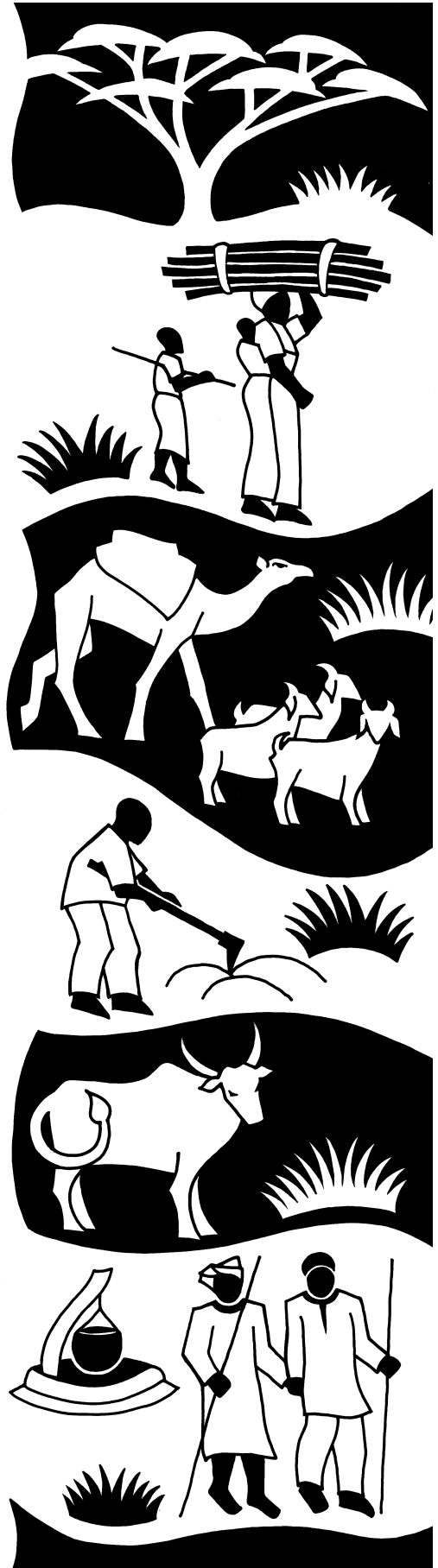


**Securing the commons No.4**

Traditional  
institutions, multiple  
stakeholders and  
modern perspectives  
in common property

Accompanying change within  
Borana pastoral systems

Boku Tache & Ben Irwin  
April 2003



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# Glossary of Borana Oromo Terms

<i>Aadaa</i>	Culture, custom, tradition.
<b>Abbaa Gadaa</b>	'Father of Gadaa' i.e. the Gadaa leader. He is the leader of all the Borana for an eight year term of office.
<b>Adulaa</b>	Councillor. In one <i>Gadaa</i> class there are six adulaa including the Abbaa Gadaa himself according to Borana system.
<b>Ardaa</b>	A specific location or geographic unit that olla(s) occupy.
<b>Madda</b>	Madda means aquifer, permanent water source. According to the system of Borana territorial organisation, madda is a wider geographic unit named after a permanent water source (usually water well).
<b>Dheeda</b>	A large cluster of grazing areas in Borana land consisting of several madda.
<b>Foora</b>	The practice of grazing livestock far away from the main village at a livestock camp.
<b>Gadaa Arbooraa</b>	The gadaa institution of Borana Oromo is divided into three: the senior one, Gadaa Arbooraa, and two junior branches. The two branches (Gadaa Hawaxxuu and Gadaa Koonnituu) are collectively called Gadaa Kontomaa.
<b>Gadaa Kontomaa</b>	Collective term for the two gadaa branches (Gadaa Hawaxxuu and Gadaa Koonnituu).
<b>Gadaa</b>	A generation class that assumes ritual, political and religious responsibilities for an eight-year term of office.
<b>Gumii Gaayoo</b>	The supreme decision making assembly of the Borana Oromo that meets once in every eight years at Gaayo in the Dire District. The gadaa organises the assembly. While a multitude of people actively participate in the meeting, the ultimate decision maker is not the Abbaa Gadaa in office but the most senior retired ex-Abbaa Gadaa who is called

	Abbaa Seeraa, the father of law counting on his rich experience. The Abbaa Gadaa in office is the organiser and host but does not make decisions during this particular event because this is when his administration is evaluated.
<b>Hulluuqqoo</b>	A ritual conducted for the well being of the people, livestock and the environment. Branches and leaves of certain trees or shrubs collected for this purpose.
<b>Kaloo</b>	Portion of the grazing land reserved for calves.
<b>Konfi</b>	Title given to a family conferring ownership rights to a water well.
<b>Muka qayyaa</b>	Aromatic trees or shrubs that women use for cosmetic purposes.
<b>Nagaya Borana</b>	The “Peace of the Borana”.
<b>Olla</b>	“Village” or pastoral camp – a group of homesteads that may be set up temporarily or remain in the same place over several years. A newly encamped ‘village’ is called quftuma. With current trends towards sedentarisation and agriculture, ollas are increasingly becoming more permanent, although livestock (the foora herd) will still be sent to distant pastures during the dry season.
<b>Reera</b>	Collection of close <i>ardaa</i> , compound villages.
<b>Sunsuma</b>	The respectful relationship among Borana clans.
<b>Warra</b>	Family. For management purposes, Borana separate their stock into warra herd and foora herd. The warra herd basically constitute lactating stock with at least one bull in the herd while the foora herd constitutes dry female animals (except a few milk cows) and male animals.
<b>Qaxanaa</b>	Amharic term that is introduced recently into Borana territorial organization. It is equivalent to <i>ardaa</i> .
<b>Woreda</b>	Amharic term for district.

# Introduction

Forests and pastoralism are in a state of crisis in the Borana lowlands in southern Ethiopia. State management has failed to control forest exploitation and past and present development interventions continue to undermine pastoral production systems.

In this paper we aim to show how a fundamental misunderstanding of pastoral land management, and in particular pastoral tenure systems, has undermined traditional institutions and the environment for which they were once responsible. We describe the diversity of people and institutions that use or manage the Borana forests today and the challenges that this presents in attempting to develop a new system for management. In particular, we look at the nature and status of relationships between customary institutions (mainly the Borana *Gadaa*) and more modern actors and institutions. And we present the process by which we are addressing these challenges to establish a collaborative system of management for local forest areas, with a focus on socio-political solutions, in order to slow the rapid decline of pastoral livelihoods and pastoral systems.

The paper is based on fieldwork and learning carried out as an entry point for working with local pastoral groups. The work began in September 1999 in the context of two interrelated programmes: the Borana Collaborative Forest Management Project<sup>1</sup> (BCFMP) and a regional action research programme on Shared Management of Common Property Resources (SMCPR)<sup>2</sup>.

We are still at an early stage in the implementation of the BCFMP, and this paper presents work in progress. The purpose of this paper is to share our learning with other actors working on issues of pastoral development and common property resource management. The learning and understanding developed over the past two and a half years have helped us identify development strategies that aim to recognise and legitimise traditional institutions' roles in local management, support

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<sup>1</sup> Run by SOS Sahel International (UK) in Ethiopia

<sup>2</sup> Run by IIED and SOS Sahel International (UK)

the rights and relationships of multiple stakeholders, mediate escalating pastoral conflicts, and establish new common property resource management systems.

The proposed revitalisation of systems, and particularly support to customary institutions to “modernise” in response to new contexts, should not be confused with “westernisation”. Traditional institutions that have been dormant or undermined need to adapt to new or changing environments. However, decisions about change, and the shape of any new system, remain with the stakeholders involved. We, as development actors, are intending to facilitate a process of negotiation amongst stakeholders, if it is agreed that this is an appropriate way forward.

Our work has centred on forest resources in the Borana lowlands – their past, present and future management – as a test bed common property resource within pastoral systems.



# Forest management in the Borana lowlands

## The Borana zone

Borana Zone is one of the 13 Zones of Oromiya Regional State in Ethiopia located at the southern edge of the country (Map 1). The zone is made up of thirteen districts or *woreda*, divided between two agro-ecological zones – the semi-arid lowlands to the south and the more humid lands at higher altitudes to the north.

The agro-pastoral Gujji Oromo clans (and pockets of migrant Gedeo communities) dominate the northern woredas of Galana Abbaya, Oddo Shakkiso, Bore, Hagarmaram, Uraga, Adola, Wadera. The natural vegetation in these districts consists of relatively dense forest and interspersed grassland.

The Borana are the numerically dominant ethnic group inhabiting the Borana lowlands to the south of the zone. The Borana lowlands are made up of six Woredas in Ethiopia (Liban, Arero, Yaballo, Taltalli, Dire and Moyale), and extend across the border into northern Kenya.

This southern area is the focus of our work. Average annual rainfall is less than 600mm (Coppock, 1994) and surface evaporation is high. There are two rainy seasons: the main season, *ganna* (March-May) and the minor season, *hagayya* (Sept-October). The land is largely covered with light vegetation of predominantly pod-yielding *Acacia sp.* of low forage values. The ecological conditions favour pastoralism more than farming.

Three main areas of forests are found in the Borana lowlands: at Arero, Nagelle and Yabello where altitudes are slightly higher than the surrounding areas. The forests are predominantly *Juniperus procera* (Endl.). The best specimens in Arero forest reach 30 metres in height, but trees of 10-15 metres are more common in the other forests.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Haugen (1992), Friis and Mesfin Tadesse (1990) provide valuable accounts of the flora of the Borana lowland forests.

**Map of Ethiopia showing the study area**



In the course of our work, the forests have been identified by communities (and government) as having critical functions within pastoral systems. The juniper forests are an important source of dry season pasture and water (see photo). The spiritual significance of the forests as ceremonial sites is central to the cultural integrity of the Borana Oromo clans. More recently, forest resources are increasingly important for displaced pastoralists, as a source of income and as a safety net during droughts, linking the forests to the survival of communities living adjacent to them. Juniper also produces high quality timber with a wide range of uses. The heartwood splits easily and is highly termite resistant. It makes the best quality fence posts and building timber in termite prone areas. As sawn timber it is suitable for furniture making and it is also used for shingles, pencils and matches and its commercial value is high.

Traditionally, the Borana are predominantly a rural pastoral people. Although the Borana have never relied exclusively on one sector, pastoralism constitutes the



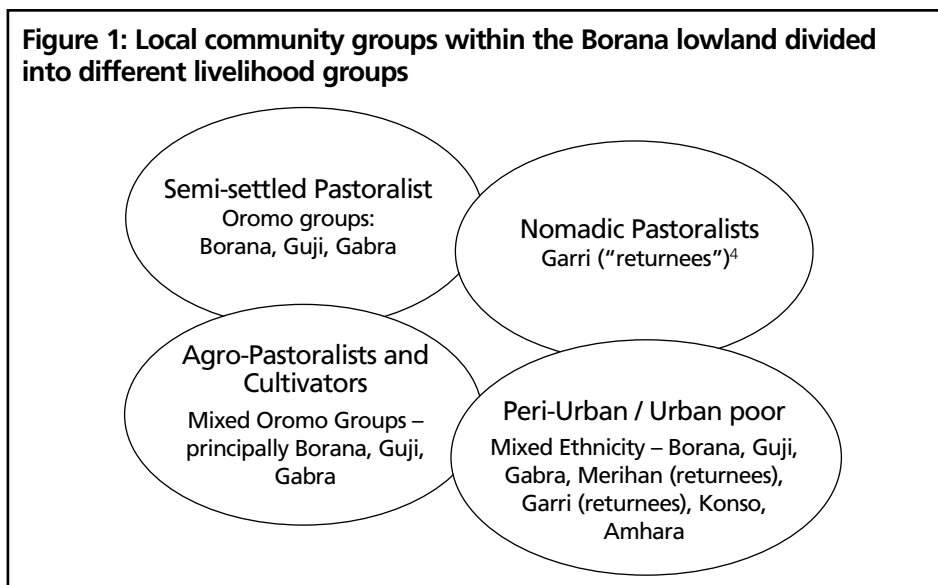
Photo: Pippa Trench

**The juniper forests, often highly degraded, provide a last resort for pastoralists and their livestock. This picture was taken towards the end of the 1999 – 2000 drought.**

single most important and viable enterprise for most households. Cattle were, and continue to be, the primary focus of Borana pastoralism, although browsing animals (camels and smallstock) are increasingly kept within diversified herds. This change is principally a reflection of recent changes in range ecology, which has affected fodder type and availability.

While the Borana make up the majority of the population, it is important to recognise that members of other Oromo clans and different ethnic groups live in the area and share in its resources.

The figure below identifies the different ethnic groups living in the Borana lowlands, and their principle sources of livelihood.



## Past policies, natural resource degradation and declining livelihoods

Pastoralists and agro pastoralists in the Borana zone are facing a crisis. The natural resources on which they depend are under increasing pressure: grasslands are suffering from major bush encroachment, agriculture is expanding, in spite of the high risk of inadequate rainfall, and forests are being rapidly degraded. Increasing numbers of people are no longer practising pastoralism as they become less able

4. "Returnees" refers to groups of Somali refugees who were resettled in areas such as Nagelle, Uudat and Moyale by UNHCR at the time of the last change of government. This resettlement has caused considerable problems due to questions of legitimacy of land claims made by people settled in particular areas – the areas in question were all Oromo before the change of government.

to cope with the impacts of drought. These people tend to move into or around urban centres, in the hope of finding new sources of livelihood. Our work has shown that these groups of peri-urban poor are the most food insecure and vulnerable to livelihood shocks such as drought.

Two key areas of policy have contributed to this situation of declining natural resources and livelihoods:

- Inappropriate development policies for pastoral areas, including land tenure and agricultural development policies.
- Ineffective forest management policies.

Fundamental in both cases has been the undermining of customary management systems<sup>5</sup>.

### **Inappropriate pastoral development policies**

The current development context in Borana is the result of approximately 30 years of engagement in pastoral areas across Ethiopia.

These past interventions predominantly ignored local structures and systems for natural resource management. Poor understanding of pastoral systems and inappropriate and inadequate training and skills of natural resource professionals have resulted in traditional natural resource management systems being almost entirely overlaid by ill-advised and inappropriate extension systems for agricultural and livestock production.

The rationale and focus of past development initiatives assumed the need to “manage” pastoralism better and increase system productivity. Attempts were made to formalise pastoralism into what were perceived to be a technically rigorous set of actions. Investments were made in water development, veterinary support and ranching based on estimates of carrying capacities. And natural resource management (NRM) policies that favoured agricultural expansion were promoted. At the same time land tenure policy dictated that pastoral common lands fell under state ownership. One of the driving forces behind this policy was the misinterpretation of the Tragedy of the Commons theory proposed by Hardin (an American geneticist!) in 1968<sup>6</sup>.

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5. Borana communities and researchers alike have identified the undermining of their traditional institutions and resource management systems as central to their problems of diminishing livelihoods (SOS Sahel 2000).

6. This article assumed that pastoralists are locked into an inevitable spiral of accumulating cattle at the expense of the resources that support them, thereby leading to the inevitable decline and degradation of their resources and long term poverty.

The impacts of these approaches served to emphasise the almost total lack of understanding of pastoral systems. Opening up dry-season grazing by establishing ponds upset the natural ecological balance of the pastoral system – its impact, overgrazing. The failure of ranches served only to emphasise the need for mobility in dryland areas. Increased agriculture, promoted by government policies, suffered from limited rainfall, as well as bringing problems associated with land use competition (particularly during drought periods) and accelerated rates of land degradation.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of the evidence, current development strategies for pastoral areas are still talking about ranches, agriculture, irrigation, and resettlement.<sup>8</sup>

### **Ineffective forest management policies**

The forests of the Borana lowlands have traditionally been considered by the Borana as an integral part of their pastoral land, with forest management being the responsibility of the Borana *Gadaa*. However, they are currently gazetted reserves, registered as National or Regional Forest Priority Areas, and the Forest Department of the Oromiya Rural Land and National Resources Administration is responsible for controlling, protecting and managing the forest resources on behalf of the Regional Government.

Enforced state ownership of all three forest sites (Arero, Nagelle, and Yabello) overruled traditional ownership, management and access rights to forest resources. However, state ownership has been unable to control resource exploitation from urban users, timber extraction by external merchants, and increased fire incidence due to reduced community responsibility. In many parts of Nagelle and Yabello forests, so much juniper has been extracted or damaged that we now find only open stands of mature trees above the denser under-storey of evergreen trees and shrubs.

Pastoral communities are those who feel the impact of these changes most acutely. Pastoralists clearly see the degradation of the forests as further evidence of the decline and destruction of their environment by forces beyond their control. If the forests are lost, the impact in terms of spiralling poverty for the people dependent on them, reduced viability for pastoral livelihoods and increasing conflict over decreasing resources, will continue to contribute to the rapid decline of pastoral areas and livelihoods.

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7. Arguments that development intervention be based around existing local governance structures have all but been ignored up until now, despite support and recommendations from research and development over the past decade (Getachew 2000, Bassi 1990, Boku 2000(b), Coppock, 1994, Helland, 2000, 1999, 1997, 1996, 1982, Hogg, 1997, 1992, 1990, Oba, 1998, 1996, Sandford and Habtu, 2000).

8. Current Ethiopian government policy is still strongly arguing for expansive irrigation programmes and settlement of pastoralists.

## Development opportunity and initiatives

In spite of these problems, there exists cause for hope.

### National policies for decentralisation of natural resource management

The new democracy that emerged during the 1990's in Ethiopia offers many opportunities to address past approaches that undermined local management and government. Current development policy in Ethiopia is increasingly considering the idea of people-led development in the broader context of national decentralisation (Box 1). Community-led management systems are being forwarded as potentially sustainable and socially and culturally appropriate models for natural resource management.

Forest resources have been the focus of some of this experimental work. High levels of destruction and positive experiences in community-led forest management elsewhere have led to calls for a new collaborative approach where the local community would play a central role in forest management.

#### **Box 1: National policies of regionalisation and decentralisation in Ethiopia**

**Over the past 10 years, the Ethiopian government has been moving towards democracy. Respect for the extraordinarily high level of ethnic and cultural diversity that exists within the country's borders is one of the cornerstones of the new government. The EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) has introduced regionalisation as a key strategy towards decentralised governance. Regions have been given responsibility for self-government, working under a Federal administration.**

**Regionalisation is obviously not without its problems. However, decentralised governance is part of an overall process to reverse the highly centralised bureaucracy and state ownership systems established by the previous Derge regime.**

### Existing customary institutions

The shift towards community-led natural resource management is made stronger by the existence of customary institutions responsible for natural resources. The Borana regard the forests as part of their lands held under their traditional common property management system (Box 2). The ethos of common property resource management and communal ownership is deep rooted among Borana Oromo and the Borana *Gadaa*, the traditional institution responsible for the management of all natural resources in their area, including pasture, water and forests, remains one of the most intact traditional institutions in Ethiopia today<sup>9</sup>.

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9. The Borana natural resource management systems are described briefly in Chapter 3.

### **Box 2: What do we mean by “common property”?**

**Communal resources are resources exploited by many different users at the same or different times.**

**When the rights to use resources are controlled by an identifiable group, and there exist rules defining who may and may not use the resource, and how, this is said to be a *common property management system*. Such a system depends on members of the group agreeing to limit their individual claims on a resource in the expectation that the other members of the group will do the same, and on the establishment of mechanisms to stop people cheating the system.**

**Disruption of common property regimes has often led to the creation of open access systems, where access to resources is entirely uncontrolled. This has resulted in a perception that common property regimes are equivalent to open access regimes. There is a misconception that only private property regimes can bring about responsible management and returns on investment.**

Source: Orstom, E. 1990 *Governing the Commons*. Cambridge University Press, UK.

## **The challenge**

In the light of the problems and the opportunities that exist, a number of key challenges remain affecting forest management in the Borana lowlands.

- How can development agencies, with little or no experience of supporting community-led resource management, be enabled to adopt new approaches and implement new decentralisation policies?

In spite of the rhetoric of people-led development, representation of local peoples' voices remains distorted. The idea of putting people first in development is still a fairly new idea in Ethiopia. Development practitioners face considerable problems putting the rhetoric into practice. The approaches of numerous development agencies and government partners remain set within the classic development model: top down, prescribed solutions to replace local NRM systems that are assumed to be outdated and inefficient. And it is not clear that there exists the political will to genuinely transfer rights and responsibilities.

What is more, pastoralists in Ethiopia remain politically marginalised, misunderstood and misrepresented. Poverty amongst these groups is increasing, social cohesion is in decline and pastoral management systems have become less functional. Decentralised forest management will only work if pastoral livelihoods are better supported through appropriate development strategies.



A new approach is required, with an emphasis on new skills and behaviour among development partners to support local communities to develop their capacity to manage their own resources in a sustainable and equitable way.

- Can traditional common property regimes, managed by customary institutions, work in the present day context of increasing resource demand and consequent rising levels of conflict and competition?

Many years of formal exclusion by successive governments have left traditional institutions isolated and alienated in their development roles. The factors influencing forest use (land use, livelihoods, settlement, and local ecology) have fundamentally changed over the past 100 years. It is no longer a viable option for traditional institutions to manage the forests in isolation of government and other modern institutions.

The Borana *Gadaa* remains a legitimate institution in the eyes of the Borana society. However, it is not clear just how fully representative or accountable the *Gadaa* is to today's modern constituency, or how well equipped it is to deal with the complex levels of partnership and negotiation required in the current context of multiple stakeholders in resource management. For example, the Ethiopian Government's Department of Agriculture (DoA) claims state ownership (Federal delegated to Regional) and responsibility for the management of forest resources, while the Garri returnees (a Somali clan) argue that the resources are open to all who should want to use them.

If the *Gadaa* is to take up their role of forest managers then it must be able to address issues of gender and youth representation, as well as power sharing, and rebuilding and sustaining inter-ethnic relationships.

- How can we support the reconciliation of traditional and modern structures and management, as well as an increasing number of stakeholders with interests in natural resource use?

In the literature, a key criterion for common property systems to work is the homogeneity of resource users and managers, with high levels of trust and social cohesion among them. In Borana, as for most of the Sahel, this is not the reality.

Conflicts of interest and lack of trust exist among local communities, particularly different ethnic groups, and also between traditional and government institutions. Resource users depend on different production systems, come from different ethnic groups and use the resources in many different ways. For example, in the Arero forest, there are Borana and Gujii semi-settled agro-pastoralists living inside the forest, who have a high level of dependence on forest products, there are

Borana pastoralists who use the forests during the dry season for grazing their *foora* herds, there are semi-settled Gabra groups who are settled outside of the forest and increasingly seek access to exploit forest products for sale to urban markets and there are Garri returnees (Somali), nomadic pastoralists who travel into the Borana lowlands to use the Arero forest during the dry season as part of their transhumance. The forests are also used by government departments for timber extraction; seven different groups, all with differing interests and uses of the resource.

### **The Borana Collaborative Forest Management Project**

It is within this context that SOS Sahel in Ethiopia set up the Borana Collaborative Forest Management Project. The project's principle aim is to establish management systems over which local people or institutions have control, and by which natural resources can be used sustainably by local communities.

In promoting a return to communal management we are not promoting a move backwards in time. As we have already seen, traditional management institutions evolved and functioned in a different context to that which exists today.

The questions we are addressing within our work are:

- Who should have what rights in decision-making over the management of the forest resources?
- How can traditional institutions adapt to become more effective in the modern context?
- How can traditional institutions be linked to government structures and institutions and form effective management partnerships?

In order to avoid our interventions further undermining the legitimacy of traditional institutions, the answers to these questions lie in discussions, debate and decisions among the stakeholders themselves. This approach implies that resource degradation requires a socio-political solution rather than a technical fix.

The forests in Borana provide a test-bed for us to pilot and develop this approach. The focus on forest resources is new in pastoral areas. However, forest resources have been identified (by both government and the community) as one of the most rapidly degrading natural resources in the area. With this degradation there is also clear recognition of the forest's critical function as a pastoral resource (dry season pasture and water), its spiritual significance (sites of ceremonial importance), its livelihood importance (for displaced pastoralists as livelihood safety net), and its

importance in creating an interface between different ethnic groups. The potential for conflict around forest use is high. The need to control exploitation and manage forests sustainably is of interest to a wide variety of livelihood groups.

The project is following a three-stage approach: an investigation phase, a negotiation stage and an implementation stage (Box 3).

**Box 3: The three stages in developing collaborative forest management**

*Investigation stage:* The first stage of the collaborative forest management (CFM) process is to understand forest use in terms of who is using the forest and how, and the impact of that use on the forest and local livelihoods. Participatory learning and action approaches are used, building the capacity of all involved to produce, analyse and utilise relevant information to plan for CFM.

*Negotiation stage:* The second stage of the process uses the information and plans developed during the investigation phase to facilitate negotiations between different stakeholders, including resource users and government agencies. The outcomes of these negotiations are forest management plans and shared management arrangements. Participatory forest-land use planning and facilitated negotiation involving all stakeholders form the basis of this work.

*Implementation stage:* The third and final stage of the process involves the implementation and monitoring of the forest management agreements. This stage is one of *learning by doing*.

The three stages are not mutually exclusive. Negotiations will start during the investigation stage as dialogue among the different stakeholders develops, and learning and negotiating are likely to continue throughout the process as a whole.

The work presented in this paper focuses on the first stage of investigation and analysis.



# 3 Common property in Borana

In this chapter we briefly review the common property systems that have traditionally been used by the Borana to control natural resource use. These systems have been extensively studied and create an important back-drop to the work of the Borana Collaborative Forest Management Project.

The ethos of common property resource management and communal ownership is deep rooted among the Borana Oromo. Land, the ultimate provider and source of livelihoods, is the property of the whole society, and is collectively owned, defended and managed. Major resources (such as particular water sources) do belong to given clans; however, they are accessible to non-clan affiliates as well, worked out through webs of arrangements stemming from social structures and kinship organisations.

The depth of the concept of common property is discernible from every day language. Words such as “we” and “our” feature predominantly in Borana conversations, expressing the philosophy of collective resource ownership. The fact that a Borana herd owner utters “our calves, our cattle” (instead of ‘my calves’, ‘my cattle’) while referring to his/her own herd, and that a woman says “our house” (instead of ‘my house’) when talking of her house, shows how the Borana social life revolves around collective ownership. It can be said that the community is more important in Borana philosophy than the individual (Boku, 2000a).

In the present context, Borana common property systems that once functioned efficiently have been undermined gradually since the early 1900s and intensively since the 1970s by various government and donor interventions.

## Key common property resources in Borana and their current status

### Water

Water is an essential resource for pastoralism. Traditional Borana tenure clearly defines the rights to water for each of the various sources (wells, rivers and ponds). In general terms, the rights required to access a source of water is related to both the reliability of the source and the amount of labour required for the development and maintenance of that source. Inhabitants of any particular area may have any

one of a number of complex access rights to different sources of water (*konfi* title, clan-association, *sunsuma* interclan relationship and agreement, etc.).

Deep wells are the most reliable and labour demanding source of water, and accordingly have the highest levels of restriction over their access. They are clan owned, and *konfi*, or title, is vested with a certain family within the clan. The Borana have an elaborate well-centred system of clan-association through which other (associated) clans can claim right of access to wells other than their own. The Borana *aadaa* (customs and culture) defines not only those who are entitled to access certain wells, but also the order of priority for watering animals among those with entitlement. Others have to request, and may be refused, access. Those given access must still wait their turn according to the priority rights of the other herds present. For the Borana, wells are not mere economic resources, but also central institutions around which their society is organised. The socio-cultural dimension of wells is manifest in the symbolic representations by which the Borana refer to wells (Boku 2000b).

Rights of access to a temporary water source (seasonal streams and ponds) depend on the amount of labour required for maintaining the source and the reliability of the water supply. Occasional water sources (surface water from rain) have the most unreliable supply and no restrictions whatsoever are imposed on accessing them.

Ownership rights, *konfi*, are established by a person developing a water source and the labour that requires. For example, in developing a pond, the *konfi* family develops the pond with labour contributed by village members. When the small pond, *qabaa*, catches water, its utilisation will be limited to village level domestic purposes. When capacity improves, utilisation extends to adult livestock of the nearby villages or even beyond. When water is available in ponds and streams, these sources are always used before wells. Temporary water is protected from animal pollution by fencing and when the volume of temporary water reduces, it is restricted for small stock (Boku, 2000b). Management of water as a common property resource in Borana remains relatively intact up to today.

### **Pasture**

Unlike in the case of water management, Borana territorial units are not based on membership in a specific clan, as clans are not territorial.

Among the Borana, land is the collective property of all Borana, represented by the *Gadaa*. In principle, all Borana are equally entitled to use the pasture in any part of the Borana homeland. In practice, however, access to pasture is severely constrained by the clan-based water management system. Unless a Borana is assured of a source of water for his herds, he will not benefit from the collective

pasture. To this extent, any part of Borana land is generally inhabited by those clans and clans-associates who have access to the wells within it.

*Aadaa* (Borana custom or culture) sanctions the different strategies that Borana institutions at all levels adopt to restrict access to parts of the pasture in their jurisdiction. These strategies include calf-reserves, buffers between villages, buffers between villages and wells, the territorial separation of livestock within a herd, and so on.

For all intents and purposes, Borana pastoral land tenure provides further corroboration of the weakness of the so-called 'tragedy of the commons' thesis (Boku 2000b). However, today pasture management is under increasing pressure from competing land use systems, ambiguity in land tenure, ecological change (due to changes in management systems), increasing sedentarisation, and a shrinking area of pasture due to regional border changes.

### Forests

Forests are a very important resource for the Borana. However *Gadaa* rulings prohibited forest destruction; the cutting of *Juniperus* was, and remains, outlawed. Forest is not necessarily distinguished from pasture by the Borana because of the value of forests as dry season grazing reserves. Before the advent of urbanisation, the demand for forest products was limited. Local communities living adjacent to the forest exploited it for dry season grazing, water, wild foods, ritual purposes, and for refuge in times of war. The forest was also thought to improve local climatic conditions. These activities had no degrading effects on the forests, as none of the activities involved tree cutting.<sup>10</sup> Thus, apart from controlling forest fire (fire was also stated as a rare phenomenon due to relative abundance of precipitation and the moist conditions under the closed canopy of the forest), and outlawing the cutting of *Juniperus* there was no strict and specific forest management system. Instead, forests were managed flexibly within the general natural resource management framework of the Borana Oromo.

Today, forest management is in crisis due to rapid clearance as a result of their *de facto* open access status.

The current degradation of the forest resources in Borana dates back over a century. In the 1890s, the occupying army of Emperor Menelik established garrisons in several areas in the occupied Borana lands. In time, permanent structures were built at these garrisons and the areas evolved into towns. These

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10. Before the incorporation of Borana into the Ethiopian State around the turn of the 20th century, the local population had not known the monetary value of the forest.

towns in Borana were all founded in or around juniper high forests (Nagelle, Yabello and Arero) due to their environmental functions and abundant supply of construction materials.

During the Italian occupation of the area (1935-41), the Italians opened up sawmills and began processing juniper for commercial markets. In this way the high construction value of the timber was demonstrated. This in turn accelerated the process of commercialisation and extraction of juniper timber. With urban population growth came increasing demand for forest products and the people to supply them.

Under the Derge Regime (1970-90), the forests were declared property of the state. As a result, ownership rights and management responsibilities were shifted from the community to the government. With this shift in ownership, the government introduced a closed management system that was enforced by forest guards. This was ineffective and inefficient and the forests were exposed to increasing destruction.



# 4 Multiple stakeholder management: Who's who?

If some form of new common property management is to be the solution to unsustainable resource use, it is essential to understand the different stakeholders and the resource user groups who could be involved in sustainable management. The principle of inclusive management depends on an understanding of the different stakeholders and the institutions that represent them. There is a need to clearly understand who could potentially gain or lose by change. Identifying how people perceive their own rights and responsibilities, as well as those of others, is also crucial in initiating discussions over who should have what rights and responsibilities in future.

A crucial part of the first stage of the Borana Collaborative Forest Management Project, the analysis stage, was designing and implementing a stakeholder analysis (Box 4). This period was also vital for learning and the development of new skills for the project staff and their local partners from government departments. The project's ability to demonstrate that it has a real understanding of the issues that surround current unsustainable resource management was essential for building trust and understanding among the different communities concerned.

## **Box 4: Defining "stakeholders"**

**Stakeholders include not only local communities but also distant users and all those who have an interest in the resources. ODA (1996) defines stakeholders as any person, group, community or body who has something to gain or lose from changes in management of the resources. They suggest that primary stakeholders have rights; secondary stakeholders have interests. This definition was problematic in our situation: deciding who has a "right" to use a forest involves difficult value judgements at the outset. As a starting point we therefore defined primary stakeholders as those who make direct use of resources and secondary stakeholders as those who use it indirectly or are interested parties (Fig 2). In the light of the stakeholder analysis we could then refine the definition in terms of rights and interests.**

The BCFMP invested almost two years of work in implementing this process. A serious drought during 1999 delayed implementation of some elements of the work as project staff and resources were diverted to provide drought relief to those most in need. However, significant time and effort had also to be invested in order

for the people involved, both community and development agencies, to learn and feel confident of new skills and understanding, and to take on board the implications of the deeper understanding that the stakeholder analysis revealed.

### **Stakeholders and politics: a cautionary note**

The pastoral groups in the study area have a long history of resource sharing and negotiating over resource access. At the present time however, within the study area, regional border disputes (between regions 4 & 5) and land ownership claims (led by Somali returnee groups) are being forwarded through political opportunity. This is causing severe ethnic conflict in the area.

Within the current conflict situation, the stakeholder concept may provide further opportunity for manipulation. This is because the term “stakeholder” can be interpreted as conferring a right or a claim without looking at the historical dimensions of how a given group has become a current stakeholder.

In this case, we use the phrase *current stakeholders* to define those groups that are currently *using* specific resources and need to be involved in negotiations over resource use and management in order to ensure (environmental) sustainability. However, we recognise the significance of historical and social factors in determining rights to *own* and *manage* land. The areas we are working in specifically the forest sites of Nagelle, Arero and Yabello, are all found within traditional Borana lands. In negotiating new common property systems, the significance of this traditional ownership needs to be recognised and reflected.

### **Building the capacity of development workers**

As described earlier, development approaches in Ethiopia have classically been top-down and focused on technical issues. Support to decentralised resource management demands a new role for development workers, a new set of skills, and a new understanding of how development processes should work.

Knowledge of participatory development processes, community planning and organisation, negotiation and mediation skills, institutional support, traditional and modern governance, the development of civil society and legal frameworks for decentralisation are all new skills required of development workers. These are in addition to their technical capacity, for example, as foresters or extension workers.

Over the course of the first two years of the project, project staff and their local government partners participated in a series of formal and informal training workshops and seminars. These included:

- Formal and informal meetings with government officials to present the concept of collaborative management and the shifts in roles and responsibilities involved
- Training workshops and exercises for the project staff and members of the Woreda Bureau of Agriculture on:
  - pastoral production systems
  - participatory development and PRA skills
  - common property management
  - collaborative forest management
  - participatory monitoring and evaluation
  - conflict analysis and negotiation skills.
- Practical training and experience for project staff and partners on participatory approaches with a focus on pastoral communities.
- A “Change Agents Review”, involving government partners, NGO’s (local and international) and representatives of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, during which community members and development officers were able to discuss frankly past development approaches and their impacts in the area and to look for longer term solutions.

The breadth and extent of investments made in the project staff and government partners reflects the newness in the approach and ideas associated with the project and the concept of inclusive community-based resource management. Most of the people participating in these workshops were highly experienced and professional experts in agriculture, sociology, forestry, range management and other related fields. However, this experience was largely modelled on the classic, technically focused approach to development. In order to achieve real participatory development, i.e. to go beyond the rhetoric, all staff needed new skills and experience to be confident in facilitating complex discussions among many different groups of people about sensitive issues, such as land tenure, resource sharing, conflict and poverty.

### **Implementing a stakeholder analysis**

The immediate objective of the analysis was to identify the different stakeholders in the Borana forests in terms of direct and indirect resource use, and then, using this information, assess their existing and potential rights and interests. The purpose was to understand the complexity of the existing stakeholder situation in Borana, so that project, government partners, and the community had an informed starting point from which to develop a strategic plan of action to address resource management arrangements. The analysis would also reveal potential risks and actual conflict between user-groups, as well as the different relationships between them.

The analysis was undertaken in parallel with the capacity development described in the previous section. Formal methodologies were devised to undertake the analysis, although much information was also gathered through informal meetings and discussions (including during some of the training workshops themselves). The analysis involved group exercises and discussions concerning current and future resource management issues with all concerned stakeholders.

Much information was already well known and understood by members of the project team who had worked extensively in the area, and in some cases had been born and brought up there. However, it was the process of learning together with the communities and government partners that was relevant in this case, as much as, if not more than, the actual information that was gathered. The process allowed the project team, local government and local communities to develop a better understanding of each other, the objectives of the project and the perceptions and concerns of the different stakeholders involved. For the project, this was essential to enable us to better facilitate the negotiation process, without over-simplifying it, externally directing it or, critically, misdirecting it.

Group work aimed to gradually bring people together as opportunities arose and through the identification of common interests, shared rights and/or relationship dynamics. These were the first steps to setting up dialogue and negotiation for future management systems.

Specific questions that the stakeholder analysis sought to answer were in relation to three elements of forest use and management:

1. Who benefits from the forest?

Benefits from the forest may be direct, for example extraction of timber for sale or subsistence use, or access to grazing and water resources for livestock herds. Benefits may also be indirect, for example in terms of income for a forest guard or the biodiversity value of the forest for a conservationist. Benefits may also be valued in terms of power and potential. When considering changing forest management systems, a specific question related to this issue was:

- Will forest management agreements result in loss of benefits (livelihoods) for some groups?

2. Who has what rights over the forest?

This question relates to the existing management systems in place for controlling forest access and use. It includes both *de facto* and *de jure* rights. Specific questions relating to this issue included:

- To what extent do any groups have traditional usage or management control over specific forest areas?

- Which groups would be party to collaborative management arrangements?

It was important to distinguish between those having rights to use or to negotiate access to resources (secondary stakeholders), and those with rights to own and/or manage a resource (primary stakeholders).

### 3. How do the different stakeholders relate to each other?

This question refers to existing and potential relationships between the different stakeholders. The future management system, if it is to be equitable and inclusive, depends on all the different groups being represented within the management structure. This will depend in large part on the relationships that exist among the different groups as well as on establishing mechanisms for managing problems and conflicts that arise; good governance. Specific questions related to this issue include:

- Can the needs and interests of different groups be reconciled?
- What causes conflict and how will conflicts be resolved?
- Would existing institutions form appropriate management structures? Are they equitable and representative to all groups, as well as members within groups?
- How can the interests of minority groups be adequately protected and provided for?

## Methodology for the stakeholder analysis

The following participatory research tools were employed to conduct the stakeholder analysis<sup>11</sup>.

### Social mapping

Social maps were used to approximate Peasant Association (PA) boundary, settlements and land use patterns (such as grazing patterns and farm lands), and economic and social infrastructure (Figure 2). The map provided a quick reference to the location within the PA of the forest resources. Once basic data was mapped, participants were asked to list and place the different ethnic groups that lived in the area. In this way an initial stakeholder list was created. This tool was used in part as a warm up exercise and allowed participants to familiarise themselves with participatory data gathering approaches, which were largely new to the area. Completing a relatively non-complex activity helped to build confidence before progressing to more detailed work.

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11. The methodology developed was adapted from Dubois and Lowore (2000) for their 4 Rs Framework and Responding to Conflict (2000) for their conflict-mapping tool.



### 3Rs matrix

This exercise explored a stakeholder's *rights* to use the forest, *responsibilities* to manage it and the *revenues* generated from forest resources. Participants were asked to list all those people who use and/or are involved with forest resources within their area (reference was made to the social map for the different groups). Each identified stakeholder was placed on the vertical axis of the matrix, and details concerning the 3Rs were then gathered for each stakeholder. The information generated during this analysis was used to identify different group perspectives of rights, responsibilities and revenues. The work enabled an understanding of existing rights and resource use in practice. '*Interviewing the tool*' or in other words, further analysis of the initial information placed on the matrix by the community, was essential with the 3Rs matrix. Field staff carried out selected questioning<sup>12</sup> in order to draw out further information concerning rights and responsibilities.

Revenue information is of course sensitive and therefore general estimates of the significance of revenues for different groups were sought in order to give an indicator of livelihood link/dependency of groups to forest resources.

An example of the 3Rs matrix is given in Appendix 1.

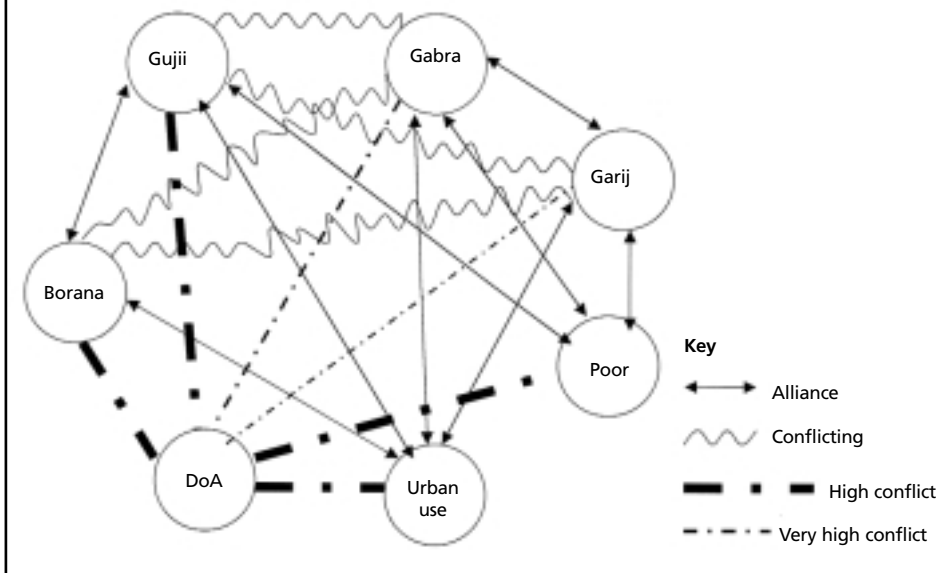
### Relationship mapping

A relationship map was used to explore the nature of resource-based relationships that exist between various primary and secondary stakeholders. Again, stakeholders who use forest resources were identified. Groups were then placed in a circle and the relationships between them (in relation to the forests) were marked. Relationship maps were used to show whether the relationship between groups is one of conflicting interest, emanating from competition over particular forest resources, an alliance, indicating collaboration, support or assistance, or neutral (Figure 3). Again, the discussion and analysis of the information by the community produced vital information concerning reasons for different relationships, as well as starting points for problem or conflict resolution.

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12. When "interviewing the tool", field staff made use of the six helpers; what, when, who, why, where and how, in order to guide their questioning.

**Figure 3: Relationship map drawn by Arero urban forest users, June 2000**



### Results of the stakeholder analysis

The results so far represent an on-going process of analysis; they need to be used and developed within the context of future work and negotiations.

#### Who benefits from the forest?

Figure 4 summarises the different stakeholders who make direct and indirect use of forest resources, identified during the course of the stakeholder analysis. A third group of indirect user institutions was also identified.

These stakeholders are diverse in ethnicity, background (e.g. rural/urban, levels of education and income), type of use or interest in the forest, and degree of dependence upon it.

The most common forest user groups are forest adjacent communities, including timber sellers, construction pole sellers, grazers/browsers, firewood collectors, *hulluuqqoo* users, wild honey collectors and charcoal makers. They include Oromo clans (Borana, Gabra, Gujii, Arsi), Somali returnees (Garri and Merihan) and other ethnic groups (Konso, and Amhara).

Direct users benefit from subsistence use of resources as well as from the income generated through their sale. In most cases, revenue from the sale of forest



products is perceived to be lower in the past than at present and at the same time livelihoods are increasingly dependant on the sale of these products.

The Forest Department are responsible for protecting and managing the forests on behalf of the regional government. The department benefits directly from forest resources through the sale of licences to extract timber. Their role as managers and protectors also brings a budget and rights to control forest resource use, as well as the associated responsibilities.

Indirect users are a significant force in driving forest resource extraction. Demands from urban and rural traders, builders, restaurant and bakery owners and others are growing and provide constant market opportunities for the many direct users. Nearly all construction in the growing urban centres is based on juniper, including many government department buildings.

**Figure 4: Initial summary of stakeholders in the Borana Juniper forests – direct and indirect resource users.**

**Indirect users –**

- Forest product traders and shop-owners in Negele and Yavelo towns retail timber and forest products such as charcoal.
- Builders rely on Juniper timber as a termite resistant construction material.
- Restaurant owners and bakeries buy fuelwood and charcoal in relatively large quantities.
- Most urban households buy cooking fuel from producers who bring it from the forests and woodlands.

**Direct users –**

- Pastoralist groups Borana, Gabra, Garri returnees.
- Agro-pastoralist villagers in and around the forests (mixed ethnicity).
- The urban/peri-urban poor in all forest adjacent towns.
- The Forest Department and other government bodies.
- Timber harvester / smugglers.
- The Ethiopian Defence Force.

**Indirect users – Interested institutions**

- Federal/Regional/Woreda Rural Land and Natural Resource Administration is responsible for controlling, protecting and managing the forest resources on behalf of the Regional Government.
- PA and Woreda Committees are charged by the government with local-level land management.
- Borana traditional institutions: Gadda and leaders with a long-term and serious interest in forest conservation.
- Various NGOs have demonstrated interests in these forests. NCA/Mekane Yesus in Yavelo and Arero has supported seedling production, plantations and construction of forest roads.
- Academic institutions such as Addis Ababa University Biology department / EARO.

At the institutional level, the main stakeholders include a number of Government Departments, local administrative bodies, and the Ethiopian Defence Forces. PA and Woreda councils are charged by the government with local level land management and include forests in their remit. The police and the courts also play a role in controlling resource extraction. Other institutional interests include national and international science institutions interested in forest biodiversity and conservation.

### Who has rights over the forests?

Figure 5 groups the different stakeholders according to their rights in the forest resources.

<b>Figure 5: Analysis of stakeholders in terms of rights and interests.</b>	
<p><b>Rights – Primary Stakeholders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borana Gadaa</li> <li>The Forest Department and other government bodies</li> <li>PA and Woreda Committees</li> <li>Pastoralist groups: Borana, Gabra</li> <li>Agro-pastoralist villagers in and around the forests (mixed ethnicity)</li> <li>Urban / peri-urban poor in all forest adjacent towns</li> </ul>	<p><b>Interests – Secondary Stakeholders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastoralist groups – Garri returnees</li> <li>Timber harvesters / smugglers</li> <li>Ethiopian Defence Forces</li> <li>Forest product traders and shop-owners in towns retail timber and forest products such as charcoal.</li> <li>Builders relying on timber as a construction material.</li> <li>Restaurant owners and bakeries – fuelwood/charcoal</li> <li>Most urban households</li> <li>Academic institutions</li> <li>NGOs</li> </ul>

The stakeholder analysis identified three main institutions with significant existing rights to *manage* the forests, whether *de facto* or *de jure*: the Forest Department, the Borana *Gadaa* and the Peasant Associations (PA).

### The Forest Department

The Borana Juniper forests are legally registered as National/Regional Forest Priority Areas and managed by the Forest Department (FD) of the Rural Land and Natural Resources Administration of Oromiya Regional Government. The responsibilities of the government extension services, of which the FD is a part, include the promotion of technological development, land and natural resource planning and management and forest conservation. However, government extension workers receive no formal training in pastoralism, even those working within pastoralist areas.

Under current state law, local communities do not have rights to extract major forest products, but they do have rights to access non-timber forest products such as pasture, wild honey, firewood and hay, at the discretion of the FD. Use of commercially valuable timber is strictly regulated or prohibited. Thus under current legislation, equity in resource use of forests is low; communities are only allowed to share low value resources, but are denied high value resources.

Many products that are legally collected such as wild honey and aromatic plants of cosmetic value (*muka qayyaa*) are increasingly extracted on an opportunistic and open access basis, as the FD has developed no regulation for use.

As we have seen, current government policy is increasingly trying to harness the potential of decentralized community-based natural resource management. However, this depends on new ways of working with and supporting the community to sustainably manage the local environment. At present, how this will actually be realised remains unqualified by regional governments. At the local level, where experimentation is taking place, there is clearly reluctance towards community management in certain quarters. It remains uncertain whether the government technical departments will readily give up or 'lose' their power over natural resources.

Within the current legal framework, the Forest Department must retain a role in any future collaborative management structure for the forests.

### **The *Gadaa* institution**

In spite of the Forest Department's formal role of manager, the stakeholder analysis clearly showed that the Borana *Gadaa* is most closely involved in forest use and *de facto* management.

As we have shown in Chapter 3 the Borana are well known for strong indigenous resource management systems and strong social systems. The Borana *Gadaa* is the overall representative of all Borana clans<sup>13</sup> and the highest traditional authority able to make legitimate decisions that affect the life of every Borana.

The *Gadaa* is a pan-Oromo organisation. It is an enduring institution that has been in operation for at least the last 600 years. Long historical and political processes in Ethiopia have weakened it in the central parts of Oromiya. However, in spite of all

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13. There are divergent views among scholars on the functions of *Gadaa* institutions. For Legesse (1973, 2000) the *Gadaa* assumes military, economic, political and ritual responsibilities in the leadership of the Oromo society. In contrast, others view the *Gadaa* as less politically relevant, playing ritual roles only (Baxter, 1978; Hinnant, 1978). From our own current work with the *Gadaa* we would argue that the *Gadaa* is more in line with the first assessment, although recent weakening of the institution, particularly post 1974, means that change in the influence of the *Gadaa* may increasingly be leading to its' playing a more ritual function.

this, the Borana *Gadaa* remains one of the most intact traditional institutions in Ethiopia today.

The *Gadaa* is organised into three bodies: *Gadaa Arbora* and two *Gadaa Kontoma*. The *Arbora* is in charge of all of Borana, and is thus superior to the *Gadaa Kontoma*. However, the two highest leaders of the *Kontoma* are also members of the six-man *Adulaa* council (*legislative and overall council of the Borana*), “a community of equals” who “shared the same amount of decision-making power. This is the Borana version of ‘government by committee’” (Legesse, 1973: 63).

The greatest challenges to the *Gadaa* social systems are linked to changes in livelihoods and particularly increasing levels of poverty amongst the Borana. During one meeting with elders and members of the *Gadaa*, the issue of agricultural expansion was analysed. Members of the *Gadaa* acknowledged that by continuing to ban agriculture, they had not taken into account the realities of those that had lost their livestock or that poverty was driving cultivation as a survival strategy. The group concluded that they (the *Gadaa*) had unintentionally forced large numbers of people to act outside of their traditional law and system. The failure to recognise the need to change, and the emphasis on conserving traditional Borana culture, rather than adapting to current realities, have to some extent undermined the function of the traditional system.

The forests have traditionally been considered an integral part of Borana land, with forest management being the responsibility of the *Gadaa*. Recognising this, and the significance of historical and social factors in determining rights to own and manage land, the project sees the Borana *Gadaa* as the key partner to the Forest Department in any future collaborative management structure.

The project has therefore started to work with the *Gadaa* as an entry point for the representation of local resource users and interest groups, who have been omitted from modern Government management structures and systems.

Working with any community-wide institution risks glossing over the complex reality of a community where various social groups may have different interests in a given resource. The *Gadaa* remains a legitimate and fairly functional institution with which the project can work. However, it is not clear how representative the *Gadaa* is today among the different primary stakeholders identified, particularly given the mixed ethnicity of pastoral groups, agro-pastoral villages and the urban and peri urban poor. Equitable representation of primary stakeholders will be the key to a successful management system. It presents an important challenge for the *Gadaa* if they are to successfully take up a new management partnership with

government. Issues of representation between social groups as well as within social groups will be a core focus of the negotiation stage of the project.

### **Local government administration**

In Ethiopia the peasant/pastoral associations (PA) are the lowest level of regional government. The PA is responsible for local level allocation of agricultural land to PA households and to represent the community in issues of land allocation, particularly with respect to investor proposals to lease land. For example, if the government wants the community to assemble for a meeting, or to organise themselves for Food for Work or Employment Generation Scheme (EGS) work, the PA officials are asked to carry this out. The PA's official role thus carries considerable power and control over resources, including decisions as to who benefits from those resources.

In terms of forest management, the PA is charged with ensuring government forest policy is followed. In the Forest Priority Areas, where the project is working, this implies ensuring that no timber is illegally cut from the forest, and that regulated or limited amounts of non-timber forest products are used by local communities. The PA and the Forest Department jointly select PA forest guards and work together to organise tree planting employment generation schemes, selecting who should participate.

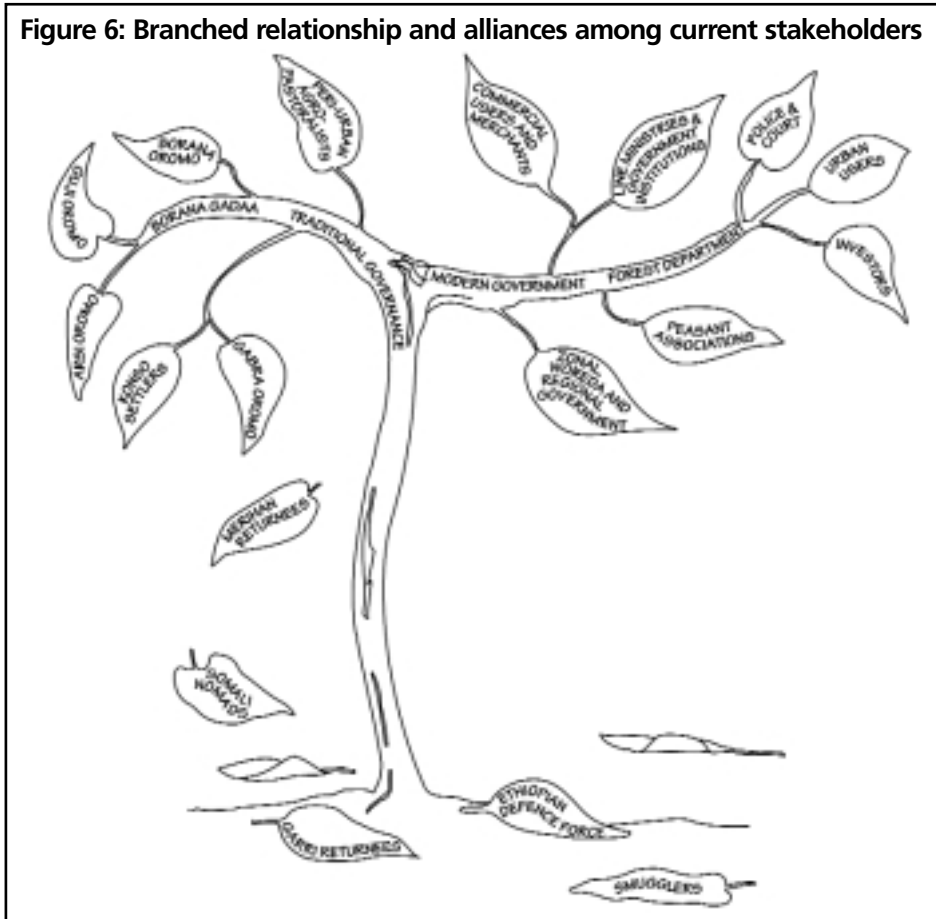
PA representatives are "voted" into position in the community, however there is little evidence of any training for these representatives in order to enable them to develop and fulfil their local government role. In practice, at present, the PA represents the government to the community, rather than *vice versa*. For example, under current investment policy the PA is responsible for undertaking a community consultation process in the event of any issue of local investment. However, lack of real community representation and inappropriate handling of requests by investors to purchase land have led to civil action and protest by communities and the *Gadaa*.

### **How do the different stakeholders relate to each other?**

The BCFMP is now working with all three "management institutions" identified in the course of the stakeholder analysis to develop a new structure that will be legitimate in the eyes of both the state and the local communities. However, this legitimacy will depend on all the various stakeholders identified during the analysis being represented within the new structure.

The relationships between the different stakeholders identified during the analysis are summarised in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Branched relationship and alliances among current stakeholders**



As the diagram shows, relationships among the different stakeholders are currently highly segregated and divided. Most relevant to the development of a collaborative management system is the split between modern and traditional governance systems and the existence of some groups that do not relate to any others.

### Relations among resource users

Among the diverse local communities, respect and support for the *Gadaa* are closely linked to ethnic lines.

Groups that are either allied to or have close associations with the Borana include members of other Oromo groups (which form the majority of the population) and members of the Konso who have settled in the Borana lowlands.

All Oromo clans have a *Gadaa* traditional governance system; other Oromo clans in the area will have their own *Gadaa* structures (although they are less functional) and will certainly recognise and respect the *Gadaa* system of governance. This is the case for the Gujii and Gabra clan groups, who have strong historical and ethnic links with the Borana, as well as regular, present day social interchange. The Borana, Gujii and Gabra all co-exist under the traditional negotiated systems of shared management of natural resources that is the *de facto* property regime of the area. Conflict, although not unknown, tends to be relatively minor and rapidly resolved through traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Recognition and respect for the *Gadaa* rules and regulations is strong amongst these groups

The Konso have also settled in the Borana lowlands under traditional agreement: adopting Borana culture and custom, and agreeing to live by *Nagaa Borana*, the "Peace of Borana". This entails living by traditional (*Gadaa*) values, rules and regulations. The Konso groups, once settled and having assumed Borana cultural practice, are actually seen as becoming Borana themselves. Again, recognition and respect for *Gadaa* rules and regulations is strong amongst this group.

The Merihan are a Somali clan, settled around the Nagelle area by UNHCR as refugee returnees. They have their own traditional institutions, whereby authority lies with the clan head and council of clan elders. These traditional institutions are called upon when problems arise and the elders have engaged with local *Gadaa* structures to negotiate access to local natural resources (pasture and water). The stakeholder analysis suggests a functional relationship exists between the two traditional institutions (the *Gadaa* and Merihan clan elders). However, work needs to be done to reaffirm the relevance and legitimacy of this relationship in relation to the long-term management of the forests and in terms of the implications for land ownership claims.

In contrast, there are serious tensions and sporadic violent conflicts between the Garri returnees and the Borana. The Garri currently claim to be a Somali clan, although their mother tongue is Oromiffa and historically they have claimed to be Oromo. Some Garri have settled, including destitute peri-urban groups around Nagelle (again settled by UNHCR as returnees), and in disputed border areas such as Uudat. Others remain transhumant and use the Borana lowlands, including Arero Forest.

Historical relationships between the Garri and Borana are long and complex. The Garri also have their own traditional institution of elders and the *Gadaa* system is known to the Garri. In times of more peaceful inter-ethnic relations there is evidence of consultation and negotiation taking place between the two groups' traditional structures. However, in very recent times the Borana and Garri relationship has been characterised by conflict, based around disputed regional borders – the south eastern border of Oromiya Region (which is also the border of the Borana lowlands)

and the adjacent Somali Region. The Borana claim to have lost land (including important traditional wells) in recent changes to regional borders. The Garri claim that the land was originally theirs. There is counter claim upon counter claim. Many Borana also argue that the Garri currently take advantage of the governance gaps (undermined traditional authority/ineffective government authority) in order to exploit resources without regard for other groups.

Developing a functional relationship between the Garri and other groups (not just the Borana) is a key challenge to local resource management.

Finally, the Amhara who have settled in the area were largely members of the former military garrison population that was based around Nagelle before and during the Derge regime. These groups are concentrated around the peri-urban areas. The Amhara have taken advantage of the absence of effective forest management (whether governmental or traditional) to become one of the main forest resource exploiters. They are aware of the traditional institutions in the area, as they come to pay their respects to the *Gadaa* when it makes ceremonial visits to the Liban plain. However it is envisaged that legitimate recognition and respect will have to be negotiated as part of a new governance and resource management regime.

### **Attitudes among the Borana**

Issues of resource tenure and control are sensitive matters that go far beyond the economic sphere for many pastoral communities. In most pastoral areas, land (and its resources) is understood in terms of past, present and future generations of a family or a society across a wider time scale. "...land belongs to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living and countless members are still unborn." (A Nigerian herdsman quoted in Lane, 1998:1)

In the context of our work, some Borana (as well as other groups and individuals within government departments) are resistant to the idea of multiple stakeholders with rights to make decisions about the use and management of "Borana" forests. These resistant groups are often given a "hard core" label. However, their concerns are relevant and their resistance, if not addressed, may undermine any new management system. This is particularly relevant at present as the regional border disputes continue. Suspicions are strong that recognising certain groups as stakeholders within a new management system may later be manipulated to promote and legitimise land ownership claims. These sensitive issues will need to be transparently addressed during stakeholder negotiations.

### **Relations among potential resource managers**

The stakeholder analysis identified significant tensions among the three main institutions with existing responsibility (*de facto* and *de jure*) for natural resource management; i.e. between the *Gadaa*, the Forest Department and the PA.



The PAs are the on-the-ground implementers of government policy, and have worked closely with the Forest Department. Relations between these two institutions appear to be good.

In discussions with Forest Department staff, however, particularly at the beginning of the project, the community were regarded as incapable of managing the forests, and indeed were viewed as the main agents of their destruction.

Attitudes are changing, particularly when our investigations clearly show that the community were originally far stronger custodians over the forests than the various government bodies. However, the *Gadaa* remain sceptical of the Forest Department's readiness to recognise the management competence of the community, and to hand over real power over management and use rights. This is exacerbated by slow progress on the ground

The main concerns expressed by members of the *Gadaa*, however, are in relation to the role of the PA in the envisaged collaborative management structure.

There is a history of tensions between the PA and *Gadaa* over who best represents the community. Previously, co-existence has been contentious and competitive; arguably this was a deliberate intention of past national governments. Overlap in the roles and responsibilities of the two institutions has been partly blamed for the undermining of traditional systems (Box 5). The PA authority and jurisdiction closely matches that of the "*madda* councils" under the *Gadaa*.

**Box 5: Competition and conflict between PA and *Gadaa***

**1. A herder bringing his cattle to an area would traditionally negotiate grazing rights with the *Arda* council. The decision would be made according to the number of cattle already grazing in the area and forage availability. If the area were already being used to its maximum potential, the herder would be asked to explore other areas to graze under the traditional grazing management system. However more recently, in the event of such a decision, herders who are "refused" access may now go to the PA and gain legal permission to graze their animals in the area.**

**2. In the 1970's, the government proposed that PA committees should take over water management. This proposal was strongly contested by the *Gadaa* and formally rejected in the *Gumi Gayoo* (general assembly) before being dropped as a strategy by the government.**

In practice, the PA is made up of Borana who know the *Gadaa* system and are even bound by it. The PA and the *Gadaa* have worked together to achieve local level development decisions. However, the PA will have to give up some of its power over the resources, just as the Forest Department has to.

**Box 6: What do the *Gadaa* leaders think of the envisaged collaborative forest management?**

*Adulaa Jaarsoo Taarii*, who is fourth ranking official in the current *Gadaa* office, believes that the forest can be managed effectively through a collaborative approach, provided central decision-making is assigned to the *Gadaa*. He sees no serious disparity between the roles of the *Gadaa* and PA structures in a collaborative working relationship. He argues that PA leadership cannot be above the *Gadaa* sanctions because the *Gadaa* is a pan-Borana institution that can pass decisions governing one's access and rights to Borana resources. They can declare someone *persona non grata* in terms of access to Borana resources, marriage to a Borana women, etc, in cases of serious deviance from societal rules and regulations. Although representatives of the government in the rural areas, PA leadership are still Borana and thus must conform to Borana rules and regulations. They thus abide by Borana laws.

Jaarsoo Taarii cited cases where the two institutions are closely working together to make community pasture reserves (*kaloo*) and redefine wet season grazing and dry season grazing arrangements for sharing pasture equitably between residents of Fuuldoya, Haroodiimtuu and Reenjii PAs in Arero. In the meetings where decisions on the matter were made, the *Abbaa Gadaa* (*Gadaa* leader) himself and one of his council members represented the *Gadaa*, while respective chairpersons and reputable community members represented each PA. The participants reached agreement and decided that each PA would rearrange its village positions in order to make a common buffer pasture that would be equally accessible to all people living in these PAs. The presence of the *Gadaa* leaders gave legitimacy and enabled the decision to be enforced. According to Jaarsoo Taarii, the *Gadaa* is itself confident that the two institutions can work together. The *Gadaa* has legitimate authority and full power to act against non-conformists, including the PA leadership. He underlines that the traditional structure is more able to sanction behaviour than the PA structure.

However, another Elder (*Borbor Bulee*) expressed his concern about the relationship between the *Gadaa* and the PA. For him, there is an enduring scepticism concerning the partnership between the two institutions. Partnership can work effectively only on an equal basis. *Borbor Bulee* argues that, from the experience so far, the local government structure has been disrespectful to the *Gadaa*, manipulating it, for example by enforcing tax contributions.

In *Borbor Bulee's* opinion, sustainable management of the forest resource is possible only when the management responsibility and authority are entrusted to elders who are custodians of the resource. The elders should be empowered to sanction behaviour particularly that of the emerging and increasingly disassociated class of youth and this poses a real challenge.

Both elders appear to agree that the likelihood of a partnership succeeding depends on explicit agreements whereby the PA structure shall play only a supportive role and the traditional structure plays a lead role.

# Facing the realities of new management systems: ethnic diversity, resource sharing and conflict

The stakeholder analysis has been used by the project as a tool to help people consider the issues surrounding rights and responsibilities among the different groups. The next stage in the process – that of negotiating a new common property management system – requires that all stakeholders try and find consensus on these issues.

In this final section we look forward to what remains to be done in the light of the results from the stakeholder analysis.

## Negotiating a representative management structure

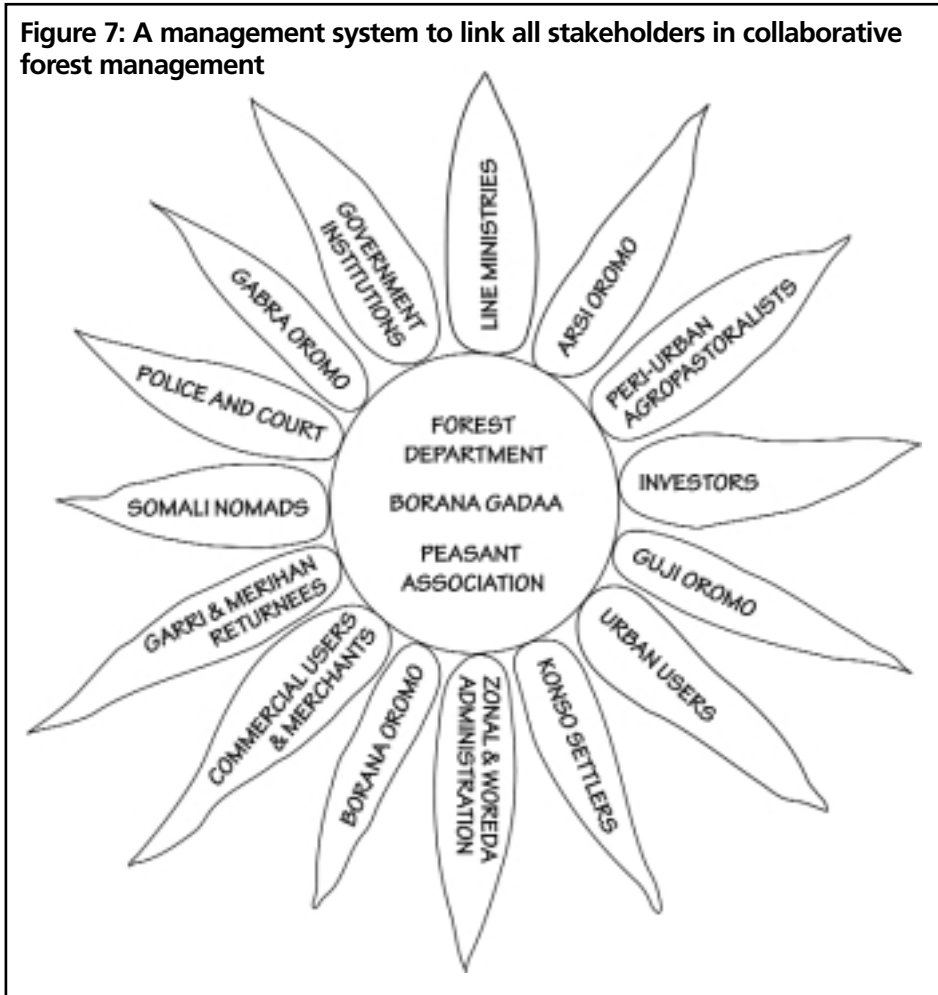
The aim of the Borana Collaborative Forest Management Project is to develop new relationships and partnerships for sustainable forest management, based on mutual recognition of legitimate roles and defined responsibilities (Figure 7).

Under the new system it is envisaged that the *Gadaa* and the government (FD and PA) remain the main legitimate right-holders over the forest. However, the stakeholder analysis identified a number of other ethnic groups using the forest, with an interest in its future management.

The main task facing the project now is to establish institutional mechanisms, together with the different stakeholders identified, which will safeguard representation of these different groups and their interests. For a collaborative management system to work, the government needs to recognise the legitimacy of the *Gadaa*, while the *Gadaa* needs to recognise the rights of access and/or interests of the other user groups and users. And in turn, those other groups need to engage in and recognise a new management system led by a partnership between the *Gadaa* and the government.

SOS Sahel is currently working with the *Gadaa* to rebuild respect and recognition for the *Gadaa* system as a legitimate governance structure and partner in development to national and regional government structures. Other traditional structures representing other ethnic groups, through interaction with the new management structure, will have an equal opportunity to gain legitimacy and recognition.

**Figure 7: A management system to link all stakeholders in collaborative forest management**



However, governance issues remain within the *Gadaa*, and these other traditional institutions, which could undermine a future management system. The *Gadaa* leadership currently retains a lot of power and authority. Under current systems, the effectiveness of the *Gadaa* depends largely on the quality of this leadership. With no formal mechanisms, at present, to address issues of accountability and representation, it is possible for the leaders to abuse their traditional power and authority. Systems of monitoring and appeals procedures for the collaborative management body, will have to be worked out and discussed in an inclusive manner to redress these issues. It is only in this respect that the envisaged partnership can work for sustainable management of the resource.

If the regional and national governments are moving towards the legitimisation of traditional governance systems, then the PA structure, as the lowest level of government, will also be part of this move. In practical terms this requires support to the PA. A key focus of future work will be in enabling the PA structures to fulfil their role as local level partners to the community. This will include work on understanding the opportunity offered by, and the use of power, and the roles and responsibilities, of government actors.

The role of the PA and their relation to the *Gadaa* at present remains unclear. Members of the PA are themselves Borana and bound by the rules of the *Gadaa*. As such they themselves recognise and understand *Gadaa*. Conversely, the *Gadaa* need to recognise the roles and relevance of the PA, as lower levels of state government. Again, this will only occur if the PAs are able to work towards better representation, equity in service provision, and fight any presence of corruption.

Finally, the ability to sanction or exclude free riders is one of the cornerstones of common property resource management. The vision here is that the communities, supported by government, will sanction free riders or rule breakers as part of the new management system. Groups that decide to act outside or against the new system, after having been given the equal opportunity to be included in developing and/or running the new system, risk being excluded. This assumes that the new management structure is supported by both the majority of community groups and the government. It is the role of the project to make this situation clear to all concerned groups from the outset of negotiations.

## **Working with conflict**

Conflicting interests exist between different resource user groups and in some cases (e.g. between the Borana and the Garri described above) this conflict can become violent.

Our current work has shown that traditional systems of conflict resolution amongst and between stakeholder ethnic groups in Borana do exist. Given the levels of existing conflicts in Borana, it can be assumed that these systems are less functional now than they were in the past, although they still have potential (Coppock 1994). Increasing external pressures on the area's resources, as well as the erosion of traditional social systems and weakened social cohesion within ethnic groups, leads us to assume that the existing conflicts, in many instances, are now beyond the scope of traditional conflict management systems.

Becoming involved in conflict over resources is often feared for its negative implications. However conflict is an inevitable part of shared management systems. Conflict resolution and management will be core to the community's capacity to manage.

Existing systems need to be further reviewed and understood in terms of their functionality today, with particular reference to their relevance and application to the different levels of conflict that may occur in a new management system. Traditional conflict resolution bodies need to be identified and strengthened in the community, as well as new skills built within partner groups in order to understand and act in natural resource based conflict situations.

### **Meeting the new challenges in development**

Demands on development professionals, in terms of their roles and the skills they require to achieve those roles, are both high and continually changing. Skills in participatory development, community planning and organisation, negotiation and mediation skills, institutional support and traditional and modern governance, the development of civil society and legal frameworks for decentralisation are all new skills required of development workers, in addition to their technical capacity.

The gap between this need and what is available, in terms of appropriately skilled development staff, remains large. This gap will continue to limit the necessary shift in development practice until it is addressed.

New development practice desperately needs new development practitioners, and these new professionals should be filtering out of the various colleges and universities, which are themselves increasingly widespread in Ethiopia. It is of concern that academic and training institutions, charged with producing tomorrow's professionals, are not changing quickly enough or rising to this challenge.

### **New common property regimes: New management partnerships**

Much is known about natural resource management systems and institutions of the past. Borana has been well studied and its traditional institutions and systems are held up as lessons for development. What is less well described is how traditional systems might be transformed or revitalised to function in today's realities.

The project in Borana is focusing on the capacity, ability, awareness and activity of the traditional local structures and resource management systems under today's conditions and circumstances. Traditional systems in transition are complex and sensitive issues. Concern about interfering in traditional systems often results in no action being taken or in rhetoric about participatory development, which remains outside the current social context.

In the light of this, our on-going initiative must be understood to be experimental. It is developing in response to the stated needs and desires of local groups to

manage their own lives and resources, through their own institutions. The next step concerns traditional and government structures working out the details of how this can work in practice. Critically, traditional institutions need to decide whether to commit to changes that will enable them to work on a more equal basis with modern government structures.

SOS Sahel aims to assist stakeholders to look forward rather than back, in relation to the development potential of traditional institutions and local management systems.

The final point to be made concerning our work and what we have learnt is that the identification of different stakeholders, and understanding their different interests, is a gradual learning process. A multiple stakeholder resource project requires time for implementation if it is to produce enduring positive results. Working within short-term donor timeframes presents real risks, in that untimely withdrawal of support, or rushed processes, could cause serious problems in terms of the quality of new resource management systems being established.





## Appendix 1. Examples of results of the stakeholder analysis

A summary of main stakeholders' rights, responsibilities and revenues in Areeri PA			
Stakeholders	Responsibility	Rights	Revenues
Grazers/browsers	Custodians of range management	Utilisation of pasture resource, range related decisions.	Pasture and associated resources.
Forest users for ritual purposes	None	Use of trees/shrubs for ritual purposes.	Cultural ends.
Cosmetics collectors	None	Using rights to aromatic plant products.	Cosmetic value for women, household income generation.
Construction timber harvesters	None	De facto rights.	Household income generation, fencing animal enclosures, house construction.
Firewood collectors	None	Use rights to dead wood.	Domestic energy supply, household income generation.
Wild food collectors	None	Use rights to what nature readily provides.	Supplementary human diet, household income generation rarely though, drought coping mechanism.
Wild honey collectors	None	Use rights to what is opportunistically available.	Supplementary human diet, household income generation.



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