**Danone Ecosystem Fund's CANTEEN LADIES project wins the 2021 GEEIS-SDG Award for its solutions addressing economic and health challenges in Indonesia**

June, 25th 2021 - Today, the Danone Ecosystem Fund announced that their CANTEEN LADIES project has won the renowned 2021 Gender Equality Diversity and Internal Standard - Sustainable Development Goal Award. This international award organized by the Arborus Fund positions gender equality as the driving force behind the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



The Danone Ecosystem Fund was created in 2009 by Danone to foster inclusive growth for vulnerable partners in our food ecosystem across the world, including family farmers, street vendors, waste pickers and caregivers.

**CANTEEN LADIES | About the Winning Project**
In Indonesia, the CANTEEN LADIES project was designed to empower women to become entrepreneurs. The initiative was co-developed by the Danone Ecosystem Fund, Danone Specialized Nutrition Indonesia, Care France and Food Bank of Indonesia. In Indonesia, there are no canteen systems in schools. Most children buy snacks and beverages from street

vendors during the day. However, these snacks do not fulfill the nutritional needs of school-age children in a country suffering from the double burden of obesity and malnutrition. Thus, CANTEEN LADIES' ultimate goal is to provide healthier snack options to kids during the school day.  For the past seven years, the project has addressed this health challenge feeding more than **24,000 children** while creating work opportunities for more than **350 women** in the Java area.

Women are at the very center of local communities, and we believe they are instrumental in the deployment of long-term solutions addressing the Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, women's empowerment is at the center of Danone Ecosystem Fund's activities since its inception. Investing in women is key as empowered women generate a virtuous circle by empowering their families, communities, economies, and environment. We believe the best way to do this is through powerful and relevant coalitions, co-creating projects with partners, to reach the right impact locally.

**Continuing our Impact | Empowering Women in Egypt**
In addition to Danone Ecosystem Fund's impactful project in Indonesia, the ALBAN BALADNA – Milk Collecting Centers project in Egypt designed to empower smallholder dairy farmers has seen significant results. The initiative was co-created with Danone Egypt and Care International with the support of the Danone Ecosystem Fund. The project recruits and trains women community leaders to secure access to education and services for all farmers (men and women alike). Community leaders are key in this project as they share knowledge with local communities and recruit new farmers to benefit from the project. Thanks to them, farmers were trained to deploy best practices that increase milk yield and quality, generate increased revenue and limit their environmental impact. Out of the **8,000** farmers strengthened, **5,000** are women.

**About the Danone Ecosystem Fund**
The Danone Ecosystem Fund was created ten years ago during the heart of the global financial crisis, with the goal of building public interest projects in Danone ecosystem. It promotes economic inclusion, social progress, and environmental resiliency in and around the local communities where Danone operates.
The Ecosystem Fund's guiding philosophy is that acting in cooperation with local actors produces the most effective results. It co-creates projects with NGOs to understand local needs and context in order to adapt interventions and approaches in ways that maintain high legitimacy among their beneficiaries.
During the past 10 years, the Fund developed 90 projects, with more than 90 non-profit organization in 36 different countries. The Funds brings knowledge and financial support to develop sustainable and inclusive business models. The projects have directly empowered 69,000 people and improved the living conditions of more than 4.8 million people.