

CFTE joined Montessori Centre International at the Athena 40 Global Thinkers Forum to Discuss ‘Female Leadership in Times of Crisis’

London, 30 March 2021 – During International Women’s Week 2021, the Centre for Finance, Technology and Entrepreneurship (CFTE) was delighted to be represented at the Athena 40 Global Thinkers Forum by Tram Anh Nguyen, CFTE’s Co-Founder, along with Maccs Pescatore, CEO of Montessori Centre International, as a part of the Education focused panel in the UK. The panel discussion revolved around the topic ‘Female leadership the time of crisis’.

The panel discussion that ensued among thought leaders in the education industry during the Athena 40 Global Thinkers Forum on **‘Female leadership in the time of a crisis’**, is truly timely in a world that has been jolted into a state of catastrophe after the COVID-19 pandemic. These unforeseen circumstances have urged leaders to emerge, take a stand, and guide the world out of the knee deep economic downturn that it has got itself into. This event is exactly the kind of conversation we have to help the world rise from the ashes and regain economic prosperity with women taking center stage.

“It was a great honour to speak at Athena 40 - a platform for visionary leadership with Montessori Centre International for a conversation that addressed vital issues on International Women’s Day 2021. It was an incredible event that brought many of us together to discuss questions around women empowerment, the importance of upskilling, the need for the right knowledge, skills and mindset to lead, and the right culture for women to thrive. In times of a crisis, despite some progress witnessed in maintaining the gender balance at the C-Suite level, there is still a lot that needs to be done to bring more women into leadership roles”, Tram Anh Nguyen, co-founder of the Center for Finance Technology and Entrepreneurship (CFTE).

The panel included Maccs Pescatore, CEO of Montessori Centre International and moderator of the discussion, along with Tram Anh Nguyen, the Co-Founder of CFTE. Their discussion encompassed a reflection of the current jobs landscape, where roles are transforming, including industries like banking, partly because of technology requiring new skills to lead. The discussion also highlighted the fact that women today are breaking stereotypes as they are seen at the top of traditionally male-dominated institutions.

While this reshuffling of gender roles at the C-Suite level is admirable, the panel accentuated the fact that we still need more role models from under-represented groups in these leadership positions. Leaders need to reflect the communities that they represent, as rightly said by the panelists. The COVID-19 pandemic, has in fact created the perfect opportunity by testing mettle and redefining the notion that being a certain gender is the most important thing when one is faced with a mammoth task of adapting in a time of crisis and being resilient.

The discussion took a positive turn as the speakers discussed the findings of a recent report by Harvard Business Review that revealed that women proved to be much better leaders during the crisis. This resonates with the phenomenon called the “glass cliff” - where when a company is in trouble a woman is put in charge to save it. Women have spent too long proving their worth. Now with the reality of their capabilities right in front of eyes, we need to create more opportunities for women to lead to see real progress.

“The pandemic has been a huge test for leaders around the world and has highlighted the need for skills like resilience, adaptability and emotional intelligence in management positions. Female leaders have demonstrated these skills in bucket-loads, and many have thrived during the crisis. Yet, there is still a long way to go when it comes to gender equality at the top.”, Maccs Pescatore, CEO of Montessori Centre International.

Montessori Centre International is a leading institution in the education landscape. Their principles can contribute to building future leaders and creating renewed mindset for women. Academic achievements are needed for future generations, but other skills are also vital, such as curiosity, resilience, flexibility, confidence. Key to the Montessori approach is trust and providing spaces to have experiences that the child can learn from so that they can inculcate the right skills to thrive in the future.

The Centre for Finance, Technology and Entrepreneurship is also driven by a similar mission - to help empower individuals by allowing them to build the right skills to lead. One of CFTE’s missions is also to ensure that everyone is able to leverage access to education, effectively ensuring that they are able to adapt and thrive in the rapidly changing FinTech industry. And it is through continuous education that women are able to empower themselves to break the glass ceiling. As of 2020, 40% of CFTE’s alumni were women, this is a big achievement.

With these forward thinking institutions carving out the fate of the future generations it's safe to say we are in good hands. But we still need more institutions to be the flag bearers of this new revolution. We need more female leaders to leave the ladder down, or even better, help someone up the ladder behind them. It must be nothing less than a priority to encourage, empower, nurture, support and give opportunities

to women. If we want to see change we have to do something about it, it's not the time to be passive.

About Montessori Centre International:

Montessori Centre International (MCI) is a leading provider of, and facilitator in the provision of Montessori training to meet the needs of the Early Years communities in the UK and around the world. It provides the sector's marker of quality assurance through its Standards, Training and Accreditation Review (STAR) Framework. Resources are made available to parents and carers through its online hub, the Montessori Network.

MCI is part of The Montessori Group, a central hub for Montessori philosophy in the UK.

The Montessori Group also includes Montessori St Nicholas charity which carries out social impact programmes and initiatives. In 2020, the charity partnered with Leeds Beckett University to create the International Montessori Institute.

About CFTE:

The Centre for Finance, Technology & Entrepreneurship (CFTE) is a global education platform that aims to equip financial professionals with the necessary skills to remain competitive in a rapidly changing industry. With offices in London, Singapore, Hong Kong and Abu Dhabi, CFTE partners with Fortune 500 companies to build their knowledge in Financial Technology, whilst simultaneously supporting their digital transformation process. In a tech world, we bet on people.