



Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment



Context

Rural women are key agents for achieving the transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. But limited access to credit, health care and education are among the many challenges they face, which have been further aggravated by recent economic and food crises, and climate change. Ensuring their empowerment is key not only to the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Programme overview

The Joint Programme “Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women” (JP RWEE) is a global initiative of FAO, IFAD, WFP, and UN Women, whose overarching goal is to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development.

Jointly implemented since 2014 thanks to the generous contributions of Sweden and Norway in **Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger, and Rwanda**, the JP RWEE builds on each Agency’s comparative advantage and institutional strengths in order to reach four interrelated outcomes:

- Improved food and nutrition security;
- Increased income to sustain livelihoods;
- Enhanced participation in decision-making; and
- More gender-responsive policy environment.

Key results

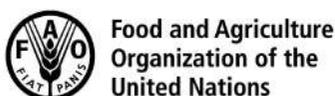
The programme has reached **over 49,000 women** and **315,000 members** of their families through a comprehensive “package” of sequenced interventions to support women’s empowerment. Some of the key results achieved so far include:

- **103 %** average increase in agricultural production
- **Over USD 1.8 million** generated from sales;
- **81 % of supported POs** led by women or with women in key leadership positions;
- Over **16,000 women organized in saving groups**;
- **2,000 government officials** at all levels with enhanced skills on gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive budgeting, and women’s rights;
- National governments of Guatemala, Ethiopia and Nepal supported for the development and implementation of **gender policies** in the agricultural sector;
- Engagement in **key policy forums** on rural women’s rights.

Recent country evaluations also highlighted the contribution of the JP to the Agenda 2030 and several SDGs, including SDG 1 - “No poverty”, SDG 2 - “End Hunger”, SDG 5 - “Gender Equality”, SDG 8 - “Decent Work and Economic Growth”, and SDG 17 - “Partnership for the Goals”.

Way forward

1. **Consolidate** results achieved;
2. **Systematize** and share knowledge;
3. **Scale-up and replicate** in other countries.



Lessons learned and success stories



Why is it working?

- The JP RWEE offers integrated, **holistic support** to tackle structural gender inequalities that prevent many women and girls from realizing their economic rights and autonomy.
- Each participating UN Organization is building on its **comparative advantages**.
- **Same beneficiaries** and target areas to maximize impact.
- **Active engagement of men** to support gender equality.
- Creation and formalization of **women's groups** to promote collective action and economic activities.
- **National ownership** of activities through regular involvement of local governments.
- **South-South cooperation** and exchanges on good practices and lessons learnt among country teams.
- Inclusion of **climate resilient agricultural techniques** in training.
- Access to **financial services** to unleash the productive potential of vulnerable women.
- Inclusive governance structure that ensures smooth implementation and **sustainability**.
- **Dedicated staff** (national and global coordinators) to ensure programme-wide coherence and impact.
- Potential to **replicate the successful model** in other countries.

Voices from the field

"The benefit that we all gained from the Programme is enormous. We are now actively engaged in discussing different issues that concern our wellbeing as well as social and economic development." Asnaku, Ethiopia

"The life of the (DIMITRA) clubs has brought us a great change and relief, as we have understood many things that improve our health. Even the women who are not part of the club enjoy its benefits because they are aware of everything that others do, see the change in other women and get inspired." Malam Koira, Niger

"The support I received from the JP RWEE has impacted my life positively. Now, I feel stronger and more committed to my community and family; I also know that my opinion is valid and should be taken into account." Olga, Guatemala

"What surprised us is that the programme touched issues that seemed to be very serious and almost unreachable for us, such as development strategies, and equal rights and opportunities." Zamira, Kyrgyzstan

"Before, we were not allowed to step out of our homes even for a short period of time. Things are changing. Now, men are supporting and even encouraging us to spend quality time outside." Chanda, Nepal

"I have become an inspiration for other participants, as I show them how things can work out if you invest in your business." Drocella, Rwanda



For further information, please contact:
Azzurra Chiarini—JP RWEE Global Coordinator
azzurra.chiarini@wfp.org
<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/RWF00>

May 2019