



Evaluation Brief

JOINT PROGRAM ON GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (JP GEWE)

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The Program

The Joint Program on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (JP GEWE) was a coordinated approach of six UN Agencies in support of the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) efforts to further improve the lives of Ethiopian women and support the realization of their rights, in line with its international commitments.

The JP GEWE was aligned with the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I), the overarching national development strategy as well as sector-based plans, strategies and policies. The JP was grounded in the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Ethiopia, jointly agreed by the GoE and the UN Country Team (UNCT).

The JP was launched in 2011 for an initial pilot phase of 18 months ending in June 2012. As the program gained momentum, it demonstrated the ability to develop more ambitious targets among 11 regions of Ethiopia to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and defend women's rights. The extension of the program, initiated in line with the UNDAF (2012-2015), jointly agreed by the GoE and the UNCT, relies on a number of lessons learnt and new opportunities for more effective delivery of results. Hence, Phase II of the Program focused on a set of strategies and synergies encompassing the work of six UN Agencies including UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.

The Evaluation

The Evaluation of Phase II of the JP was undertaken between October 4, 2016 -December 31, 2016 with the fieldwork undertaken during the month of November 2016.

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide an in-depth assessment of the results of the Program against its four outcome areas namely; Women's Economic Empowerment, Women and girls access to Education and Leadership, Ending Violence against Women and girls and National Planning based on seven key evaluation principles: 1) relevance and strategic fit; 2) Validity of design; 3) effectiveness; 4) efficiency; 5) sustainability; 6) coherence; 7) management and coordination.

The Evaluation used a mixed method/approach combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. Triangulation was done by using an array of sources and methods such as focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, testimonials, a questionnaire and a World Café Stakeholder and Debriefing workshop. The evaluation encountered a number of limitations including: 1) time and financial constraints limited the fieldwork to six vs nine regional administrations; 2) lack of consolidated and amalgamated financial and programmatic information made reporting on financial issues and actual outputs a challenge; 3) gaps in institutional memory due to staff turnover.



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Findings of the evaluation

1. **Relevance and Strategic Fit** The Evaluation revealed that the JP GEWE was highly relevant and strategic given government priorities, needs and targets, UNDAF and mandates of the six UN Agencies.
 2. **Validity of Design** The JP Program was well designed and the theory of change well-articulated. The four key outcome areas sought to address key relevant issues related to economic empowerment, girls' education, women's leadership and decision-making, mainstreaming Gender Equality (GE) into the Government machinery and violence against women.
 3. **Effectiveness** The Program have achieve concrete results in its four outcome areas as follows: Outcome 1: the revolving fund and associated capacity building trainings and business development support benefitted 3907 women (vs a target of 5400) and provided a livelihood to a significant number of women. Outcome 2: Scholarships for girls, benefitted 23, 495 women surpassing its target of 22,800 and gave them the boost to complete their studies. Furthermore, about 500 newly appointed women leaders in Amhara Region benefited from a transformative and inclusive leadership training. Outcome 3: government machinery gender audits, and tools for gender responsive budgeting has led to enhanced capacity and awareness for gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting by MoFEC and other sector ministries. Outcome 4: Community Conversations and advocacy have resulted in community awareness around key issues and led to decreases in child marriages, abandonment of (FGM), and greater coordination between key institutions (health, courts, justice and police) on VAW, etc. CSOs, however, have played a limited role in the program. In addition, knowledge and capacities of women development groups (WDGs); key community structures were enhanced to combat GBV and HTPs.
 4. **Efficiency** As the JP GEWE Program worked through Government structures, there were cost savings. However, these were offset by the geographic and thematic dispersion of Program activities making the overall Program less efficient than it could have been.
- With total funding of US\$ 35,502,304 a funding gap of \$ 24,987,718 dollars (70%), the JP GEWE Program's overall impact was significantly constrained.
5. **Sustainability** Many elements of the JP GEWE Program are sustainable despite the lack of an exit plan. As the Program worked through Government structures, many of the activities are already part of government plans and programs. The revolving fund will continue to benefit women as long as there is a high repayment rate and trained experts on Basic Business Skills at the regional and Woreda level available to continue providing training before the revolving fund is disbursed. The scholarships for girls' education at the tertiary level will discontinue without renewed funding. Support provided for Gender Responsive Budgeting and the use of the Gender Leveling Tool will require continued support to solidify the progress to date.
 6. **Coherence** The JP GEWE Program had six participating UN agencies making it challenging to achieve coherence. The four outcome areas were not systematically implemented in all regions and were for the most part implemented separately missing opportunities for synergies between the outcome areas. While results-based management training was given to the regions, it needed to be given on a continual basis given the high turnover of staff.
 7. **Management and Coordination** The Joint Program was never able to achieve economies of scale or efficiencies due to pooled funding modalities. Each UN agency continued to require that their own set of procedures, templates and formats be used. Rather than Delivering as One; the JP Program Delivered as six separate UN agencies. Management and implementation capacities have been affected by inadequate staffing in the early years, a high staff turnover, and low capacity at the Woreda and Kebele level which has made reporting and documenting best practices and lessons learned difficult. Joint monitoring, occurring once a year, has not always involved all stakeholders.



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Recommendations

Primary Recommendations:

1. The GoE and participating UN agencies should develop an exit plan that includes a communication strategy, other options for funding and a calendar to incorporate project activities into the Government budget in order to inform all key stakeholders like the implementing partners and communities in the region of the end of the JP GEWE program.
2. UN agencies and donors should support separate and thematically focused JPs that continue and strengthen what has been done under Phase II. Examples of such JPs may include: 1) the current GBV bilateral program could be expanded to other agencies and include a component of economic empowerment; 2) Gender Mainstreaming JP to deepen existing initiatives like GRB, Leveling tools and Gender Audit and address any new emerging issues like Gender Statistics and SDGs.
5. Participating UN agencies and government counterparts should ensure participation of all relevant stakeholders including sector ministries as well as CSOs in the design of future JPs related to GEWE.
6. Where a JP already exists, participating agencies should avoid parallel activities and instead invest additional resources in the relevant JP.
7. In designing future JPs on GEWE, UN agencies and government counterparts should balance geographic focus vs. national coverage. Select limited number of regions based on prevalence of GEWE issues and expand to other regions given resource availability, scalability and replicability of interventions.
8. In future JPs on GEWE, UN Agencies and government counterparts should develop Monitoring and Evaluation systems that can systematically collect and report on outputs and outcomes given indicators and targets and include all donors, stakeholders and IPs in Joint M&E missions with common checklist and one final monitoring report vs separate agency reports. Regular RBM and reporting training is also important.

General Recommendations for Any Future JPs or standalone program on GEWE

3. Government of Ethiopia and UN agencies should ensure affirmative action as an essential element of any GEWE Program with baseline and targets, mentoring and training to ensure that women can access key JP positions at all levels of decision-making.
4. UN agencies should have a realistic planning with different fundraising scenarios, based on available resource envelope otherwise it will be difficult to mobilize resources without a costed program document shared with funding agency.
9. Balance between direct support and addressing structural issues (i.e. Economic empowerment should cover not only direct service delivery, but also structural financial issues that impede women's economic empowerment).
10. Need for greater coordination, communication and transparency: 1) Between program leads, participating UN agencies and partners; 2) Between MoWCA and sector Ministries (i.e. Education, Health, Justice).



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