



**TIAW**  
The International  
Alliance for Women

World of  
Difference  
AWARDS

## Corporate & Corporate Initiatives for Women's Empowerment Category

### **Fatou Manneh**

**Category: Corporate**

**Country: Gambia**

Farouk Manneh is the founder of Jelmah Herbella a business that processes local tea sourced from farmers, and effectively markets the products online through a digital marketing model. Her impact extends beyond her business endeavors, as she has trained over 1000 women in financial literacy through the Women Boss program, which has grown to a network of over 10,000 members in Gambia. Fatou's dedication to entrepreneurship, women's empowerment, and environmental sustainability makes her a truly inspiring figure.

---

### **Alteris Women**

**Category: Corporate Initiatives for Women's Economic Empowerment**

**Country: Australia**

Alteris Women's mission is to advance women's economic empowerment. The team of senior professional women have the skills, knowledge, and lived experience that enables them to enhance all women's financial confidence and wellbeing at every stage of life. It is their mission to advance women's economic standing by empowering women with insights, education, and tools that give them the confidence to make decisions that best suit their needs. By using their collective wisdom, expertise and commitment, Alteris Women also contribute to programs that have a direct impact on women's economic empowerment both at home and abroad. Alteris Women hold events called "Insights" where speakers and groups share insights on managing money, investing, and preparation. They support the work of charitable organizations who significantly demonstrate efforts towards women's economic empowerment, such as The Global Federation of Chinese Business Women, The International Alliance for Women (TIAW), and Dress For Success.

Empower women.  
Change the world.

tiaw.org

## Education Category

### **Michael Mwavali**

**Category: Education**

**Country: Kenya**

Michael Mwavali is passionate about creating opportunities for women to achieve economic security and contribute to their communities. He believes that access to quality services for economic empowerment and early childhood education are essential to women.

Beginning as a teacher in a small village in Kenya, he offered children an education beginning at the kindergarten level. The government of Kenya does not offer free kindergartens. Brought to school by their mothers, Mr. Mwavali soon mobilized the women by organizing a "table bank". He advised each member as to the best business to begin based upon their skills and training. Many members attended vocational skills training. Out of the 197 women who were part of the group, 126 were successful because of Mr. Mwavali's initiatives. These women even funded the building of four classrooms for their children. Many of them also raised money to start a feeding program and purchase school supplies.

Due to his work and initiatives over 100 women are earning a living, providing for their children and being able to send them to school.

---

### **Beth Terry Wawira**

**Category: Education**

**Country: Kenya**

Beth Wawira founded Smart Child Kenya in 2008. The organization aims to help vulnerable children develop and grow, especially girls via their work in four thematic areas: Education, Child Protection/feeding program, Reproductive Health, and working to stop Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Her own story inspired her work. Forced to leave school, once she began menstruating, she ran away to avoid being a child bride and to avoid FGM. She became self-sufficient and entered a marriage with a man of her own choosing.

Smart Child Kenya provides girls with a primary and secondary education. The organization cares for those in need of medical support and/or suffering from cancer, diabetes, HIV, and AIDS. Sixty children are currently fed each month, every evening. The goal is to feed 500 children. Established Ruth's Rescue House where young girls who have run away to avoid child bride marriage and FGM reside. The Sewing Circle provides economic employment for women who sew reusable menstrual pads for sale to local organizations such as Pads4Africa.

The organization is supported by its own efforts and volunteers globally who support the education of girls and the economic empowerment of women.

## **Entrepreneurship Category**

### **Yainkain Santious Bangura**

**Category: Entrepreneurship**

**Country: Sierra Leone**

Yainkain Santious Bangura is a beacon of hope and empowerment in Sierra Leone, particularly in the Makeni Bombali District. Born and raised in this vibrant community, Yainkain recognized the challenges faced by marginalized women and girls, particularly survivors of Gender-Based and Sexual Violence (GBSV) and those engaged in sex work. To offer these women an opportunity, she founded Yani's Beauty Fashion and Skills Training Empire. From 2021 through 2023, she has empowered 2500 young women through different skills trainings and now 80% are small business owners in the district. Women receive vocational training, support, and a safe space to heal and grow.

Yainkain's vision is to create a future where every woman and girl in Sierra Leone has the opportunity to thrive. Her leadership and dedication have earned her widespread respect and made her a role model for aspiring changemakers across the nation.

---

### **Shamim Naluyima**

**Category: Entrepreneurship**

**Country: Uganda**

Shamim Naluyima is the founder of EDUPLASTICS, a company that addresses the plastic waste challenge by recycling plastic disposable waste into educational materials for children in refugee camps and rural communities as well as producing eco-friendly accessories such as backpacks and shopping bags.

Through this initiative, she has created job opportunities for women and youth in her community. By training these marginalized groups in plastic waste collection, recycling and reuse, as well as sewing and tailoring skills, she has empowered them to earn a living, raise their standards of living, support their families, contribute to the local economy, and break the cycle of poverty.

## **Non-Profit/NGO Category**

### **Dorothy Akende**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Nigeria**

Ms. Akende has been a community development activist for over 8 years and is the founder and executive director of House of Hilkiyah Foundation, an NGO that provides interventions in peace building, poverty alleviation, humanitarian issues focusing on violence against women. The foundation has trained approximately 2050 women from more than 12 communities in how to run small businesses and provided financial training.

She is also affiliated with DO, a non-profit startup of individuals taking personal and collective action for a better future for Africa. Dorothy identified the need for women farmers to be able to automate the grain grinding process to allow the women more time to farm and increase their productivity. With support from Guaranty Trust Bank, she was able to obtain ten grinding machines which were placed at four strategic locations in the community. These machines served over 3000 women farmers. Additionally, the women farmers were provided financial literacy training.

Ms. Akende works closely with UN Women. She is the winner of numerous awards and recognitions including being nominated by UN Women Nigeria as an outstanding leader.

---

### **Selase Atsriku**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Ghana**

Selase Atsriku is the Chief Operating Officer and Volunteer Coordinator at Fafali organization he spearheads strategic planning and empower underserved children through education, environmental initiatives, and sports programs.

Mr. Selase has spearheaded a groundbreaking project called "Girls On A Mission". This initiative goes beyond conventional categories to positively impact the economic empowerment of women in the Anumie Electoral Area (AEA) by focusing on critical aspects such as sexual and reproductive health education, high school attainment, and STEM education.

Through this project, 25 girls are currently enrolled in high school, over 100 girls have been introduced to STEM education, and three girls are earning supplementary income in video and photography shoots. The initiative has extended its impact beyond direct beneficiaries, reaching over 300 students with crucial education on sexual and reproductive health, thus fostering a healthier and more informed community. The Fafali organization is creating a ripple effect that will contribute to the long-term economic empowerment of women in the region.

## **Brave Aurora Association**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Ghana**

Initially founded as an orphanage in 2010 by volunteers from Austria, Brave Aurora (BA) Association transitioned in 2016 to an NGO due to the Care Reform Initiative by the government of Ghana which sought to reduce or close the number of orphanages. BA is organized around three program initiatives: education, child protection, and a vocational skills program to promote economic empowerment for women and girls.

The education program seeks to support the orphans as well as the children in the community by making education inclusive for all and providing teaching and learning materials. The child protection program ensures children are raised and cared for either by their families or in the care of BA. The livelihood program provides women vocational skills to improve their economic and decision-making powers in the community.

Over the years, BA has equipped approximately 1500 women with different vocational skills training.

---

## **American Association of University Women (AAUW)**

**Gloria L. Blackwell – CEO**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: United States**

Helmed by Chief Executive Officer, Gloria L. Blackwell, AAUW has led the fight in the United States for women's equity and economic opportunity since 1881. Currently the organization focuses on training and advocacy. AAUW's salary negotiation trainings are facilitator guided virtual workshops and use AAUW's Work Smart Online e-learning tool that teaches women to negotiate for a new job, raise or promotion. AAUW's salary negotiation and financial literacy trainings are its most sought-after programs and to date have reached 197,679 people.

AAUW is a leader in the call for student loan debt relief, which cripple women's financial trajectories. Women hold almost 2/3 of the United States' \$1.54 trillion in student debt, totaling \$929 billion. News outlets reporting on women's economic empowerment topics such as gender pay gap and student loan debt, frequently cite AAUW's original research. As the face of AAUW, Ms. Blackwell has provided statements of subject matter expertise for such publications as Time Magazine, The Washington Post, Politico, and more. Gloria in addition to her role as CEO, is AAUW's main representative to the United Nations. Among her many accomplishments is over 15 years of managing AAUW's highly esteemed fellowships and grants program – awarding over \$70 million in funding to women scholars and programs in the US and abroad. Of note, she has significantly expanded AAUW's outreach to girls and women of color. Gloria is committed to supporting opportunities and empowerment for women and girls globally.

## **Sandra Cabrera**

**Category: Non-profit/NGO**

**Country: Argentina**

Sandra Cabrera is the dedicated coordinator of Fundacion San Genaro's Women Empowerment project. In 2016, she began as a volunteer at the foundation's headquarters in Villa Ojo de Agua. Initially shy, she has grown in confidence and is today the leader and the key representative of the foundation in the community.

Under her leadership, the Women Empowerment project has flourished, reaching hundreds of women in the community. Since 2017, Sandra has participated in and led over 300 activities, providing valuable resources and support. Her work has impacted over 200 women in Villa Ojo de Agua, a small town of 15,000 people, located in the southern part of Santiago del Estero, one of the poorest and most disadvantaged regions of Argentina. Sandra's role extends beyond coordinating at the headquarters level. She also accompanies teams to rural schools, ensuring that educational programs reach even the most isolated communities. Her involvement has been crucial in overcoming various logistical hurdles and cultural barriers.

Ms. Cabrera has also ensured that the foundation's headquarters is a safe space for women, which is essential in a region and country with high levels of sexism.

---

## **Helene Do**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Australia**

Helene Do has a distinguished career spanning over 25 years in senior leadership roles, with a wealth of experience in Professional Services, Customer Success, and Technical Support within Digital Marketing and Business Intelligence. Her expertise spans the for-profit, charitable, and social enterprise sectors.

Currently Ms. Do serves as the Co-Chair of Human & Hope Association Ind., a charity dedicated to funding locally run education projects in Cambodia. Since 2020, she has leveraged her extensive professional experience to secure vital funding through matching campaigns. Her strategic vision has catalyzed initiatives such as sewing projects and agriculture training, equipping women with sustainable skills for self-reliance. Her commitment to governance has attracted influential ambassadors for the cause and ensured the organization's financial sustainability.

Under Helene's stewardship, Human and Hope has acquired funding for projects such as the Menstrual Hygiene Project, which reduces expenses spent on pads while also generating income for the female makers, to financial literacy workshops for women studying agriculture and tuition for sewing programs. Her impact extends beyond the balance sheet, with her guidance, support, and unwavering support in advancing women's economic empowerment globally.

## **Maia Ganon**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Argentina**

Maia Ganon is the Executive Director of the Vamos A Zoomar Foundation, which carries out projects to expand women's access to the construction field. Currently only 5.4% of registered construction workers in Argentina are women.

Since 2021, more than 800 women have participated in training in trades. More than 25 training courses have taken place, more than 50 alliances were generated by the foundation and the first university certification was offered by the National University of the Northeast in Chaco and Corrientes. Currently, 10% of the women trained are working in the construction field.

In May 2024, the foundation launched the training cycle "Building Your Future", consisting of four modules that provide tools for the labor insertion of women in construction. As a result, the first 100 women have graduated and are taking their first steps in the construction industry.

Maia is working on the development of the project "Installers-Women who Build" that focuses on increasing women's access to the sector through the creation of work teams comprised of and led by women. The project seeks to provide job opportunities, technical skills, establish a stable income, and actively contribute to the industry. This project promotes gender equity and labor inclusion as well as strengthens the local economy.

---

## **Kelly Lyndgaard**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: United States**

Kelly Lyndgaard is the Founder and CEO of Unshattered, a 501c (3) non-profit social enterprise. The mission of Unshattered is to end the addiction relapse cycle by providing pathways toward economic independence and sustained sobriety. Ms. Lyndgaard realized that without job skills or sufficient education even the most motivated recovering addict is apt to relapse. The organization was founded to provide jobs, educational skills, and a path toward long-term sobriety.

The organization makes and sells custom handbags from upcycled material. It also provides ways to donate that produce tangible results. The company provides full time employment for 29 women in recovery. In its eight years of existence, it has provided 200 women with job skills to sustain employment. 100% of the employees have been able to move out of transitional housing and into independent living within 12 months of employment. Individual relapses have been minimized following the Unshattered model. Kelly envisions that in 5 years to have 50+ women employees in sustainable long-term careers. She's building partnerships in housing, education, and healthcare, access to daycare, etc. The goal is to have every woman on the team in a position of community impact and financial stability – Ambassadors of Possibility, to show that it is possible to rise above the circumstances handed to them.

## **Tiffany “Delilah” Miranda**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: United States**

Girls Make Beats is a 501(C)(3) founded in 2012. Its mission is to close the gender gap in Music Education and Technology. Tiffany Miranda identified the gender gap in the music industry with respect to music producers, DJs, and audio engineers. Since 2012, this organization has served over 900 girls both domestically and globally. 75% of the girls come from historically racial and socio-economic underrepresented groups.

This organization through educational programming, events, and mentorship increases the number of women in this industry. The girls in training with Girls Make Beats are provided industry opportunities to display their skills, work at actual events, and begin to build a network of industry contacts.

With the work of Tiffany Miranda another industry, dominated by men, has been opened up. She stands out in creating a “feeder” stream of highly qualified women to work in the music industry.

---

## **Stella Maris Molina**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Argentina**

Stella Molina is an Indigenous activist and founder of the non-profit Fundacion Markani whose mission is to promote the integration of vulnerable communities and raise awareness about the importance of building an inclusive society with a gender perspective. The organization focuses on public policies, as a transformation tool within the framework of the movement for global justice.

Fundacion Markani is an organization created and led by indigenous women, gender-based survivors in Salta, Argentina. Through the foundation's Shelter for Women, women can start a new chapter in their lives. Stella has leveraged company alliances, entrepreneurship, and access to information and communication technology to assist 12 Indigenous depressed communities of the northwest and southern Argentina totaling approximately 12,000 people develop their economic activities to focus directly on local production and development. Sustainable practices were introduced to the communities and implemented while respecting the natural resources and existing eco-systems. Additionally, modern technologies were paired and applied to traditional craft industries.

Ms. Molina has contributed to the economic autonomy of 70% of the women in these communities and in general to the local economic development by reducing gaps in inclusion and moving towards an equitable and egalitarian future for these Indigenous people.

She was recognized for her work by Vital Voices as an Outstanding Women of the Social Economy and was awarded the Descatada Woman Award by the Secretariat of Women of the Province of Salta.



## **Hadijah Nankanja**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Uganda**

Hadijah Nankanja is the founder and team leader of Community Women's Enterprise Network Uganda, Limited (CWEN), a non-profit organization with the vision of seeing more women owned businesses with products and services on the market. CWEN was founded in 2014 and has a network of women entrepreneurs and youths totaling over 1500 across Uganda. CWEN provides business information, technical support, training and guidance for their members to reach greater markets, increase the quality of their products, and to brand and market their products. CWEN provides a co-shared work and processing facility for its members. A lack of affordable space and high upfront costs to build out a space creates significant barriers to growth for women entrepreneurs. CWEN's facility removes these barriers and creates jobs within the community.

CWEN's annual Bootcamp for young women entrepreneurs (ages 18-24) focuses on building skills and business acumen. Graduates of the Bootcamp are mentored for a significant period to ensure continuous learning and advancement.

Through her leadership, CWEN has trained over 5800 women, while 400 products have come to market or received program support, and 492 jobs have been created.

---

## **Corrinne Nguruki Yamo**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Kenya**

Corrine Nguruki Yamo is the current CEO at Generation Kenya part of the global non-profit Generation network that supports people to achieve economic mobility and a better life. She has 15+ years of experience in the development field with significant focus in youth development and empowerment. Prior to joining Generation Kenya, she built her career in youth economic development at Save the Children, USA. As a financial consultant, MicroSave Consulting, Ltd., she co-managed an adolescent girls' saving project funded by the Nike Foundation. She was a technical advisor on product development, market research, strategic marketing for banks and Micro Finance Initiatives (MFIs) in Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Sierra Leone, and Ghana during her career as a professional banker.

Generation Kenya aligns their educational and vocational training with the needs of industry sectors. They serve individuals at all career levels and assist them in overcoming biases and obstacles to gain employment. There is also a focus on tracking and raising the return on investment employers get from recruiting and training so that new hires operate at higher productivity, with longer retention and a faster progression speed to promotion.

Generation Kenya has graduated 28,056 individuals; 57% of whom are female. 82% of graduates are placed within 90 days of graduation at one of over 350 employer partners. The placement rate of female graduates is nearly 60%. Generation Kenya has grown from one training location in Nairobi in 2015 to 31 across 20 counties in Kenya.

## **Terese Njoroge**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Republic of Kenya**

Terese founded Clean Start Africa after being wrongly imprisoned with her three-month old daughter. Her firsthand experience of the plight of women imprisoned with their children mostly due to the criminalization of poverty led her to commit her life to supporting hundreds of women leaving prison to successfully reintegrate into society. Since 2105 she has been steering social-economic transformation and social justice reforms in Kenya and across the African continent.

She has been recognized and awarded both domestically and internationally. Among her numerous awards, she was an inaugural Ford Foundation Global Fellow, a Vital Voices LeadGlobal Fellow, TED Women 2017 speaker and the recipient of the 2018 African Female Leader Excellence Award by The Global Thinkers Forum. Her drive to bring social change led to an advisory role to the board at Mighty Ally, an organization that helps growth-stage nonprofits and social enterprises to position their brands.

---

## **Susanne Rheault**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Tanzania**

Susanne Rheault, PhD is a psychologist and organizational development specialist. She is the Co-Founder of Precious Project, Inc., a United States and Tanzanian based NGO. The mission of Precious Project is to nurture, educate, and empower impoverished and/or orphaned youth in Tanzania to be productive members and future leaders of their country.

Since its founding in 2010, Precious Project has grown to provide a residential home for 30 children, a village school, a breakfast club for all students attending the school, an agricultural program to develop and teach community members more self-reliance and sustainability in food sourcing, construction of a community center, and support of a women's economic empowerment group named "Mwnamke Unaweza" meaning 'a woman can' in Swahili. Conceived by women who worked on the building of the new Children's Home, the women meet weekly and receive training in basic skills to build and fund micro-enterprises formed by its group members.

In June 2023, the Precious Project received Tanzania's "Uhuru Torch Award" for outstanding educational contributions to underprivileged children.

Precious Project has received a four-star rating from Charity Navigator and the Platinum Seal of Transparency from Candid, formerly known as GuideStar. The Platinum seal is reserved for organizations that demonstrate an exceptional substantiated commitment to transparency in operations.

## **Nadia Sanchez**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Colombia**

Nadia Sanchez has made significant contributions to international development, having worked with esteemed organizations like the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Organization of American States in Washington, DC.

As the President of the She Is Foundation, Nadia leads initiatives promoting economic empowerment and digital inclusion for women across Colombia and seven other countries, including Peru, Panama, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and the United States. To date, the She Is Foundation has developed over 500 programs, benefiting more than 17,000 women and girls. Additionally, she fosters the SHE IS GLOBAL FORUM, uniting over 30 countries and 81,000 individuals in a powerful network for women's empowerment and global change.

Nadia's influence extends globally. She has been honored in over 15 countries and given lectures in 22 countries. Her impactful work has been recognized by the World Bank and the White House, and she was named as one of Forbes' most powerful women. In 2024, she received the prestigious Cafam Woman of the Year award in Colombia.

---

## **Madjalía Seynou**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Burkina Faso**

Madjalía Seynou grew up in rural Burkina Faso and witnessed the daily challenges faced by rural women farmers. In 2019 she founded FarmSahel, a non-profit organization that empowers women farmers to advance their communities by helping them learn and adopt regenerative agricultural practices, thereby increasing their potential for economic gain.

To date, FarmSahel has created 10 agricultural cooperatives, representing 1500 female farmers in 10 villages who work together to control their economic destinies through collective decision-making and knowledge sharing. This has led to a 56% average increase in crop yield, with a corresponding 35% increase in income. FarmSahel has built 2 solar powered water wells to provide clean drinking water to 2 communities of 10,000 people and allowed 100 women farmers to grow off season vegetables which provide additional income.

Ms. Seynou's commitment extends beyond FarmShel; she founded Iram Web Services, a web design agency and co-founded RabbitSkill, a job board connecting Burkina Faso's youth with online job opportunities and career guidance. She holds a Master's degree in accounting and a Bachelor of Science in economics. Ms. Seynou is a recipient of the 2023 Women Creativity in Rural Life Award.

## **Michael Sunbola**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Nigeria**

Michael Sunbola is a leader with a passion for advocating for sustainability in food systems. He has demonstrated a commitment to addressing one of the most pressing issues in Nigeria and Africa as a whole—hunger and poverty, by establishing Nigeria's first Indigenous food bank. The Lagos Food Bank initiative has made considerable progress in ensuring food security and nutrition in over 160 communities, reaching over 2,400,000 beneficiaries since inception. The Food Bank has not only provided regular food supplies to vulnerable households but has also provided vulnerable women with farming skills and resources. The program provides food security and nutrition and contributes to financial stability, natural resource management, and rural community cohesion. For his work Michael has been the recipient of several distinguished awards. Future-focused, Michael aspires to build a society where everyone has access to wholesome food and where the most vulnerable people have the tools they need to escape poverty.

---

## **Adimaimalaga Tafuna'i**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Samoa**

Adimaimalaga "Adi" Tafuna'i is the Executive Director of Women in Business Development, Inc., an NGO that she co-founded in Samoa in 1991. This enterprise social support services and commercial/social enterprise services for rural farming families in Samoa. Her work for the past 30 years has empowered thousands of family enterprises to generate products that are processed, marketed, and supplied to local and overseas markets. Adi has done so in a way that honors Indigenous traditions, uses both traditional and modern technology, and promotes fair trade. She has created an inclusive workspace where employees with disabilities comprise 20% of the total staff.

Adi's impact is vast. She sits on the Global Agenda Council for new Growth Models for the World Economic Forum. She is an Emerging Pacific Women Leaders Project mentor as well as Chair of the Steering Committee for Australia Awards Women Leading and Influencing. From 2005 to 2008, she was Chair of the Pacific Islands Association on Non-Governmental Organizations. Adi has led and/or been a member of other international organizations and committees, such as the Women in Business Foundation, Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community, European Union Micro Projects Steering Committee, and Regional Forestry Program's Project Steering Committee. In 2005, she was a member of the Commonwealth Observer Group for the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Uganda.

## **Soleir Valecillos**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Venezuela**

Soleir Valecillos Alza is a lawyer currently focusing her work on helping women over 50 in Venezuela, reinsert themselves into the labor market and earn a living. She is the co-founder and CEO of Silvermoon a non-profit in Venezuela. Most women in this age demographic live on a pension of less than \$6.00 per month in a country with hyperinflation. In one year, she has impacted more than 1200 women in her community. Silvermoon is the first organization dedicated to promoting the silver economy in Venezuela through training and technological literacy of people over 50 years old. The focus is on empowering and encouraging the population to achieve their professional goals through specialized technological training, offering them the opportunity to learn in a safe environment designed for their needs. It has not been without its regional challenges.

---

## **Alida Weht**

**Category: Non-Profit/NGO**

**Country: Argentina**

Alida Weht moved with her children to Chacra de la Merced, where she noticed that many women did not return home for fear of domestic violence, instead spending the nights outdoors in the town square. This prompted her to co-found Las Omas Ong which has played a crucial role in changing the lives of over 300 women. The organization, whose motto is "Women who change their lives change the world," focuses on improving the economic and social quality of life for vulnerable women, including victims of violence.

The activities of Las Omas Ong are divided into three main pillars: Support, Training, and Production. Support is provided in the areas of health, including mental health, social assistance, and food and clothing assistance. Primary and secondary education is provided for youth and adults as well as vocational training. Production units in the areas of textiles, fabric recycling, resale shops, construction, and catering promote financial independence and community empowerment.

Alida continues to be a source of inspiration for women who want to change their circumstances. Her leadership has been crucial to the growth and success of Las Omas Ong and she is an influential figure in the fight for equal opportunities in Cordoba and beyond.

## **Public Sector Category**

### **Marilyn Okowa-Daramola**

**Category: Public Sector**

**Country: Nigeria**

The Honorable Marilyn Okowa-Daramola, is a Legislator, youth advocate and girl's empowerment trailblazer. She was elected to the 8<sup>th</sup> Delta State House of Assembly in March 2023 at the age of 33, to represent Ika North-East State Constituency and currently serves as the Chairman of the Finance and Appropriation Committee, Deputy Chairman, Housing, Women Affairs, Girl Child and Humanitarian Support Services amongst others. She is the youngest legislator and one of two female legislators in the 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

She began her public service career as a Senior Special Assistant to the Governor of Delta State on Girl Child Empowerment, where she headed the Delta State Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Girl Child Development, from 2019-2022. During her tenure, she pioneered Project GEST – the Girls Entrepreneurship and Skills Training Programme, through which 1850 young female entrepreneurs in Delta State were trained, empowered, and established. Surveys showed that through this program, over 7000 people were indirectly impacted with improved livelihoods as most of the beneficiaries are paying it forward by training others in their communities.

Marilyn established a non-profit, The Marilyn Okowa-Daramola Foundation with the objectives of alleviating poverty, encouraging women-owned enterprises, and inspiring youth through education. Thus far the foundation has reached out to approximately 2300 children, over 1128 market women and hundreds of indigent families through the Back-to-School Outreach and the Market Women Business Support Outreach.

As a legislator she sponsored a bill which was passed by the House to protect the rights of people living with disabilities, ensuring a future of improved access and opportunities. She is also the Family Planning Ambassador for Delta State and holds the view that family planning is a fundamental human right and key to empowering young women to make informed choices about their bodies, futures, and families. Marilyn is an active advocate to increase the number of young people, especially young women in active politics and elected office.

## **Young Leaders (Under 25 years of age) Category**

### **Mathabo Koloti**

**Category: Young Leaders (Under 25 years of age)**

**Country: South Africa**

In the landscape of empowerment, Mathabo Koloti has dedicated herself to advancing the economic empowerment of women in her local community. At the forefront of her advocacy lies her involvement with the MT Foundation, where she champions the Free The Period program, aimed at breaking the shackles of period poverty and empowering young girls. Mathabo's fervor and dedication have seen her emerge as a true ambassador for change, tirelessly raising awareness and motivating young girls to aspire for a brighter, more equitable future. She is resilient, passionate, and has an unwavering commitment to social progress.