

South-South Series: Empowering and Growing Women-led Business



UN Women-COLEAD South-South Series: Empowering and Growing Women-led Business

Session n°4: Leveraging Technology and Digital Transformation

Wednesday 3 September 2025 - 14:00-16:00 UTC

BIODATA OF PANELISTS

Sheba Augustine – Founder, OMI Natural Skincare, Granada

Sheba Augustine is the founder of **OMI**, an all-natural skincare brand established in 2018 on the Caribbean Island of Grenada. Inspired by her experience as a young mother searching for pure and safe skincare for her newborn, she began with a simple two-ingredient whipped body butter made from local cocoa butter and coconut oil, pure enough to eat. Since then, OMI has expanded into a full line of everyday skincare products, including body scrubs, lightweight facial oils, clay masks, and lip care. The brand remains committed to formulating simple, effective skincare made with slow-processed, natural ingredients. Sustainability is central to OMI's values, with products packaged in reusable glass and tin containers, alongside a refill service for customers. As a **solopreneur**, Sheba leads every aspect of her business, from product formulation and design to marketing, sales, and delivery, fueled by her passion for creating authentic and sustainable skincare solutions for her community and beyond.

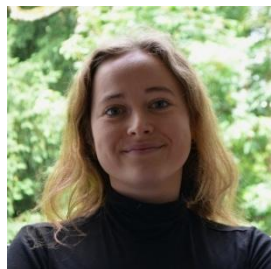


Nyasha Denhere – Co-founder, Bono Salus Enterprises Pvt Ltd, Zimbabwe

Nyasha Denhere is the Co-Founder of Bono Salus Enterprises Pvt Ltd, with more than five years of hands-on experience in urban farming, particularly microgreens and smoothie production. Inspired by early exposure to farming through her parents, she later earned a Bachelor's degree in Economics and a Diploma in Transport and Logistics to strengthen her business and operational skills. Nyasha is an advocate for sustainable agriculture and plant-based diets and is passionate about changing the African food systems through innovation. Alongside her agricultural pursuits, she is also an experienced teacher of Economics and Entrepreneurial Development, with over a decade of classroom experience, combining academic knowledge and practical business expertise to drive innovation in agribusiness.

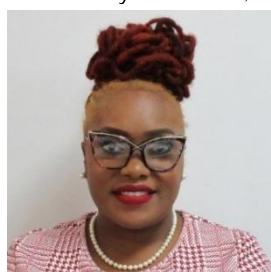


Nina Desanlis-Perrin – Project Officer, COLEAD



Nina Desanlis-Perrin is a Project Officer in the Networks and Alliance Department at COLEAD, where she develops and coordinates global partnerships to support entrepreneurship development and sustainability in the agrifood sector across the Global South countries. She co-organises agrifood webinars aimed at showcasing innovations of farmer-led businesses and SMEs with key international partners such as UN Women. Nina holds an MSc in Environmental Science for Sustainability from King's College London, and a BSc in Public Administration from Erasmus University Rotterdam. She is an advocate for sustainable development, international cooperation, and climate justice, working to promote resilient and inclusive solutions for communities and food systems worldwide.

Kemoy Shureen Edwards – CEO, Grenada National Training Agency



Dr. Kemoy Edwards, an accomplished higher education professional currently serves as Chief Executive Officer of the Grenada National Training Agency (GNTA). With extensive experience in teaching, quality assurance, and educational leadership, she previously taught at the Grenada Boys' Secondary School and T.A. Marryshow Community College, where she also held positions including Quality Assurance Officer, Co-Director of the Confucius Classroom, and Chair of the Department of Arts, Humanities and General Studies. She has lectured at The University of the West Indies Global Campus and served as a Chief Examiner with the Caribbean Examinations Council. At the GNTA, she has led initiatives such as enterprise-based training for the Beauty and Wellness Industry, digital literacy programs, and youth-focused agricultural projects, while streamlining internal operations. She holds a BA in French and Spanish (UWI), an MA in Applied Linguistics (University of Massachusetts, Boston), a Doctorate in Higher Education Management (University of Bath, UK), and certificates in Adult Education and Quality Systems Management.

Gayle Gollop – Programme Specialist, Private Sector, UN Women MCO Caribbean



Gayle Gollop is an attorney-at-law with over 15 years of experience in the development sector. Before returning to Barbados to serve as Special Advisor on Trade and Legal Affairs at the Caribbean Export Development Agency, she worked with the Pan American Health Organization and the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, DC. Throughout her career, she has gained extensive experience in supporting the development and competitiveness of the region's private sector. Passionate about the social and economic development of the Caribbean, she remains dedicated to advancing this mission. Gayle currently serves as the Private Sector Specialist for the UN Women Multi-Country Office – Caribbean, overseeing initiatives across 22 countries and territories in the region.

Jeremy Knops – General Delegate, COLEAD



Jeremy Knops holds a master's degree in business engineering from the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management. 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 was appointed as General Delegate of COLEAD in June 2019.

Josephine Okot – Founder, Victoria Seeds, Uganda



Josephine Okot is the Founder and Managing Director of Victoria Seeds Ltd established for disseminating certified seed to small holder farmers in 2004. She has steered it from a struggling start up to one of Uganda's leading seed houses, evident in the 2018 Access to Seed Index ranking for Eastern and Southern Africa #6. Okot's outstanding work has been recognized through numerous national and international accolades. Okot was the 2007 YARA Prize laureate (Africa Food Prize) awarded in recognition of her work to reverse Africa's declining agricultural productivity and standing as an outstanding example of African entrepreneurs willing to take risks and break new ground. She was the Honoree of the 2009 Oslo Business for Peace Award in recognition of her work in promoting socially responsible and ethical business practice in an outstanding way. She was the African Woman of the Year for her outstanding work in supporting, promoting, mentoring women and demonstrating qualities required to succeed in business at the Africa Awards for Entrepreneurship in 2011. Ms Okot has served on the 3rd Presidential Investor Round Table chairing the Food and Agro-processing technical working group and

on the Boards of Uganda Investment Authority, The African Agriculture Technology Foundation based in Nairobi and Stanbic Bank Uganda Ltd. Ms Okot served on the Board of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture based in Ibadan, Nigeria, the Board of Uganda Development Corporation and was Board Chair of Soroti Fruit Ltd, a subsidiary of Uganda Development Corporation. Presently she serves on the Board of the International Fertilizer Development Center based in Alabama USA.

Gladys Yao – Founder, Piment Mako, Côte d'Ivoire



Gladys Yao, is the founder and manager of the of the Société Ivoirienne de Transformation du Vivrier (SITRAV), operating under the brand Piment Mako. Married and mother of four, she holds a degree in Botany and Phytotherapy from the University of Abobo-Adjamé. After completing her studies, she entered entrepreneurship, first opening a restaurant in Koumassi called La Manne before pivoting to agro-processing. Together with her husband, she began transforming chili peppers into powder at home, a venture that grew into SITRAV, founded in 2016. The company specializes in turning local staples, such as chili, pepper, soumara, okra, and onion, into 100% natural seasoning powders marketed under the brand MAKO. SITRAV products, packaged in small sticks and jars, are sold both in local markets and formal retail channels. Under Yao's leadership, SITRAV has become a recognized ambassador of Ivorian agri-food innovation, winning several awards including the Pierre Castel Prize (2019), MTN Start-up Prize (2020), CGECI Agriculture Prize (2016), and the National Excellence Award (2025). SITRAV contributes to reducing post-harvest losses and promoting local transformation, making it a model for sustainable agri-business in the country.



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