



Health For All: The key role of agrifood MSMEs and businesses

The agricultural and agrifood sectors are key for promoting healthy diets and contributing to achieving health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many actors along the food system value chain contribute to producing, processing, packaging, distributing and marketing healthy food. Nutrition and food safety are key foundations to a healthy diet, which is necessary for overall health, optimal growth and development. Local micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and businesses have a key role to play in making nutritious and safe foods available, accessible, affordable, and desirable for improved nutrition.

The [PAFO-COLEAD Innovations Series](#) and the [IICA-COLEAD Caribbean Agrifood Business Series](#) highlight entrepreneurs who are dedicated to using their businesses as a platform to promote nutritious diets and make them accessible through healthy, innovative, local and nutritionally-dense products. The first 12 Innovations Sessions and 8 Caribbean Agrifood Business Sessions have featured various agrifood MSMEs and businesses that contribute to ensuring health for all through producing nutritious food, making nutritious food available on local markets, reducing food loss and waste, as well as ensuring food safety and quality, transparency along the supply chain. By sharing their drivers of success, these inspiring entrepreneurs encourage others to seize opportunities offered by the agrifood sector and so to increase the supply of nutritious food, making healthy diets more accessible.

(Re-)discover below some of the featured African and Caribbean entrepreneurs that presented how they contribute to producing and promoting nutrition and healthy diets for all.

The importance of a healthy diet begins at infancy, and nutritious food is key for ensuring healthy child development. The following African and Caribbean companies are innovating to support infant and child nutrition:



Oluwaseun Sangoleye, Founder & CEO, [Baby Grubz](#), Nigeria

Baby Grubz is a social enterprise which manufactures packaged infant meals and snacks made from grains, fruit and vegetables and operates in Ghana, Togo and the United Kingdom. Baby Grubz aims to reduce the high rates of malnutrition and poverty in Africa. Its products are prepared with super food sourced locally in order to tackle the major deficiencies in baby and infant nutrition.

Baby Grubz also works with over 300,000 mothers to provide peer-to-peer mentoring on the benefits of nutritious foods and breastfeeding. Through its active use of social media, Baby Grubz has built a vast network to share knowledge on how to feed children and to widely promote its products.





Fannie Perisha Gondwe, Founder & Executive Director, [Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprise](#), Malawi

Perisha Agro and Packing Enterprise is an eco-inclusive business aimed at improving the nutritional status of women and children under the age of five. The company promotes the growth and consumption of locally-grown biofortified foods including orange fleshed sweet potato, orange maize, Nua Beans and cassava products. The company owes a large part of its growth due to the establishment of partnerships and collaboration with investors, clients, the government, NGOs and farmers. Perisha Agro is among the 2022 Top 50 African Business Heroes (ABH) under the Jack Ma Foundation competition.



Jolenta Joseph, Founder & CEO, [Sanavita](#), Tanzania

Sanavita adds value to crops such as orange fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSP), beans and maize. Its objective is to address the high rates of malnutrition in Tanzania; especially anaemia (which mainly affects women at reproductive age) and vitamin A deficiency (from which one out of three children under the age of six suffers).

Sanavita supports over 1,500 smallholder farmers and offers them a reliable link to ready markets by buying and processing their produce into nutritious food products. The company also improves the livelihoods of rural communities and supports women to escape poverty through engagement in agriculture. Sanavita delivers training and offer consultation on a range of issues.



Eric Muthomi, Founder & CEO, [Stawi Foods and Fruits Ltd.](#), Kenya

Stawi Foods is a food company which processes seven nutritious locally grown crops: banana, amaranth, maize, finger millet, red sorghum, soy and wheat. Its product range includes pre-cooked, nutritious porridge flour made from ancient grains blended with bananas which are distributed on the domestic market. Stawi products are (bio-)fortified with minerals and vitamins, which are especially beneficial to women and children. Stawi Foods supports its local supplier farmers to access the market and produce food sustainably, while providing access to affordable nutritious food to low-income Kenyan families.



Tania Lieuw-A-Soe, CEO, [SURIVIT N.V.](#), Suriname

SURIVIT N.V. is a fruit and cassava processing company that produces flour tasty and healthy products, such as baby porridge, cassava pancakes mixes and cassava flakes, both for local and export markets. It was created in 2020 by “Wi! Uma Fu Sranan” (meaning “We the women of Suriname”), the first women agricultural cooperative in Suriname.

SURIVIT N.V. is a pioneering social enterprise which educates and empowers women to learn all aspects of producing, value adding, food safety, product marketing and distribution. The company aims to contribute to sustainable food and nutrition security, economic growth, value chain development, promotion and employment opportunities in Suriname with the specific focus on rural women.

The focus on locally grown crops and local supply chains not only reduces the import bill, but it confronts malnutrition by making healthy products more accessible. The following African and Caribbean companies ensure that healthy products are available locally:



David Foli Ayivor, Founder & CEO, [Agromyx](#), Ghana

Agromyx is an agrifood processing company created in 2017 which addresses the problem of food waste by buying and processing smallholder farmers’ excess produce into vitamin- and mineral-rich instant cereals and fruit powders. Its brand Nourimeal™ has 10 varieties of instant cereals and fruit powders rich in vitamin A, iron and magnesium, vitamin- and minerals which are rare to find in existing dietary ecosystem but vital.

Agromyx currently works directly with 165 smallholder farmers, 112 of whom are women. The company is encouraging local farmers to transition toward organic agricultural practices and agroforestry; as well as supports building capacity and market resilience.



Salma Abdulai, Co-Founder and CEO, [Amaati Group](#), Ghana

AMAATI is a social Ghanaian company created in 2013 which processes organic-certified fonio into ready to use flour and cereals for both the local and export markets. Fonio is a climate resistant

indigenous cereal which does not contain any gluten and has high quantity of fiber, iron, amino acids, protein, potassium among other nutrients.

AMAATI supports vulnerable rural women to grow fonio on degraded (due to exhaustive use) and/or abandoned lands by creating a land management system where the lands can be regenerated and used to grow other crops, including fonio. The company currently works with 5,000 smallholder farmers and also hires (young) women to process fonio.



Nnaemeka Ikegwuonu, Founder & Executive Director, [ColdHubs Limited](#), Nigeria

ColdHubs Limited is a company providing breakthrough innovation to the local community and smallholder farmers. ColdHubs are solar-powered walk-in cold storage rooms for 24/7 cold storage of perishable foods, extending the shelf life of fruit and vegetables from two to 21 days. Users from the local community and smallholder farmers can store food in the cold room by paying a daily flat fee. The company is leading the market for innovative and affordable cold-storage solutions in Nigeria and plans to deploy ColdHubs all across Africa, starting with South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Benin and Kenya.



Rachel Renie, Co-Founder & Managing Director, [D'Market Movers](#), Trinidad & Tobago

D'Market Movers is an online distribution company specialised in the delivery of fresh produce throughout Trinidad & Tobago. D'Market Movers works closely with a network of about 250 farmers/artisans who supply various types of fresh produce and tries to create new opportunities for its local agripreneurs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the online shop has enabled customers to be supplied with fresh food while ensuring their security as they could stay at home. D'Market Movers recently launched a click and collect store to meet the customers' demand to go in store and be able to interact with staff.



Catherine Krobo Edusei, Founder & CEO, [Eden Tree Limited](#), Ghana

Eden Tree Limited is a company which produces, packages and markets high-end fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs, as well as convenient food to promote healthy eating habits. The healthy value-added products are exported within West Africa. The driving motto of Eden Tree is "Healthier People, Better Nation", as the company considers good nutrition to be key to a successful and emerging economy. The

company is strongly committed to corporate social responsibility and works closely with over 200 approved smallholder suppliers and helps them to better develop their production, including by providing loans to improve production and to buy inputs. Among others, the company pays tuition fees for the children of staff members, provides educational materials, and organises nursing to enable mothers to continue to work and attend to their children.



Marlene José, Founder and CEO, [FoodCare Lda](#), Angola

FoodCare is a company processing organic African food that preserves the originality of the products while operating in compliance with international food safety and quality standards. It aims to overcome the preconception of African food as being “indigenous food” due to the lack of sanitary infrastructure which contributes to the contamination of nutritiously rich products during processing. Having obtained the HACCP and FDA certifications has enabled FoodCare to export to the European and American continents and to increase its product range.



Jeanette Marcelle, Founder and CEO, [Handmade by Jeanette Co.](#), Trinidad and Tobago

Handmade by Jeanette Co. (HBJ) is a chef-owned and operated agri-processing food company making artisan products including granola, unique sauces and spice rubs. The company is supporting small farmers in the community by making their products using 75% locally sourced indigenous ingredients. Driven by innovation, HBJ creates shelf stable products that are rich in nutrients. Featured in some of the top gourmet shops in Trinidad, the company caters to health-conscious individuals, vegans and millennial customers. Jeanette strives to follow business practices that are beneficial to the environment, including those that reduce waste in the agriculture sector.



Gaëlle Laura Kenfack, Founder, [KENZA MARKET](#), Cameroon

KENZA MARKET is a company specialised in the processing and distribution of pre-cooked, dried, organic and dietetic products and ingredients (fruit, vegetables, spices, vegetable oils, poultry etc.) to quickly prepare healthy meals. KENZA MARKET is wary of the challenges with wheat consumption due to growing gluten intolerances. Hence, they are selling local flours that are easier to digest, such as

banana and cassava flour. The company, which was founded in 2016, is one of the pioneers that produces and markets local products from Cameroon to promote “Made in Cameroon” (MIC), a concept launched by the private sector to support local production and consumption.



Halatou Dem, Director General, [Les Céréales de TATAM SARL](#), Mali

Les Céréales de TATAM SARL adds value to traditionally grown grains in Mali by processing local cereals (such as millet flour, fonio, monicourou, diouka, etc.) with high nutritional content in healthy and ready to be consumed produces. It brings this delicious traditional food to the urban population across Africa, Europe and the USA. The company commits to achieving innovation through nutrition and promoting women’s employment and privileges women in the recruitment process.



Theophilia Stoute, Founder & Managing Director, [O’s Inc.](#), Barbados

O’s Inc. is an agro-processing company which produces all-natural, organic and gluten-free products, such as flours, pancakes mixes, porridges, coatings and oils. All the products are prepared with locally grown fruit and vegetables, such as cassava, breadfruit, sweet potato, plantain or coconut, without additives nor preservatives. The company supports a healthy lifestyle and a gluten-free diet with high-quality products at an affordable cost and proves that eating healthy doesn’t mean eating bland. O’s products are currently available in supermarkets and convenient shops across Barbados and will be exported to other Caribbean islands in a near future. The company is still developing new formulas and products, and strives to source an eco-friendly packaging to guarantee the freshness and aroma of its products.



Affiong Williams, Founder & CEO, [Reelfruit](#), Nigeria

Reelfruit creates new value chains by processing fresh fruit in value-added convenient produces, like snacks, and by building its own network for distribution. The processed mangoes, pineapples, coconuts, bananas and plantains are distributed in local and export markets, including through Amazon.

The company aims to produce Nigerian food products that meet world-class standards and to market them everywhere. Reelfruit also produces snacks retailed in schools to promote healthy eating habits. The company trains its salaries, especially rural women, to grow high quality, export grade mangoes. Moreover, with its empowering women’s programme “Female Farmers To High-Value Mango Farming”, ReelFruit has contributed to a 300% increase in farmers’ incomes.



Danielle Thomson, Founder & CEO, [THERAPY](#), Jamaica

THERAPY produces balanced, nutrient-rich, vegan, sugar-free and preservative-free products. The plant-based foods are made from local organic fruit and vegetables grown by a network of Jamaican organic farmers. The company focuses on product development and innovation to respond to consumers’ needs, lifestyle changes focused on health and wellbeing. THERAPY supports organic farmers and MSMEs, and sustainable farming, as well as raises awareness on the importance of growing organically and maintaining seasonal supply of the products.



Marie Ange Mukagahima, Founder & CEO, [Zima Enterprise](#), Rwanda

Zima Enterprise processes pumpkin and its unused seeds into pumpkin seed oil, pumpkin cookies, roasted pumpkin seeds and pumpkin seed flour. Pumpkins are an easy crop to grow in Rwanda with little seasonality and rich in minerals (such as magnesium, zinc, potassium, sodium) and vitamin, contain antioxidants and dietary fibre, and are low in cholesterol. Since the inception of the business, Zima Enterprise has worked to improve health conditions for the people in Rwanda through accessible and nutritionally beneficial products.

Zima Enterprise ensures five rural cooperatives of women farmers and over 50 farmers a constant supply of pumpkins for processing and provides the farmers with high-quality seed for sowing.

Short presentations of all featured companies, including the one tackling food loss and waste and ensuring food safety, are available by clicking on the pictures below:

