

Connecting the dots

Stories of change: Young Women in Local Economic Development

Better business skills brings self-reliance

Summary

Mercy Naulapwa, farmer and businesswoman, Mpulungu district, Zambia
Project involvement: Young Women in Local Economic Development network and workshops

Training in business management has given young entrepreneur Mercy Naulapwa a new insight into how to run her bakery business, leading to increased profits and giving her a new self-reliance to support her family. Now she wants to apply her new skills to growing her business, increasing her customer base and providing employment for others.

Background

Mercy Naulapwa is a young farmer and businesswoman from Mpulungu district, Zambia. She has a bakery and gardening business, selling vegetables and snacks such as cupcakes, buns and fritters. Despite not having any financial support, she managed to raise the initial funds to start up a business by selling mangoes from her back yard. She used the profit from this to begin growing and selling vegetables and then expanded to a bakery.

Aims

Mercy did not have a formal plan for growing her business and was looking for help to get some formal training in business management to improve her business and profits so that she would not have to depend on anyone to support her family. Covid-19 restrictions also made it hard for her to continue doing business as she could not move about so freely so she needed some help and guidance on the way forward.

“I want to have enough stock and capital so as to reach out to many customers, provide employment to my peers and make sustainable profit,” explains Mercy.

How the CtD project has helped

The training Mercy has received in business management and entrepreneurship from the Connecting the Dots project, has given Mercy a new insight into her business and she now has plans to grow the business and expand it to other areas to increase profits. She is also using the knowledge she has gained on customer relations to look at how she can improve her relationships with existing and new customers to build her customer base.

Impact

Mercy has greatly increased her knowledge of business management; putting into practice some of the skills she has learned has helped her see an increase in profits. She has put into place a plan for the future, recognising the challenges she has around financing to increase her stock and provide capital to grow her business.

With the profits she makes, Mercy is now fully self-reliant, able to support her family and children's schooling.

"The Jo Cox Connecting the Dots project has taught me business management which has helped me manage my business. Now I don't have to depend on anyone to support my family. I am able to sustain my family, myself and my extended family," she explains.

"I feel good because it has helped with life time business skills. Perseverance and hard work pays," she concluded.

