



JP RWEE 2025 FACTSHEET

Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards 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 share of unpaid care and domestic work. Rural women are largely excluded from decision-making structures and processes. Deeply entrenched discriminatory social norms and patriarchal systems further impede their ability to fully participate in and equally benefit from economic activities. These constraints are further exacerbated during times of conflict, climate change, environmental degradation and crisis.

Programme Overview

The Joint Programme on '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.

Thanks to the generous support of Ireland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) and the Gates Foundation, the programme is implementing Phase II.

The programme is being jointly implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the World Food Programme (WFP) since 2014.

PHASE I 2014-2021

Ethiopia
Guatemala
Kyrgyzstan
Liberia
Nepal
Niger
Rwanda

PHASE II 2022-2027

Nepal
Niger
Rwanda
Tanzania
Tunisia
the Pacific Islands
(Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands
and Tonga)

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



Improved food security and nutrition;



Increased income, decent work and economic autonomy;



Enhanced participation and leadership in rural life and institutions;



More gender-responsive policy environment.

To achieve these outcomes, the programme applies the following strategies:

- Working with partners, including national and local government, NGOs, civil society, the private sector and large-scale development programme to provide on-the-ground support.
- Developing individual, collective and institutional capacities to contribute to knowledge and skills transfer, ensuring sustainability of the implemented activities.
- Working with and through women's groups and individual rural women farmer cooperatives to enhance economic and social capital;
- Leveraging information and communication technologies (ICTs), digital agriculture and innovative solutions to improve efficiency;
- Applying participatory approaches throughout the programme's design and implementation to ensure it is appropriately tailored to local contexts.

To ensure no one is left behind, the programme specifically targets the rural women living in the poorest and most vulnerable situations facing food insecurity and malnutrition. JP RWEE has also prioritized the inclusion of the most marginalized groups, including survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), people living with HIV, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and Women Headed Households.

Building on lessons learned from Phase I, Phase II incorporates two cross-cutting lenses:



A **resilience lens** enables rural women and their households to strengthen social capital fostering **social resilience**; enhance capacities and access to decent employment promoting **economic resilience**; and build capacities in climate smart agricultural practices advancing **resilience to climate change**.



A **gender-transformative lens** to address root causes of inequalities, increase individual and collective agency¹, readdress unequal power relations, and change discriminatory policies and social norms at all levels (incl. household, community and governments).

JP RWEE's approaches foster an environment of inclusivity and reflection which supports in fostering social change and empowering women as agents of change, ensuring that interventions are tailored to the specific needs and contexts of programme participants and communities. These approaches include, among others:

Gender Action Learning System (GALS) is a household methodology that empowers women to visualize and actualize their economic and development goals. The tool focuses on engaging both men and women at the household level to challenge and change deep-rooted stereotyped gender norms.

Business Action Learning for Innovation (BALI) methodology promotes women's business innovation and diversification of their opportunities within local economies.

The Farmer Field Schools (FFS) learning approach reinforces technical capacity and supports positive changes in attitudes, behaviours and practices to transform gender relations.

Dimitra Clubs are community listening clubs where women and men identify, discuss and take collective action on gender and development issues.

Community-based Participatory Planning (CBPP) brings together communities, partners and local government to identify issues and tailor programme responses to local requirements.

Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and Planning is a systematic process of embedding a gender perspective throughout the entire budget cycle to achieve gender equality and ensure public resources benefit everyone equitably.





Key Results

The programme directly reached **over 130,000 rural women and men** since Phase I and is expected to reach an additional 10,000 women and men by the end of Phase II (2027).

By mid-year 2025, key programme results for each of the four outcome area include:

Improved food security and nutrition

Participating rural women achieved an average **82% increase in production**.

They have also **increased their production of nutritious crops by 9%**.

Around **40,000 participants** benefitted from capacity strengthening activities in improved agricultural production techniques.

Almost **20,000 additional participants** have gained access to productive resources such as land and **climate-smart agriculture** tools.

Increased income, decent work and economic autonomy

Over USD 3,600,000 were generated from sales at the individual and group levels.

10% increase in rural women's income was generated from farm and off-farm production.

Over USD 1,900,000 were mobilized through savings and loan schemes.

4,600 rural women have gained access to gender-responsive financial services such as savings and credit.

Enhanced participation and leadership in rural life and institutions

On average, **77% of Producer Organizations** were led by rural women.

25% increase of women leaders was achieved in community decision-making bodies and producer organizations.

Nearly **20,000 participants** were trained through gender-transformative approaches.

More gender-responsive policy environment

Participating households reported **higher level of empowerment, strong Gender Parity Index¹** and more **gender-equitable relations**, indicating improved access to resources and decision-making.

Nearly **50% more** rural women and men participating in the programme are now demonstrating **improved awareness** and understanding of their **legal rights** and relevant **policy mechanisms**.

Gender mainstreaming has been successfully incorporated into **6 national policies and strategies**.

5% of rural women reached have reported active participation in local and national-level government meetings on **policy formulation** and **budget allocation**.

A **33% increase** in rural women initiating **agribusiness or self-employment activities** (5,138 women across all countries in 2024) further illustrates the impact of a supportive policy environment.

Looking Forward

Building on the successful models and tailored approaches developed in Phase I, which have proven effective and replicable², Phase II of the JP RWEE integrates key learnings and introduces new elements to further support rural women's economic empowerment in evolving contexts.

2025 marks the midpoint of the programme implementation, and country teams are conducting Mid-Term Reviews (MTRs). This exercise assesses progress in the implementation of the planned JP RWEE activities and results, the programme's performance in delivering joint interventions aimed at Women's Economic Empowerment through the two cross-cutting lenses and applied strategies and approaches. MTRs allow for recalibration of activities based on findings to ensure successful achievement of programme's goals.

The review also helps inform the second half of Phase II and strengthen the key elements needed to sustain achieved results and drive transformational change for women's economic empowerment.

¹ As measured by the pro [WEAI](#).
² According to the [JP RWEE Final Evaluation \(2014-2020\)](#).



Agnes Nibakure, Rango village, Rwanda.

Agnes once struggled with poverty, conflicts at home, and a lack of self-confidence. Married at just 16, she had little knowledge of women's rights or financial empowerment.

"The family journey had been marked by conflicts, rooted in a lack of self-confidence to manage the little resources we had, including the livestock and food at home, and domestic violence was considered normal. Due to regular conflict about the management of our family income, my husband Emmanuel decided to leave the household."

Everything changed when Agnes joined the JP RWEE. Through training in gender equality, agriculture, savings, and business skills, Agnes found her voice and began transforming her life. A small loan of just 10,000 RWF (about \$8) helped her start a business focused on growing potatoes and selling baskets. Within three months, she had repaid the loan and doubled her earnings.

With her entrepreneurial spirit ignited by the JP RWEE, Agnes had bigger dreams. After losing land and house in the valley because of extremely heavy rains and floodings, Agnes rented a small piece of land where she cultivated beans, yielding 30 kilograms for home consumption, and earning a steady income from her various ventures.

As her confidence and income grew, her husband Emmanuel returned—this time to learn from her. After participating in the programme's Gender Action Learning System (GALS) training, he became a true partner—sharing household duties and helping raise their children.

Agnes aspires to register her own business, create a registered company specializing in basket and agriculture products marketing, and ultimately become a recognized entrepreneur in Rwanda.

Read full story [here](#).

THE JOINT PROGRAMME ON ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARDS RURAL WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (JP RWEE)

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