

# POWERWOMEN

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FOR COOPERATIVES

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## COLOPHON

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# PREFACE

Agriterra trained 14 strong willed female (future) leaders in the first ever 'Female Leadership in Agricultural Cooperatives Masterclass', held in Kenya. The group is composed of Zambian, Ugandese and Kenyan participants, representing organisations that are active in coffee, dairy, sunflower or credit and saving.

Main purpose of the masterclass is to strengthen the leadership skills of these women. These highly motivated cooperative leaders return full of energy and ambitions back to their respective cooperatives, better equipped to take up their leadership roles and make a change contributing to closing the gender gap in agricultural cooperatives.

#FemaleLeadership  
#Powerwomen

*"Main purpose is to strengthen the leadership skills."*

# FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES SUPPORTED BY AGRITERRA

**Agriterra has developed a female leadership trajectory in order to contribute closing the gender gap in agricultural cooperatives. Why?**

The representation and participation of women in cooperatives and farmers organisations is in most parts of the world low. Women constitute over 70% of the agricultural workforce and are a relatively overrepresented group in rural areas. Despite being the largest workforce, they are behind informal representation and decision making. They are often deprived of land rights, land ownership, access to finance, access to education etc. Cultural beliefs have women put in a backwards position where they are seen as the ones taking care of domestic affairs but not of economic affairs, though they invest lots of their time as labour in the agricultural sector, but not owning a fair share of the economic benefits from it.

*“Through storytelling, all participants shared their journey in life to where they are now as a woman, as a leader.”*

Agriculture offers good opportunities for development, and the economic relevance of the agricultural sector can still develop a lot especially in Africa. Research proves that if women have equal access to the resources needed, they produce 20 to 30% more compared to men; women reinvest the money for 90% back in society and families, whereas men only reinvest 45%. Cultural gender biases are affecting to a large extent the under-representation of women

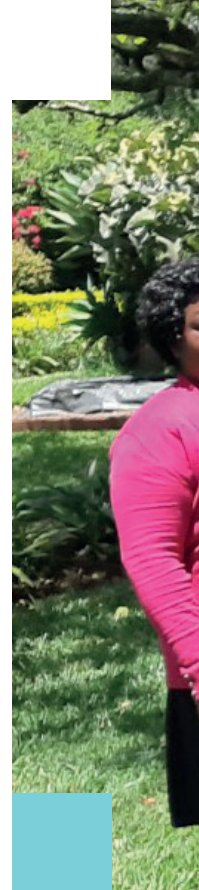
in cooperatives. However, it is well possible to close the gender gap if both men and women, boys and girls are aware of this and realise the unlocked potential of women.

## **Female leadership trajectory**

The female leadership trajectory of Agriterra aims to contribute to closing the gender gap, with a strong focus on Africa initially. The trajectory starts with the identification of organisations that are open towards addressing this subject and acknowledge that the current situations need to be changed.

Representatives (women and men) can participate in the 3 days **basic female leadership training**. The training focuses on understanding the current gender gap, make participants aware of this and their potential to overcome it. It focused much on creating more space for women to be seen as full-fledged and needed members of the cooperatives; empower the women to become more self-confident to stand up and become leaders and allow for opening the discussion on the subject also with the men. Action plans are made that often include actions like creating an enabling environment to increase the female participation in the Board; sensitisation of men and women on gender gaps; mobilisation of women to join the cooperatives as full members and leaders.

The most promising or talented female leaders or potential leaders were selected to attend the first Masterclass Female Leadership in Nairobi from 1 to 6 March 2020.





The 5 days [Masterclass Female leadership](#) was conducted for 14 cooperatives (potential) leaders all females from 3 countries and representing 11 organisations. The masterclass was designed by a consultant, Bert Overbeek, an experienced trainer/coach and specialist in diversity and leadership in co-creation with Bertken de Leede, business advisor Agriterra and programme manager female leadership and Stellah Nyagah, business advisor Agriterra Kenya.

All participants completed a [personality test](#) and their profiles were distributed and explained. This was an eyeopener for all, being the first time to be “analysed “like this, allowing to understand themselves better and how they can make use of their personality characteristics in, for example, the board or as a group member.

The [MAFSAC model](#) (Message, Active listening, Further asking, Summarising, Agreement and Conclusion) is a communication tool to be used improving leadership skills. Participants realise that certain steps of MAFSAC are omitted (like further asking, summarising, conclusion). Endless [practising with the model](#) during exercises and role-plays addressing topics like leadership styles, motivation, convincing, feedback and negotiating resulted in a good understanding and internalisation of the power of the MAFSAC model. Through [storytelling](#), all participants shared their journey in life to where they are now as a woman, as a leader. This was inspiring and shows a better insight into the cultural and personal dimensions of leadership.

At the end of the masterclass, all participants presented their [SMART action plans](#). [Follow up](#) will be done by a buddy and/or mentorship system, a quarterly skype call with selected representatives from each country with Agriterra FL programme manager and follow up by the Business advisors at regular bases. Buddy and mentor duos are formed using a natural process as it is heavily based on trust and personal “clicks”.

Based on our own reflection, feedback and tips and tops from the participants, the masterclass training programme and materials will now be further fine-tuned. But I can confidently say that it is a well-developed programme, with the right approach for the target group. The result was a group of very happy, empowered and inspired women, with [self-confidence and ambitions that are converted into action plans](#), going back to their own cooperative with a suitcase filled with energy, ideas, tools and being part of a group of strong peers that they can always contact.

**Bertken de Leede**, business advisor Agriterra



# ANEDY NYIRENDRA SOKO

## ZAMBIA

Chipata District Women Association (CDWA)

Age: 44

Anedi Nyirendra Soko, 44 years old, was born in the Ndola district of Zambia. Her parents divorced when she was still young and she grew up partly with her father and partly with her grandparents. She completed primary school but had to stop secondary education half-way due to a lack of resources. She married and got three children: 1 boy and 2 girls. When her husband died in 1998, she went back to her father where she stayed for 4 years.

Anedi Nyirendra joined the Chipata District Women Association, a women group in her village. Being one of the few that went to secondary school, she was elected as group secretary. In 2000, she was elected as vice chairperson, making her the youngest member of the board. In 2001, she was elected as district board treasurer of the Women Association. This allowed her to participate in several capacity building trainings such as business management, basic accounting and record keeping. The organisation saw her potential and sent her as their representative to various meetings, forums and external activities. In 2002, she remarried and her husband strongly encouraged her to go back to school, which she did in 2006. In 2010, she became the coordinator of the Association.

### Leadership

She has developed her leadership over the years and applies this at various levels. She

runs her family farm and has improved a lot in this. She practises 'sustainable agriculture'. Through the use of better inputs and farming techniques she was able to multiply the yields by almost 4. She also keeps livestock (poultry and pigs) for income and meat. All her children are going to college now, pursuing higher education.

*“Through the use of better inputs and farming techniques I was able to multiply the yields by almost four.”*

Anedi Nyirendra is a role model in her organisation and stimulates women to stand up for their rights. The women groups are now benefiting from Fertiliser Support Programmes, which was not allowed before. Members have expanded their farming production through extension services supplied by various organisations, including Agriterro. Anedi seeks contact with external organisations to get access to resources to further develop the members. She writes proposals and business plans. With one of them she gained access to funds to set up a sunflower oil processing facility.

### Sensitisation and motivation trainings

After the Agriterro Female leadership training Anedi coordinated the rollout of sensitisation and motivation trainings in all the catchment areas, building the capacity of the leaders of 52 women groups. Now, the women are leaders in community development committees such as the Camp Agriculture Committee, Parent Teachers Associations, DDCC and Paralegal chieftdom committees. Realising that it would help CDWA to move forward, the organisation also included more young leaders and a man in the board.

The CDWA membership is growing and the professionalism of the organisation is increasing, thanks to Anedi's improved leadership skills. She was invited to the Masterclass female leadership in Nairobi. Boarding a plane for the first time was an unforgettable experience and the exchange with 13 other female leaders has given her a lot of encouragement and energy to continue her role as coordinator but also as an example to others.



# RUTH BANDA

## ZAMBIA

Chadiza District Farmers Association (CDFA)

Age: 64

Ruth Banda is a 64 year old woman from Eastern Zambia. She is currently the chairperson of the Chadiza District Farmers Association. For 21 years she was a teacher and raised her family. After retiring in 1995, she decided to start farming. In 1998, she established a small farmer group, and joined as a board member. This group joined the CDFA and Ruth became an active member.

Since then, she sat in several district committees and boards. She also held several leadership positions in other Community Based Organisations. She was appointed as manager for the Food Reserve Agency Marketing contract from 2009 to 2012. In 2014, she was elected as National Vice Chairperson for the Women Farmers' Forum at the Zambia National Farmers Union and was elected Chairperson in 2017. She is now a board member of ZNFU representing the Women Farmers.



*“The training was very educative, inspiring and exciting.”*

### Chairperson

In November 2018, Ruth joined the female leadership training organised by Agriterra and this reconfirmed and consolidated her desire and commitment to be a female leader. She did not hesitate anymore and put herself forward as a candidate for the chairperson position of CDFA. She was elected by the members, leaving 3 men behind her, and is now heading the Board of Directors.

Her experiences in Zambia are:

- Little support from fellow women.
- “Lets wait and see” attitude from the opposite sex.
- Low participation of female members and high illiteracy level of the women.

The female leadership training has resulted in remarkable changes in CDFA:

- Amendment of the constitution to allow more than 30% of female representation at board level and implementation hereof (currently 40%).
- More participation of female members during the meetings.
- Establishment of women and youth council at district level
- More women in leadership positions at zone/group level
- More women willing to take up leadership positions and more networking and collaboration with stakeholders.

Ruth participated in the Masterclass female leadership. Her story and experiences are an example for the other participants, but she also learned a lot, which will help her to be a good leader.

# SARAH BAGAMPANGIRE

## UGANDA

### Kasaali Farmers' Cooperative Society

Sarah is a secondary school teacher in Kibaale, South West Uganda. She is a mother of five and owner of a coffee farm together with her husband. To Sarah's father education was very important for both his sons and daughters. After primary school, Sarah went to college to study for a teaching certificate, where she met her future husband who also studied to become a teacher. Her husband even encouraged Sarah to get further education and continues to be supportive by taking care of the children and creating a good environment for her to study and work.

#### Own farm

When Sarah and her husband started their teaching career, they also set up their own farm. On the farm they grow coffee as a cash crop, which they supply to the Kasaali Farmers' Cooperative Society. Sarah's husband is a board member of the cooperative. Sarah is a lead farmer, where she motivates and encourages other women to learn from her, focusing on increasing their production. She leads a campaign that encourages men to work with women on the coffee shambas and promotes an inclusive family business allowing women to get a fair share of the coffee income. After following the Agriterra Female Leadership Training in August 2019, Sarah felt more empowered to create awareness among women and men about the gender inequality in her culture and how to overcome this. She became more determined in her opinion that more women should join the cooperative as full-fledged members.

Sarah started joining her husband in group meetings (Agalya Awamu group in Kiswaga), where she talked to the members about their role in the cooperative and in their farms. "Men talk ill about women and see them as thieves", she says. Sarah discovered that some women were secretly selling the coffee outside of the cooperative because they were angry they didn't get any income from the coffee production. Sarah discussed this issue with various families, in a mediating role but also pointing out that women who do a lot of the work on the farm but cannot benefit from the income (may) turn against the business.



#### Buying shares

Sarah promotes farming as an activity of the entire family. If young girls see their mothers steal coffee or damage the farms, they may also do this in the future. Therefore, Sarah, together with some other members of the cooperative, came up with the proposition that women can also buy shares and become full-fledged members of the cooperative.

Sarah proudly shares that the Board of Directors has approved of her proposition to recruit more female members and to appoint a woman as the next chairperson. As a result, Kasaali Cooperative has expanded its membership base from 2018 to 2019 with 100 new members, whereof 50% of the new members are women, increasing the female membership from 23 to 26%.

On March 14, the Annual General Meeting of the Kasaali Cooperative elected its first ever female chairperson Madam Kigundu Lovence.

Sarah is a strong willed and analytical leader. She is not (yet) on the forefront, but her long term goal is to become a Kasaali board member. She is an active and influential member, accepted and respected by members, leading by example. The collaboration with her husband and the mutual support of the couple gives her the space she needs to further develop her leadership skills. She participated in the Female Leadership Masterclass in Nairobi and this was a great experience.



# JOAN SIMBOLEI

## KENYA

Kipkelion District Coffee Union (KDCU)

Age: 39

Joan is the vice chairwoman of Kipkelion Women in a coffee organisation (KWICO) and is thirty-nine years old. KWICO is the female branch of the Kipkelion District Coffee Union in Kericho county. Joan is a professional translator for the deaf and fights for the rights of the deaf in her community.

Joan had a challenging childhood. She was brought up in a polygamous family and her mother left her with her weak and sickly grandmother when she was eight years old. “Girls my age had parents that took decisions for them, also about their future. My upbringing toughened me and taught me I had to be independent and my own leader”, Joan says.

*“My upbringing toughened me and taught me I had to be independent and my own leader.”*

Thanks to her courage and resilient attitude, she was appointed to different positions in her community. Joan says that it wasn't easy for her, being a married woman leader.

She faced various challenges, even from her husband, because people wrongly believed that women cannot lead. Nevertheless, she never lost hope.

### Change mindset

Joan worked hard and managed to become the owner of a 1-acre piece of land. She planted 300 coffee trees that have increased to 500 trees. She was elected as chairwoman of the women group in her coffee society and was able to change the mindset of her husband, who became a co-manager of the farm.

In 2017, Joan was invited together with other women leaders to spearhead the start of a women organisation in coffee: KWICO. She mobilised women to supply 100 kg of coffee as a registration fee. Those who had no coffee trees or land would try to convince their husbands to provide for coffee trees that would yield the 100 kg. Through this mobilisation strategy, they were able to register 800 active women and lobby the Kericho government to give them over 10,000 tree seedlings that could be distributed among the women in KWICO. She concludes by saying: “Women have power and can use this power to influence other women and their community”.



# COSTANCE ASIIMWE

## UGANDA

Lyamujungu SACCO

Age: 34

Costance Asiimwe is a young woman from Kabale in the south-west of Uganda. She grew up in a large polygamous family composed of a father, his 3 wives and 14 children. It was not an easy start as the family was large and resources were limited.

When Costance was in class 5 of primary school, she had to take care of her mother, who was sick. She was very determined about her future and had 2 principles: she did not want to end up in an early marriage and she wanted to live as an example to her younger siblings.

*“Through sharing and interacting with women from different countries, we have acquired a lot of knowledge.”*

When she was in class 7, her father told her that there was no money to pay her school fees anymore. Costance decided to leave the village and go to town to find a job. From her first salary, she bought clothes and shoes to look more representative and to give herself the status she deserved. After one year of hard work, she had saved enough money to continue her school and further studies, without any support from her father.

### First female credit officer

She continued to study and became a banking officer at Lyamujungu SACCO. Because of her hard work and sincerity, the SACCO promoted her and she became the first female credit officer, driving a motorbike to visit remote clients. After that, she was promoted to branch manager and recently, she became the internal auditor of the SACCO. She still continues with her studies now and is about to complete her MBA.

Costance is active in mobilising women, not only in her SACCO but also in her own church, society, and the neighbourhood she lives in. She started a SACCO for the staff of Lyamujungu SACCO and set up various credit and saving groups in her neighbourhood.

She always leads by example and is honest and dedicated.

### More women

In August 2019, Costance participated in the Female Leadership Training organised by Agriterra. The Lyamujungu team analysed its products and decided that it was time to develop products that better suited female needs. They are working hard on this new product and it is almost ready. Costance also argues for more women in credit officers' positions that were only occupied by men, because, according to Costance, women don't accept bribes. So far, one female credit officer has been appointed.

Costance participated in the Female Masterclass in Nairobi, an unforgettable experience for her: “It was my first time out of Uganda and through sharing and interacting with women from different countries, we have acquired a lot of knowledge, such as negotiation tips and the improvement of communication through the MAFSAC model. This knowledge is vital for the implementation of the action plan and the development of women and the SACCO at large. During this Female Masterclass, we realised that, if we want women to succeed, men should be actively involved”.



# DAPHNE MUCHAI

## KENYA

Women Farmers' Association of Kenya (WoFaAK)  
Age: 56

Daphne Muchai is 56 years old and was born in Meru county, Kenya. She is the third born of five siblings, having two older brothers. Daphne grew up in a rural setting, which meant that, being the elder daughter, she had to do all the household chores and farm work. Her parents, who were Christians, encouraged her to be a leader at family and church level, but, having been brought up among boys, she always had to fight for space and respect.

*“If women use their strength and believe in themselves, they can be successful.”*

After her high school education, Daphne went to college and obtained a diploma in agriculture. She paid for her first and second degree herself. She worked for the Ministry of Agriculture for twenty-five years as an extension worker and later joined the National Farmers' Organisation where she worked for eleven years. Daphne has been married for 25 years and has two grown-up daughters.

When her parents passed away, Daphne was made responsible for the fair distribution of the family assets among the five children. This is how her 'leadership journey' began. Almost immediately after, she joined women welfare groups and was elected as chairperson of many church, welfare and development groups. Currently, she is the director of a women savings & investment group in Nairobi. She says that the leadership positions gave her the opportunity to grow and develop her leadership skills, which eventually lead her to founding her own organisation.

### Developing leadership skills

In 2017, Daphne founded the Women Farmers' Association of Kenya (WoFaAK) whose aim is to bridge the gap to women farmers' leadership. The idea to set up a Kenya-based organisation was born after an interaction with a German rural women organisation during an annual conference. Daphne mobilised a few women with a background of agriculture and community development who were



willing to join her in developing leadership and developmental skills for the rural women and youth mentors. She is the organisation's founder and current executive director.

Daphne says that being a woman leader for over 35 years now, hasn't exactly been a walk in the park. She has had her ups and downs. "It isn't always easy to find women who are willing to believe in you and in your work. And if they do, some have set high expectations for you." During the organisation's foundation, she had to deal with the discouragement of the development partners, who are generally reluctant to support the initial development of organisations and only want to work with the successful ones. Through the ups and downs, Daphne learnt that her family's support, her holding on to honesty and integrity, her self-sacrifice and, most importantly, her determination in what she believes in lead to her success as a woman leader.

Because of her expertise in gender and rural women development, Agriterra engaged Daphne as an agripooler for the first Female Leadership training in 2017. Later, she provided trainings for other Agriterra clients in Kenya and recently in South Sudan. As an agripooler, and a director of her own women organisation, she encourages rural women to challenge themselves.

# WOMEN WITH POTENTIAL AND AMBITION



**Bert Overbeek has been working as a trainer, coach, interim manager, and writer for 25 years. He delivers training courses in leadership and all derivatives thereof for more than 55 organisations. In addition to this, he has written several books about management, including a book about gender diversity and inclusion.**

In March 2020, he travelled to Kenya on behalf of Agriterra to provide the training 'Masterclass Female Leadership' for fourteen women from eleven different cooperatives. "Agriterra wishes to increase the female force in the management boards of the cooperatives. The basic principles of leadership are very important for this and I enjoy contributing to this. I met Carmen van Dam at the LTO Academy, a training provider for the agricultural sector. She has carried out assignments for Agriterra regularly and she recommended me for this. I had already provided training courses in Europe before, but never in Africa."

## Other cultures

Bert has been interested in other cultures all his life. "Among others, I have assisted African entrepreneurs who have recently established themselves in the Netherlands. Besides this, I have always enjoyed observing traditional social relationships. What and how do other people go about doing this? I have also read a lot of literature about this topic and, for example, about the history of slavery. I have visited South

to receive fresh feedback on my own training skills." He was impressed by the participants who came from Zambia, Kenya and Uganda. "I enjoyed all of them. They were not necessarily highly educated women, but women who had positioned themselves well. They wanted to learn, they had potential and ambition. They had reached the required level themselves, and often against all odds. For two evenings, we did 'storytelling', which I found very interesting. These were all women with whom you could one day win a war."

Bert began the training by recalling the principles of previous training courses and presenting the question: what do you consider to be characteristics of good leadership? From here he continued to delve further. A clear cultural difference between the Western and African world was giving feedback. "We are very direct here in the Netherlands. There, the participants would only talk when they were asked something. We asked them how they would give feedback. They replied, "We'll show them or help them to do otherwise."

*"It is, of course, best to have a mixed management board."*

Africa in the past, but I had never been to Kenya before. So, it was a new experience, but it also felt very familiar."

Bert developed the training together with Bertken de Leede, business advisor at Agriterra Nederland and Stellan Nyagah, business advisor at Agriterra Kenya. The three of them provided the training together. "We had a pleasant working relationship and it was also valuable





### Questioning and summarising

An important topic during the training was: How should you deal with political field strategies? How should you position yourself on the management board and how can you use your environment to achieve your goal?

The participants were enthusiastic about the so-called MAFSAC model, which deals with the best way to convey a message (Message, Active listening, Further asking, Summarising, Agreement and Conclusion). “We practised this together. The questioning and summarising, in particular, was a real eye-opener. It established a connection. We have enabled women to display male behaviour through role-playing. It was hilarious. They laughed a lot, but have also seriously played-out the scenario of: how do I deal with someone who is displaying dominant male behaviour?”

“Women have to realise that they can bring so much to the management board of a cooperative,” says Bert. “For example, they are often more realistic when it comes to creating an inventory of risks. The participants plan to insist on more female members joining their management boards. The training is called ‘Female Leadership Training’, but the goal is ‘shared leadership’, because it is, of course, best to have a mixed management board. During the training, they learned to stick to their goals, to deal with situations intelligently and to work on relationships and make good use of political field strategies.”

A question that Bert was often asked by other Dutch people was: How can you, as a white

man in Africa, provide ‘Female Leadership training’? “But”, Bert replied, “this didn’t matter at all for the participants. They saw me as someone who gave them knowledge that they could use. I didn’t sense any resistance from them and had good contact with the participants. I am still in our What’s App group. Besides, I delivered the training together with Bertken and Stella.”

### Continuation

The training is now mainly aimed at African women but could easily be adapted, according to Bert. “It’s suitable material with which you can enter the market and it would be nice to expand the training more broadly. As a trainer, you must have a certain amount of experience. In particular, being able to switch between the content and the level of your audience requires significant trainer skills. You have to be able to sense the needs of the participants.”

Bert has great respect for the mentality of the participants. “I find their mentality admirable. Their attitudes greatly reflect their Christian faith. Even when they experience setbacks, they thank God for the good times and make the most of it. In this time, with the spread of the coronavirus, I wish everyone would take on this example. People here are complaining that they cannot go to the hairdresser or the theatre. There, the people are not whining, but instead, stand tall and carry on. Fantastic! All in all, this training in Kenya was a fantastic experience. I would go again tomorrow if I could!”

# LEAH CHEPKEMOI

## KENYA

**Cherara Primary Society**  
**Age: 41**

Leah is a coffee farmer from Kericho county. She is a member of the Kipkelion District Coffee Union and of the Kipkelion Women in Coffee Organisation. She is a board member of the Cherara Primary Society based in Kericho county in Kenya.

Leah is forty-one years old and a single mother of four children. She went to the Cherara primary school, and like many other women in her community, was not able to go to high school as her father did not have the money for it. Therefore, she dropped out of secondary school after her second year. She stayed at home for two years and, in the third year, at the age of nineteen, she was married off culturally. She was married for eleven years and had four children who are all grown-up now. When she returned home after her marriage, her father gave her two acres of land. She practices mixed farming but grows coffee on the major part of the land.

### Leadership journey

Her leadership journey started in 2008 when she was elected as a board member of the Cherara dispensary in the Cherara sub-location. She says that her husband did not approve of her becoming a leader as he believed that women could not lead and have to focus on home chores and raising children. The relationship was strained and sometimes, she was not allowed to go to leadership meetings. To avoid further restrictions imposed by her husband, she tried to schedule the meetings during the

day. In 2011, after returning to her home, she was elected as a secondary school board member and as the chairwoman of a women group in her community. In 2017, she was recognised in her primary society and was elected as a board member.

*“Women must show that they can lead as well as men and they must be bold and patient to really make a difference.”*

Leah says that it has not been easy being a woman leader. Many people believed that she chose leadership over her marriage and for men this was a reason not to believe in what she had to say as a woman. But women must show that they can lead as well as men and they must be bold and patient to really make a difference.

Thanks to her resilience Leah was able to lobby her society to pass a motion to create an additional position for a woman leader, as, currently, there are only two women in the board. She also acknowledges that the trainings she attended helped her to understand her position and role as a female leader. She encourages other women to be strong, patient and not to be afraid of taking up leadership. She believes that today, it is not as difficult as it used to be for women to be leaders. Therefore, women should boldly vie for leadership positions in their societies.



# ANN TUWEI

## KENYA

Kimologit Farmers' Cooperative Society

Age: 46

Ann Tuwei is a treasurer of the Kipkelion Women in Coffee Organisation (KWICO) and the women representative of the Kimologit Farmers' Cooperative Society. Ann is 46 years old, a mother of three children, a coffee farmer and a businesswoman in cereal trading. She went to a primary boarding school and then to high school where she studied for two years. Her parents were farmers who owned over twenty cows, which were their main source of income. However, due to her father's illness, the family had to sell all the cows and raise Ksh. 70,000 (USD 654) to pay the hospital bill. This was a big hit to the family as Ann had to drop out of school and help her mother in starting up a small business. She could not go back to school as the money earned was used to educate her younger brother.



*“I believe that women deserve an equal opportunity.”*

Ann says that, while supporting her mother in the business, she acquired business management skills that she now uses in her current business.

### Her own small-scale farm

Ann was married at the age of 21 to a polygamous husband. Due to struggles in her marriage, she decided to start her own small-scale poultry farm in 2003 which helped her raise enough funds to lease a piece of land 10 years after. She sold all the poultry, leased a piece of land and bought a dairy cow. Later, she bought her own 1,5-acre land where she grew coffee and bananas, which are now her main agricultural crops. She owns over 2,000 kg of coffee that are supplied to the Kimologit Farmers' Cooperative Society.

### Women representative

Being an active supplier in her society, Ann was elected as a board member and as a women representative in 2017. As a women representative, she represents the interests of the women in the society, trains women

on good coffee farming practices and promotes the table banking concept. Also in 2017, KWICO was founded through the mobilisation of women leaders in the different primary societies. Ann managed to convince her society to participate into the KWICO-concept and, together with other five societies, they formed the women organisation. In collaboration with other women leaders, Ann influences and motivates other coffee women to join the women organisation while offering them training sessions on coffee farming. She also lobbys for women's positions in the primary societies and union as she believes that women deserve an equal opportunity.

Ann participated in the Female leadership training and masterclass organised by Agriterra, where she believes she was empowered. She is happy to have learnt about the MAFSAC-model. She thinks that she will be able to transfer this knowledge to other women leaders in KWICO as this will help them to improve their communication skills as leaders. Her aim is to use the skills she gained to bring more Primary Cooperatives into the women organisation and to lobby the union to create more positions for women in the board.

# PAMELA KOSKEI

## KENYA

**BAMSCOS**  
Age: 51

Pamela Koskei is 51 years old and is a board member of the Baringo Agricultural Marketing Services Cooperative Society (BAMSCOS) in Baringo County, situated in the Rift valley region of Kenya. In 2014, she was elected as a chairlady in her primary cooperative society 'Langas Farmers' Cooperative Society'. Later that year, she was elected as a board member in the union. "I am the first ever elected female chairperson in a Baringo County dairy cooperative", Pamela proudly says. Pamela is a secretary by profession.

### Lead farmer

Pamela worked for the Kenyan Government for twelve years. In 2008, she quit her job to become a farmer. After several consultations with ministerial officers and visiting several farms, she challenged herself to improve her farm and was able to change her cross-breed cows that gave her 2 litres per day to grade cows that produce at least 15 litres per cow per day. In her community, Pamela is a lead farmer.

Pamela and her husband own more than 5 acres of land together, where they practice dairy farming, tree farming and horticultural farming. Although they own the farm together, Pamela is the manager of the farm. "We have an agreement that my husband must consult me on matters related to the farm and he does that because he respects me as the manager", Pamela says.

### An example to emulate

Pamela has been a leader for over 20 years. She started her leadership journey in the church. In her community, she mentors young girls and helps them to mobilise government funds for projects.

As a cooperative leader, she participated in several trainings that have helped her build her leadership skills, such as the Female leadership training organised by Agriterra in 2019. Thanks to her commitment to mentoring young girls and her dedication as a community leader, Pamela was appointed by BAMSCOS as the

union's coordinator of women as she is seen as an example to emulate. In this role she supports women of 19 primary cooperatives in setting up table banking. She also trains and mentors women in the union to take up leadership roles, not only in society but also in the union.



*"We have an agreement that my husband must consult me on matters related to the farm and he does that because he respects me as the manager."*



# GRACE SITENEI

## KENYA

Chepkorio Dairies Limited

Age: 53

Grace is a 53-year-old woman leader and secretary of Chepkorio Dairies Limited. She lives in Burnt Forest in the Uasin Gishu county of Kenya. Grace was born in a polygamous and abusive family. Her father was not able to pay for her school fees and therefore, she had to struggle to raise the money together with her mother. She finished high school in 1986 and joined the Naivasha Dairy Training Institute where she followed a course in dairy technology. After her college education, she was employed by the Kenya Cooperative Creameries (KCC) in 1993 and worked there as a junior production supervisor for 5 years. In 1997, KCC collapsed and Grace had to re-join her parents as a single mother. This is when she started farming.

### Dairy farmer

Grace's mother gave her a quarter-acre piece of land, which she used to practice dairy farming. She bought one dairy cow for learning purposes and later bought two more. She used her farm income to pay for her two children's school fees.

She was determined to be the best dairy farmer of her community. Therefore, she formed a group with other farmers of her community where they would exchange skills and tips for better farming. With these newly learnt skills she was able to increase her productivity and the number of animals.

### Role model

Grace's leadership journey began when she was a supervisor at KCC. She became a role model in her community and was elected as a board member in the then newly established government Community Development Fund project (CDF). In addition, she was elected as a board member in three different schools. In 2010, Chepkorio Dairies Limited was established and together with the other farmers of the group, she joined the cooperative and became one of the founders as she mobilised other dairy farmers. She says that she was elected in her region unopposed by both men and women because they recognised her and associated her with leadership abilities.



### Mobilisation meeting

Grace followed several trainings from the government and other institutions during which she acquired her leadership skills. In 2019, Grace participated in the Female leadership training organised by Agriterra in Nakuru. Through this training she realised how much her community needs to be empowered to recognise and appreciate women as leaders. She says that most women are not confident enough to take up leadership positions and therefore need to be convinced that they can lead as well as men. She is determined to use her position as a female leader to mobilise more women to take up leadership positions. After the training, she retrieved the list of Chepkorio women farmers and organised a mobilisation meeting with the help of the cooperative. By mobilising and training women to improve their productivity and become active in the cooperative, Grace prepares them for leadership.

*“I am optimistic that in the coming elections, more women will be elected to the board.”*

# NORAH ASIO EBUKALIN

## UGANDA

### PKWI farmer to farmer cooperative

Norah is the general secretary of the board of the PKWI farmer to farmer cooperative in Uganda as well as the owner of a sunflower oil processing business. Norah is a widow with 5 children and several grandchildren. She has her own farm that she is still working on.

She is the first born of her father's second wife. When she was a teenager, her father died, and she took care of her mother and brothers. She did the household chores while her two younger brothers went to school. She started giving Sunday school lessons in her church and got some remuneration for that. She used the money to continue her secondary education and pursued a teacher diploma after that. However, her husband did not allow her to work as a teacher and she started farming.

#### Support each other

In those years there was a serious insurgency in Uganda, and a lot of women had to take care of their children on their own. This is when, in 1993, Norah founded PKWI together with 12 women, to support each other and overcome the challenges. She further improved her farming skills and got elected as best farmer.

Norah had various opportunities to travel abroad, representing small farmers in national and international forums.

PKWI has grown from 12 women to more than 2500 farmers in 2019, of which 40% are men and 60% women, doing business. Norah is a role model, leads by example and is consistent and loyal. According to her, the secret to leadership is being a woman who stands by her word in spite of all manners of intimidation and unfavourable circumstances.

Norah is a strong-willed woman, who has learned how to create room for her story and point of view without doing harm to others. She is humble, but knows how to talk to others, including big leaders. She expresses her opinion in a firm and clear way that everyone understands. Despite of cultural barriers, she managed to be a woman that is heard and respected.

She uses her status and experience to coach and mentor young women. She prepares them to be good leaders in the future. She believes in collaboration and cooperation. Women should support fellow women, take up action at the right time, take up leadership positions and change their attitude towards cultural beliefs.

Norah shares her experiences as a female leadership role model in the Agriterria female leadership trainings. Women and men believe and trust her. She has very good qualities as a leader and her willingness to share and mentor others is a great asset.



*“It was great to have a man facilitating the female leadership masterclass. Next time let us invite some men from cooperatives to attend on the third day!”*

# 3 POWERWOMEN

## MILKA SAWE

**BAMSCOS union**

Milka is 42 years old, the secretary of Mumberes primary society and a board member of BAMSCOS union in Baringo County, Kenya.

Milka is a farmer and a mother of 4 children. She is a lead farmer in her community. She was elected a board member of her society in 2015 and board member in BAMSCOS since 2016.

*“Women should join leadership and empower other more women.”*



Milka believes that the gender gap in leadership in Kenya can still be closed if women became available and active in their societies. She is therefore actively engaged in promoting women participation through AGM and group meetings.



## JANE BAGANDA

**RUKAKA Dairy Farmers Cooperative Society**

Jane Baganda Tayebwa (57) is a model dairy farmer and a member of RUKAKA Dairy Farmers Cooperative Society in Uganda. As a retired Human Resource Officer she decided to take up dairy farming in an entrepreneurial way.

Although she is not holding a formal leadership position, she is active in mobilising and inspiring women in her society. She is motivated to increase female engagement in entrepreneurial dairy farming, so that women have access to their own income. She has her own model farm where others can come and see what she is doing. Her ambition is to further improve her farm so it will serve as a demonstration farm, allowing her also to invite women and train them on dairy inclusiveness. Jane says that training women in improving their dairy farm and business is a good entry point for empowerment and it will also encourage women to have a voice in their homes. Her goal is that more women will become members of the society and that female leadership will increase from 1 to 3 persons in the board in the next year. She feels inspired by the trainings and realises that she is a powerful lobbyist and will use this in order to achieve her goals!!

## LUCY KINANU

**Meru Coffee Millers Cooperative Union**

Lucy Kinanu is a 70-year-old farmer and a retired government official in Meru county, Kenya. She is a board member of Meru Coffee Millers Cooperative Union since 2006. Lucy is aggressive and confident. She has held different leadership positions in her community. Her motto is “manage people well and they will want you”. Throughout her leadership journey, Lucy has faced various challenges as a woman, a government official and a single mother. She comes from a community where men do not easily give up their leadership positions to women. Therefore, women must learn to courageously fight for those positions but also be able to display the capability they possess to lead. She thinks that women perfectly complement men and therefore, without the two in any leadership setting, there is an imbalance.





Agriterra is an agri-agency founded by the Dutch agricultural sector and professionalises cooperatives and farmer organisations worldwide to better serve the needs and interests of their members. By their success they make an important contribution to employment and sustainable economic development.