

UNESCO team report 2018-2019

Monique Bouaziz, Renée Gérard, Danielle Levy

NGOs at UNESCO are involved in the preparation of two forums every year and of a few international Days. On 26 and 27 September 2018 a forum on migrants was held in Tunis. It was associated to an international day on peace, which implied a design and an art competition on this theme "Drones and Robots at the service of peace". This event was followed by another celebration day, as it was the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The second forum "Science as a common good of humankind" took place in Moscow on 27 and 28 November. Its panels on science for peace, on the social responsibility of science and the quest for sustainable solutions for ensuring peace stability in the 21st century were led by the Russian Academy of Sciences. It was of extremely high quality. As we belonged to the group that had worked to prepare the forum we were invited, all expenses paid, by the Russian peace foundation and the Russian Academy of sciences who were in association with UNESCO for this event.

17 to 19 December was the occasion of the International Conference of INGOs, which was the moment of the election of the Liaison Committee and of its President (a woman). These events offered a real occasion to discuss on the necessary changes in the manner of preparing forums and were at the origin of a group who decided to prepare documents on reinforcing the INGO partnership with UNESCO. In 2019 only one forum is scheduled. It was meant to be hosted in July but will only be held in December because of the election of the Liaison committee last December. As the Liaison Committee has to agree on the themes of the forums, the time was too short to have good speakers free for the event and to find a state willing or able to host a minimum of a hundred people during 2 to 3 days. This forum will deal with "inequality". Two forums should be held in 2020. One on "Global Citizenship" and one as a follow up to the Days of Peace and we are already working on them.

For the second time we have received money from the Participation Programme to send people to get trained in hydrology. They are back from the training and ready to train other people. We are happy to tell that out of 30 people trained, 15 were women (3 out of 6 in the group from Togo sent by IAW).

2019 was rich in events at UNESCO, but to attendance and preparation of special Days such as the one which is to be a follow up to the International Day of the Girl and one on Water, were added the meetings preparing the G7 and the Beijing +25 events.

Some of these meetings were held at UNESCO headquarters, such as the one held on May 9 by the W7 (this movement brings together associations that defend women's rights in the G7 countries and all over the world). In the presence of more than 400 feminist NGOs, recommendations "towards a truly feminist and transformative G7" were handed to the ministers, among which were the French Secretary of State for Gender Equality and for the Fight against Discrimination, and the G7 Ministers for Gender Equality and Women's Rights.

Another event was held on July 5th. NGOs were invited by the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Education and Youth, of France and Mrs Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, to a UNESCO world conference: "innovating for girls and women's empowerment through education". Conference concluded by the President of the French Republic Mr Emmanuel Macron who is also President of the G7 this year.

We also attended the C7 (the Civil Society summit) on July 23 at the CESE (Economic, Social and Environmental Council). The theme of the meeting was the role of the G7 in the fight against inequality: It proposed to face up the challenge of development, to act in health and education and to find funds to answer the needs in these fields. The second half of this meeting was the occasion to draw up a survey of the Sahel region within the context of the security and climate crisis.

Recommendations from the C7 for the G7 were signed by some associations. Monique signed them in the name of IAW and AFEM, The recommendations were handed to the Secretary of State for Europe and Foreign Affairs who was to give them to President Macron.

In spite of all these meetings, while many of the G7 statements have lots of references to women's empowerment and gender equality, women were disappointed by the G7 itself by the fact that there was no adequate funding nor timeline for implementation, and that consensus was prioritised to feminist policy.

Monique was also invited at "L'Elysée", place of residence of President Macron on the occasion of the "1er prix Simone Weill de la République" (First Simone Weill Prize of the Republic). It was awarded to a Cameroon woman who works on Violence against Women.

Unfortunately, we were not able to participate in CSW this year but we attended the meetings organised by the French delegation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on CSW issues.

We were lucky enough to be invited at the National Assembly to meet French Oscar award film maker Agnes Varda a few days before she died. She commented her 1977 film: "l'une chante, l'autre pas" (one sings, the other doesn't). Probably the most feminist of her films.