# Make Mothers Matter

**On-line June Meeting**

*Wednesday 1st July 2020 – Exchange meeting*

Make Mothers Matter

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# Why mothers matter

- Description of the organisation and its work
- Covid-19 actions and lessons

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# Origins

- **Make Mothers Matter (MMM)** is an international NGO created in 1947 at the UNESCO to raise th awareness of policy makers and public opinion on the contribution of mothers to **social, cultura and economic development.**

- Union Féminine Civique et Sociale (UFCS) whose main goal was to improve the conditions o women at work during the inter-war period
- 1946, congress on « The Action of Women in a world that needs to be re-designed », inviting women to actively participate in the **reconstruction of a society that was destroyed**, beginning with their **own families**
- In **1947 during the UNESCO** international congress "**Mothers Work for Human Progress**"



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# Milestones

- 1949: MMM is among the first NGOs to be granted **Consultative Status** with the United Nations
- 1994: MMM receives the « International Year of the Family » award UN
- 1999: MMM's 50th anniversary is celebrated at UNESCO, international conference on "*The family and the social dynamics of mother's work*"
- 2004: MMM is granted General Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- 2007: MMM's 60th anniversary, international congress at the UNESCO in Paris *"1000 mothers for peace"*



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# Activity

- We act through **advocacy, network and communication**
- Our poles of action are **education, health, peace and economy**
- Expanding network **of 40+ grass-roots** organisations and partners around the world reaching over **10 million mothers** globally. **Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin-America**
  Their mission aligns with MMM's mission
- We empower and defend mothers, advancing their rights and that of their children
  We believe this will revert on their family and the whole of society
- We provide a voice for mothers and a platform to address their concerns at the international level: the European Union, UNESCO and the United Nations(General consultative status)

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# European Delegation of Make Mothers

- Established in 2008: Voice mother's concerns to policy makers and other stakeholders to influence policies and legislation at the European Union level by proposing concrete solutions in order to achieve a positive change in mothers' lives. Monitor, research and analyse measures that impact mothers and their families. Some areas of work:

- reconciliation between work and family life: gender pay and pension gap, care credits, gender equality, elimination of motherhood penalty, recognition of unpaid care as work , flexible working conditions, right to disconnect

- early childhood development

- single mothers' vulnerability to poverty, mothers' and children's health, lifelong learning, validation of skills, eg

# "What matters to mothers in Europe"

In 2011 a **survey** of almost 12,000 mothers in Europe was carried out by the EU Delegation of MMM, in 16 countries and in 10 languages, continues to provide some guidance for the work of the delegation

Almost all mothers say that being a mother is a source of enormous satisfaction

However, a strongly-held and general concern about the lack of **choice, time, recognition**, This is aggravated for **mothers in precarious situations, mothers raising children on their own, mothers with disabilities or of children with disabilities, eg**

MMM believes that Gender equality will not be achieved until **unpaid care work is recognised, reduced, and redistributed**

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# Some MMM's recent actions

- **Raise a Pen campaign** (2019) launched together with the London School of Economics, for girls' education in Afghanistan.

- Statement on education on the occasion of the **40th General Conference of UNESCO** in Paris (MMM benefits from a "Consultative partnership with UNESCO), 2019

- MMM responded to the **EU Commission's** Public Consultation: "**Transparency on pay for men and women**, May 2020

- **Role of Families in achieving the Circular Economy**. A change only achieved if the needs of the families are taken on board and the families are informed. In partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee, Brx. 2019



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# Cont.

- EMPOWERED MOTHERS CAN PROVIDE THE **NURTURING CARE** WHICH IS SO IMPORTANT FOR **EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**, Written statement submitted by MMMM, U.N, General Assembly Human Rights Council Thirty-eighth session

- MMM Conference on the specific **vulnerability of single mothers** in relation **to homelessness and its impact on children**, organised by our UN MMM Delegation in New York. (UN NY side event, CSOCD58), March 2020

- **MOTHER'S HEALTH AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES GREATLY IMPACT CHILD DEVELOPMENT**, Oral Statement 43rd session of the Human Rights Council Item 3 Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children General debate, March 2020

# Some of our members and partners

**Memisa** (Africa, India), **Volunteering Matters** (UK), **Friendship** (Bangladesh), **L'Heure Joyeuse (**Morocco), **La maison de Tom Puce** (France), **Mame Pentru Mame** (Romania), **Union des Mamans d'Enfants Handicapés** (France), **Verband Familienarbeit e.V.** (Germany), **DonnEuropee FedercCsalinghe**, (Italy), **Haro** (Sweden), **Accion Familiar** (Spain) …

• Early Childhood Peace Consortium, ECPC

•European Social Platform and SDG Watch

•New York, Geneva and Vienna: NGO Committee on the Status of Women (New York and Geneva)

NGO Committee on the Family (New York and Vienna), NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva)

NGO Committee on Social Development (New York)

# Covid-19 response of Make Mothers Matter

Website with **resource**s for our members, **best practices** and **testimonials** ("MMM Voices") from our members.

Paradoxically Covid -19 also highlighted  the cause of mothers and fathers putting family care work in the forefront of the news.

We co-signed and disseminated multiple statements:

- Global Call to Action in Response to Covid-19 for Children in Fragile and Conflict affected Settings, from ECPC.

- Joint-statement on support for children and families at risk of poverty, covid-19, Alliance for Investing in children

- STATEMENT WORLD HEALTH DAY 2020: RESEARCH IS NEEDED TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH, RiseUp

# MMM's voices

- A page dedicated to hearing first hand from a number of our grass roots members around the world in a series of recorded interviews conducted by MMM teams

- Understand from our member their problems and challenges, their priorities during this health crisis, to help us realize their specific needs so that we can highlight those when advocating on their behalf.

- The long-term objective is to put in place a collection of member testimonials in order to create the bigger picture post COVID-19 assessment and analysis - to help us potentially adapt our own approach for the future.

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# Some voices heard

•**Uruguay** (Ceprodih- supports mothers in situation of high social risk: unemployment, domestic violence and abandonment during pregnancy).

•**Colombia** (Asodamas, network that economically empowers women all over the country with the help of social workers and is committed to strengthening peace in families and communities).

•**Spain** (Más Familia, conciliation work and family life, certificate EFR )

•**M2M**, South Africa (works to end AIDS).

•**Colombia** (Edo Group, vulnerable communities)

•**Romania** (Mame pentru Mame- represents the interests of pregnant women and mothers' rights)

•**Bangladesh (**AWAJ foundation-labour rights, 600'000 workers – mainly women – in the garment sector across Bangladesh).


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**FB page from Unesco NGOs**

MMM together with 10 other Unesco partner organisations for members of those Unesco organisations to sharing experiences and challenges and to receive official information during the pandemic. Different continents, share best practices >> reliable report to Unesco on the real challenges, problems and needs where the grassroots organisations need support.

## Resources

On parenting tips, on maternal and child health, on addressing violence in the family, from:

Unicef, Eurofamnet, Unesco, WHO, Menengage, Harvard University Center for the Developing child, ECDAN, eg



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# Lessons learned

- **Solidarity** even with scarce economical means (masks fabrication, food baskets, etc).
- **Education**: Virtual classes. Lack of Internet connection in rural areas generates inequality. Mayors of rural towns and villages printing homework / engaged parents distributing
- **Technologies**: Counseling by phone or WhatsApp for pregnant women, for mothers fearing to go to hospitals and health centres when children were sick or need vaccines, or lactation counseling
- **Resilience** Standing up and continuing with their mission in spite of the adversity
- **Digitalization** and phones: Access to free data a mayor obstacle

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# Lessons for future advocacy

• Work on **inequalities**: **gender inequality** is among the most important of all pre-existing conditions.. lasting global recovery can be achieved without living wages and social protection for all work redistribution of women's unpaid care and domestic work and a significant strengthening of pu services and institutions

• **Return to basics**

• The **value of care** and specially of **unpaid care work**, provided in its majority by **mothers**

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# Conclusion

•**Investing in women, especially in mothers, is a profitable investment** because it results i development.

• A mother is a **multiplier** in her family, in her neighborhood and around her.

•A mother who achieves results through her efforts, transmits such **values to her children**. And also i generates **a culture of peace**. (Ceprodih, Uruguay)

• The power of mothers: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpK8BbwZ0ok

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