



**MALE CHAMPIONS  
FOR WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT**  
A CIWA INITIATIVE

# Male Champions for Women's Empowerment

Male Champion Profiles



HOSTED BY  
**WORLD BANK GROUP**  
Water



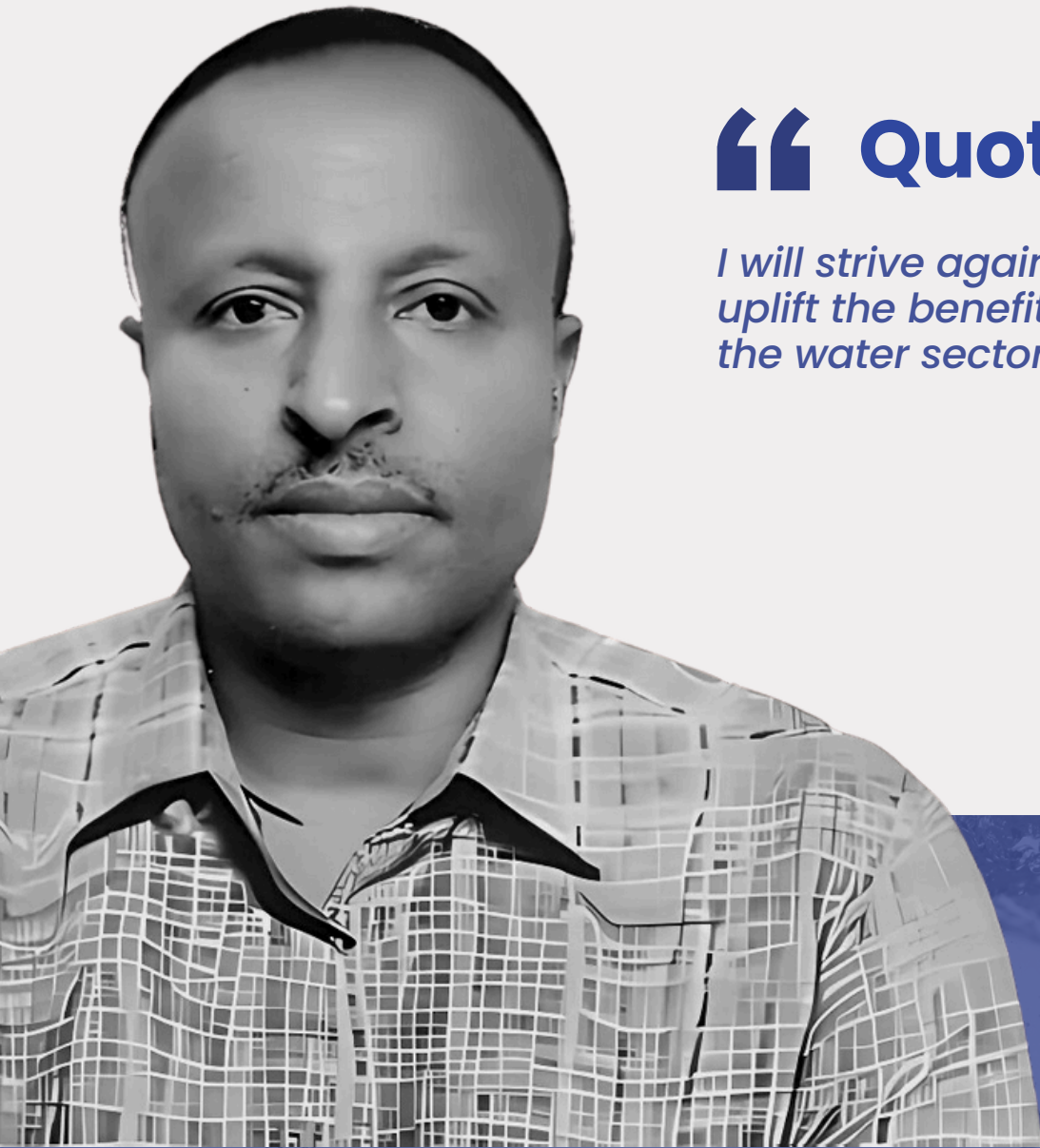


# Tefera Arega

Tefera is a program officer in the Ethiopian Natural History Society. As part of the projects he develops, he takes steps to ensure the participation of women and girls. He previously worked for the Ministry of Water and Energy on the environment and climate change and on environmental and social impact assessments in Ethiopia. He has been an ongoing advocate of GESI. As a gender focal point at ENTRO, Tefera worked to encourage the participation of women. He believes it is important as men to work toward the improvement of policies that favor the equal participation of women.

## Quote

*I will strive again and again to uplift the benefit of women in the water sector.*



# Daniel Asrat

Daniel Asrat has many years of professional experience in the areas of rural community development, environment, water resource management, and energy. He is currently working in the Ministry of Water and Energy as a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) consultant on the Ethiopian Electrification Program (ELEAP).

His work at ELEAP has included a focus on Gender Improvement and Citizen Engagement, including design of Disbursement Linked Indicators to minimize the gap between men and women employees. He has played a role in monitoring gender improvement, which has included ensuring that the indicators are gender sensitive. He has worked to ensure there is sex-disaggregated data in the database system, a gender-responsive M&E system, and gender-responsive capacity building. Daniel is committed to gender equality and has been working with the Women's Affairs section of the Ministry responsible for facilitating gender mainstreaming into sectors and projects.

## Quote

*As a Male Champion, I strive to advocate for gender equality in the water and energy sectors. I believe in the power of diversity and inclusion to drive positive change. My goal is to inspire others to join me in creating a more equitable and inclusive environment. Together, we can make a difference and build a better future for all.*



# Hycinth Banseka

Hycinth is a Cameroonian who has worked for more than 20 years in mechanical and agricultural engineering, water resources engineering and management as well as climate change in Africa. He has worked on topics ranging from the environment; water resources strategic planning; transboundary water resources management; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). He has also been a lecturer at two universities in Cameroon, a field supervisor, and executive secretary of Global Water Partnership Central Africa (GWPCA). He has been the technical director of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) since 2021.

Hycinth integrates gender and social inclusion considerations into his work, including by taking steps to recruit women in the workplace. During his work with GWPCA, he and his team conceived and implemented a project on gender-differentiated impacts of dental fluorosis and prepared gender-sensitive messages and material about the condition. He and his team also mobilized resources to train women in fluorosis-affected communities on climate information use and adaptation to climate change.



## Quote

*Investing in gender-disaggregated data generation is critical for tracking progress on gender in the water sector. Moreover, deliberately educating girls is a MUST if we are to make progress on water sector indicators in Africa.*

# Dr Stephen Donkor

Stephen is a water resource management expert with more than 30 years of experience working in Africa. He obtained a Ph.D. from Colorado State University and an MSc in water management from Wageningen University in the Netherlands. Stephen works as an independent consultant based in Accra, Ghana and is currently providing water resources management advisory services mainly in the Africa region.

During his work as the senior regional adviser at the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), he provided knowledge and experience on policy formulation, dialogue, coordination, and advocacy including gender transformation and women's empowerment in the water and environment sectors. He initiated the Pretoria Water and Gender Action Plan in 2005 and continued his commitment by supporting the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) as a Board member. He is keenly interested in actions that men can take to deal with the ongoing low presence and participation of women in the transboundary water sphere.

## Quote

*Sustainability of water infrastructure and management systems in Africa depends on the most frequent users, who are women. Their full participation in design, implementation, and maintenance is a prerequisite to success.*



# Buyani Fakudze

Buyani is the data manager at the Incomati and Maputo Watercourse Commission (INMACOM), a tripartite river basin organization formed by South Africa, Mozambique, and Eswatini, governing the shared water of the Incomati and Maputo basins. Before joining INMACOM, Buyani served on the Board of the Renewable Energy Association of Eswatini, was president of the Rotary Club of Mbuluzi-Mbabane, and served in the Geology Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy of Eswatini.

He has worked on pioneering energy projects that included a focus on increased decision making by women. The projects identified how men and women were impacted differently by energy needs in communities and crafted a solution that minimized negative impacts on women. Buyani was also involved in a WASH project that targeted areas where young girls were missing school because of a lack of access to sanitary towels. He also served on an entrepreneurial campaign that empowered young women with business skills and products to kickstart their business endeavors.

## Quote

*The Male Champions for Women's Empowerment is important because both sexes should play a role in addressing the challenges and limitations faced by young girls and women. More can be achieved through collaboration and an inclusive approach to the problems faced.*





# Dereje Gebremichael

Dereje worked for Ethiopia's Ministry of Water and Energy, involved with water-related programs and projects, from 2012-2019. He also participated in many transboundary water-related trainings and events. He has been working as a senior grant acquisition and planning officer for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC) and as a member of the Act Alliance since January 2023.

In his current role, he helps develop gender-sensitive corporate partnerships, planning, and M&E strategies for various humanitarian and development programs. Through the application of a transformative masculinity approach, he is actively engaged with the organization's Gender Unit to advance women's empowerment and gender justice. He has integrated gender issues into aspects of his professional development and made contributions to gender awareness including as a volunteer and committee member for the Women and Youth Affairs Department, participating in the production of the yearly gender bulletin, and developing and implementing gender-sensitive projects focused on managing and preventing gender-based violence.

## Quote

*The Male Champions Forum provides an enabling environment for more women as engineers and experts in the water sector and to get a better balance of perspectives.*



# Hirpo Gudeta

Hirpo is a water resource engineer who has been working with the Ministry of Water and Energy, Ethiopia, for more than 10 years. He obtained a Ph.D. from Africa Center of Excellence for Water Management, Addis Ababa University, and an MSc in Water Resource Engineering and Management from Hawassa University, Ethiopia. He serves as a senior water resource engineer in the boundary and transboundary river lead executive office, Ministry of Water and Energy, Ethiopia, currently providing hydrology and water resources management plan, design, and advisory services mainly in the Nile River Basin with overall responsibility for ensuring sustainability, efficient and equitable use, and protection of both at the national and regional level of transboundary river basins. He has gained multiple experiences in river training and flood protection, developing strategic river basin plans, specifically flood and drought strategic plans. He also served at the Basin High Council Secretariat office as a senior water resource manager. As part of all those mandates discharged to him, he provided his knowledge and experience on river engineering and flood protection, strategic river basin planning, coordination, and advocacy, including gender transformation and women's empowerment in the water resource engineering and management. He is committed to playing a crucial role in transforming the transboundary water sector into a more inclusive and equitable space for women.

## Quote

*I'm committed to advancing women and women's empowerment by actively promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment so that they are not overlooked in transboundary water project development but also project implementation.*



# Assefa Gudina

Assefa has many years of experience working in the areas of water resources management, agriculture, and THE environment. He is currently regional social and environment officer at the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO). He is also serving as the gender focal point, where he contributes to awareness raising about gender policy and strategy related to the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) for ENTRO staff and on ENTRO-organized events.

He has participated in the preparation of ENTRO's Gender Action Plan as well as ensuring follow-up implementation of gender mainstreaming for the plan by different thematic areas. Assefa is highly committed to ensuring gender equality in the Eastern Nile countries through his ongoing engagement in the areas where he works and through mainstreaming gender equality during implementation of ENTRO activities.

## Quote

*There is an issue with representation in the transboundary water sector.*

*We are often missing important perspectives.*



# Chris Juma

Chris is a consultant on water resources development and previously worked as director, water resources and as acting chief executive officer of the Lake Victoria South Water Works Development Agency (LVSWWDA). He also represented Kenya as the Technical Advisory Committee member of the Nile Basin Initiative (2015–2024) and served on the steering committee of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Hydrological Cycle Observing System and as a senior official on the Kenya team at the Lake Victoria Basin Commission.

Chris has worked to empower the female staff at the Water Ministry including by recruiting a female staff member to be his deputy and colleague at UNESCO and IAEA. At the Ministry, at LVSWWDA, and when working on rural domestic water supply and sanitation programs, he advocated for gender balance and inclusion of women in decision-making positions.



## Quote

*I'm committed to advancing women and women's empowerment by actively promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment so that they are not overlooked intransboundary water project development but also project implementation.*



# Gerald Kairu

Gerald Kairu is a multi-skilled professional with graduate training in environment and natural resources management and in M&E. Gerald is currently regional program manager in the Global Water Partnership Eastern Africa (GWPEA). He has more than 15 years of experience in climate change, community-based natural resources management, conservation financing, and high-value agriculture.

Throughout his work, he has supported the advancement of gender equality in project development and implementation. As part of his work for the Integrated Drought Management Program in the Horn of Africa (IDMP-HOA), he supported social inclusion in drought management and promotion of the role of women in building drought resilience. For the Water Climate Development and Gender Program (WACDEP-G), he coordinated the gender transformative project on Water and Climate Development. Gerald is committed to advancing gender equality by actively promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment for all genders, challenging gender stereotypes and biases, and advocating for policies and practices that foster inclusivity and diversity in all aspects of life.

## Quote

*I'm committed to advancing women and women's empowerment by actively promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment so that they are not overlooked intransboundary water project development but also project implementation.*



# Donald Kasongi

Donald is a researcher and policy analyst who has worked for more than 15 years on a range of intersectional issues in Africa. Based in Tanzania, he holds an MA in governance and social policy and a Bachelor's of Science in Forestry. He has studied natural resource governance, water diplomacy, and gender equality and social inclusion (GESI). He has worked on transboundary water resources management, extractive industries, value chains, and trade and investments policies. He served as secretary general at the Nile Basin Discourse until 2020. He is currently consulting in design and M&E of complex humanitarian and development programs in the Great Lakes Region.

Donald has a broad range of experience in gender mainstreaming in natural resource management in Sub-Saharan Africa. This includes conducting a baseline study on gender dynamics and designing gender-responsive programs in the Great Lakes Region. In 2022, he contributed to a publication, "Gender and Transboundary Water Governance," in collaboration with CIWA, for the IHE Delft Institute. Donald is highly empathetic about the importance of integrating gender equity considerations in water resources management.



## Quote

*The Male Champions Forum provides an opportunity to work together as a community and to identify some innovative ways to tackle challenges of gender inequality in the transboundary water sphere.*

# Thato Konstabole

Thato is a community development professional. He currently works for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) (a transboundary water and hydropower project between Kingdom of Lesotho and Republic of South Africa) in the Resettlement and Development unit. His main focus is on facilitating the communal compensation and livelihoods restoration of the affected populations linked to the projects. Previously he served in the civil society space in Lesotho gaining a lot of experience doing policy advocacy on climate change, environment and natural resource conservation.

He is the founder of a voluntary Youth focused organisation (Highlands Youth Initiative) that aims to empower and engage young women and men in the highlands of Lesotho who are affected by large dam projects by fostering collaboration, innovation, and sustainable practices. Through this initiative, Thato aims to promote and build an inclusive and sustainable future of shared water courses where young people especially women in Lesotho play an active role.

## “ Quote

*A woman is like a river—  
soft enough to nurture life,  
but strong enough to cut  
through mountains.*



# Mokhothu Moerane

Mokhothu is a treatment and sustainable energy specialist with a diverse background in soil conservation and natural resources management. He currently works for the Water and Sewage Company as a water treatment plant operator focusing on class 1 water treatment and environmental compensation releases to sustain life downstream of Metolong dam. He also occupies a Senior Project Coordinator position at 24+ Supportive Brothers' Cooperative Society which his main role is applying for grants and spearheading them. The current apiculture project sponsored by US Embassy Maseru has proven to have a positive impact on group members and the community at large as it has capacitated group members with agricultural skills and apiculture.

Mokhothu has also managed to raise awareness to 24+ Supportive Brothers' group members on Gender-Based Violence facilitated by Lesotho Mounted Police Services. He has also worked for Arbitrage Consultants as a volunteer for a project on women's empowerment focusing on women entrepreneurs that aimed to improve their skills on sustainable energy by building solar kiosks and registering them for cell phone charging and small grants handling using Vodacom m-pesa. The women were also able to participate in capacity building workshop on bread making/cooking using concentrated solar collectors.



## Quote

*"Wathint' a bafazi, wathint't imbokodo" – "You strike a woman, you strike a rock."*



# Dhesigen Naidoo

Dhesigen is head of climate adaptation at the South African Presidential Climate Commission. He is also head of the African Climate Risk and Human Security Program at the Institute for Security Studies. He is president of Human Right 2 Water and a founding member of the Water Policy Group, a member of the Board of the International Water Management Institute, a member of the food security organization CGIAR, and vice chair of the Technical Advisory Group on Water to the UAE. He was previously the CEO of the Water Research Commission and served in senior positions in the South African national government and South African universities.

Dhesigen is a leader, a scientist, and activist for positive social change. He has been involved with various gender strategies and has written about gender equality.

## “ Quote

*A failure to achieve the empowerment of women and the girl-child in the water sector is not only a gender injustice but a monumental risk to water security, which is why this has to have the support of all men in the sector.*



# Michael Ramaano

Michael works for the Orange–Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM) Secretariat as environment and water quality manager. Previously he worked for the Global Water Partnership Southern Africa and coordinated the development of RSAP IV, the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Regional Strategic Action Plan (RSAP) on Water Resources Management.

Through his work, Michael has always strived for inclusion of women, youth, and disadvantaged groups in water resources management and community-based natural resources management. Michael is in charge of implementing projects in ORASECOM member states that target women's inclusion to ensure they benefit from interventions. This also requires the implementation of the ORASECOM Gender Strategy, which promotes women's participation at various levels. He is currently playing a key role to support the establishment of the ORASECOM Women in Water Diplomacy Network.

## Quote

*For Southern Africa to prosper and sustainably manage their water resources, it is imperative for gender equality to be at the forefront of the movement to ensure all stakeholders play a key role. The environment has to be enabling for both men and women to be counted as equal contributors and participants in water management.*



# Richard Sangabo

Richard is an experienced socio-economist with extensive experience in socio-economic issues including conducting socio-economic assessments in Rwanda and 12 other riparian countries. He has conducted several Social Impact Assessments for World Bank and African Development Bank-funded projects. He has significant experience in social protection and socio-economic and community development and has been involved in development projects in the Ministry of Local Government. He has a bachelor's degree in social sciences, majoring in sociology and gender and development and a master's degree in demography.

He is a social safeguards specialist in the Nile Basin Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP), which oversees and coordinates transboundary projects and investments. Richard has worked as a gender expert for NELSAP including preparing a Gender Action Plan. Throughout his career, he has taken steps to mainstream gender issues into his work.

## Quote

*As a Male Champion, I want to be a role model to improve the well-being of women and to advocate for their right to participate as equals in the transboundary water sector.*



# Dr. Pinimidzai Sithole (Pinnie)

Pinimidzai is a program officer with Global Water Partnership Southern Africa (GWPSA). He is a strategy, governance, and gender development professional with more than 20 years of experience delivering advisory services in energy, water, and resilience to the public and private sectors with a focus on equality, women's economic empowerment, social development, and inclusive innovation in Africa. He has experience in policy and strategy development, fundraising, partnerships, and policy dialogue between diverse stakeholders including governments, development partners, civil society, and communities.

Pinimidzai was on the gender specialist team that drafted the revised Gender Policy for Namibia. He is currently one of the focal gender specialists at GWPSA, ensuring that gender equality and social inclusion are integrated within the GEF-funded Buzi-Pungwe-Save (BUPUSA) basins and the GEF Limpopo project. He has led gender analysis assessments for international organizations such as the International Network on Bamboo and Ratan (INBAR).

## Quote

*Achieving equality in the transboundary water sector and downstream water-dependent sectors requires men to actively unlearn deep-seated norms and power dynamics that sideline women. As a Male Champion, I am here to help break the norms and create safe spaces for equality and empowerment.*



# Dr. Callist Tindimugaya

Callist is a water resources specialist who has been working with the Ministry of Water and Environment in Uganda for more than 33 years. He is the commissioner for water resources planning and regulation with overall responsibility for ensuring sustainable and equitable use and protection of Uganda's water resources. He has represented Uganda for more than 20 years in international and transboundary water resources programs and organizations such as the NBI, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Program, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. He spearheaded the establishment of the Water Resources Institute in Uganda in 2018 and has been at the heart of its operationalization.

As part of efforts to promote gender equality, Callist established a mentorship program within the Institute for young and mid-career women, which has enabled 90 women to receive mentorship and professional and leadership development. He is committed to gender equality and seeks to consistently give equal opportunities to both men and women within his workforce.

## Quote

*The dialogue on transboundary water has been very limited due to the absence of women. The Male Champion program offers an opportunity to ensure women are active participants.*



# Francis Keny

Francis is currently working on his PhD at the Institute of Peace, Security and Development at the University of Juba focusing on transboundary water resources management of the Nile Basin for peace and security. He previously was director of policy, sector coordination and regulation in the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, a focal point for the UNECE Convention for Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, and founder and executive director of the Community Initiative for the Sustainable Peace Organization.

He has supported the promotion of gender equality through the delivery of a capacity-building program that dealt with gender including training men and women on conflict resolution and peace building that considered how conflict affects women differently. Gender equality is at the core of the community-based initiative, which includes working to mobilize women and men on social programs and implementing core values of inclusivity and participation.

## Quote

*If I want to be an excellent speaker on water issues, I work alone or with men. But if I want to be an effective and efficient water manager, I work with women.'*

