

Press Release

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES 15 MAY 2007

“Families and Persons with Disabilities”



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
FOR HOME ECONOMICS

In the resolution of 20 September 1993 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed that the International Day of Families should be celebrated on 15th May every year. The International Day of Families provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families. The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) points out the basic function of families for individuals, households and society. IFHE is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO), having consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe.

Theme of the International Day of Families of the year 2007 is:

“Families and Persons with Disabilities”

A declaration of the rights of disabled persons was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1975 when a description of a disabled person was given: A disabled person is any person unable to ensure by himself or herself a normal life, as a result of a deficiency in his or her physical or mental capabilities.

Regarding the demographic development in industrialized countries one special focus of home economics science and praxis focuses on the quality of life for disabled persons living in residential homes. Such persons often have to leave their familiar surroundings and find themselves living in unfamiliar surroundings due to the nature of their disability.

Home economists developed new concepts to facilitate this change and to improve quality of life for people with a disability. The education and training of carers and home economists is important in understanding the disability and in the process of aging of disabled persons. Moving to live in residential and nursing homes, dealing with possible dementia and the aging process, requires that the provision of a homely, comfortable, sustainable and stimulating home environment is essential. In order to achieve this home economists can offer a variety of activities for the disabled person. These are based on sound knowledge and understanding of the needs and wishes of the people involved.

For example a variety of activities to include exercise, handwork and crafts, music, cultural and other stimulating activities can be offered.

Home economists can be involved in the planning, equipping, running and maintenance of homes for disabled people enabling the residents to live in a homely environment and not in an institutional environment. By offering flexible home and household services it is possible to increase the choice of a home and enable the persons the opportunity to live in familiar surroundings.

— This is only one aspect of living with a disability in industrialised countries.

In developing countries the problems are different: often in addition to malnutrition there is a lack of water and energy supply, suitable accommodation and health facilities. The health care systems may be deficient with lack of information for pregnant women and midwifery service. Health provision and lack of immunisation may be prevalent which can lead to chronic disease, permanent disability and possible early death.

Physical and visible impairment, mental health can also result in disability. Lack of pre and post natal care can lead to malnutrition and other diseases during and after pregnancy.

Other causes for disabilities can be natural disasters and local conflicts as well as unsafe working conditions.

The IFHE challenge is to reduce poverty and hunger, increase nutrition education, access to healthy food for everyone and improved health care systems.

IFHE states that persons with disabilities has the right to a good quality of life, and with its international work it offers the great opportunity for international exchange in this important issue and to implement the results to UN Organisations.

IFHE issues a challenge: the prevention of disabilities is recognised, the quality of life for the disabled person is improved and that persons with disabilities are allowed to take part fully in the life and development of their societies.

Disability and its prevention should be of concern for people all over the world.