

ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN

PACIFIC COUNTRIES BI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 30 JUNE 2024

| Programme Title & Project Number <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Toward Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Pacific Islands (Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati, Solomon). • MPTF Office Project Reference Number: #132613 | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</th> </tr> <tr> <th><i>Island Country</i></th> <th><i>Provinces/Islands</i></th> <th><i>Communities</i></th> <th><i>Direct beneficiaries</i></th> <th><i>Indirect beneficiaries</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Fiji</td> <td>2</td> <td>30</td> <td>2,080</td> <td>9,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Solomon</td> <td>3</td> <td>50</td> <td>3,000</td> <td>13,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tonga</td> <td>3</td> <td>30</td> <td>2,000</td> <td>9,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kiribati</td> <td>4</td> <td>43</td> <td>1,480</td> <td>6,660</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>12</td> <td>150</td> <td>8,560</td> <td>38,160</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Strategic Results: a) improved food security and nutrition; b) increased income, decent work and economic autonomy; c) enhanced participation and leadership in rural life and institutions; and d) more gender-responsive policy environment.</p> | Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results | | | | | <i>Island Country</i> | <i>Provinces/Islands</i> | <i>Communities</i> | <i>Direct beneficiaries</i> | <i>Indirect beneficiaries</i> | Fiji | 2 | 30 | 2,080 | 9,000 | Solomon | 3 | 50 | 3,000 | 13,500 | Tonga | 3 | 30 | 2,000 | 9,000 | Kiribati | 4 | 43 | 1,480 | 6,660 | Total | 12 | 150 | 8,560 | 38,160 |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|---|----|-------|-------|----------------|---|----|-------|--------|--------------|---|----|-------|-------|-----------------|---|----|-------|-------|--------------|----|-----|-------|--------|
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| Total | 12 | 150 | 8,560 | 38,160 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Participating Organization(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO • IFAD • UN Women • WFP | Implementing Partners <p>Government: <u>National level</u> • Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Women and Ministry of Internal Affairs, <u>Provincial/Island level</u> • Island Councils, Provincial Governments, Provincial Councils, Town Councils <u>Local Level</u> • Communities Civil Society: Live & Learn Kiribati and Tonga, Partners in Community Development Fiji and Kastoms Garden Association.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Programme/Project Cost (US\$) <p>Total approved budget as per project document: US\$ 5 Million for five years MPTF Contribution US\$ 5 Million for five years <u>Contribution for 2024</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO US\$ 246,635 • IFAD US\$ 187,250 • WFP US\$ 200,060 • UN Women US\$ 141,240 <p>by Agency (if applicable)</p> | Programme Duration <p>Overall Duration 5 years</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Agency Contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>by Agency (if applicable)</i> • Government Contribution (if applicable) • Other Contributions (donors) (if applicable) <p>TOTAL: US\$ 5,000,000</p> | <p>Start Date 25/05/22</p> <p>End Date: 24/05/27</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Evaluation <p>Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy Mid-Term Evaluation Report – if applicable <i>please attach</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy</p> | Report Submitted By <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name: Mehtap Tatar ○ Title: Deputy Country Representative ○ Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women ○ Email address: mehtap.tatar@unwomen.org | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

NARRATIVE REPORT JPRWEE PACIFIC COUNTRIES

I. Summary

In the first six months of 2024, JPRWEE in the Pacific Islands (PI) has made notable progress and has finally gained momentum. With 42% of the planned interventions from 2022 now initiated or completed, the program has effectively addressed previous delays. Outcome 1 has surpassed its target, reached 20% more women than planned across all four countries. Activities under Outcome 2 and Outcome 4 are yet to commence, while preparations for Outcome 3 are on track for the second half of the year.

The programme now benefits from the engagement of all community-based implementing partners, including Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF), Live & Learn Kiribati, Live & Learn Tonga, and Kastom Gaden Association for the Solomon Islands. Delay is attributed to major challenges in programming with limited budgets relative to high expectations and logistical complexities found, particularly in remote outer islands, but also in persistent lengthy recruitment for some technical expertise which hinder the start of some gender-transformative interventions. Disruptions from elections in Kiribati and the Solomon Islands and high travel costs further strained resources. Key lessons learned emphasize aligning annual plans with national events and enhancing JPRWEE coordination mechanisms, which has been addressed with the setup of newly form working groups at central and country level.

The baseline exercise in Fiji is nearing completion with the outstanding data analysis, with Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Tonga having swiftly completed beneficiary targeting and distribution activities. Significant achievements include, In Fiji, the distribution of 9,350 bongo seedlings to 187 women and a partnership with. Kiribati has engaged 1,480 farmers and established 250 Climate Smart Agriculture demonstration plots. Tonga has supported 400 women with home gardens and distributed tools to 2,000 rural women. The Solomon Islands exceeded its target, reaching 2,357 rural female farmers and establishing model gardens. Notably, Fiji's partnership with New Valley Processor Pte Limited will enhance agricultural productivity and export opportunities.

II. Results

The following interventions were implemented by the Joint Programme in for the first 6 months of 2024 to deliver the JPRWEE outcomes.

Outcome 1: Improved food security and nutrition for rural women and their households that contribute to equitable and sustainable food systems.

Under outcome 1, a total of 37 interventions all carried over from 2022 and 2023, are planned for the current year across the 4 different Island Countries. 22 of those were planned to be implemented during the reporting period. 16 of these were successfully started and ongoing. While 6 have not started yet.

Output 1.1. Increased access to and control over resources, assets, technologies and services essential for climate-smart agricultural production and food and nutritional security.

In Fiji, the planned activities included the construction of 3 community nurseries, 500 plots cleared for farming, distribution of set of home garden tools to the 30 communities. Specifically, the plan aimed to construct nurseries in three sites, benefiting approximately 2,000 women, and prepare land for up to 500 women's farming plots and home gardens. Progress in these areas has been significant. Seed packs and seedlings were distributed to both women and men, with 9,350 bongo seedlings provided to 187 women through a public-private partnership facilitated by New Valley Processor Pte Limited¹. Additionally, women's groups showcased their cross-learnings in seedling preparation, drawing from the Pacific Islands Rural Agriculture Stimulus (PIRAS) Facility's training. This collaboration included an agreement where New Valley Processor Pte Limited will supply Bongo Chillie seedlings to women farmers and purchase the produce at USD3.18 per kilogram. These advancements reflect the effective implementation of the planned activities, and the strategic partnerships formed to enhance agricultural productivity. Fiji identified and registered 1,345 rural women farmers to benefit from the project. From the registered beneficiaries, 500 were identified as plot owners and also are also tools recipients, through the women's group.

Under the planned activities for Fiji, JPRWEE aimed to reach 500 beneficiaries for home garden management and establish 250 Climate Smart Agriculture demonstration plots **In Kiribati**. The programme has successfully engaged 43 communities across Tabiteuea North, Tabiteuea South, Nonouti, and Onotoa, targeting 1,480 females. From the targeting 1,009 women beneficiaries have been registered. Additionally, nursery sites were selected in consultation with local communities and island councils, with finalization of agreements to secure these locations underway.

By the end of 2024, the JPRWEE program **in Tonga** planned to support 400 women and their households in establishing and managing home gardens by preparing land, providing training, and distributing tool sets, agrochemical inputs, and planting materials. Under the reporting period the programme made significant strides ga by reaching out to 34 communities across Tongatapu, Eua, and Ha'apai², where out of 2,000 rural women farmers already registered, all 400 were selected for targeted home garden activities. The programme also successfully procured and distributed home garden tools, agrochemical inputs, and planting materials. These resources will be shared among the 400 selected beneficiaries through community clusters, managed by committees of women leaders and town officers. A user fee system for tool maintenance and replacement was implemented, ensuring the sustainability of the resources. Additionally, the remaining 1,600 beneficiaries will also benefit from these home garden tools, enhancing their agricultural productivity and supporting the program's overall goals.

For the **Solomon Islands**, the JPRWEE programme planned to distribute in-demand root crop, vegetable, and fruit varieties to 10 germplasm centers for variety multiplication for 1500 women. Additionally, the programme aimed to provide training in home garden management, along with distributing 1,500 sets of home garden tools and planting materials by the end of 2024.

1. New Valley Processor Pte Limited was established in 2018. New Valley Processor is a food processing company. Its main commodity is bongo chilli. It first began forming Clusters in the Western parts of Fiji and the Highlands to supply cassava to Government food processing statutory bodies. It will be operating its chilli processing plant in November. It is based in Sabeto, Nadi where it has 92 contracted bongo chilli farmers. It has also signed contract with rural women farmers under JPRWEE. It supplied bongo seedlings to the women, bought at USD6.82 a tray with 50 seedlings in a tray. When harvested it will buy chillies from the women at contract price of USD3.18/kg. Valley intends to buy 200 tonnes of chillies this year giving farmers USD682,581M. In 2025 it plans to process 2000 tonnes of chillies which means income to rural farmers.

2 15 communities for Tongatapu, 8 for Eua and 11 for Ha'pai.

50 communities across Guadalcanal, Malaita, and Western Province, over-reaching 2,357 rural female farmers compared to the target set. Kastoms Gaden Association³, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, conducted beneficiary registration and renewal and awareness activities. Planting Material Network⁴ was involved in renewing and registering new members, coordinating with women's groups for implementation. A four-day capacity-building training was in 15 communities for Tongatapu, 8 for Eua and 11 for Ha'apai held in Zaita, Western Province, with 42 participants (9 men and 33 women) from 20 JPRWEE community groups. The training covered climate-smart agriculture techniques including practical exercises in establishing community model gardens, in particular: (i) Seeds Saving - demonstration on how to extract, clean, dry, store and save seeds of egg plants, cucumbers, tomatoes, pumpkin and rapid multiplication of yams and taros. (ii) Soil Management – participants were taught theory and practical applications of mulching, compost making, adding organic matters (animal manure – chicken manure), green manure and planting to cover crops such as Mucuna beans. (iii) Compost Making – participants were taught how to make compost consisting of organic materials such as kitchen waste, garden residues green and brown leaves, chicken deep litter. Seven (7) model gardens were set up which are used as training model prepared in Ziata, Noro, United Church Women's Fellowship, Kuzi, Madekoloko, back to Eden and Rendova Harbor Group. While Ziata community has been completed and trainees were able to plant seeds/seedlings, the others are nearing completion. These model gardens will benefit approximately 219 beneficiaries from the 7 community groups in terms of training and supply of planting materials.

Output 1.2 Skills and capacity strengthened to increase food production, food quality and local food security reserves; reduce food loss and waste; and improve household nutrition.

The planned activities under Output 1.2 across the four countries have yet to be started and are delayed. In Fiji, field demonstrations of climate-smart agricultural practices targeting 500 participants was initially scheduled from April to July. Now that tools and land have been established, therefore demonstrations are shift to July. Similarly, Kiribati planned similar training for 200 participants from May to October.

Both Kiribati and Tonga could not start the conduct of community-based disaster risk management (CDRM) training for five communities, focusing on food processing techniques for 30 participants each from January to May. Also, the development of the five-gender responsive CDRM plans has been replanned for the second half of the year.

Outcome 2: Increased income, decent work and economic autonomy for rural women to secure their livelihoods and strengthen their resilience.

Under Outcome 2, the programme is experiencing delay in implemented planned interventions carried over from 2023. Eight (8) activities were planned across the 4 counties which include a gender-sensitive value chain analysis that identify gender-equitable, climate-smart value-adding approaches. Additionally, knowledge products will be developed as a result of the analysis to support learning and piloting of these analyses. These activities have not yet started in any of the four countries due to the delay in recruiting of consultant. FAO initially outline in their budget to utilise service providers such as NGOs, or academic institutions. These institutions were not available and so opted for individual consultants. This has been problematic in finalising due to the procurement rule of staffing salary to be below 17% of total budget and non-flexibility of moving funds between budget lines. To address this FAO has utilised own funding to

³ Kastoms Gaden Association (KGA) is IFAD's Country Implementing Partner in the Solomon Is. The role of KGA is very important as they are coordinating the implementation of JPRWEE activities in the Solomon Is.

⁴ Planting Material Network is a local affiliate of Kastoms Garden Association, who is implementing activities in the provinces. For more info, refer to this link: <https://Kastomgarden.org>

pay for a consultant which is a cost to other FAO projects. The team are planning a meeting with global team to address this budgetary issue.

Outcome 3: Rural women's voice and capacity for action are strengthened with a view to better leadership and their full participation on an equal footing within their households, communities, organisations and in systems of governance.

Under Outcome 3, no interventions are planned under the reporting period. Those programme's interventions aiming to boost leadership and organizational skills across the four countries are all planned only for the second half of the year. Fiji will host a Market Vendors Association Forum for 1,500 vendors. In Kiribati the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) for 100 participants and a Leadership Training Programme for 25 women is planned to be rolled out for the first time in the country. In Solomon Islands 500 market vendors are planned to receive leadership training. FAO has recruited consultants to support Fiji, Kiribati and Tonga. The three consultants are already engaged in discussion with CIPs discussing ways of possible collaboration. FAO have projects in these countries where they will be leverage with JPRWEE in providing the trainings for both beneficiaries of JPRWEE and FAO.

Outcome 4: Gender-sensitive legal frameworks, policies and institutions strengthened to create an enabling environment for rural women to secure their livelihoods, rights and resilience.

Under Outcome 4, the programme is experiencing delay in implemented the eight (8) planned interventions carried over from 2023 and aiming at strengthening gender-sensitive legal frameworks and institutions. These interventions include capacity-building workshops for government officials in Fiji and Solomon Islands on gender analysis and the use of gender-disaggregated data. Additionally, workshops on gender and agriculture for government agencies were scheduled in Fiji and Solomon Islands. In Kiribati, a gender and land rights analysis was planned, while Tonga had a similar assessment scheduled. These activities have not yet started in any of the four countries due to the delay in recruiting of consultant. FAO has recruited the consultants to support the implementation of these activities and are currently reviewing their activities for July – Dec 2024.

III. Describe any delays in implementation, challenges, lessons learned, successes

Delays in conducting baseline surveys in Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga have stemmed from issues with beneficiary targeting and registration, compounded by geographical and logistical challenges. These include irregular flights, high travel costs, and delays in fund disbursement. In Kiribati and the Solomon Islands, national elections caused further interruptions, halting activities during crucial periods. Delays were attributed to complex procurement procedures hurdles. As a result, these implementing partners for Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga could only be engaged starting in January 2024, impacting the timely commencement of some planned activities. Also, the lengthy processes in recruiting technical skilled partners and consultants are hindering the roll out of activities under outcome 3 and 4.

Overall, a **major challenge** has been the limited budget relative to the high expectations and logistical complexity, particularly in remote outer islands. For instance, in Kiribati and the Solomon Islands, operations were disrupted by elections, and the high cost of travel and logistics further strained resources. Lessons learned include the importance of aligning annual plans with national events and improving coordination mechanisms. The experience from Fiji highlighted the need for more efficient and less costly survey methods, leading to the decision to simplify baseline surveys and omit Pro-WEAL in other countries.

Successes include the adaptive approach of starting activities despite baseline delays, leveraging existing projects, and collaborating with government agencies to align with national priorities. For example, the

distribution of home garden tools in Kiribati, Tonga and Solomon Is, has been adapted to a group-based system, reducing costs and increasing accessibility for all beneficiaries. The establishment of the Technical Advisory Committee has improved clarity in operations and facilitated more effective planning and synergies between the PUNO in programme implementation.

IV. Insert the completed Performance Indicator Table

No changes recorded since Annual report 2023. Outcome and output level indicators are measured at the end of the planning year.

JPRWEE Implementation Pictures in Pls





OTOWAE WARD



FULL BOARD MEETING



AIKI MAIKI WARD



TEMAO WARD



AIKI MEANG WARD



TANAEANG WARD

Fig.4. Targeting and awareness in Nonouti, Kiribati Live & Learn present the JPRWEE to the Council and communities.



Fig.5. Flooded crossing of Draiba village, Namataku, Navosa, and Crossing rivers to reach Nasauvakarua village, Navatusila, Navosa, to access communities for targeting and awareness in Fiji.



Fig. 6. Identifying process at Draubuta village, Noikoro, Navosa, Fiji.

Fig. 7. Identification process at Namoli village, Noikoro, Navosa, Fiji.