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## Towards Endogenous Development: Borana Pastoralists' Response to Environmental and Institutional Changes

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### Abstract

Pastoral rangeland management has been weakened by poorly adapted development interventions, inadequate land use policies and population growth. Ignoring pastoralists' technical and organisational capacities has contributed to progressive degradation, the erosion of social structures and poverty. Many stakeholders and scientists nowadays promote endogenous development based on pastoralists' strategies and innovative approaches. This paper explores adaptive strategies of Borana pastoralists in response to environmental and institutional change in southern Ethiopia. The study was conducted from 2000 to 2002 in co-operation with the Borana Lowlands Pastoral Development Programme (BLPDP/GTZ). Present land use strategies and institutional networks were compared to past patterns, using participatory appraisal, official maps, GIS and household surveys. Stakeholder workshops provided a platform to identify priorities for pastoral oriented development. The opening of water dams in Dida Hara in the 1970s led to a permanent use of former exclusive rainy season grazing areas. While principles for water management were transferred from traditional deep wells to newly constructed dams, the scattered establishment of new encampments counteracted traditional rules. In the early 2000s, pastoralists have started attempts to reorganise settlements clustering encampments in line in order to avoid further fragmentation of the common grazing areas. The decrease of cattle numbers per person below the threshold of survival accelerated cropland expansion into valuable grazing areas. In response to this development, the Borana courts accepted crop cultivation as a means to cope with the increasing food insecurity, but only in restricted areas. The courts also accepted cooperative grazing reserves to feed weak animals during dry season periods, but forbade individual appropriation of communal rangelands by fencing. The rapid degradation of rangelands motivated pastoralists to adopt camels with positive effects on herd mobility. Although indigenous institutions have lost influence and conflicts between Borana elders and local governments have occurred, in some districts joint consultations for a coordinated land use were initiated. These examples show that pastoral organisation has the potential to form the backbone for endogenous development. Together with external actors such as development and government agencies they are now challenged to develop more sustainable and diverse land use strategies and redefine institutional responsibilities.

**Keywords:** Common property, endogenous development, Ethiopia, indigenous knowledge, institutional change, pastoral rangeland management