



JP RWEE FACTSHEET

Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment



Context

Rural women are key agents of change who are at the forefront of agricultural production, supporting food security and nutrition. The income they generate contributes to rural economies, as well as to the health and wellbeing of their families and communities. Despite their critical role in the eradication of poverty, rural women continue to face systemic barriers that limit their access to productive resources, opportunities and services, and they carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work. Rural women are predominantly excluded from decision-making structures and processes, and deeply entrenched social norms and patriarchal systems further impede their ability to fully participate and equally benefit from economic activities. All of which are further exacerbated during times of conflict, climate change and crisis.

Programme Overview

The Joint Programme 'Accelerating Progress towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment' (JP RWEE) is a global initiative with an overarching goal to secure rural women's livelihoods, rights and resilience in the context of sustainable development.

The JP RWEE builds on each agency's comparative advantages and adopts a holistic approach to improve the status of women in rural areas and achieve four interrelated outcomes:

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

The programme was jointly implemented from 2014 to 2021 by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UN Women and the World Food Programme (WFP) in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda.

A new phase of the programme will be implemented in Nepal, Niger, the Pacific Islands, Tanzania and Tunisia from 2022-2027, thanks to the generous support of Norway and Sweden. The programme seeks to expand its funding base and further scale up this proven holistic programme model to additional countries including Palestine, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Rwanda.

Key Results

The programme reached almost 80 000 direct beneficiaries and over 400 000 indirect beneficiaries during the first phase of implementation. Key programme results include:

- **82 percent** average increase in production by rural women;
- Over **USD 3 600 000** generated from sales at the individual and group levels;
- Over **USD 1 900 000** mobilized through savings and loan schemes;
- On average **77 percent** of Producer Organizations led by rural women;
- Approximately **40 000 beneficiaries** benefitted from capacity strengthening activities in **agricultural production techniques**;
- Approximately **20 000 beneficiaries** trained through **gender-transformative approaches**;
- **Increased empowerment** and **higher gender parity index** as measured by the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI);
- More **gender-equitable relations** achieved within participating households;
- **Gender mainstreaming** incorporated into **national policies and strategies**;
- Reported **increased resilience** to the impacts of COVID-19.

Contribution to the SDGs





JP RWEE Approach

The JP RWEE adopts a number of programme strategies to achieve its goal and objectives and enhance the sustainability of the programme. Two cross-cutting lenses have been incorporated for the new phase of the programme:

- i. A resilience lens to enable rural women and their households to anticipate, adapt and respond to climate change, hazards and other shocks and build back from COVID-19.
- ii. A gender-transformative lens to address unequal power dynamics and discriminatory social norms and contribute to transformative and structural change at multiple levels.

Programme strategies include:

- Working with partners, including national and local government, NGOs, civil society and the private sector;
- Developing individual, collective and institutional capacity to contribute to knowledge and skills transfer;
- Working with and through women's groups to enhance economic and social capital;
- Applying an intersectional approach to ensure that No One is Left Behind;
- Leveraging ICTs, digital agriculture and innovative solutions;
- Application of participatory approaches throughout the programme, with appropriately contextualized design and implementation.

Targeting includes the poorest and most vulnerable rural women, as well as smallholder women farmers with economic potential. Inclusion of the most marginalized groups has included survivors of GBV, people living with HIV, internally displaced persons and indigenous women.



Amplifying Women's Voices

"Even though many people told me I couldn't do it, because technology is for men, not women, I knew I could. The JP RWEE taught me that women can do much more than just housework. And now my community knows that and so do my daughters."

– Marta Benavente, JP RWEE trained solar engineer, Guatemala

"As a member of the Women's Council, I am able to use this platform to share knowledge of planting across the district and also teach community members on the importance of eating fruits to help reduce malnutrition. I am also earning money with my grafting business, and have been able to buy my own cow, and pay for my family's medical insurance."

– Marie-Rose, Rwanda

"In 2017, I put forward my candidacy for the local council (kenesh) and was able to win, our society supported me. I was able to develop my leadership skills, I was able to prove that politics is not only for me, that women can and should do it too."

– Tursunai Akmatova, Kyrgyzstan

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<https://www.ifad.org/nl/jprwee>