

UPF Paris, France: Delegates to UNESCO in Paris' Views on Peace Education

Jacques Marion
March 21, 2024



Paris, France – Peace education is critical in a world plagued by conflicts, and women play an essential role in providing that education. On March 21, 2024, UPF-France and the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) co-hosted a meeting to explore these ideas, on "The role of women in education for sustainable peace" at the Espace Barrault in Paris. It was the second in a series of events scheduled for 2024 on the theme of "peace education" in conjunction with UNESCO.



In September 2023, UNESCO published a new Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development. This was the culmination of a three-year reappraisal of its educational policies originally promulgated in 1974.

The Paris event was a reminder of the general concern for peace education in a world where conflicts are proliferating. It was also an opportunity, in the context of "Women's Month," to affirm the role of women in peacebuilding. Seventy participants attended the event, on site and online, including representatives of NGOs from France, Europe and Africa.



The three main speakers were linked to UNESCO.

Mr. Patrick Jouan, vice president of UPF-France, moderated the event. By way of introduction, **Mr. Jacques Marion**, president of UPF-France, presented the activities of UPF and WFWP, and spoke of the new "Good Citizenship and Peace Education" project launched in Africa, as well as WFWP's peacebuilding work in the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

The first speaker was **Mrs. Machon-Honoré**, delegate of Business Professional Women International to UNESCO and former president of the International Conference of NGO Partners of UNESCO and of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee. She recalled UNESCO's history and policies concerning the role of women in peace education. She then spoke of her own experience of partnership with women involved in the Jeju Global Peace Academy in Korea.



Dr. Hala Taweel, counsellor and deputy permanent delegate of the State of Palestine to UNESCO, spoke of her painful personal experience as a Palestinian under Israeli occupation. The captivated audience then heard her describe the various projects she has launched over the years to create links between Palestinians and Israelis through education.

Dr. Lydia Aly, counselor at the Egyptian Embassy, whose diplomatic mission covers both France and UNESCO, spoke of the current situation of women in Egyptian society. Despite a difficult socio-political environment, women are gradually gaining recognition and position thanks to educational opportunities.

The audience was attentive, as the topics touched on very concrete points on each continent. Questions ranged from the practical role UNESCO can play in conflict zones, to the possibility of supporting women's education in Afghanistan, to the tragic plight of women victims of war in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Budgets for women's education programs also raised questions.

UPF and WFWP representatives concluded that "education of the heart" and "education of values" are priorities for peace education. They expressed the hope that UNESCO would honor women of peace, including mothers who are heroines of peace education.