

Session title:	Women inclusion in resilience of agricultural value chains
Session number:	3
Type of session:	Webinar
Day:	Monday, 6 September 2021
Time:	10:00-11:00 EAT
No. of participants:	6 speakers including chair and panelists + 40 in audience
Session Organizers:	International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
Moderator:	Dr. Julie Crowley – IDRC Regional Director for West and Central Africa
Rapporteur:	Dr. Michele Leone – Senior Program Specialist – Climate Resilient Food Systems - IDRC Regional Office for West and Central Africa
Relevant outcome:	<p>Food systems are complex but actions to transform them for the better need to be anchored in specific parts of the system</p> <p>GESI is a critical element of sustainability and resilience. Recovery without GESI would be a step backwards.</p> <p>Changes are possible if all actors are on board and gender equality remain at the barycenter of research and decision-making efforts.</p>
Objectives:	<p>Via a discussion on how three different research projects in three African regions (East, West and North) can react to contextualized challenges in terms of resilience and equity of food systems, we aim to share knowledge on how multi-stakeholders' VC approaches integrating gender in research can be used to gain better understanding on the importance of a stronger role of women farmers and their families in the food systems and in key commodities value chains within the system. We will argue that enhancing this role will not only increase resilience of women farmers and their households, but of the food systems, and should therefore be encouraged</p>

in decision making at all levels, from access to technology and support services (e.g. extension, finance, markets), legal and policy support, legislation and capacity building.

**Speakers:**

**Chair: Julie Crowley**  
IDRC Regional Director, Central and West Africa



Prior to joining IDRC in 2019, Julie worked at Global Affairs Canada, where she focused on African issues. Since 2005, she has worked on diplomatic assignments to Zimbabwe, Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Ethiopia, where her responsibilities included work with the African Union. Julie also has a broad range of experience in communications, strategic advice and analysis, management, corporate governance, and diplomacy. Julie’s background is in law and environmental international relations, which includes working as a research assistant at the United Nations Secretariat for the Convention on Biodiversity.

She holds a Bachelor of Laws degree and a certificate in journalism from Université Laval, as well as a master’s degree in international relations from the Université du Québec à Montreal.



**Edidah Lubega Ampaire**  
Senior Programme Specialist  
International Development Research Centre  
Nairobi, Kenya

Edidah Lubega Ampaire is a Social Science Researcher working with IDRC’s Climate Resilient Food Systems Division, leading work on gender equality and social inclusion. She is passionate about research for development work around gender equality and inclusive policy and in translating knowledge to influence policy change and to benefit vulnerable end-users especially women and girls. Before Joining IDRC, Edidah worked at the CGIAR, researching on gender in agricultural policy, climate change adaptation and farmer-based organizations. Edidah holds a PhD in Rural Development from the University of Pretoria, South Africa, an MSc. in Agricultural Extension Education and a BSc. in Agriculture from Makerere University, Uganda.

Panellists



**Pr. Redouane Choukr-Allah** retired professor of Agronomy, Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Hassan II, Morocco, is an Agronomist, soil and water environmental expert with more than 35 years of experience in the use of saline water and the use of pre-treated sewage for growing crops. He holds a PhD in environment Horticulture from the University of Minnesota, St Paul USA. He also served as a technical coordinator of a 12 million project, financed by USAID on the water resources sustainability in Morocco.

He served as head of the salinity and plant nutrition laboratory since 1996 and he served at ICBA as a senior fellow scientist in Horticulture and a Section Head of Crop Diversification and Genetics. He has produced numerous publications, including edited books, research reports, articles in peer-reviewed international journals and books in the field of non-conventional water.



**Ms Grace Nanyonjo** holds a Master's Degree in Gender and a Bachelors of Science in Horticulture from Makerere University. She possesses a certificate in Implementation, Analysis and Interpretation of Project-Level Women Empowerment Agricultural Index (PRO-WEAI) from IFPRI. Grace is a fellow under the Gender-responsive Researchers Equipped for Agricultural Transformation (GREAT) project implemented by Cornell and Makerere Universities.

Currently, she is working with the **National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO)** as a **Gender specialist** and coordinator of Karamoja activities. Grace was engaged with the "Precooked bean" project under Cultivate Africa's future by IDRC aimed at scaling up supply of precooked beans for food and nutrition security by leveraging on public-private partnership with digital payment as a pilot model. Grace is devoted to attaining equity and transforming agricultural systems through financial inclusive interventions.



**Dr. Andrew Wardell, Principal Scientists, CIFOR.** Andrew has over 38 years of experience working on natural resource governance, capacity development and finance issues in over twenty South-East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa countries. He is a Principal Scientist with the Value Chains, Finance and Investment team based in Montpellier. He is involved in Flagship 3 of the Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA) research programme, notably on P 2 (Plantations) and P 20 (Approaches to Sustainability). He is also Principal Investigator on a new IDRC-funded research project 'Globalizations in a nutshell. Opportunities and risks for women shea producers and shea parklands in Burkina Faso'. Previously he was Research Director of CIFOR's Forests and Governance Programme. Dr. Wardell has a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agricultural Botany from the University of Reading, a Master of Science in Forestry and its relation to Land Use from the University of Oxford, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental History exploring the legacy of British colonial rule on contemporary forest policy and practice in Ghana from the University of Copenhagen. Dr. Wardell was formerly a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for World Environment History at the University of Sussex, and a Danish diplomat. He has published 3 books and edited collections, over 50 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters and 70 technical publications. He is currently working on a CITES book project with Cambridge University Press.



**Mercy Rurii, Program Officer, IDRC,** is a program officer, managing a portfolio of projects in the Cultivate Africa's Future program, a partnership between IDRC and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). This is a \$40 million worth of projects on reducing post harvest losses, promoting market access, supporting the development of innovations to protect farmers from climate-related shocks and other shocks such as Covid-19, financing for agriculture, scaling of solutions to enhance nutrition, support to youth agripreneurs, and understanding gender equality and inclusion in various value chains. Mercy obtained her bachelor's, in Political Science and Communications, from Brock University, in the city St. Catharines in the Niagara region of the Canadian province of Ontario. She holds a master's in Political Science, with a specialization in international development studies, from the University of Guelph, also in the province of Ontario in Canada, and a second master's from the University of Nairobi.

**Main highlights:**

(\*For Insights and newsletter. To be based on the theme of the day. Fill in in bullet form)



move towards serious gender integration and gender transformative action and research. She underscored that Gender Equality and Social Inclusion is an end but also a critical pathway for transforming food systems. So, IDRC supports research that addresses underlying structural conditions and power relationships that exacerbate social and gender inequalities in food systems and undermine the resilience of communities to climate change and other stressors. This work tests, validates and promotes technical and social innovations that build the resilience of poor communities. It brings to scale use of proven innovations to empower marginalized farmers and ensure equitable access to nutritious food.

The three panelists invited to the event were an example of such work, having in common the fact that their projects and teams developed and implemented innovations that increased women's agency to deal with the constraining norms and social structures. As a result, women were empowered and able to make contributions to improve their resilience in the respective value chains across different contexts.

The Panel dug deeper in each project context, discussing how innovation in technology, social science and policy can reach the twofold goals of gender equality and value chain resilience, bringing specific examples from different countries and regions of Africa: Prof. Redouane Choukr-Allah spoke about women-led processing of Quinoa seeds in Morocco, in line with national agricultural development priorities. Dr. Andrew Wardell highlighted how research can provide evidence for a stronger role of women in Shea parklands managed by them in Burkina Faso, redressing historically established power and market unbalances, and hopefully enabling policies that preserve parklands but also promise to enhance the negotiating power of women cooperatives. Ms Grace Nanyonjo explained how integrating new technologies and inclusion is possible, via an attentive use of ICTs in access to service and credits to women working on the pre-cooked beans value chain in Kenya and Uganda, which also seized opportunities for moving from project/commodity level to sectoral, national level. In the case of the precooked beans project, for example, in Uganda it has given the possibility to enhance the role of zinc-rich foods in school and in the national nutrition sector.

The closing intervention by Mercy Rurii from IDRC highlighted again that it is in times of crises that we must be most vigilant on gender and social inclusion. As Burkina Faso and Morocco have demonstrated, some countries could have a multiplicity of shocks as COVID-19, climatic extremes, and insecurity, but it is imperative to be intentional and deliberate on gender and social inclusion whether it takes the transformative, responsive or sensitive models. Inclusion challenges as we all know social norms and structures, policies whether national or local and indeed those developed in private sector. It is therefore important to understand the factors of disempowerment in designing interventions to address them.

#### Tweetable quotes with timestamp:

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**How has the session contributed to the AGRF outcomes?**

The session clearly highlighted that gender integration for equality and inclusion is not only a goal by itself but is a necessary condition and a means to build back food systems better, in the spirit of AGRF2021.