



Nepal Update July 2016

Context

Rural women constitute 43 percent of the total 83 percent population living in the rural areas of Nepal. As in many developing countries, women have played an important and often unrecognized role in the agriculture sector in Nepal that sustains nearly 80 percent of the total population. The recent increasing trend in out-migration of working age men is having a dramatic effect—both positive and negative on rural women. With so many men moving abroad for work, women have stepped into more meaningful leadership roles and also functioning as a caretaker of their family. Women's empowerment is a key to overall economic productivity, given women's large presence (67%) in the agricultural workforce. Also, Nepal is in the process of implementing the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and empowerment of rural women is vital to the success of the SDGs: from the goal to end poverty and hunger, improve food security and nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture and, achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

Programme Overview

The Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal, Joint Programme (RWEE JP) is a 5 year programme initiated in 2012 at the global level by UN WOMEN, FAO, IFAD and WFP to promote the economic empowerment of rural women by securing their livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development. Together with Nepal, the RWEE Joint Programme has been implemented in Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Niger, Rwanda and Ethiopia. The RWEE JP-Nepal was developed by UN WOMEN, FAO, IFAD and WFP as a pilot for the gender responsive implementation of the Nepal Agriculture Development Strategy being implemented by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and different development partners including UN agencies. This 5-year initiative aims to achieve meaningful changes in the status of rural women through the following outcomes:

- Improved food and nutrition security
- Increased income to secure livelihoods
- Enhanced participation in decision-making at the community level
- More gender-responsive policy environment

Expected results

The programme is currently supporting **3,400 rural women and their families** in **30 Village Development Committees (VDCs)** of the **three** selected districts (Sarlahi, Sindhuli, Rautahat) and plans to scale up to a total of **6,600 rural women and their families** if additional funding become available.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS AND SUCCESS STORIES

- **600** rural women farmers trained on leadership development with GESI response approach
- Over **3,400** rural women engaged in cereal production and kitchen gardening for improved food and nutrition security
- **129** nurseries were established to support vegetable production for rural women in the three districts
- **1,937** rural women's households (HHs) benefited from the construction of infrastructure through Cash for Assets activities
- Over **3,120** pregnant/breast feeding mothers and children under 2 years benefited from support provided through supplementary food and nutrition counselling
- Draft **GESI** strategy for the implementation of the Agricultural Development Strategy.



Photo credit: Narendra Shrestha/UN Women

"Thanks to the joint programme, we have harvested three times more vegetables and fruits than last year."

- Kalpana Shrestha, 36,
President, Panchakanya
Female Farmer's Group



Photo credit: Narendra Shrestha/UN Women

"After the training equality and economic empowerment, I am more confident to express myself in public."

- Chandra Thapa, 45,
Ranichuri VDC, Sindhuli



Photo credit: Narendra Shrestha/UN Women

"This is the first time we received hands on support to construct a canal to irrigate our fields. We hope to a good harvest this year."

- Members of Laigurash
Female Farmers' Group

“RWEE JP improves lives of female farmers in Nepal”



Chandra Kala Thapa plucking long beans from her kitchen garden in Ranichuri VDC, Sindhuli
Narendra Shrestha/UN Women

Chandra Kala Thapa, is one of many smallholder women farmers from Ranichuri VDC in Sindhuli district. She has been supported by the RWEE programme to improve agricultural productivity and increase their incomes.

“Now the prices are good and the money comes on time. This was not the case when I used to sell maize in the market,” she says. Chandra Kala explains while a kilogramme of maize would sell at NPR 40 per kilo in the market, the sale of vegetables and fruits in all seasons range from NPR 80 to NPR 120 per kilo.

Like other smallholder women farmers working with the RWEE initiative, Chandra Kala is assured of a steady market for her produce and a sustainable source of income. “The joint programme provided me with technical knowledge as well as agriculture inputs (seeds, fertilizers, equipment) and facilitated access to credits so that I could produce more, aggregate crops and sell it in the market,” she said.

A mother of two, Chandra Kala is happy that her sons, 8 and 11 are getting a balanced diet at home and that she can afford to send them to school. “Before, I had no money to properly feed my children or send them to school. Now, I produce enough for me and my family. I am happy that I can provide for their education and also pay for medical care,” she says.

Chandra Kala says she has benefitted greatly from the trainings on gender equality and economic empowerment given to women farmers from the RWEE joint programme districts.

“This training has boosted my confidence and given me an opportunity to express myself. It has also equipped me with knowledge to advance women’s rights. These days I can participate more fully in activities both related to my household and community,” she says.

“I often share my learnings about gender with my husband. I am so happy that he is helping me both in my household chores and in farms,” Chandra Kala adds with a smile.

Governance

The Programme Steering Committee (PSC) chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) was established to provide the overall coordination and guidance on programme implementation.

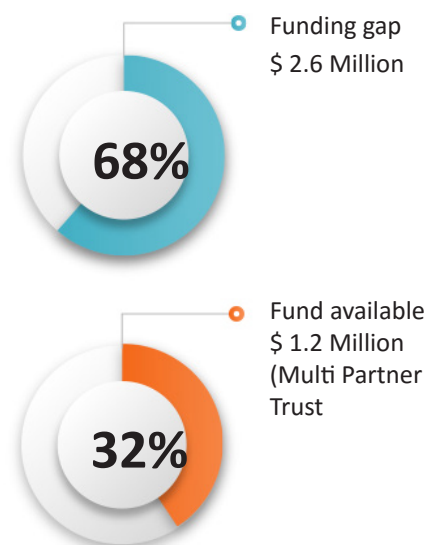
The PSC members include representatives of the National Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Department of Agriculture, Department of Livestock Services and a representative of women farmers from the National Peasant Coalition in an effort to ensure inclusive participation.

Budget

The total budget required is USD 3.8 Million, out of which USD 1.2 Million is currently available from the Multi Partner Trust Fund (till December 2016) thanks to the generous contribution of the governments of Norway and Sweden.

There still remains a funding gap of USD 2.6 Million, which will require mobilization of additional fund.

Fund for RWEE Joint Programme



For more information, please contact:
Rachana Bhattarai, Programme Officer
T +977-1-4255110/ 4216028/ 4239089
E: rachana.bhattarai@unwomen.org

