

## **Women's Economic Empowerment in the Pastoral Areas of Somaliland, Sudan and Uganda**

- We aim to empower pastoralist women economically.
- We are working with organized women's groups.
- Our program areas are:
  - Uganda – Ssembabule, Mbarara and Kabale districts, in the semi-arid "Cattle Corridor"
  - Somaliland - three districts in this majority pastoralist country
  - Kassala State - in Eastern Sudan
- Mobile pastoralism is the best option in arid and semi-arid lands.
- But pastoralists are marginalized – socially and economically.
- Pastoralist women are doubly marginalized.
- Gender inequality is severe:
  - Girls have very limited access to education
  - Illiteracy rates among women are very high
  - Women have very limited access to information – few own radios
  - Women's participation in public life is restricted
  - Women's ability to travel is also restricted
- There has been great social and economic change in recent years:
  - More pastoralists live in settlements in and around towns and trading centres
  - Towns and trading centres are centres of business, economic diversification, and social change
  - More girls are going to school

### **Women's Empowerment**

- Empowering women involves:
  - legal rights;
  - participation in public life and politics
  - changes in attitudes and culture.
- This program focuses on one area – increasing women's independent incomes.

### **Our program involves:**

- Basic business skills training for women's groups
- Linking women's groups up with local finance providers
- Providing women's groups with information on new income-generating activities.
- Study tours:
  - with businesswomen, women's group members, NGO workers and women in leadership positions
  - aimed at broadening participants' horizons, generating new business ideas and strengthening regional business links.
- Influencing Policy & Practice:
  - disseminating the results of our baseline studies
  - holding multistakeholder discussions
  - drawing attention to pastoral areas and bringing in other actors.

### **Opportunities**

- Pastoralist women are engaged in a variety of income-generating activities:
  - herding small stock – selling live goats and sheep
  - processing milk – making ghee
  - horticulture – fruits and vegetables
  - running teashops and retail shops, along roadsides and in trading centers.
- With small loans, women can scale up their IGAs and increase their independent incomes.
- Women's participation in wider business networks can bring new ideas and investment.