



African Women's Collaborative for Healthy Food Systems Steering Committee • Terms of Reference

Summary

The African Women's Collaborative for Healthy Food Systems (the Collaborative) arose in 2017 from a collective concern about rural women's rights and food quality combined with a commitment to economic and gender justice. The Collaborative addresses the marginalisation of indigenous, pastoralist and peasant women across the continent through a shared agenda of food sovereignty, healthy food systems and human rights, including the right to have equal access to and control over land, seeds, property and natural resources, to contribute to economic growth, and to have representation at regional, national and continental levels.

The Collaborative is Pan-African initiative led by outstanding African rural women. It has a Steering Committee, a Management Group, a Finance Committee, Advisors, and a technical support team. The structure of the Collaborative is based on collaboration, joint decision-making and joint accountability with the aim of combining knowledge, experience and influence, and drawing upon each member's access to her own membership organization and networks. The Collaborative is fiscally sponsored by [FJC](#) in New York.

The Steering Committee may consist of 5 to 15 people from up to 15 countries in 5 regions (North, South, East, West, and Central Africa). Membership of the Steering Committee must reflect diversity of nationality, race, age, gender, language, culture, and religion. The current Steering Committee is composed of six peasant and indigenous women farmers from Burkina Faso, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Zambia (see Annex 1 for list of current Steering Committee members). Each Steering Committee member leads her own registered organization with several thousand women members. All are active leaders in food sovereignty movements in East, West and Southern Africa, have significant roles on pan-African and global platforms and share their knowledge with UN agencies and international NGOs as well as with regional networks and organisations.

As one of its strategic priorities for 2022-2023, the Collaborative aims to expand the Steering Committee with three young women leaders, who will bring a new dynamic to the Collaborative and at the same time engage with other Steering Committee members and learn from the Collaborative's work. They will enrich the Collaborative not only with their experience and knowledge, but with a regional perspective that is deeply rooted in peasant and indigenous

cultures. The Collaborative is particularly seeking representation from Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa.

Mission and Vision

The Collaborative's vision is that African people and Mother Earth are nourished, healthy and enjoying a good life. Its mission is to promote and nurture a way of life that respects, takes care of and restores Mother Earth and her resources while benefiting African people and their communities. The Collaborative promotes healthy food systems that are grounded in feminist principles and that improve livelihoods for peasant and indigenous women across Africa.

The Collaborative's focus is to highlight and change the minimal participation of peasant and indigenous women in decision-making processes within the many African farmer organisations, NGOs and CBOs that are advocating for agroecology, seed saving and food sovereignty, as well as from African feminist fora; the lack of respect for their knowledge and expertise as practitioners in all aspects of the food system; and the lack of cohesion between existing broad-based women's movements campaigning for environmental justice, women's rights and healthy food systems. Its strategy is to combine knowledge, experience and local capacity and a broad base in both Francophone and Anglophone regions of Africa.

Role and Responsibilities

The primary responsibilities of the Steering Committee as a group are to:

- Set the vision and direction of the Collaborative;
- Define and agree annual goals, priorities and outcomes for the Collaborative;
- Develop and adopt strategic plans and policies for the Collaborative;
- Review, comment on and approve annual budgets, financial reports, funding proposals and project expenditure;
- Nominate, elect and appoint new members of the Steering Committee, Advisors, Technical Support team and others, as agreed;
- Develop and help implement Collaborative activities.
- Individual Steering Committee members are expected to:
- Participate in Steering Committee and Strategic Planning meetings by Zoom or WhatsApp up to six times a year to guide the Collaborative, make decisions, and review progress;
- Review and comment by email on fundraising applications and project plans, as requested;
- Share information and knowledge with other Steering Committee members (through WhatsApp and email);
- Maintain and improve communication systems to ensure online connectivity with members of the Collaborative, seeking help from the Collaborative when necessary;
- Contribute information and insights for research projects undertaken by the Collaborative, as needed;
- Recommend and make introductions to organizations and individuals according to Collaborative criteria and priorities.

Projects

When funding is available from the Collaborative, each Steering Committee member carries out projects in her own country, in partnership with her own organization, and in collaboration with other Steering Committee members. For all projects, and in particular multi-country projects, each Steering Committee member will:

- Help develop project goals and intended outcomes;
- Help define activities and timelines;
- Provide estimates of costs for implementation in their country;
- Review and give input on the proposal and funding application;
- Sign necessary contracts on behalf of their organization, receive fees, and ensure her organization is committed to fulfilling the goals of the project
- Implement in-country activities according to timeline and budget;
- Provide regular updates;
- Fulfil the reporting requirements of the project (narrative and financial)

Convenings

The Collaborative recognizes the importance of meeting in-person as a full group, to share knowledge, develop strategies and agree priorities. However, the Collaborative has only been able to meet once as a full group due to cost, travel restrictions with COVID-19 and other constraints. This means the Collaborative has relied on regular zoom meetings to bring everyone together to discuss key issues. In addition, some Collaborative Steering Committee members have been able to meet with one or two other Steering Committee members during conferences or other gatherings. It is important that Steering Committee members:

- keep the Collaborative informed of their travel plans in the hopes of being in the same place at the same time as other Collaborative members. The Collaborative does not expect to pay for these meetings.
- Attend scheduled in-person meetings organized and paid for by the Collaborative;
- Provide estimated costs on request for economy travel and other essential expenses in advance as requested and provide receipts of expenditure within 30 days.

Honorarium

Each Steering Committee member receives a modest monthly honorarium from the Collaborative.

The Collaborative assesses the IT needs of each new Steering Committee member to ensure they are able to carry out the work of the Collaborative. These needs vary, depending on the IT equipment and support they already have, the extent of their work with the Collaborative, and the particular circumstances of their country. Based on this assessment, the Collaborative

offers technical support and a financial contribution towards connectivity and communications equipment (such as laptop, cell phone, Wi-Fi box, router, printer, scanner).

Each Steering Committee member also receives a monthly contribution from the Collaborative to support her internet costs.

Election and Onboarding

To become a member of the Steering Committee, candidates must complete an application form. This is reviewed by all members of the Steering Committee, who vote to elect new members. New members are given an introductory training and orientation, along with access to the Collaborative's Google Drive where documents are stored, contact information of other Steering Committee members, and regular contact with the Collaborative's Outreach & Communications Manager.

Terms

The terms of a Steering Committee Member are three years, renewable for a second three-year term.

Authorization

Each Steering Committee member ensures that the organization she is working with has authorized her participation as a Steering Committee member of the Collaborative for a period of three years. When possible, each Steering Committee member involves her organization and its members in Collaborative activities in ways that benefit the organization and its members.

Qualification

To qualify for the 2023 call for applications, you need to:

- Be a peasant or indigenous young woman leader actively involved in community-based food systems and agroecological practices
- Be a board member or an active leader of a young women's rights and/or farming organization with a minimum of 500 women members for an emerging organization (under 5 years) or a minimum of 1000 women members for an established organization (5 years or above)
- Be 18-35 years old
- Have reliable access to the internet and cell phone

Qualities and skills

In 2023, the Collaborative is seeking to elect three young women leaders who:

- Have an understanding of and can speak clearly about the realities, rights and resources of African rural women
- Have in-depth understanding of the needs and challenges faced by young peasant women and girls in Africa, and can work with the Collaborative to develop innovative strategies that address these issues in a way that is attractive to young people
- Are passionate about highlighting the significance and value of African women's local seeds and local food systems to officials and policymakers at community, national and Pan-African level
- Communicate effectively in English or French (speak, read and write)
- Speak at least one African language.

Application

To submit an application, please visit us online to [download our application](#) form and complete the form in English or French. Send the completed application form by email to applicationscollaborative@gmail.com.

We will review applications on a rolling basis and the position is open until filled.

Annex 1

Steering Committee Members 2022

The current Steering Committee is composed of six peasant and indigenous women farmers from Burkina Faso, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Zambia. They are:

1. **Elizabeth Mpfu:** Collaborative co-founder and Director Elizabeth Mpfu, is the Former Chair of Zimbabwe Smallholders Organic Farmers Forum (ZIMSOFF). ZIMSOFF is the voice of peasants struggling for social justice in Zimbabwe. Its goal is improved livelihoods of organized and empowered smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe practicing sustainable and viable ecological agriculture. ZIMSOFF has 19,000 members (13,000 female) in eight provinces. Elizabeth was also until October 2021 Secretary General of La Via Campesina (LVC), an influential coalition of over 178 organizations advocating family-farm-based sustainable agriculture. Elizabeth remains closely connected with LVC.
2. **Shoba Liban:** Shoba Liban is the CEO of Pastoralist Women for Health and Education (PWHE) Kenya, an economic empowerment and women's rights organisation serving 2,000 Pastoralist women and young people in Northern Kenya.
3. **Masudio Margaret Eburu:** Masudio is District Chairperson of Eastern and Southern Africa Small-Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF) Uganda. ESAFF is a regional farmer network operating in 15 ESA countries. ESAFF is a network of smallholder farmers who advocate for policy, practice and attitude change to meet the needs, aspirations, and development of small-scale farmers using agroecological methods in East and Southern Africa. ESAFF Uganda operates in 30 districts in Uganda, and its members are majority female.
4. **Grace Tepula:** Grace is Chair of Rural Women's Assembly (RWA) Zambia. Rural Women's Assembly is a network of national rural women's movements, assemblies, grassroots organizations and chapters of mixed peasant unions, federations and movements across ten countries in the SADC region which campaign for feminist leadership, environmental justice, and food sovereignty. The involvement of Grace Tepula and the RWA is of critical importance, as the Assembly is one of the strongest spaces for discussions about women's issues.
5. **Mariama Sonko:** Mariama, who is from Senegal, is President of We Are the Solution/Nous Sommes La Solution (WAS/NSS). NSS/WAS is an important social movement in West Africa led by peasant women, which promotes women's rights and agroecology by demanding recognition for peasant women producers, their seeds, knowledge and leadership. NSS/WAS represents over 500 rural women's associations in seven countries in West Africa reaching more than 160,000 rural women. Mariama Sonko is also the Treasurer of the Association des Jeunes Agriculteurs en Casamance (AJAC) in Senegal.
6. **Catherine Soulama:** Catherine is responsible for monitoring field schools in the Cascades Region of Burkina Faso for the Fédération Nationale des Organisations Paysannes (FENOP). Catherine Soulama is also a representative of We Are the Solution/Nous Sommes La Solution (WAS/NSS) in Burkina Faso.

Signed by:

Elizabeth Mpofu

Founder/Director

January 12, 2023