

Connecting the dots

Stories of change: Young Women in Local Economic Development

Climate-smart farming

Summary

Marina Moyo Chibawe, forester and agriculturist, Zambia

Project involvement: Young Women in Local Economic Development network and workshops

Young entrepreneur and farmer, Marina Moyo Chibawe, was facing a number of challenges in trying to grow her business and adopt new technologies to cope with the effects of climate change. Having the chance to have a mentor, learn new skills, and get involved in a network with other young people in similar situations, she is now thriving as a small independent business owner and is on her way to achieve her goals.

Background

Marina Moyo Chibawe is an entrepreneur and a farmer who is keen to learn and adopt new technologies that will help cope with climate change, soil erosion, biodiversity loss and help meet the rising demand for more food of higher quality in the community. As a young woman with experience in agriculture, she is also hoping to be a role model to inspire other young women to go into farming and build a career in agriculture.

Aims

Recognising that starting a farming business is not easy as it involves many variables and there are many things to consider, Marina drafted a strategy and an operational plan before buying any equipment or stock to start farming.

However, when it came to growing her business, Marina faced a range of challenges, including financial management, and she wanted to make sure that she recognised and overcame the common pitfalls associated with growing the business to ensure it would continue to grow and thrive.

“As the business grows, different problems and opportunities come up which demanded different solutions. When it comes to farming what worked a year ago might now be not the best approach for the next year. I failed many times where I lost more chickens in my poultry farming compared to the capital I invested. That was like starting all over again,” explained Marina.

“The effects of climate change affect farmers’ ability to grow the food we all need today; I want to contribute to the agriculture sector through developing and adopting climate-smart practices. by making better use of information and

technology,” said Marina.

How the CtD project has helped

Marina reviewed and carried out research on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the business. Her motivation was to consider where she was, where she wanted to be, and how to get there; she set both personal and business goals and objectives.

With support from her husband and other farmers in the women in local government network, particularly that of her YWLG mentor Elizabeth, Marian was able to begin to address some of the challenges and develop and carry out her business growth plans and achieve some of her goals.

The programme also helped her own personal development, and feel connected to others in similar situations through the various training, workshops and mentorship meetings.

“The Connecting the Dots programme has helped me develop my business. I have learnt great entrepreneurial skills, problem solving and decision-making skills, and, I have contributed positively to the community,” says Marina.

Impact

Marina says that, despite the many challenges, she likes being an independent business owner as she is her own boss and has the freedom to make the decisions she needs to that are crucial to the success of her business. In addition, there are other lifestyle advantages of owning a small business such as being able to decide when and where she wants to work: if she wants to spend more time with her family, she does not have to ask for the time off.

Marina has also found running her own business has brought financial benefit and stability. Though the financial risk is high, running a business is an opportunity to make more money than working as an employee. Marina says that this means she benefits from her own hard work and can help others in the community.

The experience has provided a learning platform where she could interact directly with other smaller farmers. It has also allowed the other young people involved in the project to learn first hand where their food comes from and the importance of agriculture.

“Learning about the positive impact of agriculture on the community fosters a sense of hard work and togetherness especially among young people,” concluded Marina.

