



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 aims to achieve the four interrelated programme outcomes:

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

The JP RWEE contributes to the Agenda 2030 and the **Sustainable Development Goals** 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”.

Joint Programming

The JP RWEE allows each participating UN Organization to build on its comparative advantages and institutional strengths :

- **FAO:** assistance on policies about agriculture and food security;
- **IFAD:** presence in rural areas and innovative tools to measure women’s empowerment;
- **WFP:** innovations for providing food assistance; and
- **UN Women:** global mandate on gender equality.

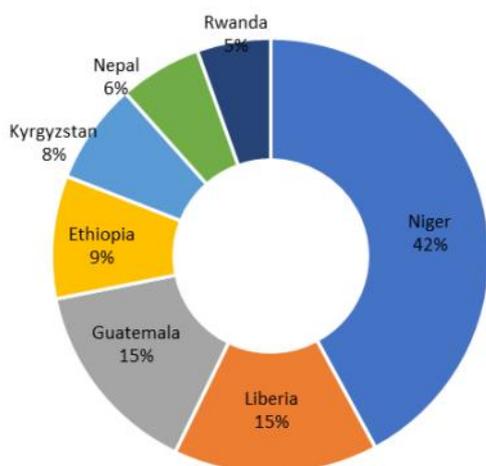


Key Results and Lessons Learned



Key Results

The programme has reached over **75,000** women and **384,000** members of their families through a comprehensive “package” of sequenced interventions to support women’s empowerment.



Programme beneficiaries by country as percentage of the total.

Some of the key results achieved so far include:

- **107 %** average increase in agricultural production;
- Over **USD 2.54 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;
- **Over 4,000 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; and
- Engagement in key policy forums on rural women’s rights.

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;
- **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;
- Use of **Information and communications technologies (ICTs)** to provide access to resources;
- Access to **financial services** to unleash the productive potential of vulnerable women;
- **Inclusive governance** structure that ensures smooth implementation and sustainability; and
- **Dedicated staff** (national and global coordinators) to ensure programme-wide coherence and impact.
- **Potential to replicate** the successful model in other countries.

