



**ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN
BI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 30 JUNE 2019**

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Toward Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in (<i>add country</i>) MPTF Office Project Reference Number:¹ 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</p> <p><i>Liberia</i></p>																
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO, IFAD, UNWOMEN, WFP 	<p>The strategic result is to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the SDGs.</p>																
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Total approved budget as per project document:</td> <td align="right">\$ 800,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MPTF Contribution</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>• <i>UN Women Liberia</i></td> <td align="right">\$ 300,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agency Contribution</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>• <i>WFP Liberia</i></td> <td align="right">\$ 250,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agency Contribution</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>• <i>FAO Liberia (if applicable)</i></td> <td align="right">\$ 250,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL:</td> <td align="right">\$ 800,000</td> </tr> </table>	Total approved budget as per project document:	\$ 800,000	MPTF Contribution		• <i>UN Women Liberia</i>	\$ 300,000	Agency Contribution		• <i>WFP Liberia</i>	\$ 250,000	Agency Contribution		• <i>FAO Liberia (if applicable)</i>	\$ 250,000	TOTAL:	\$ 800,000	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Gender Children, and Social Protection Ministry of Agriculture Liberia Land Authority National Rural Women’s Structure Rights and Rice Foundation National Adult Education Association of Liberia Association of Women in Cross Border Trade THINK Liberia Farmers Assistance Programme Liberia Marketing Association EduCARE Liberia Agro-Machinery Company
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<p align="center">Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p> <p>Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date:</p> <p>Mid-Term Evaluation Report – if applicable <i>please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date:</p>	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration 5 YEARS</p> <p>Start Date (<i>15 10 2012</i>)</p>																
	<p align="center">Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Ramon Garway Title: National Coordinator Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women Email address: ramon.garway@unwomen.org 																

¹ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number are as follows: ETHIOPIA: 00092000; GUATEMALA: 00092001; KYRGYZSTAN: 00092002; LIBERIA: 00092003; NEPAL: 00092004; NIGER: 00092005; RWANDA: 00092006

NARRATIVE REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 2019 Bi-annual progress report under the Joint Programme “Accelerating Progress toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women” in Liberia (JPRWEE) covers the period from January to June 2019. This progress report represents a consolidation of information collected from participating UN agencies, the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) and implementing partners from Civil Society submitted to the JPRWEE National Coordinator based in the UN Women Liberia Country Office.

The National Technical Advisory Committee represented by technicians from participating UN agencies, Government Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs) and Civil Society has been providing the National Joint Steering Committee (Co-chaired by MGCSP and the United Nations Resident Coordinator) with a complete summary of key achievements and challenges associated with the implementation of the country programme for the period under programmatic review.

In Margibi, Bassa, Sinoe, River Gee and Maryland Counties, 401 beneficiaries (women 341 and men 60) have access to quality farming inputs like seeds and tools for investing in agriculture and now have increased agricultural production and productivity for their respective households as a result.

50 rural women from the National Rural Women Structure and 2 rural women from the Association of Women in Cross Border Trade attended and participated in a one-week technical workshop on Rice and Cassava value chains development from May 31, 2019 – June 6, 2019. The workshop sought to enhance agro-food trade and market access. In this context, rural women beneficiaries were trained and sensitized on food traceability and food safety, as well as international packaging standards and on the Hazard Analytical Critical Control points (HACCP) standards of production. Rural women beneficiaries were taught on how to turn cassava and rice into flour, pasta, soap and cosmetics. These women also learned about packaging, food safety, best practices in processing cassava and rice, the use of labels and barcoding to prepare their products for export. Rural women beneficiaries are now able to produce and train other women on highly value-added fine finished products such as: high quality cassava flour, gari, cassava chips, cassava pasta, cassava soap, rice flour, puffed rice, gluten free icing sugar. A replication of the training is scheduled for late September 2019.

A supply of manufacturing equipment, and approximately 900 (bags) and 250 (bottles) have been provided to facilitate the production of cassava and rice products as well as a better presentation of these products. Ma Kebbeh Monger, National President of the National Rural Women Structure said, *“the training will improve the lives of women farmers. They will no longer be thinking only about producing cassava and rice to feed their families and sell as usual. Rural women can now turn cassava into spaghetti, soap and other things on which they have been trained for.”*

Contracts for the construction of 5 poultry units have been concluded with construction firms expected to roll out implementation for women-based farming groups to have access to protein and dietary diversification for improved nutrition security.

11.76 hectares of the planned 22 hectares (53%) of land have been cleared to invest in staple food crop production. There were no yield increases reported as of June 30, 2019 as harvest is expected in September and October 2019 respectively. In addition, approximately 1.82 MT out of the planned 57MT (3%) of food commodities were distributed as labor incentives to 401 beneficiaries (women 341 and men 60) in 5 targeted rural communities.

5 farming groups were identified and selected for agri-business development skills training and access to rural credit through the establishment of Village Savings and Loan Associations. In addition, 140 VSLA groups (comprising 420 rural women entrepreneurs) were formed with rural women entrepreneurs who are trading agriculture produce. These are groups of 20-30 people who save together and are able to take small loans out from those savings. They are, self-sustaining and self-managed groups.

Orange Liberia has engaged an additional 10 women beneficiaries from Montserrado County as mobile money agents, providing them with employment opportunities with the company. Moreover, Orange Liberia has provided LD\$ 50,000 (US\$ 250.00) in additional start-up capital to women mobile money agents managing existing mobile money kiosks. In addition, the Orange Money (mobile money platform) training curriculum was piloted with 749 women entrepreneurs from 35 communities across Montserrado and Margibi Counties in order to raise awareness around the use of the platform for ensuring that they invest in mobile money transactions as an innovative and safe way of saving their money within functional VSLAs. This includes also for their use in making purchases from vendors for sale in local markets.

500 rural young women and adolescent girls from Margibi, Bassa, Sinoe, River Gee and Maryland Counties are accessing nine months literacy and numeracy skills training programme, inclusive of business development and financial management skills trainings. Moreover, 200 rural women and young women are accessing vocational skills trainings in tailoring and cosmetology followed by awareness raising on Sexual and Reproductive Health including for Menstrual Hygiene Management. In addition, a comprehensive training manual on Menstrual Hygiene Management designed specifically for illiterate and semi-literate young women and adolescent girls living in rural areas is being developed by the programme with support from the National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL) and in collaboration with Planned Parenthood Association of Liberia (PPAL), the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

379 rural young women beneficiaries accessing secondary education in 13 rural public schools in Margibi, Bassa, Sinoe, River Gee and Maryland Counties were provided school supplies (e.g. calculators, copybooks, book bags, pens, pencils, sharpeners, erasers, rules, etc.) to enhance the retention rate of beneficiaries participating in formal schooling.

The programme, through Rights and Rice Foundation and Foundation for Community Initiative, supported 5 key Civil Society Organizations (e.g. Liberian National Rural Women Structure, Liberia Marketing Association, Women in Peace Huts Association, Women's NGO Secretariat, Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness) and the Liberia Land Authority (LLA) to engage in developing guidelines and regulations (e.g. guidelines on implementation of customary land rights; regulations for land committees' by laws and governance, etc.) to move the implementation of Liberia's new Land Law forward.

In addition, the programme supported the convening of CSOs at a one-week national retreat in Gbarnga, Bong County with representation from Liberia's 15 counties on raising increased awareness around the new Land Law and its implementation. In this context, a factsheet on the Land Rights Act (Land Law), particularly on Customary Land Rights was developed and distributed to participants. The factsheet highlighted basic and fundamental provisions of the Land Law that enabled participants to easily understand key messages of the new Land Law. In addition, a draft declaration was produced at the retreat, describing the position of the CSOs present on key contentious issues that require technical redress by the LLA. The framework for a draft strategy was developed for the national dissemination of the law; and this is expected to be finalized by the CSO Working Group on land for presentation to partners.

2 trainings were planned for in practical Community Based Participatory Processes, aimed at addressing real community problems and assisting them to find their own solutions. 1 training has been completed for Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties

Facilitate networking of rural women's organisations at sub-national and national levels, and their stronger links with the women's movement for better information exchange, advocacy, coordination and participation in national policy and decision-making processes.

With support from the programme, the CSO Working Group on Land in Liberia was instrumental in working closely with key partners from national government (e.g. Liberia Land Authority, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Agriculture, Governance Commission, etc.), development partners (e.g. Landesa Rural Development Institute, Welthungerhilfe, United States Agency for International Development) and Civil Society on organizing a national conference on the Land Rights Act which was held under the banner: "One Law, One Message." The purpose of the conference was to jointly review key messages that were developed by the different actors including the LLA and to re-develop a joint message that would be used for nation-wide awareness on the new Land Law. The programme particularly supported this initiative to foster the development of women land rights messages and support partner organizations to undertake massive education and gender-sensitive awareness with CSOs, CBOs, women and community groups at local level.

The national conference had been attended by 40 persons (30 males; 10 females) representing 20 national and international organizations. At the end of the conference a draft land rights message was developed highlighting the four major categories of land as well as women land rights messages. This output is the result of several presentations made by key CSO partners during the conference that had developed previous messages for awareness during their respective interventions. The draft messages were compiled and further submitted to a small working committee of organizations with technical expertise to review and produce simplified and synchronized messages.

I. Results

From 1 January to 30 June 2019, provide a narrative summary of the results achieved, divided by outcome. Make reference to the implementation mechanism utilized and key partnerships.

Outcome 1: *Rural women have improved food and nutrition security*

Output 1.1: *Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security*

- The programme has 401 beneficiaries (women 341 and men 60) who are benefitting from the use of high quality seeds, tools and machineries for investing in agriculture. In this context, there is increased productivity with beneficiaries wherein they have been observed to have acceptable quantities of appropriate food available, adequate income through their respective businesses and VSLAs to access food, and lastly adequate dietary intake for their nutrition.
- 11.76 hectares of the planned 22 hectares (53%) of land have been cleared to invest in staple food crop production. There were no yield increases reported as of June 30, 2019 as harvest is expected in September and October 2019 respectively. In addition, approximately 1.82 MT out of the planned 57MT (3%) of food commodities were distributed as labor incentives to 401 beneficiaries (women 341 and men 60) in 5 targeted rural communities.

- Contracts for the construction of 5 poultry units have been concluded with construction firms expected to roll out implementation for women-based farming groups to have access to protein and dietary diversification for improved nutrition security at the community level.

Output 1.2: *Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves*

- Rural women are serving as community-based facilitators providing trainings to other rural women farmers on both cassava and rice value chains development. Rural women beneficiaries have increased knowledge and skills in agricultural value chains development (e.g. quality cassava flour, gari, cassava chips, cassava pasta, cassava soap, rice flour, puffed rice, gluten free icing sugar). Thus, women farmers are transforming cassava and rice into flour, pasta, soap and cosmetics. These women know how to do packaging, food safety, processing cassava and rice, the use of labels to prepare their products for export. A replication of the training is scheduled for late September 2019.
- A supply of manufacturing equipment, and approximately 900 (bags) and 250 (bottles) have been provided to facilitate the production of cassava and rice products as well as a better presentation of these products. Ma Kebbeh Monger, National President of the National Rural Women Structure said, *“the training will improve the lives of women farmers. They will no longer be thinking only about producing cassava and rice to feed their families and sell as usual. Rural women can now turn cassava into spaghetti, soap and other things on which they have been trained for.”*
- 5 grain reserves in Margibi, Grand Bassa, Maryland, Sinoe and River Gee Counties have continued to be used in protecting women farmers from the production shortfalls of grains (e.g. rice) and as a buffer against the abrupt rise in the price of grain at the community level. Thus, grain reserves remain strategic to strengthening the resilience of poor female-headed households to seasonal food insecurity in Liberia including for natural disasters, especially during this rainy season.

Outcome 2: Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods

Output 2.1 Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products

- 500 rural young women and adolescent girls from Margibi, Bassa, Sinoe, River Gee and Maryland Counties are accessing nine months literacy and numeracy skills training programme, inclusive of business development and financial management skills trainings. Moreover, 200 rural women and young women are accessing vocational skills trainings in tailoring and cosmetology followed by awareness raising on Sexual and Reproductive Health including for Menstrual Hygiene Management. In addition, a comprehensive training manual on Menstrual Hygiene Management designed specifically for illiterate and semi-literate young women and adolescent girls living in rural areas is being developed by the programme with support from the National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL) and in collaboration with Planned Parenthood Association of Liberia (PPAL), the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.
- 5 farming groups were identified and selected for agri-business development skills training and access to rural credit through the establishment of Village Savings and Loan Associations. In addition, 140 VSLA groups (comprising 420 rural women entrepreneurs) were formed with rural women entrepreneurs who are trading agriculture produce across the southeast of Liberia. These are groups of 20-30 people who save together and are able to take loans out from those savings. They are, self-sustaining and self-managed groups that are active in targeted communities under the programme.

Output 2.2: Rural women have increased access to decent wage employment opportunities

- Orange Liberia has engaged an additional 10 women beneficiaries from Montserrado County as mobile money agents, providing them with employment opportunities with the company. Moreover, Orange Liberia has provided LD\$ 50,000 (US\$ 250.00) in additional start-up capital to women mobile money agents managing existing mobile money kiosks. In addition, the Orange Money (mobile money platform) training curriculum was piloted with 749 women entrepreneurs from 35 communities across Montserrado and Margibi Counties in order to raise awareness around the use of the platform for ensuring that they invest in mobile money transactions as an innovative and safe way of saving their money within functional VSLAs. This includes also for their use in making purchases from vendors for sale in local markets.
- In addition, these 749 women who have received training in the use of the Orange Money platform have all received feature mobile phones from the company (@ US\$ 10.00 per piece), the Orange Money curriculum /user manual, as well as orange visibility materials (e.g. tariffs posters, orange mobile money ledgers, SIM card registration booklets, etc.)

Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes

Output 3.1 Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance.

- The programme, through Rights and Rice Foundation and Foundation for Community Initiative, supported 5 key Civil Society Organizations (e.g. Liberian National Rural Women Structure, Liberia Marketing Association, Women in Peace Huts Association, Women’s NGO Secretariat, Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness) and the LLA to engage in developing guidelines and regulations (e.g. guidelines on implementation of customary land rights; regulations for land committees’ by laws and governance, etc.) to move the implementation of Liberia’s new Land Law forward.
- In addition, the programme supported the convening of CSOs at a one-week national retreat in Gbarnga, Bong County with representation from Liberia’s 15 counties on raising increased awareness around the new Land Law and its implementation. In this context, a factsheet on the Land Rights Act (Land Law), particularly on Customary Land Rights was developed and distributed to participants. The factsheet highlighted basic and fundamental provisions of the Land Law that enabled participants to easily understand key messages of the new Land Law. In addition, a draft declaration was produced at the retreat, describing the position of the CSOs present on key contentious issues that require technical redress by the LLA. The framework for a draft strategy was developed for the national dissemination of the law; and this is expected to be finalized by the CSO Working Group on land for presentation to partners.
- 379 rural young women beneficiaries accessing secondary education in 13 rural public schools in Margibi, Bassa, Sinoe, River Gee and Maryland Counties were provided school supplies (e.g. calculators, copybooks, book bags, pens, pencils, sharpeners, erasers, rules, etc.) to enhance the retention rate of beneficiaries participating in formal schooling.

Output 3.2 Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions

Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women, have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment

- 75 national leaders of the National Rural Women Structure and 45 national leaders of the Liberia Marketing Association have increased knowledge about the new Land Law and the gender commitments therein as it relates to land ownership. These women leaders are also raising awareness at district and community level with other rural women on the new Land Law. A factsheet that was developed along with key basic messages for

dissemination of the new Land Law are two knowledge products currently being used by Rights and Rice Foundation for awareness raising on women's land rights.

- 5 local media institutions from Margibi, Grand Bassa, Maryland, Sinoe and River Gee Counties are engaged in gender-sensitive awareness raising for local communities and trainings for other local journalists on the new Land Law. The programme has brought together 25 persons (12 males, 13 females) from both print and electronic media in this endeavor.
- As a result of strategic partnership with the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP), the programme received and distributed over 15,000 pieces of condoms during HIV/AIDS awareness exercises (e.g. literacy and business skills classes) across Montserrado, Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties. Rural women and adolescent girls are practicing safe sex in order to prevent HIV/AIDS or other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) including for the prevention of unwanted pregnancies.
- Community-based facilitators are building the capacity of S/GBV survivors, women with disability, traditional women and community leaders to prevent and respond to cases of HIV/AIDS including other STIs at the community level.

Outcome 4: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women

Output 4.1: Policy makers and parliamentarians have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural employment policies, laws and budgets

- With support from the programme, the CSO Working Group on Land in Liberia was instrumental in working closely with key partners from national government (e.g. Liberia Land Authority, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Agriculture, Governance Commission, etc.), development partners (e.g. Landesa Rural Development Institute, Welthungerhilfe, United States Agency for International Development) and Civil Society on organizing a national conference on the Land Rights Act which was held under the banner: *"One Law, One Message."* The purpose of the conference was to jointly review key messages that were developed by the different actors including the LLA and to re-develop a joint message that would be used for nation-wide awareness on the new Land Law. The programme particularly supported this initiative to foster the development of women land rights messages and support partner organizations to undertake massive education and gender-sensitive awareness with CSOs, CBOs, women and community groups at local level. The national brought together 40 persons (30 males; 10 females) representing 20 national and international organizations. At the end of the conference a draft land rights message was developed highlighting the four major categories of land as well as women land rights messages. This output is the result of several presentations made by key CSO partners during the conference that had developed previous messages for awareness during their respective interventions. The draft messages were compiled and further submitted to a small working committee of organizations with technical expertise to review and produce simplified and synchronized messages.

II. Describe any delays in implementation, challenges, lessons learned & best practices

The most difficult aspect of working together was on clear targeting and delivering as one in the same communities. The three UN agencies could not agree in certain instances (*due to bad road networks and network coverage*) but later compromised in support of the harmonization of the programme's approach for ensuring increased impact of interventions in the lives of women and youth at all levels. One good practice identified that made coordination work better was the fact that the country programme continued to utilize the strategy of building synergies with other similar ongoing programmes (e.g. UN Women's Buy from Women Initiative, JP RWEE on SGBV, Spotlight Initiative, WFP's P4P / School Feeding Programme, etc.) for delivering results in the same locations and the fact that the programme remains flexible (e.g. awareness raising on S/GBV, HIV/AIDS, SRH, etc.) in its approach to programming. Another was a participatory approach to community mobilization, recruitment and implementation of gender-sensitive interventions which played a key role in guaranteeing increased community ownership of the programme at the community level.

It should also be noted here that early rainfall served as an impediment for timely preparation of land; the fields were flooded as a result of the heavy down pour, beneficiaries' willingness to work under the rain was also a serious challenge. Another key challenge was access to land for agriculture production. For example, in Juah Town, Siahn and Gbarzegiah in Grand Bassa County, beneficiaries were deprived of land access. However, the challenge with flood was mitigated through proper water management implored by the programme agriculture technicians from FAO and WFP.

Mentoring rural women beneficiaries has been a good practice in terms of helping them implement what is being taught in the literacy and business skills training sessions. It provides the community-based facilitators the opportunity to engage the beneficiaries on a one-on-one basis, giving them the opportunity to ask specific questions related to their business investments.

The programme is breaking new grounds by bringing women into the digital space which hitherto appears to be reserved for men, especially in the case of Liberia. Women are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of the digital world for their economic empowerment and are expanding their investments in this sector through the use of mobile money.

In addition, the programme will expand its work on digital literacy by ensuring that innovation and ICTs offer exciting opportunities to unlock the business potential of traditionally marginalized and isolated women farmers. This will be achieved by:

- Providing easy, mobile-enabled access to climate-smart agricultural information and services.
- Building a digital track record and credit profile to increase access to finance.
- Connecting farmers to national supply chains to improve access to markets.

Working with rural women on their land rights has proven to be successful as a result of the new land law that is being implemented in Liberia. Women are increasingly exercising their land rights at the community level. A practical example is the fact that rural women are requesting that their spouses have their names included on land deeds or land certificates to show joint ownership.

Collaboration with government, UN system, civil society and private sector amongst others has been at the core of the programme. The programme's collaboration with the LLA and the CSOs Working Group on Land Rights intensified in the wake of partners' move to develop a standardized message for nationwide dissemination of the new Land Law. This has resulted in a harmonised approach to promoting women's land rights at the national and sub-national levels.

Stand-alone and joint monitoring and evaluation of the country programme's interventions provided a great insight in understanding the processes surrounding the programme's status in terms of delivery. In this context, challenges, lessons and best practices were identified through careful observation, interviews and focus group discussions during joint monitoring and evaluation of interventions under the programme. Thus, the knowledge acquired assisted the programme in making informed-decisions about the rollout of activities (e.g. skills building, advocacy and awareness raising, rural credit, etc.) at both the national and sub-national levels. In addition, the knowledge gained from the programme has accelerated efforts in advancing the development of key knowledge products (e.g. factsheet on land rights, simplified key messages on women land rights; training curriculum on ICT - mobile money for use by women, etc.)

Internal processes within the participating UN agencies proved challenging at times. For examples, the bureaucracy with procurement and contracting were two key issues causing delays with programme implementation. However, the UN Resident Coordinator intervened on accelerating delivery and pushed the Heads of Agencies from FAO, WFP and UN Women to deliver as planned. The Government, through the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of

Gender, Children and Social Protection also played a role in urging the participating UN agencies to accelerate implementation processes.

The monitoring and evaluation including knowledge management strategies were indeed most useful as both approaches provided the opportunity for understanding key lessons learned (e.g. joint delivery, building synergies, programmatic flexibility, etc.) that were being documented under the JPRWEE's implementation. Two notable challenges in this regard were inaccessibility to project sites due to very bad road conditions followed by getting communities to own the JPRWEE at local level. From the inception of programme implementation, a community-based participatory approach was perhaps the one thing that easily resolved the ownership issue.

The successful engagement with males as gender advocates has assisted in achieving transformative changes against stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination and inequality in Liberia. For examples, two strategic approaches here have been through awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns (e.g. UN Women's HeforShe and that of participatory community dialogues facilitated by WFP in collaboration with FAO and UN Women). In addition, building synergies with other programmes are ensuring the increased participation of men and boys as agents of change in support of women's empowerment at the local level.

Another focus area has been the case with the value of partnerships. The country programme has always been keen on the development of solid partnerships with different stakeholders, from the Government of Liberia and Civil Society, to other UN Agencies (e.g. UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, etc.) and the private sector (e.g. Orange, Coca Cola, etc.) This has ensured increased impact of the JPRWEE on the lives of women and girls including the youth. For example, women have increased voice and agency in all government initiatives including for the implementation of the new Land Law as a result of the JPRWEE's strategic partnership with the LLA, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Women's NGO Secretariat, the National Rural Women Structure, the Association of Women in Cross-Border Trade and that of local-level land committees in target counties.

The JPRWEE continues the task of working to establish the broader conditions needed for women's advancement. This includes access to productive assets, new technologies, education, information and services, employment and market opportunities including leadership and decision-making skills. For example, the National Rural Women Structure has advocated immensely for awareness raising and dissemination of the new Land Law which now has clear provisions on women's rights to own and inherit land.

III. Qualitative assessment

Monitoring and assessment field missions were instrumental in gathering information on the impact of the JPRWEE on rural women, their families and the target communities. In addition, stakeholders' consultations also played a key part in ascertaining the level of impact experienced at county level. As of June 2019, the JPRWEE was able to document the following as per the four outcome areas which it is aimed at addressing:

Improving food and nutrition security with rural women

- Storage facilities, constructed by the JPRWEE, continue to offer a secured space for rural women small-holder farmers to investing in rice and cassava value chains development (e.g. production of farina, fufu, cassava and rice flour, cassava chips, cassava spaghetti, popped rice, etc.) including for their access to other related services.
- Rural women farmers have the knowledge and necessary skills to manage, maintain and repair (basic) agro-processing machines situated in storage facilities.
- Rural women farmers are exercising their land rights to own and co-own land for agricultural production and are aware of the referral pathway for accessing justice when their land rights are violated.
- Rural women small-holder farmers have access to high quality seeds and tools and are using these for investing in agriculture at the community level.

- Rural women small-holder farmers are investing on farmland totaling 11.76 hectares and are expected to expand to 22 hectares by the end of December 2019. These women farmers have also benefitted from approximately 1.82 MT of food commodities as labor incentives for investing in lowland development. The t
- Five poultry units are expected to be fully constructed and operational by December 2019 for women-based farming groups to have access to protein and dietary diversification.

Recommendations based on feedback from interviews and group discussions

- The programme needs to continue investing in the use of storage facilities for use by women small-holder farmers for ensuring that there is improved food and nutrition security at both the district and community levels.
- In order to strengthen the sustainability of the storage facilities, there is a need for more women farmers to have more training in the use, maintenance and repairs of agro-processing machines.
- There needs to be a gender-responsive approach to community mobilization, dissemination of knowledge products for awareness raising on the new Land Law.

Increasing rural women access to income

- Through the use of ICT (Orange Money), women beneficiaries continue to access employment opportunities as mobile money agents with the private sector, particularly Orange Liberia. Moreover, women entrepreneurs in target communities are engaging in mobile money transactions (e.g. purchasing and selling) within the respective businesses for income generation.
- VSLAs remain as groups of 25 – 30 women who save together and are able to take small loans out from those savings. They continue to be self-sustaining and self-managed groups. The positive effects of VSLAs on the lives of women and their households are striking. Joint monitoring missions have found that food poverty amongst VSLA members has fallen from 75% to 20% after just one cycle of saving. The percentage of rural adolescent girls attending school has risen from 63% to 82%. Women-headed houses have stated that they are better-able to cope with health costs. Being part of such a successful community group has led to impressive gains in women's social status. They are being allowed to start their own businesses and take part in community decision-making. Being able to contribute financially within their families has put these women on a more equal footing with their spouses. An overwhelming number of VSLA members have also stressed how the groups have helped to improve relations between different tribes. The significance of this cannot be understated. Peace remains fragile in Liberia, and VSLAs are providing a neutral platform for people from different settings to come together for individual and collective gain. This is of huge importance in the interest of peace, solidarity and equality.

Recommendations based on feedback from interviews and group discussions

- The JPRWEE needs to organize groups of similar VSLAs into cooperatives and/or credit unions for increased recognition in the formal economy. This will give them more buy in from private sector for increased access to finance services for economic growth.
- There is an increased need for more strategic partnerships with private sector for ensuring women's access to employment opportunities for their economic security.
- The JPRWEE needs to strengthen partnerships with existing programmes by fostering synergies for promoting women's access to new technologies for their economic and social empowerment.

Rural women with enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community

- Between January – June 2019, the JPRWEE in partnership with the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) received and distributed condoms with women and adolescent girls beneficiaries accessing literacy and business skills classes in Montserrado, Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties.

- Community-based facilitators were provided training on reducing women vulnerability to HIV/AIDS with special focus on survivors of S/GBV, women with disability, traditional women and community leaders.

Recommendations based on feedback from interviews and group discussions

- In addition to awareness raising on S/GBV and SEA prevention, management and response, the programme should consider the promotion of HIV & AIDS vulnerability reduction amongst young rural women and adolescent girls in concession areas at the district and community levels.

In Liberia, the JPRWEE has three of the four UN agencies as participating UN agencies. These include FAO, WFP and UN Women. IFAD does not have a country office in Liberia. UN Women serves as the lead UN agency while FAO and WFP serve as participating UN agencies. UN Women chairs the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC), also serving a secretariat. There is a National Joint Steering Committee (NJSC), co-chaired by the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and the United Nations through the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office. Hence, the Minister of Gender and the UN Resident Coordinator both co-chair the NJSC for ensuring that the joint programme is 'Delivering as One.' The latter is also represented by the Heads of Agencies from FAO, WFP and UN Women including for heads of government ministries, agencies and commissioners.

For Liberia, the objective of delivering as One UN, under the JPRWEE, is to ensure swift and more effective development operations and to accelerate progress to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals as a UN development system that delivers more and better for the poorest and most disadvantaged Liberians.

The JP RWEE continues to serve as model for other UN agencies in implementing and promoting the objectives of 'Delivering as One' in conjunction with Liberia's Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development. It is committed to the 'One UN' process in partnership with national government and other key stakeholders and partners; and by working at the headquarters level, the regional level and at the country level, the JPRWEE aims to ensure that joint management of the programme is 'vertically integrated' throughout its implementation in Liberia.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1 Improved food and nutrition security			
<p>Indicator: <i>Increase of agricultural production of women farmers</i> Baseline (2018): 25% of women farmers Planned Target (2019): 35% of women farmers</p> <p>Indicator: <i>Percent of rural women experiencing dietary diversity for improved nutrition</i> Baseline (2018): 73.5% of rural women beneficiaries Planned Target (2019): 85% of rural women beneficiaries</p> <p>Indicator: <i>Number of rural women experiencing dietary diversity for improved nutrition</i> Baseline (2018): 5,733 rural women Planned Target (2019): 6,583 rural women</p>	<p>15% increase in agricultural production (rice and cassava) of women farmers in 2019</p> <p>68.4% of rural women headed-households are consuming a balance diet of carbohydrates and vegetables in the first half of 2019. This was determined from field missions wherein questionnaires were administered to project participants and community stakeholders in Maryland, River Gee, Sinoe, Grand Bassa and Margibi Counties.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Planned targets are expected to be reached by end of December 2019. Inaccessibility of project communities due to bad roads. Roads are expected to improve once the dry seasons sets in beginning in October 2019. This will allow for accessibility of project communities in order to complete remaining activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports
Output 1.1 Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security			
<p>Indicator 1.1.1 <i>Number of women farmers benefitting from the use of high quality seeds, tools and machineries increased production.</i> Baseline: 3,193 women farmers Planned Target: 510 farmers (F: 408; M: 102)</p>	<p>401 beneficiaries (women 341 and men 60) are benefitting from the use of high quality seeds, tools and machineries for increased production. Beneficiaries have been observed to have acceptable quantities of appropriate food available, adequate income through their respective businesses and VSLAs to access food, and lastly adequate dietary intake for their nutrition.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Planned targets are expected to be reached by end of December 2019. Inaccessibility of project communities due to bad roads</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports

<p>Indicator 1.1.2 <i>Number of women farmers benefitting from lowland development in rice production for increased agricultural production and productivity</i> Baseline: 309 women farmers Planned Target: 510 farmers (F: 408; M: 102)</p>	<p>401 beneficiaries (women 341 and men 60) are investing on 11.76 hectares of lowland for rice production. There were no yield increases reported as of June 30, 2019 as harvest is expected in September and October 2019 respectively.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Planned targets are expected to be reached by end of December 2019 Inaccessibility of project communities due to bad roads</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports
<p>Indicator 1.1.3 <i>Number of hectares of lowland developed for rice production</i> Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 22 hectares of lowland development</p>	<p>11.76 hectares of lowland is being invested on for rice production. Harvest will be in September and October 2019 respectively</p>	<p>Ongoing. Planned targets are expected to be reached by end of December 2019 Heavy downpour of rain this year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports
<p>Indicator 1.1.4 <i>Number of farmers benefitting from the provision of assorted food commodity distributed as labor incentives</i> Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 2,200 farmers (F: 1,320; M: 880)</p>	<p>Approximately 1.82 MT out of the planned 57MT (3%) of food commodities were distributed as labor incentives to 401 beneficiaries (women 341 and men 60) in 5 targeted rural communities.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Planned targets are expected to be reached by end of December 2019 Inaccessibility of project communities due to bad roads</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports
<p>Indicator 1.1.5 <i>Number of rural women accessing and benefitting from poultry units for increased protein consumption and dietary diversification</i> Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 2,550 beneficiaries (F: 2,040; M: 510)</p>	<p>Contracts for the construction of 5 poultry units have been concluded with construction firms. These units, once constructed, are expected to be accessed by a total of 408 women and 102 men beneficiaries that have been identified and selected for accessing and utilizing the poultry units in each of the 5 targeted communities in Margibi, Grand Bassa, Sinoe, Maryland and River Gee Counties. This brings the total number of beneficiaries to 2,550 (F: 2,040; M: 510)</p>	<p>Ongoing. Planned targets are expected to be reached by end of December 2019 Inaccessibility of project communities due to bad roads Heavy downpour of rain this year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports
<p>Output 1.2 Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves and their production</p>			
<p>Indicator 1.2.1 <i>Number of rural women farmers benefitting from trainings in technical approaches and best practices associated with harvesting, storage and processing</i></p>	<p>Pending</p>	<p>Inaccessibility of project communities due to bad roads Heavy downpour of rain this year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports

<p>Baseline: 3,193 women farmers Planned Target: 3,443 rural women from CGRs</p>			
<p>Indicator 1.2.2 Number of rural women farmers benefitting from trainings in value addition (e.g. processing, packaging, storage, etc.) for access to markets Baseline: 3,193 women farmers Planned Target: 250 rural women from CGRs</p>	<p>52 women from the National Rural Women Structure participated in a technical workshop on rice and cassava value chains development. Rural women beneficiaries were trained and sensitized on food traceability and food safety, as well as international packaging standards and on the Hazard Analytical Critical Control points (HACCP) standards of production.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Planned targets are expected to be reached by end of December 2019 Inaccessibility of project communities due to bad roads</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports ▪ IPs Progress Reports
<p>Outcome 2 Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods.</p>			
<p>Indicator: Income generated by rural women's cooperatives from their sales to markets Baseline (2018): LD\$ 16,200,000 (or US\$ 81,000) Planned Target (2019): LD\$ 18,200,000 (or US\$ 91,000)</p>	<p>A total of LD\$ 9,100,000 (about US\$ 45,500) was generated from women beneficiaries in the sales of locally produced crops (e.g. rice and cassava) that were processed in 5 Community Grain Reserves</p>	<p>The planned target was not met and is expected to be met by the end of December 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports ▪ IPs Progress Reports
<p>Output 2.1 Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products</p>			
<p>Indicator 2.1.1 Number of rural women with financial literacy skills that are accessing financial services from established VSLAs Baseline: 7,233 women beneficiaries Planned Target: 300 rural women and men beneficiaries (F: 240; M: 60)</p>	<p>5 farming groups (comprising 300 women farmers) were identified and selected for agri-business development skills training and access to rural credit through the establishment of VSLAs for agriculture. In addition, 140 VSLA groups (comprising 420 rural women entrepreneurs) were formed with rural women entrepreneurs.</p> <p>The partnership with Orange produced a training curriculum based on Orange Money and piloted with 749 women entrepreneurs</p>	<p>Overachieved for access to financial services Ongoing for access to decent work. Planned target is expected to be reached by end of December 2019 Inaccessibility of project communities due to bad roads Heavy downpour of rain this year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports ▪ IPs Progress Reports

	from 35 communities across Montserrado and Margibi Counties in order to raise awareness around the use of the mobile platform for ensuring that women beneficiaries can invest in mobile money transactions as an innovative and safe way of saving their money. This includes also for their use in making purchases from vendors for sale in local markets.		
<p>Indicator 2.1.2 Number of rural women who join and are participating in VSL Associations</p> <p>Baseline: 7,233 women beneficiaries</p> <p>Planned Target: 300 rural women and men beneficiaries (F: 240; M: 60)</p>	420 new women beneficiaries join and are participating in 140 newly established VSLAs (associations of 20-30 people who save together and are able to take loans out from those savings).	Overachieved for rural women VSL Associations. 60 male youth farmers are expected to be included by the end of December 2019.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports ▪ IPs Progress Reports
Output 2.2 Rural women have increased access to decent wage employment opportunities			
<p>Indicator: Number of women beneficiaries accessing decent work</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 772 women beneficiaries</p> <p>Planned Target (2019): 1,062 women beneficiaries</p>	<p>109 new women are accessing decent work with private sector (e.g. Orange and Coca Cola) as mobile money agents and sales agents respectively for both companies.</p> <p><i>In addition, Orange has engaged an additional 10 women beneficiaries from Montserrado and Grand Bassa Counties as women mobile money agents. A total of LD\$ 50,000 (US\$ 250.00) in additional start-up capital to women mobile money agents was provided by Orange Liberia.</i></p> <p>UN Women under its Strategic Note Project with the Embassy of Sweden will contribute an additional US\$ 250.00 (LD\$ 50,000) to the</p>	<p>Ongoing. Planned targets are expected to be reached by end of December 2019</p> <p>Ongoing for access to decent work. Planned target is expected to be reached by end of December 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports ▪ IPs Progress Reports

	women mobile money agents, bringing the total to US\$ 500.00 per woman as start-up capital investment.		
Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes.			
Indicator: <i>Percentage of rural women who are members of land committees in targeted counties</i> Baseline (2018): 32% Planned Target (2019): 40%	As a result of awareness raising on women's land rights for agriculture and strengthened leadership skills, there was a 3% increase in the percentage of women participating in land committees.	Ongoing. Planned targets are expected to be reached by end of December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports ▪ IPs Progress Reports
Output 3.1 Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance			
Indicator 3.1.1 <i>Number of young women and adolescent girls accessing secondary education</i> Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 2,040 young women and adolescent girls	379 rural young women beneficiaries are accessing secondary education in 13 rural public schools in Margibi, Bassa, Sinoe, River Gee and Maryland Counties. School supplies (e.g. calculators, copybooks, book bags, pens, pencils, sharpeners, erasers, rules, etc.) were provided by the programme to enhance the retention rate of beneficiaries participating in formal education.	Ongoing. Planned target is expected to be reached by end of December 2019 Inaccessibility of project communities due to bad roads Heavy downpour of rain this year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports ▪ IPs Progress Reports
Indicator 3.1.2 <i>Number of rural women who are participating in decision-making processes in land committees at local level</i> Baseline: 901 active rural women Planned Target: 1,309 rural women	367 new JPRWEE beneficiaries from Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties are fully active in local level land committees making decision on community management of land and other natural resources. The programme supported 5 key Civil Society Organizations (e.g. National Rural Women Structure, Liberia Marketing Association, Women in Peace Huts Association, Women's NGO Secretariat, Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness) and the LLA to engage in developing guidelines and regulations (e.g.	Ongoing. Planned target is expected to be reached by June 2020 Inaccessibility of project communities due to bad roads Heavy downpour of rain this year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports ▪ IPs Progress Reports

	<p>guidelines on implementation of customary land rights; regulations for land committees' by laws and governance, etc.) to move the implementation of Liberia's new Land Law forward.</p> <p>The programme also supported the convening of CSOs at a one-week national retreat in Gbarnga, Bong County with representation from Liberia's 15 counties on raising increased awareness around the new Land Law and its implementation. In this context, a factsheet on the Land Rights Act (Land Law), particularly on Customary Land Rights was developed and distributed to participants.</p>		
<p>Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment.</p>			
<p>Indicator 3.4.1 <i>Number of young women and adolescent girls with increased knowledge and practical skills to prevent and respond to HIV/AIDS including other STIs</i></p> <p>Baseline (2018): 2,093 young women and adolescent girls</p> <p>Planned Target (2019): 2,040 young women and adolescent girls</p>	<p>The programme received and distributed over 15,000 pieces of condoms to 1,209 women beneficiaries during HIV/AIDS awareness exercises (e.g. literacy and business skills classes) across Montserrado, Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties. Rural women and adolescent girls are practicing safe sex in order to prevent HIV/AIDS or other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) including for the prevention of unwanted pregnancies. In addition, community-based facilitators are building the capacity of S/GBV survivors, women with disability, traditional women and community leaders to prevent and respond to cases of HIV/AIDS including other STIs at the community level.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Planned targets are expected to be reached by end of December 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports ▪ IPs Progress Reports
<p>Outcome 4: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women</p>			

<p>Indicator: Number of laws passed to secure rural women’s land ownership Baseline (2018): 1 Planned Target (2019): 0</p>	<p>Liberia Land Rights Act passed and enacted into Law for implementation in 2018</p>	<p>Implementation of the new Land Law ongoing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MGCSP Progress Reports ▪ LLA Progress Reports
<p>Output 4.1: Policy makers and parliamentarians have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural employment policies, laws and budgets.</p>			
<p>Indicator 4.1.1 Extent to which the national Land law (Land Rights Act) make provisions for gender equality and women’s empowerment Baseline: Yes Planned Target: Finalization of the gender-sensitive key messages on women’s land rights for nation-wide awareness raising.</p>	<p>A National Conference on the Land Rights Act (Law) was organized under the banner: “One Law, One Message.” The purpose of the conference was to jointly review existing gender-sensitive key messages that were developed by the different actors including the LLA for nation-wide awareness with rural women on the new Land Law.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MoA/MGCSP County Progress Reports ▪ JPRWEE Monitoring Reports ▪ IPs Progress Reports

A Specific Story

Name: Ma Martha S. Karnga

Location: Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, Republic of Liberia

Age: 66 years

The Story of a Rural Woman Leader



Photo Credit: Rights & Rice Foundation 2019

“I now understand my land rights, and it has made me strong to go out to talk to other community people about land rights issues regardless of gender”. I now have my own women’s group that I put together called Bassa Women Development Association (BAWODA) that is talking about women land rights and land palaver issues in towns and villages in Grand Bassa County. We rural women leaders are working very hard with rural women to make sure that they have their rights on land matter.”

“When my husband died years ago, he left me with a parcel of land. I was in conflict with his family for many years because I had no rights to own the land even though I was his widow. But now and because I now know my land rights, I went to the law in my town to legally acquire the land by registering it and getting my deed. I am very happy now because of the rural women programme that has given me a voice to speak out on my rights as a senior citizen (old woman).”