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“ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN”

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2018

<p>Programme Title & Project Number</p> <p>Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Toward Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal</p> <p>MPTF Office Project Reference Number:¹ 00092004</p>	<p>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s)/Strategic Results</p> <p>Nepal: Five Municipalities and five Rural Municipalities from two local units Sarlahi and Rautahat² (Hill and Terai region)</p> <p>Sarlahi: Rural Municipalities: Chandranagar, Brahmpuri, Basawariya, and Dhankaul Municipalities: Bagmati and Barahathwa</p> <p>Rautahat: Rural Municipalities: Yamuna Mai Municipalities: Gujara, Brindaban, and Rajpur</p> <p>Sindhuli: Rural Municipalities: Golanjar, Sunkoshi and Tin Patan Municipalities: Kamalai, Dudhauri and Kamalamai</p> <p>Direct beneficiaries: 3,622 rural women farmers Indirect beneficiaries: In this reporting period, 15,574 family members (estimated)³ of the 3,622 rural women and 565 government officials, local elected representatives, community members and relevant district level stakeholders who participated in events were reached.</p> <p>The strategic result is to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the SDGs.</p>
<p>Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) • International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) • World Food Programme (WFP) • United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) 	<p>Implementing Partners</p> <p>Government: Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) in close coordination with Municipality and rural municipality at the local level</p> <p>Civil society: Equal Access International (EAI)</p>
<p>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total budget as per project document: USD 2,377,774</p> <p>MPTF Contribution: USD 2,377,774</p> <p>First tranche: USD 1,177,774 Second tranche: USD 0 Third tranche: USD 400,000 Fourth tranche: USD 800,000</p> <p>Government Contribution: Not applicable Other Contributions (donors): Not applicable</p>	<p>Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration 5 years (initial period)</p> <p>Start Date: 15 October 2012 (This is a starting date of the global JP. The JP RWEE in Nepal started in March 2015)</p> <p>End Date (Original): 31 October 2017 End Date (Extended): 30 September 2019</p>
<p>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: dd.mm.yyyy Mid-Term Evaluation Report <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy</p>	<p>Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name: Ms. Mio Yokota ○ Title: Programme Specialist/Unit Head ○ Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women ○ Email address: mio.yokota@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

² On 10 March 2017, the Government of Nepal adopted 753 local body systems fulfilling the requirement of the new Constitution of Nepal 2015. All of the old municipalities and Village Development Committees (which were more than 3,900 in number) were restructured into a total of 744 new Municipalities and Rural Municipalities.

³ The average size of a household in Nepal is 5.3 persons per household. The number of indirect beneficiaries was calculated by multiplying 3,622 direct beneficiaries by 5.3 and subtracting 3,622.

Abbreviations

JP RWEE	Accelerating Progress Toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal: A Joint Pilot Contributing to Implementation of the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) in Nepal
MoALD	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
MPTF	Multi Partner Trust Fund
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WFP	World Food Programme
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
NPR	Nepali Rupee
Mt.	Metric Ton
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
PSA	Public Service Announcements
IEC	Information Education and Communication
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Joint Programme “Accelerating Progress Toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal: A Joint Pilot Contributing to Implementation of the Agriculture Development Strategy in Nepal (JP RWEE)” aims to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights. The programme is currently being implemented in the two local units of Sarlahi and Rautahat districts in Province 2 under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) of the Government of Nepal.

The JP RWEE in Nepal started its implementation in March 2015 as a joint initiative among the Government of Nepal, FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN Women to pilot the implementation of the Agriculture Development Strategy 2015-2030 with a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) approach. It is now in its final year of implementation. The Annual Report 2018 covers the period January to December 2018, which was divided into the following three time frames:

From January to April 2018: The JP RWEE was implemented in three districts (Sindhuli, Sarlahi and Rautahat) with 3,622 rural women farmers. During this period, field interventions, such as provision of technical support for agricultural production by FAO and a comprehensive advocacy campaign, “*Sahi Ho!*” by UN Women, were carried out as per the work plan for 2017/2018.

From May to June 2018: In May 2018, a work plan for 2018/2019 was submitted to the Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) with a request for additional budget allocation of USD 800,000 to Nepal for the implementation of the JP RWEE from July 2018 to September 2019. The funding allocation was received by the respective agencies in July 2018. A two-month period from May to June 2018 was utilized for planning and internal coordination among the participating UN agencies.

From July to December 2018: With the approval of the new work plan for 2018/2019, the JP RWEE phased out from Sindhuli district, mainly due to the limited funding, and continued the implementation in the remaining two districts, Rautahat and Sarlahi. According to the Gender Development Index, these two districts are much behind of other districts in terms of women’s empowerment. Occurrence of traditional harmful socio-cultural practices is also still high in the two districts such as child marriage, dowry among others. In addition, the selected two districts are among the topmost districts in Terai region severely affected by a flood in 2017, which accounted for 40 per cent (equivalent to approximately USD 23 million) of the total loss occurred in the agriculture sector. Therefore, the JP RWEE team in Nepal decided to continue its efforts in these two districts. At present, rural women in Sindhuli are continuing vegetable production on a self-help basis, utilizing their learnings from the JP RWEE. The number of direct participants (rural women farmers) in the JP RWEE also decreased to 2,330 (1,145 in Sarlahi and 1,185 in Rautahat), reflecting the change in the geographic coverage. From this phase, IFAD started receiving the fund allocation, making all of the four participating agencies, FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN Women, able to start implementing field activities.

While the coverage of this annual report is from January to December 2018, the indicator-based results for Outcomes 1 and 2 were updated with the data and information as of April 2018, covering the three districts, Sindhuli, Rautahat and Sarlahi. The update on the harvest and income generation after May 2018 was not available at the time of reporting, because the next harvest of crops which were planted for the winter season, will be completed in April

2019. The result reporting for Outcomes 3 and 4 covers the progress observed throughout 2018 after the completion of the respective activities under an action-oriented advocacy campaign, “Sahi Ho!”.

The key progress during this period included:

- 3,622 rural women farmers in three districts benefitted from kitchen gardening and commercial fresh vegetable production. Their vegetable production was increased by 13 per cent per household, compared to the baseline. The total volume of the annual harvest as of April 2018 was 956 Metric Tons (mt.) with 3,622 women in 3,622 households. The average agricultural production per household had increased to 264 kg from the baseline of 234 kg;
- 3,622 rural women were able to improve the nutrition security at home by consuming more vegetables which were home-grown, with the support of the JP RWEE or purchased with income generated through the JP RWEE. In total, 636 mt. of vegetables were consumed by the JP RWEE participants and their family members (As of April 2018);
- 2,076 rural women, out of 3,622 supported, earned a total of NPR 7,695,100⁴ by selling vegetables in nearby markets (as of April 2018);
- Awareness of rural women farmers and other community members on women’s rights and gender issues in the community was increased through a series of community-based discussions organized as part of an action-oriented “*Sahi Ho!*” advocacy campaign; and
- A common understanding was fostered among 111 government representatives, local level policy makers and other stakeholders on existing gaps and challenges in implementing the government’s policies, programmes and the delivery of agriculture extension services in the new federal government structure, through two policy dialogues.

Key milestones of the JP:

The achievement and progress made during the reporting period in Sindhuli, Sarlahi and Rautahat districts are described below. Please note that results for Outcome 1 and 2 are the updates as of April 2018 only because the data and sales for the next harvest will be available after April 2018.

Outcome 1: Improved food and nutrition security

- As a result of spot trainings, and the continued application of recommended vegetable cultivation practices, 3,622 rural women farmers (1,145 in Sarlahi 1,185 in Rautahat and 1,292 in Sindhuli) **increased their vegetable production by 13 per cent** by April 2018, contributing to the improved food security for them and their family. The total volume of the production was 956 mt. for 3,622 women in 3,622 households with a total estimated number of 15,574 other family members. The average agricultural production per household was 264 kg;
- A total of 363 mt. of vegetables were consumed by 3,622 rural women farmers and their family members (by April 2018), contributing to the improved nutrition security at their home; and
- 155 rural women’s groups (out of 158 formed) accumulated Nepali Rupee (NPR) 4,838,575⁵ by revolving fund schemes established in their group.

⁴ USD 67,468.32 with the UN exchange rate for February 2019, NPR 114.055/USD

Outcome 2: Increased income to secure livelihoods

- Fifty-seven per cent of the total beneficiaries or 2,076 rural women farmers, out of 3,622 in three districts, earned a total of NPR 7,695,100⁶ by selling vegetables produced with the support of the JP RWEE. The remaining 1,546 rural women self-consumed their agricultural production.

Outcome 3: Enhanced leadership and participation in communities, rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies and programmes

- Awareness of rural women farmers and other community members on women's rights and gender issues in the community was increased through a series of community-based discussions organized as part of an action-oriented advocacy campaign titled "*Sahi Ho!*" Mobilization and awareness raising activities organized under the campaign, highlighted the existing adverse social norms and cultural practices, such as unequal wages to women, mobility restriction which limits women's direct access to the market and double burden of household and farm work. Such norms and practices have been hindering women farmers meaningfully participating in, contributing to the rural agro-based economy in a full format This was observed during the community-based discussions where rural women raised issues, such as equal wage for women and gender-based violence in their communities. A total of 221 community people (99 women and 122 men) were mobilized through three multi-format community forums under the *Sahi Ho!* advocacy campaign.
- The discussion activities also contributed to the creation of more supportive environment in the community for rural women's leadership and empowerment. For example, a strong commitment from the Mayor of Gajura in Rautarat district was generated to address the issues raised by women during the community dialogue event in Gajura Municipality. The issues raised included the lack of proper community-irrigation systems, need for a vegetable collection centre which is accessible to rural women farmers in the community, and safe public transportation to marketplace. This was attained through community-based discussions with policy makers, including, a follow-up meeting with the said Mayor. The Mayor specifically committed to coordinate with the concerned authorities and address the above listed issues within the current fiscal year 2018/19.

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

- A space for open discussion on gender responsive policy environment ensuring economic empowerment of rural women was created, through two national policy dialogue events. The events helped to foster a common understanding among 110 (62 women and 48 men) government representatives, local level policy makers and other stakeholders on existing gaps and challenges in creating a more enabling environment for rural women's empowerment and leadership. These policy makers agreed that there is a need to identify common issues faced by rural women at homes and in communicates and policies should address these issues. Participants also discussed necessary policy interventions to integrate rural women's priorities in the agriculture

⁵ USD 42,423.17 with the UN exchange rate for February 2019, NPR 114.055/USD

⁶ USD 67,468.32 with the UN exchange rate for February 2019, NPR 114.055/USD

development policies of the new federal structure. The participants consisted of representatives from government offices, research institutions, development partners, civil society organizations and relevant stakeholders.

- Political will to progress toward a more enabling and gender responsive local policy environment was demonstrated in the commitments made by eight local governance representatives during the community-based mobilization/awareness raising events in the three districts, which were attended by 221 participants (99 women). For example- Mr. Nirsal Sah, Mayor of Malanagwa Municipality, Sarlahi district, shared that his municipality had allocated NPR 3 million (approximately USD 30,000) for the fiscal year 2018/2019 to support agriculture related activities. While all individuals will be able to submit their proposals to access the government funds, proposals from women groups, marginalized and Dalit communities will be prioritized. Similarly, Mr. Ajaya Gupta, Mayor of Gaur Municipality, Rautahat district, shared that he had repeatedly reiterated the need for a community vegetable collection centre in the Municipal Assembly meetings, in order to respond to a request made by women farmers during a community dialogue event organized under the Sahi Ho! campaign. He also shared that a need for the proper market management mechanism to regulate and monitor the price of local produce, had been discussed at the Mayors' meetings.

JP RWEE has formally phased out from Sindhuli after May 2018 and continued its activities only in Rautahat and Sarlahi from July 2018. The 1,292 participants from Sindhuli, who were supported with capacity development in agricultural production and leadership skills, continue their agricultural production on a self-help basis by utilizing their enhanced agricultural skills and knowledge. Before phasing out from Sindhuli, the JP RWEE also supported the registration of rural women's groups, which were established with the support of the joint programme, in the government offices so that they could be formally recognized and eligible to receive the government-led support/services. With a series of spot trainings, transfer of knowledge and skills on agriculture production, distribution of vegetable seeds and agriculture technologies through the JP RWEE, these rural women enhanced their technical capacities and are continuing their agriculture production in their own initiative. This can be considered as a positive indication of the increased agency and confidence among RWEE women farmers in Sindhuli, building on their technical skills, knowledge and technologies which were acquired with the support of the joint programme.

I. Results

i) Narrative reporting on results:

This section provides a narrative report on the outcomes and relevant outputs from January-December 2018 where progress was made during the reporting period.

Outcome 1: Rural women have improved food and nutrition security

A total of 3,622 rural women farmers (38.49 per cent Janajatis, 7.7 per cent Dalits, 4.97 per cent Muslims, 26.65 per cent Madhesis and 22.19 per cent Brahmins and Chhetris) in 3,622 households were able to increase their vegetable production by 13 per cent (as of April 2018) in Sindhuli, Rautahat and Sarlahi districts. The JP RWEE continued to contribute to the increase in the production capacity of rural women farmers by providing field level on the spot trainings to help rural women sustain and internalize their enhanced knowledge, skills and technology adoption capacities for improved food and nutrition security. The rural

women farmers were found to be continuously applying learnings from the JP RWEE to their agricultural production. With the increased vegetable production, vegetable consumption per household has also been increased and additional household income was generated by selling fresh vegetables in the local markets. During the reporting period, indirect beneficiaries, such as 19,196 family members of 3,622 rural women farmers and 565 government officials, local elected representatives, community members and relevant district level stakeholders were also covered through different events. Their role was significant to the vision of securing women's food security, livelihood and rights.

As of April 2018, 3,622 rural women produced a total of 956 mt. of summer season fresh vegetable, consumed 636 mt and sold 320 mt. in the market. During this period, a total of 141 rural women directly received the follow-up training support, while the remaining 3,481 continued to apply their learnings from the JP RWEE to the agricultural production on their own initiative. This shows that the rural women farmers were able to internalize the JP RWEE results and leverage it for the improved agricultural production. The preparation for winter season vegetables farming started in Sarlahi and Rautahat in July 2018 after the current fund allocation was received from the MPTF. As the harvest of the winter season vegetables is yet to be made, the progress updates on the production, consumption and sales of winter season vegetable farming (updates after April 2018) will be reported in the next reporting period. Rural women were capacitated on kitchen gardening and commercial fresh vegetable production under the JP RWEE by providing on-farm training, (i.e nursery, soil and critical stage of crop management), introducing women-friendly technology and extending technical back stopping support. This has enhanced their knowledge, skills and technology adoption capacity to engage in vegetable production through their own initiative for improved food and nutrition security.

A total of 155 rural women's groups (out of 158 formed) in Sindhuli, Sarlahi and Rautahat districts, established a group revolving fund scheme in their respective groups, securing groups members' access to financial resources. In total, NPR 4,838,575 was made available/accessible to a total of 3,553 RWEE women farmers through the revolving fund scheme. The average size of a loan lent from the revolving fund was NPR 15,000 (USD 131.51) with an average 12 per cent of an interest rate which is lower than the average commercial interest rate (16 per cent). So far, the women's groups reported 100 per cent of repayment from members. The group finance scheme has enabled group members to buy agriculture inputs (e.g. seeds) in time and other essential goods and services during the time of urgency. This provision has prevented group members from resorting to loans with high interest rate offered by local money lenders. They were also spared from the high transaction cost associated with accessing loans from financial institutions.

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

A total of 3,622 rural women in Sindhuli, Sarlahi and Rautahat districts, continued to enjoy the increased access to agriculture resources such as vegetable seeds, agriculture machinery and equipment, and agriculture technologies (e.g. plastic tunnels), which were made available through the technical and material support provided under the JP RWEE. The knowledge, skills, technologies and other learnings acquired with the support of the JP RWEE contributed to the strengthening of rural women's agricultural production capacity in kitchen gardening and commercial vegetable farming. This led to improvement of the food and nutrition security with them and their families. In November 2018, 48 plastic tunnels were installed in farmyards of selected rural women farmers in Sarlahi and Rautahat (24 Sarlahi

and 24 Rautahat) to demonstrate a new technology for offseason vegetable production. The products are yet to be harvested.

As of April 2018, a total of 158 rural women's groups were formed engaging 3,622 rural women in three districts. A total of 155 women's groups (out of 158 formed) established a group revolving fund scheme, accumulating a total of NPR 4,838,575 (USD 42,423.17) for their individual use. Group members put an average of NPR 100⁷ per month as a seed contribution to the group revolving fund, and were able to borrow money as a loan from the group fund. The women mostly spent their loan to purchase agricultural inputs, such as seeds, fertilizers, or to meet other essential needs for their households, such as health care services, consumables for kitchen and others.

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

The income generation capacity of the rural women farmers in three districts has increased as their agricultural production grew. As of April 2018, 2,076 rural women farmers, out of a total of 3,622 women supported through the JP RWEE, were able to earn a total of NPR 7,695,100 (USD 67,468.32) by selling vegetables in the market. Increased income will help rural women secure their livelihoods in a more sustainable manner and create wealth under their own initiative.

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

During this reporting period, rural women in the programme areas enhanced their entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products. This is evidenced by 2,076 rural women who started to sell their agricultural products to the local markets after sufficiently meeting their home consumption needs. This is a first step to their participation in the agricultural value chains, which enables them to access the market to their products. JP RWEE provided 12 rural women farmers' groups (289 members) with the post-harvest management training and necessary equipment, such as a weighing machine and a plastic crate, to handle and carry fresh vegetables safely to the market. The joint programme also facilitated the establishment of market linkages between farmers' groups with local whole sellers/vendors/collectors and retailers by organizing one joint consultation meeting. The joint consultation meeting was found a good means for rural women farmers to find local buyers (wholesalers and retailers). There is also a plan to organize at least one consultation meeting in 2019.

Out of 158 rural women's groups formed with the support of the JP RWEE in three districts, there were only 12 groups which had been initially engaged in commercial vegetable production. The remaining 146 had been supported in kitchen gardening prioritizing their own consumption. With the technical and material support provided under the JP RWEE, rural women farmers were able to increase their agricultural production and meet the need of self-consumption for them and their family members. With this improvement, the JP RWEE encouraged the rural women farmers who had been doing kitchen gardening to move to commercial vegetable production to generate/increase their income from agricultural production. The current activities under 2018-2019 workplan focused on the promotion of kitchen gardening group to commercial vegetable farming. After July 2018, a total of 1,159

⁷ USD 0.87 with the UN exchange rate for February 2019, NPR 114.055/USD

rural women farmers who had been in 48 kitchen gardening groups (Sarlahi and Rautahat) were promoted to commercial vegetable production. Each farmer planted fresh vegetable in 0.08 hectare (2.5 *katha* land) in winter season. Some women have developed their direct contact with whole seller/vendor for selling their vegetable.

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

During the reporting period, women reached by the programme demonstrated increased self-awareness, confidence, leadership, and economic strength. They showed that they can now raise their concerns and advocate for responses to their issues in community meetings and are valued as economic contributors in the family. For example, the rural women reported that they continue to approach and hold meetings with the local elected bodies to discuss their issues even after the advocacy event activities.

The evidences to these results were provided through qualitative information and reflections of the JP RWEE interventions through focus group discussions (FGDs) and face-to-face interviews with about 20-25 rural women farmers who participated in the JP RWEE. During a monitoring visit in July 2018, rural women farmers in Sindhuli district expressed that the JP RWEE was able to bring a positive shift in their lives. These women, who used to be mainly engaged in household chores, are now holding senior level leadership positions in different committees/groups/networks at the community level, such as community-based users' groups (such as water resource management, forest management, mothers' groups, women's cooperatives), as well as different local level networks. The number of women holding these positions will be reported in the next report in 2019. Rural women farmers also expressed that they are more united than before and could take collective actions if an incident related to violence against women, polygamy, child marriage is observed in their communities. The rural women also continuously practice skills and knowledge on agricultural production, which they learned through the JP RWEE, and apply their learnings to produce vegetables. For example, the women farmers reported that they were able to produce more than before as they have quality seeds received from the JP RWEE and also have better irrigation system constructed under the JP.

The rural women farmers were also invited to the Ward Assembly meetings where they asked questions to ward representatives on the budget allocated for empowerment of rural women at the local level. It is a positive achievement that rural women farmers already participate in the local budget planning process. However, at this moment, it is difficult to calculate and assess the level of the impact of their voice in terms of the amount of the budget actually allocated, as the local budget allocation was determined in consideration of many other factors and local stakeholders. Some of the RWEE participants (100 rural women farmers) have opened their personal bank account. During FGDs, rural women explained that the engagement in the JP RWEE enabled them to increase their economic contribution to the household income/livelihoods, which has also positively influenced the family support and perception on the work and leadership of rural women farmers. During the FGD, one woman said she is more confident to access loans from the cooperatives, re-pay loans and make savings of her earnings. According to her, the JP RWEE made this possible as she did not have any idea about cooperative/banking system before the intervention of the JP.

⁸ Users' groups are a community-based coordination and decision-making mechanism and usually formed for specific community development areas, such as water source management, forest management, etc.

In Sarlahi district, a rural woman who participated in the media engagement training under the *Sahi Ho!* Campaign, reported that she had identified an incident where a woman was subject to a false accusation by villagers for witchcraft. She recorded it, utilizing video documentation skills learned through the training, and presented video footages as an evidence during a community gathering and raised a concern. Later, because of her effort, the community was able to identify perpetrators who had to apologize to the woman. This is an example of increased self-awareness, confidence and leadership with rural women farmers who now can raise their concerns and advocate for addressing their issues in community meetings.

Output 3.1: Rural women, including young women, have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to take an active part in local governance systems.

The women farmers from Rautahat have demonstrated their confidence and leadership skills by organizing a meeting with the Mayor of Gujara Municipality, in Rautahat district on 17 September 2018, to follow-up on their demands shared during the multi-format community dialogue organized as part of the *Sahi Ho!* advocacy campaign. In response, the Mayor committed to coordinate with the concerned authorities and address their demands within the current fiscal year 2018/2019. This event was also reported on an online news portal (please see the link <http://www.paricharchanews.com/archives/8655> to access the news published on the meeting).

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

A total of five rural women farmers' groups, out of 19 groups which had submitted/filed documents, completed the official registration in local government (municipalities or rural municipalities) offices in 2018. They are among 158 women farmers' groups which were formed with the support of the JP RWEE. The group registration is a requirement to formalize farmers' groups which are yet to become a cooperative, in the Government system. This formal recognition will help rural women farmers have access to the government-led longer term support and/or agricultural extension services. It is already in process. However, it was delayed due to the absence of a Group Registration Act at the local government system. The Act is recently under the operations. Coordination with the relevant municipalities and rural municipalities is ongoing by the JP RWEE team for registration under the JP.

Two multipurpose cooperatives were formed - one each in Sarlahi and Rautahat districts. Around 150 rural women joined in each cooperative.⁹ The cooperative is recently registered in Rautahat. However, the one in Sarlahi is still in the process of registration. Eight rural women's groups joined together and registered themselves as members of the cooperative in Rautahat district. Through this registered cooperative, these women can now approach banks or financial institution for loan for bigger level investments for vegetable production. This will support rural women to increase their income for sustainable livelihood.

⁹ A group consists of individuals who are from same geographical area and have similar interests or aims with regular contact and frequent interaction, mutual influence and togetherness to achieve a common set of goals. A cooperative is a private business organization which is owned and run jointly by its members who share the profits and benefits. Although, cooperatives vary in type and membership size, they are formed to meet the specific objectives of cooperatives members.

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

The action-oriented *Sahi Ho!* advocacy campaign was launched in January 2018 to enhance communities' awareness on economic contribution and leadership of rural women farmers. Around 11 million individuals were reached through the campaign activities and media contents, out of which around 11,629 community people including community leaders, were directly engaged and mobilized through the community-based activities. The activities included multi-format community dialogues, Public Service Announcements (PSAs), policy dialogues in the three JP RWEE districts and Kathmandu. The campaign was designed to focus on creating a supportive and enabling environment for women through advocacy, policy influencing and interactions with communities to address and challenge prevailing adverse gender norms and beliefs, whilst advocating for changes to the policy environment that reinforces them.

A summary of activities conducted during the reporting period is as follows:

Multi format community dialogues

Three multi format community dialogues were organized on 12, 14 and 15 of February 2018 in Sarlahi, Sindhuli and Rautahat districts respectively. The format of the dialogue was a '*kachahari*' style forum theatre, which allows audience to participate in the performance along with the actors, and the audience can determine how the story will end. A script of the '*kachahari*' theatre was written by a local theatre group '*Suseli Kala Samuha*'¹⁰ working closely with Equal Access International, a technical partner who is in charge of the overall advocacy campaign. Issues of the double work burden with women farmers, having to manage both household chores and farming, were presented to leaders and members of the community in the format of a drama. After the performance by a theater group, community dialogues were facilitated on the issues highlighted with the participants.

Representatives from local government offices, such as Municipality Office including its agriculture and women divisions and District Coordination Committee, were invited to the events. A total of 221 participants (99 women and 122 men) in three districts including women farmers and their families, government officials, local elected representatives and non-government organizations attended the multi-format community forums. The participants included 56 women who were JP RWEE's direct beneficiaries.

Out of 221 participants, 133 participants provided feedback through the event survey. The survey feedback showed that at least 47 per cent of respondents were able to understand issues raised during the multi-format forum theatre and relate them to their own lives. A community discussion was held after the performance, where participants, especially rural women farmers, were encouraged to share their challenges and lessons learned. They were also requested to highlight adverse social norms and cultural practices, which make their participation in economic activities more challenging. Issues raised by women farmers during the community discussion included unequal wages between female and male farmers, lack of proper irrigation systems in their community, absence of collection center (a designated place to sell their produce) for the vegetables and limited linkages with the market, including the limited transportation facilities which make it difficult for them to take their produce to the market. A short video produced on the multi-format community dialogue held in Rautahat can be viewed at- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3o3wsWtXqak>.

¹⁰ '*Suseli Kala Samuha*' is the name of a local theater group in Chitwan district, who performed a drama during the community dialogue sessions in the three JP districts.

Government representatives who attended the events picked up the community discussion and expressed their commitments to look into the issues raised and provide solutions to them. For example, the Mayor of Malangawa Municipality (Sarlahi district) allocated the budget to implement the support programme to ensure women's empowerment in the agriculture sector. This is also described under Outcome 4 below.

Orientation on short video production and linkages with local media

As part of *Sahi Ho!* campaign, one-day orientation for 12 selected women farmers from Sarlahi, Rautahat and Sindhuli districts was organized to orient the women farmers about the importance of utilization of media to advocate their issues and concerns. Four local journalists were also invited to the event who shared their knowledge on building relationship with local journalists for local level advocacy. This was done to build the capacity of women farmers to use the local media to highlight their issues and challenges for influencing the local level leaders to pay attention. In addition, a half-day training was also conducted on making short videos/testimonials using mobile phones. After the training, the women were excited to apply their new skills of short video production as one of the tools for local advocacy and reported (through the event feedback form) that they will take the learnings from the orientation and use them to address/highlight their issues at the local level. It is encouraging to report that more than 50 per cent of the women who had attended this session have already started capturing videos on issues of rural women farmers and are motivated to advocate for their issues on their own.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Three audio and video PSAs, or a total of six PSAs, each with 30 -second duration, were developed under the *Sahi Ho!* campaign. The PSAs were designed with an objective to address norms, attitudes and beliefs that adversely affect women's economic empowerment and leadership, particularly focusing on women's leadership in economic opportunities, women and labour migration (in the context of unsafe migration and human trafficking) and women in agriculture. Two PSAs particularly highlighted rural women's roles and contributions in agriculture with the following key message:

“Let's recognize the women's contribution in agriculture and share workload from home to the farm.”

As the level of involvement of women farmers in agriculture/farming in Nepal is equal and sometimes more than men, and women's role in agriculture is increasing everyday (84.3 per cent of the labour force¹¹) due to high levels of out-migration of rural men in search for lucrative jobs in Kathmandu or abroad. However, despite women's significant contributions to agricultural work, little of this has been acknowledged monetarily or socially. It is said that women are still far behind men in terms of their decision-making and earning potential when it comes to farming. Women continue to be expected to complete household duties on top of any farm work. Restrictive norms around gender roles keep women very much in the role of silent farm hands – they are expected to help farm work and agriculture production, but not to contribute in terms of decision-making or gain technical skills. While challenges and gender division of roles still persist, there have been some positive improvements over time observed during the mission visit to Sindhuli, including women's increased access to markets and, in some instances, a relative increase in control over the income. Rural women during the FGD in Sindhuli mentioned that they had to take their husband's permission to buy or sell goods at

¹¹ Nepal Labor Force Survey, 2008, Government of Nepal

their homes. However, now they can just inform their husband while selling or buying goods for their homes and husbands are fine with their wives' decisions. According to these women, this is a positive shift that the JP was able to bring to their lives. However, as a whole, the full achievement of rural women's economic empowerment has not yet been achieved. Hence, the above campaign message was developed to broaden areas of women's potentials, acknowledging women farmers' contributions and encouraging women's roles in decision-making. It also targets families and communities to share the household responsibilities with rural women.

The PSAs were pilot-tested in three districts and were finalized based on the feedback received from members of communities in Rautahat and Sarlahi districts, where the pilot test was conducted. The PSAs started airing from 8 March 2018 from two national television stations, Radio Nepal and 11 radio stations in the targeted districts marking the International Women's Day on 8 March 2018. The airing continued until December 2018. In addition, the video PSA has been shared on the social networking sites (campaign Facebook, twitter page and you tube channel) for wider dissemination from. The video PSA is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUpG029asfA>. A total of 11,084,219 people were reached through the PSAs.

The Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials and assessments

IEC materials such as posters, hoarding boards and PSAs were developed/produced and disseminated as part of *Sahi Ho!* campaign to ensure wider reach in the three districts as well as at the national level.¹² The materials were distributed through Equal Access's radio partners and the local implementing partners (Saamudayik Saarathi, FORWARD Nepal and Himal Innovative Development Research Ltd.) who shared the materials with the participants of the campaign activities, local schools and local government offices. The materials were also shared with the relevant stakeholders at the national level and in the campaign districts.

For the assessment, feedback forms were administered in various project districts. In Rautahat, Sarlahi and Sindhuli, the surveys were conducted between July-November 2018. The assessment of hoarding board was done using snapshot surveys¹³ with the pedestrians at the hoarding board locations whereas the assessment of the PSAs was done using feedback forms from a group of audience who were asked to listen and watch these PSAs. In these assessments, the respondents were asked about the clarity, attractiveness and relevance of the messages to their community. In addition, the respondents were also asked verbally if they were likely to initiate any actions related to the messages. The findings reported here are related to the objective three of the campaign, which is "to promote increased participation and representation of rural women farmers in local-level decision-making process through community-level awareness raising and policy advocacy".

A total of 53 responses (20 female) were collected for the PSA assessment whereas 51 responses (20 female) were collected from the hoarding board assessment. Most of the respondents in both assessments were between 15-49 years of age (45 in PSAs and posters assessments, and 38 in hoarding board assessments).

¹² Three audio PSAs, three video PSAs, 15 hoarding boards, 2,000 posters, 2,000 stickers and 5,000 brochures were developed. A total of 4,000 brochures, 2,000 stickers and 1,900 posters were distributed to the relevant stakeholders in the districts.

¹³ Snapshot surveys are designed for quick and instant feedback on specific aspects of a strategy or an activity. These surveys are mostly administered when the time for interaction with the respondents is very less.

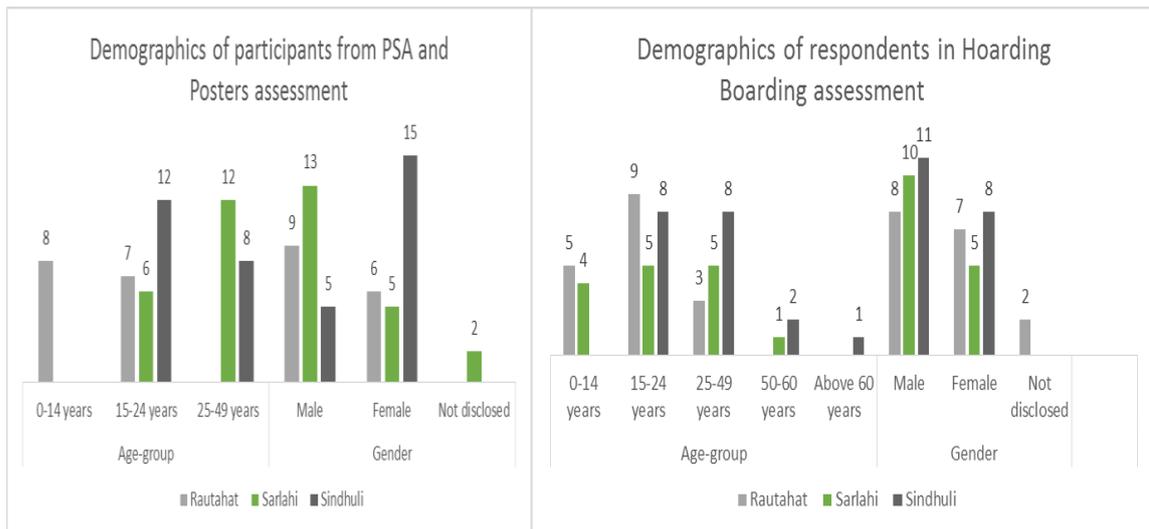


Figure 1: Demographics of respondents in IEC materials assessment

Major findings from the assessments:

All 53 respondents stated that they found the audio and the poster attractive. They also clearly understood the message. In case of video PSA, except for two respondents, all remaining respondents said it was attractive, and also clearly understandable. Similarly, all 53 respondents stated that the messages in the PSAs and the poster were relevant to their community. Two respondents in video PSA assessment and one respondent in poster assessment did not respond to the question about the relevance of the messages.

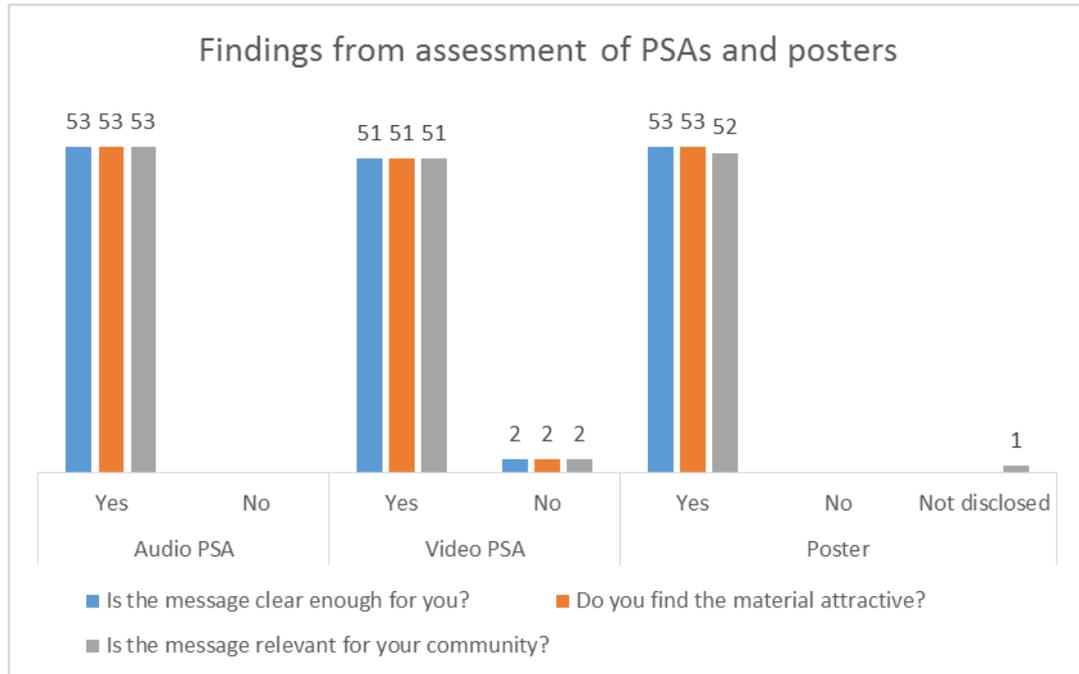


Figure 2: Findings from assessment of PSAs and posters

Among 51 respondents in the hoarding board assessment, all of them stated that the message in the hoarding board was clearly understandable, attractive and relevant for their community.

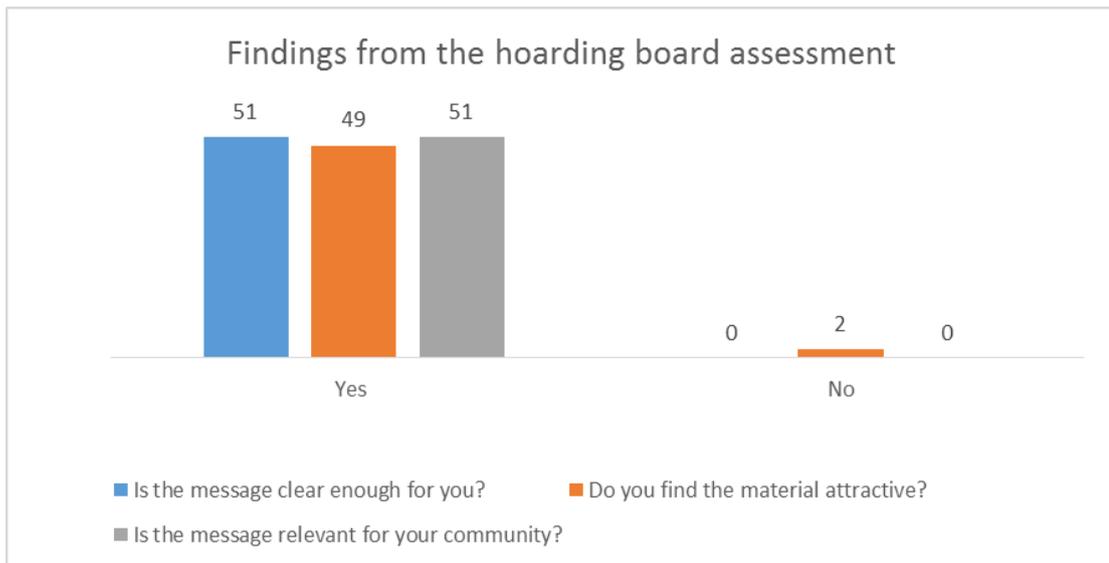


Figure 3: Findings from the assessment of hoarding boards

After listening to the PSAs and viewing the poster and the hoarding board, many of the respondents provided feedback stating that they agreed with the messages. A 25-49 year old female from Sindhuli shares,

"We women are also as capable as men. We can also earn our own living and live a decent life. This is what I learnt from the PSAs, and I agree with this message" (A 25-49 year old female respondent, Sindhuli)

Similarly, a 15-24 year old female respondent from Sarlahi believes that the advocacy efforts should go along with activities such as vocational trainings targeted at generating income opportunities for women.

"In addition to the awareness promotion through this advocacy campaign, such as these PSAs, vocational training activities should also be ensured in order to make that women are self-dependent." (A 15-24 year old female respondent, Sarlahi)

In other comments, the respondents have suggested that these IEC materials should be extensively promoted all over the country as they saw the messages relevant for the whole country. A male respondent from Rautahat comments on the poster,

"After looking into these posters, we can sense the importance of men and women working together and respecting each other's work. Hence, I feel these messages are very important. They should be promoted all over the country". (A 15-24 year old male respondent, Rautahat)

Similarly, one of the respondents of the hoarding board assessment shares that the hoarding board depicts the message about necessity of acknowledging women's contributions in agriculture.

"After looking at the hoarding board, it's clear that it is necessary to respect women's contribution in agriculture. I think we should all support this cause" (A 25-49 year old male respondent, Rautahat)

Some photos from the assessment:



Photo 1: Respondents during hoarding board assessment in Sarlahi
(Photo Credit: Pramesh Bade/Equal Access International, July 2018)



Photo 2: Respondents reacting with 'Thumbs up' after the PSAs assessment in Rautahat
(Photo Credit: Pramesh Bade/Equal Access International, July 2018)

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

A gender responsive policy environment was further promoted, especially at the district level, for the economic empowerment of rural women. This was demonstrated in commitments, which representatives of local government bodies publicly made during their participation in multi-format community dialogues in the three districts. One of such examples is the Mayor of Malangwa Municipality in Sarlahi district. She expressed her commitment to allocate budget to programmes in her municipality to increase access of women, especially women from marginalized communities, to agricultural development activities. During a follow-up meeting with the Mayor, she informed that she had fulfilled her commitment and allocated Nepali Rupee (NPR) three million (USD 25,828.98) to such programmes already. Similarly,

she has allocated NPR 1.5 million (USD 12,914.49) to programmes targeted at improving school attendance of female students from marginalized communities.

The advocacy campaign was able to collect similar commitments from local elected leaders and representatives through multi format community dialogues. This is an important evidence that more political interests and will have been solicited at the local level, through the JP RWEE's intervention, for building more gender responsive environment for economic empowerment of rural women. Quotes of their commitments are presented as below:

"Women should get all the same rights as men. They should be respected, and men should support them in both household and agriculture work. I commit to support in the empowerment of Dalit women who are marginalized. I will try my best to send all the girls to school for their empowerment".

Nirsal Sah, Mayor of Malangawa Municipality, Sarlahi

"As a Mayor of Gaur, I will forward the problems raised by women farmers to the Mayor of Gujara to construct a vegetable collection center. Agriculture is the main source of income of women farmers so we will try our best to solve their problems".

Ajaya Gupta, Mayor of Gaur Municipality, Rautahat

"Women's participation and leadership should be promoted in every sector. Hence for the empowerment of women farmers, I will coordinate with the relevant stakeholders to solve the problems raised in this event".

Shankar Verma Tiwari, Chief of District Coordination Committee, Sindhuli.

Output 4.3: An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women's priorities in regional and global policy processes.

As part of 'Sahi Ho!' campaign, two policy dialogues were organized in Kathmandu on 25 January 2018 and 18 September 2018. The dialogues focused on: (a) discussing necessary policy interventions to integrate rural women's priorities in the relevant policies of agriculture development, (b) addressing social barriers to rural women's economic empowerment, and (c) exploring opportunities for women farmers in the new federal government structure. The policy dialogues specifically targeted federal and local level policy makers to engage them in discussions to identify gaps and advocate for positive policy changes. A total of 110 participants (62 women and 48 men) from government offices, research institutions, development partners, civil society organizations and relevant stakeholders joined the programme.

The discussions emphasized the need for periodic reviews of existing policies to ensure that they adequately and effectively address social barriers to women's economic empowerment. It also highlighted the need for effective implementation of policies at the grassroots level, along with strengthened institutional capacity, and adequate and competent human resources at the local government bodies.

Key issues discussed during the policy dialogue organized on 25 January 2018 included lack of recognition of women's work in the agriculture sector, gender-based discrimination at

home and communities, unpaid household and care work. In addition, it was also highlighted that many technical and agricultural skills training designed for women's economic empowerment lack a focus on market linkages as well as women's leadership capacity development to prepare them to work in the markets and communities. It was evident, from the engaging interactions among participants on the issue, that the policy dialogue was effective in bringing the issues of women and agriculture to the attention of policy makers from the government bodies, scholars and practitioners working on the issue. In addition, participants expressed their solidarity to the campaign and ensured their commitment to bring about policy changes that are sensitive to the needs of rural women farmers by advocating strongly for gender sensitive plans and policies. A representative from the MoALD mentioned that the discussion helped them deepen their understanding of the existing gaps and challenges. He further promised to make sure that the Ministry will ensure sufficient provisions to address those gaps in the national budget.

The second policy dialogue, organized on 18 September 2018 on the themes related to women's economic empowerment in agriculture in the changing state restructuring process in Nepal, covered the following key discussion areas:

- Key existing legal frameworks (Constitution, Legislation, Local Governance Act, policies) related to agriculture and gender perspective on those legal frameworks;
- The roles of the three tiers of governments (Federal, Provincial and Local) defined/mandated in the key legislations for promoting rural women's leadership and empowerment in agriculture development, and its implementation status; and
- Recommendations for government and non-governmental actors for the best utilization of various opportunities for rural women's leadership and empowerment in agriculture in the context of federalism.

The discussion also focused on issues/agendas to concretize the policy framework for gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) particularly, how these policies would help to advance the roles and prospects of women farmers in Nepal. Some of the examples of good work being done by

local government were also shared during the event. For example, the head of Helambu Rural Municipality shared that they have been directly engaging with women in agriculture and are supporting agro-cooperatives in their community to identify the crops that suit the geographical attributes and crop diversity. The representatives of local government also acknowledged the roles of women in agriculture during the event and shared their plans to increase women's access to resources, especially with regard to agricultural income.

"This (the event) is a very helpful programme to get insights on the current scenario on how women's economic empowerment programme is being implemented, gaps in implementation and how we can move in the process of current state restructuring."

Mr. Prakash Poudel, Central Agricultural Laboratory, Department of Agriculture, Lalitpur

Challenge, mitigation measure and lesson learnt

Lessons learnt:

- *Consideration for the most appropriate means of communication for the advocacy campaign and community awareness raising*

The Sahi Ho! advocacy campaign applied various modes of communication to disseminate the campaign messages and conduct community-level awareness activities. For example, the information was disseminated through social media, PSA through local radio and TV programme and community-level awareness events to maximize the possible outreach of the campaign across all 12 campaign locations (Kathmandu and 11 districts). However, in the case of the JP RWEE, rural women farmers who often live in remote and rural areas, do not necessarily have sufficient access to some of the selected communication channels such as TV and social media, and it might have affected the effectiveness in delivering the campaign messages to the direct beneficiaries of the JP RWEE. The selection of modes of communication should be based on the local context of targeted audience including rural women farmers. The design and format of community-level policy dialogues and awareness activities should also consider the remoteness of rural women farmers in order to maximize the participation of the RWEE women in relevant campaign activities.

- *Need to invest in engaging families and communities to create enabling environment*

Deeply ingrained social norms hindered few rural women, particularly those having small children, from pursuing income-generating activities through their engagement in the group. The JP RWEE team in Nepal found that prevailing discriminatory social norms and absence of enabling environment at home is one of the main factors hindering women's economic empowerment. The JP RWEE team realized that there is a need to invest more in engaging families and communities to create and sustain an enabling environment to change the traditional social norms that limit women's leadership and participation at various levels. In this context, the JP RWEE team will invest on interventions with families and communities under Outcome 3 and 4 to enable them to help bring about positive transformation in the lives of women.

Qualitative assessment:

No updates in this reporting period

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	Achievement of Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1 Improved food and nutrition security			
<p>Indicator 1.1: % of increase in agriculture production of women farmers</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food crops 1,337 kg/HH - Vegetables 234 kg/HH <p>Planned Target (2018 and 2019): 200 % increase in food production</p>	<p>Indicator 1.1: 13 % of increase in agricultural production (264 kg. per household) in Sindhuli, Sarlahi and Rautahat districts by April 2018</p>		<p>Production data of targeted beneficiaries and field observation</p>
<p>Indicator 1.2: Women’s dietary diversity or variety of households food consumption pattern</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <p>1.2.1 62.2% of HHs (with kitchen gardening) surveyed with sufficient quantity and frequency of vegetable consumption</p> <p>1.2.2 72.4% of HHs surveyed have minimum acceptable diet (MAD)</p> <p>1.2.3 Food Consumption Score of HHs surveyed is 6.73%</p> <p>1.2.4 Coping Strategy Index (CSI)</p> <p>Planned Target:</p> <p>1.2.1 50% increase by quantity and frequency in vegetable consumption of kitchen garden (2017)</p> <p>1.2.2 At least 85% of the total HHs supported have minimum acceptable diet (MAD) (5,610 HHs in five years, and 2,890 HHs as of December 2016,)</p> <p>1.2.3 80% of the total HHs supported improve Food Consumption Score (FCS)</p>	<p>Indicator 1.2.1 – 1.2.4:</p> <p>Not available.</p> <p>Note: The relevant data was not collected during the reporting period. The data will be updated for the next report.</p>		<p>Vegetable consumption data of targeted beneficiaries</p>

1.2.4 CSI (5,280 HHs in five years and 2,720 HHs as of December 2016)			
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: Number of rural women farmers who have access to integrated agriculture/nutrition services Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 2,333 rural women farmers</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.2: Number of rural women farmers who utilize improved agriculture production techniques Baseline: 287 households with 574 rural women farmers Planned Target: 2,333 women farmers</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.3: Number of rural women accessing community assets and agriculture infrastructure (including shared equipment and machineries) Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 2,333 rural women</p>	<p>Indicator 1.1.1: Not available</p> <p>Note: Activities for this indicator will start in 2019</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.2: 3,622 rural women farmers have been utilizing improved agriculture production techniques. This achievement exceeds the target by 55 per cent.</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.3: 252 rural women in three districts have access to shared equipment and agricultural machineries such as power tillers, paddy threshers, corn shellers and paddy/wheat harvesters</p> <p>Note: The data on the utilization of community infrastructure/assets such as fish ponds and irrigation schemes was not collected during the reporting period. The data will be updated for the next report.</p>		Field monitoring report
Output 1.2 Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves and their production			
Not applicable for reporting as the JP RWEE in Nepal does not target this output.			
Outcome 2 Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods.			

<p>Indicator 2.1: Variation of women/women groups/cooperatives income generated from their sales markets Baseline: 49 rural women farmers Planned Target: 1,320 rural women generated income from their sales market</p>	<p>Indicator 2.1: 2,076 rural women earned a total of NPR 7,695,100 by selling vegetables This achievement exceeded the target by 57 per cent.</p>		<p>Fresh vegetable sales data of targeted rural women and field report</p>
<p>Indicator 2.2: Proportion of rural women with empowerment in the income domain of the “women’s empowerment agriculture index” WEAI (control over income) Baseline: IFAD to set the baseline Target: IFAD to set the target</p>	<p>Indicator 2.2: Not available. Note: Activities for this indicator will start in 2019.</p>		
<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 farmers trained on entrepreneurial and /or vocational skills to have increased access to markets Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 50 rural women farmers</p>	<p>Indicator 2.1.1: Not available. Note: Activities for this indicator will start in 2019.</p>		
<p>Output 2.2 Rural women have increased access to decent wage employment opportunities</p>			
<p>Indicator 2.2.1: Number of rural women farmers who entered wage employment with the support of the JP RWEE Baseline: 922 rural women Planned Target: 1,500 rural women</p>	<p>Indicator 2.2.1: Not available. Note: Activities for this indicator will start in 2019.</p>		<p>Field monitoring report</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes.</p>			
<p>Indicator 3.1: % of women elected as representative at local level/community level committees Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 10 (2018-2019)</p>	<p>Indicator 3.1: Not available. Note: The relevant data was not collected during the reporting period. The data will be updated for</p>		

	the next report.		
Indicator 3.2: % of producer’s organizations led by women Baseline: 2.9 % producers organizations led by women Planned Target: 5% increase (against the baseline) in rural women leadership in producer’s organizations (2018-2019)	Indicator 3.2: Not available. Note: The relevant data was not collected during the reporting period. The data will be updated for the next report.		
Output 3.1 Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance			
Indicator 3.1.1: Number of rural women farmers who participated in the local policy discussions and/or formal decision-making processes Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 20 (2018-2019)	Indicator 3.1.1: Not available. Note: Activities for this indicator will start in 2019.		
Output 3.2: Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions			
Indicator 3.1.2: Number of rural women’s groups who join formally registered cooperatives or registered themselves in relevant local government offices Baseline: 14 rural women’s groups joined cooperatives Planned Target: 2 additional cooperatives joined by rural women (2018-2019)	Indicator 3.1.2: A total of 20 rural women’s groups registered themselves in the local government offices (rural municipality/municipality). Out of them, 19 were registered as women farmer groups and one was registered a formal cooperative		Field monitoring report
Output 3.3: Rural women, including young women, have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels			
Not applicable for reporting as the JP RWEE in Nepal does not target this output.			
Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment.			
Indicator 3.4.1: Number of rural women are aware of women’s human rights and GESI responsive approaches Baseline: 5 rural women Planned Target: 1,620 rural women	Indicator 3.4.1: Not available. Note: Activities for this indicator will start in 2019.		

<p>Indicator 3.4.2: Number of families/households mobilized and increased their awareness and support rural women's economic empowerment Baseline: 0 Target: 1,620 rural women</p>	<p>Indicator 3.4.2: Not available. Note: Activities for this indicator will start in 2019.</p>		
<p>Outcome 4: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women</p>			
<p>Indicator 4.1: % of government budgets and donor funding (on budget) allocated to programme benefitting rural women Baseline: 5% Planned Target: 20 % of Government budgets and donor funding (on budget) allocated to programme benefitting rural women</p>	<p>Indicator 4.1: 38.65 % for the fiscal year 2018/2019</p>		
<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: Number of local government representatives/officials who enhanced their knowledge on issues of rural women farmers Baseline: 0 Planned Target:30 (2018-2019)</p>	<p>Indicator 4.1.1: Not available. Note: Activities for this indicator will start in 2019.</p>		
<p>Output 4.2: Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women</p>			
<p>Indicator 4.2.1: Number of countries where the “women empowerment agriculture index” is piloted Baseline: IFAD to set the baseline Planned Target: IFAD to set the target</p>	<p>Indicator 4.2.1: Not available. Note: Activities for this indicator will start in 2019.</p>		
<p>Output 4.3: An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women's priorities in regional policy processes.</p>			
<p>Not applicable for reporting as the JP RWEE in Nepal does not target this output.</p>			

II. A Specific Story

Problems/challenges faced:

Ms. Sagira Khatun belongs to a Muslim community in Rautahat district. She represents Brahmsthan Rural Women Farmers Group of Yamuna Mai Rural Municipality, ward no 4 in Rautahat district. She is 45 years old and lives with her husband, along with her children. She has eight children – four daughters and four sons - and one grandson. Her elder daughter, whose husband is currently in Malaysia in



foreign labour migration, is also living in the same house with her four children- one son and three daughters. Her family owns a small patch of land covering an area of 0.16 hectare, where she has small mud house (in a form of hut) to accommodate her entire family. Her family has leased one hectare of land. The family also leased two buffalo and three goats. Muslim communities in Nepal are considered as minority group. The women within this community often experience various forms of discrimination and negative impacts of adverse social norms and practices, such as domestic violence, preference of sons, restriction in women's mobility etc. As for Sagira, she was able to step out of her house due to the poor economic condition of her family.

Programme Interventions/Results:

JP RWEE has been supporting rural women farmer's group with quality inputs, training at field level, collective production and marketing of the vegetable produced in Rautahat district in close collaboration with local relevant government institutions.

Sagira was engaged in Brahmsthan Rural Women Farmers Group since the initial phase of the JP RWEE in 2016. The JP RWEE provided her technical know-how through on the spot training such as nursery establishment, transplanting, group meeting, line agencies coordination, harvesting and marketing. She received training on commercial vegetable farming. Sagira's engagement in the JP RWEE supported in transfer of her knowledge and skills to entire family.

Currently, her entire family is engaged in cultivation of the vegetable in 0.43 hectare areas of the leased land and grow cauliflowers, cabbage, chili, tomato, cucumber, eggplant, sponge gourd, bitter gourd, ladies finger and bottle gourd. The JP RWEE also provided leadership training to rural women in the programme districts. This supported Sagira to enhance her leadership skills and raise her voice during the group meetings. "I was able to make decision within women's group for the first time in my life," says Sagira.

Her village has access to road for marketing of her produce. She earned NPR 10,000.00 (USD 87.67) at the beginning stage of the programme. Now, she is earning NPR. 100,000.00 (USD 876.76) per season from the

selling of fresh vegetable. Her family is also benefitting extra income of NPR 40,000.00 (USD 350.70) through the cereal production, like rice and wheat, which they learnt from Sagira under the JP RWEE. Earlier, her husband used to work in India as a seasonal labour worker, and now he is working hard in their farm at home. The efforts of Sagira, after her enrollment in the training provided under the JP RWEE is bringing home a reliable source of income amounting a sum of NPR 400,000.00 per annum (USD 3,507.07). This efforts of her also allowed her to engage more in the family level decision-making process which was a rare case earlier.

Her group members are responsive and contributed to marketing system for the supply. They noticed the income generation through commercial production and in the same line improved their families' livelihoods and enhanced their own empowerment. Sagira expresses gratefulness for women's economic empowerment efforts through the interventions of the JP RWEE in Nepal.

III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)

Not applicable

IV. Resources

A total of USD 800,000 was additionally received as the fourth tranche from the MPTF in July 2018. As of December 2018, 33.05 per cent (UN Women 40,576.72, FAO 99,919) of the amount has been disbursed.