

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



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

Session n°5:
Access to Finance for Women-Led MSMEs
Wednesday 22 October 2025 - 14:00-16:00 UTC

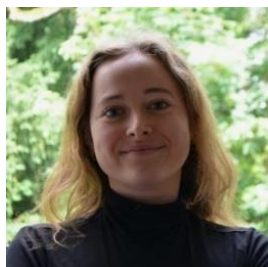
BIODATA OF PANELISTS

Angela Davis – Partnerships Lead, UN Women Multi-Country Office (MCO) Caribbean



Angela Davis is a regionally respected, highly motivated development professional with 20+ years of experience across public health, sexual and reproductive health, international health, and development. She has a strong record of program management for national and donor-funded initiatives within dynamic political, development, and fiscal contexts. Angela brings expert technical and programmatic knowledge of maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS, and works at the intersection of these areas with social, cultural, and behavioral determinants of health, gender, and sexual and gender-based violence. For the past eleven years, she has provided programmatic oversight and strategic direction for a leading international development partner, stewarding a regional development assistance portfolio of ~US\$6 million annually. Her work requires close collaboration with intergovernmental agencies, national governments, civil society, multilateral organizations, and donors. Results-driven and analytically sharp, Angela pairs clear strategic thinking with excellent oral and written communication skills. She is grounded in both the theory and practice of public health, program management, and international development, consistently translating evidence into impactful, equity-focused programming.

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.

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.

Cecilia Lazarte – Inclusive Financial Ecosystem Project Lead, UN Women, Argentina



Cecilia Lazarte is a practitioner of social transformation and a tireless explorer of approaches that help organizations and groups evolve toward impactful change—at both the personal and systemic levels. Her professional path is deeply intertwined with her own growth. Working for social inclusion revealed a core insight that guides her work: people are shaped by the systems they inhabit. That realization challenged her assumptions, broadened her perspective, and equipped her to accompany others through questions, reflection, and co-creation. With more than 20 years of experience in gender inclusion—particularly in the private sector—Cecilia has examined the realities of business, the environment, and the financial system. She identified a prevailing paradigm that often drives dynamics away from sustainability, and she has led initiatives to challenge it: advancing organizational diversity strategies, expanding women's access to capital, and strengthening women's participation in employment and markets. Convinced that meaningful change requires multi-level action and multi-stakeholder collaboration, she has contributed to projects in public policy design and evaluation, business model development, inclusive value chains, and public/private procurement. She has also worked to transform impact-investment strategies and embed gender intelligence into financial product design. This journey led her to found Sacuda, channeling her purpose into building initiatives that advance a sustainable, life-centered financial system. Entrepreneurship opened the door to innovation, including fellowships at the intersection of startups and women's leadership. With a strong commitment to new ways of working—and a clear awareness of the impact our actions generate—Cecilia also serves as a mentor and speaker in diverse forums.

Michelle Mboha – Investment Manager, Inua Capital, Uganda



Michelle Mboha is a business advisory and investment professional in the East African region. She holds a Bachelor's in Financial Economics from Strathmore University, an MBA from Edinburg Business School – Herriot Watt University and is a 2020 Acumen East Africa Fellow. Michelle Mboha has over 9 years' experience in SME Business Advisory, early-stage investment advisory and Strategy Consulting in East, West, and Southern Africa. She is a Senior Investment Manager at Inua Capital, a Ugandan limited liability company dedicated to the management of financing support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uganda. Michelle is an intersectional feminist and speaks often on personal finance, investments, and startups, leveraging her platform and knowledge to raise awareness on difficult societal issues surrounding women and financial freedom.



Edna Odallo – Managing Director, Afriscope Research, Kenya

Edna Odallo is the Managing Director at Afriscope Research Ltd, an Enterprise Support Organisation that equips SMEs with the tools they need to scale sustainably. With 20 years experience in the financial services sector, she is renowned for her corporate accounting and private equity expertise across global jurisdictions. Edna is a specialist in establishing financial and market linkages for small and mid-sized companies. Her exceptional deal origination and strategic planning skills have fuelled the growth of businesses in diverse sectors. Edna holds a CAIA® Charter (Global Alternative Investments Certification), CPA designation, and a Bachelor of Economics Degree. As a visionary leader, she continues to drive positive change and amplify businesses success

María Rojas – Head of Information and Analysis, REDCAMIF, Nicaragua

María Rojas is responsible for information and analysis at REDCAMIF. She has a degree in Public Accounting and Finance, a master's degree in Finance, and more than seven years of experience in the banking sector and 12 years in inclusive finance. She is an evaluator of Customer Protection Principles, certified in Social Auditing, and a facilitator of workshops on financial and social indicators. She currently heads REDCAMIF's Information and Analysis Unit and serves as associate editor of the Microfinance Magazine, the Quarterly Financial Monitoring Report, and various microfinance sector studies. She also manages the data for the Central American and Caribbean Microfinance Portal – MIFIndex.



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