



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

SESSION N°12

Entrepreneurial skills developed by successful African SMEs

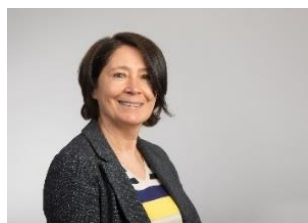
Wednesday 15 February 2023, 12:00-14:00 GMT

Online ([Zoom](#))

English-French-Portuguese interpretation available

BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

ISOLINA BOTO – HEAD OF NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES, COLEAD



Isolina Boto is the Head of Networks and Alliances at COLEAD, a non-profit Association of private sector operators in the agrifood sector active in the EU, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) regions. Isolina has more than 25 years of experience in agricultural development. She started her career with the European Commission and has also worked with various ACP embassies and NGOs in areas related to food security, rural development and trade. Before joining COLEAD, she was the Manager of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) Brussels Office (2004-2020) implementing policy initiatives related to the ACP-EU cooperation in the field of agricultural and rural development. She has led agribusiness projects in support of capacity development of SMEs, entrepreneurs and farmers organisations across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.





ETIENNE CHRISTIAN DIOMA – DIRECTOR, UPROMABIO (HAUTS BASSINS ORGANIC AND FAIR TRADE MANGO PRODUCERS’ UNION), BURKINA FASO

Since 2015, Etienne Christian Dioma has been the Director of the cooperative society UPROMABIO/HBS (Union of Cooperative Societies with a Board of Directors of Organic and Fair Trade Mango Producers of the Hauts Bassins Region). He has more than 20 years of experience in the production, processing and marketing of organic and fair trade dried mango and dried hibiscus flowers.



He holds a Master's degree in Quality, Health, Safety and Environment (QHSE) and has studied in Burkina Faso at the University of Ouagadougou and the International Institute of Water and Environmental Engineering (2IE). In 1997, he started his first position as quality manager for mango drying at the economic interest group *Cercle Des Sécheurs* (GIE-CDS). He was in charge of monitoring the drying process in GIE-CDS member units, as well as fair trade and organic certification, quality control and exports. Since GIE-CDS ceased its activities in 2014 and at the request of GIE-CDS clients, he continues to carry out the same activities with UPROMABIO/HBS, a production union whose creation he had supported with GIE-CDS.

Throughout his career, Etienne Christian Dioma has attended training courses in Belgium, France and Switzerland. He also participated in training courses offered by COLEAD (formerly known as COLEACP).

Etienne Christian Dioma is also Founding President of the Association of Mango Processors of Burkina Faso.

PROF. ANTHONY EGERU, MANAGER FOR TRAINING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, RUFORUM

Dr. Egeru Anthony (Ugandan) is the RUFORUM Manager for Training and Community Development, an eight year project funded by The MasterCard Foundation to strengthen the effectiveness of university contribution to development through skills development particularly entrepreneurship of talented, motivated and disadvantaged youth in Africa. He previously served as Assistant Grants Manager at RUFORUM Secretariat, Lecturer at Makerere University, Uganda, and a secondary school teacher at Merryland High School, Entebbe, Uganda.



Anthony is a distinguished academic and has multi-faceted experience in research including in systems ecology with a focus on management of dryland ecosystems, early warning system, rangeland health monitoring, land use planning, pastoral livelihoods, agro-forestry systems, climate change, adaptation and resilience programming and analysis, development processes-especially participatory analysis and curriculum design and development.



FANNIE GONDWE – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PERISHA AGRO AND PACKAGING ENTERPRISE, MALAWI

Fannie Perisha Gondwe is the Founder and Executive Director of Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprise, an eco-inclusive agri-business enterprise aiming at improving the nutritional status of women and children under-five. The company promotes the growing and consumption of biofortified foods including orange fleshed sweet potato, orange maize, Nua Beans and cassava products.



Fannie holds an MBA from Eastern and Southern Africa Institute of Management (ESAMI), Tanzania. She worked as the Regional Finance and Administration Manager at World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), Southern Africa Region for 11 years before founding Perisha Agro in 2015.

As an entrepreneur, Fannie has won several awards in agribusiness including HIVOS Most Impactful Business, Graca Marcel Outstanding business and the Female Biosciences Business Acceleration award. Perisha Agro is among the 2022 Top 50 African Business Heroes under Jack Ma ABH competition. Fannie has won 3 matching grants through investor pitch competitions and also secured bank loans for her business.

MARLENE JOSÉ – CEO, FOODCARE, LDA, ANGOLA

Marlene José was born in Luanda, Angola. She studied international relations at the University of Minho, Portugal, and supply chains at the Catholic University of Lisbon, Portugal. In 2020, she also attended an executive training in Emerging Markets at Harvard University, USA. After years of experience working in the direction of several manufacturing industries in Angola, Marlene started her entrepreneurial career in 2019 with her pilot project FoodCare, Lda. With FoodCare, Marlène wants to overcome the preconception of African food as being “indigenous food” due to the lack of sanitary infrastructure. Her strategy is to process food in a way that preserves the originality of the products and is in compliance with hygiene and food safety standards. FoodCare’s factory is HACCP and FDA certified, enabling the company 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 one of the most coveted world shows, the Summer Fancy Food Show, in New York, USA, an initiative of the USAID Trade Hub under the African Growth Opportunity Act program (AGOA) targeting Southern African countries.



JEREMY KNOPS – GENERAL DELEGATE, COLEAD

Jeremy Knops holds a Master's degree in Business Engineering from the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM). Prior to joining COLEAD in 2009, he was involved in Guatemala with the daily operations of a farmers' cooperative exporting loquats to the EU and the US. He started to work for COLEAD as an expert in charge of matters related to private standards and certification for ACP producers and exporters of fruit and vegetables. Jeremy is an accredited coach for leadership and professional development. He has been appointed as General Delegate of COLEAD in June 2019.



KINGSLY KONGNYUH KWALAR, CEO, OPTIMIZ

Kingsly is an entrepreneur who has dedicated his career to improving the food industry for growers and exporters. With a background in shipping and insurance, he founded StilFresh in 2016 to help African food growers and exporters to be more profitable through effective claims and risk management.



Kingsly has lived and worked in some of the most important global food hubs, including London, Buenos Aires, Johannesburg and now Germany, where he is the CEO and founder of OPTIMIZ. Through OPTIMIZ, he is revolutionizing the way international traders operate by providing a platform that enables remote inspection of cargo and digitization of internal processes. Kingsly's passion for helping the food industry and his extensive experience make him a leader in the field.

DR. BABAFEMI OYEWOLE – CEO, PAFO

Dr. Babafemi Oyewole, the CEO of Pan African Farmers Organization (PAFO), is a tri-sector executive and professional with experiences in the public, private and non-government sectors, and a veteran in the management of international institutions. Prior to his appointment at PAFO, he was the CEO of the African Agribusiness Alliance; former CEO of African Cashew Alliance; former Executive Director/CEO of African Energy Investment Corporation (AEICORP); Deputy Secretary General of the West African Bankers Association (WABA); General Manager, Banque Internationale du Benin, and Senior Economist with the Bank of Industry, Nigeria. He was a Regional Consultant on natural resources management policy in African countries with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). He is a member of Africa Regional Experts on Policy Dialogue on Natural Resource-based Development at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).



Dr. Oyewole was a Chevening Scholar for his PhD in development economics at the university of Bradford, United Kingdom, and obtained an MBA in Technology, Marketing and Business Strategy from Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria. He has attended several management and executive development programmes in top universities including Lagos Business School, Nigeria, and Harvard university, United States. He has published articles in international



journals and made conference presentations on development policy, banking and finance, agriculture, agribusiness, and sustainable development issues.

MARIAN THOMPSON – MANAGING DIRECTOR, BIO-TROPICAL PRODUCTS COMPANY LTD, GHANA

Marian Thompson has been an entrepreneur in the last three decades in the hospitality, travel and tourism industry. For the last five years, she has been involved in agri-preneurship, fired by her personal commitment to develop the next generation of leaders, the youth and females, in the agribusiness sector. A highly driven and motivated person, Marian is Managing Director of the Ghana-based processing company Bio-Tropical Products Company Ltd. Her responsibilities include corporate governance and nurturing growth strategies of social impact to overcome barriers to establishing profitable business for both the international and regional markets. This includes taking advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and regional market opportunities. Marian is an alumnus of University of Ghana with a Bachelor degree in Sociology.

