



IFAD 2024 Gender Awards Ceremony and interactive session: Champions of Change: Celebrating transformative pathways to a nourished future

Date and time: 14 February 2024 12.00 noon to 1.30 p.m.

Introduction

Gender inequality is one of the most pervasive threats to inclusive sustainable food systems. Efforts to advance gender equality and social inclusion are embedded in every IFAD-financed programme from the outset and maintained during implementation. IFAD has developed tools and mechanisms to monitor project impact across diverse target groups, with specific attention to poor rural women, youth, persons with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples. Projects are formulated and implemented to address the unique needs of these groups, measuring aspects such as their participation and empowerment over time.

Since 2013, IFAD's Gender Awards have celebrated projects that drive gender equality and women's empowerment in its operations across regions, fuelled by the belief that addressing the root causes of gender inequality – including discriminatory practices, social norms and entrenched economic disparities – is essential to reducing hunger and poverty and ultimately delivering on the promise of the 2030 Agenda.

Gender equality cannot be achieved solely by focusing on women. It calls for transforming deep-seated norms, roles, behaviours and power dynamics, challenging discriminatory practices and empowering both women and men while recognizing their distinct needs and fostering equal opportunities.

These awards underscore IFAD's commitment to holistic social and economic progress through active and impactful engagement in the field. The winning projects showcase best practices developed by IFAD's dedicated staff and collaborating organizations, illustrating the transformative potential of prioritizing gender equality to combat poverty and hunger. The recognition of women's voices and the promotion of equal opportunities stand as essential pillars for effective and sustainable development, underscoring IFAD's ongoing commitment to driving positive change in rural communities and economies.

By dismantling unequal power relations and promoting shared decision-making, the awardees have created an environment where everyone, regardless of gender, can fully contribute to and benefit from rural development projects.



The Awardees

The Plurinational State of Bolivia: Camelid Value Chain Strengthening Programme (PRO-CAMELIDOS)

The Integral Strengthening Programme for the Camelid Value Chain in the Bolivian High Plateau, known locally by its Spanish name *Pro-Camélidos*, spans 30 towns in the Bolivian departments of La Paz, Oruro and Potosí. *Pro-Camélidos* is a wide-ranging project designed to increase incomes and reduce poverty by developing the Camelid value chain, while simultaneously improving rangeland management and raising the economic and social status of rural women in the Altiplano.

Pro-Camélidos has put gender equality at the forefront. The project has targeted over 63,000 rural families involved in raising llamas and alpacas, emphasizing women's representation in marketing and leadership roles.

Key features of the project have included undertaking a detailed a situation analysis. Developing and implementing an action plan for organizational strengthening based on gender equity and the inclusion of young people has been central to the project's transformational goals. Activities to raise awareness to promote gender equity and the inclusion of young people, primarily through a gender-transformative methodology called *Cerrando Brecha*, have been conducted in 33 productive economic organizations. In addition, workshops have been conducted with users from productive economic organizations to promote reflection on beliefs, behaviours and customs that perpetuate discrimination, inequalities and violence against women. These workshops have promoted changes in attitude and a new commitment to adopting practices that lead to societal change, empower women and deliver transformative changes in gender relations.

Women have been heavily represented among the beneficiaries of every kind of training, including technical training designed to ensure the quality of artisanal llama meat, which is considered a delicacy in Bolivia. They have also been heavily represented in marketing initiatives, such as 12 trade fairs and national and departmental expositions that enabled producers to reach potential customers. Workshops have also been held to advance the economic and political empowerment of women. For example, 20 joint workshops promoting women's leadership and entrepreneurship were held with a start-up called *Hola Tractor*. As a result, women participants over the age of 18 have been able to generate additional income for 20 per cent of women in that age group.

Cambodia: Tonle Sap Poverty Reduction Project (TSPRSDP)

The Tonle Sap Poverty Reduction and Smallholder Development Project is a collaboration between the Asian Development Bank and IFAD involving an investment of US\$121 million. The aim of the project is to boost agricultural productivity in 270 communes in seven provinces in the Tonle Sap drainage basin in northwest Cambodia. The project also seeks to improve rural roads, waterways and other infrastructure to enable farmers to reach wider markets. These improvements, combined with diversification, will enable farmers to achieve more stable incomes, with fewer risks. Addressing the root causes of gender



inequalities, such as biased attitudes, behaviours and practices that militate against gender equality, and promoting women's leadership are key to achieving these outcomes and fostering lasting change.

Meticulously collecting gender data about every aspect of the project was critical to evaluating its success. The project has largely exceeded its targets for women's participation. Beyond outreach, more than half of the 459,603 farmers benefiting from project initiatives are women – 15 per cent of whom are also heads of household.

Through initiatives like self-help groups and livelihood improvement groups, the project empowers women farmers, fostering confidence in accessing financial resources and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. A US\$11 million revolving fund has been set up to enable participants to implement new business plans for activities such as growing rice and vegetables, raising chickens or setting up or expanding microenterprises. Overall, 73 per cent of the lending has been to women. Similarly, of the 7,980 people who have received training in running and financing small businesses, almost three-quarters are women. The introduction of labour-saving technologies such as solar water pumps and drip irrigation has enabled women to spend more time on income-generating activities, elevating their economic and social status. The project also champions greater women's leadership, with women assuming key roles and climbing the ladder to higher positions, ensuring a lasting impact. The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) has fostered joint decision-making, challenging traditional gender roles and leading to positive household-level changes.

For example, 59 per cent of the participants in the 448 market improvement groups created have been women, almost double the objective. Among these groups, 54 per cent of committee members have been women, and women have been elected to chair 41 per cent of the groups. Such outcomes do not only shape decisions; they transform women's roles and the way women are perceived in their communities.

These efforts have transformed societal perceptions and practices, positioning the project as a model for holistic and sustainable development.

Ghana: Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (GASIP)

Gender-transformative approaches have played a significant part in the Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (GASIP). This far-reaching project, launched in 2015, set out to enable 75,600 rural households to boost their incomes and become more resilient to climate change. Of the US\$77.9 million invested, US\$10 million was climate adaptation funding channelled through IFAD's Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP), with another US\$36 million came from IFAD resources. National and local government chipped in more than US\$9 million, and a further US\$17 million plus was provided by Ghanaian financial institutions.

GASIP's transformative gender efforts have centred on empowering women economically and challenging biased attitudes, beliefs and practices that perpetuate gender inequalities. Over 500 savings



groups with 14,663 registered members have been formed, focusing on the financial empowerment of women and youth. About 79 per cent of village saving and loan association (VSLA) members are women, and their leadership in these groups has enabled women to successfully run for and win local assembly chair positions. Women in VSLAs have gained more access to productive resources, including credit, inputs and training. For instance, women have borrowed money from their savings groups to rent land and purchase seed, fertilizer or mechanization services. VSLAs have provided a platform for financial empowerment, especially for women. This has empowered women to contribute more significantly to household financial decisions.

The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) has been integrated into VSLAs. The project has built a movement of GALS champions who have campaigned for gender justice and created community theatre scripts to show how relationships and power relations could profoundly change to the benefit of all. Household-level dialogue and reflection have resulted in a willingness to encourage women's involvement in income-generating activities and equitable sharing of domestic chores. GASIP has made great strides in changing the harmful root causes of gender inequality and disempowerment, demonstrating the importance of gender strategies for achieving lasting benefits in rural development.

The project has also supported women's participation in both essential value chains and plans to raise resources together to build key infrastructure, such as warehouses, that will increase their participation in markets. On two occasions in particular, change accelerated when opinion leaders, including local chiefs, became GALS champions, whose role is to train others in the GALS methodology and act to continue social change for greater gender equality. Some leaders now use their authority to change harmful cultural practices and taboos. For example, the Chief of Biu in the Upper East Region is now promoting women's access to irrigable land in Tono, part of his traditional area.

Radio panel discussions on empowerment have also contributed to economic and climate resilience initiatives, as people have begun to recognize and respect the part that women and young people can play in building rural resilience and prosperity.

Madagascar: Vocational Training and Agricultural Productivity Improvement Programme (FORMAPROD)

The Vocational Training and Agricultural Productivity Improvement Programme, usually known by its French acronym, FORMAPROD, was launched jointly by IFAD and the Government of Madagascar in May 2013. IFAD provided US\$46.1 million of the US\$76.9 investment, with the balance provided by the Governments of Madagascar and Spain and project participants.

The FORMAPROD project in Madagascar exemplifies the implementation of a gender-transformative approach, significantly advancing gender-based economic equality and societal change. By equipping rural women and youth with essential skills and resources, the project has not only bolstered their economic participation but fostered substantial shifts in traditional roles and community dynamics as well.



FORMAPROD's groundbreaking approach, featuring the integration of GALS+,¹ has sparked transformative shifts in traditional gender roles and community dynamics in Madagascar. With over 50,000 women participating in tailored training, GALS+ has not only empowered women but led to men assuming more household responsibilities and a marked reduction in domestic violence. Some significant outcomes of the programme's GALS+ components have included men doing substantially more housework, with 89 per cent of participating households reckoned to share power equally between women and men. The dominance of men in household decision-making has also significantly declined – from 51 per cent down to just 5 per cent reporting the dominance of male household members. Furthermore, a significant reduction in domestic violence, both physical and intellectual, has been achieved.

The programme's impact extends to raising awareness about gender-based violence issues. Improved diets and health practices among participants have been noted. In particular, the regular consumption of fruits and vegetables points to a shift in household eating habits, which is essential for long-term health improvements. FORMAPROD stands as a model for inclusive development, prioritizing adaptability and inclusivity through transformative gender strategies.

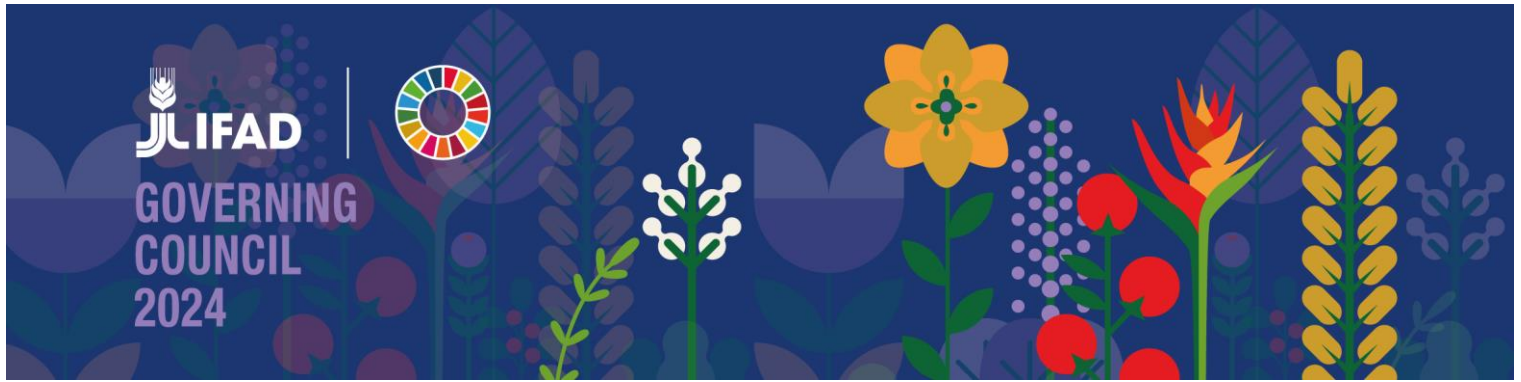
Furthermore, FORMAPROD has been found to ensure that rural women, as well as men, benefit from improved and equal access to the economic opportunities present in rural areas. The core economic programme developed five types of training, all designed to improve local skills. Community training activities across more than 150 centres have offered something for everyone: tutoring, distance learning, short on-site vocational courses, initial training for would-be farmers and similar courses for would-be technicians. There has been strong post-training support: 1,796 women have received support in developing business plans. The results have been impressive: revenue increases have averaged a hefty 68 per cent, enabling young women to save and reinvest in their businesses.

Montenegro: Rural Clustering and Transformation Project (RCTP)

The Rural Clustering and Transformation Project (RCTP) in Montenegro aims to increase prosperity in mountainous farming communities in the north of the Balkan country. Its primary focus has been on developing dairy and crop value chains and improving rural infrastructure. The close attention paid to addressing the root causes of gender inequality, empowering women and enhancing equality has proven integral to its remarkable success.

Launched in 2017, the six-year project has invested US\$17 million in last-mile rural roads to better connect farmers to markets and in organizing and training farmers to enable them to grow their revenues. Its aim is to benefit 20,600 people. Funding from IFAD's Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP), which channels climate change finance, has been added to IFAD loans, along with

¹ GALS+ is an expanded version of the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) that takes this approach a step further by integrating additional components or themes that are relevant to the specific context or project objectives. These additional components can include topics such as climate change resilience, advanced economic empowerment strategies, health and nutrition or environmental sustainability. Essentially, while GALS lays the foundational framework for gender equality and empowerment, GALS+ adapts and enhances this framework to address broader or more specific development challenges and goals.



more than US\$5 million from the Government of Montenegro, to finance the project. Project participants have contributed US\$1.7 million, demonstrating their belief in its benefits.

The Montenegro project has focused on dairy and crop value chains. Integration of GALS has fostered the implementation of affirmative initiatives, including grants for labour-saving devices, intra-household dialogues that encourage equitable workloads, and communication through conversations to change perceptions about women's roles. In just three years, the project approved 581 matching grants to buy labour-saving devices such as milking and hay-making machines. GALS sessions and partnerships with municipalities have led to greater participation by women in community decision-making and policy-shaping.

The impacts of women's greater leadership and participation in community decision-making at all levels is contributing to profound changes and long-lasting project benefits. Influencing municipal gender action plans and encouraging women's participation in policy-making have been important aspects. Greater inclusion of women's perspectives in policy-making is leading to community-level changes in attitude towards women's roles in governance and public affairs, and initiatives such as awareness campaigns and training sessions on gender-based violence and women's rights have led to heightened community awareness of gender-based violence, resulting in a shift towards more equal and respectful gender relations.



AGENDA

| Moderator: Redi Tlhabi, Senior Anchor and Executive Producer | | |
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| Time | Session | Speaker |
| 12.00 | Introduction to the Gender Awards | Ndaya Beltchika, Lead Technical Specialist, Gender and Social Inclusion Division, IFAD |
| 12.05 | Keynote address | Kristin Engvig, CEO & Founder of WIN and WINConference |
| 12.10 | Awards ceremony | Moderator: Donal Brown, Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department, IFAD Prize ceremony: President Awardees: Project representatives |
| 12.40 | Interactive panel discussion | Panellists: Gender Focal Points for the five IFAD-funded projects awarded |
| 13.10 | Statements from the floor | Governors |
| 13.25 | Closing remarks | Jyotsna Puri, Associate Vice-President, Strategy and Knowledge Department, IFAD |

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Kristin Engvig



Kristin Engvig, a trailblazer for women and authentic leadership, founded WIN 25 years ago, envisioning a more feminine, global, and sustainable approach to work and life. Hosting impactful events across Europe, India, Nigeria, Japan, and the United Arab Emirates, she recently earned the EuroKnowledge Outstanding Women Leadership Award. With a background in finance and consulting, she engages on the global stage, contributing to forums such as the W7 of the G7 and the Nobel Peace Prize Forum. As a business economist with an MBA, Kristin, a mother and advocate for change, leads the Women Pioneering Global Change initiative for GCF/WIN.



Redi Tlhabi

Redi Tlhabi is a highly distinguished South African journalist, producer, radio and television host, columnist, award-winning author and moderator. Ms Tlhabi has facilitated debates on international platforms such as Aljazeera, BBC World News and the United Nations. Ms Tlhabi passionately tackles current global sociopolitical issues; crime, corruption, foreign policy, education, politics and community issues. She truly believes that journalism is merely a tool through which social justice can be achieved and is a member of the prestigious United Nations Global Journalists Corps.



Dr Jyotsna Puri

Jyotsna Puri, Associate Vice-President at IFAD's Strategy and Knowledge Department, leads strategy in agriculture, climate, gender, nutrition, youth and social inclusion. She provides evidence-informed programme advice and policy, contributing to resource mobilization. With prior experience at the Green Climate Fund, International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Puri is also an adjunct associate professor at Columbia University. Recognized for her environmental leadership by the Global Landscape Forum in 2019, she holds a PhD in Agriculture and Resource Economics and an MA in Development Economics.



Donal Brown

Donal Brown, Associate Vice-President of IFAD's Programme Management Department, manages operations through loans and grants, overseeing the work of five regional divisions and the Operational Policy and Results Division. Previously at the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), he has held senior roles, including Africa Director. Brown led the United Kingdom's task force against Ebola in Sierra Leone and has extensive field experience in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. A former veterinarian, he holds a Master's in Tropical Animal Health, a Postgraduate Diploma in Leadership and Management, and a Bachelor's in Veterinary Science.





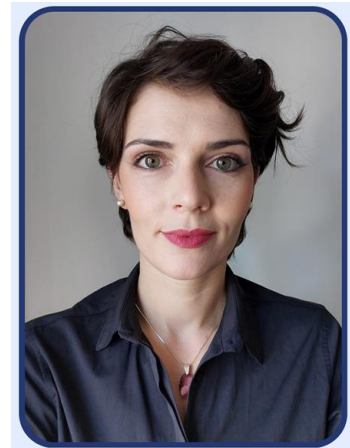
Ndaya Beltchika



Ndaya Beltchika is IFAD's Lead Technical Specialist – Gender, Targeting and Social Inclusion. Previously, she was Country Director in the West and Central Africa Division, where she led the development of country strategies, provided oversight and coordinated programmes of loans and grants in Benin, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Ms Beltchika holds a Master's in Agricultural Economics from the University of California at Davis, California, United States, and a Master's in Business Administration from Babson College's FW Olin Graduate School of Business in Massachusetts, United States.

Bojana Perunović

Bojana Perunović is a dedicated agricultural professional from Montenegro. She holds a Master's degree in Agricultural Sciences and has extensive experience in rural transformation and gender equality projects. Ms Perunović has worked as a Gender Focal Point and consultant in the RCTP project, emphasizing the empowerment of women and young people in rural areas. Her expertise includes policy drafting, workshop organization and collaboration with various institutions to foster social inclusion and development in agriculture.



Mickaëlle Andriamahefa



Ms Andriamahefa, Operations Manager and gender focal point, holds a graduate degree in Management Sciences. She coordinates technical activities for FORMAPROD, having started as a Youth Employment Advisor and advancing to Regional Socio-Organizer in Haute Matsiatra. Ms Andriamahefa became a Training and Employment Officer prior to her promotion. She has been introducing GALS in Madagascar since 2015, working with various stakeholders. Appointed Gender Focal Point in 2016, she previously supported CAPFIDA's project evaluation system and has experience in education. Ms Andriamahefa is also an international GALS consultant, specializing in project management.



Letitia Sampoia Apam

Letitia Sampoia Apam, a Ghanaian educator since 1997, has evolved from a skilled teacher to a dynamic force in rural development. With a Teachers Certificate from Gbewah College of Education, she has transitioned into project management, specializing in gender equality, social inclusion, market linkages, etc. Her impactful roles span various projects, including collaboration with major funders like IFAD, USAID and the European Union. She holds an MSc in Development Policy and Planning, showcasing her commitment to driving positive change in partnership with organizations like CARE International and Technoserve Inc.



Sereyroth Lim

Sereyroth Lim, a dedicated advocate for gender equality, serves as a Project Gender Specialist with the Tonle Sap Poverty Reduction and Smallholder Development Project – Additional Finance (TSSD-AF) in Cambodia. With over a decade of experience spanning sectors such as gender-based violence, agriculture and climate change, she fosters collaboration between diverse stakeholders. Operating at the grassroots and policy level, her aim is to effect comprehensive societal transformation, driven by her passion for creating an equitable and inclusive society.

Roberto Bonifacio Montaña

Roberto Bonifacio Montaña is a dedicated professional with over 20 years of experience in advancing Camelid husbandry in the Plurinational State of Bolivia's highlands. With a background in Agronomy and ongoing pursuit of a Master's in Camelid Livestock, his two-decade career is marked by impactful roles in IFAD-funded programmes. As the National Coordinator for *PRO-CAMÉLIDOS* and other key positions, he demonstrates expertise in sustainable resource management and entrepreneurial initiatives, contributing significantly to Bolivia's Camelid sector.





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