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mine

Mothers Centers International
Network for Empowerment

Mother Center Conference *How do we want to raise our Children?*

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Press Statement

This conference is the birth of a Mother Center global movement.

It is the first time that Mother Centers and Mother Center initiatives from all around the world have come together to meet each other face to face, share with each other, learn from each other and create common campaigns and action plans together.

The idea for the campaign, "How do we want to raise our children" came from the Union of Slovak Mother Centers and was taken up with great enthusiasm by the **mine** network. It is the first campaign that created participation from Mother Centers and similar grassroots groups from all around the world. Over 75 groups around the world participated in our campaign. We have representatives of 22 countries here at this conference. 30 000 women, men and children participated in the local dialogs. Together we are representing thousands and thousands of families in many continents. We will use this opportunity in the next days to join our forces, to create public attention to mother's voices, to create bold plans, to define and shape an international Mother Center agenda, to strengthen our network.

This is just the start of a longer process. Many young parents find themselves struggling with issues of how to bridge traditional and modern values, how to keep up with their children, what to pass on to their children, and how to participate in and influence public childcare and education in kindergartens and schools. Within the educational system parental knowledge and involvement and is often lacking. The campaign has showed that Mother Centers generate a wide range of practical experience and expertise linked to parenthood and child-upbringing. The aim is to make this knowledge and practical experience visible and operational in society. We want to raise awareness and recognition of the position of Mother Centers as "universities of parenthood". In the process a better understanding will be developed of what is needed to support mothers and families in their daily and daunting task of bringing up the next generation.



Mother Centers are an answer to the weakening of social ties, family, kin and neighbourhood networks in many different social, cultural and historic settings currently on our planet. They are reinventing family and kinship under contemporary conditions.

We will be hearing from every country. How they shaped the campaign in their local context, what work they are doing to support families.. We will get a picture of what mothers and Mother Centers world wide have to say, what their visions as well as their struggles are, what they are already doing for a better planet. We will conduct panels to discuss partnership building strategies with professionals on how they can support Mother Centers and their influence in society. We will show our competencies, we will analyse our issues and gather our solutions. We will adopt a platform of action that will be presented to the Slovak parliament on Tuesday, after the conference. We will begin a public debate on issues of child-raising and family policy where the voices of parents themselves are highlighted.

With the material generated during this campaign, we have gathered a wealth of bottom up grassroots knowledge and expertise. The conference intends to harvest this knowledge and create channels to bring it into mainstream thinking and public decision making.

Some key messages emerging from the campaign include:

- ❖ Mother Centers provide a unique supportive environment for child-raising not found anywhere else in society.
- ❖ Mothers around the world place great importance on transferring values to their children
- ❖ Mothers gain great competencies and skills through their daily life and engagement with children
- ❖ Mothers worldwide want more influence on kindergartens and schools. They want to cooperate with kindergarten and school teachers as equal partners.
- ❖ Fathers who are involved in the Mother Center movement welcome their participation in discussing child raising issues
- ❖ Mother Centers provide an effective learning space for parenting and child raising skills
- ❖ Mothers see the need for better conditions for their task of raising the next generation

Note to journalists:

For further information see www.mine.cc or www.materskecentra.sk (English), or contact Saskia Repcikova, +421 (0)905 741 565, saskia@materskecentra.sk.

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