

**“ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN”  
FINAL PROGRAMME REPORT  
MPTF OFFICE GENERIC FINAL PROGRAMME 1 NARRATIVE REPORT  
REPORTING PERIOD: FROM ETHIOPIA STARTING OCTOBER 2014 TO AGREED END DATE 31  
AUGUST /2021**

Programme Title & Project Number	Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results <sup>2</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Toward Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia</li> <li>MPTF Office Project Reference Number: 00092000</li> </ul>	<i>Ethiopia, Federal and Regional (Oromia and Afar Regions)</i>
	<i>Priority area: Rural Women Economic Empowerment</i>
	Programme Beneficiaries
	<p>Programme Beneficiaries: Direct Beneficiaries: 4,700 rural women. (3,500 in Oromia, 200 IDPs in Gelan and Sululta town and 600 in Afar).</p> <p>Indirect Beneficiaries: 17,500 in Oromia and 4,000 in Afar (Members of the community in JP RWEE implementing areas)</p>
Participating Organization(s)	Implementing Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAO, IFAD, UN Women, WFP</li> </ul>	<p><b>Federal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (MoWCY).</li> <li>Ministry of Agriculture (MoA);</li> <li>Land Administration and Use Directorate under Ministry of Agriculture</li> <li>Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (MoFEC)</li> <li>Bureau of Cooperative Promotion Agencies (BoCPA)</li> <li>Federal Urban Job Creation and Food Security Agency.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

<sup>2</sup> Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

	<b>Regional and District level (Oromia and Afar):</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bureaus of Women and Children Affairs (BoWCYAs);</li> <li>• Cooperative Promotion Agency.</li> <li>• Bureaus of Finance and Economic Cooperation (BoFECs);</li> <li>• Bureaus of Agriculture and Natural Resource (BoANR);</li> </ul>		
Programme/Project Cost (US\$)		Programme Duration	
<b>Total approved budget as per project document:</b> <b>US\$ 3,433,256</b> <b>MPTF Contribution</b> • <i>by Agency (if applicable)</i> <i>UN Women US\$ 901,123</i> <i>FAO US\$ 933,418</i> <i>WFP US\$ 1,598,715</i> <b>Agency Contribution</b> • <i>by Agency (if applicable)</i> <b>TOTAL: US\$ 3,433,256</b>		Overall Duration: 6.10 years Start Date: 3 15/10/2014	
		Original End Date: 31/12/2020	
		Actual End Date: 31/08/2021	
		Have agency(ies) operationally closed the Programme in its(their) system?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval. End Date (30 06 2021)		Report Submitted By	
Evaluation Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: 30.11.2018 Evaluation Report - Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy		<input type="checkbox"/> Name: Selam Gebretsion <input type="checkbox"/> Title: National Program Coordinator JP RWEE <input type="checkbox"/> Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women <input type="checkbox"/> Email address: selam.gebretsion@unwomen.org	

<sup>3</sup> The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>BDS</b>	Business Development Service
<b>BoANRs</b>	Bureaus of Agriculture and Natural Resources
<b>BoCPA</b>	Bureau of Cooperative Promotion Agencies
<b>BoFEC</b>	Bureau of Finance and Economic Cooperation <sup>4</sup>
<b>BoWCYA</b>	Bureau of Women Children and Youth Affairs <sup>5</sup>
<b>CCs</b>	Community Conversations
<b>CPAs</b>	Cooperative Promotion Agencies
<b>ETB</b>	Ethiopian Birr
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>GRB</b>	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced People
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IGAs</b>	Income Generating Activities
<b>JP RWEE</b>	Joint Programme on Rural Women Economic Empowerment
<b>LAND</b>	Land Administration to Nurture Development
<b>MoA</b>	Ministry of Agriculture
<b>MoWCY</b>	Ministry of Women Children and Youth <sup>6</sup>
<b>MoFEC</b>	Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation <sup>7</sup>
<b>MPTF</b>	Multi Partners Trust Fund
<b>PMC</b>	Programme Management Committee
<b>RUSACCOs</b>	Rural Saving and Credit Cooperative Organizations
<b>SNNPR</b>	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
<b>SWAA-E</b>	Society for Women and AIDS in Africa-Ethiopia
<b>TWG</b>	Technical Working Group
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WISE</b>	Organization for Women in Self Employment
<b>WEAI</b>	Women Empowerment Agriculture Index

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<sup>4</sup>The regional Bureaus of Finance and Economic Development are changed to Bureaus of Finance and Economic Cooperation.

<sup>5</sup>The regional Bureaus of Women and Children Affairs are changed to Bureaus of Women, Children and Youth Affairs.

<sup>6</sup>The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is changed to Ministry of Women, Children and Youth.

<sup>7</sup>The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is now changed to Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Joint Programme ‘Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women’ (JP RWEE) was implemented in Ethiopia from October 2014 to August 2021 by FAO, IFAD, UN WOMEN and WFP. Its overarching goal was to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the post MDGs. In Ethiopia, the programme reached 4,700 rural women in the regions of Afar and Oromia. To achieve its goal, the JP RWEE worked in close cooperation with multiple government ministries, as well as NGO implementing partners. The programme leveraged the comparative advantage of each participating agency and created synergies between the UN agencies and government partners in addressing the multiple factors involved in securing rural women’s economic empowerment. The programme targeted the most vulnerable women in food insecure communities.

The programme worked to achieve four programme outcomes: (i) improved food and nutrition security; (ii) increased incomes to secure livelihoods; (iii) women’s enhanced participation and leadership in rural life and institutions; and (iv) a more gender-responsive political environment. Over the course of the programme, women’s food security and nutrition increased, with improvement in food consumption patterns being achieved in all of the target areas (e.g., in Afar the number of women eating three times a day increased from 40% to 55% whilst the number eating once a day decreased from 20% to 3%). Agricultural production increased by 15% in Oromia, by 5% in Afar and thus, on average, by 10%. The programme worked extensively through Rural Saving and Credit Cooperative Organizations (RUSACCOs) and was able to increase the planned number of beneficiaries from 2,500 to 4,423. With the support of stakeholders, it was able to benefit a total of 4,127 female and 296 male members in Oromia through 12 RUSACCOs, and 673 female members in Afar through 6 RUSACCOs. In Oromia, 3,435 out of 4,423 members accessed credit from financial institutions and, in Afar, 487 out of 673 members accessed credit services. In terms of diversifying source of income and livelihoods, 70% of the members of the RUSACCOs (3,276 in Oromia and 333 in Afar) were able to diversify their sources of incomes through their engagement in Income Generating Activities. Since the start of the JP RWEE, beneficiaries have been able to save and raise their capital. Aggregate saving in the Oromia region amounts to US\$ 191,764, aggregate saving in the Afar region is US\$ 23,000, which makes a total of US\$ 214,764. The beneficiaries in both regions have improved their communication, assertiveness, management, and leadership skills and taken up leadership positions in cooperatives and local structures. Through community conversations and participatory methodologies there is now a much greater level of awareness on gender equality and women’s rights within the local communities. The programme was also successful in working with the national government at the policy level, inputting into Land Rights reform processes, the mainstreaming of gender within the agriculture sector and in developing guidelines on unpaid care work. Capacity building on gender mainstreaming was carried out for both national and local government stakeholders. The programme was impacted at times by natural disasters, including a devastating locust invasion in 2020 and droughts, political instability and the COVID-19 global pandemic. Despite this, the results show that women were able to advance their economic empowerment and show some resilience in the face of shocks. In addition, from 2018 the programme expanded its implementation to include internally displaced communities, who had been forced to flee the Somali region and move to neighbouring Oromia, benefitting 800 IDPs.

### **I. Purpose**

The JP RWEE was implemented in support of the Ethiopian government’s national priorities in relation to gender equality and rural women’s economic empowerment, and the reduction of poverty. The programme aimed to secure women’s livelihoods and rights and was aligned with the national Ten Years Perspective Plan (2020-2030), the Growth and Transformation Plan II and with the Ethiopia UNDAF 2016-2020. The latter includes pillars on sustainable economic growth and risk reduction, with a strong focus on strengthening agricultural development and financial inclusion, and supporting vulnerable communities, women, and youth

on governance and capacity development. Cross-cutting issues amongst all UNDAF pillars are gender equality, the environment, and human rights. These were addressed in the JP RWEE through its focus on promoting greater equity, rights-based approaches and supporting the inclusion of vulnerable, marginalized and excluded groups, specifically women and children, as contributors to development in the country.

## II. Assessment of Programme Results

### i) Narrative reporting on results:

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

The JP RWEE targeted rural districts (*Woredas*) predominantly inhabited by smallholder subsistence farmers with limited access to livelihoods opportunities and income diversification. In these areas, inhabitants mainly rely on agriculture and cattle breeding for their livelihoods, and on rainfall for agriculture. In recent years, erratic rainfall has negatively impacted household food security and nutrition in the area and recurrent drought has ravaged the areas every other year. Most women in the districts do not have access to irrigation systems and lack agriculture inputs which, in turn, increase women's vulnerability to drought.

Noting these challenges, the JP RWEE used an integrated approach to enhance food security and nutrition in the implementing areas. Working in close collaboration with government stakeholders, rural women, traditional and religious leaders and men in the communities, awareness raising on nutrition and women's rights was carried out. along with practical training on improved agriculture practices, post-harvest control, management of local food reserves, and small-scale irrigation practices. As a result, an improvement in rural women's dietary diversity and consumption patterns was achieved. A survey conducted in October 2014 revealed the eating patterns of beneficiaries in Oromia and Afar. In Oromia, 87.6% ate three times a day, 10.2% ate twice a day, and 2% ate once a day. In Afar, only 39.9% ate three times a day, 34.1% ate twice a day, and 20.3% ate once a day. As a result of the trainings and livelihood activities provided by the JP RWEE, the eating patterns in both regions have improved. Currently, 90% of the beneficiaries in Oromia eat 3 times a day and 10% eat twice a day. In Afar, 55% now eat three times a day, 37% twice a day, and only 3% once a day.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, in Oromia the agricultural production has increased by 15%, while in Afar the agriculture productivity increased by just 5%. In Asboda and Boyna kebeles in Afar region there was increase in dairy production following the provision of cows through the programme.

Given the climatic vulnerability of the area, and its impact on food security, the programme also trained women on climate smart agriculture approaches (CSA). A training centre was established where technical demonstrations were provided in agricultural techniques to adapt to and mitigate against climate change, as well as to increase production and improve cooperative members' livelihoods. A partnership was established with the Adami Tulu Agriculture Research Centre, which aimed to promote the adoption of improved seeds and climate smart agricultural practices. Additionally, the research centre, in collaboration with the JP RWEE team, supported women in planting 3,044 different fruit trees (banana, avocado, papaya, apple, guava, orange, and mango) to diversify their diet and consumption patterns. As a result, the JP RWEE has developed a model site that helps local community and development partners, including the government, to learn from and replicate the model in other drought-prone areas.

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<sup>8</sup> Information obtained from the Mid-term evaluation and Year-end (2021) monitoring data collected through the Bureau of Agriculture in Oromia and Bureau of Pastoral and Agriculture Development in Afar.

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

The programme contributed to the implementation of good agricultural practices by providing technical support to beneficiaries. Accessing land and utilizing it to the fullest capacity had historically been challenging for most of the women beneficiaries. One of the main reasons for this is that agriculture extension services are provided by men and therefore often only target men, which makes women beneficiaries dependent on their husbands or neighbours for receiving information. Access to capacity building activities has been limited for most female-headed households. Responding to this limitation, the JP RWEE focused on increasing women beneficiaries' access to agricultural extension and advisory services. In turn, beneficiaries were enabled to use their lands effectively and enhance their productivity and source of income.

Through several activities, such as trainings, demonstrations, and experience sharing visits, the JP RWEE contributed to the improvement of beneficiaries' knowledge, skills, and practices on improved agricultural technologies. This has resulted in remarkable positive changes in production and productivity. In total, 64% of the beneficiaries accessed integrated agriculture services and inputs. Due to a strong level of cooperation and collaboration with government stakeholders, the planned target for rural women's households accessing these integrated agriculture services and inputs was surpassed. Beneficiaries gained knowledge and skills on: row/line planting; preparation of farmland; effective utilization of natural fertilizers/compost; search, harvest and preservation of water for irrigation techniques; cattle fattening techniques; preparation of nutritious food for families; techniques to sort and reserve harvested crops for sale, consumption, and emergency; use of pesticides and other techniques such as mixing crops (teff with beans) to preserve household food. Furthermore, beneficiaries were trained on regenerative agriculture, multipurpose tree seedlings production and plantation, soil and water conservation, agriculture, animal fodder and range land management. A total of 277 beneficiaries received 100 kg of seeds (carrot, cabbage, apple, wheat, maize, teff and onion) and different equipment (4 water pumps, 4 maize sheller, 4 power generators).

Beneficiaries were also provided with time and labour-saving technologies, such as milk processing machines, water pumps, maize sheller and beehives. In total, 842 women beneficiaries (642 in Oromia and 200 in Afar) accessed these time and labour-saving technologies. The equipment provided both enhanced their productivity and saved them time. For instance, the milk processing machines that were provided to the Yaya Gulele district enabled 550 of the most vulnerable, poor and illiterate women to increase their productivity and income through effective time and labour use. Previously, when using traditional milk processing techniques, it took women 6 hours to produce 1-2 kg of quality cheese and butter; now, it takes them less than 30 minutes. In total, the JP RWEE provided more than 100 milk processing equipment tools, including electric milk churners, lactometers, electrical cream separators, milk containers, manual mils churners, milk strainers, water filter cans, deep freezers, and hanging/weighing scales.

In the JP RWEE implementing districts, as in other areas of Ethiopia, the nutrition of women and girls is negatively impacted by social norms and practices. Men and boys usually get larger and better portions of food, whilst women (including pregnant and lactating women) and girls are expected to eat small portions or leftovers. The programme worked to create more equitable food consumption practices, giving priority to children and pregnant and lactating women. In-depth interviews with beneficiaries and stakeholders revealed that the successful work of the programme on changing these norms was considered a great achievement within the communities.<sup>9</sup>

As a result of trainings on post-harvest technologies, horticulture development, and improved crop production, more women have started utilizing improved production techniques. In Oromia, 25% of the targeted

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<sup>9</sup> 2018 Mid-term assessment; 2021 best practice assessment

beneficiaries have started to utilize improved production techniques (from a baseline of 2.3%); whilst in Afar only 5% of the targeted women have started utilizing them (from a baseline of almost 0%). Through the years, there was improvement in utilizing of improved production techniques. However, the growing improvement was hampered by the desert locust and floods that affected the region.

### **Output 1.2: Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves.**

In order to increase rural women's capacity to enhance and control their food security reserves, the JP RWEE supported capacity building trainings on household food reserves and management as well as increased access to innovative agricultural and food processing technologies. As a result, 40% of the women in Oromia and 15% of the women in Afar have increased access to and control over local food reserves. As a consequence of the droughts, floods and political unrest Ethiopia faced, the percentage of increase has been fluctuating over the years and the planned target in both regions was not achieved. In the years of political unrest, farmers faced delays in the supply of agricultural inputs, roads were blocked, and most rural villages have become hard to reach. On top of this, the natural disasters, climate change, floods and the desert locust outbreak affected the food reserves.

With the aim of enhancing local food security and production, beneficiaries are provided with revolving crop seedings. Similar to the revolving fund, the crop seeds will be borrowed by members of the RUSACCOs on a revolving basis. Beneficiaries who received crop seeds in the first round cultivated and returned the crop seeds (with added amount) to the RUSACCOs. The beneficiaries were then able to ensure their food security and repay an additional amount for a second cohort of beneficiaries to benefit from. This system is beneficial for two reasons: first, it is a way of ensuring food and nutrition security, and second, it promotes a culture of cultivating and saving.

Beneficiaries were also provided with agriculture inputs including fertilizers, improved seeds and loan facilities. The JP RWEE provided 400 kg of Urea fertilizers and 400 kg of NPS fertilizers to the Gellan Woreda, and 800 kg of Urea fertilizers and 800 kg of NPS fertilizers to the Adamy Tulu Woreda. As a result of the provision of trainings and agriculture inputs, rural women increased production to the extent that it now exceeds the requirements for household consumption, and they are now selling excess produce.

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

The programme supported 3,276 beneficiaries in Oromia and 333 beneficiaries in Afar (almost 70% of the beneficiaries) in diversifying their sources of income to two or more. Almost all the targeted beneficiaries now have access to one source of income (from agriculture and livestock rearing to petty trading). To achieve this, the JP RWEE used a cooperative system that involved community members mobilizing resources, especially financial, and distributing these among members on a rotating basis. Through this system, women were able to increase their economic autonomy.<sup>10</sup> Through the years, beneficiaries were able to save a total of US\$ 214,764 (9,664,380 ETB) in the two regions (in Oromia 8,629,380.00 ETB (US\$ 191,764) and in Afar 1,035,000.00 ETB (US\$ 23,000).

At the start of JP RWEE, most of the beneficiaries were housewives or mothers engaged in unpaid care activities in their households. Now, as a result of the various capacity building activities that took place under the programme (such as business management and savings trainings) and the experience sharing organized with other districts (e.g., Adami Tulu Jiddo Kombolocha with Dodola), women have become businesswomen and

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<sup>10</sup> Based on the mid-term evaluation conducted in 2018, 2021 best practice identification assessment and discussion with the beneficiaries on periodic monitoring visits.

entrepreneurs. This has helped them to diversify their business and income generation opportunities and significantly improve their incomes and livelihoods.

The resilience and sustainability of beneficiaries' businesses has been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, natural disasters (such as floods and desert locust) and the political crises in the Oromia and Afar regions. Despite all these challenges, beneficiaries have been able to sustain their businesses and make more profit by diversifying their sources of income. Over the course of the programme, beneficiaries were able to save and raise their capital ranging from US\$ 4,000 to US\$ 143,928.8 within their respective cooperatives. The range in the increase is wide due to differences in the lifetimes of cooperatives, saving capacities, and profit margins. The total capital of members from cooperatives in the Adami Tulu Jiddo Kombolocha, Dodola, and Yayya Gulale Woredas added up to 327,099,916 birr (US\$ 539,643.42) in October 2021. Whilst the aggregate savings in Oromia (8,629,380.00 ETB (US\$ 191,764) and Afar (1,035,000.00 ETB (US\$ 23,000) added up to a total of 9,664,380,00 ETB (US\$ 214,764).

As a result of this improved business and saving culture, rural women's livelihoods have improved. They are now able to buy stationary materials and send their children to school. Additionally, most beneficiaries who were unable to read and write have joined the adult literacy programme, which has helped them develop basic reading and writing skills critical for entrepreneurship.

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

The programme provided training to a total of 3,879 beneficiaries (3,279 beneficiaries in Oromia and 600 in Afar) on basic business skills, entrepreneurship, revolving fund management and principles of cooperatives. This training served as a guide for beneficiaries on how to conduct business, save money and diversify business options. Furthermore, 3,430 beneficiaries (2,964 in Oromia and 466 in Afar) received training on markets, Business Development Service (BDS) and cooperatives. This included training on animal fattening, dairy farming, poultry businesses, grain production and related agribusiness activities. As a result of the trainings, 2,095 women (1,771 in Oromia and 324 in Afar) received access to diversified market opportunities. Providing business development support, in addition to access to credit, has proven effective in overcoming barriers that had limited rural women's economic potential.

With regards to creating market linkages, beneficiaries were supported with market information (e.g., products in high demand, places, time of market), packaging techniques, and training on establishing market linkages. Women were able to sell their products at national, regional and district level exhibitions and at bazaars organized by the Federal Urban Job Creation and Food Security Agency. In addition to promoting and selling their products, they were also able to establish business linkages with similar businesses and entrepreneurs on these occasions. This enabled them to both generate more profit and create opportunities to share information and experience with likeminded business organizations. So far, 15 women's cooperatives with 3,280 members have benefitted from the market linkage activities, and six women agro-business cooperatives with 860 members have been linked to buyers.

A total of 48 (40 women and 8 men) Woreda experts and 84 (56 women and 28 men) RUSACCOs staff members also increased their skills to deliver training on basic business skills and entrepreneurship. In addition, 400 women Internally Displaced People (IDPs) improved their joint and individual business management skills through trainings and business development services delivered by Woreda experts. The initial target of 700 women was not achieved due to the COVID-19 regulations which restricted social gatherings and movements and, therefore, limited capacity building activities.



Through experience sharing and learning programmes, beneficiaries were exposed to national and specific regional level visits. The main aim of these visits to the different JP RWEE supported cooperatives was for beneficiaries to learn about business management and about how to overcome challenges. Similarly, through the South-South learning exchange conducted by the JP RWEE in October 2018, a learning opportunity between Ethiopian and Liberian rural woman was created. Rural businesswomen from Ethiopia were able to share their experiences on entrepreneurship with rural women from Liberia.

The above-mentioned achievements were the results of working in close collaboration with federal, regional and district level stakeholders. For example, government partners have, on different occasions, requested transportation and stationary equipment that facilitated the provision of services (e.g., trainings and monitoring visits) for beneficiaries.

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

As mentioned previously, to increase rural women's access to decent wage employment opportunities, the JP RWEE made use of the cooperative system that involved community members voluntarily pooling financial resources and distributing it to members on a rotating basis. It did so by using Rural Saving and Credit Cooperatives (RUSACCOs) to facilitate access to financial services for member-owned financial cooperatives. At the start of the JP RWEE, rural cooperatives already existed in the intervention areas. However, their operation, commitment, and effectiveness to serve the members and the community was very weak. Realizing the cooperatives' potential, the JP RWEE built on the existing cooperatives by providing capacity building training (on life skill, business management and saving), strengthening the membership system, and providing initial credit. Accordingly, 3,276 RUSACCOs members in Oromia and 333 RUSACCOs members in Afar have been engaged in income generating activities outside of the group cooperatives and have reported increased income due to engagement in different profitable business activities such as small-scale trade, beef-fattening, and selling fruit and vegetables.

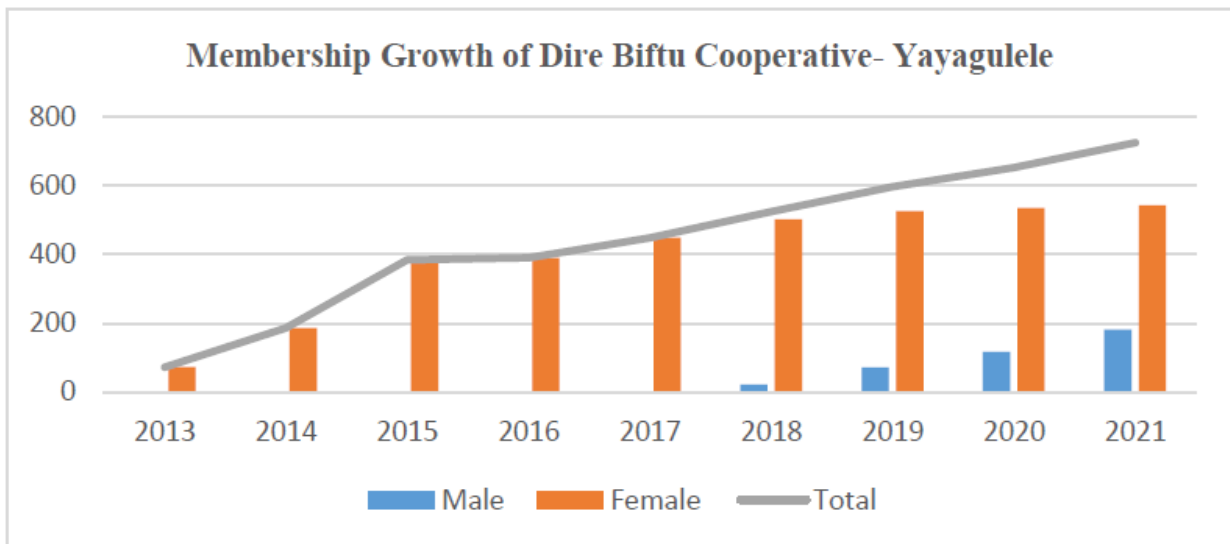
Access to loans, technical support, and strong follow-up enabled the rural women to start businesses and, in IDP settings, to become more successful in generating income in the host community.<sup>11</sup> Initially, a significant number of women were sceptical about the benefits of taking out loans for starting a business and were concerned about the possibility of not being able to repay those loans. Yet, supported through trainings and business engagement, they enhanced their confidence and started to apply for increasingly higher value loans. This is a clear indicator of women benefiting from managing their loans independently and enhancing their credit management skills. The JP RWEE also brought new opportunities for internally displaced women living in the Gelan and Sululta towns.

In total, 94% of the beneficiaries have benefited from gender-sensitive financial and non-financial services. The positive impact of these services can be observed through the significant increase in cooperative membership and the revival of the functionality of the cooperatives. Cooperatives developed strong managerial and financial capacities and have started providing the necessary support to members on credit and technical business support. This, in turn, has motivated rural women to join cooperatives, which explains the dramatic increase in cooperative membership since the start of the JP RWEE.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, almost all members of the RUSACCOs are JP RWEE beneficiaries, which explains why the number of RUSACCOs has increased beyond the planned numbers. In Oromia, the 12 existing RUSACCOs have 4,127 women members and 296 men members; whilst in Afar, the 6 RUSACCOs count 673 women members and no men members.

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<sup>11</sup> 2021 best practice identification assessment.

<sup>12</sup> The findings of independent consultants in mid-term evaluation conducted in 2018, 2021 best practice identification assessment.



**Table 6:** Increase in membership in JP RWEE through the years in Yaya Gulele Woreda

In addition to their individual income generating activities, beneficiaries were also reorganized in sub-group businesses in cattle and shoat fattening, milk processing, grain production, and in mill grinding services. The regrouping of beneficiaries was implemented through a participatory and interest-based system. This, in turn, helped to motivate beneficiaries to work effectively, reach more beneficiaries with technologies and other agricultural inputs, and create economies of scale. As part of their group businesses, women beneficiaries now also have a better opportunity to access technologies (e.g., improved seeds and fertilizers) and land through available government initiatives, and other service providers in the area.

Additionally, to increase the numeracy and literacy skills of targeted beneficiaries, the Integrated Functional Adult Literacy (IFAL) was implemented. As part of this programme, 1,748 JP RWEE beneficiaries from Oromia and 79 from Afar enrolled in the Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) program to improve their reading and writing. From these participants, 1,014 in Oromia and 34 in Afar are now able to read and write well. It has also helped them to use and operate technologies such as their mobile telephones effectively. Few of the women have dropped out from the FAL program due to different reason, but most of them have expressed their plan to continue what they have started.

Lastly, the JP RWEE’s positive impact on increased access to decent wage employment opportunities extended beyond the targeted beneficiary group to beneficiaries’ families and communities at large. As a result of increased incomes and economic opportunities, women were able to send their children to school and to support their husbands with household expenses.<sup>13</sup>

*“...I want my children to study their education. I am not an educated woman though I had a wish. I had no chance to be educated but I never wish my fate for my children. Yet my two sons had dropped out from school, and they were supporting family livelihoods. However, the JPRWEE enabled me to send them back to school”*

*A voice of women in Adami Tutlu, district*

<sup>13</sup> Findings of independent consultants in mid-term evaluation conducted in 2018, 2021 best practice identification assessment.

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

Under this outcome, a total of 3,508 women (85% of the beneficiaries) received training in leadership skills, assertiveness, and management skills. Through the different awareness raising and training sessions provided to the target groups and their spouses on topics such as women's rights, gender inequality, and decision making at the household level, household gender roles, such as decision making on expenditure, are now much more equal. Furthermore, 80% of the targeted women have been engaged in leadership, leading their RUSACCOs, agri-business cooperatives and local institutions.

Women in the targeted districts, as elsewhere in the country, have limited opportunity to exercise their rights. Their mobility and participation in community leadership is very low. Due to restricted social norms, women require their husbands' permission to participate in public life.<sup>14</sup> To overcome this barrier to participation, community conversations and men-only dialogues were organized in both the Oromia and Afar regions. The aim of these dialogues was to create awareness about gender equality, fair division of labour, and women's role in decision making. In turn, men discussed issues that are often ignored, such as gender equality and women's empowerment. The continuous discussion with men brought about significant changes, as some men have started to support their spouses in fencing, ploughing, weeding, harvesting, and storing of agriculture productions. Others are supporting their spouses in food preparation and childcare<sup>15</sup>. As a result of these changes, social norms that disempower women and girls were challenged. In addition to taking part and expressing their thoughts in meetings, women are now also taking on leadership positions in formal and informal positions, such as in cooperatives.

The programme also had a positive impact on women's agency. Rural women have become aware of their rights and developed capacities to express their needs and interests. Through increased income and integrated functional adult literacy (IFAL), beneficiaries' confidence in decision making has increased. This increase in confidence is witnessed through 18 women taking on leadership positions in RUSACCOs since the start of the JP RWEE.<sup>16</sup>

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

To contribute to enhancing rural women's confidence and leadership skills, the JP RWEE strengthened beneficiaries' leadership capacity to lead their institutions effectively and efficiently. Support was provided to 7,990 community members (6,246 women and 1,744 men) through individual level leadership trainings, exposure visits, CCs, and awareness creation campaigns conducted in both regions. Through these activities, 100% of the beneficiaries have strengthened their leadership, assertiveness and management skills. As a result, women cooperatives have become exemplary of vibrant women led organization that have successfully mobilized women and attracted community membership.

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

Women's cooperatives in the programme also started establishing sub-groups in which they support each other on social issues. Almost all cooperatives are now run by women leaders, and women are advocating for matters

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<sup>14</sup> This has been identified based on the discussion with regional and Woreda level stakeholders as well as the beneficiaries themselves.

<sup>15</sup> Findings of independent consultants in mid-term evaluation conducted in 2021 best practice identification assessment.

<sup>16</sup> This has been identified based on the discussion with regional and Woreda level stakeholders as well as the beneficiaries themselves.

that affect their lives through representation in the Kebele Aba Geda Council and in the Kebele Administration. In total, 14% of the cooperatives' membership are now leading RUSACCOs, agri-business cooperatives and local institutions. Representatives of the cooperatives work in close cooperation with government stakeholders, who conduct periodic monitoring visits and consultative workshops. This has created and strengthened a sense of ownership, accountability, and support. For instance, in the Adami Tulu Jiddo Kombolocha district, the Abdi Boru Fattening Cooperative managed to receive electric power through cooperation with government officials. Women achieved this result by pushing for their rights to work and enhance their activity. After a number of meetings with members of the cooperative, the *Kebele* Administration was convinced of the value of supplying electricity and provided the cooperative with electric power. This has significantly improved their activity, as it has facilitated access to animal fodder. Through this, the cooperative's sustainability is ensured whilst its productivity in the beef fattening business is enhanced.

In total, 48 institutions (38 from Oromia and 7 from Afar) are advocating on women's economic rights including their access to and control over land and other services and resources. Furthermore, 89% of the respondents from Oromia and 93% from Afar now believe that women should own and use financial income of households equal to men.<sup>17</sup>

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

A total of 4 regional dialogues (one in Afar and three in Oromia) were conducted to further strengthen rural women's capacity to engage in relevant policy forums, namely: Forum on Gender and Agricultural Mechanization; Women Forum in Oromia; Consultative Meeting in Afar region; and Free Legal Provision for Rural Women. Furthermore, 28 women participated in learning visits with successful cooperatives and individuals and improved their knowledge as a result. A total of 60 additional women cooperative leaders and members also participated in forums in which they learned from other successful women's experiences.

The community conversations have boosted beneficiaries' confidence and public speaking skills. Women are now represented in different formal and informal community leadership positions, for example, as representatives of women and peace affairs at Kebele level. They are able to partake in discussions and decisions that affect their lives at cooperative and community level. Through their representatives, the beneficiaries have channelled and voiced their demands/requests to the district administrators on several occasions and received support. For instance, in Dodola, after a long and bureaucratic process managed by the women, the Badhatu cooperative which has 402 women members in Bura Adele Kebele, received 1.5 hectares of land from the government for joint farming activities.

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

At the start of the JP RWEE, existing social norms tended to influence husbands' position on their wives' participation in public gatherings and trainings. They were often sceptical as they considered it to be threatening to their position at the household level. Recognizing this challenge, the JP RWEE engaged men in its gender awareness raising activities. As a result, a total of 17,246 beneficiaries (13,696 men and 3,550 women), including targeted women, their spouses, community leaders, selected community members, and members of women associations, developed positive attitudes towards gender issues and minimized their misunderstanding about women's economic rights. Now, women are supported by their spouses, as well as by the rest of the community, to attend trainings and take part in business activities.

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<sup>17</sup> End of the Year report obtained from Regional and Woreda agriculture, cooperative, women and children Affairs.

To achieve its goal of bringing sustainable social change at the household and community level, the programme used gender awareness raising campaigns and community conversations (CCs) which included both beneficiaries and their spouses. The main aim of these capacity building trainings was to create positive attitudes towards gender equality and women's empowerment issues. The CCs cultivated and improved the habit of discussion on different issues that were previously not discussed. This has created space for improved conversation at the household level, particularly on issues that affect the lives of the family such as resource control, cultivation, division of labour and parenting. An example of the significant positive change this has brought to the lives of women is found in Afar. At the start of the JP RWEE, women in Afar needed permission from either their clan leader or their husband to talk at CCs. This has changed over the course of the JP RWEE implementation, as the programme involved both men and women in the conversations. As a result, women participating in the programme in Afar can now freely express their needs and interests without having to request permission.<sup>18</sup>

The JP RWEE also contributed to improving intra-household power dynamics, and women have become actively involved in decision making on household resources and assets as a result of their economic contribution to the household. Men valued women's contribution to household incomes and, in turn, started valuing their voice in decision making. This represents a positive change in terms of norms around women's economic empowerment.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, with the aim of raising awareness on, and preventing the spread of, COVID-19, the JP RWEE provided sensitization training to 18,000 community members.

#### **Outcome 4: Gender Responsive Policy and institutional Environment**

At the national level, the programme worked with ministries to help create more gender responsive policies and strategies in key areas for rural women. Crucial to this aim of informing, influencing and reforming policies to include more gender responsive and women inclusive provisions and implementations was policy analysis.

A number of new or revised agricultural strategies, regulatory frameworks and standards were developed and incorporated gender mainstreaming. This included a gender mainstreaming training manual within the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA); guidelines on unpaid care work for government stakeholders and a gender sensitive cooperative strengthening manual for the Federal Cooperatives Agency (FCA); The JP RWEE also advocated for Land Compensation Regulation and succeeded in ensuring the incorporation of a gender sensitivity provision within the Regulation.

Furthermore, several relevant institutions incorporated gender equality related targets in their policies and programmes. Three sectoral ministries (Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education and Federal Cooperative Promotion Agency) incorporated gender related targets into their policies and plans, and this was cascaded to the targeted JP RWEE implementing regional and district institutions.

#### **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.**

Through workshops on gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting (GRB), gender and leadership, and revolving fund management, 1,434 experts (832 women and 602 men) of regional and district level Bureau of Women and Children Affairs (WCAs), Cooperative Promotion Agency (CPAs), Bureau of Agriculture

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<sup>18</sup> Findings of independent consultants in mid-term evaluation conducted in 2021 best practice identification assessment.

<sup>19</sup> Findings of 2021 best practice identification assessment.

(BoA), district and zonal administrations, and women associations enhanced their knowledge and skills to respond to the needs of rural women in the Afar and Oromia regions.

The JP RWEE, in cooperation with the Ministry of Urban Development and Construction and the Ethiopian Women's Land Rights Task Force (EWLRTF), advocated for the integration of legal provisions that protect the interests of women and vulnerable groups. To this end, it succeeded in identifying legal gaps and proposing solutions for policy makers. For example, the Ministry of Councils approved the inclusion of gender provisions in the land compensation regulation that the JP RWEE advocated for. These provisions include affirmative action, women's right to be informed about and access compensation, mandatory inclusion of women and vulnerable groups in consultative meetings, and pro bono services.

The JP RWEE also launched the 'Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Research Dissemination Forum'. The forum is an ongoing research presentation platform in which academics, researchers, practitioners, and institutions share their research findings on gender equality and women's empowerment. The forum also aimed to advocate and influence policies, legislations, and decisions through evidence-based research.

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

With the aim of making available research, laws and policies related to gender and land issues, the JP RWEE, in collaboration with the Ethiopian Women's Land Rights Task Force, developed a bibliography. The bibliography contains research, articles, journals, federal and regional laws, and policies related to women's land rights. The document serves as a database that shows the existing research and information for researchers and practitioners. It also pinpoints gaps in research and areas that require more analysis and investigation.

The Women Empowerment Agricultural Index (WEAI) was conducted in the JP RWEE implementing areas in 2017, with a specific focus on the Oromia region. The tool measures women's empowerment in agriculture and gender parity in empowerment within the household. Based on the findings, the local definitions of women's empowerment from the perspective of rural women and men in two of the JP RWEE implementing districts have been articulated. Men's and women's group discussions indicated that the ability to meet one's prescribed social roles was considered an important dimension of empowerment. For men, specifically, that entails providing for the family by meeting the family members' needs for food, clothing, shoes, education, and medication and, thus, improving the family's quality of life. The study also found that men and women who participate in a variety of income generating activities are considered empowered. For men, these income generating activities included crop production, cattle fattening, and wage employment. For women, these comprised selling local alcoholic drinks, vegetables, handcrafts, poultry products such as eggs and chicken, dairy products, and other petty trade. An article capturing these findings was published, entitled "Using qualitative methods to understand the local meaning of women's empowerment in Ethiopia."<sup>20</sup>

A numbers of gender responsive policy dialogues and documents have been produced. These documents include, but are not limited to:

- A rapid assessment and a policy brief on Gender and Agricultural Mechanization<sup>21</sup> that was published by the JP RWEE (UN Women), in collaboration with the Women Children and Youth Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), to highlight the need for enhanced gender responsiveness in agriculture mechanization policy, as well as to inform stakeholder programming in this sector.

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<sup>20</sup> The article can be accessed here: <https://gaap.ifpri.info/files/2017/12/Debevec-et-al-Local-definitions-of-empowerment-in-Ethiopia.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publication/2020/06/gender-and-agricultural-mechanization-policy-brief>

- The research on “Costing the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Ethiopia”, which is a joint initiative by UN Women Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO), UN Women Ethiopia, UNDP, UNEP, Poverty-Environment Initiative Africa, and Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resource (MoANR). A policy brief has been developed and was presented to the management of MoANR. The purpose was to get buy-in and ownership of the line ministries on the national-level policy dialogue in 2018, which aimed to influence the agriculture sector policies and strategies in the country.<sup>22</sup>
- An assessment on the ‘Actual benefit of land registration and certification for women: beyond the numbers’. The study aims to analyze the benefits women gain after receiving land certification. Based on the identified challenges to women benefiting from a land certificate, the research proposed strategies to advance project development. The research was conducted in close cooperation with the Women’s Land Rights Task force and the findings were disseminated widely, including to government and non-government partners.
- A gender mainstreaming training manual for the Ministry of Agriculture. The training manual identified gender gaps in the Ethiopian agriculture sector and proposed suggestions on how to integrate gender issues effectively.
- A Guideline on Unpaid Care Work, to be used by government institutions and CSOs working on unpaid care work, was developed with the support of the JP RWEE. As the issue of unpaid care work has not previously been on the policy agenda in Ethiopia, it explains the concept and activities that can be considered as unpaid care work and cites a few initiatives at the national level. The main aim of the document is to serve as a guide on how to initiate and implement unpaid care work activities at the community and organizational level.
- A Gender and Agricultural Mechanization Policy Brief which identifies the main gender gaps in the agriculture sector. The main aim of the policy brief is to inform policy and legal drafters on these gaps and propose solutions for improving the lives of women and vulnerable groups.
- The National Agricultural Policy has been drafted but is not yet finalized.

#### **Output 4.3: An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women’s priorities in regional policy processes**

The JP RWEE, aiming to ensure gender responsive agriculture sector policies, strategies, and programmes by using evidence-based advocacy, capacity building, knowledge and information sharing platforms, established the National Network for Gender Equality in Agriculture. The network consists of stakeholders drawn from MoWCA, OXFAM, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MoANR) with ongoing technical and financial support provided by UN Women and the previous Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. Since its official establishment in 2019, the network has served as an information and experience sharing learning forum. It is also aims to strengthen collaboration among stakeholders working on gender and agriculture, and to thereby also minimize duplications of efforts in this field.

The second vibrant network is the Ethiopian Women’s Land Rights Task Force. The main aim of the network is to advocate, influence and share information about women’s land right in Ethiopia. The JP RWEE is one of the active members of the task force and has been influencing policies and laws related to gender and land issues.

Lastly, a monthly ‘Research Dissemination Forum’ has been in place since December 2020. The main aim of the forum is to share information and learning on gender equality and women’s economic empowerment

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<sup>22</sup> <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/04/study-of-cost-of-gender-gap-eth>.

issues. In the forum, academics, students, experts, and project and government representatives have shared their research findings.

## **Qualitative assessment**

The JP RWEE was designed to address the interlinked aspects of gender inequality in an integrated and comprehensive manner. The programme consisted of focus areas such as capacity building, livelihood improvement, literacy and life skills, and technology transfer. The programme also focused on supporting gender mainstreaming within the relevant institutions/sectors to ensure better access to gender-responsive financial and non-financial services for rural women to engage in profitable businesses including agro-processing. Through its approach, the JP RWEE strived to deconstruct the existing biased gender norms within the community. For this reason, the programme worked with both rural women and partners, as well as the wider community.

The JP RWEE provided financial means to rural women by looking at individual cases, in terms of women's type of business and financial needs, instead of providing uniform loans to all women. Furthermore, preceding any kind of financial support, women were provided with basic business skills (BBS) and support in business plan development, as well as gender-sensitization for them and their spouses. Other measures included continuous community conversations, parallel capacity building for the stakeholders to promote the provision of gender-sensitive financial and non-financial services to women, and experience sharing visits between targeted women cooperative leaders and successful cooperatives in the country. These key approaches have been employed to ensure sustainability of impact and promote socioeconomic resilience.

At the start of the JP RWEE, a baseline survey was conducted which identified the specific challenges the targeted rural women in the two targeted regions (Afar and Oromia) faced. This included, amongst other challenges, limited access to financial services and non-financial services (including business development services) caused by the lack of gender-responsive financial services and limited networking and coordination between the relevant governmental sectors and actors identified. Other factors identified included weak institutional structures, weak capacity to support women, cooperatives, and micro-finance institutions, inability of government bureaus to properly integrate gender into financial and non-financial service delivery, and low numbers of women in the leadership of such institutions. To provide comprehensive support to the targeted women cooperatives, regional and district level steering committees as well as technical working groups were established in both regions. These district level steering committees are comprised of the heads of the district administration, heads of district level offices participating in the joint programme (such as the agriculture office), cooperative and women affairs offices, as well as district finance and economic development offices.

Through the interventions implemented by the JP RWEE, beneficiaries have been able to benefit from financial services and business development support. As a result, they are now making use of credit to strengthen their income generating activities, which include cattle fattening, dairy production, petty trades, small scale irrigation, and small ruminant rearing and fattening. The use of credit directly contributed to the realisation of the programme's outcome of increasing rural women's income to sustain their livelihoods through enabling them to access holistic income-generating facilities and gender-sensitive financial and non-financial services.

The women cooperatives that the JP RWEE has supported are not only a place of work, but also function as a place for establishing relations of solidarity amongst women and improving social capital. This is highly relevant in terms of increasing women's social inclusion and sense of belonging. By joining cooperatives,



both women's capacity to make strategic choices in their lives and their self-esteem and decision-making capabilities have increased.

The monitoring and evaluation of the programme was conducted in a participatory manner, in which UN agencies and government and non-government partners visited the beneficiaries and discussed the course of the programme. Acknowledging the benefits and achievements the JP RWEE has brought, government partners agree that the strategy and approach used by the programme is worth duplicating. The programme was carried out in close collaboration with local government as a direct implementing partner in the work with cooperatives. This has vastly increased the likelihood of sustainability of the work.

ii) **Indicator Based Performance Assessment:**

	<b>Achieved Indicator Targets</b>	<b>Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)</b>	<b>Source of Verification</b>
<b>Outcome 1: Rural women have improved food and nutrition security</b>			
<p><b>Indicator 1.1:</b> Frequency and composition of meals and dietary diversity among targeted women and family members</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b>  <i>Oromia:</i> 87.6% eat three times a day; 10.2% eat twice a day, and 2% eat once a day  <i>Afar:</i> 39.9% eat three times a day; 34.1% eat twice a day; 20.3% eat once a day</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b>  <i>Oromia:</i> 97% of the target in Oromia will eat three times a day with appropriate dietary diversity  <i>Afar:</i> 70% of the target in Afar will eat three times a day with appropriate dietary diversity</p>	<p>In Oromia 90% of the targeted beneficiaries eat 3 times a day and 10% eat two times a day.</p> <p>In Afar 55% eat three times a day, 37% eat two times a day and 3% eat once a day.</p> <p>Improvement of rural women dietary diversity and consumption patterns. Increase in agricultural production, including diversified activities such as fattening of cattle and small ruminants which impacts positively the consumption pattern with three meals per day among beneficiaries. Their children reenrolled to school.</p> <p>In Afar, traditional food/meals derive from livestock products. As a result of the JP RWEE interventions (trainings, demonstration workshops and etc.), beneficiaries started using vegetables and fruits for consumption which contributed to more nutritious dietary diversity.</p>	<p>The difference from the planned target occurred due to the political instability and natural disasters (e.g., floods, dessert locust)</p>	<p>End –year monitoring data collected through the Bureau of Agriculture in Oromia and Bureau of Pastoral and Agriculture Development in Afar</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.2:</b> Percentage increase in agricultural production of targeted women farmers (targeted households) in a sustainable manner</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b>  <i>Oromia:</i> 4.7%  <i>Afar:</i> 18.4%</p>	<p>In Oromia the agricultural production has increased by 15%.</p> <p>In Afar the agriculture productivity increased only 5%. In Asboda and Boyna kebeles in Afar region there is increase in</p>	<p>The production in Afar is very limited due to the desert locust and floods that affected the region to the greater extent.</p>	<p>End –year monitoring data collected through the Bureau of Agriculture in Oromia and Bureau of Pastoral and Agriculture Development in Afar</p>

<p><b>Planned Target:</b> Average 20% increase</p>	<p>dairy production following the provision of cows through JP RWEE.</p>		
<p><b>Output 1.1: Rural women have increased access to resources, assets, and services critical for their food and nutrition security</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.1</b> Percentage of targeted rural women/households accessing integrated agriculture services and inputs <b>Baseline:</b> <i>Oromia:</i> 15% <i>Afar:</i> none <b>Planned Target:</b> On average 30% of the targeted rural women</p>	<p>64% of the targeted rural women were able to access integrated agriculture services and inputs.</p>	<p>There was a strong cooperation and collaboration with government stakeholders that enabled JP RWEE to surpass the planned target.</p>	<p>Year-end monitoring data collected through the Bureau of Agriculture in Oromia and Bureau of Pastoral and Agriculture Development in Afar</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.3.</b> Percentage of targeted women utilizing improved production techniques <b>Baseline:</b> <i>Oromia:</i> 2.3% <i>Afar:</i> none as pastoralist community, women per se hardly improved production techniques <b>Planned Target:</b> Average 30% of the target women</p>	<p>After six years of JP RWEE, through trainings on post-harvest technologies, horticulture development, improved crop production there are improvements, in Oromia 25% of the targeted beneficiaries have started to utilize improved production techniques while in Afar only 5% of target women utilized them.</p>	<p>The planned target in both regions was not achieved due to the political unrest that was ongoing for years. On top of this, the natural disasters, climate change, flood and the desert locust outbreak affected the improved production techniques.</p>	<p>Year-end monitoring data collected through the Bureau of Agriculture in Oromia and Bureau of Pastoral and Agriculture Development in Afar</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.4.</b> Number of women provided with time and labor saving and agricultural productive technologies with access to necessary capacity building interventions <b>Baseline:</b> <i>Oromia:</i> None. <i>Afar:</i> None <b>Planned Target:</b> 1,500 women accessing technology and tools</p>	<p>842 women beneficiaries (642 in Oromia and 200 in Afar) accessed time and labor-saving technologies. The technologies include one tractor to the RUSACCO, hand operated cream separator, hand operated butter turner, aluminum milk container, deep freeze and cattle fattening</p>	<p>The planned target in both regions was not achieved due to the political unrest that was ongoing for years. On top of the challenge, COVID-19 epidemic has restricted social gatherings and meetings.</p>	<p>Year-end monitoring data collected through the Bureau of Agriculture in Oromia and Bureau of Pastoral and Agriculture Development in Afar. FAO</p>
<p><b>Output 1.2: Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves</b></p>			

<p><b>Indicator 1.1.1</b> Percentage of women with increased access and control over local food reserves</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> <i>Oromia:</i> 20.6% <i>Afar:</i> No control over local reserves due to depletion of household asset</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b></p>	<p>40% of the women in Oromia and 15% of the women in Afar have increased access and control over local food reserves.</p>	<p>The percentage of increase has been fluctuating during the years due to the drought, floods and political unrest in the country. Almost 40% of the planned 50% beneficiaries have increased access and control over local food reserves. The reason for not achieving 100% is because of the increase in number of beneficiaries from within and without the HHs.</p>	<p>Monitoring data collected through the Bureau of Agriculture in Oromia and Bureau of Pastoral and Agriculture Development in Afar and FAO</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2: Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 2.1:</b> Number of women with diversified income sources</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> <i>Oromia:</i> All targeted women (households) have one to two sources of income (agriculture and livestock) <i>Afar:</i> All targeted women (households) have one to two sources of income. Agriculture and livestock) And very few (14-16% engage in labor work like Food for work program and petty trade for subsistence life)</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 3 to 4 income sources for at least 67% of the target Woredas depending on the target areas</p>	<p>70% (3,276 beneficiaries in Oromia and, 333 beneficiaries in Afar) were able to diversify their source of income to two and more.</p> <p>While, almost all target beneficiaries have access to more than one source of income (from agriculture, livestock rearing and petty trading).</p>	<p>COVID-19 outbreak has limited businesses to the greater extent as movements, markets and social interaction was limited. This was worsened by the political instability in the country that destroyed numbers of businesses.</p>	<p>Data collected through Bureau of Women Children and Youth Affairs (BoWCAs) and CPAs Cooperative Promotion Agencies (CPAs).</p>
<p><b>Indicator 2.2:</b> Average annual income of the targeted women/household</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> US\$ 450 per annum</p>	<p>Since the start of JP RWEE in 2014, beneficiaries were able to save and raise their capital ranging from US\$ 4,000 to US\$ 143,928.8 within their respective cooperatives.</p>	<p>End-term evaluation has not been conducted and it is difficult to get the exact amount or estimate at the household level and per annum.</p>	<p>Monitoring data collected through the Bureau of Agriculture in Oromia and Bureau of Pastoral and</p>

<p><b>Planned Target:</b> US\$ 900.00 per annum for 70% of the target</p>	<p>Aggregate saving in Oromia region is 8,629,380.00 ETB (US\$ 191,764) and Afar region total saving amount is 1,035,000.00 ETB (US\$ 23,000). The total for the two regions is US\$ 214,764.</p>		<p>Agriculture Development in Afar and WFP.</p>
<p><b>Output 2.1: Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 2.1.1:</b> Number of targeted women getting access to diversified market opportunities (district and regional markets) for their goods /services <b>Baseline:</b> <i>Oromia:</i> None <i>Afar:</i> None <b>Planned Target:</b> At least 1,200 of the target women (2,000) got access to diversified/better market</p>	<p>In Oromia, 3,279 beneficiaries and in Afar 600 women have benefited from entrepreneurship and business skills training. Following the trainings 2,095 women (1,771 in Oromia and 324 in Afar) have got access to diversified market opportunities.  Beneficiaries were able to save a total of US\$ 214,764 (9,664,380 ETB) in the two regions. In Oromia region is 8,629,380.00 ETB (US\$ 191,764) and Afar region total saving amount is 1,035,000.00 ETB (US\$ 23,000).</p>	<p>Target overachieved due to high interest of women. The budget allocated for the purpose was used to train additional women (almost double), by organizing the trainings at the cooperative's centers, with very minimum cost, by reducing the budget allocated to train one woman by half and used the remaining half to train the additional ones.</p>	<p>Monitoring data collected through the Bureau of Agriculture in Oromia and Bureau of Pastoral and training/ monitoring report, SWAA-E</p>
<p><b>Indicator 2.1.2:</b> Number of target women with increased marketing skills of specific value chains Received BDS (counselling, coaching, cooperative formation etc.) <b>Baseline:</b> <i>Oromia:</i> 26 women received entrepreneurship and business skills trainings. Received BDS (counselling, coaching, cooperative formation etc.): 280 women <i>Afar:</i> 68 women received training on entrepreneurship and business skills <b>Planned Target:</b> 2,500 rural women (1,500 existing and 1,000 new)</p>	<p>3,430 beneficiaries (2,964 in Oromia and 466 in Afar) were able to enhance their skill about market, BDS and cooperatives.  Training included animal fattening, dairy farm, poultry business, grain production and related agribusiness activities with improved, networking and linkages among themselves and with Urban women cooperatives, business knowledge and entrepreneurship skills.</p>	<p>Target achieved</p>	<p>Data collected through BoWCAs, and CPAs.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 2.1.3:</b> Number of trained woreda experts and RUSACCOs staff with increased skills to deliver training on basic business skills and entrepreneurship  <b>Baseline:</b> None  <b>Planned Target:</b> 24 staff (18 from woreda IPs offices and 6 RUSACCOs hired staff)</p>	<p>48 (8 men and 40 women) Woreda Experts and 84 (56 female and 28 Male) RUSACCOs staff trained.</p>	<p>Given the high turnover rate at Woreda level, the training provided exceeded the planned target.</p>	<p>Data collected through BoWCAs, and CPAs.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 2.1.4:</b> Number of Rural Women groups/cooperatives with access to better market  <b>Baseline:</b> None  <b>Planned Target:</b> 12 women cooperatives with at least 2400 members (ten previous RUSACCOS and two new ones)</p>	<p>15 women cooperatives with more than 3,280 members have got access to diversified market opportunities.</p>	<p>Following the high demand from beneficiaries and government partners, the numbers of women benefiting from cooperatives have increased and this has a direct effect on the increase of women with better market access.</p>	<p>Data collected through BoWCAs, and CPAs.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 2.1.5:</b> Number of targeted rural women/girls in agribusiness enterprises /cooperatives with improved joint business management skills  <b>Baseline:</b> None  <b>Planned Target:</b> 700 rural women (400 female IDPs and 300 women from</p>	<p>400 IDP women have improved their joint and individual business management skills through trainings and business development services by Woreda experts.</p>	<p>The difference from the planned target is due to COVID-19 restriction in social gathering and movements, that limited the capacity building activities.</p>	<p>Data collected through BoWCAs, and CPAs.</p>
<p><b>Output 2.2: Rural women access to holistic income-generating facilities and to gender-sensitive financial and non-financial services increased</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 2.2.1:</b> Percentage of targeted women in the targeted SACCOS (cooperatives) benefitting from gender-sensitive financial and non-financial services  <b>Baseline:</b>  <i>Oromia:</i> Women benefitted financial services 38.2%. The financial</p>	<p>94% of the beneficiaries have benefited from gender sensitive financial and non-financial services.   1,748 beneficiaries from Oromia and 79 from Afar have been enrolled in Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) Program. Out of this number 1,014 in Oromia and 34</p>	<p>The high demand from beneficiaries and government partners has facilitated the increase numbers of women benefiting than the planned target.</p>	<p>Data collected through BoWCAs, SWAAE and CPAs.</p>

<p>services found to be gender insensitive. 280 women received Functional Adult Literacy: 200 women <i>Afar:</i> None <b>Planned Target:</b> 80% of the target women</p>	<p>beneficiaries in Afar can read and write well. It has also helped them to use and operate technologies such as their mobile telephones effectively.</p>		
<p><b>Indicator 2.2.2:</b> Number of women engaged in profitable IGA <b>Baseline:</b> Almost all women have engaged in subsistence kind of business <b>Planned Target:</b> 600 of the targeted women</p>	<p>3,276 in Oromia and 333 in Afar beneficiaries are engaged in Income Generating Activities besides working in group cooperatives.</p>	<p>Interest of most women beneficiaries were to get an access to finance and engage in different IGA activities. Due to this, JP RWEE has allocated and re-programed a huge amount of fund for revolving fund that brought these results.</p>	<p>Data collected through BoWCAs and CPAs.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies, and programmes</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 3.1.1:</b> Number of women with improved leadership, assertiveness, and management skills <b>Baseline:</b> <i>Oromia:</i> No woman in leadership position <i>Afar:</i> Only in their self-help groups /women SACCOS <b>Planned Target:</b> 10% of the target women will be participating in leadership and decision making in rural institutions including RUSACCOS and community-based organization</p> <p><b>Indicator 3.1.2:</b> Number of regional dialogue mechanisms on agriculture, rural development and land that involve rural women's groups <b>Baseline:</b> None</p>	<p>80% of the women are leading their agro-business cooperatives, RUSACCOS, represented in Kebele Aba Geda council, (as secretary), in the kebele administration etc.</p> <p>4 regional dialogues (one in Afar and three in Oromia) have been conducted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forum on Gender and Agricultural Mechanization.</li> </ul>	<p>Based on the monitoring visit conducted to JP RWEE implementing woredas and it was disclosed that most of the RUSACCOS are led by women.</p> <p>It was conducted as planned.</p>	<p>Based on year-end monitoring data collected through BoWCAs, Implementing partners, and CPA.</p> <p>Report from MoWCA, Federal Cooperative Agency, proceeding of the programme review meeting</p>

<p><b>Target: 4</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women Forum in Oromia</li> <li>• Consultative meeting in Afar region.</li> <li>• Free legal provision for rural women</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Indicator 3.1.3:</b> Proportion of targeted rural women jointly deciding on household resources and matters</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b>  <i>Oromia:</i> Almost non except in their self-help groups /cooperatives  <i>Afar:</i> Almost non except in their self-help groups /cooperatives</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 60% of the target women will have equal say on HH resources and matter</p>	<p>100% have strengthened their leadership, assertiveness and management skills and leading their cooperatives</p> <p>Almost all (100%) of the target women have equal say on HH resources and matter.</p>	<p>Male engagement activity has been done continuously that has brought significant change in joint decision making at the household level.</p> <p>The different awareness raising, and training sessions provided for the target groups and their spouses, on gender, gender equalities, decision making at HH and different levels, and its benefits, the experience shared among the target groups on the issue during different discussion sessions had brought the target group on almost equal position on jointly deciding on household resources and matters.  No women reported husband dominated HH decision</p>	<p>Data collected through BoWCAs, SWAAE and CPAs.</p> <p>Monitoring/ review meetings conducted with the target groups on which each woman and some of their spouses shared experience on the joint decision making.  Final documentation on best practices and lessons from JP RWEE</p>
<p><b>Indicator 3.1.4:</b> Proportion of targeted rural women participating in decision making in rural institutions and communities</p> <p><b>Output 3.2:</b> Rural women have greater organizational capacities to</p>	<p>14% of the target women have been engaged in leadership (leading their RUSACCOs and agri-business cooperatives as well as local institutions)</p> <p>18 women have filled positions of leadership in RUSACCOs</p>	<p>More than 14 % of the target women have managed to take leadership positions through their cooperatives and local institutions such as Kebele Gada Council in rotational basis.</p>	<p>Data collected through BoWCAs, SWAAE and CPAs.</p> <p>SWAAE Periodic Report and Monitoring reports.</p>



<p>form, sustain and participate in POs, cooperatives and unions</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b>  <i>Oromia:</i> only in their self-help groups/women SACCOs  <i>Afar:</i> only in their self-help groups/women SACCOs</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 10% of the target women will be participating in leadership and decision making in rural institutions including RUSACCOs and community -based organization</p>			
<p><b>Output 3.1: Rural women, including young women, have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 3.1.1:</b> Number of institutions and communities advocating for women and girls’ economic rights</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b>  <i>Oromia:</i> 2 women cooperatives per Woreda.  <i>Afar:</i> 2 women cooperatives per Woreda</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> At least 3 cooperative unions and 16 cooperatives (both led by women and men) and 50% of the family members of the targeted women</p>	<p>48 institutions (38 from Oromia and 7 from Afar) are advocating on women economic rights including their access and control over land and other services and resources. They are women-led cooperatives and Woreda institutions.</p>		<p>UN Women and Monitoring report</p>
<p><b>Indicator 3.1.2:</b> Number of community members (by sex) whose misunderstanding /misconception on gender issues and women’s economic rights minimized</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> There is a misunderstanding of gender and women right’s issues in targeted areas</p>	<p>93.4% the target community minimized their misunderstanding/misconceptions of gender issues and women’s economic rights.</p>	<p>There is an increase achievement than the planned, due to the continuous community dialogue conducted in JP RWEE implementing Woredas.</p>	<p>Monitoring visit and SWAA-E report.</p>

<b>Planned Target:</b> 80% of the target community (both male and female)			
<b>Indicator 3.1.3:</b> Number of women with improved leadership, assertiveness, and management skills <b>Baseline:</b> <i>Oromia:</i> 10% of the target (SACCO committee members) <i>Afar:</i> None <b>Planned Target:</b> 65% of the target will have better skill and confidence	85% (3,508) women have strengthened their leadership, assertiveness and management skills and leading their cooperatives.	The greater achievement than the plan is due to intensive work on capacity building including exposure visit between cooperative leaders, linkages and interaction with successful role mode urban based cooperatives and different trainings on leadership and cooperative management with payment of less DSA than initially planned it was managed to surpass the plan.	Periodic reports from SWAEE and BOWCY
<b>Output 3.2: Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions</b>			
<b>Indicator 3.2.1:</b> Number of informal rural women’s groups who join formally registered POs, cooperatives and unions <b>Baseline:</b> N/A <b>Planned Target:</b> N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Indicator 3.2.2:</b> Number of POs, cooperatives and unions that adopt a gender policy/strategy and/or a women’s quota for their board <b>Baseline:</b> N/A <b>Planned Target:</b> N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Output 3.3: Rural women, including young women, have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels</b>			
<b>Indicator 3.3.1:</b> Number of rural women that participated in the learning visits and have strengthened their knowledge <b>Baseline:</b> None in both Oromia and Afar regions <b>Planned Target:</b> 40 rural women	28 women have participated in learning visits with successful cooperatives and individuals and have improved their knowledge as result.  60 additional women cooperative leaders and members have also participated in	The number of women who participated in learning visits was lower than planned. However, the gap was filled with exchange of learning and knowledge between the women who have visited within their respective cooperatives.	SWAAE Periodic Reports and BOWCY Reports

	forums that helped them get experiences from other successful women		
<b>Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment</b>			
<p><b>Indicator 3.4.1:</b> Number of community members whose misunderstanding/misconception on gender issues and women's economic rights minimized</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> There is a misunderstanding of gender and women right's issues in targeted areas</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 11,200 of the target community (both men and women)</p>	<p>17,246 (13,696 men and 3,550 women) including targeted women, their spouses, community leaders and selected community members and members of women associations developed positive attitude towards gender issues and their misunderstanding about women's economic rights changed.</p> <p>The JP RWEE has provided sensitization training for 18,000 community members</p>	N/A	N/A
<b>Outcome 4: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women</b>			
<p><b>Indicator 4.1:</b> Number of new/revised agricultural strategies, regulatory frameworks and standards which mainstreamed gender</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> There is one agricultural policy which is gender sensitive at national level</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 3 (one gender responsive policy, one gender mainstreaming strategy and one implementation guideline the same cascaded to the target regions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender mainstreaming training manual at MOA has been developed.</li> <li>• Guideline on unpaid care work for government stakeholders.</li> <li>• Gender sensitive Cooperative Strengthening Manual of Federal Cooperatives Agency (FCA) has been developed.</li> <li>• JP RWEE has advocate Land Compensation Regulation and succeeded in incorporating gender sensitivity provision.</li> </ul>	All the planed revision and new draft strategies and regulatory frameworks has been developed.	Report from Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Agricultural Transformation Agency, and UN Women.
<p><b>Indicator 4.2:</b> Number of relevant institutions incorporated gender equality related targets in their policy and programs</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> TBD</p>	3 sectoral ministries (Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education and Federal Cooperative Promotion Agency have been incorporating gender related targets in their policies and plans. The	Achieved as planned	Report of MOA, MOWCY, BOWCY, Report of Cooperative Promotion Agency

<p><b>Planned Target:</b> 3 sectoral institutions (Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Ministry of Education (Integrated functional adult literacy program and manual) and Federal Cooperative Agency</p>	<p>same is being cascaded to the target regional and woreda institutions.</p>		
<p><b>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</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 4.1.1:</b> Number of experts and officials in agriculture cooperative and other institutions whose capacity increased to conduct gender analysis and integrate gender sensitive indicators and targets in planning and budgeting <b>Baseline:</b> TBD <b>Planned Target:</b> 624 experts and government officials working in agriculture, cooperative and other government institutions</p>	<p>1,434 (832 women and 602 men) experts of regional and district level BoWCAs, CPAs, BoAs, district and zonal administrations, women associations enhanced their knowledge and skills to respond to the needs of women beneficiaries in Afar and Oromia regions through workshops, gender mainstreaming and GRB, Gender and, gender and leadership trainings and on revolving fund management.</p>	<p>Overachieved</p>	<p>Report from MoWCA, Federal Cooperative Agency, proceeding of the programme review meeting.</p>
<p><b>Output 4.2: Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 4.2.1:</b> Number of countries where the women’s empowerment in agriculture index is piloted <b>Baseline:</b> <b>Planned Target:</b> To have a gender responsive national Agricultural Policy</p>	<p>The JP RWEE piloted Pro-WEAI. The agreement was signed between IFPRI Washington and FAO HQ for the period 2015 – 2020. An impact evaluation process has been started with a collection of baseline quantitative data in 2017 followed by qualitative data in 2018 and mid-line quantitative data collection in 2019. Final report preparation is in progress by the team in HQ and FAOET, it is expected to be ready in the first quarter of 2022.</p>		<p>FAO</p>
<p><b>Indicator 4.2.1:</b> Availability of evidence-based research and actions to inform policy development/revision, to better integrate gender equality in key</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID-19 pandemic rapid assessment was conducted.</li> </ul>		<p>data from BoWCYAs and Rural Land Administration and Use Directorate under Ministry of Agriculture.</p>

<p>sectors strategy and investment framework</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> Only national level Preliminary Gender Profile</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 3 policy advocacy-oriented research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A rapid assessment and a policy brief on Gender and Agricultural Mechanization<sup>23</sup> is published.</li> <li>• The research on “Costing the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Ethiopia” is conducted.</li> <li>• Research on The Actual Benefit of Land Registration and Certification for Women: Beyond the Numbers has been conducted.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Indicator 4.2.2:</b> Gender Analysis of the National Agricultural policy</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b></p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> To have a gender responsive National Agricultural Policy</p>	<p>The National Agricultural Policy has been drafted but not finalized.</p>	<p>The policy must be owned and led by Ministry of Agriculture. Though, it has been drafted, it is taking years as it needs approval at various stages.</p>	<p>Ministry of Agriculture and UN Women.</p>
<p><b>Output 4.3: An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women’s priorities in regional policy processes</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 4.3.1</b> Number of regional dialogue mechanisms on agriculture, rural development and land that involve rural women’s groups</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 1</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 2 dialogue forums</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A monthly ‘Research dissemination Forum’ has been established starting from December 2020. The main aim of the forum is to share information and learning on gender equality and women economic empowerment issues. In the forum, numbers of academicians, students, experts, project, and government representatives have shared their research finding and have taken part in the session.</li> <li>• Every two weeks the Ethiopian Women’s Land Rights Task Force is conducting a meeting on laws and policies in the agriculture sector that affect the rights of women.</li> <li>• The National Network for Gender Equality in Agriculture was established. The network consists of stakeholders drawn from MoWCA, OXFAM, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with ongoing technical and financial support provided by UN Women and the previous Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. Since its official establishment in 2019, the network is serving as an information and experience sharing learning forum.</li> </ul>		

<sup>23</sup><https://africa.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publication/2020/06/gender-and-agricultural-mechanization-policy-brief>

### iii) Evaluation, Best Practices and Lessons Learned

#### Evaluation

The 2018 mid-term evaluation informed the JP RWEE on the programme's key achievements and challenges that needed to be addressed. It was used to make informed decisions on a number of areas for improvement, for example, such as a lack of strong engagement of activities for men. Based on the identified gap, stronger men engagement activities were designed; men in the community were invited to take part in community conversations and men-only dialogues on the issues of gender equality and women empowerment were organized. As a result of these initiatives, men started to understand the benefits of empowering women and, as an example, started supporting their partners in household chores. Similarly, after the COVID-19 pandemic, a rapid assessment was conducted to assess the challenges, coping mechanism and lessons learned from beneficiaries and stakeholders. This helped the JP RWEE analyse the situation and strategize how to continue implementing the programme effectively. Due to the political crisis Ethiopia is facing and restricted movements during COVID-19, an end-term survey has not been conducted. To fill this gap, a qualitative assessment which identifies the achievements, challenges and proposes a way forward was conducted in November 2021.<sup>24</sup>

A rapid assessment that was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic to assess challenges, coping mechanisms and lessons learned from beneficiaries and stakeholders. This has helped the programme to analyse the situation and strategize on how to implement the project effectively in the evolving context.

#### Challenges

The JP RWEE in Ethiopia faced several external challenges over the course of the programme. The political unrest the country faced, natural disasters (floods, droughts, and extreme desert locust infestations), and the COVID-19 pandemic challenged and delayed implementation. For example, women farmers in the implementation areas faced recurrent drought and, as a result, lost crops which negatively impacted the results. However, both women farmers and government stakeholders strongly believe, and reported, that the JP RWEE women beneficiaries were better equipped to cope with the drought, which is a strong indication that JP RWEE has built the resilience capacity of rural women.

Rural women's demand for improved farm inputs and business expansion was also increased. However, the supply of inputs and credit services has not been sufficient to meet this raised demand. Instead, the 2021 qualitative study emphasized the need for increasing women's savings in order to uplift cooperatives' financial capacity and meet the demand for credits.

Another challenge has been the consistent joint delivery of the programme. Given the limited number of human resources assigned, the high turnover rate and competing priorities, it has been difficult to monitor the project as planned. The implementation of the planned quarterly joint monitoring visits by all UN agencies and government partners, it proved challenging to achieve at times.

Another challenging factor has been the significantly different regional contexts in Oromia and Afar in terms of social, cultural, economic, and geographical factors. For example, the targeted rural women in Afar are pastoralists whereas those targeted in Oromia are purely agrarians. Furthermore, the Afar region also faces minimal infrastructural facilities, limited human capacity and harsh weather conditions when compared to Oromia. To address these regional differences, activities were tailored towards the specific contexts of the two

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<sup>24</sup> The findings are under analysis at the time of report submission.

regions in both the planning and implementation phases of the JP RWEE. However, results have been significantly different for the two regions.

## **Lessons Learned**

One of the JP RWEE's key learnings has been that joint programming requires time, especially in the initial phases when inter-agency coordination for the efficient use of resources and expertise is required. However, in the long term, the results are sustainable. Synergy amongst different actors (UN agencies, government organizations, local level community organizations and CSOs) strengthened the efficient use of resources and created a sense of ownership. As indicated by the global final evaluation, another crucial factor for the programme's sustainability in Ethiopia has been the investment in partnerships with regional governments for coordination and joint delivery. The programme's approach of working through local government extension workers and structures ensured continued support and supervision throughout the period in which COVID-19 restrictions limited travel for JP RWEE participating agency staff.

Furthermore, the promotion of a savings culture stands out as a successful programme methodology. Due to increased savings, most beneficiaries have been able to withstand the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions. Prior to programme participation, a savings culture, nor the ability to save, did not exist among the cooperative members. Yet, as a result of this savings culture, beneficiaries indicated that they have now developed the confidence and the means to manage difficult situations within their businesses and families.<sup>25</sup>

Another lesson learned is the importance of market-oriented agricultural extension services for improving farmers' capacities for quality production, proper harvesting, preservation techniques, and value additions to meet the end market demand for quality products.

Lastly, strong engagement of men is a lesson identified. To ensure the sustainability of women's empowerment in the community, men need to be included in the discussions. By doing so, the JP RWEE has challenged and changed long-standing attitudes towards women's capacity and, in turn, men have become agents of change in the empowerment process.

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<sup>25</sup> Findings of 2021 best practice identification assessment.

#### iv) Success Story

Mr. Hussen, a beneficiary's husband, has shared his story on how the project has brought him positive behavioural changes in terms of supporting his wife's empowerment.

*"... I thought that I have full control on my wife. I used to believe it is a husband's duty to guide and command his wife's life. For this reason, I was the only one who used to pass decision for her and the family. I also believed that a wife must be at home, caring for the children. I used to limit my wife's activities and participation outside home. As I have only seen men taking part in public activities and never thought women, and particularly my wife, will be able to take part in public activities.*

*My thoughts and beliefs start to fade after the community dialogue we had with the JP RWEE. Starting from that day, I started to question my beliefs and I helped me to open my mind. Gradually it changed how I perceive and understand about women's participation and its importance. After she started participating in business activities, she was supporting me in household expenses. We were able to send our children to school and our life changed significantly. Now, I have realized that I am the first person to benefit from my wife's empowerment. I have changed my mindset and she is one of the leading active participants in our district cooperative beside running her own business. She has also travelled to USA, New York for JP RWEE experience sharing programme. During that time, I was taking care of the children until her return. Had it not been for JP RWEE, I would never allow her to do what she is doing now."*



Photo 1: Mr. Hussen, JP RWEE beneficiary husband at Adami Tulu Woreda