



Women's Entrepreneurship for Empowerment Project Tajikistan

ANNUAL REPORT:

October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016

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Women's Entrepreneurship for Empowerment

TAJIKISTAN

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Abbreviations

USAID – United States Agency for International Development
AOR – Agreement Officer Representative
NABWT – National association of business women of Tajikistan
AMEP – Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
PM – Project Manager
M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation
VC – Value Chain
VCT – Value Chain Team
FTF – Feed The Future

Definitions

Economically Active Women: Women who are conducting their own business and have ongoing sales and income. The project assumes and confirms through ongoing research that Economic empowerment combats discrimination and disadvantage. Economically active women are more likely to participate in decision-making and be advocates for their rights.

Economically Non-Active Women: Women who have not started any business or have any ongoing sales.

Dekhkan Farm – Literally “peasant farm” - A commercial farm subject to the agricultural single tax to where the members of the farm own non-land assets defined by the farm’s charter. Types include individual, family, and collective. (*source: USAID Tajikistan FAST Project documents published in 2014*)

Table of Government Administrative Units in Tajikistan

(sourced from USAID Tajikistan FAST Project documents published in 2014)

Generic English	Tojiki	Tojiki in English transliteration	Russian	Russian in English transliteration
Province(s)	Вилоят(ҳо)	Viloyat(ho)	Область (области)	Oblast(i)
District(s)	Ноҳия(ҳо)	Nohiya(ho)	Район(ы)	raiony
Sub-district(s)	Ҷамоат(ҳо)	Jamoat(ho)	Сельсовет(ы) / Джамоат(ы)	Sel'sovet(y) / Dzhamoat(y)
Village(s)	Деҳа (Деҳот)	Deha (Dehot)	Село (Села) / Кишлак(и)	Selo (Syola) / Kishlak(i)
Neighborhood(s)	Маҳалла (Маҳаллҳо)	Mahalla (Mahallho)	Махалла (Махаллы)	Makhalla (Makhally)

The term *Jamoat* (sub-district) is used often in this document.

Project Zone of Influence – Map of where the Project works

Figure 1 - Map of WEEP Zone of Influence



Section I: Overall progress of the Women Entrepreneurship for Empowerment project

The *National Association of Business Women of Tajikistan* through *Women's Entrepreneurship for Empowerment Project* funded generously by USAID advocated and pressed the issue of women's entrepreneurship across the board on multiple levels of society, from youth and their teachers, to expansive press campaigns to the public, the lobbying of government officials on behalf of women businessmen, and by engaging women and men directly in the communities where they live. Government officials from the highest levels to the clerks in tax offices paid attention to the needs of businesswomen through the Zone of Influence. Not only did women receive trainings in business and professional skills, but they received inspiration and courage to achieve through a movement of women running their own operations and carrying responsibility for the care of their families through the "Farah 2016" national campaign and competition. Women were emboldened to try new ventures, and supported as they learned new skills and took new steps outside their homes.

Project Achievements on Key Indicators (including Feed the Future Indicators)

- **187 women started new businesses supported by project efforts, which was 187% of the project goal for Project year two, and 79% of the goal for the life of the project.**
- **Of these 187, 162, or 87% of these businesses were started in rural areas in Khatlon. These areas have been identified as especially difficult areas for business and entrepreneurship, and yet this project has seen excellent success helping women start businesses.**
- **The project came along active business women and saw 189 women improve their business through increased profits, improved products, or increased hiring. This was 95% of the goal for Project Year Two.**
- **A total of 210 women who are WEEP beneficiaries invested in their own businesses, which was 100% of the Project goal for Year two.**
- **The Project was able to channel and coordinate United States Government Assistance to 2,707 households in Khatlon, which was 129% of the Project goal for Year Two.**
- **Only 18 women who are Project beneficiaries officially registered their businesses during Project year two, which was only 30% of the target. The general economic environment of Tajikistan has made it hard for both men and women entrepreneurs to register.**
- **Several project targets have still to be met because they are waiting to be implemented according to schedule. These include youth co-education (*Junior Achievement*), Role Model development through Farah, and Funds raised for Farah from the private sector. Supporting activities have been implemented to date and these targets are fully expected to be met during Project Year three.**

187 women started new businesses after attending a project training this last year. That is 187% of the goal!

87% of new businesses were started in rural areas in southern Tajikistan

Considering that the project got a slow start, and really only started activities on the ground in the last quarter of Project Year One, these accomplishments against life of project goals indicate that the Project has traction and is making an impact as or more than planned, and can expect to accomplish most of its goals by the end of the project lifecycle. This is in the overall context that the Tajik economy continues to sit stalled in the midst of an economic crisis, and entrepreneurship suffers especially.

Umed Yusupov, the Head of Risk Management Division of IMON International, one of the largest micro deposit organizations in the country, shared this statement on business startup financing: In 2014, 890 clients received start up loans, in 2015, 627 loans, and in 2016, only 57 loans. This is 6% of the 2014 value.

The value of these start-up loans was \$1,805,000 USD in 2016. In 2014, the value was only \$32,800 USD. This is 1.8% of the 2014 value.

In other words, for business start-up, IMON International gave 6% of the number of loans in 2016 vs. 2014, and only 1.8% of the value of loans– this can be understood as a clear financial indicator on the difficulty of business startup in Tajikistan right now, and a proxy indicator for the overall economy of Tajikistan.

Again, in this context, the success of the WEEP project stands out as quite good results.

Other Key Results and Achievements

- Seven study tours involving seventy-one woman entrepreneurs from Khatlon travelled to the Sugd province, covering several business sectors including agricultural, handicraft, beauty and health.
- A total of 1,592 economically inactive women received practical steps and basic “know-how” on how to start their own business, including business plan development, through trainings in a three-day training program called “Start Up”; Certificates awarded after this training have access to credit from IMON International Microfinance Organization.
- The Project Value Chain team trained 1,049 women in a one-day training on agriculture and in addition, project trainers trained 1,089 women in vocational trainings lasting 3-8 days, covering over 10 different topics as requested by women as marketable skills that could be used as to start or improve women owned businesses.
- The project achieved its training goals – the number of Business Development trainings reached 151% of plan and Vocational/Agricultural trainings reached 115% of plan.
- The project distributed greenhouse supplies and inputs to twenty female seedling producers as part of the focus on the greenhouse vegetable seedling production value chain during February, 2016. Additionally the project trained the seedling producers in a broad set of required technical skills for advanced seedling production between January and July, 2016.
- The twenty women who received greenhouses were assisted and trained by WEEP in containerized vegetable seedling production in cooperation with TAWA. All twenty women stated that they will expand their greenhouses next year and will continue to produce seedlings using the new technology.

- To promote better vegetable seedling growing practices, twenty Open Field Day / Inquiry Workshops were conducted with 603 participants in twenty Jamoats across seven districts.
- WEEP Field Monitoring revealed that farmers in southern districts of Shahrituz and Qubodiyon were not drying extra fresh fruit that they could not bring to market. In response to farmers' requests WEEP organized trainings for export quality fruit drying techniques focused on apricots reaching 45 farmers.
- After a year of negotiation with the Ministry of Education, the project was able to start training school teachers in the internationally recognized *Junior Achievement* youth business curriculum. This is a key project component of influencing the attitude of youth regarding female entrepreneurship, and including youth in the management and ownership of their own business initiatives. Forty teachers were trained through Training of Trainer efforts.
- The Project attitude and advocacy team produced 25 articles dealing with issues facing businesswomen, which were published in newspapers covering more than 40,000 readers.
- Two studies using focus groups were conducted in June, 2016: one focusing on economically inactive women, and one focused on economically active women. The results of these studies helped the project identify and address barriers to women's entrepreneurship.
- Capacity building for the NABWT staff was organized through 5 events focusing on Facilitation skills, Community mobilization, Monitoring and Evaluation, Lobbying and Advocacy and Team Development using Enneagram.
- Media reached all of Tajikistan and the Zone of Influence: through project efforts 36 articles were published, 18 videos were shown on television, and 96 social media articles highlighting project activities and promoting women's entrepreneurship across a broad set of national and regional audiences. This strong media campaign resulted in a broader awareness of the barriers and issues facing women entrepreneurs across Tajikistan.
- Using expertise and experience from other parts of Tajikistan allowed the project to network businesswomen from poor regions into mentoring relationships.
- Women entrepreneurs as project beneficiaries were connected to exhibitions and fairs where they got the chance to present themselves as entrepreneurs and increase their self-confidence. At the same time, this allowed women network with other women entrepreneurs and promote their products to other regions. Additionally women were connected to opportunities for business mentoring through study tours which provided a good opportunity for the women to share their experience and learn from one another. They were able to share information, find solutions for common problems, connect and cooperate.
- Cooperation with three other USAID funded projects working in the Feed the Future Zone of Influence allowed the project to capitalize on other agricultural assistance and training resources to build up women's higher value participation in the focus value chains.

New Initiatives began in this Reporting Period

- Project leadership and the Project Value Chain Team, in consultation with USAID, reviewed value chain assessments made in the first quarter, and decided on a focus on the greenhouse vegetable seedling production and the strawberry production value chains.
- Fifty-one strawberry value chain beneficiaries participated in a baseline survey and the project staff began training activities with these producers. Additionally an international consultant for strawberry production was engaged and worked with the staff to develop a strong and realistic plan to bring in new strawberry varieties and demonstrate modern growing methods.
- Promotion of the biennial “Farah-2016 Woman Entrepreneur of the Year” competition began in February 2016 and continued through September. The final even is to be held in October, 2016.
- In June, an MOU to open a new “Adras” style traditional hand weaving training center was signed with the city Government of Qurghonteppa. The city of Qurghonteppa is provided a rent free location for the center, and the Project bought down training equipment and a professional trainer from Khujand. This skill has been unknown before in the ZOI. This is a traditional technique of weaving that is unique to Central Asia and had a large potential for women to develop businesses serving both local and regional markets.
- Additionally another training center for professional sewing skills was also opened in Qurghonteppa on July 12, 2016.
- RSM Tajikistan was selected and engaged through a tendering process as general auditor, as approved by USAID/CARS on May 23, 2016.

Cooperation with Host Government, other donors, USAID funded projects

- The **USAID funded Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity (TAWA)** agreed to be a key partner for WEEP in the greenhouse vegetable seedling production value chain, and a Memo of Understanding was signed between the project chiefs of parties on January 11, 2016.
- Cooperation with the **Ministry of Education and Science** as obtained to allow the Project to support the Ministry’s own Junior Achievement initiative through Training of Trainer efforts. The deputy minister attended the opening trainings in Qurghonteppa.
- WEEP staff continued to regularly meet with regional and local government leaders throughout the target region for project coordination, and with two agenda items: One, to lobby on behalf of female entrepreneurs and secondly, to raise awareness of the issues facing women attempting to conduct business in Khatlon.
- An initiative to build twenty improved greenhouses for seedling production was started with the **USAID-funded Tajikistan Nutrition-Sensitive Vegetable Technologies Project (TNSVTP)**. An MOU between the projects was drafted in September of Project Year one, and is expected to be signed in the beginning of First Quarter of Project Year 3, in time to allow the construction of the greenhouses before the 2017 vegetable seedling production season. TNSVTP will construct the greenhouses for the twenty WEEP selected beneficiaries and WEEP will provide training and support to the greenhouse owners in seedling production, a focus value chain for the WEEP project.

- Cooperation with the **USAID funded Farmer to Farmer** program provided 80 women with focused agricultural training on strawberry production and vegetable seedling production.

Compliance with USAID Special Conditions in this Reporting Period

- The staff of NABWT has worked diligently to achieve compliance with all the special conditions specified in the project agreement. USAID Central Asia issued a memo on March 1, 2016, stating that NABWT has successfully implemented the 5 special conditions specified in the referenced Pre-award Survey Report originally conducted April 14, 2014, and recommending closure of the special conditions. Accordingly USAID amended the DGP Agreement on April 5, 2016 removing the special conditions in the original DPG award.

Section II: Clippings and Quotes from Beneficiaries

These quotes from women touched and helped by the project in their business initiatives are the real results of this project. Reading them is inspiring, as you realize that these women are working very hard managing their own businesses in a very challenging environment, and the work of the NABWT has released new potential in them, and opened new opportunities for them. More quotes are presented as an annex to this report.

WOMEN LEARN ENTREPRENEURSHIP 25.12.2015 “Khatlon” Newspaper



Barfimo Rahimova from the Bokhtar district: for years I have been engaged in embroidery and *suzani* embroidery work. Before I had no idea how to learn the market demand or how to display my handmade products for sale. Having attended the training on “business start-up” I have learned the ways of doing things and acquired the entrepreneur skills. Now I intend to improve my skills and pay serious attention to the quality of my handicraft. I wish to become more confident in enterprise activity to improve my living standards.

Hikoyat Rahmonova has succeeded in this sphere in the shortest time



Hikoyat Rahmonova, from the Bokhtar district, is engaged in growing agricultural crops in greenhouses. Recently she has sold 5,000 seedlings for the first time and her sustainable steps in the sphere of enterprise have begun.

I have been working on land for 35 years, but I think that only now I got engaged professionally in agricultural sphere. My achievements are first of all due to the trainings, specifically, study trip to Sughd province organized by NABWT and by the project. We have encountered experienced farmers there and learned successful ways of farming, shared our experience, which gave positive results subsequently.

Before Hikoyat Rahmonova run farming based on traditional practices learnt from older generation, like her fellow-villagers. Family members and relatives enjoyed the yields of her farming labor, but never put them for sale.

Hikoyat Rahmonova and her family members intend to construct one more greenhouse and to plant other crops. Furthermore, they are planning to experiment with planting of lemon trees in a new greenhouse.

Section II: Activities and Progress Year 2 activities and progresses

Objective 1: To empower women who are currently economically inactive to start microenterprises, through understanding the reasons why they are not participating, and then working to overcome these barriers.

Understanding Barriers

The first part of this objective included understanding the reasons for women not being economically active, or in other words, not conducting business activity.

The project generated two reports in year one of the project to provide the understanding needed of the barriers:

- A Formative Research Report
- Report On A Study Of The Situation In The Field Of Folk Art And Handicraft Products' Sales In Dushanbe

During the third quarter of Year two, a follow up study was carried out by the Project Monitoring and Evaluation team entitled "A Report on issues facing Economically Inactive Women Preventing them from Starting new businesses."

This report re-underlined the list of key issues facing women that had been identified in the studies before. The list identified by women in these focus groups included:

Issue	Percentage of focus groups who named this issue
Access to finance	21%
Lack of childcare / kindergarten not available	21%
The lack of working conditions – a place to work, with good facilities	17%
A lack of knowledge and skills (experience)	8%
Men's lack of trust in allowing women to engage in business	8%
The high cost of small business registration (Patent)	4%
Administrative barriers (inspections from government departments, difficulties in registration, etc.)	4%
Lack of sponsorship	4%
A lack of information about marketing	4%
The low of market demand	4%
Fear and lack of self-confidence	4%

Additionally as the project continued to engage women in the districts through round tables and training events, information was collected through interviews and focus group discussions.

Ongoing project activities and engagement with women throughout the ZOI made it clear that this list of key barriers facing women was relevant. The Project has achieved understanding.

Empowering Women to start microenterprises

After understanding and quantifying the barriers facing women, the project used several tools pointed at helping women to move from economical inactivity to active entrepreneurship.

One of the key tools was training – using the material and course developed by IMON’s training center in a program called “Start-Up”, and a second tool was vocational training. Alongside that was regular support to women in connecting them to financial resources such as microcredit, and also legal advising as needed. Additionally the strong public awareness campaign identified successful women in both written, visual and web media.

Another tool was gathering women, community leaders and other stakeholders in Jomoat Meetings. These meetings, mostly held during the second quarter of Year 2, were used to present the project’s goals, but also provided a forum to discuss issues. One interesting result from these meetings was that men reached out to the project to request that the Project train and support their wives to start businesses.

After trainings, 2123 were called for telephone interviews – and 1056 women answered. Of these 1056, 187 women started new businesses after Project training and assistance such as legal counseling. While this is not a very high percentage, considering the ongoing poor economy in Tajikistan, and general poor environment for entrepreneurship in Khatlon, this is an accomplishment. This was **which was 187% of the project goal for Project Year two, and 79% of the goal for the life of the project.**

Of these 187 new businesses started by women, 162, or **87% of these businesses were started in rural areas in Khatlon.** These areas have been identified as especially difficult areas for business and entrepreneurship, and yet this project has seen excellent success helping women start businesses.

1.1 (1a) Conducting trainings on business startup, agriculture, vocational trainings and legal trainings.

1.1.1 Organize women into groups for conducting training

With the support of local relevant authorities, “raisi mahalas” (neighborhood leaders), representatives of women committee within target jamoats, project field officers in villages mobilized 107 groups of women to be involved in project activities.

1.1.2 Organizing TOT for project’s staff in conducting business, agriculture, and vocational trainings

The project continued with a strong training component training a total of 2,707 women in the reporting period. At the completion of training courses local government officials were regularly invited to attend the graduation ceremonies, to involve them as stakeholders in women’s entrepreneurship. Certificates were awarded for trainings, a high value for trainees in Tajikistan.

Start Up Trainings for Economically Inactive Women

The three day business startup trainings (“Start Up”) provided by the IMON Training Center trainers ended in May, after training a total of 1,592 economically inactive women in 107

trainings from the beginning of the year. A total of 71 Start Up trainings were planned in Project Year 2, so the total number of trainings was completed.

Agriculture and Vocational Trainings

The Project Value Chain team trained 1049 women in a one-day training on agriculture and in addition, project trainers trained 1089 women in vocational trainings lasting 3-8 days, covering over ten different topics as requested by women as marketable skills that could be used as to start or improve a women owned business.

Photo Set 1 - Vocational Trainings in Bokhtar, Vakhsh and the Balkhi (Rumi) Districts (Photo Credit: WEEP)



Photo Set 2 - Agricultural Trainings in Bokhtar District (Photo Credit: WEEP)



In addition, project trainers trained 134 women in vocational trainings lasting 3-8 days, covering over 10 different topics as requested by women as marketable skills that could be used as to start or improve a women owned business.

- Curtain sewing
- Bakery
- Computer embroidery
- Cooking
- Design and Sewing
- Fruit Drying
- Hairstyling
- Patchwork
- Salad Making
- Traditional sewing techniques like *Suzani* and *Yorma*

Training Effectiveness Focus Group Study

A set of Focus Group Discussion Reports were prepared by M&E to review the effectiveness of this training. The results of these reports were presented in the Project Year 2 third quarter. Trainings were organized across a wide variety of vocations according to marketable skills demanded by women in business or doing business.

The table below (Table 1) shows the accomplishments of the Project in the number of trainings conducted against the work plan number of trainings for year two.

Table 2 Planned Trainings and Accomplishments in Project Year Two

Training Type	Number of Trainings Planned in Year Two (Work Plan Appendix I)	Number of Trainings Completed Year Two
Business Development	71	107 (151% of Plan)
Vocational/Agriculture	97	147 (152% of Plan)

New Hand Weaving Vocational Center Agreement Reached with the Qurghonteppa City Government

In June, An MOU to open a new "Adras" style traditional hand weaving training center was signed with the city Government of Qurghonteppa. The city of Qurghonteppa is providing a rent free location for the center, and the Project will supply the training equipment, materials and a professional trainer from Khujand. This skill has been unknown before in Khatlon, southern Tajikistan.

Both parties agreed to conduct joint project activities to attract more women to trainings on *adras* weaving in the center. The center is started operations in the fourth quarter.

Photo 3 - Export Quality Fruit Drying Training in Shahrituz and Qubodiyon (Photo Credit: WEEP)



Fruit Drying Training in Export Quality Standards

WEEP Field Monitoring revealed that farmers the in southern districts of Shahrituz and Qubodiyon were not drying fruits. In response to farmers' requests WEEP organized trainings for export quality fruit drying techniques focused on apricots in May. Four trainers working in the dried fruit export industry in Northern Tajikistan were brought from the Sughd region to teach best practices to farmers in Khatlon.

The fruit drying trainings covered six days and reached 45 farmers.

1.2 Make women interested via basic business skills/vocational trainings compiled based on results of the research

In order to attract women to start their business, the project organized and facilitated **107 3-day business start-up trainings** (“Start-Up”), **74 1-day trainings on agriculture** (“AGRO”) and **73 trainings on professional skills**. Professional skills training included training on baking, clothing design, sewing of traditional and European style dresses, salad making, hair styling, computer embroidery, curtain sewing and on sewing of purses and tablet/phone covers.

The project helped women build business skills through startup training given to 1592 women. In the training, 155 of the participants were government employees and 214 were from private sectors as agricultural work, sewing shop or were already conducting a business like selling in the market. Of the 1592 trained in “Start Up”, 1392 (87%) of them were economically inactive women.

Each of beneficiary women who participated was interviewed, and the data collected into a database to continue the analysis of barriers to entry, and also to allow the project to track the steps economically inactive women were taking in starting businesses.

Training Step 1: Government Interactions and Relationship

As best project practice in Tajikistan, after obtaining a project support letter from the Regional Governor’s office, District levels leaders were approached for written agreement for project activities, and requesting their input on which Jamoats the project was could work in.

Training Step 2: Selection of economically non-active women for trainings and Mobilization to attend the trainings.

Based on government introductions, village and mahalla leaders were approached to suggest women who were not economically active. The criteria for non-active participants was:

1. 18-45 Years of age
2. Citizen of target District/Jamoat
3. Interest in starting a business

Training Step 3: Training Material Development

The three day business Start-Up training was taken from the Imon International Training Center material. The themes covered in the StartUp trainings were:

- Gender equality: the life circle of people and enterprises;
- Entrepreneur women: women can succeed in business;
- SWOT analysis;
- Marketing;
- What is a business plan;
- Production, services and technology;
- Small Business Finance;
- Applying for credit for a business



Photo 4. Participants of vocational training on bakery in A.Jomi district Photo Credit: WEEP

The one day agriculture training was developed by the Value Chain Team. Two weeks of effort were used to develop the material and train the project trainers. Themes introduced in the “Agro” training were:

- Vegetable Production Management
- Vegetable IPM,
- Greenhouse management,
- Drip irrigation
- Mulching
- Compost making

For the agriculture training In house project expertise and the Tajik publication *Directory for Protecting Plants*(2010) were referenced extensively.

Training Step 4: Mobilization (gathering of groups) and Group Trainings

Group trainings were conducted with the permission and support of jamoat and community leaders. Results from the women participating in the trainings were generally positive, although please see notes below under *Lessons Learned from Project Year 2 trainings*. The Start Up Training was conducted by experienced trainers. Training events were also promoted on print media and on national TV.

Lessons learned from Project Year 2 trainings:

In fact, the project found it difficult to mobilize women to join the start-up trainings. A key reason was because women did not understand the value. They were interested in direct professional skills training (baking, sewing, etc.) and not in business training. Project field staff learned the value of explaining the value of the course. As media and articles appeared about the program this also helped develop interest among women to join the Start Up training.

After trainings follow-up monitoring found that some of the women who attended the first StartUp trainings were not in fact interested in starting a business. This was also due to the fact that some women designated for the trainings were chosen by village leadership and did not have much interest in starting a business. Project field staff found it important to apply the criteria of interest in starting a business to the Start Up attendees.

1.3 Work with financial institutions, with local governance, with local NGOs, donors and other relevant counterparts to facilitate access to finance /resources and registration

1.3.1 Regular meetings with financial institutions in order to facilitate credit support to the project’s beneficiaries in all project districts

Due to NABWT’s strong relationship with IMON, it was natural to start in cooperation with IMON in Year two. IMON made its loan database available to the project to reach out of active entrepreneurs, and provided its StartUp training material to the project.

However, for expanded access to microcredit for women, it was decided that in Project year two other microfinance organizations will be invited to also present their products at the project trainings. *Finca* and *Eskhata* also presented their loan products.

1.3.2 Assist women in preparation of business plans for applying for loan.

WEEP staff continued the process of meeting with micro credit organizations during the reporting period to obtain more information about the credit and services being offered. This data is being analyzed and will be presented in a later report.

1.3.3 Provide technical and legal advice to women who want to register their businesses

The Project Attitude and Advocacy Department regularly met with twenty-five women seeking to register their business during the reporting period and provided extensive legal advice and advocacy on their behalf.

1.3.4 Work with existing NGOs, INGOs, donors and other relevant counterparts to facilitate cooperation with the project's beneficiaries

Cooperation with Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity (TAWA)

Regular cooperation with the **USAID funded Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity (TAWA)** project continued as per the MOU presented in the Project Year 2 second Quarter report. TAWA provided seedlings, trays and training as inputs to contributed to the improvement of the WEEP Vegetable Seedling Value Chain objectives.

More on this cooperation is presented in the section **2.1.1 Conducting assessment and developing a Value Chain Intervention Plan.**

Cooperation with Farmer to Farmer

Additionally the **USAID funded Farmer to Farmer Program** provided the volunteer Dr. Mohamed Abdel-Rahman who provided extensive training and consultations for strawberry and vegetable seedling producers, both WEEP focus Value chains. His assistance is further discussed under section 2.1.5.

Cooperation with World Vegetables Organization AVRDC project on establishing 20 greenhouses in target districts.

The project is in the stage of signing a Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of 20 improved greenhouses for seedling producers in zone of influence. AVRDC is providing materials and constructing modern greenhouses 6 meters wide and 24 meters long, to twenty women–beneficiaries of WEEP project who are producing vegetable seedlings. WEEP will identify these women based on developed criteria, and lead them in producing of seedlings whole year.

Objective 2: To assist economically active women with existing businesses to expand their businesses and occupy higher levels of value chains.

2.1 To facilitate greater access to higher value areas of the value chain via training, inquiry workshops, networking support – connecting start-up companies with experienced mentors via meetings, individual consultations, study tours between districts

2.1.1 Conducting assessment and developing a Value Chain Intervention Plan

The initial Value Chain assessment report from Mennonite Economic Development Associates submitted to WEEP in January 2016 suggested a broad set of activities focused on three vegetable value chains: cucumber, tomato and chili peppers. The value chain assessment report was presented as an annex in the Second Quarter report of this year.

WEEP in consultation with USAID AORs reviewed the suggestions in the report, and came to the conclusion in a meeting in early 2016 that a focus on the **greenhouse vegetable seedling production** and the **strawberry production** value chains would produce better results and would be a better fit for cooperation with USAID current project partners in Khatlon.

The **USAID funded Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity (TAWA)** agreed to be a key partner for WEEP in this process, and a Memo of Understanding was signed between the project chiefs of parties on January 11, 2016. TAWA provided inputs for the farmers. WEEP selected twenty women-farmers to host demonstrations of modern techniques of tunnel greenhouse vegetable seedling production. WEEP distributed the seeds, seedling containers, greenhouse materials (frames, wires and polyethylene film) purchased by TAWA to the farmers. WEEP value chain specialists trained and oversaw the vegetable seedling production process and provided ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the process.

A detailed Value Chain intervention plan for both the seedling production and strawberry value chain was developed by the Value Chain Team leader. This is also presented as a report Annex with updated statuses for each step.

2.1.2 21 inquiry workshops on value chains, 21 inquiry workshops with men Value chains trainings (to coordinate with 2c)

During the first quarter of Project Year 2, value chain assessment inquiry workshops were held within communities to explore options for value chains interventions that women could participate in for profit. It was important to gather women and men to have to get a picture of what product and activity can be included into higher levels of value chain, and where women can be more involved profitably. Overall 21 assessment meetings in 21 jamoats were held during the reporting period.

To understand issues in women's entrepreneurship the project held additional 21 meetings with men to explain the definition of business and difference of women and men in business,

and explain the market economy that Tajikistan has transitioned to. During the meetings it was clear that most of the men do not accept the reality of the current situation yet, and continue to think of a Soviet type of economy, where the government's role is to create jobs with high salaries that are enough to easily support the family. However, the project tried to influence the opinion of men on women's entrepreneurship, including the idea that the economic situation of a family can positively change if women are engaged in income generating activities. After these meetings number target participants, the project saw an increase in interest from women who want to have businesses.

2.1.3 Meetings and individual consultations with beneficiaries

The project has used trainings and meetings with women to make a presentation of WEEP, and introduced the project opportunities to empower women. In overall, 44 meetings with overall participation of 900 women in 8 target districts were held during October-December 2015. Representatives of Women Committee from both Jamoat and a district Hukumats and neighborhood chairpersons (Raisi Mahallas), worked with project value chain specialists to mobilize women who are interested in entrepreneurship. The contact numbers of key personnel, including the Project Manager, Attitude and Advocacy Team Leader, and Monitoring and Evaluation Manager were disseminated among women in each meeting. Seven business women requested for the project assistance in difficulties faced during reporting period.

Women regularly requested help and were assisted in individual consultations by both the Advocacy and Lobbying Team, and the Value Chain Team.

Assistance from the Advocacy and Lobbying team included issues of:

- Business registration
- Licensing and certification issues
- Tax issues
- Pension issues for entrepreneurs
- Steps in business start up

Assistance from the Value Chain team included issues of:

- Finding sources for agricultural inputs
- Finding sources for equipment

2.1.4 Implementation of activities according to the Value Chain Implementation Plan

The Value Chain Action Plan showing steps completed for both vegetable seedling development and strawberries is presented as an annex to this report.

Containerized Vegetable Seedling Development – 20 Seedling Growing Businesses Established/Improved

Identification of beneficiaries was made through meetings with local government.

Cooperation continued through the period with TAWA as per the MOU presented in the Y2Q2 report.

To promote better vegetable seedling growing practices, during April, twenty Open Field Day / Inquiry Workshops were conducted with 603 participants in 20 Jamoats across seven districts.

Feedback from Women growers using containerized seedling systems as promoted by WEEP:

- Twenty women planted 74,000 tomato and pepper seeds;
- The women were able to produce 69,000 seedlings;
- The women sold 23,400 of these seedlings to neighbors earning 8,500 somoni;
- Another 1,500 seedlings were distributed by women for promoting these seedlings to new clients; and
- The remaining seedlings were planted by the seedling producers to produce and sell fresh produce on their own land.

During field interviews women mentioned that they were not previously aware of this technology and they found that, it is very useful and more practical. They have mentioned about the advantages of this process:

- “It saves time on planting the seeds.”
- “There is a higher probability of getting 100% germination.”
- “The seedlings are less affected by pests.”
- “There is an advantage in getting early seedlings.”
- “The seedlings are easy to transplant to open land. “

Since this technology was new to women some of them could not get 100% germination of seeds, but they mentioned that they did not follow some of the instructions of the WEEP agronomists. Some women mentioned that they have purchased some agro vitamins for better care and germination based on agronomist’s advice.

Almost all of the selected women were engaged previously in seedling production, and they mentioned that this technology is more profitable, because the seedlings can produced earlier in greenhouses and can sold with higher prices. Field interviews with WEEP seedling producers indicated they have sold seedling from 0.20 and up to one somoni. They could get more profit if they could get the seeds earlier and produce seedlings earlier.

All the women stated that they will expand their greenhouses next year and will produce different type of seedlings through this technology.

Photo Set 10 - Open Field Days Presenting Advanced Vegetable Seedling Production (Photo Credit: WEEP)



Strawberry Value Chain Improvements

With the support of Jamoat representatives WEEP identified producers of strawberries in the Jomi and Vaksh districts to involve in project activities focused on the improvement of strawberry production practices.

Strawberry value chain improvement was unable to move forward without better expert advice and input on modern production methods. An ongoing recruiting effort to find an international specialist provided several strong candidates. **Bob Nottelman** from California was successfully hired and was able to work with the Value Chain Team to develop a comprehensive strawberry value chain improvement plan. The implementation of this plan started in the fourth quarter of Project Year 2. Import of new varieties of strawberries is anticipated in the late fall of 2016 (Project Year 3, first quarter).

Farmer to Farmer Volunteer Assistance

The Farmer to Farmer project provided volunteer Dr. Mohamed Abdel-Rahman between April 16 through May 1, 2016 for visits to WEEP beneficiaries and training assistance. Besides individual consultations for many project beneficiaries, specialized trainings were provided on modern strawberry production.

Additional meetings and trainings were held with vegetable seedling producers.

This was a key chance to introduce and promote modern agricultural best practices for these value chains.

2.1.5 Seven networking events, One in each district

The State Committee on Investment and State Property Management of the Republic of Tajikistan declared Entrepreneurship Week from October 8 to 15, 2015. One day of this week was devoted to the Women's Entrepreneurship. In the frame of this event WEEP planned and conducted networking events in each target 7 district and Qurghonteppa city with participation of business ladies, inspection departments, tax committee representatives, local authorities, representatives from District Hukumat, The government department of women and family, and local residents. The topic of discussion was the opportunities for women's business development in the district. This networking event was important platform for business ladies to be acquainted with each other and also widely used to meet

face to face with inspection departments like the tax committee, fire department, sanitary-epidemiology institution, and the department of Government Standards.

2.2 (2b) Assisting with access to new markets

2.2.1 Training on how to access new markets, how to export, etc.; Modules of market access within value chain trainings (see 2a and Appendix II)

Parts of the business develop training “Start Up” focused on helping women entrepreneurs look for new markets.

Project activities will continue to look for export and new markets in the following period.

2.2.2 Find out about trade fairs and inform women entrepreneurs about upcoming trade fairs and participating in trade fairs directly to promote the project

The project supported three women from the Qurghonteppa, Vakhsh and Shahrituz districts to participate at an exhibition organized by the State Committee on Investment and State Property in Dushanbe on October and in an International Forum devoted to Women’s Entrepreneurship organized by United States Embassy in Dushanbe on November. The women from Khatlon brought products from the agriculture, sewing products; and jewelry (local silver) sectors.

Picture 13. Women from Khatlon are participating in the Exhibition, Ismailiya Center, Dushanbe



The women from Khatlon saw similar products of their colleagues from other regions of Tajikistan, and were able to find areas for improvements, in particular, the product design and quality.

As a follow-up, the project plans to organize vocational trainings to these women in order to improve the quality and design of produced product. The project also assisted in the preparation of business cards for the women.

2.2.3 At least 10 exchange visits of women from Khatlon to Sughd , Dushanbe and other regions of Tajikistan and vice versa

The project aims to cover all sectors of higher levels of value chains where women can be engaged. One of the project tools that effectively influence on inspiring women in business is organizing study tours from South to North of the country. Women’s entrepreneurship is well developed in the North, Sughd Oblast to compare with the South, Khatlon Oblast. The cultural, historical aspects and geographical situation of the North has created a place that is generally more economically advanced than the rest of Tajikistan.

The Project sent a total of 71 women on 7 study tours to the North of Tajikistan during Project Year 2. Additionally a number of trainers were brought down from Northern Tajikistan to provide trainings.

Key results from these tours and exchanges included:

Previously unknown agricultural technologies were demonstrated and introduced to women in the ZOI Khatlon, including:

- Containerized seedlings
- Drip irrigation (orchard and greenhouse)
- Modern greenhouse management
- Improved vegetable seedling production
- Export quality fruit drying
- Improved Fruit Orchard Care

Additionally women saw the operation of more advanced and improved businesses from various sectors including:

- Food production
- Restaurants and food services
- Sewing production
- Handicrafts production
- Medical Services
- Other services connected to women owned businesses
- *Adras* and *atlas* traditional weaving

Leadership from the NABWT along with women with extensive business experience met with the women to hear their feedback and encourage them in women's entrepreneurship. Networking and motivational events were also included to allow the businesswomen to gain connections and build momentum for women's business in Tajikistan.

As part of the value chain improvements, In January WEEP brought eleven experienced greenhouse growers from Khatlon for a three day intensive training on seedling production in greenhouses. Both theoretical and practical hands-on training was included. Study tours in agricultural were connected to intensive trainings in seedling production and fruit drying.

Key results from study tour and trainings from the north included women adopting improved agricultural practices such as containerized seedling production, and improved fruit drying.

Additionally, a number of women from other sectors reported improving their own businesses in Khatlon, by increasing the number of products and services, or increasing the quality of product and services, based on things they had learned from the study tours. Unfortunately many women who went on the study tour were not able to make significant changes to improve their business. One interpretation of this is due to the difficult business climate in Khatlon at this time.



Photo 18 – February Study Tour visiting a sewing workshop in Sugd. (photo credit: WEEP)



Photo 4 Photo set of visit to Shartuz and Qubodiyon to observe export quality fruit drying (Photo Credit: WEEP)



Photo 16 Greenhouse Training in Sugd during January Study Tour. (Photo credit: WEEP)

2.4. Work with financial institutions, with local governments, with local NGOs, donors and other relevant counterparts to facilitate access to finance/resources and registration/legalization

The Microfinance Institution IMON international is one of the project partner provides credits to project's beneficiaries. Beneficiaries use awarded certificates after training "Start Up" for easy access to IMON International's credits. In Project Year 2 sixty-two women who are WEEP beneficiaries have received credits in total sum of \$ 59,849 USD to start or improve their own business, for an average of approximately \$965 / business. The women participating in the "Start Up" training are mostly economically inactive women. The project will monitor the women who have taken loans to see if the women have been able to leverage these loans into profitable business success. These results will be presented in a later report.

Active and inactive women in target jamoats use the legal advice hot line organized by the project to get information about the legal sides of starting and operating of businesses. In this regard, attitude and advocacy team has established a database to identify gaps in understanding of relevant laws by women, and stimulating them to register their businesses appropriately.

Objective 3: To positively influence attitudes to and knowledge about women's microenterprise in the society, including youth and state bodies

3.1 Development of co-educational business education with youth, including in cooperation with Junior Achievement

- 3.1.1 Curriculum development
- 3.1.2 Making textbooks and teaching materials
- 3.1.3 Training of Trainers curriculum developed
- 3.1.4 To print 2000 textbooks and teaching materials

Photo 5 - JA Training event for teachers with new curriculum and attendance by Deputy Minister of Education and Science



There were several repeated visits to the Ministry of Education and Science needed to obtain the consent of the Ministry of Education and Science for the training of 40 teachers on Junior Achievement. As a result of these several meetings, the ministry issued permission for the Junior Achievement training program and gave an official letter of cooperation for the training to be held at the Qurghonteppa Institute on Advanced Training. This letter was presented as an annex in the Project Year 2 third quarter report.

The ministry representatives and WEEP decided to carry out the training in two phases. The first phase was held from May 18 to 22, 2016 in Qurghonteppa with participation of 20 teachers from Qurghonteppa, Vakhsh, Bohtar and Jomi districts. On the opening day of the training the Deputy Minister of Education and Science attended the event.

The Ministry of Education and Science made the decision to develop the curriculum internally under the direction of a deputy minister. WEEP provided financial support to print 200 books. Additionally WEEP organized and covered the costs of the training for 40 teachers. Books were distributed to teachers who participated in training.

3.2 Establishing partnerships with government and lobbying on project results via meetings, round tables, presentations of analyses results, etc.

3.2.1 Conduction of working meetings with local authorities to lobby project and beneficiaries interests

The project staff have networked with local government officials and engaged local government both personally and through media communications as discussed above.

3.2.2 7 events and round tables with participation of about 50 people, total 300 participants;

This was implemented in the context of Entrepreneur's week in October, 2015.

3.3 (3c) Farah-2016, best woman entrepreneur of the year competition

The final event of Farah 2016 is to be held in October, 2016. Most of the activities below will be completed in the first quarter of Project Year 3.

3.3.1 Advertising the journal production, -

A bid was announced for Farah 2016 journal production. The LLC *Abusidiq* was selected and contracted.

3.3.2 Closing ceremony – about 30 round tables with total participation of 1500 people;

3.3.3 Video broadcasting through in national and local TV stations;

3.3.4 Printing and distribution of informational booklets;



Photo 23 - Farah Promotion Event in Qurghonteppa
(Photo Credit: WEEP)

3.3.5 Conduction of 2 orientation trainings for 50 Farah participants;

3.3.6 Designing, printing and distribution of 800 journals;

The Journal designed, printed 400 copies, 200 copies distributed among women participants, government officials and mass media.

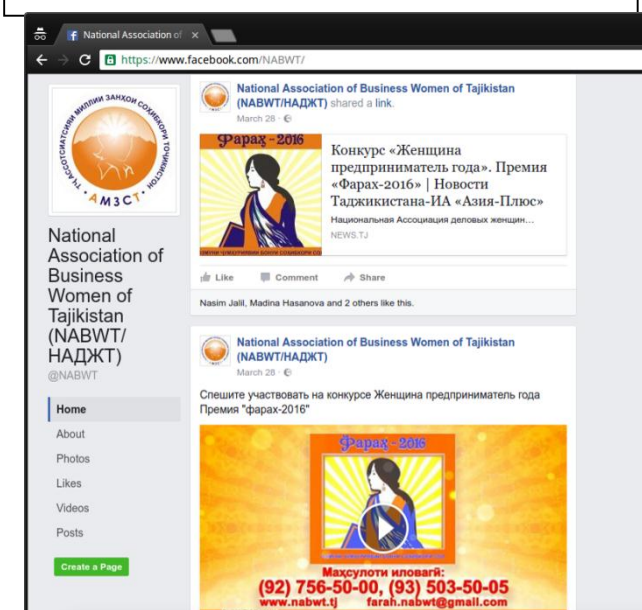
3.3.7 Shoot 6 video films about 30 semi-finalists;

39 semi finalists from Tajikistan are in the process of the shooting the film. Sughd province is done, Khatlon is currently in process.

3.3.8 1 conference; 20 Post Farah round tables.

The promotion of the biennial “Farah-2016 Woman Entrepreneur of the Year” competition began in February 2016. Power point presentations on the NABWT and the Completion have been presented at all trainings and other WEEP events. One Farah Completion focused Event was also held on March 30, 2016 with 50 participants. Most of the Farah activities are planned build in momentum culminating in October, 2016 with the Final events, combined with a media campaign.

Photo 22 - NABWT Social Media promotion of Farah-2016 on Facebook (Photo Credit: WEEP)



The Farah PR campaign ran from March 9 through May 30, and included:

- The organization of 4 Round tables in the cities of Khujand, Dushanbe, Qurghonteppa, Kulob;
- The organization of 25 informational meetings around the country;
- The design, printing and distribution of 500 informational booklets and flyers;
- Shooting and broadcasting video announcements about the Farah-2016 competition through republican and local TV stations;
- 25 radio interviews with contestants and winners of the previous Farah competitions.

The cut off date for submission of applications was on June 1, 2016. 278 applications were submitted for participation in the competition. Success stories and more details of the competition will be provided in later reports.

Section III: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

This section of the annual report provides an overview of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities implemented during of FY2. The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of WEEP is a critical to ensuring the success of measuring the impact of project interventions. M&E functions are closely integrated with the overall project framework and are coordinated with program staff, beneficiaries and other project stakeholders in developing/refining tools and data collection. The M&E Unit has continually served its role of providing support to strengthen planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting ensuring compliance with the USAID requirements.

M&E did an extensive set of focus group interviews, which provided guidance for work plan development for the rest of the project life cycle. These reports are included as annexes to this report.

M&E team Accomplishments:

- A database in Microsoft Excel for the tracking beneficiaries was developed and continuously updated. All beneficiaries who attended to the project activities have been entered into the data base. The same information on beneficiaries was entered into the online NABWT database.
- In order to collect good quality information several data collection tools were developed and revised , including surveys and interview sheets. The M&E team uses these tools to collect information on beneficiaries, for post training evaluations and telephone interviews with women who have attended trainings and events. An external M&E local consultant was hired part time to assist this process.
- Telephone interviews with women who attended trainings were conducted to follow up on their progress after the training. For this reporting period telephone interviews with Start Up, Agro training and Vocational training participants were conducted during reporting period in order to collect information on indicators. In total 2123 women were called:1056 out of them answered, 1067 did not respond. Out of this 1056 women,187 started business activities and51of them took a loan from *Imon International* or other finance institutions. These 187 women started various business activities like starting to sell in the market and agricultural production, baking, sewing and handicrafts productions.
- M&E provided an analysis of beneficiaries through Focus Group Interviews to determine success of project training activities and other interventions. This was included as an Annex in the Project Year two fourth quarter report.
- Tracking of indicators and verification of data.
- Preparation and collection of data from other project staff for reporting to USAID.
- The Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan was revised based on project requirement and was submitted to USAID during this reporting period.
- An M&E Consultant, Mr. Azizmahmad Azizov was brought on to assist in building the M&E department's capacity in July , 2016.

Indicator tracking table for Project Year 2 by Quarter

	Type of indicator					Year 2: 2016						
Indicator #	Old number	New number	Indicator Title	Unit of Measure	Disaggregation	Target for 2016	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Actual	Target achievement in %
Objective 1: To empower women who are currently economically inactive to start microenterprises, through understanding the reasons why they are not participating, and then working to overcome these barriers												
1	FtF-4.5. (2)/ Outcome	EG. 3-9	# new enterprises started by women (reported by 8 districts, both unregistered and registered)	number	Location, duration and sex, legal status	100		80	56	51	187	187%
			Unregistered					71	49	48		
			Registered					9	7	3		
			New					80	56	51		
			Continuing						80	136		
			Urban					10	9	6		
			Rural					70	47	45		
			Women					80	136	187		
Objective 2: To assist economically active women with existing businesses to expand their businesses and occupy higher levels of value chains												
2	FtF 4.5.2-43 Outcome	EG. 3.2.-21	# existing enterprises that have improved their work, increased profitability, started working at higher levels of value chains	number	type of entity/ business	200		52	26	111	189	95%
			Firm									
			CSO									
3	FtF-4.5. (2)/ Outcome	EG. 3-9	# of unregistered existing business that have been registered	number	Location, duration and sex, Type of business	60		8	7	3	18	30%
			New					8	7	3		
			Continuing					8	15	18		
			Location									

Type of indicator						Year 2: 2016						
Indicator #	Old number	New number	Indicator Title	Unit of Measure	Disaggregation	Target for 2016	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Actual	Target achievement in %
			Women					8	15	18		
4	PPR/ Outcome	PPR/ Outcome	# women invested own money in their businesses	Number	Type of business/ funds	210		42	31	137	210 ¹	100%
Objective 3: To positively influence attitudes and knowledge about women's microenterprise in society, including youth and state bodies												
5	FtF4.5.2-7 Output	EG. 3.2 - 1	# youth educated via co-educational programs	number	Type of individual, Sex	88					0	0%
			Female									
			Male									
			Student									
6	PPR/ Outcome	PPR/ Outcome	% youth with increased knowledge and improved skills (pre-test and post-test) attitude towards women's entrepreneurship improved among youth	Percent	Type of individual, Sex	90					0	0%
			Female									
			Male									
7	PPR/ Output	PPR/ Output	# new role models developed via Farah and shared with target women	number	type/ topic	30					0	0%

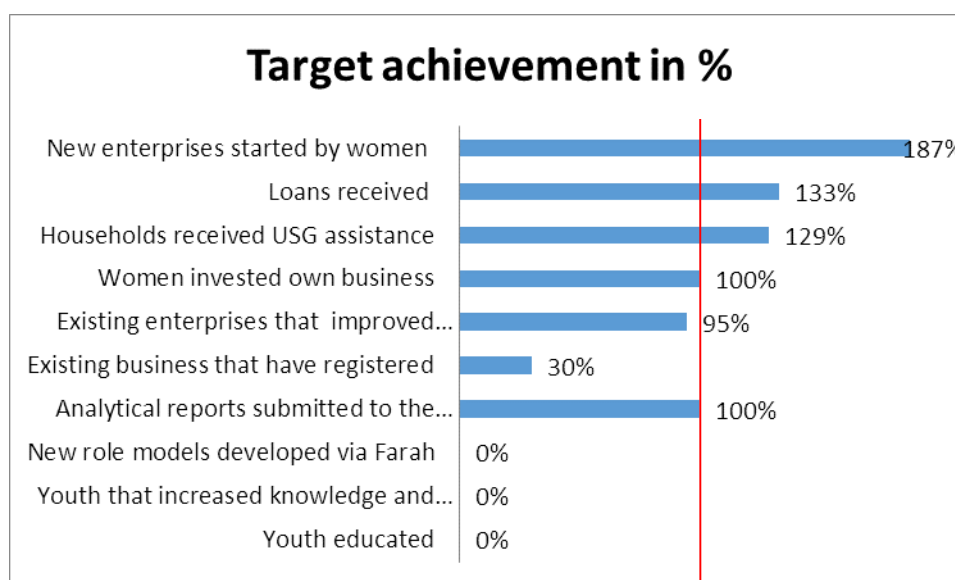
¹ For indicator #4, # women invested own money in their businesses, 210 is in fact the correct number. It is pure coincidence that this number matches the goal for 2016. This number does not include women who took loans for business.

Type of indicator						Year 2: 2016						
Indicator #	Old number	New number	Indicator Title	Unit of Measure	Disaggregation	Target for 2016	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Actual	Target achievement in %
8		PPR/ Output	# analytical reports submitted to the government	Number	N/A	1				1	1	100%
Additional indicators related to all objectives												
9	FtF4.5.2-7, FtF 4.5.2-13 Output	E.G. 3.2-1	# households receiving USG assistance	Number	Duration, gendered household type	2103	624	821	906	356	2707	129%
			New				624	821	906	356		
			Continuing					624	1445	2351		
			Location									
			MNF									
			M&F				624	1445	2351	2707		
10	FtF 4.5.2-29 Outcome	E.G.3.2-6	\$ value of loans received (FtF indicator)	USD	Type of business	45000		11 399	13 676	34774	59849	133%
			Loans-Producer									
			Loans-processor/wholesaler									
			Loans- trader/assembler									
11	FtF 4.5.2-43 Outcome	E.G. 3.2-21	Funds raised from private sector (for Farah and other) – for USAID to trace Private Sector Engagement and Partnership activities (no target)	USD	N/A	20000					0	0%

Indicator tracking table LOP

Indica tor #	Type of indicators		Indicator Title	Unit of Measur e	Disaggregat ion	2015	2015			2016			2017			LOP		
	Old number	New numb er				Baseli ne	Target	Actual	Target achiev ement in %	Target	Actua l	Target achiev ement in %	Targ et	Actual	Target achieve ment in %	Target	Actu al	Target achieve ment in %
Objective 1: To empower women who are currently economically inactive to start microenterprises, through understanding the reasons why they are not participating, and then working to overcome these barriers																		
1	FtF-4.5. (2)/ Outcome	EG. 3- 9	# new enterprises started by women (reported by 8 districts, both unregistered and registered)	number	Location, duration and sex, legal status	0	25	10	40%	100	187	187%	125			250	197	79%
Objective 2: To assist economically active women with existing businesses to expand their businesses and occupy higher levels of value chains																		
2	FtF 4.5.2- 43 Outcome	EG. 3.2.- 21	# existing enterprises that have improved their work, increased profitability, started working at higher levels of value chains	number	type of entity/ business	0	20	2	10%	200	189	95%	200			420	191	45%
3	FtF-4.5. (2)/ Outcome	EG. 3- 9	# of unregistered existing business that have been registered	number	Location, duration and sex, Type of business	0	0	0		60	18	30%	40			100	18	18%
4	PPR/ Outcome	PPR/ Outco me	# women invested own money in their businesses	Number	Type of business/ funds	0	30	0	0%	210	210	100%	215			455	210	46%
Objective 3: To positively influence attitudes and knowledge about women’s microenterprise in society, including youth and state bodies																		
5	FtF4.5.2-7 Output	EG. 3.2 - 1	# youth educated via co-educational programs	number	Type of individual, Sex	0	0	0		88	0	0%	88			176	0	0%
6	PPR/ Outcome	PPR/ Outco me	% youth with increased knowledge and improved skills (pre-test and post-test)attitude towards women’s	Percent	Type of individual, Sex	0	0	0		90%	0	0%	90%			90%	0	0%

Indicator #	Type of indicators		Indicator Title	Unit of Measure	Disaggregation	2015	2015			2016			2017			LOP		
	Old number	New number				Baseline	Target	Actual	Target achievement in %	Target	Actual	Target achievement in %	Target	Actual	Target achievement in %	Target	Actual	Target achievement in %
			entrepreneurship improved among youth															
7	PPR/Output	PPR/Output	# new role models developed via Farah and shared with target women	number	type/ topic	0	0	0		30	0	0%	0			30	0	0%
8	PPR/Output	PPR/Output	# analytical reports submitted to the government	Number	N/A	0	2	1	50%	1	1	100%	1			4	2	50%
Additional indicators related to all objectives																		
9	FtF4.5.2-7,FtF 4.5.2-13Output	E.G. 3.2-1	# households receiving USG assistance	Number	Duration, gendered household type	0	1230	376	31%	2103	2707	129%	1813			5146	3083	60%
10	FtF 4.5.2-29 Outcome	E.G.3. 2-6	\$ value of loans received (FtF indicator)	USD	Type of business	0	7 500	5 564	74%	45 000	59 849	133%	55 000		0%	107 500	65 413	61%
11	FtF 4.5.2-43 Outcome	E.G. 3.2-21	Funds raised from private sector (for Farah and other) – for USAID to trace Private Sector Engagement and Partnership activities (no target)	USD	N/A	0	0	0		20 000	0	0%	0			20 000	0	0



Comments on Indicators

(Overall project achievements against indicators have been addressed in previous sections of this report.)

In general it is clear that for the ongoing depressed economy in Tajikistan some of the planned project indicator targets were too optimistic. Most families and small business still tell that they have half of the income they had previously since the loss of value of the Russian ruble in 2015. Except for the wealthiest in Khatlon, most of the population is living to avoid risk. A key indicator that has been difficult to achieve is legal registration of businesses by women.

Indicators related to Farah and Youth education are expected to be fully achieved during Project Year 3.

Challenges

The project got a slow start in getting organized and hiring staffing through FY2015. Tajikistan's ongoing economic crisis has created a very poor environment for entrepreneurs, which has made it hard to see businesses legally registered. Even if women open their businesses, the ongoing economic crisis followed by low financial opportunities of population in whole imposes barriers to women. Getting women motivated and self-confident to take business risks has taken time – role models have been needed. The regulatory environment of Tajikistan makes business registration and operation very difficult for both men and women. Women in Tajikistan face high levels of discrimination, violence and inequality. These also impact the economic development of women, especially in rural areas.

Lesson learned

Training for women in business and vocational skills has proven to have immediate results in helping women start and expand their businesses. Training is not enough however, women need assistance too with the legal tangle of registration and tax payments, and support when gender issues come up, like permission from husbands to leave the home. Business services are a missing component that the project continues to explore, such as private home based kindergartens, which are a sustainable business model in themselves, but also support other women's enterprises.

Section IV: Other project related activities/issues (staffing, etc.)

During reporting period, the following project staff was recruited:

Malika Inoyatova, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager left the project on November 4, 2015.

Zarina Qambarova, previously **Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant**, was promoted to **Monitoring and Evaluation Manager** on January 25, 2016.

Nilufar Nazarov was hired as the new **Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant** on March 1, 2016.

Malika Mirzobahodurova was hired as a **Consultant for the Implementation of the Farrah-2016 Competition**.

Amonjon Makhkamov was hired as a **Public Relation Assistant** on April 11, 2016

Sayor Abdurahimova was hired as a **Value Chain specialist** on April 11, 2016

Azizov Azizmahmad was hired as **M&E Consultant** on July 1, 2016

Khuseinova Gulchehra was hired as **M&E Assistant** on August 1, 2016

Patrick Tucker was hired as a part-time **International Consultant** in February, 2016

Zafar Alizoda was hired as part-time **local consultant focused on Government Relationships** March, 2016

Amirova Uliya was hired as a **Financial Consultant** on August 01, 2016.

Section V: Challenges encountered /Proposed Solutions

Compliance to the USAID Special Conditions specified in the DGP Agreement

The staff of NABWT has worked diligently to achieve compliance with all the special conditions specified in the project agreement. An assessment team from USAID conducted a review of NABWT in December, 2015. The results of their review was issued in a memo from USAID/CAR on March 1, 2016, stating that NABWT has successfully implemented the 5 special conditions specified in the referenced Pre-award Survey Report originally conducted April 14, 2014, and recommending closure of the special conditions.

Negotiation with Value Chain Consultants

It was determined that it was not possible for WEEP to employ MEDA as an organizational consultant under USAID rules covering this Project, and so their services were discontinued. It is foreseen that more specialized consultants will be needed for the duration of the project, such as a Strawberry Production consultant.

Junior Achievement

As discussed under Activity 3.1, this activity required a full year of discussions with the Ministry of Science and Education before seeing results.

Section VII: NABWT's capacity building activities

In retrospect the project's capacity building schedule was overly ambitious, and since the project start was effectively delayed by about six months, capacity building activities were pushed out to occur in project year two. The capacity building plan has now been fulfilled.

The one aspect of capacity building that was not delayed was focusing on the special conditions specified in the Project Agreement. The post-award survey identified several issues that needed improvement in policy and practice. IMON International provided consultation from its internal auditing department to improve the policies as specified. This process is continued through Project Year 2. Additionally the WEEP Value chain Team Leader and Project Coordinator participated at the training organized by IMON International on "Financing of Value Chain Products" conducted by international trainers in Khojand.

In addition to the capacity building plan, WEEP staff also receives Value Chain training in October from the international consultant who was assisting in the value chain assessment activities.

An M&E Consultant, Mr. Azizmahamad Azizov was brought on to assist in building the M&E department's capacity. A table showing the capacity training activities is presented as an Annex to this report.

Section VII: Activities Planned for the next Period

Key activities planned for next period (Project Year 3, First quarter) include:

1. Setup of two strawberry demonstration plots with imported modern strawberry varieties from Turkey or California. 10500 strawberry dry root plants will be imported. Training of 30 women in modern strawberry planting and improved cropping practices with drip fertigation, plastic mulching, and Integrated Pest Management.
2. Establishing links between strawberry supplier and growers, introducing “One touch” harvesting technology and post-harvest technology To enabling Access to higher level internal markets (supermarkets, etc.)
3. Identifying twenty beneficiaries -seedling growers, signing agreements with them for cooperation with WEEP, installing twenty standard size 24m x6m greenhouses (with technical support of TNSVTP/WVC), and preparing an agricultural and business plan for a whole year for seedling production;
4. Linking seedling growers with commercial farmers on contractual bases ;
5. Conducting of at least 5 business oriented trainings and 10 vocational trainings;
6. Preparation of a concept note for new business training centers; Determining the location of at least 3 training centers that will be established by WEEP with an existing business in zone of influence; Identification of potential partners for centers.
7. Providing at least ten women with legal advice connected to starting up a business or with difficulties faced during for a women managed businesses;
8. Completion of the Farah 2016 Woman Entrepreneur of the Year, including a conference on the issues facing women entrepreneurs, a final event in Dushanbe, and follow up round table meetings in Dushanbe, Khujand, Qurghonteppa, and Vahdat;
9. Organizing a Junior Achievement youth camp in Bahoriston (Sugd Province) for 20 youth (10 male, 10 female), including getting permission from the Ministry of Science and Education.