

“ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL
WOMEN”

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2019

<p>Programme Title & Project Number</p> <p>Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal</p> <p>MPTF Office Project Reference Number: 00092004</p> <p>Participating Organization(s):</p> <p>FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP</p>	<p>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</p> <p>Nepal: Five Municipalities and five Rural Municipalities from two local units Sarlahi and Rautahat</p> <p>Sarlahi: Rural Municipalities: Chandranagar, Brahmpuri, Basawariya, and Dhankaul Municipalities: Bagmati and Barahathwa</p> <p>Rautahat: Rural Municipalities: Yamuna Mai Municipalities: Gujara, Brindaban, and Rajpur</p> <p>Direct Beneficiaries (2019): 2,333 women</p> <p>Indirect beneficiaries (2019): In this reporting period, 10,031 family members (estimated)¹ of the 2,333 rural women and 38 local elected representatives were reached.</p> <p>The strategic result is to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the SDGs</p>
<p>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total budget as per project document: US\$ 2,377,774</p> <p>MPTF Contribution: US\$ 2,377,774</p> <p>Government Contribution: Not applicable Other Contributions (donors): Not applicable</p>	<p>Implementing Partners</p> <p>Government: Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) in close coordination with municipality and rural municipality at the local level</p> <p>Civil Society: Equal Access International (EAI), Support Activities for Poor Producers of Nepal (Sappros Nepal)</p>
<p>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p> <p>Assessment/Review - if applicable please attach <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy</p>	<p>Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration: Eight years (extended)</p> <p>Start Date: <i>15 October 2012</i> (This is a starting date of the global JP RWEE. The JP RWEE in Nepal started in March 2015)</p> <p>End Date (Original): <i>31 October 2017</i> End Date (Extended): <i>31 December 2021, subject to subsequent signing the Addendum</i></p> <p>Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name: Mio Yokota ○ Title: Programme Specialist/Unit Head ○ Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women ○ Email address: mio.yokota@unwomen.org

¹ The average size of a household in Nepal is 5.3 persons per household. The number of indirect beneficiaries was calculated by multiplying 2,333 direct beneficiaries by 5.3 and subtracting 2,333 (representing the number of JP RWEE’s direct beneficiaries)

List of Acronyms

ADS	Agriculture Development Strategy
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JP RWEE	Joint Programme for Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women
MoALD	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
MPTF	Multi Partner Trust Fund
Mt.	Metric Tons
NPR	Nepali Rupee
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
US\$	United States Dollar
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WFP	World Food Programme

NARRATIVE REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Joint Programme “Accelerating Progress Toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal: A Joint Pilot Contributing to Implementation of the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) in Nepal” (JP RWEE) aims to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights. The programme is currently being implemented in Sarlahi and Rautahat districts of Province 2 under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) of the Government of Nepal.

The JP RWEE implementation in Nepal started in 2015 in three districts (Sindhuli, Sarlahi and Rautahat) with 3,622 rural women. Due to financial constraint, the geographic coverage was narrowed down to two districts (Sarlahi and Rautahat) in July 2018 with the approval of the work plan for 2018/2019. At present, the programme is being implemented in Sarlahi and Rautahat districts covering 2,333 rural women farmers as beneficiaries. This annual report summarizes key progress and achievements of the JP RWEE from 1 January to 31 December 2019.

Out of the total 11 programme output indicators, six have either been achieved or are on track. Out of remaining five, four indicators have exceeded their respective targets and one indicator where the progress is not reported in this reporting period will be reported in the bi-annual report of 2020. Out of seven outcome indicators, six have exceeded the targets. The remaining one indicator which has not made any progress will be reported in the bi-annual report of 2020². The key milestones of the JP RWEE by outcome are as follows:

Outcome 1: Improved food and nutrition security

In 2019, 2,333 rural women in two districts (1,142 in Sarlahi 1,191 in Rautahat) continued to benefit from JP RWEE’s technical and material support on kitchen gardening and commercial fresh vegetable production, which resulted in the improvement of the food and nutrition security of the farmers and their family. The main results include:

- The household vegetable production of 2,333 rural women increased by 329% per household in 2019 compared to the baseline from 234 kg in 2015 to 1,003 kg. per household in 2019. The total estimated production of vegetable in 2019 was 2,340 metric tons (mt.)

In addition to making the direct impact on the improved food and nutrition security with the JP RWEE participants and their family, the JP RWEE also made the following contributions to increase the sustainability of the result under Outcome 1:

- A total of 178 rural women in Sarlahi and Rautahat districts gained knowledge on diversified diet and nutritional food recipe preparation and have been practicing the diversified food consumption at household level.
- The training on diversified diet and nutrition education was provided for women including pregnant and lactating women based on the training manual on nutrition of children and pregnant and lactating women developed for the use of community facilitators/resource persons.
- 93 rural women’s groups with 2,259 members - accumulated a total of Nepali Rupee (NPR) 6,210,080 (US\$ 54,618)³ through a group revolving fund scheme that was established after the JP RWEE team helped the members understand the importance of creating a revolving fund scheme.

² Women Empowerment Agriculture Index (WEAI) is a new activity that will start in the first quarter of 2020. WEAI is an in-depth assessment of Gender Action Learning System (GALS) results planned for 2020 along with other GALS tools like participatory gender review to assess and documents the changes in both individual and family level

³ US\$ 54,618 with the UN exchange rate for January 2020, NPR 113.7/US\$

Outcome 2: Increased income to secure livelihoods

- A total of NPR 27, 471,862 (US\$ 241,617) was earned by 1,751 JP RWEE participants (75% of the 2,333 rural women farmers supported) in this reporting period. This was the gross income from the total sales of 1,465 mt. fresh vegetables produced by rural women farmers with the support of the JP RWEE. The remaining 582 rural women opted to use their harvests for family consumption.
- A total of 135 rural women earned a daily wage of NPR 400 (US\$ 3.51) as per government's local wage rate for maximum 30 days of construction work. Their individual average total earning was NPR 8,500 (US\$ 74.75). These women have received short-term wage employment through their engagement in the construction of two market outlets in Sarlahi district constructed through Cash Assistance for Assets modality.
- More than 2,000 rural women farmers have started bringing their surplus (vegetable) produce for sale. Their earnings after selling of the surplus produce will be reported in the JP RWEE's Annual Report of 2020. The market outlets have facilitated market linkages for rural women farmers, resulting in market-oriented agriculture, sustained local economy and more sustainable income for rural women.

Outcome 3: Enhanced leadership and participation in communities, rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies and programmes

- A total of 1,294 rural women enhanced their leadership skills such as effective communication, self-awareness, knowledge about their rights through their participation in six-week interventions of the training. A total of 2,286 women farmers and their family members were engaged as part of the JP RWEE. Ongoing JP RWEE's monitoring and follow up interviews with participants, field monitors, group facilitators and family members captured increased knowledge⁴, confidence and leadership skills of rural women.
- A total of 411 rural women and men have been bringing positive changes in their behaviours using the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology and tools such as planning for economic development, understanding among the family members on the equal distribution of the household chores. This process has initiated positive changes in women's lives, for example: participating women have improved their overall economic conditions through diversifying incomes, increased control over income and savings, improved equality and harmony in families.

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

- Gender responsive policy environment at the local level, the JP RWEE established relationships with local government representatives, ensuring local ownership for sustainability. A total of 38 government officials were directly engaged in the activities during the project period, including the Hon'ble Internal Affairs and Law Minister of Province 2, who attended the training of the women group facilitators and the workshop with the local leaders, encouraging them to take on leadership roles and prioritize the issues of the women farmers.

I. Purpose

In Nepal, the JP RWEE is being implemented as a pilot initiative for the gender responsive implementation of the ADS, a 20-year (2015-2035) agricultural strategy of the Government of Nepal. The following four outcome areas of the programme were identified based on specific challenges and opportunities in the context of Nepal:

- Outcome 1: Rural women have improved food and nutrition security;
- Outcome 2: Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods;
- Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes; and
- Outcome 4: More gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women.

⁴ Increased knowledge on issues such as gender, gender roles, women rights, violence against women, local level planning processes, locally available resources and budgets for women, farmers and agriculture.

II. Results

i) Narrative reporting on results:

Outcome 1: Rural women have improved food and nutrition security

From January-December 2019, a total of 2,333 rural women farmers (Janajatis 27.65 %, Dalits 9.39 %, Muslims 7.37 %, Madhesis 45% and Brahmins and Chhetris 10.59 %) in 2,333 households were able to increase their vegetable production by 329% in Rautahat and Sarlahi districts. From a baseline of 234 kg. per household in 2015, to 1,003 kg. per household, in 2019. This is a result of the continued support provided by JP RWEE to rural women farmers to enhance their agriculture production capacity by providing on-farm on-site trainings, and guidance to apply their acquired knowledge, skills and agricultural technologies into practice. The trainings covered relevant subjects, such as nursery establishment and soil and crop management. Exposure visits to vegetable production farms in Chitwan and Parsa districts were organized in May 2019 with 34 selected JP RWEE rural women to introduce labour-saving technologies and extend learning and sharing opportunities for them. These continued technical support and exposure visits supported JP RWEE women farmers to internalize their learning and engage in vegetable production through their own initiative. An increase in agricultural production is contributing to improved food and nutrition security of JP RWEE women and their family members. Rural women themselves reported in group discussion improved nutrition in-take after the implementation of the JP RWEE.

Nutrition trainings and the cash assistance provided have supported in increasing the acceptable food consumption score in both districts. Only 3% of the respondents in Rautahat and 1% in Sarlahi had borderline food consumption score⁵. None of the districts had poor food consumption scores which shows that the beneficiaries have shifted to food secured ones and consuming adequate quantities of foods from different food groups. Among the women, interviewed on dietary practices 59% had medium dietary diversity. Results indicates that 97 % of the women met minimum dietary diversity.

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

A total of 2,333 rural women in Sarlahi and Rautahat districts, continued to benefit from increased access to resources and services, which are critical to the improvement of their agricultural production. These include vegetable seeds, irrigation schemes (motor-operating shallow tube wells with a pump set), agricultural machinery and equipment, and introduction of useful agricultural technologies such as drip irrigation, plastic tunnel for off-season vegetable production, seed bed preparation techniques among others. From January-December 2020, 25 shallow tube-wells were installed in two districts (Rautahat 11, Sarlahi 14) with the technical and financial support from the JP RWEE. As a result of this, 75 hectares of land of approximately 23 rural women's groups (covering 250 rural women's households) will have easy access to agricultural water through the 25 tube wells.

A total of 93 rural women's groups (97% of 96 groups formed through the JP RWEE) in Sarlahi and Rautahat districts, established a revolving fund scheme in their respective groups, securing group members' access to financial resources. During this reporting period, a total of NPR 6,210,080 (US\$ 54,618) was made available/accessible to a total of 2,258 (97% of all direct beneficiaries) JP RWEE women farmers through the

⁵ The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is an index developed by WFP that aggregates household-level data on the diversity and frequency of food groups consumed over the previous seven days, which is then weighted according to the relative nutritional value of the consumed food groups. For instance, food groups containing nutritionally dense foods, such as animal products, are given greater weight than those containing less nutritionally dense foods. Based on this score, a household's food consumption can be further classified into one of three categories: poor, borderline, or acceptable by applying the WFP's recommended cut-offs/thresholds to the food consumption score: 0-21: Poor; 21.5-35: Borderline; >35: Acceptable. The FCS is a proxy indicator of household caloric availability.

revolving fund scheme. The group finance scheme has empowered group members to buy agricultural inputs (e.g. seeds, chemical fertilizer, pesticides and agriculture tools) on time and other essential goods and services during the time of urgency. Access to their own financial resource (a group revolving fund) has enabled group members to avoid taking loans from local money lenders and financial institutions, which generally charge high interest rate, require complex application processes, and impose rules that are usually difficult for women to follow.

A total of 200 rural women (106 Rautahat 106 and Sarlahi 94) completed an intensive nutrition education training programme in June with the support of the JP RWEE. This programme focused on diversified food consumption patterns and dietary practices in households, and the development of a nutritive profile of local foods. With technical and funding support from the JP RWEE, a training manual on nutrition of children and pregnant and lactating women was developed for the use of community facilitators/resource persons. The social behavior change communication nutrition information, education and communication materials were distributed to the nutrition training participants. The materials were distributed to the communities as well.

A total of 178 rural women (92 Rautahat and 86 Sarlahi) gained knowledge on diversified diets and nutritional food recipe preparation increasing the diversity of food consumption at household level. Similarly, 200 additional women were sensitized with enhanced knowledge on household level disaster preparedness, early warning and early actions, in the face of increasing climate-induced disasters. Now, they are aware and prepared for saving lives and property in the event of disasters i.e. floods, cold wave, windstorm etc.

In Rautahat district, a multipurpose cooperative was established in 2018 under the support of the JP RWEE. In 2019, this cooperative established an agro-veterinarian shop and supplied immediate inputs to the cooperative members and minimum technical advisory service to rural women farmers in agriculture and livestock development. The membership in the cooperative has increased from 200 (in 2018) to 300 (in 2019). The cooperative is able to save NPR 700,000 (US\$ 6,156) by 2019 and also operating saving and credit schemes for rural women farmers.

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

In this reporting period, 1,751 rural women farmers, or 75% of the 2,333 women supported, earned a total of NPR 27,471,862 (US\$ 241,617) by selling surplus vegetables such as tomato, chilis, cauliflower, radish, onion, carrot, broadleaf mustard, cucumber, beans and sponge guard in the market. The increased agricultural production, through the support of the JP RWEE, enabled the women to sell more vegetables in the nearby markets. The remaining 582 rural women's vegetable production (25 % of the 2,333 direct beneficiaries) was consumed directly or by family members.

A total of 135 rural women earned a daily wage of NPR 400 (US\$ 3.51). through their engagement in the construction of two market outlets in Sarlahi district constructed through Cash Assistance for Assets programme. Two market outlets management committees (11 members each) have been formed in coordination with respective municipalities. Total 22 management committee members have gained knowledge and skills market outlets management, repair and maintenance which is being guided by the standard market outlet operation guidelines.

After construction of the market-outlets, more than 2,000 rural women farmers have started bringing their surplus produce for sale. Their individual average total earning was NPR 8500 (US\$ 74.75). The cash-based transfer was made directly to the respective beneficiary's bank account through WFP-contracted Financial Service Provider. Cash transfers provided a starting point to promote digital financial inclusion of unbanked persons through the opening of bank accounts by all 135 rural women. The market outlets have facilitated market linkages for rural women farmers, resulting in market-oriented agriculture, sustained local economy and more sustainable income for rural women.

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

Out of the total 96 women farmers' groups established under the JP RWEE, 55 were engaged in commercial vegetable production as of December 2019. Out of the 55 groups, 40 were supported by JP RWEE with marketing equipment, such as weighing machine and plastic crate, to handle and carry fresh vegetables safely to the market. The JP RWEE organized an interaction workshop in June 2019 in the respective districts to facilitate the establishment of vegetable marketing linkages among the 40 women farmers' groups, local wholesalers/vendors/collectors and retailers. During the exposure visit to Chitwan and Parsa districts, 34 rural women farmers were also able to visit vegetable market centers and sell their surplus products to wholesalers and traders.

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

A total of 135 rural women received short-term wage employment in Sarlahi through cash assistance for assets activities who earned average NPR 8,500 (US\$ 74.75), as per government's local wage rate.

To increase off-farm wage employment opportunities of rural women, 24 women were selected to enhance their capacity as pesticides retailers and took an examination to secure a license so that the rural women can legitimately start agro-veterinarian business through opening an agro-veterinarian shop. The JP RWEE played a role in coordinating with the Government for the participation of the rural women to this training and selecting women participant as per the required criteria of the training. The women's group recommended the trainees as per the group decision. Since the JP RWEE is inclusive of men in the community, the JP RWEE strongly believes inclusion of men is an important to bring transformative change in families and communities. In addition to the 24 JP RWEE participants, two men family members of JP RWEE women were included in the training with a condition that they would utilize their knowledge and skills with their families and rural women's groups in their respective districts. The examination was administered by the Plant Quarantine and Pesticide Management Center under the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Government of Nepal.⁶ Out of 26 farmers who took the licensure examination, nine (seven women and two men) passed the examination and received a license. Out of them, five farmers (four women and one man) already opened agro-veterinarian shops and the remaining farmers are in the process of opening shops in both districts. Despite the intention to help rural women to start their own business, the eligibility requirements such as minimum high school level education for the license exam did not qualify many of rural women for taking the exam. As a countermeasure, men family members of the JP RWEE participants were additionally invited to the training and took the exam. A lesson learned from this experience indicates that the selection of occupations and skills development for wage employment opportunities must consider the specific status and conditions of rural women as well as inequalities and barriers they face. In the future, JP RWEE will take into account the current condition, status and challenges, which JP RWEE women may face when accessing those opportunities, including education levels, skills, understanding and mobility restrictions. The JP RWEE team, in future, will also negotiate with the Government counterparts regarding the location of trainings.

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

Adding on the results, achievements and lessons learned from *Sahi Ho!* advocacy campaign⁷, a follow-up intervention through trainings, orientations for community engagement in the two JP RWEE districts was

⁶ For more details, visit to: <http://www.npponepal.gov.np/>

⁷ UN Women launched a one-year action-oriented communication and advocacy campaign, *Sahi Ho!*, in 2018 to raise public awareness, increase political will, and encourage allocation of increased resources to support women's leadership roles and economic empowerment in Nepal. The campaign directly contributed to UN Women's three ongoing women's economic empowerment programmes namely the JP RWEE, Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment Programme and The Future We Want Project. The campaign was successfully completed on 31 March 2019 and was able to directly engage 11,629 people through the community-based activities and reached approximately 11 million individuals through the campaign activities and mass media/social media outreach.

designed and implemented. This intervention engaged rural women's families and aimed to empower rural women farmers in the context of federalism. Family members were engaged through the two-family sessions, planned before and after the six-weeks long weekly intervention with the rural women farmers.

The women were provided with knowledge on how local government units provide financial support and other resources (e.g. materials, seeds, and training) to women/farmers in the federal context, how they need to approach to the local government to claim for the support and resources, and what makes them eligible for local government grants among others. In addition, multiple platforms such as public hearings and meetings with the local government representatives, were provided for the women farmers to meet, discuss and raise their priorities with the relevant local government representatives. The support aimed to utilize women's economic empowerment as an entry point for building a more gender responsive environment for rural women farmers at home and communities in these two districts.

As part of this intervention, a five-day Training of Trainers (ToT) on life skills and leadership skills, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and local level planning process was organised to enhance the capacity of the 18 group facilitators (nine facilitators from Rautahat and Sarlahi each), enabling them to transfer their knowledge to the women farmer groups in their respective districts. Following the ToT, 1,294 women (Brahmin/Chettri 253, Dalit 163, Janajatis 395, Madhesis 456, Others 7 and demographic unavailable for 20) from the 54 women groups attended six weekly sessions that enhanced their knowledge on life skills and leadership skills. These sessions were facilitated by the trained women facilitators, and feedback forms were collected from each session to monitor the progress. Along with the six regular sessions held, two additional sessions were organized for the women and their family members. Each woman group member was required to bring one family member to these sessions, which were focused on the importance of a supportive environment at home for the women.

In addition, a total of 43 one-day orientation sessions on the theme of women's economic empowerment, GESI responsive agricultural development and women's leadership roles were conducted in the two targeted districts. These orientation sessions were attended by 992 women from the women's groups (who were not part of the 6 weeks intervention sessions). The participants were oriented about issues such as women's economic empowerment, barriers and discriminatory social norms related to it, gender responsive program of local government, and challenges faced by women farmers. Participant women were able to stir some discussions around these issues. Such discussion opportunities were positively received by the rural women farmers as they suggested that such discussions should take place more often and more ongoing programs were required.

The intervention not only enhanced their knowledge level on various issues such as life skills, women rights, violence against women and girls, importance of gender equality and social inclusion, the local level annual planning and budget allocation processes, resources available for women and farmers at the local level etc, they were also encouraged to take actions to advocate for their priorities and concerns with the local level government authorities to take leadership roles and make decisions at their household level as well as in the community events. The end-line study shows around 23 % of women reported an increase in awareness about local budgets and resources related to agriculture, resulting in a 34 % increment in the number of women groups directly engaging with the local government institutions to ensure their better access and allocation of these resources to meet the needs of women farmers. Out of those who engaged with the local government (municipality office), three rural women farmer's groups were able to secure around NPR 3,115,000 (US\$ 27,396). The amount was secured by rural women farmers to support their need for income generation by controlling insect infection in their crops. Likewise, these sessions also proved to be an important platform for them to discuss the existing socio-cultural norms related to gender inequality. Such discussions were significant in motivating the women to challenge and resist the existing discriminatory practices. For instance, a number of the women's groups realized that they were not equally represented in local level planning process, and were able to pressurize the local level officials through face to face meetings, to ensure women's representation in the upcoming events related to the planning process, resulting in the commitments of the government representatives to address it during the next planning process. As reported by the women themselves, the confidence gained from their participation in the intervention also inspired them to present their views in public

hearings and discussions held in their community. The topic of the discussions was focused on rights of rural women farmers, issues and challenges faced by them in their respective communities.

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

A total of 18 group facilitators women (Janajati 12, Madhesi 4 and Brahmin/Chettri 2) were enabled to strengthen their leadership capacity on life skills and leadership skills, GESI and local level planning process to transfer their knowledge to the women farmer groups in their respective districts.

During the five-day ToT of the facilitators on life skills and leadership skills, GESI and local level planning process, the pre and post-test analysis of the participants showed that 32% of the participants felt that their knowledge level on issues such as life skills, gender equality, women's rights and GESI (GESI included sessions on equality, intersectionality among women, violence against women, women's human rights, provisions on women's rights in the Constitution of Nepal 2015 among others) was increased, and 78% of the participants felt more confident to participate in the discussions on these issues after attending the training. The increased capacity of the facilitators to lead local awareness programmes and to engage in local level advocacy efforts is evident in their active role in facilitating the 43 one-day orientations among the rural women farmer's group members (who were not part of the six-weekly group meeting) in their communities focusing on areas such as gender equality, social and gender norms, life skills, and others. The facilitators also actively engaged in monthly meetings of the local working groups and with the local level leaders to advocate for gender responsive plans and programs.

The end line findings show that 72% (of total 1,647 respondents compared to 41% in baseline) of the women group members have reported an increase in knowledge about women's rights such as violence against women, women's economic and political rights, issues related to dowry, child marriage and 54 % (compared to 21 % in baseline) of women have reported increment in their knowledge about gender equity and equality and social inclusion. Likewise, the women reported that they are now more self-aware of their strengths (66% in endline compared to 30 % in baseline), areas of improvement (78% compared to 49% in baseline) and goal in life (84 % compared to 63 % in baseline). The personal strengths included an ability to lead, negotiate, speak without fear which they were encouraged to identify through self-reflection. The areas of improvement included low self-confidence and fear to speak loud in public due to existing traditional social norms and values.

Similarly, 67% (compared to 48% in baseline) of women reported increased (better) communication with their family members, particularly in areas like- sharing of each other's day to day activities, worries, future ambitions and plans.

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

One multipurpose cooperative was formed and registered in Sarlahi district in May 2019. Around 200 interested members of eight rural women farmer groups under the JP RWEE joined together and registered themselves as members of the cooperative. Through this registered cooperative, the women are now eligible to approach banks or financial institutions for individual or group loans and also access other incentive packages declared by the Government. The intensive package comprises of relaxation on tax and interest rate, access to subsidy among others. After the completion of a one-year period, cooperative can be an agent of input corporation to sell the subsidized fertilizer and other essential commodities to the farmers.

This is supporting rural women to enhance their leadership role and increase their income for sustainable livelihood. The JP RWEE facilitated the process to bring these women together and sensitized them on the importance of the cooperative and how it will support them for enhanced leadership and sustainable livelihood of rural women farmers.

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

A total of 1,294 rural women farmers and their families have been reached through a series of discussion sessions in their community. The group discussions cover information on GESI issues, local level planning process, allocation of resources for women farmers at local levels and how to tap such resources. Participatory tools, such as reflective dialogues, discussions and role plays, are being used to enhance their life and leadership skills, including advocacy and coalition building skills.

The comparative analysis of the baseline and end-line study as well as the qualitative data collected showed a significant increase in the knowledge and confidence level of the women as a direct result of participation in the project activities. 72% (compared to 41%) of the women group members have reported that they are now aware about women's rights and 54% (compared to 21% in baseline) of women have reported that they are aware about gender equality and social inclusion. In addition, 36 % of the women reported that they are now more self-aware of their strengths, areas of improvement and goal in life. Similarly, 67% (compared to 48% in baseline) of women reported increased (better) communication with their family members, particularly in areas like- sharing of each other's day to day activities, worries, future ambitions and plans.

"These session helps us understand our strengths and our priorities and take actions accordingly. We are now able to take actions collectively as a group on the issues of women, prioritize the issue, develop an action plan and submit it to the respective Palika", (Member of Mankamana Mahila Farmer Group of Gujara Municipality, Rautahat)

"I reached out to our ward and municipality representatives after attending the sessions and now I am invited by my local government in the meetings and selected as a member of health committee of Municipality", (Roshni Kumari Chaudhary, President of Jaldevi Women Farmer Group, Barhathba, Sarlahi).

"We took joint initiation with the local working group for completing the construction and the management of agriculture service center", (A member of Janaki Women Group, Sarlahi)

"After the session on life skills, I understood that if we have the skills (life skills) and understanding about the things that are important to us, then it helps to achieve our goals and to ultimately improve our living standards" (A member of Milijuli Group, Sarlahi)

Supportive family and community environment

A total of 411 rural participants (women 330, men 81⁸):) have been bringing positive changes in their behaviour through the use of the GALS methodology being introduced for the first time in Nepal through the JP RWEE. They are initiating positive changes in their individual behavior and actions at the household level such as sharing of household chores among the family members and overall wellbeing.

53 people (52 women and 1 men) directly participated in GALS workshops conducted in February, May and August 2019. However, they shared the methodology with a total of 222 members of their women's groups and 136 relatives (56 women and 80 men), spreading its use in villages of six Municipalities (Bagmati, Gujara, Rajpur, Barathawa, Yamuna Mai and Chandra Nagar).

GALS is supporting direct and indirect beneficiaries of the JP RWEE to understand their current situations, aspirations and objectivities - as individuals and as families, and act upon them by developing joint livelihood strategies. The most recurrent objectives of GALS beneficiaries in the JP RWEE include increasing their

⁸ Brahmin/Chettri: women 16 men 3; Madhesi: women 167 men 39; Muslim: women 48 men 12; Tharu: women 88 men 26; Dalit: women 8 and men 1 and Janajatis: women 3

physical assets, raising the source of family income, improving the education of children, marriage of adult son and daughters, strengthening emotional and economic relationships among family members among others.

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

A gender responsive policy environment has been promoted through enhancing the knowledge and understanding of local elected leaders. The JP RWEE engaged 38 (22 women, 16 men) local elected leaders from Rautahat and Sarlahi in a three-day Workshop on 'Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, Gender Responsive Budget in local level participatory planning process'. Through interactive sessions on local level planning process, gender responsive budgeting, and GESI, the participants were engaged in discussion on the need for more gender-friendly policy and environment at the local level to address the needs of rural women farmers. After the training, the participants shared that they were more aware about the local level planning process and the importance of women's representation in the planning process after.

In addition, the women group members were also able to work as a group to advocate for their priorities through constructive engagement with the local government institutions and authorities which resulted in the following achievements:

- A budget of NPR 2,000,000 (US\$ 1,759) has been allocated for construction of collection center in Brindaban Municipality, Rautahat district. The local municipality authorities also made a commitment that trainings to support women's empowerment will be included in the next development plan.
- Local government authorities in Barhathba Municipality in Sarlahi district allocated NPR 15,000 (US\$ 131.92) from its annual resources to support the activities for women's empowerment.
- As a result of the advocacy done by women farmer's groups in Bagmati Municipality, the local government allocated NPR 100,000 (US\$ 879.50) for controlling 'Phaujee' insect infection in maize crops.
- Local governments of Brindaban and Bagmati Municipality welcomed the women farmers to come and consult with the women development officer at the social development section of the municipality for the approval of women's cooperative.
- Similarly, Gujara Municipality has allocated NPR 1,000,000 (US\$ 8,795) to the women's groups for income generation activities.

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*

Two community-based events – one public hearing and one community discussion were conducted in Sarlahi and Rautahat respectively engaging a total of 118 participants (76 women, 42 men)⁹. This comprised of both local Government representatives, local community people and rural women farmers directly engaged in JP RWEE activities. These activities contributed in increasing discussions on gender responsiveness of the current policies and programs at the local level. The local level officials present in these programs accepted that the current plans and policies do not adequately address the existing barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment and responded positively to the comments and concerns raised by the participants. One of the major commitments from the local level officials was to ensure women's meaningful participation in the upcoming local level planning process which will take place in January 2020 and the decision for budget allocation for different thematic areas will be completed around June 2020

As a result of the increased dialogue among community members and the local level officials, the local government in all four programme intervention municipalities expressed their commitment to act for more

⁹ Janajati 24, Dalit 23, Brahmins/Chhetris 17, Madhesis 43 and 11 Muslims

gender responsive plans and policies in the upcoming local level planning process. Likewise, as a result of joint advocacy from women's groups and local working groups, the women's groups were able to secure portions of budget of NPR 3,115,000 (US\$ 27,396) for activities such as control of insecticides in crop field, construction of the vegetable collection center, agriculture and livestock development, and income generation activities.

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

With the submission of the new workplan covering January-December 2020 to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) in this reporting period, the timing of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) endline survey was shifted to 2020.

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

Challenges:

Although great efforts were made to select the most active local women from the community as group facilitators to lead the weekly intervention sessions, it was observed that most had no previous exposure to the issues/programmes related to women's empowerment, gender and life skills. Although each facilitator was given a copy of the comprehensive manual, the reading materials provided in the manual as reference for the session preparation were still deemed not detailed enough to enable the facilitators to feel fully comfortable to lead the sessions. Hence, it was very challenging to ensure quality facilitation of weekly sessions and effective mobilization of the women farmer group members.

Mitigation measure: In order to build the confidence of the group facilitators, additional audio-visual tools such as radio program episodes on the particular topics covered in the sessions and life skills booklets were shared with the facilitators which enabled them to feel better prepared before the sessions.

The local level government officials were found to be very reluctant to participate in Public Hearings in Rautahat district where the community members would have the opportunity to openly raise their problems and concerns and they would be expected to respond to their queries, as well as provide update on their ongoing work and deliverables. The local officials did not feel comfortable to partake in an open discussion with the community members regarding their issues and concerns and to respond to their queries regarding the local government's ongoing work and deliverables¹⁰. They were reluctant as there was an anticipation of negative questions from the participants to the local officials. They wanted to make the discussion constructive and fruitful rather than naming or shaming anyone during the discussion. After much follow-up and many meetings, the project team was able to organize one Public Hearing in Sarlahi district with local government representatives.

Mitigation measure: To ensure that the Public Hearing was conducted in the implementation area, the title of the activity was changed from 'Public Hearing' to a 'Community Discussion', only after which it was able to convince the government officials from Rautahat district to attend the activity. The officials actively participated in these discussions without any hesitation.

Natural disasters such as flooding and heavy rains proved to be one of the biggest challenges during the programme period as it severely affected the timeline of the implementation. It took around 4-6 weeks for the situation to get back to normal after the flooding and the implementation to be resumed effectively. Due to this, it was challenging not only to complete the programme activities within the programme period, but also to ensure meaningful engagement of the community members, local leaders and radio stations, as they were more focused on relief programs.

¹⁰ This also speaks to a need for more capacity building amongst leaders such as training on 'governance and transparency' so that they feel confident to engage with their communities in an open way and support the importance of doing this as a local representative.

Mitigation measure: Several follow-ups were conducted to inform the selected leaders from the local communities and reminded them multiple times regarding the training/meeting or community event days to make sure they are able to attend, while maintaining a good rapport, so they were supportive of the programme activities and attended as frequently as possible. This regular coordination and communication supported the JP RWEE team to continue implementation of activities once situation was bit stabilized.

Good practices

Engagement of families and communities: The inclusion and engagement of family members in the six week-long training with the women farmer group members proved to be a successful approach. Each woman group member was required to bring one family member to the (two) family sessions, planning before and after the six weeks long intervention, which were focused on the importance of a supportive environment at home for the women. The participating family members were impressed by the objectives of the weekly sessions and were happy about their participation in the sessions. During both sessions, a significant level of participation of family members (93% attendance) was reported. The acceptance of the family members resulted in the high number of women's attendance (as reported by the group members and facilitators) in the six weeks sessions, with an average of 95% of attendance rate, which is an achievement given the mobility restriction for women in the targeted communities.

Coordination at different levels

- Coordination among the four participating agencies

The service provider of WFP, FAO's field staff and IFAD field-based facilitators worked closely for planning and implementing the activities to avoid duplication and maximize the effectiveness of joint activities. They observed and monitored each other's activities. Particularly, the nutrition education training was implemented jointly by WFP and FAO in which IFAD field-based staff also participated. WFP's service provider obtained approval from concerned local government to implement the project activities, as per the provision of Local Government Operations Act, 2017. IFAD field-based staff participated in this training to enhance better coordination in the field. During the joint field mission, UN Women led and explained the rural women about upcoming activities of the JP RWEE in 2020.

- Coordination with the local government

The local government selected the suitable public land for construction of market outlets and provided to the respective cooperative for construction and use of the market outlets, through a formal agreement between Municipality and cooperative. There is strong buy-in of the local-government for the project activities. However, there was dispute in selection of the location/land for construction of market outlet in Rautahat district, due to the political conflict of interest. There was no consensus on the land/location among the proposed three locations in three Municipalities in Rautahat due to vested political interest and other localized conflicts among the representatives of Municipalities. Hence, in consultation with the local-government representatives and women groups, the market-outlet was not constructed in Rautahat and its was redirected to Sarlahi district where both market outlets have been constructed in separate municipalities.

Lessons learned

GALS is proving to be a meaningful approach and is being adopted effectively by more vulnerable rural women and their families rather than well-off families. People who had less opportunity to receive trainings have grasped its full essence, increased their hopes and brought about real changes in their lives. Visions prepared by individuals have powerfully demonstrated to drive their ideas, behaviors and actions has increased the overall productivity of a person. Peer sharing in smaller groups is found to be more effective than in larger groups, as larger groups have different types of interest. Smaller groups are more focused to bring transformative changes at household and communities.

An additional lesson learned related to the agro-veterinarian initiative. Despite JP RWEE's intention to help rural women to start their own business, the eligibility requirements in this training was minimum completion of high school level education. This did not qualify many of rural women for taking the exam. A lesson learned from this experience was that the selection of occupations and skills development for wage employment opportunities must take into account specific real status and conditions of rural women in the communities as well as inequalities and barriers they face in their day-to-day lives. Going forward, the JP RWEE will take into account the current condition, status and challenges the JP RWEE women face while accessing those opportunities, including education levels, skills, understanding and mobility restrictions. The JP RWEE team, in future, will also negotiate with the Government counterparts regarding the location of trainings which also created an issue for rural women farmers as they were to be away from their homes for long periods of time.

III. Implementation and Coordination Mechanisms

Implementation mechanism

At the national level, the Programme Steering Committee (PSC) was formed by the Government of Nepal in 2015 during the beginning of the JP RWEE implementation. The same PSC is being continued in this phase of the programme. The PSC is chaired by the Secretary of the MoALD and includes representation of the joint secretaries of the MoALD, as well as other relevant sectoral ministries and departments (director generals), such as the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, Ministry of Finance, National Planning Commission, Department of Livestock Services and Department of Agriculture.

The engagement of high-level authorities in the PSC reveals that ownership has been taken by the government for the successful piloting of the ADS. The PSC includes women farmers' representation from the National Peasant Coalition to ensure inclusive participation. The role of the PSC is to provide strategic guidance for the implementation of the programme and monitor the effective programme implementation. The PSC meets once a year. In 2019, the PSC took place on 9 September at the MoALD.

The key issues raised by the PSC members during the meeting included: ownership and management of Community Agriculture Extension Service Centers (CAESC) constructed under the JP RWEE; outreach of the *Sahi Ho!* (that's right!) advocacy campaign and the number of population reached; engagement of local government in the programme; rationale for narrowing down the geographic coverage to the two districts; clarification on the attribution and contribution made by the programme in the lives of rural women; reasons for not covering the livestock from the second phase of the JP RWEE; total budget of the JP RWEE and reason for delayed expenditure and comparison of vegetable production with the baseline.

The PSC members provided the following key suggestions: aligning the programme results with the MoALD's priority targets and focus more on the high value agricultural crops such as rice, onion among others. The JP RWEE team has integrated these suggestions in the JP RWEE's current Work Plan in 2019.

The established Working Group (WG) of four UN participating agencies holds meeting regularly to provide guidance on programme implementation and to support the PSC. The WG is led by UN Women and meets regularly as per the requirements to discuss the progress of the JP RWEE, address emerging issues and challenges and further resource mobilization.

Coordination mechanism

The JP RWEE participating agencies have been working closely with relevant local government in two districts in Province 2. The joint mission by the participating agencies under the leadership of the MoALD in 2019 facilitated the development of common understanding among the district-level stakeholders of the JP RWEE and enabled them to extend their support for the effective implementation of the programme. The objective of

this mission was to monitor the implementation of the programme activities and observe the change in the lives of rural women. This mission was also accompanied by the JP RWEE's former Global Coordinator.

The District Technical Officers based in two districts have been coordinating with the service providers of all four agencies in two districts for the effective implementation and monitoring of the JP RWEE.

- **Qualitative assessment:**

The type of changes experienced by rural women using GALS is summarized as follows:

a) Improvement of overall economic condition:

The most significant type of changes related to increased income-generating opportunities and control over income. In particular:

Better use of JP RWEE opportunities for economic empowerment: Rural women along with their household members have increased and diversified sources of income. GALS is facilitating linkages of women groups to opportunities provided by the JP RWEE, such as support to vegetable production. After adopting GALS, rural women who were cultivating 1-2 vegetable varieties in small plots have now added more varieties and increased the size of plots, volume of production and therefore income. Women that were producing only in the main season have now learned from other group peers how to extend gradually production also to off-season, which is resulting in increased their income and profit.

Income diversification: Through GALS use and sharing, men and women members of the family have both agreed to diversify their sources of income by initiating new economic activities. For example: rearing livestock (buffalo, goat, pigs, chickens), growing cash crops like maize, opening meat shop, purchasing/renting fruit garden for mango and jack fruit. Based on understanding between couples, husbands have temporarily migrated to city areas and India in order to earn more money and achieve their family vision.

Women's control over income and saving capacity improved: Most of the members of three women's groups in Gujara Municipality have opened bank accounts in their own name and increased the deposit of their savings. In almost all groups, women have increased their joint savings, to which they are contributing more regularly than before. Some mothers have started to deposit saving in the name of their children and have also opened bank account in the name of their children.

The second significant change observed is the decrease in expenses that GALS users performed as a consequence of the use of the GALS tool "gender balance tree". Although these are not big amounts, men are coming to realize their pattern of expenses, which resulted in decreasing or quitting the consumption of alcohol. Some families decreased their expenses on clothes, cosmetics, consumable items like sugar and cooking oil. Money saved is deposited as savings in the bank.

b) Equality and harmony among family members:

GALS is fostering discussions and mutual understanding within the household, which contributes to strengthen trust and relationship among husband, wife and other members of the family. Women of families that had the most frequent exposure to GALS (e.g. those of GALS champions) are increasing their decision-making capacity. GALS is contributing to concrete behavior changes, such as:

- Increase understanding amongst the family members supported in reduction of domestic violence in few GALS' households.
- Family members, especially husbands, are supporting their wives to perform household chores, so that rural women can dedicate their free time to economic activities.

- Sharing of GALS methodology and tools with family members and colleagues had enhanced the level of self-reflection, confidence, listening between couple and developed mutual understanding.

c) Changes in traditional gender roles and socio-cultural norms

- Changes in traditional socio-cultural norms. For example, women who always used to wear saree have started to wear Kurtha Salwar and removed head cover; women who were never allowed by husbands and in-laws to go out of the house have started to go out to perform economic activities. Because of this, these women not only are being exposed to other communities, but also have initiated self-earning, marketing, attending meetings and working with husband in vegetable field.
- Women are bringing changes in their way of thinking and actions, with increased understanding of their own roles and ability to bring about changes. For example: envisioning about happy life, identifying appropriate actions to achieving visions, identifying both opportunities available and challenges to be faced on the way to achieve vision, reducing expenses that women and men can minimize and involving in more income generation activities.
- Changes in the perception of women and their new role as economic agents has in return increased the role of men in unpaid household work. There is unbelievable story of Tetari Khatun (mentioned under the case story section), a woman from Muslim community, who was trusted for the first time by her husband and went to the local market to purchase kitchen items. She has built her house combining income of both husband and wife with credit along with many positive changes within six months after she participated in GALS change catalyst workshop in May 2019.

d) Changes in group dynamics

- Almost all the members of groups have increased their attendance in meeting and providing meaningful and quality time to the meeting.
- Practice of peer sharing of GALS tools with group members and beyond the group by champions is being increased in all nine rural women groups.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	Achievement of Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1 Improved food and nutrition security			
<p>Indicator 1.1: % of increase in agriculture production of women farmers</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food crops 1,337 kg/HH - Vegetables 234 kg/HH <p>Planned Target (2018 and 2019): 200 % increase in vegetable production</p>	<p>Total of 329% increase in agricultural vegetable crops production (1003 kg. per household) in Sarlahi and Rautahat districts by December 2019 (Target achieved and exceeded)</p>		<p>Production data of targeted beneficiaries and field observation</p>
<p>Indicator 1.2: Women's dietary diversity or variety of households food consumption pattern</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <p>1.2.1 62.2% of HHs (with kitchen gardening) surveyed with sufficient quantity and frequency of vegetable consumption</p> <p>1.2.2 72.4% of HHs surveyed have minimum acceptable diet (MAD)</p> <p>1.2.3 Food Consumption Score of HHs surveyed is 6.73%</p> <p>1.2.4 Coping Strategy Index (CSI)</p> <p>Planned Target:</p> <p>1.2.1 50% increase by quantity and frequency in vegetable consumption of kitchen garden (2017)</p> <p>1.2.2 At least 85% of the total HHs supported have minimum acceptable diet (MAD) (5,610 HHs in five years, and 2,890 HHs as of December 2016,)</p> <p>1.2.3 80% of the total HHs supported improve Food Consumption Score (FCS)</p> <p>1.2.4 CSI (5,280 HHs in five years and 2,720 HHs as of December 2016)</p>	<p>69.9% increase by quantity and frequency in vegetable consumption of kitchen garden. 875 mt. vegetable consumed by 2,333 household as of December 2019 (in other words the vegetable consumption per household is 375 kg per year).</p> <p>(Target achieved and exceeded)</p> <p>1.2.2 97% of HHs (143 HHs) supported have minimum acceptable diet (Target achieved and exceeded)</p> <p>1.2.3 97% HHs (143 HHs) supported improved Food Consumption Score (Target achieved and exceeded)</p> <p>1.2.4 16% HHs on an average in both districts adopted stress coping strategies</p>		<p>Vegetable consumption data of targeted beneficiaries and final evaluation report of the JP RWEE</p>

Output 1.1 Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security			
<p>Indicator 1.1.1: Number of rural women who have access to integrated agriculture/nutrition services</p> <p>Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 2,333 rural women farmers</p>	<p>2,333 rural women have access to integrated agriculture/nutrition services through kitchen gardening and commercial vegetable production. (Target achieved)</p>		Field monitoring report
<p>Indicator 1.1.2: Number of rural women who utilize improved agriculture production techniques</p> <p>Baseline: 287 households with 574 rural women farmers Planned Target: 2,333 women farmers</p>	<p>2,333 rural women have been utilizing improved agriculture production techniques (Target achieved)</p>		
<p>Indicator 1.1.3: Number of rural women accessing community assets and agriculture infrastructure (including shored equipment and machineries)</p> <p>Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 700 rural women</p>	<p>800 rural women in two districts have access to shared equipment and agricultural machineries such as power tillers, corn shellers, paddy/wheat harvesters and shallow tube well (Target achieved and exceeded)</p> <p>Note: 800 rural women of 40 groups have received, the marketing equipment, such as, plastic crate and weighing machine</p>		
Outcome 2 Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods.			
<p>Indicator 2.1: Variation of women/women groups/cooperatives income generated from their sales markets</p> <p>Baseline: 49 rural women farmers Planned Target: 1,320 rural women generated income from their sales market</p>	<p>1,751 rural women earned a total of NPR 27,471,862 (US\$ 241,617) by selling vegetables (Target achieved and exceeded)</p>		Fresh vegetable sales data of targeted rural women and field report
<p>Indicator 2.2: Proportion of rural women with empowerment in the income domain of the “women’s empowerment agriculture index” WEAI (control over income)</p> <p>Baseline: IFAD to set the baseline</p>	<p>Not available.</p> <p>This is a new activity that will start in the first quarter of 2020. WEAI is an in-depth assessment of GALS results planned for 2020 along with other GALS tools like participatory gender review to assess and</p>		

Target: IFAD to set the target	documents the changes in both individual and family level in a participatory manner using diagrams, symbols and drawings.		
Output 2.1 Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products			
Indicator 2.1.1: Number of rural women farmers trained on entrepreneurial and /or vocational skills to have increased access to markets Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 50 rural women farmers	Out of 96 rural women farmers' groups, 56 rural women from 55 rural women farmers' groups were supported to enhance their market linkages through an interaction workshop with local vendors/retailers/wholesalers. (Target achieved and exceeded)		Data of vegetable linkages development interaction workshop and exposure visit
Output 2.2 Rural women have increased access to decent wage employment opportunities			
Indicator 2.2.1: Number of rural women farmers who entered wage employment with the support of the JP RWEE Baseline: 922 rural women Planned Target: 200 more rural women compared to the target rural women	Total 135 rural women received short-term wage employment through cash assistance for assets activities who earned average NPR 8, 500 (US\$ 74.7), as per government's local wage rate in both districts as a result of short-term wage employment in the construction of two market outlets (Target not achieved. Achievement of target is short by 65 rural women)		Field monitoring report
Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes.			
Indicator 3.1: % of women elected as representative at local level/community level committees Baseline: 43.6% (828 including 9 in leadership position in cooperatives) Planned Target: 10 (2018-2019)	64.7% (1,065) rural women are in leadership position in cooperatives in two districts (Target achieved and exceeded)		Equal Access International's report
Indicator 3.2: % of producer's organizations led by women Baseline: 2.9 % producers organizations led by women Planned Target: 5% increase (against the baseline) in rural women leadership in producer's organizations (2018-2019)	23.7 % (552 rural women) increase in rural women leadership in producer's organizations (Target achieved and exceeded)		Field monitoring report
Output 3.1 Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance			

<p>Indicator 3.1.1: Number of rural women farmers who participated in the local policy discussions and/or formal decision-making processes</p> <p>Baseline:723 rural women Planned Target: 20 increased against the baseline (2018-2019)</p>	<p>1,180 rural women visited government offices and enhanced their knowledge and understanding on local level planning process (Target achieved and exceeded)</p>		<p>Equal Access International's report</p>
<p>Output 3.2: Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions</p>			
<p>Indicator 3.2.1: Number of rural women's groups who join formally registered cooperatives or registered themselves in relevant local government offices</p> <p>Baseline: 14 rural women's groups joined cooperatives Planned Target: 2 additional cooperatives joined by rural women (2018-2019)</p>	<p>Eight women's groups formed one cooperative and registered in 2019 (In progress, target partially achieved)</p> <p>Note: The establishment of three multi-purpose cooperatives of rural women's groups has been lined up in the work plan from January-December 2020.</p>		<p>Field monitoring report</p>
<p>Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment.</p>			
<p>Indicator 3.4.1: Number of rural women are aware of women's human rights and GESI responsive approaches</p> <p>Baseline: 5 rural women Planned Target: 1,500 rural women</p> <p>Indicator 3.4.2: Number of families/households mobilized and increased their awareness and support rural women's economic empowerment</p> <p>Baseline: 0 Target: 1,620 rural women</p>	<p>A total of 1,312 rural women (18 women facilitators and 1,294 rural women farmers) reached through weekly discussion sessions on women's human rights and GESI responsive approaches and aware about women rights (In progress. Target achievement is short by 188 rural women)</p> <p>190 households mobilized and increased their awareness and support for rural women's economic empowerment (In progress. Target partially achieved)</p>	<p>The total number of women selected for engagement through the weekly discussion were 1, 294 (54 women groups), the rest (42 groups) were reached through the one-day orientations only. The target will be met in 2020</p>	<p>Equal Access International's report</p>
<p>Field monitoring report</p>			
<p>Outcome 4: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women</p>			
<p>Indicator 4.1: % of government budgets and donor funding (on budget) allocated to programme benefitting rural women</p> <p>Baseline: 5% Planned Target: 20% of Government budgets and donor funding (on budget) allocated to programme benefitting rural women</p>	<p>38.65% for the fiscal year 2018/2019 allocated to programme benefitting rural women (Target achieved and exceeded)</p>		

Output 4.1: Policy makers and parliamentarians have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural employment policies, laws and budgets.			
Indicator 4.1.1: Number of local government representatives/officials who enhanced their knowledge on issues of rural women farmers Baseline: 0 Planned Target:30 (2018-2019)	A total of 38 locally elected leaders (22 women, 16 men) from Rautahat and Sarlahi districts enhanced their knowledge on GESI and GRB in local level participatory planning processes (Target achieved and exceeded)		Equal Access International's report
Output 4.2: Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women			
Indicator 4.2.1: Number of countries where the “women empowerment agriculture index (WEAI)” is piloted Baseline: IFAD to set the baseline Planned Target: IFAD to set the target	Not available. The WEAI will contribute to the programme's endline and will be carried out in the first quarter of 2020 as a new activity.		

iii) A Specific Story

Case story 1:

I learned how to earn a better livelihood for the first time in my life

Ms. Shiva Kaliya Devi Mukhiya, a member of the Janaki group in Brindaban lives with her family of seven including her husband, two sons and three daughters in the Rautahat district. Her family owns a land covering an area of 0.5 hector. In 2018, she received technical and financial support from the JP RWEE to start farming of off-season vegetable production using high plastic tunnel.

Program Interventions/Results:

The JP RWEE has been working in close collaboration with the relevant local government. 96 rural women's groups have been formed since 2015 representing members of 2,333 households of five urban and five rural municipalities in Rautahat and Sarlahi districts. Off-season vegetable farming using plastic tunnel technology was initiated in the year 2018 in two districts. In the first year, 48 farmers participated in the off-season vegetable farming using one plastic tunnel to each household of the farming community working in different farmer groups. Gradually, after observing positive results achieved by their neighbors, more farmers came forward to engage themselves in the off-season vegetable farming adopting the plastic tunnel technology.



“I earned a total of NPR 60,000 (US\$ 527.70) with cucumber worth NPR. 35,000 (US\$ 307.82) and bitter gourd worth NPR 25,000 (US\$ 219.87) from the tunnel” says Shiv Kaliya Devi Mukhiya. Further, she shared that before starting the off-season vegetable cultivation she was growing the cauliflower and lady finger/okra as seasonal vegetable and was earning NPR 4,200 (US\$ 36.93) from an area of 39.6 m². “It has been a learning process. After the JP RWEE’s interventions, I learned the techniques to establish the vegetable nursery, to transplant vegetables seedlings

including the techniques to control disease and pest and many more. This supported me to learn how to earn better livelihood,” she says with smile.

In addition, 70 rural women farmers of different groups from Rautahat and Sarlahi districts were enrolled in the JP RWEE’s activities on off-season vegetable cultivation in plastic tunnel.

However, woman like Shiva Kaliya Devi Mukhiya found that she benefited greatly from the off season vegetable cultivation in plastic tunnel. She increased her number of plastic tunnels from one to four in her own cost. Women farmers were grateful to the JP RWEE for empowering them with skills and knowledge to use the locally available resources. Now, they know to how earn better livelihood with affordable investment. The vegetables added to their kitchen have also added value to their nutrient intake in daily meals. The situation in the district is encouraging and has given women an additional avenue to earn a better livelihood.





Case story 2: First time in my life I was trusted

Tetri Khatun is a 37-year-old Muslim woman and a member of Brahmathan Women Farmer Group in Rautahat. She has been married to Madan Rajbhat for 21 years and they have two sons and two daughters. They used to live in a small fenced hut made of mud and bamboo, built on public land. They did not have any productive land. Tetri and Madan are both illiterate. Tetri primarily works as agriculture wage labor within the village. Madan also works as daily wage labor within their own village and neighboring ones. Daily wage rate in agriculture is very low, especially for



women. Madan's earning increased slightly when he got an opportunity work installing tube wells and cutting trees. For two years, they rented two *kattha* (0.06 ha) land on rent on NPR 5,000 (US\$ 43.97) per year and earned around NPR 50,000 (US\$ 439.75) from cereal and some seasonal vegetables under the support of the JP RWEE.

Program Interventions/Results:

Tetri was selected as a participant from for a GALS change catalyst workshop organized by JP RWEE in May 2019, along with other three members of the women's group formed under the JP RWEE. She said *"It was the first time I participated in such a workshop so, I was slightly nervous. It was difficult for me to understand the things due to some language issue. When it came to draw my vision I felt it was a difficult task"*. Tetri shared that GALS helped her to understand that she needed to earn more money and spend less. She further added, *"I had prepared my vision to have a house which would not be affected by floods, earn more through goats raising and enable my children to have an education"*.

When Tetri came home after the GALS workshop, she shared the learnings with her husband, showing him her notebook with the GALS tools. Madan liked it. After 20 days of workshop, a GALS facilitator visited and *"helped me to share the drawings of my vision and household analysis with my husband and children. They understood the essential elements of drawings and my plans for our future"*.

That event was a turning point that reflected a change in how Madan perceived Tetri. Madan stated that: *"Ideas and thinking of his wife were very good and I trusted her vision and plan to create better future for our family"*. He used to think that Tetri could not understand the market matters and she may be cheated in financial transactions. Thus, he never trusted her to engage in economic activities. Following the GALs activities, something shifted in her life: Tetri had twinkle in her eyes when she shared this story. For the first time during her two decades of married life, Tetri went by herself for shopping at the market with NPR 200 (US\$ 1.75). She brought potatoes and onions that costed NPR 40 (US\$ 0.36), vegetables and pulses for additional NPR 40 (US\$ 0.36), and cooking oil for NPR 40 (US\$ 0.36). When she reached home, she did the calculations and returned remaining NPR 80 (US\$ 0.70) to her husband who *"smiled and said my calculation was correct. He even said I managed to bargain on the price and saved some amount, normally he doesn't manage to save*





when he goes to the market.” Tetri proudly said that now she manages money for shopping for her family. A couple of months after this, she even went to Bairgainia with her friends, a market at the border with India where she bought clothes for the family.

Thanks to GALS, Madan and Tetri are now regularly discussing choices with each other, which has improved their relationship, understanding and overall family management. “After becoming acquainted with GALS, both Tetri and Madan started to implement their plan to achieve a shared vision that they developed together with their children. Their elder daughter (16 years old), who had dropped out of school, have now joined ‘Kishori Shiksha’ (Informal education for girls); the younger daughter (11 years old) was admitted in school. The younger son (6 years old) was not attending the school regularly but now is studying in grade one. The elder son (13 years) was not interested to join school and went instead to Kathmandu and is now working in a hotel, earning NPR. 6,000 (US\$ 52.77) per month, also sending home some remittances. Madan went to Punjab, India, to work as an agriculture labor with his friends and earned 30,000 Indian Rupees (US\$ 420.46¹¹) in two months. Tetri has purchased two goats in NPR 8,000 (US\$ 70.36) from her saving. With these progresses, they have planned to build a house with a higher foundation level that would enable them to cope with monsoon floods.



Madan and Tetri have started to build a new house with some of the earnings and credit, which they are planning to complete in this winter. Madan has brought a second-hand TV and a loudspeaker, which he installed on the roof of the new house. Madan proudly says, “This was my dream. We are moving faster in searching our dreams”. Neighbors of the couple said: “Madan used to play cards whenever he had money in his pocket but now he stopped and he is making better use of this money”.

Tetri and Madan both shared that they will add 0.5ha of rented land to produce vegetables. Madan wants to learn from his elder brother Magani Miya how to produce vegetables for sale on rented land as Magani has more experiences in vegetable production. Magani says, “Now Tetri and her family is doing better, and I hope they could progress even more if they continue to have such a constructive approach.” “Tetri who was not interested in group activities and meetings, except for regular saving of NPR 50 (US\$ 0.43) per month. Her self- awareness and courage have now tremendously improved,” says Pramila Thakur, Chairperson of the women’s group. Tetri now dreams to have a small piece of land and a house in her name.

These days, Tetri is regularly attending GALS peer-learning sessions in the group to share her learning and further develop her confidence to make the changes she envisages in her life.



III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)

Not applicable

¹¹ US\$ 420.46 with the UN exchange rate for Indian Rupee (INR) January 2020, INR 71.35/US\$

IV. Resources

A total of US\$ 800,000 was additionally received from the MPTF in July 2018. As of December 2019, 88.12 % (UN Women US\$ 207,036.74¹²; FAO US\$ 187,800; WFP US\$ 187,800 and IFAD US\$ 133,685) of the amount has been disbursed.

¹² UN Women total remaining budget in 2019, US\$ 249,669.53 (US\$ 12,169.53 carried over from 2017 and US\$ 237,500 received in 2018)