

# Connecting the dots .....

## Stories of change: Women in Local Government

### A motivating experience

#### *Summary*

Cllr Angela Kayekesi, town councillor, Zambia

Project involvement: Women in Local Government network

*A keen sports enthusiast, Cllr Angela Kayekesi has worked tirelessly in the community promoting gender equality and encouraging women to take more interest in women's issues. Being involved in the Connecting the Dots project and learning the experiences of other women has spurred Angela's motivation to take this work forward and make changes at the grassroots level to transform the community she represents.*

#### *Background*

Cllr Angela Kayekesi is a councillor with responsibility for Youth and a Coordinator for HIV, children and trauma. She is very active in the community, having worked as a volunteer for 18 years as a mentor, trainer, and facilitator for young people as agents of change. Angela is a keen sportswoman. Having been involved in many field and team events while at school - 100m, long and triple jump and football, she later played football for the Zambia senior women's team from 2001-2006. She has also studied marketing.

#### *Aims*

Angela wants to see improvements to the sporting infrastructure for girls and women to encourage a greater participation in sports. She is also an advocate for wider gender issues, in particular increased participation of women in decision making.

Having spent a lot of time conducting mentoring sessions for young women who want to achieve higher positions, she understands the barriers and challenges that need to be overcome. She says that one of these challenges is that many women do not support other women and the younger women feel it is a waste of time. Angela's experience is that not enough women have interest in the things that affect them at grassroots level, but sensitisation and tutoring can help to dispel the myths, and help women to realise that they are as equal to the task as men.

Yes I did devise a plan because I believe it starts with what you want to achieve. Looking around to see people who can help you meet your obligation is another. One needs both human resource and monetary to achieve intended purpose. Proposal writing, helps to lobby for financial assistance.

#### *How the CtD project has helped*

Angela says that as well as learning practical skills, the Connecting Dots project has taught her self sacrifice and the example of women such as Jo Cox motivates her to do more on women's issues. The project has helped her develop plans and proposals to raise funds to provide resources for community transformation.

The learning from the project has provided a big impetus for Angela to advocate for gender equality and motivated her to get involved in future action for change.

"The Jo Cox Project has really been an eye opener for me because It provided a platform to see how those before me have sacrificed their energy in making sure that gender equality is promoted at all levels.

"Learning from their experiences motivated me to do more and be part and parcel of this great movement. There is no turning back, we must forge ahead until the concept is understood by all peace-loving citizens," says Angela. "Such programs should be promoted and supported."

*Impact*

Angela says that the rewards are visible:

"The provision of services to the community on their door step is very much appreciated; and when the electorates are involved in decision making they have a sense of ownership of projects," she notes.

"However, it has not been easy: many politicians did not always meet their promises meaning funds were often inadequate to cover everything."

