



MAURITIUS OFFICE



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FACT FILE

Country	Mauritius
Board Member	Loga Virahsawmy
Staff Members	Mary Coopan - Gender Justice and Local Government Manager Mary-Jane Piang-Nee - Programme Assistant Davinah Sholay - Programme Officer
When registered	September 2008
Alliance focal network	Media Watch Organisation
How many governance COE's	9
How many media COE's	3
Key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare • Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands • Ministry of Environment • Ministry of Health and Quality of Life • Mauritius Council of Social Services • Women in Networking • Shelter of Women and Children in Distress • Victim Support • LEAD • Media Watch Organisation • All localities of Mauritius • Mouvement Liberation Fam • Department of Communications Studies of the University of Mauritius • PILS (Prevention, Intervention and Fight against HIV and AIDS) • Chrysalide Residential Centre • National Aids Secretariat (Prime Minister's Office) Solidary Centre



Devi Rungasamy

"I was very excited to participate in the first Gender Links workshop held in my Council of Curepipe. While I had encountered the work of GL in the past, I was very impressed that the Mayor at the time, Michael Sik Yuen made it a must for all of us to attend the full two day workshop, and joined in on a level

playing field with the rest of us participating. I still remember how he committed himself fully to the fight against GBV in our community, and how he presented the council's good practices at the first Local Governance Summit in Johannesburg.

An important shift that has taken place in my association since encountering GL is that now, we always invite male counterparts to participate in our activities. This is because gender affects all of us, not just women, and I understand the importance of everyone working together for change. My involvement with GL has been very strong since 2009. After the first Local Government workshop on GBV at that time, there were a range of follow up workshops, talks, and marches. We even started an initiative called "For a greener Curepipe" that is centered on the gender and climate justice nexus. It will be presented as a good practice in the upcoming Local Government Summit.

I have always been at the forefront of leading others, but in more traditional ways. After I encountered GL and became more familiar with the issue of GBV, I began to see the world differently."

Read more: <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/devi-rungasamy-2012-05-23>



Rouben Moonien

"As Chief Health Inspector in Curepipe, I am the Head of Department and have over 300 employees working under me. Before I followed the first workshop with Gender Links, I thought that "gender" meant women, and I was a bit embarrassed to have anything to do with the topic. Little did I realize that gender meant both women and men, and how both sexes are perceived in society, as well as the role of both in society. Gender Links was a real eye opener. I can now safely say that I am gender sensitive, and that this change happened thanks to Gender Links. Two workshops were enough to make me change my perceptions, and also change the way that I work.

Quite a few major structures fall under my remit at work, which means that gender issues form part of my everyday life. I have to make sure that Curepipe is a clean environment with a decent and clean market. Public lavatories must maintain a good standard of hygiene. The cemetery, the crematorium and anything that has to do with sanitation fall under my portfolio. Now, I make sure that both women and men participate in all the work that I do. Women do much better than men in certain jobs. My Principal Health Inspector is a woman and there are another two Health Inspectors who are women. We contract work a lot, for example, for cleaning but I can assure you there are now lots of women in these fields and they do really well."

Read more: <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/rouben-moonien-2012-05-24>

Key achievements

SADC Gender Protocol campaign and barometer report:

Although Mauritius is not yet a signatory to the SADC Gender Protocol, there is momentum towards Mauritius signing following the quota adopted for the local government elections (see Alliance section of the report.) Civil society continues to track progress against the targets of the Protocol. The office held two reference group meetings in May 2011 and April 2012.

Media

Gender Links signed MOU's with three major media houses in Mauritius joining the COE process: *Le Defi Media Group* with 11 media outlets; the *Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC)* with over 15 media outlets and *Le Mauricien Group* with four media outlets.

Governance

GL is working with all nine district municipalities of Mauritius in the COE process. Following the adoption of the quota for women in local government, GL has been conducting Gender, Elections and Media Literacy training for prospective candidates for the July 2012 elections. Minister of Local Government, Hon. Herve Aimee, expressed his appreciation of the work of Gender Links in empowering women at Mauritius' first national Gender Justice and Local Government Summit and Awards. GL Mauritius has verified and is strengthening work in all nine COEs. The Francophone Director has held successful meetings with Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Public Infrastructure, Minister of Youth and Sports, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Social Integrity and Minister of Culture. They have all agreed to sponsor the workshops of Gender Links. Almost all GL's local government work in Mauritius is sponsored through in-kind support.

Gender justice

The preliminary findings of the GBV Indicators Project shows that almost one in every four (23.8%) women have experienced some form of GBV at least once in their lifetime. The results have been shared with the Prime Minister (see Gender Justice section of the report) and are being used to galvanise support to end GBV at national

and local level. GL mounted a spirited Sixteen Days of Activism campaign in Mauritius with high level political support.

Key challenges

- Raising funds in a middle-income country poses challenges.
- Central government funds Councils, therefore councils cannot make budget decisions.
- Getting COE's to sign MOUs.

Key priorities for 2012:

- Reference Group Meeting for GBV Indicators followed by the launch.
- Advocacy, strengthening of Mauritius National Action Plan to End Gender Violence based on the GBV Indicators.
- Launch of the SADC Gender Protocol Barometer.
- Workshops and follow up with all the Media and Local Government COEs.
- Organising the 2013 Mauritius Gender Justice Summit bringing together media and local government work.



Meghanaiyegee Veerachetty winning receiving an award from Minister of Local Government Herve Aimee, at the Summit in Mauritius. Photo: Mary Coopan

Breaking the silence at MBC

Following workshops on coverage of GBV in preparation for the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign, the MBC embarked on a series of programmes on gender and GBV. The Director General of the MBC, Dhanjay Callikan



Loga Virahsawmy and Dan Callikan, Director of the MBC in Mauritius. Photo: Mary Jane Piang Nee

commented: "We are showing the other face of Mauritius where people live in poverty, where gender based violence is rife and where children cannot go to school because men just leave

and refuse to bear the family responsibility. With these programmes we want to make sure that we are changing peoples' lives." Djemillah Mourade, former intern at Gender Links (Mauritius) does a daily programme on MBC Radio called "Cool FM a l'ecoute" "Cool FM is listening to you". This is a daily talk show where mostly women call to talk about their traumatic experiences on GBV.

Hon. Mireille Martin, Minister of Gender Equality launched the Gender in Media Education (GIME) report in front of over 150 participants comprising of academic staff, students and NGOs. Former Minister of Gender Equality, Hon. Sheila Bappo launched the Mauritius Gender, Media and Elections report. Gender Links Mauritius marked the 20th Anniversary of World Press Freedom Day at the MBC with a workshop entitled "Gender Equality and Press Freedom."