

REVOLUTIONIZING A MINDSET

Temilade Dairo

Hailing from Ogbomosho, the Oyo state of Nigeria, Mrs Temilade Dairo's story is one that speaks of the importance of an encouraging male mindset to help a woman reach her dreams!

The urge to do more

She holds a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics and previously was a stay-at-home mum, spending most of her time taking care of her children and carrying other household chores. However, with the urge to do more despite the limited opportunities available, she decided to bring in a change in life.

Traits of a trainer

Her Husband, Mr. Dairo had been a cashew farmer and the sole provider for the family. Determined to take this a step ahead, she joined the Promoting Cashew Farmer Livelihood program in August 2013 as a local community trainer. She actively took part in the program and was noted to be very receptive to both theoretical and practical aspects of the training. Right from the beginning, she displayed the traits of a passionate trainer and having had and the actual farming experiences he had proved to be an added benefit for the role.

Her husband was reluctant of her participation

When Mrs Temilade was selected to be a part of the program, she underwent the required training and accepted the responsibility. Despite her interest in the job, her husband objected to her participation. They were at odds over her interaction with other male participants including her supervisor, Mr. Tajudeen. He was reluctant towards any direct communication with her over the phone and would insist the callers dropped a message which he would then relay to her.

He contacted the program extension trainers and expressed his disapproval of her participation, this involved making verbal warnings and demands over the phone as well as barring his wife from communicating with those





involved in the program. Several attempts to resolve the case were made during these phone conversations but to no avail.

The male mindset

According to Mr. Dairo, “It is a taboo for a woman to make decisions without her husband’s approval.” It is their mindset that a man is the head of the family and without their prior knowledge, no decision can be taken.



In their community, the men make the decisions for their wives on a regular basis and it is the norm. This is the case in many rural communities, where there is a high level of significance placed on men in general over women.

Blessing or burden?

Her worries grew stronger as what she felt should have been good news became a burden on her family. In order to resolve the situation, she went on to take the necessary steps to keep her dreams intact and contacted her supervisor to relay her situation. She lamented to her supervisor that it was not easy undergoing all the processes to be certified as a female trainer without enjoying an inch of her husband’s support.

Her husband’s concerns

Her supervisor, Mr. Tajudeen, who initially came to sensitize the community about the program, proceeded to formally visit Mr. Dairo and enlightened him about the program. This eased Mr. Dairo’s concerns to an extent and it was then discovered that he was concerned about the people his wife would be interacting with and the various locations she would be going to visit. Besides, he also didn’t want people disturbing her or creating undue stress. However, since Mrs. Temilade was capable and truly interested in the opportunity, his worries were pointless.

Supporting each other

After the discussion with the supervisor, Mr. Dairo agreed to drop her over to the next couple of trainings that Mrs. Temilade organized and anchored. However, as the program progressed, he then committed to even picking her up afterwards and in some cases, assisted her with demonstrations, and escorted her to the various farms she visited.

Mrs. Temilade also assisted her husband on his farm with her newly acquired knowledge. He saw the improvements and became more supportive of the program. Overtime, he became one of the strongest advocates, sharing the program information with his friends and recommending the program to both male and female farmers.



Her productivity was appreciated

Mrs. Temilade was extremely happy with this change. Although this development came as a surprise, she was certain it was because he noted that instead of spending

her free time being at home and doing nothing, by actively engaging in good work, she had become productive. This also earned her another good side of him.

Speaking of his positive attitude, she said, “We lived more happily now that he understood my role as more of a change agent. Other men I trained also admired and appreciated the training I delivered. My female counterparts looked up on me as their mentor. I could see and feel it, that most of the women I trained wished to be like me. Thanks to TechnoServe for helping me engage in the act of nation building. I am glad to say that I have trained many farmers, hundreds in number, both men and women, across Oyo.”

Respected by all

Till date Mrs Temilade has trained over 1200 people, including many women, who respect her and are relaxed enough to call and ask for advice on their farm. They do not fear of reprove from their husbands and community for they too are trying to keep pace with the trends.

Witnessing an overall development

She now earns an additional income that is used to supplement the household funds and has reduced the burden on her husband who previously was the sole provider. This has also boosted her family standing in the community. Mr. Dairo is proud of all her achievements while Mrs Temilade she has been able to increase her knowledge and technical exposure. As of September 2015, she went back to school to acquire a Master’s in Agricultural Economics.

In conclusion

Mrs Temilade’s story makes it clear that by putting extra emphasis on behavioral change management, the men can be enlightened on the benefits of women engagement in other economic opportunities. This also helps to inform them about the measures that are taken to ensure that participants only deal with pre-screened and approved people, regardless of the individual being a program manager or a farmer.

Another important lesson demonstrated was the importance of female role models when trying to introduce change and new learnings. This was utilized as a tool throughout the program, which contributed to the 45% female participation in the Promoting Cashew Farmer Livelihood program. Thus, the support of family is essential for encouraging women to take advantage of new economic opportunities. In order to work, they must feel free and not penalized. This is taking place gradually in many societies and we hope to see more women in higher positions in the future!

