

RESILIENCE IN ACTION

Changing
Horizons in
Ethiopia's
Drylands



RESILIENCE
IN ACTION | Changing
Horizons in
Ethiopia's
Drylands



RESILIENCE IN ACTION

Changing
Horizons in
Ethiopia's
Drylands

CONTENTS

4
FOREWORD

6
PEOPLE AND
COMMUNITIES

34
LIVESTOCK
AND MARKETS

56
PASTURE
AND WATER

82
CHANGING
HORIZONS

108
USAID'S
PARTNERS

112
ABOUT USAID



re·sil·ience /ri-zíl-yuh ns/ *noun*

The ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.



ETHIOPIA'S enormous pastoral population is estimated at 12 to 15 million people, the majority of whom live in the arid or semi-arid drylands that cover about 60 percent of the country. Following the famine of 2003—that left one-fifth of Ethiopia's population without food and tens of thousands dead from starvation—USAID used the funding for the famine response to initiate the Pastoralists Livelihoods program to improve and strengthen the status of this population. This established the foundation and basis of our interventions in these regions.

When the 2011, Horn of Africa drought occurred, it was one of the worst droughts in 60 years. Ethiopia was one of several countries affected, but due to a rapid response, including pre-positioning of food, and programs mounted by humanitarian agencies and donors, and the government, such as the multi-donor Productive Safety Net Program, the impact was less severe than in Somalia where many perished.

By working with USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) USAID in Ethiopia has integrated near-term relief and longer-term development interventions to reduce reliance on very costly emergency responses. Without these programs, the drought would have depleted the household assets of many Ethiopians as they struggled to maintain their livestock. This threat was

minimized thanks to USAID's support for commercial destocking and supplementary livestock feeding, which supplied fodder to more than 32,000 cattle, sheep, and goats. In addition, households were able to slaughter the weakest animals for food. Partners also set up a voucher-based system to provide vaccinations that protected more than 1.4 million animals from drought-induced diseases, and destocking activities provided income to both livestock traders and vulnerable households whose animals would have died from the effects of drought without any intervention, leaving them without income or food.

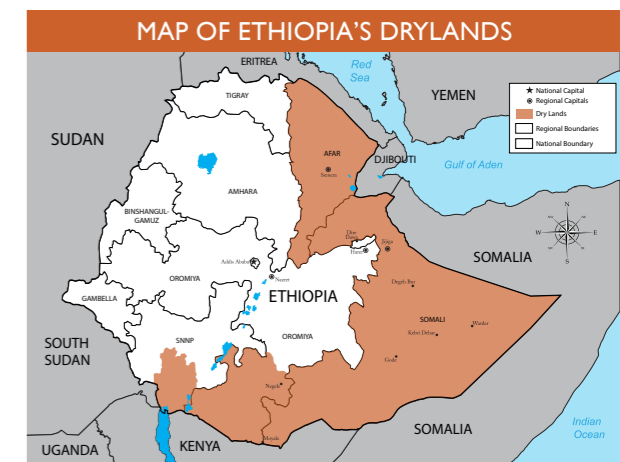
The response to the 2011 drought was a model for Horn of Africa governments and development partners, demonstrating how moving from the usual emergency relief aspects of a crisis could be done to increase the resilience of regional populations in the face of future shocks or severe climatic variations.

Through "resilience-based" activities, pastoral communities are gradually acquiring the knowledge and skills they need to enhance their livelihoods and safeguard them against future shocks. Evidence and analysis generated by research institutions such as Tufts University show pastoralists with substantial herds are becoming more productive and benefiting from the vibrant commercial livestock trade, while the more marginal and poorer households with fewer animals are abandoning pastoralism to settle in urban areas, seeking other economic opportunities.

Our approach in Ethiopia recognizes these dynamics, working closely with communities while developing relationships with new stakeholders, such as small businesses in the private sector (for instance, slaughterhouses and milk processing facilities) and supporting the expansion of financial institutions. The experience gained and lessons learned over the years have shown us that for communities to be resilient, interventions must provide sustainable and reliable sources of income and assets through a combination of activities.

We support and strengthen pastoralists through improved livestock production and marketing, for example, by improving natural resource management, water supplies, and animal health—while at the same time supporting the development of new economic opportunities, providing vocational training and access to financial services to those pastoralists who are struggling to make a living. Drought preparedness and response, improved nutrition, access to water, and are interconnected, and all are core elements of our activities.

USAID also strives to harness innovations, such as mobile banking, index-based drought insurance, and remote sensing satellite technology for underground water exploration, among others. The use of this remote sensing technology gave greater confidence in getting water in an area where the success of drilling has been low. Upon completion of the current water activities in 2014, new or improved wells will benefit no fewer than 220,000 people,



giving them better access to more reliable water resources and reducing the need to truck in water, a very expensive proposition, in future droughts which are occurring at a higher frequency than in past decades.

Evidence-based learning and knowledge-sharing and transfer are also central to our resilience interventions. We are interested in learning and understanding what works and what doesn't, and we are always ready to make any necessary adjustments as activities are carried out. This book documents changing trends, lessons learned, and results proven by USAID and our implementing partners in helping pastoral communities build resilience in the dryland areas of Ethiopia.

We hope these examples will serve others working to help these pastoral communities prosper and achieve long-lasting economic benefits while preventing or responding to the human and environmental devastation caused by extreme climactic events. By building more resilient communities and stimulating sustainable livelihoods, USAID and our many partners aim, ultimately, to put an end to the many factors that generate recurring cycles of disaster and extreme poverty.

Dennis Weller
Mission Director
USAID/Ethiopia

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES





PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

LEFT: More often than not, the burden of finding water for their families falls heavily on women and girls. In some parts of Ethiopia, they walk for up to six hours to collect water from sources that might not even be clean.

Working with communities to develop and maintain sustainable water sources closer to home will allow women and their daughters to dedicate themselves to other activities, such as child care, income generation, and education.

LIVING IN OFTEN REMOTE and isolated rural areas, Ethiopia's dryland communities have limited access to many of the basic services that are commonplace in urban centers. Seasonal mobility patterns and the constant search for adequate pasture and water make health care, education, water, electricity, and financial assistance difficult to provide. Poverty is also of particular concern in pastoral areas, with income and food security low and vulnerability to loss of assets to sudden shocks high.

Pastoral communities have long been enormously resilient, with highly developed coping mechanisms that have allowed them to survive and thrive in this unforgiving landscape for centuries. Chief among them were communities pulling together and households helping each other out when times were hard. But in recent years, as the population has grown and disasters including floods and drought have become more frequent and intense, resources have become scarce and traditional coping mechanisms have been pushed to the breaking point—occasionally giving rise to conflict.

USAID's work with pastoral communities is helping improve access to basic services, including health care, clean water and education. It is also supporting other development opportunities, including women's economic development and peace-building initiatives that reinforce linkages within communities. By helping with the implementation of regional early warning systems, USAID is also providing communities, and those who are working to help them, with the information they need to be prepared and respond to the shocks that will inevitably come. All of USAID's activities take a holistic approach toward building resilience so communities not only are prepared to withstand the next crisis, but are also better off in general and have a stronger base from which to increase their productivity and assets, and to grow.

YOUR HEALTH IS IN YOUR HANDS

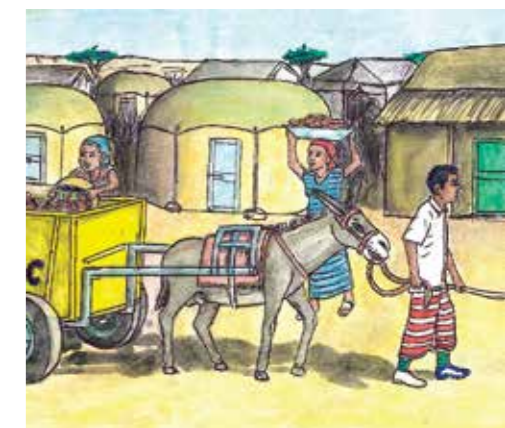
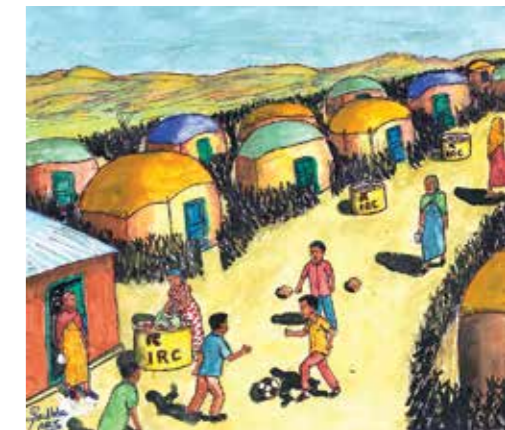
Because pastoral communities, like many in Ethiopia, often don't know the effect good hygiene practices can have on their health, the installation of USAID-supported water systems is complemented by visits from environmental health agents and volunteer community hygiene promoters.

These mobile educators help villagers aware of the benefits of hand washing with soap or ash, the use of latrines, hygienic food preparation, safe water handling and storage, and the proper disposal of waste. This information gives communities the tools they need to take responsibility for their own health, thereby preventing illness, reducing the amount of money they spend on health services, and, ultimately, increasing their wealth and productivity.



“One day, I went to a community meeting where we learned that some of our traditions were not so good for our health. For example, traditionally, it was taboo to bury our feces, but when we were shown what was happening in our own backyard, it made us understand why we were constantly falling prey to all kinds of disease. We realized it was time to make some changes. After that meeting, nearly all of the villagers went away and built a latrine. Since then, the attitudes in the village have reversed; now people who don't have a latrine are considered ignorant and foolish. Most households in my village also now have a separate kitchen and a waste pit, and they are aware of the health benefits of good personal hygiene.”

– ABDIYA NEGASH





IMPROVING ACCESS TO BASIC HEALTH SERVICES

“As a health extension worker, I am responsible for promoting health and hygiene in four neighboring villages, the furthest of which is fourteen kilometers away. My job is to go house-to-house teaching community members about a range of health topics. I also organize community meetings; visit mothers with newborn babies to teach them about breastfeeding, immunization, family planning, and nutrition; and work at the health post, giving vaccinations and treating minor ailments. The mobile lifestyle of the villagers means that at certain times of the year, I don’t see them, but over time, they have learned a lot. As a result, their health is much better now than it was just a few years ago.”

– HALIMA AJJA

In 2004, the Government of Ethiopia launched its ambitious Health Extension Program to bridge the huge gap between the need for health care services and its availability in rural areas by focusing on improving preventive health measures and behaviors at the household and community levels.

Central to the program’s strategy is a grassroots army of trained, professional health extension workers (HEWs). This largely female force is selected from the rural communities in which they live and will ultimately work. Following a year-long training, HEWs provide free basic health services to surrounding communities, transfer knowledge and skills, and

follow up with community members to confirm their understanding and monitor changes in behavior.

According to USAID, the Health Extension Program has been instrumental in making basic health care accessible to some sixty-seven million rural residents for the first time and now serves more than 85 percent of the population.

Through its implementing partners, USAID provides support to the Health Extension Program by assisting the government to train, supervise and equip Health Extension Workers and other front-line health professionals.

CIRCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT



TWO JUGGLERS and a young acrobat followed by a big banner parade up and down the main road in the small town of Fafan, giving people a taste of what they will see if they come to watch today's circus performance. The show features young acrobats, jugglers, comedy skits, singing, and dancing... but this is no ordinary circus.

Set up initially to address the needs of children, youth, and women, this mobile circus is based on the philosophy that communities themselves can best create sustainable solutions to their own problems.

The young performers, all between six and eighteen years of age, put on colorful displays for the target communities to convey key messages about various health and social issues, sparking the kind of conversation and debate that, ideally, will result in behavioral change.

This combination of entertainment and education is not new. In rural areas where most people do not have access to television, theater and circus performances are a popular and effective means of communicating information to large numbers of people of all ages and literacy levels.

"Today's key messages are about nutrition for mothers and children," explains Amal Abdulayhe, a female performer with the circus.

"This area is well known for producing milk, so we want to tell the mothers about its importance—of breast milk for their babies and animal milk for their growing children. We have also incorporated information about the benefits of good nutrition in general into our different acts."

In rural areas, women in particular spend a lot of time fetching water, farming, and carrying out other manual tasks. If a mother is busy with activities away from the home, she may not have time to breastfeed her baby, prepare food for her children, or make sure they are clean. This and many other factors, including disease, food shortages, and inadequate maternal and child health care and sanitation services, can contribute to malnutrition, one of the main health problems facing women and children in Ethiopia.

The circus, with its messages about proper diet and good health practices, is a great, informal complement to USAID's other health activities. Performances are free and shows are held in public spaces to reach as many people as possible. "Everybody likes the circus," says Amal. "That's why it is such an effective way to educate children and adults alike. People are more likely to remember key messages when they are put across in a fun and entertaining way by performers they can relate to."

Working in partnership with USAID, the circus group regularly changes the content of its performances to align with various health campaigns organized throughout the Somali Region. USAID aims to reach 1.25 million people with its behavior-changing messages on nutrition by 2017.



“I learned about HIV and AIDS at school, but when I took part in a three-day training on it, I realized I didn’t really know anything about it at all.”

—AYAN MOHAMMED AHMED

ETHIOPIA HAS an expanding, largely rural, youth population, with almost one-third of its total population under the age of twenty-five. Problems affecting today’s adolescents and youth are many and are often interrelated. Education levels are below average, and many young people find themselves employed in low-paying jobs with limited career options, while others who migrate to urban centers in search of better opportunities may end up in similar situations or worse.

But a host of other issues—most related to sexual and reproductive health (SRH)—pose a threat to their well-being. These include early marriage, female genital mutilation, unplanned and/or closely spaced pregnancies, abortion, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV and AIDS, exacerbated by unemployment and extreme poverty.

Young people, especially in rural areas, lack appropriate information on important topics that concern their well-being and have limited means to obtain it.

They also find it difficult to turn to community elders or their parents for advice, as Ethiopian society has many taboos related to sexuality, reproduction, and fertility control. Talking about sexuality and seeking information is considered culturally shameful and is very much discouraged, especially for girls; an unmarried girl who is brave enough to seek information related to sexuality, family planning, or pregnancy is likely to be presumed sexually active and may become an embarrassment to her family.

USAID understands the need to harness the vibrant energy of this generation and empower young people to be their own advocates and agents for change. Today, a number of innovative activities are helping Ethiopia’s youth (young people eighteen to twenty-five)—and their communities—to get the information they need to make more informed choices. From awareness campaigns on HIV and AIDS, family planning, and other reproductive health issues, to peer education and youth clubs based in villages and schools, outreach services, and mobile clinics, USAID-supported activities are enabling young people to take their health decisions into their own hands and providing them with the information and tools to influence others to do the same.

RIGHT: Youth health club members Ahmed Hasan Da’ud (left) and Ayan Mohammed Ahmed (center) conduct door-to-door sessions in their community. The sessions cover far more than just sexual and reproductive health; breastfeeding, nutrition, good hygiene and preventable diseases are among the many topics these young people are also trained to talk about.



For example, the twenty-two volunteer members of the youth health club in Kebribeyah—a small town in Somali Region (one of Ethiopia’s nine regions)—have all received training on a wide range of SRH topics. Ayan Mohammed Ahmed joined because she thought it would be interesting to learn more about the different health topics. “I learned about HIV and AIDS at school,” she says, “but when I took part in a three-day training on it, I realized I didn’t really know anything about it at all.”

Working in groups of two or three, the volunteers go house-to-house, passing key messages to people in their community with the help of colorful training aids. When the club was first established, the young people found this challenging. “People were very much set in their ways and thought we were being paid by NGOs [non-governmental organizations] to spread false information,” says Ahmed Hasan Da’ud, who joined the youth health club when it was first set up. A lot of time and patience was needed to get across messages that would eventually trigger behavioral change in his community. But, he adds, “Attitudes are slowly changing. Today people often come up to us and ask us different health-related questions. If we don’t have the answers they need, we refer them to the relevant health services.”

Since the club started working in the community in 2010, its members have already noticed changes—particularly in the behaviors of other young people. Tally sheets at condom distribution outlets show more and more young people are taking them, more young women are making use of family planning consultations following informative sessions with health club volunteers, and people are more aware of the long-term harmful effects of female genital mutilation (FGM). Once the subject of questions for which, Ahmed said, he had no good answers, FGM has become a well-known issue people are no longer afraid to discuss.

Benefits for the young people involved in the club are not just a better understanding of health topics, but greater self-esteem and confidence, better negotiation skills, and stronger skills and experience as leaders.



“We have a saying: peace is costly, but it is worth the expense.”

– HUSSEIN ALIYYI

FOR DRYLAND COMMUNITIES, peace is essential to survival. Pastoralists rely on cooperation and social networks to negotiate access to the resources they need to exist. When relationships break down—whether among communities, clans, or ethnic groups—cooperation and sharing are replaced by animosity and isolation, disrupting access to pasture and water as well as other services and facilities critical to daily life, such as markets, schools, and health facilities. Even the threat of losing this access can have devastating effects, resulting in further breakdown of community relationships. The most severe consequences are damage to property and resources, and even loss of life.

In 2008, the perceived threat of losing access to pasture and water significantly escalated tensions between two neighboring pastoral communities—Meda, which is ethnically Oromo, and Huriyo, which is ethnically Somali.

Despite a history of working together in peace, a referendum to delineate Ethiopia’s administrative boundaries created perceptions that the two communities would lose their ability to negotiate access to critical cross-boundary resources and have to cope with survival on either side of a new “line.” Some used the referendum as an opportunity to promote their own interests, stirring fear and rumors and further escalating the tension.

Madawalabu District in Ethiopia’s Oromia Region was one of those affected by the change in borders. Hussein Aliyyii, now the head of the district, was then working as a security officer with the federal police, who were deployed to help keep the peace. “When these new boundaries were established,” he remembers, “some people thought they would lose access to their most essential resources—grazing land and water. People on both sides grabbed their guns and snatched others from the federal agents, and overnight the situation escalated out of control.”

“You can’t just search for peace and hope to find it, as you don’t know where it will be.”

– HABIBA HASSAN

HABIBA HASSAN and her family were asleep in their house on the Somali side of the “line” when the first shots were fired early in the morning. “There was no time to think about anything; we just started running. On the first day, we didn’t go far. We just went to the foot of the mountains nearby and hid. After a couple of days, officials from the local government came and told us to go home. We went back and took care of the dead bodies.” In the days that followed, Habiba and the hundreds of others who had fled tried to resume their lives. But fears remained on both sides.

Sporadic fighting continued over the next two months, with more lives, property, and animals lost on both sides. Then women on the Oromia side decided to take matters into their own hands: They cut the pipe from a shared water source that carried water to their Somali neighbors, four kilometers away.

With no water and continued insecurity, those on the Somali side of the “line” felt they had no choice but to leave in search of a safer place to live.

“We all walked together for two days and two nights,” says Habiba. “Sleep doesn’t come when you are scared for your life and the lives of your children. There was no food. Many children died, including my youngest, who was bitten by a snake. Finally we came to a river. It was the first water we had seen since we left, so we decided to stop and set up camp there. We cut trees and grass to make basic shelters, and we slept. We drank water from the river and ate any birds we could catch.”

Fearing for their lives, the villagers had taken with them only as much as they or their few remaining animals could carry. Many animals died, were stolen, or disappeared during the fighting, and it was not long before their numbers dwindled further.





“If there is water, there will be peace.”

– KADIR ABDI

THE SITUATION in the makeshift camp soon became critical. “People in our community were either starving or dying,” says Huriyo community elder Kadir Abdi. “We were so lucky the non-governmental organizations found us. They gave us food, water, jerry cans, plastic sheeting, and other items we had left behind when we ran away.”

The relief interventions also opened pathways for people to begin discussing how they could address their problems. In collaboration with the government, organizations providing assistance offered to support the community in mediating their issues.

“We were shocked when they started talking about peace,” says Kadir. “They told us officials from both the Oromia and Somali sides wanted to bring all of us together to find a solution. After ten months living in the camp by the river, dialogues started, and attitudes began to change.”

After much negotiation, each side selected fifty elders to represent its respective communities at a large peace-building conference, supported by USAID and the regional governments. Kadir was one of those selected. “On the first day, there was a lot of tension and fear,” he recalls. “But as the days passed, we came to understand more and more about the interests of the other side.”

Of high priority was the demarcation of the cross-regional border. “The government sat down with us, and we worked to mark out new boundaries based on historical events in the area,” says Kadir.

“The other major issue was water. We knew that if we were going to have a good and long-lasting relationship, we would have to find a sustainable solution to the water problem.”

After the conference, peace committees of fifteen members each were sent back to each side to pass along key messages about restoring relationships between the communities. Committee members received training and worked with their counterparts on the other side for months to restore peace. Most important, the communities began negotiating through their representatives to build bridges and to address the water issue. “Only after the bigger issues were straightened out were we able to develop a plan to move our people back home,” says Kadir.

After many lengthy negotiations, the Oromo community agreed to extend their spring into Kersadula District in the Somali Region. To ensure an adequate supply of water for each side, USAID and its partners decided to develop and construct different water schemes in Meda and Huriyo from the Meda spring. For its part, the Somali community extended grazing rights to the Meda Oromo community on the Somali side. In addition to creating a strong economic tie between the two communities that would help sustain the peace, this “win-win” approach kept one group from being perceived as a loser to the other.

“Only when attitudes change will peace come.”

— KHADIJA DIDO

“REESTABLISHING PEACE is a lengthy process that requires patience and tolerance on both sides,” says Khadija Dido, a member of the peace committee from the Oromia side. “Forgetting trauma is extremely difficult. It will take a long time for people from both communities to entirely get over what happened here. It is hard to get enemies to sit down together, but through this process we have discussed our interests and the impact of conflict. We have discussed what it takes to be understanding of our differences, and we have learned that our differences can be resolved through dialogue.”

Although peace has been restored for more than four years now, the peace-building committees from both sides still meet every fifteen days, as do the elders and government officials, to address any concerns either side might have. “The success of the peace-building process has had a far-reaching effect,” says government official, Hussein Aliyyii. “It appears to have made both sides stronger in more ways than one.”

Today, both Somali and Oromo communities have permanent access to water. Two cattle troughs, two water distribution points, and a water storage tank have been constructed in Meda town in Oromia, and two cattle troughs, three distribution points, and a water supply system have been built in Huriyo.

The Meda spring in Oromia is the source of water for both communities. All of the infrastructure was built by the communities with technical support and assistance from USAID and its partners. Cross-border management committees have also been put into place to ensure sustainability. In addition, they promote key hygiene messages and provide a platform for the communities to come together regularly around their shared interest of good water management.

Not only is the water situation better than it ever was before; peace has brought growing prosperity. Members of both communities are building houses, farming, taking their livestock out to graze, going to the market, and sending their children to school. People who used to be enemies walk arm in arm through the marketplace and warmly embrace each other on both sides of the border. Both communities have greater freedom of movement than they ever had before, thanks to their ongoing efforts to build peace.

“I have learned two things from this experience,” says Khadija, “On the negative side, I have seen that the impact of conflict is death, the destruction of resources, and psychological suffering. On the positive side, I have learned what a tremendous difference coming together again could make. What happened here serves as a lesson to us all, reminding us never to go down the road of conflict again.”





PEACE AND PROSPERITY

“Peace can only accelerate development.”

— SHEIK MUKTAR

USAID and its partners build into all of their dryland activities approaches designed to help pastoral communities—and those who work with them—foresee and proactively address any issues that may lead to conflict:

- They take conflict-sensitive approaches to development programming that not only “Do No Harm,” but build relationships around shared interests.
- They strengthen government and customary institutions that play a pivotal role in both conflict resolution and the management of natural resources and improve linkages between the two.
- They open community dialogues among clan leaders, elders, women, and youth to prevent minor conflicts from escalating and ensure they are quickly and peacefully resolved.
- They include traditionally excluded actors, such as women, who may provide an important channel through which to promote peace.
- They establish market linkages among communities and support shared natural resource management projects that build economic stability—a cornerstone of peace—and bring communities together to work toward common goals.
- They form peace committees made up of cross-sections of community members. Set up as formal or informal structures, these groups are vital early warning and response mechanisms and are crucial for mediating conflict at a local level through customary laws, state instruments, or a combination of the two.
- They strengthen the capacity of government institutions at all levels.
- They develop natural resource use plans with the active participation of community members so rangeland management systems can be put into place and all will be aware of their rights, responsibilities, and benefits.
- They actively involve communities in the design, implementation, and monitoring of all community-level initiatives.



A DIFFERENT KIND OF BANK

Between 2009 and 2013, USAID supported the construction of 112 grain storage facilities and the creation of 112 new cereal bank groups in the Oromia and Somalia regions.

All the groups—both new and existing—received training in business management, basic literacy, and numeracy and were linked with wholesalers who would provide them with grain. Groups also received seed money to bolster their purchasing capacity.

DIQO KOTOBO is one of fourteen members of a community-managed cereal bank group, one of many set up, with support from USAID, to alleviate the pressures of food shortages in pastoral areas. In the dry season when pasture is scarce, pastoralists are forced to buy grain to supplement their diets, as their livestock produce less milk and livestock prices are generally at their lowest. “This cereal group was set up for two reasons,” explains Diqo, “to improve the availability of grain for our community and other communities in the area and to help stabilize its price during the hardest times of the year. Previously we had to travel more than thirty-five kilometers to buy our grain. With transport costs and the price of grain both high, we had to sell more and more livestock to survive.”

The women selected to form the group received basic business skills training and assistance in setting up functional literacy classes for those who were interested. After each member had made an 80 Birr (US \$4.20) contribution to the group, USAID provided support for the construction of a grain storage room just off the main road.

USAID also provided 17,000 Birr (US \$895) in seed money that the group used to buy grain. “With grain right on our doorstep, we saw straight away how we were helping the communities around here and at the same time helping ourselves,” says Diqo. “With the profits from sales we were able to open a small shop that sells basic necessities—tea, flashlights, shoes, pasta, soap, sugar, matches.” Sales of grain and from the shop have enabled the group to expand its activities. It now also keeps in stock a supply of rock salt for animals, as there is none in the area. “Our capital is also growing,” says Diqo. “We have a total of 91,000 Birr (US \$4,750) in cash and assets and have been able to pay our members dividends of 500 Birr (US \$26).”

The group’s capital is not the only thing that is growing. Many other small businesses are starting to spring up in the neighborhood. “A couple of years ago the only buildings around here were the school and the store,” Diqo points out. “Now that communities know they can buy grain here, they are moving nearer and building places of their own.” Looking to the future, Diqo thinks the group’s next project might be to invest in a grinding mill.



LEFT, ABOVE: Diqo looks after the cereal group’s small shop today. Members of the group take turns managing the shop and the grain store. When stocks run low, a couple of the women travel to Negelle, the nearest big town, to resupply from wholesalers there. As more families arrive and settle in the area, other small businesses—coffee shops, restaurants, hardware stores—are opening along the main road to cater to the needs of this growing community.

SMALL SUMS ADD UP TO BIG CHANGES



LEFT: Member Hodan Kahin received 10,000 Birr in credit when the Hartisheik Rural Savings and Credit Cooperative gave out its first round of loans. Hodan used the money to diversify the goods she was selling in her shop. “Now that I have more things for sale in my shop,” she says, “I have more customers and a greater income for my family. And that changes everything.”

MOST FORMAL LENDING institutions are not interested in loaning out what they consider to be small amounts of money to people with little or no collateral.

For the majority of the rural population, however, it is precisely this kind of capital that could make a substantial difference to their lives. Today, a variety of alternative financial services are cropping up to service the needs of the poor, including microfinance institutions, credit unions, local savings and credit groups, and cooperatives. With training and support from USAID and its partners, more and more pastoralists are realizing the benefits of pooling their resources to accelerate their way out of poverty. Among them is a group of women in the small town of Hartisheik, in Ethiopia’s Somali Region.

“One day I saw an ad offering training and grants for small groups of women who were interested in developing or expanding their income-generating activities,” says the group’s chairwoman, Muna Ismail Omar. “I decided to attend the meeting to see what it was all about.”

Like many others, Muna applied to the program and was ultimately chosen to participate, along with thirty-five other women from her community. The women were organized into seven groups and received training in business skills and financial and risk management. USAID’s partners also helped each group create a business plan, taught the women about the benefits of saving, and showed them how, as a group, they could use the money they saved to provide short-term loans to members.

After the groups were up and running, USAID provided each with startup capital of 20,000 Birr (US \$1,052) to be used according to its business plan. Most of the women decided to stick with what they knew best: livestock. They would buy young sheep and goats, fatten them, and then sell them again a few months later. Others engaged in petty trade.

After only a few months of working together, the women were amazed at the changes having access to even a small amount of money could make. “Before, our means to make money were extremely limited,” says Muna. “But with the capital, we were able to invest in more livestock—and at a much better price.”

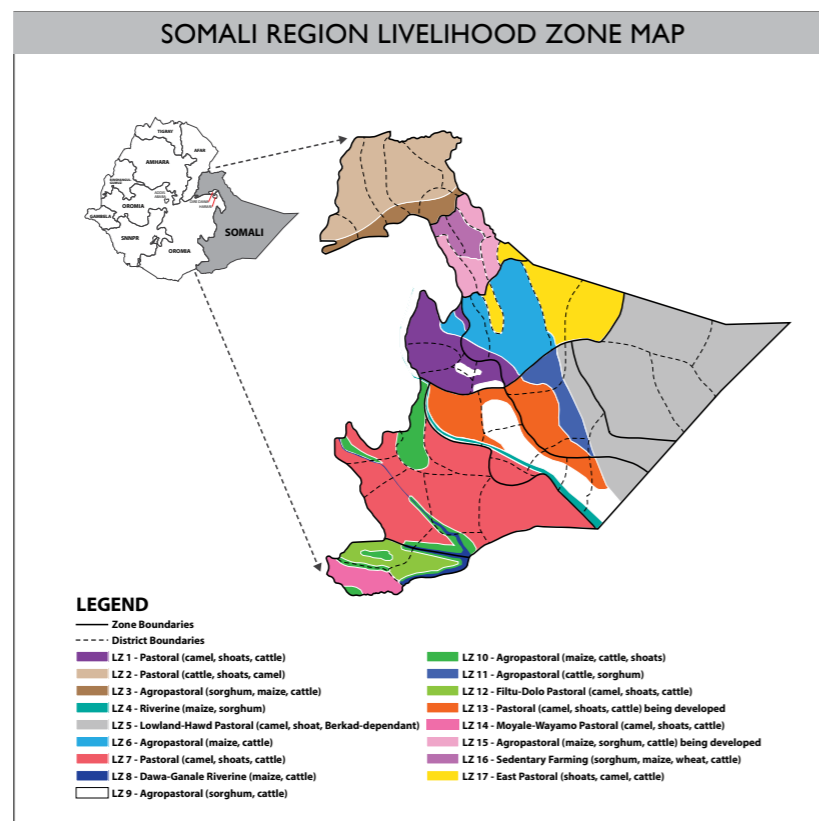
Three years ago, after receiving further training in financial management and savings and credit, Hartisheik’s seven individual groups realized the benefits could be even greater if they joined forces, and the Hartisheik Rural Savings and Credit Organization (RUSACO) was born. “With thirty-five members paying in 100 Birr (US \$5) each month, our savings grew quickly,” says Muna, who was elected chairwoman of the RUSACO.

In 2012, Hartisheik RUSACO gave out its first round of loans to individual group members. Six women each received 10,000 Birr, to be paid back over four months. In the second round, loans were granted to ten women and in a third round to fifteen. In keeping with Islamic banking principles, no interest was charged; each loan carried a flat five percent service charge. To date, all the loans have been paid back in full and on time. The majority of women who received them invested the money in expanding their livestock marketing activities. Others have used it to open shops and diversify the goods they offer for sale.

Seeing how the RUSACO’s members had prospered, other women from the community asked to join them. Hartisheik RUSACO now has forty-eight active members, all of whom know each other very well.

This strong social support network provides them with far more benefits than any formal banking structure ever could. “If any of us is in trouble or struggling with something at home—say, an illness or the need to pay for funeral expenses—the group pulls together to help out in any way it can,” says Muna. Some of the literate members have also started teaching those who never had the chance to go to school how to read and write. “It is important for their business, so they are keen to learn,” she says.

Looking back, Muna is amazed at the progress they have made: “We have come a very long way indeed. Before, if we needed money for the children or the family we had to ask our husbands. Now we are much more independent. We have the freedom to buy what we need with our own money. Our families are better off. Why would we ever want to go back to how we were living before?”



THE DROUGHT that struck Ethiopia in 2000 was a huge wake-up call for the government and the many humanitarian and development actors who had been working there for decades. Despite millions of dollars spent on emergency relief and development projects over the years, the people were unprepared. Many who managed to survive were forced to give up their traditional way of life, as all their assets were gone.

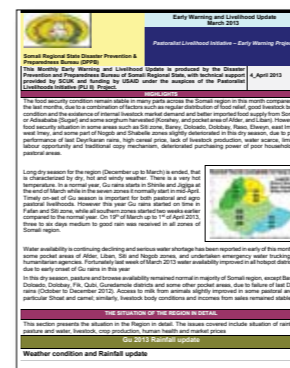
Hussein Warmahaye, the early warning case team leader for Ethiopia's Somali Region, explains that the early warning system in place at that time did not set off any alarm bells. It was, he says, "based on indicators relevant to the crop producers in the highlands," who "had little or no connection with the Somali Region, where the majority of the population are pastoralists and depend on livestock as their main source of income."

Following this disaster, the government, with USAID's support, established an independent Somali Region Early Warning Unit, which is operated by its Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau. The new early warning system is designed to collect, update, and monitor information on local weather patterns throughout the region and establish a comprehensive data bank based on a range of relevant socioeconomic indicators, including market trends, consumer spending, pastoral movements, livestock disease, and food security.

The Somali Region Early Warning Unit works at both the regional and the grassroots levels. "The main unit is set up at the regional level," explains Hussein, "and a coordinator in each of the region's nine zones works with units that go out to communities and spend time talking with people to find out what the situation is on the ground. They ask people about their meal habits, harvests, cereal and livestock prices, water and pasture availability, and a host of other things to gain a thorough overview of the situation."

The data gathered are compiled monthly and compared to baseline trends. The result is the *Early Warning and Livelihood Update*, an email newsletter sent out to a wide range of stakeholders, including the government, NGOs, development partners, and various associations and local communities. "This keeps people in the loop," says Hussein, "so everyone from high-level decision makers to local government officials can foresee upcoming shocks and trigger timely, appropriate, and preventive measures."

The early warning system is also an important tool for development. According to Hussein, "The system picks up behavioral changes in the population if they veer from the norm and alerts the authorities concerned. For example, if a community picks up and moves, this will obviously have an effect on schooling, and appropriate actions should be taken."



Stakeholders can follow important developments in the Somali Region through the Early Warning and Livelihood Update, a monthly email newsletter that highlights key indicators, including weather patterns and rainfall, water, pasture and livestock conditions, the status of nutrition and human health, food and livestock prices, and terms of trade.

When another big drought hit the Horn of Africa in 2011, the Somali Region's new, improved early warning system and the greater situational awareness it provided were instrumental in allowing USAID and its partners to foresee the impacts of intensifying drought conditions. As a result, they were proactive not only in seeking emergency funding, but in making necessary adjustments to certain activities, such as animal health care (vaccinating animals before they became too weak) or commercial destocking (selling animals before they died), thus ensuring livelihoods were protected before the full-blown crisis took effect. Activities such as commercial destocking further strengthened pastoral households by providing cash to buy grain or fodder for their remaining animals at the height of the crisis. By jointly developing contingency plans, the government and NGOs were able to respond to the drought promptly and effectively, enabling the population of Ethiopia to fare better than their neighbors in Somalia.

THE CRISIS MODIFIER

Applying for donor funds to address a crisis has traditionally been a long process, often holding up the arrival of urgently needed aid for weeks or even months. Until now, such procedures were necessary, as emergency and development programs were managed by separate systems. Realizing that delays in reallocating or sourcing new funds were severely affecting response time, USAID came up with new funding mechanisms, such as the crisis modifier, to speed up the pace.

The crisis modifier is a component built into USAID's cooperative agreements with implementing partners targeting drought-prone areas. By integrating flexible funds from its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) into its development activities, USAID has reduced the processing and approval time frame for emergency funding, while at the same time protecting gains from ongoing development initiatives.

Between 2009 and 2012, this rapid funding mechanism gave USAID's partners access to more than \$2.4 million to implement activities aimed at alleviating the impacts of drought and building community resilience including:

- Supplementary feeding activities that provided fodder to more than 32,000 cattle, sheep, and goats. This prevented thousands of livestock deaths, thereby safeguarding both household assets and an important source of nutrition for vulnerable children.
- Slaughter destocking is a process by which pastoralists are paid for cattle that would not otherwise fetch a competitive price. The meat is then distributed to the community to improve nutrition. In 2011, more than 6,100 emaciated, but not diseased, livestock were slaughtered and cash transfers of 800 Birr (\$42) per animal were given to almost 6,000 beneficiaries.
- Commercial destocking links pastoralists to livestock traders, who fatten livestock to sell for competitive prices. During the 2011 drought, more than 8,400 households received a total of almost \$1 million through the commercial destocking of an estimated 15,900 animals.
- Voucher-based treatments and preventive vaccinations to protect more than 1.4 million livestock from drought-induced diseases were given out, benefiting nearly 120,000 households between 2010-2011.

LIVESTOCK AND MARKETS





LIVESTOCK AND MARKETS

LEFT: Livestock traders Sofia Mohamed and Abdi Gursum discuss a sale at the livestock market in Jigjiga in the Somali Region. Sofia has been working on a small scale to support her family since her husband lost his job. Abdi is an established trader, working with large amounts of capital.

“Our biggest problem is not capacity, animal health or drought. It is markets,” says Abdi. “If the market is there, we can supply as many animals as you want—year after year.”

ETHIOPIA'S LIVESTOCK POPULATION is among the largest of any country in the world and the largest in sub-Saharan Africa. Its millions of camels, cattle, sheep and goats contribute to the livelihoods of the majority of the population. For many years, the export of livestock and livestock products has been Ethiopia's second most valuable source of foreign currency, after coffee. The country's proximity to the Middle East offers great opportunities for market-oriented development of the livestock sector.

Despite this enormous livestock resource and the potential for increased production, Ethiopia's livestock value chains—meat, dairy, hides (camels and cattle), and skins (sheep and goats)—remain underdeveloped. Rather than raising them for market, pastoralists historically have used livestock more like walking banks, selling them only when they need money or as a last resort in times of drought. As the livestock export market expands, however, increasing numbers of pastoralists are becoming more market-oriented. But they face challenges with limited animal feed and poor animal health among the greatest in each of the value chains, resulting in decreased productivity and poor quality meat, milk, and hides. Other challenges include the high cost of transportation, poor linkages between producers and consumers, and lack of access to end markets.

USAID's livestock and market expansion activities are working to address these constraints through initiatives that support livestock productivity, animal health, and market access. To ensure pastoralists have access to animal health care and a high quality drug supply, USAID is linking private veterinary pharmacists with community animal health workers. To increase smallholders' bargaining power in the market and help them develop improved structures for milk collection, it is supporting livestock marketing groups. And by building more formal market structures, USAID is increasing economic opportunities not only for pastoralists in the drylands, but also for the wider community.

USAID and its partners are currently helping thirty private veterinary pharmacists and more than 1,500 community animal health workers expand their operations and provide pastoral households with access to high quality veterinary products and services in the Afar, Somali, and Oromia regions.

PASTORALISTS DEPEND on the well-being of their animals for their livelihoods. Sick animals mean lower productivity, less income, and, ultimately, poorer family nutrition and health.

In the past, the mobile lifestyle of pastoralists, the limited availability of good veterinary drugs, poor infrastructure, the lack of transportation, and the reluctance of qualified vets to live in remote areas hampered the provision of veterinary services in rural areas. This left pastoralists with few options but to attempt to diagnose and treat their animals themselves, often with limited success.

In an attempt to close the gaps in animal health services in rural areas, community animal health workers (CAHWs)—livestock keepers in pastoral areas trained in basic animal health care—have been made integral to animal health service delivery in remote pastoral areas where there are no private practitioners and government coverage is limited.

Among its activities designed to bolster households' resilience to shocks, USAID has been working to strengthen Ethiopia's community-based animal health delivery system and increase its sustainability. One key intervention strengthens the link between private veterinary pharmacists and CAHWs. The result has been an increase in the proper use of good quality drugs, improved access to services and information, and, ultimately, improved animal health.

Abdirahman Abib Mahmoud is a private veterinary pharmacist (PVP) with a small shop in Fafan, a small town, in Ethiopia's Somali Region. "I used to work at the Regional Integrated Livestock Research and Development Center," he says. "One of my tasks was research on the use of animal drugs by pastoral communities. When I saw the results, I realized there was a high demand for drugs in the area that wasn't being met, so I decided to resign and open my own pharmacy."

But when Abdirahman first opened his doors, he struggled to find all of the drugs he needed. Suppliers in town would often run out, leaving him to hunt around, buying in dribs and drabs wherever he could. He also had trouble reaching people in remote areas whom he knew needed the supplies. "I could only help those who knew about the shop and those who came in. I knew there were still people out there in need of drugs, but I couldn't see how to reach them all."

USAID invited Abdirahman to a meeting that brought PVPs, wholesalers, and government representatives together in Addis Ababa. "There were a lot of PVPs like myself at this meeting, so it was good to find out how they were operating," he says. "We had the chance to talk to a lot of different wholesalers and find out about all the products available in Ethiopia. Now I order all of my drugs through the regional wholesalers I met there. The drugs might be more expensive than those I can get on the local market, but at least I know where they come from and that the quality is good."



“I am really interested in helping to improve the health of livestock in the area.”

— ABDIRAHMAN ABIB MAHMOUD

Abdirahman also received business and marketing training from the regional wholesalers, learning key skills such as drug administration and handling and warehouse management. The training was also a good opportunity to cement business relationships and open lines of communication between the suppliers and the PVPs.

In addition, USAID helped Abdirahman reach those in need of his drugs by linking PVPs with CAHWs, the frontline animal health providers in remote pastoral areas, and suggesting new ways of doing business. In the process, USAID and its partners made clear the potential benefits of collaboration.

Ahmed Mahmoud Habib is a CAHW who lives in Fafan, where Abdirahman has his pharmacy. “I used to work as a volunteer,” he says, “but now I feel like a businessman. I buy my drugs and equipment from Abdirahman at a discount, which means I can charge my customers the normal rate, leaving me with a bit of profit for my services. I didn’t have anything like this kind of income before.”

Abdirahman is also reaping the rewards of partnership, having greatly increased the number of pastoralists he can reach. “Our eyes were opened when we were put together with the CAHWs,” he says. “They travel up to thirty kilometers away in the course of their work, which means I no longer have to worry about how to reach my customers. Working with Ahmed and the other CAHWs, I have doubled my radius and at the same time doubled my income.”

Not long ago, with support from USAID, Abdirahman opened a second branch of his pharmacy. He received money for shelving and transportation and five months’ salary for an employee to help him get started. “When I had one branch I used to make 7,000 Birr (US \$364) per month,” he says. “Now, with two, I can make as much as 30,000 Birr (US \$1,566) per month.”

The increases in both PVP sales and the numbers of CAHWs’ customers highlight the large demand for high quality animal health goods and services in pastoral areas. Improved business development, better drugs, greater knowledge and information, and increased incomes result in benefits to animal health and livestock productivity, which, in turn help strengthen household and community resilience to external shocks.



LEFT: “When I finished school I went on to study animal health assistance, and I am currently studying for a degree in animal and rangeland science at Jigjiga University,” says Abdirahman Abib Mahmoud. “So when customers come into my shop with questions about their animals, I always try to answer them. And when they come in looking for a specific drug, I always ask about the problem before I give them anything. Often, they don’t need the drug that they’re asking for, but something entirely different.”

BELOW: After training, CAHWs like Ahmed Mahmoud Habib, are able to treat most sick animals. They are also responsible for helping the government conduct seasonal vaccination campaigns and for dealing with outbreaks of disease.

CAHWs are the service providers of choice for rural communities in pastoral areas, as government veterinary services are limited by their immobility. And now that CAHWs carry certificates of government endorsement, livestock owners can have confidence in their abilities and their authorization to deliver services.



PASTORALISTS ARE highly dependent on income from the sale of their livestock and livestock products (milk, butter, skins, and hides), but a number of serious constraints—including poor market and road infrastructure, high transport costs, lack of buyers, repeated taxation, lack of holding grounds around markets, lack of access to credit, and relatively few markets with great distances between them—limit returns for everyone involved.

USAID and its partners understand that the success of the pastoral system—from smallholder producers in rural areas to large international traders—requires addressing first and foremost those factors that limit market access. Poor marketing opportunities in the drylands often force producers and traders to trek long distances to improve their selling prospects. The resulting costs and weight loss in the animals reduce profits. Initiatives to improve rural infrastructure, such as feeder roads for livestock movement and water and fodder availability along such routes, will improve pastoralists' access to basic services and markets and draw more traders and animals to the area, improving competition and further increasing market supply.

To date, USAID, in close collaboration with local, regional, and national authorities, has supported the construction of twenty-five livestock markets in Ethiopia's dryland areas, for the most part near villages and towns on sites that had long been used by traders but were without basic infrastructure. The markets have been equipped with permanent and separate enclosures for cattle, sheep, goats and camels, along with loading ramps, feeding and watering troughs, weighing scales, and sanitation facilities. Some also provide veterinary and pharmacy services.

As a result, these markets are attracting not only more animals, brokers, middlemen, and livestock traders, but a host of small businesses and petty traders who are taking advantage of the many steady customers to sell everything from tea, coffee, and simple meals to rope, cloth, and basic foodstuffs, like sugar, cereals, and oil. Other entrepreneurs cut and sell grass for the animals, and those with the space to do so can make a living by holding livestock for buyers who need a place to keep them until they can move them on.

What is good for business is also good for the wider community. Having worked to establish local management structures and train those responsible for the day-to-day running and maintenance of market facilities, USAID has helped ensure that taxes from livestock sales—now easier to collect—are supporting local schools and towns and the upkeep of the market facility itself.

RIGHT: The Haro Bake livestock market lies on the main road to Yabello, in south Ethiopia. Since its facilities were upgraded in 2007, it has come to be known as a main trading center for camels, cattle, sheep, and goats. Garbi Halake, a member of the Haro Bake market management committee, explains that before the improvements, it was hard to keep track of what was going on.

"The animals would escape through the makeshift fencing, and some buyers and sellers would hide their livestock to avoid paying taxes." Now, prospective parties to a sale take the animals into the new holding pens to continue their transactions.



BETTER MARKETS
PROFIT EVERYONE



"It's very well organized here now, and the traders know how the system works," says Yabello broker Liben Roba. "Once the animals have been weighed and a price agreed to inside the holding pen, money changes hands, and then the taxes are collected near the exit. There is no way to cheat the system now."



“WHEN I WAS sixteen years old,” recalls Musse Sheik Abdi, “my mother gave me some sheep and goats and told me to give them to the traders who were going to Hargeisa (Somaliland). Instead of handing the animals over to these men, I decided to go along with them to find out how business was done.” Since that day, Musse has never looked back. After selling his mother’s livestock in Hargeisa, he used the proceeds to buy more to sell and has been trading in livestock ever since.

Six years ago, Musse joined a livestock marketing cooperative. Pooling resources gave the cooperative access to larger markets and higher returns, enabling them to invest in more animals. The traders also received business skills training from USAID and are now among the top live animal exporters in the Somali Region. They export to the Middle East and, if the market is good, to Somaliland.

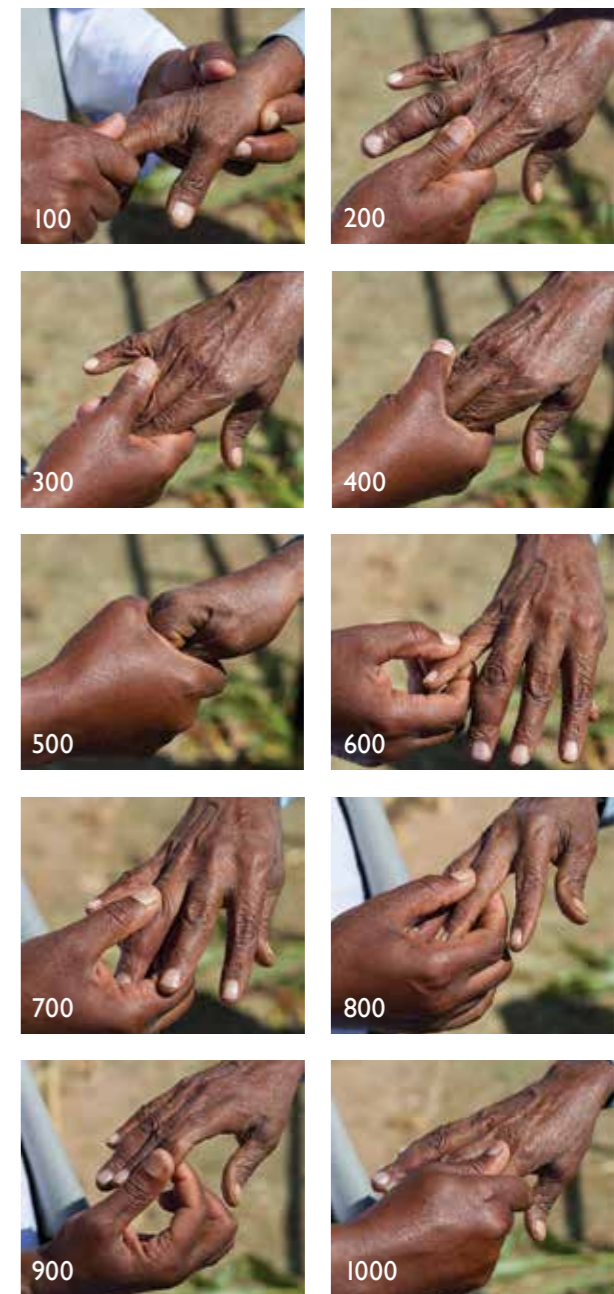
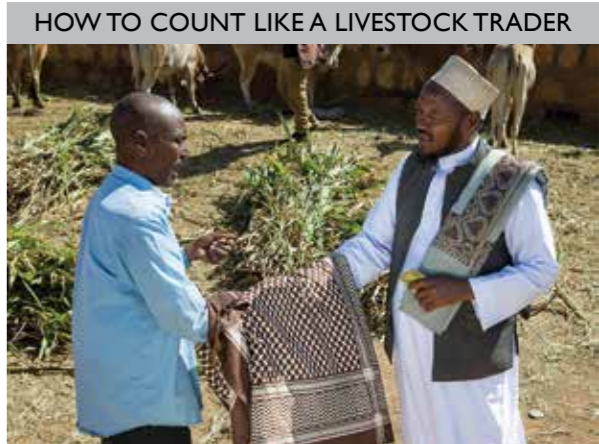
“Buyers just phone me up when they are ready to place an order; we keep animals in the holding pen that we can put on a truck at a moment’s notice,” Musse says. He adds, “It’s a far cry from when I was walking for twenty days to take my goats to the border!”

In times of drought, limited marketing opportunities can have devastating consequences for pastoralists: Livestock grow thin and weak, causing their market price to fall as the prices of staples like rice and maize increase. At the height of the drought in 2011, USAID helped Musse’s cooperative, together with nine other licensed cooperatives and individual traders, take part in commercial destocking initiatives. A loan of 80,000 Birr (US \$4,168) allowed each group to purchase the weakened livestock at a reasonable price, which, under the circumstances, suited both the traders and the owners. Because destocking activities were implemented at the right time, traders made profits, and pastoralists received a vital injection of cash for their livestock before losing them to drought. This cash was sufficient to see many pastoralists through the worst of the crisis—and proved a valuable alternative to reliance on food aid.

On the rare occasions when pastoralists living in remote communities go to market to sell their own livestock instead of engaging brokers, they are at a distinct disadvantage to the traders and middlemen who have greater access to market information, especially pricing. A local custom involving handshakes under a cloth to agree on prices gives brokers even more room to manipulate prices and walk away with substantial commissions.

USAID and its partners have addressed this situation by training market monitors and providing market information, including livestock prices, to pastoral communities through radio, text messaging, newspapers, and other media. This helps pastoralists decide when and where to sell their livestock and ensures they get fair prices when they do.

RIGHT: Prices are agreed upon through a customary system of counting, which is carried out through a series of rapid handshakes under a cloth.



At the same time, USAID also provided Musse with a second loan. He and sixty-three other traders from the Somali Region—this time working as individuals—were given a total of \$250,000 in short-term loans with which to buy drought-stricken cattle, sheep, and goats. They purchased a total of 8,082 sheep and goats and 478 cattle, and the loans were paid back within a hundred days. “Both sides won,” says Musse, “producers got cash, and we got access to more live animals at a good price.”

As a result of the destocking activities, Musse and his cooperative are now working from a larger capital base than ever before. “Our cooperative is pretty big now,” he says. “We have a holding ground near the border where we fatten and care for our export livestock. Sometimes we send 3,000 heads per week to the Middle East; during holiday seasons, we could be asked for as many as 150,000.”

“In other regions,” he continues, “there are multiple sources of income, like fishing or agriculture. In this region, we have one: livestock. Livestock is what we know, and, if we manage it properly, it is our security for the future.”



EXPANDING EXISTING MARKETS

Despite poor transportation links and little history of trading between the pastoral lowlands and highland Ethiopia, recent data indicate that the pastoral areas of Ethiopia now supply 90 percent of Ethiopia's "formal" meat and live animal exports. This means more and more pastoral animals are being traded through feedlots in Modjo and Nazareth and processed at abattoirs like Helimex plc (shown here) for export.

USAID supports the livestock sector by improving trade and export competitiveness. Ethiopia's meat and live animal exports have grown from almost US \$52 million in fiscal year 2006/2007 to nearly US \$286 million in fiscal year 2011/2012. Hide, skins and leather is another sector with big earnings potential, having brought in almost US \$100 million for the country in fiscal year 2011/2012.

BETTER TOGETHER: MILK COLLECTION COOPERATIVES

UD AHMED found out about the women's milk collection cooperative in Fafan when her parents told her they were giving their milk to someone who was sending it to Jigjiga, the nearest big town, to be sold. "I realized this was something I could also do," she says. Ud joined a cooperative and became the "middleman" between her parents and a woman in another cooperative that sells the milk to consumers in Jigjiga.

Every day, Ud puts twenty-five liters of milk on a truck that goes to town and collects the empty containers when they come back the next morning. "I sell the milk to the woman in town for 50 Birr per jerry can; I give 40 Birr to my parents, and transport fees are 1.5 Birr per container. This leaves me with a profit of 8.5 Birr per jerry can, which is pretty good for a middleman." Every five days or so, a few of the women in Ud's cooperative go to Jigjiga in the truck to collect the money from the cooperative that sells their milk. Working together and sharing resources and expenses, including the cost of transportation, is much more cost-effective than everyone selling their milk on their own.



ABOVE, RIGHT: Every morning, the women in Ud's milk collection cooperative wait for the truck to arrive. After off-loading the empty jerry cans from the previous day's run, they wait for the producers to bring their fresh milk. Some of the producers hand carry the filled jerry cans and others bring them on donkeys, and they exchange them for the empties, which they bring home to clean and refill the next day.

When the truck returns later in the morning, Ud and the other women in her cooperative tie the filled containers onto it to be taken directly to the sellers' cooperative in Jigjiga. All of Ud's yellow jerry cans are easily identifiable by the piece of blue cloth she ties around each handle so that both the woman she is dealing with in Jigjiga and Ud herself can pick them out from among all the other containers on the truck.

USAID conducted value chain assessments in Somali Region to determine where milk cooperatives could prove viable. Afterward they set up ten milk marketing cooperatives, and linked them with milk producer groups for supply and with traders for sale.

USAID provided all of these groups with training in milk hygiene, sanitation, financial management, and literacy and numeracy. It also provided aluminum containers for proper milk storage, links to fodder traders to improve overall milk quality, and seed money to start activities.



BETTER TOGETHER: ENSURING QUALITY

Fatima Ahmed (in yellow), vice chairwoman of the Bombas milk collection cooperative and a few of the fifty-three cooperative members line up in the collection center to have their milk tested for quality before it is sent to the sales cooperative in nearby Jigjiga town.

With few or no standard procedures in place to regulate production and quality, both rural and urban populations often buy milk that has been contaminated at some point in the chain from producer to consumer. Poor milking hygiene and dirty collection containers introduce bacteria into the milk. Among other problems are frequent adulteration with water so there is "more" milk to sell, and the use of irregular quantities of antibiotics to preserve its "shelf life." Milk that has been sitting in the sun all day may be brought back out for sale the following day.

USAID and its partners have been working to help small-scale milk producers improve milk quality throughout the value chain, from outreach activities that target animal health and feeding practices and proper milk hygiene to quality control tests in collection centers to check for freshness and purity.

According to Fatima, "All members of the cooperative have been trained in good hygiene practices and understand their importance, as their milk will not be accepted if it doesn't pass the simple alcohol and lactometer tests." A lacto densitometer shows whether the milk has been watered down, and the alcohol test checks its pH level, which indicates whether or not it is fresh.

"The amount of milk each member brings to the center is written down in a register so they can be paid what they are owed at the end of the month," says Fatima. About 450 liters of milk pass through the center every day, of which, two-thirds is taken to Jigjiga, and the rest is sold to villagers from the center. "Our next step is to get the electricity hooked up at the center. That will allow us to keep the milk fresh and also to use the cream separator, which will enable us to make other dairy products and further increase our income."





BETTER TOGETHER: SELLING IT ON

LEFT: An 800 milliliter cup of milk costs Asad and the others in her co-op 15 to 16 Birr (US \$.85). When it is fresh, they can sell it to a customer for 20 Birr.

Later in the day, the price drops to 10 Birr per cup, and after a full day sitting in the sun, if anyone wants to buy it, a cup costs just 5 Birr. When the refrigerators are hooked up at her cooperative's new collection center, it will change not only Asad's income, but also her life.

“Sitting with the milk outside in the sun all day isn't good – for us, for the milk or for business. We expect big changes.”

– ASAD MUHUMED

ASAD MUHUMED has been selling milk on the street in Gode town for twenty years. She sits out in the hot sun most days from 8 am to 4 pm alongside the other women in her cooperative. As the town has expanded in recent years, Asad has seen the demand for milk grow, not only among the growing population, but among the increasing numbers of tea shops and restaurants looking to serve them.

“I buy my milk from pastoralists who bring it into town every morning,” says Asad. “The amount of milk I sell depends entirely on how much they give me, and this varies according to the season. When they move far away in the rainy season, we have to rely solely on suppliers who live in town.”

Without a formal outlet facility for the milk, customers buy it off the street from women like Asad. But they always taste it first. It is fresh when it first arrives, but as the day progresses and the milk turns, the price drops. “Sitting with the milk outside in the sun all day isn't good—for us, for the milk, or for business,” says Asad.

When USAID and its partners decided to work with Asad's cooperative to build a milk collection facility in Gode and furnish it with two solar-powered refrigerators, the women were delighted. “We expect big changes,” says Asad. “First, we will have the capacity to purchase and sell more milk, and because we can keep it cold, the price will stay the same as it was at the start of the day. Second, we will not have to sit around in the hot sun all day waiting to make a sale when there is a lot of other work we could be doing at home.”

USAID and its partners are also working with Asad's cooperative to improve the overall quality of the milk they buy and sell. By providing training in product testing, good hygiene practices, dairy product development, and business management, they benefit not only Asad and the others in the cooperative, but all the people in Gode who rely on their milk.



PASTURE AND WATER



PASTURE AND WATER

LEFT: The Borana are known for their traditional 'singing wells.' Now, filled with water at the end of the rainy season, the wells are silent, but during the dry season they will empty and men will form long lines down into the well, passing the water up to the surface and singing as they work.

PASTORALISM AS A WAY OF LIFE and a source of livelihood has existed for centuries in Ethiopia, where the vast drylands are well suited for it. The environment is too harsh and unforgiving for farming, the rainfall too erratic and unpredictable; so pastoralists move their "farms" to where the rain has fallen in search of two essential resources—pasture and water—which their animals turn into meat and milk.

Seasonal mobility, combined with complex social systems and highly developed coping mechanisms, has allowed pastoralists in the drylands to prosper for many generations. Over the past several decades, however, life in these already difficult regions has become more difficult: the spread of harmful invasive species, rangeland degradation and erosion, mismanagement of resources, overgrazing, land ownership issues, and increased agricultural activities have all contributed to a shortage of grassland resources in pastoral areas. Climate change, too, is increasing both the frequency and intensity of drought, and extreme weather patterns mean that rainfall—already unreliable—is even more so.

USAID and its partners have been working hand-in-hand with pastoral communities to help them adjust and further adapt their coping mechanisms to these changes through a range of activities aimed at enhancing their capacity to respond to and bounce back from shocks. For resources to be long lasting and contribute to the overall well-being of the communities that use them, they must be properly managed and monitored. Through its partners, USAID has provided training to different user groups and committees to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skills to stand on their own.

One thing all of these initiatives have in common is that they depend on community involvement for their success. This way, when hard times come around—as they no doubt will—the communities will be confident in their ability to cope, as they will have the necessary resources to hand and be more adept at managing them to suit their needs.

“We know from long experience that pastoralism works in this environment. If the rain doesn’t come, a pastoralist can always move his animals to where there is water, but he can’t move his farm.”

— LIBEN JILO KOMA

THE ELDERS gathered here today under the shade of this tree, and elsewhere under the shade of many others, form the backbone of Borana society. As one of the “customary institutions” that have governed every aspect of pastoralists’ lives and livelihoods for centuries, the elders have long been responsible for the proper management of the natural resources on which their way of life depends.

In keeping with tradition, today’s meeting is held in the open. There are no secrets here; anyone can come and listen to what is being said. But other traditions are changing. In recent years the balance of power and equity in pastoral communities has been in a state of flux. “The shade,” previously the sole domain of the elders, is now shared with other actors, most notably government officials—many of them Borana themselves—who must adhere to a different set of rules, laws, and regulations.

The changes have presented challenges to traditional ways of life for many communities. Natural resource planning, for centuries undertaken only by elders who had spent many years under the shade learning traditional Borana methods for managing the people and resources of this difficult environment, is no longer left entirely to them. As a result, many communities that used to work as one, guided by the elders, face disagreement and dissent as they fall under the governance of two vastly different systems.

In some pastoral communities, this has pitted community members—and even family members—against one another. In others, the imbalance of power and a lack of understanding of traditional systems have resulted in the loss of vital rangeland resources through, for example, the creation of nature reserves or the escalation of commercial agricultural activities, also leading to conflict. In still other cases, inappropriate development interventions—for example, the construction of large machine-dug ponds in wet-season grazing areas—have reduced pastoral mobility and increased the number of permanent settlements.

Add to these the other factors already affecting the rangeland, from aggressive colonization by invasive plant species and the rapid growth in numbers of people and livestock to the fencing off of land for private use, and it is no wonder customary institutions have found it difficult to cope.

There is, of course, no turning back the clock. But USAID recognizes that working to promote dialogue among all of the different stakeholders concerned with natural resources in pastoral areas can provide a way forward.

To this end, USAID facilitates monthly meetings among community elders, government, NGOs, and others to ensure everyone with a voice in the matter of rangeland management understands the issues and one another’s positions on them.



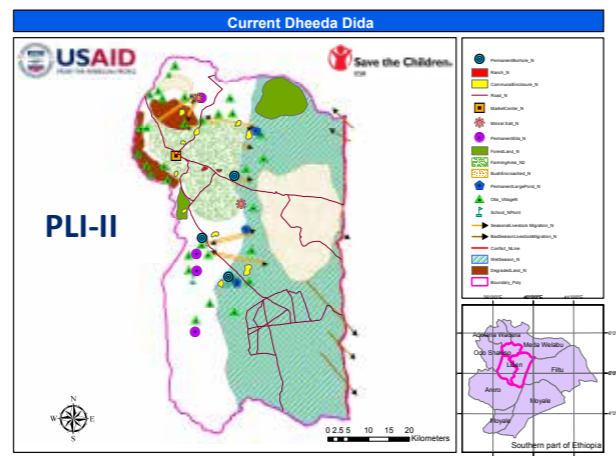
One issue that has received a lot of attention lately is the growing number of farms on the rangeland. “These days more and more pastoralists want to try their hand at farming,” says elder and former *kebele*¹ chairman, Liben Jilo Koma, “but farming and pastoralism are usually at odds with each other.” Pastoralists’ land use plans designate specific grazing areas for each community to use during the wet season and others to use during the dry season when water and pasture are scarce. “We know from long experience that this works in this environment,” explains Liben. “If the rain doesn’t come, a pastoralist can always move his animals to where there is water, but he can’t move his farm. The problem is farms springing up all over the place with no regard for the recognized grazing areas, and this reduces everyone else’s access to pasture.”

Precisely this kind of issue is put on the table and discussed during the monthly community dialogue meetings so stakeholders can find a way to respond to these challenges with one voice. “After all,” says Liben, “I may work for the government, but I am also a Borana. Our interests are one and the same.”



ABOVE: Traditionally, Borana women stayed home, looking after the children, preparing food, fetching firewood, and hauling water and only men sat under the shade. Now, women are also active participants in this previously all-male domain.

¹A *kebele* is Ethiopia’s smallest administrative unit.



ABOVE: Using geographic information system coordinates, community maps are converted into a digital format for ease of use by external actors, including local authorities, the central government and the international community, for whom the maps provide a useful tool to help guide development initiatives.

RIGHT: Senior elders, community members, and security guards are all responsible for the upkeep and protection of Koba-Adi's community enclosure.



PARTICIPATORY RESOURCE mapping (PRM) is an exercise that helps pastoralists convert their already extensive knowledge of their land into a visual planning tool. USAID and its partners introduced this planning method to Koba-Adi community to help its members find ways to improve their land management. “After we made a map of our *kebele*,” says Hussein Webo, a community elder, “we had a much better idea of what resources we had and where everything was: the settlements; the farming areas; pasture; roads; the wet and dry season grazing areas and mobility routes.”

In PRM, a facilitator works with community leaders to draw, whether on paper or on the ground, a map of the key resources in their area, including pasture, forest areas, water sources, settlements, bush-encroached land, roads, private enclosures, and any other areas or resources of interest, such as towns and veterinary and health posts. They also note mobility patterns, areas of potential conflict, and areas affected by invasive species.

Once completed, the maps are shared with the larger community so natural resource-related problems can be assessed and discussed, and viable planning processes can take place.

“Our animals form the basis of our livelihood,” Hussein explains, “but many were dying during the dry season, as there was not sufficient pasture to feed them all. The men would take the stronger animals to a dry season grazing area and leave the milking cows, calves, and plowing oxen with the women and children and older people who remained at the homestead. But ensuring enough grass was available for those animals was always a problem.

“Making the map helped us see the different options open to us and making a second map—the ‘vision map’—helped us to clarify what we want to create here for the future. We shared the maps with the larger community and discussed ideas for making use of the resources around us. Everyone agreed we should try fencing off an area of degraded land to see if the grass would eventually grow back.

“Four years ago, we fenced off twenty-five hectares of common land, and about forty households looked after it together. We made terraces and drainage systems, planted different grasses for animal feed and introduced fines for anyone who brings their livestock inside.

“The enclosure was a great success. Those who participated had enough grass to get their weaker animals through the lean season, and others saw firsthand the benefit of giving the land time to heal. In the second year, sixty more households joined us, and we expanded the enclosure to two hundred hectares. Today, the number of households maintaining the enclosure has reached three hundred, and the site has grown to a thousand hectares.

“When the time comes to cut and store the hay, the elders are in charge of supervising the work and making a list of the beneficiaries. The grass is usually cut when it is green and still full of nutrients, but it will only be distributed when it is really necessary, with everyone who has helped to maintain the enclosure receiving an equal share.

“Having this enclosure has helped us a lot,” says Hussein. “Without it we would have to go to town or somewhere else to find or even buy food for our animals. It has also been a good lesson for neighboring communities, who have seen what we have done and decided to do the same.”

Between 2005 and 2014, USAID supported a total of forty-six community mapping exercises, leading to the digitization of four community maps with assistance from technical partners. As a result of this exercise and the implementation of community action plans, private farms and *kallos*—enclosures—that blocked community access to dry season grazing areas, water points, and other key resources were dismantled and made part of communal enclosures.

Settlements located in inappropriate places, such as communal grazing areas, were relocated. Around Liben, access roads to key resource areas that had been closed for over thirteen years were reopened, along with fifteen routes to mineral lick areas for livestock.

USAID-supported interventions such as PRM have been instrumental to improving management practices in approximately two million hectares of rangeland in Oromia, Somali, and Afar Regions.

The Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) is a large-scale, Government of Ethiopia-implemented, multi-donor-funded program that aims to help people escape food insecurity in Ethiopia. Funding more than 20 percent of PSNP's budget between 2010 and 2014, USAID is the program's largest bilateral donor.

This program has been helping to cushion vulnerable groups from shocks and increase their resilience by providing predictable and timely food transfers while they work to build community assets and enhance their livelihoods.

Nationwide, the PSNP reaches 6.4 million people, 1.5 million of them through USAID support. In pastoral areas, USAID's PSNP programs support 162,728 people in the Somali Region and the Borena Zone of the Oromia Region. Working with the Ethiopian Government, other donors and implementing partners, USAID is also helping design the next generation of PSNP programs through developing more sustainable approaches to protecting and building household and community assets for people in their livelihoods.

PSNP public works reduce communities' risks and improve resilience through a wide range of activities, including fodder production, infrastructure construction, soil and water conservation initiatives, rural road rehabilitation, and the construction of schools and clinics.

WITH EIGHT children to look after, Nagele Boru has to use her time wisely. Most of her waking hours are taken up by caring for them, milking the cattle, fetching water and firewood, farming, washing, and cooking meals. During the dry season, between January and June, Nagele has another activity to fit into her schedule: together with her husband and other members of their community, she works to complete a variety of labor-based public works in exchange for monthly food rations or cash.

Known as the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), this USAID-supported Government of Ethiopia initiative helps build the resilience of food-insecure communities around the country by keeping vulnerable households from falling into further poverty during the yearly "lean season"—a time when rainfall is scarce, food stocks are low, and new crops are not yet ready to harvest. To buy food, many poor families are left with no choice but to sell off valuable assets, usually livestock. Rebuilding the capital they need to buy their assets back can take a long time, leaving many people trapped in a cycle of poverty.

Recently, Nagele and her husband have been working on a community enclosure not far from their home, putting up fences, digging trenches and soil basins, and planting new varieties of grasses. Working side-by-side with technical assistants who are responsible for the different activities, the communities involved learn new skills and are able to see the results of their work firsthand. "We have been working on this enclosure to receive food rations for our family, but when the dry season comes around, our animals will also benefit. Each of us will get a share of the hay," says Nagele.

The community enclosure has helped Nagele and her family break out of the cycle of poverty. "When the program started, we didn't have anything, no animals at all," she says. "After we started getting food for work, I no longer had to spend the money I was getting from my other small jobs on food. Eventually, we managed to save enough to buy a cow, and by spring, we had a calf! We now own three cows and two calves. We have milk for our children, and we can feed them well."



STATE-OF-THE-ART
TECHNOLOGY
FOR WATER SOLUTIONS

Between 2011 and 2013, USAID and its implementing partners drilled thirteen boreholes using WATEX remote sensing technology in the Somali Region of Ethiopia, benefiting more than 86,000 people. In addition, four new water wells in Afar and six in Borena were drilled using conventional methods, benefiting 24,000 individuals.

During the same period, USAID and its partners rehabilitated and expanded seventeen existing water schemes that will serve almost 125,000 individuals and millions of animals in the Somali, Afar and Oromia Regions.

BELOW: USAID'S partners in the field use WATEX and iGens technology to locate sites suitable for the development of water schemes—including this one near Waji, a village in Ethiopia's Somali Region. As with most USAID activities, construction and installation work are shared between project partners and the community, with USAID providing equipment, technology, and expertise and the community contributing labor.

When the Waji scheme is finished, its six kilometers of pipeline will deliver water to three water points and four animal troughs and serve more than 12,000 people in six communities.

“Previously, during the dry season, those of us from Waji had to walk 60 kilometers round trip to collect drinking water. We would leave in a group at midnight and arrive at the water point in the late afternoon. After filling up we would rest for a few hours and then make our way home again, arriving late at night. So when they started constructing this water system here last year, I was amazed. I kept asking myself, “Are we really going to be able to get water from here?” But then as they drilled the borehole, water started pouring out of the ground, just meters from where we stood. Who would have ever thought it? Here we were going all that way under the hot sun, and there was water right beneath our feet!

– MAHMOUD AHMED



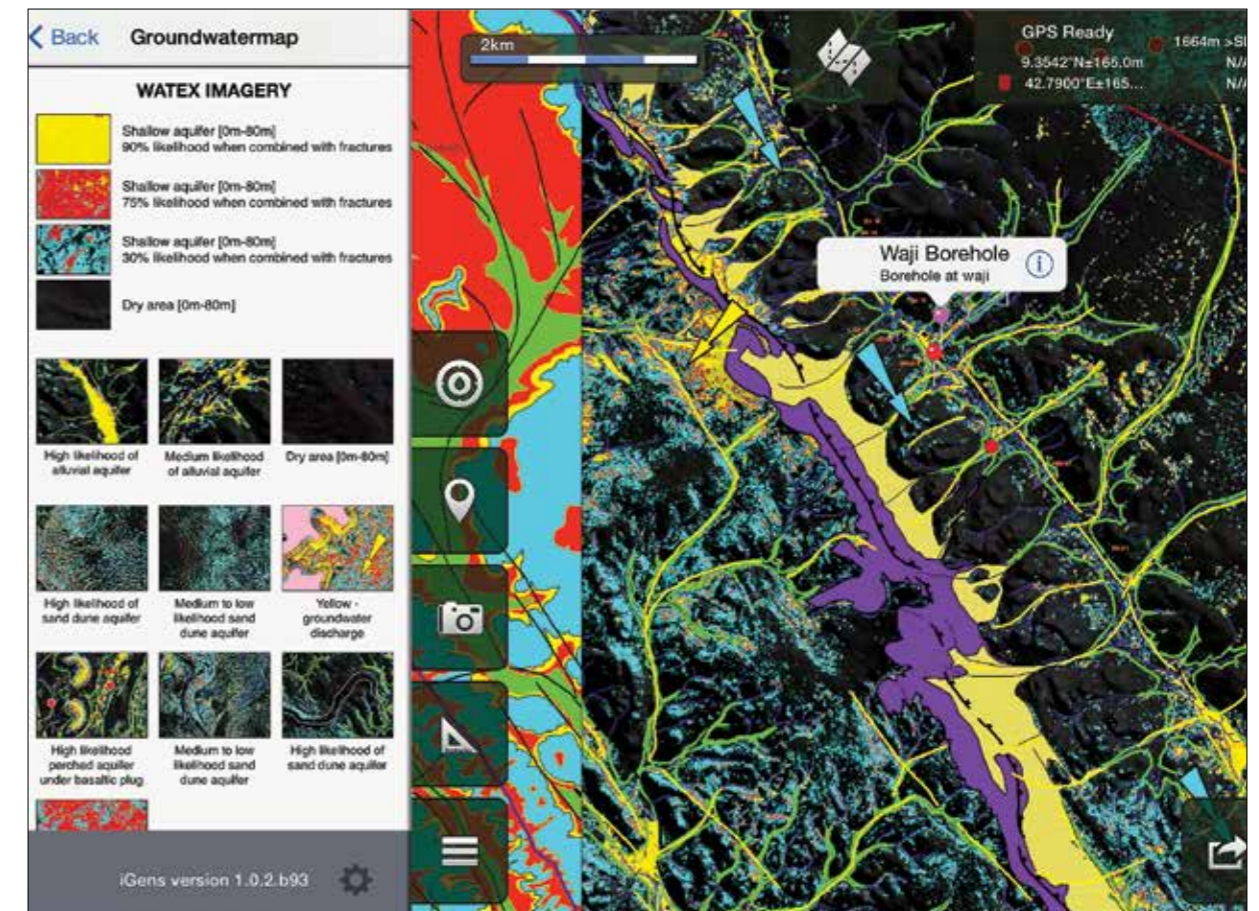
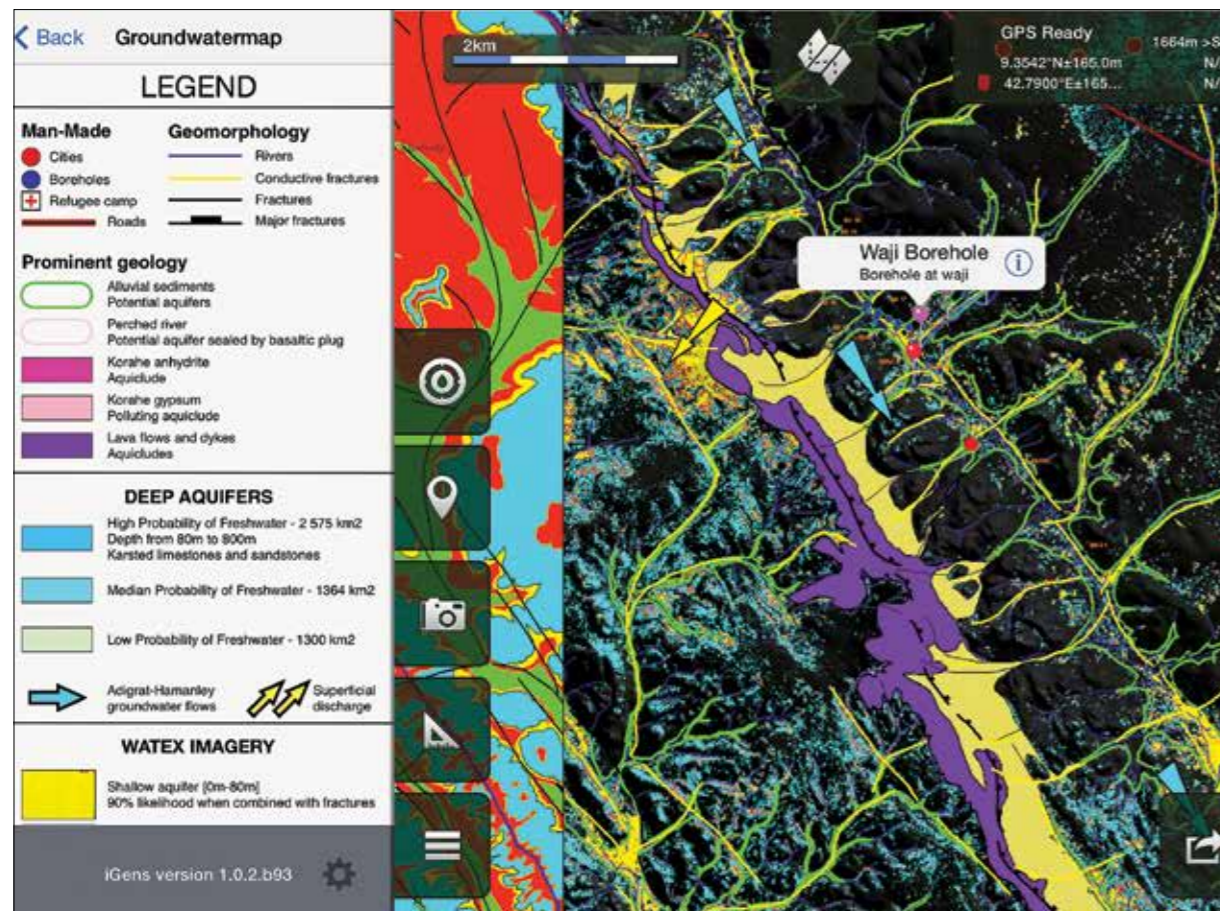
“We used to waste a lot of time and money doing hydrological studies everywhere. Now, with the Igens technology, we can immediately see whether a study is necessary or not.”

– JOCKUS ZAMARI, INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

BELOW LEFT, RIGHT: USAID and its partners are using state-of-the-art WATEX (water exploration) technology to locate and assess renewable underground water reserves in pastoral areas.

The WATEX system detects water by processing and interpreting conventional, oil industry, and remote sensing data.

The process is rapid, economical, and highly effective for water potential mapping. Using an iPad application called iGens (Groundwater Exploration Navigation System), geologists and hydrologists can view the WATEX results in the field. In addition to determining where to drill for water, this new technology improves the ability of humanitarian and development organizations to identify areas suitable for settlement (temporary and permanent), cultivation, and development.



RIGHT: Bule (center) and Ware (right) fill their jerry cans at the rehabilitated water point in Dhas. To ensure it is properly managed and fees can be collected, the water point is only open for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening.



ETHIOPIA'S RATE of access to safe water is among the lowest in the world: just 39 percent of Ethiopians have access to an improved source of water (one that is constructed to protect it from outside contamination, in particular from contamination with fecal matter). This number is significantly lower in pastoral areas, where people often have no choice but to rely on unsafe water sources—rivers, seasonal streams, lakes, shallow unprotected ponds or wells, and even puddles they share with their animals—just to survive.

Communities with limited access to clean water are more likely to be poor. More money is spent on medical bills, work opportunities are lost to illness, children miss school because they are sick, and women and girls spend precious time and energy traveling long distances for water. In addition, as water is frequently limited to what can be physically carried, it is not “wasted” on proper hygiene, which further jeopardizes health.

Bule Dhenge used to get her family's water from Duse Wolensu Kebe, near the village of Dhas, a reliable source of safe water less than an hour from home. But when the generator and pump there broke down, the result was an eight-hour round trip on foot to fetch water.

“I used to leave home very early in the morning so I would be home by early afternoon, as I would have to go out again to collect firewood and then start cooking,” Bule recalls. “I didn't have a donkey then, so I could only bring back one jerry can of twenty-five liters for the whole family.”

Two years ago, Dhas's water supply system was rehabilitated, including the installation of a new water pump and generator. Everything changed—once again, it now takes Bule a little over an hour to make the round trip.

“Now that the water is back on, we have to pay for it—it costs 1 Birr (US \$.05) to fill four jerry cans—but it's worth it,” she says. “The water we were drinking before tasted salty and I'm not sure how clean it really was. Since we have been coming back to Dhas, where the water is clean, my children are not sick as often as they used to be.”

Restoring dependable access to clean water has also brought positive changes to the lives of many other families in nearby communities. Salo Qotole recently moved to the area after she heard it had plentiful water and good pasture. “I live less than an hour's walk away from here,” she says, strapping four heavy jerry cans of water onto the back of her donkey. “I am so glad this water point has been fixed and is working again. It means I don't have to go out looking for water every day. Four jerry cans are enough to last us two days, which leaves me more time to work on the farm.”

To make sure the water doesn't stop flowing again, a water management committee, made up of trusted members of the local community, was trained and put in place to ensure the maintenance and day-to-day running of the water point. The community chose Ware Tache to head the committee. “So far we haven't had any problems,” says Ware. “The cashier and a controller collect the fees from the users. Some of this money goes toward fuel and oil for the generator that runs the pump, and the rest is put into our bank account for any maintenance that needs to be done. Nobody complains about paying for water. They understand how important it is to all of us that we keep this system working properly.”

“I am so glad this water point has been fixed and is working again. It means I don't have to go out looking for water every day.”

— SALO QOTOLE

USAID's Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Transformation for Enhanced Resilience Program benefits almost 47,000 households (220,000 individuals) in the Afar, Somali, and Oromia Regions by improving sustainable access to safe water—and by linking it to improved sanitation and hygiene. Among the program activities have been the following:

- Drilling twenty-two new boreholes and the construction of water supply systems

- Rehabilitating nineteen existing borehole-based systems and corresponding distribution networks employing a conflict-sensitive approach
- Establishing or strengthening water management committees for all forty-one boreholes to enhance community ownership and ensure sustainability
- Conducting water, sanitation and hygiene campaigns
- Improving natural resource management around water catchment facilities to prevent degradation and increase underground water recharge.

BRINGING WATER CLOSER TO HOME

Pump operator Dido Denge cleans the new generator that supports the Dhas water system. A key member of the water management committee, he is trained to oversee the generator's workings and basic maintenance. "I am responsible for keeping the generator clean, ensuring it has fuel and oil, and switching it on and off according to the schedule," he says. "Usage differs during the wet and dry seasons. In the dry season it is switched on daily from 8 to 10 am and 3 to 5 pm. In the wet season, the times are the same, but it goes on only three times per week."

The generator supplies electricity to pump water from the ground to fill a reservoir. From there, gravity carries the piped water to three other villages in the area. "The other villages also have water management committees to run their water points," Dido explains. "But because this system serves more than one village, key members from those committees are part of a larger water board. Fees collected at each village water point are submitted to the board, and they pay for fuel and any maintenance to the generator I'm not qualified to do."





BRINGING WATER CLOSER TO HOME

LEFT: While the herders fill their jerry cans at the water point, the taps are also opened at the troughs so the livestock can drink. Ware Tache, head of Dhas's water management committee, watches over the animals drinking, as users must pay a fee for each of their animals that use the water scheme.

To promote the sustainability of water activities, USAID supports the development and enhancement of water management committees (WMCs) at each of its water project sites, through which communities are responsible for managing all aspects of their water schemes on a cost-recovery basis.

USAID and its partners provide training for WMCs in the development of committee bylaws, accounting and financial procedures for the management of community funds, natural resource maintenance, conflict mitigation, and gender and protection issues. They also provide technical training on the operation and the maintenance and rehabilitation of generators and pumps, along with maintenance toolkits and basic spare parts.

The Government of Ethiopia requires participation in water management committees to be at least 50 percent female. Offering women leadership positions helps shift attitudes toward gender and traditional roles, in turn creating a ripple effect of change in the community.

Finally, water management committees receive training in health and sanitation education, which they are expected to pass on to their communities.

By 2017, USAID will have established and trained three hundred water management committees in three hundred communities across the southern and northeastern parts of Ethiopia.

SAVING RAINWATER FOR A DRY DAY

For the past four years, the village of Ijiiid in the southern Somali Region has relied entirely on water trucked in by NGOs to meet its needs during the dry season—a costly and unsustainable solution to a chronic problem.

To provide a better solution for Ijiiid and other communities facing chronic water shortages, USAID is supporting the construction of community birkads—open, cement-lined storage tanks that collect and hold rainwater. During the peak of the dry season, Ijiiid's birkad will provide the community's two hundred residents with a reliable source of water.

As with most USAID activities, this is a partnership. The community excavated the birkad, and USAID contractors are working to construct it. Also, as is the case with USAID-supported water activities, the birkad, once completed, will be transferred to a trained, community-based water management committee that will oversee its management and collect a small user fee to support its maintenance. Should it run dry over the course of a particularly long and difficult dry season, the fee will also help cover the cost of refilling it from the occasional water truck.





LEADING CAMELS TO WATER

Through the rehabilitation of the El Dub site, USAID and its partners have improved access to water for more than 200 households and 7,500 livestock within a thirty-kilometer radius.

“These days it doesn’t take long to water the camels, so people are happy to help each other out.”

— AYANLE, CAMEL HERDER

THE EL DUB shallow wells have long been an important source of water for pastoralists during the dry season. Water is always there, and it is near the surface, but it has not always been easy to get at.

“Five years ago, this was a small, dirty water point,” says Ayanle. “There were only three or four holes, and we would have to dig them out every year at the start of the dry season. During the wet season, when they were not being used, they filled with dirt, debris, and animal feces, so when we uncovered them, the water was black and toxic. There were cases where people dug open the holes, breathed in the lethal fumes, and died—fast.”

Ayanle continues, “There were no troughs for the animals then, either. Each herder carried his own, made of a piece of hollowed-out tree trunk. With a trough that small, you could water only two or three camels at a time. And because the water was not clean, the animals didn’t always want to drink. It was a big problem.

Three to four herds might be waiting at any given time, and it might take ten hours or an entire day to water them all. People would get frustrated, and fights would break out.”

In 2009, USAID and its partners rehabilitated the El Dub shallow well site, installing seven cement-lined wells attached to fourteen drinking troughs for the animals. Now, several herders can water up to two hundred camels in just one hour—meaning livestock have more time to graze, people are more cooperative, and there is no more cause for conflict.

“Before, I watered my animals alone, and so did everyone else; having already waited so long, no one had time to wait around to help anyone else,” says Ayanle. “But these days it doesn’t take long to water the camels, so people are happy to help each other out.”

(Pictured left to right) Ayanle, Mowlid and Hussein work together to haul up water, which they pour into a trough, taking it in turn to water their respective herds. Each of the young men has about 100 camels and it will take them a little over an hour to water all of them. In the distance, more camels and herders make their way towards the busy water point.



CHANGING HORIZONS





CHANGING HORIZONS

LEFT: Ramha Hassan Abbib sells cereals in the market. She is currently repaying her second loan from the Somali Microfinance Share Company. She used both of her loans to increase her cereal stocks. With more capital, she can get a better price buying in bulk and has gradually become a bigger supplier in the market.

With the profits from sales, Ramha and her husband have been able to build their own house and can now afford to keep their children in school. "I've always worked with cereals in the market," says Ramha, "but I've never been this well off."

INCREASINGLY, PASTORALISTS are recognizing the need to diversify their livelihoods. Some are adding agricultural activities to pastoralism, while others send their children to school in town in the hope they will one day earn enough to support their parents. Still others are building houses in nearby urban centers and opening bank accounts they feel will provide more security than keeping all their money in livestock.

Other changes are on the horizon, as well. The drylands are becoming more closely connected to the rest of the country through better road networks and telecommunications, providing unprecedented opportunities and access to markets. At the same time, the increasing severity and frequency of droughts in recent decades has caused herds to dwindle. Those who no longer have sufficient animals to support themselves are abandoning their traditional way of life in search of new livelihoods in the rapidly growing towns and urban areas.

Some pastoralists, it is thought, will gradually move toward a more settled lifestyle—already common in some areas—in which some family members migrate with the animals according to the seasons, while the rest remain in one place. Those who stay will be able to engage in waged employment, agriculture (where feasible), and trading to diversify and supplement their incomes. A larger settled population will, in turn, fuel the growth of small and medium-sized towns. The demand for milk and meat products will increase—and the pastoral areas, home to most of the country's livestock, will be the logical source of supply.

USAID is providing support to pastoralists making the transition to a new way of life through short-term training initiatives that help them learn new skills and adapt to changes. It is also facilitating access to viable financial solutions to help them find their feet. Many large investors are looking to the changes on the horizon, too. As they move into pastoral areas to develop new business opportunities they are, at the same time, opening up new markets and livelihoods and expanding existing ones for local communities.



In 2013, USAID leveraged \$8.5 million of new private sector investment in the Somali Region of Ethiopia, a figure that includes the new JESH slaughterhouse near Jigjiga.

“JESH succeeds when pastoralism flourishes.”

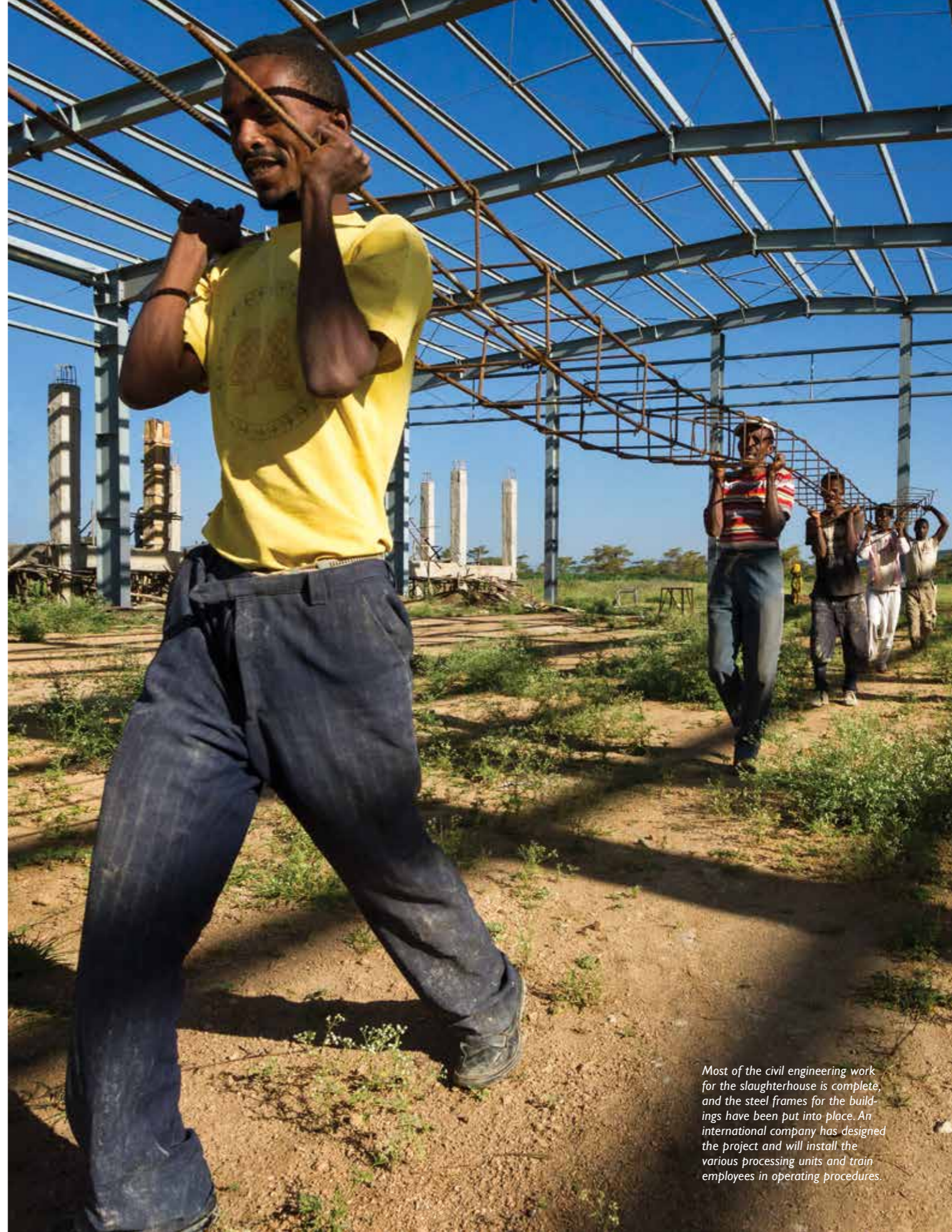
— DR. FAISAL ABDI GUHA

ETHIOPIA IS HOME to the largest livestock population in Africa, and, it is estimated, almost half the country's cattle, goat, and camel population and 64 percent of its sheep population are raised in Ethiopia's Somali Region. Jigjiga, the region's capital, is at the epicenter of a lucrative trade in livestock with the Middle East. However, few have really capitalized on the potential inherent in this source of wealth.

Geographical location, networks, and a lack of reliable access to other marketing options drive cross-border livestock trade between the Somali Region and Somalia. Currently, it is estimated that almost two million live animals—the majority of them sheep and goats—are exported informally from the Somali Region every year, mostly to Somalia. The buyers are looking for larger ruminants that do not sell as well in Ethiopia, so traders are able to get a better price for them there. The cross-border trade, while beneficial to local communities who have little access to other markets, does not provide any significant returns for Ethiopia—whether in taxes, foreign exchange, employment, or value added through the processing of hides and skins.

One man is working to change all this: Dr. Faisal Abdi Guha is the general manager of Jigjiga Export Slaughterhouse (JESH) Plc., a multi-million-dollar, state-of-the-art slaughterhouse and industrial complex under construction in the heart of the Somali Region. “We have a top spot,” says Faisal. “Animals coming from Oromia or the highlands pass through here on their way to the Middle East, together with those coming from the east of the country, and the largest livestock market in the region is less than twenty minutes away, so it should be relatively easy to do business with the herders.”

When it is up and running, the slaughterhouse aims to process at least two thousand sheep and goats per eight-hour shift. The start-up of such an operation in the region promises to open up market access for smallholder farmers, most of whom have little or no experience of direct market dealings and have, until now, been kept unaware of key market information, including prices, desired livestock characteristics, health requirements, and other market standards. “We will be looking to create a sustainable supply of high quality animals to keep the abattoir functioning,” says Faisal. “And we will need to do some legwork with the pastoralists to ensure adequate animal health and nutrition and promote productivity.”



Most of the civil engineering work for the slaughterhouse is complete, and the steel frames for the buildings have been put into place. An international company has designed the project and will install the various processing units and train employees in operating procedures.

CAPITALIZING ON THE OPPORTUNITIES

Through various initiatives, USAID will increase fodder production in 2014 by supporting and working with at least ten local commercial feed and fodder producers to expand their operations. More than a thousand pastoralists will be exposed to new models of feed and fodder technologies and demonstration sites through specific training activities.

USAID's ongoing activities in the region over the past ten years have involved pastoral communities in various initiatives to help them improve both animal health and productivity. USAID and its partners have also worked to establish eighteen independent livestock trading groups across the Somali Region to ensure JESH receives a steady supply of good quality animals. "It's a win-win situation," says Faisal. "We are very lucky to have this kind of support. We wouldn't be able to do all of this on our own."

JESH aims to be more than just the region's main slaughterhouse; its greater vision includes support for the wider community. Hundreds of hectares of fertile company-owned land stretch along the valley surrounding the complex. Some will be used to grow highly nutritive varieties of fodder for fattening livestock in the holding pens before slaughter. Other land will be used to start up a seed expansion program. "We plan to distribute the seeds to the community within a ten- to twenty-kilometer radius of the slaughterhouse," says Faisal. "They will grow fodder and produce seed, and we will buy it from them. They will also grow fodder to feed their own animals."

"Through measures like this, we aim to help people be prepared for the next drought. In past droughts, fodder had to be trucked in from the highlands. In the next one—and there will always be a next one—people will fare better if they are prepared, and they will not need to rely on donor aid."

Other land will be used for feedlots and for the construction of holding pens for up to 5,000 cattle and 45,000 sheep and goats.

As well as benefiting pastoralists and livestock traders in the area by providing access to a new, stable market, JESH will offer a variety of other employment opportunities. "The slaughterhouse will create about 145 direct and more than 1,000 indirect jobs, which in turn will provide a well-needed boost to the local economy," says Faisal. "In addition, our products will be exported to other countries, which means foreign exchange will come into the country's coffers. We hope to be an example for other investors who are currently on the fence, as there are certainly a lot of opportunities to be developed in this region."

TOP: Aman Hassan, who is in charge of agriculture at JESH, harvests elephant grass. As part of an initial pilot project, JESH will harvest four tons of seeds from alfalfa and elephant, Sudan, and Napier grasses to find out which of these highly nutritive species grow best in the area.

BOTTOM: Both fodder and seeds, like the elephant grass seeds shown here, will serve as cash crops and will also be harvested and stored for use during the lean season. Having instigated such initiatives through the private sector, USAID is confident sufficient quantities of grass and fodder stocks will be in place to see communities through the next drought.





MILKING THE BENEFITS



To enhance market opportunities for dairy producers in the Jigjiga and Shinile Zones of the northern Somali Region, USAID supports activities connecting producer groups with larger milk processors sourcing from each Zone.

In Jigjiga Zone, for example, USAID will help to establish a supply-demand relationship between Amir Abdurahman's dairy processing company called *Berwaqo* and two local cooperatives, one in the town of Fafan and the other in the town of Bombas. *Berwaqo* plans to source up to 20,000 liters of milk daily (10,000 liters each of camel and cattle milk) from these producer groups and co-operatives.

IN ETHIOPIA, demand for high quality dairy products is on the rise—the result of a rapidly growing population, urbanization, increases in income, and changes in lifestyle and consumption. Although current per capita milk consumption is just seventeen liters per person per year, rates of consumption are predicted to increase by almost 60 percent by 2020.

At present, almost 95 percent of the national milk supply is unprocessed and marketed through informal channels, which means producers only deliver fresh milk to consumers in their immediate vicinities or sell to cooperatives, collectors, or traders from nearby towns. Traditionally, milk production in pastoral areas has not been market oriented; small-scale producers sell only what they are not able to consume. To fill the growing gaps between supply and demand, the dairy industry needs to expand, livestock need to be more productive and better managed, and small-scale producers need to be more focused on the market.

When local entrepreneur Amir Abdurahman sees this gap in the market, he sees an opportunity. “There is great potential here to develop the dairy industry,” he says. “There are enough small-scale producers in the region to do something big.” Amir has found that big idea.

He recently constructed the first milk processing plant in Ethiopia's Somali Region. Located on the outskirts of Jigjiga town, his initiative will open up the market for local milk like never before.

“Until now, all milk processing has been done hundreds of kilometers away in the highlands,” says Amir. “The opportunities here are fantastic. In the beginning, I plan to process about 20,000 liters of milk per day, which means I will need to obtain milk from about 2,500 households. If all goes well, I will grow to 40,000 liters a day.” He adds, “Not only will this initiative support producers by providing a stable source of income, but by selling directly to us, they can cut out the middlemen, leaving rural households with a bigger share of the profits.”

As he finishes building the processing plant, Amir will be looking to obtain sufficient quantities of good quality milk from producers throughout the region. The USAID-supported collection centers and women's milk cooperatives will be among his first targets. Having received training from USAID in good hygiene practices, animal health, and improved feeding practices to help increase production, these groups already understand more than most about improving productivity and ensuring milk quality. By raising standards at the producer level, USAID has ensured the payoffs will be felt along the entire milk value chain.

MICROFINANCE:
MAKING DREAMS
COMETRUE

RIGHT: Shamis Cali Colow sits with Kaydo ("money belt"), one of the four goats she bought with her first loan from the SMFSC. As part of a loan agreement, an SMFSC customer must agree to put some of the money into a savings account to serve as the bank's collateral should the customer default. Before receiving the 4,000 Birr (US \$208) she needed, Shamis had to deposit 10 percent (400 Birr, or US \$21) into the account.

After the loan is repaid in full, this money is hers to keep. Shamis's monthly repayments also include a small amount of money that must be saved. "This teaches customers the importance of saving," explains Mohamed Abdirahman, deputy general manager of the SMFSC. "And it can serve as collateral if they decide to take out a second loan."



"I'm not worried about paying the money back. I will work hard at my business, and I will succeed."

— SHAMIS CALI COLOW

RATHER THAN making poor households dependent on aid by distributing handouts, many development organizations nowadays are turning toward microfinance in their attempts to reduce poverty. Opening up branches in both urban and rural centers where traditional banking services are not available, microfinance institutions are able to give individuals and small businesses affordable access to capital.

Operating in a niche market, microfinance institutions address the needs of people who are considered "high risk" by the formal banking sector. High-risk groups or individuals have very few assets, require small loans and substantial follow-up, and include those engaged in activities with fluctuating incomes, such as smallholder farmers or petty traders. The major benefit of microfinance is that it helps the poor manage their assets while generating income, enabling them to turn what little money they have into larger capital. This sector is set to grow and, as it does, more people will be able to benefit from access to credit.

In early 2011, with support from USAID, the National Bank of Ethiopia registered the Somali Microfinance Share Company (SMFSC). "This is the first Islamic microfinance institution in the country," says Mohamed Abdirahman, the organization's deputy general manager.

"It is based on non-interest (Islamic) principles and provides a variety of financial services for the poorer people of the region, including savings, credit, transfers, and financial and business advice." In July 2011, the Somali Regional Government backed SMFSC to the tune of 20 million Birr (US \$1.05 million).

"We have sixteen branches in very remote areas, as this is where the people who need the most help are." Mohamed explains. "They don't have access to any banking facilities out there. Many are ready to do business, but they need credit—initial capital—to get started, and somewhere to save their money. Of course, there are other banks in the main towns of the region, but they will only give out high-collateral, interest-bearing loans."

Like other microfinance institutions, the SMFSC gives out small loans without collateral and with only a minimal service fee. To date, it has given out more than 19 million Birr (US \$1 million) in small loans and currently has almost 3,400 customers. "So far we have not had anyone default," says Mohamed. "Every single loan has been paid back in full. We gave one lady 4,000 Birr (US \$210) to buy five sheep and goats, and she paid the money back in one year. By that time, she already had twelve more animals and was ready to take out a second loan of 7,000 Birr (US \$368). It is really encouraging to see how these people, with minimal assistance, are setting themselves up for a better future."

In 2013, the National Bank of Ethiopia issued a new directive allowing mobile banking for financial institutions, such as microfinance institutions. Following this policy change, USAID has been working with a private technology service provider to assist SMFSC to develop a mobile banking system that links the SMFSC branches through agent banking services. Agent banking allows shopkeepers or others engaged in commercial or business activities to carry out financial services on behalf of the microfinance institution. For those who live in rural communities, this means they will no longer have to trek into town to pay their loans or receive their money, but can conduct their business with the financial institution through their local agent. This new service is currently being piloted in the Somali Region. If successful, it will have the potential to expand to other areas in the country, bringing financial services within the reach of more and more people and helping them achieve their goals.

In January 2011, the National Bank of Ethiopia registered the Somali Microfinance Share Company (SMFSC), a joint venture between the Somali Regional Government, and non-government and private institutions. Starting out with an initial capital of 1.5 million Birr (US \$78,000), the company has rapidly grown, increasing its capital value to 22 million Birr (US \$ 1.1 million) by the end of 2013.

Since opening, the SMFSC has given out more than 19 million Birr (US \$986,200) in small loans, ranging from 4,000 to 75,000 Birr, to both individuals and small businesses and currently has almost 3,400 customers. All of SMFSC's loans have a compulsory savings component to help customers manage their money. At the end of 2013, SMFSC's total customer savings amounted to more than 37 million Birr (US \$1.9 million), which highlights the success of the savings initiative.

MICROFINANCE:
MAKING DREAMS
COMETRUE



ABOVE: Despite already owning the space for a small shop, Sahra Osman Ibrahim used to sell vegetables and meat from a little table on the street. Without sufficient capital to buy the goods she would need to open a shop of her own, she rented the space out to another shopkeeper.

Shortly after receiving her first loan from the USAID-supported Somali Microfinance Share Company (SMFSC), Sahra asked her tenant to find a new space. She used the money from the loan to buy grocery supplies and opened a shop of her own. Business is good. After she had paid back the first loan, Sahra applied for a second one to start building a bigger house for her family.

RIGHT: Jamal Kamal Wabiso gets up at five o'clock every morning to make donuts. He gives some of them to young boys to sell on the streets for him before school, and the rest he sells throughout the day from a small room attached to the one where he and his family live, which he has converted into a restaurant.

Jamal used his first loan to buy more ingredients so he could increase his production and sales. With the profit, he bought drinks and simple foodstuffs (such as eggs, spaghetti, and beans) to sell. With the number of regular customers growing, he is thinking about setting up a proper restaurant.



TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

Many pastoralists leaving their traditional way of life for new economic opportunities realize they must develop or enhance their skills to match the demands of the local market. Among the ways USAID and its partners are working to support them is through training initiatives under the framework of the government's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy. The TVET College in Jigjiga runs both short- and long-term courses in a variety of disciplines, including carpentry, metalwork, plumbing, tailoring, hotel management, and mechanics.

USAID provides technical assistance to the TVET to help them develop relevant two- and three-month courses geared toward people with limited formal education. The TVET works directly with applicants and with the USAID-supported one stop service centers (see page 98) to match students' skills and capacity for learning with the different training courses on offer and the current market demands for labor.

Our aim is to provide our trainees from pastoral areas with a wide range of skills and an insight into careers that might be open to them once they complete their training," says Yemane Tarekegn, an automotive teacher at the college.

Some members of pastoralist families enroll in the courses to change their lives quickly; others, like Haji Aliya, as part of a longer-term plan. "My parents always pushed me to study and learn," says Haji, who has just started a short-term electrical course. "They never allowed me to go out with the animals. They expect me to help them in the future when I get a job."

Still others, like Kedir Abdikarim, want to return to their pastoral roots and use their new skills in the service of their communities. "This course is a starting point, not an ending point," says Kedir, who is taking a three-month course in automotive mechanics and driving. "In the future, I want to be an engineer. I want to go back to my community and help them with what I have learned. Then, whenever there is a problem, we won't have to pay to bring someone from outside. We will be able to solve it on our own."



BRINGING
PEOPLE AND
BUSINESS
TOGETHER

USAID and its partners are collaborating with the government to support the development of one stop service centers through the provision of resources, capacity building, expansion, and the creation of database systems and by improving linkages with potential employers.



ARRIVING IN TOWN with limited skills or know-how can be daunting—all the more so if it is not clear where to look for a job or what the current expectations are in the labor market. Add to this the fact that many people who come with hopes of newfound prosperity can quickly find themselves at a loss.

In 2006, in an attempt to provide a boost to local economies, the Government of Ethiopia developed a Micro and Small Scale Enterprises Development Program to address urban unemployment and increasing poverty. Within the framework of this program, entities known as one stop service centers have been set up in main towns to provide guidance and assistance for a wide range of employment and business development issues. Individuals looking for work can be matched with employers who need workers with specific skill sets or just daily laborers. One stop service centers also provide those looking to start up small businesses with financial guidance, assist them with legal or administrative paperwork, and link them to a variety of training courses.

After being away for many years, Amina Mohamed returned to Jigjiga with little more than her baking skills. Having asked around at various places, she was finally offered paid work training others to bake. “I was asked to train twenty-five women for three months,” she says, “and I came to realize there was a demand for my skills—both in baking and in training others to bake.”

The one stop service center in Jigjiga suggested that forming a cooperative would be a good way to do both. They helped Amina put together a group of fifteen women whom she trained; they now work with her to make cakes and cookies.

With further assistance from the center, “Amina Sweet,” as she is popularly known, and the members of her cooperative also received business training and secured a loan of 120,000 Birr (US \$6,315) to expand their business. “The center also helped us secure discounted raw materials, such as flour and sugar, which helps us to increase our profits,” says Amina. “And whenever they learn of a need for our services, for event catering, meetings, and so forth, they give us a call.”

Finally, the center puts Amina in touch with other women who are interested in learning to bake and engages her to train them in this potentially lucrative skill.



“Now we are people who have hope for the future.”

— KALTOUMA SHEIKH

“AFTER OUR LIVESTOCK died in the drought, we kept asking ourselves ‘How will we live?’” says Kaltouma Sheikh, waving a bar of soap as she speaks. “We knew that without our animals, if we stayed in the bush there was nothing for us to do, and it would be the end of us. We thought, if we move to town at least we can do something to earn money. We knew we didn’t have any skills that are useful in the town, but people always need someone to collect firewood and water and to do labor.”

Even so, life in town was difficult for Kaltouma and her family. “Sometimes there was no work. We struggled to have food just once or twice a day. We couldn’t afford to send our children to school. It was bad.”

Unfortunately, Kaltouma’s story is a common one. In recent years, drought, flood, and conflict have decimated the herds of many of Ethiopia’s smallholder pastoralists, leaving them with few options for survival. This has been especially true in and around the town of Gode in the southern part of Ethiopia’s Somali Region. In 2000, the area was ground zero for a devastating drought, which left millions in need of humanitarian assistance and resulted in the deaths of countless livestock.

Today the town continues to grow as so-called pastoral “dropouts” move there in search of ways to earn the money they now need to keep their families alive. For most of these newcomers, life is not easy; they rely on unpredictable work as daily laborers for their survival—and on food aid.

Thanks to USAID, this is not the end of their story, but the start of a new chapter, as its TOPs (transitioning out of pastoralism) activity targets members of the most vulnerable families and gives them the opportunity to learn vocational skills and then work together in groups to generate income. In addition to being trained in tailoring, masonry, cobblestone and road making, carpentry, soap making, handicrafts, and other vocations, members are taught business management. USAID helps each group develop a sound business plan and then provides it with a US\$1,200 grant in cash and/or in kind as start-up capital to get its activities off the ground.

Kaltouma and her group of twelve other women decided to form a soap-making cooperative. “When we talked about what kind of activity we wanted to do, we thought this was the best idea,” says Kaltouma. “It’s a new idea. Nobody is making soap in this area or even in this region. We are the only ones.”

RIGHT: Many of USAID’s income generating and cooperative activities target women. “Women are the backbone of the family,” says Saleban Mohamed Ahmed, Deputy Head of Shabelle Zone, in which Gode is located. “When you increase the capacity of women you increase the wellbeing of the whole family.”



When they formed their group over a year ago, the women were trained to make soap by hand. Later they received a soap-making machine, and someone came from Addis Ababa to train them to use it.

“We’ve only had the machine for a few months now, but already we’re making a decent amount of money,” says Kaltouma. “We charge just 5 Birr (US \$.25) for a bar of soap, which is 1 Birr cheaper than the other soaps on the market, which all come from Addis. And our soap is better quality. Right now our biggest challenge is just to make people aware we are here and selling this product.”

Like all the groups of people in transition out of pastoralism, the soap-making cooperative also has a saving component. Not only does the group save the money they need to purchase raw materials; each member also makes a weekly contribution of 20 Birr (US \$1) to a group savings scheme through which members take turns borrowing money. “This money can help members if someone falls sick or has unexpected expenses,” says Kaltouma. “It can also be used as capital to expand their other business activities.”

“What is the difference in our situation before we started doing this and now?” Kaltouma asks, rhetorically. “Now we are people who have hope for the future. We have skills and a machine and a business. We eat three times a day. We have the money to send our children to school. And we have savings that allow us to buy the resources, such as livestock or a new home, to improve our lives further. Now we are settled in the town, and we are no longer thinking about going back to our old life. We are happy with this life.”

Like Kaltouma, others in the drylands have journeyed far beyond their previous lives in search of new horizons. Their stories, some of which follow, illustrate that in many cases, it doesn’t take much—just the right skills, know-how, and a small amount of start-up capital—to change a life.



LEFT: “There is more skill to making a good cobblestone than you might think,” Faduma Maki observes. “You have to carve them so that each side lies perfectly flat.”

CENTER: “Now I earn something every day,” says Hindo. “Even though we are ten tailors in the co-op and we all live in the same area, there is enough demand—whether for making clothes or mending them—for each of us to make money. None of the nearby villages has a tailor, so they come here, too.”

RIGHT: “When the next drought comes, it will definitely have an impact on us because the cost of feeding our donkeys will go up, and people will no longer hire us to transport grasses, but that’s it,” says Barni. “We will be much better off than we were before.”

BUILDING BACK BETTER: COBBLESTONES AND ROAD-BUILDING COOPERATIVE

The “three Fadumas”—Faduma Bihi, Faduma Qabdid, and Faduma Maki—chisel rocks into cobblestones for the government’s regional road project. As part of an initial group of fifty men and women selected for this activity, they completed twenty-one days of technical training and six days of leadership and management training before starting work.

“We are twenty-five people in our group,” says Faduma Maki. “We call it ‘Towfig,’ which means, ‘Let our ideas become one.’” She explains that the government helped their group establish itself as a cooperative and open a bank account.

Group members are tasked with shaping rocks into flat-sided cobblestones of a certain size that will later be used to pave the roads in the town. “Each individual in the group works as much as he or she wants, but obviously the more you work, the more money you can earn. It’s physically demanding work, but it’s stable and the money is good.” Group members are paid 4 Birr (US \$0.20) per cobblestone, which the government buys by the truckload after the members have carved them. The government puts the money into their bank account, and everyone is paid according to the number of stones they have completed.

When enough cobblestones are done to lay a stretch of road, the group is contracted to do this work, as well. “Sure, it’s hard work,” says Maki, with a laugh. “Look at us! Before we started doing this our faces were clean, and we were incredibly beautiful!” But she isn’t really complaining: “All of us chose to join this cooperative because we knew we could make more money doing this than any of the other income-generating activities.”

THE FRUITS OF OUR LABOR: NURSERY COOPERATIVE

“Before we started this nursery, most of us were idle. During the 2000 drought, we were very badly affected. Taking the example of just the two of us who are here today, I had fifty cattle and my partner here, Abdi Farah, had two hundred sheep and goats. We lost all of them—100 percent. So we were forced to move our families to town and look for work. We didn’t have any skills except livestock rearing, so it was a really difficult time. We relied on relief food and assistance from our relatives, and we worked as laborers whenever we could—working on other people’s farms or transporting goods around town with a wheelbarrow—until we started this business three years ago. I had seen that a lot of farmers outside town wanted to get their hands on fruit trees, so we started supplying them.”

The cooperative was already up and running on a small scale when USAID’s partners approached it about expanding the business. In addition to providing training in basic business and saving, they offered help both in cash and in kind by building shade structures for the plants, extending a water pipe into the nursery yard, and buying 4,950 fruit tree seedlings from the nursery to distribute to farmers outside town. The cooperative now produces a wide variety of seedlings—mango, papaya, neem, moringa, guava, lemon, and others—and supports the fifteen families who share the work.

“The business has become really profitable over the last year as more and more people have come to hear about it,” Abdi says. “We share the profits among us and put a portion into a collective savings account as insurance against the hard times that may come.”

TAKING A LOAD OFF: TRANSPORTATION COOPERATIVE

Barni Abdullahi is a member of a transport cooperative, along with nine other women. With donkey carts, the women provide a cheap and simple transportation service, carrying a wide range of commodities, including water, firewood, and various construction materials.” After receiving training in business and savings we received five donkeys and five carts for the ten of us,” explains Barni. “We share one donkey and cart between two of us, taking turns so we each work three to four days a week.”

Most of the time, Barni and her partner use their donkey and cart to transport water. “It is in high demand,” she says. “After all, there is no life without water.” On days when she has the cart, Barni buys a barrel of water for 3 Birr (US \$.05) near the source and transports it back to the outskirts of Gode, where she sells the water for 15 Birr (US \$.75). “It is very hard to find water around here,” she says, “so people either have to go far away to collect it themselves, or they have to buy it from us.”

Each trip to fetch water takes one to two hours, and the cart can only carry one barrel at a time, so the number of trips Barni and her partner can make in a day is limited. “If we make six trips a day we can earn 72 Birr (US \$3.75), minus 8 Birr (US\$0.40) in costs for the donkey,” she says. “That makes 192 Birr (US \$10) or more each week that we can put toward helping support our families.”

As with other groups, members of the cooperative save money by contributing 10 Birr (US \$0.50) each week into a savings fund from which they can take loans on a rotating basis. To date, the group has managed to save 14,000 Birr (US \$737).

For Barni, the difference from her previous life is considerable. “I am supporting all eight of my family members with what I earn,” she says. “When we first settled here, we collected grass and firewood and brought it to town to sell, carrying it on our own backs. We are much better off than we were before.”



A HEALTHY FUTURE: VEGETABLE COOPERATIVE

Asho Sheikh Ahmed, Hamdi Badal, and Hasna Abdi are all former pastoralists whose newfound business skills are helping them prosper in an urban setting. They buy fresh produce directly from farmers, who bring it to town in the morning and then sell it for a small profit in the market.

According to Hasna, the group's chairwoman, "This is good for everybody. The farmers aren't town people. They don't have time to sit in the market and sell their produce. They come in the morning, sell it to us, and go back to work on their farms. They get their money, and we make some too." Again, like others, the group also has a saving component that has helped its ten members get their individual businesses up and running. "Each woman contributes 100 Birr (US \$5) per month, and we use this money as a rotating loan," says Hasna. "A lot of the women use the money for school-related expenses. But many of us also live in rental houses, and we would like to buy land and build our own places."

The business management training provided by USAID's partners has helped the women's businesses grow. "Before we only offered some tomatoes and a few other vegetables, but now we are selling so much more," says Hasna.

In short, both the present and the future are looking brighter for Hasna and the other women in her cooperative: "This life is better than our old life. We are all settled

in one place, our children are in school, and we don't worry about what we will do if there is another drought, because we no longer have livestock. Our vegetables come from land irrigated by a river, so as long as nothing happens there, we will be okay."

ON THE MEND: TAILORING COOPERATIVE

Hindo Afi and her family moved to Gode when they lost all their livestock in the drought of 2008–9. When Hindo was selected to join USAID's TOPs activity she lived in a broken-down house, her husband was not working, and the only income they had was from the occasional sale of firewood and a few onions and tomatoes she sold from a little table outside her house. The family often relied on food aid to make ends meet.

After attending a short course in which she learned sewing and basic business management skills, Hindo and nine other women formed a tailoring and savings cooperative, and each woman was given a sewing machine.

A lot has happened in the ten months since Hindo learned to be a tailor. "When I started working, we rebuilt our house, and I made a workroom and shop," she says. "Now I earn enough money to buy the things we need, plus all the children's supplies for school. With what is left, I buy things for my shop that people need, like pens, notebooks, matches, soap, and sugar. We are doing really well."

LEFT: The vegetable cooperative's business model is relatively simple. They buy at 8 Birr (US \$.40) per kilogram and sell to their customers at 12 Birr (US \$.65) per kilogram.

RIGHT: Abdi Abdul, chairman and founder of Horses Nursery Cooperative, selects seedlings for a customer. "Most popular are lemon, guava, and papaya," he says.





GROWING INCOME: FODDER COOPERATIVE

Farah Gamadid moved to Gode town seventeen years ago after he lost all his livestock. “Up until two years ago, my family relied on food aid,” says Farah, “but things have changed since I joined this fodder cooperative.”

Thirteen families make up the fodder cooperative on the outskirts of town. It has nineteen hectares of farmland—ten of which are currently being cultivated—and sells fodder for livestock in the town and neighboring communities. “If there is a demand for fodder we cut it and sell it,” Farah explains. “If there is no demand, for example, during the wet season, we cut it and store it to sell later.” Profits are shared among the co-op members and reinvested in growing more fodder.

In addition to providing training and start-up capital, USAID and its partners have provided valuable support to the fodder cooperative through exchange visits and training in fodder preservation and farm management. “Now we have a better standard of living,” says Farah. “When it came time to apply for food aid this year, I thought, why bother?”



USAID'S PARTNERS

USAID's Primary Resilience Partners in Ethiopia include:



CARE

CARE Ethiopia's mission is to work with poor women and men, boys and girls, communities and institutions, to have a significant impact on the underlying causes of poverty. In mutually supportive alliances, CARE Ethiopia contributes to economic and social transformation, unleashing the power of the most vulnerable women and girls, honoring their dignity.



GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

Global Communities works closely with communities worldwide to bring about sustainable changes that improve the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable. Global Communities believes that the real power of what they do lies in their ability to develop the relationships that put the people of the community at the forefront of their own development.



INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises and helps people to survive and rebuild their lives. Founded in 1933 at the request of Albert Einstein, the IRC offers lifesaving care and life-changing assistance to refugees forced to flee from war or disaster. At work today in over forty countries and twenty-two U.S. cities, the IRC restores safety, dignity, and hope to millions who are uprooted and struggling to endure. The IRC leads the way from harm to home.



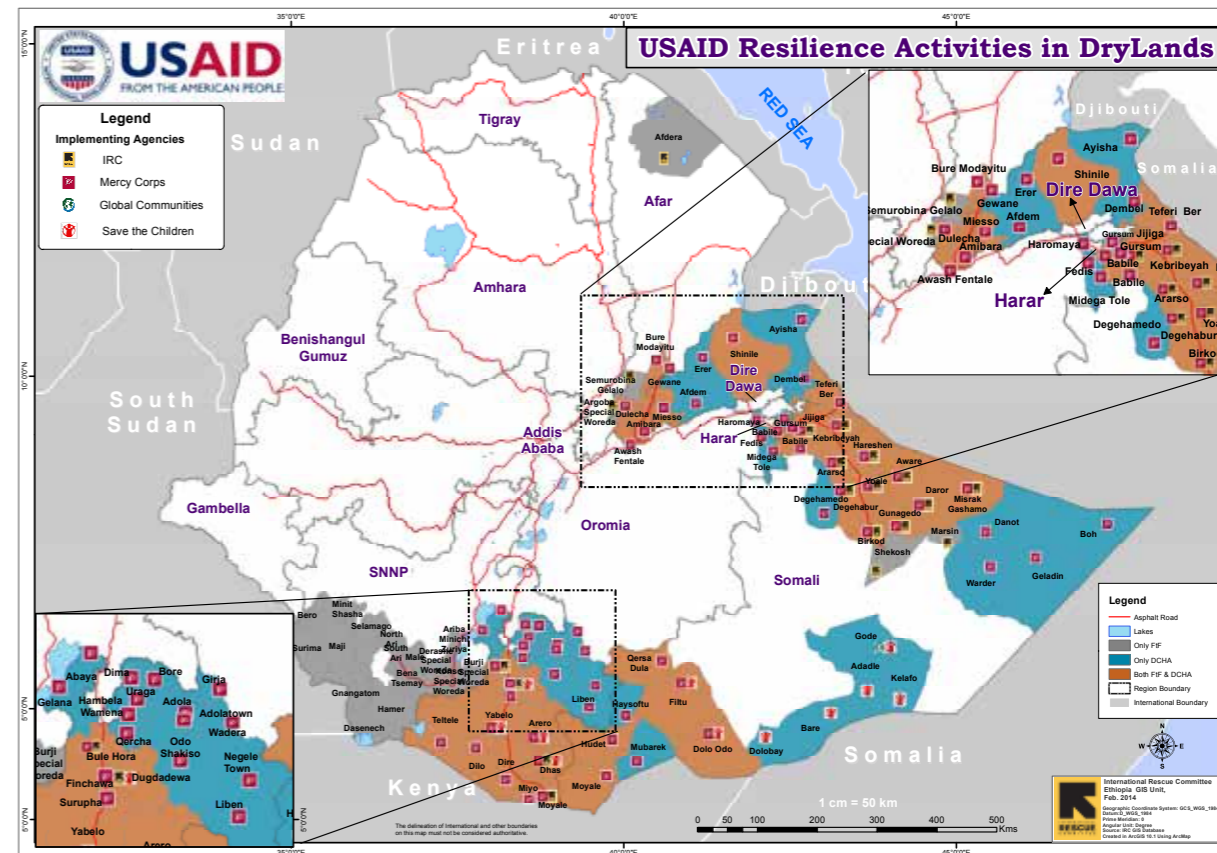
MERCY CORPS

Mercy Corps exists to alleviate suffering, poverty, and oppression by helping people build secure, productive, and just communities. Mercy Corps helps people turn the crises they confront into the opportunities they deserve. Driven by local needs, their programs provide communities in the world's toughest places with the tools and support they need to transform their own lives.



RADAR TECHNOLOGIES INTERNATIONAL

Radar Technologies International (RTI) is a natural resource exploration firm offering cutting edge intelligence services around the world since 1996. RTI has a proven track record of unique discoveries in the fields of groundwater, minerals, and oil and gas exploration. RTI's services combine decades of traditional resource exploration experience with expert knowledge and development of remotely sensed data.



SAVE THE CHILDREN

Save the Children is the world's leading independent organization for children. Save the Children's vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development, and participation. Their mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.



TUFTS UNIVERSITY'S FEINSTEIN INTERNATIONAL CENTER

The Feinstein International Center is part of the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, USA. The Center is multidisciplinary and focuses on policy, programming, and applied research to improve the lives of people affected by recurrent crises and disasters. The Africa Regional Office is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE

The U.S. Forest Service, through its international programs, acts as an advocate for U.S. interests abroad and engages with countless governmental and nongovernmental partners to share best practices. As the United States continues to be one of the world's largest traders in forest products and a leader in sustainable forest management, it makes sense to have active development engagements abroad.



UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The USGS is a science organization that provides impartial information on the health of our ecosystems and environment, the natural hazards that threaten us, the natural resources we rely on, the impacts of climate and land-use change, and the core science systems that help us provide timely, relevant, and usable information.

USAID partners to end extreme poverty and to promote resilient, democratic societies, while advancing U.S. security and prosperity.

USAID is the lead U.S. Government agency that works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential. USAID's portfolio in Ethiopia is one of the largest and most complex in Africa.

Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with an annual per capita income of \$471. Ten percent of the population suffers from chronic food insecurity, and 82 percent is dependent on subsistence agriculture. The fast-growing population, now estimated at more than 85 million, puts tremendous pressure on the land and natural resources that are the cornerstones for the country's growth.

U.S. assistance capitalizes on a partnership with the government of Ethiopia to combat poverty, deliver high quality basic public health and education services, and generate opportunities for private sector engagement in sustainable economic development.

To learn more about USAID Ethiopia, please visit www.usaid.gov/ethiopia.

USAID/Ethiopia
Entoto Street
P.O. Box 1014
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
+251-11-130-6002

USAID Washington
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20523
+1 202-712-4544



©USAID 2014

WORDS: CLAIRE STOUT
PHOTOGRAPHS: KELLEY LYNCH
EDITORS: KELLEY LYNCH AND LISA PARMELEE
USAID TECHNICAL AND EDITORIAL INPUT:
MOHAMED ABDINOOR, DUBALE ADMASU, ROBERT SAUERS
AND NENA TERRELL
DESIGN: LAURA EITZEN

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT SAUERS
ILLUSTRATIONS PAGES 11: GADHLE ARTS, COURTESY OF IRC
ILLUSTRATION PAGE 86: COURTESY OF JESH PLC
MAP ART PAGE 111: HABTAMU GULILAT

SPECIAL THANKS TO MERCY CORPS AND IRC FOR THEIR SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS OF MAKING THIS BOOK. THANKS ALSO TO CARE, SAVE THE CHILDREN AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN THE FIELD.

