

[View this email in your browser](#)

KARIMU
INTERNATIONAL HELP FOUNDATION



Karimu transforms lives and it surely transformed the life of Shau Erro Ae!



Dear Karimu supporter,

It is with tremendous excitement that I let you know that our Tanzanian Regional Director, Shau Erro Ae, has been accepted to attend the Executive Program at Stanford University, California this coming June/July, 2024. Stanford has long been among the world's best centers of excellence in education, innovation, and leadership. Shau received the single Scholarship that SEP Alumni offers per year, winning a tough competition against people from around the world. It is truly amazing that one of our staff won the opportunity to be part of such a prestigious institution and program. He will have the opportunity to immerse in the rich learning environment that Stanford has to offer. I am sure this will unlock many great things for Shau, for Karimu, for our Tanzanian communities and for his country.

Shau has an incredible life story with all the chances in the world to remain marginalized and to live within the same level of poverty and lack of education as his ancestors. He comes from Africa's poorest of the poor with parents and relatives without any education. However, his desire to break the cycle against all odds, enabled him to reach university, learn to speak English fluently, be hired by Karimu, and, now, come to California.

Shau was born in Ayalagaya and, like most, took advantage of Karimu's investments in the area to improve his life. He comes from an extremely poor family with 9 children. Nobody had ever finished high school. Like most houses in Ayalagaya when Karimu started to work there, his house was made of mud walls, dirt floor, and grass roofing. There was no furniture and everyone slept on the floor. There was no light, making it impossible to even do the school homework after dark. The 9 children were supported by his mother who had an yearly income of approximately \$200. School for one child cost half of this. As such, Shau's mother could not afford to send him to school and he decided to work to be able to do it. When he was in primary school, knowing that he would need money to go to secondary school, he raised goats and chickens. Sadly, he miscalculated the amount needed and, by the start of the second year of secondary school, the money had finished. He decided to visit his father to ask him to help pay for his studies (given that other fathers did that for their children). His father was living about 90 km (60 miles) from his mother's place and he walked for 20 hours. When Shau tells you the story of his life, you can sense how much this experience has left a mark on him. He walked from 4:30 AM to 00:30 AM on the next day. After explaining to his father how much he needed his father's help, the father not only rejected his request, but even did not give him the money for a bus ride back home. Shau had to walk the 90 km (60 miles) back, totally disappointed, but still thinking about how he could make his dream of going to university come true.

Like the other members of the community, Shau learned the value of hope and the strength to never give up pursuing his dreams.

In one of his many attempts to solve his challenge, he spoke with the Catholic priest in whose choir he sang about his despair. The church offered to pay a portion of his tuition fees and the rest was covered by his mother and many older relatives. Later on, due to his excellent school performance, he received a government scholarship to attend university and graduated successfully. Unfortunately, there were (and still are) no jobs in Tanzania (40% of the young population is jobless) and so he went back home, but not defeated. He volunteered as a teacher while raising chickens to sustain his family.

When I met Shau in 2017, he had 20 chickens whose eggs he was selling in the local market. However, he had a positive attitude, an incredible hunger to learn, resilience, strong drive, and humbleness. I concluded that he was the right person to become Karimu's first full-time employee.



Karimu certainly changed his life just like it did for the other members of the Ayalagaya community. Shau, like them, took advantage of every Karimu project that he could. He was trained on financial services, learning record keeping, the importance of savings, decision making, and loans. He joined our vanilla project, is exploiting the use of Biochar to reduce the use of industrial fertilizers (increasing his yields), is already driving the introduction of avocado for export in the region, and has learned how to raise chickens commercially. Like the Ayalagaya teachers, he took computer training, learned about the internet, project management, leadership, and much more. In 6 years, Karimu raised Shau out of poverty together with the 15,000 people of Ayalagaya.

Today, he owns a gorgeous house, several farms, and a motorcycle. His children are picked up every morning and driven to an outstanding private school in Babati. He has a helper at home and several employees taking care of his farms. He has built a beautiful family with his wife and his 3 cute boys.



Shau's story illustrates the core of Karimu's beliefs that poor people can get out of poverty own their own if given the basics of sanitation, health, education, income opportunities, and financial services. There are many more Shaus in Ayalagaya who have flourished and dramatically improved their lives leveraging what Karimu brought to the area.

It is, however, obvious that Shau is a brilliant individual and deserves all the credit for having been accepted at Stanford's Executive Program. He is certainly unique. During my professional career, I had the opportunity to manage and lead over 5000 people from dozens of countries in the world, to travel to more than half of the world's nations, and to live in many different continents. I would put Shau among those in the top 1% for his strong leadership, hunger to learn and improve, resilience, passion, and commitment to enhance the lives of poor families in Africa.

I am very happy for him, proud of seeing the first Karimu staff accepted to come to Stanford, and honored to have been able to witness his transformation since 2017.

I am sure Shau is just the first Ayalagaya community member to receive an opportunity like this. I am confident that there will be many more.

Thank you! Asante sana.

Nelson Mattos
Karimu Chief Operating Officer



Copyright © 2024 Karimu International Help Foundation, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

