

Hawawu's story: a Farm Enterprise Advisor breaking barriers to agricultural growth



“I found it difficult in the beginning to stand in front of many people, including men, to talk, but now I have overcome that fear. I now train both men and women in good agricultural practices.”

Hawawu Imoro, Farm Enterprise Advisor

Hawawu Imoro is a Farm Enterprise Advisor (FEA) who works with the agribusiness Antika Limited. For her, sharing agricultural knowledge is not just a job: it is a way to break down the barriers that stop smallholder farmers from being more productive and earning a better income.

Born in the rural community of Bollu in the Sisala West District of the Upper East Region, Hawawu started her own farm in 1996. Having completed her basic education, Hawawu found that farming was a way to support her family and the schooling of her younger brothers. And Hawawu never stopped learning. In 2016, with 20 years of agricultural experience behind her, she was among the first cohort of FEAs engaged by Antika. She is still the only woman among the 15 agents who work with the firm.

The FEA model was introduced by the UK DFID-funded Market Development Programme for Northern Ghana (MADE) to expand the delivery of inputs and services

to farmers in Northern Ghana, a region where most smallholder farmers lack access to extension services due to the limited number of agricultural extension officers. MADE supports its agribusiness partners to engage FEAs, who in turn deliver input packages to farmers that include certified seeds, fertilisers, agrochemicals, mechanised services and – to tie it all together – training and farm advisory services. This complete bundle of inputs, services and expertise is delivered on credit terms, and FEAs are crucial to its success.

After receiving training organised by MADE, Hawawu started operating as an FEA in five communities of Sisala West District. “I found it difficult in the beginning to

stand in front of many people, including men, to talk, but now I have overcome that fear," she says. "I now train both men and women in good agricultural practices and supervise their work on the farms."

"The training and improved inputs have made the women that I work with appreciate the one- to two-acre plots of land given to them by their husbands. They can maximise their lands through timely access to the right inputs."

Hawawu Imoro, Farm Enterprise Advisor

"Hawawu has been very helpful to us," says Fisatu Ali, a member of Gbarakan Farmers Group in Nyimate. "She is easily accessible and readily solves our problems. Before she started working with us, we attended agricultural extension meetings. But we the women sat separately from the men and waited for their issues to be addressed before we brought ours up for discussion."

Taking a different approach, Hawawu organised the women into groups that meet weekly to plan farming and social activities, support each other with farm labour and contribute to shared Village Savings and Loans accounts. In three years she has helped increase the share of women among the farmers Antika supports in these communities from 17% to over 64%. These female farmers have tripled their maize yields from 600 kg to 1,800 kg per acre.



Hawawu speaking with maize farmers



Hawawu advising on mechanised land preparation

Hawawu plans to increase the number of smallholder farmers supported in her district from over 500 to 1,000 in the coming season, with 80% being women. Based on her successes in Sisala West District, Antika is supporting Hawawu to form a farmer-based organisation, through which she will help even more farmers achieve higher productivity and incomes.

"Hawawu has contributed a lot to educating her fellow women on good agricultural practices, especially on row planting and fertiliser application. It is challenging to get women to work as FEAs in the Upper West Region, but Hawawu is a good role model for young women who want to become FEAs."

Alhaji Abdulai Antiku, Managing Director of Antika Limited



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