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EVALUATION

Final Evaluation Report of Women's Entrepreneurship for Empowerment Project, Tajikistan

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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR EMPOWERMENT PROJECT IN TAJIKISTAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The overall purpose of the evaluation was to conduct an independent assessment of the success of the Women's Entrepreneurship for Empowerment Project (WEEP) after 4 years of implementation by the National Association of Business Women of Tajikistan (NABWT) from 2014 to 2018. It was conducted by an independent consultant from abroad, who had no prior involvement in the project, following a call for consultants and a subsequent transparent bidding process by NABWT.

The evaluation explores the extent to which the assumed causal pathways between the project's outcome objectives and its activities are sound and whether or not activities yielded the intended outcomes. It sought to identify bottlenecks and constraints experienced in pursuit of the outcomes and to provide an opportunity for project stakeholders to take stock of accomplishments and lessons learned to date.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Women's Entrepreneurship for Empowerment project (WEEP) was designed and implemented by the National Association of Business Woman of Tajikistan (NABWT) in partnership with and cofunded by IMON International. Based on the NABWT's 20 year experience of issues relating to women empowerment in Tajikistan, the project was designed to tackle issues relating to women headed households, food insecurity and poverty by empowering women to either start new businesses or improve existing ones.

The project had three objectives:

- 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.
- 2) To facilitate greater access for women with microenterprises to higher value areas of the value chain, new markets and customers and to business support mechanisms, including micro-finance.
- 3) To positively influence attitudes to women's microenterprise, through development of co-educational business education with youth and through partnerships with government.

FINDINGS: MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The situation of women in Tajikistan and in Khatlon in particular which is characterized by unemployment, lack of economic opportunities, lack of confidence and entrepreneurial skills and support, demonstrates a need for such a project. The objectives and activities implemented to achieve that, are indeed relevant as a response to the need to support women's entrepreneurship and empowerment. Providing access to information through training and networking is very relevant for increasing women's confidence in either starting their own businesses or expanding and improving their existing businesses.

The three project objectives were successfully attained since all performance indicators at the end of the project were either achieved at target or above.

The project was implemented in a financially efficient way. Due to the fact that the various project activities were low budget (training, networking, and advisory support) and staff costs kept low due to the fact that only local staff (no international expatriate staff) implemented the entire project, while achieving a high impact in terms of outcomes, this project can definitely be considered financially efficient with no over-spending and sound financial management of qualified staff.

The direct impact is quite clear since all beneficiaries benefitted to some extent from the project's interventions. Even though not all women used the skills and knowledge acquired through trainings, study tours or support, they did however gain exponentially in self-confidence and self-worth. The indirect impact is the interesting aspect here. While women gain skills and confidence they pass it down to their daughters, neighbours, family and community members. There was also an observed positive knock-on effect from woman who were already economically active and who improved their business as a result of the project interventions. Women who had received training, were training other women in their communities or families imparting the same skills they had gained.

The number of women who started their own businesses is an indicator of how successful the various trainings and support was. Furthermore, the evaluation observed that most women who were already economically active and who did receive business training, they did indeed improve their business, increased their confidence as they gained knowledge of tax and legal practices.

The nature of this project, which provides knowledge, skills, confidence and networking opportunities to women is sustainable since these women generate income from the skills acquired.

The interventions made to improve women's agricultural practices with the introduction of various new technologies such as drip irrigation, seedling production, shading on greenhouses,

composting and others, contributes exponentially to environmental sustainability by reducing the waist of water resources, reducing the salinization of the soil, improving crop yield and reducing fertilizer use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand the project locations to other districts in Khatlon since demand for increased support to women is high.
- Focus a particular part of the project in supporting high value women-led businesses which have potential for expansion and export
- Work closely with other FTF projects in avoiding overlap of activities and ensure each project has its own value added and objectives.
- Centralise decision making with regards to project activities to the Project Manager based in Khatlon and increase the PM's autonomy with regards to project related decisions.
- Perform regular market assessments to inform various interventions regarding business strategies and understandings of market dynamics in the region.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The overall purpose of the evaluation was to conduct an independent assessment of the success of the Women's Entrepreneurship for Empowerment Project (WEEP) after 4 years of implementation by the National Association of Business Women of Tajikistan (NABWT). It was conducted by an independent consultant from abroad, who had no prior involvement in the project, following a call for consultants and a subsequent transparent bidding process by NABWT.

The evaluation explores the extent to which the assumed causal pathways between the project's outcome objectives and its activities are sound and whether or not activities yielded the intended outcomes. It sought to identify bottlenecks and constraints experienced in pursuit of the outcomes and to provide an opportunity for project stakeholders to take stock of accomplishments and lessons learned to date.

The results of this evaluation ultimately serve as a source of evidence to help inform decisions about future programme designs and policies including in-country partners at national, regional and local levels especially within the context of USAID's "Feed the Future" initiative in Kathlon Province, where this project was implemented.

The final evaluation sought to answer the following questions:

- To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended impacts and effects?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of its objectives?
- Were the activities cost-efficient?
- Were the objectives achieved on time?
- Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?
- What has happened as a result of the project?
- What real difference have the activities made to the beneficiaries? And how many people have been affected?
- What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Women's Entrepreneurship for Empowerment project (WEEP) was designed and implemented by the National Association of Business Woman of Tajikistan (NABWT) in partnership with and co-funded by IMON International. Based on the NABWT's 20 year experience of issues relating to women empowerment in Tajikistan, the project was designed to tackle issues relating to women headed households, food insecurity and poverty by empowering women to either start new businesses or improve existing ones.

Indeed, Tajikistan faces many challenges, including poverty and food insecurity. With increasing male labour migration to Russia, the burden for women in Tajikistan has increased. In addition to household duties, women have taken over farming management and much of the labour force. Women face discrimination, including cultural attitudes discouraging them from working outside the home or starting a business.

The project worked to empower women to establish microenterprises, move into high value sections of the value chain, and improve access to services and support.

The project supported microenterprises and household farms, particularly focusing on women headed households, and within fruit and vegetable value chains with a special focus on vegetable seedlings and strawberry production. Alternative sources of income for women farmers were also developed, to allow the establishment of enterprises that generate income during the winter months. The overall goal of these interventions was to contribute to economic stability and viability in rural communities. The project worked with economically inactive women within these communities, to better understand their reasons for not starting businesses and barriers to entry in the labour and enterprise market. This work formed the basis of the local advocacy strategy, as well as feeding into the broader advocacy strategy.

The initial project period was 3 years from 2014-2017 and then was extended for one year until 30 September 2018, for a total of 2 million USD. It was partly co-funded by IMON International.

The project was implemented in thirteen districts in Khatlon province in Southern Tajikistan, which is a Feed the Future (FTF) Initiative area. It targeted rural women headed households, which are the most vulnerable. Khatlon is the province of Tajikistan that the highest proportion of its population living in poverty. The project started with 8 districts for the first 3 years of the project and then extended to 13 in the fourth year.

The project had three objectives:

- 4) 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.
- 5) To facilitate greater access for women with microenterprises to higher value areas of the value chain, new markets and customers and to business support mechanisms, including micro-finance.
- 6) To positively influence attitudes to women's microenterprise, through development of co-educational business education with youth and through partnerships with government.

To achieve these objectives, the following activities were implemented:

- Vocational and Business trainings.
- Set-up of training centres.
- Business and legal support provided to existing businesses.
- Introduction of new technologies for women who are economically active in the agricultural sector.
- Supporting high schools in introducing curriculum on basis of economics and promoting entrepreneurship amongst youths.
- Networking events, study tours in Tajikistan and abroad and youth camps.
- National Competition (every 2 years) organized to select Women Entrepreneur of the Year (Farah Competition).

EVALUATION METHODS & LIMITATIONS

The final evaluation was conducted by an independent evaluation consultant. A thorough desk review of all relevant project documentation was conducted, followed by 11 days of extensive field visits in Tajikistan. On the last day of field work, the consultant presented the preliminary findings to USAID and partners in Dushanbe. After thorough analysis of both desk review and field visits, the consultant consolidated and drafted the final report.

The data collection methodology consisted of individual interviews with beneficiaries, visits of individual businesses and training centres, with focus group discussions with certain groups of beneficiaries. Random sampling was used for certain visits to ensure transparency with regards to choice of targeted beneficiaries. Various stakeholders of the project including partner organisations and local government officials were also interviewed. The consultant covered a total of 11 districts out of 13 and interviewed over 45 beneficiaries. Focus group discussions were conducted randomly with small groups of women to assess their situation and the impact of the project on their lives. Simultaneous interpretation from Tajik to English was provided by the M&E Manager.

Due to the change of laws regarding registered sim cards for mobile telephones, many contact details of beneficiaries of the first 3 years of the project were incorrect or deregistered and therefore contacting beneficiaries of the beginning of the project was difficult.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS: MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NABWT works at the national level with much experience of implementing projects funded by international donors on women empowerment and entrepreneurship. This particular project was designed in a relevant manner based on a number of baseline studies and preliminary data, which included formative research on the situation of women in Khatlon, attitude tests, value chain mapping and legislation mapping. Furthermore, the experience of NABWT over the years in working with women entrepreneurs also contributed to designing a project that was relevant.

Although the objectives and outcomes were broad and ambitious without extensive details on how the outcomes were to be achieved, this did however allow flexibility in amending project activities to suit needs on the ground.

Relevance

Although the project document specifically mentions targeting women headed households this does not entirely reflect the reality of the domestic situation of many beneficiaries. Indeed, many do live with men who are either permanently based there or who occasionally migrate for work in Russia.

The situation of women in Tajikistan and in Khatlon in particular which is characterized by unemployment, lack of economic opportunities, lack of confidence and entrepreneurial skills and support, demonstrates a need for such a project. The objectives and activities implemented to achieve that, are indeed relevant as a response to the need to support women's entrepreneurship and empowerment. Providing access to information through training and networking is very relevant for increasing women's confidence in either starting their own businesses or expanding and improving their existing businesses.

Targeting youth and working with them on entrepreneurship, both boys and girls is highly relevant considering the fact that youth are the adults of tomorrow. Integrating the learning of basic economics into their high school curricular was relevant to the students since it represented concrete information regarding the reality of economic life.

According to a recent study commissioned by UNDP in Tajikistan, one of the greatest obstacles women face in setting up a business stems from their own attitude. Women felt unsure about their own ability to start or run a business, which affected their engagement levels in

entrepreneurship. When asked what could have improved their situation the most, they talked about stronger skills, self-esteem and self-confidence more than external issues such as access to finance. The UNDP study continued by stating that many women particularly expressed interest in business skills training organized for women only that would focus on issues relevant to them. According to respondents, such trainings should focus on knowledge of business management as well as knowledge of the market¹.

This is exactly what the WEE project has endeavored to do and has successfully done.

Effectiveness

The three project objectives were successfully attained since all performance indicators at the end of the project were either achieved at target or above. Annex I provides an overview of all the final performance indicators and targets achieved for the entire duration of the project. One particular target stands out at 39% achievement rate, and that is the number of business who officially register. This can be explained by the fact that although many women have started a new business as a result of the project's interventions (425 new business, achieving 121% of the project's target), these new businesses are homebased businesses either related to a vocational skills such as sewing, embroidery or baking or managing a small plot for agricultural purposes which is located on the family land. All these types of business, are not required to be registered by law, hence the lack of their formal registration.

The last year of the project was implemented during a period of economic downturn where most families expressed that they were in some of economic crisis with a reduction in consumer confidence in spending and also reduced entrepreneurial confidence in the face of reduced income, high loan defaults. There was a reduction in the number of businesses registered in year 4 of the project (16 out of 20 targeted).

Efficiency

The project was implemented in a financially efficient way. Due to the fact that the various project activities were low budget (training, networking, and advisory support) and staff costs kept low due to the fact that only local staff (no international expatriate staff) implemented the entire project, while achieving a high impact in terms of outcomes, this project can definitely be considered financially efficient with no over-spending and sound financial management of qualified staff.

In a comparison of actual expenditures with budget estimates, it is evident that the financial management of the project was very accurate. Budgeting estimates in the beginning of the project corresponded well to the actual expenditures incurred throughout the project. There were no overruns of high costs.

¹ UNDP Barriers to Female Entrepreneurship, 2016, p.15

Partnerships with various organisations that provided cost sharing such as IMON International was successful.

The project's activities were efficiently amended throughout the project to adapt to needs on the ground such as reducing the time of training days to support women who cannot leave their homes for extended periods of time or how trainings were conducted in complement such as having a vocational training and then compliment it with business training to ensure that skills acquired are both technical and economically viable. Other amendments were made with regards to which new technologies were to be introduced in the agricultural related small businesses. All such variations to the project over its implementation period were made to ensure increased efficiency of the project. These amendments were made by experienced project staff who have excellent knowledge of needs and realities of the beneficiaries including knowledge of local market conditions.

Impact: Analysis of Results that contributed towards Programme Objectives

An analysis of the impact of the project needs to focus on both direct and indirect impact. The direct impact is quite clear since all beneficiaries benefitted to some extent from the project's interventions. Even though not all women used the skills and knowledge acquired through trainings, study tours or support, they did however gain exponentially in self-confidence and self-worth. The indirect impact is the interesting aspect here. While women gain skills and confidence they pass it down to their daughters, neighbours, family and community members. There was also an observed positive knock-on effect from woman who were already economically active and who improved their business as a result of the project interventions. Women who had received training, were training other women in their communities or families imparting the same skills they had gained. Support networks were created by using modern technology communication tools like Viber where women continued to exchange amongst themselves and seek advice and support from other entrepreneurs regarding their business activities, even very small scale activities.

Objective 1: The number of women who started their own businesses is an indicator of how successful the various trainings and support was. Even through many women still don't register their businesses, a significant number have started an economic activity as a result of the project's interventions. The total number of trainings was also achieved (100% of target achieved). A total of 1280 women participated in vocational or business training.

Objective 2: The evaluation observed that most women who were already economically active and who did receive business training, they did indeed improve their business, increased their confidence as they gained knowledge of tax and legal practices. The new technologies applied in the agricultural sector were used and continued efficiently which means that as the objective states, women do ultimately result in working at higher levels of the value chain.

Furthermore, as a result of the project interventions with regards to encouraging women entrepreneurs with established businesses to register their business, most entrepreneurs understood the importance of registering and started the procedure. Many also took loans to improve their businesses and learnt how to successfully manage and reimburse those loans. It was observed that the vast majority of women will reimburse their loans, even despite the high rates of microloans, since women took great responsibility to ensure their reimbursement.

The introduction of strawberries and strawberry seedling production has been highly successful since women have been well trained, study tours to strawberry producers in Turkey have been organized to disseminate information and increase networking and high yield American varieties introduced to the market. This component of the project has been so successful that some of the producers have reached export capacity and the demand for strawberries on the market and for seedlings by other producers has exponentially increased.

The various study tours that are organized both within Tajikistan and abroad, are highly successful in opening up the world to women entrepreneurs from Khatlon. They provide networking and knowledge sharing opportunities while also linking women to suppliers and other potential business partnerships with a potential for developing export links for the more ambitious entrepreneurs.

Objective 3: The impact of this objective, especially after the first 3 years is difficult to assess in terms of the possibility to objectively verify the quality of the impact of networking and advocacy events. However, since its indicators were quantitative with regards to the numbers of events and number of attendees, indicators were indeed achieved (102% and 106% respectively). Another activity that took place in the first 3 years of the project and not continued in the 4th year, was the training of 40 high school teachers in the “Basis in Economics”, to be introduced in high schools across Khatlon. In addition the students of these high schools had the opportunity to participate in youth entrepreneurship summer and winter camps where they were taught business planning skills and voted for best business plans. Students very much appreciated these opportunities. They were also very positive about learning basic economics at school and understanding the concepts of entrepreneurship. The rationale behind this intervention was to increase youth awareness of market economics and to instill a sense of gender equality when it comes to the idea of women as entrepreneurs. This evaluation found that that outcome was indeed successful.

Another important activity included under this objective is the competition “Farah” which vows to find the best woman entrepreneur of the year after a rigorous selection process of women's businesses around the country. Due to the level of media coverage and dissemination of this event, the impact of improving the image of women entrepreneurs in the country including having an effect on government institutions, is palpable. The women who emerge as semi-

finalists of the Farah competition (around 30 every 2 years) become role models for other women entrepreneurs.

While there have been changes in the law in recent years, first on the age of marriage and on the changes of taxation and need for registration of homebased businesses such as sewing, handicraft and baking, no evidence suggests that these changes were as a result of the project's advocacy interventions. However, what these changes demonstrate, is that this project is indeed implemented during times of change for women and their role in society.

Sustainability

The nature of this project, which provides knowledge, skills, confidence and networking opportunities to women is sustainable since these women generate income from the skills acquired. The training centres are handed over to economically active beneficiaries who have particularly developed entrepreneurial skills and manage the centres in a financially sustainable way. The various hardware installed in the training centres such as sewing machines and embroidery machines and the material used for improving the irrigation of greenhouses, were sourced from local suppliers and all spare parts are found locally, contributing to the sustainability of the use of these tools. The interventions made to improve women's agricultural practices with the introduction of various new technologies such as drip irrigation, seedling production, shading on greenhouses, composting and others, contributes exponentially to environmental sustainability by reducing the waste of water resources, reducing the salinization of the soil, improving crop yield and reducing fertilizer use.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The design of the M&E framework was broad in scope and in verifiable indicators, which gave flexibility to the project staff to amend the project activities according to needs of the beneficiaries. Since the project staff are local experts in their various fields of knowledge, feedback and observations from staff fed back into the various analyses and assessments which in turn fed back into the project activities and relevant amendments and adjustments. The monitoring and evaluation department clearly improved its capacity and that of its staff by the end of the project with effective monitoring, efficient use of database information and proper collection and management of data and information from and about beneficiaries. Statistics are regularly collected by the M&E which show specific criteria of beneficiaries, their lives, the impact of the trainings and other project activities and information regarding their economic activity. Reporting to USAID from both field staff and NABWT headquarters is done in a timely manner.

Management

A project manager is responsible for the overall operational management of this project based in Khatlon with a team of project staff all based in the project office in Bohtar (formally known as Qurgontepa), Katlon. The staffing structure and division of roles and responsibilities is well

defined and staff have opportunities (and are encouraged) to freely contribute openly to any discussion regarding the activities of the project through regular staff meetings. Some other roles such as project coordinator, finance director and communications director are all based in the north of the country in Khujand. The financial management of this project was transparent, efficient and successful.

There have been significant efforts made in increasing the skills and knowledge of project staff by contributing widely to staff development over the 4 years of the project. There was hardly any staff turnover from the beginning of the project to the end which ensured continuity and consistency of the implementation.

Coordination

Coordination was also successful between other project leaders in Khatlon, implementing projects funded by USAID under the Feed the Future Initiative to ensure lack of overlap or inconsistencies in the various project interventions. These projects share their beneficiary databases and monitoring data with each other which is highly beneficial to the implementation of all these projects within the same region. There is a potential overlap or occurrences of double beneficiaries with the TAWA project, which needs to be noted.

The project staff maintains excellent relations with local government officials and cooperation with district and provincial level government is very efficient, contributing to effective implementation of the project while ensuring cooperation with the government. This also allows for a sense of national ownership of the outcomes of the activities implemented.

CONCLUSIONS

Strengths

The most important strength of this project lies in its relevance and in the impact it has on women's lives. It imparts skills and confidence to women who then in turn either impart it on others who use that knowledge to improve their livelihoods and that of their families. Women who know their rights are empowered. This project enables that empowerment through disseminating information and knowledge through trainings and support and through the encouragement of networking. Women can share their experiences with other women and other entrepreneurs and seek business related advice which in turn translates to the improvement of their businesses or their business endeavours. Women are given windows to the world through study tours both inside and outside Tajikistan. The project staff provides continuous advice for women entrepreneurs on legal and business related issues. The choice of the location for the project, in Khatlon province, one of the poorest provinces in Tajikistan was a good choice since the need to develop women's empowerment and women's entrepreneurship is significant. It is also a unique project in this location with no other NGO

implementing similar projects. The implementing organization, in this case, NABWT, since it is Tajik organization with Tajik staff, has an in-depth understanding of the context of the country, the development issues faced by local communities and local government dynamics. As a result, the project staff are able to interact efficiently with both beneficiaries and partners.

The empowerment aspect of this project needs to be noted since the simple training of a beneficiary on issues relating to tax collection or business plan development, has an exponential impact on her self-confidence. This evaluation noted the significant effects of increase in self-confidence of these women and the obvious outcome that it can have on the community and the children of these women who subsequently now have a role model of a confident independent woman who heads her household and supports her family with the income she has generated.

Weaknesses

Even though the project was implemented over 4 years, many worthy activities started in the last part of the project and would need a continuation of project funding to continue to have a significant impact on beneficiaries' lives. There is a huge demand by women to receive more training and support with either starting a business or improving their existing one and therefore the project's life would ideally need to be longer. Furthermore, the project was only implemented in 13 districts of the entire province due to the limitations to project funds, however the demand is much greater in all other districts of the province.

Due to the budget limitations, the project was limited to activities which, if budget would have allowed, could have been expanded significantly, in response to the needs and demands of the women in Khatlon.

Two main targets of the project, namely the number of new enterprises started by women and the number of existing enterprises that have improved their work and profitability, were somewhat ambitious in the project proposal considering 1) the legal status of requirements for small household businesses with regards to official registration and 2) the economic situation in Khatlon province and the small scale of women led small businesses, which while they many have improved their business thanks to the project interventions, many have also not been able to increase profitability and especially, have not started working at high levels of the value chain.

Opportunities

While working in specific districts, there are opportunities to work in neighbouring districts by geographical closeness but also by creating links with beneficiaries in the next area. This project, through its project staff who have expertise in business and legal knowledge, provides individual support to local women headed businesses. The new technologies that have been applied in the context of improving agricultural related business has provided unrivalled opportunities to improve the environment, reduce waste, save money and increase income and in the case of strawberry production, has created potential for export markets.

By setting up 5 training centres and handing them over to entrepreneurial women who successfully and sustainably manage these centres, this creates economic potential and increased opportunities for other women to receive training in these same centres.

UNDP's study on the barriers to women's entrepreneurship concluded that for women already engaged in business, access to markets determined their success. However, respondents also credited helpful innovations like micro credits, self-help groups, and market information systems for their success. Trainings and support offered by organizations and associations benefitted respondents, but mainly those who already had a business idea or a skill. Women who engaged in business activities mainly as a support for their livelihoods felt that they did not have adequate access to information. This demonstrates significant interest in basic business training, suggesting that existing programs should be scaled up and offered to a wider audience. In addition, technological advances in internet and mobile phone access have the possibility to promote innovations and supporting entrepreneurship. One in ten respondents already found internet access useful to them, despite information in the Tajik language being available online much less than in Russian or English. With the growing number of mobile and internet subscribers, information shared in Tajik could reach even more users in the future².

Threats

While most women are educated and literate, there is a portion of vulnerable women whose education level creates an obstacle to their ability to participate in and understand the various trainings offered by the project. However, this is a minority of women and the evaluation observed that even poorly educated women still benefited from vocational training since it was given in an easy to understand way and was largely hands-on. Even the business training was developed so that women with low levels of literacy could follow and understand. Still a threat to the success of women's empowerment is the role they play in a society that is still highly gender imbalanced. Men often lack support to women who wish to start or improve their businesses. This trend however is changing slowly and as women become economically active and financially more independent, the men observe the benefits of the additional income for their families and feel less pressure to provide for their families themselves, also reducing the need to migrate abroad for work. Some of the areas of intervention are isolated and access to the beneficiaries by the project remains a challenge as is their access to markets which could provide opportunities to expand their businesses. Furthermore, issues relating to volatile electricity provision is a problem for many women who operate businesses that depend on regular electricity provision. Finally, the harshness of the climate in Khatlon province is also a threat to agricultural related economic activities and there is a need to adapt the technologies to that harshness.

² UNDP Barriers to Female Entrepreneurship, 2016, p.15

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand the project locations to other districts in Khatlon since demand for increased support to women is high.
- Focus a particular part of the project in supporting high value women-led businesses which have potential for expansion and export
- Work closely with other FTF projects in avoiding overlap of activities and ensure each project has its own value added and objectives.
- Centralise decision making with regards to project activities to the Project Manager based in Khatlon and increase the PM's autonomy with regards to project related decisions.
- Perform regular market assessments to inform various interventions regarding business strategies and understandings of market dynamics in the region.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: FINAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#	Type of indicators		Indicator Title	Unit of Measure	Disaggregation	2015	2015			2016			2017			2018			LOP		
	Old number	New number				BL	Target	Actual	Target achieved %												
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 (both unregistered and registered)	number	Location, duration and sex, legal status	0	25	10	40%	100	187	187%	125	112	90%	100	116	116%	350	425	121%
2	NEW : Outcome	PPR/ Outcome	Number of vocational and business trainings provided by training centers	Number	Location, type of training	0										20	20	100%	20	20	100%

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3	NEW : Output	PPR/ Output	Number of training centers established and function by WEEP support	Number	Location	0												2	2		5	5	100%
4	NEW : 4.5.2 . (7): Output	PPR/ Output	Number of women trained as a result of USG assistance	Number	Location , type of training	0												1200	1280	107%	1200	1280	107%
Objective 2: To assist economically active women with existing businesses to expand their businesses and occupy higher levels of value chains																							
5	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	198	99%	180	180	100%	600	569	95%		
6	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	13	33%	20	16	16%	120	47	39%		

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10	NEW : Output indicator	PPR/ Output	Number of events and networking on support of women’s entrepreneurship held by WEEP support	Number	by type: advocacy meeting, roundtable, youth economic camp, competition, exchange visits, etc	0												32	34	106%	32	34	106%
11	NEW : Output indicator	PPR/ Output	Number of attendees at the events on support of women’s entrepreneurship held in USG assistance	Number	by type: advocacy meeting, roundtable, youth economic camp, competition, exchange visits, etc	0												2000	2041	102%	2000	2041	102%
12	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	39	130%			30	34	113%	60	73	122%
Additional indicators related to all objectives																							

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13	FtF4.5.2-13 Output	E.G. 3.2-1	# households receiving USG assistance	Number	Duration , gendered household type	0	1230	376	31%	2103	2707	129%	1813	1853	102%	1800	2060	114%	6946	6996	101%
14	FtF4.5.2-29 Outcome	E.G.3.2-6	\$ value of loans received	USD	Type of business	0	7500	5564	74%	45000	59849	133%	55000	55173	100%	30000	36557	122%	137500	157143	114%

ANNEX II: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

II.A DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

WEEP Project Proposal
 Baseline for Indicator 6: Attitude Test
 Focus Group Discussions, pre-project
 Formative Research Report
 LTTP – FY4
 NABWT Financial Reports
 Annual Reports – All years
 Final Performance Indicators for all years
 WEEP Activity M&E plans for all years

NABWT Work Plan for Y4
 M&E Quarterly Reports
 M&E Data bases
 WEEP Staff TOR and Managements Reports
 Detailed Project Budget for first 3 years
 Budget Narrative for first 3 years
 Budget and Narrative for RFA 4th year extension
 UNDP Report: Barriers to Female Entrepreneurship, Tajikistan, 2016

II.B INTERVIEWS AND FIELD VISITS

Date	Time	Activity	District	Staff		
27-07-2018	9-00 10-00	Meet with A&A Department Meet with BDS	Qurgonteppa	Farhod Toirov Ittifok Akhmedov		

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	11-00 14-00	Meet with M&E Meet with PR		Zarina Qambarova Madina Sultonova, Amonjon Mahkamov		
	14-30	Meet with FD		Firuz Mahmudova, Anjela Kabutova		
	16-00	Meet with VC		Husniddin Kuziboev		
Site visits						
Date	Time	Activity	District	Beneficiary	Telephone	Purpose
28-07-2018	8-00	Site visit of woman in agro sector	Balkhi, j. Navobod	Ismoilova Fotima	905-85-57-77	New technology, took loan, Study story to North, Greenhouse
		Visit of women started business on Bakery	Balkhi, j. Balkh	Sheralieva Nazokat	93-797-59-99	Started business, Vocational training participants
		Woman who received loan	Balkhi, Kalenin	Zuhurova Gulmoh	93-157-05-18	Took loan, Greenhouse
		Woman who applied new technology	Jaihun	Qurbonova Gulnoza	93-157-05-18	New technology, Study tour to Turkey
		Women with greenhouses	Qurgonteppa	Azimova		New technology, Study tour to Turkey
29-07-2018	8-00	Meet with entrepreneur woman	Qubodiyon	Jurakulova Muhabbat	93-176-75-65	Took loan, Study tour, Trainer, Training Center
		Women entrepreneur – Bakery	Qubodiyon	Ruziboeva Bahrinisso	93-822-72-26	Business training Participants
		Visit of woman - Tailor	Qubodiyon	Nazirova Orzugul		Vocational Training participant
		Visit of started business in Shahrituz- Beauty salon	Shahrituz	Burhonova Zarina	93-740-24-27	Started business
		Visit of green house	Sjajrituz	Satorova Gulsara		Greenhouses
30-07-2018		Meet with women who registered her business	Qurgonteppa	Kuldosheva	93-538-41-18	Registered business and faced difficulties, Study tour participant , Took loan
	9-00	Visit of woman who started business – Beauty Salon	Qurgonteppa	Toirova Hamrokhon		Started business , Farrah participant, Business training participant

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	10-00	Meeting with representative of Imon	Qurgonteppa	Kabutova Guljahon		Partner Director of Imon in Qurgonteppa
		Meeting with two students	Qurgonteppa			Two students from Winter Camp
		Visit of woman – Bakery	Qurgonteppa	Ahrorova Inobat	93-182-13-61	Started business and participants of business training
		Meet with trainer. Tailor	Qurgonteppa	Saidvalieva Saodat		Trainer. Transfer training center, Study tour
	14-00	Meeting with students and teacher	Qurgonteppa – office			1 Student and 1 teacher
	15-30	Meeting with representative of government of Qurginteppa	Qurgonteppa	Farhod responsible		Government representative
	16-00					
		Visit of woman in agro sector	Bokhtar, j. Sarvati Istiklol	Ergasheva Kholida	93-315-6-54-45	Business training participant
31-07-2018	8-00	Site visit of woman who applied to new technology	Bokhtar, j. Sarvati Istiklol	Yuldosheva Muayssara		New technology applied, Took, loan. Study Tour to Turkey and North, Greenhouse
		Meet with women handicraft	Bokhtar. S. Zargar .	Qayumova		Study tour, craft arctician
	12-30	Visit owner of green houses and fruit drying training center	Vakhsh. J. Rudaki	Shirinova Bozorgul	93-837-90-44	New technology, Study tour participants, invested own money, Training center, Greenhouse
		Visit training center – Bakery	Vakhsh	Rajabova Inobat		Training center, Trainer, study tour
		Meet with woman – Agriculture	Vaksh	Sharifova Bibirobiya	915197076	Business training participant
	15-30	Meet with partner	Qurgonteppa	Deputy director		TAWA project
1-08-2018	7-00	Site visit of training participant – furniture maker	Khuroson	Abdulloeva Soliyamoh	91-532-23-95	Business training participant
		Meet with training participants –	Yovon	Gioyeva Shahnoza	939003732	Business and vocational training participant

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		Visit strawberry demoplots	Yovon	Kholikova Murodbi		Strawberry demoplots, Study tour
		Meet with the representative of government	Qurgonteppa	Rahimzoda Ranno		The head of Women and family affair commette of Khattlon region
2-08-2018	8-00	Meeting women who registered business	Qurgonteppa	Niyozova Rohila		Registered and started business, Study tour, Trainer
		Meeting with beneficiary	Qurgoonteppa , Zarkhez	Nuralieva Salomat	919-37-22-29	Business training participant FY 3
		Visit of training participant	Sarband	Qurbonova Rano	550-555-244	Business and vocational training participants
		Meeting with beneficiary	Jomi, Yakkatut	Gulova Gulzira	901-30-33-83	Business training participants FY 4, Rendom selection
		Women who invested money – Agriculture	Jomi , j. Zarnisor	Jobirova Dilafuz	915-07-61-61	Invested own money
		Meeting with beneficiary	Jomi, Yakatut	Rahima Davlatova	900-77-68-71	Who stopped their business
3-08-2018	8-00	Meet with partner - WVC	Dushnabe, Atlas	Nurali Saidov		WVC
	9-30	Meeting with partner - DAI	Dushanbe	Parviz Kamolitdinov		DAI
	11.00	Meeting with committee of Farrah	Dushanbe,	Shahlo Vatanova		Committee member
	12-00	Meeting with CoP	Dushanbe			
	15-00	Presentation to USAID and Partners	Dushanbe, Atlas Hotel			

ANNEX III: DISCLOSURE OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Name	Adeline Mills
Title	International Evaluation Consultant
Organization	Self-Employed
Evaluation Position?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number <i>(contract or other instrument)</i>	Individual Contract Agreement signed between Adeline Mills and NABWT on 26 July 2018
USAID Project(s) Evaluated <i>(Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</i>	Women's Entrepreneurship for Empowerment Project, National Association of Business Women of Tajikistan, AID-176-A-14-00006
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:</p> <p><i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation. 	
<p>I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.</p>	
Signature	Adeline Mills
Date	13 August 2018