

Case Study 3: **Effectiveness of Data-Driven Advocacy in Policy Influence in Mauritius**

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Mauritius has made significant strides in promoting human rights and gender equality, yet persistent challenges remain, particularly gender-based violence and discrimination against vulnerable communities. Since 2019, Kolektif Drwa Imin (KDI) has been advocating for gender equality, inclusion, and protection of the rights of mainly three vulnerable groups including women, children and LGBTI+ in Mauritius through data-driven efforts. By doing so, KDI has emerged as a voice for marginalised groups, using data-driven in-sights and strategic partnerships to drive policy changes.

KDI's advocacy is grounded in research, collaboration with stakeholders, and grassroots engagement. Their recommendations have provided parliamentarians with comprehensive insights on gender issues, supported by evidence and testimonials, which will hopefully lead to policy reforms, including the Gender Equality Bill and the Protection from Domestic Violence Act (PDVA). Likewise recommendations were made to the 4th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle as documented on the website of the OHCHR.

KDI emphasised gender-inclusive language in legislation and recommended amendments to the PDVA, including adopting gender-neutral language, expanding and specifying the definition of violence psychological abuse in legislation. In 2021, KDI began working sessions and training on Post-Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) to monitor the implementation and impact of laws. Recommendations were, then, sent to the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare and other officials, advocating for the removal of discriminatory clauses in the PDVA and the inclusion of various forms of violence in its definition. One of their research and Statistics Mauritius (2024) confirmed that verbal violence is the most reported form of violence among women, LGBTI+ individuals, and children (according to their parents).

During the 92nd session of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), KDI submitted, among other partners, recommendations to the UN, which were reflected in the Concluding Observations for Mauritius. These recommendations aimed at enhancing child protection and addressing domestic abuse, reinforcing KDI's advocacy points. In the 2023 UPR, KDI's recommendations prompted calls for legislative reforms, with member states urging Mauritius to combat gender-based violence and promote LGBTI+ rights. The Gender Ministry confirmed financial assistance from the EU for the Gender Equality Bill, reflecting progress towards inclusive policy measures. KDI has consistently advocated for a non-binary approach to the bill and engaged stakeholders through various channels, including media interventions and direct communications with government officials.

They hope their efforts will lead to legislative reviews and greater awareness of the rights of marginalised communities. Achievements like the prohibition of child marriage in the Children's Act of 2020 highlight the impact of persistent advocacy. Despite challenges, KDI remains committed to fostering a society that is protective, inclusive, and equitable, continuing to engage national and international stakeholders to amplify their efforts.