



## Accelerator Mentorship Programme for Women-led SMEs in Africa

### Final Report



#### Key achievements of the pilot programme include:

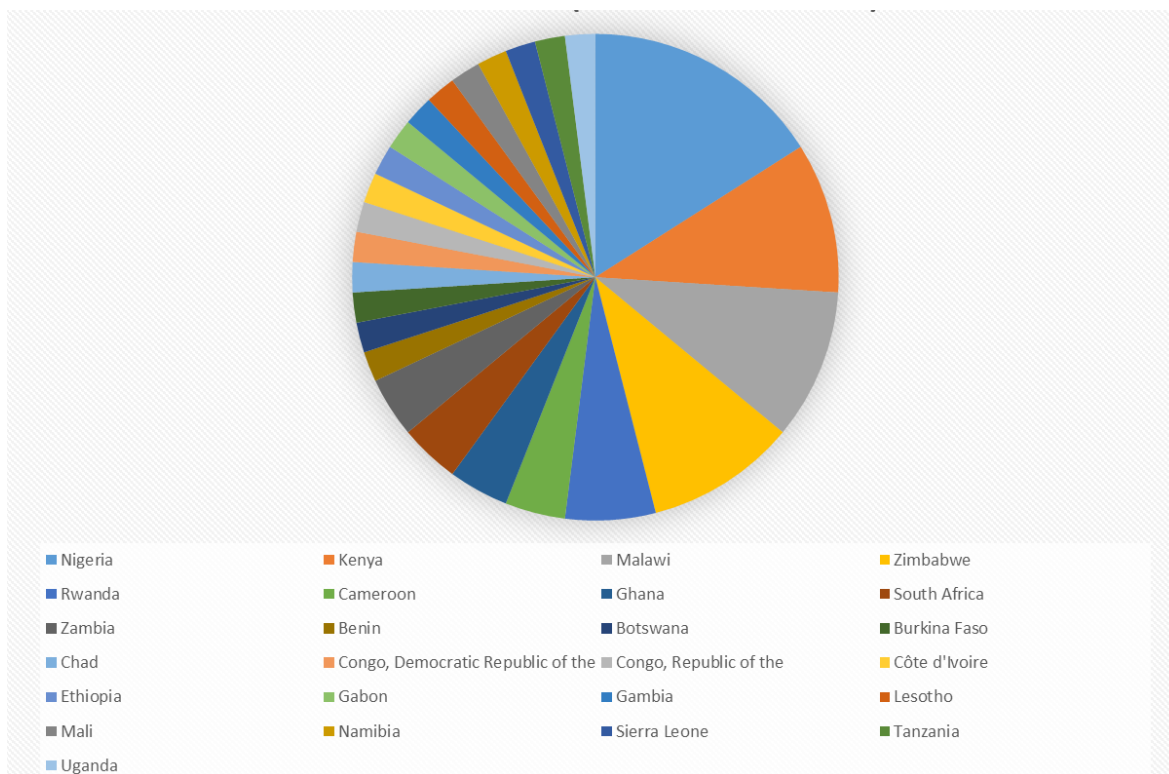
- Over **500 applications** were received from **25 countries** across Africa.
- **51 mentees** were paired with **51 successful global women business leaders** mentors. **46 mentees** completed the programme.
- The mentees work across the entire value chain, including in **production, processing, marketing and distribution, logistics and digital agriculture**.
- **3 workshops** on leadership and human resources, business development and marketing, and finance access were curated. The workshops featured **30 speakers and experts**.
- A total of **6 mentors and mentees** participated and spoke at the launch event during the investment forum at the World Food Forum in October 2022.
- Mentees featured on the [FAO CONNECT](#) and [IAFN](#) websites. This was another opportunity to showcase their work and gain further interest from potential partners/investors.
- A spillover effect, reaching **over half a million** people on the continent. Most of the mentees are linked to cooperatives and farmer groups in their communities. The SMEs are also major employers in their communities and countries, directly contributing to improved incomes for families in rural households.

#### Programme Overview

As part of our efforts to close the gender gap, IAFN partnered with FAO to launch the [Women SME Accelerator Programme](#) in October 2022. The pilot programme ran for six months and received overwhelming interest underscoring the important role mentorship can play in accelerating SMEs. The program aims to support women entrepreneurs in addressing key challenges and constraints they face in their businesses.

Over 500 applications were received in a span of 4 weeks. 41 English and 10 French mentees drawn from 25 countries across Africa (see chart below) were selected to go through the programme. The 51 mentees work across the entire value chain, including in production, processing, marketing and distribution, logistics and digital agriculture. The mentees went through the three main components of the program:

- **One-on-One Mentoring:** Each mentee was paired with a global woman business leader and received personal guidance and consultation for six months.
- **Capacity development and tools - Tailor-made training to enhance hard skills:** Each participant completed 2 mandatory courses and an optional course on the FAO eLearning Academy.
- **Workshops & Interaction with Global Leaders:** Through joint workshop sessions with experts in the field, mentees had access to knowledge exchange sessions, peer learning and networking with each other as well as with invited experts allowing for interactive moments.



### One-on-one Mentoring

*"I am privileged because I believe in the power of mentorship, for I know mentorship is transformational. John Crosby says "Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction." And that's the experience I had with Rahmat Eyinfunjowo through the support of the FAO-IAFN accelerator mentorship program."*

*Fatou Manneh*



The 51 mentees were paired with 51 global women business leaders. While the program required them to hold only 6 mentorship sessions each lasting one hour, most of the pairs met more than six times and the mentors gave more time than was required. Interactions continued over emails, text messages and WhatsApp, indicating just how valuable these sessions were. Some of the success stories out of these connections include:

- **Education foundation set up** - Yemisi Iranloye of Psaltry International used the prize money she had received from WAYA awards in 2022 and the coaching of her mentor Mrs. Margaret Munene to set up the foundation.
- **Equipment sourced affordably** – JaneFrances Nkiruka is in the process of sourcing equipment for her processing plant at a fair cost with the help of her mentor Kantha Shelke who connected her to the manufacturers.

**MENTOR**



**Kantha Shelke**

Founder, Corvus Blue LLC and Senior Lecturer, Johns Hopkins University, USA

**MENTEE**



**JaneFrances Nkiruka Ighosewe**

Founder, Something Lite Greek Yogurt, Nigeria

**Capacity development and tools - Tailor-made training to enhance hard skills**

*“Le programme m’a permis de mieux assimiler les notions de chaîne de valeur agricole et surtout les questions liées à la nutrition. Les cours ont été d’une très grande utilité. J’ai suivi tous les cours et obtenu 2 badges.”/ “The program allowed me to better assimilate the concepts of the agricultural value chain and especially the issues related to nutrition. The courses were very helpful. I completed all the courses and earned 2 badges.” - Celia Chabi*

The mentees completed 2 mandatory courses (business development and market access) and an optional course on the FAO eLearning Academy. The courses provided the mentees with practical skills and knowledge to manage their businesses. Topics covered included local area and market assessment, investment planning, managing hire services, rural investment, participatory data collection, among others.





## Workshops & Interaction with Global Leaders



Through joint workshop sessions with experts in the field, participants had access to knowledge exchange sessions, peer learning and networking with each other as well as with invited experts allowing for interactive moments. Three workshops were curated focusing on:

- **Business Development and Marketing** – This was the first workshop in the series and was well attended by **63 participants**, including **8 speakers**. Topics covered included brand positioning, customer segmentation, market research, branding and advertising, messaging. Watch the recording [here](#).
- **Leadership and Human Resources** – FAO Deputy Director General **Beth Bechdol** was among the **6 speakers** at the workshop which was attended by **75 participants**. Topics covered included change management, networking, building and organization, hiring and management, people centered approach team building and community engagement. Watch the workshop recording [here](#).
- **Access to Financial Services** – The workshop was the most attended with a total of **83 participants**. Mentees had an opportunity to pitch their businesses and receive practical guidance and feedback from potential financiers and investors. **2 banks have expressed interest and initiated partnership talks with 3 of the SMEs**. We will keep you posted on any deals that will be made out of this. Watch the recording [here](#).

*"The Leadership and Human Resource Workshop gave me new skill sets which have been instrumental in transforming my leadership style. I have learnt to improve team productivity using small high impact teams and blended working. Managing people has become an exciting challenge through implementing e-learning portal lessons!" - Sila Mbofana*



### More Information and Resources on Cohort 1

- Agrifoodnet, [Women SME Accelerator Programme Concept Note, Mentors & Mentees](#)
- FAO Connect, [Women Accelerator Programme](#)
- FAO Connect, [Access to finance workshop](#)
- FAO Connect, [Leadership and Human Resources Workshop](#)
- [Leadership and Human Resources Workshop recording](#)
- [Finance Access Workshop recording](#)
- [Business Development and Marketing Workshop recording](#)
- Launch Event, [Levelling the Playing Field: Eliminating inequalities in accessing STIs across value chains](#)
- Emerging ag., [Happy International Women's Day](#)
- GFAR Blog, [One empowered female agripreneur can rally a whole community](#)
- [A Personal Report on the FAO-IAFN SME Women's Accelerator Programme Launch](#)

### Mentee-Mentor Pairings

	Mentee Name	Mentor Name
1	Aline Gaju Managing Director, Germin8 Rwanda	Lorena Basso President, Basso Semillas Argentina
2	Aminata Karanka CEO, Sorogbema Agricultural Company Sierra Leone	Adrienne Mollor Farmer and grower-owner, Ocean Spray Cooperative in Southeastern Massachusetts USA
3	Chidinma Ezeh FarmCAS Nigeria	Ashley Mutiso Chief of Staff, Future Africa Forum Kenya
4	Corlia van Dyk CEO, Taste Me Curry Fish South Africa	Eilene Bowland Director of Innovation, Leprino Foods USA
5	Damilola Adeyemi Co-founder, D-Olivette Enterprise Nigeria	Mamy Ingabire Muziga Managing Director, Charis Unmanned Aerial Solutions Ltd Rwanda
6	Dorah Kwamboka Momanyi CEO & Founder, iPoP Africa Limited Kenya	Anne Sarfo CEO, Annes Perfections Ghana
7	Edith Mpoto Managing Director, Nkhotakota Steadfast Cooperations for Youth (NS4Y) Malawi	Jelica Kujundzic Commercial and Risk Director CAFI - Commodity and Freight Integrators DMCC United Arab Emirates
8	Emmastella Gakuo Co-founder and Director of Operations Savanna Circuit Kenya	Eunice Mwongera CEO & Founder, Hillside Green Kenya



9	Esther Unathi Sihlahla Founder, Pella Food Garden Cooperative South Africa	Hellen Oyare Director, Helena Agspace Limited Kenya
10	Fatou Manneh Founder, Jelmah Herbella Gambia	Rahmat Eyinfunjowo Co-CEO, Operations, Nourishing Africa Nigeria
11	Feddy Tesha Managing Director and Shareholder Profate Investments limited Tanzania	Lynda McDonald Project Manager Dairy Development TetraLaval International Sweden
12	Gaudensia Bakilile General Manager G2L Company Limited Tanzania	Poorva Pandya Chief Executive Officer Export Trading Group Foundation USA
13	JaneFrances Nkiruka Ighosewe Founder Something Lite Greek Yogurt Nigeria	Kantha Shelke Founder / Senior Lecturer Corvus Blue LLC / Johns Hopkins University USA
14	Joy Munthali Founder Tawonga General Suppliers Malawi	Mary Ann Sayoc Public Affairs Lead East West Seed International Philippines
15	Judith Marera Founder and CEO Lanforce Trading (Pvt) Ltd T/A Lanforce Energy (Pvt) Ltd Zimbabwe	Judith Bryans Chief Executive Officer Dairy UK United Kingdom
16	Kekeletso Motopi Matli Founder Leseli Development Resources Centre Lesotho	Ruramiso Mashumba Chief Executive Officer Mnandi Africa Zimbabwe
17	Kudzai Sigauke Agripreneur & Owner Janna Fresh Produce Zimbabwe	Monica Githige Impact Manager, Agriculture and Nutrition BoP Innovation Centre Limited Kenya
18	Lilian Mpama Founder Lilies Innovations Malawi	Alima Bawah Co-founder Cowtribe Ghana
19	Lilian Uwintwali Founder and CEO Mahwi Tech Rwanda	Martine Koopman Owner Smart Resultancy Netherlands



20	Linda Chepkwony Founder RiftValley Organics Africa Kenya	Nathalie Lazzarato Operations Cargill S.A. USA
21	Lynnet Nakidde Biofertilizer Centre For Youth Empowerment Uganda	Sindhu Abbasi Agri Business Value Chain Facilitator FAO Pakistan
22	Maimbolwa Mooto Founder Mooto Farms Limited	Jelica Kujundzic Commercial and Risk Director CAFI - Commodity and Freight Integrators DMCC United Arab Emirates
23	Maria Shipapo MIST Agricultural Laboratory (MISTAL) Namibia	Enaam Ahmed-Ali Sustainability Rabobank Netherlands
24	Nadia Niwemugeni Cupper Beans Ltd Rwanda	Christine Daugherty Business Development Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation USA
25	Nishimwe Esther Founder Pristine Life Ltd Rwanda	Yaa Kusi Binka CEO Pepper Delight Ghana
26	Ogola Lois Kange Chief Executive Officer Smiley'z Mobile Kitchen Limited Nigeria	Ruxandra-Valentina Florescu Regional Chief Financial Officer COFCO International Switzerland
27	Olapeju Umah Founder & Head of Operations MyFoodAngels Nigeria	Hazel Awino CEO Agri Innovation Hub Kenya Kenya
28	Oluebube Akah Founder Aga's Wholesome Foods Limited Nigeria	Tatiana De Paula Campos International and Institutional Relations Manager Brazilian Association of Citrus Exporters Brazil
29	Oluwaseun Sangoleye Mum-In-Chief Baby Grubz Nigeria	Donna Rosa Chief Entrepreneurship Officer Efour Enterprises LLC USA
30	Oluyemisi Iranloye Founder and Managing Director Psaltry International Company Ltd Nigeria	Margaret Munene CEO Palmhouse Dairy Limited Kenya



31	Paida Moyo Little Blackwood farm Zimbabwe	Rita Odera Investment Executive, GroFin Kenya
32	Pauline Otila Founder, Apiculture Venture Limited Kenya	Karimi Thurania Country Manager, Kenya, OCP Africa Kenya
33	Precious Awesome Founder and CEO Awesome God Agro Allied Industries Limited (AGAAI Ltd) Nigeria	Marygoretti Kamau Project Manager The Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee (COLEACP) Kenya
34	Rabecca Atuhaire CEO & Founder Agrisensor Technologies Uganda	Su Kahumbu Founder iCow Kenya
35	Rahel Heruy Managing Director Damascene Essential Oil Processing Ethiopia	Robynne Anderson Director General International Agrifood Network (IAFN) Canada
36	Rhoda Mkumbwa Secretary General African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFishNet) Malawi	Kate Dempsey Chief Executive Officer Aqua License Ireland
37	Rose Kennedy Founder, Eproke Holdings Botswana	Patience Koku CEO, Replenish Farms Nigeria
38	Silahlekelwe Mbofana Founder Malila Investments T/A Tarima Vegetables Zimbabwe	Langelihle Simela Agribusiness Development Manager Absa South Africa
39	Thokozani Chimasula Founder and CEO Tac-Maz Sustainable Ventures Malawi	Edith Wheatland Founder and CEO Rockland Farms Ghana
40	Vanessa Aisha Limann CEO Vanelim Enterprise Ghana	Lucy Muchoki CEO Pan African Agribusiness and Agroindustry Consortium (PANACC) Kenya
41	Vera Osei-Bonsu Chief Executive Officer Eat Smart Foods Ghana	Onigbanjo Oluwatoyin CEO Augustsecrets Ltd Nigeria





French

	Nom du mentoré	Nom des mentors
1	Adèle Nkagha MBA Présidente Coopérative de production agricoles nno (coopraNNO) Gabon	Sophie Goudard Director of Operations Emerging ag inc France
2	Ama Sangare Confisol Mali	Ducrot Virginie Head of Ecotoxicological Effects Bayer Crop Science Germany
3	Célia Chabi KIEL BIEN-ÊTRE Benin	Jenny Du Co-Founder & Senior Vice President Apeel Sciences USA
4	Désirée Nguekadji Fondatrice l'entreprise Biokadji Chad	Julia Friederike Harnal Vice President Public Affairs Agricultural Solutions, BASF Germany
5	Inès Mano Nessa Bio COSMÉTICS AND CARE Burkina Faso	Séverine JEANNEAU Responsable Filières et Développement Durable Semences et Santé Végétale Corteva Agriscience
6	Konan Jeanne Armelle Manhounou Biosave-ci Côte d'Ivoire	Sophie Goudard Director of Operations Emerging ag inc France
7	Lea Babite LEPAG-Boyama SARL Democratic Republic of Congo	Césarie Kantarama Farmer and Chairperson INGABO Syndicate Farmers Union Rwanda
8	Marcelline Koutatouka née Dinzébi Boukondzo Ingénieur en Agronomie tropicale, Gérante Société MktOTO Sarl Democratic Republic of Congo	Tenemba Anna Samake Executive Director MBC Africa, ShEquity Ghana
9	Nankeng Yolande Founder Extrait Végétal Sarl	Celestine Habiba Directrice Générale Habiba Natural Care Cameroon
10	ZE épouse Nlate Mengue Pulchérie Marie Charlotte Cameroon	Bertille Fages Farming Policy Officer Nuffield International France