



**“ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN”  
BI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT  
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2020**

<p align="center"><b>Programme Title &amp; Project Number</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Toward Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Liberia</li> <li>• MPTF Office Project Reference Number:<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</b></p> <p><i>Liberia</i></p> <p>Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Maryland, River Gee, and Sinoe Counties</p> <p align="center"><b>Programme Beneficiaries</b></p> <p><b>Direct beneficiaries:</b> 1,027 beneficiaries (809 women and 218 men)</p> <p><b>Indirect beneficiaries:</b> 1,989 beneficiaries (1,231 women and 758 men)</p> <p>Number of participants from the beginning of the Joint Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct:</b> 11,770 beneficiaries (10,082 women and 1,688 men)</li> <li>• <b>Indirect:</b> 44,679 beneficiaries (39,476 women and 5,203 men)</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Participating Organization(s)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAO, IFAD, UNWOMEN, WFP</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>Implementing Partners</b></p> <p><b>Government institutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture</li> <li>• Ministry of Finance and Development Planning</li> </ul> <p><b>NGOs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rights and Rice Foundation</li> <li>• National Adult Education Association of Liberia</li> <li>• Agro-Machinery Company</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The MPTF Office Project Reference Number are as follows: ETHIOPIA: 00092000; GUATEMALA: 00092001; KYRGYZSTAN: 00092002; LIBERIA: 00092003; NEPAL: 00092004; NIGER: 00092005; RWANDA: 00092006

- Farmers Assistance Programme

**Civil Society Organizations**

- National Rural Women’s Structure
- Liberia Marketing Association
- Association of Women in Cross Border Trade

**Other partner(s)**

- Orange Liberia

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</b></p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: US\$ 900,000</p> <p>MPTF Contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN Women - US\$ 264,091</li> <li>• UNFAO - US\$ 364,068</li> <li>• WFP - US\$ 271,841</li> </ul> <p>Agency Contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN Women - US\$ 50,000</li> <li>• UNFAO - None</li> <li>• WFP - None</li> </ul> <p>Government Contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul> <p>Other Contributions (donors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL:</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Programme Duration</b></p> <p>Overall Duration 6.5 years</p> <p>Start Date (15 October 2014)</p> <p>End Date (30 June 2021)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</b></p> <p>Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>n/a</i></p> <p>Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>n/a</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Report Submitted By</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name: Ramon G. Garway</li> <li>○ Title: National Coordinator</li> <li>○ Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women</li> <li>○ Email address: <a href="mailto:ramon.garway@unwomen.org">ramon.garway@unwomen.org</a></li> </ul>

## **NARRATIVE REPORT**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This 2020 Annual Report for the Joint Programme ‘Accelerating Progress toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women’ (JP RWEE) in Liberia covers the period from January to December 2020. Established in 2014, the overarching goal of the JP RWEE is to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development, based on four outcomes: (1) improved food and nutrition security; (1) increased income to secure their livelihoods; (3) enhanced participation in decision making; and (4) gender-responsive policy environment for the economic empowerment of rural women. Jointly implemented by FAO, WFP and UN Women, the JP RWEE is unique in that each UN agency in Liberia brings a distinct comparative advantage to programming.

In March 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) as a global pandemic, which led to global and national response efforts to contain the spread of the virus. In Liberia, the Government adopted a set of robust measures to curb the virus's spread, which included school closures, national lockdowns, and restricted mobility. As a result, JP RWEE programme implementation was severely affected, leading to the approval of a no cost extension until June 2021 to ensure completion. The imposition of restrictions impacted rural women in multiple ways. In JP RWEE programme areas women experienced an increased burden of unpaid care work and loss of income.

Despite the challenges, the JP RWEE managed to make progress across all programme outcomes with the exception of outcome four. Policy development work was put on hold due to the changed priorities of government in responding to the pandemic. However, despite heavy seasonal rainfall affecting production and the challenges imposed on restrictions to movement, women were able to improve their food and nutrition security through increased crop production (e.g. rice, cassava, vegetables, etc.) which included the cultivation of 34.56 hectares of farmland for rice and over 18.5 hectares of farmland for industrial cassava. The effective management of Community Grain Reserves also enabled women to access grains and prevent food insecurity, which proved to be effective in building resilience against COVID-19 at the community level. In addition, 16 active Village Savings and Loan Associations were able to provide rural women beneficiaries impacted by the pandemic with access to sustainable rural credit for jumpstarting their businesses and preventing loss of business and income insecurity. Business development skills training, vocational skills training and numeracy and literacy training was also carried out to increase the skills and knowledge base of women and improve their capacity in business development and leadership. The JP RWEE also supported its key networks, namely the Liberia National Rural Women Structure, the LMA, the National Peace Huts Women of Liberia, and the Association of Women in Cross Border Trade to conduct COVID-19 outreach activities with women and men beneficiaries in over 55 targeted communities across Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa, and Sinoe Counties. The exercise was aimed at promoting social distancing and WASH practices with the programme beneficiaries as measures for curtailing the spread of the virus.

### **1. Purpose**

The JP RWEE provides strategic support to the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning; the Ministry of Agriculture; and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection in furtherance of the Government’s implementation of its national priority plan, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD 2019 - 2023) for achieving meaningful economic growth for empowering the lives of women and girls in rural areas through food and nutrition security, increased access to income for sustain livelihoods, enhanced participation and leadership of rural women and adolescent girls and lastly a vibrant gender-responsive policy environment for the social and economic empowerment of rural women and girls in Liberia. The JP RWEE continues to work to support Gender Equality and Women’s

Empowerment (GEWE) priorities and commitments that have been identified and led by national government under its PAPD 2019 – 2023 implementation. It continues to ensure that all relevant and key stakeholders and partners from national government, the UN System, public and private sectors are involved in strategic planning and decision-making processes for strengthening implementation and maximizing results. The programme builds on existing development frameworks (e.g. National Gender Policy, National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy, the Land Rights Act, etc.) and strategies for ensuring that women and girls in rural areas are economically and socially empowered. The programme remains committed to strengthening the effectiveness of financial support through coordination and harmonization of cross-cutting gender interventions (e.g. Liberia Flagship Programme on Climate-smart Agriculture, and UN Women’s ‘Buy From Women’ Initiative) These programmes and projects are closely aligned with the joint programme’s national priorities and are buttressing ongoing efforts for economically empowering rural women smallholder farmers. Moreover, the programme’s framework and lessons learnt assisted in making informed decisions in the development of the UNSDCF 2020 – 2024 which aligns closely with the PAPD 2019 - 2023. The programme has been identified as one of the UN’s flagship programmes for the implementation of the UNSDCF 2020 – 2024 in Liberia.

## I. Results

Despite the global COVID-19 pandemic the JP RWEE delivered on the following results during the reporting period 1 January to 31 December 2020:

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

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

- 400 women beneficiaries from Montserrado, Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties are accessing sustainable rural financial services through the 16 newly established Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). Beneficiaries reported to have increased their self-esteem through access to the VSLAs and attribute their self-esteem towards increased decision-making at the household and community levels. Being part of such successful community associations has led to gains in women’s social status. Being able to contribute financially within their families has put these women on a more equal footing with their spouses.
- 31 existing and 16 newly established VSLAs from Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Maryland, River Gee, and Sinoe Counties have provided US\$ 58,750 (LD\$ 9,400,000) in rural credit to a total of 1,175 women beneficiaries for access to sustainable finance for building and expanding their existing business during COVID-19.
- 401 beneficiaries (women: 341; and men: 60) and their households in the Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties have improved their food security and nutrition through increased crop production, which included the cultivation of 34.56 hectares of farmland for rice and over 18.5 hectares of farmland for industrial cassava. An increase was reported in crop yield resulting in the production of four (4) metric tons of paddy rice from Grand Bassa and Margibi Counties. Beneficiaries have increased their crop yields and income generation as a result of access to farming inputs and labor-saving technologies (e.g. rice and cassava processing machines, etc.) provided under the programme.
- 401 beneficiaries (women: 341; and men: 60) in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties increased their production of rice and cassava crops as a result of increased access to quality seeds, assorted hand tools, and other planting materials through the programme. In addition, the income-generation capacity of these beneficiaries improved significantly because of the use of labor-saving technologies (e.g. motorized cassava graters, etc.) which were distributed to communities across the targeted counties.

- 22 hectares of community lowland farm assets for staple food crop production were developed by rural women smallholder farmers in Grand Bassa and Margibi Counties as a result of the joint programme's provision of 27 Mt. of assorted food commodities (rice, pulses and oil) to four rural women agriculture groups (1 in Grand Bassa and 3 in Margibi Counties) in response to the impact of COVID-19 on grain reserves. These commodities also contributed to a means of income generation for the women accessing the grain reserves who were affected by the impact of the pandemic.

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

- 491 beneficiaries (women 400 / men 91) have been enabled to access seven innovative food processing units which enable the use of motorized cassava graters for adding value to cassava (e.g. farina production). The procurement of additional food processing units for the poultry and the dryers for vegetables, etc, is underway. In addition, 2 of 5 CGRs are storing 4 Mt of paddy rice which were reported as increase in yield in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties. The rice stored in the CGRs was used by beneficiaries to address food insecurity due to travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two community owned CGRs were constructed in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties, and women smallholder farmers are accessing labor-saving technologies for rice and cassava value chains development.

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

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

- A total of 400 women smallholder farmers with entrepreneurship skills have increased economic security (defined by their ability to generate and manage their own income) through better organized businesses. These women are transforming market tables into profitable businesses and are also saving money, not only as members of VSLAs but also as bank account holders. Access to business development and financial literacy skills is building the confidence of these women and helping them to realise their full potential.
- 487 women beneficiaries in Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa Counties increased their literacy and numeracy skills through the provision of regular training under the programme, which in turn led to the improvement of organizational and business development skills, as well as an increased understanding on shared household and care-giving roles. The programme is unlocking the full potential of women beneficiaries as they have gained a new sense of confidence through the ability to read, write their names, and use mobile phones. It is transforming their market ventures into profitable businesses.
- 487 women beneficiaries in Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa Counties have rediscovered their self-worth and self-confidence as a result of accessing and completing the vocational skills trainings provided by the JP RWEE (e.g. tailoring and cosmetology). In this context, new knowledge and skills in cosmetology and tailoring have thereby opened new opportunities for self-employment, income generation, and wealth creation. In addition, these beneficiaries are participating in community meetings and are making decisions relating to issues that are affecting their community as well as their wellbeing.
- The JP RWEE specialized business development and financial literacy trainings are transforming women beneficiaries from selling “for selling’s sake” to selling for profit, as many of them did not have the relevant business knowledge and skills before the JP RWEE intervention. These beneficiaries are now saving their money as bank account holders and are separating their personal money from their business money. Also, local community women are demonstrating their potential

and resourcefulness as business programme facilitators in the targeted communities in Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa Counties.

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

- Despite the impact of COVID-19, 50 women beneficiaries are accessing employment opportunities within the private sector company, Orange. The women undertook the position of mobile money agents, operating 50 mobile money stations in Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa Counties. These women beneficiaries have reportedly provided mobile money transaction services to over 15,062 clients/customers between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2020. They are also engaged in the registration of SIM cards and the opening of mobile bank accounts.
- 399 rural community women and 88 young rural women in and adolescent girls living with HIV/AIDS were supported by the joint programme with business development and financial literacy Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa Counties. These beneficiaries also received business start-up capital to initiate small businesses (e.g. tailoring, baking, and hairdressing shops) for income generation and are now self-employed, successfully managing their respective shops.

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

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

- Land Committee Meetings at the county level were reconvened in December 2020, no new women beneficiaries have gained memberships to existing land committees at the county level due to restrictions and health and wellbeing fears brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The joint programme is expected to expand its engagement on women's land rights advocacy and campaigns at the county, district, and community levels in 2021. Thus, the planned target is expected to be reached in 2021.
- No capacity building trainings in leadership and decision-making skills, including organizational development, were conducted during the reporting period. The activities on capacity building were rephased to 2021 programming due to COVID-19.

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

- No producer organizations were formalized during the reporting period due to COVID-19. The timeline for this activity was revised to 2021.

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

- 67 male religious, traditional, and community leaders and 809 women beneficiaries are practicing better handwashing and, in most cases, wearing stitch masks to curb the spread of COVID-19. This was as a result of two awareness raising exercises on COVID-19 that were facilitated jointly by the Liberia National Rural Women's Structure, the National Peace Hut Women of Liberia, and the Liberia Marketing Association with support from the JP RWEE. These exercises also included youth groups and male networks (HeForShe), which were implemented at community level. Field visits have confirmed that beneficiaries are passing on the knowledge and skills to others at the community level in support of COVID-19 prevention.

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

- 615 women leaders at the county level are leading women's rights advocacy efforts in the management of land for agriculture.
- 2 forums were held at county level on women's land rights referencing the gender-responsive implementation of the Land Rights Act in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties. COVID-19 prevention measures were considered. Women and women's civil society at county level are accessing information on their land rights from the County Service Centers. There is increased knowledge on land rights within these target groups as they are now successfully demanding the respect of women's rights in community management of land to local government at the county level. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the JP RWEE could not expand at the district and community levels even though there is a need to expand to include grassroots rural women smallholder farmers.
- 288 young women and adolescent girls are engaged in family planning and Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) which has been achieved through SRH education and capacity building in MHM at the community level.
- 350 young women beneficiaries have increased knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention and response following awareness raising on HIV/AIDS. From key informant interviews, about 65% of women beneficiaries and their spouses are practicing safe sex, using condoms as a preventive measure against infection, while at least 5% of the other women beneficiaries are practicing abstinence.

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

**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.

- No capacity building activities with policy makers and parliamentarians were conducted during the reporting period due to COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings.

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

- The joint programme contributed to the development of methodology, research areas, and research questions for a rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on women, girls, children, and their communities with UNICEF, UNFPA, and UN OHCHR. The survey report is currently being finalized and will contribute to the process of informing the planned Phase II design of the JP RWEE within the context of long-term recovery.
- A gender analysis of Liberia's COVID-19 Response Plan, COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund and budget allocations and expenditure was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning with support from the JP RWEE. As the pandemic continues, the analysis is assisting in informing policy actors and budget drafters to give more consideration to addressing gender issues during the response. Some recommendations from the analysis included:
  1. The government should revise the National COVID-19 Response Plan to ensure the full integration of gender-sensitive response planning.
  2. Gender-disaggregated data should be used to justify budget allocations and expenditures.
  3. The COVID-19 emergency relief fund donations and expenditures should be publicized.
  4. At the administrative level, more women's voices should be taken into consideration.

5. The government should establish a website dedicated to exclusive reporting on its COVID-19 plans, processes, and achievements.
- The JP RWEE conducted a value chain assessment for rice and vegetables across all targeted communities in Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Maryland, River Gee, and Sinoe Counties. The assessment looked at all aspects of the value chains from production to the market, opportunities, and challenges. Some key findings that informed the programme included:
    1. Working with rice farmers through existing or new associations (e.g. cooperatives, public-private partnerships, etc.) is now the approach the joint programme has taken to value chain development, given the small average size of rice farms across the country, and the poverty reduction needs of the subsistence farmers who farm the land.
    2. Selecting the right rice varieties that have the yield, disease resistance, and length of growing season characteristics desired by women smallholder farmers, and the taste characteristics sought by rice consumers, has been a central role of the Ministry of Agriculture Extension Officers associated with the rice value chain under the joint programme.
    3. The programme is working to enable an adequate environment to develop the cassava value chain. Cassava as a crop continues to contribute to food security at local level, but its potential as a raw material for agro-processing is also making it an important contributor for poverty reduction among smallholders.

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

### **Challenges**

The COVID-19 pandemic added new layers of complexity to the implementation of the joint programme in Liberia, which impacted the ‘Delivering as One’ approach. Restrictive measures including curfews, mobility restrictions, social distancing and limited or no access to internet connectivity prevented the implementation of the joint targeting of beneficiaries and communities, including National Technical Advisory Committee, National Joint Steering Committee (NJSC) and Governmental meetings (e.g. Ministries of Agriculture; Gender, Children, and Social Protection, etc.).

Internal processes within the participating UN agencies proved even more challenging as the UN System had to work from home as a mitigating measure for preventing COVID-19 infection with staff. For example, an increased delay in approvals with UN agencies and government regulatory bodies, and procurement processing and contracting with the participating UN agencies, contributed immensely to delays with programme implementation. Thus, the joint programme had to adapt to the country context in response to COVID-19 and has been implementing measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on programme implementation. The JP RWEE also coordinated with the government’s COVID-19 National Response Plan by aligning the joint programme’s priorities with the COVID-19 Emergency Food Security Plan in relation to purchasing and pre-positioning of emergency food stocks, expanding cultivation, strengthening coordination, and investing in agro-processing (e.g. the transformation of local produce such as cassava and rice into value added agricultural products ,as well as the transfer of technology for agri-business development in order to improve income generation and food security at local level).

To address the challenges presented by the travel restrictions due to COVID-19, the joint programme was able to utilize the local Ministry of Agriculture Extension Workers and the Ministry of Gender County Coordinators, involved in the programme since the inception, to support monitoring and supervision efforts at the district and community levels. These extension workers and Gender County Coordinators from the two government ministries have played a key role in following up with beneficiaries at the community level and reporting to their respective ministries and the participating UN agencies. Due to the restrictions on social gathering, capacity building trainings and farming interventions were also delayed. A no cost extension was approved by the donors and a number of activities have been reprogrammed for 2021.



## Lessons Learned

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic provided an insight into the importance of crisis preparedness and contingency planning. The programme's collaboration with the Government's National COVID-19 Response represented an important alignment with national coordination mechanisms. However, the JP RWEE recognizes the need for additional measures and critical interventions such as the provision of food baskets to beneficiaries to help beneficiaries cope with shock and ensure they can overcome the barriers and continue to participate in agricultural work. Furthermore, the lockdown-imposed hardship on the ability of households to access nutritious food due to a lack of access to markets. As a result of this, some beneficiaries sought odd jobs to secure daily income for catering to their households, even though some invested their time and energy in homegrown vegetables for consumption. This was observed to be the main driving force behind the farmers not putting in the time to work on their farms. The homegrown gardens cultivated under the programme did, however, enable women and their families to have access to nutritious food and maintain a healthy diet.

Utilizing innovative approaches towards gaining new skills in digital literacy and mobile banking, competences and organizational capacities has enabled women beneficiaries to lead and actively participate in more social and economic activities (e.g. rural women in PTA meetings, community meetings, volunteer work, climate smart agriculture, teaching, oil production, etc.). These new skills are enhancing their decision-making roles and to earn increased respect within and outside their households and communities.

The successful engagement with men as gender advocates has continuously proven successful towards achieving transformative changes against stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination and inequality at the household and community levels. Two strategic approaches, including UN Women's 'He For She' campaign<sup>2</sup>, (e.g.) have been undertaken during the programme implementation which have been proved successful, including awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns via national and community radios. Furthermore, building synergies with other programmes and projects (e.g. FAO's Promoting Increased Resilience and Sustainable Income Generation, Food Security and Nutrition for Rural Women; UN Women's Spotlight Initiative and the BuyFromWomen Pilot Project, etc.) has ensured the increased participation of men and boys as agents of change in support of women's empowerment in Liberia.

## Good Practices

One of the good practices observed during the national lockdown due to COVID-19 was the remote supervision of the programme through mobile phone calls and social media (e.g. Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp, etc.) to maintain communication with beneficiaries at the household and community levels. Nonetheless, there were connectivity issues at times and not all women had access to the technology which was a challenge.

The use of community grain reserves which had been developed under the programme proved to be a key coping strategy during the COVID-19 crisis for the women beneficiaries. Members of the grain reserves took loans from their stock reserves and were able to repay them without traveling out of their communities which would have exposed them to the virus. The reserves provided the farmers with the capacity to overcome unusually high rainfall and high temperatures which affected agricultural production, as well as withstand the impact of COVID-19, while also undertaking value addition to food products.

The joint programme aligned its 2020/2021 implementation plan with the Government of Liberia's COVID-19 Emergency Food Security Plan by ensuring that it targeted the most vulnerable households as well as female-headed households facing lost income because of the pandemic. The programme has contributed to the

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<sup>2</sup> [UN Women HeForShe Campaign](#)

boosting of local production of staple crops which include rice, cassava, beans, and vegetables to mitigate imminent slowdowns in trade due to the pandemic.

The joint programme remains flexible in its approach to delivering its interventions at all levels. In this context, interventions related to COVID-19 prevention, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) prevention; HIV/AIDS prevention; Menstrual Health Hygiene Management, and Sexual and Reproductive Health education have been provided and continue to be provided for beneficiaries across targeted counties in Liberia.

Despite the challenging context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the JP RWEE was able to deliver results under three of its four outcomes which included key interventions and implementation under improved food and nutrition security, increased sustainable income, and enhanced leadership and participation. Thus, no key results were achieved under the Outcome 4 of the JP RWEE global framework. This was due to the national lockdown and Government's call for prioritizing areas under the first three outcomes of the joint programme, especially Outcomes 1 and 2.

### **Qualitative assessment**

During a recent stocktaking exercise in Maryland, River Gee, Sinoe, Grand Bassa, and Margibi Counties, more than 85% of women beneficiaries (987 women) reported their satisfaction and indicated the impactful means of the programme – from capacity building to income generation and production. Some of the beneficiaries indicated that the programme has strengthened their involvement in decision-making processes both at the household and community levels. It has also strengthened the relationship with other surrounding communities. For example, members of communities that are not members of the grain reserves or VSLAs were able to borrow as a temporary measure from the grain reserves or the VSLAs and over time build that relationship that better unifies them. All loans have been repaid by the community members.

Due to travel restrictions and imposed curfews brought on by the COVID-19 lockdown, the use of extension workers from the Ministry of Agriculture and the use of social media (e.g. Facebook and WhatsApp) were instrumental in providing support in terms of monitoring and reporting. The social workers from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection conducted monitoring visits and took photos of activities in the field for reporting on progress, challenges and/or constraints.

The programme has been able to document the following as of December 31, 2020:

In rural households, women beneficiaries are preparing foods that are crucial to the increase of dietary diversity and which they did not previously consume. This includes vegetables rich in potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin A, and vitamin C. Women are also ensuring that access to food within the household is no longer determined by their cultural practices nor the power relationships within the family. Based on feedback from Agriculture Extension Workers and Gender County Coordinators, women beneficiaries continue to state that they are having a nutritional intake equal to that of men within the household.

Men beneficiaries continue to recognize the importance of serving as gender advocates in advocating for the end to violence against women and girls at the household and community levels. These men beneficiaries are also continuing to stand by women even during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic wherein they are jointly working with women to address the impact of COVID-19 on individuals, households, and communities by promoting social distancing and hand washing including raising awareness on COVID-19 and prevention of domestic violence.

Women beneficiaries, their families and communities have seen the value of the Community Grain Reserves and have strengthened their ownership of all reserves and their facilities for protecting themselves from grain (e.g. rice) production shortfalls and for strengthening the resilience of poor households to food insecurity and economic shocks. Women beneficiaries in grain reserves have been managing and maintaining labor-saving

technologies for increased production despite the pandemic, especially during the October to December 2020 rice harvest period.

Women beneficiaries have mobile money accounts and are in possession of their bank books and VSLA booklets which indicate they are accessing financial services for expanding their investments and experiencing economic growth. Thus, women beneficiaries have better organized businesses that are registered and recognized by their local communities and authorities. Businesses have grown from being worth US\$ 300.00 (LD\$ 51,000.00) to US\$ 2,700.00 (LD\$ 459,000.00) over the nine-month period.

Women beneficiaries are vocal about addressing SGBV at the household and community levels including for promoting HIV/AIDS prevention, COVID-19 prevention, Sexual and Reproductive Health, and better Menstrual Hygiene Management. Furthermore, communities have recognized the JP RWEE's efforts in creating a more supportive community for women and girls to exercise their rights as human beings and contributors to society at large.

Overall, the JNSC remains responsible for the monitoring and adapting of interventions and strategies that respond to any changes that may affect the sustainability of the programme's interventions.

The joint programme in Liberia continues to remain focused on 'Delivering as One' and is attempting to accelerate progress for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a UN development system that delivers more and better for the poorest and most disadvantaged Liberians. The joint programme is also serving as a model for other UN agencies as these agencies are utilizing the joint programme's training curricula (e.g. literacy, business development, VSLAs, etc.) for training women under their projects and as a best practice on ensuring a gender responsive policy environment for the economic empowerment of rural women (e.g. the Liberia Spotlight Initiative economic empowerment activities with traditional leaders and practitioners, etc.) – thus contributing to the implementation of the government's Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD 2019 – 2023) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2020-2024. Despite the restrictive environment caused by the pandemic, the three agencies were able to coordinate remotely and have meetings through online mechanisms during the period when staff had to work from home. The National Steering Committee and the Technical Working Group continued to coordinate effectively and were able to be responsive and flexible in ensuring the programme adapted to the challenges caused by COVID-19.

Another good practice identified that continues to make coordination work better with the joint programme is the building of synergies with other programmes and projects funded by the private sector which are crucial to promoting rural women's economic empowerment. The joint programme is strengthening linkages with the Alibaba funded Buy From Women pilot project led by UN Women for connecting the JP RWEE's women smallholder farmers and cooperatives to information, finance, and markets via information communication technology (ICT); the UN Women Innovation Norway funded project on "Digital Solutions to Improve Women Smallholder Farmers Resilience to Natural Disasters" by identifying and developing innovative digital solutions in two major areas, namely 1) Insurance: for addressing farmers' vulnerability to shocks, given the inevitability of environmental hazards and increased unpredictability brought on by climate change; and 2) Mobile-based Disaster Risk Reduction features by reviewing existing mobile-based tools for disaster preparedness, response, and resilience that would allow for crowdsourcing of real-time information, mobile loans for recovery, geo-mapping of damages, etc.; and the Orange Foundation funded project on Women's Digital Centers wherein JP RWEE beneficiaries in some communities are able to access digital literacy classes and access the internet for access to information.

The JP RWEE established strategic partnership with the National Public Health Institute through aligning its implementation plan with the COVID-19 National Response Plan for mitigating the impacts of the pandemic on individuals, households, and communities. In addition, the joint programme also established a strategic partnership with the National AIDS Commission (NAC) on HIV/AIDS prevention in targeted communities across Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa Counties.

## **Recommendations based on information provided by the Ministry of Agriculture in response to the impact of COVID-19 on food security and livelihood at local level**

The following actions were implanted as part of the JP RWEE and were in line with the government's COVID-19 Emergency Food Security Plan:

- Strengthening coordination by working with key government ministries and public entities, finance institutions and development partners, private sector, commercial and investment banks, as well as smallholder farmers, cooperatives, and agro-processors for building synergies across networks and communities of practice.
- Investing in agro-processing as a stimulus for agro-processors where they will transform crops and raw materials into consumer-ready food. When existing processing facilities remain operational, this will preserve jobs and incomes, and boost local production capacities during the emergency period and beyond.
- Expanding cultivation by boosting local production of staple crops which include rice, cassava, beans, vegetables to mitigate imminent slowdowns in trade. Also, there is an increased need for the purchase and distribution of seeds, tools, and labor-saving technologies, possibly using mobile money (e-wallet) solutions.
- Purchasing and pre-positioning emergency food stocks which will include rice, cassava, beans, and pulses to address food insecurity. This should also ensure that emergency distribution targets the most vulnerable households, as well as households facing lost income because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other stocks should be pre-positioned in storage facilities in hard-to-reach locations.

### **Interaction and Participation in COVID-19 Planning**

The JP RWEE is collaborating with UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, and OHCHR on an ongoing joint assessment with a focus on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on women, children, and their communities. The assessment is guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its central promise to 'leave no one behind'. It considers the new United Nations framework for the immediate socio-economic response to support countries and societies in the face of COVID-19, putting in practice the UN Secretary-General's Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity report on the pandemic. The assessment covers food and nutrition security; social protection and basic services; economy and jobs; social cohesion and community resilience; and poverty. It will help to inform the JP RWEE's next steps as it relates to COVID-19 long-term recovery in Liberia including the development of a potential Phase II of the programme.

Through coordinated COVID-19 response planning the JP RWEE linked in with a UNAIDS led Joint Programme, and was able, through their funding, to provide a cash injection which was used to help stimulate activities for Savings and Loan Associations (SLAs), covering 750 beneficiaries, impacted by COVID-19 across Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Sinoe, Maryland, River Gee, and Sinoe Counties

The JP RWEE also supported its key networks, namely the Liberia National Rural Women Structure, the LMA, the National Peace Huts Women of Liberia, and the Association of Women in Cross Border Trade to conduct COVID-19 outreach activities with women and men beneficiaries in over 55 targeted communities across Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa, and Sinoe Counties. The exercise was aimed at promoting social distancing and WASH practices with the programme beneficiaries as measures for curtailing the spread of the virus. Hygiene supplies were also distributed to beneficiaries.

**ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:**

	<b><u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets</b>	<b>Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)</b>	<b>Source of Verification</b>
<b>Outcome 1 Improved food and nutrition security</b>			
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.1:</b> Percentage increase in the production of rice with women beneficiaries  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 40% of women beneficiaries  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 35% of women beneficiaries</p>	<p>10% increase in agricultural production for rice with 501 smallholder farmers (women 441 and men 60)</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 travel restrictions impacted the timely delivery of results. Thus, the planned targets were not met by the end of December 2020. These targets are expected to be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Progress reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.2:</b> Increase in the production of cassava with women beneficiaries  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 40% of women beneficiaries  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 25% of women beneficiaries</p>	<p>5% increase in agricultural production for cassava with 501 smallholder farmers (women 441 and men 60) from Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties in 2020.</p>		
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.1:</b> Number of women beneficiaries <b>experiencing</b> dietary diversity for improved nutrition  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 11,390 beneficiaries (women 10,423 / men 967)  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 3,207 beneficiaries (women 2,774 / men 433)</p>	<p>As a result of the joint programme's intervention, 1,027 beneficiaries (809 women and 218 men) had adequate dietary intake (e.g. consuming vegetables, fruits, beans, rice, cassava, etc. from the major food groups) at the household level for their nutrition in 2020. The Ministry of Agriculture Extension Officers recorded food consumption data of the local population in JP RWEE communities (e.g. types and amount of food consumed by individuals and their households) by administering frequency questionnaires and reviewing dietary records. Some of these foods (e.g. rice, casava products)</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 travel restrictions impacted the timely delivery of results. Thus, the planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. These targets are expected to be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Progress reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>

	were in JP RWEE funded storage facilities before the onset of the pandemic.		
<b>Output 1.1</b> Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets, and services critical for their food and nutrition security			
<p><b>Indicator 1.1.1:</b> Number of rural women trained in organizational development and loans management (issuance, repayment, and food commodity management)</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 7,926</p> <p>Planned Target: 500 (males 0 / females 500) impacted by COVID-19 response</p>	<p>Capacity building trainings in harvesting, handling, processing, preservation, and packaging of assorted vegetables were postponed till 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. This target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<b>Output 1.2</b> Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves and their production			
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.1:</b> Number of rural women accessing and utilizing innovative food processing units</p> <p><b>Baseline (2019):</b> 0</p> <p><b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 491 beneficiaries (women 400 / men 91)</p>	<p>491 beneficiaries (women 400 / men 91) from communities with 7 innovative food processing units being finalized are accessing motorized cassava graters for adding value to cassava (e.g. farina production).</p> <p>Food processing units for the poultry and the dryers for vegetables, etc. are being procured. In addition, 2 of 5 CGRs are storing 4 Mt of paddy rice which were reported as increase in yield in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties.</p> <p>The rice stored in the CGRs was used by beneficiaries to address food insecurity due to travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target with the processing units was not fully met by the end of December 2020. This target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Progress reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>

	Two new community own CGRs were constructed in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties; 109 women smallholder farmers are accessing labor-saving technologies for rice and cassava value chains development in those new storage facilities.		
<b>Indicator 1.2.2:</b> Number of rural women who access food processing facilities <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 0 <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 491 beneficiaries (women 400 / men 91)	600 smallholder farmers (women 509 / men 91) are accessing food processing facilities in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties	The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. However, the planned target was met by the end of December 2020.	Progress reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.
<b>Indicator 1.2.3:</b> Number of rural women who get contract with WFP to support Home Grown School feeding and P4P <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 0 <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 269 beneficiaries (women 206 / men 63)	No contracts were signed with rural women in support of WFP's Home-Grown School feeding and the P4P. The activities here were rephased to 2021 programming due to COVID-19.	The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target here was not met by the end of December 2020. This target will be reached in 2021.	Progress reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.
<b>Indicator 1.2.4:</b> Number of Farmers Field Schools established/strengthened <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 0 <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 5 FFS	No Farmers Field Schools were established during the reporting period. The activities here were rephased to 2021 programming due to COVID-19.	The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target here was not met by the end of December 2020. This target	Progress reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County

		will be reached in 2021.	Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.5:</b> Number of beneficiaries (disaggregated by age and gender) benefitting from Farmers Field Schools  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 0  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 491 beneficiaries (women 400 / men 91)</p>	<p>No beneficiaries (disaggregated by age and gender) benefitted from Farmers Field Schools because they were never established during the reporting period. The activities here were rephased to 2021 programming due to COVID-19.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target here was not met by the end of December 2020. This target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Progress reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2 Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods.</b></p>			
<p><b>Indicator 2.1.1:</b> Income generated by women beneficiaries from the sales of their agriculture produce in markets  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> LD\$ 31,627,601 (US\$ 158,138)  <b>Planned Target:</b> LD\$ 18,200,000 (or US\$ 91,000)</p>	<p>Women beneficiaries were unable to access markets for the sale of their agriculture produce due to the national lockdown, given the COVID-19 pandemic. Produce that were stored in CGRs were used by the beneficiaries to address the scarcity of food during the national lockdown due to the coronavirus.</p> <p>10 women-owned and non-agriculture small businesses (e.g. specifically tailor shops) with over 175 women beneficiaries in Montserrado County generated US\$ 27,500 (LD\$ 4,400,000) from the sale of non-agriculture products (e.g. locally produced stitch masks and</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not fully met by the end of December 2020. This target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.  IPs Progress Reports</p>



	liquid soap) in response to COVID-19 with support from the joint programme through building synergies with the UNAIDS joint programme.		
<b>Output 2.1</b> Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products			
<b>Indicator 2.1.1:</b> Number of value chains assessments conducted Baseline (2019): 2 Planned Target (2020): 2 value chains assessment	1 value chain assessment was conducted for rice and another for vegetables. The assessment looked at all aspects of the value chains from production to the market, opportunities, and challenges.	The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. However, the planned target here was met by the end of December 2020.	Progress reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.
<b>Indicator 2.1.2:</b> Number of markets, demand and distribution channels identified for targeted agro-products <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 0 <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 1 gender gap analysis and 2 market studies	No change here because of travel restrictions. The activities here were rephased to 2021 programming due to COVID-19.	The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target here was not met by the end of December 2020. This target will be reached in 2021.	Progress reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.
<b>Indicator 2.1.3:</b> Number of trainings conducted in harvesting, handling, processing, preservation, and packaging of assorted vegetables <b>Baseline:</b> 0 <b>Planned Target:</b> 240 (males 28 / females 212)	Capacity building trainings in harvesting, handling, processing, preservation, and packaging of assorted vegetables were postponed till 2021 due to COVID-19.	The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. This target will be reached in 2021.	Reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and

			community levels were submitted.
<p><b>Indicator 2.1.4:</b> Number of trainings conducted in harvesting, handling, processing, preserving, and packaging of poultry products (meat and eggs)  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned Target:</b> 120 (males 18 / females 62)</p>	<p>Capacity building trainings in harvesting, handling, processing, preserving, and packaging of poultry products (meat and eggs) were postponed till 2021 due to COVID-19.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. This target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 2.1.5:</b> Number of trainings conducted in harvesting of fish, processing using smoking klins, preserving and packaging  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned Target:</b> 138 (males 32 / females 106)</p>	<p>Capacity building trainings in harvesting of fish, processing using smoking klins, preserving and packaging were postponed till 2021 due to COVID-19.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. This target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 2.1.6:</b> Number of women trained in business development, entrepreneurial and marketing skills (including packaging, storage, food quality control and negotiating skills)  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 7,926 (women 7,926 / men 0)  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 500 women beneficiaries</p>	<p>A total of 400 women smallholder farmers with entrepreneurship skills have increased economic security (defined by their ability to generate and manage their own income) through better organized businesses. These women are transforming market tables into profitable businesses and are also saving money not only as members of VSLAs but also as bank account holders.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target here was not fully met by the end of December 2020. The target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from the National Adult Education Association of Liberia, Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were</p>

	<p>487 women beneficiaries in Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa Counties can read, write, count, and access relevant information because of having accessed and completed literacy and numeracy skills trainings. These have also rediscovered their self-worth and self-confidence because of having accessed and completed life skills trainings (e.g. tailoring and cosmetology).</p> <p>New knowledge and skills in cosmetology and tailoring have thereby opened new opportunities for self-employment, income generation, and wealth creation. In addition, these beneficiaries are participating in community meetings and are making decisions as it relates to issues that are affecting their community as well as their wellbeing.</p>		submitted.
<p><b>Indicator 2.1.7:</b> Number of rural women involved in cassava value chain development (e.g. cassava based fortified food like super-Gari, cassava flower, etc.)  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 3,008 women beneficiaries  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 500 women beneficiaries</p>	<p>341 women beneficiaries in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties are involved in cassava value chain development (e.g. cassava based fortified food like super-Gari, cassava flower, etc.) Labor-saving technologies (e.g. rice and cassava processing machines, etc.) helped immensely in removing the labor in agriculture operations during the reporting period; thus, contributing to increased processing with cassava</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target here was not met by the end of December 2020. This target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Progress reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>

	products.		
<p><b>Indicator 2.1.8:</b> Number of market linkages established with WFP Home-Grown School Feeding programme  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 3,008 women beneficiaries  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 500 women beneficiaries</p>	<p>WFP has initiated the establishment of farming groups into cooperatives which will allow them to form part of WFP’s potential vendor roster for the purchase of local commodities by WFP, as well as other organizations.</p> <p>The <u>UN Women Buy from Women eCommerce digital platform</u> will also enable women smallholder farmers to sell their produce to potential buyers with payments made through mobile money.</p>	<p>The activities here were rephased to 2021 programming due to COVID-19.</p>	<p>Progress reports from Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Output 2.2</b> Rural women have increased access to decent wage employment opportunities</p>			
<p><b>Indicator 2.2.1:</b> Number of women accessing decent work and wage  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 1,116 women beneficiaries  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 60 women beneficiaries</p>	<p>50 women beneficiaries are accessing employment opportunities with a private sector company, namely Orange as women mobile money agents operating 50 mobile money stations in Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa Counties. These women beneficiaries have reportedly provided mobile money transaction services to over 15,062</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. This target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from the National Adult Education Association of Liberia, Orange, and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were</p>

	<p>clients/customers between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2020. They are also engaged in the registration of SIM cards and mobile bank accounts in targeted communities.</p> <p>399 rural community women and 88 young rural women and adolescent girls living with HIV/AIDS were supported by the joint programme with business development and financial literacy skills in Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa Counties. These beneficiaries also received business start-up capital to initiate small businesses (e.g. tailoring, baking, and hairdressing shops) for income generation and are now self-employed, successfully managing their respective shops.</p>		submitted.
<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:</b> Number of women beneficiaries who are members of land committees in targeted counties  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 1,268 women beneficiaries  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 75 women beneficiaries</p>	<p>Though Land Committee meetings at county level were reconvened in targeted counties, no new women beneficiaries have gained memberships in these existing land committees. The joint programme is expected to step up its engagement on women's land rights advocacy and campaigns at the county level. Thus, the planned target is expected to be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. This target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Output 3.1</b> Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance</p>			

<p><b>Indicator 3.1.1:</b> Number of rural women in leadership roles in land committees at local level  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 1,268 women beneficiaries  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 75 women beneficiaries</p>	<p>Though Land Committee Meetings at county level were reconvened in December 2020, no new women beneficiaries have been recruited to a leadership role in existing land committees at the county level. The joint programme is expected to expand its engagement on women’s land rights advocacy and campaigns at the county, district, and community levels in 2021.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. The target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 3.1.2:</b> Number of capacity building trainings in leadership and decision-making skills conducted  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 10  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 1 capacity building trainings</p>	<p>No capacity building trainings in leadership and decision-making skills were conducted during the reporting period. The activities on capacity building were rephased to 2021 programming due to COVID-19.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. The target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 3.1.3:</b> Number of rural women smallholder farmers trained in organizational development  <b>Baseline:</b> 0  <b>Planned Target:</b> 500 (males 0 / females 500) impacted by COVID-19 response</p>	<p>No capacity building trainings in organizational development were conducted during the reporting period. The activities on capacity building were rephased to 2021 programming due to COVID-19.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. The target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Output 3.2:</b> Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives, and unions</p>			

<p><b>Indicator 3.2.1:</b> Number of rural women organized into and participating in producer organizations  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 2,089  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 350 women</p>	<p>No producer organizations were formalized during the reporting period. This activity was rephased to 2021 programming.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. The target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 3.2.2:</b> Number of women POs organized  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 13  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 5 women-based producer organizations</p>	<p>No producer organizations were formalized during the reporting period. This activity was rephased to 2021 programming.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. The target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 3.2.3:</b> Number of women farming groups developed into cooperatives  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 13  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 10 cooperatives</p>	<p>7 farming groups from Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties were organized into farming cooperatives investing in the rice and cassava value chains during the reporting period. This activity was rephased to 2021 programming.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. The target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 3.2.4:</b> Number of informal rural women groups affiliating with formal organizations  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 958  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 5 groups</p>	<p>7 farming groups from Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties affiliated with 4 formal organizations, namely the Liberia Marketing Association, the Association of Women in Cross Border Trade, and the National Peace Hut Women of Liberia during the reporting period.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was however met by the end of December 2020.</p>	<p>Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 3.2.5:</b> Number of strategic dialogues supporting networking between informal women’s groups and formal organizations conducted  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 19  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 2 strategic dialogues</p>	<p>3 strategic dialogues supporting land rights networking between informal women’s groups and formal organizations was conducted in Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa Counties during the reporting period.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. The target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Output 3.3:</b> Rural women, including young women, have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels</p>			
<p><b>Indicator 3.3.1:</b> Number of national dialogue mechanisms on agriculture, rural development and land that involves rural women’s groups  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 1  <b>Planned Target:</b> 3 national dialogue mechanisms</p>	<p>No new national dialogue mechanisms on agriculture, rural development and land that involves rural women’s groups were established during the reporting period. This activity was rephased to 2021 programming.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. The target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection County Coordinators supporting monitoring and supervision at the county, district, and community levels were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Output 3.4:</b> Rural women, including young women have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment.</p>			
<p><b>Indicator 3.4.1:</b> Number of rural women exercising their land rights as per the new land law  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 3,556 women beneficiaries  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 350 women beneficiaries</p>	<p>615 women leaders at the county level demanded respect for women’s rights in the management of land for agriculture between 1 January – 31 December 2020 under the joint programme.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target here for land rights awareness was however met by the end of December 2020.</p>	<p>Reports from Liwen, White Rose Alliance, National Adult Education Association of Liberia, Rights and Rice Foundation, and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 3.4.2:</b> Number of rural women accessing information on land rights  <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 3,556 women beneficiaries  <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 350 women beneficiaries</p>	<p>Over 615 rural women have accessed information on land rights from 2 County Service Centers in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties during the reporting period.</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target here was however met by the end of December 2020.</p>	<p>Reports from Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection and relevant CSOs were submitted.</p>



<b>Outcome 4: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women</b>			
<b>Indicator:</b> Number of laws/policy frameworks passed to secure rural women's land ownership <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 1 <b>Planned Target:</b> 0	The Land Rights Act for Liberia was signed into law by President George Weah on September 19, 2018. The joint programme contributed to advocacy and awareness raising campaigns around women's land rights and the passage of the Act. It is now focused on ensuring the gender-responsive implementation of the Land Rights Act.	Ongoing	Reports from the Liberia Land Authority and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection were submitted.
<b>Output 4.1</b> Policy makers and parliamentarians have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural employment policies, laws, and budgets.			
<b>Indicator 4.1.1:</b> Number of capacity building trainings for decentralized officials at all levels conducted on the Land Rights Act <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 2 <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 1 capacity building trainings for 100 policy makers (women 50 / men 50) from the Legislature and relevant MACs	No progress has been reported here due to COVID-19.	The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. The targets will be reached in 2021.	Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection were submitted.
<b>Indicator 4.1.2:</b> Number of awareness building and advocacy exercises with the LLA, law makers and other relevant stakeholders conducted <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 2 <b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 2 awareness	2 forums were held at county level on women's land rights referencing the gender-responsive implementation of the Land Rights Act in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties with relevant stakeholders from local government, civil society, and	The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was however met by the end of December 2020.	Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection were submitted.

building and advocacy exercises	community-based organizations.		
<p><b>Indicator 4.1.3:</b> Number of national institutions and donor coordination mechanisms that are delivering evidence-based gender responsive rural development and agricultural programmes and policies</p> <p><b>Baseline (2019):</b> 5 national institutions and donor coordination mechanisms</p> <p><b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 2 (Cooperative Development Agency, Development Partners Forum on Gender)</p>	<p>The Cooperative Development Agency (CDA) has developed its Gender Policy and is implementing the policy to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in its programmes, strategies, and activities</p>	<p>The inaccessibility of project communities due to COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of results. The planned target was not met by the end of December 2020. The target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from UN Women and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Output 4.2</b> Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women.</p>			
<p><b>Indicator 4.2.1:</b> Number of institutions with capacities to collect, analyze, interpret, and report on gender disaggregated data</p> <p><b>Baseline (2019):</b> 3</p> <p><b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 4 (LISGIS, MoA, MGCSP, and MIA)</p>	<p>LISGIS, MoA, and MGCSP have strengthened capacity to collect, analyze, interpret, and report on gender disaggregated data for women in agriculture</p>	<p>The planned target was not fully met by the end of December 2020. The target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection and LISGIS were submitted.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 4.2.2:</b> Evidence of overall improvement in Monitoring, Evaluation, Knowledge and Communication</p> <p><b>Baseline (2019):</b> Participating Agencies evidence-based M&amp;E including strengthened knowledge management and communications</p> <p><b>Planned Target (2020):</b> 3 focal points (e.g. program officer, M&amp;E officer, communication officer) each from UN</p>	<p>The PUNOs conducted joint monitoring and assessment missions in the field. Findings from monitoring and assessment missions were document and informed several knowledge products that were developed (e.g. factsheets, flyers, policy briefs, etc.)</p> <p>Capacity building in results-based</p>	<p>The planned target was met by the end of December 2020. The target will be reached in 2021.</p>	<p>Reports from UN Women and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection were submitted.</p>

Women, FAO, and WFP	reporting and communications were conducted for key stakeholders and partners from government and civil society.		
<b>Output 4.3</b> An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women’s priorities in regional policy processes.			
<b>Indicator 4.3.1:</b> Number of national consultations on JP RWEE held to inform a second phase <b>Baseline (2019):</b> 0 <b>Planned Target (2021):</b> 1 national consultations dialogue	The ToR for the national consultations is being developed	Ongoing	UN Women, FAO, and WFP progress reports

**Mariama Fallah,  
Sinoe County, Liberia**

### **A Success Story of a Rural Cross Border Trader**



*“Before my participation in the JP RWEE, I used to sell charcoal in the local market in Greenville as a community market woman. I wanted to be a cross border trader to make more money but didn’t understand the idea behind cross border trade. Moreover, I had no confidence in myself because I had no idea or knowledge about cross border trade and the rights of such traders in the ECOWAS region, including the security issues that many women traders face at border points.*

*When I participated in the literacy and business skills classes and later my local Village Savings and Loan Association, I was able to better understand what cross border trading is and my rights as a cross border trader. The programme opened my eyes; and today, I am now crossing the borders in the region to trade and to buy goods because I now have the confidence and knowledge as a trader and as a woman. I now use my local VSLA as a space in my town to also discuss issues (e.g. GBV, SEA, extortion, harassment, etc.) affecting women traders for action to be taken by the local government.*

*I am now a registered member of the Association of Women in Cross Border Trade which is currently serving as one of many key entry points for the provision of information, services, finances, and skills training under the programme. My business has also grown very big, and I continue to get mentoring and coaching services from the programme through my community-based facilitator and the AWICBT.*

### **III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)**

The joint programme with technical support from the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) and in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection conducted an assessment on the ‘Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index’ (WEAI) in Bong County to determine the level of women’s empowerment in the county. The intent was to secure information for informing the Phase II of the joint programme in Liberia, if considered for a second phase. This was recommended by government represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Civil Society represented by the Liberia National Rural Women Structure and the Liberia Marketing Association.

Recommendations from the assessment included:

- Empowerment programmes need to be tailored to cash crop production because of existing high participation of women in food crop production activities. However, the assessment showed that any effective food crop intervention such as vegetables, cassava, plantain, etc., needs to prioritize linkages to markets to enable women to generate incomes from their farm produces.
- There should be increased investment in creating access to credit, utilizing the Village Savings and Loans (VSLA) scheme. Under this mechanism, women should be organized into small groups whose self-generated savings can continue to serve as a revolving fund for members. VSLAs bring the additional benefit of social empowerment and group membership, which is currently at low levels across all communities in the targeted county.

- Further research should be undertaken to better understand the root causes of women’s low rights over household assets. Meanwhile, future programmes should prioritize empowerment interventions that help women shift the use of their incomes in favor of acquiring assets as this will help enhance women’s autonomy, thereby reducing empowerment gaps on rights over household assets.

The joint programme also provided support to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to conduct a gender analysis of Liberia's COVID-19 Response Plan, COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund and budget allocations and expenditure. As the pandemic continues, the analysis is assisting in informing policy actors and budget drafters to give more consideration to addressing gender issues during the response.

### III. Resources

<b>Total approved 2019/2020 budget: US\$ 900,000 <i>RWEE-MPTF</i></b>	<b>Budget by Agency</b>	<b>Expenditure by Agency Estimated</b>	<b>Balance</b>
MPTF Contribution <sup>6</sup> :			
UN Women Liberia	US\$ 264,091.00	US\$ 219,091	US\$45,000.00
WFP Liberia <sup>3</sup>	US\$ 271,841.00	US\$ 187,952	US\$83,889.00
FAO Liberia	US\$ 364,068.00	US\$ 298,065	US\$66,003.00

<sup>3</sup> Due to heavy rains, road infrastructure affected WFP’s delivery; applies also to FAO and UN Women