



FIRST MEETING LEADERS OF RURALITY

16 - 20 April





**ALINA
RUIZ**



Leader of Rurality
of Provincia del Chaco, Argentina

This daughter of farmers was born and raised on the outskirts of El Impenetrable, the immense, wooded plain extending across Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay.

Alina owns a rural restaurant named after her grandmother Anna, **which she operates based on the zero-kilometer concept**, which means that her menu prioritizes the use of crops and livestock produced in that area. **She also provides training to rural dwellers, aiming to increase their appreciation for agricultural products.**





**PATRICIA
GORZA**



Leader of Rurality
of Buenos Aires, Argentina

This livestock farmer from the Nueve de Julio municipality was born into a family of farmers. Along with her son (the fifth generation of these family farmers), **she grows corn, soyabean and wheat and also raises beef cattle.** Patricia is the **head of Mujeres Rurales Argentinas—an association of female farmers**, established in 2019, which has made a name for itself among other rural associations.





**ANDREA
IZZO CAPELLA**



Leader of Rurality
of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Andrea is a Buenos Aires fashion designer who moved to the city of Las Flores, in the heart of La Pampa – a region blessed with one of the most suitable environments for agricultural production.

There, **she established the Cultural and Design Center for Rural Women**, seeking to **equip** traditionally **marginalized rural women with the tools** needed to create their own production businesses and to believe in themselves.





**MILAGROS
PAULÓN**



Leader of Rurality
of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Milagros operates her family's dairy farm in Brandsen. She herself does the milking twice per day, in the morning and evening, and produces and sells cheese with her mother.

Milagros is a member of the Federación de Asociaciones Centros Educativos Para la Producción Total (FACEPT), a second-tier, self-managed and co-managed educational organization, consisting of associations of family farmers, small farmers and rural workers (CEPT 18) in Brandsen, where **she studied to be an agricultural technician. She now applies this knowledge in her production.**





**JOSÉ
MUÑOZ**



Leader of Rurality
of Provincia de Catamarca, Argentina

For almost his entire life, **José Muñoz has been involved in agro-technical education**, which he considers to be a strategic tool in encouraging youth to remain in rural areas.

For years, he has served as the Director of the Agro-technical School of Tinogasta, a city in the province of Catamarca in northeastern Argentina. This arid region has poor soil and is far-removed from the major productive areas in the country. Thus, crops are grown using artificial irrigation. **José is a proponent of organic agriculture.**





DANIEL BRUNO



Daniel is a teacher who, during the pandemic, kept his rural students connected to the classroom over FM radio.

He lives in San Roque, a small city in the province of Corrientes in northeastern Argentina, where **he advocates that formal education should train young people in food production methods, along with improving education in rural areas to generate opportunities for individual and collective development to help halt migration to the cities.**

Leader of Rurality
of San Roque, Corrientes, Argentina.





**DEON
GIBSON**



Leader of Rurality
of Abaco, Bahamas.

Deon Gibson supports resilient agriculture and promotes increased local food production and consumption to reduce his Caribbean country's dependence on food imports.

Gibson is known in The Bahamas as **Gibby da Farma**, which is also the name of his business through which **he advises other farmers on best agricultural practices. He is also in charge of the farm of the One Eleuthera Foundation**, named for the Bahamian island where it is located. The organization **assists rural communities in The Bahamas to become self-sufficient**, while caring for their ecosystems and increasing production.





**TRIGIDIA
JIMÉNEZ**



Leader of Rurality
of Bolivia

Trigidia fuses scientific and ancestral knowledge in Bolivia to improve the cañahua crop. When she began to produce cañahua, it was only for personal consumption, **but today it is produced and sold by more than 1,500 families.**

She is one of the driving forces behind the cañahua knowledge network, **Red Nacional de Saberes y Conocimientos en Cañahua**, an organization that seeks to **raise the visibility of this crop, given its importance for food security and its resilience to climate change.**





**YESSICA
YANA**



Yessica Yana is an agronomist and the first female of the Aymara indigenous people to operate a drone, thereby helping to boost agricultural yields and make more efficient use of water in the Bolivian Altiplano.

She has piloted drones on various small farms in the Bolivian Altiplano, thanks to a project implemented by Swisscontact. The initiative aims to promote an inclusive digital world, in which **innovation and technology help to reduce gender gaps** and contribute to greater equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Leader of Rurality
of Alto Airport, La Paz, Bolivia





KATIA SILENE TONKYRE



Leader of Rurality
of Pará, Brazil.

Katia Tonkyre is the **cacique (chief) of the Akratikatejé village** in the northern state of **Pará, Brazil**. She was awarded for her organizational initiatives and commitment to entrepreneurship, harvesting and production, while also educating and raising awareness about the importance of environmental conservation and protection in the world's largest tropical forest, the Amazon.

Katia heads one of the 27 villages in the reserve, which is home to 85 indigenous people from 23 families in the Gaviao da Montanha ethnic group, whose main livelihood is the **collection, production and sale of chestnuts, as well as fish, honey and fruit**.





FRANCISCA NERI



Leader of Rurality
of Piauí, Brazil.

At just 22 years of age, Francisca Neri became the **President of the Association of Sheep and Goat Breeders in a municipality in northeast Brazil** and motivated other young people to take an interest in livestock farming.

The daughter of rural farmers from Betânia, a municipality in the state of Piauí, Francisca is now 25 **and is Secretary of Family Farming**, a position from which **she promotes associative and cooperative enterprises to improve the income and quality of life of small farmers.**





**SIMONE
SILOTTI**



Leader of Rurality
of Brazil.

A Brazilian farmer, Simone is the creator of “Do an incredible good”—a project that connects farmers and organizations working with at-risk populations.

In May of 2020, she created the “Do an incredible good” project, which salvaged 200 tons of fruits and vegetables to distribute across 13 municipalities, **benefiting more than 100 farmers and 100 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and food kitchens.**





**GILLIAN
FLIES**



Gillian practices regenerative agriculture on her farm in the Canadian province of Ontario and seeks to enable all consumers to readily access organic food. **She is the President of the Canadian Organic Growers association.**

Leader of Rurality
of Ontario, Canada.





ALFREDO CARRASCO



Leader of Rurality
of Santiago, Chile.

A produce farmer, Alfredo is the leader of FarmHability—an inclusive project **that promotes sustainable**, integrative agriculture, creating learning opportunities and producing healthy foods for his community.

He inherited his **passion for agriculture and nature** from his father. From a young age, together they would cultivate vegetables on the family farm. The young Chilean's world came crashing down four years ago, however, when a mountain bike accident left him a paraplegic.

Far from giving up, after two years of rehab, Alfredo found a way to continue working the land and producing food: **he designed a greenhouse specifically adapted for his wheelchair and that today helps with rehabilitation and vocational integration for other people with disabilities.**





BERNARDA SALAZAR



Leader of Rurality
of Ñuble, Chile

Bernarda Salazar is a family farmer and beekeeper in the district of Bulnes, Ñuble, where she has 300 hives.

She is known for her **unwavering desire to learn, to improve her production and to tout the quality of Chilean honey**, in order to tap into new markets.





PAULINA CARRASCO



Leader of Rurality
of La Unión, Chile.

Paulina Carrasco **is an agronomist specialized in livestock production.** She works in Agrícola Cocule, the dairy that was established by her family in 1955, at the urging of her grandmother of Italian descent.

Paulina has been running the dairy—located in the district of La Unión—for some time. **She is also the first women to head the Dairy Farmers Association of Los Ríos (APROVAL)** in its more than 20 years of existence.





MACARENA VALDÉS & MARCO ACEITUNO



Leaders of Rurality
of Valparaíso, Chile.

Meet the founders and owners of Granja La Pachamama – a farm working to produce food amidst the severe drought that is hitting Chile, clearly demonstrating the concept of producing more with less.

Macarena and Marco, along with their three children, **operate a production enterprise in the hills of Los Molles municipality in the central region of Valparaíso.**

Adopting an integrated system that includes the recycling of water, they have been able to establish an **agroecological farm** to grow food for personal consumption; the excess supply is used to barter with their neighbors. **They also rear animals.** The farm has three solar panels for electricity production and a biodigester that converts organic waste from the production animals into biogas.





**EMILIO
SEPÚLVEDA**



Chilean family farmer and member of the Mapuche people.

Emilio produces olive plants and an olive oil whose quality has been highlighted by experts in an area that had never before produced this product. **He became interested in olive plants** that were traditionally grown in northern Chile, **and brought the activity to Araucanía, one of the 16 regions of the country** located more than 700 kilometers south of the capital, Santiago.

Leader of Rurality
of Araucanía, Chile.





JULIO CÉSAR DELGADO



Leader of Rurality
of Bogotá, Colombia.

This **grower of ornamental flowers** is one of only a few in Colombia growing Alpine violets.

Delgado operates in the municipality of San Antonio del Tequendama, 50 kilometers from the Colombian capital of Bogotá, **where the nursery industry is an important economic activity with over 100 establishments.**





**LILIANA
JIMÉNEZ**



Leader of Rurality
of Nilo, Cundinamarca, Colombia.

A Colombian cocoa producer, Liliana is a leading advocate for the rights of rural women.

About 10 years ago, Liliana and her family decided they wanted to change their urban lifestyle and move to the countryside. She knew close to nothing about rural life. Liliana has come a long way since then, dedicating her time to growing organic cocoa.

She currently chairs the Board of Directors of an association of small-scale producers, PROSOAGRO. Since 2016, she has held the title of “María del Campo”, a name that identifies Colombian cocoa farming around the world and highlights the role played by women, and which is bestowed by the National Federation of Cocoa Growers (FEDECACAO).





**SONIA
MURILLO**



A sugarcane farmer from Costa Rica, Sonia is a promoter of fair trade in Latin America and the Caribbean, and creator of development opportunities for smallholders.

Sonia Murillo is a member of Coopecañera R.L., a cooperative of small-scale producers in the canton of San Ramón, in Costa Rica's Central Valley. After becoming affiliated with the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair-Trade Small Producers and Workers (CLAC), **she was one of the founders of the Network for Costa Rica and Panama.**

Leader of Rurality
of San Ramón, province of Alajuela,
Costa Rica.





**AGRO27 –
CONAC 4S**



This group of students between the ages of 13 and 17 who specialize in agriculture at the 27 de Abril Professional Technical School in Santa Cruz, in the province of Guanacaste, Costa Rica, **created a silvopastoral-goat module to promote and foster learning about dairy production.**

Among them are students Sherelyn González, Dayanna López, Dairon Briceño, Maya Abueg, Ashton Abueg, Norton Villagra, José Luis Moraga, Josué Álvarez, Kevin Leal, Ehyni Rodríguez, and Yeikol Ortiz, who **have 13 goats**—including a male goat—**that allow them to produce milk and cheese (and yogurt too, in the near future), which they then sell to their community**

Leaders of Rurality
of Santa Cruz, Guanacaste, Costa Rica.





**ELVIA
MONZÓN**



Leader of Rurality
of San Antonio Huista, Guatemala.

A coffee farmer, Elvia is the President of the Rancho Viejo Coffee Growers' Association (AIDEC) in Guatemala.

On her 50th birthday, Elvia Monzón received a gift she'll never forget: the roaster of her dreams for Rancho Viejo Small Producers Integrated Cooperative, the organization she heads in San Antonio Huista, Guatemala.

The coffee roaster was given as part of a program sponsored by **PROCAGICA** (Central American Program for Integrated Coffee Leaf Rust Management), **with the aim to strengthen producer organizations and improve their integration in the coffee value chain.** With it, the organization can generate added value and sell its product at a higher price.





GUSTAVO RIVAS



Leader of Rurality
of Guatemala City, Guatemala

Gustavo has devoted his life to **improving agriculture in Guatemala**, as a farmer, project manager for the State, **private business employee and leader of an association that seeks to professionalize the work of rural inhabitants.**

Thus, he participated in projects to sell fresh foods directly to consumers and, in 2013, **cofounded the National Basic Grains Association (ANAGRAB)**, which brings together both small- and large-scale producers of corn, beans, rice and other daily staples of the Guatemalan diet. Today, **he is the President and legal representative of ANAGRAB.**





**ROSAMUND
BENN**

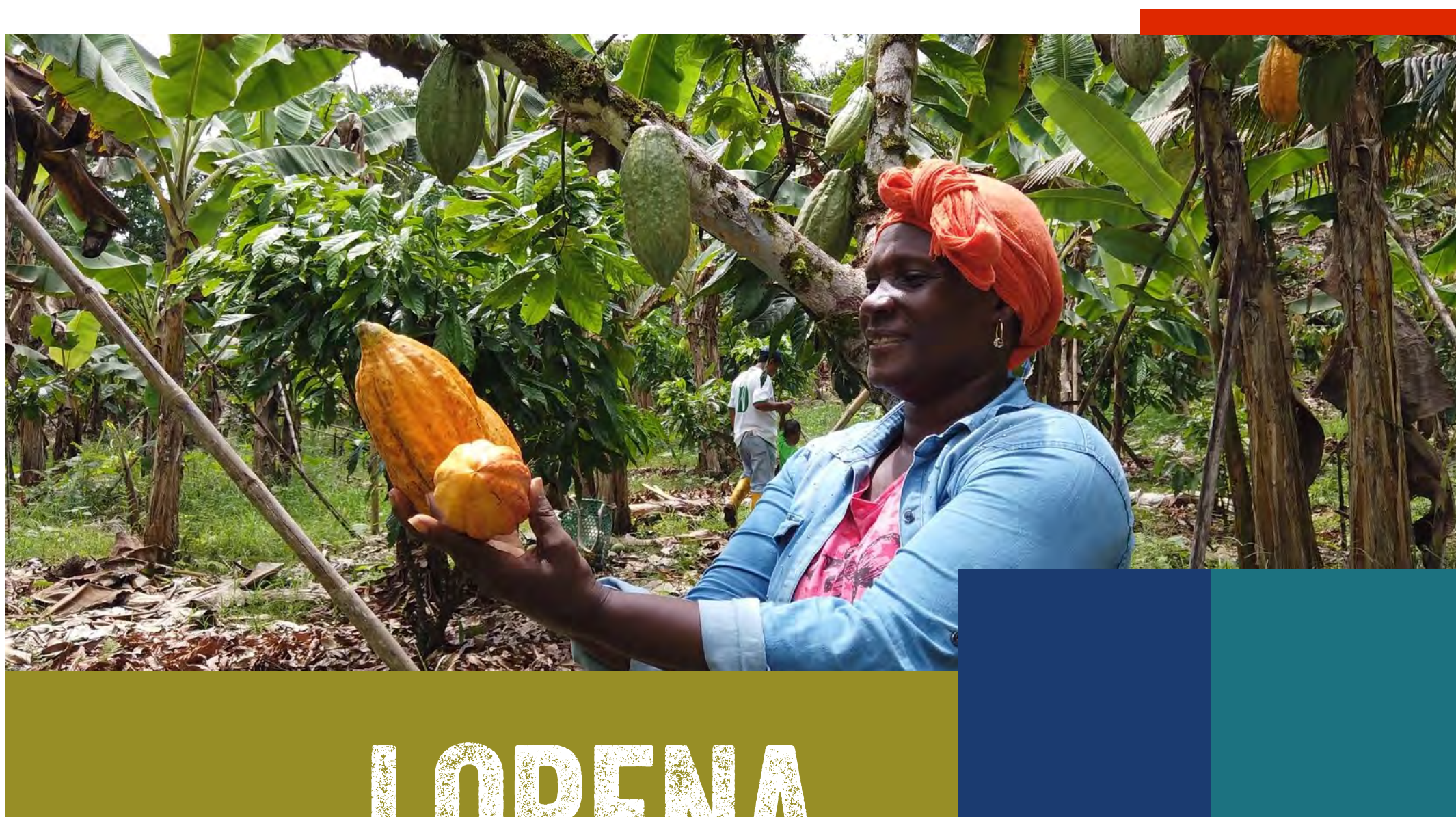


Leader of Rurality
of Georgetown, Guyana.

Rosamund is farmer who has motivated dozens of rural women in Guyana to process and market their crops to improve their income and quality of life.

Rosamund is the **President of the Women Agro-processors Development Network (WADNET)** in Guyana.





**LORENA
VALDEZ**



Leader of Rurality
of Timbiré, Ecuador.

One of the founders of the Asociación de Mujeres Afroecuatorianas Timbiré en el Futuro (AMATIF), Lorena has dedicated the past 15 years to driving community development in her country.

The work of **Valdez and of AMATIF** serves as a positive example for rural areas in the Americas. The association **has already established a cocoa processing plant** that produces chocolate and other by-products that are sold throughout the province and plans to expand to international markets. The AMATIF collection center enables the products to be marketed collectively, thus securing better prices.





**ODETTE
VARELA**



Leader of Rurality
of El Salvador

As General Director of El Salvador's National School of Agriculture (ENA), Odette provides tools to enable small-scale farmers in this Central American country to overcome poverty and to strengthen rural women.

In 2021, this **agro-industrial engineer** with a rich academic and professional history became **the first woman to head ENA**. In 2023, she was appointed as the acting **Executive Director of El Salvador's National Center for Agricultural and Forestry Technology (CENTA)**.





**SALOMÓN
ZELADA**



Leader of Rurality
of La Libertad, El Salvador.

Born into a family of farmers, Salomón Zelada received training in agronomy at the National School of Agriculture (ENA) of El Salvador. **He has broad experience in the public and cooperative sectors.**

For more than 30 years, **he has managed the San Carlos Agricultural Cooperative**, which supports 100 families by **providing income through diversified agricultural production, as well as electricity, drinking water and other basic services that contribute to rural retention.**





**MARILYN
HERSHEY**



Leader of Rurality
of Pennsylvania, United States.

Marilyn is a dairy farmer from the United States, working to guarantee the food and nutrition security of people in this region.

She strives to **reduce the environmental impact** of her production activities, by **implementing best practices to protect the soil, reduce water consumption and minimize the carbon footprint** of her operations.





**KRYSTA
HARDEN**



As the current CEO and president of the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC), Krysta is advocating for women to play a leading role in food production. In February 2021, she became the first woman appointed to lead USDEC.

She leads a team of specialists at USDEC, whose mission is to improve the quality of dairy produced in the USA, meet consumer demands, work for farmers' welfare and care for natural resources. **Krysta also worked for seven years in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA),** three of them as Deputy Secretary.

Leader of Rurality
of Washington DC, United States.





**PHILLIP "CHIP"
COUNCELL**



Leader of Rurality
of Talbot, Maryland, United States.

Agricultural producer from the United States

On his just less than 2,000-acre (800 hectares) farm, **Councill grows corn, wheat, soybean and vegetables.**

He is the sitting president of Maizall, an association of maize farmers and exporters in the United States, Brazil and Argentina, **who are working together to share expertise and information and to address trade barriers.**





**EODORA
MÉNDEZ**



Leader of Rurality
of Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Eodora is working to encourage rural residents to establish associations among themselves, to increase the efficiency of their food production and marketing.

She is a member of the Lenca indigenous community and was raised in a family that cultivated basic grains and vegetables. She served as President of the small farmer agroindustrial association, Empresa Campesina Agroindustrial de la Reforma Agraria de Intibucá (ECARAI), which represents communities in the highland areas of Intibucá, Honduras. The organization has enabled 325 small farmers to successfully cultivate and market grains and vegetables as a group.





**GABRIELA
LUCAS DEECKE**



Leader of Rurality
of Querétaro, México.

Gabriela is the founder and CEO of the Center for Innovation on Small-Scale Sustainable Agriculture (CIASPE), an organization aimed at strengthening the self-management capabilities and resilience of small-scale female farmers.

CIASPE works to support the wellbeing of rural families through regenerative agroecological practices.





**JUANA
GARCÍA**



Leader of Rurality
of Chiapas, México.

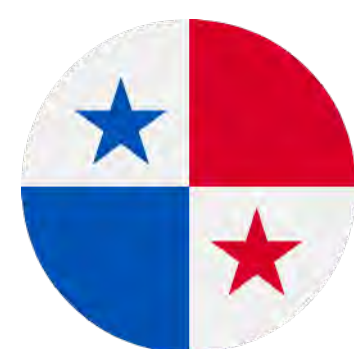
An advocate for the collective organization of small- and medium-scale female farmers, Juana is one of the founders of the National Association of Rural Women Entrepreneurs.

For 25 years, **she has managed a wildlife conservation management unit** in the southern state of Chiapas, where she spends her time raising animals and restoring the environment.





CHITO QUINTERO



Born in an indigenous region and raised in poverty, **Chito is now the promotor of a banana cooperative** that exports to different countries and has improved living conditions for his community.

He is a member of the Ngäbe-Buglé indigenous community. Having lost his mother at the age of 6, he was forced to work from an early age to support his siblings. **He became a union leader shortly after becoming a banana farmer**, and in 1991 he **co-founded the banana cooperative Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples Bananera del Atlántico (COOBANA)**, which currently has 220 members and more than 600 workers.

Leader of Rurality
of Changuinola, Bocas del Toro, Panamá.





**ROSALINA JAROLIN
FERNÁNDEZ**



This Paraguayan family farmer works to encourage small farmers to establish associations, directly market their products and, in turn, improve their income.

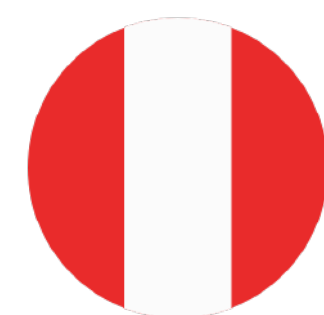
At present, Rosalina **leads the Curupicayty Association, made up of 53 farmers, 24 of whom are women.** She devotes her early mornings to farming activities, before traveling 38 kilometers to the Paraguayan capital of Asunción, where she runs the organization's fruit and vegetable stand. **She also seeks to instill a love of agriculture among youth in Itá.**

Leader of Rurality
of Asunción, Paraguay.





HAYDÉE ANCCASI



Leader of Rurality
of Huancavelica, Peru.

Haydée is the founder of an organization that grows, mass produces and sells maca, an ancient crop that is native to her country.

She founded Farinka Organics, a company that today provides a means of living for the 32 families that grow it, while taking **special care of the environment**. Currently, the super food has attracted a great deal of attention in many countries, due to its exceptional nutritional qualities.





**JOELIN
SANTOS**



Leader of Rurality
of Dominican Republic.

Joelin created the Association of Pineapple Producers of Monte Plata, an initiative that changed the lives of many farmers, who were accustomed to struggling to earn a profit from the fruits of their labor.

Today, the association has more than 400 farmers, who produce more than 20 million top-quality pineapples each year, through environmentally friendly agricultural practices, selling them on the national and international market.





**GILLIAN
GODDARD**



Leader of Rurality
of Trinidad and Tobago.



An activist, Gillian founded the Alliance of Rural Communities, an organization that has empowered farmers in Trinidad and Tobago and other Caribbean countries.

Gillian opened Trinidad and Tobago's first organic food store and founded the Alliance of Rural Communities – a non-profit that seeks to enlighten farmers about the value of natural resources, ensure their role in public policy development and facilitate their access to the requisite financial tools to boost their production and income.

The Alliance also forged linkages between Caribbean and African cocoa producers to create the Cross Atlantic Chocolate Collective, which allows them to share the experiences of communities that process their own agricultural raw materials and undertake their own marketing.





RAMGOPAUL ROOP

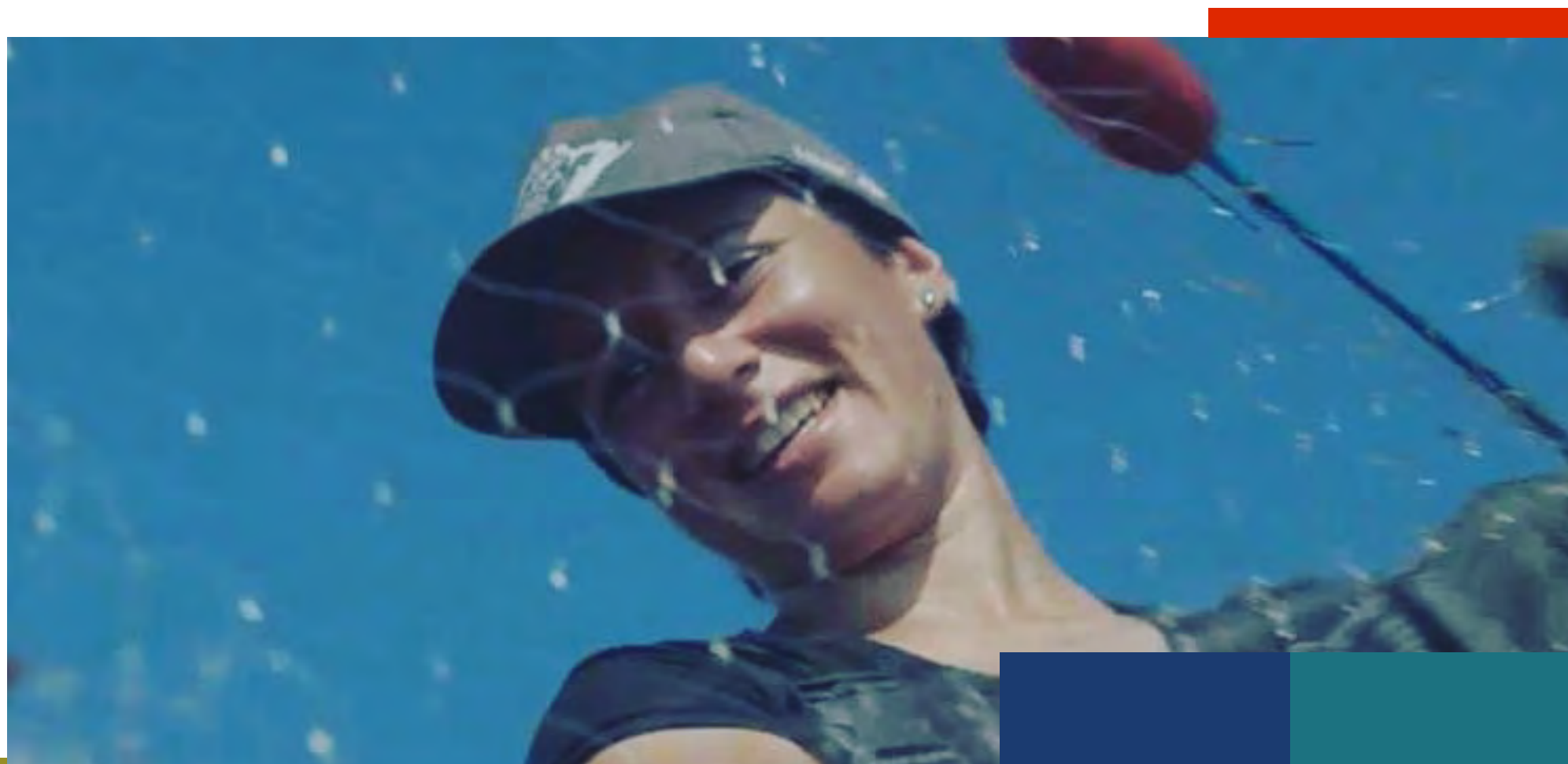


Leader of Rurality
of Carlsen Field, Trinidad and Tobago.

Ramgopaul is a prominent farmer from Trinidad and Tobago and **advocate for resilient agriculture in the Caribbean, with a focus on efficient water use and soil health.**

On his farm, **he has also incorporated agroecological soil rehabilitation practices that are environmentally friendly.** His main achievement has been to **promote sustainable agricultural techniques and business practices with the potential to contribute to rural development and food security in Trinidad and Tobago.**





ANDREA BALLESTERO



Leader of Rurality
of Rocha, Uruguay

As a young woman from Laguna de Rocha, Andrea **has blazed a trail in the traditionally male occupation of artisanal fishing.**

Andrea also established the Cocina de Barra restaurant with eight other women, serving traditional dishes prepared with fresh fish from the lagoon to the tourists who flock to Rocha for its beaches and sunshine.

The venture received financial support from the Directorate General for Rural Development (DGDR), which falls under Uruguay's Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries.