



CREATING EMPOWERED FARMERS AND GENDER CHAMPIONS

CASE STUDY NO. 1

**“Wamenitoa
porini kunileta
barabarani”**

These are the words of Ms. Hidaya Michael, a 36 year old farmer and gender champion at Ilula Ward in Iringa region, when asked how the AMDT intervention has impacted her life. The words literally mean that AMDT has taken her out of the forest and brought her to the main road. In other words, her life has been transformed.



*Ms. Hidaya Michael
A sunflower farmer and GBV champion*

Ms. Hidaya practiced sunflower farming before the AMDT intervention but she made little or no profit at all. At the time she had no knowledge of the right planting seasons, quality sunflower seeds, and good farming practices. Ms. Hidaya never insured her crops and therefore she and other farmers in her village would lose everything in the event of a natural disaster. She also sold farm produce without adding any value.

Like many other women in her area, Ms. Hidaya has encountered Gender- Based Violence (GBV). GBV has led to poor participation of women and youth farmers in farming activities because they do not reap the benefits from farming activities. Women farmers suffered the most because their spouses used to keep and spend all the income earned from farming. Also, due to gender stigmatization, Ms. Hidaya and other women were afraid of speaking in public.

In 2017, Ms. Hidaya was introduced to Dr. Maureen, a representative of CARE International. Dr. Maureen enrolled her in a program on sunflower farming and GBV organized by CARE International and funded by the AMDT. The training was conducted at the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) centre in Iringa municipality. Ms. Hidaya and four other farmers in her locality together with other village representatives attended the life-changing training.

They learnt about the planting seasons for sunflower from a weather expert, were exposed to Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) including the proper use and application of the right types of farm inputs (seeds, fertilizers and agrochemicals) and harvesting methods from agricultural officers, and were introduced to insurance services for crops by representatives of insurance companies. They also learnt that it was more valuable to sell processed products for value addition to earn more money rather than sell raw materials.



After the training, Ms. Hidaya was made an ambassador of sunflower farming both for the farmers in her village as well as for other farmers in Ilula ward. Hidaya used the unique opportunity given to her to form the Litenga Farmer's Group that attracted 34 members, including members from a Village Community Bank (VICOBA) to which she belongs.

During the 2019 planting season Ms. Hidaya organized the group and acquired an 8-acre piece of land where they applied the knowledge obtained during the training and planted sunflower using the recommended farm inputs. Seeing the potential of sunflower farming, Ms. Hidaya decided to also plant sunflower on her own 4-acre piece of land. Unfortunately, heavy rains flooded the farms and swept them away. Ms. Hidaya's farm was heavily destroyed.

Despite the losses due to the heavy rains, Ms. Hidaya did not hesitate to plant sunflower the following year. She knew that there is a readily available market for the produce. However, once again, the floods washed away their farms. The losses Ms. Hidaya incurred the second time around made her realize the importance of insuring her crops. She admitted that she had been taking things for granted thinking that spending TZS 50,000 per acre on insurance was too expensive because even though she lost quite a large part of her crop, she still earned what she termed the best income in her entire life. She earned 1.7 Million Tanzania Shillings.

As per the training she had received she sold sunflower oil instead of raw materials and used the money to invest in a poultry business. She also invested some of the money in a cattle business. She bought one cow which is expecting a calf anytime soon. She now sees the benefit of engaging in mixed farming activities.

“...nilipata shilingi milioni moja na laki saba (TZS 1,700,000), pesa ambayo sikuwahi kuipata kwa mara moja maishani mwangu”



Crop yields per acre increased by 100%



ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms. Hidaya used the unique opportunity given to her to form the Litenga Farmer's Group that attracted 34 members, including members from a Village Community Bank (VICOBA) to which she belongs. During the 2019 planting season Ms. Hidaya organized the group and acquired an 8-acre piece of land where they applied the knowledge obtained during the training and planted sun-flower using the recommended farm inputs. Seeing the potential of sunflower farming, Ms. Hidaya decided to also plant sunflower on her own 4-acre piece of land.

Ms. Hidaya continues to grow sunflower and uses improved Hysun 33 seeds which increases crop yields by almost 100%. She proudly says that she now produces about 9 to 12 bags per acre compared to the period before the project when she was using her own selected seeds and used to produce only 1 to 1.5 bags per acre.

The losses incurred from the floods made Ms. Hidaya and other farmers to realize the importance of insuring their crops. Ms. Hidaya admitted that she had been taking things for granted thinking that spending TZS 50,000/= per acre on insurance was too expensive.

THE VILLAGE HEROINE!

There was a time Ms. Hidaya went to her home village to attend a wedding. One day as she was passing by, she saw a nine-year old child stripped naked and tied to a barn or "kihenge" as locally known, with his head directly facing the sun. When she stopped to inquire what was going on, the child's mother informed her that her husband had given their son the punishment and left. The mother further explained that the boy had been asked by his father to keep watch over the family cattle and the boy told his father that he had a headache therefore he could not do it. The father accused the son of being rude and disrespectful which led to the punishment.

Ms. Hidaya asked the mother why she did not report the case to the gender desk at the police station and the trembling mother responded that the woman in charge at the gender desk is her husband's mistress and that reporting the matter to her would result in her facing her husband's wrath.

Ms. Hidaya took it upon herself to untie the child and told the mother to ask the husband to see her. Upon his return, the father was told that Ms. Hidaya wanted to see him and obliged but he was too drunk to hold a constructive discussion. Hidaya asked him to return home and promised to visit him the following morning.

As promised, Ms. Hidaya visited the family the following morning and introduced herself as a certified representative of the police for GBV matters. She recalled the previous day's incident and after a long discussion, she counseled him and told him that the next time he laid a hand on his wife or any of his children he would face the consequences of the law. She showed him a leaflet with her picture on it stating that she is an authorized personnel working on GBV.

There is a readily available market for sunflower oil so Ms. Hidaya and other farmers process their harvested produce and sell sunflower oil which earns them more money.

A TRANSFORMED SPEAKER

*"...nilikua siwezi kuzungumza mbele za watu kama ninavyozungumza sasa"
"I did not have the confidence to speak in front of people the way I am able to do now..."*

The training has built Ms. Hidaya's confidence. She admitted to have been very shy to speak in public, even in a group of three people, but that has changed. Now she freely contributes in group discussions. She mentioned that Dr. Maureen was especially fundamental in transforming her to becoming open in discussions and building her confidence.

Ms. Hidaya regards Dr. Maureen as her role model who she credits for her ability to speak confidently and to fight against GBV. She has become a gender champion and a semi-skilled focal person. She has helped to solve many GBV cases through her work by raising awareness on GBV and empowering women to speak up. She attests that one case that really stands out for her involved in Kiwele, her home village involved a male parent and his son.



CHALLENGES

Even though there is a readily available market for sunflower oil, there is no reliable processor for sunflower seeds in Ilula. Hidayah shared that the processor that she and other farmers have been using is not reliable, and the processing machine used by the said processor produces less oil than expected.

Ms. Hidayah also faces challenges as a gender champion, specifically the lack of cooperation from beneficiaries. She has championed 120 beneficiaries so far but she feels discouraged to continue doing so as she receives little cooperation from the people she serves. Some of them refuse to sign the form after she has counseled them as evidence of their partici



LESSONS LEARNT

The AMDT initiative, implemented through a series of training sessions organized and delivered by CARE International has benefitted a large number of farmers in Ilula ward. The training has helped Ms. Hidayah and other farmers to abandon their traditional farming practices and adopt good and modern farming practices, which have more than doubled their sunflower yields.

The training also changed the farmers' mindset on selling unprocessed farm produce. Ms. Hidayah and other farmers now add value to their farm produce by processing their sunflower seed into oil which they sell at a better price, thus increasing their earnings.

Also, the timely availability of farm inputs ensures that farmers maximize the benefits of investing in sunflower farming.



SPECIAL NOTE

There are various opportunities for more interventions. Ms. Hidayah recommends that CARE International should work with agro dealers and other relevant stakeholders to devise a system that will ensure required farm inputs are available on time and at an affordable price. To solve the problem of lack of reliable oil processors, the AMDT should follow up with project implementers such as CARE International

and others to support oil pressing so that farmers can have an honest and reliable processor and further benefit from their hard labour in the farm.

There is also a need for more interventions on GBV to educate more people on gender issues and the importance of their participation in the initiatives carried out by gender champions like Ms. Hidayah.



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