



**MOTHER-CENTERED  
ADVOCACY IN ACTION**

**A YEAR IN REVIEW**

**2024**

Credit: Marina Cavazza

[www.makemothersmatter.org](http://www.makemothersmatter.org)

MAKE  
MOTHERS  
MATTER

# 01 WELCOME



## **A Year of Impact, driving change for the Future.**

2024 was a year of significant progress for Make Mothers Matter, true to its mission of amplifying mothers' voices and gaining recognition for the value of care work around the world.

Thanks to a European survey conducted in 12 countries, we shed light on the realities experienced by over 9,600 mothers, providing a solid foundation for our advocacy efforts with decision-makers.

On all fronts – at the United Nations, the European Union, UNESCO, and on the ground with our members – we worked to ensure that mothers are recognized as agents of change. Our network grew stronger, our projects gained momentum, and our message became clearer and more far-reaching.

In 2025, the challenges remain many, but our determination is unwavering. With your support, we will continue our efforts to transform policies, shift mindsets, and help build a society that fully acknowledges the essential role of mothers in creating a fairer, more inclusive, and more sustainable future.

**Anne-Claire de Liedekerke**

**MMM President**

# CONTENT

<b>01. WELCOME</b>	<b>2</b>
Opening words	2
About us	4
How we make change happen	6
The year in a nutshell	7
<b>02. RAISING VOICES</b>	<b>10</b>
At the UN	11
At the EU	14
At UNESCO	17
At the National Level	19
<b>03. IMPACTFUL PROJECTS</b>	<b>20</b>
A major Europe-wide survey	21
Reconciling parenthood and work	22
<b>04. MOBILISING OUR NETWORK</b>	<b>24</b>
The grassroots power of MMM	25
Strengthening our network	26
<b>05. JOINING FORCES</b>	<b>30</b>
Working with alliances	31
Driving change through partnerships	32
<b>06. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>07. LEADERSHIP TEAM</b>	<b>35</b>

## ABOUT US

At MMM, we are driven by the belief that mothers are essential agents of peace and social progress.

Since 1947, we operate for the universal recognition of the irreplaceable role that mothers play within their families and in society.

Building on our global network of grassroots member organisations who represent mothers from all over the world, we drive a movement to ensure that every mother, regardless of her circumstances, has the opportunity to fulfill her caring and educational responsibilities and lead a dignified and autonomous life. We are committed to addressing the barriers they face in education, health, economic opportunities and societal participation to work towards a more caring, inclusive and equitable society.

### OUR VISION

**MMM works for a world where women who are mothers are supported by the society in which they live and can, without being penalized, balance their responsibilities as mothers with their other roles while contributing to sustainable development and peace**

### OUR MISSION

**We amplify the voices of mothers, advocate for their rights and strengthen their capacity to take action**

***“We believe in the power of mothers to make the world a better place”***



## OUR OBJECTIVES

- Shift global perceptions of mothers' roles and the value of care
- Address the unique challenges mothers face
- Advance supportive laws and public policies for mothers
- Promote mothers as powerful agents of change
- Build a global community of support and engagement for mothers

**Motherhood, as lived and experienced, is central to our field of action with and for women**

## THE ISSUES WE CARE ABOUT



Valuing Unpaid Family Care Work



Supporting Maternal Mental Health



Ensuring Work-life Balance and ending the Motherhood penalty



Advancing the mother's role in Early Childhood Development



Eradicating Mothers' Poverty



Promoting girl's Education



# HOW WE MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN

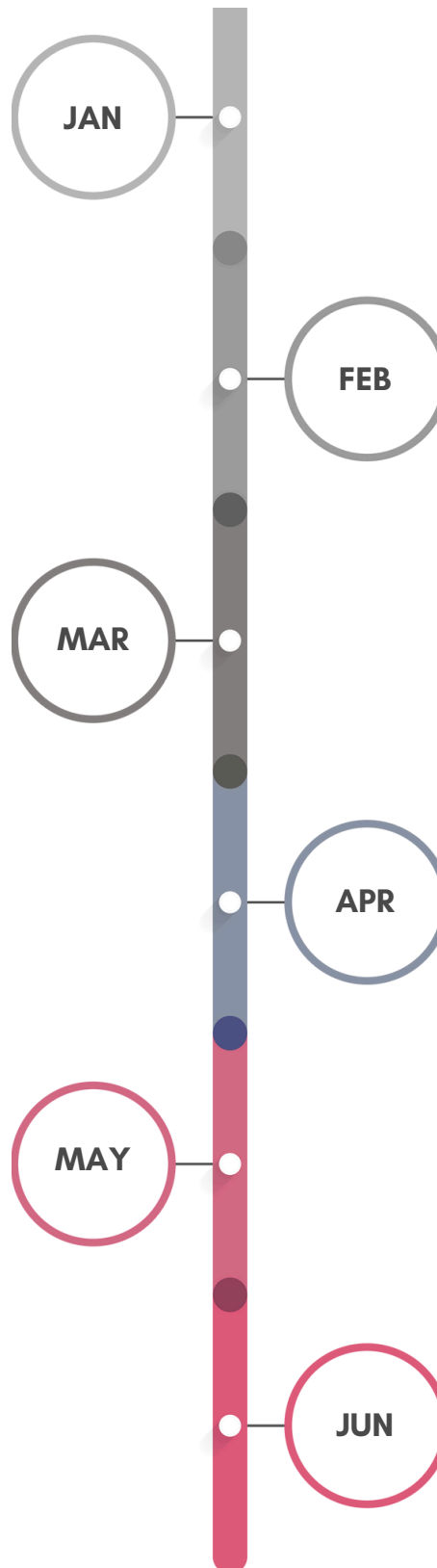
## KEY ACTIVITIES

- ✓ **Representing** our grassroots members working on the ground with and for mothers, at the EU, the UN, and UNESCO
- ✓ **Advocating** for mothers and families to amplify their voices globally. We respond to consultations, develop concrete recommendations for policy makers at international and national levels, write policy briefs on our key topics
- ✓ **Monitoring** draft legislations and issues to be addressed, closely following initiatives and best practices making sure to highlight and push for their implementation
- ✓ **Leading** a network of members, sharing information and actions and working with alliances and coalitions, participating in events, advisory committees and consortia where we can make mothers' voices heard and exert influence
- ✓ **Collecting** data, producing research through regular surveys to better understand the situation of mothers and their challenges



# THE YEAR IN A NUTSHELL

- **Launch of Be Family® Movement:** co-founded by MMM to encourage companies and organisations to support people with caregiving responsibilities.
- **CSW68:** MMM advocates for women's financial inclusion, focusing on national financial inclusion strategies and gender perspectives in financial tools.
- MMM exchanges with the European Commission, DG Justice, on the upcoming **EU Recommendation on Integrated Child Protection Systems**, calling for the need to support mothers and parents to prevent child separation.
- MMM participates in the **high-level EU event** under the **Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU** on the **Child Guarantee**, where our joint paper of the Alliance for Investing in Children is presented. MMM calls for support for single mothers and families in vulnerable situations.
- **MMM contributes to the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty's Call for Input** and shares input on Indigenous mothers and single motherhood, addressing the link between poverty and caregiving challenges.
- **MMM launches a major European Survey** on mothers in 12 countries with almost 10 000 respondents to gather insights into the challenges faced by mothers.



- **UN Resolution on Care** adopted at the Commission on Social Development, advancing the recognition of care work. **A major victory for MMM.**
- **62nd Commission on Social Development:** MMM advocates for investing in mothers through recognition, education, and protection, with a focus on the ripple effects benefiting society.
- MMM joins **ILO's Global Coalition for Social Justice** putting the multiple challenges and realities that mothers face worldwide on decision-making agendas.
- **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Call for Input** on Care and Support Systems: MMM answers the call by highlighting mothers' perspectives, advocating for the recognition of unpaid care work, decent work, and labour market participation.
- **At the 112th International Labour Conference, MMM advocates for a new social contract** that promotes equitable unpaid care work distribution and universal social protection.
- **At the 56th Human Rights Council** MMM contributes to discussions on the failures of economic systems, particularly for mothers, and calls for the recognition and redistribution of unpaid care work.
- The **academic paper** "Mapping Key Actors in Family Support: A European Perspective", **co-authored by MMM**, is published in *Children and Youth Services Review* (Elsevier).

- **2024 UN High Level Political Forum.**

MMM organises a side-event on 'Mothers, unpaid care work and global crises' with high-level speakers.

- **ECOSOC Meeting on care:** MMM advocates for co-responsibility in national care policies and reiterates that unpaid care is indispensable *work*.

- **OHCHR Call for Input:** MMM contributes to the discussion, focusing on maternal mental health.

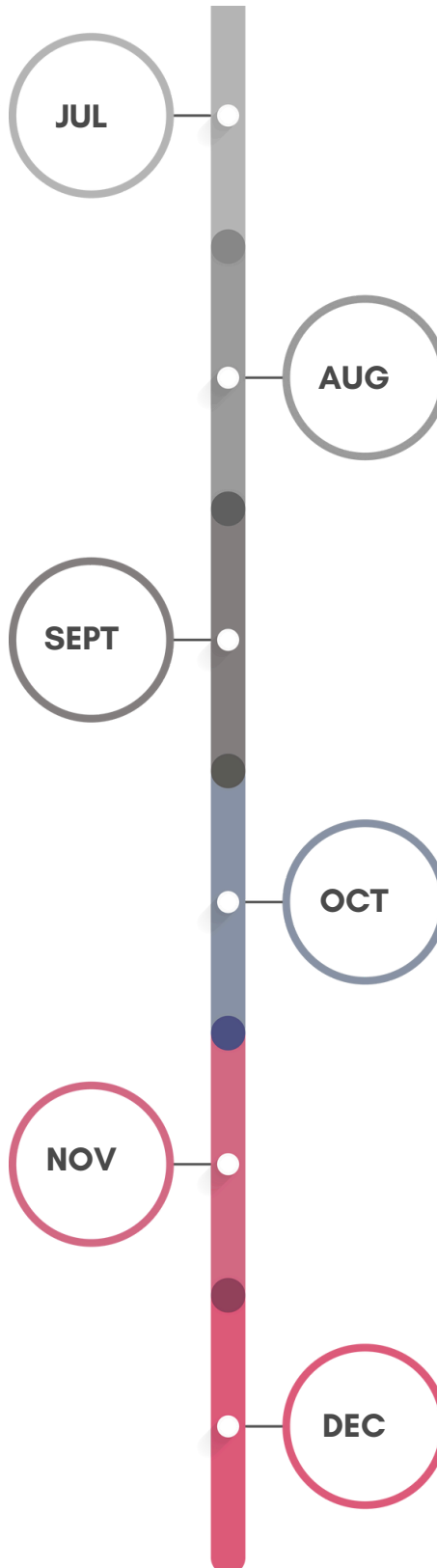
- **57th Human Rights Council in Geneva:** MMM delivers 5 statements on the right to water, education for peace, and the protection of family rights, with a focus on mothers' roles.

- MMM takes part in the consultation of the **Degroof Petercam Foundation** and **Make.org** on balancing parenthood and professional life in Belgium.

- MMM intervenes in the **ISSA Conference** in Sofia highlighting the mother's role in early childhood development.

- UN: MMM advocates for the gendered impact of care policies in a **working group on Discrimination against women and girls.**

- MMM contributes **questions** to the European Parliament for the **hearings of new EU Commissioner candidates.** Many of MMM's questions regarding mothers, UPFCW and WLB are taken into consideration and asked during the public hearings.



- **Beijing+30 Review:** MMM contributes to the UNECE review, focusing on the economic and health impacts of unpaid care work.

- MMM takes part in the commemoration of the **International Day of Care and Support** at the UN in Geneva.

- MMM is a speaker and co-organiser of the EurofamNet EU event **"Child and Family Support in Europe and Policy Lessons for Evidence-Informed Decision-Making"**, which includes participation from representatives of two DGs of the European Commission, Members of the European Parliament, and the Committee of the Regions.

- **OHCHR Call for Input on Just Transition and Human Rights:** MMM advocates for a care-centered transition in global policy.

- MMM organises a workshop with our members on advocacy at the UN.

- MMM takes part in the **International Conference of NGOs at UNESCO.**

- MMM is invited as an expert to the EESC **hearing on the EU's priorities at UNCSW69.** MMM highlights the challenges mothers face, particularly in relation to unpaid care work. The report adopted many of our demands.

## WINS BY NUMBERS



### ADVOCACY & INFLUENCE

- **17** official written and oral statements at high-level UN meetings
- **14** joint policy briefs
- **7** responses to official UN calls for input
- **>4,000** decision-makers reached
- **1 UN resolution on care adopted — a major policy win**



### THOUGHT LEADERSHIP & RESEARCH

- **9,600** mothers surveyed across **12** countries in Europe
- **49** blog and website articles



### NETWORK & REACH

- **44** member associations
- **5** new members
- **33** events and conferences — **3** in-house
- **5** continents engaged in grassroots advocacy
- **>5000** recipients of digital communication



### PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

- **1** survey & report — State Of Motherhood in Europe 2024
- **1** family friendly business initiative co-founded
- **7** european projects



### FUNDING & SUPPORT FOR OUR NETWORK

- **9** targeted funding opportunities
- **3** member organisations successfully funded

## 02

## RAISING MOTHERS' VOICES



***"OECD countries need to find an optimal balance between preparing families for life in the labour market and preparing the labour market for the lives of families – those countries that manage this challenge best, will do better for their families" OECD, Doing better for Families, 2011***

## AT THE UN



### Making Mothers Matter at the heart of global policy

At MMM, our advocacy at the United Nations is grounded in a deep commitment to representing mothers globally, particularly those whose voices are often left unheard. Drawing on our grassroots knowledge and global network, we leverage every tool available to civil society to engage with Member States, international institutions and NGOs. In 2024, our UN Advocacy Team delivered powerful, consistent messaging: recognising, valuing and supporting mothers and their unpaid care work is critical to realizing their human rights and those of their children, advancing gender equality and achieving sustainable development.

**In 2024, we responded to 7 official UN calls for input**, with the objective of ensuring that policies and reports incorporate the lived realities of mothers. Our contributions provided grounded insights on a range of issues

#### Amplifying mothers' voices through UN consultations

- Care and Support Systems (April, OHCHR): We advocated for systemic change to address the inequitable distribution of unpaid family care work and the barriers mothers face in the labor market.
- Poverty in Colombia (May, UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty): Together with our member EDO Group, we highlighted the challenges of Indigenous mothers in La Guajira, linking poverty to the specific hardships faced by single mothers.
- Mental Health and Human Rights (September, OHCHR): MMM raised awareness on maternal mental health issues and their prevalence, urging recognition of its role in human rights protection.
- Education for Peace and Tolerance (November, OHCHR): We stressed the foundational importance of early childhood development in building peaceful societies, and called for investment in parental support and education.
- Gendered Dimensions of Care (November, UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls): Our input focused on the specific discriminations and disproportionate impact of care responsibilities on women who are mothers and presented policy examples addressing these inequalities.
- Just Transition and Human Rights (December, OHCHR): We advocated for care-centered policies in climate and economic transitions, spotlighting the disproportionate impact of climate change on women.
- Health Workforce and Caregivers (December, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health): MMM emphasised the need to recognise and support mothers and other unpaid caregivers as frontline health workers, and essential contributors to health systems.
- We also prepared input on welfare policies and their impact on mothers—notably the negative consequences of conditional cash transfers which often exacerbate gender stereotypes and increase women's unpaid care work.

## Strategic engagement through UN statements

MMM submitted and delivered 17 statements at high-level UN meetings in 2024. Our advocacy spanned economic justice and rights, care policies, gender equality, education, and climate resilience—all through the lens of motherhood:

- Human Rights Council (HRC) Sessions 55–57 (Geneva): We delivered multiple oral statements across the year, advocating for:
  - Recognition of unpaid care work in social protection and fiscal policy
  - Structural reforms in the global economic system to uphold women’s and mothers’ rights
  - The role of education, access to water and other essential public infrastructure and services in enhancing family and community well-being and peace-building
- Commission on Social Development (CSocD62, February): Our February statement urged investment in mothers as a key lever for sustainable development.
- Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68, March): We pushed for gender-responsive financial inclusion, calling for national strategies that recognise and support mothers’ economic empowerment.
- UN Commission on Population Development (CPopD, April): We submitted a written statement spotlighting maternal well-being as a cornerstone of healthier, more resilient societies.
- 112<sup>th</sup> International Labour Conference (ILO, June): With the support of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, we called for a new social contract to redistribute unpaid care work across society and ensure universal social protection.
- UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF, July): We highlighted how global crises disproportionately impact women—in particular mothers—by increasing unpaid care work, and advocated for a shift toward a caring economy.
- High Level ECOSOC Meeting on Care and Support (July): We reaffirmed that unpaid care work is foundational to society and called for shared responsibility in national care policies.
- International Day of Care and Support (October): As the sole NGO speaker at the Palais des Nations, we made a bold appeal to transform how care is valued across global development agendas.



## Shaping global frameworks through reports and reviews

MMM played a key role in shaping policy through our contributions to global review processes:

- Beijing+30 UNECE Regional Review: We led advocacy on women’s economic empowerment and mental health, coordinated a working group, submitted a detailed background paper, edited a video, organized a workshop, and helped draft outcomes that included mothers’ perspectives.
- UNANIMA International Report on Hidden Homelessness: We contributed critical insights on the invisibility of lone mothers experiencing homelessness.

## Advancing structural change in international law

MMM engaged in transformative advocacy to strengthen international legal frameworks:

- Right to Education: Through joint advocacy with Child Rights Connect and Human Rights Watch, we contributed to the adoption of a Human Rights Council resolution establishing a working group to draft a third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, aiming to guarantee free pre-primary and secondary education for all children. Our efforts ensured parents—particularly mothers—were recognized as essential stakeholders.
- Summit of the Future (preparatory process): we contributed work to ensure that the voices and needs of mothers are represented in this pivotal global dialogue on the future of multilateralism.



## Leading and contributing to key events and side events

In 2024, MMM organized and contributed to multiple influential events to raise awareness and propose concrete policy solutions:

- CSW68 Side Event (March): We spotlighted the motherhood penalty and made the case for investing in mothers as a strategic and equitable development imperative.
- HLPF Side Event (July): Supported by UN Women and the UN Special Rapporteur on Poverty, this virtual event connected unpaid care work with intersecting global crises—climate, debt, inflation—demonstrating that most crises have a disproportionate impact on women—in particular mothers, increasing unpaid care work, and that supporting mothers is key to systemic resilience.
- Side-event to the Summit of the Future (September): MMM was invited to contribute to a UN Women event on the role of local governments in fostering care policies. This gave us the opportunity to reassert the principle of co-responsibility and highlight examples of good policies and practices—including by our members—that support mothers at the local level.

## AT THE EU

### Shaping european policy for mothers, families, and future generations

In 2024, MMM remained deeply engaged with European institutions, alliances, and civil society platforms to ensure that mothers' voices are heard where it matters most. From maternal mental health to child rights, long-term care, and gender equality, we worked tirelessly to shape policies, influence narratives, and drive systemic change across the European Union.

#### Influencing european policy through strategic inputs and recommendations

This year, MMM provided expert input across multiple high-level consultations and policy frameworks:

- OHCHR Consultation on Racial Discrimination in the Right to Health (Regional, Europe): We delivered both oral and written input highlighting gaps in maternal health care across EU member states, in partnership with our Irish member (IR Maternity Network). Our contribution emphasized the urgent need to close racial and systemic gaps in maternal healthcare.
- Joint input to La Hulpe Declaration (with the Social Platform): We contributed to shaping this crucial interinstitutional Declaration, which reaffirms the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) as a cornerstone for the EU's policy agenda. Our advocacy helped ensure commitments to review the EPSR Action Plan in 2025 reflect social equity and care-centered priorities that are important issues to shape policies favourable to mothers.
- MMM contributes questions to the European Parliament for the hearings of new Commissioner candidates. Many of MMM's questions regarding mothers, Unpaid Care Work, WLB (Work-Life Balance), are asked during the public hearings to the candidates.



#### Raising mothers' voices through public statement

We issued and co-signed influential statements that shaped discourse and called for action:

- World Mental Health Day: Together with 33 organizations, we emphasized maternal mental health as an essential yet overlooked issue in public health systems.
- Joint statements with the Child Alliance (Child Guarantee): We advocated for the inclusion of single mothers and maternal physical and mental health in the implementation of the European Child Guarantee. One of our statements was presented at the high level political event under the Belgian Presidency of Council of the European Union.
- EASPD joint position paper on Early Childhood Education. MMM contributed a mother-centred perspective to this paper on family-centred early childhood intervention, highlighting the foundational role of mothers in early learning.

## Publishing and contributing to research and policy papers

Our advocacy was further strengthened by active contributions to academic publications and policy development, reinforcing our expertise and influence.

### Academic publications:

- Published paper: “Mapping key actors in family support: A European perspective” (Children and Youth Services Review, Elsevier) MMM is one of the co-authors of this scholar paper.
- Contributions to academic work: Through our involvement in Eurofamnet and a network of COST Actions on mental health, we co-authored or contributed to papers on:
  - Family support systems
  - Quality standards in family support
  - Maternal mental health as a public health priority
  - Well-being economy and its connection to care work

### Policy contributions

- Joint paper on Long-Term Care: As part of the informal care alliance on long term care, we emphasised mothers' and families' needs within the European Care Strategy.
- Meetings with the European Commission: We advocated for reducing social and economic inequalities, spotlighting the disproportionate poverty affecting mothers, particularly single mothers.
- Direct dialogue with the EU Commission on Child Protection Systems: MMM joined Eurochild, SOS Kinderdorf, and others in shaping the Commission's upcoming Recommendation on Integrated Child Protection Systems—ensuring “mothers” are included as key stakeholders.



## Showcasing expertise at high-level events

MMM participated in and co-organized over 30 major events and conferences, using each platform to raise awareness, share expertise, and advocate for mothers' rights.

### Child Guarantee events

- Presentation at the high-level event of the Belgian EU Presidency on the Child Guarantee
- Meetings with the EU Child Guarantee National Coordinators and civil society alliances
- MMM stand and participation in informal networking events to highlight advocacy priorities

### Gender equality & care economy

- Invitation as an expert to the EESC hearing on the UN CSW69
- Participation in CESIE's Gender Equality Conference, EIGE Gender Equality Forum, Eurofound event on Work and well-being: "The gender gap in job quality" and the EU event on "Transforming the Care Economy"
- Presentation on unpaid care work at a Time Use Initiative event to emphasise the link between time poverty and mothers' well-being

### Early childhood & family support

- Intervention in the ISSA conference on Early Childhood Development. MMM participated to reinforce the integration of maternal needs in early childhood policy dialogues and project development
- Within the framework of the EU funded project WLE, MMM organised the final conference on Family wellbeing
- As part of EurofamNet, we co-organised and spoke at the Committee of Regions' event focused on policy lessons for family support

### Maternal health advocacy

MMM raised visibility of maternal health and built international connections (e.g., RI International, AFSP, GLE Women's Leadership Collaborative)

- Participation at the Mental health Europe panel during the EU Mental Health week
- Participation at the DisQo Stakeholder Network Conference on "Effective Access to Quality Healthcare for Roma and Racialised Communities" and a webinar from Royal Holloway University on maternal health discrimination
- Submission of advocacy materials to the EC and OHCHR
- Invited as an expert to a two-day workshop on mental health "Leadership for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Women's Leadership". Theme: Mental health, leadership, diversity

### Other Noteworthy Engagements

- Speaker role at the EESC expert hearing on EU priorities for UNCSW69
- Intervention at the 40th anniversary of our member Isadora Duncan, highlighting challenges faced in the EU by single mothers
- Active participation in Social Platform's Long-Term Care Conference, Entrepreneurship4all event from a partner on women's entrepreneurship

## AT UNESCO

As part of UNESCO's mission to build peace through education, we are committed to preparing the mothers of tomorrow by investing in girls' education and empowerment today. Through initiatives like Voix des Filles across French-speaking Africa and our advocacy for educational reform, we are laying the foundation for resilient, empowered future mothers - essential pillars of sustainable communities around the world.

### **Amplifying the voices of girls - the mothers of tomorrow - through education across french-speaking Africa**

In 2024, MMM contributed to the significant expansion of "Voix Des Filles"(VDF)- NGOs at national level, (the Voices of Girls) - originally a UNESCO Working Group initiative - across French-speaking Africa. In addition to the first VDF NGO created in Ivory Coast in May 2023 headed by our member AJAD, new VDF NGOs were successfully established in Madagascar, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, Congo, Senegal, and Morocco, creating a vibrant network of advocates for girls' education and empowerment throughout the region.

MMM members Otitsara, Association des Soeurs Augustines du Saint Esprit, Aidprofen and En Avant Les Enfants (EALE) volunteered in Madagascar, Burkina Faso and Democratic Republic of Congo.

### **A field visit in Ivory Coast**

The extensive mission to Côte d'Ivoire in October marked a milestone in MMM's engagement across Africa, achieving a dual objective: visiting our member AJAD in the field and strengthening collaboration with UNESCO stakeholders in the country.

The visit included a tour of the AJAD Professional Training Centre for girls and young women - many of them mothers - and attendance at the AJAD diploma ceremony. Over the course of two weeks, the delegation also carried out several strategic activities, including preparations for the International Day of the Girl with local partners at the Ivorian National Commission for UNESCO, productive meetings at the UNESCO office in Abidjan, and participation in a regional senators' conference.

The mission culminated on October 14 with the celebration of the International Day of the Girl in Yamoussoukro, alongside Côte d'Ivoire officials, civil society stakeholders, and numerous schoolgirls and students who shared moving testimonies about how education is transforming their lives.



## Advancing the Right to Education through policy reform

We actively supported a civil society-led initiative advocating for a fourth optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, aimed at guaranteeing at least one year of free pre-primary education and free secondary education for all children worldwide. This ambitious proposal has gained strong momentum through our coalition-building efforts.

MMM mobilized several other UNESCO partner NGOs and reached out to broader NGO networks at the UN in Geneva, working through MMM UN Geneva to enhance coordination and impact. With the support of Human Rights Watch and Child Connect, we developed strong advocacy arguments.

A key meeting with the French National Commission in November helped secure valuable support and strategic connections. We also made progress with member states, particularly in the UK and Canada. In preparation for the March 2025 Human Rights Council session, we contributed to planning efforts and advocated for the inclusion of child participation.

***"Today, you are not just receiving a diploma, you are receiving the keys to your independence and your future."***

## Contributing to UNESCO's global initiatives

Throughout 2024, our team made substantial contributions to several key UNESCO-led global initiatives:

- We played an active role in ensuring that the perspectives of mothers were effectively integrated into UNESCO's long-term strategic planning and programming for the 2026–2029 period, as outlined in the organization's Draft Programme and Budget (43 C/5).
- Our team participated in brainstorming sessions on UNESCO's program and budget, providing valuable input toward the development of recommendations for the 2024 International Conference of NGOs (CINGO). In preparation for the event, we also engaged in coalition-building with other official UNESCO partner NGOs, significantly enhancing our collective impact.
- During the CINGO conference, we contributed to key discussions on the Priority Africa and Gender Equality initiatives, participated in the election of a new liaison committee, and supported the approval of collective NGO contributions to UNESCO's Draft Programme and Budget.
- Aligned with our commitment to prioritizing youth, we took part in UNESCO's Youth Working Group Strategic Dialogue at the 2024 International Conference of NGOs. We advocated for the inclusion of youth - alongside Small Island Developing States (SIDS) - as central stakeholders in UNESCO's future strategic direction.



## AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

### FRANCE

#### **Contribution to the Government mission supporting single-parent families**

We actively contributed to the government mission led by MP Fanta Berete and Senator Xavier Iacovelli, which aimed to strengthen support for single-parent families. Through a written submission grounded in field data, our team amplified the voices of single mother - too often overlooked despite their heightened vulnerability. MMM highlighted the challenges these women face, including isolation, mental overload, and barriers to housing, employment, and childcare. This contribution is fully aligned with MMM's mission to recognize unpaid care work and to promote supported, inclusive, and equitable parenting.

#### **Mothers and Peace in the Spotlight - Dinner Conference in Versailles, September**

MMM hosted a high-level dinner at Versailles City Hall to spotlight the vital role of mothers in peacebuilding. The event, held under the patronage of Mayor François de Mazières and supported by elected officials and civil society leaders, gathered committed voices to advance this important message. Among the speakers was Charlotte Baelde, Regional Delegate for Gender Equality, who joined others in recognising mothers' essential contributions to social cohesion, peace education, and violence prevention.

#### **Contribution to the Senate - PLFSS 2025**

MMM was invited to share its expertise with the Senate's Social Affairs Committee during the review of the 2025 Social Security Financing Bill (PLFSS). In its written submission, MMM addressed key family policy issues, including the declining birth rate, the structure of parental leave, the diversity of childcare options, and the fairness of family taxation.

We underscored the urgent need for flexible, equitable systems that respect parental choices and better support families in balancing work and care responsibilities.

#### **Contribution to the Senate Mission on Childcare Facilities - December**

MMM responded to the French Senate's fact-finding mission on early childhood care facilities by completing its official questionnaire. In its contribution, MMM conveyed the concerns of mothers regarding the current childcare system, highlighting the shortage of available places, the rigidity of existing models, and the disproportionate burden placed on mothers due to limited flexibility and inadequate parental leave. This input underscored the need for a diverse range of childcare solutions and public policies that truly reflect the needs of families. MMM also drew attention to related issues such as mental health, parental burnout, and social inequities - particularly affecting caregiving mothers and families in vulnerable situations.

### BELGIUM

#### **Participation in the Perinatal Mental Health Symposium - Flemish Parliament, February**

MMM participated in a symposium on perinatal mental health at the Flemish Parliament, organised by An-Sofie Van Parijs. The EU team continued to promote the European guidelines on maternal mental health, published in 2023 by the Rise Up PPD coalition, of which MMM is a member. The event featured key contributions from Gwendolyn Rutten, Vice Minister-President of Flanders, and Professor Alain Grégoire, and helped strengthen the link between medical expertise, political engagement, and civic advocacy. MMM remains committed to making maternal mental health a central issue in the development of coherent public policies.

# 03 IMPACTFUL PROJECTS



## FLEXIBILITÉ

Adaptabilité des conditions de travail

HORAIRES / LIEUX DE TRAVAIL / DURÉE DU TRAVAIL / CONGÉS

ENTREPRISES  
flexibles  
économiques

SALARIÉS / PARENTS  
// responsabilités  
vie perso

	RISQUES Complexité organisation	OPPORTUNITÉS Attraction fidélisation
ENTREPRISES		
SALARIÉS	Projet de vie	Equilibre pro- perso

*Our projects extend our positioning beyond advocacy, to drive lasting change in civil society.*

# A MAJOR EUROPE-WIDE SURVEY

## ENABLING MOTHERS TO SPEAK OUT

### State of motherhood in Europe 2024

La maternité reste un sujet peu exploré et encore trop peu pris en compte, tant dans les politiques publiques que dans le débat sociétal. Cette invisibilisation engendre des besoins non satisfaits et des défis ignorés pour les mères. Des données solides sont indispensables pour nourrir les politiques publiques et favoriser un changement réel et durable.

Pour contribuer à combler ce manque, MMM a mené l'enquête « La maternité en Europe – État des lieux 2024 », en collaboration avec Kantar, leader mondial des données, études et conseils, chargé du travail de terrain, et Nikki van der Gaag, experte indépendante des questions liées aux femmes.

Cette enquête donne la parole à 9 600 mères réparties dans 11 pays de l'Union européenne — Belgique, Tchéquie, France, Allemagne, Irlande, Italie, Pologne, Portugal, Slovaquie, Espagne et Suède — ainsi qu'au Royaume-Uni.

Le rapport aborde des thématiques clés telles que la garde d'enfants, la santé mentale maternelle, l'allaitement et l'alimentation infantile, le retour au travail, l'équilibre entre vie professionnelle et vie familiale, ainsi que le rôle des pères et des co-parents. Les résultats révèlent des injustices persistantes — économiques, sociales et sanitaires — souvent invisibles et encore largement ignorées ou non traitées.



**Read the full report here:**  
<https://makemothermatter.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/MMM-State-of-Motherhood-in-Europe-2024.pdf>

# RECONCILING PARENTHOOD AND WORK

## TOWARDS FAMILY FRIENDLY WORK POLICIES

### Be Family®

In 2024, Make Mothers Matter co-founded Be Family®, an innovative initiative designed to foster inclusive and responsible practices toward families in the workplace. The initiative seeks to shift the paradigm from families adapting to companies, to companies adapting to families—aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 5, 6, 8, and 16.

Be Family® brings together a coalition of committed companies and professionals who recognize that supporting employees with caregiving responsibilities enhances both societal inclusivity and business performance. It provides a comprehensive framework that includes a self-assessment tool, sharing of best practices, actionable recommendations, and a certification process to promote and acknowledge continuous improvement.

The official launch of Be Family® took place in Paris in November 2024. The event brought together over 100 participants, including HR professionals, corporate leaders, and work-life balance experts.

By joining Be Family®, companies demonstrate a strong commitment to creating work environments that support and accommodate families. Through this initiative, MMM reinforces its mission to advocate for systemic change that uplifts mothers, strengthens families, and benefits society as a whole.



## Expert participation to a public consultation in Belgium

Make Mothers Matter (MMM) participated as an expert in Belgium's national public consultation on reconciling parenthood and work, launched by the Degroof Petercam Foundation in collaboration with Make.org.

The consultation highlighted significant challenges in Belgium, including gender disparities in employment, with women disproportionately engaged in part-time work due to caregiving responsibilities. This imbalance contributes to economic vulnerability and mental health risks among mothers.

This initiative aimed to identify impactful solutions to help parents balance work and family life, gathering input from citizens, civil society actors, and organizations. The results were revealed in Autumn 2024, and MMM was pleased to see that several of its proposals received significant attention and votes.


Following the consultation, MMM participated in a series of workshops hosted by the Degroof Petercam Foundation, focused on transforming these citizen ideas into actionable solutions. The workshops fostered collaboration and the exchange of best practices.

From these collective sessions, 2 to 3 projects will be selected for acceleration in the coming months. **MMM proposed the Be Family® Project.**



How can we reconcile parenthood  
and work in Belgium?

# 04 MOBILISING OUR NETWORK



*“Tackling child poverty is inseparable from supporting mothers, especially single mothers, whose wellbeing is critical to ensuring healthy futures for their children. Thank you MMM for voicing our needs and concerns.”*

Camilla Rodrigues, Mulheres à Obra



# THE GRASSROOTS POWER OF MMM

*CONNECTED, COMMITTED AND CREATING CHANGE*

Our member network brings together over 40 organisations from around the world, all committed to advocating for and empowering mothers.

At MMM, we actively support our members by providing advocacy opportunities within high-level institutions, helping them gain visibility on global platforms, and connecting them with funding opportunities. We strengthen their capacity by fostering knowledge-sharing, building skills, and promoting the exchange of best practices.

## 5 NEW MEMBERS IN 2024

- **Single SuperMom** - Netherlands
- **Landsforeningen 1001 dager** - Norway
- **Fondation Hubi & Vinciane** - Bénin
- **Mamas for Africa** - RDC
- **Kisany** - RDC



## STRENGTHENING OUR NETWORK *ADVOCACY, VISIBILITY, FUNDING AND KNOWLEDGE*

### Opening doors to global exposure

This year, our EU and UN advocacy teams facilitated meaningful opportunities for members to engage in high-level international events. Through these platforms, our members amplified their messages, shared their expertise, and advocated for the inclusion of mothers in key policy frameworks.

The **Porto Social Forum** in Portugal provided our member **Mulheres à Obra** with a valuable opportunity to network at a high-level event and advocate for the recognition and inclusion of mothers on key issues such as skills development, child poverty, social exclusion and the reinforcement of the European Pillar of Social Rights at both EU and national levels.

#### UN SDG Summit

During this global event where world leaders reviewed progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, we showcased **videos of our members** expressing their hopes and concerns for **mothers** on themes including poverty, hunger, education, gender equality, health, and economic growth.

As part of the preparatory process for the Summit of the future, the **UN Civil Society Forum was held in Kenya**, providing our Kenyan member association **Passion to Share** with the opportunity to attend a high-level meeting in person. This event allowed them to network with key stakeholders and participate in workshops on important topics such as gender justice, building resilient communities, and reclaiming the dignity of African women and girls. It was a significant occasion for them to advocate for the economic empowerment of women, particularly mothers, and to emphasise the importance of addressing their mental health needs.

At the **UN Civil Society Forum which took place during the UN Commission on Social Development**, our members shared **video-messages** highlighting challenges and solutions to advance social development, justice, and poverty eradication, accelerating progress on the 2030 Agenda.

At the International **Step by Step Association Conference** in Sofia, Bulgaria, our panel represented by our members **Isadora Duncan, Fundevas, Accion Familiar (Spain), Child Nepal**, and **1001 dager** (1001 days - Norway), highlighted their work advancing early childhood education by working with mothers. They demonstrated how mothers' health, education, economic status, and overall well-being directly influence the development of infants and young children.

At the **high-level segment of the UN Human Rights Council**, our member **Aidprofen** (Democratic Republic of Congo) delivered powerful speech calling on governments to end conflicts and violence, emphasizing their devastating impact on women and girls worldwide.

Our member, Irish Maternity Support, brought its expertise on maternal health and trauma at the conference "The Right to Health of People of African Descent", organised by **EPHA and OHCHR**.

## Providing high level visibility through awards and international recognition

To highlight and reward the exceptional work of our members, we actively nominated them for prestigious global awards. These nominations not only celebrate their outstanding achievements but also bring much-deserved recognition to their efforts, amplifying their impact and inspiring others in the global community.

The **UNESCO Girls & Women Education Prize** recognizes exceptional projects dedicated to enhancing educational opportunities for girls and women, ultimately improving their quality of life.

This year, we proudly nominated three of our members, highlighting their outstanding contributions to empowering women and girls through education.

Since 2019, the **United States Institute of Peace's Women Building Peace Award** has honoured exceptional women peace builders who have made a transformative impact in ending violence and resolving conflicts in their communities.

This year, we proudly nominated the president of one of our member organisations for her lifelong dedication to peacebuilding and her tireless efforts to foster reconciliation and stability in her country.

For the **UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence**, we nominated a member organisation for their unwavering commitment to promoting peace and supporting women and mothers victims of conflict. Through their tireless efforts, they have made a profound impact on fostering tolerance, reconciliation, and healing in one of the world's most conflict-affected regions.



## Knowledge sharing and capacity building

We developed and hosted a variety of online workshops, events and roundtable discussions to help build our members' skills, increase collaboration and share best practices to help our collective advocacy efforts.

At the first Youth Inclusion International Forum in New York, we led a **panel discussion** focused on the societal inclusion of young mothers, spotlighting the work of members supporting single mothers.

To further enrich the discussion and foster knowledge sharing, we organised a follow-up **roundtable**, bringing together our participating members to exchange **best practices** and deepen collaboration.

### Introduction to **MMM advocacy**:

This online workshop introduced members to our advocacy at the EU, UN, and UNESCO, allowing them to interact directly with our advocacy leaders and explore opportunities to increase their involvement.

Building on the previous workshop, we organised a follow-up session focused on **navigating the UN system** and amplifying our members' voices within it. Led by our UN Advocacy Team Leader and Communications Lead, this workshop offered an in-depth exploration of advocacy opportunities at the UN level. Participants also received **practical guidance on crafting impactful communications**—whether through videos or oral presentations—to effectively showcase their organisation's work and maximise their influence.

**To help strengthen engagement and develop a more connected network, a quarterly Members' Newsletter keeps everyone up to date**

Since May 2024, we have published 4 editions featuring members' projects, updates on our UN and EU advocacy work, upcoming events and funding opportunities

***"MMM is a valuable resource for advocacy, support, and connection, playing a crucial role in helping organisations advance the rights and recognition of mothers globally."***

*Alain Englebert, EALE*

## Supporting access to funding

Recognising the importance of financial support, we worked to identify, share, and support funding opportunities that align with our members' missions and needs.

In 2024, we shared **9 targeted funding opportunities**, providing hands-on support for applications, including, to the International Women's Day of Prayer fund. As a result, 3 members successfully secured grants, enabling them to further their work with and for mothers in their communities.

**3 of our members,  
directly benefited from  
MMM funding  
opportunities.**

In our ongoing efforts to raise the profile of our network and connect members with institutional support, MMM conducted high-level diplomatic outreach in Brussels. We met with **ambassadors from Colombia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, and Morocco to present the work of our members, explore avenues for funding collaboration, and advocate for stronger maternal policy frameworks at both national and international levels.**

These meetings focused on:

- Showcasing grassroots impact
- Highlighting specific initiatives led by our members in each country, demonstrating their contribution to key global priorities such as women's economic empowerment, early childhood development, and peacebuilding.
- Advocating for financial support. We discussed ways embassies could help facilitate access to international and bilateral funding streams for civil society organisations working with mothers.
- Fostering Policy Dialogue

# 05 JOINING FORCES



## WORKING WITHIN ALLIANCES

MMM continued to strengthen its partnerships and alliances across key EU and global platforms.

### NEW COLLABORATIONS

At the EU, MMM joined the **Alliance for Childhood** and helped build the new subgroup on mental health within the Alliance for investing in children—deepening our advocacy around maternal and child mental health and wellbeing.

MMM also joined the **Global Coalition on Social Protection Floors**, which opened collaboration with other INGOs like **ATD Fourth World** or **Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)**, to strengthen advocacy on Universal Social Protection, which is key for unpaid caregivers, beginning with mothers.

*“Working with alliances amplifies our message, expands our reach, and ensures that the issues affecting mothers are prioritised across the EU and UN policy landscapes”*

### ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS AT THE EU

- Active roles in the **Social Platform, Eurofamnet, DisQo, the Alliance for Investing in Children, and the Long-Term Care Alliance**
- MMM EU Team held a workshop for the **WEGate community** for a group from North Macedonia on Decent work for women workers
- Continuation of the **“Breaking the silence on maternal mental health” video series where MMM partners with experts** to help raise awareness among mothers, their families, policymakers and public in general on the importance of supporting mothers’ mental health

### ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS AT THE UN

- At the global level, MMM is also an active member of several civil society coalitions and networks or multi-stakeholder alliances, including the **Global Alliance for Care, the Wellbeing Economy Alliance, the Early Childhood Peace Consortium, and Child Rights Connect.**

The UN Team is also working closely with other like-minded INGOs as part of NGO Committees, in particular the **NGO Committee on Social Development and the NGO Committees on the Status of Women in New York and Geneva.**

# DRIVING CHANGE THROUGH EU PROJECTS

## Transforming advocacy into action: Empowering mothers across Europe

In 2024, MMM strengthened its role as a strategic partner in European funded projects aimed at improving the lives of mothers. From financial empowerment and maternal health to digital training and labor market inclusion, we worked on diverse EU-funded initiatives to turn advocacy into practical solutions. Through co-creation, research, and direct engagement with mothers, our project work continues to deliver concrete tools and policy insights that promote gender equality and family well-being.

## Empowering mothers through work, skills, and equity

### BAC Project

#### Financial empowerment of mothers

A pioneering initiative focused on building financial literacy and economic empowerment for women, particularly mothers in order to fight maternal poverty. In collaboration with PhD researchers, MMM contributed its expertise and priorities to ensure that research outcomes translate into impactful tools and strategies.

Deliverables will include research-based tools for public awareness and practical empowerment.

### MAV Project

#### Mom Virtual Assistant

Aimed at supporting mothers to return or stay in the labor market, by recognizing and enhancing the soft skills gained through motherhood. It promotes digital, transversal, and entrepreneurial skills through a training program.

Deliverables will include Compendium, tools and training curriculum.

### MothersCan Project

The project examines the barriers mothers face in the labour market and aims to influence the EU agenda by raising awareness of gender equality challenges in the workplace. It also promotes equal participation, supports mothers' reintegration through skill-building, and showcases innovative ways to empower women returning to work after maternity leave.

It is directed at mothers who are unemployed or long-term unemployed, working part-time but seeking full-time employment, and single mothers.



## Maternal and mental health advocacy

### Spiomet4Health

MMM participated in the review meeting with the EU Commission.

### Assist Project Mothers with disabilities

MMM is the project coordinator of this vital initiative addressing maternal health for women with disabilities (both physical and mental). The project aims to make healthcare equally accessible and inclusive for mothers with disabilities at every stage of motherhood and eliminate attitudinal biases.

We have conducted literature review, contributed to desk research, coordinated deliverables, and participated in partner meetings.

Value: Building expertise and advocating for an often-overlooked group of mothers, while contributing to the development of supportive policies and practices.

### Cost Actions group on Mental health

Active collaboration on policy and academic work linking maternal mental health to EU health strategies.

Result: Stronger positioning of maternal mental health in EU discourse.

## Family support and early childhood development

### WLE (We Learn Everywhere)

The concluding conference of our project on child and parental well-being - and the vital role of family support structures in early childhood development has successfully taken place.

Following a thorough review by the European Union, the project received a highly positive evaluation and was recognised as a significant contribution in the field. It has since been selected for publication on the official EU website.

Make Mothers Matter played an active role in supporting the final report review and participating in the on-site project evaluation. This project reinforces our commitment to evidence-based advocacy for families.

### Eurofamnet Event

MMM intervene as speaker and co-organised the high-level EU event on family support, held in October. Our contributions included drafting the concept note, coordinating speaker invitations, overseeing venue logistics, and co-authoring the paper on quality standards in family support presented during the event.

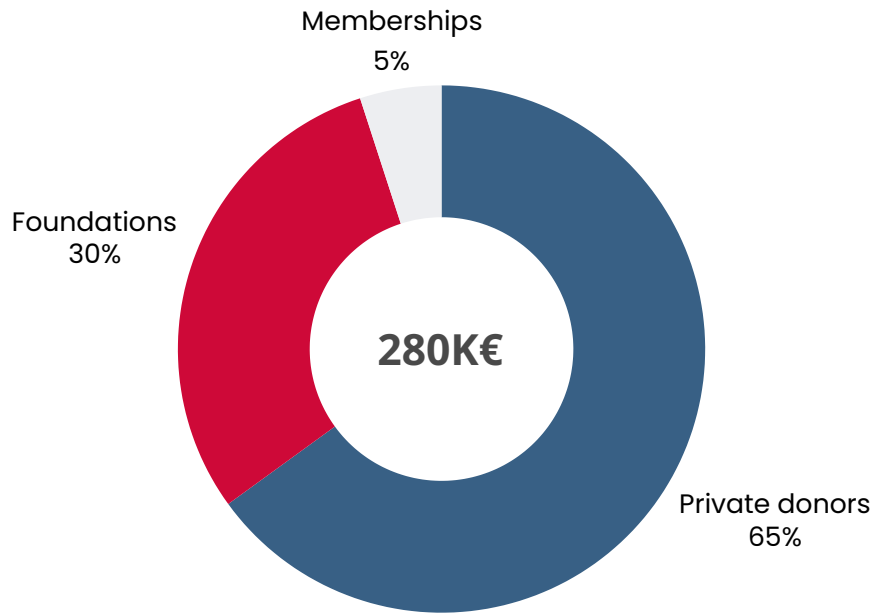
This strategic involvement underscores MMM's leadership in shaping the European agenda on family policy and support systems.



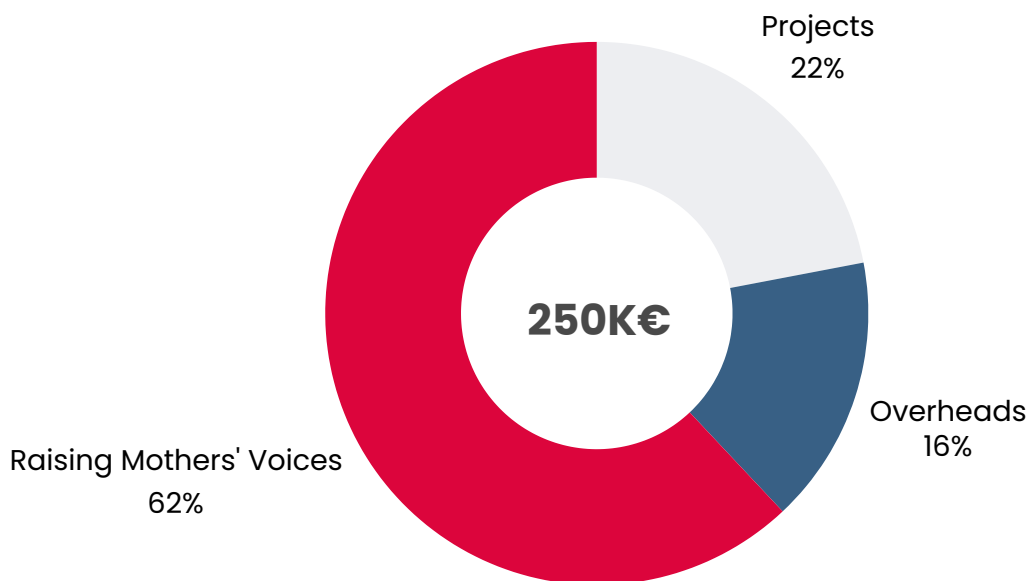
# 06

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

### Income



### Expenditures



# 07 LEADERSHIP TEAM

## THE BOARD



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## A FINAL WORD

**As we look back on 2024, I want to thank everyone who made our work possible.**

To our Board, our teams, our donors, and partners - your support, time, and commitment have been key to every step forward.

This year was about steady, meaningful progress - listening to mothers, sharing their realities, and making their concerns part of the bigger picture. None of it happens without all of you.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Let's keep building, together.

**A lot of small steps bring mothers to big changes.**

**Afaf Abounouadar**

**MMM Executive Director**



## OUR SUPPORTERS



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