



## INNOVATIONS SERIES : 1-year anniversary of inspiring stories from African businesses and SMEs

One year ago, in November 2020, the Pan-African Farmers' Organization ([PAFO](#)) and COLEACP launched the Innovations Series aimed at showcasing innovations and successes of African farmer-led businesses and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The Innovations Series held every two months shares best practices from entrepreneurs, farmers, agripreneurs and SMEs to support others to embrace the unprecedented opportunities offered by local, regional and export markets. The series focuses on innovations across value chains to transform food systems, promote sustainable agriculture and leverage investment. They support a sustainable food systems approach which looks at the contribution of entrepreneurs to business models which are economically, environmentally and socially viable. We share successes in production methods, access to markets and product development, with a focus on value-addition, technologies including digital solutions, nutrition and circular economy.

The Innovations Series also features the contributions of those who support an enabling environment for African farmer-led businesses and SMEs to grow and expand, create jobs and impact rural communities. The insights from policy (OACPS, European Commission (Agriculture, Trade, Development), NEPAD, GAIN, AGRF, ACFTA, AFSA), research (FARA, AKADEMIYA2063, IPES-FOOD, DeSIRA), finance (ABC Fund, AgriFI, FarmFit, Bamboo Capital Partners) and support to business development (Pan African Agribusiness and Agroindustry Consortium (PanAAC) brought invaluable networks and connections to the entrepreneurs.

Within the last 12 months, PAFO and COLEACP have organised six Innovations Sessions on the following topics:

- [Increased market opportunities through added-value and branded products](#) (Session n°1)
- [Grow local: Conquering local markets](#) (Session n°2)
- [African Continental Free Trade Area \(AfCFTA\): opportunities for SMEs and businesses in the agri-food sector](#) (Session n°3)

- [Sustainable food systems: the key role of SMEs and businesses](#) (Session n°4)
- [Food and Nutrition Security: the contribution of SMEs and businesses](#) (Session n°5)
- [Promoting sustainable agriculture and agroecological practices: the key role of MSMEs and farmers organisations](#) (Session n°6)

Their recordings are available on [PAFO's](#) and [COLEACP's](#) YouTube channels.

During these sessions, 24 inspiring farmers groups and entrepreneurs presented their businesses to more than 2 200 participants from more than 100 countries on different continents. Find below a snapshot of their presentations which we hope will inspire you!

## **Innovations Session n°1:** **Increased market opportunities through added-value and branded products**



### **Halatou Dem, Director General, [Les Céréales de TATAM SARL](#), Mali**

Les Céréales de TATAM SARL 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.

**Alex Mutua Muli, Co-founder & CEO,  
Goshen Farm Exporters Limited, Kenya**

Goshen Farm Exporters Limited is a family-owned company which processes, packages and exports natural crisps from dried Kenyan mangoes, pineapples, leafy vegetables (incl. cowpeas, amaranth) etc. without additives or added sugar.

The company integrates technology into its business model to enhance the development of the supply chains by using the digital platform DigiFarm to connect fruit and vegetable sellers and buyers. It also actively works on developing climate-smart farming solutions and a green factory where all waste will be recycled.

Goshen Farm Exporters Limited is a member of COLEACP and benefitted from specific support adapted to its needs and participated to collective trainings organised by COLEACP.



**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 COLEACP and benefitted from specific support adapted to its needs and participated to collective trainings organised by COLEACP.

**Eric Muthomi, Founder & CEO, Stawi Foods and Fruits Ltd., Kenya**

Stawi Foods is a food company which processes seven nutritious locally grown crops: banana, amaranth, maize, finger millet, red sorghum, soy and wheat. Its product range includes pre-cooked, nutritious porridge flour made from ancient grains blended with bananas which are essentially distributed on the domestic market. The company also has a manufacturing contract with non-governmental organisations in Kenya.

Stawi Foods supports its local supplier farmers to access the market and produce food sustainably, while providing access to affordable nutritious food to low-income Kenyan families.





## Innovations Session n°2: Grow local: Conquering local markets



### Komi Agbokou, Co-founder & President, ChocoTogo, Togo

ChocoTogo is a cooperative that promotes sustainable organic cocoa production, including by preserving old cocoa varieties, and transforming cocoa into quality products. ChocoTogo's mission is to add value to Togolese (small) cocoa production by transforming cocoa into organic, fair trade, artisanal and local products, such as chocolate bars with various flavours, cocoa beans and chocolate paste. The products are available on the domestic market and sold in most supermarkets of the country, as well as exported to the EU.

Since its creation in 2014, the company has developed a new market in Togo, creating supply and demand for processed cocoa bean products.

### 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 SARL & Les Jus Tillou SA, Benin

Les Fruits Tillou & Les Jus Tillou are family businesses which produce and process pineapple. LES FRUITS TILLOU SARL produces organic and conventional fresh pineapples, as well as dried pineapples, for international markets. LES JUS TILLOU SA. 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 COLEACP, Les Fruits Tillou & Les Jus Tillou benefitted from specific support adapted to their needs and participated to collective trainings organised by COLEACP.

## 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.



## Innovations Session n°3: African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): opportunities for SMEs and businesses in the agri-food sector



### Dan Jakana, Founder & CEO, Jakana Foods Ltd, Uganda

Jakana Foods Ltd is a food processor and packaging technology specialist producing organic certified and natural non-organic dried fruit, natural fruit juice, pulp and concentrate, as well as condiments. The processed fruit are Uganda grown pineapple, mango, papaya, jackfruit, banana etc. The dried fruit, fruit juices and pulps are sold on export markets (mainly USA and EU), as well as a small portion on the domestic market.

The company has created a community premium fund with its buyers to give back to the communities in which its farmers live. The communities which surround the factory and farm benefit from training, agro-processing education, and new product development opportunities for all entrepreneurs interested in value addition.

Jakana Foods Ltd is a member of COLEACP and benefitted from specific support adapted to its needs and participated to collective trainings organised by COLEACP.



## Michael Annan-Forson, Founder & CEO, Melach Coconut Processing Farm, Ghana

Melach Coconut Processing Farm is a coconut processing company which produces, among others, Ecocert Fairtrade-certified extra virgin cold pressed coconut oil, fresh coconut water, coconut porridge and organic coconut butter. The products are traded under the product brand name “Ropheka” for the health & beauty sector, as well as the food and hospitality sectors. The company supplies domestic, regional and international markets.

Melach Coconut Processing Farm sources coconut from local farmers (mostly women, many in a vulnerable situation) providing a variety of services to them. It also raises health awareness in local schools of the farming community, and supports orphanages and widows.

Melach Coconut Processing Farm is a member of COLEACP and benefitted from specific support adapted to its needs and participated to collective trainings organised by COLEACP.



## Moussa Silvain Diakité, Founder & CEO, SCS International SARL, Mali

Service Commercial Silvain International SARL (SCS International) is a company packing and exporting fresh mangoes mainly to Europe and partly to African countries (Gabon, Morocco, etc.). The company is internationally recognised for its exported fruit, which fully meets the requirements and quality standards.

The company maintains long-lasting and trusting relationships with its partners along the value chain: it supports its producers, trains its staff, has long-term contracts with its suppliers, regularly exchanges with its clients, as well as technical and financial partners, and actively participates in Mali's mango interprofessional association.

As longtime member of COLEACP, SCS International benefitted from specific support adapted to its needs and participated to collective trainings organised by COLEACP.



## Innovations Session n°4: Sustainable food systems: the key role of SMEs and businesses



Nnaemeka Ikegwuonu, Founder & Executive Director, ColdHubs Limited, Nigeria

ColdHubs Limited is a company providing breakthrough innovation to the local community and smallholder farmers. ColdHubs are solar-powered walk-in cold storage rooms for 24/7 cold storage of perishable foods, extending the shelf life of fruit and vegetables from two to 21 days. Users from the local community and smallholder farmers can store food in the cold room by paying a daily flat fee. The company is leading the market for innovative and affordable cold-storage solutions in Nigeria and plans to deploy ColdHubs all across Africa, starting with South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Benin and Kenya.

## **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.

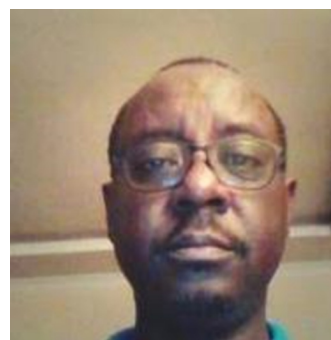
Lovin is the only woman owning a fish processing plant in Uganda and is dedicated to helping local entrepreneurs build and grow successful fish businesses, many of them being women.



**Pierre Damien Mbatezimana, Founder & Managing Director, SHEKINA Enterprise, Rwanda**

SHEKINA Enterprise is a food processing company which produces dried cassava leaves with a shelf life of two years and instant mixtures used to cook cassava leaves with fish or beef flavour. It also produces flour from cassava and other crops, such as maize, millet, peanut, roasted soybeans, etc. Most of the products are exported internationally (USA, Canada, Belgium, Sweden and the UK), the rest being sold on the domestic and regional (Uganda, Congo, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania) markets.

The company developed and uses an innovative drying technology to secure the nutritive value of cassava leaves while avoiding their wastage due to their high perishability (as leaves have a high water content). This value-addition eases the commercialisation and transport of the products.



**Gaëtan Etancelin, President, SYMABIO, Madagascar**

The Malagasy Union for Organic Agriculture (Syndicat Malgache de l'Agriculture Biologique, SYMABIO) reunites all the stakeholders of the organic farming sector in Madagascar, among others, Chocolaterie Robert which processes Madagascar's cocoa into bars, confectionery and pastries, as well as SAHANALA Madagascar SA which brings together four producers' federations, including the vanilla federation.

SYMABIO defends the interests of all the actors involved in the production of organic farming products and is the privileged interlocutor for public authorities and professionals. It also takes part in the negotiations of the organic national legal framework.

## Innovations Session n°5: Food and Nutrition Security: the contribution of SMEs and businesses



### David Foli Ayivor, Founder & CEO, Agromyx, Ghana

Agromyx is an agrifood processing company created in 2017 which addresses the problem of food waste by buying and processing smallholder farmers' excess produce into vitamin- and mineral-rich instant cereals and fruit powders. Its brand Nourimeal™ has 10 varieties of instant cereals and fruit powders rich in vitamin A, iron and magnesium, vitamin- and minerals which are rare to find in existing dietary ecosystem but vital.

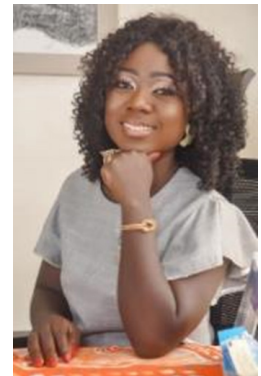
Agromyx currently works directly with 165 smallholder farmers, 112 of whom are women. The company is encouraging local farmers to transition toward organic agricultural practices and agroforestry; as well as supports building capacity and market resilience.



## 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 five 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.

# Zima





## Courage Hodey, Financial Manager, MAPHLIX TRUST GHANA LTD, Ghana



Maphlix Trust Ghana produces and sells vegetables (22 crops), grain, roots and tubers. The company mainly exports yam, orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP), fresh vegetables and fruits.

Maphlix Trust Ghana also adds value to their root and tuber crops such as cassava and OFSP through processing to ensure the provision of food and nutrition security. As cassava roots processed into gari are a poor source of vitamin A, the company supplements its gari with OFSP which is rich in beta-carotene. OFSP is also used to prepare bread (at 30% substitution) to provide high beta-carotene bread compared to 100% wheat flour bread which has a very low Vitamin A content.

Maphlix Trust Ghana is a member of COLEACP and benefitted from specific support adapted to its needs and participated to collective trainings organised by COLEACP.

## Innovations Session n°6: Promoting sustainable agriculture and agroecological practices: the key role of MSMEs and farmers organisations



### Gustav Dessogom Bakounda, Founder & Director, Label d'Or and Jus Délices, Togo

Label d'Or is a pioneer Togolese company supporting agricultural sectors (soy, fonio, pineapple, turmeric etc) along the entire value chain (production, processing, export). Its produce are largely exported to organic companies and businesses in the EU and in the United States.

The company has its own organic production but also works with 10,000 producers in 14 organic productions. It supports (smallholder) farmers in organising themselves into cooperatives and unions and provides them with training and certification in organic farming.

Label d'Or is a member of COLEACP and benefitted from specific support adapted to its needs and participated to collective trainings organised by COLEACP.

Jus Délice is Togo's first modern organic juice processing plant for export, as well as the country's largest organic pineapple juice processing plant.

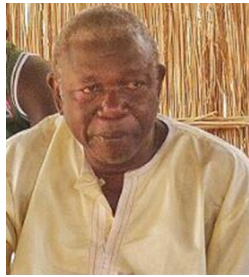


## Olayemi Aganga, Co-founder, Maungo Craft, Bostwana

Maungo Craft is a solution-oriented company which upcycles indigenous fruits (orphan crops), that would otherwise be wasted, to produce jams, sauces and syrups. Maungo Craft creates new value chains between farmers, cosmetic processors and communities, to develop a climate change adaptive circular economy. The company works with local farmers to supply vegetable and with natural cosmetic oil processors to process morula, thus promoting the growth of two industries at the same time.

The company started in 2017 and already won 13 local, regional and international.





## Gora Ndiaye, Founder & Director, Ferme-École Agroécologique de Kaydara, Senegal

The Kaydara agro-ecological farm school is located in the village of Keur Samba Dia, Senegal, and offers alternatives to the rural exodus, supporting local employment and providing young farmers with skills to develop a sustainable agriculture applying agroecological practices. Since 2007, the association has trained dozens of young farmers at the farm school allowing them to make a living from agriculture in their villages by producing sustainably and supplying local markets. Located in a desertic area, Kaydara Farm-School plays a significant role in the protection of the environment, in particular through the use of renewable energy sources, the manufacture of compost, the protection of coastal areas and the establishment of ecological farming practices.



## Noël N'Guessan, Co-founder & Chief Technical Officer, LONO, Côte d'Ivoire

LONO is an engineering company based in Côte d'Ivoire which makes carbon and nutrient recycling accessible to farmers. Its two products under the brand name Kubeko can use by smallholder farmers to directly recycle the nutrients and organic matter back into their soils.

The company also offers advice and executes studies in the field of renewable energy, biomass, biofuels, agriculture and development impact. It works directly with cooperatives and larger value chain organisations to integrate their sustainability strategies such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) for palm oil and ECOCERT for cacao and fruit production.

The company is also developing larger industrial composting projects that create local bioeconomy for organic waste and working in West Africa.

