

## PART I: THE DROUGHT

Rather than isolating the drought as an issue to be discussed, the Workshop planners allowed the subject to emerge during the course of project discussions. The project presentations of the grantees were expected to become “doors” which would open the way to a discussion of issues that would emerge as the presentations were made. It became clear early in the Workshop that the drought served both as a cruel common denominator of nomadic experience, and as a catalyst which had pushed grassroots people to embrace and direct what life changes they could. Questions of cultural and social stability, economic viability, and cultural identity were all addressed as people talked about their motivations for attempting to design and implement their own projects.

The droughts of the last two decades affected a huge band of territories across the entire continent from Senegal to Somalia. The drought of 1973-74 was actually the apex of a longer period of sporadic droughts. The drought of 1984-85, was particularly difficult, due to the suddenness with which it arrived compared to the earlier great drought. The following excerpts from a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) report provide one with an idea of the immensity of the tragedy for the countries involved, and the regional losses that were incurred.

*In 1967-1988, the yearly rains failed, bringing drought to the Sahel ... As the dryness continued, the first noticeable effect was the drop in the water table. The Senegal River was reduced to 65% of normal levels, Burkina's Black Volta went down by 54%, and by 1971, Lake Chad was a third of its normal size. Grasses, then shallow-rooted leguminous plants died, reducing ground cover and forage for animals. Desertification, which had begun gradually before the drought, accelerated rapidly. Without water or vegetation, animals began to die ... Mali, Chad and Niger lost about a third of their livestock. The mortality rate began to rise, from 2.7% to as high as 7%, and up to 100,000 people may have died from a combination of starvation and disease...*

*Nomads, especially in isolated areas, were hit hardest. Whole families began migrating toward food sources, joined by rural communities no longer able to farm. Cities mushroomed, Dakar, Senegal increased by 42%... (and) livestock losses have been estimated at \$400 million.*

USAID, Sahel Development Program: 1986-1988; *Report to Congress*, Washington, D.C. June 1989.

It is often stated that two droughts occurred: one in the early 1970's, and one in the mid 1980's, but from a meteorological standpoint, the drought continued throughout the entire decade with some high and low fluctuations. The problem of the 1984-85 drought, as expressed by the ADF grantees, was that they “did not see the normal signs,” which for them heralded the oncoming of a severe drought period. However, governments in the region were better prepared than they had been in the past.

The drought was one experience which was shared by all the participants and served as a focal point for all the discussions. To open the discussion, Advisory Committee members recounted their personal encounters with the drought and famine, and invited the participants to do likewise.

What follows are excerpts taken directly from the transcripts of the audio tapes of the Workshop. The authors have considered that in the spirit of the Workshop, and indeed, of ADF's mandate, the words of the participants themselves must be presented so that readers can "hear" what herders had to say about their experiences. We have tried to select those passages which reflect the outstanding issues of each session, and to present them according to theme.

### **Comment, N'Gadd Amadou, Former ADF Country Liaison Officer, Niger:**

For us the drought of 1984-1985 was the most destructive, because it destabilized the community and people died as well as animals. There were people who lost thousands of heads of cattle and who up to today still don't have one cow. In spite of the fact that we were able to go beyond the borders of the neighboring countries (which is what we discussed earlier in terms of transhumant zones), we had a difficult time. We were able to go to the southern countries, Nigeria and Cameroon, in order to try to save our herds. It still was not enough to allow us to maintain some kind of survival and stability of human and animal life.

### **Comment, Dr. Asmarom Legesse, Advisory Committee:**

In 1973, the worst drought that I have ever seen took place in Ethiopia, where I saw tens of thousands of people dying, and that is the year I started my research on drought. So, for East Africa, 1973-1974 was the worst drought ever.

### **The Experience of the Drought: The Mini Mini Project**

During the drought years of 1983-85, in Niger, thousands of nomadic families drifted toward the towns in an attempt to save their herds and their lives. Ahmoudou Mohamedoun is from a nomadic Tuareg family that was considered well-to-do in pre-drought days. He emerged as a community leader in his native region of Tahoua, when his family and others began to suffer the effects of drought. As the only person with a car for miles and miles around, Ahmoudou began ferrying water in discarded petrol drums from the town of Tahoua to nomad camps in the bush. So renowned did he become for this activity and so ubiquitous in his movements, that a local woman griot (storyteller) created a song for him, and named him "Mini Mini," which means "pulsating star." Subsequently, the project which he helped to initiate in the nomadic community of Tahoua was named "Mini Mini." The project is run as a collaborative effort with various members of the nomadic community. Below is an excerpt from Mr. Ahmoudou Mohamedoun's presentation:

We have lived through two major droughts. Of course, as I have said, there are really prevailing drought conditions all of the time. Two really drastic droughts from my point of view were 1972-73, and 1984-85. After the drought

of 1972-73, the Government of Niger made every effort to help the people rebuild their herds. But we found in 1984-85, that rebuilding of herds was not enough. The rebuilding of herds had to be associated with new and better strategies. So the project of Mini Mini really started to actually create new herding systems.

Our traditional strategies are valid, but are difficult because we can no longer move freely from one district to another as we did before. In 1984, the Government of Niger and the population of Niger engaged in discussions to find a solution. Some of the discussions were drastic. At one point, the Government of Niger suggested that 50% of all the herds of Niger should be sold.

It's very interesting to note, that the drought of 1984-85 didn't resemble the other droughts that the people were used to. The way that it started was not the way we were used to seeing it, it came with a very big wind. When the Government suggested we should reduce our herds by 50%, many of the people waited. In the end, we had to sell all of our herds. The herders who went to the South were able to save some of their animals and could live off of those few animals that they had left. The herders in our community did not move when the drought came, and so we lost all of our herds and were obliged to be dependent on government assistance.

Each group of participants went back to the theme of the drought in opening their presentation. This was the great shared experience. It was clear, however, that the Nomads of Somalia and Tanzania had difficulty understanding the extent of suffering experienced by the peoples of the western Sahel. Although Somalia lost people and herds in both the droughts of the early 1970's and the mid 1980's, the sense of "being caught" and "being hedged in" was evidently not as strong. For the Maasai of Tanzania, severe drought demands strategies of greater mobility, and greater mobility is an option that is open to them. It is also an option that works. This community had a much larger expanse of territory within which they could migrate with ease. Further, the periodic division of the community into nomadic and sedentary segments and the fact that the division may last as long as six months, led to an interesting discussion of the very nature of nomadism.

### **Coping With Drought: The Herders' Cooperative of Niamey**

The representative of the Herders of Niamey gave a poignant account of his community's struggle to rebuild their lives after the drought. The project was organized by a lineage of the Gojanko'en Wodaabe, traditionally residents in the Tahoua Department of Niger. This group resided in a zone designated for a large-scale project aimed at creating herders' cooperatives. This was sponsored jointly by USAID and the Ministry of Rural Development. Unfortunately, with the arrival of the drought in 1984-85, few members of this community ever saw any benefits from this large project. The example of the large-scale project, as well as visits to the Dakoro project described in the quoted text, no doubt helped them have a vision of what it was they were after. Their story of how they survived the drought and began to build their project follows:

We are all herders, the Wodaabe. The crafts that we make are traditionally used during festivals. The first aspect of the project was the rebuilding of our herds; it was the first priority. The most important thing was that

everybody understood that the major objective and goal of this project was the rebuilding of the herds of our nomadic community. We have four different activities which have helped us to add on and maintain this rebuilding of our herds ourselves.

At the time we started (our) project, we had a lot of problems due to the drought. Nobody knows what we lived through. It was in the city of Tahoua where we live that we met Wendy [Wilson] [the former Sahel Regional Manager], and we talked to her about our problems ... Macao put us in contact, and at that time, we discussed our way of life and our problems and talked about a lot of things, because the Kasausawa and the Gojanko'en are brothers-in-law. It was right about the time of the drought that we ... decided to leave our home country because of the difficulty we were having there; we migrated to the Niamey area, which is the capital of Niger, where we went with our animals. On the journey we made from Tahoua to Niamey, we lost all of our animals. Even though we had left with our herds, by the time we got to Niamey, we had not one animal left. It was when we moved to Niamey and I saw that Wendy was coming back to Niger, we waited for about two years. At that time, she was discussing the Dakoro project with Macao and had occasion to talk with us about project design.

She told us that since there was a lot of work to be done for the Dakoro project, we would have to be patient for a while ... Later, I, Wendy and N'Gade [the former Niger ADF Country Liaison Officer] went to visit Macao, which gave me a chance to sit down and talk with the people there ... Another thing that we have benefited from is a complete change of our way of life and our situation and condition that we were living in. Before, when we lost all of our animals, whenever people looked at us, they looked at us with pity. Now that our lives have improved and we have animals, people look at us in a friendly way and with respect ... sometimes even asking us to help them create a project themselves.

We are now living the benefits of the project that ADF has financed, and we feel good about it. We are happy for everything that the project has given us, especially the animals that we have ... after all we are herders before anything else ... Now we are finding that our relatives are coming to us and asking us to help them to design a project.

Up until today we continue to do our crafts. This has never been our traditional occupation. This is something we have done in intervals. We do this now as another way of generating income, so that is now our profession, but it is really a strategy to earn money and to be able to also leave the city.

With the income that we get from the sale of the crafts, one part goes into the purchase of animals, and another part goes into re-investment: buying more material to make more crafts. The reason why we use some of the money to buy animals, is because we are really not people of the city; we are people of the country and of the bush. We are, after all, herders, and a herder cannot live without animals.

The thing that brought us to do this jewelry-making and other craft-making was the drought. If it wasn't for the drought, we would not have been making these crafts on a commercial basis. In fact, our ultimate goal would still

be to go back to the bush and live with our animals, because this is the way that we grew up. We grew up as pastoralists with animals and we did not know any of these problems until the last great drought. So, if anything, it would be best if we could return to the bush with the animals and have the ADF project there.

Our culture also has its own solidarity, and we have an institution which we call Habba Na'i. This is an institution which exists to help people in the community who need assistance and want to get animals. A friend or relative would present themselves to another and say that they need the assistance of Habba Na'i. The person would give them a cow, and this would give birth two times; once the cow has calves twice, the person then returns the cow to the owner and they keep the calves.

Later on, during the same session, the herders returned to the subject of the institution of "Habba Na'i" that helped the Wodaabe through the drought. Both the Maasai and the Tuareg spoke of a similar institution in their respective societies which goes into effect during periods of crisis. It is a safety net that rescues the most destitute members of the community, and is based on a common morality that seems to be shared by many pastoral societies.

**Question, Naomi Kipuri, Advisory Committee:**

This institution you've described, Habba Na'i, seems like an insurance against extreme poverty. Have you been able to apply the same principles to the project?

**Response, Bazo Abahi, Dakoro Herders' Cooperative, Niger:**

The institution of Habba Na'i is really for an intimate relationship with your relative or someone that you esteem very much. That's the only context it exists in. This activity has allowed us to help relatives and friends in need more than before.

**Question, Mme. Hawoy Baby, Agro-Nord Project, Mali:**

This is a solidarity that has existed in all nomadic societies, not just this particular one, and extends to not just a relative, but even to a neighbor. The nomad will feel morally obliged to come to the assistance of that relative or neighbor in need. Even to the extent that when they don't have an animal that the person in need could take home, that person could come to the other nomad camp to milk an animal so that they can have something to eat and then go back home ... It is for affection and caring between two people and community solidarity ... Even if you have a little bit, you feel a moral obligation to share.

**Comment, Macao bii Gao, Dakoro Herders' Cooperative, Niger:**

In this specific case, we are explaining that the Habba Na'i does not exist as much as it did in the past. Before the great drought, this was an activity that was everywhere. You could see it practiced very frequently. But, nowadays it is not practiced as much and it is really an expression of extreme pity and concern for the person involved. Besides, Habba Na'i can only be done on specific days. If you do it on another day in Wodaabe, the animal would not survive.

**Question, Maasai Veterinarian, Ngorongoro Park, Tanzania:**

I am really sorry to hear of the drought which hit our descendants,\* but I am interested to know what year this was. It sounded like a really big drought.

**Comment, Gabriel Tonge, Albalbal Project, Tanzania:**

Is it the whole nation of Niger who suffered from drought or is it a small segment in a given village, or is it just your descendant group who suffered the most; or does it cover the whole country at large?

**Response, Bazo Abahi, Dakoro Herders' Cooperative, Niger:**

In terms of the drought in Niger, everybody suffered and every community was decimated by the drought, whether farmer or herder. In terms of the year that this took place, it was 1984.

**Question, Siraji Abdillahi, Himilo Project, Somalia:**

We know in all parts of Africa the drought is common and has killed many animals and human beings. Since the drought destroyed your animals and you received assistance, what have you done to prevent something like that from recurring? In other words, have you changed your way of life in anyway to make you less vulnerable to such disaster?

**Response, Bazo Abahi, Dakoro Herders' Cooperative, Niger:**

In our experience, we have found that it is crucial to have some variety in our production activities. What we do is we have a base where we get some income from the sale of jewelry and a grain mill, while the majority of the family are out in the bush with the animals. In this way, if there is a catastrophe or if there is a drought, we won't be caught as in the old days with a huge herd of animals out in the bush that we can't move quickly enough. Now, we have changed our strategy and we have reduced the size of our herds. We have smaller herds, perhaps, not the very large herds we had before. We are more protected against disaster. If we go back for help, we go back to our own people.

One effective way of coping with drought is partial sedentarization, i.e., to let one part of the community continue its nomadic existence, while another part of the community becomes sedentary and reaps the benefits made available by government and private voluntary organizations. A classic example of partial sedentarization is found in the Tassaqt Project from Mali. Here, the herders have by no means abandoned pastoral nomadism. The economic activities which they have added to their subsistence economy are consistent with and supportive of their nomadic way of life. One of these activities includes the commitment of a section of the community who are volunteers to concentrate on white sorghum production.

*\*When asked why he (Maasai Veterinarian) referred to the Sahelians as "Our descendants, he referred to oral tradition and explained that the Maasai came from the Northeast, crossed a big body of water, which they think may be the Red Sea. According to tradition, as they moved southwards, many groups split off and drifted away. That is why they think of strangers who are like themselves, as "descendants. "*

This crop has decreased that community's dependence on the market for millet and sorghum.

### **Comment, Tassaqt Project**

...Our best accomplishment is that we enabled -the nomads to start some new economic activities in their communities. It has allowed the nomads to learn for the first time how to cultivate some fields. By rehabilitating the herds, what ADF has done is to allow us to practice a new kind of animal husbandry that is controlled and that is more in balance with nature. We now have "managed herds". They are not so large as to destroy the environment.

So, we watch our herds very carefully now; it is not like we have a very big herd and cannot watch every animal individually. Now, when the males are two or three years old, we will sell them right away and we don't keep them. The culling of the herd is a more constant job ... We have also gone back to raising smaller animals [sheep and goats] which is part of our tradition...

### **Coping With Drought: Somali Herders, Daryeel Project**

The next project team that discussed the methods of coping with drought were representatives of Daryeel, an indigenous private voluntary organization (PVO) from Somalia which conducts applied research for the purpose of designing development projects in Somali communities. At this stage, we focused not on the genesis or the organizational characteristics of the project, but rather on some of the Daryeel findings which were reported to the Workshop and generated considerable debate about drought and survival strategies. In the course of their presentation they stated:

The herds of the Somali nomads are relatively big and if you monetize them, he (the nomad) would more or less become a rich person. The tentative results of our research indicate that we may be going in the wrong direction. To conclude this tentative finding ... it can be said that development may mean something different to the nomads. The way we (professional development workers) see development may not be relevant to the nomadic way of life.

Sahelian participants quickly pushed the discussion from a characterization about "successful nomads," to an inquiry into the mechanisms of survival that made it possible for the nomads to preserve their wealth in spite of the drought. There was considerable curiosity about the wealth of the Somali herders.

### **Question, Ousmane Maiga, ADF Country Liaison Officer, Mali:**

How do the nomads get organized in Somalia to handle their own issues and problems? What are some of the specific coping mechanisms of the Somali nomads?

### **Response, Abdi Osman, ADF Country Liaison Officer, Somalia:**

In Somalia, in as much as we are different from other societies, urbanization is only in our recent history. We are basically a 100% nomadic society. Therefore, there is a certain permanence about nomadic life in Somalia. For example, during the last World War, and in Somalia's recent civil war, in



both cases, the prices of animals were such that they profited, and everybody left the towns and went into the interior. Everybody who did not have animals then, and does not have animals now, cannot cope with life -- they are really helpless, they can't cope with life.

**Question, Mohammed Ould Mohammed, Agro-Nord Project, Mali:**

Has Somalia been stricken by drought, and if so, how did you manage to keep your cattle? And if that is not the case, then I do not understand how the nomads in Somalia are richer.

**Response, Abdi Haybe Elmi, Daryeel Project, Somalia:**

Somalia experienced recurring drought for the last two decades. We had a big drought like most Sahelian countries in 1974-75. And also, we had another smaller one in 1984-85. The nomads have lost a lot of animals. What I was trying to imply was the nomad is richer than the regular Arab who works for the government or small business man, when you monetize the small herd that the nomad has. Of course, I am not saying that all nomads in Somalia are rich. Some are richer than others.

**Question, Mme. Hawoy Baby, Agro-Nord Project, Mali:**

Your contribution has been greatly appreciated. How did the nomads manage to escape and save their cattle during the different droughts?

**Response, Abdi Ahmed, Himilo Project, Somalia:**

They utilize movement. They move to places where their animals can survive, places that have pasture and water. Nomads go to agricultural areas and buy hay from farmers.

**Question, Mme. Hawoy Baby, Agro-Nord Project, Mali:**

How is it that all the animals are used to hay?

**Response, Abdi Ahmed, Himilo Project, Somalia:**

Hay is used only during the long, hard drought.

**Question, Mohammed Lamin, Attawari N'Adrar Project, Niger:**

I would like to ask our brothers and colleagues from Somalia to please excuse us if we dwell so long on this subject, but from where we are from, when we hear the word drought, we hear the word death! And we are really concerned to know what it is that you did, and what were the strategies that you had to be able to survive the situation and to hold on to your animals?

**Comment, Dr. Asmarom Legesse, Advisory Committee:**

In the little bit of discussion that I have had with people from West Africa and from the Horn, one interesting difference that we have observed so far is that the patterns we see among Tuareg and Wodaabe in West Africa seems to be transhumant movement within a limited range of territory. By contrast, the





*Mr. Bazo Abahi of Niger (second from left) shares his experiences as conference coordinator, Dr. Aliou Boly (glasses), prepares to translate from Fulfulde to French, and Dr. Legesse records (extreme right).*

Somalis are among the most widely nomadic peoples we know, which means that when drought strikes, they can travel as much as 500 miles; they can go out of the drought territory into non-drought areas.

**Response, N’Gadd Amadou, Former ADF Country Liaison Officer, Niger:**

In our case, we did try to move! In the three or four droughts which we have experienced, we have traveled more than 500 miles, we moved 2,000 miles, maybe even 10,000 miles -- we moved from Niger to Cameroon, from Niger to Nigeria, to Ghana -- but the problem that we experienced is that the animals could not adapt to the pasture; it is really an ecological problem.

**Response, Dr. Asmarom Legesse, Advisory Committee:**

I agree with N’Gade’s comments that migration in times of crises can go across vast zones in West Africa, but as you are doing that, you are crossing ecological zones in which your animals may not be appropriately adapted.

While with the Somali, they are essentially remaining in an entirely savannah region, but the vast expanse of the rangelands in a north-south direction is such that they can sometimes escape from the drought by migrating southward to an area that is outside of the drought affected region.

**Question, Macao bii Gao, Dakoro Herders’ Cooperative, Niger:**

If the Somali nomads are rich, what do you then propose is the best assistance for them? What kind of development?

The Somali representatives of the Daryeel Project were hesitant to give a specific prescription for development and suggested that development programs can only be designed by the communities themselves.

**Response, Abdi Elmi, Daryeel Project, Somalia:**

It has been said again and again that the Somali nomads are rich. I think that what Abdou was saying, he means they are relatively rich, compared to other groups such as government civil servants and so on ... They have a way of life which is sustainable.

**Question, Moussa Ndiaye, Keur Boumy Project, Senegal:**

I understand that, but I really want to know what is it that they do in Somalia to support the herders who have a lot of animals? What is it in Somalia that supports this system so that it can continue to be sustainable?

At this point the Somali team was reaching the end of their arguments and suggested that it might be the indigenous system of government that helps to make the economy self-sustaining, or perhaps it is just the way that the nomads look after the animals. But their Sahelian inquisitors were not about to stop their questioning.

**Question, Ousmane Maiga, ADF Country Liaison Officer, Mali:**

What people want to know are the real hard facts -- what are the technical applications that existed to conserve animals; to take care of the herds;

whether there are particular technical strategies involved -- whether sociologically, (that he is aware of), or veterinary or other pasture management application (that he is aware of) that he can share with the others who are very concerned about learning new strategies that will allow them to modify their systems, so that their systems will become more drought resistant.

**Comment, Dr. Asmarom Legesse, Advisory Committee:**

The Somali community that I have known in northern Kenya takes certain steps that I would like to comment on in response to Mr. Maiga's issues and other issues that were raised. Somali migration is *incremental*; that is a very important concept. That is to say, they do not wait until the animals are weak to start migrating. They are constantly shifting, and by the time the drought looks really bad, they have already moved out of the drought affected zone. Other societies adjoining them [such as Borana] wait and wait, and find that the animals have become so weak when they decide to migrate, up to 80% of the animals die in one single migration. Another important aspect of the Daryeel presentation is their defense of indigenous knowledge systems as major mechanisms for coping with drought and for making the pastoral economy self-sustaining.

**Comment, Daryeel:**

What we have found out is that the nomadic community, as we see it in Somalia, is highly developed in every aspect. The nomads have achieved expertise in a number of fields as far as their way of life is concerned. Initially, nomads had their own governmental system which has been expressed through tradition, and this institution has its own social units. It has all the proficiency it needs. I would expect that that is true of most nomadic communities. They have their doctors, including orthopedics, pediatrics and general medicine. They have the basic general management expertise, better than anyone else who has come from a university. They have experience to predict the rainy season, or they can closely predict the weather. In Somalia, the nomadic family serves as the day-care or pre-school education quarters. Education, which is relevant to this way of life, is provided by parents, brothers and sisters. These tentative results indicate that, maybe, we may be going in the wrong direction ... The way we (as development professionals) see development may not be relevant to the nomadic way of life...

**Question, Dr. Asmarom Legesse, Advisory Committee:**

The follow-up question I would like to ask Abdi ... in relation to the question of Olei Gona (of Maasai), has to do with the field of expertise of the nomads, which is a very important area. Just look around at these plants. The vast majority of these plants are known to nomads by name, and their characteristics are described by nomads. If you ask a scientist to come in here and identify these plants, (he) could not identify as many ... When you do make a collection and send them to the arboretum, what they find is that there are plants here known to the nomads unknown to science. Since we know we have two sciences at work here, two bodies of knowledge, the question is how do we keep the two bodies of knowledge alive, and how do we employ them in the field of development?



*Project leader Abou Ag Assabit of Tassaqt describes the use of traditional crafts from the Gao region of Mali.*



### **Question, Gabriel Tonge, Albalbal Project, Tanzania:**

Now that there is separation -- here is old traditional knowledge, and the contemporary knowledge of those who have expertise in cattle and so forth, what advice would you give us to continue to improve our herds?

### **Question, N’Gadd Amadou, Former ADF Country Liaison Officer, Niger:**

We risk going into an academic discussion that would go beyond the interest of the participants. Shall we talk about the elements of development within the nomadic community, or are we going to spend our time discussing studies of nomadic communities?

### **Response, Abdillahi Haji Ahmed, Advisory Committee:**

I think what Mr. N’Gade raises a question about us going to the core, the real issues of the nomads. That is what we are all here for. I don’t think it has been academic yet. And I don’t think we have lost much time. We have so many more days to go into it. But we must keep ourselves on line. When a particular discussion is going off course, I think we should bring it back and put it on course.

These comments suggest that there was no consensus about the contemporary application of indigenous knowledge and how it might be brought into the development process. Some, like N’Gade, seemed to resent academic studies of traditional knowledge. Others, in particular the nomads and some of the mixed farmers, expressed pride concerning their indigenous knowledge system that is passed on from generation to generation. They saw indigenous knowledge systems as a vital aspect of their capacity to survive in their habitat and thought it worthwhile that scholars study their knowledge systems. The strongest expression of this came from the highly educated members of the Dialambere Integrated Project who were of pastoral background, and from the equally erudite members of the Daryeel Project. The nomads themselves took indigenous knowledge totally for granted. They made comments about it when they saw that some of the new livestock breeders were lacking in such knowledge, or in the context of learning practical applications of new strategies mixing old and new technologies.

There was little or no discussion about the possible function of an urban-based indigenous PVO, such as Daryeel and the usefulness of establishing such an organization by others in the meeting. All the questions indicated that the PVO was being asked to furnish answers to substantive and conceptual issues, and did not seem to serve as an organizational model which they might wish to emulate. Part of the reason for this was that all of the grantee groups viewed themselves as grassroots PVO’s, and did not consider Daryeel as very different, except for its urban base and more intellectual focus.

### **Commercializing Crafts: A Method of Coping With Drought**

During the course of the presentation of the Niamey Herders’ Cooperative, reference was made to income generation through jewelry production. This presentation stimulated many questions, since it seemed relevant to both sedentary and nomadic activities. Nevertheless, some participants had a difficult time understanding how jewelry production could be integrated into a pastoral nomadic life.

The presentation of the Herders' Cooperative of Niamey is a good example of nomads using a former recreational activity as a cash earner in difficult times, changing what was essentially an informal domestic craft associated with households, into a cottage industry which plays an important role in the diversification of the pastoral economy. An excerpt from their presentation follows:

Some people decided to stay in Niamey while they were waiting for the project. We continued to make jewelry, and the rest of the community went back out into the bush ... when asked what were the things that we wanted to do the most, we replied, "to have a dry goods store, to have the materials in order to be able to produce more jewelry for sale, and to have animals which we could distribute among ourselves."

**Question, Moussa N'Diaye, Keur Boumy Project, Senegal:**

The question is that you have said livestock production, or pastoralism, is your major occupation. Since you said that the main thing you really want to do is lead a pastoral life, what will happen to your jewelry making activities which still, nevertheless can give you income and is not dependent on rain, so to speak?

**Response, Bazo Abahi, Dakoro Herders' Cooperative, Niger:**

This has been worked out. What happens is that the community is divided into two different groups ... The older people live in the city and watch out for that part of the project, because they are older and it is easy for them to live in the city. The young people go back out in the bush and take care of the animals. They all benefit from the project, but some people live in town, and the majority; the younger people, go out into the bush and take care of the animals.

This project presentation included daily exhibitions of Wodaabe crafts which were on sale to Workshop participants. They created a wonderful opportunity for cultural sharing, and participants from both East and West Africa were wearing Wodaabe jewelry by the end of the Workshop. Jewelry was also bartered. Two Wodaabe participants traded their jewelry for Maasai herding sticks which they treasured highly.

Similarly, the Tassaqt Group brought several examples of craft produced by community members in the Gao region of Mali. One project leader, Al Gabit, spoke of the items that they brought with them for display at the Workshop. He said:

These few items ... were made exclusively by a class of men in our group. The group of men that produces these art objects make them primarily for our community. We are the consumers of these products in the community. Of course, now, things have changed in our community; these objects are not only made for our consumption, but are also sold to government workers, to people in other ethnic groups, and to tourists who come to our area.

**A Weavers' Cooperative: The Jelib Marka Project**

Jelib Marka of Somalia is undoubtedly the most specialized community represented in the Workshop. It is a totally sedentary community, engaged in weaving and marketing cloth. Weaving is the principal source of their livelihood, and livestock has no significant place in their economic life. They brought with them magnificent samples

of their workmanship, and indicated that their craft is not of recent vintage, but that they have practiced weaving for centuries.

As the discussion progressed, the pastoralists in the audience were somewhat puzzled. They expected the craft production to be a supplement to a pastoral economy. When they realized that the Jelib Marka Somalis have hardly any livestock at all, the discourse took a different turn. The nomads grilled the weavers with questions about their nomadic past. Were they nomadic at any time in the past? Dr. Legesse posed the following question to the Jelib Marka group.

**Question, Dr. Asmarom Legesse, Advisory Committee:**

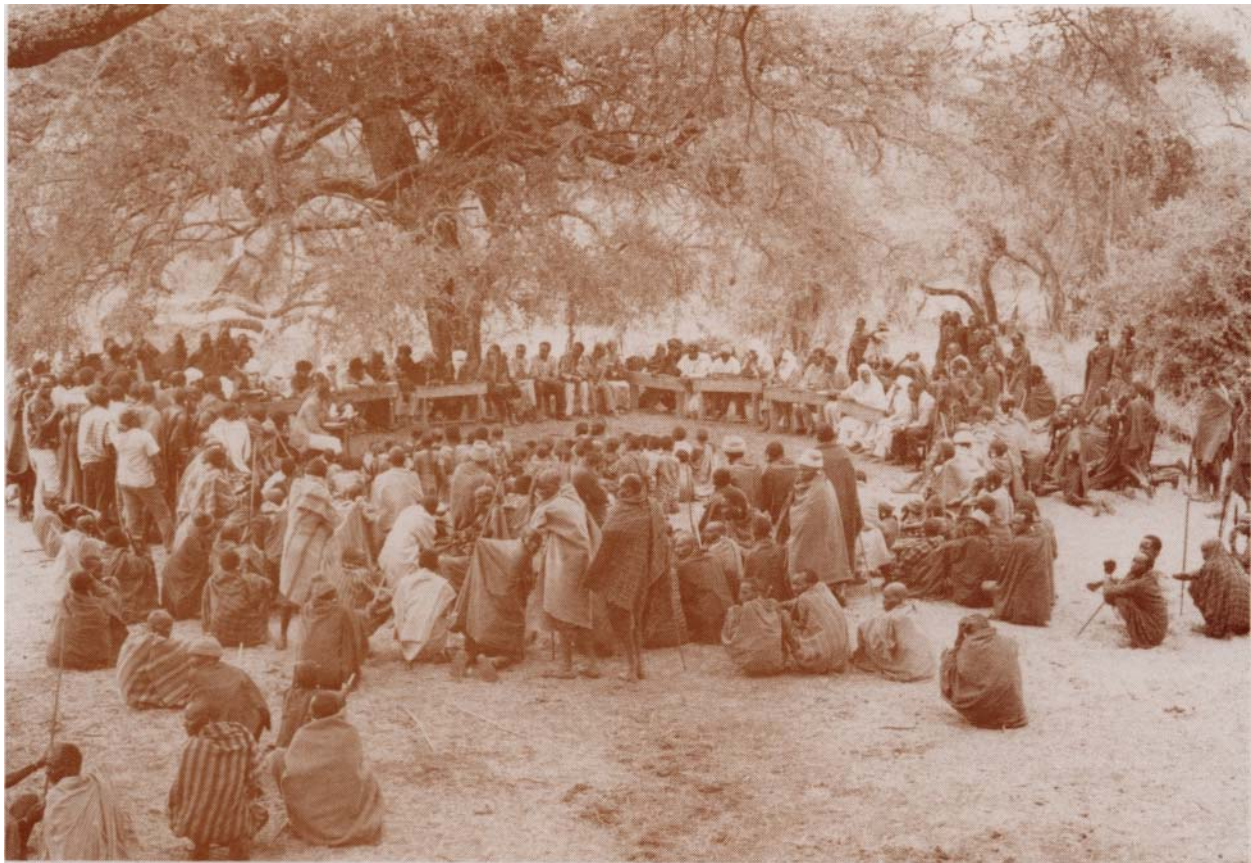
Since the weavers have been sedentary for possibly centuries, is it the case that they have residual or actual rights in water resources and pastures that are controlled by the nomadic community? In other words, if any part of their family wanted to go and become part of the nomadic community, do they have those rights?

Once it was established that they were not nomads recently turned weavers, the participants of nomadic background were hesitant to learn from them, in spite of the fact that the work that they did and their organization seemed to be quite exemplary. It was established, however, as the discussions progressed, that the weavers did traditionally produce and sell cloth to the nomads of Somalia, and so had some familiarity with nomadic culture. Nevertheless, it became clear that nomads and other herders wanted to know how any economic activity they tried out would mesh in with the pastoral life style. This appeared to be a reason why herders were reluctant to learn from groups who have no livestock at all, or who were not nomadic at some stage in their past, or, at the very least, kept some livestock on the periphery of their present sedentary economy. Throughout the crafts presentations, however, there was general mutual admiration, and all of the cloths brought by the Jelib Marka group were sold to other participants, or given as presents to fellow grantees. The same was true of the jewelry brought by the Herders' Cooperative of Niamey.

**Response, Jelib Marka:**

The people who inhabit Jelib Marka and the surrounding areas are of the same clan or tribe. That clan extends far away to several regions. The fact is, they are a clan that belongs to a bigger nomadic clan and that is how they are related. In Somalia, land belongs to one. They have the right to get livestock and go anywhere they want.





*Discussions among grantees at the Albalbal School site in Tanzania.*