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EMPOWERING CHANGE: BAKARI SHIDAFI'S ROLE AS A MALE GENDER CHAMPION


CARE Tanzania Success stories

Bakari Shidafa is 55 years old, a husband, and a father of six children living in Mbokoi village in the Usambara highlands. He is a member of Juhudi VSLA in the Dule ward. Although he is disabled (his leg cannot walk), Bakari is a responsible father and a good husband to his wife. He ensures his family is respected and he participates in development activities.

After several gender and land acquisition training sessions provided through the Her Money Her Life project in collaboration with government officials, Bakari is now a recognized gender champion in his village. Bakari is proud of his wife; he respects her thoughts, and they make joint decisions on various issues at the family level. He supports his wife financially to improve her share in the VSLA because the savings and loans from the VSLA have supported the family in accessing credit for their retail shop business expansion. Bakari assists his wife with several household chores to reduce the workload. He cooperates with his wife on parenting, and they raise their children based on equality. Male children do household chores such as washing dishes and cooking, while female children engage in discussions about maintaining and owning family assets such as land.

He has allocated ½ hectare of land to his wife for maize and beans cultivation. Before receiving training from CARE, he had a land ownership deed for their one-hectare farm with only his name on it. However, after receiving gender and land acquisition training, he promised to write both his and his wife's names on the title deed of their second farm, which is one and a half hectares. Bakari advocates for women's rights in his VSLA and in the community. He trusts women's leadership, so he has advised his wife and a VSLA chair to run for the position of village chairperson in the next election, and he has promised to provide full support as needed.

Despite his physical challenges, Bakari has emerged as a beacon of gender equality and community development in Mbokoi village. His commitment to supporting his wife and promoting shared decision-making and equal opportunities for his children underscores the profound impact that one individual can have on fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

A man wearing a blue jacket, a striped shirt, and a traditional orange and white patterned hat is standing in a rustic wooden enclosure. He is holding a wooden staff in his left hand and offering a green leaf to a white goat. Another goat is visible in the foreground, also eating. The enclosure is built with thick wooden logs and has a dirt floor. The background shows lush green foliage.

Bakari's journey from a traditional mindset to becoming a recognized gender champion is not just inspiring; it is a powerful reminder that true progress is achieved when we work together, respect each other, and strive for mutual growth and empowerment.