



Make
Mothers
Matter

A YEAR IN REVIEW 2025



MOTHER-CENTERED ADVOCACY IN ACTION



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Why Mothers? Try without!

After nearly 20 years with Make Mothers Matter, I still find myself asking a fundamental question: why does MMM need to exist?

Why do mothers need to be defended and why is their essential contribution to society so often belittled, taken for granted, rather than recognised as a priority across public and private policies?

Pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, raising children, managing daily life, and providing constant physical and emotional care are not marginal activities. They are the foundation of our economies, our human development, and our shared sustainable future. Yet they remain largely invisible.

Why do mothers still bear - too often alone - the economic, professional, and health costs of care?

Some women manage to “have it all.” But they remain the exception, not the norm, as structural barriers continue to confine motherhood to the **private sphere - a sphere where care work has no price and therefore, in our systems, too little recognition.**

This must change.

FOREWORD

Year after year, MMM has contributed to that change. We work to make care visible and valued.

We produce data, launch campaigns, and formulate concrete recommendations.

We amplify mothers’ voice - so that policymakers, employers, and public opinion better recognise their contribution.

Today, care is increasingly present on the agenda of international institutions and in workplace discussions. This progress is collective, driven by our network, our alliances, and our partnerships.

This report highlights this impact and the actions that have enabled it.

The commitment of our teams and the support of our donors make this work possible and strengthen its impact. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to each and every one of them.

We share a common conviction: mothers are key to a sustainable future. When they are supported, valued, and recognised, they are a powerful force for change.

Looking ahead, our ambition is to further scale our impact: to increase our visibility, deepen our partnerships with grassroots organisations for local impact, and continue engaging institutions and the private sector to address the root causes of the challenges mothers face - for lasting systemic change.

Because nothing is possible without mothers - and supporting them means building a more just, sustainable, and humane society for all.

Anne-Claire de Liedekerke
President
 Make Mothers Matter

2025 KEY FIGURES

21 Statements

4 Joint policy briefs

6 Contributions to EU reports

22 Events and conferences

4 EU funded projects

11 New members
(**55** total)

1 International campaign

50+ Press articles

6 Media appearances

Social media reach

x10 followers

900k + views

10k+ Audience, including policymakers



In 2025, we saw real progress for mothers and a shift in the systems that hold them back. Care is increasingly recognised as a structural issue, maternity-related discrimination is finally on the global agenda, and maternal mental health has become part of public and media debate. None of this happened by chance - it is the result of MMM's sustained advocacy, ensuring mothers are visible, heard and counted where it matters most.



Afaf Abounouadar
Executive Director
Make Mothers Matter

2025 HIGHLIGHTS



European Parliament Presentation

Amplifying mothers' voices and lived experiences directly into European policymaking.



Launch of The Momney Project

Highlighting mothers' unpaid care work as a driver of economic & societal value.



Motherhood Penalty recognised at CSW69

Marking a historic breakthrough: global recognition of maternity-based discrimination as a key gender equality priority.



Influencing the EU Gender Equality Resolution

Elevating motherhood on the policy agenda to shape more inclusive & equitable gender equality frameworks.



4th International FfD4 Conference Spain

Challenging how unfair taxation, the debt crisis and trade agreements disproportionately affect mothers.



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VISION, MISSION & VALUES

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OBJECTIVES & CORE ISSUES

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ACTIONS



Supporting mothers to advance gender equality



VISION

MMM works for a world where women who are mothers are supported by the societies 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.

MISSION

We defend mothers, amplify their voices and strengthen their capacity to take action.

We are driven by the belief that mothers are essential agents of peace and social progress.

Since 1947, we have worked to advance 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 representing mothers worldwide, we drive a movement to ensure that every mother – regardless of her circumstances – can fulfill her caring and educational responsibilities and lead a dignified, autonomous life. We address the barriers mothers face in education, health, economic opportunity and societal participation, working towards a more caring, inclusive and equitable world.

—• ADVOCACY —• IMPACT —• CHANGE

OBJECTIVES

> GLOBAL PERCEPTIONS

Shift perceptions of motherhood so it is fully valued and supported across societies worldwide

> MOTHERS' SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

Identify and address the distinct social, economic, and health challenges, as well as the specific discriminations facing mothers

> GENDER EQUALITY

Advance gender equality by promoting the rights, opportunities, and recognition of mothers

> MATERNAL WELLBEING OF MOTHERS

Strengthen the wellbeing of mothers, children, and families through recognition, support and redistribution of unpaid care work

> CARE-CENTERED ECONOMY

Transform our economies 'beyond GDP' to prioritise the wellbeing of people and the planet and support care

CORE ISSUES



Unpaid Family Care Work



Motherhood Penalty



Maternal Mental Health



Early Childhood Development



Maternal Poverty



Girl's Education

ACTIONS

Representing our grassroots members' actions on the ground with and for mothers, at the EU, the UN, and UNESCO.

Advocating for mothers and families, amplifying their voices through targeted actions globally.

Responding to consultations, producing policy briefs, and developing concrete recommendations for national and international decision-makers.

Monitoring policy developments to integrate mothers' perspectives and ensure key measures are highlighted and promoted.

Leading a mothers' support network by coordinating the MMM membership, collaborating in alliances, coalitions, events and advisory groups, to amplify mothers' voices and strengthen our collective influence

Collecting data and producing research actions, including regular surveys, to deepen understanding of mothers' situations.





RAISING MOTHERS' VOICES

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AT THE UN

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AT THE EU

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AT UNESCO

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JOINING FORCES

AT THE UN

Our work at the United Nations continues to be driven by a central theme: mothers are not merely beneficiaries of development but are essential agents for development. Their wellbeing, rights, and unpaid labour form the bedrock of sustainable and thriving societies. We successfully interconnected disparate agendas—climate change, homelessness, education, and economic policy—demonstrating that without addressing the care economy and maternal rights, global goals on poverty eradication, gender equality, and environmental resilience cannot be met.

2025 marks a significant expansion in MMM’s advocacy efforts, using multiples avenues at the highest levels of the United Nations, in New York and Geneva, as well as two major UN Conferences.

WHAT WE CHANGED IN 2025

Framing care as essential infrastructure

We worked to shift how care is understood – from a private responsibility to a core pillar of economic and social systems.

We contributed to UN debates on:

- climate transition and Just Transition processes
- social protection systems, advocating for care-centred models that strengthen social cohesion and reduce inequalities
- labour markets and informal employment, showing that unequal care responsibilities are a structural barrier to women’s economic participation
- global development models beyond GDP, challenging economic frameworks that ignore the value of unpaid care work

Impact

Care is increasingly recognised across UN frameworks as a cross-cutting structural issue.

- The UN roadmap on eradicating poverty beyond growth **explicitly recognises care and social reproduction as foundational to economic systems.**
- Care is now more clearly linked to climate resilience, social cohesion and economic sustainability.

Motherhood as the "Unfinished Business" of Gender Equality

MMM positioned motherhood as a missing dimension of gender equality.

We:

- delivered MMM’s first oral statement at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)
- framed motherhood as the “unfinished business” of the Beijing Platform for Action
- brought evidence on the motherhood penalty, unpaid care and mental health

Historic milestone:

Discrimination linked to motherhood is formally recognised in the CSW69 Agreed Conclusions.

Advancing Mothers’ rights within Human Rights Agendas

We strengthened the recognition of mothers’ rights as human rights issues and delivered oral statements across the Human Rights Council sessions and events

- connected maternal wellbeing to child rights, poverty, housing and equality
- promoted a shared responsibility model of care

Impact

- A Human Rights Council resolution now recognises pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination.
- Our recommendations were incorporated into the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls report, with direct reference to our work.



AT THE UN

Integrating care into global responses to crises

We expanded our scope to demonstrate how the neglect of care work exacerbates the impact of global crises on women who are mothers:

We contributed to:

- the UN Special Rapporteur on Poverty’s “**Roadmap on eradicating poverty beyond growth**”
- a new Policy Brief, “**Climate Change: A Maternal Physical and Mental Health Emergency**”, developed in collaboration with a researcher at Harvard to provide evidence that the climate crisis is not gender-neutral and has impact on maternal health
- UNANIMA’s report, “**The Hidden Faces of Homelessness**” on homelessness and vulnerability of single mothers

Driving recognition of care as a strategic investment

We advocated for stronger investment in care systems as a driver of sustainable development.

We engaged in:

- the **Financing for Development Conference** calling upon governments to prioritise investments in Care systems and support for mothers, framing it as a high-return investment in human capital rather than a social cost.
- discussions on expanding the right to education (CRC Optional Protocol) to free pre-primary education and free secondary education.
- the High-Level Political Forum, focusing on SDG 5 (gender Equality), and placing Target 5.4 (unpaid care and domestic work) at the centre of our advocacy

21 Oral and written Statements

3 Invitations to speak at high level convenings

3 Calls for input and consultations

3 side-events to UN conferences



AT THE EU

Making mothers visible where decisions are made

European policies shape the daily lives of millions of families. In 2025, we strengthened our presence at the EU level to ensure that mothers' realities are at the forefront of policymaking. As the EU prepared major strategies, including the **Gender Equality Strategy (2026–2030)**, **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy**, and the new **European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan**, we engaged directly with decision-makers across the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the EU.

Our message remained clear: Care and motherhood are not side issues — they are central to Europe's future.



WHAT WE CHANGED IN 2025

Shaping Gender Equality Policies

MMM contributed to key EU policy processes to ensure that motherhood is fully integrated into gender equality frameworks.

We highlighted:

- the motherhood penalty
- unequal unpaid care responsibilities
- economic insecurity linked to caregiving

Impact

Our advocacy contributed to the recognition of unpaid care work and the motherhood penalty in the **European Parliament's 2025 Gender Equality Resolution**.

For the first time, single mothers are explicitly recognised in this policy framework.

Making care a Public Priority

We worked to reframe care as a collective responsibility and economic foundation, rather than a private issue.

We contributed to EU debates on:

- care policies
- pay and pension gaps
- time poverty

Impact

Care is increasingly recognised at EU level as a public good essential to social cohesion and economic sustainability.

The motherhood penalty is now acknowledged as a structural driver of inequality.

Protecting investment in families

We engaged in EU discussions on social investment, including:

- the **European Pillar of Social Rights**
- the **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy**
- the future **EU budget**

We advocated for stronger investment in families, especially through the **EU Child Guarantee**.

Impact

Reducing child poverty is now more clearly linked to supporting mothers, particularly single mothers.

AT THE EU

A defining moment in Brussels: for the first time, thousands of mothers had a voice in the European Parliament.

In 2025, MMM presented the results of its **State of Motherhood in Europe 2024 survey** at the European Parliament in Brussels.

The event brought together policymakers, researchers and private-sector actors.

Behind the data were real stories:

- mothers facing economic insecurity despite working
- women struggling with mental overload and lack of support
- families navigating impossible trade-offs between work and care

This moment marked a turning point: EU policymakers were no longer discussing abstract concepts – but the lived realities of mothers.

Impact

4 Commission representatives
300 online participants
100 in person

Maternal Mental Health gains momentum on the European agenda

Elevating Maternal Mental Health

MMM brought maternal mental health into EU policy debates, including at the European Parliament.

We highlighted:

- the mental load carried by mothers
- the link between mental health, inequality and care systems
- the situation of mothers with disabilities

Impact

Maternal mental health is increasingly recognised as a systemic issue – not just an individual one – but one linked to gender equality, labour markets and care systems

- 5 EU consultations answered
- 6 Contributions to European Parliament reports
- 4 Joint policy papers with partners
- 18 Policy events and expert meetings



MAKE MOTHERS MATTER
presents its
State of Motherhood in Europe
2024 survey results

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,
BRUXELLES, BELGIUM

22 September 2025

JOINING FORCES

EU FUNDED PROJECTS

At the European level, MMM acts as a bridge between policy, research and the lived realities of mothers. Through EU-funded projects and research networks, we work with partners to translate policy priorities into concrete actions addressing gender equality, care, employment and digital transformation. These initiatives enable us not only to inform policy, but also to test solutions, build capacities and generate evidence across Member States. By bringing mothers' experiences into European research and innovation processes, we strengthen collaboration between civil society, academia and public institutions, contributing to more inclusive and effective policies.

ASSIST



MMM is the coordinator of the **ASSIST Project**, which focuses on mothers with disabilities – a group often overlooked in policy and healthcare systems. In 2025, the partnership produced key outputs including national and transnational reports analysing discrimination in healthcare and identifying best practices to support inclusive care. The project also developed a digital ecosystem combining training resources, a virtual learning environment and simulation tools aimed at improving healthcare professionals' capacity to support women with disabilities in their journey to motherhood.

EurofamNET



MMM continued its engagement in **EurofamNet – the European Family Support Network**, bringing together researchers, practitioners and policymakers working on family policies. We contributed to project outputs and reports, participated in plenary meetings and led the policy and practice workgroup. Through this role, we ensured that issues related to motherhood, unpaid care work and gender equality were integrated into discussions on family support systems at European level.

MOTHERSCAN



The **MothersCan project** focused on expanding vocational training opportunities and fostering collaboration between education providers, policymakers and businesses. In 2025, MMM supported the dissemination of the project's final results and participated in its closing conference in Berlin, which brought together key stakeholders to address the structural challenges mothers face in reconciling work and caregiving. The project received the **Die Europa Prize**, recognising its impact in the field of education and social innovation.



MAV - Mom Virtual Assistant



The **MAV – Mom Virtual Assistant project** explored new opportunities for mothers in the digital labour market by providing upskilling and reskilling pathways. It builds on the recognition that skills developed through motherhood – such as organisation, adaptability and problem-solving – are directly transferable to professional environments. We organised workshops with partners and mothers to test and refine the digital tools developed by the project, ensuring their relevance to real-life needs. The project was positively evaluated by the European Commission.

WORKING WITHIN COALITIONS AND ALLIANCES

We continue to strengthen our partnerships across key EU and global platforms, working within coalitions to amplify our voice, expand our reach, and influence EU and UN policy agendas to better recognise and address the realities mothers face.



AT UNESCO

Bringing mothers' voices into global education and peace agendas

UNESCO plays a central role in shaping global frameworks on education, culture and peace – areas where mothers have a foundational influence yet remain insufficiently recognised in policy discourse.

As an organisation historically rooted at UNESCO since its founding, Make Mothers Matter (MMM) continues to advocate within this space for the recognition of mothers as essential actors in education, child development and social cohesion.

In 2025, we contributed to UNESCO's global education agenda by bringing parents' – and particularly mothers' – perspectives into international discussions on the future of the right to education.

Advancing the role of parents in the Global Right to Education

In December 2025, MMM participated in UNESCO's **International Symposium on the Future of the Right to Education**, marking the 65th anniversary of the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education.

The symposium gathered Member States, UN agencies, civil society and experts to assess progress and define priorities for achieving inclusive and equitable education worldwide.

MMM contributed by conveying testimonies and perspectives from its global network of member associations working directly with families and communities.

Through these contributions, MMM emphasised that:

- parents are essential partners in education systems
- mothers play a foundational role in children's learning and development
- education policies must reflect family realities
- inclusive education requires family engagement

This advocacy reinforced the importance of integrating parents – and especially mothers – into global education strategies and frameworks.

Supporting parents – and particularly mothers – is essential to achieving equitable education and sustainable societies.



Strengthening UNESCO's Education and Peace Mandate

MMM's engagement at UNESCO reflects its longstanding mission to highlight the role of mothers in education, prevention and social cohesion.

By bringing grassroots parental perspectives into international education debates, we contribute to UNESCO's objective of ensuring education systems respond to social realities and support human development across generations. This work also aligns with our broader commitment to recognising mothers as key contributors to peace-building, resilience and community wellbeing.





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THE STATE OF MOTHERHOOD
IN EUROPE

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THE MOMNEY PROJECT

IMPACTFUL PROJECTS



Make Mothers Matter

State of motherhood in Europe 2024

Overlooked challenges, unmet needs

Results of the 2024 survey

Based on a study conducted by Kantar and commissioned by MMM



THE STATE OF MOTHERHOOD IN EUROPE

The **State of Motherhood in Europe** research initiative was created to respond to a critical gap in public data: the lack of large-scale, comparable, evidence-based information on mothers' lived experiences across Europe. Mothers' realities – in relation to care, work, mental health, economic security, and social recognition – remain largely invisible in policymaking spaces, despite their central role in sustaining families, communities, and economies.

The objective was to listen directly to mothers, transform their voices into robust data, and bring this evidence to the highest levels of decision-making in European and international institutions, as well as to national advocacy movements. By doing so, our aim is to initiate and influence public policies that improve the lives of millions of mothers and children, contributing to long-term structural and systemic change.

The survey was carried out in collaboration with **Kantar**, gathering responses from **9,600 mothers** across 11 EU countries – Ireland, Germany, France, Slovakia, Poland, Sweden, Spain, Czech Republic, Belgium, Portugal, and Italy – as well as the United Kingdom.

This unprecedented dataset enabled MMM to produce in 2024:

- A global European report
- National focus reports, offering country-specific insights to support targeted advocacy and policy engagement.

In 2025, our work focused on the dissemination of the results throughout the European countries surveyed.

12 events organised around the national results

1k+ attendees

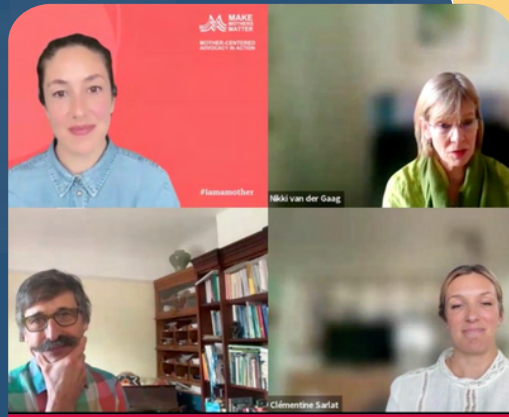
SURVEY EUROPEAN TOUR



Unveiling new data. Sparking real conversations. Driving action to help mothers thrive



Survey Presentation
EU Parliament
Brussels, Belgium



Survey Launch Webinar
France



Radio Interview
Belgium



SHE Conference
Norway



Survey Presentation
Germany



Annual Event, Mulheres a Obra
Portugal



Màs Família
Spain



MOBILISING OUR NETWORK

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GROWING COMMUNITY OF MEMBERS

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WIDER ECOSYSTEM



**55 members globally
11 new members**

- Mexico – Mama Godin
- Austria – FEM.A
- Czechia – Aperio
- France – Bande de Mères
- France – Association des Familles Monoparentales
- Australia – Single Mother Families
- Bulgaria – Mom Got a Job
- Spain – Fundación AMASOL
- Spain – Moms in Co
- Sierra Leone – Life for African Mothers
- Haiti – AMECEP

A GROWING COMMUNITY OF MEMBERS

Our member network brings together grassroots organisations working directly with mothers and families across diverse social, cultural and economic contexts.

In 2025, the network continued to strengthen its role as a connector of civil society organisations, a platform for peer learning and a channel through which the lived realities of mothers inform advocacy at national and international levels.

Through strategic expansion, policy engagement and ecosystem partnerships, the network expanded its reach and consolidated its contribution to advancing maternal wellbeing, care recognition and gender equality.

Expanding the network

In 2025, the network continued to grow, welcoming **11 new member organisations** and expanding its geographical footprint across Europe, Latin America, Africa and Australia.

These new members contribute to reinforce expertise on key issues affecting mothers, including single mothers, maternal health, economic empowerment, and community-based support.



Amplifying members' voices in international policy spaces

A central mission of the network is to ensure that the voices of organisations working closest to mothers are heard in policy discussions.

In 2025, members contributed directly to international policy debates. Two associate members – **Irish Maternity Support Network** and **Child Nepal** – were selected among the four civil society speakers addressing the High-Level Segment of the 58th session of the UN Human Rights Council. Their interventions highlighted the importance of respectful maternity care and access to education, bringing field-based perspectives into international human rights discussions.

This illustrates how the network functions as a bridge between grassroots organisations and global policymaking processes.

Supporting Members' Sustainability

To strengthen members' organisational capacity, the network also disseminates relevant funding opportunities from international donors and foundations.

In 2025, information was shared on funding streams related to:

- maternal and reproductive health
- girls' education
- women's economic empowerment
- prevention of gender-based violence
- sustainable development initiatives

By acting as an information hub and opportunity broker, the network supports members in accessing funding and expanding their impact.



A WIDER ECOSYSTEM



Strengthening national policy engagement

The network also supported national-level advocacy, particularly in Belgium, where targeted outreach was conducted with policymakers at federal and regional levels.

Meetings were held with Flemish Minister for Health and Equality, Minister for Health and Equality for Wallonia and Brussels, Federal Minister of Health and Members of the Brussels Parliament.

These exchanges helped raise awareness among policymakers of the structural dimensions of care and the importance of maternal wellbeing within public health and equality frameworks.

They also reinforced the network's position as a credible interlocutor on issues related to unpaid care, maternal mental health and family policy.

Building a broader ecosystem for change

Beyond its member organisations, MMM actively engages with a wider ecosystem of partners including researchers, advocacy groups, feminist organisations and policy experts working on care, gender equality and social policy. These collaborations create opportunities for knowledge exchange, joint advocacy and increased visibility for issues affecting mothers.

Partners engaged in 2025 included the Vrouwenraad, in Belgium, the National women's council in Ireland, and the University of Gent amongst others.

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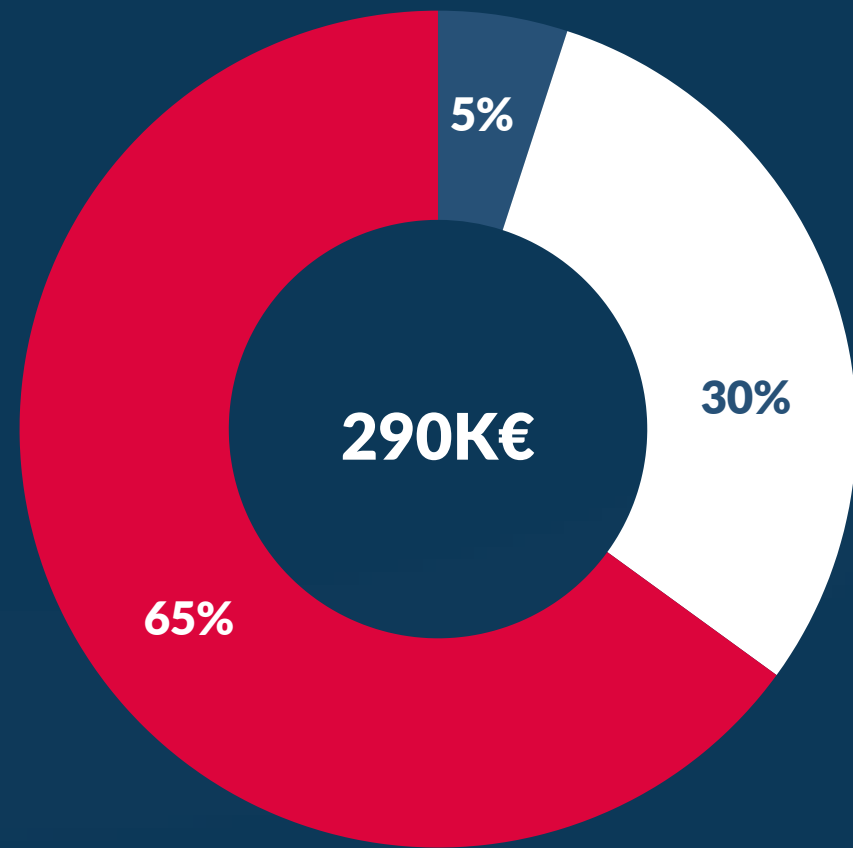
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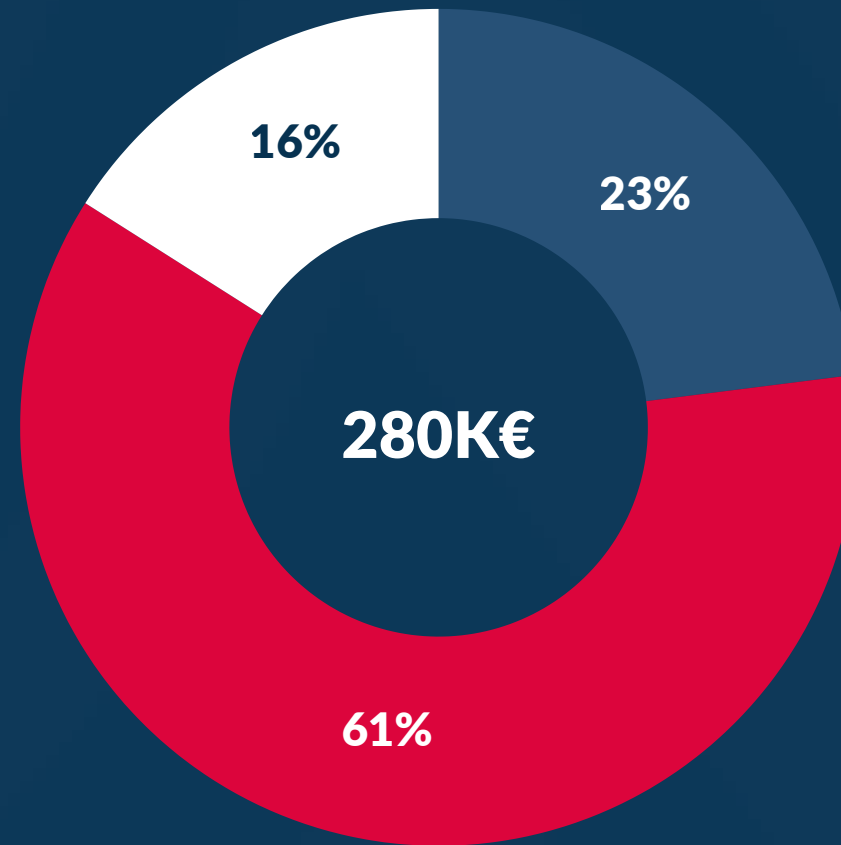
TEAM

INCOME



MEMBERSHIP PRIVATE DONORS FOUNDATIONS

EXPENDITURE



PROJECTS RAISING VOICES OVERHEADS

DONORS



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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