

# Connecting the dots .....

## Stories of change: Women in Local Government

### Rewards of mentoring

#### *Summary*

Thabile Ndlovu, Executive Officer, Manzine Municipal Council, Eswatini  
Project involvement: Women in Local Government network and mentor

*Thabile Ndlovu has found the experience of mentoring as part of the Connecting the Dots project very rewarding and inspiring. She is proud of her mentee who, originally a volunteer at the council, has followed Thabile's advice, and gained the confidence to apply for a scholarship and start on the road to achieve her ambition of a degree in psychology.*

#### *Background and aims*

Thabile Ndlovu is an experienced officer with Manzine Municipal Council. She joined the Connecting the Dots project to be able to share her own experience of local government with younger women to encourage more women to get involved in working in this area and make successful careers.

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

Thabile was introduced as a mentor for a young woman from Empayane. The young woman had started working for the municipality as a volunteer, without qualifications. She was soon promoted thanks to her hard work. Through the mentoring sessions, Thabile learned that her mentee had taken a six week course in counselling for which she received a certificate, but, though she was keen to continue her studies and go further to obtain a degree in psychology, she was not able to as she was not earning enough to be able to cover the cost.

As her mentor, Thabile discussed this with her and asked her questions about the situation: what was the actual cost and if any scholarships were available. She also suggested that the mentee should obtain more information about the degree and talk to her manager about her career prospects. This had a life-changing effect for the mentee. Once she talked to her manager about her goals, she discovered that the municipality had a scholarship programme for which she might be eligible.

Mentoring has also helped Thabile develop her own skills, with mentor and mentee growing and learning together.

"The whole mentoring exercise has been very fulfilling in the sense that I have been able to bring out my own experience to give to another person who wants to learn in a conducive environment.

"I am very grateful for participation in this Women in Local Government programme and being given an opportunity to mentor younger counterparts," says Thabile.

*Impact*

Thabile's mentee is now starting a basic diploma in psychology course as a foundation from which she can move on to studying for a degree which will be supported by funding from the municipality.

Thabile says that this was over and above what they were hoping to achieve from the mentorship.

*Looking forward*

"I have been inspired to do more mentoring. Even when project funding stops I am not going to stop mentoring as I am already geared up and seen the benefits," Thabile says enthusiastically.

