

Mothers' call to action

Employment opportunities that recognise and adapt to caregiving demands

1. Create decent work for mothers that meets caregiving demands
2. Design jobs in ways that allow mothers to spend time with their children
3. Jobs must pay enough to take care of mothers' and children's needs
4. Create jobs close to where low-income mothers live, reducing travel burdens and ensuring quick access in child-related emergencies
5. Establish affordable and quality ECD centres and crèches close to where mothers work
6. Workplaces must offer child care supports
7. Expand employment opportunities for mothers in child-focused services (e.g. schools, libraries, ECD centres)
8. Align work schedules with childcare facility hours to ensure children's safety
9. Create flexible jobs and work arrangements to support caregiving
10. Provide WIFI-enabled community spaces for mothers to access and apply for jobs

mothers' call to action

"Mom hubs": Safe, accessible spaces offering co-ordinated support services for mothers

The range of coordinated services include:

1. Affordable, fair financial support mechanisms (e.g., small loans) that protect mothers from exploitative lending and debt traps
2. Skills training and employment pathways (e.g., CV development, entrepreneurship, critical digital literacy)
3. Adult basic education programmes
4. Parenting programmes that strengthen mothers' wellbeing and distributes The Motherload
5. Ad hoc and short term crèche and babysitting services (e.g., if a mother needs to attend a job interview)
6. Free, reliable WiFi access to support job-seeking and digital inclusion
7. Women's health services, including reproductive and maternal care
8. Safe house facilities and protection services for women facing violence
9. Self-care and wellbeing services (e.g. yoga, relaxation, mental health)
10. Counselling and legal aid services to uphold women's rights

mothers' call to action

Safe and caring communities for mothers and children

1. Foster communities with supportive neighbours – creating ways for neighbours to help each other
2. Establish community "libraries of things" (shared resources like kitchen utensils, tools, toys) to reduce household burdens
3. Monitor and strengthen the quality of ECD centres and crèches by ensuring safety standards, qualified and competent staff. Provide government support for non-compliance rather than shutting down the needed services
4. Strengthen essential services by ensuring 24hr access in communities (e.g., police and hospitals)
5. Enforce strict confidentiality protocols in public hospitals to protect mothers' dignity
6. Invest in safe, affordable public transport designed for women and children
7. Create emotionally safe communities by reducing judgment of mothers from community members and addressing social norms that harden men
8. Build public art and cultural centres in low-income communities to create safe gathering spaces and build community connection
9. Strengthen ward councillor accountability
10. Improve neighbourhood safety and child-friendly infrastructure, including safe playgrounds where children can play, giving mothers rest time

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Fathers' call to action

Build gender-equal care systems

1. Provide free tertiary education through educational grants, improving fathers' opportunities to better their family's livelihoods
2. Incorporate awareness of unpaid care work as a topic in school curricula (e.g., Life orientation) to shift gender norms
3. Guarantee equal maternity and paternity leave that is paid and legally protected
4. Extend family responsibility leave for fathers to at least 10 days, so men can care for children and support mothers
5. Establish mechanisms to improve communication between families, communities, and policymakers to address unpaid work
6. Promote men/father involvement in care giving through campaigns, media, and programmes, to help shift gender norms and distribute the load
7. Strengthen government commitment to gender-equal caregiving policies

fathers' call to action

Social and community programmes that promote men's involvement in care work

1. Promote programmes (e.g., family strengthening) that help fathers take equal responsibility for childcare and household duties, and be present, patient, and respectful in their families
2. Offer programmes that encourage fathers to be caregiver role models
3. Advocate for equal child support laws that apply fairly to both fathers and mothers
4. Legislate equal parental leave, ensuring paternity leave is the same as maternity leave
5. Create initiatives that encourage men to be part of Early Childhood Development (ECD) teaching and caregiving
6. Create community support and training programmes that facilitate open group forums where fathers can learn and speak about fathering and caregiving
7. Use schools, national and social media, and campaigns to raise awareness and share examples of positive fatherhood
8. Provide psychologically safe spaces for fathers and mothers to openly discuss parenting challenges and share experiences

fathers' call to action

Address Absent fathers (including present but absent fathers)

1. Promote campaigns on responsible fatherhood – love, care, and presence matter more than money
2. Support programmes where fathers learn to build mutual respect and friendships with children for healthy father-child relationships
3. Establish accessible recreational activities in communities (e.g., sports or entertainment) for fathers to bond with their children. Initiatives like "Take a Child to Work" can also strengthen father-child connections
4. Develop community-based programmes that include fathers, stepfathers, social fathers, and father figures in caregiving roles
5. Establish volunteering opportunities for young boys that promotes care work as a life skill, and develops caring and nurturing skills, contributing to more socially conscious adult men and more caring fathers
6. Create opportunities for fathers to volunteer in child-related facilities (e.g., schools), normalising fathers' engagement in education related care work and contributing to greater involvement in other forms of care work
7. Provide counselling support for fathers facing challenges (e.g., unemployment, substance abuse, or stress)
8. Establish dialogue platforms for fathers and mothers to discuss parenting challenges in safe, accessible ways
9. Expand job opportunities to reduce fathers being absent due to the shame of unemployment

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**the
motherload
project.**

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9. Expand job opportunities to reduce fathers being absent due to the shame of unemployment
10. Strengthen and enforce laws holding absent fathers accountable

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