



## PAFO-COLEAD INNOVATIONS SERIES: Innovations and successes of African farmer-led businesses and SMEs

### 28 inspiring African women farmers and entrepreneurs

In November 2020, the Pan-African Farmers' Organization ([PAFO](#)) and the [COLEAD](#)<sup>1</sup> launched the Innovations Series aimed at showcasing innovations and successes of African farmer-led businesses and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The Innovations Series shares best practices from entrepreneurs, farmers, agripreneurs and SMEs to support and encourage others to embrace the unprecedented opportunities offered by local, regional and export markets. The series focuses on innovations across value chains that are transforming food systems, promoting sustainable agriculture and leveraging investment. PAFO and the COLEAD have already organised twelve Innovations Sessions on various topics (e.g. added-value and branded products; local, regional and export markets; sustainability; nutrition; circular economy etc.).

The recordings of the sessions are available on [PAFO's](#) and the [COLEAD's](#) YouTube channels.

During these sessions, **28 inspiring women farmers and entrepreneurs** presented their businesses to create awareness about their key contributions to food systems and the (rural) economy, but also to share their knowledge and experiences so as to inspire others to engage (more) with agriculture and entrepreneurship, and to call for targeted support from policy makers, finance institutions, research and support organisations.

**Find short presentations of these amazing women entrepreneurs below:**

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<sup>1</sup> [COLEACP becomes COLEAD](#) in January 2023 (Committee Linking Entrepreneurship Agriculture Development).





**Halatou Dem, Director General, [Les Céréales de TATAM S.A.R.L](#), Mali**

Les Céréales de TATAM S.A.R.L adds value to traditionally grown grains in Mali by processing local cereals (such as millet flour, fonio, monicourou, diouka, etc.) with high nutritional content in healthy and ready to be consumed produces. It brings this delicious traditional food to the urban population across Africa, Europe and the USA. The company commits to achieving innovation through nutrition and promoting women’s employment and privileges women in the recruitment process.



**Alice Riouall, Founder & CEO, [Mango So](#), Burkina Faso**

Mango So is a processing company which mainly processes mango and coconut into organic and Fairtrade dried mango and coconut chips for international markets, mostly Europe. Mango-So constantly anticipates and develops products adapted to specific markets, such as mango jam and mango sirop for the local market. It also processes, on a smaller scale, vegetables, the dried tomatoes being mostly sold on the domestic market. The company participates in community life by improving its workers’ children’s health and education, promoting gender equality by enabling both young and adult women to become economically independent, and combating women’s exclusion and early and forced marriages, among others. Mango So is a member of COLEAD and benefitted from specific support adapted to its needs and participated to collective trainings organised by COLEAD.



**Catherine Krobo Edusei, Founder & CEO, [Eden Tree Limited](#), Ghana**

Eden Tree Limited is a company which produces, packages and markets high-end fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs, as well as convenient food to promote healthy eating habits. The healthy value-added products are exported within West Africa. Eden Tree acts as a bridge between farmers and consumers by connecting farmers to markets. The company is strongly committed to corporate social responsibility and works closely with over 200 approved smallholder suppliers and helps them to better develop their production, including by providing loans to improve production and to buy inputs. Among others, the company pays tuition fees for the children of staff members, provides educational materials, and organises nursing to enable mothers to continue to work and attend to their children.





**Bertille Guèdègbé Marcos, Founder & CEO, [Les Fruits Tillou S.A.R.L.](#) & [Les Jus Tillou S.A.](#), Benin**

Les Fruits Tillou & Les Jus Tillou are family businesses which produce and process pineapple. LES FRUITS TILLOU S.A.R.L. produces organic and conventional fresh pineapples, as well as dried pineapples, for international markets. LES JUS TILLOU S.A. produces industrial organic pineapple juice for international markets and artisanal pineapple juice which is sold on the local market and in the sub-region. In 2018, the company invested in a fruit drying unit to produce organic dried pineapples for the European market.

The successful development of both companies has contributed to creating employment, empowering women, and developing the area surrounding the processing units with the construction of schools and wells among others.

As longtime members of COLEAD, Les Fruits Tillou & Les Jus Tillou benefitted from specific support adapted to their needs and participated to collective trainings organised by COLEAD.



**Affiong Williams, Founder & CEO, [Reelfruit](#), Nigeria**

Reelfruit creates new value chains by processing fresh fruit in value-added convenient produces, like snacks, and by building its own network for distribution. The processed mangoes, pineapples, coconuts, bananas and plantains are distributed in local and export markets, including through Amazon. The company aims to produce Nigerian food products that meet world-class standards and to market them everywhere.

The company trains its salaries, especially rural women, to grow high quality, export grade mangoes. Moreover, with its empowering women's programme "Female Farmers To High-Value Mango Farming", Reelfruit has contributed to a 300% increase in farmers' incomes.



**Lovin Kobusingye, Co-founder & CEO, [KATI FARMS \(Uganda\) LTD](#), Uganda**

KATI FARMS (Uganda) LTD is the first agrofish-processing enterprise producing fish sausages in Uganda. The company's flagship product is the fish sausage made of locally-sourced tilapia. Other processed fish and healthy products include, among others, fish samosas, frozen and chilled fish fillets, fish powder, surimi, crude fish oil, fish meal. The products are sold in Uganda and neighbouring countries to hotels, restaurants (both domestic and international) and supermarkets, as well as on the informal market.

KATI FARM supports its farmers, among others, by providing them with trainings and hiring out expensive equipment for a small fee, such as fish nets, oxygen cylinders, and water transportation tanks.





**Oluwaseun Sangoleye, Founder & CEO, [Baby Grubz](#), Nigeria**

Baby Grubz is a social enterprise which manufactures packaged infant meals and snacks made from grains, fruit and vegetables and operates in Ghana, Togo and the United Kingdom. Baby Grubz aims to reduce the high rates of malnutrition and poverty in Africa. Its products are prepared with super food sourced locally in order to tackle the major deficiencies in baby and infant nutrition.

Baby Grubz also works with over 300,000 mothers to provide peer-to-peer mentoring on the benefits of nutritious foods and breastfeeding. Through its active use of social media, Baby Grubz has built a vast network to share knowledge on how to feed children and to widely promote its products.



**Jolenta Joseph, Founder & CEO, [Sanavita](#), Tanzania**

Sanavita adds value to crops such as orange fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSP), beans and maize. Its objective is to address the high rates of malnutrition in Tanzania; especially anaemia (which mainly affects women at reproductive age) and vitamin A deficiency (from which one out of three children under the age of six suffers). Sanavita supports over 1,500 smallholder farmers and offers them a reliable link to ready markets by buying and processing their produce into nutritious food products. The company also improves the livelihoods of rural communities and supports women to escape poverty through engagement in agriculture. Sanavita delivers training and offer consultation on a range of issues.



**Marie Ange Mukagahima, Founder & CEO, [Zima Enterprise](#), Rwanda**

Zima Enterprise processes pumpkin and its unused seeds into pumpkin seed oil, pumpkin cookies, roasted pumpkin seeds and pumpkin seed flour. Pumpkins are an easy crop to grow in Rwanda with little seasonality and rich in minerals (such as magnesium, zinc, potassium, sodium) and vitamin, contain antioxidants and dietary fibre, and are low in cholesterol.

Zima Enterprise ensures gives rural cooperatives of women farmers and over 50 farmers a constant supply of pumpkins for processing and provides the farmers with high-quality seed for sowing. The relationship supports a rise in the standard of living of these farmers and provides them with skills, tools and market awareness regarding their crops.





**Euphrasie Dassoundo, Founder and General Director, [AgroExpress](#), Benin**

Agro Express is a company processing fruit, vegetables and spices into purees and concentrates. Tomato puree is its most popular product but the company also produces onion and garlic puree, ground ginger, peanut paste, spice mixes and marinades. By processing fresh food in jars, extending its shelf life, Agro Express tackles the issue of post-harvest losses of Beninese fruit and vegetables producers, as well as the food safety issue.

Agro Express is committed to support the social development of local communities by creating jobs for young people and women.



**Elmine Kouyaté, Founder and Director, [Axxiom](#), Côte d'Ivoire**

Axxiom is an Ivorian company involved in the entire mushroom value chain, producing fresh mushrooms, mainly of the oyster variety, and processing them into dried mushrooms, prepared meals, energy drink, as well as cosmetic products.

Axxiom aims to empower local communities by starting their own mushroom production which supply the company in raw material. Axxiom supports and invested in 7 mushroom farms, all run by women.



**Jane Maigua, Managing Director, [Exotic EPZ Limited](#), Kenya**

Exotic EPZ Limited is a Kenyan company processing macadamia nuts in different sizes (wholes, halves, chips) and exporting to international markets, especially USA, Asia and Europe. Exotic EPZ Limited works closely with 7,000 macadamia nut farmers across Kenya, sourcing them with high quality nuts. In order to support the local farmers and help them to continue to produce in a sustainable manner, the company provides them with seeds and offers training on various topics.

The company is committed to comply with international high-quality standards and developed an environmentally friendly processing activity by installing a solar plant and processing macadamia nut shells into biogas.



**Adama Mbaye, CEO, [BAONANE](#), Senegal**

BAONANE is a Senegalese agribusiness offering a range of baobab-based products such as fruit pulp, powder, leaves, seeds and baobab oil, as well as hibiscus flowers (including oil), local cereals, poultry and livestock feed. BAONANE is strongly committed to offer organic products, ensuring high quality and food safety. The company also supports fair, social and sustainable agriculture, by contributing to the development of the entire agricultural and agri-food sector and promoting employment among rural communities, especially young people and women who suffer the most from unemployment and poor livelihood conditions.



**Awa Caba, Co-founder and CEO, [Soreetul](#), Senegal**

Soreetul is the first digital platform in Senegal that sells African processed agricultural products and cosmetics. More than 400 products from 10 different categories (such as cereals, juices and teas) are available. Soreetul also has a physical shop and offers a catering service, providing meals exclusively made from local products for companies.

Strongly committed to women's empowerment and promoting business initiatives, Soreetul enables many SMEs to showcase their products and expand their market. The company contributes to the development of the agri-food sector and to connecting it to the urban demand.



**Yvonne Otieno, Director, [Miyonga Fresh Greens ENT](#), Kenya**

Miyonga Fresh Greens ENT is a Kenyan family business established in 2014 which produces quality horticultural products grown fairly, sustainably and under the highest food safety standards for the regional and export (EU) markets. The company also adds value to fruit which does not meet (export-) requirements by drying them and by pulverizing dried fruit into all-purpose fruit powder.

Miyonga Fresh Greens ENT is a social company committed to enhancing food security and health, improving productivity and reducing poverty, with lower environmental and social costs. It has developed a network over 5,000 smallholders in Kenya, created about 7,500 jobs, enabled over 30,000 farmers to earn an income and improved 195,000 lives.





**Salma Abdulai, Co-Founder and CEO, [Amaati Group](#), Ghana**

AMAATI Company limited is a social Ghanian company created in 2013 which processes organic-certified fonio into ready to use flour and cereals for both the local and export markets. Fonio is a climate resistant indigenous cereal which does not contain any gluten and has high quantity of fiber, iron, amino acids, protein, potassium among other nutrients.

AMAATI supports vulnerable rural women to grow fonio on degraded (due to exhaustive use) and/or abandoned lands by creating a land management system where the lands can be regenerated and used to grow other crops, including fonio. The company currently works with 5,000 smallholder farmers and also hires (young) women to process fonio.



**Marie-Andrée Tall, Founder and Director, [Fruitales](#), Senegal**

Fruitales is a Senegalese company created in 2005 that processes local fruit and vegetables into purees, jams and syrups for the local and international markets. As a social enterprise, Fruitales has positively impacted stakeholders along the entire value chain. The company has a policy of recruiting disadvantaged women to provide them with training and support them in their professional development. It also has a policy of exclusive supply of raw agricultural products from local producers at a fair price, giving priority to products grown or harvested by women, and supporting the professionalisation of greenhouse producers. Fruitales also sources its packaging from local companies.



**Gaëlle Laura Kenfack, Founder, [KENZA MARKET](#), Cameroon**

KENZA MARKET is a company specialised in the processing and distribution of pre-cooked, dried, organic and dietetic products and ingredients (fruit, vegetables, spices, vegetable oils, poultry etc.) to quickly prepare healthy meals. The company which was founded in 2016 is one of the pioneers that produces and markets local products from Cameroon, first only online, then in physical stores.

KENZA MARKET produces quality products by ensuring their traceability from the fields and village farms to the shelves. The production process meets international requirements.





**Annie Kamala, CEO, [AGRO BIBI](#), DRC**

AGRO BIBI is a company created in 2005 producing and processing fruit, cereals, cocoa and vanilla in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) for both the local (supermarkets and restaurants) and regional (e.g. Uganda, Gabon, Congo) markets. The company has a strong focus on empowering women, including by providing them with jobs and trainings in food processing. 'Bibi' means 'woman' in Swahili.



**Hasina Ralay, Manager, [LYCHEELAND](#), Madagascar**

Lycheeland is a Malagasy company specialising in the drying and processing of exotic products and superfoods from Madagascar. Lycheeland supplies the largest variety of naturally dehydrated tropical products in the Indian Ocean. Since its creation, Lycheeland has continuously developed its range of nutritious and healthy products, while combating food loss and waste. The company also supports farmers by ensuring them fair prices, using an environmentally friendly processing method and creating jobs, especially for women whose income it seeks to improve.



**Elizabeth Jebby Bischof, Co-Founder and Managing Director, [Bdelo](#), Kenya**

Bdelo is an award-winning regional market leader in the production of healthy and tasty tortilla chips and tortillas that are 100 % naturally seasoned, gluten and preservative free. The products are maize-based fused with high value seeds, grains, vegetables, herbs and legumes. The company aims to contribute to healthier and fun lifestyles but also to rural development and progress, including by creating market for indigenous foods normally grown by women in rural communities.

Bdelo Kenya was incorporated in 2010 and the Bdelo Middle East Marketing & Distribution office established in 2019.







**Sakina Usengimana, Founder and CEO, [Afri Foods](#), Rwanda**

Afri Foods is a woman-led horticulture export company founded in 2019 which distributes fresh, high-quality Rwandan produce to both local consumers and exports markets. The company sources from more than 500 farmers and 5 cooperatives in Rwanda, 70% of whom are women and youth. Sakina’s vision is to empower women and youth in the communities she works with through agriculture, with an emphasis on experiential learning while continuing to export Rwanda’s fresh goods to markets all over the world and become a preferred vendor with consistent quality products.



**Rose Noah, Co-Founder and CEO, [West African Feeds](#), Ghana**

West African Feeds Ltd is a Ghanaian biotech firm operating in the nutrient recycling industry. Fuelled by the desire to address Africa’s greenhouse gas emissions, West African Feeds harnesses the ability of black soldier fly larvae to valorise food waste. Through this process, they convert bio-waste into valuable inputs for Africa’s livestock industry, including organic fertiliser, insect-based animal feed, animal nutrition, compost and hygiene products. These products provide the agriculture industry and small scale animal farmers with economically and environmentally sustainable alternatives.

West African Feeds Ltd is looking to expand its production and product range by partnering up with waste suppliers (farmers and food processors) to whom it offers zero-waste management services, and research institutions for co-developing new products.



**Fatou Titine Cissoko, Founder and Manager, [Jedengui](#), Guinea**

Enterprise Fatou & Kadija (EFK) is a company specialising in the drying of high quality fruit that sells products under the brand Jedengui. The company produces 100% natural, preservative-free dried pineapples, dried mangoes and natural juices, which are supplied to both national and international markets.

EFK was created in 2013 upon the desire to address the post-harvest losses recorded by local producers, and to develop the agri-food sector with local products, while integrating and contributing to the development of women in the agribusiness in Guinea. Today, the company is successfully achieving these goals, while creating jobs for young people and women. EFK works closely with producers: it created women's cooperatives, provides support and advice to farmers on how to market their products, and buys the production surplus from members of the Federation of Planters from the Fruit Sector of Lower Guinea (FEPAF-BG).





**Marlene José, Founder and CEO, [FoodCare Lda](#), Angola**

FoodCare is a company processing organic African food that preserves the originality of the products while operating in compliance with international food safety and quality standards. It aims to overcome the preconception of African food as being “indigenous food” due to the lack of sanitary infrastructure which contributes to the contamination of nutritiously rich products during processing. Having obtained the HACCP and FDA certifications has enabled FoodCare to export to the European and American continents and to increase its product range.

In 2022, FoodCare was the first Angolan food company to participate in the Summer Fancy Food Show, in New York, USA.



**Marian Thompson, Managing Director, [Bio-Tropical Products Company Ltd](#), Ghana**

Bio-Tropical Products Company Ltd is a processing company producing organic orange and lemon cut peels, organic cocoa shells and shea butter. Certified organic by Ecocert and USDA, the company grows organic citrus and also sources from smallholder organic producers from the central region of Ghana. Its HACCP certification is currently in process. In addition to being certified Fair Trade, the company maintains corporate social responsibilities, while also creating employment for young females.

Bio-Tropical Products Company Ltd actively participates in market opportunities inclusive of attending trade fairs and benefiting from support from its partners, of whom include COLEAD.



**Fannie Perisha Gondwe, Founder and Executive Director, [Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprise](#), Malawi**

Perisha Agro and Packing Enterprise is an eco-inclusive business aimed at improving the nutritional status of women and children under the age of five. The company promotes the growth and consumption of locally-grown biofortified foods including orange fleshed sweet potato, orange maize, Nua Beans and cassava products. The company owes a large part of its growth due to the establishment of partnerships and collaboration with investors, clients, the government, NGOs and farmers.

Perisha Agro is among the 2022 Top 50 African Business Heroes (ABH) under the Jack Ma Foundation competition.

