



# PROJECTS NEWSLETTER 2019

## UPDATES FROM THE LAST YEAR OF ACWW PROJECTS

In 2018, ACWW funded its 1049<sup>th</sup> project and has now invested more than £4.3 million on project funding since Project No.1. Fourteen projects were approved in the last year, located in 6 countries and 3 ACWW Areas. In their two Meetings, February and November 2018, the Projects Committee discussed 17 Progress Reports and noted the successful completion of 14 projects following the review of their Final Reports.

The Committee, with administrative support from the Projects staff, worked hard to ensure that grants allocated are being spent according to the Monitoring and Evaluation Plans approved at the initial stage of each project. This resulted in 12 evaluation visits to ongoing projects, 11 of which were satisfactory.

ACWW supports local initiatives and adopts a bottom-up approach to development as the path to sustainability. Therefore, in the past year, we took every opportunity to revisit older projects and find out whether their reported outcomes are still sustained as intended. Five follow-up visits to projects completed more than three years ago were organised in conjunction with routine evaluation visits, extension work, and Area Conferences. You will find the summary from Project 974's follow-up visit which took place in September 2018 at the end of this Newsletter.

While striving for sustainability in rural communities around the world, ACWW also understands that ongoing development and strategy adaptation are central to the proper functioning and continuity of every organisation. In April 2018, we launched the Women Empowered Fund, our new funding initiative which allows us to employ a forward-looking funding strategy and ensure the sustainability of ACWW Projects. On each summary in this publication you will find a small WE Fund sticker indicating the Focus Area the project falls within.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported ACWW projects with donations, fundraising events, educational talks, and by sharing information. Women-to-Women empowerment is the ACWW model, and we are grateful for our network which enables these projects to continue, encouraging positive progress in communities around the world.



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# PROGRESS REPORTS

## 1031 - Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) - Cameroon Improving the Livelihoods of Indigenous Mbororo Women around Kilum-Ijim Forest

Project 1031 is located in a mountainous region, about a hundred kilometres from Cameroon's North-West Region capital Bamenda and works with the Mbororos, a semi-nomadic cattle-rearing community who have faced discrimination since arriving in Cameroon in the early 1900s. Many Mbororo live isolated in small, remote communities and often enter conflict with neighbouring settlements. Mbororos are a minority group of 1.5 million people, many of whom are illiterate and ignored by the state authorities. This results in poor access to public services like schools, hospitals, clean water, and electricity. Polygamous relationships are common, and women and men have clearly distinct roles in the everyday life.

The target groups of the project had to be changed from the Mbockenghas Mbororo community to the Mbororo forest community of Akeh, as the former found it difficult to accept that women can engage in livelihood and income generating initiatives. Further to this, the leaders of the community saw the project activities as an attempt to challenge their culture. However, a few women from Mbockenghas were willing and able to learn and were enrolled in the training sessions in the Akeh Mbororo community.

Similar beliefs are engendered in the Akeh Mbororo community as well. However, CAMGEW started working with them in 2016 (with Project 992 funded by ACWW), where meetings with men's social groups were organised to convince them that equal participation between men and women is required to achieve a sustainable development in their community and families. It seems that creating a discussion on the topic was positive as both men and women were fully involved in the activities of Project 1031.

The group's progress report provided information on the following achievements:

- CAMGEW produced training manuals on agroforestry and vegetable gardening
- 66 women attended trainings on agroforestry where they were provided with guidance on soil conservation the proper use of nitrogen fixing (taking nitrogen from the air and making it available in the soil) and forage trees
- 60 women attended training on organic vegetable gardening
- 72 beneficiaries enhanced their knowledge on good nutritional practices. To better facilitate this, CAMGEW invited a bilingual nutritionist from the Akeh Helath Centre who was able to communicate with the women in both English and Fulfulde (a Mbororo native dialect)
- 78 one to one counselling sessions (65 women and 13 men) were organised throughout the project to attend to the emotional needs of beneficiaries from the community. Topics discussed at these sessions include dealing with arguments at home, gender discriminatory cultural practices, lack of access to education, infant mortality, and dealing with frequent conflicts with the permanently settled villagers in the area.

The group of beneficiaries were educated on the advantages of using trees and crops that withstand the harsh climate during the dry season, such as sweet potato, and can be used as fodder for their cattle and sheep during the dry season when there is not enough grass. The women were also encouraged to gather cow dung into bags and sell it to other farmers, as it is very valuable and much needed by the farmers in the area. Conflicts between the Mbororo grazers and farmers are very common and CAMGEW believes that creating an economic relationship between the two groups could give incentive to maintain peaceful partnership.

Throughout the project, weekly meetings were held with Mbororo leaders and project stakeholders to evaluate the progress to date. At these meetings, beneficiaries share the challenges they have been experiencing and exchange advice, whilst the main stakeholders advise the beneficiaries on the project timeline and what results are expected. Many of the women use this opportunity to speak about their successes at these meetings as well.

CAMGEW has encountered some challenges since the beginning of their project implementation. Prolific rains made travelling very difficult, which led to complications in the training session coordination and an increase in their travel expenses. The socio-political situation in the country has grown more complex and the violence in the anglophone regions of Cameroon (where Project 1031 is located) became a reason for ACWW to temporarily put this project on hold. Following the advice from the ACWW East, West, and Central Africa Area President, the Final Instalment for this project has been withheld until an evaluation visit is organised at the project location and situation in the country has stabilised.

**“Aloe Vera is one of the medicinal plants that CAMGEW shared with us. It facilitates the healing of minor wounds and injuries children incur while playing. I gave this advice to my friends and I keep encouraging them to grow medicinal plants in their gardens.”**

*Mama Abdou Rashidatu  
project beneficiary*



**“CAMGEW provided us with the medicinal plant commonly called Fever Grass (Lemongrass) and I planted it in my garden. Every morning I have been preparing some of it for my family and I believe their health has improved since”**

*Nasamou Hurera  
project beneficiary*



**Project  
1031**

## **1033 - Socio Economic Development Association (SEDA) - India Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness**

In February 2018, the World Health Organisation reported that complications during pregnancy and childbirth were the leading cause of death for girls aged 15 to 19 globally<sup>1</sup>. This has been the case for some time and is a major concern, particularly in India where around 33% of the country's population is born of adolescent pregnancies. The ingrained and sensitive issues of local tradition, early-age and child marriage, public taboos around discussions of a sexual nature, and poor access to adequate information and education on sexual and reproductive health, render the task of counteracting such disturbing statistics more complicated.

In 2005 the Indian government started implementing an extensive Adolescence Education Programme to provide India's 250 million adolescents with necessary sexual and reproductive health education. The subject was introduced in the schools' curricula to achieve as wide coverage as possible. However, many young Indians are not likely to stay in school and benefit from these programmes, especially in rural areas where strong cultural taboos and traditional attitudes mean that girls are 20% less likely to stay in school than their urban counterparts. They are also twice as likely to have a child between 15 and 19, due to early marriages. In other words, the demographic group the most in need of sexual and reproductive health education is the one least likely to get access to it.

The Socio-Economic Development Association (SEDA) team identified this issue, and are currently implementing Project 1033 in Karungal, a panchayat (small rural town) in Tamil Nadu. As a result, 400 female self-help groups' (SHG) members and 100 adolescents are directly benefitting from a sexual and reproductive health awareness programme.

In the first phase of the project, SEDA recruited and trained 15 community trainers who were then able to respond adequately to questions when they give talks at self-help groups' meetings in their areas. Topics of the training included sexual and gender identity, child health, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), and cervical cancer. This provided them with the necessary skills and knowledge to act as advocates of reproductive health within their communities. A large part of the training time was dedicated to family planning options and developing arguments to make it more easily accessible and appreciated among the volunteers' communities.

<sup>1</sup> National Family Health Survey – 4, 2015-2016



The 15 trainers conducted sessions for 8 groups of 50 Self-Help Groups (SHG) members each, and 2 groups of 50 adolescents over the period of 4 months. Follow-up meetings were yet to be organised in the third phase of the project. To make the learning process easier, SEDA prepared and distributed resource materials in the local language and made sure that illiterate beneficiaries were paired with others who could assist them.

SEDA are also attempting to engage local health centres' personnel for future cooperation, which would allow them to use government health resources to give easier access to sexual and reproductive health information and support in rural areas. So far, these attempts have not achieved the desired result and SEDA have realised the difficulties in making such considerable impacts in a short period of time, with limited budget. However, working directly with women and adolescents in their target beneficiary group is what matters most to the success of the project.

#### Evaluation visit for Project 1033:

An ACWW resource person visited SEDA's office and 1033 project site in August 2018. The evaluation report returned to ACWW indicates that the organisation currently employs 5 staff, 3 of whom are female. All project activities have been completed as planned and SEDA has monitored them closely. Well-kept activity reports and attendance lists were available. Further to this, no issues occurred during the documentation and financial management review.

As part of her field visit, the resource person took part in two sessions, each attended by around 50 people. She shares that the women she spoke to have improved their understanding and awareness of their sexual and reproductive health rights. Before, they considered inappropriate even saying HIV/AIDS and STD out loud, and they would refuse to go to a hospital or medical camps for screening and treatment. Now, they feel comfortable discussing sexually transmitted diseases and preventative measures, attending trainings on the topic, and going for routine screenings.

The improved level of awareness is particularly important for the women in the target communities located near the Tamil Nadu's border with the state of Kerala. This becomes evident from the story of one of the beneficiaries, who told the resource person how the men from the region are likely to go to the neighbouring state for work. They would be away for months and when they come home, many of them would have contracted STDs, which are then transmitted to their wives. Regular screenings and accessible information would improve the quality of life of these women.

The good level of beneficiary engagement indicates that SEDA's efforts throughout the project implementation have had their impact on the communities involved. Nevertheless, the social stigma around sexual and reproductive issues is deeply ingrained in the culture of rural India and educating people about it is a long-term task. Project 1033 has played its role by raising questions and offering a safe space for discussion and learning and the resource person recommended the implementing organisation for further funding as a worthy advocate for reproductive health and education.

**The core of their mission is the education of women who will then share this knowledge with their children and female friends and therefore, spread awareness of sexual and reproductive health issues at a grass-roots level.**

## Project 1033



**Maternal & Reproductive Health**



## 1035 - KADIWOD Kasese District Women with Disabilities - Uganda Women's Mushroom Growing for Social and Economic Development

Project 1035 is situated in Kasese District, western Uganda, just above Lake George and provides a group of people with disabilities with training on mushroom growing as a source of income.

In their project application, KADIWOD explain that they have chosen mushrooms growing training as it is particularly suited to people with disabilities. As mushrooms need shade to grow, workers benefit from reducing the exertion which is often associated with open cultivation. At the same time, they provide a fast yielding, nutritious food source and a reliable livelihood. Their protein content is 3-7% when fresh and 19-35% when dry and are a source of all essential amino acids, amides and lysine.

Mushroom cultivation requires low start-up costs with short-term returns on investment. They can be produced and sold within 2 to 4 months, whilst spawns (mushroom spores) and spawn bags can be bought by the entrepreneur at a reasonably low cost allowing for an acceptable profit margin.

Mushroom growing is especially relevant to Kasese District and many of its tribal traditions. The Batooro use mushrooms in the preparation of special meals for in-laws and honourable persons, whilst amongst the Bayiira, mushrooms are used in rituals after the childbirth and as medicine to cure measles.

KADIWOD's project proposal was approved by the Projects Committee in October 2017 and according to Project 1035's Progress Report received mid-2018, the group has accomplished the following:

- 3 mobilisation meetings were conducted in the sub-counties of Karambi, Kyabarungira and Kasese Municipality, each attended by 9 people
- 105 people from the three sub-counties were trained in mushroom growing techniques and the benefits of mushroom consumption
- 10 Beneficiaries took part in a three-day field trip to Kabala. They gained practical experience and learned alternative practices for efficient mushroom growing
- Materials like drums, substrate (cotton husk), watering cans, tapelines, maize bran (husk), plastic tanks to hold water, polythene bags, and pawns (mushroom spores)

Continuous monitoring and support were being provided to beneficiaries. The group reports that the beneficiaries started harvesting in February 2018 and that there has been a good level of cooperation between the trainers, trainees, and local leaders. The project is already benefiting the community which is demonstrated by the local demand for the groups' produce.

The main challenge encountered by the groups is the lack of dryers to process the mushrooms that have not been sold. Local drying methods were inefficient enough as mushrooms perish quickly and therefore, the lack of proper means to dry them leads to loss of possible income and wasted produce. The expense for the driers was not budgeted in the proposal and this has created a setback for the group. Nevertheless, the beneficiaries are very optimistic as the returns from their activities have been good and they are hoping to be able to invest some of the profit into two driers in the future.

**'It all looked like a myth during the mushroom training workshop, when we were taught how to grow mushrooms indoors, using local resources. But when I saw them growing, they looked beautiful and appetizing. Once I tried them, I realised how delicious they are, and I could not believe that they were a product of our work. I couldn't decide whether I liked the ones we had grown or the wild grown ones better, which is great because we can use them interchangeably. Looking at the materials used, the labour, and the availability of spawns, the project is a good investment which can boost income.'**

Mbambu Jane (Project Beneficiary)



# FINAL REPORTS

## 1006 - Koda Community Education Centre - Georgia Bio-Farming: Supporting Vegetable Gardens in Koda, Georgia



The aim of this project was to ameliorate the living conditions of displaced people from South Ossetia living in Koda Settlement, through the construction of a better irrigation system. Their Final Report informs that two wells, new water tanks, and electric switches have been installed, and the creation of an organic garden was made possible. As a result of nutrition classes and training on organic farming and pesticide control, all beneficiaries have improved their productivity and are now able to provide for their families.

The garden yielded 600 kg of vegetables and 190 kg of raspberries, which generated returns of 2050 GEL (around £600). This was lower than the projected 1550 kg of produce, but even though the season was not as favourable as expected, the beneficiaries are hopeful that their yield will increase over the years. The group succeeded in selling all their produce locally at conferences and festivals. They are hoping to one day be able to sell on an industrial scale.

Inga\*, who was the project manager, successfully developed and implemented her vision for sustainability through Project 1006. She is now well respected, and her leadership accepted by others within their small community. This was made possible with a small investment from ACWW and has resulted in increased income for the families involved and improved knowledge of efficient agricultural methods and small-business development.

The group experienced certain challenges with the technicalities of project output measurement, but the quality of their final report is a testament to the commitment of the people involved and the positive impact the project had on the target community.

\*Names may have been changed to protect the identities of the beneficiaries

**Inga Beruashvili, age 47, is an Internally Displaced Person from Tskhinvali Village Eredvi, South Ossetia. She is now living in the Tetrtskaro, Koda with her husband, 3 children, and 2 grandchildren. Currently the Koda IDP settlement is home to over 1600 refugees from the 2008 South Ossetia war.**

**Most, like Inga, have a farming background and live in apartments with small plots of land where they struggle to grow enough crops to provide for themselves and their families. Inga says that this project gave her and other beneficiaries the opportunity to rebuild their livelihood through provision of improved infrastructure so they can water their gardens.**

## 1019 – Nest – Sri Lanka HIV/AIDS Prevention, Education, Caring and Improving Attitudes for Women and Children

To date, HIV related awareness programmes in Sri Lanka have largely focused on urban areas and high-risk groups. This has enabled Sri Lanka to maintain a low HIV infection rate which the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/ AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates to be less than 0.1% within the general population and less than 5% within high risk groups. Nevertheless, a significant knowledge gap remains, even among high risk population groups as shown in the 2014 IBBS Survey<sup>3</sup> among Key Populations at the Higher Risk of HIV in Sri Lanka . While most respondents would be willing to care for an HIV positive family member, many do not believe an HIV positive student should be allowed to go to school and would not buy food from an HIV positive food seller. It is, therefore, necessary to educate young people and equip educators with the necessary skills and resources to address such misunderstandings leading to high levels of stigmatisation.

Nest drew attention to this in their project proposal which was approved for funding by ACWW. The implementing organisation offered HIV/AIDS awareness workshops to 4,000 students aged 14+. The students were from 103 Government-funded schools. They learned about the disease, modes of transmission, and prevention, as well as care and management techniques. In conjunction with the workshops, training was also provided to several teachers. The programme was well received. Nest reports that many students have kept in contact and requested further information.

Prior to the programme, teachers from these schools reported that they could not teach sex education to students as they were uncomfortable with the topic. Following the awareness training, many teachers stated that they are more confident in teaching sexual health, particularly on issues pertaining to HIV/AIDS.

<sup>3</sup> March 2015 Integrated Biological and Behavioural Surveillance (IBBS) Survey among Key Populations at Higher Risk of HIV in Sri Lanka



To help address HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination, Nest conducted 6 further public awareness campaigns, which sought to improve knowledge of and change attitudes towards HIV/AIDS as well as mental illness. As part of these campaigns, they set up 20 outdoor stalls in 11 districts, where they distributed health literacy material and answered public queries regarding HIV/AIDS and mental illness. They were able to engage large crowds and provide information to members of the community who were not aware of or had misconceptions about these issues.

In conjunction with this campaign, project and health workers also made 1621 visits to individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS or mental illness. During these visits, staff shared health literacy resources, taught participants how to care for themselves and others, and advised them on mechanisms to cope with stigma. As a result, several participants reported that they felt more empowered, supported, and optimistic.

Family members of those infected with HIV stated that the programme has helped reduce their fears and as a result, not only are they willing to care for people with HIV/AIDS, but to also accept them in their social circle without prejudice.

Nest worked hard to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and reduce stigma and discrimination for those living with the condition. According to the reports received, the group completed the projects successfully, in accordance with their submitted monitoring and evaluation plan.

**Maternal & Reproductive Health**



**1022 – Fundación Junkabal – Guatemala**  
**Fertilise Your Future**

Fundación Junkabal’s work has been empowering women as agents for change in their family and society for almost 60 years. The organisation’s primary purpose is to educate girls and young women from the least prosperous parts of Guatemalan society through vital skills training programs. Project 1022 introduces 25 women beneficiaries to three professional fields; marketing, catering, and the beauty industry.

The training programme was initiated with workshops on recognising one’s personality strengths and discovering their application in the labour market. Then, Fundación Junkabal adopted a more individual approach and facilitated one-to-one interviews with a vocational training coordinator and a social worker. The participants were advised to choose the type of training best suited to their skills and character, based on the interviews. Three took up marketing, nine aspired to become successful in the beauty industry, and 13 undertook training as chefs.

The introduction of practical components in all workshops equipped the participants with skills which put them in an advantageous position when applying for internships. As a result of this and with the cooperation of Fundación Junkabal, 15 of the 25 project beneficiaries succeeded in securing internships in their professional field of choice following the completion of the programme.

Fundación Junkabal were a responsive partner to ACWW and continue to keep in touch and update us on the development progress of the beneficiaries. According to one of their follow-up updates, 3 months after the completion of the training programme, 56% of the beneficiaries had found a job, continued studying or started a business of their own. This information is a testament to the success of Junkabal’s project, planting the seed of ambition in the minds of the participants, who can now continue their personal development and contribution to their communities.



**Education and Capacity Building**



## 1023 – Deepam Trust – India

### Enhancement of Nutritional Health Security through Home Gardens for Dalit Women

In 2017, the World Bank Joint Malnutrition dataset<sup>4</sup> was published, and showed that in India, as well as several other developing countries, almost half of child deaths under the age of five are from nutrition-related causes.

The health complications they develop largely relate to poor nutritional habits and hygiene in their day-to-day lives. The data also shows that the nutrition of the mother during pregnancy is a crucial factor in the health of her child. This data is supported by findings from the Indian government's National Family and Health Survey 4<sup>5</sup>, which highlights that 52% of pregnant women aged 15-49 years are suffering from Anaemia. When the mother is undernourished, her child will also suffer from insufficient nutrition. Project 1023 addresses this issue through nutrition education and small-scale agricultural training for women in the Thanjavur District of Tamil Nadu.

The Final Report received from project partner Deepam Trust summarises the achievements of the year-long project:

- A total of five training sessions were conducted on reducing malnutrition, food safety awareness, basic health, sustainable cooking methods, and organic home garden preparation. As a result, 250 Dalit women have a better understanding of the importance of good nutritional habits and the potential that home gardens have in improving the nutritional quality of the food consumed by their families.
- 250 women from 25 villages constructed small vegetable gardens in the backyards of their homes and received seed kits and seedlings to ensure the diversity of their produce. As a result, 222 (89%) families increased consumption of fresh home garden products.
- 56% of the targeted households reduced expenditure on vegetable by 75% and over 50% of them doubled their household income from their home gardens.
- 600 women from village self-help groups attended awareness meetings on the importance of good nutritional practices and organic home gardening. They were also provided with clear instructions on how they could get Vitamin A drops and deworming tablets from local government departments.

This project aimed to promote gender equality through the empowerment of the target group with livelihood skills. It gave these women greater control over the products consumed by their families and provided them with a small source of income. Most importantly, the women who took part in the training became recognized in their community for their agricultural skills, resulting in higher self-esteem and allowing them to interact outside their usual social circle of family and neighbours.

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF, WHO, World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition dataset, updated May 2017

<sup>5</sup> National Family Health Survey – 4, 2015-2016

\* Names may have been changed to protect the identity of beneficiaries



Nutrition,  
Good Health  
& Wellbeing

**Gunitha\* from Keluthur village of Thanjavur district has a physical disability which made it difficult for her to provide for her family. A field worker from Deepam Trust invited her to take part in the training, where she received a seed kit and guidance on best agricultural practices. She owns half an acre of land behind her house where she now cultivates various produce. With a drip irrigation system in place, Gunitha has harvested approximately 1200 kg of vegetables in two consecutive seasons. Of her harvests, she sold 1000 kg of vegetables and earned INR. 28,500 (around £315). She sold vegetables in a local market, at shops in the Dalit community, as well as at a street stall in her village. Gunitha used the profit from the sale of the excess produce to cover her family's medical expenses and general household supplies.**



## 1032 – Sain Tus Centre – Mongolia

### Women's Economic Empowerment

The Khovd Aimag district, where project 1032 is located, is recognised as one of the most deprived regions in Mongolia. At the end of 2017, the World Bank in conjunction with the National Statistical Office of Mongolia (NSO)<sup>6</sup> reported that the poverty rate in the country had increased from 21.6% in 2014 to 29.6% in 2016. In rural areas, this rate reached 34.9% and in Khovd Aimag reached 36.7% .

Worryingly, these numbers look good when compared to 2010, when 52.7% of the population fell beneath the poverty line. This followed a devastating winter when nearly 9,000 families lost their entire herds to the cold and hunger. Another 33,000 lost half their livestock. Almost 10 million cattle, sheep, goats, horses, yaks and camels died, a fifth of the country's total, at a cost of 520bn Tögrögs (£250 million).

Many of these former herders have since relocated to cities to look for work. However, there remain insufficient opportunities for work, and high levels of financial strain on rural families.

To help address this, ACWW partnered with Sain Tus Center on Project 1032, Women's Economic Empowerment. This project provided boot and felt-making training for two different groups, plus health education and business skills training to 40 low-income, female-headed families from nomadic communities in Jargalant district.

The aim of this project was two-fold. First, to help improve the economic conditions of beneficiaries; second, to educate and empower participants, raising awareness of and helping them address health and social issues in their communities.

#### Training Programme

- Financial Accounting Training – to track their daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly family income and expenditures. Each family made a 5-year financial plan they will aim to follow in the future.
- Organisational Structure Training – group structure, defining the group's role, requirements for group members, group management, and taking responsibility for employees, were among the topics discussed. The groups established monthly evaluation meetings as a result.
- Small Business Management Training – Development Stages of a Small Business; Research Methods; Difficulties and Weaknesses of Small Business; Required Skills of Small Business keepers; and Marketing Skills. Both groups received accounting ledgers to track income and expenditure. Sain Tus reports that at the end of the project implementation period it was much easier for the groups involved to evaluate the efficiency of their small businesses.
- Group Fund Management Training – in this module, the beneficiaries were taught how to spend group funds and monitor the financial movements efficiently to allow for future growth.

<sup>6</sup><https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/10/17/2016-poverty-rate-in-mongolia-estimated-at-296-percent>

## Project Implementation

The boot making group bought electric sewing machines and raw materials in November 2017 and, a few months later, they were selling their products at the Khovd market and in their local community. They also travelled for two months in the countryside in late spring and sold 172 pairs of new boots and repaired 268 pairs of old boots and shoes, plus a bigger order for 52 pairs of dancing boots in June 2018.

The group working with felt bought wool combining machines and started producing different types of felt products, mostly traditional slippers and souvenirs. They received an order for 1,300 pieces of Christmas decoration from Australia in November 2017, and the client placed the same order again in May 2018. They even made 12 pairs of slippers for an order from Sweden. They were able to buy a second wool combining machine from the overall profit of their sales.

Sain Tus Center's staff encouraged the two groups and advised them throughout the project. During the ten months of active project implementation, the groups showed good attendance and they learned from each other's management techniques. The two groups have registered as business cooperatives and are applying for government support.

Sain Tus further supported the groups to build marketing networks and promote their products at exhibitions and markets. They had stands at a trade exhibition in February 2018, which proved highly profitable and participated in another one organised by the Chamber of Commerce of Khovd Province in September 2018.



## Project Impact

Group incomes greatly increased because of this project. Before, the 'Buyant' Felt Product Group saw an increase of 142%, whilst the 'Jargalant' boot making group increased their income by 157%.

From their profits, around 50% was then reinvested in the cooperatives, meaning that their actual income from external sources had risen around 25% overall. With further expansion, it is projected that this will rise in the future.

The Women's Economic Empowerment Project has not only improved the prospects of participants but has enabled them to further develop self-reliance skills through several training days on Stress Reduction and Mental Health Care, Reproductive Health, Nutrition Education, and Basic Hygiene Practices. In their Final Report, Sain Tus emphasise their commitment to maintain links with and provide support to the beneficiaries of their projects in future.

### Ariunaa

Ariunaa used to be a herdsman in the countryside, where she lived with her six children and husband. Her family lost their livestock in 2010's cold winter and were forced to move to Khovd (Jargalant Sum).

Left unemployed and with no source of income for three years, she participated in vocational training on felt production in 2015. She started making small felt products and decorations at home with hand-made combs, meaning a limited scope for increasing productivity over time.

She created the "Buyant" Felt Product Group with 10 members in 2016 and was looking for financial support to purchase supplies and tools. After the group was involved in Project 1032, members received further training, a wool combining machine and raw materials which

hugely increased their efficiency. Before the project, Ariunaa's monthly income was 60,000 MNT (about £19) and after the project she earned 420,000 MNT as the group leader (about £132). Living conditions have improved and she is proud to have stable work and income. She is careful to re-invest as much as possible back into the business to allow for its further growth.



### Otgonbayar

Otgonbayar lives with her 4 children in Khaikhan Bag of Jargalant Sum. She was unemployed for six years, with her only source of income a state provided child benefit of 80,000 MNT monthly (20,000 MNT per child). In 2016 she participated in a 45-day boot-sewing vocational training programme funded by the Labour Department. After that she started sewing boots at home but did not have the capital for initial investment in a sewing machine or raw materials for the boots. With the funding received from ACWW and through Sain Tus, her group was in a position to purchase the necessary equipment and started producing a larger number of boots as well as repairing old ones. Her current income is 500,000 MNT, which allows her to provide for her children and think about further expansion of her business.

## EVALUATION REPORTS

### 1002 – Daughters of Mary Immaculate Sisters – Tanzania

#### Support for Employable Skill Building Programme for Victims of Trafficking in Kibamba

The ACWW East, West, and Central Africa Area President visited the Daughters of Mary Immaculate Sisters in Kibamba in mid-September 2017. During her visit, she met the project coordinator and counsellor Sr Teresa, and other members of staff who are taking care of victims of trafficking. She reports the project is well organised, and run by a great team. Full access to all records, account registers, reports, and registration certificates were granted and she reports that all are in good order.

The girls make their own clothes in a well-equipped room with sewing machines budgeted for in the project proposal. Working in pairs and evaluating one another's work, they are introduced to hairdressing in a separate room. They develop computer skills in another space with two computers. The resource person reports that this activity was highly motivating for the girls because the teacher is a past victim of trafficking and all her pupils look up to her as a role model. At the time of the visit, she could not observe training sessions in catering because the teacher had just left but she reports that the group was in the process of recruiting a new one.

Another major part of the project was the maintenance of a drop-in counselling centre where all girls were accepted when first taken off the streets. The staff works in close collaboration with government officials, social workers, and members of victims' families in their effort to provide support. Throughout their stay, the girls attend regular sessions with a counsellor, working together toward overcoming their trauma. They can request additional sessions if needed.

In conclusion, the Area President reports that regardless of the constant struggle for financial security and finding volunteers who are qualified enough to work with the children, the project is well implemented and the girls who have gone through the programme are doing well both professionally and emotionally in their new lives.



Education  
and Capacity  
Building



## 973 – Sain Tus Centre – Mongolia Greenhouse Development

The average temperatures in Mongolia are below freezing between October and April. The growing season in Western Mongolia is just three months long- from June to August. Only 9% of the land is arable and 45% of the approximately 3 million population live in the capital Ulaanbaatar. As a result, fruit and vegetables are in short supply for 10 months of the year and families must either pay inflated prices for low quality, imported produce, or go without.

In 2014, the Sain Tus Center, a local NGO that aims to empower disadvantaged women in Western Mongolia, came up with a possible solution: the construction of large, heated poly-tunnels, to extend the growing season. This would allow two harvests of fruit and vegetables to be obtained between March and October. In order to fund this project, the Sain Tus team applied for a grant of £2990 from ACWW to pay for the construction of two polytunnels, each measuring 20 by 6 metres, with heating and irrigation systems, close to the small town of Jargalant Sum.

In May 2018, almost three years after the completion of Project 973, an ACWW resource person visited the organisation and returned an informative report on the activities and progress of the two groups of farmers. The resource person reports that the main crops developed in the green houses are cabbages, carrots, cucumbers, onion, peppers, potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, and pumpkin. Last year they grew a 27kg pumpkin! They also grow garlic as it produces good income. Aside from their main crops, the groups grow the famous Khovd water melons and white melons, as well as sunflowers. This produce is then sold fresh or pickled at local markets, restaurants, and hotels, as well as to many private customers in the area. Most of their preserves are sold at the Khazak Naurus festival which celebrates the beginning of the new year for Khazaks and at the Mongolian White Moon Festival (Mongolian Lunar New Year or Tsagaan Sar).

With the profit from their work, the two groups supported by Sain Tus Center were able to purchase a second slightly smaller greenhouse each (10m by 6m) and are now planting vegetables in the 4 greenhouses and 3.8 hectares open land. According to their 2017 harvesting records:

- The actual yield of the vegetables exceeded the expected yield by 15% on average, where the turnips and pumpkins reached 22% higher yield in comparison with the projections
- 31% of the total income was re-invested in the project whilst 69% of the income was shared by the beneficiaries' families as profit
- The average profit for each of the 45 direct beneficiaries amounted to 2,185,928 MNT (approximately £680) for the growing season – 94% increase in comparison to the profit each beneficiary made at the end of 2015

94%  
Increase  
in Profits

45  
Direct  
Beneficiaries

Overall, the ACWW monitoring visit and Sain Tus Centre's continuous reports indicate that this project has been a spectacular example of an initiative which started with an agricultural training and initial capital from ACWW and has been expanding in controlled and sustainable manner three years after the end of their funding period. Before the project was initiated, 70% of the beneficiaries were unemployed and 30% were growing vegetables only in their own gardens. Now, their income has increased considerably over the past three years and both groups were able to employ more people to keep up with the work and the demand for their products.

**Angrul\* is a member of Greenhouse 2 group. She is 30 years old, has 4 children and she used to be a cleaner until she lost her job in 2014. That is when Angrul joined the Greenhouse Development project, where planting, watering, weeding, and selling in the market were some of her responsibilities. The 200,000 MNT that she now makes monthly allow her to cover her children's school fees, uniforms, and books. Her family were rarely able to afford fruits and vegetables before she joined the project, but now she can put nutritious and vitamin rich food on the table regularly.**



\*Names may have been changed to protect the identities of beneficiaries

## 1029 – Women Empowerment & Environmental Development Organisation - Bangladesh Providing Agricultural Training for Empowering Vulnerable Women and Enhancing Family Food Security

Women Empowerment and Environment Development Organization (WEEDO), with the financial assistance of ACWW, implemented a one-year agricultural training and empowerment project. Its purpose was to improve household food security and nutrition for 100 marginalised and impoverished families through facilitating access to 'spare' land, as well as to provide training in how to grow vegetables, fruits, spices, and medicinal herbs. In doing so, its aim was twofold: first, improve and diversify beneficiaries' diets; and second, help create a sustainable source of income.

To assess the project implementation process and impact, an ACWW Resource Person located in Bangladesh visited WEEDO in Narail District, Bangladesh in May 2018. As part of her trip, she visited WEEDO's office, where she met the project coordinators, managers, general staff and volunteers. Whilst doing so, she reviewed the organisations documents and records, which she reported were in line with ACWW's funding policy.

Having reviewed the project documents, she found the activities were carried out and implemented to schedule, despite minor hiccups. According to the records, the Project Coordinators achieved this through careful planning, establishing open communication channels with stakeholders, and conducting regular monitoring sessions, which enabled them to identify and address gaps.

The Resource Person then visited the site, where she had the opportunity to interview beneficiaries at their vegetable gardens. Here are their stories:

Geetu\* lives in Maliate Village in Narail District with her three children. Prior to joining the programme, and following the death of her husband, she described feeling despondent due to facing chronic hunger and food insecurity year-round. Through this project, she is now able to meet the nutritional needs of her family and has also increased her annual income by 20,000 BDT (Bangladeshi Taka), which is roughly £176. As a result, she describes having a more positive outlook as she states that this project has given her "a new life".

Manvi\* lives in Hatiara Village in Narail District with her three children- two of whom are disabled. Prior to his death, her husband used to work as a day labourer, which met their basic needs. After his death, she felt helpless. Despite taking on menial jobs, she was not able to meet the needs of her children, particularly the unique needs of her disabled son and daughter. Through taking part in this project, however, Manvi reports that she now earns 300 BDT (roughly £2.70) a day as a result of selling her surplus crop, which has enabled her to meet her children's medical needs. Through growing a wide range of vegetables, fruits, legumes, and herbs, she is able to save money and improve their nutritional intake.

\*Names may have been changed to protect the identities of beneficiaries

**Based on her findings, the Resource Person concluded that the project was successful as it achieved the following:**

- **Beneficiaries have access to a wider range of foods**
- **They have gained an extra source of income**
- **They are more involved in local decision-making processes**

**WEEDO has been able to continue and maintain project 1029 despite their funding cycle coming to an end in April 2018. This is a testament to the project's success and ACWW is hoping to re-visit their work once again in the next two years, to confirm impact and report to donors.**



**Sustainable  
Agriculture,  
Training &  
Development**



# FOLLOW-UP REPORTS

## 974 – Voluntary Efforts for Community Health Uganda (VECH) - Uganda

### Kabembe Grandmothers, Orphans, and Vulnerable Children Health Improvement

In October 2014, ACWW funded a water harvesting project in Kabembe, an hour's drive east from Kampala, Uganda. As a result, water harvesting tanks were constructed in 19 grandmother's homes. According to the group's Final Report, two people from the local community have been trained as water masons to clean and repair the tanks. Furthermore, a local Water Users Committee is responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance of the facilities and the grandchildren were taught how to carry out periodic and basic cleaning.

An ACWW resource person visited VECH and the project location before the East, West, and Central Africa Area Conference in September 2018, three years after the group had submitted their final report. In their central office, she verified their certificate of registration, reports, policies, and accounts register. She was provided with information about other funding partners of the organisation and saw proof of grants from several international funders.

Two of the three paid staff members attended the meeting – the Programme's Director and the Project Officer. Two female volunteers are also assisting the organisation's activities. The evaluator spoke to three project beneficiaries, all of whom were satisfied with the workings of their water harvesting tanks and reported that the whole community has been working successfully towards ensuring their proper maintenance. The beneficiaries are harvesting water from the roofs of their houses for cooking, drinking, washing their clothes, and bathing. Some of them have even created kitchen gardens where they cultivate vegetables for consumption, whilst others have developed small poultry units.

All tanks have 4,500-litre capacity and are fully used. The water users committee which was created towards the end of the project implementation period in 2015 is still in place and has been serving its purpose efficiently. This committee is responsible for motivating the users to put aside savings for the tanks' maintenance. VECH continues to pay regular visits to the community and the group of beneficiaries to make sure that the outputs of the project are appreciated and looked after by the beneficiary community.

Before the project, the beneficiaries had to walk 4 miles to fetch water and now they can save enough rain water for their daily needs and have learned to use it wisely. ACWW's resource person concludes her report with a strong recommendation for further partnership with VECH.

## “Every drop of water matters”

*– said Joyce Lutwama to the ACWW resource person whilst demonstrating how she looks after her water harvesting jar.*





# ACWW Projects and the United Nations

ACWW has held consultative status with the UN since 1947. This status is both a privilege and immense responsibility. The responsibilities of organisations holding Consultative Status include reporting to the United Nations on the work they have done to further the aims of the UN and its associated bodies. The current goals of the UN are summarised in the 16 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As part of our commitment to evaluate the impact of ACWW projects, with the aim of tracking progress over time, we report on how the projects we have funded have contributed to the SDGs. On individual project reports, you will often see a collection of SDG indicators, which explain how that project has worked towards the progress of a particular SDG. The projects featured in this publication work towards the SDGs you see here.

By donating to ACWW projects, you are contributing to the success of the SDGs. While they might come across as idealistic, the SDGs can only succeed when individuals work together towards common goals, and from its inception in 1920, to its Consultative Status in 1947, to today, ACWW has been a framework for women to unite their voices and their resources for the common cause of improving the lives and communities of Rural women worldwide.



**TARGET 1-1**  
ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY

**TARGET 1-A**  
MOBILIZE RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES TO END POVERTY

**TARGET 1-B**  
CREATE PRO-POOR AND GENDER-SENSITIVE POLICY FRAMEWORKS

**TARGET 2-1**  
UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD

**TARGET 2-2**  
END ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION

**TARGET 2-3**  
DOUBLE THE PRODUCTIVITY AND INCOMES OF SMALL-SCALE FOOD PRODUCERS

**TARGET 2-4**  
SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION AND RESILIENT AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

**TARGET 2-A**  
INVEST IN RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY AND GENE BANKS

**TARGET 3-1**  
REDUCE MATERNAL MORTALITY

**TARGET 3-2**  
END ALL PREVENTABLE DEATHS UNDER 5 YEARS OF AGE

**TARGET 3-3**  
FIGHT COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

**TARGET 3-4**  
REDUCE MORTALITY FROM NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH

**TARGET 3-7**  
UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE CARE, FAMILY PLANNING AND EDUCATION

**TARGET 4-3**  
EQUAL ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION

**TARGET 4-4**  
INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH RELEVANT SKILLS FOR FINANCIAL SUCCESS

**TARGET 5-1**  
END DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

**TARGET 5-2**  
END ALL VIOLENCE AGAINST AND EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

**TARGET 5-5**  
ENSURE FULL PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

**TARGET 5-6**  
UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

**TARGET 5-A**  
EQUAL RIGHTS TO ECONOMIC RESOURCES, PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

**TARGET 6-1**  
SAFE AND AFFORDABLE DRINKING WATER

**TARGET 6-4**  
INCREASE WATER-USE EFFICIENCY AND ENSURE FRESHWATER SUPPLIES

**TARGET 10-3**  
ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND END DISCRIMINATION



**THE GLOBAL GOALS**  
For Sustainable Development



# THE WOMEN EMPOWERED FUND

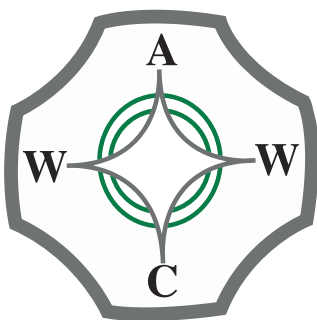
## ACWW PROJECT FUNDING

ACWW's Project Fund for Rural Women  
Committed to the SDGs

ACWW's projects are grassroots initiatives, focused on empowering women to make positive, sustainable change and progress in their lives and communities. We fund projects which fall within criteria set by our policy and constitution, summarised in 6 priority focus areas. When you donate to one or more of these focus areas, your donation will be earmarked for that specific focus area, and only used to fund projects and their associated costs.

ACWW Projects are making a difference in the lives of women around the world. We are dedicated to the empowerment of rural women based on the needs they see in their communities. We believe that empowering women is the key to sustainable change, and that empowered women have a responsibility to support their sisters. After all, this is the foundation of ACWW – connecting and supporting women through collaboration, education, and opportunity.

Woman to woman. Community to Community. Together, we are empowered.





Empowering women and transforming communities  
through small-scale, women led initiatives

**#WeAreACWW**

