



Society for International Development  
Washington Chapter

# **FY 2021**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

Food Security & Agriculture Workgroup

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## FOOD SECURITY & AGRICULTURE WORKGROUP

The SID-Washington (SID-W) Food Security and Agriculture Workgroup is a group of individuals actively engaged and informed in issues related to global agriculture and food systems. With events ranging from developing more resilient and inclusive market systems to innovative agriculture technologies, this Workgroup aims to inform on agriculture-related knowledge and practices to meet the challenge of global food security.



## Dear Members of the Food Security & Agriculture Workgroup,

We are happy to report that we had another productive year, with programming that was entirely virtual! As we reflect on the past year, the Workgroup produced several great events, such as **Young Women Leaders: Achieving Economic Empowerment through Agriculture**, **What makes agricultural innovation happen? Lessons from Israel and beyond**, and a planning meeting. We are currently working on a new and exciting slate of events for FY 2022, so stay tuned for more information!

We would like to thank outgoing Co-Chair **Mark Castellino**, who put on many fantastic events during their tenure. We wish them well in their future endeavors! We would also like to welcome new Co-Chair **Noor Seddiq** who joins us this year.

After 5 years with our team, **Paul Sherman**, our Director of Programs, will be stepping down from his role to pursue graduate studies. Paul is still involved with SID-Washington as a Consultant. Thank you, Paul, for your effort and commitment to the Workgroups and their programming!

Stepping into Paul's role, we would like to welcome **Malavika Randive** as our new Program Coordinator. Malavika will be working closely with our Co-Chairs in planning events for the Workgroup.

Thank you for your continued interest and support of the Workgroups. We hope to see you at future SID-Washington events! If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to send an email to [events@sidw.org](mailto:events@sidw.org).

Best regards,



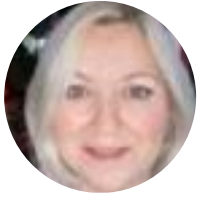
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Raphaelson".

Katherine Raphaelson



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Malavika Randive".

Malavika Randive



**Sabrina  
Amburgey**

Vice President, Strategic  
Growth & Partnerships,  
ACDI/VOCA

Sabrina Amburgey provides strategic analysis and business intelligence to advance growth and diversification of clients and partnerships at ACDI/VOCA, a US nonprofit that helps people and communities improve their lives by increasing economic prosperity and social inclusion. She has over 20 years of experience in international development in various business development, technical and project management roles focused on food security, resilience, market systems, agriculture and capacity building. She also serves on the Board of the Agribusiness Market Ecosystem Alliance (AMEA), a global network for accelerating the professionalization of farmer organizations, and led its development of ISO/IWA 29 Professional Farmer Organization Guidelines. Prior to joining ACDI/VOCA, she developed and implemented innovative organizational capacity assessment tools and approaches for Pact. She also worked in Kenya, providing technical and operational support across Africa as part of Pact’s Africa Regional Support Network. Over the course of her career she has worked in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Sabrina holds a BA in sociology and anthropology from Lewis & Clark College and an MPA from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey. She has a working knowledge of Spanish and Mandarin and received certification in “Making Markets Work for the Poor” from the Springfield Centre.



**Mark  
Castellino**

Vice President, Public Sector  
Business Development,  
Opportunity International

Mark Castellino has over 20 years of experience in agricultural development and food security. He is currently the Vice President of Public Sector Business Development at Opportunity International, a US-based organization that develops financial solutions to unleash the power of entrepreneurship. Mark leads Opportunity’s US Government business line. Prior to joining Opportunity, Mark led the business development team at Fintrac, an agricultural development consulting firm that provides agricultural development services and technical assistance to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Resilience & Food Security and missions around the world. Mark also led business development efforts at the global non-profit ADRA International, winning funding from USAID and US Department of Agriculture for food security, economic growth and emergency response activities across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. He also worked with ADRA in the UK, managing funding from the U.K. Government and the European Commission. Mark started out his career in international development implementing food security and economic growth projects in Azerbaijan. Mark has also worked on agriculture and food security policy issues in Washington D.C., including advocating for the successful enactment of the 2016 Global Food Security Act, a landmark piece of legislation that funds and directs the US Government’s work in food security.

**Wednesday, October 21, 2020**

8:00 AM - 9:30 AM ET | Online via Zoom

Young Women Leaders: Achieving Economic Empowerment through Agriculture

**Wednesday, December 9, 2020**

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM ET | Online via Zoom

What makes agricultural innovation happen? Lessons from Israel and beyond

**Monday, March 15, 2021**

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM ET | Online via Zoom

Food Security & Agriculture Workgroup Planning Meeting



# Young Women Leaders: Achieving Economic Empowerment through Agriculture

Moderator: **Cristina Manfre**, Global Gender Director, TechnoServe  
**Joyce Muchena**, Gender Lead, Mastercard Foundation

Speakers: **Sandra Namulondo Tumwebaze**, Assistant Relationship Manager, Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited  
**Maria Ndagire**, Founder and Team Leader, Fastmere  
**Awa Sanou**, Research Partner, Mastercard Foundation

**Event Description:** The commercial agriculture sector has not always created formal employment opportunities for women, least of all young women. Yet for millions of young women around the world, particularly those living in rural communities, agriculture remains an important livelihood option. In this joint workgroup event, we explored the challenges facing young women in agriculture and learned about the economic pathways they are forging in the sector, from production to processing to technical services and organizational leadership. We heard from a panel of young women who are forging careers in agriculture and considered the ways in which international agricultural investments can support and shape those careers.

## Key Takeaways:

### 1) Careers in Agriculture

Maria Ndagire (Fastmere) started by discussing how her interest in agriculture came from her upbringing. Early in her life, being involved in a new agricultural technology fueled her passion for the field. With a growing interest, she pursued a degree in agriculture and then later developed her company to create opportunities for other women like her as well as maximize her opportunities. She pointed out that young African women face extremely high barriers of entry into the field. While she draws happiness from knowing that women are challenging and overcoming these challenges, she knows the journey can be quite difficult.

Sandra Namulondo Tumwebaze (Opportunity Bank Uganda) spoke next about her experience being raised by a single mother who was a farmer that faced several difficulties while growing up. While she initially did not consider pursuing agriculture as a career – having gone to Uganda University to study finance and accounting, her skills in marketing drew her back. When she came to work at Opportunity Bank, she decided to work towards providing financial solutions to people working in agriculture. In her current role, she is responsible for reaching out to farmers and offer financial support, as 80 percent of her current portfolio comprises of agricultural activities.

Unlike her fellow panelists, Awa Sanou (Mastercard) grew up in the city, with her interest in agriculture coming from going

to the farms in her village in the summer. She further discusses her experience of securing a scholarship to work in India and realizing that to create impact one needs to develop technical skills. This realization and her interest in agriculture led her to pursue her postgraduate studies in Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics from Michigan State University, where she learned the skills needed for her to help others begin their careers.

### 2) Challenges for Women in Agriculture

Sanou explained how math requirements can be a very high barrier for people, as they often lack exposure to such advanced concepts and therefore face great challenges when pursuing a degree in agriculture. While she acknowledged that academic rigor is important, more must be done to support students who have lacked that exposure in their schooling. Moreover, she highlighted the importance of having a diverse faculty who can better understand and engage with their students struggles, potentially through mentorship opportunities.

According to Namulondo Tumwebaze, rural women lack access to capital and markets, which creates another hurdle in setting up successful enterprises. Institutions – including ones by Opportunity Bank Uganda, are developing solutions with technology helping to ensure greater accessibility. However, women in agriculture still face great challenges.

Ndagire described how patriarchal norms continue to hinder

and prevent women from gaining support to grow their businesses. To resolve this, actors in the space need to ensure that young women have access to the correct information. Providing internet access would go a long way in finding and creating more opportunities to access to financial resources.

### 3) Future Success of African Women in Agriculture

Ndagire outlined a few key points that will positively affect the future success for women in agriculture:

- Women need mentors, as this provides access to more resources and aides in career development.
- There is a need for more funding to encourage business development.
- Information should be more accessible.
- Establishing infrastructure helps rural women in particular.

- There needs to be a change in social perception. Individuals who influence the lives of these rural women, particularly the men, provide women the space to develop their skills and build their careers.

Namulondo Tumwebaze spoke from a different perspective, highlighting how women can support themselves through agriculture and need to be reminded of that fact. Further, she discussed how agriculture is growing at a rapid pace, so women must be involved in this growth to ensure they are not left behind.

Sanou highlighted how agriculture sector must increase its profitability and provide technical skills to attract young women. Both of these factors can be increase participation and success of young women in the industry.





## What makes agricultural innovation happen? Lessons from Israel and beyond

Moderator: **Lori Groves Rowley**, Director, Global Food Security and Aid Effectiveness, The Lugar Center

Speakers: **Danielle Abraham**, Executive Director, Volcani International Partnerships (VIP)

**Elisa Burrows**, Deputy Program Director, Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation, Fintrac

**Thierry Hoza Ngoga**, Head of State Capability, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)

**Jonathan Said**, Senior Manager, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change

**Event Description:** The ability of the agriculture sector to drive inclusive economic growth and improve food security in underdeveloped markets rests to a large extent on innovation. Our panel considered the structural constraints to agricultural innovation and discussed how they can be addressed with a combination of policy, investment and market opportunities. We looked at the case of Israel and its remarkable success in overcoming the natural constraints to its agricultural and water sectors. We also considered how the private sector in Africa and Latin America can be harnessed to drive agricultural transformation.

### Key Takeaways:

#### 1) Israel's Agricultural Success

Danielle Abraham (Volcani International Partnerships or VIP) started the session by discussing the case of Israel and its success in overcoming the natural constraints to its agricultural and water sectors. Despite a lack of fertile soil and land, Israel had success due to three underlying elements, which created this mentality that there is no choice but to succeed. Abraham discussed the three underlying elements: (1) ideology and national mission, (2) pioneer mindset, and (3) historical inheritance.

#### 2) Lessons from Beyond Israel

Jonathan Said (Tony Blair Institute for Global Change) provided two key lessons from Israel that could be applied to low-income countries. First, governments play an important role in enabling an environment that allows for the agriculture sector to succeed. By extension, the politics around agricultural issues also needs to support the industry. Said explained that agriculture should not be seen as an end to food insecurity, but rather as a larger industry for employment, trade, etc. Second, development partners can empower farmer organizations and smaller enterprises through long-term management support.

Thierry Hoza Ngoga (Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa or AGRA) said that the case of Israel is relevant as many countries in Africa try to learn from its agricultural success. AGRA

works with governments across Africa to co-create country specific solutions to agricultural challenges with five areas of focus: (1) high level of political leadership and commitment, (2) agriculture as a national priority, (3) investment, (4) mutual accountability, and (5) the enabling environment. Ngoga explained that the aim is work alongside governments to transform agriculture.

#### 3) Partnering for Innovation

Elisa Burrows (Fintrac Inc.) explained that Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation is a USAID-funded program that builds partnerships with private sector agribusinesses in emerging markets. She emphasized that the private sector is often overlooked as a tool for development. However, this program helps farmers access new technologies and services and develop more robust market systems. Burrows shared some insights implementers had learned over the years, including: (1) engaging and allowing the private sector early on in the process, (2) stakeholder relationship management is crucial (commercialization is resource intensive and requires a broad range of resources to be successful), and (3) commercialization is an ongoing process that requires a long-term view.

# Food Security & Agriculture Workgroup Planning Meeting

Workgroup **Sabrina Amburgey**, Vice President of Strategic Growth & Partnerships, ACDI/VOCA  
 Co-Chairs: **Mark Castellino**, Vice President, Public Sector Business Development, Opportunity International

**Event Description:** The Food Security & Agriculture Workgroup met on Monday, March 15th at 11:00 AM ET to plan events for the group in the next year. In recent months, the group organized events on topics such as Young Women Leaders: Achieving Economic Empowerment through Agriculture and What makes agricultural innovation happen? Lessons from Israel and beyond. All members were encouraged to join and to bring ideas for event formats and topics. In the lead-up to March 15th, we gathered feedback from our participants. Members were asked to fill out a survey to guide the event agenda.

## Key Takeaways:

### 1) Introductions

Workgroup Co-Chairs Sabrina Amburgey (ACDI/VOCA) and Mark Castellino (Opportunity International) provided an overview of the events from 2020. During this review, they covered issues of inclusivity in development and how they included panelists from around the world. The Co-Chairs presented statistics showing great gender diversity for event moderators and speakers and mentioned that 40% of individuals involved in the events were people of color. Moving forward, they would like to continue to prioritize diversity and representation at events.

### 2) Discussion on Event Topics & Formats

#### Topic 1: Agriculture Finance

Participants discussed new developments in technology in agriculture, the involvement of smallholders in finance and the diversification rural economies. Within the topic of agriculture finance, attendees decided that the Workgroup should explore pathways for smallholder farmers as a possible future event.

#### Topic 2: Private Sector Engagement

Attendees were excited to discuss intersections of private sector engagement with education, agriculture, and pathways to employment. There was a discussion regarding the “missing middle” between smallholder farmers and food processing.

From this conversation, attendees landed on the idea of employers involved in looking at the competencies of and making better matches with potential employees.

#### Topic 3: Safe & Nutritious Food Systems

The Workgroup touched upon the growing importance of food safety and food supply with the increasing likelihood of famines around the world. Participants stated that USAID has their own foci and funding regarding nutrition policies. After further discussion, the Workgroup determined they would look into planning an event on the implementation and lessons learned of approaches like nutrition sensitive agriculture.

#### Topic 4: Diversifying Rural Economies for Increased Resilience

Participants discussed the context of rural economies needing increasing resilience, the environmental aspects, and how to create pathways to subsistence. The group ultimately decided on the topic of overcoming different challenges that make it difficult to escape small scale base subsistence farming.

### 3) Next Steps

For the four topics, participants volunteered to complete planning templates and lead efforts for the proposed events. The Co-Chairs expressed that events should be as interactive as possible by integrating tools into the logistics and formats. The Co-Chairs announced that they will be looking for a new Co-Chair after July 2021 for approximately the next two years.

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Washington Chapter**

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**FY 2021 Workgroup Co-Chairs**

Sabrina Amburgey - Vice President, Strategic Growth & Partnerships, ACDI/VOCA

Mark Castellino - Vice President, Public Sector Business Development, Opportunity International

**Photo Credit**

Screenshots from various SID-W events  
Stock images from Canva

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