



# **ENABLING RESILIENCE FOR PASTORAL COMMUNITIES IN ETHIOPIA**

## **PRIME Impact and Results Report**

MARCH 2019

## CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

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### > RECOMMENDED CITATION

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## About PRIME

Most people living in Ethiopia's drylands are pastoralists<sup>1</sup> and two-thirds of the land is used for extensive livestock production.<sup>2</sup> However, being a pastoralist in Ethiopia is becoming increasingly challenging as the population increases at swift rates<sup>3</sup>, climate change shocks grow more severe, and traditional rangeland management of pasture areas deteriorates. Though migratory practices have allowed pastoralists to contend with such obstacles persistent economic challenges, nutritional problems and climate instability drive many people to move away from pastoralism. People transitioning out of pastoralism face problems in securing alternative livelihoods due to lack of technical and life skills.

Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement and Market Expansion (PRIME) was a USAID-led Feed the Future program that included a markets based and adaptive management approach to help pastoralists strengthen systems to simultaneously address economic needs and climate adaptation to increase resilience capacities. By working within pastoralist markets, PRIME helped people to be prepared for environmental shocks by strengthening systems as opposed to relying on humanitarian handouts which achieve, at best, short term results.

### About the Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion (PRIME)

PRIME worked with traditional pastoralists and those transitioning out of pastoralism (TOPs) in Ethiopia's drylands to **reduce chronic poverty and food insecurity.**

**PRIME Goal:** Reduce poverty and hunger

**PRIME Objective:** To increase household incomes and enhance resilience to climate change through market linkages

**Timeframe:** October 2012–March 2019

**Budget:** \$70,000,000 USD

**Donor:** USAID

**Location:** Afar, Oromia and Somali regions of Ethiopia

**IMPACT: Increased household income 78%**

PRIME households income increased on average to an equivalent of \$2,287 USD per year.

**Positive impacts in food security** Despite record droughts, PRIME-targeted households showed only 4% decline in food security compared to 30% in others.

**Marginalized people have greater resilience**

2,252,404 people benefited from PRIME were enabled to better withstand shocks and stresses.<sup>4</sup>

1 Between 60–70% of people according to Solomon Desta, "Pastoralism and Development in Ethiopia," Economic Focus, accessed October 17, 2015, [http://www.eeacon.org/sites/default/files/publications/Economic%20Focus%20Vol%209%20No%203\\_0.pdf](http://www.eeacon.org/sites/default/files/publications/Economic%20Focus%20Vol%209%20No%203_0.pdf)

2 Ibid.

3 By 2050 Ethiopia is expected to be the world's seventh most populated country. "U.S. Projected to Remain World's Third Most Populous Country Through 20150, Census Bureau Reports," U.S. Census Bureau, June 27, 2010, [www.census.gov/newsroomreleases/archives/international\\_population/cb11-116.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroomreleases/archives/international_population/cb11-116.html)

4 PRIME reached 321, 772 households and an estimated 2,252,404 individuals with enhanced resilience. (Year 7, Quarter 1, December 31, 2018).

## PRIME's Innovative Strategy

Led by Mercy Corps and implemented by a consortium of national and international organizations, **PRIME interventions helped strengthen the systems that pastoralists operate in so that they can earn higher incomes and be more resilient to climate change shocks that exacerbate chronic poverty and recurrent food insecurity.** Contextualized activities integrated across the program's three geographic regions improved livestock productivity, strengthened management of natural resources, secured pathways to alternative livelihoods, and improved nutrition for mothers and children.

**Mercy Corps defines resilience as the capacity of communities in complex socio-ecological systems to learn, cope, adapt, and transform in the face of shocks and stresses.<sup>5</sup>**

### PRIME Objective Components & Activities

PRIME targeted those working in pastoralism and pastoralists seeking alternative livelihoods, with the underpinning theory that systems working in synergy must be strengthened simultaneously. Therefore PRIME's intermediate results (IR) concentrated on five key components (listed at right) to accomplish its goal.

Mercy Corps led the implementation of these objectives across the consortium of 10 organizations, 5 technical areas, and 3 regional clusters. These complementary objectives created the framework whereby teams were structured in each of the geographic regions and implemented by the consortium of partners through field sourced contextualized activities.

*"Imagine that each component is part of a vaccine that can help communities adapt to climate change; each community should get all the courses of the vaccine—from animal health to natural resource management to access to finance to nutrition—in order to become truly resilient."*

— Netsaalam Bahiru, Alternative Livelihoods Advisor, PRIME

## INTERMEDIATE RESULTS (IR)



**IR1 ) LIVESTOCK PRODUCTIVITY**  
**Goal: Improved productivity and competitiveness of livestock and livestock products.**

Activities included: strengthening networks of private veterinary providers; promoting dairy production via milk collection groups; linkages with processors and business expansion grants to processors; promoting meat production via an export-quality slaughterhouse; live animal export, and trade fairs.



**IR2 ) NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**  
**Goal: Enhanced adaptation to climate change via natural resource management.**

Activities included: rangeland mapping; rangeland council capacity building, including cultivating women as decision-makers; social analysis and action groups; water point rehabilitation; weather forecasting, sharing climate information, and clearing of bush and invasive plants.



**IR3 ) ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS**  
**Goal: Strengthened alternative livelihoods for households transitioning out of pastoralism.**

Activities included: agricultural inputs; access to finance; renewable energy projects, and support for people augmenting or transitioning out of pastoralism, including vocational training scholarships, online job platforms, entrepreneur networks, and job fairs.



**IR4 ) LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE**  
**Goal: Enhanced innovation, learning, and knowledge management.**

Activities included: defining indicators and other measurements; collecting, organizing, and sharing data from all PRIME components, and otherwise managing information and materials for use by stakeholders, donors, the public, and PRIME itself.



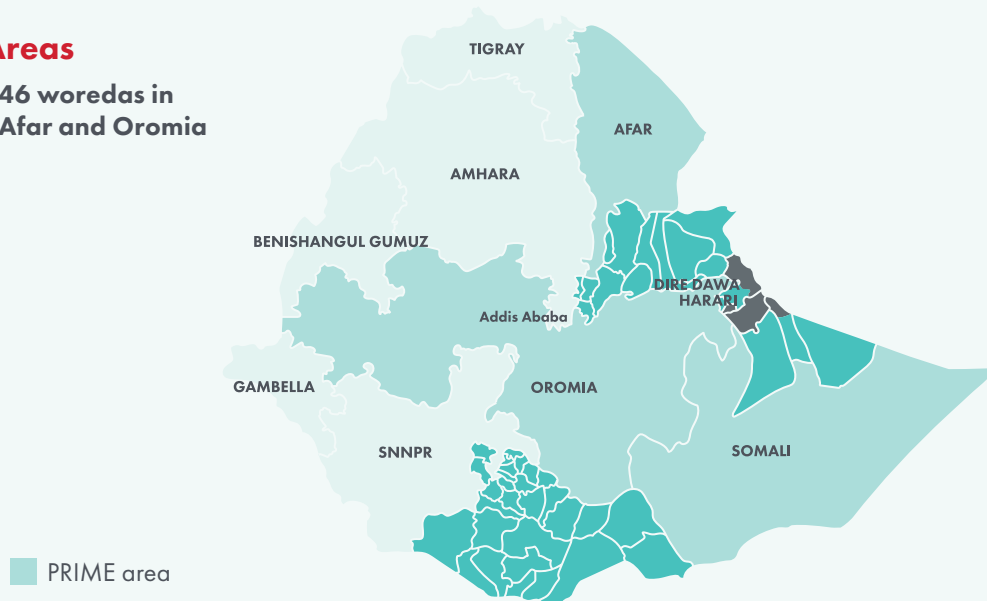
**IR5 ) NUTRITION**  
**Goal: Improved dietary diversity of targeted households.**

Activities included: messages about livestock health and veterinary services; including fodder and veterinary medicine; a series of radio soap operas aimed at young mothers which provides information about nutrition during the first 1000 days of a child's life; theater performances, and a camel caravan.

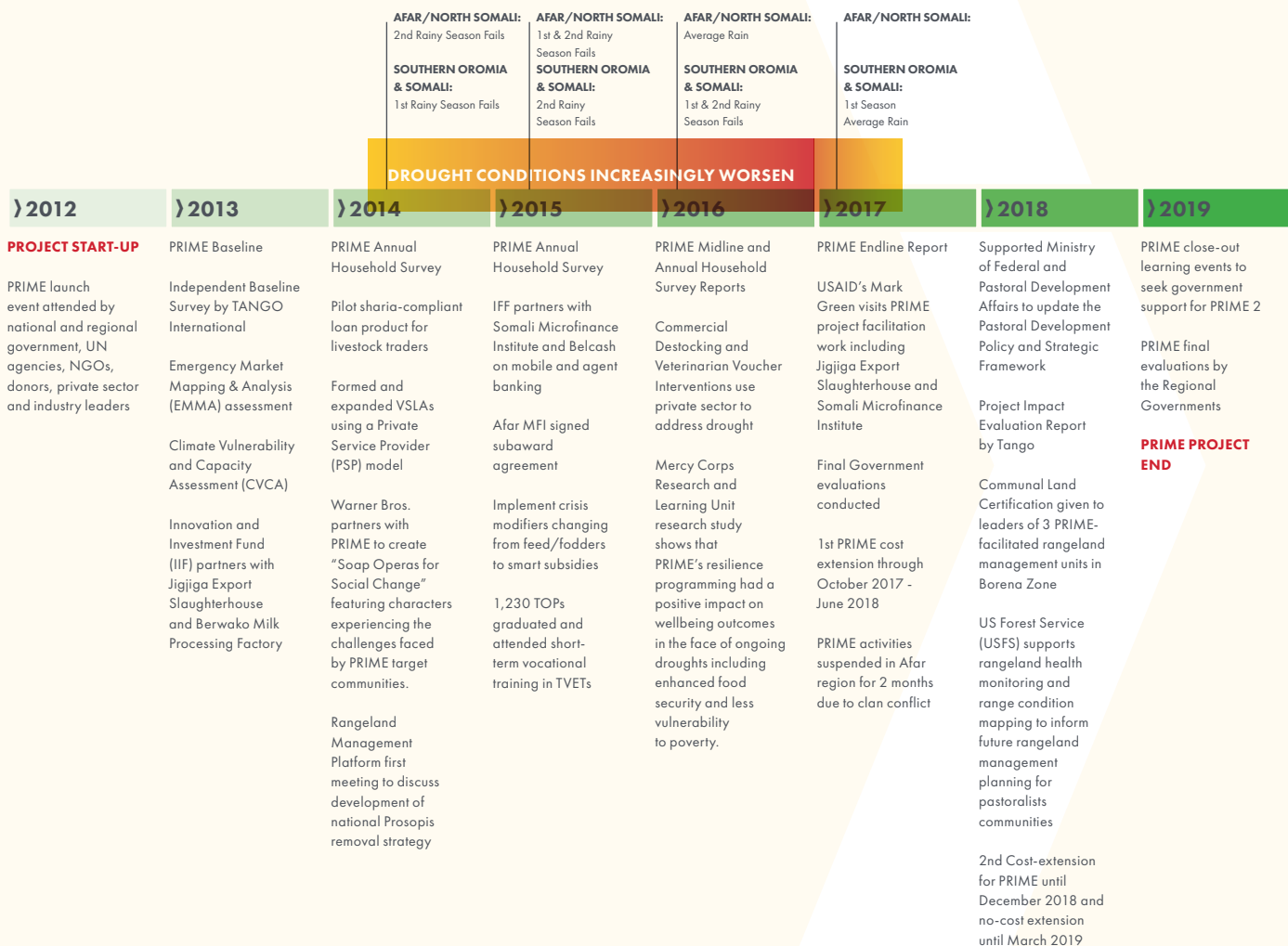
5 For more see [mercycorps.org/resilience](https://mercycorps.org/resilience)

## Map of Intervention Areas

PRIME was implemented in 46 woredas in the drylands of the Somali, Afar and Oromia regional states of Ethiopia.

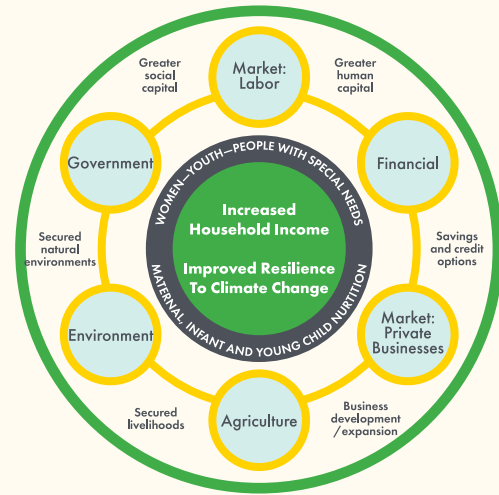
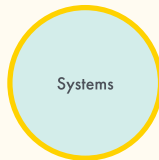


## Timeline of PRIME Project Implementation



# Building Resilience: PRIME'S Integrated Systems-Strengthening Approach

## LEGEND



## Key Implementation Approaches

PRIME operated through the following approaches across all IR components:

**› Market Systems Development.** PRIME's market-driven activities used facilitation and co-investment rather than direct implementation and cash or service handouts, to invest in the capacity of local stakeholders as key leverage points to scale activities. Since access to finance was cited as one of the top challenges for businesses in Ethiopia, a \$6 million USD **Innovation Investment Fund (IIF)**<sup>6</sup> was managed by PRIME and USAID to leverage investments of more than \$18 million USD in 21 medium to large-scale enterprises using a cost-share model. Investees included microfinance institutions, dairy production facilities, and livestock value chain businesses. The IIF contributed to the program's flexibility in making investments where it was felt they could make the greatest impact.

**› Adaptive Management.** USAID and PRIME leadership sought to build adaptive management into program design. Budget flexibility, the use of crisis modifiers and field sourced activities ensured the program was able to pivot when needed to respond to emergent conditions and new learnings.

**Multi-year budget flexibility** was key to enabling PRIME to respond to changing contexts and deliver tangible results while also pursuing foundational market facilitation activities over the long term. Specific activities could be quickly reprogrammed without additional approvals, thus allowing the budget to be adapted over the program lifespan to best achieve its goals.

PRIME was an early adopter of **crisis modifiers**<sup>7</sup> including the creation of an alternative plan for rapid response to a shock—from the program conception in order to mitigate against loss of investments towards longer-term development outcomes. PRIME's foresight in planning allowed the program to pivot and implement crisis modifiers at the onset of the 2015 drought. This was achieved through fodder subsidies and livestock veterinary vouchers aiming to support animal health and milk production as well as incentives for traders to maintain the price of livestock. These strategies were critical to the success of PRIME's achievements during and despite the drought crisis.

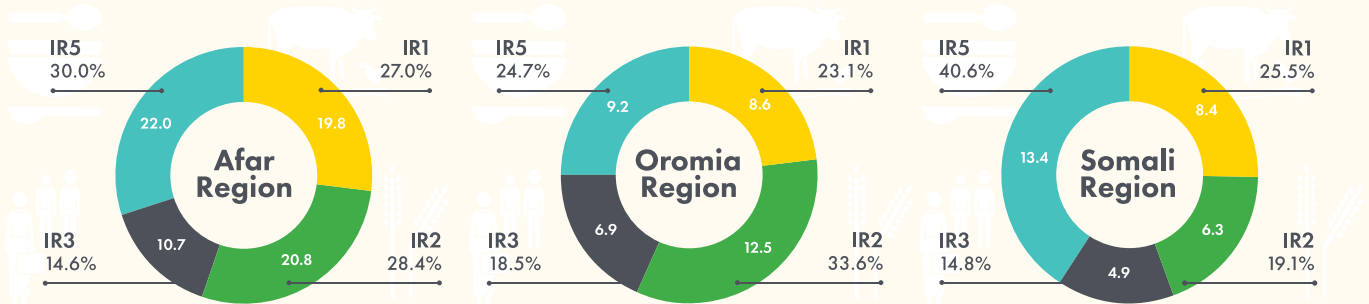
**› Integration of Sectors and Objective Components.** As the PRIME lead, Mercy Corps managed 9 partner organizations, 5 technical areas, and 3 regional clusters. If there is a formula to the success of PRIME's integrated approach it is in engaging partners and leaders from each component team to systematically work together as opposed to operating simultaneous siloed activities. PRIME used a **concept notes system**<sup>8</sup> to source activities proposed by field teams which allowed for direct engagement with participating communities through submissions via an online system; more than 1,300 concept note submissions were received. The system engaged staff and partners at all levels and geographies to support real time response to contextual needs and changing circumstances as well as a feedback loop to learn from activities across the entire program thus bolstering learning and integration.

6 Mercy Corps. PRIME Innovation Investment Fund Learning Brief.

7 "Crisis modifiers" are a funding mechanism designed to support a rapid, early response to new humanitarian needs so as to protect the development gains during a crisis. PRIME was an early adopter of crisis modifiers which were initially designed in the sahel region to enhance adaptability of development programs in response to drought in pastoralist areas. "EARLY RESPONSE TO DROUGHT IN PASTORALIST AREAS: Lessons from the USAID Crisis Modifier in East Africa", November 2015 found at [http://karamojaresilience.org/images/what-we-do/crisis-modifier-review/usaids-crisis-modifier-review\\_final\\_draft\\_jan\\_2016.pdf](http://karamojaresilience.org/images/what-we-do/crisis-modifier-review/usaids-crisis-modifier-review_final_draft_jan_2016.pdf)

8 Mercy Corps. PRIME Innovation Investment Fund Learning Brief.

## Average Number of Activities By Region, 2012-2017<sup>9</sup>



Sourcing activities from field teams allowed implementation to reflect the needs of the operating context. For instance in the Somali region, dietary diversity and nutrition were a higher priority than in Oromia, resulting in a higher concentration of activities around IR5 objectives.

This is a testimony to the projects ability to respond to needs and adapt to changing contexts rather than follow a predestined work plan that might have otherwise not been reflective of different needs in each region.

## Women's Participation in Decision Making at the Household Level

(PRIME Midline Annual Household Survey Report, 2016)<sup>10</sup>



### Gender Equity and Inclusion of People with Disabilities.

All teams participated in gender training and engaged people with disabilities in programming making necessary adjustments for special needs. Each concept note developed for PRIME considered how the activity would address gender equity and people with disabilities.

The principle gender issue tackled by PRIME was **women's participation household decisions**. Women's participation in natural resource management (NRM) committees and the growth of Village-level Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) groups, whose members are mostly women, played a significant role in increasing women's participation in decision making in their households. As illustrated in the charts above, women who reported their ability to meaningfully participate in decision-making regarding economic activities, nutrition, NRM and governance in their household rose by 9%, in line with year over year increases, especially in Somali region and in Oromia (78%).

### Market Systems Development (MSD)

Market Systems Development (MSD) is the theory that systems - financial, market, health, agriculture and environmental — act in synergy, not isolation. By strengthening these systems simultaneously, households and communities are strengthened and have greater ability to remain strong through shocks. PRIME used this unique approach to building resilience through market system facilitation throughout all components of the project. For instance, PRIME strengthened the linkage between producers and markets through interventions at identified opportunity points in the livestock and agriculture market system without becoming part of the market itself, and therefore avoiding dependency. PRIME made cost-share financial investments and training to bolster the market system in areas such as access to fodder, veterinary services, dairy processors, input suppliers, traders, and livestock processing facilities.

Many practitioners and government counterparts were wary of this new approach, requiring time, explanation and demonstrated evidence of its success in order to adopt it. This also resulted in partners and peer agencies beginning to appreciate the value of this work, ultimately realizing that development needs to shift away from direct services to strengthening systems for long term, sustainable change.

### MSD Cost-Sharing Philosophy

Cost-sharing is an important part of strengthening financial systems by including those often left out, and building social capital. Traditional thinking sees it inappropriate to ask beneficiaries or local partners for money or in-kind contributions in order to help themselves. However, cost-sharing was fundamental to PRIME's approach by ensuring people had a stake in the success of strengthening their businesses by requiring them to match at least 50% cash or in-kind to Mercy Corps' 50% for business grants.

<sup>9</sup> PRIME Endline Survey, (2017) p. 28.

<sup>10</sup> For this indicator USAID agreed to use FY2016 AHS midline data to apply to the FY2017 endline due to budget constraints.

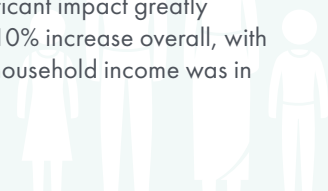
# PRIME IMPACT

Through the PRIME project **2,252,404 marginalized people have enhanced resilience to withstand shocks and stresses** from climate change through market linkages. Multiple research initiatives agree that PRIME positively impacted resilience despite severe droughts experienced at the midline of project implementation (see timeline above). PRIME interventions worked to strengthen market systems where pastoralists and those transitioning out of pastoralism

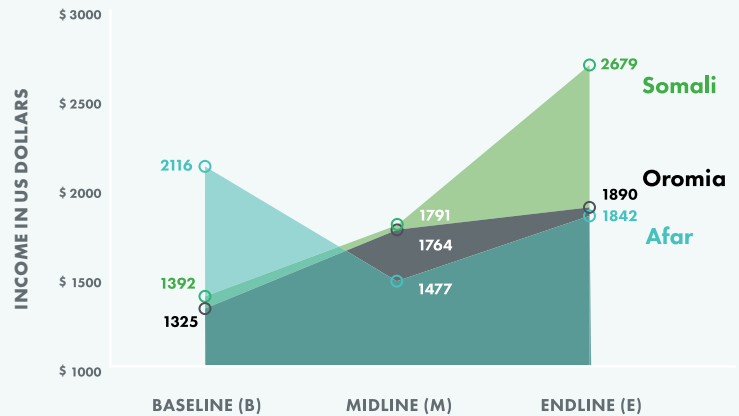
operate so that they can have stronger livelihoods giving them a better buffer to the climate shocks indicative of the drylands. Despite the extreme droughts, PRIME surpassed targets for increase in incomes and use of animal health services. While the target was not met, despite the drought, there was an improvement in dietary diversity for children and pregnant/lactating women in target communities signalling positive outcomes for PRIME families.<sup>11</sup>

## Today communities are more resilient because of PRIME interventions.

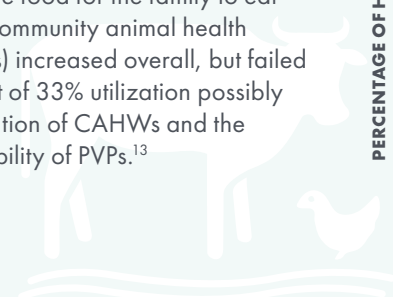
**Families have more income to help them through shocks.** PRIME's systems facilitation approach helped household nominal income in target areas increase by 78% (equivalent to \$2,287 USD annually over the baseline of \$1,589 USD) giving families greater financial security and more ability to diversify their diet. Increased income was PRIME's most significant impact greatly surpassing the goal of 10% increase overall, with the largest increase in household income was in Somali region.<sup>12</sup>



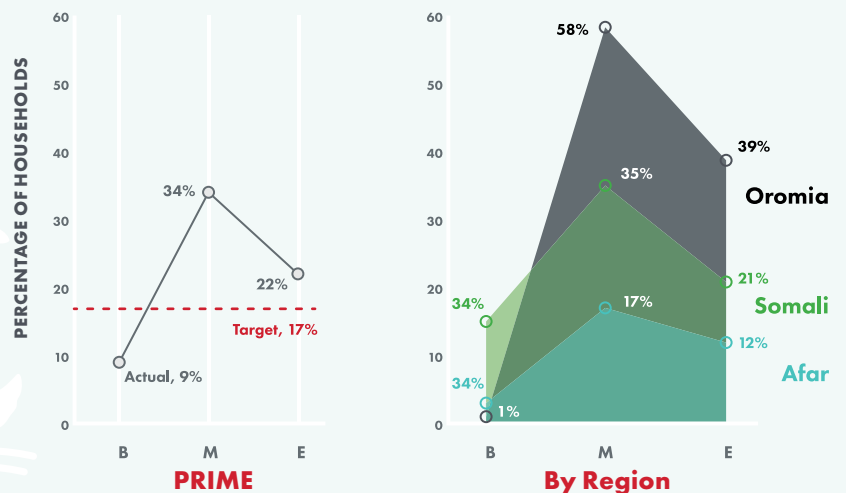
### Nominal Annual Income by Region (in USD)



**Livestock health have improved.** PRIME interventions helped increase use of animal health services from private veterinary pharmacies (PVPs) to 22% of households (5% over target of 17%). Animal health is important for pastoralists because healthy animals fetch higher prices at market, have less chance of unexpected death in a shock, and produce more food for the family to eat and sell. Use of community animal health workers (CAHWs) increased overall, but failed to meet the target of 33% utilization possibly because of migration of CAHWs and the increased availability of PVPs.<sup>13</sup>



### Households Using PVP-Provided Animal Health Services (percentage)

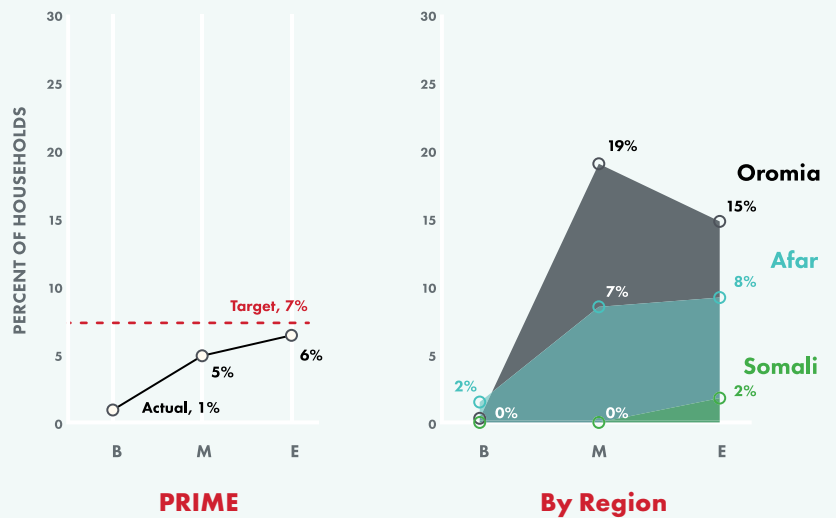


11 PRIME impact data was largely sourced from the Year 6 Annual Report (2017) and PRIME Endline Survey (2017), except where otherwise referenced.  
 12 The upward trend was similar in the regions, except Afar Region which experienced prolonged severe drought during the project period and was the likely reason for the difference. Kimetrica attributed PRIME's interventions with preventing even greater setbacks in nominal incomes for Afari households, though results were not statistically significant for Afar.  
 13 Results were not statistically significant for Somali Region.



**Children eat more diverse diets.** PRIME reached 170,195 children under five with nutrition activities and 1.2 million people through Soap Opera for Social Change nutritional messaging radio programming in local languages. PRIME mainstreamed nutritional education across components to help to **increase the number of households where children ate 4 or more food groups** (from 1% at baseline to 6% at endline). Dietary diversity of pregnant or lactating women increased slightly, but fell short of the target. Overall, improvements were achieved, but due to small sample sizes of pregnant or lactating women and children age 6-23 months in the households surveyed the analysis was weak potentially weakening statistical significance.<sup>14</sup>

## Households with a Child Aged 6-23 months Consuming at Least Four Food Groups (percentage)



**Businesses in livestock and dairy sectors received critical investments to grow.** \$18 million USD private investments leveraged with \$6 million USD in business investments and 5,668 full-time equivalent jobs created.



**Communities are better organized to adopt natural resource management practices.** 42,008 hectares of rangeland improved through natural resource management and 180,422 individuals increased capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate variability and change.



**Financial service access expanded to pastoral communities.** 341,316 individuals obtained direct access to financial services and products, 301,578 individuals opened savings accounts, and 37,838 individuals obtained business loans.



**Policy environment is improved.** PRIME facilitated the development of 11 enabling policies to support inclusive financial services, inclusivity for the disabled, agri-sensitive nutrition, and pastoral development.

<sup>14</sup> Across regions, the implementation of PRIME is associated with an increase equivalent to 0.32 and 0.35 food groups in Afar and Oromia, respectively. For Somali Region, impact evaluation results regarding the increase in food groups were not statistically significant.



K. Lynch / Mercy Corps

## Animal Health is Good for Business and Families

Pastoral communities in Ethiopia rely on their herds for both diet and income. The increased use of private veterinary pharmacies (PVP) and community animal health worker (CAHW) services helps to maintain greater herd health so households can have milk to drink at home, milk to sell in dairy markets, and strong livestock to trade when needed. PRIME helped to facilitate CAHWs to establish business relationships with PVPs through direct sales of veterinary drugs and services, strengthening social capital and market linkages. For example, in PRIME’s final year (2018) in the Somali and Oromia regions 40 PVPs worked through 175 CAHWs to sell veterinary drugs worth \$497,666 USD helping 125,802 pastoral and agro-pastoral households to maintain healthy herds.

## PRIME Increased Resilience to Shocks

Midway into PRIME implementation, Ethiopia was hit with two of their worst droughts in more than 50 years—the prolonged El Nino and La Nina droughts of 2015-2017. The droughts offered an opportunity to assess PRIME’s interventions in the midst of a shock. Rather than transferring resources, by applying crisis modifiers, PRIME doubled down on its market systems approach and continued to work to change behaviors, build capacity, and increase access to markets to ensure that pastoralists are able to earn better income by ensuring that communities are familiar with a range of strategies.

Multiple research initiatives agree that **PRIME’s comprehensive multi-sectoral programming helped to strengthen household and community resilience** capacities to manage the drought effects from climate change including reducing reliance on negative coping mechanisms, preventing unplanned deaths of livestock.<sup>15</sup>

## Estimated recovery trajectory at shock exposure increases for low—and high intensity PRIME project households

According to research contracted by USAID, households residing in communities receiving a comprehensive set of PRIME resilience interventions were able to maintain their food security in the face of the drought shock.<sup>19</sup>

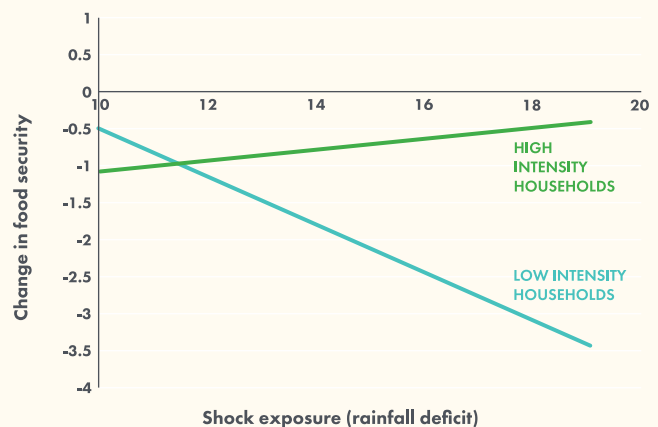
### During the drought PRIME participants had:

**1.4 times higher asset values than a comparison group<sup>16</sup>**

**4% less likelihood of risk of being under the poverty line<sup>17</sup>**

**Reported up to 20% less livestock mortality rates<sup>18</sup>**

**Increased borrowing from friends and family, reducing reliance on risky borrowing mechanisms**



<sup>15</sup> Mercy Corps, “Climate Resilient Development Case Study Series: Ethiopia”.

<sup>16</sup> Mercy Corps (2017). “Enhancing Resilience to Severe Drought: What Works? Evidence from Mercy Corps’ PRIME Program in the Somali region of Ethiopia”.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Smith, L., Frankenberger, T., Nelson, S. (2018). *Feed the Future Ethiopia Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement and Market Expansion (PRIME) Project Impact Evaluation: Report of Recurrent Monitoring Survey 2 (2015/16)*. Produced by TANGO International and Save the Children as part of the Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (REAL) Associate Award.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

## PRIME Programmatic Outcomes

PRIME made significant achievements across all the technical components despite the onset of drought and transition to emergency drought response halfway through implementation. In fact, households that were exposed to

more project activities were less likely to see a deterioration of their food security as the severity of the drought increased as compared with households that were exposed to fewer project activities.<sup>20</sup>



### PRIME Improved Productivity and Competitiveness of Livestock and Livestock Product<sup>21</sup>

PRIME improved access to and availability of quality livestock inputs, including feed, fodder and animal health services; improved meat and live animals trade; and strengthened the dairy value chain, while enhancing access to key market information.

**39,459** households supported to apply new technologies or management practices to maintain healthier livestock and pastoral practices

**5,270** pastoralist households received vouchers for veterinary products to protect herds during drought crisis<sup>22</sup>

**40** of private veterinary pharmacies (PVPs) contracted with PRIME to improve animal health practices

**175** community animal health workers (CAHWs) trained through PRIME to support animal health

### Strengthening Market Linkages During a Shock Through Smart Subsidies

When droughts hit Ethiopia PRIME held steadfast to a market systems approach through the emergency response by offering “smart” subsidies in lieu of direct delivery of services that have proven to lack sustainability and disrupt rather than strengthen markets. PRIME used two mechanisms: veterinary vouchers and commercial destocking incentives.

› Veterinary vouchers helped to protect the health of livestock by reducing the risk of drought-induced diseases through access to veterinary services and establishing a sustainable network between livestock owners, CAHWs, PVP and veterinary drug wholesalers. 5,270 pastoralist households from 53 kebeles in six woredas received vouchers and **87% of vouchers were used to purchase veterinary products from PVPs supported by PRIME, resulting in reduced death and sickness in herds.**<sup>23</sup>

› Commercial destocking incentives motivated local traders to buy more livestock from areas affected by the drought which they would have otherwise avoided due to declining conditions of drought affected livestock. Commercial destocking is the selling off animals to reduce herd size and therefore maintain a healthier

(i.e. fatter) and more profitable herd overall. The subsidy resulted in 12,237 shoats destocked from target markets. **Pastoralists earned enough income by destocking to purchase fodder to maintain remaining livestock and support dairy production for sale and family needs.** Additionally, with less animals in drought areas, grazing was reduced on rangelands, easing the pressure on suffering fields during the drought.<sup>24</sup>

*“I was able to maintain a steady supply of animals during a period when my business should have had few if any earnings. I also benefited from linking with producers during the commercial destocking program helping me to establish a number of positive relationships to the extent that I now have more livestock trade than I can manage.”*

—Duba Wario, a participating livestock trader in the Oromia Region<sup>25</sup>

### Innovation Investment Fund Supports an Integrated Approach to Market Growth

Through the PRIME Innovation Investment Fund (IIF) investments of \$6,000,000 USD in financial access and poultry, livestock and milk processing ventures leveraged \$18,000,000 USD in private investment funds to support growth of markets for pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in target areas.

20 Smith, L., Frankenberger, T., Nelson, S. (2018). Feed the Future Ethiopia Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement and Market Expansion (PRIME) Project Impact Evaluation: Report of Recurrent Monitoring Survey 2 (2015/16). Produced by TANGO International and Save the Children as part of the Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (REAL) Associate Award.

21 PRIME Year 6 Annual Report (2018).

22 Mercy Corps (2016 April). SMART SUBSIDIES IN DROUGHT RESPONSE: Veterinary Voucher.

23 Ibid.

24 Mercy Corps (2016 April). SMART SUBSIDIES IN DROUGHT RESPONSE: Commercial De-stocking in Ethiopia.

25 Mercy Corps (2018 May). FEED THE FUTURE: Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement and Market Expansion (PRIME) Project: Building Prosperity and Resilience in Ethiopia's Lowlands.

The Innovation Investment Fund (IIF) supported the establishment of Barwaqo Milk Processing Plant project in Jijiga with a cost-share grant of \$370,000 USD (project valued at \$1.3 million USD) which increased access to local milk processing in the Somali region and added jobs. The Barwaqo Milk Processing Plant is one in a series of interventions that supported improved productivity and competitiveness of pastoralists in the Somali Region. Strengthening systems requires multiple inputs and when households benefit from the collective effort of PRIME activities their resilience is greatly improved, as seen in Fawsiya and Nimo's story below.<sup>26</sup> PRIME provided

technical and financial support to develop actors in the dairy value chain such as producers, milk collectors, and milk processing companies.

*“While the completion of this project poses numerous challenges, the vision of working together with the milk producing communities and the support we are getting from PRIME and USAID keeps us confident that what we are doing will bring tremendous benefits to the households who we create markets for, the consumers, and the national economy.”*

—Amir Mukhtar, owner of Barwako Milk Processing Factory<sup>27</sup>

## WORKING WITHIN THE LIVESTOCK AND MILK PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

Fawsiya and Nimo, two women pastoralists who managed camel herds and milk production, credit the expansion of their businesses to joining a community-based milk cooperative supported by PRIME investments. The co-op guaranteed them a fair milk price at a nearby processing plant relieving them of the burden to travel far distances squandering time and milk quality in the hot sun. They also improved their herd health by using local veterinarian who expanded services under a PRIME cost-share grant.

With their businesses strong, the women joined a village savings and loan group (VSLA) which PRIME helped initiate allowing them to build savings and invest in their businesses. During the droughts, both women used their loans to buy fodder and animal supplements to maintain milk supply for production and to feed their families.

PRIME also linked Fawsiya and Nimo with an environmental system program to help understand how to reverse rangeland degradation to promote biodiversity, reduce conflict and maintain critical grazing resources.

**“We plant sorghum because it provides extra food for the family, but more importantly, it provides a fodder reserve for our milk animals when grazing opportunities become limited, to keep milk production going.”**

—Fawsiya Ziyad, Somali Region camel herder and mother and now farmer, jokingly explains that with the time saved from not walking to Jijiga to sell milk they can now farm. Their ability to diversify their food sources and businesses strengthens their families resilience to shocks.



## PRIME Enhanced Pastoralists' Adaptation to Climate Change and Natural Resource Management

PRIME revitalized community rangeland management and improved early warning and related climate information systems. This resulted in improved resource governance and management practices, leading to more informed, forward-looking decision-making towards climate adaptation. By also focusing on better livestock productivity and livelihood diversification, PRIME simultaneously helped improve livelihood-related decision-making processes to consider climate change and support adaptation planning. Through PRIME 180,422 individuals have increased their capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate variability and climate

change, the benefits of which transfer to thousands more who will be indirectly impacted and influenced through their natural resource management.

Key strategies for achieving climate change objectives were engaging Rangeland Councils and forming Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) groups.

**› Rangeland Councils** were often people's first point of contact for PRIME and offered an opportunity to support PRIME's broader development goals by gaining entry and insight into communities. By **rehabilitating more than 42,000 hectares of rangelands** PRIME identified and helped to revitalize the centuries old Rangeland Council system. Councils had regular meetings,

<sup>26</sup> For the full story see: Mercy Corps (2018 May). FEED THE FUTURE: Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement and Market Expansion (PRIME) Project: Building Prosperity and Resilience in Ethiopia's Lowlands.

<sup>27</sup> Mercy Corps. PRIME Innovation Investment Fund Learning Brief.

organized community rehabilitation of water points and bush areas, cleared invasive species, and established dry season grazing reserve areas. These groups provided the rangeland management essential for livestock market expansion and nutrition work.

› **Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP)** groups were developed by PRIME’s partner CARE to share traditional and meteorological forecasts with communities through facilitated discussion groups. Using forecasting to plan strategies to adapt to potential scenarios helped people initiate behavior change based on scientific data. A consultative workshop was held with 128 PSP members in 2018 (Year 6 of implementation) in which the

participants agreed that PSP should be integrated into government annual planning, acknowledging the climate information needs and its importance for pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods which are prone to recurrent drought. They stressed that the **PSP approach is a participatory and sector inclusive tool, and the advisories are the key for disaster risk reduction planning and adaptive actions.**

*“We were ready when the last drought came because we had a plan to deal with it, and because PRIME helped us implement parts of it.”*  
—Aki Dida, Dida Rangeland Council Member<sup>28</sup>



### PRIME Strengthened Alternative Livelihoods and Access to Finance for Households Transitioning Out of Pastoralism

PRIME improved livelihood options for people transitioning out of pastoralism (TOPs), especially youth and women, through providing access to skills development and vocational training as well as increasing access to financial tools including credit, loans and savings mechanisms.

(52% female) received contextualized and market-driven training in skills such as garment-making, welding, carpentry, automobile repair, information technology, masonry, construction, electric installation, and hairdressing.

PRIME trained Ministry of Social and Labor Affairs agents to mentor and champion individuals with special needs within their communities. PRIME also made available a number of small-business start-up grants to graduates with a TVET certificate of completion and an approved business plan. People with special needs are now regularly supported by their local Social and Labor Affairs office when trying to locate a business venue, navigate business start-up regulations, obtain credit, and receive marketing support.

#### Technical Training and Employability Linkages

PRIME worked with Technical Vocational Education Training Centers (TVETs) to better prepare TOPs to succeed in the workforce and as business owners. PRIME helped TVETs establish new skill and labor curriculums and update existing curriculums as well as equip and adapt facilities and courses to accommodate women and people with special needs. PRIME then awarded 1,695 scholarships for low-income applicants to participate in the course offerings. 852 youth

**14 TVETs** received support to create TOPs appropriate curriculum and adapt content and facilities to PWD and gender needs

**1,695** youth and women won PRIME scholarships for TVET courses

**3,953** youth graduated from TVETs using curricula developed under PRIME

**5,688** full time equivalent jobs and another 1,213 jobs obtained (i.e, did not qualify to be counted as FTE) for both skilled and unskilled youths and TOPs.

28 Mercy Corps (2018 May). FEED THE FUTURE: Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement and Market Expansion (PRIME) Project: Building Prosperity and Resilience in Ethiopia’s Lowlands.

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDS) TO STRENGTHEN LIVELIHOODS OPPORTUNITIES

In Year 6, PRIME-supported small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with training and facility rehabilitation to be better able to employ community members with disabilities. Examples of livelihoods where PWDs can work includes shoa fattening, furniture making and secretary services. The SMEs have created employment opportunities for 47 PWDs (46.8% Female) and five PWD SMEs supported by PRIME collected \$6,150 USD in revenue.

## Access to Finance

PRIME supported three micro-finance institutions (MFIs) including Somali MFI, Rays MFI and Afar MFI to provide appropriate financial services backed with modern technology in rural and urban communities. MFIs created more appropriate and accessible financial services, agriculture and small business inputs allowing 341,316 of the poorest and most vulnerable in society obtain access to finance creating a step out of poverty. Financial inclusion not only empowered individuals and families, but collectively developed entire communities by driving economic growth. Financial service providers enabled 301,578 people to have the ability and tools to manage and save their money and empowered people with the skills and knowledge to make financial decisions.<sup>29</sup>

**Somali MFI HelloCash system:** This mobile and agent banking service reduced the transaction costs pastoralists used to incur due to traveling to big towns to gain access to financial services. It is also becoming a suitable solution for pastoralists as it allows them to make money transfers (send and receive) from their mobile phones and access cash in and cash out services from nearby SMFI HelloCash agents. **HelloCash has reached 235,335 customers and 18,822,641 transactions were recorded with a total value of US \$735,361,886 USD.**

**341,316** individuals get direct access to financial services and contextualized products, such as Sharia-compliant loans for the predominantly Muslim population

**37,838** take out loans to expand or start their businesses

**301,578** people open savings accounts

**1,900** take out index-based livestock insurance to help protect pastoralists against losses during droughts

## PRIME Improved Nutritional Status of Households Through Targeted, Sustained and Evidence-based Interventions

Through tailored social and behavioral change communication mechanisms, PRIME facilitated enhanced nutrition practices, increased the demand for nutritious food, improved household decision-making for equitable access to nutrition, leveraged private sector investment for nutrition support and informed policy practices regarding nutrition and food security.

- PRIME collaborated with the Ethiopian government to integrate its Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) health system-strengthening program with its other systems-strengthening programs, now using this manual to train health workers in MIYCN practices and policies in a cascading manner—regional health workers, district health workers and then community health workers.
- PRIME created nutrition-focused soap operas in three regional languages Afan-Oromo (Oromia), Afar-Af (Afar), and Af-Somali (Somali), to complement the trainings.

**Soap operas reached a wide audience 1.2 million, across all 3 target areas with contextualized, custom messaging and marketing.**<sup>30</sup>

Community health workers trained savings group leaders in MIYCN, who went on to train to their savings-group members who in turn went on to share what they had learned with their extended families and neighbors. The linkage between MIYCN and the VSLA groups proved invaluable because it enabled savings group members to gain the financial capital needed to prioritize household nutrition. **PRIME has reached 321,772+ households with critical nutrition and health specific education. By doing so, pregnant and lactating women, infants and young children in remote areas are healthier, and households and communities are much more resilient.**<sup>31</sup>

*“We felt that the importance of this message was so great, that we should not limit it to pregnant and lactating women in our group only. For this reason, we invited everyone in our community, not just maternal women, to learn the importance of MIYCN.”*

—Genet Mamu, Chairperson of a RuSACCO group in the Afar Region

<sup>29</sup> Mercy Corps. PRIME Financial Services Learning Brief.

<sup>30</sup> Mercy Corps (2016 June). Soap Opera for Social Change: Improving Nutrition for Ethiopian Pastoralists.

<sup>31</sup> Mercy Corps (2017). “Enhancing Resilience to Severe Drought: What Works? Evidence from Mercy Corps’ PRIME Program in the Somali region of Ethiopia”.

# CONCLUSION

PRIME has succeeded in building an evidence base for the value of a market systems approach to resilience programming. PRIME's unique approach had the ingrained flexibility to adapt to shifting demands, a long-term commitment to facilitate lasting linkages in communities, and the technical expertise to execute on innovative solutions. By committing to the foundational market systems approach even in the face of shocks during the 2015–2017 droughts, PRIME has proven the importance of using facilitative

methods to systems strengthening making Mercy Corps a go-to leader in resilience programming in the region. Other humanitarian, government, and development actors in the region have been swayed to this way of thinking and are eager to understand more about how to apply systems-based intervention methods to economic, ecological and social systems to build stronger, more climate-resilient households and communities.

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HARAMAYA UNIVERSITY

ETHIOPIAN CENTER FOR DISABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT (ECDD)

ACTION FOR INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ASSOCIATION (AISDA)

FRIENDSHIP SUPPORT ASSOCIATION (FSA)

SOS SAHEL

KIMETRICA

AGED AND CHILDREN PASTORALISTS ASSOCIATION (ACPA)

### About Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we partner to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within. Now, and for the future.



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