



4TH INTERNATIONAL FORUM OF NGOS IN OFFICIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH UNESCO

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The 4th International Forum of NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO was held at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on June 29th and 30th 2015. With approximately 250 participants from international NGOs worldwide, the goal of the Forum was to review the progress that has been made in the field of women and poverty. IFHE had two representatives from different countries in attendance: Jacqueline FRITSCH (France) and Mona SHARAF ABDEL GALIL (Egypt).

The Forum was hosted by Mr Eric FALT, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for External Relations and Public Information and Mrs. Martine LEVY, Chairperson of the International Conference of NGOs in the UNESCO NGOs Liaison Committee. Throughout the two days, participants were presented with data and facts from different regions of the world on the current situation and the progress that has been made. The participants also had the opportunity to discuss together and listen to representatives from the different NGOs and get an insight into how they work. There were also thematic sessions and panel discussions debating the NGOs best practices to fight poverty.

The Forum discussed how women can drive poverty eradication by utilising their capacities that in many parts of the world are being undermined. The United Nations estimate that if women were given the same access to land, fertilisers, water and crops for food production, more than 100 million people would be lifted out of hunger. Education was also discussed at length, because it is widely regarded as the one key element to eradicating poverty. Education for women has many benefits; it reduces maternal mortality rate and the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as improves conditions for the whole family because educated women will have a better chance to provide for their families. As Nelson MANDELA once said: "Education is the most powerful weapon to change the world."

Moreover, the Forum also discussed that empowerment and leadership goes hand in hand and the importance of women being involved in decision-making.



IFHE has been working on women's empowerment and gender equality, especially embracing all actions throughout International Women's Day celebrations. In a statement about IFHE, "the role of Home Economics education in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is the specific goal of confronting poverty and sustainable development. Home Economics education programmes can enhance vocational skills for youth, employment and self-reliance, reorient students' attitudes towards rural and urban society and thus halt or refrain urban migration and enhance social and occupational mobility. Home Economics education is regarded as empowering for women to support the development of any nation.

At the tertiary level, it may be geared towards meeting the needs of the labour market for skilled personnel and to provide students with skills necessary for self-employment. There are many opportunities available to Home Economics graduates through which they can set up Business Enterprises. An enterprise simply refers to any activity by which one earns a living. This involves personal ownership of a business or self-employment. The areas of Home Economics providing skills for job or business opportunities for our young people for gainful employment include: Clothing and Textiles, Food and Nutrition, Daily Life Activities Management, Household Management, Consumer Education, Child and Maternity Care. When young women and girls engage themselves in one or more of these businesses, sustainability is assured. This implies that they will be able to acquire the essential things for daily living.

With the skills acquired, they become independent and useful."