

***Port Louis is the heart, the brains and the lung of Mauritius. All main transactions be it politics, economy and religious are in Port Louis***  
**Municipal council of Port Louis**



*"Economic empowerment of women and Climate Change will change the face of Port Louis. In the early 1900 Port Louis became the first Council in the history of Mauritius to have a woman councillor"* - Mamade Khodabaccus, Lord Mayor, Port Louis

**Fact box**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	Mauritius
<b>COUNCIL</b>	Municipal Council of Port Louis
<b>WHY SELECTED</b>	Typical
Score when score card first administered	53%
Agreed score at summit/during verification	47%
Population	139,000
Key characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Port Louis is the Capital of Mauritius.</li> <li>• The Port Louis harbour is the only harbour of Mauritius and is at the heart of business.</li> <li>• All the main institutions - administrative, political and judiciary are in Port Louis.</li> <li>• The Government House with its Legislative Assembly, different Ministries, Supreme Court, Industrial Court as well as other courts are all in Port Louis.</li> <li>• The Line Barracks, the Apravasi Ghat (where the first Indian immigrants arrived) decreed as World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO is also in Port Louis.</li> <li>• It is also a centre of attraction with the older theatre of the region, the Museum. With its oldest Mosques, Pagodas, Churches and Temples, Port Louis is a mixing pot of different cultures and religion.</li> </ul>
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### **What was the situation before the intervention?**

According to the Assistant Chief Executive of Port Louis, Rita Moheeputh gender issues have been present since the early 1900s with the first female councillor in the history of Mauritius. Port Louis is the first municipal council to have a crèche free of charge for mothers so that they could go to work with peace of mind knowing that their children are safe. It was also the first council to set up a committee for the development of women and children and women's organisation in Port Louis are registered with the council and are therefore given grants so to that they implement their activities.

Gender Links helped the council of Port Louis to build their understanding on the concept of gender. With the development of the council's first gender action plan through the Centres of Excellence process, GL helped to build up and bring in a new dimension around gender issues and GL's intervention encouraged the Mayor to present a paper at the first national gender justice and local government summit hosted by GL Mauritius.

### **How has life tangibly and demonstrably changed as a result of the intervention?**

- The council gets regular feedback from its beneficiaries. The gaps, challenges and enthusiasm identified by the beneficiaries are analysed and the council tries to improve on these.
- With the new Local Government Act all committees have been dismantled and there is an Executive Committee chaired by the Mayor that takes decision. Women councillors sit on the committee and their voices are heard equally to those of the men.
- There are open days organised in collaboration with the Small and Medium Development Authority where most women can access information on opening their own businesses.
- The Council does its best to help women in need – whether it is around business or housing and the council also hosts workshops over and above helping NGOs within its capabilities. When the council is not able to help, it refers beneficiaries to the correct channels.
- Women are now in previously male dominated jobs in the council. There are two female works inspectors as well as a female health supervisor. The women inspectors are responsible for the safety and cleanliness of Port Louis. They have to do follow up and report on all problems including GBV.
- The senior welfare officer and the senior librarians are women.



### **How do we know this change has occurred?**

- The council approves a list of activities on gender issues. These are recorded in the council minutes.
- Throughout the year talks on GBV are held.
- One of the biggest successes of the council was a talk on legislation that exists for women and information was given for survivors.
- A monument has been put in the "Jardin de la Compagnie" (Company Garden) on violence against children and how this affects the whole society.
- There is a multipurpose centre in Port Louis where all sorts of activities are organised. The centre is reserved for women on several days during the week.

- Port Louis has also two swimming pools and these two are reserved for women on certain days.

**What are the characteristics of this group that distinguish it from the others?**

- Port Louis is the capital of Mauritius and all main transactions including it administrative, political, judicial, business or religious go through Port Louis.
- Climate Change is a major concern for the council. There is a big project in place to make Port Louis green. 90% of those who have taken plants to make a greener Port Louis are women.
- Although the Council does not deal with housing, permits to build houses take five days instead of 15 days to make sure that people have a roof under their head.

**What changes in intervention design might or have been made to increase these benefits?**

A shelter for women and children in distress – these vulnerable groups have no to place to go and very often have to return to a traumatic relationship.