

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

Programme Title & Project Number	Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Toward Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in (<i>Rwanda</i>) • MPTF Office Project Reference Number:¹ 00092006 	<p>(<i>Rwanda</i>)</p> <p>Districts:(Kirehe, Ngoma, Nyaruguru, Muhanga, Gakenke and Nyagatare).</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 align="center">Programme Beneficiaries</p> <p>Beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct: 1,986 (1,653 women and 333 men) • Indirect: 9,374 (7,709 women and 1,665 men)
Participating Organization(s)	Implementing Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO, IFAD, UNWOMEN, WFP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) • Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion ((MIGEPROF). • INADES Formation Rwanda (IFR), • Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), • Association pour le Development du

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

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- People (ADEPE),
- Sustainable Agriculture for Food Security and Economic Development, (SAFE)
 - Community Vision Initiative (CVI);
 - Duterimbere NGO and;
 - Imbuto Foundation.

Programme/Project Cost (US\$)
Total approved budget as per project document: MPTF Contribution: US\$ 900,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>by Agency (if applicable)</i> Agency Contribution • <i>by Agency (if applicable)</i> Government Contribution <i>(if applicable)</i> Other Contributions (donors) <i>(if applicable)</i>: SDF: US\$ 987,875
TOTAL: US\$ 1,887,875

Programme Duration
Overall Duration 6.5 years
Start Date <i>(15 10 2014)</i>
End Date <i>(30 June 2021)</i>

Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.
Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i>
Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No : Yes Date: <i>January to June 2019</i>

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Acronyms

ASWG	Agriculture Sector Working Group
A-WEAI	Abbreviated Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
EICV5	Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FtMA	Farm to Market Alliance
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GoR	Government of Rwanda
GMO	Gender Monitoring Office
HDDS	Household Dietary Diversity Scale
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IP	Implementing Partner
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum
JP-RWEE	Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NISR	National Institute of Statistics Rwanda
RCA	Rwanda Cooperative Agency
PHHS	Post-harvest Handling and Storage
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDF	Sustainable Development Fund
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation
UCW	Unpaid Care Work
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WDDS	Women's Dietary Diversity Score
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

This 2020 annual report for the Joint Programme 'Accelerating Progress toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE) in Rwanda covers the period from January to December 2020. The JP RWEE, jointly implemented in partnership with FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP and supported by the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), adopts a holistic approach towards empowering rural women as key agents for achieving the transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. Since 2014 the JP RWEE in Rwanda has continued to sustain gains under the programme's overarching goal to secure rural women's livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development goals based on four outcome areas: improved food and nutrition security; increased income to secure their livelihoods; enhanced leadership and participation in rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies and programmes; and gender-responsive policy environment for the economic empowerment of rural women.

In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) as a global pandemic, which led to global and national response efforts to contain the spread of the virus. In Rwanda, the Government adopted a series of measures to address the pandemic, including national lockdowns, curfews and restricted mobility. The onset of the pandemic caused a series of delays to the implementation of programmatic activities, notably the restrictions placed on gatherings and mobility affected in-person trainings and capacity building activities, including capacity building for women's groups. A no cost extension was received for the programme until June 2021. Despite the setbacks, the JP RWEE adopted alternative approaches to programme implementation, including the utilization of virtual tools in conducting technical meetings within UN Participating Agencies, as well as with implementing partners. Where possible, implementing partners adopted the approach of using local field officers in the respective JP RWEE intervention areas to carry out site visits, which enabled the continuation of support to 19 cooperatives encompassing 1,986 beneficiaries (1,653 women and 333 men) through capacity building on cooperative management, cooperative laws, leadership, financial management, food security, nutrition, and Post-Harvest Handling and Storage (PHHS), amongst other topics.

During the reporting period, the JP RWEE led capacity building sessions on the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) in the context of climate change, which was rolled out to 360 GALS Champions (290 women and 70 men) from eight cooperatives. This resulted in the increase of agriculture production through climate change mitigation and adaptative actions. As a result of using the GALS methodology, 280 champions (250 women, and 30 men) have been able to deal with COVID-19 through their savings which made it possible for them purchase food and other essential items, such as health insurance, at a challenging time. Women were supported during the period to have increased production for income generation through improved postharvest handling of maize. Capacity building of rural women to reduce post-harvest losses in the maize value chain and ensure a good quality of produce for the market and consumers was carried out, whilst 8 Cooperatives/Groups were supported with the construction of three maize drying halls in two districts.

The programme supported a study on 'Assessing Agriculture Labor Saving Technologies for Women' in Rwanda that identified existing labour-saving technologies in agriculture for small scale women farmers, assessed existing gaps, analyzed factors influencing women's time constraints and drudgery in the agriculture sector, and proposed possible interventions and recommendations for gender sensitive programming.

Key Results:

- Despite COVID-19, the JP RWEE continued to support 19 cooperatives encompassing 1,986 beneficiaries (1,653 women and 333 men).
- The JP RWEE supported 1,661 women and 328 men beneficiaries under the 19 cooperatives to acquire knowledge on the propagation and grafting of fruit trees to produce productive seedlings for income-generating activities and nutrition. As a result, 23,429 plants (avocado and mango) were grafted and are ready for plantation in February 2021.
- Beneficiaries were trained to install small scale irrigation systems to enable the provision of water supply for crop irrigation and ensure ownership and sustainability of the systems within their communities.
- 360 Champions (290 women and 70 men) from eight cooperatives were supported through the provision of awareness raising and advocacy trainings on the Gender Action learning System. The champions also trained their peers, as well as family, community and cooperative members. Through applying the GALS methodology, which involves household level planning, 280 champions (250 women, and 30 men) have been able to deal with COVID 19 through using savings to buy food and essentials.
- Three cooperatives gained a profit over US\$ 1,042 per season from average profit of 350\$ while others earned between US\$ 144 \$ to US\$ 928 per season.
- A total of 12 cooperatives with 1,181 members, of which 927 are women (78.5%) and 254 are men (22.5%) in Muhanga, Gakenke and Nyagatare districts produced 3,501 metric tons of vegetables, supported with the provision of agricultural inputs and fertilizers, and were linked to markets, generating a total income of 60,822,920 Rwf (US\$ 62,191\$). The increased productivity, income and food security contributed to coping with the socio-economic challenges of COVID-19 at the household and cooperative/group levels.

I. Purpose

The Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE) aims to secure rural women's livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development, targeting four outcome areas: (1) improved food and nutrition security (2) increased income to secure livelihoods (3) enhanced leadership and participation in rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies, and programs (4) gender responsive policy environment for the economic empowerment of rural women. In Rwanda, the JP RWEE is implemented jointly by FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN Women, with WFP as the lead agency. The Joint Programme is implemented in three districts of Kirehe, Ngoma and Nyaruguru districts.

The JP RWEE has been informed by Rwanda's development priorities as outlined in 'Vision 2020' and 'Vision 2050', the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1 2018 – 2024), the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA4 2018 – 2024), the Rwanda National Gender Policy, and the updated Agriculture Gender Mainstreaming Strategy. These strategic documents outline interventions aimed at moving agriculture from a low production, subsistence-based to a market oriented, value-creating sector that improves rural incomes, addresses poverty and benefits women and men equally. The JP RWEE workplan is incorporated into the Rwandan United Nations Development Assistance Plan 2018 – 2023 (UNDAP II); the four programme outcomes are aligned to UNDAP II outcomes 6 and the JP RWEE has also received

funding from the Sustainable development Fund (SDF) totaling US\$ 987,875 to support the implementation of activities.

II. Results

During 2020 the JP RWEE supported 19 women's cooperatives, totaling 1,986 beneficiaries (1,653 women and 333 men) from an initial of 2,083 (1,713 women and 370 men) in 2019. The decrease in targeted beneficiaries was due primarily to the COVID-19 crisis and its associated restrictions. An assessment of the groups carried out by the programme found that the beneficiaries were able to continue agricultural without significant negative impact; both men and women respondents indicated that they had enough or more time to engage in agriculture and that their household food security was not affected. The majority of the women respondents reported higher levels of appreciation for male family members during the challenging period of COVID-19, indicating that some men positively participated in domestic responsibilities and unpaid care work, including positive parenting for children at home and out of school. Group and cooperative members reported using the grain reserves established under the programme to feed their families and share food with vulnerable members of their communities and families who were not part of the JP RWEE.

The beneficiaries also indicated that the start-up initiatives developed under the JP RWEE, such as the provision of water harvesting facilities and small livestock, helped them to cope during the difficult period. All cooperatives and groups indicated that the savings and lending components of the groups had been critical and enabled the purchasing of essential household goods and items.

i) Narrative reporting on results:

Outcome 1 Rural women have Improved food and nutrition security

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

During the reporting period, the JP RWEE provided standardized cooking kits to all 19 cooperatives and facilitated the training of representatives and community health workers with cooking demonstration sessions to facilitate skill-sharing with their cooperative members. The kits and demonstrations served to provide and inform 1,986 beneficiaries (1,653 women and 333 men). women and men on the nutritional value of a balanced diet for cooking, the sessions also provided specific home-based Early Childhood Development (ECD) feeding activities.

In collaboration with implementing partners, the JP RWEE organized three nutrition awareness workshops in Kirehe, Ngoma and Nyaruguru, (one per district) with a component on Infant, Youth and Child Feeding (IYCF). A total of 316 participants (165 men and 151 women) from decentralized government, Civil Society Organizations (CSO), churches and targeted cooperatives shared experiences on working towards malnutrition eradication. Discussions were based on the status of food and nutrition in each district according to the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA) District Plan to Eliminate Malnutrition (DPEM), and ECD activity plans. As a result, the training has enhanced women's and communities' awareness of the importance of food and nutrition security towards eradicating malnutrition, with attendees and district authorities committing to reinforce best practices through close support and monitoring within their communities.

The JP RWEE supported 1,661 women and 328 men beneficiaries in 19 cooperatives to acquire knowledge on the propagation and grafting of fruit trees to produce productive seedlings for income-generating activities and nutrition. The on-site training developed their knowledge on technical agricultural practices related to plant grafting, including site preparation, seed planting and grafting techniques and seedling care. As a result, 23,429 plants (avocado and mango) were grafted and are ready for plantation in February 2021, and 994 (830 women and 164 men) beneficiaries started their own nurseries to sell trees fruits in the community.

A total of 990 (781 women and 209 men) beneficiaries have gained new skills in the construction process and practices of roof rainwater harvesting system. The trainings enabled the participants to gain skills in on-site preparation, ditching, walls construction and roofing, as well as maintenance and handling. As a result, 278 households have benefited from the new systems constructed by the beneficiaries. Having the capacity to install the systems also to ensure the ownership and sustainability of the systems within their communities. The beneficiaries of the irrigation activities are grouped in five farmers' organizations /cooperatives located in Kirehe, Ngoma and Nyaruguru Districts.

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

Three community maize drying halls in two districts (Kirehe and Ngoma) have been developed to address the challenges of maize postharvest handling and to continue enhancing the capacity of rural women to reduce post-harvest maize losses and ensure good quality produce for buyers and consumers. As a result, cooperatives and groups that benefited from the facilities have been identified and have purchased the plots with the facilitation of the implementing partner and local authorities.

The remaining activities under this outcome were not completed due to delays in programme implementation caused by COVID-19 and will be completed in 2021.

Outcome 2 Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods

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

An assessment was carried out to assess the ability of cooperatives to develop and implement viable business plans. A total of 11 out of 19 cooperatives who received the first fund installment of 1,014, 400 Rwf (1,037 \$) in 2018 for their business plans were found to have implemented them effectively and efficiently. As a result, they were recommended to receive the second fund installment to strengthen their on-going businesses and expand them further. Out of the 11 successful cooperatives, three gained a profit of over US\$ 1,042 per season from an average profit of 350\$ while others earned between US\$ 144 \$ to US\$ 928 per season. The money earned from the cooperative activities enabled beneficiaries to pay annual family health insurance, access loans for small income generating activities, access agricultural inputs for the following season and purchased assets such as goats, chicken, rabbits, etc. The remaining 8 cooperatives are being further supported on management and entrepreneurship skills.

A total of 12 cooperatives in Muhanga, Gakenke and Nyagatare districts with 1,181 members, of which 927 are women (78.5%) and 254 are men (22.5%), recorded 3,501 metric tons of vegetables. They were

supported with agricultural inputs and fertilizers and were linked to markets, generating a total income of 60,822,920 Rwf (US\$ 62,191\$). The increased productivity, income and food security contributed to coping with the socio-economic challenges of COVID-19 at the household level and within the cooperatives/groups.

In addition to the above, five cooperatives (Twitezimbere Kiyonza, Terimbere Sake, Bimpinduka, Twitezimbere COPABINYA and Kubinya) with a total of 494 members (378 women and 116 men) from three districts of Kirehe, Ngoma and Nyaruguru recorded a total production of 8.052 tons of tomatoes and accessed markets through the signing of a business contract for medium scale buyers. The contract was facilitated as result of JP RWEE business advisory services provided to the cooperatives (market negotiation skills, business contract signing, management and transport service provision etc) and the cooperatives gained a total income of 1,388,750 RWF (US\$ 1,477.39). As a result of the JP RWEE intervention, all cooperative members reported that they were able to pay for health insurance and to address basic family needs such as food, education, and clothes. The smallholder farmers were also capacitated through awareness raising to prevent COVID-19 spreading and stay safe and healthy.

The remaining activities under this outcome were not completed due to delays in programme implementation caused by COVID-19 and will be completed in 2021.

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

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

The number of women in leadership positions has increased throughout the course of the JP RWEE. In the 19 groups/cooperatives, the average composition of the board of directors supervisory committees is 73% female and 27% male.

171 women from 19 targeted cooperatives were trained on leadership skills over a two-day course in the context of Gender in Agribusiness leadership. Each cooperative was represented by 9 leaders and the training enabled the participants to understand thoroughly how compliance with gender equality principles will contribute to the promotion of good leadership in their cooperatives, within the objective of improving value chains.

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

A total of 11 informal rural women cooperatives (out of 19 supported) received coaching on governance, leadership, financial management and providing advice towards formal/legal cooperative registration has continued. In collaboration with local authorities, the partner in charge of this activity supported and coached group leaders to gather all requirements (internal regulations, bylaws) for formal registration.

Three cooperatives are still gathering the required documentation, five cooperatives are still going through the registration process at district level, three have submitted the documentation for registration at Rwanda Cooperative Agency (RCA) level. Eight cooperatives have received their RCA registration certificates. This is significant progress as at the start of their involvement in the programme only two cooperatives were

legally registered. Support to registration as a formal cooperative is part of institutional capacity strengthening and is a foundation for sustainability. Registered cooperatives have more enhanced access and opportunities, they are able to register their properties, access wider markets, be recognised as a legal entity, and, importantly, get loans from formal financial institutions.

Output 3.3: Rural women, including young women, have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels

The JP RWEE provided a ‘training of trainers’ to implementing partner staff members (6 men and 1 woman) on gender in agribusiness leadership and governance. The training covered the affect of social and gender norms on food security and nutrition, and how these can be changed to bring about positive outcomes. The training also covered how to apply a gender lens to value chain analysis, enterprise selection, and market assessment etc. The roll out of the training to other trainers and to women beneficiaries will continue to be implemented.

The planned exchange/study visits on selected themes (governance/leadership, entrepreneurship, women participation etc.) have not taken place yet due to the current situation of COVID-19. The activity will be carried out as soon as the conditions are favorable.

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

Within this output, activities continued under the Gender Action learning System (GALS) approach. A further baseline (KAP survey) was conducted with 360 beneficiaries (290 women and 70 Men in the Districts of Ngoma, Nyaruguru and Kirehe to gather additional information from beneficiaries on their economic condition, governance system of the women’s groups, voice and decision-making capacity in the groups and also within the household, including women’s workload, nutrition status of family members, and awareness of climate change and natural resource management within their farming. This information was used to better understand the issues faced by beneficiaries and tailor the interventions. An endline study (post KAP survey) will be carried out in 2021 so as to be able to observe and quantify changes among GALS and non-GALS beneficiaries.

GALS baseline data collection was conducted by two (implementing partners (IPs) to 360 champions (290 women and 70 men), and included a focus on nutrition and climate change. Following completion of the baseline, 360 Champions (290 Women and 70 Men) from eight cooperatives are being trained on GALS. The champions also train their fellows, as well as family, community and cooperative members. Through the GALS activities, 280 champions (250 women, and 30 men) have been able to deal with COVID 19 where savings that have been obtained have facilitated them to deal with socio-economic effects caused by the pandemic. The GALS model takes a group approach and works with beneficiaries both at the household level and group level to plan and work together for more longer term goals and vision. This approach had encouraged a culture of savings within the groups.

The JP RWEE contributed towards producing, disseminating, and raising awareness of rural women’s land rights and effective use of land resources through the distribution of booklets to beneficiaries. In terms of

“Leaving No One Behind” and to increase inclusion and outreach, the booklet was summarized in Kinyarwanda, and a video was produced to further enhance the outreach through different channels.

The remaining activities under this outcome were not completed due to delays in programme implementation caused by COVID-19 and will be completed in 2021.

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

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

Though most of the planned activities for implementation at national/central level are still pending due to the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, strong and strategic partnerships are ongoing with the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI) and the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) on policy interventions. Both ministries have officially appointed technical focal persons for the implementation of the JP RWEE and joint activities will be carried out during 2021, including a WEAI survey.

Output 4.2: Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women

A study commissioned by WFP under the the JP RWEE and in collaboration with ICCO Cooperation in Rwanda, (‘Assessing Agriculture Labour Saving Technologies’), shed light on existing labour-saving technologies in agriculture for small scale women farmers, assessed existing gaps, analyzed factors influencing women’s time constraints and drudgery in the agriculture sector, and proposed possible interventions and recommendations for gender sensitive programming. The study found that most rural women are still using rudimentary tools such as hoes and spades for ploughing and planting. Equipment like sprayers and irrigation equipment do not have a competitive advantage for women as compared to men due to their design and they do not contribute to saving energy as a result. At household level, there are available technologies such as energy saving stoves, plastic storage silos and rainwater harvesting facilities which can play an important role in reducing rural women’s workload. Other equipment is available but not accessible to women and is used by men, including large irrigation equipment, greenhouses, and tractors. Milling machines and drip irrigation kits are also available in some places but are not easily accessed for women’s use. Cultural issues linked with decision making at household level, equipment design, low income for women and limited purchasing power, limited access to information and education are some of the reasons which prevent women from accessing labor saving technologies. One of the study’s recommendations states that investment is needed across all actors to ensure that women have access to those labor-saving technologies which also include resilience to climate change. Modification of existing equipment to enable use by women (e.g. smaller sprayers, simple irrigation machines etc.) is also recommended. Leveraging on the activities of saving groups for access to finances and cooperatives for shared equipment can also improve access. The study recommended to conduct further research on the social dimensions of technology access. The JP RWEE plans to hold workshops for the dissemination and awareness on two other studies conducted in late 2019 namely ‘Gender in the Bean Value chain’ and ‘Women in Value Chain Finance’ as soon as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. The implementation of recommendations made in the study will add value to the economic empowerment of women by reducing their work burden and freeing up their time for other activities. The study will be further used to apply the recommendations in programmatic design and activities, as well as for advocacy in policy.

The remaining activities under this outcome were not completed due to delays in programme implementation caused by COVID-19 and will be completed in 2021.

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

The participating UN agencies and implementing partners experienced the major challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and its multiple effects. The pandemic led to the enforcement of a two months full lockdown countrywide (March to April), followed by a partial easing of restrictions, and a further lockdown in December. This resulted in significant delays to the implementation of programme activities and the approval of a no cost extension by the programme's donors. COVID-19 prevention measures such as social distancing and restrictions on gatherings meant that face-to-face workshops, meetings, trainings, field visits, consultation with beneficiaries and stakeholders could not take place as planned.

A strategy was put in place to overcome the challenges, namely adopting virtual tools to conduct technical meetings within UN Participating Agencies as well as with implementing partners. Where possible implementing partners adopted the approach of using local field officers in the respective JP RWEE intervention areas to visit programme areas. The implementing partners were able to have regular follow up with beneficiaries and mobile phone communication was used where necessary. COVID-19 revealed to the programme the importance of enabling digital access for rural women. For example, women started using mobile money services within their saving and loan groups among others and this practice will continue as a good lesson learnt.

The programme activities that required the engagement and collaboration with government ministries, including the activities on increasing policy awareness and advocacy could not be implemented due to other urgent priorities in regard to the socio-economic response to COVID-19. They will be implemented in 2021.

Due to COVID-19 and the necessary prevention measures put in place, activities relating to the village saving and loan associations (VSLAs) as well as income generating activities were negatively affected. An assessment carried out in June revealed that some VSLA members who had taken small loans from saving groups were not able to pay back the loans due to the socio-economic impact of the pandemic. However, there were signs of recovery by the end of 2020, with VSLAs continuing their saving and lending activities, although at a slower pace than previously and members gradually paying back their loans. However, saving groups had limited available funds to lend out to members which affected individual income generating activities due to a shortage of finance as result of the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Most of the women engaged in small businesses reported to be affected by limitations in accessing markets and customers. The programme, along with the women, advocated with local government authorities to enable women to move safely to market in remote areas in order to limit the impact on their livelihoods. Mobile phones were also used to buy and sell products.

Despite this, a major lesson learned, is that village saving and loans associations/groups play a big role in building resilience of rural women. The savings culture promoted by the programme enabled members to buy food and other essential items while income generating activities were affected, sustaining their families and withstanding the crisis until the situation eased.

A final important learning and good practice was that of positive household relations during the pandemic, as a result of the household methodology GALS which has been used in the programme. Through the GALS

tools, couples were able to plan mitigation strategies as well as improving communication, and dialogue, sharing of role and responsibility, helping each other in activities during the pandemic, which have helped to maintain good relationships within households.

Qualitative assessment

This qualitative assessment is limited due to the programmatic delays experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Further assessment will be made in the final report.

During 2020, collaboration among the JP RWEE and One UN Rwanda remained strong and effective. For instance, the JP RWEE was selected for One UN Rwanda UNDAF II funding, receiving a total of \$987,875 USD to support additional activities.

As the implementation of the work plan continued in spite of COVID-19, a key focus continued to be on awareness raising in Covid-19 prevention, JP RWEE beneficiaries were able to lead by example and act as change agents in raising awareness around prevention of the virus.

As part of ongoing monitoring, JP RWEE technical working group meetings and national steering committee meetings took place in order to follow progress, respond to the challenging context of the pandemic and take decisions on programme implementation and strategy. Among other things, a strategy of remote monitoring of interventions was agreed and implementing partners and local government authorities were engaged in mechanisms to keep activities going despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

During the period without restrictions to movement, qualitative data was collected by both implementing partners and the Technical Working Group. Cooperative leaders and selected members shared the challenges they faced and explained how they managed to effectively collaborate by applying the gender principles learned through the programme, while supporting their families and ensuring the cohesion within the household.

The monitoring visits performed at field level showed that the JP RWEE helped families to maintain cohesion during the pandemic as compared to similar households who were not participating in such a programme. As mentioned above, saving groups although affected by COVID-19, helped beneficiaries to show resilience and cover basic needs. However, some women struggled to pay back loans and suffered businesses closure for significant amounts of time. A resilience lens should be applied in future women's economic empowerment programming.

The JP RWEE complements other projects implemented in the programme areas, primarily by the Rwanda Agricultural Board, in the domain of family farming and food systems whereby they have been building capacity of farmers to increase production of both crops and livestock in Nyaruguru, Kirehe and Ngoma districts. It also complements their interventions of the same partner in environment and climate change whereby they empower communities in community-based adaptation to climate change through clean cooking and improved energy saving stoves.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1 Rural women have Improved food and nutrition security			
Output 1.1 Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security			
Indicator 1.1.1: Number of rural women and men who have strengthened their knowledge on land rights and land management Target: 1000 Achieved: 50	50 women consulted during the process of summarizing the booklet on women’s land rights and documentary video for rural women farmers. The summarized booklet of women’s land rights and documentary were developed and produced for dissemination among rural women farmers in coming year.	Due to COVID-19 restrictions the materials could not be disseminated. The remaining 950 people will be reached in 2021.	IP Reports
1.1.2 Number of JPRWEE beneficiaries who have accessed nutrition education services and materials Target: 2083 Achieved: 316	Dissemination and awareness raising on nutrition and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials were provided as a training of trainers to 316 beneficiaries (165 men and 151 women)	Number was limited due to COVID-19 and the target will be reached in 2021.	Implementing Partners Reports
1.1.3 Number of cooperatives supported with rainwater tanks Target: 8 Achieved: 8	8 cooperatives (278 women) were supported with rainwater tanks	N/A	Implementing Partners reports

<p>Number of women utilizing rainwater harvested for agriculture production Target: 298 Achieved: 278</p> <p>1.1.4 Number of cooperatives supported to put in place nurseries with fruit tree grafted Target: 483 Achieved: 994</p> <p>1.1.5 Number of women groups/cooperatives provided with standardized cooking demonstration kits. Target: 2083 Achieved: 133</p> <p>1.1.6 Number of workshops and participants that attended the workshop on nutrition awareness workshops including on Infant and Youth Child Feeding (IYCF) Target: 300 Achieved: 316</p>	<p>994 (830 women and 164 men) beneficiaries started their own nurseries to sell trees fruits in the community.</p> <p>Distribution of kits is ongoing and so far 7 cooperatives have been reached (133)</p> <p>Three nutrition awareness workshops in Kirehe, Ngoma and Nyaruguru, (one per district) with a component on Infant, Youth and Child Feeding (IYCF) were conducted and a total of 316 beneficiaries (165 men and 151 women) participated</p>	<p>There was exceptional interest and demand from beneficiaries resulting in the target being overachieved</p> <p>Delayed by COVID-19</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Field reports and implementing Partners reports and records from farmer's groups</p> <p>Field reports and implementing Partners reports</p> <p>Field reports and implementing Partners reports</p>
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<p>1.1.7. Number of joint analysis on the limiting factors for women participation in the lucrative part of the milk value chain conducted</p> <p>1.1.8. Number of farmers reached by the reached (women and men) by Piloting interventions to address gaps for women participation in the lucrative part of the bean value chain (re: women in bean value chain study).</p> <p>1.1.9 Number of good practices identified</p> <p>Number of farmers reached through primary knowledge sharing (women and men)</p>	<p>1.1.7. Conduct a joint analysis on the limiting factors for women participation in the lucrative part of the milk value chain.</p> <p>1.1.8 Piloting interventions to address gaps for women participation in the lucrative part of the bean value chain (re: women in bean value chain study).</p> <p>1.1.9 number of inventories of good practices/ benchmarks, and knowledge sharing on effective and women friendly labor-saving technologies</p>	<p>Postponed and will be conducted in 2021</p> <p>Postponed and will be conducted in 2021</p> <p>Postponed and will be conducted in 2021</p>	
<p>Output 1.2 Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves and their production</p>			
<p>1.2.1 Provide farmers with post-harvest handling and storage facilities (5 grain drying sheds/storage centres for 5 maize cooperatives).</p>	<p>8 Cooperatives have been supported and are using the harvest handling facilities.</p>	<p>Over achievement due to high demand by beneficiaries</p>	<p>Field reports and implementing Partners reports</p>

Target: 3 Cooperatives Achieved: 8			
1.2.2 Organize food hygiene awareness sessions to safeguard nutrition (environmental hygiene promotion and support for domestic hygiene)	A total of 118 people (927 women and 254 men) participated in 3 sessions	N/A	
Target: 925 Achieved: 1181			
1.2.3. Conduct a study on women participation in and benefits from nutrient -rich foods production, purchase and consumption patterns within RWE groups including the efficiency of the retail system among supported beneficiaries/communities.	Did not take place	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	
Outcome 2 Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods			
Indicator 2.1: Income generated by community saving groups (RWF)	Unavailable	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection was not conducted and will be reported on during the next reporting period	
Baseline:			
Target: 75,000,000 RWF (US\$ 81,522)			
Output 2.1 Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products			
Indicator 2.1.1: Number of rural women's cooperatives and women groups with agriculture production sales	17 cooperatives composed of 1,675 (1,305 women and 370 men)	The variance was due to Covid-19 and the programme implementation delays and the remaining cooperatives	Implementing partners reports and field reports

to markets Target: 20 Achieved: 17		will be reached in 2021	
Indicator 2.1.2: Number of households with small livestock in targeted areas Baseline: 167 Target: 600 HH with Livestock	Did not take place	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	
Indicator 2.1.3: Number of women trained on entrepreneurship skills and value chain Baseline: 0 Target:300 women and men received coaching (200 women and 100 men)	Did not take place	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	
Indicator 2.1.4: Number of cooperatives and groups received coaching and business advisory services Target: 20 Cooperatives Achieved: 19	19 Cooperatives composed of 2,183 members (1,760 women and 423 men), received coaching and business advisory services	19 Cooperatives	Partners reports
Indicator 2.1.5: Number of rural women in targeted areas accessing finance from financial institutions (by SACCO, MFI, Banks, VSLs.	Postponed	Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the programme activities contributing to this indicator have been rescheduled and will be reported on in the next reporting period	

Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 600 (400 women+200 men)			
Indicator 2.1.6: Cumulative amounts of savings realized by VSLAs Target: 25,000,000 RWF (US\$ 27,174)	Postponed	Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the data collection was not yet conducted	
Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes			
Output 3.1 Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance			
Indicator 3.1.1: Number of women trained on leadership involvement in management Target: 608 women Achieved: 100	100 beneficiaries (86 women beneficiaries' women and 14 men) were trained and the remaining 508 beneficiaries will be trained in 2021	Some delays due to COVID-19	Implementing partners reports
Indicator 3.1.2 : Number of participants in capacity building sessions Target: 100 women	None		
Indicator 3.1.3: Number of farmers participating in exchange visits Target: 36	None	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	
Output 3.2: Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions			

Indicator 3.2.1 Number of POs, cooperatives and unions that adopt a gender policy/strategy and/or a women's quota for their board Planned Target: 10 cooperatives (900 women and 190 men)	None	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	
Indicator 3.2.2: Number of informal rural women groups that join formally registered POs, cooperatives and unions Target: 5 groups (500 women & 85 men) Achieved: 8	Eight groups formally registered		
Number of women participating a national Agri Fair	None	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	
Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment.			
3.4.1 Number of JPRWEE men that are reached by the men engage pioneers Number of community men who sign men engagement compact to support gender equality	None	Postponed until 2021	
3.4.2 Number of champions who are being	360 champions have been trained and disseminated	Remainder of people will be reached in 2021	Implementing partner's quarterly reports

trained on GALS methodology plus nutrition and climate change Planned Target: 600 champions	GALS in the community by training their friends, neighbors, family members, and cooperatives members		
3.4.3 Number of champions that performed the gender participatory review and stock take of the results of such process	None	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	
3.4.4 Number of female agri extension officers trained	None	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	
Outcome 4: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women			
Output 4.1: Policy makers and parliamentarians have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural employment policies, laws and budgets.			
4.4.1. Number of dissemination workshops organized Number of stakeholders engaged in policy making participating	No workshops were conducted for the dissemination and awareness creation of the findings of the studies on Gender in the bean value chain, women in value chain finance	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	
4.1.2 Number of stakeholders from private sector reached that can now enhance their capacities to effectively mainstream gender	None	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	
Indicator 4.1.2. Number of local authorities with	Postponed	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	

increased capacity on gender-responsive			
Baseline: Planned Target: 50 (35 women and 15 men)			
Output 4.2: Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women			
4.2.1 Number of local authorities with increased capacity on gender-responsive planning	None	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	
Indicator 4.2.1: “Women’s empowerment in agriculture index” (WEAI) is piloted or mainstreamed in National Statistics Baseline: 0 Target: 1	Not yet done	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	The WEAI study report is available
Output 4.3: An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women’s priorities in regional policy processes.			
Indicator 4.3.1. Number of stakeholders participating in policy dialogue Planned Target: 150 (95 women and 55 men)	None	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	
4.3.2 Number of staff who complete the module on Gender and Youth	None	Postponed and will be conducted in 2021	

III Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)

N/A

IV Resources

FAO: Expenditure: \$184,634; Remaining Balance: \$35,366

IFAD: Expenditure \$ \$140,000; remaining balance \$60,000

UN Women: Expenditure \$ 186,00; Remaining Balance: \$49,000

WFP: Expenditure \$ 132,574; Remaining Balance \$127,426
