



IMPACT
CREATIVITY
LEGACY
SUSTAINABILITY

Celebrating Women's Success

IDB Prize for
Women's Contribution
to Development



Islamic Development Bank
Together We Build A Better Future



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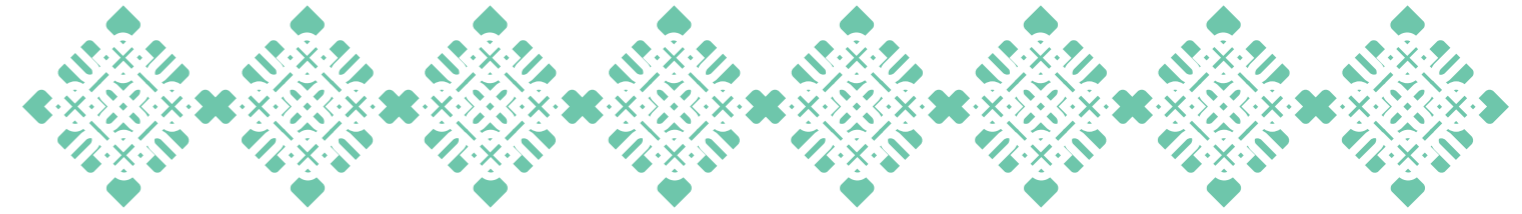
Empowerment of women and promoting their role in all economic, social and cultural aspects of our life, is a building block of the IDB Group strategy and action plans, particularly those aimed at poverty alleviation and achieving prosperity and social progress for our member countries.

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Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali Al-Madani, President, IDB



Islamic Development Bank
Together We Build A Better Future



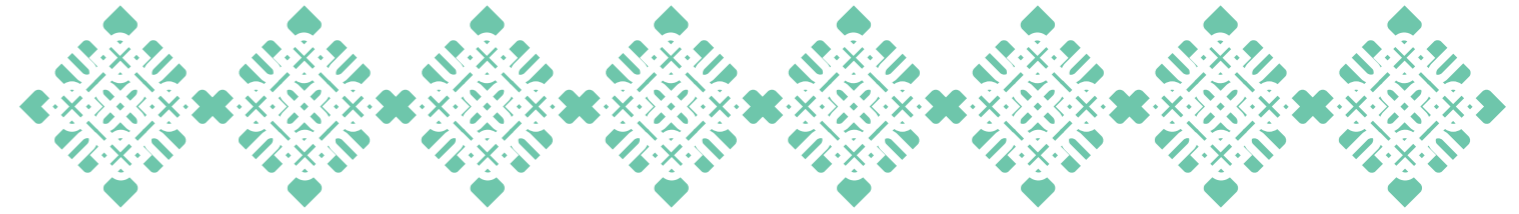
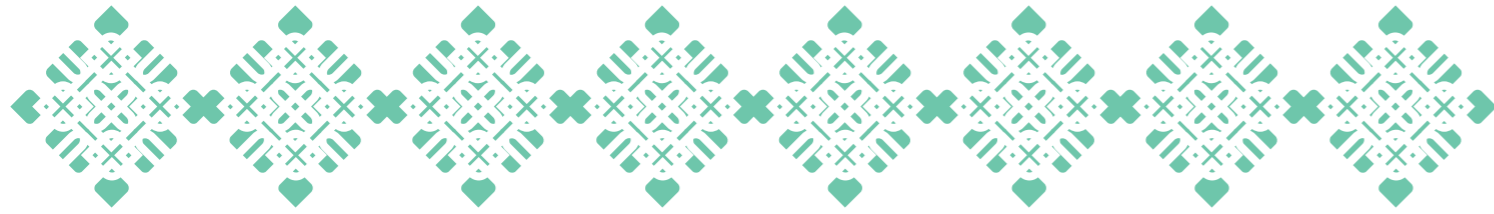
Recognizing Women's Achievements

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is an international financial institution with a membership of 57 countries spreading across different continents and regions. Its mission is to promote comprehensive human development, with a focus on the priority areas of alleviating poverty, improving health, promoting education, improving governance and prospering the people. Recognizing women as central to achieving human development, the Bank includes the empowerment of women within its strategic framework.

Although women constitute nearly half of the world's population, they remain an untapped resource in many countries, while their great skills and potential could instead be nurtured to benefit humanity. The IDB recognizes that the participation of women in the socio-economic development process is necessary to achieve economic prosperity, poverty reduction and human development in its member countries. It has the firm conviction that the world's human capital would remain deficient "unless member countries and Muslim communities fully unlock the vast potential that lies in half of their population." One of the main objectives that the Bank seeks to achieve is to help women fulfill their potential, use their talents and skills for the sustainable prosperity of their families and communities, and participate in socio-economic development.

The Bank has been active in the social development sector since its inception and has achieved tremendous success over the last four decades in the service of Muslims worldwide. It has a long history of promoting and encouraging women's participation in the socio-economic development of its member countries. The IDB has always been keen to finance development projects of direct or indirect impact on women's conditions. Such projects are designed to ensure women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion so as to improve their livelihoods, increase women's and girls' access to education, and to improve their health and ability to provide their children with basic healthcare.

In 2004, the Bank established the IDB Women's Advisory Panel, a group of 12 prominent women who are experts in a wide range of fields, and who together represent multiple regions and backgrounds. The Panel advises the Bank on how to enable women to become key players in its activities and operations, and recommends initiatives to promote and encourage women's participation in the socio-economic development of IDB member countries. Acting on one of the Panel's most notable recommendations to celebrate and recognize women's success, the Bank established the "IDB Prize for Women's Contribution to Development" in 2006.



The Prize

The IDB Prize for Women's Contribution to Development is annually awarded to individual women or women's organizations that have played a crucial role in efforts to improve the socio-economic status of women in IDB member countries and/or in Muslim communities in non-member countries.

The Prize seeks to increase women's access to opportunities and resources that would help them contribute actively to the development of their economies and societies, and to draw international attention to the vital role women play in development.

The theme of the Prize is changed every year in a bid to highlight the various issues shaping our world and their specific effects on women.

THE PRIZE OBJECTIVES

The Prize is designed to celebrate the remarkable achievements many pro-active, visionary and dedicated women have made. It is also meant to motivate more individual women and women's organizations to act on their ideas, develop their talents and maximize their contribution to the global stage.

It recognizes...

- the importance of the role of women in IDB member countries and Muslim communities globally;
- contributions made by individuals and organizations to improve the socio-economic status of women in IDB member countries and Muslim communities in non-member countries.

It encourages...

- efforts made to improve women's access to opportunities and resources that help them to contribute actively to the development of their economies and societies;
- individuals and organizations that offer grants and resources to work towards promoting women's socio-economic development.

It inspires...

- women by promoting exemplary role models;
- individuals and organizations to initiate and actively engage in projects designed to develop women and build their capacities.

It rewards...

- individual women and women-led organizations that seek to improve the well-being and status of women locally, nationally and globally;
- actions that strengthen the role of women as essential contributors to society and as effective agents of change and development.

THE PRIZE, PAST AND PRESENT

Even though the Prize was established almost a decade ago, the traits and characteristics demonstrated by early IDB Prize winners are equally apparent in the Prize winners of more recent times.

The ingenuity of ALGA, whose vocational training programs earned them an IDB Prize in 2006, is evident in the work of Mrs Selina Jahan, the 2014 Prize winner, whose techniques of increasing crop yield have now been shared with over 10,000 Bangladeshi women.

The compassion displayed by retired secondary school teacher and a 2007 Prize winner, Alwia Omer Ahmed Al-Osta, is matched by that of Mrs Tri Mumpuni, a 2010 Prize Winner, both of whom work tirelessly to empower young women in their communities through education.

The determination to succeed, despite challenging circumstances, is as evident in AFAO's campaign for West African women's rights (see the 2014 Prize winners) as it was in Mrs Fatimah Al-Jadaa's case, whose mission to train women in Palestine earned her an IDB Prize in 2006.

Each of the 33 IDB Prize winners for Women's Contribution to Development over the past nine years are truly remarkable individuals and organizations. All the winners have demonstrated strong willingness to get women working, help them to generate income, maintain their health and that of their families, fulfill their potential and thus elevate their socio-economic status.

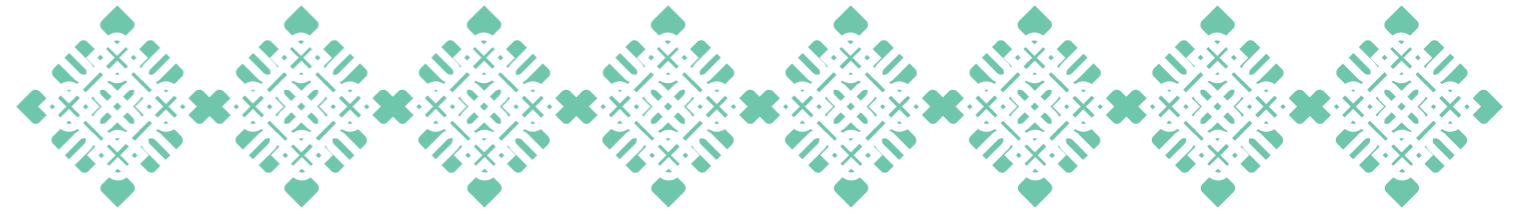
Winners, past and present, reinforce the true value of the Women's Prize, and epitomize the magnitude of the achievements skilled and confident women can make.

Thanks to the efforts and work of the Prize winners, hundreds of thousands of women and their families now enjoy better quality of life. Furthermore, the winners' legacies ensure that their work will continue to benefit Muslim societies long into the future.

Each Prize winner's work clearly aligns with the IDB's ongoing mission. The common themes of compassion, drive, determination, courage, entrepreneurship and philanthropy that run throughout their stories embody the IDB's focus on women's empowerment and demonstrate women's potential. Each case serves as an inspiration as well as a contribution to society.

This publication has been developed to illustrate and share the success stories of the winners of the Prize, who are inspirational role models for other communities and people worldwide.

Some of the stories of these women have not spread beyond their local communities. However, their achievements have had the impact of transforming not only their lives, but also the lives of their families and the people around them. On the other hand, others have succeeded in spreading their ideas and beliefs locally and internationally. The IDB's goal is to give a chance to these strong-willed women to speak to the world and to highlight the stories of women who have persistently gone a long way towards bringing about positive change in their communities in fields such as economic empowerment, education, health, community service, capacity development, science, the environment, and food security.



Advancing Women in the Muslim World

The empowerment of women and the elevation of their status in all domains of life is an endowment of Islamic knowledge and heritage upon Muslim women. The status of women in Islam is emphasized in their right to a sense of self-worth, respect, dignity and the management of their lives. Muslim women can participate in social, religious and public activities as well as enjoy equal rights for social and economic justice. The Islamic traditions state that a woman is entitled to an equal opportunity for education, employment, inheritance, property ownership, and may dispose of her properties and earnings as she pleases.

Unfortunately, women in the Muslim world are often hindered from fully and meaningfully contributing to social development due to poverty and lack of opportunities, or by being excluded from the decision-making process.

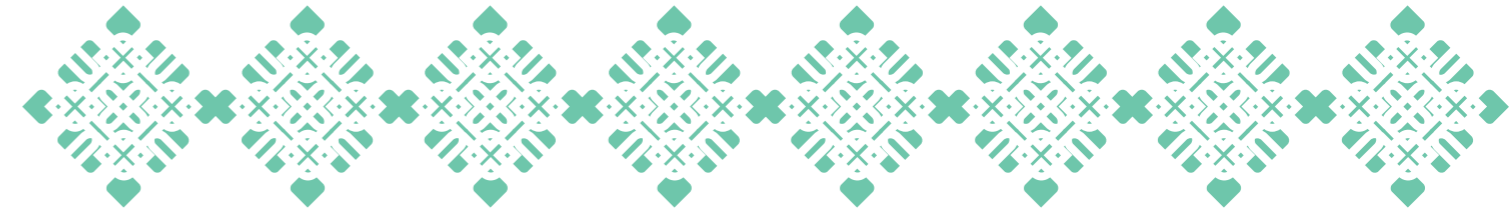
The aforementioned limitations on women were alien to Islam during its early days. They are rekindled today, perhaps as a result of a subversion from the true spirit and mandates of the Islamic teachings.

At the emergence of Islam, many women played a vital role in community development. Among those women are Khadija, the Mother of all Believers, who had contributed economically, socially, psychologically, and politically to her community. Khadija is a learning example for both Muslim women and men alike, as a leading businesswoman, an owner of a prominent trade caravan, a talented entrepreneur, negotiator, and caregiver.

Indeed, her responsibilities and contributions to social development are perhaps what prepared her for the role of the first believer and beloved wife of the Prophet, who supported her husband when he returned home carrying news of his prophecy.

One cannot make mention of the Mother of all Believers Khadija without recalling Islam's center of knowledge, the Mother of Believers, Aisha. Aisha's home in Medina was transformed into a community learning center where young and old gathered for the purpose of gaining knowledge, and learning from Islamic moral values. Aisha was an ambassador for the teachings of Prophet Muhammad regarding the obligation of scholarship for both women and men: *"Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every Muslim."* [Ibn Majah]

In the contemporary world, many notable Muslim women have majorly contributed to philanthropy and community development. This tradition is as old as the Islamic civilization itself. From the house of the Prophet; Khadija, Aisha, Umm Salama, Hafsa, and Nusaiba, have all been everlasting symbols of philanthropy and benevolence. Later, Muslim women have made tremendous contributions as philanthropists and benefactresses. Queen Zubayda, wife of 9th century Caliph Harun Al-Rasheed in the Abbasid dynasty, made significant contributions to public works such as building wells and guest houses on the major routes that pilgrims took to Mecca, and supporting poets and writers.



Fatima al Fihriyya in Fez, Morocco founded al-Qarawwiyyin mosque, Banafshaa' ar-Rumiyya in the 11th century restored schools, bridges, public housing for homeless women in Baghdad, besides having her own school endowment. Moreover, Fatima of Cordoba was a 10th century librarian who oversaw 70 public libraries containing 400,000 books. Arwa al-Sulayhi, an 11th century Yemeni Queen who ruled for 71 years and was known as the Noble Lady. Sultana Shajarat al-Durr, Egypt, Sultana Razia, India, and in central India, Begum Kaikhursau Jahan were among many others who remain a legacy of philanthropy in the field of intellectual, social and economic development. They are exemplary role models for contemporary generations, both men and women alike.

There exists a plethora of traditions inspiring the strengthening of community bonds, development and a helping spirit amongst members of a community. The interconnectedness of the Muslim community is a vital theme in Islamic tradition, and the Prophet is reported to have emphasized this in his saying: *"In their mutual affection, compassion and sympathy, the believers are like one body: when any of its organs has a complaint, the rest of the body responds with sleeplessness and fever."*

Each individual member is accountable for their own work, as declared in the Quran: *"Men shall have a benefit of what they earn and women shall have a benefit of what they earn"* [Quran 4:32] Individual and community social development is incumbent upon each individual self as commanded by God and the teachings of his messenger: *"Let anyone of you who can be of benefit to his/her brother/sister do so."* [Related by Muslim on the authority of Jabir]

Women play a vital role in social development as they go beyond their personal needs when addressing and solving community problems. Women have the privilege of intimate affiliations with various members of society; recognize the importance of attending to all fields of human development and are aware of the effects of addressing individual concerns. Women tend to invest their resources on their families – prioritizing things like healthcare, nutrition, education, and all the building blocks of a thriving society. The empowerment of women is the empowerment of all people and all that is good.



Individual: women entrepreneurs and their role in sustainable development

Mrs Nofa Al Fayez
Jordan

Driven by her determination to earn additional income to fund her eight children's education, Mrs Nofa Al Fayez established a Dairy Factory on her own plot of land in Jordan. This was the first step in a journey that saw her inspire other local women and eventually become President of the Al-Azrag Women Association for Social Development and Volunteerism. Today, Nofa is a role model for many and takes a very active role in supporting local women in Jordan and encouraging sustainable development.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Nofa had spent a great deal of her time to further the work of charitable organizations as a volunteer within her local community and taking part in numerous charitable initiatives for many organizations. As her children grew older, it became clear to her that she would need to increase the household income in order to fund their education. She began to think about how she could bring about social change within her community while increasing her own income.

Nofa started the Hajer Dairy Factory, a modest dairy plant. She quickly grew her business, producing milk and cheese at affordable prices and selling them to nearby villages.

Initially, Nofa carried out the bulk of the work alone. However, given her commitment to selling her goods at prices local townspeople could afford, demand for her produce soon grew. In order to meet demand, she began recruiting employees from the local community.

Recognizing the potential of women with families and their need for an income, Nofa decided to staff her factory with female employees. There was no shortage of potential recruits, and Nofa took great care to teach every new employee how to produce milk and cheese, and how to sell them to local customers.

By 2006, the year she was awarded the IDB Prize, she employed four women in need of additional income who could not find employment elsewhere. She now employs eight women, buys raw materials from four local farms, and sells her produce in Jordan and across the border in neighboring Saudi Arabia.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Perhaps the most important impact of Nofa's work has been the influence it has had on local perceptions of women in the community.

When the Hajer Dairy Factory was first established, the women of the local community were largely confined to household responsibilities. The factory's success has proven to be inspirational. Now, the valuable role that women can and do play in society is recognized amongst the local community so much so that women are increasingly following Nofa's example and starting their own entrepreneurial projects. Thanks to Nofa and her Hajer Dairy Factory, women are able to work for the first time, building new skills and experiences, making their own decisions, and achieving financial independence.



THE IDB PRIZE

One of the Factory's major challenges has been to keep up with increasing demand, especially given limited access to investment funds. With the IDB Prize, Nofa was able to increase the scale of her operation to meet this need. She now rents a larger plot of land and owns larger refrigerators that can contain a greater volume of produce before distribution.

More importantly, the Hajer Dairy Factory has increased the number of jobs available to local women and its total workforce now stands at eight members of staff.

THE FUTURE

The immediate future is all about increasing the scale for the Hajer Dairy project. Demand for produce remains strong thereby making expansion an increasingly sensible decision.

As time goes by, Nofa aspires to acquire a greater number of refrigerators, replace outdated equipment and buy a refrigerated van to help broaden the project's reach. Ultimately, she wishes to continue to advance the status of women in the local community.

“Women work hard and prove that they are able to overcome all challenges and share in traditionally male responsibilities. Women can be economically independent and can provide sustenance for their children and their families.”



Individual: women entrepreneurs and their role in sustainable development

**Mrs Fatimah Abd Al Raheem
Al Jadaa**
Palestine

Over the last three decades, Mrs Fatimah Abd Al Raheem Al Jadaa has touched the lives of hundreds of vulnerable women, creating employment opportunities and supporting business ideas. Spurred by her passion for sewing as a child and her dream to contribute to the Palestinian economy, Fatimah went on to found and direct the Al-Hana' Sewing Center in 1987. The Center now employs 305 workers across seven sewing centers in four different Palestinian cities.

ACHIEVEMENTS

30 years ago, Fatimah could never have dreamed how far her patience, hard work and perseverance would eventually take her. In 1986, a young but keen seamstress Fatimah enrolled in a course run by the Al Morabetat Association to improve her sewing skills. After graduation, Fatimah began fashioning and selling clothing and uniforms to nearby villages. Determined to achieve her full potential, she worked day and night, paying little regard to her continuous fatigue.

She did not stop there. Fatimah set up her first sewing center a year later in 1987. She chose to employ women suffering in poverty, focusing her efforts on how to provide opportunities to women blighted by social problems, including those raising families on their own after divorce or those unable to find employment due to lack of education or skills.

Over the next two decades, Fatimah began expanding her operations. What began as a workforce of ten employees increased to an all-female staff of 140. She developed commercial relationships with multinational companies and her sales climbed to 377,200 Jordanian Dinar (USD 530,000) per year, out of which 15% was profit. Her single sewing center in Hableh has grown to seven centers across four towns, and has begun work on other projects including a farming business that employs over 100 workers.

“
I would like to say again that I feel proud as I give jobs to people, whose sons and daughters are doctors, teachers and so on. I believe and have the thought that I am the doctor or the teacher, despite being without a university degree myself.
”

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Unemployment and poverty are just two items on a list of social problems the Palestinian people are presently working to resolve. The women Fatimah employs come to her with little or no skills, and as a first step, she teaches them how to sew. Broadly speaking, the employment Fatimah provides helps to mitigate the existing Palestinian unemployment rate, which frequently exceeds 25%. On a community level, ongoing paid work helps women support and provide for their families.

Fatimah is limiting the number of Palestinian women working in Israeli settlements, an outlawed activity which often sees Palestinians mistreated and discriminated against. Through her own example, she is showing women what is possible and inspiring them to aim for more within their communities. She is a living proof of the power of persistence and courage.

Fatimah's work is ensuring the next younger generations are able to fund and continue their studies (either through direct holiday employment or through indirect financial stability) and go on to become doctors, engineers and teachers, thereby lifting themselves from the poverty trap.

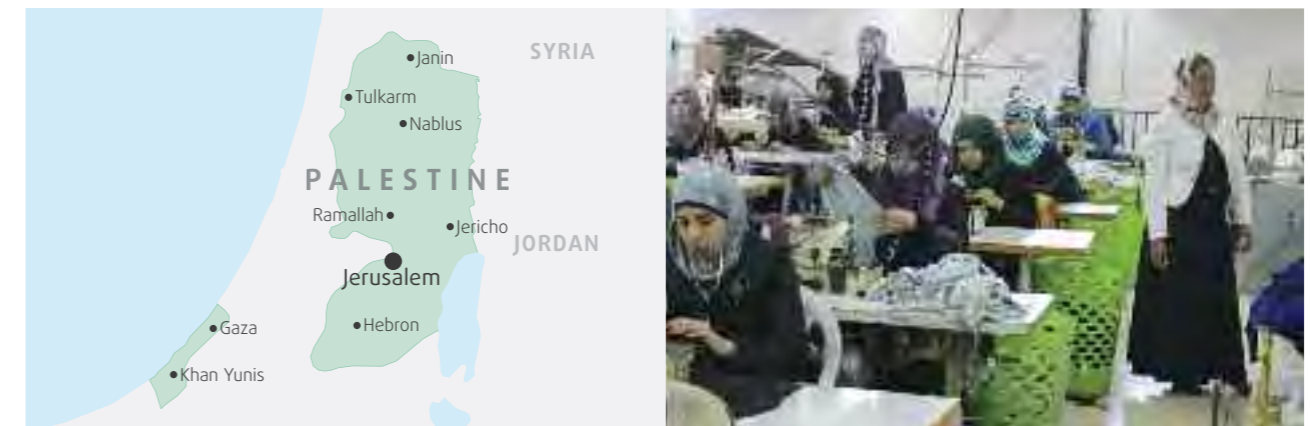
THE IDB PRIZE

Fatimah used her IDB Prize to continue expanding the scale of her operation. When she was awarded the Prize in 2006, she employed 140 women and acquired 110 machines. Presently, she employs more than 305 women and has increased her machinery accordingly.

Fatimah also used the IDB Prize to diversify. She increasingly works in the agricultural sector and employs a workforce of local farmers. As a result of the greater recognition and credibility the Prize brought her, she has seen her influence grow.

THE FUTURE

Fatimah continues to expand the Al Hana' Sewing Center and has immediate plans to begin fashioning and selling soft furnishings such as bed covers and cushion covers. At the time of writing, the Sewing Center is in talks with leading hotels as an initial customer base, and considering the idea of starting a clothing recycling business.





Organization: the role of training and advocacy programs in women's socio-economic development

ALGA Kyrgyzstan

The Rural Women's Association (ALGA) was first established in 1995 with the aim of improving the status and living standards of rural women. Their work focuses on how to raise women's awareness of their own realities and capabilities, and how to enable them to recognize their own rights and strengthen their social and economic contribution to society.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Since 1995, ALGA has grown from a small informal group of volunteers in their own local communities to a well-established and widely respected organization with a comprehensive program of creative activities for women in rural areas.

These activities are built around the five key critical areas of concern that they have identified: women and poverty, women and the economy, women and human rights, women and violence, and women and decision-making.

ALGA's work aims to ensure human rights and sustainable livelihoods. By improving the resources available to women in rural communities, they are able to alleviate poverty and to play an active role in society.

The Association created the Rural Women's Support Center in the village of Jerkazar, as well as three additional branches in more remote areas. They established 30 self-help groups to reduce poverty and provide funding of approximately four million Kyrgystani Soms (USD 65,000). They set up vocational training, including hairdressing, sewing and culinary learning to provide income-generating skills; they also provided more than 100 families and children with humanitarian support.

Their work has attracted grants, influenced national support programs and ensured greater sustainability, and boosted the levels of women's contribution to social activity. Their Rural Community Councils tackle violence against women, and their leadership development programs encourage women to successfully run for rural elections and become part of their local councils.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Following Kyrgyzstan's independence in 1991 and the start of the country's transition to a market economy, there was a period of considerable change and challenge. Unemployment rose, social support decreased and living standards dropped, especially for the female population in rural areas. Poor conditions were increasingly aggravated by rising gender inequality and discrimination, with women becoming one of the most vulnerable and downtrodden groups in society.

Having emerged from rural beginnings, ALGA has a unique understanding of rural community issues. The training sessions, workshops, self-help groups and awareness-raising activities they have implemented were designed to empower women and that is exactly what they have achieved. Women in rural communities have been given the opportunity to improve their own lives and communities. ALGA's work has directly reached hundreds of people, including refugee women and young people; its impact is benefiting many more.



THE IDB PRIZE

In addition to generating greater recognition and esteem, the IDB Prize has enabled ALGA to further strengthen and grow. It has been able to offer more training to staff within its organization and has developed a gender advancement program to promote equality of rights, opportunities and responsibilities for men and women in rural communities. It has held lectures for young people in schools. Furthermore, ALGA has become a consultant to local authorities and gained the trust of the government.

THE FUTURE

ALGA has shown what is possible when women come together, and have the confidence to contribute to and create new prospects. The Organization continues to create opportunities for rural women and their families thereby helping them to improve their socio-economic status and human rights.

They are creating more leadership training opportunities and helping to forge partnerships within the communities to promote advocacy and information campaigns. They also conduct detailed research and analysis to influence the government's commitment and drive for more change.





Organization: the role of training and advocacy programs in women's socio-economic development

Association Femmes de l'Avenir du Burkina

Burkina Faso

Established in 1997, the Association Femmes de l'Avenir (AFA) designs and implements unique and transformative development projects for women, helping them in their fight against poverty through small loans and income-generating activities.

From the outset, AFA had a very clear objective. It sees women as the pillars of the family and helps women to get themselves and their families out of poverty.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Association established five key priorities to empower women. They are as follows: promote health activities; support income-generating activities to reduce poverty; assist children and encourage socio-professional integration; improve strategic capabilities; and establish more cross-sector and inter-cultural exchanges.

The Association's achievements go far beyond traditional learning and education. From conducting outreach activities designed to teach women development issues to helping them design and set up their own businesses and projects, the Association has enabled thousands of people to increase their income and build better lives for their families.

Through micro-credit and support, AFA has enrolled 50 children in primary and secondary schools, enabled women to obtain certificates of primary education through evening classes, and made over 3,000 women and girls aware of the importance of saving money for a more sustainable future. They have conducted essential training in hygiene, sanitation and health, distributed school kits, helped with tuition fees and provided orphans and vulnerable children with nutritional support.

They also established the 'Fight against Thirst' project, which is designed to bring clean water to the central region of Burkina Faso at affordable prices. The 500 water barrels they provided enabled women to start thinking creatively and make money of their own, pushing the barrels and renting them to young people to generate incomes of 200 CFA francs a day (USD 0.35). By offering water management and hygiene training, as well as introducing water-recycling projects such as a vegetable garden, they helped the women ensure sustainable livelihoods for themselves.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Improved access to education and the provision of clean water are two of the most obvious benefits of AFA's work. However their impact has made a far larger and deeper impression. They brought women together for the first time – and together these women have learned to take control of their own lives and contribute positively to the economic and social life of the societies in which they live.

AFA's approach is changing behaviors and transforming attitudes. By empowering women to contribute to development projects, and encouraging men to support them, they are changing traditional thinking. It is not just the women with whom they work who learn, but the whole community. Their work is helping to create a more sustainable future for everyone.



THE IDB PRIZE

The IDB Prize was used to set up a new micro-finance institution to help women gain financial support and implement more income generating activities. The institution, registered with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, offers rural women greater access to funding than ever before.

By virtue of the increased visibility brought about by the Prize, AFA now has more influence and greater recognition on both national and international levels, as more women hear about its services every day.

THE FUTURE

AFA has already put in place a strategic plan. In the next five years, it aims to build and mobilize more financial and technical partners, to conduct key awareness sessions for members of 'yaars' (markets), and to expand its activities across other regions of the country. As its services continue to grow, more women will have the opportunity to find their own way out of poverty.





Organization: the role of training and advocacy programs in women's socio-economic development

Society of Insha Al-Usra Palestine

The Society of Insha Al-Usra is a charitable, volunteer-based society that works with women, children and marginalized members of Palestinian society to strengthen family institutions and the Palestinian national heritage. Working within a turbulent social and political environment, the Society aims to economically empower women who would otherwise be dependent on aid. In 2006, it launched the DEEP Project – a sub-project focused on achieving this aim by transforming opportunities for Palestinian families.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Society built a college in Al-Bireh City in pursuit of the DEEP Project's ambitious goals. It then began offering diplomas in nursing, medical secretarial training and physiotherapy. The Society also built centers for vocational training and offered women childcare lessons, administrative and IT training, and workshops in traditional sewing techniques. Since mothers constitute a large percentage of the project's target audience, the Society established kindergarten and day-care services to facilitate women's involvement.

Thanks to the DEEP Project, essential funding has been made available to women and their families. Currently, 1,400 families are sponsored each month through the organization and 126 students are being supported at university. The Project has ultimately helped hundreds of women learn a profession, which they later use to support and provide for their families. Self-reliance and steadfastness are just two of the Project's long-term legacies.

The DEEP Project's success has been undeniable by any evaluation metric, and it continues to change the course of participants' lives nine years on. Project participants continually graduate and are able to generate their own incomes and provide for their families.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Society's DEEP Project has done much more than encourage financial independence. It has transformed perceptions of women and demonstrated to the community that women are valuable members of society in their own right. It showed that, with education, women could quickly pave the way to economic empowerment. In doing so, the DEEP Project underlined the fact that work is not a shameful activity. It clearly communicated to women and society as a whole that working to achieve financial independence is a highly rewarding endeavor for all.

By helping women to secure employment, the Project has aided self-expression among frequently marginalized members of Palestinian society.



THE IDB PRIZE

The IDB Prize has helped to fund new projects initiated by the Insha Al-Usra Society, continuing to facilitate the ongoing provision of the Society's DEEP Project.

As a recipient of the IDB Prize, the Project and its parent society gained recognition on both local and national levels. Recognized as a charitable venture run by volunteers, the Project has acquired greater credibility, vital to the DEEP Project's ongoing success.

THE FUTURE

The success of the DEEP Project has been clearly noted by its parent society. As time goes on, the Society plans to expand the Project by opening a second college, allowing a greater number of Palestinian women to join its program. More resources will be allocated to increase the number of vocational training facilities, such as those that teach women traditional sewing techniques.

Besides the DEEP Project, the Insha Al-Usra Society celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 2015. After this well-deserved celebration, the Society plans to introduce the Al-Sinyada Club for elders, and expand its Folk Heritage Museum.





Individual: women advocates for rural/poor girls' education

Mrs Alwia Omer Ahmed Al-Osta
Sudan

Mrs Alwia Omer Ahmed Al-Osta is a retired secondary school teacher, who has spent a great part of her life helping to provide education to poor and rural communities. To take this work further, she founded the Albar and Alahssan Organization in North Kordofan and is now the Principal of its Holy Quran Alnour School.

Alwia's belief that poor communities should be empowered to develop themselves has been the motivating force for her work. From the beginning, her aim was to provide better opportunities for education and to raise awareness of its importance. By offering people the chance to improve their knowledge of Islam, health and basic vocational skills, she is helping to reduce crime and pave the way for them to create new lives.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Alwia's hard work has seen 6,480 girls living in poverty in rural areas gain access to primary education at the new Holy Quran Alnour School that she established. She has organized literacy classes, handicraft workshops and implemented small projects for rural women, including confectionery and sewing projects, to ensure they have financial independence and further positive opportunities. She organized seminars to raise awareness about economic and social issues and set up group discussion sessions for women too.

Alwia was the driving force behind the construction of a new mosque for the benefit of students and the whole community. She has worked closely with charities including the Islamic Dawa Organization to support female prisoners in Elobeid Prison and played a part in the release of 108 women. Alwia has also supported the Mwfag Charity with its work with orphans, and helped to support and train social workers in Elobeid and rural areas.

Alwia has consistently found new creative and sustainable ways of funding the work. The lack of resources meant that everything had to be sustainable from the outset. She established a small library for books, encouraged women to organize a fair to raise money, and to set up a clothing recycling business that sells used clothes after repairing them.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

In a society where women often have no voice and little control over their own lives, the impact Alwia has brought has been immense.

She has helped women to develop clear roles for themselves – enabling them to be active in their communities and to play a leading role in their children's education. She enabled them to have a better understanding of their rights and duties in Islam. And she has played a transformational role in their day-to-day lives, teaching them the skills to generate income and to build sustainable livelihoods.

Many of her students have gone on to study at universities, becoming engineers, doctors and teachers. Through the support that Alwia provides, they have been able to achieve far more than they had ever envisaged.



THE IDB PRIZE

Winning the IDB Prize has enabled Alwia to overcome financial constraints and invest more. As a result, the Holy Quran Alnour School, with five classrooms, has moved to a new, better site in the southern part of the city. She can now provide food and clothing as well as school stationery and training materials for orphans and the poor.

The Prize has earned her greater recognition and respect and allowed her to get closer to people in need.

THE FUTURE

Alwia already has plans for further improvements. She is in the process of adding a computer lab and three classrooms to the school. She also aims to provide transport for children in rural areas and to expand the pre-school and the mosque.

“
Faith and belief are the first
steps toward your goals.
”





Organization: the role of IT education programs in women's socio-economic development programs

Al-Wafa Women's Philanthropic Association Saudi Arabia

The Al-Wafa Women's Philanthropic Association was established in 1976 to aid the socio-economic development of women and their families in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Association trains and educates Saudi women in areas as varied as sewing, ceramics, cookery, hospitality, languages and business. In response to the evolving demands of the labor market in 1997, Al-Wafa began training women in IT and computing in an effort to guide more females into long-term employment. Al-Wafa is one of the first associations to provide women in Saudi Arabia with training in computer languages and networks.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Al-Wafa Women's Philanthropic Association had already achieved a great deal before even venturing into the world of IT and computing. It opened a shelter for the homeless and a rehabilitation center for people with special needs, and trained Saudi women in business helping thousands of them achieve financial stability. The Association's decision to shift its focus to IT and computer training courses has fulfilled the market needs of the public and the private sectors, and helped secure employment for thousands of beneficiaries.

The Association worked hard to build positive and useful relationships on the international stage to realize these achievements. To date, 3,300 students have graduated from the Association's computing courses thanks to collaboration with the Riyadh Computer Center. Additionally, the Association's collaboration with Microsoft Corporation has helped secure funds for the training of another group of 185 students; collaboration with the Middle East Research Center for Human Development has supported the graduation of 8,493 students from computing courses; collaboration with the Center for Legal Advisory helped develop courses in management, accounting and law. This is in addition to the IT and computing courses that the Al-Wafa Women's Philanthropic Association offers to girls with special needs, so as to help them to learn and secure employment.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Given the Association's mission to advance the socio-economic development of women and their families, the ultimate metric of success has always been community impact.

In addition to directly educating thousands of Saudi women, the Al-Wafa Women's Philanthropic Association simultaneously raised the economic status of families throughout Saudi Arabia. These two dimensions in combination have fueled a change in the economic, social and cultural status of women across the Kingdom. It has been observed that women who take part in the Association's courses graduate with a clearer understanding of their role and potential within the society, and subsequently take pride in the financial success they go on to achieve.

Perhaps best of all, the computing courses offered by the Association are helping to develop a culture in which women are valued members of their households, their communities and wider Saudi society, previously a highly implausible outcome given traditional social mindsets.

THE IDB PRIZE

The IDB Prize was awarded to the Al-Wafa Women's Philanthropic Association to recognize the outstanding contribution it has made to the socio-economic development of women throughout Saudi Arabia. The initiative that helped the Association stand out for the IDB Prize was the provision of computer training courses to women who otherwise would not have had access to IT.

The Prize has funded the Association's charitable projects and helped increase the number of computing courses for Saudi women. Since the Association is reliant on external funds for its outreach projects and operations, the Prize has gone a long way to boosting its future progress as well as its social and economic impact.

THE FUTURE

Upon receiving the IDB Prize, the Al-Wafa Women's Philanthropic Association has re-aligned its priorities to ensure it continues to focus on efforts to overcome the most pressing challenges that Saudi society faces.

Furthermore, to ensure holistic development in Saudi society, the Association has begun helping another marginalized group, the elderly. It is constructing a large residential complex for the elderly which will be ready to operate within the next five years.





Organization: the role of IT education programs in women's socio-economic development programs

SOUL for Development

Yemen

Established in 1997, SOUL for Development was one of the first local Non-Governmental Organization in Yemen to adopt a developmental approach to its work, moving away from conventional charity models and finding creative ways to support women and children to become a model for all development partners within Yemen.

SOUL is built on the belief that women and children are essential to the future of Yemen. Women are the catalyst in the upbringing of the next generation, helping them to become future leaders and decision makers. Through support and education, SOUL aims to establish the foundations on which communities can rebuild the nation.

ACHIEVEMENTS

From the beginning, SOUL's aim was to build development programs that empower women and children and provide them with opportunities to improve their lot in life. They established five key programs: Girls' Education, Poverty Reduction through Micro-finance & Small Enterprise Development, Early Childhood Development (ECD), Strengthening Partnerships with Civil Society, and Preventative Health Care & Awareness.

Through these projects, SOUL has achieved exceptional outcomes. SOUL has driven change and development by boosting the number of girls' enrolment in schools in rural areas, by promoting a new understanding of the ECD concept across Yemen, by increasing the number of rural women benefiting from micro-finance, and by contributing to health enhancement for both women and children.

SOUL's work on ECD has helped it to establish itself as a national expert in children's rights. SOUL's support and promotion of Early Childhood Development as a holistic approach has seen the establishment of Manarat-Sana's International School, which is now providing Yemeni children with essential services and education. SOUL has gone on to offer awareness sessions on the importance of ECD to 500 people from nine governorates across the country, and provided a manual to educate parents and caregivers.

The Women in Technology program (WIT) is another example of SOUL's hard work and success. WIT strived to attract women from low-income communities, providing scholarships to ensure access to education and training. Implemented over a five-year period (between 2005 and 2010), the project focused on basic and advanced IT skills training, using Microsoft's Unlimited Potential curricula and collaborating with Cisco Academy.

A total of 2,580 women benefited from the WIT program thanks to scholarships. Over 100 of them went on to take part in advanced training. By building partnerships with businesses and other organizations, SOUL arranged internship opportunities for students, established IT forums to generate new ideas and exchange experiences, and ran competitions to encourage new business development.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

In a society where women's opportunities can be severely limited, SOUL has transformed their outlook. Providing women with the opportunity to learn and develop allows them to become economically independent and sustainable. It provides them with a voice and the chance to contribute to society.

However, that is just the beginning. Women living in conservative societies such as Yemen are constantly reminded of their weaknesses and the things they cannot do. SOUL's work shows them their own potential and the many things they can do. SOUL is succeeding not just in transforming the economic status of women, but in helping to change their own and societal attitudes as well.

THE IDB PRIZE

Winning the IDB Prize enabled SOUL to continue its work and to initiate a sustainable long-term project providing quality training to local communities. Its Community Learning and Development Center now offers IT and other professional skills training to those who might otherwise have no access to education at all.

The Prize also acted as a catalyst for positive change for the organization. The credibility it has earned has brought about new partnerships and additional funding, allowing it to continue providing support for women and children alike.

THE FUTURE

SOUL dreams of a future where young people and women can make positive changes and achieve sustainable impact within their own communities. It is supporting and empowering these vulnerable groups and has a clear strategic plan for the future such as focusing on youth empowerment and child rights, as well as enhancing the health of mothers and children.





Individual: women's initiative and participation in healthcare improvement

Mrs Saideh Ghods
Iran

Mrs Saideh Ghods, previously the International Relations Advisor at the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade, is the founder of the Society to Support Children Suffering from Cancer, widely known by its Iranian acronym, MAHAK.

MAHAK was first set up in 1991 as a Non-Government / Not-for-Profit Organization in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Its aim from the outset was to support children with cancer and their families providing guidance, hope, and emotional support during their treatment. At the heart of everything MAHAK does is the firm belief that no child should be unable to have access to treatment for financial reasons.

ACHIEVEMENTS

During the two decades since its inception, MAHAK has provided thousands of children suffering from cancer with full support, helping to reduce child mortality rates from a staggering 80% to less than 15%, and empowering the families of children with cancer.

Saideh has steered the Society to build a specialized Pediatric Cancer Hospital and Research Center. Under her guidance, MAHAK has provided healthcare and treatment to nearly 21,000 cancer-stricken children, and attracted funding from private contributors and corporate sponsorship programs.

The Society has acquired consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and now plays a significant role in global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations member states, and the World Cancer Declaration targets.

In 2007, MAHAK was recognized by the Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS) and awarded the Verified Certificate of NGO – a major accomplishment making it the first Non-Government Organization in the Middle East to obtain this certificate. It has also been ranked among the top 10 (of over 260) global NGOs by SGS, a benchmark in itself of integrity and global status.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

There were many common myths and misconceptions to overcome in Iran. Many believed that children simply could not suffer from cancer. Others held to the idea that pediatric cancer was not curable. There was a social stigma associated with the illness along with fault being firmly placed with the mother – the maternal gene and her ability to raise a child were blamed for the child's illness.

By supporting mothers and employing women within the Society, Saideh started to change these beliefs. She has helped to increase women's knowledge of the disease and to give them the power and confidence to challenge misconceptions, to spread the word that cancer is curable. Through her work, Saideh is also building a legacy of personal change. She is showing women the role they can play in humanitarian causes. She has proved that it is not just government, money and power that can bring about transformation. Her work is saving lives and transforming attitudes throughout the country.

“
My mission is to not only
cure the curable, but
prevent the preventable.
”



THE IDB PRIZE

Winning the IDB Prize enabled MAHAK to achieve its long-term goals. Not only was it able to build a new park adjacent to the MAHAK Hospital where parents can spend time, socialize and relax, they were also able to build new relationships and partnerships at regional and global levels.

The Prize brought greater credibility to MAHAK, and from that more opportunities on the global stage. Its work is increasingly respected thereby allowing it to have more influence and improve more lives.

THE FUTURE

With the specialist Pediatric Cancer Hospital and Research Center now running sustainably and effectively thanks to sponsorship programs and individual benefactors, Saideh is looking to the future. She plans to further develop the Research Center and to collaborate with centers around the world.





Individual: women's initiative and participation in healthcare improvement

Mrs Runa Khan
Bangladesh

Having spent most of her career working in the fields of development and education, publishing children's and educational books and training teachers, Mrs Runa Khan decided to put her skills and experience to even greater use. She is now the Founder and Executive Director of Friendship, a holistic and needs-based development organization that aims to support the development of marginalized citizens in Bangladesh.

Friendship's vision is of a world where people, especially those that are hard to reach and not catered for, will have equal opportunity so as to live in dignity and with hope. Its mission is to strengthen marginalized communities and empower people to reach their full potential through a needs-based integrated development approach.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Runa's work with Friendship has touched everything from healthcare and education to disaster management, infrastructure development, sustainable economic development, good governance and cultural preservation. She aims to help, through the organization, the million most affected people living in disaster-prone areas in unstable chars (riverine islands) in the north, and cyclone-prone areas in the south.

One of the many projects that Runa has helped to deliver is the improvement of healthcare for women in the northern char river island region of Bangladesh. Whilst many people in that area suffered from lack of proper healthcare, women faced the additional challenge of social constraints preventing them from covering long distances to reach whatever limited healthcare was available. It was an issue that led to increased maternal and infant mortality, sickness, poverty and fear.

Runa's work helped to establish a system giving women constant, easy access to healthcare including maternity care and cervical cancer screening services. Her creative thinking helped to overcome geographic challenges, with Friendship introducing secondary healthcare on floating hospitals on the rivers that have since become the center of the program.

Through the program alone, she has reached millions of people, alleviating their plight and giving them back their dignity and hope. She also brought literacy programs to the chars, and a sustainable economic development project that taught people to generate alternative incomes for themselves.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Just 13 years ago, when Runa first visited the chars, she met women who had nothing. They were dying of curable illnesses and were often terrified of showing their faces in their communities. They had no voice and no means of having access to the healthcare they desperately needed. Now these same women are healthy and happy, able to keep their families healthy, live lives they had never imagined, and in turn inspire and educate the women around them.

THE IDB PRIZE

Thanks to the IDB Prize, Runa has been able to cover the running costs of the Lifebuoy Friendship Hospital and to expand the satellite clinics programs. The programs have become truly sustainable and the impact of her work has been transformational. She has invested more in healthcare intervention and has been able to reach more people.

The Prize also validated her work, demonstrating how important it is and how much impact it has. As people across the country and the world have become more aware of the needs of this vulnerable group, there has been greater support and better access to additional funding.



THE FUTURE

Friendship is developing a network of land-based services for areas without any other intervention whatsoever. They plan to build a network of eight static clinics and a land hospital in the Satkhira district in the south of Bangladesh, a marshy region deprived of almost all infrastructure and healthcare support, and which the ship hospital is unable to reach.

It is also expanding the Friendship Community Medic-Aides (FCMs) program, training women to become skilled birth attendants and launching a new, exciting training program that will allow the FCMs to provide basic primary healthcare.

“
To change someone's life for the better, you need to keep an open mind, truly understand the people you want to help and design the solutions accordingly.
”





Organization: maternal care programs

Al-Aafiyah Development & Healthcare Organization

Sudan

The Al-Aafiyah Development and Healthcare Organization is one of five organizations of the Sudanese Women General Union, and has a specific objective of improving women's health in the country. Since 2000, it has focused its attention on efforts to improve access to immunization and to raise awareness about breastfeeding, reproductive health, and breast cancer. It has targeted key issues including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), HIV and tuberculosis, and has implemented income-generating and environmental sanitation activities to enable women to live healthier and more independent lives.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Organization was first established in 2000 to help improve health conditions for women by connecting official health bodies with grassroots organizations from poorer communities in Sudan.

Since then, it has gone on to successfully implement midwife programs, primary healthcare workshops, reproductive health training, and environmental awareness education projects in various villages. Its ground-breaking maternal care program has heightened awareness about reproductive health and helped to reduce alarmingly high maternal and infant death rates, as well as reducing communicable diseases from mother to child.

The Organization has changed the lives of women in some of the poorest communities in Sudan. Its impact has spread much further; through its work, it has demonstrated to social scientists, health organizations and governments that the greatest improvements in health standards for these marginalized groups can be achieved by transforming social norms and determinants. Changing the system itself is not always enough; real transformation demands social change as well.

This new insight has led to new approaches. The Organization is providing women with micro-finance to help them establish income-generating activities and become financially independent. By starting to earn their own income, women can attain new status in their communities. They have more control over their own lives – and in turn, more control over their health.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Through patience and hard work, the Organization has not only helped to change life for the 21,000 women who now have access to maternal and obstetrics services in remote areas; they have been able to use the results and data recorded in these villages to improve healthcare policy at a national level.

Its legacy will be seen for generations to come. The Organization has helped to change the country's healthcare strategy. With the new knowledge and insight the Organization has helped to provide, the women of Sudan are guaranteed a healthier future. New regulations to combat FGM have been passed into law. Reproductive health education will become an essential part of the national curriculum and access to local healthcare is being improved, with more ambulances and better services in the most remote areas.

THE IDB PRIZE

With the IDB Prize, the Organization has been able to buy two ambulances, provide new technical workshops, and run medical tours and health days in villages. It has also helped to fund medications and laboratory research, establishing a research and IT lab at Abo Anja Hospital. At the same time, the Organization has seen its reputation grow and enjoy a new level of credibility and influence with governments and national institutions.

THE FUTURE

The Organization is already working on a specialized study on reproductive health, which will influence government strategy. It will contribute to health planning at health centers across the country, and is playing a leading role in efforts to introduce changes in reproductive health education and to transform the laws regarding Female Genital Mutilation. It is set to continue empowering women for a long time to come.





Individual: community services programs for women

Mrs Nadia Ahmed Abu El-Fotouh

Egypt

Founded in 2004 by Nadia Ahmed Abu El-Fotouh and based in Dumyat in Egypt, the Women and Development Association supports visually impaired women who otherwise have little or no access to education, training or skills development. Chair of the Association, Nadia realized there were no support systems or organizations for visually disabled people, particularly women, and took steps to start to remedy the situation, eventually becoming a role model for women within her community.

ACHIEVEMENTS

While working at a local bank, Nadia came into contact with a visually impaired girl who wanted to learn IT skills. Having moved on to found the first computer center in Dumyat, she was inspired by the girl's situation and began to consider the impact of the lack of support for the lives of other visually impaired people in her society.

In 2004, Nadia founded and self-funded the Women and Development Association for the care of visually disabled women, with assistance and support from many of her professional business contacts.

Through this new organization, Nadia provided tools to help women learn to read and write Braille, and employed a teacher to work with them. She organized innovative seminars and handicraft workshops, opened a library of Braille books and provided computers with speech synthesis facilities, as well as the IT training to use them. She also provided funds so that women could cover the area's long distances and have access to these new opportunities.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Nadia has helped to transform women's lives. The women she has helped often had no chance of having an education. Many of them were not even allowed to leave the house for fear that the stigma of their disability might prevent their siblings from being married. Others had no financial or emotional support from their families. Thanks to Nadia, not only have the women themselves begun to believe in their own potential, the community has started to change their perceptions too.

Many of them have gone on to further education and some have become teachers. Two of the women Nadia helped are now members of the National Council for Disability and one is running for a seat in Parliament. Nadia's work has changed their entire outlook.



THE IDB PRIZE

Thanks to the IDB Prize, Nadia was also able to provide the women with a dedicated space of their own and funding for their future. She has also been able to compensate the many teachers and trainers who had helped her on the journey so far.

The Prize has enhanced Nadia's reputation and highlighted the importance of the work she has been doing. With greater recognition of her activity, Nadia is now able to help even more people.

THE FUTURE

Nadia plans to expand her work to Non-Government Organizations across the country and to begin supporting women with a range of disabilities. In the future, she hopes to be able to empower many more women.

“
I felt that Allah guided me to the path of true happiness when I helped these women become active rather than being passive members of the community.
”





Individual: young women's development

Mrs Fatima Ma Zhiying
China

Fatima Ma Zhiying came from humble origins, living and working in Haiyuan County, a poor, frequently drought-stricken area of China. Fatima's work with impoverished and disabled women has helped to change the lives of thousands of people in rural areas, making her a household name in China and resulting in her nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize and for many national awards.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Fatima saw the daily difficulties of people around her and the limited opportunities they have to improve their lives. Local secondary schools were only able to provide accommodation to a small percentage of students, leaving over 7,000 young people without access to education because they lived too far away.

Girls, especially those with disabilities, were the most affected, many of them leaving school at a very young age. Fatima opened her own home to provide accommodation and food to those needing it the most, helping to pay school fees, medical treatment and study expenses out of her own pocket.

Initially, Fatima was able to accommodate 16 students at a time; however she was approached by over 100 families asking for help each year. Accommodation was extremely basic and she drew up plans to be able to do more for larger numbers of girls.

Word spread about her work and when Islamic Relief and the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation heard about her efforts, they arranged to provide funding so that Fatima could build a home for the girls on her land. With the money, she erected a three-story building to provide free accommodation for 100 girls who had come from remote mountainous areas. There are 12 dormitories, two classrooms for study and extra learning, good sanitation, water and heating facilities. Even more importantly, Fatima has built a family environment where the girls are encouraged to work hard and to learn.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Fatima's work has meant that hundreds of girls have achieved an education and gone on to study at university before building their own careers. The Girl Students' Home project has helped to change attitudes towards girls' education attracting nationwide media attention, improving admission rates and showing rural communities the value of education for everyone.

“
As an ordinary Muslim woman,
I always keep in mind that even
a housewife should be imbued
with a sense of responsibility
for the nation and society. If a
woman is without knowledge,
she is illiterate and unable to
take responsibility for family
and society, let alone economic
empowerment.
”



THE IDB PRIZE

Fatima used the IDB Prize to cover the daily expenses of the Girl Students' Home. The rest of it was used to repair the kitchen and improve the building and living conditions with a small amount set-aside for the project's future. The Prize has also drawn more attention and support for the work she is doing and has allowed more families to hear about the Home.

THE FUTURE

For the future, Fatima has more plans. She hopes to establish a vocational training school for up to 1,000 students including a Muslim kindergarten, as well as an education and training base. Her dream is to provide not just traditional education, but support in reading the Quran, making traditional flowers and improving the understanding of Islamic culture. She is building a legacy of kindness proving that small personal deeds can have a huge social impact.





Individual: young women's development

Mrs Zahra Idali

Morocco

Mrs Zahra Idali is the founder of the Afoulki Association for Women in Tahanaout, Morocco. Over the last 16 years, Zahra has been dedicated to improving living conditions for rural women and empowering their development, providing education on a broad range of subjects from literacy and health to family planning and agriculture.

ACHIEVEMENTS

After finishing her Baccaureate and spending seven years working in building design, a single event changed everything for Zahra. One evening, a neighbor came to her parent's house and asked Zahra to teach her how to read. That very same evening, she arranged permission to use a local classroom and spent the next week going door-to-door looking for other interested women. When classes started shortly afterwards, Zahra had recruited 15 regular students – just one week later, 69 women had joined.

After two months running these classes, Zahra managed to secure legal status for the Association and, as a result, increased levels of recognition and respect. From that point, the project went from strength to strength with the Afoulki Association encouraging women to read and write. The environment she created empowered these women and enabled them to come together to study, share and learn.

To date, Zahra has seen 180 students achieve IT degrees and 30 go on to prepare for their Master's qualifications. 27 of her students have become teachers, 18 are now nurses and another 55 are working in the private sector. Another 70 women have established their own income-generating activities to support their families and send their children to school, encouraging the next generation to aspire for even more.

After just five years, the Afoulki Association has gained legal recognition and built a positive reputation within the community itself. Attitudes have begun to change where women in the village have a role to play and the training, knowledge and confidence to do so well.

“
The woman is the catalyst for the family and the pillar of real development that contributes to real change in thinking and approach.
”

COMMUNITY IMPACT

The impact of Zahra's efforts cannot be overstated. The original 69 women overcame a huge amount with her support – they were laughed at in the street and had to hide their books on the way to class, but they kept coming. These women changed their own lives with her help, but did much more by becoming role models and innovators themselves.

Zahra's work has not just changed the individual lives of her students, it has changed the attitudes that had previously been holding women back for a long time in their communities.



THE IDB PRIZE

With the income from the IDB Prize, she has invested in a tourist cottage in the mountains where the women can share traditional skills with visitors and use their knowledge to bring in an income for their villages. The project is proving what is possible when women have the opportunity to meet and work together.

Zahra has also been able to use some of the money to support her sister who was hospitalized suffering with blood cancer.

THE FUTURE

Zahra has a strategic plan in place for the future of the organization. She plans to enroll more girls into education in the remote mountainous areas and establish health projects targeting mothers and children in the region. She is presently looking for new ways to support women's enterprise and increase access to training programs and coaching.





Organization: female youth development

Haikal Organization

Sierra Leone

Founded in 2001, Haikal Organization is a Non-Government Organization working in both education and health. Operating in all regions of Sierra Leone, the Haikal Organization was established to help transform the lives of the poor and vulnerable, with emphasis on programs, projects and initiatives for women, children, and youths.

In the health sector, the Organization specializes in rehabilitation and social reintegration for obstetric fistula, reproductive health programs (especially for adolescents and women), and maternal and new-born health. In the education sector, the organization engages youth through formal and non-formal educational programs and projects. The Organization also provides livelihood and educational sponsorship for orphans and other vulnerable children living in Sierra Leone.

ACHIEVEMENTS

From academic learning to the management of malaria, reproductive health and nutrition, the Organization helps young women gain the knowledge they deserve for a brighter future, and the voice they need to share with their communities.

The Organization established a new Islamic educational system in Bo Town, in the southern region of Sierra Leone, an academy for girls that provides free, quality education to 1,500 students, as well as lessons on life skills to many more.

Operating with modern facilities, Haikal Academy was able to redefine education in the country. It established the first Muslim nursery school in the area, and the first Islamic school of its kind with modern facilities such as bespoke computer and science laboratories. It employed qualified Muslim science teachers from Nigeria, whilst supporting local communities with the rehabilitation and construction of other educational infrastructure for vulnerable groups affected by the rebel war.

The Organization is now recognized nationally and internationally and has been awarded the Abraham Table of Goodness Award, the Golden Jubilee National Achievement Award, and the Philanthropist of the Year Award in 2011, before receiving the Presidential Award for Contribution in Development in the Area of Education and Health of Women in Sierra Leone ('Order of the Rokel') in 2013.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Organization's achievements have been outstanding. In a society where most Muslim girls did not have access to an education and were often forced into early marriage, Haikal Organization has transformed lives and destinies. Apart from establishing an Islamic education system, the Organization has helped to empower over 2,000 young women giving them essential life skills and a voice of their own.

As the students at the Academy grow from young girls into young women and beyond, they take with them new skills and knowledge to share. Their own personal, spiritual and educational development is allowing them to empower and enable their families and communities. Through education, they are regaining their dignity and beginning to contribute positively to society.

THE IDB PRIZE

The IDB Women's Prize has ensured that the Haikal Academy is now financially secure – the Organization is able to pay its debts and buy more furniture and school materials.

In addition, the Prize brought with it greater recognition – Haikal Organization has become one of the most recognized schools in the southern region and is supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The Organization has won three more awards.

THE FUTURE

In the next five years, the Organization plans to build a school library and to expand its technical and vocational structure so that more girls and young women can undertake non-formal learning.





Organization: female youth development

Muslim Educational Society Bahrain

The Muslim Educational Society (MES) is a social and educational society driven by strong Islamic values. Their work aims to improve the lives of vulnerable people in line with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. With this as background, the MES established the Young Females' Club in 2007, a club for young Bahraini girls aged 15-26 aimed at boosting self-esteem and helping young women develop a sense of identity.

ACHIEVEMENTS

To ensure the Young Females' Club effectively targeted its audience, MES initially set about designing a series of lectures and courses that combined traditional educational training with social interaction and entertainment. It made use of technology and modern training methods to make sure the Club remained active and relevant.

In addition to facilitating lectures and workshops that ranged from health to the environment, and from social and emotional intelligence to communication, the Young Females' Club organized trips and activities to celebrate religious and national occasions.

The Club's efforts equipped young women with the tools and skills required to build a better future. Women were encouraged to think creatively and equipped to compete in the professional marketplace with the objective of becoming financially independent and stable.

The Young Females' Club has brought something entirely new to the lives of the young Bahraini women it touches. Aside from the training they receive, those young women now have an opportunity to come together to share their ideas in an encouraging, safe environment.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Young Females' Club empowers young girls to see themselves as an important part of society and helps them understand their role in light of the teachings of Islam. Up to 70 young Bahraini girls are gaining confidence and affirming their identities and social roles each year. Participants have begun to recognize their own potential as well as the potential of the women around them.

By educating young women, The Young Females' Club has sparked a flame that will burn long into the future. Club members are the future mothers of Bahrain – they will raise the next generation. Equipped with the tools and skills to do more with their own lives, they will help to ensure a more sustainable and positive future for everyone.



THE IDB PRIZE

Winning the IDB Prize was a great boost for the Club's volunteers. It reaffirmed and rewarded them for their ongoing engagement and the value of their work. It also encouraged them to continue working towards a brighter future for young Bahraini females.

The IDB Prize raised the organization's profile with the Supreme Council for Women in the Kingdom and secured additional valuable media coverage for the Young Females' Club amongst Bahraini nationals.

THE FUTURE

The Club's parent organization has been broadening its outreach work since its establishment in 1978. Over the next five years, the Organization plans to increase the number of young girls' enrolment in its Young Females' Club by widening its upper age bracket from 26 to 30 years old and reaching out to girls as young as 12.

The organization hopes to secure a building for the exclusive use of the Young Females' Club in order to establish a permanent base and reduce expenses. They also plan to begin exchanging programs with similar groups beyond the Kingdom of Bahrain.





Organization: female youth development

PARASTOR

Tajikistan

PARASTOR Non-Government Organization was founded in 1996 to promote and improve the role and status of women in society. The organization focuses on improving women's access to education, health and economic resources, as well as teaching valuable business skills that women can use to support their families. In 2009, the organization designed and implemented an income-generating project for women aged between 15 and 24.

ACHIEVEMENTS

PARASTOR had already achieved a great deal before their 2009 project began. Since its inception, PARASTOR set out to improve girl's access to education, health and economic resources in Tajikistan. One of its first activities in 1998 was a sewing project funded by Save the Children of the UK. Through the project, girls aged between 15 and 18 from the poorest families learned sewing circle skills and national golden embroidery, allowing them to earn income for their families. In 2004, through a project funded by UNICEF, PARASTOR supplied 50 schools across the Khatlon region with thousands of booklets explaining the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

In 2009, PARASTOR started working with the Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia, which provided grants to young women and girls between the ages of 15 and 24 from the poorest families in the mountain villages of Karatag, Ziddi and Romit. These grants helped young women improve their ability to generate income on their own, as well as funding vocational training and entrepreneurial projects.

As a result of these efforts, 45 girls and young women have received training in guesthouse entrepreneurship and have launched their own businesses – and many more have received training in tourism development and begun to contribute to consultations on guesthouse development in their own communities. Three new sewing workshops have also been established.

Fifteen young women were directly employed and many more received tuition on either guesthouse management or sewing skills. The organization also provided 2,130 Tajikistani Somoni (USD 490) to fund program beneficiaries, which ultimately improved the quality of life for over 100 people.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Moving beyond the initial objective of income generation, PARASTOR set out to reverse culturally-embedded stereotypes that had historically prevented women in target communities from realizing their potential. Many of the women who participated in the organization's project continue to run their own businesses today, proving that PARASTOR achieved its wider community goals.

The organization has run more than 50 projects supporting women's rights. It has seen over 1,500 women receive training and education, and many progress to start businesses or find employment. It has established forums for women to share their ideas, run exhibitions and contests to encourage creativity, and funded events to highlight women's potential and achievements. Over the course of 19 years, PARASTOR's work has left an impact that can be seen at every level.

THE IDB PRIZE

PARASTOR benefited from the IDB Prize to fund wider operations, in particular to help finance more educational programs in Tajikistan and further afield. The organization has also benefited as an IDB Prize winner by developing relationships with other local and international NGOs. Thanks in part to the Prize, PARASTOR is now a member of the Girls Not Brides Global Partnership and is part of



a coalition of organizations that promote the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women around the world.

THE FUTURE

PARASTOR remains ambitious and seeks to increase the number of members and course enrolments so that it can continue to be a force for good in society.

The organization plans to achieve its expanded membership through training, increasing the number of events it runs, involving more members in national and international presentations, and monitoring the results of these efforts.

Alongside its drive for new members, PARASTOR continues to work to promote and improve the role of women in society through projects focused on education and training, for which the organization now has more than 50 under its name.

Its excellent reputation has helped to build partnerships with other NGOs and has started to influence policy and thinking on a national and international scale. PARASTOR's efforts are showing the world the vital role that women can play in economic and social development, especially in rural communities.





Individual: women in science

Mrs Seydou Ramatou Boubacar
Niger

Mrs Seydou Ramatou Boubacar's mission was to improve the health and wellbeing of women and children, some of the poorest and most vulnerable groups in Niger. Limited technologies and equipment meant that food production was labor-intensive and hugely time-consuming, leaving women with no time to generate income or spend time with their families.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Ramatou, a research scientist and food technology expert, recognized the nutritional value of cowpea, a key food crop in Niger (sometimes known as black-eyed pea). She questioned its relative under-use within the country and set out to overcome negative perceptions of the crop and to promote its benefits, raising awareness of this high protein, calcium-, iron- and vitamin-rich product.

Cowpea was the third largest growing food crop in Niger, however only 20% of its production was being consumed. Low consumption rates were influenced by the limited products available, poor processing and the association of cowpea with flatulence. Since 85% of the population lives in poverty and many children suffer from malnutrition, Ramatou's program set out to eradicate the anomaly.

Having identified cowpea as a widely available crop with great nutritional value, Ramatou sought to find a way to make it more popular and more practical, allowing women to feed their families with it.

She began to work with women in local communities, educating them on the nutritional benefits of cowpea and running workshops to discuss traditional cowpea dishes, as well as comparing different methods and practices. She encouraged women to start recording the results of each method and to develop a best practices framework.

Through this collaboration, new processes were introduced to produce higher-quality flour and create new products. The program developed a ground-breaking, non-flatulent cowpea flour using technology to reduce gases produced during digestion, and started to produce nutritious, child-friendly foods such as biscuits, bread and porridge.

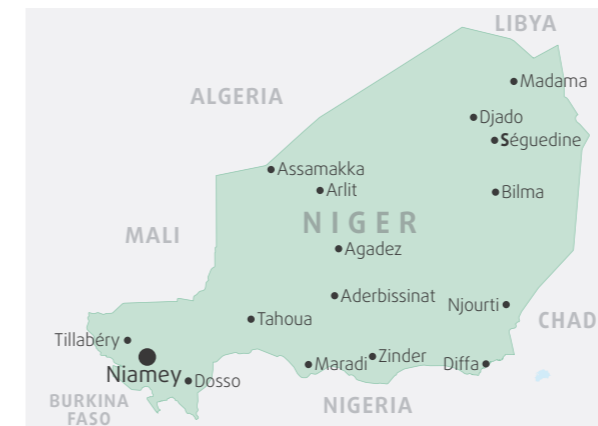


COMMUNITY IMPACT

The impact of the project has improved accessibility to and perception of this highly nutritious food and, by promoting better technology and more efficient food preparation methods, the project has enabled women to take control of their lives.

Ramatou's project has brought innovation and science to women who previously had little education and no industry experience, encouraging them to incorporate modern methods into everyday life, transforming their tasks and increasing their income. The project has enabled women to believe in their own abilities and knowledge, and to have the confidence to aspire for more.

“**What makes me most proud is to have shared knowledge with my sisters in rural areas, contributing to their development through the reduction of their tasks and increasing their income.**”



THE IDB PRIZE

With the money from the IDB Prize, Ramatou has garnered greater support for rural women. She also started work on further research to develop new cowpea products and look at other promotional opportunities. The Prize brought more awareness of her work on a national and international scale. Ramatou had the opportunity to present her project at different scientific events in Niamey, including the National Innovation and Creativity conference where she was awarded the Prime Minister's prize, and the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (WECARD/CORAF) Scientific Week, where she won the 'Best Oral Communication Award for Women'. Ramatou also participated in the IDB Innovation Exhibition.

THE FUTURE

As she continues to research and promote new cowpea products, Ramatou is looking at new opportunities to market and improve product packaging. Her aim is to make this highly nutritious food an essential and everyday part of the Niger diet.





Individual: women in science

Professor Zoubida Charrouf

Morocco

A qualified chemical engineer with a PhD in Phytochemistry, Professor Zoubida Charrouf is an expert in the study of medicinal plants and their uses. Her work saw the establishment of a scientific research program exploring the benefits of argan tree products and their sustainable management.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Professor Zoubida's research project has increased general awareness and knowledge of argan products, improved the processes used to prepare and preserve them, and helped to establish them as a cosmetic staple around the globe.

By setting up women's co-operatives to produce and market argan oil in Morocco, Professor Zoubida enabled women to pioneer and build a new industry. These rural organizations enabled women to develop new skills, take part in literacy programs and work outside their homes. Their success led many women to be involved in local elections and become advocates for their villages, giving them a voice within government and a new status within society.

Through Professor Zoubida's support, women have been pivotal in developing argan oil as a popular cosmetic ingredient, introducing pressed cake and leaves from the tree to the industry. They have also helped to transform forests by promoting restoration of trees and sustainable extraction methods.

This work has transformed the country's economy with the export of argan increasing from 200 liters per year to 1,000 tons, with another 1,000 tons sold within the country itself. The price of a liter of argan oil has increased from USD 3 in 1996 to USD 30 in 2015. The number of co-operatives continues to increase, and the impact of the Professor's work spreads.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Professor Zoubida's work has seen vulnerable women transform their lives and their communities. Their status has improved and they have gained the power to manage their income and to invest in the future of their children.

In a region that was suffering from poverty, Professor Zoubida has been instrumental in promoting change. As well as transforming an industry and changing the lives of thousands of women, her work has inspired environmental sustainability, ecotourism, and the re-birth of other traditional local products, showing the potential for rural women and natural resources.

“
We must all invest in the development of the green economy and the development of local communities. I believe this is the key to real sustainable development.
”



THE IDB PRIZE

The IDB Prize has helped Professor Zoubida to undertake more training and participate in several international conferences, contributing to the debates around sustainable development, green chemistry, green economy and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing.

She has also helped her daughter and other students to learn new analytical techniques.

THE FUTURE

In the next five years, Professor Zoubida plans to continue her new pilot project in the Mesguina Forest on 30,000 ha of argan trees. Her aim is to restore the forest by planting more trees and reconstituting the ecosystem by planting medicinal and aromatic plants. She is also creating an agritourism route to promote local products, crafts and local heritage.





Organization: women in scientific innovation

Chemistry Foundation of Syiah Kuala University Indonesia

As the communities of coastal Aceh in Indonesia faced the combination of high unemployment and low income, they were yet to take advantage of the valuable and largely untapped natural abundant fisheries in nearby seas. The Chemistry Foundation of Syiah University, established in 2007 with the aim of helping local communities increase their income using innovation and science, focused its efforts on improving the efficiency of the fishing industry. The Foundation provided new ways of working as well as opportunities for people without specific skillsets, with a particular focus on women.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Before the Chemistry Foundation of Syiah Kuala University was established, the Aceh community had very limited equipment, knowledge and technology in terms of its fishing practices.

Local fish was caught using rudimentary techniques and sold in traditional markets without any packaging. The absence of packaging and proper preservatives meant a short shelf-life for products as well as a lack of interest on the part of major supermarkets, especially when competitive products from outside the Aceh region were efficiently prepared, packaged and preserved.

The Foundation set out to change the situation by working with local communities, particularly women, teaching them new skills, helping them to diversify the range of fish products, and assisting them with tools to improve product and packaging quality.

Using modern technology, ongoing production management training, barcoding, labelling, improved product hygiene and extending shelf-life, the Foundation helped local women to learn how to market their new products to supermarkets in the surrounding area. Over time, the Foundation taught communities how to extend the range of products, introducing them to fish nuggets, meatballs and ketchup.

In 2011, when the Foundation was awarded the IDB Prize, the Aceh people were no longer selling basic produce to traditional markets, but instead were selling to supermarkets at respectable margins and generating a sustainable income for their families.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

After ascertaining that few women in Aceh had permanent jobs, the Chemistry Foundation of Syiah Kuala University focused on their education, teaching them how to implement advanced production processes and add value to the fish their families were selling.

The Foundation's work has helped women in the Aceh region to make use of sustainable employment opportunities, increase their family's income and benefit the whole community.

Structured tutorials have helped to educate women in the areas of innovation and entrepreneurship, allowing many Aceh females to deal with changing market demands. Their skills are in turn transferred to the wider community, benefitting an audience far larger than those who attended the Foundation's seminars.



THE IDB PRIZE

A significant portion of the IDB Prize money was offered to small businesses in the Aceh region as venture capital so that businesses could have access to funds to expand their operations. Businesses chose to invest the fund into a variety of areas with a focus on modern, clean, hygienic permanent work facilities as well as safeguarding their distribution network.

While the funds were very helpful (the balance of funds was used to expand the Foundation's work to other areas of Aceh), one of the most unexpected benefits of the Prize was the status awarded to the Foundation. Following the IDB recognition, the Foundation is now providing a wide range of social activities, helping communities to become sustainable and self-sufficient, enabling them to build houses and providing improved transportation links. This transformative process also brings improved technology to other industries such as soya milk processing, cake baking and meat processing.

THE FUTURE

The Foundation plans to invest in modern technology, finalize the purchase of a new modern fish-bone puller, and begin educating communities about methods for storing and canning fish.





Individual: women's application of finance for development

Mrs Seyedeh Fatemeh Moghimi
Iran

Born in Iran in 1958, Mrs Seyedeh Fatemeh Moghimi is a graduate in Civil Engineering and Business Administration, with an MBA in Strategic Management and now currently preparing for a PHD in International Entrepreneurship. In 1983, she became the first woman in Iran to establish an international transportation company, Sadid Bar International Transport Company, where she is Managing Director.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In the post-revolution era in Iran, women still had very traditional roles, often being unable to leave their home to work at all with the government thereby limiting opportunities for women's entrepreneurial development. Although women were invited to teach schoolgirls or run pre-school care, spas and beauty salons, Iranian society was far less supportive of women who were interested in working within traditionally male environments.

Seyedeh developed positive working relationships within the transport industry, persuaded male drivers to work for her company, and overcame false customs reports from competitors. When she won the IDB Prize in 2012, she had grown her business to employ over 270 people, 20 in the main office in Tehran and another 250 at Iranian ports and borders.

With the success of her business, Seyedeh started to share her story with other women. She invited them to lectures where she encouraged them to start thinking beyond traditional roles. She spoke at numerous seminars and academic institutions and helped many people in rural communities, especially young girls, to start small businesses when they finished their education.

Leading by example, she has shown that creativity, vision and persistence ensures positive outcomes, not gender.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Seyedeh is an inspiration to young girls where her efforts are used as a case study in colleges. Following her example, more and more women are moving into previously male-dominated fields – growing crops, raising cattle, harvesting honey, providing tourist services and managing transport companies.

“
I would like people to take self-confidence from my achievements – they can overcome all the problems, barriers and hardship they are facing and change the norms of their societies.
”



THE IDB PRIZE

Using the IDB Prize, Seyedeh is encouraging women in rural areas to start their own ventures. She has also created a think-tank that focuses on commerce and industry, and is supporting small business start-ups. She runs numerous workshops, translates and publishes business books and has developed a website to inspire innovation and build links between entrepreneurs and businessmen (www.karafarin24.com).

THE FUTURE

In the next five years, Seyedeh hopes to expand her transport activities for Sadid Bar and increase the company's share of import shipments from Europe to Iran. She hopes that her company's success will continue to improve trust in women, increase their knowledge and experience, and allow them to obtain better jobs with higher salaries.





Individual: women's application of finance for development

Mrs Selima Ahmad

Bangladesh

Mrs Selima Ahmad is the founder and president of the Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry. She is well known around the world as an activist for democracy, gender equality, anti-corruption and female entrepreneurship.

Selima entered a male-dominated professional world and battled perceptions and traditions to make her voice heard within the private business sector. She steadily built a strong reputation and held various senior management positions in finance and human resources. With her husband, she grew a start-up business into an international name – Nitol-Niloy Group – now employing over 5,000 people.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Women in Bangladesh face many obstacles; traditional attitudes of families and society limit educational opportunities available to them, and their progress in business is severely restricted by the male-dominated decision-making process. Women also tend to have far less access to business resources, in particular to finance.

Selima's struggle and eventual success inspired her to found the Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce, whose objective is to offer inspiration and a helping hand to female entrepreneurs.

She designed and promoted several programs to support women in business including capacity building of 7,000 female entrepreneurs, sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Embassy, The Royal Danish Embassy, US Embassy, US-AID, Asian Development Bank, Center for Private Enterprise (CIPE), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Humber Business School, International Republican Institute (IRI), and many more.

From human resource development projects to improved access to finance programs and the promotion of enterprises run by rural women, Selima's work continues to empower women across the country. She took a hands-on role helping women to get their products to international markets, providing business counselling and technical support at every level. She also conducted regular advocacy interventions with policy makers, banks and other stakeholders, establishing a separate allocation for businesswomen in the national budget and the central bank.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Selima's work has empowered a new generation of female entrepreneurs, helping women from all walks of life in the country and gaining support from around the world. Over 27,000 women have received business development training and another 8,000 have participated in national and international trade fairs.

By enabling women to establish income-generating roles for themselves, she is helping them to have a voice in their own homes and in their communities. Her work allows women to lift themselves out of poverty and to create a more equal and empowered future for the next generations.

“Each and every woman should be economically empowered, self-reliant and able to move forward with their development without challenges and fears. Every woman should promote themselves as an important member of the family, community and the society.”



THE IDB PRIZE

With the IDB Prize, Selima is taking her work further to build a skills development center in a rural village and using it as a base to educate and inspire others. She also formed the Women Entrepreneur Institute for Leadership Development, which carries out research to identify barriers, issues and solutions to women's development. The Prize brought her considerable media coverage and government recognition, allowing her to extend her reach.

THE FUTURE

In the next five years, Selima plans to continue building capacity for training female entrepreneurs, especially at a grass roots level, and to extend her influence within the policy arena.

With a strategy in place to build at least three more training centers, division resource centers, and an ICT-based business communications hub, hundreds of women will benefit from her efforts.





Organization: the contribution of institutions to women's financial empowerment

Zenab for Women in Development

Sudan

Zenab for Women in Development (ZWD) is a grassroots organization that aims to empower women and advocate for their rights. Established in 2000, and named after Mrs Zenab Mohamad Nour, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee who dedicated her life to helping young girls have access to education, ZWD works across the whole of Sudan to provide education to girls and women, and foster economic empowerment.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Zenab for Women in Development is engaged in a variety of activities to support women's rights and encourage sustainable development. From helping to build four primary schools for girls in rural villages and opening five adult educational programs for more than 500 rural women, to implementing water and sanitation projects in local communities, it has made a huge impact on the lives of poor people.

The outreach activities and educational programs it runs are helping to overcome health issues and foster understanding of reproductive, maternal, and child health in village communities.

ZWD has also set up women's co-operatives in rural areas and established the Women Farmers' Union, which provide the associations with agricultural implements and seeds. Critically, the organization helps female farmers to access credit so they can improve their own operations.

This micro-finance system allows women to take control of their farming activity and increase their earnings and income. The organization acts as guarantor for the bank, allowing women to take small loans up to USD 5,000 for the first time. With these loans, women can hire workers to clear land and carry out more efficient harvesting. The project was a huge success – all the women were able to repay their loans before the official deadline and ZWD moved on to find additional funding to offer larger interest-free loans of up to USD 30,000.

At the same time, the Union and the co-operatives also provide a place to share ideas and innovations, and to compare techniques and best practices. With mutual support, women continually find new ways of increasing their income and work together to buy equipment.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

In a society that considered women weak and disorganized, Zenab for Women in Development has had a powerful impact. This once vulnerable group now has a voice of its own and, thanks to innovative new tools and improved farming knowledge, provides the means to bring about change into their lives.

As the women learn and develop, they continue to become more aware of their own rights in society and in Islam. They are beginning to recognize their own potential as individuals and their power as a group. This is changing their roles within communities and making them less vulnerable to oppression and violence.

Women farmers are actively contributing to the economic and social development of their villages, which in turn is forcing a change of attitude across the country.

THE IDB PRIZE

Using the IDB Prize and the credibility that the award of the Prize brought, ZWD is expanding its role and influence. Apart from buying a tractor and a new planter, it has created adult education programs in rural communities, providing thousands of women with access to greater knowledge. They have also introduced pre-school education for girls, thereby empowering generations to come.

THE FUTURE

In the next five years, Zenab for Women in Development plans to expand its efforts to promote education for girls. It plans to build ten primary schools in various rural villages, enhance the schools it already runs, and launch ten more adult education programs.





Individual: women's management of natural resources for development

Mrs Tri Mumpuni
Indonesia

Mrs Tri Mumpuni graduated from Bogo Agricultural University with a Master's in Leadership for Environment and Development. Puni strongly believes energy is the best entry point to unlock the potential of rural communities and steer economic development. She has been pivotal in bringing electricity to isolated villages in Indonesia.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In Indonesia, a large number of rural communities has limited access to electricity. This means that even the most basic activities are tedious and time-consuming, ultimately holding back economic development. Recognizing the importance of introducing technology that local people could understand and manage themselves, Puni has worked with women in rural areas helping to harness electricity from renewable sources, using micro hydroelectric power that produces electricity using natural water flow.

Knowing that electricity alone would not have the requisite wide-scale impact, Puni ensured communities were trained to make the most of their new access to energy. With this power, women no longer had to spend so much time gathering firewood for cooking and fetching water for their families. Instead, they learned to operate the technology to bring electricity and clean water to their villages and to make products at home, such as patchouli and lemongrass oil which can be sold at favorable prices. Puni encouraged women to form co-operatives and to develop activities that support the community's economy. Villages have become self-reliant and sustainable through the training and ongoing support Puni offers.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

For women in these communities, Puni has brought tremendous change. They no longer need to spend so much time on the most basic community needs. They can take a more active role to support their families and process agricultural products to make food from local resources that can be sold for a decent profit.

With electricity, they have light in the evenings to hold meetings, spend time with their children, encourage study and make handicrafts. Together they are changing their everyday lives and creating a bright future.



THE IDB PRIZE

The IDB Prize has enabled Puni to support agricultural processing units for women in rural communities, and to continue supporting more meetings and gatherings, offering women expenses to cover the costs of their time away from their families. The increased recognition provided by the Prize, has seen her reach out to more women and gain greater credibility with the whole community.

THE FUTURE

Over the next five years, Puni plans to develop more micro-hydro projects so that rural people can have the electricity and light they need to make use of most of their economic potential.

“
Just do good things and good things will follow. Contribution is not only about giving money, it can be the thought, the spirit of encouraging other women, helping to solve their problems. We can help with our hand or our heart.
”





Individual: women's management of natural resources for development

Professor Pervin Mammadova
Azerbaijan

A leading expert in organic and petrochemistry, Professor Pervin Mammadova's main focus is to improve the environment and particularly combat oil pollution. Her work has created the biotechnologies to effectively de-contaminate polluted soil using the metabolic potential of micro-organisms and plants.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout her career, Professor Pervin has been engaged in studying biologically active compounds for controlling weeds in cereal crops, as well as combating oil biodegraded by micro-organisms. This research led her to consider using micro-organisms to solve oil pollution – she realized that if hydrocarbon oxidizing micro-organisms could degrade oil, they could also be useful in removing it from the environment.

She set up a research project to test the theory by hiring a group of female researchers through the scientific-practical center Women and Development which she heads. This organization is unique in Azerbaijan, enjoying a special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN. Apart from providing women with the opportunity to be active in the development of the country, it also defends women's rights and conducts a great deal of research, particularly focused on solving social and environmental problems.

The breakthrough research conducted by Professor Pervin and her team has seen a better understanding of the biological damage caused by oil pollution and the means in which to neutralize the damage. Experiments have shown very positive results and received professional recognition from around the world. Given this work in bioremediation technology, soils with high levels of contamination can be returned to full economic use.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Professor Pervin's research and work has had national and international impact. It provides a way to turn previously un-usable land into agricultural or commercial property, an outcome that benefits local people, the environment and big business.

She has transformed the traditional view of women's work within conservative societies. Through her own success and the hard work of her female team, she has shown the important contribution of women to science and the environment.

“
I advise all women, as far as possible, to contribute to solving global environmental problems and to educate their children in a spirit of environmental protection.”



THE IDB PRIZE

The IDB Prize has enabled Professor Pervin and her team to improve the material and technical base of their laboratory, and to expand their area of operations to clean up contaminated soils in other regions of the country.

Winning the Prize was also a morale booster for the team. The recognition gave Professor Pervin and her team the confidence to aspire to greater levels of achievements.

THE FUTURE

The group is expanding its research framework to deal with eco-toxicology and study heavy metals pollution of soils and oil pollution of waters. The women on her team are gaining additional education and becoming recognized experts in environmental protection.





Individual: women's management of natural resources for development

**Mrs Seidaliyeva Balkhiya
Amzeevna**
Kazakhstan

Mrs Seidaliyeva Balkhiya Amzeevna, an expert in plant nutrition and a soil specialist, has worked in farming and agriculture development for many years. At university, her particular focus was on how to improve crop yields. She eventually gave up her work as an agronomist to become a scientist.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Having developed a new natural fertilizer called 'Tabigi nar', which has the potential to change the lives of poor farmers in rural communities, Seidaliyeva experimented with inventive fertilizers made from industrial waste, discovering that it was possible to use the fertilizer to improve the quality of brownfield sites for agriculture.

Working with OBS-E LLP, an organization that had been providing free grape and fruit cultures to farmers since 2007, she conducted a new study to test Tabigi nar in rural communities. The fertilizer increased the harvest of vines from an average weight per bunch of 200-250g to 600-900g; this increase in the weight of fruit shows how the fertilizer has improved the quality and quantity of the fruit.

The success of the study compelled Seidaliyeva to register the fertilizer and apply for a patent.

Since the project's inception, Seidaliyeva decided to work with low-income and large families, particularly focusing her efforts on the women in the families. She noticed that women felt somehow awkward among a team of men at seminars. They seemed to be out of sorts and intimidated in a traditionally male environment. Seidaliyeva answered questions from the women, offered them advice and conducted follow-up workshops for them. She encouraged them to produce an income from their orchards and vineyards. Such an approach helped to improve women's health and income and to boost their confidence in over 470 families.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

In the communities where the study was run, the fertilizer has proved to be profitable for those growing the crops and those who buy the harvest. The natural, eco-friendly product is safe for consumption making it possible for thousands of people to increase their vitamin and mineral intake and thus improve their health.

Seidaliyeva's legacy helps to solve the depletion of arable land and purifying man-made waste. She has shown the world a new way to overcome agricultural problems and proved that a woman can play a significant part in inspiring scientific development.

“
Every person, whether male or female, who has read my story should believe in themselves and work hard. Only work makes a person happy. I want people to ask themselves: 'What can I do to improve life on earth?'
”



THE IDB PRIZE

The IDB Prize has allowed Seidaliyeva to continue her work and develop it further, and to fund the design and survey works for drilling new water wells. Seidaliyeva is contributing more to the debate around food, suggesting a distance-mobile management system that covers the entire food production process could help to make Kazakhstan a leader in global food safety.

THE FUTURE

Seidaliyeva has plans in place to conduct research on the use and application of Tabigi nar in different cultures and soil types. She is also building a strategy to attract investment so that she can build a plant for large-scale production of the fertilizer.





Organization: women's role in environmental leadership

Heritage Foundation of Pakistan Pakistan

Originally a family trust established in 1980 by Suhail Zaheer Lari and Yasmeen Lari, the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan has developed into an organization that champions a sense of pride in heritage, culture and tradition within Pakistan by empowering women to claim ownership of the mission for which it stands.

The Heritage Foundation of Pakistan adopted a holistic approach to its work from the outset. Rather than offering funds or grants, it chose to work directly with women in rural communities, empowering them to start helping themselves.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The great earthquake in 2005 saw a new direction for the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan. Working with marginalized communities to help re-build their homes, schools and lives, they soon recognized that women and children were the most vulnerable groups. Social constraints meant that men were not allowed to interact directly with rural women, so male-dominated disaster aid teams were often unable to reach out to them.

The Foundation began sending female teams to these communities providing direct support to rural women and introducing opportunities for them to gather and develop a sense of unity and self-worth. The organization encouraged women to use their traditional skills to help with the re-development of their villages. Women had long been at the forefront of home building, and by bringing them together, they gained the power to make better use of their skills.

From community centers and women's committees, to workshops on traditional crafts and construction techniques, the Foundation has encouraged and supported a rebirth of local culture and a new pride in Pakistani heritage. It also helped women to use innate skills and knowledge to build home-based businesses.

The Foundation has given thousands of women new dignity by enabling them to see their own worth. It has brought new life into the traditions and heritage of these local communities, encouraging ownership of historical monuments, and a new belief in traditional methods and materials.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

By showing women the value of their traditional skills and the contribution they can make within their communities, the Foundation has given them a real sense of self-worth. Their newfound confidence inspires them to achieve more, to seek education and to be role models for their children.

The organization has helped women to become economically independent and increasingly empowered. Women are mobilized to fend for themselves and become self-reliant. At the same time, they have raised the community awareness of the role women can play when they are given the opportunity to do so.



THE IDB PRIZE

With the IDB Prize, the Foundation has started to provide micro-grants to women, encouraging them to start new business ventures through a dedicated program (Barefoot Village Entrepreneurs). The recognition, which was another positive outcome of the award of the Prize, also helped the Foundation to reach out to more women, offering training programs and creating Village Master Trainers within the communities themselves.

They also implemented the 'Read Pakistan' program to help educate children, particularly girls and those not currently in school.

THE FUTURE

As it looks to the future, the Foundation is laying down plans to empower 100 women a year and promote women-centered community disaster preparation plans in ten villages. It is developing more training modules for adults and children with a focus on self-reliance. It is also working on various projects such as roof gardens to improve food security while helping to re-open dysfunctional schools and construct 50,000 Disaster Risk Resilient (DDR)-compliant, low-cost, disaster risk reduction smokeless stoves.





Individual: recognizing women's effect on food security

Mrs Fatima Ait Moussa

Morocco

Mrs Fatima Ait Moussa is the Founder and President of Afoulki Argan Co-operative, an organization that supports rural women with income-generating activities including argan production, beekeeping and poultry farming.

Fatima grew up in a poor village in southwest Morocco. Without the opportunity to go to school, she helped her mother raise five younger siblings and carried out household chores. This role became even more important after her father left to work in France to better support the family financially. After 21 years of marriage, her husband was assassinated, and she once again had to take a lead role, this time to support her own family of four children.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Fatima's Co-operative is dedicated to unlocking the potential of impoverished women in Idmin and supporting them in their attempts to secure a better life, giving them dignity and relief from begging for basic supplies.

The Afoulki Co-operative has brought together more than 125 local women who produce high-quality argan oil for national and international markets. While these women had previously relied on relatives and local barter systems, as a co-operative they have begun to build their own businesses. Fatima has since combined the argan activities with other social and useful household activities, such as literacy classes and carpet-making lessons.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

There was a great deal to overcome to achieve success. Local traditions meant women who left the house for reasons other than household chores were judged negatively, so persuading husbands and parents to allow women to attend co-operative meetings was a significant challenge.

As women gained confidence and skills, they contributed to their family's income and the economy of their villages. Traditional attitudes have slowly started to change and women have earned improved status and increased respect.



THE IDB PRIZE

The IDB Prize has allowed for further investment in the Co-operative, funding feasibility studies, knowledge development and new materials. Women are developing innovative new products including culinary and medicinal plants and the overall work of the Co-operative has gained greater credibility within their communities.

THE FUTURE

As women see success, they are becoming more confident about Fatima's work which in turn inspires them to hope for a better future. Fatima plans to increase the technical, methodological and financial resources over the next five years so that the Co-operative can become self-sustaining. Their plan is to extend activities in other rural areas in Morocco.

“Challenges happen for a reason, mainly to push our limits and make us achieve unprecedented heights. Helping other people, especially those in hard situations, prompts inner bliss and fulfilment.”





Individual: recognizing women's effect on food security

Mrs Selina Jahan

Bangladesh

Mrs Selina Jahan has been the Chairperson and CEO of the Women's Initiative for Rural Poverty Alleviation and Self-Reliance for the last 15 years.

Having grown up surrounded by acute poverty in a rural village, watching natural calamities destroy crops and lack of innovation limit production, Selina recognized there was a role for women to play to improve production.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Selina's idea was to produce fertilizer from organic waste. She began making compost for use on her own plantation and over time, the increase in her crop yield and reduction of production costs began to attract the attention of other farmers in neighboring villages, and she started to share her skills.

Skills sharing and informal training was so successful that Selina built a team of volunteers to deliver more formal training about Vermicompost, a bio-friendly, non-chemical manure, produced from farm waste and red earth worms. From humble origins in 2007 with seven housewives working together, it has developed into a movement that now involves as many as 10,000 women.

Vermicompost contains millions of beneficial micro-organisms that break down organic matter into nutrient forms that plants can readily absorb. Gentle on plants and the environment, the cost of producing Vermicompost is approximately ten times less than traditional chemical fertilizers and is considerably more sustainable, benefiting soil, water and the entire ecosystem. The impact of Selina's innovation and work has helped transform the economic status of thousands of families and the social status of thousands of women.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Through training and best practices, Selina has empowered village women and enabled them to earn income and contribute to their families and communities. By using their spare time to learn and produce the fertilizer, they have a direct, lasting impact on the development of their rural villages.

As the project grows and evolves, more women are moving away from traditional duties and establishing themselves as productive members of their communities. Benefits include generating modest incomes and helping to ensure food security, environmental sustainability and gender equality.

“
Any honest mission with an objective of welfare and service to people will prevail. From my own experience, an initiative taken and pursued by women is likely to be more rewarding, effective and sustainable.
”



THE IDB PRIZE

The IDB Prize brought Selina increased recognition for her work as well as acting as a tremendous morale booster for everyone involved. The project has developed further through the purchase of land to expand the plant, investing in office furniture and fittings, and producing a logistics and production training manual.

THE FUTURE

Forward plans are to officially register the commercial patent for Vermicompost and integrate production sourcing with the agricultural input distribution departments of the Government of Bangladesh and other high-profile organizations.

There are plans to decentralize the program and establish manufacturing and training facilities in all 64 districts, acting as commercial agro-enterprises.





Organization: recognizing women's collective action on food security

Association des Femmes de
L'Afrique de L'Ouest (AFAO)
Senegal

The West African Women's Association is a regional Non-Government Organization that operates in 16 countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Since the inception of its first pilot structure in Senegal in 1992, AFAO has become a powerful advocate for consultation, lobbying and promotion of the economic status of women.

AFAO's main objective is to mobilize women in the 16 ECOWAS countries and to highlight women's role in economic development. At the center of the objective is the belief that African economic integration must involve the entire population, 52% of whom are women.

ACHIEVEMENTS

AFAO conducted a study on the role that agricultural skills and income-generating activities play to eliminate gender inequalities and reduce poverty, malnutrition and disease among the female population in West Africa.

Following the study, it established a pivotal project for a semi-industrial fruit and vegetable processing unit for poor women and provided training for more than 1,500 women in agricultural produce processing techniques. The project was subsequently replicated in other countries and yielded 21 food products in three key processing units, while continuing to provide women in rural communities with technical training.

Since training is free, even the poorest women can access it and gain the skills they need to begin earning an income. The improved quality of food produced by the newly skilled women is helping to increase agricultural productivity at a household level, which can lead to greater food security in a region where hunger, malnutrition and poverty are recurrent.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

AFAO has built a solid reputation for championing women's rights and needs and has achieved success in enabling women to improve their standing in society. The Association is helping women across the region to achieve the recognition they deserve, and to have a voice in decision-making processes at local and national levels. Additionally, the Association's work has helped to improve food security in West Africa.



THE IDB PRIZE

The Association des Femmes de L'Afrique de l'Ouest used the IDB Prize to improve facilities at their training center; it acquired an additional 3 ha of land for crop cultivation and attracted greater recognition and more financial support from donors. Policy makers are also beginning to take note of the organization's work as its image and reputation grows.

THE FUTURE

By 2020, AFAO aims to be a leading institution that helps to enhance women's socio-economic development throughout West Africa. It has plans to improve co-operation between individual regional antennas, forge partnerships to raise more funds, and encourage more income-generating activities for women.





Organization: recognizing women's collective action on food security

Bright Generation Community Foundation

Ghana

The Bright Generation Community Foundation is a Non-Profit Organization focused on sustainable development in Ghana. Its aim is to create innovative projects that advance the social and economic welfare of women, children and youths in rural and peri-urban communities, and promote agriculture, food security and wealth creation for the most neglected segments of society.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Foundation's work has seen the creation of truly innovative projects that support the social and economic welfare of women and children. From educating vulnerable groups about health, the environment and agriculture, to providing micro-finance and basic life skills, the Foundation is helping to empower women in these communities and give them the ability to contribute.

Through this training, the Bright Generation Community Foundation helped women understand the benefits of chemical-free farming, develop sustainable income from agriculture and offered interest-free loans to support themselves. This was the first time Ghanaian women farmers had the opportunity to access finance (other than high interest informal loans at 240%), enabling them to start building new lives for themselves.

With the Foundation's support, women could access technical services, tractor services and high-quality organic compost. This has introduced more profitable farming and improved overall food security for their communities. The approach has helped to reduce smallholders' losses and debts, while alternative farming methods mean chemical-free soil and a more sustainable future. Farm produce is now worth more than it used to on the market because of its better quality and the removal of exploitative middlemen from the supply chain.

The Foundation's interventions have directly supported more than 2,000 smallholder farmers, reducing poverty levels and having a positive impact on the lives of 10,000 people.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Bright Generation Community Foundation is making advances by tackling gender disparities in Ghana. Even though they play an essential role in their farming communities, women have access to quality seeds, innovative technologies and markets that are 20% to 40% less in terms of yield than those of their male counterparts.

The Foundation's intervention has helped female smallholder farmers improve their production rate and increase their family income. Many of the women are able to sell their produce at prices 50% higher than before.

The sustainable and eco-friendly farming methods that the women are being taught is a legacy that will benefit generations to come.



THE IDB PRIZE

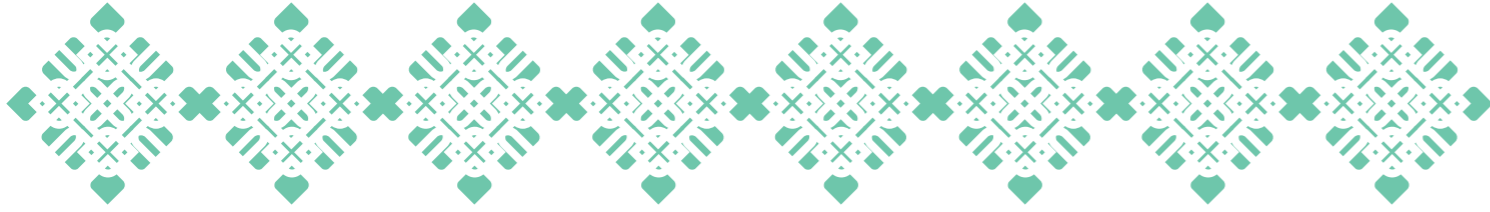
The IDB Prize has allowed the Foundation to invest further in these communities. It bought a new tractor and expanded operations to include five new Muslim communities. Its reputation and recognition has raised awareness and increased credibility.

THE FUTURE

The Foundation is continually finding new ways to increase the scope of smart agricultural activities through Islamic micro-finance. In the next five years, the aim is to extend their reach to three other key regions in Ghana and to introduce innovative irrigation programs and technologies, making rural life sustainable.

Part of the plan is to strengthen support for crop insurance for smallholder farmers through solar drying and desiccation of vegetables and fruits to help reduce the impact of post-harvest losses.





For further information

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