gender issues will be addressed within the greater context of community and cultural issues;
- ❖ Funds will be used largely for investment and re-investment purposes, and much less for services.

Principles formulated by the nomadic community

- ❖ Equity and justice
- ❖ Participation
- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Sustainability



Courtesy Pablo Balbontini

What we do ...

- ❖ We do conservation of biological diversity
 - Community Conserved Areas (CCA's)
 - Co-management of natural resources
- ❖ We value and protect cultural diversity
 - Indigenous peoples (particularly mobile indigenous)
 - Traditional knowledge
 - Customary law
 - Customary institutions
 - Identity and rights

...What we do

❖ We do Sustainable Livelihoods

- Nomadic communities
- Sedentary communities
- Agro-ecology, food sovereignty, and community based organic production
- Renewable energies and appropriate technologies for human settlements and environmental sanitation



Courtesy Pablo Balbontini

Our role in the Programme...

- ❖ We are showing that pastoralism has always been a sustainable form of livelihood and land management
- ❖ We are empowering the pastoral communities to survive and prosper through revitalising their customary institutions
- ❖ We are advocating for pro-pastoralist policies and laws at national and international levels based on recognizing customary laws

...Our role in the Programme...

- ❖ This project aims to empower migratory nomadic pastoral communities in Iran and other arid regions of Asia to:
 - ◆ identify the most appropriate models for **sustaining livelihoods and agricultural biodiversity and productivity while:**
 - ◆ taking into consideration their unique culture, present status, strengths and limitations;
 - ◆ sharing experiences and visions for the future.

...Our role in the Programme

- ❖ The project focuses presently on the experiences with nomadic pastoralists of Iran, and seeks to:
 - ◆ **create a successful synthesis of the best of traditional knowledge and modern scientific understanding** of non-equilibrium dynamic ecosystems.
 - ◆ It is hoped that success in this endeavor will lead to **development of a regional model** that would benefit nomadic pastoralists and range ecosystems across arid Asia.



Courtesy Pablo Balbontini

The results we have attained in 8 months...

- ❖ We have scaled up the success of our pilot project by helping to revitalise 10 Councils of Elders in the Qashqai and Shahsevan tribal confederations and to register their associated Community Investment Funds (CIF-CSL)
- ❖ We have established a link with the world's foremost experts on NEE, and have convinced the government to accept an in-depth enquiry into its established natural resource management policies and practices and its comparison with customary practices and NEE
- ❖ We have identified a community conserved wetland protected by the nomads since time immemorial, and have brought the government onboard to recognise this as a prototype of other CCAs (SGP co-funding)
- ❖ We have started a programme of legal support for nomadic pastoralists that needs to be strengthened and operationalised

...The results we have attained in 8 months

- ❖ We have set the basis for a community owned and operated ecotourism programme, starting with Japanese tourists
- ❖ We have laid the foundation for a system of direct access to markets for pastoral products such as *gabbeh* and other marketable products (dairy, meat, skin, wool, kashmir, medicinal and industrial plants, etc.)
- ❖ We have introduced the concept of a processing and marketing complex for nomadic pastoralists
- ❖ We have revived the concept of mobile services for nomads (health, education, veterinary,...)
- ❖ We have introduced the concept of marketing pastoralists products as natural and/or organic products
- ❖ We have pioneered the recognition of indigenous science systems as a legitimate branch of human knowledge systems



Courtesy Pablo Balbontini

Our plans for the future...

- ❖ Establishing a national union of *sandugs*
- ❖ We are working on a model for natural resource management by assessing the three management systems: customary, expert based, and NEE
- ❖ Registering the wetland in the Qashqai territory as a Community Conserved Area and encouraging the government and the local communities to follow this prototype in other areas
- ❖ Strengthen and operationalise the programme of legal support for nomadic pastoralists
- ❖ Operationalise a community owned ecotourism programme

...Our plans for the future...

- ❖ Strengthen and operationalise a system of direct access to markets for pastoral products such as *gabbeh* and other marketable products (dairy, meat, skin, wool, kashmir, medicinal and industrial plants, etc.)
- ❖ Operationalise the concept of a processing and marketing complex for nomadic pastoralists
- ❖ Operationalise and/or improve a system of mobile services for nomads (health, education, veterinary,...)
- ❖ Realise a system for marketing pastoralists products as natural and/or organic products, nationally and internationally
- ❖ Bring about the recognition of indigenous science systems as a legitimate branch of human knowledge systems

...Our plans for the future...

- ❖ **Property Rights and Legal Reform**
- ❖ **Policy Incentives**
- ❖ **Strengthening Management Systems**
- ❖ **Communication and Conflict Resolution**
- ❖ **Decentralization**
- ❖ **Mobile Services and Markets**

...Our plans for the future

Our objective does not advocate turning the clock back, nor freezing pastoralists in their current state. It advocates for appropriate policies, legal mechanisms, and support systems in order to allow self-evolution of pastoralists towards economically, socially and ecologically sustainable livelihood systems.



Courtesy Pablo Balbontini