



Peru was one of the countries most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of health and economic impacts compared to its achievements in the previous decade prior to the pandemic. In 2022, the Peru economy contracted by 11%, its biggest fall in 30 years and the largest in Latin America during that year. As a result, the national poverty rate increased to 30.1%, a level not seen since 2010. The magnitude of the welfare loss during the crisis revealed the fragility of the social gains that had been achieved during the previous two decades. ([The World Bank, 2023](#)) As a result of the pandemic, Peru's rural poverty increased abruptly, affecting 45.7% and 39.7% of the population in rural areas in 2020 and 2021 respectively ([FAO, 2023](#)). By 2021, 51% of the Peru population was suffering from moderate or severe food insecurity. Malnutrition, including anemia among children and adolescents continued rising. Chronic malnutrition is one of the main public health problems among children under 5, limiting their development and that of society at large, and making it difficult to eradicate poverty. ([World Food Programme, 2023](#))

She Feeds the World (SfTW) in Peru helped address these challenges by focusing on underlying and persistent drivers of malnutrition and anemia through three specific objectives:

1. Nutrition: Improve nutrition and health practices for mother-child care.
2. Economic Development: Increase the income of 4,000 households (16,000 individuals) from small-scale producer communities in a sustainable and inclusive manner.
3. Policy Advocacy and Strategic Alliances: Promote political advocacy and strategic alliances to improve maternal and child nutrition and local economic development with a women-focused approach.

Overview

Grant: \$3.5 M by PepsiCo Foundation
Timeline: 2019-2022
Program area: Lima, Piura & Ica

Objective:
To improve nutritional conditions and reduce anemia in children under age 5 and to increase the income of women farmers linked to small-scale agriculture in four prioritized districts in the coastal regions of Piura, Lima and Ica, using a women-focused approach.

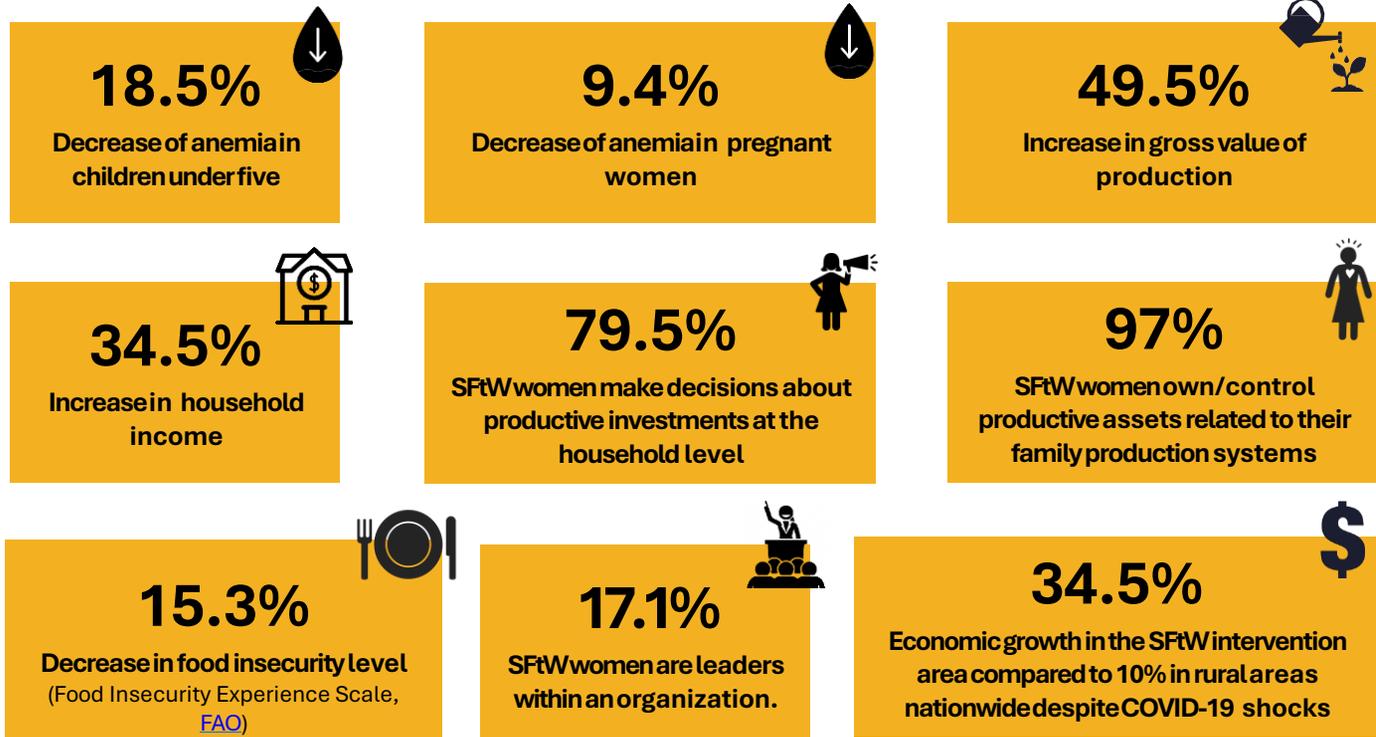
She Feeds the World Peru reached a total of **481,352 people**, (54% women reached for both direct and indirect.)



Direct reach



Indirect reach



Four years of SfTW/Peru

Strategies for Success

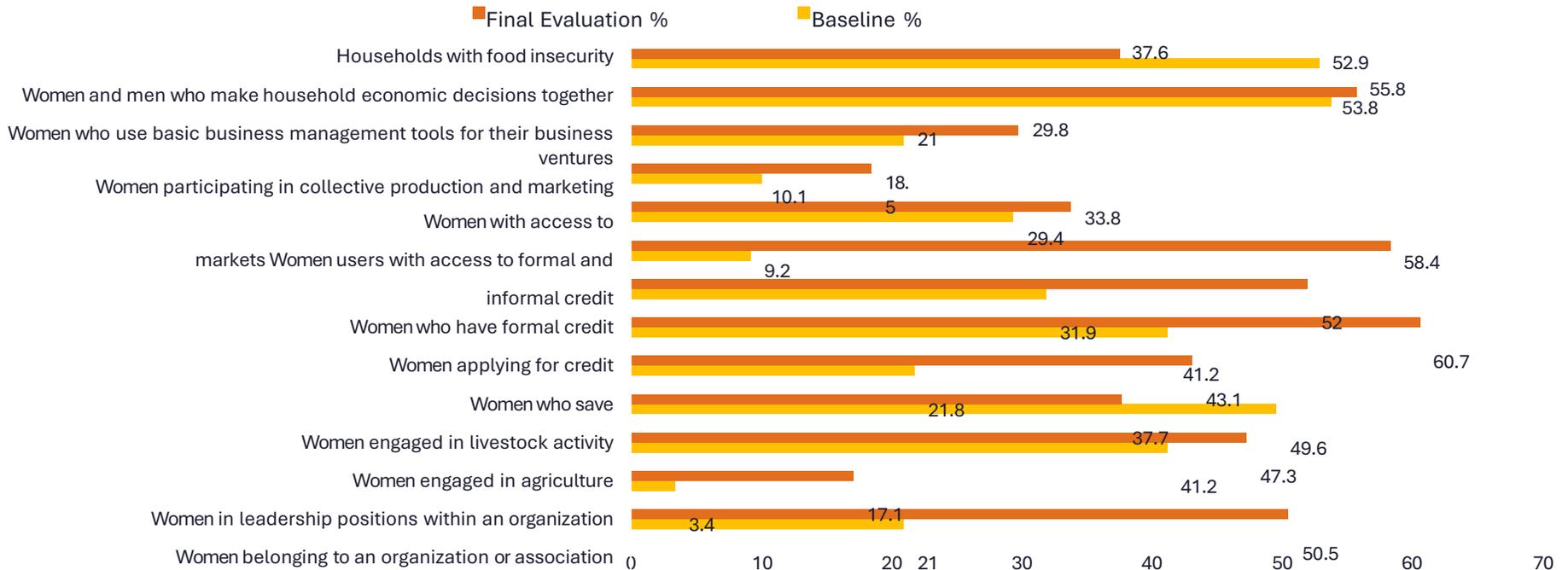
- **Demonstration sessions** promoting preparation of nutritious foods had significant impact on the adoption of good nutrition and feeding practices by the participants.
- **Strengthening community health agents (CHAs)** who are key actors with social capital that volunteer to deliver messaging on health topics (food hygiene and preparation, nutrition, breastfeeding practices, COVID prevention) through home visits. They are recognized as true agents of change in Peru.
- **Territorial approach** which focuses on building a broad consensus among public and private sector actors to solve common problems at the local level.
- Training women to be **promoters of agricultural competitiveness** is an innovative approach to fostering more female leadership in the agriculture sector.
- **Digital financial education**, through [LISTA](#) app on the tablets provided by SFtW to community leaders and facilitators, promoted financial education and inclusion, with an emphasis on savings and knowledge about business management.
- **Family co-responsibility plans** to address persistent imbalances in household chores resulted in women having reduced time (45 to 35 hours) for domestic and care work and having more time to dedicate to productive-economic activities and move toward economic empowerment.
- **Promotion of agro-ecological production in family production systems** toward the sustainability of local ecosystems and the production of safe food, generating virtuous circles between small-scale agriculture and livestock.
- SFtW collaborated with the Directorate for the Promotion of Women Agricultural Producers (within the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation) to **influence policy in the agricultural sector** by generating guidelines that promoted the participation and inclusion of women in the development of family farming and economic development.



Key Lessons

- The **promotion of the circular economy** based on the use of excreta and organic waste for agriculture and the use of techniques for agro-ecological production contributes positively to health and the protection of the environment and climate change.
- SFtW's strategy of providing training and technical assistance in the participants' **organic gardens** – rather than in a separate location – has led to more spontaneous replication in neighboring households.
- **Flexible online training** proved to be especially effective with women, as it allows them to study at whatever time is convenient in their busy days. Likewise, the digital inclusion of women through online tools such as WhatsApp and social networks proved effective for establishing links with markets and making internet sales.
- **Enlisting local allies and experts** to conduct training for the promoters of agricultural competitiveness was more effective and cost-efficient than doing the training in-house.
- **Involving men** in the economic empowerment of women is crucial for the sustainability of agricultural businesses and increasing household incomes.
- The participation of women in **training in soil management and analysis** has aroused the interest of other women to learn and provide advisory services in relation to the interpretation of the results and recommendations for the improvement of soil fertility.
- **Interviews and photos sessions** with SFtW participants has a positive impact not only on their self-esteem, but on their standing as influential community leaders.
- Multi-sectoral sustainable interventions are needed to sustain gains beyond a five-year project implementation period regarding improving the level of **anemia** prevalence.

Comparison of Baseline and Final Evaluation Study



Stories from the field



Hilda Salcedo (33), manages 3 hectares of organic strawberry crops in Pachacamac, Lima. Hilda improved her crop yield through improved irrigation, which she learned through She Feeds the World program. Investing in improved irrigation techniques not only had been profitable for her business but also is good for the environment. Because of her success, Hilda became a leader among strawberry farmers in the area, serving as a representative of the Irrigation Board Committee to help provide this valuable resource equitably to more farmers like her. As her crop yields grew, Hilda hired more young people – four women and two men – to work in her strawberry fields.

“I used to harvest 14 boxes of strawberries every two months. I was able to improve the harvest to an average of 20 boxes. That increase allowed us to cope with the effects caused by the COVID-19 crisis. On top of that, I feel joy being a woman farmer. It is calm, and it allows me to be with my husband and my friends.”

Hilda is ready to take the next step, going from being a successful strawberry farmer to having her own line of value-added products. She has a five-year plan to begin producing jams for sale. Meanwhile, she will take all the skills she learned through She Feeds the World to continue innovating and advocating for the responsible use of precious water resources.