

JOINT PROGRAMME ON:
Accelerating Progress towards the
Economic Empowerment of Rural Women



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Investing in rural people



World Food
Programme



EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN IN RWANDA
SUCCESS STORIES

About The Programme

The overarching goal of the Joint Programme on “Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women” (JPRWEE) is to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development based on four outcome areas namely: improved food and nutrition security; increased income to secure their livelihoods; enhanced leadership and participation in rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies and programs; and gender responsive policy environments for the economic empowerment of rural women in seven pilot countries: Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda. In Rwanda, the Joint Programme is currently being implemented in 3 districts of Kirehe, Ngoma in Eastern Province and Nyaruguru in Southern Province. Since the project started, it has directly impacted 17,363 beneficiaries (9,625 women, 7738 men), and indirectly impacted 83,342 (43,338 women, 40,004 men).

“Under the Joint Programme on Rural Women Economic Empowerment (JPRWEE), I was chosen to be the treasurer of the women’s group in Kirehe District.”



JPRWEE Project managers and women participants during a recent field visit

The agricultural sector in Rwanda is the main source of income and livelihood for many people residing in the rural areas of the country. The majority of women (73%) practice farming activities from early childhood making it the most practical and sustainable source of income and financial security for them.

However, the expertise that women farmers have gained over an extended period of time, has not yielded expected results due limited resources and land, unstable climate conditions, restricted access to finance and markets.

It is in this context that FAO, IFAD, UNWOMEN and WFP developed an innovative and comprehensive UN system response in support of rural women’s economic empowerment through joint actions. The 5-year joint global initiative aims to accelerate the economic empowerment of rural women by creating synergies across agencies’ mandate and institutional strength in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. To go beyond numbers and capture the experiences of women farmers who are the protagonists of the JPRWEE, Partner UN Agencies visited all cooperatives and women’s groups supported by the JPRWEE with the clear objective of giving them an opportunity to speak about the impact of the programme on their lives, as well as challenges faced, good practices and lessons learned.



DUSABE Jeanette

Cooperative "Terimbere Mugore wa Sake"

Before the programme I was extremely poor, lonely, desperate and had a conviction that I was good for nothing. I could not go into a meeting as I rarely had water to clean up and clean clothes to wear. I was ashamed and had no confidence at all. I was in the first category of Ubudehe (Poorest Economic Status ranking). My only source of income was to go around searching for farm jobs in other farmer's lands. Often it wasn't easy to be employed because I had kids and not every boss would consider a woman with little children. In those cases, my husband would be the only one to put food on the table. We could not afford health insurance (Mutuelle de sante) or to lease land on which we could grow crops (beans, maize or Irish potatoes). We had no vision or promise for the future.

After joining the cooperative, I managed to make friends and interact with other women. Being able to discuss with other women was eye opening. I started taking better care of myself, including the way I dressed as I would always be concerned with what others would think of me. I increased my confidence level and I can now easily speak in front people which was not the case before I joined the group. I

was upgraded to the 2nd category of Ubudehe. The JPRWEE programme has supported the cooperative with a green house in which we grew tomatoes. For the first harvest, each member was given 9000 Rwf (11 USD) which I used to pay for health insurance. In the second harvest, we got 5000 Rwf (6 USD) which I used to start a small business that soon increased to 30,000RWF (36 USD) and keeps improving, with a daily profit of 500Rwf, which is an addition to my normal farming activities. I can now care for my two children because I am no longer looking around for jobs. I am planning to lease land in the next season and use the skills acquired from the cooperative in my own land. I trust that the land will highly contribute to our family income and wellbeing.

The main challenges that we face are; limited access to land, no access to credit, and more significantly the current drought that we are experiencing (July to August 2017). The support of the cooperative in accessing credit would truly be helpful to us.



UMUTESI Beata
Cooperative "Abaticumugambi"

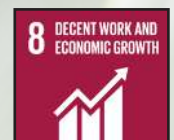
I was not part of any group. I was simply a normal farmer, growing beans and maize. I was shy and had no leadership role. At the time, we were using the tradition farming techniques such as; planting a lot of seeds, inappropriate use of fertilizers and planting bad variety of seeds. This was a result of traditional agriculture practices which led to poor harvests.

After joining the Abaticumugambi cooperative, and with the help of the JPRWEE Programme, I was chosen to be the treasurer of the women's group. The position provided great experience for me as it improved my way of taking initiative. I became more proactive and had an opportunity to exchange and learn from others on how to balance business and home management. It gave me so much confidence that I started to sell rice from Tanzania to our village. The JPRWEE programme provided me with a hoe and a spade to use at the farm.

We were given quality bean seeds which made a

significant difference because on the same area we used to sow 8kg and harvest 70 kg, but with the good seed variety provided by FAO, we harvested 150kg from the same piece of land. We took part of the harvest as seeds for the next season while the other was sold. We were also given chicken to raise as a cooperative but failed due to the lack of feeds and medicine. After realizing that they were dying, we sold them and kept the money at bank. I depend on two sources of income; farming as an individual and a member of the cooperative, and selling Tanzanian rice that I purchase from the Rusumo border in the neighborhood.

In this last year, I was able to partner with three other women in the cooperative. We built a small commercial building in the house which is an asset that will be a source of income in few months.



JOINT PROGRAMME ON:
Accelerating Progress towards the
Economic Empowerment of Rural Women



A farmer harvests vegetables from her kitchen garden

**EXPECTED
OUTCOMES
OF
THE
JPRWEE
PROGRAMME**

**Improved food and nutrition
security**

**Increased income to secure
their livelihoods and create
wealth**

**Enhanced leadership and
participation in their communities, in
rural institutions, and in shaping laws,
policies and programmes**

**A more gender-responsive
policy environment secured for
the economic empowerment of
rural women**



A woman participant's kitchen garden



MUKASHYAKA Beltide

Cooperative "Kubinya"

Before the JPRWEE programme, I was doing my farm activities all alone. I thought women were not supposed to go and work for money, especially because my husband didn't like the idea of me being out of home. I was very poor. Our house was almost falling, and I had no money to buy enough food. We were just poor.

I met other women from Kubinya Cooperative with motivating ideas. I was able to think differently and I started trusting myself. As a result, my confidence and self-esteem increased. Spending time with these women taught me that being a good woman doesn't mean that you have to stay home and depend on your husband, and in order to improve our lives we need to leave our comfort zone and take risks (do business). At the beginning, we received 15,000Rwf (18 USD) to start a small business. From that money, I used 7000Rwf (8 USD) to buy a pig, and took the remaining 8000Rwf (9 USD) to buy bananas and process local beer. Selling the beer gave me 80000

Rwf (95 USD), which I used to buy and sell sorghum, and got 160,000Rwf (190 USD).

I bought a cow which fortunately gave birth to 3 calves; however, due to the drought that we were currently experiencing, I sold them and managed to renovate my house. Last year the JPRWEE programme supported our cooperative with a greenhouse which we used to grow tomatoes and onions that we sold and shared the benefits. Each member got 12000 Rwf (14 USD). I used my share to buy a pig.

This programme has helped my family a lot. The programme brought our cooperative quality bean seeds which doubled our harvest compared to the seeds we used to grow. We were trained on good agriculture practices as well.



MUKANYANGEZI Domithille

Cooperative "Bimpinduka"

I was a housewife who could only work on the farm and cook. However, I did not belong to any group and was not respected by my husband. I had no assets, all I could do was to go to a farm and request for money for everything needed at home. We were not even able to pay for Health Insurance.

When the JPRWEE programme came, I joined the Bimpinduka cooperative and was trained on different topics such as hygiene and nutrition. I have managed to improve these aspects in my household. As a result of gaining a lot from the cooperative, my husband now respects me, and we live in peace and have a bright future.

Being in a cooperative became an incentive to change my mindset, improve my hygiene and intelligence because I had to meet other people at the cooperative. I am valued by my husband

and in-laws due to the fact that I can economically contribute to the wellbeing of my family.

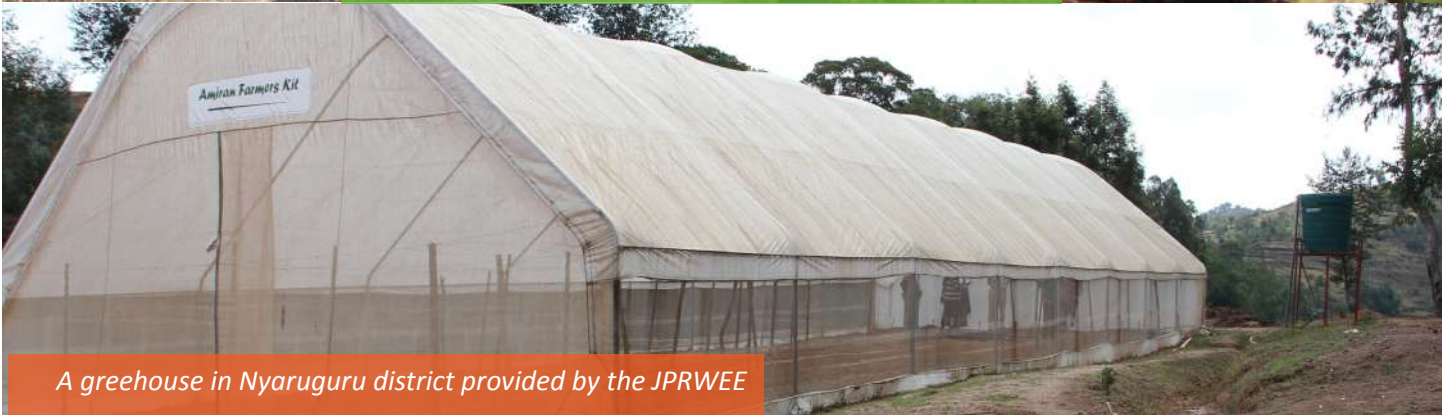
With the programme, I was given a pig. I raised it and it gave birth to 6 piglets. I sold 5 piglets and I got 18,000 Rwf (21 USD) which paid the health Insurance for the 6 members of my family. I am very grateful for the support. I was also trained on modern agricultural techniques, which made me realize that the modern technology helps us to use less quantities of seeds which increased our production from 20kg to 50kg from the same piece of land.



Tomatoes grown in a greenhouse provided by the JPRWEE



Farmers cultivate land in preparation for the rainy season



A greenhouse in Nyaruguru district provided by the JPRWEE



A woman participant walks through Twitezimbere Coaoperative`s greenhouse provided by JPRWEE

UN Women Rwanda Country Office
12 Avenue de l'armée
P.O. Box 445 – Kigali, Rwanda
Tel: 250 788 122 463
Web: www.unwomen.org
JPRWEE National Coordinator Tel : 250 788 122 466
Email: judith.katarwa@unwomen.org