

**“ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN”  
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 Nepal</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><b>Nepal:</b> Five Municipalities and Five Rural Municipalities from two local units, Sarlahi and Rautahat, in Province 2</p> <p><b>Sarlahi:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Rural Municipalities:</b> Chandranagar, Brahmpuri, Basawariya, and Dhankaul</li> <li>- <b>Municipalities:</b> Bagmati and Barahathwa</li> </ul> <p><b>Rautahat:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Rural Municipalities:</b> Yamuna Mai</li> <li>- <b>Municipalities:</b> Gujara, Brindaban and Rajpur</li> </ul> <p align="center"><b>Programme Beneficiaries</b></p> <p><b>Direct beneficiaries:</b> 3,002 direct beneficiaries  <b>Indirect beneficiaries:</b> In this reporting period, 12,908<sup>2</sup> family members (estimated) of the 3,002 rural women and 60 local elected representatives (female-27; and male-33) were reached</p>
<p align="center"><b>Participating Organization(s)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAO, IFAD, WFP, UN WOMEN</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>Implementing Partners</b></p> <p><b>Government:</b> Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), in close coordination with the relevant municipalities and rural municipalities at the local level</p> <p><b>Civil Society:</b> Equal Access International, Support Activities for Poor Producers of Nepal (Sappros Nepal)</p>
<p align="center"><b>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Programme Duration</b></p>

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

<sup>2</sup> The average size of a household in Nepal is 5.3 persons per household. The above number of indirect beneficiaries was calculated by multiplying 3,002 direct beneficiaries by 5.3 and subtracting 3,002.

<p>Total approved budget as per project document: <b>US\$ 3,277,774</b></p> <p><b>MPTF Contribution:</b> <b>US\$ 3,277,774</b></p> <p>Agency Contribution <i>Not applicable</i></p> <p>Government Contribution <i>Not applicable</i></p> <p>Other Contributions (donors) <i>Not applicable</i></p> <p><b>TOTAL:</b></p>	<p><b>Overall Duration:</b> 6.5 years</p> <p>Start Date (<i>1 January 2015</i>)</p> <p>End Date (<i>30 June 2021</i>)</p>
<b>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</b>	<b>Report Submitted By</b>
<p>Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No   Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i></p> <p>Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No   Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name: Rachana Bhattarai</li> <li>○ Title: Programme Analyst</li> <li>○ Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women</li> <li>○ Email address: rachana.bhattarai@unwomen.org</li> </ul>

## ABBREVIATIONS

ADS	Agriculture Development Strategy
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
HGSFP	Home Grown School Feeding Programme
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
JP RWEE	Accelerating Progress Toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal: A Joint Pilot Contributing to Implementation of the Agriculture Development Strategy in Nepal
MoALD	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
NPR	Nepali Rupee
NSMP	National School Meals Programme
QFL	Query For My Leaders
RERP	Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USD	United States Dollar
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WFP	World Food Programme

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Joint Programme on ‘Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women’ (JP RWEE) has been implemented in Nepal since January 2015. The programme adopts a holistic approach to women’s economic empowerment (WEE) and is implemented jointly by four UN agencies, FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP. The programme was due to be completed in December 2020 but received a no cost extension until June 2021 as a result of implementation delays caused by the global COVID-19 health pandemic. COVID-19 was first detected in Nepal in January 2020 and the government imposed a strict lockdown across the country from late March to late July in order to contain the spread of the virus. Gatherings were prohibited and travel between different areas of the country was prohibited. This led to significant delays in programme implementation resulting in a revision to the programme workplan. However, despite these challenges, good progress was made across the four programme outcomes and important learning was generated from the impact of the pandemic on rural women.

Significant progress was made towards achieving improved food security and nutrition (outcome one), with a total of 3,002 rural women increasing their vegetable production by 306%, leading to improved diet and food security for 12,908 family members. A total of 2,384 of these women sold their harvest, generating sales income of Nepali Rupee (NPR) 3,074,000 (US\$ 26,068)<sup>3</sup>. Under the programme’s group approach, which is the main mechanism used for achieving increased income opportunities and sustainable livelihoods, an additional 122 new rural women farmers women’s groups were established (composed of 1,014 rural women members). Of these, 82 groups are already successfully engaged in commercial vegetable production and achieving a wider market reach. A total of 119 of these groups have accumulated NPR 11,409,060 (US\$ 96,752), which was made available to 2,860 direct beneficiaries through the programme’s revolving fund scheme. Further sustainable livelihoods opportunities will be created under the government’s Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) at the start of 2021. This was due to commence in 2020 but was delayed due to an eight-month closure of schools due to COVID-19. All of the necessary training and preparation was carried out with government, schools and the women’s farmer groups ahead of the schools’ reopening.

With regards to outcome three of the programme, which aims to achieve the enhanced participation of women in rural life and institutions, tangible transformative change was witnessed to gender norms and roles as a result of the continued implementation of the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology. This aspect of the programme was one of the areas most affected by the COVID-19 restrictions as it depends on group interaction. Whilst progress for the new groups was severely impacted, considerable progress was made with the groups who have been involved with the GALS component since 2019. A change in perception of women’s roles was also achieved through the involvement of rural women, including in leadership, in the construction, challenging strict gender norms about women’s participation in a traditionally male occupation. In response to the restrictions to meetings and gatherings, the use of community radio was introduced to raise awareness on women’s rights and provide women with a direct channel of communication to local leaders. It proved extremely successful and also brought households together in discussing issues and taking decisions together. It is clear that the JP RWEE is breaking new grounds for rural women’s empowerment through addressing harmful social norms and helping rural women generate, acquire and use skills that improve the lives of families and communities – gains that are potentially catalytic to the COVID-19 recovery in the rural communities.

Finally, the JP RWEE continued its work in contributing to a more gender responsive policy environment, carrying out a comprehensive analysis of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy within the government’s Agricultural Development Strategy. Key recommendations and findings have been finalized and will be shared with government in 2021.

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<sup>3</sup> US\$ 26,068 based on the UN exchange rate for December 2020, NPR 117.92/US\$

## I. Purpose

Aligned with the global programme, the JP RWEE is being implemented in Nepal as a pilot initiative for the gender responsive implementation of the Agricultural Development Strategy, a 20-year (2015-2035) agricultural strategy of the Government of Nepal. The JP RWEE is also linked with the current United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2018-2022) “*Output 1.1: Strengthened capacities of smallholder farmers for increased farm production and marketing*”. The JP RWEE focuses on the following outcomes, which address the challenges and opportunities in the country: (a) Outcome 1: Rural women have improved food and nutrition security; (b) Outcome 2: Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods; (c) Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes; and (d) Outcome 4: More gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women.

## II. Results

### i) Narrative reporting on results:

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

In order to have a strong foundation for empowerment, the first outcome area focuses on achieving improved food security and nutrition for rural women through interventions in agricultural services and production, as well as in nutrition services and household consumption and dietary diversity. In 2020, food and nutrition security were improved among 3,002 rural women (Janajatis - 25.5%; Dalit - 10.1%; Muslim - 4.8%; Madheshi - 50.3% and Brahmin and Chhetris - 9.3%) who were engaged in vegetable production as members of 122 rural women’s groups. Their respective households increased their vegetable production by 306 per cent, producing a total of 2,849 metric tons (mt.) with an average vegetable production of 949 kg per household. This increase is based on a 2015 baseline of 234 kg per household; and is similar to achievements over the previous two years when 940 and 1,003 kgs were produced per household in 2018 and 2019 respectively. The 3,002 households consumed 1,199 mt. of vegetables, an increase of 324 MT from 2019, which helped contribute to their improved nutrition security. These gains resulted from the ongoing support provided by the JP RWEE to this group of rural women since 2016. The support continued to strengthen their agricultural production capacity through on-farm, on-site trainings and guidance, enabling them to apply their knowledge and skills in the application of farming practices and the use of agricultural technologies acquired through the programme.

During field monitoring visits, the rural women described how the consumption of the vegetables they grew contributed to their improved nutrition and food security, explaining that they and their family members had not consumed sufficient amounts of vegetables prior to their involvement in the JP RWEE. Significant gains were also made in wheat production through the adoption of a high-yielding variety of wheat called *banganga*. A total of 244 mt. of wheat was produced by 935 rural women in two districts, increasing the wheat production by 33 per cent per unit area. Of the total wheat production, 97.6 mt. (40%) was consumed by the rural women, 68.32 mt. (28%) was sold to neighboring farmers as food and seed grain, and 78.08 mt. (32%) was used for seeding for future production. The cereal crop production increased by 33 per cent per unit area and further contributed to food security in the programme districts.

A total of 180 farmers (f-150; m-30) enhanced their knowledge and skills on pesticide management and pesticide health hazards through six trainings. The 30 men were the husbands and family members of some of the participating rural women. The participants acquired knowledge on the effects of pesticides on human

health and the environment; use of alternative chemical pesticides; safe use and required quantity of pesticide; use of organic pesticide; handling and safe disposal of pesticide; and proper use of protective measures to avoid the harmful effects of pesticide exposure.

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

The aforementioned 3,002 rural women continued to benefit from increased access to resources and services, which sustained their improved agricultural production. These include vegetable and high-yielding variety of wheat and maize seeds, irrigation equipment (electric motor and pump set operating with a shallow tube), agricultural machinery and equipment, and introduction of useful technologies, such as drip irrigation, plastic tunnel for off-season vegetable production and seed bed preparation techniques. In 2020, four shallow tube-wells were installed in Rautahat district with technical and financial support from the JP RWEE. As a result, 12 hectares of land of four rural women's groups (covering 40 rural women's households) gained easy access to agricultural water. Occasionally, tube-well water is also accessed by rural women for bathing and washing of clothes. This led to a significant increase in time saving and reduction of work burden, along with improved production.

A total of 19 rural women members of executive committees of three women's cooperatives (Sarlahi-2 and Rautahat - 1) enhanced their knowledge and skills on cooperative operation and management through training. They also had their capacities built on planning, coordination and linkage building, book-keeping and account operation and conflict management and the holding of general assemblies. The Government of Nepal has adopted a policy to accelerate the flow of agricultural inputs and support through registered cooperatives. As a result of the women's improved capacity in effectively operating and managing cooperatives, along with the government policy on supporting registered cooperatives, more women's group members were encouraged to join the cooperatives. This is evidenced by the 44 per cent increase in the number of rural women farmers groups in the cooperatives from 16 groups in 2018/2019 to 23 groups in 2020. This has enabled women to access resources and support that were previously unavailable to them, hence increasing their ability to ensure the food and nutrition security of their households.

A total of 119 rural women's groups (out of the 122 formed) in Sarlahi and Rautahat districts, accumulated NPR 11,409,060 (US\$ 96,752)<sup>4</sup> which was made available to 2,860 direct beneficiaries through a revolving fund scheme. This group financing scheme has empowered and enabled group members to buy agricultural inputs (e.g., seeds, chemical fertilizer, pesticides and agriculture tools) on time, as well as other essential goods and services during family emergencies contributing to food and nutrition security. Access to their own financial resource through the group revolving fund enables rural women to avoid taking loans from local money lenders and financial institutions, which generally charge high interest rate, require complex documentation processes, and impose rules that are difficult for rural women to follow.

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

Despite the challenging context of COVID-19, progress was also made on increasing the income of rural women in order to contribute to securing their livelihoods. Of the 3,002 rural women supported by the JP RWEE this year, 2,384 women earned a total of NPR 29,738,850 (US\$ 252,195) by selling their vegetable products.<sup>5</sup> Among them, 935 earned NPR 3,074,000 (US\$ 26,068) by selling wheat seed and food grain. Of the 3,002, the remaining 618 rural women, the vegetables were consumed within the family. Generally, the

<sup>4</sup> US\$ 26,068 with the UN exchange rate for December 2020, NPR 117.92/US\$

<sup>5</sup> The vegetables consisted of tomato, chili, cauliflower, radish, onion, carrot, broadleaf mustard, cabbage, beans, lady's finger, sponge gourd, bitter gourd, bottle gourd, cucumber, amaranths and the high-yielding wheat variety of *banganga*.

income earned was utilized for agricultural inputs (such as seeds and soil nutrients); and to support the well-being of family members including on health, education and household food and nutrition security.

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

A total of 2,003 rural women from 82 rural women's groups have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and are engaged in value chains to access markets for their products. Out of 122 rural women's groups, 82 are engaged in commercial vegetable production. Of these, 40 groups with 957 members, received weighing machine and plastic crates to carry their products safely to the market. The vegetable marketing workshop and exposure visit to the vegetable market organized by the JP RWEE in 2019, enabled the rural women to establish sustainable marketing linkages with wholesalers, vendors, collectors and retailers. The linkages enabled rural women to sell more of their surplus vegetable products and more were encouraged to expand their vegetable production. As a result of enhanced skills through trainings, exposure visits and materials provided, rural women are now more aware of market demands and were able to increase the volume and market price of their products. During the earlier phase of the JP RWEE, these women did not have any linkages with the commercial market and were not adept at pricing and packaging their products for higher market value.

The JP RWEE is in the process of piloting<sup>6</sup> the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) with the Government of Nepal's cash-based National School Meals Programme (NSMP), which is being implemented in 56 community schools in the two JP RWEE districts. The main objective of the HGSFP is to link local production with local demand (i.e. in schools implementing the NSMP) so that schools may serve as sustainable marketing outlets for the products of the rural women. Purchasing from local farmers also ensures that children receive nutritious, home grown food. The NSMP trained different stakeholders,<sup>7</sup> including municipality officials from relevant municipalities, school management of representative schools, District Education Development Offices and District Health Offices on the HGSFP in March 2020. The staff members of JP RWEE's local implementing partner, Support Activities for Poor Producers of Nepal (Sappros Nepal), also participated in the training. The participants were trained on two days of School Meal Implementation and Management. The training was organized by the Education and Human Resource Development Center of Sanothimi, Bhaktapur, a center under the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, in collaboration with a WFP expert. In the training, the participants were oriented on school meal implementation and management guidelines; school meal implementation process among all schools and local areas; daily food menu preparation processes; and local working procedures for the effective implementation of the school meal programme. However, an eight-month long school closure from May to December 2020 imposed by the government to control the spread of COVID-19 meant that the actual HGSF implementation was delayed. Despite this, the JP RWEE was able to carry out preparatory work including menu planning, production pocket mapping, training and capacity building of school authorities, teachers, meal preparators and education officers. Once schools reopen in January 2021, the work related to establishing linkage and purchase contracts between schools and women-cooperatives will be facilitated, establishing local, sustainable market outlets for the products of rural women. A total of 56 schools in Gujara and Bagmati municipalities in Rautahat and Sarlahi districts, respectively, were supported to develop healthy and balanced meal for the schools, based on local production for the HGSFP. The JP RWEE is also facilitating the capacity strengthening of the nearby

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<sup>6</sup> NSMP is a national programme being implemented in 43 districts of Nepal but is not necessarily implemented in HGSF approach in most. Because of this, students are not provided with balanced nutrition through their food ration. Through HGSF, schools buy farmers' products to provide cooked, balanced food, based on proper menu planning for nutritious food maintaining hygiene and sanitation.

<sup>7</sup>A total of 50 participants attended the three-day training. However, not all of them were from the JP RWEE project sites. Since no resource from JP RWEE was used for this training, which was organized by another project, the details about the 50 participants were not elaborated in this report.

rural women's groups and cooperatives to supply the food products needed by the schools to implement the HGSFP, which also serves as stable market for their products. The JP RWEE is helping the rural women grow vegetables and legumes as required by the school meal to harness the opportunity opened by the HGSFP and connect women smallholder farmers to a localized value-chain. This involves linking the government-implemented cash-based school feeding programme to local agricultural production in order to create stable and reliable local demand for small-scale food producers, who are predominantly women. The schools eligible for cash-based school feeding programme receive funds from the government to provide children with one meal a day.

The JP RWEE is in the process of facilitating the establishment of a long-term contract between the school and the rural women's farmers' groups/cooperatives to supply the required agricultural products for nutritious meals for students. To facilitate the process, JP RWEE has supported the production mapping in the respective communities, identifying the exiting gaps and promoting discussion on required production volume and reasonable price for the products. The mapping meetings engaged 140 participants (f-95; m-45), enabling rural women to exercise leadership in local value chain management while assessing the supply deficit and supply-chain problems. The JP RWEE has also trained 82 school officials (f-7; m-75) on the modality of HGSFP. Upon completion of the activity by March 2021, the implementation of HGSFP will provide a nutritionally balanced midday meal to about 10,774 students from 56 community-based schools. It will also link 950 rural women to the localized market outlets, thereby improving their livelihoods.

In addition to the above, further activities implemented under this outcome included supporting 82 rural women's groups (2,003 rural women) in commercial vegetable production, including supplying 40 groups (957 rural women) with marketing equipment such as weighing machines and plastic crates to handle and carry fresh vegetables safely to the market.

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

In relation to the number of rural women farmers who entered wage employment with the support of the JP RWEE, this is in progress and still needs 65 rural women to fully achieve the target. So far, 135 women have already received short-term wage employment through cash-assistance-for-assets activities. They earned a monthly average income of NPR 8,500 (US\$ 74.7), as per government's local wage rate in both districts. This is a result of short-term wage employment in the construction of two market outlets.

In 2020, an additional 87 rural women were provided with wage employment opportunities for the construction of a further two agro-product collection centers. They were employed under WFP's Cash for Assets scheme and paid a daily rate determined by local government. The centres are almost completed, adding to the two previously constructed under the JP RWEE. The women received preconstruction management trainings and now serve as decision makers through their membership in the construction management committees. The collection centers are crucial in facilitating access to market for the products of the rural women and are expected to raise their earnings due to reduced expenses for transportation, spoilage and intermediaries and the availability of a storage facility. The locations of the storage buildings were selected in close consultation with the local municipalities, duly informed by environmental and social screenings. Having women working in construction through the CFA set a ground-breaking precedent in eliminating perceptual barriers and social norms about women's visibility in public spaces and engagement in traditionally male occupations. Leaving the house is no longer a problem for them and family members even encourage them to work in an industry that has long been stereotyped as a male domain. By positioning women as leaders, women and their families felt assured that the environment poses no danger to the participants' reputation and well-being. This experience serves as an example of how to create a decent,

productive and norm-changing work environment for rural women, especially in non-traditional fields. Safety protocols were strictly followed during the process.

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

Despite the extremely challenging context of the pandemic, the leadership ability of 1,059 rural women from both districts was strengthened by adopting an innovative radio programming approach in order to overcome the restrictions placed on in-person meetings and gatherings. All of the 1,059 rural women were provided with radio sets by Equal Access International, a JP RWEE implementing partner, which enabled them to learn from the broadcast lessons and improve their ability to engage with local leaders and officials on issues that are crucial to them, especially during the pandemic. The radio broadcasts also enabled the women to assert their status in the family and it was found that a highly positive home learning environment has been created by the use of the radios during lockdown, turning family members into a captive audience for collective listening and discussion of the broadcasted messages. Women were also able to engage directly with local authorities. Through a 'Query for My Leaders' (QFL) episode of the radio programme, rural women had an opportunity to raise queries to their local leaders on issues related to irrigation facilities, seeds and fertilisers, COVID-19 relief packages and provisions by the local government and the delivery of local services.



According to **Arati Devi Karna**, a rural woman from Gujara Municipality, Rautahat district, "the radio programme of JP RWEE is my university."

Listening to the radio programme with her family has changed their attitude towards her mobility and engagement in public life. She can now freely travel around to buy seeds and fertilizers or open her radio to engage other people from her community on various life-empowering messages aired by the programme.

Karna uses the messages from the radio to advocate against gender-based violence, call for women's leadership and status in the family and community, and change behaviours that sustain harmful norms and practices.

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

A total of 483<sup>8</sup> rural women farmers were empowered and were able to put forward their issues and priorities with their local leaders/officials through the radios' interactive voice response (IVR)<sup>9</sup> system and CommCare application by participating in the QFL radio campaign. The queries and concerns of the rural women were addressed by the locally elected leaders through the live radio programs. As of December 2020, eight of the planned 15 episodes of a magazine format radio series were produced and aired, reaching an audience of approximately 229,548 population in Rautahat and Sarlahi districts.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> This data was collected through IVR and not every caller provided their details in the IVR. Among 483 rural women farmers, 62 provided demographic information. District: Rautahat- 39, Sarlahi-23. Age-group: 15-24 years- 24, 25-49 years-35, 50 years and above - 3.

<sup>9</sup> The IVR is an automated platform which allows the callers to call in and record their feedback for the radio program, and to put forward their priorities and concerns to be shared with the representatives of their local government units by recording their audio. This is then used by the radio production team to be included in the radio program or to be shared with the relevant government authorities/local leaders to gather their response. The callers can participate either in Nepali or Bajjika - the local language. The system uses toll free phone numbers. Therefore, no cost is incurred by the callers.

<sup>10</sup> The radio reach has been calculated based on radio listenership findings from the National Media Survey 2019, which shows that 22 per cent of the population 16 years and above in Province 2 have daily access to radio.

The episodes highlighted key topics such as: gender identities, gender roles, gender equality, gender equitable households and community, women's empowerment and leadership, basic financial knowledge, diversity and social inclusion for gender equality and equity, Gender Based Violence (GBV), individual and community actions to combat GBV, access to justice, harmful social norms, traditions and practises that underpin violence against women and girls. Furthermore, eight out of 15 episodes of subsequent live call-in shows were also produced and aired, which were used as an open platform for discussions on the issues and priorities of rural women farmers among community members, local leaders and government officials in the JP RWEE areas. The episodes focused on the same topics raised in the magazine show.

The first episode of the QFL campaign was also launched in this period. Some of the major themes for the queries/priorities raised by the rural women farmers were lack of irrigation, seeds and fertilisers, COVID-19 relief provisions by the local governments, and local level service delivery.

Encouraging responses from the local leaders during the QFL include a commitment to allocate additional budget for irrigation from the Mayor of Gujara. The radio's impact was also felt beyond the JP RWEE programme areas. For example, in Katahariya Municipality of Rautahat district, there were instances of communities coming together, inspired by the radio discussions, to raise their voice against corruption in the local judicial committees.

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

A total of 1,014 rural women (Brahmin Chettri 9%; Janajatis 39%; Dalit 7%; Madhesi 43%; and Muslim 2%) in the two JP RWEE districts enhanced their organizational capacity to sustain and participate in cooperatives. In this reporting period, three new multipurpose cooperatives were formed - two in Sarlahi and one in Rautahat. Around 439 rural women from 25 rural women's groups joined the new cooperatives. One cooperative has been registered in the municipality in Sarlahi district and the registration of the remaining two is in progress.

In Sarlahi and Rautahat, there were already two cooperatives (one in each district) formed with 350 members from 16 rural women farmers' groups and registered in 2018 and 2019. Now the women members of these cooperatives increased from 350 to 575 and the group members increased from 16 to 23. With the formation of the three new cooperatives in 2020, there are now five cooperatives with 1,014 members and 48 groups of rural women farmers in the two districts. These cooperatives have initially provided saving and credit schemes for their members and eight members (6 female and two male family members of rural women) for the operation of agro-veterinarian shops in 2019 and 2020. As mentioned, the cooperative members and neighboring farmers benefit from these shops through timely, convenient and reduced expenses in the procurement of agricultural inputs, as well as access to opportunities and markets that they cannot access as members of informal groups.

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

To create a supportive family and community environment, a total of 730 rural women and their spouses (f-645; m-85) have learned the GALS methodology and how to use its tools to bring positive behavioural changes to improve their lives. Among 645 rural women, 230 from 11 groups are newly practicing GALS since 2020. Twenty-three rural women from 11 groups were trained on GALS methodology in 2019 and they are now sharing the GALS tools and their learnings with their family and group members. These women, along with their spouses and household members, are preparing their visions, setting the goals to change their economic condition, working to build a happy and gender-friendly environment at home and improve their

relationships with the people who play important roles in their families through three comprehensive tools. These tools are: (a) Road Vision Journey, (b) Happy Family Tree, and (c) Leadership Empowerment Map. These rural women have set concrete actions and milestones with symbols and drawings in these tools. All these exercises facilitate reflections about their own aspiration, thinking, behaviour and actions, along with analysis of the family context. When women learned these methodologies, along with the men, they began to change their behaviour and actions to achieve the vision and goals they set for themselves. Marginalised women with no previous exposure have adopted the GALS faster and brought about meaningful changes, such as reducing family expenses, more involvement in economic activities, engaging in household planning, and demonstrating greater inquisitiveness to learn. Male members are fully supporting this leadership role of women and their children are also happy to see their mothers leading meaningful changes in the family.

A total of 296 rural women are rolling out GALS for second round planning of change and moving to achieve their vision for three years among members of all nine groups who learned GALS in 2019. Family members (137) of trained GALS catalyst and champions and rural women (141) who had learned GALS through peer sharing outside JP RWEE groups are also adopting these tools and bringing positive changes in their lives. This year, the linkage of GALS groups with the Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project (RERP), which is a joint project of the Government of Nepal and IFAD was also initiated. Among the 16 groups practicing GALS from the JP-RWEE, one group is already linked with the RERP. This group is receiving grant and other support to improve vegetable value chain and financial access from formal financial institutions to fill the gaps in value chain, such as scaling up of improved technology-poly tunnels and irrigation facilities. Fourteen rural women farmers' groups have submitted their letters of interest and are under the process of further verification to qualify for the grant and support from the RERP.

Four champions, who learned GALS in 2019 and empowered themselves, experienced changes in their own life and households. They have facilitated sessions of the GALS catalyst workshop for the new batch of change catalysts, through the joint JP RWEE and RERP efforts. They shared how they used the GALS tools in their homes and how favourable changes were observed in the development of positive behaviors and actions of family members, such as sharing in domestic chores and planning of household activities, and improvement of gender relations within their respective households. The experiences of the four champions inspired the participants and their confidence and self-esteem were remarkably enhanced through their exposure to GALS tools. These champions also worked as volunteers to disseminate the GALS methodology, raise public awareness about COVID-19, and help vulnerable women during the lockdown period. Knowledge products, like (a) the GALS introductory brochure, (b) stories of change, and (c) GALS facilitators manual, were prepared in both English and Nepali languages, which are now under publication.



**Pachiya Chaudhari** of Bhawanipur, Rautahat says, “My illiteracy is over, and life is much better.”

Trained by the JP RWEE in the GALS methodology, she transformed into a highly effective GALS champion, helping others use the GALS tools to change their life, the way she advanced her own.

Once struggling with enormous debts, aggravated by the alcoholism and irresponsible and controlling behaviour of her husband, Chaudhari used the GALS tools to convince her husband and kids to work together as a team in setting a vision and working hard to pay their debts and send the kids to school. Hers is a successful family model of change for the better, which inspires many women to apply GALS and be like her.

As of this reporting period, 650 rural women have enhanced awareness on women's empowerment and leadership, gender equality and equity, GBV, access to justice and positive and equitable gender norms and their manifestations in the pandemic. To enhance effectiveness, two tools - IVR system and CommCare mobile applications - were used to: (a) assess the radio listenership, and (b) analyze its impact in improving the listeners' knowledge of issues raised by the radio programs.

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

To promote a gender-responsive policy environment, a review of the existing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy of the Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS) in light of the federal architecture and humanitarian crisis, was initiated in this reporting period.

The GESI strategy for ADS was developed with technical and funding support of the JP RWEE in 2016 and 2017. The on-going revision is expected to further expand awareness and ownership of GESI across government, facilitate its implementation under the federal set up and make it responsive to the envisioned recovery from the pandemic. A thorough analysis of the GESI strategy within the ADS was conducted, considering the current federal structure of Nepal and factoring the impact of COVID-19 outbreak in the agriculture sector. The review showed gaps on the understanding of GESI among the local elected leaders and on appropriate institutional mechanisms and adequate capacities, especially at the provincial and local levels. Other gaps were identified, such as lack of intra-ministerial coordination; coordination among the different agencies involved in mainstreaming of GESI in agriculture sector development; and weak alignment with the current constitutional spirit of co-existence, cooperation and collaboration. The JP RWEE team is coordinating with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Development (MoALD) and relevant government agencies to share the draft report and incorporate their inputs.

**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**

Sixty-three government officials/elected leaders (f-27; m-36) have enhanced their knowledge on GESI, gender responsive planning and budgeting through the two-day workshop in Sarlahi and Rautahat districts. They consisted of 12 Janajatis, 11 Dalits, 3 Brahmin/Chhetri, 32 Madhesi and 5 Muslim. This workshop was also designed to encourage and influence the leaders to use the learnings from the workshop to ensure meaningful participation of women and other disadvantaged groups in the local level planning process and advance the formulation and implementation of gender responsive budgets and programs in the JP RWEE municipalities.

The pre and post-test evaluation shows a significant increase in gender equality knowledge of participants, broken down as follows: (a) social inclusion concept – from 31 to 50 per cent; (b) constitutional provision on social inclusion - from 25 to 81 per cent; (c) gender mainstreaming - from 27 to 83 per cent; (d) local level planning - from 29 to 80 per cent; (e) gender responsive budgeting - from 14 to 82 per cent; (f) participation of women in the planning process - from 26 to 81 per cent; and (g) budget allocation by local government responding to the issues of women - from 28 to 83 per cent.

*"In the coming days, I will try to address the issues of the targeted groups such as women, children, and senior citizens in the planning process."*

**Gita Devi Sah**  
Vice-Chairperson  
Yamunamai Rural Municipality

*"I am involved in design and implementation of various programs. From now on, I will ensure that there will be high focus on programs targeted to the women farmers in the next plan."*

**Ashok Kumar Tharu**  
Ward Chairperson  
Guajara Municipality, ward number 2)

To contribute to this output, a thorough analysis of the GESI strategy within the ADS was conducted in 2020. As the existing ADS GESI strategy was developed before the change to a system of federalism in Nepal the 2020 review was done in consultation with key stakeholders from the local, provincial and federal governments. The recommendations from the review consisted of: (a) promoting a deeper understanding of the substantive meaning of GESI among key stakeholders; (b) enactment of a federal agricultural policy with clear provisions on the entitlements of women and excluded groups; (c) clarification of the delineation of power and mandates among the three tiers of government; (d) addressing gaps in linkages between and among agencies, with federal agencies delegating powers and supporting the subnational governments; (e) creation of functional mechanisms for GESI in the oversight agencies; and (f) development of competent human resources to advance GESI at the provincial and local levels.

The findings and recommendations will be shared with MoALD and other relevant federal government offices to address the gaps and further strengthen the existing policies and GESI strategy within the ADS. Furthermore, the findings related to rural women farmers and agriculture will be used to inform the design of JP RWEE policy dialogues to engage local government in creating a gender-responsive policy environment for rural women farmers.

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

The JP RWEE end-line survey using the programme-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) is currently in its data collection stage. This quantitative survey will assess the empowerment of the target individuals involved in the JP RWEE and compare it with a control group with similar socio-economic conditions who are not receiving similar project support. This will help to analyse the effect of JP RWEE's interventions along different dimensions of empowerment, such as autonomy in income, self-efficacy, attitudes about gender based violence, input in productive decisions, ownership of assets, access and decisions over credit, control over the use of income, work balance, group membership, and respect among household members.

This quantitative work is also complemented by a qualitative in-depth assessment of GALS results. The field work and data collection of the second part of all nine GALS groups have been completed and analysis of information and report writing are ongoing. For the quantitative part, detailed household enumeration (2,145 households) has been completed and interviews with sampled households of both treatment (980 households) and control (320 households) groups are in progress. The results will be available in 2021.

## **II. Describe any delays in implementation, challenges, lessons learned and best practices**

### **A. Challenges:**

- **Difficult execution of programme activities during the nationwide lockdown:** the restrictive measures to contain the pandemic impeded the implementation of the original annual work plan. The fear of contagion, physical distancing and lockdown constrained the implementation of community outreach activities and face-to-face interaction with the partners and the rural women. Thus, the originally planned activities were revisited and an alternative implementation model was developed. The new model used radio as a key medium to deliver skills building activities, sensitization, advocacy, and local policy dialogues.

For GALS, a special arrangement was made in collaboration with the IFAD funded project, "Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project" being implemented in the JP RWEE's districts in Province 2. A memorandum of understanding was signed for a special JP RWEE and RERP collaboration arrangements

in the COVID-19 context. Through the JP RWEE's support, capacity building and technical backstopping of RERP field staff is being conducted. With this ongoing support, RERP staff members are currently providing supervision support and backstopping to the GALS catalysts in the JP RWEE districts. However, the roll out of GALS with the 2020 cohort of beneficiaries was severely impacted as IFAD implementing staff were unable to travel to the field and the sharing of all the required GALS tools was not completed. This curtails the expected empowerment process for the beneficiaries and risks the sustainability of the intervention for this group. Significant time investment is required to overcome this. The situation will be monitored further in 2021.

Closure of the schools due to the COVID-19 outbreak impeded the HGSFP interventions. The JP RWEE team revisited the work plan and completed almost all types of trainings and consultations regarding HGSFP modality with the relevant officials in the schools. The JP RWEE continued the capacity building and preparatory interventions by observing all safety protocols.

- **Ensuring quality of construction related work** - At the initial phase of the construction work carried out by the rural women, challenges were experienced in achieving the standard of quality required of the construction work. This was not surprising given that women do not traditionally participate in construction work. This challenge was mitigated by providing pre-construction trainings to rural women and increasing the intensity of site supervision by the site supervisors and the engineer.
- **Access to digital devices** - The JP RWEE also explored online platforms to organise some of the community outreach activities, such as GESI sensitisation for local vendors and trainings for local radio partners and community reporters. However, this was less effective because of numerous issues, such as: lack of access to digital devices, like mobile phone, networks and internet, and the limited technical aptitude of the participants. This challenge was mitigated by conducting meetings in smaller groups, ensuring physical distancing and other safety measures, such as the use of masks and sanitizers.

## **B. Lessons learned**

1. **Effectiveness of radio programme in the pandemic context** - Radio remains as the most effective medium to reach the rural target groups with limited/no literacy, means or skills to use the internet.<sup>11</sup> Although the face-to face approach is still preferred, radio emerged as the most feasible option for program delivery among the target group of the JP RWEE in the pandemic context. The use of IVR system as a digital platform enhanced the quality of interaction with listeners. To achieve optimum results, it is important to: (a) orient the key participants on the use of IVR, and (b) incorporate surveys using the mobile application to assess the listenership and collect feedback from the audience. The JP RWEE will continue to optimize the use of these tools in furthering the implementation of the JP RWEE in the 'new normal' of the pandemic and beyond.
2. **Establishment of digital learning community** - Given the current digital gap, the establishment of a digital learning community centre in the targeted communities is important. This should incorporate activities on enhancing the basic digital literacy for rural women where the required infrastructures exist. This will help promote further empowerment of rural women for their engagement with local government units. It will also ensure stronger linkage of their products with the market and foster their overall growth as individuals, leaders and entrepreneurs. As the JP RWEE is ending in June 2021, the JP RWEE team is discussing about replication of this model in other districts based on the lesson learnt before and during the COVID-19 context.

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<sup>11</sup> Nepal Media Survey 2019: National Survey on Nepali Media Landscape. Sharecast Initiative Nepal, 2019.

## C. Best practices

1. **Adopting innovations to sustain implementation amidst the pandemic** – Restrictive government protocols to contain the pandemic threatened to stop the implementation of the JP RWEE. The team responded by adopting innovative implementation methods that moved the JP RWEE forward despite extreme constraints. First, radio programming on topics related to women’s empowerment, gender equality and social inclusion proved effective in capacitating the rural women with life and leadership skills, resulting in their meaningful participation in the local response to the pandemic. The radio programmes also raised awareness and improved the attitudes toward rural women among people in the community. In addition, women developed assertiveness and confidence to raise their concerns with local officials and receive attention and response in return.
2. **Breaking perceptual barriers and transforming social norms** – In the communities covered by the JP RWEE, women rarely go out of their house due to negative attitudes toward their visibility and movement in public spaces. The JP RWEE began to challenge these norms by forming a rural women-led construction management committee and helped the women to work as labourers and masons for the construction of the agro-product collection/storage structures. This provided them with opportunities to take leadership and decision-making roles, earn income through short-term job opportunities, and demonstrate that women can be equally effective in traditionally male occupations. The initiative helped increase their agency and enabled them to re-orient negative perceptions of society while embracing an alternative image of empowered and economically productive rural women.
3. **Catalytic benefits of GALS** – The women who were empowered through GALS adopted self-designed strategies to enable their families and communities to deal with the challenges spurred by the pandemic. Holding mature discussions within their family, finding appropriate ways of continuing their economic activities in the ‘new normal’, and raising awareness within neighbours and community people to follow the public health protocol were among the actions taken by many GALS champions. There is also a plan to review the impact of GALS by the JP RWEE team.

## III. Qualitative assessment

The JP RWEE team has been able to demonstrate a strong example of 'delivering as one' to the rural women and federal and local government partners. The coordination and collaboration amongst the four participating UN agencies through joint planning, implementation and missions have been exemplary even during the COVID-19 pandemic, an evidence that the JP RWEE is truly an effective one UN programme. The government stakeholders address the team as JP RWEE rather than as individual agencies of the United Nations. This practice has enabled the JP RWEE to gain the trust of government as a unified team working collaboratively to achieve common results.

The JP RWEE team observed positive qualitative changes taking place in the two districts. As a result of numerous capacity development efforts with the local government, members of cooperatives and schools in the local communities continue to demonstrate strong ownership of JP-RWEE. Strong positive responses were received from local government officials and communities regarding the sustained impact of the JP-RWEE. The provision of lands for the construction of two agri-product collection/storage centres in Gujara and Bagmati, respectively, and the leadership of the local government in the construction process, helps ensure the sustainable use of these facilities. Most of the works for the collection centers were led by management committees formed under the leadership of rural women farmers, including the construction management committee. The process also helps transform the perceptions of people toward rural women. They are now

more supportive of women's involvement in the traditionally male-dominated construction sector and their visibility in the public sphere.

The local community members were engaged in the planning of school meals. This increased the awareness of local people regarding the need for a nutritionally balanced meal for their children. Production-pocket mapping and supply-chain assessment were also conducted with the participation of rural women. These activities assessed the volume of product and their reasonable price and the ways to trade excess production for daytime lunch of students. This helped improve the rural women's knowledge and appreciation of the marketing of agricultural products.

Finally, as a result of the JP RWEE interventions, a number of positive responses to the COVID-19 crisis were seen among beneficiaries. Despite the challenges encountered within the community (including limited access to markets, reduction of food availability, increased domestic violence) JP RWEE participants were able to apply positive coping mechanisms, meaning that the impact to lives and livelihoods was mitigated for the most part. Rural women were able to provide for their family nutrition and food security through the use of home-grown vegetable production. Income generation activities were also able to continue. Adaptive responses to business, such as changing from selling vegetables at the market-place to 'door to 'door' sales modalities were also observed. Furthermore, in communities in which women are traditionally excluded from participating in public life or taking leadership, they were also able to take on roles relating to coordination and awareness raising to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This included lobbying authorities to ensure the inclusion of women in the response, distributing hygiene equipment and carrying out awareness raising.

## ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

In terms of **progress on indicators**, as of this reporting period, five (1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2 and 4.1) of the six outcome indicators have already been fully achieved and exceeded their targets; and one (2.2) has been partially achieved. Of the 15 output indicators, nine (1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 2.1.1, 3.1.1, 3.4.1 and 4.1.1) have achieved and surpassed their respective targets, two (1.2.1 and 3.2.1) have been achieved and four (1.2.4, 2.2.1, 3.4.2, and 4.2.1) are still in progress.

	Achievement of Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
<b>Outcome 1 Improved food and nutrition security</b>			
<p><b>Indicator 1.1:</b> % of increase in agriculture production of women farmers</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food crops 1,337 kg/HH</li> <li>- Vegetables 234 kg/HH</li> </ul> <p><b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 200 % increase in vegetable production</p>	<p><b>Target 1.1:</b> This indicator has achieved and exceeded its target by 106 per cent. As of the end of 2020, a 306 per cent increase in agricultural/vegetable crops production (949 kg. per household) was reached by rural women farmers in Sarlahi and Rautahat districts.</p>		Production data of targeted beneficiaries and field observation
<p><b>Indicator 1.2:</b> Women's dietary diversity or variety of households food consumption pattern</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b></p> <p>1.2.1 62.2% of HHs (with kitchen gardening) surveyed with sufficient quantity and frequency of vegetable consumption</p> <p>1.2.2 72.4% of HHs surveyed have minimum acceptable diet (MAD)</p> <p>1.2.3 Food Consumption Score of HHs surveyed is 6.73%</p>	<p><b>Target 1.2.1:</b> This target has been achieved in 2020. As of December 2020, 100 per cent increased by quantity and frequency in vegetable consumption.</p> <p><b>Target 1.2.2:</b> As reflected in the 2019 Annual Report, this indicator has achieved and exceeded its target by 12 per cent. As of December 2019, 97 per cent of HHs (143 HHs) supported have minimum acceptable diet.</p> <p><b>Target 1.2.3:</b> As reflected in the 2019 Annual Report, this indicator has achieved and exceeded its target by 17 per cent. As of December 2019, 97 per cent of HHs (143 HHs) supported improved Food Consumption Score.</p>		Vegetable consumption data of targeted beneficiaries and field reports

<p>1.2.4 Coping Strategy Index (CSI)</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b></p> <p>1.2.1 50% increase by quantity and frequency in vegetable consumption of kitchen garden (2017)</p> <p>1.2.2 At least 85% of the total HHs supported have minimum acceptable diet (MAD) (5,610 HHs in five years, and 2,890 HHs as of December 2016,)</p> <p>1.2.3 80% of the total HHs supported improve Food Consumption Score (FCS)</p> <p>1.2.4 CSI (5,280 HHs in five years and 2,720 HHs as of December 2016)</p>	<p><b>Target 1.2.4:</b> This indicator is still in progress. An average of 16 per cent of HHs in both districts adopted stress coping strategies.</p>		
<p>Output 1.1 Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security</p>			
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.1:</b> Number of rural women farmers who have access to integrated agriculture/nutrition services</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 0</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 1,025 rural women farmers</p> <p><b>Indicator 1.1.2:</b> Number of rural women farmers who utilize improved agriculture production techniques</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 287 households with 574 rural women farmers</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 3,000 women farmers</p>	<p><b>Target 1.1.1:</b> This indicator has achieved and exceeded its target. As of the end of 2020, 3,002 rural women farmers have access to integrated agriculture/nutrition services through kitchen gardening and commercial vegetable production.</p> <p><b>Target 1.1.2:</b> This indicator has met its target. As of 2020, a total of 3,002 rural women farmers have been utilizing improved agriculture production techniques.</p> <p><b>Target 1.1.3:</b> As reflected in the 2019 Annual Report, this indicator has achieved and exceed its target by 100 rural women. In 2020, 800 rural women from 40 groups continued to receive marketing equipment, such as plastic crates and weighing machine.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Field monitoring report</p>

<p><b>Indicator 1.1.3:</b> Number of rural women accessing community assets and agriculture infrastructure (including shored equipment and machineries)  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned Target:</b> 700 rural women</p>			
<p>Output 1.2 Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves and their production</p>			
<p>Not applicable for reporting as the JP RWEE in Nepal does not target this output.</p>			
<p><b>Outcome 2 Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods.</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 2.1</b> Income generated from sales of rural women  <b>Baseline:</b> 49 rural women farmers  <b>Planned Target:</b> 1,320 rural women generated income from their sales market</p>	<p><b>Target 2.1:</b> This indicator has achieved and significantly exceeded its target by 1,064 rural women farmers. As of the end of December 2020, a total of 2,384 rural women farmers generated income from their sales market. A total of 935 rural women (of the 2,384 rural women) earned additional NPR 3,074,000 (US\$ 26,068) by selling wheat seed and food grain produced with the support of the JP RWEE. Of these, 2,384 earned NPR 29,738,850 (US\$ 252,195) by selling vegetables. The number comprises 79 per cent of the 3,002 rural women supported by the JP RWEE for vegetable production in this reporting period.</p>	<p>Exceeded the target as additional groups were introduced to commercial farming due to the positive progress of the programme.</p>	<p>Fresh vegetable sales data of targeted rural women and field report</p>
<p><b>Indicator 2.2:</b> Proportion of rural women with empowerment in the income domain of the WEAI (control over income)  <b>Baseline:</b> IFAD to set the baseline  <b>Target:</b> IFAD to set the target</p>	<p><b>Target 2.2:</b> This indicator is still in progress.</p>	<p>The WEAI endline and qualitative assessment are ongoing and the findings will be available in the first half of 2021</p>	<p>Field monitoring report</p>
<p>Output 2.1 Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products</p>			

<p><b>Indicator 2.1.1:</b> Number of rural women farmers trained on entrepreneurial and /or vocational skills to have increased access to markets  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned Target:</b> 50 rural women farmers</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.2: Number of rural women farmers increased their access to markets  <b>Baseline:</b>0  <b>Target:</b> 40 rural women farmers in commercial farming</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.3: Number of shallow well tube wells installed; hectare land irrigated  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Target:</b> 20 number of shallow tube wells installed, 60 hectares of land irrigated, 200 household number benefited</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.4: Number of agriculture machinery and tools distributed to women farmer groups  <b>Baseline:</b>0  <b>Target:</b> 3,000 rural women</p>	<p><b>Target 2.1.1:</b> As reflected in the 2019 Annual Report, this indicator has been achieved and exceeded its target by six additional rural women. Out of 122 rural women farmers’ groups, 56 rural women from 55 rural women farmers’ groups were supported to enhance their market linkages through an interaction workshop with local vendors, retailers, and wholesalers.</p> <p>JP RWEE trained 140 people (95 rural women and 45 men) for production-pocket mapping, supply-chain assessment, price fixation and other decision making regarding HGSF and agriproduct storage structure.</p> <p>2.1.2: In 2020, 82 rural women farmers groups (2,003 rural women) were engaged in commercial vegetable production and have increased their access to markets. This target is exceeded by 1,963 rural women.</p> <p>2.1.3: In 2020, four shallow tube-wells were installed. In total, 12 hectares of land of four rural women’s groups (covering 40 rural women’s households) gained easy access to agricultural water. Remaining 16 shallow tube wells will be purchased and installed in 2021.</p> <p>2.1.4: In 2020, due to mobility restrictions caused by COVID-19 pandemic, drudgery reduction machines could not be purchased as planned. This will be purchased, distributed and reported in 2021 final report</p>	<p>Exceeded the target as additional groups were introduced to commercial farming due to the positive progress of the programme.</p> <p>Procurement was delayed by COVID-19</p> <p>Procurement was delayed by COVID-19</p>	<p>Field monitoring report</p>
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Output 2.2 Rural women have increased access to decent wage employment opportunities			
<p><b>Indicator 2.2.1:</b> Number of rural women farmers who entered wage employment with the support of the JP RWEE</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 922 rural women</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 300 rural women farmers</p>	<p><b>Target 2.2.1:</b> This target is in progress and still needs 165 rural women to fully achieve the target. So far, 135 rural women have already received short-term wage employment through cash-assistance-for-assets activities. They earned a monthly average income of NPR 8,500 (US\$ 74.7), as per government's local wage rate in both districts. This is a result of short-term wage employment in the construction of two market outlets. There is no progress to report in this period.</p> <p>In 2020, additional 87 rural women were provided with wage employment opportunities for agro-product collection centers. JP RWEE engaged these rural women in wage labour. These women are in the process of receiving US\$ 94 for their 20-days of labour work. At the same time, the establishment of linkage of rural women to localized value chain through HGSAF will create an opportunity for self-employment in commercial agriculture in the future.</p>	<p>The construction, which was planned to provide short-term employment work, could not be implemented during the COVID-19 lockdown. Therefore, the activity was delayed until March 2021.</p>	<p>Field monitoring report</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><b>Indicator 3.1:</b> % of women elected as representative at local level/community level committees</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 43.6% (828 including 9 in leadership position in cooperatives)</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 10% (2018-2020)</p>	<p><b>Target 3.1:</b> As reflected in the 2019 Annual Report, this indicator has achieved and exceeded its target by 54.7 per cent. As of December 2019, 64.7 per cent (1,065) of the rural women are now in leadership positions in cooperatives in two districts. There was no additional progress in 2020.</p>		<p>Equal Access International's report</p>
<p><b>Indicator 3.2:</b> % of producer's organizations led by women</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 2.9 % producers organizations led by women</p>	<p><b>Target 3.2:</b> As reflected in the 2019 Annual Report, this indicator has achieved and exceeded its target by 18.7 per cent. As of December 2019, 23.7 per cent (552 rural women) increase in rural women's leadership in producers'</p>		<p>Field monitoring report</p>

<p><b>Planned Target:</b> 5% increase (against the baseline) in rural women leadership in producer's organizations (2018-2020)</p> <p><b>3.3 Proportion of rural women farmers with empowerment in the leadership domain of the WEAI (increased decision making)</b></p>	<p>organizations has been achieved. There was no additional progress in 2020.</p>	<p>To be assessed as part of WEAI endline (2021)</p>	
<p>Output 3.1 Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance</p>			
<p><b>Indicator 3.1.1:</b> Number of rural women farmers who participated in the local policy discussions and/or formal decision-making processes</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 723 rural women</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 3,000 rural women farmers</p>	<p><b>Target 3.1.1:</b> As of December 2019, 1,180 rural women visited and held a dialogue with government officials, which resulted in the enhancement of their knowledge and understanding of local-level planning process. In addition, 483 rural women again participated in 'Query for My Leader' radio campaign and put forth their concerns and queries to the local representatives, and received responses from them in 2020. This target is short by 1,337 rural women.</p>	<p>Physical meetings were prohibited due to COVID-19. The number of women had to be reduced to facilitate the supply of radio. It is hoped to extend the reach in 2021.</p>	<p>Equal Access International's report</p>
<p>Output 3.2: Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions</p>			
<p><b>Indicator 3.2.1:</b> Number of rural women's groups who join formally registered cooperatives or registered themselves in relevant local government offices</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 14 rural women's groups joined cooperatives</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 300 rural women farmers</p>	<p><b>Target 3.2.1:</b> This indicator has been achieved and exceeded the target by 714. In 2020, three new cooperatives (two in Sarlahi and one in Rautahat) have been formed, with representation from the twenty-five women's groups. Among these three new cooperatives, one cooperative has been registered in the municipality office in Sarlahi district and the remaining two cooperatives are in the process of registration at the municipality's office. This includes 1,014 rural women farmers who joined the cooperatives in 2020.</p>	<p>Additional women wanted to join the groups after seeing the success of the cooperatives</p>	<p>Field monitoring report</p>
<p>Output 3.3: Rural women, including young women, have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels</p>			
<p>Not applicable for reporting as the JP RWEE in Nepal does not target this output.</p>			
<p>Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment.</p>			

<p><b>Indicator 3.4.1:</b> Number of rural women who are aware of women’s human rights and GESI responsive approaches  <b>Baseline:</b> 5 rural women  <b>Planned Target:</b> 3,000 rural women</p> <p><b>Indicator 3.4.2:</b> Number of families/households mobilized and increased their awareness and support rural women’s economic empowerment  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Target:</b> 610 rural women champions and 1,070 of their family and community members second level champions</p>	<p><b>Target 3.4.1:</b> This indicator is short by 1,038 to achieve its target. In 2019, a total of 1,312 rural women (18 female facilitators and 1,294 rural women) were reached through weekly discussions on women’s human rights and GESI-responsive approaches. In 2020, over 650 rural women, contacted through IVR and mobile survey for assessment on radio listenership, have reported increased awareness on the issues raised by radio programs. The topics covered gender identity and roles, promotion of women empowerment and leadership, importance of family support for women’s empowerment and leadership, basic financial knowledge, diversity and inclusion for gender equality, GBV, combating GBV, access to justice, harmful social norms and community initiative to replace negative norms via radio programs.</p> <p><b>Target 3.4.2:</b> This target remains in progress and has been partially achieved. It is short of completion by 975 rural women. In 2020, a total of 730 women and men (f-645; m-85) started to learn and practice GALS methodology and bringing about positive behavioural changes in their life.</p> <p>As of December 2020, 140 family members of rural women farmers have increased their awareness on issues, such as gender equality, joint decision making and women’s rights and expressed their commitment towards rural women's economic empowerment.</p>	<p>Physical meetings were prohibited due to COVID-19. The number of women had to be reduced to facilitate the supply of radio. It is hoped to extend the reach in 2021.</p> <p>The GALS roll out process is still going on in the field and will continue throughout 2021, as part of the programme’s strategy for sustainability. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, physical meetings were constrained that delayed the implementation of the activities.</p>	<p>Equal Access International’s report</p> <p>Field monitoring report</p>
<p><b>Outcome 4: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 4.1:</b> % of government budgets and donor funding (on budget) allocated to programme benefitting rural women</p>	<p><b>Target 4.1:</b> This indicator has achieved and exceeded its target by 18.65 per cent. As captured in the 2019 Annual Report, 38.65 per cent of federal government budget and</p>		

<p><b>Baseline:</b> 5%  <b>Planned Target:</b> 20 % of Government budgets and donor funding (on budget) allocated to programme benefitting rural women</p>	<p>donor funding for the fiscal year 2018/2019 was allocated to programmes benefitting rural women.</p>		
<p>Output 4.1: Policy makers and parliamentarians have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural employment policies, laws and budgets.</p>			
<p><b>Indicator 4.1.1:</b> Number of local government representatives/officials who enhanced their knowledge and capacity to mainstream, monitor and report issues of rural women farmers  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned Target:</b> 65 local officials (30 women and 35 men) in two events (one in each district)</p>	<p><b>Target 4.1.1:</b>  In 2020, the surplus was increased to 71 (38- f 22; m 16 in 2019) as 63 local government (f – 27; m - 36) officials/elected leaders enhanced knowledge on issues related to rural women farmers as a result of the workshop on GESI and gender responsive budgeting. The surplus would have been increased further by additional 60 elected leaders and officials, but implementation during the reporting period was hampered by restrictions related to COVID-19.</p>		<p>Equal Access International’s report</p>
<p>Output 4.2: Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women</p>			
<p><b>Indicator 4.2.1:</b> Number of countries where the WEAI is piloted  <b>Baseline:</b> IFAD to set the baseline  <b>Planned Target:</b> IFAD to set the target</p>	<p><b>Target: 4.2.1:</b> This target is still in progress.</p>	<p>The WEAI endline findings will be available in 2021 (survey is ongoing).</p>	
<p>Output 4.3: An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women’s priorities in regional policy processes.</p>			
<p>Not applicable for reporting as the JP RWEE in Nepal does not target this output.</p>			

### **III. Assessments or Evaluations**

N/A

### **IV. Resources**

A total of US\$ 900,000 was additionally received from the Multi Partner Trust Fund in December 2019. As of December 2020, 69 per cent of the amount has been disbursed Food and Agriculture Organization – US\$ 146,405.00; World Food Programme– US\$ 199,128.43; IFAD – US\$ 75,674; and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women--US\$ 199,698.00).