

**“ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN”  
 BI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT  
 REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2020**

<p align="center"><b>Programme Title &amp; Project Number</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Toward Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan</li> <li>• MPTF Office Project Reference Number:<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</b></p> <p>Kyrgyzstan, 52 villages, in 18 districts of Naryn, Osh, Batken, Chui and Jalal-Abad provinces</p> <p align="center"><b>Programme Beneficiaries</b></p> <p><b>Direct beneficiaries 2020:</b> 1716 (1666 women and 50 men)  <b>Indirect beneficiaries 2020:</b> 5148</p>
<p align="center"><b>Participating Organization(s)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAO, IFAD, UNWOMEN, WFP</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>Implementing Partners</b></p> <p><i>Please add government institutions, NGOs, civil society organizations and other partners that have an active role in the project.</i></p> <p><i>Use a different bullet point for each type of stakeholder group indicating it properly.</i></p> <p>Implementing partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGO Public Fund “Insan-Leilek”</li> <li>• NGO “Chuy-Talas Rural Advisory Services”</li> <li>• NGO “Union of cooperatives of Kyrgyzstan”</li> </ul> <p>National Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local self-governance</li> <li>▪ Ministry of Agriculture, industry and melioration</li> <li>▪ Ministry of Labour and social development</li> </ul>

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

### Programme/Project Cost (US\$)

Total approved budget as per project document:

MPTF Contribution

- UN Women- 292 500 USD
- WFP- 202 500 USD
- FAO- 202 500 USD
- IFAD- 202 500 US

**TOTAL: 900 000 USD**

### Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.

Assessment/Review - if applicable *please attach*

Yes  No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*

Mid-Term Evaluation Report – *if applicable please attach*

Yes  No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*

### Programme Duration

Overall Duration 6.5 years

Start Date (*15 10 2014*)

End Date (*30 June 2021*)

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## **NARRATIVE REPORT FORMAT**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Joint Programme on ‘Accelerating Progress towards Economic Empowerment of Rural Women’ (JP RWEE) has been operating in Kyrgyzstan since October 2014. The programme is a unique in-country partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), UN Women and the World Food Programme (WFP). It encompasses a holistic, integrated approach to women’s economic empowerment programming, capitalising on each agency’s individual strength and expertise. The programme was originally planned as a five-year intervention but was extended for a further year and will conclude in June 2021.

During 2020, the programme was implemented in Naryn, Batken, Osh, Jalal-Abad and Chui provinces in the country. In Naryn, the team mobilized 300 new beneficiaries (294 women 6 men) into 54 self-help groups (SHGs) in four districts of the province (12 target villages). Implementation of the programme in 2020 was carried out in the context of multiple crises, primarily the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic in March and a political crisis in October following disputed parliamentary elections and the resignation of the President. As a result of the delays caused to the programme due to restrictions in movement to control the spread of the pandemic, the programme received a no cost extension until June 30 2021. Despite the incredibly challenging context, programme activities were able to continue and progress was made in most outcome areas. The country team were able to adapt their ways of working and the relatively good internet network available in the country facilitated a shift to online delivery of activities where possible. JP RWEE women beneficiaries were also able to be at the forefront of the local community response to COVID-19 as a result of the entrepreneurial and leadership skills acquired through the programme.

The JP RWEE works through women’s self-help groups and larger Producer Organizations (POs), which are formed by the SHGs joining together to enable them to have better access to markets, finance and opportunities including access to larger businesses who invest in women’s microenterprise. Across all the intervention areas during 2020, SHGs were supported to develop their business activities and members participated in thematic trainings including value chain development, business planning and financial literacy. A number of the groups were selected to implement innovative business plans and start up micro enterprises. The process of strengthening Producer Organisations, critical as a programme exit strategy, was also undertaken following a comprehensive capacity assessment.

One of the JP RWEE’s strategies to achieve economic empowerment is to improve food and nutrition security through improved agricultural practices and dietary diversity. During 2020, an additional challenge was encountered as a result of abnormal weather patterns which destroyed beneficiary crops during the summer months. This led to some seeds having to be resown and lessons were learned in relation to applying climate resilient methods in the future to mitigate against erratic weather events. Despite this challenge, agricultural production was subsequently successful and better than expected yields were produced which enabled improved nutrition practices at the household level, increased food security, and additional income for families.

Application of the innovative GALS (Gender Action Learning System) and BALI (Business Action Learning for Innovation) methodologies was successfully continued in 2020, despite the restrictions in meeting in person, and significant progress was achieved for a total of 4118 direct and indirect beneficiaries. Results showed significant empowerment and improvements in the quality of household relations and subsequent joint decision making relating to family life and livelihoods as a result of transformation in gender roles.

As part of the programme design, the JP RWEE also works to influence policy and increase women’s political participation. This was particularly challenging due to the political instability in 2020, along with the COVID-19

related restrictions. However, despite the challenges, women were able to participate in forums and dialogues to enable their voices to be heard and the needs of rural women to be advocated for at the national level. A number of women were identified and supported to stand for election during local council elections. However, local elections were postponed until 2021 due to the afore mentioned challenges.

As a whole, 2020 was a year in which key learning was made as to how women's economic empowerment can and should build resilience. These learning will be critical in the design of future programme interventions as the pilot phase draws to a close in 2021.

## **I. Purpose**

The JP RWEE is aligned with the national strategic development programme of the Kyrgyz Republic and has a focus on SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals). The segregation of commitments and responsibilities of the four participating UN agencies (FAO, WFP, UN Women and IFAD) of the JP RWEE is detailed in the Annual Work Plan (AWP) under the leadership and coordination of UN Women. The JP RWEE outcomes have been integrated in the Kyrgyzstan UNDAF Priority Area I: Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth. The UNDAF directly addresses eleven country-wide priorities of the NDS, whereas the programme's activities specifically fall under four national priorities: a) agricultural development; b) small and medium enterprise development; c) gender; d) regions development through support and development of income-generating activities run by rural women, communities, SHGs and women's led organizations.

## **II. Results**

### **Narrative reporting on results:**

#### **Outcome 1 Improved food and nutrition security**

One of the JP RWEE programme strategies is to ensure that women have sufficient levels of food and nutrition security, which in turn provides a foundation for their economic empowerment. Under outcome 1, support was provided to 300 members of 54 newly identified Self Help Group (SHGs) in 12 pilot villages in Naryn province. Women were selected based on vulnerability criteria, identified with local authorities. The Naryn province farming zone is a high-altitude zone in Kyrgyzstan ranging from 1800 to 2500 meters above sea level. Traditionally vegetable crops are not grown in the area and vegetable products are imported from elsewhere in the country, or outside of Kyrgyzstan. The cost of imported vegetables is 30-50% higher than in other regions of the country. This means that most villagers, particularly the poorest, do not traditionally buy or consume vegetables and dietary diversity is extremely poor.

In order to increase dietary diversity and improve food security, a number of interventions including training and provision of inputs was provided in order to equip the women with the necessary skills and capacity to improve production. The focus of activities was centred on improving rural women's knowledge and skills on effective agro-economic activities by expanding their access to auxiliary agricultural extension services, diversification of food products and increasing the yield of various vegetable crops. Through FAO's implementing partner, Public Foundation Chui-Talas Rural Advisory Services, advisory extension services were provided to the SHG members, who had previously been excluded from extension service support. As a result of this support, in 2020, 300 members of the new Self-Help Groups (SHGs) were able to improve the quality of their household nutrition with fresh and organically grown vegetables, producing 98.2 tons of vegetables with a total amount of income averaging more than 2000000 KGS (23 640 USD) per group. This accounted for 17.5% of all vegetables harvested in Naryn province in 2020<sup>2</sup>. On average each SHG made a profit ranging from 9000 to 70,000 soms (USD106 - 827).

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/download/operational/1330/>.

The high-altitude ecological context of the northern Nary region results is characterised by long winters and shorter warm seasons which means that the planting and harvest seasons are short and do not have rainfall. The programme enabled women to enhance their knowledge and skills in vegetable production technologies including water-saving irrigation methods, integrated plant protection including the basics of organic farming, and the home production of fruits and vegetables which is not practiced in the region. However, the region experienced abnormal weather patterns during 2020 involving prolonged cold weather and rain and frost and snowfall in late May and early June which is usually warm and dry and the season for planting and harvesting. This resulted in 20% to 50% of vegetables being lost in some pilot villages and having to be resown. Despite this challenge, the subsequent yield of 13-15 tons per hectare was higher than the average yield in the province according to data from the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic<sup>3</sup>. With the implementing partner, beneficiaries identified ways to mitigate against erratic weather patterns in the future, such as through the use of frost-resistant vegetable crops, use of greenhouses to grow seedlings, selection of short growing crop varieties and the monitoring of weather forecasts.

The overall subsequent higher than expected yields (including 17 tons of cucumbers, 11 tons of carrots, 6.5 tons of tomatoes and 3.5 tons of cabbage) was evidence of the successful application of the knowledge acquired by the women in the programme. All groups planted cauliflower and broccoli for the first time and successfully yielded a strong harvest. The approximate yield of vegetables among the project beneficiaries was about 13-15 tons per hectare (in terms of 1 hectare). Provision of training was also accompanied by the supply of agricultural inputs, including high quality vegetable seeds (tomato, cucumber, pepper, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and carrot) and small plastic tunnel greenhouses to cultivate vegetables in warmer conditions. In addition, during the outbreak of COVID-19, 300 SHGs members in six villages (Blagovechennka, Atabekov, Kozho-Aryk, Apshyr Ata, Kenzhe-Kul and Samarkandek) received sweet corn seeds, as an additional support in the first months of the crisis.

In addition to training and agro-material assistance, self-help groups benefited from coaching and advisory support provided by the JP RWEE team through technical field visits throughout the growing season. Despite the restrictions to movement imposed by the authorities to contain the spread of COVID-19, online support was provided which enabled women to establish greenhouses and plant seeds as planned, resulting in the eventual successful harvest. The mobile phone app 'WhatsApp' was used to share practical teaching videos and access was available to all beneficiaries. Seven demonstration plots were created to demonstrate and share good practices among farmers, and exchange visits for sharing experience took place between target villages, involving 162 beneficiaries (134 women) and ensuring compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures.

Knowledge and skills enhancement in vegetable processing and preservation helped to achieve greater dietary diversity as women were able to produce canned vegetables for up to 60% of the harvest which were used for winter consumption, which is traditionally a period of even greater vegetable scarcity. Approximately 30% of the vegetable harvest was consumed by the women and their families as part of their daily diet. The introduction of vegetable growing technologies, training, and provision of inputs has enabled beneficiaries not only to diversify agricultural production, but also to improve and diversify the family's daily diet by including nutrient-rich fresh vegetables not traditionally consumed. The money received from the sale of vegetables was spent by families on the purchasing of additional food items, school materials, and agricultural inputs (tractors, harvesting fodder and potatoes, etc.) aimed at further increasing and expanding production.

## **Outcome 2: Rural women have increased income and secured their livelihoods.**

Outcome 2 focuses on developing and enhancing the business skills of women in order to achieve sustainable livelihoods and increased income. During 2020, 840 project participants (831 women and 9 men), members of 128 Self-Help Groups, including women who have been part of the programme since 2017, 2018 and 2019, expanded their entrepreneurship skills through a comprehensive set of interventions coordinated by JP RWEE partners and led by WFP. A needs assessment was conducted in order to identify the potential topics for training among rural women. As a result of the assessment, an integrated approach of 42 thematic training sessions on various income-generating and value-chain development areas (e.g. financial literacy, budget planning, livelihood skills, internet marketing and

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/download/operational/1330/>

current business project design) with practical sessions on the development of livelihood skills and finance management were carried out. The trainings were held in line with social distancing requirements and preventive measures in the context of the global health pandemic, with some sessions being delivered through online mechanisms when required. The training was delivered by WFP's Cooperating Partner (CP), the NGO PF "Insan-Leilek". Face masks and hand sanitizers were provided for in-person training sessions, in addition to social distancing and air ventilation requirements being put in place in the training facilities. For online sessions, links were provided to the online platform and each training participant attended sessions from home, benefiting from widespread internet coverage and affordability.

As part of the programme, participants were trained in the development of business proposals and were invited to submit applications to WFP for small-scale home-based equipment support on a competitive basis. There was a very high take up, with participants from 34 villages across four *oblasts* - Batken, Osh, Jalal-Abad and Naryn – developing and submitting a total of 90 business applications. Taking into consideration the high number of applications in comparison to 2019, the Review Committee consisting of FAO, WFP, UN Women and CPs made a thorough evaluation and selected 15 business proposals including in sewing, bakery, felt processing, milk processing, poultry farming, beekeeping and fishery farming. The provision of the equipment for the selected 15 women-led SHGs is planned for April-May of 2021. This will be followed up by mentorship support from the implementing partner, as well as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) during the Community Level Consultations in April 2021 which will collect feedback from the SHGs on the impact of the equipment on their income generation activities and their future plans beyond the JP RWEE. The findings from the FGDs will serve as an evidence-base as to whether this component was efficient and will enable the sharing of best practices and challenges for WFP to further develop their programme of support to SHGs in the future. After their participation in the training sessions, women provided their feedback which included accounts of positive experiences of being able to put the new knowledge into practice by formulating their business ideas into practical business applications. In addition, many participants stated that they gained greater mobilization and awareness within the community to participate in public decision-making and the resolution of development issues. As shared by training participant Begayim from Biymyrza village of Osh province: *"I really enjoyed the financial literacy training. Since I did not study anywhere after the end of the ninth grade, the concept of investing never crossed my mind. Now, you can think about where we can invest our accumulated funds – in my case, for the education of my son and for my business idea to start a sewing production business of national clothing"*.

WFP plans to continue providing consultative support to four mini-processing workshops (two fruit and vegetable drying, one dairy processing and one canning) launched in 2018 and 2019 under the JP RWEE. Furthermore, in 2021, WFP will support at least one rural community in JP RWEE pilot locations by providing mini-processing equipment as part of food value chain development.

Finally, as a response to the impact of COVID-19, each participant received 150 kilograms of fortified wheat flour and 15 litres of vegetable oil to maintain their food security and support their vulnerable households during October and November 2020. In total, under the JP RWEE, 840 project participants have received 3 bags of wheat-flour and 15 litres of vegetable oil each upon completion of training sessions.

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

The inclusion of women in local development processes is key to the empowerment process. Plans to support young women with enhanced confidence and leadership skills in order to participate in local governance were suspended due to the political turmoil following disputed national parliamentary elections in October 2020. This activity is planned in the first quarter of 2021 to enable women to take part in local elections in April 2021.

After the October crisis, the JP RWEE team, as part of UN Women's wider 'Election Project' programme to enhance the election of women in local and national politics, organized two online dialogues with the participation of 85 JP RWEE women representing local women groups, local *keneshes* (councils), communities, civil society, and business organizations. Participants framed the discourse on women's political participation around the context of the political

crisis in the country. The key concerns were related to a growing rhetoric of patriarchal social norms in the country supported by religious fundamentalism, nationalism and traditionalism, which threaten to diminish the role of women in politics. The dialogues resulted in a number of recommended actions for consideration within the JPRWEE in 2021, including: a series of educational sessions to support women to run for local elections, increase the number of supporters for women candidates; creation of a 'Telegram' group managed by the core group of JP RWEE women, including sessions on legal support to women candidates, and support to the participation of 12 activists in the national forum 'Women Rise for All' (March 2021), during which delegates will represent the needs of local rural women at the national level. A video on the 30% gender quota in local elections was produced by a JP RWEE media expert at the request of, and in close collaboration with, the Central Election Committee and broadcast on television during the national October elections. The video will be widely used during the campaign for the local elections in April 2021.

Some of the intermediate results achieved before the crisis included enhanced capacities of 18 women candidates to run for local elections through training and coaching activities, including various sessions on politics, ICT for development and a mentorship programme. A needs assessment conducted among women candidates formed the basis for defining the topics for mentorship and training sessions, including on improvement of ICT skills to interact with their respective constituencies.

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, women leaders from Naryn, Jalal-Abad and Osh provinces conducted 14 initiatives in response to the crisis in their communities by sewing masks and providing support to aid distribution. A total of 16 villages received aid from the programme which was distributed by JP RWEE participants in the form of protective equipment (masks, sanitizers, gloves), soap and hygiene products, baby and adult diapers, thermometers, and baby food.

Also, under outcome 3, work has taken place to increase women's capacity to lead Producer Organizations (POs). Since 2015, rural women from the JP RWEE supported SHGs, have formed 4 Producers Organizations (POs). In 2020, 311 women, representing 40 SHGs of 14 villages in Batken province formed an additional new PO. There are now 5 women led producer organizations consisting of a total of 111 SHGs. Being part of a PO significantly increases women's access to markets and income generation opportunities. As a monitoring exercise an organizational capacity assessment of the 4 previously formed POs was carried out, followed by a series of training/mentorship sessions on organizational development, based on the needs identified. The capacity assessment findings revealed that all four POs had had challenges in establishing organisational procedures such as bookkeeping, documentation, and management procedures. These shortcomings were related to the evolution of POs, with membership gradually growing from 10 to 50-60 members, requiring different level of competencies and governance rules and procedures that would enable PO leaders to manage a bigger organisation. At the initial stage POs were only focused on their formation and managing small scale revolving funds. The POs have now reviewed their organizational structure, analysed their current condition and revised their Bylaws to accommodate new visions and plans for organizational strengthening. Through a facilitated discussion, PO members have commonly agreed on the value-addition of being united under the PO for joint business processes such as production, marketing, and branding. This will help to ensure greater decision making opportunities for SHGs, as official members of POs, collecting membership fees through bank accounts and other actions to improve their organizational capacity. In addition, they have reviewed the management of revolving funds, which currently have amounts in close to 10 million soms (118, 203 USD) providing opportunities for financing the economic initiatives of SHGs. Since the assessment, the POs have enhanced their organizational capacities and organizational structures have been re-established, including management control systems and streamlining regulations on the use of funds through officially approved protocols agreed by all members of organizations; 50 members of 65 SHG have gained knowledge about functioning of cooperatives and NGOs, 25 leaders and activists of SHGs have enhanced their capacities on cooperative management.

Through facilitated discussion, the POs defined 11 business ideas, 8 of which were analyzed for their feasibility (dried apricots, sewing business, vegetables, prunes, compote mixtures, milk, kurut, processing of skins), and resulted in the development of 6 business plans, supported by 6 pieces of market research to calculate the profitability of business ideas (dried apricots, prunes, compote mixtures, milk, kurut, processing of skins). Results from these businesses will be evident in 2021.

At the onset of the COVID19 outbreak, the JP RWEE introduced an alternative mode of operations through online communication using the ‘WhatsApp’ and ‘Telegram’ apps. Taking into account the low level of digital knowledge and skills, UN Women initiated and organized a one-month online training on ICT, conducted by the private institute, the IT Academy, for programme beneficiaries and some local authority staff involved in programme implementation. In total, 80 participants took part. UN Women conducted weekly online consultations on effective social mobilization for village activists, that mobilized over 300 beneficiaries to raise awareness about COVID-19 prevention. Regular online meetings were held with activists to discuss the situation regarding activities on the ground, in order to address and collaboratively resolve difficulties and to monitor, coach and support the women. As a result of the training, some women started using online surveys within their group activities. For example, members of two self-help groups in Jerge Tal and Cholok-Kayyun villages collected data on the time local women spent baking bread every day. The survey results showed that 36.1% spend more than one hour, while 36.1% and 25% spend two and three hours, respectively. These findings resulted in the initiative ‘Social Bread’ that was organised in 5 villages as part of COVID-19 response interventions to reduce the negative impact of the crisis on the wellbeing of programme beneficiaries. Purchasing bread for ‘Social Bread’ project help women within the SHGs to free up their time for other activities, such as self-education, participation in social events, and spending time doing school homework with children. Further sustainability is envisaged from the expansion of the bakeries activities to the wider village communities.

The crises experienced in country served to highlight the importance of women’s participation in decision making. Women participating in the programme have proven their leadership qualities during the COVID-19 crisis by helping vulnerable families on the ground. Their role was very important in solving the problems which communities faced during the nationally imposed ‘lockdown’. Women activists in the JPRWEE target villages in Osh and Naryn provinces, which were most impacted by COVID-19, took the leadership in collecting information on vulnerable households requiring special assistance, acted as liaison contacts between villagers and local authorities, and assisted in the distribution of aid by ensuring coverage of the most vulnerable groups. In 6 target villages support to women leaders’ initiatives was reinforced by two projects additional to the JP RWEE through coordinated actions which resulted in the women participating in the local authorities’ development and adoption of Local Crisis preparedness plans.

During 2020, the JPRWEE, through linkages with other UN Women projects introduced the Adaptive Leadership and Positive Deviance (ALPD) approach, facilitated by a team of experts with experience of teaching this method at Oxford University in the UK. This approach will be used to support the process of development of the government’s Gender Equality Strategy (GES). The approach is used to shift thinking from linear strategic planning to scenario thinking, allowing the development and implementation of strategies and plans that are adaptive to rapidly changing contexts and uncertain political, social and economic contexts. JP RWEE programme beneficiaries will contribute to the GES development process by bringing in rural women’s perspectives and specific needs to the scenario planning for rural women’s economic empowerment, leadership and participation in decision making.

Almost 70 participants (including experts, activists, and 15 JP RWEE beneficiaries have learnt the ALPD approach. In particular, for the purpose of the JP RWEE, this approach is being applied in the areas of: a) local government’s partnership with women for COVID-19 response and crisis preparedness b) advancing women’s political participation, including through local elections c) changing community’s perceptions on women’s role in, and contribution to, the processes of local development by focusing on promoting new social norms in support to women leadership and participation in local elections. JPRWEE women participated in a brainstorming session on defining new social norms and promoting positive image of rural women leaders ahead of the local elections in April 2021. The results of this approach will be documented in 2021.

In 2020 IFAD continued to support the implementation of the household methodology GALS (Gender Action Learning System) and the BALI (Business Action Learning for Innovation) methodology in two cooperatives (“Kadam” and “Iskra” cooperatives) and two associations (“Taaji” and “Bar El”). BALI aims to improve organizational management by engaging its members in joint work, developing their sense of responsibility and also of taking ownership of common goals. In the beginning of 2020 IFAD conducted review sessions with a focus on documenting actual GALS and BALI results along all dimensions of assessment (capacities, motivation, ability to link up with the external environment and business performance). The participating cooperatives and associations

praised BALI for its innovative and easy-to-use approach for gender-equitable business development. The review demonstrated that BALI has positively impacted the capacity of women's organizations and SHGs to work on increasing income, business capacity, financial management skills, organizational development and gender-sensitive business planning. BALI tools helped participants to increase motivation to start or improve their business. A total of 92% of the overall trainees reported on their enhanced interest, proactiveness and confidence, and confirmed that they can start and successfully implement innovative economic projects. The following results were achieved:

- 245 women have improved their business capacity and financial management skills with the help of BALI tools. In particular, they have skills to identify, plan, implement and conduct feasibility assessments for innovative, viable and profitable businesses.
- 317 women have started 65 innovative business projects within the PO structure (e.g. developing a new business or upgrading existing ones, ranging from frozen dumplings to setting up an ice-skating rink), and by enhancing their business capacity, financial management skills, organizational development and gender-sensitive business planning through training and coaching support from JP RWEE.
- 250 rural women have significantly increased profit after they started using BALI. The level of profit ranged from 180% to 525%.
- An additional 67 women have started 11 BALI start-ups after trainings in October 2020.

The GALS process was continued in the same 10 pilot villages (second and third cohorts) in Osh and Jalalabad and in 5 villages in Naryn (cohorts 1,4). Emerging findings from an endline study reveal the following:

***At the Household (HH) level*** - HHs engaged in the GALS catalyst process (2059 JP RWEE participants including those who completed GALS in 2019) have started practicing better family relations, with women getting more support, respect and care from other family members, unfair workload distribution has been reconsidered and women have had more access to decision making and resource distribution. In addition, HHs have now have a common vision which they are working to achieve. HH members started reducing unnecessary costs which has resulted in saving money to realise the family vision. They apply more developed critical and creative thinking, strategic planning and analytical skills in their daily lives. Domestic violence has decreased, and reconciliation processes have taken place within households.

***At the individual level.*** 2059 women have become more confident and have belief in the future. Their increased income has resulted in their contribution to the household budget, and their role as women in general, being recognised within the household. It has also helped the women to improve their housing and housekeeping conditions by addressing their own practical needs through initiatives such as purchasing household appliances, renovating their homes, bringing water pipes into the home and building bathrooms. This has also eased women's workload and provided more free time which they used to attend different trainings, for self-education and healthcare. It was also found that women have become more active and acquired leadership skills.

***Organizational level.*** The Gender Participatory Review tools that contain 4 Happy Family Review (HFR) tools tailored to the JP RWEE will be applied at the group level to see how the GALS tools have brought about change.

In 2020, the IFAD implementing partner 'Community Development Alliance' (CDA) adapted the GALS implementation to an online mechanism in response to the COVID-19 restrictions. A total of 12 catalyst workshops lasting 40 minutes each covered all the 5 basic GALS tools, with participants joining by mobile phone. Future online implementation will be adapted based on the experience. Participants agreed that the offline format is more interactive and engaging. However, it was felt that the online sessions were useful during the government imposed lockdown. Women also gained an increased interest in learning ICT skills. It was recognised that availability of appropriate devices, good internet connection and a minimum digital skills base were essential for the smooth running of the online sessions.

The Gender Justice Diamond (GJD), which is the 5th basic GALS tool was upscaled in 10 villages (cohorts 2 and 3) of Osh and Jalalabad provinces, involving 1021 people (843 women, 178 men).

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

Progress in this area was impacted by the political crisis that took place in October 2020 and resulted in the suspension of activities relating to capacity building of policy makers and parliamentarians to mainstream gender. There were challenges associated with a high turnover of State partners. Within 2020, the position of Vice Prime Minister (VPM) on Social Affairs (JP RWEE's key state counterpart) changed three times. This situation was replicated at the level of ministries and local government, causing a high level of uncertainty and delays to implementation. Despite political uncertainties, JP RWEE, through synergies with other UN Women projects and in partnership with UNGTG, has supported the Ministry of Labor and Social Development in launching important national process on the development of a new Gender Equality Strategy (GES) 2030. A key state policy document, GES frames state commitments towards gender equality in all spheres of life, including on WEE. The process commenced in late November 2020 and will continue in 2021, ensuring genuine participation of rural women leaders and activists in the GES development process. This will contribute to bringing evidence-based priorities and concerns regarding women economic opportunities for consideration and integration in the GES 2030.

During the reporting period UN Women has started cooperation with the "Central Asia Barometer" Public fund on the development of Women Profiles (WP) in various priority thematic areas, including on the status of rural women. This is co-funded by the JP RWEE. WPs are analytical briefs, aiming to provide national stakeholders with clear analysis, through a gender lens and other disaggregation dimensions of statistical data, which measure the progress on gender equality and degree of vulnerability, marginalization, advantages and benefits of particular groups of women in Kyrgyzstan. The profiles will include factual analysis based on official statistics and qualitative surveys of the vulnerable groups and its comparison with the opposite group, as well as a corresponding group of men for some profiles. The profiles will be finalised in 2021.

More than 80 women participated in a dialogue on the role of rural women in local economies and socio-political development, in particular during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, by using a discussion platform provided by JP RWEE partners. A three-hour online event '*SHERINE*' ("gathering people for a good reason") was held and attended by rural women, bringing together women champions from across the country to discuss their initiatives in the areas of economics, social development, civic activism and leadership. Participants discussed concerns that require high-level political support as well as scaling up successful practices across the country. As a result of this event, JP RWEE activists developed recommendations to be included in the National Gender Equality Strategy (GES) 2021-2030. These included: expanding access of rural women to information, financial resources, ICT and professional opportunities; improving financial literacy for increased market access; developing a strategy to support women entrepreneurs at the level of the Ministry of Agriculture; raising awareness about the importance of women's participation in politics, organizing activities to involve rural women in public life, developing programs at the state level to increase women's political participation, and involving women in COVID-19 response strategies. The recommendations were presented to the Inter-ministerial Working Group on GES development. Its further consideration with the involvement of rural women activists has been postponed to 2021 due to the political crisis in late 2020.

#### **Describe any delays in implementation, challenges, lessons learned & best practices**

The overriding challenge experienced to programme implementation was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic, and its associated restrictions to rural life, caused significant disruption to the lives of women, and to the planned programme activities.

Despite this unprecedented challenge, a clear level of resilience was displayed by JP RWEE participants. Furthermore, the programme was able to adapt its implementation modality in many aspects and adopt online mechanisms, helped by the wide network coverage in the country and the relatively high access to digital devices.

As outlined above, a month long training was organised for 80 people, which facilitated the implementation of regular online training and consultations, and online meetings with women to discuss the evolving situation and address emerging challenges. Rural women have applied their new IT skills in their daily life, and two groups used their skills to develop a quick survey and expand their bakery business, as outlined above. Furthermore, support to newly established SHGs groups was carried out through online means with regular weekly online meetings being held with the women. This experience has contributed to learning around including women in digitalisation and incorporating digital inclusion in future interventions.

Despite the challenges to coordination as a result of the restrictions on movement and gatherings, the JP RWEE partner agencies succeeded in smoothly running inter-agency coordination through monthly online meetings. The team quickly identified new working modalities which enabled the continuity of project implementation within the limitations of the restrictions imposed (social distancing, mask wearing etc.).

Coordination with national partners was carried out through the National Steering Committee. Local authorities in target localities played an important role in ensuring the implementation of planned activities, and during periods of travel restrictions, village and district administrations helped to deliver agricultural inputs to beneficiaries. Along with new working modalities, a no cost extension was approved by the donors to enable a revised timeline in the face of delays to implementation.

According to data from the Ministry of the Economy, families that were mostly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak in Kyrgyzstan include poor households, those dependent on retail business and families with returned migrants with no employment opportunities. Regular consultations with the women confirmed the deterioration of the livelihood situation in the JP RWEE target areas and an increased risk of collapse of small-scale business enterprises, which had been earlier supported by the programme. Restriction of movement and lockdown also led to an increase in cases of domestic violence, inter-family and social tensions in the area.

In addition to the COVID-19 related challenges, the prolonged winter conditions affected the summer harvest. They were subsequently replanted, and a successful harvest was achieved. The local implementing partner and beneficiaries identified lessons learned and future mitigating action to prevent against such losses, as outlined in the results narrative above.

The COVID-19 crisis also revealed the sustainability of program results and the level of resilience of village activists and partners in confronting newly emerging challenges.

### **Qualitative assessment:**

As outlined above, 2020 was a very challenging year for Kyrgyzstan. In this context, the JP RWEE was able to continue its work with women's groups to reduce the impact of the pandemic on their lives and livelihoods. The programme showed flexibility and adaptability in its approach, and a level of resilience to the shocks encountered was displayed among JP RWEE beneficiaries. Mutual help and solidarity between SHG members proved to be a good coping strategy enabling members to jointly address hardships during the crisis situation. Facilitated by the programme, SHGs members were able to continue interventions during the lockdown period and then accelerate implementation of planned activities.

Sustainability of POs was given a high priority during the year, particularly as the programme will finish in 2021. An implementing partner, The Union of Cooperatives, was engaged to support the assessment and strengthening of POs and is integrating sustainability across its capacity development work with the organisations. The culture of working together, fostered among SHGs members in the course of JPRWEE, provides a solid ground for PO members to consolidate their efforts, power and assets and to enter to the next level of business development with their own branding, marketing opportunities and improved production capacities. This contributes to moving women out of the lower end of production and opening up higher value opportunities for them.

The emerging results from the GALS and BALI assessments have shown that empowerment is taking place and that changing gender roles are being witnessed. Engaging men is proving to be a key approach. Final endline and assessment data will be available in 2021.

The crisis has also reconfirmed the importance of women's leadership and participation in decision-making as the most important condition for effective development and progress for all, as was evident during the Covid-19 response. Women SHG members and leaders played a key role in mobilizing assistance to those in need at a critical time, when the number of cases was peaking and there was an urgent need for alternative methods of assistance. However, sufficient representation of women in politics remains a challenge and the upcoming local elections in 2021 are crucial. The mechanisms used by the JP RWEE to bring rural women's voices into policy dialogue ensure that concrete needs are listened to and that clear recommendations for strategy development are articulated and presented at the national policy development level. The development of policy and the inclusion of women in politics, particularly through the local elections, will be a key focus of the JP RWEE in 2021.

Coordination and partnership were key to the effective implementation of the programme during the pandemic. The coordination mechanisms in place meant that the National Steering Committee and the Technical Working Group was able to respond quickly to the evolving situation at the onset of COVID. Online meetings and discussion took place on an ongoing basis which resulted in a quick revision of the programme work plan, facilitated by timely and supportive engagement of the programme's donors. Coordination continued with the required intensity throughout the challenging periods of lockdown and restrictions.

Partnerships with programmes outside of the JP RWEE were also capitalised on to ensure that JP RWEE beneficiaries were incorporated into COVID-19 responses. This included JP RWEE beneficiaries being surveyed in a national government led multi agency survey involving UN Women. The JP RWEE was also incorporated into UN Women's Election Project which supports women to run for local elections. GALS beneficiaries were linked to the RERP project. The partnership with the private sector IT Academy was critical to supporting the transition to online mechanism during the pandemic.

Final results from the 2020 Annual Workplan will be available in 2021, following the completion of the no cost extension period. Learnings from 2020, and the wider programme period, will be pivotal to the design and development of a potential second phase.

**ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:**

	<b><u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets</b>	<b>Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)</b>	<b>Source of Verification</b>
<b>Outcome 1 Improved food and nutrition security</b>			
<p><b>Indicator:</b> Quant: Increase of agricultural production of women farmers Average dietary diversity score Qual: Evidence of improvement of rural women dietary diversity and consumption patterns <b>Baseline:</b> 6.22 <b>Planned Target:</b> &gt; 6.1</p>	<p>In June 2020, unstable cool weather with continuous heavy rains, frost and snow occurred in some areas of Naryn <i>oblast</i>. Such weather conditions had a negative impact on the growth of agricultural plants. Vegetable seedlings planted in the open ground were particularly affected, being severely stressed and stunted in their development (tomatoes, cauliflower, pepper, cucumbers, broccoli), which resulted in a significant reduction in yields. Some of the heat-loving crops, such as cucumbers and peppers died and these plants had to be reseeded as a result.</p> <p>Despite these difficult conditions, 300 beneficiaries improved the quality of household nutrition with fresh and organically grown vegetables ,such as tomato, cucumber, cabbage, carrot, broccoli and pepper. Beneficiaries started to harvest from June until November 2020. SHGs were trained on how to keep records on received harvest and sales. Based on these records, by November 2020, SHGs had gained 98.2 tons of vegetables with an average income of more than 2 000 000 K SZ (23 640 USD). Part of this harvest was used for their own consumption (30%), some part for preservation (on average up to 42%), and the remaining part for sales (27.5 tons of vegetables) with a total amount of 590 thousand KGS (6973 USD).</p>		
<b>Output 1.1 Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security</b>			
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.1</b> Number of rural women increased access to diversified Crop production through planting of 10 community gardens <b>Baseline:</b> 0 <b>Planned Target:</b> 450 women/50 men</p>	Planned for the next reporting periods	This activity was postponed to spring 2021 as it was not possible to select villages for planting community gardens as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions.	Minutes of the JP RWEE Technical coordination meeting, April 2020
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.2</b> Number of rural women utilizing improved production techniques (provision of drip irrigation systems in 10 fruit gardens) <b>Baseline:</b>0 <b>Planned Target:</b> 270 women/30men</p>	Planned for the next reporting periods	This activity was postponed to spring 2021 due to the COVID-19 restrictions.	Minute of the ARWEE Technical coordination meeting. April 2020

<p><b>Indicator 1.1.3.</b> Number of rural women utilizing improved production techniques (when planting apple, apricot, cherry and plum seedlings and etc.)</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 0</p> <p><b>Planned target:</b> 450 women/50 men</p>	Planned for the next reporting periods	This activity was postponed to spring 2021.	Minute of the ARWEE Technical coordination meeting. April 2020
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.4.</b> Number of rural women utilizing improved production techniques, (when planting vegetable seeds: tomato, cucumber, pepper, sweet corn, carrot etc).</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 0</p> <p><b>Planned target:</b> 270 women and 30 men</p>	300 beneficiaries received vegetable seeds (cucumber, tomato, pepper, cauliflower, broccoli, carrot and cabbage) 300 beneficiaries received 30 kgs of Sweet corn seeds. In total 600 beneficiaries were provided with the vegetable seeds.	No variance	Transmission acceptance certificates and POs
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.5.</b> Number of rural women utilizing improved production techniques (mini-plastic greenhouses)</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 0</p> <p><b>Planned target:</b> 270 women and 30 men</p>	300 beneficiaries utilising mini-plastic tunnel greenhouses in 12 pilot villages of Naryn oblast;	No variance	Transmission acceptance certificates and POs

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

-Activities that involve capacity building and input provision through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) should always be included under this output.

-In general, all activities related to post harvest facilities and actions should be included here, including the use of food processing technologies and Community Grain Reserves. Please clearly quantify, if the case, how they were used during the COVID-19 crisis as a response mechanism.

<p><b>Indicator 1.2.1</b> Number of rural women utilizing improved production techniques (participated in trainings of farmers on fruit production technologies)</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b>0</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 270 women and 30 men</p>	Planned for the next reporting period	This activity was postponed to spring 2021 as it was not possible to select villages for planting community gardens as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions.	Minute of the ARWEE Technical coordination meeting. April 2020
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.2</b> Number of rural women utilizing improved production techniques (participated in trainings of farmers on berry production technologies).</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 0</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 270 women and 30 men</p>	Planned for the next reporting period	This activity was postponed to spring 2021.	Minute of the ARWEE Technical coordination meeting. April 2020

<p><b>Indicator 1.2.3.</b> Number of rural women utilizing improved production techniques (participated in trainings on basics of Organic Agriculture and Integrated Pest management)  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned target:</b> 270 women and 30 men</p>	<p>Planned for the next reporting period</p>	<p>This activity was postponed to spring 2021.</p>	<p>Minute of the ARWEE Technical coordination meeting. April 2020</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.4.</b> Number of rural women utilizing improved production techniques (participated in trainings on Soil and Water management with basics of Conservation Agriculture (1 session) (for new SHG)  <b>Baseline:</b>  <b>Planned target:</b> 270 women and 30 men</p>	<p>30 training days conducted for project beneficiaries in Naryn province. Number of participants: 300 farmers, including 271 women and 29 men. 07-16 July 2020</p>	<p>No variance</p>	<p>Interim and final Narrative and Financial reports of PF Chui-Talas RAS (June, November 2020)</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.5.</b> Number of rural women utilizing improved production techniques (received the consultancy services and technical (agronomical) support during the growing season (field trips of trainers – agronomists, after each training and consultation)  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned target:</b> 540 women and 60 men</p>	<p>600 beneficiaries including members of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cohort received consulting services by agronomists. Off-line and on-line advisory services was provided throughout the vegetation season until November 2020 by agronomists</p>	<p>No variance</p>	<p>Interim and final Narrative and Financial reports of PF Chui-Talas RAS (June, November 2020)</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.6.</b> Number of rural women utilizing improved production techniques (participated in trainings on vegetable production technologies (for new SHGs)  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned target:</b> 270 women and 30 men</p>	<p>15 training was conducted for project beneficiaries with participation of 300 beneficiaries, including 271 women and 29 men. 10-23 June 2020</p>	<p>No variance</p>	<p>Interim and Final Narrative and Financial reports of PF Chui-Talas RAS (June, November 2020)</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.7.</b> Number of rural women utilizing improved production techniques (participated in trainings on fruit and vegetable processing technologies (for new SHGs)  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned target:</b> 270 women and 30 men</p>	<p>30 Trainings was conducted for 300 beneficiaries, Including 271 women and 29 men. 20 August – 11 September 2020</p>	<p>No variance</p>	<p>Interim and Final narrative and financial report of PF Chui-Talas RAS (June, November 2020)</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2 Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods.</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator:</b> Quant.: Income generated by rural women’s cooperatives from their sales to WFP and other markets</p>	<p>300 beneficiaries improved the quality of their household's nutrition with fresh and organically grown vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, carrots, broccoli and peppers. Beneficiaries started to receive their harvest from June until November 2020. SHGs were trained on how to keep recording their harvest and its sales. Based on this recorded</p>		

<p>Qual: Income generated by rural women's self-help groups from their sales</p> <p><b>Baseline: TBD</b> <b>Planned Target: TBD</b></p>	<p>information, by November 2020, SHGs gained 98.2 mt of vegetables with the total amount of income on average of more than KGS 2,000,000 (USD 23,640). Part of this harvest (30 percent) was used for their own consumption, some parts for preservation (on average up to 42 percent) and the remaining part for sales (27.5 mt of vegetables with a total amount of KGS 590,000 (USD 6,973).</p>		
<p><b>Output 2.1 Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products</b></p>			
<p>Indicator 2.1.1 a. Number of rural women who underwent the business mentorship programme Baseline: 700 beneficiaries (670 females and 30 males) Planned Target: 350 rural women</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.1b. Number of individual/group businesses created Baseline: 15 Planned Target: At least 15 individual/group businesses created</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>840 beneficiaries (831 women and 9 men) were provided with 42 capacity-building training sessions with a focus on business-related/entrepreneurship skills in the areas of bakery, sewing, milk processing, poultry farming and handicrafts.</li> <li>15 businesses selected</li> </ul>	<p>There was additional take up of SHGs</p>	<p>List of participants Final report of the service providers (WFP and UN Women)</p>
<p>Indicator 2.1.2. Number of recipients of food/cash Baseline: 700 beneficiaries (670 women, 30 men) Planned Target: 800 rural women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WFP distributed 130 mt (119 mt of wheat flour and 11 mt of vegetable oil) of food to 793 beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Report of the service provider</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes.</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator:</b> Quant: Number of rural women running for representatives in rural councils Qual: Evidence of rural women's empowerment in intrahousehold decision making</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> TBD based on new elections (due to the COVID-19 and unstable political situation after Parliamentary election was postponed to April 2021, before planned in April 2020)</p>	<p>18 candidates participated in program mentoring activities and are prepared to participate in upcoming local elections: to formulate their needs, requirements, participate in development planning and budgeting processes at the local level, and to contribute to the development of the regulatory framework at the national level.</p>	<p>Due to the COVID-19, unstable political situation after Parliamentary election, after that Presidential election in 10th January 2021 Central Election Committee was postponed local elections to April 2021.</p>	<p>Women's Leadership Consultant's report Central Election Committee's election results report</p>

<b>Planned Target:</b> 10	In 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter of 2021 activities on women-leadership will be continued.		
<b>Output 3.1 Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance</b>			
18 candidates participated in program mentoring activities and are prepared to participate in upcoming local elections: to formulate their needs, requirements, participate in development planning and budgeting processes at the local level, and to contribute to the development of the regulatory framework at the national level.			
<b>Indicator 3.1.1 a.</b> Number of women candidates for elections in local councils <b>Baseline:</b> 0 <b>Planned Target:</b> 10 rural women	36 women candidates from the target municipalities registered their candidature for the local elections.	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the political instability in Kyrgyzstan after the disputed national elections in October 2020, local elections were postponed until April 2021.	Women's Leadership Consultant's report Central Election Committee's election results report
<b>Indicator 3.1.1b.</b> Number of women participating in decision-making process at the local-self-government level <b>Baseline:</b> 80 <b>Planned Target:</b> 30 rural women	No women were elected as they were not held		
<b>Indicator 3.1.2.</b> Number of community initiatives supporting women candidates for local council <b>Baseline:</b> 9 <b>Planned Target:</b> 10 community initiatives	14 initiatives relating to COVID-19 response were organized and implemented.	Due to the COVID-19 situation, women who had planned to participate in the local elections initiated COVID-19 response activities at the local level.	Women's Leadership Consultant's report
<b>Output 3.2: Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions</b>			
With the support from the programme, rural women members of POs have enhanced their organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate in POs. Organizational structures of 4 organizations were developed, including management control systems; streamlining regulations on the use of funds through officially approved protocols agreed by all members of organizations. 50 members of 65 SHGs have gained knowledge on the functioning of cooperatives and NGOs; 25 leaders and activists of SHGs have enhanced their capacities on cooperative management. Six business plans were developed and implemented.			
<b>Indicator 3.2.1.</b> Number of rural women mobilized in self-help groups for joint economic activities <b>Baseline:</b> 700 (670 women, 30 men) <b>Planned Target:</b> 270 women (and 30 men)	294 women and 6 men mobilized into 54 self-help groups	An additional 24 women were included based on need and interest to join.	Social Mobilization Consultant's and village activists' reports
<b>Indicator 3.2.2a.</b> Number of POs formally registered as cooperatives <b>Baseline:</b> 0 <b>Planned targets:</b> 2 Producer Organizations	42 SHGs from 18 villages of Batken province in December 2020 established Cooperative "Organic apricot" (Nukura oruk).	No variance	Service provider's report

	Public Association “Taazhy” in the process of registering as a cooperative.		
<b>Indicator 3.2.2.</b> Number of POs that adopt a gender-sensitive policy/strategy <b>Baseline:</b> 0 <b>Planned targets:</b> 4 Producer Organizations	Internal gender-sensitive policies will be developed during the next reporting period.	Planned for 2021	Service provider’s report
<b>Indicator 3.2.3</b> Number of SHGs that joined formally registered POs (cooperatives, associations) <b>Baseline:</b> 0 <b>Planned targets:</b> 65 SHGs <b>Actual:</b> 112 SHGs	768 members of 112 SHGs from Naryn, Batken, Osh, Dzhalal-Abad provinces expanded their opportunity to become sustainable and joined into 4 Producer’s Organizations.	22 SHGs from a different UN Women project that was completed in 2019 were incorporated into POs which resulted in exceeding the target, along with a greater number of interest than expected from other SHGs.	Service provider’s report
<b>Output 3.3: Rural women, including young women, have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels</b>			
<b>Indicator 3.3.1.</b> Number of rural women participating in policy lobbying activities at local and national levels <b>Baseline:</b> 80 rural women <b>Planned Target:</b> 80 rural women	Close to 85 rural women activists participated in 2 online dialogues on the political situation and its implications on local development and upcoming local elections.	No variance	Service provider’s report
<b>Indicator 3.3.2.</b> Number of rural women participating in policy lobbying activities at local and national levels <b>Baseline:</b> 80 rural women <b>Planned Target:</b> 50 rural women	Informal platform that allowed for more than 80 rural women to interact and hold on a dialogue on the role of rural women in local economies and socio - political development, especially during the response to COVID-19 pandemic. The set of recommendations developed by dialogues participants were transferred to the Interministerial Working Group on GES 2030 development for consideration and integration within WEE priority area.	No variance	Service provider’s report
<b>Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment.</b>			

Application of GALS (Gender Action Learning System) and BALI (Business Action Learning for Innovation) was successfully continued in 2020 providing benefits to a total of 4118 direct and indirect beneficiaries. These innovative approaches proved to be effective in empowering JPRWEE participants for more productive social and economic activism and improvements in quality of their lives at the household level by attaining reallocation of gender roles and promoting transformation of social norms. The purpose of BALI was to empower women to conduct innovative, viable and profitable income generating activities by considering gender aspects of income generating activities. In late 2020, the GALS methodology was adapted to an online format in response to the requirements set by the COVID-19 crisis. Online versions of GALS manuals were transferred to beneficiaries via WhatsApp and Telegram and shared among peers. In 2020 1038 new GALS participants (all women) participated in the GALS process and utilized 3 basic GALS tools.

<p><b>Indicator 3.4.1</b> 1014 old GALS +900 new GALS+ 1090 BALI beneficiaries learn how to use GALS methodology for better livelihood planning and business development</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 1014 old GALS +900 new GALS+ 1090 BALI beneficiaries learn how to use GALS methodology for better livelihood planning and business development</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 1,013 GALS beneficiaries together with 1,673 BALI GALS beneficiaries, plus 3,346 indirect beneficiaries = total 6,032</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 1914 GALS (women/men) + 1090 BALI (women/men) beneficiaries</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>No variance</p>	<p>Service provider's report</p>
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**Outcome 4: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women**

-If reporting on country laws that secure rural women's access to land, make sure that the JP RWEE has actually contributed (advocating, lobbying, etc.) for achieving them and that this has happened during the reporting period.

<p><b>Indicator:</b> Qual.: Evidence that policies and strategies include gender equality objectives and address the barriers to women's economic advancement</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> TBD</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> TBD</p>	<p>Suspended until 2021 due to political crisis</p>	<p>Suspended until 2021 due to political crisis</p>	<p>Service provider's report</p>
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**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><b>Indicator 4.1.1</b> Number of learning and advocacy events conducted <b>Baseline:</b> <b>Planned Target:</b> 10 learning and advocacy events</p> <p>Number of policymakers who participated in the learning and advocacy events</p> <p>80 women/30 men government officials</p>	Suspended to 2021 due to political crisis	Suspended to 2021 due to political crisis	Service provider's report
<p><b>Output 4.2: Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 4.2.1</b> An in-depth assessment of GALS and BALI results, providing a qualitative understanding of the changes occurred in the beneficiaries that would complement WEAI findings <b>Baseline:</b> not available <b>Planned Target:</b> One study carried out</p>	In progress	Will be finalised in 2021	Service-provider's report
<p><b>Output 4.3: An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women's priorities in regional policy processes.</b></p>			
<p>Women profiles (analytical briefs) are under development to inform decision makers, policy makers, civil society and the general public based on evidences/data and qualitative survey research, about the advantages and capacities that belong to the analyzed groups of women and the contribution they can make to development, as well as the opportunities they benefit from or which they lack and the underrepresented groups of women.</p> <p>Online forum was conducted in light of celebration of the International Day of Rural Women, bringing together women champions from across the country to discuss their initiatives in the areas of economics, social development, civic activism and leadership. As a result of this event, JP RWEE women developed recommendations for the inclusion of rural women's issues in the National Gender equality strategy 2021-2030.</p>			
<p><b>Indicator 4.3.1.</b> Number of studies/strategies analysed where gender concerns are integrated <b>Baseline:</b> 0 <b>Planned Target:</b> 10 studies/strategies analysed</p>	In progress	No variance	Service provider's report

<p><b>Indicator 4.3.2 a.</b> Number of learning and advocacy events conducted as part of the review and development of GES (Gender Equality Strategy)  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned Target:</b> 5 learning and advocacy events</p>	<p>80 women activists participated in online dialogue ‘<i>Sherine</i>’  The learning and advocacy sessions will be continued in 2021 as part of the national process on GES development.</p>	<p>No variance</p>	<p>Service provider’s report</p>
<p><b>Indicator 4.3.2 b.</b> Number of policymakers who participated in the learning and advocacy events as part of the review and development of GES (Gender Equality Strategy)  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned Target:</b> 40 women/20 men government officials</p>	<p>Suspended to 2021 due to political crisis</p>	<p>Due to the COVID-19 the Process of GES development has been suspended to late 2020 and to be completed in 2021.</p>	<p>Service provider’s report</p>
<p><b>Indicator 4.3.3</b> Number of policymakers who participated in the learning and advocacy events (IWD, IRWD, 16 Days of Activism)  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned Target:</b> 4 events, 20 policymakers</p>	<p>Suspended to 2021 due to political crisis</p>	<p>Due to the political crisis, coaching on Adaptive leadership approach was postponed to 2021.</p>	<p>Service provider’s report</p>
<p>Indicator 4.3.4  Number of national consultations  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned Target:</b> 1 event, 15 policymakers, 20 women/ 5 men</p>	<p>Planned at the final stage of JPRWEE implementation</p>	<p>Will take place in 2021</p>	

## i) A Specific Story

### *A woman-politician better understands the problems of children and women*

The Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (RWEE) Project promotes women's participation in decision-making processes.



Nuria Temirbek kyzy lives in the village of Ak-Zhar in the At-Bashy *rayon* of the Naryn *oblast*. Six years ago, she was a housewife and did not plan to work. Two years later, she became a deputy of the local *kenesh* and since then has been constantly helping her fellow villagers.

“Women can do anything, they can work and be successful in any area, community, politics or business,” Nuria believes.

In Kyrgyzstan, it is still common for women in remote regions to have no access to education, as a result of which, after early marriage, women most often do only housework. Status is only given to men in the household heads of families, thus forming the idea that only men can be engaged in business, politics, or other socially important activities.

Nuria was one of these women until 2014, when she started to participate in the JP RWEE. Since participating in a Self Help Group and developing business skills, she along with other women in the group, has opened a number of enterprises in her village, where more than 50 women have been able to find work. This experience gave her self esteem and confidence which led to her becoming an elected local council member.

*“My outlook on life has changed for the better, I learned so much new information, participated in various trainings, and was able to help many people. I started believing in myself and in 2016 put forward my candidacy for the post of member of the local council (kenesh) and won the elections. I used to be sure that a woman should stay at home, raise children, take care of her husband. But it turned out that we are very strong, that we can do everything,”* says Nuria.

Now she not only works in the local *kenesh*, but also oversees several enterprises opened under the project, in which women sew, do handicrafts, farming, and processing industries.

During the pandemic, on her initiative, funds were allocated from the local budget for the purchase of materials so that seamstresses could sew masks and sell them to the local population at an affordable price, with families in need receiving protective equipment for free.

*“I feel different, useful and strong. At first, my husband was against my activities, because I was often not at home and I had to go to trainings. But then he realized what an important work I was doing. Now he supports me. I help people both through the projects and the local council. A woman member of the local parliament differs from a male counterpart in that we better understand the problems that women and children have to face every day, so we try to help solve them,”* says Nuria.

She calls on all women not to be afraid to start working and to benefit society, because experience shows that a woman can do everything - the main thing is to believe in herself.

**III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)**

N/A

**IV. Resources**

During reporting period 2020 in accordance with the country workplan Program spent following amount:

UN Women: USD 126,265 (balance remaining \$164,771)

FAO: USD 96,341 (balance remaining \$106,159)

WFP: USD 155,867 USD (balance remaining \$46,633)

IFAD: USD 134,419 (balance remaining \$54,83)