



JOINT PROGRAMME ON RURAL WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

CONTEXT

Ethiopia is a country located in the Horn of Africa with an estimated population of over 90 million. The agricultural sector accounts for 80% of employment and remains the major source and focus of the country's economic growth. However, agricultural productivity in the country is challenged by its high dependency on rainfall, ongoing environmental hazards, and the effects of climate change. Women constitute about 50 percent of the estimated 83 percent of rural farm labor force and they are vulnerable to related livelihood shocks. However, even though women smallholder farmers perform up to 75 percent of farm labor, they only hold 18.7 percent of the agricultural land. Women also lack the income to purchase improved agricultural inputs, have less access to extension services and the yields of women managed farms are 35 percent less per hectare as compared to men. In response to the above-multifaceted barriers of rural smallholder women, the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment was designed to create access to productive assets, farm inputs, credit service, technology package, and non-financial services to rural women in Ethiopia.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Joint Programme on 'Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women' (JP RWEE) in Ethiopia was launched in 2014 aiming at securing rural women's

livelihoods and rights in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in line with Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II). The JP RWEE is being implemented by the Government of Ethiopia in partnership with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and UN Women.



JP RWEE PROGRAMME EVALUATION

As part of the JP RWEE knowledge management activities, a final evaluation was conducted between June and October 2018 by independent consultants. It covered the programme period from November 2014 through April 2018 and assessed programme progress and performance from the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability & impact, coming up with a set of findings and recommendation.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

- Measure the extent to which the JP RWEE has fully implemented its activities, delivered outputs and attained outcomes;
- Generate substantive evidence-based knowledge on inclusive economic growth, food security, and nutrition according to the Sustainable Development Goals Fund (SDG-F) sectorial policy goals, and gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Make recommendations for possible replications of the best practices and sustainability of the concrete results achieved during implementation period.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The theory of change developed for the evaluation of the JP RWEE identified areas where change was needed and expected to happen for progress on gender equality and the empowerment of rural women. Accordingly, qualitative and quantitative data was collected by trained experts. The baseline results were compared with the survey results to determine the findings. In addition, secondary data was used, including a list of cooperative members and beneficiaries of the JP RWEE and Programme documents.

KEY FINDINGS

- Programme outcomes were in alignment with broader national policies (for example the Growth & Transformation Plan II pillar and National Social Protection policy outcomes) and international commitments (for instance, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcomes and Sustainable Development Goals 2, 5 and 8);
- The JP RWEE addressed the needs of beneficiaries as identified in the baseline;
- The JP RWEE employed a multi-faceted approach that demanded working with different actors, creating a collaboration which benefited the programme;
- The JP RWEE's interventions enhanced the frequency and dietary composition of beneficiaries' meals. Increment was observed in farm productivity due to the farm technology and input support;

- The JP RWEE enabled rural poor women to influence decisions that affect their lives at the household level. It also built the capacity of rural women to participate in decision making within rural institutions;
- The Joint Programme created a conducive policy and institutional environment, which lays the foundations for gender equality and women's economic empowerment.



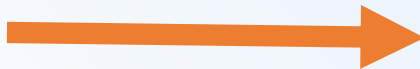
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Guidelines for the consolidating partnerships and collaboration among Programme stakeholders should be developed by UN participating agencies and government implementing parties;
- The government of Ethiopia and participating UN agencies should commit funding, taking up the ownership of the JP RWEE activities in the target districts and expand to other districts by developing a scale up plan;
- All parties, but specifically the government of Ethiopia, must focus on immediate results with long-term impact in designing future programmes;
- The Government of Ethiopia and the participating UN agencies should consider developing more strategies, other than the community conversations and sensitization events, to promote men's participation in the process of women's economic empowerment;
- The Government of Ethiopia and the participating UN agencies must understand that women's empowerment is not limited to economic empowerment. Future initiatives should include all empowerment dimensions as well as indicators in the Monitoring & Evaluation framework;
- The Government of Ethiopia and the participating UN agencies must ensure that future Programme activities address the different vulnerability contexts of rural women.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

2015

2018




FOOD SECURITY & NUTRITION

Average productivity per hectare **3.87% quintals**

Average productivity per hectare increased to **25.05 % quintals**



20.6 % of rural women control and manage household food reserves



66.8 % of rural women control and manage household food reserves



INCREASED INCOME

Average annual income of **9,313 ETB (336.40 USD)**

Average annual income increased to **21,308 ETB (774.30 USD)**



No rural women had access to Finance and non-financial services



67% of targeted rural women accessed gender sensitive finance and non-financial services



ENHANCED LEADERSHIP & PARTICIPATION



No rural women were participating in leadership positions or processes



108 rural women participated in the leadership of administration, audit, control and loan committees of their cooperatives



GENDER RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT



Limited gender mainstreaming capacity from government experts



1,332 (775 female and 557 male) government experts and officials' increased their capacity to mainstream gender

Beneficiaries' Testimonies

"After I received a loan of over 6,200Birr (280USD), I rented one-hectare of land (2.5 acre) for 2,000 Birr (90 USD) and purchased two quintals of improved wheat seeds worth over 3,000 Birr(136 USD) for sowing. By applying fertilizer worth 1,500Birr (68 USD) and taking care of the farm with my husband, I harvested 17 quintals. From its sale, I earned 17,000Birr(770USD). This was double of my previous income and I invested part of it in a bigger maize plantation".

Kebele Gure, one of the JP RWEE's beneficiaries in Adamitulu district, Oromia region.



"Through the JP RWEE, I got a 6000 Birr (270 USD) loan. With part of it, I purchased improved vegetable seedlings. Before getting a training on how to make my garden effective, I used to plant one type of vegetable per season. After the training, I started to plant and harvest a variety of vegetable. I have been both supplying the local market and feeding my family with more diverse vegetable dishes than before. I have also started in a local saving scheme known as *Equb*, saving 75 Birr (4USD) each week".

Birtukan Fikadu, one of the programme's beneficiaries in Yaya Gulele district, Oromia region.



"Because of the drought caused by El Niño, I harvested only 50 kg of maize, almost nothing compared to the normal amount of four quintals. After ploughing the land with my own pair of oxen, which I purchased with the loan received from the Programme, and getting enough rain, I harvested seven quintals. I have already sold one quintal for 400 Birr (17USD) to pay for my two daughters' education expenses. I have kept four quintals for the family's consumption and will sell the remaining when the prices get higher".

Ila Robale, one of the JP RWEE's beneficiaries in Adamitulu district, Oromia region.



"Before the death of my husband, whenever the rainy season came, I remember him spending three to four days ploughing the family's land with the pair of oxen we owned. Each day, he and the oxen used to come back home exhausted. Today, it is different, as I am privileged to farm the same land with a tractor owned by our cooperative, which makes me complete the work in maximum three hours".

(fourth from left in the picture) Kamsu Bame, one of the JP RWEE's beneficiaries in Dodola district, Oromia region.



Food and Agriculture
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