

Centre of Excellence – Municipal Council of Curepipe

Strategic Communications and IT for Advocacy Stages VII and VII Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th November 2012



http://gemcommunity.genderlinks.org.za/gallery/main.php?q2_itemId=28580

Synopsis

The Workshop on Strategic Communications and IT for advocacy is part of the Centres of Excellence for gender mainstreaming in local government. This follow up workshop seeks to ensure that the Municipal Council of Curepipe with the collaboration of Gender Links brings together stakeholders to understand the media, how to develop strategic campaign for the 16 days as well as IT for Advocacy.

Objectives

To gain understanding of how the media works and can be used in leveraging the work on gender and governance
To gain understanding and skills on how to advocate for key gender issues in the action plan
To apply skills gained in developing campaigns
To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the campaigns including gathering examples for the annual Gender Justice and Local Government Summit and Awards of 2013
Empower participants in the use of internet, setting e-mails, social media and designing of mobile advocacy

The workshop includes:

Political support : Getting buy-in from the Chief Executive of the Municipal Council

Evidence-based : Discuss with high officials of Council and NGOs regarding strategic needs for the 16 days campaign for the locality

Specific interventions : NGOs to work with the Council to combat GBV through awareness campaigns on GBV and safety of women to talk at night.

Community mobilisation : the Municipal Council to support NGOs to do community mobilisation for the 16 days campaign

Capacity building : Training of the Council staff and NGOs to become trainers in media literacy and who in turn, transfer the skills and knowledge on media literacy to their family members and the community in general

Applications skills : Gender Links to give support when need be and help the Council to prepare for the Gender Justice and Local Government Summit.

Background

During the whole of 2010, 2011 and 2012 the Satellite Office of Gender Links in Mauritius has worked with all localities of Mauritius and has helped them to develop a Gender Action Plan. The Gender Action Plan of the Municipal Council of Curepipe was updated to include Local Economic Development, Gender and the Environment and Sustainable Development, Health and HIV and AIDS and Gender Based Violence. The Action Plan has been approved by Council. As a follow up of the Adoption of the Action Plan, Gender Links facilitated a two day workshop on 5th and 6th November 2011 on Strategic Communications and IT for advocacy.

Day 1

Introduction and Keynote address

The workshop was opened by the Chief Executive of the Council in the presence of high officials of the Council. In his address Vineshing Seetulparsad thanked Gender Links for its commitment in doing training for localities of Mauritius. He highlighted that the Municipal Council will give all its support to Gender Links for workshops, activities and events.

Loga Virahsawmy welcomed participants and explained the process for the two day workshop. She also talked about the 16 days campaigns and explained that without the full participation of the Council and NGOs the public at large will not get as good understanding of media literacy and media reporting on women. She explained the training that Gender Links will facilitate on 21st November 2012 for all localities of Mauritius on cyber dialogues. She also explained that as part of a project that Gender Links has for 2013 a series of personal testimonies "I" stories will be written so that survivors get training to become economically independent.

The workshop

19 women and six men from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, one Councillor and representatives of NGOs attended the two day workshop on 5th and 6th November 2012. Participants included one blind lady and a partially blind lady. The time table and the registration list are enclosed at Annexes A and B

Media monitoring, GMPS, taking up cases and writing press releases

Loga talked about media content, diversity of voices and sources and gender sensitive coverage.



http://gemcommunity.genderlinks.org.za/gallery/main.php?g2_itemId=28649

Participants showed great interest in the presentation of the GMPS. Loga made sure that the two disabled ladies could follow the presentation and encouraged them to ask questions. Participants engaged with the GMPS findings and highlighted the following:

1. Very often the media reveals the identity of survivors which can be detrimental to the person even more so that Mauritius is a small island. One of the participants who is a survivor explained how she lost her job because the media revealed her identity.
2. Journalists must be careful when writing on ethnicity, culture and religion. Mauritius being a multi-cultural and multi-racial society journalists should not hurt the sensibility of people
3. The media should help by giving more gender sensitive information and programmes
4. Women must be encouraged to listen, read and follow mainstream news instead of watching soap operas
5. Television must be encourage to give gender sensitive programmes at peak time
6. The language of the media is very often not accessible to the public as it is too technical
7. Media must be careful in passing value judgement

Media Monitoring

Participants took great interest in the counting of pictures of the media as well as monitoring short articles from a gender perspective. They could relate more with the GMPS after having done the self-monitoring. The two disabled ladies also took great interest in the media monitoring. The articles were read to them.

Blatant stereotypes, subtle stereotype and gender aware articles were explained with the support of media clippings

Advertisement

Participants were quite shock with advertisements in Mauritius. Council staff took note so that an item be put on the Agenda to vet all advertisements that are put in public places of Curepipe.

Participants agreed to send complaints to the media, the Association of Advertising Agencies and the Independent Broadcasting Authority.

Mock Radio Interview

Two participants took part in the mock radio interview while the rest of the participants were asked to comment on delivery.



http://gemcommunity.genderlinks.org.za/gallery/main.php?g2_itemId=28583

16 days campaign

Participants agreed to have a Take Back the Night March in the main road of Curepipe with lighting of candles and a small show. The date was provisionally booked for 30th November. The Municipal Council of Curepipe to provide transport, candles and water. The Council will also find out if t-shirts and pins can be made using the CD that Gender Links handed over to the Deputy Chief Executive

Brigitte Michel, Chairperson of AILES agreed to chair the programme with the collaboration of the Municipal Council and NGOs.

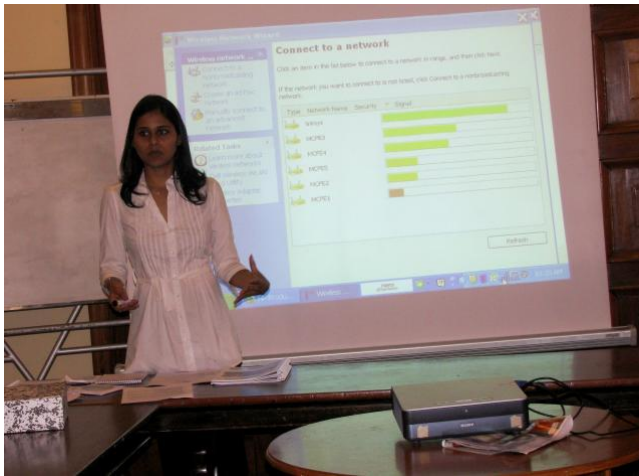
Day 2

IT for Advocacy

Mena Gopaul opened the workshop with a general overview on the information era. Emphasis was laid the constructive use of technology to change mind-set and mainstream Gender in all spheres of life. Technology, she said, enable NGOs and localities to reach a thousand people in one go, networking opportunities, is cost saving and is in line with eco living as we reduce the use of paper and energy. This alone gave the participants a keen interest in the workshop.

Explanation was given on how to build and make use of online petitions. The NGO 'Ailes' , an organisation whose main aim is to rehabilitate drug users and HIV positive people, took note of this as they said online petitions can greatly advance their projects as they could get the support of the population.

Since most of the participants already had email addresses, Ghirish Abdhoosee helped the those who needed help with e-mails and to create their own e-mail.



http://gemcommunity.genderlinks.org.za/gallery/main.php?g2_itemId=28646&g2_imageViewsIndex=1

Cyber Dialogue

An introduction on cyber dialogue was given to the participants; how GL created an online chat room to raise awareness on the 16 days of Activism on Gender Violence. It also allows local councils to communicate among them and with their counterparts of the SADC region.

To make the participants gain more understanding on the importance of the cyber dialogue, a discussion on the main themes of the SADC protocol was discussed. Each theme, especially those where Mauritius still has to work on, like Governance, the Constitution, Economic Empowerment, Media, GBV and HIV/Aids were put into the context of the country. Several issues were raised already during the discussion. For instance participants were asking why Mauritius has not signed the protocol and what could be done. Or more importantly, in relation to the GL latest findings on GBV, what Mauritius can do to counter childhood issues which are among the main causes of violence at later stage in men.

Most participants were then keen to take part in the cyber dialogue as they wanted to get the views of other localities, locally and regionally, on such pertinent social issues.

16 days campaign

Background knowledge on 16 days was given; why UN commemorated these specific days and why we should act as good citizens and take actions against violence. The participants took more interest once they came to know the meaning behind the 16 days and had more incentive to participate in the campaigns.

They were then put into three groups to discuss:

- 1) The major causes of GBV (also include childhood problems)

- 2) What can the Locality of Curepipe do to curb the current level of GBV?
- 3) Why are local councils strategic for the 16 days campaigns?

The reporting back was very interesting. Everyone participated and there was a good sharing of ideas. They all agreed on the fact that nowadays an abuse of technology, a highly materialistic society and a decrease in moral values were among the main causes. An interesting point raised was that since women are now working, their financial independence is also among the root of GBV as men are still baffled by the fact that women are not reliant on them. Counselling is highly advised in schools for children having problems at home.



http://gemcommunity.genderlinks.org.za/gallery/main.php?g2_itemId=28655

The staff of Municipal Council of Curepipe agree that localities play a key role in sensitizing the population. Their role is to give full support, financially and logistically, to NGOs. They also come up with new projects and implement them. Since the adoption of a Gender Policy, a budget is voted for gender each year and projects are put into place to empower women and girls. They are strategic for the 16 days as they are close to their communities and are aware of the NGOs who are actively participating to sensitize the community on salient issues which are hindering the advancement of the country at large.

The 16 days cd was projected right afterward to the participants.

Way forward

It was concluded that the NGO 'Ailes' will devise a 'Take back the night' campaign as part of their 16 days. The municipality of Curepipe will give them full support and will set up a show on GBV before the walk.

Annex A



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND IT FOR ADVOCACY WORKSHOP

STAGES VII AND VIII

Municipal Council of Curepipe

COUNCIL ROOM

Monday 5th November and Tuesday 6th November 2012

Objectives

- To gain understanding of how the media works and can be used in leveraging the work on gender and governance
- To gain an understanding and skills on how to advocate for key gender issues in the action plan
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DAY/TIME	ACTIVITIES	WHO	
DAY ONE: Monday 5th November			
8:45 – 9.15	Registration	GL	
9.15 – 9.20	Opening	CEO	
9.20 – 9.30	Introductions and objectives Expectations from participants	GL	
Gender and media literacy			
9:30 – 10:30	Media monitoring, findings of GMPS, taking up cases	GL	
10:30 – 10.45	TEA		
Gender and communications			
10.45 -11.15	Profiles and mock interviews	GL and participants	
11.15 – 12.15	What is meant by communications; different	GL	

DAY/TIME	ACTIVITIES	WHO	
	communications		
12.15 – 13.00	Lunch	All	
13.00 – 14.00	Campaigns and different elements of campaigns		
14.00 – 15.00	Slogans for and catchy messages for campaigns		
15.00 – 16.00	Report back		
DAY TWO – Tuesday 6th November			
IT for Advocacy			
9.30 – 10.30	Understanding the internet; creating e-mail accounts; online petitions		
10.30 – 10.45	Tea		
10.45 – 12.00	Cyber dialogue and on line chat		
12.00 – 12.45	Lunch		
12.45 – 13.00	What is the 16 days		
13.00 – 14.00	Group work on developing campaigns		
14.00 – 14.30	Report back		
14.30 – 15.00	Consolidate a Plan for the Council for the 16 days		
15.00 – 16.00	Collection of list of survivors for personal testimonies		

Annex B



REGISTRATION FORM

Strategic Communications & IT for advocacy including the use of cell phone

Date: 05 & 06 November 2012

Venue: Municipal Council of

Curepipe

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19F & 6M