

IFAD Gender Awards 2019

Honouring achievements in gender equality and women's empowerment

Pakistan, Malawi, Guatemala, Turkey and Cameroon

Asia and the Pacific

Southern Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project

The project has adopted a unique poverty graduation approach for the ultra-poor and poor. This combines interventions in social mobilization, social protection, and the creation of assets and skills, as well as basic rural infrastructure development, to improve rural livelihoods, with a specific emphasis on women's empowerment.

The result has been a drastic reduction in the number of ultra-poor households in targeted communities, from 58 per cent to 4 per cent. Under the poverty graduation approach,¹ over 1,600 homeless families have benefited from decent, climate-safe and functional houses with running water, bathrooms and solar power. A total of 5,000 toilets have been built, promoting hygiene and working towards achieving SDG 6 on water and sanitation.

All 1,600 housing units have been legally registered in the names of women participating in the project. Home ownership has strengthened the women's standing in their families as well as in the community and given them a greater voice in family decision-making.

The majority of the members of the community organizations are women. This has helped them to voice their needs regarding livelihood support and community infrastructure. Women were involved in the procurement of farm animals, which increased their sense of ownership and allowed them to control their own income.

Furthermore, women benefited from vocational and enterprise training, which aided them in building assets and generating income. Around 80 per cent of the trainees are now running their own small businesses or are employed. Increased incomes have also led to higher primary school enrolment.

Read more about the project:

www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/project/id/1100001514/country/pakistan

1. The poverty graduation approach is a series of sequenced multi-sector activities to transition the poorest and most vulnerable households from access to basic services such as sanitation to mainstream development activities such as income generation activities within a period of time.





East and Southern Africa

Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme

The project addresses the gender inequalities that persist in households and groups, and at the village level, in Malawi.

The IFAD-funded project focuses on enhancing the agricultural productivity and food security of rural women and their families through simple, affordable income-generating technologies. Women's participation in decision-making bodies at village, area and district levels has been strengthened and they now make up 30 per cent of such groups.

Gender-sensitive participatory appraisals were conducted at the beginning of the project. The exercise proved crucial in identifying the persistent social issues that continue to affect programme outreach and impact.

The project achieved a strong gender balance among participants (e.g. farmer business schools trained 10,467 women, 61 per cent of total participants). Women benefited not only from extension activities promoting good agricultural practices and from training in business-oriented farming, but also from increased access to input loans and village challenge funds. In addition, they were aided by the livestock pass-on systems in which participants pass on some of their small livestock's offspring to other needy households. Training provided to district and extension staff, and lead farmers, also strengthened the quality of gender mainstreaming.

A total of 20,500 families received improved rocket stoves. The stoves have notably reduced the felling of trees around villages because they require 50 per cent less firewood to cook meals. Also helping save timber is the availability of wood from pigeon pea shrubs. As a result, women, who are mainly responsible for collecting firewood, are saving a significant amount of time and energy.

Reducing physical labour in domestic and productive chores lessens the pressure on a person's nutrient requirements, which is particularly important in maternal nutrition (and thus foetal and child health). This is of special relevance in poor rural areas, where pregnant and breastfeeding women already struggle to meet their higher nutrient requirements.

To address the underlying causes of gender inequality (including prevailing social norms and attitudes), the project is promoting a household approach in target villages. This considers intergenerational issues, with specific attention paid to households affected by HIV/AIDS. The result is increased participation of women in decision-making, reduction of their workload and an improved access to, and control over, resources, assets and benefits.

Read more about the project:

www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/project/id/1100001534/country/malawi

Latin America and the Caribbean

Sustainable Rural Development Programme for the Northern Region

PRODENORTE is aiming to increase the production, employment and incomes of poor rural women in the north of Guatemala by strengthening their market access, and agricultural and non-agricultural revenues. This is being accomplished through partnerships with the private sector that drive improved quality and sustainability in production, while also strengthening marketing/export and technological development.

To boost their economic empowerment, the project is supporting women in various ways. Examples include developing and implementing business plans, setting up community savings and credit groups, generating income through the sustainable use of natural resources (e.g. production of timber and other forest products) and providing vocational training for young women. All training activities are undertaken in Mayan languages (Q'eqchi, Poqomchi and Achí) to secure the active participation of rural women.

Women have accordingly been able to enhance their participation in productive initiatives and, increasingly, to take on leadership roles. More than 2,000 women have been certified as indigenous rural trainers in the programme area and now work as development promoters in their communities.

Women acting as role models are playing a major part in bringing about change. An increasing number now hold leadership positions, especially in community development councils.

The project is providing training for women in how to reduce the daily physical toll and drudgery of housework through labour-saving technologies, such as improved cooking stoves. Some 800 families have also gained access to clean drinking water following the construction of water cisterns. Many women involved in the project are enjoying better living conditions and can engage in economic activities while also participating in decision-making at various levels.

Read more about the project:

www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/project/id/1100001473/country/guatemala





Near East, North Africa and Europe

Murat River Watershed Rehabilitation Project

The project targets women in remote mountain areas of eastern Turkey, enabling them to earn more income from agricultural production and to reduce their household expenditures and workload. At the same time, it is helping mitigate the impact of environmental disasters, such as flash floods, landslides, and erosion.

Particular efforts have been made by the project to encourage women to participate and to ensure that gender issues are mainstreamed into the development and implementation of 26 microcatchment area plans.

To give rural women and men an equal opportunity to engage in, and benefit from, profitable activities, the project has specifically targeted women in initiatives centering on horticulture and energy saving. A total of 410 hectares of orchards have been established and 162 plastic tunnels for vegetable production have been laid down, which has increased women's incomes by 60 per cent. The project has also helped diversify participants' sources of revenue by promoting local handicrafts, beekeeping and the production of grape juice and strawberries.

Innovative energy-saving technologies have been introduced by the project. To date, 3,200 households have received solar panels, 2,300 have benefited from insulation and 4,600 are using energy-efficient stoves. This has contributed to a significant reduction in women's workload.

Following a request from local women, communal village bakeries have been set up by the project. Not only do they contribute to reducing firewood consumption and address health issues arising from the use of non-standard ovens: they also provide the women with a social space to interact outside the household.

Read more about the project:

www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/project/id/1100001623/country/turkey

West and Central Africa

Youth Agropastoral Entrepreneurship Promotion Programme

The programme, which focuses on the development of businesses managed by young people in Cameroon, continuously innovates to integrate the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including women.

Targeted awareness-raising sessions are regularly organized to encourage husbands and wives to view project activities as a family business. As a result, they are adjusting their schedules and sharing household work to allow their partners to take part in training. Women's participation in awareness sessions is growing and was standing at 32.6 per cent in May 2019.

The programme supports young entrepreneurs in setting up regional and national networks. Gender quotas are used to encourage young women to take leadership roles within these groups. To date, of the 16 main national delegates, five are young women. And women's membership is growing fast, from 76 in 2015 to 1,492 in May, 2019.

Other activities promote the participation of young women in the programme. Facilities such as baby sitting, medical care and nutrition subsidies are on offer to enable young mothers to follow training at the same pace as male classmates. Since 2018, the programme has helped look after nearly 100 babies, enabling their mothers to stay the course. The overall percentage of women completing training increased from 32.5 per cent in 2015 to 41.8 per cent in 2018. Enterprises led by young women were responsible for 1,872, or 38.9 per cent of the 4,812 jobs created.

Intergenerational discussions on gender relations are also taking place. Modules on the sociocultural barriers that may stand in the way of women's empowerment are well received by young people of both sexes and have a direct and immediate impact on young men and women's behaviours and relationships.

By taking into account the specific needs of young women and addressing the root causes of gender inequalities, the project has generated transformative changes.

Read more about the project:

www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/project/id/1100001694/country/cameroon








The Gender Award spotlights a programme or project in each of IFAD's five regions that has taken an innovative, transformative approach to addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. This year's awards celebrate operations in Pakistan, Malawi, Guatemala, Turkey and Cameroon.

IFAD's **Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment** has three interconnected strategic objectives:

- to promote **economic empowerment** for rural women and men
- to enable women and men to have **equal voice and influence**
- to achieve a more **equitable balance in workloads** between women and men.



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