

LEARNING BRIEF

RESILIENCE IN PASTORAL AREAS (RIPA-South)

Through the Resilience in Pastoral Areas project, iDE is working with women and youth to design diversified livelihood opportunities that will generate income and increase agro-pastoralists resilience in the face of climate change, natural disasters, and food insecurity. Through partnering with private sector actors and financial institutions, young pastoralists and agro-pastoralists will engage in new jobs and value chains as both small business owners and wage employees.



Uncovering employment challenges & opportunities

As part of the RIPA-South project, iDE is engaging pastoral youth in both self-employment/small business development and wage employment. This brief explores the project's experience with understanding the employment climate in the pastoral lowlands of Ethiopia, and developing a strategy to address the diverse barriers and opportunities.

Background

With over 70% of its population under 30 years of age, Ethiopia's youth demographic is rapidly growing. Meanwhile, a high unemployment rate and challenging agricultural sector have left many Ethiopian youth without a sustainable livelihood. While unemployment is more prevalent in urban areas, it is ubiquitous across the country and led to rural-urban migration. It is also

common among youth in the pastoral lowlands, as the agro-pastoral livelihood became less sustainable over the last several decades of climate change, population increase, and associated impacts. Through the RIPA project, iDE seeks to better understand and address the challenges that pastoral youth face in gaining meaningful employment opportunities.



"I'm interested in other skills, I need to learn about moto maintenance...there are no people here to train us, it's good if we can get training."

Ibrahim Katelo,
Borana region, Ethiopia

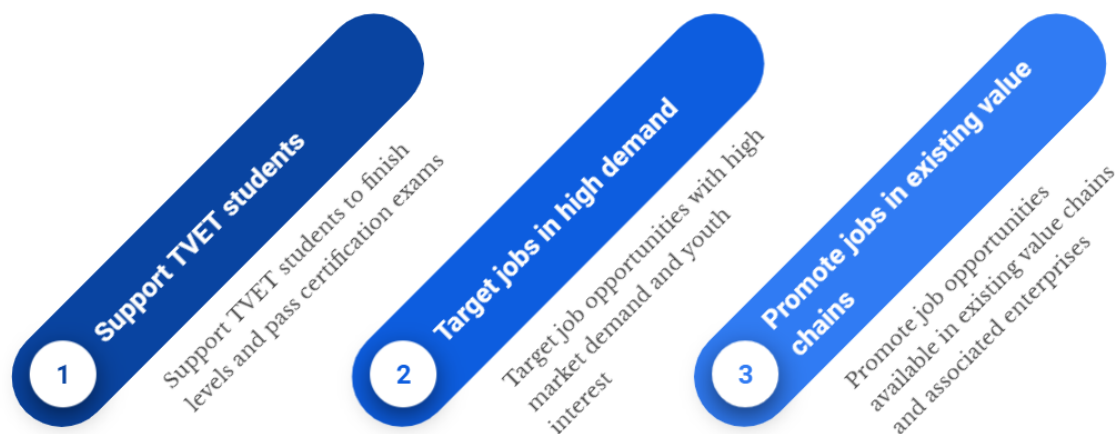
Photo by Rebecca Merrifield

Developing an Employment Strategy

In order to better understand pastoral youths' current livelihood activities, challenges, and interests, we conducted participatory research utilizing the Human-Centered Design approach. Through in-depth interviews and activities, we were able to explore youths' perceptions and values around work, and the 'whys' behind what they currently do or want to do in the future. In each region of the project, we learned common barriers to employment, while also discovering opportunities to further pursue.

Many young pastoralists are not aware of available job opportunities, and/or they are not interested in engaging in such a job. In South Omo, for example, new types of jobs are increasingly in demand, such as tourism and hospitality, road construction work, and sugar factory employment. Omo communities are accustomed to their pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood practices and to living with their own ethnic group, however, so they are reluctant to relocate to an unfamiliar place and pursue an unfamiliar activity. Meanwhile, some Somali youth are engaging in wage labor, but these are mainly unskilled jobs which are not respected or valued among Somali communities. In the Borana region, youth are interested in jobs with market demand, such as ICT, construction, metalworking, and garmentry, but technical training is concentrated in a few towns and is not sufficient to meet the needs of employers. Thus, despite growing interest in these employment opportunities, youth cannot easily afford and access the training they need to gain required skills and knowledge.

With an understanding of these diverse challenges, we developed a multi-faceted approach to better support youth in gaining meaningful, skilled employment. This approach aims to strengthen the efficacy of existing institutions, such as TVETs and job creation agencies, so that youth already receiving training and support can more easily acquire the appropriate skills they need to attain employment. Our approach also focuses on equipping youth for jobs that are highly demanded, so that they are more likely to find and maintain employment. And, given the potential for agro-pastoral value chains to grow, we seek to support youths' engagement in specific jobs that will fill gaps and add value to natural resources with which they are already familiar.



Lessons Learned

- Pastoral communities maintain their pride rooted in their pastoral livelihood, and find some forms of wage labor undignified (mainly unskilled work)
- While raising awareness about diverse job opportunities, it is important to remain sensitive to what communities consider valuable and meaningful work
- Some development actors (in pastoral areas) and older generations tend to perceive youth as lazy and unwilling to engage in hard work; however, in many cases youth want to work but are unaware of or unequipped to pursue such job opportunities
- Despite the growth of industrial parks, factories, and businesses in southern Ethiopia, pastoral youth have little awareness of or interest in such unfamiliar jobs and work settings

iDE Ethiopia

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