

5th ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

THEME

Influencing sustainable agroecology: A pathway to climate justice and resilience – opportunities for optimizing women’s leadership development

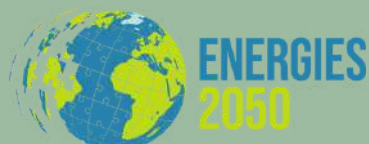
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DATE: 31st October to 2nd November 2024

VENUE: The Central Auditorium, Church of Pentecost, Kpasa, Oti Region - Ghana



Co-organized by



Conference Background

Agroecology is “an integrated approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of food and agricultural systems” that “aims to optimize the interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment while taking into account the social aspects that must be addressed for a sustainable and equitable food system” (FAO). In the context of changing climate and growing concerns for more healthy food systems, agroecology is not only gaining momentum as a scientific discipline, but constitutes a **sustainable farming approach** and a formidable **social movement** across the globe. There is, consequently, growing evidence of its multiple benefits, from climate resilience to farm productivity and efficiency.

Agroecological practices bring resilience and broad-based productivity to rural communities and provide important ecosystem services across the landscape, including: increased average crop yield along such environmental benefits as carbon sequestration, reduction in pesticide use and soil restoration. It is worrying that the level of **involvement of women in modern agricultural policies**, strategies and leadership in contemporary times, is **woefully inadequate**.

Women play an essential role in the food system. However, despite their crucial contributions, they are not yet sufficiently empowered to thrive within it. Agroecology serves as an antidote to many of these disparities. Well-designed, adequately funded, and systematically implemented agroecological systems can yield various positive results. These can manifest in different forms, such as improved health for women, an economic boost to the nation, and enhanced soil health.



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Women make up 43% of the global agricultural labor force (FAO). However, globally, **less than 15% of landholders are women** (FAO). According to UN Women, only 2% of organizations governing the food systems in low- and middle-income countries are led by women. Additionally, **1 in 4 women and girls are expected to be moderately or severely food insecure by 2030**. The impacts of climate change are different for women and men, with women likely to bear the greater burden in situations of poverty. To ensure climate justice for women, their participation in decision-making processes is indispensable.

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The co-organizers of the conference are committed to empowering women and promoting gender equality in leadership and decision-making. The move is to involve women in leadership roles, particularly in the context of climate justice and resilience, as never before. This conference seeks to explore the intersection of **agroecology, climate justice & resilience** along with women taking center stage in leadership.

Conference Co-Organizers

LINEENBAAL Women Association, which has has over 3,000 women members, operates in the Oti, Volta, and parts of the Northern Regions of Ghana with the aim of reducing poverty among women and girls through the creation of sustainable income-generating activities.



The **objectives** of the association are:

- ◆ To **contribute to food security** in Northern Ghana and the country as a whole
- ◆ To **increase the export** of Ghanaian agricultural produce
- ◆ To **provide employment** through sustainable farming, processing, and export

The association has significantly contributed to the prosperity, health, and happiness of their communities, thereby promoting a promising future for the next generation. They have been working to support women in achieving greater participation in accessing economic opportunities and resources, increasing women's voices in decision-making, and gaining admission to employment with equitable wages.

So far, **more than 1,800 vulnerable women** members of the LINEENBAAL Women Association have directly and indirectly **benefited from training in agro-value chain processing**. This training specifically focuses on the use of African locust beans (peanuts and soybeans) to produce a local delicacy popularly known as SOUMBALA. Recipients of this training have reported approximately a 200% increase in their weekly profits after marketing their products.

An important component of this activity is linking the women beneficiaries to our **Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)**, which are now present in over 12 communities and reach more than **800 women entrepreneurs** who come together to pool their resources, save money, and provide loans to other VSLA members.





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The injustice of climate change is that its negative impacts disproportionately affect poor communities, which have contributed the least to its causes. Women, in particular, suffer more from the impacts of climate change, as they are often disempowered and lack access to resources. To address the problem of climate change and its negative impacts on poor communities, the LINEENBAAL Women Association implements projects in the Oti Region to empower women to develop **community-based adaptations** against these impacts.

Since its inception, the association has worked to provide women with access to climate information and tools to innovate their mitigation approaches in response to evolving challenges. This allows them to co-design adaptation strategies that can also engage with climate policy at the regional, national, and international levels. This activity empowers women and increases community resilience to climate change while contributing to sustainable development.

So far, their Climate Resilience Programs have reached over **2,453 women** and more than **1,680 individual beneficiaries**. For **every \$1 invested**, more than **\$2 is returned** on the investment within two years. Furthermore, Participatory Scenario Planning workshops were conducted in 10 districts in the Oti Region.



ENERGIES 2050 — a co-organizer of the conference, is a French-based non-governmental organization that has been active for more than 25 years as an international network and, since 2011, as an association committed to a new development model.

The association is mobilized in the **fight against climate change**, the implementation of shared and sustainable development, and the establishment of a more human, plural, and united society, bringing peace and respecting natural resources and the common goods of humanity.

The association brings together members and partners from more than 100 nationalities. Together, they implement innovative, demonstrative, and replicable projects in more than 70 countries.

ENERGIES 2050 intervenes according to a **systemic, multi-level, and inclusive approach**. The association and its network support international institutions, national governments, and local governments, as well as multi-actor coalitions and non-state public or private actors, in the development and implementation of strategies and low-carbon development programs and projects with high potential for innovation in the areas of mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.

The Agroecology Conference

This **5th Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Conference (WiLD-M)** aims to invoke gender inclusiveness and motivate grassroots participation in national, global, and community dialogues and activism towards creating regenerative resilience in nature. It also seeks to invest in intentional interventions that can reduce the negative impacts of the current unsustainable food security systems.

The theme for the **2023 conference** was **Empowering Women in Energy Transition** and brought together over **700 delegates**. It was held in Kpandai in the Northern Region. The event offered lots of learning and fun, allowing participating delegates to return home with renewed spirit, new knowledge, and lessons to guide their objectives.

This year's edition of the WiLD-M Conference is strategically designed to empower primary stakeholders in the biodiversity divide and to make women core influencers and decision-makers in the call to action. The Women in Agroecology Conference

provides a platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing, as well as planning and action for creating an **Agroecology Village**. It is estimated that this year's three-day conference will assemble over 1,500 participants from various groups within and outside the FARIAD Network.

The conference will be held in Kpassa, in the Oti Region of Ghana, at the Main Central Auditorium



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of The Church of Pentecost. The conference comprises several activities, including exhibitions, plenary and breakout sessions, as well as field excursions to agroecological enterprises. It will be a hybrid event, featuring in-person attendance and live streaming for online participants.

Building on the body of knowledge disseminated by various experts, such as the **High-Level Panel of Experts** (HLPE), this conference is organized to share the principles of sustainable food systems (SFS) that focus on improving resource efficiency, strengthening resilience, and securing social equity and responsibility (Sustainability 2021, 13). The WiLD-M Conference will advance the impartation of knowledge in agroecology, with women as the main focus participants.

The Keynote Speaker

Our keynote speaker **Mr. Stéphane Pouffary** is a mentoring patron of the LINEENBAAL Women Association. Mr. Pouffary is the **Founder** and **Chief Executive Officer of ENERGIES 2050**. He has worked in international cooperation and as an environmental and climate activist for over 35 years. Mr. Stéphane is the author of more than 200 technical publications. He has also founded, co-founded, and is involved in several international initiatives such as the Climate Task Force of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa), ART's PLANET, ethiCarbon®, the Francophonie Initiative for Sustainable Cities (IFVD), and the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (Global ABC).



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Stéphane Pouffary is a specialist in the **development and implementation of strategies to combat climate change**, as well as in programs and low-carbon development projects. He has served as a team leader for numerous international multidisciplinary climate change projects.

With extensive experience in a large number of developing countries, including Africa, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and Latin America, coupled with his wide-ranging international expertise, Mr. Pouffary has a deep understanding of current global challenges and future needs, particularly in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and addressing climate change.

The Main Speaker



The main speaker for the 5th WILD-M Conference is **Madam Monica Yator**, a **trainer of trainers in agroecology and permaculture innovations**. She is an advocate for agroecological transition, climate change, and resilience actions.

Madam Yator is a recipient of multiple awards in the areas of **Climate Justice, Agroecology, Gender Equality**, and **Human Rights** activism.

A few of Madam Monica Yator's honors include the 20 for 20 Solidarity Awards—an initiative of Soar and Equality Now—and an Agroecology Award for the Women Empowerment category

in 2023. Additionally, she won an award in the category of Exemplary Works in Transforming Agroecology Transitioning Women, organized by AFSA in 2021. Madam Yator is currently the chair of the Agroecology Coalition and a member of both Pelum Kenya and the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA).

She is part of the Pastoralists Alliance for Resilience and Adaptation Across Nations and also a fellow of the Coalition of Indigenous Women Organization. To maintain the relevance of our conference objectives, our keynote speaker, Madam Monica Yator, is a feminist and the founder of the **Indigenous Women and Girls Initiative** (IWGI). IWGI is a community-based organization advocating for Agroecology transitioning among indigenous communities in Kenya and beyond.

The main speaker and other facilitators will, together, deliver on conference sub-themes that focus on applying the **13 Agroecology Principles** designed by the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on food security and nutrition. The HLPE advises the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Committee on World Food Security (Sustainability 2021, 13).

Shared Vision

The Agroecology Women's Conference envisions:

"A world where women farmers and leaders are empowered to lead agroecological transformation initiatives, fostering resilient, sustainable, and equitable food systems that prioritize the well-being of people, the planet, and shared prosperity for all"

Conference Purpose

By the end of the conference, the approximately 1,500 participants are expected to work towards concerted efforts for **climate justice** and **resilience in agroecological systems**.

The conference also aims to create a core group, or a "yeast," of individuals who will, in turn, raise enthusiasm among agriculturists, farmers, and other stakeholders across agroecology sub-sectors, **fostering a transition to more environmentally friendly solutions** with a long-term vision and strategic planning.

Conference Scope

Duration: 3 Days

Thematic Context: Key conference terminologies will include, but are not limited to, *Climate Action, Regenerative Agriculture, Climate Resilience, Food Systems, Food Security, Greenhouse Gases, Biodiversity, Biofuel Substitution, Organic Farming, and Non-synthetic Farming Inputs, among others.*

Why Participate in the WiLD-M Conference?

The 5th Women in Leadership Conference is unique in its design, offering a solid platform for women and youth in regenerative agriculture. It emphasizes eco-friendly production of safe, nutritious food by recognizing them as active partners in sustainable food systems.

This event provides a **platform for decision-makers and partners** to demonstrate how **food systems can ensure safe, equitable, and culturally diverse practices** in production, distribution, and consumption. Farmer organizations and market women will be encouraged to rethink traditional agroecological approaches.

Participants will share insights and gain **confidence to act in agroecology**. The event will serve as a forum for advocates to inspire a transition toward agroecology-based food systems, emphasizing production, consumption, and market access. Stakeholders will recognize the interconnectedness of their actions and prioritize agroecological investments, promoting climate action, environmental justice, and food sovereignty for future generations. Let us seize this opportunity to create a flourishing and sustainable future.

Why sponsor WiLD-M Conference?

The conference concludes with the establishment of a milestone project called **FARIAD Agroecology Village**, a 20-acre tree planting initiative that includes maintenance costs. The budget covers feeding, transportation, conference materials, and paraphernalia for an estimated 1,500 to 2,500 participants. Additionally, the budget also accounts for the transportation and hosting expenses of high-profile dignitaries and policy influencers, as well as venues, publicity, and related items.

Financing or sponsoring the "Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Conference" **supports:**

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Women's empowerment and gender equality |  Networking opportunities and brand visibility |
|  Sustainable agriculture and climate action |  Capacity building and policy influence |
|  Food security and inclusive development |  Social impact and positive change |

By supporting this conference, you not only contribute to a more equitable, sustainable, and food-secure future, but you also help generate positive publicity and enhance the reputation of your organization.

Target Audience

Women associations

Women group leaders and aspiring professionals in various sectors

Political and local opinion leaders

Policymakers and government officials

Climate action and environmental activists

Activists and organizations working on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 13, and 17

Social impact activists

International and local NGOs focused on women's empowerment and climate action

Academia

Academics and researchers in gender studies and environmental sciences

Partnership and Sponsorship

We are **seeking partnerships and sponsorships** from local and international organizations committed to gender equality, women's empowerment, climate justice, and sustainable development. **Our partners will benefit from visibility and engagement with a dedicated audience of change-makers.**

This conference will bring together leaders from diverse markets, economic classes, academia, the banking industry, and many economically active but largely unbanked women. Sponsorship promises substantial returns on your investment.

Conference Topic Synopsis



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Why Agroecology?

Agroecology emerged in 1928 as an approach and a discipline that defines, classifies, and studies agricultural systems from environmental and socioeconomic perspectives through their methods and principles, along with the sustainability of agroecosystems (Méndez, 2013). The concept initially described usage of ecological research methods in commercial plants.

By integrating ecological principles into agricultural practices, **agroecology enhances biodiversity, enriches soils, and reduces dependency on chemical inputs, fostering healthier ecosystems.** It empowers farmers with sustainable techniques that are adaptable to local conditions, promoting food sovereignty and economic stability. **Let's discuss the need at the plenaries.**



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The Benefits of Agroecology in Agriculture and Soil Health

In today's rapidly changing agricultural landscape, the need for sustainable practices has never been more pressing. As we delve into practices that foster biodiversity, enhance soil health, and minimize chemical inputs, we will learn that agroecology not only promotes resilient farming systems but also delivers tangible benefits to far-

mers and ecosystems alike. There'll be **practical sessions to explore the multifaceted advantages of embracing agroecological practices**, from mitigating climate change to increased yields and profitability resulting from safeguarded biodiversity. **Facilitators will lead the discussion.**



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Sustaining Agroecology Initiatives: The Role of Stakeholders

Agroecology thrives on collaboration, where stakeholders play pivotal roles in ensuring its sustainability. Farmers are the backbone, implementing agroecological practices on the ground, fostering biodiversity, and conserving natural resources. The conference will explore **feasible networking and exploratory roles**

among researchers, policymakers, regulatory and market mechanisms, NGOs, development partners, donors, and civil society organizations.

Anticipate insights from the experts.

Conference Format

There will be pre-conference meetings and webinars. The main conference will be a **hybrid event**, both **virtual** and **physical**, held over three days. It will include **plenary sessions** on food system transformation topics, with inspiring keynote presentations and panel discussions involving key stakeholders. Break-out sessions will follow conference tracks, using interactive formats such as short presentations, panel discussions, and fish-bowl discussions. The third day will be a **field day**, featuring tree-planting activities in collaboration with actors from the agroecological value chains.

Conference Methodology

The conference will combine **plenary sessions**, **panel discussions**, **workshops**, and **networking opportunities** to promote the exchange of ideas and best practices. Keynote speakers, experts, and practitioners will provide insights, while interactive sessions will foster active participation and collaboration. On the final day, participants will take part in **field activities**, including tree planting at homes, along major streets in Kpassa, and on the 20-acre site designated for the FARIAD Agroecology Village, which will serve as a resource center for climate action and agroecological research.

Conference Organization

Conference Project Committee: A five-member team is responsible for developing and approving the concept and budget, monitoring progress, making necessary adjustments, and ensuring stakeholder engagement and outreach. They are also in charge of research and abstracts, budget and fundraising, communication and publicity, as well as logistics and field day activities.

Expected Conference Outcomes

01

Establishing the 20-acre FARIAD Agroecology Village by planting and nurturing 5,000 trees with women's groups

02

Strengthened networks and partnerships among stakeholders committed to agroecological sustainability and women's leadership

03

Enhanced capacity of women to lead and participate in decision-making related to agroecology and climate justice

04

Increased awareness of the importance of women's leadership in agroecology and climate justice

05

Policy recommendations to support and promote women's leadership in agroecology and climate justice initiatives

Expected Conference Impacts

In addition to the short- and medium-term outcomes, **the conference and associated projects are expected to produce the following impacts:**

- ◆ **Local economies** in Nkwanta North will **benefit from new farming practices** and pricing
- ◆ **2,000 women** will be **empowered** with new knowledge and leadership skills
- ◆ **Strengthening the brands of sponsors** and over 500 conference exhibition participants
- ◆ An estimated **48,000 pounds** (21,772.43 kg = 21.72 tCO₂e) **of CO₂ will be sequestered** by the Agroecology Village in the first five years, increasing thereafter
- ◆ Problems arising from poor agricultural practices and their impacts on people, crops, and the environment will be identified, along with possible mitigation measures
- ◆ **Awareness of agroecology's potential** for sustainable food systems will be **raised**, successful agroecology initiatives will be showcased and promoted
- ◆ A conference report, resolutions, and a policy brief will be produced

Key Milestone of the Conference

The success of the conference will be measured by the **establishment, maintenance, and management** of the **FARIAD Agroecological Village**, where various types of trees will be planted on approximately 20 acres of arable land acquired by FARIAD for this purpose. Upon successful revegetation of the land, the Agroecological Village could become a tourist destination, contribute to climate resilience, serve as one of the preserved green forests in the Eastern Corridor of Ghana, and act as a resource center for academic research in fields such as botany, zoology, and climatology, among others.



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FARIAD Agroecology Village Project

Pre-Conference Saturday Activities

The following activities are planned to to prepare the land for the tree planting exercise and support the **Soya project's** organic farming strategy to sustain the trees until they reach full canopy formation:

- **Land allocation and inspection** by the consulting project team
- **Land preparation** for the Soya project
- **Mobilization of seeds** and other inputs
- **Sowing of soybeans** and related care
- **Mobilization of** up to 5,000 carefully selected **tree seedlings**
- **Mobilization of agroecology PPEs** and relevant tools

Conference Saturday Field Day

1. The Launching Ceremony of the FARIAD Agroecology Village Project
2. Planting avenue trees along the main streets of Kpassa, as well as in a selected public basic school
3. Sharing fruit seedlings with every home willing to care for them under the coordination of the FARIAD Agroecology Village Project
4. Distribution of over 5,000 seedlings to women, youth, and other conference participants
5. Moving to the field for the planting exercise
6. Refreshments/Closing ceremony.

Conference Exhibitions

The Agroecology Conference will welcome **exhibitors of products and services aligned with its goals**, enabling participants to engage with innovative solutions, foster connections, and deepen their understanding of ecological issues. The exhibition will showcase a variety of **sustainable solutions and technologies that promote environmental protection and conservation**. Exhibitors may include companies focused on renewable energy, sustainable building materials, eco-friendly transportation, water conservation, waste management and recycling, sustainable agriculture, environmental monitoring, eco-friendly consumer products.

Conference Topics

- **Why Agroecology?**
- **How to create sustainable economic innovations and opportunities in climate change space**
- **The Benefits of Agroecology in Agriculture and Soil Health**
- **Mainstreaming Agroecology into Agricultural Education**
- **Financing for Agroecology Initiatives**
- **Women in Leadership and Decision-Making**
- **The Role of the Public-Private Partnership in Climate Change Reversibility through Agroecology**
- **The Role of Women in Leading Agroecology and Food Systems Transformation**
- **Sustaining Agroecology Initiatives – The Role of Stakeholders**

Conference Planning

Allocated Time	Pre-Conference Day: 30th October	Conference Day 1: 31st October	Conference Day 2: 1st November	Conference Day 3: 2nd November
8:00AM - 09:00 AM	Committee preparations	Arrival, registration and networking		
09:0 AM - 10:45 AM	Conference Exhibition: Setup Begins <i>The exhibition will be open until Saturday at 5 PM</i>	Launching ceremony and inaugural speeches	Presentations	Field Day events
10:50 AM - 12:00 PM		Audio-visual presentations on best practices and success stories in agroecology	Presentations	
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM		Snack/lunch break and stretch		Lunch
1:00PM - 2:15 PM		Presentations	Workshops and parallel sessions on sub-themes interspersed with exhibition visits	Closing ceremony
2:20PM - 3:10 PM		Presentations	Results collation, experience sharing, and submission of policy recommendations	Departure
After 3:10 PM		Welcoming of guests and speakers	Catering and hospitality, tourism, shopping, and exhibitions	

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