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SUCCESS STORY

Impact Evaluation Tests Innovative Approach to Securing Communal Rights in Ethiopia

Evaluation Team Meets with Project Implementers to Design Impact Evaluation



Pastoralist near Shinile in Ethiopia's Somali Region.
Photo Credit: Daniel Rubenson

Telling Our Story

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Households belonging to pastoral and agro-pastoral communities often have difficulty tapping into opportunities for the commercial production of livestock and crops, accessing markets, and expanding into new agricultural sectors. Lack of access to inputs (fertilizer, machinery, veterinary supplies, etc.) and credit, insecure land tenure and property rights, and unequal bargaining power all contribute to limiting their economic opportunities. To address these barriers, USAID, in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia, has recently launched a new project – Land Administration to Nurture Development (LAND). Under LAND, pastoral and agro-pastoral communities are expected to benefit from stronger property rights to their communal lands. The project will also help to improve governance at the local level by providing communities with decision-making rights over their natural assets, such as land and water. With stronger tenure, communities may diversify their agricultural production, engage with outside investors to add value to their livestock and agricultural goods, undertake long-term investment, increase their incomes, and improve their livelihoods.

To measure the effectiveness of the project, USAID has designed an impact evaluation. The evaluation will examine whether the project results in the expected outcomes, including increased livelihoods and opportunities for generating income within the targeted communities.

The evaluation team and the LAND project team met in Ethiopia between September 14 and October 3, 2013. To design a rigorous impact evaluation, both teams worked together to define general guidelines and clarify the type of information needed, including definition of community units, identification of the pool of potential sites where the project will operate, randomizing the selection of implementation sites, and coordinating the evaluation design with the project's implementation plan.

While designing and implementing a rigorous impact evaluation strategy requires greater up-front effort from both the implementing and evaluation teams, the payoff is being able to more accurately assess program impacts and improve future programming.