**2022 WODA CHAMPION OF WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT CATEGORY**

**JAFF FRANCIS AGIAMNTEBOM**

**CAMEROON**

**CHAMPION OF WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Jaff Francis Agiamntebom is a development practitioner with more than 15 years of working experience in the non-profit sector, and on government projects and programs in Cameroon. Jaff’s areas of expertise in the rural development fields include basic human rights, agriculture and livestock development, watershed protection, forest and environmental protection and conservation and in general natural resources management. He has worked with national and international organizations as a consultant and technician.

 Jaff is the coordinator of Forest and Agroforestry Promotors, a non-profit (FAP NGO) in Cameroon. Irrigation agriculture especially in the dry season (November to March) fetches a lot of money for gardeners but small holder farmers, especially women cannot afford to purchase a motor pump to uplift water to their farms. Therefore, they work with the gardeners as helper and jobbers and miss the larger profit-making opportunities. In 2016, FAP NGO introduced the solar pump irrigation farming system with support from partners. This is an innovative renewable energy technology, that is gradually replacing the use of diesel motor water pumps that are very expensive to purchase, manage, and which emit a lot of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. The solar water pump experience is a system that involves directly coupling a small DC electric pump to a single solar panel, without any battery or controller. This allows a farmer to have constant running water from a pipe throughout the day, as long as the sun is shining. When the day’s work is finished, the farmer simply takes the pump home, to avoid the issue of theft. This innovative experience occurred as a result of many different efforts to try to solve the problem of uplifting water from streams, wells, canals etc. by small holder farmers to their farms. This system has empowered 600 women small holder households’ farmers in the Northwest and West Regions of Cameroon to reduce their dependency upon their husbands, and their levels of poverty and unemployment.

**AHMED IMTIAZ JAMI**

**BANGLADESH**

**CHAMPION OF WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Ahmed Imtiaz Jami is a social entrepreneur who has been working since 2010 for the underprivileged, less privileged, and disadvantaged groups of people to ensure quality education, sustainable livelihood, and basic health care facilities for them. With determination, he along with his friends in 2010, started the OBHIZATRIK Foundation, a government-registered nonprofit solely for the purpose of supporting the disadvantaged population to overcome their socioeconomic barriers. Once the organization was established, he started realizing the various socio-economic issues haunting Bangladesh. He then started short-term projects/ campaigns to bring about positive impacts on the lives and livelihood of Bangladeshi citizens living below the poverty line. This gradually morphed to larger and more impactful projects. He started concentrating on SDGs to create a meaningful and sustainable impact on the people of Bangladesh.

The education system of Bangladesh struggles to reach out to the underprivileged youth of the country. A lack of a bridge between the education system and the people has caused a vicious circle. In 2013, he established OBHIZATRIK school. At present he has 3 schools with 600 students located in different parts of Bangladesh. 73% of these underprivileged children are girls. He puts his utmost effort into making sure no girls are put in the bondage of child marriage. Once these children had uncertain futures, but now they are the authors of their own life.

Business models provided under the SHOKKHOM NARI (Capable women) Livelihood project have lifted approximately 2500 women and 1200 families from extreme poverty. Beneficiaries received fully developed projects and prior training so that they can become entrepreneurs. He arranged healthcare support for rural village communities with no infrastructure through a boat ambulance service. His idea of a boat ambulance has helped numerous pregnant women to give healthy births. OBHIZATRIK Foundation has always stood up during times of need. Be it an emergency or the aftermath of a natural disaster. Ahmed and his foundation are part of changing Bangladesh.

**TRISTAN KING**

**CHAMPION OF WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

**AUSTRALIA**

Over five years ago, Tristan King decided to change careers and founded a company (UberNerd) which designs websites and investigates and fixes computer system problems.  Knowing Tristan’s knowledge, work ethic, and experience, his former employer and president of TIAW, Diane Tompson engaged Tristan to help TIAW to improve and streamline its website and other technology opportunities.  Tristan who has great respect for women, being the only son with three sisters in the family and having worked with Diane for several years was quite familiar with her work to support and empower women.  Tristan willingly and quickly took on the challenge to provide TIAW with the best possible solution to enable a cost effective, streamlined, and agile website.  His efforts allowed TIAW to eliminate or reduce costs, while providing more appropriate solutions and allowing TIAW to complete most tasks independently or with minimal guidance.  With these improvements, TIAW is better able to support its valuable programs.  Additionally, TIAW was able to reintroduce social media in a more direct way, thus reaching current and potential members, sponsors, and affiliates.  UberNerd’s tagline is “If UberNerd can’t find a solution that you’re happy with, our time is free”, which reflects how seriously Tristan takes his work and TIAW is most appreciative of the results and continued support to empower women in his somewhat unique way.

Similar to his work with TIAW, Tristan is currently advising and helping to organize the Australian Women Pilots’ Association.  The association supports the interests of female pilots, advocating for equal treatment and pay for female pilots, and as a financial support program for the training and further education of individual pilots.

**DUNGRILA PASCAL MBIMENYUY**

**CAMEROON**

**CHAMPION OF WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

The Integrated Agricultural Association (I.A.A.) is a Cameroon-based non-profit development and humanitarian organization, founded in 2016 by Dungrila Pascal Mbimenyuy to holistically promote gender equality, climate and environmental justice, food security and women's empowerment. The I.A.A. is a youth-led organization which targets peasant, grassroots, and indigenous communities across Cameroon by helping to create sustainable economic development and livelihood opportunities for women and girls; empowering and training youths and women-owned producer cooperatives and educating Cameroonians about the importance of organic farming and organic food.

Under Dungrila’s leadership, the I.A.A. transforms subsistence farms into profitable businesses by helping smallholder farmers access good training, affordable capital, quality inputs and better crop prices. The I.A.A. has been creating food awareness through educational workshops while advocating for female economic empowerment and promoting reproductive health. It has also promoted ICT and STEM courses for girls.

To date, I.A.A. has trained over 5,000 smallholder farmers, many of them women, in sustainable agriculture and distributed 7,000 vegetable seed packets to 1,500 malnourished households. It has also trained over 2,000 young girls in menstrual hygiene management and supported 500 girls with sanitary pads. Dungrila’s work has also inspired and trained 1,000 girls in ICT, hardware and software maintenance and application development, as well as trained and supported over 500 young women in the production and marketing of detergents. The I.A.A. has planted 15,000 agroforestry trees and restored 150 hectares of degraded farms while training over 850 women in agroforestry techniques in 5 years.

Dungrila is passionate about creating social change and economic equity. He believes that the future of our world depends on collective action, through which we can sustain the environment by putting social justice at the center of development.

**SHYAM POKHAREL**

**NEPAL**

**CHAMPION OF WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Shyam Pokharel, Founder and Executive Director of Samrakshak Samuha Nepal (SASANE) and CEO of SASANE Sisterhood Trekking & Travel worked as a licensed attorney with over 20 years of experience in Nepal’s legal system as a lawyer at the Supreme Court of Nepal and Executive Board Member and Legal Adviser at the Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities (CREHPA). He is an expert in the national and international human trafficking crisis.

In 2016, he and six survivors of human trafficking, (Puja Dhimal, Shova Oli, Garima Rai, Indira Gurung, Binisa Gurung, and Laxmi Gurung) founded Samrakshak Samuha Nepal (SASANE) to reintegrate survivors into society. Shyam understood the aftereffects of human trafficking even after the girls and women were rescued; once they were back to the same environment they were in before: with a high level of poverty, increased discrimination and gender violence, difficult access to education, and rising unemployment, especially for women of rural villages. This caused 68% of women and girls to be re-trafficked after being rescued, so Shyam wanted to improve their chances of reintegration and provide a safe environment with opportunities for independence and a secure source of income.

Under Shyam’s administration, SASANE has received more than 2,200 girls and women over the years, with 1,575 in schools, 45 working as paralegals, 150 police officers, 31 certificated trekking guides, and more than 3,000 children, and 60 schools participating in the mountain village education program of anti-trafficking awareness. Mr. Shyam Pokharel is highly recognized in Nepal by national and international development organizations. His efforts have been focused on empowering young girls and women survivors, allowing them to survive and strive against all the odds. At SASANE, girls learn to deal with their past as something that is gone, live in the present with the belief that they can also have a future beside their history.

**JOSEPH TEMBO**

**ZAMBIA**

**CHAMPION OF WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Joseph Tembo has been working as a fulltime public-school teacher in the Ministry of Education in Zambia for 17 years. He holds a PhD Degree in Environment and Sustainable Development. He has been campaigning for female education and equality in Zambia, believing that education is an equalizer. His vision is to empower women and girls with various resources to enable them live independent lives. In 2016, he founded a non-profit community organization, Changing Lives Initiative Zambia (CLIZ) for the development of women and girls. CLIZ has over 100 volunteers and over 100 support members. Joseph recognized that while community organizations and public schools in Zambia may have standard programs for men/ boys and women/ girls, the breadth and depth of the programs have been benefiting a small number of women and girls in the community. This inequity has caused many women and girls to live in misery as compared to men and boys. He wanted to maximize training, development, networking and mentoring specifically for more women to become successful leaders in their own businesses. Under Joseph’s consultative and participatory leadership, CLIZ has provided mentoring and support to over 3000 women and girls since 2016. Through member surveys of the women and girls who completed the mentoring program, CLIZ found that 90 percent of the women and girls have improved their income directly attributable to their experience with CLIZ. Additionally, 80 percent of the overall girls’ membership indicated that CLIZ helped them to improve their self-esteem, leadership skills, and performance within their current schools. Selected CLIZ members are sponsored to participate in many global annual leadership forums with over 100,000 online participants each year, where successful business leaders share their experience and expertise. Joseph Tembo dedicates an extraordinary amount of his time to supporting women and girls in both the informal and formal sectors, and in mentoring and coaching literally dozens of women and girls, especially those from under-represented communities in Zambia.

**AKEH TRAVIS ZENWEN**

**CAMEROON**

**CHAMPION OF WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Akeh Travis Zenwen has over 7 years of extensive experience in social and community development specifically focusing on peace building, leadership, creative skills, and capacity development. Travis is the Founder/CEO of Cameroon Young Dynamic Youths (CYDY), African Nations Amateur Development Association (ANADA), and the Executive Network for Africa (ENFA) where he focuses on developing, designing, and implementing creative skills and social development programs and activities in communities for socio-economic empowerment of adolescent girls and boys in partnership with civil society organizations, government agencies, local authorities, diverse experts, and other stakeholders. He organizes seminars, workshops, trainings, and annual football tournaments to promote social cohesion, peace building, and education. Through the CYDY Creativity and Innovation Summit, a coalition of 20 women led cultural organizations support, protect, and promote creative industries and cultural professionals in the Anglophone crisis affected regions of Cameroon through economic recovery. Travis is a member of the National Coalition on the Implementation and Localization of the UN Security Council Resolution 2250, On Youth Peace and Security in Cameroon. He runs a mentorship program for young aspiring women social entrepreneurs and has supported many to start their own organizations with remarkable social impact. He is a mentor with the USG-Alumni E-Mentoring Program in Cameroon. Travis holds a BSc Degree in Political Science and Public Administration from the University of Buea and is a holder of the NEBOSH International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety, Environmental Management UK. He has a certificate from the Young African Leaders Initiative, YALI Regional Leadership Training Center West Africa Ghana (Lagos Campus Nigeria), and a training certificate by British High Commission Cameroon on Empowering Youth Leaders as Peer Educators for Peace.