

February 2020

A Better World Succeeds Only with Women in Science - Conference of ICESCO and LIKAT

Promoting access to all areas of science for women and girls in the Islamic world is the goal of an international conference on Feb. 11th. 5000 participants are expected including female researchers and students from 350 universities in the Islamic world, as well as professors, Nobel laureates, politicians, and motivators from around the world. The video conference is organized by the Islamic World Organization for Education, Science and Culture (ICESCO), headquartered in Rabat, Morocco, the Leibniz Institute for Catalysis (LIKAT) in Rostock, Germany, and the Space Foundation, a non-profit organization that promotes space technologies.

Worldwide, just as many girls and young women complete an academic education as young men. But in research, they still make up only 28.8 percent of the global average. "Mankind will not be able to solve its problems if we do not make it possible for more women than before to become involved in science," says LIKAT Director Prof. Dr. Matthias Beller, explaining his involvement as an organizer. Matthias Beller and Prof. Dr. Angelika Brückner, member of the board at LIKAT, are invited with their contributions to the opening session in the morning and will report on their experiences.

LIKAT is committed to promoting gender equality and the compatibility of work and family life through its own programs. For example, a social fund secures temporary employment during pregnancy, parental leave or while caring for relatives. In 2020, LIKAT received the "Total E-Quality" award for the fourth time in a row.

ICESCO has been focusing on equal opportunities for women and girls for several years, especially in science, engineering, and mathematics and technology, as ICESCO Director General Dr. Salim M. AlMalik points out. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, nowhere has the proportion of women and girls in science increased more than in Arab regions. In fact, from 36.8% in 2013 to 39.8% in 2016, action programs such as the TechGirls initiative, which has so far trained a good 160 girls in Java programming and mobile applications in the Middle East and North Africa, are also contributing.

In Oman, 53% of engineering graduates are women (compared to 26% in the Netherlands). Gender equality in education and science is a global problem, as figures show. Women are co-authors of only 22% of scientific publications, according to a 2015 global analysis of 2.5 million papers. Mixed teams of authors are significantly more likely to cite from other publications. In 2008, 8 % of patents in Europe were filed by women, and in the USA women applied for only 6 % of patents.

Reports from the responsible bodies repeatedly emphasize that the female perspective lends significantly more relevance, creativity and diversity to research approaches. Gender equality is therefore one of the 17 key goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which came into force in 2016. February 11 has been observed as *International Day of Women and Girls in Science* since 2015, following a decision by the UN General Assembly.

The session will run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and can be attended live:
www.facebook.com/ICESCO.Ar/live

Registration is possible until February 5 at the following link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Y96R4IKFTzu4LcCj6SG9NA

The program can be found at: <https://www.catalysis.de/en/news-events/events/>