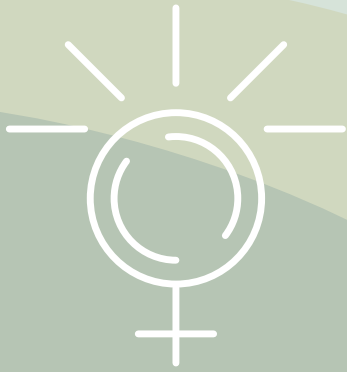




Women farmers as agents of change

Organise, speak up, connect, lead, drive change



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE
WOMAN FARMER
2026

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Content

	Preface	05
	Organise, speak up, connect, lead, drive change	07
1	Organise and build networks of change	08
2	Speak up – how women find a common voice	11
3	Connect – how women build networks across continents	12
4	Lead – How women take up leadership roles	14
5	Drive change – women as enablers of transformation	18
	Epilogue	19





Preface

The United Nations' International Year of the Woman Farmer is a reminder that women in agricultural and food systems are powerful drivers of transformational change. As knowledge bearers and decision-makers, they make vital contributions to resilient food systems. However, current global crises – from disrupted value chains and conflicts to climate change – are putting pressure on agricultural and food systems and the people working within them. Supporting farmers' organisations, especially those led by or representing women, therefore remains crucial for global food security and resilient livelihoods.

For many years, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH's Global Programme Strengthening Farmers' Organisations for Sustainable Agricultural Development has been doing exactly this. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the project strengthens the role of farmers' organisations in agricultural and food systems and policy processes, while enhancing their capacities as civil society organisations. It does so through organisational development as well as training in leadership and good agricultural practices. This has helped farmers and rural communities to safeguard food security and to foster participatory, democratic environments.

Through training in personal and professional development, the project has strengthened women's roles within their organisations and communities. Women have been enabled to realise innovative ideas, establish local businesses and increase their incomes. As a result, several have become more influential – locally, and in some cases nationally and beyond – serving as role models for other women and young people.

The Global Programme – with the best practices and stories showcased in this brochure – is just one example of how GIZ supports women farmers and rural communities. GIZ also supports women in getting access to finance, document their land rights and to advocate for inclusive policies. This work draws on a wide range of evidence and tools, bundling knowledge on and mechanisms against the root causes of social inequality. With specialised expertise and knowledge exchange across projects, GIZ contributes to sustainable food production and resilient value chains in partner countries. Building on this experience, GIZ advances BMZ's strategic goals to end hunger, poverty and inequality, and to strengthen democracy.

Nina Theis

Head of Section G510, Agricultural Systems and Agriculture Supplychains





Organise, speak up, connect, lead, drive change

2026 is dedicated to the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF) – a year that highlights the indispensable role of women in agriculture and their achievements. The Global Programme Strengthening Farmers' organisations for Sustainable Rural Development works together with its partners Andreas Hermes Akademie (AHA), BBV-Landfrauen Internationale Zusammenarbeit (BBV-LIZ), dlv-LandFrauen gGmbH and AgriCord.

Its aim is to strengthen women's representation in the leadership of farmers' organisations and to offer targeted programmes to build skills and support entrepreneurship. By fostering an entrepreneurial spirit, female participants are empowered to forge their own paths and drive change. The examples in this brochure demonstrate how well-targeted organisational development, self-efficacy training and the establishment of dynamic networks empower women to be change-makers and role models who are already shaping the future of agriculture today.

Background

Since 2015, the Global Programme Strengthening Farmers' organisations for Sustainable Rural Development of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH has been supporting the establishment of effective and independent farmers' organisations. On behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the project supports farmers' organisations in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Togo, Zambia, Madagascar and India. In the framework of the programme, the partner organisations implement activities independently. They provide organisational development, professionalisation and capacity building in the representation of farmers' interests on global agendas. The focus is on member-centred approaches and capacity building at the local level.

With the support of the programme, around 800 trainers have provided training to approximately 40,000 people in entrepreneurship, leadership and advocacy. The programme has supported around 600 organisations with organisational development. The programme runs until August 2028.



1 Organise and build networks of change

Women's organisations at national level remain the exception in Africa. Nkonka Women in Agribusiness (NWAB) from Zambia is a striking example of a successful women-led network. Women in rural and smallholder farming regions often find themselves working in less profitable value chains or relinquishing their income due to traditional gender roles. NWAB has recognised that a strong network significantly facilitates access to knowledge, new techniques, markets and capital goods.

Founded five years ago, NWAB has combined political advocacy with a sustainable business model from the outset. Its annual 'Women in Agriculture' conference brings together decision-makers from politics and business with female agribusiness entrepreneurs from across the country. In doing so, the organisation

provides important impetus for change both in business practice and in the political landscape. NWAB not only appeals to established female entrepreneurs but also offers a platform to smaller producers with an innovative spirit – a fact impressively underscored by the organisation's enormous membership growth from 41,000 to 56,000 women in recent years.

However, entrepreneurship and working together within organisational structures present different challenges: whilst clear cost-benefit considerations often take precedence within one's own business, association structures require a willingness to cooperate, shared goals and trust. To navigate this tension and fully harness the potential of its membership growth, NWAB has engaged Andreas Hermes Akademie (AHA) to provide targeted support with organisational development. AHA assisted the organisation with registering, setting up a structure and a management level. It furthermore developed the members' capacities in formulating and lobbying for their own goals. Together, sustainable structures are being established and processes and management tools developed that consolidate NWAB's position as a strong voice for women not only within the association but also in Zambian society.

“As a farmers' organisation, we want to influence policy. No policy should be pursued if it fails to include women and youth. For the future of the planet depends on it.”

Prof. Lawani Arouna

Vice-President of the farmers' organisation ROPPA



“Where women drive change, everybody wins”, Director International at AHA, Nicole Bolomey, states. “In our work, we try to develop the tools and methods to give special support to women. Be it in farmer organisations or as entrepreneurs in farming and agribusiness. Real impact needs structural change. Therefore, supporting organisations like NWAB can generate substantial impact.”

The organisational development process is demonstrating a genuine cascade effect: many of the newly developed tools and organisational cultures are being adopted and applied at local association levels. This is fostering a shared understanding of leadership, empowerment and entrepreneurial participation across Zambia.

“When women farm, families eat better and communities become stronger.”

Doreen Mataphen Ng'andu is a farmer in Chilanga District, west of Lusaka, Zambia, who left her teaching career to pursue what had long been her passion – farming. What began as a hobby gradually evolved into Matanga Farm, where she cultivates maize, sunflower, green beans, sweet potatoes and indigenous vegetables such as amaranthus, blackjack and pumpkin leaves. She also keeps free-range poultry, goats and cattle, combining crop production with livestock to strengthen food security and diversify income.

Before fully committing to agriculture in 2005, Doreen explored several business ventures, including catering, cake making and clothing sales. Farming, however, gave her a deeper sense of purpose. Through her brand, Taphie's Food, she transforms fresh produce into market-ready products, including cooking oil, dried vegetables, tomato paste and sugar-free fruit juices. By adding value at farm level, she is helping shift women farmers from selling raw produce to supplying finished goods.

As a woman farmer, Doreen has experienced both the opportunities and challenges within agricultural and food systems. Open markets are often dominated by powerful middlemen, making it difficult for women to negotiate fair prices. Access to land, financing and mechanisation remains limited, and many women balance farming with heavy household responsibilities. “Women work hard in the fields, but without equipment, markets or finance, it is difficult to grow beyond survival,” she says.

Despite these challenges, Doreen believes women are essential to building resilient food systems. “When women farm, families eat better and communities become stronger,” she explains, noting how women share knowledge and encourage each other to adopt improved practices.

She sees encouraging changes emerging as financial institutions introduce women-focused products and more programmes support female farmers. With stronger policies and better information access, she believes gender gaps can gradually close. She envisions a future where women participate confidently across the agricultural value chain – from production to processing and marketing.

“I see women stepping confidently into agribusiness, not just as producers, but as leaders,” she says.

Doreen Mataphen Ng'andu

Nkonka Women in Agribusiness (NWAB)



The Global Programme Strengthening Farmers' Organisations for Sustainable Agricultural Development also supported Andreas Hermes Akademie (AHA) in the organisational development of the Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers' Organisations (INOFO).

INOFO is a global nexus that connects organic farmer communities to international platforms to ensure that the needs and rights of local organic farmers are both acknowledged and safeguarded while achieving food security for both the present and future generations. AHA supported INOFO in drawing up a shared vision and mission, developing an organisational chart to clarify roles and processes. It supported INOFO in implementing its new strategic plan (2021–2027) through organisational development and networking, with the aim of uniting organic farmers and making their voices heard in international debates.

“Whatever they do – adding value, cooking, post-harvest work – they’re just doing their duty here.”

Since 2017, Shamika Mone has served as Chairperson of INOFO. She is a researcher originally from Maharashtra and turned to organic agriculture in Kerala, India. Shamika Mone knows from her own experience that women often face an uphill struggle in agriculture. She runs an organic farm with her husband in the Indian state of Kerala. She is also chair of the Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers' Organisations (INOFO). “Women aren't recognised as farmers. Whatever they do – adding value, cooking, post-harvest work – they're just doing their duty here.” It's different with her husband; working with him is balanced and on an equal footing. “Even though I often take on tasks that require patience. That's not really his thing,” she says with a wink. “I come from a modern family with a modern husband who understands me. But society doesn't get it. So even though I'm the president of INOFO, a member of the global IFOAM, travel internationally and speak to people as an organic farmer – when I return to my farm, I'm my husband's wife and not an organic farmer in my own right. That's the reality, and it persists. It will take a long time to change this dynamic, but every single step counts.”

Shamika Mone

Chairperson of INOFO, India





2 Speak up – how women find a common voice

Since 2023, the Global Programme supported a training hosted by the BBV-Landfrauen Internationale Zusammenarbeit (BBV-LIZ), a non-profit organisation of the Bavarian Farmers' Association. BBV-LIZ is inviting mainly from Kenya and other African countries, to international leadership workshops in Germany. Participants spent two weeks exchanging ideas about their work, role-playing, training their presentation skills and visiting farms run by Bavarian women farmers in the surrounding area.

"Networking makes us a unit and helps us to have a voice as women," summarises a participant from Kenya. This is followed by praise from the group for her presentation: at first, she sat quietly in the group – within a few days she had blossomed and was now speaking freely in front of the others. "The training in Herrsching is a 'safe space'," explains project lead Angelika Eberl. Here, the women can speak freely and there is a basis of trust. They receive feedback from the other participants and can grow from this. "The women can strengthen each other morally," says Eberl.

One of them is Phassy Mmbone: "The training has a very good effect," says Mmbone. Important topics such as conflict resolution are addressed, as is the structuring of an organisation. "The support is not only on an organisational level, but also on a personal level. It's an individual test for each participant and everyone will come out with their own concepts." The 65-year-old farmer from Kakamega County in Western Kenya owns a one-hectare farm. There, she keeps dairy cows, goats, rabbits, chickens, fish and breeds worms and flies as animal feed. She also has honeybees and grows vegetables such as carrots. "I'm a passionate farmer," she says. In 2023, she was honoured as the best farmer of the year in her home country.

After her divorce, Mmbone raised five children on her own, two of them adopted, who live and work all over the world as lawyers, engineers and university lecturers. She is very proud of them. "I believe in supporting the family." Sometimes, she is also family for others, for example when she creates prospects for people with AIDS and HIV, some of whom are rejected by their families, with an organisation she

founded herself. Mmbone is also the coordinator of the Women Farmers Association of Kenya (WoFaAK) in Western Kenya, a Kenyan association with around 5,000 women farmers, in which they can exchange market information and farming methods and support each other. Among other things, Mmbone runs a group for people with disabilities there.

The central element of the BBV-LIZ project is the promotion of the Kenyan association WoFaAK, from which several representatives alongside Phassy Mmbone take part in the training in Herrsching. BBV-LIZ has played a key role in supporting the development of this association in Kenya since 2017, organising and funding training for members and elected volunteer representatives. BBV-LIZ trained them in how to represent their interests, increase their income and secure and improve nutrition for themselves and their families. Together with WoFaAK, BBV-LIZ also made an important contribution to local rural development. WoFaAK was able to expand its organisation in 12 counties in Western and Central Kenya as well as at national level. "We have succeeded in making the women see the added value of their association and they realise that their voice is becoming stronger and stronger – at all levels, from the local member group to the national executive committee," says project manager Angelika Eberl.

Phassy Mmbone

Women Farmers Association of Kenya (WoFaAK)





3 Connect – how women build networks across continents

As part of the Global Programme, dlv-LandFrauen gGmbH has been working in Ghana and Uganda to provide targeted support for women in rural areas. Since 2017, dlv-LandFrauen gGmbH has been the international division of the German Rural Women's Association (dlv). For over 75 years, the dlv has been committed to the economic, social and political empowerment of women in rural areas.

Guided by the principle 'By rural women – for rural women', dlv-LandFrauen gGmbH built a bridge between local realities and global solutions. Through partnerships and networks, women have strengthened their voices and taken an active role in shaping change within their communities.

dlv-LandFrauen gGmbH supported Ugandan rural women in taking on leadership roles and expanding their networks. The participants were able to take part in exchanges and training courses in Germany. There, they learnt how to further develop their organisations, represent their interests and take on leadership roles. During visits to farms, the rural women also gained insights into animal husbandry and farming methods in Germany. They subsequently put the knowledge they had acquired into practice in Uganda. At the same time, they shared their experiences within their respective women's organisations, empowering women farmers and communities.

At the age of 32, farmer Sarah Awor was known as a youth leader in the Lira district in Northern Uganda. However, her leadership role came with significant challenges. Many dismissed her as 'just a young girl'. She lacked the financial resources, meeting spaces and reliable transport to reach the communities. Her family doubted her leadership, and it was difficult to balance her domestic duties with mobilising the communities.

"It was a challenge getting my family, especially my husband, to accept my role as a leader. There were many things I couldn't do because my family doubted the whole thing."

At that time, Sarah farmed just one hectare of land. This made it hard for people to believe that one could be successful in agriculture. The youth groups



Sarah Awor

Farmer from Northern Uganda

she was trying to mobilise were discouraged by a lack of money and land, volatile markets and the perception that agriculture was not a serious livelihood.

The international programme run by dlv-LandFrauen gGmbH gave Sarah the boost she needed. Being selected for the programme strengthened her self-confidence and personal development. During the study trip to Germany, her perspective broadened and she developed a new confidence to put her ideas into practice.

When she returned home, Sarah launched her transfer initiative to encourage women and young people to engage in the agricultural sector and environmental protection. She organised four youth groups, registering over 600 members and trained them in the use of certified seeds as well as improved storage and processing techniques. She also established tree nurseries that both generate income and contribute to reforestation in the region. Sarah expanded her land from one to six hectares and increased her income and savings. Her leadership skills are now recognised beyond the region as she works with district authorities, national and international partners."

"If you have the chance to do something, give it your all – and if it works, help others," says Sarah. Her journey proves that young women, when trusted and supported, can bring about significant change.



Rehemah Nasejje

Ugandan Young Farmers Association (UNYFA)

“We need to involve men in the process to make long-term progress for women.”

During the exchange, Ugandan farmers are trained in Germany on organisational development, advocacy, and leadership, including field trips to agricultural enterprises.

“It’s fascinating to see how women in Germany are involved in agriculture and animal husbandry,” remarks participant Rehemah Nasejje. The 33-year-old farmer from Mukono in central Uganda raises chickens, the only form of livestock farming women in Uganda are typically involved in, she said. As the coordinator of the Ugandan Young Farmers Association (UNYFA) partnership with dlw under the project “Enhancing the Capacity of Young Women in Agri-Business (ECAWA),” Nasejje emphasises the challenges women face. Women work hard in agriculture but have little decision-making power. When they receive support, they often have to justify it at home and deal with conflicts. “We need to involve men in the process to make long-term progress for women,” she stresses.

Trainer Patrick Mpedzisi from Zimbabwe accompanies the tour in Germany. He is used to strong women in agriculture, as he was raised by his grandmother, who practised organic farming. “I want to encourage the women in this training to be kind to themselves and to help each other. It’s important to build their self-confidence and determination so that they can grow both individually and collectively,” Mpedzisi emphasises. “The women in this programme not only enhance their knowledge but also their belief and are given an example to follow.”

Patrick Mpedzisi

Trainer, Zimbabwe





4 Lead – How women take up leadership roles

Furthermore, dlv-LandFrauen gGmbH organised the so-called Women Leadership Programme in collaboration with the Andreas Hermes Akademie (AHA) and the PanAfrican Farmers' Organisation (PAFO). Women farmers from partner countries in Africa were able to develop their leadership skills through courses in Germany and African countries and build an international network. They were supported by a virtual mentoring programme. Many of the former participants now hold leadership positions within their farmer organisations and remain connected to one another to this day. This includes German rural women from the dlv as well as African leaders from 26 countries.

"I think that this programme, which has been developed specifically for women, will help to set in motion the ideas of the German government concerning feminist development cooperation," says Ursula Braunewell, regional chairwoman of the LandFrauenverband Rheinhessen e. V. and first vice president of the dlv. "It will also make a contribution because it

is a multiplier project for women. I don't go home to my quiet little room, but share what we have experienced, what we have learned, how the women are doing. It is also important to raise awareness and help women in Africa to act as multipliers and create a network that is sustainable."

The most important thing is cohesion in a farmers' organisation, especially among women. Kavira Kapitula Esperance, participant of the Woman Leadership Programme and a farmer from North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, knows this. She is President of the Ligue des Organisations des Femmes Paysannes du Congo (LOFEPACO), part of the umbrella organisation of the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF). As a farmer, she grows rice and breeds rabbits. The fragile security situation in the region particularly affects women farmers around the towns of Beni and Lubero, she says. "The fields are far away from the villages. If the women want to go there, they have to be on guard to see if anyone is following them. We can't move freely here. The women live like refugees in their own country. They are raped and murdered, while suffering from hunger, even though they are farmers. That's what the women are experiencing at the moment. We are suffering." With her farmers' organisation, she visits the women, especially mothers, and listens to them. "We are there to give them strength." They can also share their problems at the annual meeting. "We call it the consulting room because women can get their problems off their chest there."

“Being a leader means leading an organisation for the common good.”

Kavira Kapitula Esperance

President of the Ligue des Organisations des Femmes Paysannes du Congo (LOFEPACO)



The Women Leadership Programme training helps her to understand different leadership styles better. "The women in my organisation are farmers, role models, and charismatic leaders at the same time. Nevertheless, we will take on board the experiences of the other women who have welcomed us here in Germany so that our leadership style becomes even better. Being a leader means leading an organisation for the common good."

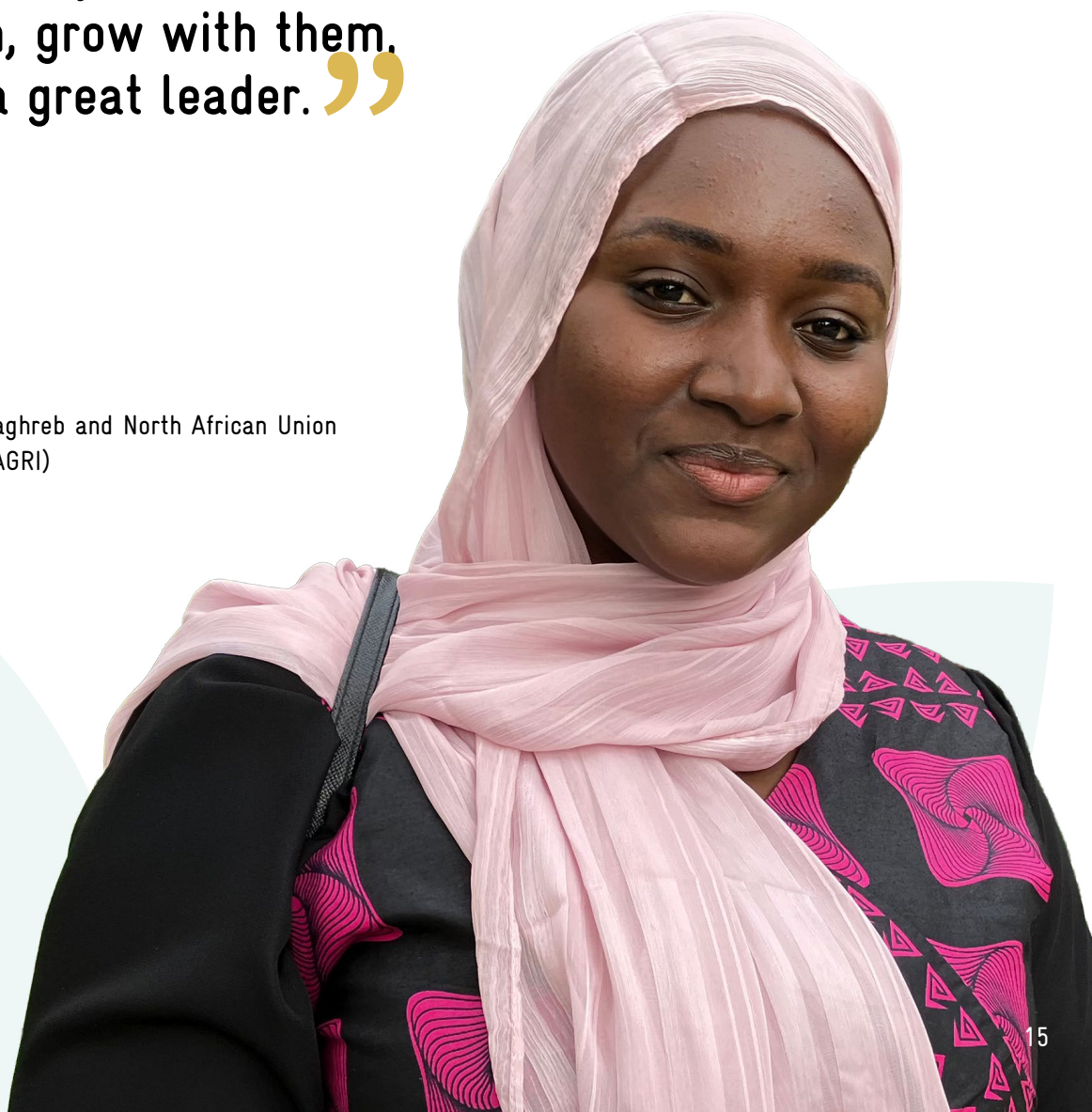
Aichatou Sakho from Mauritania was among the youngest participants of the programme. The 26-year-old grows rice and vegetables with her father and is a member of the Maghreb and North African Union of Farmers (UMNAGRI). "Just the fact that I left Mauritania to come to Germany to learn more about leadership is an asset," says Aichatou. She was nominated for the programme by her father, with whom she works together on their farm. "He encourages me every day. I am very grateful to him." She recently started her own business – selling spice blends. She also wants to get into milk production with her father and younger

brothers. It's worth taking a broad stance because climate change is also making life difficult for farmers in Mauritania. "The climate is dry. You plant your garden and when you come back, the sun has dried everything out. Then there is too much rain again and flooding in the fields, which destroys the rice. These are effects that many farmers there are struggling with." Sometimes they have to give up their activities. Nevertheless, she is optimistic about the future: "My wish is to become a leader. That's why I'm doing this course. It will certainly take a while but maybe one day I will train other women, grow with them, and be a great leader."

“My wish is to become a leader. It will certainly take a while but maybe one day I will train other women, grow with them, and be a great leader.”

Aichatou Sakho

Member of the Maghreb and North African Union of Farmers (UMNAGRI)





The Young Leaders Incubation Programme (YLIP) is aimed at all young people, but has a particularly strong and lasting impact on women. The programme, set up in collaboration with Andreas Hermes Akademie (AHA) and the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) specifically empowers future female decision-makers and entrepreneurs in Western and Southern Africa. Through intensive training, workshops, practical experience and networking, young women farmers discover their own potential and practise leadership, communication and entrepreneurial skills. One success story is that of Phumzile Thwala from Eswatini, who took part in the programme in 2023. She is driving forward mechanisation for smallholder farmers in Eswatini.

Phumzile Happy Thwala is a young woman farmer from Eswatini. Her journey in the agricultural and food system began in 2020 as a vegetable farmer, where long days in the field taught her discipline, patience, and deep respect for food. Over time, she noticed something that stayed with her: many

Phumzile Thwala

Young farmer from Eswatini

women worked the land while carrying babies on their backs, balancing farming, care work, and household responsibilities all at once. That reality inspired her next step.

Today, Phumzile partners with strategic collaborators to manufacture multifunctional smallholder farmer tools. She designed a wheel hoe to reduce physical strain and make farming more efficient, reliable, durable and easier, especially for women. Her innovation is rooted in lived experience. "I watched women bend over fields for hours with a child tied to their backs. I knew farming tools had to be kinder to women's bodies," she says. An initial production sketch has already been drawn up in collaboration with the South African Association for Family Farms (SAAI). The prototype is done and she has identified a metal company in South Africa that can produce the final product.

When she thinks about women farmers, Phumzile thinks of strength and quiet leadership. To her, being a woman farmer means feeding families, managing scarce resources, and making decisions that affect entire communities. "A woman farmer is not just growing food," she explains. "She is growing resilience, dignity, and hope."

Women play many roles in sustaining agricultural and food systems. They produce food, care for families, preserve indigenous knowledge, and often lead informally within their communities. At the same time, they face challenges such as limited market access, tools, and decision-making spaces. "When women sit at the table, goals are clearer, leadership is practical, and no one is left behind," she says.

“A woman farmer is not just growing food. She is growing resilience, dignity, and hope.”

Another impressive journey is that of Kakunandunda Kaikajora Oshoveli Katuuo, a young Agripreneur from Namibia. Her journey into horticulture began unexpectedly during the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020. Kakunandunda and her family were placed in Aminuis, a small community in one of Namibia's most drought-prone regions. Borders closed, stores emptied, and the stark reality of food insecurity became impossible to ignore. "I remember walking through the village and realising that if we didn't act, families here would go hungry," she recalls.

That moment planted the seed for Orevia Green Farms. What started as a response to crisis, quickly grew into a thriving enterprise supplying fresh produce to schools, retailers, and regional institutions. At Orevia Green Farms, Kakunandunda demonstrates how women sustain agricultural and food systems through leadership, care, and domestic responsibility. She also shaped her leadership skills with the Young Leaders Incubation Programme (YLIP), facilitated by AHA in cooperation with the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU). Her leadership extends beyond the farm gates: she engages with policy discussions and youth farming initiatives, ensuring that women and young people have a voice in shaping Namibia's agricultural future.

Kakunandunda Kaikajora Oshoveli Katuuo

Agripreneur from Namibia





5 Drive change – women as enablers of transformation

Partner organisation AgriCord provides tools and training for farmers to adapt to climate change and build resilience. As part of the Global Programme, AgriCord and its members Afdi and Fert have been working in Madagascar to provide targeted support to youth and women farmers from Réseau SOA and FIFATA. AgriCord raises awareness and supports farmers in adopting good agricultural practices such as crop rotation, promoting agroecological approaches, and managing demonstration plots on model farms. It also encourages young farmers to pursue agriculture by supporting them in developing their agricultural projects through mentorship programmes. AgriCord and its 13 members are rooted in and mandated by farmers' organisations worldwide.

In the Bongolava region of Madagascar, farming is both a livelihood and a daily challenge. More frequent droughts, declining soil fertility, and rising production costs erode the capacity of smallholders to sustain their yields and family incomes. For many women farmers, these challenges are compounded by limited access to resources and decision-making spaces.

Marie Harison Vololonirina

Vice-President of the Farmers Organisation Nambinintsoa in Madagascar



At 27 years old, Marie Harison Vololonirina is one of the new generation of women farmers determined to overcome these constraints. Living with her family of five, she manages a four-hectare farm. She grows rice, maize and cassava, while also raising pigs and poultry. Like many in her community, she has to adapt constantly to unpredictable weather conditions and pest outbreaks threatening her harvests.

Over the past few years, Marie has improved her farming practices by participating in training and exchanges with other farmers. She has progressively adopted agroecological practices such as organic fertilisation, improved soil management and biological pest control methods. The changes have reduced her production costs and maintained the productivity of her farm despite climate-related challenges.

Marie's transformation goes beyond her field. Thanks to the experience gained and self-confidence, she became more active in her local farmers' organisation (FO). Today, she serves as the vice-president of the FO Nambinintsoa, organising activities, supporting fellow farmers and facilitating discussions within the FO. Her leadership role is particularly significant in a context where women are often underrepresented in leadership positions. By stepping into this role, Marie not only strengthens her own voice but also encourages other women and young farmers to participate actively in collective structures.

At the community level, these changes are gradually contributing to stronger collaboration among farmers. Knowledge is shared more widely, and mutual support between members helps households cope during difficult periods. Leadership by women such as Marie opens new opportunities also for younger farmers. They bring in fresh ideas into farming and reinforce their motivation to engage in collective endeavours within their FOs.

Marie's story reflects a broader shift taking place in rural Madagascar. Women are not only adapting to agricultural challenges but becoming key actors in driving changes towards more resilient and sustainable farming systems.



Epilogue

Women farmers organise, raise their voices, connect, lead, and drive change. This brochure, drawing on more than a decade of collaboration between GIZ and its partners, demonstrates the transformative impact of investing in women's leadership and empowerment. Together with its partners, the Global Programme Strengthening Farmers' organisations for Sustainable Rural Development has supported many powerful women in diverse and meaningful ways: Strengthening their organisations, supporting them to articulate their priorities and advocate for their interests, fostering connections of female farmers across countries and continents, and enhancing their leadership skills to unlock and scale their innovative potential. These efforts have strongly contributed to creating more inclusive, equitable, and resilient agricultural and food systems, and thereby sustaining the future of rural communities. The individual stories shared in this brochure illustrate that meaningful change often begins with small steps. Yet, these steps can have far-reaching effects – not only for individual women farmers, but also for their families, organisations, and communities.

We are proud of the achievements highlighted here. None of this would have been possible without the dedicated, passionate, excellent work and expertise of our valued partner organisations. We extend our sincere gratitude to Andreas Hermes Akademie (AHA), BBV-Landfrauen Internationale Zusammenarbeit (BBV-LIZ), dlv-LandFrauen gGmbH and AgriCord. Thanks to your expertise, networks, creativity and engagement, we have been able to unlock women's potential in agriculture in numerous partner countries. Thank you for all your contributions and the continued trust-based collaboration throughout this ongoing journey.

Sarah Lena Jensen





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