

Mantee Lalldew



I first met Gender Links in 2009, at a workshop on Gender Based Violence. The organization was targeting people from various institutions such as Ministry of Gender Equality, Police Force, Local Authorities, and deprived areas falling under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin Rose Hill. I'm now the secretary of the Federation of Women's Associations in Beau Bassin Rose Hill, and for nearly five years, I have been working intensively with Gender Links to bring the contents of the SADC Gender Protocol to live in the community.

This collaborative work has changed me so much. I'm now well aware of my rights as a woman, and I share this with the people around me. Knowing your rights empowers everyone in day to day situations. I have always wanted to get more involved in social causes, and Gender Links has been unique, because it has given me the tools to engage with the community on gender equality.

I am now in a position to go to those in need, and let women and girls know their rights. I try and teach everyone about the Protocol, so men and women in our community understand what they can do to achieve gender equality.

In my position within the Federation, I have been communicating and sharing everything I have learned with Gender Links. We now hold activities with the municipality, and I know many other people who have benefited from Gender Links' courses. It's possible to see this in the work and activities that take place. It can be seen when we work hand in hand to make activities successful. Some examples include distributing toys to children in need, support for special needs children, donations to charitable groups, and adult literacy classes.

I have seen that, as a result of activities we have been holding, women who were shy and unwilling to voice their opinions and grievances are now motivated to bring positive changes in their own lives. Some are willing to start up small enterprises, to make them more economically independent.

We are still facing a challenge that some women are difficult to access. Diverse cultural backgrounds and beliefs mean sometimes in-laws interfere, sometimes a husband's permission is not granted, or sometimes women themselves have trouble refusing the truth or importance of an issue. We hope that as people see the benefits of adult literacy, we will be able to reach more people.

Work undertaken by Gender Links and the local authorities has been so valuable in the community. It has made the lofty goal of gender equality concrete, and given us goals to attain that are changing attitudes towards gender, and changing the mindsets of families and communities. If we keep this up, we will be able to reach the 2015 targets of the Protocol.