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Raising Voice – Securing a Livelihood:
The Role of Diverse Voices in Developing
Secure Livelihoods in Pastoralist Areas
in Ethiopia

Mary Ann Brocklesby, Mary Hopley and Patta Scott-Villiers
March 2010

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Summary

This paper is concerned with the workings of voice among pastoralists in Ethiopia. It documents how diverse pastoralist men and women – young and old, rich and poor – call on one another and on representatives and officials in efforts to achieve cooperation and influence. Diverse pastoralists explain how successful voice is the result of interconnectedness and opportunity. Individual influence varies with a speaker's social and political connections, with his or her determination, skill and experience, and as a consequence of geography and politics.

In this study we learned that to be successful as a pastoralist in Ethiopia is to be 'competent' and to be competent is to have voice. People want to build capabilities to develop and manage assets, make demands, and secure and give support. Competence can be appreciated in their mobility, visibility, audibility and action: moving to watering and grazing places at the right time, bringing up children and managing the household well, being seen doing business in town, speaking effectively at clan and government meetings, being generous in welfare and wise in justice. Competence and voice are the basis of wealth and a bulwark against hard times, going beyond ideas of social, economic or political capital to embrace Amartya Sen's notion of capability and agency, constantly renewed in interconnection and discussion (Sen 1999).

In speaking, people are seeking binding responses, although often all they get are false assurances or rebuff. Poor pastoralists, clustering in increasing numbers around the edges of settlements, say that they are becoming powerless objects of state welfare, disconnected and unable to regain competence, still less contribute to society's wellbeing. The response of pastoralist leaders has been to increase the level of engagement between different pastoralists, while increasing the intensity of their public engagements with the state.

Keywords: voice; governance; pastoralists; Ethiopia; diversity; gender; age; capability.

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Contents

Summary	3
Keywords, author notes	4
Acknowledgements	8
Glossary of terms and abbreviations	8
1 Introduction	11
1.1 Pastoralist voice in Ethiopia	11
1.2 The study	12
1.3 Inquiry framework	14
1.4 Study methods	16
1.5 The study sites	17
1.6 Constraints to the research	17
1.7 Key concepts used	19
2 Woreda contexts	20
2.1 Livelihood contexts	20
2.2 Pastoralist livelihood contexts: summary	25
3 Pastoralist livelihood security: the dynamics of competence	25
3.1 The dynamics of competence	26
3.2 Competence as a buffer against livelihood shocks and uncertainty	30
3.3 Mobility and visibility: indicators of livelihood security	31
3.4 Values shape competence	31
3.5 Pastoralist competence: summary	35
4 Whose voice counts? Transformations in response	35
4.1 Mobility, voice and social identity	35
4.2 Differentiated voice	37
4.3 Gendered voice	39
4.4 Generational differences in voice	42
4.5 Diversity and voice summary	44
5 The changing nature of response in clan and government	45
5.1 Clan competence, welfare, justice and services	46
5.2 Government responses and information flows	49

5.3	Changing nature of response	51
5.4	Response in Clan and Government: a summary	52
6	The long game of institutional change	53
6.1	The changing policy and political contexts	53
6.2	Policy effects on voice of pastoralists	56
6.3	The role of pastoralist elites – representation and opening political space	61
6.4	Supporting change in pastoralist voice and engagement: the example of PCI	63
6.5	The emerging role of the pastoralist associations	64
6.6	The long game: a summary of institutional change	66
7	Concluding remarks	67
7.1	Implications for official programmes and policies	68
7.2	Possibilities for changing the terms of engagement	69
	Annexes	71
A1	The CR2 rights-based framework for analysis, appraisal and assessment	71
A2	Sampling framework	73
A3	The building of peace processes	73
	References	77
	Figures	
Figure 3.1	Securing livelihood: importance of competence	27
Figure 3.2	Moving in and out of competence	28
Figure A1.1	The CR2 Framework	73
	Boxes	
Box 2.1	Basic services and problems of response	22
Box 2.2	Invasion of the Prosopsis tree	23
Box 3.1	The competent pastoralist	27
Box 3.2	Living on the edge: the non-competent pastoralist	28
Box 3.3	Rejecting social norms: undermining competence	32
Box 3.4	Intra-clan conflict Gawane	33
Box 3.5	The role of the investor in Gawane	34
Box 4.1	The pain of ‘dropping out’	37
Box 4.2	Women raising voice: building competence through the clan and state	40
Box 4.3	When can women speak out	41
Box 4.4	Marginalisation	43
Box 5.1	Seeking support	47
Box 5.2	Decline of customary institutions	49

Box 6.1	The importance of language	55
Box 6.2	Diverse views on pastoralist representation and the role of the elites	62
Box 6.3	Pastoral associations as emerging institutions for representation of pastoral voice	65

Tables

Table 1.1	<i>Woreda</i> selection characteristics	18
Table 2.1	The study sites – livelihoods trends and drivers of change	21
Table 2.2	Availability of basic services	24
Table 3.1	Competence and poverty dynamics in pastoralist communities	29
Table 6.1	Changes in policy and voice: 1970s–2000+	54
Table 6.2	Multiple identities of pastoralists and pastoralism and their use	55
Table 6.3	Timeline of critical events in change from ‘wanderer’ to ‘pastoralist’	58
Table A2.1	Study sample size for each location	74
Table A2.2	Participatory interest group discussions and key informants in the study <i>woredas</i>	75
Table A3.1	The building of peace processes	75

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Mary Ann Brocklesby, Mary Hopley and Patta Scott-Villiers

Glossary of terms and abbreviations

APC	Afar Pastoralist Council
Agro-pastoralist	Pastoralists who derive less than 50% of their income from livestock and livestock products, and most of remaining income from cultivation
<i>Chaat</i> (or <i>Khat</i>)	Plant traditionally chewed by as a mild stimulant
Derg	Military government of 1974–1991
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DGPP	Democracy, Growth and Peace for Pastoralists project
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front – governing party in Ethiopia
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
<i>Kebele</i>	Lowest administrative unit (village)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
NGO	Non Government Organisation
OLF	Oromiya Liberation Front
OPC	Oromiya Pastoralist Council
OPDC	Oromiya Pastoralists Development Commission
PA	Pastoralist Association (as used to describe <i>kebele</i> in Guji and Borana areas)

Parima	Pastoral Risk Management Project
Pastoralist	Individual whose livelihood is derived primarily from his or her herd of animals
PCI	Pastoralist Communication Initiative
PCDP	Pastoralist Community Development Project implemented by the GoE with WB
PDO	Pastoralist Development Office (in the <i>woreda</i>)
PFE	Pastoralist Forum of Ethiopia
PIGD	Participatory Interest Group Discussion
PSC	Parliamentary Standing Committee on Pastoralist Affairs
PSNP	Productive Safety Nets Programme (Government implemented social transfer programme currently being extended by piloting to pastoralist areas)
Region	Highest administrative unit; Zones comprise Regions (nine regions in Ethiopia)
SCUK	Save the Children United Kingdom
SCUS	Save the Children United States of America
SOREPAC	Somali Regional Pastoralist Council
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WA	Women's Association (in the <i>kebele/PA</i>)
<i>Woreda</i>	Mid-level administrative unit; <i>woredas</i> comprise Zones (122 pastoral <i>woredas</i>)
WB	World Bank
YA	Youth Association (in the <i>PA/kebele</i>)
Zone	Mid-level administrative unit; <i>woredas</i> comprise Zones

1 Introduction

1.1 Pastoralist voice in Ethiopia

This paper explores an example of how the raising of voice by a historically marginalised and excluded group is shifting and changing in efforts to secure livelihoods. It discusses the role, value and impact of voice within pastoralist livelihood systems in Ethiopia: in the spaces within pastoralism, as well as those constructed by government and those that make up the interface between pastoralists and the state. Our focus is on how a variety of different pastoralist people in the Afar and Oromia Regional National States speak up and negotiate with a view to protecting, strengthening and representing their livelihoods. We consider how changes in the environmental, political and social contexts are influencing engagements with the state and other actors.

Historically pastoralists had little or no representation within state structures. Observers describe a series of policies and programme initiatives which took scant account of pastoralist livelihood and mobility characteristics or of the specific service requirements appropriate to their communities (Markakis 2004; Mussa 2004). Pastoralist regions are known to be especially disadvantaged in terms of participation and representation (MOFED 2006). However, the past decade has seen a marked increase in levels of engagement between pastoralists and officials of the Government of Ethiopia and non-governmental agencies. New relationships, alliances and networks have opened up opportunities and dangers for pastoralists to raise their voices and make claims for livelihood security.

Voice constantly represents and re-represents concrete concerns. Every day pastoralists are speaking to one another, calling for support from neighbours and clan members, making suggestions about how things should be done, drawing on tradition, introducing new ideas. These vital conversations link everyone in society in bonds of belonging and occasions of challenge. They highlight the relative power to speak and act of those who have built competence within the society, who have large herds and maintain networks of useful contacts, and those who have lost competence, who are too old, too poor, too ill and too invisible to speak so much or so effectively. It emerges clearly from this study how strongly pastoralists value their own dialogue as a way of holding their society together and securing everyone's livelihood. Dialogue constantly renews the social and political competence of the whole. It is subject to the rules of a long tradition.

But from the standpoint of the state, this kind of dialogue is 'unruly' in that it is uncontrolled (Shankland 2010); it neither uses state fora, nor does it fully accept the order and norms embedded within the language of Ethiopia's dominant culture. These unruly acts of voice refuse to play by all the rules of the state game, and thereby signal that they cannot be used to pin people down or confine their voice to fields where issues have been framed in a particular way (Shankland pers. comm.).

Where once pastoralists in Ethiopia directed their voices almost entirely within their own societies, today the increasing presence of the state in every location

means that they are negotiating in more varied and unpredictable circumstances. They spend appreciable time and effort securing attention and response from local government and non-government service agencies and administrative bureaucracies. Male elders deal with officials to influence land decisions or justice interventions, women argue for better services and opportunities, entrepreneurs make deals, and poor people find themselves the objects of capricious welfare arrangements. The negotiation is 'strategic-bureaucratic' (Shankland 2010). Its protagonists accept the power of the state over goods such as land, education and justice, and work to gain or regain influence. They seek to overturn some of the assumptions that have left them relatively weak in decisions over how such goods are distributed, administered and developed.

But in an ideological sense, pastoralists are demanding recognition of their way of life from Ethiopia's political leaders and from international representatives. Giving recognition to the state as a significant power, pastoralists are nonetheless calling for a radical reassessment of their standing and of the way the state considers its minorities. While they are arguing for the right to have rights (Isin and Nielsen 2008), their argument is also ideological. It is an attempt to make themselves and their citizenship understood in a new way within the polity of Ethiopia and the East African Region.

Precisely who is raising their voice within the changing institutional relationships and with what effect has hitherto been unclear. There is virtually no evidence as to whose voice is being heard and how these different voices are being responded to by leaders within the pastoralist community, or by the government and other development actors. In part this reflects the current context in Ethiopia. The political spaces in which people articulate opinions and make demands are tightly controlled with little room for manoeuvre for any citizen (Poluha 2002; Hobley *et al.* 2004; Human Rights Watch 2005). Debate and discussion is directed towards imposing a consensus which contains and restricts dissent (Vaughan and Tronvoll 2003). The degree to which institutions and processes are representative or responsive to social diversity along ethnic, class and political lines is not well understood.

Development policies and programmes have assumed a degree of homogeneity which does not exist in reality. Data on which interventions are based are, at most, disaggregated by gender and location (region, urban/rural) but do little to illuminate the nature and extent of diversity within pastoralist households and communities. Some recent attempts have been made to disaggregate by poverty levels and livelihood patterns (see for example SCUK 2008; WIBD 2005a and b), but it is increasingly acknowledged that government and non-government development agencies do not understand the diversity and dynamics within and between pastoralist communities (Little *et al.* 2008; Desta *et al.* 2008).

1.2 The study

The paper presents the findings of a study commissioned by DFID-Ethiopia, through its Democracy, Growth and Peace for Pastoralists Project (DGPP), to look more critically at voice and diversity in Ethiopian pastoralism. DGPP was the last

in a series of DFID projects collectively known as the Pastoralist Communication Initiative (PCI), which until 2008, were housed by UN OCHA Ethiopia. PCI aimed to encourage communication between all the actors engaged in making and implementing policy that affects pastoralists. It operated on the assumption that enhancing opportunities for pastoralists to engage with and generate effective institutional responsiveness from government and other actors can lead to beneficial developments for pastoralists. In 2004–6, the project commissioned and managed an IDS study on vulnerable livelihoods in Ethiopia's Somali Region (Devereux 2006). The study broke new ground in its focus on the particular nature of the social, economic and governance issues facing pastoralists, agro-pastoralists and small town dwellers in the dry lowlands. It explained some of the diversity within the populations of the lowlands and showed how poverty and vulnerability reduced the capability of many to make claims for and secure their livelihoods. It showed how a secure livelihood includes not just economic and physical security, but also capacities to be influential in administrative, political and social systems, formal and informal.

The 'Raising Voice' study seeks to deepen understanding of how a variety of different pastoralist people in the Afar and Oromia Regional States speak up and negotiate with their leaders, with the state and with other institutions with a view to protecting and strengthening livelihoods in the lowlands. It draws on the vulnerable livelihoods work. It is not only a study of how pastoralist citizens and the state engage, and how citizens engage with each other, but also a further step in the active process that Ethiopia's pastoralists have been pursuing for more than a decade: securing livelihoods through dialogue with formal and informal institutions.

The research took place over a six month period between February and July 2009. There were a number of challenges involved in both selecting the research team and determining the trajectory of the study. The political and social sensitivities of speaking up and speaking out in Ethiopia means people will find their own ways of judging the reliability, trustworthiness and utility of their interlocutors. Frank and open debate is not the norm (Poluha 2002; Vaughan and Tronvoll 2003). For some, silence or subterfuge may be deemed the most sensible responses to outsiders or privileged insiders. Spaces for raising voice opened up by outsiders contain within them possibilities for danger or the pursuit of more favourable terms of engagement. They are risky, unknown spaces where those lacking power may fear revealing their opinions, their differences and their doubts. In this context, researchers cannot pretend to be neutral observers: through the process of seeking out conversations, asking questions and securing answers, they are engaging in the process by which individuals, groups and communities stay silent or flex and use voice.

We chose deliberately, therefore, to build a team in which the majority had a long-standing involvement in pastoralist issues either as pastoralists themselves – activists and elders – or as non-pastoralists known and respected within pastoralist communities. Of the core team of 12 researchers, 8 were from pastoralist communities and 7 were women. We considered it particularly important that there were a group of women from pastoralist communities in the team to ensure that that a full range of women's voices (for example young, old, better and worse off) could be listened to.

The study was phased not only to maintain robustness and research rigour but also to build on opportunities for stimulating voice and dialogue within and between pastoralist communities and with outsiders. It was carried out in three phases.

- Phase one focused on determining the parameters of the research and involved agreement between study team members of a concept note and analytical framework. Following the initial discussion a review of secondary data was conducted including DGPP project documents, research reports, policy and programme documents of major government and non-government programmes active in pastoralist areas (e.g. food aid programmes, Productive Social Safety Nets Programme; Pastoral Community Development Project, NGO livelihood and governance projects).
- Phase two, carried out in March and April 2009, involved fieldwork in three selected *woredas*¹ in Oromia and Afar Regional States. It comprised participatory interest group discussions with members of different social groups (women, men, extreme poor, elderly, leaders, elders, rural and peri-urban dwellers, educated, uneducated, traders, business people, ‘drop-outs’ etc.), as well as government officials in the *woreda* and *kebele* administrations (see Brocklesby and Hopley 2009). Fifty-six group discussions were held involving 614 people, of whom 264 were women. Within each *woreda* the study team met people in remote hamlets and in *kebele* centres² both near and far away from the *woreda* capital. The study team also had discussions with government officials and pastoralist leaders at zonal and regional levels (see A3 for sample size and tools used).
- The third phase of the research focused on a process of feedback, dialogue and peer review of the findings. Meetings were held in the *woredas* and in Addis Ababa with pastoralist associations, federal and regional government officials, representatives of local and international NGOs and donors. The study ended with a peer review meeting convened by the Afar Pastoralist Council held in Afar Regional National State. This gathering involved participants from all the field study sites (women and men), representatives of the pastoralist associations, and officials of the Governments of Oromia and Afar. The aim was to debate the findings and kindle dialogue on issues of voice, response and securing livelihoods that may be of benefit to pastoralist citizens and government in their continuing engagement.

1.3 Inquiry framework

The CR2 analytical framework (see A2) has been used extensively elsewhere to explore inclusivity and accountability in citizen-state engagement.³ It focuses on the extent to which development interventions are including and working actively

1 A *woreda* is an administrative division with a population of about 30–50,000.

2 A *kebele*, or neighbourhood association, is a sub-division of a *woreda*. A *woreda* might have between 8 and 15 *kebele*.

with poor and marginalised people. The framework links ideas of voice, social inclusion and fulfilment of responsibilities to a structured exploration of the processes by which (a) different people engage with and have voice in the decisions of informal and formal institutions and (b) these institutions respond to and/or are accountable to the claims and issues of diverse voice. Specific participatory learning methods and tools based on the components and thematic areas of the framework were adapted to facilitate discussions and analysis (Brocklesby and Hobley 2009).

There are five components within the framework. While there are overlaps between them, the components provide an organisational structure through which analysis and comparisons can be made. It identifies changes in relation to:

- **Voice, participation and accountability.** This component looks at how people express their voices, share their opinions and participate in development processes. Understanding is gained not only of what participation looks like and appears to lead to, but also of what people feel about their participation and the goals which they set for it. Linked to voice is the issue of accountability. Questions on who is accountable to whom, for what and how, are considered. Is accountability only to powerful individuals and institutions? What systems exist for mutual accountability?
- **Transformation of power – relationships and linkages.** This component examines relationships between people from the personal and intra-house hold through to the state levels. It looks at whether and how individuals, groups, organisations and institutions are linked. There is also an examination of conflict and the ways in which disputes are manifested and managed.
- **Institutional response.** Questions cover how organisations of all types – formal and informal – respond to issues raised by people in their constituency. The component addresses to what degree formal and informal institutions provide accountable and equitable resource allocation and whether and how they address issues of inclusion systematically. Assessment is made on the extent to which voice and response are linked and whether there are trends towards more or less meaningful responsiveness from state and non-state actors towards marginalised groups such as pastoralists.

These three components gave structure to data collection and analysis in this study. There was a secondary focus on the final two components of the CR2 framework – ‘tangible evidence’ and ‘sustained change’ – in terms of the effects of pastoralist voice on the livelihood security of different social groups within pastoralist communities. The tangible evidence component explores the data for impacts of voice on assets and vulnerability (as defined in the concrete goals and targets of the Ethiopian Poverty Reduction Strategies, the Millenium Development

3 The CR2 framework has now been used in a number of different settings, e.g.: for a major Impact Assessment of DFID-funded rights and advocacy work in Bangladesh; for the Inter-Agency Groups Rights-Based Learning Process in Bangladesh, Malawi and Peru; in a DFID-funded challenge fund in Ghana. It has been introduced as a planning, monitoring and evaluation framework in Yemen and Malawi and has been taken up independently by a number of civil society organisations. See Brocklesby and Crawford (2007); Interagency Group on Rights Based Development (2008).

Goals etc.), while the sustained change component assesses trends in the extent to which responses to voice have been institutionalised. The rapid nature of the study and the absence of reliable quantitative data for the locations studied meant the study team were looking not at physical change, but at perceptions as to (a) how voice claims from different social groups are shaped by and affect the existing vulnerabilities and assets of different individuals and groups, and (b) how institutions contribute to making livelihoods secure or insecure.

1.4 Study methods

The study used qualitative analysis tools (Brocklesby and Hobley 2009). Four tools were used through which to explore different and complementary aspects of voice, institutional responsiveness and livelihood security.

- ***Vulnerability mapping*** helped identify how different social groups within pastoralist communities understand vulnerability and what they consider to be the circumstances and characteristics which make certain people particularly vulnerable. The tool was used to analyse the consequences of the various characteristics of vulnerability – what part gender, age and location play and how different characteristics are inter-related and interdependent. It also helped to identify how different social groups perceived changes in vulnerability over time. What or who is helping to maintain wellbeing and security and what or who is threatening lives and livelihoods?
- ***Spokes analysis of characteristics of livelihood security***. Using a variation on a Venn diagram, this tool was used to explore what any pastoralist needs in order to feel secure in their livelihood. Asking a range of different social groups within pastoralist communities helped us understand the extent to which existing formal and informal institutional arrangements were supporting, undermining or inappropriate. It also enabled a comparative analysis of how different groups within communities think about the resources or assets they have and their expectations of being able to cope with changes in the future. Themes included relationships of conflict and cooperation within and external to pastoralist communities; changes in capacities to access, secure and maintain assets; changes in patterns of distribution and allocation of resources and assets in terms of equity, inclusion, accountability and participation; and skills and capacities to prevent, manage or endure crises.
- ***Power mapping***. A well known participatory tool used extensively to explore perceptions of power differences between individuals, groups and institutions. One disadvantage of power mapping has been that it may provide a partial or perhaps an inaccurate view, particularly where there are hidden power relationships that particular groups do not want revealed or are not aware of. We used two ways to mitigate against the potential bias. Firstly, the tool was used comparatively across a range of social groups in order to develop a systematic comparison of views of different social groups (e.g. women and men; power holders and very poor people) of what was happening in their location and identifying and asking about inconsistency or contradiction between these different perceptions. Secondly, the tool was used together

with the spokes analysis. By doing them together we were able to discuss with participants (a) how relationships with the individuals, organisations and institutions have helped or hindered different social groups to maintain livelihood security and (b) how this has changed over time. We were particularly interested in looking at the capacities of different social groups to raise voice, influence or participate in decision-making in ways that support their livelihood security.

- **Significant changes.** This tool was used to explore with different groups the major changes they have seen in the circumstances of their lives, livelihoods or communities in relation to their capacity to take part in and/or influence decisions. The types of decision included access to food, cash and other forms of social support during a period of personal or community crisis; changes in access and control over livelihood resources and changes in ability to have voice and secure adequate response.

1.5 The study sites

Three *woredas* were selected. These were **Dillo**, a *woreda* of three years standing in Borana Zone, Oromia National Regional State; **Gawane**, an old *woreda* and one of the traditional administrative areas of the Afar pastoralists in Zone 3, Afar National Regional State, and **Sabba Boru**, a brand new and remote *woreda* in Guji Zone, Oromia. Section 2 discusses the *woreda* contexts in more detail. The following criteria were used in selection:

- a range and diversity of pastoralist livelihood patterns;
- physically accessible with existing networks of trust between research team and community members;
- both agro-pastoralist and pastoralist areas;
- social safety net/non-social safety net areas;
- areas not over-surveyed and therefore less possibility of 'research fatigue'.

Table 1.1 summarises the characteristics of each *woreda* with regard to the selection criteria.

1.6 Constraints to the research

The research suffered from several constraints. In particular,

- Several informants, from local through to federal levels, indicated an unwillingness to speak openly about sensitive social and political issues. It is probable that many informants felt the same but did not express it. In response, we have changed the names in all case histories quoted, and identified all those quoted only by *woreda* and/or title (male, official, woman etc.) to protect and respect their willingness to talk with us.

Table 1.1 *Woreda* selection characteristics

<i>Woreda</i>	Characteristics
Dillo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borana area on the Ethiopia-Kenya border, remote from zonal/central government • Historically a strongly pastoralist area • Pastoralism still functional in an area well suited to small livestock rearing • Livelihood options – pastoralism, salt mining, trading, small business • Newly formed <i>woreda</i> with growing services, including a pilot productive safety nets programme • Stresses of vegetation change (encroachment of unpalatable woody species onto grazing land), drought and conflict with neighbouring areas.
Gawane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afar heartland – ‘the land of plenty’ and one of the traditional administrative areas of the Afar. • An old established <i>woreda</i> on the main trade route to Djibouti • Pastoralist livelihoods under threat: drought, high levels of bush encroachment, privatised rangelands – external investment into large scale agriculture; changing course of Awash river • High levels of conflict with neighbouring area.
Sabba Boru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A remote <i>woreda</i> not yet well linked into government or NGO services • Guji area – less studied than other pastoralist groups and areas • New <i>woreda</i> • Diverse livelihoods: artisanal mining, agro-pastoralism and pastoralism • Internal conflicts over land access and mining • Growing population, poor rainfall.

- The timeframe (always a constraint) was particularly tight because it coincided with the final few months of the project commissioning the research. This meant that where scheduled interviews were delayed, some could not take place as we were not able to extend the study schedule.
- Information and contacts within Sabba Boru were less comprehensive than in the other two *woredas*, resulting in some skewing of the data. This was unfortunate and due to circumstances beyond the study team’s control. It had been hoped to work in the Somali National Regional State, in a *woreda* where study team members had more established links. Research permission for work in Somali region was not forthcoming, resulting in the switch to Sabba Boru.

The small sample size and relatively limited fieldwork means that the findings are inevitably indicative and not representative of Ethiopian pastoralism as a whole. The study does not claim to be a comprehensive survey of voice and response processes between pastoralists, the state and non-state actors in Ethiopia. Providing a series of illustrative case studies and more general observations, the study collates and draws out commonalities and insights from the experiences of the 614 people who took part from the three *woreda*, three zones and two regions.

1.7 Key concepts used

The study's starting point was that only those who feel able, respected and powerful will exercise voice with regard to livelihood security and conversely a range of people within pastoralist communities may not, currently, feel entitled, powerful, interested or able to exercise voice to a significant extent. The point was to explore with, and through, the voices of pastoralists themselves who the powerful and powerless are, and, how they engage with each other and the state in shaping livelihood security. To do this, the study team developed a series of working definitions of the key themes explored: voice, responsiveness, livelihood security and vulnerability which we outline here.

Voice is shorthand for the communication, connection, dialogue and negotiation within which people engage with one another. Those who have voice negotiate a range of different matters for the benefit of themselves, and for those with whom they are concerned. People with voice are able to come to understandings with others about what needs to be done and how. They influence how issues, such as 'pastoralism' or 'economic growth', are understood and acted upon. They make successful claims for benefits, goods and services. They influence ways in which people are treated, levels and direction of investment, design and delivery of projects, details of policies, accountability of leaders and the definition and implementation of law. Individuals speaking out on matters of public concern express ideas that may have widespread or deep-rooted currency. Effective voice means that people of all social groups, including the poorest and most marginal, are listened to and feel their views are being satisfactorily represented by, or acted upon, by others. Effective voice also implies that the channels to which people have access are socially and institutionally recognised.

Response refers to the ways in which more powerful people and also institutions recognise, engage with, and act upon matters and claims raised by the less powerful, including the poorest and least powerful people. This study considers **responsiveness** at a range of levels and in different contexts, where exercise of voice leads to response and to the capability of those demanding to hold the 'responders' to account; it focuses on understanding the dynamics of power and on making explicit which social groups are included, excluded and indifferent:

- Within pastoral communities – who is responding to whom and how, and who is accountable to whom in relation to secure livelihoods?
- Between pastoral communities – how do competition and collaboration function in responding to livelihoods issues?

- Between pastoral communities and the government – how does response emerge through informal mechanisms as well as through the formal processes at *woreda*, regional and national level? What are the responses and responsibilities of government actors at each of these levels as well as of leaders and members pastoralist associations and other bodies with representative mandates?

Processes and channels of response both reflect and are highly dependent on webs of relationship, all of which are continuously negotiated. Response can be used as a mechanism for control or punishment where its use or non-use can lead, in the case of public resources, for example, to their provision, withdrawal or non-provision.

The term **livelihood security** is used in this study to refer to adequate and sustainable access to and control over resources, (economic, social, physical, natural and political). It means that individuals and households are able to claim goods, services and entitlements that help achieve wellbeing without undermining the natural resource base.⁴ In the context of Ethiopia, we made the assumption that, however imperfect, there are a range of public actions which work to promote greater livelihood security. These actions, both formal and informal, are carried out by pastoralists from within pastoralist communities, and by the state and other actors, (local and international associations and NGOs, UN agencies, donors etc.).

Vulnerability is understood to mean the extent to which people are exposed to the damaging effects of negative conditions in their social, economic and physical environment. Vulnerability describes the factors which make certain people more exposed. Economic poverty is an obvious factor. Other factors include a lack of understanding and awareness (for example because of insufficient or inappropriate communication of information and ideas); embedded social and cultural attitudes and practices which discriminate against, disadvantage or give precedence to certain people on certain grounds (such as gender, age, ethnicity or religion,); attitudes towards people carrying out certain behaviours (such as chewing *chaat*, a narcotic) or reactions to people with different health status (e.g. people living with HIV, people with TB) within societies (Brocklesby and Hopley 2009).

2 Woreda contexts

2.1 Livelihood contexts

This section gives a very brief introduction to the different forms of livelihood in the three *woredas* studies. The *woredas* contrast in terms of history, ethnicity, the role of conflict and the abundance and type of natural resources. Both Dillo and

4 Adapted from Scoones (1998).

Table 2.1 The study sites – livelihood trends and drivers of change

	Livelihood system	Livelihood concerns
Dillo (Borana)	Pastoralism, salt mining and trade.	Borana pastoralists report reduction of palatable grazing and reduced production caused by decline in rainfall and increasing cover of woody acacia species. Access to pasture is also restricted by conflict across the Kenya border. The new <i>woreda</i> status is increasing pastoralist engagement with the state, improving access to education, health, water and roads, while reducing the freedom of pastoralists to make their own range management decisions on a scale required to deal with bush encroachment. People talk of the exit of youth from pastoral systems, school drop-outs and increased reliance by the poor on safety nets and food aid.
Gawane (Afar)	Pastoralism, agro-pastoralism, investor farming, small business and trade.	Afar pastoralists report curtailment of rangelands due to appropriation and privatisation of riverside land bush encroachment (<i>Prosopis spp.</i>), changes in the course of the river and conflict with neighbouring Somali Issa. Younger people are taking up riverside farming in growing numbers. Parents are increasingly interested in education for boys and girls. Many note rising disaffection between elders and young people, loss of authority of clan leaders and internal conflicts over privatised land.
Sabba Boru (Guji)	Agro-pastoralism, pastoralism, bee-keeping and mining (gold, dolomite, minerals)	Guji agro-pastoralists report drying of wells, decline in rainfall, crop failure and individualisation of dry season pastures which is blocking access routes to water and grazing. New schools and clinics are planned. Roads are very poor, distances to water in the dry season as much as 50km. Elders note how new evangelical churches are affecting customary institutions and authority of elders. Women talk of increased social discord. They also note the negative effects of mining, including pollution and effects on youth behaviour.

Sabba Boru are new *woredas* which affects the nature and availability of government services. Table 2.1 describes the main livelihood systems and commonly expressed concerns. Each *woreda* is facing particular pressures whether it is as a result of conflict reducing access to grazing areas, encroachment of pasture by invasive species or the privatisation of land by investors and major commercial farming and mining activities.

Dillo (Oromia Region) is a new *woreda*, with poor access during the rainy season. Road infrastructure and communication is limited in this area with no all-weather roads. Its proximity to the Kenyan border both provides trade opportunities as well as a reason for conflict. The main source of livelihood in Dillo *woreda* is pastoralism, mainly sheep and goats but also some cows and now, increasingly camels. Salt mining, petty trading in Dillo town and trading with Kenya are additional elements of livelihoods.

Sabba Boru, also a new *woreda* (Oromia Region), is an area rich in minerals – in particular gold – which drives many of the livelihoods in the *woreda*. Its limited road infrastructure has been built by the mining operations. It is a remote area that was previously difficult to reach from the former *woreda* headquarters. It has been newly designated as a pastoral *woreda* although many people's livelihoods are derived from subsistence maize farming and gold mining.

Box 2.1 Basic services and problems of response

PCDP constructed the health clinic in response to requests from the community when they came round to ask what we needed. The clinic is there, it is well-equipped, but no services are provided. We have discussed this problem in a meeting and representatives were sent to the woreda, we were told to wait for sometime; but two years have passed since then. Due to lack of proper health services we have lost lots of children and adults; the next clinic is far away and it too sometimes does not have services. We are forced to go all the way to Gawane which is very far; we really need services close to us.

We have gone to the woreda and got no response, we cannot go beyond this. It is frustrating and discouraging, but because we continue to have these problems and it is so far to go for all these services we are going to ask repeatedly and see what happens.

(Young women, Gawane Woreda)

Gawane (Afar Region) is an old *woreda* that illustrates the extreme pressures some pastoralists are facing. This area used to be considered one of the wealthiest pastoral areas in Afar with access to good grazing close to the Awash River. Now grazing areas and livelihoods are under increasing pressure through: (1) appropriation of land close to the river by investors; (2) the changing course of the Awash which has taken away areas of grazing; (3) the ongoing conflict between the Afar and the Issa which has further reduced the accessible grazing areas and limited mobility of the Afar (in some cases they are only moving for two

months of the year); and (4) massive encroachment onto the riverside land of the invasive *Prosopis spp.* (Box 2.2). Conflict shapes livelihood decisions in this *woreda* affecting the opportunities available to households. The *woreda* is traversed by the main transport route to Djibouti bringing with it high profile presence of security forces to ensure that the road remains open.

Box 2.2 Invasion of the Prosopis tree

During the Derg they came and told us this is a desert tree and it was planted in every door. They did not know when they brought it that it would be like this. The Derg said they could control nature. But it got out of control; it was called woyane because it was 'revolutionary' (a Tigrayan word); it got beyond their control in the Woyane (EPRDF) time. At that time the woreda administrator was an Afar, all the others were outsiders. We are cursing him every day.'

(Old man, Gawane Woreda)

Common across these three *woredas* is the limited access they have to functioning basic services (Box 2.1 and Table 2.2). Although with the formation of the new *woredas* for both Dillo and Sabba Boru there are some improvements noted by households.

The government has recently opened schools in some of parts of the woreda – because of this almost all the young generation are in schools and have started to learn. Previously the school was (far away) in Dillo but now we have a school in our village. The construction of the school was as a result of government initiative and community participation.

(Women, Dillo Woreda)

Across the three *woredas* a variety of livelihoods are pursued: livestock-based livelihoods predominate where households rely on rearing camels, cattle, sheep and goats. The survival, quantity and condition of these livestock determine a household's wealth and ability to continue their traditional livelihood practices. Mobility, (usually within a mosaic of recognised, well defined and long-standing circuits) and the ability to access natural resources, such as pasture and water, are fundamental to the continuation of this livelihood. Those households engaged in mobile livestock livelihoods are generally considered to be 'pure' pastoralists (Markakis 2004).

Agro-pastoralism is strongest in Sabba Boru and Gawane. In Sabba Boru it is by choice; in Afar pastoralists are being forced into agro-pastoralism as their mobility becomes more constrained by conflict and loss of pasture. For some, agro-pastoralism is considered to be a transition phase to accumulate to move back into 'pure pastoralism', the time-frame for this transition can be over several generations. It can be considered too a form of pastoral diversification and not solely a conversion from pastoralism.

Table 2.2 Availability of basic services

	Dillo	Sabba Boru	Gawane
Population	46,000	98,000	35,000
Health clinics functioning	3 health posts 1 clinic	12 health posts 5 clinics	7 health posts 1 clinic
Schools	11 primary schools 17 mobile schools 8 'satellite' schools 0 secondary schools	37 primary and satellite schools 0 secondary schools	10 primary schools 12 'satellite schools' 1 secondary school
NGOs	Several operating	None operating	Several operating
Markets	2 (one in <i>woreda</i> and one accessible outside <i>woreda</i>)	Nearest market in adjacent <i>woreda</i> but not accessible for some of population for part of year	4 accessible in and from Gawane

Agro-pastoralist livelihoods combine extensive livestock raising and rain-fed crop production (usually wheat, sorghum and/or maize) for household consumption. In Afar agro-pastoralists are also farming cotton and other cash crops. The area under agricultural cultivation is restricted by the availability of labour within the household, with women often saying that agro-pastoralism is more demanding of their time and labour than pastoralism. Mobility remains an important element of these livelihoods. For those where mobility is becoming more constrained the livelihood systems are forced away from mobile livestock, limited to very short term mobility and highly dependent on settled agriculture, and thus more vulnerable to variable rainfall. In all three *woredas*, respondents indicated that the decreased duration and intensity of rainfall over the last decade is putting stress on livelihoods that are increasingly constrained in terms of mobility and therefore ability to move to reduce the exposure to climatic change.

For those where mobile livestock keeping has ceased to be an option or through choice (because they have access to fertile river-edge land and can afford the necessary investment) settled agriculture includes cultivation of food crops together with small flocks of sheep and goats. Quality (in terms of access to irrigation) and extent of land determines wealth and also resilience particularly to fluctuations in rainfall (Elias 2008).

Finally in all three *woredas* there were households who are pastoral 'drop-outs' living on the edge of small urban centres. They have lost all their livestock. They now depend mainly on the sale of family labour through hiring out to commercial farms, mining, through sale of firewood, water and salt and other forms of petty trading. Drop-outs are not only drop-outs from school or the education system but also dropouts from the pastoral production system.

Mining attracts dropouts to generate livelihoods but, they end up in urban centres being isolated from their families and wider community.

(Mixed group of young men and women)

2.2 Pastoralist livelihood contexts: summary

The three selected *woredas* highlight the diversity of pastoralist livelihoods in Ethiopia today. Geography, clan affiliation, access to government services, abundance of natural resources, connections to markets and much else help shape the nature and degree of livelihood security. No one site can represent the variety of livelihoods pursued by pastoralists across the lowlands of Ethiopia. Livelihood options include mobile pastoralism, livestock trading, agro-pastoralism, petty trading, salt mining, mining and government or NGO employment. Opportunities for livelihood diversification are limited and across all three sites pastoralists are feeling increasingly vulnerable to livelihood insecurity. In the following section we explore the differences between those who are thriving in difficult circumstances and those who are merely managing or declining into destitution. It was on that basis that the study sought to examine what role voice played in shaping livelihood security, and whose voice matters.

3 Pastoralist livelihood security: the dynamics of competence

Study finding: Pastoralist livelihood security is characterised by ‘competence’: the capacities, capabilities and agency required to build up and manage assets; make demands, secure and give support, adapt to changing conditions and maintain wellbeing.

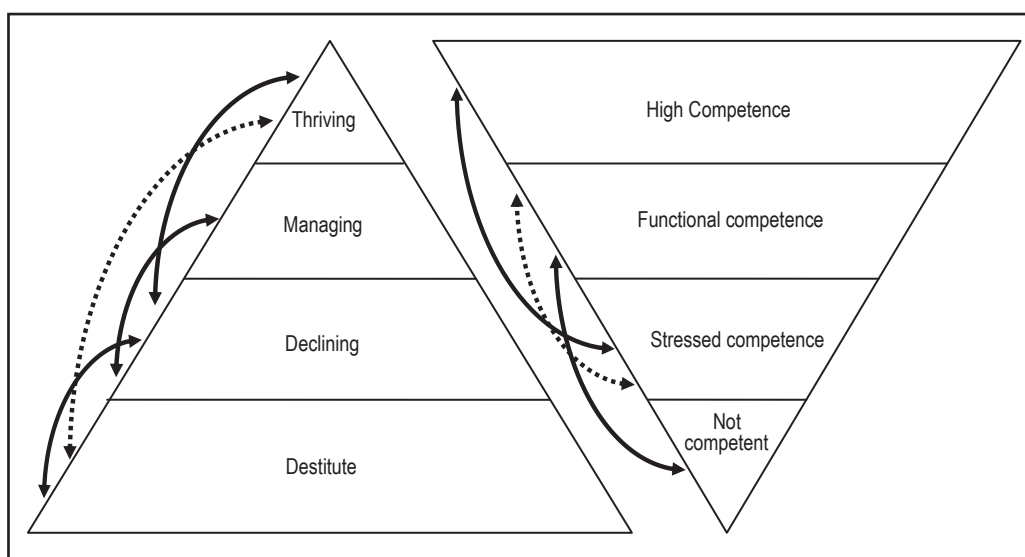
Pastoralist men and women across different social groups and all the study sites related livelihood security to having the skills and capacities necessary to manage a herd and live as a pastoralist. Used to living in dryland environments, pastoralists have developed systems, networks and institutions which enable the majority to function effectively in a highly unpredictable environment. For secure livelihoods, the size of the asset base – the herd size and access to grazing and water sources – is only a part of the story. Agency, a person’s ability to make informed and resolute choices and therefore feel confident in the actions taken, is seen as critical. Agency is created and recreated through the accumulation of knowledge, skills, a network of relationships, (relatives, clans, trading partners, and neighbours) and the raising of voice – having the power to actively connect with and engage in those networks. The more a person can demonstrate these characteristics the more he or she is acknowledged as functional or competent as a pastoralist.

3.1 The dynamics of competence

Competence is a dynamic concept and one which fits with pastoralists' own perception of being able to manage risk and do well. It highlights the high degree of heterogeneity and diversity between social groups. Individuals are not characterised as simply competent or non-competent. Distinctions were made because of behaviour, because of age and because of environmental and other conditions. The dynamic shifts between stages of competence are difficult to capture in a linear diagram but from the field data it is clear that many households transit between different stages due to distinctive and individual causes (chronic ill-health, for instance) as well as the impact of collective livelihood effects such as severe drought, violent conflict or market shifts. It is useful to think of competence as encompassing a continuum on which individuals and households move up and down. It is like a state of health which individuals, households and even clans have, nurture and sometimes lose. It involves a set of inter-related capacities: talent, skill, physical capacity, material assets, environmental conditions, moral and social behaviour, relationships and kin, willpower, persistence and courage. There are conditions within a household – the age and gender of the members, the number of dependents, health and education status as well as influences from outside – rain, economic conditions, clan networks and the actions of government and other agencies which determine the extent of competence. We suggest here four dynamic categories through which households and individuals within them move at different times. Table 3.1 summarises the distinguishing characteristics of each of these categories. Figure 3.1 illustrates the dynamic processes underlying these categories.

The story of Molu, described in Box 3.1 and Figure 3.2, illustrates several interesting issues around how households can lose much of their material competence and yet climb back out of near destitution as a result of individual efforts and clan support. It describes the situation of a family suffering profound shock that sent it into decline from a household considered to be competent to a position of near destitution. However, those attributes of competence not directly related to material assets – social networks, persistence, knowledge, skills and voice – were vital to their survival and subsequent wellbeing. Through shifting to town and to a place where there were clan relations; they were able to build up sufficient livestock to return to a position of utility to the clan and greater competence. The strategies employed point to a web of connections between clan and governmental systems, between the household and overall utility to the clan.

Figure 3.1 Securing livelihood: importance of competence



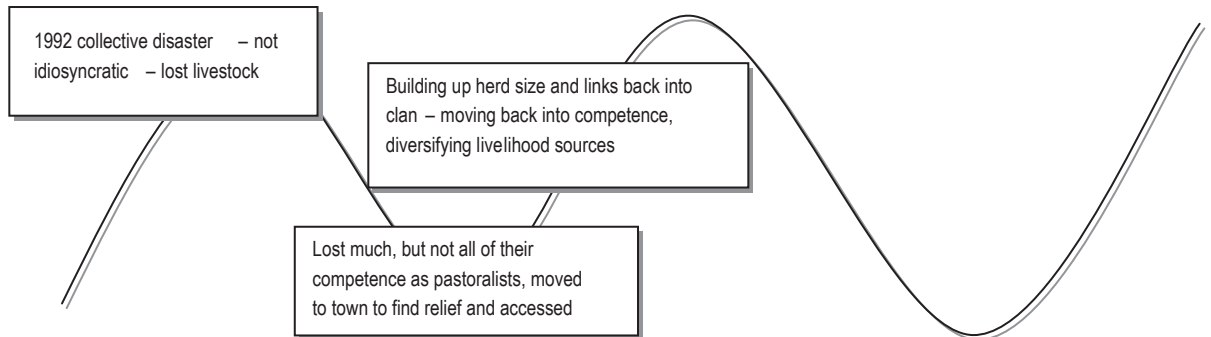
Box 3.1 The competent pastoralist

Molu is a young pastoralist in his late twenties who since the death of his father is head of the family of six; his mother was the second wife. He has yet to marry. Twenty-two years ago, because of a prolonged drought, animal and human disease his family lost their wealth – all but two cows of their livestock died and their other assets were used up. The consequences were devastating. As first-born he should have been ritually named and invested into the clan at a special feast. Too poor to do so, the family moved to the edge of the nearest town. They worked as day labourers and sold the two cows in order to buy a donkey cart. His father asked for help from the clan and they were helped to build a house by an elder who provided water and poles and other things. The family became farmers and bought six cows. As first born he was sent to school and remained there until Class 6. After a few years and with more clan support the family bought some goats and sheep. Last year, after the opening of the new *woreda*, they moved back to their old homeland.

Today, Molu and his family have 16 cows and 23 goats and sheep. They live on the milk and cereals from their farm. The young children are all at school and his brother has started to work in the *woreda* office. While the herd is still small, it is growing by the year. Molu also buys and sells salt and is involved in salt mining. He takes his family responsibilities seriously and this year sold two bulls in order to pay for medicine for his sick sister. Molu is optimistic for the future. He is committed to a pastoralist way of life and embedded within the clan, having with their support built back the herd and the family livelihood from nothing.

(Case history, Dillo Woreda)

Figure 3.2 Moving in and out of competence



- Lack of sufficient livestock meant the family could not meet its social obligations, e.g. the naming ceremony; they excluded themselves from the social structures of the clan system and left to go to a town to access what opportunities they could find to survive, and then drew on their ties to their wealthy clans people.
- For this family the herd size decreased beneath the level of viability, so they were forced to move to the edge of the system and although they had to struggle for many years to stabilise themselves, they remained positioned to gain entry again. Their remaining competencies were sufficient to keep them connected and find ways to seize opportunities when they emerged to improve their livelihood. In this sense, competency acts as a social insurance: a buffer put in place when doing well in order to survive livelihood shocks. They disappeared for a period whilst stabilising their livelihoods, but it appears when they were sufficiently stabilised they were able to reactivate their social networks and access support from a wealthier clan member and relatives.

In contrast the story of Bona, a Guji, Box 3.2, illustrates how a household can move to a point from which they are at risk of dropping out of the pastoral system and reflects the effects of drought and a decline in overall competence.

Box 3.2 Living on the edge: the non-competent pastoralist

Bona, a Guji living in a remote hamlet in Sabba Boru with his wife and children, has little left to support his family. The high level of poverty in the *kebele* means that clan-based support is almost non-existent. The *woreda* is a very new one and services have yet to be fully established. 'We are selling our animals to purchase grain. In the past we used to grow our own maize to supplement our livestock production during times of stress. Due to the rain shortage we can't grow maize. I got 10 animals from my parents years ago to establish my own family. Now I am left with only two animals. Two animals can't be an asset for the family.'

Molu and his family's return to pastoralist competence and Bona's decline into non-competence tell just two stories. Across the three *woredas*, stories of competence, stories of decline and stories of to non-competence built up a rich picture of the factors influencing an individual's, and a household's capacities to secure a pastoralist livelihood. We highlight four key issues.

Table 3.1 Competence and poverty dynamics in pastoralist communities

Pastoral competence	Poverty status	Characteristics
High competence	Thriving	<p>Agency: strong networks, high levels of visibility in clan and government arenas at all levels; respected for speaking well, good access to information; connections to rural and urban areas; considered to have wisdom.</p> <p>Assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural: herd size viable with enough for surplus production, diverse livestock holding. • Financial: highly diverse income sources, member of saving groups; access to paid employment in urban and rural areas; remittances; mobile and active in pastoralist system. • Human: good health; educated; children in school (boys and increasingly girls). <p>Resilience levels: living in and with an unpredictable environment (drought, bush encroachment, reduced rangelands and weak markets) but with high levels of skill, clan support, family networks, saving and livelihood alternatives; supports clan members through social transfers, advice and advocacy.</p> <p>Life-cycle stage: older male in leadership position; young married male with small family; married woman with some education in stable relationship, with small number of dependents; young educated man.</p>
Functional competence	<p>Managing</p> <p>Above and just below poverty line</p>	<p>Agency: respected within the clan system, but not necessarily in elder or leadership position; some or all members of family mobile; engages with government at <i>kebele</i> and <i>woreda</i>, but limited power to secure meaningful response from government officials and service deliverers; a degree of self organisation in groups; working within the pastoralist system. Skilled, knowledgeable and supported.</p> <p>Assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural: limited number of livestock at level of viability; can sell milk, but stock vulnerable to depletion. • Financial: some access to paid employment; limited remittance income, member of savings groups and/or NGO projects. • Human: skilled and knowledgeable within pastoralist system; increasing access to healthcare and formal education for some members of immediate family (usually boys). • Resilience levels: as with high competence, though facing multiple vulnerabilities; having some assets (savings, family and clan networks, food aid support etc). <p>Life-cycle stage: productive age for both men and women (16–40) with growing number of dependents (elderly, children and others).</p>

Stressed competence	Declining poor	<p>Agency: limited, constrained networks with limited mobility and visibility in clan and government arenas.</p> <p>Assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural: limited number of livestock, just at level of viability, highly vulnerable to depletion. • Financial: no access to paid employment; no remittance income; not member of savings groups. • Human: poor health; nutritional status poor; low educational status. <p>Resilience levels: as with high competence, but facing enduring, often intergenerational multiple vulnerabilities with little (savings, limited social networks, livelihood alternatives, etc).</p> <p>Life-cycle stage: widowed/divorced; high number of dependents; elderly with limited family support.</p>
Non competence	Destitute	<p>Agency: no agency for social action; no family networks or connections into clan system.</p> <p>Assets: no livestock assets; health tends to be compromised; highly food insecure; no access to income; children not at school.</p> <p>Resilience levels: multiple intergenerational vulnerabilities. Very high levels of social and political vulnerability.</p> <p>Life-cycle stage: elderly, divorced or widowed.</p>

3.2 Competence as a buffer against livelihood shocks and uncertainty

The unpredictability of the ecosystem exposes all social groups to multiple risks of loss. In such high risk environments, there are expectations of large fluctuations of wealth for any household. It is competence that safeguards people against destitution. As Figure 3.2 indicates, the notion of competence cannot be directly correlated to wealth or poverty. Losing competence does not directly lead to poverty and then to destitution, because elements of competence remain and others can be rebuilt. But a decline indicates contracting relationships, and increasing disengagement from the networks of power and influence which could reduce poverty and vulnerability. Life events matter: when livestock are raided on a large scale or when a protracted drought affects all the lowlands, such events can lead to households losing all their material assets overnight. Insidious processes also matter: when the rangeland is no longer managed to maximise pasture, when a husband takes to *chaat* or alcohol, when domestic violence threatens physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing; when a long-running conflict closes off vital water sources and grazing, households become increasingly stressed. The more competent a pastoralist is the more likely he or she can maintain livelihood security. Competence goes beyond ideas of social, economic or political capital to embrace Sen's notion of capability, interconnection and agency (Sen 1999: 87). It sustains a livelihood during the good times and provides a bulwark against the bad times. It is a key factor in receiving livestock transfers and other forms of collective support from the clan (Santos and Barrett 2005). This support signals the existence of the capabilities which allow a

household or individual to address and reduce the vulnerabilities they face, on their own terms.

3.3 Mobility and visibility: indicators of livelihood security

Mobility for a pastoralist is necessary part of competence and a sign of livelihood security. It is the herd that gives meaning and movement to a pastoralist and provides the opportunities for visibility – being seen at grazing grounds, travelling on livestock routes, meeting at water points and markets. As Santos and Barrett (2005: 2) state ‘Wealth dynamics affect social transfers largely by conditioning a herder’s social network. Destitution (owning a herd that is persistently below five cattle for the Borana) has a strongly negative and statistically significant impact on the probability of being known within the community. Since the possibility of receiving any assistance from others depends fundamentally on being known by others, ‘the social invisibility of the destitute explains much of their exclusion from social transfer networks’ (Santos and Barrett 2005: 2).

Poverty is perceived as less prevalent amongst those who are able to be physically remote from *woreda* or urban centres because it demonstrates that the household has the capacities to increase herd size, live off animal products and practice mobile pastoralism. For those living a more sedentary life on the edges of small towns with few connections to the pastoralist system, poverty and livelihood insecurity is most likely. They can no longer function as pastoralists and have, in effect, become non-competent and, to a large extent, invisible as pastoralists. For the majority this was not viewed as a matter of choice but as a painful exit.

Before, we lived a good life, now there is no life. It's all poverty! I had many animals, milk, butter, but now there are no animals, no grass, no milk and no life. That's why it's different. If I had my animals I wouldn't come to town. When they died I had nothing left there. No husband, no animals, no life. I just came for my own survival.

(Pastoralist woman living on the edge of Gawane Town)

While this finding would appear to contradict mainstream understanding of livelihood security, which equates settlement and urbanisation with improved livelihoods (see for example MOFED 2006), it strongly echoes data from recent qualitative and quantitative research (Desta *et al.* 2008; Little *et al.* 2008). These studies point to a nuanced model of livelihood security that associates mobile pastoralism with greater wealth, better nutrition and less vulnerability.

3.4 Values shape competence

Competence entails not only good management, but also knowing how to behave as a pastoralist. To understand, respect and follow the social norms of the clan is perceived as integral to competence. In other words competence is about much more than having the technical capabilities to maintain and sustain a production system. It is also about maintaining social identity and social cohesion. There are rights and benefits to be gained through clan membership – welfare support,

shared investment, legal protection, collective rangeland management and access to water – and these are closely linked to conforming to strict rules and a hierarchy of responsibilities. Young Borana herdsmen, for example, describe traditional welfare support as much as a judgement of worthiness – the person is trustworthy and acting responsibly on behalf of others – as an act of charity.

Busa Gonofa is a traditional system. It provides simple help to those who have lost their animals. First the cause of animal loss is considered – conflict, bushfire, alcohol. Neighbours help by giving milking cows, milk, meat. In exchange the children of that family who are being helped will help the neighbours with their animals. If someone loses his animals as a result of alcohol and other bad things – all his children, his wife, his close relatives and other important members of the community will be called upon and the head of the family will not be allowed to sell animals, this power will be transferred to one of his close relatives who is trustworthy, so that person will manage and supervise the family.

(Young herdsmen, Dillo)

The impacts of behaving without respect for customs and values or ignoring the wisdom of others are extensive. The buffer of clan support in the event of a livelihood shock is withdrawn; serious infractions are punished and in extremes can lead to expulsion from the clan. As Box 3.3 illustrates the clan has the power and networks to seriously undermine the livelihood of an individual if that individual is deemed to be a liability and threat to clan integrity.

Box 3.3 Rejecting social norms: undermining competence

Adelo is a trader. He has livestock and wealth. During his travels for trading purposes he has learned how to chew *chaat* and drink alcohol – he started to sell all his animals. His close family gave him advice to stop this behaviour, to which he replied: ‘they are my animals, children, family, and wealth how you can stop me?’ They said: ‘If you don’t behave properly the animals belong to the clan, and if you don’t behave effectively you have to leave’. So for two years he tried to sell his animals in secret. Throughout all Borana a message was spread saying that Adelo is a wealth destroyer so whenever he goes to market do not accept to sell his animals. He can return to his family when he has decided he has had enough of his bad behaviour and is willing to change. He will have the right to drink the milk of his animals and whatever is prepared in his house but he doesn’t have the power or right to sell his animals.

(Borana trader)

Overall it appears that competence is under stress in Ethiopia’s pastoralist areas. Pastoralists who took part in the study generally believe that those who are living at levels of high and functional competence, although still in the majority, are relatively fewer and not as rich as before. This is seen to be one of the most significant changes of the last 10–15 years. An apparently increasing number of

households and individuals have lost sufficient competence to bounce back from drought-induced shock and withstand pressures such as blocked mobility, policies and services promoting settlement and increasing individualisation and annexation of the land. Decline in individual competence is having an effect on clan competence. Livestock per household is said to be decreasing. Labour for herding is constrained as herds become smaller, growing numbers of young people spend time in education, and families without livestock come to live on the edge of town, unable to either reconnect back into pastoralism or pass on the skills and behaviours which would enable their children to do so. This in turn is undermining clans' collective capability to maintain the integrity of their systems.

Pastoralist competence is under increasing stress due to three major drivers of change: (1) climate; (2) violent conflict; and (3) land policy. In each *woreda* these drivers affect households in different ways depending on their levels of competence and wealth. Their interaction exacerbates conditions for livelihood insecurity. Much discussion in pastoralist areas today centres on the failure of rains in terms of location, duration and intensity, reducing the pasture available, leading to failures in crop production and making the search for drinking water for humans and livestock even more arduous.

In Oromo tradition 'peace is defined not as the absence of war but a proper relationship within the localities and with God, *waagai*' (Edossa *et al.* 2005: 29) pastoralists complain that it severely limits mobility and resource sharing. But conflict is viewed with ambivalence by many since the confusion it causes provides opportunities to acquire control over natural assets (such as areas of grazing and livestock). For some, conflict offers a state of greater certainty than peace in an environment that has been dominated by conflict: 'We don't want peace with them, whenever we have peace with them the situation worsens' (discussion in Gawane with a group of men and women).

Box 3.4 Intra-clan conflict Gawane

*Fighting inside the clan is caused by land. Since the investors have come everyone is claiming the land as their own. The elders try to sort these cases out but many are beyond the elders. There was a death as a result of an issue which was forwarded to government. Poverty has led us to fight amongst ourselves; we never had these problems before when we were better off. The lack of alternatives has led us to accept the investors – we had no capacity to remove the *Prosopis* spp., so we let them farm and remove the trees.*

(Old man, woman and young women, Gawane)

From discussions in all of the *woredas* there is increasing concern at the levels and extent of conflict and particularly newly emerging conflict within clans. Development and administration brings in their wake conflict over allocation of rights to new water sources (boreholes etc), access to land and its ownership, appropriation of land for commercial or conservation reasons (Edossa *et al.* 2005).

Some of the conflict in these three *woredas* is based on land allocation and effective individualisation of farmland and rangelands. In Gawane there are increasing incidents of intra-clan conflict as a result of land deals made between clan members and external investors, exacerbated by the lack of transparency over the process and payment for acquisition of lands (Boxes 3.4 and 3.5).

Box 3.5 The role of the investor in Gawane

This percentage investors are supposed to pay for the land – some communities are not getting anything and they have lost land that they had cleared. They are not happy about it. In other places there is money given, but the community doesn't know on what basis the percentage is decided; they sometimes get 50 birr, sometimes more. They don't know what the investor gets. The money is causing some intra-clan problems. People do not know how much they should be paid. They are just accepting what they are given. Some elders are involved in giving the land, but they don't know what the percentage should be – 50 per cent, 30 per cent, 200 birr per hectare – they don't know. The elders say they have an agreement between elders, government and investors but they do not know what is in it.

The one who says he doesn't know is probably getting the advantage. They give money to some elders, who persuade others to shut up. The elders convince the community. They don't even know how many hectares they have given to the investor. The investors come and say, this is my land! It was given to me! They show a map. They convince the elders. All that the community gets is 5 or 6 birr per day [for labour], no schools are built as stated in the agreement.

(Man, Gawane Town)

In Sabba Boru there is an accelerating process of enclosure of land by individual households, blocking routes to grazing and water. The enclosures started through the suggestions of agricultural extensionists when Sabba Boru was part of an agricultural-based *woreda*. They have since increased in number and size and now there has been expansion into the most productive areas of common rangelands, leaving only marginal lands for extensive pastoralism under collective management. Pasture is scarce, particularly on watering days. The levels and occurrence of internal conflicts are increasing (including physical attacks when attempts are made to dismantle sections of the enclosed areas). Attempts by the *kebele* leadership to enforce community decisions to open up these lands have failed. Effectively a process of privatisation of rangelands is underway putting increasing pressure on the livelihoods of those not able to enclose lands or able to prevent others from doing so (Box 4.1).

In each of these cases, land policy is being interpreted on the ground. For Gawane, land is still retained by the clans and is being disposed of by some within the clan. In Sabba Boru, the government policy of allocation of land to individual farmers is being rapidly adopted by pastoralists as a means to privatise

rangeland and control access to valuable assets such as water sources and salt-licks.

3.5 Pastoralist competence: summary

Pastoralists across all study sites and social groups characterised a secure and successful livelihood as one in which individuals and households have the capabilities and agency to build up and manage assets, make demands, secure and give support and adapt to changing conditions. We translated this as 'competence'. It is recognisable in people's mobility, visibility and good behaviour; moving to the right watering hole and grazing places at the right time, bringing up children and managing the household well, being seen doing business in town and in the market, speaking effectively at clan meetings and with officials.

Contrary to mainstream views of pastoralism as essentially a backward and impoverished livelihood, mobility linked to livestock rearing is perceived as a prerequisite for competence, wealth and livelihood security as a pastoralist. Pastoralists' competence is perceived to be under increasing stress due to three key factors: borders, land policy and conflict. These factors are interrelated and affect households and clans in different ways depending on levels of wealth, and competence. Whilst the majority of pastoralists are still perceived to be competent, levels of wealth are seen to be declining. An apparently increasing number of households are unable to cope with livelihood shocks and stresses and are 'dropping out' of pastoralism: living on the edge of towns unable to effectively reconnect to the clan. Decline in individual competence destabilises the clan's collective competence and capacity to maintain and sustain the pastoralist way of life.

4 Whose voice counts? Transformations in response

Study finding: voice is a key part of competence and livelihood security. Channels for voice that can generate respect, response and accountability from those in power are highly diverse: shaped by location, clan, gender, age and status.

4.1 Mobility, voice and social identity

Acts of voice – the ways of speaking out and securing answers – are the basis of competence. For pastoralists in Oromia and Afar, raising voice is the process through which individuals and households produce and reproduce supportive connections and opportunities for securing a living. It is an expression of pastoralist social identity.

Any decline in levels of competence is directly related to inability to raise voice. What triggers declining competence and fuels political and social vulnerability is a person's inability to fulfil his or her expected role in pastoralist society. It is more than expressing opinions, and demanding actions from people in power. It is a continuous and visible process of social and political engagement at all levels – in the household, the clan, the wider community, and with government and other actors at local, regional and national level. In effect, voice is an expression of agency and is heard and understood through channels of communication in the broadest sense.

...every meeting has its own life. And the nature and the discussion and the picture will be completely different [in each case]. For pastoralists our lives are about meetings. There is no single one day without meeting. It can be from the village, it can be the general pasture area... For example, if we settle here today and we want to move, you cannot make one single move without a meeting.

(Borana elder)

For men in particular being 'out there' and networking – under the meeting shade, in the market, in town – is part of their social identity; if this capability is lost then part of their identity is also lost. For most pastoralist women being in continuous communication with family, neighbours and community and being 'out there' on a more localised but no less important scale is a vital part of their contribution to and support from society. Although the importance of diverse relationships is vital in most cultures, for pastoralists, continued viability depends on mobility and visibility: literally on the ability to be seen to 'walk-the-talk'. Building capabilities to have effective voice requires mobility, particularly for men: to be seen sharing information, to be visible at important resource points (wells, grazing areas), to be present when decisions are discussed and made. This process creates a complex web of relationships that connect the individual and his family and lineage to: the rural and urban contexts, to markets and to the state. Agrarian society, historically more static than pastoralist society, does not have the same dynamic, mobile and to a large extent borderless sets of relationships.

Chronic stress is triggering higher levels of drop-outs, forcing increasing numbers to live sedentary lives on the periphery of small towns and having to seek livelihoods that are no longer primarily dependent on livestock. As a consequence, this group is losing connections to the clan system and the protection offered during times of crisis. As families and individuals fall out of the clan social protection system they lose not just economic security, but the emotional, psychological and social wellbeing associated with being part of the clan system. Their invisibility and immobility removes them politically and psychologically from being a pastoralist (Box 4.1). Perhaps it is worst for the old, as they see no prospect of return; they are locked out, having lost a sense of belonging and the possibility of reconnecting. Such forced disengagement effectively closes down opportunities to exercise voice and agency. The government social safety nets provided in some pilot pastoral areas for example, cannot replace those elements of pastoral identity which encourage engagement and raising voice. They provide support for maintenance of a low-level of livelihood, but leave people dislocated and disconnected. For young people of such families this level of social

disconnection is a significant problem accompanied by growing levels of disaffection, alcoholism and *chaat* consumption.

Box 4.1 The pain of ‘dropping out’

My son is working with the government, we depend on his salary. All our animals have died due to drought so we have none. Previously we were living in the village where I used to own cows and have milk and butter in plenty. Here I do not have – it has made me weak and old. I have to live on dry food. I prefer life in the village... but I am used to living in town now and this is the life God has chosen for me, I am old and will do what my children want, but in my opinion I would love to go back to pastoralism. Other family members come and see me but expect nothing from me as they I know I depend on my children and those who are able give me something. Long ago they used to give buttermilk but they don't have any now and I don't have any to give them. We used to live a good life – now there's no life; it's all poverty. Because I have no animals, no grass, no milk I have no life. If I had my animals I would not have come to town, when they died I had nothing left – no husband, no animals, no life. I came just for my survival. Having animals earns you respect.

(Gawane Town, elderly woman)

Our customary leaders have done nothing, they have not contacted us. As they travel past along this road, our chiefs have never stopped to talk to us, to greet us, to say, ‘You are our people, how are you?’

(Borana women refugees)

4.2 Differentiated voice

Across pastoralism, the dynamics of wealth, gender and age, as with elsewhere in Ethiopia are shaping and influencing capacity to raise voice. Findings from the study suggest that these dynamics are highly context specific. The broad categories of poor, (as was shown, for example, in the discussion on competence), or of women and youth, are not in themselves sufficient to capture the specific nature of socially differentiated voice in the three *woredas*. In such a short piece of work, it was not possible to understand fully the power differences within and between individuals, households and groups in communities and across communities based on clan affiliation. Nevertheless, there are some issues and trends that the study highlights.

Power differences: based on competence, lifecycle, wealth and gender: there are critical differences in power and influence within all social groups which enable or block the raising of voice. The relationship some women, for example, have with the administration (via marriage and kinship for example), is empowering for those women. They attend *kebele* meetings and participate in the

women's associations. But for others, rather than opening up a space for voice, such power can constrain voice for others. 'We can not speak freely, when she is with us', commented one group of women about the representative on their *kebele* committee. The powerlessness they felt was linked to their poverty as well as their gender as they said: 'Because of our poverty we are not able to speak, if you have property, you have power. If you have power you can talk or voice for yourself. The ones with power talk to each other'.

Agency to exercise voice dependent on context as well as social factors:

pastoralist contexts are diverse and some caution needs to be applied in making generalisations about voice. The diversity relates to where (which clan, which location), whom (competent pastoralist, man, women, elder etc.) in what arena (in the clan, in the *kebele*, at federal level) and about what (about receiving benefits, about boundary disputes, about resources or representation outside the clan). How communication channels for voice and response operate varies within and between the ethnic groups, from the Borana and Guji with highly structured social units for organisation, to the Afar with a strong territorial base. However, in all cases the value of information is high and shared without discrimination. For the Afar, the *dagu* system obliges each person to pass new information to another. Judgements of the competence of a person rely on an assessment of the quality of the information they provide; someone found to be telling lies will lose the trust of others and lose social status (field notes; WIBD 2005a).

Intra-household dynamics shaping capabilities to voice: intra-household relationships influence the opportunities and channels that people have to raise voice. The factors are complex. It involves status: whether the person is male head of household, young adult or child; and position in family: whether the woman is alone or the first wife, second wife, daughter or mother-in-law. It also involves the number of adults in the house, marital relationships and courage to speak. The courage to speak has a particular resonance in pastoralist society. Good public speaking and the risks people take, women and men alike, to speak out and speak well are admired and respected. However, the courage to speak is not entirely based on individual attributes; it is also shaped by the nature of the household, its status within the clan, its visibility and the degree of mobility (i.e. the strength of its connections to pastoralism).

We know her problems because she spoke out. Her clansmen helped her but she never stopped fighting, she never stopped speaking.

(Young Borana Women)

Disabled people invisible and voiceless: reaching disabled people was difficult and in some *kebeles* did not happen. In all three *woredas* disability is a cultural taboo as well as a characteristic which severely reduced people's capacities to secure a livelihood. As a taboo, it means that disabled people have little or no opportunities to exercise voice within pastoralist systems and when they do, it appears to be limited to requests for support from neighbours and family. Government targets disabled people as welfare recipients, but not as people with capabilities to exercise agency and voice. The extreme invisibility of disabled people reflects more broadly on their marginalisation from development processes globally. More work is needed in the context of pastoralism to understand this aspect of voice and social diversity.

She was a young mother of two children when her husband took her back to her parent's home. The reasons for this are not known as she has not spoken out. She couldn't share anything with anyone else as she is poor and knows that no-one can help her as poor people don't get support unlike rich people, who get support from community and government. She also had the disadvantage of being disabled (with only one hand). This increases her marginalisation even more because when a woman's hand is asked for in marriage: 'you must see if she is whole or not.'

(Mixed-age women, Dillo)

Cutting across these broad-based issues are the dynamism and dynamics of exercising voice because of gender and lifecycle. We explore these issues in more detail below.

4.3 Gendered voice

You are stronger when you have a husband. You are two voices but if you are alone yours is one voice. With a husband you are respected and listened to.

(Afar woman)

For women, while their circles of mobility are more circumscribed, their webs of information operate in a similar mode to those of men – operating both through other women, but also through their husbands and other male relatives. 'As women we look upon our elders and husbands to settle disputes. We don't involve ourselves completely. We are committed to household and animal responsibilities and have our men to do peace mediation. We speak to our husbands for the need for peace and they speak on our behalf;' (women in Dillo). It may not be voice as is often understood in development terms, (i.e. a direct engagement with others to speak, voice opinions, influence and make decisions) but women have ways of making their voice heard; of being of use to and respected within clans. It is not free and open but closed within boundaries; nevertheless it is voice. Their public role in customary institutions is limited, however. In our discussions women rarely expressed interest in being actively involved. Where they have trust in the leadership they feel they can voice their concerns freely. Where clan-based systems are in decline women expressed a sense of powerlessness and lack of agency. Where clan systems remain strong at the community level, women have a much stronger sense of actively engaging and exercising voice. Women like Lensaa in Box 4.2 use their position and trust in the clan as a springboard for engagement with and influencing government. The strong sense of identity, of belonging, and of being actively listened to within the clan drive a sense of entitlement to engage with external actors.

The question of who goes to school is decided in the house. It hasn't reached the point of discussing it in the community and the government. Women have a voice with the husband on education, but not on land or other things.

(Woman, Sabba Boru)

Women also exercise voice and agency within some traditional governance processes. For Guji and Borana pastoralists, for example, women have an important role in peace processes. 'Following major conflicts, the two groups have a cultural practice of sending peace messengers to the adversary group. The party first interested in peace sends a *lichoo*, a female peace envoy, to the *hayyu*, judge, of the opponent group' (Debsu 2009: 25). In all three areas studied, domestic abuse, rape and financial irresponsibility by the male householder towards the women are considered serious infractions of customary law. Moreover in allegations of rape a woman's word is enough; witnesses or external proof are not expected. However, as clan systems of redress and dispute resolution are weakening at local level, as is discussed below, voice's agency and right in this regard is being undermined. Flintan *et al.* (2008) also observes that while women can attend traditional gatherings to raise issues important to them, they are less likely to receive the same attention as men and may need the mediating support of a male relative or clan elder.

Box 4.2 Women raising voice: building competence through the clan and state

Lensaa is a married women living with her husband and 4 children in a village close to *kebele* and *woreda* centres. She and her family own sheep and goats and are using the profit from milk sales to buy more animals. She is in her early 30s and well respected by her neighbours and the clan elders. Her three eldest children go to primary school and she also has been having basic education. Lensaa has been active in setting up a saving group with other women in her hamlet. Lensaa is optimistic that the government will match their savings with a loan, although this has yet to happen despite their persistence in asking for support. The group works together on a number of issues from family planning, water resources, education and giving support to each other. They now believe family planning to be an important part of their livelihood security and are supporting each other to use it regardless of the attitudes of their husbands, they say.

Lensaa is strongly supportive of her pastoralist system and trusts the clan elders to respond to her demands when she needs help. She is less hopeful of government but nevertheless is not afraid to speak to officials. She led her savings group in complaining to the *woreda* about the way the local health worker treated them. The health worker was removed but they are still waiting for a replacement.

(Woman, Dillo)

Over the last 15 years there have been some small steps in including women formally within the customary institutions of pastoralism such as the *Gadaa* system of the Borana. However, physical inclusion does not automatically lead to transformations in the way decisions are made (greater equity for women) or how they are made (greater attention to gendered issues). The barriers against women

having a public and equitable role in discussions are still much greater than for men. Men from an early age move around within their kin and clansmen and join in gatherings, learning through observing, mentoring and practicing the skills of negotiation, mediation and communication. The more competent their household the more opportunities they have for honing their skills for future livelihood security. Girls and women have much more restricted channels through which to communicate, exercise agency and raise voice (Muir 2007; Flintan *et al.* 2008). As explored in Box 4.3, the effect of their words is as much an outcome of their relationships with those in power as it is a measure of their own persistence and competence.

Box 4.3 When can women speak out?

The woman in the kebele was raped, she got no justice; she had no property and no father. The man who raped her has money, he has power. He went to the administration, he didn't accept to be judged by the elders. He knows that the elders do not have power over him. But in another case there was a lady got divorced for her protection. The community forced the husband to divorce as he was beating her. She voiced again and again to elders. A disabled lady was divorced against her will, she got no property from the husband, but she didn't speak. The point is that if you speak and speak you will be heard. But if you don't speak; if you feel powerless to speak, you will be forgotten.

(Mixed Group, Dillo)

As in the other parts of Ethiopia, patterns of women's representation and presence in public government fora are changing. However, it is unclear how women are accessing and participating in these new institutions. In some study areas, both the women's bureau and the women's association were praised for the new opportunities they gave women to engage with decision-making processes.

Amina, a divorcee, is living with her family and is intending to get remarried. She said: 'first priority would be to the cousins of her former husband but she can refuse to do this these days, before it was not culturally allowed. This has changed because education has changed people and the women affairs office will fight for her rights to refuse. Some women even refuse to get married these days.

(Afar woman)

On the other hand, poorer women living on the periphery of the settlements (neither in the rangelands nor in the settlements) and away from the administration are much less confident of being heard or responded to. 'We feel marginalised but going to meetings is a waste of time. We should use that time to do our work – fetch water because we don't matter' (poor Borana women living in a hamlet at periphery of the *kebele*). Although, the associations are open to all women, it is not clear what mechanisms are used to ensure that all women

regardless of their status, geographical distance from *kebele* centres or age are encouraged to participate. Certainly, it is not a simple choice between clan-based or government fora. Women expressed the most confidence in their access to decision-making and the capacities to influence those in power in locations where both government and clan institutions are seen to be active and cooperative.

Women can now openly and confidently stand up and talk. We can voice our issues without fear. We wanted to construct a borehole using our own capital but due to the drought this was not possible. That shows we can make our own decisions.

(Young Borana women)

4.4 Generational differences in voice

Across all three *woreda* it was the youngest and the oldest who expressed the most difficulty in being able to speak out and be heard. Poverty and vulnerability are critical to their exclusion and disconnection from customary and government systems. This is not uniform, those from within competent households or with connections to competent households have great agency to speak. This situation is also true for those who have relatives who are party members or who are within the EPRDF party system.

Older people, particularly women who are losing connections with the clan system are not necessarily being included in public fora for discussion, decision-making or information sharing (Box 4.4). They are likely to be targeted for relief or welfare support – food aid or the productive safety nets. However, this targeting is not perceived to lead to greater inclusion and representation in public arenas. As one elderly Afar women explained: ‘Democracy does not mind about us. Only the young are useful. The old are shadowed. No one cares about us. The labour-force is important today and because we cannot provide any labour-force we are useless’.

The older people in rural areas who most often expressed the feeling of exclusion are the managing and declining poor, experiencing stressed competence. They did not have a position of respect within the clan system as a recognised elder. Nor were they necessarily being picked up by government services for food aid or inclusion in the Productive Safety Net Programme (Dillo). They lacked the voice and agency to influence food aid decisions and were not considered poor enough (through community based targeting) for inclusion in the PSNP.

For young men and women pastoralists the situation appears equally variable and uncertain. The exercise of voice is for many becoming more constrained with limited institutional response either from within the clan or government system. At the centre of pastoralist life, young people are socialised into the clan system over a long period of time. Young boys for example, in the Guji and Borana pastoralist systems have opportunities to attend the *jaarsa* (body of male elders) from the age of 10 (Muir 2007). Attendance gives them opportunities to learn and develop the capabilities to exercise voice as they grow older. But pressures on pastoralism are undermining this process of socialisation for young people in households

whose competence is under stress, hanging on but at the edge of 'dropping out' of pastoralism. In both Gawane and Dillo for example, participants commented that now that herd sizes are so much smaller, young men (and to some extent women) are refusing to help with the livestock and are looking else where for livelihood opportunities. Yet government services are not necessarily supporting younger people to adapt to changing livelihood circumstances or take part in decision-making affecting their futures.

The future of pastoralist is not good, the young generations do not want the system and they do not mostly support us in keeping animals, fencing, moving etc. so how do you think the system will continue?

(Older man, Dillo)

Box 4.4 Marginalisation

Assia is a 70-year-old widow who lives with her elder blind brother. Her son helps her but he has little or no livestock and has only recently in the last year taken up farming. He is married with two children and his wife is pregnant. Assia has no other relatives and no neighbours who help her. She had four goats but one died and another she sold to pay for hospital treatment for her heart condition. When food aid comes, vulnerable people are not selected separately and everyone gets what they can. For Assia, the system is breaking down: 'the culture of sharing is no longer there, we were used to milk and butter and now life has changed to money. We do have elders but they don't come to us and we don't go them'. An NGO has helped by giving her three goats but other than food aid she gets nothing from the *kebele*. 'It's there but people like me are too old for associations and we don't go to meetings. People know we are not able to do anything so they don't invite us.

(Afar woman, Gawane)

Youth associations are the main government-based fora for young people to exercise voice. These appear to be dominated by those with education, from wealthy functional or high competence households. Poorer youth, and those dropping out from education, are less likely to be consulted or included in decision making around public social welfare programming; although, they are the ones who are more likely to perform the safety nets or food-for-work activities such as bush clearance and road building. The small space for young people to exercise voice and agency is perceived in all three *woredas* as a contributory factor for their widespread disaffection and dislocation. In turn, it compounds tensions between the generations and closes down more channels through which to voice their opinions or take part in decisions.

These tensions reflect issues more significant than older people simply saying 'youth of today'. Sending a child to school, for example, is not as straightforwardly positive as it might be. In the past, the brightest boy in the family would be kept back from formal education and educated through the clan about their shared

traditions and in the ways of livestock and pastoralism. Increasing livelihood insecurity and reduced herd size for some is changing that. Now the brightest boys, if it can be afforded, are being selected to send to school.

We used to send to school the children who were nuisances. Now we take those whom we love. We used to send the ones who are not responsible, not capable of taking care of the animals.

(Adult man, Sabba Boru)

The shift indicates that people consider that education benefits future security. Yet, in common with the rest of rural Ethiopia, concerns about the quality and appropriateness of the education are also expressed. Equally, there is the acknowledgement that creating better life chances for children risks losing them in the future. These concerns are compounded for pastoralist adults because, while education increases life chances for some – they also see the education system as a further way for non-pastoralists to denigrate pastoralism as a backward way of life. 'Our children go to school and do not want to come back to us, to our system.' Education may encourage children to reject pastoralism but it is not necessarily equipping them to build the competence necessary for their future. In Gawane, for example, people mentioned how teaching in the vernacular, put in place to support greater take-up of educational opportunities has led in some cases to increased discrimination against pastoralist students. Poorer children are dropping out of school before learning the national language assuring future exclusion from higher education or better-placed work in government and elsewhere.

Those who go to school are the ones who break the customary laws. Why? They are ones who bring all these evils, like alcohol and chaat. Why? The ones who have gone to school think they know better, they look down on customary law.

(Young men, Dillo)

4.5 Diversity and voice summary

Resilience to livelihood shocks or stresses is being lost for many pastoralists and increasingly they are experiencing step changes – as a result of the external pressures that are increasing risk and insecurity. The resilience to these external changes, and capacity to raise voice, varies with an individual's level of competence, life cycle position and the gendered livelihood context in which she or he operates. But importantly it is also a function of the competence of the whole community.

Voice is affected by its subject matter, women, for example, have agency which is important to them in terms of defining their social position and influence over household decisions, but relatively limited agency in terms of securing the livelihood at a broader scale. Voice is contingent on political and social agency. Agency is highly dependent on levels of competence, context as well as social factors like gender and age. The capacity of individuals to make claims for

influence depends on whether they are accepted as legitimate participants in the discussions in household, at the clan meetings or in government circles at different levels. In certain instances people can exercise a high degree of agency, yet in others will face constraints in raising voice.

None of the above findings on voice and diversity are surprising. The effects of gender, disability, inter-household and intra-community social differences on an individual's ability, and specifically women's ability, to engage and participate in public fora have been long recognised within development (see for example Booth 1994 and for disability Fafchamps and Kebede 2008). More surprising is the lack of attention by external actors to any power analysis with which to understand issues of exclusion, social diversity and power differences. Very little is known about the power and social dynamics that lead to people losing social connectivity and competence.

What happens to the relationships, connections, capacities to take action for those who have 'stressed competence': people not managing and declining into destitution? Trends in all three *woredas* indicate that these groups are increasingly being disconnected from the competent. The changing nature of the response means that traditional pastoralist channels for voice are no longer open to some of them but it does not appear that new spaces are opening up for all of them to participate in meaningful ways in government or other fora. One explanation for this lack of concern lies in notions of unruliness (Shankland 2010). Those pastoralists who fall out of the pastoralist system, fall into the official state/NGO welfare system. They become part of a rule-bound arrangement that unfortunately gives them little more than an ability to survive. For those who remain competent, their engagement with the state makes use of state structures and resources, and a strategic-bureaucratic form of voice. It is to this relationship between pastoralists and government that we turn in the next section.

5 The changing nature of response in clan and government

Study finding: voice and response processes and systems for accessing support and services or settling disputes are at risk of becoming more discriminatory for poorer and marginal groups within pastoralist communities.

The nature of the voice-response mechanism varies according to who is asking, who is listening and what is to be responded to. There are two separate but increasingly linked means through which people expect a response: the institutions of the customary and the government systems. Claims for relief, welfare, justice and services are made and heard within both these systems. Securing the livelihood involves social and political engagement with customary institutions for social transfers, justice and production decisions and with government and other external actors for a range of development goods and services. These institutions have different information requirements and modes of engagement. As time goes on their interaction is creating hybrid forms of institution whose rules of operation are often unspoken and unstable.

5.1 Clan competence, welfare, justice and services

Just as there is evidence of decline in individual competence, so it is that clan competence overall is declining in its ability to respond in three areas crucial for livelihood security: social protection, justice and management of range use (pasture and water). The channels for voice and response for the less competent are operating at the edge of functionality. Across all three *woredas* the pastoralist support systems are weakening, particularly for women and the poorest social groups. Doss (2001) has previously highlighted downward trends in the utility and level of clan-based social transfers. The stress on pastoralist livelihood systems is stretching to breaking point at least some of the patterns of mutual support. In Dillo and Gawane, for example, poor respondents repeatedly reported the lack of clan response to their pleas for assistance. For some, the time taken by the clan system to discuss and determine the legitimacy of each claim is too long. They turned to government, because a relief response, however inadequate, was quicker. Others explained how they did not approach the clan any more, opting out so as not to burden a stressed system. As one man in Gawane observed, it is acknowledged that the system is not responding because it cannot cope with the level of poverty:

We used to help those who were vulnerable by sharing milk and other animal products with them. I used to do this out of good faith because I knew how vulnerable they were. There was a spirit of sharing. Now there is no sharing because everyone is poor and what they have is not enough for them so there is nothing to share. We still try to share what little we have with the extreme poor. Out of a half sack I can give one plate, and a cup of milk can be given. The heart is willing but there's little to be shared.

A collective clan response is highly individualised but at the same time is made on the basis of whether that individual will be able to contribute to the sustained future of the clan as a whole. The key factor is utility to the clan (McPeak 2005). The ability to be heard and get a timely and meaningful response from the traditional system depends on an individual's previous wealth position and whether they are considered to have been generous to others when they were able. It also depends on the size and viability of the individual's herd. If an individual or household is assessed not to have a viable herd it is now less likely that they will get clan support: 'The social safety net seems to operate only for those households of moderate or greater livestock wealth and not for the poorest' (Santos and Barrett 2005: 2; Tache 2008). Now it is more likely that the more competent and the thriving will get a response from the clan and those who are less competent and declining are more likely to be institutionally excluded from response because of the stress that clan systems and pastoralist livelihoods are experiencing. For competent households, their ability to seek and gain support within the clan system remains strong, at the same time their high levels of social connectivity means that they can access and use government services to supplement and secure their livelihoods.

Even though clan responses to voice for welfare assistance are weakening, most people say that customary structures from family, neighbours and the clan itself remain their main source of support. There are many examples of neighbourhood-based informal social systems working to support individual households. Family

and neighbours remain the most important source of help, but an increasing number of people are now falling outside the old system, with its integral sense of obligation and belonging, and may not be able to get back in: 'our relatives will help us and we may go back where we came from. They will share what they have. All are from the same clan, are related and all suffer together' (Afar women).

As the traditional pastoralist relief and welfare systems lose ability to respond to the less competent, the opportunities available for response through governmental systems (backed by donors and NGOs) become more important. However, these spaces for response are highly controlled and build a relationship based more on patronage and dependence than those of mutual obligation characteristic of the clan system. Relief and welfare arrangements at *kebele* and *woreda* have the effect of disconnecting the poorest people from the pastoralist communication networks and from the sources of competence that they need to thrive once again as pastoralists. The alternative response does not offer new competence, but it does provide sustenance. As Box 5.1 illustrates, however, there is little confidence in the government system to respond as the clan once did.

The government assistance – which is normally food aid – usually comes very late, when the damage has already been done, it is not reliable or sustainable. Pastoralist support from our neighbours, from our clan is immediate and continuous.

(Older woman, Dillo)

Box 5.1 Seeking support

A group of pastoralist women in Dillo were asked where did very poor and vulnerable people go for help? Their answer illustrated their lack of confidence in the government system. It also highlighted their shame and reluctance to make a demand for food support, because, culturally, to ask is to be thought not hungry but greedy.

The first level of response to vulnerable people is from neighbours and friends. The second is from the safety net programme – food is given every 5 months. Sometimes it reaches Dillo after 3 months but then it is kept in store for another 2 months. We have not asked why there is this delay. The government knows we are hungry and the government knows what it should do. We fear government; we cannot ask. And how can we ask? If we ask for food it proves we are greedy.

(Rural women, Dillo)

Just as the social transfer systems are coming under pressure so too are the channels for response to voice seeking justice. The traditional justice systems are central to maintenance of clan competence and individual livelihood security. The systems of rules and known punishments are still considered to be critical elements for maintenance of the integrity of the community, negotiating peace

between groups and resolving individual disputes and grievances. But there are now alternative channels for response to justice claims, with more wealthy and elite households using government courts and administrators to bypass those of the clans where it is to their advantage (Lister 2004). Effectively the customary institutions are being weakened and undermined by the use of other channels for redress. While the majority of people noted that they always go first to the traditional justice system, and in most cases feel satisfied, there were a number of instances of people finding it convenient or necessary to seek justice outside the traditional system. This was a repeated finding across the three *woredas* and was particularly prevalent for women seeking justice for gender-based violence, for example women experiencing domestic violence in Sabba Boru spoke of turning first to the church and then, when that failed, to the courts in Nagelle. One particular example illustrates this point: a teenage girl in Dillo *Woreda* was raped and made pregnant. She took her case to the clan for resolution, and the male perpetrator took the case to the administration. The administration dismissed the case because there were no witnesses. The victim's voice raised in the customary institution was diminished by the use of the administrative system to trump the customary processes.

For the more competent pastoralists seeking to secure their livelihood, government programmes provide opportunities for building increased competence. Many pastoralists engage at *kebele* and *woreda* to access basic services. Education is particularly highly prized in the three *woredas* for its potential to equip a new generation with capabilities for securing livelihoods. Water, medical, veterinary, market, road and credit services are also all appreciated for the potential they offer for strengthening pastoralist livelihoods and giving opportunities for non-pastoralist livelihoods in the future. However the data suggest that people do not feel they have influence over what is provided, its quality or suitability. This is at odds with a deep concern for quality and relevance of services, particularly of education. Many children exit the education system after only a few years, for multiple reasons. In two of the three *woreda* there are no secondary schools, so going beyond primary would mean travelling a long distance to the zonal capital. For the poorest, being able to afford just the clean clothes that a child needs to take part in classes is a challenge. For both those who drop out early, and those who carry on to gain basic qualifications, parents and community leaders express concerns that their education teaches them to reject pastoralism as backward, while failing to equip the majority with the basic skills for life. Nonetheless, despite the difficulties and concerns, all ages in all three *woreda* remain committed to educating children, both boys and girls.

We put time together to make roads and build schools. It is the elders and also very active youth. We even pay for the teachers to a certain extent. All the schools are community-built. One elder was challenging us – he said he would invest from his own pocket. We felt ashamed when he saw we hadn't finished plastering the school, but we were too hungry, we had no energy.

(Elderly man, Sabba Boru)

5.2 Government responses and information flows

As more pastoralist areas become incorporated into the state delivery system through the creation of new *woredas*, the extent, effectiveness and influence of these channels grows. Increasingly, a form of hybridisation between systems is emerging as this incorporation continues and as pastoralists seek to access basic services from the *kebele* and *woreda* and look for other forms of representation at higher levels that will allow more successful state engagement. At the *kebele* level, for the Borana and Guji, for example, the clan system meets the government through the election of *jaarsa* members to the *kebele* council or as cabinet members. This provides one channel for pastoralists into the governmental system and vice-versa (Muir 2007).

Changes in the connections between pastoralist systems and government are rooted in the history of their engagement, a history which is described at greater length in Section 6. During the Derg period between 1974 and 1991 customary institutions began to lose some of their powers; with the regime intervening with customary leadership and dismissing leaders that challenged their authority (Box 5.2). After the overthrow of the Derg regime, the EPRDF consolidated its position within the country. In pastoral areas EPRDF took a different route to engaging with the population than in other areas of the country, clan leaders became their intermediaries and operated as 'coopted' partners. As Vaughan notes (2003), this use of elites (quite contrary to policy elsewhere) was an acceptance that the only way into these systems and populations was through the conduit of the pastoralist elites themselves. Working through the pastoralist clans was recognition of the 'separateness' of pastoralists from the usual systems of state control. This long-established approach continues today in the study *woredas* with a clear and recognised 'partnership' between the state and clan leaders.

Box 5.2 Decline of customary institutions

The elders said that rich people used to have 1,000 camels. If you had only 15 cattle you were poor. We couldn't finish the milk all day; the surplus was spilt in the Awash. The people used to rule. There were five known elders, they used to rule this Baado (riverside) land... they used to give the best judgements. They used to think that they were judging their own children. We had our own government at that time. Sultan Ali Mireh (leader of all the Afar) was dismissed by the Derg. That was the time when the traditional ruling system started to decline. There were two changes: one phase was a phase based on benefit, and the second was a phase based on lies. The rain decreased. The river changed direction, the woyane tree got out of control. Our capability and our voice started to decline. Voice is between us as well as external. It was good to discuss among ourselves in order to have better voice. We are like a person who lost the path in the day time and we want to find it in the night. How can we find it?

(Elders, Gawane)

You can't go beyond clan realities to the issues of land, language, culture, participation, power and to mobilising the peasants, because they are nomads, so here you either have a clan leader or you don't. And in these instances we knew that the type of coalition that we needed to build was a coalition [with local leaders].

(Vaughan 2003: 206 citing an interview with the Transitional Government of Ethiopia President in 1994)

Identifying young men for party membership has been a further mechanism for inserting the state into the customary system and changing the nature of clan authority. In Afar, Vaughan reports that the Afar People's Democratic Organisation (closely allied to the EPRDF) drew its members from amongst the young men 'whose social, political and economic marginality had been further intensified by the impoverishment and breakdown of the pastoral economy... Placing these young upstarts as elected representatives, local executives has subverted the traditional authority of elder clan members, whose loyalty was woven into a conservative social structure over which EPRDF had little evident means of gaining control' (Vaughan 2003: 214). A frequent complaint, as noted already is that the young are losing respect for the customary institutions. Pastoralists recognise, however, that the younger generation holds the key to opening channels for government services, negotiations with investors and reproduction of the pastoralist livelihood.

Government response is both about maintaining the integrity of the state and delivering efficient development and relief across a vast nation. For pastoralists, engagement with the state has both benefits and tradeoffs: autonomy is traded for access to basic services, relief and incorporation into the state. At the national level, political messages are managed through a party system that reaches far into rural areas. Development services are made available through a decentralised system of *woreda* budgets delivering on national and regional state policies with strong technical guidance from a range of central line ministries and regional and zonal bureaus. The opening of new *woredas* provides an interesting example of its effects. In Dillo, for example, there is clear evidence of new services coming into the *woreda* but at the same time there are tradeoffs to this increased presence of government. Greater government control over what an individual does and how they do it is more evident. The selection of the '300 people' within a *kebele* to manage the political interface with the wider community has meant that areas once remote from the state are now becoming more deeply incorporated.

Importantly, the net of social obligations and response from the traditional institutions is being partly replaced by greater dependency on the government and NGO services and welfare. Pastoralists now have less freedom to act independently, for example to use their own expertise to allocate land uses and manage pasture and water. In all three areas, pastoralists complained that management of land was no longer effective as it had been in the past.

The problem begins with who is appointed to lead the people; it is someone who has connection or exposure to the towns. Those who want to bring issues of grazing or water and so on, they are second. In terms of voice they live on the edge. These ones are always there to make sure the orders of their superiors are implemented. The chairman of one woreda may look like a lightweight, but it does not matter whether the community accept him or not, it matters if the administration likes him.

(Traditional leader)

Government channels for voice and response tend to operate through directives and plans to be carried out, allowing limited ranges of information to be released (Vaughan and Tronvoll 2003; Yilmaz and Venugopal 2008). A person's status within the government system is dependent on their ability to transfer political messages and information, as well as be seen to deliver the expected targets set by higher levels of authority. Formal state institutional arrangements at *kebele*, *woreda* and region tend to be exclusionary and inequitable. Access to information is restricted and privileged; it is circulated to targeted groups – the elites and selected poor (through particular programmes and projects). For those outside the system there is a degree of mistrust of information that flows down the lines to local officials.

Engagement with the two systems of information flow – clan and government – requires different sets of competence. Customary systems give value to information as a means of being competent, the government system as a means of achieving pre-set goals. Customary systems require a high degree of social connectivity and mutual information exchange, a process that is tied into a person's long term status and acceptance within the tradition and all the benefits that entails. A person operating within the government system is not expected to contribute opinions, but to hear directives, put them into action and make reports. To be effective within the government system a pastoralist needs to be educated in that system, to have the language to engage with bureaucrats, the capacity to be present at a range of fora from the local to the *woreda* to the regional-levels, to understand the Party and even to be part of it. Only a few of the older pastoralist elites have this competence, along with increasing numbers of the educated youth.

Both systems demand a high level of engagement in terms of time spent in meetings. Regular and long *kebele* meetings are a common feature of life for today's pastoralist who lives in or near a settlement and who wants to avail government services. People listen attentively. They gather information that can be useful to the individual and the clan in the future, such as information on government or NGO plans for water, roads, schools and clinics. Their presence and persistence at these meetings signals a willingness to take part in a long engagement. One aimed at engendering a change in relationships and perhaps a future where a more vocal and empowered voice can be exercised.

5.3 Changing nature of response

Customary institutions remain the primary institution of identity, belonging and

response in the three *woredas*. But their ability to provide support to the poorest has weakened, and internationally financed relief and welfare provided through the government and NGOs has extended its reach. Useful services such as education and water supplies have increased their coverage too, and the result for voice and response is that a form of hybridisation is taking place between customary and state structures. These hybrid structures are not formalised, but pragmatic, and the rules of engagement are neither clear nor entirely stable. Cooperation depends on mutual interests being in alignment and it is maintained through continuous negotiation.

Understanding the ways in which pastoralists operate in these systems, who can engage meaningfully and who is excluded, is critical to effective programming of development activities. On the whole donors, through support to government programmes help to confine participation to arenas of voice that are carefully controlled spaces tied to development processes (Poluha 2002). These allow some opening of opportunity for regulated participation but do not support the other channels of voice that provide important aspects of livelihood security. The limited knowledge of how people use and influence these diverse channels limits the effectiveness of development interventions and runs the risk of increasing the vulnerability and levels of insecurity of pastoralists. Different forms of intervention are required that in particular focus on building the agency, competence and interconnection of individual and diverse pastoralists in their relations with their clans and service providers.

5.4 Response in clan and government: a summary

Where once pastoralists directed their voice almost entirely within their own societies; today the increasing presence of the state in every location means that they are negotiating in far more variegated circumstances. Pastoralists in Ethiopia spend appreciable time and effort securing attention and response from local government and non-government service agencies. Male elders deal with officials to influence land decisions or justice intervention; women argue for better services and opportunities; entrepreneurs make deals and poor people find themselves the objects of capricious welfare arrangements.

Responsive systems, both from within the clan and the state, for providing support and services, settling disputes and dispensing justice are at risk of becoming more discriminatory for poorer and marginal groups within pastoralist communities. Pastoralist support and justice systems are weakening across all three *woredas*. However government or non-government agencies are not necessarily moving into the spaces opened up by the decline of customary systems. Hybrid systems have emerged in which the rules of engagement are in a state of flux and those showing the least competence are losing vital channels in which to voice demands and make claims. This in turn is contributing to increased vulnerability to exclusion and livelihood insecurity. Pastoralists are seeking binding responses but often all they get is false assurances or rebuff. Poor people say they are becoming powerless objects of aid and welfare, unable to build competence and contribute to the well being of pastoralist society.

In Section 6 we look at the history of change in pastoralist government engagement in terms of strategy and ideology. We consider how pastoralists are trying to open up different types of political space at higher-levels in order to begin to challenge and change understanding of pastoralist systems by government so that at the local-level there can be more effective response to the diversity of pastoralist contexts and concerns. We also look at one example of a development project that supports processes that build pastoralist competence and voice to achieve better clan and government responsiveness as a means to illustrate the different types of processes necessary for working with pastoralist systems.

6 The long game of institutional change

Study finding: pastoralist elites and the state are engaged in a long game of repositioning and transforming pastoralist-state engagement. Results so far suggest that opening up space within constrained political systems for pastoralist-state engagement is both possible and essential if marginalised voices are to be heard and acted upon.

6.1 The changing policy and political contexts

Changes in voice and response in the *kebele* and *woreda* are to a large extent framed by the nature of the relationships between pastoralists and government at higher levels. These relations are characterised by a long process of political change where modest changes in the terms of engagement are leading to small shifts in attitudes, behaviours and understanding of pastoralists. Historically, relationships between the state and pastoralists have been characterised by tensions as a result of the state attempting to impose structures and institutions developed for sedentary populations onto mobile pastoral communities, resulting in conflict and antagonism between the state and pastoralists and increasing strain on the pastoral institutions (Hogg 1993; Lister 2004; Elias 2008). The 'empty' lands of the pastoralists have long been an attractive policy option for use by the state to resettle highland farmers and to incorporate these lands into commercial agriculture (see the GoE Rural Development Policy 2001 cited in Sahara 2003).

More recent shifts in understanding are reflected to a degree in changes to the policy and political context for pastoralism. In some respects there have been major shifts over the last decade in policies and in others it has remained constant as the basic vision for settled agriculture has continued to determine the policy agenda (Hussein 2007; Tables 6.1 and 6.3).

High level processes of political decision-making carried out by the EPRDF to a large extent determine the shape of policy activity for pastoralists (Lister 2004; NGO pers. comm.). A development vision based on growth drives the policy responses. Thus policy for lowland pastoralist areas reflects the pressure for

commercialisation of agriculture in high potential areas next to rivers, sedentarisation, and the strong determination to provide basic services to all in an organised and efficient manner, an inconsistent support to livestock markets and at the same time response to a context of humanitarian relief and conflict. Actions on the ground contain a mix of interventions from food aid, to large-scale commercial agriculture, to support to crop planting and irrigation and in some areas to pastoralism and livestock. Provision of basic services and safety nets has become a major area of activity. Food assistance has become institutionalised in pastoral areas 'resulting in many communities considering food aid to be a right, rather than a response' (donor pers. comm.). This complex of policies and actions, often contradicting each other, and in some cases leading to greater livelihood insecurity for pastoralists, has at its roots the contested understanding of pastoralism.

Table 6.1 Changes in policy and voice: 1970s–2000+

Decade	Policy response	Naming	Voice issues
1970s–1980s	Sedentarisation Acquisition of riverine pastoral lands for large-scale irrigated commercial agriculture	<i>Zelan</i> wanderers	None in government system
1990s	Sedentarisation – long-term strategy Mobility – short-term strategy	Livestock keepers, farmers and pastoralists	Opening up of cross-clan pastoral voice Ambivalence in recognition of pastoralists and their distinct voice
2000+	Sedentarisation – long-term strategy Mobility – short-term strategy Presumption of privatisation of land, no presumption for communal ownership	Pastoralists, pastoralist areas, emerging regions. Developing regions	Recognition in parliament Incorporation of pastoral offices across ministries and regions Formalised and organised cross-clan voice through pastoral associations

Lister (2004) observes that there is 'implicit disagreement in statements over the concept of 'pastoralism' and the definition and substance of 'pastoralist issues' in Ethiopia'. As Table 6.2 suggests there are a number of ways in which the terms are used in public discourse. The concepts are at times overlapping, and have changed historically, although the thread of state discourse remains consistent over time with an implicit policy push towards sedentarisation (a tabulated and detailed analysis of change is presented in Annex 3). What is notable is the change in use of language from a shift away from the pejorative use of *zelan*, a

person who wanders without aim, to a consistent and more recent reference to 'pastoralists' and 'pastoralism' (Box 6.1). The sense of progress that this has given to pastoralists is still at odds with views that prevail among many at federal level that pastoralism is a backward form of production, where mobility causes conflict and inefficient use of productive resources.

Table 6.2 Multiple identities of pastoralists and pastoralism and their use

Pastoralist as...	Used by...
Social identity , as an assertion of difference from or similarity with other groups	Pastoralist associations, PFE, different clans and ethnic groups as a way of highlighting commonalities; some individuals to describe their cultural affinity and to indicate who they are irrespective of their livelihood activities.
A mode of production	MOFED Livestock Policy Guidelines recognise the economic value of livestock production.
Livelihood system , focused on the use of livestock.	Government, NGOs, research institutions, PCDP.
A form of political mobilisation	Pastoralist associations particularly at federal and regional levels; the customary systems of decision-making and resource allocation.
'Sector' of policy	GoE through emerging regions – 'pastoralist areas', advocacy calls by some NGOs for a pastoralist commission.

Source: based on Lister (2004: 11)

Box 6.1 The importance of language

'Nomadic areas are designated as 'areas with specific problems... where unless special measures appropriate to local conditions are taken, these areas may soon face uncontrollable problems' (cited in Hogg 1993).

During Haile Selassie's period and the Derg we were called zelan, an insult that means to wander without aim; we were also called farmers, we couldn't use the word pastoralist. If we said in court that we were pastoralists it would not be accepted; we kept quiet, we had no knowledge of farming – we were pastoralists.

(Pastoral elders discussing the past)

Ten years ago we were not known as pastoralists. In the current government we are known as pastoralists, a term that expresses our identity.

(Pastoral elder reflecting on change)

Multiple understandings play out in the various policies and programmes of government. Actors work with a variety of definitions in pursuit of their agendas. Some have used a technical production focus as an entry point for opening up policy debates to broader-based pastoralist issues. For example, the development of national livestock guidelines for relief in pastoralist areas brought together diverse actors (government officials, CSOs, research institutions) with very different views on pastoralist issues who could organise and agree around a technical resource-based intervention. At the same time, the technical focus provided a space through which to debate, and include in policy issues, social and political aspects of pastoralism. For other actors, the concept is used to legitimate their particular agendas. The Government of Ethiopia through its Ministry of Federal Affairs and the World Bank-sponsored Pastoralist Community Development Project, for example, emphasises the managerial and technical nature of pastoralism by focusing on livestock and related livelihood issues.

6.2 Policy effects on voice of pastoralists

For pastoralist voice, the existence of these diverse views creates a complicated arena in which to build a shared understanding of pastoralism, as a social, economic and political system. For pastoralist elites organising at regional and federal level, the multiplicity of meanings can be seen as an advantage. Deep-rooted and at times, ideological differences, between themselves and non-pastoralist actors, over the concept of pastoralism can be set aside, in order to open up possibilities for discussion, debate and changing the terms of engagement. The space therefore for debate, although contested and difficult, is one in which there is opportunity to change and build an understanding of pastoralism that could allow for robust development of pastoral livelihoods.

At regional levels, pastoralist issues are getting attention, at least in small towns which are underwriting a certain amount of market and economic activity. However there are numerous counter forces, which mean that steps forward, relating to voice are cancelled out by steps backward, relating to a range of factors such as population growth, inflation, capricious trade limitations and poor quality of education. Nor are pastoralists without agency at the national level. However, policies that frame government pastoralist engagement constrain the degree to which this agency can be exercised and the degree to which government will respond to the pastoralist voice.

The contested livelihood space that pastoralists occupy is best understood by reference to rural land policy. From at least 1975 through to current proclamations on land (Government of Ethiopia 2005) the right to determine land use and land ownership is vested with government. The right to determine land use and management through collective arrangements organised by pastoralist customary institutions is over-ridden by the state's rights to allocate land to private individuals wishing to engage in farming.⁵ The failure to recognise collective systems of land management in law militates against a pastoral way of life organised around a collective rules-based land management system.

Policies remain contradictory, reflecting multiple understandings of pastoralism and its future. However, despite this there has clearly been an increasing national

recognition of pastoralism as a valid Ethiopian livelihood. This is reflected in the establishment of the Pastoral Affairs Standing Committee in parliament, comprising MPs from all regions (some, but not all from pastoralist areas), the incorporation of pastoralism across ministry structures and the now institutionalised annual Pastoralist Days. In the regions there has been a clear institutional response with, for example, the establishment in Oromia of a separate Oromia Pastoral Areas Development Commission and the recent provision of observer status to the Oromia Pastoral Association in the regional parliament.

These new structures represent opportunities for pastoralists to engage with government in negotiation and dialogue from a respectable position. From the pastoralist side this opening of formal space by government has been responded to with the formation of mass-membership pastoral associations (Oromia, Afar and Somali). These membership-based associations are strongly owned by the pastoralists themselves and are seen as distinctly different from NGOs. The process of formation and their representation provide them with legitimacy to voice on pastoralist issues that other organisations cannot claim: 'we create it, we drive it. NGOs are people who come to us' (OPA board member cited in Morton and Shitarek 2009).

The timeline of critical events in the change of language from wanderer to pastoralist (Table 6.3) illustrates how long the process of engagement has been and how slow it is to open up space and understanding for changes in attitudes, behaviours and policy towards pastoralists. Shifting institutional response from one directed and determined by a belief that pastoralism is 'backward' and inefficient, to be eradicated over time, to one that welcomes and understands a diversity of livelihood systems and their adaptation to diverse social and environmental landscapes, requires a sustained and multi-level, multi-actor approach. Pastoralists are active agents in this process of change, operating at local and regional/national levels to open up space for different approaches, but require the right forms of development support that are sensitive to the power dynamics that shape the ability of pastoralists to engage and secure their own livelihoods. This leads to a set of questions about the role and importance of representation, how it is organised and who represents who.

5 Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation 'Holding right, pastoralist and semi-pastoralist have been defined in individual and not collective terms'; 'Peasant farmers/pastoralists engaged in agriculture for a living shall be given rural land free of charge' (Article 5 (1a); Communal land is provided by government where 'government being the owner of rural land, communal rural land holdings can be changed to private holdings as may be necessary' (Article 5(3)).

Table 6.3 Timeline of critical events in change from ‘wanderer’ to ‘pastoralist’

Year	Events, policies and projects	Issues	Changing recognition and understanding of pastoralist voice
1975–1991			Derided as nomads – <i>zelan</i> – a derogatory and insulting term that means to wander around without aim and is used in amharic to denote people who have no focus in life.
1975–1984	Third Livestock Development Project	Focused on development of rangelands, watering points and aimed at production of livestock for export. Highly technocratic and driven by expert understanding.	Nomads, farmers but not pastoralists.
1975	Nationalisation of Rural Lands Proclamation article 27	The government shall have the responsibility to improve grazing areas, to dig wells and to settle the nomadic people for farming purposes.	Language of nomads and need for sedentarisation.
1995	The Federal Constitution	Enshrines the rights of pastoralists ‘to free land for grazing and cultivation as well as the right not to be displaced from their own lands’ (Article 40).	Referred to as <i>pastoralists</i> .
1997	Nagelle – 3 day meeting of elders from different clans. Organised by PCAE focused on the issue of pastoralist recognition.	Discussion focused on problem that they were being called farmers by government and told to be farmers, pastoralism wasn’t recognised and would only be recognised if they became farmers. Raised the issue that government had representative structures for agriculture, beekeeping and other rural livelihoods but nothing for pastoralists. There were 12 million pastoralists but no institution for them. At this stage there was only one male pastoralist in government.	Opening up cross-clan organised pastoralist space. Each of the pastoralist elders was asked to take this message back to their clans and to discuss the issue about how to get recognition as pastoralists.
1997	Filtu meeting in Somali region held 5 days later, followed 3 days later by a meeting held in Addis including Oromia, Afar, Somali and Southern Nations.	Formation of Pastoral Forum for Ethiopia. Led to agreement to hold regional pastoralist days – agreed to by regional governments.	Brought regional (and clan voice) to a federal level for the first time.

1998	Filtu – first celebration of pastoralist day		Recognition of pastoralists as an organised identity with a separate and legitimate voice.
1999	Filtu – pastoralist day	Conference called by government on pastoral policy.	
2000	Jijigga – pastoralist day	Strong recognition by Somali and Afar regional governments of value of pastoralist day.	
2001	Rural Development Policy and Strategy	Short-term support to mobility but long-term strategy of sedentarisation based on irrigated lands.	Still a long-term vision focused on settled and not mobile populations.
2002	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy	Focuses on strategies for sedentarisation of pastoralists on a voluntary basis; continued emphasis on irrigation.	
2002	Workshop on pastoralism in parliament	PCI invited by Speaker of the House to organise a workshop for 80 MPs from pastoralist areas.	Idea developed for formation of a standing committee on pastoralism and put to speaker.
2002	Ministry of Federal Affairs established	New ministry responsible for development of the emerging regions.	Recognition of pastoralist areas. Pastoral offices formed in all emerging regions.
2002	Oromia Pastoralist Development Commission (OPDC) established	Responsible for special pastoralist programme in Oromia	Regional response to growing interest in government on pastoral issues.
2002	Statement on Pastoral Development Policy	Objective: 'Transforming the pastoral societies to agro-pastoral life complemented by urbanisation' (p.6)	
2002	Government pastoralist consultative meeting at Dire Dawa	Minister for Federal Affairs presented strategy to more than 1,000 pastoralist elders.	Recognition of special nature of pastoralist areas for delivery of national decentralisation programme.
2002	Formation of Pastoralist Affairs Standing Committee at Parliament	New committee formed by Speaker of the House of People's Representatives.	Oversight of pastoralist programmes in MOFA and other ministries. Responsible for considering impact on pastoralists of all new legislation.
2003	Southern Region Pastoralist Day	Increased number of participants including parliamentarians and international organisations.	
2004	Yabello Pastoralist Day	Policy clash between pastoralists and government became the focus for discussion and need for action recognised by pastoralists – in particular the need for a more organised voice.	Sedentarisation versus mobility.

2004 (cont.)	Yabello Pastoralist Day (cont.)	Idea of pastoral council at federal level was raised with federal government – but there was no response.	
2005	Dire Dawa Pastoralist Day	Organised by PFE and attended by pastoralists from across Ethiopia.	
2005	National Election	Uninformed understanding of pastoralism but election issues were party based and not issue based and did not provide a forum for pastoralist issues.	
2005	Plan for Accelerated and Sustain- able Develop- ment End Poverty (PASDEP)	Includes a 'special effort for pastoral areas' including a range of basic services plus a continued indication of the long-term strategy 'to facilitate the slow transition for those who want to shift to settlement over time (p.50). Links mobility to conflict.	Pastoralists recognised as a distinct livelihood system but still with a strong underlying strategy of sedentarisation and individualisation.
2005	Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation	'Holding right, pastoralist and semi-pastoralist have been defined in individual and not collective terms.' 'Peasant farmers/pastoralists engaged in agriculture for a living shall be given rural land free of charge' (Article 5 (1a)). Communal land is provided by government where 'government being the owner of rural land, communal rural land holdings can be changed to private holdings as may be necessary' (Article 5(3)). Regional councils have the power to enact detailed law on this basis.	Pastoralists recognised but denied collective land rights, rather the pursuit of individualisation and privatisation away from the clan structures.
2006	Pastoralist Day at UN ECA (Addis Ababa)	PFE and Government facilitated pastoralists from all regions to come together with government and political leaders, chaired by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.	First time pastoralists, prime minister and senior leadership start a dialogue at national level. Recognition of national pastoralist voice.
2006	Oromia Pastoralist Association (OPA) established		New pastoralist association promoting pastoralist knowledge and engagement.
2007	OPA gathering at Hara Qallo Oromia	OPA organised a gathering of 100 pastoralist elders from Oromia, also attended by regional government officials.	First large OPA event. Government responded positively to pastoralist issues on education, Regional Minister announced that pastoralist children would be able to access university with lower grades.

2007	OPA granted observer status in Oromia regional Parliament		Recognition of pastoralists and their distinct identity within Oromia by regional government.
2007	Pastoralist Day held in parliament	Issue of separate pastoral ministry was raised with the Prime Minister but no response. Agreed to form Somali Pastoralist Council.	
2007	Somali pastoralist gathering (Hudet)	Led to establishment of Somali Pastoralist Council. Agreement to discuss Afar Pastoralist Council.	
2008	Adame (Nazret) Pastoralist Day	Oromia Pastoral Area Development Commission commissioned independent study on pastoralism – looking at conditions for pastoralism, soil types, rainfall and identifying potential areas for settled agriculture – concluded very few pockets available and so should be supporting pastoralism. Issue of separate pastoral ministry raised with Prime Minister again but no response.	Study conclusions accepted by regional government as basis for practice. Speech of Minister of Federal Affairs highlighted desirability of pastoralist settlement.
2008	Afar Pastoralist Council registered	Gathering of pastoralists from across Afar, members of regional government, Afar MPs, OPA and Somali Pastoralist Council to discuss mandate of Afar Council.	First gathering of Afar pastoralists and agreement to hold pastoralist meetings at zone level.
2009	Samara (Afar) Pastoralist Day	OPDC report discussed in presence of federal government and report outcomes appreciated. Pastoralist council heads called to discussion with government.	Importance of regional government study recognising the value of pastoralism and the difficulties of settled agriculture in many areas. PM response to pastoralists over separate ministry suggesting that it is better to mainstream across ministries than to have a separate ministry.

Source: discussions with pastoralist associations, PCI team; Hussein (2007); Lister (2004); Hogg (1993).

6.3 The role of pastoralist elites – representation and opening political space

Pastoralist elites play an important and often controversial representation role that operates at multiple levels (Box 6.2 reflects some of this diversity of opinion): 'nominations are made now for political reasons which might not bring leaders that

can govern well. The qualities needed for leadership are: “A person who hears, not the one who says I know, a person who is committed for the people and stands for them; who feels responsible” (Afar elders).

Box 6.2 Diverse views on pastoralist representation and the roles of the elites

Representation by and for pastoralists: ‘I am a pastoralist and everything about me and my family is pastoralist. We have been working on building our own representation with the government. We want the process of other people speaking for pastoralists to come to an end. The challenge is that people think they know and understand us, but they don’t’. (Borana Elder, cited in UN-OCHA-PCI 2008)

Representation by those in power for themselves: ‘Because of our poverty we are not able to speak, if you have property, you have power. If you have power you can talk or voice for yourself. The ones with power talk to each other’. Some elders are chosen for their wisdom rather than for their property ownership and they are respected but they do not voice. This is because they are poor ‘they don’t have the power to be listened to’. (Borana elderly woman)

Representation for government: ‘We have traditional leaders who lead us, even though they are not as strong as they used to be since the leaders of nowadays are advisors to the government’ (Afar women).

‘Nominations now are for political reasons which might not provide leaders that can govern well’ (Afar elders).

Pastoral representation and the concerns people express about this operate differently at *woreda* and federal level. The work of pastoral elites, through the Oromia, Afar and Somali Pastoral Councils, is opening up small political spaces which in turn are helping to open up space for change at local levels. Framing and raising debates, challenging the language used to describe pastoral systems, raising voice and issues year after year is leading to incremental response from both regional and more recently federal governments (Table 6.3). The pastoralist elites who lead these associations are not only interesting for their engagement with government at national and regional levels, but also for the role they undertake as those prepared to take risks for others to open these spaces for new forms of dialogue and understanding. As noted earlier the ability to engage at these levels requires particular kinds of competence that set these elites aside from others.

Until recently pastoralist representation at regional and federal level had been about ensuring a presence rather than providing a channel for the diverse voices of pastoralist citizens. In the words of one academic commentator: ‘pastoralists’ federal level representatives are considered more as flag-bearers than articulators of voices... [they] are not pastoralists in the real sense of the word, rather individuals who are sons of Chiefs, Ugaz or Sultans that are urbanised, educated

and without roots in pastoral areas. They are sent to the centre because they are considered “equal” to the highlanders.’ With the new associations, there is a change; the competence expected of leadership includes ability to engage with different sets of understandings *to convey* the issues and meanings of pastoralism as more than just a production system.

As the reach of the state extends further into pastoralist areas and into their social systems there is a growing questioning of the role of some clan leaders as brokers between the state and the clan system. For some they are considered to be speaking for government, or private investors, and not as elders protecting the competence of the clan as a whole or its members. They are considered to have moved from the collective good to the individual and private good – seeking access to state powers to secure their own livelihoods. For others the role is more nuanced and connected, working both within the government and the traditional institutions to ensure effective connection to the benefits of the state and to protect and secure the clan good.

There is a critical link between the national and local levels of representation: the one operating in the arena of regional and federal engagement is necessary to create slightly more room for manoeuvre through building informed national and regional understandings of pastoralism. This helps to open up space and opportunity for interpretations of policy, practice and law that specifically respond to the livelihood security requirements of pastoralists, for example moving away from agricultural extension in pastoralist areas to livestock services support.

6.4 Supporting change in pastoralist voice and engagement: the example of PCI

The Pastoralist Communication Initiative (PCI) ran for seven years between 2002 and 2009. It took as its starting point the identification and support to opportunities to create space in which pastoralists and government could build an understanding that begins to reconcile some of these diverse views and builds the agency and voice of pastoralists at national-level. At the same time PCI also supported the creation of spaces in which pastoralists can come together and resolve differences. PCI, through its work, has offered opportunities for pastoralists to meet, analyse, debate and negotiate with one another and with authorities. It has contributed to efforts to generate new knowledge and leadership; change attitudes and understandings in and about pastoralist societies and, develop cooperative initiatives between pastoralist leaders, government and other bodies.

The focus of its work has not been on delivery of services but rather on coming to understandings between different groups with a view to negotiating a better deal for pastoralists. The initiative differed from most other externally initiated development activities in that it focused on generating dialogue and developing accountable relationships of benefit to ordinary pastoralists. PCI’s approach was based on recognition that simply providing fora for pastoralists to explain themselves to government does not in itself bring change. The critical shift is not to increase understanding *of* pastoralists but understandings *with* pastoralists’

(DGPP Advisory Group Internal Report 2008: 2). In this sense, PCI was focused on building solidarity between and within pastoral clans, to build the capability to have more organised voice and to work with the strengths of the clan system and its competence based on negotiation and the capability to speak and to resolve difference.

6.5 The emerging role of the pastoralist associations

The emergence of the pastoralist associations provides an example of how pastoralist elites can open space for representation. The idea for these associations originated at least a decade ago among pastoralist leaders, but it was at a pastoralist gathering (supported by PCI) held in 2006 at Yaballo with pastoral representatives from Ethiopia, West Africa, Kenya and India that pastoralists leaders decided in earnest to form formal mass organisations. Discussions at the event had focused on the need for pastoral communities to organise themselves into an independent civil society starting from a base of self-organisation. Experience from participants from other countries helped to inform the approach taken by the Ethiopian pastoralists, based on self-mobilisation and membership-based organisations: 'community organisations are seldom successful if they depend heavily on outside resources before they have developed their internal structure and direction' (PCI 2006).

The spaces that subsequently opened up for engagement with government, largely as a result of the pastoralists' own efforts, provide an interesting insight into mechanisms for operation and change within tightly controlled political systems (Box 6.3). Table 6.3 provides a timeline of key events that have helped to shape the space in which pastoralists currently operate and describes PCI support processes.

The associations' most public face is associated with National Pastoralist Day which has become the public and national space for pastoralism in Ethiopia. It is sometimes criticised as being only a show-case rather than a moment of opportunity for engagement and building understanding. However, in the traditions of pastoralism where response to voice is seen to be a *long* process, the pastoralist days provide an important mechanism for change, albeit operating in highly constrained political space. Over time, these days have moved from the regional to national level, from NGO-organised to government-organised, and now include face-to-face exchange between pastoralists and the Prime Minister and other senior members of government. Issues are raised consistently at these days with the eventual expectation of response, an approach to voice and its response that is mirrored at all levels for pastoralists. The role of the elites in these days is consequential. Their high levels of competence and their ability to operate within the clan and the government systems means that they are able to take the risks associated with speaking out and also carry with them the respect of the clans while they gain the respect of high levels of government. They are pastoralists, and as pastoralists have the right to represent others: 'I am a pastoralist and everything about me and my family is pastoralist. We have been working on building our own representation with the government. We want the process of other people speaking for pastoralists to come to an end. The challenge is that

people think they know and understand us, but they don't' (Borana elder, cited in UN-OCHA-PCI 2008).

When a bird or eagle is flying it makes its wings straight, so that it can fly properly, so for us to be heard and to be able to voice, we need to discuss among ourselves, and if we want our voice to be heard from a distance we have to strengthen the institutions who are advocating for the pastoralists.

(Afar elders)

Box 6.3 Pastoral associations as emerging institutions for representation of pastoral voice

OPA, the first association to be formed, emerged from an increased awareness amongst pastoralists of the need to have more organised formal voice outside the customary systems. The construction of the association and its mandate was based on extensive research from the *olaa* to the *gadaa* with the leaders asking at each level what the council should do and how it should be structured. It was not seen as a replacement for the traditional structures, rather as a necessary interface with the state and a means to organise across territory and across issues. The territorial organisation is in distinction to the social organisation of the *gadaa* but does not follow the government territorial structure as it is based on populations of pastoralists: thus split into three geographical areas of Oromia Region – south, south-east and central. The general assembly has representation according to populations of the different areas. The 75 members are selected by male elites from whom the executive and board members are derived. Currently there is no female representation in the association; all the locally influential people are male. At the level of the three geographical areas there are member structures with 25% female representation. These sub-structures meet on a 3-monthly basis; and ensure that issues from the local-level help to inform the wider debate.

(OPA Board Member)

As the associations grow in confidence and credibility they are taking on increasingly complex and high-profile roles. Their role as brokers of change both nationally and locally is exemplified in recent work that OPA has been facilitating to broker peace between numerous different clans. These processes build on high levels of political intelligence to support the weaving of peace. (Annex 3 describes the series of gatherings and events sponsored by PCI which are supporting the building of peace in a number of pastoralist areas are described).

The questions of who has legitimacy to represent who, and whose voices are excluded, still remain important questions for these associations and for those who provide support to them. In terms of their future development, ensuring the building of engagement and voice for the diversity of pastoralists will be critical to their continued legitimacy and ability to ensure that they support the development of clan competence for the benefit of all rather than for the few.

6.6 The long game: a summary of institutional change

Pastoralists, living on the margin, in every sense, are committed to a long game of engagement with the state. What is clear is that the spaces for engagement are in flux, as are the pastoralist and governmental systems underpinning them. As the site of encounter of stressed social, environmental and political systems, these often informal negotiation spaces are operating under extreme pressure whether at *kebele*, *woreda*, regional or national level. People approach their participation with great caution. Understanding these dynamics is critical for effective development intervention.

This section has demonstrated the long-term nature of these processes of change. These processes are underscored by a negotiation of ideology as much as of rights and powers. Support for them is not easily packaged into projects. The example of PCI and the pastoralist associations provides some interesting lessons for development practice. It has demonstrated through careful mediation and politically informed understanding of the meso- and macro-context that it is possible to support the opening of political space for the voices of previously marginalised groups to be both spoken and heard. PCI's approach, to provide logistical support and advice to pastoralist leaders yet keep a very low profile during gatherings and decision-making, was identified as best practice by a recent evaluation of DFID's country programme (Barnett *et al.* 2009: 44).

Its positioning based on long-term experience in the region and multiple relationships both within and outside Ethiopia with key individuals has enabled the organisation to have credibility and entry at multiple levels. It has been able to respond to moments of opportunity and be well-positioned to support change. The mosaic of approaches used has varied from bringing together pastoralists from Kenya and Ethiopia in a rolling peace process; to support to critical studies to highlight key areas of policy change (Devereux 2006; Umar and Baulch 2005); and a highly formative role in the establishment of the Pastoral Affairs Standing Committee in parliament (Lister 2004). Its particular way of working also provided an important source of political insight to donors allowing a more informed understanding to develop of local-level dynamics to inform higher level strategic engagements (Barnett *et al.* 2009).⁶

6 The recent DFID country evaluation makes the following assessment: 'The Pastoralist Communication Initiative (PCI) stands out as an exception in DFID's new portfolio of interventions. Despite the move away from projects, there was a strong rationale to continue to work with PCI. The two main reasons put forward for renewing support in 2004 were: (i) a strong performance from the project in "*addressing the political marginalisation of a highly vulnerable group*", and (ii) the "side-benefit to PCI" in terms of learning more about pastoralism in Ethiopia to inform DFID's longer-term strategy. While the overall goal of PCI is to reduce livelihood vulnerability of pastoralist communities, PCI stands out from community-driven livelihood projects by focusing on consultation, facilitation and empowerment to secure pastoralist participation in the decision-making process. The pastoralist initiative allowed DFID advisers and pastoralist organisations to meet on a regular basis in the early years of the evaluation period. However, this was lost in subsequent years.'

7 Concluding remarks

Voice is fundamental to livelihood security (Barnett *et al.* 2009; IAGHR 2008; Hobley 2004). Raising voice is more than an individual's or group's capacity to get demands met from time to time from the state or other actors. At its most powerful, voice is a complex process of social and political encounter that has the potential to transform the terms of engagement between people and leaders (Webster and Engberg-Pederson 2003; Gaventa 2004). It is a dynamic process of communication, rooted in people's identities, situations and institutions.

In development, the raising of voice has been seen as both an outcome and a process of active participation wherein hitherto excluded people gain and retain the confidence and right to influence the decisions and resource allocations which shape their lives (Hickey and Mohan 2004; Cornwall and Gaventa 2000). Since the early 1990s many livelihood-based development projects and programmes have worked to open up public spaces through which poor and marginalised people can exercise their voice (Booth 1994; Goetz and Gaventa 2002; O'Neill *et al.* 2007). Undoubtedly, there have been benefits from these voice initiatives: some better services, improved goods and opportunities for people on the margins to work directly with development organisations in shaping projects. Yet in practice the poorest people and those most politically and socially marginalised are not experiencing much benefit from voice initiatives, and appear to have little influence over the spaces opened up for their voices to be heard⁷ (Moore and Putzel 1999).

Public spaces which are cultivated as a means of strengthening marginalised voices are politically and socially constructed arenas, often created by outsiders. The deliberations that they allow can fundamentally challenge and rewrite the rules of the game or they can continue to reproduce the status quo of power relations. These spaces may end up being filled by gatekeepers who speak *instead of* rather than *with the* people they represent (Cornwall 2002). Who creates and who occupies and controls entry to different types of spaces determines whose voice is heard and who accesses resources and decisions (Brocklesby and Hobley 2003).

There has been a tendency among development practitioners to undervalue and overlook the power dynamics and the dynamism of raising voice in public (and private) spaces.⁸ We have suggested, throughout this paper, that the raising of voice needs to be understood in relation to pastoralist competence which in itself is the basis of livelihood security. The findings strongly suggest that the ability to raise voice is integral to pastoralism: it is an expression of social identity and contribution. It is the inability to raise voice that signals declines in levels of competence. Loss of competence indicates an individual or household facing

7 Initiatives which include user committees, consultation mechanisms etc. do not necessarily give new voice, powers and livelihood security to marginalised people.

8 The notable exception is around gender and gendered relations in the household and community where the skills of mediation, bargaining and negotiation are recognised as essential for women to have a say in household decision-making and beyond.

increasing stresses and becoming more vulnerable to loss. The loss of livestock, the loss of access to the rangelands and the loss of social connectivity: all of these indicate an inability to fulfil one's role as a pastoralist and are marked by a decline in the power and capability to raise voice.

These findings have implications for development practice. They suggest that more nuanced ways of working are required. Ways that seek to understand and engage with the web of relationships which can either support or hinder individuals and households as they use their voice in unruly, strategic and ideological ways, in increasingly unpredictable environments, to forge a livelihood. There are, we suggest, implications for what is done by outsiders – the programmes, policies and actions – the nature of the information gathered and used – and the terms of engagement.

7.1 Implications for official programmes and policies

Over-simplified understandings of diversity within pastoralist communities that appear to direct development interventions (programmes as well as policy) are insufficient to understand how people marshal support in times of stress and crisis or regenerate their livelihoods in the face of changing options. While safety net programmes and relief aid reduce immediate vulnerability, they do not build the other key elements of competence, particularly the element of voice; they leave people silent on the edge of the clan, increasingly disconnected. The destitute *are found* by these programmes, while the competent *find* support within the pastoralist clan systems and elsewhere.

Importantly, the data from this study indicate that people who are less competent are at real risk of slipping into severe poverty because pastoralist systems are not able to help enough, and state systems, including those supported by non-governmental organisations, are not sufficiently flexible and sensitive to local diversity and the need for voice and connection. This group is under stress and is finding it increasingly difficult to get access to the kind of cooperation that will revitalise their competence. They are at risk of becoming the new destitute.

Many donors, in supporting projects and government services, help confine people's participation to arenas that are highly controlled and disempowering. Development processes and services – essential to dynamic livelihoods – are also processes of political control. Effective strategic engagement requires that outsiders understand the way supportive connections are made and maintained across society at local level (*woreda* and below) as well as how connections to higher levels of governance are being developed. This level of understanding is critical for pastoral systems where social, political, economic and environmental insecurity is catapulting people from managing well to merely surviving, often without warning. It suggests that donors and supporting organisations should consider three prerequisites for engagement: (a) develop better understanding of the social diversity across the clans, the regions and within communities by integrating social analyses more systematically into their planning and practice; (b) develop systems and processes which enable them to use more effectively data emerging from research institutes and universities in Ethiopia and the region

more generally and, (c) support the design of competence-based approaches for different social groups within and part of pastoralist society.

This type of support demands a longer period of engagement based on a nuanced understanding of the political and social landscape. Long-term involvement and greater use of political inquiry to deliver informed understanding of the underlying causes and dynamics of insecure livelihoods will reduce the risks of reinforcing social inequalities and 'doing harm' (Barnett *et al.* 2009).⁹ The failure to move beyond 'functional ignorance' (Duffield 1996) – avoiding those uncomfortable questions that challenge aid processes and their potential for doing harm – has led to limited understanding of the political complexities and diversities underpinning pastoralist societies in Ethiopia. This has meant that the deep structural causes for marginalisation and increasing conflict are poorly understood and weakly responded to.

7.2 Possibilities for changing the terms of engagement

Pastoralist elites and the state in Ethiopia are engaged in a long game of repositioning and transforming pastoralist-state engagement. Results so far suggest opening up space within constrained political systems for pastoralist-state engagement is both possible and essential if marginalised voices are to be heard and acted upon. The seemingly small progress and opening of space that pastoralists have achieved over the last 10 years is actually impressive; shifts in name and the language used for engagement, an acceptance of pastoralists as a separate social identity as well as a production system are major changes despite the fact that the underlying policies still present a vision of Ethiopia that does not have room for mobile societies. Perhaps what is most important is that these are initiatives that are rooted within a pastoralist identity that require the pastoralist elites to bridge the gap between pastoralists and the state and to open a space that will allow a diversity of representation.

This leads to the final finding that voice and equitable governance cannot be tackled through 'projectised' inputs. Changing democratic space is not something that can fit within project boundaries; it is about people's capabilities to have the agency to behave as citizens. Ethiopia's pastoralists are not dependents or beneficiaries of the state and its donors, nor are they irritants and aliens – they belong. It is a process of engagement that has to start through interactions between the citizens and the state and cannot be bridged by intermediary organisations – NGOs, projects or indeed donors. Supporting voice and fair response thus implies a different approach which is fluid and responsive to the opportunities identified by citizens, that is highly connected and has access to political intelligence to allow understanding of when to act and with whom.

9 The DFID Country Evaluation commented that 'DFID Ethiopia should further strengthen existing NGO platforms to improve opportunities to learn from NGO best practices, action research and political intelligence. This could provide an important counterbalance to the loss of direct NGO-DFID interactions as a result of the shift to multi-donor programmes; as well as to help compensate for the pre dominant federal government focus of current interactions' (Country Evaluation 2009: 79).

As the study has shown there are some interesting and persuasive exceptions to the existing somewhat mechanised development responses to pastoralist livelihoods. The exceptions demonstrate that careful processes – knowing when to support pastoralists to come together in different arenas and at different levels – have helped to support a transformation in the nature of relationships between pastoralists and more importantly between pastoralists and the state.

The pastoralist associations are beginning to demonstrate a new way of engaging and opening political space both at national level and through their work to resolve protracted violent conflicts across regional boundaries. Such initiatives provide important avenues for change but require the right kind of support to help them continue and move towards greater social inclusion and representation of women, marginalised and poorer social groups within pastoralist communities. Such support includes and goes beyond the more usual organisational capacity building measures (financing, management systems, human resources, planning etc). It also includes long term support to: broadening the terms of engagement with the state and other development actors; building relationships within communities and with external actors and, institutionally embedding systems and processes for inclusive, equitable decision-making.

However, it is also the case that a process that helps raise the voice of marginalised groups and open spaces for engagement is one that carries high degrees of risk. This is particularly the case with a state that controls voice and limits access to political spaces. When we consider the nature of the political spaces available for relationships that challenge access to decision-making and resources, it is clear that they are contentious and sensitive arenas in which to operate. For any donor therefore it is critical to understand the nature of the risks that projects and organisations funded by them enter into. When it gets difficult because these organisations are supporting challenge to the political structures, however mild, it is important for donors to be clear in their commitment to the organisations that they are funding and not to distance themselves from them (Barnett *et al.* 2009). Organisations that fundamentally challenge the deep structures are the same organisations that may be politically the most vulnerable. Recent events with PCI, for example, illustrate this when a government clamp-down on their activities made it difficult for them to continue to operate inside Ethiopia.

The findings of this study are echoed in a statement made by the British Government in 2009: 'conflict and fragility are inherently political. They are about how power and resources are shared in society, between ethnic groups, social classes or men and women. Their solutions must be rooted in politics' (DFID 2009: 70).

The UK will increasingly put politics at the heart of its action. We need to understand who holds power in society, so we can forge new alliances for peace and prosperity... In the future, understanding political dynamics will shape more of our programmes.

(DFID White Paper 2009: 73)

Annexes

A1 The CR2 rights-based framework for analysis, appraisal and assessment

Background

The CR2 Rights-Based Development Planning and Impact Assessment Framework has been developed over the last five years in response to a growing need to determine the added value of development which works to voice claims and actively participate in governance processes which affect their lives. This kind of development is value-based development which works for the ethical inclusion of all people, without discrimination, in building a fair, just and non-discriminatory society. Work to date has shown that there are a number of ways in which this kind of approach adds value to the development process. The added value increases the possibility of achieving livelihood security by encouraging better governance and alleviating poverty.

The Framework allows assessment of progress towards tangible impacts for broad-based livelihood security contained in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets contained in such documents as Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs). It also assesses progress towards the wider goal of Sustained Change. Furthermore it assesses progress made towards the ultimate goal of improved governance and rights fulfilment, that is, increased justice, equity and dignity for all, as stated within the Millennium Declaration.¹⁰

On an operational level, the framework can show whether and how interventions are achieving impacts and outcomes in relation to human security through:

- Asset accumulation (economic, political, social, environmental, physical, etc.);
- Decreased vulnerability to social exclusion and extreme poverty and;
- Increased equity in decision-making and resource allocation between the powerful and powerless.

The framework is a generic and comprehensive tool which must be adapted to the particular goals of the research. The thematic questions are tailored for relevance to the social, cultural, political and geographical context.

Components of the Framework

The Framework is described graphically in Figure A1.1. The Framework captures both the **process** and the **products** of interventions. In RBD, *how* things are done (process) is as important as *what* is done (product). The three underlying

¹⁰ The Government of Ethiopia was one of the signatories of the Millennium Declaration and has a stated commitment to meeting nationally based MDG targets by 2015.

rights-based development principles: participation, inclusion and the fulfillment of obligation, underpin the Framework. All work stemming from these three principles is categorised into three, interlinked components each one centred on assessing a different aspect of programme implementation.

The details of these components are discussed below. Whilst there are inevitable overlaps between the components, division of the Framework provides an organisational structure through which analysis can be made, and it allows for meaningful comparison between differing types of intervention. It identifies changes brought about in relation to:

Voice, participation and accountability. This component looks at the extent to which people are able to express their voices, share their opinions and participate in project activities. This component explores the form that participation takes, and what participation leads to. Understanding is gained not only of what participation looks like and appears to lead to, but also on what people feel about their participation and the goals which they set for it. Linked to voice is the issue of accountability. Questions on who is accountable to whom and for what, are considered. Particular attention is paid to the *direction* of accountability. Is accountability only upwards? Or do systems for mutual transparency and accountability exist?

Transformation of power: relationships and linkages. This component examines relationships between people from the personal and intra-household through to the state levels. It looks at whether, and how, individuals, groups, organisations and institutions form links to work together and to work in partnership. There is also an examination of potential and actual conflict and the ways in which conflict is managed and resolved.

Questions are also asked on how roles and responsibilities are decided and carried out. Trends in relationships between individuals, groups and institutions are examined to show whether power relations are changing in ways that lead to greater access to services, assets, justice and equity. The component has a strong focus on issues of discrimination, vulnerability and inclusion, as well as on the structural relationships formed between institutions and groups. Inclusion is understood to mean 'the continuous process of ensuring that all people, including those who are normally marginalised and excluded from full participation in society, can take valued part in decision-making processes'.¹¹ From this perspective we are looking for trends in the identification of vulnerabilities and/or vulnerable and marginalised groups within pastoralist communities and at how these vulnerabilities are addressed.

Institutional response. Questions cover how organisations, of all types – formal and informal, respond to the issues raised by people in their constituency. The component addresses the systems that informal institutions and formal organisations use, how they ensure accountable and equitable resource allocation, whether and how they address issues of inclusion systematically, and

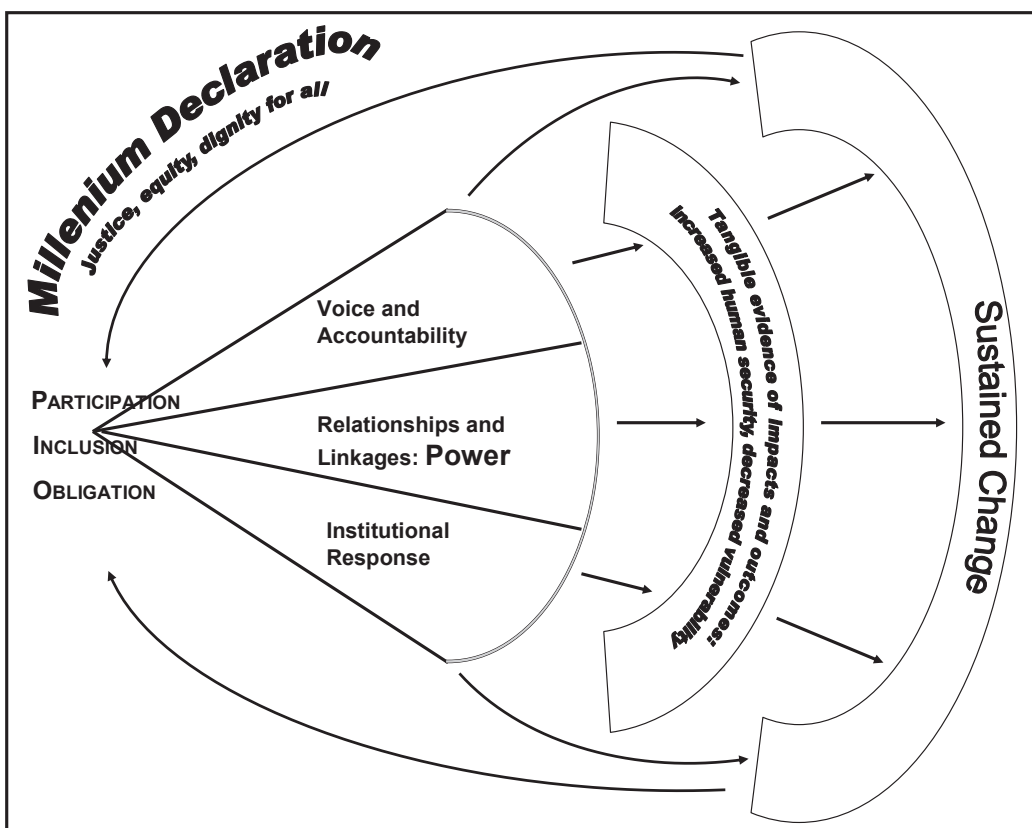
11 Brocklesby and Crawford (forthcoming 2009) *Changing Relationships, Claiming Rights*, a workbook on rights-based development.

how they measure their success. The component looks for trends in identification of vulnerabilities and at how these vulnerabilities are addressed. Assessment is made on the extent to which voice and response are linked so as to lead to more appropriate and accessible services.

Tangible evidence. As discussed above, this component looks at the data available which points directly to impacts as measured against concrete targets and goals leading to increased assets and decreased vulnerability (contained in the Ethiopian Poverty Reduction Strategies, the MDGs etc.).

Sustained change. This component assesses whether the ways in which voices are raised in pastoralist communities towards securing a living are likely to have lasting impact (positive) which will extend beyond the immediate claim in terms of policy and practice. It looks to see whether changes made by institutions over time in response to voice have been *institutionalised* in the given context, and whether skills and other benefits are being transferred into other aspects of livelihood security.

Figure A1.1 The CR2 Framework



Source: Brocklesby and Crawford (forthcoming), reproduced with permission.

A2 Sampling framework

The sample size and the range of groups were slightly different in each of the three case-study locations. In all locations, purposive sampling was used to ensure that the marginalised, the poorest and most vulnerable individuals or groups were included in the sample. Separate discussions were held with female

and male participants. The interest groups identified through stakeholder analysis reflected the social diversity within pastoralist communities. They included:

- Community leaders
- Especially poor, vulnerable and/or marginalised people
- Older men
- Older women
- Men of 'adult' status
- Women of 'adult' status
- Young men and women
- Girls and boys (up to 14)
- Special interest groups: e.g. teachers, extension workers, *kebele* officials, relevant to pastoralist livelihood security
- Younger girls (c. 6–10 yrs)
- Younger boys (c. 6–10 yrs) and
- Local officials at *woreda* and *kebele* level and when applicable at regional level,
- Government officers, elected representatives
- People in organisations, other NGOs etc. who are close to pastoralist communities

Table A2.1 outlines how the sampling framework links components of the analytical framework to the participatory tools used and to the people we will need to hold conversations with in the field.

Table A2.1 Study sample size for each location

Component	Tool	Sample size within pastoralist communities	Pastoralist interest groups	Govt and other key actors at <i>woreda</i> level
Voice and accountability	Vulnerability mapping (VM) Spokes/power mapping (S/PM)	12–16 people (max 20) for each stakeholder category. In each location sample at least 60% of the categories.	Separate groups for men and women at community level. Focus on and ensure inclusion the poorer and more vulnerable people.	Meetings with actors at <i>woreda</i> level will be most effective if the spokes and significant changes. If holding large meetings divide participants into smaller groups of government and non-government participants.
Relationships and linkages	VM, S/PM	Where possible limit group size to between 6–8 people. With groups over 20 people it will be very difficult to encourage all to participate, particularly with groups where will are not usually asked their opinion publicly.		
Institutional response	S/PM & SC			
Tangible impacts and outcomes	S/PM & SC			
Sustained change	Information collected via all the discussions and tools			

Source: Brocklesby and Hobley (2009).

Table A2.2 Participatory interest group discussions and key informants in the study *woredas*

<i>Woreda</i>	<i>Kebele, number of discussions, male and female informants</i>		
	No of <i>kebeles</i> selected	No of participatory interest group discussions and key informant interviews	No of men and women
Dillo	6	22 PIGD 9 KI	119 men 105 women
Gawane	5	20 PIGD 9 KI	77 men 95 women
Sabba Boru	5	15 PIGD 7 KI	134 men 64 women
Total	16	57 PIGD 25 KI	350 men 264 women 614 people in total

A3 The building of peace processes

Table A3.1 The building of peace processes

	Event	Actions	Outcomes
July 2007	OPA Peace Meetings	OPA started a long process of peace meetings and peace committee development in a number of <i>woredas</i> across Oromia Region including on its borders with Afar and Somali.	The current peace processes between Borana and Gabra are an outcome of this work.
November 2007	South Omo Pastoralist Gathering at Kangatan	PCI and AEPDA organised gathering of 200 pastoralist men, women and young people from Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan. SNNPR President addressed the meeting which was also attended by government officials and NGOs.	Peace between groups spanning Sudan-Ethiopia border agreed and has lasted since that time. SNNPR government recognition of pastoralist capability. Pastoralist Peace committee formed with membership of 17 tribes.
December 2007	Somali Pastoralist Gathering at Hudet	PCI organised gathering of 500 pastoralist elders, women and youth to discuss Devereux livelihoods study. Pastoralists and local government attended from all <i>woredas</i> of Somali Region, as well as Oromia and Afar pastoralists, officials from MFA, MOARD, Parliament, USAID, DFID and NGOs and Ethiopian media.	Establishment of Somali Pastoralist Association. Decision by Somali pastoralists to focus on peace in Somali Region. Idea for formation of Afar Pastoralist Council taken back to Afar. Agreement for new Afar-Issa talks led by elders.

April 2008	Customary leaders meeting at Marsabit	Ethiopia Boran leaders met Kenya Boran and Gabra leaders to discuss Borana-Gabra Ethiopia-Kenya peace.	Kenya Gabra joined peace process.
August 2008	Kora Pastoralist Gathering Kenya	50 Kenyan and 20 Ethiopian pastoralist elders, Minister of Northern Kenya and his staff, Ministry of Lands Kenya, Ethiopia Government officials, UN, donors, and NGO officials discuss government policy for pastoralist areas.	Policy dialogue between pastoralists and government. Establishment of trust between Ethiopian and Kenyan pastoralist leaders. Formation of Kenya pastoralist organisation 'Pastoralist Shade Initiative.'
October 2008	Afar Pastoralist Council gathering near Awash	Pastoralists from all areas of Afar, Afar Regional Government, Afar MPs, members of OPA and Somali Pastoralist Council discussed mandate of new Afar council and agreed initial focus on conflict on Afar borders.	First Afar pastoralist gathering. Consolidation of new council. Beginning of a process of pastoralist meetings in each zone.
January 2009	Pastoralist Peace Gathering, Dambelawachu Oromia	OPA hosted 250 pastoralists, government officials, UN, donors and NGOs from Ethiopia and Kenya in discussions on peace, law and cross-border cooperation.	First international gathering organised by OPA. Public endorsement by Ethiopian Government of new hybrid approaches to working on conflict.
June 2009	Dukana Peace Gathering, Kenya	130 Gabra and Borana pastoralists from Kenya and Ethiopia and district and local officials discussed Borana-Gabra peace.	Strategy for extending peace and free movement of livestock and people along and across Ethiopia-Kenya border from Seberei to Moyale. Gathering set frame for larger and more complex peace gathering to be held in July.

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