

## **A Secure society for the the 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY – Why mothers matter**

Study Conference

held at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom on Thursday April 10<sup>th</sup> 2008



MMM England, working in partnership with the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom and the Institute of Statecraft and Governance, organised this Study Conference to bring together representatives of MMM associations from 17 countries with the Armed Forces, other community-based organisations in the UK and various government agencies.

**There were four direct outcomes from the conference:**

1. The British Army recognised the value of improving its level of community engagement. It has committed to:

- significantly increasing the number of officers and warrant officers involved full-time in this activity
- developing a strategy to help create a focussed policy for the whole Armed Forces
- cooperating actively with other government departments.

Armed Forces Career Offices were originally set up to recruit young people into the Armed Forces, but it has become clear that many troubled young people could benefit from the Army's expertise in dealing with Youth on a wider scale. Youth Engagement Programmes have been developed and it has become evident that it is important to work with all the resources the community can offer, including a very powerful one - mothers.

**Hanif Qadir** presented at the conference the work of the Action for Change Foundation (ACF), which provides leadership training and sports activities for young people at risk of being recruited – or already recruited - for jihad. The ACF Programmes offer the same challenges as violent extremism, but in a positive, constructive way. Hanif and his



teamfully understood the message of the conference – the importance of engaging mothers.

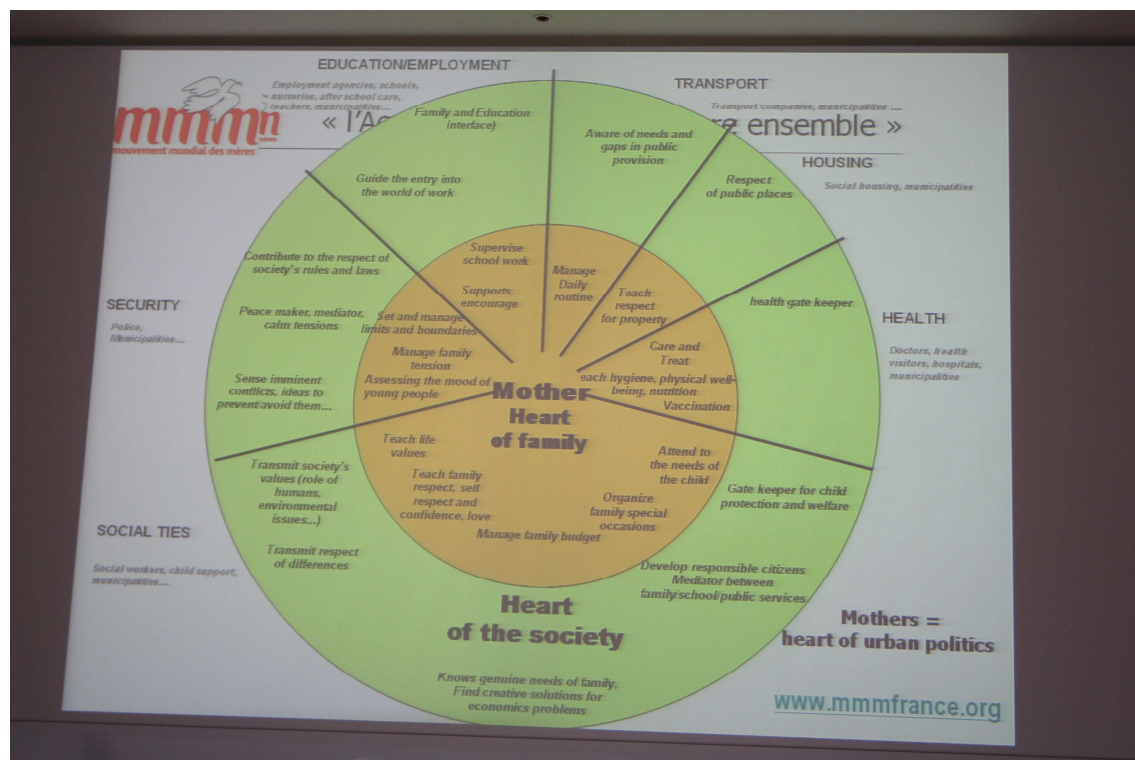
Hanif realised that it is important for the mothers and future mothers to understand why the ACF Programmes work for their young men. For the women from 15 – 45,

this was a liberating experience -

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Isabelle de Rambuteau's presentation at the conference of MMM France's Programme of workshops for mothers in disadvantaged urban areas with a high level of violence and social discord. She made a presentation of the "Living Better Together Agenda" (a

further



development of Isabelle's 'Relay Mothers' workshops) – highlighting powerfully the link between what is taught in the home and behaviour in the community.

The direct result of this meeting was that the message was understood – mothers are a powerful resource and should be included in any integrated action in the community. Much good work is being done in the community, especially with disaffected young people, but organisations tend to work in isolation with no coordination which considerably reduces any potential impact. This conference gave a real sense that the various organisations have the will to develop a strategy for working together to help young people overcome behavioural problems caused by their background, to reduce violence in society and to build cohesive and inclusive communities.