



Oral Statement
UN Commission on Population Development
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Population, Education, and Sustainable Development

Thank you Mr. President, your excellences, dear colleagues. Make Mothers Matter federates more than 40 grass roots associations worldwide working *with* and *for* mothers. We thank the bureau, and the UN teams for all their work and for giving us this platform to raise their voices.

We welcome the theme of this session, and want to emphasize the importance of parents and families in the daily education of children as primary educators and carers, especially mothers, who play an essential role that must be recognized, valued and supported.

Against the profound changes and challenges in the world, education systems must adapt to the evolving skills required and develop critical thinking, respect, empathy, and creativity.

Yet, soft skills learning and the passing on of the values of respect and benevolence mostly takes place in informal or non-formal education contexts - in particular through everyday family member interactions. Peace and sustainable development begin in the home.

A nurturing family environment is also key for Early Childhood Development: scientific evidence shows how early education and care shapes our overall future development, including the acquisition of vital skills. Family interest and support are instrumental to their child's self-confidence and success at school.

Non-formal education within families is the product of unpaid care work. But globally, women spend 3.2 more time on unpaid domestic and care work than men, and are heavily penalized from the resulting time poverty. Mothers have to juggle multiple roles inside and outside the home, to the detriment of their financial independence and security. To redress this inequity, men must take their share of responsibility. This is an important lever for greater gender equality and increased recognition of care work. It also reduces violence and fosters the wellbeing of the entire family.

But this is not enough.

At MMM, we believe it is time for formal, informal and non-formal education to unite in the pursuit of a common goal, empowering children, building sustainable development and peace, and recognizing that education is intrinsically linked to unpaid care work.

For children to enjoy their right to education in its broadest sense, parents and other caregivers must be empowered, not penalized

A right to care would foster quality non-formal education: it would assert unpaid care work as a collective responsibility and put obligations on States to take their share, and develop legal frameworks, policies and services to support families as the primary educators of their children.

We are therefore calling on member States to recognize Care as a Right – the Right to Care and the Right to be cared for. It will support a much-needed transformation of education, and catalyse sustainable development.