**Population empowerment is one of the strategy for strengthening primary health care in Mauritius.**

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**Introduction**

Health promotion is a core component of health intervention programmes and community empowerment is one of the main approaches to promote health. All the different National Action Plans being implemented to improve health and quality of life have strategies defined to increase health literacy. In line with these Action Plans the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life regularly conducts community awareness programmes, health promotion programmes and information campaigns on disease prevention. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has dedicated structured units for the planning and implementation of policies, programs, services, and activities to increase levels of health literacy and many activities of health promotion are complemented by other ministries and non-governmental organizations. Despite the various strategies implemented for population empowerment, several indicators show that several problems remain and need to be improved. Reason why an assessment on population empowerment to strengthen primary health care in Mauritius was initiated.

**Methodology**

The country assessment starts with a thorough analysis of the situation of population empowerment over the past 15 years. Challenges or present opportunities for improving population empowerment were then carried out. A participatory and flexible approach was used for this assessment; a multidisciplinary team was set up to carry out the assessment. A Working Group (WG) of 6 members was constituted to review and to validate the report. The report identified keys opportunities that the country may continue to build on as well as challenges and possible solutions for population empowerment as one of the strategy for strengthening primary health care in Mauritius.

**Results**

The assessment identified opportunities mentioned above and challenges that need to be mitigated for improving PHC in the countries. The challenges identified are: (i) the population is not adequately empowered to change behaviour towards taking responsibility for their own health; (ii) the population is not engaged actively in decision-making processes both around policy issues as well as individual treatment options/plans; and the high-risk populations, disadvantaged groups including the increasing elderly population are not adequately targeted for more tailored health promotion and health education.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

The assessment recommended to strengthen community mobilization and participation to promote health literacy including behaviour change in the population, to fully leverage information technology to support health literacy and patient empowerment, to ensure adequate and well-trained human resources to better empower the community and to target high-risk populations and disadvantaged communities including elderly persons for more tailored health promotion and health education. All recommendations are being implemented by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to empower population to contribute to strengthen the primary health care in Mauritius.