



Need to Connect (NTC)  
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# Need to Connect Comparative Report Summary



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The needs analysis of young mothers in partner countries has revealed that while realistic, practical and accessible structures around maternal physical health and baby health are safely in place in all partner countries, a number of supports are still missing.

First, the maternity/paternity leave laws in different countries conceptualise motherhood in different ways and are applied differently. This means that in some countries early motherhood is something that is shared between genders and/or is done by both parents of the baby regardless of their gender, whilst in others, it is interpreted and lived as a gendered activity left to mothers, which can feel rather lonely and difficult.

Second, most young mothers feel they have support networks through their families, friends and communities, however, a **significant percentage of young mothers do not feel they have any support network**. It is therefore vital to think of community structures and online platforms to reach out to those women and provide the necessary supports.

Third, helping mothers to combine their professional activities and childcare are still failing in most places at least to a degree. There are not enough affordable state childcare facilities and even in countries where the system works comparatively well, there are significant gaps.

Finally, and most importantly, the supports around the emotional side of motherhood are sorely missing in ALL partner countries. The above research has revealed that what the young mothers need is: help transitioning into motherhood in terms of their own emotional response to motherhood, their identity, navigating intense and often toxic societal pressures of being a mother, the cyber space, critically assessing the helpful and accurate information from spam, navigating conflicting demands and expectations on mothers, and help understanding the harmfulness of intense mothering. The *Need to Connect* project partners will develop the supports to young mothers based on the outcomes of this research.

