

# Connecting the dots .....

## Stories of change: Young Women in Local Government

### Regaining self-esteem

#### *Summary*

Karen Bupe Tembo, project assistant, Kafue, Zambia

Project involvement: Women in Local Economic Development network and workshops

Harriet Mutale

*Divorced at 26 after surviving an abusive relationship, joining in the Young Women in Local Government Network as a GBV survivor has helped Karen Bupe Tembo get back her self-confidence and belief in herself, ready to take more charge of her life.*

#### *Background*

A qualified teacher of mathematics and geography at secondary level, Karen Bupe Tembo is currently working as a project assistant with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Karen' had a difficult childhood as her father died when she was three and her mother when she was nine. Then she became pregnant, two months after getting engaged and was soon married. The marriage did not work out as Karen found herself in an abusive relationship. After 18 months she managed to leave and went to live with a friend after which she obtained a divorce. She is now a single mother with a two-year old boy.

#### *Aims*

Karen was pleased to be given an opportunity of being part of the Connecting the Dots project through a gender-based violence (GBV) survivors group. She wanted to take up this opportunity to help develop her life skills to give her more confidence to tackle the challenges she was facing. She was also interested to learn how more women can be involved in local governance, how young people like herself could participate more, and how sensitisation can help scale up project interventions to rural areas.

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

Through participating in capacity building meetings and workshops, Karen has gained valuable knowledge and support to give her the courage to face her fears and look at society differently. Interacting with the other members of the network has helped her regain self-esteem and boost her confidence.

Karen has not only learned about the various forms of gender-based violence such as economic and emotional abuse, but has learned other life skills around entrepreneurship, how to create a business plan and leadership.

“Being divorced at 26, I am still working on putting together all the broken pieces on my own. Thanks to the exposure I have gained through the workshops, capacity building and various interactions with other network members, I also learned how to be in-charge of my life despite the challenges I am facing and have a greater appreciation of my own worth,” said Karen.

“I no longer look down on myself, I realise that I am worthy all great things.”

